

1. Description of proposed project or activities

We are seeking support from Cal Humanities to implement ten programmatic events and two participatory activities as part of a major exhibition at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH), *We Who Work*, running from March to June of 2017.

We Who Work is an interdisciplinary exhibition that features historical artifacts of labor from the MAH's collection, objects and stories from contemporary laborers in Santa Cruz County, and tapestries and prints by internationally-acclaimed Chinese-American artist Hung Liu rooted in historical images of Chinese women at work. Participants will explore the following questions: How does labor shape our experiences - past, present, and future - as individuals and as societies? What is and what is not considered work? How does work liberate, connect, or occupy us? How have women been treated in the workforce? How does labor inspire or inhibit civic participation?

This project is a collaboration between the MAH, Hung Liu, and two local labor organizations:

- UC Santa Cruz Center for Labor Studies, led by sociologist Dr. Steve McKay, via the Working Families Project, in partnership with California Rural Legal Assistance and the UC Santa Cruz Chicano Latino Research Center
- The Day Workers Center of Santa Cruz County, which facilitates humane access to day labor

The Cal Humanities Quick Grant would:

- **Expand public participation** through 10 lectures, workshops, and community festivals.
- Invite **diverse perspectives** into the dialogue by collecting objects and stories from local laborers.
- Invite visitors to share their own stories of labor, reflect upon labor's impact on our community, and **empathize with one another** through dialogue through an in-gallery activity.

There are two targeted beneficiaries of this project who will have easy and affordable access to the exhibitions and programs (70% of visitors attend free, two festivals and daily admission is \$5):

- **Laborers and their families**, who will experience empowerment and agency as collaborators, sharing their objects and stories in the exhibition and through events.
- **The general public**. We expect 15,000 visitors over the run of the project, 90% being Santa Cruz County residents, reflecting the full age, income, and racial diversity of our county.

This project will have the highest level of promotion and publicity afforded to projects at the MAH. This includes frequent email communication to a regional email and Facebook list of 10,000+ MAH subscribers, print coverage in the quarterly MAH member newsletter (2,000 households), postcards and flyers distributed across the county, and press releases to the greater San Francisco Bay Area. The UCSC Center for Labor Studies will engage their extensive network of labor leaders and changemakers as well.

2. Objectives and desired outcomes

Our institutional goal is to ignite shared experiences and create unexpected connections that strengthen our community. For this project, labor is the central, driving theme that will allow us to accomplish that.

Our objectives are:

- **To empower 1,000 laborers**, 50 as artistic collaborators and 950+ as participants, in Santa Cruz County, over the course of three months and at least ten community events. The UC Santa Cruz study on low-wage work demonstrated that low-wage workers feel oppressed and invisible in our community. Sharing objects and stories in a professional museum gives voice and pride to people who feel voiceless.

- To invite **15,000 visitors to build social capital** together through awareness and empathy for people and experiences that are unfamiliar to them. Participants will bond and bridge over the ways labor affects us differently based on age, gender, ethnicity, geography, and politics.
- To **spark unexpected connections** between art, history, ethnicity, and politics. By pairing Hung Liu's gorgeous artwork with the everyday objects and stories of laborers past and present, we invite visitors into unexpected dialogues, provocative conversations, and new connections.

The MAH evaluates the efficacy of its projects in two ways:

- **Volume and diversity of audience.** We aim to engage 15,000 Californians who reflect the diversity of our County. The MAH also measures attendance and audience demographics (age, race/ethnicity, zip code, household income).
- **Quality of collaborators' and visitors' experiences** via regular surveys. Collaborator surveys will measure feelings of increased civic/creative agency (empowerment) and new relationships to support individual goals (bridging). Visitor surveys will measure feelings of empathy/new connections to laborers (bridging).

3. Capacity

The mission of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History is to ignite shared experiences and unexpected connections through art and history, towards an ultimate vision of building a stronger, more connected community. The MAH will lead this collaborative project and has a strong track record for developing co-creative exhibitions and interactive programs that spark diverse audiences' interest in the humanities. We produce eight temporary exhibitions and 100 community events for 50,000+ diverse local participants every year. We believe in the power of collaboration and have built an extensive network of countywide partnerships including academic institutions, civic bodies, and community organizations.

Key project staff and lead partners will include:

- **Project Director - Stacey Marie Garcia, Director of Community Engagement of the MAH:** Ms. Garcia will lead the design and execution of the exhibition and related programmatic activities. She holds a Masters in International Museum Studies from the University of Göteborg and has extensive experience leading community art installations, exhibitions, and programs.
- **Executive Director of the MAH, Nina Simon.** Ms. Simon will ensure the success of this project. Ms. Simon is an internationally-recognized expert on audience participation in museums and arts institutions who has led the MAH for the past five years.
- **The Center for Labor Studies at UC Santa Cruz** and their Director, **Dr. Steve McKay**, will serve as the humanities expert and lead partner in involving contemporary laborers. The CLS is dedicated to the study of working people, the labor movement, and the challenge of the broader global economy as it impacts the working people of California. Frequent partners of the MAH, Dr. McKay and his team are excited to bring their expertise and connections to this project.
- The **Day Worker Center in Santa Cruz County**, led by **Mireya Gomez-Contreras**, will ensure that day laborers are empowered as partners in this project, and that their families are invited to celebrate their contributions to the community as visitors and program participants.

The Santa Cruz MAH is requesting a \$5,000 grant from Cal Humanities to support *We Who Work*, the total budget of which is \$27,655. The MAH will allocate unrestricted funds from museum memberships (\$110,000 per year), admissions fees (\$20,000 per year), and our annual contract with the County of Santa Cruz (\$153,964) to fund the remaining \$22,655 project budget.