2015 National Panelists

JOHN COLUMBUS is Founder and Director Emeritus of the Black Maria Film Festival, a nationally touring, juried alternative film festival that commences its 35th season in 2016. Named after Thomas Edison’s 1893 film studio, the festival is committed to exploratory, expressive and poetic independent vision. Columbus has been a guest curator with the Flaherty Film Seminar, acted as a juror for the National Endowment for the Arts and has been a guest critic-mentor with Rhode Island School of Design and his signature film “Corona” has been exhibited at MoMA and internationally.

SIDRA BELL is the Artistic Director of Sidra Bell Dance New York (SBDNY, Inc.). Bell has won several awards, notably a prestigious 1st Prize for Choreography at the Solo Tanz Theater Festival in Stuttgart, Germany. Her critically acclaimed choreography and company has been seen throughout the United States and in Denmark, France, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey, Germany, China, Canada, Aruba, Korea, Brazil and Greece. She is currently a Master Lecturer at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and was an Adjunct Professor at Barnard College in New York City.

CHRISTOPHER HAHN was appointed General Director of Pittsburgh Opera in 2008, having served as Artistic Director since 2000. He has enriched the company’s repertoire, introducing Baroque and contemporary operas presented in a variety of production styles. Hahn’s expertise in recognizing young vocal talent has made him a sought-after juror at American and international vocal competitions, including the Bernstein Competition (Jerusalem), Plácido Domingo’s Operalia Competition, the Francisco Viñas Competition (Barcelona), and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.
KARYN OLIVIER is currently an associate professor of sculpture at Tyler School of Art. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and she is the recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, the New York Foundation for the Arts Award, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant, the William H. Johnson Prize, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, and a Creative Capital Foundation grant, among others.

JULIE RODRIGUES WIDHOLM is the Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Widholm has extensive experience organizing a range of exhibitions from solo projects with emerging and Chicago-based artists and site-specific commissions (indoor and outdoor) to large-scale international group exhibitions, touring exhibitions, and retrospectives. She most recently organized the first retrospective of the renowned sculptor Doris Salcedo.

ED HERENDEEN founded the Contemporary American Theater Festival in Shepherdstown, West Virginia in 1991 with the mission to produce and develop new American theater. Through his leadership, the Theater Festival has produced 105 new plays – including 40 world premieres and nine commissions – and has gained a reputation as one of America’s most important producers of new work. In 1999, Governor Cecil H. Underwood presented CATF with the Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. In the fall of 2001, Herendeen was appointed to the 2001/2002 New Dramatists Admissions Committee.

GWYDION SUILEBHAN is a DC-based writer, theater maker, arts marketer, speaker, and arts advocate. A founding member of The Welders and DC’s representative to the Dramatists Guild, Suilebhan is the author of The Butcher, Reals, Abstract Nude, The Constellation, Let X, The Faithkiller, Cracked, and Anthem. His work has been commissioned, produced, developed, and read by Centerstage, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Gulfshore Playhouse, the National New Play Network, Forum Theatre, Theater J, Theater Alliance, Active Cultures, and the Source Theater Festival, among others.
Regional Panelists

YONA HARVEY, literary artist and assistant professor in the Writing Program at the University of Pittsburgh

ATILIO “BUCK” FAVORINI, playwright and Emeritus Professor at the University of Pittsburgh

MATTHEW DAY, curator and host of the Pittsburgh Film Kitchen series at Pittsburgh Filmmakers

AKIKO KOTANI, visual artist

DARRELL S. KINSEL, visual artist and co-founder of BOOM Concepts Art Gallery

SETH BECKMAN, dean and professor of the Mary Pappert School of Music at Duquesne University

STAYCEE PEARL, founding artistic director of PearlArts Studios | STAYCEE PEARL dance project

Foundation Staff

MARILYN COLEMAN is project consultant for the Investing in Professional Artists program. She has worked as an executive, consultant, and fundraiser for nonprofit organizations for more than 25 years. Her firm provides strategic and business planning; board development/board training; fundraising strategy; organization capacity assessments and capacity-building plans; merge exploration facilitation; meeting/retreat facilitation; executive director coaching.

JANET SARBAUGH is senior director of the Arts & Culture Program for The Heinz Endowments. Under Janet’s leadership, this program has focused on three major goals: expanding opportunities for arts learning and participation, building regional creative capital and advancing Pittsburgh as a cultural center. Highlights of her work in these three areas include continuing development of the Pittsburgh Cultural District; operating support programs for major institutions; establishing initiatives to advance small arts organizations and multicultural arts groups; and encouraging new efforts in civic design, arts education, artist training and arts in community settings. The program distributes approximately $8 million annually. In 2003, she was named Pittsburgh’s number one cultural force by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

GERMAINE WILLIAMS is senior program officer for Arts and Culture at The Pittsburgh Foundation. The Foundation envisions the arts as a key component of healthy communities and strives to make cultural vitality and diversity a defining characteristic of regional growth. Prior to working at The Pittsburgh Foundation, Germaine served as Project Director for The Creativity Project at the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University, where he worked developing programs of support for individual artists in Pittsburgh. Before moving to Pittsburgh, Germaine was the Program Associate for the Rockefeller Foundation’s Media Arts Fellowship program in New York City. A native of Chicago, he holds a doctorate in History from Carnegie Mellon University.