



CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Regular Meeting Agenda  
Monday, March 22, 2021  
4:00 – 7:00 PM**

Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, all members of the Cultural Affairs Commission and Cultural Affairs Division will join the meeting via phone/video conference and no teleconference locations are required.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:  
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Webinar ID: 948 1788 2095

International numbers available: <https://zoom.us/u/adBwd7ypEn>

There are three ways to submit public comments. • eComment. To send your comment directly to Cultural Affairs Commission staff BEFORE the meeting via email [NBalram@oaklandca.gov](mailto:NBalram@oaklandca.gov) • To comment by Zoom video conference, click the “Raise Your Hand” button to request to speak when Public Comment is being taken. You will be permitted to speak during your turn, allowed to comment, and after the allotted time, re-muted. Instructions on how to “Raise Your Hand” is available at: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205566129> - Raise-Hand-In-Webinar. • To comment by phone, please call on one of the above listed phone numbers. You will be prompted to “Raise Your Hand” by pressing “\*9” to speak when Public Comment is taken. You will be permitted to speak during your turn, allowed to comment, and after the allotted time, re-muted. Please unmute yourself by pressing \*6. If you have any questions, please email Neha Balram, Program Analyst for the Cultural Affairs Commission at [NBalram@oaklandca.gov](mailto:NBalram@oaklandca.gov).



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Monday, March 22, 2021  
4:00 – 7:00 PM**

**AGENDA**

**Roll Call/Call to Order**

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Land Acknowledgement + Call to Presence**
- 3. Action Item 1: Approval of Minutes from January 25, 2021**
- 4. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair's Update**
- 5. Cultural Affairs Division Manager's Update**
- 6. Public Comment**
- 7. Guest Presenter: Ashara Ekundayo**
- 8. Public Art Program Overview**
- 9. Stories of Solidarity: API x Black Artists in Oakland Unite Town Hall**
- 10. California Re-opening Guidelines by Tier**
- 11. Open Forum**
- 12. Announcements & Oakland Artist Acknowledgements**
- 13. Artist Spotlight: RyanNicole, The HAVEN Project**
- 14. Closing**

**Next regular meeting: April 26, 2021 via Teleconference**

**Adjourn**

♿ This meeting location is wheelchair accessible. To request disability-related accommodations or to request American Sign Language (ASL), Cantonese, Mandarin, or Spanish language interpreter, please email [NBalram@oaklandca.gov](mailto:NBalram@oaklandca.gov) or call (510) 238-4949 Or 711 (for Relay Service) at least five (5) business days before the meeting. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting as a courtesy to attendees with chemical sensitivities.

Esta reunión es accesible para sillas de ruedas. Si desea solicitar adaptaciones relacionadas con discapacidades, o para pedir un intérprete de en español, Cantones, mandarín o de lenguaje de señas (ASL) por favor envíe un correo electrónico a [NBalram@oaklandca.gov](mailto:NBalram@oaklandca.gov) o llame al (510) 238-4949 o al 711 para servicio de retransmisión (Relay service) por lo menos cinco días hábiles antes de la reunión. Se le pide de favor que no use perfumes a esta reunión como cortesía para los que tienen sensibilidad a los productos químicos. Gracias.

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Địa điểm tổ chức cuộc họp có đường dành riêng cho xe lăn. Đề yêu cầu các phương tiện hỗ trợ phục vụ người khuyết tật hoặc yêu cầu thông dịch viên ASL, tiếng Quảng Đông, tiếng Quan Thoại hoặc tiếng Tây Ban Nha, vui lòng gửi email đến địa chỉ [NBalram@oaklandca.gov](mailto:NBalram@oaklandca.gov) hoặc gọi đến số (510) 238-4949 hoặc 711 (với Dịch vụ Tiếp âm) ít nhất năm (5) ngày làm việc trước khi cuộc họp diễn ra. Vui lòng không sử dụng các sản phẩm có mùi thơm khi tham gia cuộc họp này như một phép lịch sự đối với những người tham dự nhạy cảm đối với các chất hóa học.

**Cultural Affairs Division - Economic & Workforce Development Department**

**Cultural Affairs Commission Secretary – Neha Balram**

**Phone: (510) 238-4949**

**Recorded Agenda: (510) 238-2386**

**Telecommunications Relay Service: 711**



CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 25, 2021  
4:02 – 7:45 PM**

**Members in Attendance:** Diane Sanchez (Chair), Kev Choice (Vice Chair), Roy Chan, Jennifer Easton, J.K. Fowler, Michelle Mush Lee, Michael Orange, Charmin Roundtree-Baaqee, Vanessa Whang, Theo Aytchan Williams

**Staff in Attendance:** Roberto Bedoya, Neha Balram, Raquel Iglesias, Jim MacIrvine, Denise Pate, Kristen Zaremba

**Guests:** Rachel Yang, Favianna Rodriguez (Center for Cultural Power), Tony Leong (Fox Theater/Another Planet Entertainment/East Bay Venue Coalition), Rosalyn Nash (The People's Conservatory), and Sana Miller (The People's Conservatory)

**1. Welcome**

Meeting called to order by Commission Chair Sanchez at 4:02 PM.

**2. Acknowledgement of Land**

Recognition of the meeting space as Huichin territory, the unceded land of the Chochenyo Ohlone led by Rachel Yang, the Cultural Affairs Division's high school intern.

**3. Action Item 1: Approval of Minutes from October 26, 2020**

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 26, 2020 made by Commissioner Whang; seconded by Commissioner Fowler. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Call to Presence**

Commissioner Williams led the Call to Presence by asking those in attendance to participate breathing practices and some centering stretches.

**5. Cultural Affairs High School Intern Highlight: Rachel Yang**

Miss Yang provided an overview of her assignments and accomplishments as an intern for the Cultural Affairs Division including internal communications improvements for the Commission and communications strategy research.

**6. Public Comment**

The following members of the public made a comment: Danielle Roundtree, Jenny Roy, Ashara Ekundayo, Damon Sudds, Destiny Muhammad, Jean Marie Durant.

**7. Cultural Affairs Division Manager's Report**

Roberto Bedoya provided an update on the City’s budget and the \$62 Million shortfall. He noted that Economic & Workforce Development Department, including Cultural Affairs, and all other City departments have been asked to prepare budget scenarios. The Mayor’s proposed budget will be released in May. The Commissioners discussed their options to build City Council’s support for arts and culture in Oakland.

**8. Action Item 2: Approval of Cultural Affairs Commission Work Plan Template**

Commissioner Whang and Commissioner Easton provided an overview of the Work Plan Template. Commissioner Whang noted that the document should be used as a communication tool to compare the outlined goals in the Cultural Plan to the activities of the Cultural Affairs Division and Cultural Affairs Commission. This document represents the Commission’s commitments and work.

The first page of the spreadsheet summarizes the Phase One Actions and the Phase Two Recommendations outlined in the City of Oakland’s [Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan \(CDP\)](#) as organized by the work domains defined in the plan—that is, **Cultural Spaces, Neighborhood Places, Civic Cultural Commons, Strengthening the Cultural Ecosystem,** and **Building Internal Infrastructure** (of the Cultural Affairs Division) **for Cultural Equity.**

The second page of the spreadsheet names and briefly describes the work plan areas proposed by the Commission Ad Hoc Teams.

- Cultural Asset Map
- Cultural Affairs Division Budget Analysis
- Research Potential City Revenue Streams
- Research Potential External Revenue Streams
- Strengthen Advocacy for the Cultural Sector
- Artist Relief – Additional Direct Funding
- Artist Relief – Access to Public Spaces

Commissioner Roundtree-Baaqee made a motion to approve the Work Plan Template; seconded by Commissioner Fowler.

Choice	AYE
Chan	AYE
Easton	AYE
Fowler	AYE
Lee	AYE
Orange	AYE
Roundtree-Baaqee	AYE
Whang	AYE
Williams	AYE
Sanchez	AYE

The motions passed unanimously.

**9. Action Item 3: Approval of Oakland Poet Laureate**

Commissioner Fowler presented the plan to introduce a Poet Laureate program for adults in Oakland. The creation of an Oakland Poet Laureate program is a response to a call from Mayor Schaaf and the hope is to launch is by April 2020. The new Poet Laureate would have a two-year term, receive a stipend, participate in various public engagement activities, and create a poem for the city. The group discussed the makeup of the review committee.

Commissioner Williams proposed a friendly amendment that Oakland Poet Laureate Oversight Committee (OPLOC) charged with reviewing applications and selecting a finalist, should include five members – one member from the Cultural Affairs Commission, one member of the Cultural Affairs Division staff, the Oakland Youth Poet Laureate, and two literary community members.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the proposal to support an Oakland Poet Laureate with the friendly amendment of five members; seconded by Commissioner Chan.

Choice	AYE
Chan	AYE
Easton	AYE
Fowler	AYE
Lee	AYE
Orange	AYE
Roundtree-Baaqee	AYE
Whang	AYE
Williams	AYE
Sanchez	AYE

The motions passed unanimously.

**10. Public Art Update**

Commissioner Roundtree-Baaqee provided a high-level update on the public art elements of the Mosswood Park MP and Community Center, examples of Public Art in Private Development - Commercial and Residential Properties, and Artist & Community Initiated Public Art for Public Spaces/City Property.

**11. Guest Presenter: Favianna Rodriguez**

Chair Sanchez introduced Favianna Rodriguez –Oakland artist, activist, and co-founder of the Center for Cultural Power. Rodriguez presented on the power of culture. She explained that culture has the ability to shape and accelerate both political and economic change. She discussed the need to change the negative narrative about Oakland to a positive one that shows the full complexity of our community, which can lead to better investment and funding. She provided

examples of how the Center for Cultural Power utilizes narrative strategy for visible and irresistible storytelling about Oakland arts and culture.

#### **12. Oakland Venues Update: Tony Leong, Another Planet Entertainment**

Tony Leong from Another Planet Entertainment and The Fox Theater provided an introduction of the East Bay Venue Coalition and highlighted the severe impact of the pandemic on the music industry. Venues in the East Bay shuttered since March 2020, resulting in revenue losses for the venues, promoters, employees and performers. The East Bay Venue Coalition is actively advocating at the state level to re-open venues in a safe way.

#### **13. Announcements**

Chair Sanchez noted the following award and recognitions received by Oaklanders.

- Sugar Pie DeSanto has been selected to receive the prestigious Arhoolie Award for 2020
- *Land of the Cranes* by Aida Salazar received the 2021 Honor Book for Older Children at the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards

#### Grammy Nominations

- Fantastic Negrito - Best Contemporary Blues
- Ledisi (Oakland native) - Traditional R&B Performance
- Ambrose Akinmusire - Best Jazz Instrumental Album
- Toro Y Moi (Oakland based studio) - Best Dance Recording

#### **14. Artist Spotlight: The People's Conservatory**

Vice Chair Choice introduced The People's Conservatory, an Oakland nonprofit dedicated to training young art explorers to envision and create a humane and just world through their art. Rosalyn Nash, Executive Director of The People's Conservatory, talked about the mission of The People's Conservatory and introduced student and youth poet Sana Miller. Miller recited a poem called "Black Girls Do" that she co-wrote with Makeda Booker and set to the music of their peer Sael Rohan (poem on next page).

#### **15. Closing**

Chair Sanchez thanked the Commissioners, the public, and all the guest presenters and performers for participating, and staff and KTOP for their support and assistance.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

## Black girls do

Supported by The People's Conservatory  
Words by Makeda Booker and Sana Miller  
Beats by Sael Rohan  
Choreography by Robyn Salmond

Take a moment and think, is there anything a black girl can't do?  
WE are the originators.  
I'm talking about that dance and that hair do.  
Only if you could understand what us black girls have been through.  
take a minute, hear my words maybe you'll get a clue.  
From our birth we are not equals with someone with eyes of blue.  
We sit quite out of fear of a ratchet point of view.  
Hide our curls and our curves, our lips just to avoid the slurs.  
But what they don't know is that us beautiful black girls ain't no amateurs.  
From Michelle to Lisa, gabby to Tina, Halle to Nina. to Oaklands own Angela  
can you imagine a world without our crew?  
But dear beautiful black girls our power ain't nothin new.  
We've been running this ever since the skys been blue.

Black girls, born with the beautiful melanin that colors our skin.  
Giving us power and culture the moment our lives begin.  
We walk around in the vast world  
forced to run the treadmill of life in the box you put into at birth.  
We use the holes u poke into the box for air, for a breath of change.  
But black girls do rise  
Grow from the unwanted soil you gave us  
Black girls do create  
Making the world not as dark as it was  
We don't wake up and decide to put on our skin yet we wear it with pride  
Black girls will no longer be put aside.  
We are tired of being lonely and feeling owned,  
we don't like your world so we'll make our own.

We are the ones carved over accent tombs.  
We must tell them that our culture is not no costume.  
i know you feel it coming. I know you smell the fumes of our lashes, our lip gloss braids  
and cantu.  
I can see how you're watching the glistin of our melanin.  
You're captivated by our grace and our elegance.  
We feel like grandma's hands or the way your body moves when you embrace the blues.  
Watch and be amazed at what a black girl can do.



**Guest Presenter:****ASHARA EKUNDAYO**

ARTIST AS FIRST RESPONDER, FOUNDER/STEWARD

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IG: @BLUBLAKWOMYN | @ARTISTASFIRSTRESPONDER

Ashara Ekundayo is a Detroit-born, Oakland-based independent curator, creative industries entrepreneur, cultural strategist, and founder working across arts, community, government, and social innovation spaces. Through her consulting company AECreative Consulting Partners, LLC she designs and manages multidimensional international projects and fosters collaborative relationships through the use of mindfulness and permaculture principles to bring vision to life and create opportunities “in the deep end,” often with unlikely allies. Her creative arts practice epistemology requires an embodied commitment to recognizing joy in the midst of struggle.

For three decades Ashara lived and worked in Denver, CO where she co-founded the first indoor aquaponic food farm called The GrowHaus, and founded the Pan African Arts Society where she created and directed “Cafe Nuba” poetry venue and the Denver Pan African Film Festival. She moved to Oakland, CA in 2010 and in 2012 co-founded Impact Hub Oakland co-working community and Omi Arts Gallery and served as the Co-Director, Curator, and the Chief Creative Officer who designed and bottom-lined the brand messaging and creative practice programming of the entire company. In December 2017, she launched Ashara Ekundayo Gallery as a pilot-project social practice platform centering and exclusively exhibiting the artwork of Black womxn and women of the African Diaspora to investigate and inspire social and spiritual inquiry at the nexus of fact, the radical Black feminist imaginary, and Afrofuturism through visual and performance installation.

Currently, Ashara serves as Chief Creative Catalyst at the Bay Area Girls & Womxn of Color Collaborative and sits on the Advisory Board of the Oakland Public Conservatory of Music and the Regional Advisory Board for Arts Web Alameda County. She has served as a Fellow with the U.S. Dept. of State Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, Green For All, Emerging Arts Professionals, Schools Without Borders, Institute For The Future, Auburn Seminary in NYC and the United African Alliance Community Center in Arusha, Tanzania.

**Artist Spotlight:**

GRAMMY®-nominated quadruple *treat*, RyanNicole “utilizes every gift available to her for the liberation of all people”. Affectionately titled the “4A”, RyanNicole seeks opportunities to empower and inspire by way of her pursuits as an award winning [Artist](#) | [Actress](#) | [Athlete](#) | [Activist](#).

**ARTIST**

RyanNicole is a GRAMMY®-nominated ([Alphabet Rockers](#)) MC & Poet whose lyrical prowess has been exploited on international stages and web platforms ([Team Backpack](#)), garnering fans in the thousands across the globe. She is a TEDx Fellow, whose musical compositions include a solo mixtape, entitled [Dis’Onance](#) and several collaborative efforts with her group [Nu Dekades](#) (dec-ades) and other artists. RyanNicole has performed with a wide array of artists and persons of influence, most notably President Barack Obama

**ACTRESS**

RyanNicole was sought after to co-star in the NBA on ESPN’s Christmas Special with Daveed Diggs, playing several characters & showing off her comedic & rap skills. Ryan has led several productions of the most reputable theater companies to include *Native Son* (*Marin Theater Company*), *The Story* (SF Playhouse), *XTigone* (African American Shakespeare Theater), *Hamlet: Blood In The Brain & Raisin In The Sun* (California Shakespeare Theater/Intersection for the Arts), among many others. She is an alumna of NYC’s Public Theater Fellowship #BARS Workshop as a writer & performer. Ryan developed & and directed ACT’s Lyrical Cabaret in 2019 & is on the developmental teams for upcoming musicals *Curren\$y* & *CoFounders*.

**ATHLETE**

Ryan is a longstanding record holder & California State Champion in high school track & field, and maintains accolades in her hometown of Oakland for the fastest yet recorded time for the 300MIH & 400MIH (hurdles), respectively. Ryan was offered scholarships to several universities and accepted full rides to University of Arizona & San Diego State University, where she received degrees in Sociology & Political Science, and held the distinction of Big Red Scholar Athlete (GPA of 3.5 and above). RyanNicole has expanded her talents and interests in athleticism to training personal clients and is in the process of launching an innovative media platform called FITTRIP which serves as a guide to help travelers find healthy options while on the go.

**ACTIVIST**

RyanNicole has served her community as an organizer and activist for 2 decades. She holds the distinction of becoming one of the youngest non-profit executive directors in the Bay Area, where she received a 2-year fellowship in prestigious leadership program, LeaderSpring. RyanNicole now supports various community organizations and initiatives as a business consultant, providing counsel in capacity building, fundraising, marketing/branding and program development. Her client list includes *KALW*, *EastSide Arts Alliance*, *San Francisco Foundation*, and *Alliance for Safety & Justice* among others.