

## **OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS (OCA) REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2024**

Selected activities organized by goals in *Cultural Connection: San Jose's Cultural Plan*

The Arts Commission meetings are convening in person at City Hall and virtually on Zoom for members of the public. To speak to any item or speak during Public Comment, speakers must be physically present.

### **Support Diverse Cultural Spaces & Places Throughout the Community**

The Community and Economic Recovery Task Force recommended several arts-related recovery strategies to the City Council, including removing cost barriers for small and mid-sized art organizations access to venues. The Council appropriated \$100,000 to implement this recommendation. OCA staff coordinated with City-owned theater operators to develop criteria and a process to provide partial venue rental subsidies. OCA allocated \$25,000 respectively to the operators of the Montgomery Theater, California Theatre, Hammer Theatre and Mexican Heritage Plaza Theatre for FY 23-24.

### **Integrate High Impact Public Art & Urban Design throughout the Community**

The City of San José Public Art Program inspires community through artworks and exhibitions. We expand community participation opportunities and impact the economic and visual dynamics of the city. Our priorities are guided by the goals and values of project partners and the community. Through active engagement between artists and project stakeholders, we celebrate San Jose's diversity, innovative spirit, rich history, present and envisioned future. The program facilitates projects that are recognized nationally and internationally for innovative programming. For the most recent update on public art projects, please visit

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=114709&t=638628018234500000>

### **Strengthen the Cultural Community's Infrastructure**

#### ***Cultural Funding Portfolio - Investments in Art, Creativity, and Culture***

[FY 2024-25 Cultural Grants](#) – FY 2024-25 grant awards for OCA's three core grant programs (take pART, FPC, and Operating Grants) were approved by the Arts Commission at their May 20, 2024, meeting and incorporated into the FY 2024-25 City Budget adopted at the June 11, 2024, City Council meeting. Grant agreements are currently being processed by the OCA Arts Industry Support team.

### **Support Residents' Active, Personal Participation in Arts and Culture**

[San José Creates and Connects](#)

Launched in 2016, the San José Creates and Connects initiative aims to connect San José residents across communities and within neighborhoods through creative, participatory experiences. The initiative includes Make Music San José, #WeCreate408, and the Creative Ambassadors Program.

[Creative Ambassadors Program](#) – The role of the Creative Ambassadors is to champion the power of creative expression and engage San José residents in finding their own creative voice. Ambassadors serve a one-year term, starting in January, during which they produce a creative project that invites active participation from residents and celebrates the diversity of San Jose's cultural communities. Applications closed on September 29 and will be reviewed by an independent panel on October 16, 2024.

[San José Creative Economy Fund](#) – The San José [Creative Economy Fund](#) (CEF) is a partnership with the [Center for Cultural Innovation](#) (CCI) and provides grants to local, small arts-based businesses involved in the production or distribution of the arts, contributing to the City of San José's cultural vibrancy. Competitive applicants will reflect the City's diverse cultural communities and creative-based commercial landscape. Grants are up to \$8,000. Applications closed June 17, 2024, and the CEF panel convened on August 14, 2024, over Zoom. The panel selected seven recipients for the 2024. They are: [Convergence Arts Center](#), [Casita de las Artes](#), LLC, [Universal Grammar](#), DoViet LLC, [Arts Builds Community LLC](#), [Aretesanias Morelia](#), and [Elba Raquel](#). This year's CEF recipients were announced at the September meeting of the Arts Commission.

[San José Climate Art Program](#) – Supported through a grant from the California Arts Council, the San José Climate Art Program's objective is to build energy and community support around the City's 2030 goal of carbon neutrality by enlisting the support of and reducing the carbon impact of San José's arts and culture sector. To help build momentum and community support around the City's 2030 goal of carbon neutrality, fifteen San José artists were selected to join an Environmental Resilient Artists Cohort (RAC) to participate in a pilot program aimed to measure, assess, and adapt artistic practices to be more resilient to climate effects and lower in GHG emissions. Artists have been participating during the summer in intensive workshop learning from experts from around the globe alongside locals in San José encompassing an art-centered approach to environmental resilience.

OCA's San José Climate Art Program was featured on a segment of the [PBS News Hour](#) in August reaching a nationwide audience.

### **San José Climate Art Symposium**

Presented by the San José Climate Art Program, the [San José Climate Art Symposium](#) was held on Friday, October 11 at the [San José Museum of Art](#) and Saturday, October 12 at the [San José Environmental Innovation Center](#). This two-day symposium featured a series of presentations, discussions, technical assistance, and creative workshops designed to mobilize and share best practices, expand local and national networks, and provide specialized education, focusing on energy, water, transportation, and circularity.

## **Destination Events in San Jose**

**Outdoor Event Highlights:** September kicked off with the return of Lowrider Day, the San Jose celebration to commemorate the lowrider ban that was lifted a few years ago by the City of San Jose. Thousands of people and over 300 lowrider cars filled Santa Clara St. Viva CalleSJ had their last event of the year in September, over 100,000 people participated in this event that stretched over six miles from Roosevelt Park to Japantown to Rose Garden. There were also many cultural celebrations this month including the Ethiopian New Year Celebration at Discovery Meadow and Fiestas Patrias, the Mexican Independence Celebration at City Hall and Santa Clara St. The month continued with many other events including night markets, the Glen Fest in Willow Glen, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SoFA Street Fair, and the start of the Levitt Fall Concert Series at St. James Park.

This September, the Events Team supported the Department of Transportation with five pop-up demonstration safety events to show the positive impacts of different street changes including curb extensions, lane closures, etc.

The Special Events team hosted the last installment of CityDance San Jose event of the season, ending the year with Country Line Dancing. This yearly event is produced by the Office of Cultural Affairs and features a unique genre every third Thursday of the month from June through September. Additionally, the Special Events team continued to make it easier to activate public spaces with small scale events in various Downtown locations, permitting a number of different events through the SJ PLACES pilot project, including small activations on the Paseos.

**Upcoming Outdoor Events:** The Special Events team is looking forward to October, working with event organizers to activate public spaces and create vibrant public life throughout San Jose. Currently, approximately 22 events have been permitted by the Special Events team in the month of October. Events include the annual Rock n Roll Half Marathon, the Little Italy San Jose Festival, Dia San Jose, the annual Dia de los Muertos downtown procession, Halloween in Japantown, and many more. A new event to highlight is the Bay Area Throttle Fest at Lake Cunningham, the Special Events Team worked closely with the Special Park Use team to work through challenging logistics to make this happen.

**On-Going Outdoor Event Support:** The Special Events team is continuing to work to respond to the ever-evolving event industry. We press on with efforts to ensure our services and best practices to accommodate the changing needs of event organizers. Our work to develop monthly Brown Bag Event Permitting Series is making headway, and we hope to begin offering the chance to meet with our team to learn about producing public events in San Jose in the near future. The team is also working on how to support event organizers navigating the increasingly changing City which prompts for new event layouts, new routes, or in some cases understanding updates to policies or guidelines from other city or county departments that provide permits or services to these events.

For a full list of upcoming events overseen by the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs' Special Events team, please visit [SanJoseCulture.org](https://SanJoseCulture.org).

### **Arts, Destination Marketing, and Destination Events Funding City Council Study Session**

The [Mayor's March Budget Message for FY 24-25](#) included direction for the Administration to return to the full Council evaluating the establishment of an Admissions Fee and other funding strategies. Staff is developing a process to approach this initiative. The proposed Operating Budget for FY 24-25 recommends \$500,000 for the arts from the General Fund and \$500,000 for destination marketing. The Mayor's June Budget Message for FY 24-25 was presented to the full Council for approval on June 11, 2024.

### **2023 Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Study**

Released in November 2023, the [Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Study \(AEP6\)](#) is an economic and social impact study of the local nonprofit arts and culture industry conducted by Americans for the Arts in partnership with the City of San José's Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs (OEDCA) and SVCREATES. The report highlights that San José's nonprofit arts and culture sector generated \$292 million in economic activity in 2022 – nearly \$100 million in spending by San José arts and culture organizations and an additional \$192 million in event-related expenditures by their audiences.

Other key figures include:

- Nonprofit arts and culture organizations in San José support 4,738 jobs, from direct support of employing staff and artists to indirect support of printers, hospitality staff, graphic designers and more.
- These arts and culture organizations generated \$18.1 million in local, state and federal government revenue.
- The typical attendee spends \$43.88 per event in San José, not including the cost of admission.
- 23.7% of arts and culture attendees were from outside Santa Clara County. They spent an average of \$65.69, vital income for local businesses.
- 86.4% of San José respondents agreed that the activity or venue they were attending was “a source of neighborhood pride for the community.”
- 85.2% said they would “feel a sense of loss if that activity or venue was no longer available.”