



Media Contacts:

Dejha Carrington, National YoungArts Foundation
dcarrington@youngarts.org / 305.377.1140

Julia An, Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors
julia.an@finnpartners.com / 212.715.1694

**TWENTY NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION WINNERS
ACROSS SEVEN DISCIPLINES NAMED
2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS IN THE ARTS**

**One of Highest Honors Recognizes 160 Talented High School Seniors
as U.S. Presidential Scholars**

**Debbie Allen to Direct 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts
In Multidisciplinary Public Performance for Second Consecutive Year**

**Performance and Exhibition of Scholars' Visual Art and Writing at the
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
June 20, 2016**

MIAMI, FL (May 4, 2016) –The [National YoungArts Foundation \(YoungArts\)](http://www.youngarts.org) congratulates the 52nd class of **U.S. Presidential Scholars**, announced today by U.S. Secretary of Education John King. The 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts—one of the nation's highest honors for high school students and all of whom are YoungArts Winners—were nominated to The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars for their artistic achievement, and selected based on academic and artistic accomplishments, leadership responsibilities, community service and outreach initiatives, and overall creativity. The award, presented on behalf of the **President of the United States**, symbolically honors graduating high school seniors of high potential and recognizes up to 161 each year as U.S. Presidential Scholars.

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts are actors, dancers, singers, classical musicians, visual artists, designers and writers, joining such YoungArts alumni and leaders in their fields as Tony Award-nominated performer and choreographer **Desmond Richardson**; Los Angeles Music Center President **Rachel S. Moore**; novelist and National Book Award Finalist **Allegra Goodman**; Grammy Award-nominated violinist **Jennifer Koh**; BRAVO's "Work of Art" winner **Abdi Farah**; OBIE Award-winning actress **Donna Lynne Champlin**; and RCA Records award-winning singer/songwriter and Grammy Award-nominated artist **Chris Young**.

"This year's class of Presidential Scholars continues a more than 50 year trend of honoring students who have shown excellence in their educational, artistic and civic pursuits," said U.S. Secretary of Education John King. "Thirty years ago, the program was expanded to include students in the arts, which is critical to providing students with a well-rounded education. Now, we've added 20 more slots to honor our highest achieving students in career and technical education, reflecting the Department's belief that a quality education must be a well-rounded education that prepares students for college, careers and any other civic service."

From **June 19-20, 2016** the 20 Art Scholars will join the other 140 U.S. Presidential Scholars from across the country for the **National Recognition Program** in Washington, D.C. During the program, all Scholars will receive a Presidential Medallion presented on behalf of the President of the United States at an award ceremony on Sunday, June 19, and participate in several other recognition activities.

On **Monday, June 20** at the **John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**, an exhibition of the works of the recognized visual artists and writers will be on view at **the Hall of Nations**. At **8:00PM** in **the Concert Hall**, the U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts specializing in the performing arts, including dance, theater, music and voice, will participate in "**A Salute to the 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars**," a free public performance that celebrates all of the awardees. The multidisciplinary showcase will be directed for the second consecutive year by **Debbie Allen**, three-time Emmy Award-winning actress, Drama Desk Award Winner, Olivier Award Winner, actress, dancer, choreographer, director and producer, and former member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

"I am thrilled to participate in this incredible program celebrating the next generation of creative leaders for a second year," said Debbie Allen. "As a YoungArts master teacher and former member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, I know the value the arts have in influencing, uplifting and changing lives. These young people are our future. I look forward to working with this year's Scholars and to helping them share their talents with the public."

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts are:

<i>Name</i>	<i>School City, State</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>YoungArts Winner Year and Discipline</i>
Jared Brown	Dallas, TX	Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts	2016 YoungArts Winner in Dance/Modern
Victoria Canal Tinius	Gümligen, Bern, Switzerland	International School of Berne	2015 YoungArts Winner in Voice/Singer/Song Writer
Ruwanthi Ekanayake	Rolling Hills Estates, CA	Palos Verdes Peninsula High School	2016 YoungArts Winner in Writing/Creative Non-Fiction
Diana Eusebio	Miami, FL	Design and Architecture Senior High	2016 YoungArts Winner in Design Arts
Zlatomir Fung	Brattleboro, VT	Oak Meadow School	2016 YoungArts Winner in Music/Violoncello
Lydia Graham	Danville, KY	Danville High School	2015 YoungArts Winner in Voice/Soprano
Lauryn Hobbs	Shaker Heights, OH	Shaker Heights High School	2016 YoungArts Winner in Theater
Katerina McCrimmon	Miami, FL	New World School of the Arts	2016 YoungArts Winner in Theater
Pavithra Nagarajan	Fremont, CA	American High School	2016 YoungArts Winner in Dance/Classical Indian
Dario Natarelli	New York, NY	Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts	2016 YoungArts Winner in Dance/Tap
Isabella Nilsson	Shaker Heights, OH	Hathaway Brown School	2016 YoungArts Winner in Writing/Short Story
Aubree Oliverson	West Jordan, UT	Mountain Heights Academy	2016 YoungArts Winner in Music/Violin
Rachel Page	Washington, D.C.	Woodrow Wilson High School	2016 YoungArts Winner in Writing/Short Story
Zachary Rapaport	West Palm Beach, FL	Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts	2015 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts
Ben Ross	Santa Monica, CA	Santa Monica High School	2016 YoungArts Winner in Theater
Audrey Spensley	Avon Lake, OH	Avon Lake High School	2015 YoungArts Winner in Writing/Poetry

Sean Stack	Miami, FL	New World School of the Arts	2015 YoungArts Winner in Theater
Kaylin Sturtevant	Dallas, TX	Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts	2016 YoungArts Winner in Dance/Modern
Cornelius Tulloch	Miami, FL	Design and Architecture Senior High	2016 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts & Design Arts
Nadia Wolff	Miami, FL	Design and Architecture Senior High	2016 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts & Design Arts

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS IN THE ARTS PUBLIC EVENTS

At the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
2700 F Street NW
Washington DC 20566

Monday, June 20 at 8:00PM in the Concert Hall

“A Salute to the 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars,” a multi-disciplinary performance directed by Debbie Allen
Visual artists and writers will also celebrate their work before and after the performance in the Hall of Nations

June 15 – June 30, 2016

Exhibition of Artwork and Writing

Hall of Nations

Public Hours: 10:00AM – 9:00PM

For directions and parking information, click [here](#).

BECOMING A U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR IN THE ARTS

The first step to becoming a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts is to apply to the National YoungArts Foundation, which is the nominating agency for this honor. To be eligible for the YoungArts program, applicants must be between the ages of 15 and 18 or in high school grades 10-12. To be further considered for a nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar, applicants must be high school seniors and meet all of the U.S. Presidential Scholars requirements.

YoungArts Winners demonstrating excellence in the visual, literary, performing or design arts are selected annually through a blind adjudication process. This year, YoungArts received more than 12,000 applications, and from this pool, nearly 800 YoungArts Winners were selected. In January, approximately 170 Finalists from across the nation were invited to National YoungArts Week in Miami, where they participated in a week of intensive master classes and workshops with internationally renowned artists, and shared their work through performances, readings, exhibitions and screenings that were open to the public.

During National YoungArts Week, eligible participants are further evaluated, award levels are determined, and nominations are made for that year’s U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts candidates. After a rigorous selection process, YoungArts nominates up to 60 candidates for an invitation to apply to the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. Finally, the Commission on Presidential Scholars selects 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts each year.

ABOUT U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

In 1964, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established by executive order of President Lyndon B. Johnson to recognize and honor the nation’s top graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to recognize students who demonstrated talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

Scholars are selected annually by the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars, appointed by the President, based on academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and

writing ability. This year, more than 5,500 candidates qualified for the 2016 program determined by outstanding performance on the College Board SAT and ACT exams, through nominations made by Chief State School Officers, other partner recognition organizations, or the National YoungArts Foundation.

Since its inception, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program has honored more than 7,000 of the nation's high-performing students. Scholars are flown to Washington, D.C. for National Recognition Program where they are presented a Presidential Medallion, which is given to honorees during the annual ceremony.

The 160 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholars will be comprised of one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and from U.S. families living abroad, as well as 15 chosen at-large, 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts, and 20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in Career and Technical Education.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION

The National YoungArts Foundation (YoungArts) was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison to identify and nurture the most accomplished young artists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts, and assist them at critical junctures in their educational and professional development. Through a wide range of annual programs, regular performances, and partnerships with some of the nation's leading cultural institutions, YoungArts aspires to create a strong community of alumni and a platform for a lifetime of encouragement, opportunity and support.

YoungArts' signature program is an application-based award for emerging artists ages 15 – 18 or in grades 10 – 12 from across the United States. Selected from a pool of more than an average of 11,000 applications (in 2015, the organization received a record-breaking number of more than 12,000 applications), YoungArts Winners receive valuable support, including financial awards of up to \$10,000, professional development and educational experiences working with renowned mentors—such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Plácido Domingo, Frank Gehry, Jeff Koons, Wynton Marsalis, Robert Redford, Rebecca Walker and Bruce Weber—and performance and exhibition opportunities at some of the nation's leading cultural institutions, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), The Museum of Modern Art (New York) and New World Center (Miami). Additionally, YoungArts Winners are eligible for nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students who exemplify academic and artistic excellence.

YoungArts Winners also become part of a thousands-strong alumni network of artists, which offers them additional professional opportunities throughout their careers. YoungArts alumni who have gone on to become leaders in their fields include actresses Viola Davis, Anna Gunn, Zuzanna Szadkowski and Kerry Washington; Broadway stars Raúl Esparza, Billy Porter, Andrew Rannells and Tony Yazbeck; recording artists Josh Groban, Judith Hill and Chris Young; Metropolitan Opera star Eric Owens; musicians Terence Blanchard, Gerald Clayton and Jennifer Koh; choreographer Desmond Richardson; visual artists Daniel Arsham and Hernan Bas; internationally acclaimed multimedia artist Doug Aitken; television writer, producer, and director Jenji Kohan; New York Times bestselling author Sam Lipsyte; and Academy Award winning filmmaker Doug Blush.

Carnival Foundation is the YoungArts National Premier Sponsor.

For more information, visit youngarts.org, facebook.com/YoungArtsFoundation or twitter.com/YoungArts. To watch a brief video about YoungArts, click [here](#).

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