



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 26, 2022

Press Contact:

Jeffreen M. Hayes

press@three-walls.org

773.661.1823

THREEWALLS ANNOUNCES 2022 RAD LAB+OUTSIDE THE WALLS FELLOWS

Five ALAANA-Identified Artists Receive Research Support for Racial Justice Work

Artists Will Receive \$400,000 to Support Five Year-Long Neighborhood-Based Projects in Chicago

CHICAGO – Threewalls, a Black-led non-profit organization providing support and visibility for ALAANA (African descent, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Native American)-identified contemporary visual artists and creatives in Chicago, today announced the five 2022 recipients of the RaD Lab+Outside the Walls fellowship. Five fellows will each receive \$40,000 in the first year, with the option to renew in year two, to research a racial justice issue embedded in their neighborhood with the intent to bring about structural change using their artistic and creative practices.

In the first year of their fellowship, these ALAANA-identified artists will develop their project in the RaD Lab by researching, prototyping, and testing an idea that addresses a racial justice issue in their local Chicago community. In the second year, their research projects will be presented Outside the Walls as public installations, exhibitions, or interventions in their neighborhood. Each project will engage its respective neighbors in Kenwood & Bronzeville, Hermosa, South Shore, and Lawndale.

Meet the 2022 RaD Lab+Outside the Walls Fellows and Their Communities

[jireh I. drake](#) (they/them), mixed media artist and writer

Project focus: Systemic Racism Impacts in Kenwood & Bronzeville

[Jorge Felix](#) (he/him), artist and community curator

Project Focus: Colorism in Hermosa

[Tiffany Johnson](#) (she/her), grassroots researcher and survivor advocate

Project Focus: Gender-based violence in South Shore

[Kiela Smith-Upton](#) (she/her), community-based artist

Project Focus: Gentrification in Greater South Shore

[Sojourner Wright](#) (they/she), multidisciplinary artist and sacred space facilitator

Project Focus: Public Health in Lawndale

“This intergenerational cohort represents the breadth and interconnectedness of racial justice, equity and artistic practices in our Chicago community,” said Threewalls Executive Director **Jeffreen M. Hayes**. “The convergence of their contemporary practices will unearth beautiful links and movements towards a racially equitable and just Chicago and society at large. We are proud to begin a collaborative relationship with these fellows, support the growth of their practices and increase the award amount to \$40,000 from \$32,000 in 2020.”

The fellowship is supported by the Surdna Foundation’s Radical Imagination for Racial Justice initiative, which awarded Threewalls \$1.2 million in 2019 to expand the organization’s racial justice work. In addition to the financial award, the fellows have access to creative and personal development support through the Wellness Circle. The Wellness Circle is comprised of consultants working in the areas of finance, mental health & wellness services, digital coaching, and more. The consultants will offer group workshops and one-on-one sessions paid for by Threewalls. This year’s consultants are licensed counselor and artist Alice Berry, designer and media specialist JinJa Birk, and financial advisor Mark Haussermann.

“Given the challenging times in which we live, work, and organize, I am thrilled that Threewalls is prioritizing community care and the physical, mental, and financial wellness of ALAANA artists in Chicago,” said **Robert Smith III**, Program Officer, Thriving Cultures, Surdna Foundation. “To build a more just world, we need to nurture our full humanity and never forget that the communities closest to the problems are closest to the solutions.”

“The fellows are deeply rooted in their respective communities, and approach both their artistic practices and community engagement with intention, nuance, and care,” said Threewalls Co-Director of Programs **Adia Sykes**. “We are thrilled to support and witness their work unfold over the next year.”

Fellows were selected through an open call process and reviewed by an external panel of individuals who are actively involved in artistic work, identify as members of the ALAANA community, and are majority Chicago-based. The 2022 panelists were Anaïs Duplan, Michael Anthony García, Shelby Stone, Brenda Torres-Figueroa, and Dearra Williams.

About the Surdna Foundation

The Surdna Foundation seeks to foster just and sustainable communities in the United States—communities guided by principles of social justice and distinguished by healthy environments, inclusive economies, and thriving cultures. Learn more at www.surdna.org.

About Threewalls

Threewalls, an ever-evolving Blk art space, fosters contemporary art practices that respond to lived experiences, encouraging connections beyond art. Founded in 2003, the organization continues its purpose to support artists often marginalized because of their non-commercial and experimental practices. Over the past 6 years, Threewalls evolved to further fill a gap for Chicago-based ALAANA-identified artists, who have been historically excluded from financial, curatorial, and programmatic support. Our work, developed within a Blk-feminist and Diasporic traditions, is exclusively centered on and for ALAANA artists, decentralizes where art and art programming happen, and serves as a bridge between artists and Chicago community members. Learn more at www.three-walls.org.