

NOCCA artist-teacher, AU alumnus receives national recognition

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Louisiana's arts conservatory New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) is proud to share the news that Visual Arts Faculty Member Jeff Becker recently received national recognition for his contributions to the theatre arts community. Jeff is a 1985 alumnus of Alfred University. As one of the selective national recipients Jeff will receive \$25,000 from the Theater Communications Group's Career Development Program. Jeff is part of only six designers selected from across the nation for the 2009 NEA/TCG Career Development Programs for Theatre Designers. The recipients were chosen by an independent, national selection panel composed of theatre professionals. These programs are administered by TCG, in association with the National Endowment for the Arts, with major support from The Ford Foundation. Through support from the Endowment, \$25,000 is awarded to each of the six exceptionally talented theatre directors and six theatre designers who seek careers in America's not-for-profit professional theatre. Through the support of The Ford Foundation, each recipient will receive an additional \$2,000 to provide for individual, ongoing life needs such as health insurance, child care and parental care. These programs offer recipients an opportunity to spend six months, over a two-year period, developing their skills and expanding their knowledge of the field. Each program is hand-tailored, matching the needs and goals of the recipient with appropriate and challenging assignments. Program activities may include assistantships, observation, research and travel. "Jeff has been an innovator and leader in the local theater and arts community for years and it is wonderful and well deserved that he be awarded this unique opportunity," stated Kyle Wedberg President/CEO NOCCA. "We have been privileged to have Jeff as part of our faculty and community here at NOCCA and I look forward to the learning and vision that he will bring back to his work as a teacher and as an artist." Jeff Becker is a New Orleans-based set designer/sculptor who specializes in original site specific performances featuring innovative transforming sets, interactive environments, film and machines. Jeff has worked with theater companies such as The Cuttingball Theater, Mondo Bizzaro, Pan Pan Theatre from Ireland and Dah Teatar from Serbia. He is the recipient of several awards and grants including a NEA RAP Grant, Theater Bay Area Grant, SURDNA Professional Development Grant and a Louisiana Division of the Arts Fellowship. He is a core ensemble member of ArtSpot Productions and is on the faculty of New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. "My work exists on the cusp of visual art and theater," stated Jeff Becker. "When I create a sculpture I am constantly thinking how a viewer or performer will interact with it. My set designs and sculpture contain kinetic elements that actively engage the viewer. Movement, or the potential of it, are always inherent in my sculpture and set designs." Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, exists to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. Founded in 1961, TCG's constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through our conferences, events, research and communications; grants approximately \$2 million per year to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level and serves as the US Center of the International Theater Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is the nation's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 10 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on our booklist; it also publishes the award-winning American Theatre magazine and Artsearch, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. In 2005, TCG received the Tony Honors for Excellence in Theatre in recognition of its impact on the national field. TCG and its member theatres are major contributors to the American theatre sector, which employs more than 131,000 people, produces over 202,000 performances each year and contributes \$1.9 billion to the US economy annually. A 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, TCG is led by executive director Teresa Eyring and governed by a national board of directors representing the theatre field. NOCCA is an agency of the state of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal, Governor.