2016 Oak Fellow

The 2016 Oak Fellow is Khalid Albaih, a Sudanese artist residing in Doha. Albaih uses his daring, often biting cartoons to champion important causes like freedom of expression and democracy in the Arab world, while also criticizing Islamophobia in the West, and the use of torture and predator drone attacks by the United States. He became associated with the Arab Spring in 2011, when his images were turned into stencils and reproduced on city walls in Cairo and Sana’a that were buzzing with calls for greater citizen rights. He soon acquired thousands of followers on his Facebook site (“Khartoon!”) – a play on his artistic medium and his former home in the capital of Sudan. Offline, Albaih’s work also has appeared in exhibitions in Vienna, London, Montreal, Detroit, Bahrain, and The Hague, and has been featured prominently in numerous media outlets, including the New York Times and Al Jazeera.

Previous Oak Fellows

2015: Jodi Koberinski has pioneered work in reimagining agriculture and advocating for more equitable food systems
2014: Clare Byarugaba, co-coordinator of the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law, founded in 2009 to fight efforts in Uganda to criminalize both homosexuality itself and activism on behalf of the LGBTI community
2013: Maung Maung Than and Mya Nandar Aung have worked with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to protect the rights of stateless people in western Burma and with various organizations to encourage Buddhist-Muslim reconciliation
2012: Zandile Nhenguetze, principal of South Africa’s Ulusda School, a place of learning for young people as well as a community center that organizes adults to combat problems such as gender inequity, sexual abuse, and violence
2011: Fatima Burnad, founder and president of the Society for Rural Education and Development, which organizes and advocates for the Dalit (untouchable) community in India
2010: Jetrotha Minkoko, executive director of the Zimbabwe Peace Project, an NGO that monitors human rights abuses throughout the country
2009: Hadass Zvi, executive director of Physicians for Human Rights—Israel, who has worked on numerous campaigns to secure access to health care for Israel’s most underrepresented groups, including Palestinians, African refugees, and migrants

Oak Scholarships

In addition to the annual Oak Human Rights Fellowship, the College also has a Colby-Oak international scholarship program for students who have suffered or whose families have suffered political oppression, including politically motivated torture. Additional Oak scholarships are awarded to other international students, with two reserved for students from Zimbabwe and with a preference for one or two students from Denmark.

Application Information

For more information, contact Office of Admissions and Financial Aid
Colby College
4800 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901 U.S.A.
admissions@colby.edu
phone: 800-723-3032
fax: 207-859-4828
The Oak Fellowship

The Oak Fellowship annually offers an opportunity for one prominent activist in international human rights to take a leave from frontline work and spend the fall semester (mid-August to mid-December) in residence at Colby. This provides the fellow time for respite, reflection, research, and writing. Following the period of the award, the fellow is expected to return home to continue their human rights work.

The Oak Fellow’s responsibilities include regular meetings with students through a small seminar class and informal discussion groups. Additionally, the fellow works with Colby’s faculty to shape a lecture series or symposium on their human rights interests. The fellow participates in the intellectual life of the campus, providing Colby students the opportunity to work with an internationally recognized human rights activist.

In addition to a $33,000 stipend, the fellowship includes health benefits, housing, a campus meal plan, and transportation. The fellowship also provides an office, access to the College’s computer and library resources, a student assistant to help with the seminar and research, and secretarial support. To ensure that the fellow fully benefits from the extended respite and safety of the fellowship experience, the program is designed to allow dependent family members to join the fellow in residence at Colby. A limited budget is allocated to help offset the cost of transportation, housing, and meals for family members who accompany the fellow.

Eligibility for the Oak Fellowship is restricted to those whose work takes place primarily outside the United States. Selection criteria include achievements in the struggle for human rights, the need for respite and removal from danger, and the ability to contribute to the Colby community.

Film/Photography and Human Rights

The Oak Institute for Human Rights at Colby College is pleased to issue this call for nominations for the 2017 Oak Fellowship. Our theme is human rights and film/photography. We are looking for a filmmaker and/or photographer who uses one or both of these media to expose human rights abuses or who has been subjected to censorship or some other kind of abuse for pursuing their art or journalism. Applicants may be documentary or feature filmmakers, photojournalists, or artistic photographers. The successful applicant, though, will see the world through a critical lens, challenging other viewers to think more deeply. We ask your help in identifying filmmakers or photographers in need of respite.

About Colby

Colby College, founded in 1813, is one of America’s outstanding and most prestigious liberal arts colleges, offering a rigorous academic program that fosters transformational relationships between students and faculty. Located on one of the most beautiful campuses in the nation, Colby overlooks a small New England town in Maine’s Kennebec River valley. The College enrolls approximately 1,850 undergraduate students and has a faculty of 200.

Application Information

Nominations for the 2017 Oak Fellowship should be sent to

Professor Walter Hatch
Oak Institute for the Study of International Human Rights
Colby College
5300 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901 U.S.A.
E-mail: oakhr@colby.edu
Phone: 207-859-5319 Fax: 207-859-5229

More information and application forms are available at colby.edu/oak.


The selection of the 2017 Oak Fellow will be announced by April 15, 2017.