



BELLE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2012 GRANTS

Gina Beavers

Visual Arts

New York, New York



The diverse body of work of Gina Beavers includes palettes, food, body work and child-like paintings. Ms. Beavers has a “distinctively skeptical approach to painting” and

her work is far from systematic. Her paintings stand out from the crowd and have been described as meaty, edgy and playful. She is able to incorporate humor into her work and yet remain sincere — a difficult but impressive balance.

“Gina is always finding new ways to be inventive with her work.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Trina Merry

Visual Arts

San José, California

In 2006 Trina Merry began as a “live painter” on stage with a band whose canvas happened to be a human body. In June 2011 at the SubZERO Festival in San José, Trina debuted her talents to the wider public with the Art Alive Gallery conceptual installation. Partnering with modern dance group Tahira, the exhibit and performance were an astounding hit and



Ms. Merry made the decision to be a full-time fine art body painter. Since then, she has dedicated herself to creating works of art on and with the human form. She has worked with photographers, dance groups, models and friends to push the perception of the art form into a valid genre rather than just a commercialized gimmick.

“Trina has grown by leaps and bounds in the past three years in the field of fine art body painting with every sign of exploring new ground in this genre.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Tina Morrill

Art Activism

San José, California

ArtBox Project SJ

Tina Morrill is the motivating force behind the Art Box Project San José. She has enlisted artists to decorate 34 utility boxes with artistic designs around San José. Her goals for creating this project were to integrate art into many San José neighborhoods and support local artists, who get paid for their work. It was also designed as an anti-graffiti effort because most graffiti artists tend not to deface art pieces. The artwork is intended to enhance the environment, be dynamic and show respect to all communities.

“She had the idea for the art boxes, understood that it filled a need and took the steps necessary to get it off the ground.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Cuong Nguyen
Visual Arts
San José, California



Cuong Nguyen was born in Vietnam and trained to be a traditional portrait artist when he was just 10 years old. His passion is drawing human faces and he has been known to approach strangers to request that they model for him. Although his focus is on the human form, he remains quite versatile as an artist. From creating pastel paintings on pavement to still lifes and abstract work, art has always been his passion.

“Cuong has a deep artistic drive in him that propels him to continue painting, exploring and growing as an artist.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Maura Thompson
Visual Arts
Oakland, California

Maura Thompson is a young artist who has followed her creative passions across the country. From switching colleges so she could pursue a degree in art to



finding a new job that would allow her more time to paint, Ms. Thompson is excited about her future as an artist. She loves spending time in her studio and embraces her creative impulse, which seeps into every aspect of her life.

“She makes things because she loves it and this grant will help keep her creative passions burning brightly.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Chloe Veltman
Music
San Francisco, California



An extraordinary arts critic and classical musician, Chloe Veltman is also the director and host of KALW public radio’s Voicebox, a weekly show highlighting Bay Area singing. Since 2010, Ms. Veltman has devoted herself to this program to explore the art form in depth and to share the best of the local music scene. Her breathtaking knowledge of singing traditions ranges from opera to jazz, from medieval madrigals to Negro spirituals, from show tunes to Tuvan throat singing. While unpaid for this work, Ms. Veltman is committed to spotlighting vocal artists who have increasingly fewer mainstream media outlets to talk seriously about their craft.

“What really makes Chloe so remarkable is her relentless commitment to putting on an original show each week that celebrates the joy of singing.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Maria Walker
Visual Arts
Brooklyn, New York

Maria Walker’s paintings have been described as “rugged and ragged” with “tough, unfinished beauty.” She uses acrylic paint, canvas, wood, staples, wood screws, wood glue and D-rings. Starting with the stretcher, Ms. Walker makes what could be described as a three-dimensional drawing, creating a new form that inspires her when she goes to paint. Ms. Walker’s approach is an interesting cross between painting and sculpture, and she uses the canvas in a very unique and compelling way.



“Her work is innovative and interesting and there’s a physicality to her work that’s compelling.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Laura Weinbach

Music

Oakland, California



Laura Weinbach, with her band Foxtails Brigade, plays jazz standards, French love songs and haunting originals that are potent in equal measure. This is because each song receives a personalization that, regardless of actual writing credits, makes it

an original composition. Quirky yet superb songwriting and arranging, as well as unorthodox instrumentation create sonic scapes that are jarring and comforting, foreign and catchy. Along with impressive talent and originality comes a relentlessness in her to get her music in front of people. Creating well-produced studio recordings, artful music videos, original concert handbills and more, it's immediately evident that every cent the band makes (and surely then some) is reinvested.

“In her is a rare creative drive and spirit that gives life to beautiful, vulnerable music with an emotional rawness one can’t ignore and feels privileged to hear.”

— Belle Foundation scout

Derek Weisberg

Sculpture

New York, New York

Derek Weisberg is a sculptor who constantly explores the human condition through a frozen moment in fired clay. A viewer of his work fully experiences emotion and expression emitting from the sculpture itself. This is a conscious intention of Mr. Weisberg ... through the eyes, mouth and hand gestures, the viewer is able to feel what the maker of the ceramic figure was feeling at the time of its creation. Although Mr. Weisberg has lived in New York City for the past year and is yet to be “discovered,” he remains unscathed by the New York art scene pressure to create commodified works. Mr. Weisberg strives to create works of art that are emotional and psychological self-portraits. Through his work he aims to make sense of his life, experiences and the times we live.

“He continues to create art that is genuine and authentic to his personal experiences, which he feels connects him to humanity.”

— 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.

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A decorative flourish consisting of two symmetrical, curved lines that meet at a central point, forming a scroll-like shape.