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Artistic collaboratives among 2020 Individual Artist Awardees

Anchorage, AK – Rasmuson Foundation has named 36 Individual Artist Award recipients for 2020 including, for the first time, four collaborations. The Foundation today is announcing ten $18,000 Fellowships and 25 Project Awards of $7,500. Recipients were selected from a pool of 289 applicants by a panel of Lower 48 artists and creative community leaders.

The Foundation announced its 2020 Distinguished Artist, carver Wayne Price of Haines, in March. He is being honored with a $40,000 award for a lifetime of creative excellence.

With this round of awards, Rasmuson Foundation solicited proposals from artists who work collaboratively to recognize and give opportunity to more channels of creativity. The four group awardees include one Fellowship and three Project Awards.

Fellowships are awarded to mid-career and mature artists ready for a year of focused creative development. Sculptor Sarah Davies, clay artist Edwin Mighell and filmmaker Joshua Albeza Branstetter will collaborate with survivors of abuse on a site-specific installation of sonic sculptural monuments in Western Alaska. Rachelle Branstetter is managing the project. The artists are calling their project Absolute Zero, explains Joshua Branstetter, “because we aspire to build communities with zero abuse. Art is one of the best ways that we can take account of our past to heal and build a better future.”

Folk musician Emma Hill traveled this winter through more than 30 national parks, hiking and biking, climbing and camping, writing and recording melodies, poetry and potential lyrics. She plans to focus those experiences into a cohesive work, “Park Songs,” with music, poetry and images that immerse audiences in the power of natural spaces and underscore their importance in our culture.

Project Awards support artists at all career stages for specific, short-term works. Among the group awardees, illustrator Natasha Zahn Pristas and writer Sara Loewen will explore the Kodiak Archipelago, integrating writing and art to capture and communicate the circular nature of life on an island. Tent City Press, an Anchorage printmakers’
collective led by Bryce Nicolasa Fredrick and Levi Werner, will make investments to expand self-publishing capacity, which will allow them to provide studio access to a wider community of creatives.

Other Project Award recipients include Sarah Campen, whose choreography employs an Alaska-specific movement vocabulary. She will create a multi-media dance performance documenting the physical language of salmon processing, integrating interviews with commercial fishers. “Cutting Fish,” the working title, will build from a documentary base of cleaning and processing fish and incorporate elements of contemporary dance.

Sean Northover creates music as a means of connecting diverse people. He will produce an album as a love letter to those nearest to his heart, driven by hip-hop, R&B, jazz, soul, reggae, pop and folk influences. He hopes “to spread love by showing people who look like me (and those who don’t) what we are all capable of.” His art reflects his Jamaican American roots.

Photographer Sarah Manriquez will confront stereotypes about people who experience homelessness through images that tell stories about shared human struggles. Corinna Cook is working on a book-length collection of lyric essays built around research into the art, changing ecology and history of Southeast Alaska and the Canadian Yukon.

Snapshots of all 36 artists and their projects accompany this release and are available on the Foundation’s 2020 IAA webpage. Learn more about Wayne Price on the Distinguished Artist web feature. Photos, videos and audio files are available here or on request.

Rasmuson Foundation has recognized exceptional Alaska artists with individual grant awards since 2004. The program has made a total of 552 grants: 391 Project Awards, 144 Fellowships and 17 Distinguished Artist awards totaling almost $5.2 million.

With today’s awards, Rasmuson Foundation reaffirms its commitment to the arts and their importance to the fabric of society itself.

“We are so proud to honor this year’s awardees for their remarkable creativity, talent and vision. These artists show us new ways of seeing and help us understand the complexities and challenges of our world,” says Diane Kaplan, Foundation president and CEO. “They are fearless and open our eyes to the beauty that surrounds us still.”
About the Foundation
Through grantmaking and initiatives, Rasmuson Foundation aims to promote a better life for all Alaskans. Main funding areas are housing, homelessness, education, health care, the arts and organizational and community development. The Foundation was created in 1955 by Jenny Rasmuson to honor her late husband, E.A. Rasmuson.