**For Immediate Release**

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**Local Artists and Arts Organizations Awarded Grants from Lane Arts Council**

*$63,800 awarded to artists and arts organizations in Eugene*

**Eugene, OR** - Lane Arts Council announces the recipients of two local grant programs awarding $63,800 to support artists and arts organizations in the Eugene area in 2022.

The [Community Arts Program Grant](http://lanearts.org/community-arts-grants/) and [Artist Grant](http://lanearts.org/artist-grant/) programs are funded by the [City of Eugene Cultural Services Division](https://www.eugene-or.gov/129/Cultural-Services), and administered by [Lane Arts Council](http://lanearts.org/).

This year, Lane Arts Council focused the Community Arts Program Grant toward helping Eugene’s small and mid-sized nonprofit arts organizations recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and fulfill their strategic goals moving forward. The program provides essential operating support to help sustain our arts and culture community in Eugene. The following twelve organizations were awarded:

* Christians as Family Advocates - $3,000
* DanceAbility International - $4,383
* DisOrient Asian American Film Festival of Lane County - $4,490
* Eugene Opera - $4,390
* Eugene-Springfield Youth Orchestras - $5,000
* Kutsinhira Cultural Arts Center - $2,975
* Materials Exchange Center for Community Arts (MECCA) - $5,000
* Maude Kerns Art Center - $4,380
* OrchestraNext - $1,850
* Oregon Supported Living Program, Arts & Culture Program (OSLP) - $4,525
* Very Little Theatre - $4,578
* Willamette Jazz Society - $5,000

Artist Grants support individual artists of any discipline to pursue a new creative endeavor (Project Grant), invest in their artistic development (Process Grant), or bolster artistic business capacity (Progress Grant) to advance their career or artistic development. The following eight artists were awarded:

* Mija Andrade - $1,800
* Mika Aono - $1,620
* Esteban Camacho Steffensen - $1,800
* Joshua Caraco - $1,800
* Cari Ingrassia - $1,800
* Nicole Malinoff - $1,800
* Nicole Medema - $1,800
* Carlos Rasmussen - $1,800

The 2021-22 Community Arts Program Grant will support the Very Little Theatre, Eugene’s oldest performing arts organization, as it continues to renovate its historic building; improving the capacity for the organization to produce and present theatrical works for years to come.

The Community Arts Program Grant will also provide funding for Oregon Supported Living Program’s (OSLP) Arts & Culture Program, whose mission is to empower adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. OSLP breaks down barriers to participation in the arts for people of all abilities, building bridges to a more diverse and inclusive community.

Carlos Rasmussen will be supported by an Artist Grant for his project, “The Artistic Release Therapy Show, AKA The ART Show.” Rasmussen will hold an event highlighting the importance and connection of mental health and artistry. He shared, “Dance has saved me. I want to help other artists express the importance of their art forms and how it impacts their mental health along with their audience; to give them a stage, a safe space to be free, and to be their full self.”

Artist Grant recipient Mika Aono will use the funds to invest in essential equipment for handmade paper. The equipment will be used to deepen her exploration of Japanese Knotweed, a plant species invasive to Oregon, which is native to the area where she was born and raised. She is inspired by “how language describing invasive species is uncannily similar to the language used to discuss the current immigration crisis. Solving the problem in semiotics could be a step towards accepting the foreign/unfamiliar.”

“This has been an incredibly difficult time for artists and arts organizations and yet we are looking to the arts for healing, connection, and inspiration more than ever,” shared Stacey Ray, Lane Arts Council Executive Director. “I’m grateful that we can support these influential artists and arts organizations who continue to be a source of light in our community.”

The public is invited to celebrate awardees by attending the livestream virtual award ceremony on Wednesday, January 26th at 5pm (hosted on Lane Arts Council’s [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/lane.arts.council) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4O-gUWu4aQk)).

Applications for Lane Arts Council’s 2022-23 grants will be posted in early 2022.

*About Lane Arts Council*

*Lane Arts Council, founded in 1976, is a nonprofit arts organization that works to cultivate strong and creative arts communities throughout Lane County by providing high-quality arts experiences, engaging people of all ages in arts education, and encouraging artistic endeavors.*

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