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## **Native Arts & Cultures Foundation Announces 2023 *Lift* Program Awardees**

**PORTLAND, Oregon, September 13, 2023** – The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (NACF) is excited to announce the new 2023 ***LIFT – Early Career Support for Native Artists*** program awardees!

Over 63 artist applications were reviewed by a panel of arts professionals and peers with expertise in various artistic disciplines following a national open call for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian artist applicants. Fifteen artists were selected to receive a \$10,000 one-year award designed to support them in furthering their work and to serve as a launching point in their career.

The *LIFT – Early Career Support for Native Artists* program provides early career Native artists with professional development, marketing support, culturally appropriate evaluation, and a \$10,000 award to develop and realize new projects. Support for burgeoning artists is critical in developing fresh voices and envisioning the future of our respective Native practices. In addition, *LIFT* encourages artists to uplift communities, advance positive social change, point courageously toward environmental sustainability, and foster communal meaning-making.

"These artists show courage and commitment to developing innovative artistic practices that strengthen communities and tell powerful stories to create connections, deepen understandings, and counteract historical injustices." – *Laura (Cales) Matalaka (Chickasaw) Associate Director of Programs*

Selected artists for the LIFT 2023 awards are as follows:

### **Film/Video**

- **Alana Tiikpuu** (Nez Perce & Navajo) – **Narrative Film**  
"Goat Song" is a short film about a young Indigenous man who was adopted out of his family as a child and undergoes a spiritual transformation as he searches to reconnect with his community.
- **Alica "Sheyashi" Mteuzi** (Black, Caddo, Cheyenne & Arapaho) – **Narrative Film**  
"BILA" is a sci-fi narrative set 50 years into the future.
- **Angelique Kalani Axelrode** (Kānaka Maoli) – **Performance**  
"Kai Hali'a" is a semi-autobiographical, live cinematic experience that incorporates interactive technology with digital and film footage, direct film animation, embodied movement and choreography, and generative animations spawned by movement.

### **Multi-Disciplinary Arts**

- **Golga Oscar** (Yup'ik Nation - Kasigluk/Tununak) – **Textiles**  
Oscar will create two forms of Yup'ik fancy parkas to share with community members and feature in fashion shows across North America.
- **Nanea Lum** (Native Hawaiian) – **Public Art**  
"Nu'uano Streaming" is a public art project that speaks directly to the issue of water diversion in Hawai'i's post-contact society.
- **Tomantha Sylvester** (Citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians) – **Theater**  
"Kiindaash naa bndamwin webkaamgak - And so began the prophecy" is a site-specific theatre

performance that explores the relationship between traditional Ojibwe cosmology and women from other ancient matriarchal societies.

### **Traditional Arts**

- **Kyle "Hokona" Kootswatewa (Hopi) – Textiles/Weaving**  
Kootswatewa's project will revitalize the ancestral Puebloan technique of yucca cordage weaving.

### **Visual Arts**

- **Ayuthea LaPier (Hanis Coos, Blackfeet, Tlingit [Chookeneidi Clan], Metis) – Mixed Media**  
"Land Back : Fire Back" is a visual storytelling of Pacific Northwest Indigenous fire-practitioners' Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) that will open conversations around the meaning of land rematriation and land defense.
- **Jared Andreas (Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians) – Painting**  
"Illuminated" will consist of twelve large-scale oil portraits of tribal members from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.
- **Kanani Miyamoto (Hawaiian) – Mixed Media**  
"Weaving Angels" will be an immersive installation combining printmaking, woven materials and carved wood blocks that will serve as a symbol of community, cultural survival, and resistance against assimilation.
- **Mikaela Shafer (Hopi, Coyote Clan) – Mixed Media**  
"Down Road 264" is a journey of memories and healing in a matrilineal culture through a collection of mixed media art and poetry.
- **Zoë Urness (Tlingit Alaskan Native) – Photography**  
"The Eternal Village and the Chilkat River" is a photographic exploration that examines the symbiotic relationship the Chilkat Tlingit Village of Klukwan has had with the Chilkat River for thousands of years.

### **Other Disciplines**

- **Agalisiga "chuj" Mackey (Cherokee Nation) – Music/Performance**  
"G.G.R.T O'OTV P (Yuwasv Unatseli)" will be a country-folk album entirely written, sung, and performed in the Cherokee language.
- **Ashley Young (Tlingit) – Music/Composition**  
Young will write, perform, record, release, and promote a 3-6 track EP. Their process of lyric-writing will involve research and collaboration with fellow Tlingit language learners and teachers.
- **Kalikopuanoheaokalani Aiu (Kanak 'Ōiwi & Of many Islands and Seas) – Dance/Choreography**  
A collaborative multimedia performance that will center Native Hawaiian and Filipino Indigenous methodologies and concepts.

NACF is grateful to the Maxwell | Hanrahan Foundation, and The Rasmuson Foundation for their support of the *LIFT - Early Career Support for Native Artists* program.

### **About the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation**

The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation's mission is to advance equity and cultural knowledge, focusing on the power of arts and collaboration to strengthen Native communities and promote positive social change with American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native peoples in the United States. To learn more about the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, visit [www.nativeartsandcultures.org](http://www.nativeartsandcultures.org).

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