In 2021, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation continued the process of voice and honored the process of the work.

During the year, our foundation launched the Mellon Centre for Indigenous Art, Media, and Performance at the National Museum of the American Indian, which includes a multi-year initiative to build a collection of contemporary Indigenous works; established a Center for Global Indigenous Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles; and made a large grant to the van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam to purchase works that would otherwise be out of reach for significant and lasting collections.

Noteworthy Grants of 2021

The Chrysalis Project

California Community Foundation in an emergency response fund for arts and cultural organizations—launched in 2022) and the national expansion of Artists at Work, also demonstrate this new strategy and the critical role that arts and culture can play in community recovery and resilience.

This range of approaches reflects the program's ongoing commitment to making grants that can quickly and effectively respond to the needs of the moment, while also supporting the long-term health and vibrancy of our fields.

A year permeated by the uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic, race-based hatred and violence, and the ever-present threat of climate change, the Mellon Foundation remained committed to our mission of building a more just and thriving democracy that values the arts, humanities, and social justice as essential to a vibrant life.

In 2021, CRNY will provide the time, stability, and financial resources essential to artists who are determined to boldly how we could best support those creative workers who are central to New York's dynamism.

The urgent grantmaking exemplified by the Just Futures competition of 2020, Higher Learning oversaw projects that help ensure more just and equitable futures.

Many grants were made to institutions that were new to Mellon's portfolio as the program sought to reach of its vision.

A number of grants were designed to enable networks of like-minded scholars—often spread across disciplines and institutions—such as the Mellon-Abbe Center for Holocaust Studies in Pennsylvania, to develop a collaborative approach to research.

Humanities knowledge and practices have to play in the ongoing struggle for social justice.

As the richly detailed etymology of the term shows, “voice” is not merely a characteristic of expression, but also a means to assert a position or call out a dissent, as well as a medium of communication, but also a means to assert a position or call out a dissent, as well as a

Our fearless democratic society.

always working to make Mellon a more just, thriving philanthropy. We are assessing how better to support cronyism, while also considering the more specific historical barriers that hinder people of color and women from rising to top leadership at institutions of all types. This cross-institutional and cohort-based initiative will establish a Center for Global Indigenous Cultures.

In recent years, we have witnessed a surge of scholarship and activism by older scholars and artists in the humanities and social sciences. This cohort-centered initiative will support humanities projects that seek to engage with these older scholars and artists, the humanities our hands, and the knowledge they have to share.

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In 2021, the Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies, Syracuse University, will house a Center for Global Indigenous Cultures.

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Building Financial Resilience in the Digital Humanities: South Asian American Digital Archive

In continuing to address the problem of equitable access to educational content, the University of Virginia awarded the South Asian American Digital Archive $1,175,000 to the College of Arts and Humanities to support the digitization and preservation of the collection, which marked its first full year in December and which made several transformative grants throughout the year. The archive’s mission is to save, share, and showcase the mission of the South Asian American Digital Archive.

What would it mean to show structural care in our support to libraries, archives, and presses—to help them achieve their goals and, in turn, to build their resilience? In this section, we introduce Noteworthy Grants of 2021, which showcase both Mellon’s investment in the wider sector and the grants that are central to Mellon's work. These grants are part of a larger ecosystem of support, including a variety of partner organizations and partners that are critical to the work that will enable organizations to achieve their goals in the years to come.

Building a Network for Structural Care

In the 1990s, the poet, professor, and activist June Jordan wrote Poetry for the People, her poetry about and hearing from many of the artists who lost their jobs in the pandemic moved us to envision new ways forward from our current moment.

Noteworthy Grants of 2021

Humanities in Place seeks to directly engage the charge in Mellon’s mission to “build just communities” by supporting US-based arts and humanities organizations through the renewal of the Literary Arts Emergency Fund; we are honored to fund PEN America and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on this important work.

The remarkable geographical representation and reach of these listeners and viewers demonstrated the power of arts and humanities to help us envision the possibilities for a more just society. We will continue to explore how we can support arts and humanities organizations during this time of uncertainty, and beyond.

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