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Contact: Mason Kilpatrick

620.899.6508 | [communications@charlottestreet.org](mailto:communications@charlottestreet.org)

[www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org)

For immediate release

**CHARLOTTE  
STREET  
FOUNDATION**

## **Charlotte Street Foundation congratulates recipients of 2018 Art Omi Fellowship and Byron C. Cohen Award**

**Kansas City, MO, March 13, 2018:** The Charlotte Street Foundation is excited to announce the selection of **Rashawn Griffin** as the Charlotte Street Fellow of the **Art Omi International Artists Residency Program** for the summer of 2018. Additionally, Charlotte Street congratulates recent Charlotte Street Visual Artist Fellow **Jillian Youngbird** for being awarded the 2018 recipient of the **Byron C. Cohen Award**.



(Left: Jillian Youngbird, *SnakeLore 2*, 2016

Right: Rashawn Griffin, *...And I Would Eat My Children*, 2015)

In 2005, Charlotte Street added an opportunity for one Award recipient to attend the **Art Omi Residency**. Art Omi is a highly respected international artists residency program in Upstate New York. All past award recipients are invited to submit applications to Art Omi with one spot guaranteed for a Charlotte Street artist. Artists are selected by the Art Omi selection panel. Not only does the selected artist benefit from the fully-funded residency and professionally curated exhibition, but all applicants have their work viewed by a selection panel comprised of nationally known artists, arts professionals, and art collectors.

The **Byron C. Cohen Award** provides one Kansas City-based visual artist annually with funding to attend a leading national/international art fair of their particular interest. The award is administered by Charlotte Street and funded by contributions made to Charlotte Street in memory of Byron C. Cohen. The artist for the annual award is selected by a panel of local and national curators as part of Charlotte Street's annual Visual Artist Awards selection process.

The Byron C. Cohen Award honors gallerist and collector Byron C. Cohen and his passion for art, artists travel, and his desire to connect Kansas City and its artists to the national and international art world. Eileen Cohen, Toma Wolff, and Mark Cohen serve as advisors to the Byron C. Cohen Fund at Charlotte Street Foundation. Funds contributed to date will support one annual Byron C. Cohen Award for five years.



*Kansas City's Arts Provocateur*  
1000 W 25th Street KC MO 64108

### **ABOUT RASHAWN GRIFFIN**

Rashawn Griffin uses diverse materials such as bed sheets, tassels, food, and flora to create large-scale sculpture and paintings. After receiving a MFA from Yale University in 2005, he has exhibited in multiple solo and group exhibitions in the United States and abroad. Often pushing the boundaries between object and installation, his work challenges viewers to engage in their own past experiences when confronting his art. A haunting installation in the 2008 Whitney Biennial, for example, is punctuated by a live audio feed from a field in Kansas, where the artist was raised, to the space in New York. A lumbering garbage bag man/sculpture wanders through a field in "To bring love/terrible things", highlighting his exploration of place, site specificity, and identity.

Griffin's installations explore the relationship between architecture and the traditions of painting with a series stretched fabric walls-- as the picture becomes the space, the pictorial space highlights the architecture, as the paintings become objects themselves.



Living and working in Olathe, Kansas, he was a 2006 resident of the Studio Museum in Harlem's AIR program. Along with the 2008 Whitney Biennial, his work has been exhibited widely, including a two-person exhibition at the Studio Museum (RSVP), as well as "Freeway Balconies" at the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin, Germany, and "THREADS: Textiles and Fiber in the works of African American Artists" at EK Projects in Beijng, China, curated by Collier Schorr and Lowery Stokes Sims respectively. Recently the subject of the solo exhibition "A hole-in-the-wall country" at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, Kansas, as well as the exhibition "Minimal Baroque" at Rønnebæksholm in Næstved, Denmark. This past summer he was a Master Artist-in-Residence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, he was also a 2015 Charlotte Street Award winner in Kansas City.

### **ABOUT JILLIAN YOUNGBIRD**

Jillian Youngbird is a hunter-gatherer, storyteller and visual artist living and working in Kansas City. She studied art at the Kansas City Art Institute and currently works at a non-profit art studio supporting artists with developmental disabilities. Being of Native American descent, growing up in the Ozark hills formed an interesting narrative in my self-identity. Storytelling has always been an important part of both cultures. In her study of Ozarkian and Native lore, she has come to find common threads and motives. This kind of artistic storytelling can function as expression of personal and group identity, as well as, providing political and social control.



Through the study of nature, history and folklore, she uses recycled materials from her environment to create sculpture, photographs and performances that investigate our impact on the natural world and her place between two interwoven cultures.

### **ABOUT ART OMI**

Omi International Artists Residency invites visual artists from every continent, representing a wide diversity of artistic styles, to gather in rural New York State to experiment, collaborate, and share ideas. During four weeks each June-July, concentrated time for creative work is balanced with the stimulation of cultural exchange and critical appraisal. Learn more at <http://www.artomi.org>

### **ABOUT BYRON C. COHEN FUND**

The Byron C. Cohen Award honors Byron's passion for art, artists, and travel, and his desire to connect Kansas City and its artists to the national and international art world. Byron was adamant that exposure to premier art fairs such as Art Basel, New York art fairs, and various satellite fairs would enable collectors and artists to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the visual arts. With this in mind, the Byron C. Cohen Award was established to provide local artists funding to attend premiere fairs. A panel of local and national curators selects the Byron C. Cohen Award recipient annually as part of Charlotte Street Foundation's annual Visual Artist Awards selection process.

### **ABOUT CHARLOTTE STREET**

Charlotte Street identifies the needs and fuels the evolution of an ever-changing multidisciplinary arts ecosystem, acting as its primary provocateur. Charlotte Street cultivates the contemporary, the exceptional, and the unexpected in the practice of artists working in and engaging with the Kansas City art community. Since 1997, Charlotte Street has distributed over \$1.1 million in awards and grants to artists and their innovative projects and connected individual artists to each other and to the greater Kansas City community. For more information about Charlotte Street, its awards, programs, and initiatives, visit [www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org).

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