

# YES and NO

Conversations About Thriving  
with Artists of Color  
in the Twin Cities

A Report for the  
McKnight Foundation

June 1, 2015

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs  
at the University of Minnesota

## THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive. The McKnight Foundation arts program supports working artists to create and contribute to vibrant communities. As creators, innovators, and leaders, Minnesota's working artists are the primary drivers of our heralded arts and cultural community, and arts organizations play a crucial role in fostering and amplifying their work. This study, developed in partnership with the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota with project leads Neeraj Mehta (CURA) and Arleta Little (McKnight), is a targeted exploration of the perspectives and experiences of working artists of color designed to inform McKnight's philanthropic planning and practices in the arts.

**Over the course of three months during the spring of 2015, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) interviewed 25 working artists of color in the Twin Cities region.**

At CURA we recognize the vital role that artists play in building strong, vibrant places and communities. Artists are important and effective community developers and community builders, providing new ways to approach building community with the goal of improving neighborhoods. CURA supports arts- and culture-related research and planning projects, and provides small grants to community organizations, arts organizations, and individual artists.



Mike Hoyt



Dyani Whitehawk

# We see arts and culture in communities as more than a luxury for the benefit of some, but as essential ingredients that should exist everywhere for the benefit of all.

The Twin Cities arts and culture scene is rich and expansive. It exists strongly in small places and in large institutions, in places easily seen and places more hidden. Yet at the same time as we acknowledge the artistic strength of our region, we are aware of the ways in which not everyone benefits from the cultural assets and thriving cultural economy of our region.

Too often our approaches to understanding or addressing these complicated realities take a universal approach rather than a targeted approach to inquiry and analysis. This project was created specifically to hear from working artists of color directly on important questions related to their well being as artists, individuals and community.

*Thank you to the McKnight Foundation for their support of this project, and their shared belief about the importance of artists in our region and communities.*

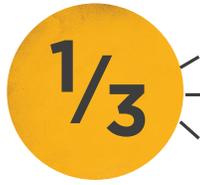
**The project began by identifying artists inside of our own networks, the networks of the McKnight Foundation and through recommendations from other artists.** In the end, we spent time listening and learning from 25 local artists of color. They are an amazing group of talented, fierce, persistent, courageous, creative, tenacious, motivated, one size does not fit all group of people. Two hours with each of them was not nearly enough time to uncover the wisdom each artist holds from their deep experiences as artists in the Twin Cities (and beyond). Below is the list of artists interviewed.

- |   |                  |    |                    |    |                       |
|---|------------------|----|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | E.G. Bailey      | 10 | Maria Isa          | 18 | Aki Shibata           |
| 2 | D.A. Bullock     | 11 | Andrea Jenkins     | 19 | Xavier Tavera         |
| 3 | Shá Cage         | 12 | Tish Jones         | 20 | Fres Thao             |
| 4 | Kenna Cottman    | 13 | Alberto Justiniano | 21 | Saymoukda Vongsay     |
| 5 | Roger Cummings   | 14 | Oskar Ly           | 22 | Chaun Webster         |
| 6 | Adrienne Doyle   | 15 | Chaka Mkali        | 23 | Dyani White Hawk Polk |
| 7 | Jeremiah Ellison | 16 | Dipankar Mukherjee | 24 | May Lee Yang          |
| 8 | Nimo Farah       | 17 | Meena Natarajan    | 25 | Marcus Young          |
| 9 | Mike Hoyt        |    |                    |    |                       |

The arc of our conversation with each artist was fairly simple. It came down to five questions that served as the guide for our learning.



# So what did we learn?



- said **yes** they are thriving.
- said **no** they are not thriving.
- said **'yes and no.'**

*We learned that in some ways artists of color are just like other artists.*

- They want to get better and better and better at what they do.
- They want to be able to direct and control how they spend their time and what they work on.
- They want to be connected and related to each other.
- They want health insurance, they want financial stability, and they want money to save for their kids' college tuition.
- They want a sense of purpose that defines their work.
- They want time, and money and dedicated space (physical and social) for their artistic practice.

*All of the artists interviewed have a deeply embedded growth mindset, with a strong desire to:*

- Deepen their learning.
- Deepen their relationships to others.
- Deepen their connection to their community (geographic and/or cultural).

*They want to be creatively, economically and socially strong.*

- They want to tinker and test and practice.
- They want to take risks.
- They want space for reflection and learning, time away from the dance floor to go to the balcony and look at their work (past, present and future) and plan for what needs to happen next in their lives as artists.

While we identified likely similarities between the artists of color we interviewed and artists more

generally, we also heard themes that seem unique to working artists of color about what it means to thrive.

## **The wellbeing of their cultural and geographic community matters significantly to their definition of thriving.**

The artists of color we interviewed are operating deeply at the intersection of arts and community. When asked 'what does it mean for you to thrive as an artist of color?' almost every artist spoke to some degree or another about the interdependent nature of their lives and practice with the wellbeing of their community. Success to them is not simply measured by individual success or individual genius.



What it means for me to thrive as an artist is that the Black community is thriving and that the people who are in my neighborhood, at my school and near my studio are walking in the power of knowing who we are and how we do things and the power our art brings us, and then we start to leverage that power into political power, power to change our schools, power to have our environment the way we want it, so what it means for me to thrive is for my people to walk in their cultural power."

## **Artists of color are operating inside of, next to and around arts institutions and arts structures that perpetuate the same racial, social and economic inequities found elsewhere.**

Many of the artists spoke to the structural racism embedded in major arts institutions, both in how/which work is presented and supported, but also how artists are funded. They described the reality of having to move around white

dominated space and the challenges and barriers that reality creates, especially as they work to challenge status quo, are developing works outside of mainstream American and European traditions and canons, or are pushing institutions and systems to operate more equitably. Some artists see themselves as working to shape and transform these places; others have exited and are working to create new systems and institutions.

“How can you understand my art if you do not understand my community? How can you value my art if you do not value my community?”

“We know the blueprint for building preeminent white arts institutions, now let's do that for communities of color. Stop pretending it's so hard. You know what to do.”

“I don't want to mess with white institutions that privilege other white people.”

“As a black person I am constantly defending myself, explaining myself, tamping myself down so that people can take it. Changing myself, lying to people so they don't feel whatever they are feeling about their whiteness and guilt and this image they have about white institutions and systems.”

## Artists of color want their own space.

The idea of space was broken down into many different ideas and concepts. There is the deep commitment and desire to owning real physical space. Be that a film house, a theater, or a cooperative bookstore, the notion of owning real estate and the control and connection to community that owning space provides was a thread seen through many of our conversations. The other kind of space that artists spoke to was the space to be with each other, on their own terms, with agendas they created, with facilitators

they chose, not under the control of anyone but themselves. Some articulated this space as necessary for learning and mentoring purposes, others for reflection, and still others wanted space with each other for strategizing and plotting for a brighter future.

“We need space together. Space for us by us. Space to create more. Space to connect. Space to build. Space to develop. Space away. Space to dream. Space to imagine. Space to have fun.”

“In order to thrive as an artist, space is an invaluable resource and space that I have ownership stake in. Owning dirt. That is essential to me thriving right now.”

## Artists of color are more than just one thing.

Many artists spoke to the challenge of having to 'check the box' of one thing when having to describe either themselves or their artistic practice or forms, and the limitations they felt this created in people understanding and appreciating the fullness of themselves and their art.

“I am a dancer. I am African American. I am a poet. I am a teacher. I am a community member. I am a student. I'm Latino. I write plays. I write books. I run a business. I produce. I perform. I make films. I take photos. I tell stories. I sing. I'm an organizer. I'm a nonprofit leader. I'm an actor.”

“So when you don't fall into neat categories you are constantly having to explain yourself before you even are able to enter the game.”

# What should we do?

**In our attempt to identify themes and recommendations we were hesitant to engage in too much meaning making without engaging more fully with the artists themselves, which we see as an essential next step in successfully developing any future strategy.**

**Within our report we've done three things:**

1. Developed recommendations based on the themes uncovered from our interviews with the 25 artists.
2. Included the words of the artists themselves in the appendix (see appendix II through VII). Their ideas and articulations are powerful and deep and strong enough to stand on their own without any interpretation by us. We encourage the reader to take time reading through the entire appendix.
3. Within our recommendations we note examples of types of programs that might connect to future strategies focused on creating benefit for artists of color in our region. Those examples are more fully described in the appendix (see appendix VIII).

## Recommendations

### **1. Create a program that explicitly targets more financial resources to artists of color to use in flexible ways they define as being supportive of them thriving. (Personally, Professionally and Artistically.)**

- For some this might be taking a class on running a successful arts business, or taking a grant-writing course.
- Some might use the resources for dedicated workspace.
- A few might register for master courses in the Twin Cities or elsewhere.
- And still for others it might mean doing work that engages their community in their practice and art in more intentional ways.
- The Advancing Black Art program in Pittsburgh is a strong example of flexible support with a targeted focus and equity impact.

Dyani Whitehawk



## **2. Develop a cohort program that supports the ability of artists of color to be with each other in meaningful ways, defined by them.**

- Examples of what this could look like might begin by looking at leadership and retreat type programs locally and across the country. (The models shared below are meant to provide examples of the type of structure and format that could be used versus the specific content).
- The Shannon Leadership Institute is a local model that allows nonprofit leaders to be with each other for reflection and renewal either in monthly or quarterly formats for one year. A model like this, targeted to artists of color, could be valuable in many ways. A requirement for this approach would be to allow room for artists themselves to have control over program design/outcomes, facilitator selection and agenda setting.
- The Rockwood Leadership is another model that is relevant. Rockwood provides a weeklong retreat setting for personal development and renewal for leaders and change makers in the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. Their weeklong format of getting leaders away for a week could easily be adapted for a target audience of artists of color, creating an intensive and unique environment.

## **3. Invest in artists' of color community-based work and work they describe as intending a community impact or benefit.**

- Supporting artists of color who work at the intersection of art and community is vital to their definition of thriving.
- The artists we interviewed clearly described the blurring boundaries between their artistic activity and their social change and community work. Artists are looking for ways to explore questions, address issues and develop their practice while pursuing action and engagement in their communities.
- The Surdna Foundation recent RFP for "Artists Engaging in Social Change" is an example of what targeting funding for artist driven projects in communities might look like.
- The Leeway Foundation funding of women and trans artists creating social change is another model of supporting the natural intersections between artists and their communities.
- The Stanton Fellowship of the Durfee Foundation is another, more resource intensive, investment that supports leaders work in thinking and addressing community challenges. The fellowship gives six fellows with \$100,000 over two years to 'think deeply about the intractable problems in their sector, and tease out solutions that will improve life for people of L.A.'

## **4. Show leadership around issues of race and equity in the Twin Cities by talking about race more explicitly and investing in strategies that challenge institutional and structural racism.**

- Tilt your governance and decision-making structures away from prevailing patterns of privilege by educating trustees and other leaders inside the organization on issues related to race, the arts and equity.

### **Six-Foot-Tall Sugarcane By Nimo H. Farah**

She covers her expressions with a shawl,  
modest, but heaven is at her feet  
and I fear God through her.

So I sit on the floor massaging her swollen ankles.

The combination of third and first world  
burdens continue to weigh her down.

She was once a six-foot-tall sugarcane, but now  
she and I are the same height  
and my heaven is seven inches shorter.

- Build equity into your purposes and processes.
  - Develop a racial equity impact assessment for your grant making in the arts.
  - Explore non-traditional ways of grant making like giving circles and peer review committees.
  - Question assumptions about the way things work now or need to work in the future.
- Expand support of artists' of color work that explore new territories beyond traditional canons and challenge mainstream traditions and ideas about what art is.
- Take a visible, public, leadership role in advancing racial, social and economic equity for artists of color.



Xavier Tavera

## hairstory

by: Andrea Jenkins

“All Swallows end up in Capistrano” -

John Edgar Wideman

hair the color of algae

hair, the texture of fog

hair, smelling like slime and sour sausage

wooly, kinky, straight, nappy, curly

thick and unmanageable

unruly, unbecoming

but that's not what you need

to know about this

hair, the crowning summit

hair, connected to the stories

of the past

hair, boot step synchronicity

with so many Black writers

Alice Walker

Alexs Pate

Toni Morrison

G.E. Patterson

Cornelius Eady

Nikky Finney

Terry McMillian

Make room for my blues.

## 5. Bring artists of color together and let them shape whatever program or investment strategy the foundation decides to move forward with in support of artists of color in our region.

- We understand that there are limitations to interviewing 25 artists of color and trying to develop themes and ideas for what should happen next. The approach taken through this process provides meaningful context and should be seen as the start of a conversation, not the completion.
- Many of the artists showed interest in coming together after the individual interviews to be with each other and review the themes and ideas uncovered here. The opportunity to do this would help to ground truth our attempt at creating a summary and would be valuable in allowing for the artists themselves to define what creative, effective and powerful next steps might be, for the artists and also for the McKnight Foundation.
- We also recommend the foundation explore advancing institutional practices that create consistent, predictable ways for artists of color to engage with and influence your grant making priorities and decision making.
  - A great tool to help assess an organization's community engagement practices and to move from outreach to engagement is the “Community Engagement Assessment Tool” developed by local leaders involved with the Building the Field of Community Engagement project.

# Appendix

# I. Demographics

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The following summarizes the demographics of the artists that CURA interviewed. The artists self identified themselves in the following areas:

- Gender
- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
- Art Forms Practicing

## Gender

Among the 25 artists we interviewed, there were

- 12 Males
- 12 Females
- 1 Transgender Female

## Age

The median age of the artists we interviewed is 36 years

## Race/Ethnic Background

- African American
- African American/Black
- Apia/Lao
- Asian American
- Black
- Black American
- Black/African
- Black/Latino/Louisiana Creole
- Hapa/Transracial
- Hawai'an/ Chinese/ Filipino/ Spanish/ German/ English
- Dutch/Scottish
- Hmong French American
- Japanese
- Latino
- Mexican
- Native American/Caucasian
- Puerto Rican/Indigenous Taíno
- South Asian/Indian
- Southeast Asian/Hmong

## Art Forms

The 25 artists combined, practice...62 Art Forms

- Acting
- Administrative
- Animation/Video
- Beadwork
- Behavioral Art
- Betweenness Broker
- Black Dance Forms
- Choreography
- Community Organizing
- Creative Fiction
- Creative Non-Fiction
- Creative Writing
- Cultural Artist & Producer
- Curator
- Dance
- Deliberative Community Practice
- Directing
- DJ
- Drawing
- Education
- Essay
- Fashion Art Design
- Fiction
- Film/Video
- Filmmaking
- Graphic Design
- Hip Hop
- Installation
- Literary Art
- Media Arts
- Mixed media
- Movement
- Multi disciplined
- Music
- Neighborhood Embedded
- Networked Based Interactive
- New Media
- Non-Fiction
- Oral History and Culture
- Painting
- Percussionist
- Performance Art
- Photography
- Playwriting
- Poetry
- Printmaking
- Producing
- Porcupine quillwork
- Public practice
- Screen Printing
- Sculpture
- Shortform
- Singing
- Songwriting
- Spoken Word
- Storytelling
- Theater
- Theater production
- Visual Art
- Vocalist
- Writing
- Zinemaking

## II. What does it mean for you to thrive as a working artist of color?

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- We don't want to take another job.
- Ability to support others.
- Ability to support my community.
- Doing work that your soul wants to do, and being paid fairly for it.
- Sustain your economic support along with creative supports, social supports and spiritual supports.
- Economically sustain ourselves without constantly searching for a job, searching for a contract.
- A sustainable creative space that is resourced.
- Where you can ask the questions you want to ask.
- Control of your own material.
- Define your own trajectory.
- Control.
- Sustainability.
- Remain economically buoyant.
- Ability to pay artists we work with.
- Hiring artists as much as possible.
- Space to create the work.
- Real estate can provide legitimacy, but then there is a contradiction, because people think that a space is an albatross. An illegitimate connection between ownership of land and artistic space to create space.
- Health insurance.
- Ability to take risks.
- To risk and to fail.
  - If we choose well known, mainstream work to present, great.
  - But if we choose not to present Shakespeare, then what?
- Connection to national networks.
- Control. Design. Space. Support/supportive of others. Flexibility.
- Creating bold new work that speaks to our reality.
- Have the time to do the work.
- Time to do what I want, and to choose what I want to work on.
- Income that pays the bills
- Time. Control. Independence.
- To support yourself primarily through your art.
- Thriving not surviving.
- Access to resources. To gallery space. To materials. To opportunities.
- Dreams don't pay the bills.
- Multiple consistent revenue streams.
- To connect my work to my community. Not to just make pretty things.
- I'm thriving when my community is thriving.
- I am in control of the decisions I make. I get to choose.
- To be able to support myself.
- To be able to employ others.
- Not just about my individual well-being.
- Being engaged in a diversity of projects, of my choosing.
- Connection to peers to meet and talk with and learn from.
- Peer learning.
- Having a 30-hour a week job and practicing my art for 30 hours. I don't want to leave my job.
- Health insurance.
- College savings for my kids.
- Pragmatism.
- Not worrying about my basic needs.
- Having space to create (physical and time)
- Having connection to my community.
- I cannot separate the necessities of life from my community because I do not live in a vacuum.
- Art is not a luxury. It is an essential part of our community.
- To be a reflection for my community.
- It is really hard to separate myself from my community.
- I am not just an artist. I am an activist. I am black. I am an organizer.
- To have consistent work that I am excited about. Not just something that pays the bills.

- I always will have a side hustle. Like contract work.
- Work you're engaged with, that validates the trajectory of your career and path.
- Pay my bills. Feed my family.
- Live comfortably in a way that is your full time job.
- To practice my art full time.
- Consulting is part of my job.
- Getting grants and fellowships.
- Being able to pour myself into what I want to create.
- Not using my creative ability to fulfill other people's needs.
- Having my own space.
- Exhibitions.
- Doing artistic talks.
- Teaching.
- Building the field.
- Thriving means I do my art as a job and get to spend time with my family on nights and weekends.
- Having a practice I am excited about.
- Gallery support.
- Recognition within and outside of my cultural field.
- For my work to pay for itself.
- Not being grant funded.
- To focus on the work I am interested in rather than having to do different things to make ends meet.
- Creating new work.
- Time is invaluable. Space is invaluable.
- Space we have ownership over.
- Ownership.
- Being paid for my work. And fairly so I am not exploited.
- Healthcare.
- Regular paycheck.
- Access to resources.
- Access to networks
- To continue creating.
- Salary based off my creations.
- Space to create.
- Financial Stability.
- Creating my own work as distinct from client work.
- Passing knowledge to others.
- Work driven by me. Not by clients/others.
- Time and space to understand my purpose.
- Connection to peers.
  - To be a better tennis player you need to play with better tennis players.
- To go away sometimes from here.
- Work life balance.
- Using my art to improve my community.
- Have all the time I need. Freedom to do the projects I want to do.
- Funding.
- To take healthy risks.
- Paying my bills.
- Being fairly compensated for my work.
- To make a living.
- To identify and connection with an audience within your community.
- Physical space.
- Community development linked to creative development.
- Thrive financially.
- Connection to community as audience.
- It means the black community is thriving and that the people who are in my neighborhood and my school and near my studio are walking in the power of knowing who we are, and how we do things and that the power of our art brings us together, and then we start to leverage that power into political power, power to change our schools, power to have our environment the way we want it, so what it means to thrive is for my people to walk in their cultural power.
- Not about me doing shows and getting these grants.
- To do your work with the proper resources.
- To take care of yourself and your family.
- To have a place of living.
- Control over life and artistic choices.
- To be innovative and adventurous.
- Financial support.
- The ability to blossom.
- The ability to move forward.
- Having mentors and masters that you are a

student of who ask for your help.

- Being paid fairly.
- Having space to experiment.
- Being healthy and having my basic needs met.
- Having people that look like you in your community.
- Having family and culture present.
- I have enough to pay my bills, save for retirement, do my art and be financially stable and able to share my art with my community.
- Connections laterally across communities, cultures, perspectives, experiences and

disciplines.

- Having enough money to support the art I want to do.
- The way that I practice my art is has to be informed and inspired, relatable and connected to community. Otherwise it doesn't mean anything.

## Themes

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- Control/Ownership/Authorship
- Opportunities
- Time, Space and Money
- Connection to People & Community
- A Thriving Community
- Sustainability
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Your theme here)

### III. Are you thriving now? What challenges and barriers limit your ability to thrive as an artist?

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- Yes, as a graduate student right now I am thriving.
- This year has been a good one for our work because of large grants we've received.
- We are thriving, because we are choosing what we want to do, yet at the same time we are not thriving because we need more space and our own space.
- No, we recognize a lack of equity in funding systems. Organizations led by people of color are less supported, especially when not presenting mainstream traditional work.
- I am thriving more than I have before. But I am still not where I want to be.
- Yes I am thriving, but some of that is smoke and mirrors based on what people see. I'm doing the work I want, but I still don't have anything to leave my kids. I don't own anything, like property.
- Space is a real challenge.
- An environmental barrier is the way in which the 'academy' defines what is good art or not. As they propagate an outdated model of cultural production. Just because you have an MFA doesn't mean you know what good art is or isn't.
- The narrative that "real artists are meant to sacrifice for their craft". I don't buy that model.
- You get an MFA and you get a level of power or control in our region. That's not ok.
- A bump in resources has helped me thrive more.
- A real barrier is the voices or arbiters of what is or isn't quality in the world of art.
- This idea of 'who decides' what is or isn't good art. It's messed up. The system of judging.
- I don't want to mess with white institutions that privilege other white people.
- I get asked all the time to come to these places as a person of color, where the value I bring to them is my cultural identity, not my identity as a talented artist. They aren't asking me to produce my work, they are asking me to select others. I want to create something new and exciting in the middle.
- Resources and time are a deficit to thriving.
- Lots of white artists do work with their white artist peers, that they call social practice or community practice. Artists of color just do that work without calling themselves social practice artists.
- Owning dirt. That seems important to me thriving right now.
- Who decides what is or isn't art or quality. A specific vernacular and education and position you rise to within a narrow institutional structure like fine art curation.
- What privileges certain people to rise up in those institutions, what values and principles come with those people?
- I feel successful in that I am connecting my work more and more to my community. But also feel the pressure of the success to continue to do more.
- A barrier is that too often I am brought around to places as because of my cultural identify versus as just being invited as a talented artist. My cultural identity is not the prime identifier of my artistic practice, and I am not an ambassador or representative for my whole community.
- Yes, I am quitting my day job to do my art full time. This has happened because of recent fellowships that have given me the resources to take a risk.
- A barrier to me thriving is having audiences fully understand and grasp my work without having the cultural understanding and awareness of what I am putting into my art. People can't recognize what is actually there.
- Other cultures are often celebrated in the larger art scene. Our history isn't as frontal yet, it is not acknowledged in the same way.
- The ability for artists to grasp the strength and

beauty of what artists of color are producing without fully grasping the strength and beauty of the cultural community from which the artist comes. Or the history of oppression, the social and economic status, the context of current issues, etc.

- I am 50% of where I want to be as a thriving artist.
- I'm a one person shop because I am creating my work, producing my work, I'm teaching, and mentoring, and doing admin stuff, and finances, etc. It's super challenging to stay focused on the craft, with so much other things to do. It comes at the expense of my art making.
- The city of Minneapolis is like a tomb for artists of color and indigenous artists. As a black artist, the ceiling is very very low. We're begging out here. To McKnight, to Jerome, to Bush, to the City.
- Real barriers to owning space.
- We need investment tools that allow the collective to develop resources where they can make the kinds of investments necessary to sustain artist practice and community engagement.
- I have healthcare now, but if I lose it, I am through.
- I am at the most thriving moment of my career, but I'm not thriving. Whether it's a lack of technical skills or a lack of strong networks, I am not financially thriving off my work to allow me to solely work on my craft.
- Some of it has to do with the lack of appreciation my own community has for the arts.
- I make a decent living as compared to other artists I know, and I don't have a 9-5, but I'm still hustling to make this work. And I'm doing other people's work and not my own.
- Thriving is not just having money, it's about what work are you producing, whose work are you doing? Ownership and Control go hand in hand with financial thriving.
- A barrier for me is not having gone to college and receiving the stamp of approval that comes from having a degree. It doesn't matter to me, but it matters in two other ways: 1) I'm getting older, and I used to get pats on my back for being the young kid making it work, but those doesn't get me far anymore. 2) I wish I would have had the time to just think and

focus and work on my art.

- People don't take me seriously because I don't have a degree. I notice it, even if I think it's whack.
- I can't see or sense my future. Therefore I am not thriving.
- Also being mid career is an interesting place. While also being middle aged and mid career. My invincibility is no longer there.
- I am in an in between space that is both liberating and unsupported. So when you don't fall into neat categories you constantly have to explain yourself before you enter the game.
- Yes because I am always making work.
- I am better than where I was five years ago, but not where I want to be.
- I cannot live off my art, which is a part of my definition of thriving.
- I feel involved and a part of a community, so I feel thriving in that way.
- I need a better online presence.
- I need more time.
- I am continuously presented with opportunities to create high quality art and being somewhat fairly compensated.
- The biggest barrier for me is having to work a full time job.
- Racism. Sexism. Homophobia, Trans phobia.
- I don't see spaces and places for the community to indulge in the arts in my community.
- The supportive nature of our ecosystem is paper-thin. Sustainability is almost non-existent.
- Not enough space to accommodate audience connection.
- We're all competing for the same resources.
- Don't know how to write a good grant? You're out of luck.
- A system built on good grant writing as a real barrier to becoming a thriving artist.
- White supremacy and whiteness are oppressive.
- As a black person I am constantly defending myself, explaining myself, tamping myself down so that people can take it. Changing myself, lying to people so they don't feel whatever they are feeling about their whiteness and guilt and this image they have about white

institutions and systems.

- I am screaming at all these institutions; we can't even start because you're not telling the truth.
- I am always starting at Square 1, explaining, explaining, and explaining.
- Why can't white institutions get out of the way?
- I don't want to be the only black person in the room, the only black perspective.
- Continue to innovate and have experiences outside of Minnesota.
- We need big investments. Like \$100k investments.
- Limited opportunities. We're all lumped into the same pot. That's inconsiderate to what the challenges of artists of color face. And the huge amount of resources non-people of color have. We end up having to step on each other.
- We have a cultural tendency to adore outsiders. We don't look at the talent in the Twin Cities. We commission outsiders. Celebrate them. Then ask Twin Cities artists to sit with them, but not invest in our local talent.
- Dominant white culture as barrier.
- Need more room for artistic and professional development.
- Promotional and marketing support.
- I do feel like I am thriving right now. Because I can pay my bills and I can also make things and include people who aren't usually included in that making process. I don't know how to write a good grant. That skill would be really helpful. I am building relationships with people who could be mentors for me. So that will be helpful.
- I need healthcare.
- I have a team.
- I am thriving in that I am learning how to work

through systems like the city, nonprofit industrial complex, etc. But I'm not thriving in my practice.

- What gets in the way is that mainstream platform doesn't hold the entirety of who I am, of all my identities and practices. Their platforms are rigid, full of expectations and guidelines.
- I am not just one thing.
- So when I bring something different, then I have to create my own space versus occupy the spaces that others create because their spaces can't hold all of who I am. Creating your own space can be harder and less resourced and less supported.
- I wish I had more time to do my own art, but keeping my organization thriving takes up all of my time.
- One barrier is getting our community to appreciate and have access to our art.
- Mostly white people, with incomes over \$100,000 are the ones supporting the arts. Most of our community has so much going in their lives; they haven't had the same connection to art growing up. It is making me rethink how I do audience development. How do you get community to engage artists to participate in community vs. artists engaging community to participate in the arts?
- There is a perception of elitism that our community can have of the arts.
- An important question for me to answer is who gets to support and serve artists of color and communities of color? What institutions do we build to serve our communities versus building our community serve ourselves?
- Leasing space is expensive. We need our own space.

## Themes

- Yes or No?
  - 1/3 said yes
  - 1/3 said no
  - 1/3 said yes and no
- Challenges of racial inequities inside of structures and institutions
- Time, Space and Money
- Control
- Resources for professional, personal and artistic development
  - Grant writing
  - Marketing and Communications
  - Education and Skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Your theme here)

## IV. What have been supportive resources for you thus far in your life/work as an artist?

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- A supportive partner
- Finding a community of artists of color who provide mentoring, peer learning and support.
- Ability to self-finance my own work through a variety of methods.
- Mentoring as a key area of support, informally and formally.
- Fellowships that provide time and space to practice away from the grinds of regular life.
- Being involved with JXTA.
- Other artists of color.
- Practicing cooperative economics. Sharing resources. Especially since we're not always supportive by mainstream resources. We have to work to leverage our own community assets, working together.
- Mentorship and tutelage under other artists of color.
- Other people helping me to access resources and networks they have had success in accessing.
- Space. Not just physical space, though that's essential. Retreats. Space to create more. Space to connect. Space to build. Time to do the work. Professional development space. Space away. Space to dream. Space to imagine. Space to have fun. Space for us by us.
- 3 generational space.
- Often what has been support is not the organization itself, but the person at the organization or the relationships that the organization helps facilitate.
- Grants.
- Being Hmong early in the arts game.
- My connection to my own community.
- People and organizations working on social change, racial equity and community development.
- Tenacity.
- Mentorship.
  - In grant writing
  - In playing the game
- Partnerships with other artists and organizations.
- Teaching opportunities.
- As a women the ability to generate and produce my own work.
- Retreats. Get away and frame my work and practice. Reflections.
- Learning from peers.
- Family. Helping with childcare, supporting me.
- Juxta as a place of dreaming and community.
- Partnerships and relationships with major arts institutions like the Ordway, Northrup or the Walker. They are not critical to success, but I am leveraging those relationships to get resources to my community and my community back into those resources.
- The uniqueness of my personality and talent. Me. My identity. My skills.
- Being a successful grant writer.
- Fellowships and grants.
- Mentorship.
- Resources have been negligible at times, but mentorship relationships huge.
- Mentors
- Knowing people who had access to the relationships and resources I needed.
- Social Capital.
- Free Space
- Workshops on the nuts and bolts of being a working artists. Taxes. Resumes.
- Getting my first grant because if you get one grant, you keep getting others.
- Persistence
- Mentoring.
- Networking.
- Support from my community.
- Time.
- Grants.
- A good liberal arts education.
- Connected to my cultural community.
- Grants.
- Living in a city that is affordable.

- Setting up a simple life financially, which allows me to try and fail.
- Knowing that your life isn't on the line if you try something and fail.
- An ecology of support: Affordable housing. Mentorships. Important arts organizations. Thriving ethnic community. Financial support. It takes all of us to build an ecology.
- Connections to lots of people and resources.
- Juxtaposition Arts.
- Helped me to build a better narrative about the role of art and art making in my life. More than just something pretty, the work can be more important than that. They lit a fire under me. JXTA made me take art seriously in a way that I don't know if I would have gotten around to on my own.
- Exposure to ideas and thinking that I don't come across every single day on my own.
- My family and my parents.
- People + relationships + organizations/institutions.
- People who took an interest in me and my practice.
- Fellowships.
- Grants.
- Self Motivation to do something that hasn't been done in my community before.
- To be consistent.
- Being in the nonprofit field.
- Technology. Social Media. Web Platform.
- People who took me in, who took interest in me, who mentored me. Who challenged me.
- Teaching opportunities.
- People.
- Having time off of work.
- The convergence of time and mentorship. And to get out of Minnesota.
- My partner. Nothing is possible without my partner.
- Juxtaposition Arts.
- Grants.
- Knowing how to write grants.
- Having support of galleries that represent me and present my work.
- Being a new immigrant.
- Community of women artists of color.
- Queer community.
- Finding places to publish my work.
- Mentors that are doing it.
- Community Engagement and placemaking movement and community development.
- People who believed in me when a lot of others didn't.
- People who took chances on me.
- Mentoring and Apprenticeship.
- The smoke and mirrors of higher education or awards. The label or respect that comes from a title or receiving an award or fellowship. It helps.
- Family.
- Foundations. State Arts Board.
- Personal Relationships with each other. Marriage. Family.
- Commitment to the work, to an equitable society.
- Mentorship. Being mentored. Mentoring others.
- Peer learning at a national/international level.
- Interchange/exchange with other communities, which strengthens desire/motivation.
- People at institutions, not necessarily the institution itself.
- Big Dreams.
- Collaborating with other supportive organizations.
- Time to be able to do the work.
- Ability to meet national level artists has inspired me to continue doing my art and my practice.
- Finding time to renew myself.
- My first grant.
- Travel grants.
- Definitely having physical space that I can create in.
- Having access to money and grants.
- A community of peer mentors, people who have done it.

## Leadership Organizations Mentioned

- Mu Performing Arts
- McKnight Fellowship
- Jerome Fellowship
- MN State Arts Board
- Juxtaposition Arts
- Loft
- SASE
- Intermedia Arts
- Many Voices Fellowship
- Midwest Regional Arts Council
- West Broadway Coalition
- Legacy Amendment
- Forecast Public Art
- Givens Foundation
- Springboard for the Arts
- First People's Fund
- Native Arts and Culture Foundation
- The Eitljorg Foundation
- MN Historical Society
- Pillsbury House + Theater
- Bush Fellowship
- Compass Artist Roster
- Loeb Fellowship
- Hope Community
- Voices for Racial Justice
- Center for Hmong Arts and Talent

## Themes

- Identity, Background and Personal Traits
- Leadership Organizations
- Mentorship
- Social Capital
- Education
- Grants and Fellowships
- Space (physical and social)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Your theme here)

## V. What other resources would help working artists of color thrive?

- A college degree that gives me more mobility and ability to get paid more.
- Learning more technical skills.
- Physical space to practice.
- More public recognition of what my art is.
- Opportunity for mastering my skills, master workshops, etc.
- Time.
- Money.
- Studio Space.
- Marketing skills.
- Website design.
- Being able to travel and see other places, connect with others nationally.
- National peer learning.
- Space.
- Time.
- Learning more about community development.
- Resources to attend conferences and professional development outside of MN.
- Resources to learn new skills. Plus resources to build out my existing skills.
- Financial planning, money management skills. I need to learn how to save and to be economically stable.
- Recognition and acknowledgement of what I do as art as valuable by my own community.
- Peer Support and learning from those that are thriving.
- There is no silver bullet. It will take me 50 years. But being with someone who is thriving or has made it, spending time with them would be valuable.
- I need time. Time to do. To practice.
- I need time to learn new skills.
- Time equals money.
- Money for the equipment/technology/materials I need to get going.
- Ability to train and master my practice.
- Ability to connect to more producers to support my art.
- Ability to train in a new skill, one that I am not already thriving in.
- To learn the business side of things more.
- Freedom to experiment with new ideas and skills.
- Peer learning from those beyond me.
- I need someone to help with outreach and engagement and marketing.
- Community development purposes.
- Business skills.
- Developing new skills.
- Learn new skills learn from others.
- Someone to take a risk on me.
- A way to distribute risk more broadly.
- Fellowships that put me in places of competition and learning.
- Risk taking, learning, experimentation.
- Ability to attend workshops to develop new skills.
- Time, Money and Space.
- I need more training.
- Mentoring and peer learning.
- Money.
- Ability to earn a formal degree.
- Physical space.
- I'm still curious about in the development field, under market loans for developing spaces, MCCD resources. Some folks interested in creating a new brand of creative community development (CCD).
- Space and time to work better together.
- Administrative support.
- I need to go visit and see other places. Meet other people.
- Must be able to own my own space.
- Professional development that has nothing to do with the arts, which can sustain my life.
- Instead of moving project to project, get ownership and control over resources to define our own futures without begging for money.
- Means of control.
- I have to learn more about money and money management.
- Finances and health care.
- A lending library of key materials.
- National partnerships.
- Grant Writing Skills.
- Upfront funding for supplies, technology, materials that enable you to do the work you need.
- Larger grants, \$100k instead of \$20k
- Flexible professional development funds, used to capture 'right now' opportunities.
- Training led by us, for us, with people who understand our situation and history
- Collaborative projects.

### Themes

- Skill/Professional Development
- Exposure
- Time/Space/Money
- Travel

## VI. How are working artists of color financing their work?

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- Month to Month.
- If I can have the correct balance between work and art, then a secure stable job will pay for my artist practice.
- Having a FT job. When you have kids, kids don't eat off dreams.
- MULTIPLE FORMS OF INCOME TO SUPPORT MY VARIOUS INTERESTS.
- Flexibility with disciplines. Knowing how to write. Knowing how to talk about your work. Time management. Business skills. A strong collective who can help.
- Jobs. Fellowships. Grants.
- Live minimally.
- Scholarships. Grants. Fellowships. Sales.
- I do a lot of side work.
- Lectures. Contract work.
- Grants. Contracts.
- Honestly in my first part of my career was out of my own pocket. Earning from daytime job and using that to fund my creative career. Now it's through grants and fundraising, through community, through friends and family. For the most part a lot of it is still out of pocket.
- I do freelance and I do get compensation to teach. And I do contract work. Mainly my contract work is really arts related organizations.
- Fee for service clients. I get a few grants. I have some issues with grants from a philosophical standpoint. Not my main thrust. It can't be, because these things aren't guaranteed, to roll the dice on a grant, to miss whatever \$2k-\$3k from a client to apply, can sometimes be a set back.
- I started to recognize grants as a form of narrative control, even if you get the grant I didn't want to sacrifice in my ideals to get this grant.
- Getting a grant doesn't mean that your ideas are great, just that it fit inside the agenda that this person pushing this grant was trying to give. I don't want to be trapped in this cycle of being underneath someone else's narrative control. I want to chart a course to start building that myself.
- The last 7 years i have had a day job that is an arts job. I feel very lucky about that. But it could also take up my life, so it's about balancing. Before I had my day job I had to write a lot of grants. Now I have stopped writing grants. I have just started hiring a bookkeeper for the art work so I don't have to do it, since I'm so bad at it.
- For the past 10 years, I've hired someone to do my taxes for me. Someone who is very sensitive to artists and artist practice.
- The practice I used to have for grants was that for each project I would try not to go over budget. And then the last few years, since I haven't been writing grants, outside the day job work, I am doing work that people hire you for. Then dedicate the savings from that to my personal practice.
- I have been trying really hard, to not fund my art practice out of my day job.
- 75% of my practice is funded by my job as a teacher. Writing grants pushes me. Part of my practice.
- Financing out of my own pocket. I think that it's my strategy is really just getting by, I feel bad for my son, so sorry he's not going to have a college fund.
- I have a part time job.
- I get a lot of speaking gigs, which is one way I can pay myself to write.
- The most is usually from speaking gigs and teaching.
- I have a full time job. It allows me to be able to do jobs for low pay, because I am subsidizing it with my income, but I am paying for it in every other way.
- I seek grants and paid gigs.
- I treat it like a business, from the start. And have had an ability to keep those two things separate. I know as an artist, I want to be constantly creating and pushing and being creative. But I realize that I also have to have the business acumen to make a living at this.

- I went through NDC entrepreneur class.
- Long-Range Planning. That's our approach. When we first got together. Our first meeting we developed a five-year plan. We look a year to a year and half. Sometimes even 2 years. When we reach capacity, we reach capacity. We're in a tricky period, glass-ceiling place. We need to keep taking smaller stuff, some of the bigger stuff sort of comes, but not consistent enough.
- Curation. Consulting & Educating. Teach.
- Teaching for the last 10 years.
- Writing grants and whatever fellowship stuff.
- I usually just do it by myself, financing it with my own funds. Or people usually find me if they have projects that support me at time. I do some freelancing work that generates income.
- I have a job that I like.
- I work in a way that is fairly modest in scale and expense.
- I practice within the means of what I have, creating with that. I scale my life around that.
- I am happy having a middle-income life, making \$40k some dollars and family of four, solidly in lower middle income.
- Part of going back to the larger institutional thing, I don't want to mess with an organization that pays someone \$400k to run their theater or whatever. We can't have conversations about equity, we can do a lot with those resources instead of maintain that power and inequity.
- Part of it is scaling my practice to my values and means. And living within that pretty happily.
- Some grants, and my job, using both to finance my art.
- Teachings. Sales. Contracts.
- Formal business plan.
- I have a job.
- I have a partner that supports me.

## Themes

- Multiple revenue streams
- A full- or part-time job.
- Grants.
- Contracts.
- Fellowships.
- Teaching.
- Speaking
- Self finance
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Your theme here)

## VII. How can McKnight support working artists of color?

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- More collaborations that are resourced and equitable.
- We need to change the grant writing system that doesn't equitably address people's barriers to those types of processes. If you're not a good writer, if English is your second language, if you don't have the networks to even know about these opportunities then what? Talented artists are being left on the side because they don't know how to play the game. We should change the game.
- Build social capital and connection for artists of color.
- We need a HUB for artists of color to connect, get support, grow, access resources, be mentored. Run by us, for us.
- Opportunities for more residencies.
- Advance race equity in major institutions.
- Leadership on race conversations and art institutions in our region.
- I think there is opportunity to form collectives with other artists and access larger chunks of state arts funding. Work more creatively with NRP funds and neighborhoods.
- Open spaces for exploration.
- Other ways of getting grants than writing grants.
- Conversations about race amongst top art institutions.
- Fund artists to make community impact, not just produce objects.
- Scenius vs. genius (acknowledging the collective genius vs. the individual genius).
- McKnight should do a racial equity analysis of where their funding goes and to whom.
- Who gets to make your decisions? Set your priorities?
- How is community engagement structured in your work at the foundation?
- How are ideas generated?
- Build a local market and audience for artists of color. Not supported by 1 foundation, but instead supported by 10,000 fans.
- Space for where people of differing ideologies can really engage with each other in meaningful ways. Once you're out in the artist world we all surround ourselves by people who just think like us.
- Help distribute risk out from just a singular individual.
- Don't make artists define themselves as just one thing: I am more than just one thing. I am not just a dancer. Why are we always boiled down into one thing? I'm a dancer, I'm a teacher, I'm a \_\_\_\_\_
- How are we developing leaders of color to take on leadership roles in major arts institutions?
- How can McKnight influence their fellow funders to not be so fickle? The people who can play the game, get the money. Be aware of what is new in other programs, because it seems like so often funders don't fully bake their ideas, because there are so many instances where millions dollars are spent on unbaked ideas.
- Invest in the community, do not just invest in the individual artist.
- Stop putting us into categories.
- How do you understand the successful trajectory of an artist and make strategic investments at critical moments?
- McKnight is the funding you get when you are already thriving. Is there a pre-thriving award that McKnight needs to give out?
- When do young artists leave the field because they couldn't turn the corner? Help them at that point.
- Jerome to McKnight? Map the pathway? Define the gaps? Make changes.
- Keep hiring people of color who get it to work at your foundation.
- We need more space to show our work.

- They know how we will fail and they are doing nothing to change the landscape. It's not rocket science. It is as blatant as a hammer to your head. There is no mystery. You know how to sustain arts organizations. Stop pretending it is so hard. You know what to do. Support us. Give us more resources. Get others to resource us more.
- We know the blueprint for building preeminent institutions, let's do that for communities of color now.
- Create equity in your giving. Set benchmarks and be transparent.
- You give us small amounts of money then come back and tell us we have capacity issues.
- Educate your board.
- Building relationships. Building skills. Building spaces.
- Invest in young artists more, not just 'emerged'.
- Dialogue more with communities of color.
- Transparency on decision-making.
- More community engagement.
- How can the Latino community access more resources?
- Fund artists to make community impact.
- Placemaking isn't about funding huge initiatives that make huge impact. Those efforts don't really touch the people most impacted by how places are built and work.
- Having a physical home is equivalent to shelter. What is the physical home for arts in my community? Does every community have this? They should, like every community has a library.
- More grants.
- Bigger grants.
- Where are the grants for people emerging vs. emerged?
- How do we get sustainability money?

## VIII. Program Examples

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### **Surdna Foundation**

Arts Engaging in Social Change: Request for Proposals

<http://www.surdna.org/rfp.html>

In the fall of 2014, the Surdna Foundation began accepting proposals for one or two year support to extraordinary artist-driven projects as part of its Artists Engaging in Social Change funding area.

*Artists Engaging in Social Change: What Do We Mean?*

It's difficult to trace the complex relationship between works of art and social transformation, yet it is clear that artists provoke, expand and even heal the civic imagination in critical ways. During the last few decades, artists working to effect change in particular communities have created a variety of explicitly political and social interventions. Simultaneously, other artists have emphasized less the "what" of social change (i.e. the issue or agenda that drives artistic explorations) and stressed instead the "how" of community embeddedness, working in a way that results in such impacts as increased community capacity for civic expression and leadership, the preservation and transmission of treasured cultural practices, and the amplification of voices that are too often ignored. We consider these different approaches to be equally capable of illuminating the unique role artists play in broader societal change, and we aim to support both through this RFP. ([www.surdna.org](http://www.surdna.org))

*Art and culture at the center of sustainable communities.*

At the Surdna Foundation, we foster the development of just and sustainable communities. For us, art, culture and design are not accessories to that process: they are central. Art is fundamental to our collective understanding of who we are, what we believe, and how we relate to each other and our surroundings. Artists and their coconspirators weave the cultural fabric necessary for a sustainable, vibrant society. The development and sharing of artists' work contributes to the strengthening of communities—culturally, socially, and economically. Our definition of Artists Engaging in Social Change includes both cherished, longstanding ways of working and newer practices. Our focus here is on the commitment, spirit and generosity with which the work is undertaken as well as the form it ultimately takes.

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### **The Durfee Foundation**

Stanton Fellowship

<http://durfee.org/what-we-support/stanton-fellowship/>

The Durfee Foundation's Stanton Fellowship provides up to six fellows with \$100,000 each over a two-year period to think deeply about the intractable problems in their sector, and to tease out solutions that will improve life for the people of L.A.

Each fellow designs his or her own project and plan. We are looking for projects that build on the fellow's expertise and allow him or her to reach in new directions. Fellows should present projects that they would not otherwise be able to do in the course of their day-to-day work, if not for the Stanton Fellowship. Possible use of the funds might include domestic or international travel, attending conferences, hiring research assistants or consultants, or a writing retreat. The goal is to enable fellows to expand knowledge, hone professional skills, form strategic alliances, and advance their work to the next level. It is presumed that the project will require the fellow's release from regular responsibilities for planned segments of time, for a total of three months in blocks of time of two weeks or longer.

## Leeway Foundation

<http://www.leeway.org>

The Leeway Foundation's grantmaking programs honor women and trans\* artists for their ability to create social change through their artistic and cultural work. Leeway supports the natural intersection of art and social change. We understand that art is not born in a vacuum. Art is created within a context. Who we are, where we live, how we relate to our communities, and how we view the world influence what we create, how we create, and why we create art for social change. Art for social change is art with a vision and impacts people in many ways. It can: raise consciousness; alter how we think about ourselves, our society, or our culture; create a vision of a more just world; be a tool or strategy for organizing and movement-building; reclaim traditional cultural practices as a form of resistance or community building; challenge racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism or other forms of oppression; and question mainstream culture and beliefs. With the ideals of social change in mind, we created these programs to challenge the norms of traditional grantmaking. We seek to recognize women and trans artists whose work is often ignored, silenced, and marginalized because of what they create or who they are - such as people of color; immigrants; gay, lesbian, and bisexual people; poor and working-class people; and people who take risks with art form and content to share their social change vision.

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## Heinz Endowments

Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh

<http://www.heinz.org/Interior.aspx?id=314>

Both The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments are committed to helping create a vibrant cultural life in Pittsburgh and the region. The foundations have maintained a long-term commitment to arts and culture as an important factor in the region's quality of life, in the well-being of its citizens, and in its image and economy.

Pittsburgh has lagged in the presence of stable Black arts organizations and professional Black artists; that is, organizations and individuals whose work focuses on the art of African-Americans, Africa and the larger Diaspora—despite the fact that the city of Pittsburgh itself is over 25% African American. The region's well documented social and economic disparities around race, as well as our racial segregation, are also present in the region's cultural life. Historically lower government and foundation support, fewer individual donors for the arts, little or no endowment income, and smaller audiences leave many arts organizations that are committed to Black arts programming under-resourced. Working capital for these organizations can be far less than that of their counterparts working in western European-based art forms that were founded decades ago. Less working capital has significant ramifications for the quality and quantity of Black arts programming presented in the region: artistic risk-taking is curtailed; outreach programming to schools is reduced; individual artists are less likely to find sustainable employment in chosen art forms; visibility within the arts landscape is constrained; and organizational growth is made much more difficult. In addition, Black arts as a collective segment of the region's life has not been adequately documented and discussed as part of the region's cultural health. Creating equity in all our funding programs is critically important, and this grants program is a next step in building strategies to create equity.

We believe that the most important investments that philanthropy can make to advance Black arts in the city and region are:

- 1) To help to build the careers of individual artists;
- 2) To increase the sustainability of cultural organizations that focus on Black arts;
- 3) To build community awareness of the Black arts sector; and

4) To support connections between Black arts organizations and larger and predominantly white arts organizations. Growing institutional capacity, supporting career development, and building understanding and awareness within the larger community is the best way to ensure that there will be a continuing presence of these cultural forms and increasing interest in and demand for them.

These beliefs have led us to focus grant dollars on operating support, funds for individual artists, unrestricted support, and activities that advance the field collectively. If this investment strategy is successful, we will be able to measure progress in terms of growth in organizational health, career opportunities for artists, and public participation in the art of the African Diaspora.

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## **Shannon Leadership Institute**

<https://www.wilder.org/Community-Leadership/James-P-Shannon-Leadership-Institute/Pages/default.aspx>

The James P. Shannon Leadership Institute offers personal and professional renewal for community-serving leaders from all sectors: nonprofit, philanthropy, corporate, education, artistic and other community-serving organizations. Leadership in community requires a strong sense of purpose and understanding of personal values.

Through a structured, supportive environment, the James P. Shannon Leadership Institute challenges participants to:

- Redefine the purpose of their work
- Gain clarity of their core values
- Develop strategies to increase their effectiveness
- Identify changes needed to improve their focus, commitment, energy and satisfaction

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## **Rockwood Leadership Institute**

Art of Leadership Program

<http://rockwoodleadership.org/section.php?id=9>

Each training convenes 24-30 leaders working in different organizations and issue areas. The Art of Leadership fosters learning partnerships through pair and small group work, as well as post-retreat peer support.

Art of Leadership is:

- A five-day intensive residential retreat that teaches powerful visioning, listening, speaking, presentation, team-building and feedback skills to emerging and established social change leaders.
- Taught in an intimate learning community limited to 24-30 emerging and longtime leaders, working across a wide range of issues: climate change, human and civil rights, arts and cultural work.
- Led by nationally recognized thinkers, educators and activists who are experts at sharing in-depth insights and innovative leadership practices.
- All retreats are held in beautiful retreat settings in California and on the East Coast.

## **Fire this Time Fund**

<http://firethistimefund.org/>

Fire This Time Fund is a five year old, all volunteer organized, independent giving circle. We support small-scale, creative social change projects initiated by local artists, educators and organizers who weave an analysis of racial, economic, social, environmental, or gender justice into their work.

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## **Arts Rising Giving Circle**

<http://artsrising.net/about/mission.php>

- Arts Rising Mission: to build a community of people excited to support (with money and/or time) social change arts.
  - Why Now: The arts are a powerful, under-used force for change. Especially in these times, when hateful divisions are prevalent and many people feel cynical and despairing, humanity is hungry for what the arts can offer: hope, beauty, humor, perspective, and connection to the human spirit.
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## **Building the Field of Community Engagement**

[www.buildthefield.org](http://www.buildthefield.org)

Building the Field of Community Engagement is a collaborative initiative designed to magnify and elevate the power of community engagement to change the way problems are solved and resources are invested. Building the field is bolstering the work of community engagement practitioners and encouraging other organizations to integrate community engagement into their work.

Building the Field partners:

Casa de Esperanza

Cultural Wellness Center

Hope Community

Lyndale Neighborhood Association

Native American Community Development Institute

Nexus Community Partners

Their Community Engagement Assessment tool is intended to provide organizations with a starting point for assessing whether their work is community engagement.

Key questions they ask in their tool include:

- What kind of relationships do you have with your community members?
- Why are you engaging people?
- What are you getting people involved in? When?
- How do ideas get generated?
- Do your organizational structures and policies support engagement?

The tool then provides a rubric for determining where on the continuum you are from outreach to engagement and strategies for moving from one end to the other.

**Yes and No: Conversations About Thriving with Artists of Color in the Twin Cities**

A Report for the McKnight Foundation - [www.mcknight.org](http://www.mcknight.org)

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The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota