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Faculty Performance Arts Group Receives MacArthur Foundation Grant

Chicago, IL—Every House Has a Door, the nonprofit performance group created by faculty members Lin Hixson (Performance) and Matthew Goulish (Writing) at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), has received a $32,500 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation International Connections Fund to create and produce a performance derived from materials in the Randolph Street Gallery archives.

SAIC is the sole repository for the Randolph Street Gallery Archives. From 1979 until its closing in 1998, Randolph Street Gallery (RSG) was a vital force in the development of contemporary art in Chicago, serving as a laboratory for new art forms and creative ways to bring art to the world. There were few organizations in the United States that provided a comparable forum for engagement in contemporary issues. RSG was a central component of the Chicago avant-garde art community, as well as a vital part of the national scene and a welcoming venue for international artists.

According to the MacArthur Foundation, this grant will, “expand a Bristol [United Kingdom] performance piece to include material developed from the Randolph Street Gallery Archive, held at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, through artist and performer residencies.”

The group will develop a new iteration of the project 9 Beginnings: Bristol, launched in August 2012. The premiere performance was developed in response to Bristol’s Live Art Archives and supported by Performing Documents, a joint venture of the University of Bristol and Arnolfini Gallery in the United Kingdom that aims to explore “creative approaches” to archives.

Supported by MacArthur’s International Connections Fund, Every House Has a Door states they intend to “reconvene the 9 Beginnings team, and to continue the life and expand the international scope of this project.” This creative team includes Director Lin Hixson, Dramaturg Matthew Goulish, Performers Selma Banich (Croatia) and Sebastián Calderón Bentín (Panama), and three UK-based participants: Assistant Director Nicki Polykarpou, Choreographed Stagehands Annalaura Alifuoco and Nik Wakefield, and others to be determined. At the end of 2013, the group will present a single performance in Chicago merging their response to 9 Beginnings: Bristol and 9 Beginnings: Chicago, based on the new research conducted at the Randolph Street Gallery Archive.

The MacArthur Foundation awarded grants to 13 Chicago arts and culture nonprofits this year to conduct collaborations with arts organizations in 12 countries. The grants are provided through MacArthur’s International Connections Fund, which aims to help Chicago nonprofit arts and culture organizations advance their work by collaborating with peer organizations abroad.

The Foundation awards more than $8 million annually to more than 200 arts and culture groups in Chicago and the region as an expression of its civic commitment to the place.
where the Foundation has its headquarters and where John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur made their home. Grants are designed to help sustain the cultural life of the city and region.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. SAIC also enables adults, high school students, middle school students, and children to flourish in a variety of courses, workshops, certificate programs, and camps through its Continuing Studies program. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC’s resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

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