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**Leeway Foundation Awards 10 Philadelphia Artists with \$15,000 Transformation Award**  
*The 2016 awards were presented to a diverse group of artists and cultural producers who have worked for five years or more to further social change in the Delaware Region*

PHILADELPHIA – Today, the Leeway Foundation announced \$150,000 in grants to 10 women and trans\* artists and cultural producers in Greater Philadelphia, acknowledging their commitment to art and social justice that impacts a larger audience or community. This year’s recipients work in an array of disciplines, including performance, media and folk art.

**The 2016 Leeway Transformation Award (LTA) recipients are as follows (in alphabetical order):**

**Indah Nuritasari** of Center City, *Literary Arts and Media Arts*

**Julie Rainbow** of Germantown, *Media Arts*

**Kavindu “Kavi” Ade** of West Philadelphia, *Literary Arts and Performance*

**Ksenya Leah Basarab** of West Philadelphia, *Music*

**LaTreice V. Branson** of Mantua, *Music and Performance*

**M. Asli Dukan** of West Philadelphia, *Media Arts*

**Marie Nyenabo** of Southwest Philadelphia, *Music and Folk Art*

**Merián Soto** of Mt. Airy, *Multidisciplinary*

**Misty Sol** of South Philadelphia, *Multidisciplinary*

**Noelle Hanrahan** of Frankford, *Media Arts and Literary Arts*

“The 2016 Transformation Awardees are all artists that represent what is at the core of Leeway’s mission: visionary, community-based cultural work,” said Sara Zia Ebrahimi, Leeway’s Program Director. “Each of these artists practice their own craft as well as mentor, teach, or bring others together. Their artistic practice is not in isolation; they understand that social change does not happen by exceptional individuals, but rather by strong communities that work together.”

A national panel of artists and cultural producers convened to review applications and work samples in this two-stage process. The 2016 panel consisted of Chicago-based Palestinian author and graphic novelist **Leila Abdelrazaq**; Filipino multimedia artist and Director of Operations and Communications at the Trans Justice Funding Project **Marin Watts**; New-York based, Caribbean-born choreographer **Paloma McGregor**; 2016 Doris Duke Artist and Creative Capital awardee **Sharon Bridgforth**; and poet, author and Pew Fellow **Trapeta Mayson (ACG ‘14, LTA ‘07)**. Advocate, educator, doula, and facilitator **Erme Maula** facilitated the panel’s second stage.

Applications are made available on the Leeway website, and may also be obtained by calling 215.545.4078 or emailing [info@leeway.org](mailto:info@leeway.org). The next Leeway Transformation Award deadline is May 15, 2017. Interested applicants are encouraged to attend one of the many support sessions offered throughout the year, or schedule an appointment with a foundation staff member for one-on-one support.

**Press inquiries and photo requests should be directed to Denise Beek at 215.545.4078, ext. 14 or [dbeek@leeway.org](mailto:dbeek@leeway.org).**

\*We use the term “trans” in its most inclusive sense, as an umbrella term encompassing transsexual, transgender, genderqueer, Two-Spirit people, and more generally, anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is nonconforming and/or different from their gender assigned at birth.

## 2016 Leeway Transformation Award Panelists (Stage Two)

### Erme Maula (Facilitator)

Erme is an advocate, educator, doula, facilitator and nurse. She is grounded in social justice and strives to support people moving forward, regardless of their challenges. A theme of supporting self direction has been a thread through her professional career working with women and children, persons infected and affected by HIV, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, persons who have experience with mental and physical health challenges, and students of varied disciplines. Erme is able to assess situations and support group processes. She can often be found cooking, photographing, gardening, watching movies, crafting, or supporting women and their families as a doula. Erme identifies as a queer woman who calls Philadelphia home but spent the first half of her life in South Carolina.

### Leila Abdelrazaq

Leila is a Chicago-born, Palestinian author and artist. She graduated from DePaul University in 2015 with a BFA in Theatre Arts and a BA in Arabic Studies. Leila's debut graphic novel, *Baddawi*, was shortlisted for the Palestine Book Awards. Her creative work primarily explores issues related to diaspora, refugees, history, memory, and borders. Leila has been involved in organizing around the Palestinian cause in the city of Chicago since 2011. She is currently a core member of For The People Artists Collective.

### Marin Watts

Marin is a queer, trans, Filipino multimedia artist and educator who is deeply committed to social justice. His artwork is an exploration of queerness, gender, spirituality, and cultural identity. Culturally rooted in the South, his multimedia video installations, drawings, and photographs draw from those environmental and cultural spaces. For over a decade, Watts has dedicated his time to providing arts and media education and supporting LGBTQ youth. More recently, he's committed his efforts to the Trans Justice Funding Project, a community-led funding initiative that supports grassroots trans-led trans justice groups across the country.

### Paloma McGregor

Paloma is a New York-based, Caribbean-born choreographer whose work focuses on centering Black voices through collaborative, process-based art-making, teaching and organizing. She creates projects in which communities of geography, practice and values can vision their roles in enacting a more equitable and joyful future. She has worked with grandparents, children, environmental educators, and academics to create a wide range of work, including a dance with a makeshift fishnet on a Brooklyn rooftop, structured improvisation for a floating platform in the Bronx River, and a multidisciplinary performance about food justice. As Co-Founder and Director of Angela's Pulse- a collective that creates and produces collaborative performance work to build community and illuminate bold, new stories- Paloma created *Dancing While Black*, providing platforms for community-building, process, performance and documentation among Black dance artists. Her work has been supported by Surdna Foundation, Dance/USA, MAP Fund, the Jerome Foundation, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Through a two-year residency at Brooklyn Arts Exchange, she developed a solo iteration of her ongoing performance project, *Building A Better Fishtrap*. The project, rooted in her 90-year-old father's vanishing fishing tradition, examines what we take with us, leave behind and return to reclaim. Paloma toured internationally for six years with Urban Bush Women and continues to perform on her own, as well as collaborate on other performance, visual arts and social practice projects.

### Sharon Bridgforth

Sharon is a 2016 Doris Duke Artist and a 2016 Creative Capital awardee. A New Dramatists alumnae, Sharon collaborates with actors, dancers, singers and audiences live during performance as she composes moving soundscapes of her jazz/ritual texts. A MAP Fund and National Performance Network Creation Fund recipient, her work has been presented by Links Hall, Pillsbury House Theatre, The New Black Fest and New York SummerStage Festival. She has served in residence at: IDEX/Thousand Currents; allgo, statewide queer people of color organization; Brown University's MFA Playwriting Program; University of Iowa's MFA Playwrights Program; The Theatre School at DePaul University; and The Department of Performance Studies at Northwestern University. Publications include: *love conjure/blues*; Lambda Literary Award winning *the bull-jean stories*; and *Experiments in a Jazz Aesthetic: Art, Activism, Academia, and the Austin Project*. Sharon's *delta dandi*, is published in solo/black/woman. Sharon is currently developing the *dat Black Mermaid Man Lady/Home* Project.

**Trapeta B. Mayson (ACG '14, LTA '07)**

Trapeta reads her poetry widely and works extensively, conducting poetry and creative writing workshops. She is a recipient of a Pew Fellowship, Leeway Transformation Award, Leeway Art and Change Grant and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Grants. Her work was also nominated for a 2016 Pushcart Prize. She is the author of two books, *She Was Once Herself* and *Mocha Melodies*. Her other publications include submissions in *The American Poetry Review*, *Epiphany Literary Journal*, *Aesthetica Magazine*, *Margie: The American Journal of Poetry* and *Lavanderia*, among others. Trapeta also collaborates with legendary guitarist and composer Monnette Sudler – the two blend poetry and music and perform around the country.

**ABOUT LEEWAY**

The Leeway Foundation supports women and transgender artists and cultural producers working in communities at the intersection of art, culture, and social change. Through our grantmaking and other programs we promote artistic expression that amplifies the voices of those on the margins, promotes sustainable and healthy communities, and works in the service of movements for economic and social justice. For more information about Leeway, its grant programs, grantees and events, visit [leeway.org](http://leeway.org).

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