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ARTSFAIRFAX Artist Grants Honor Two Innovative Artists

Fairfax County, VA- ARTSFAIRFAX awarded its prestigious 2019 Artist Grants to two artists – Mount Vernon percussionist Tom Teasley and Springfield sculptor Foon Sham. These highly competitive individual artist awards recognize exceptional work by Fairfax artists across a range of disciplines, including visual arts, creative writing, theatre, dance performance and choreography, film and new media. Each \$5,000 award provides these artists with deserved recognition and act as catalysts for the advancement of their careers and skills.

“Fairfax County artists are innovators and entrepreneurs and we are proud to invest in their development and the enduring legacy they create for our residents and the next generation of artists,” said Linda S. Sullivan, President & CEO of ARTSFAIRFAX.

Artist Grants raise the profile of outstanding artists by shining a light on their accomplishments and at the same time helps fuel their drive to expand their horizons as artists. As Tom Teasley said, “This grant will allow me to expand my artistic vision with performances, educational activities, and cultural exchange. I am grateful to be a resident of Fairfax County where recognition of the arts is making the quality of life better for all residents.”

Artist grants are open to artists of all disciplines residing in Fairfax County. Teasley and Sham were selected from a group of 20 highly qualified artists. These grants are



an investment in the sustained growth and development of the arts in Fairfax County, as well as a way to honor artists’ commitment to an artistic discipline and raise their profile locally and nationally as exceptional artists.

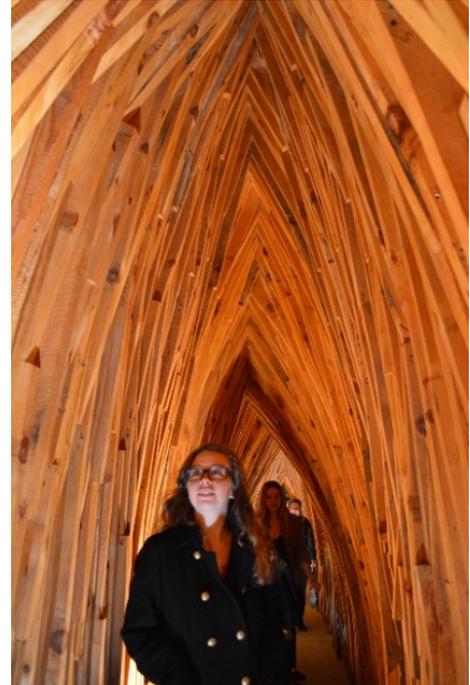
Tom Teasley performs with local musicians as part of a cultural exchange at the US Embassy Muscat, Oman. Photo Tom Teasley, courtesy of U.S. Embassy Muscat, Oman.

Tom Teasley

Tom Teasley calls himself a drummer, but that doesn't begin to describe what a unique music and theater career he has had as a solo percussionist, composer, and collaborator. Last summer, using music to re-imagine film, he composed and performed a live soundtrack for several of Buster Keaton's silent films. Teasley and the other artists recognized by **ARTSFAIRFAX** are characterized by their drive to experiment, evolve and push boundaries in their work. In addition to being recognized with his first Artist Grant, Teasley is a recipient of a Helen Hayes Award for sound design, and multiple WAMA's (Washington Area Music Award) as World Music Instrumentalist of the year.

Foon Sham

Foon Sham creates sculptures primarily in wood that are often massive in scale and participatory, bringing people into the work. For his 2017 work, "Escape", he created a 62 foot long tunnel handcrafted out of layers of finished and unfinished wood. The work serves as commentary on immigration at the southern border with its exterior of peaks and valleys, mirroring the profile of landscapes along the US-Mexico border, and its interior evoking both the sense of being a prisoner and also an escape to freedom. Sham's work is labor-intensive and he experiments with materials and building methods. His first **ARTSFAIRFAX's** award in 2014 provided him the opportunity cast sculpture from wood to metal, expanding his portfolio and sculpture techniques. This current grant will allow him to develop another large scale project, Maze of Knowledge.



Foon's Escpae interior with people inside. Photo: Pui Sham

ARTSFAIRFAX retains its legal name of the ARTS Council of Fairfax County, but all community and business engagement will fall under the new brand name. **ARTSFAIRFAX** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, incorporated in 1964, as Fairfax County's designated local arts agency. **ARTSFAIRFAX** is funded in part by Fairfax County, corporations, foundations, individuals, the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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