

Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh announces \$388,000 in grants

Grants to individual artists and residencies totaling \$241,325 were awarded to:

- **Wali Jamal (\$15,000):** To produce an audio book and video series based on “The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered,” a book originally published in 1852 by Martin Delaney, Pittsburgh's first known African American doctor.
- **Artists Image Resource (\$20,000):** To support an artist residency with visual artist Bekezela Mguni for the creation of new work and community engagement projects to build on her 2016 “Activist Print” series. The residency will provide the artist with access to print and imaging capacities to produce new work and to gather a crew of artists and educators to help present the work and the ideas to the community.
- **Asia Bey (\$14,150):** To complete, publish and distribute her original graphic novel, “EXA,” which explores the artist’s lived experience of growing into a Black woman and internal struggles involving maternity, domesticity, change and spirituality.
- **Chatham University (\$20,000):** To support Pittsburgh nonfiction storyteller Njaimeh Njie as the scholar and artist in residence with the university’s Immersive Media program and Women's Institute. Njie will create an immersive art installation, building on her current work in photography, film and multimedia.
- **Yvonne McBride (\$15,000):** To support her research and writing for a novel celebrating the history and musical legacy of the Hill District. The book will explore the impact that the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, and the 1968 riot following the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had on the Hill District.
- **Pittsburgh Glass Center, Inc. (\$20,000):** To support an artist residency at the Pittsburgh Glass Center with Percy Echols II. Echols works in the emerging artistic medium of plasma or plasma neon.
- **Jasiri X (\$15,000):** To support the development of “EyeKhanX: An Original Hip-Hop Soundtrack” for the 1925 silent film classic "Body and Soul." The soundtrack will connect past to present, while paying homage to director Oscar Micheaux and actor Paul Robeson, who were both artists and activists.
- **Gregory Scott Williams Jr. (\$15,000):** To support the development of a feature documentary called "Midlife Fantasy," an intimate examination of the life of a Black man and artist living in Pittsburgh, trying to propel his filmmaking career forward, while looking for love online.

- **Duane Binion (\$15,000):** To celebrate queer people of color from underground ballroom communities past, present and future through an interactive installation at True T Studios in Bloomfield. The installation will recreate a ballroom through projection, light, music and dance, and include speakers, performance and video interviews with ballroom icons from Pittsburgh, New York City and beyond.
- **Hannah Eko (\$14,875):** To support the writing of three literary collections: “Madhappy,” a coming-of-age literary fiction novel that follows a young woman journeying from her New Mexico military prep school to New York City; “Thank You, Wyclef,” a self-help book about personal transformation and healing from an alternative, afro-futuristic viewpoint; and “Untitled: A Black Daughterhood,” which employs a mix of cultural examination, archival research and personal storytelling.
- **Fatima Jamal (\$15,000):** To support a feature-length documentary titled “No Fats, No Femmes,” which uses poetry, performance, archival footage and interviews to examine the soul and substance of Black, gay life. The film will urge viewers to wrestle with the power of dominant gazes in shaping beauty, identity and desire.
- **Jordan Montgomery (\$15,000):** To support recording and mastering the album “Thank You For Your Purchase But We Are Not For Sale” and related music videos and performances. The recording will examine how Black art is celebrated while Black life is disregarded, with the goal of humanizing Black art by celebrating its creators and influences as much as the art itself.
- **Steven Montinar (\$3,000):** To support an exhibition presented by Montinar and Karla Arrucha of wearable sculptures that revolve around Black and Hispanic culture. The sculptures are constructed out of objects of Black and Hispanic oppression, hardship and constraint, and made into items of style and positive usefulness.
- **Mame-Fatou Niang (\$14,300):** To support the visual art installation and documentary film “From the most beautiful city in the world to the most livable city in America: Black (In)Visibilities in Paris and Pittsburgh” through artist residencies. The project will explore similarities between Paris and Pittsburgh, and the challenges faced by Black communities in both cities.
- **Graciela Sarabia (\$15,000):** To support “GoodTalkGoodFun: with Asia!” an absurdist talk and variety show for television broadcast that is hosted by a Black woman and prioritizes people of color as guests and collaborators. The show will feature interviews with real and fictional Pittsburgh figures and professionals, as well as sketches, non-sequitur antics and the disruptive imagination of the host.
- **Dejah Monea (\$15,000):** To support the creation and promotion of her new 12-track album, "Butterflies." Monea is a Black woman creator, performer, photographer and graphic designer who views music as a form of self-care for herself and listeners.

Planning support totaling \$25,000 was awarded to:

- **Deesha Philyaw (\$5,000):** To support planning to establish the Pittsburgh Writers' Workshop, which will serve as an incubator for African American writing talent, celebrate writers and the craft of writing in Pittsburgh, and advance the city's literary legacy.
- **Monique Conley (\$5,000):** To support planning activities relating to a nonfiction book about the struggles and barriers her family faces raising her 15-year-old son, Jordan, an African American boy with a rare chromosomal disorder and multiple disabilities.
- **Celeta Hickman (\$5,000):** To support a planning grant to convene design visioning roundtables that lead to the development of "The Black Bead Story: A Digital Spectacle." The series of multidisciplinary, short-film performance pieces will highlight accessories designed by the artist and inspired by African antiquity, the Harlem Renaissance and Jazz Age, and the origins of contemporary Black glamour.
- **Afro American Music Institute (\$10,000):** To support a documentary, "The Beat Goes On," about Grambling State University's marching band. The film will focus on the drive, rigor, discipline and passion of students from the classroom to the field at this historically Black university.

Special Project support totaling \$37,000 was awarded to:

- **Jazz Workshop, Inc. (\$17,000):** To support the celebration of the organization's 46th year with a commemorative concert series, "Trilogy: A Tribute to Jazz Masters." The first concert will be a tribute to the late Pittsburgh-native saxophonist Stanley Turrentine; the second, a tribute to jazz greats including Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Erroll Garner and Duke Pearson; and the third, "Alto Madness," will feature the swinging sounds of three masters of jazz on the alto saxophone: Richie Cole, Tony Campbell and Kenny Blake.
- **Legacy Arts Project/Atypical Arts (\$20,000):** To support an event to celebrate the life and work of the late Miles Saal, known as Yung Mulatto, who died at age 21 after a battle with depression. The project will include a mental health forum — co-presented with LEAD Pittsburgh and focused on African American artists — as well as an exhibition at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center that includes visual art, music and theater performances by Saal and his collaborators.

Grants in the Advancing the Field category totaling \$50,000 were awarded to:

- **Kilolo Luckett (\$25,000):** To support a strategic partnership between the contemporary arts series By Any Means and the journal of art criticism ARTS.BLACK to embark on a nine-month residency aimed at amplifying and publishing the work of Black critics in visual arts, performance and theater.
- **James White (\$25,000):** To support the creation of short documentaries on five Pittsburgh-based Black artists while highlighting their careers and supporting connections among American African artists.

Festival support totaling \$35,000 was awarded to:

- **Harambee Ujima Black Arts & Culture Association (\$15,000):** For the 2019 Harambee Ujima Black Arts Festival.
- **Community Empowerment Association, Inc. (\$10,000):** To support the Black Family Reunion annual event.
- **Toni Nadiyah Stowers (\$10,000):** To support the presentation of "Sabar Rek," highlighting the national dance of Senegal.

More information about the program, including guidelines and application information, are available online at [The Pittsburgh Foundation](#) or [The Heinz Endowments](#).

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