

## Eastern Market 'robot factory,' Cranbrook film studio among projects sharing \$2.5 million in Knight Arts Challenge awards



Photo by Courtesy of Knight Foundation Knight Arts Challenge winner Heritage Works perform at the awards ceremony Monday evening at the Fillmore Detroit.

Fifty-seven local art projects will share in \$2.5 million in Knight Arts Challenge Detroit grants from the Miami-based **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**. And thanks to its early success, the program will be renewed through 2018 with another \$9 million in grants.

The grants represent the third round of the three-year, \$9 million arts challenge, which funds the best ideas for engaging and enriching the city through the arts.

The response from Detroiters has exceeded expectations, the foundation, said, with 3,500 ideas submitted over the past three years and the 114 winners helping to bring high quality arts programs more deeply into the city's neighborhoods.

The 2015 Knight Arts Challenge Detroit winners were chosen from more than 1,000 submissions. They range from large-scale public art installations to bringing professional artists into classrooms, all "authentically Detroit" concepts, as Knight Foundation President Alberto Ibarguen characterized them in a release.

"Detroit's future is being driven by artists and creatives," added Victoria Rogers, the foundation's vice president for arts. "Over the past three years, the Knight Arts Challenge has helped to further fuel that momentum,

funding high-quality projects that reflect the city's hopes for tomorrow.”



A project to turn a writing center in Eastern Market into a pretend “robot factory” where students create stories to humanize the bots is among the projects being funded by the 2015 Knight Arts Challenge.

- **826 Michigan**, which plans to turn a writing center in **Eastern Market** into a pretend “robot factory” where students create stories to humanize the bots.
- A project to turn a Detroit apartment into an art installation and community space that embraces fire’s transformative qualities, with everything inside made of charred wood, steel, molten glass and black ceramics.
- A project to share the stories of recent Iraqi women refugees in Detroit by pairing them with Iraqi artists and writers to develop a series of photo essays about their lives.
- **Arab American National Museum** for an artist-in-residence program that engages the community and serves as an incubator for new works to increase the public’s understanding of Arab and Arab-American culture.
- A series of murals on Southwest Detroit’s commercial buildings that feature Mexican culture along with advertisements.
- **Cranbrook Art Museum** to launch a Detroit tour of “The Truth Booth,” a portable film studio in the shape of a speech bubble by Hank Willis Thomas and **The Cause Collective** that compiles responses to the statement “The truth is ...”
- Turning the abandoned childhood home of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Stephen Henderson into a space that promotes the literary arts via a resident fellow at nearby **Marygrove College**.
- Bringing together musicians at a storefront that sells instruments and accessories, offers repairs, and educates with private and free lessons on playing, do-it-yourself repairs and songwriting.
- The launch of a one-month residency for international and national visual artists who use metal as their primary medium.
- Yeti Publishing’s reissuance of several gospel albums produced in Detroit in the 1960s and ‘70s.

Many of this year’s winners will use Detroit as an urban stage, the foundation said. They will transform park trails in the city’s Brightmoor neighborhood into performance spaces, create outdoor puppet spectacles that tell the story of the surrounding neighborhood, make art more accessible with famous paintings recreated on former rooftop commercial signs and turn the side of **Cobo Center** into a display for digital art.

The **Hamtramck Free School** was chosen from among four small arts groups as the winner of the 2015 Knight Arts Challenge People’s Choice Award after a text-to-vote campaign.

It will receive \$20,000, in addition to its Knight Arts Challenge grant to fund the artistic project of its choice.