

**FY2024-2025 Neighborhood Voices for Festivals Grant Program  
Panelist Biographies - Public Review Panels: October 15, 2024**

**MK Chavez**

MK Chavez is a mixed-race writer, educator, writing coach, and editor living in Oakland, the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people. She is the author of *Mothermorphosis* and *Dear Animal* (Nomadic Press), as well as several chapbooks, including the lyric essay chapbook *A Brief History of the Selfie*. Chavez's writing explores mixed-race identity, social justice, environmental resilience, horror cinema, magic, ritual, and the creative process. As the co-director of the Berkeley Poetry Festival and curator of *Lyrics & Dirges*, Chavez creates spaces where the voices of BIPOC and LGBTQI communities are celebrated. Her curatorial work includes partnerships with the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, where she has designed events that integrate poetry with visual arts. Chavez has taught at a variety of institutions, including Stanford University, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, and Mills College. She currently teaches in the University of San Francisco's Creative Writing Program.

**Priya Das**

Priya is co-founder and Chief Programming Officer of Mosaic America. She is the creator of Mosaic's inspired framework for social cohesion. Under her directorship, the award-winning Mosaic Festival annually makes and holds authentic space for over 50 locally practiced cultures. Her year-round programming philosophy is, "Every place and person is a mosaic;" that systems must be designed to reduce the gap between program and participation. Priya holds degrees in Business and Computer Science and is a change-maker at heart. She is an alumna of Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute (MALI) and SVCreates' MindShare program.

**Eric Garcia**

Eric Garcia is a devised theater artist, drag queen, and queer community organizer. They are the Co-Artistic Director of Detour Productions, Co-Host of the monthly drag cabaret *Clutch The Pearls*, and is the Managing Director with *Fresh Meat Productions* and the San Francisco Transgender Film Festival.

**Preston Justice**

Preston Justice is a life long student and lover of many forms of arts, culture, and the people/ places they come from. He's been witness to the positive and lasting impact engaging with live performance has on society, and believes that ensuring art's accessibility to all people is critical to our collective well being. He's contributed to many community arts spaces around the Bay Area, including with *Yerba Buena Gardens Festival* in San Francisco, and the *Friday Nights at OMCA* event in Oakland.