Leeway Foundation Announces Spring 2017 Art and Change Grantees
22 women and trans artists and cultural producers receive project-based grants
to further social change in the Delaware Valley

PHILADELPHIA – Today, the Leeway Foundation announced $47,500 in grants to 22 women and trans* artists and cultural producers in Greater Philadelphia, supporting their work to address a range of social change issues, from immigration and transgender justice to cultural preservation and environmental justice.

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, visual arts, and literary arts.

The following 22 artists were awarded grants (in alphabetical order):

@Pormisjoyas of West Philadelphia, Folk Art
Alex Barrett and Kris Moore of University City, Literary and Visual Arts
Amber Emory of West Philadelphia, Performance and Literary Arts
Ana Guissel Palma of West Kensington, Crafts & Textiles and Visual Arts
Carman Spoto of Downingtown, Media Arts
Carolyn L. Payne of Chester, Multidisciplinary
Cassendre Xavier of University City, Multidisciplinary
Davy Knittle of Cedar Park and Mel Bentley of Allegheny West, Literary Arts and Crafts & Textiles
JBK of North Philadelphia, Visual Arts and Folk Art
Kara Crombie of East Kensington, Music and Performance

Art and Change Grants are distributed twice a year and evaluated by an independent peer review panel. The Spring 2017 review panel consisted of arts administrator and nonprofit development professional Amanda Morales Pratt, vocalist and pianist Dena Underwood (ACG ‘16), and social research activist artist Julie Rainbow (LTA ‘16, ACG ‘14).
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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Leeway awarded $47,500 in project-based grants to 22 women, transgender and gender non-conforming artists.

Grantees by County:
- Kensington/Fishtown/Port Richmond: 4
- West Philly: 4
- South Philly: 3
- University City: 3
- Germantown/Mt Airy: 2
- North Philly: 2

Grantees’ Disciplines:
- Performance: 8
- Visual Arts: 7
- Literary Arts: 6
- Multidisciplinary: 4
- Music: 4
- Crafts & Textiles: 3
- Folk Art: 2
- Media Arts: 2

Grantees’ Social Change Intent:
- Cultural preservation: 11
- Transgender justice, gender self-determination: 6
- Feminism: 6
- Racial justice: 5
- Environmental justice: 4
- LGBTQI social movements: 4
- Displacement, migration, immigration: 3
- Economic justice: 2
- Indigenous sovereignty/rights: 1

*Grantees selected up to 2 disciplines and up to 3 intents.

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@Pormisjoyas
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia
Change Partner: Laura Deutch, PhillyCAM
Discipline: Folk Art
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Displacement, migration, and immigration; Economic justice
Amount: $2,500

@Pormisjoyas will lead a series of workshops in which they will teach immigrant Latinx community members metalworking skills in order to make hand-made jewelry. These classes will incorporate a storytelling component, build and sustain participants’ self-esteem and personal growth, and provide a connection to their roots and values, all in a safe environment regardless of immigration status. The classes will be broadcast through a series of short video segments on Atrevete, PhillyCAM’s bilingual program.

Alex Barrett and Kris Moore
Neighborhood: University City
Change Partner: Jarrod Green, Children’s Community School
Discipline: Literary Arts, Visual Arts
Social Change Intent: Transgender justice, gender self-determination
Amount: $2,500

Alex and Kris will write and illustrate a book for early-education-age children that explores gender-nonconformity, along with a supplementary curriculum guide for families and early childhood educators. The book will feature a gender non-conforming protagonist of color, and they will base the plot of this story in the conversations they will have while working with young students at the Children’s Community School (CCS) in West Philadelphia, where Kris teaches.

Amber Emory
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia
Change Partner: Rachel Dukeman
Discipline: Performance, Literary Arts
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Indigenous sovereignty/rights
Amount: $2,500

Amber will create a solo performance that unearths the Indigenous woman’s voice through the Cherokee perspective and responds to current curatorial gaps in male-centered Native American art and history exhibits. Amber will complete dramaturgical research and cultural immersion in Cherokee, NC and perform the one-woman show as an exhibit performance at the Penn Museum on Columbus Day and as a theatrical piece for the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. She will also offer it as a teaching device for the curriculum of Independence Charter School.

Ana Guissel Palma
Neighborhood: West Kensington
Change Partner: Fleisher Art Memorial
Discipline: Crafts & Textiles, Visual Arts
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Displacement, migration, and immigration
Amount: $2,500

Ana will lead eight workshops for community members at Fleisher Art Memorial, in which they will fabricate moveable sculptures out of papier-mâché. People from different backgrounds will get together to engage in personal dialogue while they fabricate their pieces, allowing for independent critical thinking and community interaction. The artifacts created will be displayed in a large procession in South Philadelphia for the el Día de los Muertos / Day of the Dead cultural celebration.
Carman Spoto  
**Neighborhood:** Downingtown  
**Change Partner:** Quinn Dougherty, Sothis Music-Theater Ensemble  
**Discipline:** Media Arts  
**Social Change Intent:** LGBTQI social movements; Transgender justice, gender self-determination  
**Amount:** $2,500

Carman will write and direct a feature-length film, *What Color is Blue*, about the internal impotence that queer and trans youth feel while facing the people, politicians, and organizations that do not want them to exist. The film will follow Alexandra, a young black trans woman, and her partner Lulu, a non-binary femme. As they go to political organizing meetings, visit prisons, perform at DIY art spaces, and eat pizza by the river, they wonder about the meaning of life and what they should be doing to protect their lives and those of their friends. Carman aims to hire queer and trans people and people of color for the cast and production crew.

Carolyn L. Payne  
**Neighborhood:** Chester  
**Change Partner:** Twyla Simpkins  
**Discipline:** Multidisciplinary  
**Social Change Intent:** Cultural preservation; Racial justice  
**Amount:** $2,500

Carolyn will produce the annual Juneteenth Festival in Chester. Juneteenth is an annual day of observance that commemorates the enforcement by Union soldiers of the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed all remaining slaves in Texas on June 19, 1865. The Saturday celebration will showcase music, dance, drumming, spoken word, and local food and crafts vendors, as well as activities for youth. The presentation and continuation of this festival in Chester plays an important role in re-shaping attitudes, countering cultural stereotypes, and preserving and fostering community pride in her predominantly Black neighborhood.

Cassendre Xavier  
**Neighborhood:** University City  
**Change Partner:** Gina Renzi, The Rotunda  
**Discipline:** Multidisciplinary  
**Social Change Intent:** Economic justice; Feminism; Racial justice  
**Amount:** $2,500

Cassendre will produce the 11th Black Women’s Arts Festival (BWAF), which she created in 2003, to showcase multidisciplinary performances, visual arts, films, and workshops by black women, girls, and trans folks, as well as merchandise created or sold by black women and girls. Free and open to the public, this year’s event aims to compensate participating artists, establish a group of dedicated volunteers for ongoing sustainability, and focus on artist entrepreneurship.

Davy Knittle and Mel Bentley  
**Neighborhood:** Cedar Park and Allegheny West  
**Change Partner:** Jessica Lowenthal, Kelly Writers House  
**Discipline:** Literary Arts, Crafts & Textiles  
**Social Change Intent:** Cultural preservation; LGBTQI social movements; Transgender justice, gender self-determination  
**Amount:** $2,500

Davy and Mel will produce a chapbook series of writing by transgender and gender non-conforming youth who are part of the transcribez writing group, a monthly workshop for trans/GNC youth ages 14-24 at the Kelly Writers House. Davy and Mel will work directly with each individual participant to edit a larger body of their own work and collaborate with them.
on the design. Each student will be given 50 copies of their chapbook, and a copy of each book will be available at the Attic, William Way Center, the LGBT Center at Penn, and Wooden Shoe Bookstore. Davy and Mel will also organize a chapbook release reading and final event for the 2017-2018 workshop year.

**JBK**  
**Neighborhood:** North Philadelphia  
**Change Partner:** Charlyn Griffith  
**Discipline:** Visual Arts, Folk Art  
**Social Change Intent:** Cultural preservation  
**Amount:** $2,500

JBK will facilitate three farm-to-table culinary workshops utilizing food grown at Life Do Grow urban farm and recipes collected from surrounding neighbors. Fresh ingredients such as herbs, vegetables, edible flowers, infused oils, and native plants will be used to make the meals, which will be served to neighbors, community members, and volunteers. JBK and a youth assistant will paint three 4 x 5 ft. acrylic portraits of these neighbors and their food narratives on wood sheets covered in resin for weatherproofing. JBK will use lumber and metal pipe to construct the stands on which the portraits will be attached, and they’ll be installed throughout the farm to reflect the cultural connection to the food the farm grows and cooks.

**Kara Crombie**  
**Neighborhood:** East Kensington  
**Change Partner:** The Advocate Center for Culture and Education  
**Discipline:** Music, Performance  
**Social Change Intent:** Feminism; Racial justice  
**Amount:** $2,500

Kara will organize and instruct a songwriting and music production workshop for adolescent and teenage girls at The Advocate Center for Culture and Education (the Advocate). The workshop will introduce students to powerful feminist role models in music history, educate them in song writing and music production techniques, and provide a safe environment for young girls to develop lyrical content. The girls will then learn recording techniques and record their performances, which will be performed in a culminating open mic night at the Advocate.

**Kayleb Rae Candrilli**  
**Neighborhood:** Point Breeze  
**Change Partner:** Jack Papanier  
**Discipline:** Literary Arts, Performance  
**Social Change Intent:** Environmental justice; LGBTQI social movements; Transgender justice, gender self-determination  
**Amount:** $2,500

Kayleb will write a full-length collection of poems in response to the paintings of Hernan Bas, a queer Detroit-based artist, that focuses on queer and trans joy. Bas exclusively paints slim male bodies at the mercy of brackish, hectic landscapes. Kayleb aims to critique such hegemonic portrayals that perpetuate body shaming in the gay community, write through Bas’ images as a way to explore their own trans/male identity, and celebrate trans bodies within the practice of poetry.

**Leah Stein**  
**Neighborhood:** South Philadelphia  
**Change Partner:** Shavon Norris  
**Discipline:** Performance, Music  
**Social Change Intent:** Feminism; Racial justice  
**Amount:** $2,500
Leah will produce *Portraits*, a series of performed duets in conjunction with the exhibition *A MORE PERFECT UNION: Power, Sex, and Race in the Representation of Couples* at the Woodmere Art Museum. This series of duets for mixed genders, ages, and races speaks to the complexities, passion, tension, confusion, and beauty of human connection. Leah will respond to the visual images within the exhibit and create an intimate look at couples, breaking expectations of race, gender, and orientation, using movement, sound, and text to catalyze the performers’ and audiences’ imaginations. The performance will also highlight the politics of representation and call attention to multiple understandings inspired by the visual artworks, the performers’ responses, personal experiences, and artistic research.

**Li Sumpter**  
**Neighborhood:** Walnut Hill  
**Change Partner:** Tommy Joshua, Director of the North Philly Peace Park  
**Discipline:** Multidisciplinary  
**Social Change Intent:** Displacement, migration, and immigration; Environmental justice  
**Amount:** $2,500

Li will continue work on her *Graffiti in the Grass* interactive graphic novel project, conceived and written by Li and illustrated by Eric Battle. Li will collaborate with a professional colorist to add full color to the three completed black and white promotional posters, develop and design a site-specific survival “pocket map,” and design and print the survival zine, *Pop Prophecy*. The zines and pocket maps will be distributed at free emergency preparedness and direct action workshops Li will facilitate at North Philly Peace Park, designated partner sites across “Peace Town,” and other select public events, community gatherings, and direct actions this summer.

**Meg Lemieur and Bri Barton**  
**Neighborhood:** Fishtown / Port Richmond and Norris Square  
**Change Partner:** EDGE  
**Discipline:** Visual Arts, Performance  
**Social Change Intent:** Environmental justice  
**Amount:** $2,500

In the *Water Ways* project, Bri and Meg will illustrate four pen-and-ink posters exposing the environmental dangers of oil and gas industries that threaten the health of the most vulnerable populations in the Greater Philadelphia area. They will gather interviews from affected people and work with them to draw their stories. Through regional storytelling events and workshops featuring the posters as a teaching tool, *Water Ways* will raise awareness, fundraise, and build connections between regional resistance groups.

**Nkechi**  
**Neighborhood:** Germantown  
**Change Partner:** The Colored Girls Museum  
**Discipline:** Multidisciplinary  
**Social Change Intent:** Cultural preservation; Feminism; Racial justice  
**Amount:** $2,500

Nkechi will pilot an artist in residency program at The Colored Girls Museum by creating an installation featuring a customized bed, a wall mural, art curated by Nkechi and donated by Philadelphia artists, and her own personal writing. Nkechi will live, work, and write at the museum; create a toolkit for Black women in the process of self examination; and curate and document the space for the next Black female artist in residence, who will be able to live in Nkechi’s installation and add to it by creating their own documentation, art, and writing.
Priscilla Anacakuyani  
**Neighborhood:** Grays Ferry  
**Change Partner:** West Kensington Ministries  
**Discipline:** Visual Arts, Performance  
**Social Change Intent:** Cultural preservation  
**Amount:** $2,500

Priscilla will teach monthly Taino cultural art classes to children ages 10-15. Each class will involve an interactive approach to learning more about the Taino people, the indigenous people of the Caribbean. The children will learn about Taino musical instruments, design and build their own, and learn how to play traditional Taino music as a group for an end of program performance during Native American Heritage month.

Stephanie Amma  
**Neighborhood:** East Mount Airy  
**Change Partner:** Abayomi Awodesu  
**Discipline:** Folk Art, Music  
**Social Change Intent:** Cultural preservation  
**Amount:** $2,500

Stephanie will teach African dance, song, and drumming from Nigeria, Ghana, and Mali to 2nd through 5th grade students in the after school soccer club at Eleanor Emlen Public School in Germantown. The class will be a motivational practice that will build focus and stamina as well as companionship among the students, in an effort to eradicate the epidemic of bullying at the school.

Stephanie Yuhas  
**Neighborhood:** West End  
**Change Partner:** Matthew Conant  
**Discipline:** Media Arts, Performance  
**Social Change Intent:** Feminism  
**Amount:** $2,500

Stephanie will organize several live screenings and Q&A sessions around her short film *Vessel*. The short stars an entirely female cast and surrounds Molly, a woman haunted by dreams, who is convinced that something is wrong with her pregnancy. Inspired by the research of Temple University professor Dr. David M. Jacobs, who discovered a series of women who all became pregnant after having terrible abduction dreams, Stephanie will use the film as a tool to inspire discussions about the shame and isolation that comes from rape, miscarriage, and abortion; build community with other local female science fiction lovers; and combat misogyny in popular sci-fi culture.

Susan Lankin-Watts  
**Neighborhood:** Ardmore  
**Change Partner:** Diane Monroe  
**Discipline:** Music  
**Social Change Intent:** Cultural preservation; Feminism  
**Amount:** $2,500

Susan will produce a free klezmer concert that highlights klezmer music, or Eastern European Jewish folk music, by women composers who are not celebrated in the male-dominated genre. Susan will expand the scope of her volunteer community band to include more instruments, more musicians, an expanded repertoire, and increased frequency of rehearsals. The concert will showcase women who are composing vocal and instrumental pieces that speak to their sensibilities and push the form stylistically and technically.
Amanda Morales Pratt is an arts administrator and nonprofit development professional who has worked in nonprofit and arts & culture contexts for their entire career. They currently serve as the Director of Development at Bread & Roses Community Fund, a social justice fund in Philadelphia dedicated to supporting community organizing. Prior to joining Bread & Roses, Amanda managed fundraising and marketing for Norris Square Neighborhood Project, a Latinx arts, culture, and gardening organization grounded in food justice and culture preservation. Amanda worked in institutional advancement at the Pennsylvania SPCA, running their grants program as well as supporting annual fundraising and special events. Previous to this, Amanda served as an AmeriCorps VISTA with the Urban Technology Project, an I.T. workforce development program for Philadelphia public high school graduates, and as the Arts on South Coordinator for Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, a mosaic art environment created by Isaiah Zagar. In these positions, Amanda developed their fundraising, community outreach, and event planning skills. Amanda earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatrical Design & Technology at Emerson College and a Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership at La Salle University. They were selected as a 2017 class member for Leadership Philadelphia’s Connectors and Keepers program. Their pronouns are they/them/their.

Dena Underwood is a vocalist and self-taught pianist from Philadelphia. Hailing from a family of gifted vocalists and instrumentalists, Dena’s passion for music began at an early age. Since graduating from the Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, and studying Jazz Voice Performance at Temple University, Dena has performed at a number of venues, including The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Academy of Music and The Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, World Café Live, Plays and Players Theatre, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and New York City’s Lincoln Center. Dena performs regularly as vocalist/pianist in the Philadelphia area.

Julie Rainbow is a social research activist artist who integrates critical thinking with 25 years of social work experience, while synthesizing and analyzing stories from elders into original artistic work. Rainbow’s social work experience allows her to listen deeply and uncover both the bold and the humble responses to life. Her work is meant to stimulate an “urgent reconsideration” of how the aging are perceived and the role they play. In 1995, Julie was selected as a W.K. Kellogg Foundation International Leadership Fellow. The fellowship provided learning in seven countries on four different continents, further encouraging her to pursue her passion of documenting the lives of elders. Her book, Standing the Test of Time: Love Stories of African American Elders, published by Pilgrim Press in 2002, was a tribute African American elders. Artistically, her work brings honor and recognition to the aging population and helps to inform the conversation about creating places for the aging population to be valued, engaged, and heard across generations. Rainbow has received funding for her work from the Leeway Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and was a 2016 Leeway Foundation Transformation Award recipient. She studied Economics at Spelman College and earned a MSS from the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research.