



Press Release

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Center for Cultural Innovation Awards Artistic Innovation Grants to Bay Area Performing and Media Artists

San Francisco – The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) today announced eight new grantees of the Investing in Artists program. Awards of \$8,250 each were granted for Artistic Innovation projects proposed by performing and media artists in the San Francisco Bay Area. The program is made possible with support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

First launched in 2007, Investing in Artists supports artists who are creating new work that pushes the envelope of their creative process, explores new artistic collaborations, and/or supports artistic growth and experimentation that extends the boundaries of their art-making.

Out of 72 eligible applications, the eight Investing in Artists grantees are (project discipline and county of residence noted in parentheses):

Yawen Chien (Theatre & Video/Santa Clara County) to support the development of a modern shadow-puppet theater production that explores the challenges and resilience of girls forced into marriage and child labor in 1950s Asia.

Venus Jones (Film & Animation/Santa Clara County) to support the production of *Lil' Red is Riding the Wrong Way in the Hood*, a short, animated parody that deals with human trafficking, especially among black and brown youth.

Maribel Martinez (Theatre/Santa Clara County) to support the development of a bilingual theatre production for young audiences that expands the representation of LGBTQ youth of color and reflects the lived experiences and ancestral teachings of Chicanx youth.

Emily Meehan (Film/Santa Cruz County) to support the production and release of *Concurrent*, a short film about two female surfers in Santa Cruz who have survived sexual trauma and use surfing and creative expression as their main tools toward healing, health, and reconnection.

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Sruti Sarathy (Music/Santa Clara County) to support the development of *Carnatic Crossings*, a cross-cultural music performance featuring new compositions that experiment with the Indian classical form through raga-based improvisation, speculative historical collaborations, and spoken word.

Lisa Sniderman (Musical Theatre/San Mateo County) to support the development of *The Grieving Project Musical*, a spoken word musical exploring concepts of mental health, transformation, identity, grieving, and thriving, intended for chronically ill and disabled communities.

Terrance Walker (Music/San Mateo County) to support the development of *Group Therapy*, a community-based, healing-centered music project.

Alisa Yang (Multidisciplinary/Santa Clara County) to support the development of a short VR immersive film that narrates the story of Afong Moy, the first known Asian woman immigrant in America in 1834, through the rooms of an imagined love hotel.

“From experimenting with classical forms to exploring themes of healing and renewal, Investing in Artists’ 2022 grantees give us a window into our cultural milieu,” says CCI Program Director, Laura Poppiti. “Through their work in the performing and media arts, these artists bolster the Bay Area’s identity as a stronghold of artistic and cultural innovation, experimentation, and expression, and we are honored to support them.”

The 2022 Investing in Artists program awarded \$66,000 in project support grants. This is the second round of the program’s current three-year grant cycle. This cycle is marked by significant updates from previous ones: the number of awards available for each round has increased from six to eight; the maximum award amount has increased from \$8,000 to \$8,250; and, we are rotating Bay Area counties that are eligible for support. For the 2022 application round, artists residing in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San Mateo Counties were eligible to apply. In 2021, artists residing in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco Counties were eligible to apply while the 2023 round will make eligible artists residing in Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. In so doing, CCI will target resources more intentionally to all ten Bay Area counties.

A group of panelists reflecting a diverse range of knowledge and perspectives assisted CCI in reviewing the Investing in Artists applications, including Gilbert Guerrero (co-founder and co-director of Shapeshifters Cinema), Tammy L. Hall (pianist, composer, educator, and musical director), Stuck Sanders (dancer, choreographer, and educator), and Parul Wadhwa (new media artist and immersive storyteller).

CCI would like to extend a special thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their outreach and networking support: Arte del Corazón, Arts Council Santa Cruz County, City of San José - Office of Cultural Affairs, Content Magazine, Cristal Avila - Santa Cruz Application Ambassador, Frederica Smith - Santa Cruz Application Ambassador, genARTS Silicon Valley, InterMusic SF, Robert Parra - Philanthropist/Creative Producer, San Mateo County Office of Arts and Culture, and School of Arts and Culture at the Mexican Heritage Plaza.

About the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI)

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was founded in 2001 as a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Our 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. For more information about CCI, please visit www.cciarts.org.