



leeway foundation

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2023 grantee announcements: leeway.org/news

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2023 News Release

Leeway Foundation announces \$50,000 in project-based funding to 26 women, trans*, and/or gender nonconforming artists and cultural producers in Greater Philadelphia with the 2023 Art and Change Grant (ACG).

PHILADELPHIA (November 20, 2023) -- The Leeway Foundation announces \$50,000 in project-based funding to 26 women, trans*, and/or gender nonconforming artists and cultural producers in Greater Philadelphia with the 2023 Art and Change Grant (ACG).

In tandem with region-wide efforts to preserve the rich and diverse cultures that make Philadelphia, Philadelphia, this year's ACG recipients saw a strong focus on cultural preservation, as well as LGBTQIA movements and environmental justice. This year also highlighted collaborative practices, with five of the 20 projects consisting of collectives. This year's grantees are working in visual art, media, literature, performance, music, folk art, crafts and textiles, and multidisciplinary forms.

Many of these projects amplify the voices of those on the margins and work in the service of movement building and liberation. Among this cohort of grantees are audio-visual archives documenting queer and trans art; quilting workshops preserving African American history; community-art builds focused on ending medical deportation; music highlighting the Puerto Rican diaspora; multidisciplinary celebrations of rest and rejuvenation; and narrative portrait projects about Black Wombhood – to just to name a few.

Leeway's Art and Change Grant provides grants of up to \$2,500 to fund art for social change projects by women, trans, and gender nonconforming artists and cultural producers living in Greater Philadelphia.*

The 2023 Art and Grant Recipients are (in alphabetical order):

[Amalia Gabriel Colon-Nava](#) of Germantown, Folk Arts & Performance, \$2,500

[Ang\(ela\) Bey](#) of West Philadelphia, Performance & Literary Arts, \$2,500

[Chela Ixcopal](#) of University City, Media and Visual Arts, \$2,500

[Dindga McCannon](#) of South Philadelphia, Crafts, Textiles & Visual Arts, \$2,500

[Feini Yin](#) of Point Breeze, Media Arts, \$2,500

[Florence 444 Fire + Juliette Rando](#) of West Philadelphia, Media & Performing Arts, \$2,500

[Jaq “Jingle” Masters](#) of Kensington, Visual Arts, \$2,500
[Jean Wong](#) of East Lansdowne, Visual Arts, \$2,500
[Lady Vic](#) of Manayunk, Media Arts, \$2,500
[Lars Shimabukuro](#) of Northern Liberties, Crafts & Textile Arts, \$2,500
[LaTreice Victoria](#) of North East Philadelphia, Multidisciplinary, \$2,500
[Lunise Cerin](#) of Cobbs Creek, Visual & Folks Arts, \$2,500
[Marcelle McGuirk](#) of Fishtown, Music & Performing Arts, \$2,500
[Micah Lockman-Fine + Lu Donovan](#) of West Philadelphia, Multidisciplinary, \$2,500
[Naila Francis + Catherine Birdsall](#) of Roxborough and South Kensington, Multidisciplinary, \$2,500
[Putery Long](#) of Havertown, Folk Arts, \$2,500
[Reyna Navarro](#) of South Philadelphia, Crafts, Textiles, & Folk Arts, \$2,500
[Sarah Kim](#) of Cedar Hill, Performing & Media Arts, \$2,500
[Sheridan Merrick + Gene Farbe](#) of Olde Kensington and West Philadelphia, Performing Arts, \$2,500
[Tanya Latortue, Gabriella A. Nelson, + Zoë](#) of Old City, Walnut Hill, and East Mount Airy, Multidisciplinary, \$2,500

Art and Change grant applications are evaluated by an independent peer review panel. The 2023 review panel consisted of fiber and mixed media artist, **Asake Denise Jones**; curator, editor, and writer, [Connie Yu \(ACG '19\)](#); and multidisciplinary artist, performer, filmmaker, set and projection designer, and director of experimental theatre **Nia Benjamin**.

Independent Peer Review Panel

- **Asake Denise Jones (she/her)** is a fiber and mixed media artist, Transformative Arts Coach, and retreat facilitator. Her textile skills were honed while assisting her mother, Dorothy Foye - "Miss D" (as she was professionally known) in her Philadelphia, PA dressmaking business. Since 1995, Asake has taught and exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally. As a workshop and retreat facilitator who works with individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to use artmaking as a catalyst for creating action plans for achieving wholeness, balance, and transformation, she has incorporated art, spirituality, mindfulness, and evidence-based practices for over 25-years. She is documented in the books: *Communion of the Spirit*, *President Obama: A Celebration in Art Quilts*, and *Types & Shadows: Journal of Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts*. Her self-guided training and studies include, but are not limited to: Fleisher’s Art Memorial, (Philadelphia), Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Philadelphia), Spelman College (Atlanta), The Neighborhood Art’s Center (Atlanta), The Cultural Center of Liberia (West Africa), Main Line Arts Center (Haverford), University of the Arts (Philadelphia), Build-A-Bridge Summer Institute for Arts and Transformation (Philadelphia), and The Center for Transformative Art (Philadelphia). Dindga McCannon, Wendell George Brown, Bisa Butler, Hollis Chatelain, Rachel Clark, Gyleen Fitzgerald and Aisha Lumumba, are some of the master artist and quilters she has had the opportunity to study under.
- **Connie Yu ACG '19 (they/them)** is a writer living in Philadelphia. They co-curate, edit, and publish work by/for queer and trans Asian artists with the print collective FORTUNE, and tend to its small-scale risograph imprint Many Folds Press. Connie is currently the Project Manager of The Velocity Fund, a Philadelphia-based Regional Regranting Program that offers direct-to-artist grants. In this work, they are committed to sharing resources and asking questions that can make arts programs, grants, and projects more accessible to more people. They work on multidisciplinary productions in Philadelphia to

tune skills, build resources, and share joy collaboratively. Find out more about Connie's work at: www.connieyu.one

- **Nia Benjamin (they/them)** is a queer, agender, Afro-Caribbean multidisciplinary artist, performer, filmmaker, set and projection designer, and director of experimental theatre. Their work uses the synthesis of dance, poetry, live music, theatre and video arts to create live performances about the sovereignty, liberation, and interiority of Black and Brown, queer and trans* people. Nia is the Co-Artistic Director of Ninth Planet, a Philadelphia based experimental theatre company that makes original works of performance that centers people of color, women, queer and trans* people in Philadelphia. As an artist, their aim is to create accessible, challenging work that invites non-traditional audiences in performative and creative spaces. Through collaborative making practices, Nia works with all kinds of communities in the creation of new performance and installation works. With an interest in finding new systems for generating devised work, Nia's creative practice empowers teams to employ horizontal leadership models to upset patriarchal dynamics that exist within traditional artistic practices and alienate those who are historically marginalized. Their most recent full-length work, *high noon* was the winner of a 2022 Fringies Award. Currently, they work as the Director of Creative Projects at Intercultural Journeys and have worked with Leeway Foundation, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Girls Who Code, and is a graduate of the Ira Brind School of Theatre at the University of the Arts. Find out more about Ninth Planet at: www.ninthplanet.org.

Applications are made available on the Leeway website and may also be obtained by calling 1(215) 728-9273 or emailing info@leeway.org. Potential applicants are encouraged to attend one of the many support sessions offered throughout the year or schedule an appointment with a staff member for one-on-one support.

Press inquiries and photo requests should be directed to Bee Knight, 215.728.9273 or bknight@leeway.org

ABOUT LEEWAY

The Leeway Foundation supports women, trans* and gender nonconforming artists and cultural producers working in communities at the intersection of art, culture, and social change. Through our grantmaking and other programs, we promote artistic expression that amplifies the voices of those on the margins, promotes sustainable and healthy communities, and works in the service of movements for economic and social justice. For more information about Leeway, its grant programs, grantees, and events, visit leeway.org.

**Leeway is a trans-affirming organization committed to gender self-determination, and we use the term "trans" in its most inclusive sense, as an umbrella term encompassing transsexual, transgender, genderqueer, Two-Spirit people, and anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is nonconforming and/or different from their gender assigned at birth.*