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San Francisco Bay Area Arts Organizations Announce the Creative Communities Coalition, a \$1.3M Guaranteed Income Program for Artists

18-month program to disburse monthly direct cash payments to sixty artists

San Francisco, June 28, 2022 – Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is proud to announce the **Creative Communities Coalition for Guaranteed Income (CCCGI)**—a new initiative convened by YBCA and led by six San Francisco arts and culture organizations dedicated to economic justice: Black Freighter Press, Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco (CCCSF), The Transgender District, Dance Mission Theater, Galeria de la Raza, and the San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company (SFBATCO). The community-led initiative, funded by Jack Dorsey’s #StartSmall Foundation and Mackenzie Scott, implements a \$1.3 million, 18-month guaranteed income program focused on San Francisco artists grappling with the harms of structural racism, displacement, and inequity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the San Francisco Guaranteed Income Pilot for Artists (SF-GIPA) launched in May 2021, CCCGI is part of #StartSmall’s \$3.5 million larger investment to expand YBCA’s guaranteed income work with and for artists. Through a coalition-led effort, sixty San Francisco-based artists will receive an unrestricted \$1,000 per month. The first payments began in October 2021, with the program expanding over subsequent months to encompass all sixty artist participants.

“This work is about demonstrating the immense impact that comes from artist-designed and -led sustainable economic investment models,” said **Stephanie Imah, Director of Artist Investment at YBCA**. “Artists—including the brilliant community leaders driving this coalition work—are uniquely equipped to interrogate our hardest challenges with creativity and curiosity.”

Guaranteed income programs demonstrably improve lives, as many successful pilot programs across the country have already illustrated. CCCGI will contribute to the growing body of evidence, along with artist-centered pilots in New York, Minnesota, and Ireland, that unconditional

cash builds what one program participant refers to as “breathing room”—allowing artists to sustain colleagues and each other, meet loved ones for the first time, and continue to uplift and unite their communities.

Guided by a commitment to equity and justice, this coalition-led guaranteed income program creates a pathway to economic security for artists in communities typically overlooked and underserved by traditional funding sources—namely, artists of color; immigrant, refugee, non-english speaking, and undocumented artists; queer and trans artists; sex working artists; artists in communities grappling with overpolicing and the carceral system; housing insecure and unhoused artists; and senior and youth artists.

“Structural racism, not individual decisions, is a root cause of economic inequality and poverty,” said **Jenny Leung, Executive Director of CCCSF**. “Guaranteed income and other trust-based investments address inequity by challenging entrenched, racist narratives of worth and deservedness. In that spirit, this Coalition’s work exemplifies a simple call to action: Trust Artists. Trust Community. Trust People.”

In addition to advocating for artists’ guaranteed income, the Coalition calls for a pivot away from merit-based arts funding and, instead, toward economic models that unconditionally trust people to make the best decisions for themselves and their families—ultimately placing artists and community at the helm of sustainable investment strategy.

ABOUT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Opened to the public in 1993, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is San Francisco’s center for art and progress. By centering artists as essential to social and cultural movement, YBCA is reimagining the role an arts institution can play in the community it serves. Our mission is to generate culture that moves people.

ABOUT CREATIVE COMMUNITIES COALITION MEMBERS

About Black Freighter Press

Black Freighter Press publishes revolutionary books. We are committed to the exploration of liberation, using art to transform consciousness. A platform for Black and Brown writers to honor ancestry and propel radical imagination.

About Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco

Chinese Culture Center (CCC) is a non-profit arts organization established in 1965. A cultural pillar in San Francisco’s Chinatown, CCC elevates underserved communities and gives voice to equality through education and contemporary art. By providing a safe environment for artists who

champion activism, resiliency, and healthy communities, we shift dominant narratives, empower change, and reimagine our futures.

About The Transgender District

The Transgender District is the first legally recognized transgender district in the world. We are leading the way to provide innovative solutions for our community, creating an atmosphere that celebrates and affirms the ongoing presence, resilience, contributions, and culture of transgender people, and creating safe spaces for trans people that inspire economic advancement, leadership development and community.

About Dance Mission Theater

Dance Mission Theater is an artist driven space dedicated to inclusiveness, fairness, and justice located in the heart of SF's Mission District. We create, produce, present, and teach feminist and multicultural dance/theater, engaging a diverse group of Bay Area artists, audiences, and students. Many women, queer, racially mixed, and culturally specific ensembles consider Dance Mission Theater their artistic home, creating a thriving inter-generational community. Dance Mission Theater is also the home to Krissy Keefer's Dance Brigade, San Francisco's groundbreaking, social-change dance company and Grrrl Brigade, Dance Brigade's youth leadership dance company. www.dancemissiontheater.org.

About Galería de la Raza

Founded in 1970, Galería de la Raza | Studio 24 is a non-profit dedicated to promoting Xicanx/Latinx art and culture. Our "creative place keeping" ethos is rooted in social inclusion and justice, where community arts are central to navigating the complex intersection of urban development, social inequality, affordable housing, and the historical-cultural legacies of communities of color. To implement our mission, the Galería supports Latinx artists in the visual, literary, media, and performing art fields whose works explore new aesthetic possibilities for socially committed art.

About San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company

San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company (SFBATCO) unites artists and audiences through live theatre that is reflective of the authentic perspective and history of the San Francisco Bay Area. Our non-profit organization supports artists through creative development, full productions, and mentorship that aspire to engage a new generation of live theatre supporters.

ABOUT #STARTSMALL

#StartSmall is Jack Dorsey's philanthropic initiative to fund global crisis relief, girls health and education, and efforts towards Universal Basic Income. Dorsey transferred \$1 billion (28% of his wealth) to #StartSmall in 2020.

ABOUT Mackenzie Scott

Novelist and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott committed to donating at least half of her wealth after receiving a 4% stake in Amazon in 2019 during her divorce from Jeff Bezos. In 2021, MacKenzie Scott distributed a round of grant funding worth \$2.7 billion to 286 arts, social justice and higher education organizations, including many nonprofits in the Bay Area where she was born and raised.

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