

REPORT: BIPOC CREATOR GRANTS 2021

BY INGRID SCHORR, DIRECTOR OF ARTS ENGAGEMENT

In December 2020, Brandeis Arts Engagement announced the [availability of funding](#) to support Brandeis undergraduates whose creative work amplifies the voices of BIPOC people. Students were invited to apply for up to \$250 to be used for resources such as equipment, materials, studio time, lessons, workshops and so forth for creative arts disciplines such as (but not limited to) music, photography, curating, filmmaking, design, poetry, and spoken word.

In addition to the material support, students were paired with a faculty or graduate student in the Division of Creative Arts for additional conversation and guidance.

Grants were distributed on a rolling basis until the \$3,000 budget was used up.

RECIPIENTS

Juliana An '21	Cyril Ojilere '21
Kenia Arbaiza '24	Viv Santana-Perez '22
Geraldine Bogard '21	Krupa Sourirajan '23
Alejandra Bonilla '21	Tamara Tarwoe '21
Sienna Bucu '22	Ekene Uwanka '21
Liz Gong '23	Sophia Wang '23
Jay Gonzalez '24	Tré Warner '22
Jonathan Joasil '22	

Division of Creative Arts affiliation

3 Creative Arts majors; 3 Creative Arts minors
(2 undecided at time of application)

By creative discipline

Theater	1	Photography	4
Other visual art	4	Interdisciplinary	2
Music	4		

FEEDBACK FROM RECIPIENTS

A survey in May 2021 yielded 11 responses from the 15 grant recipients. In their statements about the positive impact of the grant, recipients mentioned learning new skills and forming new connections within the Brandeis arts community, as well as validation, affirmation, empowerment, and encouragement.

“Continuing to be intentional about this initiative will go a long way to help BIPOC creatives at Brandeis.”

--Ekene Uwanka '21

ROOM TO GROW

Asked to choose from a list of things that would be helpful for future participants, most respondents said that the **opportunity to share creative work** and to **meet as a group to reflect and share resources** would be helpful.

It is clear that students would benefit from more practical support around budgeting and purchasing. Students were not aware of free resources such as SIMS and LinkedIn Learning. They also need more preparation for contacting the faculty member or graduate student they are matched with (not all students followed through on this) and for making the most of the conversation.

IMPACT

Survey question: What are some possible next steps for you creatively?

- Finish building my studio set-up, and learn new ways to mix, master, and produce music.
- Complete part of a song that I am writing.
- Branching into new designs!
- Finding ways to communicate activist ideology through art in various mediums including larger soft sculpture works.
- I will continue working on photography for my Senior Studio and Honors Thesis.
- I will most likely make poetry writing a practice for my own wellbeing and use it to connect with others.
- I have an internship with a professional theater company through November 2021.
- I will continue making music and sharing it with the world.
- Work on more full-length musical projects.
- Work with another muralist as an assistant.
- I will continue working on photography for my Senior Studio and Honors Thesis.

Survey question: What did you get out of your conversation with your faculty or grad student mentor?

- I learned of alumni in the music business, which made it easier to believe that I can study something besides music, whilst growing as an artist.
- I started to understand basics of how to get started [with the MIDI controller].
- It assured me that there not only would there be assistance when necessary, but that this work follows in already established feminist traditions.
- I learned about the CAST minor! I also created a connection with a faculty member [Tom King] who I'm sure I'll be in conversation with a lot during my time at Brandeis. I also learned how the skills learned in poetry workshop are applicable in other disciplines.
- Motivation to continue releasing music.
- An open mind to possibilities and new ways of approaching my creative ideas.

OUTCOMES

What new knowledge or skills did you obtain as a result of the grant? How did the grant expand your creative capabilities?

- I was able to create a studio at home and **continue recording music** as if I was on campus. I was able to re-record multiple songs and learn **new mastering techniques**. I produced a new song and began another small recording project.
- [Through Arts Engagement] I participated in the **Festival of the Arts**, collaborated with another Brandeis student on a **[CAST capstone project]**, and was encouraged to apply for a **Remis grant** for summer study, which I received.
- With the sewing machine from the grant I was able to accomplish two major things: **supplement income** in order to buy supplies and pay rent as well as **donate money to Brandeis Mutual Aid**; and work through **a new medium**.
- I learned more about **portrait shooting**. I definitely want to create a video portrait series. This grant was so great to me, because I **can carry out projects** that sometimes only sit in my mind.
- By taking part in an actor training program with Shakespeare and Company, I experienced a new world in theater that I have never seen before.
- With the projector I could make **larger paintings for my art class** and I **grew as a portrait artist**.
- I learned how **poetry is a tool of resistance and care**. The space that I shared with poets in this workshop reminded me of how essential being in community is to art. So, I think during my time at Brandeis **I will build upon the social skills** I saw Ariana Brown use to build spaces that welcome people who don't imagine themselves in a creative space.

NEXT STEPS

AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Depending on the 2021-22 operating budget for Arts Engagement, we plan to offer the grant again and will continue to refine and develop the support given to students.

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Submitted by
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