

## PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

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## EIGHT MONTANA ARTISTS WIN THE MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL'S 2015 ARTIST'S INNOVATION AWARD

The Montana Arts Council is pleased to announce eight Montana artists as winners of the 2015 Artist's Innovation Award. The winners are: sculptor Louis Habeck of Billings; fiber-artist Maggy Rozycki Hiltner of Red Lodge; ceramicist Steven Lee of Helena; performer Jack Gladstone and sculptor Kate Hunt from Kalispell; and poet Heather Cahoon, writer Deidre McNamer and performer Jeremy Sher from Missoula.

The Artist's Innovation Award of \$3,000 is made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Winning artists who receive this cash award must also convey their artistry to other Montanans during the course of the upcoming year.

As a clay artist, ceramicist Steven Lee is the recipient of the Jessie Wilber and Frances Senska Individual Artist Award, established by a private gift to the arts council from Stacy Hamm and Sage Walden.

Review panels comprised of experts in the fields of visual arts, performing arts and literary arts met in early December to select the winners. This honor rewards Montana artists who demonstrate innovation in their work as well as originality and dedication in their creative pursuits. The Montana Arts Council established this award program in order to foster environments where the innovation and creativity of artists are valued and celebrated.

### WINNERS BY REGION

#### BILLINGS

##### **Visual Artist Louis Habeck**

Louis Habeck is an interdisciplinary artist, with sculpture as his primary focus. He uses non-traditional materials, but whether through painting or sculpture, Louis prefers to depict peculiar, melancholy creatures which somehow manage to retain a slight sense of whimsy. Panelists praised his innovative and creative use of materials, and the compelling execution of his vision.

Of his recent work, Habeck says, “I have been painting still lifes, portraits and landscapes on creatures that I have sculpted instead of using traditional flat canvases... My current body of work involves the sculpting and casting of life-size triceratops heads.”

Habeck was born and currently resides in Billings, MT. He graduated from The University of Montana in 2011, receiving a Bachelor of Fine Art with an emphasis in photography, however, his work spans the boundaries between most mediums. He has given multiple sculpture lectures and demos for classes at Northwest College, Montana State University Billings, and the MAEA Conference (Montana Art Education Association), and spent the spring as the artist-in-residence at the Yellowstone Art Museum’s Visible Vault.

### **Visual Artist Maggy Rozycki Hiltner, Red Lodge**

Maggy Rozycki Hiltner earned a BFA in sculpture from Syracuse University before turning to fiber arts as a specialty. She lives in Red Lodge with her two daughters and her husband, David Hiltner, who directs the Red Lodge Clay Center.

Rozycki Hiltner is known for her use of vintage imagery and traditional techniques to create complex, contemporary art. Her work has been featured in group and solo exhibitions all over the United States and internationally, from Los Angeles to New York City, and from Montana to Kansas to Michigan. This fall, she was the Artist-In-Residence at the Yellowstone Art Museum while her 288-square-foot hand-stitched piece, Vantage Point, was on exhibit. Currently, you can find her large-scale collaged embroidery in the touring exhibit, Extreme Fibers: Textile Icons and the New Edge, at Michigan’s Denno Museum Center. In 2016, she will have solo exhibitions at the Lawrence Arts Center, KS, Bellevue Arts Museum, WA, and in May 2017 at the Missoula Art Museum. Her work is carried in Montana at Toucan Gallery in Billings, tart in Bozeman, and Turman Larison in Helena.

### HELENA

#### **Visual Artist Steven Lee: Ceramics, Winner of the Jessie Wilber and Frances Senska Individual Artist Award, established by a private gift to the arts council from Stacy Hamm and Sage Walden.**

Steven Young Lee received his MFA in Ceramics from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in 2004. In 2004-5, he lectured and taught at numerous universities throughout China. While there, Lee created a new body of work as part of a one-year cultural and educational exchange fellowship in Jingdezhen, Jianxi Province. He has taught at Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan, the Clay Art Center in New York, the Lill Street Studio in Chicago and Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver, B.C. Lee is currently the Resident Artist Director of the Archie Bray Foundation.

Lee describes his work as “a collage of forms and motifs from various origins--Chinese, Korean, French, Dutch, English, Minoan, etc. The pieces I create, appropriate elements of form, decoration, color, image and material from various cultures and historical periods.” Lee creates exquisitely shaped and painted pots, then uses the clay’s own tendency to crack or misshape to blow apart the traditional forms, resulting in beautiful, innovative new works.

## KALISPELL

### **Performing Artist Jack Gladstone**

Jack Gladstone is an enrolled citizen of the Blackfeet Nation. He illustrates American Indian culture through a mosaic of music, lyric poetry and spoken word narrative. A 2015 winner of the Governor's Humanities Award, Gladstone calls himself a "storysmith, forging ancient, historical and contemporary narratives into accessible lyrical art."

A former college instructor, Gladstone co-founded Glacier National Park's renowned lecture series, "Native America Speaks" in 1985. Jack has released fifteen critically acclaimed CDs. His latest release, "Native Anthropology," garnered the prestigious "Best Historical Recording" from the Native American Music Association. In the spring of 2013, Gladstone became the first Montanan to receive the C.M. Russell Heritage Award, given to honor his contribution to the "legacy, culture and life of the American West." This past year, he debuted an elementary and middle school writing program utilizing Russell's artwork as primary documents. Students discover clues within Russell's compositions that promote an appreciation of his perspective towards the featured work and then write narratives, song lyrics, or poetry using the topics at hand.

### **Visual Artist Kate Hunt**

Kate Hunt was raised in a town of 900 on the plains of Montana, and the subtle power of the landscape has influenced her work. Hunt graduated from the Kansas City Art Institute and Cranbrook Academy of Art. She has shown nationally and internationally and her work is in many prominent collections. Hunt's work is object oriented. Her materials include steel, twine, boat building epoxy, encaustic, and newspaper.

Hunt first started working with newspaper at the Kansas City Art Institute. Her teacher, Joan Livingstone, had her make a "chinese finger trap", the kind found at carnivals that tighten as you try to pull your fingers out. From there she started building large weavings with newspaper. In describing her choice of material, Hunt says, "I realized early on that newspaper lent itself to me because it is easy to get, durable (there is a reason our landfills are filled with the stuff) and very forgiving. While I use it as a construction material, everyone has a history with newspaper that brings another layer to the work that I love."

## MISSOULA

### **Literary Artist Heather Cahoon**

Heather Cahoon grew up in St. Ignatius, Montana on the Flathead Indian Reservation where she is an enrolled Pend d' Oreille. She holds an MFA in Poetry from The University of Montana and was the recipient of the 2000 Richard Hugo Memorial Scholarship and the 2005 Merriam Frontier Award for publication of her book, *Elk Thirst*. She also holds an interdisciplinary PhD in history, anthropology, and Native American Studies. Her writing has appeared in numerous national and international publications.

She lives in Missoula, Montana with her husband and sons and teaches Native Studies and poetry at The University of Montana.

Cahoon's writing combines traditional lyric poetry, full of images from the Western landscape, with complicated cultural issues. In describing her own work, she says "...it is my aim that my poetry will positively affect my community and other people attempting the daunting and often unmapped task of processing the things that have pained them most."

### **Literary Artist Deirdre McNamer**

Deirdre McNamer graduated from The University of Montana School of Journalism in 1973 and began her professional writing career as a journalist, working for the Associated Press in Portland, Oregon. In 1980 she moved back to Missoula and took a job at the *Missoulian*, where she began to move away from straight news reporting to long feature stories and profiles, which won regional newspaper prizes. In 1982, she was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for Professional Journalists at the University of Michigan.

In 1985 she entered the University of Montana's creative-writing program, earning an MFA in 1987. Her first novel, *Rima in the Weeds*, was published in 1991 and won that year's Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award for fiction. Two more novels, *One Sweet Quarrel* (1994) and *My Russian* (1999) were *New York Times* Notable Books of the year, and *Red Rover* (2007) won the Montana Book Award from the state library association and made Best Books of 2007 lists in *Artforum*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post*.

McNamer has continued to write short essays for the *New Yorker* and many other venues. She has taught creative writing at the college level since 1992, served as chair of the fiction panel for the 2011 National Book awards and judged the 2015 PEN/Faulkner awards.

### **Performance Artist Jeremy Sher**

Jeremy Sher is a professional actor living in Missoula. He has co-founded several performance ensembles over the past 20 years in France, Spain, Seattle, St. Louis and Chicago. He has performed and trained in disciplines from classical theatre to Japanese dance, often with multi-national casts. He has trained in Suzuki and Viewpoints with Anne Bogart and SITI Company in New York & Chicago, and has led Suzuki training groups in Seattle, St. Louis, Paris and Chicago. He has also taught Improvisation and Movement workshops at several universities across the country. His passion lies in "devising" – a process of creating original work on one's feet in the studio.

Since moving to Missoula in 2012, Sher has worked with the Montana Rep (*Circle Mirror Transformation*, Missoula Colony), done several staged readings in town and in Idaho with award-winning playwright Robert Caisley (*Happy, Lucky Me, Art*), and he created a hit show combining his pastry chef experience with original comedic interpretation in 2014, slated to tour the Pacific Northwest

in 2016. Described with such terms as “elegance, “taste,” and “humor,” Sher’s creative and innovative professionalism was praised by panel reviewers.

For more information on the winners and the Artist’s Innovation Award program, visit:

[http://www.art.mt.gov/artists/artists\\_innovation.asp](http://www.art.mt.gov/artists/artists_innovation.asp)

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