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Yerba Buena Center for the Arts launches “Artist Power Center,” an integrated web platform and hotline to connect and support artists nationwide during COVID pandemic and beyond

Launched with support from Zendesk, the initiative will allow for the long-term sharing of resources and opportunities, including grants and emergency relief, to rebuild a thriving creative community



SAN FRANCISCO (May 13, 2020)—[Yerba Buena Center for the Arts \(YBCA\)](#) announced today the creation of the [Artist Power Center](#), a digital platform and hotline to help artists and cultural workers navigate emergency relief and build towards recovery and regeneration. This long-term initiative features customized tools designed to eliminate the challenges of tracking funding opportunities and will serve as a space for artists to organize knowledge, share

resources, and create connections that will strengthen the creative community across the United States.

Already facing structural vulnerabilities before the pandemic, artists are confronting severe financial and social impacts from the COVID crisis. Performances, exhibitions, and classes have been dramatically reduced, as have opportunities for artists working to support community development, public health, and other social services. An April 2020 survey by Americans for the Arts notes that 95% of artists have lost income as a result of the pandemic, while two-thirds face unemployment. Those sheltering alone face unprecedented social isolation and loss of access to peers and collaborators.

In this wake, numerous funders and organizations have created programs to provide emergency aid and support to creative professionals. Recognizing the difficulties of navigating these dispersed and evolving resources, the **Artist Power Center** will serve as a comprehensive portal serving and connecting artists across all practice areas, from performers and writers to painters and photographers, through personalized assistance that will support their long-term needs at no cost.

The **Artist Power Center** will enable artists to explore a continuously updated list of funders and resources based on their unique needs and organized by medium, location, and type of assistance. YBCA staff will also provide daily phone support, Monday through Friday, to individually consult artists as they navigate opportunities and notify them of forthcoming relief funds.

Other features of the **Artist Power Center** include a community forum page that will allow artists and cultural workers to connect on issues of similar interest and share their direct learnings in navigating professional opportunities. YBCA will also curate webinars developed by peer organizations across the country on how to apply for various programs.

The use of Zendesk, employed by global companies like Vimeo and Squarespace, represents a major milestone in the digital infrastructure available for artist services. In aggregating applicant and funder behaviors, the **Artist Power Center** will enable analytics that offer a richer understanding of the socioeconomic issues facing artists and how funding organizations can better structure their giving and support.

“COVID-19 has made clear that many of our economic and political systems were already in need of reimagining,” said **YBCA CEO Deborah Cullinan**. “As we work to rebuild a more just and inclusive world, we will need creativity and imagination at the forefront, driving social progress and policy change. The **Artist Power Center** will allow us to collaborate and support artists nationwide and develop a more informed understanding of the challenges they face.”

“Put yourself in the shoes of an artist who has just lost a significant amount of work. That’s overwhelming enough. Now add hours and hours of grant and relief fund research on top of that. It’s just too much,” said **Meklit Hadero, YBCA’s Chief of Program**. “The Artist Power Center is here so folks can connect with real people standing ready to assist. We will support

members of our creative community in cultivating their own power as we work together to reshape the broader landscape for cultural workers.”

The **Artist Power Center** is made possible by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies, whose generous support funded the project's research and development. The launch of the Artist Power Center is supported by a 6-month grant from Zendesk as part of its COVID-19 response efforts

ABOUT THE ARTIST POWER CENTER

The [Artist Power Center](#) is a digital platform to help artists and cultural workers navigate emergency relief and sustain long-term careers. Powered by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the platform allows artists to organize knowledge, exchange resources and opportunities, share their stories, and create connections that will strengthen the creative community across the United States.

The Artist Power Center includes a funding database of continually updated opportunities, a hotline offering personalized guidance navigating grant and professional support, and a discussion forum for artists to share experiences and build networks.

All services are available at no cost and can be accessed via phone, chat, SMS, or email. Starting on May 12th, phone support will be offered in both English and Spanish, Monday through Friday from 10am-6pm PST.

ABOUT THE YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is one of the nation's most innovative contemporary arts centers. Founded in 1993, YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, YBCA is committed to creating an inclusive culture that awakens personal and societal transformation. YBCA presents a wide variety of programming year-round, including performing arts, visual arts, and civic engagement. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787). For more information, visit ybca.org.

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