



VIA ART FUND AND WAGNER FOUNDATION AWARD **\$200,000 IN INCUBATOR GRANTS IN 2021**

Two years of general operating support awarded to five small-scale visual arts nonprofit organizations across the United States.

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE) – VIA Art Fund and Wagner Foundation have awarded grants totaling \$200,000 to five U.S.-based visual arts organizations. The recipients of the 2021 VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant Fund grant are: MOCA Tucson (Tucson, AZ), Santa Fe Art Institute (Santa Fe, NM), Stove Works (Chattanooga, TN), The Union for Contemporary Art (Omaha, NE), and Wave Pool (Cincinnati, OH).

The 2021 Incubator Grantees demonstrate a commitment to support their respective communities through fostering experimental contemporary art and advancing critical discourse in contemporary art on a national level.

Katherine Rochester, Director of Curatorial Research at VIA Art Fund stated: “Our third cohort of VIA | Wagner Incubator grantees exemplifies the richness of the cultural landscape in urban centers throughout the southeastern, midwestern, and southwestern United States. While each organization is utterly unique, all are united by a mission to create innovative contemporary arts programming that resonates at home while steering discourse further afield. This integration of the local with the global infuses our national arts ecosystem with various models for artistic excellence, ensuring that artists have the platforms they need for developing experimental work.”

Wagner Foundation Deputy Director Caroline Easley commented: “In our third year of the VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant Fund, we welcome a growing community of cultural organizations, each reflecting a distinct geography, history, and audience. Wagner’s mission of investing in just and robust communities recognizes that art organizations are unique in providing a variety of gathering spaces and opportunities for expression and sharing that can foster economic growth and cultural transformation. Each organization shares a commitment to confronting issues of social justice and contributing to a more inclusive arts ecosystem. We are proud to welcome them to this year’s incubator cohort.”

In 2019, the Incubator Grant Fund was established by VIA Art Fund and Wagner Foundation with the intention of cultivating an inclusive and dynamic arts ecosystem by awarding \$1 million to be dispersed among small, nonprofit visual arts organizations across the nation. Each organization will receive \$40,000 for general operating support to be dispersed in \$20,000 installments over two years.

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2021 Incubator Grantees:

MOCA Tucson (Tucson, AZ) offers engaging programming with a focus on major new commissions, an artist residency, and far-reaching education programs. With a particular focus on regional sociopolitical themes, MOCA's programming is designed to encourage empathy between a diverse group of artists and audiences. Executive Director Kate Green commented: "MOCA Tucson is profoundly grateful for VIA Art Fund and Wagner Foundation's support of our important work as a beacon for contemporary art in the Sonoran Desert. As MOCA expands its ambitious projects with artists and visitors in downtown Tucson, this grant is crucial, allowing us to continue to inspire and educate across cultures, economies, borders, geographies, and communities."

Santa Fe Art Institute (Santa Fe, NM) supports artists, activists, and creative visionaries through residency programs that focus on an annual theme examining critical social issues in the Santa Fe community. SFAI's programming allows artists and creative practitioners the fundamental resources to produce ambitious, forward-looking work and engage the general public through exhibitions, community projects, and events. Executive Director Jamie Blosser commented: "In a few short years, VIA Art Fund has demonstrated its commitment to supporting artists dedicated to critical inquiry and cultural exchange by modeling a new way for patrons to positively impact the entire arts ecosystem. The Santa Fe Art Institute is honored to be awarded the VIA Art Fund | Wagner Foundation Incubator Grant, which aligns fully with our mission to connect the arts and social justice."

Stove Works (Chattanooga, TN) is an alternative art space whose mission is to serve the Chattanooga community through the production, exhibition, and education of contemporary art. Its robust artist in residence program, which hosts over 70 artists each year generates meaningful exchange and reflection, providing opportunities to learn from the experiences of others and to give voice. Founder and Executive Director Charlotte Caldwell commented: "We moved into our permanent home in October of last year, in the middle of the pandemic. When we were notified that we were among the recipients of the VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant, we were a week out from opening the first exhibition on-site that we could share, without restraint, with our communities. We experienced an immediate wave of energy and affirmation."

The Union for Contemporary Art (Omaha, NE) is a community arts center creating positive social change in the North Omaha community. The Union's commitment to addressing civic issues faced by residents and elevating artistic voices of the African Diaspora contribute to the revitalization and unification of the city's cultural identity. Founder and Executive Director, Brigitte McQueen commented: "As the founder of The Union, it feels surreal to see our organization recognized by the VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant Fund, knowing that it joins a list of incredibly prestigious and accomplished organizations. We're deeply honored to have been granted this support as we celebrate our 10th year and are grateful for the impact this opportunity will have on our artist-centered work."

Wave Pool (Cincinnati, OH) is an experimental art space offering an array of programs that integrate the community's knowledge of its own needs with artists' vision and sense of possibility. Wave Pool facilitates organic exchange between staff members, artists and curators in residence, and community members to nurture mutually beneficial projects supporting positive change. Founder and Executive Director Cal Cullen commented: "We are thrilled to be a recipient of the Incubator Grant. Both the funds and the connections offered through this opportunity are crucial to Wave Pool's vision for artists and communities remaking the world together. This program is a game changer for our organization and for contemporary artists in our region in Southwestern Ohio. We could not be more grateful and excited."

ABOUT US

Since its founding in 2013, **VIA Art Fund** has built a national coalition of dedicated individual philanthropists and family foundations who have awarded over \$6 million in grants and gifted or partially gifted over 40 works of art to US museums. VIA Art Fund supports contemporary visual art through a series of philanthropic partnerships that exemplify our grantmaking core values of Artistic Production, Thought Leadership, and Public Engagement. Partnering directly with artists, curators, and cultural institutions around the world, VIA Art Fund awards grants to innovative artistic organizations and endeavors in various forms, from the production, exhibition, and institutional acquisition of works of art, to symposia, educational programs, and publications. VIA Art Fund stands apart in the landscape of contemporary arts funding as a collective, democratic initiative that connects art patrons with today's most visionary cultural producers.

Wagner Foundation's vision is a just and robust community where everyone is valued equally and has the ability to imagine, shape, pursue, and sustain the lives they wish to lead. In pursuit of this vision, the foundation's mission is to confront the social and historical disparities that perpetuate injustice. The foundation does this by accompanying organizations aligned with this goal, serving as advocates for change and convening thought leaders. Its focus on health equity and shared prosperity is balanced by a holistic approach which aims to develop and strengthen equitable systems throughout the world. In these efforts, the foundation welcomes creative solutions bringing communities together. It is committed to encouraging visionary individuals, as well as arts organizations that expand cultural access. The willingness to explore, ask questions, and support one another makes new solutions possible, transforming culture in the process.

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