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**ROCKET GRANTS Announces 2013 Award Winners**

The *Rocket Grants* program, made possible by Charlotte Street Foundation and the KU Spencer Museum of Art with funding from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, fuels the energy of the Kansas City regional visual arts community by encouraging and supporting innovative and inventive work that engages an audience outside of established arts venues, museums, theaters, art galleries or arts districts.

Now in its fourth year, the *Rocket Grants* program is announcing the award of a total of $46,000 to ten new, innovative, community-engaged art projects that will happen in surprising places around the Kansas City region, bringing the total to $163,000 distributed since the program's inception in 2010. This year the awarded projects involve thirty different artists and collaborators, including two individuals and eight artist teams, and the communities in which they live and work include Kansas City, MO and KS, Lee’s Summit, MO, Lawrence, KS, and Leavenworth, KS.

Eight Project Awards were selected at $5,250 each, and two Research & Development Awards at $2,000 each, with an option to return for up to a further $4,000 next year. The R & D Awards are a new feature of the program this year, and are intended for large or complex projects that will benefit from a longer preparation time.

**Artists: Darryl Chamberlain & The Light in the Other Room**
**Project: The Artists for Life Project (R & D Award)**
A collective engagement by artists from the Light in the Other Room, whose mission is to reduce handgun violence in the KC Metro area through the use of compelling and provocative artwork.

**Artists: Maria Velasco and Biri Rottenberg-Rosler**
**Project: Your Ideal End (R & D Award)**
An experimental animation that deals with the topic of child abuse in a domestic setting, resulting in a series of workshops developed in collaboration with the Psychology Department at the University of Kansas.

**Artists: Jacob Wagner & Yozo Suzuki**
**Project: Public Service Announcement: KC Endangered (Project Award)**
A creative partnership between the Society for the Prevention of Un-necessary Demolition (s.p.u.d.) and local neighborhoods, that will highlight vacancy, abandonment and the erosion of place.

**Artists: Jessie Christian & Thaddeus Christian**
**Project: Hard 50 Farm Zine Mobile (Project Award)**
A curated traveling zine gallery and shop, consisting of a converted horse trailer and outfitter tent expansion, that will house a collection of over 1,200 self-published and small press literary and visual arts zines.

**Artists: Leandra Burnett, Sarah Murphy & Kent Szlaunderbach**
**Project: Civilian Stories (Project Award)**
A print and web-based series of artist-driven journals – presenting literature, illustration, and diagrams originating from civic research, and from artists working in collaboration with community leaders and organizations.
**Artist: Jaimie Warren**

**Project: KC Drag University (Project Award)**
A workshop series for local LGBTQ high school students and straight allies, that will connect young creatives with each other and with adult mentors, advocate for queer youth, and foster new skills and confidence in an at-risk community.

**Artists: Mark Southerland, Hadley Ann Johnson, Peregrine Honig, Laura Frank, Beau Bledsoe, Zhanna Saparova & Matt Tady**

**Project: No More Nomads (Project Award)**
A performance installation that combines flamenco, sculptural set pieces, experimental music and movement, live video remediation, and conceptual apparel, in a contemporary passion play.

**Artists: Nedra Bonds & Nancy Dawson**

**Project: If Da Dirt Could Talk (Project Award)**
Engaging communities around environmental justice and African American history, through workshops, quilts, and performances of an original play in the Old Quindaro Cemetery, Kansas City, KS

**Artist: De De DeVille**

**Project: First Lady? (Project Award)**
An original one-act play about the current political landscape of gay rights, offering a humorous exploration of the accidental election of a gay President, and a drag queen first lady.

**Artists: Laura Isaac & James Isaac**

**Project: Into the Night Sea (Project Award)**
A multimedia project navigating the unsettling world of childhood nightmares, through a series of short films that combine visual art, photography, and dance with an accompanying soundtrack of re-imagined traditional lullabies.

Each project title above is linked to a full description on the [Rocketblog](https), and the attached addendum includes an edited one-paragraph version.

The 2013 Rocket Grants Selection Panel included two national jurors – Meg Onli and Colin Kloecker – and two regional jurors – Joseph Keehn and Judith G. Levy. The juror’s diverse backgrounds and practices provided valuable insights, perspective, and experience in reviewing the 60 applications submitted by individual artists and artist groups (totaling over 244 individual artists). The quality of the applications was extremely high, and the selection process was lively and challenging as the panelists worked to select a balanced and diverse grouping from among the top scoring projects.

**ABOUT THE SELECTION PANEL JURORS:**

Meg Onli is an artist and writer currently working in Chicago. Her work has been shown nationally and in 2009 she had her first solo exhibition, The Underground Railroad Project, at Twelve Galleries in Chicago. Currently, Onli investigates the intricacies of black visual representations and histories in America through on her website Black Visual Archive, for which she recently received a prestigious Creative Capital Arts Writers Award. From 2006 to 2010, she was the associate producer of Chicago-based art and culture weekly podcast and blog Bad at Sports. She has also written for Art21 as well as Daily Serving.

Programs like Rocket Grants help artists and cultural makers sustain practices while also supporting experimentation, which is so greatly needed. This support is vital to artists creating public-oriented work because they have the opportunity to impact unsuspecting audiences in a profound way. – Meg Onli

Colin Kloecker is a Twin Cities-based artist, designer, and cultural producer working at the intersection of public engagement and civic design. Colin works with other individuals and organizations to create public art and design projects that invite creative participation inspire new connections, and encourage the collaborative making of meaning. He holds a BS in Architecture and developed affordable and supportive housing. In 2009, after 2 years of
creating innovative public programs like Solutions Twin Cities, Salon Saloon, and Give & Take, Colin and his collaborators founded Works Progress, an artist-led public design studio that he now co-directs with his wife and creative partner, Shanai Matteson. Works Progress creates collaborative projects that inspire, inform and connect; catalyzing relationships across creative and cultural boundaries and providing new platforms for public engagement.

"Across the country, artists and designers are making and remaking public life. This socially engaged creative practice is critical to the future of our cities. Our communities are more than just where we live, work, shop and go to school. Our communities are defined by the connections we have to each other. Persistent divides across politics, race and class tell us we need new ways of practicing that connection, of practicing community. In supporting artists who expand and confound our expectations of public life, the Rocket Grants program is helping Kansas City to become more vibrant, connected, and resilient" – Colin Kloecker

Joseph Keehn II is a multidisciplinary artist/curator/writer based in Kansas City, MO. Keehn has worked at institutions such as the Japan Society, Museum of Modern Art, Brooklyn Museum, and New Museum where he co-edited and contributed to the publication Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education. A Kansas native, Keehn returned to his home state in 2010 to the Salina Art Center. At the Art Center, Keehn curated over 100 programs ranging from a bicycle polo match in a warehouse to a director’s talk with Bill Weber, creator of the Academy Award Shortlisted Nominee for Best Documentary We Were Here (2011). Most recently, Keehn collaborated with New York City-based director Travis Chamberlain on An Otherwise Hopeless Evening, a world-premiere anthology production of four short plays by William Inge and a site-responsive exhibition of original artwork. The successful production will tour later in 2013.

Judith G. Levy is a conceptual artist whose videos, public art, installations, performance, and two-dimensional work, explore public and private history, as well as challenging social, historical and political subjects. She has shown her work and been awarded public art commissions across the nation, including exhibitions at the Plains Art Museum and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. In 2007 she was awarded a Lilly Foundation Grant to travel to Poland and Germany. Levy received a Rocket Grants award in 2011, for a film, NV in KC, which will debut in Kansas City and Lawrence, KS this May. She works in Kansas City, MO, and lives in Lawrence, KS.

ABOUT THE ROCKET GRANTS PROGRAM:

Rocket Grants enable artists to take new risks with their work, push the scope and scale of their activities, develop and pursue collaborative projects, and/or engage with the public and public realm in inventive and meaningful ways. To date, the program has funded 40 different projects, involving at least 102 artists. Hundreds of other artists have been integrally and peripherally included in the performances, publications, workshops, artist-run spaces, videos, public installations, events and websites that the awards have funded. Participating artists and artists groups must live within an 80-mile radius of metropolitan Kansas City. Proposed work/projects may be in any medium with a strong visual component and should either engage or develop new audiences, specific public communities, or the regional arts community.

Julia Cole, Rocket Grants Program Coordinator, says, “The work this program stimulates has a significant impact throughout the region, at a time when we are focused more than ever on how the arts build vibrant communities. I am fortunate to have served on the Mayor’s Task Force for the Arts, and see how well this program fits into the bigger picture, through the way it challenges limiting ideas, creates imaginative alternatives, and engages the general public in the process.”

The Rocket Grants program is funded by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and is implemented by a partnership between the Charlotte Street Foundation in Kansas City, and the Spencer Museum of Art in Lawrence, KS.