

Sharmi Basu, Executive Director, Vital Arts

Sharmi Basu (they/them) is a multimedia performance artist, curator, composer, and arts organizer born and based in the unceded territories of Chochenyo Ohlone peoples, also known as Oakland, CA. They create sound and performance pieces that address vulnerability, accountability, and experiences of diaspora by creating new narratives for decolonial thinking toward individual and collective liberation. Their primary performance project, *Beast Nest*, shows us that the abstract and immaterial experiences of trauma can be transformed through the process of creation in art and sound. They believe that transcending the emotional landscape through active presence is the key to accessing multidimensionality and work with these ideas in their Sound and Liberation workshops, their curatorial projects, and their BIPOC improvisation group, the Mara Performance Collective.

Lisa Burger, Executive Director of Independent Arts & Media (IAM)

A licensed attorney and lifelong lover of the arts, Lisa Burger is the Executive Director of Independent Arts & Media (IAM), a San Francisco-based nonprofit fiscal sponsor. She is the former Managing Director of Zaccho Dance Theatre, a nationally renowned dance company which creates and presents aerial and site-specific performances that investigate dance as it relates to place. Lisa serves on the Board of Directors for the SOMArts Cultural Center in San Francisco and Advisory Council for The Crucible in West Oakland, and is a consultant specializing in nonprofit formation, operations, and early strategic development. Formerly a practicing attorney with San Francisco public interest law firm Lexington Law Group, her legal practice was devoted exclusively to representing plaintiffs in environmental enforcement and consumer protection litigation.

T. Kebo Drew, Managing Director, Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project

Drew directs organizational development, strategic thinking, fundraising and communications for QWOCCMAP. She joined QWOCCMAP as its second staff member in 2007 as a Horizons Foundation Rickey William Leader Fellow, when she developed and expanded the QWOCCMAP Community Partner program. She also conceived QWOCCMAP's signature presentation "Reels of Resistance: Film IS Social Justice Activism." Drew has professionally managed development, operations and events for corporations, community, arts and nonprofit organizations for over 15 years. She is also a member of the Frameline (SF LGBT Film Festival) Board of Directors. She holds a B.P.A. in Nonprofit Administration from the University of San Francisco. Born in Memphis, Drew is a 2nd generation activist. She is also an award-winning poet, dancer and writer who has performed throughout the U.S., Latin America and Europe. A Cave Canem Poetry Fellow, Drew has won the Audre

Lorde/Pat Parker Award and the Astraea Emerging Lesbian Writers Award. She has also won the Irene Weed Dance Award and Robert Kuykendall Dance Scholarship.

Adam Fong, Program Officer, Performing Arts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Adam Fong joined the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in 2018 as a Program Officer in Performing Arts. He manages a diverse portfolio of grants supporting artists and communities throughout the Bay Area.

Adam is a musician and cultural entrepreneur with deep experience in the San Francisco Bay Area. He co-founded two Bay Area 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).

Earlier in his career, Adam held positions with organizations including Other Minds, Music at Kohl Mansion, and the San Francisco Opera. In addition, he has served as co-chair of the funding advisory committee for the city of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program, and as a member of the Emerging Leader Council of Americans for the Arts

Wayne Hazzard, Artist Administrator/Executive Director, Dancers' Group

Wayne is a native Californian and as a co-founder is proud to continue his work with the Bay Area dance community as artist administrator aka executive director of Dancers' Group. Hazzard is a leader in the service field who is known for his work with fiscal sponsorship and on new program development. Before his manifold career in arts management, Hazzard had a distinguished 20-year career performing with many notable choreographers and companies including Joe Goode, Margaret Jenkins, Ed Mock, June Watanabe, Emily Keeler, Aaron Osborne and more.

Joshua Heim, Executive Director, Western Arts Alliance

Joshua Heim started at Western Arts Alliance (WAA) in September 2022. Before dedicating his work fulltime to WAA, Joshua served as Deputy Director at 4Culture, a cultural development authority and funding agency in King County, Washington. During his time at 4Culture he led an impactful COVID-19 response that distributing over \$12 million of federal disaster relief to cultural organizations and individual cultural workers and served as an advisor to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Arts and Culture Recovery Strategy. He also provided oversight on a portfolio of funding programs, helping to deepen the organization's commitment to equity and supporting those who have been historically underserved through arts philanthropy. Before that, Joshua led local arts agencies at the

Cities of Bellevue and Redmond in Washington State where he cultivated a passion and expertise in cultural planning, creative placemaking, and the creative economy.

Danae Rees, Managing Director, Axis Dance Company and Octavia Hingle, Accessibility Artist, Axis Dance Company

Danae brings many years of experience across a variety of dance sectors. Born and raised in Brisbane, Australia, she holds a double Bachelor's Degree in Performing Arts (Dance) & Education (Secondary) from the Queensland University of Technology. She has provided dance instruction, training and program management to public schools, studios, universities, and dance organizations in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

While working in the United Kingdom as Head of Dance at Jo Richardson Community School in London, Danae developed an inclusive standards-based dance curriculum across grade levels K-12, working closely with the feeder elementary schools, higher education institutions, dance companies, and community dance organizations to provide sequential experiences in dance.

Danae fused dance programs and special youth initiatives to extended creative and performing experiences for students, working on projects with Wayne McGregor (Ballroom Scene for Harry Potter & The Goblet of Fire), Specialist Arts Trust, Youth Dance England, The Royal Ballet School Project, The Royal Academy of Dance (school-based teacher mentor), the Center for

Advance Training Program (C.A.T) in Dance at Laban and The Place, C-12 Dance Theatre and others – helping to guide future careers in dance.

She has served as schools and community program manager for Luna Dance Institute and the San Francisco Ballet's Center for Dance Education. Most recently, as Executive Director for The Dizzy Feet Foundation (now American Dance Movement), Danae oversaw the foundation's grants which provide greater access to dance for young people in underserved communities nationwide. Overseeing Dizzy Feet's annual National Dance Day celebration, a day dedicated to celebrating dance and its many benefits, she produced national events to include both live (The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The Music Center, Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts & Others) and online participation, reaching millions of dance enthusiasts across the US. Danae is dedicated to maintaining high standards for dance, broadening the dance audience base, and moving the dance profession forward.

Octavia Rose Hingle (they/he) is an East Bay born & raised performing artist and cultural

producer with a physical impairment. Their performance and installation work centers access as an aesthetic portal into visions of past and future ancestors that travel through the present moment. They are the founder and co-producer of Crip Ecstasy, a nightlife event series that centers accessibility and disability culture from the ground up. Octavia holds a BA in dance from Middlebury College, and has studied with ODC/Dance, the UCLA Dancing Disability lab, AXIS Choreo-Lab and the Headlong Performance Institute. They have presented work with Counterpulse, Gray Area, 2727 California Street, Queering Dance Festival, Fresh Festival SF, LEVYdance and SAFEhouse for the Arts. You can see more of their work at vimeo.com/octaviarose

Dr. Anne Huang, Executive Director, World Arts West (WAW)

WAW is an arts organization serving the largest world dance network in the US through artist services and collective advocacy. Under Dr. Huang's leadership, WAW greatly expanded the accessibility and reach of the WAW Dance Festival, and instituted pioneering programs such as the Arts Equity Research Project, and Grants Accelerator Program. As a thought leader with deep knowledge of challenges for cultural artists in the 21st century, Anne is a sought after consultant for culturally-specific capacity building and resource equity in philanthropy. She's presented for Grantmakers in the Arts, National Association of Latino Arts & Culture, Dance/USA, and other convenings.

Ashanti McGhee, Grant and Access Manager, Creative West

Ashanti McGee is an artist and arts advocate who has called Las Vegas, Nevada home for over 25 years. She began her arts administrative work assisting local grassroots and nonprofits with grant writing and management and continued working in this area for over a decade. In 2014, she was selected as the Nevada representative for Creative West's Emerging Leaders of Color program and has served as a panelist for Creative West's Arts Leadership and Advocacy Seminar. She most recently served as a district representative for Nevada Congresswoman Susie Lee, focusing on outreach for Black, Native American, and LGBTQ+ communities around arts and culture and environment and public lands. A proud mom of four, McGee has committed her work to arts and education, including updating arts education standards for the Nevada Department of Education; serving as a board member for Cultural Alliance of Nevada, a statewide arts advocacy organization; cofounding the Las Vegas Womxn of Color Arts Festival, and acting as a core member of NUWU Cultural Arts + Activism complex, a POC-owned and operated space in Las Vegas

that works to uplift all communities by strengthening cultural knowledge and identity through the arts, activism, and education.

Aliah Najmabadi, Program Manager, Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA)

A dance artist/ethnographer, she has over two decades of experience in cultural programming and community development playing a vital role in the San Francisco Bay Area's performing arts landscape. Internationally, Aliah managed bio-cultural stewardship initiatives, supporting indigenous performing arts in her role as Program Manager of the Tajik Dance Initiative. She holds a master's degree in Performance from the University of London's School of Oriental & African Studies and bachelor's degrees from UCLA in World Arts & Cultures and Near Eastern Language & Culture.

Laura Poppiti, Deputy Director, Center for Cultural Innovation

Laura Poppiti (she/her - hear my name) is the Deputy Director at the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), a California 501c3 nonprofit that supports individuals in the arts—artists, culture bearers, and creative entrepreneurs—to realize greater self-determination. Prior to CCI, she worked for more than a decade at small and mid-size arts and arts education nonprofit organizations—including New Conservatory Theatre Center, The Imagine Bus Project, SF Camerawork, and the Museum of Performance & Design—in various fundraising and programmatic roles. Laura currently serves on the Support for Individual Artists Committee for Grantmakers in the Arts and the Advisory Circle for Look What She Did!, an LA-based nonprofit with the mission of bringing stories of astonishing women, past and present, to the forefront of our culture. She has participated as a grant panelist for the California Arts Council, Creative Sonoma, LA County Department of Arts & Culture, and San José Office of Cultural Affairs, among others. Laura received her B.A. in History from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and her M.A. in Exhibition & Museum Studies from the San Francisco Art Institute.

Brendan Rawson, Executive Director, San Jose Jazz

South Bay native Brendan Rawson has worked in the local arts scene for more than twenty years. Since joining SJZ in 2012, Brendan has worked to increase the impact of our education programs and conceived many of our most successful initiatives, including Jazz Beyond programming and our mobile Boombox Truck stage. These initiatives reflect Brendan's conviction that SJZ's greatest strengths lie in its resourcefulness and adaptability, and that one its most important measures of success is its relevance to the community. Prior to his current role, Brendan served as Director of Cultural Participation at

1stACT Silicon Valley, where he helped launch the Left Coast Live music festival, spearheaded shared facilities and services strategies for the sector and led the organization's research work. Prior to 1stACT, Brendan served as Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC Santa Cruz Extension. He has also held positions at Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley, MACLA Center for Latino Arts and Collaborative Economics. Brendan holds a Masters of Public Policy from UC Berkeley and a Bachelor's degree from Santa Clara University. Brendan has served on the Boards of Teatro Visión, Bay Area Glass Institute, and Valley Verde.

Yesenia Sanchez, Trainer & Coach, Center for Cultural Innovation

Yesenia is the Executive Co-Director for Intersection for the Arts. She oversees Intersection's programs, including Artist Membership, Professional Development, and Community Resources. Yesenia has a long history with Intersection working in various capacities. She served as Administrative Director & Program Director of the Intersection Incubator from 2004-2008 and as the Director of Finance & Organizational Development from 2014-2019 and currently in her role as Executive Co-Director as of 2024. Concurrently, she is also a nonprofit arts management coach and consultant with over 20 years experience supporting Bay Area nonprofit organizations working at the intersections of arts, culture, and social justice.