



**INAUGURAL DIGITAL ARTS WRITING AWARDS RECIPIENTS
ANNOUNCED BY THE CARL & MARILYNN THOMA ART FOUNDATION**

Santa Fe, NM / Chicago, IL (April 21, 2015) – The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation announces today the recipients and the selection committee for its inaugural Arts Writing Fellowship Awards in the digital arts. The fellowships are no-strings-attached, merit-based awards recognizing the achievements of both an established and an emerging arts writer who have contributed significantly to the field of writing in the digital arts. The awards are the first of their kind to target the importance of writing that directly advances the scholarship, criticism and theory of the digital arts and evolving technologies within contemporary art.

Jon Ippolito received the \$30,000 award for an established arts writer in the U.S. who has made significant contributions to writing in the digital arts. Jon Ippolito is Professor of New Media and Director of the Digital Curation program at the University of Maine, and from 1991-2006, was Associate Curator of Media Arts at the Guggenheim Museum. His current projects—including the Variable Media Network, ThoughtMesh and his co-authored books *At the Edge of Art* and *Re-collection*—aim to expand the art world beyond its traditional preoccupations.

The selection committee emphasized that Jon Ippolito has made a life-long commitment to the field of digital art, bridging the gap between academic and community-oriented forms of publication including diverse formats in the practice of writing. Ippolito’s championship of the work of digital artists, as well as his specific contributions over many years to the field of digital cultural heritage and media preservation, were factors in their decision. The relevance of Ippolito’s texts affects not only media art but calls attention to the challenges that digital culture makes of heritage institutions in a fundamental way.

Joanne McNeil received the \$15,000 award for an emerging arts writer in the U.S. who demonstrates great potential in writing in the digital arts. Joanne McNeil is a New York based writer who was both a resident at Eyebeam in 2014 and a 2012 USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism fellow. Her writing has appeared in *Frieze*, *Dissent* and *Domus*. She contributed to books published by *Space Caviar*, *AND/ The Piracy Project* and forthcoming books from the Walker Art Center and New Documents.

The selection committee was impressed by Joanne McNeil’s contribution to contemporary media art, which already manifests a very promising and unique voice in art and technology. They found her writing to be particularly beautiful and expressive of her deep interests in surveillance and algorithmic culture.

Ippolito and McNeil were selected from a pool of twenty-one nominations solicited from fifteen prominent curators, writers and educators across the United States.

The selection committee that reviewed the nominee applications was comprised of three well-respected arts professionals with extensive knowledge of digital arts writing. This year’s selection committee included **Michael Connor**, Artistic Director of **Rhizome**; **Rudolf Frieling**, Curator of Media Arts at

SFMOMA; and **Christiane Paul**, Associate Professor, School of Media Studies at **The New School** and Adjunct Curator of New Media Arts at the **Whitney Museum of American Art**.

Carl Thoma, co-founder of the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation, said, “We are thrilled with the selection committee’s decisions. Jon Ippolito and Joanne McNeil embody the mission of the awards, which is to advance the scholarship and broaden awareness of the field of digital arts. We chose to focus on writers in the United States where there is a strong need to support this field.”

The Thoma Foundation is committed to sustaining the program over a three-year pilot phase, and potentially beyond. The Foundation has expressed the strong belief that arts writing plays an important role in securing the unique place of digital art in art history and in providing crucial commentary on current culture and daily life.

ABOUT THE CARL & MARILYNN THOMA ART FOUNDATION

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation was established in 1986 to fulfill the Thomas’ broad commitment to philanthropy. In 2014, the Thomas went on to found the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation to distinguish their initiatives in, and support of, visual art.

The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation recognizes the power of the arts to challenge and shift perceptions, spark creativity and connect people across cultures. The Foundation lends and exhibits artworks from the collection and supports innovative individuals and pivotal initiatives in the arts. The Foundation’s collection spans three broad fields: Modern & Contemporary (including a digital arts collection), Spanish Colonial and Japanese Bamboo.

For more information, visit www.thomafoundation.org

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