

Shoebox Arts Receives CALI Catalyst Grant for First In-Person Call and Response Project

From digital roots to handmade books, "Call and Response" brings global artists together in a new collaborative journey.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [Shoebox Arts](#) is proud to announce that its internationally recognized program Call and Response has been awarded a \$7,500 CALI Catalyst grant from the [Center for Cultural Innovation](#) (CCI).

This support makes possible the program's most ambitious step yet: its first in-person edition, a four-month collaborative book arts project culminating in a major exhibition at the [Start Up Art Fair in Venice Beach](#), California, February 28 – March 1, 2026.



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This support from CCI affirms that collaborative, artist-centered programming can transform systems, build sustainable networks, and bring underrepresented voices to the forefront.”

Kristine Schomaker

Since its beginning in 2020 by artist, cultural producer, and Shoebox founder Kristine Schomaker, Call and Response has connected more than 500 artists through collaborative art-making over 20 rounds and across six continents. By pairing artists at random and asking them to create work together through a back-and-forth exchange, the project has built unexpected connections and fostered a vibrant creative community across geographic and cultural boundaries. Now, this global digital collaboration is entering the physical realm for the first time.

When the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered galleries and isolated artists worldwide, Schomaker responded by creating Call and Response. Modeled after jazz traditions and the surrealist exquisite corpse, the project removed barriers of fees, applications, and gatekeeping. Anyone willing to create could participate. Through rapid-fire 24–48 hour exchanges, artists collaborated online, responding to one another's work in real time. Over the course of 20+ rounds, participants produced more than a thousand original artworks. The project became a lifeline for many artists—fostering creativity, breaking isolation, and proving that community and

collaboration can thrive without traditional structures.

"From the start, Call and Response has been about connection, community, and creativity" says Schomaker. "This next step into book arts expands on that vision—two artists, one book, endless possibilities."

For this new edition, artists will be randomly paired and challenged to create a collaborative book together. Unlike past iterations focused on individual digital pieces, this project emphasizes true collaboration—where two creative voices blend into something neither could have made alone. The collaborations will unfold over 4 months. Book art can take many forms: altered existing books, handmade volumes, accordion structures, sculptural books, or mixed-media works. Photography, painting, collage, writing, printmaking, and other mediums are all welcome. Resources and examples will be provided for those new to book art.

Artist pairs will decide how to approach their collaboration: some partners will mail a physical book back and forth while others may create pieces individually, photograph them, and combine them at the end. The format, size, and binding style are entirely up to the artists. All collaborative books will be presented in a dedicated exhibition at the 2026 Start Up Art Fair at the Kinney Hotel in Venice Beach, California. The presentation will also include interactive components such as binding demonstrations, artist talks, and opportunities for audiences to engage directly with



Polina Schneider and Kim Reasor, Call and Response



Aishwarya Vedula & Mary Khutsishvili for Call and Response

the collaborative process.

Interested artists can sign up through September 30, 2025 at Shoebox Arts. The project is open to artists of all disciplines, both nationally and internationally. No prior experience with book art is required—just a willingness to collaborate and experiment.

About Kristine Schomaker

Kristine Schomaker is an artist, curator, art historian, and cultural producer based in Los Angeles. As founder of Shoebox Arts and publisher of Art and Cake magazine, she has long been an advocate for emerging and underrepresented artists. With Call and Response, she has continually pushed the boundaries of what artist-led collaboration can look like, creating spaces where creativity flourishes without gatekeeping.

The CALI Catalyst grant recognizes Schomaker's role as a change-maker in the arts, always finding new avenues to connect artists and communities.

About the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI)

The Center for Cultural Innovation supports California artists through programs designed to strengthen their capacity for creative and professional success. Among its opportunities is the Professional Development grant of up to \$600 available to individual artists for training, workshops, and skill development—expanding resources alongside initiatives like the Catalyst program.

About Shoebox Arts

Founded in 2014, Shoebox Arts supports artists through exhibitions, consulting, publications, and collaborative projects. Its mission is to dismantle barriers to visibility and professional growth while fostering a sustainable, inclusive arts ecosystem. With Call and Response, Shoebox Arts has proven that meaningful artistic exchange can thrive across distance and difference. Now, with the support of the CALI Catalyst grant, that spirit of collaboration will find new life in the tangible form of book art.

xxx

Kristine Schomaker

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