



# Mellon and Ford Foundations Announce Second Cohort of Latinx Artist Fellows

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*The US Latinx Art Forum, with support from the Mellon and Ford Foundations, to Offer 15 More Visual Artists Unrestricted Awards of \$50,000*

(NEW YORK, NY - May 12, 2022) The Mellon Foundation (<https://mellon.org/>) and the Ford Foundation ([/](https://www.fordfoundation.org/)) today announced the newest cohort of the Latinx Artist Fellowship (<https://mellon.org/programs/arts-and-culture/latinx-artist-fellowship/>)—a multiyear initiative administered by the US Latinx Art Forum (USLAF) (<https://www.uslaf.org/>) in collaboration with the New York Foundation for the Arts (<https://www.nyfa.org/>). In its second year, the fellowship recognizes 15 of the most compelling Latinx visual artists working in the United States today, and aims to address a systemic lack of support, visibility, and patronage of Latinx visual artists—individuals of Latin American or Caribbean descent, born or living in the United States.

The first-of-its-kind initiative launched in 2021, with a combined commitment of \$5 million from the Mellon and Ford Foundations to provide \$50,000 in unrestricted funds each to a total of 75 Latinx visual artists through 2025. Additional funds support fellowship administration and capacity building at USLAF.

The 2022 Fellowship class was chosen to reflect the diversity that exists within the Latinx community, highlighting the practices of women-identified, queer, and non-binary artists, as well as those from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, ranging from Chicana and Ecuadorian-American to Afro-Cuban and Indigenous. The cohort includes artists working in locations such as Baroda, Michigan; Farmington, New

Mexico; San Antón, Carolina, Puerto Rico; and Nashville, Tennessee, while the aesthetic practices represented by the fellows span installation art, abstraction, and performance, as well as contemporary craft, textile, and fiber-based work. Deliberately intergenerational, it is equally divided between emerging, mid-career, and established artists.

The 2022 Latinx Fellows are:

**Tanya Aguiñiga**

she/her/ella

Craft Based Artist and Activist

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

**Maria Gaspar**

she/her/hers

Interdisciplinary Artist

Lives and works in Chicago, IL

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**Candida Alvarez**

she/her

Visual Artist and Painter

Lives and works in Baroda, MI and Chicago, IL

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**Jay Lynn Gomez**

she/hers

Painting and Sculpture Artist

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

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**Amalia Mesa-Bains**

she/her

Installation Artist, Curator, and Writer

Lives and works in Monterey, CA and San Francisco, CA

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**Juana Valdés**

she/her/ella

Multidisciplinary Artist

Lives and works in Miami, FL and New York, NY

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**María Magdalena Campos Pons**

she/her

Multimedia Artist

Lives and works in Nashville, TN

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**Carmelita Tropicana**

she/her

Writer and Performance Artist

Lives and works in New York, NY

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**Leslie Martinez**

they/them

Visual Artist and Painter

Lives and works in Dallas, TX

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**Lucia Hierro**

she/her

Sculpture and Installation Artist

Lives and works in New York, NY

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**Koyoltzintli**

she/her/hers

Interdisciplinary Artist

Lives and works in New York, NY

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**Las Nietas de Nonó**

they/them

Multidisciplinary Artists

Lives and works in  
San Antón, Carolina, Puerto Rico

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**Consuelo Jimenez Underwood**

she/her

Contemporary Fiber Artist

Lives and works in Gualala, CA

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**Rosemary Meza-DesPlas**

she/her/ella

Multidisciplinary Artist

Lives and works in Farmington, NM

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**Vincent Valdez**

he/his

Visual Artist and Painter

Lives and works in Houston, TX

Fellows were selected by a jury of curators at partner organizations, current fellows, and arts practitioners: **Rita Gonzalez** (Terri and Michael Smooke Curator and Department Head of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art), **Marcela Guerrero** (Jennifer Rubio Associate Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York), **Cesáreo Moreno** (Visual Arts Director and Chief Curator, National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago), **Elia Alba** (Multidisciplinary artist based in Bronx, NY), **Celia Álvarez Muñoz** (Conceptual artist based in Arlington, TX), **Vick Quezada** (Interdisciplinary artist based in Northampton, MA), and **danilo machado** (poet and Producer of Public Programs at Brooklyn Museum). The jurors evaluated more than 200 nominees recommended by invited external nominators with expertise in Latinx art.

“USLAF is excited to continue our mission to advocate and uplift the important work of Latinx artists,” said **Rose Salseda, PhD, Associate Director, US Latinx Art Forum**. “The second cohort, as the first, represents the dynamic range of aesthetic practices that

speak to the complex and diverse experiences of Latinxs throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico.”

“As the Latinx Artist Fellowship enters its second year, we at Mellon are energized by the extraordinary sweep of work these fifteen artists envision and create, and the powerful perspectives and stories they bring to the visual arts,” said **Elizabeth Alexander, President of the Mellon Foundation**. “We congratulate this second cohort of fellows, and are proud to join with Ford in supporting the US Latinx Art Forum.”

“We are thrilled to partner with Mellon and the US Latinx Art Forum to welcome and celebrate the second cohort of Latinx Artist Fellows,” said **Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation**. “These fifteen visual artists bring an unmatched breadth of perspectives and practices to the initiative and have made an indelible impact on American art today.”

The Fellowship is part of the **Latinx Art Visibility Initiative**, led by the Mellon Foundation and the Ford Foundation. Currently in its first phase, the three-part initiative will additionally include support for museums committed to collecting and studying Latinx art; and partnerships in academia to support professors and students committed to studying Latinx art and artists.

Despite a centuries-long history of contributions to American art, Latinx artists have been consistently marginalized within American art history. Though Latinx people account for nearly 20 percent of the total US population and represent the largest minority-majority in many regions across the country, Latinx causes and organizations traditionally receive less than 2 percent of philanthropic funding while annual funding for Latinx arts and culture has declined 35 percent annually since 2013, dropping from \$39 million to \$13 million.

The Fellowship, and the greater Latinx Art Visibility Initiative, is a long overdue opportunity to lift up Latinx artists, and to provide financial support to expand and secure their place within American art, and art history.

For more information on the Latinx Artist Fellowship, visit [mellon.org/latinx-artist-fellowship/](https://mellon.org/latinx-artist-fellowship/) (<https://mellon.org/latinx-artist-fellowship/>).

## **About US Latinx Art Forum**

Since 2015, the US Latinx Art Forum (USLAF) has supported the creation of a more equitable art world by championing artists and arts professionals dedicated to Latinx art through research, studio practice, pedagogy, and writing. USLAF generates and supports initiatives that benefit an intergenerational network of nearly 700 members and advances the vitality of Latinx art within academia, art institutions, and collections. Past initiatives have included data collection to track the growth of Latinx art history in academia, which in turn fueled advocacy efforts for greater representation of Latinx art; a closed-door convening with stakeholders to understand the urgent issues facing Latinx artists and cultural workers; and the Mazorca Initiative, a micro-grant program launched in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing threats to justice caused by systemic racism and xenophobia.

## **About the Mellon Foundation**

The Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at [mellon.org](http://mellon.org).

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