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Artspace partner receives ‘Our Town’ grant from National Endowment for the Arts

*PA‘I Foundation of Honolulu among 51 selected
for NEA ‘creative placemaking’ funds*

MINNEAPOLIS—The PA‘I Foundation of Honolulu has received a \$150,000 “Our Town” grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to support development of Ola Ka ‘Ilima (Creative Art Spaces), a two-part initiative that will include an Artspace live/work project in Hawai‘i as well as engagement activities for visual artists, “kumu hula” (master teachers of Hawaiian dance), and musicians, the NEA announced today.

“Our Town” is the NEA’s latest investment in “creative placemaking,” through which partners from both public and private sectors come together to shape the social, physical, and economic character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities.

The Hawai‘i project, developed by Artspace in partnership with PA‘I Foundation, will include a cultural market survey to assess the size and specific uses of the project; it is anticipated that there will be about 40 units of affordable live/work space for artists and their families. The site has not been selected but will probably be in Honolulu.

“Communities across our country are using smart design and leveraging the arts to enhance quality of life and promote their distinctive identities,” NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman said in announcing the awards. “In this time of great economic upheaval, Our Town provides communities an opportunity to reignite their economies.”

“We’re very excited to have the support of the NEA,” said Vicky Holt Takamine, executive director of the PA‘I Foundation. “The idea for the project is to infuse the community with life through the creative arts. This grant will help us revitalize our community by supporting artistic endeavors not just in hula but also the visual and traditional arts and cultural practices as well.”

“We’re delighted to see the PA‘I Foundation receive this award from the NEA,” said Rebecca Driscoll, Artspace Board Chair. “The Our Town program is further evidence of the strong

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national leadership of the NEA in making creative placemaking a reality in communities all across America.”

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Hawai‘i project is an outgrowth of a scope of Discovery work conducted by Artspace in 2009-10 with funding by the Ford Foundation. During the course of that work, Artspace met Vicky Holt Takamine, the kumu hula (master teacher) of Pua Ali ‘i ‘Ilima, a school of traditional Hawaiian dance, and leader of the PA‘I Foundation. The result was a partnership whose objective is to develop an Artspace project in Hawai‘i that will provide both affordable housing for Hawaiian artists and space for traditional Hawaiian art forms such as hula kahiko (ancient Hawaiian dance), hula ‘auana (modern style Hawaiian dance), leo ki’eki’e (falsetto singing), kī ho‘alu (slack key guitar), ukulele and Hawaiian language.

ABOUT ARTSPACE

Established in 1979, Artspace is now the nation’s leading developer for the arts. We own and operate 28 major projects in 13 states. Of that number, 22 are “live/work” projects, in which each apartment has sufficient extra space for an artist’s studio; in aggregate, they provide more than a thousand residential units, the vast majority of them affordable. Most of the live/work projects and all six non-residential projects provide work space for artists and arts organizations as well as arts-related and arts-friendly commercial activities – in all, more than three million square feet.

ABOUT THE NEA

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

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