

# TRAVEL AND STUDY GRANT PROGRAM

400 SIBLEY STREET, SUITE 125  
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101-1928  
651.224.9431 or 1.800.995.3766  
FAX 651.224.3439  
E-MAIL: info@jeromefdn.org

SUPPORTED BY THE GENERAL MILLS FOUNDATION,  
THE ART AND MARTHA KAEMMER FUND  
OF HRK FOUNDATION  
AND THE JEROME FOUNDATION

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

J U N E   2 0 0 8

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The General Mills Foundation, the Art and Martha Kaemmer Fund of HRK Foundation and the Jerome Foundation announce the 2008 Travel and Study Grant Program recipients. Thirty-five grants totaling \$138,538, ranging in size from \$1,130 to \$5,000, were authorized. The Travel and Study Grant Program awards grants to individuals in Minnesota and the five boroughs of New York City to support travel for the purpose of professional development. Grant categories for this round were dance, literature and film and video. Three-person panels in each eligible arts discipline reviewed 248 applications; 97 from Minnesota and 151 from New York City. The panel recommendations were reviewed by the Jerome Foundation Directors, who authorized the following grants.

### DANCE

The Dance Panel reviewed 62 applications; 22 from Minnesota and 40 from New York City. Panelists were Trevor Carlson, Executive Director, Merce Cunningham Dance Company, New York; Mary Easter, Professor of Dance and Performance at Carleton College, Minnesota; and Sally Rouse, co-founder and dancer, James Sewell Ballet, Minnesota.

**Maggie Bergeron**, St. Paul, Minnesota, will travel to locations in Michigan, Texas, South Dakota, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Missouri, California and New Hampshire to research the experience of prom in multiple geographic locations and socioeconomic conditions. This will inform the creation of Maggie Bergeron & Company's upcoming production of *Leaver's Ball*. This new work is based on the microcosm of prom night as a rite of passage and a means of examining the social order of American culture.

**Lisa Berman**, St. Paul, Minnesota, and **Amy Sackett**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will go to Rotterdam, Holland, to work with B-Girl Aruna, explore and compare Hip Hop culture in Europe versus the U.S., and study Aruna's thriving art center, HipHopHuis, as a template for starting a similar organization in the Twin Cities. Berman and Sackett were introduced to Aruna in 2006 through the *B-Girl Be* summit at Intermedia Arts. Berman and Sackett are both choreographers working with the Twin Cities based hip hop dance companies, Rhythm Queenz and Collective. They are invested in creating positive female role models and breaking the choreographic gender stereotypes within hip-hop culture.

**Ann Carter**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will travel to the Appalachian Mountains; San Francisco, California; Portland, Oregon; and throughout the Midwest to study with masters of clogging, percussive dance, and social dance calling to further her work with these community-building dance forms. Carter is a member of the Wild Goose Chase Cloggers (WGCC), whose mission is to spread the joy of Appalachian music and dance. Within these social dance forms, calling is an integral part of the choreography. She wants to study these forms to better integrate this into her work with the WGCC as well as her own intergenerational collaborative dance group, Steppin' Out, which fuses cloggers with African American step teams.

**Pramila Vasudevan**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will travel to New Delhi, India to work with the Raqs Media Collective, artists who produce new media and multidisciplinary work from a contemporary perspective, and to study contemporary Indian performing arts through the School of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, a progressive hub of contemporary Indian art. Vasudevan started a new media and movement-based performance company, Aniccha Arts, in 2004. Her travels will help guide her vision for this company and the new work she will be developing over the coming year.

**Kyle Abraham**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Berlin, Germany in search of inspiration for a new creative process and ideas and imagery for a dance-related project in 2009. This will be a research-based trip looking at the cultural expression of sexuality in German and Japanese cultures. Among other activities, he will spend time with the collection at the Beate Uhse Erotik-Museum, which houses an Asian section of shunga by Utamaro, Harunobu and others alongside the major works of the Weimar-era artists. As a black American choreographer, he is interested in the ways Japanese and European cultures are synthesized into hip-hop culture, especially through gender and sexuality roles.

**Tze Chun**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina to research the history and culture of Argentine Tango through an intensive apprenticeship in tango, exploration of local Milongas, and investigation of tango shows in Buenos Aires. Chun is working choreographically with and against the emotional distance and cultural silence of her native Chinese culture and sees a parallel in Tango between the physically restrictive dresses with released and passionate movement. She is searching for a new movement style that explores themes of intimacy, social resistance, and unspoken personal histories.

**Adam McKinney**, New York City, will travel to Israel to continue exploring the connections among dance, movement, and healing with Ethiopian-Israeli communities. McKinney is the co-founder of DNA WORKS, an organization dedicated to furthering artistic expression and dialogue, focusing on issues of identity, culture, class and heritage. McKinney pursues the use of dance and movement as healing catalysts toward systemic change in communities where social and political violence have prevailed.

**Rebecca Thomas**, New York City will travel to Seville, Spain, undertaking three months of intensive study to gain a significant level of mastery with the *bata de cola* (long-train dress), a technique and sub-genre of Flamenco dance. She will incorporate it into her vocabulary and creative process. She will study with Milagros Menjibar, known as *la reina de la bata de cola*, (the queen of the long-train dress); Menjibar combines the emotional force and elegance of classical flamenco with her own revolutionary touches. Thomas will also study with Maria Angeles Gabaldón, Yolanda Heredia, and Belen Maya—all highly regarded teachers and dancers of this form.

**Adia Tamar Whitaker**, Brooklyn, New York, will attend a summer dance intensive in Kingston, Jamaica, where she will study Jamaican folklore in performance, culture and contemporary contexts. She will then travel to Ghana to study the Dahomean roots of Afro-Haitian dance in Ewe culture. In her choreographic work, Whitaker combines these traditional influences with hip-hop and modern dance vocabularies. She wants to study these forms at their source.

#### **FILM/VIDEO**

The Film and Video Panel examined 76 applications: 57 from New York City and 18 from Minnesota. Panelists were Lucinda Winter, Executive Director of the Minnesota Film and TV Board, Minnesota; filmmaker William Slichter, Minnesota; and Dorothy Thigpen, Executive Director of Third World Newsreel, New York City.

**Virgilio Bravo**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Santiago and Valparaiso, Chile, to reconnect with former political exiles and victims of political violence. His 2007 film *Estilo Hip Hop* chronicled Latin American hip hop activism and its impact on class and racial politics. He is extremely eager to reconnect with his native homeland and learn from former political exiles. He will travel under the mentorship of Rosa Ayress, who heads a non-governmental cultural arts institution that works with families of former political exiles. He hopes to learn from oral storytellers, working with families and elders on issues of loss of life and reconciliation. This will inform future film work.

**Katja Esson**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to the Kanatsiohareke Mohawk Community on the Akwesasne Reservation, to reach a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Mohawk people: their past, culture and everyday life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2003, Esson began *Skydancer*, a documentary project about the Mohawk Indian tradition of iron working and a spiritual reflection on a people building the cities of the future while rebuilding their own traditions. She is investigating a new type of documentary and has made specific inroads with the Kanatsiohareke Mohawk.

**Samantha Y. Goodner**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will spend three months in the Yunnan Province of China, to research a network of relationships among petty bureaucrats and low-level schoolteachers posted to rural or remote locations. Through focused immersion, she will gain impressions and information to inform a semi-fictional narrative on which to base her next film. She will discuss her proposed work with filmmakers in Kunming, and pursue collaborative relationships.

**Joe E. Jeffreys**, New York City, will travel to the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin to study, explore and catalog 16mm film outtakes from the landmark pre-Stonewall drag documentary *Queen* (1968) for possible use in future drag documentary projects. The *Queen* outtakes are available only at the Center. The filmmaker's work focuses on the auditory and visual record of male and female impersonation in New York City.

**Oliver Jolliffe**, New York City, will travel to Utah, New Mexico and Colorado to do research on the feasibility of shooting a video project using a thermal imaging cameras. The grant will allow him to visit three desired locations for a future shoot: White Sands in New Mexico, the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah and the Great Sand Dunes of Colorado. In 2005, Jolliffe directed a video art series that used thermal imaging cameras to highlight the thermal signatures of clothed/nude subjects in various landscapes. He now wants to take the technology a step further, scout locations and develop a coherent proposal for a film.

**Xeng Lor**, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, will study the history of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Hmong villages and cities in Laos and Thailand. Lor has videotaped interviews with Hmong gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the Upper Midwest and California. He now wishes to expand that investigation to understand what happened to GLBT Hmong in Laos and Thailand 30 to 60 years ago and what happens to them now. Did they ever marry? How did they live their lives in Laos and Thailand? He hopes to gather enough information through field research and taped conversations to move forward on his concept for a documentary film.

**Jila Nikpay**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will travel to New York City to meet with scholar Hamid Dabashi, a renowned Iranian cultural critic, author and professor in Islamic Studies at Columbia University. Her purpose is to deepen her aesthetic language and offer stimulating insight into her work, which is theatrical in nature and explores the themes of dislocation and loss. Nikpay is working on a new film that charts a new direction in her work. In preparation for that, she's been actively researching the work of Iranian scholars and believes that Dabashi's work on Iranian writers and filmmakers will inspire her work.

**Kevin Obsatz**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will travel to Boulder, Colorado, to attend two workshops at the Handmade Film Institute, learning to shoot and develop super-8 and 16mm film by hand. The goals of the Handmade Film Camp and the Wilderness Filmmaking Expedition are to put filmmakers at various levels of experience in direct contact with the tools necessary to make films by hand and teach them how to experiment with the process to expand their aesthetic and technical sensibilities. Obsatz expects these programs to be valuable to his development as an artist.

**Ann Oren**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Norway to do cultural and aesthetic research toward the creation of videos for a project titled *IN SECURITY*, in collaboration with Norwegian writer Anna Gutto and the Unbound Theater. Gutto approached Oren to collaborate on this work because she found the conceptual and aesthetic sensibility of Oren's video work enchantingly suitable for her writing. Many aspects of the work have cultural and visual references, which require Oren to spend time in Norway experimenting with actors in front of her camera, researching the Norwegian mindset of living and the natural phenomena that contribute to it.

**Eun-Ha Paek**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Turkey to explore performance-based motion and the outcome of less controlled movement as seen in unusual geographical formations to inform her animation work. As a first generation Asian living in a Western culture, Paek is curious about how different cultural influences come together. She will research traditional dance forms and collect imagery.

**Jake Yuzna**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will travel to three cities in Germany to visit the sites of the last days of Ernst Röhm's life, a founding member of the Nazi Party, the leader of a storm battalion, and an open homosexual. Yuzna will also research and interview young queer couples living in Berlin's arts community. The research will become the basis for the creation of a dramatic film consisting of two interwoven stories of queer relationships in Germany. The first will follow the final months of Ernst Röhm, climaxing with the Night of the Long Knives, when Hitler reportedly executed 85 people including several founding members of the Nazi Party and high ranking officers of the military. The second will center on a love story set in the queer arts community of present day Berlin.

**Adam Zucker**, New York City, will travel to Poland to explore a "lost world of Polish Jewry", and its recent renaissance via the Jewish Culture Festival, an annual event celebrating Jewish culture in a country that has lost almost its entire Jewish population. The Festival takes place in Cracow, a city 20 minutes from Auschwitz. The Jewish quarter of Cracow is filled with music, art, dance, lectures, exhibits and films celebrating the 900-year history of Jews in Poland. Festival founder Janusz Makuch has invited Zucker to attend the Festival, meet with the organizers, interview people engaged in the project and conduct research. Zucker intends to develop the seeds of a new documentary.

#### **LITERATURE**

The Literature Travel and Study Program Panel reviewed 111 applications, 57 from Minnesota and 54 from New York City. Panelists were Bob Holman, poet, spoken word artist, professor, founder of The Bowery Poetry Club and publisher, New York City; and George Rabasa, novelist and short story writer, Minnesota.

**Elana Bell**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Jerusalem, interviewing citizens, documenting observations and developing language skills to inform *Holy. Land. Holy. Land.*, an in-progress collection of poems and poetic fragments in multiple voices exploring questions of identity and displacement as they relate to the land of Israel/former Palestine. Bell is an American granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, and sees herself as a narrator/searcher with a fragmented and complex relationship to the land of Israel/Palestine. She will delve into the subject first-hand and participate more fully with communities.

**Akiva Freidlin**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Cherokee, North Carolina, to conduct interviews and gather information about the developing tourism economy of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, in order to document the political and cultural effects of the marketing of Cherokee history and culture. He will interview key figures, conduct research at cultural sites and attend Cherokee tourism events. This will feed the development of a long narrative nonfiction piece.

**Aracelis Girmay**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Eritrea to explore Eritrean history as it relates to war, memory, art, hybridness and mythologies. Girmay will begin work on a new and experimental collection of poems and essays. She will gather pieces of experiences, stories, voices, answers, questions and reference points.

**Rachael Hanel**, Madison Lake, Minnesota, will travel to the San Francisco Bay Area to research the life of Camilla Hall, a Minnesota native and member of the radical Symbionese Liberation Army in the 1970s. Camilla Hall was killed in 1974 at the age of 29 during a massive shootout with the Los Angeles Police. She grew up in small town Minnesota as the daughter of a Lutheran pastor. Hanel's research will lead to the creation of new work.

**Miriam Karmel**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will travel to the American Jewish Historical Society, New York City, to conduct research on the Jewish Agricultural and Aid Society and its support for Jewish farm families settling in Minnesota in the early 1900s. Karmel hopes to discover material for a novel that she is planning to write about one of those farm families.

**Tou SaiKo Lee**, St. Paul, Minnesota, will travel with his grandmother to Thailand to capture the essence of the traditional art form of Kwv Txiaj, improvised or memorized chanted poetry. This will inform his spoken word practice. He seeks to work with his grandmother to understand the cultural roots of his Hmong identity so that they can continue to perform together and improve their collaborative work. They will work with a recognized practitioner of the art form, Joua Lee.

**Mary Losure**, St. Paul, Minnesota, will travel to France to inform her writing of a book of creative nonfiction for young adults, *A Life So Strange, The Story of a Wild Boy*. Her research will focus on Victor of Aveyron, a wild boy discovered in the forests of southern France in 1797. He survived in the woods, alone and naked, for most of his childhood. She will retrace the path of the wild boy's wanderings and photograph sites.

**Ashley Makar**, Brooklyn, New York will travel to Israel to investigate the Sudanese refugee crisis. She will visit a refugee outreach organization and a kibbutz where displaced Sudanese have been placed. The research will contribute to a creative nonfiction book that turns ethnographic research into empathetic narrative.

**Marian Yalini Thambynayagam**, Brooklyn, New York will travel to India and two locations in Sri Lanka to deepen her perspectives by examining the conditions vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka and the Diaspora are currently facing. Her spoken word poetry explores issues pertaining to the Sri Lankan Diaspora, using gender and sexuality as a lens, focused primarily on the US, Canada and England. This trip will expand her explorations and inform future work.

**Kim Thompson**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will travel to Seoul, South Korea, her birth land in order to lend her voice to her fellow 200,000+ Korean adoptees so that a more complete version of the adoption story can be told. She intends to use her time in Korea to continue a collection of prose/poetry/essay centered on the themes of race, cultural identity and the mythology and truth of her birth mother. She expects to gain more information through interviews about adoption and the social systems that support adoptees, orphans and single mothers.

**Samantha Thornhill**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Trinidad to conduct cultural research and draw sustenance and ideas from the culture and the place, which will inform upcoming writing projects. She will connect with the Trinidadian novelist Earl Lovelace and spend time in the rural village of Caparo.

**Diane Wilson**, Shafer, Minnesota, will travel to South Dakota, northern Minnesota and Canada to conduct research for a creative nonfiction book, *Beloved Child*, which explores the process of healing from historic trauma through the personal stories of Native people. Juxtaposed with the story of Dakota removal to the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota after the 1862 Dakota war in Minnesota, the book challenges contemporary stereotypes with a pre-contact Dakota tradition of *child-beloved*. Wilson uses personal stories to explore larger, historical issues. She will interview specific individuals.

**Bridgette Wimberly**, New York City, will travel to Cleveland, Ohio, to work with teens in the Cleveland Juvenile Detention Center to gather information to inform her spoken word poems about their experiences.

**Chavisa Woods**, Brooklyn, New York, will travel to Southern Illinois and Kansas, Missouri, exploring her relation with her Native American heritage, while conducting interviews with estranged relatives and citizens of her hometown. She will travel to Native American reservations where distant relatives are residing to understand relationships between the American rural class and Native American culture. Her current writing is an artistic exploration of the experiences of lower class Americans, a societal critique and a personal revolution.

The Twin Cities portion of the program is supported by the General Mills Foundation, the Art and Martha Kaemmer Fund of HRK Foundation, and the Jerome Foundation. The Greater Minnesota portion of the program is supported by the Art and Martha Kaemmer Fund of HRK Foundation and Jerome Foundation. The New York City portion of the program is supported by the Jerome Foundation.

For further information about these grants, please contact Jerome Foundation Program Officer Eleanor Savage or President Cynthia Gehrig at 651.224.9431 or 1.800.995.3766. Visit the Jerome Foundation on the Web at [www.jeromefdn.org](http://www.jeromefdn.org).

###