

# Arts + Social Impact Explorer Fact Sheet

## ARTS + IMMIGRATION

### IMPACT POINTS

#### 85% STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY TIES

More than 8 out of 10 participatory arts activities strengthen community ties, including across cultural experiences and viewpoints.<sup>1</sup>

#### IMMIGRANTS' GRANDCHILDREN 2X AS LIKELY TO ATTEND CULTURAL EVENTS

Compared to first-generation immigrants, U.S. residents in the country for three generations or more participate in live theater at more than double the rate. In general, cultural participation rates rise the more time has passed since immigrating, reaching levels comparable to the U.S.-born population after 15 years of residency.<sup>4</sup>

#### IMMIGRANTS 19% MORE LIKELY TO TAKE PART IN TECH-BASED ART

Immigrants are up to 19 percent more likely to take part in a variety of cultural activities that incorporate technology—particularly the use of television, mobile devices, or the internet to view artforms like classical music, salsa, ballet, contemporary dance, and theater.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1 IN 4 U.S. NOBEL LAUREATES IN LITERATURE ARE IMMIGRANTS

The number is even higher overall for Nobel Laureates. Thirty-nine percent of the U.S. science Laureates are immigrants—and many of them thank creative enterprises for their scientific success.<sup>5</sup>

#### 57% BELIEVE AMERICAN CULTURE IMPROVED BY IMMIGRANT CULTURES

Fifty-seven percent of Americans believe that immigrants improve the quality of the food, music, and arts in the United States—a number that has increased by 17 percent in the last 10 years.<sup>3</sup>

#### CULTURE IMPROVES IMMIGRANTS' WELL-BEING

Immigrants who participate in culturally meaningful activities, including their indigenous arts, show improved psychological well-being, enhanced positive emotions and feelings, and deeper social connections with others.<sup>6</sup>

### OVERVIEW

Each new wave of immigrants to the United States brings new perspectives, traditions, and art, which add to the evolving cultural tapestry of America. The unique, complex amount of immigration and integration that American communities constantly go through can place cultures in conflict—but arts and culture is also one of the best ways to create a new harmony.

Immigrants contribute greatly to the artistic and creative experiences that benefits all Americans from all backgrounds. However, immigrants—particularly first-generation immigrants—often choose not to participate in formal mainstream arts and culture activities, favoring participatory arts activities (e.g., amateur choruses, poetry writing circles, hip hop groups, etc.) that tend to be more informal and often connected to their cultural heritage. Immigrants, and particularly their children, tend to adopt the cultural behaviors of their U.S.-born neighbors over time.

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# EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

## “Until We Are All Free” Art Kit from CultureStrike, Oakland, CA



In collaboration with Mobilize the Immigrant Vote (MIV), CultureStrike has created an easy guide to help you with making stencils, banners, and other art projects to fuel events, marches, and actions specifically related to immigration.

<http://www.culturestrike.org/project/%E2%80%9Cuntil-we-are-all-free%E2%80%9D-art-kit>  
[sonia@culturestrike.org](mailto:sonia@culturestrike.org)

**image:** Artwork include in CultureStrike’s guides available for download on their website.

## Revolutionizing Asian American Immigrant Stories on the East Coast (RAISE), New York, NY



RAISE, a project of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, is led by a group of undocumented youth. It uses literary zines, theater, and film to amplify their voices.

[aaldef.org/raise.html](http://aaldef.org/raise.html)  
[info@aaldef.org](mailto:info@aaldef.org)

**image:** AALDEF protests and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans.

## The Immigrant Artist Mentoring Program



The Immigrant Artist Mentoring Program, from the New York Foundation for the Arts, pairs immigrant artists from all disciplines with artist mentors who provide mentees with one-on-one support.

[nyfa.org/Content/Show/Mentorship](http://nyfa.org/Content/Show/Mentorship)

**image:** NYFA’s Immigrant Artist Mentoring Program

## Gulf Labor Artist Coalition, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



Gulf Labor Artist Coalition is a coalition of international artists working to ensure that migrant worker rights are protected during the construction of museums on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi.

<http://www.gulflabor.org>  
[contact@gulflabor.org](mailto:contact@gulflabor.org)

**image:** Occupation of Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice by the Gulf Labor Artist Coalition

## Judson Memorial Church, New York, NY



Judson Memorial Church is both a place of worship and an arts presenter. It leads the NYC chapter of the New Sanctuary Coalition, a coalition of faith communities committed to active non-violent resistance to the deportation system.

<http://www.judson.org>  
[info@judson.org](mailto:info@judson.org)

**image:** Judson is host to many cultural events and has a rich history of providing inclusive uncensored space to the community.

## Once Upon a Place, New York, NY



Once Upon a Place is a multimedia art installation in which participants are invited to step inside repurposed New York City phone booths and listen to oral histories of immigration to the United States.

[timessquarenyc.org/times-square-arts/projects/at-the-crossroads/once-upon-a-place/index.aspx](http://timessquarenyc.org/times-square-arts/projects/at-the-crossroads/once-upon-a-place/index.aspx)  
[arts@timessquarenyc.org](mailto:arts@timessquarenyc.org)

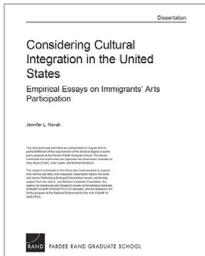
**image:** Photo by Brian William Waddell. Courtesy of Times Square Arts.

**top image:** Judson is host to many cultural events and has a rich history of providing inclusive uncensored space to the community.



# READING LIST

## Considering Cultural Integration in the United States



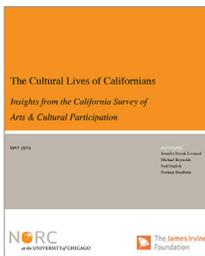
The study investigates the arts and cultural behavior of first and second-generation immigrants to the United States and compares them to third+ generation citizens. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/101041>

## Migrants, Communities, and Culture



Migrants, Communities, and Culture examines migrant communities in Philadelphia and the impacts they have made on the arts and culture sector in the city. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/101092>

## The Cultural Lives of Californians



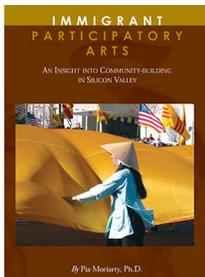
The report on the California Survey of Arts and Cultural Participation does a deep dive in the arts and cultural behavior of the state. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/101042>

## Arts, Political Activation, & Immigration



This essay from the book *Arts & America: Arts, Culture, and the Future of American Communities*, looks at changes in the meaning of citizenship and political activation of individuals, particularly through the lens of immigration issues, and the role that the arts may play in positively impacting those changes over the next 10–15 years. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/90687>

## Immigrant Participatory Arts



Immigrant Participatory Arts examines immigrant communities in Silicon Valley and outlines how they make use of participatory arts as a tool of community cohesion and societal bridging. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/101090>

top image: Occupation of Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice by the Gulf Labor Artist Coalition.

### REFERENCES

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# ORGANIZATIONS

## CultureStrike

CultureStrike empowers artists to dream big, disrupt the status quo, and envision a truly just world rooted in shared humanity. It operates through a migrant lens across various issues to create work that highlights the complexity, nuance, and beauty of communities that are often rendered invisible.

<http://www.culturestrike.org/about>

## Artists from Abroad

Artists from Abroad is an online resource for foreign guest artists and performing arts organization. It also provides information on immigration and tax law for immigrant artists.

[artistsfromabroad.org](http://artistsfromabroad.org)

## Asian American Artists Foundation (A3)

The A3 Foundation invests in and fosters Asian American artists in media.

[a3-foundation.org](http://a3-foundation.org)

top image: AALDEF protests and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



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**LEARN MORE**  
[AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/SOCIALIMPACT](http://AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/SOCIALIMPACT)

Americans for the Arts developed this Fact Sheet as part of the Arts + Social Impact Explorer.

