



## Press Release

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

**San Francisco** – The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) today announced eight new grantees of the [Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation](#) program (fka Investing in Artists). Awards of \$9,000 each were granted for Artistic Innovation projects proposed by performing and media artists in the San Francisco Bay Area. The program is made possible with support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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

Out of 99 eligible applications, the eight Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation grantees are (county of residence noted in parentheses):

**Nathan Aurellano** (San Francisco County) to support the production and distribution of "Missing Boy," a short fiction narrative film about an amnesiac Filipina mother, who must investigate a distorted version of her home to find her missing son.

**Shari "The Coloratura"** (Alameda County) to support the production and promotion of Eyes Wide Open, an alternative R&B album featuring opera vocals and themes of self-love.

**Amal Bisharat** (San Francisco County) to support the development of "Mornings in Jenin Musical", an original musical theater production adapted from the internationally best-selling novel "Mornings in Jenin" by Palestinian-American author Susan Abulhawa.

**Christy Chan** (Contra Costa County) to support the creation of the narrative short film "Sunday Errand," a story of what it means to confront racism with child-like innocence and imagination.

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**Rashaad Newsome** (Alameda County) to support the production and presentation of "I Come As One, But I Stand As One Hundred," an innovative theater/dance performance.

**Swetha Prabakaran** (San Francisco County) to support the development of a Carnatic-Baroque fusion Bharatanatyam opera that reclaims the feminine lens of South Asian cultural history.

**Liz Roberts** (San Francisco County) to support the production of an experimental documentary film that profiles Heather Edney, co-founder of one of the earliest harm reduction programs in the United States.

**Breanna Sinclairé** (San Francisco County) to support the production and presentation of an immersive, Afrofuturistic headphone opera, "GO2 WILDERNESS."

"Every year, we are amazed by the incredible talent, vision, and cultural impact that Bay Area artists bring to the forefront. The 2024 Investing in Artists' grantees represent a diverse range of performing and media arts projects that not only push creative boundaries but also invite us to reflect, imagine, and connect with one another," says CCI Program Officer, Stephanie Barajas. "We are thrilled to support these eight remarkable artists who, while coming from counties with robust resources, play a vital role in shaping and enriching the broader creative community in the Bay Area."

The 2024 Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation program has awarded \$72,000 in project support grants as part of the first round of the program's current three-year grant cycle (2024–2026). For this new cycle, we are thrilled to increase the award amount from \$8,250 to \$9,000 and to continue rotating eligible Bay Area counties, ensuring that resources are more intentionally directed to all ten Bay Area counties. For the 2024 application cycle, artists from Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco Counties were eligible to apply. In 2025, artists from Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San Mateo Counties will be invited to apply, with the final round in 2026 opening up to those from Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties.

A group of panelists reflecting a diverse range of knowledge and perspectives assisted CCI in reviewing the Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation applications, including Sheldon Alexander (drummer, educator, and composer), Daniel Diaz (filmmaker, founder of CiNEOLA, and Director of Marketing & Audience Strategy at BAVC Media), Dyana Diaz (theater-maker, teaching artist, puppeteer, and Director of Bilingual Education at SF Youth Theatre), Janesta Edmonds (choreographer, performance artist, writer, and Studio Manager at PUSH Dance Company), Amy Langer (founding ensemble member and former co-artistic director of the San Francisco Neo-Futurists), Lali Mejia (percussionist, composer, producer, and music educator), Mabel Valdiviezo (filmmaker, multidisciplinary artist, and founder of Haiku Films), and Chloë L. Zimberg (dancer, producer, curator, and Creative Director at ODC Theater).

### **About the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI)**

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was founded in 2001 as a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Our mission is to support individuals in the arts—artists, culture bearers, and creative entrepreneurs—to realize greater self-determination so as to unfetter their productivity, free expression, and social impact, which contributes to shaping our collective national identity in ways that reflect the diversity of society.

For more information about CCI, please visit [www.cciarts.org](http://www.cciarts.org).

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