



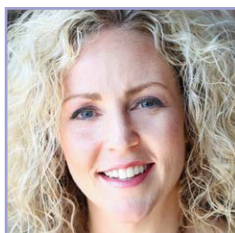
MEET THE FELLOWS

2019 COHORT

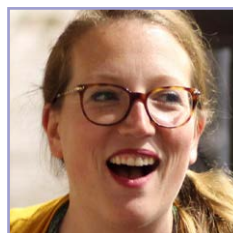
2019 Creative Community Fellows



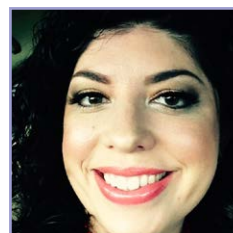
**Nik
Aberle**
Rapid City, SD



**Jessica
Ackerman**
Minot, ND



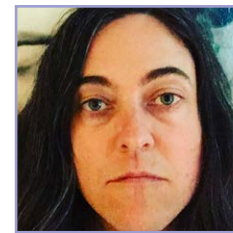
**Emilie
Amrein**
San Marcos, CA



**Cristina
Benz**
Saint Paul, MN



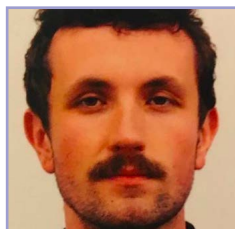
**Taykhoom
Biviji**
Chicago, IL



**Crystal
Brinkman**
Minneapolis, MN



**Fay
Darmawi**
San Francisco, CA



**Adam
Desjardins**
Detroit, MI



**Stephanie
Echeveste**
New York, NY



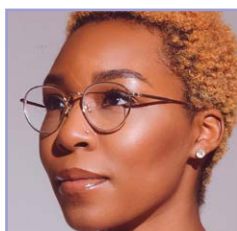
**Armando
Franco**
Gilroy, CA



**Brion
Gill**
Baltimore, MD



**Hannah
Grant**
Ersleville, Australia



**Chavon
Henderson**
Baltimore, MD



**Heidi
Jeub**
Little Falls, MN



**Hamzat
Koriko**
Grand Forks, ND



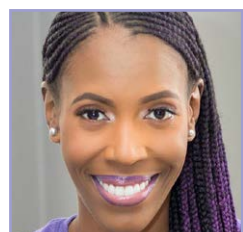
**Sharon
Mansur**
Winona, MN



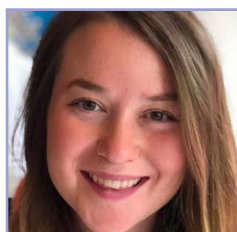
**Debby
Maziarz**
Melbourne, Australia



**Vincent
Mraz**
New York, NY



**Brittany
Rhodes**
Detroit, MI



**Julia
Ryan**
Boston, MA



**Alisha
Shilling**
Kalispell, MT



**Sarah
Smith Warren**
New Rockford, ND



**Ryan
Stopera**
Minneapolis, MN



**Ayana
Williams**
Memphis, TN



**Jacqueline
Wolven**
Eureka Springs, AR



Nik Aberle
Rapid City, SD

Nik is an avid explorer in more ways than one. While he does indulge in the conventional definition and explores the globe, he also explores different ways to challenge himself both artistically and technically. As a visual artist, he generally works in room-scale installations and experiences and finds a way to incorporate cutting edge technology into those experiences. His goal is to introduce people to things they've never experienced in environments they never thought possible. Introducing teens and youth to this technology to help shape their future is among the top of his priorities.



Jessica Ackerman
Minot, ND

Jessica Ackerman is a community advocate, passionate volunteer, and positive leader from Minot, ND. She is redeveloping blighted property in downtown Minot to increase the vibrancy and economic impact in the community. She is also spearheading a community coalition to inspire local organizations, entrepreneurs, and people of diverse backgrounds and interests to collaborate on the creation of an inclusive public gathering place in the heart of the Minot community.



Emilie Amrein
San Marcos, CA

Emilie Amrein is Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at the University of San Diego where she serves as the conductor of the USD Choral Scholars and teaches courses on the intersection of music and social justice movements. Dr. Amrein is the co-artistic director of Common Ground Voices / La Frontera, an international community music project that aims

aims to generate meaningful collaboration through music, explore and create music of shared human values and aspirations, contribute to community music as an exercise of non-violence, and utilize music as a springboard for a meaningful discussion about social and political change within the group as well as with the society in general. A passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion within the arts and academia, Emilie is currently researching the application of conflict transformation, restorative justice, and other healing practices within the ensemble setting. She has presented her scholarship for distinguished professional organizations, including Chorus America, the American Choral Director's Association, the College Music Society, and the National Youth Leadership Council.

I am a high school visual art teacher and racial equity leader in my school district. I co-lead an anti-racism leadership group for youth at the high school where I teach, and lead a racial equity team for staff and faculty. In addition, I have participated in various initiatives through Educators 4 Excellence including, testifying at the Office of Civil Rights in Washington DC and helping to write a national survey about important educational issues.



Cristina Benz
Saint Paul, MN



Taykhoom Biviji
Chicago, IL

Originally from Mumbai, India, Taykhoom Biviji received a Masters in Arts Administration and Policy (2017) from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and holds a Masters in Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology (2015) from St. Xavier's University-Mumbai. He has worked in the North Lawndale community for the last 4 years, first as a researcher prototyping incubator models for not for profits and then as the Homan Square Community Coordinator for SAIC. Currently, he is a Project Manager at the SAIC's Office of Engagement focusing on Oaks of North Lawndale and developing partnerships and engagement programs.



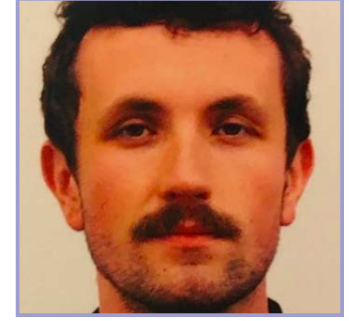
Crystal Brinkman
Minneapolis, MN

Crystal Brinkman is a musician, performer, and youth worker. She is the director of Kulture Klub Collaborative, a nonprofit arts organization in Minneapolis, MN with a mission of engaging youth experiencing homelessness in art and creative practice.



Fay Darmawi
San Francisco, CA

Fay Darmawi is SFUFF's Founder and Executive Producer and her unique background is a mix of film and finance. In addition to 25 years of community development finance including most recently managing the low-income housing tax credit investment portfolio for Silicon Valley Bank, she's a screenwriting fellow with the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley. Based on her curation of the SFUFF, she was selected as one of the first Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Fellows. She is also a graduate of the European Union's Valletta 2018 Curatorial School and most recently completed a storytelling residency with Forward/Slash Story. Fay's formal urbanist training is from M.I.T. and the University of Pennsylvania but her love of cities is from her childhood experiences living in the epicenter of Jakarta, Indonesia.



Adam DesJardins
Detroit, MI

Adam DesJardins is arts programmer passionate about helping to strengthen the arts & cultural landscape of Southeastern Michigan. Hailing from Ann Arbor and currently rooted in Detroit, Adam has worked for numerous arts organizations, from grassroots puppet houses to university performing arts presenters to education departments in national institutions, reflecting his curiosity for all of the different angles of arts & culture work in the world we live in. He believes strongly that all audiences deserve quality, thought-provoking arts experiences in their lives and currently incorporates this in his work at CultureSource, a regional arts and culture coalition, where he manages programs including residencies with visiting arts leaders and thinkers, professional development workshops, and most recently, a visit from the National Endowment for the Arts for their National Council meeting. You can find him dragging his friends to a street festival, trying to learn Polish from his grandma, or endlessly talking about public transit.



Stephanie Echeveste
New York, NY

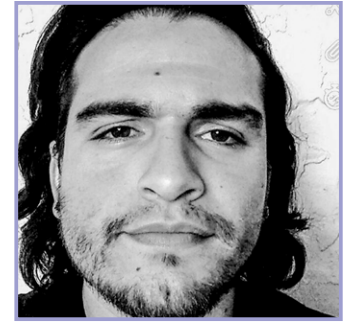
Stephanie Echeveste is a Mexican-American artist, cultural producer, and entrepreneur. She is the founder of Distill Creative, which designs one-of-a-kind experiences to help individuals and businesses be more creative and find their community. She hosts creative workshops and happenings at her studio in Brooklyn and has three Chapters in Southern California, Washington, DC, and Reston, Virginia,

where local Distill Creative Chapter leaders lead monthly craft workshops.

Distill Creative also consults with real estate developers and arts organizations to curate, design, and produce creative placemaking initiatives and artwork.

Stephanie loves cities and is fascinated with the increase of real estate development, but fears the lack of inclusion and equity, which she witnessed first hand as Placemaking Manager at Vornado and JBG Smith in Washington, DC.

She is working on creating a professional development program for real estate developers and artists to create more opportunities for funded artwork by underrepresented demographics, particularly women of color, in privately-owned spaces and privately-owned public spaces. For the past three years, Stephanie has been doing this work — first as an employee of a real estate investment trust and now as a business owner who consults with developers. She is looking to fine tune her process and create a toolkit that can be used locally in NYC, nationally, and globally.



Armando Franco
Gilroy, CA

We are working with a group of Jovenes Nobles (Noble Youth) that have been working diligently to raise funds to restore a historical mural in Downtown Gilroy, CA. The mural is a giant 30ft Aztec Calendar located on a building that is about 30ft tall and will be the final installment to a series of 3 restoration projects. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 to hire youth interns, purchase necessary materials and scaffolding, maintenance and lastly to rehire veteran Chicano Muralist Guillermo Aranda! Campaign efforts include: November 3rd, 2018 we had a fundraising kick off/Dia de los Muertos event with Tacos El Guero and gave a short presentation to the City of Gilroy's Public Art Committee. We are currently applying for a grant through the California Arts Council and are planning future fundraising events with local artist Nacho Moya at Moya Arts Gallery. We will continue to brainstorm new ideas for our fundraising campaign every week at the CARAS office. (Community Agency for Resources Advocacy & Services) This is a project that will restore culture and history in California but only through the power of unity amongst our communities.



Brion Gill
Baltimore, MD

Lady Brion is an international spoken word artist, poetry coach, activist, organizer, and educator. During her time as a competitor in slam competitions she has won the 2016 National Poetry Slam Champion, the 2017 & 2019 Southern Fried Regional Slam Champion and the 2019 Rustbelt Regional Competition. From 2015 to the present she has also represented Baltimore in a number of other national

competitions including the Individual World Poetry Slam and the Women of the World Poetry Slam.

Brion is a recipient of the Open Society Institute Fellowship centered around her project facilitating poetry workshops in prisons and group homes throughout Maryland. She also received the 2017 Salzburg Fellowship for Social Innovators. She received her B.A. in Communications from Howard University and her MFA in Creative Writing & Publishing Arts from the University of Baltimore.

Her most recent accomplishment is becoming the founder and executive director of Maryland first Black arts and entertainment district — The Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts and Entertainment District.



Hannah Grant
Erskineville, Australia

Hannah Grant is the founder of Collective Impact Arts – an organisation which grows from her 12+ years of experience in community arts for social outcomes. She was Director of Socially-Engaged Programs at Shopfront Arts Co-op for 5 years, where she created a series of sustainable programs working with young people to use the arts as a tool for change in their schools and local communities.

As an artist, Hannah works across storytelling, visual arts, digital arts and theatre-making, focussing specifically on socially-engaged and participatory practice and working with young people. She has worked extensively with young offenders, school pupils, young parents, young victims of crime, peer youth workers, asylum seekers and refugees, young people with mental health diagnoses and young people with physical and learning disabilities. Her work is responsive, creative and informed by grass-roots engagement.

Hannah holds an MA in Applied Theatre from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London (2006) where she focussed on working with young people. Her career began in London, working with organisations including Immediate Theatre and Leap Confronting Conflict, and in 2010 she embarked on a new adventure launching Theatre:Connect – an international youth arts project working in Singapore, India, Vietnam, Norway and the UK.

Hannah is on the board of Matriark Theatre Company as Education and Communities specialist, she is a member of the international Placemaking Leadership Council and a 2017 Stand Up Social Impact Fellow. In 2016, she travelled to Puebla, Mexico for an Arts Education residency with the Arquetopia Foundation.



Chavon Henderson
Baltimore, MD

Chavon Henderson is a multifaceted human being. Chavon is the creative director at her brand management company, SVNCRWNS and a visual artist. She is analytically minded and practiced and has respect for the power of our ability to cultivate through creativity. At SVNCRWNS, Chavon uses photography, video and strategic and creative practices to build communication tools and

community activations for various brands and organizations. Based in Baltimore, MD, Chavon has worked with clients like The Baltimore Museum of Art, Greenmount West Community Center, American Visionary Arts Museum, Crust By Mack, Sankofa African & World Bazaar and many other businesses, organizations and artists. Chavon teaches, mentors and consults with entrepreneurs and youth on a variety of subjects.

Her main areas of interest are the culture, education and business through arts, while also being highly involved, during the last three years, in coordinating various projects in arts and culture. Chavon holds degrees in accounting and fashion merchandising and retail management and has trained in non-academic contexts.

She lives in West Baltimore, MD with her wife. She spends a lot of time working on her business, growing brands and creating visuals.



I am a visual artist that practices painting, bookarts, and public art, concentrating on rural subjects and concerns. To overcome the isolation and barriers of being an abstract artist in a rural community, I have made purposeful, yet authentic, partners in non-arts sectors, in order to shed light on unearthed narratives or ideas.



Heidi Jeub
Little Falls, MN



Hamzat Koriko
Grand Forks, ND

Koriko is the executive director of the African Arts Arena that provides intercultural competence, diversity and inclusion service through performing arts. He published three plays, *Quand L'oiseau S'envole* (Harmattan, 2006), *L'ombre d'une Nuit* (Harmattan, 2012) and *Jazve* (Awoudy, 2018) and co-authored *The Complicated Identity Negotiation of Women in Kangni Alem* (Ajero's *Chemin de Croix* and *Gustave Akakpo's Catharsis*). Koriko teaches introduction to critical thinking, scholarly inquiry through diversity. Hamzat is a playwright, director, actor and storyteller.



Sharon Mansur
Winona, MN

Sharon Mansur is an Arab American experimental interdisciplinary dance and visual artist, educator, curator, community mover and shaker. She is based in the Mississippi river town of Winona, Minnesota, curates and performs in *SHIFT~* performance salons and directs *The Cedar Tree Project*.

Sharon's creative practice and research integrates improvisational techniques, somatic practices, site inspired actions, and interdisciplinary collaborations. She loves creating experiences where active, empathetic viewing and wild imaginations are inspired, as well as building and supporting the creative ecology of a community. Ongoing themes include her Lebanese heritage, the complex nature of identity, and the subtle dialogue among private and public layers of self and environment. Sharon deeply believes in the power of art towards self-actualization, healing and transformation.

Sharon's dance performances, visual installations and screendance projects have been presented throughout the United States, as well as in Argentina, Bulgaria, Canada, Ecuador, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Mexico, Norway and the UK. She received a Best Performance Award at the Mirror Mountain Film Festival (Canada) in 2015 for 'variation on residue', and was also featured in the 2018 WomenCinemakers Biennale magazine

Recent support includes the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council, and a Springboard for the Arts: Hinge Arts Residency. Sharon was a 2018 McKnight Foundation Dance Fellow, and will be premiering a McKnight Fellowship commissioned solo in fall 2020.



Debby Maziarz
Melbourne, Australia

I am a community arts and cultural development leader committed to changing the mindset and practices of independent artists seeking to resource their work and sustain a career in the arts. My ideas represent a step change in the current funding arrangements for the arts sector and present a challenge to the funders and funded alike.

I began my creative journey as a performer in the Women's Circus in 1991. While working as a Youth Arts Officer, I founded the Westside Circus in 1996, Melbourne's leading social circus enterprise for young people. I was the Artistic Director for 15 years creating original physical theatre works with diverse young

people combining live music, media arts, storytelling and circus.

I was instrumental in shaping the social circus movement in Australia, combining youth work, feminist and community theatre influences into a model of practice that utilised community engagement, partnership development and mentoring as tools for social change. The Westside Circus continues to be a highly regarded training ground for socially engaged circus trainers, teachers, administrators, technicians, theatre makers, performers and producers that serve the arts and health sectors globally.

In 2010, I established my own arts leadership practice specialising in mentoring, professional development, advocacy, fundraising and facilitation. This was driven by the deepening challenge of sustaining work in the arts in Australia and the need for a more resilient, connected and entrepreneurial sector. My practice and approach are underpinned by a belief that sustainability in the arts can be achieved through a more self-aware arts ecology, that strives for equitable systems and processes and an entrepreneurial mindset.

I have produced and delivered a professional development workshop series across Australia, teaching more than 3,000 individuals the art of recognising their own unique value.

I am a recipient of an Australia Council Community Arts and Cultural Development Fellowship (2016 – 2017) where I completed a research program to learn the systems, processes and methodologies that underpin bartering initiatives in Australia and overseas.

In an advisory role, I have worked as Strategic Mentor and Fundraiser in a range of not for profit arts organisations and artist led collectives. I am often called upon in times of adversity and uncertainty, working with staff, Boards, financial partners and community leaders to co-design and drive change management, strategic and major fundraising projects.

I have successfully sustained my own arts practice for 9 consecutive years and raised over \$6.8 million towards social change, arts and cultural activity in Australia.



Vinny Mraz
New York, NY

Vinny Mraz is a playwright, teaching artist and theater maker in NYC. His work has been seen at Object Movement Festival, The Tank, Dixon Place, Little Theater, The Dallas Solo Festival, Harlem Nights, the Secret Theater, New Short Play Festival, the PIT Solocom and Sarah Lawrence College. He was an Artist in Residence with the Object Movement Festival from 2018 - 2019 where he developed an original

puppetry piece called You Can see Nothing From Here along with collaborator Chris Carcione. As a teaching artist he has spent the last 6 years working with senior citizens in writing workshops, acting classes and developing original show revues in senior centers and public libraries. He has taught workshops in writing and performance in libraries, colleges, and prisons. He works with Lifetime Arts as a trainer where he leads workshops and seminars for artists and administrators on Creative Aging. He is an adjunct professor of theater at Manhattanville College.

He studied theater at Sarah Lawrence College, Emerson College, The Kenyon College Playwriting Institute, the Cherry Lane Theater School and The Second City in Chicago. He is a 2019 artist-in-residence for the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Su Casa program.



Brittany Rhodes
Detroit, MI

Passionate about helping children strengthen their math skills and confidence, Brittany Rhodes is the founder of Black Girl MATHgic. Black Girl MATHgic (BGM) is the first and only monthly math confidence subscription box curated for girls on a 3rd-8th grade math skill level.

Prior to founding Black Girl MATHgic, Brittany spent six years working for various nonprofits focused on the resurgence of her hometown, Detroit, MI. In addition to building Black Girl MATHgic, Brittany is a math tutor at the Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program, Co-Chair of the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) Alumni Advisory Council and Board Member for the Detroit Food Academy and The Connection Network. She is an inaugural Spelman College 40 Under 40 Award Recipient and Salzburg Global Seminar Young Cultural Innovators Fellow. Brittany is also the 2019 First Place Winner of Michigan Women Forward's Empower Change MI Pitch Competition – Ideation Category and Second Place Winner of the February 2019 Rashard Howard Virtual Pitch Competition.

Brittany received her Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Spelman College and her Master of Business Administration in Marketing, Communication and Organizational Behavior from the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University, where she was a Consortium for Graduate Study in Management Fellow.



Julia Ryan
Boston, MA

Julia Ryan (she/her/hers) is an artist, in addition to being an arts educator, organizer, activist, and service provider located in Boston, Massachusetts. Since 2017 Julia has worked with the City of Boston, as the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture's first-ever Artist Resource Manager, running the Artist Resource Desk. The Artist Resource Desk is the City of Boston's one stop shop for local artists - focusing on supporting Boston's artist community holistically: listening to their needs, and developing and revising programs to better support their work and well-being. Julia grew up in Jamaica Plain, the neighborhood of Boston where she lives today. Growing up in a neighborhood rich with artists, Julia is passionate about creating and maintaining a city where artists are valued, supported, and thriving. Julia holds a Master's in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education focusing on the arts, and a Bachelor's Degree in the History of Art from Bryn Mawr College. She has worked as an educator in informal learning settings, museums, and after-school programs and organizations. She has also worked in curatorial settings, non-profit arts fundraising, and currently works in municipal government. Julia is trained in methods of printmaking, painting, and drawing, classical viola and voice.



Alisha Shilling
Kalispell, MT

Alisha Shilling was born and raised in Montana. She was a professional photographer and bookkeeper for over a decade before deciding to pursue a dream that began 20 years ago of opening an art center in her hometown. KALICO art center will facilitate the intersection of art and community for all ages and abilities. Her and her husband have four kids who are active in sports, theater and making slime. She lives for the summer days on Flathead Lake. traveling and living a creative life.



Sarah Smith Warren
New Rockford, ND

Born and raised in very rural North Dakota, my husband and I recently moved back to the state to work, raise our family and create a community of our own. After a decade working in non-profit arts, humanities and economic development, I moved into entrepreneurship, opening my own photography and consulting business. I'm working to bridge the gap between private small business and nonprofit, I want to create a new model where businesses, artists and entrepreneurs can work together to create a more vibrant community using art, culture, conversations and connection.



Ryan Stopera
Minneapolis, MN

My path from social worker and community organizer to artist and cultural connector was a long and necessary journey in living a life of integrity and paying tribute to my late sister, who was a talented filmmaker. After my sister passed away from a drug overdose 14 years ago I started a career working with youth and adults experiencing chemical dependency, mental health issues, and

homelessness. This work led me to community organizing, which, due to the need to use powerful storytelling as a tool for social change, led me to become a filmmaker.

Everything I have learned and experienced has informed who I am today. I am grateful for the opportunity to create art, organize my community around issues impacting our lives, and build power together. I am grateful that these different areas of my life are not compartmentalized, but intersectional, and always working in partnership with each other. My vision for developing an artist cooperative space that combines a mission driven business working in partnership with a non-profit organization in the same space, allows me to utilize all of my skills, experiences, and relationships to develop a space that addresses community needs today and for the future.



Ayana Williams
Memphis, TN

My name is Ayana C Williams and I am the new executive director of Blues City Cultural Center (BCCC). My parents Levi and Deborah Frazier are the co-founder of BCCC which has been in existence for 40 years. We believe in Arts for a Better Way of Life (Tag Line). I appeared in shows acting and/or dancing in Play for a Day, Lonely Christmas Tree, Down on Beale, A Tribute to Richard Wright. I danced in Nashville, TN at the Bicentennial Celebration of Tennessee. The most memorable was my performance in Paris, France at the Sorbonne University, A Tribute to Richard Wright. I take pleasure in performing, but really enjoy being the assistant director and stage manager. We have signature programs, Sew Much Love, Peace in the House, This is Orange Mound, and Whitehaven 38116. I design program schedules and coordinated facilitator training sessions. I conduct workshops to build self-esteem, inner peace, conflict resolution and etc for adults and youth. Also, I organized our first Express Yourself Pop Up Arts Festival for the Whitehaven Area. Before going full time with BCCC I was the program director for Salvation Army - Emergency Family Shelter/New Direction Family Residence. I am a certified trainer for Transition to Success. I have earned my Master's Degree for Leadership and Business Administration. Currently, I am working on my doctoral for Organizational Leadership.



Jacqueline Wolven
Eureka Springs, AR

Started out as a designer, became an expert in travel marketing and business development and now and leading an effort to create a dynamic downtown. I believe in Real People and Real Places and help teams across the nation brand, market and develop their story.



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