



KeepArtHappening.org

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Arts and Education Council launches Diversifying the Arts grant program

Nine grants awarded to arts organizations to increase the availability and accessibility of arts experiences

ST. LOUIS, MO – Oct. 24, 2019 – The [Arts and Education Council](#) has awarded nine grants to local arts organizations who demonstrate diversity or seek to expand support of programs, leadership and access and that show promise for creative new directions in arts and cultural programming. The Creative Impact Fund for Diversifying the Arts, administered by the Arts and Education Council, is funded by a \$50,000 gift from local community leaders. These nine grants will increase the availability and accessibility of arts experiences across the bi-state region.

“The Arts and Education Council recognizes that diversity means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies.” said Cynthia A. Prost, Arts and Education Council president and CEO. “We’re proud to support greater understanding and appreciation of our differences throughout our neighborhoods, classrooms, artistic venues and beyond with these grants.”

Organizations receiving Creative Impact Fund for Diversifying the Arts grants are (in alphabetical order):

The Black Rep will perform “Bubbling Brown Sugar,” a musical intended to create a feeling of community among their culturally and socially diverse audience.

CAIR-Missouri will introduce the St. Louis community to Islamic culture through its Great Muslim Food Festival.

Cinema St. Louis will produce its thirteenth annual QFest, a program focused on exposing St. Louis audiences to diverse stories of love, hope and inspiration through films that celebrate LGBTQ+ culture around the world.

In collaboration with **Creative Reaction Lab**, ethnically diverse youth groups will be given the opportunity to become leaders in designing healthy and equitable communities.

Gateway Korea Foundation will curate a collection on Korean textile art in conjunction with the Saint Louis Art Museum.

The Griot Museum of Black History will produce an illustrated booklet that tells the stories of prominent, African American historical figures.

Educational programs of the **Intersect Arts Center** will continue to encourage participants of all ages to explore various mediums of artwork through studio sessions, mentorship and exhibitions.

Transcending the Spectrum, an art exhibition developed by the **Metro Trans Umbrella Group**, will provide a space for underrepresented artistic communities to showcase and sell their work.

MindsEye will create a safe space for artists, people with disabilities and community leaders to discuss how to best address the challenges that affect their communities. Through these forums, they hope to foster conversations that will positively impact accessibility in the St. Louis area.

Applications were reviewed by a community advisory panel at the Arts and Education Council's Centene Center for the Arts, an arts incubator in the heart of the Grand Center Arts District.

In June, an advisory committee was formed to guide the Arts and Education Council in the program's development. The 2019 committee is (in alphabetical order): **Chris Clark**, artistic director of Cinema St. Louis; **Carmen Dence**, founder and artistic director of Grupo Atlantico; **Jason Frazier**, president and CEO of MindsEye; **Ron Himes**, founder and producing director of the Saint Louis Black Repertory Company; **Sayer Johnson**, executive director and co-founder of Metro Trans Umbrella Group; **Faizan Syed**, executive director of the Missouri chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MO); and **Solomon Thurman, Jr.**, artist and co-owner of 10th Street Gallery. Arts and Education Council board members Terrance J. Good, Sara Burke and Keith Tyrone Williams also serve on the committee.

For more information about the Arts and Education Council's grant programs, visit KeepArtHappening.org/grant-programs.

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About the Arts and Education Council: *Keep Art Happening*. – The Arts and Education Council ensures the 16-county, bi-state region is rich with arts and cultural experiences for all through programs and services that support more than 70 organizations each year, including: operating grants; arts incubation at the Centene Center for the Arts; PNC Program Grants; the Creative Impact Fund, with lead support from Bayer Fund; Creative Impact Fund for Diversifying the Arts; the Maritz Arts and Education Fund for Teachers; Bayer Fund Rural Community Arts Program grants; the Art Education Fund, underwritten by Wells Fargo Advisors; the Catalyst Innovation Lab; the Katherine Dunham Fellowship; the stARTup Creative Competition; Leadership Roundtables; Arts Marketers; the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association; the Keep Art Happening Scholarship; and the St. Louis Arts Awards.

The Arts and Education Council is entirely funded by individual donors, corporations and foundations in the St. Louis region. Since its inception in 1963 as the region's only privately-supported united arts fund, the Arts and Education Council has raised and distributed more than \$100 million in private funding for the arts – a significant contribution that directly impacts the quality of life in our region. The Arts and Education Council meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Charity Standards and has earned the Wise Giving Seal of Approval, a three-star rating from Charity Navigator and a Guidestar Exchange Gold Participant rating.

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