FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Announces 2016 SMFA Traveling Fellows

(August 24, 2015) BOSTON, MA—Through out our long and distinguished history, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), has been fortunate to be the beneficiary of donations and gifts designed to support student work. None has been as important or as enduring as the Traveling Fellowships, which were created in 1894 to encourage post-graduate work and travel. While the selection criteria have changed through the years, the awards have consistently provided support to launch individual careers through independent work, travel, and exhibition opportunities.

Earlier this summer, a jury comprised of Bree Edwards, Director of the Northeastern Center for the Arts; Arnold Kemp, artist and SMFA alumnus; and Jeffrey Lee, co-founder of the Ryan Lee gallery in New York, awarded 10 fellowships from a pool of 190 alumni applicants.

**Erik Benjamins** (MFA 2012)
Benjamins works across the visual, performing, and culinary art communities to explore how our comforts and expectations shift as we move between home and away places. He will travel to Chengdu, China to respond to the city’s renowned Sichuan cuisine and culture. Experiencing the euphorias and antagonisms of eating this cuisine will deepen his ongoing focus on the personal and collective powers of cooking and eating.

**Stephen St. Francis Decky** (Diploma 2011, MFA 2013)
Decky’s paintings and films are inspired by lush mythologies and cultures of far-flung island kingdoms. He will travel to Mo’orea and the Windward Islands of French Polynesia, which has been a dream for nearly half his lifetime. His extended visit will allow him to create a series of new paintings and multimedia works directly informed and inspired by their landscapes, languages, and people.

**Coorain Devin** (Combined Degree 2013)
Devin’s “Coloring Coorain” television broadcast creates zany, dreamlike spaces with green screen technology to broach difficult or taboo subject matter with humor and criticism. He will travel to series of actual spaces that embody this campy sensibility: novelty hotels and roadside attractions such as the Rainbow Motel in Chicago and the World’s Largest Ball of Paint in Indiana. Delving into real life exploration of an aesthetic he has created digitally will bring fresh perspective to his work.

**Corey Dunlap** (BFA 2013)
Dunlap’s work draws from the materials and techniques of corporeal object making, their function, and how they are designed to interact with the body. He will visit Reykjavik, Iceland—the epicenter of strength-based competitions such as Spartan Race and Strong Man Competition—to document races and achieve a greater understanding of the athletes’ discipline and motivation.

**Ryan Hawk** (BFA 2013)
Hawk’s work explores corporeality and embodiment in relation to modern power structures. He will travel to Pitch Lake in La Brea, Trinidad which is the world’s largest natural asphalt deposit. Hawk will collaborate with local community members to safely study and experiment with the asphalt and produce new video and performance work that outlines connections to this material’s multiple functions and the effects of its industrialization.
Maia Lynch (MFA 2013)
Lynch’s paintings are informed by histories of geography, migration, sacrifice, and survival. She will attend an artist residency on the islands of Shikoku and Kyushu to study Nihonga style painting and Ukiyo-e wood block prints and paintings. Her time abroad studying illustration and textile traditions will help broaden her skillset for putting pigment on paper.

Laura Beth Reese (MFA 2013)
Reese uses photography as a catalyst for intimacy. After years of piecing together a family history from internet research, she will travel to and live in Roland, Iowa, where her biological parents reside. She will photograph the town, residents, and ultimately her biological family, and explore the person she might have been if she had not been given up for adoption.

Daniel Rich (MFA 2004)
Rich translates photographs into paintings that call attention to implicit political and social narratives associated with built environments. He will visit three Chinese cities—Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and Guangzhou—and continue his in-depth exploration of the symbolic roles architecture plays in politics and its power to function as an icon.

Keith Walsh (MFA 1992)
Walsh’s drawings lend poetic form to coalitions in American history, namely the Civil Rights and Black Panthers movements. He will attend a residency at the Pike School of Art in McComb, Mississippi. He will research content related to his ongoing investigation into the geology of liberation politics in the United States and the landscape of the deep South as a means of shaping an understanding of history and common spiritual ground.

Toshiki Yashiro (MFA 2014)
Yashiro’s video work explores the inseparable relationship between people and environment/space. He will travel to locations in Scotland, Ireland, France, and Italy to film narrative shorts that are loose adaptations of 20th century literary works by authors such as James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway. These cinematic compositions will document on- and off-screen narratives, challenging the concept of “fiction.”

The 2016 Fellows have approximately one year to complete their travels. At the conclusion of those travels, their works will be reviewed again and one artist from this distinguished group will be selected for a 2018 solo presentation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Visit www.smfa.edu/fellows for more information about upcoming exhibitions.

About the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:
Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is one of only two art schools in the country affiliated with a major museum—the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our mission is to provide an education in the fine arts—for undergraduate and graduate students—that is interdisciplinary and self-directed. This education values cultural, artistic and intellectual diversity; it embraces a wide range of media; it stresses the development of individual vision and its relation to culture in general; it values equally the knowledge gained by thinking and doing; it is deeply engaged with the world as a whole. While the School’s mission is constant, its practice is always transforming. For more information about our programs and partnerships, visit www.smfa.edu.

About the Jurors:
Bree Edwards is Director of the Northeastern Center for the Arts, in Boston, MA. Her career in the curation, production and administration of contemporary art has included positions at the Asheville Art Museum (NC) and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts at the University of Houston (TX). From 2003–2004, she was Curatorial Fellow at DeAppel Centre for Contemporary Art, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She is a Susan Vogt Fellow with the Boston Consortium and a member of the Northeastern Public Art Initiative. Bree holds a B.A. from Goddard College (VT) and is a graduate of Bard College’s Center for Curatorial Studies (NY) with an M.A. in
Curatorial Studies of Contemporary Art. She previously served on advisory boards of the Aurora Picture Show, Western Carolina Media Arts Alliance, the Public Art Committee of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, and Blaffer Art Museum. She also served on numerous grant and award panels for organizations including Houston Cinema Arts and the Houston Arts Alliance’s Civic Art + Design committee.

Arnold Joseph Kemp is the recipient of awards and fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and the Joan Mitchell Foundation, Artadia Fund for Art & Dialogue, Art Matters Grant, and Printed Matter Award for Artists. His artworks are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Berkeley Art Museum. Kemp is also a writer and he has read on street corners, in living rooms in Oakland, and in bars and bookstores in San Francisco, Berkeley and New York. His writing has appeared in Callaloo, Three Rivers Poetry Journal, Agni Review, MIRAGE #4 Period(ical), River Styx, Nocturnes, Art Journal, and Tripwire. Kemp has presented his writing at the Bowery Poetry Club, Banff Centre, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Portland Art Museum, California College of the Arts, PDX Contemporary, San Francisco State University, Portland State University and New Langton Arts. He is the recipient of awards from Tufts University and the American Academy of Poets. He is the Chairperson of the Department of Painting & Printmaking at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Jeffrey Lee is a partner in RYAN LEE, established in by Mary Ryan and Jeffrey Lee in New York City. Representing both established and emerging artists, RYAN LEE is committed to showing innovative and pioneering exhibitions that represent the spectrum of contemporary art practices, and will also be a platform for many artists’ first New York exhibitions. The gallery also launched RLWindow, an exhibition space dedicated for video, installation, and performance at the gallery designed to engage High Line visitors through a window. Lee holds a BA in art history from Columbia University.

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