



## **Visual Artist Jim Draper Receives Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award**

*Longtime North Florida artist showcases nature's beauty in influential ways*

JACKSONVILLE, Florida – January 31, 2018 — For three decades, Jim Draper has created compelling images that highlight the natural world while presenting more complex issues of human existence. This pursuit of excellence has resulted in his selection as the third Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award winner. The award, which includes a \$10,000 unrestricted grant, recognizes an artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida, and is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker, whose leadership helped create and nurture such vital cultural gems such as The Community Foundation's Art Ventures Fund, the Arts Assembly (now the Cultural Council) and Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, among others. The award was presented at a private reception this week.

Draper is Instructor of Painting and Drawing at the University of North Florida and Curator of UNF Galleries. His best-known works include the recent Feast of Flowers exhibition at The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, the *Ribbon of Life* environmental painting at Baptist Medical Center and his *Healing Palms* series. He's created several public art installations including the glass enclosure of etched palms at Jacksonville International Airport. His current work includes *Full Immersion*, a serial program that explores ways in which the natural order informs structures and behaviors of the human experience, and *The Ditch*, which he describes as a visual reconciliation of the disturbed landscape.

Draper is primarily known for his depictions of flora and fauna that draw from the state's varied habitats, especially its waterways, according to Debra L. Murphy, PhD, professor of art history and chair of the Department of Art and Design at the University of North Florida.

"His paintings are restrained but powerful admonitions addressing environmental issues," Murphy notes. {He is} part avid naturalist, part ruminating philosopher and part zealous advocate for environmental causes."

In addition to being a long-practicing artist, Draper has been an educator, a curator, a lecturer and a writer. He was recently awarded the Fellow Man and Mother Earth award from the Stetson Kennedy Foundation.

"Without question, Jim Draper has been a major force in the North Florida arts scene and has extended his influence by working collaboratively with the wider cultural, environmental and educational communities," noted Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "Like this award's namesake, Ann Baker, Jim Draper has had a far-reaching effect on the causes for which he is most passionate. Our community is substantially richer because of his work."

The selection process for the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award includes a knowledgeable, anonymous panel of advisors who put forward a short list of finalists after considering a wide range of deserving artists in all disciplines throughout the year. A Selection Committee (a member of the Baker family, a Trustee of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, a representative from the advisory panel and The Community Foundation president) reviews the finalists and names the winner.

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### **Art Ventures**

For more than 25 years, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida has invested in the local cultural community as part of an exceptional initiative known as Art Ventures. In 1989, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) chose Jacksonville to receive \$50,000/year for four years, provided that The Community Foundation and (at the time) The Arts Assembly work together to raise \$100,000/year in unrestricted gifts over the same period. The challenge was a success, and the first grants were made in 1990. Art Ventures provides support for the more fragile part of the arts community—emerging individual artists and small arts organizations—and it has provided more than \$1 million in grants to individuals and small arts organizations since its inception. In 2015, The Community Foundation created the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award to honor the late Ann Baker, who led the initial Art Ventures fundraising with Courtenay Wilson, and who chaired The Community Foundation Board of Trustees from 2002-2003.

### **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 54<sup>th</sup> year, the Foundation has assets of approximately \$385 million and has made nearly \$450 million in grants since 1964.

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