



# ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 -  
June 30, 2024



2023 Creative Impact Fund  
awardee, Shadi Ayoub's "Let's Print  
Together!" workshop

## HIGHLIGHTS

### CREATIVE IMPACT FUND

16 Awardees Supported by Cuyahoga  
Arts & Culture

### ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 6

Cleveland included in national study

### GOALS

2024 Strategic Priorities



**JEREMY  
JOHNSON**  
President and CEO

Dear Friends,

What a year! As we reflect on the past fiscal calendar, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, a defining moment for our region was the awe-inspiring solar eclipse we witnessed together. Just as the sun and moon aligned to create an unforgettable collective experience for northeast Ohioans, so did Assembly focus its mission to unify and impact Cleveland's creative sector, advocating for resources, equity, and support for artists and cultural organizations alike.

In the pages of this annual report we spotlight some of the milestones. The photos reflect the incredible artists and programs that were part of the first cohort of the Creative Impact Fund. We highlight the impact of our advocacy with government partners, which led to the naming of a senior strategist in Cleveland City Hall and a \$3M investment in artist-led projects across the city. We participated in a national economic study, AEP6, that quantified the local dollars and jobs generated by the arts and culture industry. Our efforts with state and county officials led to ground-breaking legislation. It will allow Cuyahoga County voters the option to replace and grow a cigarette levy that could generate \$160M over 10 years for cultural nonprofits. And there's so much more.

These movements have led us to declare 2023-2024 as the Year of the Levy and the Year of Individual artists.

Please continue to follow and support Assembly by becoming a member. Your engagement helps elevate and invest in an arts and culture sector that benefits all of us. Thanks for your partnership!

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy V. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jeremy V. Johnson  
President and CEO  
Assembly for the Arts

***"2024 is the Year  
of the Levy and the  
Year of Individual  
Artists"***



# Public Support for Arts and Culture

Assembly and Cuyahoga County's arts and cultural community successfully advocated for permissive language to be added to the State of Ohio legislature. The language allows Cuyahoga County to ask its voters if they will increase a tax on cigarettes sold within its borders dedicated to support arts and culture.

Assembly partnered with Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) to redesign and relaunch the online resource and directory at [clevelandartsevents.com](https://clevelandartsevents.com). This public-private partnership is a unified effort to support nonprofits, artists, arts business, and the communities they serve to broaden and deepen their connections. Enhanced features include overall navigation, job and other opportunities, artist profiles, artist spaces and a cultural map.

cleveland  
ARTS + EVENTS



2023 Creative Impact Fund awardee, Moises De Freitas' "Afro Brazilian Cultural Appreciation Initiative"



2023 Creative Impact Fund awardee, Julia Rosa Sosa directs *Marisol* By José Rivera, Actors: Elisa Beatris Fuentes, Andrew Aaron Valdez, Hillary Wheelock; presented at Cleveland Public Theatre, Photo by Steve Wagner

# IMPACT

## Creative Impact Fund

16 artists and art collectives were each awarded \$6,250 in flexible funding and project-based placekeeping initiatives centered in redlined communities.

**Let's Print Together!** (Shadi Ayoub; St. Clair Superior; Clark Fulton; Asiatown)

**Raíces: Danzas de México** (Alexander Corona; St. Clair Superior)

**Afro Brazilian Cultural Appreciation Initiative** (Moises De Freitas; East Cleveland)

**Domestic Violence is Not Pretty** (Dale Goode; East Cleveland)

**The Avenue Cleveland Youth Photography Program** (Natasha Herbert; Midtown, St. Clair Superior; Central-Kinsman; East Cleveland)

**Heart Beat Drum Circle** (Baba Jubal Harris; East Cleveland)

**The Girl** (Stephanie Lassiter; Mt. Pleasant)

**ROOTED** (Josh Maxwell; Broadway-Slavic Village)

**A Piece of Cake** (Adenike Mosley-Brown; Central-Kinsman; North & South Collinwood)

**Recapture the Spirit of Our Community Park** (Robin Robinson; Glenville)

**Artistic Jungle Series** (Georgio Sabino; Fairfax)

**Wave Space Summer Camps** (Julie Schabel; North & South Collinwood; Hough; Central-Kinsman; Union Miles; St. Clair Superior)

**The Splice Cream Spliced Team Dream Concert Series** (Ben Smith; Buckeye-Woodhill)

**El Romántico** (Julia Rosa Sosa, Writing/Literature; Clark Fulton)

**U & I of Euclid Avenue** (Mary Thomas; East Cleveland)

**Sustainable Arts with Zolten Wood Design & Collinwood Painted Rain Barrel Project** (Linda Zolten Wood; East Cleveland; North Collinwood)

Learn more at [assemblycle.org/creativeimpactfund/](https://assemblycle.org/creativeimpactfund/)



# Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Study

For the first time, Cleveland was represented in the Arts & Economic Prosperity national study by Americans for the Arts. The results showed Cuyahoga County's nonprofit arts and culture industry generated at least **\$533,156,171 in economic activity** in 2022. That economic activity supported at least **8,637 jobs** and generated \$104.2 million in local, state, and federal government revenue.

This important study has helped Assembly advocate for more resources devoted to arts and culture.

Learn more at [assemblycle.org/aep6/](https://assemblycle.org/aep6/)

# Artist Listening Campaign

We collected about **200 survey responses** and heard from **150 artists via 4 listening sessions** to generate insights to inform future funding programs.

This campaign was funded by CAC and The George Gund Foundation.

Assembly contracted with research firm ISO Arts Consulting, led by Dr. Brea Heidelberg to ensure objectivity.

## key learnings

- Prioritize unrestricted funds and increase the amount awarded to each artist
- Increase overall support for artist funding by seeking sources beyond Cuyahoga Arts & Culture
- Create a central virtual space for finding grant opportunities, deadlines, and resources
- Simplify and streamline grant application processes
- Prioritize funding and resources for historically underrepresented or marginalized artists
- Increase opportunities for artists to be included in discussions or conversations about civic and social issues by facilitating connections between artists and civic leaders.
- Facilitate more artist listening sessions
- Establish an Artist Advisory Board





Rhonda K. Brown, City of Cleveland Senior Strategist for Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy at Quarterly Assembly

# Transformative Arts Fund



Assembly supported the City of Cleveland in the review and panel process for \$3million in project funds to transform Cleveland through public art. Grantees announced in July 2024.

[view press release](#)

## Fiscal Sponsorship

**11 projects raised over \$167k through Assembly fiscal sponsorship** from funders including the Cleveland Foundation, NeighborUp, The George Gund Foundation, lobby, Banks-Baldwin, Callahan Foundation, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and individual donors.

See all projects and donate at [assemblycle.org/fiscal-sponsorship](https://assemblycle.org/fiscal-sponsorship)

## Creative Impact Hough

In partnership with the Cleveland Foundation, we assembled a team of consulting artists to create a vision for a Black arts and cultural district in Hough. The consulting artists will continue their community-engaged work in 2024-2025.

## Public Officials Recognition Breakfast

Sponsored by **KeyBank** 

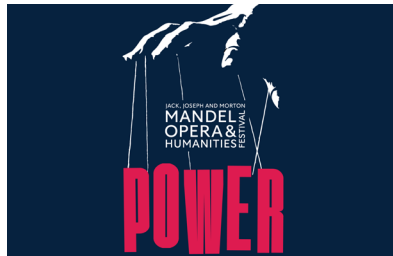
**16 public officials were added to the 2023 arts and culture honor roll** for acknowledging the importance of arts in policy shown by their participation.

In recognition of their investments in arts and culture, Assembly offered special acknowledgment to:

- **US Senator Sherrod Brown**
- **OH State Senator Matt Dolan**
- **Cuyahoga County Councilwoman Yvonne Conwell**



## In The Community



**Assembly staff frequently presents throughout Cleveland including talks, tables, and resource sharing. Some of those include...**

Power Dynamics, Diverse Perspectives in Classical Music - Cleveland Orchestra's 2024 Mandel Opera & Humanities Festival: Power

ECDI Small Biz Block Festival (168 participants)

Walls of Respect: Norman Parish and the Parish Art Gallery, film screening + dialogue as part of the Greater Cleveland Urban Film Festival and in partnership with moCa Cleveland

Let's Talk Art: The Intersection of Visual Arts & Poetry panel discussion in partnership with Cuyahoga County Public Library and the Museum of Creative Human Art.

Public Art and the Public Realm: Activating Public Spaces in Downtown Cleveland panel discussion hosted by the City Club of Cleveland

FutureLAND panel discussion on the convergence of art and technology in partnership with the Cleveland Institute of Art

moCa Cleveland's Black Arts Showcase and more.

## Business Acumen

Supported in part by the Entrepreneur In Residence Powered by



**15 small and medium-sized arts businesses** attended a 5-week bookkeeping and finance workshop that included **Quickbooks training and 1-year software subscription**. Presented in partnership with ECDI's Women's Business Center of NEO.

More than 100 artists and creative entrepreneurs attended the first **Art at Work networking event** in partnership with the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE). It bridged connections between small business support and creative communities.

**Over 1,300 individual users visited the "Business of Art"** section of Assembly's website more than 2,350 times.

[assemblycle.org/the-business-of-art](https://assemblycle.org/the-business-of-art)



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Four strategic priorities were defined and prioritized by our Board of Trustees to guide our work.



**Advance an ambitious  
advocacy agenda to elevate  
the arts and culture sector**



**Work against systemic  
racism**



**Ensure economic stability  
for artists and creative  
professions**



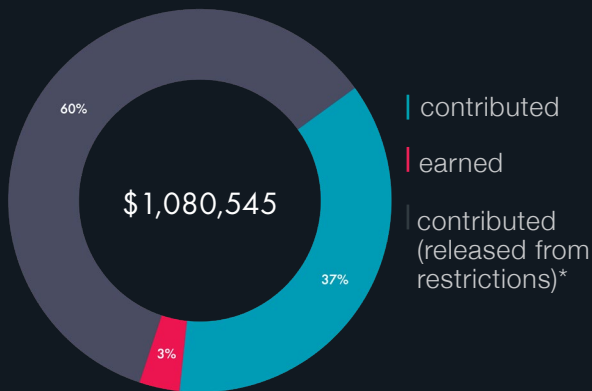
**Position and  
communicate arts and  
culture as a valued sector  
by all residents and  
community members**



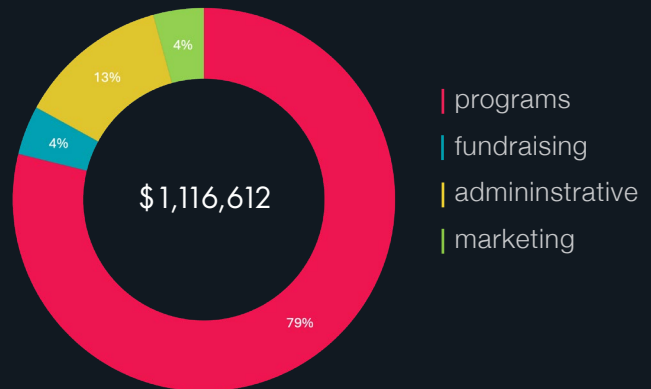
# BY THE NUMBERS

Operating Finances (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



Financials are not yet audited.

\*Per GAAP, Assembly recognized multi-year grants as contributed revenue in the year awarded. Those funds were released from restrictions and cover operating expenses from FY'24 and are not recognized as new income in the Statement of Financial Activities.

## ONLINE REACH

**26K USERS** ↑9.3%  
visited Assemblycle.org 69K times

**f 166K** ↑266%  
page reach @assemblycle

**ig 62K** ↑55%  
page reach @assemblycle

## MEMBERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

**432 MEMBERS** ↑10%

**224 ATTENDEES** ↑23%  
at Quarterly Assemblies

**851 ATTENDEES** ↓9.7%  
at all in-person or live virtual events

# VALUES

**Mutual Respect and Unity.**

**Inclusion and Racial Equity.**

**Transparency and Trust.**

**Collaborative Leadership.**

**Adaptability and Agility.**

## OVERVIEW

### VISION

To ensure that everyone who lives and works in Greater Cleveland benefits from a diverse and equitable arts and cultural sector and recognizes that the arts are an essential, defining element in the quality of life, social fabric, and economic vitality of the region.

### MISSION

To convene, coordinate, and collaborate with everyone who lives and works in Greater Cleveland to strengthen and support those in the region who create, present, experience and appreciate all forms of arts and culture.



# Board of Trustees

## FY '24 Officers

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**Zulma Zabala\*** The Center for Community Solutions



\* End of term at Assembly for the Arts. Thank you for your service to greater Cleveland's arts and culture community!



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\* End of term at Assembly for the Arts.  
Thank you for your service to greater  
Cleveland's arts and culture community!

# THANK YOU



#### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



#### FOUNDING DONORS

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Assembly for the Arts Staff