

cultural  
identity  
in the  
west

**SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS**

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
NOVEMBER 11-13, 2004

PRESENTED BY  
THE WESTERN STATES ARTS FEDERATION

**WESTAF**

cultural  
identity  
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west

SYMPOSIUM DIRECTOR:  
ANTHONY RADICH

PROCEEDINGS EDITOR:  
MARY HEADRICK

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:  
SONJA K. FOSS  
ANTHONY RADICH  
LISA BOYD  
LAUREL SHERMAN  
PAUL MINICUCCI

GRAPHIC DESIGN:  
DAVID BAKER

COVER IMAGE:  
DETAIL OF *CROW AND FALCON* BY GLORIA EMERSON

THE WESTERN STATES ARTS FEDERATION  
1743 WAZEE ST., SUITE 300  
DENVER, COLORADO 80202

TEL. 303-629-1166  
TTY: 303-607-9019  
FAX: 303-629-9717  
WWW.WESTA.ORG

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT SPONSOR

### The Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF)

WESTAF is a nonprofit arts service organization dedicated to the creative advancement and preservation of the arts. Founded in 1974, the organization fulfills its mission to strengthen the financial, organizational, and policy infrastructure of the arts in the West by providing innovative programs and services. WESTAF is located in Denver, Colorado, and is governed by a 22-member board of trustees drawn largely from arts leaders in the West. The organization serves the largest geographical area and number of states of the six mainland regional arts organizations. WESTAF's constituents include the state arts agencies, artists, and arts organizations of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

WESTAF is engaged in information-systems development, arts-policy research, state-arts-agency development, and the convening of arts experts and leaders to address critical issues in the arts. In addition, the organization is committed to programmatic work in the areas of performing arts presenting, visual arts, literature, and folk arts. Programs in these areas include activities such as the convening of leaders from an arts discipline; the development of model programs; and the sponsorship of long-term, region-wide programs that fill a gap in the arts infrastructure of the West. WESTAF has also developed a number of Web-based programs designed to benefit the future well-being of the arts communities of the West.

In 2000, WESTAF created a multicultural task force to provide inspiration and guidance for the organization's commitment to multicultural policies and values. After eight meetings in locations across the West, the task force presented a report and recommendations to the

WESTAF Board of Trustees, who adopted the recommendations with the stated intent of infusing WESTAF with multicultural values and placing it on a path to evolve into a truly multicultural organization. The trustees then institutionalized the work of the task force and transformed the group into a permanent advisory committee. The Multicultural Advisory Committee now regularly meets and advises WESTAF on a wide variety of issues. *Cultural Identity in the West* was the first in a series of planned convenings on topics related to multiculturalism and the arts in the West.

WESTAF is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

## INTRODUCTION

by Suzanne Benally

This symposium grew out of conversations, discussions, questions, experiences and cultural histories of a group of people committed to the accurate representation and the voice of and for cultural arts of people of color, communities of color, and indigenous people. In 2000, WESTAF convened a multicultural task force to guide its development toward becoming a multicultural arts organization and to assert multicultural arts leadership in the West. The task force met over a year and a half, evolving values and principles and advancing recommendations to the WESTAF Board of Trustees that were fully adopted by the Board.

The dialogue among the task-force members was a thick text of America's personal history, collective experiences, collisions, and intersections that reflected the complexity of the issue at hand. Unable to lock down a definition of diversity that would satisfy those who were seeking definition, the task force evolved a dynamic understanding of diversity that sometimes was a suitable container for the concept and sometimes not. Nevertheless, a document evolved that recognized, listened to, and included a diversity of cultures in the arts. Specifically, the focus was on those who have been marginalized throughout history and those who continue to be marginalized today.

A major concern of the task force was the identification of and contact with emerging cultural leaders and voices among youth. The task force wanted to engage future generations in a dialogue around the following questions: What are the issues of cultural assimilation to people? What are our rights of identity? How can we prevent cultural genocide? How do we bring forward authentic cultural voice and place, which are critical to the survival of an indigenous people? And, finally, how can we deal

effectively with issues of inclusion and economics for arts organizations of color and indigenous arts organizations in a way that builds cultural capacity in our communities?

These are the concerns that shaped the three topics that were thoughtfully discussed during WESTAF's 2004 symposium.

## LIST OF SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS

### Co-Facilitators

Suzanne Benally  
Chair  
Environmental Studies Program  
Naropa University  
Boulder, CO

Juan Carrillo  
Former Interim Director  
California Arts Council  
Sacramento, CA

### Participants

Michael Alexander  
Executive Director  
Grand Performances  
Los Angeles, CA

Margo Aragon  
Public Affairs Director  
KLEW-TV  
Lewiston, ID

Susan Boskoff  
Executive Director  
Nevada Arts Council  
Carson City, NV

James Early  
Director  
Center for Folklife and  
Cultural Heritage  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C.

Gloria Emerson  
Visual Artist, Poet, and Consultant  
Shiprock, NM

Estelle Enoki  
Administrative Services Assistant  
Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts  
Honolulu, HI

Rose Fosdick  
Program Director  
Kawerak Reindeer Herders Association  
Nome, AK

Ricardo Frazer  
President  
Hardroad.com  
Seattle, WA

Anthony (Tony) J. Garcia  
Director  
El Centro Su Teatro  
Denver, CO

Pravina Gondalia  
Visual Artist and Art Consultant  
Cheyenne, WY

Neil Hannahs  
Director  
Land Assets Division  
Kamehameha Schools  
Honolulu, HI

Anne Huang  
Executive Director  
Oakland Asian Cultural Center  
Oakland, CA

Leslie Ito  
Executive Director  
Visual Communications  
Los Angeles, CA

Debora Iyall  
Artist and Educator  
Twenty-Nine Palms, CA

Judith Luther Wilder  
President  
Center for Cultural Innovation  
Culver City, CA

Sabrina Lynn Motley  
Director of Public Programs  
Japanese American National Museum  
Los Angeles, CA

Patty Ortiz  
Director of Programs  
Museum of Contemporary Art/Denver  
Denver, CO

Michael Schuster  
Curator  
East-West Center Gallery  
Oahu, HI

Ron Senungetuk  
Artist  
Homer, AK

Mayumi Tsutakawa  
Independent Editor and Curator  
Seattle, WA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS:  
CITIZEN-ARTIST: IMAGINING THE FUTURE POSSIBLE**

by James Early

I am pleased to be back at the Japanese American National Museum. This institution provided a watershed experience for me on the eve of the decision of the Rodney King trial, which, many of you will remember, was very much an explicit issue about diversity and disparities among races in America. The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Bob Adams, asked me to speak in his stead at the opening of this museum. "You will likely be the only African American there," he said to me.

I think back on that important occasion in my personal and professional development for reasons related to the objectives of the 2004 WESTAF symposium: Acting on the nexus between generational transition and multiculturalism.

Bob Adams was and is the kind of person who is willing to risk the security of "business as usual." As a world-renowned archaeologist and anthropologist and chief executive officer of the Smithsonian Institution, he was invited to give his imprimatur to the Japanese American National Museum. Rather than select a more senior member of his staff to represent him and the Smithsonian, he turned to a relatively young African American (a person of another generation, race, and cultural background) who was always "spitting into the wind" of the Smithsonian status quo. He did so without overriding concern as to whether his decision would diminish or tarnish the reputation of the Smithsonian Institution. I know that he had intention and anticipation that my participation in the opening of the Japanese American National Museum on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution would reflect beyond what the Smithsonian might generally be understood to be or project itself to be. We were both agents of changing times and multicultural, generational transitions, taking risks that "our deci-

sion"—invitation and acceptance—would reflect well, if not the best, on his generational values and professional ways and on my generational values and evolving new professional ways.

I arrived at the Japanese American National Museum with many preconceptions. Despite the positive valence many, including me, have attached to the term *people of color* (predicated in large measure on generalized distinctions from *White Americans* and presumed unity based on common marginalization in the discriminatory practice of U.S. democracy), the term is often used idealistically and fails to produce expected positive outcomes. I certainly came to the opening of this museum with a positive sense about who Japanese Americans were and what I would expect at the opening of the museum. But I soon learned that my thinking about Japanese Americans was (to be lenient on myself) rather uncomplicated. To my pleasant surprise and learning, the museum opened with a tri-lingual exhibition—English, Japanese, and Spanish.

The museum is, of course, about Japanese Americans, but it is also about looking at the city of Los Angeles and the United States through the experiences of Japanese Americans, which is a different kind of multicultural optic than we often deal with, to see "them" and "ourselves." So, the memory marker evoked by my return to this museum is of a concept and approach to multiculturalism that values and projects the history, culture, and democratic aspirations of each particular ethnic community as an integral element of a commonly assumed—if not fully shared—national identity in national public spaces. Japanese (or other ethnic or racial-specific) Americans who live their lives in distinctive and commonly shared ways of knowing and doing in individual and collective ethnic and public spaces reflect a multicultural future possible for all.

That brief bit of personal history provides an entree to the larger systemic issues addressed in the review of the role of state arts agencies dur-

ing WESTAF's 2003 symposium. One of the problems set forth for exploration by WESTAF at this year's symposium is the fact that the Baby Boomer generation has served for a long time in the field and is currently blocking entry into leadership positions by younger people. The role, or at least potential new role, of artists linked to professional multicultural generational transition is critical to fostering broader, more dynamic and encompassing public life among

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citizen-artists and to imagining the future possible.

"People of color" and "younger people" are twin

themes--and the demographic base--for the future possible that together can reflect upon, in unprecedented ways, WESTAF's motto of "Celebrating the Western Imagination through the Arts." Or, to the contrary, if these themes are not addressed forthrightly, one can readily imagine a future of heightening tensions and conflicts in the arts and society at large. So, not only is a generational change in order, but so, too, is a cultural shift in how we understand, imagine, and implement cultural policy and administration in the rising future of the U.S. West with a majority of people of color and younger people. Where might/should we begin to figure out a way forward?

I have chosen to speak to the issues of multiculturalism and generational transition in an often-under-addressed dimension of the arts and of artists: The everyday-lived lives of artists as active, concerned citizens among the general public who use or can use their special skills, professional work, and status as artists to stimulate and entertain us in their more encompassing role of fellow citizens who contribute to the general welfare of society.

These early years of the 21st century constitute a particularly significant time for those who are involved in the world of arts and culture.

Cultural and artistic indices are decidedly present in manifold expressions of racial, ethnic, gender, religious, and national identity. Therefore, I urge that we reflect on multiculturalism and generational change in relation to all of the turmoil and conflicts we face. I also urge such reflection in our constant search for more secure and more expansive concepts and practices of freedom and development rooted in distinct modes of doing and knowing in all aspects of life across the United States and the world, including diversity of language, religious practices, aesthetic standards, cultural and arts practices, economic systems, and styles of professional work.

All too often in history and the present, the artist has not been fully recognized as a member of the general citizenry. Throughout time and across cultures, the artist in every society has been someone special--someone to be embraced, to be admired, and/or someone to be rejected and persecuted. Far too often, the artist has accepted that status--as a kind of meta-figure above or outside of ordinary life--because of the imagination, artistry, poetic voice, imagery, and critical commentary on life he or she brings before the general public. Now, as never before, culture and the arts have emerged as transversal elements intersecting the full range of human experience and citizenship. Thus, the notion of citizen is a much more dynamic and encompassing concept than is the sometimes-rarefied concept of artist or distinctive notion of cultural worker.

Raymond Williams, who was a very important cultural critic and historian with the British School of Cultural Studies, noted that in the first half of the 19th century, Western societies began to develop a different notion about the role and function of the artist. Prior to that period, the artist had been seen as someone who was simply skilled--a skilled person. What began to emerge was the concept of the creative artist--the imaginative artist, which led to the concept of imaginative truth.

Consider the nexus of imagination and truth—an imaginative truth. Stimulated by the muse, the imagination and truth of artists operating in the mundane present can become a medium for all citizens re-imagining and recreating themselves in a more perfect future. A citizen-artist can thus engage history, reflect and act on the present, and go far beyond and imagine new truths—new ways of doing things—that heretofore have not been considered or fully developed.

Over the course of the next 25 to 50 years, global politics rooted in cultural life will shift

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increasingly from extreme attention to the West (from the United States) and reflect the expanding cultural presence of Latin America, Asia, and Africa throughout the world. Japanese Americans—and not just the older generations but the newer citizen-artists—will look

increasingly both ways across the Pacific. Latinos and African-Diaspora and Eastern-European Americans, among others, will also expand and/or begin to observe and embrace trans-national perspectives, and culture and the arts will provide context, imagination, and cohesion in a new multi-polar-cultural world. The U.S. will reflect these changes as well as hopefully contribute constructively to them. The United States of America will internally encounter more elastic constructs of national identity, more expansive transnational expressions of loyalties, and also a more encompassing engagement of cultures and ranges of aesthetics in our national and global identities.

What do these projections of a future possible suggest for those of us in artistic, creative professions? The anticipated changes in the interaction of global cultures certainly encompass aesthetic contestations, new creative synthesis, stories, nation-identity narratives, historical revisions, and changes in cultural and governance policies. Culture and the arts will become more

transversal in intersection with social, economic, and security (safety and happiness) policies. Citizen-artists and citizen-cultural workers creating imaginative truths can help other citizens—newer, younger, and older—imagine life in ways that they are having great difficulty envisioning because of out-of-date, stagnant, restrictive generational and racial, gender, and cultural concepts that resist change and all too frequently demean new American voices and life ways.

Possibilities for citizen-artists to play central roles in the social and political imaginary and the symbolic universe of diversity that make us distinct and also provide the cultural and creative legacies for us all—nationally and globally—to find common cause, identity, and well-being will not naturally come forth.

Generational and multicultural change requires of us to exercise the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship. As artists and cultural workers, we are responsible—and I suggest obliged—to consciously stimulate and contribute to change. Thus, we must forthrightly confront obstacles to change and make opportunities for progressive change.

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WESTAF is more aware than most of the symbolic significance of the factual observation by Hector Tobar (chief of the *Los Angeles Times* office and author of *Translation Nation*) that Latin American immigration is changing the culture of the United States. Los Angeles already is the "New York" of the 21st century: The place where a new cultural identity is being defined. In the last years of the 20th century, we see how Latino culture is exported from Los Angeles to states like Kansas, North Carolina, and Georgia in the interior of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Do not changing demographics require us to responsibly reflect changes in governance per-



sonnel of arts and cultural organizations, in vision, philosophy, and workplace practices? Does not the meaning of democratic citizenship oblige us to not just include "others" in the reigning paradigms and organizational structures but to learn from them about their cosmographies, languages, and social and economic values and to contribute to imagination and creation of a new public space and citizen identity in national and global arenas?

Across the United States, we increasingly live in communities with growing numbers of Spanish-speaking fellow citizens and residents. We, as fellow citizens, are de facto part of the same national community, even as we are distinct cultural elements of that community. To deepen and expand our citizenship, citizen-artists and citizen-cultural workers must not simply imagine new environments but carefully and critically examine the official cultural and symbolic circumstances in and across which we live.

The Japanese American National Museum, despite the mono- or bi-lingual way many in Los Angeles and from across the country and around the world express themselves, imagined and executed a tri-lingual inaugural exhibition. If you consider that 71 percent of the students in the Unified District of Los Angeles are Hispanic, we should be able to easily imagine doing things a different way from what we have done in the past. We should readily see and act on adoption of culturally diverse personnel and management perspectives and policies that encompass and reflect the world of actual citizens and residents through whom the creative imagination operates daily.

The themes of generational transition and multiculturalism that WESTAF has chosen suggests that the organization may be prepared to envision and help to create a more culturally diverse official arts-and-culture community. To do so requires proactive engagement with the historical imperative of the emergence of multiculturalism in direct response and opposition to the mono-cultural official Anglo-Protestant domi-

nant value system and symbolic representation of the United States. Recognition of the objective distinct cultures that comprise—and have always comprised—the United States since before it became a Republic is still today a controversial concept.

Samuel P. Huntington, the widely acclaimed political scientist who developed the book and thesis, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, wrote in the March/April, 2004, issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine that the "persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. The cultural division between Hispanics and Anglos could replace the racial division between Blacks and Whites as the most serious cleavage in U.S. society."<sup>2</sup> Huntington, no mere academic or political scientist simply writing for the academy, asserts with authority a cultural and symbolic identity of the country in noting, "In the final decades of the 20th century . . . the United States' Anglo-Protestant culture and the creed that it produced came under assault by the popularity in intellectual and political circles of the doctrines of multiculturalism and diversity."<sup>3</sup>

So, Hector Tobar's thesis that there exists an emptiness today in terms of national and cultural identity in the United States and that the Latinos are filling it with the idea that they are really from another place, that part of their soul comes from the land south of the Rio Bravo,<sup>4</sup> illustrates a fault line with Huntington's thesis that WESTAF must, I think, take on as it steps forward and implements generational multicultural change in its missions, hiring, and governance personnel with respect to the changing demography and concomitant cultural implications and unchanging policies about Latinos, Native Americans, Asia-Pacific Islanders, and African Americans. Who are they/we as citizens in policy terms given new migrations and citizenships and residencies?

As we seek in the early years of the 21st century to make specific plans to implement genera-

tional and multicultural changes in the leadership personnel of arts and culture organizations, we should recall the pivotal roles—legacies—of artists and cultural workers who, almost a half century ago, engaged lived artistic and cultural realities of multicultural communities. They used their analytical abilities, imaginations, and creative crafts to help portray, project, and validate socio-cultural, economic, and political options beyond the dominant mono-cultural identity that officially characterized public life.

This is a moment in which you young people, if you want to be a part of leadership, have to step forth with your visions of new possibilities. You won't get positions simply because you are

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young or because you are of color. I think you will get them based on two key factors. One is your ability to discern what it is about history that is expressed in the present older generation that really is valuable for this moment and for

tomorrow. What has transcendent value? Whether they are green or pink or whatever color, you have got to learn what and who contributed to historical progress that has brought us to this transitional moment in time.

You young adults prepared for leadership must also find ways to convince others to follow—and not just others of color. Let's be frank: Mostly White and some few other ethnic Baby Boomer generation executives who still occupy major positions in this country in most jobs, including arts and culture, must be approached and tested as individuals, not as mere representatives of groups. Many before them sacrificed careers and some died in the civil rights movement, which helped to pave the way for new—sometimes radical—explorations in the arts and culture. Find them and build strategies for change.

And young adults must approach generational change in leadership as proprietors of the whole arts-and-culture enterprise, not simply as people

of color or as youth. So often, if we are White women or whatever class or age or background—and certainly if we are people of color—our approach to governance positions is that the enterprise belongs to "them." We are not just group representatives. If we are going to be first-class citizens, we have to actualize that citizenship to the fullest and be owners with "others" of the states' arts-and-humanities councils and national arts-and-culture organizations and foundations.

Young people, follow and push forth your ideas, but do not become idealistic and mainly critical. The idea is not how high you can immediately fly but to step over the precipice of the status quo, begin the transformation of moribund official values and practices, and not splash to the ground. There are going to be struggles and low moments. But whether you are of color or not, you are not just the new generation responsible for making change. You are of the global moment in which aesthetics, philosophies, and socio-cultural practices can break through the old boundaries of race and ethnicity and gender and nationality. A new world is possible if we imagine and create it so.

*In this transition to new generational, multicultural leadership, Baby Boomers now in charge must re-imagine change.*

In this transition to new generational, multicultural leadership, Baby Boomers now in charge must re-imagine change. We must remember how the status quo responded to us as young people, prepared, and raring to go forward. We knew that we were ready in our 20s, although we may have been in our 40s before we were admitted to the table. Why would we think that this generation, with far more access to information and education, far more facility about the world than we had in our youth, is not ready to step forth? We, too, have to do for them what we wanted people to do for us. We have to risk learning. We have to risk peering into the future, listening to this younger generation and thinking, "Hmmm, this is one of those young people I should take a risk with."



We Baby Boomers came through a special period. It was a period of literally a new world, not just a new United States. We have lived long enough to be in another new movement called *globalization*, which is more than economics. This movement has a lot to do with the fact that the creative imaginations of our generation have brought us the technology that allows us to collapse space and time and to meet and learn about people in a global community of culturally diverse communities with distinct languages, aesthetics, religions, and all kinds of social values--literally 24 hours a day.

The 2003 WESTAF symposium noted that young people are not emerging to replace the older generation of Baby Boomers. I suggest they are right here with us if only we will acknowledge, embrace, and follow them. Perhaps we are looking for the reproduction of ourselves as leaders.

We do not have to totally step aside. We have many valuable experiences that we can transfer to this generation. But they are going to help us do this. That is just the natural law of things. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to look and see what is new and engage young people from multicultural backgrounds in learning and creating. We must work with them to not only test themselves but to test our readiness and abilities to imagine ourselves as members of a new nation and world.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Michael Alexander:** I would add that even in the city of Los Angeles, a great portion of our population does not interact with the arts. The arts are not as much a part of their lives as we would like. Part of our responsibility is to find ways to be ambassadors even in these seemingly art-full communities. We need to reach out to the many who are part of our communities who do not engage in the arts.

**Lonnie Cooper:** Maybe some of our problems stem from the fact that we impose what we think the public ought to be paying attention

to on the public. We are obsessed with telling them what art forms they should be paying attention to, not helping them enjoy the art forms that interest them.

**James Early:** I would venture to say that the arts and cultural expressions are inherent elements of human existence no matter what your cultural background, your class background, your formal education, or lack thereof. Some kind of symbolic expression, some kind of artistic expression, some notions—be they categorical notions, be they narrative notions of aesthetics—are operating all the time. You cannot get up in a Black community and sing a blues song and be applauded simply because you said this is a blues song. It is about a dialogical conversation. It has got to be something so attractive that someone says, "Ooh." Something to which someone responds, "Wow." You cannot get up and write haiku and declare, "This is good poetry." Therefore, the linkage between artists and audiences is a social reflection that addresses or reflects the artist's interests and stimulates or provokes the audience.

The problem is that we, the public servants, need to be servants in the representation of our citizens. We are often the bridges to the public space, and we are often the presentational link between artists and publics. That public space belongs to all of us, even as artists assume distinct and often distinguished public space roles and identities. We need to inform communities on how to access public space and, in the process, expand the notion and the complexity of the public space. That is a challenge we all face.

We face a huge challenge in the area of language. New immigrants don't come in saying, "I am not going to learn to speak English." They come in on the margins, in peripheral residential areas, in which they are speaking to like-language groups. Our challenge as public servants—and this would be the analog to the

*Maybe some of our problems stem from the fact that we impose what we think the public ought to be paying attention to on the public.*

arts and culture, I think, as well—is how we do two things. How do we put language facilities at the natural points of entry where people are coming and also to say that we recognize and respect the cultural expressions that you bring? This is also what we should do in the public space, which means that these spaces will become bi- and multicultural. But it also means we, too, can become multicultural.

Right now, even those of us who have multicultural philosophy are still too mono-cultural in our practice. We have not recognized or fully embraced the multicultural reality. We still think too much in an old categorical way of thinking that arts and culture are sort of expressions of a particular kind of person. I don't

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mean racial and ethnic because those categories can apply to any group. But the notion that all citizens are integral to an understanding of the arts and culture is not commonplace. There is no citizen who does not have an aesthetic sense. There is no immigrant who does not have an aesthetic sense. Is aesthetics a term of art for them? No. But give them a choice, and they will make sensory decisions on what is good, true, and beautiful to them. Ask them why, and they won't give you a categorical answer. They will give you a narrative answer: "I felt, I feel, I thought." Our challenge as the professionals who work with categories and analytical propositions is to try to reflect that in public policy. This is where I think we have to take ourselves a lot more seriously. That's not a critique of us, but it is meant to be a motivation for us.

**Judith Luther Wilder:** So isn't art inherently a place to develop conflict? We are all comfortable in our own language, and each of us communicates to others through language--individual language. We have to write within a language. Isn't art inherently a place of misunderstanding? If we are speaking of that place—a creative place—don't we necessarily develop points of conflict?

**James Early:** I would suspect that, in the early days of humankind, that was probably the case. We saw or heard something different, including a representation of art. It was so jarring because of little experience of comparison of expressions, so fear and misunderstanding and consequent conflict may have happened. But that's not the historical moment in which we live. Despite ongoing conflicts, we live in an era in which we can access almost anything. Even that which we have never seen before, we can find out about, find some reference to it. Now it may be a point of contention, but that may not be conflict. That's where opportunities of learning can exist. This is where we get into the public space--those of us who are involved in policy and those creators involved in art making.

We can together play a most important role by saying that the human circumstance is a fairly common one. What makes it uncommon are the multiple, infinite ways in which we express common concerns, common interests. That's what makes us culturally different. We use the old example that one culture might have X number of designations for the word "snow." Another culture may have two. We are looking at the same phenomenon, but we are experiencing and interpreting it in very diverse ways. There is no reason why that should be political except if we are so wedded to our own construct that we disavow another. This is a problem with the Samuel B. Huntingtons of the world and their insistence on an Anglo-American construct as the embodiment of being American. I read into that construct the ominous inference that "all of these Spanish-speaking Catholics are threatening." Why would they be a threat necessarily to the Anglo-American paradigm? Why can't we imagine a more expansive democracy reflecting the growing numbers of different religious communities--Hindus, Santeria practitioners, and so on? If the South Africans can have 11 official languages, why can't we at least own up to two?

*If the South Africans can have 11 official languages, why can't we at least own up to two?*

So I don't think that art is necessarily a site of conflict. I think it is figuring out how we can help people inform themselves so that they can mediate with each other within and across aesthetic, social, and philosophical spaces, not necessarily how we hand policy down to them and how we mediate for them. Again, if I go back to the example of the Japanese American museum, by bringing those three languages into that museum, they were saying first to their home community that this is also integral to who we are. We are not just singularly Japanese Americans. We are also related to the "other" citizens with languages in this public space we share.

**Geoff Gallegos:** When the art is good and so is the audience, there won't be a conflict.

**James Early:** Do you want to expand on that?

**Geoff Gallegos:** Take an artist who is in the service industry and not looking at art as a commodity. An artist working in LA, where it is more for a profit, might not do this, but an artist who has a particular viewpoint that is on behalf of their community will. Art is different to different audiences. And if they do it well, I don't necessarily see that as a conflict. Everybody is happy. We bring our art to them, and we say, "This is where we are coming from." This is a real service. In part, there is a spiritual answer. Can we bring art to the community as a means to say, "Here we are and here is where we present it"? And if we do it well, isn't that a good in itself?

**James Early:** But take jazz, for example, the history of which has been a very controversial art form, or take the *Piss Christ* by Andres Serrano. That was a very controversial art piece. It spoke to a lot of us, and a lot of us felt that it trampled on our most intimate perspectives of our religion. In that regard, there certainly was tension, and there certainly was conflict.

There is a positivist view of art that is art is good. If we are coming from different cultural perspectives, different learned behaviors, differ-

ent traditions of how we understand what is art, that's not necessarily so. The challenge is how to set up a public space that frames controversies as educational opportunities and thus an alternative to destructive conflict—a situation that does not necessarily provide a panacea that resolves something but gives us the confidence that we can continue to try to negotiate and mediate the conflict. That is, I think, the democratic challenge. And this is where the artist plays a crucial role.

**Lonnie Cooper:** You mentioned how we have instant access to just about everything. But I would think it is the nature of humanity to look at the things we agree with. Do we not also look only at those things that are part of our belief system so that the problem is that, yes, we all have access to everything in the entire universe because of the Internet and everything else, but we don't go to those things regularly. I live in a very, very conservative community in northern Colorado, and I talk to people, especially coming up to these elections, and they do not look to the other side. The truth is that happens from both sides of the aisle politically. It happens as well among the community of artists. It happens from people who are religious. It happens from every other aspect. People tend to stay with things that are comfortable, with what is known to them—whether that is ethnic or religious or racial or sexual or anything else.

There has always been a conflict in bringing the unfamiliar to bear, bringing in the "others." There is an "other" that's important. That is a natural conflict of America because there are so many "others" coming in all of the time. I think that sort of thing that we as art professionals—cultural professionals or whatever you want to call us—that's part of our job. The gentleman over here talks about how he brings learning. That's exactly part of our job. It is to make people understand that there are different ways of thinking. Yes, it has been these sources of conflict for some people. I think that's a natural thing, but I think you make a great point at the end that that is part of our responsibility:

To show people that there are other ways of thought and other ways of thinking. Trying to do it without confrontation and conflict may not be possible. Sometimes, you have got to

*...that is part of our responsibility: To show people that there are other ways of thought and other ways of thinking.*

fight them to get your point across.

**James Early:** I totally agree with you. I think the artistic and creative and cultural community must revisit some familiar mod-

els that are not reflected on a lot. I worked with artists once or twice from India from communities in which, when a cow dies, there is still a male-dominated culture that says there is a witch in the community. And a woman might die for that. A woman may be selected out as the witch and killed because of the economic, the mythical, and the cultural values of that cow and the male supremacy, although that may not be the term that is used. Tradition may make it difficult—if not impossible—to get men to discuss these issues with women. But a woman dramatist is able to come in and say, "I do theater," and she is able to talk to them and other people in the community and then to do a dramatic presentation of the issue that creates a new public space for reflection and possible transformation. The drama becomes the public square; it becomes the mediating institution. Men who were ready to identify some woman as a witch come and sit and may find themselves enlightened.

I had the following experience with other colleagues at a Smithsonian Institution Folklife Festival with representatives from rural communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, some of which are communities made up chiefly of descendants of enslaved Africans, in which the tradition is for men to play drums. They were from Surinam, French Guinea, Jamaica, and the Texas-US border. All these men are playing drums. And in one group, a woman is playing drums. A discussion ensues about tradition and the appropriateness of a woman playing drums. And the political representative of the Jamaican Maroon community

group with whom the woman is playing explains to other tradition bearers—also descendants of various Maroon communities in the Americas—that the primary leader against their enslavement was a woman. Three years later, we learned that these groups had a follow-up meeting, prompted by the role of a woman in a traditional musical group, about the general roles of women in their societies that extended far beyond the playing of drums.

Another example: I was in Cuba about five weeks ago. I was told there was a significant controversy in the Afro-Cuban religious community because three women had been made priests. One was from Venezuela. Another optic into the democratic influence of cultural artistic expressions.

We, in arts-and-culture work, carry a big responsibility that requires taking ourselves perhaps more seriously than we have in recent times. I think it can be argued quite easily now, bolstered by empirical demographic data, that arts-and-culture issues are front-line issues. When we bring these extraordinary new immigrant and/or new citizen-artists onto downtown public stages, and many—not all—of them return to the most horrible apartment complexes with lack of proper heating and lighting and so forth or low-income employment, we are connected to that community through art in ways in which many social workers are not connected to the people.

How do we then handle (or do we?), particularly in the arts, that special citizenship connection? There are no easy answers, but there are issues we must address.

**Margo Aragon:** There is an issue I would like to talk about and that is people feeling very comfortable within their own culture. Can we imagine that there are people who get bored with their own culture? To talk about the influence of the "other" that James says is possible—and that is true—there are people who are bored with their own culture. We need to provide opportunities for them to invite or be invited

into the "other" that they don't know. They understand there is something out there, but they don't know what it is. I talk about that from my own perspective. I have moved into a place in Idaho that happens to be mostly Anglo. Through them, I was introduced to people who were Nez Perce Indian people. I didn't know anything about them but became part of a culture, which was introduced to me because I was living in a different place. In so doing, great things have happened. This whole re-imagining that we talked about and taking ourselves seriously in a cultural way moved me far beyond anything that I thought was possible.

*Can we imagine that there are people who get bored with their own culture?*

**Leslie Ito:** I just wanted to thank you for your comments about the elasticity and the elastic identity. To be honest, when I got the call about this symposium, and I saw multiculturalism and identity was the subject, I thought, "Oh, my." I wasn't quite sure I should come. I am really glad that you set this tone for us to talk about these issues because I think it is really important to look beyond the traditional definitions of multiculturalism and identity. As a young person, I think that identity is so much more fluid in my generation, and even the half of the generation beyond me. My sister is six years younger, and her friends are not talking about being Asian American or being a lesbian or whatever. It goes beyond that. I think the fluidity is in the arts. Artists don't consider themselves simply painters anymore. Or you are dabbling in all different kinds of media because we have this accessibility to acknowledge an idea that is much more open. It leads us into this more fluid kind of identity. I think sometimes it is misconstrued as a lack of passion or not being consistent—having some sort of ADD or something. I think it's the nature of what we are working with these days.

**James Early:** This particular moment in which we live is also referred to as the *information society*. I know you may not agree with any of these terms; however, I think the important thing is

for us to examine why these terms have emerged. Do they hold any significant meaning, or are they just marginal? Are they simply invented? I think the notion of information society is one of the synonyms for globalization and carries a very high valence. Things are moving a lot faster.

Regarding changing multicultural meanings and identities among generations, I think people of my generation tend to be dismissive of the identity issues younger adults are dealing with. Of course, like many of us of mixed-race background, I can't tell you where and when the mixture occurred. Thus, *mixed race* is not a term of decisive meaning for my generation. There is a tendency to dismiss what it may mean for this generation. It is important that we understand the history of aesthetics and representation of certain kinds of artistic genres or identity representation within specific social-historical moments. At the same time, it is important that we adults not conflate our experiences with this new moment of issues of mixed-race identity expressed by many young people. Despite the persistence of racism and racial categorization, young people are living in a different time, which requires fresh thinking without abandonment of the cross-generational realities of racism.

*Despite the persistence of racism and racial categorization, young people are living in a different time, which requires fresh thinking without abandonment of the cross-generational realities of racism.*

Another important identity subject that requires reflection is *African American*. Who is an African American today given the numbers and diversity of African and African Diaspora citizens resulting from the 1965 Immigration Act? I have colleagues who have studied notions of the vertical village in the ways new African immigrants and citizens adapt new space and living conditions to reflect traditional life ways. I am suggesting that we recognize that this is, indeed, a new moment, whether as artists or professional cultural representatives who set



policy and who are concerned with guiding principles and courses of action. How we engage these new socio-cultural lives in the intersecting, overlapping spheres of public space is a major, major challenge before us.

But it also means engaging policy makers who are more at the center of gravity of where our resources go--both human resources and budgetary resources. Encapsulated in those human and budget resources are notions of value. If our multicultural values are not represented among policy makers, we must take on those roles and that responsibility to engage and to

*If our multicultural values are not represented among policy makers, we must take on those roles and that responsibility to engage and to provide guidance in that arena.*

provide guidance in that arena. Otherwise, we will continue to be in a marginalized position. Those creative people that we want to serve are multiplying on the margin of the public space or outside of the public space, and therein is a weakening of democracy--of proactive citizen involvement in decision making and of democratic

expression. If these new cultural citizens are living mostly or totally outside of the public space where most of the public institutions and resources are, then the future possible is being limited.

**Ulysses Jenkins:** I just want to say that you mentioned something along the lines of history and the Baby Boomer generation. Obviously, the process that you describe in terms of imagining is really at a loss at a certain point. Working with the youth, they are looking at this generation and its history and what it is producing. They tend to think there is a lack of legitimacy and the ability to get along with one another. That has nothing to do with that background or gender--it's like you came from that period and, as adults, you can't get along. It's the Baby Boomer generation. We are the ones who are dealing with these particular issues and specifics, and we simply cannot come together. I think we have to deal with the consequences. I think when you talk about the arts and evolution therein, the information age can give us a

lot of things, but, as people, we need to figure out a few things. Technology is best for destroying each other.

**James Early:** Well, I think you are right about the significance of imagining. That was what I was attempting to emphasize by referring back 40 years and recalling what we were thinking. Not just about what was going on in the moment, but we were recalling that we were coming from generations of people whose minds (imagination of what could be) catapulted way ahead. As young adults, many of us found a way to productively engage imagination--to figure out how to ground it and to make a reality.

Let me close with references to conversations and experiences I have had with renowned artists-activists-cultural workers whose creative endeavors, interpretive perspectives, and organizational work have made profound differences for their generations and for those who followed them. Each is a social individual in artistic life. Harry Belafonte, now in his late 70s, has said on a number of occasions but most recently at an event for a project I am involved in, *Artist and Social Responsibility* (with scholar-music-producer Amy Horowitz and musicians Bernice Reagon, Holly Near, and Pete Seeger), that we are "carrying the burden of an uninstructed society." I take his evaluation as a motivation for artist and cultural workers to draw upon history and imagination and creativity to work with people, especially young adults, to instruct themselves. If we don't, then the creative and democratic space in which we live could be severely restricted.

Second, I have been advantaged to spend a lot of quality time during the last 35 years with Bernice Johnson Reagon, an extraordinary artist-activist-intellectual. She often talks about how "we must hold the positions that we assert." As a historian, her exhortation is grounded in an appreciation of the difficult roads already traveled. As an artist, singer, composer, playwright, and producer, imagination and creativity provide visions and pathways to

the future.

Many of you have expressed dismay—even depression—with the elections. I, too, care about the shifts with respect to what the elections may have brought to the outlooks and politics of the country. However, I urge you as artists and cultural workers to hold to the visions of what has been asserted, especially in regards to the advancement of cultural diversity over the last 40 years, and to hold to the responsibility of future progress.

Third and last, I think we have to consider that if we don't step forward, who will? And if we step forward, how will we do it? Do we step forth with madness and fear? Or do we step forth with the confidence of historical assertions and achievements, with a sense that we can, like generations before us, foster a future environment that is unimaginable to many today?

I think the artists and the cultural workers and the intellectuals and the religious people among us can contribute to motivating and to helping the rest of society imagine different ways of living.

<sup>1</sup> Hector Tobar, *Translation Nation: Defining a New American Identity in the Spanish-Speaking United States* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005) 7.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "The Hispanic Challenge," *Foreign Policy* March/April 2004, 4 Jan. 2006 <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=2495](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2495)> 1.

<sup>3</sup> Huntington 2.

<sup>4</sup> Tobar.

## TOPIC I: THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS: STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE NEW YOUNG VOICES IN BROADER CULTURAL DISCUSSIONS

### INTRODUCTION

**Juan Carrillo:** What I often hear today is, "I'm tired," "I'm burned out," "I can't do it anymore, I'm getting too old." All of those statements are made and heard frequently by those of us who work in this field. Another issue we all have heard more and more about is the concern about who is going to take over when we are not around? Where is the next generation? Who is behind us? Who is coming up? I know that a number of efforts have been made to develop leadership in the arts. For a number of years, the California Arts Council operated a leadership program in Southern California in collaboration with the Coro Foundation. Over 100 individuals went through that civic affairs leadership development process. At the Council, we also have the Next Generation program and others that strive to address this issue. I am certain other arts organizations have programs designed to identify leadership people from the next generation. This segment of the symposium deals with this important topic.

### ITO PRESENTATION

**Leslie Ito:** I am here today to talk about leadership development and leadership succession from the emerging leader point of view. One of my mentors, Jerry Yoshitomi, has this equation for determining whether one is an emerging leader. You start with your age and add the number of years that you have been in the field. Then you subtract the number of people who are senior to you in your organization. The result is a number that could be said to determine whether you are an emerging leader or not. Given this formula, I am about a 41, so you can calculate and see where you lie on this spectrum of emerging versus established leaders.

Like others here, I, too, am a product of many mentors. My presentation today is a very personal one. It is something that I have been experiencing over the last year and a half--something I have been journaling on. Although the story I am going to tell you is very personal, I want you to also see it as a case study because there are some best practices in this case study. However, there are also some things to look out for in your organizations and in the field in general.

*I am barely 30, and I am running an organization that is five years older than me.*

I am barely 30, and I am running an organization that is five years older than me. This is, I think, kind of a new phenomenon for the arts field. I think with the Baby Boomer generation beginning to move into retirement age, my situation might become a situation we observe more often--perhaps a trend. So how did I get here and what were the circumstances? This is what I would like to share with you.

In the spring of 2003, the subject of leadership development and succession became very personal to me. I have to go all the way back, though, to the beginning of my career in arts administration in 1993 to tell the full story. In that year, I was introduced to the field of arts administration through the Getty Grant Program, the Multicultural Undergraduate



Summer Internship Program. In that program, I spent 10 really eye-opening weeks at Visual Communications, which is an Asian-American media arts organization. That summer, I was exposed to many new ideas at the age of 18-- ideas that I would never have thought would have made this much of an impact on my life-- ideas like the information super highway, arts advocacy, arts as a potential career option, and coming to think of myself as a leader.

That summer, I met Linda Mabalot, who at that time was the executive director of Visual Communications, and she made a great impact on my life. At the end of my internship, she pulled me aside in the smoky hallway--because that was when you could smoke inside buildings in California. She planted the seed in my head that Asian-American arts would become a community in which I would work and that it was part of my responsibility to learn as much as I could so that I could come back and be a leader in the community.

For the next 10 years, I was fortunate to have opportunities to work in several arts organizations across the country. I built up my resume, sharpened my skills at large museums and performing arts centers, and I also worked at the Smithsonian. But throughout this time, I kept in touch with Visual Communications because it felt really close to my heart, not just because it was the first organization at which I had worked, but because I felt strongly about the organization's mission. Visual Communications was founded in the grassroots movement and the anti-war movement. I very much liked the political part of the art making and using media to tell stories and empower our communities. So over this 10-year period, Linda and I would meet periodically for lunch and check in on each other. She would check in on my career, I would check in on the organization, and it was really like a two-way street--very much what I think of as an ideal mentorship process because we were learning from each other.

In the fall of 2000, upon returning from a two-year position at the Ford Foundation in its

media arts and culture division, I returned home to Los Angeles and reconnected with Visual Communications. I started out as a volunteer for its 30th anniversary celebration and then was hired part time as a grant writer. In 2001, we were awarded the New Voices Fellowship, which is a national leadership development program that helps nonprofit organizations recruit or retain innovative and new talent. This program paid for my position at Visual Communications, and part of the structure of the fellowship was the creation of a formal mentorship program.

I know that many of you know Linda and know Visual Communications. The mentorship was far from formal, but we were able to form a highly productive relationship, where I was learning a great deal from Linda and was able to take on many responsibilities because she was willing to give up a lot of responsibility. Linda was willing to take that risk with me, and I think it made a big difference. She was willing to allow me to make mistakes in the learning process and was open to many of the ideas I brought to the table. Through the process of passing on responsibilities to me and other new staff members, she was then able to focus on things on which she hadn't previously had an opportunity to focus, like board development. As I said, our mentor relationship was really a two-way street; although she was teaching me things, I was also bringing new ideas to the organization.

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When I first arrived at Visual Communications, I was always asking about the systems. So what is the system of our ticketing or our program development? Linda would look at me with her eyes open wide and throw back her head and laugh and say, "Systems! We don't have systems here." That was a little bit of a shock to me, coming from the Ford Foundation, where I was trained to think about process and institutionalization. But Linda welcomed new ideas to the organization, and over the two years that we

spent together, we worked very hard on organizational infrastructure, fundraising plans, and programming issues. At the same time, she was encouraging me to hone my leadership skills and take on more responsibility.

During this period, she wasn't just cultivating me as a new leader; she was also purposefully bringing what she called "the young bloods" into the organization, adding fresh perspectives and new energy. Most important, what she was doing was building a multi-generational team. We have these "young bloods" but also the "old timers" who have institutional memory and who can give us such things as the history of Asian-American media arts and the community. I believe that is really important. It is an important synergy that needs to happen.

With the new surge of energy and new thinking the young people brought, we could see changes in our programming. We received a grant from the California Arts Council's *Next Generation* program; we started a program called *Armed with a Camera*, which is a fellowship for emerging media artists. Today, we support anywhere from five to ten artists a year. We work with them on a bi-monthly basis over five months to create five-minute digital pieces that premier at our annual film festival. This program is now in its fourth year and has gained a great deal of support. Over the past three years, we have worked with over 12 fellows to add to the collection of pieces that Visual Communications has produced over the past 34 years. We are continually trying to support new artists.

During this time, Linda had also been working on board development. Now, a third of our board is under the age of 40, which I think is remarkable for a 35-year-old organization. My hope is that the change in governance will also translate into the identification of new donors. I believe establishing that relationship will take much more time; however, I think with the processes we have set into place, we will also be able to tap into new individual donors.

This outreach to a new generation also extends to our audiences at our film festival. Forty percent of our festival audiences are between the ages of 21 and 29. I find this phenomenal. I know that arts organizations of approximately our same organizational age are struggling with this same issue. I think the answer is related to who is doing the programming and who is leading the organization. I am very proud of what we have accomplished in those areas.

Every step of the way, Linda generously shared her knowledge, experience, and passion with me, and yet, as she chain smoked away, she never sugar coated the difficulties she faced as a leader of a media arts organization. Every day, I witnessed the realities of being an executive director, and yet it never deterred me from my goal of having a career in the arts. I took notes furiously and observed all of the leaders around me, and I continue to do so. But little did I know that my dream of becoming executive director would come sooner than expected.

*Every day, I witnessed the realities of being an executive director, and yet it never deterred me from my goal of having a career in the arts.*

In the spring of 2004, Linda was not feeling well. She took some time off to take care of her health and, about three weeks away from our 19th annual film festival, Linda hadn't yet returned to the office. A day and a half before the festival, she was diagnosed with cancer; a month later, she passed away. My last visit with Linda was much like the lunches we used to have--we shared. This time, I was checking in on her, and she was checking with me about the organization. After 17 years of being the executive director, she had let go and trusted that the foundation that she had laid was going to survive. I assured her that I would try my best to make that happen. I asked her if she had any more wisdom to share with me, and she looked at me and laughed. I think that laugh was her telling me that I needed to find humor in every situation; I think that is how she was able to keep it going.

The transition period from when Linda passed away to me being appointed as the new executive director was about seven months. We had a hiring committee made up of both board and staff, and they worked tirelessly at creating a job description for a position that had been held for 17 years and was suddenly left void. In the meantime, I was appointed acting executive

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director. My primary role was to make certain the search committee stayed on task and adhered to a strict timeline. I had learned from other mentors in the field that the time period of not having an executive director is really critical and that we needed to try to keep it brief. So we tried to do that as well as possible. During

this time, I used the Illinois Arts Alliance's *Planning for Succession* tool kit.<sup>1</sup> It was an invaluable resource for us. For everybody who hasn't thought about succession planning, I encourage you to take a look at this document. In January of 2004, after a nationwide search and a formal interview process, I was named the new executive director of Visual Communications.

Inheriting an organization that has 34 years of history and relationships with the community is a lot of pressure, on top of which it is probably the most difficult time financially to inherit and manage a mid-size arts organization--especially in the state of California. At this point, I must mention all those horrible statistics that we've been using for arts-advocacy purposes. It is ironic that, as I have been cleaning up file boxes and file boxes of Linda's old notes, I realize that this crisis is not anything new and that she, too, went through the "drop-everything-and-advocate-for-the-arts" days. I have definitely inherited her struggles, and yet I hope to solve them in new ways and come at them with fresh ideas.

Although at times I wish for more moments to spend with Linda as my elder and ask for more advice, I know that she would probably only

laugh some more at me and tell me to figure it out myself. Fortunately, she has left me with an entire cabinet of advisors (as I like to call them). She had made so many great colleagues in the field, and she introduced me to them. Many of them are here in this room.

Although Linda's death was unexpected and the organization had no formal succession plan, Linda had already begun to put one into practice. She did this by nurturing new leaders in the organization, passing on knowledge and responsibilities, strengthening the board of directors, and ensuring that the organization had a core base of members and artists who were passionate about Visual Communications' mission. These are all key components to leadership transition, and yet our transition, I must admit, has been far from smooth. Although Linda was not a founding executive director, the organization has been suffering from some post-founder symptoms. We are challenged by everything from trying to navigate the financial systems, since Linda had many of the numbers "in her head," to other things like following up with key funders to assure them that the organization was in good hands. A coordinated effort by both our board and our staff has been necessary to move the organization forward.

Allowing ourselves to mourn Linda's passing and adjust to the loss of her contagious energy has been a difficult process for everybody--one we are still working through. However, we realize we must continue her vision.

This leadership transition has also provided an opportunity for us to take Linda's vision and build upon it. In the summer of 2004, we started our strategic planning process, which is something that I believe Linda had been struggling with for a long time. This kind of transition really helped propel us in the direction of looking at our future and considering what our future as an organization is going to look like.

Although Visual Communications is unique, I hope that what I have conveyed here, which again is a very personal story and obviously still very fresh in the way that I am dealing with it,

suggests that leadership succession is a necessity for our field. It is something that we must face and plan for. The planning process, I think, is extremely critical. And yet, as we learned with this Visual Communications case study, there is only so much that we can plan for in the end--life is unpredictable.

*She would want me to identify my own leadership skills and style and run with my own ideas...*

Filling Linda's shoes is a very tough job. At the same time, I know that she would encourage me to find my own shoes. Hers were the Asian acupuncture slippers that she would wear around the office. Mine? Maybe they are the black leather flats with rubber soles and a little flower on the top. She would want me to identify my own leadership skills and style and run with my own ideas and lead the organization with a fresh new perspective in order to encourage a new generation of artists, audiences, and donors.

<sup>1</sup> Merianne Liteman and Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation with Arts & Business Council of Chicago, *Planning for Succession, a Toolkit for Board Members and Staff of Nonprofit Arts Organizations* (Chicago: Illinois Arts Foundation and Arts & Business Council of Chicago, 2003.)



## FRAZER PRESENTATION

**Ricardo Frazer:** Our strategy is to include new young voices in broader cultural discussions. I am going to start out by saying, "I like big butts, and I cannot lie. I like big butts, and I cannot lie."<sup>1</sup> That is an excerpt from Sir Mix-A-Lot's insightful commentary on his cultural reality as it relates to physical beauty in his community. "Baby Got Back" was one of the biggest songs in the early 1990s. Ten years later, America's perception of beauty, in my opinion, includes the likes of J. Lo and Vivica A. Fox. Sir Mix-A-Lot, the artist, a young voice at the time, a leader, he developed his voice at the Boys and Girls Club in Seattle.

Jazz Lee Alston from New York City. Here is an excerpt from Jazz's commentary on her eyewitness account of the murder of her cousin. It's a commentary on domestic violence, and this is a small excerpt. She says: "My man loved me so much that he left me when I was eight months pregnant. I wonder if, walking through the door, he just said, 'fuck it.' My man loved me so much, Christmas night he blew my head wide open all over the living room floor. Love. . . Never that."<sup>2</sup> Jazz Lee Alston, a spoken word artist, a leader. The folks at Sundance called her "a new voice for a new generation." Jazz developed her voice in the housing projects of the Bronx.

Back at the height of my involvement in the music business, I got a call from a high school kid I didn't know. He had a passion for hip-hop music. He was writing a paper on starting a record company and wanted to intern with me. I asked him a series of questions. He told me that he was Native American, a member of the Suquamish tribe. He was 17 and had very strong opinions on the Native-American condition in the West. Chuck Deem is his name. Chuck and I worked together for over three years; we traveled all across this country. Chuck is now the leader of all youth programs for the Suquamish tribe.

What am I trying to say here? What I'm trying to say is that young leaders arrive from places and parts we can't often imagine.

*...young leaders arrive from places and parts we can't often imagine.*

Strategies to include new young voices in a broader cultural discussion are as varied as are those individuals. However, it is my opinion that creating an environment through the arts where young people can develop leadership skills should be a vital part of our strategic mix.

What can we do? What we can establish, with the participation and engagement of young people, are structures, incubators, a place, an environment where young leaders can and will rise. To that extent, I want to bring your attention to a public/private partnership developed between the city of Seattle and a group founded by my colleague on the Seattle Arts Commission, James Keblas, and his partner Shannon Stewart. The group is called the *Vera Project*. James and Shannon were over in The Netherlands and saw government supporting the arts over there, and the concept of government support for young and edgy popular art was something they both wanted to bring back to Seattle. So, through much work and funding by the city, they created a space whereby young volunteers, with minimal government interference, created independent music and arts programs. This space is an incubator for the arts developed by young people, administered by young people, for young people, where they are the voice.

Vera is truly an amazing public/private partnership. James and Shannon are able to leverage the city's funding in the private sector. In a 20-month span, they have served over 15,500 individuals who are audiences at shows, volunteers in a variety of production and performance roles, and participants in workshops and conferences. The various audiences are Seattle's youth, ages 14 to 21, and their racial and ethnic backgrounds are reflective of the population of Seattle. The Vera Project empowers young voices by placing them in a position of responsibility. Young people staff the steering committee,

which trains the next generation of leaders and encourages civic engagement. They have voting rights on all issues relating to the operation and programming of the venue. If an outside organization wants to give money to Vera, it has to meet those young members. It has to make a presentation, and members then vote on whether or not to accept the money. Some may

*I think it is important that, as elders, leaders of corporations and agencies, we extend our operation beyond our borders to a place where youth exists...*

think that that is arrogant. No. I say it is taking ownership, taking responsibility, empowerment.

I think it is important that, as elders, leaders of corporations and agencies, we extend our operation beyond our borders

to a place where youth exists, where youth creates--be it at the community center, on a reservation, on a street corner in New York City, or at the local Boys and Girls Club. We must go to the places where young voices are. Only then can we truly share the places where we are.

The city of Seattle's partnership with the Vera Project is unique. The partnership is strongly supported by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs and is reflective of our understanding of the need to include young voices in broader cultural discussions. In Seattle, we have chosen to do that through the arts--through the presentation of musical shows; art gallery exhibits; performances; educational seminars, including "b-boy" dancing; silk-screen designs; audience engineering; stage, sound and lights management; graphic design; and young people's active participation in the governance of the venue. There is success in training young people through the arts for leadership roles. This is evident in the 5th Avenue Performing Arts Theater, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, NTM, Seattle Rep, Children's Theater--all of our major arts organizations now look to Vera for staffing needs. In other words, our major arts organizations recognize the need to sprinkle their landscape with and incorporate young voices at all levels of their organizations. On a political and civic note, Vera members were engaged in active discussions, workshops, and

seminars on issues affecting young people during our most recent presidential campaign. Our keynote speaker, Mr. James Early, talked about the fact that we are carrying the burden of an uninstructed society. I say to you that it is our civic duty to teach, that it is our responsibility to instruct; however, in order to teach, we must be willing to learn, and we can learn from young people. Government and its agencies can and must be instrumental in this instruction. In partnerships with private individuals and private organizations, we can realize that impact.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Mix-A-Lot, "Baby Got Back," by Anthony Ray, *Mack Daddy*, Def American, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Jazz Lee Alston, "Love . . . Never That," *Jazz Lee Alston*, American, 1995.



## IYALL PRESENTATION

**Debora Iyall:** My name is Debora Iyall, and I am definitely a freelance artist and educator.

*...I am in an interesting position in that all of my seniors who hire me and coordinate me and make sure I get paid are at least 15 years younger than me.*

When Leslie Ito presented the formula for where you are, whether you are an emerging leader, I found I am in an interesting position in that all of my seniors who hire me and coordinate me and make sure I get paid are at least 15 years younger than me. I believe that has to do with me

being a committed working artist rather than coming from the academic world. To that end, I want to start my presentation with a piece I wrote, a part of a longer poem called "Nervous Horse":

As another day begins  
The kids are punching clocks  
Write figures impressive for teachers obsessive  
Passing out no favors  
Marking time with useless labors  
As cool as any tool  
As cool as any tool  
Flowers painted on my bed  
Lunging wind that clears the air  
Afternoons spent driving around  
Let's start everything right here.  
Nothing is beneath me.  
I'm laid below the grass  
With no window to the world  
Not first or last

As a Native person, I think that last part really is reaffirmed in the idea of the seventh generation; the daughters of our daughters of our daughters of our daughters of our daughter's daughters need to have as nice a world to live in as we do because the mothers of our mothers of our mothers of our mothers of our mothers of our mother's mother took care of it. We will always be in that continuum somewhere, both first and last.

After James Early's opening comments and in talking with others who are here, I revised my presentation. I wanted to talk about what we can do with these Baby Boomers (I was born in 1954). Last night, I was furiously writing when I got back to my room, and I am going to give you some of that and then I am going to show you some artwork from some of my students. One of my frustrations, of course, is that one of the first things I thought of is how I am frustrated. I teach in the public schools, and they call me the expert in the extreme residencies because I am often teaching in the schools that are called *community day schools*. That is where kids go when they have been kicked out of every other school. Often, the kids in my class have not only a teacher, but a guard and an observer, someone who is constantly writing down everything they are doing. Any behaviors--any acting out--gets points, gets marked down. There is this incredible punitive aspect to them being in school, and yet they are fantastic artists. My frustration is that I cannot really be honest with them as an adult, as someone in recovery, as someone who has the politics I do. It still seems the world is safe for discussion and doing nothing.

I do a lot of printmaking with kids in a workshop environment. I also have a project out in 29 Palms called the *29 Palms Creative Center*, where I work with adults. We are together at the moment of creation, and every day when I go out, it is honoring to these kids that I am witness to them and to their ideas. I always tell them that it is not about the art; you don't get to say whether it's working or not. A lot of the kids are like, "I messed up. I messed up." I say to them, "No, no, no. You don't get to say that. You just have to do it and try to learn some of the techniques." One of the things, as adults, and especially academic art, I have to say is that it is not always inspiring to kids to pursue careers in the arts. I don't know any kid right now who is just dying to be a conceptual artist. They want me to teach them how to draw, they want me to show them the secrets, show them the techniques. I feel that it is my duty to honor that and expose them to the idea of non-



representation if I can slip it in somehow, where it is fun.

*We're in a world that is constantly producing new vision, and to put our blinders on our personal lives is not helpful.*

One of the things I think we as adults and arts administrators and art advocates can do is get excited about the unknown again, and we can learn how to stay up late again. I know so many people who think that once they are

40 years old, they don't have to listen to any music made after 1990--you could even say 1980 for some of them, and you could even say 1975 for some. And I don't think that's right. We're in a world that is constantly producing new vision, and to put our blinders on our personal lives is not helpful. I'm not talking about reviewing proposals here, I am talking about going down, taking your kids or your nephew or a neighbor kid if it makes you feel more justified, but going down and listening to and seeing some bands, going out and seeing what kids are up to. You could even join in and be a part of that audience that is active and interested.

I actually think I know I am being successful in my art and in my life when I am a little uncomfortable. I talk to the kids about risk. I say, "You don't buy the next album by Ermine or whoever if you think that it's going to be the same as the one before." It just doesn't happen. Artists need to keep pushing, and we all need to keep pushing. It is absolutely a crime for us not to understand that skills-based art has a lot of value when we live in a country that is exporting so much culture, and these kids could be a part of it. These kids could have careers as lighting designers or as graphic designers or producers. That is part of our legacy as Americans.

I am anxious to let you know that I have been eclipsed by my students. I have students whom I have taught through my Ink Clan Print Making Program in San Francisco who are out-selling me incredibly after being completely novice printmakers. I am so happy about that. They call me up like I'm their old aunt and say, "Oh, I sold another piece" or "I'm getting in

another show" or "I got accepted into Kansas City Art Institute on a merit scholarship." Someone who was cleaning houses for a living called me to let me know that, and in that way, they are honoring my process.

I think we also need to learn how to ask for help. We really do. We need to ask the kids, "Teach me, teach me from your point of view" and relax and listen to what they say. I also was speaking a little bit with Leslie Ito last night, and she was talking about younger people--maybe it was introductions or something--and how we have these more mixed ethnic identities. I think as traditional people are essential and integral to our survival and our wisdom, we have to understand that kids are not attached to tradition, and we can't necessarily enforce that. What we can do is show how that tradition can bring depth but not in an enforced way. I have seen a lot of kids get really turned off by having to go to piano lessons. Well, in our own ethnic communities, we have similar things that would be like having to go instead of just showing up.

I also think it is appropriate to recognize that thinking something is ugly is a value, and so is noticing what is happening; there can be no wrong noticing. We need to recognize economic disparity but don't let economics define value. And any good idea is a good idea, even if it is poorly executed, but a bad idea all slicked up is still a bad idea.

I want to turn you on to a few things that are going on that I try to talk to kids about. We have created a situation in the visual arts--the fine arts--where we have people who are extremely talented--representational artists who are considered outsider artists. Now they have magazines. We are also creating artists who are interested in earth works and site-specific sculpture. Out in the desert, there is this project that happens twice a year called *High Desert Test Sites* that is primarily artists in their 30s, some in their 20s, and all of us older artists have to drag ourselves out to these earth works and get a clue what they are dialoging about. A lot of it is about sustainable living, and they are interested in all kinds of clay architecture and integrat-

ing architecture and fine arts. It is quite fascinating. Another social phenomenon is *Burning Man*. We all act like hedonism and naked joy is off, it's outsider, and I just have a really hard time believing that any of our cultures didn't really celebrate the body and celebrate our joy. Each one of us has a hedonistic naked aspect to our own culture and yet we allow the Western culture, or the dominant culture, whatever you want to call it, to dress us back up in missionary clothes. There is no need, and those people are not outsiders. There are too many of them.

*I am interested in sharing Native culture with kids.*

I am interested in sharing Native culture with kids. I do a lot of storytelling, which for me is fantastic

because, in my voice and the singing that I do, when I do the storytelling, I am inspiring them to make visuals happen. The kids do these great drawings of what was the favorite part of the story for them. Then we take those drawings and turn them into puppets made out of file folders and little barbecue skewers and turn on a bright halogen light and have a shadow play in classrooms and multipurpose rooms in these very impoverished communities. It doesn't cost anybody hardly anything, and it is so magical for them, so empowering for them to see. I have a bunch of their great drawings to share with you.

I also have students who are 19 and 21 doing etchings. I am a printmaker, so we still do etchings, and they are very technique minded. The people who are interested in doing etchings love to draw, and one of the most talented women I've ever seen at etching, her work reminds me of Rembrandt. It is fantastic. She ended up passing away from anorexia. We found out she had been wrapping her body in plastic and then jogging and then not eating. I have had people involved in the size-acceptance movement talk to me about how our cultures deal with our dominant culture's view of size and dieting, and don't the Native women get to be big, and isn't it okay? And, of course, in Samoa, we are all used to seeing big Pacific Islanders and various people, and we see the statistics about African-

American women and Latino women being more accepting of their bodies and all that.

But it is still kind of a frontier that there is some way to be able to talk to kids about those kinds of issues and bring them into their art. If we don't do some more noticing, we are going to lose more artists to the kinds of pressures that encourage individuals in communities toward conformity. These are all really old things we have talked about for years and years. We have to keep talking and keep engaging.

*If we don't do some more noticing, we are going to lose more artists to the kinds of pressures that encourage individuals in communities toward conformity.*

One of the things I am really excited about right now is that I am working with the McCallum Theater's Aesthetic Arts Program. It is a program that is organized through the Lincoln Center, and it involves visual arts, performing arts, music, and aesthetic education. I am learning a lot, and it is changing the way I teach. It is generating ideas from the kids; they are showing me how to teach in that way, and so many of my comments have come out of the learning I have been doing through this program.

*After her presentation, Debora Iyall showed slides of her students' artwork:*

This was the Coho Salmon [see Figure 1, page 53] that was very important in West Coast tribes. I always show a picture of the salmon to the kids before I tell the Salmon Sisters' story. In the story, Bear has called a council of all the animals. And one of the first things he says is, "We have a problem." There are some great lessons in that story, including acknowledging we have a problem.

I always give the kids background on the stories we're telling, and we end up telling in shadows. They have a basket with a wonderful design. I have introduced them to basket designs.

Here is one of the shadow puppets [see Figure 2, page 53]. After I tell the story, I have them do their drawings of their favorite scenes. Then I teach them how they need to draw shadow puppets, which is with the side view so that they can talk, and about silhouette and negative space, and this is where all the standards of art also get to come in.

And here is some printmaking [see Figure 3, page 53]. They have this wonderful new art supply at Dick Blick, which is foam that can be turned into relief prints. I am very much into experimental printmaking. This is an example of how I like to work with kids--I have them bring drawings and then figure out neat ways to ink it up. This is on black paper.

"Animals and Their Humans" was this theme. Here is a kid saying, "I rule the opposite of heaven" [see Figure 4, page 53]. Wild little child there, but wonderful art.

## RESPONSES AND DISCUSSION

**Margo Aragon:** I want to say "thank you" to all three presenters for speaking so much from your hearts and exposing our minds to what you are doing. I appreciate your showing us the sort of passion you bring to all of the things that affect you not only professionally but personally. I also appreciate your reminding us that the work we do and the work in which all of us here are engaged is really multi-level. It is not just something that we do every day and don't think about on the weekends. We obsess over it and wonder how did we get here? How do we go from here to the next step?

You have provided three different examples of what you have done. I was anticipating what I might hear. Would it be something similar? Would it be something vastly different? I think it is a mixture of both. The three of you have found a way in your own communities to pinpoint and identify the needs and have employed creative means to address them.

You have talked about the difficulties, although I didn't hear Ricardo reference difficulties. What I am curious about is, when we talk about success, and James Early talked about it in his keynote address, maybe just little successes are the successes when you are working in some areas, particularly some students' view of their own success. Do they see themselves as successful, or are their little bits of success presented to them by the greater society around them? I am curious about that. Is the success being measured by the young people on their own terms, or is it a combination of both?

**Ricardo Frazer:** In the Vera project, I think success is measured by the kids them-

selves. They are empowered to run the organization. They are the ones. We are there really to answer questions, but they respond to each other, talk to each other, so they see success in the kid who is sitting across from them. The success is not us saying, "You are successful." We provide the avenue, the venue, for them to be successful, but they run all of the programs; they do everything themselves. When there is a musical production, I am not the stage person, James Keblas is not the sound guy. The kids are the sound guys and the stage people, so they do all of the work. I think the success for them comes from them seeing the end results of their work.

**Debora Iyall:** I have had a little different experience from that partly because I am in the public schools and the economics of the situation. I think my kids are disappointed that I don't seem to have more money. I think they can tell that I am sort of down there in the trenches with them, and I've had high school students ask me, "How much money do you make?" And when I tell them, it's like, "Oh well, then I'm never going to be an artist." And they are fantastic artists. But I have to agree with them when I look at how a lot of our arts are handled, not necessarily in the nonprofit area, but the idea of "send \$25 for the first slide to be juried for this show." Our whole system

*...the success for them comes from them seeing the end results of their work.*

of how we do exhibitions is so often layered in obstacles.

I also think that, for a lot of the students, the expectations of the administration and the teachers is that these kids are going to be in jail in a very few years--maybe this year, maybe next year--but definitely by the time they are 20. In the community day schools that I am in, many of the kids are already in group homes, foster care, and drug-treatment programs. Sometimes, it is really hard to be there and feel like a collaborator in that. So I want to give them a lot of success. I want to give them my approval for every effort they are making to see outside those bars that are up there and those guards and that glaring. It is not even disappointment; kids who want to succeed and are smart get visions from their teachers such as, "Oh, I'm disappointed that you didn't do better." But this is just the expectation of failure that is projected by so many of the people who are working with these kids every day. I feel like I am the cheerleader. I support and encourage them no matter what they are doing as long as they are showing up because these are the ones who are still showing up--they haven't dropped out of school yet. They are still in school through all of this negativity.

We need to make more room all over for their successes. That is why I like to do productions, too, because there is a *da-da-da-daa*. We've done the show, everyone clapped, or I put up exhibitions in their classes--every residency I have, if I don't do a show, I do an exhibition. I mat some of the kids' work and I bring punch and cookies and we title everything and we let the artists speak and we give away little rewards. The kids get to vote on their best of show, best of the techniques, and other things. So I work to build successes in my programs.

**Leslie Ito:** In the *Armed with a Camera* project, we work with emerging media artists in the Asian-American community. Success is measured in different ways, and I think from the artists' perspective, they feel they've gotten a lot out of the program in various ways. Their

pieces go on to travel the film-festival circuit; some of them have even been shown internationally.

For me, one of the biggest signs of success is that their parents call and support the organization because they really appreciate the support that we have given to their sons and daughters. Especially in communities of color, parent recognition is very important. I had one fellow who said, "This is the first time that my parents actually acknowledged that I am an artist or that the arts could be a career for me." That came about because he had won a fellowship and was getting paid to produce something. So I think there are small indicators of success like that.

*Especially in communities of color, parent recognition is very important.*

What is frustrating for me is being in Los Angeles. Here, being a media arts organization is a much more complex thing than being a media arts organization anywhere else in this country. Some of our funders want to define success as whether these people can go on and find jobs in the industry. That is not really what I am interested in. I am interested in developing the artist. I am interested in their creativity and cultivating and fostering that.

**Ricardo Frazer:** I think we can't focus on money. I know that money is important, but we can't focus on money. Our work is about the development of an individual--the development of a young person as a whole. You can't always put an economic value to that. So if we focus on money in the arts, we often lose. It is more about fostering a deeper understanding and a deeper development of an individual than it is about money. Again, I understand that money is important. We need money to sustain ourselves and to survive, but there are intangibles on which we sometimes can't put our fingers.

**James Early:** Thank you for three stellar examples of leadership and to Debora Iyall for pointing out to us that the quality of emerging lead-

ers is not always indexed by youth. I say wherever I am--and particularly before teachers--that the most important leaders are our teachers. They are more important than individual mothers and fathers and presidents and prime ministers and Congress people. Teachers in any society are the professionals where the largest number of young people are systematically engaged. I think what you have shared with us is another example of how important it is for us to give attention to our teachers as the bridge for every generation.

One other "sound thought" ran through my mind in the voice of Ysaye Maria Barnwell of Sweet Honey in the Rock. It's a paraphrase of a Kahlil Gibran poem, "On Children," that says, "Your children are not your children . . . They have their own thoughts . . . You can strive to be like them but you can not make them just like you."<sup>1</sup> I jotted down a little note to myself: "We are always living our future, whether we recognize it or not. If we have good health or sustained health, what we see in these young people, we will be living with all the time. If we address them earlier, we will perhaps be able to engage and inform the future."

I have always been a reluctant follower. This is a way of saying that I know how to lead myself. So I have no problems following. I am talking now to we older folk not about how to move on over but how to step into a bigger space. The young adults in arts and culture represent emerging new spaces in which we can join and,

*We can learn that we have life beyond our histories, and we can move beyond the fear that we are coming to an end.*

we can move beyond the fear that we are coming to an end. I don't think enough can be said about succession plans except that I would caution that they should not be overly mechanical. What I take from Leslie Ito--and I see what my wife Merriam and I are doing now not only

in the process, affirm them and ourselves.

By stepping into their space, we can contribute and actually grow. We can learn that we have life beyond our histories, and

with our own young adults but with their peer groups--is that we are inviting young people into our private space like I was invited into a lot of private spaces as a younger person in my 20s. The late Ralph Rinzler, who brought me to the Smithsonian after earlier struggles with him, knew that I was an activist and aggressive by Smithsonian standards, but he felt like there was something that I might be able to contribute to the advancement of multiculturalism. And thus, he was willing to take the risk of not being totally comfortable with a different work style.

So I think we have to have generational succession plans, not just for the office but in our lives. We must invite young adults into our spaces and go into theirs because, as Ricardo said, they are going to be doing things whether we like it or not.

*...we have to have generational succession plans, not just for the office but in our lives.*

We really have to be earnest about the leadership dimensions we are considering. We need to contribute to efforts to place younger people at the center of gravity of organizations. In addition, we need to find ways to complement them--and part of complementing is sometimes moving out not with bitterness, not with regret, but with saying, "I've given all that I actually can give. I am going to live on, but despite all of my accomplishments, I can't figure out if I've got anything to contribute to this new generation of leaders other than helping to give up some space." That liberates us--I certainly feel liberated by it. I think it is part of our maturity, and we only get that confirmed in significant ways by looking at what is emerging. It is not by staying in our own heads and simply tracking our own autobiographical development.

Where are the young people? They are everywhere. They literally are everywhere, so there is no shortage of them. They are organized everywhere. And in the leadership transition, there will be some mistakes; there will be some regrets. But let's be honest. Look in the mirror



and recall how many mistakes we have made, whether it's with our own children or the leadership that we have offered. I am really encouraged and I would ask all of us to be encouraged and then I would ask us to do what Debora Iyall has asked us to--and that is not just talk about it. It is a safe haven to talk about it; we need to come back in a year's time and say, "Well, here's the one thing we did or the two people we found or the three or the 30"--whatever it is, we need to take that step. Otherwise, the world will be developing outside of us, and we will actually lose a lot because young people have longevity. We no longer have longevity.

**Leslie Ito:** James Early just reminded me that I am really happy that this discussion about emerging leadership and diversity is coming together. There are too many times that I have been at discussions--arts and policy discussions--where it is one or the other, and to me the West is the best place for us to take that position and move these two things forward. There is no better place to do that, and it is in our hands to do it.

The other thing is this, when talking about putting these ideas into action, what would it look like if next year's WESTAF symposium were planned by this next generation? This is something to think about. And part of the commitment is that all of the elders will be willing to come and be at the table.

**Ricardo Frazer:** I want to take in what James Early said and let that simmer for awhile. But he does strike a chord with me on a number of notes. When he said as elders, as older folks, we need to step aside with grace and let young people lead and not be threatened by what we don't know or what is outside of our realm of understanding--that really strikes a note with me.

Back when hip hop first started and we were traveling a lot, guys dressed with their pants halfway down their butts and the clothes were big. They were outspoken about certain things, and there was cussing. We would go into a

radio station or a concert hall or a restaurant, and we were like pariahs. People looked at us like, "Oh my God. What is going on?" Part of that, I think, is that cultural disconnect--that disconnect between adults and kids and of the different cultures in which we live. And there is also a fear factor. So instead of looking to relate to us or to those kids, the approach was, "Okay, you're over there, and we're over here." We had the toughest time at Black radio stations, dealing with older Black men and women who were the establishment. When they looked at this young generation, it was as if everything they had worked for was being thrown down the drain or they thought, "This is not what it's about." We are looking to assimilate, and you are saying we are this and we are that. So, yeah, again, the idea of stepping aside with grace and letting young people do what they do and helping them in development is a very important one for me.

**Debora Iyall:** I want to pass on one thing, and that is a quote from Debbie Harry of Blondie, and I think we could all use it, share it, really take it in and know it. And that is: "Dreaming is free."<sup>2</sup>

**Margo Aragon:** In the Nez Perce culture, speakers are developed at a very early age. They provide opportunities for young people, men and women, to speak as young as teenagers, 12 or 13 years of age. What they do is, whenever there comes a time to have a speaking part, they will say, "So and so is going to be speaking." So you never know who is going to be up, and that is how they start designating who will be the speakers many years down the road--those who show signs of talent of oratory. They all know. They never say, "That one is good or that one is not good or did you hear that one?" It never comes up. It is just obvious how they develop these skills, and that is exactly what happens. By the time they are 17 or 18, the young men and women have already developed quite substantial skills, and those are the ones who go on to be the speakers for their communities.

At the same time, as they grow into this, it is so ingrained, they couldn't even tell you that this is what happens. But as they get older and they are speaking, the very eldest of the people will be outside of close range, and they will be "throwing" comments to the person speaking. The person could be 50 or 60 years old, but the ones who are older will be talking, so then they develop this skill of not only talking but of listening and taking it in. So it is a very circular kind of thing. I was so amazed to watch that happen.

So my question is: Do you think it is possible to develop this co-existence, this bringing up and circular thing happening within your communities? It seems like we are talking about a social change in the way we are developing young people. But do we do that in our own families? Is that happening in your own families where you are being considered the speaker and the role model? In work, yes, it's happening because we are developing that.

**Debora Iyall:** In my family, I was in a band that had a very prominent saxophone player, and my nephew saw him live when he was about three years old. Now my sister and I go to my nephew's gigs--that's one of the ways that we stay young--and go to hear him playing, listening, talking to him afterwards, "You gotta step up to the mic a little bit more." I'm one of those elders urging them on.

*...the reason that I have been able to be successful in working with a multi-generational kind of staff is because I grew up around my grandparents, and I think that makes a huge difference.*

**Leslie Ito:** I would like to think that, for communities of color, this kind of continuum that you are talking about happens more naturally for us. I know that I consider myself a historian, so I really value history and legacy and what has come before me. But also, the reason that I have been able to be successful in working with a multi-generational kind of staff is because I grew up around my grandparents, and I think that makes a huge difference. I understand how to relate to multiple generations, and I think

that is important.

Debora Iyall made me think that there is a whole youth culture behind me with which I should stay in much better touch. It is a culture that I don't know, so I need to make a better effort. Even though I still consider myself an emerging leader, I need to consider the people who are behind me as well.

**Ricardo Frazer:** When I talk about moving aside, I don't really mean getting completely out of the way. Not at all. And I think James Early touched on that point, too. One doesn't completely extricate oneself from a situation--you just allow those young people to do their thing. Because they need your guidance, they will ask you questions. You just can't be hostile to them.

In rap music, it happens that way because you get a guy like Dr. Dre, for example, or the group N.W.A., back in the early '90s--you've got Ice Cube, the D.O.C.--all of these guys who came up as a unit, as a family, and they have had success as a unit. What they look to do, though, is to branch out from there, so each individual member of that group then gets his situation and his own deal and has his own album and his own voice. So you learn while you are in that family--while you are in that unit--and then you have to develop your skills, you have to have patience and wait your turn for your record to be released. When we look at a more contemporary rap artist like Nelly or Eminem, for example, he had the group D-12. That was the group that was around him; he had success out of that group. He went back and brought that group up, and out of that group, there are individuals who are now engaged in solo projects. So Em didn't really move aside in the sense that he left that situation. He became the elder statesman, as it were, and helped the kids, the other members of that group, achieve success. So that is what I mean when I talk about moving aside, and your whole idea of co-existing lends itself to that.

The same thing happened at the Vera project, where the kids who are there the longest may

move on to the 5th Avenue Theatre or the ballet. When other kids come into the organization, they are there to help those kids because they know that progression. I love that idea of longevity. I mean, youth has longevity, and if we acknowledge that and recognize that, then the whole idea of being threatened or standing in their way is minimized. When we are gone, they will still be here.

*We need to think more long term; we need to think about the field in general.*

**Leslie Ito:** I wanted to emphasize another point, and it is about nurturing new talent, whether it is artistic or administrative talent, and then having people move on.

I have heard many discussions with elders, and they say, "Well, I invested all this time into this person, and then they left five months later." I think that we can't be that short sighted in our thinking. We need to think more long term; we need to think about the field in general. When I left Visual Communications at the end of my summer internship, Linda kept in touch with me. She knew I was going to go and I was going to learn from Jerry Yoshitomi at the Japanese American Community Cultural Center and I was going to learn from Franklin Odo at the Smithsonian. Then I was going to come back and bring it all back to Visual Communications. I think that was a good model as far as looking long term and growing our leaders. We need to look at it as a field investing in the growth of its leaders.

**Michael Alexander:** I would like to point out that we Baby Boomers are probably the first generation in a greatly expanding field of culture workers. Those in the cultural world before us were probably primarily working for major institutions. Around the time that we came of age is when a great many dance companies and theater companies and all types of community-based arts organizations were developed. I remember in my early career when dance leaders would get together, we were busy teaching each other. I was so impressed when the manager of the Bela Lewitzky Dance Company, Darlene Neal, opened up her briefcase and took

out a hand-held calculator. I thought, "Gosh, my company will never be able to afford one of those." But we were teaching each other, and I think now there is a need for us, as we get older, to teach each other about how to deal with these transition issues. It is going to be important for us to make sure that this topic is on agendas as we gather, and it has got to be a topic for a much bigger universe than is represented in this room. We need to gather and talk about how do we pass the baton or share the baton as we move forward.

**Mayumi Tsutakawa:** What has been said strikes a chord with me because I have two children who are not children anymore--they are emerging arts leaders. They are working in New York and learning to organize and express themselves through the arts. I have a young cousin in the B-Girls break-dancing group, the Massive Monkeys offshoot group. It's great for us to talk about how we as individuals will respond, but what will we as older adults in policymaking positions do to encourage young leaders? What is very important to me as part of an institution, a state arts agency, is by the end of this discussion, or by the end of tomorrow, will there be recommendations for institutional policy change that will help to nurture, hire, and train emerging leaders? How do we really make this a priority?

We are in the midst of a sea change in our field. When you go to the national arts conferences--with great respect to all of those who go to these conferences--there are a lot of people there with gray hair like mine and like Juan's. But it is very important for us to address this issue. So I would like to see this gathering propose some policy changes such as recommending that a certain percentage of arts-council boards be young leaders.

**Gloria Emerson:** I didn't realize until I was listening to the presentations of Leslie, Ricardo, and Debora how much I have become part of the elderly mindset. It seems as if, for a long time--actually, it's been five years--I've been in the rooms of the aging--my father and then my



dying sister and now with my mother. It has become so precious to me to be with the older generation as I've tried to capture the aesthetic,

*That generation is certainly going to need to know a little bit of what I call "the bundles of wisdom," which are evaporating.*

the concepts of that generation, knowing that whatever I have to bring to the next generation is going to be a very frail bridge of wisdom. I have been able to capture so very little of the wisdom of the people who are moving on.

That has been so much of my concern--to find ways to honor the philosophy of life, of land, of space, of the sacred.

Sometimes, I get so bothered and irritated by today--by modern contraptions and so forth--and yet I know now as I've listened to you how important it is that I also try harder to connect with the newer generation. That generation is certainly going to need to know a little bit of what I call "the bundles of wisdom," which are evaporating.

**Susan Boskoff:** I feel so dazed and confused. Suddenly, I listen to Senator Arlen Specter (Republican, Pennsylvania), and he seems to be making sense. I hear Ricardo Frazer talk about his work and the rap song "Baby Got Back." And I realize how much I like it, even though it's the antithesis of the message we were trying to teach teenagers when I was a counselor at Planned Parenthood in Salt Lake City many years ago.

Of course, it's cyclical. Every generation, every field, has concerns about passing on the baton or searching out the next leaders. To follow up on Gloria's comment, maybe they come from the past and the present. I have been spending time with my mother, who is 86 and the youngest of her group of "rebels" who live in the Redwoods Senior Community in Marin County. They are a varied bunch; many continue with social activism and the pursuit of creative expression. They engage in and confront life head on, and they energize me in a way that's nearly impossible to explain. I return home, and my stepson, a young artist and architect who works in his father's firm, forces

me to rethink my own vision. As his instructor said of Nick's approach to landscape painting in Italy, "This kid is unbelievable. He deconstructs as he looks at things." Both sets of experiences--both young and old--provide the path to new thought and perhaps outcome. And that speaks leadership to me.

As an aside, I don't think we have anyone here who works with the built environment, but I believe that architects, with their physical language designed to influence the new century's urban and suburban fabric, whether it's Thom Mayne and Morphosis, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, or Andreas Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, must be part of the leadership discussion. Our investment in the planning, design, and function of our cities and neighborhoods will inform the development of new communication and social systems, which includes the arts. There is reason to meet in this neighborhood in Los Angeles. The fabric of culture weaves in and out between the built environment and traffic pattern--human and motorized. Is there a plan to include buildings of human scale along side Thom Mayne's Caltrans building? Will it become a good neighbor to those who already live and work here? The issue of layers of poverty within our cities is something we all need to address, and that includes the leadership of our field.

Returning to the sense of the cyclical nature of things, in our country during the '20s and '30s, new social movements were born. Artists, who are often on the front lines of social change movements, and social activists were searching out leaders and trying to find the new notes of democracy. The creation of the Works Progress Administration is significant. Thousands of artists were engaged to create and work, again, to find those new notes of democracy. It was the government's first support system for arts programs, but, in reality, it was the voice of the individual artist that surfaced. Every generation, in finding its way and its notes, will always glance over its shoulder while looking forward. For me, there is a comfort in that, even though I am still worried that

Arlen Spector is making sense to me.

**Estelle Enoki:** I have a question for Leslie Ito. You were fortunate to have a very nurturing and unique relationship with your mentor, Linda. I have worked through probably 10 administrative transitions in my career. Not accepting your predecessor's work—or even trashing your predecessor's work—seems to be a standard way of establishing your own identity and power base, and this is common political practice. What are your thoughts on this practice?

**Leslie Ito:** I am a firm believer that, in any kind of position, there is something to be said about the two four-year terms of the presidency. If you can't do it in eight years, then maybe it is time to move on. So, in about eight years, you may see me moving on from Visual Communications if I can't do it. That is to say that I was thinking about this whole process this morning, and it probably took me what would be my first term to finish or push what Linda has started. I was then a new leader trying to feel out my own style and considering how that would happen. We are going through a strategic planning process, and it will be very helpful for me to be able to not trash my predecessor because a lot of the foundation of my thinking for the organization is really based on my learning from Linda. But the challenge is to take not just my ideas but the ideas of the whole team I am trying to build. Our ideas as a team will move us forward.

When I talk about the founder syndrome or post-founder syndrome, I keep in mind that Linda was really the vision behind our organization. I think my leadership style is a little different. I don't want the future of Visual Communications to be my vision alone. I want it to be the vision of my team and that of my staff, my board, our constituents, and the members and artists whom we serve. So that is the direction that I am going.

**Michael Shuster:** Because I have worked so much with the traditional arts and traditional artists, I think it is really important to look at

that area as a wonderful model for what we are talking about. I think Neil Hannahs could probably talk about hula, and you could talk about Okinawan musicians, who have a whole system of passing on their knowledge and passing on their leadership while the elders still stay in total contact with their people, with their communities, and with their groups of artists. Simultaneously, they are working cooperatively to train a whole new generation—not just one generation but the generations of the future.

**Suzanne Benally:** I want to comment from a place of becoming an "emerging elder" and note

how I might be concerned about this from a Native perspective. Gloria Emerson mentioned that one of her concerns is loss of language, and I think about language—which, for the Navajo, really carries our philosophy--and

*It is important to us that we help ground young people's identity in our culture.*

art is a living part of that. It is important to us that we help ground young people's identity in our culture. This is because we were given instructions of who we are as human beings and what our role is in this world, on this earth. Through the language, we also receive cultural instructions on behaviors and things we do and things we don't do that sustain the culture and the way of life. The tension with a lot of our young people is that the contemporary arts challenge this. This is not to say that we are not a dynamic culture, but how do we address this? The last time I was home to Shiprock, I was looking at a cartoon of a traditional Navajo who was hanging up her husband's pants. A lot of Navajo men are cowboys, so they wear very thin Wranglers. In the second frame, she was holding up her grandson's jeans, which are sort of the hip-hop jeans, and they were really wide, and she is looking at these really puzzled. Just grappling with the change is a challenge for us.

**Debora Iyall:** Well, the Maori have a wonderful school where they are teaching contemporary arts and techniques, but all of the art work is encouraged (and I believe it is enforced) to have a Native perspective. I don't know the name of

the school, but it is a really wonderful model. I met a number of the artists from it up in Olympia when they had the gathering *Return to the Swing* for indigenous artists of the Pacific Rim.

**Neil Hannahs:** First, I want to thank those who presented for sharing not only the *mana'o* (knowledge) that is in your head but *pu`uwai* and *na`au*, which is what is in your heart and your gut. Thank you very much. It takes courage to do that.

Second, I detect a structure--a model of leadership--that suggests to me a hierarchy and a pyramid that gets narrow at the top. In order to have things go up, you must get out of the way or make room. I want to submit for consideration a different model of leadership that is as broad as the responsibilities we have, and there is room for plenty of leaders. One of our practices is to race canoes, and if you think of the person in back as the steersman, as the leader, you are really missing the leadership provided by every other member of the crew. The person in the first seat is a leader because he or she sets the pace. The person in the second seat has to back that person up and has to be a strong paddler. The persons in the third and fourth seats are your muscles; they give you the brawn of the canoe. The fifth seat of the six is the back-up steersman, picking up anything that the steersman doesn't pick up. In this

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model, the responsibilities are shared, and there is a lot of room for leadership.

Third, I was trying to run Leslie Ito's emerging-leader equation, and I was getting into some pretty

high numbers. I wanted to raise my hand as an emerging leader, too. I have been 30 years with one organization. On the one hand, with that kind of experience, I ought to be a mature leader, but, in some ways, I feel young in some of my leadership responsibilities because I've been able to re-pot many times, and that re-potting has allowed room for my roots to feel

young and to stretch out. Certainly, there is a need for the young sprout--we call the young sprout the *oha*, which is the young sprout that comes from the *taro*, the *kalo*. There is plenty of room to proliferate those, but still we have room to grow as well. We can keep re-growing, and that's kept me going!

**Patty Ortiz:** In a previous life, I was an arts and educator coordinator for the state arts council in Colorado. We sponsored aesthetic education institutes in migrant camps and in the San Luis Valley. What we came to realize was the best way to expose the teachers to contemporary art was to use the folk arts. We developed institutes that included folklorists and folk artists with contemporary artists so that when the teachers realized that gardening is an art form and knitting is, too, they were able to understand artistic processes and understand contemporary processes. The project was very successful.

On another subject, we think about our elders and how they can speak to our future leaders. What I've now realized is what our young leaders are doing is keeping our elders alive--probably in a lot of different ways.

<sup>1</sup> Ysaye Maria Barnwell, "On Children," Perf. Sweet Honey in the Rock, *Good News*, Flying Fish, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Blondie, "Dreaming," *Eat To the Beat*, by Debbie Harry, Chrysalis Records, 1979.

## TOPIC II: ISSUES OF INCLUSION AND ECONOMICS

### GARCIA PRESENTATION

**Tony Garcia:** I work in a Chicano and Latino cultural arts center called *El Centro Su Teatro*. A lot of the impetus for what we do comes from the Chicano movement. As a matter of fact, I teach now in the Chicano Studies Department. Consequently, I would say that the business of cultural identity has been my career. Not that I know everything about it, but I have been able to feed myself and my family talking about Chicano issues and what it's like being a Chicano and also the whole push for the discussion of self-identification. I teach this at Metropolitan State College in Denver. The reason kids come into my class is because the college requires that they take a multicultural credit. If not for that requirement, I might not see them. Many of them come from the suburbs, while others are fourth-generation Chicanos who are trying to rediscover their roots.

Some of the first questions I am asked in class are, "What is a Chicano? Are you a Chicano? Are you a Mexican? Are you a Hispanic?" They worry because "I don't want to offend anybody." We start off by having the discussion. We talk about Ruben Salazar, the late *Los Angeles Times* writer. His essay containing his definition of a Chicano says, "A Chicano is a Mexican American with a non-Anglo image of himself."<sup>1</sup> And so then they think they are kind of fine, and they kind of go along with that for a little bit.

Then I start to show them other examples. In *Zoot Suit*, you have the White pachuco who tells the lawyer, "You just better find out what it means to be Chicano . . . I'm pachuco too."<sup>2</sup> And then we have the Culture Clash guys they read in the *Culture Clash* book. There, in a forward written by Philip Kan Gotanda, he says that "Chicano is a state of mind,"<sup>3</sup> and you have two Culture Clash guys who are from El Salvador calling themselves *Chicanos*, so now my students are really starting to have some

problems. We brought in the Chicano Messengers, and Paul Flores is Mexican, Cuban, and Serbian, and he says "I'm a Chicano." Mark David Pinate is Panamanian, born and raised in this country, and he says, "I'm a Chicano." I gotta tell you, now my students' heads are spinning around pretty badly. The Taco Shop poets do an interview in the *Visiones* PBS series, and one of the guys says, "I was born in Chile, but now I call myself a *Chicano*."<sup>4</sup>

So then the question goes to the students: "What do you call yourselves--*White students*?"

For lack of a better word, that's what we are

calling them now, and I hear the words, "I'm a mutt" when they talk about their racial or ethnic composition. That kind of shocks me. The other piece that comes out of it is when

...they use the term *American* a lot of times to describe *White English speakers*.

they make references to what they are versus what the "other," the people of color, are. They say, "Well, I think they were Mexican, or I think they were Hispanic, and the other person was American." So they use the term *American* a lot of times to describe White English speakers. So it becomes a really interesting dynamic of what that whole piece of cultural identity is.

I went to speak at Lincoln High School in Denver, which has a predominantly Mexican student body--a lot of children of immigrants are there. Every time I mentioned the word *Chicano*, I got booed. I got booed for a reason; there is a lot of friction between Chicanos and Mexicanos--first generation and those who have been here for a while. The Chicanos are intimidated because their Spanish sucks, and the Mexicanos realize that they are being treated in some ways with less opportunity because they don't speak English as well. So you have a lot of friction. What the Mexicanos don't realize at this point, as they are booing me, is that they, whether they like it or not, fit into a definition of *Chicano*: They are of Mexican descent and born or raised in the United States.

Although we as Chicanos are being criticized by that group because of our so-called assimilation or Americanization--that we speak English more and that kind of thing--they are actually starting to fall more and more into that category. As I drive through my neighborhood, which is primarily Mexicano, I see signs that say "yarda sale." *Yarda* is a word for yard in Spanish, and it's probably not the most proper word, and *sale* is the word in English. So you have to be able to be bilingual to read this sign, and these are Mexicanos who are starting to adapt English words with Spanish endings. Consequently, they are becoming more Chicano than they really realize.

The population of Denver, which is surprising to some people, is about 28 percent Latino. In northern Colorado, the city of Greeley is about 35 percent Latino. Many people think of Colorado as a fairly conservative state, but there are really two Colorados. There is an urban and southern Colorado, which is where the primary concentration of Latinos is. Then there are the suburbs and the Western Slope of the state, which is where the heaviest concentration of European Americans is. Some say we are as divided as the United States.

A recent article in *The Denver Post* talked about how Colorado is not a blue state or a red state--it is a purple state. I think that a powerful

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argument could be made that the United States is not a red or a blue country, but it is more of a purple country. Yesterday, as I was talking to an Iranian cab driver, he was

outraged at the recent elections. He noted that, in the world, opposition to the conservative agenda is really in the majority, but the minority seems to be powerful because they are in power. Right now, in the schools, Latinos represent more than 50 percent of the population of the Denver Public Schools. In Denver, people estimate that those school-aged youth are the next big voting block; they have not yet reached voting age, but they are soon going to be the majority in the city, and they are going to be voting. They are going to be a powerful block.

I made a mistake because I read compulsively. I read George Will yesterday, and I was outraged. His column was once again an admonishment for those who have liberal ideas. He writes that what we've managed to do is offend the mainstream of the United States with our ideas of acceptance and inclusion. He indicated that what happened in the recent election was a backlash against those ideas--and George Bush was elected because the mainstream does not hold those values. Will indicated that many of us are outside of the mainstream. Well, his mainstream is a little bit different from my mainstream.

Working in the mainstream has been a lifelong experience for us as artists of color. Starting off with the idea of just doing the work, the opportunity to do your work, was a large advancement. I am the first--and there may be other Chicano playwrights in the state--but you know, I can't think of any who get paid much. I don't think any of them are paid for actually doing the work that they are doing. This is the situation in my generation--the Baby Boomer/Chicano Movement generation. We represent the first generation where people actually started to get paid to do their work. We were the first generation to start looking at ourselves as having a career in the arts. My parents' generation did not. That doesn't mean that they didn't have art; it doesn't mean that they didn't have practicing artists. It means that they did everything that they could possibly do in order to create their art on another level. So we are the beneficiaries of that experience and all that went before them.

*We were the first generation to start looking at ourselves as having a career in the arts.*

So my generation of Chicano artists started off with this idea that we just wanted to be able to have a voice. And as we moved through the system, we began to learn--I think it took us until sometime in the mid '70s before we realized--that there was money that was being used to actually fund artists, and we were amazed that they managed to keep that a secret for such a long time. And as soon as we found out about



it, they cut it. So we went through this whole process. This is pre-marginalization. So now we've moved to the table, and we say, "Hey, wait a minute, you guys have got some money. We want to be a part of that thing." And so we are included but now marginalized.

We also have a tendency to marginalize ourselves. In my class, I learned a lot about urban culture and hip hop from my students because they compare it to what I am talking to them about. We read Luis Valdez's *Los Vendidos*<sup>5</sup> and talked about the idea of selling out. These kids have beliefs about who sold out in the worlds of hip hop and rap music--and they believe selling out is almost instantaneous. To them, if more than five people know you, you may have sold out. If you make more than \$150, you have sold out. So their ideas are really pretty interesting and pretty scrambled, but I think in them there is an element of self-marginalization that takes place. It is as if they are saying, "If they like us, there must be something wrong with us." I think it is a guy thing, too. "If this woman is so great, what the hell is she doing with me? Right?" When that is said, all the guys laugh. So, in our culture, we have a tendency to do that to ourselves, and all of us went through these periods.

So then the discussion moves toward inclusion. And what does *inclusion* mean? One definition is us living out on this periphery and only kind of knowing this other thing happens, and every now and then we are able to partake of it. The next stage, which was inclusion when it started, was one in which we were being invited to the table. But what happened out of that, I think, is something we are experiencing in Denver. For example, I was asked to serve on a task force that was established to help revive the Colorado Council on the Arts. On the task force were people from mainstream institutions. During the meetings, all of them passed out their brochures, and there were tons of brown people and black people and yellow people on the covers of these brochures. Yet, when you opened them up and looked at the names of the staff and board, there were no apparent names

of brown people, black people, red people, or any other than white. This whole thing about diversity means we are going to put you on our cover, but we are not going to put you on our board.

The major institutions position themselves to ask for money on our behalf, but they are not going to give that money to us. Denver is the land of the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). The District, if you haven't heard of it, has become a funding model that a number of other cities have talked about adopting. Recently, the District was once again reauthorized, and many people think that is a very positive thing. However, during the time leading up to the reauthorization process, there was a powerful move within the Latino community--though it didn't actually materialize into action--to oppose the reauthorization. The reason was that the SCFD is a three-tiered system, with most of the money (62 percent) allocated to five large organizations. These organizations are clearly not organizations of color--nor are they organizations that reach out in any significant way to that community. Denver's cultural policy, even with an African-American mayor, has been to build the infrastructure of major organizations and major arts-organization facilities with the idea that others will be helped through the arts version of the trickle-down theory. The administration's belief was that somehow this would happen with the building of the consciousness of the arts around large arts organizations' activities.

People like me get accused--and not without reason--of biting the hand that feeds them because we actually do get the leftovers-- whatever rolls off of the table. So there is this discussion in Denver that the great thing about the SCFD being reauthorized is that an organization like mine can still receive \$35,000 annually from it. Now I will take that money--I am not that stupid. But the conversation that I think is really important--and the Latino community is starting to have that conversation--is that we are marginalized, and the community's artists are marginalized. The common perception in the

arts community seems to be that one art is as good as any other art as long as something is happening, and we who feel marginalized

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artists are marginalized.*

should shut up and go home, and everything will be fine.

During the '80s in the Latino theater movement, there was a project that came out of Denver called the *Hispanic Playwright Project*. The goal of the project was to mainstream our artists. So this discussion about mainstreaming was taking place a long time ago. What mainstreaming meant in those terms is how to get our artists to sound more like the mainstream--or what we perceived as the mainstream--so that we could fit into it. I would like to start having a discussion about what it means for us to be considered part of the mainstream. At 35 percent or at 28 percent of the population, we are no longer happy with inclusion--we are really talking about full participation.

When we talk about cultural identity, we are circling back to a core issue: Is cultural identity how we look at ourselves and how we envision our cities? It is not enough that everything is equal to everything else and that if we can make a nod to each ethnic group, we have fulfilled our task. I think that we have to start really working with this issue--and it seems like the urban centers are a good place to start. I live in an urban center—it's a place in which I would like to continue to work. I think we need to take a close look at how we perceive cities in terms of how they perceive their cultural identity. This approach is different from one that considers that there is a mainstream (read Euro-Americans) and feels ways must be found to include (read adjust) other groups into the mainstream.

The process of defining cultural identity will have a significant learning curve. Groups have to go through the process; however, there is a big power shift that has to happen within that, too, and considerations related to the allocation of money are part of that process. We must be able to turn those political wheels and those

economic wheels so that we are not only being just included in different parts of the discussion, but we actually see that major art centers of color are being built within our communities because they provide the infrastructure and the institutions for us to continue our work long term. When we talk about cultural policy, I think we have to start talking about it in a completely different manner; we need to look at it in a different kind of light. What we are really talking about is not just from the point of inclusion, which greets us with "Hi, welcome. You're coming into my house." The new realization must be that it is our house as well.

*The new realization  
must be that it is our  
house as well.*

Going back to the discussion of marginalization, I still have a difficult time. The theater work I do involves a lot of music, but I will cringe (and I am working on this) when somebody calls it *American* musical theater. This occurs because my concept of American musical theater is not something that I am dying to go see--or that I want to be accused of creating. But you know what? For 30 years, organizations such as Su Teatro, Teatro Campesino, organizations in the African-American community, organizations in the Asian community, have been creating musical works of theater, yet we continue as people of color to shy away from the term *American*. I am more comfortable being called a *Norte Americano*, right? It's the same as when we shy away from the term *patriotism* because we see *patriotism* as *native-ism* or *national-ism*. A national dialogue is taking place regarding how we see ourselves in terms of our cultural identity and how we want the rest of the world to see us. We have to start taking back some of those terms. We, me, us are as American as anybody else in this country, and we also are as mainstream as anybody else in my country. I am not the most radical person in my community--as hard as that is to believe--I am not. For some people in my community, I am pretty mild. I think that what has happened is that we have bought into some of the concept of inclusion. We bought into not belonging, yet we crave acceptance. The con-



versation I am interested in having is when can we start saying, "No, it's not a question of giving me my piece of the pie. It's that I am involved in every element of the pie."

I want to comment on just one last thing. Part of this issue (cultural identity) is about institutions--building our own institutions. The other thing is infrastructure--building our own infrastructure. This morning, Leslie Ito talked about all the opportunities she has had in terms of arts administration, yet few of us have had those opportunities and struggle still to create them for others. As we have developed our organizations with difficulty, we recognize that arts administrators--all of the arts administrators here--are really the backbone of what makes this stuff go. They create opportunities for artists. Arts administrators are the ones who say, "Oh, yes, we'll make sure we shut the light off. No, don't worry about that." We make sure the lights go on, we make sure the lights go off, we make sure the trash gets picked up--all that other stuff that sometimes gets lost in the process. But we need to create opportunities for our young people to say, "Hey, you know what? I can get a job as an arts administrator in an organization of color. I can work in the arts and make my car payments, and I can get health benefits, and maybe even an IRA account somewhere along the line, and I can actually have a career being an arts administrator in my community. I can help build my community, and I can help build that infrastructure so that, later on, somebody else can come into that place."

I belong to an organization called the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC), and NALAC has been around for awhile. We have our roots in The Association of American Cultures (TAAC). NALAC has created a national leadership institute, and every year for the past three years, we have taken 13 to 17 young Latino arts administrators and provided them with an intensive two-week course in arts administration, talking about nonprofits, writing grants, all the other things that people come in and go, "I don't even know where to

start with this kind of work." And part of this is a mentorship program.

So those are the two pieces that I would like to put on the table. We need to reconsider how we fit into the mainstream. This process is not a question of us challenging the mainstream anymore because the dynamics within the mainstream in the next 50 years indicate that "we people of color" are going to be the mainstream. I think also that in our conversation of how we become that, we have to create opportunities to create that infrastructure by creating a body of arts administrators, creating that stability within our organizations, so that they can then turn around and support our artists and our organizations and create that longevity for arts institutions within our communities.

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*We need to reconsider how we fit into the mainstream.*

<sup>1</sup> Ruben Salazar, "Who Is a Chicano? And What is It the Chicanos Want?" *Los Angeles Times* 6 Feb. 1970: B7.

<sup>2</sup> Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit and Other Plays* (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1990) 68.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Kan Gotanda, Foreword, *Culture Clash: Life, Death and Revolutionary Comedy*, by Richard Montoya, Culture Clash, Ricardo Salinas, Herbert Siguenza and Culture Clash (Comedy Troupe) (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1998) ix.

<sup>4</sup> "Episode Five," *Visiones: Latino Art & Culture Captures the Rich Cultural and Artistic Expressions of Latinos in the United States*, PBS, 3 Oct. 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Luis Valdez, *Los Vendedos* (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1990).



## MOTLEY PRESENTATION

**Sabrina Lynn Motley:** This past January, the Japanese American National Museum was asked by SITES, which is the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service, to host *September 11th: Bearing Witness to History*. Originally developed by the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, the exhibition contained 48 artifacts from steel girders to clothes worn by rescue personnel from the three crash sites. The exhibition had been slated to go to Chicago; however, the venue cancelled and, as there was no California showing in the original schedule, they asked us as a Smithsonian affiliate to present it. So, in January, 2005, we had a little more than a week to determine if our space could accommodate the artifacts—there were questions about weights of the girders, we would have to split it up and show it on two floors, we would have to obtain the necessary funds in a very quick manner. Most important, we had to consider whether the exhibition made sense from the standpoint of our mission. Of all the discussions that took place, it was the latter that was the most charged. The recurring question, internally and externally, was why would the Japanese American National Museum present such an exhibition?

*...the National Museum is the only museum in the United States dedicated to sharing the experiences of over 850,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry.*

As James Early pointed out, the National Museum is the only museum in the United States dedicated to sharing the experiences of over 850,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry. It was established in 1982 when two groups, Little Tokyo-based businessmen (and these were mostly men, although a lot of women did the on-the-ground work) and highly decorated World War II veterans, pooled their talents and their resources to create an institution that would work to ensure the preservation of Japanese-American heritage and cultural identity. This vision is reflected in our mission state-

ment, which reads: "The mission of the Japanese American National Museum is to promote the understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the experiences of Japanese Americans." It is the end of that sentence, "understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the experience of Japanese Americans," that offers both pause and promise.

It was interesting for me to hear Mr. Early talk about the National Museum as a trail blazer and remark upon the tri-lingual activities that took place at the opening of its new building. I didn't attend those opening events, but I saw the pictures. It was April 30, 1992. It was the day after the riots that occurred in the wake of the Rodney King trials. At the opening, it must have seemed like an oasis in a quickly burning desert as a Buddhist priest conducted rituals next to an African-American choir from Crenshaw High School, who stood next to folklorico dancers from Plaza de la Raza. If you look at those pictures closely, you will glimpse the challenges to come--the same challenges that we faced some 12 years later as we tried to figure out whether to host the *Bearing Witness* exhibition.

How does a culturally specific institution speak to the needs of its base as well as to the needs of the larger community? Moreover, what happens when the demographics of that base are rapidly shifting and that changing base demands other things from the institution? For many, hosting the exhibition wasn't an "either/or" question, but a "why should we?" question. Many felt there were scores of stories to be told within the Japanese-American community—a community whose story hadn't been fully told. Given that so many holding those stories were passing away, the question was asked, "What is the best way to reach out to others?" This was more than a philosophical question as the National Museum also had finite resources. Of course, others argued that one of the critical components of the National Museum's work was to provide ways to bring people together in dialogue and partnership and to forge new ground.

Like that of other American ethnic communities, the Japanese-American story, if it is to have larger relevance, must be told alongside the stories of other cultural and ethnic groups. Moreover, as the National Museum valued the first voice, it was critical that diverse individuals and communities be heard and heard often. So the National Museum had presented several exhibitions in the past that were conceived and/or executed with non-Japanese-American partners, most notably, *Boyle Heights: The Power of Place*, which many from diverse local communities attended. In those instances, the Japanese story was core even as it shared space with those other groups.

Still, *September 11th: Bearing Witness to History*

*The exhibition required the museum to make a clear statement and to take decisive action.*

was different. The horrific acts of that day weren't ethnic specific. The exhibition required the museum to make a clear statement and to take decisive action. Quickly.

Ultimately, we decided to host the exhibition and, against the advice of our financial officer, we jumped into it headlong. We figured we would find the money, which we did. Then we sat about crafting a clear statement of purpose and outlining the necessary decisive actions. The public statement went something like this: "History came tapping after September 11th, 2001, and made the relevance of the internment camps obvious. As a preeminent collector of personal histories with a commitment to learning the lessons from our past, the National Museum provides an important setting in which to examine the continued response to tragedy and heroism of that defining moment." It was hoped that, by claiming the culturally specific, we would activate gestures that would result in deeper cross-cultural connections. In the end, the exhibition was the highest attended in our history, bringing with it an increase in attendance from every ethnic group and many first-time visitors.

What it did not do is increase membership, and it did not increase store sales. In that way, our

financial officers were vindicated but, obviously, that wasn't the point. The exhibition did not result in a proportional increase to the people viewing our core exhibition, which is called *Common Ground: The Heart of Community*. *Common Ground* is the story of 125 years of people of Japanese descent living in America. Here, it's clear that some of the folks who said we shouldn't take the exhibition were vindicated, too. People didn't see the core story. That was our fault. We were remiss in not making more explicit the connections in the collateral materials we created as well as the ads we placed and the articles that we produced. In hindsight, we see we should have done more, and I have no doubt that we will make meaningful changes based on these experiences.

By now, you have no doubt noticed that I am not Japanese American. I am not speaking *for* a community—I am speaking *about* it. That said, these issues are not abstract because, as the director of public programs, they have a very real impact on the work that I do. In the case of *Bearing Witness*, I had to produce 24 events over the course of six weeks.

Yes, I lived at that museum! I created programs that reflected the mission of National Museum and spoke to multiple communities, including the core one. When I started, I was the new kid in town. I had just been made director of public programs, and I felt a keen responsibility to everybody. I was being watched by many of the same people who avoided me in the hallways, just as I was being helped and protected by those who met me with open arms. At the end of the day, if it is true, as James Early said, that the National Museum is blazing a trail, then for our conversation perhaps it is most important that it does so within its own community. This gives us another way to think about inclusivity, speaking internally as well as externally. Call it *outreach* or *process*--whatever name it is given, it's important that its definition and its function can and should reflect the particular communities that enact it. Communities grapple with the issue

*Communities grapple with the issue of inclusivity in different ways at different points in their history.*

of inclusivity in different ways at different points in their history. For example, these issues may look different as successive generations that are increasingly hapa take on leadership positions.

If our experience in presenting *September 11th: Bearing Witness to History* is any indication, there is no *terra firma*. Sadly, there may be no measurable economic benefit for some time to come. Yet, there is something to be gained by treading into these difficult waters. In her essay, "Finding Family Stories: Mapping the Journey to Community Engagement,"<sup>1</sup> Kinshasha Holman Conwill has written about how museums around the country are dealing with questions, especially after 9/11, of how to be community conscious because they recognize that museums are part of the web of organizations that creates the life of communities.

The National Museum will continue to engage its base by presenting core stories in concert with stories that speak to a larger community. In this way, it makes the creation of the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy even more important. For some time, the National Museum is going to have to focus on a specific story, and well it should. The National Center allows us to delve into the issues of diversity and democracy. Its goal is to inspire young people to be engaged citizens by learning lessons from the past as they work to shape a "more perfect union."

So the story continues to be told, but it is very difficult. I find it interesting to have to tell it as, again, someone who is not Japanese American. This is my first experience of working at a culturally specific institution. I also find it ironic that I am having conversations about issues that I have often avoided having within my own community. I am walking into the territory of others, which I'd like to think gives me a different insight into all of this. As you can see, there are many more stories to be told, and I want to thank you for listening to just one of them.

<sup>1</sup> Kinshasha Holman Conwill, "Mapping the Journey to Community Engagement," *Japanese American National Museum, Finding Family Stories, Exhibits 2003*, 16 Jan. 2006 <<http://www.janm.org/exhibits/ffs/2003exhibition/general/2003mission.html>>.



## LUTHER WILDER PRESENTATION

**Judith Luther Wilder:** I feel like this panel could aptly be called *The Sacred and the Profane*. Sabrina Motley and Tony Garcia have addressed very sacred issues. I am going to talk about the profane, which is money.

I am going to frame my remarks by briefly describing my own organization, which is the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI). I will also talk briefly about a year and a half of research we did before we created the CCI. I think this has relevance because, while our research dealt with the function of artists as a whole in the general arts economy, we found trends that have a negative and disproportionate impact on artists of color. The CCI is, in a nutshell, a small business development center for artists. It is the first one in the country to focus on the financial and the business needs of artists.

*...it was our feeling that artists are, by their very nature, entrepreneurs.*

In establishing the organization, it was our feeling that artists are, by their very nature, entrepreneurs. They deal with risk all of the time, and most

of them are self-employed. We thought it appropriate to look at the kinds of services workers in other industries regularly access. If you are in transportation, if you are in sales, if you are in any other industry, you have access to support systems. However, we found these were not available to the artist. We started CCI based on what we identified as a need within the community. Our primary programs provide entrepreneurial training, one-to-one business counseling, collateral for loans, marketing workshops, and a benefits program for artists that includes travel discounts, access to dental and health insurance, prepaid and low-cost legal assistance, and discount tickets to theater and performing arts venues across the country.

The CCI was established three years ago at the behest of Cora Mirakatani, who was then a senior program director for the James Irvine

Foundation. She is now executive director of the Japanese American Community Cultural Center. She engaged my company to conduct a study that confirmed that basically there is no arts economy that is recognized by the financial markets or government agencies. However, there is clearly a robust underground economy. Almost all other industries are reflected on balance sheets which, in turn, create equity, which then create economic opportunities. The arts industry doesn't have this structure and capacity that would be economically beneficial.

I clearly can't cover 18 months of research in 10 minutes, and you would lose the will to live if I tried, but I will mention one or two of our findings. One of the interesting pieces of information that we gathered that ties into this discussion documented a 46-percent increase in the number of professional artists (this is 326,000 persons) between 1970 and 1980, which was a higher rate of growth than all technical professions enjoyed during that same period of time. This increase corresponded with a change in the nonprofit tax code, which corresponded with an increase in the philanthropic dollars available to nonprofit arts organizations.

In the past decade, while the growth in the number of trained artists has continued, the volume of philanthropic dollars that are allocated to individual artists, as you all know, has witnessed a tragic decline.

Let's fast forward to today. Two months ago, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article talking about the decrease in roles on television and in film for artists of color. When I read that, I called Cal Arts and Otis and the Southern California Institute of Architecture and Arts Center to ask them if enrollment of artists of color had declined or increased in the last 10 years at their institutions. Without exception, three art schools said the numbers of multicultural artists they were enrolling and graduating had increased in all cases dramatically. This increase flies in the face of the recent report from University of Southern California's Tomas Rivera Policy Institute that focused on lower



acceptance rates of Latino and African-American applicants to all schools at University of California campuses since California voted in 1996 to ban the consideration of race in admissions. Apparently, while admissions for Latino and African-American artists at all University of California campuses have declined, the num-

*... the numbers of people trained without market consideration works to the disadvantage of all artists but works to the significant disadvantage of multicultural artists.*

bers of Latino and African-American art students at art schools have continued to rise. So, at least in California, this increase in art schools generally and among multicultural artists specifically suggests that the numbers of people trained without market consideration works to the disadvantage of all

artists but works to the significant disadvantage of multicultural artists.

Education is not tied to the growth of the arts industry or an opportunity but much more to giving because art schools continue to be the beneficiaries of philanthropy. This same philanthropy does not typically continue to nurture multicultural artists nor are employment or other opportunities there for them once they graduate.

So you have the following happening simultaneously: Nonprofit giving staying relatively flat, the number of arts graduates and specifically multicultural arts graduates is continuing to grow, there is a decrease in amount per artist or amount per capita, overall Hispanic populations have increased so that minority has become majority, and the arts industry is essentially 501(c)(3) based and therefore is not tracked as other industries are. As a result, you have not only an underground industry but one that, to some extent (because of poor data management), is certainly not functioning efficiently.

To contrast this, I would like to mention another profession that was tracked and that managed its data so that adjustments were made. In the '70s there was a widespread belief that the oceans would be a source of great research and development. At the time, there were several

television shows that had underwater heroes, and this was prior to our systematic destruction of the oceans. Mainstream schools turned out Ph.D. oceanographers by the thousands, and in no time, we had over 100,000 Ph.D.-level ocean scientists. The unhappy parents of these ocean scientists discovered there was no market for them. Ph.D.s ended up going back to school or working for the equivalent of what would be \$30,000 a year today. A few went to work for the oil industry, but many thousands were shockingly un- or under-employed. What happened?

This was a profession in which good information existed, planning was accommodated, the schools put the brakes on, and the economy for that profession adjusted, which happens in most industries that are properly documented and planned. The arts industry--or if you will, the underground arts industry--is not even as well tracked as other mission-driven industries. In the area of theology, the Catholic Church and the Mormon Church know exactly how many priests they need and how many missionaries they need.

But we are not in an industry that adjusts in time to avoid disaster. We have increasing numbers of multicultural artists in pursuit of fewer opportunities. We have less money, and artists of color are not only competing with each other for roles and grants and commissions but with many, many other artists overall. At some point, our industry has to pay attention to the models established by virtually every other industry and profession and acknowledge that even as the nonprofit community grows in significance, the picture that emerges of the sector that we are most concerned about, the arts, is of a sector experiencing mismatch, scarcity, uncertainty, and disinvestment in programs and facilities.

The CCI is a very small organization, but we have tried to do what we hope is working well for artists like J. Michael Walker and his colleagues. That is to position ourselves and our constituency at the intersection between culture and commerce and to connect the cultural

economy with the market. Part of our mission is very simple; it is to help artists get their work to marketplace in a way that is profitable for them. No one who comes through CCI becomes a better artist because they come through CCI, but we hope that they do manage their businesses and their careers more efficiently, that they learn to recognize that they are running small businesses, and that they should do it well. They should also learn that they are self-employed, and, if they identify themselves as such, they will inherit access and benefits they would not otherwise receive.

For example, if a person goes to a bank and identifies herself as an artist, good luck on getting a loan. However, if she states she is an African-American self-employed woman with an arts business, chances for success in obtaining a loan are greatly improved. Such redefinition also opens the door to other kinds of support. This crosses the gambit from micro-loans to free entrepreneurial training and business training. But you have to go in and say, "I am a small business owner, or I am a self-employed person." Is this approach ideal? Probably not--a person should be able to shout about his or her artistry from the rooftops, but the fact of the matter is, when one is an artist, playing the game gets you farther than being totally candid.

*...when one is an artist, playing the game gets you farther than being totally candid.*

For those of you who work in the so-called arts industry, look around and recognize that we need to control the industry rather than have it control us. It is what this group was talking about earlier when we talked about interviewing the people who come in to give you money. It is taking that kind of control. We produce essential products of communication. The arts are the steak; they are not the sizzle. We must recognize that, in our \$10 trillion economy, the arts are not reflected except as a creature of the wealthy who are rewarded for supporting the nonprofit arts. I agree with Debora Iyall who said that economics should not determine value, but I think values and value should drive

economics. I don't think we have done that.

We can learn from the struggles of other industries and move the funding of the arts from a dead-end system to one that is open ended. This is particularly critical for multicultural artists who find it easier to adapt to a market economy than mainstream artists who grew up in a grants system and are now shocked that the gravy train doesn't stop at their station anymore--or doesn't stop as often. Multicultural artists never rode that train, even when it was going full speed, and so adapting to an earned-income model to debt financing to complete projects to entrepreneurial strategies is not going to be such a shock to the collective systems of the multicultural artist. It is important to begin this adaptation immediately and to learn to use the few tools that are already in place as soon as possible. We really have to risk learning something new, as James Early said. It is very important. I think that when we are talking about language and the Japanese American National Museum being tri-lingual in their approach, we have to take on languages such as business language because business is not going to learn the arts language anytime soon.

*...we have to take on languages such as business language because business is not going to learn the arts language anytime soon.*

## RESPONSES AND DISCUSSION

**Michael Alexander:** When it comes to issues, there were two things that I heard strongly noted here. One is that we have got certain artists who are working to send messages back within their own communities. These artists produce work that helps them deal with their own identification and the issues with which their communities are dealing. The other is that some are working to get messages out about their community--they want to help Americans and others get to know that community better.

I also am realizing that the arts infrastructure is actually modeled on history and the experience

of the mainstream major arts organizations. I think that the funding and other support programs were essentially set up to deal with the realities of big symphony orchestras and big museums. When dealing with those types of institutions, there was a reason to have matching grants and the other common mechanisms we have today. The approach was a politically appropriate way to set up a government funding program. Then, to state that public money would be matched by private-sector money sounded very good. But such an approach is a real problem for a great many non-mainstream arts organizations. This is particularly the case with community-based organizations, where the level of wealth--of philanthropic orientation, of opportunities to find funding--does not exist as it does for the majors. When these organizations are given a government grant that must be matched, it becomes a double challenge. This is not the same experience as a major arts organization, where one has board members who, if necessary, are prepared to write checks to meet payroll at the end of the week. This kind of situation is one that I know has existed in certain mainstream organizations. The smaller community-based cultural organizations survive on the backs of the artists and the most passionate culture workers.

*I think there are some real challenges that we have to look at regarding the economic infrastructure for the arts.*

I think there are some real challenges that we have to look at regarding the economic infrastructure for the arts. For those of us who are working in the West, I think of the West as a colony or a group of

colonies. Los Angeles may have one or two nationally significant headquarters here--the Disney/ABC combination is here, but with all of the Hollywood industry that is based in Los Angeles, most of it is owned elsewhere, as is so much else. Our major newspaper just got bought out in the last few years by the Tribune Company of Chicago. We must remember that the purpose of colonies is to send money back to the home office. This approach leaves a lot less money available to support community-based enterprises.

Years ago, I went with Jack Jackson, whom many of you may know is the founder and guide for the Inner City Cultural Center. We went to a meeting with Jack Valenti, the head of the Motion Picture Association of America. I was director of performing arts for the city of Los Angeles for two years and thought, "Well, I may as well use that moment to see if I can try and talk to somebody from Hollywood." And Jack said, "I can't talk to you, I can't really do anything for you. It's hard enough to keep seven studios talking the same language. We can't do anything for the arts."

Jack Jackson was telling him that there are times when an industry has to stop just dealing with what it considers important, what are its favorites, and it has to take a look at the needs of the community that is its home. He noted that people in the community were demonstrating their passions. He noted there were enough people going to Plaza de la Raza, there were lots of people going to the Arts Center at the Watts Towers, and there were people going to venues all over Los Angeles--community-based organizations. Jackson argued it was time for the industry to become a different kind of citizen.

**Susan Boskoff:** I want to thank Tony Garcia for acknowledging the role of arts administrators. It's gratifying. I have said often that if it weren't for artists, arts administrators would not have jobs. If not for artists, we administrators would probably be doing what our parents wanted us to do or have jobs that at least we could explain to our parents.

Regarding the question of inclusion, I would like to reflect for a moment on the work of the Nevada Arts Council and offer several random observations. We often trail trends in Nevada, and that occasionally works for us, allowing us to approach directions and attitudes of our field in a somewhat different manner. Many years ago, we wanted to streamline our funding program, so we considered a number of models. The ones that resonated well were flexible, more general, and less cumbersome for staff and applicants. Our process became inclusive, pri-

marily because of the need for ease of access and management. We don't have a grant category for ethnic organizations or a program category for ethnic organizations. Yet, we have largely been able to serve equally using our fairly simple system and a continuing policy of "high-touch" assistance.

There does remain the question of how the Arts Council can or should work with culturally specific arts groups working within their local communities. In a state like Nevada, a very young state, just how ethnic communities reach out and invite others to share in their culture still remains problematic. What is the role of the Arts Council, and what are the implications for promoting that path? Reaching out can encourage the development of a more stable economic base for an organization. Yet, doing so can create cross-pollination that may, in the end, diminish the clarity and intensity of an art form practiced within the ethnic community.

*Arts and culture creates and sustains our democracy, but, as a people, we don't value the arts.*

In terms of economics, another dynamic seems to be occurring. Much of the world considers culture as capital, but in this country, we do not. Arts and culture creates and sustains our democracy, but, as a people, we don't value the arts.

Obviously, arts and culture are not considered "players" in our fiscal or governmental systems. I think this is unfortunate because, with our multiplicity of cultures, we lose the opportunity to position arts and culture in the marketplace.

In Nevada, the gaming industry is always a factor. It contributes a modest amount of funding to support the arts, yet it employs a breadth of artists from dancers to set designers to muralists. A casino may be a more visible partner in a rural area where resources are scarce, or in Reno, where the threat of Indian gaming in California has become a reality. And casinos often use the arts as an opportunity to attract clients--galleries, festivals, and Broadway shows can be found in a number of properties. The success of a casino, however, is reliant on keeping clients inside at the table, slot machine,

restaurant, or special event. Notice that you don't see many clocks in casinos. The community outside the casino doors is just a distraction. Yet, this is an industry that brings in a workforce recruited from around the world, and each group brings with it culture from its homeland. These individuals add to the complexity of the state, as many are "hidden populations," but they are also important tradition bearers that are now part of Nevada's strange cultural fabric and history.

The Arts Council is located in the Department of Cultural Affairs, which includes preservation, history, and museums as well as the state library and archives. In my 11 years there, I have observed that, though they still are under funded, the work of my sister agencies is more easily understood by the general population and the funders in Nevada. In part, this is because they offer the expected. What the Arts Council offers is the unknown--the product of an artist. And after so long in this business, I am just realizing how intimidating and downright scary that is to the uninitiated, especially those in government. We can seldom predict in the long term what an arts organization is going to present or what an artist is going to create. These acts of creative expressive always contribute to democracy, but they are often random and seldom part of a larger plan. I think that this dynamic is one reason we don't have adequate arts funding. It also suggests why we do not have broad support for inclusion. Inclusion is a democratic act that tilts against systems of control. Inclusion has a disorganized aspect, and it introduces uncertainty--features that, again, seem to elicit fear of the unknown from our fellow citizens.

**Anne Huang:** I want to open with a quote from Bishop Desmond Tutu: "It's not about merely obtaining a seat at the table . . . it's about setting the menu."<sup>1</sup> I have been asking myself all day: After we have been invited to come to the table, how do we change the menu? I want to talk about two things: Self-marginalization and the issue of inclusion.

I want to share an experience I had when organizations approached the Oakland Asian Cultural Center earlier this year. They wanted to engage in a programmatic collaboration with us. The organizations were very straightforward in informing me that they know their organizations are based in an area with the highest concentrations of Asian Americans in the country. They know statistics such as 50 percent of the homes in the city of San Francisco are owned by Asian Americans. Now just think about that. That is a staggering statistic for a Western American city. So these mainstream organizations that traditionally do not have Asian-American programming or Asian-American donors or Asian-American audiences are waking up to the fact that they need now to pay attention to the Oakland Asian Cultural Center and Asian-American arts organizations like ours. After talking to the organizations a little bit more, I felt they presented great collaborative opportunities for us. Working with them was going to greatly increase the visibility of our organization and, frankly, reach out to brand new audiences and donors.

I shared this with some of my colleagues, and some of them warned me against collaborating with "those people"--the mainstream organizations. When Tony Garcia talked about self-marginalization, I thought about that, and what I want to ask you, Tony, as well as anybody else on the panel who would like to respond, is: How do the traditionally marginalized communities stop the self-marginalization you talked about earlier today?

**Tony Garcia:** I think, as the mainstream, we ought to include them as well into our work. We need to rethink how we approach things. One of the difficulties that our communities have in terms of collaborating with mainstream organizations is the fear of interference within the first voice and losing control over it and the fear of acceptance.

A friend of mine, Lalo Delgado, just passed away, and one of the things he taught me was that you teach so that you can learn. What I

learned from my students is that what they dig about the culture is the music, and they like the food and they like the noise and a lot of the stuff that they don't have. They like the women, they like the men, you know, that kind of stuff.

But it is the other stuff that gets a little bit trickier. As an arts organization, we are really in a great position; it is an entry point--that is what we have done; we create these entry points to have these conversations. I think it is rethinking our stuff and knowing that what we have is just as valid. We have engaged in several arts collaborations. We have to get over this feeling that we don't belong in this room.

*We have to get over this feeling that we don't belong in this room.*

For years, people were telling me that, one of these days, your plays are going to be at the Denver Center for Performing Arts (Denver's large repertory theater). Well, I gave them so much shit that it ain't never going to happen. It wasn't a problem for me because I never wanted to be there, but one of the things I try to express to our other people is, "You deserve to be at that place or a place that works at that same level because our community deserves that kind of stuff." We need to move out of this mindset and try to avoid those two things. Collaborations are tricky because of the power dynamics, but we need to start in the collaboration work with the assumption that we have got the power.

We did a collaboration with the Denver International Film Festival, and they were really good to us and really tried. But following the collaboration, they said, "We want you to be a little bit more independent." I think they said this because we drove them crazy in that we wouldn't give up on those two points. As much as they were trying to help us, they weren't going to change what we were, so we came to a place of "we are helping each other and we are mutually independent and we feel that it is just as valid in the terms of the work we are doing and just as valid in terms of the work they are doing. So, it's a tough mindset, but I think you are right, it starts with us.



I have been working with our city government planners, and they're interested in working with organizations such as ours. I want them to start thinking about creating art clusters for organizations of color. I don't want them to just think about working with individual arts organizations but to consider the entire context for those organizations. For example, I want them to think about where the restaurant is going to go and where the transportation piece is going to go.

This whole country runs on disorganization. The idea is that if we just kind of work in a laissez-faire manner, then if there is a failure, it's nobody's fault. So when I talk about us changing our thinking, it's not anymore about "I'm going to do this thing, and then my people will come here and it will be just a great thing." It's like we belong in the city, we have a place to be here. I want to think of a holistic approach to art; I want to think about a holistic approach to our communities working there. How are business and art going to interact? Because we, for example, have a building, and we are away from everything else. We have no other support services, but it was a battle just to get that place. I don't want to work like that anymore, and I don't want the city to work--like I have any choice--but I don't want it to work like that anymore. So when somebody comes up to me and says, "I've got this great idea" for something that's isolated and has no chance of surviving, I don't want to do that. I want to go, "No! Here is what I want you to do with that before he gets me to jump on board with that."

**Pravina Gondalia:** I would like to follow up on what Anne Huang and Tony Garcia said. I have a different perspective on what Tony said. I don't see it as self-marginalization as much as I view it as working in silos. This is what feels comfortable, this is what we know, and this is what we work with. That approach is congruent with the fact that we as artists or artist communities work the same way. We need to be able to go out and talk to other non-arts entities in the community. This is why being able to articulate the merits of the arts to the non-arts communi-

ty, in addition to our own way of doing things in the community and for our constituency, is so important.

**Susan Boskoff:** I have a question for Tony Garcia relating to the Spanish-speaking community in Reno. We encourage our grantees to work with the non-arts sector within their communities and try to do the same thing as a state arts agency so as not to marginalize ourselves. We have a very strong folklife program, which is trying to expand into new communities to work with Nevada's new immigrants. One of our folklorists has been a member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Reno for many years and recently made a presentation at one of its luncheons. She was called the next day and was told that Reno now has a Latino Chamber of Commerce as well. So we now have a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and a Latino Chamber of Commerce to work with and through. Tony, do you have any thoughts about why two organizations, and do you have a sense of how we as administrators can work with organizations that are culturally specific as well as with the communities in which they exist?

**Tony Garcia:** Let me try to answer it this way. I was at The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) Conference quite a while back, and I was hanging out with a friend of mine, Jo Bunton Keel. I don't know if any of you know her; she was involved in theater in Denver. At the conference, the attendees were broken out into different cultural affinity groups. I went to hang out with the Latinos, and she went to hang out with the African Americans. Afterwards, she came up to me and said, "Man, you guys have it together. All we did was fight." And I said, "Are you kidding? I walked in this room, and they closed the door behind us, and I was scared." Some people here are laughing because they know what I am talking about. The perception is that we all come from exactly the same voice and, from my understanding in

*...being able to articulate the merits of the arts to the non-arts community, in addition to our own way of doing things in the community...is so important.*

the dominant culture, everybody doesn't get along with each other, either. The first time I heard somebody who was White "dis" somebody else who was White, I was kind of like, "Wow, you guys do that, too?" or "I don't like this group." It just kind of shows the texture within that group.

Part of the thing in organizing those communities, too, is that until they develop organic leadership, it is always going to be difficult. There will always be people who--man, you get two artists in the room looking at the same piece of work, and like they're going to get along, right? But creating those opportunities is great because that provides the opportunity for that leadership to start to take hold and then you can put yourself at the point where you can actually start having that dialogue.

**Michael Alexander:** Considering that much of WESTAF's constituency deals with non-ethnic-specific arts organizations, I just want to get something onto the record, too. I think that it is very important to create as much of a sense of ownership in organizations as possible. We have been very fortunate where I work at Grand Performances. We were addressing the many different communities of arts in Los Angeles from the very beginning, and, as a result, audiences from the various communities started to feel that they were part of the inner circle right at the beginning of our work. I think this approach has served us very, very well. I also think it is much more difficult for organizations that don't have that kind of history from the beginning to make the adjustment. But I think among the ways that people can deal with creating that sense of broad ownership is going to be the sharing of power, and that is probably the most difficult thing--along with passing the baton and/or sharing that baton.

Again, I remember Jack Jackson complaining about one of the mainstream theater companies that always wanted to hear his opinion, but they never wanted to give him the power to actually pick a program out of eight theater works that they would do in a season. They

didn't want to give up that power. We have given up that power at various times to different members of our community. We respond when Plaza de la Raza calls and says, "Please present so and so, so we can present so and so." Dwayne Obota used to say, "You gotta present so and so. We can't do them at the JACCC (Japanese American Cultural and Community Center)." We would work with our colleagues in different ways, and I think that helped our organization's health in the community at large. We've been appreciated and, to a certain degree, owned by many people from around the community just because of that.

**James Early:** I think one of our challenges is to begin to change our metaphors. In many ways, we are prisoners of history--doubly, those of us who have been marginalized. We are always looking at the status quo and then figuring out how we are going to be who we are going to be in relationship to the status quo. I was just thinking of Frantz Fanon. Some of you might remember those books in the '60's, *Black Skin, White Masks*<sup>2</sup> and *The Wretched of the Earth*. He said, "if we want humanity to advance a step farther, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries . . . . [I]f we wish to reply to the expectations of the people of Europe, it is no good sending them back a reflection, even an ideal reflection, of their society and their thought with which from time to time they feel immeasurably sickened."<sup>3</sup>

I think we have to get beyond talking about old democratic conceptions and think about what could be new democratic conceptions. The term people of color is still a useful term, but it seems to me it is not ultimately what we want to be bound by. Some of us have color, and some don't. Something is wrong with that rainbow. I mean, white is a stripe in the rainbow. Defeating racism requires a strategic unity of people of color but also of other democratic minded people.



There remains an issue of power. We can "color" up the workplace all we want, but if we don't alter the power balance--if we don't change our conception of power--then we ultimately won't make progress.

*We can "color" up the workplace all we want, but if we don't alter the power balance...then we ultimately won't make progress.*

This is something for younger and older folk to think about--not where we came from only (although we also have to think about that)--but also figuring out the kind and quality of public space we want to inhabit in the future.

<sup>1</sup> *Fordham Black & Hispanic MBA Association*, Fordham University, New York, 16 Jan. 2006 <<http://www.fordhambhmba.com/prospectivests.html>>.

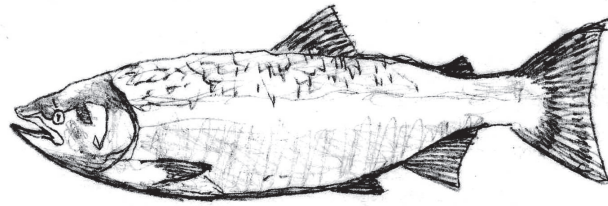
<sup>2</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1952 (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961 (New York: Grove Press, 1963) 315-16.



## SELECTION OF COLOR IMAGES FROM PRESENTATIONS

The following images were selected from Debora Iyall's presentation and used with her permission:



Coho salmon

Figure 1. CoHo Salmon by Debora Iyall.



Figure 2. Coyote by Savannah, a fourth-grade student from Yucca Elementary in Yucca Valley, CA.

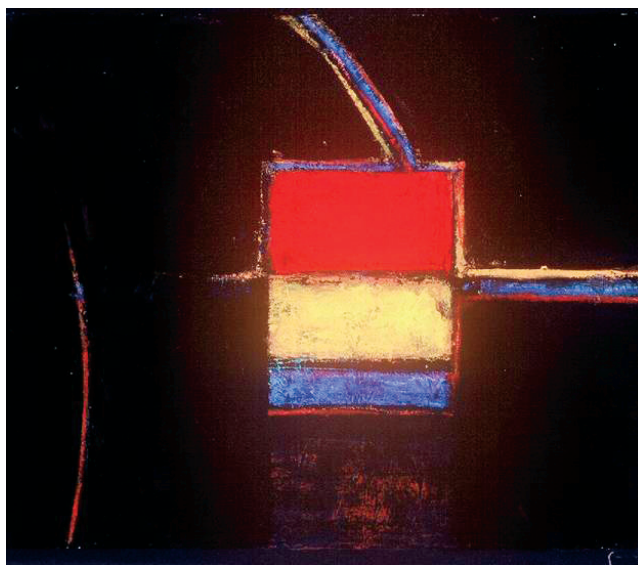


Figure 3. Self-Portrait by Miles, age 7, a participant in Cat's CAP day camp in Richmond, VA.



Figure 4. Devil by Miles, age 7, a participant in Cat's CAP day camp in Richmond, VA.

*The following images were selected from Gloria Emerson's presentation and used with her permission:*



*Figure 5. Untitled by Gloria Emerson.*



*Figure 6. Untitled by Gloria Emerson.*

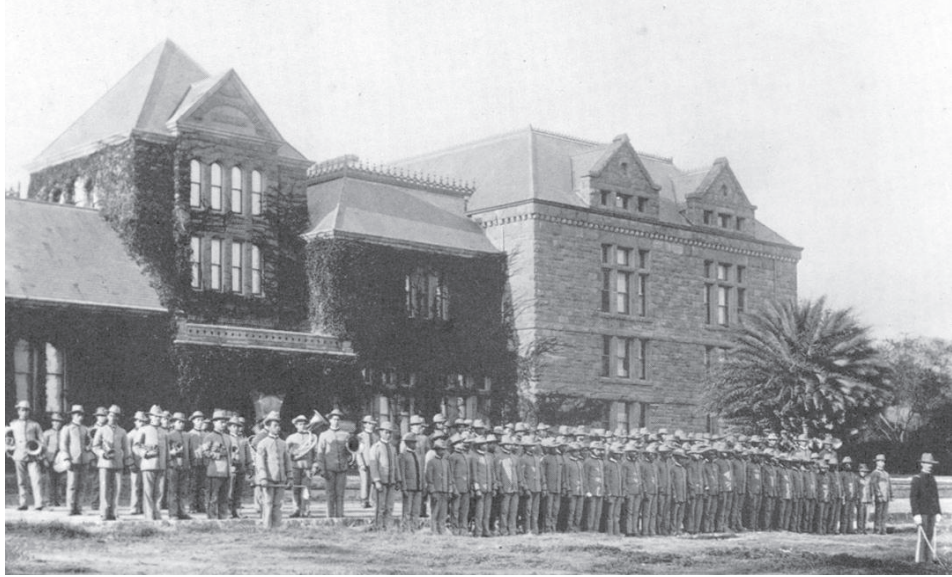


*Figure 7. Crow and Falcon by Gloria Emerson*









*Figure 10. Kamehameha Schools.*



*Figure 11. He'eia Fish Pond, a cultural treasure.*



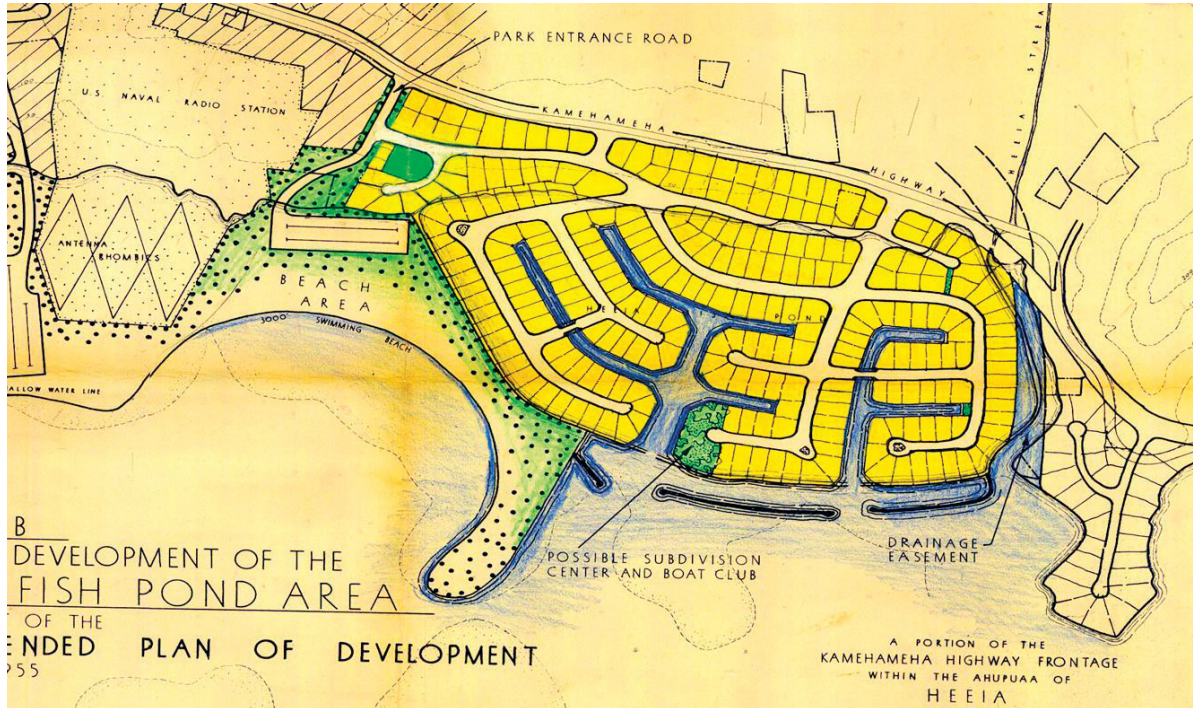


Figure 12. He'eia Fish Pond Marina Proposal.

The following images were selected from Patty Ortiz's presentation and used with her permission:

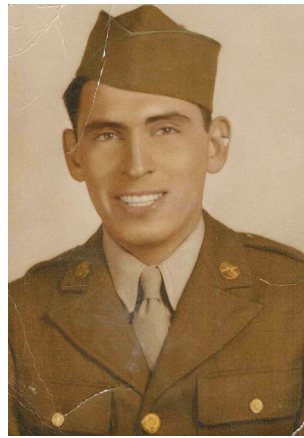


Figure 13. Patty Ortiz's parents, Anita and Pete Ortiz.



Figure 14. Being Migrant by Patty Ortiz.

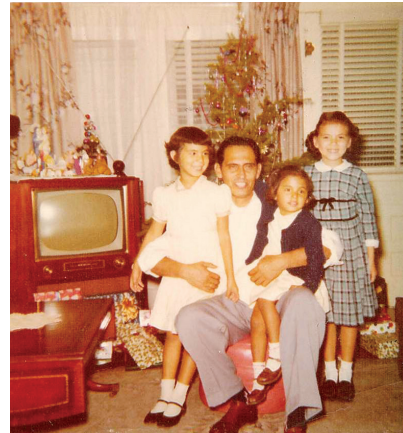


Figure 15. Pete Ortiz with daughters Thelma, Esther and Patty.

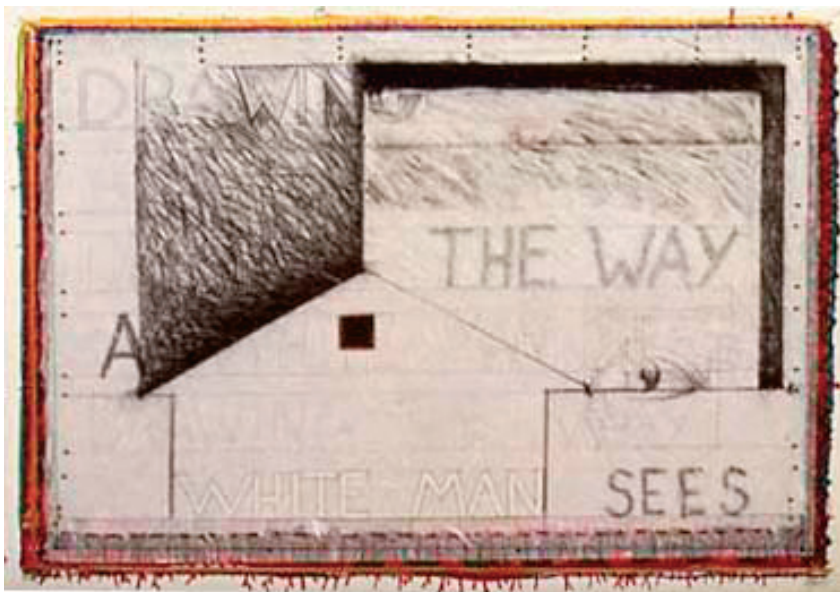


Figure 16. Drawing the Way a White Man Sees by Patty Ortiz.



The following images were selected from Ron Senungetuk's presentation and used with his permission:



Figure 17. Map of Seward Peninsula.



Figure 18. Wales.



Figure 19. Diomede Islanders landing at Wales Beach.



*Figure 20. Mask of Post-Colonializational Tupilaks by Susie Silook.*



*Figure 21. Umialiq by Ron Senungetuk.*



*Figure 22. Driftwood structure used for food and storage.*

### TOPIC III: THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE LAND TO CULTURAL IDENTITY

#### EMERSON PRESENTATION

*Gloria Emerson showed slides of her artwork while she spoke.*

**Gloria Emerson:** Sacred space, cultural landscape. Euro Americans read classics for enlightenment. Native peoples read canyons, rivers, mountain, and deserts for survival and spiritual renewal. The cultural landscape includes the oral histories, the songs, and the languages that hold the cells of wisdom. These bundles of wisdom were handed down from generation to generation.

*The cultural landscape includes the oral histories, the songs, and the languages that hold the cells of wisdom.*

This is Table Mesa, the rock formation, and this is Table Mesa from my book, *At the Hems of the Lowest Clouds: Meditations on Navajo Landscapes*.<sup>1</sup> When I was painting as part of an artist residency, I broke a wrist and was having trouble painting, so somebody suggested that I paint large, and I did. As my wrist was healing, I started to do the more refined areas in the work. When the book was published, I was invited to do a book signing, and I raced out to Table Mesa to take photos of the rock formation. I want to talk a little bit about the painting and the rock.

This image is also of Table Mesa, and this poem that I wrote was my effort to deify gravity, the force of gravity. *Daz* is gravity.

We know our sacred spaces and our iconographies are under siege. [See Figure 5, page 54.] For example, in Albuquerque, we have the mayor and developers who want to cut a road through the homelands of thousands of petroglyphs to alleviate the stress of unplanned growth in Albuquerque. It is so much more expedient for the city to cut a road through this area than to bypass it. On November 2, 2004, the people of Albuquerque had an opportunity

to vote down a street bond that would have given the city the monies to cut the road through. Well, we lost; the vote was something like 60 to 39 percent. Thirty-nine percent of the people of Albuquerque did not want a road to be cut through the petroglyphs. I feel that cutting a road through the petroglyphs is like cutting highways through chapels, through sacred places.

So now, Native peoples are reading a changing landscape. Bulldozers erase our aboriginal landscapes and are causing the memory of wisdom to be lost—wisdom that we had learned for hundreds and thousands of years of our kinship and our relationship with our biospheres. This changing landscape, the languages and iconographies of place, are de-contextualized. The artifacts that had been found in many places throughout this hemisphere are showcased in museums, and their original meanings have been obliterated by time.

This image is one of my artworks up in *Ndi'ji'lii*, which is a word for sunflower. It was a way for me to work with my own Navajo language. I have just begun to put the Navajo language into some of my artwork.

With the changing cultural landscape, we have new storytellers who are invading our homes, who sit with us at our meals, who are changing the songs--the languages of the young people, their aspirations and aesthetics--as ancient languages fade. In this painting [see Figure 6, page 54], the blue figures are the ones who are envious of our land, and they represent Exxon, timber, and water interests. The crow and the coyote are negotiating our future. This is really about how our lands have been taken for oil and for gas exploration. My area of Shiprock has been contaminated by uranium tailings, and, in many places, the tailings are still exposed. So many of the Navajo people are ill and have died from cancer--from leukemia--because of the uncovered toxic waste.

*This is really about how our lands have been taken for oil and for gas exploration.*



In thinking of our sacred place, I think of my father's words when he said, "Where the waters walked is sacred, where the birds fly is sacred, where the corn grows is sacred." When I was home with my parents the last several years, these old beliefs, I felt, were fading. Because of that, I started to write, and I wrote new stories of "place." These new stories are not the way the old stories happen about our sacred space. The old stories were stories our people say came from the holy ones. And here I was making up my own legends. Well, I got a call from the School of American Research in Santa Fe, and they asked me, "If you were selected for an artist's residency, what project would you propose?" I said perhaps I could visualize these legends that I am creating.

After I got into the residency and began painting and finalizing the work, they asked if they could publish both the paintings and the stories. Because there are so many of my Navajo people who are cultural purists--who would have objected strenuously to seeing me create new stories of "place," which is something that we just do not do--I changed the myths from story to poetic form, and that is what this book is about. One of them has to do with this land, of maintaining the story of *gáagii*, the crow [see Figure 7, page 54]: "That tall crow over there, who divines the history of his clan. It is his people, you see, who compete with the falcon sentries for the right to guard the hems of the lowest clouds, which spill rain like ancient drummings onto parched drums." <sup>2</sup>

*Déest'íí* is the Navajo word for stargazing, which is a form of divining the many levels of space and the many dimensions as we understand stargazing [see Figure 8, page 55].

into the holy belly of breathing,  
 Light waves travel to uplifted faces,  
 chiseling wisdom  
 onto leaves of every tree,  
 onto stalks of every corn,  
 tassels swaying  
 with ancient winds breathing  
 Story talking physics flow as rivers

singing up corn,  
 singing up kernels of wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

I would like to mention to you something that you probably know, but I need to state it again. In our way of thinking, the mountains, the canyons, the stone formations all had their stories. An educated Navajo person was one who knew those stories because within these stories was the wisdom of how we care for and how we are related to all things within our biospheres. And so the cardinal directions--for example, the east, the west, the south, the north, the up and down, and where we are--are holy. They are to be respected and so, in our way of thinking, we have the mountains to the east, the south, the north, west of north, and then we have the door-way mountains. Each of these mountains has its respective different colors, and each is represented by an animal, a plant, a bird. And each one has its own songs and prayer bundles, so the medicine person, in wanting to seek knowledge of each place, would carry his *jish*-- his medicine bundle--and bring forth the songs and the prayers giving respect to each place in exchange for knowledge. The colors are associated with the "upward lifting," our creation stories. Then there are stories of migration and stories of the origin of our clans. They are all connected to some divine incident and to our holy ones, whom we call *Di'yin Dinéé*.

*An educated Navajo person was one who knew those stories because within these stories was the wisdom of how we care for and how we are related to all things within our biospheres.*

There is some very important work that needs to be done. I think it is so important that I wish to see others take on that work because I don't think that I am able to do so. It is a large body of work to help the old people define the cultural aesthetics. There is a lot of information that comes from linguists, from cultural anthropology, from archeology, and so forth, and there are also Indian scholars and Indian artists who are working to define those old aesthetics. I think it is so important because, within every language, there is a body of intellectual labor



that goes down the drain when a language becomes weakened over time.

For example, with Navajo, there is a saying, *Sáah naaghái Bikééh Hózhó*, which is very difficult to translate. The physical part of it has to do with old age, wisdom, and walking in beauty. But it goes beyond just those words. It takes a person with a strong cultural mind days to unravel the kernels of wisdom within those words of *Sáah naaghái Bikééh Hózhó*. The "unraveling" has to do not only with talking but the ceremonial re-enactment of certain parts of the creation story. It also has to do with the integration of song, dance, prayer, healing, and coming back to balance. Within the words *Sáah naaghái Bikééh Hózhó* are the other icons--the symbology that represents what we call "upward lifting" or, in my way of thinking, self-actualization.

In the work I attempted to do with other scholars from around the United States, some parallels emerged--some common threads of knowledge. One had to do, for example, with the artwork that was coming from the traditional people who have a very strong affinity with nature. The other is something I call the *language of aesthetics*, and then another is a strong sense of communal consciousness and a real strong affinity not only with one's clan, one's family, and one's extended family but also with the biosphere. Another is the strong sense of spirituality.

Another was, of course, something that has really changed radically, and that is the shift in gender roles in art making. There was a time when women made more of the abstract symbology, while the figurative work was left for the men. There were a lot of reasons for why this happened, but now--with my people anyway--there are women who make sand paintings that hold symbols of deities, and images from these sand paintings went into Navajo textiles in the early part of the 1900s. In my own work, in an effort to respect the old ways and the old knowledge, I found it very difficult to break away to become an artist in a very contemporary mode.

I kept wanting to paint figurative work--do sculpture of figures--and I have. And in that way, I have broken taboos and such, and that has been a different kind of a learning process.

One thing that I mentioned before is myth making. Myth making came, we believe, from the holy ones, and we as mortals do not make up our own stories of "place." I had to do it to fill a vacuum of knowledge, and I never intended that these legends, which I made up for myself, would come into a book. I don't know whether to apologize that they are in poetic form, but this is to explain why they are in this form.

At this point in my life, having done so much radical work--carrying protest signs and standing in front of my tribal council with protest signs and doing all sorts of things--it is sort of a legacy. My parents stood before bulldozers trying to protect land from being bulldozed by the oil companies--Texaco, for example. Protesting runs in our family now. But at this time in my life (and I don't know how to say this to have my own people understand it), how do I help bring back that old love of our land? How do I bring back the old aesthetic and the care that we had for our land?

At one time, we said, "We walk in beauty." Now, I have to say, "We walked in beauty, and now we walk in litter." I see us on a ship, and we are breaking parts of the ship, we are burning parts of the ship, we are drilling holes in the ship, not knowing that we are going to sink ourselves. This planet is our ship. *Ta'akodi*.

<sup>1</sup> Gloria J. Emerson, *At the Hems of the Lowest Clouds: Meditations on Navajo Landscapes* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2003.)

<sup>2</sup> Emerson 55.

<sup>3</sup> Emerson 69, 71.



## HANNAHS PRESENTATION

*Neil Hannahs showed slides while he spoke.*

**Neil Hannahs:** I spoke earlier about the racing canoe, but when we Hawaiians wanted to really get some place, we used a voyaging canoe. We used constellations--celestial navigation--as our guide, not instrumentation. I think one of the things we have had to learn is that we have followed a lot of stars to where other people wanted us to go. One of the things that we are doing now is trying to find out where we want to go. How do we go back to some of our traditional ways of doing things to learn the values that those practices taught our ancestors?

I am an asset manager. Many times, an asset manager has the owner's perspective of his or her portfolio. These assets are theirs and they use, invest in, and trade them according to their desires and needs. We have a different--more custodial--view of our land assets. One of the things we say is *aloha ke Akua*--thank you, God, for putting into our care something that man did and could not create. This is truly a gift. And our asset management needs to begin with an understanding that the right of use and benefit comes with a responsibility for stewardship and care. In a traditional sense, we are the younger sibling of the other living organisms in and on our lands--the younger sibling of this earth and everything that is on this earth. There needs to be an understanding of this kinship, and there needs to be some deference shown in how we act toward and how we treat our older sibling.

We have great squabbles in our community about the word *stewardship*. A scholar at the University of Hawaii, says, "Stewardship? That's what you do for somebody else's stuff. This is our stuff." We need to talk about kinship and caring for our lands with an attitude of kinship--that it is our relation.

I think you know some of the history of Hawaii; let's go through this very quickly. We settled here from Polynesia, and we were thriving

for 500 to 1,000 years, depending on whose estimates you accept. It wasn't an easy existence, but it was a sustainable existence because the values and beliefs I just talked about promoted a harmonious existence with our land and resources. This was followed by a period of colonization, during which merchants, missionaries, and mercenaries came to Hawaii. Their influence transformed us--not only radically but very quickly.

All matter of our lives changed--the manner of religion, the manner of governance, languages, commerce, just about everything--in the span of about three generations, from the time it took for a child to become a grandparent. We lost about 9 out of every 10 in our population. I mentioned that to a friend and she said, "That is the very literal meaning of the word *decimation*." Nine out of ten were lost!

*We lost about 9 out of every 10 in our population.*

The school I work for was founded by Bernice Pauahi Bishop. She was the great granddaughter of the great chief Kamehameha [see Figure 9, page 55]. He united the kingdoms and brought the lands of Hawaii under common domain and rule and had a fairly peaceful existence after many battles that led to unification. In 1848, because of the desire of outside business interests to secure their investments, a system was implemented that allowed for the first time fee title to these lands. We had no concept of private ownership of lands. This right did not exist before 1848, but when owners of sugar plantations wanted to come in and make investments, they said they weren't going to do it if they didn't own the land. So they encouraged our chiefs to adopt a system of private-land ownership.

Many chiefs who were loyal to Kamehameha or in that line took portions of lands, but, ultimately by fate and really by magnificent foresight, these land holdings that got dispersed across many chiefs and their heirs got reconsolidated into the holdings of two women. One was Ruth Ke'elikolani, who predeceased our

founder by about 17 months. Our founder inherited most of her land in 1883--about 10 percent of all the land of Hawaii at that time. She died within a year and a half after inheriting the lands, and she left her estate to create a school in perpetuity for children of Hawaiian ancestry. This bequest reflected the value she placed upon education. When she looked at the decimation of her people and the transformation of Hawaiian society, she concluded that the only way for her people to survive the course of history and to progress and to recover was by acquiring educational tools that would make them competitive.

So she created these schools and named them after her great grandfather, Kamehameha [see *Figure 10, page 56*]. We then set about the business of managing the endowment she left us, all those lands, and opening up these schools and trying to serve.

The lands we had were largely agricultural lands. There were also a lot of conservation lands. The trustees (remember this is back in 1884) for about 120 years or so applied pretty traditional fiduciary thinking to the management of those lands--they worked to maximize the economic performance of these assets. The goal was to fill our cash register and provide for our beneficiaries--and it could be school needs, it could be cultural needs, it could even be stewardship of our lands and resources. It could all be provided if the lands could produce money.

And so we took our lands and, like any other college or university or Western developer or pension fund, we said, "Okay, let's put in some housing, and if we put in single- and multi-family housing, that will create a demand for some shopping. And we'll put a little shopping center there and that will create a demand for some industrial space and some office space and so forth, all of which will deliver an income stream to support our school."

And so we did this. At first, we were land rich and cash poor. Then, with World War II and

later with statehood, our population mushroomed, and this caused an economic boom through the '60s, '70s, and '80s. Our endowment benefited from this period of economic prosperity. Our current endowment has a value of \$6 billion. And so it looks like the strategy of economic maximization is working. We have had to place a lot of that into financial assets because we were forced to sell all of the single- and multi-family residential properties instead of leasing them and getting the land back at the end of the lease term--we had to alienate the fee ownership. But, clearly, there is security, there is strength, there is size built into this financial performance.

These financial resources enabled us to build out our campuses. We have probably the largest secondary school system in America.

*These financial resources enabled us to build out our campuses.*

We have three campuses: One on the island of Oahu at Kapalama, a new campus that we are building near Hilo, and a Maui campus as well. We have a whole suite of preschool programs. We have extensive outreach programs and cultural programs. The creation of wealth enabled all of this.

So what does an asset manager like me do to sustain and grow these assets? Years ago, the ideas would have destroyed a cultural treasure. Our princess's very first inheritance was a 90-acre fishpond on the windward side of the island of Oahu [see *Figure 11, page 56*]. There are many types of fishponds built in Polynesia and probably elsewhere in the world. There are probably about five currently in place in Hawaii, featuring different styles of rock enclosures. Some are inland, some are outboard into the open ocean, and this one was on the cusp of a rich environment of fresh water and ocean water created where the wetlands met the marine estuary.

This 90-acre fishpond was like a refrigerator. This was a really cool place. They built what they call *makaha*, little gate systems that allow the outflow of fresh water during the receding

tide. This attracted baby fish out in the open ocean. They would get the scent of this fresh water and come in and nurture themselves here within the enclosed pond. The incoming tide, the rush of salt water from the outside, would lure big, mature fish to those gate systems because they would want to go out to the open ocean. So, without getting wet, without even a net, our ancestors would be able to fish just by drawing fish out of the gate. They had an interesting value system--the fish first to the gate were the hardiest, so they let them go because that is what they wanted for brood stock. The second to the gate were considered pretty good and pretty smart, so they put them back in the pond so they can lead the way for the next generation. It was the third--the weakest of the lot--that they harvested and ate.

So what does a good fiduciary do to this? Or how do you monetize the asset? You destroy it. One idea back in 1955 was to create some marina lots [see Figure 12, page 57]. I've got a warehouse full of plans like this for our agriculture and conservation lands. They were all designed to create an asset that would contribute money to our schools. This one, like so many others, did not happen.

Often, these proposals did not happen because we found ourselves as a Hawaiian institution fighting a lot with our own people. Why? On the one hand, they stood to benefit from this project. But they said, "Look at what is happening to Honolulu. Look at Waikiki. What is the end game if we keep managing our assets to this end, for this purpose, and in this way? What will such development patterns do to our significant and sacred places?"

Our stakeholders made a couple of critical, yet constructive, observations. First, they said, "We are having a problem with your endowment management, your asset-management approach." Second, they acknowledged that our schools have done some tremendous things over the years, but they also expressed concerns about some failings.

To understand this concern, some background is necessary. Our princess said she wanted to create these schools and she wanted to teach in the English branches and she wanted them to learn all kinds of things that would help them succeed in Western society. Since most of the traditional systems for education had long since broken down, the princess looked to models that were being applied on the continent to other indigenous peoples.

So, from the outset, we patterned our school after Indian boarding schools and other models that were designed to convert savage natives by providing them with educational experiences that would help them to acquire discipline, domestic skills, Western knowledge, and Christian faith. So these are the kinds of things that our schools did for our own people.

But our stakeholders pointed out that, 117 years later, we continue to have some problems. This was proof to them that the model is not working in terms of the impacts that our endowment-management practices were having on lands and communities or that our educational approach was having on their well-being.

They said, "We are still not there. We still have limited self-determination. We are increasingly alienating our people from place; we move them out so we can put somebody else in, so we can get money from the new guys. We have a loss of language and values because they are no longer associated with place. We have a breakdown of *'ohana*, our family system. We have educational underachievement, social and economic underachievement, health issues, and, most of all, a crisis of spirit.

*At best, we learned about our culture, but we certainly did not learn through it.*

And so we started to grapple with this in the late '90s, and we asked, "How

do we become better?" I stand here as a graduate of the school, and I was really served well by the school, but when I went through the school, I didn't learn about my culture. Since I was bound for college, I didn't have time for

that. We were told to take physics and learn French--a foreign language they would accept at a college. At best, we learned about our culture, but we certainly did not learn through it.

In our strategic planning process, we talked at length to our own stakeholders and honored their input by recognizing that we need to think differently. They took us back to our mission and really forced us to come to grips with the question, "What does it take to improve capability and well-being?" Should we just put students in a school and make them Western? Is that the model?

So now, we are grappling with this, and to do so, we use part of our ancestral wisdom. A wise saying is that the health of the tree is not seen in its leaves and branches; it is in its trunk, it is on the inside, it is in the taproot. That is where it is. So we can adorn ourselves with college degrees and high school diplomas, and we can adorn ourselves with jobs. But, if, in the core of our people, there is not a strong sense of identity and a good feeling about that identity and a connection to our place and resources and, through that, an ability to honor our traditions and practice our customs, which help us to perpetuate our values and spread that into the larger community, we are always going to be at a loss. We will not get to the point of improving our capability and being well as a people.

So now we are looking at it differently. As an asset manager, we are saying we need a new strategy. This thing that it's all about the money is not acceptable. We have to put forth a strategy that recognizes that money is important, and it's a return that we want to derive from our assets, including our land assets, but we need to bring our goals and objectives into a tighter alignment. And we need to bring our own stakeholders, our Hawaiian community, into the middle of that picture to help them be empowered, to help us achieve the returns we want. We call that an integrated management strategy. That is what we are turning to. Let's go back to that fish pond. What does it

mean here? Let me begin with an aside about succession. A few years back, we found a very mature group in our community, the Center for a Sustainable Future, headed by the director of the College of Earth Sciences at the University of Hawaii. These people were very well connected with a funding entity called *Sea Grant*, which is a major federal-funding source for ocean-environment work, and we gave this group the master lease for the pond and asked them to develop a master plan for it. They got totally beaten up because they represented a bunch of older people who had baggage, and the people who had issues with their baggage just pounded on them in community meetings. The Center controlled a little islet right off of the fish pond called *Coconut Island*, where they conduct research, and all of the community said, "You stopped letting us come fish over there, so we don't like you, and we're not going to support your planning process." This contentious conversation went on for two years, and we got nowhere.

But we had a college class at the fish pond, and they ran through a couple of cohorts of young people at the fish pond. These were young people in their 20s with college degrees in zoology, marine biology, Hawaiian studies, education, and business. There were six of them whom we put onto the property when the older guys failed. We gave it to this young talented group who had no baggage, who had tremendous energy, who had passion, who had technical knowledge and cultural knowledge, and who had the willingness to work really hard. They have done so much with that. And they have transformed this fish pond into a context for learning. Kids don't go there just to learn how to fish or how their ancestors fished. They come here to learn the value of cleaning this pond and removing the invasive species (mangrove, in this case) that is overtaking this pond and destroying it. They learn about the place names and how the pond functions. We've had kids do global positioning (GPS) gridding of the pond so they can test

*...they have transformed this fish pond into a context for learning.*



salinity and temperature and dissolved oxygen readings to develop a GPS mapping of the pond's conditions. They also remind our students that our ancestors could do this without all of this technical equipment. They could look at the pond, they could taste the water, and they could understand what was going on.

So now that pond is serving over 5,000 students a year. That is as many students as are on our three campuses. We have students who come here every week as a part of an out-of-classroom learning site. Where we really have been successful is with students who need an alternative approach to education. I could get into four walls like this and survive in school and do okay, but for most of our Hawaiian population, the reason they are not being served well is that they don't thrive in this kind of an environment. But when they go out into the ocean to learn about an invasive form of seaweed, they think they are playing. They don't know they are learning science at that moment. We have them fish out predators, so they bring out the barracuda that are in the pond (because we don't want the barracuda eating the other fish), and then we not only have them learn how to clean and prepare the fish for eating but also how to do a gut analysis to figure out what the predator is eating. And they are actually producing publishable research through their interaction with this pond.

I did an economic analysis. When we were renting this pond to an aquaculture business

*We skipped the monetization process but achieved a greater economic return, and we honored the cultural treasure that we have.*

(because it takes a village to have a facility like this), business after business failed. We were lucky to get the \$100 a month for the caretaker's shack, \$1,200 a year. Capitalize that at 5 percent, you've got a \$60,000 asset valuation based on that economic return. But

back when we only served about 150 kids who used the pond as their school just one day a week, I pointed out that it takes us about \$15,000 a year to educate a child in our school system, so we have 150 kids going there one

day a week. That translates to a value of \$3,000 for each of those 150 kids. Multiply that times 150, and you now have \$450,000 annual commensurate return. Cap that by 5 percent, and now we have a \$9-million asset, whereas before we had a \$60,000 asset. We skipped the monetization process but achieved a greater economic return, and we honored the cultural treasure that we have.

And so now we are saying, "Wait a minute, I have 360,000 acres, not just a 90-acre fish pond. We have whole valleys, we have streams, we have mountaintops, we have watersheds, and we have native forests. We have all kinds of ecosystems present on our land. How do we attract the intellectual capital to bring back the knowledge that's in our own community as well as in modern science for us to be better managers of the assets and for the assets to make a more profound contribution to our trust purposes?"

We are bridging now--bridging from looking just at a school with a student body to our whole nation of people. How do we cultivate values and extend our reach to a larger part of our population? We are bridging from thinking in Western terms to thinking in Native terms. We are bridging from just learning about our culture, like it is something odd, something that's not us, to learning through our culture. In the case of land management, we are bridging from really thinking about our land as acreage to a recognition that our lands are part of a system from the heavens of horizon, a living system, and that what you do at one part of the land affects what happens elsewhere on the land.

We've talked about this a lot--bridging from *kala* to *waiwai*. This is about changing our definition and measures of wealth. *Kala* is our way of saying the dollar. *Waiwai* takes the word for water, the most important resource in an island community, and it doubles it to say *waiwai*. This is true wealth. It creates *'aina momona*, lands that feed us, a land of abundance. That's what wealth is all about. It bridges from a

dependent population waiting for the federal government or the Department of Education to come in and do something for their kids to an empowered people, where the people are coming as caretakers, stewards of our land, and are being empowered in the process. We are bridging from us looking at our history and saying we want to honor these legacy lands that were given to us by the princess to really having us think that yes, that needs to be honored, but what are we passing on to the next generation? What is the land legacy that extends from here?

I appreciated the comment about a reflection of a blacker shade of European values. That's what we did for a long time. We followed a course

*It is time for us to have our own dreams. It is time for us to navigate to our own star and to bring that canoe home to our own shore.*

that took us someplace else. We got in our canoe and went where somebody else wanted us to go. Brian Mallott of First Alaskans Institute had a great quote at a conference I attended in Anchorage in June. He said, "The dreams others have for us always seem to come with a compulsion to change

us." It is time for us to have our own dreams. It is time for us to navigate to our own star and to bring that canoe home to our own shore. That's what we're doing. *Mahalo.*

## ORTIZ PRESENTATION

*Patty Ortiz showed slides while she spoke.*

**Patty Ortiz:** When I started thinking about land and environment and how multiculturalism is affected by it, I decided to look at the importance of place for me and my family. I wanted to consider how these factors affected my family and how our society and our community are shifting. It is almost like we have to keep our place right here in our hearts because we move. We move for our work, we move for education. We are no longer isolated in the "third place" anymore. We don't stay within our communities; we go beyond them.

I decided to talk about my parents because they are unique people [see Figure 13, page 57]. They are both from Texas. Both of them were born in Texas, but they come from very different backgrounds. My dad comes from an indigenous tribe in Texas and was a migrant worker when he was a little boy. He has told me many, many stories about being migrant as a boy, some of which are things of which he is not proud, and some are things of which he is very proud. He talks about how he had to leave school early to be migrant during the summer. He talks about how he would return to school in the fall after it had already started. He is very proud of the fact that he only failed one class in all that time. Although he is from Texas, he is also very proud of the fact that his

*...in a way, we are all migrant.*

grandmother and grandfather were from that region before it became Texas.

In Texas, there are about five migrant streams. My father's family always went to Michigan because we had some distant relatives there, and we visited them all the time. So I began thinking about the idea of being migrant. My dad stopped being migrant about the time he became a teenager; however, it affected him greatly, and he would always talk about it. I started thinking about the whole notion of being migrant. If I broadened the definition of the meaning into the idea of moving across the

country for work or for jobs, then, in a way, we are all migrant.

I lived with many sayings that my parents would tell to their daughters. I would hear many stories. My father would help me in my garden, or we would help him at his home, and I would say, "Oh, come on Dad, I can't work anymore." He would say "Well, when I was migrant, I couldn't stop. Work won't kill you, laziness will." So that was always something we lived with. The work ethic was very strong for us because of that, and it continues to be as we get older.

I am currently working on an artwork related to the concept of being migrant [see Figure 14, page 58]. I bought a trailer and decided that I would use it to become migrant; it will migrate throughout Colorado. It is actually like a piece of land that is built on the top of the trailer and has dirt with grass growing at the top. Starting in Lamar, Colorado, it will travel diagonally through the state following the migrant path of geese.

My mom came from a different economic background from my dad. She is from San Antonio. Her mother, my grandmother, came to Texas from Torean, Mexico, when she was 16 years old and migrated to the same town that my Dad was from, which was around Austin, Texas. There, my grandmother met my grandfather and decided to stay. That was about 1912, which, obviously, was after the revolution, where many people were moving north to try to find a better life. All of my mother's brothers and sisters were college educated. They were very unlike my dad, who lived within his community and never really saw anything else but his family and his neighborhood. My mom actually felt more discrimination and talked about it to us. At the age of 12, she was diagnosed as legally blind. However, she never became blind. She fought that disability to the point that we, as her children, never realized she was legally blind. She would cook, she would

*She would tell us (in Spanish), "If you don't speak up, God won't hear you."*

sew, and she would do many things for us. So she overcame that. She was a very bright and very assertive woman. She would tell us (in Spanish), "If you don't speak up, God won't hear you." And for three girls, that was pretty important. It made us feel that, when we were sitting in class, we should raise our hands; we should ask questions. So it was pretty important.

My family lived in San Antonio. San Antonio is a unique place. Today, the Latino population is 58 percent. When I was little, it was obviously proportionately less, but still, it was rich in Latino culture, and I really never had a sense of discrimination. I was completely proud of living there. We lived in the same house all of our lives. The house was a block away from the huge Basilica of the Little Flower, which is St. Theresa. The Basilica cast a shadow over the entire neighborhood--the neighborhood in which we went to school and to church. Partly because of that presence and experience, my religious background is embedded in my bones.

After working as a migrant, my dad worked for Pepsi Cola and struggled with a number of issues there. He tried to start a labor union and was fired for that effort. He then applied for work at Kelly Air Force Base and had a great career there. What was interesting was the effect his work had on me. Airplanes were everything to him. We used to go to air shows (San Antonio has three Air Force bases). There were

*My father believed that education was the only thing that could fight discrimination.*

airplanes in the sky all the time. My dad worked hard at two jobs in order to ensure that we had music lessons and art lessons and went to a good school. He wanted his girls to succeed and not be discrimi-

nated against--not experience the same kind of discrimination that my mom or my dad experienced.

We did not know the language. My parents spoke Spanish at home, but mostly, they would speak it if they didn't want us to hear something. So it is unfortunate, but that's the way it

was at the time. My father believed that education was the only thing that could fight discrimination. Of course, there was my mother's saying, "If you don't speak up, God won't hear you," always being infiltrated into our heads. There was also another saying, "Love is acquired by love alone." Also, because of my dad's experience trying to establish labor unions, he always said, "You are not going to fight outside the system. You are going to fight within the system." So that gives you an insight into my background and the background of my sisters [see Figure 15, page 58].

In this presentation, I am proposing this notion of "a place" as something we can take with us. My oldest sister was the first person to leave our family and, I like to think, migrate out of San Antonio to New York. Then she migrated to Michigan and finally returned to San Antonio. My sister Esther moved to Florida and eventually moved to Atlanta, where she still resides. I moved to Colorado. The shift from San Antonio to Colorado was particularly harsh for me, and I was surprised to experience it. I actually have a different view of Denver than Tony Garcia does because I had to adjust a lot due to the differences between San Antonio and Denver. As I mentioned before, my dad raised us to believe we would be treated exactly as one expected to be treated. He suggested that, if you do not expect to be treated equally, you won't be. In many ways, I had no notion of what was marginal and what was mainstream because it was all mainstream to me. So when I moved to Colorado, all of a sudden there was that mainstream, and there was the marginal--it was a whole new experience.

*...my dad raised us to believe we would be treated exactly as one expected to be treated.*

Now I am working at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver, which I consider a mainstream organization, even though I was talking to an executive at the Wells Fargo bank, and she told me, "Well, Patty, the Museum of Contemporary Art is a marginal organization." I was really surprised to hear that. What I have

done at the Museum of Contemporary Art is very important. Working there allows me to have an impact on the design of the programs and increase the level of access Latino artists have to the institution. Actually, we are quite lucky because our director is quite sensitive to those other visions. Now is a perfect time to influence policy so that it becomes a more established practice within the Museum as it grows and moves to a new building.

After being invited to make this presentation, I started asking non-Latino artists about the concept of multiculturalism and what they thought of it. I was very discouraged because I received the response, "Oh, that's over." They said it as though it were a movement of art like Pop Art or Minimalism. So, obviously, I have much more work to do in that area--to educate them. What is funny about that, too, is that they would say, "Well, you had five Latino artists in the Museum's biennial, you had this and this and this. Many times, that is a unique situation because I think, in Denver, what happens is that we have a number of Latino artists who are recycled. Such recycling is unfortunate and affects the development of our future leadership. We need to create a breeding ground in which more artists are able to participate. We need to say to other organizations, "No, no, no, don't just pick the work of known artists. Pick someone else--open your eyes and look for someone else."

When I think of Denver in comparison to San Antonio, the first thing I think of is my religious background. Again, the Little Flower Basilica stands out as an important symbol for me. When I moved to Denver, I married an Anglo Protestant, and I think that is something that happens naturally when we start moving. We stop just knowing people within our own culture and within our community, and we start meeting people from different religions and different backgrounds. Sometimes, these people fall in love and get married. In my case, the man I married is a Protestant. His mother was actually a Methodist minister, and I was struck by the different way each of us

approached religion. I've always loved the Mexican Catholicism in that it was so spiritual--so mystical. In fact, it was very superstitious--and I loved that about it, and I loved the notion of saints in how you could speak to people. The whole thing was like a story that you could play with. I used to use these saints in my work because I always thought they protected me. I considered that they were behind me all of the time, helping me and watching over me as I worked and reached out.

I received a New Forums Grant and completed a piece called *The Taxonixik Air Show*. The work was inspired by years of my father pointing out airplanes and me completing millions of drawings of paper airplanes. After my 20th airplane drawing, somebody said, "Patty, don't you think that it's a little weird that your father works for Kelly Air Force Base, and you're doing all these paper airplanes?" His interest in airplanes definitely affected me, particularly in terms of the playful approach he brought to the sighting of airplanes. So this artwork actually has a lot to do with my struggles related to moving to Denver from San Antonio. In the work, there is kind of a runway that separates two communities. The community on the left was, for me, the barrio where the workers lived and where the plaza was. The community on the right was where the church was, as well as the wealthier communities. In that part of the work, the identities are a little bit more obscure.

I already talked about the fact that we don't speak Spanish. That brings up another issue for me about language because it not only means the verbal language of Spanish but also the visual language. When Latino artists show their work at mainstream venues, many people can't see what is going on. They don't understand the visual language of Latinos. I looked up the 2000 census to find comparative information about the Latino population and the use of language in Denver ver-

*When Latino artists show their work at mainstream venues, many people can't see what is going on. They don't understand the visual language of Latinos.*



sus San Antonio. In Denver, the percentage of bilingual persons is 27 percent, 21 percent of whom speak English and Spanish.<sup>1</sup> However, if we take a closer look at the bilingual population in Denver, only six percent of the five-to-seven year olds are bilingual. A total of 19 percent of those ages 18 to 64 are bilingual. Those 65 years of age and over are reported to only speak Spanish, and there are only 2 percent who are bilingual. That was a concerning thing for me because it seemed like the youngsters were not learning Spanish. The same pattern occurs in San Antonio.

I completed a drawing a few years ago that was inspired by a story I had heard. The story was about a friend of mine who was teaching English, and there was a Latino man who was taking the class in order to get a better wage. My friend was very upset because he said, "I cannot pass this man because he cannot write." He told me he would tutor him and meet with him after the class to help him. The entire process was very frustrating for him because he very much wanted the man to pass, but the man couldn't get it. Finally, one evening, the teacher scratched his head and said, "Listen, what you have to do is you have to write like a White guy." The student said, "Oh, okay," and he passed the class because he figured out that he had to write like they talk. This event reminded me of an issue I had dealt with in school. Even though I attended the University of Texas at Austin, all of my professors were White men. So I made a piece called *Drawing the Way a White Man Sees* [see Figure 16, page 58]. I created the drawing by putting on layers and layers of tissue paper covering up my drawing to appear the way I thought a White man might want to see the drawing to be in the end. What is interesting about the work is that, when I exhibited it, I had a lot of White men say that they really liked it!

One of my sisters had three children. She is the one who moved to New York and then to Michigan and then back to San Antonio. The reason she returned to San Antonio is that she wanted her children to have the experience she

had. She married a Latino man. I, on the other hand, married an Anglo and had two children, and we live in Denver. So these experiences are very different. That has concerned me because I want my children to have the experiences I had. So when I started thinking about the whole interracial issue, I wanted to find out where I fit in the statistics. I came up with a couple of different statistics: In the year 2000, one in every 15 marriages is interracial. This is a 65-percent increase over 1990. Nearly 3 of every 10 marriages involving Latinos is a mixed-race marriage. Nearly half of all U. S. interracial marriages include a Latino, and about half of third-generation Mexican Americans marry non-Hispanic Whites.<sup>2</sup> So I became a statistic.

*Nearly 3 of every 10 marriages involving Latinos is a mixed-race marriage.*

My parents are now in their 80s and are lovely, lovely people. Here is a photo of my kids. They look very different. What is funny is that Maya, the oldest, has my dark skin complexion and is a *folklorico* dancer. My son Peter has always had a love for his grandparents to the point where, during one of their visits to San Antonio, he wanted to change his name. His last name is Shugart, but he decided that, since he was named after his grandpa, that just couldn't be. "It's going to be Ortiz now." And so he went for two years without us knowing that he changed his name. Finally, his teacher said, "You know, we have your son's name now." I said, "Excuse me, you don't know his name?" He said, "Sure, we do, his name is Peter Rafael Shugart Ortiz." And I said, "Oh, I didn't know that."

The other thing that is interesting about Peter and the struggles that I think he is having is one day, about two months ago, he had his friends following him to the car when I picked him up. He said to them, "This is my mom. Hi. Bye." After I drove away, he told me, "They didn't believe I am Mexican." So that is a difficult thing for me to hear.



I have tried to give my children as many experiences as I can to introduce them to my culture. Actually, I can thank El Centro Su Teatro, I can thank the Museo de las Americas, I can thank Fiesta Colorado, the Chicano Arts and Humanities Council, and others because they have been, as much as they can, part of their culture. My children are very proud of their culture. So that's my story.

<sup>1</sup> "Language use and English Speaking Ability: 2000," *US Census Online*, 2000, Census Brief, 16 Jan. 2006 <<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf>>.

<sup>2</sup> Audrey Singer, "The New U.S. Demographics," 10 Nov. 2003, The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. 16 Jan. 2006 <[http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/speeches/20031110\\_Singer.ppt#10](http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/speeches/20031110_Singer.ppt#10)>.



## SEUNGETUK PRESENTATION

*Ron Senungetuk showed slides while he spoke.*

**Ron Senungetuk:** I am taking you as far West as possible, to the extreme end of Seward Peninsula [see Figure 17, page 59]. Today, we call the whole area the *Seward Peninsula*. In Wales, there are many lakes and tundra on the flat part of the land and all variety of birds during the spring and summer migration. Flat land serves as a grazing ground for a reindeer herd that belongs to a family in Wales. Also, most of the tundra and surrounding hills are places for berry picking and getting plants of one variety or another.

Across the water, there is a darker, shaded land that is Little Diomede Island. Three miles farther is Big Diomede Island. These two islands are three miles apart, but they are 24 hours apart on the International Date Line. The mainland, with the Siberian Hills of Asia, is beyond the islands. These lands are 57 miles away from the beaches of Wales.

*... [Wales] really hasn't changed in 2,500 years.*

Wales is an area where my kind of people have been living for a long, long time. Nearby is St. Lawrence Island. This is the beginning area of whaling places and whale migration routes in springtime.

Wales is on the migration route of whales and other sea mammals. If you travel more or less straight north from Wales, you get to Point Hope, one of the fabulous places as far as whaling goes. Of course, whaling continues up to Barrow and farther on.

This is an image of Kingegan, or Wales, taken in 1978 [see Figure 18, page 59]. Rapid changes are occurring, but they are superficial. This picture was taken 25 years ago, and nothing much really has changed physically. In fact, this place really hasn't changed in 2,500 years. It has been occupied by the same people for at least 2,500 years. Human settlement there could extend back even further. If we keep finding artifacts to prove age through carbon dating, we may

find humans have lived in the area for up to 10,000 years. Wales is a small village. I was born and raised there and was 14 years old when I was apprenticing for whaling. Rose Fosdick's father and my father were peer hunters with complete sets of everything for catching animals.

I left Wales at the age of 15 to attend school. In Wales, we could only go through the eighth grade at that time, and we could not go to school in Nome because of discrimination and what have you. I went to school in Sitka, in the extreme southern part of Alaska.

The hunting occurs just off the land's waters, and it varies with the seasons. Seals may be taken during one period of time in spring, and then walrus may be taken in another period, perhaps another month, and whales and birds and so forth and so on. So this place was one of the important places because of the migrating animals going through this area seasonally.

This is a group of Diomede Island people landing at Wales Beach with their skin boat in the 1970s [see Figure 19, page 59]. The Wales people are greeting the visitors. This kind of activity has changed some. In other words, the boats have been replaced by powerful aluminum boats. But there are still a few types of skin boats, and these were because skin boats are able to go above an ice flow if they were caught in the ice flow. The skin boats are able to slide over ice. They were pretty adaptable for many, many thousands of years.

This is a piece of ivory that was found on the Siberian side of the Bering Strait. The piece is about 10 inches long, and it is part of a whaling spear. The wooden shaft had already turned to earth when these were taken out by a team of German and Russian anthropologists. The reason I am showing this kind of thing is because it is one of the examples of earlier devices used for hunting. It is tremendously decorated with such pleasing lines and forms, and that is part of our culture as far back as we know it. The upper part of that ivory shaft has a wedge that

wedged into the wood shaft. The lower part is blunt, and there is a socket hole to receive the piece of bone that then was attached to the spearhead. The spearhead was attached to a line, and when the spearhead was driven into animals, such as a whale, the line was attached to a float on the other end. So that was a way to secure animals. This type of tool hasn't changed in the time period I'm talking about. The same technique continues to be used with only slight changes.

This is the rear end of that spearhead. It looks a little bit like a jet--it is quite streamlined. The spearhead has holes, and is lightened by the holes through the ivory. This piece was attached at the rear end of the wood shaft. At the extreme end, there was a spear thrower that was used to project the whole spear toward the animal. This looks like a type that is the typical type of that period. It looks like it could skim over water when it was thrown to the animal.

...contemporary Alaska-Native artists are going into this resource for their new works.

The reason I am showing the early, Old-Bering-Sea-style work is to demonstrate that contemporary Alaska-Native artists are going into this resource for their new works. I mentioned St. Lawrence Island--and this work is by Susie Silook, who now lives in Anchorage but originally came from St. Lawrence Island. Her resources are right from St. Lawrence Island--from the artifacts in the ground. Quite a bit of her work is a statement--in this case, Christianity taking over shamanism, thereby splitting the mask in half. The ivory female object at the center is typical of the ivory female objects that have been found over and over again on St. Lawrence Island. So she is saying something like Christianity is here, and our shamanistic period is over--perhaps not quite that--but that is my interpretation.

This work is a cross with two halos around it [see Figure 20, page 60]. This was also done by Susie Silook. Yup'ik masks had halos around the face, and those halos are broken. On the cross, among the Old-Bering-Sea type of art-

work, she has written, "The missionaries came to kill us with John 3:16." She is a poet and can't figure out if she should continue her visual artwork or go into poetry alone. She majored in English; she knows the heavy-duty stuff of living, she has experienced it, and she is one of the prime examples of Alaska-Native artists today.

This is my work [see Figure 21, page 60]. It is a wood panel and was included in the *Circumpolar Arts from the Arctic* exhibition project. That project occurred in 1991 and included Native people from Siberia, Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and the Sami people of Northern Scandinavia. This work is like the ivory examples I showed earlier. The ivory pieces were anthropomorphic; they looked like whales and human beings at the same time. The point of this approach was to be pleasing toward animals on which you are dependent.

I worked with silver for a long, long, time. I am a trained silversmith and woodworker. I wanted to work with wood, but then I couldn't figure out how to go back to Alaska and ship rosewood and that kind of material from state-side to Alaska, so I decided I could work in small scale--in metal. This piece of work is like halibut, and on the base of this work are little marks that look like whales' tails. Whales' tails on ivory pieces represent the whale tallies or how many animals you have caught in your life so far. This belonged to the U.S. Department of the Interior and, in one of their exhibitions, it was stolen. I tried to remake it, but I had lost touch with hollowware making at this point in 1963.

This is the way Wales looked in the 1950s and 1960s. I used to go there even after I had left. I like it in Wales, even though there may be 70-mile-per-hour winds in the winter. There are some lovely, lovely times in that part of the world. It is totally different, even for me, when I go from Homer to Wales; it is quite something else. This is a driftwood structure, quite tall, with a platform on the middle part that was used for storage, food, and so on that you had to store somewhere [see Figure 22, page 60].

There are quite a few driftwood parts where people hung meat or fish to dry, and then the huge open spaces were used to stretch walrus skin for skin boats. This sort of thing no longer exists.

This is a detail of a mobile that I made in 2001. It is now located at a court building in Fairbanks. It is quite huge. There are three clusters that consume approximately 10 feet x 10 feet x 10 feet of airspace. When the three are counted together, the airspace is about 30 feet--a large piece of work. There are two foot-long pieces--the shortest is of laminated wood, and the longest pieces are 12 feet long.

This is one of the recent works that I completed for a solo exhibition in Homer at a small gallery there. I made 25 small murals; this one is 24 inches long. They were all pretty much based on Bering Strait imagery. I called that exhibition *Goodbye Bering Strait, Hello Homer--* where my work was beginning to change to reflect a different spot in Alaska. But the interesting thing about this exhibition is

that I had quite a few red dots on that 25-piece exhibition, and on the last day, a man showed up and plunked down \$9,500 and walked out with six pieces. The money is not the point in this statement; the point is that, collectively, Alaska-Native artists are into contemporary

Native art, meaning that we are

into fine art. So many people today have mentioned *mainstream*. We are no longer depending on gift shops to sell our works. We don't want others to interpret our culture. We are saying, "no, thank you," and we are doing our own interpretation of art based on our traditional works, backgrounds, and land.

## RESPONSE

**Pravina Gondalia:** Even though I am a respondent, what I'm going to do is make a few comments. Gloria Emerson states that our relationships with our physical spaces are sacred. Neil Hannahs sees land as a resource and emphasizes

the investing and developing partnership between the land resources and its people and their way of life. Patty [Ortiz], we would love to have your migrant trailer come to Wyoming. Ron Senungetuk talks about how land and its environment influence the way we live.

As for me, I came to the U.S.A. in my teen years, and for the last 28 years, I have made a home in the States. In India, the concept of making a living as an artist didn't exist. My career background has been in the area of software consulting with General Motors and IBM. When I arrived in Wyoming, I didn't have the opportunity to continue working in the computer science area, so I entered the art world. The magic and the mystery of art was what appealed to me about the art world. Since I didn't have to make a living as an artist, it seemed appropriate to enter the field. The journey has been quite fascinating.

The two big questions I have about land and cultural identity are: What is location, and what is a culture? If identity is the process of becoming, then what role do the location and the culture play in the cause of the cosmos? Location is a space, a physical place on this earth, on which we choose to build our social relations of family, friends, community, and nation. Culture is a collection of traditions, of human behaviors accepted by a group of people. I would like to quote Hamid Naficy, a professor at Rice University, who had a significant impact on my art practice. When I was entering the filmmaking program, I read some of his books. In his book, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, he describes location in the following way: "Place is the segment of space that people imbue with special meaning and value."<sup>1</sup> He speaks of how a relationship with this physical entity and our social relations within it make this place our place in the world. We often take this place for granted until we find ourselves away from it, displaced. That was the situation with me.

The separation from the original place creates a longing, a desire to reconnect, in spite of a well-

*We are saying, "no, thank you," and we are doing our own interpretation of art based on our traditional works, backgrounds, and land.*



established life in a new location. We as Americans feel our land is sacred; we feel blessed and privileged to be on this land. Apparently, many other people from other parts of the world feel the same way about American soil and feel blessed by their good fortune to locate here. And that was definitely the case for me and many of my friends.

Nearly everybody who is here has come from another place at some point. Other than the

*In our efforts to create the unity, have we lost our specificity?*

Native Americans, everybody who is here has come from another place. It is often said that America is the melting pot of those various cultures. Unity in

diversity is what makes us Americans. On the other hand, too much of an emphasis on the unity can force us to conform to an extent that we lose our specificity in the name of the unity. So one important question to ask ourselves is: In our efforts to create the unity, have we lost our specificity? And that is what we are talking about in terms of diversity.

James Early mentioned that South Africa has 11 official languages. Respect for diversity is clearly evident in India. The Republic of India has 18 official languages. Upon its independence in 1947, not a single native language connected its people. To this day, the language that connects them all is English. So unity in diversity is a crucial concept. When newcomers arrive here, they live in an "allocated space,"<sup>2</sup> to use a phrase Arjun Appadurai gives to foreigners. Appadurai says that the American mainstream is this giant glass house where foreigners are visiting for activities like work, shopping, education. It is a one-way street. There is no traffic flowing from the main glass house into their direction. And we heard that in Tony Garcia's presentation, too. He wants to invite the mainstream to join us, right? Various cultures and ethnic groups have their own glass houses. When and how do ethnic groups make the effort to be part of the main glass house?

There are several million Indians who have settled on the North American continent. The

Indian group is a fairly new group to this country. Issues of diasporas, where identity revolves around two locations and the past and the future, are constantly present in the struggle of daily life. This dynamic is the essence of my artwork. Diasporic people cross many borders

and welcome new territories during their journeys of life, whether these borders are national, social, environmental, metaphorical, psychological, or philosophical. Changing location requires a careful evaluation of the demarcations of space, whether it is personal, social, private, public, inside, or

*Issues of diasporas, where identity revolves around two locations and the past and the future, are constantly present in the struggle of daily life.*

outside. Transformation--the process of aligning these new boundaries--is crucial and exhausting. A change in adaptation efforts from the small glass houses is the vision to recognize the importance and benefits of unity while retaining the pride of cultural heritage. Is the fusion process unique for diasporic people?

The human being is a social creature. We exist within our social context. To what degree we maintain our uniqueness without isolating ourselves from our surroundings is the act of delicate balance, which expands our horizons, enriches life, and fills us with the gratitude and blessings of life every step of the way in the journey we call life. As human beings, we exist within our surroundings. No culture has ever existed in its purity. Any attempt to maintain its purity only isolates it, leading to its eventual demise. Cultures are best preserved by being protected from "mixing." Depth, richness, and fullness of a culture are only augmented by such mixing. The melting pot that makes us Americans is the R&D of human civilization.

Now I want to talk about my basic observation at the core level between host society and home society. The basic fundamental difference I have observed between the host society and the home society is quite profound. Host society is structured such that the individual is the center, and the social environment is created by those individuals in an "equality" context. In home

society, the idealized social system is the nucleus, and the individuals find their position within the hierarchical order, a huge difference experienced through daily life experiences.

For diasporic people, our formative years will always be different from our present. Patty Ortiz mentioned the idea when she compared her family life with her sister's and noted the differences. We often find ourselves comparing now with then and here with there. No matter how much we evolve in our host location, our original selves will always mark us as different. Perhaps that is the uniqueness we have, which is our weakness and our strength at the same time. Listening to Patty's compelling story, I would like to quote a Vietnamese artist, Trinh T. Minh-Ha from her book, *Woman, Native, Other*: "minority's voice is always personal; while that of the majority is always impersonal."<sup>3</sup>

The balancing act between ethnic and national loyalty and personal and artistic integrity is one

*The balancing act between ethnic and national loyalty and personal and artistic integrity is one of the challenges for a diasporic artist like myself.*

of the challenges for a diasporic artist like myself. Artworks made strictly for one's own collective community lack the dimension for the artist's personal evolution and his or her stylistic transformation. That was really true for me as I completed a body of work in 2000, where I used certain cultural images, and people didn't know what these images were.

The visual aesthetics are so closely related to the cultural specificity. So, after I made four pieces and had planned to complete many more, I said, "Well, that's enough."

Transformation, the most difficult process for diasporic people, offers quite rewarding results as it enriches life, expands horizons, and generates personal growth. This is really important for me because, when I started creating art, I went through the process. I started creating imagery. The general understanding of art is this hand-created object that we preserve and is unique, and we collect it. That basically relates

to this whole idea that art is not part of our daily lives or it is simply the icing on the cake or it is totally dependent on the discretionary income of the wealthy. Through my art journey, that is not what I wanted to create, so the question I kept asking was, "Why do I create?" Quite a bit of the answer was that, in India, when you are living in that culture, there is a lot of oral history passed down. However, when you live outside of the culture, you don't have that option available. How do you maintain cultural heritage history? My children have no idea what my childhood was like. So that really prompted me to place them in a picture as, too, I wanted to start documenting what life has been like for me in the United States.

As a result of that, I feel that art represents who we are and how we live. So artists and their creations are the research and development of human civilization, where traditions are questioned and boundaries are challenged. When Matisse painted a portrait of Mrs. Matisse, his idea was to use color in a non-traditional way. Matisse earned himself a title of *Wild Beast* in the process of freeing color. That goes to the same thing that James Early mentioned yesterday, that art is imagined. Artists live ahead of their time. And artists are always pushing--what I consider the social-norm boundaries--and artists are on those boundaries, questioning those boundaries, which eventually expands the social norms. It changes that social norm, but the established social norm is a slow process, so the seeds that artists plant will take a long time to germinate and become part of a social norm. Obviously, Matisse did it. He freed color. We don't even think twice when color is used in an expressive way today.

So, as a diasporic subject, I have experienced translation and infusion between my cultural encounters. I believe that innovation occurs on the borders of cultures, communities, and disciplines. Art is born among individuals, communities, and cultures in the process of dialogic interaction. Creation takes place not within discrete bounded cultures but rather among permeable, changing communities. As an artist, art

creation is a journey in expressing ideas. The artists' ideas translate into issues and dialogues of the contemporary art world. Cultural standards and traditions condition our perception

*Visual aesthetics has a close relationship with cultural specificity.*

and our interpretation of our visual perceptions. Visual aesthetics has a close relationship with cultural specificity. The question of why and for whom artists express their

ideas requires careful consideration of the use of the materials and the choice of the medium.

Journeys of diaspora, identity, and life are just like art creation, where process is the essence--not the product or the destination. My artworks are my prints in time of my whereabouts on this earth, with translation and fusion of the cultures of my inheritance and acquisition. So that's what I wanted to say.

<sup>1</sup> Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) 152.

<sup>2</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.)

<sup>3</sup> Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) 28.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND REPORTS

**Suzanne Benally:** Last night, several of us sat down and framed what we thought we heard as some of the more salient questions and concerns in the discussions. This morning, we decided we didn't want our interpretation of the discussion alone to frame the questions for today's discussions. Rather, we wanted to listen to the questions and issues others might raise. We plan to identify five central questions that the breakout groups can discuss. Before taking suggestions for discussion questions from you, I want to present a list of questions that the facilitators noted during the presentations and discussions of the last two days:

- How can we help ground young people in the wisdom of their culture?
- How can we creatively synthesize modern youth culture and the wisdom passed down to us from the elders?
- How can the arts help us be less uninstructed and better able to participate in decisions that affect our lives?
- How could issues of succession in cultural organizations be more effectively managed?
- What are the implications of the art world taking on the financing and management practices of the business world more aggressively?
- The West is a region of the country that attracts a great number of tourists because of its natural spaces. What is the cultural community's role in ensuring that the sacred and community arts spaces encountered by these tourists are not diminished?
- Does the relentless advance of the digital age carry new opportunities for us? Does that advance hold dangers for our work?
- How can we be true to our communities and, at the same time, create new messages that pro-

vide insight for those communities regarding where they are going?

- Is there a next step to the conversation of the last two days? If so, what would it be?
- We need to move beyond a definition of ourselves. How might we do so?
- How do we understand the issues we've discussed in terms of their uniqueness to the West, particularly their informing of issues related to land and place?
- What do we mean by *democracy*? This question came out of the notion that many peoples have experienced democracy unevenly. So what does it mean to use it as a paradigm or a redefined paradigm?
- What is the reconciliation among colonial culture, indigenous culture, and immigrant culture?
- In order to move to the imaginative truth and democracy that James Early laid out for us, what are the new cultures, the new languages, and the new consciousness that we need to cultivate?

Those are the key questions that we identified. What questions do you propose we consider?

**John Coe:** For those of us who work in government, how do we get our leaders--the governors or board members or people who are above us--to think in terms of multiculturalism? We've had an incredible experience here. How do we get state leaders to have a similar type of experience? Can we encourage them to be willing to act on policies that can benefit what we have been talking about?

**Mayumi Tsutakawa:** What would be the policies that we would specifically share with and recommend to state and regional arts agencies in regard to multicultural arts and communities?

**Ricardo Frazer:** Who advocates for indigenous people and for immigrants? Is it someone outside of that community, or is it done within that community?

**Lisle Soukup:** How can an arts-advocacy organization better engage members of diverse communities as arts activists?

**Michael Schuster:** Is there a way to support marginal or community organizations without overwhelming them and prompting the same homogenous outcomes?

**Suzanne Benally:** We have worked to telescope the suggestions for discussion made by the group as a whole with those noted by the facilitators. Obviously, we can't address all of the questions that were posed. We propose that the following questions be used for our group discussion:

1. How do you engage diverse communities in advocacy for public funding?
2. How can mainstream organizations support community-based organizations without overwhelming them with homogeneous outcomes?
3. What is the reconciliation among colonial cultures, indigenous cultures, and immigrant cultures?
4. What are the ways the arts can more effectively instruct broader communities on critical issues of cultural systems?

*Participants and observers separated into groups to discuss each of the above four topics. Afterwards, one person from each breakout group gave a report.*

**Michael Alexander:** My group was challenged with the question of how to engage diverse communities in advocacy for public funding. First of all, we weren't certain that public funding was the end we should be pursuing. We did, however, feel that our work in the area of public funding could be informed by successful mod-

els. Our group observed that opera audiences are growing around the country, so there must be things we can learn from that. Republicans—now there's an organization to look at regarding ways to advocate. Also, there is something called *The Future of Music* that is a success, and MoveOn.org is another example of a possible successful model. Our group suggests that we as a field start looking at other models and other operations and learn from them.

We felt that we had to come up with 21st-century language regarding the value of public support for the arts. We also talked about how we have to come up with effective language that fosters inclusion but one that also starts using terminology that is appropriate to this century. We need to talk about the creation of wealth and public value. We also need to talk about *investors* instead of *funders*. We must find ways to adjust to the times so that we are communicating our message more effectively. The approach should tie back to our discussion of youth culture. We have to use the language with which they are working and the language they understand.

Our group encouraged WESTAF to be a convener or co-convener that would bring a broader spectrum of participants to the table. We need to use the prestige of an organization such as WESTAF to make certain that we convene and that we do so in a very inclusive manner. To succeed, we must have the participation of a more diverse group of leaders, and we need the leadership of the big cultural institutions as well as the small cultural institutions in order to deal with all of these advocacy-related issues.

Our group also looks forward to the upcoming conference for The Association of American Cultures. We suggest WESTAF convene a session there focusing on opera companies and their relationship to the issues we are discussing here.

*Our group suggests that we as a field start looking at other models and other operations and learn from them.*

**John Coe:** The New England Foundation for the Arts recently completed a study. One of the findings was to employ the language of business when advocating for the arts--to put the needs of the arts in the language of the business community so it can be understood.

**Michael Alexander:** One of the things that all of us should figure out is how to serve on the boards of banks--and bank board members get paid! Accomplishing something like that would provide us with an income stream to support the other arts-based things we are doing. We should figure out how to represent the arts and maybe certain ethnic-specific communities or certain other specific elements of the arts to the business community that needs what we have.

**Susan Boskoff:** As I was in the group that reported out, I would like to clarify and expand on the issue of language. How we communicate goes beyond how we speak to those we hope will support and fund the arts. It requires finding a 21st-century language to describe both our work and ourselves. Knowing that language is a significant way of dividing people, without clarity of understanding in how we speak about the work that we do, those who are in power can use our own language to divide and conquer. So we discussed a need to speak above and beyond the language of our business--to become more inclusive for those within the culture industry.

**Judith Luther Wilder:** I want to call your attention to the study, *Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC)*,<sup>1</sup> which was funded by the Ford Foundation. Some of you have been involved in the study because your cities have been named Creative Communities. Los Angeles is one, and the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) is the organization that represents that. The approach is a wonderful model to look at in terms of bringing cross-sector industries into involvement with the arts. I think that when we talk about inviting other people to the table to come to a future convening, there are wonderful and obvious people like the president of the American Business

Association, who is a great arts advocate, who should be invited.

I also think what Michael Alexander does--and what I try to do--is to wander into enemy territory as much as possible. We should not just invite people from the industry to come to arts meetings and programs; we need to go to those boards and to those institutions that have typically not been friendly to the arts. My goal is to be with them but to have them pay me to be there.

*...we need to go to those boards and to those institutions that have typically not been friendly to the arts.*

**James Early:** I would certainly endorse the conversation that we're having about the need to be able to speak the languages of the marketplace and the business community. However, as a prerequisite, I think it is imperative for our community to begin to elaborate the societal value of arts and culture that are not market or economy specific. We need not view this as an either/or situation but as a necessary means of articulating intrinsic benefits of arts-and-culture practice and appreciation so that other social sectors like the business community and market considerations come into partnership to assist arts and culture in their main goals of achieving creative, expressive, and interpretive endeavors.

We do not do very well in conveying the role of arts and culture to the spiritual (not religious) and psychological well-being of society. We must better elaborate to all sectors of society the non-market benefits that accrue to individuals, communities, and the nation. The dialogue must begin with the basic goal of advancing arts and culture and not simply making them epiphenomenal to market principles and goals characteristic of the tendency of recent years to suggest that, if children study ballet or jazz, tap, or other art forms, they have better computational skills and critical thinking as adults. This kind of instrumentalist approach to determining value can ultimately make arts and culture captive to external market forces and bottom-line cultural policies. Of course, arts-and-culture practitioners simply must become more



adept at the business dimensions and requirements of arts-and-culture institutional and organizational work. For arts-and-culture practitioners, calling forth or responding to the muse is, of course, primary, but doing so with real-world considerations of stable economic moorings and mid-to-long-term security requires engagement with and mastery of sound business practices and partnerships.

The last comment I want to make on language or terminology is about the term *people of color* that two or three people informally asked me about. Someone asked me if I was disparaging that term. What I am suggesting is that we must locate such terms with historical narratives; otherwise, we tend at all times to reify assumed ideological affinity and activist unity and lose understanding of what circumstances, motives, and organizing strategies led to the emergence and influence of the term.

Multiculturalism emerged because of the dominance (hegemony) of monoculturalism and the critiques, visions, actions, and movement of cultural activists like many of us at this conference. We didn't come up with the term first; the term *multiculturalism* emerged from the values, goals, and activities of the counter project to monoculturalism. The term *people of color* emerged in opposition to racism and all that systemic discrimination entails about dominant arts-and-culture perspectives and practices. We have achieved many gains, but we have to say why, how, with whom, as well as lay bare the differences and tensions that arose among and between marginalized groups in the struggles to overcome Eurocentric hegemony. Therefore, use of the term *people of color* must be situated in its historical complexities and contemporized in this new era with explanation of why it is still relevant and useful. If we don't do that, some will allege that it is divisive and/or irrelevant to addressing today's challenges and opportunities.

**Sandra Gibson:** Our group's conversation started with a discussion of intrinsic versus instrumental values. We talked about creating and advocating for the values we hold and trying to

find the linkages across our communities and cultures that still support these values. I would urge everyone to become familiar with a new study that Rand has just completed for the Wallace Foundation on the benefits of participation called *Gifts of the Muse, Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*.<sup>2</sup> The study starts to make a scientific case for the intrinsic value of the arts.

**Anthony Radich:** One other item from that conversation that I would like to highlight is the need to take a good look at the current coalitions supporting public funders. I think we all realize that those coalitions don't, for the most part, work anymore. We need to think about building new coalitions from the ground up that deal with the broad spectrum of people who are interested in our cause and our interests. Some of our old coalition partners are frankly not very interested in what we are doing anymore. We need to rebuild that coalition in an inclusive yet quite different way. Part of that approach should be frequently reaching across lines and outside of the arts.

*We need to think about building new coalitions from the ground up that deal with the broad spectrum of people who are interested in our cause and our interests.*

**Len Edgerly:** The question our group discussed was: How can mainstream organizations support communities without overwhelming them with expectations of homogenous outcomes?

What emerged from our discussion was the thought that this is a pivotal question that seems to underlie a lot of the conversation of the last few days. The idea of our work being part of a commons can be problematic because, at the same time we are part of the commons, we are asking others to recognize that we don't hold a common understanding of the world. These perspectives are not necessarily antagonistic. But our group thought there was a need to have some clarity about what is in the commons versus what is not in the commons.

Regarding the topic of organizations and how they give support, some in the group felt the

field was drowning in paper, and they asked if all of this paper was really being used. They also asked if the flurry of paper was keeping us away from the direct activity of creation and presentation of the arts. That discussion evolved to an understanding that how the information collected from organizations is used is crucial. Some noted that how the data is used--particularly the stories--enables us to have conversations with other sectors. The longer we talked, the more we understood that this is a tough business and that it is a very long-term effort to see any meaningful change in this area.

In our discussion, there came a moment that I suspect few of us in the group will forget. This was when Rose Fosdick spoke about the experience of the Native people in Alaska. Her comments put flesh on the question that we were considering and showed how deeply this challenge goes into the soul of the communities that we are trying to support. She put it this way, "Eskimos' communities were told essentially by the dominant culture, 'You can't talk your language; you can't dance.'" She said that, in response, "Our people stopped talking, and we stopped dancing." To realize the depth of this intervention by the dominant culture into the soul of these communities and to hear it expressed in person with such eloquence really showed us what we are up against.

Rose also said that what was amazing out of that experience was the adaptability of her people to the point that now the dance is being revitalized, and there are attempts to reclaim the language. You see things like Eskimo people dancing stories of the Bible, in which the authenticity of the dance has survived and adapted to the reality of the new circumstances.

Listening to Rose, it became clear that James Early was right when he said this is long-term work but that everyone has the responsibility to fight for every inch wherever we are placed in our work. We need to do what we can and take responsibility for what we can. We can't assume that anyone is off limits for being talked to and educated, whether they are on a board of com-

missioners or whatever other level of hierarchy. We need to fight for even an inch and to go home for supper and praise the inch and look forward to the following day's battle.

Another aspect of the conversation which moved me as a man was looking around the group after Rose had talked and seeing that the women were all crying. Suzanne Benally quoted an indigenous people's saying, "When the hearts of the women are on the table, the lives of the people are on the table."

**Bob Mesko:** I have here two versions of my group's question. The first version is: "How do colonial immigration and indigenous cultures reconcile themselves?" And the second is: "How can we reconcile colonial immigration and indigenous cultures?" The group's reflection on these two statements somehow provided a pathway for the answers we came to in our group.

The group discussion started at the global level, and Neil Hannahs contributed some wonderful insights and considered culture through the lens of the environment and ecosystems. We were all in agreement with his point that a monoculture is not a healthy system--that the healthiest systems are complex and diverse. The group acknowledged multicultural societies live in a degree of tension; however, they noted such tension is a source of their vitality. The group noted that there is a sort of danger to diversity because, when you have a complex and diverse culture in balance, that's the ideal situation, but when a dominant species appears and other aspects of that culture are threatened, there is a breakdown not only for threatened groups but for the system as a whole.

The group considered the current situation in the United States and came to the conclusion that there is a process in force where the colonial culture, which was defined as "the current dominant one," is undergoing a process where

*We need to fight for even an inch and to go home for supper and praise the inch and look forward to the following day's battle.*

it is being forced to reconcile with other cultures that are coming into the system, whether the dominant culture likes it or not. One of the points that came up was from the essay by Samuel Huntington,<sup>3</sup> previously mentioned by James Early. The essay was pointed to as evidence that the dominant culture is feeling threatened by another culture. In this case, it was the Hispanic one, which was gaining in strength and vitality to such an extent that the dominant culture felt itself threatened and feared it was going to lose its identity if it let this second culture within its space.

Ironically, we reflected on the fact that, when we had the fortune of listening to Patty Ortiz's presentation, which was from the aspect of the new culture coming into this space--the Hispanic culture--she spoke of how representatives of that culture also have a fear. They fear that, by mixing and merging with the dominant culture, they will lose the roots of their identity.

*...there is really nothing to fear from this-- what is being created is something more complex, more balanced, and more vital.*

So it was fascinating for us to look at one empirical process where two cultures were meeting in one space, and they both felt threatened for different reasons. In spite of this fact, there are outside forces with which we are all familiar--such as globalization--that are forcing the cultures to reconcile themselves and to live together and to borrow from each other. We would hope the leaders of those cultural groups would be able to exhibit that there is really nothing to fear from this-- what is being created is something more complex, more balanced, and more vital.

The second statement of the question is, "How can we reconcile the colonial, the immigrant, and the indigenous cultures?" The answer to the first question sort of lets us off the hook on this one. It assumes there are recurring processes we don't have to worry about that constantly work to reconcile cultures. However, the group noted that even a healthy ecosystem needs a certain active positive stewardship in order to keep it in balance. Then the group shifted to

the micro level, where we noted that arts leaders have a crucial role to play as early adopters of models of the new culture. The group came up with two role models at the micro level that suggested a way that these cultures can meld effectively.

One model suggested by Neil Hannahs was *punana leo*, which means "language nest." It is a very exciting concept of how one culture previously in the background or in the shadows of the dominant culture--in this case, the indigenous Hawaiian culture--was able to come up with a strategy for reviving its linguistic traditions. It was a system of how people can relearn the Native-Hawaiian language by children and parents learning together. This had to be a conscious decision both by the participants and the policy makers that was a healthy and very proactive approach to one culture coming into a real partnership and balance with the dominant culture.

The second model, also showing very courageous leadership and forward thinking by arts leaders, was suggested by Ruben Guevara. He handed me a brochure detailing how, in one artistic event, we can see the healthy balance of colonial immigration and indigenous cultures. This was a performance called *To All Relations: Sacred Moon Songs*, where there was a Chicano director reaching out through the tradition of Islamic songs. The piece was performed at a theater honored by the name of an agent/playwright, David Henry Huang, who was honored with a Pulitzer Prize by the dominant Anglo culture on Broadway and supported by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. It was co-directed by an Asian American, Nobuko Miyamoto. In spite of--according to his own reportage--getting some flack for reaching out from his own culture, this art activity illustrates the outcome of a new, more complex, more balanced cultural ecosystem--one that is integrative of cultures that hadn't interacted much before.

**Mayumi Tsutakawa:** I just want to add one thing. The group wrestled a bit with the concept of "out marriage" taking over and therefore

erasing specific cultures. Our thinking was that, with the persistence of cultural forms and languages, specific cultures will continue, despite the very high rate of intermarriage.

*...with the persistence of cultural forms and languages, specific cultures will continue, despite the very high rate of intermarriage.*

peoples and their cultures with the dominant society. I believe this issue is far more complex and problematic and political than we are addressing here. As I listened to Rose Fosdick and Gloria Emerson and to many other women coming to these tables--coming to these organizations, being invited to participate—they are still not being listened to in trying to represent their communities. The examples that were shared in terms of not being listened to really speak to the kind of racism that exists--the kind of structural racism that exists—with, frankly, no intention to change.

When we all came out of that group for topic number two, I think we all were very quiet because we understand how deep this goes. We understand the deep wounding to which Rose Fosdick was referring--not as something in the past but as something that continues today and is still an issue of survival.

*Every time we redefine and rename the discourse, indigenous people still have to adapt...*

One of the things that I heard Rose say was that her people, along with a lot of other indigenous peoples, have to continually adapt. Fortunately, they can draw on the strength of their cultures to do that adaptation. Nonetheless, they are being asked to adapt every time new policies come along, every time we have these new discussions. Every time we redefine and rename the discourse, indigenous people still have to adapt, and that is really concerning to me. At what point do we really take our place at the table without it having to be a process of adapting?

**Suzanne Benally:** I want to tie this discussion back to the report of the discussion of the second group. We need to raise the question of what we mean by the reconciliation of indigenous

I really find the framing of democracy, common space, and public space to be problematic for indigenous peoples. I don't want to dismiss that metaphor as a possible and potential framework, provided we can assert the integrity around which you are proposing. As I listen to someone in our group ask, "How do I bring a multicultural model into the group in which I am engaged?," I think that offers him a way of thinking about it. But it is still problematic. I am also concerned that what it does, yet again, is offer us what will become another kind of racialized discourse, much the same way that diversity became a racialized discourse for us. That's a discourse that ultimately benefits White Americans and not the issues and concerns of the people in communities of color.

As we talk about the arts and we try to find ways to move this agenda forward--to find that common space in its integrity--I think we really have to scale up the complexity and politics of what we are talking about. We have to understand that, for indigenous peoples, our existence is still tied to federal policy. It always has been, and it continues to be. Even if we join the table and enter into this common space, we can be guaranteed that there is another policy that is going to change and shift that for us. Over the years, I guess I have learned not to move to anger because, when you come out of this deep, deep pain and emotion, you want to go to the point of anger. In my lifetime, I have been there, done that. So I am not sure where I am with this other than to name it right now.

*...when you come out of this deep, deep pain and emotion, you want to go to the point of anger.*

**James Early:** My sense is that maybe we just made another breakthrough in our two days of conversation. I live with anger all the time, and I have many, many scars. I am often resentful of the fact that I have had to fight, and people like me have had to fight so hard and at times become ugly in behavior to accomplish diversity goals. You know, sometimes you get in a battle, and you win it, and then you go home on the weekend and you say, "I'm glad I won the bat-

tle, but I really said some ugly things to somebody. I paid too high a price. I had to win that, but I paid too high a price in my own humanity." And those struggles can make you hard and, at times, very unhappy with the emotional energy and tough posture one spontaneously assumes in the heat of debate and mediation of differences on the job. Racism still exists, sexism still exists, as well as homophobia. But there has never been a paradise on earth in any of our communities before any of us had contact with each other. We did not live in situations free of intrinsic conflict--men and women. So the bases for frustration--even anger--are always present. The issue is not anger but how to effectively use the righteous anger to advance the cause of cultural democracy in arts and culture and to do so preserving--in fact, improving--one's humanity.

We are human beings who have imagination, so our imagination always has the possibility to escape the tradition and to peer beyond how the elders or the parents or the religion or the language defines us. I would say, just like ecosystems, if we don't consider new ways to confront old and new situations, we perish. It is our very nature to be adaptive within our own communities as well as among other communities.

I think we do have to talk about the anger, and I think we have to be careful of just looking for philosophical platitudes that logically make us seem better but obscure the fact that we still have contradictions in our arts-and-culture practices in the workplace and in public spaces. We had a card passed around yesterday that I've been thinking about. It said, "I shape democracy." *Democracy* is often talked about as a term that can descend on us rather than that we are the essence of the term, which means that we can always imagine and create it in different ways and select from as well as abandon the ways that we've imagined and done it before. I think that preceding the term *reconciliation* and actions toward that end is admission if not full answers to the basic question--how to be honest about the pain and the anger and the racism

and so forth. In process, we will come to learn how to justly mediate differences as we go forth into the future. Otherwise, we will become anesthetized with flowery phraseology and/or consumed with frustration and anger, and we won't be able to achieve or to measure progress.

Since there haven't been, in my view, any paradises, and there will not be any future paradises, it is critical--despite frustration and anger about lack of progress or slow changes--to develop ways of assessing progress, even small measures of progress. Despite the legitimate suspicions, frustration, and raw emotion that have issued forth in this conference, just think, 25 years ago, none of us would have been in this room together. How did it happen that we have crossed many--some heretofore nearly impenetrable cultural frontiers and vastly different ways of knowing and doing--to arrive in productive discussion, exchange, exploration, and recommendations at this important meeting on generational and multicultural change? This meeting is the result of conscious, ongoing struggle and mediation and agreement that this "inch" of progress has been achieved. It will be the new beachhead for launching the next stage (miles to go) of struggle for progress.

*...just think, 25 years ago, none of us would have been in this room together.*

So I think we all have to make real in our lives and work the slogan, "I shape democracy." We all have to find the ways to do so. In summary, these are some considerations worth talking about--the pain and the anger--in very honest ways and then looking at how we can negotiate just ways forward. We need to realize, though, that there is no paradise on the other side of the negotiation. "They say that freedom is a constant struggle"<sup>4</sup> is a refrain from a freedom song that I interpret to mean that every small step of progress opens up new challenges and new possibilities that we have to continue to shape into futures possible.

**Paul Minicucci:** Our question was: "What are the ways that arts can be more effective to instruct the broader community about critical



issues in our cultural systems or ecosystems?"

Our group struggled with what this question meant. As a result, our notes are not linear. There were two branches to our discussion. One was the necessity of artists to be validated by different means within their own communities. The second was that we need to be more effective in communicating those messages to the broader community. Our group thought that one couldn't do one of these to the exclusion of the other.

We started out by talking about whether we were or were not successful in the recent election. In that election, many artists were active and were trying to use the arts to highlight the critical issues and values of our communities. One strand of the group's thinking could be summed up as, "Well, look what happened." Another theme of the group's thought was, "Well, you can't really look at the outcome of an election as evidence as to whether or not we were a success in effectively instructing the broader community." The group's conclusion was that there are many things that happened in between the instruction and the outcome. So we ought to be realistic. I think Tony Garcia was correct in saying we would be deluding ourselves if we thought the artist and the role of the arts are determinative in things like elections.

Then we got into a discussion about the role of the artist within the community and as a mediator or conversationalist beyond the community. We talked about how artists see themselves and whether or not we see ourselves as representing a community and interpreting what we see and hear through our own vision or just engage in propaganda. We talked about what the role of an activist is, and we talked a lot about terms. I think we all agreed that we need to be careful about how we use terms. For example, the term *activists* rather than *agents of social change* was provided as one example. We also talked about how bridges need to be self-consciously built to the broader community. One thought is that we could start by being

more effective by instructing ourselves within our own communities on the issue of self-marginalization. If we did that, the group thought the activity would help bolster the role of artists within their own communities before they thought about trying to bring those messages to the broader community. We talked about what kind of processes can be devised to do that--to self-validate.

*...we could start by being more effective by instructing ourselves within our own communities on the issue of self-marginalization.*

We talked about the necessity of giving ourselves awards and other validation that mean something in our community rather than playing the games of the Academy Award or the Pulitzer Prize as the validation we seek and accept. I think we all recognize that, if we want to bring the instruction to the broader community, we have to be effective in some way in creating the bridge to the broader community.

Another issue we discussed was the fact that we think that we can't make a kind of large global impact. A member of our group brought up the *Laramie Project*<sup>5</sup> as an example of what seemed to be the right play at the right time to define a very singular event. The play was placed in the broader community in such a way that it really did have a significant impact. That impact was one that could almost be measured in terms of its power to sensitize people to the issue of gay eradication and gay discrimination that the broader community places on the gay community. Somehow, people in the broader community were moved by this issue of the *Laramie Project* to the point that it is now even being performed in high schools.

The group concluded that there were ways to instruct the broader community. In order to do so, however, we have to make certain that we first relate well to our own communities, self-validate, not self-marginalize, and then find effective ways of building bridges to the outside community. I think we probably didn't really get to the question posed. I think we all felt

that it was a very broad question about what the role of the artist is and what the role of art is. The entire dialogue also relates a bit to the question of instrumental value versus intrinsic value, and it also relates to the question of how language can or can't be used.

We did talk a lot about how the mainstream and the commercial mainstream co-ops all of our language, whether it is Martin Luther King or another leader. Any successful language that

*Language in self-definition is very important.*

we can come up with is now used to sell products. There is the Wal-Martization phenomenon. Wal-Mart is on National Public Radio now as the "community builder." Language in self-definition is very important. We have to be very careful about it because we could actually be winning the battles and ending up losing some of the wars.

**Lawson Inada:** It was really nice sitting out there [in the Miyako Hotel lobby]. I could have gone to any of the discussion groups, but I happened to go out there and sit, so this is an outgrowth of that because it was very stimulating listening to all of these ideas. But a couple of non-official words came to mind, and they are *spiffy* and *funky*. We were sitting there in this very spiffy hotel looking outside at this spiffy 'mobile. I could probably live a whole year off of what it cost for that 'mobile, but you look beyond that, and it's funky, you know. And you see Little Tokyo, the way that J. Town used to be, and I started having kind of a time-warp flash because I go back to the '40s and '50s, when it was funky, but it was really happening. Even though it seems like everybody talks about the future, we forget the past--forget our own histories. So it takes a Rose Fosdick to remind us, "Excuse me." You know what I mean--that there's a reality out there. So just by looking across the street and thinking back and forth, I remember a time before arts agencies, before foundations. And it seems to me, in our communities, it really was happening, and things were going on. It's like, "We don't need no stinking badges." I don't want us to lose sight of that. Maybe it's just being older; I don't want us to

lose sight of the fact that we produced great culture before all of this stuff--and I'm not so sure that it's an improvement. You know what I mean? Like nowadays, I buy CDs-- that's not an improvement over my LPs. You know what I mean? Excuse me. Looks can be deceiving. It seems like we're really getting there now. Well, geez, I remember this little Tokyo, this little J Town, from the old days, from the '40s and '50s. We didn't have this; this is the Japanese money hotel. We didn't have this; we didn't have the spiffy museum. There's a lot of Japanese money. That's why, when James Early was talking about seeing a big Sony sign, I'm not so sure that museum is an improvement over the Buddhist temple that was there. And then I blink my eyes and--I'm glad that James mentioned paradise--because this was paradise in a certain way when giants walked the earth. It's sad for me to think that maybe we can look forward but look back to what we may not even know.

*...this was paradise in a certain way when giants walked the earth.*

During World War II--and this happened in San Francisco and all of our major communities--you read Maya Angelou and see that the Black community went into the Little Tokyos--and that was here. We were taken away, and this became an extension of the Black community, right around here. Then there became little clubs, and we had little funky hotels--none of this spiffy stuff. And I mean to tell you--I've got this one tape--Charlie Parker used to live around here. He had this little old room in this funky hotel, and he was playing at a place called *The Finale Club* with Dizzy Gillespie. It was all right here. And it's a shame, but that's just America. We could give a quiz, and people don't know him. Maybe I could say he's the greatest artist America has ever produced period. People don't know who I'm talking about. So culturally, the giant was walking this earth right here where we meet.

Also right around here--and this is following the War--there was an elderly man who was making a living washing dishes, and the restaurant he

worked for let him have a little room for rent somewhere--extra funky. Now I could mention that name to you, and you wouldn't know who he is, but he was a giant because he was not affiliated with any of the official temples around here. He would just offer these informal teachings to people who came by. But as a result of these informal teachings, you see, he was a Zen master. His name was Sensei Nyogen Senzaki, and any Zen people in this country can tell you he is one of the true founders and pioneers of Zen in America, which is very huge now. You see? And so there was a paradise, and we did have giants walking the earth, and they had enormous cultural impact. And it seems to me that one of our own problems as a society--and that's all of us--the young people somehow don't know that. We can blame the schools, and we can blame the media, but they really don't know that.

So I think there is a way of incorporating the forward with honoring and respecting what's been there because it's kind of like all of us have been sitting on their shoulders. Somebody mentioned that sort of praise, and that's just one thing that came to me by sitting out there in that nice lobby.

**Michael Alexander:** If you would indulge me, I would like to take about three minutes to read something that was written by John Hersey in 1972 that asks questions about artists' roles in a society. It may help us think about how people who are outside of our community look at us. These are two separate sections from his book, *The Conspiracy*, and it meant so much to me that I typed it into my Palm Pilot so I can look at it over and over again. It is from a novel based on supposed letters sent between Tigellinus, who was one of the co-commanders of the Praetorium Guard, to Nero and various others in Rome. Included among these letters are copies of intercepted letters that are picked up by spies in an effort to give us alternate bits of information. Pannus is the tribune of the secret police, Seneca is the famous philosopher, and Lucan is Seneca's nephew and an honored poet. And the comments are on the roles of the

arts and artists in a book that I found really quite interesting. This is from Pannus to Tigellinus:

I've been having some thoughts, stirred up perhaps by the report on the Piso dinner, on how to deal with writers, with artists in general--this side of extreme measure.

Their principal weakness is their self-importance. They think that the world cares about their opinions. Some even think they change the world! Lucan speaks of a writer's "responsibilities." A writer has no responsibilities, for responsibilities are the burden of power. He is, at best, an entertainer, like that trained bear we saw nodding its head and catching apples in its mouth the other evening. At less than best, he is an oaf who lets farts at both ends.

The second weakness of artists is their love of sniffing each other's farts. Unlike other egoists, creators of works of art really believe that they are superior not only as individuals but also as a class. For this reason they are extremely jealous of each other's credentials. They believe they have a sort of priesthood. They delight therefore in cutting down others of their kind, believing they are keeping the priesthood pure and strong.<sup>6</sup>

Then there is a passage in the letter between the poet and the philosopher: "A writer cannot change the world; his duty is to describe it. It may be that because a writer, like a sculptor or painter or musician, has wider-ranging and more sensitive perceptions than a man of affairs, he can describe the world in ways that open the eyes of the man of action, and therefore affect the action."<sup>7</sup>

I thought that was a most interesting section; I hope that it was interesting to the rest of you.

<sup>1</sup> *Lincnet.net: Leveraging Investments in Creativity*, The LINC Network, 16 Jan. 2006 <[www.lincnet.net](http://www.lincnet.net)>.

<sup>2</sup> Kevin F. McCarthy, Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, Laura Zakaras, and Arthur Brooks, *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "The Hispanic Challenge," *Foreign Policy* March/April 2004, 4 Jan. 2006 <[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=2495](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2495)>.

<sup>4</sup> The Freedom Singers, "Freedom is a Constant Struggle," *Freedom is a Constant Struggle, Songs of the Freedom Movement*, ed. and comp. Guy and Candie Carawan (New York: Oak Publications, 1968) 92.

<sup>5</sup> Moises Kaufman and members of Tectonic Theater Project, *The Laramie Project* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> John Richard Hersey, *The Conspiracy: A Novel* (New York: Random House, 1972) 29-30.

<sup>7</sup> Hersey 133.

## FINAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Juan Carrillo:** We are now going to move into a discussion segment, where we will listen to recommendations. We are interested in hearing any recommendations that might have been developing in your heads or have developed in writing that you think need to be heard by the WESTAF leadership.

**Suzanne Benally:** A number of people have approached us and said, "Let's spend some time offering recommendations and suggestions for policy changes, noting policy implications, and making organizational recommendations on a number of the issues that we've addressed over the two days." So let's hear from all of you--symposium core participants and observers alike.

**Juan Carrillo:** I'll start out by suggesting that, wherever decisions are made about gatherings or convenings, this model, this idea, and the subjects we've touched on really drive future convenings by state arts agencies or funders. I encourage WESTAF to structure and promote a continuing dialogue on this topic throughout the West.

**John Coe:** I agree with what you just said; however, I would also like us to think of how to sponsor this conversation at the federal level. I am not sure how we would do that. Maybe we can include in some of these convenings some people who are at the policy level from Washington.

Another thing I've been thinking about is a magazine to which I subscribe. When we got involved with this multicultural advisory committee, I got a hard copy of a magazine called *Diversity*. It really deals almost exclusively with the corporate world. I think the latest issue I received focused on the 50 companies that practice diversity the best in the whole country. Maybe there are some things we can learn from them. But also, I called them up and said, "What can you tell me about diversity in the nonprofit sector?" And they couldn't tell me a

thing. They didn't know anything. Maybe we need to start looking at models or examples of things occurring with diversity in the nonprofit sector to help us move forward. Those are a couple of my thoughts.

**Pravina Gondalia:** For me, this has been quite an enriching experience. I heard many different perspectives from many different people. Now the information is just going to have to settle in and eventually turn into some kind of knowledge. Who knows where that knowledge will lead? This gathering is really very important, quite exciting, and the right step leading in the right direction. Thank you.

**Leslie Ito:** I have three recommendations. The first is building on Juan Carrillo's point. I think that the ideas that have come up here need to be shared with Grantmakers in the Arts. I am hoping there are people here who are influential and can advance the ideas discussed here. I also recommend that emerging leaders be brought into the planning for a future symposium.

Finally, it has taken me a long time to understand what policy making is, and I think I am finally starting to get it. I think that--building on what James Early said, that we shape democracy, we shape policy--we have been doing policy making over the last two days. So it is up to us, no matter whether you are a funder or you are an individual artist or an administrator of an arts organization. It is up to us to use the language that we've heard here over the last few days and begin to more actively shape cultural policy.

**Lonnie Cooper:** WESTAF does not have to convene a symposium for us to all be talking about what we have talked about the last two days. This dialogue is not academic, and it is not "highfalutin." The only way that it happens is if all of us are talking about it and all of us are continuing this conversation beyond what has happened here.

*I also recommend that emerging leaders be brought into the planning for a future symposium.*



**Judith Luther Wilder:** My suggestion is that we have to look at some new models for financing everything we do in the arts--from advocacy to creating large works and small works. Of particular importance is the need to deal with individual artists and help them develop some new tools. There was a time when we didn't have public funding for the arts and a time before artists and administrators became accustomed to the notion of grants and endowments.

Another thing that struck me during the past couple of days is how closely we are aligned and how we perhaps should have stronger alliances with the environmental community. Such an alliance is possible because so much of what we are talking about both communities care about, and it seems to me that we literally rise and fall

*...art and the environment are joined at the hip. Maybe we need to formalize that partnership.*

together. When the state agencies decide to cut back, it is always the arts and the environmental agencies. At the city level in Los Angeles, it was the environment agency that did not survive and the arts agency that did. But what Neil Hannahs is talking about, what Gloria Emerson is talking about, and what Rose Fosdick is talking about is that art and the environment are joined at the hip. Maybe we need to formalize that partnership.

**Jean Tokuda Irwin:** I feel a sense of renewal, but I also feel a sense of, "Well, I'm back to the drawing board as the triage person for ethnicity and inclusiveness in many of the settings in which I work." For a while, in my state arts agency, if a person came through the door who was of color, non-English speaking, or obviously of low socio-economic circumstances, they were automatically sent to me. My job was then to decide where they needed to go for assistance within our agency. One day, a panelist with cerebral palsy and halting speech called. She, too, was referred to me to "figure it all out." Fortunately for me and also because of administrative leadership that seeks equity and diversity agency and department wide, these issues are now a part of our strategic planning

conversation, and these incidences are fewer and farther between.

However, in my day-to-day work and during my services on various nonprofit boards and taskforces (state department of education, a state parent organization, and a nonprofit arts organization), I find myself to always be the one to address issues of ethnicity, religious diversity, and issues pertaining to those with disabilities as well. I also serve on two committees, one predominately Asian and one predominately Native American. I find it amazing that sometimes committees of individuals who have experienced the height of prejudice and racism can, in a heartbeat, exclude and disparage others.

What I'm sensing is that what I need to do when I get back to my state is to find more and more individuals who are in the mainstream who can speak on behalf of these issues in many of the settings in which I serve. I am tired of always being the "thorn in everyone's flesh" or the proverbial "champion of the underdog" or the "one with a chip on her shoulder" even if I'm speaking on behalf of a group of people outside of my own ethnic community.

I want to feel that we, as a community, are making progress at keeping some of these issues on the table. It is hard to do that in a state that still does not have a hate-crimes bill. I also think I need help in how I expand the definition of some of the issues and how I obtain support from the mainstream for advocacy, particularly in the arts and education arena.

*This WESTAF gathering also gave me comfort and relief in hearing how others have made and celebrated their journey through White America.*

I have not heard a single comment during these proceedings with which I've disagreed. Some of the conversation really spoke to my own immigrant experience, my own difficulty learning the English language, my sense of despair at losing some of my ethnic roots, my sadness when

someone told me, "You're not Japanese enough" or, a few minutes later, "You're too Japanese and not enough American, and you should go back to where your people came from." This WESTAF gathering also gave me comfort and relief in hearing how others have made and celebrated their journey through White America. Thank you for the opportunity.

**Neil Hannahs:** I don't have any new recommendations to make, but let me personalize and reinforce a couple of the comments made to date. First, I hadn't heard of WESTAF before I came here, but I appreciate being here. I think it is important that you talk beyond yourselves and reach out to others. So, thank you for inviting me to be here as part of that conversation.

The second point is that, as you talk to other people, sometimes you need new languages, and we've heard that discussed today. I am constantly trying to deal with and reconcile the concept of economic capital with my culture. We live in a society that talks a lot about accountability, so I have to be accountable for economic capital. In defining ways to measure economic success, I keep trying to push for a more balanced scorecard. I have to continue to learn how to talk about cultural capital, environmental capital, and the social capital of communities, as well as educational reach and intellectual capital. I am trying to develop that language--currently, it is a language that is fairly primitive, and I suspect some of that language would be useful to you as you reach out to other people. So learn to speak new languages. *'A`ole pau ka `ike i ka halau ho`okahi* is one of our wise sayings. It suggests that all knowledge is not taught in one school. *No laila, e pupukahi i holomua kakou.* Therefore, we have to work together for us all to progress and to move forward.

**Ruben Guevara:** This conversation has been a long time coming, and these ideas--these concepts of cross-cultural awareness through artistic and political engagement--are coming to fruition little by little. I was born and raised in

Los Angeles, and my entire life has been a multicultural experience that has deeply informed my art and activism. My suggestions for WESTAF include supporting cross/intercultural performances that reflect some of the themes discussed at this symposium. There was an interesting event this past weekend in Little Tokyo, just two blocks away at the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple, that illustrates this possibility. An interfaith panel was convened to talk about issues of the day organized by Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress and the Muslim Public Affairs Council celebrating Ramadan in solidarity. It involved various faiths and leaders--Buddhist, Native American, Catholic, Christian, Muslim, and a female rabbi. The title was *Communities Under Siege: Keeping the Faith*. A very lively discussion followed from the capacity audience.

Afterward, there were intercultural performances and a potluck dinner. We enjoyed a Taiko group, poetry by some of my students from Dolores Mission, singer Nobuko Miyamoto, the artistic director from Great Leap, and Avaz performed a powerful Sufi dance piece. So, it is possible for culture and politics to successfully meet in the intersection of civic action and responsibility.

**Michael Schuster:** I know that, some years ago, there were some recommendations made by the WESTAF Multicultural Task Force. I don't know if everyone was informed about what those recommendations were, and there were actual benchmarks set. As I remember, more and more of those benchmarks are being met by this organization. What is essential is that, in the next phase of that group's work, new benchmarks be set so there can really be a continuous revolution in this kind of structure. So if WESTAF could share those with us, we would be really grateful, and you can see how far this organization has come in such a short time.

*...it is possible for culture and politics to successfully meet in the intersection of civic action and responsibility.*

**Lucero Arellano:** I think the dialogue that has taken place needs to be expanded to a national level. We should be looking at ways of making this rich experience available to other colleagues in the field: Artists, representatives of arts organizations, and arts administrators--particularly those working with artists and organizations of color. We need to make this happen; otherwise, this conversation will be limited. This is a good beginning.

**Mayumi Tsutakawa:** After the election, in our communities, there has been a kind of void of positive thinking. I think there is also divisiveness because not everybody voted the same way. I think that some of us were a little surprised to hear in the numbers that "not everybody thinks like me." So the positive spirit and the sharing and the cross-pollination that took place here need to be recorded and shared to be more concrete. Because WESTAF specifically represents state entities, I very much hope that each state arts agency and all of you who represent state agencies take very overt action in reporting about this to the states that are not represented here.

**Mitch Menchaca:** This was a very good thing for me to come to after my fifth week on the job at the Arizona Commission on the Arts. There has always been talk about multicultural programs in what we do, but there has never been a plan set in action. I have to say that coming to this has really given me ideas so that I can go back to my agency with 14 pages of notes to try and set something in place. I am glad that I am not alone now, that I do know that there are other people out there who do this in their field, and it makes me not question if I made the right decision by leaving my previous job.

**Eric Hayashi:** I want to start with a footnote to what Lawson Inada was saying about J. Town. I don't know if many of you know this, especially if you are unfamiliar with L. A. At our opening dinner, did you see the acknowledgment wall at the Japanese American National Museum? It was a wall of names. Yes, Sony is a contributor.

I happen to know that, for their contribution of the video screen wall and I think some \$100,000, they got their logo placed with the video monitor. And yes, they are a Japan-based multi-national company. There was also the name of a couple listed there--George and Sakaye Aratani. Their names were on the top left-hand side in large letters because they personally have given the museum \$10 million dollars plus. Yes, they are wealthy, and yes, they are divesting themselves of that; they have committed another \$10 million to the Center for the Preservation of Democracy that is to be matched by other sources.

The Aratanis are wealthy, but the story behind that is this: George was from a farming family on California's Central Coast. His father was very shrewd and hard working and had built up a farming operation on the Central Coast prior to World War II. They estimated it had a value of about \$20 million by the time the War broke out. George had a privileged life. He had an education, he could play baseball. But the family lost it all. George was put into the internment camps along with his entire family. George enlisted in the U.S. Army and fought as a member of the Military Intelligence Service. When the family returned to their area home after the War, their business was gone, and there was no farming operation. George started with nothing, and he created his financial empire by building up several companies that he founded and grew over five decades. He created Kenwood U.S.A. & International and Mikasa (crystal and tableware). Contrary to popular belief, Mikasa is actually an American company based out of New Jersey--it is not a Japanese company. George sold it to the French a few years ago for many millions of dollars. He put that money into his foundation, and he dedicates a majority of those earnings to go back here to the West. His philanthropic focus is on activities that encourage our nation not to forget about the suffering and contributions of Japanese Americans during the War and about related discrimination against Asian Americans. George and his wife Sakaye are deeply committed and connected to their community to this day.

**Michael Alexander:** I have a number of thoughts. Legacy is a very important issue to me, and you talked about it in terms of the Aratanis, who are leaving a legacy. I hope that what we are working on here has a second and third life as well. If art is a process, democracy is a process, also. We want to continue to have opportunities. I think that we had the right size group here; I think that the breakout groups that we had this morning had the right number of people. I would hope WESTAF can continue to help be the convener. If it can't be the sole convener, then I encourage it to use its leadership position to encourage the convenings of meetings like this that bring people together. I think additional convenings would be absolutely invaluable and would help guarantee a legacy for what has been started here.

**Ricardo Frazer:** The course that WESTAF's staff is on is the proper course. You have identified areas of interest, important areas--multiculturalism and cultural identity. I know you've hired someone to look into the whole issue of advocacy in the West. You've looked at technology as a means of sustaining the organization. So I think you are on the right path, and I thank you for this convening.

**Anne Huang:** I am very new to these conversations, and I feel like I have learned a lot, but I need to absorb quite a bit. The question I have asked myself throughout this gathering is, "What do I do when I get home?" I don't have all of the answers yet, but I am going to commit to coming up with some of those answers and trying to advocate to some of the people around me--our organization's constituency and my friends and family.

I want to second Leslie Ito's recommendation for bringing emerging leaders to the planning process. There was an item in the initial e-mail I received from WESTAF--a possible agenda item on the future of culturally specific community centers. I know it's not on the final agenda here, but I would like to see it on a future WESTAF agenda.

**Leigh Ann Hahn:** Pollyanna person that I am, I am overly optimistic about most things that I approach. I realized that one of the things that I really enjoyed about the parts of the conversation that I've had the opportunity to hear in this room is that the primary approach is one that comes from an expectation of success, as opposed to the negative. There is not a lot of cheerleading going on here, and we have had a very pragmatic conversation, but it is presumed that things will change and that some things currently are on the right track. And that's really great for me to hear.

**Sabrina Lynn Motley:** Neil [Hannahs], you said something about knowledge not coming from one classroom, but I think the fact of the matter is that, for a lot of young people, knowledge is coming from one classroom, and those classrooms are, frankly, horrible. Keeping in mind that the Japanese American National Museum is set to embark upon the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy, my recommendation would be that we bring in the educators and the administrators from various school districts so that they also hear these conversations and participate in them.

*...my recommendation would be that we bring in the educators and the administrators from various school districts so that they also hear these conversations and participate in them.*

**Sandra Gibson:** I don't see a lot of my national arts service organization colleagues here, which I think we should think about. This is a conversation in the West about the West, but it is really a national conversation. I would echo the sentiments about expanding this conversation to include many others. I encourage WESTAF to think about expanding it in a different way so that it continues to happen in small groups and more on the ground. In addition, some effort could be made to ensure that the less likely networks that would appreciate the information would receive the proceedings.

I also want to echo what others have said about building different kinds of alliances. My staff

and a group of 75 artists and artistic leaders under the age of 35 are having a similar conversation this weekend in Berkeley at the Hechos en Califas festival and artist summit hosted at La Peña Cultural Center. I don't think that we have a widespread-enough way to involve young people, and we are having the conversation without them. I was recently at the Independent Sector annual meeting. That organization is the umbrella organization for the nonprofit sector in the U.S. Significantly absent from the meeting agenda were issues related to the environment, education, and the arts. I think that organizations and networks like this are very powerful natural allies. When we talk about the land and our natural resources, we are talking about our culture. I want to strongly encourage us to really reach out to organizations outside the arts/cultural sphere.

**Louis LeRoy:** This has been a very interesting meeting. I come from Yuma, Arizona, and there is an interesting phenomenon taking place in that part of the country that relates to the work that we are doing here. I think you will all agree that the arts play a significant role in bringing people together in a way that nothing else can,

*I see a growing hysteria revolving around the issue of racism in this country, and now it is manifesting itself in terms of illegal immigrants...*

and we are dealing with a special issue in this country--issues that are racially based. I bring up Yuma because, in Yuma, I was on my way to El Centro, and I got stopped three times by the border patrol. There is literally a Berlin Wall that has gone up on the southern border of this country, and I am living seven miles from it. I see a growing hysteria

revolving around the issue of racism in this country, and now it is manifesting itself in terms of illegal immigrants, but that is just another way of saying *people of color*.

In this past election, an interesting poll was conducted by the state of Arizona. A total of 78 percent of all voters in the state voted for Proposition 200. The proposition is an almost unenforceable statute that mandates that, if

anyone is going to use any government service, the person must prove citizenship. They were targeting illegal aliens who were using school and hospital services and not paying taxes. But what it amounts to is that, if an illegal immigrant goes to the Yuma swimming pool, which is run by the City of Yuma, a governmental entity, and buys a ticket and goes swimming, the person who sold him the ticket can now be arrested for being involved in allowing an illegal immigrant to use a government service. It is really an unenforceable proposition. The only people who are going to make money out of this are the lawyers.

But the reason I bring this up is because, in the preliminary readings that WESTAF provided, there was some interesting information about demographic shifts in this country. The article titled "The Nation of Minorities: America in 2050" starts off by saying: "America is facing the largest cultural shift in its history. Around the year 2050, Whites will become a minority."<sup>1</sup> What does this mean? In the same article, the author goes on to say, "The very idea that America will become a major minority scares the hell out of some people, and that's where we find ourselves--not only at a point of incredible change but of incredible fear."<sup>2</sup>

So what we bring to the table is an answer to a growing problem in this country because it is a national problem. I don't live in other parts of the world, so I can't say what is happening in other places, but here, I think it is clear to me that we have got a situation that is going to grow. The arts can play an important part in healing and providing solutions to this problem, so my charge to the Western states is to begin thinking about (and this is an enormous task) how can we communicate the solutions that the arts offer, particularly in the area of cultural diversity, to our country's leadership? Just start thinking about it because that's a tough assignment. I think it is also wrapped up in the issue of future funding because, if we are a solution, then we should be getting a lot of money to do what we do because we can solve the problem.



**Gloria Emerson:** I was really taken by the first panel yesterday. I think I heard a recommendation that perhaps young people could help form or plan another meeting. I would also like to see this. Also, I don't know if it's in the goals or

*...I would encourage you to bring together rural artists from reservations and from very isolated places throughout the Western states.*

the mission of WESTAF, but I would encourage you to bring together rural artists from reservations and from very isolated places throughout the Western states. We need to meet each other and learn from one another. We become so insulated in our own little enclaves. We are so isolated. It is very important for us to begin these encounters and to learn from one another.

**Patty Ortiz:** There have been times throughout these last two days where I would get really sad, frustrated, or angry. What I came back thinking each time was the importance of our education system--it is so standardized, and we always come up with walls in the process of teaching our children how to be more accessible and more inclusive in the way they are thinking. It is so important to have the arts in the schools because I believe that arts really do teach that inherent ability to see in multiple ways. I think we do need to keep that in mind and continue to remember to support art teachers in the schools.

**Lawson Inada:** I think all of us represented are like the old guard. For the Asians here, we represent the old Asians. For all of our groups--black, brown, red, yellow, indigenous, white, whatever you want to call us--there have been so many new folks that I think it behooves us all, as particular groups, to have in-house meetings. "So, you're working with Mayumi Tsutakawa--are we going to meet in your digs--like with the Hmong people?" You know what I mean? Or the new Filipinos, the new Koreans, the new Southeast Asians. We need to do that in-house because, in my home community, we have been outnumbered; there are 45,000 Hmongs who have moved in overnight. For all of you people, it's very, very interesting.

Next time around, you don't need us; you need the other ones.

**Ron Senungetuk:** I thought I came from a state loaded with multiculturalism. The Native sector alone has six different groups whose languages are different from each other, and we all have aspirations to reach equality with others. We haven't quite reached the goal. For example, not too long ago in Anchorage, there was a paintball incident. A Native woman was the victim. Some of these things are happening now and then, and it makes one say, "Hmm." So what I would like to recommend is for WESTAF to send information not just to state arts councils--because the state arts councils' information flow often does not reach us. Both Rose Fosdick and I have been board members of the state arts council in the past at one time or another, and we are always 10 percent or something of that sort. It is still the same thing. Ninety percent of the information I receive from state arts councils goes to File 13. I would like to see the information from this meeting extend beyond my little circles in Alaska. I would like to see this huge circle becoming a communication in a rather big circle. I hope that WESTAF will make sure that this kind of information is so important that it goes down to the individual levels.

**Estelle Enoki:** I want to thank WESTAF for bringing voices of the Pacific peoples to this meeting. I have enjoyed hearing the discussions and stories, and it reminds me that so much of experience is contextual and allegorical.

I don't have any specific recommendations, but what emerged from this meeting is the importance of communication and that language has the capacity to separate and also to bridge relations between people. Unfortunately, language can and has been used to communicate political derisiveness, policies that have been unjust, and discrimination. We have the capacity as creative people to facilitate communication, whether or not we choose to

*...language has the capacity to separate and also to bridge relations between people.*

do so. As artists and as leaders, while it is natural to seek opinions that validate ours, we can also appreciate the multiplicity of views that inevitably surround every situation. It is allowing for these processes in communication and perspective to take place that shape the most effective relations among people and the most effective policies.

**Rose Fosdick:** When I got here Wednesday night, I slept very well. I felt very comfortable here in this community [Little Tokyo], and I took a look around and felt really good--felt very connected to another culture. I really appreciate hearing the presentations that were made; I learned so much. I learned what I will bring back to my own place of work, and what I will do is to involve the youth more and to make a plan to have somebody take over what I am trying to do. I also learned that we not only need to get to the table, but we need to change the menu. I am not sure who said that, and I really appreciate hearing words that James Early presented. I will bring back what I learned to people with whom I work, and I look forward to the report that will come out of this gathering.

**James Early:** As I've heard issues addressed, my mind has been running and calling up various thoughts. One saying that came to mind is, "*En la tierra de los ciegos, el tuerto es rey*" (in the land of the blind, the one eyed is king), which made me think that we are very imperfect people in a very imperfect world. But even with our limited vision, we have real power to imagine and to transform.

What we have seen happen and expressed and felt here in the last couple of days is something that we did by responding to the invitation to be here and by straightforwardly addressing difficult issues. Although much of what we have talked about has been discussed many times before, this time, like the previous times, is different. We are in this space at this time, not literally stuck in the past. Despite similarities to previous meetings, this particular experience of engagement and exchange just happened; we

just made it happen. We should appreciate the fact that we made it happen and, in so doing, understand that we can also go forth from here and implement change.

I have, perhaps like many of you, a lot of internal dialogue and a lot of internal struggle. Periodically, I try to remind myself that I am a public servant working in a public institution that belongs to all of us. We who work in those institutions, of course, want to be there by dint of merit, and I know that I am, but it is a privilege to be there to serve despite the continuing struggles about the legitimacy of our multicultural issues. That larger social construct of self as public servant, is, I find, useful to avoid becoming overly self-indulged in personal narratives. It is also reinforcing as it can direct one to work with "others" who, despite differences, share in that public outlook and goals. In this respect, we must multiply the socially and activist-minded people who serve in arts and culture work. We are in urgent need of more people who can approach the "pinhead of light" in un-illuminated work environments and make them into a sky.

*...we must multiply the socially and activist-minded people who serve in arts and culture work.*

I strongly urge that a digest--something that is accessible and readable--come out of this meeting and be distributed to local and national organizations and institutions concerned with arts and culture. The Multicultural Advisory Committee's report and perspectives and declarations should go to the President's Council on the Arts and Humanities, the NEA, the NEH, all of our service-performance associations, bankers, and chambers of commerce. It should emphasize the issues and goals we feel strongly about, sharing the issues that we are trying to figure out, and noting the things that we are not sure about, except that we are sure that the arenas in which we work are really important to all of our communities.

**Angie Kim:** When I think of the West, I think of the many rural areas that are so often under-served. Perhaps when WESTAF is planning

another meeting, you can think about holding it in a rural area and inviting locals to the conversation. Also, consider the composition of participants. I always love having artists participate, and because the transfer of knowledge between generations is such an important dialogue for WESTAF, consider having both emerging artists and established artists invited. My own line of work prompts me to underscore this. I am always looking for culturally and ethnically diverse and mature artists to sit on panels or advise, and, in certain regions, there are too few of these people. Really, this is incredibly difficult because young, ethnically diverse artists have not been put in positions of power or given the needed experience to rise to be leaders. It would make a world of a difference for one young recent art graduate with an MFA to be able to put on her resume, "I participated at a WESTAF symposium—I led a co-session on an important topic." Suddenly, opportunities become more open to her, and she is given opportunities by people like me looking for mature arts leaders who represent or are versed about diversity to make a difference. There are small but significant things that WESTAF can do in practice to start changing the landscape.

Having said that, I also want to add this small caveat about WESTAF. I know WESTAF as an acronym, which doesn't describe much about its mission and identity. Also, one suggestion is prompted by recognizing that this organization is in a very interesting place right now by focusing on the West. If you look just at funding streams, most of the money resides in and remains on the East Coast. But, at the same time, the East is very interested now in looking at the West because of issues of diversity. If you position yourself as a recognizable leader in this dialogue, you will help bring attention and resources to the West.

Leslie [Ito], you mentioned Grant Makers in the Arts (GIA) as a partner in issues of diversity. However, the funding field is changing due to the generational transfer of wealth. The transfer of wealth--and thus the distribution of wealth--

is itself a challenge because it is not happening through established private foundations but rather through individual giving. And when I say *individuals*, I mean in non-transparent ways through community foundations' donor-advised funds, family foundations, and individuals themselves, and they characteristically give in a non-transparent, checkbook-grantmaking way. In other words, the field of funding is changing to becoming harder to track giving and harder to approach, and giving is happening in a less strategic, long-term-vision way. So when you engage in this dialogue about ways of building support, you are sharing some of the problems with which GIA is struggling, which is how to communicate to individual donors and non-transparent family foundations about issues of diversity and be able to emphasize the need to aggregate their money to make real socio-cultural change.

**Anthony Radich:** Well, what happens next? A few things: Thank you, Michael Shuster, for bringing up the Multicultural Task Force and the work of the committee over the years. I think one thing that we would like to do is send that brochure out to you with the benchmarks that we have and let you know a little bit more about WESTAF and what the committee is doing. The next thing the committee will do is take a lot of these suggestions and do some planning for what happens next. This is the first really public activity the committee has sponsored, even though it has done a lot of internal work at WESTAF over the years. Then, of course, we will issue the book of published proceedings.

*...the proceedings obviously can't capture the energy, the power of the people here.*

In my view, the proceedings obviously can't capture the energy, the power of the people here. The other thing I would say they can't capture is the sheer goodness of the people here and their commitment to this good for our world. That can't be captured in words, but it has been great to experience it here.

**Suzanne Benally:** In Navajo, we don't really say "thank you," but we say "we appreciate" something you've done. So I would like to extend an appreciation to Anthony Radich for his amazing leadership commitment and his willingness to listen--to step back and let us all come forward with this. To the WESTAF organization, and the staff who make it up, for all their work and their commitment, and even their willingness to become a multiculturally competent organization. To Adrienne Devereux, from WESTAF, who has been with this group from the very beginning and who is very much a part of who we are, and to the board of trustees of WESTAF, now being chaired by Len Edgerly. And to the Multicultural Task Force and Multicultural Advisory Committee for the amazing work they've done over a five-year period.

When I first convened this work, I took a huge breath; I can finally let it out at this moment. In many ways, our Multicultural Advisory Committee became family pretty quickly and acted like family. How the conversations evolved and how they have continued during this conference is very much appreciated. I would also like to extend an appreciation to all of the participants, presenters, respondents, and observers for your commitment, your concern, the passions that drive you around this work, the creativity that you bring, the ideas--all of that which nourishes your own spirits and also nourishes the spirit of this work.

This symposium is truly one of the few that I've attended that has allowed a kind of diversity of representation and people to each take the center. Therefore, we had multiple centers throughout this symposium. The conversations and discussions have woven an amazing web that is interconnected, interdependent, and that might lead us toward that common space that James Early has spoken about, even though we might stumble along the way. To those of you whom we keep labeling *the younger generation* or *the youth* or *the next generation*, I would like to shift

that language and say, "Colleagues, we look forward to the next symposium that you plan."

<sup>1</sup> Farai Chideya, "A Nation of Minorities: America in 2050," *Civil Rights Journal* (Fall 1999): 35.

<sup>2</sup> Chideya 38.

*"Colleagues, we look forward to the next symposium that you plan."*

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## SYMPOSIUM PROCESS AND AGENDA

### ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM PROCESS

The symposium meetings were convened at the Miyako Hotel in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, California. The opening dinner and keynote presentation by James Early took place at the Japanese American National Museum, also in Little Tokyo.

The symposium was structured as follows: Ten individuals were asked to prepare presentations on assigned topics of approximately 20 minutes in length. These participants were followed by pre-assigned respondents who commented on the presentations and added their own perspectives on the topic. Also at the symposium table were discussants--people invited to join in the symposium conversation during scheduled discussion periods. Surrounding the symposium table were observers, who were invited into the discussion at periodic intervals.

The symposium audio was recorded, transcribed, and then edited to produce these proceedings. Every effort was made to ensure all commentary was captured in as clear a manner as possible.

### AGENDA

#### Thursday, November 11, 2004

*The opening cocktail reception, dinner, and keynote address took place at the Japanese American National Museum.*

Keynote Address: *Citizen-Artist: Imagining the Future Possible*

James Early, Director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

#### Friday, November 12, 2004

*Meetings on Friday and Saturday took place at the Miyako Hotel.*

##### Introductions

Topic I: *The Next Generation of Leaders: Strategies to Include New Young Voices in Broader Cultural Discussions*

Presenters: Leslie Ito  
Ricardo Frazer  
Debora Iyall  
Respondents: Margo Aragon  
James Early

Topic II: *Issues of Inclusion and Economics*

Presenters: Tony Garcia  
Sabrina Motley  
Judith Luther Wilder  
Respondents: Michael Alexander  
Susan Boskoff  
Anne Huang

Topic III: *The Relationship of the Land to Cultural Identity*

Presenters: Gloria Emerson  
Neil Hannahs  
Patty Ortiz  
Ron Senungetuk  
Respondent: Pravina Gondolia

#### Saturday, November 13, 2004

*Both participants and observers participated in Saturday's session.*

Breakout Sessions and Reports

Final Comments and Recommendations





## PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

*The biographies listed here were current in November of 2004. Some information may have changed by the publishing date. Italicized text indicates an excerpt from each person's introductory remarks on the first day of meetings.*

### **Michael Alexander**

Michael Alexander is the Executive/Artistic Director of Grand Performances, a nonprofit institution that celebrates the community's diverse cultural contributions. During his tenure, Grand Performances has become Southern California's premier presenter of free performing arts programs. Alexander came to Grand Performances after a successful career in arts management. He was an administrator for nonprofit dance companies (such as AMAN Folk Ensemble and San Francisco Ballet), managed his own artist touring/booking company, and served as the director of Performing Arts for the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department. A native of Los Angeles, he currently serves on several nonprofit arts and community service boards and co-chairs *Arts for LA*, a committee of arts leaders. In 2003, Alexander received the California Arts Council's Director's Award for exemplary contributions to the arts in California, and in 2004, he was appointed by the California legislature to serve on the California Arts Council.

*One of my mentors told me that art is a lie in the service of truth. At my organization, we seek out artists who are working in both traditional and contemporary genres from the many different communities of Los Angeles and beyond. We have been told that we have the most diverse audience in the country--and we are constantly searching for ways to make the art serve the truth, to give audiences an opportunity to learn about each other, and to learn about their neighbors that make up this metropolitan area. In addition, we try to develop programs that go beyond the sheer presentation of performance and seek ways the arts can impact audiences so we can show people how the arts can*

*help people make decisions of many different sorts.*

### **Margo Aragon**

Margo Aragon is the Director of Public Affairs and host of *Northwest Morning* for CBS affiliate KLEW in Lewiston, Idaho. Aragon also serves as the Public Relations Coordinator for the Community Action Partnership. In 1997, she co-authored the book, *A Little Bit of Wisdom: Conversations with a Nez Perce Elder*, with Horace Axtell. A second co-authored book with Axtell titled *First Book* is forthcoming. Aragon was a 2001-2002 Humanities Scholar, is a long-time lecturer on Nez Perce culture and community, and currently serves as a member of the Idaho Commission on the Arts. She holds an MFA in English and literature from Bennington College and a bachelor's degree in English from Lewis and Clark College.

*Currently, I am working with a Nez Perce Elder who is 80 years old. We completed his memoir many years ago. From that book, A Little Bit of Wisdom: Conversations with a Nez Perce Elder, we've gone on to talk about Nez Perce culture and community across the country and all over the world. One of my great pleasures has been to meet Mimi Po (that is their name for themselves) through this work.*

### **Suzanne Benally**

Suzanne Benally is the Chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. She has extensive experience in higher education policy, assessment, and diversity. She has directed an institute on ethnic diversity at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and has worked with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, serving as an Interim Executive Director and Director of Education Programs to address the concerns and needs of K-12 and post-secondary education for American Indians. Her special interests and research have focused on the relationship between land and place as expressed through written and oral literature. Benally has a consulting practice that has included work with foundations such as the Ford Foundation, the

Packard Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation. She is a member of the board of trustees of the Western States Arts Federation. Benally is Navajo and Santa Clara Tewa.

*My experience and how I find myself here doing this work probably grow out of how we are guided or advised or told what to do as children when we are in the process of becoming educated. As an Indian at the time that I was going to school, I wanted to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts and be an artist. My mother was very concerned about that and kept saying, "No, you need to be a teacher." Many of us tended to be guided into educational roles and education professions, so I did that. So most of my career has been working in education, teaching, educational administration, higher education, and particularly in diversity in higher education.*

*I am thinking a lot about what it means—there is always a tension between our cultural selves and who we are in the larger societies. In some ways, we integrate the two, and we also keep them separate, too, and move in and out between the two places to do the work that we do. The interests that I hold are around how we look at and understand the intersection of art, culture, land, and spirituality. I am concerned about how we develop the future leadership and a kind of activist leadership for environmental concerns— environmental concerns both in terms of how we sustain our regard and cultural understanding for land and the kind of political activists we need to be to protect those lands. As indigenous peoples, we are probably going to face in the future the greatest resource development of our lands that we've seen yet. We will talk in this gathering about how our cultural survival depends on land and the kind of "ensoulment" that happens with our lands. That is the work that (it seems odd to say) excites me. It is work I feel very passionate about and am very concerned about.*

### **Susan Boskoff**

Susan Boskoff celebrated her 11th year as the Executive Director of the Nevada Arts Council in the fall of 2004. Before moving to Nevada, Boskoff was the Director of the Performing Arts

Coalition in Salt Lake City and designed and implemented a capital campaign, the outcome of which was the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center. At the same time, she developed a Public Art Program for Salt Lake County and facilitated a series of installations at the new Salt Lake Convention Center. For 11 years prior, she worked at the Utah Arts Council as Coordinator of the Utah Performing Arts Tour and the Community Development Program. Boskoff has been a trustee for the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, the Western Arts Alliance, the Western States Arts Federation, and various local and state organizations. A native of Maryland, Boskoff received her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in communication arts with an emphasis in television and film production.

*One of the things in which I am most interested is finding ways to support the arts in our communities that are generated from members of those communities. Nevada is the fifth most urbanized state. We have Las Vegas, which continues to grow at the rate of 3,000 to 6,000 people a month. The Las Vegas metro area has doubled in population since I assumed my job at the Council. Yet, in Nevada's North, Reno remains a relatively small city, and the remainder of the state is very, very rural. Working with this diverse mixture of populations and concentrations of populations is very challenging; yet, within these populations are individuals who produce meaningful art and communities that support those artists.*

### **Juan Carrillo**

Juan Carrillo is the former Interim Director of the California Arts Council. He has managed many of the agency's programs and served as Deputy Director and Chief of Programs under eight administrations. Carrillo has served on numerous federal, state, and local arts agency advisory and funding panels and has represented the agency at legislative committees, state and national conferences, and private and public advisory bodies. He is a founding member of several arts groups, including the Royal Chicano Air Force, an artists' collective; The Association of American Cultures; and the

Center for Contemporary Art in Sacramento. He enjoys drawing and writing and is a Latin jazz historian. Carrillo is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, where he majored in American history, and he received a master's degree in education and cultural anthropology from California State University, Sacramento.

*A couple of things that strike me; I am sitting here and I am thinking about being on the campus at San Francisco State in 1968 and trying to figure out what all that was about. I knew it was important--the movement for ethnic studies at San Francisco State. I went to Berkeley and found myself within a matter of months standing outside the Business Administration building (I was a business education major) holding a picket sign and trying to shut down the entire campus. At the time I was thinking, "I am never going to make it through college by standing out here on strike while everyone else is going to class." And, believe me, observing the number of people who were going to class while I was standing there, I really thought I didn't have a chance. Eventually, I became the first graduate student in the first Chicano Studies class at Berkeley.*

*So the leap from there to this symposium is pretty remarkable--that the Western states are dealing with issues of diversity and how we address it and that we are pondering the question of what it means to be a Westerner. As we discuss what it means to be who we are, it strikes me that these things were never really talked about in any academic setting in the past.*

*I am also thinking about being an immigrant because I was born in Mexico. My mother and father went back with a couple of daughters, and I was born there and lived there for the first few years of my life. When I went to Berkeley, I was 26 or 27, and I was standing at the International House because I wasn't a citizen of the United States, so I had to enroll and go through the process as a foreigner. I was just a Mission District kid, and I was sitting there with people in the outfits of their native countries. I am just a Mission District kid, standing there wondering,*

*"What am I doing here?" Except for the fact that I wasn't a citizen.*

*I'll just jump to a challenge first. Lucero Arellano and I, who are here representing the California Arts Council, we are really challenged about the notion that there should not be public support for the arts. The Council currently receives less than three cents per California resident in state support for the arts--and we are the fifth largest economy in the world. The world's fourth largest economy, the United Kingdom, allocates \$26 per capita to the arts. The world's sixth largest economy, France, allocates \$57 dollars per capita, and we are at three cents. We think the challenge is trying to get it up to a dollar. We were almost at a dollar a few years ago, and we thought we were doing pretty well. I read recently that Canada, which has fewer people than California, is at over \$200 per person in per-capita level of arts support. So I sit here and I think, well, that is a challenge because it is about convincing people that what we do is of real value and brings great benefit.*

*What excites me? My son came from Mexico with his family a couple of weeks ago, and they are now living with us. I don't know how long they will be with us, but I think it will be a while because, on election night, we all gave birth to a baby, so we have a new baby in our family who is just over a week old.*

*I welcome all the symposium participants to our great state. This is a place where a lot of people have come from other places, including myself, and have stayed here because there is great promise here.*

### **James Early**

James Early is the Director of Cultural Heritage Policy at the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in Washington, D.C. Since 1984, Early has served in various positions at the Smithsonian Institution: Assistant Provost for Educational and Cultural Programs, Assistant Secretary for Education and Public Service, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Service, and Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Public Service. Prior to

his work with the Smithsonian Institution, Early was a humanist-administrator at the National Endowment for the Humanities; producer, writer and host of a weekly radio segment of cultural, educational, and political commentary at WHUR FM radio; and a Research Associate for Programs and Documentation at the Howard University Institute for the Arts and Humanities.

Early received a B.A. degree in Spanish at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1969; in 1971, he entered the Graduate Studies program at Howard University on a Ford Foundation Fellowship to pursue a Ph. D. in Latin American and Caribbean history and a minor in African and African-American history.

Over the course of his 30-year professional career, Early has consistently recognized the integrity of historically evolved values and cultures of African-American, Latino, Native-American, Asian-Pacific-American, and Euro-American communities and has explored the implications of culture, ethnicity, and nationality in constructions of statecraft and democratic institutions. He has taught high school Spanish, worked with the incarcerated, taught at the college level, lectured in the U.S. and internationally, and written on the politics of culture. The main focus of his professional work is on cultural democracy and development of cultural heritage policy.

*What excites me most is that, in this very, very challenging moment, I am sitting at a table where people are speaking their own languages notwithstanding the fact that they may be "dying" languages. The fact of the matter is, the languages are alive because someone is speaking them and working to pass them on. I am excited about the fact that artists and cultural workers are looking beyond their own muse, their own canvases, their own stages. They are doing so to really engage people in other policy-making arenas as full partners--not as petitionists to them--but as full partners and as potential leaders in many of those arenas.*

### **Gloria Emerson**

Gloria Emerson of the Dine Nation lives in Shiprock, New Mexico. Emerson is a visual artist, poet, and freelance consultant working in the fields of Indian education and art. In 2002, she served as an artist in residence at the Indian Arts Research Center of the School of American Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she painted her interpretations of Dine cultural landscape mythology. In 2003, the School of American Research published the poems and paintings in a book, *At the Hems of the Lowest Clouds: Meditations on Navajo Landscapes*. Emerson received her B.A. from the University of Denver in 1962 and an Ed.M. from Harvard University in 1972. She attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe from 1987 to 1990. Emerson was appointed by Governor Bill Richardson to serve on the New Mexico State Commission of the Arts in 2003. Emerson worked for the Institute of American Indians and the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts in Santa Fe in the 1990s. She is currently teaching a master's level course on the revitalization of Native-American languages at the Tsaile, Arizona, campus of Dine College.

*I am very concerned that my people are becoming so wholesale in love with the worst aspects of Westernization. Many of my people voted the other way during the last election, and I think that many of my people would not stand up and fight for the holy places--the sacred places--as we used to do. Our languages are disappearing and, with that, the fading of our wisdom traditions. So there are many things that we have to work on as Navajo people--and I believe that what I say is true of other peoples throughout our hemisphere.*

### **Estelle Enoki**

Estelle Enoki, a member of WESTAF's Multicultural Advisory Committee, has lived and worked in communities primarily in Hawaii and the Bay Area of California. She is currently an arts administrator with the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. Her education includes a fine arts degree in visual art, accompanied by coursework in creative writing and design. In addition to academic



learning, she values the contributions of field-work and experience in shaping individual perspectives.

*What am I excited about? I think it is getting more involved with policy development and being able to constructively address issues and problems that come one's way. One important policy issue our agency is working to address is our relationship with the Hawaiian community. We seek to accomplish this through policy development and outreach to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the inclusion of Native-Hawaiian cultural resources in major event planning. A priority in our recently developed strategic plan is to further Native-Hawaiian culture in the arts; our agency is very much committed to that.*

### **Rose Fosdick**

Rose Fosdick is the Program Director for the Kawerak Reindeer Herders Association in Nome, Alaska. She serves on the board of Bering Strait Inuit Cooperative and is a member of Alaska Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. Previous service includes: Council member on Alaska State Council on the Arts; member of the Multicultural Advisory Committee at WESTAF; member of the Board of Advisors to the School of Agriculture, Land Resources and Management at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks; and board member for the Nome Arts Council. Previous work experience includes serving as Services Director for the Institute of Alaska Native Arts, a former statewide Native arts organization based in Fairbanks. She is Inupiaq (Eskimo) and earned a B.A. in biology from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. She was born and raised in Nome, Alaska, and has an interest in all aspects of Alaska-Native people, including history, current affairs, rights, and events.

*What I am really excited about right now is the number of people who are revitalizing language and revitalizing dance. Next week, a number of us will gather at the Kawerak board room, and we have invited elders from the Wales community who are living in Nome. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ways to revitalize our language.*

### **Ricardo Frazer**

Ricardo Frazer is the President of Hardroad.com, an entertainment company in Seattle, WA, focusing on the distribution of urban music, artist management, and video development. He is also the President of Rhyme Cartel Records, Inc., an independent record company, where he is responsible for the management, planning, marketing, and promotion of multi-platinum, Grammy-Award-winning artist Sir Mix-A-Lot and a roster of eight other recording artists. He served as the Co-Executive Producer/Music Supervisor for Playboy Television and the Music Supervisor for United Paramount Network's (UPN) weekly television series, *The Watcher*. Frazer is a former chair of the Seattle Arts Commission, a community activist, and an artist. He is also a member of the WESTAF board of trustees.

*What I am excited about is what we are doing in Seattle in terms of advocacy. In recent years, a number of state and local arts organizations took major budget hits, and we did, too. We reacted to the cuts by asking ourselves, "How do we get this money back?" But we were unable to get the money back immediately. What I kept saying to my colleagues was, "Look, instead of being reactive, we have to be proactive. We can't wait for something bad to happen (which is what we often do in the arts community) and then try to change it. We have to have a plan, stick to the plan, implement the plan, and make changes that way." So, two years ago, when we lost the funding, I went around to the various arts organizations--to meetings of their boards and to a lot of arts events. At those gatherings, I talked to board members, and my rap was, "Look, we have to work to elect folks to public office who are about the arts. We have to deal with our city council members. We have to be proactive and talk to the mayor about the issues that are important to our community."*

### **Anthony J. Garcia**

Anthony J. Garcia has been the Executive Artistic Director at El Centro Su Teatro in Denver, Colorado, since 1989 and has been Director of the Su Teatro Company since 1974. He is an instructor in Chicano Studies at



Metropolitan State College of Denver and participates in the NEWSED-Santa Fe Redevelopment Authority and the Community Development Coalition--Elyria Swansea. Garcia serves as resident playwright at the Centro, generating successes such as the 1986 production of *Introduction to Chicano History: 101*, which was featured in Joseph Papp's Latino Theater Festival in New York and subsequently toured the U.S. Southwest and Mexico. In 1991, *Ludlow, Grita de las Minas*, also by Garcia, was performed at the TENAZ Festival in San Antonio, Texas. *La Carpa Aztlan presents: I Don't Speak English Only!* is the company's most successful touring production to date, written in 1993 by Garcia and the late José Guadalupe Saucedo. The production has toured Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Kansas, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Texas, and California.

*I think we are in a situation today where we have an opportunity to start to look at the work we do at El Centro Su Teatro as not necessarily looking at inclusion but actually being part of the mainstream--of changing the definition of the mainstream. So in terms of that work, this conversation is exciting.*

### **Pravina Gondalia**

Pravina Gondalia immigrated to the United States in 1976 from India. She earned a B.S. in statistics and mathematics and for 10 years pursued a professional career in computer science with GM and IBM. She then moved to Wyoming to discover the art world. While creating art objects through painting, her intellectual artistic inquiries landed her at Vermont College to earn her M.F.A. from Union Institute and University. Her art practice has become multidisciplinary and employs many materials and various technologies. Her creative works explore the issue of "being on becoming" on cultural phenomena. She has won several awards and shows her works extensively in the United States. In addition to being a visual artist and art consultant, she serves on the board of the Wyoming Arts Council.

*The project on which I am currently working is like peeling the layers of an onion. It is a process one goes through in reflection and then integrates. As I peel the layers, I come closer and closer to the core of expression. I have already completed several works on the different layers, but the current project is about what is at the core. The objects themselves are visual aesthetics, and the objects are culturally dependent. I ask, "Who really connects to those objects?" But it is really our subjectivity that connects to the objects, so when you look at that core, we have really a lot more in common than all this cultural conditioning.*

### **Neil Hannahs**

Neil J. K. Hannahs is the Director of the Land Assets Division for Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu, Hawaii. He is responsible for the team that manages Kamehameha's 360,000 acres of agriculture and conservation lands in Hawaii. Born in Honolulu, Hannahs is a graduate of Kamehameha Schools and joined the Kamehameha Schools staff in 1974. Prior to assuming his current position, he served Kamehameha Schools in a variety of roles. He coordinated development of Kamehameha Schools' strategic plan for 2000-2015. As Manager of Kakaako Improvement, he was responsible for the redevelopment of 54 acres of land owned by the Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu's Kakaako Community Development District. Hannahs currently serves as Chair of the Hawaii Public Television Foundation board of directors and President of the Land Use Research Foundation. He is also a member of the board for 'Ike 'Āina and Bishop Museum and serves as a State Committee Member of the Hawaii Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). He earned his B.A. degree in political science as well as an M.A. in education from Stanford University.

*I am very much a child of the school that I work for. I attended through the seventh grade, graduated, went off and earned a couple of degrees and have now been back on the staff for 30 years. I am very much the product of many mentors, one of whom is Gladys Brandt, who was quite prominent in the work of the Hawaii State Foundation for*

*Culture and the Arts. The names of my many other mentors won't mean anything to most of you, but what they represent are the people upon whose shoulders I stand today.*

### **Anne Huang**

Originally from Taiwan, Anne Huang has been in the U.S. since age 12. She has been at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center since 2001 and became the Executive Director in 2003. She brings to OACC a diverse background in arts management, performing arts, and business management. Her performing arts experiences include the Afro-Cuban dance troupe Obakoso, led by José Francisco Barroso, and the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir. From 1990 through 2000, Huang worked as a dentist and managed a highly successful dental practice in San Francisco. Between 1995 and 1998, Huang helped start and manage Obakoso, where she oversaw fiscal management, event booking, ticket sales, marketing, and volunteer management.

*What I am most excited about is the effort to obliterate the margin that James Early so aptly talks about. When we think of all the art that is being created in marginalized communities, we need to ask ourselves, "What can we do to ensure that either the margin no longer exists or the margin is faded or the margin is relocated?"*

### **Leslie Ito**

Leslie Ito is the Executive Director of Visual Communications, the nation's first Asian-American media arts organization. Ito is also the co-coordinator for the California Asian American and Pacific Islander Arts Network, an informal advocacy and networking group. From 1998-2000, she was a Program Associate in the Media, Arts and Culture Division at the Ford Foundation in New York. She has worked in several Asian-Pacific-American arts and cultural organizations in the Los Angeles area, including the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, Visual Communications, and the Japanese American National Museum. She has also worked at the Smithsonian Institution's Wider Audience Development

Office. Ito received her B.A. from Mount Holyoke College in American studies and her M.A. in Asian American studies from UCLA.

*I am excited about the future in general and certainly about the future of my organization. We will be 35 years old in 2005, and I think we have a whole new life ahead of us. I also am excited about the future of the field--the direction of where we are going--and what the field is going to look like in the future. I want to know how I can cultivate emerging leaders to ensure there are individuals to tend the arts for the generations that follow me.*

### **Debora Iyall**

Debora Iyall is best known for her singing and lyrics with the seminal '80s new wave band, Romeo Void. A graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute, Iyall has been exhibiting her visual art since her first solo show in 1981. She leads arts programs for youth and was the Director of Arts Programs at American Indian Contemporary Arts in San Francisco from 1998 to 2000. She founded the Ink Clan printmaking program at the South of Market Cultural Center in 1995, and now, as a resident of the high desert, she teaches printmaking through the 29 Palms Creative Center. Iyall is also a popular artist in residence at community centers, public and charter schools, and local museums. A multi-disciplined artist, her credits include lighting director and landscape scenery designer for ShadowLight Theater's 2000 and 2001 season, which offered *Coyote's Journey*. In 2002, she was the Lighting Director for ShadowLight Theater's world premier of Octavio Solis' *Seven Visions of Encarnacion* at Brava Theater in San Francisco. She performs regularly in various musical and spoken-word environments. A published poet, she has contributed to the *City Lights Journal* and *Sequoia* (a literary arts magazine of Stanford University). Her most recent spoken-word performance was in November, 2002, at the Gene Austry Museum in Los Angeles, and she has done spoken-word performances with writers and performers such as William Burroughs, Jim Carroll, Exene Cervenka, and Louise Erdrich.

*One of the things I am most excited about is combining the visual arts and performance in shadow plays. I worked with ShadowLight Theater in San Francisco for a number of seasons, and I have integrated that experience into all my residencies. I either use a Charlie Tom story, which is from the Karuk, or I let the kids write their own stories, including one right now that they are doing about La Llarona (she is contemporary now but kids still get thrown off the bridge). Another one is Who Let The Cats Out, a story about a dog show, and the kids get to sing, and there's a little dog named Mickey.*

### **Judith Luther Wilder**

Judith Luther Wilder is President of the Center for Cultural Innovation. She serves on the board of SIAS University in China and has a broad roster of global nonprofit clients. The author of several books on marketing and business management, Luther Wilder is a sought-after speaker on the subjects of public relations, entrepreneurship, and issues affecting artists and women in business. She founded the Los Angeles Office of the American Women's Economic Development Corporation and co-founded Women Incorporated, a national nonprofit membership organization created to aggregate the power of women business owners.

*At the Center for Cultural Innovation, we provide collateral for loans, entrepreneurial training for artists, benefits that allow artists to have access to dental care and health insurance, travel discounts, and other services. My passion is creating wealth for artists or, if not wealth, at least helping artists become more financially independent.*

### **Sabrina Lynn Motley**

A native Angeleno, Sabrina Lynn Motley has worked with community-based artists and arts organizations throughout Southern California. Currently, she is Director of Public Programs for the Japanese American National Museum and its affiliated educational institution, the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy, in Los Angeles. For the past five years, she has served as a producing consultant for the J. Paul Getty Museum, during which

time she produced some highly successful music series, including *Sounds of LA*, *The Summer Sessions*, and *Garden Concerts for Kids*. In addition to her programming/producing work, Motley has conducted ethnographic research for the Ford Foundation on the 1993 Los Angeles Festival and Leadership for a Changing World's Black AIDS/Black Faith project (a collaboration between Cornerstone Theater Company and the Black AIDS Institute). A doctoral candidate in anthropology at UCLA, she is writing a dissertation on faith-based social activism. An avid traveler, Motley is also Tuesday host of the world music program, *Global Village*, on KPFF 90.7 FM.

*I am most excited about the Japanese American National Museum's decision to expand upon its core story. That story is primarily about its particular community and, in many ways, a particular point in the community's history--that of the internment camps. The expanded vision of the museum is to talk about issues of diversity and democracy--how it is that people who have struggled for freedom have really pushed these issues for all of us?*

### **Patty Ortiz**

Patty Ortiz, born in San Antonio, Texas, received her B.F.A. from the University of Texas in Austin and her M.F.A. from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Ortiz has exhibited her work internationally, including in the Salon de Artes Plásticas in Mexico City; the Tryon Center in Charlotte, North Carolina; the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Valdivia, Chile; the Tropfen Museum in Amsterdam; the La Raza Galleria Posada in Sacramento, California; the Galeria Otra Vez in Los Angeles; and the San Bernardino County Museum in California. She received a "New Forms Regional Initiative Grant," funded by the National Endowment for the Arts' Inter-Arts Program and the Rockefeller Foundation, and a CoVision Project Grant from the Colorado Council on the Arts. Ortiz has also received several public art commissions, including one from the city of Boulder to create an outdoor work and the city of Denver to create a perma-

ment work for the Denver International Airport. She has served on numerous boards, including the Chicano Humanities Arts Council, the Mayor's Commission on the Arts, and Museo de las Americas. She has also been on several grant and fellowship review panels. Ortiz is presently Director of Programs of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver.

*Presently, the staff at the museum is 50 percent minority. I believe this fact contributes in a very positive way to our work. Also, during the museum's recent Biennial, 10 artists from Colorado were highlighted, and of those, five were Latino. The fact that a mainstream contemporary arts organization included so many Latino perspectives is unusual and something of which I am proud to be a part.*

### **Michael Schuster**

Michael Schuster is the curator of the gallery at the East-West Center, an organization in Oahu, Hawaii, that was established over 40 years ago to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. Schuster earned a Ph.D. in Asian Theater from the University of Hawaii and studied internationally with master artists from India, Burma, Indonesia, and Japan. Previously, he worked as the folk arts coordinator for the Hawaii State Foundation for Culture and the Arts and as a folklorist for the National Organization for Traditional Artist Exchange. He has produced radio and video documentaries about diverse Asian and Pacific art forms; written essays, articles, and educational materials about the arts of Asia and the Pacific; and curated exhibitions and performances of traditional arts. A founding member of the Train Theater in Jerusalem, Schuster performed and designed productions that toured internationally. He has been awarded grants from the Fulbright Program, the East-West Center, and the Asian Cultural Council. He has also served on panels for the National Endowment of the Arts and WESTAF (Multicultural Task Force).

*Right now we are working on a show featuring contemporary Hong Kong art and the tensions there. There are four or five artists involved who are describing in their work the tensions related to what is going on in a community like Hong Kong as it has reverted to control by China. We work with all different communities throughout Asia, and I am very excited about some of the work we are able to show. In the spring, we are going to show some work from Rajasthan in northern India. We're going to show some work related to the traditional Japanese temples in Hawaii (there are more than 100 years of tradition there), and we're going to show work from the Islamic cultures in Asia as well. I am also excited because I was part of WESTAF's original task force that was working on these multicultural issues, and I'm really delighted to see that this symposium has come together.*

### **Ron Senungetuk**

Ron Senungetuk has perhaps the most extensive national and international exhibition record of any Alaskan artist. Senungetuk received his college art training at the School for American Craftsmen of the Rochester Institute of Technology, completing the B.F.A. program in 1960. He continued his training in Oslo, Norway, under a Fulbright Fellowship. As a contemporary artist who works predominantly in wood and in metal, Senungetuk has always seen his Eskimo heritage as only one of the many wells from which he can draw inspiration and imagery. In addition to his own work as an artist, Senungetuk has played a major role in the development of contemporary Alaska-Native art through his teaching and leadership in founding and directing the Native Art Center at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, until his retirement in 1988. Now living in Homer, Alaska, Senungetuk still actively exhibits and serves as an interpreter and spokesperson for contemporary Alaska-Native art internationally.

*The exciting part of my life is that every time there is a solo exhibition, there is a whole set of new ideas. I cannot keep up with all the ideas that are happening. Challenges? I think my main chal-*

*lenge is that time factor, and that relates to that "aging business." But I will have to learn how to say "no" to activities so I can spend more time on my work. I tend to join the board of any worthy nonprofit organization that asks. I'll just have to slow down a little bit.*

**Mayumi Tsutakawa**

Mayumi Tsutakawa is an independent editor and curator in Seattle, WA. She formerly headed the King County Cultural Resources Division and was Director of External Relations for the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle. She has edited several multicultural literary anthologies, including *Edge Walking on the Western Rim: New Works by 12 Northwest Writers* (Sasquatch, 1994), and she coordinated *The Power of Language: Writers of Color* reading series. She also organized exhibitions of artwork by both historical and contemporary artists of color. Tsutakawa received her master's degree in communications, as well as her bachelor's degree in Japan Area Studies, from the University of Washington.

*I find it is very challenging for the organizations with which I work to take the time to deal with day-to-day issues--issues critical to keeping their doors open. There is an incredible amount of joy and creativity in these organizations, but there is so much work to be done. I am hoping we can share ideas and perspectives at this gathering and really help one another.*



## LIST OF SYMPOSIUM OBSERVERS

Lucero Arellano  
WESTAF Multicultural Advisory Committee  
Program Manager  
Multicultural Arts Development Programs  
California Arts Council  
Sacramento, CA

Clayton Campbell  
Co-Executive Director  
18th Street Arts Center  
Santa Monica, CA

John Coe  
WESTAF Multicultural Advisory Committee  
Special Projects Director  
Wyoming Division of Cultural Resources  
Cheyenne, WY

Lonnie Cooper  
Director of Cultural Affairs  
City of Greeley  
Greeley, CO

Len Egerly  
WESTAF Chair  
Poet  
Denver, CO

Steve Forrester  
Chair  
Oregon Arts Commission  
Astoria, OR

Geoff Gallegos  
daKAH Hip Hop Orchestra  
Los Angeles, CA

Sandra Gibson  
President and CEO  
Arts Presenters  
Washington, DC

Ruben Funkahuátl Guevara  
Interdisciplinary Artist, Music Historian  
Los Angeles, CA

Leigh Ann Hahn  
Director of Programming  
Grand Performances  
Los Angeles, CA

Eric Hayashi  
WESTAF Trustee  
WESTAF Multicultural Advisory Committee  
Walnut Creek, CA

Lawson Inada  
Past Member, WESTAF Multicultural  
Task Force  
Medford, OR

Ulysses Jenkins, Jr.  
Associate Professor of Studio Art  
University of California, Irvine  
Irvine, CA

Angie Kim  
Program Officer, Arts  
Flintridge Foundation  
Pasadena, CA

Louis LeRoy  
Chair  
The Association of American Cultures  
Yuma, AZ

Mitch Menchaca  
Director, Expansion Arts  
Arizona Commission on the Arts  
Phoenix, AZ

Jean Miao  
Program Manager  
Getty Grants Program  
Los Angeles, CA

Paul Minicucci  
Arts Consultant  
Sacramento, CA

Elena Minor  
Finance Mogul  
REDCAT-California Institute of the Arts  
Los Angeles, CA

Janine Perron  
Grants Manager  
Los Angeles County Arts Commission  
Los Angeles, CA

Lisle Soukup  
Executive Director  
Arizonans for Cultural Development  
Phoenix, AZ

Jean Tokuda Irwin  
Arts Education Coordinator  
Utah Arts Council  
Salt Lake City, UT

J. Michael Walker  
Visual Artist  
Los Angeles, CA

Lula Washington  
Artistic Director & Founder  
Lula Washington Dance Theatre  
Los Angeles, CA

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Executive Director

Amy Funicello  
Associate Director

Bob Mesko  
Deputy Director

Shannon Daut  
Director of Programs

Mary Headrick  
Director of Marketing and  
Communications

Adrienne Devereux  
Operations Associate