The U.S. Latinx Art Forum announces first round of CHARLA FUND recipients

November 13, 2020 – The U.S. Latinx Art Forum (USLAF) announces its inaugural round of the CHARLA FUND for visual artists. Through the financial generosity of the Ford Foundation, the CHARLA Fund will comprise three total rounds of 10-15 grants of $400 to support the realization and documentation of artist-generated dialogues. Each dialogue will then be archived and shared on USLAF’s website (uslaf.org) and social media platforms.

The CHARLA FUND, part of USLAF’s larger Mazorca Initiative, offers support to artists of color affected by both the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing threats to justice caused by systemic racism, xenophobia, and state-sanctioned violence. The flexible and open-ended format of the CHARLA FUND enables recipients to have creative, challenging, supportive, and unconventional conversations with artists, other artworkers, and between the field of visual art and other disciplines.

For the initiative’s first round, proposals were solicited by nomination from arts leaders from across the United States and Puerto Rico. Proposals were then selected based on the recommendations of an external advisory board comprising world-class artists, scholars, and curators who share a long-standing commitment to enhancing equity in the art world and represent a range of perspectives based on their diverse art practices, areas of specializations, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and regions they live and work.

Advisory board members reviewed a total of 49 proposals for the CHARLA Fund Round 1. They sought to assess the strength of the proposals and the feasibility of the proposed CHARLA while considering the various needs of artists, such as the desire to strengthen artistic networks after sheltering-in-place restrictions and as pandemic-based closures limited opportunities and income for artists. Indeed, many artists of color have been disproportionately impacted by the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and ongoing stressors caused by the injustices of state violence.

The 15 artists whose proposals were selected for the CHARLA FUND Round 1 include painters, photographers, multimedia artists, filmmakers, performance artists, and educators. Their proposed charlas, Spanish for an informal conversation, include a series of curated Zoom discussions centered on specific key artworks, dialogues based on archival materials, an experimental video performance, a recipe exchange, an oral history project, and studio visits with curators and other interlocutors.

The CHARLA FUND Round 1 Cohort:
About the U.S. Latinx Art Forum and Mazorca Initiative

The U.S. Latinx Art Forum (USLAF) champions artists and arts professionals engaged in research, studio practice, pedagogy, and writing. We generate and support initiatives that advance the vitality of Latinx art through an intergenerational network that spans academia, art institutions, and collections. It currently comprises over 400 members who are artists, scholars, educators, and graduate students. To find out how to become a member, see our website here.

The CHARLA Fund is the first program in USLAF’s 2020–21 Mazorca Initiative. The initiative comprises three project categories that will allow USLAF to disburse the modest, yet meaningful stipends to artists while also supporting their creativity and disseminating their work. In addition to the CHARLA Fund, other programs will include an artist interview project with publication by USLAF and an online art exhibition project presented on USLAF’s website. All projects funded by Mazorca will be archived on the USLAF website to ensure the future access of artists’ work. Through the Mazorca Initiative, USLAF seeks to recognize and honor the creativity, plurality and interconnectedness of communities who produce art that affirms life and imagines the just world we need while strengthening an intergenerational, cross-racial, and pan-ethnic network of artists and interlocutors across the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean.