

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## #PPGArtists Public Studio Residency, Summer 2017

The Power Plant Gallery, a laboratory for the arts at Duke University, is pleased to announce our summer 2017 artists-in-residence: **Dasha Chapman and Aya Shabu** (Residency 1: June 1–July 15, 2017), and **Julia Gartrell** (Residency 2: July 19–September 2, 2017).

In Residency 1, Chapman and Shabu, both artists, scholars, and dancers will continue to develop their project *Hayti/Haiti/History*: a performance ethnography project, steeped in local histories of activism and resistance. During Residency 2, Durham native and sculptor, Gartrell, will continue her exploration of the evolution of industry, southern identity, and the material culture through the weaving of personal and regional memories.

“We are excited to have Dasha Chapman and Aya Shabu, and Julia Gartrell in residence this summer,” Power Plant Gallery Director Caitlin Margaret Kelly said. “Both proposals explore regional and personal identities and histories, each through their own artistic medium. Their projects, rooted in scholarship, oral histories, place, and time also reinforce the arts as a form of inquiry and critique.”

The Power Plant Gallery promotes creative work, while engaging with audiences through the transformative power of the arts. Each summer we transform the gallery into the PPGStudios, supporting artists in their creative endeavors. The six-week residencies offer artists and artist groups 24/7 access to our 1500-square-foot facility, along with a \$750 honorarium, and invites the public to interact and engage with the artists on select Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Public hours will be announced closer to the beginning of the summer and published on our website at [powerplantgallery.org](http://powerplantgallery.org).

### **Dasha Chapman and Aya Shabu** (Residency 1: June 1–July 15, 2017)

As a collaborative community endeavor, *Hayti/Haiti/History* is a trifold performance project grown from a community space for story-sharing and creative exploration, tilted toward local memories of social justice organizing and coalitional care in downtown Durham. Through performance and dialogue, we pursue the question: How can Durham’s histories of activism and resistance inform our current freedom struggles? As artist-scholars with deep interest and connections to Haiti and Haitian performance idioms, we are interested in exploring how everyday actions of local Hayti community residents—both past and present—have (or have not) drawn from Haiti as an imaginative resource. At the same time, how have residents created their own forms of resistance and creative survival in the face of marginalization, policing, and—more recently—gentrification? Second, we seek to learn about the coalitional alliances between white and black residents during the struggles for civil rights and gender/sexual justice.

### Bios:

Dasha A. Chapman is the Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of African and African American Studies at Duke University, working alongside Duke’s Haiti Lab, the Program in Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, and Dance. Dasha’s research engages African diaspora theory, performance studies, ethnography, and the queer Caribbean. She received her PhD in Performance Studies from New York University, and is a dancer who works in African diasporic techniques and collaborates with choreographers in New York, Haiti, and Durham, NC. Her writing appears in *The Black Scholar* and *Dance Chronicle*, and she co-edited a special issue of *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory on Queer Haitian Performance and Affiliation*, forthcoming 2017.

The Power Plant Gallery is an initiative of the Center for Documentary Studies and the Master of Fine Arts in Experimental and Documentary Arts at Duke University.

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Aya Shabu is a professional dancer, choreographer, and teaching artist living in Durham, North Carolina. A 2012-2013 Emerging Artist Grant recipient, Aya has choreographed for some of the Triangle's best theatrical productions, most notably *The Parchman Hour*, *I Love My Hair* and *The Brothers Size*. An alum of the nationally and internationally recognized African American Dance Ensemble, Aya is currently a dancer and drummer with Shabutaso's *The Magic of African Rhythms*. Passionate about preserving African diaspora cultural traditions, Aya is the founder of Whistle Stop Tours, walking tours of African American neighborhoods. Whistle Stop Tours — *Haiti to Hayti*, *Black Wall Street*, *Pauli Murray's Place* — strive to be a contributing voice in shaping the public memory of North Carolina's slave past and African American achievement.

**Julia Gartrell** (Residency 2: July 19-September 2, 2017) says, I am a Durham native interested in the evolution of industry, southern identity, and the material culture of the region. My practice weaves together lore, autobiography, traditional crafts, and southern history into sculptural objects. Using clays native to Durham, textiles, and a variety of found materials and bric-a-brac, I build architecturally scaled sculptures and installations. As a resident at the Power Plant Public Studio Residency I would create a series of large scale sculptures that interrogate the history of labor and agriculture in Durham, through research of the tobacco industry.

As a kid in Durham in the eighties, the sweet dense smell of tobacco hung in the air on humid windless days. That smell represented the town to me, and while I am not a smoker, a whiff of an unsmoked cigarette can transport me back in time. When I was in high school, what is now the American Tobacco Campus was largely abandoned. I have a crisp memory of trespassing into those buildings and exploring the strange, monolithic, and wonderful machinery left behind, witnesses to a highly productive era in Durham. Since then, the town has redeveloped many of these buildings into functional, aesthetic, and prosperous spaces. I would be able to weave my personal memories with Durham's greater story into sculptural, site-specific pieces that point at and question aspects of Durham's history.

**Bio:**

Julia Gartrell is a sculptor based in Durham, NC. She received an MFA in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design, and a BA in Art from Kalamazoo College in Michigan. Her work explores Southern lore, Appalachian craft traditions, methods of mending, and material culture. Her research includes the collection of oral histories, from which she bases her work, as well as primary and secondary resources related to the material culture of the South. Julia manipulates a variety of found and altered materials in her work, combining contemporary sculptural and traditional craft techniques. She is particularly interested in the creation and performance of identity in the South as it relates to industrialization, queerness, and rituals within rural communities. Julia recently finished a year-long residency at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, where she explored regional craft traditions and developed sculptural uses for native North Carolinian clays. She has also participated in residencies at Ox-Bow School of Art in Michigan and Ifitry Artists' Residency in Morocco. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, including the Casablanca Biennale in Morocco, Flux Factory in NYC, Target Gallery in Alexandria, VA, and extensively in the Midwest and Southeast. Julia currently works as an adjunct in the Sculpture + Extended Media Department at Virginia Commonwealth University and in the Art Department at John Tyler Community College.

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