



Youth concert ends a year of remote dancing

BY VERA CASTANEDA

If you're passing through Main and 19th streets in Santa Ana later this month, you might catch a glimpse of young dancers performing in and out of the Wooden Floor's flagship location.

The performance is part of the nonprofit youth development organization's 38th annual concert "Passage/

Home: A Site-Specific Exploration of Place" and marks the first in-person event after a year of dancing remotely.

Audiences will be guided to 10 spaces throughout the facility stationed with dances, multimedia and visual installations highlighting the Wooden Floor's legacy of enriching the lives of youths. They commit to

See **Dancing**, page R2

TOP PHOTO: Students Viviana, Jasmine and Ariana rehearse the Wooden Floor's 38th annual concert "Passage/Home." **RIGHT:** Young dancers rehearse on the stair steps. **BELOW:** Students rehearse outside the Wooden Floor's Main Street location.

Photos by Sarah Delgado



YIMBY group fights to boost housing

Nonprofit asks O.C. Council of Governments to drop lawsuit, support state plan to build 1.34M more homes in SoCal.

BY BEN BRAZIL

A group that advocates for more home-building and lower-cost housing in Orange County started a petition in support of a state plan to find space by 2029 for about 1.34 million homes in Southern California, including about 183,000 in Orange County.

The petition is in response to a lawsuit filed by the Orange County Council of Governments that takes issue with the state-mandated figure. The planning agency, which is made up of Orange County cities, claims in the lawsuit that the SCAG region's share should be only 651,000 housing units.

"This lawsuit runs counter to the interest of the most at-risk for displacement and homelessness," the petition says. "Orange County needs more housing. We need subsidized affordable housing for low & very-low-income families and service sector workers. We need 'missing-middle' townhomes and condos near jobs for millennial-aged teachers, healthcare workers, and emerging professionals.

"We are signing this petition to tell you that Orange County cities and the Southern California region as a whole need all 1.3 M new homes as assigned by the 6th cycle [Regional Housing Needs Assessment]. Please drop your lawsuit. Instead, please work with cities' staff and residents through the housing elements process to find sites suitable to build new housing."

The petition was started by People for Housing Orange County, which is part of the YIMBY Action Network. The national nonprofit is made up of chapters in San Francisco, Denver, Atlanta and Chicago, among other locations. YIMBY stands for "yes in my backyard," a response to the commonly used term NIMBY, which stands for "not in

See **Housing**, page R6

How a \$185K grant fund will support arts programming in O.C.

BY VERA CASTANEDA

A portion of funds from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts have reached Orange County once again.

Among 50 museums and arts organizations, Grand Central Art Center, Orange County Museum of Art and Laguna Art Museum are spring 2021 grant recipients. The funds will support administrative expenses, programs, exhibitions and curatorial research.

"We are pleased to support three exceptional institutions in Orange County," said Rachel Bers, program director of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, in a statement. "Their programs and exhibitions provide an important platform for artists to engage with local communities,

while upholding the foundation's belief that artists have significant contributions to make to social, political and cultural conversations taking place nationally."

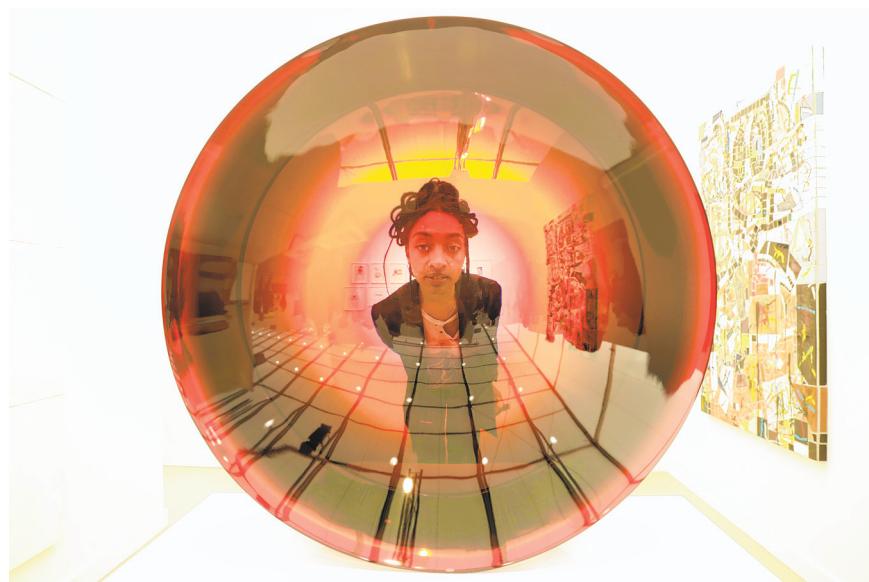
TimesOC checked in with the three O.C. recipients to see what they may have planned in the near future.

ORANGE COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

The museum was awarded \$60,000 to support the "Fred Eversley: Reflecting Back (the World)" exhibit, which is scheduled to open in October 2022 as one of the inaugural exhibitions in the new 53,000-square-foot museum in Costa Mesa.

Eversley's first retrospective in

See **Grant**, page R6



ARTIST ARIA DEAN looks through the work of another artist, Fred Eversley, "untitled parabolic lens." Thousands attended Frieze 2020 in Los Angeles in February 2020.

Carolyn Coler
Los Angeles Times

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GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION AIMS TO FILL SERVICE GAP FOR THOSE DEALING WITH EATING DISORDERS

BY VERA CASTANEDA

For years, Nalgona Positivity Pride's logo has been a child taking a huge chomp out of a burger. It's an animated rendering of the founder of the grassroots organization's friend that captures the group's essence — unapologetic.

"It's a heartwarming image that just took me back to being a child, being an intuitive eater," said NPP founder Gloria Lucas. "You know when you're hungry. You know when you're full. Somehow along the way — with fat-phobia and being introduced to beliefs as to what a woman should look like — we lose that."

The logo goes hand in hand with the group's playful name. The Spanish word "*nalgona*" refers to a woman with a big butt, at times used in a negative way to describe larger body types. But for Lucas, using it means reclaiming it.

NPP offers a variety of services such as in-person talks, online courses and peer support groups. It's purpose is to create a grassroots treatment model with an emphasis on harm reduction for Black, Indigenous and people of color who are struggling with eating disorders and poor body image.

Lucas describes harm reduction as a compassionate approach to providing "over the counter" ways for people, who aren't able to completely abstain from eating disorder behavior, to take care of themselves. For example, education about oral care when some behaviors take a toll on teeth.

Lucas, who identifies as Xicana, created the organization in 2014 after struggling with an eating disorder and having difficulties finding medical treatment and representation in research.

"I wanted to learn why I had developed an eating disorder if this is a struggle that focuses on white, middle-class women," said Lucas. "Obviously, I learned later that eating disorders impact all kinds of people, even those who look 'healthy.' Everything that I was reading did not talk about race or historical violence."

NPP started off as unfunded public speaking events in schools and events that linked historical trauma to eating disorders.

"My public speaking started as a Jehovah's Witness and having to go door to door," she joked. Later, Lucas added that she pulled skills from her background as an activist, sexual



SANTA ANA resident Gloria Lucas, 30, is the founder and CEO of Nalgona Positivity Pride, an organization dedicated to providing body-positive and eating disorder treatment resources for BIPOC communities.

*Kevin Chang
Staff
Photographer*

health educator, youth program staff and nonprofit work associated with substance abuse and trauma among cis and trans women.

After she kept getting frequent requests for travelling speaking gigs, Lucas decided to grow NPP on a full-time basis.

One of her milestones was reaching 100,000 followers on the organization's Instagram account, where she brings awareness to many social issues. Another milestone was developing business consultation services and the Mujeres Market, a pop up featuring independent vendors who identify as women of color, femmes of color, or queer or trans people of color.

Lucas has stopped traveling for in-person talks during the coronavirus pandemic. She's focused on posting regularly on Instagram, developing more courses and taking care of Etsy order shipments of NPP's merchandise from her Santa Ana home.

Online courses, led by Lucas, dietitians, nurses, therapists, social workers and scholars, touch on colonial roots of psychiatry, how to set boundaries around food during the holidays and more.

Topics like dealing with intimate partner violence were added in 2020 as domestic violence resource centers tracked a rise in cases.

The free online peer support group, Sage and Spoon, also expanded. Initially, Sage and Spoon, which meet on the last week of every month, was for BIPOC 18 years old or older. A second iteration of the group for Black people and led by Black specialists was formed at the end of 2020.

Over Zoom, licensed clinical mental

health therapist Alishia McCullough and physical therapist assistant Illya Park typically start with a welcome, introduce the group's purpose, explain guidelines and then dive into a topic for the month.

McCullough said about 50 people attended the last group meeting.

In June, the topic was intersectionality, trauma and eating disorders. Participants have the option to share while McCullough and Park discuss tips and resources. The session ends with a breathing exercise.

McCullough, who specializes in eating disorders, disordered eating and racial trauma, met Lucas doing panel discussions.

"When I was getting all my experience with eating disorders, it was all coming from a lens of academia and clinical work through therapy," said McCullough. "However, Gloria was the one who showed me that this can look so much different. You don't necessarily have to have that background in higher education. Seeing someone be able to do that work — speak from her experience and do it on a grassroots level really encouraged me in my own journey ... Sometimes in academia, we discount lived experience and uphold research as part of that colonial framework."

As for NPP's future, Lucas said she would like to open a brick-and-mortar one day that can serve as a shop, community space and eating disorder center that combines a holistic team of therapists, acupuncturists and *curanderos*.

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Sarah Delgado

A STUDENT REHEARSES in front of the Wooden Floor's Main Street Location for the nonprofit youth development organization's 38th annual concert.

DANCING

Continued from page R1

working with 475 low-income students for 10 consecutive years from third to 12th grade, offering ballet training mixed with modern dance, improv and choreography classes.

Last year, dancers were in the middle of their second rehearsal run before they had to cancel due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The staff realized the annual concert for 2021 would not take place in a traditional theater environment either. Instead of their usual Irvine Barclay theater location, they decided to switch the venue to the nonprofit's first building, designed by architect Ernesto M. Vasquez.

"Our students call our building a second home because they are with the Wooden Floor for 10 years," said Dawn Reese, chief executive officer. "We don't ever say that to them. They say that amongst themselves. Our choreographer, on his own, named the concert 'Passage/Home' not knowing that the students call it their second home. He just felt that was the right title for this time when they are coming back."

This year's performance is a unique opportunity for the dancers, ranging from 11 to 18 years old, to

co-create movement alongside artists and designers.

"Creating at this juncture in time, it has taken on additional resonance as a homecoming, a return 'home' for the Wooden Floor community," said choreographer Stephan Koplowitz, who has created site-specific works for more than 30 years. "Site dance brings people from diverse parts of life together and makes us experience our surroundings with new eyes."

The organization offered a summer pilot dance program when it was founded in 1983 by Beth Burns, who at the time was a Catholic nun with St. Joseph of Orange. Over the years, the program changed to become more involved in public schools and eventually opened a flagship location in Santa Ana with three dance studios, education and community centers.

By the time Burns retired in 2005, programming had expanded to support dancers in their quest to graduate from high school and move on to higher educational pursuits. Free tutoring and college prep assistance, such as classes on writing a personal statement, were offered. A family service component was also introduced, offering emotional wellness support to students and parents.

*See **Dancing**, page R4*



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As experts predict another bad fire season, Orange County Fire Watch is ready to help prevent wildfires

BY BEN BRAZIL

As experts predict another historically bad fire season in California, Orange County Fire Watch is preparing to prevent fires before they grow into massive blazes that can threaten homes and wildlife.

The countywide program will use a hybrid system with in-person and virtual monitoring, which O.C. Fire Watch adopted last year to keep volunteers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 300 volunteers will look for signs of fires, largely on Red Flag warning days when strong winds, low humidity levels and high temperatures increase the risk of fire.

O.C. Fire Watch volunteers are particularly important during the Santa Ana winds season, which starts around August. Red Flag warnings can last into March.

"Even if it was going to be another worst fire season ever, as some chiefs typically try to communicate, we staff to the maximum ability," said Tony Pointer, the conservancy's fire watch manager. "Whether it's going to be a light fire season or heavy fire season, we staff as

much as we can. We just focus on trying to reduce the number of ignitions so they don't even get to the possibility of being a catastrophic fire."

O.C. Fire Watch is managed by Irvine Ranch Conservancy for O.C. Parks and the cities of Irvine and Newport Beach.

There are currently fewer volunteers than last year, when there were 350. The program was unable to hold orientations for newcomers due to the pandemic. Pointer said the less manpower doesn't inhibit the fire watches' monitoring abilities.

"Of course, it stretches us a little thin," Pointer said. "What it probably does is where typically we try to have two volunteers at a fire watch location, it does sort of get us down to one volunteer at a location instead of the two sets of eyes when we're deploying."

O.C. Fire Watch volunteers monitor 36 different locations throughout the county. In-person watchers take two-hour shifts and virtual watchers take four-hour shifts.

Virtual watchers can use computers or tablets to monitor the camera feeds. Pointer said the method for monitoring is much different

when done virtually. Only some of the cameras rotate. They also are not zoomed in and take a more broad view of the area.

Virtual fire watchers will monitor up to four camera feeds, normally from different areas.

Pointer said the Santiago Canyon area is one of the most historically hazardous spots that they oversee. The O.C. Fire Watch heavily staffs that area, he said.

Pointer also said that roadsides are an important area to monitor. Many roadside fires can be caused by malfunctioning cars. He said that they heavily monitor the 241 Toll Road, which is bordered by vegetation and runs through Rancho Santa Margarita, Lake Forest and Irvine.

Last year's fire season was the worst in California history, with six of the state's largest fires ever recorded. Orange County had its own share of fires — the Blue Ridge and Silverado fires and the Bond fire. Last month, there were several brush fires near Newport Coast that had to be extinguished by more than 100 firefighters.

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A CHILD COOLS OFF at Wild Rivers in Irvine in 2011. Construction of a new Wild Rivers park began Wednesday.



Mark Boster
L.A. Times

Construction begins on a new Wild Rivers water park

During the 1990s and 2000s, Wild Rivers water park was the place to go in Orange County to cool off during the summer.

A decade after the theme park was closed, construction began on a new 20-acre Wild Rivers on Wednesday. The \$60-million park may reopen as early as summer 2022 at the Orange County Great Park.

The park has been in the works for several years, but the Irvine City Council approved the location and lease in April 2020.

"It's a treasure that we are excited to have in this city," Irvine Mayor Farrah Khan said at the groundbreaking this week. "To make sure that not only today's generation, but generations to come will be able to not only enjoy the amenities of Wild Rivers, but also have an opportunity to work at Wild Rivers. Wild

Rivers is one of the highest employment opportunities for our teens."

The new park will include 20 attractions on opening day, though other amusements are planned for the future, including a potential expansion of the park.

Development plans of the park show that it will be sectioned into three main areas. The southwest sector will include Adventure River, kids' slides, a shallow activity pool called the Island and a play structure. The southeast sector will include family raft rides and a mixture of various slides. The northern area will have mat racers and the much-beloved wave pool.

The city of Irvine will construct a parking lot of about 1,230 spaces that it will lease to the water park.

— From staff reports

Bubblefest makes its return to Discovery Cube Orange County

Bubblefest is back at Discovery Cube Orange County, but following a COVID-19 yearlong delay, it looks a little different this year.

In the past, bubble artist Deni Yang featured more complicated sets with plants and lights everywhere.

"Normally we have a lot of machines and special effects equipment, but now it looks a lot cleaner," Yang told City News Service. "So we changed the aesthetic of this show. We wanted to keep it streamlined for now because we didn't know how long we were going to run the show."

It was also not known before opening July 2 how large an audience could be expected due to the pandemic and social distancing, Yang said.

"Everything was changing every week with different kinds of regulations," Yang said as he was staging the annual production. "So now the stage is decorated with some Japanese art and other cool canvas art."

The last time he staged the show it had seven lasers, so this time he will feature 11, Yang said. "If anything, we added a lot more bubbles, too," Yang said.

There isn't a kid zone in front of the stage for children to sit on the floor and enjoy the show this time, Yang said. But the stage is closer to the audience.



BUBBLEFEST LASER SHOW & Family Night has returned to Discovery Cube Orange County through Friday.

Hayne Palmour
IV The San Diego
Union-Tribune

It was also up in the air if his sister, Melody, will be part of the act.

"She just had a baby in January," Yang said. "She's really tempted to perform. But I'll leave it up to her. We can always make a change really quickly."

Yang thought he might be able to stage a Christmas show last year, but then the pandemic surged again. Now that his laser and bubble show is back on track, there are some nerves, but that is typical, Yang said.

"I think I'm going to be relieved because the normalcy is coming back," Yang said. "Every time I go to a new stage, I tend to get nervous before the first show, but once you get through that ... after the first show, the ice is broken. You go back to an interactive-and-improve mode. It becomes natural."

Yang has been entertaining au-

diences with his bubble and laser show for two decades, so taking time off during the pandemic was tough.

"I'm happy to see a stage," he said. "After a year and a half and so many delays, I was like 'finally, finally we're back.'"

Yang said the bonus is that nothing could be more clean than bubbles. He uses mostly baby shampoo, dish detergent and antibacterial soap to make his bubbles.

"If you use too much dishwashing liquid, it becomes too strong," Yang said. "My skin would dry up and I'd have to use Vaseline constantly after the day. But with baby shampoo, it's more sensitive."

The show runs four times a day through Friday at Discovery Cube Orange County, 2500 N. Main St., Santa Ana.

— City News Service

DANCING

Continued from page R2

In 2009, the organization changed its name from Saint Joseph Ballet to the Wooden Floor. Almost 10 years later, it opened a second location within the Depot at Santiago, an affordable housing community.

For the annual concert, dancers are expected to fulfill an 80% attendance requirement and maintain a GPA higher than 2.5 in order to perform. They've balanced school and rehearsals ranging from one to four weeks long, for five to six days a week.

Participation in this year's concert, with COVID-19 safety protocols in place, was voluntary. About 80 dancers signed up and began rehearsals in January.

Fifteen-year-old Alexander Vargas, who lives in Santa Ana, has spent four years at the Wooden Floor. His mom heard about

their dance programs and took him to the free auditions. He was reluctant, but his parents encouraged him to try it out for one year. Today, his favorite form of dance is ballet and his experience at the Wooden Floor led him to enroll in Orange County School of the Arts' Ballroom Dance Conservatory.

Vargas, who has tuned in to Zoom dance classes this past year, will be one of the dancers stationed outdoors during the concert.

"I was so used to dancing around other people seeing them face to face [prior to the pandemic]," said Vargas. "When I'm here at my house, it feels kind of lonely because all you see is a screen. Of course I adapted to it, but I'd prefer dancing in person, socializing."

Karen Carrasco, 12, who was inspired to dance after watching the "Angelina Ballerina" animated show, felt the same way. She said the highlight of in-person rehears-

als has been making new friends.

"When we were online in our house, I felt like I didn't want my parents to see me dance because I got more nervous," said Carrasco, who lives in Santa Ana and attends O.C. Educational Arts Academy. "I adapted to online [learning] but I didn't adapt to dancing in front of my parents. It's just uncomfortable sometimes. The in-person concert feels great because you get to talk to someone your age."

Before the coronavirus pandemic hit, the Wooden Floor had just finished fundraising more than \$20 million in order to ensure the second location could operate for the next 10 years. The organization also grew its endowment from \$2.7 million to about \$8 million.

Its financial security prevented the organization from cutting services over the past year.

Within a week after shutting down facilities, they started test-

ing prerecorded classes and eventually offered live classes throughout the summer and fall.

About half of the students did not have access to a laptop. The nonprofit raised money and used extra COVID-19 relief funds to purchase 225 laptops in June 2020 for students to keep indefinitely.

Reese said they called homes routinely to keep students engaged and offered more resources for parents to connect through virtual support groups, which is one of the activities she plans to continue as the Wooden Floor reopens. "Our No. 1 goal, especially during the pandemic when our students have been going through these really deep challenges, is to ensure they emerge as really confident leaders, that they keep their big visions for their future and that the pandemic doesn't pull them down," Reese said.

Vargas and Carrasco have a few more years until they graduate.

IF YOU GO

What: "Passage/Home: A Site-Specific Exploration of Place"

When: July 15 through 17 and 23 through 24, various showtimes

Where: The Wooden Floor, 1810 N. Main St., Santa Ana

Cost: \$20 general admission, \$10 admission for children under 13 and students

Info: thewoodenfloor.org

But when asked, they don't hesitate to name their respective visions. Vargas sees himself becoming a computer engineer at UC Irvine or Cal Poly Pomona. Carrasco wants to run a school as a vice principal and will be the first in her family to attend college.

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GRANT

Continued from page R1

California will examine five decades of his career, his role in shaping California art history and the technical innovation in his sculptures. Some of his sculptures are made out of cast-resin pieces that act as lenses or mirrors playing with color and light.

One of his early solo exhibitions took place in 1978 at OCMA, then called the Newport Harbor Art Museum. The artist is known as a key figure in the California Light and Space Movement who used his firsthand understanding as an engineer in his artwork.

“Today at age 80, his work is collected by major museums and consistently included in noteworthy group shows,” read a statement from OCMA describing the exhibit. “Yet, unlike many of his peers, he has not received the recognition his contribution warrants.”

“A historic retrospective in California, where the work was rooted, will offer OCMA’s audiences an opportunity to examine Eversley’s role in shaping California art history and gain insight into the influence of his background as an African American man and scientist,” the statement reads. “Eversley’s artistic career serves as a unique case study in examining the influence of technology on Californian sculptures starting in the 1960s and how these works inspired deepened awareness of perceptual experiences and challenged ideas about what art could be.”

GRAND CENTRAL ART CENTER

Over two years, the center will receive \$100,000 to support its artist-in-residence program. This marks the third time the foundation awarded the center, which is partnered with Santa Ana and Cal State Fullerton.

According to Director and Chief Curator John Spiak, the grant will go toward the research and project developments of upcoming artists-in-resi-



Photos by Don Leach | Staff Photographer

THE LAGUNA ART MUSEUM is one of three museums in Orange County that received Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts grant funds in support of visual arts programs, exhibitions and curatorial research.



THE GRAND CENTRAL Art Center in Santa Ana.

dence Alicia Rojas, Carlee Fernandez, Kelley-Ann Lindo, Shaun Leonardo and Jasmin Mara López. The center paused some of its programming due to the coronavirus pandemic but plans to continue projects with artists including Yumi Janairo Roth, Lexa Walsh, Susy Bielak and Fred Schmalz, Glenda Leon, Pablo Helguera to name a few.

Some of the artists have Cal State Fullerton associations. Fernandez is a 1997 fine arts alumna. López will be working on a film about a current Cal State Fullerton student Gilbert Anthony Romero and Roth’s

project features alumnus Erik Argote as a sign spinner.

“GCAC’s residencies develop by believing that an actual creative process should be fluid and porous, not confined or restricted by limitations and preconceived notions placed upon it from the onset,” wrote Spiak via email. “The process should be allowed to roam freely, providing opportunities for exchange, discovery and influence to occur organically.”

Some past artists in residence, such as Sarah Rafael Garcia and Sara Guerrero, are engaged in O.C.-based arts programming outside



THE ORANGE COUNTY Museum of Art in Santa Ana.

of GCAC and the foundation.

The center is set to reopen with new exhibitions in early September.

LAGUNA ART MUSEUM

The museum, which reopened in March, received \$25,000 for its curatorial research fellowship featuring Sharrissa Iqbal and Michael Duncan.

Former Executive Director Malcolm Warner and UC Irvine Professor Whiting chose Iqbal and Duncan to curate “Particles and Waves: Southern California Abstraction and Modern Physics, 1945 to 1980,” which will examine how

modern physics impacted abstract art in postwar Southern California.

The exhibit is a collaboration with the Getty Foundation’s Pacific Standard Time initiative “Art x Science x LA” set to open in 2024 with many concurrent exhibitions, performances, publications and other programming.

Iqbal and Duncan will complete extensive research, which includes interviews and artist studio visits, to write essays and catalogue entries for the exhibit publication. Iqbal will travel to Washington, D.C., New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Taos and

“Their programs and exhibitions provide an important platform for artists to engage with local communities, while upholding the foundation’s belief that artists have significant contributions to make to social, political and cultural conversations taking place nationally.”

Rachel Bers

Program director of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

Berlin. Duncan will travel to Washington, D.C., New York, San Francisco and Oakland.

“This exhibition offers an exciting opportunity to explore the interrelated histories of scientific research and artistic experimentation in Southern California,” Sharrissa Iqbal, lead curator of the Laguna Art Museum’s exhibition, said in January.

“After World War II, a wide range of artists in and around Los Angeles produced visually abstract artworks concerned with scientific theories, mathematical models and engineered technologies,” Iqbal said. “By bringing together a vibrant intersection of non-figurative artworks influenced by modern physics, ‘Particles and Waves’ will shed new light on the history of artistic abstraction in the region.”

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HOUSING

Continued from page R1

my backyard,” and refers to residents who oppose development.

“There’s a lot of people in Orange County that recognize that we do have a housing shortage and that suing HCD is a waste of time and money,” said Elizabeth Hansburg, co-founder and executive director of People for Housing O.C. “Those efforts and energies would be better put to working with HCD and working with your local government, your planning department, your residents and election officials to find viable sites for the new housing that we need.”

The state number was finalized in March by the Southern California Assn. of Governments as part of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. SCAG, which is made up of local officials and addresses regional issues, was tasked with allocating these housing goals to each city. The state has mandated that six counties in Southern California, including Orange and Los Angeles, will need to find zoning for the homes.

The process has been mired in controversy for the past year. Cities have contested the numbers allocated to them, citing the difficulty of reaching such lofty housing goals. Nearly half the cities in Orange County filed appeals with SCAG, but all were denied.

With the lawsuit, the cities have taken the fight directly to the California Department of Housing and Community Development. “Orange County jurisdictions are currently following the state’s housing statutes and are working hard to update housing elements to meet the number of housing units assigned to them via the 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) methodology,” reads a statement from Trevor O’Neil, Anaheim Councilman and chair of the council of governments. “However, OCCOG recognizes that Orange County’s citizens and taxpayers deserve to be treated fairly under



Josh Edelson

AN AFFORDABLE housing project in Alameda County in Northern California. An Orange County nonprofit advocates for more homes and more affordable housing in the region.

the law.

“Therefore, on behalf of its members, OCCOG is challenging the Regional Determination established by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Simply, HCD did not follow the statutes outlined in state law to develop the projected number of units needed in the next eight years to adequately house Orange County’s population.”

According to the lawsuit, the council of governments believes that the state used wrong population forecast data in determining the housing needs. Also, the lawsuit contends that the state did not use comparable regions when evaluating household overcrowding and cost-burden rates. Rather, the HCD used national averages, the lawsuit says.

HCD spokeswoman Alicia Murillo said this week that she couldn’t provide a comment on the lawsuit. However, she provided a statement on the general contention of the council of governments.

“HCD stands by the credibility and legality of its Regional Housing Needs Determinations for the sixth cycle housing element throughout the state,” she said. “The methodology accurately captures housing needs in compliance with legislation passed in 2017 and 2018.”

The petition currently

has just over 100 signatures, but Hansburg is hoping to get anywhere from 500 to 1,000.

She said part of the difficulty in getting enough people behind the housing movement is its complexity. She pointed out that it’s not as easy for people to understand as a “save the whales” campaign.

Also, there is a contingent — the “NIMBYs” — who push back on development of any kind.

“Southern California has a nostalgia for low-density suburban development patterns where everyone has their single-family home,” Hansburg said. “If you read the post-World War II descriptions about how good life in California was, it’s all based on that idea that everybody has space. California has been a land of opportunity for a lot of people, and it still continues to be a land of opportunity, but we don’t have the space that we used to for everyone to come in and affordably own their own single-family home. We have to build higher-density housing, and that goes against the mindset of a lot of folks who like it the way it is.

“I think for some people, there’s an association of apartments with low-income people, people of color, and I think there is some element of racism and classism.”

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