

## **Nasher Sculpture Center Announces the 2021 Nasher Artist Grant Winners**

*Five North Texas Artists to Receive Grants to Support Studio and Curatorial Practices*

DALLAS, Texas (August 3, 2021) – The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the winners of the 2021 Nasher Artist Grants, a program which provides annual financial support to North Texas artists through the distribution of grants that may be used to fund the purchasing of equipment and materials, travel or research, studio space, or artist-run curatorial projects. The 2021 Nasher Artist Grants are made possible by support from Nasher Members and Patrons.

The 2021 grant awardees are: Amber Bemak, Xxavier Edward Carter, Christian Cruz, Inyang Essien, Karla Garcia.

The 2021 winners were chosen by a jury that included artists Jer'Lisa Devezin, Leslie Martinez, Shelby David Meier, and Matthew Ronay. Nasher Associate Curator Dr. Leigh Arnold and Nasher Curator of Education Anna Smith serve on the jury on an annual basis. Each Nasher Artist Grant awardee will receive \$2000 to realize projects related to their practice.

“The Nasher is proud to help further the practices of this group of outstanding North Texas artists,” says Dr. Leigh Arnold. “This year’s awardees show a strong and imaginative commitment to raise the voices of their communities and to highlight the struggles of others through their artistic work, a labor that the jury found deeply important in this moment, We are so pleased that the Nasher Sculpture Center can contribute to these artists’ development and success.”

2021 Nasher Artist Grants will go towards the realization of the following projects by the award recipients:

### **Amber Bemak, Dallas**

Amber Bemak will use her Nasher grant to finish post-production of an experimental documentary about the artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña, titled *100 Ways to Crash the Border*. Gómez-Peña is a renowned multi-media border artist who has worked for decades teaching others how to perform political and radical work. “Interacting with Gómez-Peña’s performance art style and his critique of the ethnographic gaze, the film’s narrative explores my relationship as director of the film to Gómez-Peña,” says Bemak. “Together, Gómez-Peña and I use our filmmaking process to reveal the complexities between us, as two differently-embodied people in terms of race, gender, age, and ethnicity, playing with the borders between director/subject, camera/audience and the observer/the observed.”

### **Xxavier Edward Carter, Dallas**

Xxavier Edward Carter will use his grant to create a quarterly arts magazine that will cover the intersections and divergences of art, sex, and society, with contributions from artists and writers from across the globe. With especial focus on race, gender, and class, the magazine will include photos, text, drawings, pop-out materials or other means of artistic expression, and present bodies and voices that have often been penalized or deemed unacceptable for print. A digital version of the subscription-based magazine will also be available. “This publication looks to build community by tapping writers globally to track the pulse of art, sex, and society in a shrinking global climate where both physical and virtual spaces are becoming ever more commodified by capitalism and white supremacy,” says Carter.

### **Christian Cruz, Irving**

Christian Cruz will use the grant funds to rent a venue for several performance installations that will explore the worthiness of certain intimate labors, community healing, Chicanisma (Mexican American feminism), and futurism. The performances include "Anger as Currency," in which angry personal stories have a monetary value, as well as "Breastmilk Bodegas," an imagined town in which breastmilk can be bought and sold at the corner store, "giving people who produce milk another avenue to make money with their bodies," says Cruz. A vignette called "Bridge Awards" considers the value of public praise by honoring patrons that simply show up to see Mexican American art during a global pandemic.

### **Inyang Essien, Dallas**

With an interest in ethnomathematics and ethnocomputing—the study of culture as it pertains to mathematics and computing—photographer Inyang Essien will use her Nasher Artist Grant to create an interactive photo and video exhibition that explores the geometric formulas and fractal patterns found in nature— from the branching of trees to the spirals and tendrils seen in various plants— and adopted by African and Indigenous American cultures for the formation of textiles, architecture, and artwork. Essien will record the ways these algorithms—called “heritage algorithms”—are used within specific communities in South Dallas, manifesting in cornrows, barbershop hair designs, drum music rhythms, mancala and henna. “I would like to encourage youth that may not have otherwise expressed enthusiasm in STEM subjects to develop interest through relatability,” says Essien. “It is important for developing youth to have the option to learn mathematical and technological systems through cultural practices already familiar to them.”

### **Karla Garcia, Dallas**

Artist Karla Garcia will use her Nasher Artist Grant to build a stand-alone studio for her ceramics practice. The grant will allow her a safer space to make the work “which speaks of Mexican culture, migration, and Mexican-American identity, as related to my experience,” says the artist. The dedicated studio space will encourage Garcia to expand her practice, making larger works and exhibitions possible, including an outdoor installation of her unfired clay sculptures sited in the desert near the US-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas, which will result in the publication of an artist book documenting the works. Garcia also hopes the grant will provide support to acquire permits to move the installation across the border, to Ciudad Juárez itself.

**For images, please follow [this link](#).**

**The next open call for Nasher Artist Grant applications will be in summer 2022.**

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#### **About the Nasher Sculpture Center:**

Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture

Center is open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions. For more information and book advanced tickets, please visit [www.NasherSculptureCenter.org](http://www.NasherSculptureCenter.org).