

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vermont Arts Council Announces Special Project Grants

Montpelier – The Vermont Arts Exchange, The Vermont Folklife Center, and choreographer Hannah Dennison have been awarded grants for arts projects that are deeply engaged with community. These Vermont Arts Council special project grants exemplify the Council’s new strategic goals to expand access to the arts, inspire creative placemaking, and energize Vermont’s creative economy.

“Engagement with the arts transforms individual lives, connects us more deeply to each other, boosts the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live,” said Vermont Arts Council Executive Director Karen Mittelman. “These outstanding projects reflect both the Council’s strategic priorities and our commitment to building a Vermont where art and creativity are at the heart of our communities.”

TLC Doll Project, Vermont Arts Exchange, North Bennington: The Vermont Arts Exchange (VAE) is dedicated to expanding access to the arts to all members of the community. The TLC Doll Project enables young women from the Vermont School for Girls, a residential treatment facility, to work with textile artists to design and create handmade dolls for children in need. Through this program, students are introduced to professional artists, stretch their skills and creativity, and experience the power of the arts to change lives. The Council’s grant will enable the VAE to expand this successful program to include additional artists and to leverage the funding necessary to make the program sustainable.

Vermont Folklife Center (VFC), Middlebury: The Folklife Center has worked for decades to document and sustain the cultural practices of immigrant and refugee artists across Vermont. In 2009-2011, the Council and VFC conducted a needs assessment through interviews with new American artists and representatives of arts and refugee service organizations. Building on previous research, VFC is now conducting intensive fieldwork in the Bhutanese-Nepali community, which is the largest refugee population to be resettled in Vermont in the past few years. The grant will support VFC in documenting the arts of Bhutanese-Nepali immigrants, and identifying ways to share their rich cultural knowledge and skills with a wider audience.

The Quarry Project, Barre: Dancer and choreographer Hannah Dennison began work in 2016 on The Quarry Project, a site-specific dance/theater piece that will be performed in the Wells-Lamson quarry, one of the oldest and deepest granite quarries in the nation. Dennison is

creating a piece, which will take place on floating platforms, inspired by both the stunning natural space and the history of the quarry. The Council's grant will support intensive work on set design and choreography, in addition to a series of community meetings to gather local stories about the history of the Wells-Lamson quarry.

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a state where everyone has access to the arts and creativity in their life, education, and community. Through its programs and services, the Council strives to increase public awareness of the positive role artists and arts organizations play in communities and to maximize opportunities for everyone to experience the arts. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. www.vermontartscouncil.org.

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