ALLIANCE for CALIFORNIA TRADITIONAL ARTS

2018–2019

ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome

What is the story of your community? What are the songs, dances, foods, and practices that connect you to the people around you? These shared practices are what we call the traditional arts—they tell us what it means to be human through collective aesthetics, values, and experiences.

At ACTA, we support the work of artists and organizations who engage with the transformative and restorative impact of collective traditions in their communities. We craft programs and services in direct response to the needs of California's cultural communities, providing opportunities for exchange, collaboration, and connection to new resources.

In these pages, we take a look back at our work across 2018 and 2019, saluting the artists, organizations, and communities that we serve, as well as the funders who make our work possible.

Amy Kitchener

Amy Kitchener
Co-Founder + Executive Director

This report summarizes activities from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Please contact us at info@actaonline.org with questions or comments.

COVER IMAGE—2018 ACTA Apprentice Jasmine Orpilla performs pangalay dance from the Philippines at a Traditional Arts Roundtable Series event. Photo: T. Saarelma/ACTA. ABOVE—Afro-Colombian percussion students at Chuckawalla State Prison. Photo: Peter Merts, courtesy of the California Arts Council. INSET— Amy Kitchener. Photo: Craig Kohlruss.

Mission

The Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) promotes and supports ways for cultural traditions to thrive now and into the future.

Founded in 1997, ACTA is a 501(c)3 non-profit and the California Arts Council's official partner in serving the state's folk and traditional arts field.

California is at the forefront of the country's shift toward racial and ethnic plurality. We hold the key to breaking the race-based discrimination, injustice, and bigotry that has infected our democracy. The culture-bearers of our state are leading the way in reimagining a country that embodies multiplicity, equity, and mutual respect.

The more we cultivate a space for cultural practices to thrive in, the closer we get to a national consciousness that affirms our shared humanity.

We all belong here.

ABOVE—Daria Chaikovsky (R) of the Ukrainian Art Center, a 2019 Living Cultures grantee, shares a traditionally decorated pysanka Easter egg with 2019 mentor artist in Korean folk dance, DaEun Jung (L). Photo: T. Saarelma/ACTA. INSET—A dancer from the Lan Nartthasin Thai Dance Group performs at the Promise Zone Arts Live! event in Los Angeles. Photo: T. Saarelma/ACTA.

IN CALIFORNIA YOU WILL FIND:

- **1 in 8** U.S. residents
- **One fifth** of U.S. Indian tribal entities
- **More than 200** spoken languages
- The nation's **largest immigrant and indigenous population**
- The world's **fifth largest economy**

SINCE OUR FOUNDING,

ACTA has distributed more than **$5.5 million** to more than **1,200 artists and organizations** throughout **50 counties** in the state.

What We Do

Sustainability

We provide financial support to practitioners and organizations to advance their cultural practices across generations.

Relationships

We produce events that bring together culture bearers and the public to learn, celebrate, and organize.

Transformation

We foster healing from trauma through collective cultural practice for incarcerated and returning individuals.

Social Justice

We engage traditional arts as a force for change in our neighborhoods.

Belonging

We listen to how communities identify their cultural resources and help them to transform the findings into action.

Visibility

We amplify the value of the traditional arts in everyday life through stories, documentation, and public advocacy at the local, state, and national levels.

“Traditional arts are a way of creating new social relations.

People are speaking up, standing up, and fighting back against the world that has been handed to them.

They are creating a picture of the world that many of us want to live in.”

—**Dr. George Lipsitz**, Professor of Black Studies, UC Santa Barbara, describing ACTA’s Building Healthy Communities projects

OPPOSITE—ACTA Arts in Corrections artist resident Marty Natividad (L) leads a class on Danza Azteca at the Substance Abuse Treatment Facility in Corcoran, CA. Photo: Peter Merts, courtesy of the California Arts Council.
THIS PAGE—Los Angeles-based altarista Ofelia Esparza leads an arrival ceremony at a Traditional Arts Roundtable Series event. Photo: T. Saarelma/ACTA.

2019 LIVING CULTURES GRANTEES

African Queens Dance Company, Oakland
Ballet Folklórico Nueva Antequera, Los Angeles
Bay Area Bomba y Plena Workshop, Oakland
Berkeley Old Time Music Convention, Berkeley
BrasArte: The Damasceno Brazilian Cultural Exchange, Oakland
Chaksam-pa Tibetan Dance & Opera Company, El Cerrito
Dance Group Xorotroptzi, Culver City
Dancing Ci(y)phers, Oakland
Ektaa Center, Irvine
El Teatro de la Tierra, Fresno
Eszterlánc Hungarian Folk Ensemble, San Ramon
Frente Indigena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB), Fresno
Great Leap, Inc., Los Angeles
Hmong Association of Long Beach
IIe Orunmila Afedefeyo, Los Angeles
Japanese Cultural Fair, Santa Cruz
JC Culture Foundation, Artesia
Kalingafornia Laga, Castro Valley
Kinnara Gagaku, Los Angeles
KlezCalifornia, Inc., Berkeley
KSTARPRODUCTIONS, Oakland
La Ultima Parada, San Jose
Little Manila Rising, Stockton
Manilatown Heritage Foundation, San Francisco
Network of Myanmar American Association, Monterey
North American Guqin Association, Union City
Omnira Institute, Oakland
Purple Silk Music Education Foundation, Oakland
Ravi & Shashi Bellare Arts Foundation, Chino Hills
Regional Organization of Oaxaca, Los Angeles
Rhythm Arts Alliance, Los Angeles
San Francisco Guzheng Music Society, San Francisco
Senderos, Santa Cruz
Somali Youth United, Inc., San Diego
The Latino Commission Central Valley Nuevo Comienzo, Orosi
The VA'V Ensemble, Fremont
Theatre of Yugen, San Francisco
Ukrainian Art Center, Inc., Los Angeles
Umoja Ensemble of the Inland Empire / "We the People" Cultural Dance Center, San Bernardino
Voice of Roma, Sebastopol

Sustainability

By providing financial support to artists and organizations, we help ensure the lasting impact of shared cultural traditions in communities.

2019 FUNDING SNAPSHOT

$251,000 awarded

117 total applications across two funding programs

57 applications awarded

LIVING CULTURES GRANTS PROGRAM

Providing project-based funding to non-profit organizations to ensure cultural continuity in California.

14 years of programming

$3.6 million dollars awarded

634 projects supported

"ACTA makes it possible to live our dreams. They have been integral to our musical lineage—without ACTA's support, some of our songs would be on the edge of dying out."

—**Tsering Wangmo**, Chaksam-pa Tibetan Dance & Opera Company, 2019 Living Cultures grantee

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Encouraging the continuity of the state's traditional arts and cultures by contracting mentor artists to engage in intensive, one-on-one training with qualified apprentices

19
years of programming

Nearly
$1 million
dollars awarded

348
artist pairs supported

2019 APPRENTICESHIP COHORT

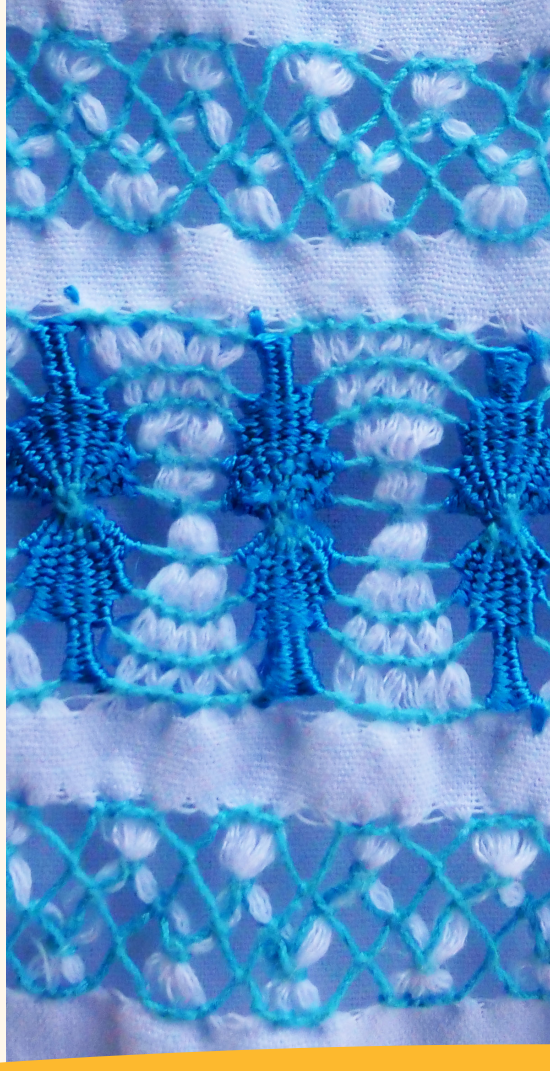
Mehrdad Arabifard + Negin Fadaee, Los Angeles | *Persian tombak*
Hari Asuri + Brinda Asuri, Orange | *Indian Sankeertanam music*
Zarouhi "Zee" Bedrossian + Julianne Burk, Fresno | *Armenian home cooking*
Swapan Chaudhuri + Rohan Krishnamurthy, San Rafael | *North Indian tabla percussion*
Bernard Barros Ellorin + Kimberly Kalanduyan, San Diego | *Southern Philippine kulintang music*
DaEun Jung + Melody Hyun-Jeong Shim, Los Angeles | *Korean folk dance*
Youngmin Lee + Stephanie Rue, Pleasanton | *Korean bojagi textiles*
Gaudencia Lopez + Francisco Gomez Padilla, Fresno | *Zapotec cambalache embroidery*
Shirley Kazuyo Muramoto-Wong + Bo Shannon Chappel, Oakland | *Japanese koto music*
Pierr Padilla + Carmen Román, Oakland | *Afro-Peruvian Marinera Limeña dance*
Dorothy Sylvia (Yurok/Karuk) + Sonia Franzi (Yurok/Karuk), Hoopa | *Yurok/Karuk/Hupa cradle basketry*
Eva Tam + Teresa Luk, San Francisco | *Cantonese opera*
Soumya Tilak + Vibha Raju, San Jose | *Bharatanatyam, Indian classical dance*
Luis Torres + Arthur Torres, Panorama City | *Andean music of Bolivia*
Jayashree Varadarajan + Kaushik Shivakumar, Sunnyvale | *South Indian Carnatic classical music*
Snigdha Venkataramani + Anagaa Nathan, Fremont | *Bharatanatyam, Indian classical dance*
Van-Anh "Vanessa" Vo + Thu Vu, Fremont | *Vietnamese dan tranh*

"It was not long until playing and sharing kulintang music and Maguindanaon culture became a passion of mine. Through it, I found my identity as an artist, as an ethnic Maguindanaon Filipino, and as a young woman."

—**Kimberly Kalanduyan**, 2019 ACTA apprentice in kulintang music from the Southern Philippines under mentor artist Bernard Barros Ellorin

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP—Performers from 2019 Living Cultures grantee organization Senderos perform a Mexican traditional dance at a Bay Area artist gathering. Photo: J. Jameson/ACTA. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM—Tsering Wangmo. Photo courtesy of the artist. THIS PAGE, TOP—Mentor artist in the Indian classical dance form Bharatanatyam, Soumya Tilak (back), adjusts the posture of her 2019 ACTA apprentice Vibha Raju in San Jose. Photo: S. Saraswat/ACTA. THIS PAGE, BOTTOM—Kimberly Kalanduyan. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Relationships



By gathering around cultural expression, we weave the threads that bind all of us.

ACTA creates opportunities for traditional artists and administrators to gather together and share not only art, but resources and ideas to build a more connected and robust traditional arts field.

These kinds of gatherings—created in collaboration with the traditional arts community for the traditional arts community—are rare. ACTA has led the way in creating meaningful spaces for practitioners, institutional partners, and the general public through:

STATEWIDE CONVENINGS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC SHARINGS AND PERFORMANCES

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

TOP—Cambalache embroidery by 2019 ACTA mentor artist Gaudencia Lopez. Photo: A. Kitchener/ACTA. BOTTOM—Artists and leaders from the 2018 - 2020 Cultural Pathways cohort with ACTA and CAC staff at a Southern California convening. Photo: ACTA.

STATEWIDE CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS OF COLOR

Over the last year ACTA provided services to the Cultural Pathways grantee cohort of the California Arts Council designed to strengthen the capacity of new and emerging arts organizations. We developed programming that included in-depth training and practical tools for the arts leaders within the grantee cohort. ACTA's unique perspective and skill set as a statewide organization in service to culturally-rooted arts organizations and practitioners is deeply aligned with the distinctive needs of the Cultural Pathway program's focus on funding and supporting "small, new, and emerging organizations rooted in communities of color, recent immigrant and refugee communities, and tribal or indigenous groups," as described by the California Arts Council.

ABOVE—Members of the Urasenke School of Chado, LA chapter. Photo: T. Saarelma/ACTA. RIGHT—Brewing matcha tea. Photo: T. Saarelma/ACTA.

TRADITIONAL ARTS ROUNDTABLE SERIES

On December 1, 2018, ACTA launched its 2018–2019 **Traditional Arts Roundtable Series** (TARS) in Los Angeles around the theme of "Ritual and Improvisation." In this first of five events, we invited students and teachers from the LA chapter of the Urasenke School of Chado to share the process and values of the traditional Japanese chado tea ceremony with a mixed audience of artists, advocates, and community members at Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC). Throughout the event, we honored the life and work of the late Madame Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto, National Heritage Fellow and one of the most influential and prolific tea masters in the United States. After the tea ceremony and a participatory chado tea brewing workshop, ACTA staff members moderated a discussion on the needs of traditional artists in cities like LA alongside our colleagues from the JACCC.

A COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS

On Sunday, June 9, 2019, ACTA held the 2019 Bay Area convening of Living Cultures Grants Program (LCGP) and Apprenticeship Program (AP) participants at BrasArte World Dance Center in Berkeley. We shared collective dialogue, presentations, and performances where Bay Area neighbors could learn about each other's work and deepen their local artistic network. Among the presenters from the ACTA family were Youngmin Lee, bojagi (Korean wrapping cloths) artist, dan tranh musician Vanessa Vo, mridangam (South Indian percussion) musician Rohan Krishnamurthy, dancers from Dancing Ci(y)phers, and performers from Senderos.

LEFT—Master mridangam artist Rohan Krishnamurthy. Photo: J. Jameson/ACTA. ABOVE—Master dan tranh musician Van-Anh "Vanessa" Vo (L) at the convening in Berkeley. Photo J. Jameson/ACTA.

"Yeah you come in here and you can beat the drums and everything, but it's more than that. I like it because I learn more about myself. We all think we are different, especially coming from a system that separates us racially. It teaches us that we are all actually interconnected with each other."

—**Aisha Estrada**, Reentry Through the Arts student in Afro-Colombian drumming

Transformation

By bringing traditional arts practices inside our state prisons, correctional facilities, and reentry spaces, we open a pathway toward communal expression for some of California's most vulnerable populations.

Engaging in art forms that are built on the bedrock of cultural knowledge and shared skills offers participants powerful self-affirmation, deep understanding of one another, and an overall sense of belonging.

ARTS IN CORRECTIONS

18 prisons served
8,427 instruction hours
26 weeks of programming
33 artist residents reflecting
19 expressive forms

REENTRY THROUGH THE ARTS

18 weeks of programming
92 participants
2 public events
4 artist residents reflecting **2** forms
174 instruction hours

Social Justice

By connecting deeply rooted traditional arts processes with localized social justice efforts, ACTA helps counter the forces of structural racism which manifest in disparities in health, education, jobs, and individual freedoms.

Our Building Healthy Communities - Boyle Heights initiative employs five local artist fellows and four mentees who integrate cultural arts into community-wide efforts against systemic inequities in their neighborhoods. Key issues include:

ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

YOUTH SERVICES

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP—A beadwork student at Valley State Prison. Photo: Peter Merts, courtesy of the California Arts Council. OPPOSITE PAGE, SIDEBAR—Aisha Estrada. Photo: S. Saraswat/ACTA. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM—ACTA Arts in Corrections artist resident Alberto Lopez (L) leads a class in Afro-Colombian percussion at Chuckawalla State Prison. Photo by Peter Merts, courtesy of the California Arts Council. THIS PAGE, TOP—ACTA artist fellow Vaneza Calderon (L) and mentee Marcos Macias lead a collective songwriting workshop in Pacoima. Photo: T. Saarelma/ACTA. THIS PAGE, INSET—Restorative justice quilting workshop in Boyle Heights. Photo: S. Saraswat/ACTA. THIS PAGE, SIDEBAR—Juana Mena. Photo: S. Saraswat/ACTA.

"Quilting is a way of uniting ourselves and healing, from our ancestors to the present. In the workshops, we have had the confidence to speak and take out what we have been carrying from way back. One person told me that thanks to the workshop, she had the courage to let go of something that was burning her. She was able to break that chain and ask for help."

—**Juana Mena**, ACTA Artist Fellow and master quilter with the Building Healthy Communities' Health Happens in Schools initiative

Belonging

By listening to communities identify their cultural resources, we help them create responses to challenges and opportunities on the local level.

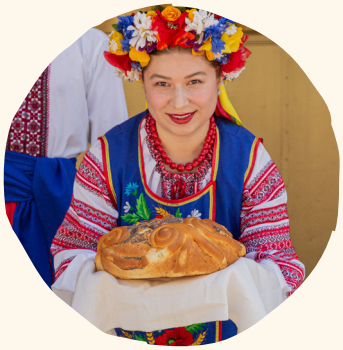
35 site visits

1000+ cultural assets identified

5 public gatherings

Over the course of ten years, we have refined a **Participatory Cultural Asset Mapping Methodology**: a way of understanding a specific community that recognizes and lifts up its inherent strengths, values its wisdom, and prioritizes its self-identified needs.

In 2018–19, we employed this methodology in Los Angeles' federally-designated Promise Zone with the City of Los Angeles' Dept. of Cultural Affairs and LA Commons. The collected data is shared with the public, and the process is set to conclude in late 2019.



PEOPLE * PLACES * PRACTICES

Photos from Promise Zone Live! event at Levitt Pavilion. ABOVE—Performer from the Imperial Court of Los Angeles and Hollywood. INSET—Interactive drumming workshop led by the indigenous Filipino cultural organization BIBAK. LEFT—Performer from Chervona Kalyna Ukrainian dance ensemble. Photos: T. Saarelma/ACTA.

Visibility

By championing traditional arts in California and beyond, we foster understanding and appreciation of our state's exceptional cultural wealth.

Harnessing our position as a leader in the field, we advocate for the traditional arts in the private and public sphere. In 2019, Executive Director Amy Kitchener was named Chair of the Board of Trustees for the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, where she led a convening exploring questions of traditional arts infrastructure at the national level. On a daily basis, our staff members provide individualized counsel and referrals to practitioners and organizations throughout the state.

Our newly-redesigned website serves as an increasingly valuable resource for the field and the general public, featuring articles, interviews, photo essays, reports, and videos. ACTA centers the stories of traditional arts and artists in our own editorial work and in our engagements with the press.

ABOVE—ACTA Board President Dan Sheehy, artists Marion Coleman and Ofelia Esparza, and ACTA Executive Director Amy Kitchener at the 2018 NEA National Heritage Fellowships Award Ceremony at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. ACTA played a strategic role in the successful nomination of both these artists. Photo: J. Carrillo/ACTA. RIGHT—Karuk artist and ceremonial leader Brian D. Tripp accepts ACTA's California Living Heritage Award. Photo: S. Saraswat/ACTA.

BRIAN TRIPP RECEIVES ACTA'S CALIFORNIA LIVING HERITAGE AWARD

On October 4, 2018, ACTA had the honor of recognizing one of Native California's most prolific and beloved artists: Brian D. Tripp. Brian is a Karuk visual artist, a poet, a ceremonial singer and dancer, a regalia maker, and a pillar in the indigenous community of Humboldt County. He has committed decades of his life to revitalizing ceremonial life in the Klamath River region, helping usher in a new era of artistic engagement in local indigenous culture. As the recipient of the third-ever California Living Heritage Award, Brian represents the dedication, vision, and courage that allows California's cultural traditions to thrive for generations.

People

STAFF

Amy Kitchener, *Co-Founder + Executive Director*
Jennifer Joy Jameson, *Program Manager + Media Director*
Shweta Saraswat, Ph.D., *Digital Media Specialist*
Julián Antonio Carrillo, *Program Manager*
Lily Kharrazi, *Special Projects Manager*
Jasmin Temblador, *Arts in Corrections Program Manager*
Kenya Curry, *Arts in Corrections Program Coordinator*
Quetzal Flores, *Program Manager*
Betty Marín, *Program Coordinator*
Mark Hernandez, *Director of Development*
Amy Lawrence, *Director of Administration*
Crystal Murillo, *Executive Assistant*
Donna Middleton, *Accounting Assistant*

BOARD

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Director & Curator Emeritus, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
Former Director, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
Former Director, Folk & Traditional Arts, National Endowment for the Arts

Jennifer Bates (Central Sierra Mewuk)
Founding Board Board Member and Chairperson, California Indian Basketweavers' Association
Traditional Mewuk Basket Weaver and California Native Culture Consultant

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Founder and Executive Director, California Institute for Community, Art, and Culture
Founder and Former Publisher, Heyday

Nikiko Masumoto, Secretary
Farmer and Artist, Masumoto Family Farms

Libby Maynard, Audit Committee Chair
Co-founder and Executive Director, Ink People Center for the Arts

Chike Nwoffiah, V.P. of Governance
Executive Director, Silicon Valley African Film Festival

Peter Pennekamp, V.P. of Development
Senior Fellow, Community Democracy Workshop

Charlie Seemann
Former Executive Director, Western Folklife Center

Josephine Talamantez, V.P. of Finance and Administration
Board Chair, Chicano Park Museum and Cultural Center
Former Chief of Programs, California Arts Council

ABOVE—ACTA staff, board members, and community partners gathered at the historic Requa Inn on the banks of the Klamath River in Humboldt County. Photo: S. Saraswat/ACTA.

Appreciation + Finances

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center
Barr Foundation
California Arts Council
The California Endowment
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
The Walter & Elise Haas Fund
The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
Humboldt Area Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
Japanese American Cultural and Community Center
Los Angeles County Arts Commission
Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture
MiaBo Foundation
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Radio Bilingüe
Rhesus Media Group
San Francisco Arts Commission
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Ricalda Uchiyama
Amy Uyeki
Patricia Wakida
Deborah Wong
Eleanor San San Wong
Shirley M. Wong

FINANCES

	2018–19*	2017–18
EXPENSES		
Personnel	899,838	714,092
Operating/Production	2,637,674	1,407,218
TOTAL	2,637,674	2,121,310
INCOME		
Earned	1,471,748	1,038,773
Contributed	1,072,797	815,470
TOTAL	2,544,545	1,854,243
DIFFERENCE	(93,129)	(267,067)

* Unaudited figures.

Earned income revenue grew as ACTA secured more fee-for-service contracts. Expenses grew as ACTA expanded staff and programs. In 2017-18, ACTA adopted new accounting rules resulting in greater deferred revenue in that year and subsequent years. At the same time, ACTA is completing projects with funds received in previous years, resulting in the appearance of a deficit. In fact, ACTA has no deficit and maintains an unrestricted cash reserve.

BACKGROUND—Leatherwork by master saddle-maker Gaylerd Thissell. Photo: S. Chen/ACTA.

Join us

in supporting California's thriving cultural communities!

When you give to the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, you support work that tells us what it means to be human.

Make a contribution today at **actaonline.org/support**

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actaonline.org

Follow us @CalTradArts

RIGHT—2019 mentor artist in Korean folk dance, DaEun Jung (R) with apprentice Melody Shim. Photo: S. Saraswat/ACTA.