



BELLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2014 GRANTS

Andres Amador Sculpture San Francisco, California

Andres Amador's artwork is created in the sand, at low tide and isn't what you usually see in a traditional art gallery. He refers to his work as "playa paintings" and was inspired while studying geometry, ancient architecture and crop circles. This impermanent canvas has opened up whole new avenues of exploration and continues to delight the artist with possibilities. He says that "it has turned the art form into a practice of process over product."



"I was fascinated not only by the beauty of his work but by the fact that he creates massive drawings on beaches where his work will inevitably be washed away by the tide in a matter of hours."

— Belle Foundation scout

John Cerney Murals Salinas, California

Anyone who has driven on Highway 101 from Northern California to Southern California has likely seen the work of John Cerney. He is a Salinas native whose artwork can best be described as "giant cut-out art," ordinarily viewed from the comfort of your automobile. In 1995, he created a series of 10 large field workers



(18 feet tall) for a local farmer who wanted to pay tribute to the agricultural labor force. Mr. Cerney found his blueprint and was soon branching out and putting together group scenes, often telling a story while using a Norman Rockwell-like sense of humor.

"I have admired and enjoyed his pieces for years, and much of his work celebrates Salinas as much as the work of John Steinbeck does."

— Belle Foundation scout

Lianne Marie Dobbs Music New York, New York



Lianne Marie Dobbs has been described as having considerable acting chops, a voice that can bring tears to your eyes and a passion that makes the room crackle with energy. Ever since performing in "lost musicals" in the San Francisco Bay Area, Ms. Dobbs has had a love for the Great American Songbook. The San Francisco native is now happily residing in New York City where she thrives on doing new works. A self-described "sassy brunette with a vintage soul," Ms. Dobbs received rave reviews of "Everything Old is New Again," a cabaret show she created by studying old songs in music libraries rather than picking well-known favorites.

"She has a strikingly good voice, with a speciality in 1930s and 1940s era music, and the creativity and drive to develop new shows."

— Belle Foundation scout

Lila Gemellos
Murals
San José, California

Lila Gemellos paints vivid murals, transforms shoes into beautiful works of art and teaches children's art classes. Her most well-known mural covers three massive walls at Falafel Drive-In in Santa Clara, California. She's done other murals at local businesses and also worked with area schools. She started drawing on sneakers at Starbucks and in true Silicon Valley style took orders off the back of napkins — she hasn't looked back since. She says "I'm not into the art of fashion really. I'm into making art really fashionable."



"Lila can transform a dull concrete wall into a colorful story or take a plain pair of sneakers and turn them into a fashion statement."

— Belle Foundation scout

Rachel Kulchin
Photography
Portland, Oregon

Rachel Kulchin started her photography career in high school. Since then, she has traveled the world in search of the perfect photograph. From the jungles of Southeast Asia to the glaciers of Patagonia, her love of travel and her passion for life is infused in her work. Her most recent venture was to Uganda with "Photographers Without Borders." While there she worked with Youth Alive to take photographs that captured the important work this organization does in Kampala.



"I was struck by her gentle spirit that combines beautifully with courage and integrity to help her find images that capture the soul of a place and its people."

— Belle Foundation scout

Magnolia Laurie
Sculpture
Baltimore, Maryland

Magnolia Laurie was born in Massachusetts, raised in Puerto Rico and has lived in several other countries. She is a painter who works in a variety of mediums that include installation, drawing and sculpture. Ms. Laurie's work is delicate and makeshift, tensely poised between creation and destruction. In college she realized what art could be for her — "a platform, an area where I can engage in the conversation, propose or reorganize ideas about what it means to be a citizen of this world we all live on together."

"Magnolia has worked really hard to carve out a niche in the crowded field of abstract art. She's not a bombastic painter so her work must be done very well for people to take notice, which they have."



— Belle Foundation scout

Michelle Matson
Sculpture
New York, New York



Michelle Matson is a sculptor who has made life-size funky paper-based sculptures to smaller, delicate pieces that include golf balls and bananas. Her work has been described as "bizarre" and "filled with humor" but also "stunning" and "truly beautiful." The level of detail that goes into each piece is apparent.

"I've never seen anything like her work; it's super different, weird and really beautiful. You can tell that a ton of energy goes into every piece she makes."

— Belle Foundation scout

Trent Nahas
Sculpture
Oakland, California



Trent Nahas creates art by attaching found objects together and then painting them to appear as if they are made of metal. He uses a variety of media, including canvas paintings with acrylic and oil, sculptures of found objects and mixed-up media. One day he found a dried crab shell in the sand next to the arm of some unknown action-figure. He said when he put the two together the

crab seemed to come back to life and inspired him “to make hundreds of these beautiful little freaks.” From crustaceans and harnessed chaos to scavenged flotsam and re-purposed smorgas, this upcoming artist has shown at Burning Man and co-op galleries.

“His sculpture is just gorgeous. His work is especially fascinating because it’s made from found objects. He is very much a part of the zeitgeist as he is repurposing materials into beautiful objects.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Chad Scheppner
Education
Topanga, California

Chad Scheppner has been working as a director, instructor, writer, and administrator of the performing arts for children over the last 20 years. His diverse work history in Los Angeles ranges from creating plays with at-risk youth and multi-generational



gang families, to producing and directing scores of children’s musicals each year, to musical directing and conducting children’s choirs. A few years ago, Mr. Scheppner began a project called Theater 31 that initially struggled to keep less than 30 children interested in stage but is now a program that thrives with 500 active and interested participants.

“Chad has had a profound effect on kids’ lives ... giving them hands-on experience that molds their understanding of the arts, teaching lessons and making memories that will last a lifetime.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Freya Seeburger
Music
San José, California

Freya Seeburger began playing the cello when she was eleven, thanks to a dedicated middle-school music teacher who gave her the opportunity. What that



teacher discerned was confirmed just a few months later when Ms. Seeburger auditioned for a seat in the newly formed Longmont Youth Symphony in Colorado, and was selected even then as their first principal cellist. Since moving to California in 2010, she has started a busy career in both classical ensembles

and rock bands. Ms. Seeburger also organizes a performing arts showcase called “The Commons” which juxtaposes classical performing arts and contemporary culture. Her true love and passion for the music carries with each note she plays.

“Freya is a classically trained, punk rock spirited girl with the charm and elegance to defy the stereotype that classical music isn’t cool.”

— 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.

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