



The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

Pew Fellowships in the Arts

2011 Pew Fellows

Charles Cohen

*Electronic musician and composer**

Charles Cohen has been characterized as a “special and singular musician” with a highly developed and refined voice. His music is entirely improvisational, produced solely on a vintage Buchla Music Easel synthesizer, a rare analog instrument designed in the early 1970s. Cohen has been playing his self-described “beeps and boops” since he first acquired a Buchla Music Easel in 1976, one of only 25 ever produced, and remains committed to exploring its unique qualities. He has studied with musical mavericks such as accordionist and electronic composer Pauline Oliveros and jazz pianist Cecil Taylor, and is dedicated to the art of abstract improvisation, seeking out collaborations with fellow musicians who share his love of spontaneous creation during live performance. “In improvisation I try to think less and experience more,” says Cohen. “I consider each performance as an instance of my collaborative improvisation practice, which has spanned over 30 years.” Cohen has performed regularly in Philadelphia for nearly four decades.

CAConrad

Poet

People who hear CAConrad read tend to fall in love with him. Living and working in Philadelphia for 25 years, the charismatic, self-taught poet’s work falls between poetics, performance, and pedagogy. Conrad’s most visionary works are writings he calls “(Soma)tic poetry,” instructions and recipes that invite the reader-listener into deeply embodied experiences. “The aim of (Soma)tic poetry and poetics is the realization of two things about my work,” writes Conrad. “One: Everything around me has the potential to spur new modes of thought and imaginative output. Two: The most vital ingredient to bringing humane, sustainable changes to our world is creativity. Poetry and other art disciplines are forms of courage.” Conrad’s collection of poems, *The Book of Frank* (winner of the Gil Ott Book Award from Chax Press in 2009 and reprinted by Wave Books in 2010), has garnered positive reviews from the *Boston Review*, *Bookforum*, and *The Huffington Post*. He also has five other publications: *(Soma)tic Poetry Exercises & Poems* (Wave Books, forthcoming in fall 2011); *The City Real & Imagined*, a collaboration with Frank Sherlock (Factory School, 2010); *Advanced Elvis Course* (Soft Skull Press, 2009); *(Soma)tic Midge* (Faux Press, 2008); and *Deviant Propulsion* (Soft Skull Press, 2006).

Jorge Cousineau

Set Designer

Contemporary Renaissance man and “idea factory” Jorge Cousineau counts set design, lighting design, videography, and music composition among his many talents. “I can’t easily define myself with a title or place my work within a field,” Cousineau admits. He is known in Philadelphia and beyond as a multidimensional theatrical collaborator who can seamlessly integrate new technologies such as video projection into live performance. Originally trained as a painter in his native Germany, Cousineau has lived and worked in Philadelphia for over a decade and now primarily works in theater, where the borders between multiple artistic disciplines are constantly being blurred. In addition to working with ensembles such as Arden Theatre Company and New Paradise Laboratories, he has maintained a multidisciplinary performance company called Subcircle since 1998 with choreographer Niki Cousineau.

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Joy Feasley

Visual Artist

"The major concern of my work is to paint the invisible," says Joy Feasley. "This idea is most easily illustrated by holding a prism to sunlight, as it reveals a spectrum of colors, always there but not always visible." A mid-career artist who arrived in Philadelphia from New England in the late 1980s, Feasley considers herself a landscape painter, though her landscapes forego trees, sunsets, and waves, and instead seek to describe a mood. Her work tends to be small-scale and intimate, depictions of supernatural scenes painted in rich, saturated colors that are a hybrid of abstract and figurative art. Feasley, a two-time recipient of Leeway Foundation Window of Opportunity grants, also works in sculpture, printmaking, and installation. She studied at Massachusetts College of Art, Cooper Union, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Her work has been shown widely in Philadelphia, including solo exhibitions at Locks Gallery, Fleisher Art Memorial, and Vox Populi. She has also shown in group exhibitions in Raleigh, NC; Tokyo, Japan; Waltham, MA; and Brooklyn, NY.



Left: Joy Feasley, *Listen Snow is Falling*, 2008. Flashe paint on wood panel, 18 x 23.5 inches. Right: Jane Irish, *Procession*, 2011. Oil on linen, 60 x 60 inches.

Chris Forsyth

Guitarist and composer*

A rising star in Philadelphia's music community, Chris Forsyth seeks out and articulates intersections of various musical traditions, including free jazz, American folk, blues, and 20th-century electronic music. Drawn to rock music while growing up in New Jersey, Forsyth immersed himself in improvisational music in the mid-'90s, hearing and learning from many important experimental artists, including Richard Lloyd, a founding member of the influential punk band Television, and jazz guitarist Joe Morris. Since then, he has embarked on a musical career that remains devoted to his rock roots while questioning and expanding them, resulting in work that is multifaceted and pushes boundaries. "I like to explore the zones where different ideas rub up against each other and make sparks," says Forsyth. Like Charles Cohen, Forsyth finds himself especially attracted to the dynamism and singularity of improvisational music. "Improvisation involves the chance of failure as much as invention, but when it works, it is, for me, the best kind of music—living, evolving music." Forsyth has performed throughout Europe and the U.S. with various ensembles and collaborators, and has over 30 releases available on independent record labels, including his own, Evolving Ear. He currently writes and performs with a number of collaborators for various musical projects, including the experimental, gothic folk group Peeesseye and a new band called Chris Forsyth & The Paranoid Cat Band.

Jane Irish

Visual Artist

Jane Irish works at the intersection between the decorative and the political, deploying both art and craft with equal engagement (and abandon) to create paintings, sculptures, and objects that stand alone, or are part of elaborate installations. The tension in Irish's work arises from her genuine love of all things Gilded Age—the porcelains, tapestries, and gleaming interiors—and a resistance to the very systems of power that this imagery represents. A monumental painting of an ornate, rococo interior reveals, upon closer inspection, anti-Vietnam war texts embedded in the surface texture. These texts come out of a long-term project Irish initiated in collaboration with the activist group Vietnam Vets Against the War. Irish's formal art education began at the Barnes Foundation in the early 1970s. She received her B.F.A. in painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art in 1977 and her M.F.A. at Queens College in New York in 1980. She moved through the East Village scene before settling in Philadelphia, where she has been an exhibiting artist since the 1980s. *The Home Front: Jane Irish's Art of War*, was on view at Philadelphia's Locks Gallery in early 2011.

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Tania Isaac

Choreographer

Caribbean-American dancer-choreographer Tania Isaac was named one of “25 to watch” by *Dance Magazine* in 2006, and her artistry has continued to blossom. She fuses choreography with personal documentary and social commentary and grapples with identity, post-colonial issues, feminism, and juxtapositions of European and African influences, resulting in dances that are elegant, dramatic, and highly accessible. An electric and commanding performer, Isaac earned an M.F.A. in dance from Temple University in 2000 and is an able scholar, having penned articles for publications such as Susanna Sloat’s anthology *Making Caribbean Dance* (University Press of Florida, 2010). Her current work is a potentially groundbreaking exploration of creative method she calls the “Open Notebook”—a way of turning a room into a laboratory of investigation and participatory dance. She developed this project during a 2006 Residency at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography. “I fell in love with the idea that moving could be intellectual practice in itself,” says Isaac. “I enjoy the messy and exhausting process of bringing things to life.”



Left: Brian Phillips, Tattoo House exterior, 2010. Large cladding panels printed with silkscreen by Candy Depew prior to installation. Photo by Sam Oberter.
Right: Timothy Portlock, Ghost City #1, 2009. Ink jet print, 72 x 60 inches.

Pattie McCarthy

Poet*

Since earning her M.A. in English/Creative Writing from Temple University in 1998, Pattie McCarthy has established herself as a serious and ambitious young poet with a strong sense of language and tradition. She has published three books with Apogee Press: *bk of (h)rs* (2002); *Verso* (2004); and *Table Alphabetical of Hard Words* (2010), an intimate book-length poem sequence concerned with etymology and history. Speaking to her ongoing experiments with language and narrative, McCarthy says, “I strive to create work that actively involves the reader, that is skeptical and inquiring, equal parts intellectual and emotional acuity.” Her current project is “Marybones,” a meditative, wide-ranging exploration of various historical, cultural, and fictional Marys, e.g. the Virgin Mary, Mary Queen of Scots, plus Marys from the Salem Witch Trials, the *Mayflower*, and elsewhere. Her interest in the figure of Mary stems from her formative years at a Catholic girls’ school. “Images of Mary are a kind of vernacular visual language for me,” she says. “[They] formed a first consciousness of the representation and form given to women in art, and gave me a shape of motherhood in art—the only one I would see for many years.”

Brian Phillips

Architect*

Brian Phillips is founding principal of Interface Studio Architects (ISA), based in the South Kensington area of Philadelphia. ISA specializes in multifamily residential and urban projects that employ green strategies; it has been identified by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as one of several “rising design firms that see architecture as a weapon in the battle to stave off environmental ruin,” and was recently featured in an extensive article in the *New York Times*. Phillips earned a B.S. in Environmental Design from the University of Oklahoma in 1994 and earned his M.A. in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1996. His 100K Houses project, which involves finding high-performance and innovative strategies for designing and building sustainable homes for \$100,000 each, won a 2011 National Housing Award from the American Institute of Architects. “In light of recent environmental and economic crises, there is a real urgency for designers to take on the profound challenges of the present,” says Phillips. “I believe that creativity and innovation are amplified by limitations. I believe in the necessity for architecture to be broad and inclusive, while retaining a sense of precision and a deep understanding of local context.”

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Tim Portlock

Visual Artist

Originally trained as a muralist, Tim Portlock began experimenting with digital media platforms in the late '90s. He has since mastered a variety of tools, from gaming software to 3-D animation, and has used them to make art that investigates the social and economic impact of America's rapid de-industrialization. "I endeavor to create work that is visually unsettling and that does not fall neatly in one or even two media or visual disciplines," says Portlock. He creates haunting, post-apocalyptic urban landscapes, often seen from an aerial perspective—depictions of worlds in which industrial culture has come and gone, leaving certain classes and communities blighted in its wake. "In preparation for much of my work, I speak with experts in economics, urban planning, and sociology. My lifelong artistic interest [is] the dialogue between place, cultural vocabularies, and the formation of identity." A member of Vox Populi and a professor at Hunter College of The City University of New York, Portlock's works have been shown around the world, including solo and group exhibitions at the Tate Modern, London; Los Angeles Center for Digital Art; the Ars Electronica Museum, Linz, Austria; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL.

Matthew Suib

Visual Artist

Matthew Suib has been working with video, film, sound, and installation for the past decade, exhibiting internationally in galleries, co-ops, living rooms, Web sites, museums, film and new media festivals, and public spaces. His work comes from a deep engagement with moving-image culture and explores how moving images shape our understanding of culture, history, and politics. Suib earned his B.F.A. from the University of the Arts in 1995. His collaborative work with video artist and 2006 Pew Fellow Nadia Hironaka has become an increasingly potent aspect of his practice; their video installation *Whiteout* was presented in 2010 at Philadelphia's Locks Gallery and another piece is currently on view at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania. "One of the key concerns of my most recent work is a desire to free the moving image from its most common containers—the comfortable rectangles of the projection screen, television, or computer monitor," Suib says. "I continue to work with immersive forms—moving-image and sound-based installations that dissolve the cinematic screen or engage architectural and physical space. I'm excited by the possibilities of pushing formal and technological limits to shift relationships between viewer and image."

Jamaaladeen Tacuma

Free-jazz bassist, composer, and bandleader

Jamaaladeen Tacuma is considered a living legend among jazz circles. A musician-composer-arranger-producer, he is credited with redefining the potential of the electric bass. In the mid 1970s, his creatively free and funky approach caught the eye and ear of legendary saxophonist Ornette Coleman. Tacuma became part of Coleman's electric band, Prime Time, toured with the group, and played on historic recordings of *Dancing In Your Head*, *Body Meta*, and *Of Human Feelings*. Over the years, Tacuma has collaborated with a diverse and talented roster of artists, including guitarists Jeff Beck, Carlos Santana, Marc Ribot, and James Blood Ulmer. He has also performed and recorded with saxophonists Pharoah Sanders, Grover Washington, Jr., Odean Pope, and James Carter. He ranges from high culture to pop, working with both orchestras at Carnegie Hall and hip-hop/rap artists such as The Roots. Tacuma's most recent release, *For the Love of Ornette* (November 2010), was published on his own label, Jam-All Productions. It revisits his collaboration with Ornette Coleman, who also features in the mix of players. Tacuma notes that this project is a harbinger of things to come: "I imagine this form of retroactive memory and recall will be characteristic of the future body of autobiographical recordings."

**First-time PFA applicant*

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2011 Pew Fellowships in the Arts Panel Members

Adam Lerner, Panel Chair

Director and Chief Animator, Department of Structures and Fictions, Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO

Philip Bither

Senior Curator of Performing Arts, Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, MN

Julie Carr

Poet, co-publisher, Counterpath Press, and Assistant Professor of English, University of Colorado, Boulder

Anne Ellegood

Senior Curator, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

Ronen Givony

Founder and Artistic Director, Wordless Music, and Music Director, Le Poisson Rouge, New York, NY

Thomas Allen Harris

Founder and Director, Chimpanzee Productions, New York, NY

2011 Pew Fellowships in the Arts Evaluators

Sally Berger, Assistant Curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Christopher Barreca, designer and Head of Scene Design, California Institute for the Arts, Los Angeles

Ian Berry, Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs and Curator, Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY

Martin Bresnick, Charles T. Wilson Professor in the Practice of Composition, Yale School of Music, New Haven, CT

Valerie Cassel-Oliver, Senior Curator, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX

John Corbett, writer, musician, producer, curator, Chicago, IL

Susan Cross, Curator, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA

Mark Doty, poet, New York, NY

Eric Galm, Associate Professor of Music, Trinity College, Hartford, CT

Janie Geiser, experimental filmmaker, visual & performance artist, and Director, Center for Puppetry and the Arts, California Institute for the Arts, Los Angeles

Joan Gray, President, Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago, IL

Jennifer Gross, Seymour H. Knox, Jr. Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT

Kimiko Hahn, poet and professor, Queens College, The City University of New York, Flushing, NY

Brooke Hodge, Director, Exhibition Management and Publications, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

Judy Hussie-Taylor, Executive Director, Danspace Project, New York, NY

Lisa Jarnot, poet and translator, Sunnyside, NY

Darrell Jones, dancer and choreographer, Chicago, IL

Lisa Kron, playwright and actor, Brooklyn, NY

Libby Larson, composer, Minneapolis, MN

Jo Lauria, curator and art/design historian, Sherman Oaks, CA

Paul Lisicky, author, East Hampton, NY

Rudresh Mahanthappa, composer and alto saxophonist, Brooklyn, NY

Lou Mallozzi, sound artist, curator and Executive Director, Experimental Sound Studio, Chicago, IL

David Revere McFadden, Chief Curator and Vice President for Collections and Exhibitions, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY

Judy Mitoma, Director, Center for Intercultural Performance and Professor of Dance, Department of World Arts and Culture, University of California, Los Angeles

John Murphy, ethnomusicologist, saxophonist, and professor, University of North Texas, Denton

Sigrid Nunez, author, New York, NY

Hema Rajagopalan, Artistic Director, Natya Dance Theatre, Oakbrook, IL

Raymund Ryan, Curator, The Heinz Architectural Center, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA

Joel Shepard, Film/Video Curator, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA

Bennett Simpson, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

Juliana Spahr, poet, critic, and editor, Berkeley, CA

Robert Storr, Dean, Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT

Peter Taub, Director of Performing Arts, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Chicago, IL