The City Will Now Issue Pandemic Relief Funds for Artists

A new program will provide one-time funds to professional artists in Los Angeles

By Brittany Martin - August 12, 2020

A new City of Los Angeles program is providing emergency artist relief funds to artists that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The payments are designed to help keep working artists and performers afloat—particularly those who have had difficulty accessing traditional unemployment or other relief funds due to the nature of their work—and support the creation of new public art for the city.

“Local artists and arts nonprofits are the creative heart of Los Angeles,” said Councilmember David Ryu, one of the program’s chief backers. “The work of writers, musicians, painters, and all artists help make Los Angeles the vibrant and dynamic city we love. We need to be supporting these artists—and finding new ways to bring their creativity to the public.”

Funds will be distributed in the form of one-time payments of $500 to $1,500, drawing from a pool of $340,000 and administered by the Department of Cultural Affairs. The program is one of the first city relief programs in the country to be targeted specifically at individual working artists.

Professional artists of all types will be considered for the aid, from poets to painters to DJs. To qualify, they must demonstrate that the pandemic has caused direct financial hardship, and that the art they are able to make using the money will, in some way, be made available to the general public—either online or in a physical public space.

“This is an opportunity for artists to re-imagine public art and how it is experienced in the places that we live, shop, and play while providing economic relief to support artists in these areas,” the Department of Cultural Affairs website states. “DCA will create new, inclusive definitions of public art that reflect the artists’ relationship to the sights, sounds and rhythms of their communities. As the City rethinks how people will inhabit physical public spaces once the city reopens, the Citywide COVID-19 Emergency Response Program will create an opportunity for new voices to participate and illustrate how all artistic forms can contribute to and envision how our virtual and physical spaces create a new ‘third’ public realm.”
Applications for the program are now open, and will continue being accepted either until September 1 or until 600 artists have received funding.

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