



2021 Annual Report

Advisory Body Name: Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County

Meeting Time: 6-8pm second Monday of the month (no August/December)

Chair: District 1 Silvia Ledezma (January - June), At-Large 2 Ben Miyaji (July - September) and District 1 Silvia Ledezma (October - December)

Staff Person: Jenny Balisle, Managing Director

Reporting Period: January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

Meeting Locations: Zoom

Mission:

The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is dedicated to advancing the arts in a way that promotes communication, education, appreciation and collaboration throughout Contra Costa County so that we may grow creatively as a community that preserves and celebrates our diverse cultural expression.

Racial Equity Statement:

The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is dedicated to advancing the arts that preserves and celebrates our diverse cultural expression. Consistent with our values of supporting community, we have a responsibility to acknowledge that we occupy traditional native people's land. With over 1.154 million residents, we are committed to addressing the historical and systematic racial inequalities within government infrastructures, arts institutions, and society. Our top priority is delivering equity and equality in our core values, initiatives, and signature programs. Reimagining structures and policy requires honest self-reflection and identifying biases. Trust is earned through communication, education, appreciation, and collaboration.

Land Acknowledgment:

The Arts and Culture Commission would like to take a moment to acknowledge the land and indigenous peoples of Contra Costa County.

We collectively acknowledge that Contra Costa County resides on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of indigenous people. Contra Costa County resides on land that was cared for and called home by the Bay Miwok and Ohlone people, who shared their oral traditions in the Utian / Penutian language.

Local tribes from our county include, but are not limited to, the Saclan, Tatcan, Chupchan, Julpun, Volvon, Souyen, and other native peoples from time immemorial.

This land holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance to its past, present, and future stewards, the native nations and peoples of this region. We honor and continue their tradition of cultural and artistic expression in Contra Costa County through our engagement with the arts today.

I. Activities: *Describe the activities for the past year including areas of study, work, special events, collaborations, etc.*

The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is dedicated to advancing the arts through communication, education, appreciation, and collaboration. In 2021, we transitioned programs to meet pandemic needs along with advocating for equitable funding and investment. Signature programs include Poetry Out Loud, ABOUTFACE, Arts Passages, Youth Advisor, Arts Directory, Arts Calendar, advocacy, and outreach. In addition, we had several new initiatives including three California Arts Council grants, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' *Artist Power Convenings* grants, *Measure X funding advocacy*, *Arts and Culture Prospectus*, and *Envision Contra Costa 2040*. We continued to build an online presence on our website (www.ac5.org) along with consistent engagement on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Special projects, collaborations, events, discussions, activities, and services have been hosted or posted through Zoom, Facebook, and Instagram. We seek to provide meaningful support to artists and art organizations throughout Contra Costa County.

II. Accomplishments: *Describe the accomplishments for the past year, particularly in reference to your work plan and objectives.*

Through discussions and research, the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County identified the need to strengthen existing programs and implement new initiatives to support the community. The pandemic and social injustices continue to magnify the importance of the arts. Of all Bay Area Counties, Contra Costa County ranks last in arts funding at \$.06 per person when the average is \$1.04. Arts investment represents a vital quality of life, free expression, and celebration of community.

Accomplishments:

- Thanks to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, we had our first collaboration and largest regranting arts program (\$40,000) with the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. The *Artist Power Convenings* grants support underfunded artists and artist-led organizations in Contra Costa County.
 - We gathered community input, prepared presenters, attended each Measure X Community Advisory Board (MXCAB) meeting, and made a Measure X Presentation advocating for the largest additional funding for the arts since 1994. The MXCAB recommended the Arts and Culture Commission to the Board of Supervisors for funding. The Board of Supervisors approved \$250,000 annual ongoing Measure X funding allocation to the Arts and Culture Commission.
 - Identified the need for an updated *Arts and Culture Prospectus of Contra Costa County* for Cultural Stakeholders to highlight community needs through art. After a procurement process, the Commission selected Art Builds Community to facilitate the Prospectus project and started the initial phases of the project.
 - Incorporated Arts into the *Envision CC 2040* (Contra Costa County General Plan), which had previously overlooked the arts.
 - The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County was awarded three California Arts Council grants: *Jump StArts*, *Impact Projects*, and *General Operating Relief*.
 - As part of the CAC requirement, we completed our first *Racial Equity Statement*.
 - Poetry Out Loud had its first land acknowledgement and ASL interpreters for any Arts and Culture Commission program.
 - Successfully delivered virtual ABOUTFACE workshops for the first time.
 - First Art Passages exhibition at the new County Administration Building.
 - First Youth Advisor, Carolyn Considine, creates the Justice *Mural* project.
 - Collaborated with the County Administrator's Office and County Counsel's Office to update bylaws.
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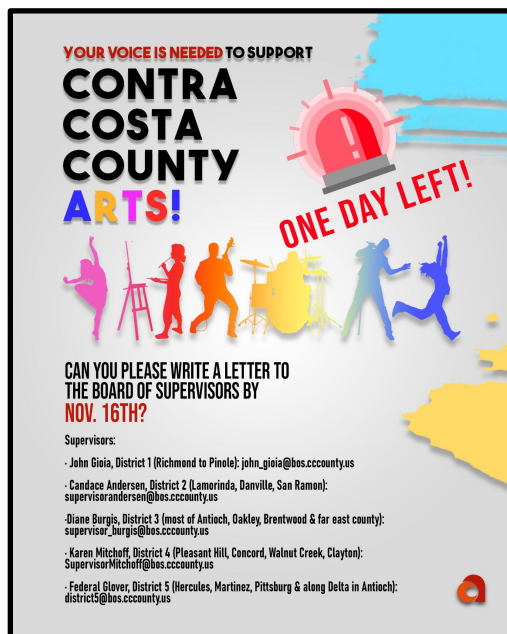
California Arts Council Grants: In 2021, the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County was awarded three grants: *Jump StArts*, *Impact Projects*, and *General Operating Relief*. As a California Arts Council designated SLP, we're grateful to receive grants that directly support communities, foster new collaborations, and build trust through art.

Jump StArts (\$2,500): With support from the California Arts Council, the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County will develop an art project in partnership with Juvenile Hall and the Office of Reentry & Justice to serve system-engaged youth.

Two community workshops and public presentation will identify a strategy, actions, and timeline. **Grant proposal ranked #2 out of all applications with a score of 5.6 (out of 6).*

Impact Projects (\$17,100): With support from the California Arts Council, the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County will establish a Utility Box Art Program. Artists partner with local organizations to create a design highlighting systemic/structural racism, education, poverty, cultural/social justice, or environmental sustainability in response to COVID-19. **Grant proposal received a score of 5 (out of 6).*

General Operating Relief (\$28,500): With support from the California Arts Council, the Arts Commission of Contra Costa County will secure staff to support signature community programs and cultural planning efforts to promote equity. Since 1994, our mission is dedicated to preserving and celebrating our diverse cultural expression through communication, education, appreciation and collaboration. **Grant proposal received a score of 4.6 (out of 6) and in 2019 score was 4 for the State-Local-Partnership grant. Consistent Contra Costa County investment will improve future grant scores.*



Measure X:

The Measure X Community Advisory Board was formed to identify unmet community needs and recommend spending priorities to the county Board of Supervisors for the allocation of Measure X funding (a new countywide half cent tax). On July 28th, the Arts and Culture Commission presented a \$625k investment ask. We gathered research, community input, prepared presenters, attended each meeting, and facilitated a Measure X Presentation advocating for the largest additional funding for the arts since 1994. The Measure X Community Advisory Board recommended the Arts and Culture Commission to the Board of Supervisors for funding.

**Please reference section V.*

Arts and Culture Prospectus of Contra Costa County:

We identified the need for an updated *Arts and Culture Prospectus of Contra Costa County* to provide a voice to Cultural Stakeholders to define needs and programs. The Commission advocated for the approval of developing an updated Arts and Culture Prospectus to the Family and Human Services Committee with a future presentation at the Board of Supervisors. Funded by a rebudget of a one-time allocation for Fiscal Year

21-22, the Arts and Culture Commission selected the firm Art Builds Community (<https://www.artbuildscommunity.com/>) to facilitate.

5/18/21 Arts and Culture Prospectus of Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Presentation video: https://youtu.be/N2TADmDF_QU

Envision CC 2040:

The Arts and Culture Commission has worked with representatives from the County Department of Conservation and Development to incorporate the Arts into the draft *Envision CC 2040* (Contra Costa County General Plan), which had previously overlooked the arts. “The General Plan outlines the County’s goals for physical growth, conservation, and community life in the unincorporated area, and contains the policies and actions necessary to achieve those goals. County staff members use the General Plan to guide decisions about zoning, permitted development, provision of public services, and transportation improvements.”

Link: <https://envisioncontracosta2040.org/>



Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Artist Power Convenings grants:

Thanks to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, we had our first ever collaboration and largest regranteeing arts program (\$40,000) with the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts for the *Artist Power Convenings* with priority being given to American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Asian American, Black and African American, Disabled, Indigenous and Indigena, Latinx, LGBTQIA2S+, MENASA, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander artists and artist-led organizations.

Contra Costa County's award recipients and proposals:

1. Dear America - "JiaYou," a series of discussions bringing together Asian American artists and Bay Area AAPI to discuss racism-related challenges facing the Asian community.
2. Edgar Vega - A convening to build a group of aspiring Contra Costa filmmakers who would like to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and collaborate on short films together.
3. Inner Eye Arts - A two-day collaborative art workshop in San Ramon on the theme of "Dhai Akhar: Seeded in Love," focused on African-Asian solidarity.
4. Jose Cordon - A three-part convening in Antioch featuring an open mic, discussions with local and regional artists, and featured performances with invited dancers and poets.
5. Karl Alfonso Evangelista - Unlocked Festival, a one-day music and multimedia festival centered on artists of color located in Richmond and neighboring areas.
6. Nurturing Independence Through Artistic Development (NIAD) - Supporting NIAD Voice, making the gatherings and artist conversations held during their six-day program for adult artists with disabilities available online.
7. RichCity Rides - A virtual event to bring together the muralists and photographers Rich City Rides works with, to produce ideas for future art projects and initiatives.
8. Robin "Shots" Lopez - #RichmondSpeaks: Art is Not A Monolith, an outdoor in-person event seeking to bring together tattoo artists, street muralists, and woodcarvers who represent Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous identities to exchange ideas and creativity with community members.
9. Tatiana Ortiz - Facilitating artist talks, tours, and art workshops in libraries in the communities of Richmond/El Cerrito and Hercules/Rodeo.

Link: <https://ybca.org/artist-power-convenings/>

YBCA Artist Power Convenings Grant video: <https://youtu.be/5J3y7elOon8>

YBCA Artist Power Convenings Q&A video: <https://youtu.be/nChQcG-Tvgg>

Arts Directory and Arts Calendar: The Arts Directory and Arts Calendar is a free listing service for any Contra Costa County artist or arts organization.

Arts Directory:

<https://zoomaru.org/searchregistry.php?r=y&eportal=contracostaarts>

Arts Calendar:

<https://www.zoomaru5.com/index.php?id=0&display=&eportal=contracostaarts>

Social Media and Platforms: The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Make sure to like and follow us to explore the incredible artistic diversity of our County including events, art opportunities, and exhibitions!

Instagram: @artsculturecoco

Facebook: @artsculturecommission

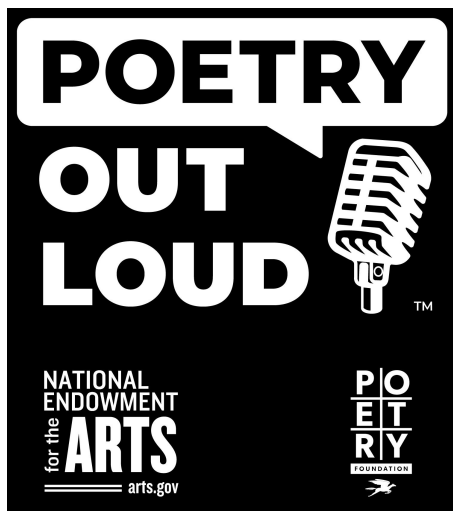
Youtube: Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County

Zoom: We have a professional account with Webinar features to support programs!



Arts Passages: Arts Passages is a rotating visual art exhibit located at the Contra Costa County's Administration Building (1025 Escobar Street, Martinez). Exhibitions showcase the rich diversity of artworks, artists, arts organizations, cultural groups, and residents throughout Contra Costa County. Our first exhibition featured the ABOUTFACE Veteran artworks.

2021 ABOUTFACE exhibition installation video: <https://youtu.be/QYgEkvp258E>
2021 ABOUTFACE exhibition video: <https://youtu.be/137nSzOmzxy>



Poetry Out Loud: Poetry Out Loud is virtual for the 2021-22 school year. Poetry Out Loud (POL) is an exciting National competition started in 2005 by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. The contest challenges high school students to memorize and recite poetry, a chance to showcase their talents, build self-confidence, and gain both an appreciation and understanding of poetry. Poetry Out Loud is a free program! There is no cost to either the school or the students.

The [Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County](#) has been an [California Arts Council](#)'s official local partner for Poetry Out Loud since 2007. Every Contra Costa County high school is encouraged to

participate, and for the first time this year non-profit organizations and libraries may participate as well. Each year ten to fifteen high schools representing East, West, and Central County have participated. These include public schools, private schools, charter schools, alternative schools, court schools, and homeschool groups.



In 2021, we managed the first *Poetry Out Loud Virtual Awards and Screening* event with the Commission's first use of an ASL interpreter and Land Acknowledgment. Brennan DeFrisco is the POL Head Student Coach and Co-Coordinator. Donte Clark is the POL Student Coach and Co-Coordinator.

Link:

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5416/Poetry-Out-Loud>

2021 Poetry Out Loud Virtual Screening and Awards Ceremony:

<https://youtu.be/VBnrlluu-NU>

Board of Supervisors Poetry Out Loud Video: <https://youtu.be/KSXAjMSQ3vE>

POL Facebook: poetryoutloudccc

POL Instagram: poetryoutloudccc



ABOUTFACE: The program went virtual for the first time! The Commission was awarded a Veterans in the Arts grant with County matching funds allowing for multiple-day workshops in spring 2021. In 2015, the [California Arts Council](#), the Arts and Culture Commission, and the Physical Rehabilitation Service at Veterans Affairs Health Care developed ABOUTFACE for the purpose of addressing the needs of veterans and improving their lives through art programming. It is based on the belief that individuals have the capacity to heal themselves.

The Arts and Culture Commission works with Veterans in Contra Costa County to offer a series of **FREE** self-portrait painting classes with supplies as a way of saying "Thank you for your service." The three-day workshops are team-taught by Teaching Artist and Coordinator Victoria Bianco and Veteran Assistant Coordinator Jeffrey Geronimo (DC1(SW/AW) Geronimo, US Navy veteran). Workshop activities include peer discussion, sketching, and painting a final self-portrait.

Link: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5824/ABOUTFACE>

ABOUTFACE Veterans' Voices of Contra Costa video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiY5CYrJgSI>

ABOUTFACE Facebook: ABOUTFACECCC

ABOUTFACE Instagram: aboutfaceccc

III. Attendance/Representation: *Describe your membership in terms of seat vacancies, diversity, level of participation, and frequency of achieving a quorum at meetings.*

Commissioners represent diverse districts and communities throughout Contra Costa County. Currently, there're 3 vacancies: District 3, District 4, and At-Large 2. All vacancies have been marketed on the Arts and Culture Commission's website, Constant Contact email, and social media. Due to not meeting quorum requirements, there were no meetings in March, October, and November. In August and December, there are no regularly scheduled meetings.

Agendas and Minutes:

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/AgendaCenter>

Boards and Commissions:

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/6408/Boards-and-Commissions-Database>

IV. Training/Certification: *Describe any training that was provided or conducted, and any certifications received, either as a requirement or done on an elective basis by members.*

Commissioners are provided the [Contra Costa County Advisory Body Handbook](#) and [Contra Costa Television Brown Act Training](#). In addition, the Managing Director shares access to the Arts and Culture Commission Google Drive with documents. When Commissioners request technical assistance, the Managing Director is available to assist and answer questions.

New Commissioners receive an orientation which includes viewing the *Brown Act and Better Government Ordinance, What You Need to Know* and *Ethics Orientation for County Officials* presentations. Commissioners update Brown Act training per the Advisory Body Handbook (recommends training be reviewed at two-year intervals). Clerk of the Board contacts were shared with Commissioners for additional assistance and resource information.

V. Proposed Work Plan / Objectives for Next Year: *Describe the advisory body's workplan, including specific objectives to be achieved in the upcoming year.*

Workplan and Objectives:

1. **Signature Programs:**

ABOUTFACE: Facilitate two workshops either hybrid or virtual (depending on the status of the ongoing pandemic).

Poetry Out Loud: Manage County program and host *Virtual Awards & Screening* event.

Youth Advisor: Commission selects and supports a second Youth Advisor.

Art Passages: Curate and install 3 exhibitions at the County Administration Building.

2. California Arts Council grant programs:

Jump StArts: Write workshop summary, submit required paperwork, and build community outreach.

Impact Projects: County Administrator's Office confirms project concept, Managing Director oversees facilitation with County departments, contact participating organizations/artists, social media marketing, and submit required paperwork.

General Operating Relief: Funds are used to supplement staff funding to support new and signature programs. The Managing Director submits required paperwork.

3. Arts and Culture Prospectus: The County Administrator's Office, Managing Director, Chair, subcommittee, and Commissioners support the firm *Art Builds Community* in project participation, advocacy, and completion.

4. Board of Supervisors Measure X New Programs:

The Board of Supervisors approved \$250k Measure X funds to be used for the following:

New Programs 150k:

1. District Public Art Program: Contra Costa County's first public art program. (\$20k each District).

2. AIRS (Artist-in-Residency in the School): Pilot program where teaching artists in CCC schools work with students to create art projects.

3. Arts Connection: Connect artists and art organizations for quarterly meetings for advocacy, opportunities, and data collection.

4. Youth Advisor in Each District: Expands equity and opportunity to youth in each District.

Staffing \$100k: The funds will supplement existing funding to be used for two employees: Managing Director (full-time) and Communication & Marketing staff (part-time). **The initial allocation of funds will be available from 4/1/22-6/30/23. The Managing Director will complete required paperwork, reports, and budgets prior to initial funding. Commissioners will confirm the funding timeline.*

We look forward to strengthening our partnership to serve the community through the arts. Commissioners represent diverse districts, neighborhoods, and communities. They are liaisons to arts, artists, cultural groups, and organizations. The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is grateful for the Board of Supervisors' support!

THANK YOU!

For information, records, comments, and questions:

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