

THE BELLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2019 GRANTS

Our mission is to actively support the arts, humanities, and education through recognition of creative efforts and visionary ideas demonstrated by individuals in these fields.

Our grants are funded by our generous donors, to whom we are so grateful.

Donors - this is because of you. Thank you!

Paulino Deleal
Theatre
San José, CA



Deleal, a former graffiti artist, found a home in theater as a scenic painter. He draws, paints, and textures artwork in the form of scenery, murals, hardwood floors, marble columns and more. He is also capable of small, realistic detail that is mesmerizing - almost like an illusion.

<http://www.abouttheartists.com/artists/415710-paulino-deleal>

"With an innate understanding of where to create that shadow or how to angle a single line, he creates masterpieces."

Jhovany R. De Ala
Visual Arts
Oakland, CA



A self-taught mixed media artist, De Ala's prints - made from intensive hand cut wood carvings - are designed in the manner of protest posters used at marches, rallies and events to promote human rights and equality.

<https://www.instagram.com/>

"The viewers of his work feel immediate compassion, solidarity, and even an inspiration to action themselves."

Megan Gnekow
Visual Arts and Education
Santa Cruz, CA



"Her dedicated pursuit of creating artwork that teaches and inspires reminds us about the complexities of life on our fragile planet."

Equally passionate about the arts and sciences - specifically wildlife conservation - Gnekow imparts a greater purpose behind every piece of art she creates. Much of her work is focused on endangered species or species of special concern - and making that knowledge accessible to an audience that is broader than the scientific community.

<https://www.megangnekow.com>

Sarah Bianco
Visual Arts
Santa Cruz, CA

"When I walked into Sarah's studio I was completely mesmerized by paintings that appeared to be on...drop cloths?"

As both a fine artist and the owner of a decorative painting/interior design business, Bianco was inspired to use her paint-splattered canvas drop cloths as the background for her "Tarp Series", which she describes as a bridge between her commercial painting and her fine art.

<http://www.sarahbianco.com>



Edward M. Corpus
Visual Arts
Seaside, CA

“The Cultural Subversive Art of Edward M. Corpus” is the phrase that greets visitors to Corpus’ website. His paintings, self-described as “art to subvert the dreadfully normal,” reflect his goal to create provocative works that express his values of social justice and inclusion.

<https://emcanimator.com>



“Edward is an artist who puts himself into his paintings, be it his political philosophy or his life experiences, and that makes his work compelling.”

“His photographs are not pretty - in fact, quite the opposite - they are raw. They show the side of life many choose to overlook. They are unblinking. They are powerful.”

Balto Montion
Photography
Watsonville, CA

Montion is a bold street photographer who eschews digital photography for 35mm film and whose subjects frequently come from his hometown of Watsonville, CA. His eye for composition and choice of subject matter combined with passion for his art promise an exciting future.

<https://www.instagram.com/seanbalto/>



“I was very touched by her work, and it moved me with how visceral the emotions were in her prints.”

Radoslava Mončeková Hrabovská
Visual Arts
Bojničky, Slovakia

Hrabovská was recently part of an exhibit in Gilroy, CA, of artists sharing their narrative of being a female/woman. Along with her three powerful pieces, she included this note to the gallery owner: “I always kept silent and didn't believe. The others have always beaten me. That changed and I started talking. My talk is in pictures.”

<https://www.artsy.net/artist/radoslava-hrabovska>



Phaan Howng
Performance Art
Baltimore, MD

Using large-scale landscape paintings, sculptures, and installations, Howng's work centers around various narratives and landscapes that reflect nature thriving in a utopian post-human planet, or what she terms an “optimistic post-apocalypse.”

<https://phaan.com>

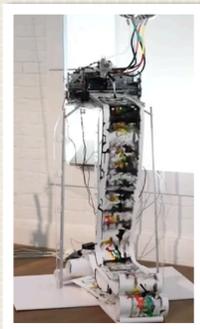
“Howng is using art to start difficult conversations about climate change and the impact humans are having on our planet.”



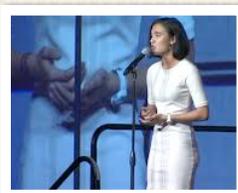
Natan Lawson
Visual Arts
Baltimore, MD

As an alternative approach to traditional painting, Lawson builds machines that apply acrylic paint, permanent marker, gel pen, and even complex airbrush techniques. This method involves stops and starts, swapping colors, misregistration, error, and imperfection, all of which become part of each final piece and reflect a process that is not fully streamlined or predictable.

<https://www.natanlawson.com>



“Natan definitely falls into the category of artists who are doing something interesting, funky and unique.”



Eleanor Wikstrom
Poetry
Oakland, CA

“I am in awe of the ambition, and quite frankly, the bravery of a powerful voice like this on the cusp of adulthood.”

Wikstrom has been writing prose and poetry since she could form sentences. She was named Oakland's Vice Youth Poet Laureate for 2019, a post that involves various public appearances as an ambassador for literacy, arts, and youth expression. She recently performed her poem “Too Good” for a room full of 1200 people at the YWCA annual luncheon honoring Christine Blasey Ford.