



Wagner Foundation Announces Inaugural Wagner Arts Fellowship and Artist Awardees

Three Boston artists, L'Merchie Frazier, Daniela Rivera and Wen-ti Tsen, to receive \$75,000 as the first Wagner Arts Fellows



The 2025 Wagner Arts Fellows (Left to Right): Wen-ti Tsen, L'Merchie Frazier, and Daniela Rivera
Photo Credit: Mel Taing

Boston, MA – March 26, 2025 – **Wagner Foundation**, a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based foundation dedicated to advancing health equity, economic prosperity, and cultural transformation worldwide, is pleased to announce the inaugural **Wagner Arts Fellowship** and its first cohort of artist awardees: visual artist and public historian **L'Merchie Frazier**, visual artist **Daniela Rivera**, and painter and sculptor **Wen-ti Tsen**.

Launched today, the Wagner Arts Fellowship is designed to support mid-career artists in the Greater Boston area who are deeply embedded within their communities and at a pivotal moment in their artistic trajectory. The initiative will annually award three Fellows with a **\$75,000 unrestricted grant** and access to tailored artist support services.

The Wagner Arts Fellowship recognizes mid-career visual artists dedicated to Boston's arts ecosystem. It supports those whose studio and/or public art practices address societal issues and deepen our collective understanding of social change. Administered by **United States**

Artists, the Fellowship also provides financial support, resources, and career development opportunities. In addition to the unrestricted award and access to artist services, the 2025 Fellows will present their work in an exhibition at the **MassArt Art Museum (MAAM)**, organized by Wagner Foundation to coincide with the opening of the Boston Public Art Triennial on May 22, 2025. Future cohorts of the Wagner Arts Fellowship will be also invited to showcase their work at the Wagner Arts Gallery, the Foundation's rotating exhibition space for contemporary art.

"We are thrilled to be part of celebrating Boston's creative community and to amplify the work of these incredible artists and their contributions to the city," said **Abigail Satinsky, Wagner Foundation Program Officer and Curator of Arts & Culture**. "Across the arts ecosystem here – from the Boston Public Arts Triennial to the ICA Boston Foster prize to Arrival Art Fair and the many others that support our region's incredible community – we are collaborating with our peers and partners to elevate artists' voices at this critical moment, affirming that art matters in this city and across the country."

The 2025 Wagner Arts Fellows, L'Merchie Frazier, Daniela Rivera, and Wen-ti Tsen, will each receive \$75,000 to continue building their practices within the Greater Boston region and expand on their socially engaged work that exemplifies the collaborative nature of the city's arts scene. This inaugural cohort of Wagner Arts Fellows redefines the role of artists within a community. Arriving in Boston with distinct global perspectives, at varying stages in their careers, each Fellow draws from their own cultural histories and lived experiences to invest in the city's evolving arts scene.

Informed by nearly 500 years of Black and Indigenous history, **L'Merchie Frazier** champions historical and cultural preservation through her work with quilts, metals, and beads, celebrating marginalized histories and engaging in restorative justice. Visual artist **Daniela Rivera's** collaborative, community-centered practice explores themes of migration, displacement, and belonging through the lens of shared experience and cultural exchange. Through his public art and sculpting practice, artist **Wen-ti Tsen** honors the working-class and immigrant communities that often go unrecognized, proving the boundless potential of art in shaping the history and cultural fabric of a city.

"L'Merchie, Daniela and Wen-ti are important voices in the arts community, and deserve both the recognition and a national platform for their work," said **Charlotte Wagner, Founder and President of Wagner Foundation**. "At the Foundation, we believe that art is essential to our collective health and wellbeing. We look forward to ensuring continued support and growth of Greater Boston's art community through our annual fellowship."

Wagner Foundation established the Wagner Arts Fellowship to strengthen Boston's burgeoning arts community, celebrating the transformative potential of Boston artists to inspire social change both locally and beyond. The Fellowship's inaugural cohort embodies this mission from their impactful artistic practices that encompass the varied cultural and historical contexts of the city, to their exemplary work as community leaders and advocates for social equity and cultural

preservation. Offering supplemental and flexible support to directly address each Fellow's diverse set of needs, the initiative aims to develop sustainable structures for future generations of Boston arts practitioners. The Fellowship's launch comes at a critical juncture for Boston artists who are deeply invested in maintaining the city's arts ecosystem through public art, education and activism.

In addition to \$75,000 unrestricted grants, each Wagner Arts Fellow will also receive a value of up to \$5,500 in artist services adapted to their specific needs. Tailored artist services include financial planning, career consulting, legal services, and more, demonstrating Wagner Foundation's commitment to establishing flexible infrastructures for artists of varying disciplines, backgrounds and career stages to thrive.

Wagner Arts Fellows are selected based on their demonstrated artistic vision, contributions to the advancement of their respective fields, dedication to the Greater Boston area, and engagement with social issues and civic impact. Artists are anonymously nominated by peers with strong connections to Boston's arts community. Selected nominees are invited to apply, and a panel of leading arts professionals selects finalists, with final approval from Wagner Foundation.

To learn more about the Wagner Arts Fellowship and inaugural 2025 cohort, please visit wfound.org/wagner-arts-fellowship/.

About the Wagner Arts Fellowship

The Wagner Arts Fellowship, founded and supported by Wagner Foundation and administered by United States Artists (USA), recognizes mid-career visual artists working in Greater Boston who have a studio and/or public practice that illuminates issues confronting society and transforms our understanding of social change. The fellowship annually awards three artists at a pivotal moment in their artistic trajectory with unrestricted grants of \$75,000 each, as well as access to supplemental artist services.

About Wagner Foundation

Wagner Foundation is a Cambridge, MA based foundation that funds at the intersection of health equity, economic prosperity, and cultural transformation across the globe. Wagner Foundation prioritizes work that strengthens equitable systems and views artists as leaders and changemakers who are critical voices in interrogating the past, wrestling with the current moment, and envisioning alternative futures. Their grantmaking is centered on the belief that contemporary art has the transformative potential to foster social healing and wellbeing, strengthen community access and power in cultural and civic institutions, and tell inclusive and necessary histories in public space. The Wagner Arts Fellowship demonstrates a deep investment in the greater Boston area through the support of practicing visual artists who are deeply connected to the local arts ecosystem.

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