

USA Today
20 September 2005

25 earn the 'genius' title

By Marissa Newhall, USA TODAY

Teresita Fernandez was home taking care of her children last Tuesday when she learned she had won \$500,000. "I was very surprised," she said. "They did such a good job of keeping it under wraps."

Fernandez, 37, a sculptor in New York City, is one of 25 recipients of this year's MacArthur Foundation Fellows Program "genius grants," annual prizes that recognize exceptional creative, scientific and intellectual minds. Fernandez and 24 others were chosen from more than 100 nominees.

Fernandez, who creates large-scale experiential pieces with various materials, said the grant was "an honor." She said she plans to put the money toward making her already brewing projects more ambitious.

"I'll continue on the path I'm on in terms of how I meander my way through ideas I've been working on for years," Fernandez said.

Other recipients:

- * Edet Bezelberg, 35, an independent documentary filmmaker in New York.
- * Michael Manga, 37, associate professor of Earth and planetary science at the University of California-Berkeley.
- * Sue Goldie, 43, a physician and public-health researcher at Harvard University.
- * Michael Walsh, 62, an independent vehicle-emissions specialist in Arlington, Va.
- * Steve Goodman, 48, a plant and animal researcher in Madagascar for Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History.
- * Majora Carter, 38, founder of Sustainable South Bronx, an organization to improve the quality of life for residents of her home neighborhood in New York City.

- * Aaron Dworkin, 35, violinist and arts educator in Detroit.
- * Lu Chen, 33, neuroscientist at the University of California, Berkeley.
- * Emily Thompson, 43, aural historian at the University of California, San Diego.
- * Jon Kleinberg, 33, computer scientist at Cornell University.
- * Fazel Sheikh, 40, independent photographer who travels and lives among the subjects of his documentary portraits.
- * Todd Martinez, 37, theoretical chemist at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- * Michael Cohen, 61, pharmacist in Huntingdon Valley, Pa., and president of the Institute for Safe Medication Practices.
- * Marin Alsop, 48, conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in Poole, England.
- * Jonathan Lethem, 41, New York City writer whose work has been published in The New Yorker and Rolling Stone.
- * Olufunmilayo Olopade, 48, oncologist at the University of Chicago Hospitals who studies breast cancer in black women.
- * Ted Ames, 66, lifelong fisherman who fuses his trade knowledge with fishery science to develop protection strategies for fish habitats in Stonington, Maine.
- * Terry Belanger, 64, preserver of rare books at the University of Virginia.
- * Nicole King, 35, molecular biologist and assistant professor of molecular and cell biology at the University of California, Berkeley.
- * Julie Mehretu, 34, painter based in New York City.
- * Joseph Curtain, 52, independent violin maker in Ann Arbor, Mich.

* Kevin Murphy, 47, economist and George J. Stigler Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago.

* Claire Gmachl, 38, laser engineer and associate professor of electrical engineering at Princeton University.

* Pehr Harbury, 40, biochemist at Stanford University.