Protege 2023 Mentors

**Bronson Foster**  
Director of Strategy & Communications, Long Beach Opera  

*Specialty: Creative Ecosystems / Performing Arts Leadership*

Bronson Foster is a strategist and leader who believes that our shared creative and cultural expressions demonstrate the best of what we can achieve. His work focuses on increasing capacity, innovating systems, building space, utilizing data and research, empowering people, and fostering future-oriented thinking for arts and cultural organizations. Bronson is on the team at Long Beach Opera where he is Director of Strategy & Communications. Previously, Bronson has worked with the Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture, Boulanger Initiative, and Live Music Project. He has also served organizations such as Arts for LA, the Association of Arts Administration Educators, and Emerging Arts Leaders Los Angeles. Bronson completed his graduate studies at the University of Southern California (USC) earning a Master of Science degree. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Bronson currently finds home in the vibrant Los Angeles region.

**Dakota McMahand-Owens**  
Founder + Executive Director, Budding Artists  

*Specialty: Arts Education & Nonprofit Management*

McMahand-Owens is a classically trained pianist who has spent her life merging arts education and activism to create social change on a grassroots level. Having been personally impacted by the transformative power of the arts, she knows it cultivates creative expression, supports relationship building, and nurtures social-emotional healing. Dakota is a first-generation college graduate with more than 10 years of experience working in the community arts space at institutions such as Inner-City Arts and City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Dakota earned her Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Public Administration from California Baptist University, and Master of Arts in Education Administration from the University of South Dakota. She also holds a Community Teaching Artist certificate from California State University, Los Angeles and is a trained facilitator for Social Emotional Arts on a Shoestring from UCLArts and Healing. As a lifelong learner, she is currently enrolled in a Specialized Study Program in Social and Emotional Learning at the University of California Riverside. In addition to her volunteer artivism efforts as the founder and executive director of Budding Artists, she works in the field of Undergraduate Medical Education.
Daniel Lobliner-Cortez
Board of Directors - Loyola Law School Orchestra

Specialty: Music - Education, Composition, Performance

Daniel Lobliner-Cortez has been playing music for 25 years. He received his Bachelor's of Music in Education, Teaching Credential, and Master's Degree in Afro-Latin Music at California State University, Los Angeles. After years in music academia, he joined and became a prominent song-writing member of a touring Latin Ska band. Mr. Cortez spent years touring the US, Europe, South America and China. During this time he gained experience in stagecraft, promotion, sound engineering, and stage performance. Mr. Cortez has also served as middle school band director and elementary level music instructor. Mr. Cortez received the titles of Teacher of the Year and STEAM Teacher of the Year.

David Valdez
Executive Engagement Manager, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - NBCUniversal

Specialty: Media & Entertainment | Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

David Valdez is the Executive Engagement Manager, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Manager supporting NBCUniversal's Chief Diversity Officer, Craig Robinson, and all of the company's DEI efforts across the enterprise. David has spent 11 years at NBCU, previously with the world-famous Studio Tour on the Universal lot before joining Corporate Diversity in Dec of 2020. David was born and raised in Los Angeles and is passionate about supporting community based organizations that provide direct services to families and individuals facing critical challenges to success. He serves on the Board of Directors with Jovenes, Inc. a non-profit that serves youth ages 18-25 that are experiencing homelessness. David is a graduate of Yale University and has a Masters in Fine Arts from the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, CA.

Heidi Zeller
Senior Manager, Cultural Planning, LA Metro

Specialty: Cultural Programming & Communications

Heidi Zeller is a cultural planner and arts organizer with a focus on the role of the arts and artists in enriching public spaces. She is Senior Manager, Cultural Programming for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority where she produces Metro Art Presents, an inventive series of arts and cultural programs in the historic heart of Los Angeles, Union Station. She also oversees communications for the Arts + Community Enrichment division, including traditional and social media, digital marketing and public information. Heidi holds a dual master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning and Public Art Studies from USC. She serves on the boards of CicLAvia, an open streets program and Freewaves, a public art organization.
Javier Solórzano
Creator of "Super Lucha Cats" and Art Director at a pet food company

Specialty: Comic books, storytelling and graphic design

Javier Solórzano is a comic book writer and artist. He is the creator of "Super Lucha Cats", a comic book about a family of lucha libre cats defending their neighborhood in Bell Gardens. Hailed as "a big win" by Eric Mutter of Lucha Central, "Super Lucha Cats" currently has 2 issues, with Javier working on the upcoming 3rd. Javier is also a Graphic Designer and works as an Art Director during the day.

Kevin Johnson-Sather
Audience Services Manager at East West Players

Speciality: Arts Administration/Theatre Arts

Kevin Johnson-Sather is an arts administration professional and theater artist. Currently, Kevin serves as the Audience Services Manager at East West Players leading equitable ticketing initiatives and stewarding the operational growth of this historic organization. Kevin holds a dual MBA/MFA in Theatre Management from California State University Long Beach and has worked in management positions at Center Theatre Group, the Echo Theatre Company, and Timber Lake Playhouse.

Lysa Flores
Director, Talent Acquisition - Lucas Museum of Narrative Art

Speciality: Producing / Singer-Songwriter / Performer

Lysa was born and raised in the city of East Los Angeles. A first generation Xicana, Lysa is an accomplished Actress, Activist, Producer and Print Maker and created her own record label “Bring Your Love” in 1997. Named by Newsweek as, “One of the 20 Young Latinos to Watch In The New Millennium,” Lysa has toured the US, Mexico, Egypt and Europe extensively and has produced 4 previously released solo albums which will be followed by her long awaited project titled Immigrant Daughter. 15 years in the making it features audio interviews of her family’s immigration story with first person accounts interwoven with musical guest artists such as Bill Frissell, Flaco Jimenez, David Hidalgo, John Doe and many more. She was the Musical Producer and actress for the critically acclaimed film, "Star Maps" for which she was nominated for best debut performance by the Independent Spirit Awards. Most recently Lysa has co-produced a trio of albums for punk icon Alice Bag the debut release for comedy activist troupe Chicano Secret Service, and the debut release for the psychobilly punk band The Deranged.
Melba Martinez
Producer- BRIC Foundation, Teaching Artist- Justice for My Sister, Social Media Video Producer- Feminist Center for Creative Work

Speciality: Community/cultural organizing, social media/communications

Melba (she/they) is an artist and cultural organizer from Pacoima, CA. Their passion for art and the fight for the liberation of all oppressed people guide her life and work. After attending UCSB, Melba was a community organizer in the San Fernando Valley working with immigrant women to create thriving communities. After that, Melba merged her love of art with her passion for social justice and began working with non and for profit arts organizations working to create a more just world. Melba has worked with, South Bay Center for Counseling, CultureGapLA, Maximum Fun, A Tribe Called Queer and currently works with BRIC Foundation, Justice for My Sister and Feminist Center for Creative Work. Melba’s personal art practice involves a variety of mediums including performance, modeling, video art, installation, fiber arts, makeup and styling. Melba weaves her varied knowledge and experience together to create space for historically excluded voices in the arts and the world at large.

Nadia Chrisanto
Assistant Operations and Digital Assets Manager

Speciality: Museum & Nonprofit Operations, Curatorial, Project & Exhibition Management/Planning, Nonprofit Administration, Leadership, DEAI

Born and raised in Jakarta, Indonesia, Nadia Savira Chrisanto moved to the United States with her family to seek stability and safety. She navigated the nook and cranny of life as an undocumented immigrant and later on as a DACAmented. Her experiences shaped her passions and advocacy for diversity, accessibility, equity, and inclusivity, with a deep focus on the immigrant community. Although she has zero artistic skills, Nadia is committed to supporting works of underrepresented artists and using art & history to promote equity and cultural history. She is a passionate arts administrator and highly self-motivated with a demonstrated history of working in mission-specific museums and nonprofit organizations serving individuals in the arts, history, and culture. Nadia has extensive experience in project management, programming, curatorial research, exhibitions planning, grantmaking, and arts administration. She was the 2016 Getty Marrow Undergraduate Intern at the California African American Museum (CAAM), where she developed her passion for the arts and nonprofit administration. After the internship, she continued working at CAAM as a Curatorial & Program Assistant, then as Program Assistant for the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), and as an Administrative Assistant for the LA County Museum of Art’s (LACMA) Education & Public Programs Department. In spring 2021, she rejoined CCI as their Assistant Operations & Digital Assets Manager. After struggling for a few long years, Nadia received her A.A. in History, Humanities, and Social & Behavioral Sciences from Pasadena City College and her B.A. in History from California State Polytechnic University Pomona. In her free time, Nadia is a cat mom to her two spoiled kitties, and enjoys playing video games and experimenting with new recipes.
Oscar Magallanes  
**Artist**  
**Specialty: Public Art**

Oscar Magallanes is a Chicano artist based in Los Angeles. Growing up in a Mexican-American barrio in LA, his artwork draws heavily from his upbringing and explores iconography from different eras. Expelled from high school at the age of fifteen, Magallanes was later admitted into the Ryman Arts program, which encouraged him to pursue a career in the arts. He went on to earn a BA in Art from UCLA in 2016 and an MFA in Visual Art from UC San Diego in 2021. His work can be found in the permanent collections of several museums including The National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago and The Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, California. In 2016, he founded the art collective 3B, which has produced public art projects for various institutions. Magallanes has also served on the boards of several arts organizations and taught at UC San Diego.

Rebecca Horta  
**Director of Youth & Family Programs, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)**  
**Specialty: Museum Education, art, youth & family programs**

A Los Angeles native, Rebecca is a bilingual arts administrator born to immigrant parents from Jalisco, Mexico with twelve years of experience in museum education and community outreach. Rebecca currently serves as Director of Youth & Family Programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Previously, Rebecca was an Arts Manager for the Airport Art Program for the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Public Art Division. In addition Rebecca has worked at the City of Ontario: Ontario Museum of History & Art, the Museum of Latin American Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum and Villa. She completed her BA in Art History from Occidental College and an MA in Museum Studies from John F. Kennedy University.

Robin Gilliam  
**Director, Kearns & West**  
**Specialty: Community outreach & engagement, CBO collaborations**

Robin Gilliam is a lifelong resident of South LA, a dedicated advocate, and an interdisciplinary practitioner. As a consultant, Robin currently works as a Director at Kearns & West where she practices process design and facilitation for community engagement and stakeholder collaborations in the environmental sector. Her areas of focus include community-based participation, equity, access, and environmental justice. Robin earned her BA in Fine Art from the University of Southern California and her Master of City Planning with an emphasis in Environmental Policy & Planning from the University of California, Berkeley. Additionally, Robin has attended Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design where she studied landscape architecture and Otis College of Art and Design for Public Practice studies.
Her diverse and creative background combined with her personal values have powered her passion for innovating impactful environmental and social justice work through meaningful collaboration and strategic partnerships.

**Ximena M Martin**  
Director of Public Programs and Culinary Arts, LA Plaza De Cultura Y Artes  

*Specialty: Cultural Anthropology*

With over 30 years of museum education and public programs experience, I have worked at the Bowers Museum of Non Western Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and presently at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes. I curate a robust public programs calendar of community events to engage guests in opportunities of learning and self-discovery through art, history, and food. Events include, cinema, music, and culinary programs, but not limited to performances, concerts lectures, public forums, workshops, think tanks, screenings, special events, etc.

**Zach Davidson**  
Assistant Director of Development, A Noise Within  

*Specialty: Development & Fundraising*

Zachary Reeve Davidson is an arts administrator, director/choreographer, producer, and general theatre miscreant. Zach is the Assistant Director of Development for A Noise Within Theatre, where he has written 100+ awarded grants (representing more than $2.6 million in funding). He also serves as the Artistic Director of Coin & Ghost, with whom he has remixed Shakespeare, Greek tragedy, Italian romance, Mexican folklore, German legend, French opera, and American mythology. As an arts administrator and creative consultant, Zach has worked with a dozen arts organizations throughout Los Angeles and around the country, including Conga Kids, Not Man Apart, Heidi Duckler Dance, BLKLST, Overtone Industries, Invertigo Dance Theatre, and more. Recently, Davidson was named to The Nonprofit Partnership’s 2023 “Emerging Leaders” cohort, co-authored the LA Anti-Racist Theatre Standards, and served as a grants panelist for both the LA County Arts Commission and the California Arts Council. @reevecreates