

## **OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS (OCA) REPORT FOR MAY 2023**

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.

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

City-owned cultural facilities have fully reopened, including museums and theaters. Team San Jose (TSJ) has reported an increase in theater occupancy rates. TSJ reported to the Community and Economic Committee on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

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 is working with City-owned theater operators to develop criteria and a process to provide a partial or full subsidy for venue costs. OCA will allocate \$25,000 respectively to the operators of the Montgomery Theater, California Theatre, Hammer Theatre and Mexican Heritage Plaza Theatre.

### **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 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=95785&t=638152813116203962>

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

**Cultural Funding Portfolio - Investments in Art, Creativity and Culture** includes three large grant programs: Operating Grants (provides partial support to San José arts organizations with professional staff and year-round programming); Festival, Parade, and Celebration Grants (provides partial support for community events held in San José and organized by nonprofit organizations); and take pART (provides partial support for publicly accessible San José arts activities by San José organizations). The panel recommendations are on the agenda for the May Arts Commission meeting. Grant recommendations will be forwarded for Council approval in June as part of the FY 2023-24 Operating Budget.

### **Enhance Support for Creative Entrepreneurs and the Commercial Creative Sector**

After a hiatus during the pandemic, the OCA is pleased to announce that it is relaunching its Creative Economy Fund grants, a grant program aimed to support arts-based commercial small businesses. The grant program is in the process of being freshened and will be announced soon in partnership with the Center for Cultural Innovation.

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

**San Jose 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 Day San José, #WeCreate408, and the Creative Ambassador Program.

**Make Music Day San José** - Staff is entering into partnership agreements with the School of Arts & Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza (MHP) and Kooltura Marketing for this year's Make Music Day San José (MMDSJ) held every year on June 21 on the Summer Solstice. For more information and to find out where you see this year's MMDSJ locations, check out <https://www.makemusicday.org/sanjose/>

**Creative Ambassadors Program** - OCA's five 2023 Creative Ambassadors have been actively engaging community members and implementing their projects since January 2023. The role of the Creative Ambassadors is to champion the power of creative expression and engage residents in finding their own creative voice. Ambassadors serve a one-year term, starting January 1, 2023, during which they produce a creative project that invites active participation from residents and celebrates the diversity of San José 's cultural communities. Find out more about this year's Creative Ambassadors by visiting: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/cultural-affairs/participate/creative-ambassadors/2023-creative-license-ambassadors>

**Cornerstone of the Arts** - The nomination guidelines for the 2023 Cornerstone of the Arts were released in early March and are available at [www.sanjoseculture.org](http://www.sanjoseculture.org). The deadline to submit a nomination is Friday, May 12, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. The event is tentatively scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 19 at the Hammer Theatre Center.

### **Destination Events in San Jose**

**Outdoor Event Highlights:** Hundreds of teens filled the Circle of Palms on April 1<sup>st</sup> to celebrate their Senior Prom and kick off the spring events season. To continue the school spirit, the Department of Transportation took Viva EscuelaSJ to O.B Whaley Elementary School by implementing a street closure on April 6<sup>th</sup> to promote walking and biking to school. April 23<sup>rd</sup> was a busy Sunday as we saw the first Viva CalleSJ of 2023 and the beloved annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival and Japantown Fun Run/Walk. This month also included vendor markets, pop-ups, and smaller community events like the new Midtown Immersive series on Friday nights that will shed light on a different neighborhood of San Jose. April ended with other annual favorites like the PurpleStride Silicon Valley walk, MACLA's Family Art Day, and the SoFA Street Fair. A special highlight for April was the very popular, Selenabration at Sonic Runway, produced by the OCA team and Council District 5 who

partnered with Sonido Clash to bring in performances, vendors, and lowriders to celebrate what would be the Queen of Tejano Music's 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

**Upcoming Outdoor Events:** As the weather becomes warmer, more events are popping up on our calendar for May. With 14 permitted events through the month, residents will have multiple outdoor events to choose from almost every weekend. Amongst some long-standing events like the Longhorn Stampede 5k and MACLA's 24<sup>th</sup> Latinx Art Now! Auction, San Jose will get to enjoy some new events like a Cinco de Mayo Show, Raza Unida Fest, and the Historic District Block Party. We'll also get to see the return of last year's popular events like the Salsa Fest on S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and the Levitt Spring Concert Series at St. James Park, plus a special welcome back to a San Jose favorite, the Japantown Immersive.

**On-Going Outdoor Event Support:** As the outdoor event industry continues to evolve, so do the services that are established to support our event organizers. Our team remains focused on facilitating the permitting process and have been very supportive in working through updates to the Regulatory Permit background-check process for events with carnival rides or games, as well as informing organizers of fee increases to various department permitting and staffing costs. Our Special Events Team also continues to develop an opportunity to connect event organizers with various event and permitting professionals through a monthly Brown Bag Event Permitting Series. In addition, the team, in partnership with the San Jose Museum of Art and el Cafecito by Mezcal, is gearing up for the return of CityDance San Jose in June, which will see hundreds of people flock to the Circle of Palms and the Museum to enjoy a free music and dance performance, lessons, and free museum admission amongst other fun event elements. Lastly, our team is also taking the lead role in the Mayor's Transition Committee's recommendation to pilot "permit-free zones" within Downtown San Jose. Through a multi-phased approach, the Downtown Vibrancy Event pilot is aimed at facilitating increased vibrancy in the public realm through the removal of barriers to activation at dedicated plazas and parks. We look forward to sharing more details in the coming month.

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