



## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
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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 \$8,000 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 164 applicants, the six *Investing in Artists* grantees are:

**Alyah Baker** (Dance) to create *(em)Bodied Return*, a multi-media exhibit and performance piece that explores the notion of the Black Body as a HOME and a place of belonging amidst mass displacement/disenfranchisement impacting folks of color.

**María de la Rosa** (Multidisciplinary) to create *Las Peteneras*, an exploration of female archetypes in Mexican music.

**Meklit Hadero** (Music) to create *The Path Became Song*, a new body of music aimed at deconstructing and expanding notions of Ethio-Jazz for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Alicia Kester** (Media Arts) to complete post-production on *Yesterday*, a new short narrative film demonstrating how sisterhood can offer hope amid the human trafficking crisis.

**Jean Melesaine** (Multidisciplinary) to support the creation of a fictional short film based on the intricacies of Samoans who've lived in San Francisco's Hunters Point subsidized housing.

**Vân-ánh Võ** (Folk/Traditional Music) to create *Songs of Protest*, a multimedia project representing voices of women of color and challenging the notion of traditional female roles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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“We are excited to support this year’s group of exceptional artists to pursue opportunities that challenge themselves artistically,” says CCI Program Director, Bay Area, Laura Poppiti. “These 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 topical subject matter and innovative practices.”

The 2018 *Investing in Artists* program granted \$48,000. This is the first cycle of a three-year granting program that originally 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: Idris Ackamoor of Cultural Odyssey, Rodrigo Garcia of Teatro Visión, Madeleine Lim of Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project, and Judith Smith of Axis Dance.

#### **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](http://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](http://www.hewlett.org).

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