

## **2022-2023 NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES – FESTIVALS**

### **Panelist Bios**

#### **Joan K. Osato**

Joan Osato has played a pivotal role in local and national theater for over two decades and has been a core member of Youth Speaks since 2001. At Youth Speaks she produces live performance events for the organization, including Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Festival as well as Life is Living in cities around the country. She has brought a multiplicity of production and design talents to Living Word Project Repertory works such as The Break/s, Word Becomes Flesh, Scourge, Tree City Legends, Spiritrials and Chasing Mehserle, and has created work as an ensemble member of critically acclaimed theater group Campo Santo. She was the inaugural recipient of the San Francisco Arts Commission Artist and Communities Partnership Grant (2007), Theater Bay Area Award for Excellence in Video Design (Tribes by Nina Raine, directed by Jonathan Moscone at Berkeley Repertory Theater) and the Surdna Foundation's Artists Engaged in Social Change Award in 2015 for NOGALES with Richard Montoya and Sean San Jose. She is an awardee of prestigious grants from the MAP Fund, the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, SFAC's Individual Artist Commission, and the Columbia Foundation. She has been recognized for her work as a photographer from Artslant, Prix de Photographie and has exhibited throughout the San Francisco Bay Area since 2009.

#### **Mona Shah**

Mona has been a non-profit professional for over 20 years in the fields of Public Health, Social Work, Youth Development and Arts and Culture working mainly with underserved communities. Her arts and culture background include being on the Board of Directors and Executive Director of Oakland Asian Cultural Center and Community Partners Manager at the Oakland Museum of California. As an independent consultant, she worked to support non-profit organizations, foundations and the public sector by providing a range of services that include the following: community engagement/outreach and partnership building, project management, social science based research, program development, facilitation, event management and planning and recruitment.

Mona is currently a Supervising Program Specialist with the Alameda County Public Health Department working on the COVID and MPX response. She is mission-driven with a strong passion for the intersection of social justice, public health and arts and culture.

#### **Steve Snider**

Steve Snider is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Oakland Venue Management (OVM) and is the Executive Director of the Downtown Oakland and Lake Merritt-Uptown District Associations. From 2009 to the present, OVM has overseen the day-to-day operations of these

two Community Benefit Districts (CBDs). These 501(c) 3, not-for-profit, organizations are two of the largest CBDs in the East Bay. The CBDs work daily to improve the quality of life of the numerous neighborhoods of downtown Oakland by attracting new businesses, residents, visitors, and events to the area. The CBDs also support the current businesses and residents by helping these neighborhoods maximize their potential and increase their vibrancy. A primary goal of the CBDs is to facilitate the continued cultural and economic development of the Oakland while working to maintain Oakland's diversity and unique multicultural history. Steve and his OVM staff oversee the combined \$3.5 MM annual budget that allocates funds for specific community improvement projects throughout the 82 square blocks of the Downtown Oakland's Central Business District. Steve is the immediate past President of the Board of Directors for the California Downtown Association and is actively involved in Oakland's cultural arts community.

### **Calvin Williams**

Calvin has over 15 years of experience working with community-based, philanthropic, and cultural organizations. In his role with Think Common Entertainment, he works as a strategic advisor on various social impact campaigns, including Imagine Justice, a nonprofit organization that Common founded in 2018 to address mass incarceration.

Previously, Calvin was a Cultural Strategies Fellow at Movement Strategy Center, where he co-founded Wakanda Dream Lab, a creative agency that produces afrofuturist anthologies and art installations for racial justice campaigns using augmented reality and immersive storytelling platforms. In addition, Calvin worked as an impact producer for several film projects including "The North Pole Show," Executive Produced by Rosario Dawson and Offsides Productions; and an upcoming documentary short titled "A Space To Breathe," a recipient of the 2021 International Documentary Association's incubator fund. Calvin contributed his talents as an impact producer to The BIG We and served as-founder and co-host of The BIG We Podcast.

Calvin earned a Masters in Public Administration from the former Bernard M. Baruch School of Public & International Affairs at City University of New York through the National Urban Fellowship. Calvin lives in Oakland with his wife Leila and son Malik. He serves his local community as a part time Political Science instructor with the De Anza Community College, Peralta Community College and Oakland Unified School Districts; and, as the Politics Committee co-chair for The Brotherhood of Elders Network.