



For Immediate Release

January 7, 2019

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**Suzanne Haag honored with Joan Shipley Award;
2019 Individual Artist Fellowships Announced**

Salem, Oregon – Suzanne Haag, a choreographer living in Eugene, is the 2019 recipient of the Oregon Arts Commission’s honorary Joan Shipley Award. Haag is one of a group of six Oregon artists selected for the Arts Commission’s 2019 Individual Artist Fellowships. The 2019 fellowships support artists working in the performing arts; visual artists are awarded in alternating years.

The Joan Shipley Award is named for Oregon arts leader Joan Shipley, who passed away in 2011. Shipley was a collector, philanthropist and supporter of many arts and humanities organizations. In 2005, she and her husband John received an Oregon Governor’s Arts Award. Many in the arts community also counted her as a mentor and friend.

The Arts Commission’s Fellowship program is available to more than 20,000 artists who call Oregon home. Fellows are recommended by a panel of Oregon arts professionals who consider artists of outstanding talent, demonstrated ability and commitment to the creation of new work(s). The Arts Commission reviews and acts on the panel’s recommendations.

The following performing artists were awarded 2019 fellowships: Suzanne Haag (Joan Shipley Award), Eugene; Crystal Akins, Portland; Linda Austin, Portland; Jason Graham, Bend; Anthony Hudson, Portland; and Abigail Sperling, McMinnville.

Brief biographies and photos follow.



Crystal Akins

Crystal Akins works in creative musical platforms for social change. She is a choral conductor and song writer who uses music in an equitable and inclusive way, addressing isolation by creating access points for community to express themselves emotionally, socially and spiritually. As a woman of color, mother, and trauma survivor, Akins now uses music to navigate healing and connection. By creating music, she helps communities move through fear and into love. Photo Credit: Crystal Akins



Linda Austin

Whether teasing out a body's history, social or political context; positioning the body alongside objects and media; negotiating a relationship with music; or engaged in a poeto-scientific study of movement and perception, Linda Austin explores how all manifestations are articulated through the body and agency of the performer. Deploying movement, sound, text, visual media, and objects, Linda celebrates the virtuosity of the everyday over a career spanning over 35 years. Photo Credit: Christine Dong



Jason Graham

Jason Graham is a mixed-media performance artist. Pulling heavily from the international culture of Hip-hop, Jason finds content in a variety of places to create a cohesive body of work. As an artist, Jason challenges his own beliefs as a means to exact a deeper and more accurate truth. As a person of color and mixed ethnicity, Jason asks: what happens when we refuse to let an easy but inaccurate answer dictate our place within the communities we call home? Photo Credit: Matthew Grimes



Suzanne Haag, Joan Shipley Fellow

Choreographer Suzanne Haag's work is rooted in the classical ballet cannon and stems from a career as a dancer with companies throughout the U.S. She is most interested in how intense study of classical ballet technique can be utilized as a communicative tool. Suzanne works to use this art form, typically associated with lightness and the ethereal, to instead demonstrate weight and a more human element. She is drawn to questions that can't be answered in words, feelings that can only be expressed through dance and topics that are uncomfortable to talk about. Suzanne was selected for the

National Choreographer's Initiative (Irvine, CA), UNCSA's Choreographic Institute (Winston-Salem, NC), was a 2017 and 2018 finalist in the McCallum Theatre's Choreography Festival (Palm Desert, CA), and is a recent recipient of the New York Choreographic Institute's Commission Initiative award. She is Resident Choreographer of Eugene Ballet and co-founder of #instaballet. Photo Credit: Damian J. McDonald



Anthony Hudson

Confronting white supremacy, complacency, and the confusion of "mixed" identities as "Portland's premier drag clown," Anthony Hudson's character Carla Rossi uses the ephemeral quality of performance – supported by scripting and interactive video – as a means for contemporary storytelling and satire. Seeking to undermine white, normative notions of race and gender as a queer biracial citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Anthony/Carla use Coyote-like trickery, alternating between pure farce and deep emotional exploration to spotlight the

constructedness of our violent society. Photo Credits: Wayne Bund & Gia Goodrich



Abigail Sperling

A flutist dedicated to commissioning and performing new compositions, Abigail Sperling completed graduate studies in New Zealand, focusing on both traditional flute repertoire and contemporary music. In 2016, a grant from Creative New Zealand saw the production of a new concerto from composer Alex Taylor, which Abigail premiered on November 25, 2018 with the Auckland Chamber Orchestra. With the goal of building relationships with Northwest female composers, Abigail

seeks to commission five new collaborative works considering notions of "home" and "place" by exploring characteristics of the region. Photo Credit: Molly Brown

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The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of Business Oregon (formerly Oregon Economic and Community Development Department) in 1993, in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission's expertise in grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development.

The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. More information about the Oregon Arts Commission is available online at: www.oregonartscommission.org.