

Iowa Artist Fellowship



ABOVE: Gabi Torres, Iowa Artist Fellow 2023-24

The Iowa Artist Fellowship, a program of the Iowa Arts Council, recognizes and supports the careers of Iowa-based artists who demonstrate exceptional creativity in the arts and the capacity to contribute to the state's artistic vitality.

Launched in 2014, a total of 60 Iowa artists have participated in the program to date.

2025-2026 Fellows



Eloy Barragán is an internationally acclaimed ballet instructor, choreographer, and filmmaker. Originally from Mexico City, Eloy is an Associate Professor of Dance at the University of Iowa where he's been teaching since 2005.

Barragán's career includes performing as a soloist with Compañía Nacional de Danza, Ballet Royal de Wallonie, and Ballet Idaho, where he also served as ballet master. Celebrated for his innovative blend of traditional ballet with contemporary concepts, his choreography has been featured at the Bolshoi Theatre and Finnish National Opera, and he's created works for companies such as the National Ballet of Mexico and Richmond Ballet. An esteemed educator, Barragán has taught worldwide, including at Beijing Dance Academy and Conservatoire de Paris.

Barragán founded and directs the International ScreenDance Festival and E-DANZA, a non-profit expanding inclusivity in the arts. He also serves as the director of the Iowa Dance Festival. His visionary approach continues to inspire dancers and choreographers globally.



Nicholas Cladis is an artist working in Iowa City, IA. He has taught at the University of Iowa and Fukui Prefectural University (Japan) and has been a visiting artist at several other universities, non-profits, and craft schools worldwide. Nicholas' work incorporates site-responsive / experimental installation, community engagement, and an attention to — and appreciation of — craft in a contemporary fine arts context. To Nicholas, the empowering, uplifting, and transformational act of making paper by hand generates essential connective points to history (time), community (people), and ecology (place).

A former Japan Foundation Fellow and resident of Japan, Nicholas maintains an active relationship with the Echizen papermaking community in Fukui Prefecture. This relationship has inspired an array of cross-cultural arts exchanges, exhibitions, and workshops.

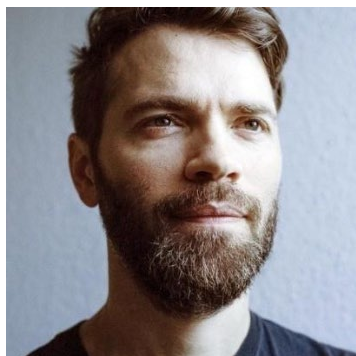


Kelly Devitt, of Creston, is a ceramic artist who primarily creates sculptures depicting emotions physically expressed through the human body. Raised in central Iowa, she received her BFA in Integrated Studio Arts from Iowa State University in 2017 and her MFA in Ceramics from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth in 2022. Kelly is currently an Instructor of Art at Southwestern Community College.



Susan Metrican, of Fairfield, is currently Assistant Professor and Wege Gallery Director at Maharishi International University. Her work takes cues from various histories surrounding the artists and objects within the decorative and applied arts of the late 19th and early 20th century, particularly objects that convey an exchange of aesthetic ideas between nations and time periods. In her paintings, she manipulates canvas through sewing, gathering, and folding, often borrowing techniques from clothing construction or furniture upholstery. The transformed canvas works in tandem with the imagery, allowing a third form of meaning or language to occur.

Metrican received an MFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and her BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute. She has attended residencies at Interlude and Shandaken: Storm King in NY, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. Her work has been exhibited in group and solo exhibitions nationally, most recently Concord Art Center (MA), Hodges Taylor (NC), Framingham State University (MA), Headstone Gallery (NY), The Hole (NY), LaiSun Keane (MA), and Rivalry Projects (NY). Her work has been featured in *ART MAZE Mag*, *Cream City Review*, and *Peripheries Journal*.



Jason Snell emerged from the 1990s rave scene in Cedar Rapids and has spent three decades as an electronic music producer, daily meditator, and computer programmer. He combines these disciplines to create sound performances using brainwave and heartbeat sensors, exploring themes of vulnerability, entrainment, and synchrony. His central work involves biofeedback soundscapes designed to guide the brain into creative, subconscious states of mind.

His work has been presented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Hirshhorn, festivals and galleries in Berlin, Dubai, and Shanghai, and at universities including MIT, NYU, Brown, Imperial College London, the University of Europe in Berlin, and the University of Iowa. His projects have been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Iowa Arts Council, Iowa City Public Arts, and the Iowa City Downtown District.

2024-2025 Fellows



Ali Hval is a multidisciplinary artist based in Iowa City. Hval is currently an Assistant Professor of Instruction in Painting and Drawing at the University of Iowa. Her work challenges traditional expectations of femininity and sheds light on issues of women's bodily autonomy. An avid public artist, Ali has also completed over 40 public murals and projects in various Iowa communities. Hval has exhibited her work across the country and had mentions in *New York Jewelry Week*, *Create! Magazine*, and *The New Yorker*. She is a former recipient of the Windgate Fellowship from the Center of Craft, Creativity, and Design.



Jillian Moore is a full-time artist, writer and workshop instructor based in rural Cedar County, Iowa. Moore was also co-founder and Director of the CRANDIC-based intersectional feminist art collective known as Bluestockings for 8 years. Moore works primarily in the field of contemporary jewelry and small sculpture and is most notable for her use of resins to build lush, colorful surfaces. Her work has been exhibited during Munich Jewelry Week, New York Jewelry Week, JOYA Barcelona, and SIERAAD Art Fair in Amsterdam. She has pieces in the permanent collection of both the Racine Art Museum of Racine, WI and the Mint Museum of Charlotte, NC.



Vi Khi Nao was born in Long Khanh, Vietnam, and immigrated to the United States at a young age. Her work includes poetry, fiction, film, and cross-genre collaboration, and has been featured in periodicals such as *Conjunctions*, *the Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Chicago Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *the Baffler*, and *McSweeney's*, and in *The Best American Nonrequired Reading* anthology. A former Black Mountain Institute fellow, she lives in Iowa City.

photo credit: Scott Indermaur



Rachel Morgan, of Cedar Falls, Iowa, is the author of the chapbook, *Honey & Blood, Blood & Honey* (Final Thursday Press, 2017). Her work appears in several anthologies, most recently, *Let Me Say This: A Dolly Parton Poetry Anthology* and *Prairie Schooner, the Journal of the American Medical Association*, and *Shenandoah*. She is the winner of the 2020 Fineline contest and the 2023 Language of the Land Fellowship. Her writing has been supported by a fellowship while at the Iowa Writer's Workshop, where she earned her M.F.A. in poetry, and from the Writer's Colony at Dairy Hollow. She is an associate professor of instruction at the University of Northern Iowa, and she edits for America's oldest Literary Magazine, the *North American Review*.

Photo credit: Henry Morgan



Jill Wells is an Iowa-based interdisciplinary artist, advocate, and mentor renowned for her innovative, narrative-driven, and multi-sensory approach to art. A native of Indianola, Iowa, Wells earned her B.F.A. from Drake University. Her work, which delves into critical themes of accessibility, disability inequality, race, and history, is distinguished by its use of tactile and Braille-infused public art. This unique approach not only enhances access to art for people of all abilities but also enlightens us about the power of inclusive art, setting her apart in the art world. In 2023, Wells achieved a significant milestone by creating Iowa's first 3D tactile mural and mural model plaque for Martin Luther King Elementary School. As the inaugural artist and fellow of color at The Harkin Institute (2022–23), Wells had the honor of representing the United States and Iowa on a panel at the United Nations in Austria.

photo Credit: Anjana Olson

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2023-2024 Fellows



Antonio Chalmers (aka Tone Da Boss), of Cedar Rapids, is a hop-hop artist and music producer. Tone has recorded numerous hip hop albums and songs over the last 20 years related to his life and artistic vision to paint a picture of the Black experience for audiences. Tone's music has been featured by several professional sports franchises and leagues, including the Chicago Sky (WNBA), the Golden State Warriors (NBA) and the Kansas City Chiefs (NFL), which played his song, "Victory Lap", on the way to their 2023 Super Bowl victory. Through his production company, T1 Entertainment, Tone has also helped more than 100 artists record and release their music, find support, and perform at venues across Iowa. As part of hip hop group Big Bang, he has collaborated with multi-platinum artists and released more than 20 videos, 10 albums, and a feature length documentary.



Lori King, of Drakesville, Iowa, offers rich cultural bluegrass and country music experiences to bring people together. For the last 25 years, Lori has managed, led and performed with several bands including Bluegrass Addiction and Lori King & Junction 63, which was selected to perform at the 2023 International Bluegrass Music Association's World of Bluegrass event. As a full-time concert and recording musician, Lori also leads the Midnight Blue Country Band and the venerable Joe and Lori King Duo. King founded the Bluegrass Music Association of Iowa (BMAI) to increase community awareness of bluegrass music across the state. For these efforts, she has been named Midwest Bluegrass Promoter of the Year four times by the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America.



Nina Lohman, of Iowa City, is the author of *The Body Alone* (University of Iowa Press, 2024), a lyrical nonfiction inquiry into the experience, meaning, and articulation of pain. Originally from California, she is the founder and publisher of *Brink*, a nonprofit, in-print literary journal that champions hybrid work. Lohman also serves as the Literary Programming Director for the Mission Creek Festival, an annual immersive music and literature festival honoring independent expression. A graduate of Fuller, she is currently working on a collection of micro-essays on the subject of release. A 2023 Iowa Artist Fellow, her writing has been supported by The Vermont Studio Center, The Sewanee Writers Conference, and The Iowa Arts Council.



Gabriella (Gabi) Torres, of Clinton, is an abstract painter and creative place-maker living and painting in her hometown of Clinton, Iowa. She specializes in creating community-based art that promotes social experiences in underutilized and under-loved community spaces. Torres has completed two public art exhibits in Clinton; WILD, which was presented at the Sawmill Museum, and The Grove, an outdoor public and interactive art exhibit in a neglected Downtown Clinton pocket park that is now a permanent outdoor gallery. She and her partner, artist Chris Shannon, are the creators of the Paint it Back Street Art Festival, in which nine local and national artists transformed an old garage into a giant work of public art.

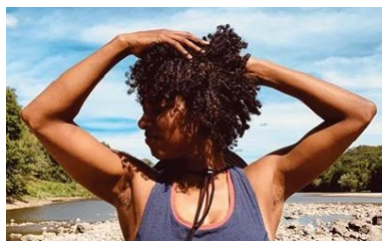


James Tutson, of Iowa City, is a singer-songwriter steadily becoming one of the most well-known musicians in the area due to his unique style combining southern soul and rhythm & blues. James was featured on season 20 of NBC's *The Voice* and has performed with many incredible artists, including Lake Street Dive, The Dip, Marc Broussard, Joanna Connor, Jordy Searcy and more. Tutson leads the Iowa City Songwriters Collective and serves local youth through the non-profit, Neighbors, which he started along with his wife. His fifth studio album, *Still*, was released in May of 2021 to positive reviews. His sixth studio album, *Happy*, released in the fall of 2022, is available on all platforms.

2022-2023 Fellows



Jennifer Colville of Iowa City is the publisher of *PromptPress*, a book arts journal, and the director of PorchLight, a community centered literary arts salon in Iowa City. Colville is the author of a 2017 collection of short stories called *Elegies for Uncanny Girls*. She holds an M.F.A from Syracuse University and a Ph.D. in literature and creative writing from the University of Utah. Her work, whether teaching, speaking or writing, explores the disruption of masculine modes of storytelling through visual art and inventive feminist forms.



T.J. Dedeaux-Norris of Iowa City is a mixed-media artist who employs painting, fiber, performance, video and music to examine how racial, gender and class socialization affects the body. Dedeaux-Norris is an associate professor of painting and drawing at the University of Iowa and holds a B.A. from the University of California at Los Angeles and an M.F.A. from Yale University. Their work has been presented at notable venues worldwide, including the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Mission Creek Festival, Nasher Museum of Art, Performa, Prospect New Orleans, Rotterdam Film Festival, Studio Museum in Harlem, Sundance Film Festival and Walker Art Center. Dedeaux-Norris received a 2019-2020 grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and has participated in numerous artist residencies across the U.S.



Tim Olson, of Dubuque, studied art at the University of Iowa and made his living for 20 years as a technician in photography studios in Los Angeles and Chicago. He moved back to Iowa with his family in 2002 and started a series of paintings and drawings that explore the parking lots and industrial no-man's-land around Dubuque and other Iowa communities. Over the past decade, he completed several community-engagement projects that used large-format photography to connect history to modern life, including the Dubuque-based project "A City at Work: 1912-2012," which received a 2013 Loren Horton Award from the State Historical Society of Iowa. Similarly, his latest work uses painting to connect art history to familiar Midwestern subjects.



David James "DJ" Savarese, of Iowa City, is an artist, activist, public scholar, multigenre writer and teacher. He is the author of *A Doorknob for the Eye* (2017), the co-author of *Studies in Brotherly Love* (2021) and has contributed poems to *The Art of Autism*, *Bellingham Review*, *Nine Mile Magazine*, *Prospect*, *The Red Wheelbarrow*, *Seneca Review*, *Split the Rock*, *Stone Canoe* and *wordgatherings*, along with nonfiction writing in *Er(r)go*, *LOGIC Magazine: Beacons* and *Unearthing the Concepts That Bury Us*, a forthcoming anthology on disability and dialogue. Savarese teaches inclusive, multigenerational poetry-writing classes, presents nationally and internationally on a range of topics and directs the Lives-in-Progress Collective at the Alliance for Citizen Directed Supports. He also co-produced a Peabody Award-winning documentary called *Deej: Inclusion Shouldn't Be a Lottery* (2017), which is set in Iowa.

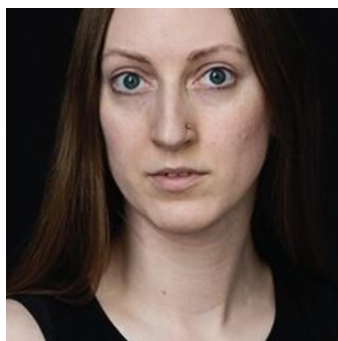


Joe Tuggle Lacina, of Grinnell, is an artist, builder and designer. He holds a B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute College of Art and an M.F.A. in dimensional practice from the University of Iowa. He works at Grinnell College as the studio art technical assistant and is currently involved in projects, programming and renovations at the Grinnell Area Arts Council. He is also renovating and developing Cupola Gallery, a contemporary art gallery and performance space in Grinnell, and maintains an active studio practice of his own, creating paintings, sculptures, structures and new media.

2021-2022 Fellows



Paul Brooke, of Des Moines, is a professor at Grand View University, where he teaches Creative Writing and Literary Theory. He is the author of six books including *Light and Matter*. Originally from Minden, Iowa, Brooke combines his love of photography, nature and poetry together in stirring ways.



Brittany Brooke Crow, of Des Moines, uses image-making to confront her fear of vulnerability. Her work explores intimacy, ways of seeing, and the expansive possibilities of photo-based art. She considers the performative action necessary to create an image an inherent part of the content of her work. In 2020, Crow turned the camera toward herself to investigate what happens to our understanding of the representation of the nude body when the artist and model are one and the same. With support from a project grant, the culminating installation *Exhibition(ist)* questioned what it meant to see and be seen. Crow received a BFA in studio art and a BA in art history from the University of Northern Iowa in 2013.



Louise Kames, of Dubuque, holds an MFA degree in drawing and printmaking from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a professor of art at Clarke University where she chairs the Art + Design Program. Her drawings, print, and installation-based work are exhibited widely including solo exhibitions across Iowa and the Midwest region. She is a regular participant in regional, national and international juried exhibitions. Kames enjoys the creative and cultural exchange offered at artist residencies, including Schloss Plüschow, Mecklenburg, Germany; Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee, Belgium; The Tyrone Guthrie Centre, County Monaghan, Ireland; Banff Centre for the Arts, Alberta, Canada; Ragdale Foundation, Lake Forest, IL; Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus in Schwandorf, Germany; Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Sweet Briar, VA; and Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT.



Emma Murray, of Des Moines, is a writer whose works of poetry/creative nonfiction can be found in or are forthcoming from *Entropy*, *Bennington Review*, *wig-wag*, *The New Territory* and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from Oklahoma State University and was a 2016 Academy of American Poets Prize recipient. When she's not writing, she's either helping run an arts + community collective out of her home, ILK HAUS; teaching Iowa State University STEM students how to harness the power of storytelling; poring over the back catalogs of all things music; or generally slapping hands away from her turntable, streaming playlists and radio dial.



Francesca Soans, of Cedar Falls, is an award-winning filmmaker and Associate Professor of Digital Media at the University of Northern Iowa. Her films and videos, exploring place, memory, and identity, have screened worldwide at competitive film festivals, art galleries, and conferences and been broadcast on public and cable television channels. Her film *Notes Towards a History* received the Directors' Citation from the prestigious Black Maria Film and Video Festival. Her fiction film *Rebirth* received awards from the Iowa Motion Picture Association and was nominated for Best Iowa Film by the Wild Rose Independent Film Festival. Her pioneering documentary *Sons of Jacob Synagogue*, co-directed with historian Robert Neymeyer received numerous awards, including the Loren Horton Community History Award from the State Historical Society of Iowa and a Silver Remi from Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival. She has received several major grants from the Iowa Arts Council, Humanities Iowa, the Guernsey Foundation, and the Broadcast Education Association.

2020-2021 Fellows



Tiberiu Chelcea, of Ames, takes elements and processes of traditional art disciplines, such as printmaking and drawing, and combines them with parts and operations of digital technologies. His work demonstrates unexpected correlations between old and new technologies, and issues of consumption, serial design, automated vs labor-intensive processes, are brought to the fore. His works have been exhibited throughout the United States (New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Iowa and other states) as well as Mexico, Egypt and Brazil, and has received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant in addition to several Iowa Arts Council project grants. Mr. Chelcea was born in Romania and came to the United States to pursue a PhD in Computer Science. He has received several awards, fellowships, and patents in the field of electronic and digital design, which continues to be a major source of inspiration for his art.



Garth Greenwell, of Iowa City, is the author of *What Belongs to You*, which won the British Book Award for Debut of the Year, was longlisted for the National Book Award, and was a finalist for several other awards, including the PEN/Faulkner Award, the LA Times Book Prize, and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. It was named a Best Book of 2016 by over 50 publications in nine countries and is being translated into over a dozen languages. His new book of fiction, *Cleanness*, was published in January 2020. A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice, it has been named a Best Book of 2020 So Far by *Time*, the *BBC*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Esquire*, and was recently longlisted for the UK's Gordon Burn Prize. A 2020 Guggenheim Fellow, he lives in Iowa City.



Catherine Reinhart, of Ames, is an interdisciplinary artist who makes fiber art, works on paper, and conducts socially engaged projects with abandoned textiles. These works center on the themes of domestic labor, connection, and care. As artist and mother, Catherine is both archivist and field hand, creating studies in the accretion of domestic life and cataloging its labors. Caregiving girds up our society and is based largely on the undervalued labor of women. Tending to one's family and community is built on consistent, repetitive actions which provide comfort, ease suffering, and connect us with our fellow man. Mending and stitching by hand parallel

these tending actions. Through their use, I communicate the transformative power of caregiving.



Levi Robb, of Des Moines, is an artist and architect whose work explores the entanglement of person and context — time and atmosphere. With a focus on the formal objectivity of place, the work is influenced by human interface with environment, landscape, and artifact. Human relationships with site-based artifacts, and the interrelationship between the material and immaterial, are often common underlying themes throughout his work. Through the analysis, manipulation and reinterpretation of latent items and specific spatial conditions, the work takes on a continual timeline with an inherent connection to the past. Acts of drawing, printmaking, sculpture and installation become tools for Robb to reassign aesthetic value to detritus and discarded material. This process yields a unique body of formal objects that reflect material culture and concretize the idea of contemporary relics.



Olivia Valentine, of Ames, is an interdisciplinary visual artist working in textile construction, drawing, and photography, and in collaborations with composers, architects, and designers. Olivia received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She is the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship for Installation Art in Turkey (2012-13), The Founding President's Award from the Textile Society of America (2014), and the Brandford/Elliott Award for Excellence in Fiber Arts (2012). Recent exhibitions include Museum of Arts and Design (New York) Pasajist (Istanbul), the American Academy in Rome (Italy), Page Bond Gallery (Richmond, VA), the Rijswijk Museum (The Netherlands), Maquis Projects (Izmir, Turkey) and Arlington Arts Center (Arlington, VA). She is an Assistant Professor of Art and Visual Culture at Iowa State University.

2019-2020 Fellows



Angela Altenhofen, of Chariton, is a sculptor, performance artist, costume designer and illustrator. She earned her BFA from the University of Northern Iowa, and MFA in Sculpture and Ceramics from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Altenhofen has exhibited her art nationally and internationally, including at art galleries and museums in Tel Aviv, Vienna, Florence, Italy and Chicago. Immediately after graduate school, Ange was diagnosed with presumed ocular histoplasmosis, a degenerative eye condition that could eventually lead to blindness. As a visual artist this forced her to rethink her creative practice, and she began researching how blind people experience art and process visual information. This resulted in *The Braille Series*, an ongoing body of tactile work.



Scott Bradley, of West Branch, is an Iowa-born writer, performer and stage director whose work has been seen across the United States. His musical *We Three Lizas* (book/lyrics) premiered with About Face Theatre and enjoyed multiple productions nationally. As co-founder of The Scooty & JoJo Show, he wrote books for, directed and performed in Chicago's long-running musicals *Alien Queen* and *Carpenters Halloween*, as well as the musicals *Mollywood*, *Tran: The Atari Musical*, and regular cabaret engagements. Since his return to Iowa in 2015, Bradley was awarded a year-long residency at Scattergood Friends School, received his MFA from the Iowa Playwrights Workshop, contributed writing to *Hot Tamale Louie*, and his documentary drama *The Wood Problem* was featured at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art and the American Gothic House.



Matthew Kluber, of Grinnell, is a visual artist working in the intersection of painting and digital technology. He received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA from the University of Iowa. Kluber has exhibited his paintings/projections, films and drawings at galleries and museums, including the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai, China; FOCUS09/Art Basel, Switzerland; The Painting Center, New York; Orange Door, Chicago; and Art Basel Miami. His work is in the collection of the Austin Museum of Art, Portland Museum of Art, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Des Moines Art Center, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Estée Lauder International Inc., and the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation. He resides in Cedar Rapids and is currently a Professor and Chair of the Art Department at Grinnell College.



Rachel Merrill, of Des Moines, is an interdisciplinary artist exploring themes of spectacle, American sports and competition. Merrill received a BS from the University of Northwestern in St. Paul, MN, and earned her MFA at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI. She has exhibited her work nationally and is active in her local art community, sharing a passion for art and education within the central Iowa area. She currently works as an Associate Professor of Art at Grand View University in Des Moines, teaching all levels of students in drawing, design, sculpture, art history and critical thinking.



Amenda Tate, of West Des Moines, is an interdisciplinary artist with a background in fine art and metalsmithing. Her work utilizes scientific and aesthetic processes to address identity, individuality, longevity and the culture of social interaction in our digital era. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions across the US, and in various media outlets including the *Denver Post*, *Art Jewelry Today 2*, the *Des Moines Register*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *dsm Magazine* and *Popular Science*. Tate has worked as an Artist-In-Residence with the New York Mills Regional Cultural Center and Ballet Des Moines. Special honors include a permanent collection commission by Arrow Electronics in conjunction with Cherry Arts and the Colorado Ballet, two Editor's Choice Awards at the New York International Maker Faire, and a special recognition award in the 2017 International RobotArt competition.

2018-2019 Fellows



Noah Doely, of Cedar Falls, works across various media, primarily in photography, sculpture and video. He received a BFA from the University of Northern Iowa and an MFA from the University of California, San Diego. He has exhibited nationally and internationally in venues such as Steve Turner Contemporary (Los Angeles), The San Diego Museum of Art, Locust Projects (Miami), The Cornell Fine Arts Museum (Winter Park), Viafarini (Milan, Italy), Seattle Center on Contemporary Art, and the Des Moines Art Center. Doely has been awarded fellowships and residencies at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, The MacDowell Colony, The Penumbra Foundation, The Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences, and the Virginia Center for Creative Arts. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Photography at the University of Northern Iowa.



Julia Franklin, of West Des Moines, uses art to tell the stories of what we leave behind. She has been creating art from discarded objects for more than 20 years, but her most recent works are inspired by a single box of her father's possessions given to her years after his tragic death. To make sense of his suicide, she creates displays with his personal belongings, letters and documents to examine what people conceal to protect, and to begin conversations about mental illness and identity. Franklin received her BFA from Midwestern State University and earned her MFA from Texas Christian University. She worked at the Dallas Museum of Art before moving to rural Iowa in 2001. She now resides in West Des Moines and serves as Professor of Art at Graceland University, where she received the Excellence in Teaching Award in 2011.



Lauren Haldeman, of Iowa City, is the author of *Instead of Dying* (winner of the Colorado Prize for Poetry, Center for Literary Publishing, 2017), *Calenday* (Rescue Press, 2014) and the artist book *The Eccentricity is Zero* (Digraph Press, 2014). Her work has appeared in *Tin House*, *Colorado Review*, *Fence*, *The Iowa Review* and *The Rumpus*. As an illustrator and poet, she has been a recipient of the Sustainable Arts Foundation Award, the Colorado Prize for Poetry and fellowships from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She works as an editor and web developer at the University of Iowa.



Mary Jones, of Des Moines, makes mixed media artworks about urban walking. For 17 years she was Professor of Art & Design at Grand View University in Des Moines where she taught courses in printmaking, book arts and graphic design. Prior to teaching, she worked as an illustrator with work published by *The Chicago Tribune*, *Playboy Magazine* and the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, among others. She has worked in the Linda Lee Alter Collection of Women in the Arts at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and in the State Museum of Illinois in both Chicago and Springfield. She has been an artist in residence at the Ragdale Foundation and at Anchor Graphics, Chicago. She has received project grants from both the Illinois Arts Council and the Iowa Arts Council.



Molly Wood, of Des Moines, is a photographer who explores botanicals as metaphors for the natural cycles of life, death and rebirth. Her digital photos use only window light and are styled with traditional Dutch still life paintings in mind. Wood has a BA in Photojournalism from Texas Christian University and an MA in Art History from Southern Methodist University, Dallas. She manages photo shoots for Better Homes and Gardens products and teaches History of Photography at DMACC. She has held solo exhibitions at Iowa State University, St Ambrose University and the Muscatine Art Museum. Wood has been included in exhibitions at Olson-Larsen Galleries, the Dubuque Art Museum, the Freeport Art Museum, the Midwest Center for Photography and the Kansas City Society of Contemporary Photography.

2017-2018 Fellows



River Glen Breitbach, of Rickardsville, was born in Dubuque. He began his musical career at the age of 2 on the violin. Blessed with the good fortune of a family that nurtured his love for music and performance, River has become a powerhouse multi-instrumentalist and songwriter with over 20 years of experience performing throughout the Midwest. His original folk-pop music draws on the traditions of conscious lyricism and political relevance to deliver performances steeped in honesty and kindness that engage listeners of all ages and endorse the idea that music can serve as medicine.



Jennifer Drinkwater, of Ames, is an assistant professor with a joint appointment between the department of art and visual culture and Iowa State University extension and outreach. Originally from Mississippi, she has a BA in both studio art and anthropology from Tulane University and earned an MFA in painting from East Carolina University. Her paintings have been exhibited nationally in juried and group shows, and she has had solo exhibitions in Iowa, New York, Illinois, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, and Washington, DC. Her work has been featured in *New American Paintings* and *Studio Visit* magazine. Her personal work and teaching often explore how we bring artwork from the studio into the world, and accordingly, how this work can both build and shape community.



Jack Meggers, of Des Moines, grew up in Mason City and Clear Lake, Iowa. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Iowa State University, then moved to New York City and began his career in stage theatre. During his seven years in New York, Jack turned his attention to cinema. He relocated to Los Angeles, and began his film career in earnest, learning the craft of filmmaking by acquiring hands on experience in every department. His first short film, *FRIGID*, was selected to the Short Film Corner at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013. Jack also directed and produced several music videos for bands in the Los Angeles area. In recent years, Jack was the Studio Manager at Quixote Studios, home to the long-running TV series "CRIMINAL MINDS". His current venture, which brings him back to his home state, is his feature-film debut, currently entitled *THE BURIAL*.



Lee Emma Running, of Grinnell, makes installations and sculptures inspired by natural phenomena. The materials she works with include animal bones, paper, fabric, fur, raw pigments and gold. She moved to Iowa City in 2001 to apprentice with papermaker Timothy Barrett at the University of Iowa Center for the Book where she learned to analyze materials and process as well as maintain the discipline of a fine craft. Lee is an Associate Professor at Grinnell College, and has received Artists Residencies and Jentel, Banner WY, Penland School of Crafts, NC, the Santa Fe Art Institute, and The Vermont Studio Center. Her work has been exhibited at the Des Moines Art Center, The Charlotte Street Foundation, The Robert C. Williams American Museum of Papermaking, and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art. Running received a BFA from Pratt Institute in 1999, and an MFA from the University of Iowa in 2005. She is represented by Olsen Larson Gallery.



Rachel Yoder, of Iowa City, is a founding editor of *draft: the journal of process*, a literary journal that features first and final drafts of stories, essays, and poems along with author interviews about the creative process. She also hosts *The Fail Safe*, an interview podcast produced in collaboration with the Iowa Writers' House, that explores how today's most successful writers grapple with and learn from failure. Rachel's writing has been awarded with The Missouri Review's Editors' Prize in both Fiction and Audio, as a finalist for The Chicago Tribune's Nelson Algren Award, and with notable distinctions in Best American Short Stories and Best American Nonrequired Reading. A graduate of the Nonfiction Writing Program at the University of Iowa, she is currently at work on an autobiographical collection of stories based on growing up Mennonite and leaving that community.

2016-2017 Fellows



Stephanie Brunia, of Oxford, Iowa, is a photographer who uses the medium to explore desires and fears surrounding human connection. Brunia received an MFA with distinction from the University of New Mexico in 2012. In 2007, she received a BFA with honors and higher distinction from the University of Iowa. She has exhibited at the Griffin Photography Museum, Rosalux Gallery, the Center for Fine Art Photography, and Rayko Photo Center and Musee d'Elysee in Lausanne, Switzerland. In 2011, Brunia was one of three artists to be featured in the Des Moines Art Center's annual Iowa Artists exhibition.



Brent Holland, of Des Moines, is a visual artist who integrates digital and traditional media applications into paintings and drawings. Using both figurative representation and formal abstraction, he transforms elements of his daily life into works that range in size and content from miniature hyperrealist portraits to wall-size collages. His work is a response to his fascination with the visual diversity of his surroundings – from the details of the human body to cluttered studio spaces, architectural drawings and urban graffiti walls. His artwork is exhibited widely, held in public and private collections and represented by Olson-Larsen Galleries. Holland is currently an Associate Professor of Art and Visual Culture at Iowa State University.



Jennifer L. Knox, of Ames, creates poems that speak in voices often ignored in the elevated realm of poetry. Through diction and popular culture, she strives to surprise readers with epiphanies of inclusion. Her interest in voice led her to the technique of crowdsourcing poems, which offers an unprecedented opportunity to generate inclusionary narratives. Birds have always been a central theme in her work. Originally from Southern California, she received her undergraduate degree in English from the University of Iowa and her MFA in Creative Writing from New York University. She is the author of four books of poems. Her work has appeared in numerous publications including in *the New York Times*, *the New Yorker* and *American Poetry Review*. She teaches at Iowa State University.



Akwi Nji, of Cedar Rapids, is a performance artist who combines the raw edge of performance poetry with silky smooth elements of live creative storytelling. In her writing she explores race, gender, parenthood and those mundane moments that, when given life on stage, become windows into universal truths about the human condition. Nji has performed at such venues as Chicago's Green Mill and Martyrs'. Nji spent seven seasons writing and performing for *SPT Theatre's Tales from the Writers' Room* before founding The Hook, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide local writers and artists with the opportunity to tell their community's stories through artistic adaptations produced for the stage.



Yun Shin, of Orange City, is a Korean artist who believes the process of making is a way of reconstructing relationships and remembering home. Relying on family treasures for inspiration, she reinterprets them by engaging in an intense process with repetitive movement. Labor and time, the very process of making, which is hidden and invested within each object, become a significant part of her work. She has exhibited her work at Woman Made Gallery in Chicago and Pen and Brush in New York. She holds an MFA in studio art at the University of Texas and a BFA degree in craft and material studies from Virginia Commonwealth University. She currently teaches painting, drawing, sculpture and ceramics at Northwestern College as an assistant professor.

2015-2016 Fellows



Rachel Buse, of Des Moines, makes sculptures and drawings depicting emotional perceptions of the human body, place and memory. Since 2012, she's been developing a series of large temporary sculptures exploring what it would be like to walk around and approach an overwhelming feeling. Her installations have exhibited throughout Iowa and Nebraska. She participated in the 2015 Tough Art Residency at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh where she created an interactive sculpture for the museum.



Matthew (Matt) Drissell, of Sioux City, utilizes a variety of styles, from traditional illusionistic representation to conceptual abstraction, to create visual art that addresses themes of sustainability. He has a MFA in Painting from New York Academy of Art and a BA from Wheaton College - Illinois. Drissell believes in making the visual arts an integral part of local communities, serving on the local arts council and teaching classes. He is a certified art teacher and taught middle and high school art for five years in Milwaukee and St. Louis. Drissell is currently an Associate Professor of Art at Dordt College in Sioux Center.



Larassa Kabel, of Des Moines, is a visual artist who uses photorealistic drawings, paintings and prints to address issues of loss, fear, gender and feminism. Kabel's work has been shown nationally in galleries and museums including the Des Moines Art Center, The MISSION Gallery, PEEL Gallery, Karolyn Sherwood Gallery, exhibit 101, Visions West, and Moberg Gallery. One of her paintings graced the 2012 White House Christmas card.



Lisa Schlesinger, of Iowa City, is a playwright, writer and theatre activist. Her plays include the *Celestial Bodies* trilogy, *The Bones of Danny Winston*, and *Rock Ends Ahead*. A recipient of the NEA/TCG Playwrights Residency Award, the BBC International Playwriting Award, and a nominee for a USArtists Fellowship, her work is produced in the U.S. and internationally and published in *American Theatre Magazine*, *Performing Arts Journal*, *Theatre Communications Group* and the *New York Times*. Her plays are forthcoming from Broadway Plays and NoPassport. She is an affiliated artist with Sleeping Weazel in Boston and In Parenthesis in New York City. She teaches playwriting at the University of Iowa.



Rob Stephens, of Des Moines, is a printmaker who creates semi-autobiographical works using paint, silkscreen, comic book sequences, and monumental woodcut prints. His works employ a heavy gestural line and saturated color, often at odds with the themes and narratives depicted. From 2000-2014 he was a professor of art at Graceland University, teaching painting, printmaking, drawing and art history. He was a visiting artist at Mission Graphica in San Francisco and has assisted in numerous print workshops across the country, including those at Frogman's Press and Tom Huck's Evil Prints. His salacious tell-all comic features "Good Kid Rob," a neurotic alter-ego. His work is shown nationally and is represented by Moberg Gallery.

2014-15 Fellows



Lauren Alleyne, of Dubuque, is a writer who was born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago. Her fiction, poetry and non-fiction deal with the intersection of place, home, and belonging. Lauren's work has been awarded numerous prizes and has been published in several journals and anthologies, including *Crab Orchard Review*, *The Cimarron Review*, *Black Arts Quarterly*, *The Caribbean Writer*, and *The Belleview Literary Review*. Her debut collection, *Difficult Fruit*, was published in February 2014 by Peepal Tree Press.



Robert John Ford, of Des Moines, is an award-winning playwright, composer and lyricist whose works have been produced throughout the country. His work has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *TIME Magazine*, CNN, CBS, ABC, and NPR. In June 2014, he will complete his two-year participation as a lyricist in the acclaimed BMI Musical Theatre Workshop in NYC. Ford will be launching a major new theatre endeavor in the fall of 2014.



Jordan Weber, of Des Moines, is an art-activist/curator.

Jordan's work strives to speak for the underprivileged majority against the opulently ruling minority. Weber uses oil, acrylic, spray paint, concrete and neon in numerous bodies of work to shock viewers from apathy while perturbing routine life. His work has been purchased by private collectors in Torino, Verona, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, San Francisco, Brooklyn, Seattle, Kansas City, Des Moines, Minneapolis, Houston and Omaha.



Kathranne Knight, of Ames, is a visual artist who makes delicate, complex, textile-like landscape drawings using repetition and straightforward rules of perspective. Her work has been shown nationally in galleries and museums including Mass MoCA, The Des Moines Art Center, The Danforth Museum, Carroll and Sons Gallery, Muriel Guepin Gallery, and Geoffrey Young Gallery. She was also published in *New American Paintings #56, Northeast Edition*.



Christopher Ford, of Des Moines, is a songwriter who writes, records, and performs music as Christopher the Conquered. Ford has played hundreds of shows internationally since 2006. This year, Ford will complete a fourth studio album in Memphis at the legendary Ardent Studios, release a live album recorded at Des Moines' Salisbury House, and perform regionally and abroad, including a month-long tour of Italy at the end of 2014.