

Artists'
Cooperative
Residency &
Exhibitions

ACRE Annual Report

Year in Review 2025



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section i Introduction



Building on the vision articulated by ACRE's community through our strategic planning process, we focused this year on strengthening the structures, relationships, and systems that allow artists to lead together over time. 2025 marked a year of intentional stewardship as we moved from planning into practice, making meaningful progress toward long-term sustainability.



This work builds on the foundation laid over ACRE's first 15 years and reflects our shared commitment to evolving and strengthening our cooperative structure. This year we invested in the conditions that support care, equity, and shared leadership—deepening staff capacity at the residency, clarifying program structures, and bringing greater cohesion across our programs in Wisconsin and Chicago.

Across the residency, exhibitions, and public programs, we felt artists holding tightly to moments of joy, experimentation, and transformation. In a period shaped by uncertainty and contraction across the arts sector, the opportunity to gather, learn, and practice small acts of collective world-building with others felt especially meaningful. This year affirmed our belief that artists already hold the knowledge needed to shape more just, sustainable, cooperative futures—and that ACRE's role is to help build the conditions where that leadership can take root.



section ii

Residency Program



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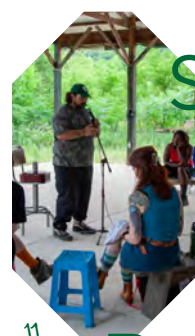
Our 8 Studio Areas



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Ceramics
Fibers
Woodshop
High Fire
Screen Printing
A/V Tech
Sound
Performance Stage

Over three sessions in the summer of 2025, the Residency Program hosted 53 visual artists, performers, musicians, and writers at our community in Steuben, WI. During their residency, participants had access to a variety of materials, equipment, expert guidance, conscientiously sourced food, and numerous opportunities to share their work. Alumni artists also played a crucial role at ACRE, returning as staff mentors to

lead studios, offer demos and workshops, and help shape the residency experience. Workshops and presentations included: wild clay foraging, weaving, rug tufting, natural dyeing, sand mold and lost wax casting, screenprinting, modular synthesis, clay throwing and hand building, 3D printing, guided movement, and performances and screenings of time-based work.





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"My time at ACRE Residency was a life-affirming experience. The staff and residents together cultivated a community atmosphere rich with emotional safety, compassion, kindness, and generosity with skill sharing and intellectual exchange. The facilities staffed with knowledgeable and skilled artists made so much possible for people seeking to expand their artistic practices through workshops, individual guidance, experimentation, and play."

—Juvana Soliven,
2025 Resident



section iii

ACRE Kitchen



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Year in Review

The ACRE Kitchen provides healthy and creative meals while supporting sustainable food producers in the Driftless region of Wisconsin. Shared meals anchor residency life, creating time and space for connection, rest, and informal exchange alongside studio work.



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* 150 Locally-Sourced Meals Served

Thank you to our Wisconsin Farmers and Vendors ♥

1. Kickapoo Exchange
2. Natural Foods Coop
3. Coop Partners Warehouse
4. Liberty Ridge Farm
5. Mountain Lane Farm
6. Renae Krause
7. Tortilleria Zepeda
8. Sam Stoltzfoos
9. Mississippi Meats
10. Eastman Meat Locker
11. Bagels Forever
12. Wisconsin Cutlery

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ACRE Kitchen

2025



section v Partnerships



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Partnerships extend ACRE's residency model by expanding access while strengthening the broader arts ecosystem. Each residency season, seven weeks are dedicated to collaborations with value-aligned organizations. By providing affinity space, hospitality, and shared resources, ACRE invests more than 60% of the cost of participation, prioritizing collaboration over competition and creating opportunities for alumni and staff to co-design and facilitate programs.



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* In 2025, we partnered with

- ① University of St. Francis
- ② WILD YAMS
- ③ GAMA (Gathering All Muslim Artists)
- ④ ICI (Independent Curators International).



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Through these collaborations, we hosted an additional 75 artists and curators and hired 15 alumni as support staff, reinforcing ACRE's commitment to shared leadership, paid labor, and cyclical engagement across programs.



section iv

Exhibitions Program



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About ACRE Projects

"I can't think of another moment in my life in which such a purposeful and intentional community was built. ACRE cared for me in ways I didn't know I needed all while allowing me the freedom to both explore within my medium and to experiment outside of it. The relationships I made during this session will undoubtedly last far into the future and I am thankful for the many wisdoms offered by my fellow residents and staff alike."

—Hunter Whitaker-Morrow,
2025 Resident

ACRE Projects is the exhibition and public program space of ACRE. The gallery provides artists with opportunities to expand their practices, develop professionally, and build community within a thriving nationwide network of peers and arts professionals. Since its founding in 2010, ACRE Projects has served as a platform for experimental programming and dialogue.

Programming at ACRE Projects is shaped by an open call process and an emerging curatorial fellowship, inviting alumni and community members to propose projects and test ideas. A rotating studio residency further extends resources to alumni, encouraging sustained engagement beyond the summer residency.

In 2025, we realigned the exhibitions program to meet our current capacity, while prioritizing long-term sustainability. This shift allowed us to deepen curatorial support, strengthen relationships with artists and audiences, and plan new programming with our national network of artists. Through this process, we scheduled 15 exhibitions through 2026 and engaged two new curatorial fellows to support exhibitions at ACRE Projects and partner galleries.

By centering artist-led initiatives within a cooperative structure, ACRE Projects strengthens connection across disciplines and supports artists in building relationships over time. The exhibitions program reflects ACRE's broader commitment to stewardship by creating collaborative, supportive, and experimental conditions for artists to develop their work and engage audiences.

In 2025, we presented seven exhibitions at ACRE Projects:

I Am a Thing That Holds Something Else
Ray Madrigal
January 17 - February 28, 2025

In Remembrance of Us
Lehna Huie
March 7 - April 14, 2025

Home, Place and Positionality
Haerim Lee and Fatima Laster
April 25 - May 30, 2025

hiccup
Tess Oldfield
June 14 - July 28, 2025

Positive or Zero: Long Distance Collaboration
Frey Michael Austin, Matthew Austin (For the Birds Trapped in Airports), Lois Bielefeld, Andi Crist, Camila Leiva, Liz Roberts, Jamie Robertson, and lee rae walsh
Curated by Zach Clark & Sara J. Winston
August 8 - September 19, 2025

Committee of Six
Fred Schmidt-Arenales
September 26 - October 26, 2025

Fixing the Baroque
Carlos Salazar-Lermont
November 7, 2025 - January 4, 2026



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I truly rarely use the word “transformative” to describe my own experiences. However, I would wholeheartedly describe my experience at ACRE as incredible and transformative on many different levels. ACRE allows you to imagine what true community and liberation grounded in art and care can look like. My practice feels enriched and nourished through the care, warmth, and ingenuity of the community of staff and residents, the land, and the resources available during the residency. I am walking away from the residency feeling deeply inspired with a new far-reaching community of peers and friends!

—Gemma Kim,
2025 Curatorial Fellow





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ACRE

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Year in Review

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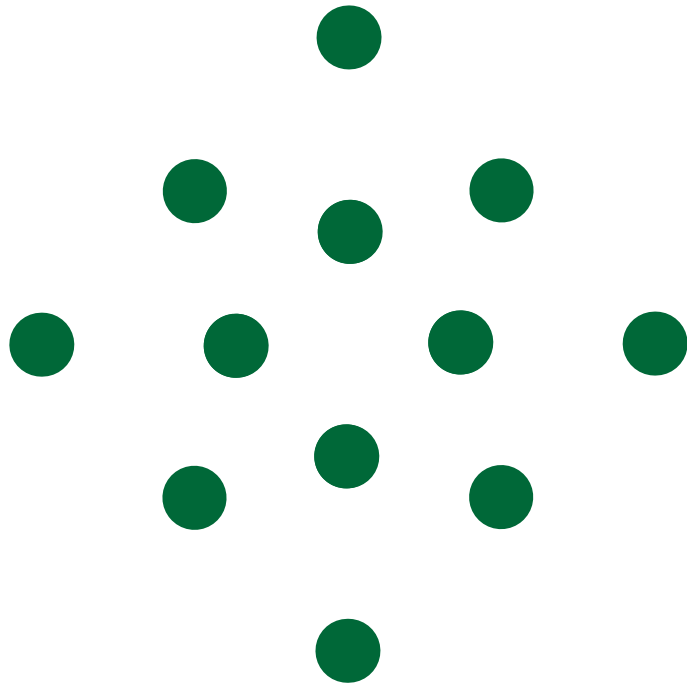


Exhibitions Program

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2025

Chicago Arts Census



The Chicago Arts Census is a cross-discipline data collection effort created by and with the art workers of Chicago.

① Data Report & Dashboard

In 2025, the Chicago Arts Census team completed and refined both the written report, *Our Work, Our Worth: The Lives and Labor of Chicago's Arts Workers*, and an interactive data dashboard. Together, these tools mark a transition from data collection and analysis toward public reporting and programming in the coming year.

The report is organized into three parts:

- ① A brief overview designed for accessibility,
- ② A set of key observations that examine patterns across the data,
- ③ A series of recommendations developed in response to feedback from artists, organizers, and partners.

The interactive dashboard presents more than 100 charts and graphs, along with filtering tools that allow users to explore the data in greater depth. Alongside the report, these tools are intended to support artists, organizations, and advocates in making informed cases for change.

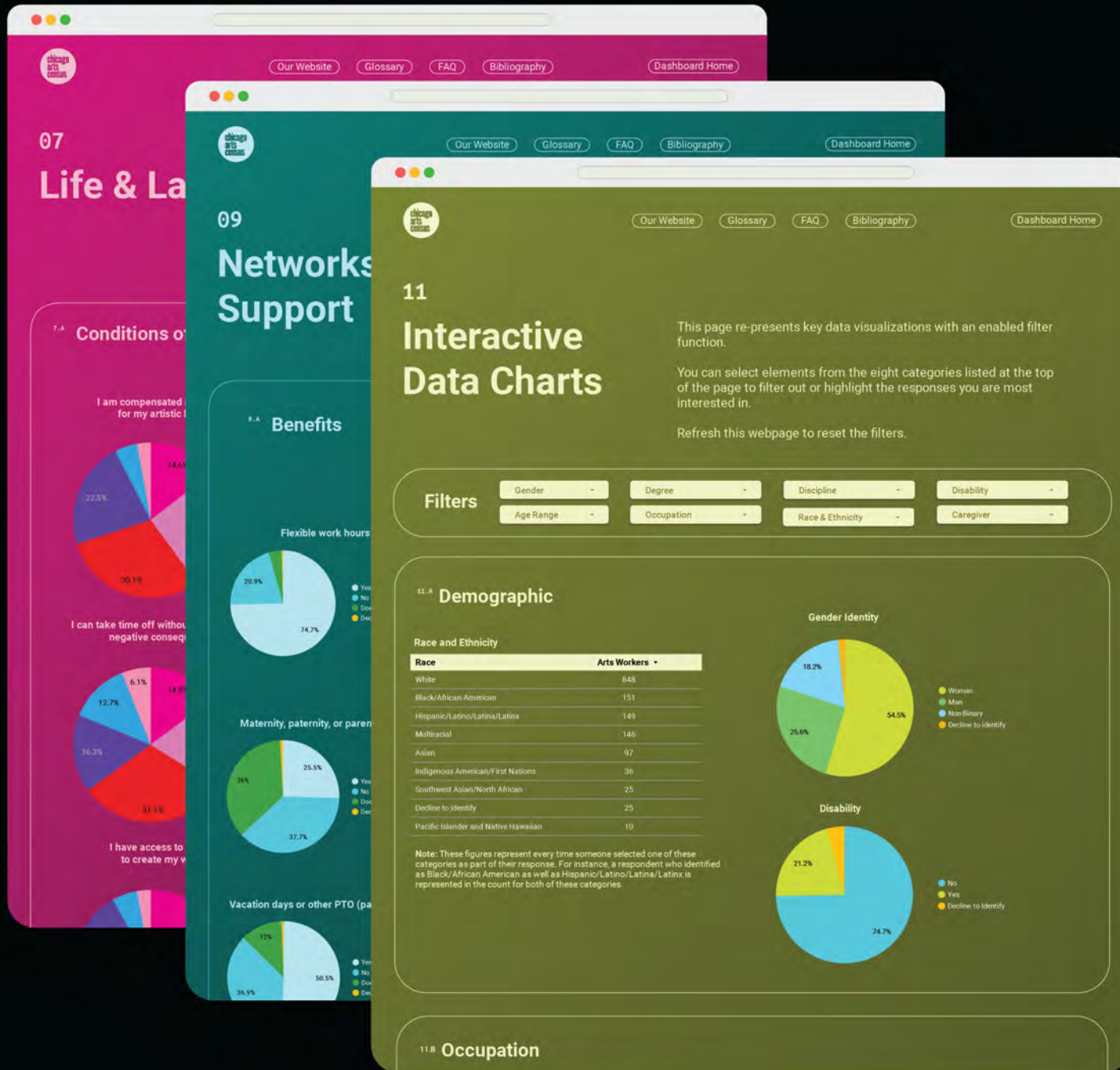
② Conference

In late 2025, the Census team shared project insights and methodology with peers at the Artist Communities Alliance Conference, contributing to broader conversations about data, labor, and advocacy across the field.

③ Public Programs

As the project moves from analysis into public engagement in 2026, we will present public programs focused on themes that emerged in the Census findings, including retirement, homeownership, community-level investing, and employment prospects for art workers within the sector.

While many individual data points may feel familiar, the collective weight of more than 1,200 artists speaking together creates new possibilities for action. Through this project, ACRE has been reshaped in ways that deepen our ability to support artists and collaborate across sectors.



Events



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1 Summer Daze

We kicked off the summer and our 16th residency season with Summer Daze at McKinley Community Play Garden, featuring music performances, clay activities with GnarWare, and a picnic lunch by ACRE Kitchen.

2 Friends + Family Weekend

We hosted our fourth annual Friends + Family Weekend up at the farm and residency in Steuben. ACRE supporters witnessed the beauty of the Driftless landscape, enjoyed delicious farm-to-table dining, and experienced firsthand our multifaceted residency environment. This year's weekend included lots of kids activities and a screenprinting cocktail hour.



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3 Hearth Benefit

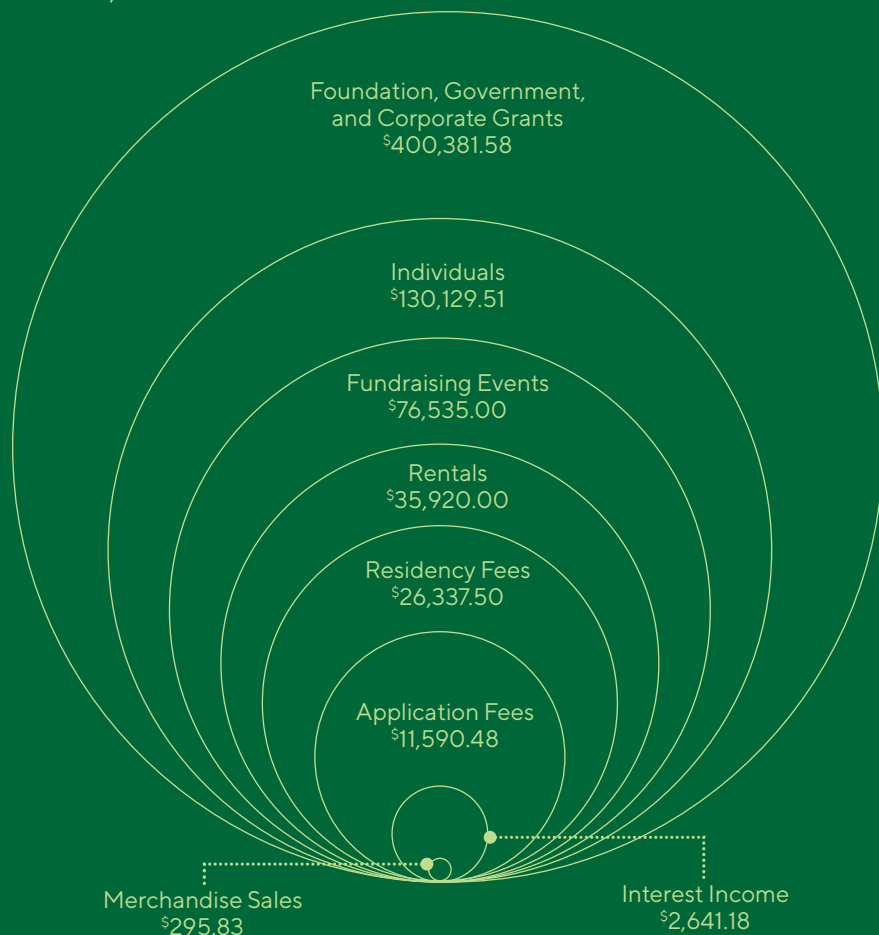
We hosted our annual Hearth Benefit at a new venue, Hoste, in Pilsen. Countless artists contributed their work and talents to creating a special evening evoking the spirit of our collective organization. Together we raised \$95,000 in support of ACRE's residency program and ongoing resources for artists—our highest level of support to date!



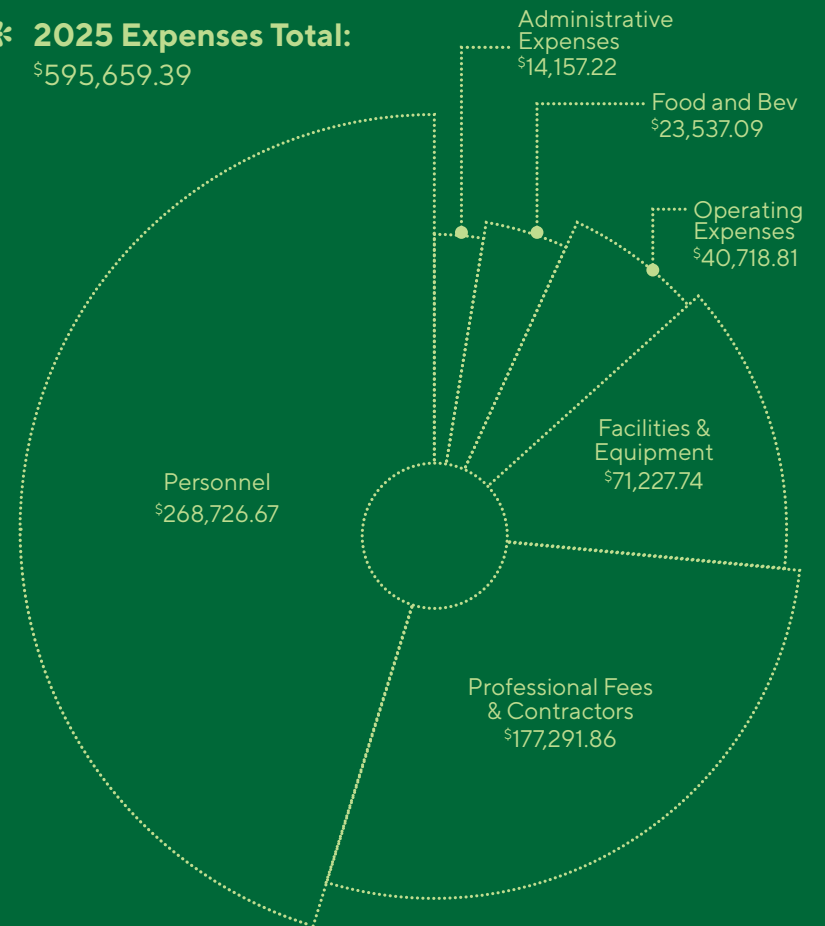
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Income & Expenses

* **2025 Income Total:**
\$683,831.08



* **2025 Expenses Total:**
\$595,659.39



Program Funders
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Good Chaos Field Foundation
Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
Illinois Arts Council Agency

Lead Sponsors
Patti Gilford
Valerie Carberry and Richard Wright
The California Clipper 710 Group
Jay Dandy and Melissa Weber

Event Sponsors
Apologue Liqueurs
DOCUMENT
Exfolia Botanical Schlep
Marz
Middle Brow

Special Thanks
ACRE Projects Gallery is sponsored by Supera, a proud supporter of the arts. Special thanks to John Supera.

To our farm partners at the Mother Earth Green Center and Steuben Lodge, Rosa Hendrickx and Bob Samuelson.

Staff, Board, & Supporters



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Staff

Kate Bowen,
Executive Director

Erin Nixon,
Development Director

Anthony Stepter,
Program Director,
Chicago Arts Census

Chelsea Flowers,
Residency Manager

Lauren Leving,
Exhibitions Director

Maggie Wong,
Volunteer Coordinator

Yejin Yoon,
Events and Rentals
Coordinator

Kelly Carr,
Residency Kitchen
Director

Anthony E. Paterra,
Residency Operations
Manager, Facilities

Ricki Dwyer,
Residency Setup
Support

Hannah Patterson,
Residency On Call
Co-Lead

Keioui Thomas,
Residency On Call
Co-Lead

Adia Sykes,
Lead Organizer,
Chicago Arts Census

Stephanie Koch,
Lead Organizer,
Chicago Arts Census

Alden Burke,
Lead Organizer,
Chicago Arts Census

Board of Directors

In 2025, ACRE welcomed two new board members, Rebecca Beltrán and Lauren Conway Modahl, whose perspectives strengthen our cooperative leadership and long-term stewardship of the organization.

Aron Gent

Charles Long,
Treasurer

Jenny Kendler

Latham Zearfoss,
Co-Chair

Lauren Conway
Modahl

Lena Singer,
Co-Secretary

Lynnette Miranda,
Co-Chair

Raven Munsell,
Co-Secretary

Rebecca Beltrán

Thank You to Our Supporters ♥

Aaron Slavutin
Abigail Steingraber
Adam Ruben
Alden Burke
Allison Burke
Anastasia and GP Tinari

Anthony Paterra
Aron Gent
Arun Gupta
Ashley DiBlasi
Benjamin Sage
Benn E Williams

Bindu Poroori
Bonnie Stanfield
Brendan Palfreyman
Bruce K Modahl
Caitlin Arnold
Caitlin Caspersen

Thank You to Our Supporters ♥

Caroline Ng	Josh Larkins	Meida McNeal
Charles Long	Joshua Geltzer	Molly Conway
Christian Garcia	Jules Gordon	Molly Kobelt
Claire Michelsen	Julia and Larry	Nayeon Yang
Courtney Mackedanz	Antonatos	Nicholas Saint
Davi Lakind	Julie Best	Nicole Marroquin
David Alderdice	Justin Scott	Nicole Simon
Deborah Rudolf	Kate Lorenz	Noor Abdal
Derlyn Moronta	Kate Rhoades	Patricia Conway
E. Leonhart Shipman	Kate Staiger	Patricia Rees
Ebba Gebisa	Kate Tuthil	Patti Gilford
Edward Wong	Kate Zeller	Paul Erschen
Elizabeth Amundsen	Katherine Bouvier	Penelope Cripps
Elizabeth Lovero	Katherine Porter	Rachael Mizuno
Ellen R. Sondag	Kaylee Tock	Rachel Price
Ellen Wersan and	Lamar Gayles	Raven Munsell
Tim Sandry	Latham Zearfoss	Romi Crawford
Emma Guttman-Slater	Laura Farnam	Ronald Orr
Erin Fowler	Laura Gutierrez	Ruoyi Shi
Esther Grimm	Laura Payne	Ryan Conway
Etta Sandry	Lauren and Martin	Samantha Reynolds
Evan Moore	Modahl	Sara Abdel Rahim
Farah Alhaidar	Lauren Peterson	Scott Campbell
Frank Casillias	Lea Tshilds	Sean Conway
Garvey Camilien	Leila Tamari	Selina Trepp
Gayatri Malmed	Lena Singer	Shafeka Hashash
Haerim Lee	Leslie Gordon	SK Kerastas
Heidi O'Neill	Lily C Andrews	Splinter Knight
Hillary Wiedemann	Lindsey French	Stacey Gillett
James Dodington	Lisa Feingold	Stella Brown
Janine Mileaf	Liz McCarthy	Stephanie Folkens
Jenal Dolson	Lois Miller	Stephanie Hodges
Jesse Ilhardt	Lowell Dwyer	Stephen Pratt
Jesse Ly	Lynnea Domienik	Susan E Prince
Jesse Malmed	Lynnette Miranda	Terry Evans
Jess Yeats	Madeline Gallucci	Thomas Romero
Jessica Harvey	Maggie Wong	Tovia Siegel
Jessyca Dudley	Mariela Acuna	Valerie Carberry and
John Jaramillo	Matt Begley	Richard Wright
John Siegfried	Matthew Clyne	Zach Smith
Jonathan Selkowitz	Matthew Lane	
Jordan Ross	Matthew Showel	
Jorge Silva	Meg Leary	



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Photo Credits

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High Fire Tech Ricki Dwyer guides a Session 1 Resident through their first time pouring metal. Photo by Kate Bowen</p> <p>13. Artist Abhishek Narula screen-printing during Session 2. Photo by Ále Campos</p> <p>Page 14-15</p> <p>14. Steubiennale installation of sculptures by Geornica Daniels. Photo by Kate Bowen</p> <p>Page 16</p> <p>15. Steubiennale installation of a new weaving by Shirin Towfiq. Photo by John Niekrasz</p> | <p>Page 17</p> <p>16. Residents prepare newly harvested clay during Session 2. Photo by Ále Campos</p> <p>17. Session 2 documentarian Ále Campos pulls a screen on the porch of the Print Shack.</p> <p>Page 18-19</p> <p>18. Session 3 Steubiennale installation of sculpture and cyanotypes. Photo by John Niekrasz</p> <p>Page 20</p> <p>19. Ploughman's Meal just before the dinner bell Session 3. Photo by John Niekrasz</p> <p>Page 21</p> <p>20. Kitchen Staff Oriana Hirsberg labels food before dinner Session 1. Photo by Alden Burke</p> | <p>21. Session 3 kitchen staff pose before the Ploughman's Meal. Photo by John Niekrasz</p> <p>Page 22-23</p> <p>22. Just before the dinner bell Session 2. Photo by Kate Bowen</p> <p>Page 24</p> <p>23. Aidan Frierson hangs a piece of hand made paper from her workshop with the WILD YAMS. Photo by Kate Bowen</p> <p>Page 25</p> <p>24. A group of regional curators from ICI's Mississippi River Basin Initiative gather on the stage for a discussion about rural arts communities during their summer convening. Photo by Kate Bowen</p> <p>25. Artist Imrul Mazid works on a water color screenprint in Thomas Romero's workshop during the GAMA retreat. Photo by Kate Bowen</p> <p>Page 26-27</p> <p>26. Artist Asad Jafri hangs a cyanotype on fabric to dry, created in a workshop by Gurtie Hansell during the GAMA retreat. Photo by Kate Bowen</p> | <p>Page 28</p> <p>27. Exhibition documentation of <i>Fixing the Baroque</i> with Carlos Salazar Lermont. Photo by Levi Shand</p> <p>Page 29</p> <p>28. 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Photo by John Niekrasz</p> <p>Page 50-51</p> <p>44. Residents relax outside the ACRE kitchen before dinner during Session 1. Photo by Alden Burke</p> |
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