

News

Warhol Foundation Distributes \$3.9 Million to 51 Organizations Grappling With Pandemic Losses

Grants will fund the staging of exhibitions, curatorial research, administrative costs, and more to organizations including the BlackStar Film Festival and W.A.G.E.

by Jasmine Weber

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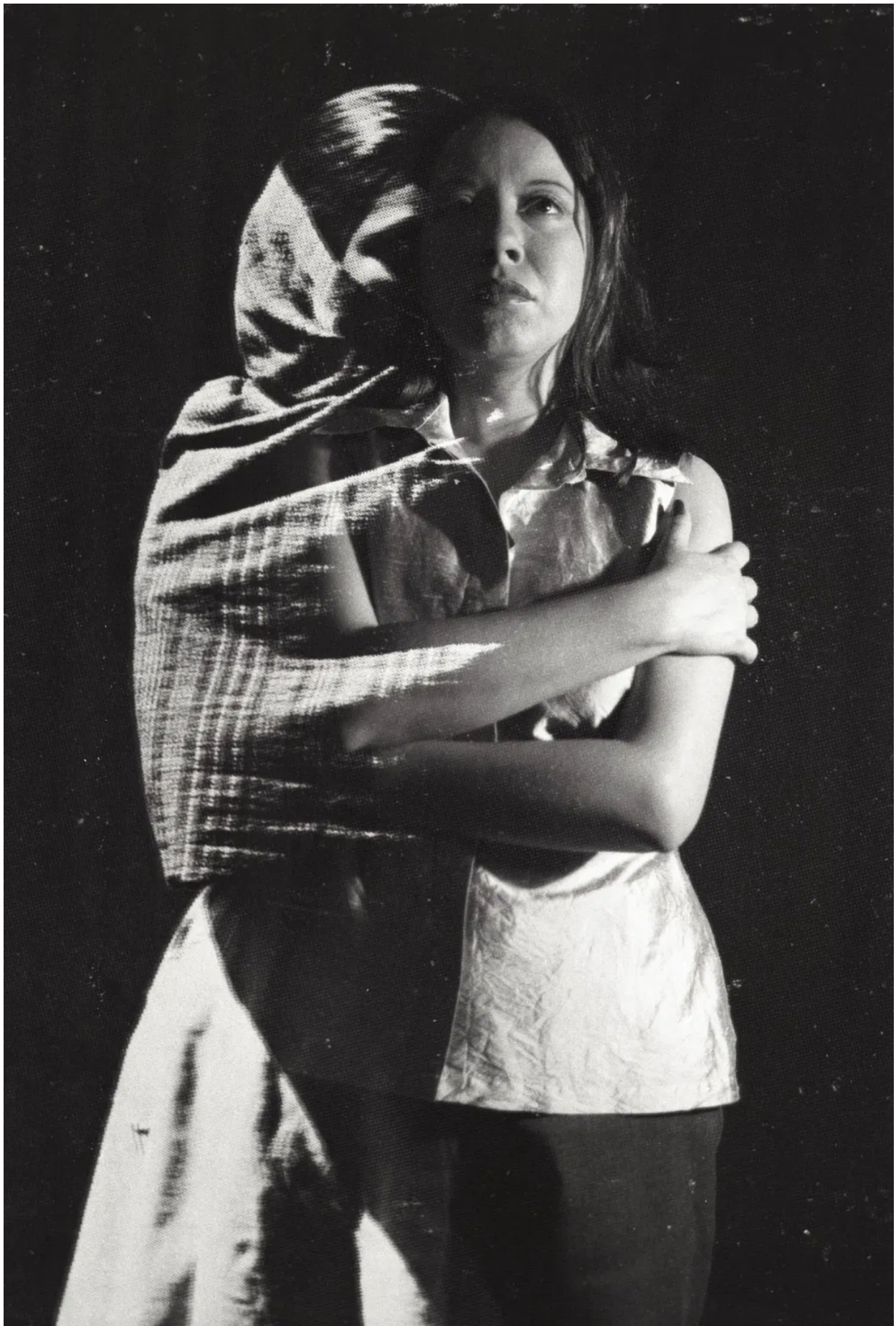
Original digital collage by Kiki Lechuga-Dupont for the cover of *Loss/Capture*, Vol. 1: The State of Black Cultural Archives, an editorial project guest edited by archivists Steven D. Booth and Stacie Williams and directed by Noor Shawaf and Tempestt Hazel; from Warhol grantee Sixty Inches From Center (courtesy Sixty Inches From Center)

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented blows to the cultural sector, forcing closures, canceling events, and leaving institutions scrambling

to adjust to the new online landscape. According to a survey by the American Alliance of Museums from November 2020, almost 30% of all US museums are at risk of closing, and almost half have laid off or furloughed workers since last March. As the field attempts to recoup amid the worsening crisis, philanthropic organizations have been tasked to step in to provide support.

Enter the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, which has announced its latest round of grants which will distribute \$3.9 million to 50 creative organizations nationwide, and one internationally. Taking the pandemic's financial strain on daily operations into account, the fall 2020 grants will allow for up to half of every award to be utilized for administrative costs.

Last year was also marked by an increasing spotlight on social justice, as record-breaking protests brought issues of anti-Blackness, ableism, and xenophobia to the forefront. Many institutions have been forced to grapple with how these concerns take shape in the arts and how to center marginalized voices, while others have had this objective at the center of their missions for years. The foundation has taken note to support these organizations; the Philadelphia organizations BlackStar Film Festival, which centers the work of Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists, and Taller Puertorriqueño, a Latinx arts and culture center, will receive \$100,000 grants.



Christina Fernandez, "Untitled Multiple Exposure #4 (Bravo)" (1999); from Warhol grantee California Museum of Photography, UC Riverside (courtesy the artist and Gallery Luisotti, Los Angeles)

“In addition to providing community and context for artists and their work, the fall 2020 grantees are active participants in the cultural life of this country; their exhibitions, publications, and public programs address the crises we are facing as a nation, from racial inequity and injustice to police violence, climate change, and the ongoing tragedies wrought by the pandemic,” said Rachel Bers, program director of the Andy Warhol Foundation. “Our grantees have a critical role to play by offering a platform to artists who speak both directly and indirectly to these issues through their work.”

Of the grantees, 22 museums, university art galleries, and other organizations will fund exhibitions addressing contemporary cultural issues or spotlighting artists who have never been exhibited at this scale. These include *Walk For Me: The Past, Present and Future of Ballroom Culture* at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and solo exhibitions on Henry Taylor at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Sadie Barnett at the Benton Museum of Art in Claremont, California.

Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.), which advocates for fair payment for artists and art workers, and Project for Empty Space, a nonprofit promoting work and programming dedicated to equity, were among the 19 small-to-mid-sized organizations who will receive funds over two years.

\$478,000 has also been allotted toward funding curatorial research fellowships at 10 organizations, focused on topics including Caribbean modernism and the cultural legacy of the US Southwest.

“The Foundation’s commitment to supporting artists by funding the institutions that incubate, encourage, exhibit, and critically engage their

work is unwavering,” said Joel Wachs, president of the Andy Warhol Foundation, in a statement. “Nonprofit arts organizations face profound challenges due to the political, economic, social, and cultural upheavals of our current moment. At the same time, and more than ever, artists need the supportive community and creative encouragement that these organizations provide.”

See the full list of grantees [here](#).

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