

OKLAHOMA VISUAL ARTS FELLOWSHIP

2020

With annual support from:



The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

STUDENT FELLOWS

Julianne Clark is a practicing interdisciplinary teaching artist and 2020 graduate with a Master of Fine Arts degree in Photography from the University of Tulsa. She achieved a Cum Laude Bachelor of Arts in Photography with a secondary emphasis in Ceramics at the University of Arkansas. She also holds minors in Psychology and Art History. Julianne taught Visual Art and Photography in the Oklahoma public school system for seven years, and was recognized as the Oklahoma State Art Educator in 2016. From 2019-2020, she was a fellow with the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship. She volunteers with many regional and national arts organizations, including the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition and the Society for Photographic Education. Her personal work often questions the reality of photography as a representation of truth. On a broader scale, Julianne questions reality and its many truths on a daily basis. She looks to art as a means of both examining and celebrating this quandary.

Janae Grass is a Sac & Fox, Muscogee (Creek), and Shawnee artist from Tulsa, Oklahoma. From a young age, she has learned how to make traditional Sac & Fox dresses and appliqué work, as well as Muscogee patchwork. Her current body of work is inspired by Sac & Fox appliqué and beadwork designs. Being involved in creating her own appliqué and beadwork, she has translated these designs over to acrylic paintings that incorporate materials used in her other work such as beads and brass.

The Oklahoma Visual Arts Fellowship recognizes exemplary artistic achievement and serve as another support to make Oklahoma a place where artists can live and thrive. We congratulate these artists on this notable award and look forward to what they accomplish over the next year.

***Krystle Brewer,
Executive Director
Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition***

Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition is a charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

Design by Lauren Fourcade

Each year, the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition is proud to honor four artists living and working in Oklahoma. These awards are intended to recognize past achievements and future promise and can be used as the artist's needs require. This year's guest juror is Sara O'Keeffe, the Nancy E. Meinig Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, OK.

This year, OVAC will produce video interviews with each artist to share their journey and career in Oklahoma. The videos will be available on our website at ovacawards.org. Also, OVAC will share and promote the exhibitions and events of these artists throughout the year.



FELLOWS

Suzanne C. Thomas is painter and a mixed media artist. She received her BFA from Oklahoma State University and her MFA from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Suzanne is currently a professor of art at Rose State College. Suzanne stays active in the local art community as not only an exhibiting artist, but also as a volunteer and advocate.

Sarah Ahmad's artwork has been featured in exhibitions in galleries and cultural centers throughout the United States and in the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, including the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Sharjah Art Museum in the United Arab Emirates, public art projects in Tennessee, and solo shows in Pakistan and the United States. Ahmad received the New York Center for Photographic Art Juror's Award, a fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center and has participated in numerous residencies. She was awarded the Tulsa Artist Fellowship and the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition Creative Projects Grant in 2019. She received an MFA from the Memphis College of Art, MA Education from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, and BA Fine Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan.



Sarah Ahmad, *Cosmic Identity*
Site-Specific Installation
2020

SARAH AHMAD

OKLAHOMA VISUAL ARTS FELLOWSHIP
M.F.A. Memphis College of Art
M.A. Ed. Union University
B.F.A. National College of Arts
Tulsa

My work is an artistic inquiry into universal identity and the human condition that transcends borders and categorizations. It encompasses themes of identity, migration, displacement, belonging, healing, rebuilding life, and what it means to create a space for oneself in the world. It evolves from my own cross-cultural identities as an immigrant from Pakistan, as a South Asian, as an American, as a woman, and as a single mother. My identity is fragmented. However, beyond the contexts of cultures and places, transcending boundaries and categorizations, time stands still. In these moments, in the rhythm of creation, I feel free. Imbuing this freedom into my work, I investigate interconnectedness through common patterns in the human body, nature, and in the cosmos. I create spaces that can serve as sanctuaries and retreats from the anxieties and upheavals of life, sites to experience wonderment, meditation, and peace.

sarahahmad.com



Suzanne Thomas, *Just One of Those Things*
Layered embroidery on tulle, painted canvas
12" x 12", 2020

SUZANNE C. THOMAS

OKLAHOMA VISUAL ARTS FELLOWSHIP
College
Tulsa

My art is an invitation to the viewers to feel the work, both literally and figuratively. The mark of the brush, the use of color or a particular stitch are used to actively used to engage the viewer. Working with a variety of mediums as well as incorporating different materials and techniques onto the surface, is an invitation for the audience to experience the art making process with me. Including embroidered images, either on tulle or directly on linens, is a new form of creative expression for me. The challenge for me is to create work that is informative, truthful, and celebratory. The imagery is inspired by personal history, familial history and vintage "glamour". I chose to embroider because it is very methodical. It has come to be a form of meditation for me to some extent. Plus I love do working with color, patterns and texture; embroidery fulfills that need. This approach has allowed me to find a deeper level of creativity as well as to be more direct with the art making process.

ovac-ok.org/art/Suzanne-C.-Thomas



Julianne Clark, *Baptismal/Generate*
Collaged archival inkjet prints
32" x 40", 2018

JULIANNE CLARK

STUDENT AWARDS
College
Tulsa

In my studio practice, I tell stories about natural spaces and home through the lens of memory. I combine collected photographs, created images, videos, and objects into vignettes in order to bring forth narratives about generational family relationships in context with the Southern landscape. Using both the past and present, real and fabricated, I invoke comparisons between people and nature, life and decay, creation and destruction. I represent both shared and individual dreams and memories. I use the natural world, domesticity, and industrial landscapes as stages for incantation to call forth these memories and dreams. On a broad scale, my work asks the viewer to consider how degradation of the land relates to erosion of family and community.

julianneclark.com



Janae Grass, *Tribal ID Holder*
Glass beads, antique brass, buckskin,
cotton, thread. 4" x 18", 2020

JANAE GRASS

STUDENT AWARDS
College
Tulsa

Janae Grass' work reflects the traditional art forms and practices that were nearly lost during the removal of the Sac & Fox people from the Great Lakes area to Oklahoma. Ribbonwork and applique designs, as well as traditional beadwork designs, are at the forefront of her current body of work, highlighting the stories and strength of the people who were able to keep these practices alive. By painting designs that would traditionally be made from fabric, Janae strives for a more permanent occupation in modern spaces where these types of designs are seen as historical rather than contemporary art. Like many indigenous artists, her goal is to encourage the change of perception that indigenous art is stagnant and unchanging.