



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
AUGUST 9, 2021  
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## **CLEVELAND ARTS PRIZE ANNOUNCES 2021 AWARDEES**

61st CAP Annual Awards Event  
Cleveland Museum of Art  
Wednesday, October 13, 2021

(Cleveland, Ohio)—Cleveland Arts Prize Board of Trustees announce the 2021 Award Winners in the following categories:

### DISCIPLINE PRIZES

**Emerging Artist** awarded to two artists currently living in Northeast Ohio who have already created significant work or projects and show remarkable promise for further development of their artistic careers.

#### **Mourning [A] BLKstar** (Music)

James Longs - vocals, LaToya Kent - vocals, Kyle Kidd - vocals, Dante Foley - drums, Theresa May - trumpet, Pete Saudek - Guitar/keys, William Washington - trombone, RA Washington - samplers/bass

Mourning [A] BLKstar is a collective of musicians, writers and multimedia artists formed in Cleveland, Ohio. In dialogue with Hip Hop production techniques and live instrumentation, M[A]B bears witness to the pathways and frequencies that have sustained the African Diaspora and beyond.

Since 2016, Mourning [A] BLKstar has received critical acclaim for their five recordings and had the opportunity to share bills and tour in support of some of this generation's most amazing musical outfits including US Girls, Oshun, Algiers, Kyp Malone (TV On The Radio/Ice Balloons), and the legendary Doom Gospel pioneers, ONO.

In 2019, M[A]B performed at The Kennedy Center in the nation's capital and their fourth full length release, *Reckoning* was released by Don Giovanni Records to rave reviews. The Wire Magazine's Neil Kulkarni said this about the collective's work - "It is, impossibly, even better than Garner and one of the finest albums of 2019 thus far, from a band whose importance is fast becoming evident."

In 2020, M[A]B released a double album entitled, *The Cycle* which garnered the collective massive praise from NPR All Songs Considered, AFROPUNK, and The Wire Magazine.

#### **Lauren Yeager** (Visual Arts)

Lauren Yeager (born 1987 in Nashville, Tennessee; lives and works in Cleveland, Ohio) is a conceptual artist working in sculpture and photography. Utilizing found objects and landscapes, she preserves the identities of these familiar components while reconfiguring them into abstract compositions. The works have the ability to fluctuate between contexts, to be both formal works and relics of personal histories and daily monotony.

Yeager is the recipient of the Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award 2019 and 2021. Her works have been exhibited extensively throughout Cleveland, with notable exhibitions including FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, 2018. Women to Watch: Ohio, Reinberger Galleries, 2015. Realization is Better than Anticipation, MOCA Cleveland, 2013, and currently Sculpture Milwaukee 2021, for which she recently completed four outdoor sculpture commissions. Her works are included in the collections of the Cleveland Clinic, Metro-Health, Worthington Yards, and the Progressive Collection. She holds a BFA from the Cleveland Institute of Art and is represented by Abattoir Gallery in Cleveland.

**Mid-Career Artist** awarded to two artists who have resided in Northeast Ohio and whose work has received both regional acclaim and national recognition.

**Alice Ripley** (Theatre & Dance)

Alice Ripley is a Tony award-winning actor and Kent State University alumna. Alice appeared in Playhouse Square as Diana in *Next to Normal* and Fantine in *Les Miserables*.

Original Broadway Cast credits include: *Next to Normal*, (Tony award, Best Actress in a Musical), *Side Show* (Tony nomination), *American Psycho*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, James Joyce's *The Dead*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Who's Tommy*. Off-Broadway/Regional: *The Pink Unicorn* (Holmdel Theatre Company), *Civil War Christmas* (NYTW), *Cather County* (Playwright's Horizons), *Five Flights* (Rattlestick Theatre), *Sunset Boulevard*, (NSMT), *Company* (Kennedy Center), Television: *GIRLBOSS*, *Blue Bloods*, *30 Rock*, *Hee Haw*. Film: *The Pink Unicorn*, *SUGAR!*, *Isn't It Delicious*, *The Adulterer*, *Sing Along*, *Muckland*, *Bear With Us*. Cabaret: *Ripley Prescription* (2019 BWW NJ Award), *Unattached* (Available on Broadway Records). Original Streaming Music: *Drive*, *Pieces*, *Calling All Angels*, *Beautiful Eyes* (available on all platforms).

Ms. Ripley works on canvas with acrylic and mixed media, and paints and designs digitally. Alice is an accomplished songwriter, playing guitar and drums live with her band, RIPLEY, and on her self-produced records *Everything's Fine*, *OUTTASITE*, and *RIPLEY EP*.

**Corrie Slawson** (Visual Arts)

Corrie Slawson's work explores forms and narratives related to social and environmental equity. The Cleveland Heights native earned her BFA at Parsons School of Design in New York and her MFA at Kent State University. Her work has been exhibited in the US and internationally, including at MOCA Cleveland, The Toledo Museum of Art, Akron Art Museum, The Massillon Museum, Centro Cultural de Tijuana, SPACES and in Dresden and Sardinia. She has received two Individual Artist Awards from the Ohio Arts Council (2012 and 2019). With support from SPACES Satellite Fund, The Andy Warhol Foundation and Akron Soul Train, Corrie and a team of NE Ohio-based artists produced *Feast*: a ballet, the film adaptation of which was awarded a Gold Laurel at the Virgin Spring Cinefest in Kolkata, India. Slawson is part-time faculty in the Painting and Drawing Department at KSU School of Art. Her work is represented by Shaheen Modern and Contemporary Gallery in Cleveland, OH.

**Lifetime Achievement** awarded to one artist who has worked in Northeast Ohio over a period of decades and whose artistic achievements have brought distinction to the artist individually and to our region as a whole.

**Raymond McNiece** (Literature)

Ray McNiece has authored eleven books of poems and monologues and CDs, most recently *Love Song for Cleveland*, a collaboration with photographer Tim Lachina and *Breath Burns Away*, *New Haiku*. The Orlando Sentinel reporting on Ray's solo theater piece "Us — Talking Across America" at the Fringe Festival called him "a modern day descendant of Woody Guthrie."

He has a way with words and a wry sense of humor.” He toured Russia with Yevgeny Yevtushenko, appeared on *Good Morning, Russia* and performed at the Moscow Polytech, the Russian Poets’ Hall of Fame, where he was described as a born poet and performer. He has toured Italy twice with legendary Beat poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti. He fronts the band Tongue-in-Groove. Among many awards, he received a Creative Workforce Fellowship and residencies at The Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Jack Kerouac House. He is currently Poet Laureate of Cleveland Heights.

## SPECIAL PRIZES

**The Robert P. Bergman Prize** is awarded to an individual whose life and work are illuminated by an energetic and inspiring dedication to a democratic vision of art. The Bergman Prize recognizes the highest possible expression of art stewardship through long term commitment.

### **Dr. Joseph J. Garry, Jr.**

Joseph Garry’s contributions to Cleveland theater and northeast Ohio are immeasurable. In the early 1970s, Garry’s production of the cabaret-style musical revue *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* was chosen to bring audiences back to PlayhouseSquare—which it did for two-and-a-half years and 550 performances, the longest theatrical run in the state of Ohio. Along with his contributions to PlayhouseSquare theaters, Garry has created and directed numerous record-breaking productions, a travel and arts show on PBS with his late partner David Frazier, “Odysseys & Ovations”, plus 30 original theater scripts which were presented around the world. Garry has staged concerts for legends that include Ray Charles and Rosemary Clooney and was honored to stage Audrey Hepburn’s final tour for UNICEF. He has lectured at international theater conferences from Bombay to Budapest.

As head of the Theater Department at CSU, Joe served as a professor and mentor to generations of students. He received an Honorary Doctorate from Baldwin Wallace for his 30 years of contributions to the theater program as director, lecturer, and author. In 2014, Garry was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Cleveland Play House. He received the prestigious PlayhouseSquare President’s Award in 2012 and continues the 48-year relationship as host of the “Broadway Buzz” lectures that precede most performances in PlayhouseSquare’s Broadway Series.

**The Martha Joseph Prize** is awarded to an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to the vitality and stature of the arts in Northeast Ohio through exceptional commitment, vision, leadership, and/or philanthropy.

### **Sean Watterson**

Sean Watterson is a passionate advocate for artists and the arts. He’s a co-founder and co-owner of The Happy Dog, an independent live music venue and community gathering place, where he has hosted thousands of musicians, academics, artists, poets, comics and storytellers over the past thirteen years. He has served on the boards of the Cleveland Arts Prize, Arts Cleveland, and the Gordon Square Arts District locally, and spearheaded the effort in Ohio on behalf of the National Independent Venue Association to Save Our Stages - an effort that led to the passage of the largest arts funding bill in the history of the United States, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars to Ohio’s independent venues, performing arts centers, museums and movie theaters. He champions the importance of individual artists and small businesses, and is an advocate for broadening traditional concepts of arts & culture to include the creative industries and creative workforce.

**The Barbara S. Robinson Prize** is awarded to an individual or organization for extraordinary commitment to advancement of the arts through leadership in public policy, legislation, arts education and community development.

### **Clara Rankin**

Clara Rankin has spent a lifetime in service to the Cleveland community and beyond. Among numerous honors, CIM bestowed upon Rankin the “Women’s Committee Distinguished Service Award.” Rankin has served as a major contributor to, and volunteer for institutions including CMA where she has been a member of the Women’s Council since 1950 and joined the Museum’s Board in 1967. She is now an active CMA Life Trustee Board Member. Clara has long supported the museum including the campaign for the acquisition of Asian Art and specifically, the Galleries of Chinese Art named in her honor.

Clara made significant contributions to the conception, planning and creation of Hopewell, a nonprofit residential therapeutic farm community providing nature-based care for adults reaching for mental well-being, which she founded in 1993.

Rankin was recognized as a member of Crain’s Cleveland’s “80 Over 80” in 2017 and the YWCA in 2013 as their “Lifetime Achievement Award” having broken barriers and shattered stereotypes. She is the recipient of the Goff Philanthropic Leadership Award and Hathaway Brown’s Distinguished Alumnae Heads Award for her work at organizations in Greater Cleveland and beyond. A longtime supporter of The Cleveland Orchestra and an avid concert goer, Rankin has been a Cleveland Orchestra Board Trustee for nearly twenty-five years.

**Special Citation presented by Cleveland Arts Prize Trustees** to an individual who has made an extraordinary contribution to the arts and culture of Northeast Ohio.

### **Franz Welser-Möst**

Franz Welser-Möst is among today’s most distinguished and recognized conductors. The 2021-22 season marks his twentieth year as music director of The Cleveland Orchestra, with their partnership extended to 2027, making him the longest-serving musical leader in the ensemble’s history. *The New York Times* has declared Cleveland under Welser-Möst’s direction to be “America’s most brilliant orchestra,” praising its virtuosity, elegance of sound, variety of color, and chamber-like musical cohesion.

With Welser-Möst, The Cleveland Orchestra has been praised for inventive programming, ongoing support for new musical works, and innovative work in presenting semi-staged and staged operas. The Orchestra has also been hugely successful in building up a new and, notably, young audience with its Center for Future Audiences programs. In 2020, they launched the ensemble’s own recording label and a brand-new digital streaming platform (Adella) to continue and extend sharing their artistry globally. The 2020-21 season inaugurated an original, global, digital concert series titled *In Focus*.

### **2021 Jury Members**

Felise Bagley (CAP ‘15), Tiziana Baldenebro, Dr. Adam Banks, Cindy Barber (CAP ‘07), Sheba Marcus Bey, Christi Birchfield (CAP ‘17), Raymond Bobgan (CAP ‘14), Bill Busta (CAP ‘14), Michele Crawford, Eric Coble (CAP ‘07), Michael Dalby, Derin Fletcher, Helen Forbes Fields (CAP ‘20), Dr. Adrienne Gosselin, Erin Guido, Jason Hanley, Ph.D., Maria Restrepo Hamilton, Peter Lawson Jones, Esq., Sarah Kabot (CAP ‘17), Yolanda Kondonassis (CAP ‘11), Jonathan Kurtz (CAP ‘12), Lisa Kurzner, James Levin (CAP ‘12), Karen Long, Dave Lucas (CAP ‘16), Robert Maschke, FAIA (CAP ‘11), Dianne McIntyre (CAP ‘06), Jeff Niesel, John Orlock, Dee Perry (CAP ‘16), Gabriel Pollack, Megan Reich, Brad Ricca (CAP ‘14), Jan Ridgeway,

Judith Salomon (CAP '90), Jeffery Streaan, Arnold Tunstall, Doug Utter (CAP '13), Andrew Valdez, Mary Weems, Ph.D. (CAP '15), John Williams (CAP '18)

**61st Annual Awards Event  
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The 61st Annual Awards Event will feature performances from past Arts Prize winners and the presentation of the 2021 Cleveland Arts Prize Award winners. The ceremony is held in the Gartner Auditorium at the Cleveland Museum of Art on Wednesday, October 13, 2021. Discipline winners receive an unrestricted prize of \$10,000. Special Prize awards are honorary. **Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available now at [clevelandartsprize.org](http://clevelandartsprize.org).**

**About Cleveland Arts Prize**

The Cleveland Arts Prize (CAP), founded by the Women's City Club of Cleveland in 1960, is the oldest award of its kind in the United States. The Prize is a testament to the standard of excellence and quality of artists in Northeast Ohio. In addition to artists, Cleveland Arts Prize honors individuals and organizations that have expanded the role of the arts in the community. Since its inception, CAP has honored over 350 artists and arts leaders. Today, CAP continues as a trusted, peer-directed arbiter and guardian of the city's creative history. Through its prize winners, CAP is the nucleus of Northeast Ohio's arts and culture legacy and the living archive of our community's triumphs. CAP is proud to honor and support them.

For more information or to contribute to the Annual Artist Prize Fund visit [www.clevelandartsprize.org](http://www.clevelandartsprize.org).

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