

News

Jordan Casteel, Nicole Fleetwood, and Daniel Lind-Ramos Named MacArthur “Genius” Fellows

Each of the 25 winners will receive a no-strings-attached \$625,000 stipend, paid out over five years.



by Hakim Bishara
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Installation view of Jesse Krimes, “Apokaluptein 16389067” (2010–2013) in *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration*, curated by 2021 MacArthur Fellow Nicole Fleetwood (image courtesy MoMA PS1; photo by Matthew Septimus)

Painter Jordan Casteel; sculptor and painter Daniel Lind-Ramos; and art historian and curator Nicole Fleetwood are among the 2021 winners of the highly coveted

MacArthur “Genius” Awards. Each will receive a no-strings-attached \$625,000 stipend, paid out over five years.

Awarded annually by the Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the fellowships are intended to “encourage people of outstanding talent to pursue their own creative, intellectual, and professional inclinations.” The selection process of the nomination-only awards is notoriously secretive.

Nominees are given no notice until they’ve been awarded the prize. Over the years, grantees have described in **interviews** how an unexpected phone call from a Chicago number changed their lives and careers.



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Above the Clouds

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Today I was named a MacArthur Fellow and this honor has left me breathless -- it genuinely stopped me in my tracks -- laid me flat -- had me confused -- and brought me to tears.

While I try to embrace the reality of this moment and all the moments that have brought me here, I can't help but see all of the people who saw my potential when I couldn't see it for myself.

As I work to make sense of it all, I just want to say THANK YOU to my nominator (whoever you are) and to all of you here with me — seeing me and the work has made this time in my life possible. ☁️🌟🌟

Be sure to check out the entire 2021 class of [#MacFellow @macfound](#)

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Casteel, who is known for her vibrant, larger-than-life portraits of people of color, posted on [Instagram](#) that receiving the honor left her “breathless.”

“It genuinely stopped me in my tracks — laid me flat — had me confused — and brought me to tears,” she wrote.

Other fellows in the 2021 class include music critic, essayist, and poet [Hanif Abdurraqib](#); documentary filmmaker [Cristina Ibarra](#); filmmaker and media artist [Alex Rivera](#); film scholar, archivist, and curator [Jacqueline Stewart](#); and choreographer and dance entrepreneur [Jawole Willa Jo Zollar](#). Outside the arts, Trevor Bedford, a computational virologist, received a timely award for developing tools for real-time tracking of virus evolution and the spread of infectious diseases.

“As we emerge from the shadows of the past two years, this class of 25 Fellows helps us reimagine what’s possible,” said Cecilia Conrad, managing director of the MacArthur Fellows. “They demonstrate that creativity has no boundaries. It happens in all fields of endeavor, among the relatively young and more seasoned, in Iowa and Puerto Rico.”