



City of Ventura
2004 Cultural Funding Program
Grant Recipients

The City of Ventura Cultural Funding Program is designed to promote the growth of Ventura's cultural assets and to ensure that city residents have access to a diverse array of cultural programming. Taking direction from the 1992 Cultural Plan, the 1998 Cultural District Plan, and the Creative Community section of the 2000 Ventura Vision document, the program supports an array of artists and programs that enhance our community through cultural offerings, which include dance, theater, music, visual arts and educational initiatives. In the 2004 funding cycle 18 arts organizations and 11 individual artists have been recognized with grants for their artistic achievements and contributions to our community.

Artist Fellowships

The Cultural Funding Program went through several major changes this year, most significantly in the Artist Fellowships. In past funding cycles artists of all disciplines were invited to submit project proposals to be considered for awards, creating the difficult task of judging painters against poets and actors against photographers. The program was revised to limit the applicants this year to visual and media artists residing in the City of Ventura. These artists were invited to apply as either an emerging (\$1,500 award) or established (\$5,000 award) artist. In the next funding cycle, fiscal year 2005, the fellowships will be open strictly to performing and literary artists.

Competing for a total of \$41,000 in award money, the fellowship applicants were judged solely on artistic achievements and the ability to continue creating work of a significant nature. Unlike past years, applicants were not asked to submit a specific project idea as part of the application process, freeing awardees to continue work on current undertakings or to develop new ideas as they see fit.

The talented group of fellowship grantees, selected by a panel of five arts professionals, represents a broad range of disciplines within the visual and media arts as follows:

Established Artist: _____

Daniela Arriaga

Installation
Art



Comfort Table #1 (detail), 2003, masking tape, string, gauze, foam core, oak paneling, handmade paper

"Conflicted" by her "sentimental view that the sacred lies within," Daniela Arriaga explores themes of family, home and "the banality of everyday life" in her temporary installations created for gallery spaces. Describing what she calls an "obsessive fixation with low craft materials," Arriaga transforms common household items such as string, erasers and candle wax, into meticulously constructed three-dimensional works. Idealizing the home as an interceding sanctuary between private and social behavior, in her work she strives to capture the tension between the security of suburban life and the discomfort it can create for those who feel trapped by its monotony.

This passion for expressing thoughts of the home and the interior is contrasted with Arriaga's desire for nature and the exterior world. Reflecting on her struggle to resolve these two conflicting desires she states, "My yearning to bring the outdoors indoors is articulated in my struggle to domesticate plants and animals by recreating them with household materials."

A recent graduate of the Department of Art Studio at UCSB, Arriaga would like to use her fellowship to continue her temporary exhibitions on a regional level. She remarks, "While ethereality is a major component to my works' content, it is difficult to receive funding for non-archival work."

Established Artist: _____

Michele Chapin

Sculpture



Tangerine Dream, 2003, Utah alabaster, California marble

In a city known for its outstanding sculptors, Michele Chapin is a respected leader in the community. Chapin specializes in stone sculptures for both interiors and exteriors, incorporating unusual tones, exotic colors and natural textures. The abstract design elements and shapes of her sculptures are inspired by the human figure, lifelong observations of organic forms, and found objects.

Chapin states, "I carve stones that I have collected and purchased that are exotic in color and translucency, incorporating and preserving their natural textures whenever possible." She has quarried and collected many of these rare and unique rocks used in her work in the deserts of Southern California.

After studying art at University of California Santa Cruz and pursuing a career in the Bay Area, she relocated to Ventura in 1987. In 1995, she founded Stoneworks Studio in Ventura as a working open-air studio and sculpture garden. A popular stop during the City sponsored ArtWalks, her studio also serves as a classroom where she teaches stone sculpture classes to youth at risk and private clients.

Chapin has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including previous artist fellowships. Her sculpture "Desert Flower" is on permanent display at Ventura City Hall and was an inaugural purchase of the Ventura Municipal Art Collection.

Established Artist: _____

Thomas Decker

Animation



Morning, 2003, sketches for animated film

A professional animator active in commercial projects for many years, Thomas Decker is in the process of creating a three-part series of short films entitled Morning, Noon, and Night depicting the stages of a working person's life. The viewer, guided by an aggressive alarm clock that represents the passing of time, sees the subject progress from young man to retiree in the span of one day.

With many major production credits under his belt, such as the Rugrats and Bebe's Kids, Decker is excited by the opportunity to create an independent film. He will use the fellowship to finish the already begun first segment, Morning, and to start production of the second. Commenting on the project he says, "My goal is to make a personal artistic statement in the medium of animation."

The fellowship will afford Decker the opportunity to update the digital equipment needed to complete a project of this scope, as well as assist with the purchase of paper and other materials for hand drawings. Calling animation and film "the great art form of the twentieth century" he sees it as his purpose to contribute to this legacy.

Established Artist: _____

MB Hanrahan

Public and Media Arts



Boo, 1998, photograph

With a formal art education that consisted of exposure to many mediums, MB Hanrahan is a prolific artist, continually challenging herself to create new work. Describing her approach to the creative process she states, "Having ideas, and actualizing them in whatever medium is most effective has become my 'signature style.'"

Widely known as a muralist and engaged in many community art projects, she is motivated to share her ideas with the world at large, not just those who follow the art scene. A previous recipient of numerous Ventura artist fellowships, her most recent public commission was for the re-creation of the "Tortilla Flats Mural" to be completed in Ventura with partner Moses Mora.

For the past six years Hanrahan has also been working on a more personal body of work she calls "holiday cards." These conceptual works are a signed and numbered series featuring herself in photos interpreting the spirit of various American holidays. Remarking on the inspiration for these pieces, Hanrahan says, "I co-opt the hype and commercialism that gave rise to holiday cards in the first place, re-creating and publishing my own." Wanting to make the holiday cards available to a wider public than the friends and collectors who receive the cards, she has begun laying the groundwork for publication of a book featuring the 45 images.

Established Artist: _____

Hanna Lore Hombordy

Ceramics and Sculpture



Green House, 2003, clay assembled with nails, underglazes, acrylic paint

Hanna Lore Hombordy began her artistic career nearly 60 years ago in the advertising and corporate world. Upon moving to Ventura in 1973, Hombordy expanded her artistic interests to include three-dimensional media, sometimes blending 2-D and 3-D art. She prides herself on creating unique, one of a kind, works of art.

Recent works have included a series of "houses," ceramic sculptures depicting a variety of whimsical dwellings for humans, birds and plants. Hombordy states, "I make the same artistic judgments whether I am designing a commercial product, an award winning sculpture, or a series of 'houses.' Consideration of materials, methods, and the elements of design are all involved." Design sketches she created while working for General Electric, Houbigant and New York advertising agencies were accepted into the archives of Cooper-Hewitt, the National Design Museum of the Smithsonian.

Continually working to contribute to the contemporary ceramics arts scene, Hombordy shares her methods with other artists by taking step-by-step photos of her work and contributing articles to ceramics journals. Reflecting on the longevity of her artistic career and what the coming year has in store she says, "I plan to continue to explore new ways with clay, to exhibit my work, to document what I do, and to think about a retrospective exhibit."

Established Artist: _____

Michellino

Ceramics and
Public Art



Lost Moon, 2001, ceramic, 10' diameter

Seeing herself as a community activist, Michel Petersen (simply known as Michellino) networks with the local community to create architecturally driven large-scale ceramic projects. Speaking of her passion for this work she states, "Art is akin to civilization and this is a vast unkempt landscape that cries out to be cultured, refined and defined by the Arts."

For the past five years Michellino has focused her energies at the Ventura Harbor, citing that the need for an artist's presence at the site was great. Working without a stipend, she has embellished many of the blank walls of the outdoor shopping areas with themes relating to the marine life the area is known for. Recently completing her MFA at Cal State Northridge with a specialization in Public Art, she has taken her passion a step further by conceiving, designing and fundraising for the Ventura Harbor Fishermen's Memorial Arch.

Commenting on the nature of the memorial project she says, "I am deeply interested in bringing environment, art and history into a multi-layered presentation without creating an intellectual barrier between the people and the art." Embodying the arches of Ancient Greece and Rome and incorporating the bas-relief of Southern France, her design combines these historical influences to create a modern memorial using the non-traditional form of ceramics.

Established Artist: _____

Michael Pedziwiatr

Painting and Sculpture



Cubic, 2003, plexiglass, mixed media, 10' x 2' x 2'

Sighting color as the most important element within his paintings, mixed media artist Michael Pedziwiatr seeks to take his exploration of color beyond two-dimensional work into the realm of three-dimensional form and space. Having already completed several sculptural works constructed from plexi-glass he states, "The combination of sculpture and painting is an exciting discovery which exposes infinite new possibilities within the use of color."

Playing with tonalities and hues that change depending on the translucent qualities of the painted surfaces, Pedziwiatr strives to include the viewer in the artwork by creating reflections of the surroundings on the sculpture. Further heightening the personal experience for the viewer, the works juxtapose abstract and human forms within the sculptures helping to elicit a myriad of metaphorical responses.

Pedziwiatr hopes to continue his investigation of three-dimensional work by using more durable, archival quality materials, such as tempered glass and resin, allowing him to display his work in outdoor settings. Speaking of his motivation for this new work he says, "To push my art to the edge of the proverbial envelope and to evoke a potent reaction from the public is my paramount concern."

Emerging Artist: _____

Gregory S. Kailian

Sculpture



Mother and Sun, 2002, onyx, basalt

Working in California marbles and unconventional stones such as basalt, pipestone and onyx, Gregory S. Kailian creates sculptures that emphasize design while exploring shapes inherent in the stone. In each of his pieces he strives to develop a form that features unique colors, veins, and patterns existing within the rock. Describing his approach to the medium he states, "In my sculpture I try to leave the viewer with an experience that transcends visual appreciation. Rather than shocking or antagonizing, I prefer that my art is viewed and perhaps later considered as a source of reflection, thought, and contemplation."

Coming from a professional background in education, Kailian has a personal interest in sharing his artistic knowledge with other artists as well as school children. He currently maintains a studio at Art City, a hotbed for stone sculpting activity in Ventura, which allows him to develop his skills in a collaborative environment. He notes, "All artists have different backgrounds, educations, experiences, talents, and skills. The more that local artists share their art, the more the diversity and talent of the arts community is expressed." He hopes to use the fellowship to create larger scale, stone pieces.

Emerging Artist: _____

Monika Navarro

Multi-Media Arts, Film and Photography



Family Portrait (Green Card ID), 2002, linocut

Building on the belief that the personal is political, Monika Navarro creates a variety of work relating to her experience as a first generation American from a Mexican immigrant family. Her current work includes images gleaned from stories and pictures during the period her family acclimated to American culture. She states, "As immigrants we are writing history with our lives, forever looking back at our ancestors and forward as we find our place and voice in a new culture." Working from family photographs, Navarro transforms the images through painting and printmaking, revealing the psychology and family dynamics hidden in the photos.

Navarro has recently begun experimenting with film, combining her prints and photos with oral history to create a visual collage. Exploring the lives of her uncles, both deported to Mexico in 1999 after years of drug abuse, has become the focus of her most current project, which she hopes to continue with the help of the fellowship. Commenting on this work she says, "I hope to engage my audience in a conversation about the lives of immigrants as well as addiction. I think this is a subject matter that is crucial as our relationship with immigrants is ever changing and tenuous."

Emerging Artist: _____

Larissa Strauss

Mosaics



Bringing the Light, 2002, stained glass mosaic

Larissa Strauss began creating mosaic artworks four years ago without any prior formal art training. First working in tile, she soon transitioned into working with stained glass, preferring the variations offered by the texture, sheen and color of the material. Cutting each piece of glass by hand, she uses her eye for detail to create meticulously constructed works, experimenting with new techniques as she progresses.

As an emerging artist, she has been fortunate to receive numerous commissions, which have allowed her to gain income from her work but have somewhat limited her artistic vision. Strauss states, "I would like to have an opportunity to be able to create works that reflect my own artistic vision as opposed to works that are produced as a result of a client's wishes." Taking inspiration from her travels, she hopes to move the traditional and ancient form of mosaic art to new and uncharted territories.

Using the fellowship, Strauss would like to create a series of three pieces reflecting the spirituality of various ethnic groups that have lived in Ventura throughout history and hopes to display these works during an upcoming ArtWalk. Strauss also aspires to share her techniques with local children and would like to make a documentary video to use as an educational tool.

Emerging Artist: _____

Cheryl Ann Thomas

Ceramic Sculpture



Relic 21, 2003, porcelain, stain

Having spent most of her professional life as an educator, Cheryl Ann Thomas has only recently turned her attention to the full-time practice of making art. An active member of the Studio Channel Islands art collective, she spends most days in her studio creating sculptures from coiled porcelain and clay. The delicate sculptures, often resembling vessels, are stained and then fired at a high temperature, encouraging the element of chance in the final firing. Speaking of the finished work she asserts, "The resulting relics are signifiers of a daily engagement with the artistic process."

Both the creative process and the resulting work represent a spiritual quest for Thomas. She states, "The coiling technique involves a succession of rhythmical movements that connect me intimately with the clay in both body and mind." Calling her hands "her tools," the texture of the piece is formed by her imprint, further strengthening her connection with the work. With the desire to continue exploring the medium of coiled ceramic sculptures, she plans on seeking gallery representation of her work on a regional level this year.

Arts Organizations

Representing the diverse mix of non-profit arts organizations in our community, 18 local arts organizations were awarded a total of \$141,000 in grants for the 2004 funding cycle. Invited to apply under a range of funding categories, the applicants were evaluated on several criteria, including artistic excellence, organizational capacity, community impact and program accessibility.

General Operating Grants

A total of \$110,000 to support the ongoing activities of both large and small cultural organizations located within the City of Ventura.

Large Arts Organizations

—annual budget greater than \$50,000

Buenaventura Art Association—an organization of visual artists and arts supporters whose members are united to promote Ventura County artists and to educate and inform the public about these artists and their work
—\$6,250

Channelaire Chorus—a 120 member women's chorus specializing in a capella barbershop harmony —\$2,500

Focus on the Masters—an art appreciation program that documents, preserves and presents the works and lives of accomplished Ventura County artists, emphasizing the importance of the arts to a healthy society —\$20,000

Performances to Grow On—presents audiences of all ages a unique glimpse into a world of creativity and education through performances that feature a variety of artistic disciplines and cultural traditions —\$6,000

Rubicon Theater—presents innovative productions of classical and contemporary plays and outreach programs for the entertainment, enrichment and education of residents and visitors —\$26,000

Ventura Music Festival—presents a series of musical programs of international caliber in historic settings in the City of Ventura to enhance the cultural and economic vitality of the community —\$25,000

Ventura College Workshop—hands on educational program for students and the community at large in opera and musical theater —\$5,550

Ventura County Ballet—presents ballet performances, educational outreach programs, and ballet instruction in order to increase appreciation by the public of the art form —\$5,000

Ventura County Master Chorale—promotes the growth, quality, appreciation and access to classical and contemporary vocal masterworks by the community through performances featuring quality musicians
—\$3,400

Small Arts Organizations

—annual budget less than \$50,000

Kids Art—provides free, interdisciplinary creative arts programs to youth at risk in a safe, supportive environment
—\$7,500

Plexus Dance Theatre—produces innovative, professional dance performances that are accessible to the general public
—\$6,000

San Buenaventura Artists' Union—promotes public involvement with art through exhibitions, demonstrations dance performances, poetry readings and music recitals
—\$1,300

Ventura Area Theatre Sports—an internationally recognized, award winning improvisational company that explores the theatre through workshops, performances and public encounters
—\$2,200

Project Grants

\$25,000 is available to arts organizations located in Ventura County to support a specific project within the City of Ventura.

California Poets in the Schools
\$3,500 to continue the Rhythm and Words Poetry Series

Music 4 Kids
\$4,000 to start a music education program in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Club of Ventura

New West Symphony
\$4,500 to produce a series of three concerts in the Ventura Downtown Cultural District

Ojai Camerata
\$2,300 to present two performances in Ventura featuring new works by local composers

Ventura County Arts Council
\$4,000 to produce a technical assistance workshop in partnership with the City of Ventura for local arts organizations

Facility Use Grants

Facility Use Grants are in-kind contributions, up to a total value of \$3,000, available to organizations wishing to produce a cultural event at City Hall. The grants allow organizations to use the historical building without having to pay the rental fees normally charged by the City.

New West Symphony

\$540 to present a series of three concerts in Spring 2004

Plexus Dance Theatre

\$1,110 to present a three-day event celebrating the 20-year history of the organization to take place during the Spring 2004 ArtWalk

San Buenaventura Artists' Union

\$300 to present the Ventura New Music Concert Series in May 2004

Ventura Chamber Music Festival

\$450 to present two concerts during the annual festival in May 2004

Community Arts Grants

A total of \$3,000 is available to a non-arts organization to partner with an artist or arts organization to present cultural programs in the City of Ventura. These grants are awarded three times a year in September, January and March.

September, 2003 Awardees

Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurses Association

\$500 for presentation of "If Only I Had More Time" a play by Marion Scherer dealing with end of life issues affecting family members and caregivers

Candelaria American Indian Council

\$400 for production of a the one-day Hutash Festival celebrating traditional Chumash culture including dance, storytelling, music and arts and crafts

LUCHA, INC

\$400 for production of a two-day festival celebrating National American Indian & Alaskan Native Heritage Month

January, 2004 Awardee

Westpark Community Center

\$675 to create a series of poetry writing workshops with poet Shelley Savren for middle school students

