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Arts Council Santa Cruz County launches COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grants for local arts community

SANTA CRUZ, CA — March 30, 2020 — Arts Council Santa Cruz County's Board of Directors has allocated \$75,000 for COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grants. These grants will provide one-time emergency support to arts organizations and current Create Grantee artists that are based in, produce, and publicly exhibit their work in Santa Cruz County. Grant applications are available now on our website and will be accepted through April 27. Applications for grants ranging from \$1,000-10,000 will be reviewed on a rolling basis with funds being released within 2 weeks of approval.

A recent survey of 28 Santa Cruz County-based arts nonprofits, estimated losses over \$1.5 million due to closures and event cancelations.

"The arts sector has been hit incredibly hard by this crisis, as dance studios close and concerts, plays, and gallery openings are canceled. Many artists, like so many others, are now unemployed. These grants will help ensure that, when we start to leave our homes again, our vibrant arts community will be there to bring us together, help us heal, and remind us of our shared humanity," said Jim Brown, Arts Council Santa Cruz County's Executive Director.

Review criteria and considerations for arts organizations include having been an Arts Council grantee at least once in the last five years. Grant awards will primarily be based on the level of financial need, risk that the organization will have to close its doors, and the ability of our limited funding to make a meaningful difference for the organization. For individual artists to qualify for an emergency grant, applicants must be a current Create grantee with an Arts Council-funded event/artwork impacted by COVID-19.

"Santa Cruz County is unthinkable without its vibrant arts scene. It was urgent that the Arts Council take action to assist organizations that have been impacted by COVID-19 to be able to keep their doors open, and to begin to take steps toward their recovery. These grants are just a beginning; but they are a sign of our commitment, and of our communities' commitment, to the vital importance of the arts," said Jeff Galipeaux, Board Chair.

In response to COVID-19, Arts Council Santa Cruz County is also making adjustments to its other programming. They have eased requirements and deadlines for Open Studios artists. The Council has also launched virtual arts education classrooms with tutorials, activities,

and lesson plans to provide arts activities for students and to be able to employ teaching artists during school closures.

"The arts are where we go as human beings, for solace, understanding, and for distraction. When this crisis is over, it will be the arts that will bring us together again, at concerts, festivals, plays, and events like Open Studios. These grants will help ensure that our creative community stays strong through this crisis and is there for us as we move towards recovery," said Brown.

"The funding for this program would not be possible without a generous bequest from Bonnie Bernardi, a founding Arts Council board member and the driving force behind our SPECTRA arts education program for many years. It is with deep gratitude that we make these resources available to support our arts ecosystem during this time," said Hannah Garcia, Grants Program Manager.

To learn more or to apply for a grant, visit www.artscouncilsc.org/grants/.

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About Arts Council Santa Cruz County

The Arts Council generates creativity, vibrancy, and connection in Santa Cruz County. For 40 years, they have fueled our creative community, supporting individual and collective artistic expression and building bridges and bonds between people throughout our county. The Council distributes more than \$200,000 annually to 80+ artists and arts organizations of all sizes. They also support and develop the creative sector through meetups, workshops, professional development grants and fiscal sponsorships.