

# NEW YORK ARTS COUNCIL APPEALS AND AWARDS

What if you don't get a grant you think you deserve? In New York State, organizations that get turned down by the arts council (NYSCA) have the option of making an appeal. NYSCA maintains a special panel that meets five times each year to review disputed decisions on grants. Like other NYSCA panels it is composed largely of artists, administrators, and other peers who are actively involved in the fields they represent.

NYSCA's guidelines clearly state that "dissatisfaction with the denial of an award or with the amount of award is not sufficient reason for an appeal." However, appeals are considered on the following grounds: information given to NYSCA was not provided to the panel or committee making decisions, the information was misrepresented, or NYSCA acted improperly, or "its discretionary authority . . . was arbitrary and capricious."

In NYSCA's media program two appeals have recently been argued and won by applicants. In both cases the grants had initially been approved by peer panels. Yet, they were rejected when sent for approval to the Communication Arts committee—a group composed of NYSCA council members Kitty Carlisle Hart, Robert Towbin, Elisabeth Chapin, Hugh Downe, Peter Duchin, Lee Guber, Edward Kresky, Samuel Lindenbaum, Armond Magnarelli, Arthur Mitchell, and Andrew Wolfe. This committee of political appointees checks all grants recommended by NYSCA's film, literature, and media programs.

The Experimental TV Center in Owego had asked for money for the production of Gary Hill's videotape *The Writing's on the Wall*. After rejection by the Communication Arts committee, the appeals committee (David Bailey, Pablo Figueroa, Ming Cho Lee, Ann-Ellen Lesser, Joan Lyons, Bessie Schonberg, Norman Singer, and Breffny

Walsh) examined the application. According to NYSCA media program director John Giancola, the materials were sent back to the Communication Arts committee for closer scrutiny, e.g., the committee screened Hill's entire tape instead of an excerpt. After that the committee reversed its previous decision.

The committee also held up a proposal from the Raindance Foundation to produce a pilot program for a cable series of artists' videotapes. According to Giancola, in this case the reasons involved the problem of a non-profit organization making a profit. The Raindance pilot was to generate income for the production of future programs. However, the Communication Arts committee feared that if profits were made they might be distributed outside the Raindance organization. At the committee meeting NYSCA staff could not confirm that Raindance intended to hold all the profits, and the grant was rejected. The appeals panel received assurance from Raindance that the project's income would not be shared with others, such as artists or co-distributors. This convinced the Communication Arts committee to make a \$20,000 award—\$6,000 less than originally recommended by the NYSCA fiscal staff and the media panel. Ira Schneider, a coordinator for the Raindance project, said that although the foundation was grateful for the NYSCA support, the reduced size of the grant and the full year it took to resolve the matter made execution of the program difficult. Schneider added that Raindance had requested funding to continue the project for another year, but that application was turned down.

That these two actions taken by the Communication Arts committee were reversed is good news, but that the projects were held up is not. Such interference with the peer review system throws all awards and rejections into question. Unfortunately, such occurrences are likely to continue. They are the unavoidable consequence of NYSCA's organizational structure which subordinates the authority of a body of active arts professionals that reviews all applications to that of a group of dignitaries that sees only a few.

**COVER:** Shirley Clarke filming *Bullfight* (1955). Courtesy Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research. See "Choreography of Cinema: An Interview with Shirley Clarke," by Lauren Rabinovitz, page 8.

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## NYSCA, con't

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This year the media program has awarded 37 grants totaling \$288,189 to organizations sponsoring video and audio productions. Selections were made from a pool of 301 applications. Last year 34 projects were awarded a total of \$293,247 and selected from 167 requests. The panel making the selections listed below was composed of Ed Bowes (videomaker), Lynn Corcoran (videomaker), Ayoka Chenzira (director, Black Filmmaker Foundation), John Driscoll (audio artist), Robert Kanter (videomaker), Lillian Katz (director of media services, Port Washington Public Library), Shigeko Kubota (video artist and curator), Nathan Lyons (director, Visual Studies Workshop), Sherry Miller (co-director, Experimental Television Center), Karen Ranucci (assistant director, Downtown Community Television), and Edin Velez (videomaker).

The following organizations, projects, and artists received support:

Alternative Media Information, *Paper Tiger*, by Dee Dee Halleck (\$8,000); An Claidhaemh Soluis/Irish Arts Center, *Hay Foot, Straw Foot*, by Deborah Green (\$2,500); Black Filmmaker Foundation, *Black-Black*, by Warrington Hudlin (\$12,000); Black Maria, *the Erlking*, by Grahame Weinbren (\$10,000); Center for New Art Activities, *Cast Iron TV*, (\$5,000); Collaborative Projects, *Potato Wolf*, (\$3,500); Committee for Visual Arts, Michael Smith (\$10,000); Earthscore Foundation, *Monitoring the Manhattan Estuary*, by Paul Ryan (\$9,000); Electronic Arts Intermix, *Good Morning Mr. Orwell*, by Nam June Paik (\$11,000); En Foco, *The River Runs Deep*, by Carlos de Jesus (\$5,000); Experimental Intermedia Foundation, *New Music Radio*, by Phil Niblock (\$7,500); Experimental Television Center, *The Writing's on the Wall*, by Gary Hill (\$10,000); Experimental Television Center, *Video/photo Process*, by Peer Bode (\$5,000); Frederick Douglas Creative Arts Center, *Black Roots Festival XII Video Project*, (\$9,970); Greenburgh Community Video, *Artists of Greenburgh*, by Joel Banow (\$1,500); Hallwalls, *Mythical and Ironic*

*Songs and Stories*, by Michael Auder (\$10,000); Institute for Art and Urban Resources, *Projector/Act*, by Al Robbins (\$15,000); Intentional Acts, *The Victim of New York*, by Traci Sampson (\$4,500); Latin American Music in Alternative Spaces, *Latin Americans in Baseball*, by Gustavo Paredes (\$12,000); Media Study/Bufalo, *Artdisc*, by Mitchell Kreigman (\$10,000); New Radio and Performing Arts, *Like the Free Spirits of Birds*, by Helen Thorington (\$4,000); New York Foundation for the Arts, *Borneo Playback*, by Carol Creeger (\$10,000); Parabola Arts Foundation, *Cymbal*, by Liz Phillips (\$20,000); Performing Artservices, *Ireland Now*, by Kit Fitzgerald (\$10,000); Port Washington Public Library, *The Gold Coast*, by Mary Lucier (\$18,000);

Portable Channel, *Exploring Iroquois Culture Through its Music*, by Frank Semmens (\$6,700); Queens Council on the Arts, *Encounter in Black Traditions*, by Samuel Lee (\$5,000); Radio Foundation, *Crime of Silence*, by Janice Ball (\$8,000); Rouletter Extra-Media Resources, *Roulette Broadcast Series*, by David Weinstein (\$7,250); Trisha Brown Foundation, *Cutback*, by Trisha Brown (\$4,000); Visual Studies Workshop, *Social Studies*, by Lyn Blumenthal (\$5,000); Visual Studies Workshop, *Genesee Valley Video Theater*, by Nancy Norwood (\$2,000); Womens Interart Center, *Women Are Talking*, by Constance DeJong (\$7,000); Women Make Movies, *Just Because of Who We Are*, by Lydia Pilcher (\$5,000); WSLU-FM, *Native American Voices*, by Louis Kanawaienton Cook (\$1,170); WSLU-FM, *The Magic Carpet*, by Joshua Sacco (\$1,599); ZBS Foundation, *The Cutting Edge*, by Thomas Lopez (\$12,000).

An additional media program award, which we neglected to include in last month's list of video writing grants, was made to Shelley Rice. She received \$1,500 for a project sponsored by Franklin Furnace Archive.

Through its visual arts program NYSCA has made 22 awards totaling \$195,244—a \$100,000 increase over 1982-83. Applications rose to 218 in 1983-84 from 126 last year, when visual arts funded 18 projects. The increased funding is attributable in part to a change in NYSCA's visual arts guidelines allowing artists to apply for up to \$10,000 this year as opposed to \$6,000 in

1982-83. This year's visual arts panel was composed of Tony Bechara (artist); Cee Scott Brown (director, Holly Solomon Gallery); Linda Goode Bryant (director, Just Above Midtown/Downtown); Syliva De Swan (director, Sculpture Space); Eric Egas (artist); Alan Kikuchi-Yngojo (artist); Graham Marks (artist and teacher), Roy Nicholson (artist and teacher); Christy Rupp (artist); Douglas Schultz (chief curator, Albright-Knox Gallery); and Shari Urquhart (artist).

The organizations, projects, and artists to receive support are:

Art Awareness, *Repeat After Me*, by Eric Egas (\$7,695); Brooklyn Botanic Garden, *Arborway*, by Hera (\$10,000); Catskill Center for Photography, *Wall Street*, by Charles Gatewood (\$6,273); Cityarts Workshop, *Blindseries*, by Suzen (\$9,975); Creative Time, *Rubble Construction Co.*, by Mark Blane (\$1,000); Exit Art, *Santa Comida/Holly Food*, by Antoni Miralda (\$10,500); Exit Art, *Idle-Idol: Beauty's Only Screen Deep*, by John Fekner (\$8,815); Franklin Furnace Archive, *How to Photograph*, by Michael Smith and William Wegman (\$10,000); Franklin Furnace Archive, *Swallows*, by Paul Zelevansky (\$10,000); Franklin Furnace Archive, *Survival Skills*, by John Malpede (\$9,870); Hallwalls, *Images on Bus Shelters*, by Biff Henrich (\$8,610); Hallwalls, *Indoor Public Sculptures*, by Ellen Steinfeld (\$9,975); Horne' Area Arts Council *Large works in terra-cotta*, by Tom Spleth (\$10,227); Just Above Midtown/Downtown, *Paths of Glory*, by Francesc Torres (\$10,500); Just Above Midtown/Downtown, *Visual/Light/Dance performance*, by Mel Wong and Kathy Billian (\$10,500); Lake George Regional Arts Project, *Adirondack Guide Memorial*, by Brower Hatcher (\$9,555); Light Work Visual Studies, *Adirondack Panorama*, by Christian Sunde (\$10,000); Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, *Trick or Drink*, by Vanalyne Green (\$6,750); Medicine Show Theater Ensemble, *Sound Sculpture*, by William Helleman (\$8,190); Organization for Independent Artists, *Gates*, by Brit Bunkley (\$6,621); Visual Studies Workshop, *French Fries*, by Warren Lehrer (\$10,188); White Columns, *Billboards*, by Nancy Dwyer (\$10,000).

NYSCA's film program has announced \$265,000 in grants for 20 film productions.

The awards represent a \$30,000 increase over 1982-83 levels of support. The panel reviewing the 220 applications this year was comprised of Bruce Jenkins (programmer, Media Study/Bufalo); Lillian Jimenez (executive director, Latino Film and Video Center); Joanne Koch (executive director, Film Society of Lincoln Center); David Liu (filmmaker); Christine McDonald (director, Crandall Library); Yvonne Rainer (filmmaker and choreographer); Pedro A. Rivera (filmmaker); Lawrence Sapadin (executive director, Foundation for Independent Video and Film); Jacqueline Shearer (filmmaker); Charlotte Sky (co-director, New Community Cinema); and Irwin Young (director, DuArt Film Laboratories).

The organizations, projects, and filmmakers to receive support are:

Alternative Media Information Project, *Plena Is Work, Plena Is Song*, by Pedro Rivera (\$15,000); Asian Cine-Vision, *This Generation*, by Calvin Wong (\$6,000); Camera News, *Chinese Restaurant Workers*, by Yuet-Fung Ho (\$10,000); Collective for Living Cinema, *Brothel*, by Lizzie Borden (\$25,000); Diva, *The Rise and Fall of the Borscht Belt*, by Peter Davis (\$13,000); Film Fund, *Cocolos and Roqueros*, by Ana Maria Garcia (\$8,000); Film Fund, *Take Back the Night*, by Meri Weingarten (\$10,000); Film News Now Foundation, *Overseas Chinese*, by Lisa Hsia (\$12,000); Film News Now Foundation, *A Question of Color*, by Kathe Sandler (\$16,000); Living Archives, *Far From Poland*, by Jill Godmilow (\$20,000); Media Study, "R", by Hollis Frampton (\$12,000); Now & Then Productions, *Dominos and Democracy*, by Jose Ponce and Doug Eisenstark (\$15,000); Pandora Educational Film Center, *Anzia Yezerska*, by Bonnie Freidman (\$7,000); Portable Channel, *How the Frog's Eye Sees*, by Skip Battaglia (\$10,000); Queens Council on the Arts, *Deep Play*, by Paul Wagner (\$5,000); Spiderwoman Theatre, *Spiderwoman*, by Bob Rosen (\$15,000); Theatre for the Forgotten, *Mexican Footage*, by Roberta Cantow (\$15,000); Upstate Films, *Current Events*, by Ralf Artyck (\$16,000); Video Repertorie, *Travelling Light*, by Jane Aaron (\$15,000); Woman's Interart Center, *Nausea*, by Ann Flournoy (\$20,000).

—David Trend