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## The Kresge Foundation and the College for Creative Studies Announce the Inaugural Kresge Eminent Artist Award of \$50,000

**DETROIT, MI.-** The Kresge Foundation announces Kresge Arts in Detroit, a new initiative administered by Detroit's College for Creative Studies, which annually funds one Kresge Eminent Artist award of \$50,000 and 18 Kresge Artist Fellowships of \$25,000 each for metropolitan Detroit artists in the visual, literary, and performing arts.

Kresge Arts in Detroit is one facet of the foundation's Detroit Program, a comprehensive, five-part community-development effort to strengthen the long-term economic, social and cultural fabric of the city and surrounding area by strengthening Detroit's neighborhoods and downtown, promoting arts and culture, advancing regional economic development, and enhancing the natural environment. "We believe the health and vitality of the area's artists and arts and cultural organizations play a critical role in the strength of our economy," says Rip Rapson, president of The Kresge Foundation.

**Kresge Eminent Artist Award** Detroit artist, Charles McGee, has been named the inaugural 2008 Kresge Eminent Artist. The \$50,000 award recognizes the longstanding and renowned contribution that McGee has made to the visual arts and to the metropolitan Detroit arts community throughout his career.

Over the past six decades, McGee, 84, has had a distinguished career that includes hundreds of exhibitions in the United States and abroad as well as many important contributions to Detroit's cultural and educational community. His paintings, assemblages and sculptures are in prestigious national and international collections, and are permanently installed at local institutions including the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. McGee is a mentor, teacher, and community arts advocate, founding the Charles McGee School of Art, Gallery 7, and the Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit (CAID).

"Charles McGee exemplifies what it means to be eminent and what it means to be a Detroiter," says Rapson, president of the Kresge Foundation. "He is an artist of international renown who in his life and his work is energetic, passionate, always probing and eager to reinvent. It is fitting that he be named the first Kresge Eminent Artist."

Nominations for the award are made by the Kresge Arts in Detroit Advisory Council, a 19-member volunteer group of leaders in the metropolitan Detroit cultural community who provide external oversight to Kresge Arts in Detroit. The award recipient is selected by an independent review panel comprised of well-respected and knowledgeable artists

and arts professionals in the local cultural community. The 2008 review panel included Gerhardt Knodel, artist and former director of Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, Dennis Alan Nawrocki, art historian and author of the recently published third edition of *Art in Detroit Public Places* (Wayne State University Press), and Dr. Cledie Taylor, founder and director of Arts Extended Gallery in Detroit.

The Kresge Eminent Artist Award is unrestricted and given each year to one artist who has lived and worked in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb Counties for a significant number of years, has a distinguished record of professional achievement in the arts, has made a significant impact on their chosen art form, shares their talent and expertise with the broader arts community and community at large and has contributed generously to the growth and vibrancy of Detroit's cultural environment.

To commemorate Charles McGee's work and share it with the community, The Kresge Foundation has published a monograph that will be distributed to arts organizations and institutions, and libraries in the region, including the Library of Michigan.

**Kresge Artist Fellowships** Each year, The Kresge Foundation will provide funding for 18 Kresge Artist Fellowships of \$25,000 each awarded to artists living and working metropolitan Detroit. The fellowships seek to advance and encourage the artistic careers of Detroit artists in the visual, performing and literary arts as well as elevate the profile of the artistic community in Detroit. Fellows will also receive customized professional development opportunities provided by ArtServe Michigan, an organization dedicated to promoting and cultivating Michigan's arts and cultural sector.

"At the College for Creative Studies we recognize that the key to revitalization of this region is through the engagement of the creative community – that's why initiatives like Kresge Arts in Detroit are so important and why we are so thrilled to be a part of it," said Richard L. Rogers, president, College for Creative Studies. "This initiative will recognize and support the artists who are committed to creating innovative work that impacts the entire community."

The Kresge Artist Fellowships recognize eighteen (18) artists whose commitment to innovation and artistic achievement are evident in the quality of their work. The Fellowships reward creative vision and commitment to excellence within a wide range of artistic disciplines, including artists who have been classically and academically trained, self taught artists and artists whose art forms have been passed down through cultural and traditional heritage. The Fellows are selected through an open, competitive, and blind process as judged by an independent review panel of renowned local and national artists and arts professionals.