



BELLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2011 GRANTS

Lacey Bryant Visual Arts San José, California

Lacey is hard to define as an artist since she works with so many media — paint, ink and paper, cardboard, yarn, pumpkins. She paints primarily on wood surfaces, often utilizing found wood for the unique textures and the history they offer. Her subjects are dreamlike, inhabiting a realm of strange, nostalgic sweetness with undercurrents of darkness and mystery. Contrasting cute with creepy, familiar with odd, Lacey sets out to quietly captivate and unnerve her viewers through the underlying tension of her work.



“Lacey will continue to grow and accomplish with her work as it is not something she does, but who she is.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Fabian Debora Visual Arts Los Angeles, California

Fabian is a painter and muralist whose life story is as inspiring and compelling as his work. Fabian grew up the son of a heroin addict and spent the first three decades of his life drifting in and out of gangs and jail before finally turning himself around and becoming a painter of uncommon grace and power. Fabian’s work takes scenes from the East Los Angeles neighborhoods where he was raised and transforms them into images of hope and redemption. Visually, Fabian’s work follows the conventions of the Chicano Art Movement,

fusing Mesoamerican imagery with graffiti styling, Mexican Catholic motifs and inner-city subject matter. Thematically, Fabian charts his own course.

“Though Fabian’s upbringing was severely tarnished by L.A.’s imperfections, he has chosen not to dwell on what went wrong in his life. What most impresses me about him is his expansive, hopeful vision.”

— Belle Foundation scout



Heather Houston Music Santa Cruz, California

Heather is a natural born singer, songwriter, performer, conductor, teacher and group facilitator. She leads singing circles and conducts two choirs: Women with Wings and Yala Lati. Yala Lati is an uplifting vocal ensemble whose sound is rooted in the ancient wisdom of women singing together in sacred circle. She is as gifted at leading hundreds of people in singing or chanting together harmoniously as she is at guiding a single student in discovering the intricacies and nuances of his or her own voice.



“She is a natural leader who inspires people to sing as a bridge for community building, engagement with social justice issues, healing, growth and self-empowerment.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Natasha Lisitsa
Installation Art
San Francisco, California

Natasha is forging a new art form that blends installation art with natural elements. In 2009, Natasha challenged her creative talent when she was asked to create a “big, dramatic piece” for the de Young Museum.



Her response was — “Elemental” — which utilized 500 blossoming branches of forsythia, 30 manzanita trees, 200 trunks of curly willow, 500 stems of anthurium and 100 feet of copper tubing. Trained as an electrical engineer, Natasha worked in Silicon Valley’s tech industry before deciding to follow her passion and pursue her love of everything artistic and floral.

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“It was clear to everyone in the room that this was an extraordinary blend of floristry, artistry and engineering.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Jeff Mills
Theatre
Santa Barbara, California

Jeff is an actor, director, movement artist, musician, and teacher and is best known for his work with BOXTALES Theatre Co. in Santa Barbara. He has toured throughout the U.S. and Mexico and produced several works with this theatre company.



Through this work he excites imaginations, strengthens cultural pride, encourages tolerance, and engages young people in the excitement and immediacy of live performance. His nature is of the highest caliber and his commitment to the arts is all-encompassing.

“Jeff continues to make art that matters in our communities. His passion is contagious and his projects are never-ending.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Adam Wagener
Music
Sunnyvale, California



Adam Wagener is a musician, engineer and entrepreneur. Here is the quintessential starving artist who continues his pursuit of music while utilizing his training as an engineer and his personal commitment to helping people. Last year, Adam was a volunteer in Tekax, Mexico to help install a clear water filtration system. He taught himself how to play the guitar and, while studying abroad in 2007 in Munich, Germany, he began writing his own music. Adam took his love of music and put it together with his engineering expertise and has started a company called Trash Amps. The result is the creation of iPod speakers and guitar amplifiers out of everyday objects that people usually throw away. Trash Amps is the remarkable integration of Adam’s passion for music combined with his keen engineering mind to honor his personal commitment to conserving the earth’s resources.

“Adam is an extremely bright and highly creative musician with the ingenuity and passion that portends great possibilities for the future.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Collaborative Grants

Pippa Arend, Beth Burns & Joy Cartier

Education

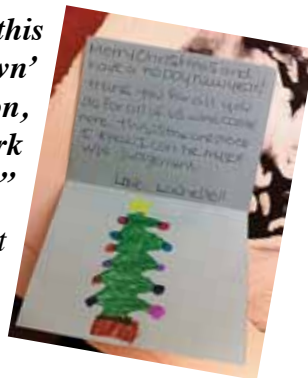
Portland, Oregon



In 2002, Pippa Arend, Beth Burns and Joy Cartier got together and transformed a brilliant idea into a tangible reality when they created p:ear, a nonprofit that builds positive relationships with homeless and transitional youth, ages 15 to 24, through education, art and recreation to affirm personal worth and create more meaningful and healthier lives. Each year their programs serve almost 900 homeless and transitional young people. To truly exit homelessness, kids must develop the internal strength, skills and foresight to make healthy choices and p:ear provides a safe, non-judgmental environment in which youth are trusted to outgrow unproductive and harmful behaviors.

“I feel honored to say this organization is in ‘my town’ and humbled by the vision, dedication and hard work of these three women.”

— Belle Foundation scout



Brendan Simon & Robert Michael

Theatre

San Francisco, California

Brendan Simon is a playwright, songwriter, actor and choreographer and Robert Michael is an accomplished musical director, composer and actor. The two artists have been collaborating for the past three years and have created beautiful art ever since. Their first major collaborative piece is a new musical called *Torch: The Musical*. They pay their actors out of pocket (although the actors would work for free) because they know the true value of their artists' time. Robert and Brendan are such giving and loving human beings that production staff, musicians and actors chomp at the bit to work with them. They are an inspiration to the theatre community.



“These two masterminds bring a depth to musical theatre that I’ve never witnessed before. They push their actors to be their very best vocally and dramatically.”

— Belle Foundation scout

The Belle Foundation for Cultural Development was established upon the belief that education, the arts and humanities are among the most vital elements of human civilization. The Belle Foundation acknowledges also that through the actions and achievements of individuals our culture not only continues to develop, but flourishes.

It is the mission of the Belle Foundation for Cultural Development to actively support and promote the arts, humanities and education, through recognition and encouragement of the creative efforts and visionary ideas demonstrated by individuals in these fields.

BELLE
FOUNDATION FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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