



2023 CREATIVE CHANGE RETREAT

participant bios



Adey Fisseha

(she/hers)

Adey Fisseha is US Senior Program Officer at Unbound Philanthropy. In partnership with Unbound's Executive Director, Adey has taken the lead in helping Unbound develop and implement a narrative strategy. This has included helping to seed the Pop Culture Collaborative to unleash the superpowers of pop culture to build widespread public yearning for a pluralist culture; and the Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy to build the narrative power of the immigrant rights field. In 2023, Adey curated a Narrative Strategy Learning series for funders. The series' goal is to increase funders' familiarity with strategies for advancing new narratives on immigration and amplify promising practices. Previously Adey worked for the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), most recently serving as a policy attorney and campaign coordinator. Adey is an immigrant from Ethiopia.



Aisha Shillingford

(she/her/hers)

Aisha Shillingford is an anti-disciplinary artist and experiential futures designer, originally from Trinidad and Tobago, currently based in BedStuy, Brooklyn. She is a self-taught artist with 20 years of experience as a cultural organizer and movement builder. She has worked at the intersection of domestic violence prevention, solidarity economics, network cultivation, collaboration consulting, and innovative approaches to transformative movement building. She has a Masters of Social Work in Social Innovation and an MBA in Social Entrepreneurship. She has been an Artist in Residence at BLKSPACE on Ryder Farm, Kolaj Institute, and the Black Mecca Project. She has been a fellow at the Race Forward Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy and the Laundromat Project. She is currently an Artist In Residence at the Laundromat Project. Aisha is the Artistic Director of Intelligent Mischief, a creative studio unleashing the power of Black radical imagination to shape the future.



Alexis Confer

(she/her)

Alexis Confer is an advocate for progressive causes and strategist based in NYC. Currently, Alexis runs her own firm supporting movement building organizations. Prior to that, she served as the inaugural Executive Director of March For Our Lives, the national student-led movement to end gun violence in the U.S. She has extensive experience in organizing, nonprofit management and local government. From 2014 to 2020, Alexis helped launch a series of groundbreaking policy initiatives at the NYC Mayor's Office, beginning with the launch of the City's first-ever free universal Pre-K program. Prior to joining City Hall, Alexis served as the first National Field Director for Everytown for Gun Safety, as well as the Deputy Field Director in Pennsylvania for Obama for America 2012. Outside of her public service work, Alexis supports the Arts and founded the Mechanicals Theater Company 8 years ago. She holds an MPA from New York University and a bachelor's from George Washington University.

Amber J. Phillips

(she/her)



Amber J. Phillips is a writer, filmmaker, and art director whose work imagines a world where Black womanhood is an abundant overwhelming experience of safety, pleasure, and joy. Amber's work draws on her life as a Black, fat, queer, femme, auntie from the Midwest. As a storyteller, Amber is devoted to using radical Black imagination to create stories, art, culture, and community.

Most recently, Amber is the creator, producer, writer and performer in her first short film *Abundance*. *Abundance* is a three-part short film that explores the limitations and radical possibilities of identity from the perspective of a jaded politico, Black storyteller, and pop culture enthusiast with Black queer feminist intentions.

You can find Amber's work at AmberAbundance.com, Instagram, and Twitter.

Amy Rosenblum-Martín

(she/her)



Formerly a staff curator at Pérez Art Museum Miami and the Bronx Museum, Amy Rosenblum-Martín has also worked for MoMA, the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan, MALBA (Buenos Aires), MARCO (Monterrey, Mexico), El Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid), Kunsthaus Bregenz (Bregenz, Austria), and National Portrait Gallery (London), among others. This independent curator was MoMA PS1 guest assistant curator of "Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration," one of the NY Times Most Important Moments in Art, 2020. Her ISCP exhibition "Adjani Okpu-Egbe: On Delegitimization, Solidarity, and the Myth of Violent Africa" was one of New York City's Best Exhibitions of 2021 (Hyperallergic). Hilton Als wrote a New Yorker feature about her Bronx Museum survey "Swagger and Tenderness: The South Bronx Portraits by John Ahearn & Rigoberto Torres" (2023). Her landmark exhibition *Ana Mendieta: Thinking About Children's Thinking* at the Sugar Hill Children's Museum in Harlem was an Artforum Critic's Pick (2018).

Attia Taylor

(she/her)



Attia Taylor is a NYC based musician and creative producer. She is the CEO of Womanly, a mission driven organization dedicated to providing accessible health information to women and non-binary people through art and creative experiences. Her work is rooted in social justice, art, and design, to bring inclusive and culturally relevant content to sound, print and digital realms. She is passionate about building and cultivating communities through journalism, music, storytelling, and research. In addition to her work with Womanly, Attia is also a senior content designer at Planned Parenthood. Reaching over 15 million people a month, her work has focused primarily on Planned Parenthood's web experience and digital chat products as tools for user and patient centered education on sexual and reproductive health. Her expertise lives in strategizing and building new ways for marginalized and at-risk communities to receive the information they need to maintain healthy lifestyles.

Cheryl Wilkins

(she/her)



Cheryl Wilkins is the Co-Founder and Co-Director at Columbia University's Center for Justice (CFJ) where her work is committed to ending the nation's reliance on incarceration, developing new approaches to safety and justice, and participating in the national and global conversation around developing effective criminal justice policy. She is also the director of Women Transcending. In the community, Cheryl is a board member with the Women's Community Justice Association, a co-convenor of the Justice 4 Women's Task-Force, an advisor with the formerly incarcerated Women's International Commission, a senior advisor with the Women & Justice Project, and co-founder and executive team member with Women Building Up. She holds a graduate degree in Urban Affairs and is the recipient of the Brian Fischer Award, Davis Putter Fellowship Award, the Sister Mary Nerney Visionary Award, the Community and Social Justice Award and the Citizens against Recidivism Award.

Christine Hoang

(she/her)



Christine Hoang is a Vietnamese American screenwriter, playwright, actor, producer, and recovering lawyer based in Austin, Texas. She was born in New Orleans Charity Hospital and learned English by watching Sesame Street. Her stories are centered on Southern BIPOC characters trying to find their way. Christine's achievements include: THRIVE Grant Winner (2023), WarnerBros Discovery 150 Artist (2022), Unlock Her Potential mentee of Brian Yorkey (2022), Yes And Laughter Lab Winner (2022), WarnerMedia 150 New Orleans Film Society South Pitch Winner (2021), Kennedy Center Playwriting Intensive Fellow (2021), Meryl Streep's The Writers Lab Fellow (2020), and Tribeca Film Institute Alumna (2020), AT&T and Tribeca Untold Stories Finalist (2020), FronteraFest Best of Fest Winner (2023, 2017, 2016), Austin Film Festival Pitch Finalist (2019, 2017), Austin Critics Table David Mark Cohen Best New Play Winner (2017).

Clare Kenny

(she/her)



Clare Kenny is a social impact strategist, producer, and writer. Clare serves as the Program Director for the Yes And... Laughter Lab (YALL), an incubation lab and fellowship program for writers and creators developing socially progressive comedy. Prior to joining YALL, Clare founded and directed GLAAD's Youth Engagement Program, creating media advocacy education and programming for LGBTQ youth. As an undergraduate at Skidmore College, she co-created Show Your Sport, an educational, multimedia program to engage NCAA student-athletes in social justice advocacy, an initiative that continues at the college to this day. Her writing has been featured in Reuters, Ms. Magazine, and Teen Vogue.



Cyrée Jarelle Johnson

(any pronouns)

Cyrée Jarelle Johnson is a poet from Piscataway, New Jersey. He is the author of *SLINGSHOT* (Nightboat Books, 2019), winner of a Lambda Literary Award for Gay Poetry. Johnson was awarded a Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation and served as the inaugural poet-in-residence at the Brooklyn Public Library. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Apogee*, *Foglifter*, *WUSSY*, and *Atmos* among other publications. *WATCHNIGHT*, his forthcoming book of poetry, considers ancestry as history in the context of the Great Black Migration of the 20th century, familial estrangement, and queer family. He is a 2023 National Endowment of the Arts Creative Writing Fellow.



Deja Foxx

(she/her)

ACTIVIST. STRATEGIST. FUTURE POTUS. Deja Foxx is 23 years old and leading thought at the intersection of social justice and social media. She is the founder of GenZ Girl Gang, an alum of Columbia University, and a Digital Creator with Ford Models who got her start advocating for reproductive justice after experiencing homelessness in her teenage years. At just 19, she worked for Kamala Harris as the Influencer and Surrogate Strategist and became one of the youngest presidential campaign staffers in modern history.



Ixchel Tonāntzin Xōchitlzihuatl

(she/we/they)

Ixchel Xōchitlzihuatl is a peace and culture strategist of mixed race and mixed indigenous ancestry from South Texas and Northern Mexico. She is one of the founding directors of Las Imaginistas (Artplace America National Creative Placemaking Award, United States Artists, Blade of Grass, Common Field, Art for Justice) and the founding director of Voces Unidas (Center for Cultural Power Border Narratives Project). Xochitlzihuatl's artwork has been seen at the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics (NY), Movement Research (NY), Diverse Works (TX), and SOMA (Mexico City, MX). Their writings have been published by the Ford Foundation, the Smithsonian Magazine, the Architecture League and Nonprofit Quarterly. They produced artwork with Creative Time (*Drifting in Daylight* with David Levine) and the Center for Urban Pedagogy (*Stand Clear of the Closing Doors*). They hold an EdM from Harvard University and an MFA from Columbia University.



Jasiri X

(he/him/his)

Jasiri X is the first independent Hip-Hop artist to be awarded an Honorary Doctorate, which he received from Chicago Theological Seminary in 2016. This recognition grew out of the spiritual/political urgency and artistic vision he shared on songs like “Justice For Trayvon” and “Strange Fruit”, which documented the unjust police killings of young Blacks in the Millennial Generation. Still, he remains rooted in the Pittsburgh-based organization he founded, IHood Media, whose mission is to build liberated communities through art, education, and social justice. One of his generation’s most important political voices, in 2017, he received the Nathan Cummings Foundation Fellowship to start the IHood Artist Academy. Jasiri also received the USA Cummings Fellowship in Music, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Artist as Activist Fellowship, and the President’s Volunteer Service Award.



Jennifer Shaw

(she/her/hers)

Jennifer Shaw is a Senior Program Manager with the Open Society Foundations’ U.S. Narrative and Culture Change team. Based in New York City, she is a lawyer with deep experience in the criminal legal system having worked as a public defender, private litigator and policy advocate. She uses grant-making, convenings, and funder education to increase the capacity of the narrative change movement. Over the past two years, she has worked with and supported communications experts and activists in their effort to build a strategy to change the national narrative around community safety.



Jeremy Dennis

(he/him)

Ma’s House & BIPOC Art Studio Inc. is led by Indigenous artist Jeremy Dennis. The project began in June 2020 and serves as a communal art space based on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation in Southampton, New York. The family house, built in the 1960s, features a residency program for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), art studio, library, along with hosting an array of art and history-based programs for tribe members and the broader local community. A not-for-profit, 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, Ma’s House & BIPOC Art Studio Inc. was chartered in 2021 in the State of New York.

Jessica Valoris

(she/her)



Jessica Valoris is an interdisciplinary artist and community facilitator. She weaves together mixed-media installation, sound collage, ritual performance and social practice to create sacred spaces. Inspired by the earth-based traditions of her Black American and Jewish ancestry, Jessica activates ancestral wisdom, personal reflection, and community study. Her art is both balm and blueprint: mapping out pathways for the Black liberatory imagination and reviving recipes for collective care. Jessica collaborates with cultural organizers to facilitate community rituals of remembrance and conversations about reparations, abolition, earth-stewardship, and more. Jessica is a recipient of the Washington Award. She has completed fellowships with VisArts, Public Interest Design Lab, Intercultural Leadership Institute, and Halcyon Arts Lab. Her work has been shown at the Phillips Collection, Kreeger Museum, Africana Film Festival, Kennedy Center and Brentwood Arts Exchange.

José Olivarez

(he/him/his)



José Olivarez is a writer from Calumet City, IL. He is the author of *Promises of Gold* and *Citizen Illegal*. Alongside Willie Perdomo and Felicia Chavez, he co-edited the poetry anthology, *The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 4: LatiNext*. His poems appear alongside photos by Antonio Salazar in the hybrid poetic text, *Por Siempre*. In a review of *Promises of Gold*, *The Chicago Reader* declared, "White people have Emily Dickinson, Mexicans have José Olivarez."

Juanita A Monsalve

(she/her/they)



Juanita A Monsalve is a cultural, creative and digital strategist working for the freedom of all communities of color. She serves as United We Dream's Senior Marketing and Creative Director, leading the network's digital engagement of members, communication and narrative strategies, as well as culture change strategies to build the power of undocumented people in the U.S.. She was the lead creative and digital strategist behind the *Home is Here* campaign, which led to the victorious protection of DACA at the Supreme Court and under her leadership, UWD's membership grew to 1,000,000 and the average monthly social media reach expanded to 6,000,000. Thanks to her creative leadership as film co-director with the *#HomeisHere* campaign, UWD submitted a historic amicus brief of video stories to the Supreme Court, and won a Shorty Award for the *#HomeisHere* videos in 2020.

Justine Hebron

(she/her)



Justine Hebron is a communications and cultural strategist. She connects people to movements through pop culture. Justine started her career in feature film production at studios including Columbia, Sony Pictures, and Universal. Next, she moved into nonprofit communications working with people and organizations to accelerate equity-centered cultural and policy change across the nation including Tom Steyer's Next Generation, Hillary Rodham Clinton and The Clinton Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Ford Foundation, and more. Since 2017, Justine has been at SFFILM, presenter of the San Francisco International Film Festival and the Bay Area's leading film arts and culture organization. She leads communications, marketing, and PR strategy as the Director of External Relations. Justine was born in New York City, and grew up in Telluride, Colorado and Santa Fe, New Mexico. She received her BA in English from San Diego State University and is a trained high school teacher.

Kahea Pacheco

(she/her)



Kahea Pacheco (Kanaka 'Ōiwi) is a passionate advocate for Indigenous people's rights and climate justice that puts aloha 'āina at the heart of solutions. She is a Co-Director at Women's Earth Alliance (WEA), a global initiative empowering women's leadership to protect the environment, end the climate crisis, and ensure a just, thriving world. With WEA, Kahea has facilitated advocacy partnerships for Indigenous women-led campaigns to protect lands, water, and sacred spaces. She also co-led the "Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies" initiative, which explored the devastating impacts of extractive industry on Indigenous women and young people, and curated community-based tools addressing environmental violence. Kahea has a background in law, critical theory and human rights, and serves on the Advisory Councils for WEF's It.org and Daughters for Earth. She is most at home on the Hāmākua coast of Hawai'i, eating fresh poke with her husband and two kids.

Karen Wong

(she)



Karen Wong is the co-founder and Chief Creative Officer of GBA/Guilty By Association, a new art and lifestyle platform dedicated to empowering diverse artists. GBA creates new opportunities, markets, and sustainable pathways for unseen creators. In the fall 2023, Wong teaches a graduate seminar "Ways of Experiencing" exploring the 'the immersive' through architectural language at Columbia University GSAPP. As the former deputy director of the New Museum (a contemporary art museum renowned for its entrepreneurial mission: new art and new ideas), Wong co-founded the initiatives IDEAS CITY (2010-2020), a malleable platform exploring the future of cities with the belief that art and culture are essential to our metropolises; NEW INC (2013-present), the first museum-led incubator for art, technology, and design; and ONX Studio (2019-present), a mixed-reality accelerator and exhibition space. These game-changing programs elevate creative practitioners and demonstrate art's transformative power for cultural and social impact.



Kayan Cheung-Miaw

(she/they)

Kayan Cheung-Miaw (she/they) is a mama, organizer, artist, and educator based in North Carolina. They are originally from Hong Kong and were raised in New York's Chinatown. As an organizer at the Chinese Progressive Association San Francisco, Kayan's leadership in the Yank Sing restaurant workers' campaign resulted in a historic \$4 million settlement for 280 workers. They are currently fighting for better wages for North Carolinians as an organizer with the United for a Fair Economy. Kayan earned their Master of Arts in Teaching: Urban Education & Social Justice from the University of San Francisco, their MFA in Comics from the California College of the Arts, and their BA in the Study of Women & Gender from Smith College.



Kristen Marston

(she/her)

Kristen Marston is a cultural strategist and consulting producer who specializes in working with entertainment and advertising professionals to create accurate, inclusive, and empathetic portrayals of Black, Brown, and LGBTQ+ communities. Through her work she aims to tell powerful stories and to design campaigns and products that ignite positive and long-lasting social change. Kristen has consulted on over 100+ major TV shows, films, and documentaries for companies like HBO Max, MTV, Amazon, Disney, ABC, NBC, Starz, Lionsgate and on projects like Marvel's Black Panther: Wakanda Forever and the Emmy-winning Netflix series, When They See Us. Currently, she serves as Chief Impact Officer at The League, where she weaves together advocacy and popular culture to create real lasting impact and to move the conversations that matter most in the world.



Laura Hughes

(she/her)

Laura A. Hughes, Director of Narrative Strategies, is a curious learner, change-maker, and persuasive leader with high emotional intelligence. At PolicyLink she is responsible for harnessing the power of narrative to advance racial equity and justice specific to housing for the more than one million individuals who live below 200 percent of the poverty level. Hughes has led numerous projects including the strategic alignment of corporate and philanthropic partners to layer-focused investments to dramatically influence the trajectory of a neighborhood and achieve measurable gains for children and families. Additionally, she served as a program officer with The Skillman Foundation and as the Executive Director of the Ruth Ellis Center, a homeless and runaway shelter dedicated to the needs of LGBTQ youth. Prior to her role with Gusto Partners, LLC, Laura served as the Vice President of Communications & Community for a woman-owned, \$500 million IT and business services corporation with 3,000 consultants and 32 offices in the US and Europe. Laura earned a Bachelor of Arts with High Honors in Anthropology from Brown University and her Master in Public Health, Health Behavior Health Education, from the University of Michigan. She was a 2016 German Marshall Fellow.



Lakyn Carlton

(she/her)

Lakyn (Lay-kin) Carlton is a sustainability educator, first, and a personal stylist--also, first. Well-known for her biting wit on Twitter, Lakyn is committed to building a better fashion future: from fighting for the rights of garment workers to holding brands accountable for unethical actions to teaching consumers to make more conscious choices while still honoring their own self-expression. A proud community college-dropout, Lakyn's side passions include showing Black girls from humble beginnings that they, too, can build a career and life in fashion, and helping to create a world where we all don't just survive, but thrive—and look cute, too.



Layel Camargo

(they/them)

Layel is Yaqui and Mayo of the Sonoran Desert. As a transgender and gender non-conforming person, they've dedicated the last decade advancing climate justice through storytelling and narrative change by creating campaigns like 'Climate Woke' with The Center For Cultural Power and supporting media projects like 'The North Pole Show' with Executive Producers Rosario Dawson and Movement Generation, Justice and Ecology Project. They are the producer and host of 'Did We Go Too Far', a climate justice podcast. Most recently, Layel Co-founded a 900 acre land stewardship and cultural change organization; Shelterwood Collective. Layel was named on the Grist 2020 Fixers List. They graduated from UC Santa Cruz with degrees in Feminist Studies and Legal Studies.



Lee Sunday Evans

(she/her)

Lee Sunday Evans is a two-time Obie Award-winning Director + Choreographer and the Artistic Director of Waterwell. She recently directed the acclaimed production of Heather Christian's ORATORIO FOR LIVING THINGS and was just announced as the director of a Broadway-bound musical adaptation of A WRINKLE IN TIME. She is developing a TV project for A24, and her feature-length film THE COURTROOM, written by Arian Moayed, premiered at the Tribeca Festival. Notable theater credits include DANCE NATION by Clare Barron, DETROIT RED by Will Power, SUNDAY by Jack Thorne, IN THE GREEN by Grace McLean, MILLER, MISSISSIPPI by Boo Killebrew, and HOME by Geoff Sobelle.

Lionel Cruet

(he)



Lionel Cruet, a Puerto Rican artist, resides in both New York City and San Juan. With a diverse educational background, including a Bachelor of Fine Arts from La Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Diseño, a Master of Fine Arts in Digital Interdisciplinary Art Practice from CUNY, and a Master of Education from the College of Saint Rose, Cruet's artistic journey has been enriched by his studies. His works have been exhibited at renowned institutions such as the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Everson Museum of Art, and Bronx River Art Center. Notable achievements include receiving the Juan Downey Audiovisual Award at the 11th Media Arts Biennale and being a Fellow at the Socrates Sculpture Park and The Laundromat Project. In addition to his artistic practice, Cruet collaborates with the New York City Department of Education and various nonprofits. He is also a co-founder of banasta: residencia artistica in Puerto Rico.

Luke Muyskens

(he/him)



Luke Muyskens is a screenwriter and fiction writer living in St. Paul, Minnesota. His work has appeared in journals including West Branch, Third Coast, New American Writing, and a Pact Press anthology on the opioid epidemic. He earned an MFA in 2016 from Queen's University of Charlotte's Low Residency: Latin America program and was a 2018 Tin House Scholar. His screenwriting was showcased in the 2022 Yes, And... Laughter Lab. Beyond writing, Luke is collecting uranium glass and trying to sell a rusty 1995 Cadillac Eldorado.

Marcos Echeverría Ortiz

(he/him)



Marcos Echeverría Ortiz is an award-winning interdisciplinary journalist, photographer, and documentary maker practicing transmedia storytelling. His work uses hybrid media to explore the immigrant experience in New York City through stories connected to memory, archives, underground music, and human rights. His work has been exhibited and installed in Spain, Germany, Puerto Rico, Panamá, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, and the US. He has recently covered social justice movements and worked with organizations such as NYCC, Make The Road New York, and Lincoln Center. His writings have been published in Noisey VICE, The Latinx Project at NYU, Radio COCOA, among others. His pictures have also appeared in Business Insider and The New York Times. Marcos was a fellow of the Provost Scholarship at The New School, where he graduated with honors from the MA program in Media Studies and a Fellow of the Culture and Narrative Fellowship at the Opportunity Agenda.



Martin Wannam

(he/him)

Martín Wannam (b. 1992, Guatemala) is a visual artist and educator whose work critically examines Guatemala's historical, social, and political climate, focusing on freedom dreaming for the cuir individual. He focuses on the intersection of brownness and cuir utopia that uses the foundation of iconoclasm and the aesthetic of maximalism through the tools of photography, sculpture, and performance for the constant evaluation of systematic structures such as religion, coloniality, folklore, and white supremacy. Currently, he is an Assistant Professor in Studio Art at UNC Chapel Hill and part of the Fronteristxs Collective, a collective of artists fighting for migrant justice and the abolition of the prison industrial complex.



Michelle Barsa

(she/her)

Michelle is a principal of Building Cultures of Belonging on the programs team at Omidyar Network. Prior to joining ON, Michelle was as a program director at Beyond Conflict where she developed and led initiatives focused on democratic legitimacy and movement building throughout the United States. Michelle has extensive experience working to counter violent extremism, holding senior advisory positions at USAID, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and Equal Access International. As a director at the Washington, D.C.-based social impact nonprofit Inclusive Security, she advised on U.S. foreign policy related to women, peace, and security, and trained hundreds of women across Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Libya, and Nigeria to develop policy-focused advocacy strategies. Michelle has also worked to promote equitable labor practices for Latino immigrants.



Milly Tamarez

(she/her/hers)

Milly Tamarez is a stand-up comedian, writer, and actress based out of Brooklyn, New York. She most recently wrote for ABC's The Celebrity Dating Game, Jason Biggs' Cash At Your Door on E!, WWE's Friday Night Smackdown, NPR's weekly news quiz show, Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me. Milly is also co-host for a female-led political and pop culture podcast, The Betches Sup. She was recently chosen as one of a handful of comedic voices to participate in Will Ferrell, Bowen Yang and Matt Rogers produced podcast, Clown Parade: An Anthological Character Piece Carefully Curated by Las Culturistas. Milly has also written for BuzzFeed, Reductress, and MTV and has been featured on Thrillist, Vice, BET, Flama, Above Average, Univision, and Comedy Central. She is one of the creators and producers of Flexx (a satire magazine for people of color) and Diverse as Fuck Festival a festival that highlights diversity in comedy.



Monique Verdin

(she/her)

Monique Verdin is a transdisciplinary storyteller, citizen of the Houma Nation and director of The Land Memory Bank & Seed Exchange, responding to the complex interconnectedness of environment, economics, culture, climate, and change in the Gulf South. Monique is currently working to support the Okla Hina Ikhish Holo, a network of Indigenous southeastern gardeners, to grow food and medicine sovereignty in the lower Mississippi River Delta and is a member of the Another Gulf Is Possible Collaborative. Monique is co-producer/subject of the documentary *My Louisiana Love* and co-author of *Return to Yakni Chitto : Houma Migrations*.



Natasha Samreny

(she/her)

Natasha Samreny is the Director of Marketing and Communications at Trinity Rep Theater. She is also a multicultural and multidisciplinary writer, performer and storyteller with 10+ years of experience in radio and comedy. Her formal education includes a B.A. in Mass Communications, M.A. in Middle East History, and training through The Second City. Her work spans reporting, digital marketing, DEI consulting, and theater.



Nate Lewis

(he/him/his)

Nate Lewis was born and raised outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the town of Beaver Falls. Prior to pursuing a career in art, he earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Virginia Commonwealth University and practiced critical-care nursing in Washington, D.C.-area hospitals for nine years. Lewis's first artistic pursuit was playing the violin in 2008, followed by drawing in 2010. In 2017, he moved to New York City. Lewis's work has been exhibited at the California African American Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Yale Center for British Art, and is in the public collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Blanton Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, and the Brooklyn Museum, among others. Lewis has taken part in several residencies, including Pioneer Works, Fountainhead, Dieu Donne and the Art Hx Artist-in-Residence at Princeton University.

Nayantara Sen

(she/her/hers)



Nayantara Sen is a Bengali immigrant, a trilingual storyteller and fiction writer, a narrative and cultural strategist, and a social justice educator. She is the Director of Field and Funder Learning at the Pop Culture Collaborative, the Lead Designer and Narrative Strategist for the Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy, and the previous Director of Narrative and Cultural Strategies at Race Forward.

For the last 15 years, Nayantara has worked at the intersections of narrative, arts and cultural strategies, social movement strategies, racial and gender justice, immigration, and equity building. She is a recovering arts administrator with expertise in oral history, creative fiction writing, Theatre of the Oppressed, who spends a lot of time working on narrative and cultural strategies and institutional and systems change. She is the author of the Butterfly Lab Narrative Project Design Toolkit, Creating Cultures and Practices for Racial Equity, and the Cultural Strategy Primer.

Nicole Melaku

(she/her/ella)



Nicole brings over 13 years of experience working on immigrant and refugee issues at the local, state, and national level. As NPNA's Executive Director where she works to harness the collective power of NPNA's 65 member organizations across 40 states to advance immigrant integration efforts through advocacy, organizing campaigns, and policy initiatives.

Nicole is a first generation New American whose mother and grandparents hail from Chihuahua, Mexico and who naturalized as a result of the Immigration Reform and Naturalization Act (IRCA) of 1986. Nicole's career trajectory draws on the strength and perseverance of her family's own immigration story-she is an advocate, organizer, and movement leader who is dedicated to building a more inclusive and just democracy.

Orion Camero

(they/he/she)



Orion Camero is a queer visual storytelling educator and cultural organizer, centering creative interventions at the nexus of social, economic, and ecological crises to advance liberation. As a Filipinx with roots in decolonial lineage, they honor the stories of their ancestors from the Central Valley farmworkers' movements to indigenous babaylan resistance against Spanish empire. Among many roles, Orion is the Action Lead Program Manager for Narrative Initiative, a story-based social change organization focused on maximizing opportunities to nourish and grow narrative power, equip narrative changemakers, and bond communities to pursue long-term progress for social justice. Orion additionally stewards the California Allegory, an epic collaborative image that acts as a centerpiece for intersectional justice education and cross-movement pollination. Across more than a decade, their core motivation and passion thrives in threading together coalitions and building exponential power.

Prinston Nnanna

(he)



Prinston is a Brooklyn-based Artist by way of Houston, Texas, working primarily with charcoal, coffee, and acrylic inks. Mr. Nnanna is just beginning to exhibit his intimate, yet subversive, portraits. The charcoal drawn works on hand-toned paper have stood out in the group shows they have been a part of. Recurring motifs include butterflies, bees and geometric patterns that all have iconographical weight within the artist's practice. His state goal is to "depict the elegance of the Black figure at the same time as reconstructing the image in which society has painted people of colour."

He earned a BA in Arts at Texas Southern University (2016). While studying at Texas Southern Prinston was granted the opportunity to study abroad in Paris, France. There he focused on his cultural studies of the African Diaspora which still has a great impact on his works today. Mr. Nnanna then went on to earn his MFA at The New York Academy of Art (2019).

Rebecca Marimutu

(she/her)



Rebecca Marimutu is a photographer and educator from New York City, based in Baltimore. Her artistic practice explores self, identity, and material tactility through photography, collage, paper sculpture, and audio-visual abstraction. Her work looks to divest from the traditional photography canon by emphasizing contemporary artists interrogating the medium's history. She received her MFA in 2020 from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in Photographic and Electronic Media, with a concentration in Critical Studies. Her work has been shown at Spring/Break Art Fair in New York, Waller Gallery, Catalyst Contemporary, Black Artists Research Space, and Eubie Blake Cultural Center in Baltimore, MD. Currently, she is a professor at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and Towson University and the founder of Anchovy Press, an independent publishing company based in Baltimore dedicated to storytelling that centers BIPOC experiences.

Salomé Egas

(she/her/hers)



SALOMÉ EGAS is proudly Ecuadorian; an interdisciplinary performer, arts educator and children's books author who is permanently questioning her identity through dance, theater, film and textile arts. She's a NYFA Women's Fund Recipient and The Opportunity Agenda's Narrative Innovators Lab Fellow working on her multidisciplinary project "Más que un Pétalo." In 2022, she was a Brooklyn Arts Council grantee and an American Immigration Council fellow. As a solo performer, she incorporates radical self-love and indigenization as tools to empower the ancestral knowledge carried by immigrant and femme bodies of color. She founded By Salo Books, and is currently working on her second bilingual children's book. Salomé has performed nationally at several venues in NYC; and internationally in Ecuador, Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina and Canada. Salomé attended Creative Capital's Latinx Workshop (2020), EmergeNYC (2018), obtained a Master's from NYU(2018) and graduated from Skidmore College (2014)



Siyona Ravi

(she/her)

Siyona Ravi is an artist based in Brooklyn. Her practice is largely collaborative, and explores and reveals conditions for creating sustainable change. She worked at the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) for several years, where she led community-engaged design processes with community organizers and graphic designers. In 2019 she was a Create Change Fellow with The Laundromat Project. Her writing has been published in the Brooklyn Rail, Pulitzer Center, and SFMOMA's Open Space. She holds a BA in Visual Studies from the University of Pennsylvania.



Stephanie Flaster

(she/her)

As Chief of Staff at the Pop Culture Collaborative, Stephanie supports the Chief Strategy Officer on program strategy, resource development, field analysis, and insight synthesis. For the previous 8+ years, Stephanie was on the Packard Foundation's Reproductive Health team where she supported grantee partners and the wider field to advance reproductive health, rights, and justice in the U.S. and globally. During her time at the Packard Foundation, Stephanie worked closely with the Foundation's CEO and Reproductive Health Director to launch what has since become the Collaborative for Gender and Reproductive Equity. Previously, Stephanie was a volunteer with the Art of Yoga Project, through which she led trauma-informed yoga and mindfulness classes with incarcerated adolescent girls. She earned her M.A. in Poverty and Development from the Institute of Development Studies in the United Kingdom.



Steven Renderos

(he/him)

Steven Renderos (he/him) is the Executive Director of MediaJustice, a national racial justice organization that advances the media and technology rights of people of color. For the past decade, Steven has led campaigns at MediaJustice that lowered the cost of prison phone calls, secured net neutrality rules, and got Donald Trump kicked off of Twitter. Steven is a regular commentator on media, technology, and racial justice, appearing in publications like the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, and The Guardian. Steven is the creator and producer of Bring Receipts, a politics and pop culture podcast that launched in 2021, which he hosts alongside Brandi Collins-Dexter. He's also the executive producer for Revolutionary Spirits, a 4-part history podcast on the life and martyrdom of Mexican revolutionary leader Francisco Madero. Steven is a native of Los Angeles, CA and currently based in Tucson, AZ.



Taryn Higashi

(she/her)

Taryn Higashi is the Executive Director of Unbound Philanthropy, which she joined as the first member of staff in 2008. Taryn has helped Unbound grow into a significant actor in contributing to pluralistic, just, and equitable societies in the US and UK that recognize the rights and contributions of immigrants and refugees. The foundation has co-founded several vibrant institutions such as the US-based Pop Culture Collaborative, to unleash the superpowers of pop culture to build widespread public yearning for a pluralist culture, and the UK-based Power of Pop Fund to support organizations working at the intersection of popular culture and social change, with a particular focus on migration and racial justice. Prior to Unbound, Taryn managed the migrant and refugee rights portfolio and was Deputy Director of the human rights unit at the Ford Foundation. Taryn is the Chair of the Board of the International Refugee Assistance Project.



Terry Marshall

(he/him)

Terry Marshall is an artist, writer, cultural innovator, creative strategist and cultural studies scholar living in Brooklyn by way of Barbados and Boston. He has 25 plus years of experience as a labor and cultural organizer and previously founded the Hip Hop Media Lab and Streets is Watching. His work focuses on the intersection of social movement history and theory, transformative experience design, social scenes and the role of parties and festivals as drivers of social and cultural change. He is currently a Senior Fellow at the USC Annenberg Innovation Lab Civic Media Fellowship and an alumni of the Laundromat Project Creative Change Fellowship. He was a member of the design team of the Constellations Fund. Terry loves movies and comics and is a #WalkingDead superfan.



Theo Schear

(he/him)

Theo Schear is a documentary filmmaker from Oakland, California. He was a 2021 SFFILM FilmHouse Resident and a member of Detroit Public Television's National Documentary Unit. His films have played on PBS and at museums and film festivals. He produces videos for sports teams, music venues and museums, and his writing has appeared in SFMOMA's Open Space, Nieman Lab, and Film Threat.



Tomek Miernowski

(he/they)

Hi there, my name is Tomek and I'm an artist living in Brooklyn. I'm primarily interested in creative and result-oriented techniques to change current systems to ones focused on decentralized cooperation and mutual aid, built for equality, justice, and environmental symbiosis - mostly but not exclusively by attacking capitalism. I enjoy searching for and improving on successful social models through my art and community, both in leadership and supportive roles. My most recent effort is a social study presented via sound installation titled News From Somewhere (www.newsfromsomewhere.net), which recently showed at Culture Lab LIC in NYC. I'm also an active professional musician and producer. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone at the retreat!



Tunde Wey

(he/him)

Tunde Wey is a Nigerian immigrant artist, chef and writer working at the intersection of food and social politics. His work engages systems of exploitative power, particularly race, immigration, gentrification and global capitalism, from the vantage point of the othered. 🤘

STAFF & EVENT TEAM

Adam Luna

(he/him/his)



Adam Luna (he/him) serves as the Acting President at The Opportunity Agenda.

Adam brings over 20 years of experience in issue campaign management, overseeing strategic communications, policy and legislative work, coalition building, and project management across a wide range of long-term systemic challenges such as retirement security and immigration. Throughout his career, Adam has built and managed institutions and partnerships large and small, and has worked with people from all walks of life to make their voices heard and overcome seemingly intractable narrative challenges. His strategies, framing, and organizing work has helped to mobilize millions, and his commitment to leadership development has enabled a new generation of young people of color to begin impact-driven careers in social justice.

Gibrán X. Rivera

(he/him/el)



Gibrán Rivera is an internationally renowned Master Facilitator. He is a teacher, healer and coach who works to develop self-sovereignty within individuals and powerful networks of leaders. Gibrán helps us build the skills we need in these times defined by VUCA. Volatility. Uncertainty. Complexity. Ambiguity. He is the originator of the Evolutionary Leadership Workshop. Host of the Better Men Project. And one of the teachers of “What Should White People Do?” His work brings close attention to dynamics of power, equity, and inclusion. He has designed and facilitated some of the most prestigious fellowships in the country. And he specializes in the transformational offsite retreat.



Jade Wilenchik

(she/her)

Jade Wilenchik (she/her) is the Movement Capacity Coordinator at The Opportunity Agenda, where she develops and implements capacity-building models, trainings, and tools for our network.

Prior to joining The Opportunity Agenda, Jade was the Network Policy Manager at the Roosevelt Institute, overseeing curriculum design and program strategy for multiple projects to develop young people's policy and leadership skills, including the publication of the annual 10 Ideas policy journal. Committed to building long-term people power, she has also worked at MoveOn, Jobs with Justice MA, and served in the MA Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren and on the Executive Committee of the New York News Guild, Local 31003, CWA. Jade holds a BS in Communication Studies with a concentration in Political Communication from Emerson College.



Maddy Bustamante

(she/her)

Maddy Bustamante is an Event Manager on the STAMP Event Co team. After graduating Wagner College with a double major in Marketing & Management, she started her career in non-profit as part of the development and events team at the Lupus Research Alliance. Leading development efforts in virtual and IRL spaces, Maddy's adaptability and passion for the cause proved successful in meeting and exceeding fundraising goals. Maddy began at STAMP Event Co. in September 2022, taking her skillset and excitement to take on new challenges to a full time events role. Maddy resides in Staten Island, NY and is an avid baker in her free time.



Pachia Yang

(she/her)

Pachia Yang earned her Masters in Event Management at New York University where she began her journey with STAMP as an Event Intern. Now an Event Associate, Pachia is committed and dedicated to exceeding expectations. She believes that success is a direct result of effort and this is represented through her work. Her clients include ADCOLOR, The Opportunity Agenda, TLDEF, and Welcome to Chinatown. In her free time, Pachia enjoys traveling and learning new languages.



Rahwa Mengisteab

(she/her)

Rahwa Mengisteab works on interdepartmental coordination with The Opportunity Agenda and is passionate about the mission/work of the organization. She is inspired by the intersection of social change and the arts. She strives to use the art of deconstructing cultural narratives to reclaim identities to make lasting impact.



Sarah George

(she/her/hers)

Hailing from sunny Florida, Sarah George is an Event Manager with clients including Sony Music Group, Viktor & Rolf, and ADCOLOR®. A Virgo-to-the-core, Sarah finds beauty in a well-organized spreadsheet and joy walking through the office supply aisle of any store. Prior to joining STAMP full-time, Sarah was an Independent Producer working in events, music, theater, print, and film and was part of Esperanza Spalding's team for the Grammy-Award winning album, "12 Little Spells". Sarah has degrees in Theatre and Music from Florida State University.



Soha Ellaithy

(she/her)

Soha's career in the humanitarian sector started 23 years ago, aiding Somali asylum seekers in Cairo, Egypt. On her journey, Soha's roles spanned assistance delivery, communications, and fundraising. Born in Cairo, she has lived, worked, and traveled to more than 25 countries. Stepping into the position of Vice President for Institutional Advancement with TOA, Soha will be focused on propelling our organization's mission forward by expanding its network of supporters and cultivating new avenues for funding. Working with an exceptional communications team to amplify the importance of TOA's work and ensure that our message reaches wider audiences, sparks inspiration, and furthers engagement.

Sughey Ramírez

(she/they)



Sughey (she/they) brings extensive experience activating language and culture for social change to The Opportunity Agenda's Cultural Strategies initiatives. Through positions in community based participatory research, strategy, development, and community outreach, she has worked with public and private sector leaders in a creative capacity to advance issues such as health equity, affordable housing, immigrant rights, and racial justice. Her commitment to engaging collaborators across cultural spheres has successfully led her to roles at organizations such as Latin United Community Housing Association (LUCHA), the New-York Historical Society, and a consulting role with the WNBA. She's passionate about, basketball, jazz, poetry, and translating literature. Sughey holds an MA in Comparative Literature from Dartmouth College and a BA in International Studies from Middlebury College.

Sunee Kate Quirante

(she/her)



Born in the Philippines, radicalized in America; Sunee Kate Quirante is a Cebuana-Texan artist and community organizer who works toward the pursuit of cultural and collective liberation.

Sunee Kate currently serves as The Opportunity Agenda's Social Media Strategist where she publicizes TOA's vision and values for narrative change. She previously worked as a Digital Organizer for the Texas Organizing Project, managing digital grassroots campaigns for tenant rights and criminal legal reform in Texas.

Outside of work, Sunee Kate organizes in the struggle for human rights in the Philippines via Malaya Movement, raising the political consciousness of the diaspora and mobilizing the Filipino-Texan community. She also enjoys researching revolutionary Filipino visual culture and experimenting with creative mediums.

As an artist, Sunee Kate is committed to expressing the People's struggle. As an organizer, she's determined to be at the heart of it.

Dr. Tia Smith

(she/her/hers)



Dr. Tia Smith is a Research Manager at The Opportunity Agenda. Tia has collaborated and consulted with her colleagues on many research projects, conferences, films, and academic papers. She trained journalists and media professionals throughout the Caribbean and Latin American on covering taboo topics such as child sexual abuse, domestic violence and human trafficking. Tia has lived and worked in diverse cultural and learning environments in the United States, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Brazil and Trinidad & Tobago and has traveled to five continents giving her first-hand knowledge of the sensitive nature and challenges associated with issues of media, diversity and inclusiveness.

Tia is a director and producer of documentary film, web series and podcasts. Tia is a loving mother to two young adults and lives in New Orleans with her husband and the happiest dog alive – Sammi.



Yuval Kagan

(he/him)

Yuval is a Senior Event Producer at STAMP Event Co., leading projects all over the country. He brings his passion, can-do attitude, and meticulous attention to detail to each and every project. Prior to joining STAMP as an intern, Yuval studied Arts and Entertainment Management and Special Events Marketing at Pace University in New York and worked on various projects with Netflix, Levi's, and Pinknic Festival, gaining experience in logistics, production, and guest management. His clients include Women's March, Google, The Opportunity Agenda, GLAAD, Monmouth Medical Center, and Ford Foundation.

