

2006
Grants & Awards
leeway foundation 

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We are each other's harvest; we are each other's business;
we are each other's magnitude and bond.

- gwendolyn brooks

After years of imagining how to support artists whose work is about community transformation, in 2005 the Leeway Foundation refined its vision and made a commitment to provide financial support and technical assistance to women who use their artistic practice as a vehicle for creating social change. At the same time we implemented two new grant programs, the Art and Change Grant and the Transformation Award. Last year, we broadened our constituency to include transgender artists (which includes those who identify as transsexual and genderqueer) and expanded our geographical boundaries to Camden County, New Jersey.

In 2006 leeway distributed \$321,000 in grants and awards to 59 women and transgender artists living and working in the Philadelphia region.

The Art and Change Grant was offered three times in 2006 and provided up to \$2,500 in project support to 46 artists; another thirteen artists received the \$15,000 Transformation Award in recognition of their commitment to using art for social change. Those of us involved in the process were inspired, challenged, and amazed by the work of these artists and the stories they shared about themselves and their creative process. Their honesty in describing the seminal moments in their development as artists interested in the connection between art and change—some personal, some political—have a force and power that stays with you long after the first reading. They tell us they don't necessarily identify as artists, they "just do the work"; speak eloquently of moments of clarity and self-definition; express concern that their work doesn't fall neatly into any one category; and fear being marginalized, most of all.

For a number of these artists, Leeway is the first foundation to support their work. As you read about these artists, imagine a cultural landscape without their contributions. Consider how vitally important their work is in raising consciousness about issues affecting neighborhoods all around the region and beyond; how their work illustrates the impact and human toll, on the often nameless, faceless people most affected, of issues like gentrification,

identity, violence, war and failed disaster recovery; how they are celebrating traditional practices and building community, whether through the creation of a heritage garden or the practice of classical dance forms of the African and Asian diasporas; how they are claiming cultural spaces and giving voice to youth, elders, women, and trans people; how they are documenting our family and community histories and sharing the stories of the forgotten.

Social justice movements have taught us that individuals mobilized for change can alter the conditions, values, and norms of a community. We believe that art has always been a part of effective movement building and are therefore committed to using the resources of the Foundation to amplify the voices of the vibrant community of artists whose work represents the intersection of art and change. We would like to thank those who have allied themselves with the work of the Foundation—former and current board and staff members, consultants, community partners, colleagues, review panelists, and perhaps most importantly Leeway's applicants.

Life continues to teach us that change is the only constant and our work at Leeway proves again and again there is no singular formula for it; it looks, feels, sounds, and evolves differently, according to the artist. We call them artists, but they, like most of us, juggle multiple identities—activist, cultural worker, educator, organizer, parent, student, survivor, worker. This book is a public celebration of these remarkable individuals.

Philadelphia, 2007

Photo: Harvey Finkle



DENISE M. BROWN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JULIA LÓPEZ
BOARD PRESIDENT

1993 HISTORY

In 1993, **LINDA LEE ALTER**, a artist, established the Leeway Foundation to promote the welfare of women and benefit the arts by bringing visibility, support and increased respect to the work of women artists living in the five-county Philadelphia area. Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation—Leeway focused on individual women artists with the implicit goal of using art to change the world for the better. After more than a decade of grantmaking Leeway's board of directors resolved that all of its grants and work as an organization would be focused through the lens of individual and community transformation. In 2005, the foundation began concentrating its grantmaking on artists who work in communities to create social change.

As a historically woman-focused foundation created to support artists who are underrepresented because of their gender, Leeway sees the inclusion of transgender artists as integral to its work. In order to support its mission, in 2006 the foundation transitioned from a one-member board structure to a community-based board of directors. Which means the decision-making process of the foundation mirrors Leeway's values and commitment to social change.



THE LEEWAY FOUNDATION'S GRANTMAKING PROGRAMS HONOR WOMEN AND TRANSGENDER ARTISTS FOR THEIR ABILITY TO INSPIRE, CHALLENGE, PROVOKE, AND REFLECT, AS WELL AS FOR THE BEAUTY AND STRENGTH OF THEIR ART. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ART IS NOT BORN IN A VACUUM. WHAT WE CREATE, HOW WE CREATE, AND WHY WE CREATE GROW OUT OF WHO WE ARE, HOW WE RELATE TO OUR COMMUNITIES, AND HOW WE VIEW THE WORLD.

Leeway supports the natural intersection of art and social change. This work of social change impacts people in many ways. It can:

- Create space for expression and building a sense of community.
- Reclaim traditional cultural practices as a form of community building or resistance.
- Alter how we think about our society, our culture, or ourselves.
- Raise consciousness.
- Create a vision of a more just world.
- Be a tool or strategy for organizing and movement building.
- Challenge racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism, or other oppressions.
- Question mainstream culture and beliefs.

Implemented in 2005, our grant programs, the Art and Change Grant and the Leeway Transformation Award, are open to women and transgender people living the Philadelphia region working in any medium of art, including traditional and non-traditional as well as multimedia and experimental forms. Creating change must be integral to the ideas, beliefs, and goals that are woven throughout the work and the process of creating and sharing the work.

Art and Change Grant (ACG)

The Art and Change Grant provides up to \$2,500 to fund art for social change projects and opportunities.

Leeway Transformation Award (LTA)

The annual Transformation Awards of \$15,000 celebrate artists who have demonstrated a commitment of five or more years to creating art for social change.

For more information visit our website www.leeway.org.

The Art and Change Grant provides project-based grants of up to \$2,500 to women and transgender artists in the Delaware Valley region to fund art for social change projects.

This grant is distributed three times per year.



ART & CHANGE
GRANT



Adjua SIMS

CHANGE PARTNER

SOUTHWEST
COMMUNITY
SERVICES

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

YOGA, NUTRITION

NEIGHBORHOOD

COPELAND OF
SOUTHWEST
PHILADELPHIA

Adjua taught an Arts of Yoga and Cooking workshop series to youth in Southwest Philadelphia. Students learned yoga postures, breathwork, and meditation, as well as participating in cooking classes that featured nutritious, affordable, and easy-to-prepare meals they can make at home, to combat the high rate of health problems in the community. The workshops were documented, and each participant got a copy of the videotape, inspiring them to include these skills in their daily lives and in their community. Developed in response to issues facing low-income youth in her community, this project was designed to provide them with tools to bring about self-awareness, peace of mind, and a positive outlet.



Beverly DALE

CHANGE PARTNER

PENN WOMEN'S CENTER

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,300

DISCIPLINE

PERFORMANCE ART

NEIGHBORHOOD

MOUNT AIRY

Beverly created a one-woman show that uses music, poetry, memoir, and fiction that explores the destructiveness of sexual repression, stereotyping, ignorance, and gender hierarchy promoted by the Church and this culture at large. It offers an alternative story that embraces a feminist erotic spirituality that liberates, celebrates, and stands in opposition to convention. The play links current sexual behavior models with sexual assault, while modeling for survivors that healing is possible. As a pastor, Beverly hopes her play will reach both religious and secular audiences. She feels it's imperative to tell this story of sexual healing and survival, and that ultimately an audacious celebration of the sexual is intimately linked to the sacred.

Photos by Barbara Kigazi



Blanche EPPS

CHANGE PARTNER

PENTRIDGE
CHILDREN'S
GARDEN

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

HERITAGE
GARDENING

NEIGHBORHOOD

SOUTHWEST
PHILADELPHIA

Blanche taught her grandchildren, neighborhood children, and participants from the Pentridge Children's Garden her lifelong art of gardening that was passed on to her from her grandmother, uncle, and aunt in South Carolina. Blanche's gardening is rooted in her Blackfoot and African American heritage and the struggles and triumphs of these two communities. As an elder, Blanche wanted to share a sense of cultural identity and history with the young people she taught, showing them how to grow food their ancestors grew and eat the food their ancestors ate. She hopes this sharing of information and family secrets will reconnect people to the natural cycles and functions of the earth, so that when she asks young people where their food comes from, the only answer will not be "from the corner store or grocery store." This horticultural art of her indigenous and African ancestors helped her teach a community of young people to feel the earth between their fingers, to know the best time to plant, to listen to the moon for the secrets of an abundant harvest.

Photos by David Guinn



Chelsa L. CLOFER

CHANGE PARTNER

ELIZABETH
CAPUTO

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,368

DISCIPLINE

FASHION
DESIGN, FABRIC
SCULPTURE,
PATTERN
DRAFTING

NEIGHBORHOOD

UNIVERSITY CITY

Chelsa created a studio workspace where she and other artists can create, alter, deconstruct, reconstruct, design, and craft clothing and accessories for themselves and the surrounding community. This provided an artistic workspace for those who may not have access to equipment and supplies. By creating a wide range of clothing, including stylized non-gender biased clothing, Chelsa and other artists challenge societal norms of sex, gender, economy, and fashion, and provide an alternative to store-bought clothes. The studio is also a gathering space for artists and activists to come together and collaborate on projects.

Photos by Barbara Kigozi



Clarissa T. SLIGH

CHANGE PARTNER
JACOB MCBEE

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
PHOTOGRAPHY,
ARTISTS' BOOKS

NEIGHBORHOOD
POWELTON
VILLAGE

Clarissa has finished an artist book and photography project called *Jake in Transition* that began in Denton, Texas, 10 years ago when her Change Partner, Jacob McBee, asked her to document his physical transformation from female to male. The book includes interviews with Jake's family and friends, reflections, journal entries, and medical documents, and makes links between gender and race constructions in the United States. Issues of race and gender are at the forefront of the book, created by two Southerners, a white man and a black woman. Jake's goal was to share with others his process of becoming an ordinary guy, moving beyond the oppressive medical standards that determine who can and cannot transition and the academic and theoretical ideas of gender blending and performing gender. The book will stand as a testament to this experience, providing hope, insight, and information for others considering transitioning from female to male.

On the shore in Portsmouth, England, by Kimberly G. Purser

Me wearing Crown of Crowns, Clarissa Sligh with assistance of Kimberly G. Purser



Crystal L. FRAZIER

CHANGE PARTNER
JESSICA KARRAT
FOUNDATION

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
DANCE

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Crystal served as co-project director and master instructor for "Ladies of Hip-Hop," an annual festival in Philadelphia that includes two days of women-led workshops for both novice and experienced dancers of African and modern dance, including breaking, popping, and locking. This festival brought together a community of women in hip-hop from all different backgrounds and dispelled the mainstream view of women's role in hip-hop culture by highlighting positive female role models "holding their own" in a male-dominated world. In addition to sharing moves, the workshops allowed people to share their experiences, struggles, and triumphs as women in the hip-hop community.

Workshop photos by Michele Byrd-McPhee

Portrait by Gabriel Bienczycki

*Debra A.*

POWELL-WRIGHT

CHANGE PARTNERPATRICIA
MCLEAN-RASHINE**GRANT AMOUNT**

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

POETRY

NEIGHBORHOOD

GERMANTOWN

Debra helped plan and co-hosted "From Womb to Womanhood," a three-day conference for women and girls of color, featuring women across artistic disciplines addressing issues of concern to ethnically and culturally diverse females. Inspired by the poetry writing workshops she facilitates in women's shelters and transitional living environments with her group In The Company of Poets, Debra believed this conference would allow a space to see the connection between artistic expression and self-empowerment for women of color. One of the goals was for women and girls who live the power of art and social change every day to serve as examples and living testimonies for one another.



Diane CRITCHLOW

CHANGE PARTNER

MONTÄZH
PERFORMING
ARTS COMPANY

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

DANCE

NEIGHBORHOOD

WYNNFIELD

Diane served as the project director for a performance of Montäzh Performing Arts Company's "Brown Girl," an interdisciplinary work presenting the struggles and triumphs of being an African American woman. The piece addressed issues of love for communities, families, significant others, and self; body image; connection to ancestors and history; and skin color, all through the perspective of black women. This was a celebratory performance about, in Diane's words, "embracing our battles, acknowledging our strength, glorifying our progress, owning our future." The future of the "Brown Girl" project includes motivational speaking seminars, life counseling workshops, and dance classes for youth.

Photos by Bill Hebert



Ethel PARIS

CHANGE PARTNER

NOLAN WALKER

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

DOCUMENTARY

NEIGHBORHOOD

OLNEY

Ethel created a documentary, including footage shot at the Oakland-based 40th reunion of the Black Panther Party (BPP), about her life in the BPP in the 1960s. Having shared with a researcher her role with the Breakfast for School Children program and later finding her role excluded from the book he had written, Ethel decided to create this documentary to tell her story and that of other women in the BPP. This documentary gives a first-hand look at the BPP from a women's perspective through Ethel and her cousin Regina Jennings's, experience and shows how they became culturally and politically educated through the BPP. Ethel and Regina's story offers young women today possible models and vision to change their communities and know that they are an important part of this change.

Photo by Barbara Kigazi



Felicia WEBSTER

CHANGE PARTNER
CATINE ERWIN

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,050

DISCIPLINE
PERFORMANCE
ART

NEIGHBORHOOD
OVERBROOK

Felicia worked on a self-propelled Self Love tour called "Withlove, Felicia." She performed and taught writing workshops at women's facilities around Philadelphia. Felicia's hope was to encourage women to laugh out their pain, dance out their tears, cry out their joys, and be inspired to write their own stories as they relearn to love themselves. Using different artistic elements such as singing, poetry, chants, personal testimonies, and affirmations, the tour reached out to and dialogued with women who are regrouping or recovering from different societal ills, focusing on shelters, rehabilitation houses, and women's organizations dealing with survivors of rape and domestic violence, and using art as a healing tool.



Gwynne B. SIGEL

CHANGE PARTNER
RANDFORCE

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
WRITING/
THEATER

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Gwynne began work on a performance piece based on interviews with members of the Sholom Aleichum Club, founded 50 years ago and one of the last surviving organizations within Philadelphia's old Jewish left community. Many of the members are passing away, and it is important to capture this history so the connection, experiences, and insight are not lost. The interviews were a part of a multi-year oral history project that Gwynne used to inform future activist efforts of progressive Jews. Gwynne used new technology to digitally save and index the interviews, so they can be easily referenced during performances and for research purposes. This project provided the basis for a writing course Gwynne created for youth that taught participants how to use oral history to document and perform stories of community and social change.

Photo by Barbara Kigazi



Irit REINHEIMER

CHANGE PARTNER

MULTI-
COMMUNITY
ALLIANCE

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

DIGITAL VIDEO

NEIGHBORHOOD

WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Irit created five short public service announcements (PSAs) with the Multi-Community Alliance (MCA), a coalition of 25 groups organizing against casino development in their neighborhoods of Nicetown, Tioga, East Falls, Southwest Germantown, and West Allegheny, to provide media support for this organizing campaign. Using locally produced music, found sound, and interviews with MCA members, the PSAs told a visual story by the people most impacted by the potential development. The videos provided MCA with an educational and organizing tool to motivate community members to take action and inform those in power about the negative effects of this development.

Irit says, "The Multi-Community Alliance wanted to inspire folks and remind them they had the power to say NO! to the state and that many people in their community were fighting together to stop the casino from being built. The PSAs that were created gave visibility to the campaign and gave the community a better understanding of the issues."

**CHANGE PARTNER**
GEOCLAN, INC.**GRANT AMOUNT**
\$2,500**DISCIPLINE**
DEEJAY,
PRODUCTION,
FACILITATOR**NEIGHBORHOOD**
SOUTHWEST
PHILADELPHIA
AND OVERBROOK

J. and Maia developed the Empowered Thru Sound program to organize and film a group of young women who learned audio production and deejaying skills. As women of color immersed in hip-hop culture, they created a feminist model to encourage young women to think critically and become socially conscious artists, using their newly acquired skills for social change. J. and Maia wanted to instill and further the self-esteem and confidence of young women interested in these art forms. Through community viewings of the resulting film that documents the young women in the program, they have engaged a larger community and shifted how the public views women in the music industry.

Empowered Thru Sound is a community-based project that organizes young women as social change artists to learn the skills of audio production and deejaying, while providing educational and self-esteem mentoring. It recognized that the representation of women in the music industry is often limited to sexist images. The program believes that if we can affect the way young people understand music, as a whole, we can move them from a space of being mere consumers to that of decision makers and producers.

The program builds on utilizing media and music as tools for creating social change for young women. With this program J. and Maia hope to build a new generation of young women who are empowered to challenge misogyny; technically equipped to pursue their musical passions; and empowered to pursue professions in which women are under-represented.

JEL and Maia ROSSER

Photos by
William Baptist II





Joy ESTHER BUTTS

CHANGE PARTNERGEORGE
MCCOLLOUGH**GRANT AMOUNT**

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

FILM/VIDEO

NEIGHBORHOODWEST
PHILADELPHIA

Joy used film and video to explore issues of substance abuse and holistic rehabilitation. A homeless rights activist, Joy has produced and hosted the Kensington Welfare Rights Union show "Marching On" for the past 7 years, where she explores economic human rights violations, including access to health care. For this project, she videotaped interviews with current and past substance abusers, primarily in the North Philadelphia community, as well as family members, friends, co-workers, and experts in the field. The film, called *Right to Recovery*, explores how people overcome their addictions through holistic healing, as well the economic realities and costs to society of drug and alcohol abuse. One of the project's goals was to enlighten and encourage social service providers to support and expand existing alternative treatment plans as alternatives to incarceration.

The film addresses the plight of those in the depths of addiction, how they got there, and how they overcame their addictions through New Jerusalem Laura. Sister Margaret McKenna, a medical missionary nun, founded New Jerusalem Laura in 1989. New Jerusalem Laura is a non-profit organization with its center at 2011 W. Norris Street in North Philadelphia. It exists with and for the people of this impoverished neighborhood. The conservative estimate is that seventy percent of the people living in this area are either drug or alcohol addicts, or have family members or friends who have addictions.

The "Right to Recovery" is the right to treatment from addiction and the right to be healthy. Unfortunately, it is often impossible in this country for the poor to gain access to both treatment programs and the ability to support themselves while in treatment. There is insufficient funding in the U.S. government's budget for rehabilitation from substance abuse. Joy intends to use the film Right to Recovery to educate audiences about all aspects of substance abuse and its impact on communities and society at large, to shed light on what has been hidden in darkness, and to encourage government and society to increase funds for rehabilitation.



Juanita BEVERLY

CHANGE PARTNER

JOURNEY HOME
ART ENRICHMENT
CENTER

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,170

DISCIPLINE

PAINTING

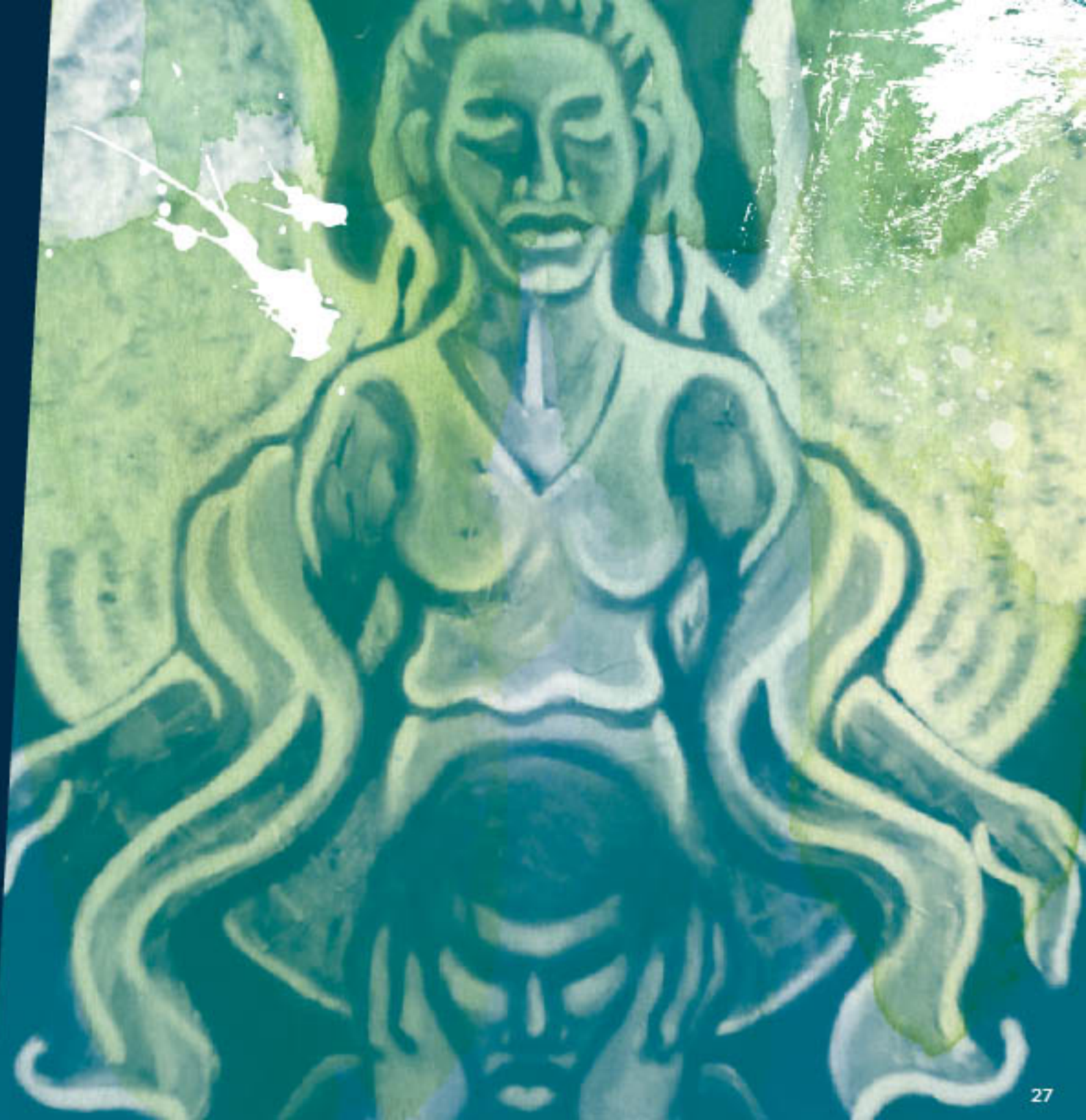
NEIGHBORHOOD

PHILADELPHIA

Juanita created a series of self-portraits depicting herself in the midst of her drug addiction, during recovery, and during her spiritual transformation. She used acrylics, mixed media, and collages to share images of herself and her emotions, ranging from low self-esteem and depression to a stronger sense of self, as she went through this transformation. Juanita's portraits are geared towards those who are in the midst of drug addiction and have been on exhibit at Journey Home. She hopes to raise awareness about the impact of drug addiction, inspiring others to use art as a way to deal with their drug addiction and to know that it is possible to stop. As someone who has lived through and witnessed the impact of drugs and violence in the area, Juanita shares her paintings with others to put forth her vision of a more hopeful and peaceful world.

Photo by Barbara Kigazi

Painting by Juanita Beverly



**CHANGE PARTNER**
UDI BAR-DAVID**GRANT AMOUNT**
\$2,500**DISCIPLINE**
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
SPIRITUALS,
INDIAN CLASSICAL
DANCE**NEIGHBORHOOD**
GERMANTOWN
AND BERWYN

Together Keisha and Shoba choreographed a piece in the Bharathanatyam tradition that was performed by Shoba, depicting the story relayed in an African American spiritual that was sung by Keisha. Using storytelling elements of both traditions, Keisha and Shoba told the story of the African slave through Indian classical dance, enabling the audience to view this experience from a different perspective and raise consciousness through the mixing of these art forms outside their native context. This project was born out of a desire to bring the African American and Indian American communities together for dialogue and exploration, understanding that both communities are very different and in some regions have very little communication with each other, but both experience racism.

Keisha and Shoba first worked together as part of a performance with Intercultural Journeys. The organization seeks to promote understanding between cultures through art and music. Their performance was created to honor the victims of September 11th, and was performed at All Souls Church in New York. Through this powerful collaboration, the two decided to continue to work together, using their mediums of African American spirituals and classical Indian dance, to create dialogue about these seemingly very different cultures, showing the common thread of humanity that runs through them both.

Shoba SHARMA and Keisha HUTCHINS



A close-up portrait of Khadija Shariff, a woman with a warm smile, wearing a white knitted beanie. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with warm lighting.

Khadija SHARRIFF

CHANGE PARTNER

MOREMI
SISTERHOOD OF
PATRIOT QUEENS

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

DESIGN, SILK
SCREENING

NEIGHBORHOOD

WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Khadija worked with young girls, age 6-9, from the Moremi Sisterhood of Patriot Queens at the Ijoba Shule to create designs for and silkscreen Kangas, design-imprinted Swahili cloths used for spreading political and social messages. The girls created a skit based on discussions of African proverbs and poems, which were printed on the Kangas. The teachings focused on the importance of mothers of communities, of political movements, of the arts, negating popular stereotypes that disregard the importance of black women. This focus on mothers coincides with the "On Our Mother's Shoulders" event Khadija co-organized to honor the artistic and activist work of Mama Charlotte O'Neal and Mama Sonia Sanchez. Local activists and poets gathered and performed alongside and in honor of these women. The Kangas and poems created were presented to the women, and offered as gifts to young people at the United African Community Center in Tanzania created by Mama Charlotte and her husband, Pete O'Neal.



Linus GRAYBILL

CHANGE PARTNER

MICHAEL
SCHWEISHEIMER

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

VIDEO

NEIGHBORHOOD

WASHINGTON
WEST

Linus created a short documentary video that examines the experiences and ramifications of being a man without a penis in gay male spaces. As a gay-identified female-to-male (FTM) transsexual, he interviewed other gay FTMs about their experiences, both social and sexual, in gay male spaces as men seeking other men. He also interviewed biological gay men about their views and understanding of the transgender community in order to compare and contrast these different perspectives. This video was presented at the Philadelphia Trans-Health Conference in March 2007 and other gatherings to encourage dialogue and community building. The video aims to increase the visibility of gay FTMs in the larger mainstream gay community and challenge sexism and transphobia within the mainstream gay and lesbian community, as well as inspire personal acceptance and a network of support within the gay FTM community.

Photo by Barbara Kigozi



Lovella CALICA

CHANGE PARTNER

DREW CAMERON

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINEPHOTOGRAPHY,
POETRY, BOOK-
MAKING**NEIGHBORHOOD**WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Lovella interviewed members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) about why they oppose the war and their experiences in the military. Their interviews were displayed alongside portraits of the members that Lovella created. In addition, she facilitated workshops in New York and New Orleans at IVAW convenings for members to create and share artistic work about their experiences as veterans. The final book, *Warrior Writers: Move, Shoot and Communicate*, helps break down societal stereotypes of who veterans are, providing a lens into the hearts of people who have a deep and intimate relationship with the Iraq war. The art workshops provided veterans with the opportunity for healing and creating a stronger sense of community as they connected on a personal and artistic level. Excerpts from the book were presented in an exhibit in Philadelphia and Burlington, Vermont.



At the exhibit, veterans read from the book and performed pieces they had written in the workshop earlier that day. The event in Burlington was also the public unveiling of *Move, Shoot and Communicate*.

This work has developed into an ongoing project called the Warrior Writers Project. Lovella will continue to facilitate workshops and organize exhibits and performances. She is also putting together another, *Re-making Sense*, based on the writing from the workshop in Vermont. The Warrior Writers Project provides tools and space for community building, healing, and redefinition to IVAW. The writing from the workshops is compiled into books, performances and exhibits that provide a lens into the hearts of people who have a deep and intimate relationship with the Iraq war. Furthermore, it gives the veterans a sense of ownership over their stories and strength in their voice, perspective, and power.



Maori Karmael HOLMES

CHANGE PARTNER

S. CHRISTIAN
ROZIER

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

FILM, VIDEO

NEIGHBORHOOD

NORTHERN
LIBERTIES

Maori produced, directed, and edited a music video for independent alternative soul artist W. Ellington, a socially progressive singer/songwriter based in Washington, D.C., who strives to create social change through his music. Ellington's messages are often lost on those who depend on the radio for information. Maori created the video to get people's attention and set a complementary visual tone for the music, while pushing people to think critically about other ways hip-hop culture can be without always resorting to the "booty-shakin', car bouncin', grills flashin' charade." This video was shared in movie theaters, live shows, schools, and other public spaces in efforts to expose people to new music, with the hope that the strong aesthetic statements made will shift people's notions of what is considered alluring and sexually or materially desirable.

Portrait by Simba Madziva

Video still of Aaries by S. Christian Rozier



Marta **SANCHEZ**

CHANGE PARTNER
CARMEN
PENDELTON

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
PAINTING

NEIGHBORHOOD
MT. AIRY

Marta facilitated her Cascarones por la Vida project, encouraging Latino youth, artists, and community members to participate in hand-painting Mexican confetti-filled eggs that were sold in a silent auction to raise funds for families affected by HIV/AIDS. These funds will help young people in these families get counseling and take art therapy classes. Marta created this project as a way to educate different communities, especially the Latino community, about HIV/AIDS. Her own experience of losing an uncle to AIDS and then feeling her family's silence and shame about his death inspired Marta to create an artistic platform for others to talk about their own experiences and to break the silence and stigma attached. Marta also worked with young people in Camden to document their experiences creating the cascarones through photography and poetry that was shared on public buses in Camden.

Photos by Barbara Kigozi

*Melissa*

TALLEY-PALMER

CHANGE PARTNER
VILLAGE OF ARTS
AND HUMANITIES

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,200

DISCIPLINE
WRITTEN & ORAL
HISTORY, DANCE

NEIGHBORHOOD
STRAWBERRY
MANSION

Melissa created an interpretive dance performance, "Let Not Your History, Be a Mystery," based on her experience as a victim of molestation, speaking to audiences about the importance of breaking the silence around molestation. The performance included video and audio of poems and short stories compiled from family and community members, gathered from interviews Melissa did in her rural Virginia childhood home. In addition, she organized several workshops to create art with members of her Philadelphia community that deals openly with and works to stop molestation. Melissa used art to explore emotions that come from the many years she suppressed this issue of molestation, and provided a way for others to speak openly about their experiences so that they do not have to live with silencing the pain.

Photos by Barbara Kigozi



Misty SOL

CHANGE PARTNER

LEONA
BREWINGTON

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

ESSAY

NEIGHBORHOOD

WEST
PHILADELPHIA

In September 2006, Misty conducted formal interviews, both written and video, in Georgia, with her great aunties about their family history, focusing on her grandmother's flight from the South in the late 1930s, following the lynching of her brother. These interviews served as the basis for a series of essays and poetry on her family history, which she performed for the larger black community and shared through workshops on history, movement, and identity. This project is the beginning of her discourse on negotiating a sense of self in relation to history; this discourse will help provide confidence and ancestral guidance to Misty, other family members, and the larger black community. Misty's work will allow her to explore how displacement and movement have shaped the identity and history of black people. Currently, Misty is working on a stage production, a short documentary, and youth workshops inspired by her research.



Nana Baakan **AGYRIRWAH**

CHANGE PARTNER
EDU-TOURISM

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
QUILTING

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Nana traveled to Morant Bay, Jamaica, to work with the St. Thomas Women's Sewing Cooperative. The cooperative, based at the Morant Bay Women's Center, provided members of the center, all of whom are unwed mothers ages 14-27, the mechanism to establish a business, enhance creative skills, and uplift their self-esteem by focusing on the traditional artist craft of quilting and making other hand-crafted items. In Jamaica unwed mothers are disenfranchised because they are not allowed to attend regular school and are forced out into other academic settings that do not give them the full extent of education needed to achieve in higher education and/or economically. Nana served as a business advisor and sewing instructor. She also created a fair trade exchange so the women could receive just compensation for their art. As a single mother whose sewing allowed her to support her family, Nana hopes this program will provide participants with the tools they need to be independent and self-sustainable.

Goods produced from this cooperative have been sold under the banner of fair trade and have been sold in Jamaica and throughout the United States. The cooperative is still in its developmental stages, Nana says, "It is truly a wonderful opportunity for me to be a part of helping these young women to reclaim their lives, their independence, their creativity, and their intellectual prowess. These women are thirsty, anxious, and willing to do whatever it takes to be successful in this venture. I am very proud to have been a significant part of its development."



Nana Korintema AYEBOAFO

CHANGE PARTNER
RESEARCH GROUP
ON DISPARITIES IN
HEALTH

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
MUSICAL THEATER

NEIGHBORHOOD
NORTH
PHILADELPHIA

Nana established a 4-week intensive HIV/AIDS Prevention Peer Education Training Program with youth in North Philadelphia, resulting in the creation of a musical theater troupe. In January 2006, Nana conducted a similar program in Larteh, Ghana working with peer educators ages 18-66. They created a play, 13 songs, 2 rap songs, 8 poems, and 7 theatrical skits as tools to educate their communities about HIV/AIDS. At the StarSpirit center in North Philly, where this project took place, children as young as 5 and adults as old as 79 come together to perform and create. The StarSpirit players were change agents to help the flow of information about HIV/AIDS rates in the black community, which leads the entire nation in new HIV cases, and stem the tide of this epidemic.



Niama Leslie JoAnn WILLIAMS

CHANGE PARTNER

BREAD LOAF
WRITERS
CONFERENCE

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

POETRY/MEMOIR/
ESSAY

NEIGHBORHOOD

NORTHERN
LIBERTIES

Niama attended the Sable/Arvon residential course in Shropshire, UK, and the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in Vermont to work on her memoir manuscript and poetry. Her manuscripts focus on her experiences as a survivor and on her journey toward personal, emotional and psychological freedom, and cite the joy of creative activity. She will use the information she gained to refine her motivational writing workshops for disadvantaged women and/or traumatized women. The workshops pass on the pleasure, healing, rewards, and empowerment that come from writing about one's own experiences and survival. Because women who have survived trauma, abuse, or lack of opportunity are used to being silent, Niama believes these workshops that use group support, writing, and drawing help women learn to find their voices and their strength.



Priyank JINDAL

CHANGE PARTNER
DREW SPENCER

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
WRITING

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Priyank will edit and write for the second issue of *Transgressions*, a zine by and for people of color with non-conforming genders: people who are transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, intersex, two-spirit, butch, etc. This zine is a collection of different forms of artistic expression, ranging from personal narratives and political essays to photographs and drawings. As a Desi transgender person involved in racial justice work for the past 10 years, he created this zine as a way for the history and current reality of the trans people of color community to be told, remembered, and honored. Since the long and powerful history of artistic resistance in trans people of color communities is often considered frivolous and unimportant due to racism, classism, and transphobia, there are very few resources for trans people of color to celebrate their work and express their lives. This zine will serve as a community-building tool, linking trans artists and creating a network of trans people of color artists for future collaboration.



Pallabi CHAKRAVORTY

CHANGE PARTNER
ASIAN ARTS
INITIATIVE

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
DANCE

NEIGHBORHOOD
LOWER MERION

Pallabi developed and performed a new choreographic work, "Replaced Rituals," which focuses on the South Asian community in Philadelphia. Created through ritual enactments from migrant communities, the piece deals with memory and identity and explores how memories imprinted in our bodies evolve in a new context. Pallabi created a new vocabulary of movement through the cross-pollination of two different classical forms (Kathak, from Islamic courts in India, and Bharatnatyam, from Hindu temples in South India) to craft an identity that is contemporary. As a South Asian woman who has lived in Philadelphia for 13 years, Pallabi feels this piece will explore her own tensions while also giving voice to marginalized communities.

"Replaced Rituals" is a partly autobiographical dance-theater work. It addresses the complex relationship of an immigrant's experience to her past. In this work Pallabi shows that our identities are embedded in bodily memories. These memories are connected to daily rituals and habits of our lives. By experimenting with movement vocabulary drawing on classical Indian dances such as Bharatnatyam and Kathak, everyday movements, gestures, rituals, and utterances, she explores the imprinting and sedimentation of cultural memory in her own and other bodies and senses that expresses migrant identities.

The work goes beyond her individual experience and includes the larger cultural experiences of the South Asian diaspora community in the Philadelphia region. Through Sufi and Bhakti music, tabla rhythms, poetry, and dance, the work gives voice to migratory rituals of the South Asian diaspora. It embraces the diversity within the South Asian community in Philadelphia by showcasing a version of Islam from India that is embedded in music and dance and shares the same humanistic principles of Hindu Bhakti (devotion). The work is especially important in the current political climate. Through this piece we hope to create an understanding of religious practices and cultural identity in South Asia that are poorly understood in communities here.

Courtyard Dancers, a diverse body of performers, creates and stages contemporary dance theater based on classical Indian and folk dance forms. Its mission is to explore the interdependence between art, life, and labor, to develop a socially engaged community of artists and audiences who experience art and culture both in political and aesthetic terms. Courtyard Dancers juxtaposes the beauty of the classical forms with pedestrian movements, everyday gestures, utterances, and text to create its own collages of life. It draws on the expressive power of Indian dances to narrate stories of the under-represented and the marginal, the quotidian, and the mundane to evoke dramatic and powerful images of ordinary life.

The dance-theater works of Courtyard Dancers strive to diffuse binaries of East and West, tradition and modern, and mind and body, without losing cultural specificity. As both performers and cultural workers, Courtyard Dancers collectively engage, represent, and critique social processes.

Portrait by Yischon Liaw Performance photo by David Neal



Qaadira ALLEN

CHANGE PARTNER

JILL MAIER

GRANT AMOUNT


\$2,495

DISCIPLINECRAFTS,
JOURNAL-
WRITING**NEIGHBORHOOD**

FAIRMOUNT PARK

Qaadira facilitated The Sankofa Circle, a transformative art-based program that supports women who are healing and recovering from childhood sexual abuse. The goal of the 11-week pilot project was to provide women whose spirits have been impacted in this way with a safe and sacred space to explore creative and holistic practices for healing, reclaim a greater sense of personal power, reaffirm the ability to self-nurture, increase self-awareness, and learn to trust and honor Self.

The Sankofa Circle is a life skills training that combines art making, energy work, and group process with practical tools for addressing the adult after-effects of sexual trauma and reducing the risk of multi-generational abuse. The Sankofa Circle is based on the Discovery Playshops workshop model. The core activity of each session is a hands-on art-making project that is designed to invite dialogue around the topic being explored. Topics during the pilot included Strengthening Boundaries, Reducing the Impact of Stress, Observing and Shifting Critical Self-Talk, Creating a New Dialogue with Your Body, Setting Personal Healing Goals, and Recognizing Your Point of Power.



A holistic sequence of supporting activities, such as reflective journaling, meditation, guided visualization, relaxation exercises, affirmations, and sacred ceremony, surrounds the art-making experience.

This project evolved from Qaadira's own personal journey of healing from childhood incest and her awareness of the wider impact of the cyclical pattern of sexual abuse on families. Qaadira created The Sankofa Circle to support other women in feeling more empowered, centered, and self-directed in their everyday lives.

Qaadira also designed a curriculum to be used to train others who wish to start a Sankofa Circle in their community. She spoke about The Sankofa Circle and the facilitator training at the 2nd National Conference on Reproductive Health in Chicago. This event was sponsored by the SisterSong Collective, an Atlanta-based non-profit.

The word Sankofa represents an Adinkra symbol called the bird of passage. It means "go back and fetch it," and it reflects the intention of The Sankofa Circle to help women reconnect with those aspects of their spirit that may have been diminished or lost through adverse childhood experiences.

Photo by Barbara Kigazi



Rachelle Lee SMITH

CHANGE PARTNER
ATTIC YOUTH
CENTER

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
PHOTOGRAPHY

NEIGHBORHOOD
CENTER CITY

Rachelle is creating a book based on photographs of queer youth. The images of the youth were taken against a stark white background to prevent any exterior environmental influences. When the images were printed, the final step was completed by the youth when they did artwork or wrote statements, quotes, stories and memories directly onto the photo, creating their own background. Rachelle has applied to shows and will be exhibiting work with Human Rights Campaign and The William Way Center. She has put together a book proposal package and mailed it to several publishers. Rachelle is a 25-year-old lesbian youth who feels that she is able to engage and exchange with the youth she photographs in projects like this which provide a space where Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual and Questioning people, especially youth, can feel empowered, can see themselves and be seen, can add their voices to an artistic process.

Photos by Rachelle Lee Smith



Sarah Stefana SMITH

CHANGE PARTNER
MEDIA MOBILIZING
PROJECT

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
PHOTOGRAPHY

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Sarah developed a series of photographs for exhibition that explores the people and places key to a growing citywide movement of labor, immigration, poverty, homelessness, and housing struggles in Philadelphia. The project is part of a multi-media campaign to break the media blackout on these issues and understand the connections between them. The backdrop of these photographs is the changing landscape of the city, where the language of redevelopment does not include the poor, working poor, or immigrants. Instead of showing people involved in these struggles as victims, these photos aim to show them as powerful people involved in struggle. The goal of the project is to create a new organizing outreach tool using the photographs in visual projected presentations that can be toured in locations around the city and distributed on the Web.

www.stefanaphotography.smugmug.com

www.myspace.com/sarastefana

Photos by Sarah Stefana Smith





Samantha BARROW

CHANGE PARTNER

KATZ: PLAN B
PRESS

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

SPOKEN
WORD, POETRY
WORKSHOPS

NEIGHBORHOOD

WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Samantha toured with Katz, a transgender spoken word performer in Georgia, in the summer of 2006, to share her book, GRIT. She traveled from Colorado to Atlanta to perform in independent bookstores, community centers, locally produced benefits, and venues. GRIT chronicles her non-traditional roles as a queer woman biker poet actively struggling with a history of sexual abuse and lifting barriers of shame and silence. Her performances challenge a gendered victim-hood and provide a model of a survivor who has reclaimed her erotic as a source of strength and change. Samantha also facilitated workshops at each event, using poetry to encourage people to explore ways to shed the shame that blocks survivors' potential for joy. She gathered these writings from participants to create a chapbook she will later pass back on to them, which they can in turn use for their own anti-violence fundraising, education, or organizing purposes.

Photo by Jacques-Jean Tiziou / www.jjtiziou.net

Since her return from her Leeway-funded journey, Sam has been featured on the cover of the Philadelphia City Paper in the Philadelphia Inquirer, and was on a panel entitled "Betrayed: Violence Against Women" with Sonia Sanchez and Marjorie Agosin. She has run several series of successful workshops in Philadelphia in settings ranging from Bryn Mawr College and West Chester University to a house in West Philly.

Here is a poem she wrote last summer while traveling and conducting workshops:

Watered Down Red

I used to think it was just watered down red.

*I would rather roll you in my purple
boil you in my crimson*

than let you creep into its folds.

*I used to think she was just watered down red,
some thin strip of gauzy femininity*

*But I saw a sunset once,
and it was shocking.*

*Even green came out to greet her,
slipping in along the outer rim of secondary clouds.
Violet lay beneath her
prostrate on a cotton float.
And blue—navy to midnight—
awnings above
spreading and protecting her entrance
into departure.*

I knew her, but couldn't talk to her yet

*like an Ex's present lover you spot
at a cocktail party through the fuzzy hum
of wine glasses and cheese.
You know your meeting is inevitable
but it doesn't make you comfortable,
and you wish she weren't so beautiful,
her collar bones weren't their own damn necklace,
her mouth wasn't a strong parting egg.*

*I wish she had never died within me.
I wish she hadn't betrayed me;*

*Soccer and girls soccer
history and women's history
people yes, women no
rape victim virgin
victim victim victim*

hole dagger

*I tried to pretend she was just watered down red
for girls and all other things awful,
like whining and lace and unwhacked knees.*

*Sniveling instead of wailing
Riding instead of driving
Cleaning instead of fixing*

I used to think it was all her fault.

*But she is the moon's favorite lover
after silence.*

*Maybe I had a crush all this time,
and just didn't know how
to put on a bow tie or
pick her flowers.*



Sannii CRESPIÑA-FLORES

CHANGE PARTNER

ART NOIR
GALLERY

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

POETRY/SPOKEN
WORD

NEIGHBORHOOD

WEST MOUNT
AIRY

Sannii facilitated a series of workshops for youth using art, music, and spoken word to explore concepts of love in her own community of Mount Airy. As a woman of color who remembers what it was like to be a youth who needed a place to create, evolve, and revolutionize her way of thinking regarding love, relationships and her community, Sannii sought to provide a multi-layered and deep approach to thinking about love. Different local artists came to Sannii's studio to support and develop the youth's artistic expression through the mediums of wood, paint, fabric, casting and journals. The art was exhibited at the Art Noir Gallery. A portion of all sales went to an existing scholarship fund for young artists.

Sannii, a poet and artist residing in Philadelphia, is the Director of Plum. She has sponsored the publication of *Love Me Bell*, a collection of poems by Philadelphia youth and is the author of *Then, I Became the Moon* and *Conversations with My Conscience*. She has now transformed *Conversations with My Conscience*, her

sophomore CD, by creating short films for each story. Chapter two of Conversations with My Conscience was accepted in the 2007 Cannes Film Festival. Her works of art have been exhibited in local and national galleries and received several awards. A portion of the proceeds from art sales is used to fund her private scholarship fund. She continues to provide workshops for youth throughout Philadelphia, both publishing and exhibiting the artworks of her students.

Little Little Darling

*Little toes, little feet
That move around in the
Soft smooth heat.
Cries that Mommy hears, and it starts to hurt her ears.
Mommy tells me to be very brave, and we hear Daddy
coming.*

Sharon Dinkins, age 9

Teach Me

*Teach me to teach you
Because I honestly have no clue
Love, trust, tears and lies
When it's said some hearts die and some hearts fly*

*Its pain, hurt, smiles and joy
It's in all little girls and boys
I pray every night
That God will stay in sight
And help me spread my dreams
So I could see everything
It's true although you can't see
Teach me to teach you
Because I honestly have no clue*

India Valize McCoy, age 13



Sheena JOHNSON

CHANGE PARTNER
NZINGA ARTS
COLLECTIVE

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
DANCE, POETRY

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Sheena choreographed "Wade in the Water" as part of the "Movement From the Margins" (MFM) performance event. This piece is a response to what Sheena witnessed when she traveled to New Orleans in solidarity with poor people and people of color in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. In New Orleans, it was clear to the world how racism and classism enacts its violence on the bodies of black people, from police brutality to forced displacement and gentrification to homelessness to forced labor, and so on. Understanding that these same issues exist in Philadelphia, this collaborative performance piece raised consciousness by illustrating the continuum of oppression faced by people of color throughout this country. The goal was for the audience to leave with the realization that dismantling systems of oppression and envisioning the creation of an alternative world that values our humanity and self-determination must be a priority for us all.

There are Katrinas waiting to happen in poor communities throughout this country. Using poetry, film, photography, and dance, MFM served as a truth-telling account of the post-Katrina world, an artist's response to the state-sanctioned violence that occurred throughout the Gulf Coast following Katrina and Rita. It also served as a piece of resistance, hope, and perseverance. Its goal was to challenge people to take up the call for action, presented to us all by what happened in New Orleans, in a real and tangible way in our own communities.



Siyade GEMECHISA

CHANGE PARTNER
STEVE ROWLAND

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
AUDIO

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Siyade is producing a 30-minute radio documentary exploring the expanding role of radio as an agent for social change and a bridge-building tool for African people across the diaspora. The interviews were conducted in Philadelphia and at an international gathering of community radio producers and broadcasters from over 90 different countries at the AMARC 9 International Community Radio Broadcasters conference in Amman, Jordan. The first part of the documentary included perspectives from local African immigrants, and captured the experience of leaving homelands and living as an immigrant in the United States. The second part included stories from African radio producers living in Africa about how radio is used as a tool for social change. With so many Africans living transnationally, this documentary deals with many related issues, such as what does being African mean and how does solidarity happen. As a child of Ethiopian political refugees, Siyade has dealt with these issues for many years, and used the documentary to answer some of these questions from different perspectives.

Siyade collected stories from African broadcasters who are using radio as a tool to serve the local needs of their communities, and learned about the surprisingly differing perspectives on the definition of solidarity within the context of the African diaspora. Currently she is focusing on editing the hours of audio she collected for her radio documentary, while preparing interviews of local Philadelphia-based African immigrants.



Stefani THREET

CHANGE PARTNER
UNIVERSITY CITY
ARTS LEAGUE

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
CERAMIC

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Stefani created a series reflecting the lives of 25 African American women and their relationships with African American men, focusing on relationships with their fathers. Through taped interviews with these women, Stefani created imagery for a series of ceramic platters that graphically depict their stories as well as her own. Embellishing the 25 platters with imagery and text from the interviews, Stefani created one platter that depicts each of the 25 women. Stefani wants the act of sharing these stories to serve as a tool for healing for both African American women and men. This work was shared in an exhibition in West Philadelphia, creating a space for women to discuss their relationships with men.



Stephanie Amma YOUNG

CHANGE PARTNER
GERMANTOWN
BEACON CENTER

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
PAINTING

NEIGHBORHOOD
LOGAN,
GERMANTOWN

Amma created an art studio at Germantown Beacon Center in Germantown High School where she worked alongside 15 young people (ages 6-18) to design a mural to teach the young people about their African American history and culture, and stories about Germantown's early settlers. Having grown up in this community and this school, Amma wanted to use this art program to build leadership among the students, so that they have a creative tool to use to speak out about issues in their community. The students worked with Amma on all aspects of the mural, and created a gallery inside the school and hosted an exhibit at the end of the project to share their individual paintings that created the final mural.

Photo by Barbara Kigozi



Tania ISAAC

CHANGE PARTNER
SAIDI

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,300

DISCIPLINE
MOVEMENT,
THEATER

NEIGHBORHOOD
SQUIRREL HILL

Tania traveled to her home place of St. Lucia to work with SAIDI, an alternative mental health-counseling agency, to create IMPRINT, a project for St. Lucian youth, 17-24 years old. Tania guided participants through movement, theater, and writing exercises that unravel pressing personal and social issues, shaping them into performance narratives that were then woven into a performance installation. This work is important to Tania, as all too often small territories like St. Lucia drown while the rest of the world reclines on their beaches. Feeling her chances of changing world economics to create actual equity in trade and politics are slim, she focuses on ways to affect the fractured society of St. Lucia that has nurtured her intellect, expression, and values. Through her work with the youth in IMPRINT, Tania facilitated the creative telling of their concerns and opinions through movement to an audience of their peers, parents and civic leaders, ultimately creating a template for future programs using the region's strength, its art, to begin to repair social rifts. The youth made a presentation to government officials, in the hope of opening a dialogue where youth voices are heard.

Headshot and production photo by Steve Belkowitz

Workshop photo by Tania Isaac



Thembu LANGA *aka* *Sista* FAYAH

CHANGE PARTNER

SHASHAMANE
MOVEMENT INC.

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

SINGER,
SONGWRITER

NEIGHBORHOOD

SOUTHWEST
PHILADELPHIA

Sista Fayah wrote, sang, and recorded her first album, *Africa Calling*, which includes music about liberation, self-empowerment, and African awareness, for Africans at home and abroad. This album aims to be a bridge between Africa and the West, combining rap, reggae, and songs in her native tongue of Zulu to create a sense of unity and to portray a better picture of Africa than the one usually portrayed by mainstream media. This album pulls upon her experience as a South African facing the hardships of the apartheid struggle and later moving to the United States and seeing African Americans facing struggles no different from that of her homeland. She is distributing the album in South Africa as well as in the United States, and using it in classroom presentations and workshops to talk about unity and solidarity.



Tina MORTON

CHANGE PARTNER
ROXANNA
WALKER-CANTON

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
FILM/VIDEO

NEIGHBORHOOD
OLNEY

Tina created a video documentary entitled *Belly of the Basin*, based on the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and their impact on the South. The film explores what happens to marginalized people displaced by natural disaster, and documents grassroots community-based leaders throughout the South. Tina wanted this video to serve as an organizing and networking tool for groups doing similar work with Katrina victims/evacuees because people often don't know of others doing similar work in neighboring states. More than just entertainment or information, this film pulls groups together and creates strong political networks. Tina organized screenings across the country, focusing on the areas hit hardest by the hurricanes.

Photo by Tina Morton



Tulie REDDICK

CHANGE PARTNER
LEANN ERICKSON

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
VIDEO

NEIGHBORHOOD
SOUTH
PHILADELPHIA

Tulie created a film to bring attention to the injustice happening in her community where nine blocks of homes were slated for demolition, including her own house. This same type of displacement is happening in South Philly, West Philly, North Philly and Brewerytown where developers and city, and state officials are taking homes owned by senior, low-income, and working-poor people, using the law of eminent domain to gentrify these neighborhoods, pushing out longtime residents in efforts to lure higher-income residents from the suburbs. Through her documentary filmmaking, Tulie told the stories of her community, highlighting the racism and classism that enables officials and developers to so easily displace residents. Most importantly, this video provides a first-hand look at gentrification from a resident living through the process and working alongside her neighbors and allies to fight the taking of their neighborhood.

Photo by Barbara Kigozi



Uva C. COLES

CHANGE PARTNER
AMBASSADOR
GERARDO
MALONEY

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
SPOKEN WORD,
WRITING

NEIGHBORHOOD
COATESVILLE

Uva visited Panama in March 2007 to create a short documentary on the cultural, societal, and personal challenges/successes of Panamanian Afro-Latinas. She interviewed Afro-Latina relatives, community educators, and leaders about history, oppression, racism, sexism, and ultimate triumph in a society that has historically devalued the presence and beauty of the Panamanian Afro-Latina. She also collaborated with Panamanian musicians who composed Latin and Afro-Caribbean pieces as a soundtrack for the documentary. This film will allow for collaborations that cross many barriers and borders. In addition to using the documentary during her presentations, Uva will donate copies to Panama's Afro-Antillean Museum, the country's sole museum dedicated to promoting Afro-Latino/Caribbean cultural pride, for educational viewing and as a powerful educational tool.

Uva has been writing and performing professionally for over a decade. About a year ago, she was asked to create a poem that spoke to the Latin experience. The committee reviewing her work found it out of step with the “true” Latin experience. She thought it interesting that her entire life, ethnicity, and race were so easily dismissed. She was disappointed, later enraged, and finally empowered. Up to that point, she had used her work as a writer and spoken word performer to educate others about the seemingly invisible Afro-Latino community. However, in that moment, it occurred to her that she wanted to, needed to, do something that could educate the masses within and outside of the Latino community about her ethnicity.

Along with a team of music and video producers including Uva’s husband, Samori Coles, and her sister, Kadine Anckle, Uva expanded this project from a personal voyage of “redemption” to a more meaningful, community-based project. In Panama, they partnered with educators; artists of varying genres including professional musicians, singers, producers and engineers, still photographers, and painters; and community activists. More importantly, they interviewed people from diverse walks of life—students (ranging from elementary school to post-graduate studies), doctors, historians, entrepreneurs, mothers, and wives—all of whom shared the Afro-Latino experience as a common thread. Their voices spoke to experiences that were as different as the shades of their skin, the textures of their hair, the depth of their accents. Many of them prided themselves on being descendants of Africa and could trace their journey from the Motherland to Panama. Some of them were less informed but very interested in learning about their ancestry. Others rejected the notion that they might be linked to Africa.

Uva says, “While I expected that in researching, writing, and filming this project, I would educate others, I didn’t expect to learn as much as I did about my own family’s history, about my community’s varying degrees of connection and disconnection from our lineage. At times I was empowered by the knowledge displayed by my people. At others times, I was saddened by our inability to acknowledge our history. I went home to educate others, but was instead educated by my own.”



Valerie GILBERT

CHANGE PARTNER
JOURNEY HOME
ART ENRICHMENT
CENTER

GRANT AMOUNT
\$2,500

DISCIPLINE
ART DOLL
SCULPTOR

NEIGHBORHOOD
SOUTHWEST
PHILADELPHIA

Valerie created a series of art doll sculptures and plaques in mixed media portraying different aspects of women's inner strength. Her pieces aim to promote reflection and alter how women think about themselves and their roles in the world, with the goal of helping women find their voice, realize their power, and inspire them to create a more just and compassionate world. Valerie's sculptures are influenced by her own personal struggles and her use of art as a form of therapy in her own recovery process. She creates to give back to the community of women who helped her in her own life and to move other women to see they too can use art as a tool to take control of their own lives.

In Valerie's solo exhibit, "A Tribute to My Sisters," some of the pieces represented famous women and some showed women whose faces we see in everyday life. Valerie tries to show what makes women strong. "When the public views this display," says Valerie, "I want them to see and feel what contributions women have made. When women view it I want them to feel the power they possess to make a better world."

Through working on and researching this exhibit Valerie found the true power of women's strength and determination. Although not always depicted in a flattering light, women have made an enormous impact on society past and present in all cultures.



Angela 'Sadio' WATSON

CHANGE PARTNER

JOSLYN LADSON
& PAUL ROBESON
HOUSE

GRANT AMOUNT

\$2,500

DISCIPLINE

DOCUMENTARY

NEIGHBORHOOD

UNIVERSITY CITY

Angela "Sadio" began preproduction on an educational documentary that uses dance ceremonies, rituals, and interviews, to share the spiritual and cultural functions of African dance. During a yearlong study in Guinea, Angela "Sadio" videotaped many forms of this dance style. By sharing the meaning and purpose of African dance through film, she is documenting and preserving important cultural knowledge. This documentary will be a tool in her work with African American and Latino youth throughout Philadelphia, which she hopes will encourage self-empowerment and change through this ritual art form.

FEBRUARY 2006 Review Panel

Aishah Shahidah Simmons is an award-winning African-American feminist lesbian documentary filmmaker, international lecturer, published writer, and activist who uses the moving image, written and spoken word to advocate for left-of-center, radical progressive social change. A native Philadelphian, she spent eleven years, seven of which were fulltime, to produce, write, and direct *NO!*, a feature length documentary which unveils the reality of rape, other forms of sexual violence and healing in African-American communities. *NO!* received an audience award and a juried award at the 2006 San Diego Women Film Festival. Her previously completed videos *Silence...Broken* and *In My Father's House*, explore the issues of race, gender, and sexuality from a Black feminist lesbian perspective. Aishah is the recipient of numerous grants and awards including the 2006 DC Rape Crisis Center's Visionary Award; a 2006 major grant from the Ford Foundation to support the international educational marketing and distribution of *NO!*; the 2006 National Award for Outstanding Response to and Prevention of Sexual Violence from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center; Leeway Foundation's 2005 Transformation Award; a 2005 Artist-in-Residency at Spelman College's Digital Moving Image Salon.

Dao-yuan Chou works with Community Organizing Collective, a community-based group that builds the capacity of recent immigrants to fight for justice in their own communities. She also is a creative non-fiction writer and 2005 recipient of the Leeway Foundation's Art and Change Grant and the Transformation Award.

June Martinez was born in the Bronx, New York. She came to Philadelphia at the age of seven and was raised in Spring Garden. She attended Philadanco where she studied modern, jazz, and ballet from 1982 to 1985. She was also involved in the night scene in Philadelphia in the eighties and helped make Catacombs and Second Story nightclubs popular. She has performed in the Broadway hit starring Della Reese, *The Last Minstrel Show*. She appeared in *Paris is Burning* and co-wrote two classic dance hits in the eighties. She is currently working on two novels, *Six Strings on a Drum* and *Two for One*. She dedicates her life to helping the community understand the hardships of transgender women who are incarcerated. She has also written two very controversial reports about HIV and AIDS in prison. She is currently involved in bringing HIV/AIDS awareness to the public through outreach. June was also a keynote speaker at the 5th Annual Transgender Health Conference in Philadelphia. June's art is uplifting to those who are living with HIV/AIDS, and she has donated most of the proceeds to AIDS research.

• **Sabina Neem** is a trans-ally who is committed to social and economic justice work. Her approach is to engage with challenging and oppressive systems in order to make change and voice informed praise and criticism. She is the HIV Prevention Specialist at the Attic Youth Center. Previously, she worked as an advocate at the Trans-health Information Project of Prevention Point Philadelphia and GALAEI. She currently co-chairs the Mayor's Taskforce on Homeless Services, Sexual and Gender Minorities Committee and is advocating for trans-inclusion policies in the Philadelphia shelter system. She has done trainings on transgender issues for homeless service organizations and has presented on this issue nationally. Sabina is pursuing a dual masters degree in Social Service and Law and Social Policy at the Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research.

JUNE 2006 Review Panel

Heather La Capria is a freelance artist, social justice organizer, and fancy pants baker living in West Philadelphia. A native of New York City, she grew up inspired by tin foil sculpture, urban fashion, anonymous street artists, her mother's cooking, and other brave and raucous LGBTQ folks like her uncle Tony. She studied at Tyler School of Art and received the Dean's Award and the Faculty Choice Award for studio work in 2006, but prefers making art that has nothing to do with still life, mostly because this existence is anything but motionless.

Naima Lowe is a writer, performer, and media-maker based in Philadelphia. She has performed or had her work mounted at diverse venues all over the country including the Capitol Theater in Olympia, Washington,, The Community Education Center in Philadelphia, Rites and Reason Theater in Providence, Rhode Island, and most recently in a TV studio at Temple University. She is currently a graduate student in Film and Media Arts at Temple, where she is exploring stop-motion animation, experimental documentary, screenwriting, and mixed-media performance art. Her work tends to explore issues of race, sexuality, and growing up. She loves using animals and the tropes ...of myth and fantasy to tell stories, and her projects tend to be multi-layered, multi-disciplinary, multi-collaborator messes.

Patience Rage was born in Philadelphia at PGH (and you gotta be a Philadelphian to even have a clue what or where this could be). Patience is the oldest daughter of 10 children and was raised predominantly in the Strawberry Mansion section of North Philadelphia. She is a writer and storyteller who works mentoring youth in her neighborhood. Patience was awarded a Leeway Art and Change Grant in October 2005 for a project working with a group of women in North Philadelphia to help them tell their stories of surviving incest.

OCTOBER 2006 Review Panel

Andi Perez is the Executive Director of Youth United for a Change (since 2004) and has worked there since 1999. Born and raised in Philadelphia, Andi attended public schools and graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles. She spent the next several years as the Executive Director of Youth United for Community Action, a youth organizing agency in Los Angeles, before returning to her hometown and joining the YUC staff. She has published articles and essays on the importance of organizing, and youth organizing in particular. Andi is also Vice President of Norris Square Civic Association Board of Directors and a long-time resident of the community.

Muthi aka Serena Reed is an aspiring artist. Using audio/video production as a medium to talk about social issues, she sees her work as a conduit for generating creative action and personal growth. Collaborating with other artists is crucial to her work in this age of multi-media production. With love, understanding, and genealogy as inspirations to the work, Muthi continues on this path.

Nava BtShalom learned to talk in Jerusalem and to read in Brooklyn; since then, she's been a Philadelphia poet. She is interested in language as a tool both to document and to reinvent political realities. Her work is concerned with place, bodies, and violence; her poetry has often dealt with power and resistance in Palestine/Israel. Nava also co-produces *Queerspawn Diaries*, a web-based radio documentary about adults from queer and transgender families. She has a BA from Oberlin College in Creative Writing for Social Change, and has received several awards for her writing. Her work has appeared recently in *Mid-American Review* and *Vespertine Press*, and is forthcoming in *Court Green*. She is a 2006 Pew Fellow in the Arts.

The Transformation Award provides unrestricted annual awards of \$15,000 to women and transgender artists living in the Delaware Valley region who create art for social change and have done so for the past five years or more, demonstrating a commitment to art and social change work.

This award is distributed once per year.



TRANSFORMATION
AWARD



Linda GOSS

DISCIPLINE
STORYTELLING

NEIGHBORHOOD
MT. AIRY

Linda is a storyteller who uses the medium to inspire people to respond to inequity in the world and to share a vision for hope, freedom, healing, and justice. Linda's stories are in the tradition of her African and African American ancestors, and tell of how people make choices and face power. Her repertoire is vast, with stories ranging from those passed down to her by family members, to oral histories, folktales from African American oral traditions, and original pieces. She is an agent for social change; her storytelling legitimizes and validates everyday stories, naming peoples experiences. Her art is built upon the transformative power of storytelling, empowering all people to acknowledge, know, and express their own stories, which she sees as a radical act in these repressive times. After an experience in 1982 when she was one of two Black storytellers at a national storytelling gathering, Linda organized with Mary Carter Smith to create their own festival, In the Tradition: National Festival of Black Storytelling, which, in 1984, gave birth to the National Association of Black Storytellers, established as a space to bring out stories from the community. That same year, Linda was named the Official Storyteller of Philadelphia by the Mayor. She has worked for over 30 years in the Philadelphia community, from circles for mothers to share stories of murdered children to intergenerational residencies to circles for breast cancer survivors to documenting community stories in North Philadelphia with the Village of Art and Humanities' "Bearing Witness: Invoking Spirit, Embracing Memory" Project. In 2003 she received the Lifetime In 2003 she received the Oracle Lifetime Achievement Award for Storytelling from the National Storytelling Network. She is the author of 6 books, including Talk That Talk, Jump Up and Say, The Frog Who Wanted to be a Singer, and Sayin' Somethin'. She is one of the roster artists with Penn PAT.

Photos by Gretchen Shannon.

Maori Karmael HOLMES

DISCIPLINE
FILMMAKING

NEIGHBORHOOD
NORTHERN
LIBERTIES

Maori works primarily as a filmmaker, taking on the roles of producer, director, editor, costume designer, and screenwriter. All of her work brings to the center the work of other artists creating art that is "under the radar," with a focus on giving women of color and other marginalized groups a chance to be seen, heard, and understood on their own terms. As an African American woman filmmaker, she challenges mainstream notions of race, identity, beauty, and gendered power structures, providing an alternative to corporate-produced mass media and their one-sided portrayals and stereotypes. These issues come up in her work with young people, such as her media residency at West Philadelphia High School's Media Arts program, where she led workshops for 10th- and 11th-grade novice filmmakers to create their own 15-minute narrative about issues important to them and their community. In 2006, she produced and curated the one-day festival Phresh: Celebrating Women in Hip-hop at the Painted Bride Art Center, focusing on the work of women in hip-hop. Maori's documentary film, *Scene Not Heard*, explores the history of women's participation in hip-hop culture in Philadelphia, featuring a range of artists and groups from the Jazzyfatnastees to Bahamadia. Created out of a need to understand why women were absent from mainstream venues, *Scene Not Heard* sought to find these women, tell their stories, and introduce them to new audiences. Currently, Maori is volunteering as executive director of the Black Lily Film & Music Festival, which builds upon the roots of the Black Lily music series started in the nineties to lift up the work and voices of underground and politically conscious women artists.

*Production still by Tina Madon
Portrait by Simba Madziva*





Maudeline SWARAY

DISCIPLINE
SINGER
SONGWRITER

NEIGHBORHOOD
CLIFTON HEIGHTS

For the past 20 years, Maudeline has been writing, recording, and performing original songs for audiences in the United States and Africa. Her music conveys a message of peace and unity with a specific emphasis on speaking to the Liberian community. As a Liberian, Maudeline has seen first-hand the impact of the ongoing war in Liberia that has killed at least 250,000 people. She wrote and performed "Let's Come Together, Once More" in response to this experience. This song of encouragement and reconciliation was used widely in the early nineties when the war was its height, providing an anthem of hope and courage to Liberians everywhere. Maudeline's goal is to use her art to help bring about change for Liberian people, so that they may regain a sense of value that has been taken away from years of warfare. She creates songs to bring about a united front, to cause an excitement that bridges the divides, which she's performed at political rallies, parties, reunions, and community gatherings. She is currently working on the "Unity Project," a series of workshops, concerts, and speeches to encourage people to join and work for social change in their community.

Photos by Barbara Kigazi



Misia DENÉA

DISCIPLINE
DANCE
PERFORMANCE
ART

NEIGHBORHOOD
WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Misia uses art as a means for change and healing in her community, especially with young people of color. For the past six years, Misia has been a dance instructor in youth programs throughout Philadelphia and Maryland. Her mission is to use hip-hop and African-inspired dance as a tool for young people to be conscious of their bodies, and promote self-worth and confidence. Her work with young people includes "Emancipation Navigation," a choreopoem she created with young women in the Girls Rites of Passage program at Huey Elementary School about a Black woman's sojourn into self-love, understanding her beauty and importance. Social change is an essential part of Misia's art, in which dance is her voice for educating audiences and sharing stories of marginalized people and communities. She created the Nzinga Arts Collective in 2003 to create a space for artists of color to come together and create art for social justice. She has worked with many progressive female artists in Philadelphia, including Montāzh, an all-female hip-hop performance group. She has created pieces to raise consciousness and money for organizations and issues ranging from MOVE, Critical Resistance, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, and Mumia Abu Jamal to the HUGS shelter for battered women in Philadelphia. Recently, Misia collaborated with dancer and choreographer Sheena Johnson and playwright Daviná Stewart to create "Movement from the Margins" (MFM), a multimedia dance performance in response to Hurricane Katrina and the ensuing attempts to erase Black people and Black culture. Performances of MFM included a post-show Q&A and report back about on-the-ground conditions in New Orleans, inspiring people of color to find resources within their own communities to ensure less reliance on the U.S. government when "Katrinas" devastate communities.

Portrait by Barbara Kigozi

Performance photo by Bill Hebert



Na Tanya Davina STEWART

DISCIPLINE

SPOKEN WORD,
PERFORMANCE
ART

NEIGHBORHOOD

WEST
PHILADELPHIA

Davina is a performance artist and community organizer. As an organizer, she uses spoken word and performance art to create a sense of community where people feel comfortable talking about difficult issues, and as a link to different communities and issues important to her. She has worked with the Philadelphia Black Women's Health Project to create a performance piece to encourage dialogue about sexual abuse, and since 2004 she has worked with the non-profit organization A Long Walk Home, which uses art for social change, to produce "Story of a Rape Survivor" (SOARS), to help people prevent and heal from sexual violence. SOARS has traveled to over 40 cities in the past three years, with Davina interpreting the poetry of survivors on stage.

Davina's art focuses on the internalization of racism, sexism, and abuses of power within the family and larger society, as well as white supremacy and systemic oppression. She uses culture as a tool in her work, often utilizing rap, double-Dutch

songs, hopscotch, and chalking by altering their content and using them outside the usual context, as evidenced in her work with the Hands Off Assata Coalition in the summer of 2005. Chalking out hopscotch boxes with activist slogans, she quickly gathered the attention of young people to encourage them and their guardians to urge Congress to remove the bounty placed on exiled freedom fighter Assata Shakur. Daviná facilitates VISIONS, the teen theater program at Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Daviná graduated from Temple University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and the Shirley Graham Du Bois Award of Excellence in African American Studies. As a teaching artist, Daviná has facilitated performance workshops for youth and adult learners at The National Civil Rights Museum and The Blues Cultural Center in Memphis, Tennessee (1996); Action AIDS Network in Johannesburg, South Africa (2002); and The People's Emergency Center Shelter (1998) and the Philadelphia Young Playwrights' Festival (2003) in Philadelphia.

Daviná collaborated with the Nzinga Arts Collective to write, perform, and produce the multi-disciplinary piece "Movement from the Margins." MFM explores race and class disparities and their impact upon the residents of the Lower 9th Ward in New Orleans as exposed by Hurricane Katrina. MFM premiered at the 2006 Philadelphia Fringe Festival and is slated for a national tour. This performance art piece is a fund-raiser for the New Orleans chapter of INCITE!, a national women of color organization working to address and end violence against women.

Daviná assistant directed the Philadelphia premiere of Tony Kushner's musical *Caroline or Change* (2007) at the Arden Theatre Company. She is producing her play *SCIAMACHY*, and hosts a monthly performance showcase called *Paradigm Shift* at the Arts Garage in Philadelphia. *Paradigm Shift* allows Daviná to feature the work of fellow Leeway grantees and local artists. Part of the proceeds from the venue is donated to Project Home, an organization working to end homelessness in Philadelphia.



Patricia McLEAN

DISCIPLINE POETRY

NEIGHBORHOOD OLNEY

Patricia's art is not only personal therapy; it is her tool for social change. When creating a work of art, she is able to flush out her anger and frustration, working out any inner problems, thus being able to live a healthy life. Patricia discovers and expresses her view of the world through her poetry, using art for social change by challenging and inspiring people to think. Four years ago, she founded Tomorrow's Girls, a summer program for girls age 8-13 focusing on learning life skills and empowerment through creative and cultural expression. The program began out of a need to offer an emotionally safe space for new and beginning poets to create. Now the focus is on strengthening artists, developing leaders, and creating change in her community through artistic culture. Patricia has also created a poetry therapy workshop, "Poetry Pulls Pain," that she has shared with numerous educational institutions, women's organizations, and transitional homes. The workshop is designed to promote awareness and self-healing that comes when one's own words are used to recognize the negative notions and emotions that prevent people from moving forward in a positive way. She uses poetry as a way to encourage others, as well as herself, to contemplate life, feelings, and spirituality, knowing that poetry can heal and connect us.

As a social artist Patricia seeks innovative solutions to troubling conditions. She is a lifelong learner ever hungry for insights, skills, imaginative ideas, and a deeper understanding of present-day issues. It has always been her dream to use her love of poetry as a conduit for individual and community empowerment. She feels blessed to teach her students of all ages to use their words to examine the motivations of the human spirit, to embrace their culture, and to empower not only themselves, but others as well, as they learn the dynamic balance between inner understanding and outward expression.

Priyank JINDAL



DISCIPLINE
 WRITING, SEX
 TOYS

NEIGHBORHOOD
 WEST
 PHILADELPHIA

Over the past five years, Priyank has written non-fiction and created art for the queer community. He has written articles about the Philippines and worker organizing in Chinatown in support of a group he works with, the Community Organizing Collective (CYOC). His on-the-ground organizing work is his drive for writing and pushes him to write about political issues in a context that remains relevant for community-based work and struggle. Priyank's queer art takes the form of books, zines, and sex toys; it is all grounded in the trans people of color community. His art functions to fill the void of resources available for trans people of color. His zine Transgressions shares stories, artwork, and political essays by trans people of color. Transgressions enabled trans people of color activists who had not traditionally identified as artists to participate in a project that redefined their activism as art. The zine has been used extensively as an educational tool for non-trans allies, and for trans people of color to connect with stories that resemble their own. In addition to making sex toys to sell at fundraisers for community-based social justice organizations, Priyank uses the activity as a community-building tool by teaching queer people of color to make their own sex toys, costing only a few dollars for supplies and specifically designed to suit each person's body size, gender, and style.



Ruth Naomi FLOYD

DISCIPLINE
PHOTOGRAPHY,
MUSIC
COMPOSITION,
INSTRUMENTAL
& VOCAL
PERFORMANCE

NEIGHBORHOOD
SOUTH
PHILADELPHIA

Ruth's art and social change work is to encourage and empower women of color and others to live a life full of promise and hope while combating HIV and AIDS. An HIV/AIDS activist for the past 15 years, she works to raise consciousness and influence the mindset of communities of color in relation to how they think about people living with HIV/AIDS. Ruth uses art to dispel myths and perceptions about HIV/AIDS among women of color. In her photography series "Reflection: Woman and the Veil" she challenges the viewer to feel and trace some of the stages that women of color may experience while struggling, surviving, fighting, and living with HIV/AIDS. Through her music, she communicates the spiritual message of love, joy, peace, and renewal while also addressing the struggles facing communities of color. As an African American artist, she is challenged to remember, investigate, and incorporate her culture's struggle for true representation of one's self and others. Her work aims to evoke a response that leads to open and honest dialogue that can revolutionize thoughts, lives, and communities.



ANGELITA
Y LA CABRA
DEL BARRIO



Soledad Chavez-Plumley
FROM "WELFARE" TO
WELL BEING.



Soledad CHAVEZ-PLUMLEY

DISCIPLINE
WRITING

NEIGHBORHOOD
WESTMONT

Soledad is a teacher and writer of poetry and short stories. As a teacher she has used the written word to help her students in a North Philadelphia bilingual school develop an understanding of their cultural, educational, and social realities. After one year of teaching in a school where Latinos were the minority, she made a conscious decision to return to North Philadelphia to work with Latino young people. She felt she would have a greater impact with young people who could relate to her and with whom she could share the importance of being Latino and why the culture and history must be respected and passed down through generations. Her work reminds people in the Latino community of the importance of holding on to their culture and language as they live in the United States. Her writing focuses on the experiences of Latino immigrants, providing her own life as an example, and the right for immigrants to be accepted and respected. As a Colombian immigrant living in the United States for the past 30 years, Soledad put her experiences and teachings into her Spanish-language book *Del Welfare a la Buena Vida*. Soledad believes her art does not simply belong to her, but to her community, the people who relate to her experiences. For Soledad, social change happens when women are empowered. This is the focus of her next book, *Latinas Contra Toda Adversidad*, in which she highlights the experiences of 25 Latino women like herself.



Thelma SHELTON ROBINSON

DISCIPLINE
STORYTELLING

NEIGHBORHOOD
SOUTH
PHILADELPHIA

Thelma's goal is to do what elders in her family and neighborhood have always taught her, to "keep on keeping on." For Thelma this happens through poetic storytelling, a natural extension of herself. Thelma is a 74-year-old African American woman born and raised in South Philadelphia, her gift for storytelling was passed on to her through her father, a master storyteller. After 34 years of service with the City of Philadelphia, she retired and began pursuing her love of poetry and storytelling. Through poetic rhyme she tells stories about Black history in Philadelphia — ranging from stories about the injustice of Corrine Sykes' trial to the boycott of Tasty-Kake products led by Black ministers to the story of the first Black men to drive trolleys — at venues like the Afro-American Museum, Painted Bride Arts Center, and Robin's Bookstore. These stories stand as significant pieces of history, many of which are not well known. Following many of her storytelling performances, Thelma is approached by other elders who share their own "back-in-the-day" stories, and in this "story swap" her work as a storyteller and its importance in community is validated. Emphasizing the importance of learning from the past, her stories illustrate the old African truth symbolized by a Sankofa bird that is looking back over its shoulder, proving that "you cannot know where you are going, if you do not know where you've been."

Photos by Barbara Kigozi



Tina MORTON

DISCIPLINE
FILM, VIDEO

NEIGHBORHOOD
OLNEY

Tina is a media activist deeply committed to facilitating members of community groups in telling their own stories. Her work is that of a video oral historian, documenting community struggles aurally and visually, who shares the perspectives of marginalized people, enabling them to be seen and heard in their own image and voice. Her own work started when she took classes at Scribe Video Center over a decade ago. Since then, she has completed a community history documentary entitled *Severed Souls* (2001), a 13-year personal journey to chronicle community memory of the execution of Corrine Sykes, a 20-year-old North Philadelphia resident wrongly executed for murder and the first African American woman to be legally executed in Pennsylvania, and *The Taking of South Central... Philadelphia* (2005), a documentary focusing on problems of gentrification affecting many communities. Currently, Tina is working on *Belly of the Basin*, chronicling the people of New Orleans' voices, voices not drowned out by Katrina but by political red tape. Featuring people's stories of survival and struggle, the film shows the grassroots organizing work happening in response to Katrina devastation and will serve as a movement-building tool by bridging the different types of organizing work happening across the South from New Orleans to Atlanta to Durham, North Carolina, as a result of Katrina.

Production still by Tina Morton



Vashti DUBOIS

DISCIPLINE
WRITING,
PERFORMANCE
ART

NEIGHBORHOOD
GERMANTOWN

For Vashti, the purpose of artmaking is to create experiences that nurture, challenge, and move the artist and community. The art and social change aspects of her work are inextricably bound up in each other, a consequence of her growing up female, Black, poor, and a single mom who just wanted to be an artist. When working with young women, age 13-17, at The Girls' Center, a project of Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Vashti and the staff came together to transform the center, but more importantly to transform the messages that people were getting about the girls through three multimedia, multidisciplinary projects. *Alice, Alicia and Ayana in Wonderland* was one of the resulting projects, a one-act play about a trip down the rabbit hole of the juvenile justice system developed from interviews, student writings, and daily interactions with the young women. Her directing work includes *Converse Sneakers*, a one-act play, a coming of age story of two Latina girls growing up in the Bronx. More recently in 2005, after her 16-year-old nephew was murdered in Lynchburg, Virginia, Vashti created a new writing series called "Hansel and Gretel," a how-to memoir that dealt with the loss of her nephew and became an instructional guide for survival for her teenage children and family. Vashti sees her art as a continuum, with each project related to and building upon the project before.

Vashti is using her Leeway award to rewrite produce and direct *Alice, Alicia and Ayana in Wonderland*.

Alice, Alicia and Ayana was done as an open reading this summer. In the fall of 2007, she will produce and direct it in Philadelphia.



Zilan MUNAS

DISCIPLINE
FILM, MEDIA ARTS

NEIGHBORHOOD
ELKINS PARK

Zilan is an independent filmmaker whose work is informed by her experiences of being Sri Lankan and Muslim, growing up in India, and living as an immigrant in the United States where she works in multiracial and multicultural communities. Zilan has produced documentaries for broadcast on feminist and Third World issues since the eighties. She has been documenting Philadelphia communities, and in particular its Muslim community, for over two decades. In the mid-1990s, she was invited by Black Liberation Movement leader Kwame Ture to film his public and the behind-the-scenes activities. In the last year, she has documented the historic Church of the Advocate in Art of the Advocate and produced *At the Wall*, a film about the stories of people who struggled against racial injustice, clashing daily with Frank Rizzo's police force during the 14-year battle to integrate North Philadelphia's Girard College. Currently, Zilan is working on *Tsunami Stories*, a film about the 44,000 Sri Lankans who lost their lives, the 900,000 Sri Lankans who lost their livelihood, houses, parents, spouses, and children, and the international relief effort that barely addressed the problem. Because of her ability to speak the three main languages of Sri Lanka, and because she is a Muslim woman, Zilan is able to get stories and footage most other filmmakers are unable to access. In addition to raising money for tsunami relief, this documentary aims to make people in the United States aware of international poverty, neglect, and the everyday reality of Sri Lankan people.

Transformation Award Review Panel

Aishah Shahidah Simmons is an award-winning African-American feminist lesbian documentary filmmaker, international lecturer, published writer, and activist who uses the moving image, written and spoken word to advocate for left-of-center, radical progressive social change. A native Philadelphian, she spent eleven years, seven of which were fulltime, to produce, write, and direct *NO!*, a feature length documentary which unveils the reality of rape, other forms of sexual violence and healing in African-American communities. *NO!* received an audience award and a juried award at the 2006 San Diego Women Film Festival. Her previously completed videos *Silence...Broken* and *In My Father's House*, explore the issues of race, gender, and sexuality from a Black feminist lesbian perspective. Aishah is the recipient of numerous grants and awards including the 2006 DC Rape Crisis Center's Visionary Award; a 2006 major grant from the Ford Foundation to support the international educational marketing and distribution of *NO!*; the 2006 National Award for Outstanding Response to and Prevention of Sexual Violence from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center; Leeway Foundation's 2005 Transformation Award; a 2005 Artist-in-Residency at Spelman College's Digital Moving Image Salon.

Marian Yalini Thambynayagam is a Queer Sri Lankan Tamil British-born American-raised woman living in Brooklyn by way of Texas. Marian's work centers on interdisciplinary collaboration. With Mango Tribe and other performance groups she works to create non-competitive spaces for marginalized communities to claim their voices, bodies, and stories using performance. Through experimental collective collaboration, she seeks to build artistic work that reflects the strength of communities while cherishing difference. She is interim Artistic Director of much-

lauded APIA Women's performance group Mango Tribe with whom she also writes and performs. She was director of Mango Tribe's New York City run of Sisters in the Smoke and the Creation Myth Project (of which she also facilitated the writing and development). In addition, she was the Movement Director for Descendants of Freedom: A Futuristic Queer Hip-hop Odyssey. She is a volunteer with the SOS Collective at the Audre Lorde Project. Marian also engages in subway spectacle and street theater to address issues of violence, war, and exploitation. As a youth worker, Marian has worked with Freedom Academy High School in Brooklyn, Youth Solidarity Summer, and the Asian Arts Initiative's Youth Arts Workshop.

Max Toth is a national organizer for United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS). His focus is student solidarity with campus workers through living wage campaigns, support for union-organizing drives, and general support for increasing union strength on campus. Max is passionate about sharing the concrete victories students are forging for workers' rights, from the food service workers in the cafeterias to sweatshops around the world. With prior work experience in web development and graphic design, he spends his days finding ways to consciously develop appealing and culturally relevant ways to communicate campaign and social justice messages. Prior to his work at USAS, he spent four years doing local anti-racist, community-based organizing work with groups in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the rare occasions of his free time, he enjoys drawing cartoons and trying to transfer his political work into engaging visuals. Max identifies as a 30-year-old white FTM transgendered person.

Trishala Deb (LTA Stage 2 Facilitator) has worked as a service provider and community organizer in North Carolina, Georgia, and New York City. Her work has focused on welfare rights, domestic violence, building progressive spaces within the South Asian community, as well as immigrant, women's, and LGBT rights. She is currently working for The Audre Lorde Project, a community organizing center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, two spirit, trans, and gender non-conforming people of color in New York City. She is a steering committee member of the South Asian Lesbian Gay Association and a member of the Community Birthing Project, a local collective of doulas of color.

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Art Sanctuary, located in North Philadelphia, uses the power of black art to transform individuals, unite groups of people, and enrich, and draw inspiration from the inner city. We invite established and aspiring artists to help create excellent lectures, performances, and educational programs.

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1801 West Diamond Street
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p 215.232.4485
f 215.232.4088
email: info@artsanctuary.org
website: www.artsanctuary.org

Asian Arts Initiative

The Asian Arts Initiative is grounded in the belief that the arts can provide an important political and cultural voice for the Asian American community in Philadelphia. We serve as a community arts center where artists and everyday people are developing means to express our diverse experiences as Asian Americans.

105 North Watts Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
p 215.557.0455
f 215.557.0457
email: info@asianartsinitiative.org
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Community Education Center

The Community Education Center is a non-profit, community based arts and education center whose mission is to strengthen the sense of shared community and culture among peoples of differing backgrounds and cultures through the arts.

3500 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104
p 215.387.1911
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website: www.cecarts.org

Painted Bride Art Center

The Painted Bride Art Center collaborates with emerging and established artists to create, produce and present innovative work that affirms the intrinsic value of all cultures and celebrates the transformative power of the arts. Through performances and exhibitions, education and outreach, the Bride creates a forum for engagement centered on contemporary social issues.

230 Vine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
p 215.925.9914
f 215.925.7402
email: info@paintedbride.org
website: www.paintedbride.org

Philadelphia Folklore Project

"Folklore means something different to everyone - as it should, since it is one of the chief means we have to represent our own realities in the face of powerful institutions. Here at the Philadelphia Folklore Project, we are committed to paying attention to the experiences and traditions of "ordinary" people. Our focus is on sustaining the diverse folk arts of the greater Philadelphia region." (Excerpted from PFP's website.)

735 South 50th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19143
p 215.726.1106
f 215.726.6250
email: pfp@folkloreproject.org
website: www.folkloreproject.org

Scribe Video Center

Scribe Video Center, a Philadelphia-based non-profit organization, was founded in 1982 as a place where people could work together and gain skills in media making. Scribe Video Center seeks to explore, develop and advance the use of video as an artistic medium and as a tool for progressive social change. "Scribe" is a metaphor for the use of video as a modern medium to record significant contemporary concerns and events.

4212 Chestnut Street
3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104
p 215.222.4201
f 215.222.4205
email: inquiry2@scribe.org
website: www.scribe.org

Taller Puertorriqueño

Taller was created in 1974 as a multidisciplinary community-anchored arts and cultural organization dedicated to the preservation, development and promotion of Puerto Rican arts and culture and to the quality representation of other Latino cultural expressions and our common roots. Taller strives to promote social justice and equality through the work of its main organizational goals. These include: strengthen the Latino community through the arts; serve as an educational vehicle advancing cultural identity and reaffirmation; and to support increased understanding and appreciation of other cultures within the wider community.

2721 North 5th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19133
p 215.426.3311
f 215.426.5682
email: dviacava@tallerpr.org
website: www.tallerpr.org

2006 *Community Partners*

Recipients 2005

Transformation Award

Aishah Shahidah Simmons
Cassandre Xavier
Dao-yuan Chou
Kornassa Bobo
Ione Nash
Iris Brown
Madga Martinez
Marissa Johnson-Valenzuela
Michele Tayoun
Sonia Sanchez
Taina Asili
Valerie Linhart

Art and Change Grant

Antya Thomas
Brandi Jeter
Carmen Rojas
Carol Finkle
Chanté Brown
Christine Duffield
Collette Copeland
Crystal Jacqueline Torres
Dante Toza
Dao-yuan Chou
Deb Shoval
Denise King
Gwynne B. Sigel
Ham'Diya Mu
James Wells
Jaye Allison
Judith Trustone
Julia Elaine Galetti
Laureen Griffin
Maori Karmael Holmes
Maribel Lozada-Arzuaga
Mary Roth
Michelle Ortiz
Misia Denéa
Na Ianyá Daviná Stewart
Nana Korantema
Nancy Bea Miller
Nicole Cousino
Nitza Rosario
Pat McLean-RoShine
Patience Rage
Sandra Andino
Shivaani Selvaraj
Serena Reed
Suzanne Povse
Taina Asili
Tamika A. Jones-Nwalipenja
Tina Norton
Toni Barber
Valerie Harris
Vanessa Julye
Violeta Rivera
Wendy Brown

