

detour

VSA EMERGING YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM 2018



 **VSA**
The Kennedy Center

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A Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program

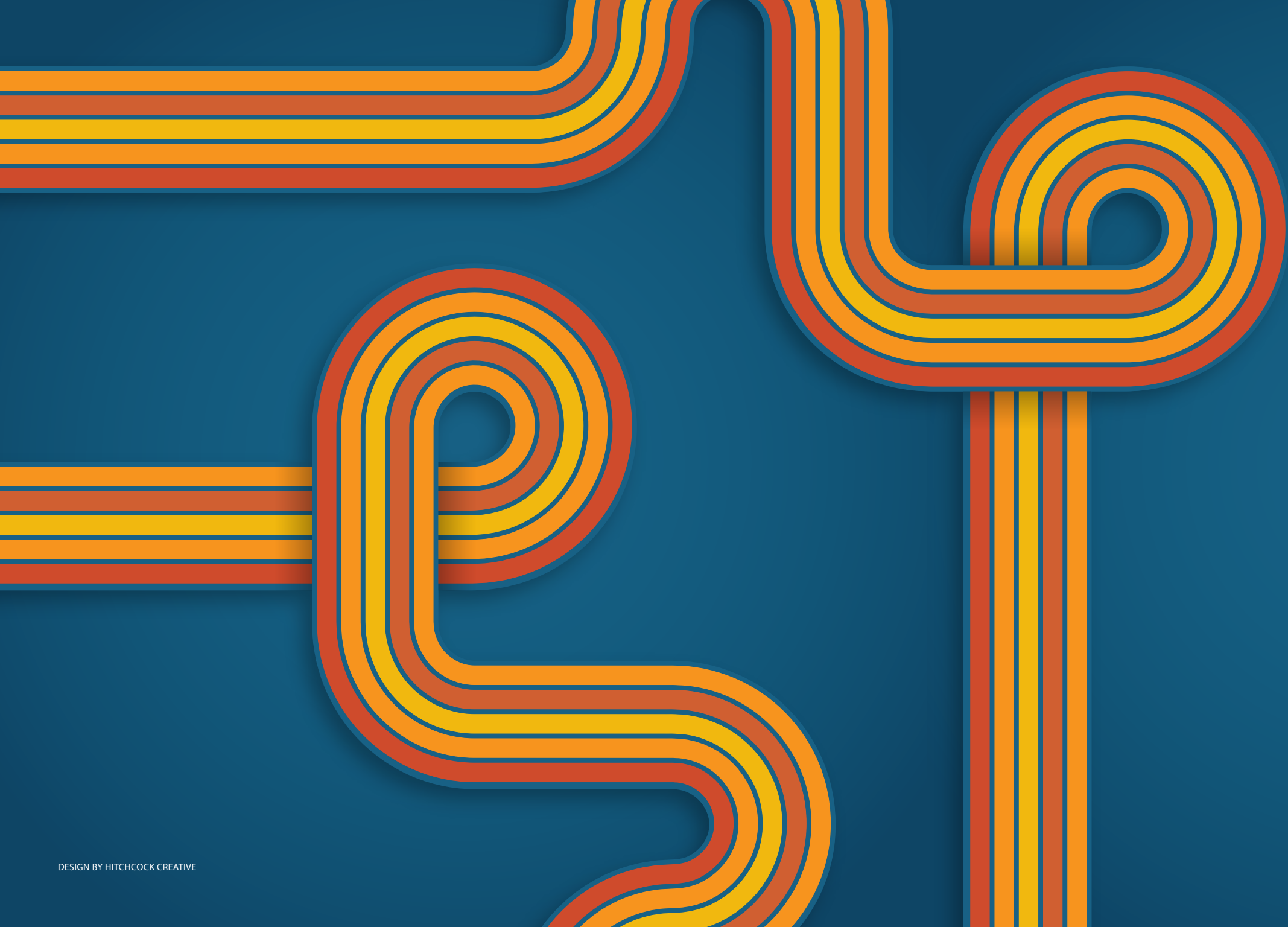


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Detour

Detour is the 17th exhibition presented by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as part of the VSA Emerging Young Artists Program, a Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program. The result of a longtime collaboration with Volkswagen Group of America, this national art competition and exhibition gives fifteen artists with disabilities, ages 16-25, the opportunity to display their work in venues across the country where each artist's individual talent, mode of expression, and view of the world is showcased and valued. With this traveling exhibition, we aim to give visibility to the work of artists with disabilities throughout the United States, positioning them to broaden our understanding of disability and the arts.

The theme of this exhibition was inspired by the notion that with a detour, the destination remains the same but the journey to reach it can be full of wonder and discovery. These artists have embraced life's detours, and their works take us on surprising forays off the beaten path. The artwork seen here explores themes of material transformation, storytelling, and identity. Whether navigating the twists and turns of an inner landscape, or expanding upon quiet moments of pause and reflection found in everyday life, these artists make visible what is often overlooked, and delve into the unexplored.

About VSA Emerging Young Artists Program

Since 2002, the Kennedy Center and Volkswagen Group of America have teamed up for the VSA Emerging Young Artists Program, a Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program, to recognize and showcase the work of emerging young artists living with disabilities, ages 16-25, who are currently residing in the United States. This collaboration creates opportunities for these artists at a critical time when many are making the life-defining choice to pursue arts-based careers. VSA and Volkswagen are committed to investing in the future of young artists living with disabilities.

Every year, hundreds of emerging young artists living with disabilities compete to be included in a curated exhibition, formed around a unique theme. After a rigorous adjudication process, 15 artists are selected to showcase their work and receive: 1) a \$20,000 grand prize, a \$10,000 first prize award, a \$6,000 second prize award, and twelve \$2,000 awards of excellence; 2) three days of all-expenses paid professional development workshops in Washington, D.C.; and 3) the opportunity to have their work displayed in an exhibition that opens in Washington, D.C. and tours for one year around the United States.



Untitled (#1), 2018
Photograph (17 in x 22 in)

Tyler Williams

Trenton, New Jersey · Age 22
Grand Prize Winner

In his documentary-style portraits, Tyler Williams creates a space for black people with multiple identities to choose for themselves how they want to be heard and represented, as he himself finds a place within his work to do the same. Williams' work often incorporates illustration, text, and audio elements, which he uses to enhance the connection between the audience and the artwork, saying "By doing this, I challenge the viewer's perception of how they are told to interact with an image. These images were created by black people and are intended to acknowledge the effort put into telling one's story and highlight the limitations in place that blocks the dispersion of that story."

Williams, who has attention deficit disorder, attends Parsons, The New School in New York City, where he is earning a bachelor's degree in Fine Art Photography.





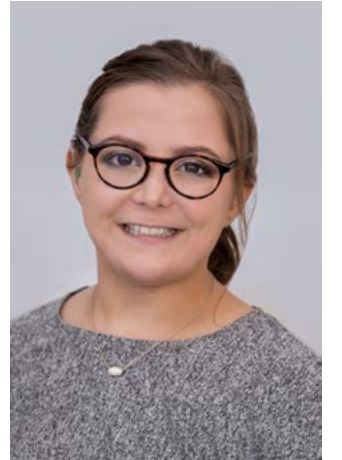
Growth, 2017
Oil on canvas (30 in x 40 in)

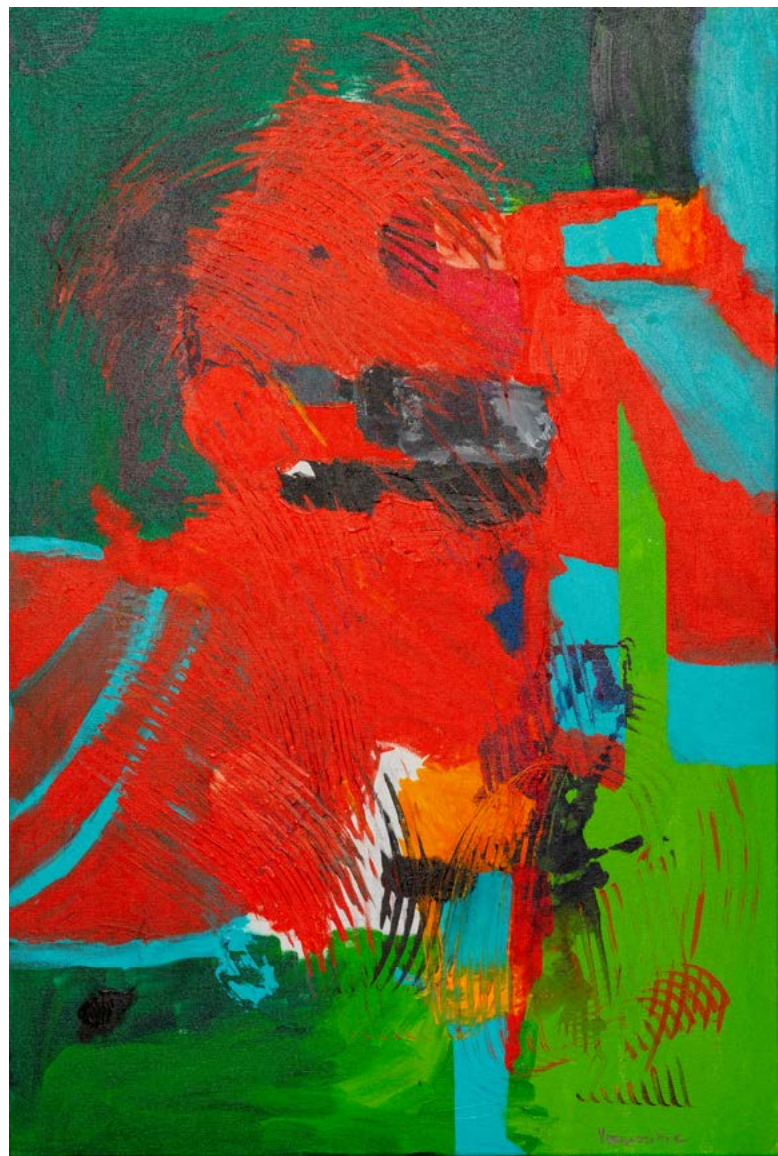
Hannah Werchan

Denton, Texas · Age 22
First Prize Winner

Hannah Werchan uses interspersed colors, impressionistic brush strokes, and compelling narratives in her paintings to convey the experiences of living with the connective tissue disorder, Stickler syndrome. Her piece, *Growth*, depicts the decision to overcome life's obstacles, to grow rather than to succumb. Werchan finds art, specifically painting, to be a powerful and dynamic medium to highlight the physical characteristics and symptoms surrounding her disorder. With art, she is able to express the feeling of being deaf in a hearing world, or the feeling of chronic pain amongst her able-bodied peers. Through her work, she hopes to capture the experiences of a person living with Stickler syndrome and the patience, endurance, and resilience it demands.

Werchan attends Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Art with a concentration in Painting and Drawing. She hopes to work as an art teacher while attending grad school to further her art education.





Dragon, 2017
Acrylic on canvas (36 in x 24 in)

Yasmine C. Iskander

McLean, Virginia • Age 21
Second Prize Winner

Yasmine Iskander's work captures the vibrancy of life, and acts as a fundamental way for her to express her journey as a person with a developmental disability and a complex medical history. When asked what influences her practice, her answer is always the same: "I use art to express my love for life and for people. When I paint I feel it in my heart. It makes me feel excited and exuberant. I love colors. In art there is always something new. And I love to learn and make my own decisions." *Dragon* is a manifestation of the strength, vibrancy and movement Iskander has found following her latest open-heart surgery. "As soon as I woke up from surgery my style became stronger like my heart. My imagination grew. I see so many layers, one on top of the other, all the way to the sky. Up, across, down, there is movement now. My detours have made my art stronger and bigger like my heart."

Iskander has received painting instruction and mentoring at the Institute for the Arts (Fairfax County Public Schools), The Community Mentoring Program sponsored by the Arlington Artist Alliance, and the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, Virginia.





Earthly Delights, 2017
Tyvek, Mylar (180 in x 48 in)

Coco Allred

Seattle, Washington · Age 19
Award of Excellence

Coco Allred works in a range of media, including printmaking, sculpture, and public art. Her practice is driven by a desire to investigate the systems, routines, and infrastructures that make up daily life. Allred's interest in nuance emerged largely due to the need for alternatives ways of managing her learning disabilities. An interest in art as a grand gesture, material transformation, and making with a repetitive rigor is integral to Allred's practice. In *Earthly Delights*, the manual processes of paper cutting becomes a way to carve out light and shadow. A Tyvek tapestry cascades, casting shadows across the gallery and the work becomes a setting for reflection, rejuvenation, and gathering.

Allred is based in Seattle, and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.





The Cow, 2018
Glazed ceramic (10 in x 5 in x 6.5 in)

Xichao (Carol) Cao

Great Neck, New York · Age 24
Award of Excellence

Xichao Cao created *The Cow* out of a love of bright colors and animals. Wearing a field of flowers, *The Cow* seems to sit solidly between two worlds, and its three legs symbolize balance among unforeseen instability. Cao explores this notion of finding balance to her life after experiencing profound hearing loss at seven months old, and receiving a cochlear implant at five years old. While making her ceramic creations, Cao says her hands “take on a life of their own,” creating a world of whimsy that is playful and full of surprise.

Cao was born in Qingdao, China, and moved to New York in 2011. She is currently studying fine arts at the School of Visual Arts in New York, New York.





Paranoia: I am the Hurricane, 2017
Photograph (24 in x 36 in)

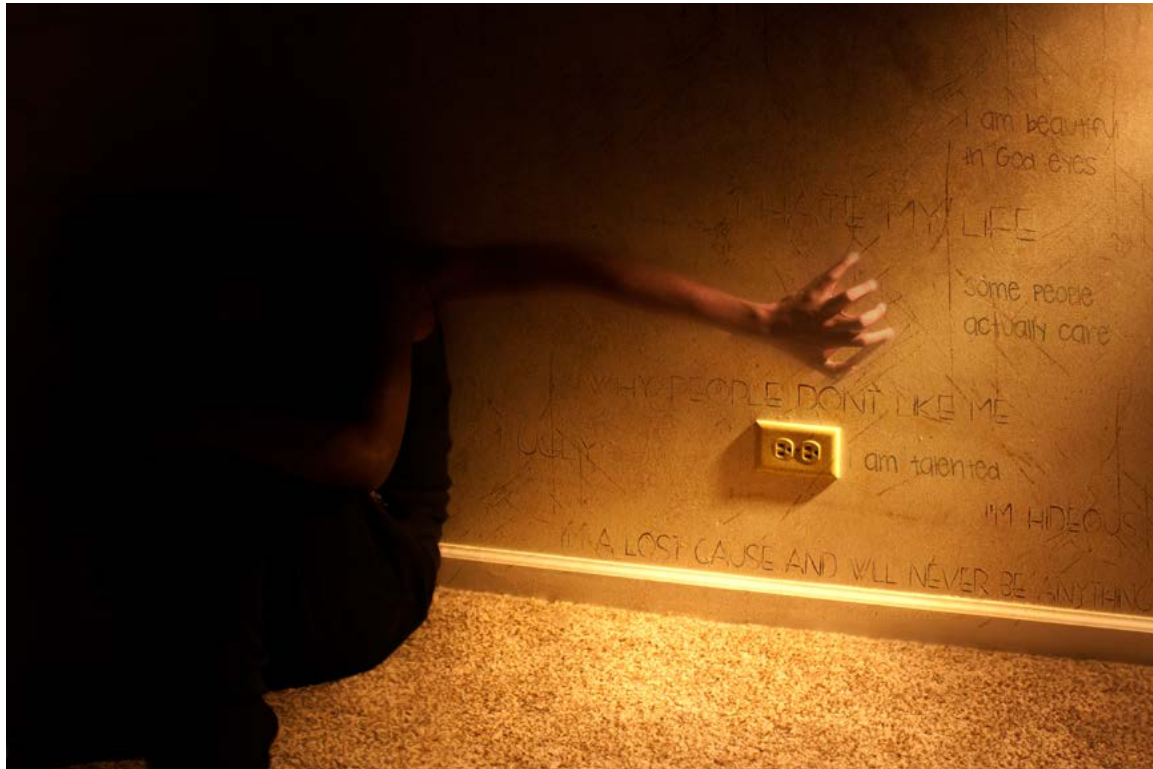
Chance DeVille

Lake Charles, Louisiana · Age 23
Award of Excellence

As a photographer, Chance DeVille revisits a childhood in which he maintained a physical closeness and emotional distance with his mother, the subject of *Paranoia: I am the Hurricane* and the series from which it comes, *Mother's Derangement*. DeVille's work delves into his mother's headspace as she navigates reality as a person with paranoid schizophrenia and recovers from an abusive marriage, often using drugs and alcohol to cope. In the photograph seen here, DeVille's mother's gaze is compelling yet secretive, and the lush green foliage in the background could be a surreal mirage, or a reflection of a dangerous and seductive inner landscape. DeVille, who has post traumatic stress disorder, focuses his work on mental illness and how it affects individuals as well as their loved ones.

DeVille received a Bachelor of Arts from McNeese State University, and is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts at Florida State University.





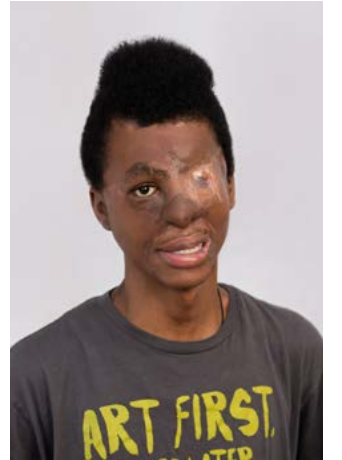
The Scars Inside, 2016
Digitally manipulated photograph (13 in x 20 in)

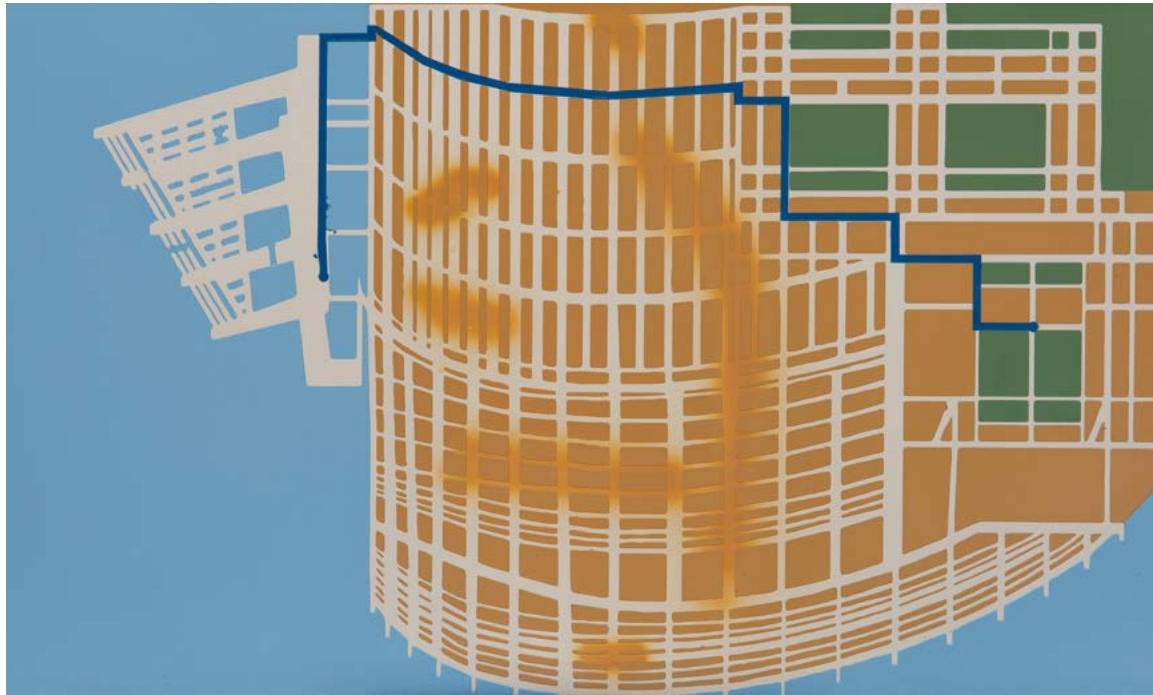
Joshua Dixon

Chicago, Illinois · Age 19
Award of Excellence

As a child, Joshua Dixon was attacked by two pit bulls in his neighborhood and lost 80% of his face and most of his vision in one eye. During his time recovering in the hospital throughout approximately 60 facial reconstruction surgeries, Dixon turned toward art therapy as a form of healing. Art also helped him deal with the trauma of being bullied at school for his appearance. The double exposure in *The Scars Inside* speaks to Dixon's overlapping identities, and the words carved into the wall reveal Dixon's internal monologue as he discovers and defines aspects of himself. Dixon views his work as visual storytelling, and hopes to use his art to tell the stories of others as well.

Dixon is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Art in Photography at Maine College of Art in Portland, Maine.





Streamlined Structure I, 2017
Acrylic on clayboard (19 in x 11 in x 1 in)

Thomas Haley

Davis, California · Age 23
Award of Excellence



Streamlined Structure I presents a graphic representation of the lack of infrastructure for people who use mobility devices, such as wheelchairs and scooters, and is part of a larger body of work called Pathfinder. As a person with limited mobility from Becker muscular dystrophy, Thomas Haley's work has significant personal relevance. The process for creating these paintings began with photographs of skyscrapers that Haley simplified into map-like patterns. After adding multiple layers of paint, aberrations appear and "pathways" become obscured. Haley identifies two points on the map and paints a blue path between them, representing the decision-making process a wheelchair user must make when exploring alternate ways of reaching a destination.

Haley received a Bachelor of Art in Art Practice with a minor in Disability Studies from University of California, Berkeley.

Kip Henderson

La Mirada, California · Age 21
Award of Excellence



Kip Henderson uses his art to explore his identity as person with a disability in short mini-comics. Henderson has a multiple joint disorder called Larsen syndrome, has lost hearing in his right ear, and due to a hospital accident at 22 months old has a tracheostomy tube to help him breathe and is entirely g-tube fed. For this series, Henderson was driven both by his desire to satisfy others' curiosity about his experience as a person with a disability, as well as to give himself an outlet to explore parts of himself he tends to leave on the sidelines. Henderson's lighthearted comics are intended to demystify the disability experience, and comes from a unique perspective and ability to laugh despite various hardships.

Henderson attends Biola University in La Mirada, California, and is a Screenwriting Major and an Art Minor.



Habits; Altoids; Body Negotiations; Bed, 2018
Pen, marker, and watercolor on paper (6 in x 5 in)



Smother Mask, 2016
Earthenware, glaze, acrylic (30 in x 18 in x 12 in)

Kat Katz

New York, New York • Age 23
Award of Excellence

Kat Katz works across many media, including textiles, sculpture, puppetry, collage and printmaking. Her work is a practice of reflection and examination of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, exploring and subverting traditional religious answers to questions around mortality and healing. *Smother Mask* was originally constructed as part of a processional puppet. The hands covering the face belong to another, highlighting the role of the puppeteers controlling the figure within. The hairline cracks and larger fissures arose during the second kiln firing of the piece, and Katz chose to incorporate them as part of the overall aesthetic. *Smother Mask* was made very shortly after Katz's diagnosis with a degenerative eye disease, and explores the idea that we cannot control even our own bodies.

Katz received a Bachelor of Fine Art in Fiber from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland.



Sarah McDaniel

Newport News, Virginia · Age 25
Award of Excellence

Sarah McDaniel draws her artistic inspiration from her personal history, and uses different forms of art to raise awareness about mental illness. *Nervous System* is a work of sculptural jewelry inspired by McDaniel's experience with post traumatic stress disorder, and is designed to resemble the chemical reactions that take place in the body during the fight-or-flight responses. The intricate design of *Nervous System* comes from McDaniel's research into the structure of DNA molecules. The piece's patina was created using a firing technique, which McDaniel relates to a phoenix being reborn from the ashes. The delicate, organic shapes recall the ability our bodies have to adapt, grow, and regenerate on a cellular level.

McDaniel is currently studying metalsmithing and psychology at Old Dominion University, and plans on continuing her education at Eastern Virginia Medical School for Art Therapy in Norfolk, Virginia.



Nervous System, 2017
Copper (29 in x 8 in)



Child Rearing, 2017
Metal print from digitally altered acrylic painting (20 in x 30 in)

Kyah Probst

St. Louis, Missouri • Age 18
Award of Excellence

As a child, Kyah Probst was diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorder (an autism spectrum disorder), and attention deficit hyperactive disorder. Her artistic process is cathartic, and begins with traditional mediums such as watercolor, acrylic, or ink which she converts into a digital format. The transformative nature of Probst's artwork reflects how she has molded herself into a successful student, friend, and family member. By shining a light on her internal battles and creative processes, Probst celebrates both her adversity and accomplishments. *Child Rearing's* cool blues contrast with the explosive design, and reflect the calm guidance Probst's family provided during her chaotic earlier years.

Probst is pursuing a teaching license in English as a second language at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and is considering an endorsement in art education.





Untitled, 2017
Oil on Canvas (36 in x 48 in)

Leonafire (Alejandra Suarez)

Miami, Florida · Age 23
Award of Excellence



As an artist with vision loss, Leonafire strives to translate her own experiences through imaginary landscape paintings, so that her audience may understand how she sees the world. A diagnosis of bilateral optic nerve neuropathy means Leonafire has difficulty seeing near and far distances with both eyes, and the nerves within her eyes are sensitive. Atmospheric imaginary landscapes illustrate how she sees in unfamiliar environments: opaque forms and hazy moments are captured in a mixture of vibrant and saturated colors. Leonafire amplifies the colors, forms, and random moments that occur while creating her paintings, and expands them to their fullest potential to symbolize ideas of growth.

Leonafire graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art from the University of Florida and is currently a resident artist at the Bakehouse Art Campus in Miami, Florida.



Deep Pressure, 2018
Acrylic and chalk on canvas (40 in x 30 in)

Oaklee Thiele

Springfield, Illinois · Age 19
Award of Excellence

Oaklee Thiele draws inspiration from everyday events, and enjoys creating works that feature intimate or banal interactions that are often overlooked. Thiele's work is an attempt to cope with past personal interactions. *Deep Pressure* is a self-portrait with Thiele's service dog, Coco, who is performing one of her service therapy tasks known as deep pressure therapy. Coco performs this task by applying pressure to certain points of Thiele's body to help mitigate symptoms of her post traumatic stress disorder. Thiele says that the strong bond that forms between a service dog and their handler is unlike any other: "It is crucial to me that I record and attempt to express this intimate and pure relationship."

Thiele is a recent graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy, and is currently living and working in Grand Rapids, Michigan.





Untitled (part of *Mrs MS* series), 2017
Inkjet photographs (13 in x 19 in)

Jade Warner

Denver, Colorado · Age 24
Award of Excellence

Jade Warner views her photography practice as a perpetual journey of development and discovery. In her introspective and surreal images, she explores the concept of chronic illness, drawing from her experience with multiple sclerosis, which she was diagnosed with at age fourteen. The lines of thread and reverse gaze in these portraits echo aspects of the disease in which nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord are damaged, and the body, in essence, attacks itself. Part of a project entitled *Mrs MS*, the photographs seen here are a means by which Warner makes visible and understandable aspects of her illness that cannot be seen.

Warner graduated *cum laude* from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Art in Photography.



Jury Panel



Caleb Charland grew up in rural Maine, and spent much of his childhood helping his father renovate their family home. This work instilled in Charland an awareness of the potential use of materials and the ability to fabricate his visions. Charland earned a Bachelor of Fine Art in Photography, with departmental honors, from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2004, a Master of Fine Art from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, as a Trustees Fellow, in 2010, and was a participant at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2009. He recently received the prestigious Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant in photography for 2016.



Makeba Dixon-Hill is the curator of education at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, the only museum in the nation that emphasizes art by and about women of the African Diaspora. Dixon-Hill studied at Spelman College, the David C. Driskell Summer Arts Institute for the study of the African Diaspora at the University of Maryland, College Park, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Getty Leadership Institute. Dixon-Hill was the Education and Public Programs Coordinator at the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Managing Editor of *Code Z*, an online publication dedicated to black visual culture. She serves on several planning committees on workforce development, children's rights, and arts advocacy. She is currently writing a children's book about her grandparents.



Dustin Grella is an animator and documentary filmmaker whose work attempts to glean glimpses of colorful insight into the seemingly mundane. His work has screened at the Cannes Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, and won the Walt Disney Award at the Ottawa International Animation Festival. His film *Prayers for Peace* screened at almost two hundred festivals worldwide and won over forty awards. He has written and mailed himself a letter every day for the past eleven years, and has over 5,218 sealed letters neatly filed and categorized. Grella is currently in production of the *Animation Hotline*, a series of micro-animations where he uses crowd-sourced voicemail messages for content. If you've got a story give him a call at (212) 683-2490.



Elizabeth Guffey is Professor of Art and Design History and directs the Master of Arts in Modern and Contemporary Art, Criticism and Theory at the State University of New York, Purchase. She was a founding editor of the journal *Design and Culture*, and is the author of books including *Retro: The Culture of Revival* (2013) and *Posters: A Global History* (2015). Her most recent book is *Designing Disability: Symbols, Spaces and Society* (Bloomsbury, 2017).

Jury Panel



Justus Harris was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and depression in high school, and has dedicated his art and technology skills to creating health education that is simple, stigma free, and human. He founded the arts-based consulting service MedSculp, which aims to empower patients through the creative interpretation of medical information. Harris has been featured at institutions including the Stanford School of Medicine, the American Diabetes Association, and the European Commission, and is a committee member for *Queer, ILL + OKAY* performance series which produces art by and for people with chronic illness. As a 2018-2019 Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellow, Harris works with doctors, educators, and medical institutions to utilize art and artists in healthcare systems. He is a passionate advocate for using art to bridge the health education gap by providing a simple, personal, and inspiring language to understand chronic illness.



Xang Mimi Ho is a fashion photographer in the northern Virginia area as well as an adjunct professor at George Mason University. Ho received her Bachelor of Fine Art from George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, and her Master of Fine Art from the Maryland Institute College of Arts, Baltimore, Maryland. Her artwork explores themes of identity and social issues. Ho is a 2005 VSA Emerging Young Artists Program First Place winner, and participated in the 2015 Emerging Young Artists program retrospective exhibit Focus Forward at the Kennedy Center. She is a practicing fashion photographer, and her photographs are included in two published book; *Portrait from The Pike: A Celebration of Community* and *Living Diversity: The Columbia Pike Documentary Project*.



Jackie Milad is a practicing visual artist and independent curator based in Baltimore City, Maryland. She began her curatorial career as the co-founder of the Transmodern Festival, an artist-run performance art and experimental media festival. More recently, Milad served as the chief curator for The Delaware Contemporary in Wilmington, Delaware. She has also held the position of gallery curator for the Adele H. Stamp Student Union's Stamp Gallery at the University of Maryland in College Park, where she supervised and mentored student employees, emerging artists/curators. She earned her Masters of Fine Art from Towson University and her Bachelor of Fine Art from the School of Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University.

Jury Panel



Tracey Salaway has been a professor at Gallaudet University Art Department since 1997 and teaches a variety of art and film courses from basic techniques to digital technology. Salaway produces numerous short experimental films, including *That's My Marshmallow* with Larry Hott, which was broadcasted on PBS channel nationwide. Her featured documentary film, *American D'Via Artist: Chuck Baird and His Journey* was nominated for the Best Documentary Film Award in WorlDeaf Cinema Festival, Washington, DC in 2010. Since 2009, Salaway has lead an ASL art tour once a month at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, presenting background information on deaf artists from across all genres.



Gordon Sasaki is an artist and educator in universities, museums, schools, and private institutions. His work is exhibited internationally and held in many private and corporate collections. A dedicated proponent of inclusion through the arts, his work focuses on revealing the beauty in the commonalities of all people. Born in Honolulu, he has been a wheelchair user since a 1982 automobile accident.



Annette Wehrhahn lives in Brooklyn, New York. She received a Bachelor of Fine Art in Printmaking from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Master of Fine Art in Painting from Bard College. She is a founding member of Soloway Gallery and has been a director there since 2010. Recent exhibitions include: Safe Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, Bernard Ceysson Luxembough, Redemptions, Andel 31 / Share 31, Copenhagen, Denmark, and Collective Show Mexico City, Mexico.

Office of VSA and Accessibility staff who contributed to the 2018 VSA Emerging Young Artists program include:

Betty Siegel, Director, VSA and Accessibility
Stephanie Litvak, Manager, VSA Programs
Nicole Smith, Assistant Manager, VSA Membership
Anne-Marie Walsh, Coordinator, VSA Visual Arts Programs



The Kennedy Center has been at the forefront of making the performing arts accessible to persons with disabilities. Serving the international disability and arts community, the Office of VSA and Accessibility, a Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability program, provides opportunities for people with disabilities of all ages across the globe to learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. The Office focuses its efforts on arts and special education initiatives; accessibility services for patrons and visitors with disabilities; professional development for educators and cultural administrators; and career opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities. For more information, please visit kennedy-center.org/vsa.

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Founded in 1955, the company’s North American headquarters are in Herndon, VA. Volkswagen Group of America brings vehicles to the U.S. that marry the science of engineering and the art of styling, with the goal of offering attractive, safe, and eco-conscious automobiles that are competitive and set world standards in their respective classes. The company has approximately 8,000 employees in the United States and sells its vehicles through a 1,000-strong dealer network.

The education programs of the Kennedy Center have become models for communities across the country and have unlocked the door to learning for millions of people. Education at the Kennedy Center produces and presents age appropriate performances and educational events for young people and their families; school- and community-based programs that directly impact teachers, students, artists, and school and arts administrators through professional development; systemic and school improvement through arts integrated curricula, inclusive classrooms, and universal design in facilities and learning; creating partnerships around the issues of arts education and arts integrated education; creating and providing educational materials via print and the Internet; and developing careers in the arts for young people and aspiring professionals.



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