



# **CALI Catalyst**

## **2023 Grantees**

[www.cciarts.org](http://www.cciarts.org)

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# About CCI ✨ ✨ ✨

Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was founded in 2001 as a California 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. Its mission is to support individuals in the arts—artists, culture bearers, and creative entrepreneurs—to realize greater self-determination so as to unfetter their productivity, free expression, and social impact, which contributes to shaping our collective national identity in ways that reflect the diversity of society.

In addition, by acting as a cross-sector incubator with an informed point of view, CCI advances efforts to improve conditions for artists and all those who share artists' conditions of low wages, high debt, and too-few assets.

For more information about CCI, visit [cciarts.org](http://cciarts.org).



# About CALI Catalyst ✨ ✨ ✨

CALI Catalyst provides unrestricted grants of up to \$7,5000, an increase from previous cycles, to California changemakers who are shifting the arts and culture sector in ways that tangibly give underrepresented voices more power and influence.

In 2021, CCI launched the California Art Leadership Investments (CALI) Catalyst grant program, which supports artists and arts workers who are on the frontlines of effecting greater inclusion, access, diversity, and equity in the arts and culture sector. Through bold actions, these individuals are tangibly helping underrepresented communities—including Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities—gain more influence and power in the arts and culture sector. We consider these bold actions to be “change-making” because they are visibly moving the needle for underrepresented communities to have more influence and power at an industry-wide level.



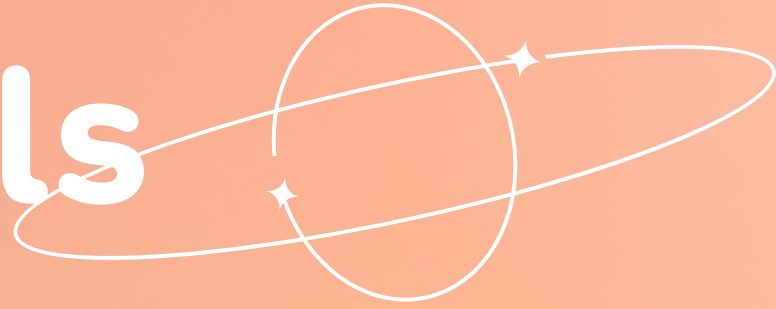
The CALI Catalyst grant program is made possible with support from:

✦ **The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation** ✦

# CALI Catalyst<sup>✦</sup> ✦2023 Grantees

The CALI Catalyst program awarded 13 grants in its third year. Grants were made to California artists and cultural workers who applied as individuals or teams.

# ✦ Individuals



**Genevieve Aleman**  
Riverside County



After moving to Moreno Valley about eight years ago, Genevieve realized there was no public art to inspire her and other creatives. In February 2023, Genevieve galvanized Moreno Valley residents to advocate to their City Council to establish a much-needed public art fund. Their efforts were successful, and 1% of new developments will now support this fund.

**Cindy Bernard**  
San Bernardino County



Cindy is creating a culture where inclusion and accessibility are assumed (as opposed to "by request") by increasing and diversifying civic engagement, arts programming, and pay equity for artists in Twentynine Palms, a rural city near the Joshua Tree National Park.

**Luna HighJohn-Bey**  
Santa Cruz County

As historian-in-residence at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, Luna unearthed the burial sites of 11 Black Gold Rush-era pioneers at Evergreen Cemetery, bringing to light their untold stories and contributions to Santa Cruz's history, empowering the Black community with a sense of belonging, and fostering cultural relevance.

**Rika Iino**  
Alameda County



Since July 2020, Rika has served as a volunteer co-chair of Building Ethical and Equitable Partnerships (BEEP), a national initiative in partnership with the Association of Performing Arts Professionals on equitable contracting between artists and cultural institutions which aims to transform the field that prioritizes performative deliverables into one that embraces process-oriented partnerships.

# ✦ Individuals

**Genevieve Leighton-Armah**  
Sacramento County

Deeply concerned about the oppressive and untenable circumstances that Black leaders in the arts and culture sector face on a daily basis, Genevieve began to coordinate nourishing workshops, dinners, and reflection spaces for Black leaders to prioritize self-care, healing, and rest.

**Hayk Makhmuryan**  
Los Angeles County



Hayk is leading the Community Arts Depot, a project that addresses the critical need for artwork storage and access with a focus on Los Angeles' Skid Row neighborhood, based on the belief that adequate and equitable accessibility to artwork storage is needed to push against cultural and social erasure.

**Faith McKinnie**  
Sacramento County

In 2020, Faith founded the Black Artist Foundry to provide unrestricted funds, exhibition and studio spaces, career-building resources, and a comprehensive directory for Black artists working in the Sacramento region and throughout the country to fight the historical and systemic lack of access.

**Mikiea Perkins**  
San Diego County



To amplify the voices of Black queer womxn in the arts and generate resources for the creative community, Mikiea launched SoulKiss Theater in July 2020, an arts education organization centering on and celebrating the voices of Black queer womxn, creating a pathway into the industry.

**Bridgid Ryan**  
Los Angeles County

Bridgid is creating a pathway for Queer, Trans, and Nonbinary artists into the entertainment industry through an 8-week writing workshop that guides them through the completion of their first screenplay, reaching for relief from isolation through self-expression while creating a strong network.



# Teams

## Arts.Co.Lab

San Francisco County



**Team Members: Arturo Méndez, Therese Davis**

In 2020, Arturo, supported by Therese, started Arts.Co.Lab and the Transformative Grant Writing program, a training program for artists from underserved communities to access funding. They have successfully created a pedagogic model based on collaboration and compassion, and we are fostering a thriving network that is building up a local infrastructure to support the creative economy, dismantling the current inequitable funding ecosystem in the arts in the Bay Area.

## BlaQyard

Alameda County



**Team Members: Stephanie Hewett, Gabriele Christian, Chibueze Crouch, Dan Carroll, Breonna Carter**

Stephanie and her team formed BlaQyard, a collective land project positioning a rental space as a community site for BlaQ artist empowerment, land education, and discreet workshop space, pushing for the liberation of the land for longer-term community use in East Oakland.

## Compton Arts Project

Los Angeles County



**Team Members: Marva Smith, Rosalind McGary**

Led by Marva and Rosalind, the Compton Arts Project is developing arts and cultural programming to significantly impact and improve community health and wellness and create the City of Compton's first Cultural District.

## Level Ground Collective

Los Angeles County



**Team Members: Samantha Curley, Reneice Charles, Leslie Foster, Rebekah Neel, Lily Epps, yétúndé olagbaju, Bri Stokes**

Through community research, organizing, and collective decision-making, the Level Ground team and board radically reorganized and restructured its organization into a decentralized, cooperative 501(c)3 rather than a typical hierarchical nonprofit. They have since shared their model and learnings with other organizations in their field.



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