

Charlotte Street Announces 2023 Visual Artist and Generative Performing Artist Fellows



Sunyoung Park, *Finger Language*, 2022

Kansas City, MO. February X, 2023: Charlotte Street is excited to announce the three local recipients of the 2023 Visual Artist Awards and two local recipients of the 2023 Generative Performing Artist Awards. This year, Charlotte Street’s Visual Artist Awards were given to **Ruben Castillo, Sean Nash** and **SunYoung Park**. Recipients of the 2023 Generative Performing Artist Awards are **Stephonne Singleton** and **Tiara Nicole**. Since 1997, 29 performing artists and 106 visual artists in the Kansas City region have received this highly regarded award.

Each Charlotte Street Visual Artist Award Fellow receives an unrestricted **cash grant of \$10,000**, recognition by Charlotte Street at the time of the award announcement and throughout 2023—including announcements to media, web-based marketing and promotional efforts, special events, and inclusion in the 2023 Charlotte Street Visual Artist Award Fellows **Exhibition at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art** later in the 2023 calendar year.

The 2023 Charlotte Street Generative Performing Artist Awards recognize two exceptional artists in the fields of dance, theatre, music, opera, sound art, performance art, multimedia performance, spoken word, puppetry or hybrid performance-based forms. Both of the artists will also receive an unrestricted

cash award of \$10,000, and their public performances will be promoted by Charlotte Street throughout the rest of the 2023 calendar year.

All of the 2023 Charlotte Street Award Fellows were selected through competitive processes beginning with open calls for applications from artists based in the five-county Kansas City Metro Area. Artist selections were made by a panel of jurors consisting of renowned and qualified arts professionals. Jurors participated in interviews, presentations, and studio visits, resulting in the selection of 10 finalists for the Generative Performing Artists Awards and 12 finalists for the Visual Artist Awards.

ABOUT THE VISUAL ARTIST AWARD WINNERS



RUBEN CASTILLO

My work is about the relationship between intimacy and queerness, exploring how it manifests within everyday phenomena. Often occurring as works on paper such as etchings or lithographs, my work has included drawing, sculpture, and video operating under the same purpose as print—materials that document and preserve the ephemeral. I create images demonstrating a desire that can be both physical and emotional. My recent work highlights qualities that can be perceived as tactile or felt, creating moments of sensual tenderness and fantasy.

I examine the emotional influence of desirable objects and places by investigating the couple's symbolic shaping of space(s). Documenting moments and objects becomes about building my archive of feeling, quietness, and closeness, acknowledging the past and proposing a future. This record of intimate scenarios collectively reflects being and desire, described by a tangible familiarity of textures and forms. Pillows, plants, clothing, furniture, and corners occupy these images as figures in a scene.

The printed image indicates a visual event. In printmaking, materials become suspended, and actions are made permanent. The event in my imagery is a sentimental remembrance. Describing still life in her book *Ordinary Affects*, Kathleen Stewart writes about vibratory potentials and the ability to “distill spirits into potency through a process of slow condensation.” Still-life describes the charged events in my work, presenting affective traces and potentials for transformation. Physical objects such as hangers, shirts, and doors are tangible, processed, and transformed—becoming something other than what they are. Simple domestic rituals, such as daydreaming while dishwashing, can become an organizing principle of futurity.

Regardless of my media, my printmaking background means I am inevitably obsessed with the impression and labor of a thing. This working method is speculative for me. The collective familiarity of the public gestures, objects, and spaces referenced mediate ambiguous forms of emotional awareness within the domestic commons. Whether they are images of places, rituals, decisions, things shared

between lovers, or readymade affordable furniture (to make one's home their best home), my work is about the hope and fantasy to communicate and connect.



SEAN NASH

Image - Sean Nash, *Mother Tongue*, 2022

As a visual artist, food fermentation experimentalist, gardener, and home cook I see my studio, garden, and kitchen as interconnected sites of agency, reciprocity, and care. I draw on embodied and sensory knowledge that has developed from a nexus of art, food, and fermentation communities. I create artworks, installations, and experiences that honor the creative ingenuity of our human and more-than-human ancestors. My work

challenges normative expectations in order to open up new connections; possibilities for intentional thinking, acting, and feeling within ecosystems. As a transgender person, my lived experience informs my process in acts of crossing, discovery, emergence, and nonconformity. I engage in a queering of substrates as diverse as paint, kombucha, insects, and vegetables to make space for what emerges from their journeys of transformation. My recent studio methodology has centered around developing socially researched sculptural paintings. In 2021, I was selected to create a public commission for the new KCI airport. Through this opportunity, I developed new ways of working and embedding my work in community ecology to create "Kansas City Reciprocity." To begin the process of creating the piece I reached out to six BIPOC and LGBTQ small farmers who practice regenerative agriculture and greatly contribute to Kansas City's diverse foodways. The piece exists as a vibrant visual celebration of our ancestral relationships with plants and plant/ people migration. When installed at the airport you will see a QR code that links to documentary information on my website, along with this short statement for the piece: Kansas City Reciprocity celebrates the commitment of KCI area farmers to food security, land stewardship, sustainability, ecological diversity, and preservation of cultural heritage.

Grounded in research and experiential reflection, I engage in my studio practice with an improvisational, experimental, curious, and fluid approach to methods and materials. I use a variety of materials with specific haptic qualities and conceptual resonance. For the sculptural paintings I am casting with aqua resin, a composite resin, in silicone molds. The casts can be initially painted with a layer of colored resin before multiple layers are cast as reinforcement. This way of working means that I will often be surprised by the outcome because I cannot see exactly what the object will look like before it is removed from the cast. Other processes I use follow a similar formula for unplanned outcomes. For my recent paintings I incorporate an initial process of gessoing fabric on top of plastic – this process yields meandering (I also call it mycelial) lines and cracks throughout the fabric that are revealed like invisible ink once the fabric is painted in color. In another, I have transformed kombucha SCOBY into translucent dyed paper/fabric sculptures. I enjoy that I cannot see the entire result emerging from an additive process. I engage in art making from the metaphorical cracks or spaces and territories that are fugitive.



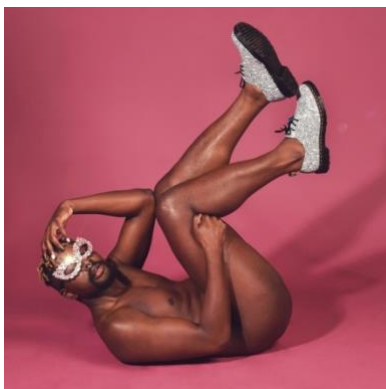
SUNYOUNG PARK

My visual language is created through processing and translating reality. I see something, and I accept it. I read it from my perspective and perceive what it is for me. When I encounter an event, feeling, or observation in the world, I process the experience by recalling distant memories and imaginative possibilities. The translation of reality is experimental and abstract, evoking mysterious atmospheres that defy precise classification.

The time I spend making the work mirrors the time I spend processing and translating reality. I sew fabrics, hand-build clay, and draw. I use materials with significantly distinctive characteristics, such as clay, fabric, wood, or metal. The use of diverse materials allows the pairing of softness with hardness, flexibility with stiffness, lightness with heaviness, and detail with abstraction. Images of distant and clear memory are revealed using flowing glazed surfaces and matte clay surfaces that are activated with a pencil. Through these contrasting oppositions, they begin to represent the duality of domesticity to nature, control to spontaneity, feminine to masculine, and east to west. While I contrast materials through their different surfaces and physical and contextual meanings, I align them into a cohesive moment.

The contrasting qualities in my artwork create visual puzzles that suggest a multitude of meanings. I regard my practice as a journey to find the essence of an object, experience, and how it relates to reality. I do not want to define what is right or what is wrong. I want to understand what I experience beyond the physical and delve into the realm of emotion and imagination. Through my evolving visual language, I want the viewer to experience moments of duality for themselves.

ABOUT THE GENERATIVE PERFORMING ARTIST AWARD WINNERS



STEPHONNE SINGLETON

As a generative performance artist and musician, my music is a result of radical and unconditional love that I have for my life and human connection. That love persists, despite living in a world that relishes my artistic contributions but not the color of my skin nor my queerness. It is within this relentless predicament that I find myself, my melodies, and my lyrics. I share my struggles, triumphs, and journey to self-love through performance. I create music and live experiences that break through the boxes of race, gender, social status and genre so that others may see their reflection in my art. All of my musical influences come together to create something inimitable but familiar. Music has always understood me and it is through music that I continue to define and understand myself. I want my

audience to feel accepted and understood by my art, to feel seen – and then to better understand themselves and those around them.



TIARA NICOLE

I am urban
I am pop culture
I am lived experienced
I am storyteller

I was first introduced to poetry and spoken word in the 8th grade. It wasn't until I was 19 years old that I began to gain my footing in what would be the thing that saves my life. Poetry went from being a hobby something that I did to pass time to being the very outlet that I used to heal from the things that I have experienced.

Four years ago, I laid in a hospital bed bleeding to death for reasons still unknown to this day. I decided that if I lived I would accomplish all the things that I set out to do. The one thing that was at the forefront of my heart was returning to the artform that brings me the most peace and stability. My influences are Nikki Giovanni, Rita Dove, Brenda Jackson, Tupac Shakur, Common just to name a few. I am also inspired by television and movies. The driving force behind my work these days is lived experienced. I have told stories that accurately depict struggles that I have dealt with as way of coping. I

am the author of two books, *Tell My Son, Thank You* and *Bittersweet 16 Lost Soul... Naïve Girl*. *Tell My Son, Thank You* is a collection of pieces that I have performed over the years which introduces my art to some and presents it to others. *Bittersweet 16 Lost Soul... Naïve Girl* is a project that I put together after experiencing sexual assault earlier in the year. Poetry was the outlet that I chose to begin the healing process. I am using this project to raise a awareness and answer the question as to why the report has gone without being made. There are more stories than there are charges being filed and brought up and with my work I want to bring light to those instances. I am also an advocate for mental health and a survivor of the struggles that come with it.

ABOUT THE VISUAL ARTIST AWARDS JURY



(From left to right)

Tempestt Hazel – Co-Director/Co-Founder of Sixty Inches From Center.

Raphael Fonseca – Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art at the Denver Art Museum

JoAnne Northrup – Executive Director and Chief Curator of Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art

ABOUT THE GENERATIVE PERFORMING ARTIST AWARDS JURY



(From left to right)

Aaliyah Christina -Artist Programs Manager and Associate Curator at Links Hall

Cynthia Post Hunt - Dance and Theater Programmer for The Momentary and Cofounder of Inverse Performance Art Festival.

Lolivone de la Rosa – Program Manager for New Music USA, and adjunct professor of New York University Tisch School of the Arts.

Stuart Carden - Artistic director of Kansas City Repertory Theatre

ABOUT CHARLOTTE STREET

Charlotte Street centers Kansas City’s most forward-thinking visual artists, writers, and performers— acting as the primary incubator, provocateur, and connector for the region’s contemporary arts community, and its leading advocate on the national stage. Since 1997, Charlotte Street has distributed over \$2 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.

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