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ArtsWave's Truth & Inspiration Artist Showcase and Exhibition Opens July 18 with Free Admission, Multiple Genres

Sixth annual showcase caps a year of Inspire Artist Grants with one day of film screenings, performances and free access to the Contemporary Arts Center.

CINCINNATI, Ohio, July 13, 2026: ArtsWave, the region's engine for the arts, will open the sixth annual Truth & Inspiration Artist Showcase on Saturday, July 18, at the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC), 44 E. Sixth St. The event is free and open to the public. For one day, the community can experience the opening of the visual art exhibition, watch live performances and film screenings, and meet the artists behind the work. Thanks to ArtsWave's partnership with the CAC, guests can also explore the entire museum at no cost.

The showcase is the public culmination of ArtsWave's Inspire Artist Grants, a program now in its sixth year that awarded \$204,700 this cycle to 24 artists creating new work exploring themes of truth and inspiration. Since 2020, ArtsWave has invested more than \$1 million in local artists through the program, funding projects across film, music, poetry, performance, visual art, fashion and installation. Local artist and mentor Michael Thompson returns as curator, working with the cohort throughout the year to bring their projects to the public.

"This cohort represents the breadth of artists in our region and brings together emerging and national talent under a single roof," said Thompson. "We have creatives working in film, performance, music, fine art and socially-based practices. This variety makes the showcase unique and gives our community access to the individuals who are helping to shape the story and culture of our city."

This year's showcase also marks the first-ever awarding of the tt stern-enzi Memorial Grant, a new honor supporting emerging artists of color working in film. The inaugural

award will be presented Friday evening at a private artists reception, with tt stern-enzi's widow on hand to help present it.

The visual art exhibition will remain on view at the CAC for two months following the opening, but July 18 is the only day to experience the showcase in full. Programming runs from 10 a.m. and includes spoken word, dance, film screenings and live music, with artists on hand throughout the day to talk about their work and the stories behind it.

"The arts are how a community understands itself," said Alecia Kintner, ArtsWave President and CEO. "On July 18, twenty four artists are giving Cincinnati a chance to see itself more clearly and it's free and open to everyone. Elevating this work to the whole community is core to how ArtsWave and our partners are building a more vibrant and connected region."

The Truth and Inspiration Showcase is made possible through partnerships with the City of Cincinnati, Duke Energy and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation.

Media are invited to attend, interview participating artists and capture the showcase live. A full schedule of performances and screenings is available on the ArtsWave App and at artswave.org/truth.

WHAT: Truth & Inspiration Artist Showcase, the public opening of ArtsWave's 2026 Inspire Artist Grants

WHEN: Saturday, July 18, 2026, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (welcome remarks at 10 a.m.)

WHERE: Contemporary Arts Center, 44 E. Sixth St., Cincinnati, OH 45202

COST: Free and open to the public, including full museum admission

SPONSORS: City of Cincinnati; Duke Energy; Greater Cincinnati Foundation.

INFO: artswave.org/truth and the [ArtsWave App](#)

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About ArtsWave

ArtsWave fuels the Cincinnati region's arts, supporting 150+ organizations, projects and artists each year. Since 1927, it has been the primary way the region funds the arts, raising millions annually from tens of thousands of individuals, businesses and foundations to drive a more vibrant economy and connected community. Through the Blueprint for Collective Action, ArtsWave strategically makes investments that maximize the arts' impact across the region. To learn more and give, visit artswave.org.