

For Immediate Release

The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics receives \$300,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to continue Global Fellows Program

Washington DC — [The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics \(The Lab\)](#) at Georgetown University is proud to announce a \$300,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation in continued support of The Lab's [Global Lab Fellows Program](#).

In a world grappling with complex challenges and divisions, the Global Fellows Program stands as a powerful example of how art can create connections and foster understanding. Working in their local communities, these fellows embark on a transnational residency, exploring the intersection of performance and politics while fostering meaningful dialogue across cultures, disciplines, and generations.

“The Lab has created a platform for like-minded artists, scholars, and activists to build a network with each other and to hear voices from around the world. It is very important for all of us to join forces in creating work that decreases polarization, division, and misunderstanding.”

-Inaugural Global Fellow, Chankethya Chey (Cambodia)

This commitment from the Mellon Foundation builds upon two previous grant cycles (beginning in 2017) that have to date enabled support of thirty remarkable artists and changemakers from around the world across three cohorts. This vital funding will enable the support of a fourth cohort of ten Fellows whose Fellowship will span Fall 2024 to Spring 2026 (applications for this cohort are now live), by which time 40 remarkable artists will have been substantively supported over a decade.

According to Derek Goldman, The Lab's Artistic and Executive Director and co-Founder: “The Global Fellows are the inspiring life-blood at the core of The Lab's work to humanize global politics through performance. At a time when so many of these artists and changemakers are working in relative isolation, amidst the converging crises of wars, climate disaster, forced migration and authoritarianism, the Fellows Program has served as a lifeline for so many - a conduit to a global community of solidarity and shared vision. Most gratifying for us at The Lab is that the Fellows remain part of The Lab's global family of collaborators and are continuing to lead and embark on an array of vital collaborations and initiatives around the world.”

"I can't express enough how having the Lab during these difficult times has been a sense of hope for the future."

-2020-22 Global Fellow, Princess Mhlongo (South Africa), Award-winning Theater Director and Managing Director of African Entertainers

The Fellows program is the launching point for long-lasting projects and partnerships. Former Fellows have gone on to be recognized worldwide for their groundbreaking work in climate change, gender, environmental, social and political injustice, and more. They are directors, performers, playwrights,

producers, thought-leaders, educators, scholars, policymakers and human rights workers and they have founded and led schools, global festivals and innumerable groundbreaking initiatives that are at the heart of the field. Many of these projects began during and because of the fellowship, and have grown beyond the program.

“Nothing gives me greater hope for our shared future than the fact that in the face of trauma the world over, this group of people can come together and celebrate and love each other. The Lab is where I can do the vital work of envisioning and practicing the more just and creative world I want to live in.”

-Inaugural Global Fellow, Caitlin Nasema Cassidy (USA), Co-Artistic Director of LubDub Theatre Co., Artist-in-Residence at Georgetown University Earth Commons

Ambassador Cynthia Schneider, Co-founding Director of The Lab, observes “The most valuable asset that The Lab gives its Global Fellows is each other. Once they meet and get to know other Fellows, they become not just friends and collaborators, but family. And, not just for the Fellowship, but the long term. Each of the Fellows in their own way works outside of the box in their home environment. The Lab Fellowship gives them peers who understand, inspire, and challenge them.”

Applications to join the Fourth Cohort of Global Fellows (2024-2026), are now open.

The residency will run September 2024-May 2026, with an in-person intensive for one week between June 27-July 13, 2025 at LaMaMa Umbria, in Italy. The deadline to [apply](#) is May 10, 2024.

“This cross-cultural, professional network is important not just for the art, not just for The Lab, but for the sustainability of the human race.”

-2020-22 Global Fellow, Lloyd Nyikadzino, Director of the Zimbabwe Theatre Academy and Founding Artistic Director of Mitambo International Theatre Festival.

In 2023, Fellows from across cohorts connected with leading professionals from Africa and the diaspora in a [residency in Sénégal](#). The residency was hosted by École des Sables, where Wesley Ruzibiza, Lab Fellow '21-'23, is Co-Artistic Director.

This sustained support from the Mellon Foundation is a powerful demonstration of The Lab's and of the performing arts' vital role in cultivating a new generation of global artists who are equipped to challenge, inspire, and shape our world at a time it needs the most.

Previous Fellows include:

Faisal Abu Alhayjaa (Palestine), Jumana Al-Yasiri (Syria-France), Taiwo Afolabi (Nigeria), Reem Alsayyah (Syria-U.K.), Sonya Armaghanyan (Armenia), Adam Ashraf Elsayigh (Egypt-USA), Fidaa Ataya (Palestine), Karishma Bhagani (Kenya), Jasmin Cardenas (Colombia-USA), Caitlin Nasema Cassidy (USA), Chankethya Chey (Cambodia), Velani Dibba (USA), Afshan D'souza-Lodhi (U.K.), Abner Torres Delina Jr (The Philippines), Kiyo Gutiérrez (Mexico), Aganza Kisaka (Uganda), Héctor Flores Komatsu (Mexico-USA), Caroline Hatem (Lebanon), Asif Majid (USA), Ifrah Mansour (Somalia-U.S.A.), Princess Mhlongo (South Africa), Ada Mukhina (Russia), Tra Nguyen (Vietnam), Lloyd Nyikadzino (Zimbabwe), Nwabisa Plaatjie (South Africa), Devika Ranjan (USA), Sebastián Torres

(Venezuela-Mexico), Manuel Viveros (Colombia), Gideon Wabvuta (Zimbabwe), Ruzibiza Wesley (Rwanda).

About The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics:

Founded in 2012 as a joint initiative of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and Department of Performing Arts, The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics humanizes global politics through performance. With highly visible original productions, partnerships, and initiatives, The Lab cultivates a distinctive global community of collaborators that includes students, emerging and established artists, educators, policy leaders, and activists. Our work harnesses narrative, memory, and acts of witnessing with the aim of sparking transformation and change.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation:

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.

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