



11 New Humanities for All Project Grants Receive \$270,000 to Explore Public Health, LGBTQ+ History, Food Cultures, and Placekeeping Across the State

Projects supported through Humanities for All Project Grants

For Immediate Release

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June 5, 2023—(Oakland, CA)—California Humanities is proud to announce its latest Humanities for All Project Grant awards totaling \$270,000 to 11 nonprofit organizations and public agencies across the state. Over the next two years, these grants will support ambitious and innovative projects that will use the humanities to provide insights on a diverse array of topics, including the little-known history of African American country music, Two-Spirit and indigenous ways of being, and the lived experiences of people who are homeless or unhoused.

Projects will take many forms, including interpretive exhibits (physical and digital), discussions, festivals, residencies, film screenings, art-making, and other activities. All will aim to promote intercultural, and intergenerational understanding and reach new, underserved, and established audiences.

As well as engaging people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, several projects will focus on humanities-based learning around the topics of housing and homelessness. For example, *Stories of CREED in Action*, conducted in partnership with the San Diego Public Library and Playwrights Project, will provide two playwriting residencies for clients of social service agency Fr. Joe's Villages to create plays based on their experiences with homelessness. The project *Welcome to the Covid Hotel*, presented by the Los Angeles Poverty Department at the Skid Row History Museum and Archive in downtown LA, will use an immersive multimedia exhibit, performance piece, and community conversations to memorialize and share the experiences of front-line healthcare workers and their unhoused patients during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Other projects will celebrate cultural and local history through regional festivals. The *150th Anniversary Roadshow* led by the County of Ventura, will offer a series of free public arts and culture programs in each of the County's five supervisorial districts, each featuring storytelling and reenactments about regional history, cultural performances, art-making workshops, oral

history activities, and poetry readings by local youth. And coinciding with the 2024 National Queer Arts Festival in the Bay Area, *Eyoomkuuka'ro Kokomaar (We Paddle Together)* will convene 17 California Indigenous culture-bearers and allies to revive cultural ways of being, including the creation of a ti'aat, or traditional plank-built boat used by the Tongva and Chumash (tomol) peoples from present-day Santa Barbara to Los Angeles.

“We are thrilled that this new round of Humanities for All Project Grant recipients will bring humanities programming to new audiences across the state,” said President & CEO Rick Noguchi. “These projects will not only share county-wide stories of cultural life through the lens of topics such as music and art, but they will also spotlight the community impacts of important social issues such as living with homelessness and with disabilities.”

Projects Awarded Spring 2023

70 Years as ONE: A Queer History Festival

ONE Archives Foundation, Los Angeles

Tony Valenzuela, Project Director

The oldest active LGBTQ+ organization in the United States, ONE Archives Foundation (ONE) will commemorate its upcoming anniversary this October with *70 Years as ONE: A Queer History Festival*, a community-co-produced festival that will take place during LGBTQ+ History Month. Humanities advisors and a Steering Committee will guide festival development, including the selection of presenting partner organizations from LA's LGBTQ+ community. An estimated 6,000 artists, students, educators, activists, and creative professionals will attend the Festival, which will feature 20-30 screenings, discussions, readings, exhibitions, and other events that will activate neighborhoods across Los Angeles County. Other offerings will be a guest-curated and community-guided collection highlights exhibition featuring objects and documents from the ONE Archives at the University of Southern California Libraries, which represents the largest repository of LGBTQ+ materials in the world. A micro-website will feature digital-only programming and facilitate broad and diverse participation. The Festival will offer varied perspectives on the forces, events, and people who have shaped LGBTQ+ history and contemporary culture with an emphasis on reaching communities with a dearth of LGBTQ+-centered programming and providing meaningful representation of historically underrepresented groups.

Culinary Connections

Southern California Public Radio, Pasadena, Los Angeles County

Rebecca Stumme, Project Director

Culinary Connections is a food-focused live event series from Southern California Public Radio (LAist/KPCC/LAist Studios) that will connect audiences to the culture, history, people, and neighborhoods that make up greater Los Angeles. These programs will shine a light on the region's distinctive food cultures and explore the potential food provides to serve as a powerful connector, bringing people together and promoting greater cultural understanding. Each in-person event will offer Angelenos good food and lively conversation exploring a range of topics (e.g. eating local, food deserts and accessibility to healthy food, skill sharing, entrepreneurship)

with guest panelists across the culinary landscape – from celebrated chefs and food industry insiders to regional independent favorites and food justice leaders. Partners will include organizations (Across Our Kitchen Tables) and shows/podcasts (American Public Media’s “The Splendid Table,” LAist Studios’ “How To LA”), and local restaurateurs. Program audio and video will be captured for wider distribution. *Culinary Connections* will consider the present and future of food through thoughtful dialogue that is accessible and relevant to local communities, particularly women and BIPOC creators and influencers, exemplifying the station’s public service mission to inform and better reflect the region by reaching new audiences and telling a more inclusive story of LA.

County of Ventura 150th Anniversary Roadshow Event Series

County of Ventura, Ventura

David Yoshitomi, Project Director

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of its founding, the County of Ventura has organized a county-wide celebration of its rich multicultural history and aspirations for a bright future. Organized around the theme “Our History, Our Future, Together,” the *150th Anniversary Roadshow* will offer a series of free public arts and culture programs in each of the county’s five supervisorial districts, each featuring storytelling and reenactments about regional history, cultural performances, art-making workshops, oral history activities, and poetry readings by local youth. Stories collected from residents will be archived and shared through a dedicated website that will provide a lasting archive of local knowledge and serve as a capstone to the project, which will conclude in spring 2025. A collaborative effort involving the County of Ventura, Museum of Ventura County, the Ventura County Arts Council, and other community partners, the project aims to explore history in an inclusive manner, foster greater understanding and awareness of the diverse communities that live in the region, promote civic engagement, particularly among youth, and inspire ongoing discussions and conversations about the region’s future.

Crip’d Ecologies: Unfurling Expanded Environments

Root Division, San Francisco

Michelle Mansour, Project Director

Through a six-week exhibition, a series of hybrid (online and in person) workshops, a two-day convening, and a full-color publication—all featuring and led by disabled artists, organizers, and experts, *Crip’d Ecologies: Unfurling Expanded Environments* will make visible the Bay Area’s vibrant disability communities, cultures, and creatives and make room for more accessible and inclusive art and environmental cultures. A multi-component project centering d/Deaf, Disabled, Ill, Blind and Mad artists whose practices insist that equity and sustainability for all bodies be built into our futures, *Crip’d Ecologies* will explore overlapping ecological crises: climate change; racial, housing, and healthcare inequities; and environmental destruction. The work of the featured artists often takes the form of cultural critique, articulating the need for collectivism, support and knowledge-sharing, while also resisting narratives of individual healing or ecological utopia, critiques that are central to Disability Justice and cultures. “Access intimacy” will be considered through each form of programming, inviting non-disabled and

disabled participants alike to model and experience accessible environmental and art cultures and practices to broaden the definition of natural spaces to realize disability ecologies within the California ecosystem.

‘Eyoomkuuka’ro Kokomaar (We Paddle Together)

QCC-The Center for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Art & Culture, San Francisco

L. Frank Manriquez, Project Director

‘Eyoomkuuka’ro Kokomaar (We Paddle Together) is a Two-Spirit centered collaboration between L. Frank Manriquez, the Queer Cultural Center, and Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits (BAAITS), who are convening with 17 California Indigenous culture-bearers and allies to revive cultural ways of being. The project will create a ti’aat or traditional plank-built boat, the fourth ever created in the past 250 years. Ti’aat are a key symbol of Indigenous cultural renewal in California, used by the Tongva and Chumash (tomol) peoples from present-day Santa Barbara to Los Angeles. Termed “a moving village” by the Project Director, this multicultural, multilingual, intergenerational humanities project will facilitate weekly participatory activities, technical training in building the canoe, Two-Spirit Powwows, lead-up, launch, and post-ceremony events aimed to spark new understandings of history shared by First Nation, Two-Spirit, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, Latinx, Filipino, Pacific Islander, and African diasporic communities. The public-culminating launch ceremony, will take place at an accessible site – The National Parks Service Aquatic Park in San Francisco/Ohlone land— and will coincide with the 2024 National Queer Arts Festival. Ultimately, the project aims to celebrate, to share, to dialogue and break bread - creating “canoes not built in 200 years, and reviving languages not spoken in 100 years.”

Redwood Time

Larry Spring Museum, Fort Bragg, Mendocino County

Anne-Maureen McKeating, Project Director

Redwood Time is a series of locally-initiated humanities projects that will take place in Mendocino and Humboldt Counties over 2023 and 2024, focused on a monumental Redwood round that has long been a landmark in Fort Bragg’s downtown. For many years, the marker has functioned to educate residents and visitors about history in a ‘relatable’ way, but one that privileges linear time as the driver of history and naturalizes Euro- and human-centric cultural achievements as the default approach to an understanding of the present. This project will invite reexamination of these ideas by considering the round as an encyclopedia with deep time origins that holds histories, legends, and timescales that, along with stories about the varied ecosystems and species that have been and continue to be lost to the extraction economy —which includes the very tree from which the round was taken — have been previously overlooked. These alternative perspectives will be explored through collaborative community input and activities that will include discussions, presentations, workshops, and arts-based activities. Aiming to engage audiences and participants from the region’s diverse communities, the project will elicit the voices of people from different generations, classes, cultures, and abilities, and contribute to a fuller understanding of place for residents and visitors alike.

Schlitzie: Alive and Inside the Decaying Sideshow
Rogue Artist Ensemble, Sun Valley, Los Angeles County
Sean Cawelti, Project Director

Premiering in summer 2023, *Schlitzie* will provide an immersive theatrical experience challenging preconceived notions and bringing new understandings to light about the sideshow theatrical form and its community of artists, many of whom, like the subject of the work, were disabled. Based on extensive research into the history of the sideshow, interviews with sideshow artists as well as scholars, the production will use physical performance, interactive sets, multiple puppetry traditions, projected media, and a sophisticated sound design to transport the audience back in time to 1920s Los Angeles. Broken into small groups, audiences will participate in storytelling forms providing high degrees of agency and improvised conversations with the characters they encounter that will support learning and sharing of ideas and perspectives across a wide range of topics and issues including disability rights, representation, and inclusion. Disability community advisors have been involved in developing the production, which will feature a cast comprised of over 40 artists of whom at least 50% will identify as BIPOC, disabled, or LGBTQ. Community partners, including the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC), which will host performances as well as puppetry and other artistic workshops for local youth, will ensure the participation of new as well as established audiences, as well as people interested in disability rights, circus arts, and the rich cultural heritage of the region's entertainment industry.

Stories from Our AAPI Elders: Connecting Generations and Communities
Possibility Labs (fiscal sponsor for Cut Fruit Collective), San Francisco
Daphne Wu, Project Director

Aiming to foster intergeneration connections within Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in the Bay Area, this "placekeeping" project will infuse humanities activities into four AAPI cultural celebrations in the Bay Area over a two-year period, connecting elders with younger generations through live events and web-based programs during 2024 and 2025. Four discussion-based events held in conjunction with established community celebrations will enable elders residing in San Francisco and Oakland Chinatowns, and San Francisco's Japantown, SOMA Pilipinas, and Koreatown to share their life stories and reflect on their experiences within these communities. Art-making programs aimed at engaging millennials and members of Gen Z, organized in partnership with cultural or direct service organizations in Bay Area AAPI community neighborhoods, will provide opportunities for younger people to reflect on elders' stories and respond by creating an essay, comic strip, poem, or zine. Cut Fruit Collective will produce a digital anthology and a traveling exhibition from these products that will be hosted at local AAPI holiday celebrations such as Lunar New Year to document and inspire continuing reflection on the stories and memories shared by the elders.

Stories of CREED in Action
St. Vincent de Paul Village, Inc., San Diego
Aleta Barthell, Project Director

Father Joe's Villages, a downtown San Diego-based social service agency, works to prevent and end homelessness through outcome-based programs anchored in principles of CREED: Compassion, Respect, Empathy, Empowerment and Dignity. This project, *Stories of CREED in Action*, conducted in partnership with the San Diego Public Library and Playwrights Project, will provide two playwriting residencies for the agency's clients that will enable them to create plays based on their experiences with homelessness. Their stories will be brought to the stage through free live performances for the public in the summer of 2024 at the Neil Morgan Auditorium at San Diego Central Library. Project goals are: 1) provide an opportunity for the agency's clients to increase their sense of self-worth by crafting a story based on their own experiences with homelessness, creating a space for healing and a venue to receive validation as they step towards their full potential and 2) increase awareness and empathy among the broader community, including housed neighbors, about the need for affordable and accessible housing for all residents of the East Village of San Diego.

Welcome to the Covid Hotel

Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD), Los Angeles

John Malpede, Project Director

Welcome to the Covid Hotel, presented by the Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) at the Skid Row History Museum and Archive (SRHMA) in downtown LA, is a multi-faceted project to memorialize and share the experiences of front-line healthcare workers and their unhoused patients during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to an immersive multimedia exhibit that will draw upon archival materials, recorded testimonies, and new interviews, the project will create a performance piece based on this history, and host five community conversations that will involve humanities experts, community members, and the healthcare providers in exploring related topics. All events will be free and open to the public with Spanish translation and other accessibility measures to maximize participation. The project will be documented through a publication (print and digital formats) and archived through a website. The project aims to advance understanding, ignite dialogue, and galvanize action to address homelessness and affiliated public health issues – all significant issues facing California, particular as Los Angeles—with nearly 70,000 unhoused individuals—is arguably the epicenter of the chronic housing crisis not only in our state, but in our nation.

Westward Bound: African American Country Music History & Cowboy Lore Berkeley Society for the Preservation of Traditional Music dba Freight & Salvage, Berkeley, Alameda County

Peter Williams, Project Director

In commemoration of his 125th birthday (Dec. 14, 1899), Freight & Salvage will host The DeFord Bailey Legacy Festival over the December 13-15, 2024 weekend. Featuring contemporary African American country music performers from around the country, the festival will honor and celebrate the legacy of this important African American country musician who was the son of enslaved people. *Westward Bound: African American Country Music History & Cowboy Lore* is a companion humanities project that will complement and contextualize the music-performance experiences provided by the festival through precursor and concurrent exhibitions

and displays of related artifacts, panel discussions, storytelling, and a videographic historic rendering. Free programming organized by humanities experts will take place at public libraries and community centers in the East Bay, both before and during the festival, to engage new audiences from historically underserved communities. Through these activities, the project aims to contribute to deepening understanding of this important cultural tradition and foster a greater sense of mutual belonging that will lift collective spirits and support the goal of racial equity.

The California Humanities' Project Grant program, a branch of our Humanities for All competitive grant program, provides funding twice a year for public humanities projects of up to two years duration from the award date. Launched in 2016, the program has made 149 awards, totaling over \$2.75 million. Learn more about the Humanities for All Grant Program [here](#).

California Humanities, a statewide 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](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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