

2021 MAAF Individual Artist Grantees Announced

Sep 22, 2021 9:00 am

Images ▾ texts ▾



Acra, NY—Wave Farm announced today fifteen artist grantees for the 2021 Media Arts Assistance Fund (MAAF), a grant partnership with the New York State Council on the Arts. MAAF Grantees: **Lily Baldwin, Johann Diedrick, Jonathan González, Lemon Guo & Mengtai Zhang, Valérie Hallier, Jaamil Olawale Kosoko, Little Manila Queens Bayanihan Arts, Mev Luna, Ricardo Miranda Zúñiga, Laura Nova, Suneil Sanzgiri, Karina Aguilera Skvirsky, SOBBETH, Yeseul Song, and Eric Souther.**

The Media Arts Assistance Fund (MAAF) supports electronic media and film organizations, as well as individual artists, in all regions of New York State. For individual artists, MAAF provides support for the completion and/or public presentation of new works in all genres of sound and moving image art, including emergent technology. Grant awards assist artists in completing new work, reaching public audiences, and advance artistic exploration and public engagement in the media arts.

NYSCEA Electronic Media & Film Program Director, Karen Helmersson, said "Now more than ever, this investment of public funds strengthens the advancement of a diverse creative culture through new technology and emerging fields, bringing new opportunity for artists and audiences alike." Wave Farm Executive Director Galen Joseph-Hunter said, "The 2021 application pool was one of the most competitive to date, and Wave Farm is delighted to be able to support these fifteen outstanding projects that represent the media arts landscape across New York State." The deadline for the 2022 Media Arts Assistance Fund for Artists will be announced this fall. Grantees are selected through a competitive panel process. Detailed information about the 2021 MAAF projects is available below.

The New York State Council on the Arts is dedicated to preserving and expanding the rich and diverse cultural resources that are and will become the heritage of New York's citizens. The Council believes in artistic excellence and the creative freedom of artists without censure, and the rights of all New Yorkers to access and experience the power of the arts and culture, and the vital contribution the arts make to the quality of life in New York communities. <http://arts.ny.gov>

Wave Farm is a non-profit arts organization driven by experimentation with broadcast media and the airwaves. A pioneer of the Transmission Arts genre, Wave Farm programs provide access to transmission technologies and support artists and organizations that engage with media as an art form. Major activities include the Wave Farm Artist Residency Program and Archive; a Transmission Art Installation Park; Wave Farm Radio, including WGXC 90.7-FM: Radio for Open Ears, a creative community radio station based in New York's Upper Hudson Valley; a Fiscal Sponsorship program; and the Media Arts Assistance Fund in partnership with NYSCEA Electronic Media/Film. <https://wavefarm.org>

GRANTEES AND PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Lily Baldwin—*Quick Slice* (New York County)

Quick Slice is a short film and installation about an unsuspecting intimacy between strangers, inspired by choreographer Netta Yerushalmi's PARAMODERNITIES project. The film's narrative follows nine lonely New Yorkers who converge over a quick slice inside a casual, non-committal community hub—the pizza shop. When a "contagiant" enters, dance turns inconsequential moments into idiosyncratic gestures, toggling between task and choreography, disrupting expectations around physical expression. A subtle, disorientating use of editing techniques and photographic devices manipulating time craft a visceral and sonically rich dreamscape. As an installation, *Quick Slice* will scale to respective environments, utilizing available architecture and unsuspecting surfaces. MAAF funds will be used to support the final edit, and additional post-production needs like color correction and a final sound mix.

Johann Diedrick—*Prelude to Wake (Kings County)*

Johann Diedrick's *Prelude to Wake* is an urgent, mournful, and world-building sonic performance that centers the loss of ourselves and environments and release them from material through an ancient technological device. Combining field recordings, original composition, and generative audio techniques, *Prelude to Wake* stages an encounter between the audience, a past that we are losing due to catastrophe, and what may exist in the future. MAAF funding will support producing a professionally recorded version of *Prelude to Wake*, to be released as a record and zine that contains an original speculative sci-fi story that accompanies the recording.

Jonathan González—*The Smallest Unit Is Each Other* (New York County)

The Smallest Unit Is Each Other struggles for otherwise narratives regarding our interspecies planetary horizons ahead. Otherwise as in undergirded by Sylvia Wynter's "Third Event", wherein a third human evolution can mobilize our storytelling capacities out of familiar colonial paradigms of catastrophe, and Kamau Brathwaite's request for poetry that breaks with this pentameter. Otherwise visualities, auralities, and stories that affirm life are presented against the backdrop of transnational calls to course correct our existence in this six-part film of animation, archival materials, interviews, speculative geographies and original screen performances, organized by "SIDE" in the form of a cassette tape. With MAAF support the film will be expanded upon to compose an interactive installation at BRIC Arts for an exhibition series on 'Landscape.'

Lemon Guo & Mengtai Zhang—*Diagnosis* (Rensselaer County)

Exploring the potential of VR (Virtual Reality) as a tool for transplanting secondhand memories, *Diagnosis* aims to connect the audience to social issues via a sensorial immersion and embodiment in the memories of people who experienced it first hand. *Diagnosis* portrays Mengtai's memories of being incarcerated in a military-operated Internet addiction camp in Beijing in 2007, where internet addiction and other youth issues were treated as a severe mental disorder with sometimes violent means. By tracing the lineage of "Internet addiction" in China's cultural context, the work discusses how societies can create or manifest pathologies as a tool for social control. MAAF funds will support the final postproduction of this work.

Valérie Hallier—*PPPP: Public Portrait & Primal Power* (New York County)

PPPP is composed of a screaming booth and a phone application with Augmented and Virtual Reality components. Inspired by the French Medieval "crieur public"—a socio-political interface between the king and "his" people—PPPP connects individuals with their own power. Also inspired by popular photo booths, it allows visitors to perform privately in a public setting. The artwork takes a fundamental yet repressed human expression to generate visuals seen inside and outside of the booth, or on one's smartphone. In addition to self-empowerment, PPPP promotes mental health by offering catharsis. It reclaims each individual's power by manifesting, during the time of a scream, a visual impact in both the virtual and the physical world, thus inspiring us to activate our untapped resources. MAAF funding will support the completion of PPPP enabling outdoor installation.

Jaamil Olawale Kosoko—*Chameleon* (Kings County)

Chameleon is an experimental visual album grown from the radical queer feminist genre of the biomythography originated by Audre Lorde. This film is an investigation of the fractal process of queer archival story telling and practice. Initially as a project of documenting movement research for performance, the film became a project of its own that intervenes into the psychic hold of the protagonist's past. Broken into five distinct confessional/autobiographical poems: Linoleum, Stank, Entertainer, Wake, and Effigy (all written by Kosoko), each poem acts as a chapter depicting and rewriting the specific moments of the performer's life. The short will tour film festivals starting in 2021 then continue screening in community-based events and through online distribution supported by MAAF. Forthcoming screenings include New York Live Arts, The MAD Museum, Toronto Indie Film Festival among others.

Little Manila Queens Bayanihan Arts—*We Are They* (Kings County)

We Are They is an experimental documentary video that combines interviews with Filipino health care workers reflecting on their battles with the Covid-19 crisis in the Little Manila neighborhood of Elmhurst Queens, with music and dance informed by traditions from the Philippines. The Filipino heroine "Tandang Sora," a Florence Nightingale-like figure, calls attention to the lineage of care labor and sacrifice that so often defines the Philippine diaspora. Collaborators in this project include: filmmaker Diana Diroy, composer Will Simbol, and choreographer Joyelle Cabato. MAAF funding will support both online screenings as well as public screenings situated at important sites in the community the film honors: the Filipino community of New York City.

Mev Luna—*Far from the distance we see* (Kings County)

This medium length video essay touches on the formation of the Texas prison system, its complex relationship with México and agriculture, and how these carceral facilities served as a model for the U.S., through the experiences of one individual—the filmmaker's late father. Building on a five year body of work that spans performance, writing, and installation, this experimental piece weaves together audio interviews with family members, archival images, exteriors of several Texas prison units captured on dashcam, and landscapes that morph and become 3D simulations. MAAF funding will support project completion, including 3D modeling and sound design.

Ricardo Miranda Zúñiga—*FinTech for the Precariat* (Kings County)

FinTech for the Precariat is a wandering world application set in a fantastic landscape populated by Greed, Lust, Gluttony, Envy, gig workers and 12 voices from New York City's financial spectrum. The user wanders about the environment to encounter the creatures that live in it and the financial perspectives and realities of individuals - from financial brokers to recent college grads to computer programmers and cultural workers. It has been projected that the 2020s will be the decade of the FinTech Revolution. This Marketing hyperbole is on the heels of many such revolutions that are sold on the promises of democratization and wealth. FinTech for the Precariat, questions who ultimately will these technologies serve? MAAF funding will support the completion and public interactive presentation.

Laura Nova—*Delicious Memories* (New York County)

Delicious Memories is a media art installation informed by an intergenerational storytelling workshop/ performance that brings together older and younger New Yorkers to tell and connect stories utilizing craft and interactive technology. The installation stitches delicious stories together into a complex multisensory communal tablecloth embroidered with cotton and conductive thread. When touched, the tablecloth amplifies recorded audio stories. Led by artists Laura Nova and Kristen Diekman, the participants who worked together virtually spring 2021 will gather around the table and share their stories in-person in Seward Park, the oldest municipal park in the U.S. and the "living room" of the Lower East Side. MAAF funds will support the completion of *Delicious Memories* and its presentation to the public.

Suneil Sanzgiri—*Golden Jubilee* (Kings County)

Golden Jubilee takes as its starting point scenes of the filmmaker's father navigating a virtual rendering of their ancestral house in Goa, India, created using the same technologies of surveillance that mining companies use to map locations for iron ore in the region. A tool for extraction and exploitation becomes a method for preservation. The film will be presented as a multi-channel, mixed media installation at Pioneer Works, bringing together questions of home, belonging, disappearance and memory as materialized, with MAAF support, in the framed 3D printed re-creations of relics from the artist's ancestral house in India, ceramic sculptures created from those 3D prints, and the videos that accompany the sculptures.

Karina Aguilera Skvirsky—*How to build a wall and other ruins* (New York County)

How to build a wall and other ruins—which gets its impetus from the debates around the engineering feats of Inkan architecture at Ingapirca—reimagines labor and its documentation through a multi-channel video installation which includes interviews with engineers, anthropologists, historians and YouTube "experts" about their theories of how Inkans built Ingapirca's walls. Outlandish theories that are scientific in nature are exposed for what they are: misinformation campaigns that seek to intellectually re-colonize the descendants of Inkans whose structures and technology are worthy of deep study and respect. The interviews are juxtaposed with a video performance, in which a brigade of Ecuadorian women build a wall in Cañar, Ecuador using recycled materials. The work does not pretend to be factual; it is a proposal. It asks, lucidly: What can an Inka technology teach us today? MAAF funding will support the installation's completion including post-production editing and sound engineering.

SOBBETH—*Our Place In The Sun* (Columbia County)

Our Place in the Sun is a once-in-a-lifetime documentary of real-time gender transition, psychic transformation and climate collapse, shot on location in the ruins of Florida's post-war mythology. A hybrid take on the "Tropical Entropic," the work is an experimental landscape film which takes a nonlinear turn into speculative fiction. Suggesting improvisation as one antidote to a world controlled by algorithm, the film's central themes are intentionally echoed in its rich experimental score. MAAF funding will support composers fees, a 5.1 mix, and other post-production costs.

Yeseul Song—*Listening to Sunken Forest* (New York County)

Listening to Sunken Forest is a large-scale interactive spatial installation and auditory archive of the unique ecosystem of the Sunken Forest Preserve, a small, rare and slowly-disappearing ecological system on the Fire Island in NY. The project records, archives, and recreates the forest through auditory senses with a mission of sharing the environmental urgency through an artistic and immersive interactive experience. The installation is also accessible to low-vision and blind visitors. MAAF funding will enable the completion of the project that involves audio field recording, sound design assistance, and iterative installation prototyping.

Eric Souther—*Frequencies of Deep Time* (Allegany County)

Frequencies From Deep Time explores changes of geological time in Western New York, change that forms strata in the rock formations of gorges like Watkins Glen and Letchworth State Parks. Souther is interested in the stories the formations can tell of the co-evolution of life and minerals, of humans and non-humans, and their entanglement with one another and the land. He developed custom software that uses sound waves to augment three-dimensional forms animating the geological landscapes. Oscillations work as an audio-visual metaphor for change across deep time and provide a way to perform across an incomprehensible length of time. MAAF funding will support the completion of sound design and distribution initiatives including festival applications.

For more information about the The New York State Council on the Arts in Partnership with Wave Farm: Media Arts Assistance Fund (MAAF) visit <https://wavefarm.org/grants/maaf-artists>.



The Drums of Occupy
The drum circle at OWS was a site of inten...
folklife.si.edu