

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Pirkle Jones Fund of MCF Announces Four \$100,000 Grant Opportunities for Marin Artists

Novato (March 10, 2025): For the past twenty years, the legacy of California photographer, [Pirkle Jones](#), has been honored via an annual \$25,000 grant awarded to an emerging or mid-career artist in Marin county, via the Pirkle Jones Fund of Marin Community Foundation (PJF). It has been very successful in identifying local talent and providing them with critical funding to enable them to further their craft.

However, 2025 will usher in a new era for PJF with the establishment of an annual series of grants aimed at building community spirit through the arts.

The new program will center on four communities within Marin County: Marin City, the Canal district of San Rafael, Novato and West Marin. The question it poses is: “**how would you use the arts to build, inspire, excite or unite community in one of these distinct areas?**”

Four awards will be made on an annual basis – one per community – each in the amount of \$100,000.

“Pirkle loved many things, but two in particular: creativity and community,” said Jennifer McFarland, Pirkle’s longtime assistant and director of the Pirkle Jones Fund. “Now more than ever we could use some hope in the world, and using art to bring community together is the perfect way to do so. He would be thrilled that his estate is supporting this.”

Pirkle Jones isn’t a household name, but his work marked an important time in the evolution of America. Pirkle was a California photographer admired for his stirring images of migrant workers, endangered landscapes, and social movements.



In the 1950's at San Francisco's California School of Fine Art (later, the SF Art Institute), he was immersed in a creative community that included Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange. In fact, he attended the first class taught by Adams, ended up becoming his assistant, and then a teacher in his own right. He taught at the school for 28 years.

His work over the next seven decades blended the two strands of what California photography at a certain time was – the technical mastery and visual crispness typified by Ansel Adams and the strong sense of social purpose reminiscent of Dorothea Lange. But his work was more overtly political, as evidenced by the four months he spent in 1968 photographing the Black Panthers.

He passed away in 2009 at the age of 95, but his legacy lives on through The Pirkle Jones Fund of MCF.

“MCF's strategic plan asks that we direct our energy towards four communities that have traditionally been most underserved and most separated,” said Julie Nakao, MCF philanthropic advisor for the Pirkle Jones Fund. “We are deeply committed to mobilizing the power in each, so to be able to provide support through such a meaningful artistic grant is incredibly generous. We can't wait to see the ideas that this generates!”

Submissions will be judged with an eye to originality, creativity, and potential for community impact. Exhibiting a keen knowledge of the specific community and its residents will be considered a key element of the submission.

Eligibility Requirements

Applications can be lodged by a single artist or a collective.

Applications are open to professional artists, emerging artists or aspiring artists. There is no requirement with regard to arts education, existing portfolio, background/credentials or any other formal training.

Applicants must be 18 years of age or older (by the time the award is granted in July)

While entrants do not have to reside in any of the four communities, they must articulate a meaningful connection or commitment, through family, work, education, sport, culture, volunteering or similar pursuit.

There is no restriction around the type of art that can be submitted: for example, paintings/murals, music, sculpture/installations, digital, video, theatre, photography and more are accepted.



The submission can be designed to be permanent or time-specific.

The winning submissions will have 7 months to complete a year to complete their concepts (July, 2025 - January 31, 2026). Funds may be used for supplies, performance costs, fees, and stipends to individual artist(s).

Applications will need to ensure that any logistical aspects of the proposal - permitting, council approvals, etc. - are planned and included in the submission. The application process will be 10 weeks in length to allow for this planning to occur. As an example, a submission should not simply propose a series of summertime outdoor street concerts with food and drink vendors, but should have already obtained verbal commitments from the desired musicians, identified the concession vendors, and have approached the local council to ascertain viability of the idea.

Selection Process

Applications must be received by email on or before 5:00p.m. PDT Friday, **May 30, 2025**.

Applications will be reviewed and artist selected by the Pirkle Jones VASP Selection Committee, which will base its assessment on originality, creativity and potential for community impact.

Award recipients will be contacted in mid-June. Grant funding will be made on or before **July 2, 2025**. Highlighting the final art project via photographs, recording/video is highly encouraged.

All other applicants will be notified of the funding decision via email.

Grant Terms

Funds may be used for supplies, performance costs, fees, and stipends to individual artist(s).

If after consulting the eligibility requirements you are qualified to lodge an application, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PirkleAward> to access the form.

Questions may be directed to Julie Nakao at jnakao@marincf.org.

