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The Confined Arts Awarded Grant to Launch “Claiming the Visual Narrative”

Newark, NJ— The Drug Policy Program of the [Open Society Foundations](#) has awarded The Confined Arts a grant for the [Claiming the Visual Narrative](#) Public Arts Project. The purpose of the grant is to counter the racist narratives of the drug war through artistic collaboration in New Jersey. [The Confined Arts](#), founded by Multimedia Visual Artist Pastor Isaac Scott of Columbia University, uses a unique methodology of strategic arts engagement to change popular perceptions, build relationships, and foster action towards collaborative community-based solutions.

The Claiming the Visual Narrative Public Arts Project is an interdisciplinary community arts methodology [piloted in Newark](#), which uses participatory action research and collaborative strategic arts engagement to change public attitudes about individuals and communities impacted by the war on drugs and the criminal legal system. The primary focus of this project is to use public art, graphic design, and film to inform community-based drug policy solutions in Newark.

The Claiming the Visual Narrative Public Arts Project in Newark will execute its goal of targeting and undoing systemic oppression in popular culture in the form of community misrepresentation by forming a Newark-based grassroots Community Convening Cohort (CCC). The CCC is designed to be made up of different Newark stakeholders with its primary function to conceptualize, fabricate, and work collaboratively to install a community-developed public art and film project which represents the values and experiences of Newark residents.

The grant funding for this project will be awarded through December 31, 2021. By transforming existing narratives around the war on drugs, facilitating public arts & storytelling projects, and providing opportunities for relationship building, the Community Convening Cohort will reimagine the visual identity and representational aesthetics of the Newark community.

The Confined Arts thanks the Open Society Foundations, Yendor Productions, the Center for Justice at Columbia University, and the Center for Institutional and Social Change at Columbia Law School for their support.

On June 7, 2021, The Confined Arts will launch the Open Call for submissions to join the CCC. If you are an organizer, artist, creative thinker, or community member in Newark, and want to share your skills and get involved in the CCC, reach out to Abigail and Arjun at ame2195@barnard.edu and asd2196@columbia.edu and visit www.theconfinedarts.org/newark-public-arts-overview.html to stay updated.