

Community Arts Grants Fund Announces Individual Artist Awards

Greene County Council on the Arts and Columbia County Council on the Arts are pleased to announce the recipients of two Individual Artist regrant awards through the Community Arts Grants Fund Decentralization Program for Columbia and Greene Counties (DEC). The grants are competitive and represent the presentation of two \$2000 awards annually.

The *Decentralization - Individual Artist Tier* is funded by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) to provide support for local artists in the construction of new, original work. The awards are intended to engage the community through the artist's creative process and promote personal artistic growth. This year's proposals included music, film, literary, playwriting, & visual arts projects. There were several impressive candidates with compelling ideas & excellent support materials, making the 2012 review an especially challenging process. After much deliberation, a panel of artists from Greene and Columbia County recommended John Feldman of Spencertown & Tasha Depp of Catskill as this year's Individual Artist Grant recipients.

With more than three dozen non-commercial films to his credit, Columbia County recipient John Feldman demonstrates equal fluency in documentary, fiction, and experimental forms. A M.F.A. graduate of Temple University (Philadelphia), Feldman began his honing his craft in the late '70s. In 2011 he received a Cine Golden Eagle Award for his documentary "EVO: Ten Questions Everyone Should Ask about Evolution" (2010). His fiction and experimental work has garnered him national recognition, including a New American Cinema Award at the Seattle International Film Festival (2002) and Best of the Festival: Biograph Film Fest (Washington DC, 1982), as well as awards in Belgium, Portugal, Spain, New Zealand, and commissions from organizations such as Purchase College School of the Arts and the Seattle Chamber Music Society.

Feldman's \$2,000 Individual Artist award will support the creation of "The Energy Project: Stuyvesant Falls Hydro-electric Plant," a short film portrait that will examine "the intersection between a historic hydro-electric plant, a natural resource, and a community." Interviews with members of the Stuyvesant Falls community will form the "heart" of the production and they, together with Feldman, will explore the questions raised by the film's complex subject. For this veteran filmmaker, the project represents a new, but viable goal. Clearly up for the task, he states, "To make a coherent, intelligent, evocative five-minute film that imbues personality, history and meaning into a power plant and its resurrection is an exciting challenge for me as a filmmaker."

Depp is a mixed-media artist and painter who has exhibited regionwide for more than 25 years. She maintains an active schedule including participation in exhibitions such as "Gun Show" at the Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild, Kleinert/James Art Center in Woodstock (June, 2011); "In the Garden" Woodstock Playhouse (July, 2011) and "Faculty + One." Columbia-Greene Community College (September, 2011) and meeting responsibilities as an Adjunct Art Instructor at CGCC. Her work has also been presented at Gallery Ehva (Provincetown), the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art (SUNY New Paltz), and gallery and nonprofit venues in NY. She holds a M.F.A. from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University and a B.F.A. from Cooper Union School of Art.

The \$2000 Individual Artist award will enable her to undertake "Free Trash

Portraits,” a project which combines a collaborative project that Depp participated in on Coney Island Boardwalk many years ago, and her current investigations into the permanence of discarded trash in contemporary culture and its unusual suitability as a ground for art making. The new project will invite local participation in several ways: in the contribution of material as “canvas” for the work, as subject for free portraits and, as discussant/respondent in a dialogue that challenges traditional definitions of value, permanence, artifact, and temporality. Finished works will be exhibited in Greene County before being offered gratis to the participants, reframing Depp’s investigation into the structure and conventional format of commissioned portraiture. Describing her process, Depp explains, “This project is actually an experiment to see how much response I can elicit through my design abilities, writing abilities, and my craft, from a possibly skeptical public, that a portrait painted on trash will not only be interesting and worthwhile, but is a timely exploration/reflection of the world we live in.”

The Board and staff of GCCA and CCCA congratulate these two imaginative individuals and invite you to watch this space for updates on their projects as the year unfolds. For more information on either project or the Individual Artist grants program, contact our Director of Community Arts Grants at 518-943-3400 or Colettegcca@hotmail.com.