

Joint Committee on the Arts
Oversight Hearing
California's Creative Economy:
Annual Report Presentation and Creative Space Issues

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1: OTIS REPORT ON THE CREATIVE ECONOMY



Bruce W. Ferguson
President, Otis College of Art and Design

An accomplished author and curator of numerous nationally and internationally noted exhibitions, Bruce W. Ferguson became president of Otis College of Art and Design in May 2015. He was the founding director and first curator of the nationally acclaimed SITE Santa Fe contemporary arts organization in New Mexico. He has curated for such eminent institutions as the Barbican Art Gallery in London, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, and the Winnipeg and Vancouver art galleries in Canada. He has organized exhibitions within the international biennales of Sao Paulo, Sydney, Venice, and Istanbul.

Mr. Ferguson's extensive academic leadership experience includes roles as Dean of Columbia University's School of the Arts, Founding Director of Arizona State University's F.A.R. (Future Arts Research), and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. In 2006, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Kansas City Art Institute. He continues to actively publish, maintain relations with colleagues worldwide and be involved on institutional boards, including the Bergen Assembly in Norway and SAHA, in Istanbul, Turkey.

<http://www.otis.edu/>



Kimberly Ritter-Martinez
Economist, Institute for Applied Economics /
Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation

Kimberly Ritter-Martinez is an economist in the Institute for Applied Economics (IAE) at the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC). Ms. Ritter-Martinez studies the regional economy of the greater Los Angeles region, researching, analyzing and forecasting macroeconomic trends such as employment, inflation, interest rates and housing. Ms. Ritter also studies and develops reports on the industries that are key to the Los Angeles regional economy including trade, manufacturing, aerospace, tourism and entertainment.

Ms. Ritter-Martinez is a principal contributor to the annual *Otis Report on the Creative Economy* and regularly contributes to economic reports and briefings presented to corporate and government groups. She also gives presentations to corporations, government agencies, non-profits and educational institutions, and frequently speaks to the media about issues pertaining to the local economy.

Kimberly earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Economics from California State University Long Beach and is active in a number of professional and community organizations including the National Association for Business Economics and the American Economic Association. She volunteered as a grant review panelist for the Ovation Foundation's Innovation Grants Awards Program.

<http://laedc.org/>



Donn K. Harris

Chair, California Arts Council

Executive Director for Creativity and the Arts, San Francisco Unified School District

Donn K. Harris became San Francisco Unified School District's Executive Director for Creativity and the Arts in July 2016, a new position created to realize the city-wide dream of building out the SFUSD presence in the Civic Center arts corridor. Prior to that he had been the Executive and Artistic Director of the Oakland School for the Arts (OSA) from 2007-2016. Mr. Harris came to OSA from the acclaimed Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts, where he served as their principal for seven years. During that time, Mr. Harris also created a sister school, The Academy of Arts and Sciences, offering arts programs to students without prior experience.

During his tenure, both Ruth Asawa School of the Arts and OSA grew significantly and received awards as California Distinguished Schools and Arts Schools Network Exemplary Schools. Mr. Harris currently serves as the Vice President of the National Arts Schools Network and has served on the boards of the Engineers Alliance for the Arts and the San Francisco Bay Area Theater Company, as well as having been a member of Create California, the statewide arts education coalition. He received his BA and MA in Theatre Arts from CSULA, and holds English Literature and Special Education teaching credentials, as well as an Administrative Services credential. A passionate commitment to diversity in the arts has marked his work throughout his career.

Governor Jerry Brown appointed Mr. Harris to the California Arts Council in January 2014 and his current term expires January 1, 2021. On January 28, 2015, Mr. Harris was voted in as the 20th Chairman of the Council.

<http://www.cac.ca.gov/>

PANEL 2: ARTIST AND CREATIVE LIVE/WORK SPACES: POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS



Teri Deaver
Vice President – Consulting and Strategic Partnerships, Artspace

Teri Deaver joined Artspace in 1997. With a background in the performing arts, she has a particular sensitivity to the plight of artists seeking affordable space. She began her tenure at Artspace as an asset manager for the organization’s rapidly growing portfolio. Over the years Ms. Deaver has leant her hand to development activities, including the Riverside Artist Lofts in Reno, NV.

In her current role as Vice President of Consulting and Strategic Partnerships, Ms. Deaver shares the knowledge of Artspace with communities nationally, as they embark on the creation of sustainable arts development projects including affordable live/work and mixed-use facilities, creative incubators, studio and non-residential creative spaces and facility expansions. Additionally, she oversees Artspace’s unique *Arts Market Survey* a comprehensive process to ensure that all new projects address the needs and interests of a local community. She believes that including affordable space, which is designed and managed to support and encourage creativity and connectivity, into comprehensive city development strategies is essential to the health and vibrancy of a community.

<http://www.artspace.org/>



Michelle Williams
Executive Director, Arts Council Santa Cruz County

Michelle Williams joined Arts Council Santa Cruz County as Executive Director in 2009. Michelle was raised in the arts and studied dance, cello, piano, bass and voice. She has a BFA in Musical Theater from Millikin University and has worked in theaters and recording studios across the U.S. as well as internationally.

Ms. Williams has served on numerous panels for the California Arts Council and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and has presented across the country on topics such as funding, advocacy, program development, public art and building partnerships. During her time at the Arts Council, she has spearheaded dramatic growth, doubling the Arts Council's budget, increasing constituents served by more than 450% and overseeing a full organizational rebrand, dynamic culture shift, and pivot towards community service and engagement. She is passionate about radical partnerships, workplace culture, and harnessing the power of the arts to ignite community change.

<http://www.artscouncilsc.org/>



Ali Youssefi
Vice President, CFY Development

Ali Youssefi is Vice President of CFY Development, Inc. He is a co-developer and co-general partner of CFY's projects, and oversees all phases of the development process, including project design, financial analysis, entitlements, permit processing, construction and property management. While CFY develops communities throughout California, Mr. Youssefi's primary focus has been on mixed-income, mixed-use infill development in his hometown of Sacramento.

Mr. Youssefi recently designed and developed the Warehouse Artist Lofts in downtown Sacramento, a community for artists that includes 116 market rate and affordable apartments and ground floor retail space. He was named one of Sacramento's Executives of the Year by the Sacramento Business Journal in 2013 and 2014. Mr. Youssefi currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Downtown Sacramento Partnership, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento Steps Forward, B Street Theatre, VERGE Center for the Arts, E. Claire Raley Studios for the Performing Arts, R Street Partnership and the National Iranian American Council.

Ali Youssefi graduated from Dartmouth College with a BA in Economics and Cognitive Science.

<http://www.cfydevelopment.com/>

PANEL 3: ARTIST AND CREATIVE LIVE/WORK SPACES: CHALLENGES, SAFETY AND OTHER ISSUES



Ron Vidal
Leadership Team, We the Artists of the Bay Area (WABA)
Member, Fire Safety Task Force, City of Oakland

We the Artists of the Bay Area (WABA) was created by artists in the hours after the Ghost Ship warehouse fire in Oakland for two purposes: to advocate for our creative community to local government and to improve the safety and sustainability of our creative community. Ron Vidal serves on the WABA Leadership Team and brings a unique combination of fire, art, business and government skills to the organization as a firefighter, fabricator, artist, business executive, civic leader and non-profit board member.

Since 2006, Mr. Vidal has served on Black Rock City's Emergency Services Department (ESD) – Fire Branch at Burning Man, including as Incident Commander (IC) of ESD-Fire for burning of THE MAN, The Temple and the ten largest wooden art pieces. The IC leads a large team of ESD resources to ensure safety of 70,000+ people during pyrotechnic displays and burns. Mr. Vidal also serves on Burning Man's Fire Arts Safety Team (FAST), the inspection/enforcement team for all open flame, pyrotechnic, propane flame effect and liquid fuel art projects. The event occurs annually on federal land in Nevada, requiring coordination with federal, state and county

law enforcement agencies and various other governmental agencies. He has served over 20 years in the fire service.

In art, Mr. Vidal has worked as a builder, metal fabricator, rigger and contributing artist on ten large scale public art pieces, unveiled in Black Rock City and Oakland. The largest pieces, *Eternal Return*, *Catacomb of Veils* and *La Victrola* span heights between 30-50' and weights between 2-200 tons. All were built safely in industrial art spaces in West Oakland (American Steel and The Crucible) and San Francisco (Pier 70 and Treasure Island) working with artists Peter Hudson, Dan Sullivan, Marco Cochrane, Nick Fynn and Rachel David.

As an executive, he has led finance, mergers and acquisitions, and operations teams in large scale industrial facilities including: utility power systems in New Jersey; oil and gas in Alaska; data centers in 30 cities, and multiple global fiber optic voice and data networks. Currently, Mr. Vidal consults on incident management for large-scale, complex IT/networking environments to global cloud computing, financial services and consumer product companies.

Mr. Vidal serves on Oakland's Fire Safety Task Force, Code Committee. He has served on twelve federal, state and local task forces, commissions and grant making panels and seven non-profit Boards.

<http://artistsofthebay.org/>



Jon Sarriugarte

Artist/Lighting and Furniture Designer, Form & Reform

Member, Mayor's Artist Housing and Workspaces Task Force, City of Oakland

Born and raised in Boise, Idaho, Jon Sarriugarte made the trip out to California to create the metal furniture company Form & Reform in 1987. He has studied and worked as a blacksmith/fabricator for over 25 years; pouring his creativity into both work and the local community where he is a civic leader and board member of the West Oakland Commerce Association. He served on Mayor Libby Schaaf's Task Force on Artist Housing & Workspaces and co-owns the Kraftworks building in West Oakland that houses over 25 industrial craftspeople and performance artists.

Not content to "merely" excel at work, Mr. Sarriugarte also believes in plain old fun. His entries in the Power Tool Drag Races have been featured on the Discovery Channel, and his work on Vortex generators were featured on the History Channel. He continues to be active in the Bay Area art group, Survival Research Laboratories. He has collaborated and worked with a number of artists and arts/crafts organizations throughout the years including American Craft Council, Burning Man, MAKE, Eric Paulos, Pepe Ozan, David Therian, Robo Dock, California Blacksmith Association, John Law, Christopher Brooks, Lighting on Demand, Therm, and the Crucible, to name a few.

In 2007 Mr. Sarriugarte and his wife founded the Boiler Bar Theater. This Oilpunk group built an entire bar from a turn of the century oil town and, along with a bevy of stage talent, have taken the show on the road as far away as Texas. The *Giant Iron Snail Art Car Golden Mean* was added in 2008, mixing Jules Verne and Dr. Doolittle in a hot rod car from the past. The *Electrobite*, a personnel transportation fossil was built in 2009; the *Zepelini*, a personnel flying machine, was created in 2010; and *The Serpent Twins* were awarded as "honorarium art cars" at Burning Man

in 2011 and 2012. In 2016 *The Serpent Twins* traveled to France to perform with La Machine. Jon is currently working on *Project Empire*.

Jon Sarriugarte is married to Kyrsten Mate, a sound designer who has worked on Oscar winning films and whose work can be heard in Pixar's animated film, *The Incredibles*, Sam Mendes' *Jarhead*, *TRON*, *War Horse* and more. Jon and Kyrsten have a wonderful daughter named Zolie Mae.

<http://formandreform.com/>



Betty Avila
Associate Director, Self Help Graphics and Art

Betty Avila's work has centered on the intersection of the arts and social justice, with particular focus on community building and public space. She has held positions with the Getty Research Institute, The Music Center and the Levitt Pavilion MacArthur Park. Betty joined the Self Help Graphics and Art leadership in 2015, an organization with a 44-year nationally-recognized artistic legacy of empowering the Chicano and Latino communities of Los Angeles through the arts.

She is a founding board member and immediate past president of Multicultural Communities for Mobility, which exists to support low-income communities of color that bike, walk and use public transit. Betty was named one of C-Suite Quarterly Magazine's NextGen 10 in Philanthropy, Arts and Culture and an Impact-Maker to Watch by City Impact Labs. She received her B.A. in Literature at Pitzer College, has an M.A. in Arts Management from Claremont Graduate University, and is a 2008 Fulbright Fellow to Korea.

<http://selfhelpgraphics.com/>



Jan Williamson
Executive Director, 18th Street Arts Center

Jan Williamson is the Executive Director of the 18th Street Arts Center. She came to the Center during its fifth year in 1995. Under her leadership “18SAC” has evolved from a small, alternative artist-run space to Southern California’s largest artist residency center, working with diverse local and international artists who provoke public dialogue through their artmaking. During her tenure, the organization purchased 18SAC’s 1.25 acre property and Williamson has been leading the planning and fundraising efforts for the renovation and redevelopment of the site.

Williamson holds a certificate from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business, Executive Program for Non-Profit Leaders and a Bachelor’s degree in Fine Art from the University of California, Santa Cruz. In 2010, she was awarded a Durfee Foundation Sabbatical Fellowship for her executive leadership in the arts. For nine years she served on Santa Monica’s Arts Commission. She currently serves on the board of Arts for LA, a regional arts advocacy agency.

Prior to 18th Street Arts Center, Williamson worked for visual artist Tom Van Sant for four years on his revolutionary artwork *The GeoSphere Project* – the first satellite composite map of the Earth, free of clouds, and for performance artist Barbara T. Smith. As an artist, Williamson co-founded and produced EWALA (Earth Water Air-Los Angeles) an annual performance art trek with playwright Susan Suntree, which engaged hundreds of Angelenos from 1994 to 2000 in honoring the Los Angeles River watershed while drawing public attention to threatened environmental areas along the river. She was also a founding member of the eco-political street theatre troupe FrogWorks, which performed original works nationally on the plight of California’s wetlands.

<http://18thstreet.org/>