Previous CPA Artist Grant Recipients

April 15, 2021—We are pleased to announce the recipients of the first ever CPA Artist Grants!
The selection committee looked at hundreds of incredible applications and had a difficult task in deciding on just two artists. So difficult, in fact, that instead of awarding two grants, we’re awarding five. Three of these grants are $5000 exhibition award grants and two of these grants are $3500 project support grants. We are honored and excited to be able to support so many artists this year. Please read on to learn about this year’s grantees and their projects. Congratulations to the 2021 CPA Artist Grant Recipients!

CPA Artist Exhibition Grants
Liz Steketee
Liz lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband and two children where she maintains her own art practice. For over a decade, Liz was a member of the photo faculty at the San Francisco Art Institute where she specialized in digital imaging, compositing, mixed media, and handmade books. In 2004, Liz completed her MFA at SFAI where she received the prestigious John Collier Award of Excellence for her thesis project. The project was based on the turbulent circumstances surrounding the birth of Liz’s first child, Emma. After completing her graduate studies, Liz dedicated her work fully to art practice and teaching. In 2017, Liz moved into a full time studio practice. Liz’s personal work focuses the notions of photography and its role in family life, memory, and our sense of self. Her most recent work explores mixed media; particularly the combination of textiles, book arts, sculpture, and photography. lizsteketee.com

riel Sturchio
riel Sturchio (they/she) is an interdisciplinary artist whose fine art practice includes film photography, printmaking, artist books, prose, sound installation, sculpture, video, and collaboration. Their work revolves around personal experiences with disability, chronic illness, and queer identity. They explore how symbols such as bodily response to aging, color, descriptive sound, and words challenge and complicate taxonomies of the body, touch, and
time. Their multidisciplinary practice provides the audience opportunities for altered mental, emotional, and physical states and explorations of vulnerability and bodily attention. They received an MFA from the University of Texas, Austin (2018), and a BFA in Photography from the Maine College of Art (2012). rielsturchio.com

Allie Tsubota
Allie Tsubota is a photographer and lens-based artist exploring concepts of racialization and whiteness, national belonging, and “postmemory” within the Asian diaspora. She is currently pursuing a Masters of Fine Arts in Photography at Rhode Island School of Design, where she is further developing a research-based practice that aims to produce multimedia, multi-layered, and multi-temporal work. Her practice employs various uses of photographic film, seriality, collage, and text. In 2021, she was shortlisted for the ChromaLuxe X Lucie Foundation Fine Art Award. Before shifting her focus to photography, Tsubota studied Dance and Environmental Studies at New York University, where she earned a BFA and BA, respectively. She has performed and had her choreography shown at venues in New York City and Cleveland. allietsubota.com

Project Support Grants
Justin Maxon
Justin will be presenting his project, A Field Guide to Crisis, on June 18th at CPA. Sign up for this interactive group conversation and exercise with this documentary photographer and social practice graduate student.

Justin Maxon is an award winning visual storyteller, arts educator, journalist and aspiring social practice artist whose work often generates transformative spaces where stored trauma associations can be amended in an attempt to foster new cognitive pathways. His work takes an interdisciplinary approach that acknowledges the socio-historical context from which issues are born and incorporates multiple voices to texture stories. He seeks to understand how positionality plays out in his work as a storyteller. He has given more than 50 lectures and has taught photography workshops in over 8 different countries across the world. He was a teaching artist in an US State Department- sponsored cultural exchange program between the United States and South Africa. He has worked on feature stories for publications such as TIME, Rolling Stone, the New Yorker, Mother Jones, and NPR. justinmaxon.com

Raymond Thompson, Jr
Raymond Thompson, Jr. is a photographer whose work focuses on race, identity and contested histories. He currently works as a Multimedia Producer at West Virginia University. He is also pursuing an MFA in photography from West Virginia University. He received his Masters degree from the University of Texas at Austin in journalism and graduated from the University of Mary Washington with a BA is American Studies. He has worked as a freelance photographer for The New York Times, The Intercept, NBC News, Propublica, WBEZ, Google, Merrell and the Associated Press. raymondthompsonjr.com

The Selection Committee
Ann M. Jastrab is the Executive Director at the Center for Photographic Art (CPA) in Carmel, California. CPA strives to advance photography through education, exhibition and publication. These regional traditions—including mastery of craft, the concept of mentorship, and dedication to the photographic arts—evolved out of CPA’s predecessor, the renowned Friends of Photography. While respecting these West Coast traditions, CPA is also at the vanguard of the future of photographic imagery. Before coming onboard at CPA, Ann was the gallery manager at Scott Nichols Gallery in San Francisco where she incorporated contemporary artists with the living legends photography. Ann also worked as the gallery director at RayKo Photo Center in San Francisco for 10 years until their closure in 2017. While there, she curated many shows in the Bay Area while simultaneously jurying, curating, and organizing numerous exhibitions for other national and international venues outside of San Francisco. While being a champion of artists, Ann created a thriving artist-in-residence program at RayKo where residents Meghann Riepenhoff, Carlos Javier Ortiz, Kathya Marie Landeros, and McNair Evans all received Guggenheim Fellowships. Besides being a curator, Ann Jastrab, MFA, is a fine art photographer, master darkroom printer, and teacher as well.
Chris Johnson is a photographic and video artist, curator and writer. Johnson studied photography with Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham and Wynn Bullock and has been the recipient of grants from the Rockefeller Foundation (w/ Hank Willis Thomas). He is a full Professor and Chair of the Photography Program at the California College of the Arts. His photographic artwork has been published and exhibited at the Smithsonian Institute, the Oakland Museum and numerous galleries and is represented in collections including the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson Arizona and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He is the author of The Practical Zone System: for Film and Digital Photography, now in its sixth edition. Question Bridge: Black Males features a series of commentaries and conversations between African American men of different ages, geographies, and backgrounds, with the intention of radically shifting perceptions of the humanity of Black males in America. The five channel video work opened at the Sundance Film Festival in 2012 and has been shown at the Brooklyn and Oakland Museums. It won the 2015 International Center of Photography’s Infinity Award and Aperture published a
monograph titled: Question Bridge: Black Males in America the same year. Question Bridge is in the permanent collections of The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington DC, The Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA, and the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts and Culture, Charlotte, NC.

Frank Yamrus is a fine art photographer who recently moved back to California, this time calling Los Angeles his home. Prior to this relocation, Frank spent eight years in New York City. While living in Manhattan, he started a series of portraits, “A Sense of a Beginning,” capturing in vivid detail and color the impact HIV/AIDS has had on long-term survivors of this disease. In many ways this collection of photographs bookends Frank’s first major body of work, Primitive Behavior. That series of luscious black and white prints was shot in the dunes and marshes of Provincetown, Massachusetts, a space known for anonymous sexual
encounters between men. Frank claimed this sacred land as his studio and addressed the psychological issues, such as multiple losses, depression, despair and survivor syndrome, that were devastating his community.

Having exhibited extensively across the United States and Europe, Frank’s’ images can be found in many public and private collections including London’s Victoria and Albert Museum, the Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art, The Kinsey Institute of Indiana University, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Special Collections at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. His work has been published in numerous catalogues, books and magazines. Frank is represented by ClampArt in New York City and Catherine Couturier Gallery in Houston.

In addition to producing work, Frank has served on the executive and curatorial committees of the Board of Directors at SF Camerawork from 1999 – 2004. During his tenure at SF Camerawork, he co-curated three exhibitions: Untitled [Conjecture], No Exit: Images of Imprisonment, and The Space Between: Locating Intimacy. Frank has also served on the Board of Directors of Blue Sky Gallery in Portland, Oregon and on their National Advisory Board. He is also currently on the board of the Center for Photographic Art.