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Disasters & destruction // News

Getty and other arts organisations launch \$12m relief fund for victims of Los Angeles wildfires

The LA Arts Community Fire Relief Fund will provide support to artists and cultural workers affected by the fires

Jori Finkel

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Flames from the Palisades fire threaten the Getty Villa on 7 January
Photo by David Swanson / AFP, via Getty Images

The J. Paul Getty Trust and several cultural partners are launching an emergency fund of \$12m and counting to help artists and cultural workers who have lost their homes, studios or livelihoods to the massive and still-raging Los Angeles wildfires. A substantial but unspecified amount comes from the Getty itself, which ranks as the world's wealthiest arts organisation thanks to its \$9.1bn endowment.

Other donations to the LA Arts Community Fire Relief Fund came from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Ford Foundation and the Mohn Art Collective (on behalf of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art and the Hammer Museum), among other non-profits. The commercial galleries Hauser & Wirth and

Gagosian have also contributed, as did Frieze (which organises a [major art fair in Los Angeles](#) every February), as well as the Qatar Museums and the East West Bank.

“This is not the Getty standing above and saying they are going to do this,” says Jeffrey Deitch, the gallery owner who participated in early conversations about the initiative. “It’s a fusion of artists, gallerists, museums, art patrons, businesses like the East West Bank. This is an example of the community all coming together.”

“Los Angeles is such an incredible community for and of artists and it would be horrible if we lose that and lose them,” says Getty president Katherine Fleming. “We’re aware there is going to be a huge amount of bureaucracy for victims of this fire, so we want this to be as swift and painless as possible.” Applications for grants can be made through the [Center for Cultural Innovation](#) starting 20 January.



Getty Trust president and chief executive Katherine E. Fleming
Photo © Samuel Stuart Hollenshead, courtesy New York University

When Covid-19 swept the US and shut down all cultural institutions in Los Angeles in early March 2020, the Getty was [slower to act](#). That April it announced a \$10m relief recovery fund to support “Los Angeles-based non-profit museums and visual arts organisations”. This time, the funding announcement came only eight days after [the Getty Villa had to deploy its irrigation systems](#) and smoke barriers to help protect the grounds and collection from the fast-encroaching Palisades fire. At present the 23,000-acre fire is still active—and only 19% contained.



Disasters & destruction

How to help artists and art workers devastated by Los Angeles wildfires

Jori Finkel

This sense of urgency and collaboration are both important, says Kathryn Andrews, an artist who just lost her home in the Palisades Fire and helped to co-found the grassroots wildfire-relief fund [Grief and Hope](#) last week “to help artists and art workers here with supplies, medical needs, and short-term as well as long-term housing needs”. While she is not officially involved in the new relief fund, she says her team has been “in regular communication with the larger group discussing how to identify the victims, how to survey their needs and exploring ways that we can collaborate”.

“We’re still maintaining Grief and Hope and that’s going to be ongoing in the coming weeks. We’ve been contacted by many arts organisations nationally that want a place to send funds generated by art auctions and fundraisers,” she says. (Along with a GoFundMe page, the group accepts donations of \$10,000 and up through its fiscal sponsor, the Brick.)

In the meantime, she says Grief and Hope is close to meeting its initial \$500,000 goal and is beginning another round of fundraising “so we can help more folks”.

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