

# Artistas del Barrio:



Expert Outfit

## Neighborhood Artists

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Community Art Initiative in Los Angeles, CA

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**Abstract:**

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Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artists, is a collaborative art initiative that engages artists of all skill levels and community members in Los Angeles, CA in an effort to bring more attention to the social justice issues that marginalized communities are working on. Artistas del barrio aims to do this and to bring awareness to the importance of celebrating ethnic diversity through art events and workshops. This group is composed of artists from historically marginalized communities in Los Angeles that will provide free events and workshops to their communities. This program will serve as a platform for artists to start their career and network with other artists and arts organizations. Ultimately, we will give resources to aspiring artists to bring art programs and events to marginalized communities. Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artists will work towards achieving racial justice through ensuring that the programming is culturally relevant which will empower marginalized communities through art and social justice. We will create a supportive community of artists that collaborate on projects together that gives community members more access to art that reflects their community and culture. For the purpose of this Blueprint, Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artists will focus on creating the collaborative art group and implementing a curriculum of 6 art events each year, as well as focus on recruiting and organizing the community around the issues that affect them, which will be reflected in the art events.

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**Issue:**

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The problem this Blueprint seeks to address is the lack of art resources, such as art materials, art classes, art galleries and spaces and artistic events for artists and community members of marginalized communities as well as the lack of representation of cultural diversity in the arts. Communities of color and low income communities have historically been left out, or marginalized, from all sorts of resources, including access to art and inclusion in the art community. Stankiewicz and Efland say in *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts* that “Powerful elements in society have influenced and determined the purpose of the arts. These dominant structures have used suitable institutions to govern how the arts are appropriated in the social order through patronage, education, and censorship (Stankiewicz and Efland 26). Luis Genaro García comments about patronage, education, and censorship in *La Lotería as Creative Resistance*, “when considering how these three systems work [patronage, education, and censorship] within working-class populations, it is important to acknowledge the existing limitations in art education and the quality of art-education access that exists for students in marginalized schools” (García 68). Furthermore, he states that the objective of the arts should be to build the consciousness of students through an imagination of possibilities—by creatively using their own cultural knowledge. With this blueprint we seek to empower diverse communities to use art as a way of exercising the right to practice their culture, customs, and feel proud of their identity. This Blueprint aims to address the issues of racial justice and cultural justice by creating artistic programs and events in marginalized communities that reflect the culture, heritage, and ethnicity of the community members with the aim of not only giving tools for artists in marginalized communities to do art, but to also use art as a platform to address social issues relevant to the community.

This Blueprint specifically centers on the lack of access to art for marginalized community members and a lack of opportunities for artists that belong to ethnically diverse, low income backgrounds. The marginalized communities in Los Angeles comprise of poor people of color. The schools in these areas generally do not have a competent arts curriculum, and those that don't always reflect the ethnic diversity of the community. This inclination towards assimilating into one dominating culture leads to a low self esteem, a disregard for one's cultural capital, and unintended whitewashing that leads to losing cultural diversity.

This blueprint seeks to empower communities by using art as a way to challenge things that are happening in their community without their permission, or other social justice issues that matter to them. For example, high end art galleries have been used to push out community artists, completely disregarding the art and culture that exists in communities of color. As playwright and screenwriter Josefina Lopez says in the LA Times, "Artists who didn't grow up in Boyle Heights, they look at Boyle Heights as a blank canvas. They don't realize they are painting over another work of art." By opening these high end art galleries in poor communities of color, they are also elitizing art, so only artists from certain socio-economic levels are able to create and sell art. We hope communities use Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artists to take action on issues that matter to them.

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#### **Solution:**

Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artist's primary approach will be idea creation. The organization will consist of three stages, or phases, that will build upon each other to create the end goal of making an organization that provides emerging artists with funds, connections to arts organizations or other important stakeholders, a network of support from other artists, and a chance to gain hands-on experience at leading their own arts events which will ultimately gives them more exposure in the arts community. In return, the artists will provide free art events to historically marginalized communities. These art events could be art exhibitions, workshops, performances, or anything that engages the community. The art events will be culturally relevant to the community and will address a social justice issue that the community is facing. This will provide a positive feedback loop of more community members being involved in their own community, as well as give more youth access to arts programming that in turn might want to become artists and create art for their communities. This also helps stimulate the economy because currently, there are limited resources for people in marginalized communities to have access to art. Artistas del Barrio, will open up a world of possibilities for youth to be able to pursue a job in the entertainment industry, which is extremely prevalent in LA. A limitation is that the campaigns and events might lose momentum if the artists affiliated with Artistas del Barrio move on to other projects and decide not to create arts programming in their communities.

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#### **Project/Organization Structure:**

Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artists is a three part program with short, medium, and long term goals.

In its first phase, we will initially use a horizontal leadership structure with all members helping each other in the various aspects that bring a project together. Each member will be able to choose what position they will chair. Each member will have the opportunity to spearhead an event, but will in turn assist others in their own events.

Once Artistas del Barrio reaches phase two it becomes a non profit. The leadership structure will then turn into a vertical leadership structure. There will be staff that are going to take over the administrative and behind-the-scenes aspects of organizing the events. They will be in charge of collaborating with the artists in creating the events, and the members will then become part of the creative board that collectively chooses the programming for each month.

Phase three consists mainly on expanding the public programming to include creating a main event, an arts festival, each year and there will be a chair that is in charge of spearheading that event as well.

**Director:**

Function: Supervises all other chairs and the coalitions. In charge of overseeing the public programming for the year and conducting weekly meetings to ensure transparency and accountability. Follows up with other chairs, and provides guidance and support as needed to other members.

Skills: leadership, managerial skills, program development experience, problem-solving skills, integrity

**Community Outreach Chair:**

Function: In charge of scouting for communities, organizations, and artists that would be interested in collaborating with us and then collaborating with them to create a calendar of events that serve to address a community social issue.

Skills: networking, social skills, communication, comfortable with computers and social media

**Communications and Publicity Chair:**

Function: Publicize events, campaigns, and in charge of social media.

Skills: Computer skills, organization, network with others, publicity, graphic design

**Fundraising Chair:**

Function: Work to raise funds for community events and initiatives.

Skills: fundraising , grant writer

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**Budget:**

BUDGET ITEM	QUANTITY	REASON FOR EXPENSE	PROJECTED COST	ACTUAL COST**	% OF TOTAL BUDGET	TIMEFRAME FOR USE OF FUNDS
Art Supplies (paint, paper, brushes, rags, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, erasers, palette, cups, etc.)	50	We need art supplies for the events, workshops, etc. It's the most important item on this list.	200		13.3%	ongoing
Printing Flyers	500	We need to make publicity and promote events	100		6%	ongoing
Swag (buttons, stickers)	200	This will be used to promote the group and remind people about us.	60		4%	ongoing
Food for Events	10	To feed the artists, organizers, and community members	500		33.3%	per event
stationary	50	To plan and carry out the projects	100		6%	ongoing

cleaning supplies	5	To clean after each event.	50		3%	ongoing
transportation	10	To ensure that the organizers are on time and bring the supplies	200		13.3%	ongoing
tablecloths	10	For promotion tables and for workshops	40		3%	ongoing
incidentals	10	For emergencies.	250		17%	ongoing
		<b>Total Cost:</b>	1,500		100%	

**Community & Civic Engagement:**

Decision-Makers:

Our decision-makers include the Department of Cultural Affairs and the LA county Arts commission. These organizations provide grants, opportunities for collaboration, and artist calls that could be very beneficial for us. Other institutions like museums (like the MOCA, LACMA, MOLAA, La Plaza), among others could also provide

opportunities and funding. In addition, higher education centers like UCLA, USC, or community colleges like LAVC, LATTC, and LACC can provide resources and support.

#### Opponents:

One of our opponents are organizations, contractors, and decision-makers that are contributing to gentrification. When there is gentrification, there are art galleries from outside that contribute to raising the prices and that makes community members develop a negative view of all artists and arts organizations. Another main opponent is the current culture of devaluing art and failing to recognize it as a crucial part of people's lives. This opposition is reinforced in low income communities where some people can't afford to pursue the arts, and therefore are left out of pursuing a career in the arts or the entertainment business. We wish to rise above these obstacles by creating anti-gentrification campaigns in our communities, and in this arts initiative we will provide the resources to have arts programming in low income, historically marginalized communities, as well as provide resources for emerging artists to create a career in the arts.

#### Assets:

There is a array of arts organizations and people that are main assets to our arts initiative. For example, arts organizations like The Pacoima Arts Incubator, Self Help Graphics, Art Division LA, are located in strategic places with space and an engaged community. We could use their space to conduct events, as well as learn how to operate an arts organization. We also consider public places like the public library, parks, or cultural centers as an asset since these are spaces where the community comes together to learn. These are also places where we can put art events. Some assets that are people include families, students, aspiring artists, and educators, who with their support, help us grow.

### **Goal Setting:**

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**Goal #1:** Create events (6 per year) throughout Los Angeles, once every two months. This will be organized by the coalition of artists and community members and will be held in public spaces.

Deliverables:

1. Announce a call for artists and select 5 other people that are interested in being part of the first coalition.
2. Plan the public programming for the year with them.
3. call the locations and the people we would like to work with.
4. advertize and fundraise at the event.

**Goal #2:** Start the non-profit. This entails receiving a grant to hire interns for the chair positions and possibly providing funds to the coalitions. Engage other communities, at least one per year. Start the creative panel, that has representatives of each coalition, the chairs, and the director. They will collectively decide on a yearly theme with which to guide the programming.

Deliverables:

1. apply for non-profit status
2. apply for grants

3. hire people to help with the fundraising, advertisement, and communications chairs.
4. as our organization grows, start conducting monthly meetings with the coalitions and create a structure with which to guide the coalitions.

**Goal #3:** Plan and create a big art fair once a year that focuses on the communities and their campaigns. This will be held in December and will celebrate the artists and community members that have participated in the workshops and the advancements they have made in their social justice efforts.

Deliverables:

1. Apply for a grant for funds for the art festival
2. create a festival planning committee that will oversee the preparation of the festival.
3. Engage the community, local arts organizations, local businesses, and other important stakeholders for them to be a part of the festival.

### **Operationalizing Artistas del Barrio:**

#### **Projected Two Year Timeline:**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Milestone</u></b>
June 2019	Announce the call for artists on social media and reach out to possible future team members.
July 2019	start recruiting people, accepting submissions, and conducting interviews.
August 2019	initiate the first meeting with at least 5 people. Go over the goals of the initiative, and set dates for the future meetings (bimonthly).
Sept 2019	Have the events chosen, along with dates and times.
Oct 2019	Secure locations and possible collaborators. Identify possible grants
Nov 2019	have advertisement flyers, social media set up, and decide on a logo.
Dec 2019	finalize all details for programming for next year. Break Dec 15-Jan 31.
Feb 2020	Start the first event and first meeting of the year.
March 2020	Conduct regular meetings, continue to work on applying to grants, promotion of events, and outreach.

April 2020	Conduct regular meetings, continue to work on applying to grants, promotion of events, and outreach.
May 2020	Conduct regular meetings, promotion of events, and outreach. Prepare next call for artists for second coalition.
June 2020	Do an evaluation of our organization, decide if we are ready to start the paperwork to be a non-profit. Launch second call for artists. Goal: recruit for a second coalition, double size to 10.
July 2020	Conduct regular meetings, continue to work on promotion of events, start accepting submissions and interview people. work on non-profit application
August 2020	introduce the next cohort, start planning next year's programming. set goals for next year. work on non-profit app
Sept 2020	The two cohorts will choose their events, along with dates and times. work on non-profit app
Oct 2020	Secure locations for the events, identify possible contributors/collaborators. find possible grants and work on non-profit application
Nov 2020	Set up advertisement campaign, flyers, etc. continue on non-profit application
Dec 2020	finalize all details for next year's programming. Submit paperwork for non-profit. Do an evaluation. Break Dec 15-jan 31.
Feb 2021	Do the first event. Start work on grants for the year, get one for the festival. Obtain non-profit status.

March 2021	Conduct regular meetings, continue to work on applying to grants, promotion of events, and outreach.
April 2021	Conduct regular meetings, continue to work on applying to grants, promotion of events, and outreach.
May 2021	start preparing for the next call for artists
June 2021	do an evaluation, launch call for artists for next cohort.

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**Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artist's Succession Plan:**

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Since one of Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artist's goal is to inspire and guide artists and community members to create their own art spaces and coalitions, the artists or community leaders of each community will take it upon themselves to maintain the work that ABNA has started. We will not be directly creating permanent spaces and social justice organizations, but we will plant the seeds of transformation. We will also be documenting the progress that we make in each community in hopes of creating a tailored "framework" for future organizations to use as a framework to continue implementing free arts organizations. Regarding Artistas del Barrio: Neighborhood Artists, we will expand each year to a new community through memberships to our organization. Each member becomes part of the creative board and has a chance to recruit new members of their community through the events. Once there are 6 artists of a same community, they can create their own sub-division and have a representative attend the main monthly creative board meetings. Once Artistas del Barrio enters phase two, staff will be hired for the chairs and the supervising chair will be chosen by the founders of the non-profit. Each new director will be elected internally, and usually those two positions will be covered by the same person.