

2 0 2 5

# ARTS & CULTURE SUMMIT



**SUMMIT PROGRAM BOOK**  
HISTORIC FIFTH STREET SCHOOL  
401 S. 4TH ST.





SHELLEY BERKLEY  
MAYOR



*From the Office of  
Mayor Shelley Berkley*

August 21, 2025

Dear Las Vegas Arts and Culture Community,

It is my pleasure to welcome everyone attending the third annual **Las Vegas Arts and Culture Summit**. This event brings together city leaders and representatives of arts and culture nonprofits, museums, art galleries, artists and venues.

Last year, the attendees had the opportunity to share ideas and resources, build stronger connections, and identify ways to continue building a stronger arts and culture community in Las Vegas. The city of Las Vegas is excited to continue to build upon the synergy created by this powerful event that brings together arts organizations large and small in an unprecedented gathering of thought provoking discussion, ideas and resource sharing.

The city of Las Vegas is committed to arts and culture. Arts and culture play a significant role in the identity of the community that lives, works and plays in the city. A significant strength of the city of Las Vegas is the diversity in the neighborhoods.

Our future is looking bright with the opening of Las Vegas Civic Center across from City Hall which will include a new plaza to be used by local arts organizations and artists for concerts, performances and festivals; the Las Vegas Museum of Art coming to Symphony Park in 2028; the new Civic Center Gallery which will debut Sept. 4, 2025 with an exhibition on loan from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, in partnership with the Las Vegas Museum of Art; the expansion of the West Las Vegas Arts Center in 2027, to name a few.

The ideas born from the Las Vegas Arts and Culture Summit will ensure the arts continue to be celebrated for the community. Thank you for all you do to enhance our quality of life in Las Vegas and for creating a more vibrant and interesting place to live.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Shelley Berkley in black ink. The signature is stylized, with the first name "Shelley" and the last name "Berkley" clearly visible.

Shelley Berkley  
Mayor, City of Las Vegas

CITY OF LAS VEGAS  
495 S. MAIN STREET  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89101

VOICE 702.229.6241  
FAX 702.385.7960  
TTY 711

EMAIL  
[officeofthemayor@lasvegasnevada.gov](mailto:officeofthemayor@lasvegasnevada.gov)  
WEBSITE [www.lasvegasnevada.gov](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov)

# SPONSORS



Mayor's Fund for Las Vegas LIFE

**NEVADA**  
ARTS COUNCIL



**MEOW WOLF**

**Ω MEGA M ART**



# SPECIAL THANKS

## SPEAKER COMMITTEE

**Michele Quinn**  
Art Advisor  
MCQ Fine Art, LLC

**Jeana Blackman Taylor**  
Artist, Cirque du Soleil  
Founder of JBT Creative

**Gary Leffler**  
Director of Development  
& Community Relations  
Huntridge Theater/SoHo Playhouse LV

**Michelle Patrick**  
Community Development Specialist  
Nevada Arts Council

**Kimberly Miller**  
Artist/Fine Arts Advisor  
UNLV

**Deanne Sole**  
Museum Editor, Curator  
Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art

**Maggie Plaster**  
Director, Parks, Recreation  
and Cultural Affairs  
City of Las Vegas

**Colette LaBouff**  
Executive Director  
Black Mountain Institute

**Jennifer Kleven**  
Deputy Parks, Recreation  
and Cultural Affairs Director  
City of Las Vegas

## PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

**Chris Quaresma**  
Recreation Supervisor  
City of North Las Vegas

**Angela Johnson**  
Recreation Coordinator  
City of North Las Vegas

**Irma Varela**  
Cultural Program Supervisor  
Clark County

**Vanessa Valdivia**  
Cultural Recreation Specialist II  
Clark County

**Kalie Crose**  
Recreation Program Coordinator  
City of Henderson

**Brian Kendall**  
Parks and Recreation Manager  
City of Henderson

**Robin Slonina**  
Owner/Artist  
Slonina Artspace/Skin City Body  
Painting

**Jonathan Meza**  
Cultural Affairs Manager  
City of Las Vegas

## ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Ailene Pasco**  
Owner  
Ailene Pasco Art

**Amanda "Rawky" Lozano**  
Founder  
Raw Femme Media

**Becky Miller**  
President  
18b The Arts District

**Joseph Sanders**  
Director of Customer Experience  
Magic Mike Live

**Kaylee O'Donnell**  
Community Outreach Manager  
The Neon Museum

**Sharee Bruscher**  
Owner  
Mojave Events

**Corey Fagan**  
Executive Director  
First Friday Foundation

**Jasmine Freeman**  
Cultural Affairs Manager  
City of Las Vegas

2025 Arts & Culture Summit Program Book designed by **Ian Racoma**  
For inquiries please email [ianracoma@me.com](mailto:ianracoma@me.com)

# SCHEDULE

8:00 AM

## CHECK-IN, MINGLE AND BREAKFAST

MAYOR'S GALLERY

Enjoy breakfast and live painting by **BLACK57**, a member of I.S.I Group, while networking and meeting others in the Southern Nevada arts community.

---

8:45 AM

## WELCOME PERFORMANCE

AUDITORIUM

"Das Schnitzel" by **1230 CLOWN SHOW** and **BENEDIKT NEGRO**

---

9:00 AM

## WELCOME REMARKS FROM **MAYOR SHELLEY BERKLEY**, DEPUTY PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR **JENNIFER KLEVEN** AND THE MAYOR'S FUND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **SALLIE DOEBLER**

AUDITORIUM

---

9:15 AM

## MUSEUMS: CULTURAL AND CIVIC PARTNERSHIPS

AUDITORIUM

Join Heather Harmon, Executive Director of the future Las Vegas Museum of Art (LVMA), and Michael Govan, CEO of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), for a dynamic conversation on building authentic, mission-driven partnerships between museums and the communities they serve.

At the heart of this dialogue is the groundbreaking collaboration between LVMA and LACMA, a model of institutional partnership rooted in shared values of equity, sustainability, and public access.

Heather and Michael will discuss how this innovative approach is shaping LVMA's early initiatives, including the inaugural exhibition Family Album and the launch of the Media Lab, as well as the long-term vision for the future museum at Symphony Park. Through this partnership, LVMA will draw upon

LACMA's vast collection of over 150,000 works, in addition to scholarship and expertise, allowing both institutions to prioritize what matters most: vibrant public programs, transformative educational experiences, and deep community engagement.

Together, they will explore how this collaboration can serve as a model for cultural partnerships nationwide, and how museums can act as civic partners committed to serving their cities with intention and care.

**Heather Harmon**

Executive Director, Las Vegas Museum of Art

**Michael Govan**

CEO, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

10:00 AM  
PERFORMANCE BY **BROADWAY IN THE H.O.O.D.**

---

10:15 AM  
**THE HEART OF CINEMA: LAS VEGAS AS AN EMERGING CENTER OF THE FILM INDUSTRY**  
AUDITORIUM

Filmmaker & Communications Specialists UNLV College of Fine Arts Las Vegas has long been a location for iconic movies, including titles like Viva La Vegas (1964), Casino (1995), The Hangover (2009) and most recently, the Oscar winning film, Anora (2024). While the recent film tax incentive bill did not pass at the 83rd Nevada Legislative Session, Las Vegas is still film-curious. This panel of local film academics, filmmakers and film experts will seek to answer the following questions: What type of filmmaking is currently being done in Las Vegas? What is being taught at our local film programs? Why should filmmakers choose Las Vegas? What do we have to offer that no one else can? What can the city of Las Vegas do to nourish our filmmakers and give them a reason to be here? What resources do we currently have available for our film community?

**Dr. Heather Addison**  
Chair, UNLV Department of Film  
**Danette Tull**  
Deputy Director, Nevada Film Office  
**Adam Paul**  
Assistant Professor, UNLV Department of Film  
**Jensen Bollozos**  
Filmmaker & Co-Founder, Eccentric Artists  
**Shahab Zargari**  
Filmmaker & Communications Specialists UNLV College of Fine Arts

---

11:15 AM  
POETRY READING BY **ASHLEY "MS. AYEVEE" VARGAS** CLARK COUNTY POET LAUREATE

---

11:30 AM  
**A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: LISTENING, RESPONDING, AND BUILDING TOGETHER**  
AUDITORIUM

Ayanna Hudson, Chief Program Officer at Americans for the Arts, will offer reflections on the evolving landscape of arts and culture across the country. Drawing from conversations with communities and collaborators, she will explore how shared insights are shaping new possibilities. Looking ahead, Ayanna will speak to how Americans for the Arts is meeting the moment—focusing on alignment, connection, and long-term resilience within the sector.

**Ayanna Hudson**, Chief Programs Officer, Americans for the Arts

---

12:15 PM  
**LUNCH AND NETWORKING**  
AUDITORIUM

---

12:45 - 1:15 PM  
PERFORMANCE BY **GARY & KURIN HALEMAU**  
AUDITORIUM

# BREAKOUT

1:30 – 2:30 PM

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARTIST AND GALLERIST- ASK THE EXPERTS WORKSHOP

Ste. 140, **Best for Artists**

Meet with a panel of leading experts in the arts professional field – from both the artist side and gallerist side of the artworld. Open format for artists and arts professionals to ask questions such as:

- **Artists:** How does a gallery look at new work? What is best approach to approaching galleries to look at work?
- **Galleries:** How to start new gallery program? What challenges do galleries face in this current climate? And how to adjust?

MODERATOR:

**Michele C Quinn**, MCQ FINE ART

PANELISTS:

**Emmanuel Muñoz**, Gallerist/Curator, Scrambled Eggz  
**Fawn Douglas**, Artist/Gallery Director, Nuwu Art  
**Chase McCurdy**, Artist/Gallery Owner, 33.G  
**Krystal Ramirez**, Artist/Instructor  
**Erik Beehn**, Artist/Teacher/Framer

## GROWING THE LAS VEGAS ARTS COMMUNITY

Auditorium, **Best for Artists or Organizations**

Since last year's summit, there has been an explosion of collaborative effort in the Vegas arts community. Join this conversation on the challenges of navigating competition and cooperation, and the opportunities available in this difficult present environment to build a stronger artistic infrastructure.

MODERATOR:

**Jeana Blackman Taylor**, Artist/Cirque du Soleil and Founder/JBT Creative

PANELISTS:

**Sarah O'Connell**, Co-Vice President, ACE Chamber  
**Wendy Kveck**, Co-founder/Board Member, Southern Nevada Arts Coalition  
**Gary Leffler**, Director of Development & Community Relations, Huntridge Theater / SoHo Playhouse LV  
**Daz Weller**, Co-founder, THIRD Street

2:45 - 3:45 PM

## BECOMING ARTS LEADERS: A WORKSHOP ON MENTORSHIP FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Ste. 140, **Best for Organizations**

This workshop for arts organizations will explore the possibilities for formal mentorships for arts administration in Las Vegas. BMI invites professionals from local organizations who are interested in fostering the arts leadership community in southern Nevada. We will share exercises and conversation based on BMI's findings from their recent "Exploring Mentorship" workshop, funded by the Creative Media, Entertainment, and Cultural Industries Interdisciplinary Research Development Area (iRDA) at UNLV.

Topics will include the value of mentorship, place-based learning and hands-on experience, and what a formal program might look like for mentoring professionals and, of course, mentees. What kind of interest is there among arts organizations to create a larger mentorship program in Las Vegas? This workshop will be an encouraging networking experience, and we anticipate that our conversations will yield ideas about pilot mentorship programs in Las Vegas.

PANELISTS:

**Colette LaBouff**, Executive Director, Black Mountain Institute  
**Charlotte Wyatt**, Associate Director of Programs, Black Mountain Institute

## SO, YOU WANT TO BE A TEACHING ARTIST?

Auditorium, **Best for Artists or Organizations**

Have you encountered the term "teaching artist" but are unclear on exactly what it means? During this session, learn from professional teaching artists and arts organizations how to effectively work with artists in classroom settings and informal learning spaces. Artists will be introduced to translating their artistic skills into lessons that can be delivered to multiple audiences. And arts organizations will learn how to work with teaching artists on programs.

MODERATOR:

**Cory Goble**, Senior Cultural Specialist, City of Las Vegas

PANELISTS:

**Terané Comito**, Director of Education, Nevada Ballet Theatre  
**Vogue Robinson**, Teaching Artist  
**Chad Scott**, Assistant Professor, Art Education & Visual Culture, UNLV  
**Melanie Jupp**, Director of Education and Outreach, The Smith Center

# SESSIONS

## CHART YOUR COURSE TO SUCCESS: CONNECT, ASSESS & THRIVE

Ste. 140, **Best for Artists**

4:00 - 5:00 PM

Where Are You Now? Where Do You Want to Go? Artists Thrive helps you answer these questions! Using nationally sourced tools, this initiative provides clarity for your artistic practice or work with artists. In this interactive workshop, you'll...

- Explore the free Artists Thrive self-assessment survey
- Network with peers
- Discover how to assess your current position.
- Define your goals and what success looks like for you.
- Learn how to measure your progress effectively.
- Leave inspired with concrete next steps.

**Heather Pontonio**, Senior Program Director,  
Emily Hall Tremain Foundation

## GRANT READINESS AND PROSPECTING: FINDING THE RIGHT GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Auditorium, **Best for Organizations**

Securing funding is crucial to your organization's ability to deliver on your mission. This session will introduce multiple funder types and help you match your programs to available governmental and charitable funding.

**Nicole Bomer**, Director of Grant Services,  
Nevada GrantLab

5:00 PM  
HAPPY HOUR  
MAYOR'S GALLERY

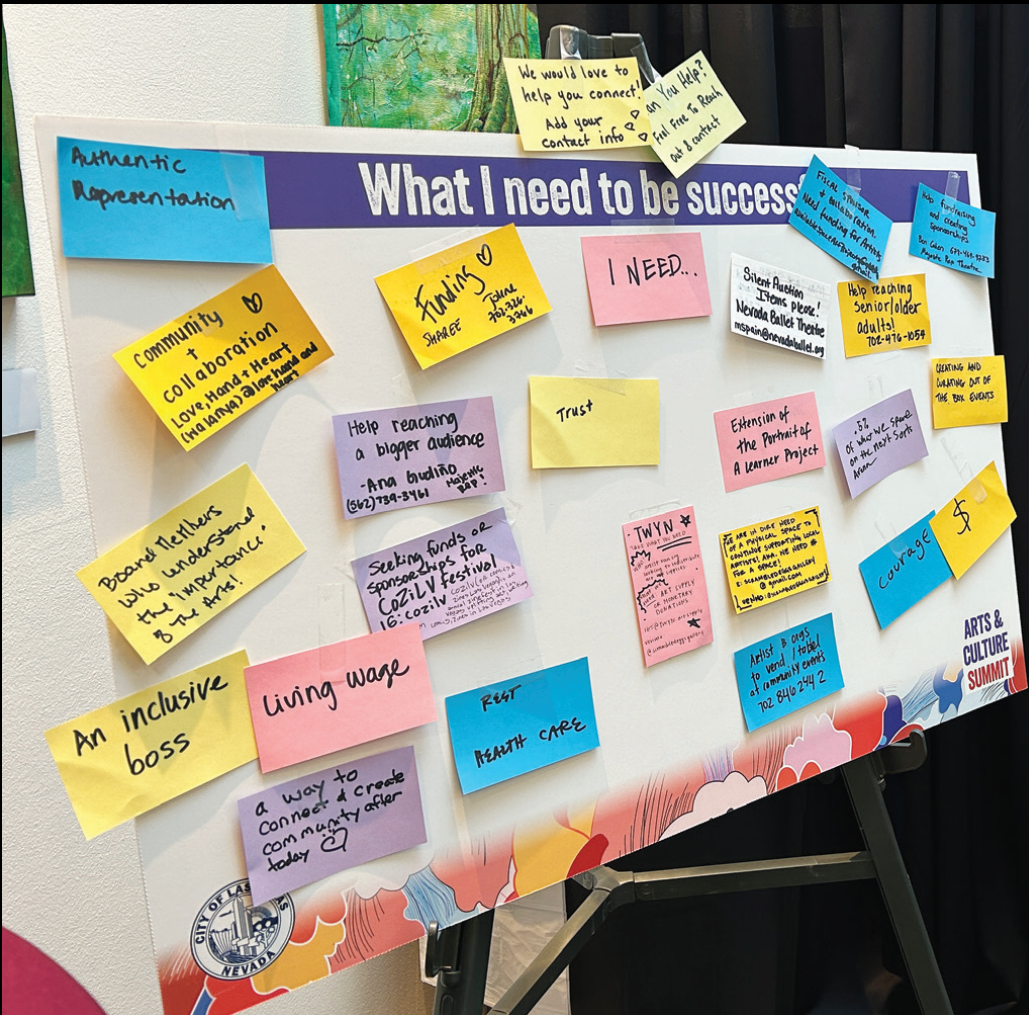
Performance by  
**JAZZ TRIO:**  
**BILL BAILEY, THOM PASTOR  
& ETSUKO KOBAMADER**

Wine sponsored by the  
Mayor's Fund for  
Las Vegas Life





# A CU S U





# ARTS & CULTURE SUMMIT





# SPEAKER BIOS



## **Adam Paul**

is an Assistant Professor of Film in Screen Acting at UNLV. He teaches acting for filmmakers, voiceover, and performance capture, and serves as the Department of Film's Student Experience and Outreach Coordinator. His work explores recorded performance, storytelling, and, as a Generative AI Fellow, advancing AI literacy and the ethical use of AI in the arts. A veteran actor, Adam has appeared in *The Informant!*, *How I Met Your Mother*, and voiced characters in *Halo Wars*, *Spirit*, and more. He also wrote and directed episodes of CBS's Emmy-winning *The Inspectors* and has created award-winning content for Starz, Volkswagen, MasterCard, and other major brands.

**Ayanna Hudson** joined Americans for the Arts (AFTA) as Chief Programs Officer on June 2, 2025, bringing over 30 years of leadership in expanding equitable arts access nationwide. Prior to joining AFTA, Ayanna held several senior positions at the National Endowment for the Arts, including Chief Strategy, Programs, and Engagement Officer where she provided oversight for three national grant programs and co-

developed the agency's Equity Action Plan. Ayanna also spearheaded the design of ArtsHERE, a transformative initiative to strengthen community arts participation in underserved communities. Prior to the NEA, she led groundbreaking arts education strategies in Los Angeles County and Fulton County. Ayanna has dedicated her career to fostering inclusive arts participation in local communities across the country, particularly those with limited opportunities to experience the arts, and strengthening the arts ecosystem. Ayanna holds degrees from Spelman College and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Chad Scott** is an interdisciplinary artist and art educator whose work draws upon his background as a cultural sociologist, qualitative research, and arts education. While his work tends to function as social and cultural critique, since becoming a father he began focusing on introspective placemaking through

creative exploration and play. Currently, Chad is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator for Art Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he also serves as an artist-in-residence for the Zeiter Literacy Development Center.

**Charlotte Wyatt** is the associate director of programs for Black Mountain Institute at UNLV. She earned an MFA in fiction from the University of Houston, where she was awarded an Inprint Donald Barthelme Prize and served as a fiction editor for *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*. She also worked for the Napa Valley Writers' Conference from 2016 through 2024, where she directed admissions and the





fiction program. Her administrative experience includes after-school programs, wine-country hospitality, and supernatural tourism. Her creative work can be found in Chautauqua, The Potomac Review, Joyland, and others.

**Chase R. McCurdy** is a practicing contemporary artist proudly born and raised in Las Vegas, NV where he is currently based. His practice can best be described as “spiritual abstraction” with an ongoing evolution toward “universe creation.” With a multi-disciplinary approach that includes painting, photography, sculpture, writing and more, he utilizes all of the means at his disposable to bring forth a “physical manifestation of the spiritual.” Additionally, McCurdy is the Founder and Director of ThirtyThree Gallery (33.G), a budding cultural landmark located in the Historic Westside community of Las Vegas.



**Colette LaBouff** is the Executive Director at Black Mountain Institute at UNLV. Prior to this, she was Executive Director at Taos Center for the Arts in Taos, New Mexico. She is the author of Mean (U. of Chicago Press, 2008), a book of prose poems, and “Holdings,” a text-object (Container Press, 2019), as well as many essays. She has a PhD in English and an MFA in Poetry, both of which she earned at University of California, Irvine. She is originally from southern California.

**Cory Goble** is a Senior Cultural Specialist with the City of Las Vegas Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs and has been developing in-school residencies, partnerships, and engagements since 2015. Cory graduated with a BA in Theatre with an acting emphasis from Willamette University in 2009. Cory is also a local theatre artist and has performed in Red, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, and Cabaret, among others. Cory also serves on the Las Vegas Book Festival programming committee and has also developed the StorySlam workshop and performance program at the Charleston Heights Arts Center which is currently in its 9th year.

**Danette Tull** is the Deputy Director of the Nevada Film Office. The Nevada Film Office markets the state's diverse locations and promotes Nevada as a premier destination for

productions. Danette's work focuses primarily in the area of Public and Community relations; however, her passion for the local community keeps her involved in all aspects of the operations. Working closely with major productions, Danette directly has a hand in films, television series, and commercials featuring Las Vegas and Nevada, driving economic benefits, tourism and promoting our state. She holds an M.S. in Library Science from the University of North Texas, and a B.A. in Foreign Languages from UC, Riverside.

**Daz Weller** is an accomplished actor, director, and arts leader, and the Executive Artistic Director of Vegas Theatre Company. Since relocating from Australia in 2010, he has helped shape Las Vegas's cultural landscape through bold artistic vision and cross-sector collaboration. Daz champions partnerships between nonprofit and commercial arts, civic institutions, and independent artists. He is also the founding CEO of THIRD Street, a new cultural hub supporting local talent and creative enterprise. With a focus on sustainable models and community impact, Daz's work exemplifies how the arts can drive civic transformation and economic development in rapidly evolving urban centers. <https://thirdstreet.vegas/>



**Dr. Heather Addison** joined UNLV FILM in 2016 as the Chair.

She has taught a broad range of courses in film history, criticism, and theory, with a particular focus on genre studies and animation. Her primary research area is Hollywood's relationship to American culture. At UNLV, she co-wrote a \$271,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant that cataloged and preserved materials in the Department of Film's Howard Hughes Motion Picture Production Records (now available in Special Collections & Archives at the UNLV Library).

Addison has published her work in a large number of scholarly journals. Her books include Hollywood and the Rise of Physical Culture (Routledge Press) and Motherhood Misconceived: Representing the Maternal in U.S. Films (SUNY Press), a collection of essays co-edited with Elaine Roth and Mary Kate Goodwin-Kelly.

**Emmanuel Muñoz** is a curator and architectural designer based in Las Vegas. He is the co-founder of Scrambled Eggs, an artist-run 'space', occasionally functioning as a gallery, collective, or other. His work moves between built environments and exhibition design and curation, with an interest in how people gather around, experience, and make art together. <https://scrambled-eggs.xyz/>

**Erik Beehn** is an artist and educator who received his MFA from the School of The Art Institute of Chicago ('15). Beehn teaches Advanced Lithography at UNLV and is the founder of Test Site Projects, a fine art print publishing house and frame shop in Las Vegas. Beehn's work is a conversation between photography and painting that explores the evolution of observational painting into abstraction. His work is included in collections at the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Art, The Nevada Museum of Art, The DePaul Art Museum, The Lilley Museum of Art and The Cleveland Clinic.

**Fawn Douglas** is an Indigenous artist, activist, and proud member of the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe. She also has roots with the Moapa Paiute, Southern Cheyenne, Creek, Pawnee, and Scottish. She is the co-founder of Nuwu Art, where she does art, runs programming and does cultural consulting. Fawn also organizes with the non-profit IndigenousAF, works as a Cultural Engagement Specialist with Meow Wolf, and serves as an Art Commissioner for the City of Las Vegas. Her studio practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture,



performance, and textile. Fawn earned her MFA with presidential honors at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).

**Gary Leffler** began his work as an arts administration, marketing and development professional in Chicago in the 1990s, working with non-profit theatres and emerging Broadway producers. He helped lead the efforts to develop a new Downtown Theatre District featuring five Broadway caliber theaters, including the restoration and renovation of two historic theaters. Working with the Mayor's Office, Gary created theatre and music festivals, as well as a tourism campaign leveraging arts and culture as an important visitation driver. Gary moved to Las Vegas in 2007, working for theatrical producers on the Strip, Nevada Ballet Theatre and currently on efforts to restore and renovate the historic Huntridge Theater. <https://www.thehuntridge.com/>

**Heather Harmon** is the Executive Director of the future Las Vegas Museum of Art and Co-Executive Director of the Triple Aught Foundation, the Nevada-based non-profit that governs and manages Michael Heizer's City. Her expertise in fundraising and development stems from former roles as

Director of the Nevada Museum of Art and Director of Development for Artists Space in New York. She was also Director at Regen Projects in Los Angeles before advising on institutional strategy at TBA21. A Las Vegas native and UNLV alumna, she sits on the Board of The Mayor's Fund and is a member of Nevada Women's Philanthropy.

**Heather Pontonio** is the Senior Program Director at the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation where she is responsible for national strategy and administration of the Art Program portfolio focused on professional practices for both artists and curators. Heather has been instrumental in the launch of Artists Thrive, a national tool to assess and improve conditions for artists. Heather has a master's degree in Public Administration from New York University and a bachelor's degree in Arts Administration from the State University of New York at Fredonia.

**Jeana Blackman Taylor** worked as an actor, writer, producer, and director in Los Angeles before coming to Las Vegas in 2009 to join Cirque du Soleil's KÀ. She has now performed in over 5,000 shows while occasionally serving as an acting coach. During the pandemic, Jeana earned an MPA from UNC with a

concentration in nonprofit management. She launched JBT Creative to work directly with various theater companies in Las Vegas, notably Broadway in the HOOD, and now serves as the Managing Director for Nevada Shakespeare Festival. She currently sits on the advisory board for SNAC. <https://jbtcreative.com/>

**Jemsen Yumico Bollozos** is a 3x Emmy-winning director and co-founder of Eccentric Artists, a hybrid art collective and film production company based in Las Vegas. She directed the campaign series At the Heart of Vegas for Visit Las Vegas, showcasing diverse stories defining the vibrant Vegas community—earning three Emmys at NATAS, including Director Short Form Content. Jemsen is also a producer at Frequency Pictures, a production company specializing in commercial work. Her documentary HOME: A Mother of 3000 won Best Nevada Film at Nevada Women's Film Festival. She's directing CRAVE and developing Gamu-Gamo, a Filipino Gothic short exploring identity, family, and cultural duality.





**Krystal Ramirez** is from Las Vegas, Nevada; she works in sculpture, photography, installation, and fiber arts. She earned her BFA in photography at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and an MFA in Art Practice from Stanford University. She has been an instructor of record at Stanford University and the University of Nevada Las Vegas. In addition to teaching and being an artist, she is a photojournalist and has worked with media companies such as Vox, NPR, and The Intercept. Krystal has shown work nationally, including the Nevada Museum of Art (Reno, NV), Barrick Museum of Art (Las Vegas, NV), New Mexico State University Art Museum (Las Cruces, NM), SOMArts (San Francisco, CA), and Gallery 400 at the University Illinois Chicago (Chicago, IL.)

**Melanie Jupp** is an arts administration and community outreach professional with over 15 years of experience in arts education. As Senior Director of Education & Outreach at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts, she leads initiatives such as sensory-inclusive programs, the Nevada High School Musical Theater Awards, and Disney Musicals in Schools. Melanie is committed to creating innovative programs that remove barriers to arts access and supporting students' artistic journeys.

**Michael Govan** is

the CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Since coming to LACMA in 2006, he has overseen the transformation of the 20-acre campus with buildings by Renzo Piano and monumental artworks by Chris Burden, Michael Heizer, Robert Irwin, Barbara Kruger, and others. At LACMA, Govan has pursued his vision of contemporary artists and architects interacting with the museum's historical collections, as evidenced by exhibition, gallery designs, and programming in collaboration with artists and architects. The museum has just completed construction on a new permanent collection building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Peter Zumthor, which will open to the public in April 2026.



**Michele C Quinn**

Over the past 25 years, Michele C Quinn, has built a career as a gallerist and private art consultant, specializing in post-war and contemporary art. Michele has served as curatorial advisor for some of the largest private and corporate contemporary art collections in the United States. From 2006-2010, she proposed and developed the \$40 million art program for MGM Resorts. She has led multiple large-scale projects for HINES, a privately owned global real estate investment, development and management firm and previously held positions at Brooke Alexander Gallery, New York, Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl, and Christie's auction house. In 2018 she was recruited to be the Senior Advisor to Paul G Allen and his multi-million-dollar fine art collection under the Vulcan, Inc umbrella. Michele is the co-curator of Tilting the Basin: Contemporary Art of Nevada, a 2016 exhibition showcasing the most significant contemporary artists living and working across Nevada.

**Nicole Bomer** serves as the Director of Grant Services at Nevada GrantLab, where she supports community partners to increase grant

revenue. Nicole fell in love with nonprofits during college while volunteering on the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota. A job with Okiciyapi Tipi Habitat for Humanity introduced her to grant writing, and Nicole has spent the last 20 years working as a grant professional in urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities, helping organizations secure over \$608 MM in funding. In her free time, Nicole enjoys science fiction, climbing and hiking, and searching for the best donut in Las Vegas.

**Sarah O'Connell** has led The Asylum Theatre as AD since 2003 after relocating from SF to establish her lighting company, AxisLights Inc. An award-winning international theatre artist, she holds an MDra in Directing from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and is an adjunct professor and creative economist for UNLV's CFA. A Co-Vice President of the Arts Creative Entertainment (ACE) Chamber, she's the former Executive Director of Henderson Symphony Orchestra, and recipient of the Forgotten Song Foundation's 2024 Vegas Icon Visionary (VIVA) and the NV Women's Film Festival 2025 Spirit of Community awards. Sarah founded EatMoreArtVegas.com in 2015, invented the COVID Create Our Recovery concerts in 2021, and a statewide Community Learning Project in 2024. <https://www.acechamber.org/>

**Shahab Zagari** is an award-winning Iranian-American filmmaker and administrative faculty member of the UNLV College of Fine Arts. After years of creating original short-form streaming content, Shahab made his directorial cinematic debut with the Philip K. Dick adaptation, THE CRYSTAL CRYPT (2013), an official selection at the San Diego Comic-Con International Independent Film Festival.

He continues to hone his craft, creating original films, music videos, and a multitude of commissioned works.

**Terané Comito** As the Director of Education, Terané oversees all functions of the School of Nevada Ballet Theater. Terané also heads up NBT's Community Education Programs including Future Dance which reaches over 20,000 students a year through its initiatives including GO-MOVE-DANCE!!!, Future Dance Scholar Program and the Dance Discovery Program. Future Dance Program graduates have





received opportunities to perform, teach, and continue their training with prestigious schools such as the Ailey School in New York City. Terané has facilitated many partnerships including the Las Vegas Academy, where the Dance Discovery Spring Concert was performed. In 2015, the Future Dance Spring Concert moved to The Smith Center, giving over 900 underserved students the chance to perform on a

professional stage. Terané has been instrumental in the expansion of NBT's Community Education programs, including the Student Matinee Series, Storytime, In School Performance Program, Kids Night Out at the Ballet, Ballet Rocks and Dance Discovery Summer Camp — where students who may otherwise be unsupervised and inactive during the summer can now dance in a fun and safe environment.

**Vogue Robinson** – author, poet, educator, & creativity enabler – appreciates human beings who put truth and heart into words. She served as Clark County, Nevada's Poet Laureate (2017-2019) and is the first Black woman to receive the Silver Pen award from the Nevada Writers' Hall of Fame. Robinson is the author of *Vogue 3:16, Selected Poems Vol. 1*. Vogue's writing, performances, and workshops are humorous, vulnerable, and empowering. Robinson has been on the NAC teaching artist roster for 5 years and also serves as a faculty member of the Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing. When she's not writing, she's spending time with her family or experimenting with fluid art techniques at home in Las Vegas.

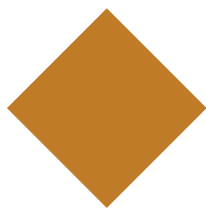
**Wendy Kveck** is an artist, arts advocate, and an Assistant Professor in Residence at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas where she teaches in the Department of Art and coordinates the graduate program. Kveck believes in the power of grass-roots arts organizations to create community and amplify the work of emerging and underrepresented artists. She is the founder of Couch in the Desert, a collaborative curatorial project highlighting contemporary art and artists who have contributed to the presentation and discussion of

contemporary art in Las Vegas, and she is a founding board member of Southern Nevada Arts Coalition (SNAC). <https://www.snacforarts.org/>

**Artist Thrive** is an initiative dedicated to increasing the value of artists in every community. It offers a comprehensive set of interconnected resources, including assessment tools and surveys, to help artists, arts organizations, and communities evaluate their current standing, set goals, and improve conditions for artists to thrive. Functioning like a navigation system, Artists Thrive provides guidance, learning opportunities, and a platform for connection within the arts sector. The tools are customizable, free to use, and aim to foster a thriving arts ecosystem through ongoing assessment and collaborative improvement. Artists Thrive hosts an annual conference - March 24-26, 2026 will include a location in Las Vegas! [www.artiststhive.org](http://www.artiststhive.org)

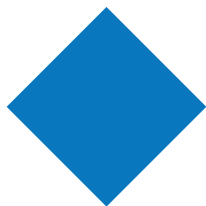


# PERFORMER BIOS



## Ashley "Ms.AyeVee" Vargas

Ashley "Ms.AyeVee" Vargas is an award-winning Afro-Latina Literary Artist from Las Vegas, Nevada. She is a woman of many hats with a passion for Poetry. Her work has been featured by The legendary All Def Poetry, Write About Now & Button Poetry. She has also been recognized by the Las Vegas Book Festival, Nevada Public Radio, & The US Congress for advancing the cause of literacy & extraordinary literary achievement. In 2022, Ms. AyeVee was selected as an official TEDx speaker for Las Vegas. She also runs a Las Vegas-based poetry organization, Beyond the Neon (@btnpoetry), focusing on poetry-exclusive events and community outreach.



## Benedikt Negro

Benedikt Negro is a pantomime and clown who currently stars in Cirque du Soleil's water show, "O". He trained at Die Etage School for the Performing Arts in Berlin and began his career as a performer at the tender age of nine. In 1991, Benedikt joined a small German circus called "Circus Apollo". It is with the members of the circus that he then learned acrobatics and juggling as well as knife throwing. Benedikt experimented increasingly in performance with conveying emotions without words, which began his fascination and work with mime. In addition to his work in Cirque du Soleil, Benedikt also started the highly-acclaimed 1230 Clown Show, (twelve thirty) a European-style, late-night clown show based in Las Vegas. The show's roster boasts professional clowns from the Strip's most renowned shows including Cirque du Soleil, Matsuri, Le Reve and Jubilee. During each 70-minute show, audience members are treated to hilarious and virtuosic performances inspired by varying themes ranging from the topical to the absurd.

## Gary and Kurin Haleamau

Gary Kawilau Haleamau of Kailua-Kona, Hawaii began his musical career at an early age; first as a solo artist, then traveling with Hawaiian music groups throughout the world sharing his amazing talent. Gary is a recipient of the "2008 Na Hoku Hanohano Award for "Best Religious Album of the Year" and in 2015, received the Nevada



KURIN HALEAMAU



Heritage Award.

Kurin Pomai-ka'imaieakua Haleamau, son of Gary Haleamau, is a singer and musician. As a former recipient of the Folk life Apprenticeship grant from the Nevada Arts Council in 2008, Kurin has since then, excelled in his musical career as an accomplished recording producer, composer and slack-key-bass guitarist.

### Black57

Matt Murphy, also known as "Black57," is a professional muralist and artist. Born in the enchanting landscapes of New Mexico and raised amidst the neon lights of Las Vegas, he has been passionately creating art for over a decade. Matt has poured his heart and soul into creating art that enriches the Las Vegas community. Over the years, Matt's murals have become an integral part of the cityscape, adorning public spaces, businesses, schools and communities. His artistic mission revolves around infusing joy and beauty into the world through vibrant colors and inspiring designs. With a keen focus on nature, portraiture, and optical illusions, he aims to transport viewers to worlds of wonder and delight.

GARY HALEAMAU

### Broadway in the H.O.O.D.

Broadway in the H.O.O.D, produced by A Source of Joy Theatricals, Inc. and led by founder Torrey A. Russell, is a national theatre program located in Las Vegas, Nevada. They are dedicated to making a positive impact in communities across the United States, with a special focus on youth between the ages of 10 to 20 residing in neighborhoods plagued with violence, gangs, drugs, and other atrocities. Broadway in the H.O.O.D offers educational and cultural opportunities to America's future leaders. Since its inception in 2010, Broadway in the H.O.O.D has produced major original productions dealing with difficult subjects and performed blockbusters such as Dreamgirls, The Lion King and The Color Purple. Performances are low-cost or free so all in our community can experience the magic of live theatre.

### Jazz Trio: Bill Bailey, Thom Pastor & Etsuko Koba Mader

This accomplished Las Vegas-based trio brings together decades of experience across jazz, classical, and contemporary music.

Bill Bailey, a Berklee-trained bassist from Boston, has performed with legends like Mel Tormé, Pavarotti, Andrea Bocelli, and Steve & Eydie. A former staff bassist at the Desert Inn and long-time member of the Nevada Chamber Symphony, Bill continues to perform regularly across genres. Thom Pastor is a multi-woodwind artist and fellow Berklee alum whose 40-year career includes performances with icons such as Frank Sinatra, Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwick, and Doc Severinsen. He plays 11 instruments and is a fixture in the Las Vegas jazz scene. Etsuko Koba Mader, originally from Osaka, Japan, earned her Master's in Music Composition from UNLV. A respected pianist, composer, and educator, she performs with top local ensembles and released her original jazz trio album, The Vessels Project, in 2019. Together, the trio combines artistry, versatility, and a deep commitment to musical excellence.



BILL BAILEY



THOM PASTOR



ETSUKO KOBAMADER



## Mayor's Fund for Las Vegas LIFE

Public art and culture has long been a focus for the Mayor's Fund for Las Vegas LIFE, recognizing its value in building community pride and creating a sense of place.



The Mayor's Fund for Las Vegas LIFE  
is proud to sponsor the  
The City of Las Vegas  
ART+ CULTURE SUMMIT 2025

[www.mayorsfundlv.org](http://www.mayorsfundlv.org)



# THE ARTS STRENGTHEN NEVADA

## *we strengthen the arts*

Only the arts offer a fivefold return on investment, boosting economic productivity, improving educational outcomes, fostering civic cohesion, facilitating good health, and preserving our cherished heritage and traditions.

Public funding for the arts brings creativity to every corner of Nevada. The Nevada Arts Council is the state's leading source of public support for the arts. We invest federal and state funds to create more opportunities for creativity—supporting Nevada artists, nonprofit organizations, and cultural projects that enrich life in cities, towns, and rural communities across Nevada.

## 2023–2025 IMPACT

Arts Council Grant Awards

**\$4,978,220**

Adults, Children, Artists Engaged

**\$4.5 Million**

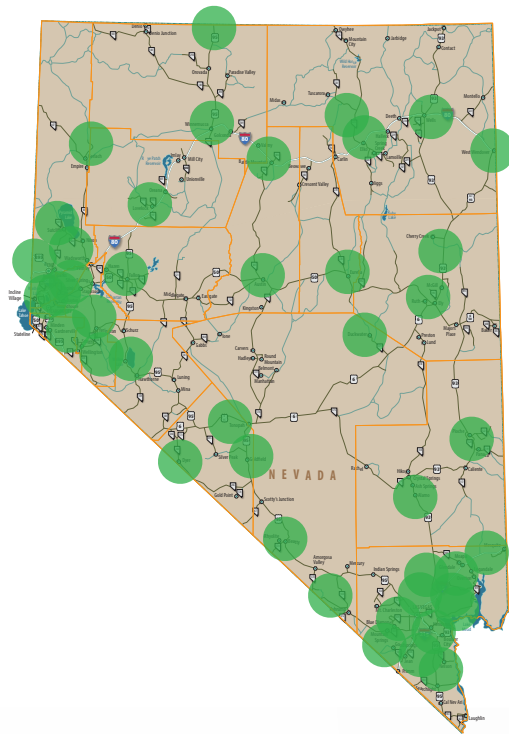
Cash Contribution to Nevada

**\$280 Million**

## SAVE THE DATE

**Intersections:** The Nevada Creative Conference

May 27–29, 2026 • Las Vegas



SCAN TO SUBSCRIBE TO INTERSECTIONS  
UPDATES OR VISIT [NARTSCOUNCIL.ORG](https://nartscouncil.org)

**NEVADA**  
ARTS COUNCIL  
[nartscouncil.org](https://nartscouncil.org)

NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
for the **ARTS**  
[arts.gov](https://arts.gov)

Source: 2023–2025 Nevada Arts Council Grants and Activity Programs report.

Data for 2024 and 2025 results still being calculated.

**SAVE THE DATE**

# **ARTISTS THR!VE**

**ANNUAL SUMMIT  
MARCH 24-26, 2026**

***A NATIONAL GATHERING IN 6 LOCATIONS  
FOR ARTISTS, ARTS ADMINISTRATORS, FUNDERS AND EDUCATORS***

Lowell, MA  
Nashville, TN

Kansas City, MO  
San Antonio, TX

Las Vegas, NV  
Billings, MT

*It's not just a conference, it's an experience*

**[www.ArtistsThrive.org](http://www.ArtistsThrive.org)**

***Sign-up for the bimonthly newsletter to get Summit updates***

# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

PLEASE COMPLETE  
THIS SHORT SUMMIT SURVEY



**SURVEY!**

LEARN MORE ABOUT CULTURAL AFFAIRS



**LEARN MORE!**

SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS



**NEWSLETTER!**

