

EVENTS

A Telethon Gathers Stories About Commuting During the Pandemic in LA

A virtual telethon will fundraise for an Arts Emergency Relief Fund, which provides grants to artists in Los Angeles impacted by COVID-19.

Elisa Wouk Almino June 17, 2020



“Transformation Through Transportation” telethon (image courtesy Renée Reizman and LADOT)

“Public transportation has always been special to me,” says musician Zach Noel. It’s not a statement people would typically associate with a Los Angeles experience. But despite LA’s reputation as a city run by cars, plenty of people take public transportation to get around, like Noel, who grew up in the San Fernando Valley.

“There’s never been a time where it wasn’t a part of my life,” he explains, sharing that he rode the train every day to go to high school. “I would spend the train rides with a notebook, staring out the window watching LA kind of transform before my eyes going from the Valley to Downtown.”

Noel’s story is one of many that will be aired during “[Transformation Through Transportation](#),” a virtual telethon event taking place over Zoom on June 26, 27, and 28. The event will fundraise for the Department of Cultural Affairs’ [Arts Emergency Relief Fund](#), which provides grants to artists impacted by COVID-19.

Renée Reizman, the artist-in-residence at the LA Department of Transportation (and also a Hyperallergic contributor), came up with the idea to launch a “Safer LA 2020 Story Hotline” during the pandemic. From now through the telethon, Reizman is welcoming anyone in Los Angeles to share what their commute has been like during the Safer at Home Orders, “whether you’ve been out getting supplies during the pandemic” or “fighting for racial justice and police abolition at Black Lives Matter protests.” Anyone interested in participating just has to call (213) 441-1558.

Share your story for the upcoming telethon (image courtesy Renée Reizman and LADOT)

In addition to sharing some of these messages during the telethon, Reizman has invited various performers, including Noel's band [New Media](#); multimedia artist [Edgar Fabián Frías](#); video artist [Yoshie Sakai](#); actress and spoken word artist [Candace Nicholas-Lippman](#); and artist and musician [Nina Sarnelle](#). The Los Angeles Public Library and [Museum of Neon Art](#) will also participate. Of special note, transportation professionals will “share facts about the impacts of COVID-19 on transportation, transit as a civil rights issue,” and how the department is currently working on “a safe and healthy recovery.”

When: Friday, June 26 12–8pm (PDT), Saturday, June 27–Sunday, June 28 2–10pm (PDT)

Where: [RSVP here](#) to join via Zoom, or livestream the event on YouTube

More info at the [Los Angeles Department of Transportation \(LADOT\)](#)

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