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Architects | Composers | Filmmakers | Interdisciplinary Artists | Theatre Artists | Visual Artists | Writers



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Doomed to Hope

"We are doomed to hope, and what is happening today cannot be the end of history"  
Syrian playwright Saadallah Wannous

By any standards, these are challenging times. And the preceding words by Syrian playwright Saadallah Wannous, whose death in 1997 was termed "a cultural tragedy," reverberate decades after they were composed.

Overseeing MacDowell in turbulent and unpredictable times is a provocative puzzle, and yet – because our mission lies in providing a nurturing environment for artists – hope is our spine and ever-present. What is the creation of new works but risk-taking experimentation: *Hope made manifest*.

Since March, when we shuttered our campus, serving artists has remained our constant north star. Currently, our website features a "Conversation About Social Justice" through images, words, music, and more by Fellows engaged in the fight against racism and oppression.

We recently completed our charter "Virtual MacDowell" – wherein eight artists across multiple disciplines participated online in episodic sharing of work and insightful dialogue on the issues confronting artists in these perilous times.

With great anticipation, we partially reopened our campus to nine art makers. These Fellows may not have the access to each other – via the usual group dinners – that comprise one valuable aspect of a residency, but each has a full-time studio in which to imagine and create.

Each day MacDowell staff and board work to understand how best to eliminate injustice within our institution, and in the arts field, to recognize where we can assure clear access in all ways as well as repair structures that might have unwisely circumscribed our program.

As I write, the Jewish New Year has just been celebrated. I am not, by any means, connected to the religious aspect of Judaism, yet I interpret the "Days of Awe" and their attendant metaphor – the opening of gates – as an entreatment to escape restricted routines and closed-in spaces. Instead, we are urged toward portals of possibility, of opportunity.

The future of democracy demands imagination, courage, hard work, and risk. Artists are our seers and guides, and in this way MacDowell's commitment to provide space, wherein artists can dream and create, is and will forever be a pillar of hope.

Your support helps us to Reopen the Doors to the MacDowell Studios,

*Philip Himberg*  
Philip Himberg, Executive Director



Modified Reopening Under Way

MacDowell reopened its studios to a limited cohort of nine Fellows on October 21 after closing its doors last March in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Resident Director **David Macy** was guided by **Mike Lindberg, M.D.**, chief medical officer at Monadnock Community Hospital, and **Ricardo Nuila, M.D.**, an internist at Baylor University Medical Center in Houston and MacDowell Fellow, in developing a comprehensive safety plan that has been adapted to allow for bringing artists back to the Peterborough program, albeit in a limited manner.

"We are fortunate that MacDowell's studios were purpose-built to support the solitary work of artists," said **Macy**. "In a necessary trade-off to reactivate MacDowell as a sanctuary for artists, we are putting some limitations on the social dimensions. While shared meals in the dining room will be missed by all, that aspect of the residency experience will have to wait until it is safe for groups to dine together."

Only artists residing in regions free of CDC travel restrictions are considered currently eligible for residency and, to assure the safest means of transportation, MacDowell is offering reimbursement of direct round-trip travel expenses. After 10 days of self-monitoring at their homes, the first group of artists traveled to Peterborough in the third week of October.

Added precautions are being enacted such as reducing the resident artist population to half or less of total capacity (32 studios). Upon arrival, artists move directly into quarantine in one of MacDowell's 14 live-in studios where lunch and dinner meals are delivered daily. Near the start of the residency period, each artist will undergo molecular PCR testing for COVID-19.

"Our online program, Virtual MacDowell, was of great support to our participating Fellows over the last months, but what artists continue to need is the actual time and space in which to contemplate and experiment, and make new work," said Executive Director **Philip Himberg**. "MacDowell Fellows are among the visionaries who will inspire and guide us, and their place at the table of our democracy is essential. For that reason, our imperative at MacDowell was to seek and find a safe way to assure that our residency program can contribute, in some way, to the healing of our shared humanity."

A full safety plan can be read at [MacDowell.org](https://MacDowell.org).

Two Pulitzers to Fellows in Music and Fiction

Writer **Colson Whitehead** (99, 11) won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *The Nickel Boys*. Based on the real story of a reform school that operated for 111 years, the novel follows Elwood Curtis, a Black boy growing up in 1960s Tallahassee, who is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy. Whitehead also won the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction in 2017 for *The Underground Railroad*. Composer **Anthony Davis** (4x 91-07) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for *The Central Park Five*. The Pulitzer jury called it "a courageous operatic work... that skillfully transforms a notorious example of injustice into something empathetic and hopeful."

Five Fellows were in the running for the Pulitzer, including **Louise Aronson** (18), a finalist in General Nonfiction for her book *Elderhood* which she worked on during her MacDowell residency; **Ann Patchett** (96) was a finalist fiction for *The Dutch House*; **Mary Ruefle** (7x 02-18) was a finalist in Poetry for her collection *Dunce*; **Jeanine Tesori** (20) was a finalist in Drama for *Soft Power* with collaborator David Henry Hwang; and **Michael Torke** (6x 84-94) was a finalist for in music for *Sky: Concerto for Violin*.

Jacqueline Woodson Named MacArthur Fellow, HCA Award Winner

Writer **Jacqueline Woodson** (4x 90-09) collected the Hans Christian Andersen Award recognizing lifelong achievement in May from a nominee pool of 34 authors. The international award is among the highest achievements in children's literature. Then in October, Woodson was named a MacArthur Fellow for "redefining children's and young adult literature to encompass more complex issues and reflect the lives of Black children, teenagers, and families." She's using part of the winnings to finish a longtime dream of establishing a residency program for BIPOC artists.

**Read Jacqueline's essay about how MacDowell helped inspire that vision on page 8.**

Bognar, Reichert Win Oscar

Filmmakers **Steve Bognar** (01, 04) and **Julia Reichert** (94, 01, 04) won the Oscar in the documentary feature category for *American Factory*. It follows the creation of the Chinese-owned automotive glass-factory Fuyao Glass America in the same building that had once housed a General Motors assembly operation in Moraine, OH.



# Composer/Performer Rosanne Cash to Receive MacDowell Medal in August

Composer and performer **Rosanne Cash** will receive the prestigious Edward MacDowell Medal, and the public celebration – with the Medalist in attendance – will take place during a free, public event on August 8, 2021.

Cash will receive the 61st Edward MacDowell Medal from Madame Chairman of the MacDowell Board of Directors **Nell Painter** (16, 19). The Medal, which has rotated annually among all disciplines practiced at MacDowell, has been awarded since 1960 to an artist who has made an outstanding contribution to American culture. The presentation, which often draws more than 1,200 visitors from around the country to MacDowell's 450-acre wooded campus, offers the public the opportunity to visit 32 open, working studios to see art being created and speak to its creators.

Cash, a Grammy-winning composer, performer, songwriter, best-selling author, and essayist, said she was “profoundly humbled to be chosen” to receive the 2021 Edward MacDowell Medal. “To be included in a list with Aaron Copland, Eudora Welty, Toni Morrison, and so many more distinguished artists, is beyond my imagining – something I would not have dared to dream or even consider,” **said Cash**. “I do not place myself in any way equal, but I accept this honor with deepest gratitude, as an encouragement to do my best work, and in the service of future inspiration. My heart is full with this precious recognition.”

“From the shockingly intimate timbre of *Seven Year Ache* in 1981 to the reflective darkness of *She Remembers Everything* 37 years later, as a composer, singer, and someone who can, in a sense, summon ambiance, Rosanne Cash has distinguished herself from her contemporaries as she has escaped the weight of her celebrated forebears,” said **Greil Marcus**, chairman of this year's MacDowell Medal selection panel.

Marcus is the author of *Mystery Train*, *Lipstick Traces*, *The History of Rock 'n' Roll in Ten Songs*, and many other books, and is a longtime music journalist and critic. Joining him on the selection panel were American music critic and arts administrator **John Rockwell**, musicologist, author, and professor **Mary E. Davis**, Yale University professor and cultural critic **Daphne Brooks**, and MacDowell Board member and WQXR radio host **Terrance McKnight**.

Cash has composed Americana, rock, blues, folk, and pop, expanding her impact on American culture across musical genres. She joins an august group of other MacDowell Medal winners such as Thornton Wilder (1960), Georgia O'Keeffe (1972), Virgil Thomson (1977), Louise Bourgeois (1990), Toni Morrison (2016), and composers Aaron Copland (1961), Leonard Bernstein (1987), David Diamond (1991), Sonny Rollins (2010), and Stephen Sondheim (2013).

Cash has released 15 albums, has earned four Grammy Awards and 12 nominations, including the 2019 nomination for her song “Crossing to Jerusalem,” from her latest album, *She Remembers Everything*. In addition to being one of the country's pre-eminent singer-songwriters, she is also an author whose four books include the best-selling memoir *Composed*, which the *Chicago Tribune* called “one of the best accounts of an American life you'll likely ever read.” Her essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, the *Oxford-American*, *The Nation*, and many more publications. For more information, please visit [macdowell.org](http://macdowell.org).



MICHAEL LAVINE



## On the Cover

Tuesday, June 9, 2020, protesters Brooklyn Borough Hall from “Covid Journal” series; print on photographic paper; 2020; **Accra Shepp** (19), visual artist.

Our November eNews will feature an essay by Accra writing about how his “Covid Journal” series came about. Stay tuned.



Follow the latest developments, news, and artist updates on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook at @MacDowell1907

## American Academy of Arts and Letters Elects Seven Fellows

Seven MacDowell Fellows were among the 13 newly named lifetime members to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A 250-person organization, the American Academy is composed of the country's leading architects, artists, composers, and writers and “seeks to foster and sustain an interest in Literature, Music, and the Fine Arts by administering over 70 awards and prizes, exhibiting art and manuscripts, funding performances of new works of musical theater, and purchasing artwork for donation to museums across the country.” Newly elected Fellows include fiction writer **Mary Gaitskill** (04, 05, 06), nonfiction writer **Barry Lopez** (04), painter **Amy Sillman** (92), fiction writer **Mona Simpson** (4x 84–96), composer **Chinary Ung** (77), photographer **Carrie Mae Weems** (14), and fiction writer **Colson Whitehead** (96, 11).

## MacDowell Reaches 100% Solar Generation



In January, we threw the switch on our second solar array along Union Street in Peterborough, which means we now offset 100 percent of our property's electrical needs with solar generation.

## Local Food Bank Benefits from MacDowell Kitchen Garden

In late September we made our last run of the season to the Peterborough Food Pantry to drop off crops harvested from MacDowell's garden. Our vegetables and fruit trees flourished in the above-average temperatures of the summer, but a few recent cold mornings called a close on their productivity. Since mid-July, our staff has made a total of eight trips to donate a range of freshly harvested crops from MacDowell to the Pantry, a local food bank that supplies meals to 300 families per month in the surrounding area.



This truck bed full of vegetables is just one of eight loads we donated to the Peterborough Food Pantry this growing season.

JACKIE LUNDSTED

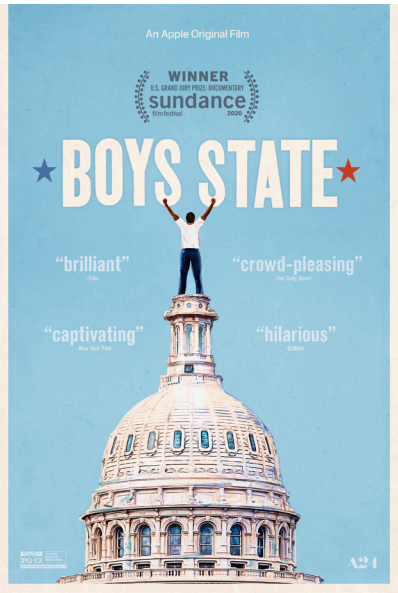




## 24 Fellows Make 2020 Guggenheim List

Congratulations to 24 Fellows awarded 2020 Fellowships from the John Simon Giuggenheim Foundation. The awardees are part of a group of 175 writers, scholars, artists, and scientists from 31 states, Washington, D.C., and two Canadian provinces. Fellows were chosen on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise via a rigorous peer-review process from almost 3,000 applicants.

**Suzanne Hitt Bocanegra** (08, 15), visual artist  
**Liz Cohen** (02), photographer  
**Marti Epstein** (98, 99), composer  
**Michael Frank** (99), nonfiction writer  
**David Gompper** (14), composer  
**David Hertzberg** (19), composer  
**Branden Jacobs-Jenkins** (12, 15), playwright  
**Penny Lane** (16), filmmaker  
**Zoe Leonard** (02), photographer  
**Ellen Lesperance** (10, 17, 20), painter  
**Ethan Lipton** (18), playwright  
**Steve Locke** (14), painter  
**Žibuoklė Martinaitytė** (09, 11, 19), composer  
**Helen Mirra** (99, 13, 15), visual artist  
**Aimee Nezhukumatathil** (06, 09, 19), poet  
**Sigrid Nunez** (89, 90, 94, 19), fiction writer  
**Clifford Owens** (18), visual artist  
**Diane Seuss** (15), poet  
**Yevgeniy Sharlat** (05, 07), composer  
**Susan Steinberg** (5 x 03-18), fiction  
**Brian Teare** (03, 05, 16), poet  
**Patricia Treib** (13), visual artist  
**Victoria-Idongesit Udondian** (19), visual artist  
**Amy Wilentz** (19), nonfiction writer



## Sundance Awards Go to Three Fellows

Congratulations to three Fellows for their wins at the Sundance Festival this past winter: The U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize Award went to **Jesse Moss** (05, 13) and Amanda McBaine for *Boys State*; the U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Editing went to Tyler H. Walk for *Welcome to Chechnya*, a film made by **David France** (19); and the Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize went to **Michael Almereyda** (6x 93-15) for *Tesla*.



## Rome Prizes Awarded to Fellow Architects

Congratulations are due to **Dan Serlin** (09) and **Robert Gerard Pietrusko** (19), both of whom were awarded 2020-2021 Rome Prizes. Serlin, an associate professor, at U.C. San Diego, will be examining the Progetto Ophelia, a psychiatric hospital and residential complex designed in 1905 by Giuseppe Quaroni and Marcello Piacentini. Serlin is taking a close look at its unprecedented empathic design for people with physical and cognitive differences. Decades ahead of their time, the hospital’s designers used light, air, sound, smell, and touch to create immersive environmental experiences for patients to spatially approximate the individual journey of psychoanalysis. The study will take into account other architectural sites of Italian disability history, as well as contemporary projects that engage multisensory and empathic design elements to inform future design.

Pietrusko, an associate professor of landscape architecture at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, is researching the dependencies and conflicts pitting environmentally necessary alterations to winemaking practices against the strict guidelines of Italy’s wine appellation system. His study of tension between the realities of a physical landscape and its standardization in a classification scheme will be informed by an analysis of material practices in the landscape and the analysis of standardization practices in the institution.



## Architect Hilary Sample Publishes and Builds for Children

Architect **Hilary Sample** (06) has published *Houses for Sale*, a children’s book on architecture, and has also been part of a team working on the Petite École, an award-winning open-air school in Versailles, as well as a large-scale master plan of social housing prototypes outside Mexico City – Laboratorio de Vivien-da. The former received an AIA New York State Honor Award, the latter an AIA New York Award of Merit for Urban Design.

## Pen winner, 6 Fellow Finalists

Writer **Ruchika Tomar** (15) won the Pen/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel for *A Prayer for Travelers*. The novel is a journey of self-discovery for protagonist Cale Lambert, who travels outside of her small town for the first time on a quest to relocate a missing friend. Writer **Madeline ffitich** (19) was a finalist for the Pen/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel for *Stay and Fight*. **Ilya Kaminsky** (09, 16) was also a finalist for the PEN/Jean Stein Book Award Prize for *Deaf Republic*. Writers **Kali Fajardo-Anstine** (18) and **Xuan Juliana Wang** (18) were both finalists for the Pen/Robert W. Bingham Award for Debut Short Story Collection for *Sabrina and Corina* and *Home Remedies*, respectively. Writer **Jody Gladding** (13) was a finalist for the Pen Translation Prize for her translation of Geneviève Damas’s *If You Cross the River*. Writer **Jia Tolentino** (18) was a finalist for the Pen/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay for *Trick Mirror*.

## 2 Receive Carnegie Fellowships

Nonfiction writer **Emily Bernard** (15) and journalist **Azmat Khan** (18) each were awarded Andrew Carnegie Fellowships. Bernard’s 2019 book *Black Is the Body: Stories from My Grandmother’s Time, My Mother’s Time, and Mine*, is a collection of personal essays exploring the complexities of race in her own life. Khan’s Fellowship was based on her plan to expand her investigative journalism. She is using reporting from Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen, along with academic research, to explore the extent of the civilian death toll in America’s precision air wars, discover why the deaths occurred, and assess how a failure to address them could haunt American policy for decades to come.

## 3 Fellows, 2 Finalists, and a Winner for Poetry Society Prize

Poet **Brian Teare** (03, 05, 16) was awarded the Four Quartets Prize for his collection *Doomstead Days*, but the judges called out the poem “Toxics Release Inventory (Essay on Man).” “Teare writes one of our times’ most affecting poems on environmental crises and ethical responsibility,” said the judges. Two other Fellows were in the running for the prize. Poet **Ilya Kaminsky** (09, 16) was a finalist for the Four Quartets for his work *Deaf Republic*.



The poems follow the lives of various members of a town that has gone deaf following the killing of a deaf boy by soldiers occupying the country. Poet **Prageeta Sharma** (95) was a finalist for the Four Quartets Prize for her work *Grief Sequence*. The poems grapple with the experience of losing a loved one, in all its complexity.

## 4 Collect Harvard University Radcliffe Institute Awards

Visual Artist **Crystal Z. Campbell** (17), a multidisciplinary artist who combines performance, sound, and film, was named the Radcliffe-Film Study Fellow/David and Roberta Logie Fellow at Harvard University Radcliffe Institute. Poet **Tonya M. Foster** (10) was named the Lisa Goldberg Fellow. During her fellowship she will “write poems that consider the myriad ways that black women have laid claim to their bodies and selves, guided in part by real-life records of sexual assaults and personal accounts of significant political events.” Filmmaker **Christopher Harris** (18) was named the Radcliffe-Film Study Fellow/David and Roberta Logie Fellow. He’ll work on a series of optically printed 16mm experimental films in conversation with canonical works of African American literature. Writer **James Sturm** (08, 15) was named the Mary I. Bunting Institute Fellow, and he has plans to make a comic book about the U.S. healthcare system.

## 9 Named 2020 USA Fellows

Filmmaker **Sophia Nahli Allison** (19), playwright **Christina Anderson** (18), writer **Sarah Broom** (12, 15), playwright **Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas** (06, 19, 19), playwright **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins** (12, 15, 16), visual artist **Howardena Pindell** (08, 13), interdisciplinary artist and choreographer **Will Rawls** (13), and architect **Hilary Sample** (06) were all named 2020 United States Artist Fellow Laureates. Each year, individual artists are anonymously nominated to apply by a geographically diverse and rotating group of artists, scholars, critics, producers, curators, and other arts professionals.

Our apologies to composer **Dan Moses Schreier** (13): We neglected to list Dan in our last newsletter as a 2019 Lucille Lortel Award winner for Outstanding Sound Design for his work on the revival of *Carmen Jones*.



🔗 INTERDISCIPLINARY ART & ARCHITECTURE

## Credit The Librettist Film Anchors Dramatists Guild’s Librettists Initiative

Theatre artists **Michael Korie** (11X 86-17) and **Mark Campbell** (98, 99, 01) formed the Librettists Initiative, with the Dramatists Guild of America’s Opera Committee, in order to inform leaders in the opera world about ways to achieve greater parity for opera librettists and foster a more equitable approach to crediting artists. *Credit the Librettist*, an informative, fun nine-minute film, points out the importance of collaboration among artists. The short film premiered at the beginning of the year at Opera America’s New Works Forum and features interviews with 20 opera composers, librettists, and producers. To view the film on YouTube, search “Credit the Librettist.” And also go to Korie’s or Campbell’s MacDowell pages to see the full interview with the late **Terrance McNally** (10).



## Sara Broom’s *The Yellow House* Wins Leonard NBCC Award

Writer **Sarah Broom** (12, 15) won the National Book Critics Circle’s 2019 Leonard Prize for best first book for *The Yellow House*. Two other Fellows were nominated for the prize: **T Kira Madden** (14, 16) for *Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls*, and **Jia Tolentino** (18) for *Trick Mirror*. Each of the books was supported by a MacDowell residency.

## Fellow Lammy Winner and Nine Finalists

Writer **Nicole Dennis-Benn** (15) won a 2020 “Lammy” from the Lambda Literary in the Lesbian Fiction category, for *Patsy*, while nine other Fellows were in the running for the awards in various categories that champion LGBTQ books and authors. Among 2020 finalists were **Jacqueline Woodson** (4x 90-09) for *Red at the Bone* and **Madeline ffitch** (19) for *Stay and Fight* in the Lesbian Fiction category. In Gay Fiction, writer **Jaime Manrique** (85, 92, 02) for *Like This Afternoon Forever* and in Gay Poetry, **Brian Teare** (03, 05, 16) for *Doomstead Days*. **Ariana Reines** (17) was a finalist in Bisexual Poetry for her collection *A Sand Book*. In Memoir/Biography there were three finalists: **T Kira Madden** (14, 16) for *Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls*, **Jaquira Díaz** (13, 17) for *Ordinary Girls*, and **Joseph Caldwell** (10x 73-08) for *In the Shadow of the Bridge*. And in the LGBTQ Drama category, **Liza Birkenmeier** (15, 17) was named a finalist for her play *Dr. Ride’s American Beach House*.



## New Releases and Visual Arts News

Visual Artist **Jane Dickson** (08) had a solo exhibition titled “Hot, Hot, Hot,” which ran from January to February (at left). It featured a series of paintings of Times Square peep shows from the 1980s.

Visual Artist **Jill Downen** (09) was one of 60 artists included in the “State of the Art 2020” exhibition at The Momentary and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. The exhibition presents contemporary art organized into the themes:

world-building, sense of place, mapping, and temporality.

Visual Artist **Diana Guerrero Macia** (98, 04) had a solo show titled “The Devil’s Daughter is Getting Married,” running from March to May at the Carrie Secrist Gallery, with a virtual viewing room. The exhibition featured eight textile-based paintings, and numerous hand-manipulated photographic prints of sketches for the paintings.

Visual Artist **Gelah Penn** (89) had a solo show titled “Uneasy Terms” running from February to March at Undercurrent Gallery in Brooklyn. The exhibition featured a 33-foot-long site-responsive installation, as well as monumental constructed drawings and small collages from two of the artist’s ongoing series, “Stele” and “Notes on Clarissa (Volume I).”

Visual Artist **Piotr Nathan** (95) was a part of the group exhibition, *Creative Sick States: AIDS, HIV, Cancer*, in Arsenal City Gallery. He was invited to design a work on the reality of HIV, and how it has changed over the years. 48 students from the Fine Arts High School in Poznań were involved in creation of the work.

🔗 OTHER PRIZES, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS

Architect **David Eskenazi** (17) was awarded the Architectural League Prize, which recognizes architects 10 years or less out from the completion of their undergraduate or graduate degrees.

Choreographer **Karen Sherman** (03, 10, 17) received the Herb Alpert Award in Dance. “She poetically and wittily brings forth the unseen, taking risks to create a necessary theatre for this time,” said the panel of judges.

Playwright **Christine Evans** (02, 09, 17) was awarded a Howard Foundation Fellowship for 2020-21 to support work on two projects: *Three Marys: A Chamber Opera* and *Truck and Train*, a new play loosely inspired by Walter Benjamin’s attempted escape from Europe during World War II.

Fiction writer **Julie Iromuanya** (16) was also awarded a Howard Foundation Fellowship for 2020-21 for her novel *A Season of Light*.

Composer **Selim Göncü** (19-20) was awarded the Suzanne and Lee Ettelson Composer’s Award. Göncü’s piece *Widerklang* for five players was selected from over 100 submissions.

Playwright **Aleshea Harris** (16, 19) was one of the recipients of the 2020 Windham-Campbell Prizes. According to the prize web site, “Harris’s work centers black bodies, celebrating them in their full spectrum of beauty and complexity: Love, rage, delight, recollection, speculation, and defiance all have a place in her character’s lives.”

Interdisciplinary Artist **Melanie Manos** (13-14) was awarded both the Kresge Arts Fellowship and Institute for the Humanities 2020 Summer Faculty Fellowship. She plans to focus on a multimedia project, “Visualizing Women’s Work,” which addresses gendered public monuments in the United States.



Writer **Greg Marshall** (18) received a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship, and will work on a novel and the essay collection he wrote at MacDowell — *Leg: The Story of a Limb and the Boy Who Grew from It*.



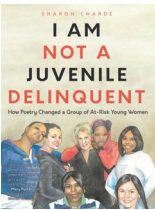
**Hey Fellows:**  
**Interested in virtual gatherings with your MacDowell cohort or sharing work? Reach out to events@macdowell.org for info.**

### Latest Fellow Book Releases:

Poet **Susan Barba** (16, 18) released her newest book of poetry, *geode*, in April.



Writer **Peter Cameron** (8x 84-08) released his new book, *What Happens at Night*, in August. The novel centers on an American couple traveling to adopt a child in the hopes of saving their marriage. The *Kirkus Reviews*’ starred review called it “a dreamy fable confronting love, death, and our inevitable inadequacy yet persistence in the face of both.”



Writer **Sharon Charde** (15, 17) released her new book, *I Am Not a Juvenile Delinquent*, in June. It traverses decades of Charde’s life, and how she found hope while grieving the loss of her child by volunteering as a poetry teacher at a residential facility for delinquent girls.

Poet **Timothy Houghton** (00) released his new poetry book, *Where the Lighthouse Begins*. It tackles themes of loss, conflict, the natural world, and the mystery of time.

Writer **Frank Huyler** (19) released his memoir, *White Hot Light* — penned at MacDowell — in August. It is structured as a series of short vignettes about his work as an emergency room physician.

Writer **Debra Jo Immergut** (16, 18) released a new novel, *You Again*, this past summer.



Writer **Ken Rosen** (19) released his new book, *Bulletproof Vest*, in April. Written entirely during his MacDowell residency, the book is an investigation into human vulnerability and protection measures in all senses. Part of its earnings go to a nonprofit that supports writers and journalists working in conflict zones.

Writer **Thaddeus Rutkowski** (95) released his new book of poetry, *Tricks of Light*, in April.



Writer **Lauren Sandler** (18) released *This Is All I Got* this spring. It’s a nonfiction narrative about a year in the life of a young homeless mother.

Writer **Stephanie Strickland** (81, 97) released *Ring the Changes* in May. The text sequence is code-generated as an homage to the art of bell ringing and the mathematical theory that underlies it.

Writer **Lysley Tenorio** (5x 01-17) released his debut novel, *The Son of Good Fortune*, in July. Written during his last

*continued on page 8*





## First Virtual MacDowell Galvanizes Artists

Eight artists – architect **Jeffrey Halstead**, composer **Steven Kazuo Takasugi** (89), filmmaker **William E. Jones**, interdisciplinary artist **Leslie Cuyjet**, playwright **C. A. Johnson**, visual artist **Phoebe Adams**, poet **Brenda Shaughnessy** (5x 98-10), and writer **Jacob Guajardo** – took part in “Virtual MacDowell: Connection through Conversation,” a month-long experiment aimed at supporting and connecting artists during a time when a physical residency was impossible. The artists, two returning Fellows and six first timers, were selected from our cancelled winter-spring 2020 season and met online twice weekly for 90-minute Zoom sessions throughout the month of August. Sessions ranged from open-ended discussions about creative practices, to MacDowell staff presentations, to work share opportunities.



## Virtual National Benefit Honors Ava DuVernay for ARRAY, Raises More than \$600,000 for MacDowell Programs

As our newsletter was going to press, we received word that our Virtual National Benefit raised more than \$600,000 on October 19th during an evening that featured filmmaker and founder of ARRAY, Ava DuVernay, accepting the inaugural Marian MacDowell Arts Advocacy Award and presentations from MacDowell Fellows in theater, poetry, film, and music. MacDowell Fellow and Madame Chairman of the Board **Nell Painter** (16, 19) hosted the free evening that featured Fellow, former MacDowell Board Member, and former NEA Chair **Jane Alexander** (19) who introduced the Marian MacDowell Award and asked Ford Foundation President Darren Walker to present the award to ARRAY. The free and open-to-the-public 45-minute program included composers **Austin Yip** (19) and **Jeanine Tesori** (20) with Tony Award-winner Karen Olivo; and filmmaker **Isabel Sandoval** (19). There was also a performance honoring **Audre Lorde** (79, 83) directed by Whitney White, scored by **JJJJJJerome Ellis** (19), and featuring Charlayne Woodard, Marsha Stephanie Blake, Fellow **Eisa Davis** (99), and Karen Pittman (pictured above, clockwise from top left).

## Summer of Music Raises \$50,000

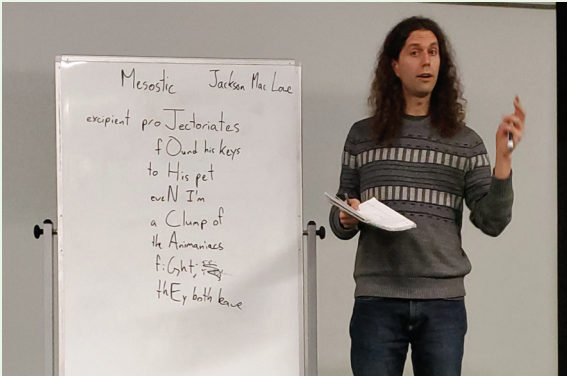
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MacDowell was forced to postpone Medal Day celebrating performer and composer Rosanne Cash until August 8, 2021. Instead, we celebrated the legacy of composition at MacDowell with our Summer of Music campaign and raised more than \$50,000 for MacDowell’s residency program. A series of virtual musical events and content featuring our MacDowell Fellows in composition included essays and playlists, as well as a virtual concert featuring JJJJJJerome Ellis’s *Evensong* followed by an **Instagram talkback between JJJJJJerome and MacDowell Chair Nell Painter**, and a **conversation on New Hampshire Public Radio’s “The Folk Show”** with Rosanne Cash and Terrance McKnight. Donors of \$20 or more to the Summer of Music campaign received illustrated “at home picnic baskets” of recipes put together by MacDowell sous chef Robin Cherof illustrated with watercolors of the grounds painted by Development Database and Direct Appeals Manager Jenni Wu so they could have a taste of MacDowell in their homes. Donors were also eligible to receive totes designed by Katie Holten and signed facsimiles of Aaron Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*. The recording of Jerome’s performance is on YT and IGTV. You can watch **Jerome’s conversation with Nell** on IG.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As is the case for so many of us, the spring, summer, and fall have reminded us just how much we value human interaction and being in community. For the first time since 1996, MacDowell in the Schools, which has brought the creative process to the classroom, and has also invited the classroom into the studio, was suspended. Thousands of students in grade school, high school, and college in the Monadnock Region have benefited from the time and expertise of MacDowell Fellows as they have shared their passion and their work with the next generations of artists and art lovers.

### MACDOWELL IN THE SCHOOLS

In January of 2020, photographer and social activist **Tonita Cervantes** met with teacher Eric Bowman’s Revolution in Ethics group in a conference room at the Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough. Tonita presented some of her photographs from her work with Sightlife.org, where she photographed people who received corneal transplants and their donor families in India, Nepal, and Ethiopia. She shared some of her photographs of the homeless in San Francisco and migrants seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border. She then focused on the six months she spent documenting camp life and front-line direct actions at Standing Rock in the Dakotas from an Indigenous point of view before answering questions from the group of almost 20 students and 5 adults.



Jerry Lieblich

In early February, playwright **Jerry Lieblich** was the last Fellow to visit Contoocook Valley Regional High School in Peterborough before the pandemic shut us down. He met with Ben Putnam’s and Jason Lambert’s Aesthetics and Ideas class in the Lucy Hurlin Theatre, leading 40 students through some writing exercises before he shared his work and fielded questions.

### MACDOWELL DOWNTOWN

Another long-standing community program, MacDowell Downtown, had been operating as a series of free presentations by MacDowell artists on the first Friday of the month from March through November in downtown Peterborough. Each season of MacDowell Downtown features a wide array of programming, including film screenings, readings, visual presenta-



Jenny and Madeleine George

tions, performances, talks, and more. But because of the shutdown, we managed to only squeeze in this season’s premier with sisters **Madeleine** and **Jenny George**. The two, Madeleine is a playwright and Jenny a poet, spoke enthusiastically and humorously to a full house at the Monadnock Center for History and Culture on March 6 about how their childhoods helped guide them to their respective creative paths.

Photographer **Tonita Cervantes** made a second public multimedia presentation at the Mariposa Museum and World Culture Center in downtown Peterborough on January 23. A slide show of her photography focused on the activism at Standing Rock Reservation (North Dakota) from 2016 on to protect water and sacred lands from the Dakota Access Pipeline and other pipelines. Other work illuminated the disenfranchised in the U.S. and other parts of the world.



# Remembering



Read more about these great talents on their artist pages at [MacDowell.org](https://MacDowell.org). Use our powerful search function for any name or subject.

**Soledad Arias** | Visual artist Soledad Arias, whose practice incorporated the word as a concrete form in the context of human relations and used a range of media, including text, prints, drawing, neon light, and installation, died in July of 2020 at home in New York. She was 60. Arias, who was in residence in 2014, was born in Buenos Aires. She attended the School of Visual Arts in New York where she completed her B.F.A. and M.F.A. degrees and remained in New York to make work that deals with the material and immaterial aspects and the impact of words. Arias's work has been exhibited at PS1 Contemporary Art Center in New York, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, Jersey City Museum, Socrates Sculpture Park, Alejandra von Hartz gallery in Miami, article gallery in Montreal, El Museo del Barrio in New York, The Art Museum of the Americas in Washington, DC, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts, among others.



TIM DONOVAN

**Helène Aylon** | Visual artist and writer Helène Aylon died April 6, 2020 from complications due to COVID-19. She was 89. Aylon studied art at Brooklyn College, where artist Ad Reinhardt was her mentor. She went to San Francisco's Antioch College to get an M.F.A. in women's studies where she was "rescued by feminism," as she put it. She read texts by Adrienne Rich and Maya Angelou, and discovered that she could be both a mother and an artist simultaneously. Aylon, in residence in 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2003, started out as an abstract painter making process-based works. She showed with the famed New York dealer Betty Parsons early on. Her work has been shown at the Whitney, The Jewish Museum (NY), the Aldrich in Connecticut, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, SFMOMA, the Ein Harod Museum in Israel, and The Warhol in Pittsburgh. Her memoir, *Whatever Is Contained Must Be Released: My Jewish Orthodox Girlhood, My Life as a Feminist Artist*, was published in 2012 by The Feminist Press.

**Anne Cox Chambers** | Anne Cox Chambers, the heiress to the Cox family media empire who went door-to-door campaigning for Democratic politicians, served as ambassador to Belgium during the Carter administration, and served on the MacDowell Board of Directors for 32 years, died at home in Atlanta on January 31, 2020. She was 100. Chambers attended Miss Porter's School in Farmington, CT, spent a year in Paris, and graduated from Finch College in Manhattan, which closed in 1976. Her father, James Middleton Cox, was a three-term governor of Ohio and founder of Cox Enterprises, which started with the purchase of a single newspaper in Dayton. For more than 30 years, Chambers and her sister, Barbara, had controlling ownership of that empire. Her sister died in 2007 and in 2013 Chambers dissolved a family trust and gave most of the family fortune to her children. She liked to say that she first went to Atlanta to attend the premiere of *Gone With the Wind*, on December 15, 1939, and never left.

**Chou Wen-chung** | Chinese-American composer Chou Wen-chung, whose intensely expressive yet balanced music seamlessly blends traditions from East and West, died in New York on October 25, 2019. He was 96. Chou, who was in residence in 1959 and 1960, emigrated to the U.S. in 1946 in the midst of political upheavals in China. He studied composition with Nicolas Slonimsky at the New England Conservatory, Otto Luening at Columbia University, and, most significantly, in private with Edgar Varèse. He became Varèse's assistant and, following Varèse's death, curator of his musical estate. He bought and then lived with his family in the Varèse Greenwich Village home, filled with magnificent memorabilia from both Varèse and China. Chou began his teaching career at Columbia in 1954 in the nascent Electronic Music Center and served on the composition faculty from 1964 until his retirement in 1991. He helped create the doctorate in music composition and served as vice-chair of the School of the Arts. Outside of Columbia, he played a major role in institutions that supported contemporary American music.

**Mary Higgins Clark** | Mary Higgins Clark, the bestselling "Queen of Suspense" who wrote dozens of suspense novels, died January 31, 2020. She was 92. Clark, who was in residence in 1977, 1979, and 1983, enjoyed a writing career that spanned decades and resulted in bestselling suspense titles such as *Loves Music, Loves to Dance* and *A Stranger Is Watching*. Two of her novels were made into feature films, including *A Stranger Is Watching*, while others were turned into television movies. She started by writing short stories. Clark published her first suspense novel, *Where Are the Children*, in 1975 followed by about 40 other books, including some with her daughter, Carol Higgins Clark. She also published a memoir and children's books. An international bestseller, more 100 million copies of her books are in print in the U.S. alone.

**Alexander Cortesi** | Alexander (Sandy) Cochrane Cortesi, who served on MacDowell's board for 21 years, died on April 5, 2020 at his home in Manhattan. He was born in New York in 1939 and was a graduate of Milton Academy and Harvard College. He spent his career as a manager and entrepreneur, primarily in the software industry. He worked with partners to found several small systems consulting businesses, working with a diverse group of large international corporations, including Rolls Royce, Bristol Myers, and American Can. He took his business skills to Washington, D.C., and with two well-known political consultants, developed a then-cutting edge technology startup called The Hotline, which was later purchased by *National Journal*. He began collecting paintings and drawings as a young man, and his eye for beauty and emotional power in abstract art was unerring. In retirement, he served on the boards of MacDowell, the New York School of Interior Design (Board Chair), and the Katonah Art Museum.

**Seena Donneson** | Painter Seena Donneson died on April 16, 2020 in Queens, NY. She was 95. Donneson was born in New York City and received her art education at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. She was in residence in 1963 and 1964, and was also the recipient of a grant from the Creative Artists Public Service from the New York State Council on the Arts. She was a visiting artist at Clay Works in New York and the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in California, both supported by the Ford Foundation. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Citibank, the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, Phillip Morris International, the USIA Art in Embassies Program, and Princeton.



**Randall Kenan** | Randall Kenan, an author whose stories explored the experience of being Black and gay in the American South, died at home in Hillsborough, NC on August 28. He was 57. Kenan, who was in residence in 1990, taught English at the University of North Carolina. He grew up in North Carolina and attended UNC, receiving his undergraduate degree in 1985. Kenan's first novel, *A Visitation of Spirits* (1989), was followed by a 1992 short story collection, *Let the Dead Bury Their Dead*, which was set in the fictional town of Tim's Creek, NC. That collection was nominated for The LA Times Book Award for Fiction, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and was one of The New York Times Notable Books of 1992. He also wrote a young adult biography of **James Baldwin** (54, 58, 60). Kenan received numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Award, the Sherwood Anderson Award, the John Dos Passos Prize, 1997 Rome Prize and his 2020 collection, *If I Had Two Wings*, was longlisted for the National Book Award. He received the North Carolina Award for Literature in 2005, was named to the Fellowship of Southern Writers in 2007, and was inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame in 2018. He taught for more than 20 years, and was a professor at UNC-Chapel Hill at the time of his death.

**Ramiza Koya** | Ramiza Shamoun Koya, who taught and advocated for writers in the Portland area and had been reveling in her own literary experience as a debut novelist this spring, died at home on June 5, 2020. She was 49. Koya, who was in residence in 2005, saw her debut novel, *The Royal Abduls*, well received earlier this year. In addition to being an author, Koya was also a painter. She was born in California, grew up there and in Colorado, and attended Sarah Lawrence College, graduating with a B.A. and an M.A. She was an adjunct professor at SUNY Purchase, but also taught in Spain, Czech Republic, and Morocco. Most recently, Koya was a professor at Portland Community College where she also served as director of youth programs at Literary Arts of Portland. She published fiction and nonfiction in literary journals and was a fellow at Blue Mountain Center.

**Terrence McNally** | Acclaimed playwright Terrence McNally died March 24, 2020 from complications due to COVID-19 in Florida. He was 81. McNally, who was in residence in 2010, often dramatized gay life in a career that spanned five decades. He graduated from W.B. Ray High School in Corpus Christi, TX in 1956 and enrolled at Columbia University where he went on to earn a bachelor's degree in English in 1960. It was a particularly vibrant time for Broadway, and according to *The New York Times*, McNally recalled heading out on his first night in New York expecting to walk up to the box office and buy a ticket to *My Fair Lady*, a smash hit that had recently opened starring Julie Andrews and Rex Harrison. Told that the show was sold out for months, he walked a few blocks south and saw Gwen Verdon in *Damn Yankees* instead. Last year he received the Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre, and previously won two Tony Awards for writing the books for the musicals *Ragtime* in 1998 and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* in 1993. He won two more for his plays *Love! Valour! Compassion!* in 1995, about gay men who share a vacation house, and *Master Class* in 1996, in which opera diva Maria Callas reflects on her career.

**Avital Sagalyn** | Painter Avital Sagalyn, whose work employed elements of abstraction, cubism, and abstract expressionism, died at home in Amherst, MA on May 11, 2020. She was 95. Sagalyn, who was in residence in 1952, fled Europe with her family during World War II and settled in New York as a refugee. Sagalyn spent hours at the Museum of Modern Art and took classes there on Saturdays as a high school student. The artist Marc Chagall, visiting her family's residence, praised her youthful work, and *The Horror of War*, a work from that period, was exhibited at MoMA. She graduated from Cooper Union School of Art in 1946, and applied in 1949 for a Fulbright to study in France. She taught at MoMA while raising three children, and last fall, when she was 94, work from her more than 70-year career was featured for the first time in a solo show at University Museum of Contemporary Art at the UMass Amherst. When asked by *The Boston Globe* why she hadn't exhibited earlier, she replied, "I wasn't ready yet."

**Kirk Stoller** | Kirk Stoller, a sculptor, curator, and arts administrator, died on April 29, 2020 in San Francisco after battling brain cancer. He was 59. Stoller, who was in residence in 2008, earned a B.A. in French from Portland State and an M.F.A. from UC Berkeley. After he retired from the position of program developer for continuing education at City College of San Francisco, he made a permanent move to New York and joined Transmitter Gallery as a co-director. He then founded and ran c2c project space from his apartment. Stoller's work has been exhibited internationally at Mary Ryan Gallery, Leslie Heller Gallery, Storefront Bushwick Gallery, Gridspace, The Property, Galerie Axel Obiger, and has been the subject of five solo exhibitions at Romer Young.



# Why MacDowell NOW?— Let the Circle Be Unbroken

JACQUELINE WOODSON

*“Before I traveled my road, I was my road.” – Antonio Porchia*



LAST AUGUST, while moving my many boxes of archives to the barn to await their transport to the Beinecke Library at Yale, I came across a collection of poems I’d written during my first residency at MacDowell. In the months and years before my acceptance letter arrived, it felt as though I’d been rejected by everyone and everything – agents, grants and fellowships, publications, residencies, teaching jobs – the list felt like it went on and on. And while I was still not beaten down enough to ever stop declaring myself an aspiring writer, I was indeed shaken by so many rejections in what felt like such a short span of time. My faith in myself had indeed grown fragile even as I continued to believe I had something to say. It felt like that something wasn’t anything the predominantly white world of publishing, and all that came with it, wanted to hear. From M.F.A. programs to movie deals, and everything in between, again and again, I saw little to no sign of myself and the people who looked like me. In the late 80s and early 90s, as I watched the careers of white guys soar, it felt like someone was not telling the whole truth. In both the queer and straight world, voices of color battled to get published. To get heard.

The poems I held last August were weak as water and spoke of the red and gold leaves and the roads in New Hampshire and somebody who was in the midst of breaking my heart somewhere. I don’t remember who that somebody was. The poems had been written in the early 90s. I was young then and the list of somebodies was long. But the velo-bound manuscripts of poems typed out on beige paper railroaded me back to a time when I was working as a temp secretary at places like Bankers’ Trust and Manufacturers Hanover Trust – places I hated walking into on weekday mornings and dreamed of one day never having to again. But these were the same places where there was always a quiet copy room filled with everything an aspiring writer would need – pens, legal pads, paperclips, folders, and the machinery to make books away from the eyes of her boss – binding them between hard plastic covers that were a Mani-Hani blue or the deathly beige of Bankers Trust. Can I say again how much I hated these places where I sat among a pool of secretaries (the temp ones like me being the lowest of the caste, the “permanent” ones of which only one was of color, just slightly higher up). This place where long before the Me Too movement, cigar-smoking white men spoke privately about their mergers and acquisitions and publicly about our breasts and butts before taking town cars home to places in Westchester and Fairfield counties. Days after returning from MacDowell that first time, I was back at my desk, typing letters and calculating expense reports,

costumed in a J Crew skirt and penny loafers. Behind me there was the memory of a small New England town, Adirondack chairs and my voice – heard. The poems take me back to all of this – that long ago dream I had of never ever again having to take a job I despised so that I could do the work I loved. In the eight weeks I spent at MacDowell that first time, I learned everything from how vibrant the leaves become in small New England towns to what an artist’s life can truly become. As I sat among other writers and composers and visual artists for the first time in my life, I knew, what I wanted was this. Always.

Thirty books later, in the winter of 2018, I received a call from the Swedish Embassy, informing me that I’d been awarded the largest prize given in young people’s literature – the Astrid Lindgren Award, an honor that comes with a purse of five million kronor – the equivalent of about \$600,000. I knew at once, what I wanted to do with this windfall. I wanted to give BIPOC artists what MacDowell had given to me – a place to begin to imagine yourself and your life different. A place to step out of the everyday grind of trying to pay the bills, of cooking for yourself, of doing work that didn’t feed your soul. As I began to build the Baldwin For the Arts residency, I mined all that I had learned from my time at MacDowell and eventually, from other residencies that had harbored me during those early years. Two years later, with a MacArthur Fellowship helping me finish this dream, I remember. As I lean over architectural plans and interview contractors, I remember. As I research the best arc of light for a painter’s studio and the configuration of a live-work studio with a piano for a composer, I remember. As I walk the land I bought with the Lindgren award and imagine the many artists that will one day walk it, I remember.

Quiet as it’s kept, so many of us who create art that we hope changes the world know that we couldn’t do this work in solitude. Even as we seek out the solitude we need to do the work. In those moments, when we are sitting alone at our desk or standing at our canvas or bending over our piano keys, we are in the rooms with all those who came before us and all those who supported us on this journey. Right now, as I write this, MacDowell is with me. And as I build a space for BIPOC artists, with each email I send with questions to ask about “How did MacDowell do that...?” and “Is it okay if I say this...,” MacDowell is with me.

I started my journey there. Everything I write and everything I build is simply... a continuum.

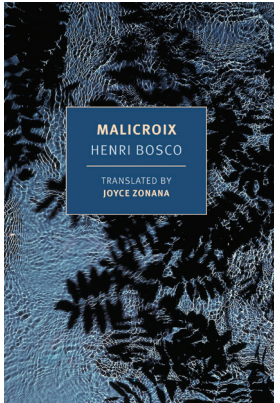
*Perhaps best known for Brown Girl Dreaming, which won the NAACP Image Award, the National Book Award, the Coretta Scott King Award, and a Newbery Honor in 2014, Jacqueline Woodson (4x 90-09) is the 2020 winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award and a 2020 MacArthur Fellow.*

*continued from page 5*

two residencies at MacDowell, the book follows the life of an undocumented teenage boy navigating his uncertain future in the United States.

Poet **Dylan Willoughby** (09) created a recording of Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey.” It appeared on the Wordsworth250 website, which is organized by William Wordsworth’s relatives.

Writer **Joyce Zonana** (18, 20) released a new translation from French of Henri Bosco’s *Malicroix*, the final draft of which was completed during her MacDowell residency. A classic coming of age tale, *Kirkus Reviews* called it “[a] work of tremendous lyricism.”



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jgourlay@macdowell.org

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**MacDowell**  
100 High Street  
Peterborough, NH 03458  
Telephone: 603-924-3886  
Fax: 603-924-9142

**MacDowell NYC**  
521 West 23rd Street  
2nd floor  
New York, NY 10011  
Telephone: 212-535-9690

**Website:** macdowell.org  
**Social Media:** @MacDowell1907



MacDowell awards Fellowships to artists of exceptional talent, providing time, space, and an inspiring environment in which to do creative work. The residency was founded in 1907 by composer Edward MacDowell and pianist Marian Nevins MacDowell, his wife. Fellows receive room, board, and exclusive use of a studio. The sole criterion for acceptance is talent, as determined by a panel representing the discipline of the applicant. MacDowell was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1997 for “nurturing and inspiring many of this century’s finest artists.”

Applications are available on our website at  
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