

FY2023-2025 Cultural Organization Assistance Grants Panelist Bios

Aldita Gallardo

Aldita Gallardo (she/they/ella) is an organizer, facilitator, and resource mobilizer based in Oakland, California, on unceded Ohlone Land. She is the principal consultant of her own grantmaking and donor advising practice, and currently serves on the Board of Directors at Funders for LGBTQ Issues. Previously, she served as Program Officer for the Fund for Trans Generations, a donor collaborative at Borealis Philanthropy that resources emerging trans-led organizations in the United States, and organized alongside trans/queer youth of color in Oakland to address school pushout prior to entering philanthropy. A writer, her gleanings on social justice philanthropy have been published in Nonprofit Quarterly, Inside Philanthropy, and the Stanford Innovation Social Review. Her work is informed by her lived experiences as a formerly undocumented migrant, fat and disabled, nonbinary trans femme from Lima, Peru; organizing at the intersections of racial, gender, and economic justice for over fifteen years; and her studies at Northwestern University. In her free time, she enjoys making music with the Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits (BAAITS) drumming circle, going on walks with her ESA chiweenie Peppers, and spending quality time with her nibblings.

David Mack

For over a decade, David Mack has managed some of California's most innovative dance, opera and theatre companies, including: The Industry, Joe Goode Performance Group and Watts Village Theater Company. In addition, he has consulted for a variety of performing arts organizations, including: Center Theatre Group, LA Dance Project and Ate9 Dance Company. As a volunteer, Mack has served on the boards and committees of several arts organizations, including: the Western Arts Alliance, San Francisco Arts Alliance and Theatre Producers of Southern California. He currently serves as a member of the WESTAF Bay Area Arts Coalition.

Mack is the Founder and Strategic Executive Officer of Artist Magnet, an Oakland-based social network for arts professionals, including: Theatre Magnet, a consulting firm for emerging arts leaders, and Artist Magnet Justice Alliance, an advocacy, professional development and fiscal sponsorship firm for emerging artists and arts administrators).

Susan Mernit

Susan is an accomplished nonprofit development consultant and former executive director with over 20 years of leadership experience. She has founded two nonprofits and provided strategic planning, fundraising, and operational advice to dozens more. As a VP at America Online, and a Senior Director at Yahoo!, she led teams responsible for over \$125MM in annual revenue, working with the corporate marketing and communications team to craft broad messages and campaigns.

Susan has secured millions in grants from Google, corporations, and foundations to support community programs in media, tech, arts, and youth development. At The Crucible, an Oakland industrial arts nonprofit, she expanded revenue through corporate partnerships and donations. She has raised over \$25 million for local nonprofits, managed large teams and budgets, and developed engaged, active non-profit boards.

Hack the Hood, the tech equity non-profit she co-founded in 2013, celebrates its 10th anniversary this year and is now 100% BIPOC-led. Oakland Local, the non-profit news site she founded in 2009 in partnership with Kwan Booth, was an essential news resource for the Town for 6 years and a first job for many local journalists.

As a consultant, Susan brings collaborative fundraising expertise to grow donor networks, corporate giving, and grant funding. Her focus areas include arts, youth empowerment, local economic development, workforce training, and food systems.

Frances Phillips

Frances Phillips retired as director of the arts program at the Walter & Elise Haas Fund and of the Creative Work Fund in October 2021 after a 27-year tenure. While in that position, she was responsible for launching and refining the Creative Work Fund, which supports new works by Bay Area artists collaborating with nonprofit organizations to create new works; and for supporting arts education, and broad public engagement in the arts in San Francisco and Alameda counties. While working in philanthropy, she also served on the boards of Grantmakers in the Arts (co-editing the GIA Reader); the California Alliance for Arts Education (now CreateCA); Community Initiatives; and Kelsey Street Press.

Prior to working at the Walter & Elise Haas Fund, Phillips was executive director of Intersection for the Arts (1988-94) and director and assistant director of The Poetry Center and American Poetry Archives at San Francisco State University (1982-88). She has had a long-standing affiliation with San Francisco State, having earned a masters degree in Creative Writing there in 1975 and later serving as an instructor of creative writing and of technical and professional writing for more than 30 years.

A poet, Phillips has published three small press books with Hanging Loose Press and Kelsey Street Press along with poems and nonfiction pieces in journals. She's also published reviews in The San Jose Mercury News, Ruminator Review, The Washington Post, Poetry Flash, and other outlets. For two years she served as poetry editor of The Hungry Mind Review. In retirement, she is taking long walks and returning to her poetry practice.

Nadine Rambeau

Nadine Rambeau, Executive Director of EPACENTER (pronounced epicenter), has spent the past 25 years activating creativity as a catalyst for youth empowerment, economic equity, and social change in multiple communities across the United States. Prior to coming to EPACENTER, she served as the managing director of the community arts and education division at the California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles. Before arriving in California, she played key leadership roles in establishing accessible arts education programs for vulnerable youth at the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago Chernin's Center for the Arts. She got her start in arts education working for the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs' award-winning job-training-in-the-arts program, Gallery 37. A writer and world-traveler who has studied the religious ceremonies of shadow puppetry in Bali, Indonesia and masked performance traditions in the African countries of Togo and Benin, she holds an MFA in critical theory from the California Institute of the Arts and a BA in political science from Northwestern University.