



23 MACARTHUR FELLOWS ANNOUNCED

One call out of the blue – \$500,000 – No strings

CHICAGO, October 2, 2012 – The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation today named 23 new MacArthur Fellows for 2012. Working across a broad spectrum of endeavors, the Fellows include a pediatric neurosurgeon, a marine ecologist, a journalist, a photographer, an optical physicist and astronomer, a stringed-instrument bow maker, a geochemist, a fiction writer, and an arts entrepreneur. All were selected for their creativity, originality, and potential to make important contributions in the future.

The recipients learned, through a phone call out of the blue from the Foundation, that they will each receive \$500,000 in no-strings-attached support over the next five years. MacArthur Fellowships come without stipulations or reporting requirements and offer Fellows unprecedented freedom and opportunity to reflect, create, and explore. The unusual level of independence afforded to Fellows underscores the spirit of freedom intrinsic to creative endeavors. The work of MacArthur Fellows knows neither boundaries nor the constraints of age, place, and endeavor.

“These extraordinary individuals demonstrate the power of creativity,” said MacArthur President Robert Gallucci. “The MacArthur Fellowship is not only a recognition of their impressive past accomplishments but also, more importantly, an investment in their potential for the future. We believe in their creative instincts and hope the freedom the Fellowship provides will enable them to pursue unfettered their insights and ideas for the benefit of the world.”

Among the recipients this year are –

- a **pediatric neurosurgeon** revolutionizing treatment of hydrocephalus and other intracranial diseases in very young children and advancing standards of and access to health care in both the developed and poorest regions of the world (Benjamin Warf);
- a **journalist** pushing beyond the constraints and conventions of traditional news writing to craft sustained narratives that heighten the reality of military service and sacrifice in the public consciousness (David Finkel);
- a **geochemist** probing the usually invisible but remarkably powerful thermal and chemical forces deep below the Earth’s crust that drive the motion of tectonic plate collisions (Terry Plank);
- a **photographer** approaching the subjects of war and landscape from new perspectives to create images that blur the boundaries between fact and fiction and are rich with layers of meaning (An-My Lê);
- an **optical physicist and astronomer** designing telescopes and other astronomical instrumentation that play a critical role in the search for Earth-like planets outside our solar system (Olivier Guyon);

- a **stringed-instrument bow maker** experimenting with new designs and materials to create violin bows that rival the quality of prized nineteenth-century bows and meet the artistic demands of today's musicians (Benoît Rolland);
- a **fiction writer** using vernacular dialogue and spare, unsentimental prose to draw readers into the various and distinct worlds that immigrants must straddle (Junot Díaz);
- a **marine ecologist** documenting the environmental and economic consequences of hypoxic zones in the Gulf of Mexico and informing strategies for restoring the degraded waters of the Gulf and the Mississippi River basin (Nancy Rabalais); and
- an **arts entrepreneur** forging a new model for the commissioning, recording, and live performance of contemporary music (Claire Chase).

Biographical information, video interviews, and downloadable photos are online at www.macfound.org/fellows.

[The selection process](#) begins with formal nominations. Hundreds of anonymous nominators assist the Foundation in identifying people to be considered for a MacArthur Fellowship. Nominations are accepted only from invited nominators, a list that is constantly renewed throughout the year. They are chosen from many fields and challenged to identify people who demonstrate exceptional creativity and promise. A Selection Committee of roughly a dozen members, who also serve anonymously, meets regularly to review files, narrow the list, and make final recommendations to the Foundation's Board of Directors. The number of Fellows selected each year is not fixed; typically, it varies between 20 and 25.

Including this year's Fellows, 873 people, ranging in age from 18 to 82 at the time of their selection, have been named MacArthur Fellows since the inaugural class in 1981.

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The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society. More information is at www.macfound.org.

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