



Robert Rauschenberg Foundation
381 Lafayette Street
New York, New York 10003

RAUSCHENBERG FOUNDATION INVESTS \$775,000 IN ARTISTS ADDRESSING THE EPIDEMIC OF MASS INCARCERATION

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation announced today the recipients of its 2016 *Artist as Activist Fellowship*—a two-year grant program designed to support U.S. based artists and artist collectives tackling important social challenges through their creative practice. The 2016 *Artist as Activist* Fellows—**Maria Gaspar**, **The Graduates**, **Titus Kaphar**, **Los Angeles Poverty Department**, **Jeremy Robins/Echoes of Incarceration**, **Favianna Rodriguez**, **Paul Rucker**, **EL Sawyer**, **jackie sumell**, and **Shontina Vernon**—will each develop projects that address the intersections between race, class, and mass incarceration.

Located in cities across the U.S.—Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia, and Seattle—the 2016 Fellows have developed projects that investigate and intervene in several facets of mass incarceration: from juvenile detention and the impact on youth with incarcerated parents, to the struggles around ‘re-entry’ for former prisoners, the connection between mass incarceration and immigration, the psychological effects of solitary confinement, the economics behind the prison industrial complex, and beyond.

The Foundation identified this year’s cohort through a competitive, nationwide call for proposals. These 10 Fellows were selected from an initial pool of 228, to receive support ranging from \$50,000 - \$100,000 over two years.

2016 Artist as Activist Fellows

Maria Gaspar’s *RADIOACTIVE: Stories from Beyond the Wall* will connect residents both inside and surrounding the largest jail in the country—Cook County Jail in Chicago—through a series of radio broadcasts and visual projections.

The Graduates will stage theater performances and public art installations that reveal how many of their communities’ citizens have been disappeared by incarceration.

Titus Kaphar will expand *The Jerome Project*, his semi-autobiographical investigation of the criminal justice system through paint, tar, and canvas, into a youth development project and documentary film.

Los Angeles Poverty Department’s *Public Safety FOR REAL* articulates an alternate conception of “public safety” and devises informal community policing vehicles that maintain respect for the wellbeing of their Skid Row neighbors.

Jeremy Robins/Echoes of Incarceration provides training in documentary filmmaking and activism for youth with incarcerated parents. Echoes will produce its first full-length documentary exploring the impact of mass incarceration on family structures.



Robert Rauschenberg Foundation
381 Lafayette Street
New York, New York 10003

Favianna Rodriguez will connect artists, activists, and movement organizers to resources and experiences that explore the intersections between mass incarceration and immigrant detention.

Paul Rucker will build on his body of work combining original cello compositions with data visualization to illustrate the disproportional representation of young people of color in juvenile detention, the economics of the prison-industrial complex, the growth of the US prison system, and the relationships among these trends.

EL Sawyer is creating curricula for agencies that serve the inmate and ex-offender population to accompany screenings of his 2013 film *Pull of Gravity*, highlighting the struggle of re-entry for men returning home from prison.

jackie sumell's project, *Solitary Gardens*, enlists communities to create public spaces designed by men and women currently held in solitary confinement, while simultaneously offering workshops and curricula for communities to envision a landscape without prisons.

Shontina Vernon's *Visionary Justice StoryLab* is an arts "collaboratory" in which artists and community organizers use media and performance to surface young peoples' narratives of systemic oppression.

For more information about the program and fellows, visit
<http://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/grants/art-grants/artist-as-activist>

About the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation fosters the legacy of the life, artistic practice, and philanthropy 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/>

Join the conversation with the Foundation on Instagram {[@rauschenbergfoundation](#)}, on Twitter {[@RRauschenberg](#)}, and on Facebook {[@RauschenbergFoundation](#)} with the hashtags #ArtistasActivist, #RRgrants, and #RauschenbergFoundation.

Media Contact: FITZ & CO, Liza Eliano, leliano@fitzandco.com, + 1-646-589-0921

Image caption and credit: "Echoes of Incarceration" crewmember Francis Adjei
Photo by Jeremy Robins, Courtesy of Robert Rauschenberg Foundation