



## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Lauren Bailey  
(213) 687-8577  
info@cciarts.org  
www.cciarts.org

### Center for Cultural Innovation Awards Support to San José Creative Enterprises

**San Francisco Bay Area** – The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) today announced the seven grantees of the **San José Creative Economy Fund**. The Fund awards project grants to arts, cultural, and creative-based commercial businesses located in the City of San José that are involved in the production or distribution of the arts, including manufacturers, service providers, presenters, and designers, among others. Funding supports projects and activities aimed at building successful arts, cultural, and creative-based small businesses in San José.

For the 2025 grantmaking round, grants of up to \$8,000 were awarded through a competitive grant application process that assessed proposals for their ability to contribute to the city's cultural vibrancy, demonstrate readiness for project implementation, grow and achieve greater financial resilience, and demonstrate economic impact (e.g., attracting visitors, generating sales tax, creating jobs) in the City of San José.

The San José Creative Economy Fund is an initiative of, and grants are made possible through, the City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) as part of its Creative Entrepreneur Project (CEP). Administration of the Fund is provided by CCI.

We are pleased to announce the following grantees who received a total of \$40,000 in this funding round:

**Art Builds Community (*Public Art Consulting Firm*), \$6,000:** To support Art Builds Community in hosting artist workshops, pop-ups, and a fabricators' open house. Funding will cover project-related staffing, artist fees, and additional furniture costs.

**Ashy Aromas (*Hand Crafted Art*), \$6,000:** To support Ashy Aromas' Project Butterfly through space renovations, a product photoshoot, and marketing for scent-making experiences. Funding will also support grass wall and panel installations.

**Hicklebee's Bookstore Inc. (*Humanities/Literary Arts*), \$5,200:** To support Hicklebee's expansion by adding new shelving, creating greater access to a wide range of authors and titles, and providing a reading nook for young readers. Funding will also support wall removals and the construction of new cabinets for storage.

#### LOS ANGELES

244 S. San Pedro Street  
Suite 401  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
P: 213.687.8577

#### BAY AREA

1446 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
P: 415.288.0530

cciarts.org  
ambitio-us.org

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**Kooltura Marketing (Humanities/Literary Arts, Media Arts), \$4,800:** To support EASTSIDE Magazine's 2026 CE issue, uplifting East San José voices through storytelling, art, and belonging advocacy. Funding will also support sustaining the free print distribution while compensating contributors, translators, photographers, and coordinators.

**Minasan (Design), \$7,200:** To support Minasan in expanding retail and music offerings, upgrading space, and showcasing local creatives. Funding will also support artist and collaborator fees.

**San José Made (Visual Arts, Design), \$6,400:** To support SJMADE's inaugural ILLO Mart event and reduce expenses for participants by providing discounted vendor space packages.

**ANNO DOMINI Gallery, KALEID Gallery (Visual Arts), \$5,400:** To support Two Fish Design in purchasing tools for in-house framing and canvas stretching for ANNO DOMINI Gallery, KALEID Gallery, and collectors.

"San Jose is one of the most diverse cities in the country, and the arts bring us together as we share our unique cultural heritages and celebrate our shared values," said San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan. "We're proud to support local entrepreneurs and artists who are telling San Jose's many stories with resources from the Creative Economy Fund."

San José's Director of Cultural Affairs Kerry Adams Hapner says, "The 2025 Creative Economy Fund grantees represent seven creative, innovative, and culturally diverse businesses in San José. The San José Office of Cultural Affairs is proud to support their growth, further strengthening the local economy while inspiring cultural curiosity and art as a catalyst for community."

San José Office of Cultural Affairs Arts Industry Support Director Ron Muriera remarked, "The continued success of the Creative Economy Fund continues to underscore the robust innovation and creativity of San José. Our forward-thinking entrepreneurs are crucial to San José's cultural landscape, and supporting their work strengthens our dedication to a thriving community and a strong local economy."

Applications to the San José Creative Economy Fund were evaluated by a four-person review panel that included **Andrew Espino**, President and Owner of Realty Executives–Silicon Valley; **April Lee**, Corporate Social Responsibility Senior Manager at Samsung Semiconductor; **Xavier Webb**, Supplier Diversity Evangelist at Adobe; and **Stephanie Imah**, creative and CCI Program Director.

"Supporting arts, cultural, and creative entrepreneurs is the core of our mission," shared Stephanie Barajas, CCI Program and Grants Management Specialist. "We're excited to build on our partnership with the City of San José and support creative businesses in this year's Creative Economy Fund round."

### **About Center for Cultural Innovation**

Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was founded in 2001 as a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Its 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, please visit [cciarts.org](https://cciarts.org).

**About San José Office of Cultural Affairs**

The Office of Cultural Affairs is a division of the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs (OEDCA) in the City Manager's Office and is the City's lead for stewarding a vibrant arts sector. It fosters cultural development through cultural funding programs, cultural workforce development, cultural facilities, special event services, and public art. For more information, visit [www.sanjoseculture.org](http://www.sanjoseculture.org).

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