

ARTS & SOCIAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP

Youth at the intersection of arts and social change.

by Maya Lee

In 2022, the Arts & Social Justice Fellowship celebrated its first cohort of young leaders working at the intersection of the arts and social change. The 2023 class brings together a new wave of bright young minds to learn and grow as artist-activists in their community.

Students who participate in the fellowship develop leadership skills, connect with networks of other students and arts professionals, and grow their capacity to drive projects from start to finish. They will attend performances that center around social justice topics across different performance venues, including *Voices of Mississippi* at the Music Center on Saturday, February 4, and *The Jungle* at Woolly Mammoth

Theatre Company on Tuesday, March 28, allowing them to experience how professional artists are using art as a form of activism.

This year, the fellows will have the opportunity to meet with Toshi Reagon, co-creator of Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* opera, which Strathmore co-presented with Woolly Mammoth last spring and will present again in June. Reagon

will discuss how she combines her values with her artistry to create social change.

Encouraging them to prioritize process over product, Strathmore has created a supportive environment for the fellows to experiment as they evolve their artistic practice. "It is incredibly powerful to watch students expand their sense of themselves as powerful artist-activists through community with their peers, study of inspiring art, and creative exploration of their ideas. We feel lucky to get to witness these students' talent and passion," explains Strathmore's Vice President of Education & Community Engagement Lauren Campbell. With mentorship from program facilitators and financial support from the organizing institutions, fellows will develop individual or group projects that reflect what they have learned and showcase them at the close of the program.

"We are thrilled to support the next generation of artist-activists and culture creators committed to using their imagination and creativity to disrupt and dismantle systems of oppression, in pursuit of a more just world for all," says Woolly Mammoth Connectivity Director/Associate Artistic Director, Kristen Jackson.

Student applications for the 2023 fellowship class are being reviewed now. For information, visit Strathmore.org/fellowship.

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Photos by Jim Saah

