

## Community Investments

### FY22-23 Cultural Equity Initiatives (CEI)



### Program Overview

#### Cultural Equity Initiatives (CEI) Grant Program Overview

The Cultural Equity Initiatives (CEI) grant program supports small and mid-sized arts organizations deeply rooted in San Francisco communities with core support grants up to \$100,000 over two years.

CEI: **Prioritizes** organizations deeply rooted and connected to BIPOC, LGBTQ and Gender Variant People, People with Disabilities, women and other communities that are identified in the Cultural Equity Endowment legislation (see below); **Fosters artistic expression and arts leadership** reflective of San Francisco's rich cultural heritage and legacy; **Provides flexibility and addresses bandwidth challenges** in critical sustainability areas including operations and staff development.

#### Panel Composition

Three distinct panels of four to five members each convened on February 22-23, 2023 (four-member panel), March 1-2, 2023 (five-member panel), and March 9, 2023 (five-member panel) to rank the CEI applications according to the stated review criteria in the published CEI 2022-2023 guidelines.

The panelists brought a range of expertise in nonprofit arts administration, artistic, cultural and community-based education and programming, philanthropy, media, mental health, and development. They identify as African American, American Indian/Alaskan, Asian American, Latinx, Arab, Jewish, and white/Caucasian. Thirty six percent identify as LGBTQIA+.

#### FY22-23 CEI Funding Recommendations

66 grant applications were received requesting a total of \$5,835,500.

The panelists reviewed 66 CEI applications according to the stated review criteria. CEI Funding recommendations include 35 applicants for a total of \$3,065,000.

Successful proposals clearly articulated their organization's mission and history of engaging communities identified in the [Cultural Equity Endowment legislation](#), and demonstrated that their staff and board leadership have deep connections to and relevant experience in the communities they serve. Additionally, each applicant clearly articulated their impact on the San Francisco arts community through programs and services, provided detailed grant plans and project budgets, shared compelling work samples and shared clear processes for financial planning and monitoring.

Funding requests included a range of small and mid-sized arts organizations that engage San Francisco's diverse audiences and communities through the production of world class works across all genres including media and film, dance, music, performance, theater, publishing, photography, literary arts, and visual arts. Applicants in this cohort provide critical space, resources and support for thousands of artists to create, dream and share their works, often at little to no cost to the public. Their missions include preserving African cultural heritage, amplifying LGBTQ+ Asian and Pacific Islander voices through arts and cultural programs,

presenting cultural and inter-generational artistic engagement , performing and teaching traditional and innovative pieces originating from West Africa and India , empowering youth to become actively passionate about their education through the theatre arts , supporting the development of new local voices for the theatre , and sparking a shared creative practice between professional artists and students .

The applicants that did not score well, were unable to clearly articulate their organization's history of engaging communities identified in the [Cultural Equity Endowment legislation](#), or they did not provide detailed grant plans and project budgets, or shared compelling work samples, or clear processes for financial planning and monitoring, or articulate how their staff and board leadership are connected to the communities they engage and serve.

### **Attachments**

Attachments to this memo include the list of CEI applicants recommended for funding with project descriptions and panelist biographies.

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 FY22-23 Cultural Equity Initiatives Funding Recommendations

Applicant Category Grant Amount	Org Budget	Project Description
<b>3rd I South Asian Independent Film</b> \$100,000	\$150,000 - \$400,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support increasing both the Artistic and Managing Directors' annual compensation and time commitments and will underwrite the annual fees of 3rd i's Communications and Development contractors. The initiative will formulate and implement a new social marketing strategy and a new fundraising approach that will expand 3rd i's audiences and increase our annual operating budget to \$200,000 by CY 2025.
<b>African Arts Academy</b> \$75,000	< \$150,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the organization's general operating costs, such as salaries for administrative and staff members, utilities, rent, office supplies, technology maintenance, Program Director, and production fees, project costs, professional development, artistic planning, special programming, and sabbaticals. The mission statement for our organization must be clear about how this fund would help develop, present, and/or support arts activities and/or youth arts activities in San Francisco.
<b>Anne Bluethenthal &amp; Dancers</b> \$100,000	\$150,000 - \$400,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support general operations from 2023-2025, supporting the advancement of performance programming while stabilizing ABD's operations and administration. The plan includes: 1) Strategic planning consultation and implementation for organizational sustainability. 2) Salary growth across program staff to foster organizational longevity. 3) Build community partnerships to foster a more collective, community-held organizational plan. 4) premiere TOWARDS OPULENCE, a multidisciplinary performance work and a health equity partnership with UCSF.

<b>Arenas Dance Company</b> Fiscal Sponsor (World Arts West) \$50,000	< \$150,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Arenas Dance Company to become more institutionalized by providing a stable stipend to Artistic Director Susana Arenas Pedroso and hiring a Company Manager and Administrative Assistant (formally volunteer positions) and a financial consultant. These positions will help Arenas Dance Company take advantage of the new opportunities being afforded Arenas Dance Company in the form of Hewlett 50 commission and NEFA/NDP funding.
<b>Arts.Co.Lab</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Accion Latina) \$65,000	< \$150,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the administrative overhead for four artists cohorts of TGW, which offers artists tools and skills to write competitive grant applications, as well as coaching, and project incubation consulting. Additionally, to support our annual Open House convening for alumni and art workers, network engagement, outreach, and a \$10K yearly scholarship fund for San Francisco-based BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and women-identified arts and culture practitioners to participate in TGW.
<b>Aunt Lute Foundation</b> \$100,000	\$150,000 - \$400,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Aunt Lute in maintaining overhead expenditures as we establish a foundation for our future in the publishing industry. We will use SFAC funds to maintain our current marketing and outreach model for our upcoming publications, so we can continue direct, intentional contact with our literary community while we expand our technological capabilities across the board to remain competitive in the changing publishing landscape.
<b>Bindlestiff Studio</b> \$100,000	\$150,000 - \$400,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support costs associated with live performances (artistic direction, administration, technical fees, house managing, box office, insurance, utilities, etc.), thereby passing those savings to the performers/artists/producers who seek to present in-person performances at Bindlestiff. This grant will help Bindlestiff contribute to the revitalization of downtown SF as we recover from the pandemic by attracting regular visitors to SOMA.

<p><b>Chinese Cultural Productions</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Art Commission funds will be used to support partial underwriting of Chinese Cultural Productions' (CCP) Artistic and Executive Directors' salaries and production and marketing costs. During the grant period we'll produce two home season concerts, participate in approximately 10 other San Francisco events, provide four hours of weekly traditional Chinese dance classes for 32 weeks serving 20-25 students in each of two years, and continue to operate the Lily Cai Dance Academy.</p>
<p><b>Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the Chinese Culture Center's core operations uplift and highlight Asian American artists and ensure community members have access to arts in Chinatown that reflect our diverse and unique perspectives.</p> <p>Specifically, funds will be allocated to support the following positions: Deputy Director and Communications Associate.</p>
<p><b>Clarion Alley Mural Project</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Independent Arts &amp; Media) \$75,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Clarion Alley Mural Project's core operations and project costs from July 2023 - June 2024 to present Manifest Differently, celebrating a diverse selection of 38 artists and poets creating new murals, installations, performances, poetry, and community engagement. This free public programming will provide a space for multigenerational artists and poets of different backgrounds to share stories and create dialogue with our communities.</p>
<p><b>Duniya Dance and Drum Company</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Dancers' Group Inc.) \$100,000</p>	<p>\$150,000 - \$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support dancer and musician pay and rehearsal space for weekday daytime rehearsals; to hire a Marketing and Communications consultant; to facilitate a company retreat; to increase the frequency of our African Arts Festival from every 3 to every 2 years; to create new dance and music repertoire including South Asian historical walking tours; and to supplement pay for Duniya staff in order to achieve these goals.</p>
<p><b>First Exposures</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Tides Center) \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support a staff capacity building initiative designed to expand both artistic and administrative staffing to enable First Exposures to expand its instructional programming in photography for under-resourced youth in its new Mission District home.</p>

<p><b>Honey Art Studio</b> Fiscal Sponsor (New Community Leadership Foundation Inc.) \$100,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Honey Art Studio's community-based work to bring arts and culture to historically Black neighborhoods that uplifts African American artists and community members.</p>
<p><b>InterMusic SF</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the production of SF Music Day and fund the addition of a new external curatorial role. InterMusic SF seeks to equitably select a curator that is a member of a historically underserved community. The curator will select featured artists, facilitate panel discussions, and provide a platform for artists to share their lived experiences with a diverse and inclusive audience.</p>
<p><b>Intersection for the Arts</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support two initiatives: 1) Increasing financial capacity of our members by: subsidizing participation in our earn-to-learn Arts Finance Empowerment Camp; and underwriting co-presenters including a portion of the Finance Manager position. 2) Increasing Professional Development program equity, access and inclusion by: contracting a consultant to facilitate an organizational audit; engaging and compensating a panel of advisors and; designing a 3-month BIPOC arts leadership earn-to-learn cohort program.</p>
<p><b>Kulintang Arts Inc.</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>\$150,000 - \$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support KULARTS in building capacity to sustain community programs and partnerships essential to the cultivation of diasporic Pilipino cultural life in the city, build our development infrastructure, and invest in our staff as we work toward our long term goal of securing a long term space for Pilipinx performing arts in our South of Market neighborhood.</p>

<p><b>Little Boxes Theater</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Independent Arts &amp; Media) \$50,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Project management organizing communication and production requirements for facilities. studio and production management</li> <li>-Administration support scheduling, marketing, website updates, social media</li> <li>-Consulting Fees Production consultation for shows/events</li> <li>-Programming and Services development enhance existing core support programs for artists</li> <li>-Artists relations production support for artist/upfront funding for projects</li> <li>-Community mentorship coaches racial and gender sensitivity coaches for artist and production teams</li> <li>-Stipends Travel and food relief</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lyzette Wanzer Projects</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Intersection for the Arts) \$25,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Trauma, Tresses, &amp; Truth's operational, technology, and personnel sectors over a two-year period. Years 2023 and 2024 will be crucial to solidifying and evangelizing our brand via our four P's: personnel, programming, products, and publicity.</p>
<p><b>Manilatown Heritage Foundation</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>\$150,000 - \$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support capacity building activities for the Manilatown Heritage Foundation geared towards community engagement best practices and the long-term financial sustainability of the organization. In year one a Cultural Equity Initiatives award will support the development of a 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. In year two the Manilatown Heritage Foundation staff will begin implementation of the Plan.</p>

<p><b>Parangal Dance Company</b> \$50,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Parangal's staff infrastructure and capacity expansion, to position us to be well-resourced in this critical moment for Filipino communities. The initiative will expand our current all-volunteer staff and support our Executive Director by bringing in a Co-Executive Director and provide our organization's five leaders with compensation including our Co-Executive Directors, Artistic Director, Music Director, and Finance Director, supporting Parangal to operate more sustainably.</p>
<p><b>Playground</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support increased equity and accessibility within PlayGround through direct support for general operating expenses. Through this funding, PlayGround will be able to further increase artist compensation and increase accessibility for its home theatre, Potrero Stage, through subsidized rentals and free use for artists representing historically excluded communities.</p>
<p><b>Red Poppy Art House</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Intersection for the Arts) \$100,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the Red Poppy Art House operation as we take the necessary steps to grow into a stable and sustainable organization. SFAC funds will support rebuilding staff capacity, becoming a 501c3 organization, covering some of our venue rental fees, increasing our development/fundraising capacity, improvements to our historic community facing mural, and sustain our long-standing FREE bi-monthly Mission Arts &amp; Performance Program (MAPP).</p>
<p><b>Robert Moses' Kin</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>\$150,000 - \$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the next two years of BY Series and DRAFT programming. The funds will be used to pay fees to choreographic fellows, composers and company dancers for the BY Series, SF community dancers for DRAFT, as well as supporting production costs. These two projects will culminate in one weekend of premieres at theaters in SF in May 2024 and 2025.</p>



<b>Sakura Matsuri Inc</b> \$100,000	\$150,000 - \$400,000	The San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support direct support of the artists and practitioners that participate in the festival through honorariums, to pay for sound/audio services necessary for the stage performances throughout the festival and for insurance premiums necessary to provide safe coverage for a large scale event.
<b>San Francisco African American Historical &amp; Cultural Society</b> \$50,000	< \$150,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support hiring part-time staff to support the Society's programs and administration Including: 1) Opening the Society's library and exhibits to the public.  2) Assisting in exhibit preparation and interpretation as needed, sorting mail, updating membership rosters, preparing thank you letters, and monitoring phones, voicemail and email.  3) Responding to inquiries from scholars, students, journalists and the public in-person or via email, providing available references and resources.
<b>San Francisco Music Mission Corporation</b> \$25,000	< \$150,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support fully funding three teaching artists for 60 classes and partially funding one teaching artist for 28 classes.
<b>Shipyard Trust for the Arts</b> \$100,000	< \$150,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support exhibits, classes and other programs in the new Shipyard Gallery, enhance future Open Studios events with local vendors and musicians, support our Artist-in-Residence program, increase outreach and further connections to Bayview artists and community, increase the number of working BIPOC artists with studios at the Shipyard, exhibit and promote their work during Open Studios and increasing their visibility to the Bayview and SF communities.
<b>StageWrite</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Intersection for the Arts) \$100,000	\$150,000 - \$400,000	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support StageWrite's programs and operations with these initiatives: a mentorship program by and for BIPOC teaching artists working in San Francisco public elementary schools in historically-marginalized communities; increasing inclusivity and accessibility to arts learning for all students; enhancing our partnerships between artists, students, teachers, families, and communities; capacity-building through expanded organizational management roles; and advocating for the value of arts education in San Francisco and beyond.

<p><b>The Marsh, a breeding ground for new performance</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support The Marsh's organization staff salaries, performer and project fees as well as to hire a part-time development manager to raise funds to better sustain organizational and performer support.</p>
<p><b>Theatre Bay Area</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to to support evaluating and improving all TBA programming and events to ensure equitable access for all participants, with an emphasis on improving access for those with marginalized identities and/or physical or mental disabilities. Funds will also partially support the salaries of TBA's 8 full and part-time staff to implement the programs we provide to San Francisco theatre companies, artists and audiences over the next two years.</p>
<p><b>Theatre of Yugen</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>&lt; \$150,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the implementation of the key actions of Theatre of Yugen's Strategic Plan for 2023-2025, including a series of DEAI training, hiring of additional staff, and recruitment and training of new ensemble members from the AAPI/BIPOC communities. These actions supported by the funds will increase Yugen's organizational capacity and ensure its growth, further deepening and expanding its impact and relevance with the intended communities.</p>
<p><b>Theatre Rhinoceros, Inc.</b> \$100,000</p>	<p>\$150,000 - \$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support rental and program expenses for our new home, an intimate theatre space at 4229 18th St., San Francisco. Our long-term goal is to establish a permanent home in the Castro (we are currently the only live theatre company in the neighborhood), and SFAC's funds will go toward fixing infrastructural issues as well as supporting our creative projects.</p>
<p><b>Urban Jazz Dance Company</b> Fiscal Sponsor (Intersection for the Arts) \$100,000</p>	<p>\$150,000 - \$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Urban Jazz Dance Company's (UJDC) conversion of our Director and Company and Festival Assistant Director from Contractors to Employees; hire two non-senior administrative employees, one who will coordinate/contract events and performance bookings and provide general administrative support, and another who will create weekly e-newsletters and regular social media content for UJDC's annual productions; set stipends for two company dancers; and establish a Board of Directors.</p>

<p><b>Voice of Witness A</b>  <b>Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation</b>  \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Voice of Witness (VOW) as it furthers its mission to center and amplify marginalized voices by producing oral history projects that illuminate social justice issues through personal narrative. Funding will facilitate the development, publication, and promotion of two oral history projects; development of accompanying curricula; and creation and implementation of storytelling and arts education resources for community partners and San Francisco schools.</p>
<p><b>Youth Art Exchange</b>  Fiscal Sponsor  (Tides Center)  \$100,000</p>	<p>&gt;\$400,000</p>	<p>San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support general operating expenses for Youth Art Exchange (YAX), including critical salary support for key staff positions as we operate youth and community-driven art spaces in the Mission and Excelsior, and engage youth of color, artists of color, and their communities through exceptional multidisciplinary arts programming, events, and exhibitions. We also aim to expand our reach, visibility, and impact over the next two years.</p>



## FY23 Cultural Equity Initiatives (CEI) I Panelist Biographies

**Rosa De Anda (She/her/hers)** is the founder and Director of the San Francisco Day of the Dead Festival of Altars since 1991. She works with hundreds of diverse artists, disciplines, and age groups. She believes culture fosters sustainable human and environmental relationships. De Anda worked as Education Director at the Mission Cultural Center and Theatre Artaud, taught foundry at the Chicago Art Institute and Arts administration at New College. Her curatorial work has also included over one hundred shows at Lila Rosa Studios. She received her BFA from UC Berkeley, an MFA in Sculpture from the School of the Chicago Art Institute, an MFA in Creative Writing from California College of the Arts, and an MFA in Poetry at the University of San Francisco in 2021.

**Susie Hara (She/her/hers)** Susie Hara's first novel, *Finder of Lost Objects* (Ithuriel's Spear), was a 2015 finalist for a Lambda Literary Award and a 2015 recipient of an International Latino Book Award. Her stories appear in several anthologies and her essay "Endless Spoonful" was published in the *Fractured Lit* journal in November 2022. Her newest novel "The House on Ashbury Street" was just published by Mumbler's Press. Her performance pieces have been produced at Z Space Studio, SOMArts, and the Marsh; she has performed as an actor with El Teatro de la Esperanza and Word for Word. Her play "Lost and Found in the Mission" received a Best Ensemble Award at the San Francisco Fringe Festival.

**Joel Molina (He/him/his)** commitment to community and cultural arts started as a youth in San Francisco. As an adult, Joel, a DJ, Music Producer, and Arts and Event Organizer is still promoting the arts. Joel has worked with various community organizations and/or partnerships that have advocated for the arts, while cultivating community awareness and empowerment. Through the unity and building of the arts, Joel conducts programs and events for the community providing space and opportunity for arts to thrive. As an Entrepreneur, Joel owns the Sacramento based record shop, *Twelves Wax*, which hosts weekly workshops in beat-making and turntablism for local artists and musicians.

**Ashanti Taylor (She/They)** is an emotional wellness and movement practitioner currently studying expressive arts therapy. Ashanti has over three years of experience as a wellness programs coordinator and one year as an expressive arts facilitator. The bulk of their work has been in nonprofits serving the local and historically underserved Black and brown communities, where they created psycho-educational and experiential mental health-focused curricula for an annual youth program based in San Francisco. This curriculum and current offerings included narrative-based activities, doodling/neurographic arts, and dance/movement. Offering these art-based activities to San Francisco youth inspired Ashanti to re-dive into their own creative exploration practices. Ashanti has found themselves in various dance classes reconnecting with their body, such as hip-hop, African dance, Bachata, and contemporary classes. As they become increasingly committed to their art practice, they believe that culture bearers and practitioners are essential to keeping art alive!



## FY23 Cultural Equity Initiatives (CEI) II Panelist Biographies

**Todd Berman (He/him/his)** has been a practicing and exhibiting visual artist in San Francisco for over twenty years. In the past year, he has painted three giant heart sculptures for the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation. He runs the Where Art Lives arts education program and often teach workshops to other educators on arts integration. From 2015-2020, he was the executive director of the Arts Education Alliance of the Bay Area.

**Robin Birdd David (She/hers/her, They/them/theirs)** is a multidisciplinary artist born in Oakland and currently based in Emeryville, California, Huchiu, in unceded Lisjan Territory on Ohlone land. David received a BA in Studio Art at San Francisco State University in 2014 and has over eight years of experience working in Arts Administration, Fundraising Development, and CRM databases. They are the co-founder of the art collective Macro Waves. The collective was the featured artist in the 2022 United States of Asian America Festival hosted by the Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center. Macro Waves is also one of the current 2022 CAC Impact Projects recipients. David's work has also been featured in various outlets such as KALW's Crosscurrents, The Bold Italic, KQED, East Bay Express, and the SF Chronicle. David is currently the Development Assistant at the Center for Asian American Media.

**Lisa Gedgudas (She/hers/her)** has dedicated over 20 years of progressive work into the creative sector, demonstrating a consistent track record in building more sustainable art and culture initiatives and opportunities, focusing on the strength of diverse communities. In her role with Denver Arts & Venues at the City of Denver, she is rooted in research, policy, advocacy, grant development, programs, cultural districts, and economic development. Lisa has built strategic partnerships to advance the field of arts and culture, recognizing the vital role the creative sector ecosystem plays locally, nationally, and globally. In 2018, she launched the Denver Music Strategy putting Denver on the map as a leading Music City. Lisa has advocated for and provided over \$6 million in grants to support individuals, non- and for-profit businesses to build culturally-centered programs rooted in engaging youth education, climate action, social good and social justice, health/wellness, music, performing arts, film, technology, immersive, and more.

**Raquel Iglesias (She/hers/her)** is an Arts Administrator based in Oakland, CA. Her career has been focused on advancing racial equity in the arts and supporting artists at every level - including as a grantmaker, fundraiser, curator and educator. Currently, Raquel manages the City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program, distributing roughly \$2M in grants to individual artists, arts organizations, and projects which support Oakland's cultural vitality. In addition to her career as a grantmaker, Raquel is also a practicing ceramics artist.

Raquel holds a B.A. in the History of Art and Visual Culture from the University of California Santa Cruz, and an M.A. in Arts Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Rosa Morales (She/her/hers)** is the Associate Manager of Narrative Film with the SFFILM Makers team. Inspired by a lifelong passion for storytelling, she has built her career in supporting artist development programs that uplift voices of filmmakers from under-represented communities. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley with a focus in Media and Latinx Studies and was a member of the 2019 Industry Academy with Film at Lincoln Center. Born and raised in San Francisco, she is committed to cultivating and celebrating the bountiful art community in the Bay Area and beyond.



## FY23 Cultural Equity Initiatives (CEI) III Panelist Biographies

**Tayshu Bommelyn (she/they)** Outside of her professional life, Tayshu is a language keeper, a nutritionist and health advocate dedicated to food sovereignty, and an avid baker/cook who enjoys grounding herself in nature, at home and around the world, especially through running. Through this connection, she finds inspiration to continue creating and sharing love. Be it through cultural traditions, as a singer, a traditional regalia maker, and a former dancer, or through more contemporary forms of art including painting, photography, and writing. She has been fortunate to be included in shows at the Morris Graves Museum of Art, as well as participating in sharing her poetry in shows and at spoken exhibitions.

Everything Tayshu does, is done with love, thoughtfulness, intelligence, and good intent - ever mindful of impact, working to honor the past and future.

**Arathi Govind (she/hers/her)** is a musician, project manager, social justice advocate, and former academic working in environmental and equity-focused nonprofits for over five years. She holds a BFA from California Institute of the Arts in multi-focus vocal performance, an MM in Musicology from the University of North Texas, and a PhD in ethnomusicology from UC Berkeley. Her doctoral research and teaching examined South Asian American musicians involved in social justice advocacy and activism. Since 2018, she has served as a Board Member and DEI-REJ lead at Music at Kohl Mansion, a chamber music organization in Burlingame. In 2021, she began work as a Program Officer for The Redford Center, where she helps build movement for climate crisis and equity solutions by supporting environmental storytellers and filmmakers.

**Jason Jong (he/him)** is a community advocate, cultural connector, percussionist, and creator of meaningful experiences that uplift traditional and contemporary arts, creativity, and cultural wisdom, in order to promote dialogue, healing, and social justice.

He has served the public-sector for 20 years, including City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program, Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, and the California Arts Council, supporting opportunities and programs for individuals, arts administrators, and cultural arts organizations which center immigrants, refugees, communities of color, tribal groups, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

He has played supporting roles as board member, staff, and advisor to public and nonprofit organizations for 30 years, and in 2013, founded Sacramento Asian Pacific Cultural Village, presenters of Asian Pacific CultureFest and Sacramento Asian Pacific Film Festival. He is a co-founder of API Rise Fund and American Liberation Network. Jason was recently named one of 25 AAPI Change Makers by the Sacramento Bee.

**Muisi-kongo Malonga (She/hers/her)** Cultural caretaker, teaching and performing artist and arts administrator, Muisi-kongo's arts practice is steeped in a staunch Bay area legacy of cultural preservation, social justice and service through art. For the past 16-years, she has served as Executive Artistic Director of Fua Dia Congo (Fua), a 46-year old Oakland-based cultural and performing arts organization founded by pioneering master artist Malonga Casquelourd. A performing member with the company for 25

years and a lifelong apprentice of traditional Congolese cultural art forms, she remains committed to protecting, preserving and passing on the rich traditions of the Kongo people. Muisi-kongo's experience in the arts field has enabled her to serve in a number of capacities, including principle dancer, choreographer, director, teaching artist, curator, administrator, and development professional. Notable Honors include: 2022 Dance/USA Artist Fellow, 2017-18 Emerging Arts Professional Fellow, 2017 Creative Work Fund Awardee in Traditional Arts and more.

**Umi Vaughan** (He/him) is an artist and anthropologist who explores dance, creates photographs and performances, and publishes about African Diaspora culture. He has conducted extensive anthropological research in Cuba about Afro-Cuban music and dance, and created numerous scholarly presentations, art exhibits, and cultural events in the U.S. and abroad. He holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Michigan. His books include "Carlos Aldama's Life in Batá: Cuba, Diaspora, and the Drum" (Indiana University Press, 2012) and "Rebel Dance, Renegade Stance: Timba Music and Black Identity in Cuba" (University of Michigan Press, 2012). Vaughan is currently Associate Professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Monterey Bay. He created an innovative new course called Afro Cuba Hip Hop: Music and Dance in the Black Atlantic about the social history and actual practice of music/dance styles from throughout the African Diaspora.