ART AND COMMUNITY RECOVERY

Challenging. Disorienting. Destabilizing. All words that describe the unprecedented year we all just experienced. While managing some of the most dramatic budget reductions from the City of Palo Alto in our history as an organization, the Palo Alto Art Center worked diligently to meet the community need for art during the pandemic, and now into our recovery. Support from our community, in advocacy efforts, and in generous contributions to the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation, has inspired and fueled us throughout. We, like you, know that art remains vital to our community recovery and look forward to your partnership to create opportunities for the entire community to learn, create, and find inspiration.

Palo Alto Art Center
Annual Report—Fiscal Year 2021

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“Wonderful culture.”
Wonderful teachers. Wonderful others. Wonderful students.

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“Art Center Ceramics Program is wonderful. Wonderful students. Wonderful teachers. Wonderful other students. Wonderful facility. Program is wonderful.”

“The Art Center is an example of a community resource that we should support rather than languish.”

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“...we need to create awareness of biases and inequities in our society and art is a great way to create awareness around these issues. The Art Center has demonstrably shown this over and over again.”

Exhibitions

Fall: October 1, 2020-January 2021
- Community Advice Revisited
- Holding it Together—November 3-14, 2020
Winter: March 6-April 3, 2021
- Where the Heart Is: Contemporary Art from Immigrant Artists
- Sanctuary City Project Residency
- The Butterfly Effect: Migration Is Beautiful
Spring and Summer: May 1-August 14, 2021
- The Black Index

The Art Center also presented community exhibitions, including Youth Art and the Peninsula Photo Competition exhibitions.

Project Look, our popular school tour program, continued virtually this year with programs inspired by the exhibitions Community Advice Revisited and Where the Heart Is. 111 tours that engaged 2,775 students, including 55 scholarship tours were provided free to Ravenswood City School District thanks to the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation.

“Every single trip (at least 10 for me by now), the themes are relevant to the students, the art is thought provoking and sophisticated, the conversation is not patronizing to the kids but uplifts their ideas, and the project is fun, interesting, and an-theme: I LOVE Project Look!”

Children’s Fine Art started the fiscal year, Summer 2020, with in-person summer camps, and continued with virtual classes, onsite classes and creative artmaking kits. Children’s Fine Art Programs engaged 942 youth through in-person and virtual classes and art kits this year.

“I can’t tell you enough how much our family appreciates all you’re doing to bring art into our home during this time. It has kept my 5th grader so happily occupied off a screen...,”

“The kids connected with me. I observed their efforts, helped “imagine” a few things to kickstart their creativity, and marveled at their results. One youngster brought a book of spy riddles to class because he wanted to share what he enjoyed. It’s just unexpected fun. I feel appreciated each week. Thank you.”

With virtual education in place in both Ravenswood City School District and Palo Alto Unified School District, the partnership element of Cultural Kaleidoscope was not possible. CK continued focusing on a series of virtual arts-integrated lessons. Funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the new curriculum is centralized around the philosophy of art-based inquiry and the use of research notebooks. Education staff distributed hundreds of art kits to local schools for their participation. 18 classrooms with 374 students experienced Cultural Kaleidoscope this past year.

“I have really loved volunteering and it makes me want to teach art to more kids and people in general.”

Volunteer programs continued at the Art Center virtually and in-person. Volunteers contributed 1644 hours over the past year, a value of $45,395.

“Throughout the pandemic, I looked forward to ACTL meetings every week as an opportunity to socialize and share thoughts. I found getting to know new mediums in the workshops, and being a member in a productive group made me feel actively involved in my community for the first time in several years.”

The Art Center is proud to have continued our internship and fellowship program during COVID-19. In the summer of 2020, the Art Center engaged seven interns, who were all paid as part of the Working Together program. Participants in the program were satisfied with most aspects of their experience, particularly finding value in working with museum staff, participating in professional development opportunities and executing job responsibilities that they found meaningful and fulfilling. The Art Center also hosted two virtual events for intern program alumni.

“Concern [about] individual laxity is not possible. CK made me want to socialize and share thoughts. I found getting to know new mediums in the workshops, and being a member in a productive group made me feel actively involved in my community for the first time in several years.”

The environment at the Palo Alto Art Center was very supportive and the staff did an incredible job of fostering a sense of community in spite of social distancing recommendations.”

“Using art really enhances the learning, especially for the little ones... I would say that in the parameters of this year and how odd it’s been, it was a really good reminder of how that can enhance in-person learning, and online learning, and just learning in general.”

- 1st grade teacher, Palo Alto

The Art Center Teen Leadership (ACTL) celebrated its fifth anniversary, with the largest group of teens participating to date (25)! The majority of the programs and workshops were virtual—teens made connections, gained leadership skills, and engaged creative thinking through a variety of art opportunities. ACT Leadership members participated in a total of 22 meetings and workshops during the academic year. Total attendance at these programs was 306.