



JEFF SMITH AND VIJAYA IYER REACH \$37K IN GIVING TO EMERGING CARTOONISTS AT 2019 CARTOON CROSSROADS COLUMBUS

Fifth winner to be named Sept. 28 at 2019 Expo Event at Columbus Metropolitan Library

COLUMBUS, OHIO (September 11, 2019) —When Jeff Smith and Vijaya Iyer step to the microphone during the 2019 Cartoon Crossroads Columbus (CXC) Expo at the Columbus Metropolitan Main Library, the long time Columbus residents will have awarded \$37,000 to emerging cartooning talent. The 2019 award will be \$7,500.

“This is an extraordinary thing they’ve done, both for cartooning and for Columbus,” Tom Spurgeon, director of CXC says. “There are few cash awards in the cartoon arts. There are even fewer that target young people, and even fewer than that that target the kind of independent, non-corporate owned art with which Jeff and Vijaya have found their own success at Cartoon Books and the Bone saga. I love everything about what they’ve done here, taking their experiences and providing real opportunities for those artists.”

The award is determined by a sub-committee of the festival, whose members include individuals with professional artistic and critical experience, as well as significant knowledge about up and coming artists. Past winners also are consulted.

New York based cartoonist Katie Skelly received the inaugural award. “I received the award in 2015, after which I secured a book deal with a major comics publisher for the first time,” she said. “I’ve since secured two more, done events and signings across the US and abroad, and currently have a solo exhibition up in the UK. The award raised my profile and made me feel more confident to go after opportunities. I’m really grateful for it.”

Other award winners are Providence publisher and artist Kevin Czapiewski (2016), California illustrator and author Kat Fajardo (2017), and Israeli cartoonist and educator Keren Katz (2018).

“One nice thing is that Jeff and Vijaya began with the first award given out during the show, right on the exhibition floor,” says Spurgeon. “So there’s terrific buzz and the artist get to directly hear the congratulations of their peers.”

Cartoon Crossroads Columbus will run its fifth festival on September 26-29 in multiple venues throughout Columbus. Jeff and Vijaya will give out their fifth award at 3 PM on September 28.

CXC 2019 sponsors and partners include: Able Roof, Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum Cartoon Books, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Experience Columbus, Greater Columbus Arts Council, GSW, Wexner Center for the Arts, and Gateway Film Center.

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