



**THE  
NICHOLSON  
PROJECT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***THE NICHOLSON PROJECT AWARDS RESIDENCIES TO  
BEVERLY PRICE + SHAUNTÉ GATES, PETER J. HARRIS, STEPHANIE J.  
WILLIAMS, AND STEPHANIE MERCEDES***



**Washington, DC (August 9, 2021)** The Nicholson Project is proud to announce our newly selected 2023 Artists-in-Residence, BEVERLY PRICE + SHAUNTÉ GATES, PETER J. HARRIS, STEPHANIE WILLIAMS, AND STEPHANIE MERCEDES. Each artist has been awarded a 10-week, fully supported residency and will live and work on-site at The Nicholson Project in Washington, DC.

### **Beverly Price + Shaunté Gates (Residency: January 17 - March 27, 2023)**

Duo Beverly Price and Shaunté Gates join The Nicholson Project as our first artists-in-residence for 2023, working on a series of new collaborative mixed-media paintings and video works that reflects and stretch the imagination about the communities in DC that they were raised and still reside, and that are dear to their hearts. Introduced to photography in 2016, Beverly Price witnessed the rapid effects of gentrification around her and felt moved to document its progression so that her fellow DC natives could read a story told by one of their own. But it wasn't until she dreamt of four black boys with royal blue eyes that her documentation grew from pure interest to powerful storytelling. The dream's subjects rose from the grounds of a historic black community in Washington, DC. Price recollects the boys spoke in a sound language, gifting her a camera, and then returning underground. She realized her dream of the "blue-eyed black boys" was a divine assignment to pick up her camera and visually explore adolescence and the black boy experience in Washington, DC. She uses the camera to highlight the youth's beauty, innocence, dignity, plight against stereotypes, and longing for solutions. Growing up in and around public housing projects during the "war on drugs," Shaunte Gates witnessed how mythologies produced social constructs, imagination, and how the limits therein inform our reality. Gates produces dreamscape-like compositions rife with cinematic moments of beauty, chaos, and glory depicting the labyrinth of social constructs we are all wading through. He works across mixed media collage and video to subvert landscapes with architecture embedded with cultural symbologies and caste categorizations. Gates' use of found materials—fabrics, canvas, paper, coins, and photographs—evoke the energy and cultural relevance of the items' site of origin and the popular culture referenced within these works. Gates refers to these landscapes as "Land of Myth," and as such denotes, mythologies are layered within the materials. He describes his work as psychogeography, focusing on our psychological experiences of the city and illuminates forgotten, discarded, or marginalized aspects of the urban environment. Friends and family are often the photographed figures transfigured into a half-animal form or other motifs of mythology. They appear concurrently ancient and futuristic, exploring themes of duality, religion, introspection, and escapism. Gates has been commissioned to create many public art works throughout Washington, DC, including *Transcending*, a painting commemorating the 140th anniversary of Howard University School of Law. His work is included in the Smithsonian Institution's *Men of Change* (2019-2022) traveling exhibition, spanning ten museums including California African American Museum, Cincinnati Underground Railroad Museum, and Washington State History Museum. His work in many esteemed private collections, and his work has been acquired by the Studio Museum in Harlem.

### **Peter J. Harris (Residency: April 18 - June 26, 2023)**

As poet Peter J. Harris says "Southeast DC spirals throughout my cultural DNA." Born and raised in Southeast Washington, DC, Harris is now based in Los Angeles where he is the Altadena Poet Laureate Editor in Chief (2022-2024). He is the author of *Safe Arms: 20 Love & Erotic Poems (w/an Ooh Baby Baby moan)*, with Spanish translations by Francisco Letelier (FlowerSong Press), and *SongAgain* (Beyond Baroque Books). Among his many award-winning works, his 2015 book of poetry, *Bless the Ashes* (Tia Chucha Press), won the PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award, and his book of personal essays, *The Black Man of Happiness: In Pursuit of My 'Unalienable Right,'* won the American Book Award. Harris is a Fellow of the Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities at USC and was the 2018 Los Angeles COLA Fellow in literary arts. He's the former producer and host of *Inspiration House: VoiceMusic for Whole Living*, a weekly radio show on KPFK-FM Los Angeles featuring poets in studio reading their work to recorded music (1999 to 2004). Harris is founding director of *The Black Man of Happiness Project*, a creative, intellectual, and artistic exploration of Black men and joy. He writes the blog [WREAKING HAPPINESS: A Joyful Living Journal](#). For the past 50 years, Harris has published his work in

a wide variety of publications, and since 1992, Harris has been a member of the Anansi Writers Workshop at the World Stage, in LA's Leimert Park.

**Stephanie J. Williams (Residency: July 5 - September 12, 2023)**

Stephanie J. Williams is a tinkerer and doodler. Her work primarily navigates hierarchies of taste, unpacking how “official” histories are constructed in order to understand social coding. She received an MFA in Sculpture from RISD, has shown in *Fictions*, part of the Studio Museum in Harlem's F-Shows exhibition series, as well as with Washington Project for the Arts, Rutgers University, [sindikit ], Tephra ICA and the Walters Museum as a Sondheim Finalist. She has held recent residencies with Sculpture Space, Williams College and the Corporation of Yaddo. Her current projects include, *Hospes*, a puppet stop motion about the body as a political object supported by Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund and a DC Arts and Humanities Fellowship, and *The Expectation of the Observed*, a stop motion commission about unrecognized labor for Stone Quarry Art Park in Cazenovia, NY. She currently teaches stop motion at Maryland Institute College of Art.

**Stephanie Mercedes (Residency: September 27 - December 5, 2023)**

Mercedes is a uncategorized Queer Latinx artist who choreographs large scale performances and installations based in sound. Mercedes transforms weapons into musical installations and works of art. She also excavates missing violent histories. Mercedes has exhibited and performed at the Bronx Museum, the Queens Museum, the Smithsonian, the Kennedy Center and the National Gallery of Art. She has been funded by George Soro's Open Society Foundation, Light Works, NALAC, The Foundation for Contemporary Art, Washington Project for the Arts, The DC Commission for the Arts and Humanities, the GLB Memorial Foundation, the Warhol Foundation, and the Clarvit Fellowship. Mercedes has been an artist-in-residence at: VisArts, Halcyon Art Labs, the Bronx Museum, Montgomery College, Christopher Newport University, SOMA, Lugar a Dudas, Largo das Artes and La Ira de Dios. Mercedes is producing an Opera with CulturalDC in 2022-23.

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**About The Nicholson Project**

The Nicholson Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Washington, DC. Founded in 2019, The Nicholson Project is an artist residency program coupled with a neighborhood garden that works to support artists and serves as a creative and innovative cultural hub. Our long-term vision to inspire others to use non-traditional arts-based, community-centered, projects as a pathway toward stronger, more vibrant communities. The Nicholson Project is located at 2310 Nicholson Street SE, Washington, DC 20020. More information is available at [thenicholsonproject.org](http://thenicholsonproject.org)

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*High-resolution images available upon request*

Press Contact

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