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## Ten Chicago artists granted a total of \$250,000 in unrestricted awards at 8<sup>th</sup> annual 3Arts Awards, Monday, October 5 Awards presented to women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities

CHICAGO, IL (October 5, 2015)—3Arts is honored to announce the ten recipients of its 8<sup>th</sup> annual **3Arts Awards**, presented to women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities working in the performing, teaching, and visual arts. The 2015 recipients are: dancer **Kris Lenzo** and choreographer **Stephanie Martinez**; vocalist **Frank Waln** and instrumentalist **Chihstuan Yang**; teaching artists **Benji Hart** and **Chris Silva**; actors **Allen Gilmore** and **Fawzia Mirza**; and visual artists **Cheryl Pope** and **Fo Wilson**. 3Arts Awards honorees each receive an unrestricted \$25,000 award to put to use according to their individual needs and priorities. To date, the Chicago-based, nonprofit granting organization 3Arts has awarded over \$1.5 million in total grants to more than 100 Chicago artists in the past eight years.

The 3Arts awards will be presented tonight, Monday, Oct. 5, by the 3Arts Board of Directors and Awards Host Committee in a celebratory gathering at the Museum of Contemporary Art. The event will also feature the world premieres of the dance, “Flexing/Fluffing,” by past 3Arts awardee **Darrell Jones** as well as the music composition, “Pretty Ugly,” by past awardee **JoVia Armstrong** and performed by an ensemble of past awardees including **Dee Alexander**, **Tatsu Aoki**, **Nicole Mitchell** and **avery r. young**.

“It is an immense privilege for 3Arts and our Award Partners to support another ten Chicago-area artists whose work energizes and enthralls every corner of our city. It is our profound hope that these artists will feel the applause emanating their way, and never forget how much they are valued here,” said 3Arts Executive Director **Esther Grisham Grimm**.

“Every year, we celebrate new awardees who reflect the breadth of art in Chicago and the diversity of our community. Hand in hand with our supporters, we do this work, in part, selfishly—to ensure that artists have a good reason to stay among us in Chicago,” added 3Arts Board Chair **Marcia Festen**.

The ten awardees were selected by national jury panels of their peers, including:

- Dance judges: **Amy Fitterer**, Dance/USA Executive Director; **Alice Sheppard**, choreographer/dancer; and **Sarah Solotaroff-Mirkin**, dance supporter/advocate
- Music judges: **Afa Sadykhly Dworkin**, Sphinx Organization President/Artistic Director; **Shulamit Ran**, Professor of Music at University of Chicago; and **Isabel Yrigoyen**, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Associate Director of Performing Arts
- Teaching Arts judges: **Barbara Hackett-Cox**, Perpich Center for Arts Education Partnership Coordinator; **Sandra Jackson-Dumont**, Metropolitan Museum of Art Frederick P. and Sandra P. Rose Chairman; and **Carrie Spittler**, Snow City Arts Executive Director
- Theater judges: **Mica Cole**, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Associate Producer; **PJ Powers**, Timeline Theatre Company Artistic Director; and **Faye Price**, Pillsbury House Theatre Co-Artistic Director

- Visual Arts judges: **Amanda Cachia**, independent curator, **Tricia Van Eck**, 6018 North Artistic Director; and **Deborah Willis**, Professor/Chair of the Department of Photo and Imaging at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts

The recipients of the 2015 3Arts Awards are:

**Dance:**

**Kris Lenzo**, *Dancer, 3Arts/David Pinkerton Awardee*



Kris Lenzo made the transition to dance after more than two decades as a wheelchair athlete and a national champion in wheelchair basketball and wheelchair track. As a member of the United States National Teams in Basketball and Track, he traveled to Nova Scotia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Since 2003, Lenzo has danced with MOMENTA performing arts. He has performed several times in the Dance St. Louis *Spring to Dance* show (2009, 2011, 2012, and 2013). His appearances have also included *Dance Chicago*, *Duets for My Valentine*, Chicago's *Bodies of Work Festival of Disability Art and Culture* in 2006 and 2013, *Counter Balance I, II, III, IV, V and VI*, and annually at the Chicago Disability Pride Parade. Lenzo has studied at Intensives with Axis

Dance in Seattle Washington and Oakland California, and is a dance instructor for MOMENTA's EveryBody Can Dance (EBCD) workshops for dancers with and without disabilities.

**Stephanie Martinez**, *Choreographer, 3Arts/RH, Restoration Hardware Awardee*



Stephanie Martinez is a dancemaker who has created original works for Luna Negra Dance Theater's 10th anniversary season at the Harris Theater, Thodos Dance Chicago, Same Planet/Different World, Ron De Jesus Dance, Elements Contemporary Ballet, Chicago Dance Crash, Visceral Dance Chicago, and The Joffrey Academy trainees. In 2010, she assisted Broadway legend Ann Reinking in setting the *Fosse Trilogy* on Thodos Dance Chicago; and Daniel Ezralow, choreographer of Broadway's *Spiderman: Turn off the Dark*, in remounting his celebrated work, *Pulse*, for Company C Contemporary Ballet in San Francisco. In 2014, she received a "Winning Works" award from The Joffrey Ballet.

Forthcoming commissions include Ballet Hispanico, Kent State University, Oakland

University, and *Fantasmagorie*, a water-based, multi-media collaboration between the Field Museum and Shedd Aquarium.

**Music:**

**Frank Waln**, *Vocalist, 3Arts/Reva & David Logan Foundation Awardee*



Frank Waln is an award-winning *Sicangu Lakota* hip hop artist, producer, and performer originally from the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. A recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship, Waln attended Columbia College Chicago where he received a BA in Audio Arts and Acoustics. Waln's awards include three Native American Music Awards, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development "Native American 40 Under 40" in 2014, and the 2014 Chicago Mayor's Award for Civic Engagement. He has been featured on *Buzzfeed's* "12 Native Americans Who Are Making a Difference," *USA Today*, *ESPN*, and *MTV's* *Rebel Music Native America*. Waln has written for various publications including *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*. Waln travels the

world spreading hope and inspiration through performance and workshops focusing on self-empowerment and the pursuit of dreams.

**Chihsuan Yang**, *Instrumentalist, 3Arts/Southwest Airlines Awardee*

Chihsuan Yang is an eclectic and versatile violinist actively engaged in the Chicago music scene. She began playing violin, piano, and *erhu* at an early age in her native country, Taiwan, and holds a bachelor degree in violin performance from DePaul University. With a firm grasp of a wide array of genres, Yang performs in the styles of classical, blues, flamenco, free-improvisation, rock, electronic-acoustic, and world music. As a member of the



legendary Corky Siegel's Chamber Blues, Yang has toured worldwide and performed at such venues as Montreal International Jazz Festival, Chicago Blues Festival, Chicago Jazz Festival, Lollapalooza, Grand Teton Music Festival, SXSW, Feria de las Artes, and Festival de Musica de Camara in Mexico. She is a founding member of the classical quintet, Accende, and the worldly sounds of Sappho's Secret Love, a collaboration of original compositions with Winston Damon. She is a member of the flamenco ensemble, Las Guitarras de Espana, and frequently performs with Grammy© nominated soul/folk/rock artist Matthew Santos. In 2014, Yang released her debut solo album, which is a mix of original world/electronic compositions.

### Teaching Arts:

#### **Benji Hart, *Dancer, 3Arts/Irene Siragusa Phelps Awardee***



Benji Hart is an activist, artist, and youth worker dedicated to radical education. Much of his work focuses on using the dance form of vogue to teach Black and Brown queer history, sex positivity, and prison abolition, and to empower poor and working queer communities in creative and celebratory ways. He strives to combine arts and education to unite oppressed collectives and plan direct action. Currently he is a drop-in worker at the Broadway Youth Center in Chicago, a community space for trans and queer youth experiencing homelessness. His writing has been published in *Salon Magazine*, *The Socialist Worker*, *Cooperative Catalyst*, and his own blog, *Radical Faggot*.

#### **Chris Silva, *Multidisciplinary Artist, 3Arts/Chandler Family Awardee***



Born in Puerto Rico, Chris Silva has been a prominent figure in Chicago's graffiti and skateboarding scenes since the 1980s and has played a significant role in the development of "street art." In the '90s, he worked on a mural with the Chicago Public Art Group as part of a community art project with urban youth. Since then the act of facilitating art experiences for young people has become an important part of his art practice. Silva has helped orchestrate youth art projects with Chicago Public Art Group, Young Chicago Authors, Gallery 37, Yollocalli Arts Reach, After School Matters, and the School of The Art Institute of Chicago. He has created public art commissions for the

Chicago Transit Authority, Seattle Sound Transit System, 1871 Chicago, the City of Chicago, LinkedIn, CBRE, OFS Brands, and The Prudential Building. In 2012, he won the Juried Award for "Best 3D Piece" at Artprize. Silva splits his time between working on large-scale commissions, producing gallery oriented work, and leading youth-involved public art projects.

### Theater:

#### **Allen Gilmore, *Actor, 3Arts/Denise & Gary Gardner Awardee***

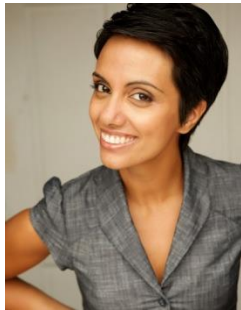


Originally from Houston, Texas, Allen Gilmore trained as an actor with master teacher, Stella Adler, at New York University, and is a graduate of Juilliard. He has performed on Broadway with Tony Randall's National Actor's Theatre and toured the country for two years with The Acting Company, creating the leading role in *The African Company Presents Richard the Third* by Carlyle Brown at the Public Theater, receiving New York's AuDelCo Award. Gilmore has played a variety of roles during his career including: both Othello and Iago (*Othello*), Cyrano (*Cyrano de Bergerac*), Ichabod Crane (*The Tales of Washington Irving*), Hamm (*Endgame*), Brutus (*Julius Caesar*), Bynum (*Joe Turner's Come and Gone*), Jaques (*As You Like It*), Lun Tha (*The King and I*), Ebenezer Scrooge

(*A Christmas Carol*), Mme. Arsinoe (*The Misanthrope*), King Hedley (*Seven Guitars*), Aaron the Moor (*Titus Andronicus*), and Vladimir (*Waiting for Godot*) among many others. He is a proud ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre Company and a member of the Court Theatre family, and a 2015 Lunt-Fontanne/Ten Chimneys Fellow.



**Fawzia Mirza, Actor, 3Arts Community Awardee**



Fawzia Mirza is an actor, comedian, and writer who believes in dispelling the myth of the “model minority” in mainstream media and in the power of comedy to tackle divisive topics. She has performed on various Chicago stages, including starring in *Brahman-I*, produced by Silk Road Rising and About Face Theatre, and at The Goodman Theatre in *The Happiest Song Plays Last* and Christopher Shinn’s world premiere, *Teddy Ferrara*. Mirza’s one-woman play, *Me, My Mom & Sharmila*, which explores her relationship with her mother through a shared love for Bollywood heroine, Sharmila Tagore, has been performed at universities, conferences, and festivals across the country and toured internationally in Denmark and Pakistan. Mirza has a new short play that will premiere in

The Inconvenience’s “Citizens” festival here in November 2015. She has appeared on television and film, including *Chicago Fire*, *6 Angry Women*, *PhD2*, *Promise Land*, *Jamie and Jessie Are Not Together*, and various web series including her own, *Kam Kardashian*. She has also produced documentaries including the award-winning *Fish Out of Water* and her own documentary, *Reclaiming Pakistan*, about Pakistani activist Muhammad Jibran Nasir. Her first short film, *The Queen of My Dreams*, co-written and co-directed by Ryan Logan, has screened at over 65 festivals worldwide and is included on the *Chicagoland Shorts* DVD collection. For that project, Mirza was just named a “Featured Artist” as part of Chicago Artists Month.

The *3Arts Community Award* is largely funded through crowdsourcing. A third of the prize is provided by 3Arts while the remaining comes from 94 donors throughout Chicagoland.

**Visual Arts:**

**Cheryl Pope, Interdisciplinary Visual Artist, 3Arts/Stan Lipkin & Evelyn Appell Lipkin Awardee**



Cheryl Pope is a visual artist working in sculpture, installation, and performance. Her work questions and responds to issues of identity as it relates to the individual and the community, specifically in regards to race, gender, class, history, power, and place. For the past three years, Pope has been developing *JUST YELL / POETRY as SELF DEFENSE*. Focusing on the physicality and embodiment of language, the politics of listening, and connecting community, the project explores the nuances present in poetry, performance, sculpture, and public experience. Pope received her BFA and MD from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she is now a full-time Professor in the

Fashion Department. She is represented by Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago, Galleria Bianconi in Milan, and Spinello Projects in Miami. Pope studied under the artist Nick Cave for 12 years. She was a teaching artist at the Museum of Contemporary Art for seven years and has worked in multiple community-based organizations throughout Chicago since 2003.

**Fo Wilson, Multidisciplinary Visual Artist, 3Arts/Allstate Awardee**



Fo Wilson is an artist/maker, educator, independent curator, and writer. Her studio work uses constructed space and furniture forms to create experiences that reposition historical objects and/or aesthetics in a contemporary context and offers audiences new ways of thinking about and interacting with history. Wilson earned a MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and is an Associate Professor at Columbia College Chicago. She has been a grant recipient of Creative Time, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Propeller Fund. Her design work is included in the collection of The Cooper Hewitt National Museum of Design. She lectures about art,

design, and craft to international audiences, and her writing and reviews have appeared in *NKA*, *Journal of Contemporary African Art*, the *International Review of African American Art* (IRAAA), and *Communication Arts*. Wilson was the 2013-14 Inaugural Faculty Fellow at the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) and has been awarded residencies or fellowships at ACRE, Haystack Mountain Center for Craft, Purchase College/SUNY Purchase New York, and Anderson Ranch Arts Center. Her solo exhibition, *Eliza’s Peculiar Cabinet of Curiosities*, will open at the Lynden Sculpture Garden in Milwaukee, in 2016, and she is a member of one of five teams selected for a public art commission that will debut next May at the Chicago Park District’s Burnham Wildlife Corridor.

Driven by the belief that the vitality and creative spirit of Chicago is reliant upon a diverse spectrum of artistic voices, 3Arts advocates for women artists, artists of color and artists with disabilities working in the performing (dance, music and theater), teaching and visual arts. For more information on 3Arts, please visit [www.3arts.org](http://www.3arts.org).

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