



FY22 Proposal Evaluation
Organizational Support Program Panelist Bios

*Biographies are based on panel slate approval for FY21 or FY22. They are arranged in no particular order.

OSP Panel 1- March 17, 2021

Lauren Lockhart

Arts Program Manager, San Diego International Airport

Lauren Lockhart is an arts administrator and curator with more than fifteen years of experience collaborating closely with artists. As Arts Program Manager for San Diego International Airport, Lockhart leads the airport's efforts to realize ambitious public artworks which are seamlessly integrated into the airport environment. She recently contributed to the development of a comprehensive Arts Master Plan for the airport that will guide the program through its largest capital project to date. Lockhart has expanded the airport's outreach efforts by creating ongoing educational programming for high school and college-age students, and by developing a public arts tour program led by trained docents in order to offer greater access to the Arts Program's collection. Lockhart works to advance and diversify the field by creating opportunities to support emerging artists making the transition from a studio to public practice. Prior to joining the airport Lockhart was an independent curator and held positions at The New Children's Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. As the Curator at The New Children's Museum, she managed curatorial development and installation of museum-wide exhibitions featuring participatory artworks in all media. Lockhart served on the Port of San Diego's Public Art Committee 2012 to 2019, and is currently Co-Chair of the Public Art Coalition of Southern California. She received her BA in Art History/Criticism from the University of California, San Diego, and MA in the History of Art from the University of California, Riverside.

Beth Chee

Director of Marketing, Birch Aquarium at Scripps

Beth Downing Chee is an experienced marketing and communications professional who has spent nearly 20 years representing some of San Diego's top brands in tourism, arts and higher education. She currently serves as the director of marketing for Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and is thrilled to represent the aquarium during such an exciting era of growth and change. In past roles, she has represented San Diego State University, Legoland California, Sea Life Aquarium and La Jolla Playhouse. She was also president and founder of Downing Street Public Relations, which focused on small, local businesses with great stories to tell. She holds a degree in journalism with an emphasis in public relations from Humboldt State University and loves being surrounded by creative and dynamic people.

Mario Echeveste

Visual artist and Architect, Instituto Municipal de Arte y Cultura Tijuana

I am licensed in two careers: architecture and visual arts from the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California. For the last 16 years, I have organized, fundraised, planned logistics, acquired city permits, and more for the Festival de la India Tijuana, a public street festival. This free event takes place in Downtown, Tijuana and explores the art and culture of India. The event includes classical dance and music, kids' areas, free vegetarian meals, yoga philosophy and meditation. For the last seven years I have worked at museums designing art exhibits and working with curators and artists from around the world. The exhibitions, which have taken place in Tijuana and Mexico City, vary in discipline and include photography, multimedia, painting, sculpture, stamp, and installations. As a practicing artist, I have been awarded many scholarships and my work has been included in biennales and art contests. I've also exhibited my work in many local and international art shows. Recently, I began working with the Instituto Municipal de Arte y Cultura Tijuana as the coordinator for local art galleries. My duties include outreach, curating, and installing art exhibits at 8 different galleries around Tijuana.

Victor Payan

Founding Director, Media Arts Santa Ana / Arts Consultant

Victor Payan is an award-winning artist, arts administrator and arts consultant whose work promotes social justice, community empowerment and tolerance through engaging and playful public performances that educate, enlighten, empower and entertain. He is Founding Director of Media Arts Santa Ana (MASA) and co-founder of OC Film Fiesta film festival. He is recipient of the Creative Capital Award, The Idea Fund and the CCI Investing in Tomorrow Grant. A native of El Cajon, he has worked with arts organizations and events

throughout San Diego, including Balboa Park, Normal Heights, North Park, Barrio Logan, Golden Hill, Hillcrest and the College area. His work has been featured in exhibitions, screenings, and performances at the MCA San Diego and other venues internationally. He served as Director of Programs for the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC), Diversity Consultant for California Presenters, and Latino Specialist for the Bowers Museum. He has presented at the NALAC and National Performance Network conferences and was selected to participate in the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics convenings in Chile, Montreal and Mexico City. Victor has served as a grant panelist for the California Arts Council, L.A. County Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, San Antonio Arts Commission and Artist Foundation of San Antonio. He has also served as a consultant for the City of Costa Mesa Arts and Culture Plan and as a steering committee member for the City of Santa Ana Arts and Culture Master Plan.

Kevin Miller

FotoEkthesis, Curator, Freelance

I am an Independent Curator, Consultant, Critic, Editor, Photographer and currently the Director of FotoEkthesis, an exhibition, archive, collections and project consultancy for institutions and artists. I moved to San Diego in 2017. From 2001 until 2016, I was the Director and Senior Curator of the Southeast Museum of Photography (SMP), a public museum located Daytona Beach, Florida. The museum is one of the largest exclusively photographic institutions in the United States and Florida's most comprehensive museum of photography, being also the largest in the southeastern US. The scale, scope, and depth of the museum's collection and programs placed it in company with only five other photographic museums in the US. I currently also serve on the Board of Advisers to the California Museum of Photography at the University of California, Riverside.

OSP Panel 2- March 18, 2021

Deonté Griffin-Quick

Manager of Programs and Services, New Jersey Theatre Alliance

Deonté Griffin-Quick is an emerging, visionary arts leader with extensive experience in state-wide program management, non-profit theatre administration, digital communications, and theatre producing. He is committed to the advancement of professional American theatre while advocating for diversity and equity in the arts. Currently, Deonté serves as the Manager of Programs and Services at New Jersey Theatre Alliance. In an effort to connect, empower, and cultivate other arts and cultural leaders of color, in 2019 Deonté developed and spearheaded the New Jersey Arts and Culture Administrators of Color Network. He was recently honored by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies with the Inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Individual Award. He has served as a grant panelist for Alternate ROOTS, the Mississippi Center for Cultural Production, and county arts agencies.

Brian Garrick

Performing Arts Presenter

Brian Garrick is a San Diego-based presenter of performing arts. Most recently was Director of Arts & Culture at the San Diego Center for Jewish Culture housed at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center. There he established Arts & Ideas, the organization's performing arts center presenting 40+ performances and lectures annually. He also directed the San Diego International Jewish Film Festival, the city's largest Jewish cultural event. Previously he was Associate Director of Programs at The 14th Street Y in Manhattan where he produced an annual all-night cultural arts festival celebrating the holiday Shavuot. Brian served as producer of literary programs in Manhattan at The Half King, where he ran a weekly author series. He was Program Manager for Arts & Ideas at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, the performing arts center that brings the most talked-about speakers and performers to the stage. He also was Program Manager with The Hub, an SF-based organization that produced and presented cutting edge performing arts programs that reflect the evolution of Jewish arts, culture, community and identity. In addition he served as Associate Director for the Bay Area Jewish Music Festival, the oldest festival of Jewish music in the country. He has served on the Conference Committees of Western Arts Alliance and California Presenters. He is an alumnus of the California Presenters Mentorship Program for Emerging Leaders and the Association of Performing Arts Professionals Emerging Leadership Institute. He is a member of the New Jewish

Culture Network, an international network of Jewish arts presenters dedicated to commissioning and touring new work. Brian holds an MA in Jewish Studies from Emory University, a BA in Women's Studies from UC Santa Cruz and has spent time learning at the Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

Ernest Figueroa

Theater Producer, Independent

Ernest A. Figueroa has been involved as a director, producer and playwright in theatre, film and television throughout the country. For the past twenty years, Mr. Figueroa has served on the Steering Committee of "Directors Lab West" in Los Angeles. As a Drama League Directing Fellow, he worked at the Roundabout Theatre on a new show "Blue" starring Phylicia Rashad and went on to be the Associate Director of the "Blue" tour starring Leslie Uggams. For two years he worked on the directing team and as a performer with the "American Girl Revue", the second longest running show in Los Angeles. Recently he returned from directing for Prometeo Theatre at the International Hispanic Theater Festival in Miami, Florida. He worked for eleven seasons as the Producer at The Broad Stage in Santa Monica, CA presenting over 900 music, theatre, dance and multi-media events, approximately 150 events annually.

Melissa Cirone

Program Manager, Education & Community Programs, Sacramento Office of Arts & Culture

As Program Manager for the Office of Arts & Culture in Sacramento, Melissa leads the City's arts education and community arts projects and initiatives. She developed the City's first Creativity Summit for high school students, as part of a nationwide youth creativity and workforce development initiative, and also runs the City's Any Given Child program, supporting equity and access to arts education for underserved youth in Sacramento County. Currently, she is piloting a citywide program, Sacramento Healthy Hearts & Minds, which pairs artists, mentors, and mental health professionals with students in 26 schools, who are struggling with Covid-19 related trauma. She also manages a citywide artist-in-residence program placing artists in community spaces. Melissa has also served as Executive Director for both literary arts and arts service organizations in the Bay Area and has extensive experience in development and communications for dance, theater, and community-based cultural organizations and individual artists.

Tezeru Teshome

Adjunct Professor of Theatre, University of San Diego

Tezeru Teshome is an interdisciplinary scholar-artist from Chicago, IL. She moved to San Diego, California about six years ago and earned a Ph.D. in Theatre & Drama from the University of California San Diego-Irvine Joint Doctoral Program. She is currently a San Diego Juvenile Justice Commissioner and a Postdoctoral Fellow in Theatre Arts at the University of San Diego, where she has begun to actualize her research on how performance can empower young people to access and establish shared governance in the juvenile justice system. As an artist, Tezeru directs and writes devised plays and films. She recently directed an undergraduate production of "Silent Sky" by Lauren Gunderson at the University of San Diego. She has performed throughout San Diego including Museum of Man, Centro Cultural de la Raza, and First American Museum sharing her passion for taboo stories with wicked messages.

OSP Panel 3- March 18, 2021

Natasha Ridley

Founding Director, Media Arts Santa Ana

Natasha Ridley is a former principal dancer of La Diego Dance Theater and has been dancing professionally for fifteen years. She began her dance career at the age of ten, at the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts in San Diego California where she received much of her dance training. In 2004, she joined La Diego Dance Theater as an apprentice and was quickly promoted to the role of principal dancer. She also served as a board member for the organization under the title of dancer liaison and continued with the company until 2008. In addition to company work, Natasha has performed in various classical ballets for local studios and collaborative shows throughout San Diego. Natasha is now focusing on creating new choreographic work and facilitating community arts engagement events. She is a co-founder of the Artists Building Community Project (ABC) with Maureen Abugan. A project devoted to the practice of using art as a means of community engagement and dialogue to better their communities, families, and selves in underserved communities. Apart from dance she is a Licensed Financial Assistant. She holds a BA in Psychology from San Diego State University and a MA in Leadership Studies from the University of San Diego and is a San Diego RISE Urban Leadership alumna.

Dr. S. Ama Wray

Associate Professor, UC Irvine School of Dance

Dr. S. Ama Wray is an associate professor of dance and the University of California, Irvine. She is a former U.K NESTA Fellow (National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts – similar to the MacArthur Awards)—an improviser, choreographer, director, teacher and scholar. She self-titles as a 'Performance Architect', receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Surrey where she developed her theory and practice of Embodiology®, a neo-African approach to contemporary dance improvisation. In London between 1992 and 2004 Wray was artistic director of JazzXchange Music and Dance Company, collaborating with musicians including: Gary Crosby - OBE, Julian Joseph, Wynton Marsalis, Bobby McFerrin and Zoe Rahman.

Justin Morrison

Consultant, Teacher and Performing Artist

Justin Morrison has a background in Dance, Film, Photography, and Information Technology. For four years he has served as Lecturer in the Department of Music & Dance at San Diego State University. Justin has lived and worked as a practicing artist in San Francisco, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Seoul, Korea, and Brooklyn, NYC, before returning to San Diego to become an artist-in-residence at Space 4 Art, a live/work collaborative space in Downtown San Diego. He is a dancemaker, choreographer and director active in the field of transmedia performance, incorporating dance, film and technology via performance and installation works in collaboration with visual artists and composers. He is a frequent and active collaborator in projects spanning the Tijuana and San Diego border, teaching dance and producing performance in Mexico with his creative partner Victor De La Fuente. Justin also works as a photographer, videographer and filmmaker, and is the founder of WWWERK, a media and technology co-operative with over 15 years' experience managing web, video and technology-based projects. More information at: justinmorrison.net

Neha Patel

Founder and Artistic Director, Naad Studios

With more than 35 years of experience in performing & teaching, Neha Patel is a skilled Bharatanatyam and Kathak virtuoso who has carved a niche for herself in San Diego and abroad. She is most notably known for her stylized and fluid grace, thoughtful and sensitive rhythmic sense, expression, and complex choreographies. Neha graduated from the world-renowned Darpana Academy of Performing Arts in Ahmedabad, founded by the legendary Mrinalini Sarabhai, and has earned the title Natya Bhushan. She is also trained in rare folk-art forms of India & theater. Neha has been able to positively impact the community of San Diego and the lives of her students through a teaching philosophy that nurtures students while also upholding high standards of dedication and learning. She excels in breaking down the intricate nuances of the art form in ways that children can understand and providing the guidance necessary to help students of all levels meet the physical and mental challenges of Indian dance. Under her guidance, children have developed the skills necessary to earn diplomas in Indian dance styles. She is the founder of Antarnaad in 1996 in Chicago, IL which later spurred the creation of Naad Studios in San Diego and Temecula. Neha and her students regularly perform in major cultural events in southern California and abroad. Neha's extensive training in the theater is apparent through her involvement with award-winning stage dramas and educational documentaries that helped educate rural tribes in Gujarat. Many of Neha's performances as both an actress and a dancer were broadcast on local & national television in India. Neha conducts lecture-demonstration &

teaches at for-profit and nonprofit organizations, schools, universities, international museums, religious conferences, and various dance festivals in the USA, India & worldwide. Also, she has served as a judge in many dance competitions in the USA and abroad. Neha is currently a board member of the management committee of IFAASD (Indian Fine Arts Academy, San Diego) and served as cultural chair of FIA (Federation of India Association, San Diego) & House of India, Balboa Park. She has been an integral part of organizing cultural concerts and fundraising events for the San Diego community. She was just featured in the online magazine SD voyager - shout-out series. Neha's passion for these sacred art forms and her relentless efforts to teach has earned her profound respect in Southern California and is a valued role model in the eyes of her students globally.

Sadie Weinberg

Artistic Director, LITVAKdance

Sadie Weinberg is the founder and Artistic Director of LITVAKdance, a non-profit dance company currently based in Encinitas, CA. In its short tenure, LITVAKdance has commissioned over 13 diverse guest artists to create dance on a small group of dancers that mirror the changing demographic of our region. Weinberg has also hosted an array of master classes through the company, both live and virtual from teaching artists across the country. Along with presenting the work of other artists, Weinberg has also created work for the company to much acclaim. LITVAKdance/Weinberg has received grants on the state and local level including the California Arts Council, California Humanities and the Cities of Encinitas and Carlsbad. Through the company, Weinberg has collaborated with the La Jolla Historical Society, LUX Art Institute, the Oceanside Museum of Art, Women's Museum of California and the Lawrence Family JCC to name a few. Prior to starting LITVAKdance, Weinberg presented her work as an independent artist and performed with the companies of John Malashock, Jean Isaacs, Nancy McCaleb and others. Weinberg has been teaching in higher education in San Diego for more than 15 years continues to hold teaching positions at UC San Diego in the Department of Theater and Dance, MiraCosta College and Canyon Crest Academy.

OSP Panel 4- March 19, 2021

Ernest Figueroa

Theater Producer, Independent

Ernest A. Figueroa has been involved as a director, producer and playwright in theatre, film and television throughout the country. For the past twenty years, Mr. Figueroa has served on the Steering Committee of "Directors Lab West" in Los Angeles. As a Drama League Directing Fellow, he worked at the Roundabout Theatre on a new show "Blue" starring Phylicia Rashad and went on to be the Associate Director of the "Blue" tour starring Leslie Uggams. For two years he worked on the directing team and as a performer with the "American Girl Revue", the second longest running show in Los Angeles. Recently he returned from directing for Prometeo Theatre at the International Hispanic Theater Festival in Miami, Florida. He worked for eleven seasons as the Producer at The Broad Stage in Santa Monica, CA presenting over 900 music, theatre, dance and multi-media events, approximately 150 events annually.

Richard Stein

President & CEO, Arts Orange County

Rick has served for over 11 years as President & CEO of Arts Orange County, the countywide nonprofit arts agency and State-Local Partner, which provides a robust menu of programs and services for artists, arts organizations, arts education and municipalities. A member of the Board of California Arts Advocates & Californians for the Arts since 2009, he served as their President for three terms. He has been a grants reviewer/panelist for National Endowment for the Arts, Western States Arts Federation, New England Foundation for the Arts, California Arts Council, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Riverside Arts Council, Louisville, KY Fund for the Arts, and Connecticut Commission on the Arts. For more than 17 years as its Executive Director, he transformed Laguna Playhouse in Laguna Beach from an amateur theatre into a \$7 million budget professional resident theatre company, where he produced more than 100 plays (including two national tours) and musicals, and where he directed notable premieres. Six of his articles have been published in the national magazine AMERICAN THEATRE. Earlier in his career, he ran a professional Shakespeare theatre, a university performing arts center, held senior management positions with two major symphony orchestras, was executive director of a countywide arts council in upstate New York, and in 1977 he co-founded a small theatre company in Syracuse, New York that continues to operate today. He holds degrees in English from Columbia and Syracuse Universities,

returned to Columbia on a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship, and was sent for a cultural exchange to South Korea by the International Theatre Institute-US. He is a resident of San Juan Capistrano.

Ashley Shabankareh

Collaborative Action Strategist/Director of Learning & Development/Education Specialist, Artist Corps New Orleans/Upbeat Academy Foundation/New Orleans Jazz Museum

Ashley Shabankareh (she/her) is a musician, music educator, arts administrator, and music education and creative economy advocate. She received her M.M. and B.M.E. from Loyola University, New Orleans. Ashley is a certified K-12 music educator and spent her early years in New Orleans teaching PK4-8th grade students. She transitioned from full-time music instruction to assist in the creation of the curriculum and program guidelines for the Tulane University Music Rising Program. In addition, Ashley previously served as the Director of Programs for Preservation Hall Foundation, working with culture bearers and serving over 35,000 per year in programming in schools, detention centers, and community centers. In 2016, she was named a Top Female Achiever by New Orleans Magazine, a New Orleans Hero by the Times-Picayune, and a Woman of the Year by New Orleans City Business. In 2017, she was named a Top Millennial in Music by the Spears Group and I Heart Media. Ashley currently serves as the Collaborative Action Strategist for Artist Corps New Orleans, Education Specialist for the New Orleans Jazz Museum, and Director of Learning and Development for Upbeat Academy. She serves as the Vice President for the Jazz Education Network, Board Chair for the Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans (MaCCNO), and Board Member for Elan Academy. Ashley performs as both a trombonist and vocalist, and has played alongside Aretha Franklin, Allen Toussaint, Jimmy Buffett, Big Sam's Funky Nation, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and in her own projects, Marina Orchestra and the Asylum Chorus.

Laura Hoffman

Self, Grant Consultant

I am an avid supporter and participant in arts and culture activities in San Diego. In addition to this exposure to many of the City's offerings, my background and availability contribute to my ability to serve as a Commission Advisory Panelist. My professional background includes a 15+ year career in proposal development and grant award management, in the arts and the bio and health sciences. My professional tenure includes the role of the Grants Officer for the Phoenix Art Museum. In this role, I submitted numerous grants and secured funding from the National Endowment of the Arts and other

private and public funders to support exhibitions and family, community, and festival programming. I was honored to be appointed by the mayor of the City of Tempe, Arizona as a Tempe Municipal Arts Commissioner and elected as an executive member-- as the Chairperson of the Grants Committee. In this role, I managed all aspects of arts funding from organizing community panels, training the panelists, and developing funding recommendations based on the panel reviews. The Tempe grants program supported organizational/infrastructure funding and project grants. As a Commissioner, other responsibilities included evaluating artists and their work for the public art program and being on the jury for the Tempe Arts Festival. I was also selected and served as a panel member for the Phoenix Arts Commission grant program. San Diego is now my home and I am very excited to bring my extensive and relevant experiences to serve the City as a panelist, and to advance diversity in the arts in our community.

Dan Atkinson

Department Director, UCSD Extension

Dan Atkinson became the Executive Director of the Western Jazz Presenters Network in June 2020, having served as the organization's board Treasurer since 1998. The WJPN is an arts service organization representing more than 30 jazz presenting organizations and festivals located throughout the western United States, western Canada, and northern Mexico. Based in San Diego, he is also the Jazz Program Coordinator for Athenaeum Music & Arts Library, where he founded the Athenaeum Jazz series in 1989. The series presents 16-18 concerts per year featuring both emerging artists and celebrated jazz masters. The Athenaeum has been recognized by Downbeat as one of the world's great jazz rooms and by JazzTimes as one of the leading jazz series on the West Coast. From 2001-2020 he was also active as the Director of Public Programs and of Arts, Humanities, Languages, and Digital Arts at the University of California San Diego, where he directed the UC San Diego Jazz Camp, the Festival of New Trumpet Music West (with Stephanie Richards), and an annual program of major lectures, conferences, and performances. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (UK) and a Voting Member of the Recording Academy (Grammy Awards), Atkinson has produced albums with artists such as Harold Land, Lee Konitz, Geoffrey Keezer, and Peter Erskine, including Erskine's 2008 Grammy-nominated CD, "Standards." From 1997-2001, he was also Associate Producer of the PBS jazz television series, "Club Date." In 2018 the national Jazz Journalists Association designated him as a recipient of a "Jazz Hero" award and the City of San Diego declared April 4 as an official "Daniel Atkinson Day" in recognition of his contributions to the cultural life of the city. He has served as a panelist for organizations including the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, California Arts Council, Chamber Music America, Western Arts Alliance, Doris Duke

Foundation, Jazz I Am Barcelona, and California Presenters. In addition to his work as an arts administrator he is also active as a classical and improvising guitarist.

OSP Panel 5- March 19, 2021

Chelsea Rowhani

Associate, Impact Experience

Chelsea Allen is a non-profit professional who works with institutions, government agencies, and philanthropists to support arts-based initiatives for social impact. As an artist herself, Chelsea knows the transformative and transcendent power art has on communities and individuals, and believes this power can be harnessed to enhance the best of the human spirit. Most recently, Chelsea was hired through a Mellon Foundation grant to conduct a Phase 0 landscape analysis for an emerging network of San Diego-based creative youth development organizations seeking to serve justice impacted youth. Prior to that, she worked as the first Manager of Community Engagement for the San Diego Symphony where she created arts-based social impact programs, including the first music-based intervention program at a San Diego women's prison in collaboration with the leadership of the San Diego Women's Drum Circle. She was also a founding board member of Voices of Our City, a choir dedicated to helping San Diego's unsheltered neighbors reconnect with hope and possibility through the healing power of music. In 2019, Chelsea moved to Los Angeles to be a founding staff member of the Guild of Future Architects, an incubator for collaborations between artists and leaders of industry aiming to build a more beautiful world for more people and currently works for Impact Experience, a non-profit building bridges between entrepreneurs, artists, and investors based on diversity, equity, and inclusion. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from Yale University where she focused her studies on the use of music in political movements.

Ashley Shabankareh

Collaborative Action Strategist/Director of Learning & Development/Education Specialist, Artist Corps New Orleans/Upbeat Academy Foundation/New Orleans Jazz Museum

Ashley Shabankareh (she/her) is a musician, music educator, arts administrator, and music education and creative economy advocate. She received her M.M. and B.M.E. from Loyola University, New Orleans. Ashley is a certified K-12 music educator and spent her early years in New Orleans teaching PK4-8th grade students. She transitioned from full-time music instruction to assist in the creation of the curriculum and program guidelines for the Tulane University Music Rising Program. In addition, Ashley previously served as the Director of Programs for Preservation Hall Foundation, working with culture bearers and serving over 35,000 per year in programming in schools, detention centers, and community centers. In 2016, she was named a Top Female Achiever by New Orleans Magazine, a New

Orleans Hero by the Times-Picayune, and a Woman of the Year by New Orleans City Business. In 2017, she was named a Top Millennial in Music by the Spears Group and I Heart Media. Ashley currently serves as the Collaborative Action Strategist for Artist Corps New Orleans, Education Specialist for the New Orleans Jazz Museum, and Director of Learning and Development for Upbeat Academy. She serves as the Vice President for the Jazz Education Network, Board Chair for the Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans (MaCCNO), and Board Member for Elan Academy. Ashley performs as both a trombonist and vocalist, and has played alongside Aretha Franklin, Allen Toussaint, Jimmy Buffett, Big Sam's Funky Nation, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, and in her own projects, Marina Orchestra and the Asylum Chorus.

Laura Hoffman

Self, Grant Consultant

I am an avid supporter and participant in arts and culture activities in San Diego. In addition to this exposure to many of the City's offerings, my background and availability contribute to my ability to serve as a Commission Advisory Panelist. My professional background includes a 15+ year career in proposal development and grant award management, in the arts and the bio and health sciences. My professional tenure includes the role of the Grants Officer for the Phoenix Art Museum. In this role, I submitted numerous grants and secured funding from the National Endowment of the Arts and other private and public funders to support exhibitions and family, community, and festival programming. I was honored to be appointed by the mayor of the City of Tempe, Arizona as a Tempe Municipal Arts Commissioner and elected as an executive member-- as the Chairperson of the Grants Committee. In this role, I managed all aspects of arts funding from organizing community panels, training the panelists, and developing funding recommendations based on the panel reviews. The Tempe grants program supported organizational/infrastructure funding and project grants. As a Commissioner, other responsibilities included evaluating artists and their work for the public art program and being on the jury for the Tempe Arts Festival. I was also selected and served as a panel member for the Phoenix Arts Commission grant program. San Diego is now my home and I am very excited to bring my extensive and relevant experiences to serve the City as a panelist, and to advance diversity in the arts in our community.

Cody Machado

Teaching Artist, Volunteer Organizing Committee Representative, The New Children's Museum, IBEW 465, The New Children's Museum Union

I am a Youth Educator, Cartoonist, Labor Organizer and, Teaching Artist at The New Children's Museum in San Diego. I grew up in Ocean Beach, attended Point Loma High

School from 2008-2012, graduated with a degree in Recreation and Leisure Facility Management from Humboldt State University in 2016, and have since 2018 been working as a Teaching Artist at the New Children's Museum. In mid-2019 after facing a number of lapses in communication and an inability for the workers voice to be heard through the channels already in place, we decided to exercise our right as American workers and unionize. I was elected by the Teaching Artist team to represent us in contract negotiations which are currently on going and we hope to reach an agreement soon. Since the pandemic hit all of us elected to the volunteer organizing committee have shifted a lot of our attention to the needs of our coworkers. We have organized fundraising efforts to create a mutual aid fund for workers who need additional support, organizing teams to work shifts at local socially distanced food banks, and even helping some coworkers with unemployment benefit certification and applying for local rental assistance programs. I hope by assisting in allocating these funds to non-profits in need that we will be able to offer a hand to help lift up more people who need it now more then ever in the face of the on going pandemic as well as create a sustainable economic environment moving forward.

Melissa Cirone

Program Manager, Education & Community Programs, Sacramento Office of Arts & Culture

As Program Manager for the Office of Arts & Culture in Sacramento, Melissa leads the City's arts education and community arts projects and initiatives. She developed the City's first Creativity Summit for high school students, as part of a nationwide youth creativity and workforce development initiative, and also runs the City's Any Given Child program, supporting equity and access to arts education for underserved youth in Sacramento County. Currently, she is piloting a citywide program, Sacramento Healthy Hearts & Minds, which pairs artists, mentors, and mental health professionals with students in 26 schools, who are struggling with Covid-19 related trauma. She also manages a citywide artist-in-residence program placing artists in community spaces. Melissa has also served as Executive Director for both literary arts and arts service organizations in the Bay Area and has extensive experience in development and communications for dance, theater, and community-based cultural organizations and individual artists.