



## **Eight Northeast Florida Individual Artists Receive Art Ventures Grants**

*Recipients include painters, composers, a playwright, a poet, a choreographer and a sculptor*

JACKSONVILLE, Florida – August 15, 2017 — The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida has awarded \$28,000 in career development grants to eight individual artists through the Art Ventures initiative. They were chosen by a selection panel from more than three dozen applications, based on the applicants' artistic accomplishments, their proposal to use the funds to further their work, and the extent to which their art is reflective of Northeast Florida.

- **Liz Gibson** (\$3,500) Performance artist Liz Gibson holds an MFA from Florida State University, and was the recipient of a Florida Division of Cultural Affairs Individual Artist Fellowship in 2014. Her exhibition and performance resume includes events at the Telfair Museum in Savannah, the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, among many others. This will be a second Art Ventures grant for Gibson, who will use the award to fund expenses related to the creation of a solo performance work about using art to empower people with disabilities.
- **Erin Kendrick** (\$3,500) Artist Erin Kendrick is the owner and lead designer for E. Street Design, a Jacksonville-based graphics company. Kendrick received her BFA from Florida State University, and an MFA in painting and drawing from Georgia State University. The grant will fund expenses related to the creation of large-scale paintings which will culminate in a solo exhibition of visual art and installations entitled, "Her Own Things..." at Space 42 in Jacksonville.
- **Roxanna Lewis** (\$3,500) Director-Choreographer Roxanna Lewis has just participated in the acclaimed Edinburgh Fringe Festival where she presented her latest work, "String Theory." Lewis moved to Jacksonville after an established and celebrated career in New York, having choreographed productions both on and off Broadway. Locally, she has directed, choreographed or taught at Flagler College, UNF, Theatre Jacksonville, Players-by-the-Sea, and FSCJ, among others. The grant will allow Lewis to purchase a professional grade camera to document and disseminate her work. Funds will also support her attendance at a workshop at The New York Film Academy.
- **Tiffany Melanson** (\$3,500) Tiffany Melanson's grant will assist in the creation and presentation of a series of poems, "Burning Anna Kingsley," by funding her research at the University of Florida Library archives in Tallahassee, attendance at the Rivendell Writer's Conference, and workshops for students creating narratives with historical themes. A creative writing instructor at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, Melanson was inspired by the complex history of the Kingsley Plantation and the individual stories of unnamed slaves. Melanson was nominated for the prestigious Pushcart Prize for poetry.
- **Ulysses Owens, Jr.** (\$3,500) The Art Ventures grant for musician and composer Ulysses Owens will fund post production and promotional expenses for a recording of original compositions featuring students from Don't Miss a Beat, a nonprofit founded by the artist. A graduate of Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, Owens received his BFA from the Juilliard School in New York. Among his many honors, Owens has received several Grammys and Grammy nominations. He was the 2016 winner of the D.C. Jazz Prix Competition, and performed at the 2017 Kennedy Center Honors.



- **Leslie Robison** (\$3,500) Leslie Robison is an associate professor of art at Flagler College. Robison will use the funds to create work for a solo exhibit while on sabbatical. Funds will be used for supplies and framing. The exhibition, “American Landscapes,” is a reflection/interpretation of social justice issues, specifically police misconduct. In conjunction with a subsequent exhibit at Flagler, Robison will host a workshop and panel discussion about civic engagement in partnership with Compassionate St. Augustine.
- **Robin Rutenberg** (\$3,500) Musician and composer Robin Rutenberg works with various ensembles and in solo projects including The Little Books, Bear Machine, Gabe Darling, and Insel. Robi is a founder of Girls Rock, Inc., a summer music camp which fosters positive identity development in girls and trans youth. “All of my work can be understood as a sonic and lyrical reflection of the emotional and political landscapes I traverse as a trans genderqueer musician in Northeast Florida,” says Rutenberg. The Art Ventures grant will fund equipment upgrades in the artist’s recording studio to help complete three self-composed and performed works.
- **Jeff Whipple** (\$3,500) The work of painter, sculptor, playwright, and video artist Jeff Whipple has been featured around the country in more than 80 solo exhibits and more than 200 group exhibitions. He has won commissions for several public art installations and is represented in numerous public and corporate collections. Whipple received the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs Individual Artist Fellowship in 2014. Whipple will use the Art Ventures grant to fund studio rental, materials and time for the creation of a series of large-scale sculptures.

“The large number of talented, hard-working artists is a tremendous asset to Northeast Florida. These eight grants honor individuals whose artistic excellence brings distinction to our region,” noted Amy Crane, program director at The Community Foundation. “The Community Foundation appreciates the foresight of the donors who established Art Ventures as a way to invest in the people who create in our community.”

#### **About the Art Ventures Initiative**

Since 1990, more than \$1 million has been granted through the Art Ventures initiative, which is funded through the Art Ventures Endowment, the J. Shepard, Jr. & Mary Ann Bryan Arts Endowment, the Anne and Sallyn Pajcic Art Ventures Endowment, the Independent Life Minority Arts Fund, and the Alynne Sharp Art Fund. Individual artists may apply for up to \$3,500 each. Art Ventures also makes grants to small arts organizations in a separate selection process. For more information, [www.jaxcf.org/the-arts](http://www.jaxcf.org/the-arts)

#### **About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida**

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida ([www.jaxcf.org](http://www.jaxcf.org)), Florida’s oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 53<sup>rd</sup> year, the Foundation has assets of \$343 million and has made nearly \$410 million in grants since 1964.

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