A NATIONAL JURIED EXHIBITION OF 15 EMERGING YOUNG ARTISTS WITH DISABILITIES

(RE) INVENTION

VOLKSWAGEN

The International Organization on Arts and Disability

GROUP OF AMERICA

THE KENNEDY CENTER
COVER IMAGE:
Monica Chulewicz
*I'm Not Here For You To Taunt*, 2016
Cyanotype prints on vintage dress (90 in x 35 in)
## Contents

About VSA Emerging Young Arts Program .................................................. 4

**Introduction** .................................................................................................. 5

### Artist Biographies

- Monica Chulewicz ................................................................. 6
- Victoria Dugger ................................................................. 9
- Kate Pincus-Whitney .......................................................... 10
- Mara Clawson ................................................................. 13
- Courtney Wynn Cooper ......................................................... 14
- Christine Driscoll .............................................................. 17
- Nicholas Fagan ................................................................. 18
- Benjamin Gibbs ................................................................. 21
- Harrison Halker Heinks ....................................................... 22
- Zàira Lee ................................................................. 25
- Jeremie Austin Miller .......................................................... 26
- Abigail Nash ................................................................. 29
- Alexandra Novess .............................................................. 30
- Alice Shockey ................................................................. 33
- Darryl Terrell ................................................................. 34
- **Jury Panel** ................................................................. 36
About VSA Emerging Young Arts 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 12 $2,000 awards of excellence; 2) 3 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.
(Re)Invention is the 15th 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 nation where each artist’s individual talent, mode of expression, and view of the world is showcased and valued.

This year, we are presenting artists whose work exemplifies themes of renewal and self-discovery—of reinvention. From the unexpected whimsy of an animation, to a bold series of self-portraits, this work engages, challenges, and delights us. Collectively, these works of art captivate us on many levels: we are asked to explore ideas of self, community, legacy, and collective memory. Across different media we see notions of an in-between state of being, where perspective is at once flattened and expanded. We also see work that questions stereotypes, and that invites us draw meaning from visual equations of shape and color.

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 and to create new contexts. These fifteen artists give us examples of how art can be used to rewrite a personal narrative. They are present in their community and in the world, and are motivated to use their creativity to send a strong message of inclusion and unity in the arts.
Monica Chulewicz

Seaford, NY • Age: 25
Grand Prize Award: $20,000

Monica Chulewicz is a Polish-American artist who was born and raised in New York. A printmaker and collagist, she uses vintage found materials in both digital and traditional hand-printing processes. Chulewicz was born with a progressive disease that has caused several secondary illnesses, and uses her chronic health issues as a means of inspiration for her work.

The cast of anonymous women depicted in *I’m Not Here For You To Taunt* represent collected memories from un-known histories, and evoke a continuum of loss and renewal throughout the generations. Chulewicz experiments with fiction of the past, using vintage photographs to create dialogues between memory and time, and address themes of existence, fragility, and mortality.

Chulewicz earned a BFA from Adelphi University in 2013. She currently lives and works in New York.

*I’m Not Here For You To Taunt*, 2016
Cyanotype prints on vintage dress (90 in x 35 in)
Unflinching and direct, Victoria Dugger’s work confronts us with a duality of beauty and the grotesque through sculpture that heavily distorts the human body. *Soft Machine 1* is part of a series exploring tropes of disability, sexuality, and fear of the unknown through figurative shapes that are unsettling recognizable, yet foreign.

Through this series, Dugger, who uses a wheelchair, aims to reinvent and restructure the body as seen by common societal perceptions and expectations. Her art at once questions the imagery and stereotypes associated with beauty and disability, and pushes us to rethink our own projected narratives of the disadvantaged.

Dugger earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting and Sculpture from Columbus State University in 2016, and continues to her create art from her hometown of Columbus, Georgia.

*Soft Machine 1, 2015*
Encaustic, nylon, brick (12 in x 18 in x 32 in)
Kate Pincus-Whitney

Santa Barbara, CA • Age: 22
Second Prize Award: $6,000

Born and raised in southern California, Kate Pincus-Whitney celebrates portraiture and the theater of the dinner table in her narrative paintings and multi-media installations. Her art is informed by her experience of navigating the world with dyslexia and stereo-blindness: female forms, table scenes, food, patterns, color, and abstracted and misspelled words are recurring motifs woven into her work. Pincus-Whitney aims to synthesize social and political themes of identity with visual memory and personal histories. She sees herself as an “artist anthropologist,” following and celebrating the thread of women in her family history, depicting female strength, resilience, and creativity.

Pincus-Whitney is a 2016 graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, where she focused on visual and performance art. She is currently working as an artist, and divides her time between New York and California.

Getting Ready, 2015
Acrylic, wood, ink and gesso, on canvas (36 in x 48 in)
The vibrant strokes of color in Mara Clawson’s *To Survive* waver separately, before coming together to form the whimsical and thoughtful imagery that accompanies her narrative. As the video unfolds, we see that the growth of images mirrors the artist’s own progression toward greater self-sufficiency. Clawson has familial dysautonomia, a neurogenetic disorder that affects her autonomic and sensory nervous systems. Through creating art, she has found a profound sense of self, stating, “Making art makes me who I am.”

Clawson attended the Ivymount School in Potomac, Maryland and the Katherine Thomas School in Rockville, Maryland. She currently produces her artworks at Art Enables in Washington, D.C., and in her home studio.

*To Survive*, 2016
Digital video
Courtney Wynn Cooper

Mountain View, CA • Age: 20
Award of Excellence

Born and raised in Mountain View, California, Courtney Cooper’s work is subtly complicated by texture, and typically focuses on one or two central shapes. While the images themselves come across as minimal and uncomplicated, the process of creating them is not. Cooper treats each painting as an equation in need of a solution. As she begins her first sketches, patterns and rules of perspective begin to emerge that she gradually builds upon to create the finished piece. In a response to finding herself anxious and overstimulated, Cooper often imagines stepping into her canvasses, escaping into a somewhat disorienting world of non-conformity. She is interested in the space between what is wrong and right, saying, “You can stay longer with something in a state of perplexity than in a state of total clarity.”

Cooper currently studies Fine Arts at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland.

Slip, 2016
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas (50 in x 36 in)
Christine Driscoll, who is on the autism spectrum, was born in Yokohama, Japan and grew up in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. In 2015, she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Animation from Savannah College of Art and Design, where she wrote, directed, and animated Pup Art, leading a team of 17 students to create the final product. The short film was inspired by the antics of Driscoll’s own dog, Rocky, and gives a playful look into the creative process. Her style is loose, gestural, and inspired by the work of classic animators such as Glen Keane and Carlos Grangel.

When she is not collaborating on projects as a 2D animator and storyboard artist, Driscoll creates 3D found-object sculptures, and is an active contributor to online art communities. Her goal is to make film adaptations of her written stories using different techniques, including CGI and Stop-Motion, as well as 2D animation.

*Pup Art, 2015  
2D animation*
Nicholas Fagan creates abstract imagery that deals with symbolism, disability, and language. His experience with dyslexia and dysgraphia has led him to devise a unique system for understanding the written word. Fagan ascribes meaning to the shape of the word itself, rather than its individual letters, and has trained himself to recognize these symbols as stand-ins for objects or concepts. He uses this technique in *Same Shame Smell*, saying, “I lay words on top of each other and allow their shapes, not the actual words, to convey the visual message.”

A native of Herndon, Virginia, Fagan is pursuing a Master of Fine Arts at The Ohio State University. He lives and works in Columbus, Ohio.

*Same Shame Smell*, 2016
House paint, spray paint on canvas (36 in x 24 in)
Introspective yet quietly objective, Gibbs’ work places at its center his experience living with cerebral palsy through self-portraiture. *The Feet 1996* is one of those rare examples of the genre where the body itself is absent, yet what we see is just as intimate, if not more, than if the artist were depicted. This work is part of a series called *Three Point Perspective* that explores perceived perspectives on disabilities from the people Gibbs interacts with on a daily basis—strangers, close friends, and family—before ultimately giving us insight into how the artist sees himself. *The Feet 1996* is the first in the series, and is meant to convey the isolation Gibbs feels when people define him by the objects he uses in daily life.

Benjamin Gibbs was born and raised in northern Virginia, and recently graduated with a bachelor’s degree in photography from Longwood University.

*The Feet 1996, 2016*
Inkjet print (14 in x 11 in)
Harrison Halker Heinks uses photography as a means to establish himself in the world. He states, “People have a tendency to ignore me because I have a disability. One way I see myself existing in this world is by capturing my reflection in everyday scenarios.”

Reminiscent of twentieth-century street photographers like Lee Friedlander and Vivian Maier, Heinks inserts himself subtly yet deliberately in his images through shadow and reflection. He explains that this type of self-representation illustrates his life with autism, in that he feels caught in another plane that runs parallel to the world in which everyone else lives. As he looks at the images he creates, Heinks places himself in a new, shared, context beyond the window, saying, “By looking at my work, I am present in their world. Being present is what motivates me to create.”

Heinks attends Edina High School in Edina, Minnesota, and creates his art at Upside Right Studios.

Vanity, 2016
Inkjet print (24 in x 18 in)
A trained pole dancer and poet from Oakland, California, Zàira Lee’s art interweaves ancestral stories of oppression through video and performance art. Her current work explores ideas of ceremony and social justice, and seeks to honor past, present, and future histories of gender and sexual violence through ritual pole dance. The pole is a conduit to these experiences, and acts as a source of empowerment for Lee, who lives with anxiety and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The photograph seen here is a still from *HOMELAND*, a collaborative video piece in which a blindfolded Lee leaves a violent past and returns to a decolonized home.

Lee graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 2015 with a bachelor’s degree in ethnic studies and a focus on carceral geographies and human rights. She lives and works in Oakland, California.

*Still from HOMELAND, 2016*
Inkjet print (36 in x 24 in)
Jeremie Austin Miller

Tulsa, OK • Age: 24
Award of Excellence

Created using both hand building and wheel throwing techniques, Jeremie Austin Miller’s work often challenges the viewer with provocative statements. For example, his vibrantly colored Japanese-style tea bowls are at odds with the fiber bowls, which are made from over $500 in shredded US currency. Through contrasting the traditional with the unexpected, Miller’s work starts a conversation about usefulness, intent, context, and privilege. The process of creating art allows Miller to better understand himself and others with mental illness, and to communicate to the broader community his often complex and abstract ideas.

Miller studies at the University of Kansas, where he is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in art with a concentration in ceramics.

Primary Bowls, 2016
Ceramic, fiber (approx. 4 in x 4.5 in x 4 in each)
The sensitive and intimate rendering of detail is something Abigail Nash takes very seriously. As an artist with low vision, objects even at a short distance are indistinct and become difficult to translate into paintings. By bringing the animal bone within her range of vision and using a brush the size of the tip of a pen, Nash created the detailed and intimate still life seen here; the colors and textures in *Clean Break* invoke the many-colored Texas Hill Country landscape from which the bone came.

Nash is passionate about bringing accessibility to the arts. A native of Mason, Texas, she studies both studio art and political science at Southwestern University.

*Clean Break*, 2016  
Oil on canvas (44 in x 35 in)
Alexandra Novess’ abstract mixed-media paintings are meant to make the viewer feel a subtle intrusion. In *Heart Strings*, she uses violin strings to illustrate the fluid and unpredictable motion of many mental and neurological conditions; the rough granite pieces are reminders to stay grounded during times of unease.

Novess’ own experience with a sleep disorder surfaces in the sinuous structure of her work. Her paintings, with their organic materials and multiple layers, function as a timeline, and give structure to the places where her memory is affected by sleep deprivation. She believes that the more we acknowledge and try to understand the prevalence of hidden disabilities, the better equipped we are to address something that so deeply affects our modern society.

Novess lives in Austin, Texas, and hopes to pursue a master’s degree in psychology and statistics.

*Heart Strings*, 2015
Acrylic, granite, violin strings on canvas (28 in x 18 in)
Alice Shockey uses photography and multimedia installations to study different iterations of demarcated space, both within communities and within the body. Her work looks at the personal and minute, as well as the interpersonal and broad-reaching. For example, Shockey uses her art to reclaim her relationship with her body in the context of her experience with chronic Lyme disease, as it displaces her sense of self and normalcy. In other instances, such as in Spaces in NYC, Crown Heights, Kingston Avenue Station, she comments on issues of boundaries, displacement, and community geography. Some of her broadest-reaching work looks at the visible and invisible forces that shape a community as seen through the lens of her family’s history as survivors of the Holocaust.

Shockey is a 2016 graduate from Oberlin College, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in studio art. She plans to continue a process of artistic advocacy and self-discovery.

*Spaces in NYC, Crown Heights, Kingston Avenue Station, 2015*
Lithographic prints (8.5 in x 12 in each)
I Wish I Was Perfectly Happy is a very personal exploration of body image, black masculinity, queer identity, and disability. Pulling from influences he observed growing up in Detroit, Michigan, Darryl Terrell’s art is a reflection of black family structure and popular culture, asking “What is American blackness? How does it look?” Terrell’s triptych examines the black, femme, and queer bodies as separate categories living within the same identity, and how they occupy space in the American landscape. Terrell’s mission is to educate; he states, “I want my art to build dialogue. I want people to look at [my work] and really think and question.”

Terrell is a Queer African-American artist whose primary practice is photography. Currently based in Chicago, Illinois, he is a pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Photography at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.
My body is a bubble...  ...some are real, some are made

I wish I was fat, perfectly happy

I wish I was fat, perfectly happy

I wish I was fat, perfectly happy

My body is a bubble...  ...some are real, some are made

1. Going To Hell
2. Groped
3. Jumped in second grade for being gay
4. Exposed
5. Naked
6. Even in second grade for being gay

I thought I was done with Depression. But I’m not

I wish I was fat, perfectly happy

I wish I was fat, perfectly happy

I wish I was fat, perfectly happy
Ellen Lupton is Senior Curator of Contemporary Design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City. She mounted her first exhibition at Cooper Hewitt, *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office*, in 1992. Since then she has organized numerous exhibitions, publications, and public programs at the museum. Lupton serves as director of the Graphic Design MFA Program at MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art) in Baltimore, where she has authored numerous books on design processes, including “Thinking with Type,” “Type on Screen,” and “Graphic Design Thinking.” She holds a BFA from The Cooper Union (1985) and a Doctorate in Communication Design from University of Baltimore (2008). She received the AIGA Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement in 2007.

Saul Chernick, (BFA RISD, MFA Rutgers University) is a visual artist and educator. He has exhibited internationally in galleries and museums including the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, the Bronx Museum of Art, the Jewish Museum, as well as Rush Arts, Max Protetch, Meulensteen, and Senior & Shopmaker Galleries in New York City. As a New York state certified art educator he has taught for the New York City public school system, as well as The Cooper Union, Parson’s School of Design, Baruch College, the Museum of Modern Art, Studio in a School, the Dreamyard Project, and the 92nd Street Y.
Laura Swanson is an artist based in New York, New York. Her work has been exhibited at the Laurie M. Tisch Gallery (New York), San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, Arsenal (Berlin), and the Jeju Museum of Contemporary Art (South Korea), among others. She was a National Endowment for the Arts John Renna Scholar in 2008-2010, Jacob K. Javits Fellow in 2010-2011, and received a Wynn Newhouse Award from the Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation in 2013. Swanson received her MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2011 and BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2008.

Brandon Brame Fortune is chief curator and curator of painting and sculpture at the National Portrait Gallery, where she has worked since 1987. Fortune organized the first two triennial Outwin Boochever Portrait Competitions (2006 and 2009) and continues to serve as one of the judges. Fortune is also chair of the curatorial team charged with creating the Portraiture Now series of exhibitions, which includes Drawing on the Edge, Asian American Portraits of Encounter, and Framing Memory. Fortune graduated from Agnes Scott College and received a master’s degree and doctorate in art history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Based in New York City, 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, Sasaki teaches in the Community and Access programs of the education department at the Museum of Modern Art, which focuses on bringing art experiences to disabled and underserved populations. Born in Honolulu, he has been a wheelchair user since a 1982 automobile accident.
Serving the international disability and arts community, VSA provides opportunities for people with disabilities, of all ages, across the globe to learn through, participate in and enjoy the arts. Founded 41 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, the VSA international network supports and offers a wide array of accessible cultural, arts and education programs and experiences. Please visit VSA at: kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/.

Volkswagen Group of America, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Volkswagen AG, one of the world’s leading automobile manufacturers and the largest carmaker in Europe. It operates a manufacturing plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee and houses the U.S. operations of a worldwide family of distinguished and exciting brands including Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Lamborghini and Volkswagen, as well as VW Credit, Inc. Founded in 1955, the company’s 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 6,000 employees in the United States and sells its vehicles through a 1,000-strong dealer network.

In recent years the Kennedy Center has dramatically expanded its education programs to reach young people, teachers, and families throughout the nation. A clear sign of the Center’s dedication is the accessible, state-of-the-art Family Theater, which opened in 2005. 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.
THE KENNEDY CENTER

David M. Rubenstein
Chairman

Deborah F. Rutter
President

Mario R. Rossero
Senior Vice President, Education

Betty Siegel
Director, VSA and Accessibility