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**ArtsWave announces another \$190,000 in Black and Brown artist grants,
nearing three-quarters of a million dollars in impact**

December 12, 2022 – At a recent board meeting, ArtsWave approved grants totaling \$190,000 for 19 local BIPOC artists in the third year of funding for its Black and Brown Artist Grants program.

As a key component of ArtsWave's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access strategy, "Lifting as We Learn," the grants program is one of several funding initiatives that have increased resources for Black and Brown arts, funding 68 artist projects with \$744,608 in grants over the past three years. As in the past, a multidisciplinary artist showcase will be held in summer of 2023. Each of the projects will include an aspect of public performance and/or display.

[This year's grants](#) will focus on the themes of healing, rebirth and reconnecting. The grants are made possible by the ArtsWave Campaign in partnership with the City of Cincinnati, Duke Energy, Macy's, Greater Cincinnati Foundation and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

Nineteen grant recipients were selected out of a highly competitive group of 48 applicants from across the region. The recipient's projects will explore and build upon the current artistic commentary of health and race and connect it with historical events and visions of a more equitable future. The projects not only represent the African American experience, but also the experiences of those with Mexican, Lebanese, Somali, Argentinian and Zimbabwean heritage.

ArtsWave's Black and Brown Artist Grants are designed to provide financial support so that Black and Brown artists in the Cincinnati region can continue to interpret the themes of our times. The program is one way that ArtsWave is working to increase the sustainability of organizations and artists that focus on the preservation and advancement of Black arts and culture.

Artists are asked to involve some aspect of collaboration with community members and other partners in their projects, so that the larger public can participate in reconciling the moment and imagining a more just and equitable future for the Cincinnati region through the arts. As a group, the projects advance ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action and the powerful goals of bridging cultural divides, promoting understanding and empathy, deepening the roots of residents, and improving neighborhoods.

Additionally, professional development services are provided to the artists to help them through the grant writing process and beyond. ArtsWave presented a series of grant writing workshops and mentoring prior to the grant submission deadline. Partnering with Wave Pool, all grant recipients will complete their "Driving Lessons" program, along with monthly networking and progress meetings with ArtsWave staff and consultants.

ArtsWave President & CEO Alecia Kintner is pleased that the Black and Brown Artist Grants program has grown in its impact, mentioning that "Each of the nearly 70 artists tells a different story through their work, and in doing so, we come together as a community to better understand and appreciate the value we bring to each other."

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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.



2023 Black and Brown Artists Grants Program Recipients

Artist	Awarded	Project Title
Brent Billingsley	\$10,000	"I'M STILL LISTENING"
Jonathan Carter	\$10,000	"Secret Bias"
Preston Bell Charles III	\$10,000	"Divided Roots - Seeing is Believing"
Daniel Chimusoro	\$10,000	"Nomad" (working title)
Michael Coppage	\$10,000	"HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK" from the "12 Commandments" series
Asha Daniels	\$10,000	AGAPE
Desirae Hosley	\$10,000	"Social Therapy: Are We Healing?"
Deqah Hussein	\$10,000	"Lost Voices of Cincinnati: West End"
Chenelle Jones	\$10,000	"Yemaya: Sista to the Distant, Yet Rising Star"
Alan Lawson	\$10,000	"Overcome" (working title)
Juan Gabriel Martinez Rubio	\$10,000	"Pato y Muerte – Duck and Death"
Pablo Mejia	\$10,000	"Lejanía"
Julia Orquera Bianco	\$10,000	"Walking the Winter"
Rebecca Nava Soto	\$10,000	"PAHTIĀ TLACUA" (Nahuatl, PAHTIĀ: to heal TLACUA: to feed)
Rowan Salem	\$10,000	"Journeys Embodied: Middle Eastern Stories"
Kareem Simpson	\$10,000	"FLIPd: Cincinnati's Famous Places, Spaces and Stories Told from the Eyes of the African American Community"
Aaron Thompson	\$10,000	"Conjunction"
Silas Tibbs	\$10,000	"Attrition: A Short Film"
Jason C. White	\$10,000	"Keep the Faith: A Community Musical"

Project Descriptions

Brent Billingsley

"I'M STILL LISTENING"

A continuation of "I'm Listening," which received a Black and Brown Artist grant in 2022, this project will be a collaboration between the artist, the Cincinnati Police Department and art students at Woodward Career Technical High School. The students will establish

their own company, obtaining a vendor's license so they can sell their own artistically-rendered garments in public.

Jonathan Carter

"Secret Bias"

"Secret Bias" will be a collection of up to 10 individual paintings and mixed media works that expose hidden biases towards others within the community. The project aims to deepen roots in our region by generating healing and reconciliation, to bridge cultural divides with the recognition that Black lives matter to the same extent as all other lives, and to promote learning and understanding.

Preston Bell Charles III

"Divided Roots - Seeing is Believing"

"Divide Roots" will use spoken word, narration and motion sequences to convey the origins of our current social-geographical landscape. Multimedia elements will explore concepts of race, location and social views through historical and contemporary lenses in Cincinnati and its neighborhoods.

Daniel Chimusoro

"Nomad" (working title)

This project will culminate in a series of 8-10 songs, available for streaming, that deal with themes of love, heartbreak and the pursuit of belonging. Chimusoro will explore experiences like facing the unintentional consequences of expressing himself through his hair, his art and more. The project will include performances of the songs in local black-owned cafes (Revel OTR, BlaCk Coffee, Cream & Sugar) and concert venues like the Woodward theater or Madison Live.

Michael Coppage

"HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK!" from the "12 Commandments" series

"HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK!" will be the fourth bronze sculpture in the "12 Commandments" series. The 10 Commandments are the moral governing principles that underpin Christianity and Judaism. In rap culture, "12" is a slang term referring to the police. Police have killed over 21,000 Americans since the year 2000, with Black and Brown people disproportionately at the receiving end of a service weapon. In 2020, when the project was conceived, 564 people died at the hands of police. Directly in conflict with commandments like "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not bear false witness," police have historically used the power of their position to justify institutional violence against people of color. The goal of "HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK!" is to highlight the assertion of power over Black bodies and the systemic issues that arise as a result.

Asha Daniels**"AGAPE"**

"AGAPE" is a couture collection of menswear and womenswear that will explore gender fluidity. The collection will adorn models as they walk the runway of a nontraditional fashion show. Like Daniels' previously funded project, "NEW MOON," the "AGAPE" fashion show will incorporate dance, live music from local artists and original spoken word performances. An interview and photo series, "Don't Forget Me," will explore Black love, featuring real couples with a focus on our elders.

Desirae Hosley**"Social Therapy: Are We Healed?"**

"Social Therapy: Are We Healed?" will be a five-part series, documented via video. A live audience will take part in an open dialogue, asking whether the arts are a healing source for the BIPOC community or a trigger of recurring events without the restoration of peace. These conversations will open the door to understanding how an artist's work can be more than a conversation starter — and how to rebuild connection after grieving past experiences. Each conversation will include a panel discussion, with artists, mental health experts and a performance that will remind us all that joy exists, even during hard times.

Deqah Hussein**"Lost Voices of Cincinnati: West End"**

Hussein's project will build on the "Urban Roots: Lost Voices of Cincinnati" podcast, also funded by ArtsWave, as part of an overall Historical Perspectives on Urban Renewal in Cincinnati series. "Lost Voices of Cincinnati: West End" will use archives and storytelling in a short documentary on the impact of Interstates 71 and 74 on three African American neighborhoods in Cincinnati: Evanston, Avondale and South Cumminsville.

Chenelle Jones**"Yemaya: Sista to the Distant, Yet Rising Star"**

This project will elevate dance and DJing as modes of storytelling. It will include recorded poetry set to music composed and performed by members of (CA)^ Dance Crew, adding visual texture through lighting and projection. This three-part story, inspired by the Yoruba myth of Yemaya, will explore the struggle for self-acceptance that women of the African Diaspora face. (CA)^2 Dance Crew will express the each phase of the story through dynamic dance, from Phase 1: Childbirth + Original Sin; to Phase 2: Shadow Dance + Love Quest; and Phase 3: Defiance + Reclamation. The message is one of defiance, representing Black women reclaiming the right to live free from racist and sexist barriers that poison their sense of self-worth and hinder spiritual ascension.

Alan Lawson

"Overcome" (Working Title)

"Overcome" is an original music composition for a full orchestra to honor the many people who have fought for our rights throughout history. The final orchestration will celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Washington, encompassing strength, determination and unity to tell a story through music and inspire listeners.

Juan Gabriel Martinez Rubio

"Pato y Muerte - Duck and Death"

"Pato y Muerte" is an original, playful dance theatre script based on a German tale. It reflects a cultural understanding of death, friendship and loyalty present in Mexico and many other Latinx cultures: that death simply serves as a reminder to celebrate life, loyalty and friendship, even as we mourn. Through this celebration and the bonds we create with others, our loved ones continue living.

Pablo Mejia

"Lejanía"

"Lejanía" is a hybrid short film that combines documentary and narrative elements. The story follows three Guatemalan brothers, Hermitanio, Daniel and Juvencio, who live and work in Cincinnati, remodeling homes. The three brothers are Pocomam — Mayan Indians of the highlands of eastern Guatemala — who speak Spanish as well as their native language, Pocomam. All three are portrayed by members of the small but thriving Latinx community of Cincinnati. Through intimate conversations, daily rituals and sharing their lived experiences, the film explores their pain and perseverance after they leave their hometowns behind. The final product, a 13-minute short film, will invite viewers to empathize with a marginalized and often overlooked community in the Midwest.

Julia Orquera Bianco

"Walking the Winter"

"Walking the Winter" is a community engagement program that will bring people together in the Ohio woods to heal and reflect through the power of nature. A series of watercolors, ink paintings and a short film will document the experience.

Rebecca Nava Soto

"PAHTIĀ TLACUA" (Nahuatl, PAHTIĀ: to heal, TLACUA: to feed)

In "PAHTIĀ TLACUA," art will serve as a vehicle for healing generational trauma and reclaiming what has been lost. A series of paintings, mixed media works and an interactive, collectively created art piece. will center Indigenous healing as an art practice. The project will honor the original holders of this wisdom while inviting viewers to embrace their own healing potential.

Rowan Salem

"Journeys Embodied: Middle Eastern Stories"

This project will highlight the stories of five Cincinnati residents of Middle Eastern descent through audio interviews and dance film. The five participants will create movement through their own stories and experiences inspiring a composition for a local, professional ensemble. "Journeys Embodied" will celebrate the diverse roots and backgrounds of our neighbors who make our community stronger through a shared experience.

Kareem Simpson

"FLIPd: Cincinnati's Famous Places, Spaces and Stories Told from the Eyes of the African American Community"

"FLIPd" is a multi-episodic podcast that explores Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky history. It uses narrative storytelling, archival audio and immersive soundscapes to explore true stories of the historic places and spaces that made the region great, from the perspective of the region's Black community. The podcast reframes our understanding of local history by exploring local spaces through an often overlooked lens.

Aaron Thompson

"Conjunction"

"Conjunction" will consist of multimedia-integrated mural-making, using text, paint and three-dimensional materials to bridge physical space with metaphysical concepts like collective genius and group action. The work, imposing in its size and content, will pose questions about individuality and collective movement toward common goals, exploring how shared creative consciousness connects communities.

Silas Tibbs

"Attrition: A Short Film"

"Attrition: A Short Film" will depict the African American experience through Orwellian-style science fiction. Set in the early days of the 21st Century, the film depicts a time of chaos and a fever pitch of ethnic tensions, forcing an inevitable but impossible choice for citizens.

Jason C. White

"Keep The Faith: A Community Musical"

"Keep the Faith" is a new musical inspired by two recent publications about the Black Church. The first is Dr. Henry Louis Gates's four-hour PBS miniseries, "The Black Church," which traces the 400 year history of the Black Church in America. The second is "Amen: Music of the Black Church," a concert film recorded by the Indiana University African American Choral Ensemble. "Keep the Faith" will be the first community musical to tell the story of the Black Church while encouraging community members to consider its future. It will promote understanding and educate audiences about the music of the Black Church — one of the most influential forms of American music.