

For Immediate Release

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MURAL ARTS INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES THREE CITIES TO HOST SECOND ROUND OF ITS ART & ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

Also Announces the Launch of a New Public Art & Civic Engagement Program, To Which It Is Currently Accepting Applications

Philadelphia, PA – [Mural Arts Institute](#), an initiative of Mural Arts Philadelphia, today announced that the second round of its Art & Environment Capacity-Building Initiative, a two-year partnership between Mural Arts and three communities in the United States centering participatory art to address local environmental issues, will take place in Austin, TX, Kern County, CA and Santa Fe, NM. This program brings together local community partners, artists and Mural Arts staff to develop sustainable programs in each location to create public art that addresses issues that have deep societal implications. The theme of this iteration of the program is climate change and resilience.

“Public art has the power to shed light on societal inequities and ignite change – that is a pillar of Mural Arts’ work and mission. Climate change disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color, contributing to an ever-glaring equity gap. This initiative seeks to demonstrate the inherent resilience of these communities in the face of the undue burden of climate change. We are eager to work with environmental experts and public art partners to support their arts and solutions-oriented efforts in the face of those challenges,” said Netanel Portier, Director of the Mural Arts Institute.

After a competitive selection process, Mural Arts Institute will collaborate with the following community-oriented teams:

- Austin, TX: Raasin in the Sun, The Mosaic Workshop (J. Muzacz), and Austin Creative Alliance
- Kern County, CA: Arts Council of Kern, Dr. Rosanna Esparza, and Michelle Glass
- Santa Fe, NM: Alas de Agua Art Collective, Three Sisters Collective

Over the next two years, Mural Arts Institute will provide each team with on-site and remote consultation services, capacity-building workshops, and an annual field-building

symposium in Philadelphia (barring Covid-19 restrictions). Each team will also receive \$94,000 in funding towards a demonstration project, designed and planned with support from Mural Arts.

Mural Arts' [Art & Environment Capacity-Building Initiative](#) began with a first cohort in 2017 with organizations in Akron, OH, Memphis, TN and Detroit, MI who completed projects in 2019. Learn more about one of the completed projects in [Memphis, TN](#).

The Institute today also announced the launch of a new Public Art & Civic Engagement Capacity-Building Initiative, centered around developing sustainable infrastructure to support the growth of socially-engaged public art in communities around the United States. As with the Art & Environment initiative, the Public Art & Civic Engagement initiative will accept three host institutions from cities across the country into the 30-month program, providing each with a range of tools, support, learning opportunities, and funding. Mural Arts is currently seeking letters of interest from organizations that would like to participate in this program. Learn more about the initiative [here](#).

About Mural Arts Institute

The Mural Arts Institute is dedicated to advancing research on and development of socially-engaged public art practices. Established in 2017 as an initiative of Mural Arts Philadelphia, the Institute's approach is centered around connection: building networks, developing partnerships, and convening artists, community and partners to collaborate around participatory public art practices. Our work is in service to a larger movement that values equity, fairness and progress across all of society. We offer the Mural Arts model to other change-oriented cities across the country to build the capacity of artists, arts organizations, cultural institutions, municipal governments and more with the goal of igniting change with public art. The Mural Arts Institute is supported by The JPB Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

About the Austin, TX Team

In Austin, Texas the collaborative team is headed by [Raasin in the Sun](#), The Mosaic Workshop, and the [Austin Creative Alliance](#), among others. Raasin in the Sun was founded by former Olympian Raasin McIntosh as a placemaking and restorative initiative aimed at inspiring, uniting and uplifting communities within East Austin. The Mosaic Workshop, co-founded by artist/educator J Muzacz, and hosted at Something Cool Studios, is a creative community hub providing access and opportunities for artists to work together and thrive together in East Austin. The Austin Creative Alliance advances and advocates for artists and cultural workers in and around Austin. The focus of their collective work for the Art and Environment Initiative will take place in East Austin, a community historically red-lined and which has seen the disproportionate impact of oil tank farms, power plants, and other toxic industries in a city otherwise praised for

its access to nature and clean living. The team will be working with the [East Austin Environmental Initiative](#), which draws upon community activism and citizen involvement to address environmental concern in the area.

About the Santa Fe, NM Team

In Santa Fe, New Mexico, Indigenous and Chicana artists, activists, scholars, and community members that comprise [Alas de la Agua Art Collective](#) and [Three Sisters Collective](#) are working towards addressing the complex dynamics of colonial history, cultural erasure and environmental racism in Santa Fe, O'gha Po'Oghe, Tewa Territory. Alas De Agua Art Collective is an intersectional grass roots space providing resources and opportunities for artists of color, native artists, immigrant, undocumented, and queer artists who have historically and currently been marginalized and not afforded the same resources. They offer opportunities for said artists to provide alternative narratives, and they remove barriers and creatively go around them. Three Sisters Collective utilizes a decolonial, Pueblo rooted, matriarch-led framework to create an extreme social shift to counteract social and environmental injustices in the community. Indigenous and communities of color in and around Santa Fe have borne the burden of environmental disregard including the storage of nuclear waste on Pueblo territory, the overgrazing of land and overharvesting of plant medicines, contamination of waterways, and heightened vulnerability of women and girls towards violence from temporary workers of environmentally extractive industries (MMIWGT2S).

About the Kern County, CA Team

The Kern County, California collaborative team is headed by Dr. Rosanna Esparza, gerontologist & environmental health researcher, and public art & social practice artist, Michelle Glass, MFA. The team is joined by David Gordon, the Executive Director of the [Arts Council of Kern](#). The team is joined by a strong partnership with environmental experts. [The Center on Race, Poverty & The Environment](#) with Executive Director Caroline Farrell, JD, provides legal, organizing, and technical assistance to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color. The [Central California Environmental Justice Network](#), directed by Nayamin Martinez, MPH, works toward eliminating harmful environmental impacts, provides technical assistance and oversees the IVAN Network ([Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods](#)) in the Central Valley. The [Central Valley Air Quality Coalition](#), directed by Catherine Garoupa White, MSW, PhD, ensures that all communities have the opportunity to be involved in air quality policy development, advocacy and regulatory processes improving regional health. Caught between big-oil, big-ag and big greed, the collaborative partnership of the individuals and organizations approach their work with vigor and passion. Their lives depend on it.

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For more than 35 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative and equitable process, creating nearly 4,000 artworks that have transformed public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts aims to

empower people, stimulate dialogue, and build bridges to understanding with projects that attract artists from Philadelphia and around the world, and programs that focus on youth education, restorative justice, mental health and wellness, and public art and its preservation. Popular mural tours offer a firsthand glimpse into the inspiring stories behind Mural Arts' iconic and unparalleled collection, which has earned Philadelphia worldwide recognition as the "City of Murals." For more information, call 215-685-0750 or visit muralarts.org. Follow along on social media: [@muralarts](https://twitter.com/muralarts) on [Twitter](https://twitter.com) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/muralarts), and [@MuralArtsPhiladelphia](https://www.facebook.com/MuralArtsPhiladelphia) on Facebook, and [phillymuralarts](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCphillymuralarts) on YouTube.

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