



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2025

MEDIA CONTACT

Maureen Ragalie
Managing Director,
gener8tor Art
(414) 687-4121
maureen@gener8tor.com

Five Milwaukee artists accepted to gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix 2025 Spring Cohort

Artists will receive grants and mentorship

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – Five Milwaukee artists have been selected for the gener8tor x Sherman Phoenix 2025 Spring cohort and will each receive \$10,000 in grant funding and mentorship in the growth of their art practice.

The gener8tor x Sherman Phoenix program is a partnership between [gener8tor](#) and the [Sherman Phoenix](#), with the support of the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Diverse Business Assistance Grant.

The talented recipients of the grant funding are [Caroline Calvano](#), [Billie Carter-Rankin](#), [Zhiwan Cheung](#), [Christian Franczyk](#), and [Brit Kromher](#).

"The creative economy is a powerful force, and we're excited to support creative entrepreneurs and Wisconsin's creative economy, which helps make our great state an amazing place to live, work and visit," said Diana Maas, DOA Assistant Deputy Secretary.

Artist profiles are provided below, along with a [press packet](#) providing details about each of the artists and their work.

The artists chosen for the gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix Spring 2025 cohort underwent a rigorous selection process. They were carefully selected from a pool of 205 applicants based on several criteria, including artistic talent, the compelling nature of their portfolios, their strong

career aspirations, and their potential to benefit from the program significantly. This selection process was overseen by a panel of esteemed arts industry professionals, including Brookes Ebetsch, Executive Director of [Chicago Artists Coalition](#) (Chicago, Ill.); Lakesha Green, Executive Director of The Union for Contemporary Art (Omaha, Neb.); and Devan Patel, Co-owner & Director of [Patel Brown Gallery](#) (Toronto and Montreal, Canada).

The Spring 2025 gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix accelerator will conclude with the cohort members exhibiting their artwork at the [Door County Contemporary Art Fair](#). The Door County Contemporary Art Fair will be held at the Peninsula School of Art in Fish Creek, Wisconsin from June 5 to June 8, 2025. gener8tor will also be hosting a panel discussion, “Sustaining Creativity: Building a Sustainable Creative Economy,” at the art fair on Friday, June 6, at 4 p.m. gener8tor Art alum, Meg Lionel Murphy, will also speak at the art fair on Friday, June 6, at 1 p.m.

The gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix accelerator was founded in 2023 with funding and support from the Wisconsin Department of Administration’s Diverse Business Assistance Grant. In collaboration with the [Sherman Phoenix](#), this initiative provides each artist with a \$10,000 grant and enrolls them in the seven-week gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix accelerator program. This comprehensive program offers tailored mentorship to help artists strengthen the business aspects of their art practice. Throughout the program, artists engage with gener8tor mentors and industry experts, both virtually and in person, from their base at the Sherman Phoenix Marketplace in Milwaukee. The program's primary focus is on supporting creative professionals who have historically faced underfunding, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, women, nonbinary individuals, persons with disabilities, neurodiverse individuals, and veterans.

To date, gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix has served over 450 artists through professional development workshops and webinars, and over 400 Milwaukee-based artists have applied to participate in the seven-week accelerator programs. So far, gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix has worked with 39 artists in the accelerator program, granting them each \$10,000 and providing them with individualized professional development support.

Beyond the 7-week accelerator program, gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix benefits the wider Milwaukee creative community through professional development workshops, one-on-one mentorship opportunities, and a Master Class series exploring the contemporary art market.

Darius Smith, Director of gener8tor Art x Sherman Phoenix, shared his enthusiasm for continuing to work with Milwaukee’s vibrant community of creative professionals.

“Collaborating with these incredibly talented artists is a true privilege,” Smith said. “With the support of gener8tor Art’s professional development programming and grant funding, these creatives are well-positioned to strengthen the business foundations of their artistic careers and strengthen Milwaukee’s art scene.”

This project is supported by the Diverse Business Assistance Grant awarded to the Sherman Phoenix via the Wisconsin Department of Administration and the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Governor Evers' Diverse Business Assistance Program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration using American Rescue Plan Act funds from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

###

About gener8tor

[gener8tor](#) is a global venture firm and accelerator network that supports [startups](#), [workers](#), [employers](#), [artists](#) and [musicians](#) across race, place and gender. gener8tor partners with companies, governments, universities and nonprofits to operate programs and [conferences](#) in more than 41 communities across 22 states and two countries. *Fast Company* named gener8tor one of the Best Workplaces for Innovators in 2021 and 2022. The International Trade Council recognized gener8tor as Global Venture Capital Firm of the Year in 2022.

About gener8tor Art

[gener8tor Art](#) is a 12-week accelerator program for visual artists. gener8tor Art helps artists achieve greater success by providing the support and mentorship needed to maintain a sustainable practice and navigate the industry.

About Sherman Phoenix Foundation

The Sherman Phoenix Foundation is focused on critically needed leadership, training and action by leaders of color on economic equity and empowerment. The Foundation will work to collaborate with leaders working to build inclusive and just economies for communities of color. It will support strategies focused on: Economic equity and empowerment; Entrepreneurship and small business success; Strategic corporate investment and training; and Emotional wellness for leaders of color. Additionally, the nonprofit organization will lead all programming at the Sherman Phoenix that brings cultural and economic vibrancy to the hub, including technical assistance for the 25+ small business tenants, wellness programming, educational offerings and arts and cultural events.