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The National Arts and Disability Center Announces the Recipients of the Arts and Accessibility Program Awards to Artists with Disabilities and Arts Organizations in California

Los Angeles, CA – With support from the California Arts Council, the National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) has awarded $136,000 to 58 recipients of the Arts and Accessibility Program. In 2020 we will award $384,000 in grants, triple the amount awarded than in previous years.

The Arts and Accessibility Program offers artists with disabilities technical assistance and financial support to further their careers in the arts. It also offers arts organizations the opportunity to design and provide services to make their arts programing accessible to all participants or audiences.

“It is remarkable that in the midst of the current health and economic crisis that is significantly impacting arts workers that artists with disabilities and arts organizations want to continue their creative practice. The Arts and Accessibility Program is a proactive approach to supporting these endeavors,” said Dr. Olivia Raynor, Founder and Director of the National Arts and Disability Center.
Following an open call for applications, submissions were adjudicated by peer reviewers made up of experts from arts and cultural fields and artists with disabilities that represent California's diverse geography, racial, ethnic, and gender identities.

Interested artists and arts organizations are encouraged to visit the NADC website to learn about future grant opportunities.

Read here to see Cycle 1 awarded artists and arts organizations.

**ARTISTS AWARDED CYCLE 1**

**Kenny Aitken** was awarded $3,000 to produce a full magazine style art book. The book aims to bring awareness to stereotypes regarding disabilities.

**Nahshon Dion Anderson** was awarded $2,658 to create a book proposal and hire a top developmental editor to help edit and market the book.

**Marik Berghs** was awarded $3,000 to move to another level of literary and visual art by creating a website for her freelance work.

**Ana Carrillo** was awarded $3,000 to pay for studio fees for six months and an assistant in order to complete a new series of pieces reflective of a spiritual journey. Included in this collection will be one public art piece, a painted bench, to be placed in a community garden for all to enjoy.

**Vanessa Cruz** was awarded $1,614 to attend *Bodytraffic Dance Company* Summer Virtual Dance Intensive to further her experience and training as a disabled dancer. As a disabled dancer, it has been her passion to gain access to equal opportunities to train in a variety of dance techniques.

**Sharon Chappell, PhD** was awarded $3,000 to produce her play *Ash and Feather, A Bird/Girl and Her Father’s Cancer*. All proceeds will be donated to the National Brain Tumor Society. Inspired by her father’s two cancers, and her own struggles with depression, panic and anxiety, Sharon has written a play to support tweens and teens emotionally and creatively, focusing on an age group for whom live theater is not often produced.

**Rick Darnell** was awarded $1,653 to further his professional goals to increase his engagement in arts and cultural activities among neighborhood residents. *The Music Box Orchestra Salon* is a fun project that will demonstrates Rick’s ability to craft social practice art projects that are accessible to people from a wide range of cultures, and abilities. This workshop will provide Rick an opportunity to work with artists with visual impairments at the Lighthouse for the Blind.
**Victor Dean** was awarded $3,000 to produce a film entitled *Ms. Jackson’s Show and Tell*, an animated short film written, directed, and narrated by Victor Dean, with music by Prince Roger Nelson. The film is based on a chance encounter that Dean had with the Artist Formally Known as Prince at the Black College Radio Conference in the late 1990s. This project will be produced in conjunction with the estate of Prince, the new executive director at Paisley Park, Alan Seiffert, who is willing to help with this process.

**Patricia Doktor** was awarded $3,000 to use footage she has gathered over several months of an after-school theatre arts class using the most dynamic clips and edit them together into one 10-minute video of the performance. The edited video will be shared with the school, student body, parents, and community.

**Pete Eckert** was awarded $3,000 to do a photo shoot of the Redwoods at the Avenue of The Giants in California. Pete’s technique will include the use of double exposure film photography combining the Redwoods and churches into one image. His goal is to show the majesty of the Redwoods and their spiritual meaning to him.

**Catherine Herrera** was awarded $3,000 for her project *Martin’s Beach*, a high-quality 60-minute documentary film and multi-media project about the fight to restore public access to the locally and internationally renowned Martin’s Beach, a fishing and surfing spot off the San Francisco Bay coast, closed off in 2011. The creation of a content-rich online community will be dedicated to California Coastal Public Access for educating and engaging audiences on Coastal Public Access.

**Janis Butler Holm** was awarded $2,158 to hire sound artists to set up her author website, website hosting and Facebook page. Janis participate in a 10-hour internship with the Alliance of Los Angeles Playwrights during which she will interview theater artists--playwrights, actors, theater personnel--about making art in the post-pandemic arts world. These interviews, conducted by phone and email, will then be published on her new website.

**Daniela Hurezanu aka Alta Ifland** was awarded $2,500 for promotional material regarding her forthcoming novel, *The Wife Who Wasn’t* (New Europe Books, February, 2021). The promotional includes the creation of a new web page with links to excerpts from the novel published in magazines, blurbs from other writers, a book description, and links to venues to buy the book and a promotional trailer/film.

**Donna F. Ivery** was awarded $3,000 to create an audiobook of her award-winning inspirational memoir, *Sleep, Pray, Heal: A Path to Wholeness and Well-Being*. The audiobook will be available on Amazon and Audible.

**Vicki Lawrence** was awarded $1,822 to continue to learn art forms that have been previously inaccessible and teach them in the community so that others can engage and create art. At the end of the year, Vicki intends to have an art show to display the art that she has learned and created. She plans to use these newly acquired skills to continue her journey and dream of
teaching arts within the community including those with and without developmental disabilities.

Ted Maeyer was awarded $3,000 to create and shoot artist interviews in order to document and share the life of those living with chronic illness. Ted believes that the interviews will help others to understand life of those living with a chronic illness.

Jessica McBrayer was awarded $3,000 to pay for digital marketing and advertising in order to grow her readership and help her become self-sufficient.

Alison O’Daniel was awarded $3,000 to push the boundaries of filmmaking and increase disability representation in cinema. Reimagining sound and the aural world, The Tuba Thieves is a feature length hybrid film that fictionalizes real events and lived experiences through a hard of hearing sensory system. Intercut with reenactments of historical concerts, a Deaf drummer explores her connection to music with her hearing father and hearing boyfriend while marching band students reconcile with tuba thefts from Southern California high schools. As a hard of hearing filmmaker, Alison consistently writes, produces, and scores her films with Deaf and hearing artists working together and with this project she will bring together Deaf and hearing audiences.

Robert Howard Ott was awarded $3,000 to complete a major milestone as both a recording artist and composer. Rob is a musician who is native to California and has composed and recorded a collection of 14 new contemplative works for solo piano. An artist who manages two disabilities—dyslexia and a chronic health condition—Rob turned to creating music in order to heal himself and find meaning in the face of challenging circumstances. His premiere Album is entitled Sound Offering.

Joshua Ramirez was awarded $3,000 to develop a website, purchase a camera, buy arts materials and create his own studio space. Many institutions and galleries have requested studio visits and to see his work documented on his website. Joshua has not been able to provide this in the past and as a result he lost out on many commissions and grants. He will also create 10 pieces of new art to add to his portfolio.

Xairan Aedn Ray was awarded $1,406 to create new art. Xairan is interested in the DIY and emerging curators and curation spaces that are representing artists as they are the next generation of artist representation. Funds will pay for new art supplies that he will use to create art that will be showcased at local exhibits.

Robert Rootenberg was awarded $3,000 to enroll in an online Process Painting facilitator training with Stewart Cubley’s The Painting Experience, purchase new materials and participate in live painting workshops. His goal is to work with individuals (either remotely, in groups, or one on one) in making art for process, not product.
Naomi Rose was awarded $3,000 to become a member of the Professional Artist Cooperative and travel to create work. She will expand her artistic techniques with new materials and seascapes from life while on location at the rugged northern California coast.

Maria Schechter was $3,000 awarded to capture the experiences of young women who have changed the world with their courage. Maria will create 7 paintings in 5 months which will document the following women: Greta Thunberg, Emma Gonzalez, Simone Biles, Malala Yousafzai, Marley Diaz, Shamma bint Suhail Faris Mazrui and Desmond Napoles. The paintings will be exhibited in December at the Palo Alto Public Library. Femmes de Courage Extraordinaire marks the celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage. The funds will be used to purchase materials for Maria’s new body of work. Along with materials, it will allow her to secure professional documentation of her final body of work.

Maryann Seyedzadeh was awarded $3,000 to create a performance and present a stronger visual presence onstage with image, dancers and musicians. This new project will build her skills as a choreographer and music director overseeing all aspects of producing a live show.

Lisa Sniderman was awarded $3,000 to create/hold a free multi-media virtual summit online. Living with a rare chronic illness for 12 years, Lisa has some challenges in creating, and connecting with others. Her summit addresses these limitations and brings people together virtually to help others who struggle with chronic illness thrive. She will market, promote, produce and host the summit as well as produce 30 video interviews.

Michaelche Swisher was awarded $2,690 to promote her paintings directly to art buyers and reengage with art collectors. Her goal is to increase direct sales and balance her income to not be solely dependent on gallery sales with their seasonal schedules and own ups and downs.

Samuel Valdez was awarded $3,000 to create a collection of stories that reveal the struggles and success of the disability community. The stories will be shared as a live performance or through virtual platforms as a form of activism for the disability community. The Tell Me Your Story project will be including a combination of art forms to bring out the best of each story; storytelling, music, dance, and visual art.

Anthony Wardlow was awarded $1,037 to create at least 12 new pieces of scratchboard art exploring the theme of animals in nature for a show at Sophie’s Kensington Gallery. Anthony wants to enhance his art sales by offering a line of giftware items, including greeting cards and mugs, using his new images for sale at St. Madeleine Sophie’s Center gift shops and on Sophie’s online shopping site.

Dyvonne Washington was awarded $3,000 to have a dedicated workspace to create her floral designs. In order to advance her creative work and floral design business she will purchase a shed that has a built-in loft for storage of inventory, and shelving for ready accessible saleable products. Funds will be used for the purchase of the shed, card stock and new supplies needed to create her floral crafts.
ORGANIZATIONS AWARDED CYCLE 1

**CRE Outreach** was awarded $5,000 to develop an original live theatrical experience, *Escape Xibalba: A Sightless Experience*. This participatory event is much like an escape room, where the audience must work together and solve riddles to move forward to the conclusion of the experience. This escape room, led by members of Theatre by the Blind, will be conducted completely in the dark. Through this experience, visually impaired guides will push audience members to change their perceptions about the capabilities of people with vision impairment, about who has access to theatre, and what it takes to navigate through society—using an ancient underworld as a metaphor for our modern society.

**Fresh Meat Productions** was awarded $5,000 to create their new #stayFRESHatHOME video series. This series will feature 12 short videos on wellness and movement created by—and intended to raise the visibility of—disabled and nondisabled transgender, gender-nonconforming and queer artists. All videos will be closed captioned to support access for Deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences. Videos will offer everything from: wheelchair and seated improvisation (Marc Brew), jazz dance basics taught in American Sign Language (Antoine Hunter), bachata dance for beginners (Jahaira Fajardo & Angelica Medina), guided meditation (Lev White), and more. There is limited video content currently available that is created BY and FOR trans/gnc people like this.

**Hanford Multicultural Theater Company** was awarded $2,750 to support two artists, one with autism spectrum disorder and one with severe learning disabilities to learn the art of puppetry from a master puppeteer who has ADHD. Together they will create a puppetry program and perform shows for Hanford Multicultural Theater Company all-inclusive audience.

**Hope Center for the Arts** was awarded $5,000 to reconnect and grow its artists with disabilities community remotely through a multi-pronged project called ‘Hope Remote Services.’ The objective of the project is to ensure that every adult with intellectual disabilities who chooses, receives vital services not just during this pandemic but beyond. It is HOPE’s intention to provide their community members the digital means to maintain a connection to community, and access to services critical to their continued growth and development.

**Invertigo Dance Co.** was awarded $5,000 to create a micro-documentary focused on the work and artists of Dancing Through Parkinson’s (DTP) which will include closed captioning; hiring accessibility consultants Jeanie McNamara (a dancer, a person with Parkinson’s, and a DTP participant with 42 years of experience as an educator), and Mike Mac (a music producer and composer who has a physical disability) to access the impact and accessibility needs of the DTP program and consult on the documentary; create a robust and flexible virtual DTP classroom with closed captioning to complement in-person classes and support the diversity of its students.
Muralism was awarded $3,000 to update PB’s *Museo al Aire Libre* (Open Air Museum) which is composed of five large-scale display of panels that are located on the Van Nuys corridor, a heavy trafficked area in the Southeast area of the San Fernando Valley. In collaboration with Pacoima Beautiful, this project will support the employment of artists with disabilities while connecting them to other community members. Each panel will be designed by Muralism artists to focus on the 2020 Census. The Muralism artists create a coloring-book style drawing on the wall and invite community members including local schools, police officers, firemen, neighborhood council members, churches, scouts and the public at large to come fill in the colors at a paint day event.

**New Filmmakers Los Angeles (NFMLA)** was awarded $5,000 to support a film festival event spotlighting disabled talent both behind and in from of the camera. NFMLA partnered with the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge to premiere 13 short films made by filmmakers with disabilities. The films will be followed by an audience-lead Q&A with the filmmakers and talent.

**New Musicals Inc.** was awarded $4,975 for *Burning the Cradle*. *Burning the Cradle*, told entirely in sign language, is part of a musical internet series of spooky tales and stories of the slightly bizarre, called *Tales from a Darkening Wood*, developed and produced by New Musicals Inc. To date, New Musicals Inc. has shot five short 6-minute episodes featuring solo Deaf actors – *Burning the Cradle* is an expansion of the vision, in a longer format, and featuring multiple storytellers. New Musical hopes that this production will create not only opportunities to compensate Deaf actors, but also to showcase their talent, and share it with a digital public.

**Outside the Lens** was awarded $5,000 to provide [vis]ability: Voice + Vision Creative Arts Training to artists with disabilities. Participating artists with developmental disabilities will join a safe and transformative learning community, curate their own exhibition, create a digital portfolio, and engage their audience around their artistic voice and vision. This 6-week, once a week training and culminating exhibition will integrate 15 new artists, ages 18-25 into the creative economy and artistic community, promoting an intersectional awareness and sustainable impact by increasing visibility for artists with disabilities. Located within the Arts District, Liberty Station, Outside the Lens has an ADA Compliant community-based gallery and Learning Center that opens doors to educational opportunities for new and emerging artists. [vis]ability: Creative Arts Training provides opportunities for artists with disabilities to be an integral part of the creative community, while producing and showcasing their work and sharing their voice and vision for a better future.

**The Music Center** was awarded $5,000 toward the Very Special Arts Festival. Due to COVID 19 this annual festival will be held as an online event on November 6th followed by an in-person festival at the Music Center Plaza in 2021. The online festivities will be split between performances by students with disabilities and performances by adult performing artists with disabilities.

**Youth Philharmonic Orchestra** was awarded $4,480 to teach Drum Power, a series of music classes that increases visibility and access to artists and students with disabilities through
teaching, playing, and performing on drums. They are converting their in-person 12-week series to a hybrid of in-person and online classes. Drum Power is taught by Juan Sanchez, a talented musician who modified his life 24 years ago after an accident to accommodate a wheelchair in order to continue teaching, performing on drums, and engaging an audience through interaction and education.