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Press Room

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State Fellowships Honor 39 Exceptional Artists

MCC Announces Grants in Choreography, Fiction/Creative Nonfiction, Poetry

(Boston, MA) - The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) has recognized 39 Massachusetts artists for creating work of exceptional quality in the disciplines of choreography, fiction/creative nonfiction, and poetry. The MCC's Artist Fellowship Program has awarded \$7,500 unrestricted grants to 21 artists, and distinguishes 18 others as finalists with \$500 grants.

MCC's Artist Fellowships recognize the unique contribution made by artists to the cultural vitality of the Commonwealth. The fellowships provide direct assistance to Massachusetts artists to recognize excellence and creative ability, and to support further development of their talents. MCC chronicles the impact of these awards in the [Fellows Notes](#) section of its [ArtSake](#) blog. Over the years, many artists of [national and international prominence](#) have won state fellowships.

"Massachusetts has a long, storied history of creative innovation, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the work of our individual artists," said MCC Executive Director Anita Walker. "We are proud to honor these remarkable artists for advancing our state's cultural heritage."

Poetry Fellow **Kevin Young of Belmont** is a nationally-renowned poet whose writing is influenced by blues music, African American culture, and deep considerations of loss and the natural world. His many honors include awards from United States Artists, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Fiction/Creative Nonfiction Fellow **Alexander Chee of Amherst** won the MCC fellowship with an essay about his writing mentor Annie Dillard. Chee, whose second novel *The Queen of the Night* is forthcoming from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, has recently been a mentor himself, as Visiting Writer at Amherst College.

Choreography Fellow **Dawn Lane of Stockbridge** explores the limitations (and potentials) of human movement in her fascinating choreographies. Her work "Mattress Ticking" features an able-bodied dancer in movement with a dancer with Huntington's Disease.

Poetry Fellow **Regie O'Hare Gibson of Lexington** is a past National Poetry Slam champion whose poetry, once featured in the 1997 film "Love Jones," explores history, politics, art, and music.

Fiction/Creative Nonfiction Fellow **Pagan Kennedy of Somerville** is the author of ten books, ranging from nonfiction about a 19th-century missionary in the Congo or the first surgical gender transition to fiction about indie rockers or experimental memory drugs. She has written for many publications including the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Village Voice*.

Poetry Fellow **Jendi Reiter of Northampton** is a poet with an idiosyncratic voice and a unique background: she practiced law in New York City before moving to Western, Mass. and becoming vice president of Winning Writers, an online resource for poets and writers.

Choreography Finalist **Anna Myer of Cambridge** impressed the choreography panel with *Street Talk Suite Talk*, which fuses contemporary dance, classical violin, and live performances by young rap artists.

[See the full list of Fellows and Finalists](#)

This is the second series of individual artists receiving direct funding from the MCC in 2010. In January, MCC announced [awards to 30 artists](#) in the disciplines of drawing, painting, and traditional arts. [Read a full list of artists funded in 2010](#), and learn more about all artists selected since 2003 on our [Gallery@MCC](#).

[MCC Artist Fellowships](#) are awards granted in specific artistic disciplines on a biennial cycle. Applications are accepted from any artist who lives and works in Massachusetts. Next year, fellowships will be awarded in crafts, film & video, music composition, photography, playwriting, and sculpture/installation. Artist awards are based on recommendations by independent panels of experts who practice in the disciplines they review.

About the Massachusetts Cultural Council

The Massachusetts Cultural Council promotes excellence, access, education and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences, in order to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.

MCC is a state agency committed to building a central place for arts and culture in the everyday lives of communities across the Commonwealth. It pursues this mission through a combination of grants, services and advocacy for cultural organizations, schools, communities and artists. MCC receives an annual appropriation from the state Legislature and funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and other sources.

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