



California Humanities Awards \$575k to 18 Projects for California Documentary Projects for Production, Research & Development

For Immediate Release

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April 20, 2023— (Oakland, CA)— California Humanities is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 California Documentary Project (CDP) grants, awarding \$575,000 to 18 new film, audio, and interactive media productions that document California in all its complexity.

This year, 13 CDP Production Grants and five Research and Development Grants will support nonfiction films and podcasts that tell essential and timely California stories from around the state. Projects include documentaries on the “godfather of Chicano theater and film,” Luis Valdez, Dalip Singh Saund’s 1956 congressional campaign to become the first Asian American member of the U.S. Congress, and veteran Marines struggling to return to civilian life after losing a fellow soldier in Afghanistan, as well as audio-based projects exploring California’s stuttering community and the changing concept of “wilderness” across the state’s public lands.

The California Documentary Project (CDP) is a competitive grant program that supports nonfiction media productions exploring California subjects and issues; use the humanities to provide context, depth, and perspective; and reach and engage broad audiences through multiple means, including radio and television broadcasts, podcasts, at community screenings and discussions, in classrooms and libraries, at film festivals, and beyond. Since 2003, we have awarded over \$7.5 million to media projects that help us better understand who we are and where we live.

For over 40 years, California Humanities has been the leading funder of documentaries by, for, and about Californians. The 18 new CDP-supported projects for 2023 continue this important tradition of bringing essential California stories to both statewide and national audiences.

“We are pleased to offer support to these impressive applicants,” said California Humanities President & CEO Julie Fry. “This talented group of storytellers will shine a light on a broad range of topics, approaches, and perspectives, particularly California’s rich history of art and culture and the people that have contributed to that legacy both in their own communities and across borders.”

California Documentary Projects Awarded in 2023

CDP Production Grants

CDP Production Grants up to \$50,000 are designed to strengthen the humanities content and approach of documentary media productions and help propel projects toward completion.

ACTING LIKE WOMEN

Project Director: Cheri Gaulke

Applicant Organization: Women Make Movies Inc

This feature-length film documents the stories of 1970s-80s Southern California feminist artists, directed by an artist who was there as a participant in the scene. This project received a CDP R&D grant in 2019.

ADELANTE

Project Director: David Alvarado

Applicant Organization: Arise Media Inc

A 90-minute documentary film about the “godfather of Chicano theater and film,” Luis Valdez, and his use of storytelling as a force for social justice.

AMERICAN SONS

Project Director: Andrew Gonzales

Applicant Organization: From the Heart Productions, Inc.

AMERICAN SONS is a journey towards healing from the trauma of war through reconnection and profound love for a Marine brotherhood and a Gold Star Family.

BEYOND SALINAS

Project Director: Laura Pacheco

Applicant Organization: International Documentary Association

BEYOND SALINAS revisits and updates the life and educational experiences of an undocumented youth ten years after he was the main character in a 2015 PBS documentary, EAST OF SALINAS.

THE CHAPLAIN OF OAKLAND

Project Director: Jessica Zitter

Applicant Organization: Reel Medicine Media

A film following 78-year-old Chaplain Betty Clark as she cares for the old, the ill, and the dying at Oakland's public Highland Hospital, shining light on a health care system that has historically neglected patients of color.

JULIA VINOGRAD: BETWEEN SPIRIT AND STONE

Project Director: Ken Paul Rosenthal

Applicant Organization: Center for Independent Documentary Inc

This one-hour documentary about Berkeley street poet Julia Vinograd is a portrait of an outsider literary artist and iconic personality and explores issues of the counterculture, disability, poetry and more.

LOS LOBOS NATIVE SONS

Project Director: Doug Blush

Applicant Organization: Gotham Film and Media Institute

A feature documentary about four-time Grammy winners from East LA, Los Lobos, told through in-depth interviews with band members, their friends, families, and fellow musicians.

PROUD STUTTER: BRINGING UNHEARD STORIES OF PEOPLE WHO STUTTER IN CALIFORNIA TO THE MAINSTREAM

Project Director: Maya Chupkov

Applicant Organization: Independent Arts & Media

As part of the third season of the series *Proud Stutter*, this documentary podcast expands on the often-misunderstood stuttering experience through authentic, research-based storytelling, that focuses on the past, present, and future of the stuttering community in California.

REIMAGINING WILDERNESS

Project Director: Marissa Ortega-Welch

Applicant Organization: KALW Public Media Inc

In the seven-episode first season of the *Reimagining Wilderness* podcast, listeners will visit public lands to explore the concept of “wilderness,” its history, how it’s changing, and how the stories we tell about wilderness say more about us than the land. This project previously received a CDP R&D grant.

RETURNING TO THE "HARLEM OF THE WEST"? JAPANESE AMERICAN RESETTLEMENT IN THE FILLMORE DISTRICT

Project Director: Katy Long

Applicant Organization: Independent Arts & Media

This immersive audio tour, enhanced with augmented-reality, soundscapes, and pop-up physical exhibits, tells the story of Japanese Americans’ return after incarceration during World War II to a radically altered Japantown in San Francisco, now also home to thousands of newly arrived Black American migrants.

SAUND VS COCHRAN

Project Director: Mridu Chandra

Applicant Organization: Gotham Film and Media Institute

SAUND vs COCHRAN is a documentary about Dalip Singh Saund’s 1956 congressional campaign against aviatrix Jackie Cochran Odlum in California’s 29th District, making him the first-ever Asian American member of U.S. Congress. This project received CDP R&D funding in 2022.

TO BE

Project Director: Tony Nguyen

Applicant Organization: Farallon Documentary Films Inc

This 60-minute personal film explores the legacy of the Vietnam War on displaced families as filmmaker Tony Nguyen seeks to solve the mystery of locating his father amid the chaos of fleeing Vietnam as refugees.

WHO THE HELL IS JOHNNY OTIS?

Project Director: David Zeiger

Applicant Organization: Film Independent Inc

This 90-minute film tells the story of musician, promotor, and civil rights activist Johnny Otis, a child of Greek immigrants who closely identified and aligned with African American culture and community.

CDP Research & Development Grants

CDP Research and Development Grants up to \$15,000 are designed to strengthen the humanities content and approach of documentary media productions in their earliest stages.

CASE CLOSED: INVESTIGATIONS IN THE ARCHIVES

Project Director: Nathan Masters

Applicant Organization: University of Southern California

A podcast series exploring the records of three prominent investigations from California history through never-before-heard tapes and original interviews with archivists who care for and scholars who interpret these invaluable collections.

FAR EAST L.A.

Project Director: Rubén Guevara III

Applicant Organization: Visual Communications

This documentary series of short films will capture the overlap in culture, community, and diversity of two Los Angeles neighborhoods, Little Tokyo and Boyle Heights.

LOOKING AT OURSELVES

Project Director: Lourdes Portillo

Applicant Organization: Good Picture Inc

An hour-long hybrid film that is part experimental documentary and part investigative journalism reflecting on the lives and experiences of two immigrant artists, filmmaker Lourdes Portillo and performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

THE INVINCIBLE MR. HONG

Project Director: Kimmie Kim

Applicant Organization: Film Independent Inc

A documentary about arguably the world's most prolific actor, James Hong, with more than 650 credits to his name on stage and screen, often as the face of caricatures that shape American perceptions of Asians for generations, from sinister warlords to Charlie Chan's #1 Son.

PARACHUTE KIDS**Project Director: Sungchang Leo Chiang****Applicant Organization: Walking Iris Media**

A feature-length, first-person essay film exploring filmmaker Leo Chang's experience as an unaccompanied minor who moved to the US from Taiwan through an unusual and on-going East Asian immigration practice.

Learn more about the California Documentary Project Grant Program [here](#).

About California Humanities:

California Humanities, a nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, promotes the humanities—focused on ideas, conversation and learning—as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect people to each other in order to help strengthen California. California Humanities has provided grants and programs across the state since 1975. To learn more, visit calhum.org, or like and follow on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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