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vsa

presents

(Re) Invention

One-Year Visual Art Exhibition featuring
15 Emerging Artists with Disabilities to Tour Nationally

(WASHINGTON)—VSA, the international organization on arts and disability, part of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts since 2011, and with generous support from Volkswagen Group of America, will present an exhibition of artwork by 15 emerging young artists, ages 16 to 25, with disabilities in a traveling exhibition. Titled (Re) Invention, this year-long national tour kicks off in Washington, D.C. at the Rayburn House Office Building on September 13, 2016.

The 2016 VSA Emerging Young Artists Competition, a Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program of the Kennedy Center, drew submissions from talented young artists with disabilities from around the U.S. This year’s artists were challenged to create work that exemplifies themes of renewal and self-discovery—of reinvention. The winners, selected from a pool of hundreds of applicants, were chosen for their often enlightening interpretations of the theme sending a strong message of inclusion and unity in the arts.

In their 15th year of collaboration, VSA and Volkswagen Group of America teamed up to challenge young artists with disabilities to demonstrate their talents and skills across the visual arts media. The winners receive a total of $60,000 in cash awards and have their work go on a one-year national tour to museums and galleries across the country. As part of their award package, the winners also receive all-expense paid travel to Washington, D.C., for three days of educational events and
seminars September 13-15, 2016. Over the weekend, the artists will convene at the Kennedy Center for a series of professional development workshops, which will provide skill-building and practical knowledge-sharing opportunities to support the growth of their careers.

“These young artists use their art to challenge us to see a world that reflects authentic human diversity including the disability experience. Their works draw us in to engage in a dialogue about the meaning of reinvention,” said Betty Siegel, Director of VSA and Accessibility of the Kennedy Center. “And we thank Volkswagen Group of America for their continued support in making this possible. We look forward to seeing the impact these 15 young artists and their work will have on our social and cultural communities.”

David Geanacopoulos, Senior Executive Vice President for Public Affairs and Policy of Volkswagen Group of America, remarked, “This 15-year partnership serves as a powerful example of Volkswagen Group of America’s unwavering support for the principles of diversity and inclusion. This year’s theme of (Re) Invention truly resonates with our company as we look to the future of mobility. The creativity and innovation exhibited in the winners’ work inspires our team in our own lives and work.”

The winners were selected by a jury of noted art professionals, including Ellen Lupton, Senior Curator of Contemporary Design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City and Director of Graphic Design MFA program at the Maryland Institute College of Art; Brandon Brame Fortune, Chief Curator and Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the National Portrait Gallery; Laura Swanson, visual artist; and visual artists and educators Saul Chernick and Gordon Sasaki.

Monica Chulewicz, age 25, of Seaford, New York won the $20,000 Grand Prize for I’m Not Here For You To Taunt, a work of cyanotype prints on vintage dress. Chulewicz is a Polish-American artist who was born and raised in New York. A printmaker and collagist, she uses vintage found materials in both digital and traditional hand-printing processes. She was born with a progressive disease that has caused several secondary illnesses and uses her chronic health issues as a means of inspiration for her work. The cast of anonymous women depicted in I’m Not
*Here For You To Taunt* represents collected memories from unknown histories and evokes a continuum of loss and renewal throughout the generations. Chulewicz experiments with fiction of the past, using vintage photographs to create dialogues between memory and time and address themes of existence, fragility, and mortality. She earned a BFA from Adelphi University in 2013 and currently lives and works in New York.

**Victoria Dugger**, age 24, of Columbus, Georgia, won the $10,000 First Prize for *Soft Machine 1*, a work composed of encaustic, nylon, and brick. Unflinching and direct, Dugger’s work confronts viewers with a duality of beauty and the grotesque through sculpture that heavily distorts the human body. *Soft Machine 1* is part of a series exploring tropes of disability, sexuality, and fear of the unknown through figurative shapes that are unsettling recognizable, yet foreign. Through this series, she aims to reinvent and restructure the human body as seen by common societal perceptions and expectations. Her art at once questions the imagery and stereotypes associated with beauty and disability and pushes us to rethink our own projected narratives of the disadvantaged. Dugger earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting and Sculpture from Columbus State University in 2016 and continues to her create art from her hometown.

**Kate Pincus-Whitney**, age 22, of Santa Barbara, California took the $6,000 Second Prize for *Getting Ready*, an acrylic, woodcut, ink, and gesso work on canvas. A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College in New York, her work incorporates social and political themes of identity with visual memory and personal histories.

The following artists will receive an Award of Excellence in the amount of $2,000:

- Christine Driscoll, Bensalem, Pennsylvania, age 24
- Alice Shockey, Princeton, New Jersey, age 24
- Alexandra Novess, The Hills, Texas, age 19
- Mara Clawson, Bethesda, Maryland, age 24
- Courtney Cooper, Mountain View, California, age 20
- Benjamin Gibbs, Vienna, Virginia, age 22
- Abigail Nash, Mason, Texas, age 21
- Zaira Lee, Oakland, California, age 22
- Nicholas Fagan, Herndon, Virginia, age 24
- Darryl Terrell, Detroit, Michigan, age 25
- Jeremie Miller, Tulsa, Oklahoma, age 24
- Harrison Halker Heinks, Edina, Minnesota, age 18

**FUNDING CREDITS:**
The VSA Emerging Young Artists Program is sponsored by Volkswagen Group of America, Inc.

**ABOUT VSA**
Serving the international disability and arts community, VSA provides opportunities for people with disabilities, of all ages, across the globe to learn through, participate in and enjoy the arts. Founded 41 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, the VSA international network supports and offers a wide array of accessible cultural, arts and education programs and experiences. Please visit VSA at: [kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/](http://kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/).

**ABOUT EDUCATION AT THE KENNEDY CENTER**
The Kennedy Center retains its commitment as the nation’s cultural center to educating and enlightening children and adults in Washington and around the country. The Center’s national education programs include: *Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child*, which works with 23 municipalities and their school districts around the country to develop a long-range strategic plan for arts education; ARTSEdge, a website that offers standards-based materials for use in and out of the classroom; Partners in Education, which forges relationships between an arts organization and its neighboring school systems to build effective arts education programs for teachers and teaching artists; Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network, works with 30 state organizations on arts education policy issues; Explore the Arts, which provide insight into the cultural and historical context of the works presented on stage and sparks dialogue between audiences and the artists who have created the performances through participatory workshops, demonstrations, panels, master classes, and open rehearsals; and the Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Awards, which acknowledge teachers of grades K-12 whose efforts have made a significant impact on their students; and Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour, which brings original Kennedy Center productions for students and families into communities and performing arts centers around the country. In 2016, the Kennedy Center and the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities announced a strategic partnership to bring the Turnaround Arts initiative to the Center, which empowers high-need, low-performing schools with innovative arts programming and resources to help address broader school challenges and close the achievement gap.

In and around D.C., the Kennedy Center’s programs include Changing Education Through the Arts, a program that works with seven schools in the area to affect long-term change in school culture through professional learning in arts integration; Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers, which trains Washington-area educators to teach the arts or other subject areas through the arts;
and Washington, D.C. Partnership Schools, where the Center provides resources and teaching artist residencies to 22 elementary, junior, and senior high schools in Washington, D.C. The Center also mounts more than 100 events and performances of theater, music, dance, and opera throughout the season for more than 100,000 local school-aged children.

In addition, the Center offers multiple skill development programs for young artists and professionals both locally and nationally, including the National Symphony Orchestra’s Youth Fellowship Program, Summer Music Institute, and High School Competition; Washington National Opera’s Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program, Opera Institute, and Kids Create Opera Partnership; the biennial New Visions/New Voices forum for development of new plays for young people; Exploring Ballet with Suzanne Farrell; Betty Carter’s Jazz Ahead; VSA’s Playwright Discovery Program, Young Soloists, and Visual Arts Programs; arts administration internships; and the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival which impacts hundreds of thousands of college-aged theater students across the country and marks its 49th anniversary in 2017.

**ABOUT VOLKSWAGEN GROUP OF AMERICA, INC.**
Volkswagen Group of America, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Volkswagen AG, one of the world’s leading automobile manufacturers and the largest carmaker in Europe. It operates a manufacturing plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee and houses the U.S. operations of a worldwide family of distinguished and exciting brands including Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Lamborghini, and Volkswagen, as well as VW Credit, Inc. Founded in 1955, the company’s headquarters are in Herndon, Va., Volkswagen Group of America brings vehicles to the U.S. that marry the science of engineering and the art of styling, with the goal of offering attractive, safe, and eco-conscious automobiles that are competitive and set world standards in their respective classes. The company has approximately 6,000 employees in the United States and sells its vehicles through a 1,000-strong dealer network.

For more information, please visit the Kennedy Center [website](https://www.kennedycenter.org).

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