

MIKE KELLEY FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Rachel Bauch, Polskin Arts

bauchr@finnpartners.com, 323-841-4139

MIKE KELLEY FOUNDATION AWARDS INAUGURAL ARTIST PROJECT GRANTS

Grants to Nine L.A. Organizations Totaling \$310,000 Will Support Artist Projects and Continue Kelley's Philanthropic Legacy



LOS ANGELES, CA, April 6, 2016—The Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts today announced the first recipients of its Artist Project Grants— Center for the Study of Political Graphics, Clockshop, Coaxial Arts Foundation, Echo Park Film Center, LA Filmforum, Los Angeles Poverty Department, The Mistake Room, Pasadena Arts Council/KNOWLEDGES, and Santa Monica Museum of Art.

Launched in June of last year, the Artist Project Grants seek to further Mike Kelley's philanthropic work and honor his legacy by supporting innovative projects with visual artists at L.A. nonprofit institutions and organizations. The goal is to benefit both visual artists and arts organizations alike and to support compelling and inventive projects in any medium, particularly work that is under-known, or has proven difficult to make or to fund.

The 2016 grant recipients include both established and new organizations, and their projects represent a diverse mix of media and content. The supported works range from a series of new commissions by members of the Echo Park Film Center Co-Op, honoring their unsung efforts at this unique volunteer-driven organization, to a collaboration with artist Rosten Woo and Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) on how zoning codes disenfranchise Downtown communities.

"Since 1985, we've been making art that connects the experience of people living in poverty in the Skid Row community to the social forces that shape their lives, in other words, creating citizen artist witnesses," explained LAPD Founding Artistic Director John Malpede. "With the Kelley Foundation grant we'll be addressing new threats to the area's hard won affordable housing, inviting both new and old residents of a quickly gentrifying Downtown to examine, question, and imagine how decisions get made and how our city gets created."

The Mistake Room will bring Los Angeles-born, Guadalajara-based Eduardo Sarabia back to the city for an innovative survey show that will weave together the artist's previous projects in a complex narrative video and installation environment. The project's deeply self-reflective nature will provide Sarabia with

a rare and risky opportunity—a chance to explore in-depth the meaning and relevance of his artistic work to date.

“This project will be the boldest endeavor I’ve ever undertaken, both formally and conceptually, bringing together ten years of work and five years of research in a new kind of ‘total artwork,’” said Sarabia. “It’s not an easy project, and without the fearless support of The Mistake Room and now the generous grant from the Kelley Foundation, I don’t think it would be feasible at all. I’m so grateful and excited.”

Following an enthusiastic response to the initial call for Letters of Inquiry, the Foundation invited 64 eligible organizations to submit full applications. These were then assessed by an independent review panel comprising artists Paul McCarthy, Frances Stark and Pae White, writer and curator Carol Cheh, and MOMA Curator Yasmil Raymond in a competitive process.

“The guidance and vision of the review panelists in this first year of the grant was invaluable,” noted Mary Clare Stevens, Executive Director of the Foundation and former Manager of the artist’s studio. “The selected projects reflect the incredible range of artistic and curatorial practices here in L.A. We are thrilled to recognize both the artists and the important work of the organizations.” Foundation board chair John C. Welchman added, “Mike set up the Foundation in 2007 to help arts organizations engaged in innovative programming or practices, often supporting work that took risks or had been overlooked. This first group of awards reflects that spirit.”

The grants cover project-related expenses and allow for a modest portion of the organization’s overhead costs. Perhaps most significantly, the grants include a dedicated fee for the artist(s). The grant-funded projects will take place throughout 2016 and 2017, and the Foundation plans to follow them as they unfold and share updates on its website.

For organizations interested in applying for the next round of Artist Project Grants, updated information on the 2017 competition will be posted later this Spring on the Foundation’s [website](#) (in the meantime, last year’s Guidelines remain on this site for reference only).

###

About the Foundation

The Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts seeks to further Kelley’s philanthropic work through grants for innovative projects that reflect his multifaceted artistic practice. The Foundation also preserves the artist’s legacy more broadly and advances the understanding of his life and creative achievements. The nonprofit Foundation was established by the artist in 2007. For additional information about the Foundation, please visit www.mikekelleyfoundation.org.

About the Artist

The work of artist Mike Kelley (1954-2012) embraced performance, installation, drawing, painting, video, sound works and sculpture. Kelley began his career in the late 1970s with solo performances, image/text works, and gallery and site-specific installations. He came to prominence in the 1980s with a series of sculptures composed of common craft materials. The artist’s later work addressed architecture and filmic narratives using the theory of repressed memory syndrome coupled with sustained biographic and pseudo-biographic inquiry into his own aesthetic and social history. Regarded as one of the most influential artists of our time, Kelley produced a body of deeply innovative work in dialogue with American popular culture as well as both modernist and alternative traditions.

Image Captions (L-R): Eduardo Sarabia, *Puerto Vallarta*, 2004, Digital C-print on Fujiflex Crystal Archive, 42 x 55 inches. © Eduardo Sarabia, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and The Mistake Room, Los Angeles. Los Angeles Poverty Department’s Walk The Talk, 2014. Photographer Henriëtte Brouwers. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Poverty Department. Andrew Kim, *The Peacock* (2015). Still by Andrew Kim from film by the same name. © EPFC Co-op.

**Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts
2016 Artists Project Grants**

Center for the Study of Political Graphics (CSPG)

To Protect and Serve? 50 Years of Posters Protesting Police Violence with multiple artists
\$25,000

In keeping with [CSPG](#)'s tradition of responding to issues of the day, *To Protect and Serve?* will explore how incidents of police violence against people of color are part of a long history of repression, a history that the artists in this exhibition call upon us to challenge and change. The exhibition will include digital reproductions of vintage and contemporary political posters by such prominent artists as Robbie Conal, the Guerrilla Girls, and Lalo Alcaraz, as well as emerging, largely anonymous, street artists like Vazta, and those selected through an open call for submissions. Scheduled for December 2017 at the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in Venice and then at El Mercado la Paloma, a Downtown community center, food court and gallery, the project will continue CSPG's mission of introducing new and diverse audiences to the visual power and complex cultural contexts of political posters.

Clockshop

Courtesy the Artists and Lauren Halsey @ *Radio Imagination*
\$30,000

As part of [Clockshop](#)'s year-long commissioning project, [Radio Imagination](#), celebrating the late Pasadena science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler, Courtesy the Artists (Alexandro Segade and Malik Gaines) will create a new choral work based on firsthand research in Butler's archive at the Huntington Library. The project continues the artists' use of performance to revitalize historical texts through song, and will also include an animated backdrop for the production based on visual materials in the archives. The work will premiere at the outdoor Levitt Pavilion in Pasadena this fall as part of the related Armory Center for the Arts. Using eclectic materials ranging from crystals and LED lights to found objects, Lauren Halsey creates site-specific installations or "kingdoms" inspired by the speculative nature of Funk music and science fiction. Having been deeply influenced by Butler, Halsey will create for the Armory show an "Afrofuturist fantasyscape" drawn from research at the Huntington Library and the setting of Butler's novel *Dawn* (1987).

Coaxial Arts Foundation

Experimental Half-Hour Residencies: Jennifer Juniper Stratford and Suzy Poling
\$10,000

[Coaxial](#)'s new Downtown space will host media artists Jennifer Juniper Stratford and Suzy Poling for 10 weeks this summer to create new video works. With a focus on obsolete or forgotten communication technologies and cast-off equipment from the entertainment industry, JJ Stratford produces cyberpunk and public access television programs, immersive installations, stage shows, music videos, and virtual reality ventures. Suzy Poling works with video, sound, and an array of other media to explore such topics as Archaic Futurism, time travel, ritual and performance, and natural phenomena. Both artists will also tape live sessions of Coaxial's signature television program, Experimental Half-Hour (EHH), which mixes old analog technologies with new high-definition equipment, allowing experimental musicians, performance artists, dancers, and comedians to reach a wider audience.

Echo Park Film Center (EPFC)

A Day In The Sun with multiple artists

\$35,000

In recognition of their countless hours as the Center’s educators, programmers, projectionists and facilitators, [Echo Park Film Center](#) Co-op members—Rick Bahto, Emmett Casey, Brenda Contreras, Paolo Davanzo, Andrew Kim, Eve-Lauryn Little Shell LaFountain, Kate Lain, Lisa Marr, Shauna McGarry, Beaux Gest Mingus, Gina Napolitan, Will O’Loughlen, Ellie Parker, Miko Reverezza, Chloe Reyes, Cosmo Segurson, Sharmaine Starks, Mike Stoltz, Ariel Teal, and Penelope Uribe-Abee—will be commissioned to make new experimental lens-based works exploring their relationships to Los Angeles. Coming from all walks of life, Co-op members include both experienced and self-taught filmmakers, queer identifying filmmakers, artists of color, art school graduates, and EPFC youth film program alumni. Their films, single and multichannel projections, site-specific installations, itinerant performances, and multimedia and expanded cinema experiments will be presented throughout 2017 at the Center, around the city via the EPFC Filmmobile and EPFC Filmcycle, and online.

LA Filmforum

Survey of International Contemporary Media Art Across Los Angeles with multiple artists

\$50,000

[Filmforum](#) will mount a series of monographic in-person programs from significant yet underseen international artists Claudio Caldini (Argentina), Helga Fanderl (Germany/France), Malcolm Le Grice (UK), Sergei Loznitsa (Belarus/Germany), Joost Rekveld (Netherlands), Daichi Saito (Japan/Montreal), Malena Szlam (Chile/Montreal), and others including the short films of Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Thailand). Despite international recognition, these artists have rarely, if ever, screened in Los Angeles due to cost and logistical complexities; much of the work requires optimal projection in theatrical settings, and/or the presence of the filmmakers themselves. Visiting artists will develop screenings and related programs at various local venues, from traditional cinemas to universities, artist-run spaces, and galleries, affording L.A. audiences unprecedented access to these important but seldom-seen media works.

Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD)

The Back 9: Golf and Zoning Policy in Los Angeles with Rosten Woo

\$50,000

LAPD and artist Rosten Woo will collaborate on the exhibition, *The Back 9*, a playable miniature golf course addressing current and historic zoning issues, from the origins of the SRO housing model that underpins Skid Row, to the potential endangering of the area’s affordable housing through the city’s new *re:code LA* initiative. To inform the exhibition’s content and design, Woo will lead free workshops with the public and LAPD company members—artists who work and live on Skid Row—and company members will also create a major theatrical performance using the golf course as their stage. The project is set to open in early 2017 at [LAPD](#)’s Skid Row History Museum & Archive.

The Mistake Room*Eduardo Sarabia: Drifting on a Dream*

\$35,000

Raised in East Los Angeles and now based in Guadalajara, Eduardo Sarabia explores complex moments of cultural contact, using storytelling, mythology, popular culture, music, spirituality, and social conventions as metaphors for broader geopolitical contexts. His “survey” show in September 2017 at [The Mistake Room](#) will take the form of a narrative video that will bring together all of the artist’s previous projects and characters in a series of interconnected stories. Sarabia will collaborate with an architect to transform TMR into a series of theatrical vignettes—a Mayan temple, a bar, a jungle in Southern Mexico, and a Border Patrol interrogation room—in which the objects and edited versions of the video will be installed.

Pasadena Arts Council (PAC)/KNOWLEDGES*KNOWLEDGES at Mount Wilson Observatory with multiple artists*

\$35,000

Through its [EMERGE Projects](#) PAC incubates new organizations, collectives, and artist projects, allowing them to seek funding through fiscal sponsorship. Under the PAC umbrella, the 2017 iteration of [KNOWLEDGES](#), an artist-led curatorial initiative, will invite artists to develop site-specific temporary installations at the Mount Wilson Observatory located 33 miles from Downtown in the Angeles National Forest. Working directly with Observatory staff during special-access tours of the complex, invited artists Scott Benzel, Jeff Cain, Krysten Cunningham, Erik Frydenborg, Channing Hansen, Gregory Michael Hernandez, Alice Könitz/Los Angeles Museum of Art, Karen Lofgren, Rosha Yaghmai, and Margaret Wertheim/Institute for Figuring will spend a year developing works in various media for sites throughout the Observatory grounds. The public will access the installations over a full weekend in June 2017. Along with programs, performances, lectures, screenings, tours of the Observatory, and telescope viewing sessions, the event will offer a rare opportunity for both artists and the public to experience this historic site in depth.

Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA)*Norm Laich: This Brush for Hire*

\$40,000

[SMMoA](#) will reemerge in a new downtown L.A. location in Spring 2017 with a survey of works by several renowned Los Angeles artists and one indispensable assistant—classically trained artist and sign painter Norm Laich. For 30 years Laich has produced sign painter’s-style hand lettering for an array of artists, including John Baldessari, Alexis Smith, Mike Kelley, Michael Asher, Lari Pittman, Allen Ruppersberg, and Liz Larner. From minimal interventions for Ed Ruscha to large installations for Barbara Kruger and Lawrence Weiner, Laich has been a principal partner in producing some of the era’s most iconic artworks. The exhibition, co-curated by John Baldessari and Meg Cranston, will include recreated paintings and graphic installations, along with a selection of Laich’s own work. The project explores the relationship between artists’ original work and the “hired hands” that helped create it, highlighting Laich’s profound yet largely unrecognized contribution to the contemporary visual art canon.