

# Racial Equity Grants for Individual Artists (REGIA)

The Racial Equity Grant for Individual Artists (REGIA) program renews grant-funded support for artists of color, building upon ArtsBuild's Equity in the Arts grant program active in 2017 and 2018 and funded by Benwood Foundation. Equity in the Arts grants supported projects led by local Black and Latino artists.

The new REGIA grant program strives to support the work of diverse artists that are reflective of our community. National reports done over the years have shown funding inequities in the nonprofit arts sector, and REGIA is aimed at providing more racially equitable grant funding in our community. The program is for artists who identify as one or more identity groups: Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian, Black or African-American, Hispanic/Latino(a)(x), Indigenous (e.g., Native American, Pacific Islander). Each year a different group will be prioritized for grant funding. Award amounts will be up to \$10,000.

This recent grant cycle was available for artists who identify as Latin(o)(a)(x) and are living and working in Hamilton County. Grant funding was made available in three funding categories: Artist Works, Equipment, and Professional Development. Funding for the new program is provided by individual donors, Lyndhurst Foundation, Benwood Foundation, and Footprint Foundation.

The goals for the program include:

- Making arts funding more equitable in our community by creating access to resources for artists of color in Hamilton County.
- Providing support to established and emerging racially diverse artists.
- Broadening the types of artists supported in the community.
- Ensuring the distribution of financial and capacity-building resources for minority artists.

## 2022 Racial Equity Grants for Individual Artists Recipients

**Pablo Mazariegos** is an established award-winning [narrative filmmaker](#) from Guatemala who now calls Chattanooga home. He produces heartfelt stories that drive meaningful change for Latino and underrepresented communities. Pablo has directed 33 video projects from start to finish highlighting 20 Chattanooga non-profits that included the participation of Latinos from Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Cuba, and Guatemala. The REGIA grant will support the writing and production of a documentary film highlighting the bond between a Guatemalan mother and son forced to live in different countries, their longing to reunite, and their journey back together. Pablo states, "I want to bring hope to the many Latino immigrant children and mothers struggling with the grief of leaving their native country and living apart from their parents and children."

**Isela Arredondo** is a local writer, visual and craft artist from Guadalajara in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Isela has worked as a community artist teaching classes at La Paz and Partnership for Families, Children and Adults. Isela has recognized a need for Spanish literature in our community and will be using her grant funding to write, illustrate, and self-publish a children's book in English and Spanish as well as in audio format for those who are hearing impaired. The book will be titled *I Am Right Here* and will convey the message that a mother is always present in her child's heart, dreams, and memories. Isela hopes her book will inspire children to "recognize and realize that regardless of where we come from, where we

live, our race, or social status, we can make an impact in the lives of others. Through art, we can find our voice and a way towards a better, healthier, and happier future."

**Kristina Sánchez-Mills** is a fine artist, sculptor, writer, teacher, illustrator, and [community artist](#) born in Costa Rica. Kristina has illustrated for authors in the U.S., Costa Rica, Portugal, Spain, and the Ivory Coast, and has worked on multiple literary and illustrative projects for the Biblioteca de las Grandes Naciones based in the Basque Country region of Spain. Kristina will be self-publishing three books that highlight the struggles she has faced in her life and the positive life-changing lessons she and her family have gained from them. The first book will be told from the perspective of a child whose sibling is ill with a catastrophic disease, the second book will be told from the sick child's point of view, and the third book will be from the parent's perspective. She hopes the books will provide "a light-hearted yet powerful view of events, fears, hopes, and coping mechanisms we learn along the way."

**Jose Loza** is a local [photographer](#) born in Peru who specializes in portraiture for personal branding and business headshots. Through his work his goal is "to create images that not only represent you well in front of your clients but also empower you, and that will leave a legacy for your loved ones." Jose will be using the REGIA grant for professional development to attend a workshop that will allow him to grow as an artist and grow his

photography business. Jose's work will culminate with a special community exhibition during National Hispanic Heritage Month in September that will be hosted at ArtsBuild to display his photography and highlight local Latino business owners.

**Samantha De Armas** is a [digital media](#) and virtual reality artist currently earning her BFA at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Her work revolves around problems of mental health, performance, art, and technology. She says, "my art is intended to question and describe my mental illness to others in an attempt to destigmatize and validate the experience." Funding from the REGIA grant will support equipment purchases to complete her senior thesis project to develop an interactive virtual environment that will be included in UTC's BFA Senior Thesis Exhibition at the Institute for Contemporary Art in May 2022.