

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Asian American Arts Alliance Awards Clare Hu and Jolene Fernandez
the 2026 Van Lier Fellowship for Visual Arts; Nikaio Thomashow
the 2026 Jadin Wong Fellowship for Dance**



Clare Hu, Jolene Fernandez, and Nikaio Thomashow.

NEW YORK, May 7, 2026 — Asian American Arts Alliance (A4) is pleased to announce the selection of **Clare Hu** (she/her) as A4's 2026 Van Lier Fellow for Visual Arts Practice and **Jolene Fernandez** (she/her) as A4's 2026 Van Lier Fellow for Visual Arts Curation. **Nikaio Thomashow** (they/he) was selected as the organization's 2026 Jadin Wong Fellow. Each fellow will receive an unrestricted cash stipend of \$10,000 and eight months of professional development training and career support to foster the next milestone of their careers.

This year's panel also decided to name two Jadin Wong Artists of Exceptional Merit: **Dahyun Kim** and **Paul Liu**. The artists were awarded \$500 for distinctive potential among this year's applicants as AAPI dance professionals.

"We are honored to be able to administer these awards, which impact emerging artists so deeply," said **Lisa Gold**, A4's executive director. "So many former fellows have been able to move their practices forward and continue to enjoy success thanks to the grounding this fellowship provides."

The Van Lier Fellowship is made possible by the Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund through the New York Community Trust, established to continue the Van Lier's legacy of arts appreciation by supporting arts groups and training programs.

The Jadin Wong Fellowship is a tribute to the life and work of renowned Chinese American actress, dancer, and comedienne Jadin Wong (1913–2010), a pioneer and innovator of Asian American performing arts. The award is made possible by the Jadin Wong Educational Fund at the New York Community Trust, established to continue her dream of supporting aspiring artists, musicians, and dancers of Asian descent.

The 2026 Van Lier review panel was composed of leaders in the field of visual art: Marina Chao, Curator at Center for Photography at Woodstock; Hitomi Iwasaki, Head Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Noguchi Museum; Melissa Joseph, artist; Connor Sen Warnick, filmmaker and former Van Lier Fellow in Visual Arts; and Simon Wu, curator and former Van Lier Fellow in Visual Arts Curation.

The 2026 Jadin Wong review panel was composed of the following leaders in the field of dance: Karesia Batan, founding executive director of Queensboro Dance Festival; Naomi Funaki, tap dance artist and A4's 2025 Jadin Wong Fellow; Vivake Khamsingsavath, teacher at The Ailey School, Manhattanville University, Peridance; Darren Lee, director and choreographer; and Parul Shah, artistic director of Parul Shah Dance Company.

More information about the fellowship is available on A4's [website](#).

About Clare Hu

Clare Hu (b. 1996, Norcross GA) is a weaver and artist piecing together maps, trying to find something that's missing. Hu is currently based in Brooklyn, NY. Hu has recently exhibited at Tempest Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), Stove Works (Chattanooga, TN), Tiger Strikes Asteroid (Greenville, SC), Artists Space (New York, NY), and the Gibbes Museum of Art (Charleston, SC). Hu completed her BFA with a focus in Fiber and Material Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and will receive her MFA from Hunter College in May. clarehu.com | @clare_hu

About Jolene Fernandez

Jolene Fernandez is a Filipino American artist, educator, and curator. She received a BA in Art from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a minor in Visual and Performing Arts Education (VAPAE). Working across Los Angeles and New York City, she has taught art in inner-city public schools with UCLA VAPAE and LA Promise Fund, in museum contexts with The Drawing Center and The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and with Teen Art Salon—the same studio she frequented after school as a student at LaGuardia. In 2023, Jolene exhibited alongside Teen Art Salon alumni in MoMA PS1's Homeroom, where she now works as Homeroom Fellow. Applying her experience as an artist and educator through a curatorial lens, her collaborations at PS1 have included *LA ESCUELA*____: *Education as Resistance*

(2025-2026) and *Red Canary Song: Touch the Heart* as part of *Greater New York 2026*.
@jolenefernandezstudio

About Nikaio Bulan Sahar Thomashow

Nikaio Bulan Sahar Thomashow (they/he) is a Jewish and Filipino American multimedia artist, director, and educator originally from the Adirondacks. They graduated from Oberlin College in 2018 and then served as the Oberlin Shansi Fellow at Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia). They've worked with companies such as Daloy Dance Company (Philippines) and EMERGE125 (NYC). Nikaio is currently a teaching artist for the Misty Copeland Foundation BE BOLD program, as well as the director of KAÖS. KAÖS is a growing collective of artists that use interdisciplinary storytelling to create innovative, site-specific performance art. Nikaio and KAÖS have presented works for organizations such as Bryant Park Picnic Performances, NYS DanceForce, the Lake Placid Center for the Arts, Movement Research at the Judson Memorial Church, and Historic Saranac Lake. They have held residency at TOPAZ ARTS for their AAPI Artist Residency and at Green Space as part of the 2022-2023 D.I.G. cohort. ka-os.org | @nik.ai.o

About Dahyun Kim

Dahyun Kim (she/they) is a choreographer, dancer, and educator from Seoul, Republic of Korea, currently based in NYC. A recent recipient of the Queens Arts Fund, Dahyun creates works that expand access to dance and engage diverse audiences. They are the Artistic Director of Ah-Molla Dance Collective, a collective dedicated to uplifting AAPI+ artistry and centering diasporic narratives through collaborative creation. Dahyun has presented work at platforms including the Hartford Dance Festival, Future Dance Festival, Queensboro Dance Festival, and WADEintoActivism Split-Bill. Drawing inspiration from traditional Korean rhythms, performance aesthetics, historical figures, and folklore, their recent choreographic interests reflect the contemporary struggles and realities one faces as an Asian immigrant artist. Committed to community building, Dahyun has engaged audiences through projects such as Asian American Arts Alliance's What Can We Do? Grant in Flushing, performances presented through Queensboro Dance Festival, and accessible workshops with Forza, PULP Workshop Series, and Umami Playground. @dahyun_dancer

About Paul Liu

Paul Liu (劉沛得) is a Taiwanese American movement artist with a focus in acrobatics and partnering. Paul grew up in New Jersey, training in traditional Chinese dance and acrobatics with the Nai-Ni Chen Youth Dance Company as well as breaking with several local b-boy crews. He later studied Western dance techniques at the Academy of Dance Arts NJ before attending Boston Conservatory and the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing. Paul performed and toured with Pilobolus Dance Theatre as a repertory company member from 2019 to 2023 and continues working with them as a teaching artist. Paul currently creates work involving acrobatic partnering and durational practices under DRWN with Sungjin Park. In addition, Paul is a collaborator with Motlee Party, a company member of 3AM Theatre, and makes props and set pieces with recycled material for a variety of productions. drwn.cargo.site | @liu_peide

About Asian American Arts Alliance (A4)

Asian American Arts Alliance is a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring greater representation, equity, and opportunities for Asian American artists and cultural organizations through resource sharing, promotion, and community building. Since 1983, A4 has sought to unify, promote, and represent the artistic and cultural producers of one of New York City's fastest-growing populations. A4 is a diverse alliance of artists, organizations, and arts supporters who believe that working together as a pan-ethnic, multidisciplinary community is essential to nurturing the development of artists and arts groups. A4 serves as a thoughtful convener of the Asian American cultural workforce around issues of race, identity, and artmaking and provides a critical voice for this community. It is the only service organization in the country dedicated to the professional development of Asian American artists in all disciplines.

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