

3Arts Awards

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3Arts announces ten artists each receiving \$30,000 unrestricted grants at annual 3Arts Awards Celebration



Acclaimed local artists & past 3Arts Awards recipients performing at the *For the Love of Artists* themed celebration include Grammy award-winning opera singer Will Liverman and Chicago poet laureate avery r. young, at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Monday, November 13

CHICAGO, IL (OCTOBER 3, 2023)– 3Arts, the Chicago-based nonprofit grantmaking organization, announces the recipients of this year’s 3Arts Awards, with over half a million dollars distributed to local artists. The 2023 recipients of the unrestricted \$30,000 grants are dance artists **Donnetta “LilBit” Jackson** and **Rika Lin**; musicians **Rashada Dawan** and **Avreeayl Ra**; teaching artists **Jacinda Bullie** and **Eric Hotchkiss**; theater artists **Nancy García Loza** and **Charlotte “Chuck” Gruman**; and visual artists **Selva Aparicio** and **Jenny Kendler**. The organization will honor the ten new recipients at its first in-person celebration since 2019 on Monday, November 13 at 5:30pm at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E Randolph Street. **3Arts Awards Celebration: For the Love of Artists** tickets include a pre-program cocktail reception, awards presentation, performances, and an after-party with a bountiful buffet and music by DJ Sadie Woods. Tickets cost \$130-\$300 and are available at 3arts.org/tickets.

The awards ceremony will bring together energy-filled performances by Grammy Award-winning opera singer **Will Liverman** (on break from his starring role in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* currently running at The

Metropolitan Opera); a dance excerpt from *Gentle, Into That Good Night* by critically acclaimed choreographer **Stephanie Martinez** (founder of PARA.MAR Dance Theatre); and a grand finale led by Chicago's inaugural poet laureate **avery r. young** joined by an "all-star band" of past 3Arts awardees **JoVia Armstrong, Meagan McNeal, Bethany Thomas, Caitlin Edwards, Sam Thousand**, and more. The awards are hosted by 3Arts Executive Director and arts leader **Esther Grimm** with event co-chairs Juana Guzman, Will Liverman, Nalani McClendon, and Jason Quiara.

"It is going to feel so good to be back together again!" notes Esther Grimm. "In addition to celebrating the extraordinary 2023 3Arts Awards recipients, we are going to announce some big—next-level—news during the event that I think everyone in Chicago will be happy about. I hope the seats will fill with people from all over metro Chicago so together we can send the loudest applause possible to the artists who add meaning and connection to our lives—and who persevered during the last three years of the pandemic. We need to let them know what they mean to us; in fact, that's why we called this event, For the Love of Artists."

3Arts has supported more than 2,000 artists, including 70% women artists, 70% artists of color, and 20% Deaf and disabled artists working in the six-county metropolitan area, and distributed over \$6.6 million in grants. Through unrestricted awards, project funding, residencies, professional development, and promotion, 3Arts helps artists take risks, experiment, and build momentum in their careers over time.

3ARTS AWARDEE BIOS

DANCE



Donnetta "LilBit" Jackson is a versatile dance performer, instructor, choreographer, and actress born and raised on the Southeast Side of Chicago. Jackson began dancing at The Sammy Dyer School of the Theatre at the age of seven. At 11 years old, she became one of the original members of the prestigious M.A.D.D. Rhythms tap company and later joined the Chicago Footwork crew, Creation Battle Clique/Creation Global. She choreographs for and performs with Grammy award-winning artist Chance the Rapper. A highlight of her career was performing alongside Missy Elliot at MTV's 2019 Video Music Awards for a Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award performance. Recently acknowledged as a "sister with

superpowers" by *Rolling Out* magazine, Jackson has also footworked internationally, for corporations like Nike and Jordan, and has competed on Season 6 of MTV's America's Best Dance Crew with the Chicago FootworkINGz. Recently, Jackson appeared on the Fox/Hulu dance series, "The Big Leap," as Tamra Smalls, and was one of the lead dancers in the Red Hot Chili Peppers' new video, "The Drummer."



Rika Lin (aka **Yoshinojo Fujima**) is an interdisciplinary artist, dancemaker, Grandmaster in Fujima-style Japanese classical dance, and part of the postwar Japanese American diaspora. Her process and art spring forth from a complete immersion in traditional practice. She has performed her original works and collaborations at Links Hall, Chicago Cultural Center, Jay Pritzker Pavilion, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, where she premiered her full-length work, *Asobi: Playing Within Time*, in 2018. Her works embody her identity and tradition through performance as well as her teaching practice in Japanese classical dance.

In 2021 Lin received the Chicago Dancemakers Forum Digital Dance Grant and Production Residency for her ongoing virtual reality project *Kurokami E{m}Urge, #ChooseYourReality*, also nurtured by her time as a Fellow in Residence at High Concept Labs. In 2023 Lin presented the most recent iteration of her ongoing "Beyond the Box" series, which centers on female performers and creatives, as a Co-Mission Fellow at Links Hall.

MUSIC



Rashada Dawan, born and raised in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago, is described as a powerhouse force in genres ranging from soul, gospel, and jazz, to classical, blues, and R&B. After graduating from Florida A&M University, Dawan went back home to be a case manager in community mental health. By day, she worked on cases ranging from anti-bullying to restorative justice. By night, she worked in music and theater. Dawan has performed on stage and screen, including Disney's *The Lion King*, *Proven Innocent* (Fox), *Easy*, (Netflix), *The Chi* (Showtime), *Chicago PD* (NBC), and *61st Street* (AMC). Her dream is to sing on her own European and South

African tour, see her daughters graduate from the college of their choice, and to play in her dream role, "Ursula," in *The Little Mermaid*.



Avreeayl Ra, born Arthur L. O'Neil in Chicago in 1947, son of tenor saxophonist and mentor Arthur "Swinglee" O'Neil, has become a local legend in the rich, progressive Chicago avant-garde jazz scene, with a career spanning more than half a century. Mentors and influences range from Henry Byrd, aka "Professor Long Hair," to Henry Rucker and the Psychic Research Foundation, to Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH coalition. The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) describes Ra as a "master drummer" and claims him as a longtime member. Ra has created and performed with many significant players and ensembles in the US and

abroad, including Sun Ra's Arkestra, and he continues to add to his extensive discography. In 2018, Ra was honored with the inaugural Elastic Arts Award and, in 2021, by the Robert D. Bielecki Foundation for his contributions to the field and his ongoing inspiration to younger players as an active artist and member of various creative communities.

TEACHING ARTS



Jacinda Bullie is an instigating art maker, creative activator, and practicing heart soother. A co-founder of Kuumba Lynx, she curates creative, loving, and critically-questioning spaces through Hip-Hop theater and arts facilitation. For 27 years, alongside her co-founders, she has coached award-winning youth poetry slam teams; written, staged, and produced full-length Hip-Hop theater productions; curated nationally recognized installations and gallery exhibits; constructed soundtracks; and contributed to a multitude of writing and performance projects. Her poems and collaborative practices have been featured in numerous outlets including *Fly Paper*,

Chitown Low Down, *Word Beats & Life's Global Journal of Hip Hop*, and *The Breakbeat Poets Vol 3: Halal If You Hear Me*, among others. She has presented around the world with Kuumba Lynx, Muslim Writers Collective, Al Haqqani Poets, and Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)'s Artist Roster. Bullie is a 2022-2023 IMAN "Sacred Cypher" resident artist, where she is encouraged to work at the intersection of culture, social justice, and community. In 2024, she will participate in a Links Hall Co-MISSION Artist Fellowship.



Eric Hotchkiss is an interdisciplinary designer, engineer, and educator based in Chicago. At the core of his philosophy is the idea of designing with, not for, communities. This principle fuels a quest for functional, community-specific designs that derive from thorough research into the desires and needs of people, particularly those in underserved regions. He channels this insight into discursive and subversive designs, fostering empowerment and agency. In 2018 Eric co-designed the Douglass 18 project, a community-led and youth-designed initiative that resulted in a conservation-themed miniature golf course located in the heart of North Lawndale.

Eric is also the founder of the interdisciplinary design firm, Made in Englewood, which creates culturally-relative objects driven by the narratives of the community in which it resides.

THEATER



Nancy García Loza is an award-winning, self-taught, and self-proclaimed *pocha* playwright rooted in Chicago, Illinois and Jalisco, México. Her play, *Pénjamo: A Pocha Road Trip Story*, is a new commission by the National Museum of Mexican Art (NMMA), with major support by the National Endowment for the Arts and a 2022 Joyce Award. She is also currently developing work for Steppenwolf Theatre Company and has received recognition from the Association of Performing Arts Professionals ArtsForward Award, the Dramatists' Guild Council's Lanford Wilson Award, and *American Theatre* magazine's podcast series, "The Subtext." García Loza

is a two-time alumna of the national Fornés Playwriting Workshop. Her work has been developed with Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf, Paramount Theatre (with support by Chicago Latino Theater Alliance), The New Harmony Project, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, SPACE on Ryder Farm, Chicago Dramatists Tutterow Fellowship, and more.



Charlotte "Chuck" Gruman is an accessibility consultant whose work bridges the gap between performance and cultural spaces and the communities that wish to experience them. Charlotte builds 3D tactile representations of theaters and cultural venues using a mixture of model building and 3D printing technology. She creates social narratives and welcome guides for visitors to lay the groundwork for stimulating yet comfortable audience experiences. Often leading educational training for students, staff, and volunteers, she has designed touch tours and led audio-described and sensory-friendly performances at Steppenwolf Theatre

Company, Goodman Theatre, Second City, Art Institute of Chicago, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago Children's Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and with Aspire and Disney for *The Lion King* at Cadillac Palace Theatre. Identifying as a person with autism, sensory processing disorder, and ADHD, Charlotte feels she is in a unique position to advocate for others like her, especially for those who struggle to advocate for themselves.

VISUAL ARTS



Selva Aparicio is an interdisciplinary artist exploring ideas of memory, intimacy, and the temporality of life through installations that celebrate the cyclicity of the natural world. Working with nature's ephemera, including cicada wings, oyster shells, and human cadavers, her praxis is an extended death ritual that foregrounds a reverence for these materials, caught in physical and spiritual limbo of their own. She received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2015) and her MFA in sculpture from Yale University (2017). She received the Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation Artadia Award in 2022, and her sculpture "Auto-da-Fé," exhibited at EXPO Chicago in 2023, was donated to the DePaul Art

Museum with funds from the Inaugural Barbara Nessim Acquisition Prize. Current projects include a major solo exhibition at the DePaul Art Museum in 2024, as well as outdoor permanent sculptures for both the Belgium Beaufort 2024 Triennale and Italy's Heraclea Archaeological Park. She is based jointly in Chicago and her native Spain.



Jenny Kendler is an interdisciplinary artist, wild forager, and environmental activist based in Chicago and various forests. Over the last two decades, her multi-faceted projects centered on climate change and biodiversity loss have been shown at London’s Hayward Gallery, Storm King Art Center, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, MSU Broad Art Museum, Pulitzer Arts Foundation, AKG Museum, Eden Project, and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. She is a founding member of Artists Commit, an artist-led effort to raise climate-consciousness in the art world, and she sits on the boards of 350.org and ACRE Residency. Since 2014 she has been the first Artist-in-Residence at the National Resources Defense Council

(NRDC). Her upcoming projects include a new installation at O’Hare Airport’s Terminal 5 expansion, a large-scale public exhibition on Governors Island (NY), a collaborative project on Bell Bowl Prairie at the Chicago Botanic Garden, and an interactive sound project for the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

NEXT LEVEL AWARDS AND MAKE A WAVE AWARDS

The nearly \$600,000 to be distributed at the celebration includes five \$50,000 Next Level Awards, along with ten \$2,000 Make a Wave Awards selected by last year’s 3Arts awardees, all to be announced at the *For the Love of Artists* event on November 13.

Next Level Awards are \$50,000 unrestricted cash awards given to past 3Arts awardees to help fuel the next stages of their careers.

Make a Wave is a groundbreaking artist-to-artist grant program in which past 3Arts Awards recipients select another ten Chicago artists to receive surprise cash awards, sending a “wave” of support through Chicago’s cultural communities. *Make a Wave* artists receive \$2,000 each, thanks to the generous partnership of the Siragusa Family Foundation.

About 3Arts

Founded in 1912, with a history centered on women artists, 3Arts is a nonprofit organization that supports artists working in the performing, teaching, and visual arts in the Chicago metropolitan area, including women artists, artists of color, and Deaf and disabled artists. By providing unrestricted awards, project funding, residencies, professional development, and promotion, 3Arts helps artists take risks, experiment, and build momentum in their careers over time.

3Arts extends special thanks to the 2023 Award Partners: The Chandler Family, The Walder Foundation, The HMS Fund, Stan Lipkin & Evelyn Appell Lipkin, The Reva & David Logan Foundation, and The SIF Fund at the Chicago Community Foundation.

One of the ten 3Arts Awards, the 2023 Community Award, is named in honor of the 152 community donors who contributed to a crowdfunding campaign to fund the award.

3Arts also recognizes support for the *Next Level Awards* from an anonymous donor at The Chicago Community Foundation and Good Chaos, as well as *Make a Wave* Partner: The Siragusa Family Foundation.

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For more information about 3Arts, please visit www.3arts.org.

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