



leeway foundation

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Leeway Foundation Announces Fall 2016 Art and Change Grantees

26 women and trans artists and cultural producers receive project-based grants to further social change in the Delaware Valley

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PHILADELPHIA – Today, the Leeway Foundation announced \$54,975 in grants to 26 women and trans* artists and cultural producers in Greater Philadelphia, supporting their work to address a range of social change issues.

Leeway's Art and Change Grant provides project-based funds of up to \$2,500 to women and trans artists and cultural producers who: propose a project that impacts a larger group, audience or community; have financial need; and live in the Delaware Valley area. The grant supports artists practicing a variety of disciplines including performance, crafts and textiles, and visual arts.

The following 26 artists were awarded grants (in alphabetical order):

Anne Harrison of South Philadelphia and
Linda Fernandez of West Philadelphia, Multi-Disciplinary

Betty Leacraft of North Philadelphia, Crafts & Textiles/ Visual Arts

Catherine Pancake of Cedar Park, Media Arts/ Music

Courtney Bowles of Kingsessing, Multi-Disciplinary

Cynthia Dewi Oka of Collingswood, Literary Arts/Performance

Debbie Rudman of Kensington, Media Arts

Dena Underwood of Italian Market, Music/ Performance

Diane Monroe of East Norriton, Music/ Performance

Emily Bunker of Fishtown, Media Arts/Crafts & Textiles

Fatu Gayflor of Upper Darby, Folk Art/Music

Jai Arun Ravine of West Philadelphia and **Coda Wei** of Upper Darby, Media Arts/Performance

JD Stokely of West Philadelphia, Performance

Kay Wood of Mount Airy, Media Arts

Lauren Vargas of Hunting Park, Visual Arts

Li Sumpter of Abington, Multi-Disciplinary

Mayada of Northeast Philadelphia, Visual Arts/ Folk Art

Nanci Hersh of New Garden, Visual Arts/ Literary Arts

Pia Deas of Art Museum, Media Arts

Romeeka Williams of North Philadelphia, Literary Arts

Shivon Pearl Love of Brewerytown and **Khaliah Pitts** of East Mount Airy, Folk Art/Literary Arts

Tessa of Southwest Philadelphia, Visual Arts/ Media Arts

Yasmine Awais of West Powelton and **K.C. Wuebbling** of Cedar Park, Visual Arts/Literary Arts

Art and Change Grants are distributed twice a year and evaluated by an independent peer review panel. The August 2016 review panel consisted of playwright and devised theater maker **MJ Kaufman (ACG '13)**, educator and community organizer **Rochelle Nichols-Solomon**, and folklorist and curator **Selina Morales**.

Applications are made available on the Leeway website, and may also be obtained by calling 215.545.4078 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 Denise Beek at (215) 545-4078, ext. 14 or dbeek@leeway.org.

**We use the term “trans” in its most inclusive sense, as an umbrella term encompassing transsexual, transgender, genderqueer, Two-Spirit people, and more generally, anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is nonconforming and/or different from their gender assigned at birth.*

ABOUT LEEWAY

The Leeway Foundation supports women and transgender 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 www.leeway.org.

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Fall 2016 Art and Change Grants

Anne Harrison and Linda Fernandez

Neighborhood: South Philadelphia

Change Partner: Justin Trezza and Norris Square Neighborhood Project

Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary

Social Change Intent: Economic justice

Amount: \$2,500

Anne Harrison and Linda Fernandez plan to use art making, specifically community print making, to educate and promote an increased understanding of economic justice issues on a micro economic level. They will bring awareness to two small endeavors in the neighborhood – one neighbor sews and sells laundry bags and another community group grows and sells produce in the neighborhood at a weekly farmers market. Their project will connect these two small enterprises together by creating a free printing activity that will encourage neighbors to print on shopping bags, commissioned by the local seamstress, as a way to help kick off the produce season at the farmers market.

Betty Leacraft

Neighborhood: North Philadelphia

Change Partner: Theresa Shockley, Community Education Center

Discipline: Crafts & Textiles/Visual Arts

Social Change Intent: Economic justice

Amount: \$2,500

Betty Leacraft will organize Know Your Legal Rights! information sessions at the Community Education Center (CEC). These tenants' rights workshops will be led by a housing attorney from Community Legal Services (CLS) and will focus on tenants' rights issues, remedies and will include dialogue with Betty about tenant/landlord experiences. West Philadelphia artists and members of the community who attend will participate in two interactive hands-on textile arts workshops. The participants will acquire skills to produce original designs on cloth that will then be incorporated into an informational wall hanging during a public reception at the CEC celebrating the participant's creative efforts. After display at CEC, the wall hanging will be shown at several community centers in West Philadelphia.

Catherine Pancake

Neighborhood: Cedar Park

Change Partner: Gina Renzi, Rotunda

Discipline: Media Arts/Music

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Catherine Pancake will commission three queer female musicians to compose music for their feature film "Queer Genius" that features visionary queer artists. Music composing for film has an extremely low presence of women, particularly queer, African American and trans women. The composed music will additionally be presented in a live performance, followed by an open discussion with the artists. Catherine will hold a free workshop for queer/POC/women regarding creative sound design and composition for film. The live performance and workshop will be held at the Rotunda in West Philadelphia.

Courtney Bowles

Neighborhood: Kingsesing

Change Partner: Philadelphia Reentry Coalition

Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary

Social Change Intent: Ending war: militarization, criminalization, and mass incarceration; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Courtney Bowles' will organize a Think Tank of returning citizens, currently incarcerated individuals, artists, activists, and legislative experts who will work to create a "Poetic Bill of Rights for Returning Citizens"; a "People's Reentry Platform," a legislative proposal drafted from the feedback of legal clinic participants across the city; and a project newspaper filled with art and advocacy materials made by Think Tank Fellows. As materials are created, a "People's Assembly" will be held at City Hall, featuring a large installation of the Think Tank's art and advocacy materials, and a press conference where Think Tank members will publicly perform the "Poetic Bill of Rights for Returning Citizens" and deliver the platform.

Cynthia Dewi Oka

Neighborhood: Collingswood

Change Partner: Asian Arts Initiative

Discipline: Literary Arts/Performance

Social Change Intent: Displacement, migration, and immigration

Amount: \$2,500

Cynthia Dewi Oka will lead a workshop series for (im)migrant youth in Philadelphia to explore the aesthetics and political interventions offered by poetry arising out of contexts of displacement. Participants will study elements of poetry through guided discussions of selected works by national and global poets, and will receive group, peer, and one-on-one support from Cynthia. With this newly-formed writing community, Cynthia aims to guide participants towards an understanding of how colonialism and imperialism causes displacement, and encourage them to re-imagine realities that center and celebrate the lives of migrants and people of color.

Debbie Rudman

Neighborhood: Kensington

Change Partner: Termite TV Collective

Discipline: Media Arts

Social Change Intent: Economic justice; Ending war: militarization, criminalization, and mass incarceration; Environmental justice

Amount: \$2,500

Debbie Rudman will create an updated documentary, *City Harvest: The Next Decade*, that those concerned with food insecurity and disenfranchisement can relate to. After spending 10 years as a grower in an expanding network of community organizations, gardens, neighborhood food cupboards and the prison greenhouse re-entry program, Debbie will further support this local initiative, beginning in her own backyard. To emphasize personal relationships that the participants have with nature in this urban environment Debbie will use observational style and a steady handheld camera. Debbie will demonstrate hard work, collaboration and mutual support by shooting individual interviews with no voiceover.

Dena Underwood

Neighborhood: Italian Market

Change Partner: John Jarboe

Discipline: Music/Performance

Social Change Intent: LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination

Amount: \$2,500

Dena Underwood will organize the Love Choir, which will bring together a community of individuals with various identities, ages, genders and sexualities. The Love Choir will prioritize voices that have been marginalized because they don't fit within the "traditional" gender assigned voices. The choir will be the manifestation of a Philadelphia vocal community that includes and showcases a beautiful range of voices and those who possess them.

Diane Monroe

Neighborhood: East Norriton

Change Partner: Historic Johnson House

Discipline: Music/Performance

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Ending war: militarization, criminalization, and mass incarceration; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Diane Monroe will design, develop and implement an artistic experience that includes an intensive workshop for selected musical artists, an open rehearsal, presentation and conversation for a public audience. Each segment will focus on the role of protest music in struggles for positive social change. The project will be a step toward the development of *Protest Band*, a platform for reinterpreting and performing time-honored protest songs and for creating new songs of resistance and progressive imagination keyed to the social issues of today.

Emily Bunker

Neighborhood: Fishtown

Change Partner: Lucia Thome, RAIR (Recycled Artist in Residency)

Discipline: Media Arts/Crafts & Textiles

Social Change Intent: Economic justice; Feminism

Amount: \$2,500

Emily Bunker's project will begin by interviewing women-identifying makers about their work in the craft and construction trades in Philadelphia, two male-dominated fields. The publishing platform for these unheard labor histories will be a microsite accompanied by selfies taken by the interviewees in their respective shops and/or workplaces. In addition to recording these histories, she will build wooden selfie sticks (using a lathe and traditional joinery techniques) and distribute them to teen girls in the Mentoring a Girl in Construction (MAGIC) camp as a tool for them to engage with the site by contributing their own selfies while learning construction techniques during the camp and on personal creative projects.

Fatu Gayflor

Neighborhood: Upper Darby

Change Partner: Jonah Wamah

Discipline: Folk Art/Music

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Displacement, migration, and immigration

Amount: \$2,500

Fatu Gayflor's project will involve a celebration of all sixteen main ethnic groups of her homeland, Liberia. Fatu will organize a full evening of presentations, conversations and workshops, offering the opportunity for Liberian refugees and immigrants here in the Philadelphia area to come together to recognize some of what each of their ethnic groups brings to their rich heritage. Through this event, Fatu hopes to encourage others to look past the differences that were flamed during the years of civil war as a step in the ongoing reconciliation and reclamation process.

Jai Arun Ravine and Coda Wei

Neighborhood: West Philadelphia

Change Partner: Eva Wo

Discipline: Media Arts/Performance

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Jai Arun Ravine and Coda Wei will produce a music video, *Ambient Asian Spaces*, featuring an original song and choreography by Coda, a performance by Jai. They will recycle material from the queer Asian fan worlds they've created for their own survival as a form of cultural preservation, and will film places such as the Asian Food Court at Upper Darby's H-Mart, Chinatown's graffiti alleys, the bubble tea shop Tea-do, and the Asian markets on Washington Avenue and Spring

Garden. Through their engagement and self-representation, they plan to empower themselves and other marginalized communities to broadcast their own visions.

JD Stokely

Neighborhood: West Philadelphia

Change Partner: Sam Congdon

Discipline: Performance

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

MOUTH/PIECE, by JD Stokely, will be a project in two parts. The first will be a two-day workshop for black femmes, women and non-binary folks that explores the mouth as a site of trauma, un/desire(ability) and resistance by using Theatre of the Oppressed games, writing exercises and interviews. The second part of the project will be a new auto-ethnographic performance inspired by the workshop series that will examine how sharing and documenting their stories is a Black liberatory praxis.

Kay Wood

Neighborhood: Mt. Airy

Change Partner: Elfie Harris

Discipline: Media Arts

Social Change Intent: Environmental justice

Amount: \$2,500

Kay Wood will create, produce, and host an hour-long radio show twice monthly called Planet Philadelphia on Gtown Radio, a small local radio station in the heart of Germantown. Through her social justice engagement over the last several years, she has met many people who are dedicated in their efforts to make the world a better place. They will inspire the show's research, stories and interviews. Kay will record and edit the interviews as well as select the environmental news, music, and activity announcements as an entertaining platform to learn about the environment.

Lauren Vargas

Neighborhood: Hunting Park

Change Partner: Michaelanne Helms

Discipline: Visual Arts

Social Change Intent: Displacement, migration, and immigration; Economic justice; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Lauren Vargas will build community through storytelling and the creation of portraits of residents in Hunting Park in order to challenge the mostly negative images portrayed in the mainstream media of North Philadelphia. Lauren will organize a community dinner for neighbors to gather and share personal histories and positive stories about their block, followed by family photo shoots and portrait sessions to capture the spirit and strength of the community. The final product will be

a series of portraits in oil paint of the neighbors, including a 140-character story written as a "tweet" by each participant, which will be displayed during a block celebration.

Li Sumpter

Neighborhood: Abington

Change Partner: William Boone, PhD

Discipline: Multi-disciplinary

Social Change Intent: Environmental Justice; Displacement, migration, and immigration

Amount: \$2,500

Li Sumpter, Ph.D. will create and publish a limited edition, 10-page prologue episode for her 3-volume epic of speculative fiction, *Graffiti in the Grass*, which explores the mystery and mythology behind UFO and crop circle phenomena through the lens of hip-hop, afrofuturism and indigenous traditions. *Graffiti in the Grass* aims to ignite the survivor spirit in us all around environmental and existential crises, migration/displacement, spiritual wellness and mental health with a focus on suicide stigmas among young women of color. She will also commission the illustration, design and printing of three unique limited edition promotional posters. Posters and publications will be distributed locally for free to communities of color in West Philadelphia with priority to young women of color, black and brown urban farmers and environmental justice artist and advocates.

Mayada

Neighborhood: Northeast Philadelphia

Change Partner: Shira Walinsky

Discipline: Visual Arts/Folk Art

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation

Amount: \$2,500

Mayada's project will be a series of paintings that interpret Iraqi folkloric songs. She will create 5-10 paintings, which celebrate and revive her cultural traditions and preserve these songs for the next generation. Mayada will host music and art workshops with Iraqi children where they will learn Arabic words and letters.

Nanci Hersh

Neighborhood: New Garden

Change Partner: YoungMoms

Discipline: Visual Arts/Literary Arts

Social Change Intent: Displacement, migration, and immigration; Economic justice; Feminism

Amount: \$2,500

Nanci Hersh will organize a series of collaborative workshops with YoungMoms, a non-profit providing support services to pregnant and parenting young mothers in Chester County, PA. Together, participants of YoungMoms and volunteer mentors will create, design, and self-publish a book for the young women to have as a parenting and community resource. This illustrated and printed manual will share information gained from the group's monthly dinner and workshops.

The workshops will include life skills training, community resources, and parent/child activities including art, early education, and cooking.

Pia Deas

Neighborhood: Art Museum

Change Partner: Philadelphia Culture Trust

Discipline: Media Arts

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Pia Deas will create Contemporary Black Canvas (CBC), a bi-weekly podcast that celebrates the depth and breadth of Black artistic and intellectual thought. CBC will feature 26 interviews with Black artists and institution builders from the United States, the African Diaspora, and Africa. Through interviews with writers, musicians, performers, and visual, culinary, and horticultural artists, CBC will offer a sophisticated and multi-disciplinary picture of the Black artistic tapestry. By presenting artists who are committed to artistic excellence, innovation in their fields, and social change, CBC will showcase the inherent value and beauty of Black people. CBC seeks to inspire and transform communities by introducing listeners to artists and by creating an exchange of ideas.

Romeeka Williams

Neighborhood: North Philadelphia

Change Partner: The Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project

Discipline: Literary Arts

Social Change Intent: Ending war: militarization, criminalization, and mass incarceration; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Romeeka Williams, will uplift the voices of young people tried and incarcerated as adults by creating a poetry book that is a collection of writing from workshops facilitated by the Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project, held every Saturday at a Philadelphia prison. Romeeka will share the writing with readers who want to learn where these young writers come from, how they got to this point in their lives, and what trauma they have experienced that influenced their decisions. Romeeka will encourage the voices of these young people and show why so many people of color are ending up incarcerated due to the school-to-prison pipeline.

Shivon Pearl Love and Khaliah D. Pitts

Neighborhood: Brewerytown

Change Partner: Harcum College Upward Bound

Discipline: Folk Art/Literary Arts

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation

Amount: \$2,475

Shivon Pearl Love and Khaliah D. Pitts, will organize Our Mother's Kitchens, using the works of Vertamae Smart-Grosvernor, Ntozake Shange, Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker to introduce

young women of color to the ways in which the authors intersect food and language as a means of expression and cultural preservation. Continuing the use of traditions from the African diaspora, where art and life are one, this 3-day culinary and literature workshop will provide the young women of color participants with vital steps towards building optimal health, self-awareness and cultural connection through the ritual and art of cooking and storytelling.

Tessa

Neighborhood: Southwest Philadelphia

Change Partner: Hilary Brashear

Discipline: Visual Arts/Media Arts

Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Disability justice; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination

Amount: \$2,500

Tessa will focus on the experience and representation of aging lesbians with Alzheimer's and dementia through a portrait series, developed in collaboration with participants. The portraits will be printed alongside transcripts of corresponding participant interviews. The interviews will be aired on radio and streamed online. The portraits and transcripts of interviews will be published into a zine and mailed to aging lesbians with dementia across the country.

Yasmine Awais and K.C. Wuebbeling

Neighborhood: West Powelton

Change Partner: Philadelphia Fight

Discipline: Visual Arts/Literary Arts

Social Change Intent: Feminism; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination; Racial justice

Amount: \$2,500

Yasmine Awais and K.C. Wuebbeling will create a photo narrative project that explores the lived experiences of women of color living with HIV in Philadelphia. Through two-hour groups over a four-week timeframe, the participants will explore the effects of HIV stigma and use their voices towards healthy creative expression. This project will provide the participants with increased education in photography techniques and its use as a form of positive self-expression, increased autonomy, and self-advocacy. The members will be encouraged to use the images and writings to develop a social support network, in a comprehensive HIV organization in Philadelphia and display their works as a form of social empowerment and risk prevention for other women of color in the community.



2016 ART AND CHANGE GRANT PANELISTS

MJ Kaufman

MJ Kaufman is a playwright and devised theater maker. They are currently working on a new project with Bearded Ladies Cabaret and a play they wrote called *eat and you belong to us*, as an incubated artist at University of the Arts. Also they are part of the Emerging Writers Group at the Public Theater, a Core Playwright at InterAct Theatre, and recently finished a residency focusing on identity and performance at the New Museum. Their plays have been seen at New York Theater Workshop, The Huntington Theater, Yale School of Drama, New Conservatory Theatre Center and performed in Russian in Moscow. MJ received the 2010 Jane Chambers Prize in Feminist Theatre. They are queer, trans, white, Jewish, and able-bodied. In their spare time, they organize with Palestine Solidarity and Immigration Justice movements.

Rochelle Nichols-Solomon

Rochelle Nichols-Solomon is an educator with more than thirty years working with schools and communities to increase education excellence and equity for students of color and low-income communities. Her work includes creating, managing, and providing high impact technical support to schools/districts along with their key stakeholder partners. Rochelle's long community history includes working with numerous organizations and serving on local and national non-profit Boards revolving around issues of public education, culture, and philanthropy. Some of the places Rochelle has served include: the Alliance Organizing Project (founding member), Philadelphia Public School Notebook (founding member and current board member), Sisters Remember Malcolm (founding member), Art Sanctuary, Bread and Roses, The National Network of Grantmakers, and Delaware Valley Grantmakers. Rochelle is married to songwriter James Solomon, and is the mother of two writers: Asali Solomon and Akiba Solomon.

Selina Morales

Selina tends Philadelphia Folklore Project's mission and vision, develops innovative programming, and manages day-to-day operations. She came to PFP in 2010 to coordinate public programs and launched its Folk Arts and Social Change residencies. Selina completed her M.A. in folklore at Indiana University and holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Oberlin College. Before joining PFP, she worked at Traditional Arts Indiana, Indiana's statewide folklife organization, where she conducted folklife research, developed public programs, and curated and coordinated exhibitions. She served as a guest curator at the Mathers Museum of World Cultures where she curated *Botanica: A Pharmacy for the Soul*, an innovative installation drawing on a 163-piece ethnographic collection documenting Botanica practices in the United States. Selina has been an invited speaker in University and community settings on social justice and folklore, Latino folklore, folklore and education, and other topics. She currently teaches in the Cultural Sustainability graduate program at Goucher College. Areas of expertise include: Urban folklore, folk healing and belief, public folklore theory and practice, and exhibition design.