

SEATTLE INDEPENDENT ARTIST SUSTAINABILITY EFFORT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SIASE Releases Open Letter Urging Supporters of Art and Culture to Re-think Their Giving Strategy

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The [Seattle Independent Artists Sustainability Effort \(SIASE\)](#) is a horizontal coalition formed by and for artists to enhance self-determination and secure both the short and long term sustainability of our communities through documentation, coordination, and direct advocacy. On April 6, 2020 [SIASE is releasing an open letter](#) aimed at challenging corporations and long-time supporters of arts and culture in Seattle to think about ways they can better support vulnerable artists in the time of COVID-19.

As gig work and contracts are postponed or canceled, and the doors to every venue, gathering place, and cultural space in Seattle closed indefinitely, the situation for local artists - who were already enduring economic precarity to exist in one of the most increasingly expensive cities in the world - has now reached a new, critical level.

The letter makes the case that because of this urgency of this crisis, it is critical for financial supporters of the arts and culture community to understand that by focusing corporate, philanthropic, foundation, and other giving solely on the most visible entities and organizations, the many who need relief immediately will go unserved due to burdensome and/or lengthy grant processes as well as red-tape bureaucracy.

The letter directs supporters to give quickly and generously to [Seattle Artist Relief Fund Amid COVID-19 organized by Ijeoma Oluo, Ebony Arunga, and Gabriel Teodros](#). This fund, established as direct and flexible mutual aid, is being led by trusted, long-time community leaders with and for those most impacted, especially QTBIPOC communities. Those who support this effort can also make a tax-deductible donation through the fund's fiscal sponsor LANGSTON by emailing seattleartistrelief@gmail.com.

To this date the 255 artists that have filled out SIASE's loss impact documentation form have reported \$2,119,173.52 in total losses, with an average reported timeline of very urgent need. Ijeoma Oluo says, "While many of the centers of philanthropy are giving to arts organizations, this fund is unique because the direct cash assistance is getting into the hands of independent artists that were living paycheck to paycheck already and are now suffering." This fund has raised nearly \$350,000. With 1800 requests for funding and a waiting list of 200; there is a current funding gap of \$600,000 to fulfill the active requests, with more coming in daily.

Of the 263 signatories that are impacted artists or community members in solidarity, 240 of them are directly impacted artists, and as of this writing, 70 community businesses and arts organizations have signed on to the letter.

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