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MISSION

The Steel Yard’s historic campus is a platform for professional artists, makers and the community to practice and learn the industrial arts. The organization fosters creative and economic opportunities, by providing workspace, tools, training, and education while forging lasting links to a local tradition of craftsmanship.
The Steel Yard is a non-profit industrial arts organization in Providence, RI. Our professional workspace enables community access to welding, blacksmithing, jewelry, ceramics and the foundry arts. We believe in a world made by hand, where individuals, neighbors, businesses, institutions, municipalities and communities come together to enrich our private lives and public spaces through creative work.
Wow, 2021 was unbelievable. We couldn’t be more grateful to each and every one of YOU for supporting our critical work.

The pandemic has taken a dramatic toll on artists, makers and cultural workers. These are the people that we depend on to preserve traditions and help us interpret and understand the world. We have experienced these hardships ourselves and heard devastating stories about lost work, canceled shows, increasing costs and missed opportunities. Their plight is familiar and has been our inspiration to dig deep.

Last year we worked to align contributions to critical needs, eliminating all artist residency fees and expanding scholarships for QT-BIPOC students to make the industrial arts more attractive and affordable. We strengthened our apprenticeship program and we worked to move towards more justice in leadership, with the support of experienced training in Cultural Cohesion and Deescalation.

Your participation and investment has brought us to this place. A place where we can focus our work on the future of equity in the Industrial Arts, and create more access to our studio, to mentorship, scholarships, audiences, income, partnerships and opportunity.

Continue reading to see how each program spent the year searching for new ways forward.

Join us in keeping the Industrial Arts accessible by sharing our stories and promoting our scholarships and programs.

Make a contribution today or volunteer, and help us inspire the community!

Thank you, on behalf of the entire Steel Yard staff and Board,

Howie Sneider, Executive Director
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, ACCESS & ANTI-RACISM

The Steel Yard engages in continual learning and action to make our campus and programs safe, inclusive, accessible, equitable, and just. We are committed to equity and justice over equality, and to taking proactive steps within our programs to undo and counteract the effects of systemic oppression. We invite feedback and participation, and strive to cultivate an environment where everyone can create.

It is our belief that everyone deserves access to the education, skills, and equipment needed to directly improve their conditions and community, and it is our responsibility to explore and address barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating with our organization. We will continue to reimagine, rebuild, and develop programs and systems to counteract the harm caused by systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism, classism, xenophobia, religious prejudice, and other forms of oppression.

Improvements to our historic industrial arts studio are ongoing to ensure disability access to each program and department. We have partnered with Arts Equity and R.A.M.P. (Real Access Motivates Progress) in this process, providing expert guidance about our studio structure and the development of our Accessibility Guide and Disabilities Welcome Guide. Our studio hosts fully accessible bathrooms, along with accessible tools and equipment in our welding shop, jewelry shop, and ceramics studio, with additional equipment for the hearing impaired. We post and publish information in multiple languages.

We have a standing committee of Board and Staff members to pursue opportunities for justice and accessibility in all of our programs and promote equitable practices and learning across the organization.
The Steel Yard acknowledges that it resides on the occupied traditional homelands of the Narragansett Nation, including the Mashapaug, Nahagansett, and Wampanoag peoples. We celebrate the past and future contributions, and stewardship, of the Indigenous peoples of the Woonasquatucket Valley and surrounding lands; we acknowledge the oppression and genocide enacted by colonizers to forcibly remove Indigenous peoples from this territory.

Working with the Providence Cultural Equity Initiative, we are connecting with Indigenous leaders to intentionally work on genuine recognition of Indigenous Nations and reconciliation.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & JUSTICE**

“We are aware of the environmental cost of self-expression and the creation of culture. We use electricity, we burn fossil fuels, and we have to pay the price. The future of the industrial arts is more sustainable today and we are proud to be a part of that change.”

- Howie Sneider, Executive Director

The Steel Yard is committed to a healthy and sustainable environment. We inhabit a facility that has continually operated as a metals fabrication shop for over 100 years. During our 20 years of stewardship, we’ve cleaned up that century of contamination and renovated our shop to be more sustainable. We know that it is our responsibility to understand the environmental impacts of our work and to make enduring changes for the good of our local and global communities.

We get all of our electricity from renewable sources. Today, a 51 kilowatt solar array that sits atop our industrial arts facility generates approximately 60,000 kilowatt hours of electricity on an annual basis.

In addition, we are one of seven partners in a historic 20-year hydroelectric renewable energy project wherein an average of 5,500,000 kWh of renewable energy will be generated annually. Through our partnership with Re-Power PVD we have committed to a 20% reduction in energy consumption by 2025.
With a 100+ year-old studio to keep up and running, we are perpetually looking at how to improve safety, functionality and accessibility.

We extolled the skills of our own staff and craftspeople by building a third coal forge in the blacksmithing department and installing a new blast-up vent fan for the chimney. We also painted new pathways throughout the studios to make movement safer and more accessible for all.

Meanwhile, our campus seemed to expand as we began using the newly powered containers in the ‘Back 40’. We continued our partnership with RI School of Design Ceramics to rebuild the atmospheric kilns and to top it all off - we got a new forklift to replace our aging (and failing) one.

And while we couldn’t host a full Iron Pour with the pandemic still lurking, we tried something new. A dedicated team of volunteers built massive cryptid sculptures from scrap iron and hosted an ‘Iron Burn’ for a limited audience of volunteers, friends and family.

“...The Steel Yard to me has been a great example of how we can build each other up and learn regardless of skill level. Working with a team on constructing a large sculpture has been so much fun and I’ve learned a lot.”

- Scott Sorensen, Iron Pour fabrication volunteer

Supporters MAKE-THE-DIFFERENCE

Generous in-kind support tooled-up our jewelry studio and provided raw materials for our foundry and Iron Burn.
ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

“My residency was one of tremendous growth. With the skills I’ve learned here, I now have a very clear image of what I’ll make, launch and sell for the next year... it wouldn’t have been possible without everything that The Yard offered me - a shared studio space, a community cohort, a generous and peaceful site where I felt like I belonged. I feel strengthened and energized to keep going.”

- Joss Liao, Resident Alumni

The Steel Yard’s Residency Program is designed to assist emerging to mid-level artists in growing and strengthening their art practice in a supportive, cooperative environment through access to The Steel Yard’s studios and facilities.

Participating artists have the opportunity to work together, to take part in community events and sales and to be creative leaders in a vibrant community shop. Most of all, residents get an all access pass to our studios in pursuit of their own work.

In 2021, seventeen artist residents worked safely in our 12,000 square foot industrial arts studio. They poured iron, fired atmospheric kilns, exhibited their artwork, taught classes and were a vibrant presence in the shop. We helped nurture their creative and economic well-being by hosting free virtual Artist Advancement Workshops, critiques with guest artists, and monthly outdoor Art Markets.

2021 RESIDENTS IN METALS, CERAMICS AND JEWELRY

Elsa Hoffman (fellow)
Rena Rong
Ellen Rogers (fellow)
Justin Dillenback (fellow)
Henry Robinson
Maxime Lefebvre
Tom Hubbard
Kimberly Dalton
Steven Kaplan-Pistiner (fellow)
Jarret Key (fellow)
Ali Vaughan
Emily Rye
David Karoff
Rebecca Ho
Joss Liao
Vicky Milne
Michelle Peterson

Supporters MAKE-THE-DIFFERENCE

Seven industry professionals provided their time and talent to teach free Artist Advancement Workshops to upwards of 250 artists from throughout the United States.

THE STEEL YARD 2021
TEACHING AND LEARNING THE INDUSTRIAL ARTS

“This weekend’s class was so awesome! It really truly exceeded expectations and it was really exciting to learn some new skills, I can’t believe I’ve never taken a class before.”

- Hannah Abelow, 2021 Student

The Steel Yard offers unique courses in the industrial arts for learners of all skill levels. Students receive hands-on experience working with the tools of the trade in a safe and creative environment, and walk away with something they made by hand.

Regardless of past experience - there is something for everyone. Every course is instructed by working artists and tradespeople who are deeply invested in their craft. Courses are small with an average of five to eight students per course.

We perpetually strive to expand our student base with a focus on equity. In 2021 we implemented new justice initiatives including sliding scale tuition classes that resulted in a 300% increase in scholarship applications and awards. Sixty seven people applied for and received scholarships. Of those awarded, 90% of recipients self-identified as QTBIPOC, with about half of recipients self-identifying as BIPOC.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Race/Ethnicity

- White: 79.9%
- Asian: 7.4%
- Black: 3.4%
- Native American: 1%
- Other: 8.3%
- Hispanic/Latinx: 9%

Gender identity

- 45.1% Female
- 46.9% Male
- 8% Non-binary/Genderqueer
- Average Age: 34 Years Old
- 18.6% Adolescents

Supporters MAKE-THE-DIFFERENCE

Because of individual and Foundation support we granted three times more scholarship money in 2021!
In 2021, we were able to continue our expanded programming, making Camp Mudhead (Ceramics Camp) and Camp Sparkle (LGBTQIA+ Metals Camp) annual summer offerings.

Camp Sparkle fosters free expression of gender and sexuality in an environment of self-discovery and creativity. The camp provides a welcoming, safe environment where young artists can explore and express their identities within the space of making, and has quickly become a Steel Yard tradition.

Youth Summer Camps at The Steel Yard are 2 week-long day programs instructed by professional artists who work in the field! Each camp offers educational workshops and studio time in a real working industrial shop for young people ages 14 – 18.

We maintain a safe and respectful environment to explore creative industrial arts. We're here to encourage creativity as well as offer an unforgettable summer experience for every participant.

Supporters MAKE-THE-DIFFERENCE

When we came up short on 2021 summer camp scholarship funds, individual donors and a corporate partner were quick to respond to our fundraising campaign, bringing in almost $10,000 in just a few short weeks!
“The Steel Yard has been an incredible community to become a part of! When I took the apprenticeship with public projects I had no idea how much access to creative and personal growth I would have. I feel very fortunate to have been offered so many different opportunities at the Yard. Not only the support to further my skills in metal fabrication but also to teach and design.”

- Kendra Plumley, 2021 Apprentice

The Steel Yard is dedicated to providing Rhode Islanders who have experienced barriers to financial stability with access to education, training and facilities to learn and practice the industrial arts. We offer paid job-readiness programs that provide the technical skills necessary to make participants more employable in livable-wage jobs.

Our apprenticeship is built around the fabrication of community-based public-art, while borrowing from the traditions of guild learning and on-the-job training. All participants are paid to participate while gaining basic metalworking skills and fabricating public projects for local installation. Up to 3 graduates of each introductory program are hired as apprentices to be Public Projects team members for a minimum of three months.

In 2021, we created the first apprenticeship position for our studio. Studio Apprentices support tool and facility maintenance, while learning what it takes to keep a much loved historic studio up and running. Overall we trained seventeen people in our week-long intensive Welding Training, and hired five of them back as apprentices.

Supporters MAKE-THE-DIFFERENCE

With support from the Central Providence Health Equity Zone and private Foundation funding, we provided livable, part-time payroll wages for Apprentices in 2021.
“From concept to fabrication, the artisans from The Steel Yard brought amazing ideas, diverse perspectives and unparalleled craftsmanship to the creation of our Coastal Resources Management Corporation Public Education Trailer. The incredible diversity of the artists added a richness to our project which can be seen in the finished work. ”

- Dan Goulet, Coastal Resources Management Council

Public Projects designs, fabricates and installs custom artwork for the public realm. We specialize in making functional and artistic street amenities (trashcans, bike racks, benches, fences, etc.). We also create and manage fine art installations.

What a busy year 2021 turned out to be! We completed twenty-one projects that employed twenty-two independent artists and twelve workforce job training program graduates. Especially popular in our shop were mobile stages and educational trailers. We worked with Spectrum Theatre Ensemble and Wilbury Theatre for the mobile stages, and Coastal Resources Management Council & The Nature Conservancy for their educational trailer. All three of these projects will allow our partners to take their theater productions and educational messages on the road throughout Rhode Island.

We also continued to create artistic amenity projects for our partners throughout the State and designed, built and installed a line of ADA accessible furnishings for our own shop and campus.

Supporters MAKE-THE-DIFFERENCE

With the support of our Public Projects partners and clients 90% of project funding was spent locally.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

“The Steel Yard Team have gone above and beyond to make sure we felt like nothing could get in the way of our dream to create a QTBIPOC night of joy. With their priority of creating access and inclusion, they didn’t let our small budget interfere with us securing the space and the necessary equipment. The Steel Yard has shown us they know what community resource sharing is all about and we couldn’t be more honored to have partnered up with such dope people.”

- Atlas Alvarado Estrada, Que Dulce

Events at The Steel Yard are intentional about community building, providing opportunities to gather, curate experiences and create collective memories in an accessible, but rare, urban green space.

With the pandemic continuing to limit many community partners from hosting their own live cultural events, we opened our campus to them for free. We provided staff support, and amenities; keeping our site activated and the community engaged from May through December!

Among these partners was Real Access Motivates Progress who launched their inaugural Accessibility is Beautiful event that highlights disability access solutions for business. We also hosted Wilbury Theatre’s Fringe Fest, Outside with Public, Que Dulce, Luv U Better trade pop-up, Providence Pechakucha, Gallery Night tours and six Art Markets.

Supporters MAKE-THE-DIFFERENCE

Thanks to private, City and State level supporters we were able to welcome 3,800 community members to attend events and gatherings hosted by 15 community partners.
West Side Sewing Studio - For 10 years West Side Sewing has operated a fully outfitted space devoted to learning the craft of sewing! All classes are individualized instruction; each person works at their own level and speed, making whatever they choose. Classes, which run year-round, are kept very small (2-5 people) so each person gets the attention and assistance they need.
www.westsidesewingstudio.com  Tenant since 2012

TRY CAPS (4H Creative Art and Problem Solving Program) - Youth ages 10 and older buddy-up with volunteers, parents, and mentors to show their leadership skills in action as they explore the great opportunities at TRY CAPS Creative Art and Problem Solving Program.
www.trycaps.com  Tenant since 2015

Public LLC - Founded by lifelong Providence residents Cassandra and Spocka, Public LLC is a creative hub for art and music and also a place to host events, meetings, workshops, and classes. It’s a space that welcomes all members of the community to experience and interact with various forms of art.
www.publicshopandgallery.com  Tenant since 2020

*In support of a creative neighbor, The Steel Yard is proud to act as fiscal agent for Counterform, a 501(c)3 non-profit founded in 2020. Counterform is a BiPoC, multilingual, and multi-disciplinary team of graphic designers, printmakers, and community advocates.
www.counterform.org

The Steel Yard rents space in our Community Art Building at 27 Sims Ave, to small creative businesses, supporting their growth, networks and opportunities. They pay below-market rate rents for the neighborhood and give back heartily to the cultural vitality of our community. In 2021 we shared hallways and stories and dreams of future creative projects together.
BUDGET REPORT

"The Steel Yard has been very responsible with our funds, making sure we are focused on our work and mission specific. Last year we were intentional about investing in people and we believe that our balanced 2021 budget is a sign of good decision making during the global pandemic."

-Rupa Datta, Board Finance Committee Member

STAFF & BOARD DEMOGRAPHICS

Race/Ethnicity

- 63% White
- 12.5% Black/African American
- 12.5% Other/multi-racial
- 6% White/Other multi-racial
- 6% Asian
- 18% Hispanic

Gender identity

- 48% Female
- 38% Male
- 9% Non-binary/Third Gender
- 5% Female/Non-Binary
SUPPORTER RECOGNITION

“I think it’s time for more subversive acts like asking cage-rattling questions. Confronting complicity and challenging privilege and power. Exploring morality and speaking out. Increasing philanthropy for social change.”

- Simone P. Joyaux (1948 - 2021) Rest in Power

To all you Yardies who kept us going with your gifts of time, talent and money and the Foundations who generously support our programs, you sustained us and broke down barriers to access for everyone in our community.

The following represents ALL of you who supported us in 2021. Some of you are new - and some have been with us since the start. We’ve curated this list by the length of our relationship. Thanks to all of you for your enduring love of the industrial arts.

*Please contact Sally Turner, sally@thesteelyard.org, if there are any errors or omissions in this document. Thank you!

WELCOME NEW SUPPORTERS - YOU SHOWED UP!

“I love you Yardies! Thanks for doing all the great work and being such an awesome neighbor and partner.”

- Alicia Lehrer

Paul Badger
Austen Bourassa
James Bourgeois
Nick Bradley
Beth Breinan
Darnell Brown
Carter Family Donor Advised Fund
Crystal Charbonneau
Humberto Cordero
Elizabeth Dargie
Jill Davidson
Fraser Davis
James & Ruth Dealy
Dexter Donation Fund
H.T. Ewald Foundation
Norman & Rosalie Fain Family Foundation
Joe Gorgi
Marc Greenfield
Donna Heroux-Everson
RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
Jennifer LaRosa Hicks
Anna Highsmith
Jennifer Houle
Hughes Family Fund
Martin Keen
Chloe Kline
Heidi Kranz
Andrea Lafazia
Alicia Lehrer
Evan Lemoine
Devra Levy
Anthony Lourenco
James McCarthy
Peter Mello
Chris Milko
Joshua Miller
Rachel Moffett
Elizabeth Moriani
Joseph Morra
Samantha Morse
Kate Nelson

Paul Oeser
Annalisa Oswald
Eric Peloquin
Hugh Peltz
The Providence Project
Glen Quinette
Emily Quinn
Nora Roberts Foundation
Don Schim
Scott Selenow
Anna Shea
Merrill W. Sherman
Schnitzer Steel Industries
Ayako Takase
Bruce Tillinghast
Meimei Tsang
Paul Waltz
Margo Weiss
Tom West
Robert D. Wray Trust
**SUPPORTING US FOR 5 YEARS AND MORE - GOING STRONG!**

“*The Steel Yard creates a means towards prosperity for individuals learning the art and science of steel and fire. Our community is so much better because of the Yard, and it’s a pleasure to support it fully.*”

- Daniel Doolittle

**SUPPORTING US OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS! - CHANGE MAKERS!**

“*The Steel Yard provides something to the greater community that is very essential; they work to preserve the beautiful history of the industrial arts. It is something that I believe in and am happy to contribute to.*”

- Christopher Lirakis
IN-KIND SUPPORTER RECOGNITION

We couldn't do our work without the generous in-kind support from partners and businesses who recognize The Steel Yard’s contributions to the local community and economy. Every year these supporters supply thousands of dollars worth of talent, tools, materials and equipment!

Bullard Abrasives
Alexander Bandazian
Erik Bright
John Halmi
David Jameson & Leslie Hartwell
Kelvin Misiurski
Scott Sorensen
Mid-City Steel
Erika Tazberick
Claudia & James Zompa

"As a long time supporter of The Steel Yard I have watched them grow into 'Adulthood.' Every time I step foot into the studios I don’t want to leave."

- Judy Croyle

Nancy Baron
Dan Baudouin
Gretchen and Humberto Bauta
Nick Bauta
Danielle Blaczak
Peter McClure & Phoebe Blake
Kipp Bradford
Stephen Brownell
Joan Bryan
Lisa Carnevale
Peter & Lucia Gill-Case
Michelle Clark
Judy Croyle
Jori Ketten & Chris Erway
Holly Ewald
Richard Goulis
Myrth York & David Green
Ryan Venghaus & Heather Guidero
David Hardy
Robert Houllahan
Andrea Joseph
Barbara Hunger & David Karoff

Jef Sneider & Gwen Kay
Richard Rubinstein & Katherine Kolbert
Rebecca & Michael Lambert
Micah Salkind & Ted McGuire
Lucia O'Reilly
October Hill Foundation
Marguerite & Wells Pile
Bob & Karen Rizzo
Ed & Maria Rondeau
Clay Rockefeller & Manya Rubinstein
Lucie Searle
Dave Sharp
Marcia & Larry Sharp
Jill Sneider
Kiki Sciullo & Howie Sneider
Lisa Vaillancourt
Abbot Stranahan & David Ward Jr.
Christine & John West
Gillian Kiley & Sam White
Rudolf & Mary Winkes
Korinna Winkes
"
IN MEMORIAM

We take this space to dedicate our work ahead in memory of those we have lost.

“Iron casting is an all-inclusive artistic medium whereupon geometrically precise practices as well as intuitive design can manifest. It is an art form, which from start to finish requires both independence and a community.”

- James Lentz 2021
The Steel Yard’s work is made possible through a combination of program-related earned income, private and government grants, corporate giving and individual philanthropy. 2019 operations are provided in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through appropriation by the Rhode Island Assembly, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and private funders.

The Steel Yard is supported by the New England Foundation for the Arts through the New England Arts Resilience Fund, part of the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund, an initiative of the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with major funding from the federal CARES Act from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (ACT) ensures the continued development of a vibrant and creative city by integrating arts and culture into community life while showcasing Providence as an international cultural destination.
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