

California

Arts

Council

Individual

Artist

Fellowships

LA County, 2023



Administered by Los Angeles Performance Practice

California Arts Council Individual Artists Fellowships Los Angeles County - 2023

California Arts Council | Individual Artists Fellowships | Los Angeles County – 2023

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Los Angeles Performance Practice

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WELCOME



MARSIAN DE LELLIS

(they/them)

Director of Creative Resourcing
Los Angeles Performance Practice

Dear Reader,

You're in for a treat. What you've uncovered is a time capsule of artists—artists who not only sustain but radically reimagine the creative landscape of Los Angeles. They work in a region that ranks first in arts providers, yet—according to the Arts Vibrancy Index—a staggering 466th in state funding. As an artist, I know this paradox all too well. It fuels my commitment to advocacy as Director of Creative Resourcing for Los Angeles Performance Practice, a small but nimble arts organization with a big heart. At LAPP, I work to secure critical resources artists need—not just by raising capital, but by picking the locks of gatekeeping and, above all, cultivating a sense of belonging.

One of our most meaningful initiatives was the Individual Artist Fellowships provided by the State of California through the California Arts Council. In 2023, LAPP distributed \$760,000 in unrestricted funding to 90 artists across disciplines and career stages. Support like this remains a rare chance to create, sustain, and sometimes—let's be honest—simply survive. But money was only the starting point; through mentorship and institutional connections, we worked to fortify the fragile ecosystems artists depend on to thrive.

My approach to resourcing has always been rooted in activism. It began with the rallies I organized as a teenager, which helped pass the nation's first LGBTQ+ student anti-discrimination law. I've carried that spirit into experimental puppetry and object performance, creating installations with dolls that memorialize obsessional lives. For me, championing artists means encouraging us to embrace our delusions—and push them even further into form.

This year I'm also serving as Director of Emerging Artists at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Puppetry Conference, where the motto is "risk, fail, risk again." That spirit of persistence resonates with me. So much of being an artist is about normalizing rejection and continuing anyway. This digital catalog serves as both a snapshot and a stratum: each layer testifying to the tenacity of culturemakers across generations. It honors artists whose work manifested through this fellowship, and countless others whose contributions enrich our creative fabric. If you weren't selected, know that the outcome speaks more to scarcity than merit. The demand is there. The talent is there. Now it's time for the resources to match.

This work came to life through many hands. I especially want to acknowledge Producer and former Director of Programs, Patricia Garza, who—with Claudia Diaz and William Ruiz Morales—built the scaffolding to realize this vision. Patricia shaped the Partner Council, gathering voices from all five districts and over 100 community organizations to guide outreach and center equity. They also connected artists with cultural institutions like Getty, MOCA, and Hammer, expanding the map of where emerging artists belong.

As every collection invites reflection, so does ours. LAPP traces its origins to the vision of founder Miranda Wright, who in 2010 set out to build a producing infrastructure linking artists between Los Angeles, Cuba, and Uganda. In those early years, Miranda did it all—handling paperwork, securing venues, even cleaning bathrooms after shows. Emerging from an ethos of international exchange, LAPP has evolved into what we now proudly call an "artist resourcing organization," with Programs for Artists, Field Initiatives, the Live Arts Exchange [LAX] Festival, and Creative Producing projects. Like any excavation site, we keep brushing away what no longer holds, exposing new scaffolding beneath the surface.

This catalog was never meant to be a sealed vault. It is both a living archive and a signal cast into the unknown—whether to future artists, or to distant civilizations who might someday stumble upon the creative traces we left behind. As you scroll through these pages, I invite you to lift the lid on the complicated, messy lives of artists whose work defines this fragile moment. These are the echoes we send forward. A small golden record from L.A. to the cosmos. The history of the future is being written right here, right now.

Until the next transmission,

MRSIAN

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

Los Angeles Performance Practice is a non-profit organization devoted to the production and presentation of contemporary performance by artists whose work advances and challenges multidisciplinary artistic practices. Our mission is to support a unique and diverse constellation of artists and audiences through the active creation and presentation of groundbreaking experiences that use innovative approaches to collaboration, technology and social engagement. Anchored in Los Angeles, our artists and projects have national and global reach. Across a range of platforms and partnerships, we build an active network of contemporary practitioners—curators and producers, artists and designers, audiences and patrons—all leveraged in service to the ideas and issues of our time.

Los Angeles Performance Practice (LAPP) was founded in 2010 by Miranda Wright as a producing infrastructure for international exchange projects. Two major exchanges laid the foundation for what would become LAPP: *The Closest Farthest Away* (Sage Lewis, Aleigh Lewis, Chi-wang Yang), developed digitally across the Florida Strait as part live performance and part narrative film in collaboration with artists in Los Angeles, Havana, and New York; and *Cooking Oil* (Asiimwe Deborah GKashugi, Emily Mendelsohn), a four-year-long exchange between artists in Los Angeles, Kigali, and Kampala, exploring joint performance aesthetics and social/political questions around the distribution of relief aid in East Africa.

In 2013, *Cooking Oil* was produced for a Los Angeles audience, and the organization shifted focus to the local ecology. The Live Arts Exchange [LAX] Festival was launched later that year, and has since presented eleven editions as a key platform for local artists.

As Creative Producers, we work closely with independent artists to realize new, innovative projects across dance, theater, puppetry, multimedia, immersive performance, installation, and hybrid forms. LAPP has provided critical producing infrastructure while partnering with a roster of adventurous institutions, including Center Theatre Group, UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance, REDCAT, CalArts Center for New Performance, Automata Arts, The Mistake Room, and others.

LAPP-supported works have toured nationally and internationally to The Public Theater's Under the Radar Festival, Sundance Film Festival's New Frontier, BAM's Next Wave Festival, PICA's TBA Festival, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, ICA Boston, MCA Santa Barbara, Fusebox Festival, Walker Art Center, Summerhall/Edinburgh Fringe, Festival Santiago a Mil (Chile), Curitiba International Festival (Brazil), Divine Comedy Festival (Poland), Prague Quadrennial, and more.

The organization was restructured as a 501(c)(3) non-profit in 2015, to better serve artists in Los Angeles. Over the past decade, LAPP has prioritized developing platforms and infrastructure for

independent artists, particularly those working in contemporary performance who have historically been underfunded and underserved in Los Angeles.

Following the success of our LAX Festival, LAPP launched additional local programs including:

FREE ADVICE, an open platform offering any artist in Los Angeles a free hour of consultation with a producer, institutional gatekeeper, arts organization leader, curator, or presenter;

WORKSHOPS, a workshop series for artists that covers both professional development and creative topics;

RESEARCH + DEVELOPMENT (R+D), launched in partnership with Automata Arts to offer early development residencies to Los Angeles-based artists creating a new work.

CASUAL, a performance series presenting works-in-process by local artists seeking critical audience feedback.

In 2019, LAPP received funding from the California Arts Council to research the evolving landscape of funding structures for performance-making in Los Angeles, compared with New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area. Ten nationally recognized artists were invited to co-create case studies evaluating how new work is resourced, created, and mobilized.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, LAPP moved programming online and played a role in reviewing emergency funds applications through the pilot round of Artist Relief. The organization leveraged PPP funds and the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) support to provide immediate funding and relief to artists within our Creative Producing projects.

In 2021, The LAX Festival reemerged as an in person weeklong event at FRANKIE, a large warehouse

space in the Arts District. In 2022, LAPP launched ACCELERATOR, a cohort model resourcing ten artists developing new work, and CONCENTRATE, a six-month residency offering arts workers access to office space and business services. A new field initiative, L.A. GATHERS convened arts leaders and culture bearers historically impacted by systemic oppression to explore building a restorative cultural economy. Later that year, Founder and Executive Director Miranda Wright announced her departure, beginning a multi-year transition towards shared leadership.

In 2023, the tenth installment of the LAX Festival reached pre-pandemic scale, with 25 events, across five downtown L.A. venues over six weeks. Several LAPP-supported creative producing projects premiere and begin touring. As an administering organization for the California Arts Council, LAPP awarded \$760,000 in unrestricted fellowships to 90 L.A. County artists across all genres, supporting 60 Emerging, 26 Established, and 4 Legacy Artists.

In 2024 LAPP received multi-year funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support its evolution to a shared governance model with multiple co-directors. In 2025, LAPP's Field Initiatives took a central role, launching BRIDGE THE GAPS: Wildfire Relief for L.A. Artists. Developed through direct conversations with nearly 200 artists, BRIDGE THE GAPS combined rapid-response micro-grants for fire-impacted artists with fully subsidized creative residencies at the Miles Memorial Playhouse, in partnership with the city of Santa Monica's Art of Recovery initiative.

While remaining firmly rooted in Los Angeles, LAPP's work now has a national reach, supporting emerging and mid-career artists and contributing to broader conversations on the evolving practices and infrastructure of contemporary performance.

A LETTER TO ARTISTS



WILLIAM RUIZ MORALES

(he/él)
Director of Field Initiatives + Creative Producing
Los Angeles Performance Practice

Dear Artists,

I am deeply grateful for the journey we shared over the past year, a journey that now finds new resonance through this digital publication, offered as an invitation to remain in dialogue.

Working alongside you has been a privilege. Through your diverse practices, I deepened my understanding of the creative ecology of Los Angeles. Your work is a reminder that creativity is a form of survival, a way of making sense of this city's many contradictions. As an immigrant, fellow artist, and relatively recent transplant still learning the dynamics of Los Angeles, I want to thank each of you, and Los Angeles Performance Practice, for opening the landscape and offering space for shared growth. In the workshops, field trips, conversations, and even the photo shoots, I witnessed the emergence of an artist-led network of exchange. I hope this publication is not a conclusion but a continuation.

A note for context: I joined LAPP as a Programs Associate and worked closely with Patricia Garza, whose leadership made running this initiative possible. Under their guidance, I focused primarily on the mentorship and learning structure of the Individual Artist Fellowships initiative and had the honor of co-shaping professional development pathways that responded to the needs of this cohort. Throughout the fellowship, we listened. You shaped the process. The testimonies you generously shared became the curriculum. From the beginning, I was struck by how a small organization like LAPP could take on such an ambitious project without losing its signature person-to-person approach. This is the kind of proximity we continue to see as essential for meaningful relationships between institutions and artists.

We are living through a moment in which artists are expected to do more with less, to move between institutional logics and community urgencies, to survive precarity and still be visionary. Too often, artists are spoken about rather than spoken with. Too often, institutions prioritize metrics over lived realities.

If we are to build a sustainable arts ecosystem in Los Angeles, institutions must realign, not with trends or mandates, but with artists. That means investing in long-term support. It means resisting simplified narratives that erase complexity. It means recognizing that artistic labor is also infrastructural labor. And it means being open to what we don't know and embrace it.

Though the fellowship has formally ended, our commitment has not. We are still here, still listening, still learning. Please continue to reach out. Let us keep building through collaboration, solidarity, and shared action.

As artists and art workers, we must continue to advocate for a field that resists simplification for the sake of marketability. Your work reaches beyond studios and stages. It opens doors to other possible worlds. The practices gathered here come from various geographies, languages, and cultural inheritances, and allow us to imagine a Los Angeles that speaks in plural, layered, and shimmering voices. This publication is one such small, localized act of resistance. It reminds us that even in times of division, we can convene differences without collapse.

In solidarity and reflection,

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark blue ink, consisting of bold, interconnected letters that appear to be 'WRM'.

FELLOWS



TANYA AGUIÑIGA

Established Artist

Artist, activist, and craftsperson collaborating with other artists and activists to create sculptures, installations, performances, and community-based art projects.



LEO ALAS

Emerging Artist

Contemporary multi-disciplinary artist exploring themes around care work and grief, through a Marxist-Feminist lens.



JANETH APARICIO VAZQUEZ

Emerging Artist

Janeth Aparicio Vazquez, Foos Skipping Rocks, 2020. Ballpoint pen on paper, 8 x 5 in. Courtesy of the artist.

"I'm interested in creating personal cartographies of the ecologies and histories of South Central, Los Angeles, and Mexico that guide my ancestral inner-knowing. My multidisciplinary work spans ink and graphite drawing, painting, and crafts-based mixed-media installation. I use these materials to create tender offerings to my past, present, and future communities."



NILGOON ASKARI

Established Artist

Iranian-American screenwriter combining her creative passions to enhance the art of storytelling in film.



C. BAIN


Emerging Artist

Gender liminal writer, performer, and artist whose work is about interstices of sex and violence.



MMIRI
/WATA

i. assignment

idei mmiri ≈  ≈ flood
nwanyị a na-añụ mmiri.
ụkwụ ka-ẹjị achọ ihe danyere na mmiri.
mmiri nwere ọkpụkpụ.
build a sentence out of water.
gill the syntax so it breathes.
ignore the blood in the water.
when the sentence collapses
blame the marrow.
by sentence i mean escape.

ii. burden

rainy season. idei mmiri.
mountains stacked high:
tibia. fibula. radius. teeth.
calcified archives of hair, gum, heart.
authorized dispersion.

a woman imbibes mmiri. chokes
on her fifth great-grandmother's sister's femur.
coughs out a dead thing with teeth.
watches the dead thing chew water.
wishes the dead thing would stop.
pleads for remnants to remain in elsewhere.
seeks a cove to call safe space.
drowns a world in silence then scream

iii. analysis

amnesia
wrapped in macerated skin—

a dead thing with teeth
chases tongue to re-member itself
rust-bruised wrists to bloated hands
to swollen belly to boned feet to
eyeless head reclaimed



CHISARAOKWU ASOMUGHA, MD

Established Artist

"The two most important challenges artists face involve censorship and funding. We need more direct and indirect support, encouragement, opportunities, and the ability to say yes to ourselves first."

.CHISARAOKWU., Mmiri I (excerpt), 2023. Published in Michigan Quarterly Review, Spring 2024. Photo: Artist.

Legacy Artist

KAMAU DAÁOOD



Creativity and history runs through the blood of revered poet Kamau Daáood.

Honored with numerous accolades, Kamau has been writing poetry, performing, teaching, and lifting up his hometown of South Central for over fifty years. He's published multiple books of poetry including *The Language of Saxophones* (2005), has performed his work internationally, and has been featured in several documentaries.

Dubbed a “word musician” of his community, Kamau is known for his powerful live readings, which are often accompanied by jazz musicians playing alongside his poems’ vivid imagery and chanted words of invocation. Onstage, he explains, “the page just becomes the instrument. So I read the words, but I try to transcend ... I just try to let go.”

One of Kamau’s first public readings was also his initiation into the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra, the South LA ensemble that has been preserving and presenting music from Black composers and musicians since 1961, and that Kamau is still a member of today. Known to many as simply the Ark—so aptly named for a vessel that holds sacred things—the multigenerational band has always been dedicated to community, social consciousness, the arts, and African culture.

He was attending a festival in South Park where the ensemble was playing one day, when community member Ted Jones noticed eighteen-year-old Kamau had his poetry with him and told Horace Tapscott—the legendary jazz pianist, composer, and founder of the Ark. “The next thing I know,” Kamau says, “the Ark was performing on stage. They were playing a tune called ‘Equinox’ by John Coltrane, and I’m on stage with a fourteen-piece band behind me, reading my poetry. And then from that point on, I considered myself drafted into the Ark.”

As we continue our conversation, I’m struck by how Kamau’s life and career are intertwined with the arts movements of Los Angeles. Born and raised in South LA, Kamau Daáood started writing in high school before connecting with other Black poets in the Watts Writers Workshop as a teenager. There, “the criticism that you got from people was really sincere and really intense,” he recalls. “If you came with something that was weak or you didn’t put a lot of work in it, they would let you know where it was, you know. And when you hit the mark and really did your job, they would let you know that too. And that was a very encouraging environment.”

He was influenced by the older, founding members of the workshop—including legends Ojenke, Eric Priestley, K. Curtis Lyle, Quincy Troupe, Wanda Coleman, and Jayne Cortez of the Los Angeles poetry scene in the ’60s and ’70s. Kamau also nurtured his craft under the mentorship of many other artists in LA, including Horace Tapscott; John Outterbridge, the former director of the Watts Towers Art Center; and Billy Higgins, one of the most recorded drummers in jazz history. Though these three greats have since passed and are honored as community ancestors, Kamau feels blessed to call them mentors.

Mentorship is tied to teaching by example, according to Kamau, as much wisdom is passed down just by “being around great people, and seeing how they navigate the world, how they are with other people, how they approach their art form, how they organize.” He takes this concept to heart in his interactions with young people as well, where it’s important to “just be true in front of them, to tell the truth and tell your stories,” he says.

In addition to his roots in South LA, Kamau is inspired by griot traditions from West Africa, where storytellers called griots, or djelis, are responsible for collecting the histories of their villages. “I’m talking about everything from the actual history to the emotional history,” Kamau explains. When griots pass down these stories through oral tradition, epic poetry, and music, “they refresh memory. They accent important issues. They teach us, they show us ourselves.”

Kamau Daáood’s commitment to this storytelling and community building tradition is clear. In 1989, he co-founded the World Stage Performance Gallery in Leimert Park with his mentor and master drummer Billy Higgins. It began as an informal collective and jam session space inspired by smaller “storefront” arts organizations Kamau grew up with, especially gathering spaces of the Black Arts Movement of the ’60s and ’70s. But soon, as they presented concerts and offered writing and vocal workshops, many people became drawn to The World Stage. Jazz musicians Herbie Hancock and Charles Lloyd visited the Stage, among many other icons. Kamau even recalls Nina Simone sitting in the audience one day. Today, the World Stage has grown into an organization that continues to inspire and gather together Black musicians, writers, and artists with its concert series, weekly workshops, and other programs.

Kamau’s work as co-founder and former artistic director of the World Stage also led him to realize how community organizing can be an art form in itself.

“Even if I’m not writing or performing, I’m in community and interacting with people, and I can’t help but be who I am and what I am. And my ideas and my feelings are constantly being put on the table of the world.”

With this mindset, Kamau envisions that anywhere a creative is can become a space for art. “It can be in what you say, it can be the way that you approach things. It can be in a poem, it can be set to music, it can be put to dance. It could be a performance for one person, it could be a performance for a thousand people.”

As a respected community arts activist, Kamau Daáood has also witnessed the gentrification of South LA through the decades. It’s an issue he highlights as important for Leimert Park, “the cultural hub of Black Los Angeles,” a place built by the local community and where musicians, writers, artists have thrived. “If we lost that, it would be a big blow to Los Angeles.” When corporations and entities with capital priorities have come into Leimert, they often buy up properties with ideas of potential profits, he explains, and sometimes from young people who are not aware of the value of their parents’ or relatives’ properties. As a result, those who have lived in Leimert Park for a long period of time—and who have been long invested in their communities—are often pushed aside. Kamau believes art and culture also plays a role in calling attention to gentrification, racism, and other social issues.

In 2023, the California Arts Council recognized Kamau Daáood’s artistic and community work with a Legacy Artist Fellowship—an award that, in his eyes, has granted him the valuable gift of time. He explains how living as an artist has required him to take on side businesses and other projects to make ends meet in the past. Things have always worked out for Kamau and his family, but he’s been in situations where he was “right on the edge.”

“I have so much hustle in me, from the way I’ve had to live,” he shares. “A big part of this process is just me establishing another relationship with my time. It’s okay to rest when I want to rest. It’s okay to just zone out and work on something, just spend time and be engaged in something. It’s okay, you know, to have time to read books and stuff like that. So I’m thankful for this time and I’m confident that some work will come from it.”

Kamau is currently working on a host of projects, from organizing a comprehensive archive of his work, to writing a memoir, to publishing and recording new poetry, and possibly being part of another documentary film. And while many artists of his experience often focus on retrospectives, Kamau assures us: “Mature artists are clearer about what they see going forward than ever.”



ROHAN CHANDER a.k.a BAKUDI SCREAM

Emerging Artist

Electronic musician and artist whose work explores gothic, science-fiction storytelling as rewriting of personal and shared histories.



HONEY BLU

Emerging Artist

Lady MC, Singer/Songwriter, & Community Organizer, who uses her musical & creative prowess to uplift and build up the Afrikan (Black) community in various spaces throughout the diaspora.

CINDY BONAPARTE

Emerging Artist

"My art arises from a natural impulse. It's the same thing that motivates me to keep breathing. I aim to create works that are life-affirming, to be an example of the world I want to see and live in. Natural materials like raw clay, paper, and fabric are all materials that hold significance in my practice. They point to my lineage and connection to nature and my spiritual practice."

Pieces of Me, 2024. Remnant fabrics, photographs, trims, and thread; 32" x 21.5" x .25". Courtesy of Heidi Marie Photography.



A. LAURA BRODY

Established Artist

"My fellow disability community influences my sculptural works. In my practice, I reimagine mobility scooters, wheelchairs, and walkers as sculptures and turn scrap fabrics into portraits and wearable art. My artworks are exuberant, colorful, detailed, and larger than life, but they also open up conversations about disability, social justice, sustainability, and waste."

Pieces of Me, 2024. Remnant fabrics, photographs, trims, and thread; 32" x 21.5" x .25". Courtesy of Heidi Marie Photography.





MARY BRONAUGH

Emerging Artist

Film + Television writer-director and producer.



BERNARD BROWN

Established Artist

Performer, choreographer, arts activist, and educator who situates their work at the intersection of Blackness, belonging, and memory.

El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reyna de los Angeles

What do any of us hope for
at the beginning of a thing?

Lovers planting kisses behind neck and ears.
Cautious farmer in her empty black-mouth field.
Indios baker's language flavored by corn flour,
by magic powder
by porous whispers of gold under mountains
under an ocean so silky
she rocked in his creamy dreams
tossing in turtle-shaped bowl
creased by butter and fresh milk
a silkworm path of salt
yoke and river water before
the hardening. Before the great walk.
Before the disappearance of canoes.
The map of rooted fathers, children and mothers
shredded, left under the dust.
Before it, the limestone church, infiltrates,
taking its illusive shape.

This is more than the turning over of a thought.
Any kind of birth is a journey. A challenge. A defeat.
Both life and death in the same breath.
The thing to be settled into
renamed
and called home.



SHONDA BUCHANAN

Established Artist

"My work is about the untold stories of BIPOC and women. Issues of landscape, ownership, removal, liminal space, and loss and reclamation of home are central in my poems, short stories, memoir and fiction. My Black and Indigenous communities inspire me to persevere in the face of societal obstacles while maintaining my sense of self and human agency. I'm also influenced by my writer friends who are also digging for answers to questions of heredity and inheritance."

Selected poem from Artificial Earth: A Poetry Chapbook for Los Angeles' Mixed-race Founders and California Indians



BRYAN BYRDLONG

Emerging Artist

Black poet from Chicago, Illinois.



DR. CECILIA CABALLERO

Emerging Artist

Poet, writer, lecturer of Chicana/o and Ethnic Studies in the California State University system.



RAUL CARDONA

Established Artist

Theater artist, actor, director, & educator who uses Teatro to empower youth, students, organizations.



JAY CARLON

Established Artist

Experimental dance artist and community organizer committed to bridging his art practice toward sustainability and decolonization.



DANIEL EDUVIJES CARRERA

Established Artist

"Notions of marginalization, identity, masculinity, family, religion and coming-of-age are central themes in my current work. Although cinema is a challenging industry, I'm committed to creating work that speaks to the unique intersection of queer and Latine identity. As a filmmaker, I strive to create films that bring greater visibility, nuance and dimensionality to often overlooked perspectives."

Director Daniel Eduvies Carrera and Cinematographer Carlo Canlas Mendoza on the set of FIAT LUX 5000. Photo by David Rodriguez



SAN CHA

Emerging Artist

Procession: An Evocation for McQueen, 2022, Performance still for LACMA. San Cha and saxophonist Lu Coy are both wearing custom OLIMA garments as they lead a procession through LACMA's pathways. Photo Courtesy of LACMA and Hrdwrkr

"The Catholic church and its imagery and music influence my work. The repression paired with the intense drama of sin and redemption makes me question reality. I love the moment when reality gets blurred."

Still I Stand

Still I stand
not like a tree
the way my mother told me
but like a dandelion
more scrappy, wild, and free
surprising people
in the harsh cold of impossibilities
I incubate in disguise
underestimated as a little thing
and spread the blanket of my tribe
We bloom in unfriendly places
season after season
Still I speak undeniably
with dandelion fields of gold.



JEN CHENG

Emerging Artist

Poet & multidisciplinary artist who blends East-West cultural influences in a new form, Feng Shui Poetry.

Jen Cheng, "Still I Stand," self published & featured in the City of Los Angeles' 2024 AAPI Heritage Month Guide

KEVIN EMILIO CONTRERAS

Emerging Artist

Kevin Emilio Contreras, Ruthless Envy on Hyperion, September 12, 2022. Digital Photo.



"I see my work as part of a lineage of queer photographers who came before me as well as other artists who similarly sought to document the lives and experiences of our community in all its raw and vulnerable states. I try in my own way to canonize my sitters and portray them as both larger-than-life and human."



STEPHANIE DEUMER

Emerging Artist

"My goal is to demystify patriarchal structures that are pervasive in technology, advertising, and entertainment that surround us on a daily basis. Engaging the very imagery and materials used in these industries, my hope is that my work will fracture the content and materials into new ways of understanding and seeing, through a feminist lens."

Stephanie Deumer, Photosynthetics, 2021-ongoing. Solar-powered video projection, Plexiglas, soil, and seedlings, 18 x 18 x 18 in. Courtesy of the artist



JENNAYA DUNLAP

Emerging Artist

"Art is an amazing weapon in the fight to dismantle systems of oppression, and a beautiful tool for community building and reimagining a world where many worlds fit. I want to tell stories and create imagery that make people yearn for deeper connection to each other, to Mother Earth, to ancestral guidance and traditions, and to practices that motivate them to overthrow carceral systems and capitalist exploitation."

Jennaya Dunlap, "Breaking Free", 2024. Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the artist



ALEXANDRIA DOUZIECH

Emerging Artist

"For protection, with love: Alexandria Douziech," installation view, Blue Roof Studios November 11-December 13, 2023. Courtesy of Blue Roof Studios. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.

"I am inspired by my parents' lived experiences — my mother's childhood on a sugarcane plantation in Guyana and my father's work on a canola farm in Canada — my work uncovers the hidden labor and lives behind plant-based commodities. Through immersive installations, sculptures, and community-driven projects, I document stories of human endurance and ecological survival, illuminating the deep connections between land, labor, colonization, and cultural legacy."

HIROKAZU KOSAKA

“To shoot yourself is to shoot your ego,” Hirokazu Kosaka says at the beginning of our conversation.

He sits in front of a backdrop of a large target, eighteen feet in diameter, at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JCCC). This target is known as a “hazy target” in kyūdō, the Japanese art of archery, symbolizing a full moon with clouds and the blurring of boundaries. He painted the target thirty years ago here at the JCCC’s Aratani Theater during one of his performances. “It’s about myself, to shoot the self.”

A renowned performance artist and notable figure in Little Tokyo for over forty years, Hirokazu Kosaka was awarded a Legacy Artist Fellowship from the California Arts Council in 2023. As he recounts his life’s work—from his education at the prestigious Chouinard Art Institute and involvement in the conceptual art scene in the 1970s, to his formative years at the Buddhist monastery, to his ongoing programs at the JCCC—I am amazed by his legacy and impact on Los Angeles and the larger art world as a local elder and culture bearer.

He currently serves as JCCC’s Master Artist in Residence, though he has been advocating for Japanese culture and art there since 1983. Recent years have also marked many anniversaries directly related to his community involvement in Little Tokyo. Koyasan Buddhist Temple, where Hirokazu served as a minister, celebrated its 110th anniversary in October 2023. And earlier this year, Los Angeles Kyūdō Kai, the Japanese archery dojo that he has been teaching and leading for decades, marked their 108th anniversary.

Central to his artistic practice is a concept he has termed “On the Verandah,” which explores the rituals and infinite possibilities of in-between spaces. “The beauty of the veranda is profound, and it’s part of my life,” Hirokazu explains. “It is a space in architecture that is either outside or inside. It is an in-between space. It’s not yes or no, it can be maybe. It’s not black, it’s not white, infinite shades of gray. It is a place, space, where man meets nature. And also it’s a buffer space. It is protection, a barricade between a space.”

This concept is key in his art as well as his teaching. At the JCCC, Hirokazu shares his cultural knowledge through traditional archery, tea ceremony, calligraphy, and flower arrangement workshops to students of all ages. “These are called the way, dō in Japanese—kyūdō, sadō, shodō, kadō. All those are a way of approach and observation.” He emphasizes the importance of emptying your mind, or “mindfulness,” in all these practices.

Widely influenced by Buddhist spirituality, Zen archery, Noh and Kabuki theater, and the conceptual art movement, his work and performances have been exhibited throughout Los Angeles and internationally. One turning point for Hirokazu was Soleares (1973), in which he played the flamenco guitar with a razor blade inserted in his finger in Kyoto, his blood pouring onto the white floor of the gallery for an hour before he packed up his things and began a thousand-mile pilgrimage of walking

in the forests and mountains of Shikoku Island. During this pilgrimage, Hirokazu Kosaka’s artistic spirit transformed into one of discipline. “It just overtook me,” he recounts, describing it as the moment when he decided to become a Buddhist monk. He was ordained as a Shingon Buddhist priest and lived at the island’s temple for three years, before moving back to Los Angeles, ministering at Koyasan Temple, and taking root at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center.

He tells me about the creation of the new Kosaka Center for Art & Crafts—funded two years ago by a W.M. Keck Foundation grant. When you enter the Center, located on the fifth floor of the JCCC, you can see the sunlight coming in from the shoji screens and dark cabinets underneath the windows. As I learn more about his practice, Hirokazu Kosaka shares the fascinating story of these furnishings’ own cultural history.

Twenty-five years ago, he had invited paper craftsmen from Echizen, a city in Fukui Prefecture, Japan, that has been making traditional washi paper for the last 1,500 years. During their time in Los Angeles, the craftsmen visited not only the JCCC but also a number of art museums, including the Getty Center. It was there that one of them recognized their own Echizen paper at an exhibit of Rembrandt’s etchings from the 17th century, when the Dutch had an exclusive trading agreement with Japan. Artisans in Echizen continue to make washi paper today using traditional methods passed down through generations. “That paper is now sitting in my Kosaka Center, filtering the Los Angeles light,” Hirokazu explains.

The cabinets are imported as well, made with the wood of Hinoki cypress trees from Wakayama Prefecture. Seven years ago, Hirokazu himself traveled to the base of Mount Kōya-san, which is also where the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism is headquartered. There, he cut the trees on particular nights of the full moon with his relatives who are traditional carpenters from Wakayama. The cabinets were constructed and stained with Binchōtan charcoal and installed at the Kosaka Center in Little Tokyo. To Hirokazu, this beautiful space where he now hosts his workshops is also part of “On the Verandah,” as the paper screens become the in-between buffer, where sunlight filters in.

What’s next for seventy-six-year-old Hirokazu Kosaka? Look out for a major retrospective of his work “Hirokazu Kosaka: Art and Asymmetry” in fall 2025, presented by the JCCC in collaboration with curator Julie Lazar, through the support of The Andy Warhol Foundation. Alongside this upcoming exhibit, Hirokazu is creating a new performance entitled Noh: Ghost of Bronzeville—inspired by the Bronzeville era, when African American communities lived in Little Tokyo from 1941 to 1946, following the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans in concentration camps during World War II. As the Bronzeville nightlife thrived with jazz musicians and “Breakfast Clubs,” Hirokazu’s new work will spotlight a fascinating era of Little Tokyo history, such as when Miles Davis and Charlie Parker performed together at the famed Finale Club.



REENA DUTT

Established Artist

THIS IS NOT A TRUE STORY by Preston Choi, directed by Reena Dutt, produced by Artists At Play, featuring Julia Cho, Rosie Narasaki and Zandi De Jesus.

Photography by Grettel Cortes.

*"I am motivated by stories that bring voice to underheard ideas, people, bodies and communities. My community is filled with folx from so many walks of life. The support and interest in stories that feel hard to find makes me really think about what kinds of projects I *need* to make vs. want to make."*



MARY EHRIN

Emerging Artist

"My work draws inspiration from the light and landscape of Southern California. Using reflective and highly textured materials, I explore our perceptions of culture, emotion, memory, space, and the natural world. A variety of materials- such as feathers, gold leaf, porcelain, and mirrored surfaces- create hybridized forms with the aim of fostering communication, associative meaning, and spaces where the materials themselves become their own narrative. The work seeks to reconcile the natural and the artificial, providing a means for reinterpreting ourselves and the environments that surround us."

Mary Ehrin, Molten Meteorite Platinum Series 1, 2015. embossed leather, jute thread, armature, 32 x 29 x 17 inches. Courtesy of BMOCA. photo credit: Wes Magyar





AI EBASHI

Emerging Artist

Japanese-born playwright and multidisciplinary theater-maker.



SARA ELLEN FOWLER

Emerging Artist

"I treasure the community of poets and artists I share drafts with and collaborate with. As an artist, I need a site or lab in which to place my feelings and questions — testing them, understanding them, integrating what I'm learning, and figuring out how to digest life experience in a way that may be compelling to other readers. Art serves this function in my life."



DAWN ERTL

Emerging Artist

"Gulf of Mexico 2050" 2023, hemp & cotton yarn, Tencel yarn (a brand/type of lyocell), fiber reactive dye, projection climate data, 16 x 23 inches.

"I make art because I have questions, and I want to find a way to understand and express my understanding of complex ideas. I'm interested in relationships from one-on-one to whole societies and environments and the interconnectedness of these systems. I'm ultimately looking to be understood and valued for my perspectives while learning and growing because of the people and influences around me."



SARAHJEEN FRANÇOIS

Emerging Artist

Haitian-American performer and Myth-maker whose creative work is an exploration of the rich storytelling practices of the Afro-folkloric.



LIZ GONZÁLEZ

Established Artist

Fourth-generation Californian, who writes creative nonfiction, poetry, and fiction.

The Fourth Wife

My many times great
grandfather
had four wives
one on each
corner--
four wives
and four houses on
one street corner.

I ask myself about
the names and occupations of
each wife-- if occupation existed beyond
birthing children, washing
clothing, scrubbing
sinks and floors, keeping
the peace.

I ask myself especially about one
who got away, a dressmaker who
ran off to New York--tired I suppose
of sharing her husband with three other
wives

(though maybe she'd tired of
sharing a favorite co-wife with
white-haired husband).

Did she wonder at the lights
of the Brooklyn Bridge?
Did she shiver when
the Atlantic winds blew
down
the
Avenues?

Did she cry when she
arrived at an
apartment where no sister
waited with
warm arms?

Or did she pick
up needle
and thread, let the fabric flow
beneath her fingers, revel
in her newly found
solitude?

I write this poem while
listening to a conference on
the names of God.

Absent the grizzled patriarch,
the golden trumpet,
did she discover the name of God
on those recovered shores
or find that she'd
carried it with her
woven into the letters
of her own
Name?

Audrey Harris Fernandez



AUDREY HARRIS FERNÁNDEZ

Emerging Artist

"As an inhabitant of the Southern California border region, I'm also interested in bridging the US-Mexico border through translation. In my writing I try to capture an invisible spiritual reality and put it into words. I am interested in how to use traditional forms to convey nontraditional messages around women's cultural contributions and spiritual authority."

Audrey Harris Fernández, "The Fourth Wife," Sunstone: Mormon Experience, Scholarship, Issues, and Art, Spring 2024.



EMEER HASSANPOUR

Emerging Artist

A shot from the feature film "The Bread Season" 2024

"Artists must hold others responsible while pursuing their own dreams. I'm part of the working class, and their struggles and experiences are part of me. My work addresses topics like colonialism and human rights, especially those related to race, class and gender."



RASHAIDA HILL

Emerging Artist

"I have an immense respect for the people of color, queer, and intersectional allies that are inspired to learn more about the weaving of our combined histories and differing perspectives. My community allows me to constantly hold myself accountable to an open mind and heart and actively listen to the concerns of my audiences, participants, and community members. This leads to productive conversations surrounding community support and imagining a future that is equitable for all."

Promo for AKATA a UCLA MFA Upstart Series choreographed by Rashaida Hill in collaboration with dancer Sydney Richardson and Aryeal Lands. Photo taken by Zay Monae



ANDREW HUANG

Established Artist

Visual artist, writer and director who crafts hybrid fantasy worlds and mythical dreamscapes.



FERNANDO ISAÍ

Emerging Artist

Zapotec teaching artist challenging the separation between art and everyday life.

PRIMA JALICHANDRA-SAKUNTABHAI

Emerging Artist

"For protection, with love: Alexandria Douziech," installation view, Blue Roof Studios November 11-December 13, 2023.
Courtesy of Blue Roof Studios. Photo: Courtesy of the artist.



"I feel the responsibility to be both artist and custodian of a history that would otherwise be lost. My practice is an excavation and meaning-making methodology that can be adapted by others. My contribution to art is not simply to produce work but also to create a conceptual framework for artists in diaspora to co-create and complicate existing narratives of belonging in both their countries of residence and origin."



RAY JONES A.K.A. SERENDIPITY

Emerging Artist

SFV-based drag performer blending comedy, horror, and camp to illustrate their takes on gender through performance.



RAY LARKIN

Emerging Artist

Skokomish Yakama artist, a mother, and a driving force behind [MOM.](#)



DYAN JONG

Emerging Artist

Resilience, 2017, Site-specific light installation using 2 K5600 Jokerbug 1600, Powerfoggers, Chinatown Mandarin Plaza, Los Angeles, 35' x 36' x 7'

"I'm a gardener, not an architect, and I also don't have a formal art background, so my immediate community shapes my work quite a bit. Conversations open up serendipitous new worlds and unforeseen paths that I wouldn't otherwise know existed. I'm interested in exploring who gets to participate in art, by repurposing the tools and materials of my current background as a commercial "insider" to create work more accessible to the public community."



DAEUN JUNG

Established Artist

Korean-born dancer-choreographer interlacing forms, principles, and methods of her ancestral and contemporary performance practices within her self-constructed system.

NORRI, 2023, Performed at the Odyssey Theater. Photo by Taso Papadakis

MIRANDA KAHN

Established Artist

"My practice is centered around the hand-cut and tactile. My hand-cut paper art and my stop motion animation are slow and delicate processes. Sometimes cutting into a few inches of paper takes hours of meditative cutting. These meticulous processes imprint on the art, changing how the viewer interacts with the work and allowing them to connect to the emotional message behind its story."

Miranda Kahn, Wave 2, 2024. Hand Cut Yatsuo paper, 14 x 18 inches.
Courtesy of the artist.



JIMIN ANNE KIM

Emerging Artist

"My community not only influences my work, they are a part of my work. In my exhibition, "Voices of Experience", we aimed to amplify often unheard and underrepresented artistic voices burdened by day to day survival. Four elder immigrant women from the MacArthur Park community embarked on a creative collaborative journey. "What story do you want to tell?" was the question at the center of this process. Each woman gave their answer in different artistic mediums, chosen to reflect the unique perspective and experience of her story."

"Voices of Experience" featuring Yang Ja Kim. Photo: Hannah Doer



ANA CARLA LAIDLEY

Emerging Artist

“Through Dance, I feel that we connect in a space that is transcendental.”

Reborn in Samba: The History of Aninha Malandro was a piece presented at the Fringe Festival in Edmonton, CA



NOBUKO MIYAMOTO



Dancer, singer, songwriter, and elder Nobuko Miyamoto describes herself as a community artist, whose art is intertwined with her decades of activism and organizing.

Alongside the rise of the civil rights, Black Power, and anti-war movements of the 1960s and early '70s, Nobuko Miyamoto found both her role in the struggle and her artistic voice, creating music that invigorated the Asian American movement. She, Chris Iijima, and William "Charlie" Chin formed a folk music group, touring the country with protest songs of racial solidarity within the liberation struggles of the era. In 1973 they recorded their songs in *A Grain of Sand*, which is considered the first album of Asian American music.

"I met Chris Iijima, who was an activist," Nobuko recalls, "and we stumbled into writing a song. When we performed that song in front of an Asian audience, it was like, 'Oh my God.' It was like this magic moment. We never had this before. This is our song—this is what it sounds like, this is what it looks like. ... And that's how I began my second life as an artist, to create music, theater, and dance that expressed who we were as Asian Americans."

Now in her eighties, Nobuko continues sharing her work and legacy. Earlier this year at the VC Film Fest in Los Angeles, the Japanese American National Museum presented the world premiere of *Nobuko Miyamoto: A Song in Movement*, a documentary which will also be featured this fall in the PBS series *Artbound*. In 2021 the Smithsonian released her most recent album *120,000 Stories*, collecting Nobuko's original recordings from the '70s, as well as her new music uplifting Asian American issues, Black lives, and environmentalism. The title refers to the mass incarceration of more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry in US concentration camps during World War II. Nobuko also published her memoir in 2021, entitled *Not Yo' Butterfly: My Long Song of Relocation, Race, Love, and Revolution*, which her mentor, the late activist Grace Lee Boggs, had encouraged her to write.

"I knew that my life had been connected to a very distinct and important historic movement, not only for the Japanese American community but for people of color in general," Nobuko says, recalling her process of writing the memoir and her desire to spread awareness of the Asian American movement. "And my engagement as an artist in that was really important to tell. Because artists make work which are archives—paintings and music and theater etc. They're all archives."

Nobuko's story is a transformative one. She was born in 1939 as a third-generation Japanese American, and grew up in the internment camps—specifically the Santa Anita detention center, which was one of the largest camps where Japanese Americans were forcibly removed. After her family was released, she pursued her art education, as her father was the one who exposed her to music and Nobuko had been drawn to dance from the young age of four. She went on to perform in films and musicals in the '50s and '60s, including *The King and I* and *West Side Story* and *Flower Drum Song* on Broadway. This is when she recognized something was missing.

"When I was a young person, I never heard a song that sang my story, or sang what I felt," she says. "There was no place to find a real expression of who we were either at that time in the 1950s, where other people were writing stories about us. ... it was a mythology that was created outside of our own expression, and it satisfied white people's needs."

This is what led to Nobuko's political education and activation. Her vocal instructor Dini Clarke shared his own experience of racial discrimination as a Black man and

taught her about the storytelling mastery of Black women singers Billie Holiday, Lena Horne, Carmen McCrae, and Nina Simone. In 1968 she worked on a film about the Black Panthers and continued her involvement in social activism in New York, meeting Yuri Kochiyama as well as other activists like Chris Iijima through Asian Americans for Action. Following their powerful tour of protest music across the US, Nobuko Miyamoto returned to Los Angeles, where she found her community base at Senshin Buddhist Temple in South Central with the help of Rev. Mas Kodani and started teaching dance classes, rehearsing for performances, and connecting more deeply with Japanese culture.

In 1978 Nobuko founded Great Leap in Los Angeles, which expanded from an Asian American performance group to a multicultural arts organization and is still active today. In addition to its live performances, educational music videos, and training programs for artists, Great Leap hosts the FandangObon eco-festival, an annual celebration that has gathered together Japanese, Mexican, and Black communities and other local groups in LA through traditional music and dance.

"When you make music together, when you dance together, and you have ideas—something clicks in, where you are connected in a very deeper way than having a conversation without that."

Nobuko Miyamoto started FandangObon with musicians and activists Quetzal Flores and Martha Gonzalez in 2012 when they discovered similarities between the Japanese Buddhist ancestor remembrance rituals of obon and the traditions of son jarocho, a musical tradition that was influenced by Indigenous, African, and Spanish communities in Veracruz, Mexico.

"We had a cultural link," Nobuko explains. "They were involved with fandango son jarocho, this form of circle dance, circle practice, where they had a platform in the middle, and the guitar players would play around the platform, and then dancers would get on the platform and step out rhythms. It was very participatory. And I had been working with Obon... we make a circle too. We have a platform in the middle that musicians usually stand on, and then people dance around that platform. And so when I saw that, I went, 'That looks very familiar to me; what would happen if we combine?' And that's how we got started."

Together, they determined that the FandangObon festival would be a conversation between cultures, highlighting each culture's unique practices while drawing a link to their shared environmental values and the communal power of music. Through the years, they have collaborated with the Nigerian Talking Drum Ensemble and Muslim artists and performers to incorporate West African dance and Sufi traditions in the festival as well.

Nobuko describes how these cultures' long-standing traditions can teach us how to treat the earth and share its resources. "They weren't in such a hurry to make big bucks, to destroy the environment—they tried to live within the environment. So earlier cultures were really much more careful about the environment. And so we wanted to dig into those traditions to show people, going backwards, looking backwards could actually help us move forward."

Here's to learning from Nobuko Miyamoto's inspiring story and moving forward with purpose. "I've just been going for all these years... but the work and the collaborations and the range of communities, I think, has been important for people to see," she says. "And for artists, for younger artists to know and figure out: how do we serve this changing world? How do we use art to really move us forward and move us together, and keep us from being torn apart in this very difficult period of time?"

DWAYNE LEBLANC

Emerging Artist

First generation, Caribbean-American artist and filmmaker focusing on themes of migration, visibility and dual identities.

Still from *Civic*, dir. Dwayne LeBlanc, 2022
Cinematography by Andrew Yuyi Truong.





NAMI LEE

Emerging Artist

Doll House III, 2023, Photo-Intaglio Print

Korean-American visual artist working with a variety of printmaking processes combining autobiographical elements with themes of migration, domestic spaces, and the multiplicities of Korean womanhood.

FRANCISCO LETELIER

Established Artist

"As a keeper of culture, my work represents community and adds to evolving ideas concerning belonging, identity, and communication. The work contains ideas and materials gathered from nature, used not only to carry historic ideas but also to gain new, scientific insights into the natural world. Creativity and imagination provide answers and direction, a legacy of cultural understandings and teachings, ideas that I expand and pass on."

Mapa/Map, 2024, Acrylic on Canvas 40" x 60"





JOYCE LU

Emerging Artist

Performing artist, director, and educator interested in using art as and for healing justice.

Photo by Lola Salgado, LAPLayback Theatre Company: Linett Luna Tovar, Ricardo Pérez González, Kimeiko Rae Vision, Ben Campbell, Joyce Lu, Allison Kenny



EMILY MARCHAND

Emerging Artist

Ceramicist, cook, community organizer inspired by the native and manufactured landscapes of Los Angeles.



KATE MCMILLAN

Emerging Artist

Author, illustrator, visual development artist.



KIRBY MARSHALL-COLLINS

Emerging Artist

Still from "Ways to Fly," dir. Kirby Marshall-Collins

Black TV writer and director amplifying the voices of Black and queer people through fun and fantastical coming-of-age stories.



JULIA MATA

Emerging Artist

"Drawing feels innate to me. A lot of my work has to do with interpersonal relationships between women of color. It's a way to communicate without words and show love back to people who have cared for me, for our stories and burdens, and the life altering impact of female friendship. It brings me joy to see the characters have a life of their own."

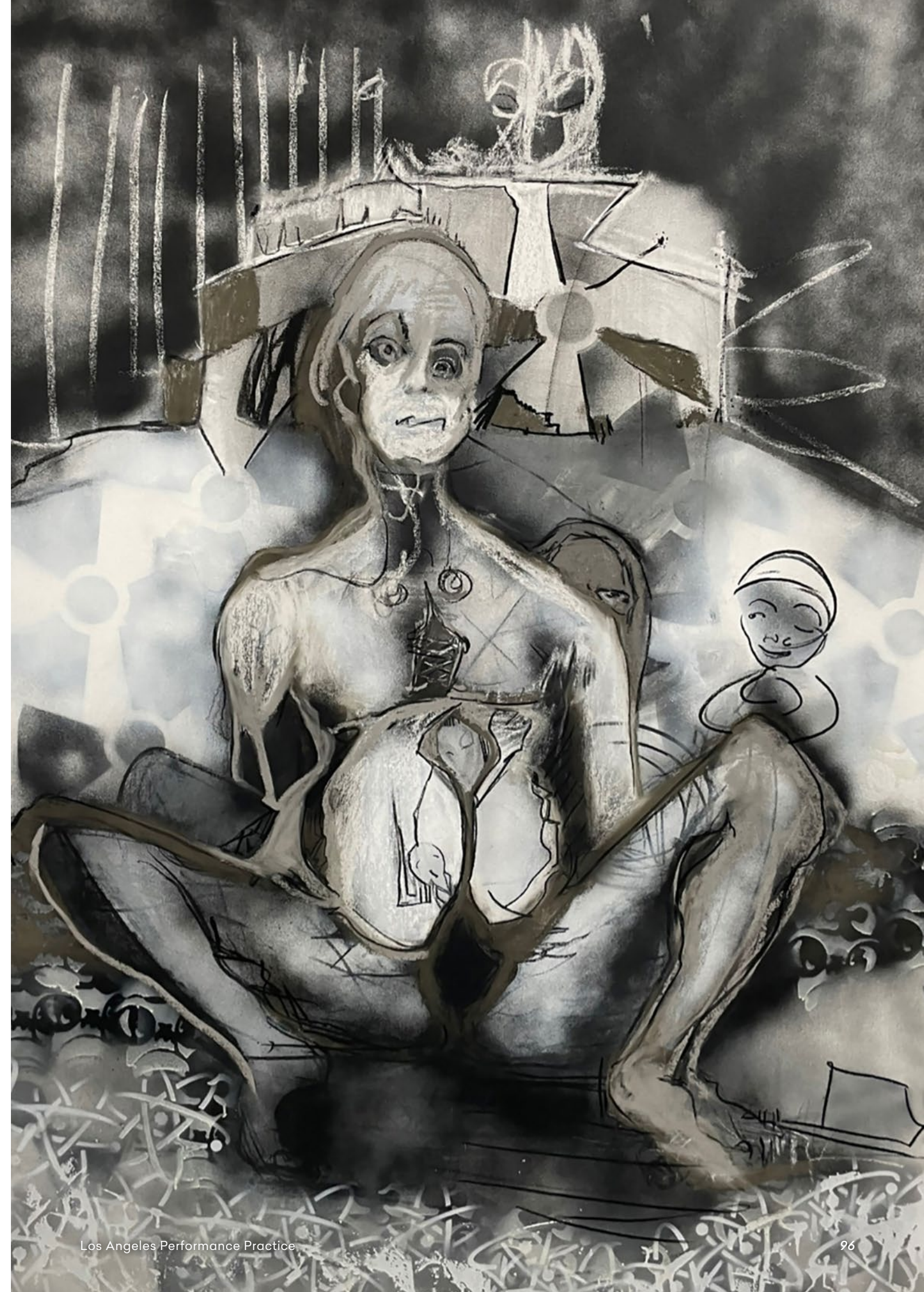
"Left Hand of Darkness" Julia Mata. Courtesy of the Artist

RANDI MATUSHEVITZ

Emerging Artist

"My desire to make art comes from an internal need to explore and understand my consciousness and the conundrums of the world. Making art is an act of living, it is my process of release, exploration and discovery. I research, question, and find confidence in my unique voice so that I can find community in the larger, collective voice, too."

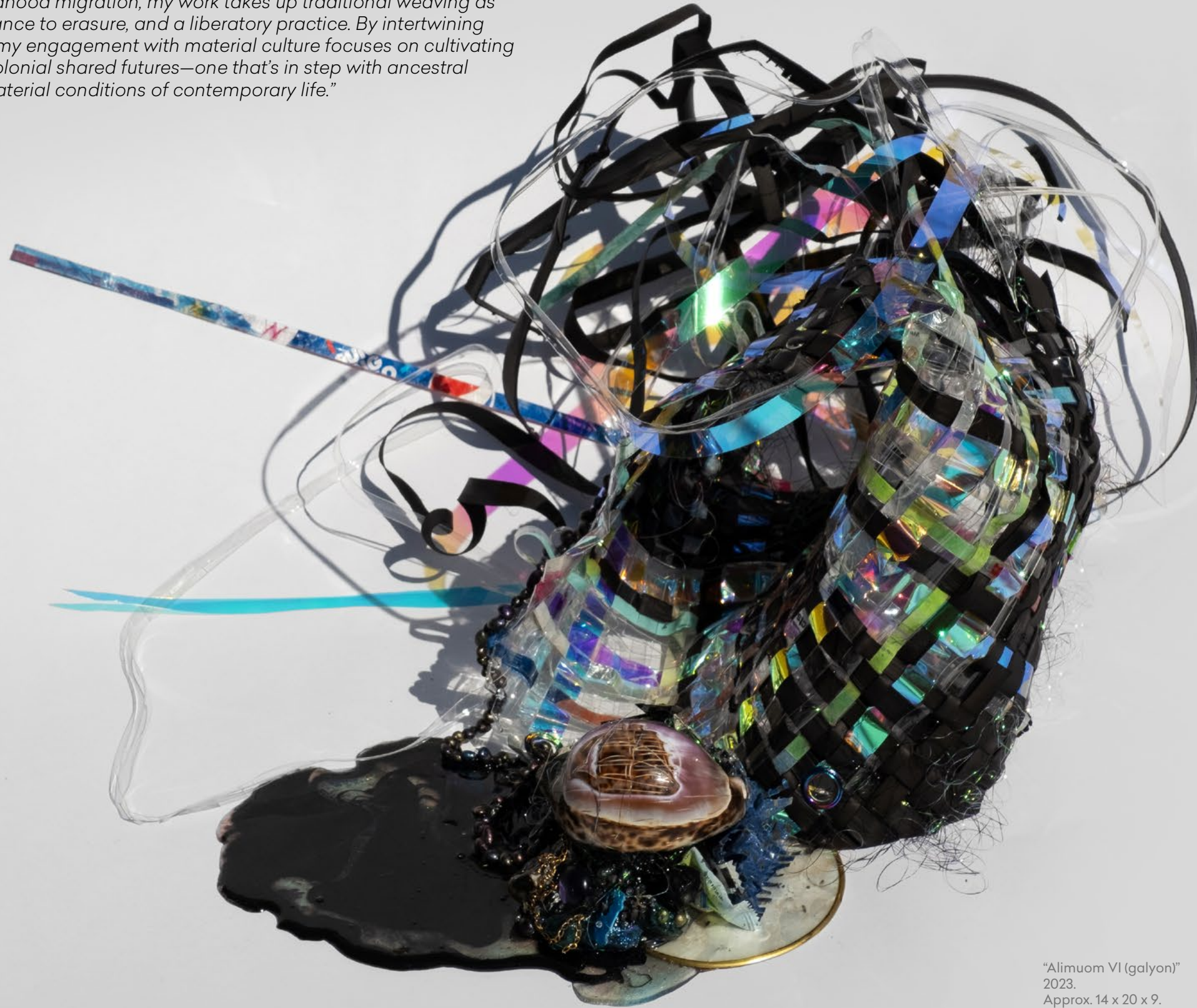
Birthing Story, 2023, Charcoal, pastel, spray paint on canvas, 72" x 48"



CAROL ANNE MCCHRYSTAL

Emerging Artist

"Rooted in my experience of childhood migration, my work takes up traditional weaving as a form of remembering, of resistance to erasure, and a liberatory practice. By intertwining these disparate methodologies, my engagement with material culture focuses on cultivating the possibility for imagining decolonial shared futures—one that's in step with ancestral knowledge, yet situated in the material conditions of contemporary life."



"Alimuom VI (galyon)"

2023.

Approx. 14 x 20 x 9.

Handwoven dyed pandan leaf, plastic water bottle, dichroic film, and plastic discards with grommets, souvenir shell, cast cement paving stone, model artificial turf, epoxy clay, resin, DVDs, iPhone 5 hardware, glass, mylar sachet, plastic bread tab, silica desiccant beads, archival gloss varnish, polypropylene tarp, opalescent metallic thread, bismuth, mica, obsidian, silicone, iron oxide pigment, mica pigment, interference pigment, powder pigment.



RYAN MEKENIAN

Emerging Artist

Still from "Spokespeople," Directed by Ryan Mekenian, short documentary, 2020.
Courtesy of USC School of Cinematic Arts. Distributed by ShortsTV. Shot on location at CicLAvia.
Director of Photography: Tara Jenkins

"As a filmmaker, photographer, and musician, I'm driven by a profound desire to connect with others through storytelling. I'm captivated by the complexities of the human experience, and I believe art has the power to evoke empathy, inspire change, and challenge perspectives. By sharing my stories, I aspire to spark conversations, provoke thought, and bring people closer together."



CONNIE MENDOZA

Emerging Artist

Dedicated artist from Boyle Heights who explores themes of polarity and cultural identity, illuminating the challenges of not fully belonging to any single culture.



CHRISTIAN MIRANDA

Emerging Artist

Mexican-American illustrator who aims to highlight the beauty and resilience of Mexican farming communities as they navigate the challenges of a changing climate.



MARCELA MONTALVAN

Emerging Artist

Visual artist who seeks to raise awareness of the urgent need for habitat and biodiversity preservation.



CHINAEDU NWADIBIA

Emerging Artist

"I believe in the functions of portraiture, storytelling and the supernatural. The orality of my Nigerian and African American heritage encourages an interest in conduits, channels, modes of communication and how they contribute to culture and identity. I remain an artist that prefers to tell stories on multiple platforms; employing sculpture, performance and writing in my lifelong engagement with photography."



JONAS OPPENHEIM

Established Artist

"My work is inspired by feelings like glee, anger, and curiosity. I want to affect the audience in ways that will stay with them and galvanize them after they leave a performance, especially when I make political work about topics like climate change, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, state violence, toxic government, incompetent media, and the rising cost of living."



NICOLE OTERO

Emerging Artist

Writer, director and editor with an emphasis on sound, perspective, and haptic cinema.

VASILIOS PAPAPITSIOS

Emerging Artist

"Much of my work has been about fighting HIV stigma and bringing awareness and compassion to the lives of those who are infected. I'm interested in atypical thinking, deeper meaning, and utilizing limitations. Drawing from my own life experiences with mobility challenges, addiction and mental health challenges, and chronic illness, I question how to serve my community as an individual and instigate necessary healing for the collective."

Scarlett Letters, PARAPRONOIA, 2025. Photo: Stefania Rosini



JENNIE E. PARK

Emerging Artist

"Throughout my creative practice, I am committed to interdisciplinarity and integrated approaches to honesty. (In)visibility and (in)vulnerability, and world-generating dynamics of entanglement and truthful paradox, recur as practices, tools or puzzles I explore through my mixed media, project-based sculpture, social practice and written work. A remembering-seeking curiosity at my core roots and guides my overall process."

Flight of the Feeler Gauge, 2021. Steel, feeler gauge, stainless steel chains, MDF, shredded paper, gearbox motor, motor mount hardware, paint, glue, fish line, power cord, 84" x 30" x 30". Photo courtesy of the artist.



Mujer Malvada

To La Siguanaba

I sprout from your black
waters – arms rooting
to earth, bajo luna del lago
Coatepque. I am birthed
from your memory, given
a new skin and hide
to brush and braid, ashes
de Izalco dusting my hair.

My hands, still my hands,
marked by your myth:
calloused, rope-burned,
nails sharpened to blade.

My face, still my face,
goes missing sometimes
(just like yours, Sihuehuet.)

My body, *my* body,
safe because you took
yours back. Safe because
you took theirs instead.



JANEL PINEDA

Emerging Artist

U.S.-born Salvadoran poet, educator, and author researching U.S. Central American poetics and the liberatory capacities of poetry.

Janel Pineda "Mujer Malvada" (2023) Originally published in Poem-a-Day on October 3, 2023, by the Academy of American Poets.

NORMA MONTTOYA

An illustration of a dark-skinned Indigenous girl wearing a white dress is at the center of *Innocence*, a mural decorating one of the Estrada Courts buildings in Boyle Heights. The girl was inspired by the designs of traditional Mexican dolls, and she stands in front of a vibrant landscape depicting mountains, the sun's rays, animals, children, and the changing times and seasons.

Last year marked the 50th anniversary of Innocence by artist Norma Montoya, who painted it in 1973 as part of the Chicano Mural Movement.

During this period, Mexican-American artists throughout the Southwest created murals celebrating their cultural pride and communities on the walls of schools, churches, city buildings, and housing projects such as Estrada.

Estrada Courts has its own long history in East Los Angeles. It's been around since 1942 and was one of the first racially integrated public housing projects in the country. Throughout the '70s and '80s, artists painted more than eighty murals there. They are iconic examples of public art in Los Angeles, and some even consider Estrada to be where the height of the Chicano Mural Movement began.

Over the decades, *Innocence*, as well as Norma's other murals at Estrada, *Fish of the Future* and *Dreamworld*, have been worn down and damaged. But thanks to her Legacy Artist Fellowship from the California Arts Council and a grant from the Eastside Arts Initiative, Norma Montoya, now in her seventies, has been making progress on a full restoration of *Innocence* that will be completed this year. The recent grant has also funded two paid internships for high schoolers to assist with the restoration and community engagement events for local families to enjoy.

Much of Norma's work aims to empower the children and younger generations of Los Angeles. Her mural designs are fantastical portals inspired by fine art, children's book illustrations, and the neighborhood kids themselves. *Fish of the Future* (1976)—an immersive underwater scene with different fish species, corals, kelps, as well as a single sinking boat—was inspired by a spontaneous conversation with the children one day, after she found out that many of them had never gone to the beach.

"I was telling them that the fishes are so many different colors and from all over the world," Norma recalls. "And one little girl says, 'Well, what happens if I'm at the ocean and I drop my slipper—my sandal, my chancla. Where would it go?' And I said, 'Well, you know, if you drop a chancla in the ocean, it would probably eventually sink down to the bottom.' And so that's when I decided to put that boot inside the mural. Because someone had lost their shoe, and that's where it went!"

Everyone was welcome to help with the murals at Estrada Courts. Norma worked primarily with younger, elementary school children who lived there, but the murals also drew in older kids who wanted to spend time with their younger siblings and cousins. The murals offered a safe space for children from the whole neighborhood to just have fun, and also an alternative for older kids who faced the peer pressure of joining a gang. Norma kept an eye out for the young "stragglers" hanging

around the area, whether they were out of school for truancy, on their way to their probation officer, or if they didn't have clothes or supplies for school. "Those are the ones that I try to pull in, you know, to paint with me for a little while, and for us to just chit chat and talk."

As a woman artist, Norma has also experienced the "machismo world" of the housing projects. "The gangsters, the older guys, they see me as a threat for some reason," she explained, referring to the verbal harassment she gets from gangsters who want to claim their territory and are not aware of the history of Estrada. Locals are wary of muralists who simply come and go—artists who get their grants, finish their murals over a weekend, and then leave without interacting much with the community.

But in Norma's case, "I never left Estrada," she says, having built relationships with the families since the early '70s. "I've always been here. If you ever go to a residents' meeting, you'll see me there." Some of the kids she painted with, now grown up, come back to the Courts to visit their aunts and uncles, and she recalls how the senior citizens always watched out for her. "They're still my friends. We kind of all grew old together."

She's a living witness to how the murals brought the larger community together. "We had so many outsiders helping us to get these murals put up and get free paint, free brushes. We had a food truck coming in ... we'd go to a burrito stand down the street and ask the local guy if he could get us some tacos or some food for the kids." Community members like the late Miguel "Mike" Duran, who was a probation officer and later a beloved counselor for youth gang members, had worked with the local Soroptimist Club to provide painting supplies for the children.

In addition to her work at Estrada, Norma Montoya was a teaching artist for thirty years through the organization Theatre Of Hearts/Youth First. She led art workshops for students and at-risk youth at public schools, alternative schools, and juvenile halls throughout LA County. Her last project with Theatre Of Hearts was a mural designed and painted in collaboration with the young women at Central Juvenile Hall in 2019. Norma's other public murals include *Ninos del Mundo* (1975) at the historic Chicano Park in San Diego, which she painted with the late Charles "Gato" Félix through a mural exchange program between local artists from Estrada Courts and San Diego's Logan Heights, and *Peasant Saint* (2001) in Little Tokyo, which she painted with her daughter Yamilette Montoya Duarte.

Norma has completed forty-eight murals throughout her career and has received numerous awards from the cities and districts where she's worked. Filled with memorable stories, she also has a collection of more than 350 photographic slides documenting the murals and community activities at Estrada Courts in the early '70s—likely enough to develop a documentary or other visual archive on East LA's local history. "The history of Estrada Courts needs to be documented," she says, for the sake of the whole community. "I'm so, so proud that we got this fellowship. It's not my fellowship. It's a fellowship that a lot of us worked for."





NADENE PITA

Emerging Artist

"As an indigenous woman of Māori and Irish descent, community is central to my artistic process, in that it's our cultural norms and our sense of selfhood in relation to others, time and place, that shapes our experiences, ideas and actions. Through my work I seek to bring the essence of sacred cultures to contemporary arts and technologically informed arts practices, to broaden our assumptions and perceptions of ourselves and the world we live in."



RUTHIE PRILLAMAN

Emerging Artist

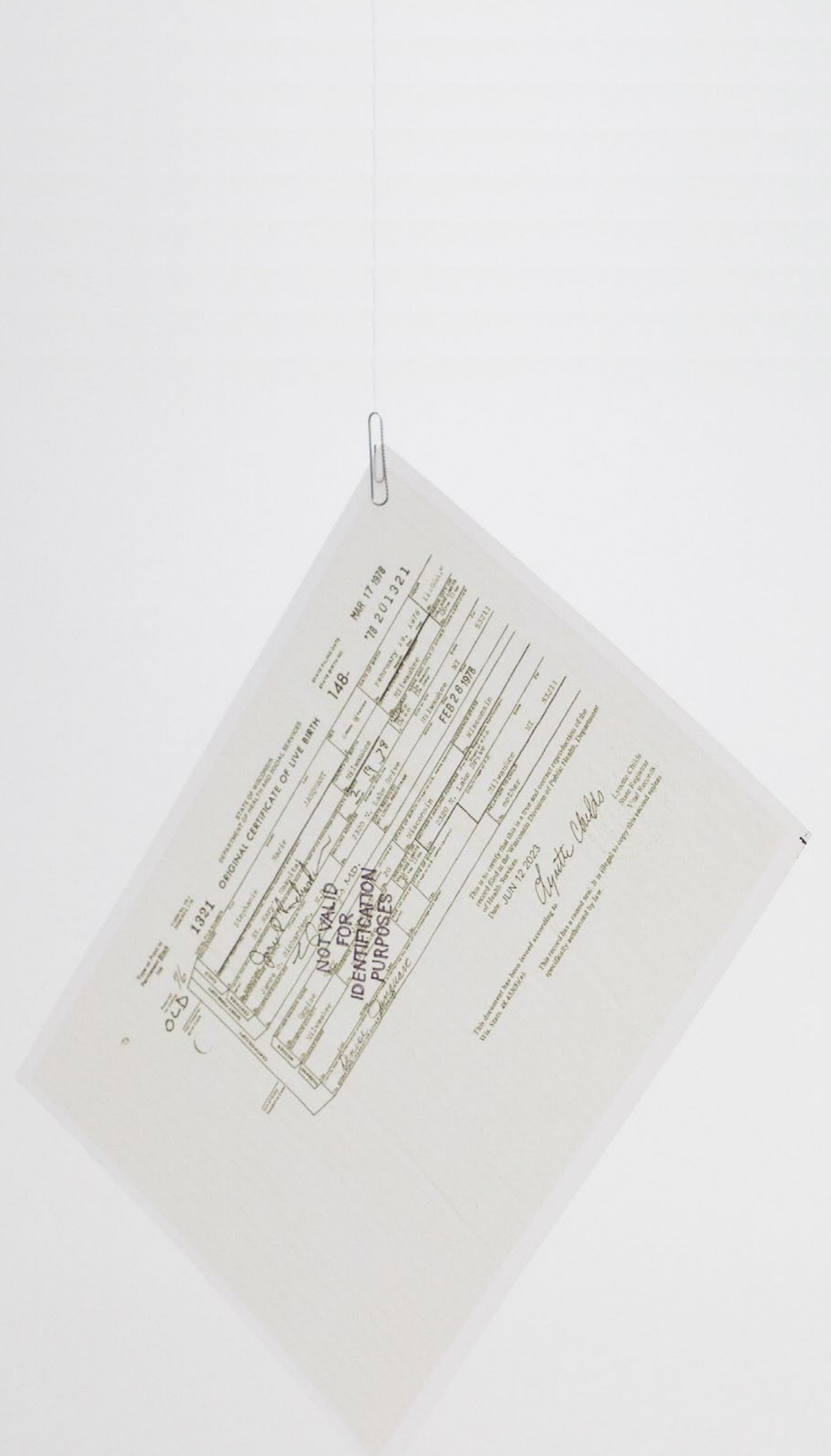
Novelist, screenwriter, and librettist focused on young peoples' literature and middle-grade media.

NICOLE RADEMACHER

Established Artist

“My work explores themes of identity, belonging, family, and cultural connection – ideas that stem from my experience as a Latine transcultural adoptee. These concepts come to life through a blend of media and approaches that allows me to delve into the complexities of our sense of self. I’m drawn to photography, using photo-collages and photo-dioramas to layer images and create new narratives that reflect the fragmented nature of memory and identity.”

Not Valid for Identification Purposes, 2024. Inkjet print on vellum, marker, paperclip, fishing line, 8.5 x 11” inkjet print, installation dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.





RENÉE REIZMAN

Emerging Artist

Interdisciplinary artist and writer who coauthors community dialogues to study the ways infrastructure shapes our culture, policy, and environment.

*A Neon Stage Dedicated to the Little Ones of Los Angeles (2021)
A public intervention by Beck+Col & Renée Reizman*

ADEE ROBERSON

Established Artist

"My environment, emotions, family history, and intersecting identities deeply inform my paintings, music, performance, and public art. I work with my artist friends and peers to create spaces for reflection, inspiration, peace, healing, and energetic movement. Through collaborative practice, I have discovered profound self love, communal healing, and the means for envisioning, embodying, and fostering regeneration and interdependence."

Peace Begins Within (Nora Dean), Screen Print on Paper, 19" x 24", 2023



JENIFFER SANCHEZ

Established Artist

Artist, danzante, choreographer, director and producer whose mission is to preserve the living tradition of Danza Azteca.

LA Ofrenda March 10, 2024 Toci, photo by Pablo Aguilar





LAURIE SHAPIRO

Emerging Artist

Mixed-media artist whose work creates rich scenarios and sensual environments that embody personal narratives as she compensates for a developing condition of hearing loss.

"one day you will no longer cause me pain," 2024. Art by Laurie Shapiro, Photo by Gregg Mazuta



PABLO “FER” SIMENTAL

Emerging Artist

Poet, film director, photographer, model, and social practitioner born and raised in Los Angeles.



DILLON SUNG

Emerging Artist

Multimedia artist and community organizer who engages her embodied research with an art practice through discourses of fine art.



LAURIE STEELINK

Established Artist

Akimel O'otham curator, contemporary artist, cultural practitioner, citizen of the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona.

GATHERING POWER III (Indian market booth), 2024, living multimedia installation

CAYETANO TALAVERA

Emerging Artist

"My artwork transforms materials that often go unseen or overlooked in our daily lives which would otherwise end up in the trash. Things like avocado pits that I use to dye fabric, coffee tins turned into planters, and cookie tins turned into a sewing kit. By working with these materials, I aim to inspire others to see value in resourcefulness and create in a way that honors conscious making and creativity."

Cayetano Talavera Reyes, Pieced Apron, 2023. Constructed apron featuring botanical dyes and textile manipulation techniques on cotton canvas. 31 x 24 inches. Los Angeles.





KAYLA TANGE

Emerging Artist

“Through video, installation, sculpture, and, more directly with performance, a large portion of my work addresses structures of spectatorship while redefining ancestral trauma through public and private rituals.”

Defining Boundaries (2018) installation view, Human Resources, Los Angeles, Curated by Vardui Sharapkhanyan, Still from video documentation : L.A. Art Documents, Sculpture Realization : Kevin Kane, Sound Design : Brent Kiser, Costume Design : Stacy Ellen Rich.

CARA ELISE TAYLOR

Emerging Artist

Analog photographer + videographer, interested in displaying the intimate and ordinary feelings and behaviors of Black people globally.

Cara Elise Taylor, Limón, 5/2021



TOM TSAI

Established Artist

"My works highlight the struggle for social progress on an individual level, navigating the tensions between resilience and grief. It is through choreographic process and performance that I realize a more empathetic and socially engaged self. My introspective nature complements my dynamic dance style, and invites audiences into an earnest process of laboring towards change."

Tom Tsai, "A Fantasy of Going Home," Aug 14 2021. CENART. Courtesy of International Contemporary Dance Festival of Mexico City (FIDCDMX), Mexico City, MX. Photo: Juan Rodrigo Becerra Acosta



JACQUELINE VALENZUELA

Emerging Artist

"My lowrider community deeply influences my artistic practice. In my work, I experiment with found car parts as painting surfaces, incorporating elements of the automotive industry into my art. The assemblage-style frames I use function as deconstructed lowriders, blending DIY culture with the extravagance of lowrider interiors."

Jacqueline Valenzuela, Blue Inferno, 2023. Airbrush, Color Pencil, Disco Glass, Faux Fur, Foamular, Iridescent Chiffon & Oil on Wooden Panels, 26"x32". Courtesy of the Artist. Photo Reference: Luis Reyes.





ALEJANDRA VASQUEZ

Established Artist

Award-winning Mexican-American filmmaker.

Going Varsity in Mariachi, 2023, dir. Alejandra Vasquez & Sam Osborn



BRITTANY WANG

Emerging Artist

Chinese-American screenwriter aiming to tell culturally nuanced stories depicting the Asian-American experience in realistic, grounded, and humanistic portrayals.



DARE WILLIAMS

Emerging Artist

Queer HIV-positive poet and literary worker.

ERASURE OF GENOCIDE IS

One-sided and short of breath.
4th-grade lessons on peaceful threats.

Using the term neophyte to describe matriarchy and noblemen.
Ratifying stakes at lethal expense.

In effort to ethnically cleanse.
Legal termination, publicly funded.

Silence.
Monoliths - tokenized weapons and empty trust.

Enterprises built by people who endure slavery.
Aggressive mockery of cultural reality.

Perpetuating these things.
Determining one's identity through charts created to eradicate.

Destroying meticulous craftsmanship weaved bound or laced.
Intricate attacks on agriculture, Laid as habitable development.



ISAAC MICHAEL YBARRA

Emerging Artist

"My community and the enduring invisibility Native Americans — even with the extensive efforts by settlers and colonizers to exterminate us — motivates my work. From there, I want a healthier, balanced ecosystem and believe that ideas of sovereignty and living in commune with the plants and animals of the natural world will make the world a more positive place."

Isaac Michael Ybarra "Erasure of Genocide Is..." a poem Ybarra adds to their visual art pieces.

YOZMIT THE DOGSTAR

Established Artist

Transgender singer-songwriter, performance artist, and designer.

Photo of Yozmit The DogStar by Ted Sun



BRISEYDA ZÁRATE

Established Artist

Professional Flamenco dancer, choreographer and teacher of 30 years, active member and leader of the LA Flamenco community.

Soleá by Briseyda Zarate for the Los Angeles Flamenco Festival. Photo by Sari Makki-Phillips.





JODY ZELLEN

Established Artist

"Words and images culled from the news media have long been a source for my projects. I'm captivated and often surprised by how events are depicted in the mass media. I draw from the poetic potential of headlines and captions juxtaposed with abstracted reductions of original images and have collected headlines and news photos for years, archiving them for use as raw material."

*The Waking Dream, Installation View
Woodbury University Nan Rae Gallery October 22 - November 16, 2022*

ARTIST BIOS

Tanya Aguiñiga is an artist, activist, and craftsperson who works with traditional materials like natural fibers and collaborates with other artists and activists to create sculptures, installations, performances, and community-based art projects. Aguiñiga's work speaks of the artist's experience of her divided identity and aspires to tell the larger and often invisible stories of the transnational community. She is the founder of AMBOS: Art Made Between Opposite Sides, a binational arts platform for migration issues.

tanyaaguiniga.com

LEO ALAS (b. 1995) is a contemporary multi-disciplinary artist exploring themes around care work and grief, through a Marxist-Feminist lens. Their practice moves through and along boundaries of intimacy, the body, and community sculpture. Leo is a co-founder of Queer Spa Network, a full spectrum doula, and a bathing enthusiast.

leo-alas.com

Janeth Aparicio Vazquez (b. Los Angeles, CA) lives and works in Los Angeles, California. She is a first-generation Chicana artist and historian as curandera of Mixtec descent. Her multidisciplinary work spans ink and graphite drawing, murals, and crafts-based mixed-media installation. Aparicio uses this range of materials to create tender offerings to her communities: past, present, and future. She holds a BA in studio art/ art history from Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA.

janethaparicio.com

Nilgoon Askari is an Iranian-American screenwriter with over four years of experience. Nilgoon is known for her captivating storytelling and ability to create dynamic scenes that transcend literature. Nilgoon combines her creative passions to enhance the art of storytelling in film. Dedicated to creating impactful and emotionally resonant pieces, Nilgoon believes in the transformative power of film, using storytelling integrity and socially relevant themes to inspire meaningful change.

.CHISARAOKWU., MD is an X-disciplinary poet artist and actor based in the US. A first-generation Igbo in America, her artistic practice is inspired by the spiritual, oral, and print archives of the Igbo and her work as a physician. She has received grants, fellowships, and residencies from MacDowell, Headlands Center for the Arts, Cave Canem, Anaphora Arts, Tin House, the Vermont Studio Center, the California Arts Council and more. She facilitates healing and arts workshops for African-descended women through her online platform ""The JOY+WELL"" and is a poetry reader for The Rumpus. Her work appears in Hayden's Ferry Review, Indiana Review, Transition, Obsidian, The New England Journal of Medicine, and more. Her chapbook, "This Wake Holding, Mmiri," was a finalist for the 2024 Evaristo Poetry Prize.

chisaraokwu.com

C. Bain is a gender liminal writer, performer, and artist. His work is about interstices of sex and violence—the body subjected to the extraction of knowledge. He has a mental health focused social work degree from Hunter and an art MFA from CalArts. He's a 2023-24 Fulbright scholar in Leipzig, researching the end of the world.

tiresiasprojekt.com

Rohan Chander (a.k.a BAKUDI SCREAM) is an electronic musician and artist based in Los Angeles. Rohan's work explores gothic, science-fiction storytelling as rewriting of personal and shared histories. Performance space collapses into BAKUDI SCREAM's various avatars of the Architect Prince, somnus, HINDOO, and FUTURANGEL through pursuit of the romantic and gruesome—tales of hackers and lovelorn heroes breaking and restructuring within new ecologies. Positionality is not a constant but a perpetually mutating agent, driving the work of BAKUDI SCREAM to explore the forces behind shared space and the glitches that flower intimacy.

rohanchander.com

Honey Blu is a Lady MC, Singer/Songwriter, & Community Organizer from Los Angeles, CA. Her genres include Hip Hop, Neo-Soul, and R&B. Her lyrics and music always exude with positive messages that leave the listener refreshed and renewed. Her mission is to use her musical & creative prowess to uplift and build up the Afrikan (Black) community in various spaces throughout the diaspora.

honeybluu.com

Cindy Bonaparte (b. 1985, Los Angeles, CA) is Los Angeles based sculptor and visual artist with Aytian and Mississippian roots. She received her MFA in Social & Environmental Arts Practice in 2021 from Prescott College as part of the inaugural cohort. Currently, her collage work focuses on using archival images to create windows to reflect on the present while reimagining the past and future. Tending to the earth and gardening where she lives has also provided raw clay as a material deepening and slowing down her relationship with the land, locality, and art process.

cindybonaparte.com

A. Laura Brody sculpts for the human body and its vehicles. She developed and curated Opulent Mobility, a series of exhibits that re-imagine disability as opulent and powerful. Ms. Brody works as a professional costume maker and designer, an artist, and an educator. She is passionate about reuse, sustainability, and re-imagining disability.

dreamsbymachine.com

Mary Bronaugh is a writer-director and producer. Most recently, she worked as a Staff Writer and Development Writer at Disney Television, Paramount, and Alcon Entertainment. Her independent films and series have premiered at Oscar-qualifying film festivals and on cable TV. She has been selected for distinguished incubator programs at Disney, NBCUniversal, Diverso, and LAPP. Her newest feature script Dog Years just received a recommendation from the invitation-only New York Stage and Film Workshop (Hamilton, Hadestown, American Idiot). She holds a BFA in Writing for Screen and Television from the USC School of Cinematic Arts and produces her original work under her production company Song Paper Pictures.

marybronaugh.com

Bernard Brown is a performer, choreographer, arts activist, and educator who situates their work at the intersection of Blackness, belonging, and memory. With an extensive performing career, Bernard now serves as

Director of Bernard Brown/bb moves, choreographing for stage, specific sites, film, and opera presented globally.

bbmoves.org

Pushcart Prize nominee, founding Literary Editor of Harriet Tubman Press and Oxfam Ambassador, **Shonda Buchanan**'s work focuses on the intersections of race, identity, landscape and language, meeting this Kalamazoo, Michigan native's mission to inspire, educate and heal. A USC Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities Fellow and a City of Los Angeles (COLA) Department of Cultural Affairs Master Artist Fellow, Shonda Buchanan is the author of five books, including the award-winning memoir "Black Indian," which was chosen by PBS NewsHour as a "Top 20 books to read" to learn about institutional racism.

shondabuchanan.com

Bryan Byrdlong is a Black poet from Chicago, Illinois. He received his MFA in Creative Writing from the Helen Zell Writers Program at the University of Michigan. He has been published in Guernica Magazine, The Kenyon Review, and Poetry Magazine, among others. Bryan received a 2021 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation. He is currently a PhD student in Creative Writing at USC in Los Angeles.

bryanbyrdlong.com

Dr. Cecilia Caballero is a poet, writer, lecturer of Chicana/o and Ethnic Studies in the California State University system, and co-editor of the bestselling book, The Chicana Motherwork Anthology. Dr. Caballero is a 2023 Aspen Words Emerging Writer Fellow and a 2023-2024 Octavia Butler Earthseed Fellow. She also served as a 2022 Visiting Teaching Artist with the Poetry Foundation and she is an alum of VONA, Macondo, Tin House, and the Women's National Book Association.

ceciliaxcaballero.wixsite.com

I am **Raul Cardona**, I view "teatro" as the pirate ship of the arts. I've taught in South LA, East LA, Northeast LA and CSULB Ethnic Studies Initiative. As a practicing artist and educator, I use Teatro to synthesize knowledge of the arts to uplift and empower youth, students, mentees, educators, allied organizations and partnering communities in the Greater Los Angeles area. Through my collaborative partnerships in the National Theatre scene, I've experienced the power of teatro as a tool for education, social justice and the transformation of our families & communities. My collaboration with a network of like-minded pedagogues provides opportunities to develop a critical anti-racist liberation curriculum and assist in its implementation.

raulcardona.org

Jay Carlon is an experimental dance artist and community organizer based in Los Angeles. Born and raised on California's Central Coast, Carlon's work is inspired by growing up queer and the youngest of 12 in a Filipino, Catholic, and agricultural migrant-working family. He is committed to bridging his art practice toward sustainability and decolonization.

jaycarlon.com

Daniel Eduvijos Carrera has screened at the Tribeca, Guadalajara, Morelia and Los Angeles Film Festivals, at numerous museums and on international broadcasts. He's the recipient of awards from the Imagen Foundation, Morelia, Guadalajara and was recognized as Best Latine Film Director by the DGA Student Film Awards. Daniel received the NHFA and NALAC film grants, is a Film Independent Fellow and also a Tribeca Film Institute/Rockefeller Foundation Media Arts Fellow. During his time as a California Arts Council Individual Artist Fellow, Daniel won the Netflix/Latino Film Institute Inclusion Fellowship to create his latest film, FIAT LUX 5000 which had an exclusive preview screening at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival. His previous work, EL PAISA, was also an Official Selection of the American Pavilion Emerging Filmmaker Showcase at the Cannes Film Festival where it was awarded Best LGBTQ+ Short Film.

San Cha is a singer-songwriter, based in Los Angeles, increasingly known for her visceral and explosive live performances. Her name, derived from the Spanish word *sancha*, which translates to 'mistress', is a mischievous reference to the title of 'San', given to male saints in the Catholic tradition. Fans of cumbia and punk, bolero and electro, flock to see San Cha's emotional renditions of traditional Mexican rancheras and original songs that queer conventions of identity, power and love. Her striking stage presence is accompanied by the one-of-a-kind garments that adorn her, aesthetic reflections of the years spent performing in drag and club scenes in the Bay.

churchofsancha.com

Jen Cheng is the current Poet Laureate of West Hollywood, author of a poetry collection Braided Spaces, and a 2023 California Arts Council Fellow. She is a multidisciplinary artist who blends East-West cultural influences in a new form, Feng Shui Poetry. Jen is the host and facilitator of Palabras Literary Salon, a BIPOC-centered bimonthly series. She is the creator of a site-specific interactive sculpture, Poetry Scrabble, to celebrate event themes and engage the community with poetry magnets to develop a collaborative poem. With stories for tween audiences, mystery detective fans, and queer love, Jen is a cross-pollinator and community curator.

jencvoice.com

Kevin Emilio Contreras (He/Him) is a Queer Latinx visual artist from Los Angeles; his practice has spanned photography, videography, and ephemeral collage. For the past six years, his work has focused on documenting Queer underground nightlife subcultures in Los Angeles. Centering B.I.P.O.C. identity across the complex spectrums of gender and sexuality, his work explores the climax of Queer performance, as well as the valleys of quiet vulnerability. By examining the temporal nature of the Self and the transience of identity, his work reflects on the human condition and speaks to preserving the dignity and power of the LGBTQ+ community.

[@emilios_room](https://www.instagram.com/emilios_room)

Poet **Kamau Daáood** is a native of Los Angeles, where he co-founded The World Stage Performance Gallery, a non-profit arts institution. His development began as a member of the Watts Writers Workshop and the Pan African People's Arkestra under the direction of pianist Horace Tapscott (late 1960's). Kamau is the author of "The Language of Saxophones" (City Lights, 2005) and "Notes D'un Griot De Los Angeles" (Le Castor Astral publisher, 2012), a bilingual anthology.

kamaudaaood.com

Stephanie Deumer is a Canadian visual artist based in Los Angeles, California. Her multi-media installations often highlight interrelations between different kinds of reproduction—including biological, visual, mechanical, and social. More particularly, the exploration of feminine constructs is a crucial through-line in Deumer's practice. Complexities of female identity formation figure prominently, specifically in relation to language, media, science, and technology.

stephaniedeumer.com

Alexandria Douziech is a research-based artist and art educator. Inspired by her family's history with cash crops and plantation labor, her work explores themes of nature, exploitation, and resilience. She holds a BFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Alexandria's art has been exhibited nationwide, including solo shows at Blue Roof Studios and LAVC Gallery. She's worked at various museums across LA and currently teaches art history. Alexandria is also the founder of the Center for Plants & Culture, a BIPOC educational initiative and social media platform, exploring how politics, economics, and culture are shaped by plants.

alexandriadouziech.com

Jennaya Dunlap is a queer, neurodivergent mother and survivor of childhood abuse, which has been a catalyst to lifelong dedication to radical social change and collective liberation. An artist since she could first hold a pencil as a toddler, her work ranges from murals to paintings in different mediums, to sculpture, filmmaking, and music. Jennaya believes art is a means of pushing forward social change and dialogue for building power. She highlights social problems in an ironic manner, while also working to uplift the solutions as well.

[@jennaya.art](https://www.instagram.com/@jennaya.art)

Reena Dutt is dedicated to new/reimagined texts that catapult polarizing conversations through unexpected stories of the underheard. She most recently directed the world premiere of Pang Spa by David Johann Kim and developed DJ Hills' Horsegirl&Cowdaddy as well as Daria Miyeko-Marinelli's Beautiful Blessed Child at 7 Devils. Upcoming: Galileo's Daughter (WAM), The Magician's Sister (Kayenta Arts). New York: Columbia University, Playwrights Realm, A.R.T. West Coast: Chalk Rep, CalArts, Artists At Play, Coeurage Ensemble, UC Riverside, Greenway Court Theatre, East West Players, Sacred Fools. Assist/Assoc Director: MTC, NYTW, The Public, The Geffen Playhouse. Theatre Fellowships: Drama League NY Directing Fellow, LCT Directors Lab, Directors Lab West.

reenadutt.com

Ai Ebashi is a Japanese-born playwright and multidisciplinary theater-maker. who is a winner of the Austin International Poetry Festival and the Leonard Isaacs Award Browning Monologue Contest. Ai's plays have been produced or staged-read at the Aurora Theater, Brava Theater, Shelton Theater, Exit Theater, San Francisco Olympians Festivals, Z-Space, PianoFight, Theatre of Yugen, Breach Once More, 9x9 Festival, GreenHouse Festival, Odell Johnson Performing Arts Center and Mile High Theater.

kunoichiproductions.org

A native of Los Angeles, **Mary Ehrin** is a visual artist best known for her experiments with geometric abstraction using reflective materials and textured surfaces. Her paintings and sculptures convey a personal vision of fantasy and illusion, with references to cultural signifiers inspired by art, fashion and cinema. As a graduate student her work was selected as a top 10 finalist in New American Paintings, a national competition by Open Studios Press, juried by Lisa Dennison, Chief Curator of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY.

maryehrin.net

Dawn Ertl is an artist born in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles but has lived in many different parts of the state. Her experience of constantly moving while growing up between rural areas and cities affected how she interacted with others. She feels connected and disconnected simultaneously, allowing her to step back and view relationships and environments from a distance, even while being part of it. She works hard to form and sustain long-lasting relationships to cultivate and protect her curated communities. At the same time, she is comfortable being alone. In solitude, she finds other ways to connect through research and planning. The same perspectives that have drawn her to art have pulled her closer to social practices and fiber-based techniques, especially weaving, establishing a foundational structure while continuously supporting exploration and testing its stability. Both genres rely on physical and mental interconnections to make them stronger and long-lasting.

[dawnertl.art](https://www.instagram.com/dawnertl.art)

Sara Ellen Fowler is a writer and artist living in Los Angeles, CA. Her work has appeared in The Offing, X-TRA Contemporary Art Journal, Interim, and Gigantic Sequins, among others. Her critical writing can be found at RHINO Poetry and Full Stop. A Community of Writers alum, Sara holds a BFA in sculpture from Art Center College of Design and an MFA in poetry from the University of California, Riverside. She is currently at work on her first collection of poems.

saraellenfowler.com

Sarahjeen François is a Haitian-American performer and Myth-maker whose creative work is an exploration of the rich storytelling practices of the Afro-folkloric. Sarahjean creates celebration of Black femme personification and all of its complexities; thus, her mission is to write stories that place Black women at the center of the arc and to ultimately to tell stories that are nuanced in their unique voices. Her latest play, Sister, Braid My Hair has recently been honored with awards of excellence for Best Direction and for Best Production.

sarahjeenfrancois.com

Liz González is a fourth-generation Californian, who writes creative nonfiction, poetry, and fiction. Currently, she writes about underrepresented San Bernardino Mexican history through the lens of her multigenerational family's history. She is the author of The Original OLG: San Bernardino's First Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, forthcoming (Los Nietos Press); Dancing in the Santa Ana Winds: Poemas y Cuentos New and Selected (Los Nietos Press, 2018); and Beneath Bone (Manifest Press, 2000). Her writing recently appeared in HTI Open Plaza, Air/Light, Poets & Writers Magazine, San Bernardino Singing, and The International Literary Quarterly.

lizgonzalez.com

Audrey Harris Fernández has led storytelling workshops in women's prisons on both sides of the U.S. Mexican border. She is interested in (counter) narratives based on eye-witness events and family storytelling practice, and how the traditional form of folklore can be used to tell contemporary stories that shed light on oppression as well as on cultural resilience and resistance. Her current creative practice revolves around storytelling in the narrative nonfiction and poetic form, and explores traditional women's arts as well as roles for women in the multiple cultures in which she lives in Southern California, including accounts of tradition and change in the Latin American and Mormon diasporas.

vocesdelacarcel.wixsite.com

Emeer Hassanpour is an independent filmmaker and critic, as well as a graduate student at the University of Southern California. He is studying Cinema Studies and engages in both practical and theoretical research. His recent co-directed feature film explores socio-economic issues within a Kurdish family in Turkey. Emeer previously served as the president of the Chicago Experimental Film Society and is the founder and chief editor of Cine Bizarre Magazine.

[@demsalanan](https://www.instagram.com/@demsalanan)

Rashaida Hill is a performance artist, community organizer, social justice worker and arts facilitator. She has had the pleasure of training and performing for many world-renowned artists while attending Old Dominion University (B.A in Theatre and Dance), The American Dance Festival, Todd Rosenlieb Dance, and the University of California, Los Angeles (MFA in Choreographic Inquiry). As a dance maker, the continuous ebb and flow informing her work includes American/Black American/Black diasporic history and cultures, Queer narratives, mental health, and trauma processing. Her work seeks to hold space for reflection, rest, recovery, and healing through invigorating and intimate theatrical displays. Recently recognized by the California Arts Council as a 2023 Emerging Artist, she hopes to continue to hold space for herself and others to investigate our embodied histories and make sense of our ever-changing realities by hosting workshops, classes and conversations with some of our most vulnerable populations.

Andrew Thomas Huang is a visual artist, writer and director who crafts hybrid fantasy worlds and mythical dreamscapes. Known for his Grammy nominated music videos of Björk, FKA twigs and Thom Yorke, Huang is also recognized as a writer and director of narrative film. His work has been commissioned by and exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, NY, The Sydney Opera House and the Museum of Contemporary Art, LA.

andrewthomashuang.com

Fernando Isai, they/them/he, is a Zapotec artist from the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca, based in Los Angeles, ancestral and unceded territory of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples and the Fernández Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. Fernando's cultural work includes teaching artists, teaching assistants, education coordinators and tour guides at various institutions as well as through their independent initiatives, challenging the separation between art and everyday life. Fernando believes in the ability of the arts to access and process emotion and ideas and the self.

fernandoisai.com

Prima Jalichandra-Sakuntabhai is a transdisciplinary artist and curator, working across performance, video and installation, currently based in Los Angeles. Recent projects include: Stranger Intimacy I & II, at the ONE Archives at USC Libraries and USC, Pacific Asia Museum (LA), Chloropsis Aurifrons Pridii, The Fulcrum Press (LA), Excerpts of Memories From the Screen, BOOKSHOP LIBRARY, BANGKOK CITY CITY GALLERY (Bangkok). They are the 2023-2024 Curatorial Fellow for Prospect Art.

primasakuntabhai.com

Ray Jones (Serendipity) is an SFV-based drag performer with 4+ years of experience. They blend comedy, horror, and camp to illustrate their takes on gender through performance. When not performing, they're usually seen volunteering at The Center in Hollywood or trying their darndest to sew a costume.

[@serendipity_ray](https://www.instagram.com/serendipity_ray)

Dyan Jong creates light installation art endemic to Los Angeles, repurposing film lights to create large scale, immersive temporalities. The film lights are a nod to her origins as an image-maker in music + entertainment and are never hidden, but openly present, to acknowledge their role in shaping Hollywood "movie magic". Light is no longer used to create an image for consumption but transformed into a lived experience for the audience, to encounter + document themselves on "set" as both consumers + creators.

studiodyanjong.com

DaEun Jung is a dancer-choreographer who interlaces forms, principles, and methods of her ancestral and contemporary performance practices. A 2023 National Dance Project Production Grant awardee, Jung redefines the practice and repertoire of Korean dance in inter/multi-cultural settings as a continuation of her MFA in choreography at UCLA where she was also a Westfield Emerging Artist. She has taught at Santa Monica College, Loyola Marymount University, and University of Nevada Reno and currently is a lecturer at UC Riverside.

daeunjung.com

Miranda Kahn is an LA-based paper artist and stop motion animator with a passion for social justice. With degrees from New York University Tisch and the California Institute of the Arts, Kahn uses her acting background to tell stories through her art, performances, and films. Her unique brand of paper art is hand cut through a detailed process of cutting pieces away to reveal her subject. Kahns award-winning short stop-motion-animated documentary Shadow Life has been screened at over 13 festivals and was included in LACMA's Black Joy and Resilience Series and her short documentary, A Mother's Journey, is screening at Women's International Film Festival in July. Her local biophilia series will be hung this year at Kaiser's Glendale pediatric waiting room.

mirandakahn.com

Anne Kim is a performance artist and choreographer from Koreatown, Los Angeles. She creates within the disciplines of mixed media and performance: using dance as a medium for intergenerational dialogue and collaboration. Additionally, Anne works at the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (KIWA) and has been involved in aiding various community initiatives. In the future, Anne hopes to continue combining her studies in gerontology with dance into an artistic practice that gives back to the community.

[@jiminannekim](https://www.instagram.com/jiminannekim)

Born in Wakayama, Japan, **Hirokazu Kosaka** is an ordained Shingon Buddhist priest, a master of the art of Japanese archery, as well as the Master Artist in Residence of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC). After graduating from the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles in 1970, he continued to study in the fields of Contemporary Art and Esoteric Buddhist Art. Kosaka has been actively advocating Japanese art and culture at JACCC since 1983.

Ana Carla Laidley, a psychologist based in Los Angeles, has developed one of the most respected and attended learning events of the art of Samba, the International Samba Congress; Her trajectory with Samba happened even before her birth. Born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Ana carries in her veins the soul of the samba legacy. Ana travels the world teaching and disseminating the art of Samba and has a doctorate in psychology.

sambanmotion.org

Ray Larkin is a Skokomish Yakama artist, a mother, and a driving force behind MOM. She was born in occupied Duwamish Territory (Seattle, WA) and lives on unceded Tongva Land (Los Angeles, CA) working with video, photography, and sound. MOM's work tells socially relevant stories with a contemporary lens, allowing the viewer to see the world through a cohesive and unique perspective. Their work aims to challenge norms while fostering empathy. Through powerful visual narratives, MOM seeks to confront perceptions, bridge divides, and cultivate a more compassionate world.

directedbymom.com

Dwayne LeBlanc is a Los Angeles based, first generation, Caribbean-American artist and filmmaker. Primarily self-taught, his practice focuses on themes of migration, visibility and dual identities. His debut

narrative short film, CIVIC, an introspective short film about homecoming, was named one of The Best Movies of 2023 by The New Yorker. He is a 2024 Dolby Institute fellow where he continues his practice with a sophomore narrative film, NOW, HEAR ME GOOD.

dwayneleblanc.com

Nami Lee is a Korean-American visual artist raised in Los Angeles. Working with a variety of printmaking processes including intaglio, wood reduction, lithography, and alternative photography, her practice combines autobiographical elements with themes of migration, domestic spaces, and the multiplicities of Korean womanhood. Lee's work has been shown in Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, and Seoul, and was most recently featured in New York in the David Zwirner group exhibition, "After-Hours: People Who Work Here."

[website](http://www.namilee.com)

Chilean-American artist, **Francisco Letelier**, is known for interdisciplinary visual art that integrates narratives exploring memory and identity. Based in Venice and Joshua Tree, California, he creates works nationally and internationally, in collaborations that facilitate collective participation. The celebrated tile murals, 'El Sol and La Luna (The Sun and The Moon)' at Westlake/Macarthur Park Metro Station in LA, honor local communities. Painted on aluminum panels the 'Into the Blue' mural spans 105 feet through time, community and airflight while celebrating local history and the environment at the Los Angeles World Airport LAX Airport Police Facility. Known also for his prose, essays and spoken word, Letelier is a recipient of the Social and Public Art Resource Center's, 'Siqueiros Award' and awarded the LA ARTcore prize for his contributions to local culture. The artist is a contributing editor to The Markaz Review.

letelierart.blogspot.com

Joyce Lu is a performing artist, director, and educator interested in using art as and for healing justice. She is the founder and director of LAPlayback Theatre Company and also performs Playback with Oakland Freedom Theatre and Dailey Innovations, Inc. in conjunction with equity training. Joyce is a former member of Body Weather Laboratory LA and has performed with Oguri and Roxanne Steinberg at many venues including The Guggenheim and Getty museums.

joycelu.com

Emily Marchand envelops ceramics, cooking, and community organizing in her art practice. Inspired by the native and manufactured landscapes of Los Angeles, she makes forms embedded with vegetables, fruits, eggs, flora and fauna. What began as an investigation and exploration into Big Agriculture, seed banks and food scarcity has inspired a closer look into her own relationship to her community through food, cooking, gardening, feeding friends and unhoused neighbors. Adjacent to her art practice, she cooks for a living as a food stylist and as a volunteer for local non-profit organizations feeding the unhoused community including Brown Bag Lady, Downtown Women's Center, and MEND Poverty.

emilymarchand.com

Kirby Marshall-Collins is a Black TV writer and director who amplifies the voices of Black and queer people through fun and fantastical coming-of-age stories. She is a 2023 Disney Entertainment Writing Fellow — chosen from thousands for the highly competitive TV staffing program. In 2022, Kirby excelled as Writers' Assistant on NANCY DREW (CW). She regularly collaborates with nonprofits on curriculum and filmmaking education for young filmmakers of color. Her greatest accomplishment is the fact that she helped her nephew make Christmas stockings last year. She is currently fundraising for her short film debut, "Ways to Fly."

kirbsidechat.com

Julia Mata is an illustrator and comic book author from Southern California, living in Los Angeles. My comics have been commissioned by The Los Angeles Times and The Washington Post and I have been featured in The New York Times, Hyperallergic, and The Brooklyn Rail. I am a 2024 City of Long Beach Professional Artist Fellow, 2023 Individual Artist Fellow with the California Arts Council and a 2022 MacDowell Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts Fellow. I self-published my comics series CRISIS by myself for five years and sold them at zine fairs and punk shows.

In 2021, CRISIS was acquired by Drawn & Quarterly for publication as a full-length graphic novel which I am currently working on.

julia-mata.com

Randi Matushevitz is a multidisciplinary artist based in Los Angeles best known for her large-scale mixed media drawings, video, and installation projects that explore raw human emotions and the delicate nature of the human connectivity. She is a recipient of a California Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship 2023-24, Curator's Choice Award Video Installation 2024, Safe Spaces Exhibition, Art Connect Society, and Finalist Money for Women/Barbara Deming Memorial Fund 2024. Her artwork has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including Projecting Possibilities on the Helms Bakery Building, Los Angeles, CA, Jerusalem Biennale, and Las Vegas Art Museum. Public acquisitions include Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA, Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Brain Center, the Marjorie Barrick Art Museum, Las Vegas, NV, and the Enter Art Foundation, Berlin, Germany.

randimatushevitz.com

Carol Anne McChrystal's sculptures concentrate on the ancestral handicrafts of her two island homelands, Ireland and the Philippines. Influenced by time spent in these places witnessing the role globalized industry plays in the transformation of cultural practices, her works take the form of floor mats traditionally plaited from local plant fibers. Informed by constructs of home and her family migration story, she hand-weaves these objects from non-traditional matter that she collects from specific landscapes.

carolannemcchrystal.com

Kate McMillan grew up in Houston, Texas, making up stories and illustrating them whenever she could. She studied architecture at Yale and Norwegian boat building through the Mortimer Hays-Brandeis Fellowship. She worked as a visual development artist at Dreamworks TV for projects including Croods: Family Tree, Abominable and the Invisible City, and Madagascar: A Little Wild. She is currently working as a location designer at Disney TV. Kate is the co-author and illustrator of the middle grade series Maple's Theory of Fun, forthcoming from Aladdin books, an imprint of Simon and Schuster.

kategcmillan.com

Ryan Mekenian (he/him) is an Armenian-American writer/director based in Tongva territory, his hometown, Los Angeles. Ryan's screenplay, The Man in the Flying Lawn Chair, was a 2022 Academy Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting quarterfinalist and won the 2021 Screenwriting Discovery Award Grand Prize at the Oscar-qualifying Rhode Island International Film Festival. His film, Spokespeople, a short documentary about L.A.'s bicycling communities, won Best Film for Change at the BAFTA-qualifying Bolton International Film Festival & Best Doc Short at the Rhode Island International Film Festival. He aims to direct the kind of movies that inspired him as a kid — true stories that convey honest, complex portrayals of the American dream.

mekenian.com

Connie Mendoza, a dedicated artist from Boyle Heights, has a deep commitment to teaching and reaching out to new and prospective artists. She is a member of the Barrio Mobile Art Studio cohort at Self Help Graphics. Currently, she is pursuing an MA in Arts Management and Fine Art at Claremont Graduate University. Her mission as an artist working within the discipline of ceramics is to navigate and embrace the unsettling experiences of being “Ni de Aqui, ni de Alla” (Not from here nor from there). In her art, she explores the profound themes of polarity and cultural identity, illuminating the challenges of not fully belonging to any single culture and the intricacies of existing between multiple worlds.

Christian Miranda is a Mexican-American illustrator with a deep appreciation for his Mexican cultural heritage and a passion for social justice. Through his work, he aims to highlight the beauty and resilience of Mexican farming communities as they navigate the challenges of a changing climate. Through the disciplines of mural painting, illustration, and 3D modeling he explores a wide range of artistic styles and concepts. His work features exaggerated proportions, playful characters, and bright colors.

@artofcham

For over five decades, **Nobuko Miyamoto** has used the art of song, dance and theater as a way to reclaim and decolonize our minds, bodies and histories, and to build solidarity across cultural borders. A child of Japanese American internment, she danced on Broadway and in films such as “Flower Drum Song” and “West Side Story”. In 1973, Nobuko co-created one of the first albums of Asian American songs, “A Grain of Sand”. In 1978, she founded the community-based arts organization Great Leap, continually collaborating with artists of color to produce concerts, theater works, music

videos, community residencies, and, most recently, the FandangObon EcoArts Festivals.

nobukomiyamoto.org

Marcela Montalvan is a visual artist living in Los Angeles, CA. Through her art, she seeks to raise awareness of the urgent need for habitat and biodiversity preservation, as well as raise awareness for women's reproductive health particularly in communities that are most vulnerable to environmental degradation and have limited access to adequate healthcare. Her work is informed by her personal experiences growing up in a community that was disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution and the lack of access to quality healthcare.

milkweedsandhoney.com

Norma Montoya is a Chicana artist, cultural worker, and educator. She participated in key mobilizations for educational rights and peace that make up pillars of the historical Chicano movement. She is a historical Chicano mural movement veteran and the only woman Lead Artist of the Estrada Courts Mural Program. She is based in City Terrace. Montoya first began painting murals in the 1970s, utilizing her practice to register and advance the imaginations and social justice needs of barrio youths.

normamontoya.wordpress.com

Chinaedu Nwadibia firmly believes in the functions of portraiture, storytelling and the supernatural. The orality of her Nigerian and African American heritage has nurtured a keen observational ear that guides her visual work. Using photography, sculpture and performance, she advocates for herself and others, illuminating the spaces just out of view and prompting a further investigation into how one perceives their surroundings. Her explorations help her practice to exist beyond the conventions of the archive or historical narrative, while also operating within these frameworks, engaging the imagination and encouraging declarations of personal freedom.

chinaeduen.com

Jonas Oppenheim is an award-winning writer whose plays have received over 50 productions. His guerrilla-theater satire “I'm Gonna Kill the President!” A Federal Offense toured to parking lots and back alleys during W. Bush and Trump. His street-theater musical Mr. Satan Goes to Wall Street performed outside the 2012 presidential conventions. His climate-crisis satire, The Planet Earth Farewell Concert, premiered in the 2024 Hollywood Fringe Festival. Jonas developed an original sitcom with CBS/Warner Brothers, and was a story producer on American Gangster: Trap Queens for BET+. His podcast sitcom, The Love Ark (it's The Love Boat on Noah's Ark!), is available everywhere. He has improvised comedy, made leftist radio, taught guerrilla theater, and played in a wild rock'n'roll band. Ceasefire now! Free Palestine!

ojonaso.wixsite.com/jonas-oppenheim

Nicole Otero is a writer, director and editor. In 2020, Otero's directorial narrative debut, SLIP, was acquired & distributed by Dedza/Kino Lorber, as part of a collection highlighting emerging directors. SLIP is currently streaming on the Criterion Channel. She is a recipient of the 2022 NALIP Latino Lens grant for her latest film WAIT FOR NIGHT, a spiritual proof of concept for her upcoming feature project in development. With an emphasis on sound and perspective, Otero is interested in haptic cinema. In addition to her work as a director, she has also edited several films for major museum exhibitions, including MoMA, the New Museum in NY, the Hammer Museum, and more.

notero.film

Vasilios Papapitsios is an LA-based writer, filmmaker, and artist blending genres and blurring boundaries at the intersections of advocacy, education, and entertainment. As a visual and cultural producer they aspire to make activated digital media through empowerment and social equity. During their 20's, after being expelled from UNC - Chapel Hill, under homophobic and false accusations of starting a local HIV-epidemic, they were diagnosed with AIDS and given months to live. As a core driving force, their work prioritizes the narratives found in LGBTQ+, Black and underserved communities, often through levity and a flare for the fantastical while still hitting on harsh realities.

vasiliospapapitsios.com

Jennie E. Park is a South Korea(n)-born and Southern California-based first-generation American immigrant artist, writer and curator committed to interdisciplinarity and integrated approaches to honesty. (In)visibility and (in)vulnerability, and world-generating dynamics of entanglement and truthful paradox, recur as practices, tools or puzzles she explores through her mixed media, project-based work.

jenniepark.art

Janel Pineda is a U.S.-born Salvadoran poet, educator, and the author of Lineage of Rain (Haymarket Books). As a Marshall Scholar, she holds dual master's degrees in Creative Writing Education and Latin American Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London and the University of Cambridge respectively. She is also a member of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). Janel is currently pursuing a PhD at UCLA as a Paul & Daisy Soros fellow, where her research focuses on U.S. Central American poetics and the liberatory capacities of poetry for Central American families.

janelpineda.com

Nadene Pita is a singer, improviser, composer and multi-instrumentalist using vocals, viola, orchestral strings, live electronics and traditional Māori instruments to make global, creative art. As an Indigenous woman her work investigates or includes meditations on the importance of family, culture, identity, self-determination, healing and connection to the natural world. Pita was born in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and grew up in Australia before moving to Los Angeles. She is Māori and Irish, with a dash of Portuguese on her father's side. She works in contemporary, intercultural music, experimental jazz, and cross-disciplinary productions, many with theater, video and dance.

nadenepita.com

Ruthie Prillaman is a novelist, screenwriter, and librettist focused on young peoples' literature and middle-grade media. Her work approaches questions of choice and identity formation with a sense of humor, dignity, and care. Her first book, Maple's Theory of Fun, an illustrated middle grade novel co-created with Kate McMillan is slated for publication by Aladdin, an imprint of Simon and Schuster in 2024, with a sequel to come in 2025. As a lyricist and librettist, Ruthie has received commissions from choirs and orchestras across the country; her narrated children's orchestral piece What About the Duck?, written with composer Andrew Maxfield, will be premiered by the Utah Symphony next season.

ruthieprillaman.com

Nicole Rademacher is a socially-engaged, interdisciplinary artist and Registered Art Therapist. Her work is emotionally reflective whether in the community or personal. Being a Latinx transcultural adoptee, she has spent her life searching for belonging and employs that experience of in-depth investigation of identity, intimacy, and family by engaging communities in multiple disciplines including video, photo-collage, works on paper, interactive websites, and installation, through a practice rooted in her education as an art therapist. Her work functions as research into how we support ourselves and others, looking to connect and build community. She has shown work worldwide including at the Centro de Arte Digital en Memoria de Juan Downey, LOOP Video Art Festival, Transmediale, and the Los Angeles International Airport.

nicolerademacher.com

Renée Reizman is an interdisciplinary artist and writer. She coauthors dialogues in diverse communities to study the ways infrastructure shapes our culture, policy, and environment. She currently teaches graphic design and digital art at Pepperdine University and the University of Southern California. Renée has engaged with the public through organizations like the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Canyonlands Solid Waste Authority, the Blue Sky Center, Antelope Valley College, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, and Machine Project. Her writing appears in publications like the Los Angeles Times, Hyperallergic, Art in America, New York Magazine, the Atlantic, Observer, Teen Vogue, and Slate. Renée holds an MFA in Art: Critical & Curatorial Studies from the University of California, Irvine.

reneereizman.com

Adee Roberson (b.1981, West Palm Beach, Florida) is an interdisciplinary artist whose work is a meditation on symbolism and texture. Synthesizing performance and installation, her work melds vibration and technicolor visions through paint- ings, video, and melodic compositions. These works offer a refracted timeline of black diasporic movement, weaving sonic and familial archives, with landscape, rhythm, and spirit. Adee is a recipient of the New York Foundation for the Arts Cutting Edge Grant and the 2021 Los Angeles Artadia Award. She is based in Los Angeles, California.

adeeroberson.com

Jeniffer Sanchez is a Los Angeles-based artist, danzante, choreographer, director and producer. Her mission is to preserve the living tradition of Danza Azteca by creating elevated experiences through live performances, film/video, music, light, food and technology. Jeniffer has since been commissioned to create original Aztec Dance Performances for the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Hollywood Forever and Culture Clash. Her work operates at the intersection of performance art, multimedia theater and Mesoamerican dance tradition.

indigitalproductions.co

Laurie Shapiro (b. Long Island, NY 1990) is a mixed-media artist based in Los Angeles, California. Through overt expressiveness and hypervisual stimulation, her work compensates for a developing condition of hearing loss, creating rich scenarios and sensual environments that embody personal narratives. Shapiro received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 2012, and also studied abroad at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey in 2011. Over the past decade, Shapiro has regularly exhibited with galleries across the country in solo and group exhibitions.

laurieshapiroart.com

Pablo “Fer” Simental is a poet, film director, photographer, model, and social practitioner born and raised in Los Angeles. Using film, scored with poetry and music, he creates intergenerational documentations of love, for future and current generations to find tools to liberate ourselves from learned oppressive social dynamics and structures. He currently works with ArtworxLA teaching arts based healing to alternative education youth. Additionally, he most recently founded OSKURO, a donation-based experimental film showcase aiming to create a platform for self-taught, independent, and first generation artists. Through image-making both in front and behind the lens, he connects with artists around the globe, with Los Angeles in his heart.

[@nene.pablo](https://www.instagram.com/nene.pablo)

Laurie Steelink is Akimel O’otham and a citizen of the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. She is a cultural practitioner. Born in Phoenix, she was adopted by a progressive white family and was raised with a strong foundation in political consciousness and creativity. Both “place” and “situation” inform Laurie’s work and in 2012 she founded Cornelius Projects, an exhibition space in San Pedro, CA with a curatorial focus on the artists and cultural history of the area. She is on the organizing committee for the Many Winters Gathering of Elders, a 4-day Indigenous cultural and spiritual event. Recently, she was appointed Native Scholar in Residence at Pitzer College for the Spring 2024 semester.

lauriesteelink.com

Dillon Sung is a multimedia artist and community organizer based in Los Angeles. Her doctoral research seeks to set up an encounter on the question of migrant self-determination by diasporic Korean stateless people in relation to notions of agency and political change as impacted by state and insurgent sovereignties. She informs and engages her embodied research with an art practice through discourses of fine art—namely social practice in how it informs politics and aesthetics—

performance studies, and autoethnographic writing. She is additionally working on a creative manuscript on undocumented life and Asian American political formation.

Cayetano Talavera is a conscious fashion artist specializing in meticulously crafted garments and textile accessories. Drawing inspiration from nature, Talavera creates with a commitment to sustainability. Through designing, sewing, and natural dyeing, he harvests the colors of nature, extracting pigments from foraged plants, homegrown flowers, insects, and food waste. His journey into conscious fashion was shaped by my humble upbringing, prompting resourcefulness and respect for materials. Talavera’s aspirations include a fiber studio to expose others to fiber as a medium and teach about fabric manipulation and natural dyes, fostering an alternative to fast fashion.

hechobycaye.com

Kayla Tange (Los Angeles) was born in South Korea and adopted by a Japanese American family. Through video, installation, sculpture, and, more directly with performance, a large portion of her work addresses structures of spectatorship while redefining ancestral trauma through public and private rituals. Her practice pendulates between literal and satirical while exploring ways of utilizing collaboration to convey feelings of longing and belonging, transforming stories of shame into a symbolic and valuable medium. Tange is also known under the stage name Coco Ono. She expresses, often in dark humor, dialogue around death, mutation, and compensation for emotional and physical labor.

kaylatange.com

Cara Elise Taylor is a photographer from the Midwest, shooting primarily with analog modes of photography and videography. The themes in her work include nostalgia/memory, food, Afrolatinidad, Caribbean life, and community. She loves color, candor, natural light, and using art to stay connected to her body. She’s perpetually interested in displaying the intimate and ordinary feelings and behaviors of Black people globally — keeping a record of the African diaspora for future generations to observe.

[website](http://www.caretaylor.com)

Tom Tsai’s dance work spans stage, short film, education, and activism. His upbringing is rooted in Taiwanese self-determination against reductive political narratives, media propaganda, and threats of war. This environment drew him to Breakin’, Hip Hop culture, and dance for social justice. Tom’s works combine physical rigor with self-inquiry, personal storytelling with political engagement, and combats erasure of identity. He is a core artist with Dancing Through Prison Walls, a collaborative choreographic project that amplifies and uplifts people impacted by mass incarceration. Through dance and film, Tom is committed to dignified portrayals of politically marginalized identities.

tomtsai.tw

Jacqueline Valenzuela is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice is centered around depicting her personal experiences as well as the storytelling of other women who like her are in the Chicano world of lowriding. Her art practice reflects the deep roots she has planted in the lowrider community by bridging the gap between fine art and this underrepresented community.

jacquelinevalenzuela.com

Alejandra Vasquez is an award-winning Mexican-American filmmaker. Her directorial feature-length debut *Going Varsity* in Mariachi, co-directed with Sam Osborn, premiered at Sundance 2023 and went on to screen at 30+ festivals around the world. Her latest short film “Baca” was commissioned by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and released on the LA Times Short Docs. Her other short works include “When It’s Good, It’s Good” (POV Shorts/Latino Public Broadcasting) and “Folk Frontera” (PBS/Independent Lens, Best Texas Short SXSW).

alejandra-vasquez.com

Brittany Wang is a Chinese-American screenwriter born in Tianjin, China. She spent her childhood in suburban Maryland after her family immigrated to the US. Upon graduation, Brittany worked at a large consulting firm, working in financial advisory while she continued to pursue her love of screenwriting in her free time. Brittany worked as a freelance production assistant for music videos, commercials, and documentary films, until beginning her MFA in Writing for the Screen and Television at the University of Southern California. Her screenplays, often striking a balance between drama and levity, aim to tell culturally nuanced stories depicting the Asian-American experience in realistic, grounded, and humanistic portrayals.

[@bruh_it_knee](https://www.instagram.com/bruh_it_knee)

Dare Williams is a Queer HIV-positive poet and literary worker rooted in Southern California. A 2019 PEN America Emerging Voices Fellow, he has received support/fellowships for his work from John Ashbury Home School, The Frost Place, Brooklyn Poets, Breadloaf, Tin House, and Vermont Studio Center. His work has been featured in Kenyon Review, Foglifter, Frontier Poetry, Poetry Northwest and elsewhere. He is an associate poetry editor at Hooligan Magazine, and an MFA student at Warren Wilson College.

darewilliams.com

Isaac Michael, a visual artist and storyteller, is Tongva, Chumash, and Xicano. Grounded in his ancestral cultivation, he utilizes film, photography, and poetry to amplify decolonization narratives and reclaim indigenous pedagogies. Through his art, Isaac seeks to challenge the dominance of the human experience and instead honors the interconnectedness of all beings. He embraces the values of Indigenous Futurism to retell the past and present, envisioning a future guided by his community’s stories, visions, and desires.

[@ooxono_paar](https://www.instagram.com/ooxono_paar)

I am “**Yozmit The DogStar**”, a Transgender singer-songwriter, performance artist, and designer. I went on a spiritual artistic journey to find my voice as a trans-identified artist curating my own Music/Fashion/Performance Art Campaign called *DoYou*. I use voice, dance, and costumery as theatrical/shamanic trinity to tell stories about “Yozmit The DogStar” the goddess archetype who is my higher channel using my male form but embodying both The Sacred Feminine and The Sacred Masculine.

yozmit.com

Briseyda Zárate Fernández is a professional Flamenco dancer, choreographer and teacher of 30 years, and has been an active member and leader of the LA Flamenco community for just as long. She is a Mexicana/Chicana with Indigenous and Andalusian Roma/Gypsy ancestry born to Mexican farm working immigrants in Delano, Ca. from Tanganciquaro, Michoacán. She is one of the few in the top-most level of those practicing this art form in the United States and is sincerely committed to transmitting her love & deep understanding of this ancestral art and life affirming tradition.

briseydazarate.com

Jody Zellen is a Los Angeles based artist who works in many media simultaneously. She makes animations, interactive installations, app art, net art, drawings, paintings, photographs, public art, and artists’ books. Zellen received a BA from Wesleyan University (1983), a MFA from CalArts (1989) and a MPS from NYU’s Interactive Telecommunications Program (2009). Her work has been included in more than 500 group exhibitions and festivals since the late 1980s and is in numerous private and museum collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Whitney Museum of American Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

jodyzellen.com