



Building an Equitable Arts Infrastructure

SYMPOSIUM

February 28 – March 1, 2025
Harry Ransom Center

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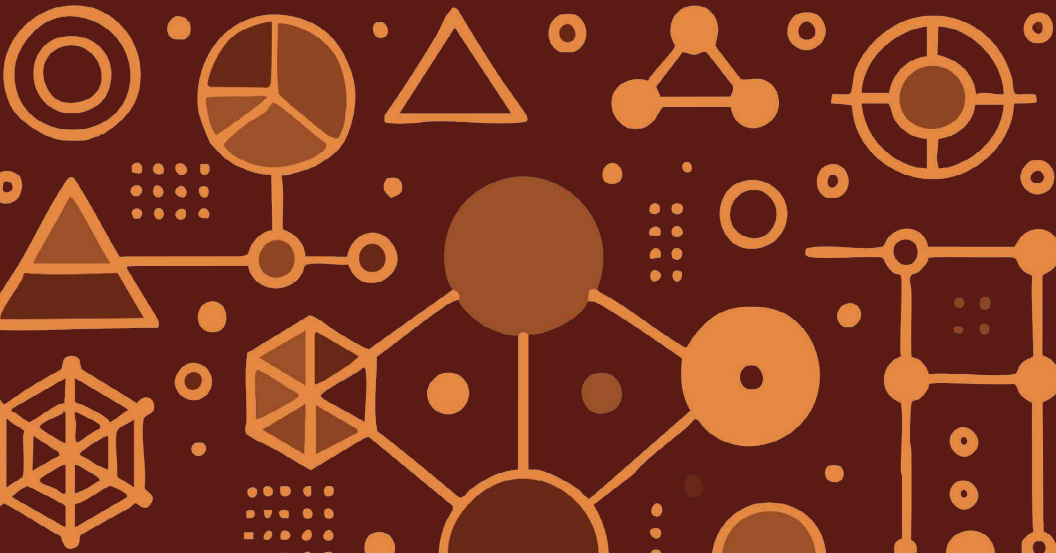
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Join the
livestream

Symposium livestreamed by HowlRound Theatre Commons
beginning **February 28 at 9:30 am CST**. No registration required.
Participate by submitting [your thoughts and questions](#).

Producer's Note

In late summer of 2020, when pandemic constraints on live gathering had reduced artistic and academic collaboration to the realm of laptop cameras and zoom screens, one of us sent a desperate email. The message was addressed to nine arts researchers, who now work at nine campuses, each of whom studies arts labor, economics, and the shaping influence of institutional policy on work in the performing arts. Some of the addressees were already friends. Others were scholarly conspirators. Others were strangers to one another. But we were all joined in our belief in the value of asking historical and theoretical questions of economic and policy research and contributing humanistic interpretations of historical issues and affordances in creative labor that could impact crucial systems change work. What we now call the Equitable Arts Infrastructure Research Group was born the deliberate impulse to connect academic research in the humanities to ground-level organizing on behalf of all artists. On behalf of that nine-member cohort, we welcome you today to a two day effort to scale urgent questions of arts support toward a national and public expanse.

When we (the Equitable Arts Infrastructure Research Group) first began meeting in 2021, a national symposium convening scholars and policy actors was foremost among our aspirations. The following two days feature five discussion sessions and a keynote and plenary conversation designed to bridge worlds of study, policy, action, production and advocacy. Moving alongside those with different professional commitments and values we balance the constant promise of new learning with a commitment to the value of study and action, accountability and imagination, questioning unexamined practices, and submitting challenges to the public record to seed future learning. It is our hope that future publications that will outlast this short weekend will provide artifacts and blueprints for change work.

The animating questions that this expanded cohort will address over the next two days, include: why does the cultural infrastructure of the United States work the way it does? And how can resources (including but not limited to economic ones) be mobilized to support the flourishing of diverse artists/creative workers in every community?

As we welcome each one of you to this conversation, we invite you to share your unique contributions to our growing learning community. It is through a spirit of listening, questioning, designing, and actively practicing new ways of seeing equity in arts labor and organization, that onetime strangers can emerge as co-creators of enabling environments for all artists.

Thank you so much for being here.

We are grateful for your attention, and inspired to work alongside you to make things better.

Sincerely,

The Equitable Arts Infrastructure Research Group, including:

Paul Bonin-Rodriguez

Charlotte Canning

Colleen Hooper

Patrick McKelvey

Jasmine Mahmoud

Derek Miller

Michael Sy Uy

Sarah Wilbur

Patricia Ybarra

Schedule of Events

Day 1 Friday, February 28, 2025

All events held on The University of Texas at Austin's campus at the Harry Ransom Center (300 W. 21st Street, Austin, 78712).

9:30-10:00 AM Welcome

Speakers: Paul Bonin-Rodriguez, Charlotte Canning, Sarah Wilbur, Peter Carpenter

10:00-11:30 AM Morning Session: Value/Mission

Non-profit performing arts organizations are pressured by industry standards and funding demands to prominently include their mission and values statements as part of its story. To this end, it could be argued that an organization's mission and values are its story. If telling a story is a way of assigning worth to what the story narrates, then the respondents in this session stand uniquely positioned to address:

- How artists, arts researchers, and/or arts intermediaries are defining value in the performing arts today and to what purposes...
- How statements of value between arts stakeholders with differential power stand in tension or alignment with artists' creative aspirations? And
- In what contexts are alternative value propositions necessary to manifest change toward greater economic and cultural justice in the performing arts ecology?

Led by **Paul Bonin-Rodriguez**, Professor of Theatre and Dance, University of Michigan; **Colleen Hooper**, Associate Professor and

Coordinator of Dance Education, Point Park University; **Adam Fong**, Program Officer, Performing Arts, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; **Todd London**, Author, Founding Director of The Third Bohemia; **Koritha Mitchell**, Professor of English, Boston University

11:30AM-1:00PM Lunch

Hosted by the University of Texas at Austin College of Fine Arts outside the Prothro Theatre in the North Atrium.

1:00-2:30 PM Afternoon Session: Data/Story

Since the quote-unquote digital turn, the transformation of aspects of arts creation, labor, and production into digital data has created new forms of valuation and understanding. The automation of aspects of artmaking due to technological advances—from the increased adoption of moving lights to the advent of AI-generated content—have fueled vital changes in artistic cooperation that will continue to impact opportunities for future generations of artists working in live performance. From the data being used to account for the value of performance practice (to grantmakers) to the data generated from engagement with technologies that spark the emergence of new performance forms, this last session asks for expert insights on the following questions:

- What historical developments in the realm of data and technology have meaningfully contributed to resource (dis)parity in the performing arts?
- How do existing technologies—however well-intended in their design—contribute to infrastructural inequities in live performance?

- What kinds of narratives are emerging today, through data collection and technological advancements to advance parity of opportunity, resource redistribution, or reparative investments in performing artists?

Led by **Derek Miller**, Professor of English and Director of Graduate Studies, Harvard University; **Wenhua Di**, Research Director, SMU DataArts; **Martine Kei Green-Rogers**, Dean of the Theatre School, DePaul University; **Brian Herrera**, Associate Professor of Theater, Princeton University; **Esther Kim Lee**, Frances Hill Fox Professor of Theater Studies, International Comparatives Studies and History, and the Director of Asian American and Diaspora Studies, Duke University

3:00-4:30 PM

Late Afternoon Session: Capital/Resources

Capital in the performing arts is often framed as financial, but the values that the performing arts generate are far beyond economic. Advocates have frequently argued for the cultural, psychological, spiritual, social, and political meanings of the arts, meanings that cannot be easily accounted for on a year-end spreadsheet. If, then, capital is generated in arts organizing through the exchange of commodities for money and through felt impressions that are fundamentally non-monetizeable, non-reproducible, and un-available outside of those in immediate attendance. In the spirit of nuancing conversation about resources beyond binary debates about scarcity and abundance, this session asks:

- How do you see artists and arts advocates negotiating multiple forms of capital in their daily work in live performance?
- Through what kinds of strategies are artists and arts advocates struggling with—or striking a balance between—generating revenue and generating other forms of meaning (social capital,

environmental stewardship, trust)?

- What steps might economic investors in the performing arts take to support noncommodifiable, indeterminate, or otherwise “iterative” approaches to performance creation and facilitation in local communities?
- What kinds of programmatic, curatorial or artistic approaches do you see taking shape in response to COVID-era threats to capitalization and, relatedly...
- What new or alternative forms of capital would you like to acknowledge as emergent or operative in the current cultural ecology?

Led by **Michael Sy Uy**, Associate Professor of Musicology and Director of the American Music Research Center, University of Colorado Boulder; **Bob Bursey**, Executive and Artistic Director, Texas Performing Arts; **Lara Evans**, Vice President, First Peoples Fund; **Sixto Wagan**, Project Director, BIPOC Arts Network & Fund

5:00-6:00 PM

Keynote Conversation: Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson and Dr. Sarah Wilbur

Sponsored by the Oscar Brockett Center for Theatre History. Together, Dr. Jackson and Dr. Wilbur will discuss the varied roles of the arts and arts research on equitable urban planning and community development.

6:00-7:00 PM

Reception

This reception will be held in the Spence Lobby of the Harry Ransom Center.

Day 2 Saturday, March 1, 2025

All events will be held on The University of Texas at Austin's campus at the Harry Ransom Center (300 W. 21st Street, Austin, 78712).

9:30-10:00 AM

Welcome

Speakers: Stephen Enniss, Betty Brumbalow Director of the Harry Ransom Center, introduced by Charlotte Canning and Paul Bonin-Rodriguez

10:00-11:30 AM

Keynote Conversation: U.S. Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME 1st District) and Dr. Charlotte Canning

Together Rep. Pingree and Dr. Canning will discuss the possibilities and liabilities of federal cultural policy, particularly as it relates to the performing arts.

11:30-1:00 PM

Lunch

Hosted outside the Prothro Theatre in the North Atrium.

1-2:30 PM

Afternoon Session: Labor/Work

Artistic production is driven by many people dedicating efforts to create. This session focuses on the practical dimensions of the artistic process and the weather of arts work on the body, individual and collective, in local contexts. Arts and culture workers have long experienced the precarity of participating in a flexible workforce, and the casualized and adjunct character of

artistic employment has had a tremendous impact on what the performing arts can and cannot do. Given the multitude of shaping forces impacting arts opportunities previously discussed at this gathering, this session's contributors will reflect on the following:

- How human labor practices have been affected by the inequitable conditions of creative work (past or present examples)
- How are artists making demands on the support systems and institutions that they variably inhabit, in light of the increased precarity and vulnerability of the pandemic ecology?
- How or in what contexts can arts labor organizing benefit from broader engagement with labor advocacy in non-arts areas (programs, political education, organizing)?
- What are the current risks in configuring art as a vital and viable form of labor or "work"?

Led by **Sarah Wilbur**, Associate Professor of the Practice in Dance, Duke University; **Alex Beasley**, University of Texas at Austin; **Alys Holden**, Partner, Keene Consulting; **Angie Kim**, President and CEO, Center for Cultural Innovation; **Laura Penn**, Executive Director, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society; **Laura Zabel**, Executive Director, Springboard for the Arts

3:00-4:30 PM

Afternoon Session 2: Market/Audience

Markets motivate the movement of arts organizers in hidden and explicit ways. Still, markets are often discussed as abstract, de-humanizing forces that shape and constrain the flow of resources and contribute to deep wealth disparity in US culture. Audiences, in contrast, are generally defined humanistically, as the intended publics for artistic production. Since the arts champions that have been invited to contribute to

this session each interface regularly with market forces, they have been invited to address the following questions:

- What kinds of market forces de-humanize, exclude, or contribute to systemic inequities or in the performing arts
- What kinds of markets have proven “hospitable” to specific ways of working in live performance
- How might arts advocates and those with decision making power in the arts strategically channel resources toward the manifestation of economic and cultural justice through their engagement with market forces?
- How you approach or perceive of quote-unquote “audiences” invested in live performance in light of these ever-changing market dynamics?

Led by **Jasmine Jamillah Mahmoud**, Assistant Professor of Theatre History and Performance Studies, University of Washington; **James Fuller**, Audience Insight Manager, Ballet Austin; **Nataki Garrett**, CEO/Executive Director, The Ladder Leadership Services; **Kevin Moriarty**, Executive Artistic Director, Dallas Theater Center; **Donna Walker-Kuhne**, Founder, Walker International Communications Group

5:00-6:30 PM

Concluding Remarks and Continuing the Conversation

After the symposium’s formal gatherings, we want to enter into a time of reflection, brainstorming, and planning for the future of arts infrastructures. What provocations do we want to create for the future of arts and cultural workers? Where should we direct energy and focus in the coming year?

Led by **Paul Bonin-Rodriguez**, Professor of Theatre and Dance, University of Michigan; **Charlotte Canning**, Professor of Performance as Public Practice, University of Texas at Austin

Special Thanks

The event organizers would like to thank the following people and organizations for their generous and sustained support:

- Michelle Belisle
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- Leslie Martinez
- Dana McLaughlin
- Raquel Monroe, Associate Dean of Graduate Education and Academic Affairs, College of Fine Arts
- Kathleen O’Neill
- Sydney Pattillo
- Ramón H. Rivera-Servera
- Fritz Schwentker
- Karen Sudbay

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These events are co-sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, The University Co-Op, The University of Texas at Austin College of Fine Arts, the Department of Theatre and Dance, and The John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies.

Land Acknowledgment

We would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Moreover, we would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas.

The Equitable Arts Infrastructure Research Group

The 2020 global pandemic and racial and climate reckonings deepened economic challenges for U.S. performing artists. Recovery has been uneven, but a strong arts labor movement has emerged, demanding accountability for systemic inequities in arts funding.

Founded at Duke University in 2021, the Equitable Arts Infrastructures Research Group unites scholars from various disciplines—Theatre, Dance, Literature, Music, and Performance Studies—across nine universities. They aim to integrate historical and contextual insights into grassroots efforts supporting U.S. artists.

Their approach to arts infrastructure recovery prioritizes research-driven action, accountability through dialogue, and public documentation of structural challenges. By fostering transparency and advocating for culturally responsive artist support, they seek to inspire long-term systemic change.

Speakers



Alex Beasley

Alex Beasley is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, where he teaches courses in the history of capitalism, the history of energy, urban history, and U.S. empire. He is the author of *Expert Capital: Houston and the Making of a Service Empire*, under contract with Harvard University Press. He co-edited, with Jessica Levy, a volume entitled *Capitalism and the American Century: Towards a Global History of Postwar America* (under contract with The University of Pennsylvania Press).



Paul Bonin-Rodriguez

Paul Bonin-Rodriguez is a Professor in the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance and the Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Career Empowerment & Leadership (EXCEL) Lab at the University of Michigan, after two decades in the Performance as Public Practice program at The University of Texas at Austin. His research analyzes systems of support for cultural workers and promotes strategies for increased resources. His first book, *Performing Policy* (2015), assesses how arts policy research and development initiatives since the 1990s have radically reshaped artists' practices nationwide. His forthcoming book, *Groundwork: Race, Equity and the National Performance Network* assesses the emergence, development and aspirations of an equitable, systems-based performance infrastructure first imagined in the late 1970s and brought to fruition in the mid-1980s. For four years (2019-2023), he served as the co-editor for *Artivate: a Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts* and currently serves as a co-editor of "Arts in Context: Critical Performance Infrastructures" for University of Texas Press.



Bob Bursey

Bob Bursey is the Executive & Artistic Director of Texas Performing Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. One of the largest scale university arts centers in the U.S., Texas Performing Arts welcomes more than 400,000 attendees each year to the full spectrum of live performance, from experimental projects to mainstream productions. From 2012-2019 Bursey was Executive Director of the Fisher Center at Bard. He received a 2019 Tony Award recognizing one of the many new productions developed there. Bursey was the Producing Director of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company from 2003-2012, a time that included the founding of New York Live Arts as a permanent home for the company. He began his career working backstage for touring artists and venues such as Pina Bausch and

the American Dance Festival. He is an Associate Professor of Practice at UT Austin and full member of the Broadway League.



Charlotte Canning

Charlotte M. Canning is the Frank C. Erwin Jr., Centennial Professor in Drama and Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, where she also serves as the Director of the Oscar G. Brockett Center for Theatre History and Criticism and Secretary of the General Faculty. Her books include *Theatre & the USA* (Methuen Drama, 2023) *On the Performance Front: US Theatre and Internationalism* (Palgrave, 2015) winner of the Joe A. Calloway Prize, *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa, 2010), *The Most American Thing in America: Circuit Chautauqua as Performance* (Iowa, 2005) recipient of the Barnard Hewitt Award for Outstanding Research in Theatre History, and *Feminist Theaters In The USA: Staging Women's Experience* (Routledge, 1996). Her op-eds have appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Washington Post*, *The Conversation*, and other publications.



Wenhua Di

Wenhua Di joined SMU DataArts as the research director in 2024. Wenhua also serves as a research professor of arts management and arts entrepreneurship and a research professor of economics at SMU. Wenhua was a research economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas studying consumer finance, impartial access to credit, and the regional economy. She led the effort to establish the DFW Federal Statistical Research Center supporting data-driven interdisciplinary research.



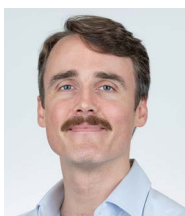
Lara Evans

Lara M. Evans, PhD is an art historian, curator, and enrolled citizen of Cherokee Nation. Dr. Evans is a board member of CAA and the National Committee for the History of Art, (U.S. affiliate, Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art). In 2023, Dr. Evans joined First Peoples Fund as Vice President of Programs after eighteen years as an art history professor, most recently at Institute of American Indian Art. Dr. Evans has developed arts infrastructure designed to serve Native American communities, include artist-in-residencies, internship/apprenticeship programs, and fellowships for artists/researchers. Evans' recent curatorial projects include Smithsonian American Art Museum's *Renwick Invitational 2023*, and co-curation of *Action/Abstraction Redefined*. Publications include "Indigeneity and the Posthumous Condition," co-authored with Mique'l Dangeli in *Posthumous Art, Law and the Art Market: The Afterlife of Art* (2022). She executive-produced the short doc *Cara Romero: Following the Light* (2023), airing on PBS.



Adam Fong

Adam Fong is a musician and culture worker based in the San Francisco Bay Area. He co-founded two local service organizations: Emerging Arts Professionals, a network dedicated to the development and growth of next generation arts and culture workers (director, 2011-2014); and Center for New Music, a hybrid supporting and presenting organization that fosters contemporary music and its community of practitioners (executive director, 2012-2018). Adam has been a frequent advisor and panelist to a broad community of artists, arts leaders, and arts organizations, and has led workshops and presentations on arts leadership, business models and planning, and community building. Since 2018, Adam has served as a program officer in the Performing Arts Program of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. He manages a diverse portfolio of grants supporting arts in the Bay Area, and leads the program's strategy to improve working conditions for artists in the region. Adam also remains active as a composer and performer.



James Fuller

As Audience Insight Manager, James Fuller is responsible for developing an understanding of Ballet Austin's audience through data analysis and market research. He is also a faculty member at Ballet Austin Academy, where he teaches ballet and contemporary dance. James danced professionally for Ballet Austin from 2010 to 2024, during which time he performed leading roles in many ballets including *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Concerto Barocco*, and *Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project*. As a company dancer, James worked collaboratively with Stephen Mills to help create numerous original works such as *Four Mortal Men*, *Bubblegum*, and *POE / A Tale of Madness*. James holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Harvard University, where he received the Suzanne Farrell Dance Prize.



Nataki Garrett

2024 Doris Duke Artist Award recipient Nataki Garrett is the President/CEO of Ladder Leadership Inc, as well as the co-Artistic Director of One Nation/One Project. In 2020, She co-founded the theater advocacy organization Professional Non-Profit Theater Coalition (PNTC) – a national advocacy coalition which organized non-profit theaters to advocate for access to the \$15B Shuttered Venue Operators Grant of historically unprecedented funding from the federal government. A 2022 United States Artist Award fellow, Nataki Garrett has received numerous awards and recognition for her artistry and leadership throughout her career. Garrett recently served as the Executive and Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF)

and the Acting Artistic Director of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA). Her vision is to empower artists as leaders and change makers who transform culture. Garrett serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors for Theater Communications Group and Another Round Another Rally. She has served on nominating committees, panels and countless juries supporting artists around the world. Frequently sought voice for her thought leadership and expertise, Garrett can be read, watched, or listened to regularly across regional and national news media.



Martine Kei Green-Rogers

Martine Kei Green-Rogers is the Dean of the Theatre School at DePaul University. Her dramaturgical work includes productions with the Goodman Theatre, Salt Lake Acting Company, Court Theatre, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Denver Center, and Raven Theatre. She was also on the dramaturgical team for the remount of *Jagged Little Pill* on Broadway. She is the stage adaptor of Jason Reynolds' book *Long Way Down* which premiered at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in October of 2018. Her most recent publications are the book *Contemporary Black Theatre and Performance: Acts of Rebellion, Activism, and Solidarity* (co-editors Dr. DeRon S. Willams and Dr. Khalid Y. Long) and the article "Engineering an Artistic Scientific Method" in *American Theatre Magazine*. She is a proud member of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA) and President-Elect of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE).



Brian Herrera

Brian Eugenio Herrera is, by turns, a writer, teacher and scholar - presently based in New Jersey, but forever rooted in New Mexico. Brian is Associate Professor of Theater in the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University, where he is also a core faculty member in the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies and a faculty affiliate with the Programs in American Studies, Music Theater and Latino Studies. With Stephanie Batiste and Robin Bernstein, Brian serves as co-editor of "Performances and American Cultures" series at NYU Press. Also a performer, Brian's autobiographical storywork performances (including *I Was the Voice of Democracy* and *TouchTones*) have been presented in venues large and small across the United States, as well as Beirut and Abu Dhabi. He has also worked closely with ArtEquity, an organization committed to creating and sustaining a culture of equity and inclusion through the arts; with Theatrical Intimacy Education, a group researching, developing, and teaching best practices for staging theatrical intimacy; and as Resident Scholar with the Obie-winning Sol

Project, an initiative dedicated to producing the work of Latinx playwrights in New York City and beyond.



Alys Holden

Alys Holden has led production departments and teams for two storied West Coast theaters, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Center Theatre Group, and is a co-author of *Structural Design for the Stage*, a seminal technical theater textbook. She has overseen teams of up to 170 union and non-union staff and implemented human-centered systems at every stop. With over twenty years of experience negotiating collective bargaining agreements, Alys has successfully navigated labor relations for theater workers and artists across the U.S., balancing the needs of organizations and workers. Her deep understanding of both intended and unintended consequences of labor agreements informs her strategic approach and philosophy. A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, Alys combines her technical expertise with people-focused leadership. She is passionate about reimagining arts infrastructure and labor practices to build a sustainable theater industry.



Colleen Hooper

Colleen Hooper researches how dance connects to economic and cultural transformations in the 20th and 21st centuries. Her writing has been published in *Dance Research Journal*, *Feminist Modernist Studies*, the *International Journal of Screenandance*, *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, *Undergraduate Research in Dance*, and *Dance: Current Selected Research*. She received a New York Public Library Short-Term Fellowship to support her book project *Dance from Labor to Service*. She is an Associate Professor of Dance at Point Park University and the Coordinator of Dance Education. She received her PhD and MFA degrees in Dance from Temple University and her choreography has been presented in a variety of site-specific and traditional stage venues since 2002. Highlights include Dance Theater Workshop's Fresh Tracks series (now New York Live Arts), Danspace Project Out of Space, Dixon Place, and the Philadelphia Fringe Festival.



Maria Rosario Jackson

With an aim towards building healthy communities where all people can thrive, Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson has a 30+ year career in strategic planning, policy research, and program design and evaluation with philanthropy, government, and nonprofit organizations. A hallmark of her work is a holistic approach that includes diverse perspectives, systems thinking and creativity. For nearly 20 years, Dr. Jackson worked at the Urban Institute, a Washington, DC-based national public policy

research organization. For more than ten years, she served as a senior advisor at the Kresge Foundation and other philanthropic organizations. Most recently, after confirmation by the U.S. Senate in December 2021, President Biden appointed Dr. Jackson as Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts where she served in that role until January 2025. Dr. Jackson is currently on leave from Arizona State University, where she is a tenured Professor in the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts and holds an appointment in the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions.



Angie Kim

Dr. Angie Kim is President and CEO of the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), a national, California-based knowledge and financial services incubator for arts workers, creative entrepreneurs, and cultural community economic trailblazers. She is also the founding director of CCI's national, pooled fund program, [AmbitioUS](#), which provides grants, loans, and investments in ownership-conferring, alternative economic paradigms of those who are seeking self-determination in order to preserve and support cultural identities on their own terms. She recently launched a new program, called Research to Impact Lab, to research, advocate for, and capitalize alternative safety net solutions for gig workers and their economically threatened communities so as to expand the social safety net to everyone, regardless of income sources or worker industries.



Esther Kim Lee

Esther Kim Lee is Frances Hill Fox Professor of Theater Studies, International Comparative Studies, and History and the Director of Asian American & Diaspora Studies Program at Duke University. She teaches and writes about theatre history, Asian American theatre, Korean diaspora theatre, and globalization and theatre. She has authored three monographs: *A History of Asian American Theatre* (2006), *The Theatre of David Henry Hwang* (2015); and *Made-Up Asians: Yellowface During the Exclusion Era* (2022). She edited *Seven Contemporary Plays from the Korean Diaspora in the Americas* (2012) and the four-volume collection, *Modern and Contemporary World Drama: Critical and Primary Sources* (2022), which challenges the prevailing Eurocentric reading of modern drama. In 2023, she received the Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society for Theatre Research. estherkimlee.com



Todd London

Todd London has been a leading figure in the U.S. nonprofit theater for more than 35 years and was the first recipient of Theater Communications Group's Visionary Leadership Award for "an individual who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to advance the theater field as a whole..." He spent 18 seasons as Artistic Director of New York's New Dramatists, which received a special Tony Honor under his leadership. His many books include two novels, *If You See Him, Let Me Know* and *The World's Room*; *This Is Not My Memoir* (with Andre Gregory); and theater books, *An Ideal Theater*; *Outrageous Fortune*; *The Importance of Staying Earnest*; *15 Actors, 20 Years*; *The Artistic Home*, and *Zelda Fichandler's The Long Revolution* (editor). A past winner of the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism and recipient of an honorary doctorate from DePaul University, he has served on the faculties of New York University, Harvard, the New School, and Yale School of Drama. He currently oversees the Dramatists Guild Foundation's Legacy Playwrights Initiative and Fellows programs.



Jasmine Jamillah Mahmoud

Jasmine Mahmoud is Assistant Professor of Theatre History and Performance Studies at the University of Washington, with affiliate appointments in Art History and Comparative History of Ideas. She co-edited *Makeshift Chicago Stages: A Century of Theater and Performance* (Northwestern University Press 2021) with Megan Geigner and Stuart Hecht, and co-authored "The Eight Pillars of American Cultural Policy" with Randy Engstrom in *The Routledge Handbook of Urban Cultural Planning* (2025). She has over 50 essays, reviews, and interviews in academic journals including *TDR: The Drama Review*, *Theater*, and *Women & Performance*, and in publications including *Crosscut's Black Arts Legacies* series, *Howlround*, *Hyperallergic*, *LitHub*, and the *South Seattle Emerald*. An arts advocate, she founded the *Seattle Arts Voter Guide*, and serves as a governor-appointed Washington State Arts Commissioner. She earned her PhD in Performance Studies from Northwestern University, MA in Arts Politics from NYU, and BA in Government from Harvard College.



Patrick McKelvey

Patrick McKelvey is Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of Pittsburgh and author of *Disability Works: Performance After Rehabilitation* (NYU Press, 2024). He has also published essays in *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Survey*, the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, and *Queer Dance* (ed. Clare Croft). McKelvey's research has received recognition from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Philosophical Society, the American Society for Theatre Research, the

American Theatre and Drama Society, the Committee on LGBT History, and the Schlesinger Library. McKelvey is currently writing *Supporting Actors*, a history of social services for disabled theatre workers and *The Guests*, a group biography of retired actors residing at the Actors Fund Home in Englewood, New Jersey.



Derek Miller

Derek Miller is Professor of English at Harvard University, where he has taught courses in theater history and dramatic literature since 2013. He has published widely on theater and music's interactions with law and economics, including his first book, *Copyright and the Value of Performance, 1770–1911* (Cambridge, 2018). Current research includes quantitative theater histories using Digital Humanities tools and techniques. More information is available at derek.visualizingbroadway.com.



Koritha Mitchell

Koritha Mitchell is a literary historian and cultural critic. She is the feminist scholar who coined the term know-your-place aggression to emphasize that marginalized groups are attacked for succeeding, not because they have done something wrong. Mitchell is author of *Living with Lynching* and *From Slave Cabins to the White House*. She is also editor of the first book-length autobiography by a formerly enslaved African American woman, Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). Her public commentary has appeared in outlets such as *Time*, *Black Perspectives*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *MSNBC*, *CNN*, and *Good Morning America*. In 2023, she was recognized as a champion of women in the public sphere with a Progressive Women's Voices IMPACT Award from the Women's Media Center. After 18 years at Ohio State University, Mitchell now teaches at Boston University. Online, she's [@ProfKori](https://twitter.com/ProfKori) and at korithamitchell.com.



Kevin Moriarty

Kevin Moriarty is executive director of Dallas Theater Center. From 2007-2022 he served as DTC's Enloe/Rose Artistic Director, during which time DTC opened the Dee & Charles Wylie Theatre at the AT&T Performing Arts Center, launched its city-wide Public Works-Dallas program, and won the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater. Before joining DTC, Kevin served as artistic director of Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY; head of the MFA directing program at Brown University; and an associate artist at Trinity Rep Company. Kevin has directed plays, musicals and operas nation-wide. He has served as Chair of the Dallas Arts District; President of Theatre Communications Group; Vice-President of National Alliance for Musical Theatre.

Kevin was a recipient of a Drama League directing fellowship and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin.



Laura Penn

Laura Penn has been Executive Director of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), the labor union that represents more than 3,500 professional directors and choreographers across the country, since 2008. In 2023, she was appointed by President Biden to serve on the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. She also serves on the Board of the Entertainment Community Fund; on the General Board of the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO; as Co-Chair of the Coalition of Broadway Unions and Guilds; and on the Tony Awards Administration Committee. She currently teaches Labor Relations in the graduate program at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. Recognized with Seattle’s Distinguished Citizen Medal, she is an advocate for civic dialogue and public participation and has been dedicated throughout her career to the idea that artistic excellence and community engagement are intrinsically connected.



Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-01)

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree moved to Maine in 1970s, and after graduating from College of the Atlantic she started a small farm on the island of North Haven. A knitting business she started in the early 80s soon grew to ten year-round employees producing knitting kits and books that were sold in hundreds of stores across the country. In 2008 Chellie Pingree was elected to Congress to serve Maine’s 1st District, the first woman ever to be elected to represent the District. She has gained national recognition for her arts policy leadership, including as Co-Chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus since 2018. She is also the lead Democrat on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, which funds numerous federal cultural agencies, including the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. In the 117th Congress, she secured the highest funding level for the Endowments since their founding.



Michael Sy Uy

Michael Sy Uy (he/him) is associate professor of musicology and director of the American Music Research Center. His main areas of scholarly research are on philanthropy, patronage, arts education, cultural policy, expertise and connoisseurship. His first book—*Ask the Experts: How Ford, Rockefeller and the NEA Changed American Music*—was published by Oxford University Press in 2020. He is currently working on his second book—*Endowing Equity: The NEA, Minority Artists and the Battle for Arts*

Funding—which has been supported by an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) fellowship. He is co-editor of the volume *Musical Capital: Sound and Power in Washington, D.C.* (Dumbarton Oaks: Harvard University Press, under contract) and co-series editor of *Arts in Context: Critical Performance Infrastructures* (University of Texas Press). His other published work appears in *American Music*, *Journal of the Society for American Music*, *Journal of Musicology*, and *Music and Arts in Action*.



Sixto Wagan

Sixto Wagan is the Executive Director of the BIPOC Arts Network and Fund (BANF), where he leads the \$12+ million initiative to advance a vibrant and equitable BIPOC arts ecosystem in Greater Houston. Under his leadership, BANF has directly invested over \$9 million in more than 150 organizations, artists, and collectives, fostering greater visibility and opportunities for connected futures for Houston's creative communities. Before BANF, Wagan founded the Center for Art and Social Engagement (CASE) at the University of Houston, through which he developed community-driven initiatives exploring creativity's role in societal impact. Wagan's time at DiverseWorks ArtSpace catalyzed his advocacy for artist-led initiatives addressing social justice and cross-disciplinary processes. His commissions and residency programs at DiverseWorks stewarded performing artists and their organizations to new creative and fiscal success. He serves on the Board of Grantmakers in the Arts and the MAP Fund.



Donna Walker-Kuhne

Donna Walker-Kuhne is an award-winning thought leader, writer and strategist for community engagement, audience development and social justice. She is President of Walker International Communications Group, a 35-year-old boutique marketing and audience development consulting agency. She was formerly Director of Marketing for both The Public Theater and Dance Theater of Harlem. She was also Vice President of Marketing and Vice President of Community Engagement at New Jersey Performing Arts Center. She provides consulting services to numerous arts organizations throughout the world and has generated over \$22m in earned income. She is also Senior Advisor, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion at New Jersey Performing Arts Center. Currently her portfolio includes social justice initiatives and Equity Diversity Inclusion workshops. She is a lecturer and key note presenter for international arts conferences in Blomfontein, South Africa, Croatia, and Australian Arts Conferences. She is an adjunct professor at New York University and Columbia University. She is the recipient of over 50 awards including the 2024 A Planter of Seeds,

The Black Seed, 2022 Margot Adams Signature Award, 2021 SGI-USA Distinguished Pioneer Award and the 2019 League of Professional Theatre Women Rachel Crothers Leadership Award. Her first book, *Invitation to the Party: Building Bridges to Arts, Culture and Community*, was published in 2005 and her second book, *Champions for the Arts: Lessons and Successful Strategies for Building Anti-Racist Arts Organizations* will be published February 2023. She has a weekly blog, *Arts and Culture Connections* that explores cultural efforts to expand diverse audiences. She is also a Board member for Newark Arts Council, Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, Signature Theater (NY), HARLEM WEEK and The Harlem Arts Alliance.



Sarah Wilbur

Sarah Wilbur (she/hers) is a cross-sector choreographer and arts labor researcher whose primary goal is to credit arts labor and laborers in all aspects of her professional work. She is the author of *Funding Bodies: Five Decades of Dance Making at the National Endowment for the Arts*, (2021) the first comprehensive history linking arts funding trends to artistic practices and organizational structures. Her current research explores the influence of the US health industry on local dance and arts communities through ethnographic case studies. Sarah co-edits the *Arts in Context: Critical Performance Infrastructures* book series (U-Texas Press) and co-facilitates the NEH-funded research collaborative “Building Equitable Arts Infrastructures.” She serves as Associate Professor of the Practice in Dance and Theater Studies at Duke University, where she also directs Graduate Studies in Dance. Sarah’s teaching and mentorship focus on creative practice, dance/performance studies, and the economics of US arts labor and institutional support.



Patricia Ybarra

Patricia Ybarra is the Duncan W. MacMillan Family Professor of the Humanities in the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University. She is the author of *Performing Conquest: Five Centuries of Theatre, History and Identity in Tlaxcala, Mexico* (Michigan, 2009), co-editor with Lara Nielsen of *Neoliberalism and Global Theatres: Performance Permutations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; paperback 2015), and *Latinx Theatre in Times of Neoliberalism* (Northwestern University Press, 2018). She is currently working on a digital humanities project on queer Iranian American director Reza Abdoh’s *Father Was a Peculiar Man* and a monograph, *Theatrical Retrospection: Reza Abdoh’s Queer Theory* (under contract with University of Michigan Press). She is a former President of ATHE, a former department chair, and the recipient of Brown’s graduate mentoring award.



Laura Zabel

Laura Zabel is an advocate and champion of artists and their role in building healthy and just communities and systems. Zabel is the Executive Director of Springboard for the Arts, an economic and community development agency run by and for artists. Springboard’s mission is to support artists with the tools to make a living and a life, and to build just and equitable communities full of meaning, joy, and connection. Through their free toolkits, training and resources Springboard’s programs have been replicated in over 100 communities across the U.S. and internationally. During the pandemic, Springboard provided emergency relief support to over 2,500 artists in their region and helped over 80 communities nationwide start their own locally-rooted emergency funds, while also supporting artists to respond directly to urgent community needs, including racial justice, social isolation, and rural-urban solidarity. In 2021, Springboard launched one of the nation’s first guaranteed income programs focused on artists, putting artists at the table of a national economic justice movement.

