

Supporting Individual Artists—Preserving the Core of Humanity

How we treat our artists, even when they tell us things we may not wish to hear, is a measure of the quality of our society, and of its confidence

Archibald L. Gilles

Our commitment to supporting individual artists is a testament to our understanding of the importance of artists in our world. We support artists to allow them time to reveal the truths of our existence. We support artists to promote diverse, creative communities engaged in civil dialogue and public service. We support artists to ensure the freedom of their expression and the preservation of our own.

To send light into the darkness of men's hearts - such is the duty of the artist.

Robert Schumann

Though artists' impressive impact on the economy is quantifiable and therefore commonly used in their defense against threats of budget cuts and the whims of prevailing tastes, it is their constructive influence on the social development of communities, states, and nations that represents their most valuable and lasting contribution. The generative power of art accosts our senses and demands our attention. It forces us to ask questions of ourselves and engage others in dialogue, changing our perspective and connecting us to the reality outside ourselves. It is for this powerful and enduring contribution that we remain forever indebted to artists.

If artists are to provide their services for the improvement of our economy and society, they must be afforded the freedom to think, work, and act in accordance with their creative insights. The most reasonable means of providing for this freedom is through assistance administered directly and indirectly to individual artists. Professional development programs and internships give artists the tools necessary to shape their own sustainable, artistic careers. Creative seminars, travel grants, and residencies help artists engage and interact with new communities, fostering dialogue with and within a broader public. Fellowships, grants, and awards afford artists the most valuable resource for their work: the opportunity to realize their projects and take the risks essential to great art.

If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.

John F. Kennedy

We live in a fractured world. I've always seen it as my role as an artist to attempt to make wholeness.

Anish Kapoor

Direct support for artists has a clear and measurable impact not only on the individuals it supports, but on the broader public as well. From improving civic life to rejuvenating the bonds of our communities, the contributions of individual artists stimulate communication and encourage cultural exchange. The value of continually refining our virtue, a value found at the core of artistic expression, is central to our notion of humanity; we are a society of individuals constantly challenging the status quo in pursuit of a more perfect world.

Investing in the future of individual artists is not only investing in an isolated individual; instead, by supporting artists we directly empower our communities, economies, and cultures. Few investments provide such diverse and valuable returns and none is as vital to our cultural heritage and public life.

About Grantmakers in the Arts' Support for Individual Artists Group

For over twenty years, a growing number of Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) members have been working together to promote and improve funding for individual artists. The group advocates for both direct and indirect support for individual artists through research, conferences, and seminars aimed at increasing awareness of the benefits of empowering artists directly. The group is one of the most active and energetic groups of funders within GIA, focused on cultivating innovative practices for promoting, recognizing, and validating artists and their contributions to society.

Presented by the GIA Support for Individual Artists Group Steering Committee: **Cindy Gehrig** (co-chair), president, Jerome Foundation; **Michael Royce** (co-chair), executive director, NYFA; **Ted Berger**, treasurer, Joan Mitchell Foundation; **Cornelia Carey**, executive director, CERF+; **Nicole Chevalier**, program director, Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation; **Esther Grimm**, executive director, 3Arts; **Abigail Guay**, program manager, Grantmakers in the Arts; **Fidelma McGinn**, executive director, Artist Trust; **Rose Parisi**, director of programs, Illinois Arts Council; **Tommer Peterson**, deputy director & director of programs, Grantmakers in the Arts; **Carolyn Somers**, executive director, Joan Mitchell Foundation; **Caitlin Strokosch**, executive director, Alliance of Artists Communities; **Laura Zimmermann**, program officer, The McKnight Foundation; and **Ute Zimmermann**, program manager, Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue.

About Grantmakers in the Arts

The mission of Grantmakers in the Arts is to provide leadership and service to advance the use of philanthropic resources on behalf of arts and culture. GIA is the only national association of private and public funders making grants to artists and arts organizations in America.

Organizational membership is open to private, independent foundations, family foundations, community foundations, public sector grantmakers, corporate foundations and corporate giving programs, and independent nonprofit organizations whose primary activity is grantmaking in the arts. GIA's strength is in its diversity of members and their common belief that America is a better place to live when the creativity of artists is prevalent in all aspects of society.

The goals of GIA include providing information, research, communication and convening opportunities. Additionally, GIA has a goal of public policy and advocacy, serving as a resource to disseminate information on why artists and arts organizations are valued tools for community economic, educational and cultural development. GIA offers a forum for discourse, whether in print, face-to-face, or online, that probes topics relevant to arts grantmakers and encourages relationship building and best practices. GIA's solid history has created both a base and an appetite for more programming, including active interchange within philanthropy around arts, culture, inclusiveness, and creativity.

For More Information

For more information on providing direct support to individual artists and on the work of the Support for Individual Artists Group Steering Committee, please visit the Support for Individual Artists funding topic page on the GIA website at www.giarts.org or contact Abigail Guay, GIA program manager, at 206-624-2312 or abigail@giarts.org.