



## **ANNOUNCING 2023 INCUBATOR GRANTEES BY VIA ART FUND AND WAGNER FOUNDATION**

Five impressive visual arts non-profit organizations across the United States are awarded a total of \$200,000 in general operating support.

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE) – VIA Art Fund and Wagner Foundation have awarded grants to five U.S.-based visual arts organizations totaling \$200,000. The recipients of the 2023 VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant Fund are: 1708 Gallery (Richmond, VA), 516 ARTS (Albuquerque, NM), Indigo Arts Alliance (Portland, ME), All My Relations Arts (Minneapolis, MN), and PARTICIPANT INC (New York, NY). This cohort of Incubator Grantees joins a network of contemporary arts organizations throughout the United States, now twenty-five members strong.

Susan Thompson, VIA Art Fund’s Director of Grantmaking and Curatorial Research stated, “VIA Art Fund is thrilled to add these five impactful organizations to our growing community of VIA | Wagner Incubator grantees. We are proud that this group expands the reach of the Incubator program not only geographically but in the depth and diversity of the communities served. In reviewing the competitive field of applicants this grant cycle, we were particularly compelled by the visionary leadership guiding each of the awarded organizations and their innovative approaches to community building through arts programming. With these selections, and in partnership with the Wagner Foundation, we continue to fulfill the Incubator Grant Fund mission to foster and support a diverse national arts network for emergent arts practice.”

Abigail Satinsky, Wagner Foundation’s Program Officer and Curator of Arts & Culture stated, “We are so pleased to welcome these exemplary organizations to our Incubator cohort and to support them as vital anchors in their regional arts ecosystems. Each brings a unique approach to arts centered programming, community partnership, diverse curatorial frameworks, and global thinking about the role of the arts in today’s world. They are building expansive and generous artworlds for their communities and it is a privilege to be in support of their work.”

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

### **2023 Incubator Grantees:**

**1708 Gallery (Richmond, VA)** was founded in 1978 by a group of artists at Virginia Commonwealth University. 1708 Gallery is one of the oldest artist-run galleries in the nation. Through exhibitions and public programs, it seeks to empower artists’ ideas and voices so they can create work that impacts the local community. Rooted in the belief that artists are catalysts for new ways of thinking and connectors of different perspectives, the gallery provides artists with financial and institutional support, as

well as professional development resources. 1708 Gallery is dedicated to facilitating opportunities for Richmond-based, national, and international artists to offer the local community diverse ideas from across the field of contemporary art. Emily Smith, Executive Director, 1708 Gallery commented, “On behalf of the staff and Board of 1708 Gallery, I am thrilled and grateful to say thank you to VIA Art Fund and the Wagner Foundation for this recognition. We are honored to join this year’s cohort of amazing organizations as well as the collective of visionaries represented by the history of the Incubator Fund. This support comes as 1708 enters its 45<sup>th</sup> year of providing a platform for artists to develop ideas and a space for audiences to convene around the conversations that these ideas—and the subsequent artworks that develop—provoke.”

For more information, please visit [1708 Gallery](#).

**516 ARTS (Albuquerque, NM)** was founded in 2006. 516 ARTS is a non-collecting, free admission contemporary art museum in Downtown Albuquerque that celebrates thought-provoking art in the here and now. 516 ARTS has a mission to connect contemporary art and diverse audiences through exhibitions and public programs that feature a mix of local, national, and international artists. The only museum in Albuquerque devoted exclusively to contemporary art, 516 ARTS prioritizes risk-taking and creative experimentation with a focus on the intersection of Latinx and Indigenous histories in New Mexico and beyond.

Deeply engaged with the Albuquerque arts community, 516 ARTS is also invested in coalition-building among arts organizations throughout the region. In 2021, 516 launched Desierto Mountain Time, a constellation of contemporary arts organizations in the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico drawn together by a shared interest in making meaningful connections between local and international communities. Core to its programming is the Indigenous Arts Program, which engages Indigenous artists and communities in New Mexico as part of a larger practice of diversity. Suzanne Sbarge, Founder and Executive Director, 516 ARTS commented, “It’s truly an honor for 516 ARTS to be one of the five small nonprofit arts organizations nationwide receiving a two-year grant from the 2023 VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant Fund. This award will fortify our efforts to engage people from all walks of life in contemporary art that raises consciousness and inspires dialogue about crucial issues in our community and the world. We look forward to embarking on artistic journeys that inspire, challenge, and enrich the cultural fabric of New Mexico and beyond.”

For more information, please visit [516 ARTS](#).

**All My Relations Arts (Minneapolis, MN)** was founded in 1999. All My Relations Art (AMRA) is the arts program of the larger cultural and community development organization Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) and is located on a stretch of Franklin Ave in Minneapolis that is referred to as the American Indian Cultural Corridor. AMRA is one of the few Midwest hubs for contemporary Native art and a national platform for the elevation of contemporary Native artists, providing career-changing support for artists and arts professionals. AMRA’s mission is to honor and strengthen relationships between contemporary American Indian artists and audiences of all ethnic backgrounds. Through mentorships, residencies, and place making opportunities, AMRA is a significant space for advancing the

careers of Native artists and arts professionals. The AMRA gallery provides a vital gathering space for creative community engagement, education, and outreach to neighbors and allies.

Robert Lilligren, President and CEO of NACDI commented, “We are so grateful to be included in the VIA | Wagner 2023 Incubator cohort. This grant will allow us to expand our work with Native artists and communities. This couldn’t come at a better time for NACDI/AMRA as our organization moves towards growth and expansion. We hope this cohort will be an opportunity to engage with other like-minded arts organizations, as we move towards change, inclusion, and diversity in the arts.”

For more information, please visit [AMRA](#).

**Indigo Arts Alliance (Portland, ME)** was founded in 2018. Indigo Arts Alliance (IAA) is the only Black-led arts incubator in northern New England dedicated to the professional development and amplification of Black and Brown artists. Its rigorous program seeks to strengthen a multicultural democracy by cultivating art as an essential resource for healthy communities. With this mission in mind, IAA provides an affirming environment for the creation of artwork across disciplines; amplifies access for Black and Brown artistic expression; and promotes discourse through participatory events that bring artists into public dialogue, centering issues of social justice, culture, and community.

IAA’s program manifests primarily as an Artist-in-Residence program for BIPOC artists to spend time working in Maine. As part of the residency program, the artists are supported through mentorship and professional development initiatives and are introduced to Maine-based artists of color to create connections and dialogues that will carry on past the term of the residency through alumni networks. Jordia Benjamin, Indigo Arts Alliance’s Executive Director commented, “At Indigo Arts Alliance, we pride ourselves on being a global organization that is based in Maine who centers the brilliance of Black and Brown artists across the global diaspora. We are honored to be amongst the 2023 recipient cohort of the VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant. At Indigo Arts Alliance we truly believe that artistic vision plays a key role in strengthening our multiracial democracy to build a humane, inclusive, and just world. We are thrilled to stand with these foundations that are making a true effort to use their influence and resources to better the arts and communities at large.”

For more information, please visit [Indigo Arts Alliance](#).

**PARTICIPANT INC (New York, NY)** was founded in 2001. PARTICIPANT INC is an alternative art space in downtown New York that collaborates closely with artists to develop, realize, and present ambitious projects within a context that recognizes the social and cultural value of artistic experimentation. PARTICIPANT is committed to interdisciplinarity and intergenerational exhibition-making, striving to address the changing context of alternative art and to respond responsibly to the diverse practices of artists. Over the past 20 years, PARTICIPANT has mounted many culturally significant exhibitions with a particular emphasis on the work of queer artists and a focus on experimentation, radicality, and risk-taking. In recent years, PARTICIPANT has taken on responsibility for stewardship of the estates of select artists with whom the organization has long-term and dedicated relationships.

Lia Gangitano, Founder and Director, PARTICIPANT INC commented, “Emerging from the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis in post-9/11 New York City, for twenty years PARTICIPANT INC has sought to create a curatorial platform centering LGBTQIA2S+ artists in which decisions are made through the lens of social, racial, and environmental justice—constructing alternative worlds in deep collaboration with emerging artists, reanimating legacies through estates work, and both, at times, amending history. It is particularly meaningful to join the growing cohort of VIA | Wagner Incubator Grant partners at this moment of risk and transition—the space and time this support enables are invaluable to small arts organizations such as PARTICIPANT as we strive to foster cultural transformation while providing research and care for prior experimental artistic practices, creating a repository of intergenerational memory, speaking to the future.”

For more information, please visit [PARTICIPANT INC](#).

To learn more about the Incubator grant program, please visit VIA Art Fund’s [website](#).

## **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 more than \$7 million in grants and gifted or partially gifted over 50 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.

The **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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