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ArtsWave awards next round of African American arts grants

CINCINNATI (September 6, 2022) – Approved during its last board meeting, ArtsWave, the region's engine for the arts, selected its third cohort of grantees in support of arts initiatives funded in part by ArtsWave's donor group of African American philanthropic leaders, referred to as "the Circle."

Seventeen organizations will receive funding through this latest round of grants representing a total of \$200,000. Grant selections were made by eight volunteers and community panelists; 27 applications were received in total.

ArtsWave is working to address systemic gaps in equity in order to make inclusion a hallmark of the Cincinnati region's arts. The "Circle's African American Arts Grants Program" is designed to strengthen the capacity and sustainability for arts organizations led by or predominantly serving Black Cincinnatians. These grants, along with other ArtsWave initiatives, are meant to increase ArtsWave's investment in Black arts each year. Over the past three years, the program has invested \$605,000 in total through 46 projects. Other ArtsWave BIPOC capacity-building programs include its Black and Brown Artist Grants Program and *Flow*, a quarterly series of African American Arts experiences.

For more information on ArtsWave's Circle of African American Leaders for the Arts, go to artswave.org/circle. To support projects like these, please go to artswave.org/give.

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About ArtsWave:

ArtsWave, a nonprofit serving the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Region, is the engine for the arts. Its roots stem back to the late 1920s when the Cincinnati Taft family provided initial investment matched by community support. In the late 1940s, it evolved to become the first united arts fund in the nation and in the mid-1970s, the first organization to initiate workplace giving for the arts. ArtsWave continues to innovate while leading, as illustrated by its No. 1 rank nationally in community arts fundraising; coordination of a sector-wide Blueprint for Collective Action; piloting of new technologies to maximize arts engagement; and development of resources for the arts.

Strong funding for the arts has allowed Cincinnati's arts and culture scene to become a national draw and regional asset, creating a wave of economic and community benefits. Each year,

ArtsWave supports the work of over 150 arts organizations, school outreach programs, festivals, community centers, neighborhoods and various collaborations through impact-based grants. These grants create thousands of concerts, shows, exhibitions, arts for school children, public art, festivals and events like BLINK®. ArtsWave met its 2022 Campaign goal, raising \$11.5 million for the arts, an amount necessary, given the difficult health and economic crisis that has spanned more than two years. Donations can be made at artswave.org/give.

ArtsWave's Next Round of African American Arts Funding

- **Professional Artistic Research Projects:** *Opening and Operating Our Northside Campus*

After years of planning and perseverance, PAR-Projects is now the owner of a ¾-acre arts and education campus in Northside Cincinnati. Today, after surviving yet another curveball during their permitting process, the Black-led organization is in the process of opening its second art gallery in 18 months and a city-approved outdoor movie theater. On their campus, comprised of two independent structures and six interconnected buildings, they continue to construct below-market-rate studios for local arts organizations while creating opportunities for Black & Brown artists.

- **Revolution Dance Theatre:** *"Centered & Celebrated" Community Series*

"Centered & Celebrated" is an all new, curated community engagement series aimed at making it easier for African American audiences to experience Revolution Dance Theatre. The series will give African Americans the opportunity to see themselves, their stories, and pieces of their culture at the center of classical theater and dance. The series of four productions is set to premiere throughout the season at multiple unconventional venues throughout the city.

- **Learning Through Art, Inc.:** *Books Alive! For Kids® Virtual Adventures App: Literacy at the Speed of Light*

This grant will enable Learning Through Art (LTA) to greatly expand its impact on students and families in the Greater Cincinnati region through the launch and continued development of its new Books Alive! For Kids® app during the upcoming school year. Free and accessible to all, the educational app primarily targets 3–9-year-olds and complements the suite of Immersive Literacy Model in-person and virtual programs/resources offered to Cincinnati Public Schools and other school districts. The app is a critical part of an effective, relevant, and accessible multi-faceted literacy program that uses different modalities and can be tailored to individual learning needs.

- **Elementz Hip Hop Cultural Art Center:** *Hip Hop Youth Orchestra and Continued Hip Hop Arts Offerings at Elementz Hip Hop Cultural Art Center*

Elementz Hip Hop Cultural Art Center aims to open its doors at its Race Street location exclusively for programmatic offerings of dance, DJing, music production, and visual art using its Mac Lab for digital design. With a pandemic-related fall-off in attendance, the Race St. center will be devoted solely to performance and programming in order to re-engage the Over-the-Rhine and surrounding BIPOC serving communities to Hip Hop cultural art forms. Prior to COVID, the center buzzed with youth engagement, having weekly attendance in the hundreds. Elementz would like to regain that engagement and re-engage the community with a relaunch of Hip Hop arts instruction.

- **Cincinnati Music Accelerator:** *CMA Music Business Academy*

This grant will support the growth of the CMA's Music Business Academy (MBA). Artists in the MBA program learn the following 10 subjects: Finance, Content, Marketing and Branding, Press and Media, Entertainment Law, Monetization, Storytelling, Booking, Organization, and Music Licensing. The program operates like a school year with fall, winter, spring, and summer sessions. There are dedicated subject matter expert Instructors and a professional African American musician leading the program. Potential students must submit an application and have an interview with the director to determine eligibility.

- **It's Commonly Jazz:** *"It's Commonly Jazz - Celebrating Jazz and the Shoebox Journey"*

It's Commonly Jazz will celebrate jazz and the African-American 'Shoebox' journey. This fall, the organization will invite the community to gather to hear one another at "Come Sunday" a jazz experience that is a fusion of jazz and storytelling with spoken word artists, musicians and graphic artists. This program is inspired by the Shoebox meal journey and the Green Book legacy. This is a celebration of the African American experience, the legacy of jazz, and the impact today.

- **Easley Blessed Media:** *Multimedia Immersion Course*

Easley Blessed Music plans to serve youth and young adults ages 13 - 14 and 15 – 22, offering a paid, all-inclusive multimedia course all year round, in a facility that houses a studio for production along with state-of-the-art professional equipment. As society moves globally toward digital reliance, some youth are at a disadvantage: they either attend schools that do not offer any trades like multimedia or they lack advanced technological programs that are required for this. Many are not exposed to art fields because of lack of funding. Other youth suffer financially. This program will train them and allow them to become employable and self-sufficient in multimedia.

- **Robert O'Neal Multicultural Arts Center:** *ROMAC Teen Apprenticeship and Entrepreneurship Program*

The ROMAC Teen Apprenticeship and Entrepreneurship Program is an innovative way for 10 West End teens to explore careers in the arts and education while learning how to lead younger children in art-making classes, furthering their own creativity and art-making skills along the way. Area teens interested in the arts will be offered paid summer apprenticeships to learn creative skills and job skills alike and to connect to the community through the creation of public art and salable works.

- **Cincinnati Black Theatre Company:** *Dance Floor Installation*

This will allow the Cincinnati Black Theatre Company to install a new floor for a dance studio within our current rehearsal space in order to create a safe place to learn and practice dance without dangerous slippage or other physical injuries.

- **Bi-Okoto Drum & Dance Theatre:** *Continuation and Expansion of Bi-Okoto's Educational Programs*

In fueling creativity and learning, Bi-Okoto's cultural arts education exposes students and their communities to African history, geography, music, dances, languages and cuisine. The program uses the culture to increase students' self-esteem and enhance their creative thinking, as they develop cultural awareness and tolerance. Collaboration and creativity among students, teachers, and parents reinforces life skills and positive values in communities. Bi-Okoto uses professional Teaching and Performing Artists (TPAs) to do this. However, retaining and hiring TPAs has become financially challenging, even as the demand for the programming grows. Bi-Okoto plans to add two more TPAs to its program.

- **UnderWorld Black Arts Festival:** *"ICBR-513 (Inspire Cincinnati's Black Renaissance 513)"*

Inspire Cincinnati's Black Renaissance 513 (ICBR-513) is a documentation of the growth in Black Cincinnati. ICBR-513 will find and commission storytellers from across Cincinnati to document UnderWorld Black Arts Festival collaborations across disciplines. Starting in October 2022, filmmakers, photographers, writers, and choreographers will document the Black Renaissance taking place in Cincinnati. Although social media is one form of learning about what's happening, this project will create artifacts to document this exciting era.

- **Juneteenth Cincinnati:** *36th Annual Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival*

Juneteenth Cincinnati will produce and present its 36th annual Juneteenth Festival as well as associated programming. The Juneteenth Festival will be held in Eden Park on the weekend of June 17-18, 2023 and will be preceded by Afro-centric programming in February and March, "Wade in the Water" a participatory dance performance by the Ohio River, and several Juneteenth flag-raising ceremonies. The overall project will employ at least 200 performing and visual artists. Beneficiaries range from toddlers to seniors.

- **Q-Kidz Dance Team:** *Q-Kidz Non-Profit Administrator Retention*

At the beginning of 2022, Q-Kidz Dance Team officially began employing an Administrator and achieved great success. Having a dedicated Administrator has helped reduce the amount of time required by the Program Director and Coaches to complete necessary administrative tasks, thereby allowing them to focus time directly on the youth, as well as developing and implementing arts programming with a focus on dance.

- **Regal Rhythms Poetry:** *Regal Rhythms Poetry's 2nd Annual Black Book Fair & Open Mic*

Regal Rhythms Poetry (RRP) will host the second Annual Black Book Fair & Open Mic on Saturday, November 19, 2022, at 1:00-8:00 p.m. (Oasis at Grace, 5524 Belmont Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45224). This event celebrates cultural inclusion in publishing, increases the representation of Black voices and creates equity for BIPOC stories. Registered participants can explore the book fair, experience workshops, engage in the discussion panel and attend the open mic. Additionally, RRP invites publishing companies as vendors to host one-on-one sessions for aspiring authors. RRP supports aspiring and published authors of all races throughout the writing, publishing, and marketing processes.

- **Hear Us, Hear Them:** “*Resounding Peace*”

Hear Us, Hear Them presents “Resounding Peace,” an evening of choral music featuring three world premiere commissions by: legendary spiritual arranger Stacey V. Gibbs, returning composer Danielle Jagelski, and Luna Composition Lab. The concert will be held Sunday, April 23, 2023 at 4 p.m. at ARCO Cincinnati. Tickets will be available to purchase in advance, online or at the door. Learn more at hearushearthem.org.

- **Jews of Color Sanctuary:** “*Ritual Studio: affinity fueled dreaming*”

Seeing Blackness in a foundational origin story is powerful and priceless. Ritual Studio invites Jewish people of color and allies to explore contradictory Torah texts side-by-side through lenses of marginalized identities, from near-eastern Biblical times through today. Conversations raised between the texts will springboard exploration into open artistic studio space, welcoming all creative expression without excluding non-visual arts like dance, music, photography, etc. Ritual Studio invites participants to interpret Torah, as a literary text with a full person of color cast, actively rewriting people of color back into a previously whitewashed script. Ritual Studio will be based in the ish Garage.

- **NuLyphe Performing Arts, Inc:** *NuLyphe Website*

NuLyphe Performing Arts rises to the call for a platform that bridges the cultural divides in the performing arts. Adults and young children can do art, but most do not know how to pursue the arts. Through the development of a website, the organization is prepared to guide new artists from age 6 and up through the process of pursuing their artistic vision, whether it is a conceptual idea or when ready to launch into their careers.