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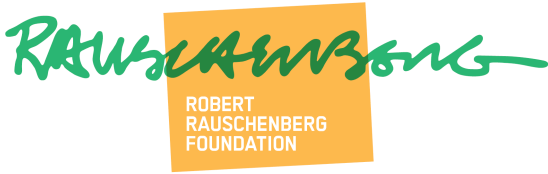
**Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Awards SEED Grants to
New Orleans–Based Arts Innovators Blights Out, New Orleans Black Mardi
Gras Indian Cooperative, and Pelican Bomb**



Blights Out with Freddy “Hollywood” Delahoussaye, Documentation of *Home Court Crawl*, December 2014. Photo: Scott McCrossen/FIVE65 Design

New York, NY (August 23, 2016) – Today the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation announced the recipients of its 2016 SEED grants. Three arts organizations from New Orleans were selected for their pioneering work and their appetite for risk: Blights Out, New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indian Cooperative, and Pelican Bomb.

“Artists and cultural leaders need support that gives them the freedom to experiment, to fail forward, and ultimately to create new models,” said Risë Wilson, director of philanthropy for the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. “None of our SEED grantees operate in the status quo and the Rauschenberg



Foundation is pleased to help them push creative boundaries and test new ideas.”

Building on Robert Rauschenberg’s legacy as an artist who was unafraid of risk—pushing the boundaries of his medium and working across disciplines long before it was standard practice—the SEED program celebrates innovation. Searching for groundbreaking, often artist-led organizations that take risks in their artistic and/or administrative practices, the SEED program provides a combination of risk capital and technical assistance over three years. Grantees are nominated to receive this support by local leaders familiar with their contributions.

Blights Out, New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indian Cooperative, and Pelican Bomb will each receive \$35,000 over three years as well as opportunities for professional development and network building. They will also participate in a national gathering of all current and past SEED grantees at the Rauschenberg Residency in Captiva, Florida for a week-long conference.

This announcement marks the program’s expansion to three new areas: Appalachia (Eastern Kentucky, Tennessee), Houston, and Santa Fe, as well as ongoing support to cultural organizations in Detroit and New Orleans. To date, the Foundation has awarded SEED grants to 48 projects in 13 cities/regions across the United States, including: Atlanta, Boise, Buffalo, Cleveland, Kansas City, Phoenix, Portland, and Providence.

“Since we started the SEED program three years ago, we have seen how each grantee organization has been able to leverage our support to take bigger risks, expand their work, and establish new relationships,” said Christy MacLear, CEO of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. “What began as a pilot program to fund a few grassroots arts organizations has grown to reinforce the idea that



art transcends geographic boundaries and should be supported no matter which corner of the country.”

Other recipients of the 2016 SEED grants are: Alabama Song, Antena, Campbell Culture Coalition, Carpetbag Theater, Complex Movements, EpiCentre Arts, Fringe Society, and Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative.

Learn more about the SEED program here:

<http://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/grants/art-grants/seed>

About the New Orleans Grantees

Blights Out

Blights Out is a collective of citizens, artists, architects, and activists “pushing boundaries of a medium, working across sectors and combining disciplines in new ways,” describes SEED nominator Brooke Anderson of Prospect New Orleans. Blights Out is daring to design a new model for development that generates dialogue, art, and action to challenge blight, displacement, and gentrification. <http://www.blightsout.org/>

New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indian Cooperative

The New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indian Cooperative is working to build a model of cooperative economics for one of New Orleans most important groups of cultural bearers. Their “work is at the helm of cultural production and legacy in the city of New Orleans,” said nominator Gia Hamilton of the Joan Mitchell Center, “, it is imperative that this group be supported in order to showcase equity in the streets for marginalized communities of color in the city of New Orleans.”

Pelican Bomb

Pelican Bomb is dedicated to supporting the creative communities of New Orleans and their audiences by cultivating multiple platforms for contemporary



art discourse, engagement, and education. William Fagaly of the New Orleans Museum of Art nominated Pelican Bomb because it “places a strong emphasis on accessibility and is widely considered in New Orleans to be the most diverse and inclusive platform for contemporary art.” <http://pelicanbomb.com/>

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About the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation fosters the legacy of the life, artistic practice, and activist philosophy of one of the most important artists of the 20th century. Through exhibitions, scholarship, grants, and a residency program, the Foundation furthers Rauschenberg’s belief that art can change the world, while ensuring that his singular achievements and contributions continue to have global impact and resonance with contemporary artists.

<http://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/>

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