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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Richmond Memorial Health Foundation Announces Visiting Artists

Arists and artist collectives will create artwork that communicates equity

RICHMOND - Richmond Memorial Health Foundation Trustees recently approved awards to six local artists and artist collectives representing a variety of art forms and diverse approaches to the challenge of communicating equity to the Richmond Region.

"We are excited by the number and quality of the proposals we received in the first year of our HEArts (Health Equity Arts) program," said Trustee Deborah Ulmer. "This is a wonderful opportunity to begin building a network of individuals and organizations working together through art to identify inequities in health outcomes in the Richmond Region."

Trustee Joe Schilling added, "We began this Visiting Artist Program with the idea that we can exhibit the resulting artwork and help to increase understanding of the importance of equity in this region. We now realize this initiative has much greater potential. We hope that it will connect us to new and existing artists in our region and build community engagement around ideas that support physical and social well-being."

The RMHF Visiting Artists are:

- **Hannah Ayers and Lance Warren, Field Studio** With "Richmond Health Equity: Video Portraits," the documentary filmmaking team will create five two-minute video portraits of individuals and families in Richmond. The portraits, touching on themes of elder care, hunger and homelessness, addiction, and incarceration, will put a human face to issues of health equity.
- **Lauren DeSimone** "Local Natives" will engage Richmond residents in community conversations about food access through photographic projections of community gardens on vacant store fronts in neighborhoods considered to be food deserts. (The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines a food desert as an urban neighborhood located more than one mile from a grocery store.)

- **Free Egunfemi, Ashley Hawkins, and Kelley Libby** “HEALTHY + WEALTHY + WISE” will empower young people to collect our community elders' wisdom about positive health choices, displaying this work via a series of interactive street art installations, enhanced with open-access audio interviews, that beautify Richmond’s urban landscape one neighborhood at a time.
- **Barry Wilder O’Keefe** This project expands on an ongoing series of social sculptures entitled “Open Inbox” with the creation of hand-carved wooden sculptures for two Richmond neighborhoods. The sculptures will serve as functional community message boxes. The design and intricate carving of these boxes will draw on the history and culture of each neighborhood.
- **Kevin Orlosky and Art on Wheels** “With these Hands” will create a series of casts depicting hands that provide a visual representation of the community while drawing comparisons and contrasts between socioeconomic statuses. The project will act as a catalyst for discussions about otherness, challenging assumptions often made about people and groups.
- **Eva Rocha** “ReCast” will examine the mental health impact of human trafficking, a problem that plagues many communities along the Interstate 95 corridor, through a series of castings of immigrant women who are victims of this serious crime and human rights violation.

Twenty-three artists and artist collectives applied to participate in the program. A group of five external reviewers recommended the finalists to the Trustees for approval.

The evaluators were Lisa Dent, Director, Resources & Award Programs, Creative Capital; Bryan Colburn Ellis, artist and educator at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Wake Forest University; Eric Gottesman, photographer, author, videographer and educator at Hampshire College and Addis Ababa University School of Fine Arts; Katherine Park, Local Program Director, Turnaround Arts: DC; and Deborah Randolph, Curator of Education at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, N.C.

“The recommended six individuals and projects were selected on their artistic merit, explicit connections to equity and health, and strong community engagement components,” said Randolph, chair of the external review committee. “These projects highlight Richmond neighborhoods while examining gaps in access to health. We believe that the artists who will be implementing these projects are capable, talented and thoughtful individuals. Together, they will help RMHF move forward in its work to communicate equity.”

Each of the six artists and artist collectives will receive awards of \$10,000. Trustees also approved two awards of \$1,500 each to two additional applicants, Alfonso Perez Acosta and Hamilton Glass with the Unity Street Project, for professional development support.

“Through the HEArts program, RMHF hopes to demonstrate our commitment to local artists by connecting them to vital resources,” said Mark Constantine, RMHF President & CEO. “In return, these artists can help us fashion a powerful link between heart and head that enables everyone in our region to understand the meaning of a truly equitable community.”

“We look forward to working with this group of kindred partners, and we feel confident that this collaboration will help us reach a wider audience and strengthen support for equity in our region,” said Kendra Jones, who leads the HEArts program at RMHF.

Watch for exhibitions of the Visiting Artists' work in March 2018, and keep up with their progress on the HEArts [website](#).