

THROUGHLINES 2027

Cincinnati, OH · October 8–10, 2027

Call for Proposals

Deadline: January 15, 2027, 11:59 PM EST

throughlines.art

THROUGHLINES is a socially engaged art convening emerging from the legacies of [Common Field](#), [Open Engagement](#), and [Hand in Glove](#). Planned in conversation with participants and organizers of these past gatherings, Throughlines continues the spirit, energy, and spaces of support the field needs. Amidst a changing institutional, cultural, and political landscape, we ask:

What do socially engaged artists do today?

What do socially engaged artists need today?

Where does socially engaged art go from here?

THROUGHLINES 2027 will take place October 8–10, 2027 at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and a constellation of sites throughout the city. Proposals are reviewed by the Artist Leadership Committee, artists and culture workers named at the end of this call. Every accepted presenter is paid and attends free.

Throughlines is committed to supporting your access needs. If you have questions, need additional support, or require this call in another format, contact Thomas at thomas@wavepoolgallery.org.

Theme: Throughlines

Throughlines is the convening title, the theme, and the program design process.

As a title, it marks continuity. The gatherings that held this field together have closed, and what they carried persists in the work of the people who made them. This convening picks up those lines.

As a theme, it asks what persists. A throughline is whatever runs through a field and carries it forward: concerns, commitments, and methods that recur across generations and outlast projects and institutions.

As a process, it determines how the program is built. The Artist Leadership Committee reads the proposals and identifies the throughlines that run across them; the program takes shape around those. Your proposal should describe what's important to you right now.

Who this call is for

We encourage anyone with a vested interest in art as a way of engaging with society to propose programs: artists, activists, academics, cultural workers and producers, administrators, curators, educators, writers, thinkers, doers, makers of all kinds and ages, located anywhere.

This is a field gathering for socially engaged art, and we use this term as a starting point. Your ideas define its meaning. We welcome hybrid work that resists categorization, that is done collaboratively across disciplines, geographies, institutions, communities, and cultures, taking the form of participatory projects, creative gathering formats, activist and civic work, pedagogy and research, performance and ritual, ecological practice, or any other. You do not need a title, degree, or vocabulary to belong here.

Why now

Art that acts in the world, within and alongside its communities, is needed. The people who make it, in turn, need a place to convene, to be cared for, and to imagine what comes next. But the infrastructure that once held this field together is disappearing. Common Field, Open Engagement, and Hand in Glove, the gatherings where socially engaged artists found one another and shared resources, have all closed. The institutions and funding that social practices rely on are under strain, and the artists doing this work are increasingly isolated. Throughlines aims to gather the field back together and rebuild its frayed networks of support, so that the histories, relationships, and knowledge it holds are carried forward.

Form Follows Values

Throughlines is shaped by the people in the room. We care about relationships: that the gathering feels peer-to-peer, that there is unstructured time to meet one another, and that together we build a lasting network of support and a deeper understanding of our field.

We favor dialogue, participation, and open forms of gathering: sessions where people work and think together, and things that could only happen in this city with these people.

What you can propose

Past gatherings in this lineage have included story circles, know-your-rights training, foraging walks, bus tours, pop-up restaurants, dance parties, treasure hunts, puppet shows, quilting bees, healing clinics, temporary radio stations, and one-on-one consultations. We invite you to expand this list.

Proposals fall into the following categories. Each carries a fee, paid to every accepted presenter:

- Special projects: multi-day projects, interventions, performances, and participatory or social works. Fee: \$1,000.
- Events: projects and gatherings of up to one day. Fee: \$500.
- Conversations: dialogue circles, panels, workshops, and short performances of up to four hours. Fee: \$250.
- Short engagements: presentations of less than 15 minutes. Fee: \$50.
- Local programming: studio or organization open houses, tours, walks, and place-based, community-hosted sessions in and around Cincinnati. These can be submitted in the Special projects, Events, or Conversations category, matched to the scale of the engagement, and are compensated at that category's fee.

If your idea does not fit neatly into these categories, propose it anyway and tell us what it needs.

Solidarity and travel support

A limited number of travel stipends will be available by need. Travel stipends are arranged after acceptance and are separate from the application; they do not affect selection.

If your salary or existing funding covers your project or your travel, or if you can otherwise afford the costs, we encourage you to waive or reduce your fee. All waived funds go toward travel support for presenters.

Featured artists

LIST TBD. CONFIRMED: Tania Bruguera. Tentative: Caroline Woolard, Mel Chin.

What the application asks

All narrative prompts are limited to 100 words.

Reviewers come from a wide variety of professional and organizing backgrounds. Do not assume knowledge of professional lingo; please explain your intentions in as plain a language as possible.

- Contact details: name(s), pronouns, email, phone, address.
- The closest category for your proposal, or “other” with a short description of your own.
- Are you located in Cincinnati, and do you want to host a local event?
- What do you want to do? Be as specific, technical, and detailed as needed for us to understand what will happen.
- Why do you want to do this? Explain your motivations and what you hope to do or achieve, in as specific terms as possible.
- Where do you want to do this? Describe your ideal environment: class, street, gallery, river bank, coffee shop, etc.
- Do you need help doing this: volunteers, access workers, equipment, facilities, etc.?
- If you are proposing a local off-site event in Cincinnati: your location.

All applicants will be notified by April 1, 2027.

If you have questions about the application, contact Thomas at thomas@wavepoolgallery.org.

Who is behind Throughlines

Throughlines is co-organized by the Art Academy of Cincinnati and Wave Pool, with advisory support from Jen de los Reyes and funding from Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation.

Proposals are juried by the Artist Leadership Committee: Mrin Aggarwal, Eliza Gregory, Jeni Jenkins, Pam Kravetz, Shanai Matteson, MC Rietz, Emily Sara, Jonathan Sears, Caroline Sindors, and Jae Washington.

The Institutional Advisory Committee provides organizational and funding oversight: Ricardo Beaird (Springboard for the Arts), Tania Bruguera (Harvard University), Calcagno Cullen (Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation), Tess Haratonik (United States Artists), Boris Oicherman (Wave Pool), Abigail Satinsky (Wagner Foundation), Sarah Stolar



Community
Driven
Artist Led

wavepoolgallery.org

(Art Academy of Cincinnati), Sarah Williams (Kenneth Rainin Foundation), Caroline Woolard (Pollinator), Nick Wylie (Public Media Institute), and Lu Zhang (A Blade of Grass).

Key dates

Milestone	Date
Call opens	Late September 2026
Proposals due	January 15, 2027, 11:59 PM EST
Applicants notified	April 1, 2027
Accepted presenters confirm participation by	May 1, 2027
THROUGHLINES 2027	October 8–10, 2027