

## 2022-2023 NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES – INDIVIDUAL ARTIST PROJECTS

### Panelist Bios

#### **Xtal Azul**

Xtal Azul is a queer xicanx interdisciplinary artist, writer, educator, and brujx plant-magic maker, whose work centers themes of queerness, ritual, mestizaje+indigequeer magic, and the body. From 2014-2019, Azul co-organized the beloved Magic Makers: Queer Art, Craft, and Healing Fair in Oakland. Azul's poems were published in QTPOCALYPSE (2021), an art zine and survival guide. Their work, Aqui 'stoy, was part of the 30th Annual Juried Exhibition, Interconnected, at Southern Exposure gallery in San Francisco (2021). They were also the lead artist for the Bay Area American Indian Two Spirit drum multimedia installation, Calling Us Home/Regresa, in the Dreams Emerging, Beyond Resilience: Dia de Los Muertos exhibition at Somarts in San Francisco (2021). Xtal Azul co-curated the National Queer Arts Festival's visual art exhibition of Vaz A Ver/You Will See (2022), and is currently co-curating the NQAF's 2023 art exhibition. They are a recipient of the 2022 Artist Adaptability Circle grant (Diamond Wave), which centers BIPOC artists, mutual aid, and creative collaboration. They live, teach, and make things in Fruitvale.

#### **Rashida Chase**

As a dedicated advocate for art, wellness, and culture, Rashida Chase has a distinguished history of community organizing and a wealth of experience with organizations founded by both artists and community members. Her unwavering commitment to promoting equitable growth and development for underrepresented communities around the world is evident in her work as an artist, as the director of AMP Oakland, and as a Masters candidate for Real Estate Development and Design at UC Berkeley. With her connections to public officials and deep understanding of grassroots organizations, Rashida acts as a vital liaison between local groups and government entities, effectively bridging the gap between community initiatives and government action.

#### **Cheryl Fabio**

Cheryl Fabio spent her formative years as an Air Force brat, moving from one end of the country to the next. After the Air Force, the Fabio family settled in East Oakland, where she attended public schools. Her mom, Sarah Fabio, was from Nashville, Tennessee, and somehow set Cheryl up to go to Fisk University. Cheryl says she was lured into going to Nashville with the promise of working with SNCC. Since that time, Fabio has been working in photography and film. She graduated from Fisk in 1971 and returned to CA with a portfolio that got her accepted into Stanford's Documentary program. Her first film, Rainbow Black: Poet Sarah Webster Fabio, was her thesis and is about her mother who was an educator, a writer, and particularly a poet. In 2017, Fabio produced and directed Evolutionary Blues... West Oakland's Music Legacy. Her new film, A Rising Tide – is about the impacts of Homelessness on children in Alameda Co. and is her third feature film. Cheryl is the Executive Director of the SARAH WEBSTER FABIO CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.

## **Leyya Mona Tawil**

Leyya Mona Tawil is an artist and curator working with sound, performance, and hybrid transmissions. Her work has been presented throughout the US, Europe and the Arab region. Tawil was the 2020 ISSUE Project Room Suzanne Fiol Curatorial Fellow for her NOMADIC SIGNALS series. Recent residency/engagements include Wysing Art Centre/British Council (UK), Sharjah Art Foundation's Tarek Atoui Sound Residency (UAE), The Poetry Project (NYC), JAM3A Festival (Detroit), TBA:22 (Portland) and Yucca Valley Material Lab's Music Residency Program. Tawil has directed TAC Temescal Art Center (Oakland) since 1997, and is the founding director and curator of Arab.AMP – a platform for futurist live art and ideas from the SWANA diaspora.

## **Pamela Ybañez**

Pamela Ybañez is a Bay Area based artist. Her artwork incorporates personal and social investigations as a way to discuss inequalities, social hierarchies and as a way to strengthen her connection to her homeland. Examining how class and race affects different groups of people in similar and different ways, she examines her own history of migration, when they were allowed to come here, and how her being in this country relates to the Civil Rights Movement. Understanding that solidarity is key as she tries to comprehend what true liberation can be. Ultimately all her investigations lead her to systems of power and that the American idea of freedom is only for some and not for all people.

In the past few years she's been learning about the awe inspiring history of weaving in the Philippines and how it has been passed on generationally. Her goal as an artist is to explore how we are woven, unwoven, and how we can connect more constructively with our communities and ourselves. It is this transformative desire to connect and this process of discovery that drives her art.

Most recently, she is a recipient of the Center for Cultural Innovation Quick Grant and was an Artist in Residence at Kala Art Institute in Fall 2022. She has exhibited her work nationwide including at Hallwalls, Site:Brooklyn, East Hawaii Cultural Center, and Kearny Street Workshop. In 2003, she received her MFA from the University of Buffalo with a BA from the University of Hawaii at Hilo. She served as an adjunct instructor at Villa Maria College and SUNY at Brockport.

She is a founding member of a Filipina/o/x artists collective in the Bay Area called [Epekto Art Projects](#) and is also a member of [Rock Paper Scissors Collective](#). She's been in the Bay Area since 2007.