

April 26, 2018

**Rome Prizes Awarded to Lewis Center Faculty**

***The American Academy in Rome Awarded Rome Prizes to writer Kirstin Valdez Quade and puppeteer Basil Twist***

 

Photo 1 caption: Writer Kirstin Valdez Quade

Photo 1 credit: Maggie Shipstead

Photo 2 caption: Puppeteer Basil Twist

Photo 2 credit: Courtesy of Basil Twist

(Princeton, NJ) Two current Princeton University Lewis Center for the Arts faculty members received 2018-19 Rome Prizes from The American Academy in Rome. Writer Kirstin Valdez Quade, a member of the Program in Creative Writing faculty, and guest artist and puppeteer Basil Twist, who is currently teaching a Princeton Atelier course, are among the 29 winners announced at a ceremony on April 12 at in the Frederick P. Rose Auditorium at Cooper Union in New York.

Independent juries of distinguished artists and scholars award the extremely competitive Rome Prize annually through a national competition. The eleven disciplines supported by the Academy through the Rome Prize are literature, music composition, visual arts, architecture, landscape architecture, design, and historic preservation and conservation, as well as ancient studies, medieval studies, Renaissance and early modern studies, and modern Italian studies. Over 900 applications were received from 44 U.S. states and Washington, DC, and the winners range in age from 27 to 56. These artists and scholars will receive a stipend, workspace, and room and board for a period of five months to two years at the Academy’s 11-acre campus in Rome.

**Kirstin Valdez Quade** is recipient of the John Guare Writer’s Fund Rome Prize, a gift of Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman. She is the author of *Night at the Fiestas*, whichreceived the John Leonard Prize from the National Book Critics Circle, the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a “5 Under 35” award from the National Book Foundation. It was a *New York Times*Notable Book and was named a best book of 2015 by the *San Francisco Chronicle*and the American Library Association. Valdez Quade is the recipient of the Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer’s Award and the 2013 Narrative Prize. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Narrative, Guernica, The Southern Review, The Best American Short Stories*, *The O. Henry Prize Stories*, and elsewhere. She was a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, where she also taught as a Jones Lecturer. She has been on the faculty in the M.F.A. programs at University of Michigan and Warren Wilson and joined the Princeton faculty as an assistant professor in 2015.

**Basil Twist** is recipient of the Jesse Howard, Jr./Henry W. and Marian T. Mitchell Rome Prize. A native of San Francisco, he is a third-generation puppeteer now living in New York City. He is the sole American to graduate from the École Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mezieres, France. Basil’s showmanship was spotlighted in New York by The Jim Henson International Festival of Puppetry with his award winning *The Araneidae Show*. Coupled with the critically and popularly praised and multiple award-winning *Symphonie Fantastique*, Twist was noted as “a singular artist of unlimited imagination.” Highlights of Twist’s subsequent work have included *Petrushka* (commissioned by Lincoln Center) and *Dogugaesh*i (The Japan Society), *Behind the Lid* (Silver Whale Gallery) with Lee Nagrin and *Arias with a Twist* (HERE) co-created with nightlife icon Joey Arias. *Symphonie* and these productions have toured throughout the world. Twist is currently represented on Broadway with *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*. Other credits include: *Oh, Hello! On Broadway*, the puppetry in *The Addams Family,* for which he won a Drama Desk Award, and staging of the puppetry for the *Pee-Wee Herman Show*. Twist’s work is deeply musical in nature. He has conceived and directed two successful operas, Ottorini Respighi’s *La Bella Dormente Nel Bosco* with the Gotham Chamber Opera at the Lincoln Center and Spoleto USA Festivals, Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel* for the Houston and Atlanta Operas, and *Master Peters Puppet Show* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has adapted his *Petrushka* to concert hall staging with full orchestra for the Fort Worth and Phoenix Symphonies. The Atelier course he is currently co-teaching at Princeton with musician/composter Ljova (Lev Zhurbin) focuses on development of a new performative installation entitled *Grandma’s Russian Painting* inspired by childhood memories of an elaborate painting Twist’s grandmother had near her swimming pool in the desert. This memory performance, where objects and a space take on haunted life of their own, responds to original music by Ljova.

To learn more about the Lewis Center for the Arts and the more than 100 public performances, exhibitions, readings, screenings, concerts, guest artist visits and lectures presented each year, most of them free, visit [arts.princeton.edu](http://arts.princeton.edu/).

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