Deron Albright*

Filmmaker

Deron Albright has been a filmmaker since 1994, with work spanning documentary, installation, poetic animation, and short- and long-form narrative. His 2005 short film, *The Legend of Black Tom*, played at over 25 festivals worldwide and garnered 13 awards of excellence. In 2008, he was awarded a Fulbright Senior Scholar Fellowship to Ghana, where he lived with his family for a year and filmed his first feature film, *The Destiny of Lesser Animals* (*Sibo ne kra, Dabo ne kra*). The film, which premiered in 2011 as part of the prestigious Museum of Modern Art and Film Society of Lincoln Center’s New Directors/New Films program, is set in Africa. Focused on the emotional journey of its middle-class protagonist, the work avoids ubiquitous narratives of poverty, war, and starvation, which tend to provide audiences with a narrow and tragic view of the continent. It has been praised by festival audiences for its honest portrayal of contemporary life in this part of the world. “My love and practice of cinema has always revolved around my belief in its unique ability to combine the artistic, emotional, intellectual and political, while at the same time demanding a tremendous discipline of craft and responsibility to audience,” says Albright.

Marshall Allen

Instrumentalist, composer, and bandleader

Marshall Belford Allen has been an active member of the Sun Ra Arkestra for over 50 years, and has helmed the historic jazz group since 1995, following the death of jazz pioneer Sun Ra. A leader in the 1960s avant-garde jazz movement, Allen started clarinet lessons at the age of 10. Stationed in Paris during World War II, he played with American jazz greats such as pianist Art Simmons and saxophonist Don Byas, and then enrolled in the Paris Conservatory of Music. Allen has appeared in concert and on recordings with such diverse groups as Phish, Sonic Youth, Digable Planets, and Medeski, Martin & Wood. His main focus, however, remains the preservation of his mentor’s artistic legacy, and further development of Sun Ra’s musical precepts. Allen writes new compositions of his own and develops fresh arrangements of Sun Ra’s music to inspire a new generation of aspiring musicians. “Sun Ra said, ‘If the Music doesn’t do you any good, how can it help anyone else?’” Allen writes. “My challenge is to get my musicians to play music that will enlighten them and, as a result, enlighten the public also.”

(continued)
Daniel Blacksberg
Trombonist and composer
Spanning avant-garde jazz, modern classical music, improvised music and klezmer—a musical tradition with roots in Eastern-European Jewish culture—Daniel Blacksberg brings a burly, rough-edged sound that pushes at the technical and textural extremes of his instrument, the trombone. Blacksberg has developed a complex style that blends experimental and klezmer music, drawing on unexpected techniques to expand the scope of the latter genre. His ambition is to create a solo body of work that refines this unique blend and establishes him as a major voice on his instrument, after many years of working as a sideman in musical groups and projects. “I see myself as continuing a lineage of experimental musicians whose work touches on and interacts with a variety of musical worlds,” says Blacksberg. “I am working to create new ways of playing for myself and for my instrument.” As he moves toward this new direction in his career, Blacksberg also plans to create and release recordings of his current output. He leads the Daniel Blacksberg Trio and Electric Simcha, and plays with guitarist Nick Millevoi in new music duo Archer Spade.

Left to right: Daniel Blacksberg, Alex Da Corte, Modern Girl, 2010, fiberglass, clay, soda pop, carpet, Papasan chair, zip ties, shoes, clothing, plastic, icicles, stuffed animals, plaster, enamel, and other materials, 55” x 68” x 52”; Meg Foley in Natural, 2010.

Alex Da Corte
Visual artist
Alex Da Corte scans grocery stores, street corners, and IKEA showrooms to find materials for his assemblages and videos, which utilize everything from food to hardware. “The challenge is to surprise with the familiar,” Da Corte says, “to extract the unnoticed in between spaces of our everyday experiences, turning things on their heads.” Born in Camden, New Jersey, he lived in Caracas, Venezuela until he was eight years old, and then returned to the U.S., where he studied at Philadelphia’s University of the Arts and received his M.F.A. in sculpture at Yale University. Da Corte began to work in sculpture after he discovered 20th-century artists such as Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol, and Marchel Duchamp, and realized that sculpture could be “soft, drippy, flat, alien, quiet, and surreal.” His works dissect artifacts of American consumer culture—soda, shampoo, beauty projects, and plastic junk—in order to reconfigure them as objects that play with and question our standards, symbols, and traditions. His work has been included in group exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania; PS1 MoMA in Long Island City, NY; Art Basel in Miami; and at solo exhibitions in Philadelphia, New York City, Paris, and elsewhere.

Meg Foley*
Choreographer
In 2010 and 2011, choreographer Meg Foley inserted unexpected performance into ordinary life with her 3:15 project, in which she created a dance, wherever she was, every day at exactly 3:15 p.m. This project allowed her to think critically about what constitutes dance—an investigation that has evolved into the core of her practice. Foley explores how every movement, no matter how ordinary or seemingly inconsequential, informs a responding movement, and so on, in an ongoing creative feedback loop. Her dances are often marked by specific and small gestures, suggesting intimacy or speaking to the innate awkwardness of the human body. “I aim for simultaneous abandon and command of my body, surrendering control while scanning and noticing how an action evolves or transitions,” Foley says. “I notice decisions without interfering in their making. The dance is pure architecture and sensation.” Foley is a 2012 recipient of the Philadelphia-based Independence Foundation Fellowship. Her work has been presented locally by the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, Bowerbird, and Vox Populi gallery, and nationally in the Movement Research series at New York’s Judson Church and at Scripps College in Claremont, CA. Voyager, a new choreographed work made in collaboration with Chris Forsyth, a 2011 Pew Fellow in music, and light designer Lenore Doxsee, will be presented by Bowerbird’s new dance program, Thirdbird, in January 2013.

(continued)
Matthew Mitchell*
*Pianist and composer

Matthew Mitchell’s compositions address intersections and cross-pollination among various strains of acoustic, electric, composed, and improvised new music. Much of his current work addresses the unique challenge of composing musical scores for improvisers, where he must frame his material in a way that allows for a musician’s strengths to shine. “I’m interested in exploring several dualities,” says Mitchell. “These include but are not limited to: linearity versus nonlinearity, the intentional versus the accidental, and consonance versus dissonance.” Based in Philadelphia, Mitchell performs throughout the U.S. and serves on the faculty of the Brooklyn-based Center for Improvisational Music. His sextet, Central Chain, consists of several of New York City’s foremost improvisers, including Tim Berne, Oscar Noriega, Mary Halvorson, John Hebert, and Tomas Fujiwara. He also leads the quintet Normal Remarkable Persons; with this ensemble, he aspires to perform an hour-long composition that allows for radically different versions, several of which Mitchell hopes to capture and document as a single recording.

Dan Murphy and Anthony Smyrski
*Visual artists

Dan Murphy and Anthony Smyrski work together as the artist duo Megawords. They are well known throughout the city for installations that are equal parts gathering space, artist studio, and storefront. In addition, they produce a self-published, biannual print magazine produced in the independent spirit of 1970s punk zine culture. While their practice has a global reach and they have collaborated with other artists internationally, it is deeply rooted in Philadelphia. As Megawords, Murphy and Smyrski have converted an abandoned newsstand in Northwest Philadelphia into an active kiosk, opened a pop-up exhibition and performance space in Chinatown, and organized free film screenings in abandoned lots, among other public projects. “We deplore culture where the audience is expected to sit back passively,” they write. “We seek a new and inclusive way of experiencing culture and we ask the audience to be active participants.” Murphy and Smyrski have expanded the context of their practice in recent years, working with established institutions such as Creative Time in New York City and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia. Earlier this year, they oversaw a project at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as part of the exhibition Zoe Strauss: Ten Years. The pair sees these new partnerships as logical steps in reaching a wider audience, and as an opportunity to challenge traditional notions of what can happen within a museum’s space.

Greg Osby*
*Saxophonist and composer

Greg Osby has made an indelible mark on contemporary jazz over the past 20 years, leading his own ensembles and performing with musical icons such as Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, Bobby McFerrin, and others. Highly regarded for his insightful and innovative approach to composition and performance, Osby strives to keep his musicians on their toes and to entice his audiences, blending familiar musical components with more challenging and advanced concepts. “I have dedicated my career to creating work that is unpredictable and to inspiring musicians to hear and play in ways that are truly new, without resorting to automatic responses and stock phraseology,” he explains. Osby is the recipient of numerous awards for his recordings and passionate live performances, including a Doris Duke Composition Fellowship and the Chamber Music America Composers Award. He is also highly invested in the survival of the art form, having established a record label in 2007, Inner Circle Music, which promotes new and progressive artists in the contemporary jazz scene. Osby hopes to host emerging talents at summer composition labs at his home in Valley Forge, and to establish a local music cooperative that pairs young musicians with experienced artists for fruitful protégé-mentor relationships.
Jumatatu Poe*
Choreographer

“I am not celebrating the human body,” says choreographer Jumatatu Poe. “That is not my creative interest. I am interested in transformation.” A young choreographer who has already produced such provocative, experimental dance works as FLATLAND 2010 and The Flight Attendants, Poe has spent the past few years studying and researching J-Sette—an underground dance form borne from Southern drill team and majorette events, and developed socially in gay, African-American clubs. The tight and meticulous movements of J-Sette, interrupted by hugely explosive moments, will be woven into Poe’s current project, Private Places, which will premiere at this year’s Philadelphia Live Arts Festival. Private Places is also inspired by the conflation of public and private identities in a world where social networking has become ubiquitous; it will experiment with unexpected interactions between performers and audience members. Poe is the founder and co-director of Philadelphia-based dance/theater company idiosynCrazy productions. He holds an M.F.A. in dance from Temple University and currently teaches at Swarthmore College and The University of the Arts.

Catie Rosemurgy*
Poet

Catie Rosemurgy’s wry and sharply imagined poems investigate the layered natures of identity, history, and narrative. The author of two collections of poetry published by Graywolf Press, The Stranger Manual (2010) and My Favorite Apocalypse (2001), Rosemurgy’s current work-in-progress explores the back story of a fictional town called Gold River. The world of Gold River is a cross between historical research and fantasy, modeled after formerly bustling shipping and lumber towns of the Upper Midwest, which peaked in the late 19th century and have experienced steep declines since. The new collection, tentatively titled, “The Small Museum of Our Burning,” is influenced by great American historic novels, and seeks to deconstruct and challenge the narrative structures of such works, while blurring the boundaries between prose and poetry. “The nature of storytelling is my subject matter,” Rosemurgy says. “I want to write a book that’s hard to classify, a book that calls out to many different kinds of books as kindred spirits.” Rosemurgy earned her M.F.A. in poetry at the University of Alabama and has been the recipient of a Rona Jaffe Award for Emerging Female Artists as well as a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She currently teaches at the College of New Jersey.

Kevin Varrone
Poet

Poet Kevin Varrone has worked for over 10 years on a multiple-book project entitled g-point Almanac, which includes chapbooks published by ixnay press and Ugly Duckling Presse. His current manuscript, “Box Score: An Autobiography,” is the fourth book in the project—a series of prose poems centered around baseball, written in a style that Varrone describes as “research lyric,” synthesizing historical anecdotes, slowly unfolding narratives, and language experimentation. “Rather than poems that require readers to receive pre-digested thought, I’m interested in writing that sees the act of reading as an act of thinking, as an act of meaning-making, as something less tidy than what the lyric poem has traditionally offered,” Varrone says. Throughout the poems, the overarching theme of baseball serves as an entryway for considering the nature of fatherhood, as well as ideas of place, identity, and inheritance. Varrone holds an M.A. in creative writing from Temple University, where he currently teaches literature and writing. He hopes to expose his work to new audiences by working in collaboration with visual artists on new projects, including an edition of “Box Score” as baseball cards that feature poems paired with collages.

(continued)
“Making photographs that describe human connection is the least difficult part of my artistic mission,” says documentary photographer Lori Waselchuk. “The challenge lies in presenting the work imaginatively and provocatively to bring an audience to a new understanding of that love.” Her photographs of post-Katrina New Orleans and the hospice at Angola Prison in Louisiana bring us into intimate contact with these complex subjects. Captivated at an early age by news photos in LIFE magazine, Waselchuk’s work is project-based and interactive; she engages in conversation and collaboration with the people she photographs, which often leads to new and unexpected artistic directions. Grace Before Dying, her photographic documentary about the Louisiana prison hospice, generated a publication and a traveling exhibition that showed in prisons and public spaces in Philadelphia; Boise, ID; Washington, DC; and elsewhere. Waselchuk’s images have appeared in magazines and newspapers worldwide, including Newsweek, Time, LIFE, the New York Times, and the Los Angeles Times. She is currently interviewing and photographing block captains in various Philadelphia neighborhoods for a new a project that will reveal the individual and shared histories of this city’s diverse citizenry.

* First-time Pew Fellowships in the Arts applicant
2012 Pew Fellowships in the Arts Panel Members

**Naomi Beckwith**  
Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL

**John Corbett**  
Writer, musician, curator; co-founder, Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, IL

**Kristy Edmunds (Panel Chair)**  
Executive and Artistic Director, Center for the Art of Performance, University of California, Los Angeles

**Judy Hussie-Taylor**  
Executive Director, Danspace Project, New York, NY

**Aaron Landsman**  
Playwright, actor; member, Elevator Repair Service, New York, NY

**Claudia Rankine**  
Poet, playwright; Henry G. Lee Professor of English, Pomona College, Claremont, CA

**Dean Otto**  
Associate Curator, Film/Video, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Christopher Barreca, designer and Head of Scene Design, California Institute for the Arts, Los Angeles

Julie Carr, poet and Assistant Professor of English, University of Colorado, Boulder

Gerald Cleaver, jazz drummer and bandleader, Brooklyn, NY

Lauren Cornell, Executive Director, Rhizome and Adjunct Curator, The New Museum, NY

Marilyn Crispell, jazz pianist and composer, Woodstock, NY

Susan Cross, Curator, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA

Yvonne Daniel, Professor Emerita of Dance and Afro-American Studies, Smith College, Castro Valley, CA

René de Guzman, Senior Curator, Oakland Museum of California

Nick Didkovsky, guitarist, composer, bandleader, and musical software programmer; Professor of Computer Music Composition, New York University

Steve Dietz, Founder, President, and Artistic Director, Northern Lights.mn, Minneapolis, MN

David Filipi, Director of Film and Video, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH

Mandy Hackett, Associate Artistic Director, The Public Theater, New York, NY

Brooke Hodge, Director of Exhibition Management and Publications, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

Mary Jane Jacob, independent curator and Professor of Sculpture and Executive Director of Exhibitions, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL

Lisa Jarnot, poet and translator, Sunnyside, NY

Kevin Iega Jeff, choreographer and Artistic Director, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, Chicago, IL

Julie Jenson, Resident Playwright, Salt Lake Acting Company, Salt Lake City, UT

Lisa Kron, writer and performer, Brooklyn, NY; Faculty, Yale School of Drama, New Haven, CT

Alexandra Lange, critic, journalist, and architectural historian, Brooklyn, NY

Libby Larsen, composer, Minneapolis, MN

Lou Mallozzi, audio artist; Executive Director, Experimental Sound Studio; Adjunct Professor, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL

Victoria Marks, choreographer and Professor of Choreography/Performance, World Arts and Cultures, University of California, Los Angeles

David McFadden, Chief Curator and Vice President, Programs and Collections, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY

Fiona McCrae, Director, Graywolf Press, Minneapolis, MN

Jennifer Monson, Artistic Director, choreographer, and performer, iLAND and BIRD BRAIN Dance, New York, NY; Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Sigrid Nunez, author, New York, NY


Raymund Ryan, Curator, Heinz Architectural Center, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA

Brian Rogers, Co-founder and Artistic Director, The Chocolate Factory, Long Island City, NY

Joel Shepard, Film/Video Curator, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA

Cindi Strauss, Curator, Modern and Contemporary Decorative Arts and Design of Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

Gilbert Vicario, Senior Curator, Des Moines Art Center, IA

Brian Wallis, Deputy Director for Exhibitions/ Chief Curator, International Center of Photography, New York, NY

Julia Wolfe, Composer, Assistant Professor of Music Composition, New York University; Co-founder and Co-artistic Director, Bang on a Can, New York, NY