

For Immediate Release
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MASS MoCA COMPLETES FIRST OF TWO-YEAR GRANT FROM WELLS FARGO FOUNDATION

Its Assets for Artists Program has already surpassed the two-year goals for the \$300,000 gift

NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS—August 15, 2022—One year ago, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art was honored to receive a \$300,000 award from the Wells Fargo Foundation to support its rapidly expanding Assets for Artists program. The two-year grant supports a broad spectrum of the Assets for Artists program activities in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut needed to meet more-than-doubled demand for their artist support services at this time of high need.

The Assets for Artists program is designed to marshal resources and strategies for artists and creative entrepreneurs across Southern New England to pursue self-determined careers while navigating an economic system that's stacked against them. Assets for Artists advances this mission by advocating for artists' needs, redistributing resources directly to artists, and creating opportunities for artists to be in community, engage in peer-learning, and obtain tools for navigating the challenges of our current economic system while simultaneously shaping a more equitable one.

Already, over the past 12 months, the Assets for Artists program served 656 artists, and 362 in this targeted program, a sharp increase from the anticipated 200 artists over the full 2-years. Covering everything from pivoting to online sales and marketing, to navigating federal and state assistance, to grant-writing, and peer-to-peer networking, Assets for Artists has this year alone provided 52 online workshops, hundreds of hours of 1-on-1 consultations, and focused artist residencies for these creatives. It has also seeded special affinity groups for artists interested in peer support and solidarity economy models. In addition to the program's staff of three, Assets for Artists relies on a network of more than 30 expert coaches, themselves practicing artists, to provide this specialized and personalized support.

"We envision a world where artists of all disciplines, identities, and backgrounds are paid fairly, valued for their important artistic, social, and economic contributions, and given equitable access to resources to thrive," says MASS MoCA's Assets for Artists program director Blair Benjamin. "We believe that pushing for equity in artist opportunities while strengthening artists' capacity for financial sustainability and self-determination transforms communities and improves the conditions in which artists live and work."

In addition to professional development trainings and consultations, this year Assets for Artists directed over \$175,000 in working capital investments to 100 artists enrolled in its intensive Capacity-Building program. These investments, usually of \$1,000 – \$2,000, provide artists unrestricted funds to use toward strategic career goals, such as purchasing equipment, renting a studio, or implementing plans to reduce credit card debt. Because an artist's business and

personal financial health are unavoidably linked, the program takes a holistic look at the overall financial health of each creative individual. Since the start of the pandemic, Assets for Artists has supported artists in securing over \$775,000 of working capital and pandemic assistance for their creative recovery.

In addition to direct services to artists, the Wells Fargo Foundation grant provided an additional \$60,000 for regranting to BIPOC-led and BIPOC-serving organizations focused on supporting artists' economic recovery and resiliency. To date, \$40,000 of the funds have been distributed to three Massachusetts-based organizations: [Berkshire Black Economic Council](#) to kickstart its newly formed Black Arts Council; [Boston Ujima Project](#) for its Ashe Ashe Cultural Assembly; and [Dunamis Boston](#) for its economic mentorship program for emerging performing artists. The remaining \$20,000 will be distributed this year.

Although Assets for Artists has surpassed its program goals for the first year of Wells Fargo grant funding, it is not slowing its programming. A new round of online workshops was announced this week, and new Capacity-Building grant cohorts will soon be onboarded in Worcester, western Mass, and Cape Cod. Early next year, the program will [roll out a pilot Spanish language workshop series in Boston](#)—led by A4A coach Yara Liceaga-Rojas and in partnership with the Boston Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest centers for making and enjoying today's most evocative art. With vast galleries and a stunning collection of indoor and outdoor performing arts venues, MASS MoCA is able to embrace all forms of art: music, sculpture, dance, film, painting, photography, theater, and new, boundary-crossing works of art that defy easy classification. Much of the work we show in our light-filled spaces, on our technically sophisticated stages, and within our lovely network of late 19th-century courtyards is made here during extended fabrication and rehearsal residencies that bring hundreds of the world's most brilliant and innovative artists to North Adams all year round. For more about MASS MoCA's Assets for Artists program, visit www.massmoca.org/assets-for-artists.