

inclusion

diversity

equity

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access



**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

**COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT**



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
City of Los Angeles

# COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT

## CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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#### Artists Credits

Front Cover: **Lilliflor Ramirez**, *Cuidate*, DCA Art of Well-Being Initiative, Digital, 2021

Inside Back Cover: **Jaqui Smith**, *Wear A Mask*, DCA Art of Well-Being Initiative, Digital, 2021

Back Cover: **Cynthia Navarro**, *Protect Your Loved Ones*, DCA Art of Well-Being Initiative, Digital, 2021

## GENERAL MANAGER'S STATEMENT

**“DCA continues to act quickly and effectively.”**

As we progress through the almost insurmountable pain and loss of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to reflect on the admirable effort on the part of the City's committed and dedicated **Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)**. DCA's inspiring workers stepped up as a team and went above and beyond the call of duty to continue to serve the residents of our great City and its visitors amidst a historic global crisis.

DCA continues to act quickly and efficiently to address the rapidly changing circumstances, meeting short-term priorities, while remaining steadfast on long-term goals for the City. DCA continues to leverage precious cultural and creative resources as drivers of economic activity, workforce development, and belonging, as well as employ strategies that counter the negative impacts of these crises.

**The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically shifted the environment in which we operate. I am proud of the work we are accomplishing together post *Safer at Home* over the past many weeks and months.**

While many of the objectives we established together as a Department shifted temporarily, we continue to advance the goals originally outlined in DCA's Operating Plan.

Building on the success of DCA over the past several years, we have made great strides in restoring baseline arts and cultural services to meet the demand of visitors and residents for free and affordable cultural offerings. As a result, **I am pleased to report a significant number of people served virtually to date during the COVID-19 pandemic through cultural festivals, art classes, and direct support to artists and nonprofit arts organizations.**

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs General Manager's Statement

With a \$16.3 million investment by the City, by mid-year in Fiscal Year 2020/21, DCA served 1,888,253 residents and visitors including: more than 1.2 million individuals served by grant-funded projects; 296,184 social media followers and website users; 244,413 community arts participants in DCA's Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers; 74,986 audience members served by our performing arts programming; and 73,750 program participants served via public art programming.

DCA consistently plays a leading role in delivering high-quality arts and cultural services through: **Community Arts; Grants Administration; Public Art; Performing Arts; and Marketing, Development, Design, and Digital Research through a Cultural Equity rubric of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Excellence, and Access.**

Amongst our Department's great achievements in this year of turmoil, we are proud to have announced our next **Poet Laureate of the City of Los Angeles, Lynne Thompson**, a renowned and treasured local educator and literary idol. Amongst Thompson's artistic accolades are the *Marsh Hawk Prize*, *Perugia Book Award*, and the *Great Lakes Colleges Association's New Writers Award*. Through her tenure as Poet Laureate, Thompson will serve as an official ambassador of LA's arts community, promoting poetry across the City and celebrating its rich literary tradition and culture. The **City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate Program** is a proud collaboration between DCA and the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) aiming to enhance the presence and appreciation of poetry and the literary arts in Los Angeles, and to engage Angelenos who have limited exposure to poetry and other forms of expressive writing.

Continuing on the subject of poetry, on this year's list we also highlight **Amanda Gorman, LA's first Youth Poet Laureate** and an alumnus of the DCA grant-funded literary arts program **WriteGirl**. She awed audiences all over the world with her poem "*The Hill We Climb*" at this year's presidential inauguration on January 20 and with "*Chorus of Captains*" at the Super Bowl on February 7, launching a national re-awakening and renewed interest towards the poetry artform while representing her native LA and DCA. Her poetic acumen and poised performance illustrate what access, mentoring, and representation can inspire. Her story and others that do not receive national attention demonstrate the impact of the arts and the services that the Department consistently offers.

The poetry does not end there, however. At this year's **Golden Globe Awards**, broadcast to an audience of over **18.3 million viewers** on NBC by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, Los Angeles's young poets, served by DCA grantee, **Get Lit – Words Ignite**, were prominently featured. The young creators expressed their art, aspirations, and dreams through poetry highlighting the success of the program.



All three poetry events demonstrate the **power and significance of arts, culture, and creativity** on a wide scale, renewing interest both nationally and locally, and opening avenues for LA's young people who participate in DCA's programs. We congratulate and applaud all the artists, writers, and educators that took part in these poetry moments of uplifting and healing.

Beyond the national/international spotlight, DCA has remained steadfast in its local efforts by finding innovative ways to continue engaging the public. For example, one of DCA's most famous and well-respected cultural programs, the **City of Los Angeles (COLA) Individual Artist Fellowships Performance Series and Visual Arts Exhibition** was not able to take place physically for the first time in 23 years, but launched virtually with the exhibition and performances premiering and showcasing the new artworks created in a digital format, while addressing the immediate impact on COVID-19 on the arts. **Selected artists for the 2020 COLA Individual Artist Fellowships included: Tanya Aguiñiga, Amir H. Fallah, YoungEun Kim, Elana Mann, Hillary Mushkin, Alison O'Daniel, Roxanne Steinberg, Vincent Ramos, Steven Reigns, Shizu Saldamando, Holly J. Tempo, Mia Doi Todd, Jeffrey Vallance, and Lisa Diane Wedgeworth.**

Each grant applicant demonstrated an exemplary career of professional public presentations for more than 15 years, centered in the LA region. COLA is one of the seven grant-categories offered annually by DCA, and all of the categories honor the synergetic relationship between Los Angeles, its creative fields, the spectrum of local talent, our collective cultural history, and our stature as an international center for creative entrepreneurship.

DCA has continued building on this successful digital format with the **2021 COLA Fellows: Neel Agrawal, Noel Alumit, Edgar Arceneaux, Maura Brewer, Nao Bustamante, Jedediah Caesar, Michael Datcher, Sarah Elgart, Neha Choksi, Lia Halloran, Phung Huynh, Farrah Karapetian, Ruben Ochoa and Umar Rashid.** These fellows produced a new body of work with grants of \$10,000 each, and their original works premiered this spring. We look forward to lessons learned through this new form of engagement and to building on the future of this program.

**DCA's success as a cultural and civic agency has also garnered the attention of other regional cultural and civic leaders and organizations. Many of our team were invited to participate in regional convenings to speak about the roles of the arts in re-imagining the future.**

Councilmember **Mark Ridley-Thomas** invited DCA's General Manager (GM) to speak to the state of the arts at his most recent Empowerment Congress. The **Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation** also reached out and invited the GM to speak to the arts sector's needs, specifically, access to community arts programs.

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs General Manager's Statement

The Foundation sought the GM's insights about access to the arts within the framework of the pandemic and knowledge of regional gaps and opportunities.

Undergirding this interest is a recent *LA Times* piece by **Marc Swed**. He mentions the need for a federal **Department of Culture** to set a tone of a "national ambition." Swed's article and the recent invitations to speak invigorate the conversation about the necessity of art and cultural programming in providing economic benefit, empathy, and wellbeing as positive outcomes. He also mentioned the financial hardships that have hit the arts community and the need for a WPA style program for artists. Cultural critics from across the nation have addressed this subject with articles appearing in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, elevating this conversation from a regional to a national level.

Shifting our focus to education: last year, in partnership with **California State University, Los Angeles** (Cal State LA), DCA launched its inaugural **Community Teaching Artist Certificate Program**, the first of its kind in the nation. The program received 30 applicants with 25 being accepted to make up the first cohort. Classes began in March, 2020, but quickly migrated to an online format in response to *Safer at Home Order*, and participants continued without interruption. The program recruited students for the fall as well. This stackable certificate program is designed for artists who teach in community arts centers, galleries, museums, and theaters, and non-arts settings. The program codifies core competencies in cross-cultural connection and communication, classroom management, and trauma-informed pedagogy.

Yet, amidst the crisis, the Department has not forgotten its role, not only as a cultural driver, but also as civic servant. This is something that cannot remain unstated and that truly showed, amidst this pandemic, as every classification participated in the **Disaster Service Worker Program for Public Employees** which continues today. From the General Manager and Assistant General Manager to DCA's Division Directors, Arts Managers, Art Center Directors, Arts Instructors, and Community Services Workers, the Department showed up to serve with more than 11,500 combined hours. DCA sincerely appreciates all the employees who served in this program in various capacities, from telephone assistance, working in shelters, and at vaccination sites to meet the needs of residents.

Additionally, DCA's Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers have served as emergency testing and vaccination sites. The **William Reagh Photography Center and the Frida Kahlo Theater**, one of DCA's public/private partnership arts facilities, for instance, served as a **COVID-19 vaccination site** for teachers and for grocery, restaurant, and childcare workers not already receiving vaccinations via unions. The pop-up site also utilized the parking lot to serve individuals who were able to register in advance through outreach from Councilmember Gil Cedillo's office in Council District 1.

Building on top of this community care and emergency response work, DCA's Marketing, Development, Design, and Digital Research Division launched the **Art of Well-Being COVID-19 Messaging Initiative** in order



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to increase the effectiveness of the City's COVID-19 messaging, using language reflective of the seriousness of the crisis and images created by artists appealing to the cultural perspectives of the BIPOC community. DCA partnered with the **Emergency Management Department (EMD)** to create the project and promote the resulting artwork and messaging with **Streets LA** and **Outfront/JC Decaux Furniture** on bus shelter posters. The pilot program focuses on reaching Black and Latinx South LA residents using images commissioned by DCA through its nonprofit community partner, LA Commons, and created by local artists.

The primary objective of the initiative is to increase awareness of the importance of hand washing, COVID-19 testing, physical distancing, use of face coverings, and other health and wellness-awareness measures that move us toward recovery from the current pandemic. The innovative manner in which DCA and EMD are trying to reach people uses the creative work of local artists to gain much-needed attention. DCA provided administration and oversight of the project, creation of the bus shelter posters, and the dissemination of the images and messaging representative of the community across social media channels. EMD and the artists commissioned also used their social media platforms to further engage the community and spread the preventative messaging.

**The artists whose works are displayed on LA's bus shelters are Alfonso Aceves, Moses X Ball, Amani Holbert, Noni Olabisi, and Eric "King Cre8" Walker.** The artwork was disseminated initially across DCA's social media channels. Artist statements were included with the images to deepen the meaning of the messaging. Over 40 social media messages have been posted so far, resulting in over 1,500 engagements with the work, seen by over 53,000 people. The project initially focused on the South end of the City as a pilot and was expanded to other communities in the LA region.

The expansion continued with community partners **Self-Help Graphics & Art** and **Il:Il A Creative Collective** presenting the following eighteen artists from East LA, the San Fernando Valley, and other parts of Los Angeles. The Self Help Graphics & Art commissioned artists are: **Gabby Claro, Sophia Garcia, Trenely "Clover" Garcia, Daniel Gonzalez, Priscilla Hernandez, Delmi "De Marte" Martinez, Cynthia Navarro, Vanya Navarette, Liliflor Ramirez, Oscar Rodriguez, Dewey Tafoya, and Arleny Vargas.** Artists commissioned by Il:Il A Creative Collective are: **Jackie Hernandez, Jaqui Smith, Kaylynn Kim, Omar Martinez, Sandy Lopez, and Val Galindo.**

Finally, DCA-grantee **Otis College** released its far-reaching annual **Report on the Creative Economy** recently that has developed over the last seven years into the industry standard. DCA is the original and longest-running sponsor of the Otis report; it is the singular project that Otis proposes to DCA in its bi-annual grant proposal.

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs General Manager's Statement

**This year's report indicated Southern California has the largest concentration of creative industries in the state, accounting for 49% of California's creative wage and salary employment, and 52% of its contract employment. Creative industries account for 9% of the region's total employment. The report further detailed the 2020 COVID-19 impact on LA's creative economy, reporting that \$78.9 billion was lost, over 276,000 jobs were impacted, and \$26.5 billion in total labor income was lost.**

DCA is proud to be a lead sponsor of this crucial industry-wide report that details the powerful workforce in the arts and culture sector and aids in creating policy to allow for progress. COVID-19 has had its impact on the sector, but the project proves crucial for highlighting the impact of organizations like DCA and its nonprofit arts and cultural organizational grantees and individual artist grantees for years to come.

In light of the dramatic change in its operating environment, the Department continues to work on its three prioritized overarching goals: **Advance Racial Equity through Culture; Retain Creative Sector Jobs; and Prepare for, and Accelerate, Economic Recovery.** Achieving these goals will: preserve our cultural ecology; ensure our regional economy is able to bounce back faster; foster belonging; and prepare for the 2022 Super Bowl and the 2028 Olympic Summer and Paralympic Games.

The work of the Department is both deep and widespread in all corners and districts of our City and takes the form of each of the Divisions that makes up its structure: **the Marketing, Development, Design, and Digital Research Division; the Community Arts Division and its Performing Arts Program; the Public Art Division; the Grants Administration Division; and the General and Administrative Support Program.** As detailed below, each Division has its specific focus in cultivating and providing equitable access to the arts and saw its own set of triumphs, quickly pivoting and finding innovative ways to continue serving our City and communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

## MARKETING, DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN, AND

## DIGITAL RESEARCH DIVISION

“DCA promoted over 400 online events and classes.”

DCA's **Marketing, Development, Design, and Digital Research Division** leads the Department's efforts in the promotion and amplification of the rich and diverse cultural voices and forms of expression by our arts and cultural partners in alignment with our City's core values. This Division manages all communications; branding; marketing; development; fundraising; design; media and public relations; promotions; publications; website development; content creation; research; writing; performance metrics creation and analysis; digital and community outreach; and social media content and engagement for DCA.

**The unit has been exceptionally critical in disseminating COVID-19, census, and election information recently in partnership with the Mayor's Office, the City Council, the Emergency Management Department, the City's Public Information Directors and Officers, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, and the Registrar Recorder.**

In quick response to the developing changes of COVID-19 and the *Safer at Home Order*, the Division quickly established an **Artist Resource List** gathering, organizing, and disseminating local, regional, state, national, and international resources for artists to access various forms of aid, including emergency funding, legal advice, skill workshops, classes and courses, amongst others. The Division posted online art resources for children, parents, families, artists, and educators to continue to work and engage with arts and culture within the new quarantine environment. The Division transformed DCA's website, **culturela.org**, into a local online hub/portal of resources for artists, educators, local leaders, and residents to access and navigate an

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Marketing, Development, Design, and Digital Research Division

overwhelming amount of information in order to address the massive impact of the pandemic on working artists and art workers in our City and beyond.

At the same time, in partnership with **DCA's Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers** and **Performing Arts Venues**, the Division managed to use this concentration of information to centralize all of the DCA **online course and event offerings** for Angelenos to access through a *DCA at Home* Portal. *DCA at Home* aggregates DCA's online classes and events programming from the Centers and Venues with those of its grantees, partners, historic sites, and galleries serving as a nexus for community art offerings in all of LA. The portal has proven to be successful with DCA's Community Arts Division continuing to operate in this new digital format, keeping Angelenos engaged throughout the year.

Through these communication strategies, alongside DCA's **Monthly Newsletters** and its **Social Media Channels**, DCA managed to **promote over 400 online events** and classes between June 2020 and March 2021. In total, DCA garnered over **1.57 million impressions** on social media between January 1 and December 31, 2020, representing a **181% increase** compared to 2019. The Department totaled **48,999 engagements**, representing a **120% increase** from that same period, and reached an **audience of over 26,000** representing a **20.8% increase**.

**Additionally, DCA realized an increase in over 290,000 social media and website users. DCA and DCA-produced events, as well as DCA grantee-sponsored events appeared a total of 511 times within traditional media outlets, such as magazines, newspapers, and other arts and culture publications as well as online.**

Alongside DCA's digital communications, the Division also continued its own publication efforts, most recently publishing: *DCA's FY2019/20 Annual Report* online, along with virtual editions of its hugely popular *2020 Latino and American Indian Heritage Month Calendars and Cultural Guides* and the *2021 African American, Asian Pacific American, and LGBT editions*, in addition to one of the City's most coveted publications, the *Festival Guide*, in 2020 and 2021, now listing local virtual festivals and events online.

The Division continues to communicate the relevance of DCA and prepare constituents for how they will experience its services. **The main conduit to service delivery since the pandemic hit has been DCA's website, its social media platforms, and the online festival guides and heritage month calendars and cultural guides. These assets demonstrate DCA's support and connection to artists, art organizations, families, and individuals.** DCA continues to search for, and utilize, every available avenue to serve the people of Los Angeles and communicate the Department's impact and leadership in the community.



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Furthermore, in line with our long-term strategic initiatives for cultural planning for the City of Los Angeles, DCA participated in the **World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF) Leadership Exchange Program** supported by **Bloomberg Philanthropies** and **Google Arts and Culture**. The program brought together practitioners from 18 of the world's largest metropolises (including Los Angeles, London, New York, Paris, and Tokyo) to share knowledge and innovative best practices that advance cultural planning and the creative sector. This global convening occurred virtually and the Division showcased its growing asset mapping projects: **Promise Zone Arts (PZA)** and the **Neighborhood Arts Profile (NAP)**, and the policy implications both projects have in terms of cultural equity, creative economic development, and preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

This Leadership Exchange program is an opportunity to develop frameworks and cooperation around the concepts of cultural equity and inclusion, heritage, and legacy in concert with the **2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games**. At the same time, providing local and regional support for the arts and culture ecosystem for both the City and County of Los Angeles. Each local arts agency shares the strategic goal of ensuring the Olympic Organizing Committee produces an **Olympic Arts Festival** involving the artists and arts organizations representing the diverse regions where the games occur. The intention is to build on the creative ecology of the region and ensure the cultural impact is informative, relevant, and sustainable after the Olympic games have ended.

The Division is also revisiting **Olympic Field Scan** data and a 2020 draft report to align it to broader strategic planning efforts parallel to the leadership exchange program. Lastly, the Division is now prepared to launch the **second Promise Zone Arts (PZA) Initiative in South Los Angeles** along with DCA's implementation partners: **LA Commons**, **Slate-Z**, and **Community Coalition (CoCo)**.

The first PZA Initiative was a cultural asset mapping and activation project under the administrative oversight of the Division. The **Los Angeles Promise Zone Website** offers a participatory platform to spotlight the artists, sites, cultural practices, and tradition bearers that the community deems significant, illuminating the rich cultural tapestry that makes up the Los Angeles Promise Zones. Currently, the website has a database that contains a searchable list of the **473 Cultural Treasures nominated through the first PZA initiative** and will include more from DCA's second initiative in the South Los Angeles Promise Zone. The Division features narratives from the site's story bank and employs a geo-humanities approach to curate social media campaigns highlighting the cultural resources of the region through the site's database and GIS-mapping features.

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Marketing, Development, Design, and Digital Research Division

The Division also manages the Department’s fundraising efforts, raising over \$47 million over the last 20 years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, DCA submitted 18 grant applications and requests for donations, and received 12 grant awards and donations to-date totaling over \$9.5 million in arts funding, with an additional \$191,339 in requested funding pending from 3 grant awards not announced yet.

Amongst the grants awarded was a **Housing and Urban Development** FY21/22 grant for **\$270,492 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for “Building the City’s Creative Workforce,”** to provide training for young people in economically deprived neighborhoods with the skills needed to enter the creative industries.

The program also seeks to fill a need for high-quality arts education programs for low-income Title I students in LAUSD and surrounding public schools. To address these challenges, DCA will expand its distance learning programs, with training programs in visual arts, animation, and digital design to be offered citywide through DCA’s network of Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers.

## GRANTS ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

“Encouraged grantees to move their public services online.”

As mandated by the Administrative Code, DCA’s **Grants Administration Division** annually awards over 350 personal service contracts to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists throughout the City. Ranging in size from \$1,000 to \$75,000, these awards are foundational to the success of most organizations that are providing free or low-cost access to a diverse array of cultural programming. With 75% of the grantee pool designated as small (under \$100,000 operating budgets) or mid-sized organizations (below \$3 million), these organizations are often culturally specific or discipline-specific, serving low-income youth, families, and communities

**In response to the COVID-19 crisis, which saw a drastic impact on the arts and culture sector, the Division invented 7 different and new partnership opportunities to support 1,173 working artists and arts managers with \$354,300 in employment compensation. It organized 4 rounds of DCA Arts Emergency Relief Grants.**

In the first round, 327 grants of \$400 each were awarded to Performing Artists and Ensembles (\$130,800 total); in the second round, 232 grants of \$400 were awarded to Artists and Small Ensembles (\$92,800 total); in the third round, 86 grants of \$400 went to 400 Artists and Small Ensembles and Design and Visual Artists (\$34,400 total); and finally, in the fourth round, 131 artists received \$400 grant awards (\$52,400 total).

The Division also partnered with the **Dance Resource Center**, awarding 300 dance artists \$100 each (\$30,000 total). As part of the **Corona Memorial** effort, grants of \$700 each were awarded to 7 artists (\$4,900 total), and, lastly, as part of a Grant Contract Amendment for the **Mariachi Plaza Festival Foundation**, 90 artists received \$100 each (\$9,000 total).

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Grants Administration Division

Finally, the Division and DCA's Performing Arts Program staff are collaborating with the **Small Business Administration** (SBA) to prepare DCA grantees and other Los Angeles-based small and medium sized venues to apply for a portion of the COVID-19 relief package through the **Shuttered Venue Operators Grant** (SVOG) opportunity.

In accord, to help sustain public services during the Mayor's *Safer at Home Order*, the **Grants Administration Division staff allowed and encouraged grantees to move their public services online in order to safely and widely serve residents as well as national viewers**. Nearly all of DCA's 350-plus grantees quickly re-envisioned how their projects could be recast online through an array of technologies, platforms, and methodologies.

**Similar to DCA's Community Arts Division, DCA's grantees' wide-range of success includes: film festivals switched to timed and on-demand online screenings; youth arts education workshops employed new distance learning models; art walks and exhibitions enabled visitors to navigate works of art in 3D-rendered virtual spaces; and day-long online festivals showcased DJs, dancers, and musicians interacting with viewers based in Los Angeles and beyond. Indeed, many DCA grant-contracted vendors have found great success in growing their audiences with online services, and are now exploring strategies to sustain this expanded reach during future activities.**

DCA is proud of the swift response staff provided to the financial impact of COVID-19 on the arts economy, and is proud of all its Centers, Venues, and Grantees for their quick mobilization to continue to provide arts and culture amidst the crisis. In doing so, DCA's grant initiatives for FY 2019/20 and 2020/21 reached over **1.2 million participants** and is growing in spite of the pandemic.

## COMMUNITY ARTS DIVISION

**“A rapid and successful switch to online platforms.”**

DCA's **Community Arts Division** provides direct access to instruction in applied creativity. Through Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers located in low-income communities across Los Angeles, DCA gives access to youth arts education rarely offered in LAUSD. Center classes are often the only access a student may have to affordable music, animation, dance, or digital arts classes. Programming provided by the centers builds creative skills that further life skills, leading to better paying jobs, fostering lifelong learning, and promoting positive civic engagement.

**Annually, the Division serves over 500,000 young people, families, adults, and seniors. Since June 2020, it has reached over 244,413 people online.** The Community Arts Division continues to meet the mandate of providing services to our communities by planning for the safe reopening of our arts and cultural centers and historic sites. As we moved through the surge and the *Safer at Home Order*, art center staff employed best practices to provide classes and services virtually, and to maintain their link to the communities they serve. DCA pursued projects to ensure that our constituents could register for classes online, and in anticipation of in-person courses being reinstated when safe, trained in the proper use and availability of Personal Protective Equipment for all staff members and participants.

**The Division's rapid response to the changes caused by COVID-19 and the resulting *Safer at Home Order* deserves the highest acknowledgment. Building on this response, the Community Arts Division continues its success in using online platforms such as YouTube, Zoom, Facebook, and Instagram Live to provide accessible and affordable online arts and cultural programming, classes, and events numbering over 400 alone over the past year during the pandemic.**

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Community Arts Division

Amongst these excellent events and programs are the following examples: the **William Grant Still Art Center's 40th Anniversary of its acclaimed *Black Doll Show*** was engaging, educational, and entertaining. Launched with an intent to not only examine the history of the artistry of black dolls, but also detail the social implications of the resulting movement. The online celebration was followed by creative and enjoyable doll-making workshops. The **Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center** continued to offer an array of virtual cultural classes for the fall, winter, spring, and summer sessions, remaining ever more connected and even hosting popular community **Open Mic Nights** via Instagram.

Several students from DCA's **Barnsdall Junior Arts Center** won awards in the **Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards**. These awards are widely publicized and encourage creative teens to participate in Regional Scholastic events. Several students received Gold Keys. This distinction allows Regional Gold Key recipients to compete for national medals in an exhibition that will culminate with a National Awards Ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York.

The **Sun Valley Youth Arts Center** continued to offer free visual arts classes via Facebook and also celebrated its **14th Annual Día de los Muertos Festival** with a virtual concert by **Conjunto Zacamandu** and **Los Hermanos Herrera**, along with an online art exhibition and a closing ritual with **Danza Temachtia Quetzacoatl**, dedicating the celebration to honor those who have lost their lives to COVID-19. The **Canoga Park Youth Arts Center** also held its popular music classes virtually, containing an array of offerings from guitar, piano, dance, drums, and ukulele. **DCA's public/private partners** like the **Center for the Arts Eagle Rock** also consistently offered virtual arts courses and activities with local teaching artists such as Doodle Hour, painting, and basketry, to name a few.

DCA's renowned **Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG)** continued to provide access to arts and cultural experiences through the presentation of timely and relevant panels, presentations, and exhibitions that were virtually accessible and free to the public. In addition to the **2020 COLA Individual Artist Fellowships** virtual visual arts exhibition, LAMAG launched both culturally and socially engaged exhibitions that answered to the impact of the pandemic. These included: *ARCHIVE MACHINES*, and, more recently, *Index, Interiors; Tender Calamities; membrane tensions; and public sculpture*. The last four of which featured newly commissioned work by research-based Los Angeles artists: **Tristan Espinoza, Panteha Arabeshi, Maru Garcia, and Alexandre Dorriz**.

LAMAG's more recent exhibitions are science-based and engage Angelenos in the era of COVID-19 with artwork that explores epidemiology, aesthetics and biology, public policy and ethics, and machine learning. The virtual exhibition design initiates visitor interaction opportunities through response prompts with additional engagement through a free downloadable educator, family and gallery guides, and a chance to further connect by attending LAMAG's virtual programming events. They prove significant amidst the global turn toward more consciousness on the relationship between human beings and the microbial/viral world.



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In December 2020, DCA celebrated the completion of the **Watts Tower Restoration Project**, a 10-year conservation effort on the sculpture conducted by the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art**. This work has buttressed and repaired the complex of minarets, spires, steeples, and turrets created over 33 years by Italian immigrant **Simon Rodia**.

This accomplishment is celebrated by DCA, especially for its commitment to the local community, young and old, whose lives are enriched by all the activity and culture that surround the Watts Towers Arts Center and the Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center, as well as the international community who visit this world-famous landmark every year and regard it as an arts icon of Los Angeles.

DCA continued to provide critical access to the city's **Hollyhock House** designed by **Frank Lloyd Wright** and on the **UNESCO World Heritage List** through promotion of the *Hollyhock House Virtual Accessibility Experience (VAE)* and the development of associated educational resources. Over 36,000 people used the VAE since its launch in August 2019, and with its pre-pandemic development, Hollyhock House was one of the early historic sites to offer free virtual access to audiences at home, showing incredibly high usage between March and May 2020.

From April to July 2020, Hollyhock House joined other public Frank Lloyd Wright sites in producing the hugely popular **Wright Virtual Visits**, where sites shared weekly short-form tours via social media. Featured prominently in Smithsonian Magazine, Architectural Digest and MarthaStewart.com, the program provided closed sites with the opportunity to provide new and growing audiences with interesting, informal glimpses into the design and history of structures like Hollyhock House, Fallingwater, Taliesin West, and Unity Temple. Since the program began, Hollyhock House has seen a 69% growth in Instagram followers. Tours produced by, and for, Hollyhock House were enjoyed by over 84,000 viewers across Instagram and Facebook. Tours shared from other Wright sites had over 34,000 views while over 50,000 viewers tuned in for Hollyhock House tours through other sites' social channels. Hollyhock House is still participating in a second iteration of Wright Virtual Visits, which launched in August, pairing two Wright sites for live thematic conversations and open Q&As on Facebook Live. Over 2,500 viewers joined for Hollyhock House's live talk with Monona Terrace in August, and Hollyhock House will be featured again on July 8 to celebrate the second anniversary of its UNESCO World Heritage List inscription along with the seven other inscribed Wright sites.

DCA also developed the **Hollyhock @ Home Guide** as a resource for young people and adults featuring educational activities, Wright-related books, films, Spotify playlists, Zoom backgrounds, and podcast recommendations from staff and docents. With over 20 arts and educational activities geared for young people ages 4 and up, the Hollyhock @ Home Guide provided resources for families to learn about Frank Lloyd Wright and Hollyhock House as well as find inspiration for artwork of their own, designing geometric abstractions, folding screens, dinnerware, and even a community plan.

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Community Arts Division

In celebration of **Hollyhock House's Centennial**, new research into the house's construction and history are being shared through social media (#HollyhockHouse100). On April 1, DCA celebrated the birthday of Aline Barnsdall, who commissioned Hollyhock House and gifted Barnsdall Park to the City. With 97 participants, festivities included remembrances and a reading from Barnsdall descents, a performance from Bob Baker Marionette Theater, as well as presentations on Barnsdall's radical Olive Hill billboards, a transformative restoration project in the owner's bedroom, and the acquisition of two original sofa tables.

DCA also created a new live our program for Hollyhock House. IN FOCUS Live Tours are free and happen on the first and third Fridays of every month. Presented on Facebook Live, these 20-minute focus tours are led by expert docents and provide a closer look at specific spaces and features of Hollyhock House with over 130 participants (including some international viewers) for the first tour.

With 120 volunteer docents playing a central role in interpreting Hollyhock House, DCA kept this group active and engaged virtually through the pandemic with lectures and conversations, book club, and tours of other restoration projects and museums, including Wright's Martin House in Buffalo, NY.

Beyond public and docent programming, Hollyhock House continues to work with BOE, GSD, Project Restore, and numerous contractors on the major \$4.5 million restoration of Residence A, the Wright-designed guest house in Barnsdall Park. This sweeping project has required extensive research, guidance, and oversight from Hollyhock House to ensure the project adheres to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration and that historical details are appropriately handled.

At Hollyhock House, ongoing restoration work continues as well. In collaboration with Judson Studios and Project Restore, DCA restored the owner's room art glass doors the original design in partnership with the art glass firm that initially created the windows. Wood floors in the private and public wings of Hollyhock House have also been restored and received new varnish coats during the closure to the public.

## PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM

**“Festivals successfully moved and took place online.”**

DCA’s **Performing Arts Program** (Perf) in the Community Arts Division provides affordable access to rehearsal and presenting space in the City’s seven performing arts venues. Four of these venues are in the midst of major capital improvements. When completed, the venues will serve as economic engines for local communities fueling small businesses. These venues provide direct access to platforms for both professional and community-based groups to rent safe and affordable facilities to produce concerts, plays, recitals, and other civic gatherings. The rental program generates **\$365,000 in direct revenue**, and **supports local small businesses** adjacent to the venues.

When COVID-19 hit Los Angeles, Perf was on the verge of launching its annual **Los Angeles Jazz Caravan** in collaboration with various community artists and organizations, as well as several heritage festivals in Leimert Park Village, as part of the Leimert Park Cultural Hub (LPCH).

**Festivals successfully moved and took place online with presenters including: the Barbara Morrison Performing Arts Center, Fernando Pullum Performing Arts Center, The World Stage, We Love Leimert, Jazz at LACMA, LA Third Church for Spiritual Living, and K-Jazz, amongst many others. Among the many different festivals and concerts that took place, were the Haitian Heritage Festival, Tech Leimert, Amplify Africa, SoulfulofNoise, JazzAntiqua Dance & Music Ensemble, and many more. Together, these virtual festivals and events reached nearly 100,000 participants.**

This virtual success also occurred in Canoga Park via the **Madrid Theater Cultural Hub** and its performing arts audiences. Perf was able to work with beloved local institutions such as the **Gr818ers, Dance Camera**

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Performing Arts Program

**West, Versa-Style Dance Company, San Fernando Valley Youth Chorus, West Valley Playhouse,** and many others, to provide programs to the West Valley and, as with the LPCH, reaching beyond the City limits to international audiences through the internet, all at no charge. This programming also included a special video featuring **Councilmember Bob Blumenfield** announcing the **Canoga Park Art Walk District** created by **11:11 A Creative Collective**.

Due to COVID-19, DCA's theaters were shuttered and staff worked remotely per the *Safer at Home Order*. However, Perf continued moving forward in managing construction and renovation projects. Attending weekly virtual meetings with the **Los Angeles Building Bureau of Engineering, Royal Construction,** the **CAO's office, Council District offices,** and the **construction crews**.

**The work, labor, dedication, and commitment of the Perf team was profound as they worked to secure sufficient resources to transform venues into Performing Arts Centers. Concurrently, Perf created a new universal rental contract template for DCA's venues which was approved by the City.**

Perf is also working at the **Vision Theatre** to ensure that, once re-opened, the world-class facility housed in Leimert Park will be of service to the Village and the larger South LA community. To this goal, Perf staff attended community meetings, formed a City Taskforce on Leimert Park Village to address critical issues, and a **South L.A. Performing Arts Alliance** to ensure that this treasured cultural space and community is preserved in partnership with performing artists, presenters, and residents. The Vision Theatre is scheduled to re-open in 2022 after a **\$33 million renovation by FSY Architects**.

To build upon this effort, **DCA was recently awarded \$4,225,000 for the Vision Theatre Renovation** as part of the Mayor's program year 47 Consolidated Plan (FY2021/22) for CDBG award funding. This grant funding will authorize renovation and expansion of a City-owned performing arts and cultural facility with significant historical importance to conform to current ADA, fire, and life safety requirements in order to showcase leading-edge productions, including theatrical, musical, and live performance and to provide a performing arts training center and education space for youth. The space will comprise 17,250 square feet when completed and seat 750 people. The Vision Theatre is located in the Leimert Park Village (CD 8), an historical and contemporary center for African American art, music, and culture in Los Angeles.

Finally, with 1,500 votes cast, Perf announced a winner for the **Vision Theatre Curtain Design Contest**, artist Wendell Wiggins. His design, *Sankofa*, will grace the stage of the renovated theater. Renderings were submitted by stage designers, costume designers, art directors, and visual artists from across Los Angeles County. The virtual contest proved a success across DCA's social media channels. Not only did it serve as a



diversion from the news cycle, but also elevated the profile of LA artists, and as a citywide endeavor, provided a moment of belonging for Angelenos as celebrities reposted the voting link on their social media accounts and urged followers to vote. The curtain will go into production by April 2021. Wiggins will work with the curtain manufacturer to complete the curtain's design, understanding it may need to be augmented to meet the theater's technical and safety needs. Funds provided for the competition were procured from the overall construction budget provided for the Vision Theatre renovation.

Throughout the pandemic, Perf actively collaborated with CD 15, BOE, and the CAO's office to continue efforts to improve this historic facility. During COVID-19, DCA installed a **new lighting and sound system**, and restored the theater's **Yamaha Concert Grand Piano**, positioning the theatre as one of the best equipped in the City. The venue also served as a polling place during the 2020 Election.

Alongside the Vision Theatre, Perf also finalized a renovation plan for the **Madrid Theater** in Canoga Park. Improvements include a complete transformation of the façade and important lobby and ADA restroom designs. The Madrid is expected to start its renovation in the fall of 2021 with **Gensler Architects** brought in to contribute to the redesign of this cultural treasure for the Valley. Perf has further worked with CD 3 and BOE to bring a brand new, one-of-a-kind performing arts incubation center and residency to LA. **The Taxco**, also known as the **Canoga Park Stage Arts Lab**, will have a mission to help LA artists develop new work, and be an important new asset to the City's fleet of theatrical venues. This lab is expected to open 2022. Another recent **CDBG grant of \$3,250,000 was awarded to DCA** for the cultural hub to further enhance these efforts.

**Since the onset of the pandemic, Perf's venues have actively followed the CDC's COVID-19 safety protocols and signage suggestions with two, the Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro, and the Madrid Theatre in Canoga Park, safely re-opened for use by the community for rentals in March 2021.**

Continuing with approved safety precautions, these venues are now available for film production, streaming, rehearsals, and any other community needs at this time.

As part of DCA's service to the community, Perf hosted town halls and community conversations to share information about reopening with the primary users of the theaters. Over 100 arts organizations were affected by these venue closures, and Perf is doing everything possible to keep the City's performing arts ecosystem engaged and informed. Both the Madrid and Warner Grand posted messages of encouragement and social justice on their marquees during this period of enlightened social awareness.

## PUBLIC ART DIVISION

**“Repurposed a program to provide emergency artist funding.”**

DCA’s **Public Art Division** provides direct investment to enhance our public spaces. Funded by the **Percent for Art Ordinances**, DCA’s public art programs commission artists to produce award-winning artworks, murals, and cultural festivals. Each commission includes rigorous outreach to ensure that the selected artist reflects the community.

The Division also manages the curatorial and administrative services of the **LAWA Art Exhibition Program**. This 18-year inter-agency partnership includes sites located at the new Midfield Satellite Concourse (MSC), the new Landside Access Modernization Program (LAMP) locations, as well as the existing LAX Terminals 1-7, Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT), and the Van Nuys FlyAway Terminal. The airport exhibitions highlight local artists and communities, reinforcing positive images of hope and inspiration while generating economic activity.

Lastly, the Division manages the **City Art Collection**, whose goal is to enhance the climate for artistic creativity, promote understanding and awareness of the visual arts, and heighten the artistic heritage of the City of Los Angeles.

**As always, the Division has a hand on the pulse of cutting-edge artistic trends that has remained steadfast during the pandemic. As COVID-19 persisted, the Division demonstrated art’s connection to world events, reflecting how artists and art organizations and the people of Los Angeles adapt and respond to the crisis.**

The Division repurposed the **Private Arts Development Fee Program (ADF)** into several emergency artist funding initiatives beginning in June 2020 with the **Restarting Community Business with Live Theaters**



**Headquartered in Council District 2** initiative. The relief program aimed to support CD 2's live theater businesses that were affected by the *Safer at Home Order* by offering stimulus contracts of **\$8,000 to 24 nonprofit or for-profit theater businesses** to create online experiences such as theatre workshops, community classes, play-readings, one-person shows, or edited versions of past events. Funds were used for rent, salaries, artist fees, videography, marketing, website administration, and related costs that were incurred between July 1 and August 31, 2020.

According to a survey after the program, emergency funding from DCA supported programming costs, payment to external vendors and staff, rent, and other overhead bills for the participating theaters. The emergency funds sustained up to 60 days of free and accessible programming for the public. Nearly half of the theaters that received funding anticipate remaining open for at least another six months to a year from now. One-third of the theaters anticipate closing within two months or less. 46% percent of the theaters will change their business model to function within the new virtual arts environment. Comments about the program expressed gratitude and were extremely positive.

### **In the summer of 2020, the Division and the City Council designated \$340,000 in Arts Development Fees to establish a Citywide COVID-19 Emergency Response Program to provide additional relief to individual artists who live in Los Angeles.**

This was an opportunity for artists to reimagine public art and how it was experienced in the places that we live, shop and play while providing economic relief to support artists in these areas. With an overwhelming response of more than 700 applicants, DCA was able to convene a professional peer panel to review the applications and center those artists who identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color as well as LGBTQI+ that were the most gravely affected by the pandemic. This resulted in **251 awards** that were released and the virtual exhibition, *Reimagine Public Art*, launched on DCA's website that can be experienced through August 31, 2021.

In response to the continued economic shifts created by COVID-19, the Division and the City Council introduced the second iteration of an artist relief program. **Art Development fees of \$434,063** were designated to establish a **Council District Specific COVID-19 Emergency Response Program (ERP)**. Nonprofit arts organizations and small commercial businesses that function as cultural spaces were required to be headquartered in one of the five specified council districts, and individual artists had to live in these districts as well. Artwork generated through the ERP Round 2 will be included in the Reimagine Public Art exhibition featured on DCA's website. In total, since March 2020, the Public Art's Division's programming has reached over **73,750 participants** through its programming.

## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Public Art Division

Continuing its work in the cultivation and preservation of LA's renowned legacy as a city of murals, it has provided for the creation of **12 new murals throughout the City**. Amongst the highlights are LA muralist **Sergio Robleto's** *Champions of Adversity* which was recently commissioned for the Spring Street Bridge Mural at Albion Riverside Park. Another, *Animal Conversation* by **Pascaline Doucin-Dahlke** was also commissioned for the North Central Animal Shelter mural. These projects are funded by DCA's Public Works Improvements Arts Program and managed by the Department's Mural Program.

Alongside these are two other murals who have made a cultural splash in CD 8: *A Guide to Fly* by **DREAM HAUS** that plays with the definition of the word flight as a verb and its slang version of "being fly." The project is interactive mimicking an activity book and giving people a sense of self-discovery and power to feel that they have choices in the way public art is created and relates to the community. The other, an untitled piece by **Daniel Monteavaro** is a mural that plays with iconic symbols of Los Angeles and the ingenuity and craftsmanship of South LA residents as it presents painted hands that create bright, beautiful birds taking in the shapes from the background and bringing them into the foreground as that is the heart of a community.

Lastly, DCA has partnered with the **Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA)**, **Metrolink**, and **Council District 6**, in order to create an artistic amenity which will showcase diverse perspectives on the past, present, and future of Van Nuys, and will provide administrative and curatorial oversight on the installation of more than **20 murals** along the **Van Nuys Metrolink Station**. A sub-recipient grant will allow DCA to allocate \$500,000 that will support local artists, reinforce the goals of public transportation, and create an additional mural destination in the San Fernando Valley.

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

**“GASP has done a swift and effective job.”**

DCA's **General Administrative and Support Program (GASP)** encompasses personnel, payroll, facilities, budgeting, and accounting. The team is responsible for processing over 500 contracts annually, positioning DCA as the second ranking agency in terms of the number of City of LA contracts awarded and administered. The proper and smooth administration of the department ensures that the city continues its tradition as a leading artistic destination, incubator and cultural hub.

### **Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, GASP has done a swift and effective job of moving administrative work to a digital format.**

This work has improved tremendously through the acceptance of digital signatures for signing contracts, AFEs, and invoices. This small administrative adjustment has not only expedited the ability to process these documents, but also facilitated the tracking of workflow. GASP staff has found that less time is now being taken to process the administrative work. Inclusively, this digital administrative turn has allowed for the Department to improve its environmental footprint.

Currently, the average time it takes for contracts to be approved by the City Attorney and uploaded to the City Clerks Council File Index for funds to be encumbered has narrowed down to one day. Prior to the pandemic, staff would have to physically travel to City Hall and deliver documents to the City Attorney's Office, in hopes of them being processed before the end of the day. Their office would then order our staff to deliver said documents to the City Clerk's office for uploading to the Index. This process would take multiple days and delay contracts from being encumbered and invoices to be paid. Now, we are able to execute all these tasks in a single day, speeding the process of payments.

The GASP team, in many ways, is the backbone and nervous system of the Department and its continued support and service amidst rapidly changing priorities facilitates the delivery of services produced by the rest of the Department.

## CONTINUED DEDICATION AND SERVICE

**“DCA continues to operationalize equitable service delivery.”**

**As a national leader, the Department of Cultural Affairs continues to operationalize equitable service delivery with excellence at its core. From the award-winning Arts Activation Fund, to the Promise Zone Arts Initiatives, to the first UNESCO World Heritage Site for Los Angeles with the Frank Lloyd Wright Hollyhock House commissioned by Aline Barnsdall, and even the Golden Globes and a historic Presidential Inauguration, DCA continues to demonstrate innovative strategies to expand access to arts, culture, and creativity.**

DCA staff, partners, community members, and grantees alike all have responded amidst this unprecedented COVID-19 global crisis. **Through DCA, the City expanded its reach to the public it intends to serve in its goal to make Los Angeles the best run city in the country and beyond.**

As demonstrated during the worldwide pandemic through the increased demand for artistic and cultural experiences:

- \* Arts and culture have been, and continue to be, essential for the well-being of human beings, teaching us, entertaining us, nurturing us, and inspiring us even in the direst of times.**
- \* Like firefighters, doctors, farmers, and first-responders, artists and arts and cultural organizations mobilized to meet the immediate needs of people, as the pandemic hit beyond the physical, affecting them emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.**
- \* Arts and culture even has the power to console us through the incalculable loss we have experienced and seen in others.**



## City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs COVID-19 Response Report

DCA remains optimistic that during this next period of economic recovery, DCA will continue this important work and looks forward to continuing to set an example for Los Angeles as the leading global arts metropolis the City has become and will continue to be for the rest of the century.

**United with partners, advocates, and alliances, DCA is strategically rooted in, and unequivocally committed to, the values of: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Excellence, and Access. These values inform our inclusive communications and intentionally collaborative initiatives.**

This commitment ensures that we will continue to provide accessible, well-funded, well-managed, and well-stewarded Neighborhood Arts and Cultural Centers, theaters, historic sites, public art projects, grantee events, performances, and educational initiatives for as many people as possible, reinforcing our citywide arts equity goals post pandemic.

## ABOUT THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

### DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles's vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, design, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists.

Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA's residents and visitors, and ensure LA's varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA's mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grantmaking, public art, community arts, performing arts, and strategic marketing, development, design, and digital research. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

For more information, please visit [culturela.org](http://culturela.org) or follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/culturela](https://facebook.com/culturela), Instagram [@culture\\_la](https://instagram.com/culture_la), and Twitter [@culture\\_la](https://twitter.com/culture_la).



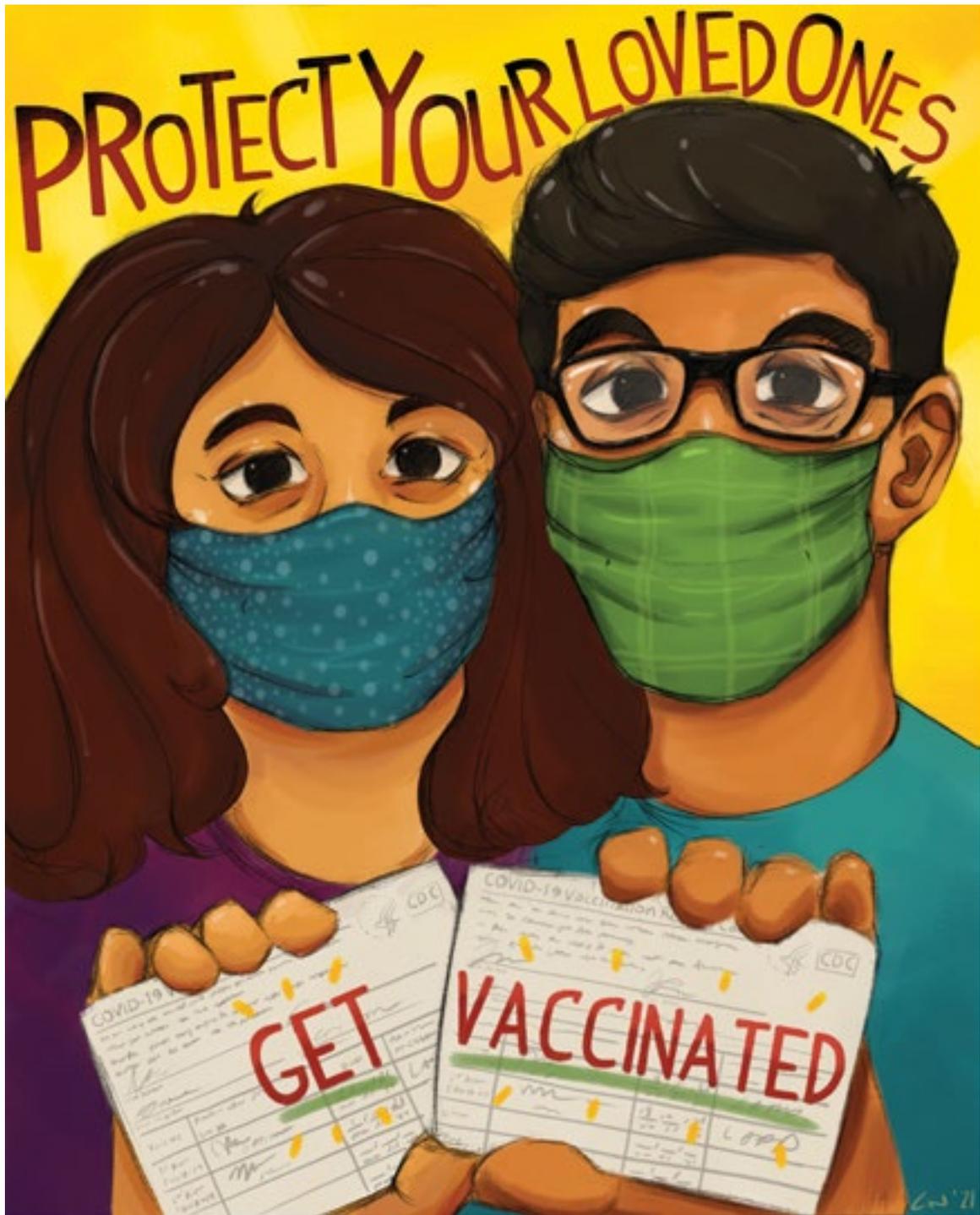
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