

# Brother Thomas Fellowships

*A Special Arts Initiative  
of the Boston Foundation*



We all share a  
creative goal  
with art. The goal  
is difficult; it is  
an invitation to  
change the world.

**Brother Thomas**

# From Our President and CEO

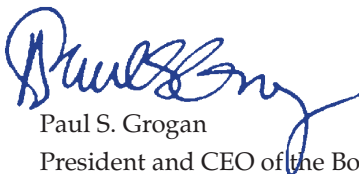
This year is the Boston Foundation's 100th Anniversary and in the process of studying our history, we have learned a great deal about the Foundation's long commitment to supporting the arts. One of the very first grants made by the Foundation went to the Community Music Center of Boston to teach the children of immigrants who came to our city in search of the American dream.

As the Foundation's resources grew, thanks to hundreds of generous donors, it began to provide critical early funding for iconic cultural institutions, such as WGBH-TV, groundbreaking performing arts organizations, such as American Repertory Theater, and advocacy organizations, including ArtsBoston.

In the 1980s, responding to a time of diminishing government support for the arts, a series of special designated funds were established at the Foundation to provide annual funding to a number of Boston's cultural organizations so that they could continue to offer free programming to the community.

And, thanks to the vision and generosity of a brilliant ceramic artist named Brother Thomas, in 2007 the Boston Foundation expanded its grant making to include fellowship grants to some of Boston's most talented individual artists.

This brochure introduces the 10 Fellows who will receive the award this year, bringing the total of fellowships awarded since the program began to 30. We are pleased to introduce you to them here and are delighted to mark the Foundation's Centennial with these new Brother Thomas Fellows.



Paul S. Grogan

President and CEO of the Boston Foundation



## **Raúl Gonzalez III**

*"and their  
Families"*

Mixed media on wall,  
13 by 40 feet, with  
student artists

## 2015 Brother Thomas Fellows



**Napoleon Jones-Henderson** Visual Artist

Napoleon Jones-Henderson has been developing his art for more than 50 years, independently and through formal study—from the Sorbonne in the 1960s to the Maryland College of Art, where he received a Master of Fine Arts as recently as 2005. Now he is teaching and inspiring the next generation of artists by working with young apprentices to create large-scale public art. “It is my dream,” he says, “to continue sharing my skill and love of the creative journey as a life-fulfilling enterprise.”



**Michelle Seaton** Author

Michelle Seaton uses the “unreported knowledge” that she has gained over 25 years as a writer and reporter to tell nuanced, fictional stories. Some of her work is inspired by her journalism—her position as a sanctioned observer in restricted spaces, such as locker rooms and cancer wards. “I want to continue to describe what it’s like to be an individual in a world where the official story told by news sources is incomplete,” she says. “I want to continue to write the stories that are important to me.”



**Jae Williams** Filmmaker

Jae Williams has made it his life's mission to share and express his curiosity and to challenge himself through his chosen medium of film. Now he is also dedicated to teaching inner-city children the fundamentals of filmmaking through the Forever Ink Project, inspired by his first film. He has reached 60 children in just two years. "To understand my vision and mission," he says, "is to understand the path to my identity as an artist and how I see myself providing a space for those who have had limitations."



**Masako Kamiya**

Visual Artist

Masako Kamiya challenges the way painting is conventionally perceived. Working with acrylic gouache, she creates three-dimensional paintings through a repetitive technique of paint application that gives her work a "sculptural dimension." She explains, "This sculptural surface moves viewers across the field of the painting ... forcing viewers' eyes to mix and optically process the various properties of color." Now, with six solo exhibits at Boston's Gallery NAGA to her credit, Masako is ready to open her mind and start a new body of work.



### **Halsey Burgund**

Sound Artist and Musician

Halsey Burgund has spent the last decade collecting spoken human voices and creating performance pieces as well as what he calls “evolving contributory installations” using the voices, along with traditional and electronic instruments, as raw material. “There is music around us every day,” he explains, “the music of human existence that, when processed and arranged by an artist, can emphasize to everyone who listens that there are beautiful and lyrical moments surrounding us all the time.”



### **Danielle Legros Georges**

Poet

As the current “Poet Laureate” of Boston, Danielle Legros Georges, who was born in Haiti and grew up in Dorchester, began her work by bringing the immigrant experience to life through her poetry. “I write poems as a way to explore questions I have, or as attempts to better understand certain subjects,” she says. “Art and art production, for me, carry with them many of the positive principles of the lessons learned from family and members of the Haitian-American community in which I developed as a person and an artist.”

**Raúl Gonzalez III** Visual Artist

Raúl Gonzalez believes that art should strive to be a true reflection of our world and not just of those who have the privilege to create it. Inspired by the immigrant experience, from his perspective as a first generation Mexican American, he strives to tell stories that welcome diverse citizens from all backgrounds and give them the confidence of belonging. In his words, “My work revolves around teaching, community and the making of artwork that shines a light and gives a voice to those who may not have it.”



**Sandrine Schaefer** Performance Artist

For Sandrine Schaefer, the thing we all call “art” in performance art, is the creative process rather than the *product* of a creative process. Using what she calls a “site-sensitive” approach, she explores the parameters of time and the body. “Because my practice is site-sensitive,” she explains, “each piece I create can only exist in the place that I have sited at the time I am making the work.” As such, she adds, “Because the work unfolds in real time, it must be witnessed live.”





**Balla Kouyaté** Composer/Musician

Balla Kouyaté is a Mandé Djeli—a musician from the Dokkala lineage of the Kouyaté clan in the Mali region of West Africa. He plays and arranges for a traditional instrument called a balafon, which he learned from his father. “I consider it both my destiny and my purpose to share my history, culture and music with the world,” he says. His love of music also has led him to transcend what he calls the “boundaries of my ancestral heritage” and explore cross-cultural collaboration with musicians such as Yo-Yo Ma.

**Nicole Aquillano** Ceramic Artist

Through the labor-intensive act of making her ceramics, Nicole Aquillano says that she establishes “a close personal relationship with each piece.” Her work, inspired by her collection of architectural photographs, features intensely detailed drawings and lines etched directly into the porcelain clay body, which is, in her words, “blurred by the movement of glaze.” She is particularly moved to explore the human need to maintain collections as a way to preserve the past and satisfy the longing with which we inhabit the world.





# The Brother Thomas Fund

was established at the Boston Foundation in 2007 to honor the legacy of Brother Thomas, a Benedictine monk and world-renowned ceramic artist, who wanted the sale of his work to support other artists, as his many friends had helped him.

Brother Thomas Fellowships are awarded to a diverse group of Greater Boston artists working at a high level of excellence in many disciplines—with the goal of enhancing their ability to thrive and create new work.

All fellows receive no-strings-attached awards of \$15,000 and are selected biennially through a rigorous process of nominations and review by a multidisciplinary panel of Boston area nonprofit arts leaders and practitioners.

As more artists join the ranks of Brother Thomas Fellows, our community will benefit immeasurably from their collective talent and creativity.



## **Sandrine Schaefer**

### *Gandhi's Flame*

site-specific performance  
art infiltration into public  
space, March 2012,  
Mexico City, 14 minutes

# Supporting the Brother Thomas Fellowships

In the 1970s, when Brother Thomas first met Sue and Bernie Pucker, owners of the Pucker Gallery on Boston's Newbury Street, ceramics were considered to be more craft than art. Brother Thomas changed that perception forever. Today, his work can be found in more than 50 national and international museums and galleries, including the Pucker Gallery, which holds the largest and most diverse collection.

Toward the end of his life, Brother Thomas joined forces with the Puckers to create a legacy that would benefit other artists through the sale of his work. Today, the proceeds of the sale of the remarkable works held by the Pucker Gallery—a series of breathtaking vessels with luminous and delicate glazes—support the Brother Thomas Fellowships.

The Boston Foundation's Arts Fund matches all contributions to the Brother Thomas Fund. We invite you to join us in fulfilling Brother Thomas' vision. If you are interested in contributing to the Brother Thomas Fund or if you are a collector who would like to learn more about purchasing Brother Thomas' works of art as a way of supporting the fund, we encourage you to contact us. We also invite you to contribute to the Boston Foundation Arts Fund, Greater Boston's only permanent endowment to support arts and culture in our community. For more information, please contact the Boston Foundation at 617-338-1700.



# About the Boston Foundation

As Greater Boston's community foundation since 1915, the Boston Foundation devotes its resources to building and sustaining a vital, prosperous city and region, where justice and opportunity are extended to everyone. It fulfills this mission in three principle ways:

*Helping donors achieve high-impact philanthropy*

*Providing major funding for nonprofit organizations*

*Serving as a civic leader and convener*

All of the work of the Foundation is guided by two main strategic goals that reflect our deep commitment to strengthening our communities:

*Greater Boston residents are successful and thriving.*

*Greater Boston communities are vibrant, safe and affordable.*

Through these goals, we seek to have a profound impact on important areas of community life:

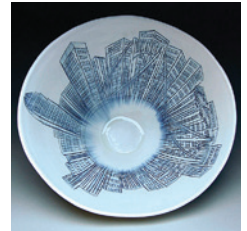
*Education*

*Health*

*Jobs and Economic Development*

*Neighborhoods and Housing*

*Arts and Culture*



**Nicole Aquillano**

*Cityscape Bowl*

13" diameter, 7" height, porcelain with inlaid underglaze and glaze, fired to cone 10 in oxidation

2013

For more information about the Boston Foundation or the Brother Thomas Fellowships, call 617-338-1700 or visit [www.tbf.org](http://www.tbf.org).

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Editor: Barbara Hindley,  
*Senior Director of Publications and Marketing,*  
The Boston Foundation

Editorial Consultants: Ann McQueen, McQueen Philanthropic  
Allyson Esposito, *Director of Arts and Culture,*  
The Boston Foundation

Designer: Kate Canfield, Canfield Design

Photographer: Richard Howard