



MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE

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For Immediate Release

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## **Interchange Awards 16 Grants of \$20,000 to Regional Artists**

**All projects focus on social change in the communities where the artists live and work**

(Kansas City, MO) – Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) is pleased to announce the inaugural grantees of the Interchange program, supporting artist-led projects focused on social impact in M-AAA's six-state region of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. This pilot program is funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The sixteen grantees, our Interchange 2019 Fellows, represent all six states with projects addressing a range of social issues, reaching communities both rural and urban. M-AAA also recognizes twenty-five finalists whose projects represent high levels of excellence but were not funded.

Each funded artist will receive a project grant of \$20,000, as well as convenings and peer connection to other 2019 Interchange grantees. This will take the form of professional development retreats and ongoing mentoring through the life of the funded projects. Like the Artists360 program in Northwest Arkansas, Interchange builds upon M-AAA's expertise in supporting and activating artist networks that has been developed through the Artist INC program.

"We were impressed but not surprised by the quality of proposals we received from throughout the region," said Todd Stein, president and CEO of Mid-America Arts Alliance. "We are grateful to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for recognizing the need for funding of this kind of work happening outside of coastal arts hubs. Congratulations to all the grantees, and we appreciate all who applied."

Grantee Mark Menjivar has been awarded for *Open Letters*, a project that will engage Texas communities in dialogue around capital punishment issues by inviting individuals on Texas death row to author open letters to society about the trauma they and their families have experienced post-conviction. The public will be invited to events where the letters will be read and a facilitated structure for response will be provided. Transcripts from the events will later be compiled into a publication for distribution. "Getting this level of support will allow me to focus on working directly with the people and communities participating in the project," says Menjivar. "It allows me to fully enter in, knowing the project will be supported throughout each step. It makes a huge difference."

We present below a full list of grantees and finalists. Full details about the Interchange program may be found at [InterchangeArtistGrant.art](http://InterchangeArtistGrant.art).

### **Interchange 2019 Fellows**

[Ilene Berman](#) (St. Louis, MO)  
[Libby Bland](#) (Houston, TX)  
[Justin Bryant](#) (Roe, AR)  
[Crystal Z Campbell](#) (Tulsa, OK)  
[Simone Cottrell](#) (Fayetteville, AR)  
[Israel Alejandro Garcia Garcia](#) (Kansas City, MO)  
[Maura Garcia](#) (Overland Park, KS)  
[Nansi Guevera](#) (Brownsville, TX)  
[Kendell Harbin](#) (Kansas City, MO)  
[Dave Loewenstein](#) (Lawrence, KS)  
[Adam McKinney](#) (Fort Worth, TX)  
[Mark Menjivar](#) (San Antonio, TX)  
[Nathan Murray](#) (Lincoln, NE)  
[Erika Nelson](#) (Lucas, KS)  
[Xochitl Rodriguez](#) (El Paso, TX)  
[Jonathan Wei](#) (Austin, TX)

### **Interchange 2019 Finalists**

Marilyn Artus (Oklahoma City, OK)  
Nick Beaulieu (Omaha, NE)  
Connie Bonfy (Wichita, KS)  
Victoria Botero (Kansas City, MO)  
Elaine Bradford (Houston, TX)  
Geraldine Craig (Manhattan, KS)  
Damon Davis (St. Louis, MO)  
Jess Dugan (St. Louis, MO)  
Rebecca French (Houston, TX)  
Matthew Gossage (Austin, TX)  
Virginia Grise (Cedar Park, TX)  
Rebecca Harrison (Omaha, NE)  
Marc Newsome (Houston, TX)  
Romy Owens (Enid, OK)  
Gabriella Parsons (Lincoln, NE)  
Victor Payan (San Antonio, TX)  
Rachel Reynolds (Fox, AR)  
Carrie Schneider (Houston, TX)  
Andrew Scott (Dallas, TX)  
Christian Vasquez (Dallas, TX)  
Dan White (Kansas City, MO)  
Jonathan Whitfill (Lubbock, TX)  
Erika Wilhite (Fayetteville, AR)  
Benjamin Wills (Kansas City, MO)  
Lucas Wrench (Tulsa, OK)

**About Mid-America Arts Alliance**

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) works collaboratively to provide more art for more people across its six states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. M-AAA strengthens and supports artists, cultural organizations, and communities throughout our region and beyond. We are especially committed to enriching the cultural life of historically underserved communities by providing high quality, meaningful, and accessible arts and culture programs and services. We believe in more art for more people. Additional information about M-AAA is available at [www.maaa.org](http://www.maaa.org).

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