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National YoungArts Foundation Announces 2016 YoungArts Winners

*819 Students from 42 States Recognized for Excellence
in the Literary, Visual, Design and Performing Arts*

*National YoungArts Foundation Receives Record Breaking Number of
Applications from Emerging Artists Across the Country*

Finalists to Participate in 35th Anniversary National YoungArts Week in Miami, January 3-10, 2016

MIAMI, FL (November 19, 2015) – The [National YoungArts Foundation](http://youngarts.org) (**YoungArts**) today announced its 2016 YoungArts Winners. From more than 12,000 applications—the largest number to date—819 young artists from 42 states have been selected for their outstanding work and accomplishments across the literary, visual, design and performing arts. Winners receive cash awards of up to \$10,000, validation by renowned mentors, opportunities to participate in YoungArts programs, a strong professional network, and guidance in taking important steps toward achieving their goals. A complete list of the 2016 Winners is available online at <http://youngarts.org/winners>.

Each YoungArts Winner is designated as a Finalist, Honorable Mention or Merit Winner through a blind adjudication process by an independent panel of highly accomplished artists. Some Winners are awarded for excellence in multiple disciplines. 2016 Finalists have the opportunity to participate in the 35th annual **National YoungArts Week** in **Miami** from **January 3 to 10, 2016**, and all Winners are eligible to participate in YoungArts' regional programs, including YoungArts Los Angeles (February 16 – 21, 2016), YoungArts Miami (March 8 – 13, 2016), and YoungArts New York (April 12 – 17, 2016), space permitting.

“On behalf of everyone at YoungArts, I want to congratulate all of our Winners and look forward to welcoming the Finalists to our campus in January,” stated Lisa Leone, Vice President of Artistic Programs for YoungArts. “As we kick off our 35th anniversary, we’re thrilled to see that YoungArts is continuing to grow and develop into a remarkable and vibrant community of more than 20,000 artists who are making contributions to the art world today. I am excited to see how this year’s winners thrive as they participate in our transformative programs.”

Of the 819 Winners, approximately 165 Finalists from around the country will come together for National YoungArts Week, which aims to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration and community while offering the guidance needed to prepare for the next stage of their careers. During the weeklong intensive, participants across 10 disciplines take master classes and workshops with internationally renowned leaders in their field, including MacArthur Genius **Tarell McCraney** (1999 Winner in Theater), Hip Hop feminist writer **Joan Morgan**, The Royal Ballet of London’s

Sarah Lamb (1998 Winner in Dance and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts), celebrated contemporary visual artist **Jose Parla**, and Academy Award winning filmmaker **Doug Blush** (1984 Winner in Cinematic Arts), among others. Throughout the week, their work will be further adjudicated to determine additional award levels, including a monetary award of \$1,000 to \$10,000. Finalists also share their talents with the public through performances in classical, jazz, voice, dance and theater, as well as film screenings at **New World Center**; an art, design and photography exhibition in the **YoungArts Gallery**; and writers' readings in the **YoungArts Jewel Box**. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.youngarts.org/yaw>.

Finalists are eligible to become U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts, as YoungArts is the exclusive nominating agency for this high honor. Every year, YoungArts nominates 60 YoungArts Winners to the White House-appointed Commission on Presidential Scholars, 20 of whom are selected to become U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

"To have such a formal organization acknowledge you as a young artist, saying that you have talent, was highly motivating for me," said Terence Blanchard, multiple Grammy Award-winning trumpeter and composer and a 1981 YoungArts Winner in Music, the inaugural class of YoungArts Winners. "I was part of YoungArts when it first started, and the mentoring and scholarships I received definitely took my artistry and career to new heights which may not have been possible otherwise."

YoungArts Winners become part of the organization's expansive alumni network of leading professionals, including visual artists **Doug Aitken** (1986 Winner in Visual Arts) and **Daniel Arsham** (1999 Winner in Visual Arts); musicians **Conrad Tao** (2011 Winner in Music and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) and **Jennifer Koh** (1994 Winner in Music and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); filmmaker **Doug Blush** (1984 Winner in Cinematic Arts); recording artists **Josh Groban** (1999 Winner in Theater) and **Chris Young** (2003 Winner in Voice and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); writers **Jenji Kohan** (1987 Winner in Writing) and **Sam Lipsyte** (1986 Winner in Writing and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); actors **Viola Davis** (1983 Winner in Theater), **Andrew Rannells** (1997 Winner in Theater) and **Kerry Washington** (1994 Winner in Theater); renowned choreographer **Desmond Richardson** (1986 Winner in Modern Dance and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); and 2015 *So You Think You Can Dance* winner **Gaby Diaz** (2014 Winner in Dance).

YoungArts supports its alumni by providing opportunities to participate in the organization's programming nationwide, including its annual YoungArts Awareness Day, a national advocacy campaign that promotes the arts as a rewarding and viable career path. The organization also seeks to support the artistry of its alumni and their projects throughout their careers; builds a community of YoungArts winners across generations; and establishes connections with partner institutions across the country, including the **John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**, **American Ballet Theater** and the **Metropolitan Museum of Art**.

Support

National YoungArts Week is supported by National Premier Sponsor Carnival Foundation; Performance Sponsor SunTrust; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and the City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council. Aon is the YoungArts Legacy Master Series Sponsor.

About the National YoungArts Foundation

The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison to identify and support the next generation of artists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts; assist them at critical junctures in their educational and professional development; and raise appreciation for the arts in American society. In recent years, there have been approximately 11,000 applications to YoungArts; in 2015, the organization received a record breaking number of more than 12,000 applications from 15-18 year old (or grades 10-12) artists, and from these, approximately 800 winners are selected.

YoungArts Winners work with renowned mentors, such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Plácido Domingo, Frank Gehry, Jeff Koons, Wynton Marsalis, Robert Redford, Rebecca Walker and Bruce Weber; receive cash awards of up to \$10,000; gain access to significant scholarships; become eligible for nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts; and perform and exhibit their work at some of the nation's leading cultural institutions, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (New York) and New World Center (Miami). YoungArts Winners also become part of the strong YoungArts alumni network artists, which offers them additional opportunities throughout their careers.

YoungArts alumni who have gone on to become leading professionals in their fields include actresses Anna Gunn, Viola Davis, and Kerry Washington; Broadway stars Raúl Esparza, Andrew Rannells and Billy Porter; recording artists Josh Groban, Nicki Minaj, Chris Young and Judith Hill; Metropolitan Opera star Eric Owens; musicians Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton and Jennifer Koh; choreographer Desmond Richardson; visual artists Daniel Arsham and Hernan Bas; internationally acclaimed multimedia artist Doug Aitken; television writer, producer, and director Jenji Kohan; and *New York Times* bestselling author Sam Lipsyte.

Carnival Foundation is the YoungArts National Premier Sponsor.

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