

SVCREATES 2023 Annual Report

January 2024



THE CHALLENGE

The unparalleled economic success of Silicon Valley makes it incredibly difficult for cultural workers to live, let alone thrive, in a region of high costs and low levels of philanthropic support for the arts. However, given the state of our world and the impact of war, climate change, anti-immigration views, and challenges to our democracy, we need the insights, inspiration, and illumination of artists now more than ever. And considering our global influence, maybe even more so in Silicon Valley.

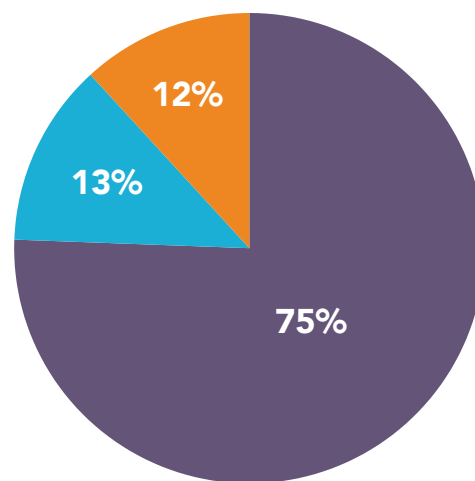
What can we do? There is no silver bullet, no one thing, and no single strategy that provides an answer to that question. **SVCREATES** responds to this conundrum by investing in the cultural infrastructure that supports the work of local artists and arts organizations, shining a light on the incredible value of the arts, and looking out for those who have limited to no access to the arts. We believe that Silicon Valley can demonstrate what a successful multicultural community looks like and how the empowerment of artists across a mosaic of cultures can be part of the answer to the most important challenges of our day.

OUR MISSION

SVCREATES works to strengthen the resilience and relevance of small multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary arts groups and individual artists who bring our international community together, nurture the joy and creativity of the people who live here, raise the burning questions of our time, and drive social change.

Our mission is to elevate Silicon Valley's creative culture by building the **capacity**, **visibility**, and **accessibility** of the arts.

IN 2023 SVCREATES INVESTED **\$3.44M**
IN THE LOCAL ARTS ECOSYSTEM



Capacity: \$2,600,000
Visibility: \$434,000
Accessibility: \$406,000

Arts Ecosystem: The interconnected and interdependent network of artists, funders, venues, organizations, students, teachers, connoisseurs, and audience members who make up our creative community.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF OUR ARTS ECOSYSTEM

IN 2023 WE:

- Awarded **73** operating grants to a diverse range of arts organizations with annual budgets under **\$1.2M**.
- Distributed **\$660,000** in California Arts Council Individual Artists Fellowship grants to **71** artists throughout Central California, with over **75%** to BIPOC/ALAANA artists.
- Supported **101** diverse local arts leaders through facilitated peer roundtables.
- Conducted online workshops, in-person town halls, and professional development events for over **370** artists, arts leaders, and cultural workers.
- Invested **\$80,000** in a community-designed grant program to elevate the arts in Gilroy.

The work that SVCREATES has been doing to allocate resources and increase support for the arts in historically underserved regions of Santa Clara County was evident in Gilroy at the inaugural La Ofrenda Festival & Wellness Fair, which brought together a wide cross-section of the Gilroy community to celebrate cultural traditions and the health of the local community.

Senator Dave Cortese,
California Senate District 15



La Ofrenda Festival, Gilroy's inaugural Día de Muertos Festival and Wellness Fair 2023

SPOTLIGHTS

Empowering Artists

Artists are change-makers and community builders. In 2023, SVCREATES piloted new ways to fuel their work.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP

The 2023 California Arts Council Individual Artists Fellowship program, managed by SVCREATES for the 17 counties of Central California, provided a regional approach to distributing state funds – increasing the number of fellowships awarded in our region by 225% over the prior fellowship cycle. This program got unrestricted grants directly into the hands of artists.

LA OFRENDA FESTIVAL & WELLNESS FAIR

Funded through SVCREATES' Gilroy Elevate the Arts, the inaugural La Ofrenda Festival & Wellness Fair was organized by a coalition of artists and civic leaders to raise the visibility of local arts, activate public spaces, and engage the entire community. The festival honored Día de Muertos, celebrated a unique region within our county, and demonstrated the power of artists to bring the community together.

Thank you again for administering the California Arts Council Individual Artists Fellowship. It was very inspiring to see your commitment to equity throughout the entire application process!

Maria Elena Chavez, Advisory Board Member,
Royal Eagle Bear Productions

RAISING THE VOICE AND VISIBILITY OF OUR CREATIVE CULTURE

IN 2023 WE:

- Produced **29** featured artist videos and added a video component to **16 Content Magazine** Podcast episodes.
- Grew *Content's* social media footprint to **23,267** followers.
- Published **4 Content Magazine** Issues with **80** featured artists, **73%** being artists of color.
- Expanded *Content's* regional reach with featured artists from Los Altos, Palo Alto, Santa Cruz, and Gilroy and hosted Pick-Up Parties in Saratoga and Los Altos.
- Piloted "Art Patrons" package with San José Museum of Art; extending to other art organizations in 2024.

The partnership between West Valley College and Content has been inspiring for our students and incredibly important to our institution. Working together has helped build a powerful audience in support of affordable art and design education, and has been a huge asset to our students as they launch their careers.

**Shannon Price, Dean,
Cilker School of Art & Design**

Eight years after being featured in Content [Magazine], I am still honored to have been included and very grateful for the Content team taking the time to shine a nourishing light on my creativity and self-expression. It was an unbelievably empowering experience!

Tricia Stackle, Artist



Ron Hemphill and Tricia Stackle, "HillStack"
Content Magazine, Issue 8.2 Sync

HILLSTACK

THE ART OF COLLABORATION

Photo by JENNIFER HUIZE Photography by JANE BROWN

The challenge of collaborative artwork is in melding the independent visions of two artists into an organic whole without one voice overpowering the other. Ron Hemphill and Tricia Stackle have tackled this undertaking together as HillStack. Their first joint creation as husband and wife is called Funny Bunnies. Each bunny is made entirely from high-quality wool with colors thoughtfully selected for its eyes, clothes, and body. Each is cut, sewn, and stuffed with care. Each is bequeathed a fitting name—Cookie Fudgemitters, Randy Snownikle, Lyla Reddippers...and Adam.

TRICIA, YOU EXPERIMENT MORE WITH DIFFERENT MEASURES AND FORMS. WHILE RON, SEEMS TO WORK MORE WITH MORE SOLID, BOXY FORMS. DO YOU TWO DIFFER? TRICIA: Digitally he does a lot more because I'm not digital. RON: I have a lot of digital pieces, cartooned faces, and perspective pieces. There are a lot of digital and computer projects that I've been doing.

HOW HAVE YOU TWO LEARNED TO COLLABORATE? TRICIA: We both have different practices that we have been working on for a while. We're all my own. That's the beauty of our collaboration—we have to find where the middle is and where both our visions are being honored. I have a very clean aesthetic, precise. He likes things to be wider and a little more organic. So I'm finding that middle ground that kind of is in some ways, HillStack is clean. Because in my work and he work separately we're exploring and doing different things. Whereas when we come together, we have to discuss and agree upon and work in our and make.

WHAT WAS THE IMPETUS FOR STARTING HILLSTACK TOGETHER? TRICIA: When we met in an school, we started talking about what we wanted our artistic life to look like. Immediately it came out that we both liked the intersection of art and design. Funny Bunnies got started when Tricia was on a conference in Washington and one of the

"That's not going to work. This one is going to be one. So we would know to say. We made a bunny or two and when we think we would come, they would say. "Oh my god. I need one of those bunnies. I've gotta have one."

WHAT WOULD THEIR BUNNIES BE DIFFERENT? Ron: Lots of people make stuffed animal objects. It's not like it's never been seen before. But there's something really great about the design we came up with that makes them work together as a fun way. With all my drawings and other projects, some people will take the time to look at it and understand it. Some people will be like, "oh, that doesn't seem anything unusual about the Funny Bunnies. There's always some type of really weird object you had a kid. It pulls (the memory) out of the adult or the kid."

THEY HAVE THAT SOCK MONKEY FEEL. TRICIA: There is that initial draw towards the fresh and childlike, but we're hoping that the material sophistication can bring our audience work on on this material journey of using wool only. They're even stuffed with wool. The reason for that is I have persistence problems. We give our kids problems—"Here, here this," and they do. They show on it and love it. They're sitting up on something more natural. It's a lot more appropriate that you and the wool is hidden inside, but we're

SPOTLIGHTS

Elevating Artists

Content Media raises the voices and visibility of artists, and connects them to opportunities and to each other.

HILLSTACK STUDIO

HillStack Studio was featured in *Content Magazine* in 2016. Artists Ron Hemphill and Tricia Stackle were struck by the Content Team's genuine interest in making a sincere connection with their artistry but also their humanness. They felt seen, heard, and valued – all important to surviving and thriving as an artist. Since being published in *Content Magazine*, their artwork has been featured in several international publications.

WEST VALLEY COLLEGE

West Valley College has been a partner of SVCREATES since 2017, when the Cilker School of Art and Design was first featured in *Content Magazine* and student fashion designs became part of an annual Fashion Show at *Content's* spring Pick-Up Party. Over the years, thousands of people have been exposed to their artistry and enjoyed the quality, beauty, and energy of the students' designs.

INCREASING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ARTS

IN 2023 WE:

- Provided arts education opportunities for over **9,000** children through ArtsEdConnect for Santa Clara County K-12 schools, awarding over **50%** of the grants to Title I schools.
- Supported over **180** educators with arts programs and materials.
- Delivered quality arts programming to court and community schools through teaching artists from our Studio program.
- Invested **\$258,000** across **16** organizations to provide arts programs to high-need communities through Arts Access Grants.
- Engaged over **160** students in Santa Clara County, with custom curriculum and participation in poetry recitation competitions through the statewide Poetry Out Loud program.
- Completed Think Together pilot project for afterschool arts programs, and Valley Medical Center series of art installations and renovations.

The partnership between SVCREATES and Think Together extends the arts ecosystem to afterschool and expanded learning opportunities. The arts help students find and strengthen their voices, engage with the world differently, unlock their emotions, and tell their own stories.

Richard Tran, General Manager for Think Together, Bay Area Region



"Sentia," sculpture by Christian Moeller at Valley Medical Center

SPOTLIGHTS

Artists Impacting Our Community

VALLEY HEALTH FOUNDATION

SVCREATES and the Valley Health Foundation have been reimagining the Women & Children's Center at the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center for several years. Our shared vision embraced welcoming and creative spaces and public art to support the well-being of patients, visitors, and staff. "Sentia," a final project and sentient sculpture that peers over the edge of the building, came to life at the Women & Children's Center in Fall 2023. Its long neck swivels up and down in response to the wind, and remains still in moments of calm. The artist, Christian Moeller was chosen after a panel of experts went through an extensive review of over 100 applications.

THINK TOGETHER

Think Together and SVCREATES also completed an afterschool pilot program that brought the arts to elementary and middle school students in the Alum Rock School District four days a week. In partnership, we plan to add more opportunities for local artists to connect with afterschool arts programming at Title I schools in 2024 and beyond.

SVCREATES has helped us bring joy, learning, and whimsy to our patients and visitors through art installations like Sentia and Like a Multivitamin. We deeply value our partnership.

Michael Elliott, President & Executive Director, Valley Health Foundation

INCUBATION OF COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

IN 2023 WE:

- Added Morgan Hill, Sunnyvale, Mountain View, and Cupertino to our municipal network of partners, joining Gilroy, Milpitas, San José, Los Gatos, and Palo Alto.
- Completed Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) research in partnership with Americans for the Arts and City of San José.
- Hosted a series of briefings on AEP6 publication with arts and civic leaders.
- Grew Arts Commission Roundtable to **20** participants.
- Advocated with other county arts agencies and Californians for the Arts to increase state funding for the arts.

Americans for the Arts enjoys a long and enduring partnership with SVCREATES and the City of San José. We are delighted to share the results of our collaborative research, and we are impressed with the progress you have made and the arts leaders that you have.

Randy Cohen, Vice President of Research, Americans for the Arts



*Arts Commission Luncheon at The Cultivar on the Alameda
Photo by Pat Tietgens*

SPOTLIGHT

Investing in Partnerships

SVCREATES' mission to elevate the arts requires "a village" and beginning in 2020, we set out to build a civic network of people who care about the arts in Silicon Valley.

Today, we have nine municipal partners in Santa Clara County, with six municipalities in the pipeline. We intend to leverage our resources and cultural assets within each community, raise local awareness and support for the arts, and build a region with a wide network of arts advocates for private, state, and federal investment in the arts.

A roundtable of Arts Commission Chairs from cities across the county was created and now meets quarterly. At a recent luncheon, Randy Cohen, VP of Research for Americans for the Arts, shared regional and national research on the economic and social impact of the arts (bit.ly/SCC_AEP6) with our municipal partners.

The Arts Commission Roundtable gives me hope and confidence, as we learn from each and begin to tackle some of the challenges facing our region together.

**Maureen Cappon-Javey,
Arts Commission Chair, Los Gatos**

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OUR WORK IN 2023 WAS MADE POSSIBLE WITH MAJOR SUPPORT FROM



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