

2023



ARTTogether

/ Annual Report





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WHO ARE WE?

ARTogether is a 501(c)(3) arts non-profit organization based in Oakland, California serving refugee and immigrant communities.

OUR MISSION.

ARTogether’s mission is to provide art programs that foster compassionate communities where refugees and immigrants can flourish.

OUR VISION.

We envision a world where there are no barriers—or borders—to art and creative expression, where everyone is welcomed and their stories have impact.

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"This year's theme is Placemaking, reflecting our belief that art is an essential tool in creating environments that promote well-being, community engagement, and a profound sense of belonging."

Dear ARTogether Community,

As I reflect on the past year, my heart is filled with gratitude for each one of you who has played a vital role in ARTogether's extraordinary journey. Your unwavering support and dedication have been the bedrock of our success, and it is a sincere honor to address you in this year's annual report.

Over the past year, ARTogether has achieved remarkable milestones that have significantly advanced our mission: to provide art programs that foster compassionate communities where refugees and immigrants flourish. Our new home in Downtown Oakland has become a vibrant hub for connection and creativity, offering a safe space for cultural expression, empowerment, and participation for immigrant and refugee communities. One participant aptly expressed, "I don't need to 'fit in' when I am at ARTogether. I feel like I belong."

Our school programs garnered local and national attention, and our other programs earning us recognition as an honoree of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Youth and children discovered joy and connection in our camps, while our art-based support group for newcomers provided a supportive haven for the community to thrive.

Despite the challenges we faced, particularly in the ongoing global refugee crisis, ARTogether continues to be a beacon of hope.

This year, more than ever, highlighted the significance of holistic programs that support those making the arduous journey to the Bay Area. As we expand our team and programs, we face uncertainties in funding, exacerbated by cuts in art funding at both local and national government levels. However, we are determined to continue pushing forward, adapting with resilience and creativity. Our commitment remains steadfast to nurturing inclusive spaces where every voice is heard and valued. This is not just our mission; it's a promise to our community.

Within the following pages of this annual report, you'll find a comprehensive overview of our collective journey—our triumphs, challenges, and the exciting path that lies ahead. This year's theme is Placemaking, reflecting our belief that art is an essential tool in creating environments that promote well-being, community engagement, and a profound sense of belonging.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community. Whether you are a valued donor, a committed volunteer, a dedicated employee, or a passionate advocate, your contributions have propelled us forward, making a meaningful impact on the lives we touch. ARTogether is not merely an entity; it is a collective force for positive change, and you are the driving force behind it. For that, I am deeply grateful.

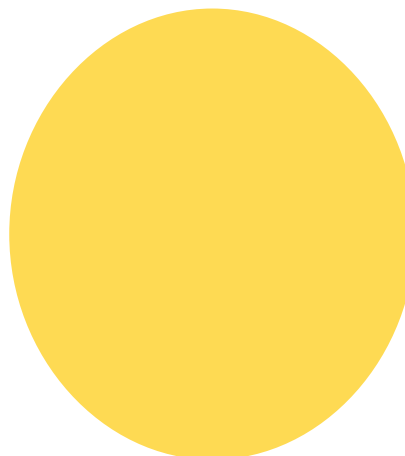
With Heartfelt Appreciation,



Leva Zand
Executive Director

01

**PLACEMAKING
IN ACTION.**





CREATE A SENSE *OF* *BELONGING*

ARTogether's programs foster a sense of belonging by creating spaces that reflect the cultural and social diversity of the community. For refugees and immigrants, having access to public spaces that celebrate their cultures, languages, and traditions is vital to feeling accepted and fostering a sense of belonging.



ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
HOME MADE @ARTogether Reading Series
Oakland, CA

HOME MADE @ ARTOGETHER

Reading Series

HOME MADE @ ARTogether is an intimate literary arts gatherings that connect, cultivate & celebrate the stories and storytellers from immigrant and refugee communities.





-Edward Gunawan, Poet, Filmmaker, Mini-Grant winner, Event Performer

“Nothing warms my heart more than when I’m sharing my work with fellow immigrants and refugees who attend ARTogether’s reading series. It feels truly liberating not needing to hyper-contextualize or over-explain my work or myself as this engaged and compassionate audience truly “gets it.”

ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
HOME MADE @ ARTogether Reading Series,
Oakland, CA



ARTS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

“The arts are something that equals everyone, art brings all people together, every family feels welcome... Let’s honor each other and learn some common language through art, and ARTogether does just that.”

—Jacqueline Smith, Headstart Preschool in Concord

ARTogether's Arts in School program collaborates with educational institutions to provide innovative art education and engagement experiences, integrating creative learning into the academic environment for refugee and immigrant students, empowering them to express themselves and enhancing their cultural understanding, and creating teaching opportunities for refugee and immigrant artists.

ARTS IN SCHOOLS/
Dance & Movement Class
Cesar Chavez Center,
Concord, CA



ARTS IN SCHOOLS/
Dance Class In Oakland International
High School, Oakland, CA



PROVIDE SPACE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

Placemaking encourages social interaction and community engagement. ARTTogether’s programs provide opportunities for refugees and immigrants to meet and connect with both their fellow newcomers and local residents. These interactions can help break down social barriers and promote understanding between different groups.

AFGHAN WOMEN ARTS-BASED SUPPORT GROUP

Afghan Women Arts-Based Support Group is designed to bring newcomer Afghan women together to build community, provide mental wellness support, and create art together.



ARTS & WELLNESS PROGRAM/
Afghan Women Arts-Based Support Group,
CERI, Oakland, CA



ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
Literary Arts Mentorship Hub
the ARTTogether Center, Oakland, CA

EVENTS AT THE CENTER

ARTTogether Center in Downtown Oakland is available for artists and organizations to use for public events free of charge. Over the course of only one year, the center became the hub for many retreats, classes, and community gatherings.



ARTS & WELLNESS PROGRAM/
Kaimera Productions Workshop,
the ARTTogether Center, Oakland, CA

FREE CO-WORKING SPACE



ARTogether Center provides free working space, wifi, tea, and a pleasant environment to artists to work in downtown Oakland!

THE ARTOGETHER CENTER/
Oakland, CA





A SAFE
SPACE

FOR CULTURAL
EXPRESSION

Our programs are designed with cultural sensitivity in mind, allowing refugees and immigrants to express their cultural identities.



LINCOLN SUMMER NIGHTS

This year, ARTogether partnered with Friends of Lincoln Square Park in Oakland Chinatown to participate in Lincoln Summer Nights. This monthly event offers art, culture, games, and resources for youth, families, seniors, and the broader community, aiming to create a shared sense of belonging and strengthen community ties.

ARTS & WELLNESS PROGRAM/
Lincoln Summer Nights Series,
July 2023, Oakland, CA



WORLD REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT DAY FESTIVAL

In collaboration with the East Bay Refugee and Immigrant Forum and partners.



PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAM/
World Refugee & Immigrant Day Festival,
June 2023, Oakland, CA



PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAM/
*World Refugee & Immigrant
Day Festival,*
June 2023, Oakland, CA





SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH & *EMOTIONAL WELLBEING*

A well-designed public space can have a positive impact on mental and emotional well-being. Refugees and immigrants who may be dealing with trauma, displacement, and cultural adjustment can benefit from spaces that offer tranquility, safety, and a sense of normalcy.



ARTS & WELLNESS PROGRAM/
Tekah Tekah, the ARTogether Center,
Oakland, CA





YOUTH ART CAMP

The Program aims to provide a unique opportunity for Afghan youth to gather in a safe space to make art, explore creativity, make friends, process and explore feelings and emotions, and develop new social skills to help navigate their new environment.

ARTS & WELLNESS PROGRAM/
Youth Art Camp, July 2023
Noor Islamic Center,
Concord, CA





Romina Zahraoui
Dots
The Tale of Unity

In "Dots: The Tale of Unity," Romina Zahraoui uses the concept of a tapestry of social and cultural influences to craft visual stories about the lives of individuals and a unity that transcends borders.

Placing her own experiences as an immigrant in the center of her work, she explores the universal aspects of human existence, such as the search for identity, the power of community, and the resilience of the human spirit.

Her art is a celebration of diversity and a testament to the power of unity. Through her vibrant, colorful compositions, she invites viewers to see the world through a new lens, one where differences are embraced and shared experiences create a sense of belonging.

SHOWCASING *SKILL AND* *TALENT*

ARTogether provides platforms for refugees and immigrants to showcase their skills, talents, and entrepreneurial endeavors. This leads to economic opportunities and helps newcomers contribute to the local economy.

ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
Breaking The Frame,
Oakland, CA



ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
East Bay Open Studios,
Oakland, CA

GROUP & SOLO EXHIBITIONS

ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/

Dots: The Tale of Unity,
the ARTTogether Center,
Oakland, CA

POP-UP ART SHOP

We partnered with Oakland Art Murmur and Visit Oakland to organize a Fashion & Art Fair as part of Oakland Style

Week, to showcase first and second generation immigrant and refugee fashion designers and artists of color.



STUDIO VISITS



ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
Studio Visit - Anita Sulimanovic,
Oakland, CA

CONNECT TO RESOURCES:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ARTogether provides community centers, resource hubs, and information kiosks in public spaces. These resources can provide essential information about local services, employment opportunities, healthcare, and education for refugees and immigrants who might be navigating a new system.



ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
Artist Statement Workshop,
In partnership with Oakland Art Murmur and Oakstop,
Oakland, CA



THE SCHOLARSHIP

The Music Scholarship provides one-on-one support, music lessons, and mentorship to musically talented high school students, helping them to pursue admission at university music programs, secure music-based scholarships, and providing pathways for students aspiring to play and perform music professionally.



ARTS IN SCHOOL/
The ARTogether Center,
Oakland, CA



BUILDING BRIDGES:

ARTogether promotes interactions between refugees, immigrants, and the broader community. This engagement can break down stereotypes, dispel misunderstandings, and create bridges of empathy and mutual support.



ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
Artist Mixer,
the ARTogether Center,
Oakland, CA

ARTIST MIXER.



ARTS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM/
Cultural Performances in Fremont
High School,
Oakland, CA

**SCHOOL
PERFORMANCES.**

EMPOWERMENT & PARTICIPATION

Involving refugees and immigrants in the placemaking process empowers them to actively shape their new environment. This sense of agency can enhance their integration experience and promote a sense of ownership over their community.

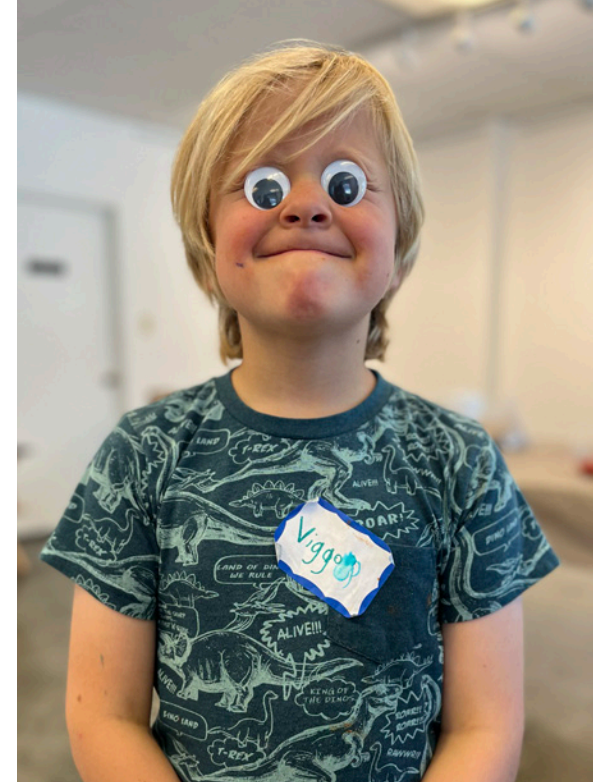


SUMMER ART CAMPS

for children



SUMMER ART CAMPS/
June 2023, the ARTtogether
Center, Oakland, CA



“

PERPETUAL EXILE ARTISTS SUCH AS MYSELF ARE NOT THE KIND OF PEOPLE, OR ARTISTS, WHO WANT SEATS, OR FOLDING CHAIRS, AT THE TABLE. WE WANT THE MEANS TO CREATE AND BUILD OUR OWN TABLES. THANKS TO THE MENTORSHIP HUB I NOW HAVE SPECIFIC TOOLS TO POWERFULLY BUILD AND CREATE MY OWN TABLE—AS A WRITER, PERFORMER, STAND-UP COMIC, IMPROVISER AND SO FORTH.

—Participant Ipeleng Kgositsile: Writer, Entertainer, Performer,
2023 Mentorship Hub Mentee

”

ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
Mentorship Hub, the ARTTogether Center,
Oakland, CA

MENTORSHIP HUB.

In 2023, the ARTTogether Mentorship Hub offered a 3-day intensive program for 1st and 2nd generation immigrant, refugee, and diasporic artists. Focused on intentional community building and culturally relevant professional development, it included

creative exercises, workshops, and coaching. Led by local BIPOC artists and professionals, participants reflected on their artistic journeys, set goals, and aligned with their values. The program emphasized gathering, collective power building, and peer connections.





“

The sense of belonging and the ongoing support from this amazing network have meant a lot to me. Connecting with fellow artists and learning from exceptional mentors has fostered invaluable connections that I cherish. Moreover, gaining a clearer understanding of the practical steps I can take to realistically achieve my artistic goals has been immensely beneficial.”

”

— Romina Zabihian: Visual Artist, Exhibition Artist, 2023 Mentorship Hub Mentee

ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/
Mentorship Hub, the ARTTogether Center,
Oakland, CA

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small, delicate white flower with a green stem and leaves. The person is wearing a dark blue jacket and a black patterned scarf. In the background, another person is visible, holding a small bouquet of yellow flowers. The scene is softly lit, creating a warm and intimate atmosphere.

LONG-TERM INTEGRATION

ARTogether contributes to the long-term integration of refugees and immigrants by creating spaces where they can invest emotionally, culturally, and socially. This investment in their new community can lead to a stronger attachment and commitment to their new home.



“

I'M VERY HAPPY ABOUT THIS PROGRAM, THAT AT ONCE A MONTH, WE GET TOGETHER, SEE OUR FRIENDS, CHAT WITH EACH OTHER, CREATE ARTS, DO SEWING, COOKING, OR EXERCISE. THIS PROGRAM IS REALLY BENEFICIAL FOR ME AND I'M GRATEFUL FOR THOSE WHO SUPPORT SUCH PROGRAMS.

”

— Mina, Participant of *Afghan Women Art & Support Group (AWASG)*

AWASG



AFGHAN WOMEN ARTS-BASED SUPPORT GROUP



AFGHAN FAMILY GATHERINGS

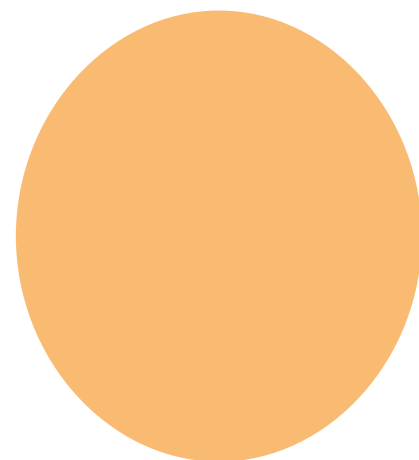
“It’s fantastic! This is the first time that there has been a celebration of Nowruz [for me] here... I hope it can raise awareness of the Afghan population and the Afghan culture of the Bay Area”

— Participant of Afghan Family Gatherings



Q2

PARTNERSHIPS.



STRONGER TOGETHER

Since its inception, ARTTogether has firmly believed in the power of partnership and collaboration, rather than competition, as the cornerstone of its work. As the only art organization in the Bay Area dedicated to serving refugees and immigrants, ARTTogether actively partners with government bodies, educational institutes, resettlement agencies, and various social service organizations. This collaborative approach has significantly broadened our reach and impact, allowing us to extend our services to a wider community. In 2023, some of our key partners included the Center for Empowering Refugees and

Immigrants, Refugee and Immigrant Transition, International Rescue Committee, East Bay Refugee and Immigrant Forum, City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program, Alameda County Art Commissioners, Oakland International High School, Fremont High School, Oakland Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, Oakland Chinatown Coalition, Kaimera Productions, Asian Health Services, and others. These partnerships exemplify our commitment to fostering inclusive, supportive communities through the arts. We are highlighting a few of these partnership here:

ARTIST GROWTH PROGRAM/

Artist Mixer in partnership with Oakland Art Murmur and Oakstop, Oakland, CA



OAKLAND ART MURMUR

Oakland Art Murmur supports and promotes visual artists and arts venues, and connects the public to the vibrant and eclectic art of the East Bay. Some of our collaborative projects included Professional Development Workshops for Artists, Oakland Style Week and East Bay Open Studios.



KAIMERA PRODUCTIONS

Kaimera uses live performance to bring audiences together in dialogue and examine some of the hardest questions our global society faces. Our continues collabration include Storytelling and Narrative Workshop which will be continued in 2024.

ASIAN HEALTH SERVICES

Asian Health Services' mission is to serve and advocate for the medically underserved, including the immigrant and refugee Asian community, and to ensure equal access to health care services regardless of income, insurance status, language, or culture. Our joint project includes Youth Leadership in Training and Coping Health in Love & Life Programs.



CENTER FOR EMPOWERING REFUGEES & IMMIGRANTS

CERI serves refugees and immigrants affected by war, torture, genocide or other extreme traumas so as to improve their emotional, physical, social and economic wellbeing. Afghan Women Arts-Based Support Group is our joint project with CERI.

Q3.

IMPACT.



ARTOGETHER's

IMPACT NUMBERS IN 2023

140

free events and programs for the community from more than 25 countries

1,200

adults directly benefited from our programs

550

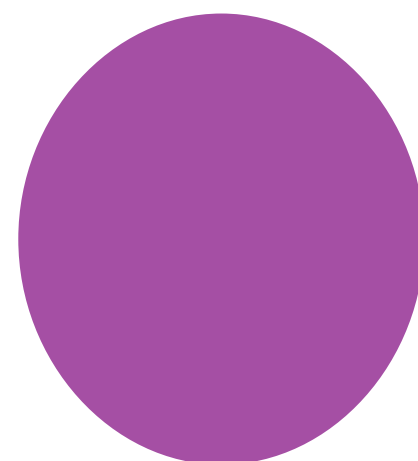
children and youths directly benefited from our programs

85

artists led our programs

Q4

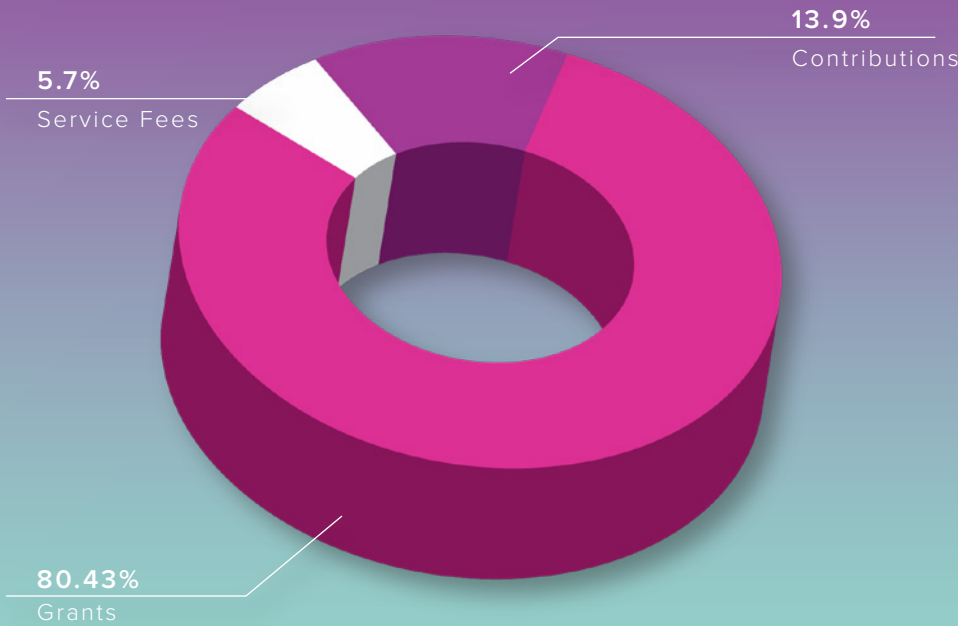
BUDGET
REPORT.



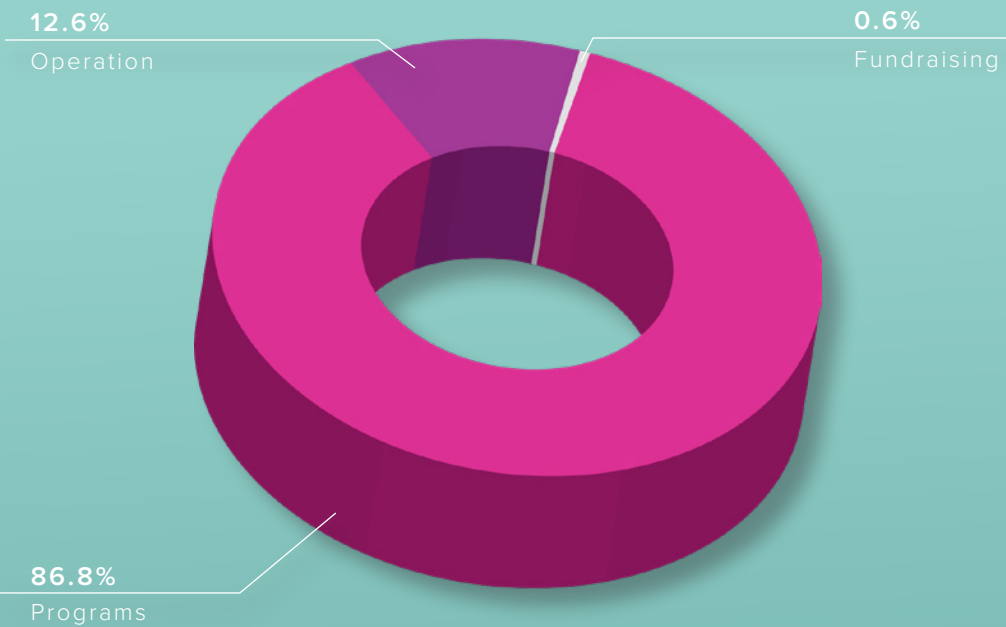
FINANCIAL REPORT

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue	\$6,301	\$47,172	\$76,052	\$305,192	\$374,423	\$536,624	\$716,349
Expenses	\$6,300	\$15,912	\$51,528	\$239,864	\$243,825	\$551,746	\$572,557

REVENUE



EXPENSES



5.

PEOPLE.

THANK YOU



VOLUNTEERS AT AFGHAN
FAMILY GATHERING/
March 2023, Fremont, CA



STAFF

Leva Zand, Executive Director/ Miles Markstein, Development Director/ Michelle Lin, Program Director/ Nick Kanozik, Program Director/ Goli Hashemi, Program Director/ Polina Marso, Program Manager/ Sabina Kariat, Program Manager/ Sarah Dawson McClean, Communications and Marketing, Photography/

VOLUNTEERS

Alexandra Pettet, Allison Goetz Davis, Hossein Namazi

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY INTERNS

Angel Garza, Cynthu Muthusamy, Gabrielle Estioko, Meesha Heydon, Sam Campanelli, Shannon Saucy-Finley

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Anita Fong, Celeste Tretto, Goli Hashemi, Jennifer Brown, Kellianne Craig, Tal Ariel

TEACHING ARTISTS AND FACILITATORS

Anita Sulimanovic, Chetna Mehta, Edward Gunawan, Gazelle Samizay, Jason Bayani, Juliana Mendonca, Katy Bahrami, Kimberley Acebo Arteche, Marisol Lara, Maw Shein Win, Nick Kanozik, Olivia Eng, Polina Marso, Preeti Vangani, Prumsodun Ok, Raeshma Razvi, Rhiannon Evans MacFadyen, Sabina Kariat, Sahba Aminikia, Sarah Dawson McClean, Sen Mendez, Shelley Wong, Taro Hattori

AFFILIATED ARTISTS

Aga Ruda, Amy Zhou, Andreína Maldonaldo (Nina Limón), Angel Bista, Ariam Araya, Arina Sawari-Stadnyk, ASWAT Ensemble, Benjamin Bartu, Bushra Gill, Carmela Gaspar, Carolina Guerrero (Cadena y Rosas), Ceza Nami, Chetna Mehta, Clary Ahn, Dalar Alahverdi, Dawn Angelicca Barcelona, Diana Fu, Diana Gameros Quartet, Diana Medina, Diana To, Elijah McClinton (deathtoheartbreaks), Forrest McGarvey, Hakim Karimzada, Houyee Chow, Ingrid Rojas Contreras, Ipeleng Kgositsile, Jadma Noronha, Jason Wyman, Jerrica Li, Jessica Yuru Zhou, Jorge Humberto Gutiérrez Cantú, Jy Jimmie Flora Gabiola, Kacy Jung, Kiki Quach, Kristie Song, Krystle Reynolds (KMLove), Laila Waziri, Olivia Eng, Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, Maruf Noyoft, Marwa Doost, Mihee Kim, Narima Assadi, Natalie Nayun, Nimisha Doongarwal, Noun Abdelaziz, Papo Rebolledo, Patricia Rojas Zambrano, Percy Schumacher, Romina Zabihian, Ruta Ghebrewold, Saahil M., Samantha Cosentino, Samia Karimi, Sarah Zuberi (zuberi studios), Sen Mendez, Shelley Siegel, Somaieh Amini, Somaieh Amini, Sujata Tibrewala, Sunroop Kaur, Tracy Jones, Valerie Win Liu, Vina Vo, Zara Jamshed, Zêdan Xelef

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Anthony Bongco, Claire Burke, Nino Fernandez, Sarah Dawson McClean

ADVISORS

Amy Lam, Helen Hansel, Mona Afari, Raeshma Razvi, Samina Ali

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abundance of Youth, Asian Health Services, ASWAT, Catholic Charities of East Bay, Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Chinatown Coalition, East Bay Refugee and Immigrant Forum, Eastwind Books, Fremont High School, Head Start/Unity Council, Kaimera Productions, Mosaiceye, Nava Dance Theatre, Noor Islamic Center, Oak Stop, Oakland Art Murmur, Oakland Art Murmur, Oakland Asian Cultural Center, Oakland International High School, Queerly Complex, Refugee and Immigrant Transitions, Resourceful Roots, Samuel Merritt University, Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, Visit Oakland

FUNDERS

Akonadi Foundation, Alameda County Arts Commission, Archewell Foundation, Arts for Oakland Kids, Barrios Trust, California Arts Council, City of Oakland, Department of Health Care Access and Information, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, Joseph & Vera Long Foundation, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Lowell Berry Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Nicholson Family Foundation, Vaccinate All 58, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, Zellerbach Family Foundation

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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DESIGN

Polina Marso

ARTogether is a 501(c)(3) organization
EIN/ 82-3045350

1200 Harrison Street,
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 545-2787
info@artogether.org

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDRESSES

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