



The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage 2024 Grantees

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pewcenterarts.org/2024grants

EVOLVING FUTURES GRANTS

Empowering a sustainable and successful future for the cultural sector, the Center's newly inaugurated Evolving Futures grants provide \$3.5 million to nine cultural organizations that are ready to evolve and adapt their business and operating models.

Each amount listed below represents Evolving Futures project funding plus an additional 20% in unrestricted, general operating support.

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University

\$480,000

Charting a detailed roadmap toward long-term sustainability, the Academy of Natural Sciences—the oldest natural history museum in the Americas—undertakes a two-year business model analysis. The study's outcomes aim to sharpen the Academy's mission, widen its impact, expand partnerships with regional institutions and local communities, and assess physical building needs to best serve its visitors, collections care, and research.

Asian Arts Initiative

\$360,000

Following more than two years of building research and master planning work with consultants and community members, Asian Arts Initiative implements a new business plan to expand and diversify use of its multidisciplinary arts center located in Philadelphia's Chinatown. Potential uses of building space include a 1,300-square-foot area to host community convenings, rehearsals, media labs, and other mission-aligned programs, maximizing the facility's potential to generate revenue while reinforcing AAI's role as a cultural facilitator and producer for the broader community.

The Barnes Foundation

\$480,000

The Barnes expands its mission and organizational scope as it becomes the operational partner of the forthcoming Calder Gardens, a new cultural destination on the Benjamin Franklin

Parkway. Scheduled to open in 2025, the building and gardens celebrate the work of sculptor Alexander Calder, a native Philadelphian and highly influential 20th-century artist. The Barnes applies and adapts its staff expertise and organizational structures for a variety of Calder Gardens' administrative and operational functions, including visitor services, marketing, and facility management, while expanding its reach to new audiences.

Historic Germantown

\$232,800

New models of support create efficiencies and revenue opportunities for smaller members of Historic Germantown, a consortium that comprises 19 cultural and historical organizations in Northwest Philadelphia. Support services are developed in collaboration with consultants and consortium members and provided by Historic Germantown. These strategies establish shared resources for property care, financial management, fundraising, communications, and program delivery to advance participating sites' public visibility, income streams, and sustainability.

Inis Nua Theatre Company

\$186,000

Two contemporary theater companies form a business partnership to align resources, streamline operations, and grow audiences and revenue. Inis Nua, a company dedicated to producing contemporary plays from Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales, undertakes an alliance with Tiny Dynamite, which produces original, non-traditional theater experiences. Establishing shared artistic leadership, staff, and costs, the partnership enables the two small companies to strategize and develop projects like a larger company, work with industry-leading experts, and advance resilient business models.

Opera Philadelphia

\$480,000

New multi-year partnerships embed Opera Philadelphia's artistic practice within other organizations to co-create operas and foster deep, collaborative relationships. Building on an existing strategic alliance with the Apollo Theater to co-commission and co-produce works by Black artists and composers, the company seeks to work with organizations related to and outside of the opera genre to nurture mutual artistic, branding, and fundraising efforts that imagine and implement new economic models for the arts.

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

\$480,000

A new "arts hub" leverages space in PAFA's contemporary Samuel M.V. Hamilton building, positioning the oldest art museum and school in the US as a key partner and community destination for diverse and engaging cultural experiences. The building plan includes renting 77,000 square feet of currently unused space to mission-aligned organizations while also partnering with these tenants on joint exhibitions, programs, and events, revitalizing PAFA's campus and creating new revenue streams.

People's Light

\$480,000

People's Light transitions from a traditional regional theater company into a "live arts center" that acts as a hub for a wide range of cultural events and social experiences. The company's business adaptations expand upon previous collaborations with area organizations and uses of its seven-acre campus for programs such as outdoor family-friendly performances, drive-in concerts, and film screenings. The addition of touring events and venue rentals furthers People's Light's aims to diversify income sources and increase its relevance to a multiplicity of visitors.

The Wilma Theater

\$360,000

The Wilma extends its commitment to a new co-producing model as it refines its collaborative processes and cultivates a strong network of partners. Informed by a pilot co-production with the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, DC, during its 2023-24 season, the theater's business planning work seeks to systematize methods for reducing production costs through expense-sharing and co-marketing, increasing earned revenue, and growing national visibility while maintaining the high quality of contemporary performance for which the Tony Award-winning theater is known.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS

This year's creative project grants, totaling \$5.6 million, support 18 cultural institutions in connecting with communities and audiences across the region. *Each amount listed below represents project funding plus an additional 20% in unrestricted, general operating support.*

Association for Public Art

Let Freedom Ring

\$360,000

Artist Paul Ramirez Jonas' public art installation *Let Freedom Ring* employs the song "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" to inspire civic engagement and cooperation. Situated adjacent to the Liberty Bell in Independence National Historical Park, the sculpture's 32 bells play all but the final note of the patriotic anthem, which visitors ring out together. Accompanying artmaking workshops and public discussions promote discourse on civic history and the future of American democracy.

BalletX

Maslow's Peak

\$360,000

Choreographer Jennifer Archibald premieres a genre-blending contemporary ballet inspired by themes from William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Contemplating power dynamics, social control, and survival instincts, the multi-sensory experience pushes the boundaries of traditional ballet

and incorporates media design. The production invites audiences to reflect on the complexities of human nature and the struggle for dominance and survival.

The Bearded Ladies Cabaret

Shavings

\$230,400

A large-scale installation and a performance series reflect on the realities and challenges of making art, asking, “Is artistic sustainability a myth?” Inspired by grief rituals and the material accumulation of fifteen years of art practice (old props, scenery, videos, and paper documents), weekly performances draw from funerary practices to explore ideas of transition, ephemerality, and legacy through the Bearded Ladies’ queer cabaret lens.

Bowerbird

A View from Inside: David Tudor at 100

\$120,000

A retrospective surveys the work of Philadelphia-born composer, performer, and sound artist David Tudor (1926–1996) through an exhibition, installations, performances, and film screenings. Tudor began experimenting with electronic music in the 1950s, employing emergent technologies like tone generators and signal processors. He became a frequent collaborator of avant-garde artists like Merce Cunningham and John Cage, and he worked with computer engineers in the 1990s to pioneer early AI tools for music.

Brandywine Museum of Art

Jerrell Gibbs: No Solace in the Shade

\$360,000

The first monographic exhibition of the work of Jerrell Gibbs presents the painter’s figurative depictions of Black masculinity and culture. Gibbs’ vibrant paintings of his family and friends highlight the artist’s concerns with identity, community, and emotional and psychological health. An exhibition catalogue and public programs including artist talks, music and dance performances, and artmaking workshops complement these themes.

The Crossing

How to Survive

\$360,000

A four-movement choral work addresses climate change in a video installation conceived by interdisciplinary artist Suzanne Bocanegra. Life-size projections of the Crossing’s singers are paired with footage of natural disasters—tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, and wildfires—to consider the effects of weather-related displacement, human-replacing technology, and the role of song in learning and surviving.

First Person Arts

Black Girls and Guns

\$359,804

A new play by Anna Deavere Smith illuminates how individual histories inform national character. Inspired by the United States' 250th anniversary, Smith's research into pre-20th-century Pennsylvania history, along with personal stories collected through interviews, centers around her family's northern migration from the South and their lives during the Civil War. In partnership with ArtPhilly, First Person Arts produces readings of the new work in three community-based venues.

Hurford Center for the Arts and Humanities

LOOK HERE

\$360,000

An exhibition spotlights the creativity of artists practicing with the Center for Creative Works, a regional Philadelphia studio focused on professional development and representation of neurodiverse artists. The Hurford Center and CCW collaborate on an exhibition at Haverford College's Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, and a concurrent satellite exhibition at Atelier Gallery in Philadelphia features artworks from inclusive studios around the US. A symposium fosters learning and conversations among arts professionals and members of the disability community.

Mann Center for the Performing Arts

A Hundred Years On

\$360,000

The 1876 Centennial Exposition, America's first world's fair, is the setting for a new oratorio composed by Peter Boyer, with a libretto by Mark Campbell. Performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, the choral ensemble The Crossing, and featured soloists in Fairmount Park—the site of the expo 150 years earlier—the research-based piece explores the promise and troubles of a young American democracy and the tensions and inequities that still exist today.

Mural Arts Philadelphia

Vamonos pa'l monte (Let's go to the mountains)

\$360,000

A processional performance created by interdisciplinary artist Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz evokes the culture, ecology, and identity of Puerto Rico as it traverses Philadelphia's major civic spaces. Amid commemorations of the America's 250th anniversary, the processional journeys away from Independence Hall and places the predominantly Puerto Rican Norris Square neighborhood as its focus. Raimundi-Ortiz, a first-generation Puerto Rican American, works with curator Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw and Norris Square residents to center the experience of navigating identity between two homelands.

Museum of the American Revolution

The Declaration's Journey

\$300,000

In celebration of the Declaration of Independence's 250th anniversary, an exhibition examines the document's considerable impact and influence on other declarations of rights. The museum highlights 15 declarations from around the world and features a canopy made from facsimiles of several hundred others, emphasizing how a wide range of political and social movements have invoked America's founding document.

Nichole Canuso Dance Company

Lunar Retreat

\$115,200

Inspired by the moon's gravitational pull on the Earth's oceans, a participatory dance performance contemplates care, loss, and transformation. In a space featuring visual design by Pew Fellow Rebecca Rutstein, video projections by Christopher Ash, and a sound installation by Bobby McElver, audience members receive choreographic prompts as they move at their own pace between collective and individual activities.

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Unearthing the Stories of Philadelphia Gardening

\$359,988

An exploration of the past and present of gardening in Philadelphia celebrates the city's home, community, and professional gardeners. Presented in partnership with The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the project focuses on the contributions of individuals and communities often overlooked in traditional Eurocentric narratives through a city-wide garden celebration, an exhibition drawing from archival materials and contemporary stories, and a demonstration garden planted at the Athenaeum.

Philadelphia Museum of Art

El Anatsui: Prints and Paper Works (working title)

\$360,000

An exhibition offers the first thorough examination of the boundary-pushing print works of El Anatsui, a Ghanaian artist known best for his sculptures made from found materials like bottle caps. Combined with an accompanying publication that serves as a comprehensive record of Anatsui's works on paper, as well as programs such as printing demonstrations and artist and curator discussions, the exhibition provides a fresh perspective on the artist's interplay between two- and three-dimensional objects and his engagement with indigenous West African design traditions.

Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia

Poquessing Creek Trail of History: The Land, The People, The Stories

\$271,680

Site-specific installations along the Poquessing Creek Trail tell the stories of the diverse peoples of Philadelphia's Byberry neighborhood and the area's role in early American history. Interpreted through historical research and community convenings, the sites include a burial ground created as a resting place for enslaved and free African Americans, a hall built for anti-slavery activists, the birthplace of founding father Benjamin Rush, and a newly created installation honoring the Lenni Lenape, the area's original stewards.

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

TERRA: Bodies & Territories

\$360,000

Choreographer Silvana Cardell creates a site-specific dance performance in the forest of the Schuylkill Center, examining the connections between women's bodies and the natural world. Featuring a cast of multigenerational dancers and a score that amplifies the natural sounds of the forest, the piece engages with the land's topography to consider women's ancestral roles as guardians of the environment.

Stenton

Wrestling with Justice: Quakers and Northern Slavery at Stenton

\$360,000

A new interpretive plan contextualizes the history of slavery at the historic house museum Stenton through exhibitions, tours, and programs. Illuminating the largely invisible labor force of enslaved and indentured people who lived and worked on the property in the 18th and 19th centuries, the project challenges prevailing views that Quakers were strictly abolitionists and that slavery was only a Southern phenomenon.

Tempesta di Mare—Philadelphia Baroque Orchestra

Hidden Virtuosas: music by and for the extraordinary female musicians of baroque Venice

\$292,440

Concerts and public engagement programs spotlight the music and lives of women composers from baroque Venice's Ospedali, an institution that housed and educated abandoned children, the disabled, and the destitute. The project is informed by new scholarship on the women and their artistic accomplishments, previously overshadowed by their connection to Antonio Vivaldi, who taught at the institution. An orchestral concert features modern premieres of reconstructed works, performed by Tempesta di Mare and the choir of Girard College, a boarding school for students from single-parent families with limited financial resources.

PEW FELLOWSHIPS

The Pew Fellowships in the Arts program nurtures regional artistic talent through 12 annual unrestricted grants. Each Pew Fellow receives an unrestricted \$85,000 award.

Mikel Patrick Avery, Composer and multidisciplinary artist

“My practice is committed to exploring ideas of democratic, communal music making...challenging social norms of what it means to be proficient.”

Avery’s creative practice spans jazz, electronic, and improvised music, as well as instrument building, film, photography, painting, and other disciplines. His interest in cultivating a “more level field for people of different trainings and backgrounds to create together” has led him to collaborate with both novice and professional artists, making participation accessible for a diverse group of practitioners.

Bettina Escauriza, Filmmaker

“Humor is the tool I use in my filmmaking, and a desire for a dignified existence is the fuel.”

Escauriza’s films take inspiration from everyday life and contemplate the mundane through comedy, satire, and surrealism. Her work deals with Indigenous knowledge—specifically Guaraní epistemologies of Paraguay, where she was born—as well as colonization, immigration, and exile, in films ranging from an absurdist romantic comedy set in a dispiriting work environment to an experimental documentary exploring language, cultural traditions, identity, and belonging.

Ralph Lemon, Interdisciplinary artist, writer, and choreographer

“I contemplate what it is I can’t do, what’s not possible, in this ongoing conversation I have with the locus of my multivalent practice, where I begin, the body—a material as place, memory, culture, and vehicle for cultural language.”

Lemon’s decades-long, multi-hyphenate body of work “entails a vigorous and purposeful collision of creative mediums,” including dance, performance, film, writing, and visual art. Often produced through cross-cultural collaborations, his works consider histories of race, gender, and heritage, and individual identity, spirituality, and memory. Lemon’s numerous awards include MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowships and a National Medal of Arts.

Michelle Lopez, Sculptor and installation artist

“As a maker, I believe the manipulation of objects and space is a wondrous alchemy, one that can transform perception.”

Lopez creates immersive, large-scale installations from industrial materials and debris like glass, wood, steel rope, and street rubble. Influenced by her own experiences of cultural hybridity, her research-driven work explores cultural phenomena and draws from the aesthetic

languages and histories of industrialization, art movements, and the built environment.

Zac Manuel, Filmmaker

“My work is an effort to look beyond the impositions of society to illustrate the truths of Black masculine identity and reframe Black men as complex, nuanced, and multidimensional.”

As a director and cinematographer, Manuel makes documentaries and music videos committed to reshaping narratives around Black masculinity, intimacy, class, and lineage. His forthcoming feature documentary, *Bloodthicker*, chronicles three childhood friends as they define their artistic identities in the presence and absence of their famous fathers.

Shavon Norris, Movement and theater artist

“My art is an act of testifying, moving us closer to processing the unprocessed and engaging our individual and collective power to activate our own healing.”

Inspired by a background in biology and the storytelling traditions of the Black church in which she grew up, Norris’ dance and theater works seek to reveal the memories and experiences held within the body. Through group facilitation, story circles, writing prompts, and movement activities, she encourages community building and investigates “the interior lives of Black people.”

Raúl Romero, Sound and installation artist

“Working with sound, because of its ability to cross so many barriers, I can unleash hidden phenomenological possibilities.”

Romero’s audio-visual installations merge sculpture, performance, nature recordings, and live plants to examine the properties of sound and its capacity to evoke or create memories. Through the lens of his Puerto Rican lineage and diasporic identity, he experiments with how sound looks and feels within the physicality of sculpture.

Tyshawn Sorey, Composer and musician

“My work concerns itself with developing a creative model that altogether obliterates musical boundaries, expands consciousness by going inward, and facilitates emotional transcendence.”

Sorey’s compositions and performances range from solo percussion and jazz ensembles to pieces for chamber music and opera settings. He describes his style as a “world aesthetic,” bridging a multitude of cultural and musical traditions found in contemporary classical music, Black American music, and African and European forms of improvised music. His honors include a Pulitzer Prize for Music and a MacArthur Fellowship.

Chad E. Taylor, Composer and musician

“I strongly believe that jazz...is a process of imagination, integration, collaboration, and innovation, and this belief is the foundation of my creative practice.”

Taylor’s prolific career as a drummer and composer includes his work as a leader of his own jazz and percussion ensembles and performances and recordings with a wide range of artists from

around the world. His music integrates genres and compositional techniques such as modern jazz, contemporary improvisation, traditional folkloric music of southern Africa, and experimental rock.

Stewart Thorndike, Filmmaker

“I sometimes feel that women are expected to make thoughtful, subtle films that will fix the world. I like to be loud and provocative and push the limits of the medium in visual, innovative, and unusual ways.”

Thorndike writes and directs character-driven psychological horror films centered on themes of motherhood, queer identity, and female rage. Her projects include the first two films of a trilogy on the complexities of motherhood—*Lyle* (2014) and *Bad Things* (2023)—and the forthcoming *Frigid*, a thriller about a group of older women at an island retreat.

Tshay, Filmmaker and photographer

“My practice is process-oriented, iterative, and rigorous. I insist on the expression of the full range of my humanity: Grief, loss, delight, and sensuality coexist in delicate harmony.”

Williams creates films across documentary, fiction, and hybrid forms, using both moving and still images to “imagine a world where Black people have full creative agency over their lives,” she says. Her short film *Proof* documents Jamaican funerary traditions and the experience of loss and grief as the artist grapples with the murder of her older sister.

Rebecca Wright, Theater director

“The performance worlds I make are abundant, celebrating the magic in mundanity and the elegance of the humble.”

Wright’s intricate world-building and ensemble-based approach to theater making considers the nature of groups, collective action, and the relationships among artists and audience members. She emphasizes folk forms, domestic materials, and the “tactility of being human” in performances made with companies such as Arden Theatre Company, Theatre Horizon, and Applied Mechanics, of which she is a founding company member.

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