

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****NOVEMBER 17, 2025**

Leeway Foundation announces its 2025 Art and Change Grant Recipients

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Leeway Foundation is proud to announce \$65,000 in funding to 29 artists and cultural producers through its [Art and Change Grant \(ACG\)](#) program. For over two decades, these \$2,500 project-based grants have supported women, trans*, and gender nonconforming artists and cultural producers creating art for social change in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Selected from over 100 applications, the 2025 ACG grantees represent a wide range of disciplines, including film, poetry, visual art, dance, music, fashion, theater, and multidisciplinary practices, engaging urgent themes such as immigrant and refugee narratives, racial justice, environmental justice, economic equity, cultural preservation, gender justice, disability justice, and LGBTQ+ advocacy. Across mediums and movements, this cohort demonstrates how art can foster collective imagination, community engagement, and social transformation. Their practices draw on ancestral knowledge, interdependence, and care to envision new possibilities for the Philadelphia region and beyond.

The 2025 cohort includes, but is not limited to: an intergenerational dance and costume project uplifting Mexican migrant families; a series of free hair-braiding and mending circles teaching sustainable care practices; bilingual youth empowerment workshops blending storytelling, zine-making, and seed-planting in North Philadelphia; a queer youth concert and art mart centering joy and belonging in Bucks County; a multimedia oral history project preserving queer and trans practitioners of African Diasporic Religions; a collective zine retreat for trans writers; participatory workshops reimagining U.S. currency through land-back and reparations dialogues; a multimedia playbook documenting Chinatown's No Arena campaign; a solo play examining Black trans masculinity and survival; a sound-based exploration of displacement and belonging for adoptees and immigrants; and a participatory performance connecting Black musical traditions to urban agriculture.

Together, these projects affirm Leeway's ongoing commitment to supporting artists whose creative practices spark dialogue, deepen community connections, and advance movements for justice and collective liberation.

The 2025 Art and Change Grant Recipients are (in alphabetical order):

[Alison](#) of Media, *Multidisciplinary*, \$2,500

[Alyssa Reynoso-Morris](#) of North Philadelphia, *Literary Arts/Visual Arts*, \$2,500

[Andrea Espinal](#) of Northeast Philadelphia, *Multidisciplinary*, \$2,500

[angel shanel edwards](#) of Southwest Philadelphia, *Crafts & Textiles*, \$2,500

[April Lee](#) of North and Northeast Philadelphia, *Multidisciplinary*, \$2,500

[Asake Denise Foye Jones](#) of West Philadelphia, *Crafts & Textiles/Media Arts*, \$2,500

[Cindy Lozito](#) of Bella Vista, *Visual Arts/Folk Arts*, \$2,500

[Dani Levsky](#) of West Philadelphia, *Performance/Literary Arts*, \$2,500

[Fiona Boyd-Clark](#) + [CJ Weintraub](#) of Doylestown Borough, *Performance/Music*, \$2,500

[Ivy McLendon](#) of Norris Square, *Multidisciplinary*, \$2,500

[Julian Shendelman](#) of Lansdowne, *Literary Arts*, \$2,500

[Kaitlin Pomerantz](#) of Germantown, *Visual Arts/Literary Arts*, \$2,500

[Lily Xie](#) of Fishtown, *Multidisciplinary*, \$2,500

[Mama Carla Wiley](#) of Olney, *Crafts & Textiles/Visual Arts*, \$2,500

[Michelle Anne Harris](#) + [Kim Altomare](#) of Olde Kensington/West Philadelphia, *Crafts & Textiles/Visual Arts*, \$2,500

[Mieke D](#) of West Philadelphia, *Folk Arts/Performance*, \$2,500

[Phoebe Bachman](#) + [Christina Morton](#) of Queen Village/Washington Square West, *Multidisciplinary*, \$2,500

[Rachel O'Hanlon-Rodriguez](#) of Kingsessing, *Folk Arts/Performance*, \$2,500

[Rayne](#) of Center City, *Performance/Literary Arts*, \$2,500

[Sai Of Relief](#) of Kensington, *Visual Arts/Crafts & Textiles*, \$2,500

[Salina Kuo](#) of West Philadelphia, *Music/Folk Arts*, \$2,500

[Shevaun Brannigan](#) of Center City West, *Performance*, \$2,500

[Tough Gossamer \(Yarrow\)](#) of Kingsessing, *Performance/Music*, \$2,500

[Trapeta B. Mayson](#) of Germantown, *Literary Arts*, \$2,500

[Yuri Seung](#) of Logan Square, *Media Arts/Performance*, \$2,500

[Zach Ozma](#) of Lansdowne, *Visual Arts*, \$2,500

ABOUT THE ART AND CHANGE GRANT

Art and Change Grant applications are evaluated by an independent peer review panel. Grantees were selected through a process that values lived experience, artistic excellence, and commitment to social transformation. The 2025 review panel consisted of singer, composer, and songleader, [Emily Bate \(WOO '22; ACG '19\)](#); curator, educator, and director of the Brind Center for African and African Diasporic Art at the Philadelphia Art Museum, Imani Roach; and film producer, cultural worker, and program manager at BlackStar Projects, Sydney Alicia Rodriguez. Learn more about each of the panelists below:

ABOUT THE 2025 ACG PANELISTS

Emily Bate (she/her) – WOO '22; ACG '19

Emily Bate is a singer, composer and songleader, working fluidly across disciplines including music performance, theater and choral music. Emily founded and conducts a multi-city queer and trans community choral project called *Trust Your Moves*. Other recent projects include: *Homo Economicus*, a solo performance about remaking the economy, and *Wig Wag*, a music-theater piece performed by a cast of 4 and the entire audience. Emily is a 2025 MacDowell Fellow, a 2022 Art Works Fellow and a 2021 Pew Fellow. Along with her co-composers on *Rose: A True Story*, she's the recent winner of the Barrymore Award for Best Original Music in a Theater Production.

Imani Roach (she/her)

Imani Roach is the inaugural director of the Brind Center for African and African Diasporic Art at the Philadelphia Art Museum. A proud Philadelphia resident since 2012, she has been active in the city's creative community as a curator, an educator, an arts journalist, a visual artist and a musician. She has developed curricula and led courses on the Arts of Africa at Haverford College, the University of Pennsylvania, Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Moore College of Art & Design, and the University of the Arts. In 2019, she became the first Managing Editor of the Artblog, an online platform founded in 2003 by Roberta Fallon and Libby Rosof to uplift local artists and cultivate local art writing. As a member of Vox Populi Gallery from 2015 until 2021, she exhibited her own artwork both locally and nationally, and as a lead vocalist in the popular '60s and '70s soul band, the York Street Hustle, she has experienced firsthand the talent and diversity of Philadelphia's music scene. Immediately prior to assuming her current role, she was Assistant Curator for the Arts of Africa at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where she contributed to the reinstallation of that institution's storied African collection.

Sydney Rodriguez (they/she)

Sydney Alicia Rodriguez is an Afrolatine producer, cultural worker, and former theater kid from PG County, MD, focused on resourcing the emerging generation of Black and Brown worldbuilders. As a Program Manager at BlackStar Projects, Sydney co-produces short fiction and experimental films as part of the Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab, shapes the program of the William & Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar, and programs the annual BlackStar Film Festival in collaboration with the festival director and selection committee. Sydney is currently producing an animated short film titled *Tell Me When You Get Home*, premiering in 2026.

ABOUT LEEWAY FOUNDATION

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.*

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LEEWAY FOUNDATION

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