



2023 Project & Impact Report

Elysian Valley Arts
Collective

A Message From Our Executive Director

2023 was a banner year for The Elysian Valley Arts Collective with more programming and events than ever. From classes and workshops to filmmaking and a new cultural festival, our programming continues to be inclusive, educational and diverse; benefiting our own community and also visitors from all over Los Angeles who come to Elysian Valley/Frogtown to be part of this unique creative enclave. Courtesy of various grantors and your generous donations, we were able to present all art classes and cultural events in 2023 free of charge.

Our arts education programs flourished with the help of our thoughtful and creative teaching artists, an amazing artist-in-residence, eager students of all ages and supportive collaborators.

In 2022, we introduced a new cultural festival, "*Illuminate the Night*," and in 2023, we saw our festival of light along the LA River grow exponentially. In fact, we saw every facet of our organization expand during the past year; from attendance, participation and funding-our funders and constituents continually let us know we were on the right path.

We will continue to make strides in 2024; galvanizing our community through art and culture, supporting artists and deepening bonds with our partners and collaborators.

On behalf of EVAC, our board of directors and our artist members, I thank you for your continued belief in what we do and your invaluable support of our mission.

With appreciation,

Micheline Cherie - Executive Director, EVAC



COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED IN 2023

7,500

VIA IN-PERSON EVENTS
& PROGRAMS

100,000+

ONLINE EVENTS-YOUTUBE
WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA

250

ARTISTS & COLLABORATORS
ENGAGED IN PROGRAMS

EVENT HIGHLIGHT:

ILLUMINATE THE NIGHT

SEPTEMBER 23, 2023

The second biennial *Illuminate the Night* event brought more attendees, artists and installations to the L.A. River. This celebration of art and culture asks attendees to "bring the light," by way of wearing, displaying and installing lights. EVAC curated twelve locations and the Taylor Yard Bridge with art exhibits, community booths, music, dance and spoken word performances with light installations at venues along the LA River Bike Path in Frogtown. Collaborators included The Music Center, The Realm Ballet Company, Bloco Obini Afro-Brazilian Drum Troupe, Frogtown Brewery, Spoke Bicycle Cafe, Happier Camper, Quantum Clinic, dublab, LoveyDove, The River LA, poet Mike Sonksen, Woodbury University, installation artists Justin Lui, Guatam Rangan, Cynthia Minet and Erica Halpern. The festival was supported by grants from Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and California Arts Council as well as generous sponsors and donors.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

4000

EVENT
ATTENDEES

60

ARTISTS
ENGAGED

25

COMMUNITY
COLLABORATORS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

START TO FINISH: A CREATIVE JOURNEY FOR YOUNG ARTISTS

April - December 2023

This program consisted of two 12-week seasons of classes for youth ages 7-17 years of age in Northeast Los Angeles. Students received free art kits and quality instruction from working, bilingual teaching artists. The focus was on early learning for the younger children and honing in on different skills and techniques for the students over 12 years of age. Classes were held at Dorris Place Elementary School and offered as an after school program and at EVAC headquarters at The Blake Lofts once a week. Instructional videos, written prompts and a field trip to the LA River were included in the program. The Start to Finish series took our students from the basics of drawing, painting and collage to an art show at a gallery with their artwork professionally mounted by our partner Frame Monster Design Laboratory. Family, friends and members of the public attended two student art shows held in our gallery. This program was funded by a grant from the California Arts Council.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

40

PARTICIPATING
STUDENTS

2

GALLERY ART
SHOWS

170

ART SHOW
ATTENDEES



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILM ENTITLED “MAJA”

March - June 2023

MAJA, a short film produced by Elysian Valley Arts Collective and directed by Cindy "Mimi" Phan documents Echo Park Latinx artist Milton "Maja" Jurado's journey as a young, undocumented gay artist moving to America from Ecuador, his experiences during Los Angeles' Chicano Art Movement in the 1970's and the formation of Self-Help Graphics & Art. While living in Los Angeles for over fifty years, Maja finds his place as a well-respected multi-disciplinary artist creating works of art in Masapan (Ecuadorian Bread Dough Sculpture), paintings, murals and beautifully decorated hand-crafted furniture. The film featured interviews by noted artists Robert Keppler and Mari Cardenas as well as art historian J.V. Decemvirale. MAJA was screened in July 2023 in Frogtown, was featured at *River Fest*; FoLAR's culture festival at the Los Angeles State Historic Park and has been submitted to several film festivals as a documentary short film. EVAC endeavors to create more films on local artists in the coming years. The project was funded by a grant from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.





2023 EVENTS & PROGRAMMING:

- ART + LOVE- Valentine's Day Art Show & Open House at The Blake Lofts in Frogtown
- Great LA River Cleanup with Friends of the LA River - Creation Station - Family Art Making
- Clockshop's 3rd Annual People's Kite Festival - Creation Station - Los Angeles State Historic Park
- Meadowvale Block Party - Creation Station Mobile Art Studio & Gallery - Family Art Making
- Start to Finish: a Creative Journey for Young Artists at Dorris Place Elementary - After Shool Program
- Dorris Place Elementary STEAM Day - Creation Station Mobile Art Studio & Gallery
- Production of the short film "MAJA," directed by Cindy "Mimi" Phan.
- River Fest - Creation Station Mobile Art Studio & Gallery and Screening of our film "MAJA" with Friends of the LA River at Los Angeles State Historic Park
- Stories, Poems & Songs: a Literary Lounge by the LA River - Multi-generational, mutli-genre, diverse poets and writers spoken word performances curated by Mike Sonksen - Various Locations
- Screening of our short film "MAJA" at The Blake Lofts; featuring art show by Milton Maja Jurado and the music of indigenous musician Martin Espino
- Trailer Park Summer Art Soiree at Happier Camper with LoveyDove and Mike the Poet
- Mosaic Class Year-long Series for Seniors led by Artist-in-Residence Katrina Alexy, supported by The Picerne Family Foundation
- 2023 Illuminate The Night - Festival featuring light installations, performing arts and spoken word in 12 venues along the LA River in Frogtown
- Elysian Valley Recreation Center Mural Project Request for Qualificatiomns
- Drag Queen Bingo Night at Frogtown Brewery
- Mural Project Kick Off - Community Workshop at The Elysian Valley Recreation Center - 3 muralist finalist RFQ's presented to the community
- Embodying the River - Cal Poly Pomona Landscape Design Studio Collaboration - Final Review & Exhibition at The Blake Lofts
- Frogtown Holiday Hop - Neighborhood holiday shopping experience featuring art, food, music in a dozen venues in Frogtown organized by EVAC
- EVAC Holiday Open House - Art show, artist mixer and holiday celebration with the Frogtown community at The Blake Lofts
- Holiday Food Drive benefiting the NELA Mercadito in collaboration with Frogtown Brewery, Happier Camper and The Blake Lofts

OUR COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

Thank you to the individuals, businesses, sponsors and nonprofits in our community that support and work with us throughout the year. We couldn't do what we do without you!

100 Acre Partnership, Katrina Alexy, The Bend, The Blake Avenue Lofts, The Blake Lofts, Bloco Obini Drum & Dance Troupe, Tina Orduno Calderon, Cal Poly Pomona Landscape Design Studio, Claytivity, Clockshop, Dan Cruz, Steven Cruz-Meza, Edwina Dedlow, Dorris Place Elementary, dublab, EFRA Architects, Elysian Valley Recreation Center, Elysian Valley Riverside Neighborhood Council, Theresa Farrell, Farmscape, Flawless Post, Frame Monster Design Lab, Friends of the LA River, Frogtown Brewery, FSY Architects, Grain Surfboards, Happier Camper, Just What I Kneaded Bakery, KERISMA, The Left Bank, Loreto Restaurant, Luxe Paws, Sean & Ebony Martin, The Music Center, NELA Mercadito, Pacific West Business Properties, Plan:d Gallery, The Pot Shop, Projected Visions, Quantum Clinic, The Realm Ballet Company, The River LA, Salazar Restaurant, Singulier Vintage, Mike Sonksen, Spoke Bicycle Cafe, A.K. Toney, Tracy A. Stone Architect, Uncommon, Waxpaper, Writ Large Projects and Woodbury University.

OUR FUNDERS

Thank you to our funders Bob Berg & Janet Workman, California Arts Council, Elysian Valley Riverside Neighborhood Council, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Meltzer-Thorne Family Fund.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tracy A. Stone - President
Nina Briggs - Vice President
Allen Anderson - Treasurer
Chazandra Kern - Secretary

Board Members

David Dedlow
Oliver Nowlin
Patricia Perez
Damian Robledo

Executive Director - Michelene Cherie



PEOPLE ARE TALKING...

Take a look at what folks are saying about us!

“Elysian Valley Arts Collective is one of my favorite organizations to partner with. Our Literary Lounge by the LA River events have been wildly successful with generations of diverse poets and writers from all over Los Angeles sharing their work.” --Mike Sonksen, Poetry Professor Woodbury University & Literary Curator

“I had a wonderful time participating in "Illuminate the Night" hosted by EVAC. The event was a blur of activity, filled with smiling faces, heartfelt, impactful interactions, gleeful kids, and genuinely curious locals and not-so-locals interacting with my art.” --Guatam Rangan, Light Installation Artist

“I have lived in Elysian Valley for ten years but only joined EVAC about three years ago. Since becoming a member I have participated in multiple events that connected me to local artists and my community. From the Friends of the LA River’s event *River Fest to Illuminate the Night*, I have displayed my work to hundreds of people. I have made new connections and professional advancements. EVAC has consistently offered new artistic opportunities and the support and community that I had been missing.” --Mary Kudlak, EVAC Artist Collective Member

"I never thought anyone would make a film about my life’s work until the Elysian Valley Arts Collective decided to do one. To be acknowledged in such a way has made me and my family so proud. To see my journey played out in this film shows me how much I have accomplished and how far I have come in my life and in my art.”
--Milton Maja Jurado, Artist - subject of our film “MAJA”

“The Elysian Valley Arts Collective welcomed me warmly when I asked to join, immediately including my artist profile on the website, and inviting me to participate in events. I really like how the community — residents from the area, kids, and stakeholders — are included in each event, showcasing the multiple personalities and talents of Frogtown. The three events this past year, which I exhibited as a featured artist, ran smoothly, delighted the visitors, created sales, and enhanced Frogtown’s reputation. The generosity of the attendees at EVAC’s annual fundraiser was an impressive and heartfelt response to their call for support of their art programs for youth. For many attendees of EVAC events, this is their first introduction to Frogtown and the lovely experience of walking or biking along the LA River, encountering music, art, food, poetry and foremost a friendly, social community.” --Erica Goebel , EVAC Artist Collective Member

“My work with EVAC over the last five months as an artist-in-residence has impacted seniors, myself, and the community at large. I knew when I partnered with EVAC I would be engaging with a competent and productive community nonprofit and specifically asked EVAC where they had a need to which they responded there was a need to give seniors a creative outlet. I've been sharing my knowledge of mosaic skills with a group of seniors who mostly reside in Elysian Valley/Frogtown and have personally seen the joy a regular weekly session of creativity brings to a group of people who are retired and often dealing with loneliness and boredom. The new skills they are learning engage their minds, hands, and hearts. I look forward to our continued partnership. It has been a very beneficial and uplifting experience for all.” --Katrina Alexy, Artist-in-Residence, Mosaic Workshops for Seniors

Regarding the *Start to Finish: a Creative Journey for Young Artists Program*:

“This was a fun experience for my son, who normally doesn’t join things like this. He pushed himself to his limits to be more creative and imaginative during this program. The art teachers were so friendly and supportive.”
--Mark A., Frogtown Resident and Parent.

“My kid had a wonderful time at the art classes. Aside from being excited to use all the new art supplies, he learned a lot from the teachers. They are encouraging, supportive and truly care about the students and their individual talents. Students have the freedom to draw the subjects they like so they enjoy the process without pressure while learning from their teachers and meeting new friends.” --Maviric Rufon, Parent