



## **Four Local Artists Awarded Rydell Visual Arts Fellowships for 2022 & 2023 by Community Foundation Santa Cruz County**

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Aptos, CA - Four local visual artists have been selected by Community Foundation Santa Cruz County to receive Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship awards for 2022 and 2023.

Each fellowship recipient receives a \$20,000 award to further their artistic career.

The awardees are **Kristiana Chan**, **Anna Friz**, **Kajahl Benes-Trapp** and **Janette Gross**. (See artist biographies below.)

Roy and Frances Rydell established the Roy and Frances Rydell Visual Arts Fund at the Community Foundation in 1985 to promote Santa Cruz County artists and arts organizations. Following their passing, their estate was bequeathed to the foundation. Their gift has generated more than \$1.4 million in fellowships for artists and support for Santa Cruz County visual arts organizations.

The Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship program was developed with input from the local arts community to honor the wishes and intent of the Rydells in establishing the fund. The fellowship program, now in its 16th year, has awarded \$680,000 directly to artists. (Complete list of current and past award recipients is available at [cfsc.org/rydell](http://cfsc.org/rydell).) Gifts allow artists uninterrupted creative time to focus solely on their work and its impact on our local community and the larger world.

The fellowships help individual visual artists pursue their creative work and are made solely on the merits of their artistry and not tied to the completion of any specific projects.

“Roy and Frances Rydell understood that artists not only bear witness to life, but they play an integral role in helping humanity process our collective experience,” said **Susan True**, CEO of the Community Foundation. “As we move into the third year of the global COVID-19 pandemic

and our community continues to heal from the CZU fires, there is just so much life to witness and process. This new cohort of artists—their diversity in terms of age, background, and forms of expression—will help us think, learn, grow, and witness as life in all its beauty and pain continues to unfold.”

Fifty-one artists applied for this round of fellowships from a candidate pool nominated by 26 local and regional visual arts organizations and former Rydell Fellows. Nominees were limited to working artists, 25 years or older, who reside in Santa Cruz County and are not enrolled in a degree granting program.

Nominating organizations were asked to consider the broad disciplines the Rydells thought of as part of the visual arts: painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, installation, mixed media, stage set design, photography, costume design, textiles, glass, film and video.

In October 2021, a panel of three nationally recognized arts professionals met at the Foundation to judge the artists' works and select the fellowship recipients. The panel members were Maori Holmes, Artistic Director and CEO of BlackStar in Philadelphia; Garth Johnson, Paul Phillips & Sharon Sullivan Curator of Ceramics, Everson Museum in Syracuse; and Astria Suparak, Independent Curator, former director and curator of the contemporary art galleries at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and Syracuse University.

The \$80,000 in new Rydell Fellowships were complemented by another \$200,000 in unrestricted grants made to local arts organizations this spring. “The fellowships and arts grants we make year in year out support those making our local arts landscape as vibrant and vital as it is. The creativity of our local arts community never ceases to inspire us. We are proud of the funding we’re able to channel to the arts, and it’s thanks to people who love this place, have a vision of a better tomorrow, and act on it by giving.” said **Kevin Heuer**, Director of Engagement & Impact.

The 2020 - 2021 Rydell Fellows will be featured in the Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship Exhibition at Museum of Art & History in downtown Santa Cruz from January 21 to March 20, 2022. For more information visit: <https://www.santacruzmah.org/exhibitions/rydell-fellowship>

### **About Community Foundation Santa Cruz County**

Since 1982, Community Foundation Santa Cruz County has brought together people, ideas, and resources to inspire philanthropy and accomplish great things. The Community Foundation helps donors and their advisors invest wisely in causes they care about, to provide grants and resources to community organizations, and to offer leadership around key local issues. The Foundation manages more than \$168 million in charitable assets and provides customized and tax-smart giving solutions that resulted in more than \$21 million in grants in 2020. Thanks to generous donors, over \$131 million in local grants and scholarships have been awarded locally since 1982. The Community Foundation seeks to make Santa Cruz County thrive for all who call it home, now and in the future. Learn more at [www.cfsc.org](http://www.cfsc.org).

## **Artist Biographies: Rydell Visual Arts Fellowship Program, Recipients 2022 - 2023**

**Kajahl Benes-Trapp** (*he/his*) was born in Santa Cruz, CA in 1985 and received his BFA in painting from San Francisco State University in 2008. He spent his final year studying at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, Tuscany, Italy. In 2012, Kajahl received his MFA in painting from Hunter College in New York. In 2013, he was a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant. He was also a 2016 Artist in Residence at the Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans, LA. More recently, Kajahl was awarded an Artist-in-Residence at Lower Eastside Printshop New York in 2019. Kajahl is represented by Richard Heller Gallery, Los Angeles, and Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago. Recent solo exhibitions include *Obscure Origins* at Tillou Fine Arts Brooklyn, NY, curated by Larry Ossei-Mensah. *Unearthed Entities* at Richard Heller Gallery in Los Angeles, CA. His latest solo exhibition, *Royal Specter*, opens at Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago, IL. His work is in the public collections of Collection Solo, The Dean Collection and 21c Museum Hotel: Art Museum.

**Kristiana Chan** (*she/her*) is a first generation Malaysian-Chinese artist, writer, and educator from the American South. Her work examines the material memory of the landscape and the excluded histories of the displaced Chinese diaspora. She researches the political, historical, and environmental heritage of the landscape and its material elements, incorporating their elemental properties into her processes. Working across disciplines, she utilizes video installation, archival photography, and experimental alternative photographic processes. Most recently, Kristiana has been working with wild harvested clay and ceramics. She is deeply fascinated by how the not-so-distant histories of racial exclusion, erasure, and extractive environmental capitalism lay the foundation for every day, lived contemporary experiences, and contribute to our concurrent crises of violent racism and climate disaster. By uncovering roots of our origins, her work seeks to revive and reckon with lost histories and lives, and their implications on race and environment, so that by knowing where we come from, we can envision a new future for ourselves. Kristiana's solo exhibitions were at the START Gallery (Winston-Salem) and The Growlery (San Francisco). Group exhibitions include SOMArts, ProArts, Root Division, Kearny Street Workshop and CTRL+SHIFT Collective. Kristiana's work was featured in Lenscratch Magazine, Seawitches Zine, and Thank You For Nothing Zine. She holds a BA from Wake Forest University.

**Anna Friz** (*she/her*) creates media art, sound, and transmission art, working across platforms to present installations, broadcasts, films and performances. Her works reflect upon media ecologies, land use, infrastructures, time perception, and critical fictions. Currently her focus is on a series of audiovisual works under the title *We Build Ruins*, which expressively consider mining and industrial corridors in the high-altitude desert in northern Chile. She has often worked with Toronto-based collective Public Studio to create multi-channel film installations and sculptures which critically consider the social politics of landscape, environment, and urban systems. Presentations of her work in the recent years include Ars Electronica Festival (Linz, Austria), the Museum of Arts and Design (New York), SITE Gallery (Houston), The New York Times Magazine, *esc Media Kunst Labor* (Graz, Austria), ReWire Festival (The Hague, Netherlands), Soundhouse at the Barbican (London UK), Espace Multimedia Gantner (Belfort

France), and RE:SOUND Festival (Aalborg, Denmark). Her radio art/works have been heard on the airwaves of more than 25 countries, and commissioned by national public radio in Austria, Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, and Mexico. She holds a PhD from York University in Toronto, and she is currently Assistant Professor in Film and Digital Media at University of California Santa Cruz.

**Janette Gross** (*she/her*) is a tapestry weaver whose work primarily focuses on wedge weave, a technique developed by the Diné Nation (Navajo) in the late 19th century. She honors the Diné tradition but uses contemporary designs and techniques. She dyes most of her wool yarn with natural dyes, many from local area plants. Janette began studying weaving and tapestry techniques after retirement. Her current work addresses the devastating effects of climate change. She and an invited group of local weavers have worked for many years in the Watsonville studio of renowned rug weaver, Martha Stanley. Janette's work has been exhibited at the Richmond Arts Center, Textile Center Minneapolis, Santa Cruz Art League, Museum of Quilts & Textiles, and the American Tapestry Biennial 13. Janette is a member of the Santa Cruz Textiles Arts Guild, Tapestry Weavers West, the Handweavers Guild of America, The Textile Arts Council, and the American Tapestry Association where she currently serves as Board Treasurer. For many years she has worked with blind and visually impaired weavers in a program sponsored by the Santa Cruz Textile Arts Guild. She lives in the Opal Cliffs section of Santa Cruz with her husband. She holds a BA from Drew University in New Jersey.

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