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**\$1 Million Knight Foundation Gift Supports  
United States Artists (USA) Fellowship Program**

***18 Artists Across the Nation to Receive USA Knight Fellowship Awards Of  
\$50,000 Each For Unrestricted Use***

MIAMI (December 7, 2009) – Eighteen artists from across the country will receive \$50,000 grants for unrestricted use, as part of a prestigious arts fellowship. The support comes thanks to a \$1 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to “United States Artists,” the national grant-making and advocacy organization.

The USA Knight Fellowships will be awarded in the coming years to artists working in communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. In addition, USA Knight Fellows will receive an additional \$5,000 to engage local residents by conducting workshops, talks or other events.

“Whether in Miami or Macon, San Jose or St. Paul, the USA Knight Fellowships will highlight the importance of the arts in our society, and the great financial needs of the artists who enrich our communities while earning a living from their artistic practices,” said Dennis Scholl, a program director for Knight Foundation.

Since 1959, Knight Foundation has invested more than \$720 million in the communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Knight Foundation focuses on projects that promote informed and engaged communities. To that end, in Miami, the foundation launched the Knight Arts Challenge, a five-year, \$40 million initiative to bring the South Florida’s diverse community together through the arts. The challenge includes endowment grants to leading arts institutions and a community-wide contest to fund the best ideas for the arts. More at [KnightArts.org](http://KnightArts.org).

Each year, United States Artists conducts a rigorous national selection process and awards 50 fellowships to artists from all disciplines in recognition of the caliber and impact of their work.

The winners of all 50 USA Fellowships for 2009, including two USA Knight Fellows, will be announced at a celebration in Los Angeles on Dec. 14 and will be broadcast live on [www.unitedstatesartists.org](http://www.unitedstatesartists.org).

The five-year grant from Knight will support artists who live and work in the 26 cities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers including: Aberdeen, S.D.; Akron, Ohio; Biloxi, Miss.; Boulder, Colo.; Bradenton, Fla.; Charlotte, N.C.; Columbia, S.C.; Columbus, Ga.; Detroit, Mich.; Duluth, Minn.; Fort Wayne, Ind.; Gary, Ind.; Grand Forks, N.D.; Lexington, Ky.; Long Beach, Calif.; Macon, Ga.; Miami, Fla.; Milledgeville, Ga.; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Palm Beach, Fla.; Philadelphia, Pa.; San Jose, Calif.; St. Paul, Minn.; State College, Pa.; Tallahassee, Fla.; and, Wichita, Kan.

“Artists give voice to our country’s limitless creative potential and they strengthen communities nationwide,” said USA Executive Director Katharine DeShaw. “United States Artists is thrilled to partner with the Knight Foundation to invest in working artists and encourage their creative contributions in Knight communities for years to come. In this difficult economic climate, USA is especially grateful to the Knight Foundation for its vision and generosity in supporting the arts.”

### **About United States Artists**

The founding of the Los Angeles-based United States Artists in 2005 was prompted by the Urban Institute’s study, *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structures for U.S. Artists*, which found that while 96% of Americans appreciate the arts, only 27% believe that artists contribute to the good of society. A recent study conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts discovered that American artists were unemployed at twice the rate of all professionals in 2008. This rate would be even higher if not for the sheer number of artists leaving the workforce and therefore not counted.

The Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Prudential Foundation, and Rasmuson Foundation contributed a total of \$22 million to establish USA as a structure through which private philanthropists, corporate donors, and other foundations can support individual artists. Due to seed funding from its founders, 100% of current donor contributions directly support artists. In addition to contributions provided by Eli and Edythe Broad, USA donors include Michael Bloomberg, Ella Fontanals-Cisneros, Shawn M. Donnelley, Agnes Gund, Target, and the Wynn Family Foundation, among others.

### **About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation advances journalism in the digital age and invests in the vitality of communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Knight Foundation focuses on projects that promote community engagement and lead to transformational change. For more, visit [www.knightfoundation.org](http://www.knightfoundation.org).