Spring 2016 Art and Change Grants

**Alisha Adams**
Neighborhood: Kensington  
Change Partner: House of Grace Catholic Worker  
Discipline: Performance/Literary Arts  
Social Change Intent: Economic justice; Feminism  
Amount: $2,500

Alisha’s *Kensington Women’s Chorus* project will be used to tear down barriers and build supportive relationships among women in her Kensington neighborhood. This multi-phase project, will begin with Alisha, House of Grace Catholic Worker, and other local organizations identifying 100 transgender and cisgender women who live in Kensington. Alisha will interview these participants about their daily economic realities including paid and unpaid work within formal and informal economies. The interviews will then be transcribed and made available in an online archive. She will then create a choral piece based on the women’s stories that will be performed by women living in Kensington at one or more neighborhood sites.

**Ants on a Log**
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Gina Renzi, The Rotunda  
Discipline: Music/Performance  
Social Change Intent: Environmental justice; Feminism  
Amount: $2,500

Ants on a Log (Anya Rose and Julie Lipson) will create a musical interactive science show for elementary school-aged children and their families. The performance will provide a creative platform to view science through a feminist and environmental justice lens, and ultimately leave the audience questioning and observing the world around them. Anya and Julie envision a world where performances inspire kids to connect with a passion that fuels them to change the world.

**Beth A. Uzwiak and Laurian R. Bowles**
Neighborhood: Germantown  
Change Partner: Kevin T. Jones, Black LGBT Archivists Society of Philadelphia  
Discipline: Media Arts/Visual Arts  
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination; Racial justice  
Amount: $2,500
Beth and Laurian will construct a mobile photo booth to showcase and document the evolution of queer ballroom culture in Philadelphia. Together with their Change Partner, they will select and digitize historic photos and documents of Philadelphia’s ballroom scene. They will create a slideshow using these photos and documents that will be screened on the exterior of the photo booth. The booth will travel to local balls where they will invite participants to reflect on the slideshow either through audio recording or writing. Participants will also have an opportunity to contribute to these archives by taking “selfies” in the booth. The project will celebrate and document the resilience in queer communities of color whose participants are disproportionately impacted by discrimination and violence.

**Chaska Sofia**  
Neighborhood: Southwest Philadelphia  
Change Partner: KellyAnne Mifflin  
Discipline: Music/Media Arts  
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination  
Amount: $2,500

Chaska will curate a bimonthly, live-streamed, music event showcasing queer and trans DJs and musicians from Philadelphia and beyond. Using dance, beats, and sound as a language of collective healing, Chaska will create alternative spaces where gender nonconforming, queer, and trans people can celebrate themselves and their survival. These events will promote, uplift, and honor the work of contemporary queer and trans artists in the Philadelphia music scene, and will be archived and viewable online as a form of queer cultural preservation.

**Donna Oblongata**  
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Morgan Andrews  
Discipline: Performance  
Social Change Intent: Feminism; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination  
Amount: $2,245

Throughout the summer of 2016, Donna will offer a series of free improvisational and clowning performance workshops, open exclusively to women and trans people. This safe and supportive performance training will empower people to speak up within a creative process and explore ways of telling their own stories. Donna hopes to provide an alternative type of performance training that honors the individual and works to counter how patriarchy, ableism, homophobia, cis-sexism, and white supremacy affect our ability to be our whole selves on stage.
Gabriela Sanchez  
Neighborhood: Overbrook Farms  
Change Partner: Norris Square Neighborhood Project  
Discipline: Music  
Social Change Intent: Displacement, migration, immigration; Feminism; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination  
Amount: $2,500

Gabriela’s Power Street Theatre Company (PSTC) will work with Norris Square Neighborhood Project to produce *Theatre en Las Parcelas*, an accessible and culturally resonant outdoor theater experience in North Philadelphia. PSTC will present theater that portrays dynamic, inspirational Latina herstories of past, present, and future in order to reclaim and represent Latina women’s empowerment. The project will feature two plays written by local feminist playwrights, *Las Mujeres* by Erlina Ortiz and *Shelter in Place* by Alisha Adams. Each piece explores diverse intersections of Latinidad and womanhood while posing intergenerational questions about culture, survival, self-preservation, and strength.

Gina Kathleen  
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Ndelea Simama  
Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary  
Social Change Intent: Feminism; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination; Racial justice  
Amount: $2,500

Gina will curate, choreograph, and produce fat Black femme porn. Her project will create safer spaces for Black femmes to express and experience their sexuality in ways that are often not available. In addition, her work will give her community a chance to see honest depictions of some of the many ways that fat Black femmes engage with their bodies and sex. Gina’s goal is the creation of a world where fat Black queer femmes are celebrated, can create their own spaces, produce their own media, and pay their rent while doing it.

Iris Devins  
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Lauren Wolkstien  
Discipline: Media Arts  
Social Change Intent: Feminism; LGBTQI Social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination  
Amount: $2,500

Iris will finish post-production on her short fictional film, *After the Date*, which follows the romance between Nate, a straight cisgender man and Emma, a photographer who is transgender. Iris’ film will show the relationship between trans women and straight men in a positive light, beyond social stereotypes and film clichés – a narrative which is rarely seen in film or television.
Contributing to the growing movement of trans stories told by trans people, Iris also plans to organize a tour featuring other transgender artists in hopes to develop a network of trans filmmakers.

**Kate Black-Regan**  
**Neighborhood:** West Philadelphia  
**Change Partner:** Lovella Calica  
**Discipline:** Multi-Disciplinary  
**Social Change Intent:** Economic justice; Feminism  
**Amount:** $2,500

Kate will facilitate a two-hour workshop with clients of domestic violence agencies and other survivors in Philadelphia. The workshop will begin with a short performance by Kate about her own experience reclaiming power after an abusive relationship. The performance will raise questions about stigma, shame, power, patriarchal culture, cycles of violence and bring up ideas about speaking out, healing, and growth. Following the performance, she will facilitate a group discussion and then invite participants to process and explore their own experiences through writing. The goal of the workshop is to connect women’s lived experiences and provide space for collective and individual exploration to reclaim power.

**Kathryn Pannepacker**  
**Neighborhood:** Germantown  
**Change Partner:** Rosalind Pichardo, Operation Save Our City  
**Discipline:** Crafts & Textiles  
**Social Change Intent:** Ending war: militarization, criminalization, and mass incarceration  
**Amount:** $2,500

Kathryn will expand on her 2015 Art and Change Grant project, *The Healing Blanket* – a collection of small hand-woven pieces created by family members, each representing a homicide that took place in Philadelphia in 2015. In honor of the 280 people killed by gun violence, Kathryn plans to hold a memorial and procession at the BKG Funeral Home in North Philadelphia. Here, she will assemble *The Healing Blanket* pieces along with photos of those killed and then drape it over a casket for viewing. This memorial will be a public outcry against gun violence and will give people an opportunity to express their grief as well as call for peace and healing in our communities. It will also be a plea to put guns down and change gun control legislation.

**Kristin Schwab and Laquanda Dobson**  
**Neighborhood:** The Bottom  
**Change Partner:** Diana Waters  
**Discipline:** Folk Art  
**Social Change Intent:** Economic justice; Racial justice  
**Amount:** $2,500
Kristin and Laquanda will create a cooking show of flavorful conversations and recipes rooted in Philadelphia. This show will use art, the power of food, and cooking to engage audiences around critical issues such as racism, white supremacy, and gentrification. Each 15-minute show will use culinary arts to illustrate social injustices on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels. Laquanda and Kristin’s relationship – built on vast socioeconomic differences and a deep love for one another – provides the foundation for this project, where they hope to inspire others to “cook up” change and communicate across difference with authenticity and vulnerability.

**M. Asli Dukan**
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia
Change Partner: Ismael Jimenez
Discipline: Media Arts/Visual Arts
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Racial justice
Amount: $2,500

M. Asli will create an interactive website for *Invisible Universe*, a documentary about Black speculative fiction (SF). The website will archive the vast collection of information about SF that M. Asli has gathered over the years and will give visitors a chance to use this information to speculate on their own future. Visitors will learn about the various writers, films, filmmakers, eras, and movements of Black SF through video, sound, graphics, and text. The website will also include what Asli calls a “future incubator,” where visitors can speculate about possible futures for our world by answering a set of questions. She hopes that people, especially young people, will use this opportunity to actively analyze issues in their lives and speculate about the futures they want, or don’t want, to see.

**Maori Karmael Holmes**
Neighborhood: Spring Garden
Change Partner: Akiba Solomon
Discipline: Media Arts/ Literary Arts
Neighborhood: Spring Garden
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Feminism
Amount: $2,500

Maori will write a feature length screenplay exploring the legacy of Black liberation movements in the 1970s, the resultant experience of Generation X, hip-hop, drug addiction, class strife, and gaps between second and third wave feminisms. Maori’s goal is to sympathetically dissect a community not often depicted on screen and examine generation gaps in both the feminist and racial justice movements; complicate the current Black social media trope of the “hotep;” and explore the nuances of class, race, and education.

**Marcelline Mandeng and Zubeyda Muzeyyen**
Neighborhood: Lawncrest
Change Partner: Tiona McClouden, Harriet’s Gun Media
Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; LGBTQI Social movements and transgender justice; Feminism
Amount: $2,500

Marcelline and Zubeyda will curate ATM (At the Moment), a series of monthly, participatory, events curated by and for queer, trans, and intersex people of color (QTIPoC). The event will focus on Black and brown femme subjectivity, experimental approaches to music and performance art, and critical analysis of relevant topics ranging from QTIPoC art, pop culture, representation, preservation, and systemic violence. The artists see ATM as an important reclamation and celebration of cultures and an active invitation to claim agency, participate in cultural production, and community building. Marcelline and Zubeyda will also document the series through audio, video, and social media to archive and counter the historically inadequate preservation of QTIPoC art and music.

Mari Morales-Williams
Neighborhood: Hunting Park
Change Partner: Nuala Cabral
Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary
Social Change Intent: Economic justice; Feminism; Racial justice
Amount: $2,500

Mari will facilitate the creation of a short film to document the lives of the staff and youth of T.U.F.F. (Turn Up for Freedom), an arts based activist driven leadership program that uses participatory action research to creatively address the injustices that Black and Latina girls are facing. The project will teach participants video and photography skills in order to document their experience at T.U.F.F. as well as their lives at home, school, and the block. The intent of this project is to use the video as an organizing tool with other middle and high school students, offer political education, and show how young people resist and experience the school to prison pipeline.

Maria Khristina Acosta
Neighborhood: Garden Court
Change Partner: Genesis Crespo
Discipline: Literary Arts
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation
Amount: $2,500

As a first-generation American, Maria Khristina understands what the loss of heritage feels like under the conformity to American culture. She will write a creative nonfiction zine that seeks to preserve her Filipino culture from the erasure caused by assimilation and white supremacy. The zine will include reflections on the loss of her Tita (Aunt) Lota and her recent family trip to the Philippines. Maria Khristina’s zine will be a cultural artifact that can be easily printed, distributed, and catalogued. She will also organize a release event that will showcase artists whose work deals with cultural preservation, loss, and healing.
Marion Bell  
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Mel Bently  
Discipline: Literary Arts  
Social Change Intent: Economic justice; Feminism; LGBTQI Social movements and transgender justice  
Amount: $2,500

Marion will create a poetry manuscript tentatively titled *Austerity*, composed of lyric poetry, fragment, and journal-like observation. The poems will explore the relation between the austerity of our current political moment and the ways our emotional life and capacity for compassion are also impoverished. Marion’s hope for the work is that it will open up space for people to experience their own value in a world of white supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism. Marion will share the work at poetry readings in and around Philadelphia, and will make the work available for online download.

Mary DeWitt  
Neighborhood: Media  
Change Partner: Laurel Raczka, Painted Bride Art Center  
Discipline: Visual Arts/Media Arts  
Social Change Intent: Ending war: militarization, criminalization, and mass incarceration; Feminism; Racial justice  
Amount: $2,500

Mary will create portraits of two African American women who are currently serving life without parole in Pennsylvania. The portraits will be accompanied by videos in which the viewer will witness the painting process and hear the voices of the women sharing information about their lives and experiences in prison. In the summer of 2016, the portraits and videos will be displayed at the Painted Bride Art Center with the goal of illustrating the toll incarceration has taken on these women and their loved ones. These portraits will both humanize these women and bring visibility to the systematic injustice of mass incarceration.

Misty Sol  
Neighborhood: West Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Lakesha Logan, Crozer Library  
Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary  
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation; Environmental justice; Racial justice  
Amount: $2,240

Misty will illustrate a series of coloring and activity books with the theme of sustainability for the children of Chester. The images will reflect the predominantly Black racial make up of the children, and the content will include the objectives and input of three youth programs- Chester Unity Through the Arts, Ruth Bennett Homes Garden, and I Can I Will Children’s Garden and Art Gallery. The artwork will document and celebrate the youth-led environmental justice work in Chester,
provide children with fun and culturally relevant learning materials, build bridges between the programs, and create incentives for more programs that address environmental racism in Chester. Misty will partner up with Lakesha Logan, children’s librarian at J. Crozier Library, who will help distribute over 300 books through pop-up events focusing on sustainability in the area.

**Rachel Zolf**

Neighborhood: West Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Scott Barrett, Reentry Coordinator, Federal Detention Center  
Discipline: Literary Arts  
Social Change Intent: Ending war: Militarization/ Criminalization/ Incarceration; Feminism; Racial justice  
Amount: $2,500

Rachel will develop and pilot an eight-week writers workshop with incarcerated women at the Federal Detention Center in downtown Philadelphia. This non-hierarchical writing group will foster creative expression, critical thinking and community building as the writers respond to writing prompts drawn from published poems, memoirs, manifestos, etc. by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people. Rachel hopes to continue the writing group past the pilot stage and to eventually work with the women in the group to create a publication of their writings that they can share with their communities on re-entry.

**Ras Mashramani**

Neighborhood: Cedar Park  
Change Partner: Alicia Lochard  
Discipline: Literary Arts  
Social Change Intent: Disability justice; Ending war: Militarization/ Criminalization/ Incarceration; Racial justice  
Amount: $2,500

Ras will write a dystopia sci-fi novel that explores the intersection of mental health treatment, mass incarceration, racism, and poverty from the perspective of a social work trainee at a local juvenile detention center. For the novel, Ras will research the histories of forced experimentation, medication, and incarceration of those deemed “dangerous to the status quo.” She will also organize a roundtable discussion with mental health professionals and survivors to facilitate understanding and dialogue between the groups. Through this project, Ras wants to draw awareness to issues of surveillance and violence in poor communities and amplify the voices of both survivors and workers who are impacted by these systems in hopes to promote solidarity. Ras sees this book as a tool to teach social workers about the cultural intricacies of “diagnosis” and “treatment,” as well as the historical distrust among vulnerable populations.

**Sarah Mueller**

Neighborhood: Brewerytown  
Change Partner: Andre Wright  
Discipline: Media Arts
Social Change Intent: Displacement/ Migration/ Immigration; Racial justice  
Amount: $2,500

Sarah’s neighborhood cinema project, #BoycottTheOscars will take place in Brewerytown, an epicenter of exponentially-advancing gentrification. The screening will bring together longstanding North Philadelphia residents and newcomers – as neighbors – to watch films often overlooked by the Academy of Motion Pictures. Film screenings will be held out of the former Young’s Candy Shop on West Girard Avenue, a location easily accessible by foot and public transportation. The intimate living room style cinema will take place over the course of six months and will create space for both long time and new residents to come together, watch films, and have open and important conversations about gentrification and displacement. Sarah hopes that the series will generate opportunity for positive interaction and genuine relationship building across social divides and teach media criticism and literacy. The project will also train youth in event management and audio/visual technologies, while paying them a modest stipend for their participation.

**Shira Walinsky**  
Neighborhood: Fairmount  
Change Partner: Gayle Isa, Asian Arts Initiative  
Discipline: Media Arts  
Social Change Intent: Displacement/ Migration/ Immigration  
Amount: $2,500

Shira will complete her short film about three teenage Karen Burmese refugees living in South Philadelphia. The film explores the lives of the teens before entering the U.S. and the challenges they face graduating from high school and entering college. As the global refugee crisis grows, understanding the lives of these students through this film can raise awareness about the specific challenges that teen refugees face. The teens will co-create their narratives and will have an opportunity to learn about the editing process.

**Sonja Claxton**  
Neighborhood: University City  
Change Partner: Sannii Crespina-Flores  
Discipline: Media Arts  
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation  
Amount: $2,500

Sonja’s project #BLKWMNPHL, also known as Black Women of Philadelphia, highlights the stories of Southern Black women who are 70 years of age and older, who migrated to Philadelphia during the Great Migration. Using short films, images, and audio posted on social media, Sonja hopes that #BLKWMNPHL will show how the stories of these women are contribute to the history of Black women in Philadelphia. This project is personal to Sonja and the history of her own family’s migration from the South and she wants to ensure that the stories of these elders are not lost. Sonja’s project provides a platform for these women to share their stories and an opportunity for
the larger community to participate through social media. In addition, the videos, images and audio pieces will be publicly exhibited within her community.

**Tristan Powell**  
Neighborhood: Furlong  
Change Partner: New Hope Arts Center  
Discipline: Media Arts/Performance  
Social Change Intent: Feminism; LGBTQI social movements and transgender justice/gender self-determination  
Amount: $2,500

Tristan will write, direct, and star in *Break in Bloom*, a semi-autobiographical short film that depicts a positive relationship between a transgender woman and a cisgender man. *Break in Bloom* is an effort to present images of love between trans women and cisgender men as untarnished, unburdened, and unafraid. Tristan believes that in addition to access to affirming healthcare, safe housing, and employment, trans people need love and loving relationships. She sees this film as a way to write her future into existence and for trans women to see their experiences mirrored in a meaningful and empowering way. The film will be available online and will premiere at a public screening at the New Hope Arts Center with a talkback afterwards to increase dialogue in semi-rural areas.

**Vashti DuBois**  
Neighborhood: Germantown  
Change Partner: Michael Clemmons  
Discipline: Multi-Disciplinary  
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation, Feminism  
Amount: $2,500

Vashti will produce a catalogue and documentary about *The Colored Girls Museum*, a space she created in her home that honors the stories and experiences of women and girls of color. The rooms in her house have been converted into installations where artists from the community tell different stories about the ordinary and extraordinary women of color in their lives. The museum is a staging ground for community engagement, education, celebration, and the advancement of civic and cultural pride. Vashti wants to preserve the museum and its impact through the catalogue and documentary.

**Viji Rao**  
Neighborhood: Northeast Philadelphia  
Change Partner: Praveen Dayananda Rao  
Discipline: Folk Art/ Music  
Social Change Intent: Cultural preservation  
Amount: $2,500
Viji will facilitate Indian classical dance and music workshops to more than 50 students over the course of three days. The participants will range in age, race, and ethnic cultural backgrounds and will include 20 professional dancers. Members of the community will come together and learn the details and technique of the art form, and collaborate to create new, original work. By performing and teaching classical Indian dance – particularly Bharatanatyam – Viji aims to preserve and explore a new future for this dance style that connects to modern, culturally and socially relevant themes.