

PRESS RELEASE



The Asian American Arts Alliance Announces the Recipient of the 2020 Van Lier Fellowship for Theater



Photo Credit: Hannah Benton

(NEW YORK, NY, April 28, 2020) — The **Asian American Arts Alliance (A4)** is pleased to announce the selection of **Miranda Cornell** for its **2020 Van Lier Fellowship**. The fellowship includes a \$6,000 unrestricted cash award and eight months of professional development training and career support to foster the next milestone of Cornell's artistic career.

Among this year's competitive applications, the review panel also created a special award, **Artist of Exceptional Merit**, to recognize **Jeesun Choi** for the excellence of her work. This award provides one-on-one consultations with respected leaders in the theater field and ongoing engagement with A4.

This fellowship is made possible with support from the **Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund** through the **New York Community Trust**. Created by the will of Sally Van Lier, the Trust carries out Edward and Sally Van Lier's legacy of arts appreciation by supporting arts groups and training programs to provide education, training, or other support.

The 2020 Van Lier review panel was composed of the following respected leaders in the field of theater: **Emilya Cachapero**, Director of Artistic and International Programs of Theatre Communications Group; **Ashley Chang**, Dramaturg, Playwrights Horizons; **Seonjae Kim**, Independent Director and former Van Lier Fellow; and **Rehana Lew Mirza**, Independent Playwright and Director, and Co-Founder of Desipina & Co.



Left to right: Emilya Cachapero, Ashley Chang, Seonjae Kim, and Rehana Lew Mirza.

Reflecting on Cornell's application, panelist Rehana Lew Mirza said, "Cornell has a very clear directorial vision and tackles projects of great ambition and scope with precision and thoughtfulness." Panelist Emilya Cachapero added, "Miranda Cornell is an exceptionally talented director who has all the earmarks of being a field leader. Although still early in her career, she has already exhibited a deeply collaborative approach to theater-making and an inquisitive mind that asks exacting questions. A4's Van Lier Fellowship is invaluable in championing early-career voices like Miranda."

Panelist Ashley Chang expressed more enthusiasm about Cornell: "The American Theater that Cornell envisions is one of magnanimity and curiosity and hope—values that define her artistic practice and leadership alike. As a director, she stands to create communities of artists and audiences that recognize—and reckon with—the histories and realities of identity, and she has demonstrated the acuity, sensitivity, and passion to do so. This is someone to watch."

Reflecting on her experience of being on both sides of the fellowship, former A4 Van Lier Fellow and panelist Seonjae Kim shared, "I am thrilled that Cornell is the recipient of the 2020 A4 Van Lier Fellowship! When I received the A4 Van Lier Fellowship in 2016, it completely changed my life as a young director. Four years later, I am honored to have been a part of the review panel, giving this brilliant emerging artist the platform and opportunity to grow her career. We absolutely need more leaders like Cornell with a vibrant and optimistic vision of what theater can be for the world, and I look forward to seeing what she creates this year."

"On behalf of the board and staff at A4, I am thrilled to present this fellowship to such a promising talent," said **Lisa Gold**, A4's Executive Director. "We are honored to administer the Van Lier Fellowship on behalf of the New York Community Trust and are incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to recognize such an outstanding Asian American artist. From starting her own theater company at age 16 to her recent directorial accomplishments, Miranda demonstrates the community leadership that will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the field and will make an excellent addition to the distinguished list of Van Lier Fellowship recipients. Coupled with her intellectual, relevant, and unique voice, we know she has an incredibly bright future in the theater world. We look forward to supporting and engaging with her and her work for a long time to come."

About Miranda Cornell

Miranda Cornell is a Japanese-American theater director, producer, and educator born and bred in Brooklyn, New York. She strives for an American Theater that is radically inclusive, and her mission as a theater maker is to tell stories that are unabashedly sincere, irrevocably alive, and deeply collaborative. Select directing credits include *Head and Heart*, a concert of songs written and performed by artists under the age of 25 for New York Musical Festival; *Revolt. She said. Revolt again.* (Vassar College); the North American premiere of Breach Theatre's *It's True, It's True, It's True* (Idlewild Theatre Ensemble); *Mr. Burns, a post-electric play* (The Philaletheis Society); *#Blessed, or How to Be Saved and Know It* at the New York International Fringe Festival; *We Go Together*, *Hamlet & Ophelia*, *Very Bad Words*, and *The Road Trip* (Semicolon Theatre Company). Assistant directing credits include McCarter Theatre Center, the Experimental Theater of Vassar College, New York Stage and Film, and The TEAM. She has worked with Theatre For A New Audience, the New Victory Theater, Theatre Communications Group, and is currently a 2019/2020 Directing & Producing Apprentice at McCarter Theatre Center. Miranda is a graduate of Vassar College where she double majored in Drama and

Education, was awarded the Molly Thacher Kazan Prize for directing, and received top honors on her Education thesis about culturally reflexive, socially engaged theater curriculum for the adolescent classroom. She is a proud alum of SITI Company's Summer Training Institute and NYSAF/Powerhouse Theater Training Program.

About the Asian American Arts Alliance (A4)

The Asian American Arts Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring greater representation, equity, and opportunities for Asian American artists and cultural organizations through resource sharing, promotion, and community building.

Since 1983, A4 has sought to unify, promote, and represent the artistic and cultural producers of one of New York City's fastest-growing populations. A4 is a diverse alliance of artists, organizations, and arts supporters who believe that working together as a pan-ethnic, multidisciplinary community is essential to nurturing the development of artists and arts groups. A4 serves as a thoughtful convener of the Asian American cultural workforce around issues of race, identity, and artmaking and provides a critical voice for this community. It is the only service organization in the country dedicated to the professional development of Asian American artists in all disciplines.

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