



## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
July 1, 2026  
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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 seven 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 Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. 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 53 eligible applications, the seven Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation grantees are (county of residence noted in parentheses):

**Florante Aguilar** (Napa County) to support the production of Episodes 2 and 3 of a video essay series on Filipino musical heritage.

**Gamal Chasten** (Marin County) to support a hybrid live, musical, cinematic, and theatrical performance of an autobiographical story.

**Kimberly Olivier** (Sonoma County) to support the development and production of new choreographic work expanding on performance research from pregnancy and postpartum.

**Kristina Dutton** (Marin County) to support the creation of a 45-minute multi-channel sound installation combining original compositions and field recordings from four continents.

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**Maria Fernanda Rondon Valero** (Sonoma County) to support the creation of a creative work that integrates scriptwriting, set design, and acting, culminating in a community presentation at Café Puente.

**Sergio Garcia** (Napa County) to support archival research, testimony collection, and script development.

**Shantre Pinkney** (Napa County) to support the production of *Raw, Black & Blue*, a hybrid fiction feature film set in Bayview Hunters Point, San Francisco.

“This year, as in years past, we continue to be inspired by the approach to creative experimentation and by the ways artists across our region are expanding their individual practices. The 2026 Investing in Artists’ grantees continue to showcase the incredibly diverse range of performing and media arts projects and stories that shape the Bay Area and the many communities that call this region home,” says Stephanie Imah, CCI’s Director of Artist Possibility Funds. “We are excited to support these seven exceptional artists, whose work plays a vital role in strengthening and enriching the region’s broader creative ecosystem.”

The 2026 Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation program has awarded \$63,000 in project support grants as part of the final round of the program’s current three-year grant cycle (2024–2026). For this cycle, we are thrilled to maintain the increased award amount of \$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 2026 application cycle, artists from Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties were eligible to apply. In 2025, artists from Counties Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Mateo. The first round in 2024 invited artists residing in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco Counties to apply.

A group of panelists reflecting a diverse range of knowledge and perspectives assisted CCI in reviewing the Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation applications, including **Asha Kohli** (somatic movement artist and founder of Way of Nitara), **Hannah Gladstone** (cultural worker and founder of the Black Banjo Reclamation Project), **Lori Herrera** (culture bearer and organizer), and **Shannon Kollasch** (artist and Program Director at Amplifi Napa Valley).

### **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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