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AUGUST 26, 2019

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Minnesota Center for Book Arts Launches McKnight Fellowships for Book Artists

Two exceptional artists in the field of book arts will receive fellowships of \$25,000 each

For the first time, two fellowships—which include an award of \$25,000 each, as well as professional development experiences, opportunities to participate in national conferences, and public discussions with visiting critics and curators—will be available in 2020 to book artists living in the state of Minnesota.

The McKnight Fellowships for Book Artists is a yearlong program designed to give exceptional, mid-career Minnesota book artists the space and time to delve more deeply into their craft, exploring and expanding on the historical foundations of the “contained narrative.”

While fellowships in visual arts, writing, and music have been staples of the McKnight Artist Fellowship programs since 1982, book arts is a new area of support for the philanthropic foundation. A new partnership between the McKnight Foundation and Minnesota Center for Book Arts makes this possible.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with the McKnight Foundation to launch the Fellowships for Book Artists, which will recognize the dynamic and diverse work of mid-career book artists in the state of Minnesota, and provide support structures to advance their careers on the national level,” says Elysa Voshell, Executive Director at Minnesota Center for Book Arts.

ABOUT BOOK ARTS

Book artists blend disciplines such as bookbinding, letterpress printing, papermaking, screen printing, typography, and collage to create new structures and interpretations of the book. MCBA serves as a regional and national hub for new and practicing book artists, offering studio space, workshops, exhibitions, and events that champion these foundational art forms.

ELIGIBILITY

Fellows must have been a Minnesota resident one year prior to applying and must maintain residency during their fellowship year. Eligible candidates for the McKnight Fellowship for Book Arts will be at a stage in their career that is beyond emerging, meaning they will have already created a substantial body of work over a sustained period of time. Minnesota Center for Book Arts will administer the selection process next spring, as well as oversee programming throughout the year.



FELLOWSHIP BENEFITS

The \$25,000 awards are unrestricted, allowing artists to set aside time for study, reflection, opportunities, new projects, experimentation, and exploration. Each fellow will benefit from Artist Collective membership during their fellowship year, which grants unlimited access to MCBA's letterpress, papermaking, and binding studios.

Due to the rarity, expense, and scale of historical book arts equipment, open studio access is especially important to the advancement of book artists compared to those working in other disciplines. "Even for mid-career artists, the cost and space requirements of outfitting a studio can be prohibitive. Not everyone has a Vandercook press in their basement that they can print on, let alone an entire library of typefaces," says Voshell.

Fellows will also receive studio visits from a national artist or critic in the field, funding for professional digital documentation of their artwork, a travel honorarium to attend a conference, and the opportunity to attend an artist residency. The two book arts fellows will also be featured participants of a public artist panel held at Open Book, the building that houses MCBA.

MCBA joins 12 other art organizations who partner with the McKnight Foundation annually and represent 14 disciplines ranging from dance and composition to writing and ceramics. The application period will be open from December 1, 2019 to March 1, 2020. Winners will be announced in May 2020.

ABOUT MCBA

Minnesota Center for Book Arts is a visual arts nonprofit organization that supports creative expression through traditional and contemporary book arts, including papermaking, bookbinding, and letterpress printing. MCBA's philosophy and artistic vision challenges its artist community to think beyond the traditional notion of "book." Today, books can be bound and unbound, fabricated into sculptures, interpreted as metaphor, experienced as installation or performance, and interacted with virtually. What unites this varied work is a focus on the interdisciplinary expression of narrative. To learn more, visit our website at mnbookarts.org.

ABOUT THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive, the McKnight Foundation's arts program is one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the country. Support for individual working Minnesota artists has been a cornerstone of the program since it began in 1981. The McKnight Artist Fellowships Program provides annual, unrestricted cash awards to outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists in 14 different creative disciplines. Program partner organizations administer the fellowships and structure them to respond to the unique challenges of different disciplines. Currently the foundation contributes about \$1.7 million per year to its statewide fellowships. For more information, visit mcknight.org/artistfellowships.