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For Immediate Release

KFW Announces 2021 Art Meets Activism Grant Recipients

The Kentucky Foundation for Women has awarded 42 Art Meets Activism Grants totaling \$225,183 to feminist artists and social change organizations from across the state. These artists and organizations received grants to advance social change through feminist-led, arts-based activities in communities throughout Kentucky.

A complete list of statewide grants follows. Here is a sampling of Kentucky artists/organizations that received funding:

My Systers Art (Paducah): \$3,000 to organize the Cinema Systers Film Festival which will encourage, inspire, and challenge women and lesbians to produce feminist works of art to share in the public forum. CSFF will build feminist community, increase public awareness of women's issues, and encourage women and lesbians to find their own voices and develop the internal fortitude to stand up for equal treatment.

Owensboro Museum of Science and History (Owensboro): \$6,140 to provide workshops to girls of color that will enhance their leadership abilities by telling their stories using their cultures' music, storytelling, creative writing, cuisine and art. They will develop an intercultural art community as a positive force for social change and self-determination.

Louisville Public Media (Louisville): \$3,000 to produce "Words for the People," a podcast hosted by Kentucky Poet Laureate and feminist Crystal Wilkinson that will explore themes of community, socio-political issues, diversity, and healing through conversations and art making. Listeners will be inspired to pursue their own art making resulting from hearing compelling testimonials and audience prompts.

Pamela Mullins (she/her) (Covington): \$4,000 to create a social media team of women and girls who will learn video and podcasting skills. This will allow them to become broadcasters who can use their voices and stories to address issues and support social change advocacy.

Misty Skaggs (she/her), **Bonita Skaggs-Parsons** (she/her), **Raina Rue** (she/her), **Vann Gibson** (they/them) (Olive Hill): \$10,000 to create murals and facilitate arts/crafts workshops, free to the community, that concentrate on social movements that are not often the focus in rural settings, including intersectional feminism and antiracist history and philosophy in Appalachia. These activities will engage participants in art making and

the murals will draw the community's attention to important issues as part of the mutual aid movement.

Kiana Mahjub (she/her) and **Cecelia Rhoden** (she/her) (Richmond): \$9,810 to lead The School of Needlework for Disobedient Women's two-week workshop for teen girls to learn to express themselves through a craft with a rich feminist history. TSNDW is designed to plant seeds of disruption and examine participants' place in the fabric of their community by connecting the past and the present, the radical and the beautiful.

“These arts-centered, community-based projects work to transform the life of women and girls in Kentucky by helping them tell their stories across a variety of art forms from needlework to film. These authentic female perspectives offer innovative ways to meet the myriad of challenges we face today and help create a more hopeful world for the women of tomorrow,” said Sharon LaRue, Executive Director of the Kentucky Foundation for Women.

The Art Meets Activism program supports a wide variety of individual artists and organizations committed to building on the power of art to increase awareness about feminist issues, alter perceptions, stimulate dialogue, open new spaces for civic participation and imagine new ways to create a more just and equitable Kentucky. The grants are for activities that are artist driven and include the direct participation of individuals and communities.

Applications for the foundation's next round of funding, through the Art Meets Activism Grant Program, will be available in **February**. You can learn about the process and preview the application questions at <https://www.kfw.org/grants/art-meets-activism/> This program supports feminist artists and organizations in Kentucky to engage individuals and communities in artmaking that directly advances positive social change. Applicants should be able to demonstrate their commitment to feminism, their ability to engage community members, and have a concrete plan for positive social change through arts-based activities. Applicants may request funds for activities including: community participation in creating art; collaborative or individualized artmaking with women and/or girls, artists' creation of new work in a community context; arts education programs primarily focused on women or girls; developing an organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan; or adapting technology to address community accessibility needs due to COVID. For more information call Avery Guess at KFW at 502-562-0045 or check our website at www.kfw.org.

The Kentucky Foundation for Women is a private foundation formed in 1985 by Louisville writer Sallie Bingham. Its mission is to promote positive social change by supporting varied feminist expression in the arts.

AMA 2021 Grantee Summaries

CD 1 \$10,500

Jacquelyn Carruthers (she/her) (Paducah): \$2,500 to hold visual art workshops for diverse communities of girls and women in Paducah and Mayfield. Her goal is to create an inspirational art environment and inspire feminism in the participants.

Nicole Cressler (she/her) (West Paducah): \$2,500 to take photographs of self-realized women including senior pictures, women in the workplace, families, and women hunters. This will empower women to learn the importance of self-care by capturing a positive self-image in a world where women are groomed to give until it destroys them from within.

My Systems Art (Paducah): \$3,000 to organize the Cinema Systems Film Festival which will encourage, inspire, and challenge women and lesbians to produce feminist works of art to share in the public forum. CSFF will build feminist community, increase public awareness of women's issues, and encourage women and lesbians to find their own voices and develop the internal fortitude to stand up for equal treatment.

Upper Town Heritage Foundation (Paducah): \$2,500 to develop a book about African American women changemakers in the Jackson Purchase area, from slavery to the present day. This project will educate, create positive social change, fight racism, and show the value of Black women in our society.

CD 2 \$6,140

Owensboro Museum of Science and History (Owensboro): \$6,140 to provide workshops to girls of color that will enhance their leadership abilities by telling their stories using their cultures' music, storytelling, creative writing, cuisine and art. They will develop an intercultural art community as a positive force for social change and self-determination.

CD 3 \$115,090

Americana Fiberworks (Louisville): \$8,000 to encourage immigrant and refugee women to invest in their creativity through fiber arts while developing their own artistic styles and independence in their craft. The program also provides the opportunity for women to gain economic empowerment in their households while improving their sewing, knitting, and embroidery.

Commonwealth Theatre Center (Louisville): \$7,500 to create and stage a play addressing the toxic relationship themes of the Selkie-Wife folktale, a story portraying a female selkie (a seal who becomes human once her skin is shed) trapped in marriage with a man who steals her skin. The play will empower women and teen girls to stand up against abuse in personal relationships through creative expression and healing in the safe space of the theatre.

Divinity Rose (she/her) (Louisville): \$2,500 to create an interactive augmented reality exhibit “Triggered,” where viewers walk through minds of women with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Viewers will better understand the disorder through engaging experiences that mimic the way unwanted experiences pop up in the minds of those afflicted with PTSD.

DJ Bombshell (she/her) (Louisville): \$2,500 to create a short, 15–20-minute documentary about how music, love, and energy uplifts neighborhoods in Louisville's West End through choreographed dance and musical performances from local acts. This story will create fellowship among residents while reminding them of the area's worth and offer an alternative perspective to non-residents who only see turmoil and dysfunction.

Kentucky Shakespeare (Louisville): \$2,750 to conduct Kentucky Shakespeare's Voices of Young Women interactive theatre workshop which will tour schools across the state, at no cost to the hosts. The workshop discussions will address the core curriculum as well as self-confidence, relationships, identity, and other issues affecting young people today.

Fairen Kia (she/her) (Louisville): \$4,500 to produce the “Love Thy Stretchmarks: Art Exhibit” which will follow Love Thy Body’s mission of creating, cultivating, and communicating hope through spoken word, photography, creative writing, public speaking, and more. The exhibition will allow participants and artists the opportunity to network, gain access to resources, and share their stories and art.

Teresa Koester (she/her) (Louisville): \$5,750 to create a traveling linocut printmaking workshop to teach teen and adult feminist artists of Kentucky. The workshops will teach practical art skills and bring attention to the relationship between art, feminism, nature, and locality. She will also create an online platform to sell a portion of the prints to benefit an ecological organization in each workshop’s geographic area.

Looking for Lilith Theatre Company (Louisville): \$4,000 for the nineteen-member ensemble to participate in up to twelve hours of Conscientious Theatre Training with the Anti-Racist Theatre. They will then create a company handbook that codifies the ways of working in a safe and brave space that Lilith has sought to create over the last twenty years. Participants will shift awareness of harmful systems, change attitudes about confronting those systems, and experience a change in behavior in dismantling them.

Louisville Public Media (Louisville): \$3,000 to produce “Words for the People,” a podcast hosted by Kentucky Poet Laureate and feminist Crystal Wilkinson that will explore themes of community, socio-political issues, diversity, and healing through

conversations and art making. Listeners will be inspired to pursue their own art making resulting from hearing compelling testimonials and audience prompts.

Valerie Magnuson (she/her/they) (Louisville): \$10,000 to produce and screen a full-length documentary on women transforming sustainable agriculture to support activism around food and environmental justice. This ecofeminist project will encourage audience members to focus on how solutions modeled in the film can be implemented in their home neighborhoods and communities.

Morgan McGill (she/her) (Louisville): \$8,553 to connect with recovering fundamentalist thinkers and create art that embodies their conversations about the suppression and abuse of sexual identity within religious contexts. The podcast and community art event will educate the public about the damage done by religion and binary thinking, especially to women and minorities.

Rheonna Nicole (she/her) (Louisville): \$5,730 to produce Lipstick University, Lipstick Wars' second online literature program of creative writing/poetry workshop courses and virtual spoken word performances. These workshops will provide access to a quality literary education for BIPOC women poets and writers in lower income communities.

Ashlee Phillips (she/her) (Louisville): \$3,607 to interview nine women from the West End of Louisville and create a space for them to tell their story through a film titled "9 Women West of 9th: Capacity Couched in Chaos." Through traditional storytelling, Black women will voice what social, economic, and racial changes they need to see that will allow them to experience the freedom of self-expression.

Jasemine "Jazzy J" Reed (she/her) (Louisville): \$5,000 to produce a student-led theater project to promote social-emotional learning and its impact on Black youth ages eight through sixteen in West Louisville. Project S.H.I.N.E. (Securing Hope in a New Earth) students will work collaboratively with community agencies, members, and local artists to develop and produce a play.

Speed Art Museum (Louisville): \$5,000 to offer two series of four artist-led workshops to women of color, ages 55 and older, who are experiencing major life changes. The women will create their own works of art and, through art, explore who they are now and what they want going forward, while also building relationships with one another.

Steam Exchange (Louisville): \$5,110 for students to work with visiting artist Kara Mason to produce a collection of custom outfits exploring feminism, identity, and intersectionality as part of a program to sell their fashion line and spread feminist messaging to a wider audience. This will culminate in a youth-organized feminist fashion show to showcase their projects for their community.

Emily Pike Stewart (she/her) (Louisville) \$8,225 to build a mobile voiceover studio to create an audio anthology of Kentucky women's creative and narrative writing, read aloud in their own voices. The activities will encourage Kentucky women to speak their

stories, experience the historical and energetic perspective of oral storytelling, and step into the physical and metaphorical value of their own voices.

Young Authors Greenhouse (Louisville): \$6,870 to offer a book writing program to thirty to thirty-five young women who will use poetry and creative non-fiction to explore and share what it means to be a middle-school girl in the twenty-first century—challenging the status quo and expectations that come with being a girl. This project will amplify the voices of young women and create a space for intergenerational learning.

CD 4 \$27,422

Bree zlee Bodnar (she/her) (Waddy): \$3,359 to produce an album, book, workshop, and event called "Upcycle" to benefit the transitional housing program for women and mothers with children at Operation Care in Shelbyville, Kentucky. The women will learn to upcycle in both the traditional sense and in the sense of breaking cycles of abuse through art making.

Robin Burke (she/her) (Taylorsville): \$5,000 to support the completion of “ripples and pools,” an intimate documentary film about people in pain healing together in the aqua therapy pool at the Home of the Innocents in Louisville. A public screening (both in-person and online) will help the community embrace the film’s hopeful and restorative possibilities for healing themselves, one another, and the world they occupy.

Pamela Mullins (she/her) (Covington): \$4,000 to create a social media team of women and girls who will learn video and podcasting skills. This will allow them to become broadcasters who can use their voices and stories to address issues and support social change advocacy.

Safe Harbor of Northeast Kentucky (Ashland): \$6,000 to teach classes using a variety of art forms that will give victims of domestic violence and sexual assault tools to express their experience and give them the opportunity to heal. These classes will empower victims to break the cycle of violence that is the history of abuse for generations of families.

Shelby Regional Arts Council (Shelbyville): \$9,063 to conduct art workshops for women in recovery that will culminate in an art exhibit and video production documenting their creative process and growth. The exhibits and video will raise community awareness, build community, and foster understanding and compassion toward women in recovery. The exhibit and video will also highlight the importance of the arts for the wellbeing of the community.

CD 5 \$37,156

Arts Connect Eastern Kentucky (ACEky) (Somerset): \$10,000 to engage women in recovery in Harlan and Perry counties in making art to sell and to give, co-creating art and materials, and participating in an online exhibit. This will help them gain self-respect and create supportive connections with communities beyond the jail or recovery center.

Megan Duff (she/her) (Grays Knob): \$8,000 to empower women from eastern Kentucky to tell their own stories by utilizing performance, art installations, and storytelling. The workshops and activities will uplift eastern Kentucky women and touch on topics including their heritage, racial injustice, equity, the LGBTQIA+ community, and economic disparity.

Samantha Johnson (she/her) (Prestonsburg): \$3,660 to produce “The Vagina Monologues,” written by playwright and activist V, which addresses women’s sexuality and the social stigma surrounding rape and abuse while creating a new conversation about and with women. Rehearsals and performances will serve as a mechanism for moving people to act to end violence while connecting Appalachian women.

Shawna McCown (she/her) (Rush): \$1,000 to develop a curriculum called Creative Vibez for her classroom that centers on culture, the arts, and creativity and enhances students’ socio-emotional and literacy skills. Participating students are juvenile and public status offenders from across Kentucky who need a safe, local space to share their work with the community.

Nicole Musgrave (she/her) (Whitesburg): \$4,496 to lead two improvisational quilting courses for female, non-binary, and trans youth and adults in eastern Kentucky. Activities will provide participants opportunities to heal perfectionism, discuss how creating by hand with discarded materials subverts consumerist culture, broaden their awareness of the history of quilting, and complicate assumptions about who quilts.

Misty Skaggs (she/her), **Bonita Skaggs-Parsons** (she/her), **Raina Rue** (she/her), **Vann Gibson** (they/them) (Olive Hill): \$10,000 to create murals and facilitate arts/crafts workshops, free to the community, that concentrate on social movements that are not often the focus in rural settings, including intersectional feminism and antiracist history and philosophy in Appalachia. These activities will engage participants in art making and the murals will draw the community’s attention to important issues as part of the mutual aid movement.

CD 6 \$28,875

Carnegie Center for Literacy & Learning (Lexington): \$4,770 for six female writers to mentor groups of young women in ninth to twelfth grade to explore writing and literary performance techniques while examining issues of concern to them, including body image and self-esteem. The project will help women writers of several age groups to forge connections while discovering their own voices with confidence and self-respect.

Jasmine Fouts (she/her) (Frankfort): \$5,545 to create songwriting workshops for women, elders (fifty-five plus), and members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community. The proposed songwriting workshops will engage community members in expressing their truth through song. Participants will receive nourishing attention and the structure needed to create and share songs from their perspective.

GreenHouse17 (Lexington): \$6,250 to provide trauma-informed art making with survivors of intimate partner abuse. Activities will facilitate emotional healing through art making, while encouraging reclamation of community, worth, and agency. Project promotion will bolster community understanding and support for survivors as they reimagine possibilities after abuse.

Kiana Mahjub (she/her) and **Cecelia Rhoden** (she/her) (Richmond): \$9,810 to lead The School of Needlework for Disobedient Women's two-week workshop for teen girls to learn to express themselves through a craft with a rich feminist history. TSNDW is designed to plant seeds of disruption and examine participants' place in the fabric of their community by connecting the past and the present, the radical and the beautiful.

My Pink Navigator, Inc. (Lexington): \$2,500 to create and distribute an artistic recovery planner for breast cancer patients with the intention of empowering patients to have more control over their healthcare. These art activities will create social change by closing the current gaps to recovery inherent in the patriarchal healthcare system and allow a better chance of survival for breast cancer patients.