



Press Release

For Immediate Release
October 2, 2017
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Center for Cultural Innovation Grants Artistic Innovation Awards to Bay Area Performing and Media Artists

San Francisco – The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) today announced six new grantees of the *Investing in Artists* program. Awards of up to \$7,500 each were granted for Artistic Innovation projects proposed by performing and media artists to create new work that pushes the envelope of their creative process. The program is made possible with support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The *Investing in Artists grants program* is designed to support diverse working artists in the 11 counties surrounding the San Francisco Bay Area. Grant funds support awardees in pursuing new collaborations, creative growth, and artistic experimentation that extends the boundaries of their art-making.

Out of 106 applicants, the six grantees of the *Investing in Artists Grants* are:

Swapan Chaudhuri (Folk/Traditional Music) to develop a new collaboration with Houman Pourmehdi of the Persian Lian Ensemble, exploring ancient musical roots in modern times.

Jennifer Crystal Chien (Media Arts) to create *The Highway* - a hybrid stop-motion animation, short documentary film that illustrates the history and context of highway protests against police violence represented by toy-scale figures and sets.

Paul S. Flores (Multidisciplinary) to create *We Have Ire* - a performance exploring issues of transnational identity with a focus on AfroCuban and Cuban-American artists in the U.S. and their influence on local culture.

Diana Markosian (Multidisciplinary) to develop a book and film focused on immigration through the eyes of her family who came to the United States from post-Soviet Russia.

Sarita P. Ocón (Theatre) to collaborate with Studio Grand Oakland to offer a pilot theatre lab initiative intended to nurture a new generation of women of color and queer women of color voices in the Bay Area.

Rebecca E. Novick (Theater) to develop *Storybank for the Resistance* - a methodology for rapid-response stories that can be used by activist and community groups to effect change.

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CCI President and CEO Angie Kim said, “We are excited to help this year’s group of exceptional artists afford opportunities to challenge themselves artistically. The grantees reflect the breadth and depth of the Bay Area’s artistic community, with projects spanning various disciplines, artists across generations, and efforts that reflect both proscenium-stage and community-based practices.”

The 2017 *Investing in Artists* Organizational Grants program granted \$45,000. This is the third cycle of a three-year granting program that began in 2007 to enhance the working lives and strengthen the creative support system for California working artists.

A panel of distinguished experts assisted CCI in reviewing the *Investing in Artists* applications, including: Dale Albright of Theatre Bay Area, Kyoko Yoshida of US Japan Cultural Trade Network, Latanya d. Tigner of Dimensions Dance Theater, and Torange Yeghiazarian of Golden Thread Productions.

About the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI)

The Center for Cultural Innovation was founded in 2001 as a California 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation. Its mission is to promote knowledge-sharing, networking, and financial independence for individual artists and creative entrepreneurs by providing business training, grants, and incubating innovative projects that create new program knowledge, tools, and practices for artists in the field. For more information, please visit www.cciarts.org.

About the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation helps people build measurably better lives, concentrating its resources on activities in education, the environment, global development and population, performing arts, and philanthropy, as well as grants to support disadvantaged communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information, please visit www.hewlett.org.

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