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## **3Arts awards 20 Chicago artists of color, artists with disabilities, and women in the arts with unrestricted cash grants**

***Annual celebration honors 10 artists with \$25,000 cash grants along with \$1,000 awards given to 10 artists as part of a peer-to-peer giving program, Make A Wave***

CHICAGO, IL (November 5, 2018)—**3Arts**, the Chicago-based nonprofit grantmaking organization, is honored to award 20 Chicago artists with unrestricted grants at the **11<sup>th</sup> annual 3Arts Awards Celebration**, taking place tonight, November 5 at the Museum of Contemporary Art. The celebration will recognize the ten annual 3Arts Awards recipients along with ten recipients of *Make a Wave*—an unprecedented artist-to-artist giving initiative.

The 3Arts Awards celebration honors ten artists with \$25,000 cash grants and ten additional artists with \$1,000 grants as part of the peer-to-peer giving program, *Make A Wave*. 3Arts has distributed more than \$3 million in total funding to more than 600 Chicago artists over the past eleven years and will award \$260,000 tonight alone.

“Championing Chicago artists is a privilege like no other. We are thrilled to present our awardees with opportunities that they profoundly deserve,” said **Esther Grisham Grimm**, Executive Director of 3Arts. “Last year’s launch of *Make a Wave* made it abundantly clear that there is nothing quite as exciting as witnessing artists offering support to other artists by paying it forward and encouraging them to dream big.”

The 2018 recipients of \$25,000 3Arts Awards are: Dancers and dance educators **T. Ayo Alston** and **Anna Martine Whitehead**; musicians **Brittany “BrittanE” Edwards** and **Ben LaMar Gay**; teaching artists **Leida “Lady Sol” Garcia** and **Elgin Bokari T. Smith**; playwright and actor **Sandra Delgado** and costume designer **Christine Pascual**; and visual artists **Dianna Frid** and **Hương Ngô**.

3Arts will additionally celebrate the recipients of *Make a Wave*, a groundbreaking artist-to-artist grant program in which past 3Arts Awards recipients select another ten Chicago artists to receive surprise \$1,000 awards, in effect sending a wave of support through our city’s brilliant creative core. The recipients of this year’s *Make a Wave* grants were selected by 2017 3Arts awardees and will be recognized tonight.

The 2018 *Make a Wave* recipients are: **Nura Aly** (violinist, educator, and dancer); **Silvia Inés Gonzalez** (interdisciplinary artist and educator); **Krystal Grover-Webb** (visual artist and educator); **Jo de Presser**, aka Marlon Billups (DJ); **Joelle Lamarre** (soprano, teacher, and playwright); **Jenna M. Lyle** (experimental musician and performer); **Krystal V. McNeil** (actor); **Gonzalo Escobar Mora** (visual artist and experimental filmmaker); **Carolyn O’Brien** (composer); and **Ana Santos** (actor).

This year’s 3Arts Awards celebration will feature performances by past awardees including wheelchair dancer **Kris Lenzo** and operatic baritone **Will Liverman**. The event is led by co-chairs Erryn Cobb (3Arts Board of Directors and CEO of Fetch Integrated Marketing Communications), Remberto Del Real (3Arts Board of

Directors and Managing Director of Personal and Business Banking Marketing for BMO Harris Bank), and Jess Godwin (singer/songwriter and 2016 3Arts Award recipient).

The recipients of the 2018 3Arts Awards are:

### Dance:



#### **T. Ayo Alston, 3Arts/Southwest Airlines Awardee**

T. Ayo Alston teaches and practices a signature theatrical style of West African drum and dance culture that captures the strength and power of women and community building. Raised in a family of highly-skilled artists and musicians, Ayo served as Dance Captain for Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago for 11 years. In 2009 she founded Ayodele Drum and Dance, a performance training organization created for women to affirm their self-confidence and strength. She has imparted her knowledge of traditional and contemporary African and African diasporic dance and music with groups across the country. In the last two years, she has been focused on fine-tuning and sharing her

ability to compose music on African instruments—such as the kalimba—resulting in her accepting a role as a lead actress and musical composer for *Mies Julie* at Victory Gardens Theater and as a composer and musician for *The Lion King Jr.* production at Brooklyn Academy of Music. Ayo teaches at Columbia College Chicago and Chicago High School for the Arts.



#### **Anna Martine Whitehead, 3Arts/O'Neill & Williams Family Awardee**

Anna Martine Whitehead is a dancer, teacher, and writer who makes performances. Her work has been presented at local venues including the Chicago Cultural Center; AUNTS in New York City; CounterPulse and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco; the Hemispheric Institute for Performance and Politics, Pieter Performance Space, and Watts Towers Art Center in Los Angeles; and the San José Museum of Art. She received a Master of Fine Arts in Social Practice from California College of the Arts and writes about race, gender, and performance. Her work has been supported by Chances Dances, Chicago Dancemakers Forum, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and

Special Events, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Headlands, High Concept Labs, Links Hall, and Pivot Arts, among others. Martine teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and with Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project. She is the author of *TREASURE | My Black Rupture* (Thread Makes Blanket, 2016).

### Music:



#### **Brittany “BrittanE” Edwards, 3Arts/The SIF Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation Awardee in honor of Samuel G. Roberson Jr.**

Born and raised in Chicago, Brittany (“BrittanE”) Edwards is an artist, producer, and songwriter. Growing up with many musical influences, she drew inspiration from her mother as well as other artists, producers, and songwriters. Her goal as an artist was and still is to influence and shape generations with music that makes people feel good for the right reasons. She refers to her music as true “soul music” because her focus is not on herself, but on her supporters. In her own words, “I don’t make music for money or because I want to be rich, and I don’t do it for attention or fame. I see the world, and

especially my generation, having a hard time getting a grasp on life and what it’s really about. I want to see the world and future generations be better, so I make music that will set people free, comfort them through hard periods in their lives, but most importantly, encourage the development of a quality people.”



#### **Ben LaMar Gay, 3Arts/Stan Lipkin & Evelyn Appell Lipkin Awardee**

Ben LaMar Gay is a composer and cornetist who moves sound, color, and space through folkloric filters to produce electro-acoustic collages. His unification of various styles is in service of the narrative and never solely a display of technique. A Chicago native, Ben’s true technique is giving life to an idea while exploring and expanding on the term “Americana.” By being active in Chicago’s experimental music scene and having spent a three-year residency in Brazil, he has collaborated with several influential figures in the world of music, including Joshua Abrams, Black Monks of Mississippi, Celso Fonseca, George Lewis, Nicole Mitchell, Jeff Parker, Theo Parrish, Mike Reed,

Tomeka Reid, and Itibere Zwarg. With the release of his debut album, *Downtown Castles Can Never Block the Sun* (International Anthem, 2018) and multiple commissions, Ben is establishing his unique place and voice in

the creative ecosystem. Embracing international vision while remaining true to his roots, he aligns his creative output with the honest notion that he only knows how to be a man from the South Side of Chicago.

## Teaching Arts:



### **Leida "Lady Sol" Garcia, 3Arts/RH, Restoration Hardware Awardee**

Leida "Lady Sol" Garcia is a proud Mexican-American street dance professional, mother, wife, and Chicago native who is globally recognized as a teaching artist, creative director, and manager. She is a teaching artist with Urban Gateways and a self-proclaimed Professor of Practice who has taught fusions of Afro-Caribbean movement workshops at Columbia College Chicago, Northwestern University, Stanford University, and University of Chicago. She is a co-founder of Kuumba Lynx and responsible for bringing Chicago's Footwork/Juke culture to global stages via King Charles and the FootworkKINGz. She has trained dancers for mega-stars, including Busta Rhymes,

Madonna, and Wyclef Jean. In 2015, she partnered with Jessica "Phoenix" Brundidge and co-founded FIYAH Fit USA, an Afro-Caribbean music and dance fitness experience that celebrates women. Her newest work, *Lady Sol's Dance Diary*, is an autobiographical "dance-dramedy" solo show in which she humorously explores music industry politics, cross-cultural identity, and the growing pains of uncovering self-love. Her immense gratitude is endowed to her beloved mother Maria Garcia and her lifelong mentor Cheryl "Efe" McWorter whose guidance has bestowed Leida with important wisdom and purpose.



### **Elgin Bokari T. Smith, 3Arts/Denise & Gary Gardner Awardee**

Elgin Bokari T. Smith (aka Kari the Illustrator) is an artist, social activist, and educator. In 2009, he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Illustration and Sculpture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and subsequently worked as an assistant for Chicago artist Theaster Gates. Elgin has collaborated with Jane Addams Hull-House Museum and Northwestern University School of Law on projects around juvenile justice, including producing the zine, *Youth Stories*, and creating illustrations for *Your Guide to the Juvenile Justice System*. He has worked as a teaching artist for several organizations including Changing Worlds, Columbia College Chicago, Gary Comer

Youth Center, and Kuumba Lynx. Elgin is currently Program Director of Free Write Arts & Literacy and President of the activist and artist collective, Elephant Rebellion. He is also the co-creator of "Pocket Con," an annual comic book convention that celebrates characters of color.

## Theater:



### **Sandra Delgado, 3Arts Community Awardee**

Sandra Delgado is a writer, actor, and producer born and raised in Chicago. Her first full-length play, *La Havana Madrid*, was developed as part of Goodman Theatre's Playwrights Unit and produced by Teatro Vista. It played to sold-out houses at both Goodman and Steppenwolf Theatre Company, received recognition as one of the best plays of 2017, and was nominated for an award by the Alliance of Latinx Theater Artists (ALTA). Recent acting credits include roles in *Oedipus El Rey* at The Public Theater, *2666* at Goodman, *Motherf\*\*ker with the Hat* at Steppenwolf, and *Mojada* at Victory Gardens Theater. She is a founding member of Collaboration, ensemble member of

Teatro Vista, resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists, and on the Advisory Committee of the Latinx Theatre Commons. Sandra is one of twenty Chicago women honored in Kerry James Marshall's public mural *RUSH MORE* on the facade of the Chicago Cultural Center. Her new play, *Hundreds and Hundreds of Stars* (formerly *Felons and Families*), will be part of Goodman's New Stages Festival this Fall. She will be starring in *La Ruta* at Steppenwolf this winter.



### **Christine Pascual, 3Arts/Lakeside Bank Awardee**

Christine Pascual is a costume designer based in Chicago since 1994. She graduated from SUNY at Stony Brook with a Bachelor of Arts degree and earned a Master of Fine Arts in costume design from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She began her career with daring, innovative storefront theaters, including Defiant and Onyx. Since then she has been working with storefront, mid-size, and large theaters. Recent productions in Chicago include: *The Displaced* at Haven Theatre; *Fade* at Victory Gardens Theater; *East Texas Hot Links* at Writers Theatre; *The Light Fantastic* at Jackalope Theatre; *Traitor* at A Red Orchid Theatre; *Simpatico* at McCarter Theatre

Center (Princeton, NJ); and *The Royale* at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. In 2010 she was a nominee for a Hewes Design Award for *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* at Victory Gardens. Christine is passionate about new theatrical works that deal with real-life human experiences and the human condition.

### **Visual Arts:**



#### **Dianna Frid, 3Arts/Chandler Family Awardee**

Dianna Frid is an artist working at the intersections of material, text, and textile. She makes artist books, drawings, and sculptures. Her works are both corporeal and philosophical reflections on the ways in which materials—physical and lexical—produce aesthetic and contemplative experiences that shape our sense of reality. In her work, embroidery is a prominent vehicle for exploring the relationships between writing and drawing, and between transcription, composition, and ineffability. Either explicitly or in nuance, Dianna engages themes of time, process, death, and the transformation of matter. Born in Mexico City, Dianna spent part of her childhood there and then in

Vancouver, Canada, where her family immigrated in the 1980s. Dianna has lived in the United States since 1999. She teaches in the College of Architecture, Design and the Arts at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she is Associate Professor.



#### **Hương Ngô, 3Arts/Reva & David Logan Foundation Awardee**

Hương Ngô (Huong Ngo) is an interdisciplinary artist whose conceptual practice translates invisible histories into material form. Having grown up as a Vietnamese refugee in the American South, she creates work that reframes the hybrid, the imperfect, and the non-fluent as sites of survival and knowledge. Hương is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a former studio fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program. Her work, which has been described as “deftly and defiantly decolonial” by *New City* and “what intersectional feminist art looks like” by the *Chicago Tribune*, has been exhibited locally at the DePaul

Art Museum and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, as well as the Museum of Modern Art, New Museum, The Kitchen, and Queens Museum (New York City), Para Site (Hong Kong), and Nhà Sàn Collective (Hanoi), among others. She is Assistant Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

### **About 3Arts**

3Arts is a nonprofit organization that advocates for Chicago’s women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities who work in the performing, teaching, and visual arts. By providing cash awards, project funding, residency fellowships, professional development, and promotion, 3Arts helps artists take risks, experiment, and build momentum in their careers.

3Arts extends a special thanks to its 2018 Award Partners: The Chandler Family; Denise & Gary Gardner; Lakeside Bank; Stan Lipkin & Evelyn Appell Lipkin; O’Neill & Williams Family; The Reva & David Logan Foundation; RH, Restoration Hardware; The SIF Fund at the Chicago Community Foundation (in honor of Samuel G. Roberson Jr.); Southwest Airlines; and donors to the 2018 3Arts Community Award. One of the ten 3Arts Awards, designated as the **3Arts Community Award**, is named in honor of the Chicago community. Earlier this spring the award was supported by 112 donors who contributed to a board-led crowdfunding campaign that also included a one-third match from 3Arts. This year’s 3Arts Community Award recipient is **Sandra Delgado**, a playwright and actor well-known in Chicago and deeply committed to creating spaces in local and national theater for Latinx artists and stories.

3Arts also gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following: *Make a Wave* Partner: the Siragusa Family Foundation; Presenting Sponsors: Allstate and BMO Harris Bank; Lead Sponsors: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Kimpton Gray Hotel, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, Perkins Coie LLP, and Wolfgang Puck Catering; Corporate Friends: Comcast, Northern Trust, and William Blair; and After-Party Sponsor: Fetch Integrated Marketing Communications.

For more information about 3Arts, please visit [www.3arts.org](http://www.3arts.org).

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