

**2022 GIA Conference**  
New York | Oct 6-12

**CONVERGE**  
**TRANSFORM**

## Supporting Artists as Workers: Policies, Programs, and Practices from the Field

**Sunday, October 9, 2022 | 9:00A–5:00P**

Gibney Dance | Studio Y | 280 Broadway | New York, NY 10007

Artists inspire us and lift collective spirits. Artists shape narratives and preserve histories. They are part of and leaders in community, imagining new and renewed ways to approach big problems. And, artists are, ultimately, workers, often navigating employment with too little support.

The pandemic exposed gaps in the arts advocacy field, which was ill-prepared to advocate on behalf of individual artists in their time of crisis. While many stepped in to fill the gap – with impressive results – many in the field recognize the need to build a stronger arts advocacy ecosystem, and to work in solidarity with other movement leaders to advance broader policy solutions, including Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, Guaranteed Income pilots, expansion of paid leave, and a host of others.

Artists have long played pivotal roles in equitable community development, education, social justice movements, and more. Join us as we think through how to organize, advocate, and implement for the future we need while we ask ourselves how we can truly fund authentic artistic movement building?

### Agenda

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|---------------|---|
| 8:00-8:45 AM  | <b>Networking breakfast</b><br><i>Sheraton   Metropolitan West</i>  |
| 8:45-9:00 AM  | <b>Bus Loading to Gibney Dance 280</b><br><i>Bus loading will begin at 8:45 am in the Main Lobby at the 53<sup>rd</sup> St entrance</i> |
| 9:00-9:30 AM  | <b>Transition &amp; Settling In</b><br><i>Gibney Dance   Studio Y</i>   |
| 9:30-9:45 AM  | <b>Welcome &amp; Opening Remarks</b><br><i>Studio Y</i>   |
|               | Presented by Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, executive director, DanceNYC  |
| 9:45-11:00 AM | <b>"Yes we can" fund systems change through advocacy and policy</b><br><i>Studio Y</i>  |

Organized by Althea Erickson, director, Rustle Lab, Center for Cultural Innovation

Presented by Rafael Espinal, executive director, Freelancers Union; Estrella Esquilin, multi-disciplinary artist, arts administrator, cultural strategist; Olympia Kazi, architecture critic and urban activist; Jessica Mele, program officer in Performing Arts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Katrina Mitchell, chief impact officer, United Way for Greater Atlanta and co-chair, Grantmakers for Southern Progress

*The pandemic exposed major gaps in our social safety net - gaps that arts workers fell through at alarming rates. To date, the arts sector has focused far too little on support for arts and culture workers themselves, with devastating consequences for individuals and communities, particularly communities of color. To fill these gaps, we must look at the systems and structures that fail to support arts workers and their peers in the broader gig economy. We must foster new alliances across sectors, support a more robust advocacy ecosystem and movement infrastructure, and invest in strategies to fundamentally reimagine a set of social protections that work for all workers. Energy is gathering around this topic! Come help us think through how we invest in systems change to build the future we need.*

11:00-12:15 PM

### **Building Structures for Equitable and Effective Support in Community-Engaged Practice**

*Studio Y*

Organized by Stephanie LaFroschia, Director of Grants and Community Engagement, San Antonio Area Foundation

Presented by Nadine Goellner, managing director, Artists at Work; Naia Kete, singer/songwriter, AAW Artist Western Mass Pilot; Stephanie LaFroschia, Director of Grants and Community Engagement, San Antonio Area Foundation; Ashley Mireles, San Antonio-based artist, arts educator, and San Antonio Area Foundation Artist Fellow

*Artists have long played pivotal roles in equitable community development, education and social justice movements, often for free and with little support to navigate the emotional, social and professional challenges that this work brings. The San Antonio Area Foundation and Artists at Work (AAW) developed programs that provide compensation, staff support and professional development with funding frameworks that connect artists and social impact organizations. Using the Area Foundation's Artist Fellowship and Artist at Work's projects across the country as case studies in scaffolded support for artists working across the spectrum of socially engaged practice, this session looks at the challenges and opportunities for connection and growth for the artists, funders, community partners and project participants.*

*AAW is a workforce resilience program in the spirit of the WPA designed to support the rebuilding of healthy communities through artistic civic engagement. AAW Artists are paired with a participating cultural organization and paid a living wage salary to continue to make art, and to be embedded in a local social impact initiative that benefits from their skills and creative thinking.*

*The Area Foundation is a community foundation working to close the opportunity gap for area residents through collaborative leadership and trust-based philanthropy.*

12:15-1:15 PM

**Lunch**  
*Studio Y*

1:15-1:30 PM

**Midway Framing**  
*Studio Y*

Presented by Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, executive director, DanceNYC

1:30-2:45 PM

**Building Solidarity between Funders and Artists: Models that Center Artists as Workers**  
*Studio Y*

Organized by GUILDED and Art.Coop

Presented by Daniel Park, Philadelphia outreach coordinator, Guilded Freelance Cooperative; Rebecca Wright, founding company member, Applied Mechanics; Maura Cuffie-Peterson, director of Strategic Initiatives for the Guaranteed Income program, Creatives Rebuild New York

*This panel will center cooperative and collective models in the arts. With the values of the solidarity economy as a guide, the panel will re-frame and re-vision the relationship between funder and artist. What do healthy funder-artist relationships look like and how can we build them? We'll reframe funding priorities around building artist-worker power and self-determination in the arts and culture, with collectives and co-ops as existing models that need stronger investment.*

2:45-4:00 PM

**Activists Be Knowing**  
*Studio Y*

Organized by Celeste C. Smith, senior program officer for Arts and Culture, The Pittsburgh Foundation

Presented by Beatrice X Keeton-Johnson, co-founder, Love Not Blood Campaign, Oakland, CA; Sadia Nawab - Director of Arts & Culture at IMAN, Chicago, IL;

Celeste C. Smith, senior program officer for Arts and Culture, The Pittsburgh Foundation; Jasiri X - Cofounder, 1Hood Media, Pittsburgh, PA

*Funding and becoming artists has become somewhat trendy especially as the Movement began to be amplified with the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Since that time, we have seen funders scramble to fund Black Lives Matter connected artists, activists, and organizations - sometimes at the expense of the movement. What can we, as funders, learn from activists and organizers? How can we know whether or not we are truly funding authentic artistic movement building? This session will explore some best practice we can employ as we seek to truly fund authentic liberation work.*

4:00-4:30 PM

**Strategizing Onward**

*Studio Y*

Facilitated by Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, executive director, DanceNYC

4:30 PM

**Closing & Adjourn**

*Studio Y*

4:30 PM

**Bus loading back to hotel**

*Chambers Street*

4:45 PM

**Return to hotel**

*Main Lobby at the 53<sup>rd</sup> St entrance*

## Speaker Bios

**Maura Cuffie-Peterson** is a facilitator, strategist, and designer. Currently, she serves as the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Guaranteed Income program at Creatives Rebuild New York. Previously she was the Senior Program Officer for ArtPlace America from 2018 to 2021. During that time, she conceived and executed the Local Control, Local Field(s) initiative, a novel approach to participatory and trust-based philanthropy. This initiative placed over \$12.5M directly under the control of practitioners across the country. She has held a variety of positions in arts, culture, and organizational change. As a co-founder of the collective, the Free Breakfast Program, she participated as a Create Change Fellow with the Laundromat Project in 2015 and in the inaugural cohort for leaders of color in EmcArts' Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators Fellowship in 2016.

**Rafael Espinal** is the Executive Director of Freelancers Union. Born and raised in Brooklyn, Rafael became New York's youngest elected official when he joined the State Assembly at age 26. The son of Dominican immigrants who were union members as well as freelancers, Rafael quickly became a leader fighting on behalf of workers, small businesses, artists, and underrepresented low-income communities. In 2013, he was elected to the New York City Council, representing Brooklyn's diverse 37th District. Rafael has been a steadfast advocate for freelancer rights throughout his career. On the City Council, he was an early supporter and co-sponsor of the first-of-its-kind Freelance Isn't Free legislation that passed in New York City in 2016, giving freelancers unprecedented protection from nonpayment and late payment. He co-sponsored a bill passed in 2019 to extend protections against harassment and discrimination to independent workers under the City's Human Rights Law.

As only the third leader of Freelancers Union since its founding in 1995, Rafael is committed to engaging with freelancers across the country, listening to their concerns, amplifying their voices in important policy debates, and continuing to strengthen and expand a movement that serves a broad spectrum of independent workers and helps them thrive in a fast-changing economy. In his short tenure, he has successfully advocated for pandemic unemployment assistance (PUA) for independent workers, the expansion of the Freelance Isn't Free Act in the City of LA, Seattle, the State of New York, and pushing for a broader social safety net for freelancers nationwide.

**Estrella Esquilín** is a multi-disciplinary artist, arts administrator, and cultural strategist with experience working at large and small universities, local government, and nonprofit organizations. Esquilín's applied creative practices have been intuitively rooted in spatial justice with a curiosity for how people interact with, relate to, and impact each other in built and natural environments. As a cultural strategist, she embraces a guiding question, "how could it feel to be welcomed into a space designed for you?" She embeds her values of social justice, racial equity, and inclusion into her studio practice, administrative processes, program design, and creative professional development to narrow gaps of inequity within arts and culture. She holds a Master of Fine Art degree in Interdisciplinary Studio Art from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Fine Art in Printmaking from Kansas City Art Institute.

**Nadine Goellner**, a strategic and collaborative arts leader, brings over fifteen years of experience realizing complex programs and initiatives across the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Nadine currently serves as the Managing Director of Artists At Work (AAW), a workforce resilience program in the spirit of the WPA that is designed to support the health of local communities through artistic civic engagement. Prior, Nadine served as Executive Director of Rooftop Films, where she successfully led the nonprofit through the pandemic and helped them re-imagine their programming and operations to continue to bring impactful cultural events to NYC. Nadine was also part of the inaugural senior leadership team at The Shed, where she played an integral role in building organizational infrastructure and resources necessary for the successful launch of the new cultural institution. A seasoned producer, she has specialized in commissioning and developing new work by luminary artists including Carrie Mae Weems, Björk, Quincy Jones, Steve McQueen, William Kentridge, Claudia Rankine, William Forsythe, and many others. She holds a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Missouri and a Graduate Certificate in Organizational Leadership from UMass Dartmouth.

**Sister Beatrice X Johnson**, aka Auntie Bee, is co-founder of the Love Not Blood Campaign, a social justice organization founded to work with families that have suffered the traumatic experience of police violence, whether by police officers, security officers, or community violence. She is the wife of Uncle Bobby X Johnson and the cousin of Gail Keaton-Smiley, who was killed by the Detroit police in 1972 and the aunt of Oscar Grant killed by the Bay Area BART police in 2009 in Oakland, California. She is a recipient of the [Mawina Kuyyate Award](#) and the [Momz That Rock Award](#), the Dick Gregory Community Award, as well as, many others. She is a member of the Nation of Islam and served as the Protocol Director for 7 years at Muhammad Mosque 26, Oakland California. She has been involved with activism since the early age of 10 years old. Auntie Bee first police activism case was at the age 21 years old.

Auntie Bee was part of the activism and protesting behind [Sagon Penn](#), twice acquitted in the shooting of two San Diego police officers in a racially charged case that sharply exposed the divide between the police and the Black community. Auntie Bee is a community organizer, activist, and an extremely caring mother, grandmother and Great grandmother that bring love and emotional support to mothers and family members impacted by police violence. Auntie Bee embodies completely and dynamically each day, a beautiful spirit, and a clear understanding, to her vision of the revolutionary path of Love by the spirit of African culture. If we all walk in her spirit, we are sure to reach our objective. Auntie Bee works to bring about an atmosphere of social justice and family relationship throughout the United States. She currently fighting for Justice and Accountability for her sister Dorothy Jean Dale-Chambers who was killed in Phoenix April 26, 2022.

**Olympia Kazi** is an architecture critic and an urban activist with twenty years of experience in advocacy, research, curating, and administration of cultural and urban design organizations in Europe and the United States. Olympia most recently led successful advocacy City, State, and Federal campaigns with two organizations she co-founded, NYC Artist Coalition and Music Workers Alliance. She has previously served as executive director of Van Alen Institute (New York), director of the Institute for Urban Design (New York), and as assistant curator at the Milan Triennale. In recognition for her work, she served as vice chair on the first ever NYC Nightlife Advisory Board. She also serves on Manhattan's Community Board 3 on Land Use and Zoning and Arts & Cultural Affairs.

Trained as an architect at the University of Florence, Italy, Olympia was awarded an urban studies fellowship at the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her work has been recognized with awards and distinctions including the Rockefeller Foundation's Cultural Innovation Fund. She has written on contemporary design and urban issues in a variety of international journals and was the editor of "The New York 2030 Notebook" (2008), a critical analysis of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC.

**Naia Kete** is a Southern California-based singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and social justice advocate with a powerful voice to match her dedication to positive change-making. Born and raised in Western Massachusetts to a family of musicians, she is now leader of the urban-reggae band SayReal, which aims to empower people to change the world by changing themselves. In 2012, she was a contestant on the second season of the NBC television show The Voice as a member of Team Blake, making it into the Top 24. She is also the founder of Song Healing Trauma, which engages the healing power of music to reframe the embodied experience of trauma in a context of safety and courage.

**Stephanie LaFroschia** is the Director of Grants and Community Engagement at the San Antonio Area Foundation, a community foundation serving San Antonio's urban center and rural areas in seven surrounding counties. In her role at the Area Foundation, she advocates for the centrality of the cultural organizations, artists, and culture bearers in equitable community development. Stephanie was instrumental in developing the 2021 Recovery Fund for the Arts and launched an Artist Fellowship program, supporting artists working to advance youth leadership and mental health. She has worked with cultural organizations in program development and participant engagement for over a decade, most recently at Artpace (San Antonio, TX), Luminaria Contemporary Arts Festival (San Antonio, TX) and the Curatorial Program for Research (New York, NY). Stephanie previously served as a program officer at the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. She came to DCLA in 2015 after eight years at El Museo del Barrio, NY, where she developed a performing arts residency and interdisciplinary programming in the visual, performing, and literary arts, including *Action Actual: Performance Art at El Museo* and *El Barrio's Freshest*, an annual b-boy/b-girl competition. Stephanie received a MA in Visual Arts Administration from New York University and a BA in Art History from Trinity University in San Antonio, TX. She lives in San Antonio, TX with her wife and children.

**Ashley Mireles** is a public and studio artist, educator, and arts administrator in San Antonio, Texas. Employing social critique and often humor, she explores her environment, cultural issues, and the human condition. Ashley continues to focus her practice on community access by developing and organizing creative programming for regional arts institutions and community spaces in Central Texas. Ashley has served as an Artist Mentor for the New York Foundation for the Arts' Immigrant Artist Mentorship program and is a 2022 National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Leadership Institute Fellow, San Antonio Area Foundation Artist Fellow, and Education and Community Programs Manager at Artpace San Antonio. Her work has been collected by Artpace, City of San Antonio, Mexic-Arte Museum, National Museum of Mexican Art, Texas Christian University Print Collection, University of Texas Libraries Special Collections, Walt Disney Company, and Zuckerman Museum of Art, and published in the *American Statesman*, *Huffington Post*, *Mitú*, and *Remezcla*.

**Jessica Mele** is a Program Officer in Performing Arts at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. She manages a diverse portfolio of grants, with a focus on arts education policy and advocacy. Jessica began her career living a double life as a faculty assistant to Marshall Ganz at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and an organizer for the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers. She was a founding advisory council member of Teaching Artists Guild. Jessica is also a writer, performer, and exhausted mother based in San Francisco.

**Katrina Mitchell** is an experienced and respected leader with more than 20 years of experience working on a national and regional level. She has worked in the non-profit, philanthropic, and public sector. She currently serves as the Chief Community Impact Officer at United Way of Greater Atlanta and is responsible for leading United Way's Child Well Being Impact Fund, co-leading the Greater Atlanta COVID Response and Recovery Fund and launching the United for Racial Equity and Healing Fund. Katrina is also the recipient of Rockwood Leadership Institute's Equity in Philanthropy Fellowship, Association for Black Foundation Executives Connecting Leaders Fellowship, Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta Results Based Leadership Program and Leadership America Class of 2018. After receiving a B.A. in English from Wellesley College, Katrina earned a M.Ed. from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

**Sadia Nawab**, driven by her passion for justice, solidarity, and understanding people, currently serves as the Director of Arts & Culture for the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN). She has cultivated talented teams from Chicago to Atlanta to produce live performance shows, host artist residencies, install co-created visual arts murals, and establish a neighborhood ceramic studio on Chicago's South Side. Skilled as a curator and program director, Sadia has institutionalized collaborative program development with community members, artists, medical professionals, and organizers; intentional and experiential curation and production; and exceptional administrative practices. Recognized for demonstrating a natural aptitude toward restorative practices, creative thinking, and thriving spaces, Sadia contributes to panels, grantmaking, boards, and committees across fields. She has formally studied culture and is pursuing advanced studies in business. Sadia's commitment to a creative life permeates many elements like her artistry in music, style, cooking, playing with her three sons, and aspiring to a holistic and intentional lifestyle seeped in community.

**Daniel Park** is a queer, bi-racial, theatre and performance artist, movement facilitator, and organizer for racial and labor justice in the cultural sector. Through all of the above, his work brings people together to understand and experiment with their individual and mutual roles in bringing about the liberation of all people. Since moving to Philadelphia in 2014 Daniel has become a leader for radical thought in the local creative ecosystem and a trusted national source for guidance on the intersection between cooperatives and the arts. He is a co-founder and worker owner of Obvious Agency, one of the country's only theatrical worker-owned cooperatives. As a trainer, facilitator, and consultant Daniel specializes in participatory group processes and supporting organizations and individuals to radically transform their work to be in better alignment with their values.

**Celeste C. Smith** is a cultural leader with a finger on the pulse of race and social discourse. She works to advance racial justice, center the voices of people and communities most impacted by racism, and respond to critical community issues. She is a national 2018 SXSW Community Service Award honoree bringing to her role deep experience as a celebrated non-profit and community leader, arts administrator, artist, and co-founder of 1Hood Media, whose mission is to build liberated communities through art, education, and social justice. She is also the senior program manager for arts and culture at The Pittsburgh Foundation and manager of Pittsburgh-based hip hop artist Jasiri X. Smith has quickly emerged as a thought-leader in philanthropy as indicated by her appointment as co-chair of the national Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) Support for Individual Artists Committee, Americans for the Arts Arts Education Network Advisory Council, and participation as an invited panelist and presenter at dozens of events and conferences. Lastly, Celeste continues to produce her own artistic works, most recently appearing in the published literary anthology, *Tender*, edited by Vanessa German, award-winning visual and performance artist, and Deesha Philyaw, national book award finalist.

**Rebecca Wright** is part of Applied Mechanics, a collective that is feminist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-normative, and pro-Black: "For us these values mean the dismantling of all hierarchies and inequitable power relations. We make stories that aim to expand the possibility of liberation for all beings – beginning with ourselves. Our work together and the art that we make should uphold these values." <https://www.appliedmechanics.us/about/>

**Jasiri X** is the first independent Hip-Hop artist to be awarded an Honorary Doctorate, which he received from Chicago Theological Seminary in 2016. This recognition grew out of the spiritual/political urgency and artistic vision he shared on songs like “Justice For Trayvon” and “Strange Fruit”, which documented the unjust police killings of young Blacks in the Millennial Generation. Likewise, he has been deeply involved with the national Movement for Black Lives, working with organizations like The Gathering for Justice, Blackout for Human Rights, Justice or Else, BVP100 and Sankofa. Still, he remains rooted in the Pittsburgh-based organization he co-founded, 1Hood Media, whose mission is to build liberated communities through art, education, and social justice. His critically acclaimed album Black Liberation Theology (2015) has been recognized as a soundtrack for today’s civil rights movement. He has performed his music from the Smithsonian to the Apollo Theater and has discussed his views on Hip-Hop, race, and politics at leading institutions across the nation, including Harvard University, University of Chicago, NYU, Yale, and Stanford, among others. Beyond his work nationally, Jasiri’s focus on social change has also touched the global arena. In 2016, he was commissioned by The Open Society Foundation to travel to Columbia to create a film (War on Us with Grammy Award-winning hip-hop artist Rhymefest) that highlights the international effects of US drug policy in South America. One of the most important political voices of his generation, in 2017 he received the Nathan Cummings Foundation Fellowship to start the 1Hood Artist Academy. Jasiri is also a recipient of the USA Cummings Fellowship in Music, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Artist as Activist Fellowship and the President's Volunteer Service Award.

## About Locations

### Gibney Dance

Gibney's story began in 1991, when choreographer Gina Gibney founded her socially active dance company with a single dance studio to call home. Almost three decades later, throughout the organization's many expansions, Gibney's acclaimed resident dance ensemble, Gibney Company, remains at the core of its work.

Gibney Company members are full-time Artistic Associates who contribute not only as impeccable performing artists but also as activists and cultural entrepreneurs.

With an unrelenting focus on artistic excellence and social integrity, Gibney Company co-creates an environment where dancers are activated towards their full artistic, entrepreneurial, and socially-minded selves through rigorous physical, intellectual, and interpersonal practices. In addition to creation and performance, the Artistic Associates are highly engaged in the organization's Community programs and are cultivated as entrepreneurs and leaders in the field.

**Effective on September 6, 2022, masks are required in all common areas and recommended in studios.** Common areas include lobbies, elevators, hallways, galleries, bathrooms, kitchenettes, and locker rooms. **Full Vaccination is still required at Gibney Center.** This decision is in part dictated by building management and additionally offers an extra layer of safety as we ease other measures.

To increase awareness of Monkeypox transmission, symptoms, vaccine eligibility, and treatment options, new **Monkeypox resource signage** is posted throughout Gibney Center.

## About Lunch

### Feed Me More

Feed Me More, Inc is a catering company that serves the New York Tri-State market offering creative, colorful food options with global influences. The service offerings are quite a change relative to the existing catering market, which is quite stagnant. Most people make the incorrect assumption that catered food means ordinary, boring food; we are here to break that presumption. Our Black-owned business aims to inject new life into the event private, social, and corporate event catering market, leveraging Chef Lisle's culinary skills to develop creative new catering options to wow each guest.



**Grantmakers in the Arts**  
Supporting a Creative America