STATE ARTS COUNCIL GRANTS NEARLY $1 MILLION TO NEW JERSEY ARTISTS & WELCOMES NEW COUNCIL MEMBER

(Trenton, NJ) The New Jersey State Council on the Arts held its first public meeting of 2021 today, where nearly $1 million was awarded to 129 New Jersey artists through two grant programs.

The Individual Artist Fellowships are competitive awards to New Jersey artists in 12 rotating disciplines granted solely on independent peer panel assessment of work samples. The anonymous process is focused on artistic quality, and awards may be used to help artists produce new work and advance their careers. New Jersey artists applied for awards this year in the categories of crafts, interdisciplinary performance and interdisciplinary visual art, photography, and playwriting and screenwriting. This program is carried out in partnership with the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation.

See the complete list of the 2021 Fellowship Award recipients.

"In this unprecedented time, people across the world have turned to the arts," said Secretary of State Tahesha Way. "It is the passion and creativity of artists like the ones honored today who have gotten us through some of our most difficult times. New Jersey is home to a wonderfully diverse and extremely talented artist community, and I'm proud to work with the Arts Council to ensure ongoing support for our state's individual artists."

The Council also announced grants awarded through the Individual Artist Recovery Grant program. This new program was announced last fall in response to the impact of the COVID pandemic on New Jersey artists, many of whom are gig and freelance workers who were not immediately eligible for employment recovery benefits or funds.

The program was spearheaded by the Council's Director of Artist Services, Danielle Bursk, who said: "New Jersey's artists were impacted financially by the pandemic on multiple fronts: arts venues closed, meaning their creative work and income suffered. Plus, gig work and side-jobs dried up, leaving many artists with no source of income. Offering Individual Artist Recovery grants allows the State Arts Council to help New Jersey artists with financial recovery at a time when they need it most. Helping to support their recovery through this program is one way we can ensure that New Jersey's artists will continue to thrive and produce the incredible creative work that we are so proud of."

In addition to announcing this year's Artist Fellowships, the meeting also included the swearing-in of the newest member of the Council board, Felicia Grant.

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"We are thrilled to welcome Felicia to the State Arts Council," said Council Chair Elizabeth Mattson. "Felicia's insight and perspective come at a pivotal moment as the Council adapts our programs and services to better serve the field during a time of significant change. Her strong ties to New Jersey's arts and cultural communities will be extremely beneficial as we work to support artists and organizations in every corner of our state."

"As a designer and artist, I understand the crucial role the arts play in our everyday lives," said Felicia Grant. "Having spent most of my adult life as an advocate and devotee of the arts, I humbly welcome the opportunity to give voice to my passion through service on the NJ State Council on the Arts."

About the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, created in 1966, is a division of the NJ Department of State. The Council was established to encourage and foster public interest in the arts; enlarge public and private resources devoted to the arts; promote freedom of expression in the arts; and facilitate the inclusion of art in every public building in New Jersey. The Council receives direct appropriations from the State of New Jersey through a dedicated, renewable Hotel/Motel Occupancy fee, as well as competitive grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. To learn more about the Council, please visit www.artscouncil.nj.gov.

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