

Panelists

Ursula Barton

Portland, OR

Removing barriers for a diversity of voices to be present in decision making, leadership, and access to resources has been my main focus since 2016 when I was a founding member of NTX LVL, a fem identifying lead activism group that threw art centered events to raise money for BIPOC lead non-profits focused on building equity by centering the voices and needs of the BIPOC community. Working within this group for 2.5 years taught me a lot about my roll in the organization, as well as in the community. As an able bodied cis white woman, I learned that building equity is a call to action, to continuously examine my own biases, access, and recourses that I have as a result of a system that has been built to benefit me, and to intentionally use my time and privilege to meaningfully and authentically help in the dismantling of systems of white supremacy, ableism, sexism, and discrimination. I understand equity as not giving the same to everyone, but creating opportunities that specifically seeks to rebalance the generations of blocked access to important resources and power, and to make certain to consider the context of this compounded effect on marginalized communities when building a team, offering support, and working to build a more just system to replace the unjust one we currently operate in. NXT LVL dissolved in 2018, so I expanded my storefront and gallery space, Jailbreak Studios, to build on our mission, centering marginalized voices in Portland's art scene. It's an honor to work with 40+ artists from underrepresented communities, supporting and providing space for them to tell their own stories through their art.

I think America needs to be better at listening to marginalized voices, centering their experiences, and sharing access and power with a diversity of backgrounds to effectively build equity within any system.

Ilyana Bocanegra

Austin, TX

Illyana Bocanegra (they/them) is a filmmaker and designer living in Austin with 7+ years of visual communication design in TV/Film, print media, and web applications; Technical expertise in producing, directing, and making creative content for individuals, brands, small businesses, and non-profits.

My connection to equity begins with my identity as a Mexican-American artist, educator, and organizer. I understand the complicated nature of our current power structures and how they affect people like me. I've participated in panel conversations for Austin Design Week where my creative partners and I discussed Disability Justice in the context of arts programming and event production. And I have a history of demonstrated interest and involvement with many organizations in Austin that are built by BIPOC folks for BIPOC folks because of the inaccessibility toward resources, funding, and leadership.

Lisa Byrd

New York, NY

Lisa Byrd's interest lies in exploring the intersection of the arts, civic engagement, community activism and cultural preservation. Lisa has a 30+ year career in the arts with roles ranging from audio engineering and production management to providing organizational leadership as production director for dance companies and executive leadership for community based arts organizations. Lisa has an undergraduate degree in Philosophy from Penn State University and a

Masters Degree in Theater History and Criticism from Texas State University. She continued her studies in leadership and organizing with Marshall Ganz's Leadership, Organizing and Action, an Executive Education program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Public Policy.

Utilizing her leadership skills as well as her skills as a community organizer Lisa developed what is now Texas' only African American cultural district, Six Square: Austin's Black Cultural Heritage District. Lisa continues her work using a collaborative learning model in partnership with artists and arts organizations and those interested in public policy and civic action. Her current collaborative partnerships include Civic Arts and Forklift Danceworks on projects that center the arts as an organizing pathway to addressing civic life.

Over the years Lisa's work has been recognized for its positive impact on communities she has engaged. In 2015 she received the Dewey Award from SXSW Conference. The award is given as an acknowledgement to the honoree's dedication to creating positive and lasting change in their communities. In 2016 she received an award for her leadership as a community partner from the University of Texas at Austin's Division on Diversity and Community Engagement. And, in 2017 she received the Ada Simond Trailblazer Award from the Austin Black Democrats. Lisa is also very proud to have been elected in 2019 to the Community Education Council representing District 3 for the New York City Department of Education.

My personal connection to the concept of equity is that I have throughout my professional career in the arts in Austin I have experienced first hand the inequities in the cultural funding program. I have served as executive director for a culturally specific arts organization and founder and executive director of a cultural district. In both cases though our work not only reached and served thousands, supported artists, employed many and created programs that included audience members from outside the immediate community; we were grossly underfunded by cultural contracts. This is not just an individual, personal story, but is an historic phenomenon that has affected every Black arts and cultural organization since the inception of public funding for the arts.

The effects of this gross underfunding of Black arts and culture organizations can be seen today in Austin. There are no long standing Black arts and cultural institutions producing new works and preserving the artistic and cultural outputs of its community. This is essential work to in support of healthy and thriving cultural communities. This continues to be a problem for the entire city.

Mia Hooper

East McKeesport, PA

Originally hailing from central Pennsylvania, Mia Hooper (she/her) is the current Director of Development and Grantmaking at the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. In this role she has raised funds for a variety of special projects including the Governor's Awards for the Arts and the Arts Council's Restart the Arts joint marketing campaign. She also manages the Arts Council's various grantmaking programs, including its grant programs conducted on behalf of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. During her time at the Arts Council, she has pushed to ensure that at least 40% of all grants made at the Arts Council go to BIPOC artists and BIPOC-led arts organizations. Prior to joining the Arts Council, Mia spent 5 years at Pittsburgh-based contemporary dance company, Attack Theatre, as their Finance and Development Coordinator.

When Mia is not busy writing and/or reviewing grant proposals, you can find her serving as a board member for Handmade Arcade, spending time with her young son, and binge-watching episodes of Law & Order SVU.

Increasing equity and inclusion is at the top my mind in just about everything I do. In 2016, I served as part of the Learning and Leadership Committee for Racial Equity in Pittsburgh Arts Funding research report. As part of this committee, myself and 13 other BIPOC artists/arts administrators reviewed research data from area funders regarding their present and historical approach to funding BIPOC arts organizations/artists. We then developed a series of recommendations for funders to use to create a more equitable funding environment. I am also an active member of the Arts Administrators of Color Network whose mission is to empower and support arts administrators of color across the nation.

I have also been an active member of the Pittsburgh Arts Accessibility Peers network since 2015, having attended numerous workshops/trainings and the Kennedy Center's LEAD Conference many times.

As a grantmaker, I believe that transparency and shared decision making is key to improving equity in the arts funding landscape. For each grant program I manage, I make sure there are 1) a variety of support services offered leading up to any deadlines (ex: information sessions and one-on-one support), 2) panels are always selected after applications close to ensure they represent the applicants themselves, and 3) application feedback is always offered to each applicant. I also regularly encourage members of the arts community to sign up to serve as paid panelists, as it ensures decisions are made by the community and gives them insight into what funders focus on for when they are applying for their own grants. These approaches all work to improve equity in funding decisions.

De Juana Lozada

Austin, TX

De Juana "De J." Lozada is a serial entrepreneur, education and business empowerment advocate. She is the founder and chief visionary officer for Soul Made Holdings, LLC, which is the parent company of the award-winning Soul Popped Gourmet Popcorn and of Good Trouble Gourmet. She is continuing to receive recognition for her one-of-a-kind, all-natural popcorn blends that recreate the authentic tastes of American Soul Food like Banana Pudding, Chicken 'N Waffles and Macaroni & Cheese and vegan Fried Chicken, just to name a few.

In 2021, De J. launched Good Trouble Gourmet, an all-digital fundraising platform that allows fundraisers to connect with their supporters nationwide without ever having to be face-to-face through delivery. This makes GTG the only black-owned popcorn fundraising company in America with national reach.

Today, De J. continues to lead the charge to elevate underrepresented makers predominantly in the Austin, Texas metropolitan area by launching the Soul Made Collective – Cultural Exchange in The Arboretum, a high-income shopping district located in the northwestern part of the city. Now, shoppers may patron as many as 25 individual makers in one convenient, indoor location

to support these emerging brands. This is the first-of-its-kind retail space in Austin for predominantly African American founders.

Highlights from past service include education leadership for the State of Texas in Communications and Diversity & Inclusion and in Tourism and Travel Information for the Texas Department of Transportation. She also spent 10 years working in Europe as a Civilian Public Affairs Officer for the U.S. Department of Defense where she was primarily responsible for command information (television, radio and newspaper) and host nation relations. She is a 2020 Tory Burch Fellow and is a proud member of Les Dames d'Escoffier.

De J. is the mother of two sons: one an engineer and digital designer currently residing in Sweden, and the other a United States Marine stationed in Japan.

*Founding and former Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

*Founder of the P-20 Institute for African American Student Success

*Founder, Texas Higher Education Journal

*Former Division Director, Travel & Tourism Information Division, TXDOT

*Former Civilian Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of Defense"

Savita Raj

Austin, TX

For the past 20 years, I have served as an executive at different non-profit organizations. The connecting thread has been equity and inclusion. Whether it's been championing for girls' and womens' access to STEM careers or for increasing access to college and careers for underrepresented students, my interest and commitment has been in designing and implementing thoughtful, welcoming, inclusive spaces and opportunities.

An engineer by training, I moved to a non-profit career at the Girl Scouts of Central Texas almost 20 years ago. I established the first all-girl robotics and game design teams and launched the Techgirls initiative at local high schools during my tenure here. Techgirls is an afterschool STEM engagement program in communities traditionally underrepresented in STEM. Later, as the Executive Director of the Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering, I led a team that provided innovative, hands-on STEM programs for almost 250,000 students from under-resourced communities across Texas.

Recently, as the Chief Program Officer for Girl Scouts of the USA, I continue to advocate for access and inclusion in communities across the country, leading teams that design inclusive, equitable access to programs and services from camps to cookies, from computing to coalition-building.

My children went to Kealing Middle School and LASA. And I have seen first hand the disparity of resources across neighborhoods. So while my children were at AISD, I participated whenever possible to broaden opportunities across the school district. Continuing to engage with the Austin community, continuing to ensure that opportunities are available to all, and ensuring that diversity & creativity are showcased in public spaces is very important to me.

Jason Rubio**Austin, TX**

My name is Jason Rubio and I am a local Austin resident. I attended Texas State University for my undergraduate degree and graduate degree in Education. I also graduated from UTRGV with a Master's in Public Affairs.

I have been in the education field as a teacher and an administrator for 13 years. I also co-founded "Ayuda" which is a local group that helps the Latinx population with community resources and other opportunities. In 2020 & 2021 Ayuda partnered with Hispanic Star and Uplift Austin to provide over \$500,000 worth of health and hygiene supplies to the local Austin community.

Regarding the arts, I have owned/managed a local entertainment company, Austin's Best DJs, since 2012. We provide music and entertainment for local events, parties, concerts, festivals, and private events. I love music and am grateful that we're able to be a part of so many great events in the Austin area. <https://www.AustinBestDJs.com>

I also founded Quince Expos in 2021. Quince Expos hosts expos in the Austin and central Texas area that aims to help Latinx clients connect with local vendors for their wedding, quinceanera, party, or event. Not many expos focus on this population, so I decided to change that. <https://QuinceExpos.com>

I am passionate about promoting equity in our community because it truly matters. I hope that this program can truly transform the local community and I'd love to be a part of it!

I previously worked with Integral Care as a Cultural Competency Trainer. We taught the "Undoing Racism" training and also developed our own curricula to teach every staff member at Integral Care. I have also volunteered with Uplift Austin to help provide resources and supplies to the local Austin community. I also volunteer with Hispanic Star to help the Hispanic/Latinx population with better job opportunities, inclusive and equitable education opportunities, promote health and well-being, and gender equality.

Alternates**Faith Anderson****Austin, TX**

Faith Anderson is a queer Black performing artist and community strategist born and raised in Austin, TX. After pursuing a degree at Howard University, Faith returned home with a purpose of building awareness of the lack of space and representation for queer Black actors. While shedding light on these issues, Faith is also developing a wellness program that centers the unique experiences of the QTBIPOC communities and gives space for individuals to discover and amplify their individual voice through physical, mental, and spiritual guidance.

At the core, I am an intuitive artist and advocate who represents the rejection of norms within the American Society. After personal experiences of exclusion, failure, and imposter syndrome at the hands of a capitalist and patriarchal society, building sustainable and equitable art spaces has been my drive. I believe art is essential to build better humans for the future of our world and have excelled at building my own curriculum in order to be the best human and artist I can be

within both professional and personal spaces. Through various voice and identity trainings, a dedication to trauma informed leadership, and many advocacy platforms, I've gathered the hats of an actor, director, project manager, hype man, and connection amongst many historically excluded communities in Austin, TX. The dynamic nurturing from family and the love and accountability from friends has been the transformative factors to make me who I am today.

Andie Flores

Austin, TX

Andie Flores (b. 1990, San Antonio) (she/her) is a performance artist in Austin, Texas, who uses embarrassment as a medium for investigating hyper, almost obsessive, visibility in a racialized body. Her work has been shown at Presa House Gallery, The Museum of Human Achievement, Ivester Contemporary, MASS Gallery, Future Front Film Fest, Contrast Film Festival, Fusebox Festival, and The Dallas Latino Cultural Center. She was named one of Remezcla's '40 Emerging, Texas-based Artists to Know' in 2020, and recently made Glasstire's 'Best of 2021' list. Her newest solo show debuts at Ivester Contemporary in mid-October 2022. She has a masters in Mexican American Latinx Studies from the University of Texas at Austin.

Throughout the many roles I've had in my life, one of the key threads has been an investment and deeper investigation into equity. From my roles as a teacher helping students navigate their own systemic and economic inequalities at home and in academic settings (while teaching about struggles for and barriers to racial and class equality) to my work as a visual artist and performer exploring themes of cultural connection and the complexities of living in a racialized body. Much of my visual work is also concerned with the changing landscape of Austin: both how incoming corporations displace and make secondary the very members of the community Austin claims to value most, and understanding the social intricacies of changing ownership of venues, loss of physical arts spaces, etc. I have been a member of numerous arts groups and organizations in the community, where my voice was called upon to provide insight into lived experiences, identify areas for growth, and ideate alternatives to outdated practices. I am dedicated to holding all Austin communities I'm involved with accountable to equity, and I prioritize access and support each step of the way.

Readers

Veronica Castillo-Pérez

Austin, TX

Ms. Castillo-Pérez has spent several years of her career promoting Latin American culture and, during the last several years, has expanded her vision of promoting cultural diversity through arts to include organizations that promote the culture of other people of color. She is a consultant with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in the Preserving Diverse Cultures Division. Ms. Castillo-Pérez has served as the Interim Administrator for The Philadelphia Dance Company (PHILADANCO!) and the past Executive Director of Raíces Culturales Latinoamericanas, Inc. in Philadelphia.

As an arts administrator for nonprofit organizations, she has expertise in grant writing and fundraising, areas of expertise needed to assist in financially stabilizing nonprofit organizations. Ms. Castillo-Pérez has many years of experience in board development. She has served on the board of the Mexican Cultural Center and the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. Ms. Castillo-Pérez has served on the Philadelphia Police Advisory Commission, an appointment

made by Mayor Michael Nutter in 2010. She is Co-Founder of Latinas Unidas Por el Arte (LUPE Arte), a nonprofit arts organization that brought local artists and schoolchildren together for after-school and summer multidisciplinary instruction in Austin, Texas' underprivileged neighborhoods. She is the recipient of the 2008 Most Influential Latinos in the Delaware Valley, the recipient of a Senate Proclamation sponsored by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione on April 27, 2009 and the recipient of the 2012 Minority Business Leader Award from the Philadelphia Business Journal. Her civic and advocacy work spans over four decades dating back to the Cesar Chavez-lead grape boycotts in Austin, Texas in the late 1980s. She recently founded Movimiento Administradores de Arte en Pensilvania (MAAP) in the middle of a national health pandemic to provide online grant writing workshops by Zoom to artists and arts organization in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Castillo-Pérez is a graduate of The University of Texas with a BA in Psychology. Her forte is rebuilding fledgling nonprofit art organizations by analyzing its strengths and weaknesses and making appropriate recommendations to stabilize and move it forward.

As a member of the BIPOC community working in the cultural arts field for over 25 year I can honestly say that I have first hand knowledge of the need for true equity in our local and national cultural communities. I have worked and volunteered with La Pena, Inc., a local grassroots cultural arts organization during the past 30 years and currently serve as an Independent Arts Administrator Consultant for several Pennsylvania-based arts organizations such as the Mexican Cultural Center in Philadelphia, the Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Dance Company known as PHILADANCO, Casa de Venezuela in Philadelphia and the Dominican American Chamber of Commerce. I recently founded and received funding from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts to further develop Movimiento Administradores de Arte en Pensilvania (MAAP) to provide training to Pennsylvania artists and arts organizations in grant writing.

Madeleine Cutrona

Kingston, NY

Madeleine Cutrona is a Director of Fiscal Sponsorship at New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) where she consults with artists about fundraising strategies, grant proposals, and project management. She brings a decade of experience teaching visual art, fundraising, and helping artists connect with their audiences. Madeleine is interested in how artists garner resources, build support, and hone skills to execute their creative projects. She studied Anthropology and Studio Art at the University of Rochester, and holds NYS Visual Arts Education Teaching Certification and an MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA).

As a creative child from a low-income family in Western New York, I understand the importance of affordable and accessible arts and cultural offerings within a community. My upbringing fueled my entry into the nonprofit arts sector, and shapes my goal of ensuring high quality arts experiences and resources are equitably distributed among the public.

Equity means acknowledging and removing barriers, many of which are historical, that impact people's access to resources. It also means acknowledging one's own privilege within these systems. As a white woman, I engage in the ongoing work of unlearning racism by reading and listening to scholars and activists, participating in group trainings, and speaking with other white people about race. My first thinking and training in issues of equity, diversity and inclusion were

as an Anthropology student at the University of Rochester, and later furthered in graduate studies in social justice art education at CUNY Brooklyn College. At New York Foundation for the Arts I continued this learning by participating in an organizational evaluation, training led by artEquity's Carmen Morgan, and serving as an DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, access) working group member. I helped draft NYFA's statement on Equity Diversity, Inclusion & Access and coordinated an assessment and staff training about disability. As a department director, I make decisions about programming, hiring, and management through an equity lens. I work with our leadership team to question how NYFA's DEIA goals align with our practices in internal operation and external programming. Building a more equitable society, means building an antiracist one through continual learning and action. This work requires personal change, as well as operational changes in organizations. I am applying for this opportunity to share my experience in the arts and to serve the community of Austin.

Ngoc-Tran Vu

Boston, MA

Ngoc-Tran Vu (she/her) is a 1.5-generation Vietnamese American interdisciplinary and transnational artist and cultural strategist whose socially engaged work draws from her experience as a community organizer, educator, and healer. Tran moves between mediums and materials to work in painting, photography, sculpture and social practice so that her art can best resonate and engage with its audience intentionally. Born in Vietnam, Tran came to the United States with her family as political refugees and grew up in Boston's Dorchester and South Boston working-class neighborhoods. Tran received her MA in Arts and Politics at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and her BA in Ethnic Studies and Visual Arts at Brown University.

Diversity, inclusion and equity are the core and foundation of my values and what I believe. My dedication to being antiracist every day is central and an unwavering commitment to my mission and vision. I am a storyteller, connector and an interpreter. My work and practice evokes themes of familial ties, memories, and rituals amongst issues of social justice and intersectionality. As a 1.5-generation Vietnamese American interdisciplinary artist and organizer, I am passionate in creating and facilitating spaces for cross-cultural storytelling and critical discourse that challenge inequity. I thread my social practice through photography, painting, and sculpture so that my art can resonate and engage audiences with intentionality. My experiences as a person of color working with communities inside, outside and beyond the United States have informed my framing of realities, visions and possibilities. My deepest influences include my family and friends as well as fellow artists and changemakers from the past, present, and beyond.

As a creative committed to communities and social justice, my passion and professional background on projects and initiatives have equipped me in being an effective artist and empathetic leader in trust-based partnerships, collaborations and intentional activities. I am driven to co-create, support and protect the stories and experiences with communities of color, refugees and immigrants. Through active participation and holistic facilitation, I aim to offer new modes of resistance to interrogate and counteract the dominant narrative. I am particularly invested in the intersections of storytelling, cultures, and activism, spotlighting those who are willing to step out of bounds to advance social change. In my own healing and growth journey, I am continuously exploring and unpacking themes of identity, justice, belonging, and power. The

arts serve as portals into realms of re-imaginings pivotal to restructuring the status quo and speaking truth to power. I embrace my responsibility to facilitate work that contributes positively to my local and global community.