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NEWS RELEASE

Over \$10 Million in New Funding to Strengthen Philadelphia-Area Cultural Groups and Artists

39 new grants from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage will support innovative operating models, performances, exhibitions, events, and local artists

PHILADELPHIA (Sept. 24, 2024)—The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage (the Center) announced today that it has awarded \$10.2 million to 39 Philadelphia-area cultural organizations and artists, including \$3.5 million to help ensure the future of several of the most prominent institutions in the city and \$1 million in unrestricted fellowships to 12 local artists.

New this year, the Center’s “Evolving Futures” awards represent an investment toward a thriving future for the region’s cultural sector. The grants—which support Philadelphia organizations, including The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Asian Arts Initiative, Historic Germantown, Opera Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and People’s Light—come at a critical juncture following the pandemic, as the sector seeks to chart a path toward greater sustainability. Through this program, nine grants will help organizations undertake major operational adaptations designed to lead to long-term viability, relevance, and success.

Additionally, 12 Philadelphia-area artists have been named Pew Fellows in the Arts, receiving \$85,000 each, which is an additional \$10,000 per artist this year.

Plus, 18 local arts and heritage organizations will receive funding to present timely and compelling public events and programs. As the country approaches the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, several projects reflect on U.S. history, civic participation, and the future of American democracy. Other projects highlight Black artists, life, and culture, or consider the environment and a changing climate.

“We’re delighted to continue our long-standing support for individual artists and creative projects as well as to introduce the Evolving Futures grants this year,” says Paula Marincola, executive director of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. “We are particularly gratified to offer important risk capital to address crucial operational issues through this new funding platform while also supporting vibrant programs for many different audiences and communities.”

Donna Frisby-Greenwood, the senior vice president leading The Pew Charitable Trusts' work in Philadelphia, adds, "The Pew Charitable Trusts is extremely pleased to support The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage in its commitment to ensuring a thriving cultural sector that represents and celebrates diverse perspectives. We look forward to seeing how these grantees use their exceptional creativity to spark important social conversations—and produce accessible works of art for Philadelphia-area residents and visitors to enjoy."

Below is a partial list of organizations and artists receiving awards, along with the subjects and issues they will address. A full list of grantees and funded projects is available at pewcenterarts.org/2024grants.

Evolving Futures

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, including:

- Research and development of models that rethink and sharpen missions and optimize use of existing buildings and facilities for organizations such as **The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University**, **Asian Arts Initiative**, and **Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts**.
- Expansion of mission and organizational capacity for the **Barnes Foundation** as it becomes the operational partner of the forthcoming Calder Gardens on the Parkway, and for **People's Light** as it transitions from a regional theater company into a live arts center that acts as a hub for a wide range of events and social experiences on its seven-acre campus.
- Collaborative endeavors, through which **Historic Germantown** will develop new models of support for smaller members of its consortium of historical organizations and **Inis Nua Theatre Company** will partner with another contemporary theater producer, Tiny Dynamite, to align resources and increase revenues.
- New commitments to leveraging strategic alliances in the co-creation and production of performance works, with innovative models being developed at both **Opera Philadelphia** and **The Wilma Theater**.

Projects and Public Programs

This year's project grants to cultural institutions range from \$100,000 to \$300,000, plus an additional 20% in general operating support, bringing the maximum award to \$360,000. The funded works will engage communities and audiences across the region through newly commissioned theater, dance, and music performances, public art installations, and contemporary visual art and historical exhibitions.

American Democracy and the Country's Semiquincentennial

- **Association for Public Art** will install artist Paul Ramírez Jonas' *Let Freedom Ring* 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 "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," which visitors ring out together.

- **First Person Arts** will support the development of a new play by Anna Deavere Smith, whose research into her own family's northern migration from the South and their lives during the Civil War will illuminate how individual histories inform national character.
- **Museum of the American Revolution** will examine the Declaration of Independence's considerable impact and influence on other declarations of rights in an exhibition highlighting declarations from around the world and emphasizing how a wide range of political and social movements have invoked America's founding document.

Focus on Black Artists, Life, and Culture

- **BalletX** will commission a hip-hop–inflected ballet retelling of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* from choreographer Jennifer Archibald.
- **Brandywine Museum of Art** will present the first solo exhibition of Jerrell Gibbs' work, showcasing the painter's figurative depictions of Black masculinity and culture.
- **Philadelphia Museum of Art** will offer the first thorough examination of the print works of Ghanaian artist El Anatsui, considering the artist's interplay between two- and three-dimensional objects and his engagement with indigenous West African design traditions.

Our Connection to the Natural World

- **The Crossing** will commission a four-movement choral work that addresses climate change and the rise in natural disasters, presented in a video installation conceived by interdisciplinary artist Suzanne Bocanegra.
- **Nichole Canuso Dance Company** will invite audiences to a participatory dance performance inspired by the moon's gravitational pull on the Earth's oceans.
- **The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education** will present choreographer Silvana Cardell's new site-specific dance performance, which incorporates the natural sounds of the forest and considers women's ancestral roles as guardians of the environment.

Pew Fellowships in the Arts

Supporting artists since 1992, the Pew Fellowships in the Arts program nurtures local artistic talent through 12 annual unrestricted grants. This year's fellowships total \$1 million to support a dozen Philadelphia-area artists, with each receiving \$85,000 in unrestricted funds—an increase of \$10,000 from the previous year. Beyond the monetary award, each fellowship includes professional advancement resources such as financial counseling, workshops, and opportunities to participate in artist residency programs. This year's Pew Fellows in the Arts work in performance, music, visual arts, and film. Among them are:

- **Ralph Lemon**, an interdisciplinary artist whose decades-long body of work includes dance, performance, film, writing, and visual artworks that explore race, gender, heritage, spirituality, and memory.
- **Raúl Romero**, a sound and installation artist who merges sculpture, performance, nature recordings, and live plants to examine sound's capacity to evoke or create memories.
- **Tyshawn Sorey**, a composer and musician who bridges cultural and musical traditions found in contemporary classical music, Black American music, and African and European forms of improvised music.

- **Stewart Thorndike**, a filmmaker whose character-driven, psychological horror films center on themes of motherhood and LGBTQ+ identities.

See a full list of grantees and funded projects at pewcenterarts.org/2024grants.

About The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage is a multidisciplinary grantmaker and hub for knowledge-sharing, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and dedicated to fostering a vibrant and diverse cultural community in Greater Philadelphia. The Center invests in ambitious, imaginative, and catalytic work that showcases the region's cultural vitality and enhances public life, and it engages in an exchange of ideas concerning artistic and interpretive practice with a broad network of cultural practitioners and leaders. For more information, visit pewcenterarts.org.