



THE WESTMORELAND MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

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10 Artists Chosen for The Westmoreland Diversity Coalition's Diversity Billboard Campaign

*The Coalition's public art billboard project featuring 10 artists'
new works of art will launch in fall 2020*

GREENSBURG, Pennsylvania (August 12, 2020) – The Westmoreland Diversity Coalition and The Westmoreland Museum of American Art are excited to announce the 10 artists that have been selected for the Diversity Billboard Art Project: Edith Abeyta, Dorion Barill, Tina Williams Brewer, Alejandro Fiez, Fran Flaherty, Shane Pilster, Amun Ray, Susanne Slavick, Ginger Brooks Takahashi, and Alisha B. Wormsley.

The Diversity Billboard Art Project is a public art campaign that will display 10 new works of art, curated by The Westmoreland Museum of American Art and informed by an advisory team of community members, on billboards around Westmoreland County. Each artist is commissioned to create an original artwork, inspired by the theme "Make Our Differences Our Strengths," that visually conveys how diversity and inclusion can make Westmoreland County communities stronger.

Due to their artistic excellence and compelling proposals, these 10 artists were chosen by a selection committee - comprised of representatives from the Westmoreland Diversity Coalition board, The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, and Westmoreland County community - from a pool of over 50 applicants.

"The Coalition was thrilled that over 50 artists applied," commented Carlotta Paige, Founder of the Coalition and Board of Trustees Co-Chair/Secretary. "It made it difficult, however, for the selection committee to choose as they were all so worthy of consideration."

The artworks will be installed on specific billboards along Route 22, Route 30, Route 31, Route 51, Route 56, Route 119, Route 217, and I-76, starting in October and be on view at each location for 12 to 24 weeks.

To allow the public to experience all 10 artworks at once and more deeply engage with and reflect upon the overall message, the Coalition plans to host additional exhibitions featuring the artists' works in the Greensburg, Jeannette, Murrysville and New Kensington areas. These exhibitions will be contingent on pending health and safety protocols. The first exhibition of the 10 artworks is planned to be at The Westmoreland Museum of American Art starting on October 16.

"We want as many people as possible to see the exhibit, so following the exhibition at the museum, it will travel to strategically located places throughout the county. Some of the places will be educational institutions, while others may be small, independent art galleries. If our physical options are limited, we will introduce virtual programming," said Sheila Cuellar-Shaffer, Lead Artist for the project.

"The 10 artists chosen had the strongest, most captivating proposals," noted Anne Kraybill, Director/CEO of the Museum. "Each artist works with differing mediums, from textiles and oil paints to video and digital illustration, and their works of art promise to be powerful, provocative, and ultimately, creating a positive impact in Westmoreland County. We are excited to see their finished pieces and share them with our community at the Museum,"

The Diversity Billboard Art Project was made possible through a recent grant award of \$150,000 from the Heinz Endowments Just Arts program to the Westmoreland Diversity Coalition. The Heinz Endowments Just Arts Program is an initiative that supports artists, organizations and communities who harness the power of the arts to respond to social issues affecting the Pittsburgh region and beyond. Founder of the Coalition and board of trustees' co-chair/secretary Carlotta Paige conceived the project and developed the grant proposal with fellow board of trustees' member Sheila Cuellar-Shaffer.

About The Artists

Edith Abeyta is a visual artist living in North Braddock, Pennsylvania. Her current practice is centered around people, identity and negotiating relationships with the built environment, which manifests as temporary installations, sculptures and experiential life events. Abeyta has been working as an artist in residence with the Office of Public Art at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Hazelwood since June 2014. Her work with Hazelwood residents resulted in a multi-year project, Arts Excursions Unlimited, a free monthly arts excursions program, an art studio, and temporary public art.

<http://www.artsexcursionsunlimited.com> Facebook: [@artexcursionsunlimited](#)

Draftsman and filmmaker, **Dorion Barill** produces site-specific work by mining dream imagery and local history. Orbiting conditions of fear and irrationality, his artwork presents utopian visions on the threshold of consciousness. He's been awarded residencies in Rome and Cappadocia, with an exhibition record that includes the Palace of Saint Michael and Saint George in Corfu, Greece; the Three Rivers Arts Festival Juried Exhibition in Pittsburgh; and the Castello Colonna in Genazzano, Italy. He was a recipient of The Pittsburgh Foundation's 2013 Investing In Professional Artists Grant.

<https://www.dorionbarill.com/> Facebook: [@dorianbarill.studio](#) Instagram: [@dorian_barill](#)

Internationally renowned fiber artist **Tina Williams Brewer** is known for her artistic exploration of African American history and culture and the personal experiences associated with it. Using symbolism, textile, and fabrics, she creates story quilts that are motivated by issues focusing on family, women and children, and the spirituality of the culture. She is the recipient of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Awards for the Arts, Artist of the Year, 2018.

<https://tinawilliamsbrewer.wordpress.com/> Instagram: [@tinabrewerdesigns](#)

Alejandro Fiez was born in a city called Ambato, located in a valley near The Andes mountain range in Ecuador. He studied Graphic Design at the Universidad Catolica del Ecuador and attended art school at the Nueva Escuela de Diseno y Comunicacion in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He won the National Painting Prize Luis A. Martinez when he returned to Ecuador. After making installations in public spaces in Ambato-Ecuador, he traveled to Pittsburgh and exhibited his work in group and solo exhibitions, including the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh's 2019 Annual Exhibition.

www.alejandrofiez.wordpress.com Instagram: [@alejandrofiez](https://www.instagram.com/alejandrofiez)

Fran Flaherty is a deaf artist living in Pittsburgh for over 25 years. As a first generation immigrant from the Philippines, her work is centered in issues surrounding migrant family relations and assimilation, maternal feminism, disability aesthetics, and social work. Her work is inspired by the care paradigm. It is the prospect of this harmony that inspired her to create *Anthropology of Motherhood*, an ongoing project which highlights artworks that engage in the complex visual, material, emotional, corporeal, and lived experiences of motherhood, caregiving, parenting, nurturing, and maternal labor.

<https://franflaherty.com/> Facebook: [@FranLedonioFlaherty](https://www.facebook.com/FranLedonioFlaherty) Instagram: [@fcflaherty](https://www.instagram.com/fcflaherty)

Originally from the San Francisco Bay area, **Shane Pilster** has called Pittsburgh his home since 2004 and is a pioneer in bringing awareness and shining a spotlight on urban art and its artistry. Working with Rivers of Steel since 2012, he created its Urban Art Tour and interactive workshop curriculum to showcase the postindustrial history of Carrie Furnaces. In addition to organizing and curating the legal painting areas of this National Historic Landmark, he has organized art components and live demonstrations at events such as Homestead First Fridays, Thrival Festival, and the Three Rivers Arts Festival.

<https://www.dowhatwelope.com> Facebook: [@paintforhire](https://www.facebook.com/paintforhire) Instagram: [@outafterdark](https://www.instagram.com/outafterdark)

Amun Ray is a young black multi-platform artist with a strong focus on visual arts. He was raised within the arts and from a young age he was either painting a picture, writing a story or poem, or on stage performing. For Amun Ray, the arts have always been therapeutic, helping him make sense of the surrounding world. His talents have led to one of the greatest accomplishments of his life, designing a community park in Wilkinsburg. He is also a creative consultant/artist for 1hood Media, and teaching artist at Boom Concepts.

<https://www.amunray.com/> Facebook: [@artbyamunray](https://www.facebook.com/artbyamunray) Instagram: [@amun_ray7](https://www.instagram.com/amun_ray7)

Susanne Slavick is an artist, curator and the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University. Her traveling curatorial projects include *When the Bough Breaks* (2019); *Marx@200* (2018); *Unloaded* (2015-19); and *Out of Rubble* (2011-15). Slavick has exhibited internationally, most recently at University of Virginia, Gettysburg College, McDonough Museum of Art, Chicago Cultural Center, and Accola Griefen Gallery (NYC). Her work has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts and through four awards from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

<https://www.susanneslavick.com/> Facebook: [@SusanneSlavick](https://www.facebook.com/SusanneSlavick)

Ginger Brooks Takahashi is co-founder of queer and feminist journal *LTTR*; project *MOBILIVRE BOOKMOBILE* project; the touring musical act *MEN*; and *General Sisters*. She has presented work at the Oakland Museum of California, 2019; Jewish Museum, 2016; Tensta Konsthall, 2015; Brooklyn Museum, 2013; Museo Tamayo, 2010; New Museum, 2009; and Serpentine Gallery, 2008. She is currently developing a public art piece with Nine Mile Run Watershed Association and Center for Civic Arts in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania.

Instagram: [@brookstakahashi](https://www.instagram.com/brookstakahashi)

Pittsburgh-based interdisciplinary artist and cultural producer **Alisha B. Wormsley** creates work that is about collective memory and the synchronicity of time, specifically through the stories of women of color. She has received numerous awards and grants to support her programs: *The People Are The Light, afronaut(a)* film and performance series, Homewood Artist Residency (recipient of the mayor's public art award) *the Children of NAN* video art series, and *There Are Black People in the Future*. Her work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally.

<https://alishabwormsley.com/> Instagram: [@alishabwormsley](#) [@sibylsshine](#)

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About Heinz Endowments Just Arts Program

The Just Arts initiative was created over an 18-month period with input from an advisory panel consisting of nearly two dozen community leaders with strong connections to the regional art community. In addition to providing a platform for critical discourse and fostering community/artist partnerships, Just Arts projects will include the application of rigorous aesthetic standards and attention to cultural integrity.

About the Westmoreland Diversity Coalition

The Coalition is a community based nonprofit membership organization that is poised to bring people together to promote diversity from all walks of life, generate greater understanding and acceptance, and to help create through advocacy and education an atmosphere in Westmoreland County where all people feel welcome. The Coalition is working to build a cohesive foundation and network of residents and organizations in Westmoreland County to raise public awareness and work collectively to effect broad-based social change.

About The Westmoreland Museum of American Art

Western Pennsylvania's only museum dedicated to American art, in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, is a place to share meaningful cultural experiences that open the door to new ideas, perspectives and possibilities. The Westmoreland's extraordinary permanent collection, with its strong focus on the art and artists of southwestern Pennsylvania, is complemented by an impressive schedule of temporary exhibitions— both nationally traveling exhibitions and those organized by the Museum—as well as community-oriented programming and special events.