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For Immediate Release

KFW Announces 2024 Art Meets Activism Grant Recipients

The Kentucky Foundation for Women has awarded 38 Art Meets Activism Grants totaling \$230,503 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 Sisters Art, Paducah, \$10,000 to produce the Cinema Sisters Lesbian Film Festival, the centerpiece of a 4-day women's cultural festival held in Paducah over Memorial Day Weekend. The festival will feature film produced exclusively by lesbian filmmakers, filmmaking workshops, live entertainment, open mic/spoken word, parties, dancing, and art installations to inspire community involvement.

Imani Dennison (she/they) Louisville, \$5,000 to produce "The People Could Fly," a poetic documentary rooted in principles of liberation and freedom about the history of Black gathering spaces in Louisville from the 1960's to mid-2000's. Using archival footage, still photos, newsreel, and newly shot material, the project will explore the history of a segregated Louisville and Black resistance through the ritual of roller skating and how roller rinks emerged as sanctuaries for Black culture.

The Chamber Theatre and Teatro Tercera Llamada, Louisville, \$5,000 to produce a bilingual performance (half Spanish/half English) with supertitles in alternating languages of "The House of Bernarda Alba/La Casa de Bernarda Alba" with an all-female cast. The production aims to help the audience identify abuse and mental health issues while sharing tools and resources for help.

Louisville Family Justice Advocates, Louisville, \$5,000 to allow LFJA and The Special Project artists to work with community members who have been impacted by incarceration to create a large woven artwork together. Participants will learn basic weaving skills on small cardboard looms before working on larger frame looms to weave a collaborative piece that tells "The Story of Incarceration."

Amy Le Ann Richardson (she/her) Olive Hill, \$7,000 to host writing workshops across Eastern Kentucky and invite self-identified mountain women farmers and gardeners to share their stories. The writing will celebrate the resilient women who have carried the work of foodways across generations and the voices of women who moved to the mountains to get their hands in the dirt.

Nicole Garneau (she/her) Rebellious Performance Retreat, Disputanta, \$4,000 to support the second annual Rebellious Performance Retreat, an immersive workshop and retreat in rural Appalachian Kentucky for performing artists whose work engages intersectional feminism, LGBTQIA+ rights, anti-racism, and anti-oppression. This will nurture a rural Kentucky hub of support for activist performance through community-building, resource-sharing, peer feedback, and a final showcase.

Jill Robertson (she/her) Hazard, \$10,000 to work with residents of a local recovery center to design and fabricate a permanent mixed-media public community art installation at the Artstation in downtown Hazard. Participants will work to challenge social norms around female-led projects and women in metal working, address LGBTQ+ issues, foster the humanization of people in recovery, and find healing through art.

Kate Boudreaux (she/her) Lexington, \$2,400 to plan and lead dance and movement workshops for people of all abilities and age groups, with support from mentors in her community, and to help spread a message of health and inclusion. These workshops will impact Boudreaux as a dancer and assistant dance instructor with Down Syndrome and will show people of all ages and abilities that dance is for everyone and can be part of health and healing.

“These grantees are bringing artists together to recognize and address important topics such as Black resistance and joy, female farming and foodways, and mental health and inclusion. Community art and activism help build lasting change in Kentucky,” 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.

KFW’s Artist Enrichment grant applications will be available Friday, August 2, 2024.

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.

KFW Executive Director Sharon LaRue and selected grant recipients are available for interviews/appearances. Contact Ms. LaRue for further information and to schedule interviews. A complete list of the grants awarded statewide broken down by congressional districts follows.

2024 KFW Art Meets Activism Grant Recipients

CD1 – 1 grantee, \$10,000

My Systers Art, Paducah, \$10,000 to produce the Cinema Systers Lesbian Film Festival, the centerpiece of a 4-day women's cultural festival held in Paducah over Memorial Day Weekend. The festival will feature film produced exclusively by lesbian filmmakers, filmmaking workshops, live entertainment, open mic/spoken word, parties, dancing, and art installations to inspire community involvement.

CD2 – 1 grantee, \$5,000

Imani Dennison (she/they) Louisville, \$5,000 to produce “The People Could Fly,” a poetic documentary rooted in principles of liberation and freedom about the history of Black gathering spaces in Louisville from the 1960's to mid-2000's. Using archival footage, still photos, newsreel, and newly shot material, the project will explore the history of a segregated Louisville and Black resistance through the ritual of roller skating and how roller rinks emerged as sanctuaries for Black culture.

CD3 – 19 grantees, \$98,584

300FOR300, Louisville, \$5,000 to create a virtual reality film experience titled “When the Light Shines Through,” that documents and shares the stories of girls of color in Louisville. Girls will engage in the creation of the project and share their stories with the wider community with the goal of combating racism and establishing new narratives about their lives.

Ambo Dance Theatre, Louisville, \$4,000 to support the production of “There Will Always Be Strings,” an evening-length dance work exploring how early childhood experiences influence attachment style in adulthood. Their first piece of repertory would engage dancers of all ages by producing broader mental health awareness and applying practices for the community and partnering organizations.

BEL Kids Louisville, Louisville, \$5,000 to teach children of Eastern African descent about their culture through music, dances, drama, crafts, costume making, storytelling, and East African language learning. This will help participants develop their confidence and understand and appreciate the uniqueness and inherent value of people who are different from them in terms of culture, behavior, and background.

The Chamber Theatre and Teatro Tercera Llamada, Louisville, \$5,000 to produce a bilingual performance (half Spanish/half English) with supertitles in alternating languages of “The House of Bernarda Alba/La Casa de Bernarda Alba” with an all-women cast. The production aims to help the audience identify abuse and mental health issues while sharing tools and resources for help.

Demi Gardner (she/her) Louisville, \$10,000 to document the stories of Black women from the West End of Louisville in “Westward Expansion,” a feature-length documentary. The film explores the Black woman’s role in navigating a changing environment while building their careers, community, and family.

Clarity Hagan (they/she) and three witches shakespeare, Louisville, \$8,000 to create a queer, genderbent, site-specific production of Much Ado About Nothing, set just after the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. This will open a discussion of how internalized misogyny and oppressive policies demanding secrecy affect the queer community and provide a supportive, cathartic space for queer artists and youth to heal.

Kentucky Performing Arts - ArtsReach, Louisville, \$5,000 to support GirlCode, an all-day immersive women's empowerment event to promote connection, self-expression, and reflection among multiple generations of women of color in Louisville and surrounding areas. Artist-led sessions will inspire participants to embrace their beauty, uniqueness, authenticity, and voice, and will culminate with a spoken word and storytelling event.

Looking for Lilith Theatre Company, Louisville, \$4,250 to tour "Defining Infinity," an original piece that celebrates the diversity of gender identity and sexuality spectrums and to produce workshops where participants can share their stories. The reinvented narrative centers on the stories of a group of queer friends as they explore how gender and sexuality norms have been challenged through the lifetimes of the characters.

Louisville Family Justice Advocates, Louisville, \$5,000 to allow LFJA and The Special Project artists to work with community members who have been impacted by incarceration to create a large woven artwork together. Participants will learn basic weaving skills on small cardboard looms before working on larger frame looms to weave a collaborative piece that tells "The Story of Incarceration."

Louisville Youth Choir, Louisville, \$2,500 to engage female-identifying singers from Louisville and rural Kentucky in raising their collective voices to challenge gender expectations. Through the music sung by the adult soprano and alto Lascito Coro (Legacy Choir), participants will explore what Kentucky women share regardless of geography, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, marital status, childlessness, motherhood, religious beliefs, and cultural origin.

Jessica Mathis AKA Divinity Rose (she/her) Louisville, \$2,674 to host a screenplay competition to encourage works set in Kentucky that address feminist topics and feature strong lead or primary roles for actors who identify as women, trans, gender fluid, or nonbinary. Participants from Kentucky will receive judges' feedback, and winning scripts will be awarded cash, free professional coaching, and the chance to have professional actors read their work at a live recorded film and TV industry event.

Redline Performing Arts, Louisville, \$9,550 to support "The Color Purple Initiative," a month-long campaign to promote feminism, diversity, and empowerment through the arts. In collaboration with Actors Theatre of Louisville and Erica Denise Entertainment, a powerful ten-performance run of the acclaimed musical "The Color Purple" will serve as a focal point for discussions, workshops, and events designed to elevate women and LGBTQ+ voices, particularly those of Black women and transgender individuals.

Jessica Sharpenstein (she/her) Louisville, \$2,500 to facilitate a mindful arts integration program for asylum-seeking and refugee youth using trauma-informed practices to generate trust, belonging, and visibility in their community. Through writing, music, visual arts, drama, and breathwork, participants will share their lived worlds with Literatura de Cordel (Brazilian string art), exhibitions, and performances that spur ideas, action, and change for the community.

Shrike and Thorn Productions, Macedonia Parks (she/they) and Evan Sims (he/they) Louisville, \$1,500 to support Georgia Rhoades' mixed arts presentation of life and death as a woman in rural community, a striking example of life as it is seldom seen from the perspective of an aged woman. The filmmakers will shine a light on her perspective and bring her story of hardship, beauty, and grace to a wider audience so that people can recognize the older women in their lives, and perhaps become a little less afraid of time passing.

StageOne Family Theatre, Louisville, \$8,500 to support touring performances of "The History of Now" by Keith McGill alongside ARTivism workshops/residencies, introducing young people and the public to advocacy through artmaking. By sharing examples of prominent youth activists and coaching students on how to create poetry, ARTivism will guide students in analyzing their selected social justice issue while creating a call to action through art.

Steam Exchange, Louisville, \$9,500 to teach participants various dance styles, sewing, and design skills while exploring feminism, body positivity, self-expression, and Black joy with designer Kara Mason, dancer Rahkyilah Jones, and dance instructors from Crestview Studios. The class will culminate in a youth-organized community showcase to share their performances, costumes, music, and other art.

Dasia Woods (she/her) Louisville, \$1,500 to lead weekly literary and writing workshops at a Louisville high school to cultivate a space for young women to use their voices and share their stories through writing. Participants will engage in activities that allow them to change their consciousness, encourage solidarity with one another, and grow their individual artistry through the study of impactful women writers of the 20th century.

Young Authors Greenhouse, Louisville, \$6,610 for young women (ages 11-14) to participate in a poetry/creative nonfiction book project and songwriting performance based on a theme of personal significance to them. They will discuss leadership, improve writing skills, learn how writing can be a powerful way to create change, and take part in the publishing process.

CD4 – 2 grantees, \$17,000

Amy Le Ann Richardson (she/her) Olive Hill, \$7,000 to host writing workshops across Eastern Kentucky and invite self-identified mountain women farmers and gardeners to share their stories. The writing will celebrate the resilient women who have carried the work of foodways across generations and the voices of women who moved to the mountains to get their hands in the dirt.

Angela Ramsey Robinson (she/her) LaGrange, \$10,000 to amplify the voices of women in Kentucky, raising awareness around the challenges women face with breast cancer and beyond. Through a workshop series, women will explore challenges related to body image, sexual health, and emotional well-being, fostering a resilient and supportive community empowered to use visual art and story for personal self-expression and positive social change.

CD5 – 7 grantees, \$52,148

Tammy Clemons, Bighill, \$9,180 to support the expansion of a regional “ZiNetwork” of maker-activists in Kentucky and Appalachia. This project connects dispersed zine producers, activities, and resources and provides opportunities for regional feminist zine-related networking, skill-sharing, and collective artmaking, including “zini-grants” and other pay-it-forward activities. This will culminate in “AMazine: Making Social Change in Kentucky and Appalachia,” a collaborative zine project focused on art and activism.

Nicole Garneau (she/her) Rebellious Performance Retreat, Disputanta, \$4,000 to support the second annual Rebellious Performance Retreat, an immersive workshop and retreat in rural Appalachian Kentucky for performing artists whose work engages intersectional feminism, LGBTQIA+ rights, anti-racism, and anti-oppression. This will nurture a rural Kentucky hub of support for activist performance through community-building, resource-sharing, peer feedback, and a final showcase.

Willa Johnson (she/her) Jenkins, \$5,000 to support "Reckoning the Reflection," a self-portrait project aimed at empowering Kentucky women through photography workshops and community storytelling sessions. Participants will explore and express their identities, experiences, and challenges as they question stereotypes, promote empathy, and inspire advocacy for gender equality to catalyze broader societal changes of inclusivity and empowerment.

Shawna McCown AKA Tia Woods (she/her) Rush, \$9,000 to support the production of the Wildflower Festival, a free, annual, high-quality musical event that creates an inclusive space for artists and art enthusiasts to share and enjoy artwork. The festival will give creatives, especially women and those who identify as women, opportunities to share their work and raise their voices to create social change.

Recovering Joy Arts and Nature Center, Somerset, \$9,968 to provide participants from a local recovery center for women opportunities to make fiber arts, reflect on the art process, advocate for themselves, integrate artmaking in recovery, and share their art. Lead artists will sharpen their skills in art and teaching, share their knowledge of artmaking and the earth, and influence social change by helping women in recovery find and raise their voices.

Jill Robertson (she/her) Hazard, \$10,000 to work with residents of a local recovery center to design and fabricate a permanent mixed-media public community art installation at the

Artstation in downtown Hazard. Participants will work to challenge social norms around female-led projects and women in metal working, address LGBTQ+ issues, foster the humanization of people in recovery, and find healing through art.

CD6 – 9 grantees, \$47,771

Ain't I A Girl Empowerment Program, Dayzaughn Graves (she/her) Richmond, \$6,000 to support engaging artmaking sessions where participants can explore and unleash their creativity. By providing participants with the freedom to express themselves, the program will empower them to strengthen their connection with self, fostering a sense of agency and individuality, and nurturing a community where every voice is heard and valued.

Kate Boudreaux (she/her) Lexington, \$2,400 to plan and lead dance and movement workshops for people of all abilities and age groups, with support from mentors in her community, and to help spread a message of health and inclusion. These workshops will impact Boudreaux as a dancer and assistant dance instructor with Down Syndrome and will show people of all ages and abilities that dance is for everyone and can be part of health and healing.

Carnegie Center for Literacy & Learning, Lexington, \$5,275 for seven female or nonbinary writers to mentor female and nonbinary 9th-12th graders as they explore writing and literary performance techniques while examining body image and self-esteem, LGBTQ+ issues, and feminism. In a supportive and welcoming environment, students will discover their voices with confidence and self-respect and deepen connections between writers of different ages.

Jennifer Hart (she/her) Lexington, \$9,755 to teach clients at a local women's recovery program sewing and quilting skills to create unique, handmade art quilt jackets while equipping participants with practical skills and tools for navigating life beyond addiction. This initiative aims to address the devastating impact of substance abuse in Kentucky by supporting individuals through recovery and fostering healthier, safer, and more resilient communities.

Annette Hines (she/her) and Kat Smith (they/them) Morehead, \$5,000 to support participants in creating quilt squares that answer the prompt "What Home Means to Us." The squares will be pieced together into a large community-created quilt. Programming will be paired with education and conversation around envisioning alternative possibilities, such as investment in community land trusts, for future generations.

Elisabeth Jensen (she/her) Nicholasville, \$1,941 to lead nature-based creativity workshops for womxn living with chronic illness and womxn engaged in social-justice activism or changemaking. By connecting with nature and exploring multiple avenues of creativity, participants will deepen their relationship to self, community, and place and will nourish their creative energy.

Movement Continuum, Lexington, \$2,500 to support a tour of “Traveler,” a show that follows one thread of time linking four American women throughout history to rural/small town communities in Kentucky. In conjunction, the group will facilitate free workshops open to any female-identifying person to explore contemporary dance and participate in conversations centered on American woman and girlhood.

Voices Amplified, Lexington, \$10,000 to produce a feminist play centered on the United States Constitution to foster reflection among audiences while promoting civic engagement. Post-performance workshops will provide a structured platform for participants to exchange experiences provoked by the theatrical storytelling, thereby enhancing dialogue and understanding of constitutional principles from a feminist perspective.