Molly Gaston Johnson

In April 2020, Molly Gaston Johnson created, “Exquisitely Connected,” an east-coast/west-coast partnership between Maryhill Museum of Art and Monmouth Arts in response to Covid-19. This digital mural project allows people from anywhere to submit a visual art piece that expresses their ideas on this particular moment in time and connects their work to others, forging larger and larger community understandings.

Molly is a mother, Young Audiences credentialed teaching artist, college professor, and studio artist specializing in printmaking (which requires planning, patience, and small steps to achieve end goals). This informs her work with all ages. She is a proud part of the Young Audiences New Jersey/Eastern Pennsylvania family, where her art residencies blend discovery in hands on making with reading, social studies, math, social and emotional learning, and community-mindedness. Molly participated in a 2019 Maryhill Museum of Art project, Exquisite Gorge, which selected 11 artists from across the country to create community-based work inspired by the Columbia River Gorge, was honored by Young Audiences peers as 2019 Teaching Artist of the Year, received a 2012 New Jersey Governor’s Award, and was the only individual artist awarded a Dodge grant to develop New Jersey-based public art in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. She received a full fellowship and an MFA from the Ohio State University, a BFA from James Madison University in printmaking and a BA in Art History, and a certificate from Columbia Teachers College Teaching Artist program.

**Personal Quote:**

Receiving this award, and being nominated for it by what I consider to be my family at Young Audiences New Jersey/Eastern Pennsylvania, is a signal that I am doing the right thing and that good people believe in me. Recognition at this level is a great honor that keeps me forging on. I have chosen a path that leads me to use my visual art skills for more than simply showing people what I see. My work as a teaching artist allows me to help others learn to see…to see and learn about their neighbor and also about themselves. The most beautiful part is that the teaching artist work I do through Young Audiences comes back to me as I get inspired to make more of my own art, which then feeds back in to the teaching artistry in an ever upward and expanding spiral.