Alaska

Neelam Ibrahim is a multidisciplinary artist who has been with the Kodiak Arts Council as an art education coordinator since 2020. Inspired by her parents, Neelam's interest in art started at a young age of 3 and since then she has expanded her knowledge by learning different cultures and traditional-art forms in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia that she now incorporates in her art as well as in her community.

Arizona

Mitch Menchaca was appointed as the executive director of the City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture in 2018. An Arizona native, he relocated from Phoenix to Washington, D.C. in 2009 to lead the Local Arts Advancement Department at Americans for the Arts, where he guided a team of professionals serving and advancing the nation's 5,000 local arts agencies. Before 2009, Mitch served as the senior director of grants and programs at the Arizona Commission on the Arts, where he administered an extensive portfolio of grants from all artistic disciplines, budget sizes, and regions of the state. In addition, he managed the commission's local arts agencies, international, cultural tourism, tribal museums, and rural programs and initiatives. Mitch is the past chairman of The Association of American Cultures, served on the board of directors for DataArts (formerly the Cultural Data Project), was an inaugural board member for Latinos LEAD (Latinos for Leadership Excellence And Diversity) in Los Angeles, and is the Governor appointed arts and culture chair for the Arizona Mexico Commission. Mitch earned a Bachelor of Liberal Studies and a Masters of Nonprofit Leadership and Management at Arizona State University and completed a festival and event management certificate at the University of Minnesota.

Yvonne Montoya is a mother, dancemaker, bi-national artist, and the founding director of Safos Dance Theatre. Based in Tucson, A.Z. and originally from Albuquerque, N.M., her work is grounded in and inspired by the landscapes, languages, cultures, and aesthetics of the U.S. Southwest. Montoya is the founder and co-organizer for Dance in the Desert: A Gathering of Latinx Dancemakers. Montoya is a 2021 Southwest Folk Alliance Plain View Fellow, a 2019-2020 Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellow, a member of the 2019-2020 Dance/USA Fellowships to Artists pilot program, and a recipient of the 2019 National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC) POD grant, the 2020 MAP Fund Award, and the first Arizona-based artist to receive the 2020 New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) National Dance Project Production Grant. www.yvonnomontoya.co
California

David Mack has managed some of LA’s most innovative arts organizations, including: The Industry, Watts Village Theater Company and Heidi Duckler Dance. In addition to his current role as Executive Director of Invertigo Dance Theatre, Mack serves as an arts consultant for the City of West Hollywood and Board member of the Western Arts Alliance and the LA County Department of Arts and Culture Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative Advisory Committee. Mack is also the Founder and Strategic Executive Director of Artist Magnet, a new online social network for Theatre people. A Southern California Leadership Network fellow, Mack has served as Managing Director of Watts Village Theater Company and The Industry, as well as an arts consultant for Center Theatre Group, L.A. Dance Project, DIAVOLO | Architecture in Motion and Ate9 Dance Company. In his role as a community leader, Mack served as Chairman of LA County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas’ Empowerment Congress Arts & Culture Committee, as well as on the Board of Directors of several organizations, including: Dance Resource Center and Theatrical Producers’ League of Los Angeles.

Demone Carter is an award-winning artist from San Jose, Ca. Performing under the name DEM ONE, he has released several albums and collaborated with notable hip hop artists like D-Styles, Motion Man, Chali Tuna, and Bambu. In 2014 Demone received the Leigh Weimers Emerging Artists Award and in 2016 he was named a 2016 Silicon Valley Artist Laureate. More recently he took part in a cultural exchange musical tour of Vietnam as part of the Blood Moon Orchestra in conjunction with the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi.

In addition to recording and performing Demone is also host of the Dad Bod Rap Pod podcast and writes about music, culture, and race for Silicon Valley De Bug, Content Magazine, and San Jose Inside Blog.

Over ten years of teaching and entrepreneurship experience provided Nicole Winthrop (she/her) with key strategies centered in accountability and equitable practices that led her to grow and oversee a museum membership program as Membership Manager for the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco. In addition to overseeing campaign appeals, database integrity, and member and audience engagement, Nicole worked to support the Museum’s development team with grant writing, fundraising, and corporate engagement. Further, Nicole managed and oversaw the Museum’s volunteer program, where she trained interns and volunteers on how to build and execute a successful fundraising campaign through member engagement. In 2019, Nicole had the opportunity to attend the Alliance of American Museums (AAM) 2019 museum leadership conference, Reimagining the Museum, in Oaxaca, Mexico. This year, Nicole received certification through the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) in Advanced Grant Writing and Statistics for Managerial Use and has joined the National Art Education Association (NAEA). In addition to her museum and nonprofit development work, Nicole is an artist and teaching artist who uses assemblage as an art and environmental practice. She currently works as Program Associate for Center for Cultural Innovation.

Colorado

Lafayette, Louisiana native and Boulder, Colorado transplant, Helanius J. Wilkins is a choreographer, performance artist, educator, and innovator. Wilkins’s creative research and projects are rooted in the interconnections of American contemporary performance, cultural history, and identities of Black men. His projects examine the raced dancing body and ways ritual can access knowledge. He uses
remembering to piece together and liberate Black identity through performance. Having choreographed
60+ works, honors include Pola Nirenska Award for Contemporary Achievement in Dance (DC’s highest
honor, given by the Washington Performing Arts Society, 2008); Kennedy Center Local Dance
Dance Project, National Performance Network (NPN), DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, and
the Boulder Office of Arts & Culture Public Arts Program have supported his work. He founded and
artistically directed D.C.-based EDGEWORKS Dance Theater, an all-male dance company
predominantly of African American men that toured nationally and internationally (2001 - 2014). He is
Associate Chair and a Professor of Dance at CU Boulder. He is a member of the National Board of
Directors of the American College Dance Association (ACDA) for the Northwest region, and was
appointed in 2018 by Governor Jared Polis to the Colorado Council on Creative Industries.
https://www.helaniusj.com/

Hawai’i

Danica Rosengren is the Arts Education Specialist for Hawai’i’s State Foundation on Culture and the
Arts. Through her work as an educator and administrator, she focuses on arts education for all learners
to foster inclusive, creative spaces. As a theatre artist, she focuses on developing site-specific free
performances. She has created performances in parks, coffee shops, and front offices of schools in
South Korea, Arizona and Maine. Her most recent work, Maintenance, was developed for the Hawaii
State Art Museum, so that museum goers can stumble upon a whimsical performative experience
during their museum visit. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Northwestern University, and a
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre for Youth from Arizona State University.

Lee Dombroski is the Director of the Performing Arts Center at the University of Hawai’i, Hilo. Prior to
her return to Hawai’i, Lee was the Production Manager at the Seattle Children’s Theatre where she also
spent three years as the Costume Shop Manager. She was the Associate Director of the Kahilu Theatre
in Kamuela, Hawai’i for 7 years and a freelance costume designer in Honolulu. She spent 7 years on
the Design and Technology faculty at California Institute of the Arts, and 24 years at the Colorado
Shakespeare Festival in Boulder, Colorado; 5 as the Costume Director and 19 as the Wig Master. Lee’s
wigs have been seen at the Mark Taper Forum, Seattle Children’s Theatre, CalArts, and South Coast
Repertory Theatre and her hair sculptures have been exhibited in galleries in Los Angeles, San
Francisco, New York, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Lee has designed
costumes for UH Hilo Performing Arts Center, Mānoa Valley Theatre, Kumuh Kahua Theatre, Monkey
and the Waterfall Dance Theatre, CalArts Theatre and Dance Schools, and Seattle Children’s Theatre.
Lee holds a BFA in Theatre from the University of Colorado, Boulder and an MFA in Design from
California Institute of the Arts.

Idaho

Jocelyn Robertson is the Literature Director and Public Information Officer for the Idaho Commission
on the Arts. In this role she facilitates state-wide literature programs such as the Idaho Writer in
Residence and creative writing workshops with incarcerated youth and adult populations as well as
supporting agency initiatives for Idaho artists, arts education, and arts organizations. She has worked in
non-profit arts management and the public sector for 20 years with a focus on marketing and
communications. In her spare time she is a freelance book designer, writes novels, and owns a winery
with her sisters. She has a M.A. in Arts Administration from Indiana University and a B.A. in Visual Arts
Steven Hatcher is the state folklorist and director of the Folk and Traditional Arts Program at the Idaho Commission on the Arts. A public sector folklorist with 21 years of experience, Steven spent a decade living in four countries and on as many continents. Overseas, his experience focused on the educational side of public folklore through contract positions awarded by the State Department and as an expatriate hired in the local economy. Prior to life overseas, he cut his teeth at the Western Folklife Center in Elko, Nevada where he was hired as an archives assistant to help at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. At the Idaho Commission on the Arts, Steven documents, supports, and celebrates the folklife of Idaho through public programs and grant funding. He has a M.A. in American Studies from Utah State University and a B.A. in English from the University of Utah.

Montana

Ashleigh Heimbach is President/CEO of West Mont, located in Helena, Montana. Over the past 10 years, she has held leadership positions within West Mont. She began her career as the Accounts Payable Coordinator and quickly moved up the ladder until four years ago taking over as the President/CEO. Prior to working in a non-profit atmosphere, she worked in Healthcare at an Urgent Care. There she was responsible for managing the front desk as well as accounting work in the billing department. Ms. Heimbach is currently the Executive Officer of the West Mont and West Mont Foundation Board of Directors. She has also served on the board for Downtown Helena (DHI). Ms. Heimbach attended Montana State University – Billings and earned her bachelor's degree in Business Management with emphasis in accounting. She was born and raised in Helena, Montana and loves to spend her free time with her yellow lab, Bristol, out exploring the Montana mountains.

Nevada

Jennifer Kleven is an arts administrator, artist, curator and advocate. Currently she is the Grants and Gifts Manager at the Neon Museum and has been with the organization in roles ranging from volunteer to Membership Manager for the past ten years. She holds a BA in Art History and BFA in Art from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. From 2010-2013 she operated Kleven Contemporary, a gallery exhibiting emerging artists in downtown Las Vegas. In 2018 she was selected as the WESTAF Emerging Leader of Color for the state of Nevada and currently is the Nevada Museums Association first Vice-President and second-chair for the Las Vegas Arts Commission. She strives to expand access to arts and culture for under-resourced communities and seeks innovative ways to bring the arts to new audiences. In her spare time, she enjoys curating exhibits and workshops as part of GULCH Collective, gardening, creating ceramic art, getting outdoors, visiting museums and engaging with the arts.

Zarinah Washington is a double alumni of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas having earned her Bachelors of Social Work in 2005 and recently received her Master’s in Social Work, management and community practice concentration. Since 2016, Zarinah has served as a graduate assistant with the Center for Social Justice where she worked to amplify and affirm diverse student identities through an intersectional framework. Her programming led to the bridging of community and campus leaders, moving her into community organizing centering social justice work in the Las Vegas area.

Prior to pursuing her graduate studies, Zarinah worked as an arts administrator in both commercial and regional theatre, touring internationally. It was through these experiences as well as her studies at “The
Mecca”, Howard University, that she found the inspiration to examine therapeutic arts interventions through a social work lens not only on the individual level but on the larger societal level as well. This year, Zarinah has set her focus on founding the Nevada Creative Arts Collective to foster a space for individual and community healing while providing support to artists of color as well as those with marginalized identities.

New Mexico

Elena Higgins, Samoan/Maori. was born and bred in New Zealand before relocating to Australia for a teaching career, and eventually finding her home in the United States. Elena has been described as exotic, extravagant, eclectic, esoteric, gorgeous, spirited, and so much more; the lasting impression Elena leaves in everyone’s hearts is her smile. Elena loves the outdoors and thrives on travel and new experiences. With her pitch-perfect bass alto voice on stage she captivates audiences; her prolific smile invites her world audiences into her wild joy and love for life. Elena is a woman of action; she have a vision, begins formulating strategies and teams to execute her vision, and off she goes. Elena is a born leader reminiscent of her Southern Pacific tribes. Elena is the Executive Director for IndigenousWays and her mission has always been about supporting the arts and music and bringing people together so we may all love and learn from one another.

In 2006, Elena moved to the USA to pursue her musical talents. Supporting Native American gatherings and circles, she found her way to New Mexico and in August met Tash Terry. Tash and Elena formed the multiple award winning musical duo, Indigie Femme.

Indigie Femme’s delivery of music is about connecting to the vital forces that are available to us in the world (both seen and unseen) that enable us to connect to the light within. Every person will see the same waterfall in a different way, as people will hear music as they wish, while others interpret their dreams, or not, in their own ways. We as “earth surface people (human beings)” have the healing sources inside us and often time consumes our ability to reconnect with self. Therefore, we have a variety of disciplines and connections to keep that part of us alive. Indigie Femme’s gifts are with their synergy on stage as they give their all to audiences as a global and collective unit. The multi award winning duo, Indigie Femme’s music has been described as, “A twist of world beats lavish the acoustic folk duo who tap into their indigenous roots.” Indigie Femme’s worldly vibrations ignite the collective consciousness to bring hope and healing to Mother Earth through their powerful performances.

Oregon

Erin Boberg Doughton, (she/her) Artistic Director & Curator of Performance at PICA (Portland Institute for Contemporary Art,) works collaboratively to curate and produce performance programs including dance, music, theatre and multi-disciplinary projects as part of PICA’s TBA (Time-Based Art) Festival as well as year-round presentations, commissions and residencies including the Creative Exchange Lab. She teaches performance as an Assistant Professor and Mentor at PNCA (Pacific Northwest College of Art.) She serves on the advisory council for the National Performance Network (NPN) and is a former National Dance Project hubsite advisor. Erin grew up in Portland and studied dance, music and theatre at Lewis & Clark College, and has worked at PICA in various roles, starting as a volunteer, since the organization’s founding in 1995.
Sean Andries is an Arts Administrator with a passion for creating access to arts and culture in communities across Oregon. Growing up in rural Jackson County, Sean was lucky to be raised with the world-renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival in his backyard. He credits this early, available access to high quality artistic product with shaping the trajectory of his life and career. After graduating from the University of Oregon with a degree in Theatre and Arts Administration, Sean was accepted as a member of the prestigious Actors Theatre of Louisville Apprentice Company in Louisville, Kentucky. It was here that his twin passions of working on stage as an actor and in the office to support the work of artists became fully entwined. After working in theatres across the country, Sean returned to Oregon where he has helped write, direct, perform, and tour dozens of new plays and has worked professionally onstage in educational theatre programs for companies such as Oregon Children’s Theatre, Imago Theatre, and Tears of Joy. While touring with these companies across Oregon and during his time studying at the Dell’Arte International School of Physical Theatre, Sean discovered a calling to support art in rural spaces. As an administrator, Sean has held positions with a number of respected performing arts companies in Portland including BodyVox Dance Company, the Circus Project, and Portland Center Stage. He works currently as the Executive Director of the Chehalem Cultural Center in Newberg, is the Vice President of the Yamhill County Cultural Coalition, and sits on the Board of Directors of the Oregon Cultural Trust. Sean firmly believes that, “great art makes great communities and great communities make great art.”

Utah

Katy Shoemaker’s inherent drive for community change led her to her career in grant writing and management in 2014. With professional experiences managing grants with a variety of nonprofits in different sectors, Katy has successfully raised more than $35mm in her career and is a Certified Grant Professional (GPC). She is the current President of the Utah Chapter of the Grant Professionals Association, is a certified Change Leader through Utah Division of Arts & Museums, has volunteered on various state-wide grant review panels, and travels throughout the state of Utah, presenting on grant writing and management topics to fellow nonprofit professionals.

Max Chang received a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley and an MBA from The Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania with a double major in marketing and entrepreneurial management. Currently, he is the Chief Operating Officer and partner of American Estate Management Corporation.

Max has served on numerous arts and cultural related boards in Utah. He is a past board member of Salt Lake County’s Zoo Arts and Parks Tier 1, Center for the Arts (now Arts and Culture) and Cultural Facilities Support Program Advisory Boards. He also has served on the boards of the Spike 150 Foundation, Natural History Museum of Utah, Karl Malone Foundation for Kids, Utah Film Center, Holladay Preschool and is currently the Treasurer of the Oakridge Elementary Parent Teachers Association. He served on the Governor’s Mansion Artist Awards Committee from 2010-2020.

Washington

Catherine Nueva España is an experienced arts administrator, facilitator, consultant, and curator based in Seattle, WA. She currently serves as a Commissioner on the WA State Arts Commission, a board member for the Seattle International Dance Festival, and a community advisor for the Seattle Art Museum. She was most recently the Executive Director at Velocity Dance Center and has served as a
grant panelist for the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture and 4Culture.

SuJ'n Chon is a writer, multidisciplinary artist, and co-founder of IDEA Odyssey, a visual arts collective. She is a programmer for the Asian Crossroads program of the Seattle International Film Festival and has been a guest curator at Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience. SuJ'n is a WESTAF ELC alum (’13) and served on WESTAF’s Multicultural Advisory Committee until its sunset in 2019. In her professional life, SuJ'n is currently the principal changemaker at Novum Lux, which primarily supports those doing work at the intersection of arts, education, and social justice. She lives and works from her home on the Swinomish Indian Reservation in rural Skagit County, Washington.

Wyoming

Dara Lohnes-Davies is the Collections Manager at the University of Wyoming Art Museum. She also represents the museum as the Wyoming State Representative in RC-MPMA and the Museum Studies Liaison for the CS-AAM professional organizations. Her MA in Museum Studies is from the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. Her BA in Humanities and Fine Arts with minors in Museum Studies and Music is from the University of Wyoming. She has previously held positions at the National Music Museum, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, and the Herrett Center for Arts and Sciences.

Lucas Fralick works as Wyoming Humanities’ Museum on Mainstreet Coordinator and offers membership and newsletter services to local nonprofits on a case-by-case basis. He holds an MA in History from the University of Wyoming. Fralick enjoys hiking and birding on the weekends, he lives in Gillette, WY.