



## For Immediate Release

**Contact:** Kristin Roth-Schrefer  
Communications Director  
Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art  
212.974.7003  
kschrefer@ddcf.org

### **THE DORIS DUKE FOUNDATION FOR ISLAMIC ART'S BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM AWARDS MORE THAN \$1.6 MILLION IN GRANTS FOLLOWING ITS SECOND FUNDING COMPETITION**

#### **Nine U.S. Organizations Receive Support to Implement Cultural Programs Intended to Increase Public Understanding of Contemporary Muslim Societies**

**New York, NY, March 16, 2015** – The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (DDFIA) announced today that it is awarding nine U.S. nonprofit organizations a total of \$1,653,698 in grants as a result of the Building Bridges Program's second annual funding competition.

"In this fraught time as a small band of extremists attempt to usurp and malign the public narrative of more than one fourth of the world's humanity— more than 1.6 billion Muslims—we need imaginative ways to open new pathways for connection and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims to strengthen our social fabric," said Zeyba Rahman, senior program officer for the DDFIA Building Bridges Program. "We are inspired by the thoughtful, creative programs that these organizations will undertake and are delighted to support their projects to engage communities through arts experiences that more accurately represent the vast diversity and richness of Muslim societies."

This round of funding builds upon last year's successful inaugural competition. Prior to last year, the program had awarded grants solely through a staff-selected approach or through grants to intermediary organizations. The DDFIA, which is an operating foundation of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, is continuing to provide grantees with support to plan and implement cultural programs or projects intended to increase public understanding of current-day Muslim societies through arts or media-based experiences.

The [Building Bridges 2014-2015 Grants Program](#) sought arts-focused programs that create experiential, engaging projects tailored to the needs and interests of their target audiences. A panel of external experts reviewed the applications and chose nine projects from a total of 98 submissions, almost double the number submitted in the previous year.

The grant recipients are as follows:

- **Arts Midwest** in Minneapolis, MN will receive \$281,229 to implement the fifth season of "Caravanserai: A Place Where Cultures Meet," a touring and residency program for U.S.-based Muslim artists focused on engaging youth in the U.S. heartland.
- **Asia Society** in New York, NY will receive \$100,669 to create "Encounters at the Crossroads," a performance program within its multidisciplinary "Creative Voices of Muslim Asia" initiative, aiming to deepen understanding of the diversity of Muslim cultures through music and innovative shadow puppetry which will appeal to both American Muslim and non-Muslim youth.
- **Brooklyn Academy of Music** in Brooklyn, NY will receive \$300,000 to launch "Muslim Stories: Global to Local," a multi-region, interdisciplinary initiative that will showcase stories told by artists from Muslim-majority societies through dance, music, theatre and cinema over a two-year period.
- **Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Inc.** in Nashville, TN will receive \$35,000 to develop dynamic and educational public programming that will complement its first comprehensive exhibition of Islamic art, "Ink, Silk and Gold: Islamic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston," and allow museumgoers to interact more deeply with Muslim cultures.

- **Grand Performances** in Los Angeles, CA will receive \$213,000 to develop “Re:ARRANGED – Muslim Cultures Decoded and Demystified,” a two-year project that will bring musicians from Central and East Asian Muslim countries underrepresented on Los Angeles stages to interact and engage with underserved youth, local artists and the broader public.
- **New England Foundation for the Arts** in Boston, MA will receive \$300,000 to develop Season Three of “Center Stage,” which will bring performing arts ensembles from Algeria and Tanzania to the U.S. to help build mutual understanding through performances and people-to-people exchange.
- **Ping Chong & Company** in New York, NY will receive \$150,000 to develop “Beyond the Sacred,” a two-year interactive platform that will engage middle school, high school and college students by creating opportunities via scriptwriting and theatrical performances that explore and develop familiarity of local Muslims and their identities.
- **Split This Rock** in Washington, D.C. will receive \$98,800 to launch “Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here DC 2016,” a three-month-long literary festival that will honor the free exchange of ideas and knowledge by celebrating the work of modern Arab poets, as well as their translators and publishers, with the public.
- **Sundance Institute** in Los Angeles, CA will receive \$175,000 to launch the Doris Duke New Frontier Fellowships, which will support three participants from Sundance Institute’s New Frontier Story Lab for a span of two years and allow fellows to develop and refine audience engagement for their exploratory and interdisciplinary projects.

Since 2007, the Building Bridges Program has supported efforts to encourage social cohesion by increasing the public’s familiarity with and understanding of contemporary Muslim societies through arts and media-based programming. Today, there are more than 1.6 billion Muslims around the world and approximately five million in the United States. A September 2014 report from Pew Research Center for the People & the Press showed that 50 percent of Americans believe that Islam encourages more violence than other religions, and a May 2013 Pew report stated that 45 percent of Americans believe that American Muslims face “a lot” of discrimination. Within this context, the Building Bridges Program supports grantees using the arts or media as a medium for increasing awareness and thereby understanding of the richness and diversity of Muslim cultures and the societies from which they emanate. It has found that programs with significant impact toward this goal were those that have allowed for a more substantial connection between audiences and the arts (whether with the art itself or with visual, performing artists or filmmakers/media platforms, etc.).

### **About the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art**

The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (DDFIA) is an operating foundation funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The mission of DDFIA is to improve the quality of people’s lives through the study, understanding and appreciation of Muslim arts and cultures. Based in New York, the Building Bridges Program is the grant-making program of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art and supports national efforts that use the arts to increase the public’s understanding of contemporary Muslim societies. For more information, please visit [www.ddcf.org/programs/building-bridges](http://www.ddcf.org/programs/building-bridges).

### **About the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is to improve the quality of people’s lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and child well-being, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke’s properties. The Arts Program focuses its support on contemporary dance, jazz and theatre artists, and the organizations that nurture, present and produce them. For more information, please visit [www.ddcf.org](http://www.ddcf.org).