Budding Artists

Strategic Plan

2023 -25
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In September 2022, Budding Artists engaged arts and culture consultant Evonne Gallardo to design and guide a planning process that would help inform the focus and work for Budding Artists for the next 2 years. The result of the 3-month process is the following, which includes key narratives, cornerstones and goals identified at the organizational retreat held in October 2022.

The strategic plan includes recommendations that correspond to each goal as well as working documents for future implementation planning work. The aim of Budding Artists’ strategic planning process was to create a set of strategic priorities that would inform a detailed implementation plan and help guide the organization’s focus, activities and investments between 2023-2026.

Organizations use strategic planning to:
1. Provide a structured process to define success
2. Uncover the operational and programmatic steps to get there
3. Align resources to achieve goals within a given time frame

Strategic planning is a framework for organizational work within a given time frame. The following Strategic Plan coheres the story of Budding Artists, examines input from its closest constituents, directions, goals, and recommendations. Budding Artists’ leadership will continue the work to design a completed implementation plan, outlining action, timelines, parties responsible and costs. What is offered here is a summary of key findings including internal and external assessment; context; findings and goals and recommendations.
Strategic Framework

A strategic framework enables an effective and dynamic model to guide Budding Artists’ actions and decisions, rather than a pre-determined series of steps. This framework presents a vision for how to navigate Budding Artists’ internal and external landscape by turning its attention and energy to the areas that ensure the greatest potential, health and sustainability for Budding Artists.

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions refer to the foundational ideas or actions that allow for greater consistency in strategy over time. Strategic Directions lead an organization to the actions outlined through goals, objectives, and related activities. While strategic directions provide the grounding for Budding Artists’ four goals, intersecting priorities/values serve as necessary lenses through which actions can be more effectively identified.
 Strategic Goals and Key Actions

01
GOAL 1: STRUCTURE BUDDING ARTISTS FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

KEY ACTIONS
- Continue the work of establishing Budding Artists as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization
- Formalize Board Roles and Create a Learning Culture
- Value Leadership

02
GOAL 2: GROW VALUE, FINANCES AND RESOURCES

KEY ACTIONS
- Grow Revenue <= 30% Annually through Foundation/Government Grants and Program Services
- Explore subscription-based giving and special events
- Make Our Needs Explicit and Share Leadership and the Load

03
GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN OPERATIONS TO BETTER SERVE AND GROW

KEY ACTIONS
- Strengthen Greater Inclusion and Advanced Timing in Planning, Implementation and Consistency
- Invest in digital experiences to match in-person experiences

04
GOAL 4: SHARE BUDDING ARTISTS' STORY

KEY ACTIONS
- Recruit PR/Marketing Expertise as Part of Board Work
- Clarify Brand Development and Strategy
- Share Our Story and Impact
BUDDING ARTISTS OVERVIEW

Founded in 2018, Budding Artists’ mission serves the Los Angeles County community by providing preschool children with transformative, process-focused art experiences.

Budding Artists nurtures creativity, serving over 10,000 children and adults in the South and Southeast Los Angeles areas. Budding Artists works through a STEAM approach, which adds arts education (liberal arts, fine arts, music, design-thinking, and language arts) in promoting curiosity and creating a pathway to attract more students, specifically underrepresented groups into STEM fields. By participating in Budding Artists’ process-focused art programming, children engage in building critical thinking, problem solving and creativity skills, all of which are needed in our evolving global economy.

As Budding Artists has reached more visibility, the reliance on it as an arts service provider for Pre-K students, parents and the local arts and culture sector has grown within the Southeast Los Angeles area, Inglewood and beyond. In 2022, Budding Artists was awarded CalNonprofit of the Year for AD-63, nominated by California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon.

Our spark and drive is to reimagine and expand arts education in our home, for our neighbors, in our community, and abroad. The support we’ve received from the children we have the pleasure of serving, their parents, and other community members has been tremendous and reaffirms that our work is both necessary and welcome - it is “for us, by us”.

Dakota McMahan-Owens, Founder + Executive Director
Budding Artists
BUDDING ARTISTS OVERVIEW

Current Mission
Budding Artists seeks to stimulate a more inclusive and creative global society by providing transformative process-focused art experiences to pre-kindergarten children in under-resourced communities.

Current Programming
Budding Artists’ programming provides free process-based art experiences to young children ages birth to five to prepare students for successful participation in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programs in preparation for elementary school.

Virtual Workshops
Designed as a virtual inquiry-based studio to support creativity, innovation and social/emotional wellbeing, virtual workshops utilize a variety of art mediums to increase the accessibility of our programs. All virtual workshops include art materials and are taught in both English and Spanish to support our emergent bilingual community.

Artful Parenting Workshop
This free 1.5 hour annual workshop walks parents and guardians through their child’s process-based art experience. Participants will be prepared with tools to continue the learning experience outside of session into their home.

Pop Up Workshops
Uniquely curated one-time process-based art workshops that incorporate music, movement, and technology at various community events. Pop-Up Workshops may also include free art kits for a grab-and-go curated art experience.
BUDDING ARTISTS OVERVIEW

**04**

**MakerSpace**
Launched in the Summer of 2022, the Maker Space is a series of community engagement workshops designed to address the underrepresentation of Black and Latino professionals in STEM careers. The Maker Space exposes non-dominant populations to STEM by using technology and the creative imagination to interact and engage with the world around them.

**05**

**Exploration Program**
This Budding Artists' 6-week visual arts signature program was created as a way to create unique learning experiences for children of color that guide the conversation to promote authentic thinking, inclusivity, creativity, and problem solving which are all necessary, critical life skills needed in the STEAM fields. Our participants will experience the warmth, beauty, and passion of arts education through the following developmental areas: social and emotional, language and literacy development, cognitive and physical development. The program is offered free to the community with instruction in a variety of art mediums. Each session includes a literacy component which connects to the lesson, nonjudgmental critique, and makerspace area for the children to explore after they are done working at the various art stations. The program concludes with a Culminating Public Exhibition.

**06**

**Art Kits Series**
The magic of our Exploration Program is captured in these kits which includes art materials, guidebook, and access to on demand instruction videos in English and Spanish.
Next Chapter Program
Next Chapter provides young children between the ages 0-5 with free new books to encourage creativity while promoting mental, emotional, and psychological development.

Community Engagement Initiatives

Public Arts Initiative
Art can transform the blank walls of clinical environments or public spaces into compassionate care areas filled with imagination, inspiration, and hope. Our Public Arts Initiative focuses on donating artwork created by our young artists to local hospitals and public community spaces.

Annual Culminating Exhibition
The Budding Artists annual culminating exhibition event is designed to highlight artwork produced during our summer exploration program. Launched in 2019, these community events center on the importance of displaying student work as affirming children’s ideas and interests, documenting children’s learning journeys and increases children’s self-esteem, sense of ownership, and belonging. For nearly all of our students, this is their first formal experience exhibiting work. Curated in partnership with Open Walls, these exhibitions have become a staple community event that includes local food vendors, pop-up makerspace, free STEAM books and more, attracting over 150 people in attendance and over 250 unique viewers of the virtual exhibition space every year.
Community Murals

In partnership with Turnaround Arts: CA the Community Arts Project was established in 2021/22 to support local schools to utilize communal campus-based art projects to help students, teachers, and families process emotions, share their voices, and foster long-term community-building and healing.

Community Arts Internships

Our organization partners with The Intern Project to provide South LA high school students with paid summer internships to expose teens of color to careers in community arts, arts and technology, and other STEAM careers through hands on experiences and listening tours with our advisory board members and partners based on students’ areas of interest.
Partners and Funders

- City of Inglewood, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
- City of Lynwood, Department of Parks and Community Services
- City of Maywood
- South Gate Museum and Art Gallery, City of South Gate
- Fulcrum Arts
- The Intern Project
- Girls Build
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn
- California Department of Public Health
- Speaker Anthony Rendon, California’s Sixty Third Assembly District
- Compton Unified School District
- Turnaround Arts: California
- Open Walls
- PepsiCo
- Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

Budget, Capacity and Resources

Budding Artists operates with:

- Annual budget of $72,000
- One Founder + Executive Director
- Nine Board Members
- Two contracted Teaching Artists
- One contracted Educational Administrator
- Two Community Arts Interns
CRITICAL CONTEXT

In any effort, context is critical. An effective strategic plan suits the organization’s current position based on an accurate evaluation of the internal and external factors influencing the operations of the organization. For example:

- Changing demographics and a younger population might define how Budding Artists imagines new futures and relevance.
- Effects of Covid-19 require organizational integration to maximize agility for what will continue to be uncertain conditions for gatherings and in-person experiences.
- Trends in the arts and culture sector inform how Budding Artists sees itself and how it is responding to market predictions and focus.

National and Local Arts and Culture Sectors

Social sectors are currently struggling with risk, and the arts and culture sector fares far worse on average. Working through unprecedented times requires a combination of strategy and planning guided by external and internal forces.

According to SMU-DataArts, modeling an arts and culture field is comprised of the following:

- Artists are the nucleus of our arts and culture ecosystem.
- Arts and cultural organizations operate in a variety of ways including producing, presenting and serving the arts and culture field.
- Community is broad and can include arts and entertainment—festivals, concerts, backyard performances, private dance troupes, volunteers and the public.
- Government support is the public investment and support committed to the arts and culture ecosystem through grants, capital projects, training, support and other resources.
CRITICAL CONTEXT

In March 2021, Americans for the Arts identified critical trends for 2021 and beyond. Across the arts field, most of us would agree that 2020 was a humbling, surprising, traumatic, and frustratingly unpredictable year. While trend forecasting in this moment is a tricky business, understanding what might be coming around the bend is crucial to our success, particularly as we navigate such a volatile time.

- Social justice movements will continue to disrupt the status quo and push new possibilities and policies.
- Reckoning with historic and current racial inequities will continue with a start and stop in maintaining forward momentum and giving into inertia.
- Economy will restart, but the creative economy will need help to keep up the pace.
- Budget ripple effects in local and state governments will make 2023 a risky time for the entire creative sector.
- Plight of independent creative workers will move up the priority list.
- Digital is here to stay. Virtual engagement (at least some of the time) will be, too.
- All aspects of health—from individual to environmental—will take the spotlight.
- “Getting back out there” will start up again but will likely look differently

Los Angeles County

In 2060, the youth population in the U.S. (under 18) will be a majority nonwhite population. Millennials are the largest adult generation in the U.S., but they are starting to share the spotlight with Generation Z who share similar political and social views. L.A. County’s arts and culture ecosystem is vibrant, diverse and complex and home to 228 museums, 279 art galleries, 580 heritage or historical sites, more than 400 music venues, 330 theaters, plus botanical gardens, concert halls, bookstores, art centers, and more. The sector’s creative economy is a significant driver of the region’s economy and contributes more than $200 billion annually and generates 1 out of 5 jobs in the County.
CRITICAL CONTEXT

L.A. County Cultural Policy
In 2021, Supervisors approved a County-wide cultural policy. In 2022 the plan was approved. Art is not a luxury,” said Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. “It is a critical component of a creative and healthy economy and a resilient society. The County’s Cultural Policy mandates that all County departments will strive to provide services, conduct internal operations, allocate resources, establish regulations, and operate facilities in a manner that supports cultural equity and ensures that all individuals and communities can participate fully and equitably in cultural life through the arts. County commissions, agencies and authorities, municipalities, and private sector partners of the County are also encouraged to incorporate the principles of this policy.

South East Los Angeles (SELA)

LA River Upgrade-New Cultural Center
An upcoming Los Angeles River upgrade includes improvements and water management policies implemented through Los Angeles County Public Works Department. An important value undergirding the plan is to address planning and development’s history of discriminatory practices in gateway cities like South Gate, such as redlining which negatively impacted Black, Latino and Asian communities. The 2020 master plan for the Los Angeles River from Chatsworth to Long Beach, also includes the construction of $150-million cultural center for music, dance, painting, culinary arts, ceramics, photography and filmmaking to be located in the City of South Gate.

*Revitalizing the river south of downtown offers our South East communities an opportunity to rebuild our connections, to the river and each other.*
-Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
WHAT WE LEARNED: KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Engagement for Budding Artists’ planning efforts was done to establish internal and external context; assess Budding Artists’ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; hear from partners in the work (parents and community partners) and discover and define key issues that would inform planning.

Interviews
7 one-on-one interviews were conducted with Budding Artists’ team, parents and partners. Questions included:
- Describe Budding Artists
- What Does Budding Arts Provide to Los Angeles' Arts and Culture Sector?
- What values do you associate with Budding Artists?
- What is Budding Artists' Greatest Impact?
- What are Budding Artists' Most Pressing Need(s)?

Exemplary! I wish all our relationships were like ours with Budding Artists. They showed up and they did their work. We are looking to organizations to provide services. Budding Artists has the expertise and access to the community.

Creative, community based, equity-based, youth friendly, open arms.

I am so impressed with Budding Artists’ work ethic. They have a clear vision but still meet us where we’re at. They truly care and have a collaborative spirit.

Thanks to Budding Artists our community has access to art and culture. Workshops for the parents too. Self care is so important for parents. Thank you to this program.

As a parent I feel it gives my child the opportunity to explore the arts. That’s not something I’m familiar with. It allows me as a parent to introduce them to something that shows my boys what is possible. It gives me a sense of satisfaction. For the children, they fell in love with art and are integrating it into their everyday. It’s given my children a real sense of confidence.

It’s been an amazing partnership—by far my favorite community-based organization to work with! Mental health-based, social and emotional skills. Excellent interactions and communication with community and parents. Highly collaborative. Youth activities are amazing.
WHAT WE LEARNED: KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Pressing Needs
- Full time staff
- Increased Funding
- Increased Professional Development
- 501c3 Status
- Incremental Sustainability
- Increased Organization Visibility
- Partnership with Art Materials Store

Performance
Budding Artists’ financial performance is quickly growing. Between 2021 and 2022, its annual budget more than doubled and in 2023, it is expected to double itself once again. This will undoubtedly require increased investment in staff and operations to achieve healthy sustainability.
WHAT WE LEARNED: KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Performance

In 2022, Budding Artists served over 4,575 children and families:

- Provided 700 free Drawing, Watercolor, and Color Theory Art Kits
- Activated two school communities in partnership with Turnaround Arts: California, leading the conceptualization and production of 11 Community Murals in Cudahy and Paramount by 230 pre-K, TK, Kindergartners, and middle school students
- 1 Culminating Exhibition featuring over 100 pieces of artwork with 150 people in attendance
- Provided 850 children with new STEAM Books written and/or highlighting Black, Indigenous, People of Color
- Facilitated 16 COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Art Workshop, serving over 1,600 families
- 10 Pop-up community art workshops serving over 1,000 families
- Facilitated one 4-week Winter Exploration Program & two 8-week Summer Exploration Programs serving a total of 45 children
- Awarded 2022 AD-63 CalNonprofit of the Year by Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
RETREAT OUTCOMES

Board members met for a 1 day, 6 hour retreat on Sunday, October 8th, 2022. The purpose of the retreat was to establish key areas of focus and priorities for Budding Artists over the next 2 years through:
- Assessing external and internal conditions.
- Identifying trends, connections and patterns in the current arts and culture field.
- Identifying a set of values.
- Discussing the work needed towards clarity around Budding Artists’ current vision and mission; and
- Initializing ideation for goal setting.

Current Position
A nonprofit lifecycle shows the various stages of an organization. Based on current organizational performance and intake feedback, Budding Artists falls into a combination of Start Up/Incubation and Adolescent/Growing.

Start Up
- Start Up Characteristics
  - Your organization’s founders are developing the idea, gaining support, and applying for tax-exempt status for your nonprofit.
  - Your organization is run by volunteers and has no paid staff.

Growth
- Growth Characteristics
  - Your nonprofit has launched and is “on the map.” Your programs and funding streams are expanding.
  - Building infrastructure and formalized processes become necessary.
  - You hire your first paid employee(s).
  - “Outsiders” – people who are not your friends or family – join the board.
  - You rent your first office space.
  - You are beginning to implement administrative systems and have a few in place already.
KEY CORNERSTONES: VALUES, MISSION AND IMPACT

Budding Artists’ values, vision and mission are critical to informing the development of effective strategy and outcomes.

Values
An organization’s values serve as the unchanging beliefs that serve as a touchstone during the constantly evolving nature of an organization. Values are less aspirational and more in action as it relates to an organization. These are the principles through which an organization is guided in every aspect of its work, including decision making. Values are not to be taken lightly and must be agreed upon and infused through every person associated with the organization. The following values were identified with Budding Artists throughout the process:

- Accessible
- Accountable
- Anti-Racist
- Caring
- Collaboration
- Community
- Compassion
- Creativity
- Equity
- Exploration
- Family-Oriented
- Grassroots
- High Quality
- Inclusive
- Integrity
- Learning
- Nurturing
- Openness/Honesty/Transparency
- Partnerships
- Service
- Sustainability
- Wellness

Mission
An organization’s mission communicates purpose, groups served, and how it plans to do so. Defines location and what makes it different from others in the same field.

Revised Mission Statement
Budding Artists seeks to stimulate a more inclusive and creative global society by providing transformative, intergenerational and process-focused art experiences for pre-kindergarten children and their families in under-resourced communities.
KEY CORNERSTONES: VALUES, MISSION AND IMPACT

Impact
An organization's impact is the systemic change that is expected to be affected in the long-term and for whom. To make explicit Budding Artists' impact, retreat participants were asked what primary issue Budding Artists was addressing through its work.

Based on conversations and additional intake, the primary issue Budding Artists' is addressing is:

The lack of cultural and educational access and equity for children ages 0-5 in Los Angeles County.

The primary issue Budding Artists is addressing is...

To define Budding Artists' impact, further work must include informing the following logic model:
KEY CORNERSTONES: VALUES, MISSION AND IMPACT

SOAR Analysis
A SOAR is a strategy formulation and planning framework that allows an organization to plan its most preferred future. SOAR takes Appreciative Inquiry and applies it to provide a strategic thinking and conversation process. According to SOAR.com this framework addresses the following evaluation:

Budding Arts’ retreat participants were polled on each of the SOAR areas with the following results:

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<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>ASPIRATIONS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Full Time Staff</td>
<td>Full Time Staff</td>
<td>Leader in Arts Education Spaces in SELA and Beyond</td>
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<td>Fastmoving</td>
<td>City Partnerships</td>
<td>In-School Programming</td>
<td>Present at Conferences</td>
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<td>Agility</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>Endowment</td>
<td>Student Alumni Coming Back as Staff/Volunteers</td>
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<td>Igniting Creativity</td>
<td>Programs in Inglewood</td>
<td>More Monthly Donors</td>
<td>Evaluator</td>
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<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Full Time Operation</td>
<td>Consistent Donors</td>
<td>Program Alumni</td>
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<td>Adaptive</td>
<td>Partnerships with Public Schools</td>
<td>501c3</td>
<td>Program Alumni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection with Community</td>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>More Students and Families</td>
<td>More and Higher Variety of Resources</td>
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<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Diverse</td>
<td>Full-time Staff</td>
<td>Feedback from Parents</td>
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<td>Programming</td>
<td>More Partnerships</td>
<td>More Seats at Decision-Making Tables</td>
<td>Returning Students</td>
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<td>Pre-K Education</td>
<td>More Funding</td>
<td>More Teachers/Program Development</td>
<td>More Data</td>
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<td>Creative Solutions</td>
<td>Expanding Programming</td>
<td>Book Publishing</td>
<td>Students Turning to Teaching Artists</td>
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<td>Resourceful</td>
<td>STEAM</td>
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<td>Includes Families</td>
<td>Increase Contract Services</td>
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<td>Excellent Graphic Design</td>
<td>Year-Round Programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Standards</td>
<td>Connections with Head Start and Other Preschools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td>More Publicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>Increase Professional Development</td>
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<td>Partners</td>
<td>Transportation: Van/Bus</td>
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<td>Confidence Building</td>
<td>Bilingual Offerings</td>
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<td>Collaborative Skills</td>
<td>Increased Exposure/Publicity</td>
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<td>Pop-Up in Community</td>
<td>Cross Disciplinary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Attitude</td>
<td>Teaching Artists</td>
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NEXT STEPS

Below are the general goals that emerged through Budding Artists’ planning process.

01 Structure Budding Artists for Sustainable Growth
   - Continue the work of establishing Budding Artists as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization
   - Grow Budding Artists’ Board of Directors
   - Formalize Board Roles and Create a Learning Culture
   - Secure Financial Assets
   - Value Leadership

02 Grow Budding Artists Value, Finances and Resources
   - Grow Revenue <= 30% Annually through Foundation/Government Grants and Program Services
   - Subscription-Based Giving and Events
   - Make Needs Explicit and Share the Load

03 Strengthen Operations to Better Serve and Grow
   - Greater Inclusion and Advanced Timing in Planning, Implementation and Consistency
   - Invest in enhanced digital experiences to match in-person experiences

04 Share Budding Artists Story
   - Recruit PR/Marketing Expertise as Part of Board Work
   - Clarify Brand and Strategy
   - Share Our Story and Impact
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City of Lynwood Department of Parks and Community Services
Los Angeles Department of Public Health
Office of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Budding Artists Program Parents

We thank you for your continued support in our strategic planning efforts.

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Budding Artists is a fiscally sponsored program of Fulcrum Arts, a registered 501(c)(3) public charity.