ACTIVATE Emerging Arts Leaders: 2023 Cohort Biographies

Alfred Coles is an artist, and organizer using music and the power of community as a catalyst for social change and well being. Using his voice as an artist and storyteller under the moniker "Alfred Nomad" to cultivate amity within communities for more than a decade, Alfred founded the culture brand LxVE (Love x Value Everything & Everyone) to highlight and encourage entrepreneurial creatives. Curating experiences such as concerts, art exhibitions, panels, and his annual festival LxVE Fest, he effortlessly weaves together his musicianship and collective advocacy. As current Program Coordinator for the nonprofit Painted Brain, Alfred will be of service to continue PB's mission to create lasting community-based solutions to mental health challenges and the impact of social injustice through arts, advocacy, and enterprise.

Bryan Guzman is a first-generation Salvadoran-American, born and raised in South Central LA. He graduated from the University of Southern California with a B.A. in Narrative Studies, and is passionate about film, community engagement, and equity in the arts. He is currently a Social Impact Coordinator with the Lucas Museum of Narrative Arts, where he is working on initiatives and programming to better serve the community once the museum opens. In his free time, Bryan likes to play video games, and plays drum set and bass, though not very good, and has lately been infatuated with film photography. He also loves hanging out with his cat, Mochi.

Cindy Damas: I am the Program Manager for Everybody Dance LA! a non-profit focused on bringing high quality dance instruction to low income youth (K-12) in LA. I have worked with EDLA! for almost 6 years and have held multiple positions before being promoted to my current role. I manage the administrative part of the after school dance program serving 450+ students after school Monday-Friday and Saturdays. I oversee parent engagement and information in English and Spanish languages. As well as supervise a team of 5 staff that support teachers, students and parents on site during classes. I am also a member of our organization's EDAI committee and co-lead a student leadership group offered to our enrolled students.

Jean Young (they/she) is a second generation Taiwanese American multi-disciplinary artist and storyteller who is inspired by the relationships and communities around them. Based in Los Angeles, they are currently the Marketing Coordinator at the Chinese American Museum, the Social Media Manager for Tuesday Night Project, and previously a Digital Publication Intern for the Smithsonian Folklife digital magazine through the East Los Angeles College Museum Studies Certificate Program. They graduated from University of California, Davis with Bachelor of Arts in Art Studio and Communications and was a Resident Artist at the Royal Drawing School in London, UK. Jean is interested in how digital media usage facilitates community building, informing the ways they create content and branding for the organizations they are a part of. As an arts advocate, they continue to utilize digital strategies to create connections and access to resources within a community for more equity within the arts.
Jennie E. Park is a South Korea-born and Southern California-based American immigrant artist, writer and curator interested in interdisciplinarity and integrated approaches to honesty. (In)visibility and (in)vulnerability, and world-generating dynamics of entanglement and truthful paradox, recur as practices, tools or puzzles she explores through her mixed media, project-based work. Her artwork has been internationally exhibited through galleries, film festivals, fairs, and community and office spaces, including most recently at MOAH:CEDAR (Lancaster), Axis Gallery (Sacramento), Helen J Gallery (Los Angeles), and has received MOZAIK Future Art Awards. She has written for Artillery and other arts publications for the last decade, and her prior graduate degrees in law and cognitive psychology inform her art and writing practices. She recently received an MFA in Art and Creative Writing with an Integrated Media concentration from CalArts.

Krystine Murry was born and raised in Los Angeles. In 2013, she moved to Bellingham, Washington to attend Western Washington University. After working at the Western Gallery, she fell in love with gallery practices and majored in art history. Exploring and advocating intersectionality within her studies led her to pull away from “traditional” art historical studying to gain a fluid understanding of individuals navigating the arts. After graduation, she took on various positions in museums and galleries with the intention of gaining a well rounded experience to have a better understanding of how these spaces can better serve the public and their workers, as well as create communities for them. She currently works at LACMA, as an Education Coordinator and oversees two programs that prioritize making museums inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Lizeth Ayala is a Mexican-American scholar and artist at heart who is passionate about storytelling, art access, and community work. Born and raised in LA, East Hollywood. She is a first-generation college student graduating from CSULA in June 2023 with a B.A. in Sociology and minor in Latin-American and Pan-African studies. An alumni of the LAUSD - Conservatory of Fine Arts, where at a young age she found theatre as her outlet to express and overcome. In 2018 she became a part of an after-school program that worked with first-generation and low-income students where she was inspired by her mentors and working with youth to be a dedicated and resourceful advocate with three years of experience in program implementation, fundraising, and community outreach through Kid City Hope Place. Outside of school and work, Lizeth practices a range of art mediums including street photography, poetry, and currently learning guitar.

Marco Barcena is a Council Member and former Mayor of the City of Bell Gardens. He immigrated from Mexico and has since made it his mission to improve the lives of his constituents. He graduated from the University of California Berkeley, creating a new Interdisciplinary Studies Field Major with an area of concentration in Technology and Consumer Behavior. He recently succeeded in funding the construction of a $20+ million Aquatics Center for his underserved community. Marco is a strong supporter of recreation, art, and education, and has pushed for an increase in art programs in Bell Gardens. He organized the City's first outdoor art gallery in conjunction with a 5k last year and hopes to continue growing the arts in the City of Bell Gardens.

Paola Lopez pronouns she/her/ella. LA native WOC born and raised in Echo Park. Currently attending LATTC Community Planning/ Economic Development Leadership program. As Social Media Coordinator for Grand Park I help amplify the many talents and voices of LA based artists and community organizations in our beautiful hometown. With a background in production coordination, live entertainment, and nonprofit/union sector in Los Angeles for 7+ years. It is an honor to form part of Arts
for LA - ACTIVATE Emerging Arts Leaders 2023 cohort. I am excited to continue working towards a Los Angeles that is culturally equitable and accessible for all Angelenos. Uplifting and acknowledging the many voices in my communities with access to the arts and resources for all. I look forward to building long lasting relationships and activating my leadership power.

Roberto Carlos: Artist and social entrepreneur who is passionately creating innovative projects promoting the arts to create a positive social impact for future generations. Currently, I perform traditional folk music from Latin America in the Los Angeles County area with our three-piece band, Tres Souls. In 2018, I recorded on the Grammy-nominated album "Amar y Vivir" with La Santa Cecilia. I developed my own concert production, Boleros De Noche; becoming an ambassador for "Bolero" music in the U.S. In the past five years I produced nearly sold out shows at The Ford theater. My future goals include bringing Boleros De Noche to the Hollywood Bowl.