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United States Artists Announces 2026 Fellows and Berresford Prize Recipient During Its 20th Year

Marking two decades of unrestricted support that nurtures artists' creative freedom and drives lasting impact.



2026 USA Fellows.

CHICAGO, IL – January 14, 2026 – Today, **United States Artists (USA)** announces fifty 2026 Fellows alongside the Berresford Prize recipient as the organization commemorates its 20th Anniversary. The **USA Fellowship**, an award of \$50,000, grants artists the freedom to allocate funds to their unique needs—whether towards expanding their practice, covering living expenses, accessing healthcare, or investing in their communities. The **Berresford Prize** is a



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\$50,000 annual award honoring a cultural practitioner for their significant contributions to the advancement of artists in society.

In addition, USA Fellowship awardees receive tailored support such as financial planning, career consulting, legal advice, and personal care. These accompanying resources reflect USA's agility in addressing artists' evolving needs, being in constant dialogue with artists on how their practices and livelihoods can be most effectively supported.

"For two decades, United States Artists has advanced a simple yet powerful conviction—that artists are essential to the imagination and health of our society," said **Judilee Reed, President and CEO of United States Artists**. "Our commitment to unrestricted support, with programs such as the USA Fellowship, has enabled artists across every discipline and place to sustain their livelihoods, take creative risks, and define their own paths forward. Through the Berresford Prize, we recognize that there are creative administrators who create the conditions that support artists. The legacy of USA relies on the vitality and enduring impact of these artists and administrators, whose work continues to reimagine and enrich our collective future. We look forward to the next twenty years and beyond."

USA Fellows are selected based on their groundbreaking artistic visions, unique perspectives within their fields, and evident potential for the award to make a significant impact in their practices and lives. The Fellowship is awarded through a year-long, peer-led selection process in ten disciplines. Each year's cohort reflects the current cultural and societal moment, honoring a plurality of voices from diverse backgrounds and often-overlooked experiences, identities, and perspectives.

The 50 artists in the 2026 cohort span 19 US states and Washington DC, having made names for themselves through work that is activated by audiences and interlocutors. Many of this year's Fellows explore personal archives, trace artistic lineages, and move fluidly between inheritance and invention. In doing so, they enlighten histories, surface overlooked narratives, and challenge the status quo of whose stories are preserved. Select 2026 Fellows include:

- Improvisor and composer **Ben LaMar Gay**, touring for his latest release, *Yowzers*, with his ensemble across the U.S. and Europe this year
- Interdisciplinary artist **Edra Soto**, showcasing a new installation, *the place of dwelling*, at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art January 2026

- Filmmaker **Fawzia Mirza**, director on the TV series *Deli Boys* with a second season set to premiere soon
- Artist **Maia Chao**, who will be participating in the 2026 Whitney Biennial, opening in March
- Choreographer, dancer, and director **Shamel Pitts**, performing *Marks of RED* alongside an all-femme ensemble in Minneapolis, Boston, and the UK this spring
- Musician, producer, and conceptualist **Terri Lyne Carrington**, who recently released her latest album *We Insist 2025!* with vocalist Christie Dashiell

As part of its ongoing commitment to uplifting artists and responding to their needs, USA also recognizes the vital contributions of those who support and advance creative communities. Established in 2019, the Berresford Prize honors administrators, curators, scholars, and producers who create platforms and conditions for artists to thrive. The Prize awards individuals shaping sustainable pathways for artists and cultural practitioners.

The 2026 Berresford Prize recipient, **Lori Lea Pourier (Oglala Lakota)**, is a long-standing arts leader who has made an enduring impact on the cultural preservation, advocacy, and artistic possibilities of Indigenous Arts ecologies across the nation. From her early career at the First Nations Development Institute and the International Indigenous Women's Network, to her founding of the First Peoples Fund, where she is now Senior Fellow, Pourier has created a legacy of supporting and advocating for the work of Native artists and arts communities for nearly 30 years.

"I am deeply honored to receive this award named in recognition of Susan Berresford. I first met Susan early in my career during her tenure at the Ford Foundation. As a young Native woman entering the Foundation's offices for the first time, I could not have imagined the path that lay ahead. In 2006, while hosting Ford Foundation staff and grantees in the Black Hills of South Dakota, we witnessed the launch of United States Artists. Since then, many First Peoples Fund artists and culture bearers have gone on to be recognized by United States Artists—an enduring reflection of the vision and investment that began in those early years," said Pourier.

The 2026 USA Fellows are:

Architecture & Design

Curry J. Hackett

(he/him)

Multimedia Artist and
Educator

Brooklyn, NY

Margaret Roach Wheeler
(she/her)

Weaver and Textile Designer
Sulphur, OK

Rosten Woo
(he/him)

Civic Designer
Los Angeles, CA

Craft

Anina Major
(she/her)

Artist
Los Angeles, CA

Anthony Sonnenberg
(he/him)

Decoration Enthusiast
Fayetteville, AR

Corey Pemberton
(he/him/they/them)

Multidisciplinary Artist
Los Angeles, CA

Norwood Viviano
(he/him)

Glass and Multimedia Artist
Kalamazoo, MI

Craft continues

Robell Awake

(he/him)

Chairmaker
Atlanta, GA

Xenobia Bailey
(she/her)

Enchantress Crochet Fiber

Artist
Philadelphia, PA

Dance

Jason Samuels Smith

(he/him)

Tap Dancer
Jersey City, NJ

Mame Diarra Speis-Biaye
(she/her)

Movement Improviser,
Choreographer, and
Kinesthetic Storyteller

New York, NY

Parul Shah

(she/her)

Performer, Choreographer,
and Educator
New York, NY

Shamel Pitts

(he/him)

Choreographer, Dancer, and
Director
Brooklyn, NY

Dance continues

Thaddeus Davis

(he/him) & Tanya Wideman-
Davis (she/her)
(Wideman Davis Dance)

Transdisciplinary Dancers and
Choreographers
Columbia, SC

Film

Fawzia Mirza
(she/her/they/them)

Filmmaker
Los Angeles, CA

Jules Rosskam
(he/him)

Nonfiction Filmmaker

Brooklyn, NY

Monica Sorelle
(she/her)

Filmmaker and Artist
Miami, FL

Raven Jackson
(she/her)

Filmmaker, Poet, and
Photographer
Los Angeles, CA

Set Hernandez

(they/them, she/her, he/him)
Filmmaker, Writer, and
Community Organizer
San Fernando Valley, CA

Media	Music	Mina Morita
Anjali Kamat (she/her)	Ben LaMar Gay (he/him)	(she/her)
Creative Nonfiction and Multimedia Artist New York, NY	Multi-Freshness Artist, Improviser, and Composer Chicago, IL	Director Washington, DC
Chenjerai Kumanyika (he/him)	inti figgis-vizueta (she/her)	Tanya Orellana (she/her)
Critical Audio Documentarian and Organizer New York, NY	Composer New York, NY	Scenic Designer New York, NY
Mendi Obadike (she/her) & Keith Obadike (he/him) Interdisciplinary Artists and Composers Ithaca, NY	Layale Chaker (she/her)	Ty Defoe (he/him/we/our)
Nancy Baker Cahill (she/her)	Composer and Performer New York, NY	Interdisciplinary Artist New York, NY
Transdisciplinary Artist Germantown, NY	Sharon Udoeh (she/her)	Traditional Arts
Nat Decker (they/them) Artist Los Angeles, CA	Pianist, Composer, and Hymnologist Chicago, IL	Aristotle Jones (he/him)
Nathan Young (he/him) Artist, Curator, Scholar, and Composer Tahlequah, OK	Terri Lyne Carrington (she/her)	Singer, Songwriter, and Storyteller Osage, WV
	Musician, Producer, and Conceptualist Woburn, MA	Lily Hope (she/her)
	Theater & Performance	Cultural Continuity Artist Juneau, AK
	Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew (she/her)	Sheila Kay Adams (she/her)
	Theater Designer and Artist New York, NY	Traditional Ballad Singer, Banjoist, and Storyteller Marshall, NC
	Mei Ann Teo Director, Theatre Maker, and Artistic Leader New York, NY	Willi Carlisle (he/him)
		Folk Singer Kansas City, MO

Visual Art	Visual Art continues	Writing continues
Edra Soto (she/her)	Mercedes Dorame (she/her)	LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (she/her)
Interdisciplinary Artist Chicago, IL	Multidisciplinary Artist Los Angeles, CA	Interdisciplinary Poet and Relative New York, NY
Eric-Paul Riege (he/him)	Raheleh Filsoofi (she/her)	Lauren Rebecca Weinstein (she/her)
Maker, Performer, and Weaver Na'nízhoozhí or Gallup, NM	Itinerate and Interdisciplinary Artist Nashville, TN	Sequential Storyteller Maplewood, NJ
Macon Reed (they/them)	Writing	Mayukh Sen (he/him)
Interdisciplinary Artist New Orleans, LA	Johanna Hedva (they/them)	Biographer and Essayist Brooklyn, NY
Maia Chao (she/her)	Writer, Artist, and Musician Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Territories aka Los Angeles, CA	Sarah Aziza (she/her/هی)
Artist Philadelphia, PA		Writer Canarsie and Munsee Lenape land aka Brooklyn NY

The 2026 USA Fellowships were generously made possible by Sarah Arison, Barr Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, Good Chaos, David Horvitz and Francie Bishop Good, Hearthland Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, Barbara and Amos Hostetter, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Poetry Foundation, Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Foundation, Todd and Betiana Simon, Annette and Paul Smith, Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, Katie Weitz, PhD, Windgate Charitable Foundation.

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About United States Artists

United States Artists is a national arts funding organization based in Chicago, IL that raises money and redistributes it in the form of unrestricted awards to the country's most compelling artists and cultural practitioners. Since its founding in 2005, USA has awarded over 1000 individuals with over \$53 million of direct support.

In addition to direct support of artists and cultural practitioners, USA is a key advisor and partner within arts philanthropy, working with foundations, philanthropists, and other field leaders to conduct research, design programs, and administer funds in response to their mission and the needs of artists.

USA's work is made possible through the support of various philanthropic foundations, companies, and individuals who share in its mission to celebrate the tremendous cultural contributions of artists and sustain creative ecosystems to enable artists and cultural practitioners to thrive.

About USA Fellowships

USA Fellowships are \$50,000 in unrestricted money that the artists can use in any way they would like. In addition to the award, current Fellows have access to financial planning, career consulting, legal advice, and other professional services as requested. Fellows are selected through a nomination, application, and review process. Each year, artists are anonymously nominated by a geographically diverse and rotating group of arts professionals to apply for the Fellowship. Applications are reviewed by discipline-specific panels for their artistic vision, contributions to the field, and the potential impact of the award on their practice. Panels recommend finalists for board approval. USA fundraises annually to make as many awards as possible.

Past awardees include interdisciplinary artist **Gala Porras-Kim** (2025), choreographer and tap dancer **Ayodele Casel** (2023), musician and composer **Laura Ortman** (2022), creative composer and trumpeter **Wadada Leo Smith** (2021), painter and visual artist **Howardena Pindell** (2020), dancer and choreographer **Alice Sheppard** (2019), poet **Claudia Rankine** (2016), potter **Roberto Lugo** (2016), writer **Teju Cole** (2015), filmmaker **Barry Jenkins** (2012), documentary filmmaker **Laura Poitras** (2010), fashion designers **Kate** and **Laura Mulleavy** of **Rodarte** (2009), multidisciplinary artist **Martha Rosler** (2008), and multimedia artist **Paul Chan** (2007).

About the Berresford Prize

Introduced in 2019, the Berresford Prize was conceived of by several USA Fellows to acknowledge those who have dedicated their careers to the advocacy and care of artists. Named for USA's co-founder Susan V. Berresford, this award reinforces our commitment to artists by recognizing the remarkable administrators, curators, scholars, and producers who are building platforms and creating conditions for artists to thrive. Each year's recipient of the Berresford Prize is selected through an internal artist-led nomination and review process. 2007 USA Fellow Ann Hamilton called it "a prize given to a cultural practitioner who creates and nurtures the conditions for artists to thrive."

Previous recipients of the Berresford Prize have included: **Beth Boone**, artist, community leader, and Artistic and Executive Director of Miami Light Project; **Maori Karmael Holmes**, founder and Chief Executive & Artistic Officer of Blackstar Projects; **Kristy Edmunds**, Executive and Artistic Director of UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance at the time of the award; **Linda Goode Bryant**, social activist, gallerist, filmmaker, and Founder and President of Active Citizen Project and Project EATS; **Lulani Arquette**, President and CEO of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (NACF) and **Roberto Bedoya**, Cultural Affairs Manager for the City of Oakland (jointly awarded the Prize in 2021); and author, bookseller, artist, and Native Arts advocate **Louise Erdrich**.

