

What 5 local artists are doing with grant money from Nasher Sculpture Center

By Alex Bentley

Back in January 2015, Nasher Sculpture Center announced plans to award semi-annual microgrants, ranging from \$250-\$1,000, to local artists. The museum recently revealed the first round of recipients.

The winners include Christopher Blay from Fort Worth, Brick Haus Collective from Denton, Celia Eberle and Margaret Meehan from Dallas, and Jeff Gibbons from Arlington — all of whom get \$1,000. The inaugural Nasher microgrants are made possible by the support of Michael M. Corman and Kevin Fink, and Christen and Derek Wilson.

“Artists are typically very resourceful in finding ways to bring their ideas to fruition,” said Nasher director Jeremy Strick in a release. “But since even the savviest artist sometimes can’t realize the hopes for a project without some outside financial assistance, the Nasher is proud to have initiated this microgrant program in support of our artist community.”

Here is what the artists intend to do with the money:

Blay plans to realize a video production and installation of the project Kara Walker Texas Ranger, which considers the history of violence toward African-Americans by police and other armed authorities. The project will be done in collaboration with New York puppeteers Lake Simons and Christopher Green. Brick Haus Collective, aka artists Rachel Fisher and Abby Sherrill, will use the funds to establish an artist-run incubator space in Denton, which will include affordable studio spaces as well as opportunities for artists to collaborate and participate in exhibitions, performances and instructional workshops. Eberle plans to purchase a new compressor to operate the pneumatic carving tools she needs for the stone and other natural materials she incorporates into her work.

Gibbons will use his funds to rent a studio space in Dallas and pay for the transport of his work to national and international exhibitions.

Meehan recently purchased a kiln to fire the clay she uses in her artistic practice, so she will put her Nasher microgrant toward hiring an electrician and purchasing an environmental vent to make it function safely in her studio.

The first microgrant recipients were chosen by a jury that included Dallas-based artists Frances Bagley, Annette Lawrence and John Pomara; Chicago-based artist Tony Tasset; and assistant curator Leigh Arnold and curator of education Anna Smith, both of the Nasher. Another round of microgrants will be awarded in the fall. In the first few months of 2015, Nasher Sculpture Center has committed toward honoring artists both local and global, as it also established the new Nasher Prize in addition to the microgrant program.

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