

**Media Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 15, 2018**

Edmonton Arts Council recognizes outstanding local artists

Edmonton... Tonight the Edmonton Arts Council, City of Edmonton and Edmonton Community Foundation will recognize the 2017 recipients of the **Cultural Diversity in the Arts** project grants and the **Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund** awards.

Presenters include Councillor Jon Dziadyk bringing greetings on behalf of the City of Edmonton, and Craig Stumpf-Allen of the Edmonton Community Foundation. The evening will also feature performances by Farhad Khosravi and the Brendan McGrath Trio. Short films by Cineflair Productions will also be screened, showcasing the award and grant recipients. The videos will be released at 7:00 p.m. MST on the Edmonton Arts Council's Facebook page. **Contact the Edmonton Arts Council if you would like an embargoed preview of these shorts.**

When: Thursday, February 15, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. (presentation to take place 7:00 to 7:40 p.m.)

What: Awards presentation and reception, media photo opportunity

Where: Allard Hall Main Atrium, MacEwan University (11110 104 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB)

"Tonight, we celebrate 27 remarkable local artists that call Edmonton home" said Sanjay Shahani Executive Director of the Edmonton Arts Council. "Ranging from emerging to established, these artists excel in their disciplines, while doubling as instructors, event organizers, administrators, activists and volunteers who are constantly working to broaden and promote the Edmonton arts community. We are so pleased for the opportunity to invest in Edmonton and look forward to seeing the projects and performances that result from the investments announced tonight."

The City of Edmonton through the Edmonton Arts Council established the **Cultural Diversity in the Arts program** to recognize that artists from all parts of the world enrich Edmonton's cultural scene. Artists from these communities can apply to any Edmonton Arts Council program, but many also face cultural, linguistic or historical barriers to accessing support. Grants will support the activities of individual, Edmonton artists for a specific time towards a specific project.

The **Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund (EATF)** provides awards to encourage artists to stay in our community. "Edmonton Community Foundation is proud to have partnered with the EAC to provide 20 years of awards from the Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund," said Craig Stumpf-Allen, Edmonton Community Foundation Director of Grants and Community Engagement. "The recipients – past, present, and future – help make Edmonton a vibrant and engaging city, extending the impact of the awards far beyond their monetary value." In celebration of Canada's 150th Anniversary, and the 20th year of the EATF Award, the Eldon and Anne Foote Fund made a contribution to increase the EATF pool allowing the EAC to award \$15,000 to ten exceptional, local artists.

More information about the Edmonton Arts Council's grants and award programs can be found at: grants.edmontonarts.ca

Backgrounder: Cultural Diversity in the Arts and Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund recipients

Recipients of the 2017 Cultural Diversity in the Arts program:

Abdul Malik will use film to produce an artistic examination of various figures that uphold and are indispensable to the diverse and multicultural fabric of Edmonton.

Aksam Alyousef is working to mount a full studio production of his play *Hagar*, a one-woman show about a single mother trying to flee from the war in Syria with her one-year-old son.

Cheyenne Bruneau AKA Miss Rae plans to write, record, and release *Wild Rose*, her sophomore Blues/Soul album with the Midnight Ramblers in Edmonton.

One of two Sarangi players in North America, **Dr. Deepak Paramashivan** will be creating his first studio music album entitled *The Blue Line - Lullabies and other Songs of India* featuring traditional songs of India on Sarangi and vocals with Western Orchestration.

Over two years, **Erica Cawagas** wrote the original script and music for *Emma the Musical* to promote international awareness in the preservation and retention of Filipino heritage and culture. *Emma the Musical* will be staged July 7, 2018 at the University of Alberta, Myer Horowitz Theatre.

Jonathan Sherrer is a visual artist who will be examining his strained relationship to his Filipino-Canadian heritage through a large, room-spanning, free-standing autobiographical comic "book" that will unfold as two narratives – one following his Eastern side and the other, the West.

Lakshminarayanan (Naren) Ganesan will share his love of Bharatanatyam, Indian classical dance, in a multidisciplinary project celebrating ancient temple rituals and practices in *Kshetra*.

Originally from England and Cameroon, **Leo Lucien-Bay** will be expanding on a short story he wrote to create a 70-minute animated film that explores our relationship with religion and hero worship.

A first generation Turkish-Canadian with roots in the Jewish community, **Linda Ozromano** will depict her own journey as an immigrant to try to find meaning in loss through a photography project.

Singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist **Roya Yazdanmehr** weaves between her Middle Eastern, Ukrainian, Canadian and Baha'i communities throughout her work. She will be recording her debut full-length music album entitled *Breath & Being*, set to release in Fall 2018.

Chinese Canadian filmmaker **Shawn Tse** is the Director, Co-Producer, Co-Writer, Host and Editor of his new project *Seconds, Please!* This video-based series will explore the transmission of culture and food between first and second-generation immigrants.

Black Girl Magic is a collective of seven African diaspora women: Shima Aisha Robinson, Jules Nyx, Nasra Adem, Mpoie Mogale, Medgine Mathurin, Karimah Ashanti Marshall, and Fatima (Effy) Adar. They are creating a multimedia work of audiovisual performance art exploring their roots and the women who built Edmonton.

Recipients of the 2017 Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund Award:

Kyle Armstrong is a filmmaker whose work has been recognized internationally and has been a continued presence in Edmonton's arts community - collaborating across disciplines.

A first-generation Caribbean-Canadian emcee/poet, writer, graphic designer, and mixed media visual artist, **KazMega** (Jermaine Curtis) works to uplift marginalized groups through arts programs and events.

April Dean is a champion for contemporary visual art in Edmonton. An artist, curator, educator and public speaker, Dean was awarded the 2016 Mayor's Award for Excellence in Arts Management for her role as The Society of Northern Alberta Print-Artists' Executive Director.

Helping others discover their own creative selves is what brings a sense of purpose to **Paul Freeman's** life as an artist. He is co-founder of the Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts and accomplished artist in his own right, receiving the Eldon and Anne Foote Edmonton Visual Arts Prize in 2013.

Alexandra Lazarowich is a Cree filmmaker whose films explore the issues impacting Aboriginal peoples from around the world. Her short documentary *Cree Code Talker* has screened internationally and won at numerous film festivals.

Beginning her career as a principal dancer in Ballet Philippines, **Ida Beltran Lucila** has since pioneered a dance therapy program in Manila and celebrated her Filipino culture in Edmonton's arts community - teaching dance, choreography, co-founding the Philippine Arts Council, organizing Philippine Fiesta, and launching The Learning Table.

Bradley Necyk is a multidisciplinary artist and researcher exploring ideas of medication regimes, psychiatry, and the narratives that form around these systems.

Shima Aisha Robinson AKA Dwennimmen uses her spoken word poetry to address harmful social disparities, injustices, the reality of pain and the achievability of success. Robinson is also a member of the Black Girl Magic collective, recipient of a 2017 Cultural Diversity in the Arts project grant.

Born and raised in Fort McMurray, **Jeannie Vandekerkhove** is a dancer, choreographer and teacher in the contemporary arts. Throughout her work, she pushes her artistic boundaries and presses against genres, question gender norms in dance, and breaks assumptions about what contemporary dance is.

Soul-pop singer/songwriter **Nuela Charles** received the Edmonton Artists' Trust Fund in 2014 and since continued her commitment to remain in Edmonton and pursue her music career. She tours internationally and her albums have garnered numerous awards, including a nomination for a 2018 JUNO Award.

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The Edmonton Arts Council is a non-profit society and charitable organization that supports and promotes the arts community in Edmonton. The EAC works to increase the profile and involvement of arts and culture in all aspects of our community life.

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