



**THE DRIEHAUS MUSEUM ANNOUNCES 2020 RECIPIENTS OF ITS
*A TALE OF TODAY: EMERGING ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP***

**2020 FELLOWS ARE INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTISTS WHO EXPLORE SUBJECTS
RANGING FROM IDENTITY AND MEMORY TO THE NOTION OF THE VOID**

Virtual Conversation Series with Fellows Also Planned

CHICAGO — June 11, 2020 — The Richard H. Driehaus Museum today announced the four artists who will receive its 2020 *A Tale of Today: Emerging Artists Fellowship*. Launched in 2019, the annual Fellowship provides four emerging Chicago-based ALAANA (African, Latino, Asian, Arab, and Native American) artists with an unrestricted stipend of \$2,500. It also provides the artists with support from the Driehaus Museum’s professional networks to advance and promote their careers, plus access to the Museum’s resources and its home, the Nickerson Mansion. To help with the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis, the stipend this year will be given at the outset of the program, allowing the Fellows to immediately use the funds for anything from studio supplies to housing and other basic needs.

The Fellowship is a six-month program which includes meetings with art professionals, career counselling sessions, public programming experiences, and exhibition opportunities, including a pop-up exhibition at EXPO Chicago in April 2021. Inspired in part by the Nickerson Family, who in the late 19th century often invited art students to sketch and study their collection, the Fellowship encourages artists to use the Museum and the mansion as a creative center for developing their work and careers.

The 2020 *A Tale of Today: Emerging Artists Fellows* are: Maryam Taghavi, Alexandria Eregbu, Devin T. Mays, and Unyimeabasi Udoh. Brief bios on each of the Fellows follow below.

“We are committed to supporting our local artists and the creative community in Chicago,” said founder and president of the Board of Trustees, Richard H. Driehaus. “Our Fellows this year reflect the diversity of Chicago’s cultural scene and the variety of contemporary art being created in the city. We want the Driehaus Museum and its home, the Nickerson Mansion, to serve as an inspiration for Chicago’s creative energy.”

This year’s four Fellows were selected by a committee comprised of Lisa Lee, Associate Professor of Public Culture and Museum Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago; artist Nick Cave; gallerist Monique Meloche; and Hendrik Folkerts, Dittmer Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago. An open call application process invited artists to submit their portfolios and describe how their practice would develop through the Fellowship, how the Driehaus Museum’s space and history related to their work, and how they would contribute to their Fellowship cohort.

“Following the success of last year’s program, I am thrilled to welcome the second cohort of *A Tale of Today: Emerging Artists Fellows* to the Driehaus Museum,” said the *A Tale of Today* Curatorial Fellow, Kekeli Sumah, who also leads the Fellowship program. “As our world has transformed over the past few months, so too have the topics we will explore in the program, including resiliency, adaptability, and perseverance in the face of adversity. At times like these, strengthening one’s community is especially important, and I look forward to working with the Fellows to do just that.”

This summer, the Driehaus Museum will also launch a virtual conversation series featuring the *A Tale of Today: Emerging Artists Fellows*. The conversations will explore the Fellows' current projects, practices, and techniques in light of the themes being explored in the A Tale of Today Fellowship.

The *A Tale of Today Emerging Artists Fellowship* is made possible in part through a grant award from the Terra Foundation for American Art.

About the 2020 A Tale of Today: Emerging Artists Fellows

MARYAM TAGHAVI

Maryam Taghavi is a Tehran-born Chicago-based interdisciplinary artist working in photography, installation, video, publication, drawing, and performance. She employs a post-studio, site-specific practice that weighs in on and intervenes in existing modes of production. Interested in the interchangeability between the observer and participant, Taghavi locates agency in the role of the language to mark the experience of displacement and expose complex layers of difference across social and cultural levels. Taghavi's work has been exhibited at LAXART, the Queens Museum, and the Chicago Cultural Center, among others.

ALEXANDRA EREGBU

Alexandra Eregbu is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice draws from history, lived experiences, and her own imagination to deepen her connectivity to the natural world. Her work is driven by memories, whether lived or dreamt, and surrealist activity across the diaspora — spanning from West Africa and the Caribbean, to her native city in Chicago. Frequently working with natural dyes such as indigo, dried roots, and other plant-based pigments, Eregbu is also motivated by the stories of the material world and views her work as a quest to unlock the unifying mysteries that exist within them. Her work has been presented at Public Space One in Iowa City, the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, Casa Rosada in Salvador, Brazil, and the Contemporary Art Center in New Orleans, among others.

DEVIN T. MAYS

Devin T. Mays' practice is driven by an investigation of the so-called "in-between" space created by the social polarities of his understanding. He is interested in developing a visual language that defines and re-defines the "in-between" being. Through performances, spatial interventions, and installation work, Mays' practice questions and complicates how we view our identities and understand ourselves subjectively. His work has been exhibited at the DePaul Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, as well as the Chicago Artists Coalition.

UNYIMEABASI UDOH

Unyimeabasi Udoh is an artist and graphic designer who seeks to make peace with the void. They are concerned with surface and absence, text as image, blackness as color and construct, and how systems of communication and knowledge—particularly the Western canons of art and literature, and the position of black people and African artifacts within them—are created and maintained. Udoh has exhibited work at the Chicago Artists Coalition, SITE Galleries in Chicago, and the Porto Design Biennale in Portugal.

About A Tale of Today

The *A Tale of Today* initiative launched in March 2019 with the opening of the Driehaus Museum's inaugural contemporary art exhibition featuring the work of Yinka Shonibare CBE. Since then, *A Tale of Today* has expanded into the Fellowship program, which launched in June 2019, with an aim to engage Chicago-based emerging artists, promoting their careers and expanding their networks. The

second class of Fellows coincides with the second *A Tale of Today* contemporary art exhibition, featuring site-specific work by the Chicago-based artists Mika Horibuchi and Nate Young. The initiative takes its name from *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, the 1873 book by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner that gave the era its name.

About The Terra Foundation for American Art

The Terra Foundation for American Art is dedicated to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of the visual arts of the United States for national and international audiences. Recognizing the importance of experiencing original works of art, the foundation provides opportunities for interaction and study, beginning with the presentation and growth of its own art collection in Chicago. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative exhibitions, research, and educational programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them.

About The Richard H. Driehaus Museum

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum explores the Gilded Age through the art, architecture, and design of the late 19th century to the present. Once known as Chicago's "Marble Palace" and located just steps from the Magnificent Mile, the collection of period decorative arts is presented in an immersive experience within the mansion. Temporary exhibitions organized by the Driehaus Museum and its partners place the Gilded Age in context, as do vibrant educational and cultural programs designed to illuminate the history, culture, and urban fabric of Chicago.

Richard H. Driehaus, the museum's founder and namesake, is a Chicago businessman and preservationist with a long history of supporting the arts and culture.

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