

A man with a beard, glasses, and a black cap stands behind a DJ booth. He is holding a translucent pink and blue vinyl record. The background is a wall of wood paneling with a large oval mirror. Above him are shelves filled with vinyl records. To his left is a black speaker. To his right is a stack of vinyl records, including one with a purple cover. The overall atmosphere is warm and nostalgic, with colorful light spots scattered across the scene.

SAC ART PULSE

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BY THE SOLVING SACRAMENTO JOURNALISM COLLABORATIVE



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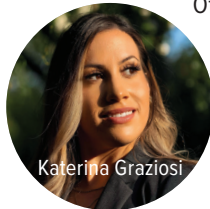
HELLO!



Sena Christian

Last year, Solving Sacramento embarked on a new project — a series of listening sessions with members of our local arts community. We had a couple simple goals: to connect with one another and to figure out opportunities to work together to improve our arts coverage. During these sessions, we realized another role our journalism collaborative can play in our city: convener.

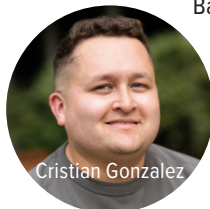
Our first three sessions were organized by artistic sector: performing arts, music and visual arts. We heard from people leading prominent arts organizations or businesses, like B Street Theatre and Teatro Nagual, Harlow's, Torch Club and Crocker Art Museum. For our fourth session, we invited individual working artists and those representing smaller arts organizations and businesses, such as Out the Way on J, Sac Dance Lab and Musiclandria.



Katerina Graziosi

Of course, we heard some venting about the state of the arts and the creative economy in those first few sessions. That's totally fair and understandable. And we got some good ideas — already implemented — as a result. But we were really struck by the tone of the last listening session we held, a week after Election Day. The 12 people who joined us in the theater at Celebration Arts expressed camaraderie and a dedication to making good things happen. I was pleasantly surprised when one of our questions was about thoughts on Sacramento's art scene, and we were met with: "We have a ton of talent here!" And "Sacramento is a great place to be an artist!" A sense of hope permeated the idea that creating new systems of connection for the arts is possible.

Something we heard repeatedly throughout the four listening sessions is the need for a centralized hub for our arts community and a way for people to find out about local events. But do people even want hubs anymore? Or rather: How might we re-imagine what a "hub" means?



Cristian Gonzalez

Back in the late aughts when I was a staff writer for the Sacramento News & Review, the alt-weekly was publishing stories by some of the best arts writers our city has seen in recent decades. There were calendar listings community members referenced and a handy map of Second Saturday shows, which brought a ton of people out into the streets of Midtown every month. Our central city had a dynamic nightlife scene of clubs, music venues and poetry places. Then the pandemic happened. Venues closed, at least temporarily. Submerge Magazine shut down, SN&R's budget for arts coverage shrank to almost nothing. I, for one, felt a declining sense of hope for our arts scene.

But that's changed — in large part thanks to these listening sessions, and realizing the immense talent, passion and hope of our city's artists.

Sena Christian
Project Manager

LEGEND HAS IT

STORY BY
KATERINA GRAZIOSI

PHOTOS BY
STEVE MARTARANO

CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING AS SACRAMENTO'S FIRST HI-FIDELITY LISTENING BAR

It's a quarter to 2 p.m. when Purple Disco Machine's "Devil in Me" fills a bar on the corner block of 4th and L Streets in Downtown Sacramento with a rhythmic funk-house beat.

The sound is crisp, enveloping a growing crowd with a quality and precision rivaled by live music. Abs One is at the decks of the newly minted booth where 14 DJs — including DJ Fooders, Vinyl Honey, DJ Epik and others — set to spin vinyl records until midnight at the grand opening of the city's first hi-fi bar, Legend Has It, on Sept. 14, 2024.

Short for hi-fidelity audio, hi-fi bars are spaces that prioritize the listening experience, particularly of pressed music, over all else. Popularized in

Japan during the 1940s and '50s, these intimate venues made use of postwar goods entering the country by sourcing top-notch audio systems and curating "cultural lifelines" for audiophiles and community alike to gather in the wake of a shortage of social events and the shuttering of businesses forced by World War II.

The concept of a Japanese jazz kissa, or kissaten, is mirrored here at 410 L St. with its cozy, modern furniture, custom blonde-wood millwork and Klipsch La Scala speakers that flank the booth — some of the clearest in the game, according to co-owner and DJ José Medina.

"We curated this equipment to make sure it fits our space," Medina says. "You'll hear things that you haven't heard before on an album, especially when it's been reproduced on a vinyl."

Medina and his wife, Victoria, co-own the bar at the former location of Whired Wine with business partners and friends Jin and Michael Juliano. Inspired by their shared love of music, craft beer and natural wine, the two couples dreamt of fusing it all together. While the four previously floated ideas of opening such an establishment, it was a visit to a listening bar during a joint trip to Seattle in late 2022 that moved the needle.

"I still remember the conversation that basically sparked it," Medina says. "We saw a vinyl bar [in Seattle] and we were captivated, but at the same time we were like this is something we could do, to an extent, in Sacramento."



Legend Has It co-owners Michael and Jin Juliano, and José and Victoria Medina stand behind the bar at the grand opening of Sacramento's first hi-fi bar on Sept. 14, 2024.



Attendees hear sets from 14 DJs during the grand opening of Legend Has It on Sept. 14, 2024 in Downtown Sacramento.

A HUB TO CALL HOME

For co-owner Juliano, whose background is in audio engineering and radio, traveling with his wife, Jin, to visit family in South Korea and the hi-fi bars they experienced there, as well as in Japan, highlighted a different and special kind of DJ culture.

"In my mind back in the day, [a] DJ was always in a tower somewhere like dance club sort of stuff," Juliano says, "so seeing a DJ just spin vinyl in soul, funk, jazz — it blew my mind." The more relaxed setting and the audio focus is a concept he says was missing in Sacramento.

It's a sentiment shared by Eric Sasz, who goes professionally as DJ Saurus. Sasz has been involved with the local music scene for over 25 years and currently books DJs for San Francisco's Exploratorium After Dark hours. He now helps book the talent at Legend Has It and says he's well-connected and poised to highlight a diverse repertoire of turntablists.

"A lot of local DJs get overlooked in Sacramento, especially vinyl DJs, because the younger turn-up culture is really big right now," Sasz reflects. "But with vinyl culture, there's a lot of folks here that we wanted to shine the spotlight on because they're not getting that."

In addition to the limited opportunities for a niche subset of DJs, lasting impacts of the pandemic continue to affect nightlife economy and the music scene as a whole, according to Medina, who has held residencies locally at B-Side and Bottle & Barlow. He adds that while many businesses turned to live en-

tertainment as a way to entice patrons back through their doors, many of them couldn't pay DJs pre-pandemic rates while sustaining higher overhead costs.

"A lot of DJs have been impacted by recent closures of businesses, but then also very much by the changes to the business model [post COVID]," he says, adding that he hopes to help change that and broaden collaboration with creatives and artists to forge a true community-focused hub. A lineup of 14 local DJs played 45-minute sessions during the opening to a rotating crowd of about 400 people, according to Medina.

Audrey Esperanza, who spins as DJ Ink Fat around town in places like Darling Aviary and The Flamingo House, was in attendance to support the launch. She stresses the need for cities to have spaces dedicated to preserving the art of analog mixing and to "keep this kind of culture alive and thriving for the younger generations."

Best known as DJ Epik, Dustin Worswick's set closed out the night. He's been kicking around Sacramento's music scene since the mid '90s and currently plays at LowBrau's Motown Mondays, his weekly residency of over 10 years. Worswick took on an unofficial consulting and supporting role to the Legend Has It project saying it has his "seal of approval."

"I'm hoping music lovers in Sacramento embrace it and get to come out and experience something that's a little different than your average bar and club," he says. "This is a space where you're going to be taken on a musical journey."

THE SUM OF PARTS

When the co-owners moved to the River City from San Francisco — the Julianos in 2021 and the Medinas in 2022 — it was through networking with the community that solidified Sacramento as a good home for the project, according to Juliano.

“As we were getting to know Sacramento, we met so many cool people, DJs, bar owners and brewers” he says. “The brewers and a lot of the bar owners as well have been just super open to us.”

In addition to a selection of California-produced natural wines, the bar boasts a large selection of local craft beer from Porchlight Brewing Company, LogOff Brewing, Alaro Craft Brewing and others, according to Juliano. He adds that everyone they’ve worked with to complete the project from the electrician who wired the impressive set up, to the graphic designer, the breweries supplying the craft beer and the interior designer, all are locally based businesses.

And for the inspired crate digger, record sales by local purveyors Twelves Wax and Sounds Universoul set up shop just outside the bar during the launch.

“Keeping things really Sacramento is really important [to us],” co-owner Victoria Medina says. “We want this to be a staple in the community and continue working with more folks in the community and putting our roots there downtown.”

Not unlike the revitalization of communal gatherings brought about by jazz kissaten in Japan, José Medina hopes to carry on expanding avenues of creation and collaboration for the region.

“The hope is to continue to innovate and continue to bring growth to Sacramento,” he says. “I think it’s safe to say we are heavily invested [here].”

As for the hi-fi bar’s name, it’s an eponym to the inaugural concept realized in the capital city but also a nod to the reflection of an innovative future, according to Juliano.

“I think we all like the idea of saying, ‘well, legend has it, it all started in Sacramento,’” he says. ■



Abs One plays the second set of the day during the grand opening of Legend Has It on Sept. 14, 2024. He says the bar is “a creative space to cultivate the purity of vinyl.”

SOLVING SACRAMENTO

STAFF REPORT

AWARDED GRANT FROM TEICHERT FOUNDATION

Solving Sacramento was recently awarded a \$4,000 grant from the Teichert Foundation to expand the journalism collaborative's partnership with student journalists and recent college graduates at Sacramento area colleges.

Students will be paid to produce freelance stories, photos and videos for the collaborative, covering the critical beats of affordable housing, homelessness, economic equity, the environment and the arts. Their stories will be cross-published by Solving Sacramento's member outlets. The group's news members include: CapRadio, Outword Magazine, Russian American Media, Sacramento Business Journal, Sacramento News & Review, The Sacramento Observer and Univision 19.

"We've been working with student journalists since our start, but this grant will allow us to do even more," said Solving Sacramento Project Manager Sena Christian. "We really enjoy working with students, as we find them to be super enthusiastic and eager to do their best. We believe this new program will be mutually beneficial to local students and our news partners."

The Teichert Foundation aims to "make grants to organizations that create beauty, foster culture, nurture

children, provide access to food and housing for those in need, preserve nature, increase awareness of our environment, build an educated citizenry and a well-prepared workforce, and strive to provide better health for all," according to its website.

Student journalists or recent graduates interested in participating should email Solving Sacramento at info@solvingsacramento.org. The group is currently outreaching and recruiting, and expects student stories to start publishing in February. ■

Teichert Foundation Executive Director Heather Riggs presents a check to Larry Lee, CEO and publisher of The Sacramento Observer, which is one of Solving Sacramento's news partners.



PSYCHEDELIC PROJECTS

AIM TO STAMP GRASS VALLEY AS EPICENTER OF MOVEMENT

STORY BY RUSSELL NICHOLS PHOTOS BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ

For the past four years, Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) has been pushing to decriminalize psychedelic drugs — but every time he writes a bill on the matter, policymakers in California just say no.

The latest was Senate Bill 1012. It would've given adults the green light to use certain psychedelic substances for therapeutic purposes under strict supervision by a licensed facilitator in a controlled environment. In May 2024, the bill stalled in the Senate Appropriations Committee. A similar bill was vetoed in 2023 by Gov. Gavin Newsom, who suggested the state establish "regulated treatment guidelines."

Wiener won't quit.

"We've been working for four years to legalize access to psychedelics in California, to bring these substances out of the shadows and into the sunlight, and to improve safety and education around their use," Wiener said in a statement. "... I'm highly committed to this issue, and we'll continue to work on expanding access to psychedelics."

As his psychedelics bill died in committee in 2023, about 60 miles north on Highway 49, another psychedelic project was coming to life in Grass Valley. This one was 30 years in the making, birthed by Brian Chambers, a psychedelic art collector who also seeks to bring psychedelics to the mainstream, but through surreal pieces instead of state policy.

In spring 2024, he launched the Psychedelic Arts and Culture Trust (PACT) to educate the public on the past, present and future impact of psychedelics on visual art and culture. Curious minds can learn about substances like ayahuasca, DMT, LSD, peyote and psilocybin (magic mushrooms), and how they influence the mind and induce hallucinations — a side effect known to inspire art creation and affect the art viewing experience.

PACT is an offshoot of The Chambers Project, an 8,000-square-foot gallery and community center in Grass Valley, established in 2021 by Chambers and co-owner Leah Plenge. The gallery mainly exhibits psychedelic art. After the inaugural PACT symposium in August 2024, the gallery has hosted several events, such as a Q&A with Bill Walker, the legendary Grateful Dead album cover artist. Other events have included comedy shows, music events and glassblowing workshops. The next show will take place March 8, 2025, with a focus on optical art.

"With the resurgence and destigmatization and social and medical acceptance of all things psychedelic, it feels like a prime time to really stamp ourselves as the epicenter of the psychedelic art movement," says Chambers, who has a personal collection of more than 300 trippy works.

Emerging from the "Summer of Love" scene in 1960s San Francisco, psychedelic art used

WIC ART



Lynn Sanborn, archivist librarian at the Sacramento State Library, holds a 2013 Walking Spanish tour poster.

“brilliant colors and mind-bending images to represent the freedom of ideals and expression of the era,” according to Lynn Sanborn, archivist librarian at the Sacramento State Library.

From concert posters to handbills, this vibrant artwork celebrating music, activism and Sacramento history can be found in the Sacramento Rock and Radio collection at Sacramento State’s Gerth Special Collections & University Archives.

“This art style continues to have significance today,” Sanborn says, “and has evolved to showcase the flowing styles representative of a new age.”

Growing up in the 1980s in Tennessee, Chambers was captivated by surrealists like Salvador Dalí. He became immersed in psychedelic art in the mid-1990s. That was when he read the classic road trip opus “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas” by Hunter S. Thompson. In high school, his science teacher showed the class an Alex Grey poster, which Chambers learned was inspired by LSD.

After discovering Rick Griffin and the other San Francisco artists from the ‘60s concert poster movement, Chambers was hooked. In 2008, he

connected with artist Mario Martinez — who goes professionally by Mars-1 — which would shape his path in commissioning live, collaborative artwork.

“I enjoy pairing different artists together so that they can teach and learn from each other,” Chambers says. “And I’ve definitely found that the sum of a couple artists is greater than anything that they can do on an individual level.”

For years, Chambers had been doing his highest profile showcases in San Francisco, Denver, Miami and New York. But four years ago, when COVID hit, he realized the gallery landscape was changing. His kids were also getting older. He wanted them to be able to see his work as a collector locally and says he felt like he was cheating his local community by working elsewhere.

“That’s when I really decided to level up and buy the building that we’ve currently got,” says Chambers, who uses psychedelics. “So it’s a big blank canvas with plenty of room to grow and do some amazing things. And with this community that’s so embracing of everything that we’re doing, it seems to be working.”

Various scientific studies highlight the potential benefits of psychedelics. Supporters include veterans who have used psychedelics to treat PTSD, and parents who used psychedelic therapy to help their children overcome addiction.

But the stigma is hard to shake — especially when opponents highlight insufficient evidence.

Critics to Wiener's bill include some medical professionals, such as the California State Association of Psychiatrists, which expressed that "evidence to support the therapeutic use of psychedelics is not yet robust enough to justify widespread access, especially for unsupervised use or use in the presence of non-medical individuals."

This fine line is familiar to Justin Lovato, a surreal, psychedelic artist who believes these substances shouldn't be taken lightly.

Growing up in South Sacramento, with his father being a painter, Lovato was drawn to alternative art spaces and underground shows. One of his biggest influences was The Toyroom Gallery, a lowbrow, pop-surrealist street art gallery. This was where he sold his first paintings in 2005, making about \$800.

"It made me think maybe it was possible to live off of it," he says, "and that turned out to be true. A part of it was me committing to being an artist and not going to school for anything else. Not giving myself a choice. No backup plan."

After he relocated to the Bay Area in 2010, Lovato took a trip to Grass Valley where he met Chambers and was introduced to the wild world of

psychedelic art. Under the influence of psychedelics, Lovato's art grew even more surreal than it was when he started.

"Psychedelics do have the effect of making synapses connect where they don't usually," Lovato says. "... It also has the effect of making your mind flow freely. Ideas will pop up. If you're lucky, you can take a note and grab one — one in 10 is actually a good idea."

But Lovato believes the conversation is a nuanced one. For instance, he says psychedelics are not a panacea or "the only path to fulfilling yourself spiritually or creatively." And certain mental illnesses can become intensified without proper supervision, he adds.

"Psychedelics are kind of playing with fire," he says. "It can be productive and sometimes it can be potentially treacherous. I think psychedelics are a tool to create feedback loops in your mind, so your previous experiences affect your [psychedelic] experiences."

That said, he can't deny the positive influence psychedelics have had on him. Lovato says Chambers has been the most important person in his art career by providing unique opportunities in a niche area of the art world where he feels he fits in.

"What he's doing is important and historical," Lovato says, emphasizing his mission to bridge psychedelic art history with the modern era. "... And I think he is the aggregate for the psychedelic art that's coming out into the world." ■



Sacramento State's Special Collections & University Archives has various psychedelic art pieces and posters that students can view.

THE ROLE OF 'THIRD SPACES' IN KEEPING ALL-AGES

MUSIC ALONE IN SACRAMENTO

STORY BY RACHEL LEIBROCK PHOTOS BY XAVIER FIGUEROA

Ruby Copher was 15 the first time she played for a crowd. It was the summer of 2021 at Swabbies on the River, and she was there with a band put together during a weeklong stint in G.I.R.L.S. Rock Sacramento, a local nonprofit music organization.

Copher was excited for the chance, but also, perhaps, a little bit anxious. She'd been playing guitar for two years, but this would be her biggest show yet.

"It was nerve-wracking," she says now. "But we'd spent all this time building community and there were all these people who'd come out. I felt like I was being taken care of and set up for success."

Now 18, Copher remembers the experience as unique — not just because of the venue or the audience but because she had the chance to play to a crowd at all. Since COVID, she says, the number of places for under-21 folks to perform — and listen to — live music, has shrunk.

"I mostly play metal and punk, and that community is really tight and DIY so there are opportunities once you get to know people," she says. "But with [other types of music] the chances to play live are harder to come by."

Regardless of genre, some in the Sacramento region believe that the all-ages music scene has faded since its 2000s-era glory days, due in part to the pandemic. Others, however, argue that youth-friendly options abound with just as many venues as ever.

The true state of the all-ages scene, however, more likely exists somewhere in the middle.



Ruby Copher behind Tower Cafe in Sacramento. Copher did a stint at G.I.R.L.S Rock Sacramento before forming the punk band Whoreified.

'IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE THIRD SPACES'

True Love Coffeehouse. Capitol Garage. The Shine. Luigi's Pizza Parlor. In the early-to-mid 2000s these were just some of the downtown and Midtown Sacramento spots hosting regular all-ages shows. Although the choices grew scarcer past the grid, a scattering of churches and coffeeshops were also age inclusive.



Larisa Bryski is the co-founder and executive director of G.I.R.L.S. Rock Sacramento.

Larisa Bryski, G.I.R.L.S. Rock Sacramento co-founder and executive director, remembers the era fondly.

“Back then there were a lot of all-ages spots and there was a lot of buzz around all those venues and a lot of kids wanting to play or see live music,” says Bryski, whose organization teaches girls how to play music. “Now, I don’t see any difference in the amount of young people who want that, but I just don’t see enough places for them to play.”

With G.I.R.L.S. Rock Sacramento, Bryski and her team create a safe space for youth to enjoy and create music but, she worries, where do they go when they’ve finished their stint?

There are some notable outlets: Harlow’s and its sister club, the upstairs Starlet Room, regularly hosts all-ages shows in Midtown, as does Ace of Spades, several blocks over. Further afield, The Boardwalk in Orangevale and Goldfield Trading Post in Midtown and Roseville also put on all-ages shows.

These are bigger rooms, however, not the small to midsize rooms of the aughts where kids and teens could cut their musical teeth without the pressure of drawing a large crowd. In that category the choices are notably fewer: Café Colonial in South Sacramento, The Red Museum downtown, and a handful of other spots that occasionally present all-ages gigs.

“It seems like people were trying harder before with opportunities for bands and sing-

er-songwriter situations for kids who just wanted to get up on stage for the first time,” Bryski says.

Now, she says, COVID and its ensuing lockdown accounts for at least one significant cause of the decrease in venues that regularly cater to an all-ages crowd. While nightclubs such as Harlow’s have the means to operate a bar during an all-ages show, smaller venues are likely to lose out on a sizable income stream through alcohol sales.

“[Post-pandemic] people were struggling in the local entertainment industry,” she says. “From a business standpoint, people [want] to focus on opportunities that are money-making and you’re not going to make as much money if you don’t have a bar.”

With or without booze, the music fan-to-musician pipeline is a two-way conduit.

When youth have the chance to take in live music, Bryski says, they build an appreciation for the art and, sometimes, an aspiration to create it themselves. Either way, that hunger for live music often lasts well into adulthood and helps to create the foundation for a robust arts and culture scene.

“Music, in an overarching way, builds community,” Bryski says. “I’ve seen firsthand how kids thrive when they’re with people who are like-minded.”

Copher, who still plays music in a handful of bands including her main project, Whoreified, agrees. While punk and metal bands often rely

on house shows for gigs, the City of Sacramento and venue owners should work harder to create or support more prospects for young musicians and music fans of all genres.

Since the pandemic, she says, there are fewer so-called “third spaces”—places that are separate from home and work, such as cafes, where people can gather informally to hang out. Factor in an ever-increasing dependency on screens, she adds, and young people are less likely to go out, which in turn means they’re less likely to build tangible kinships.

“Sometimes it’s hard enough even for myself to go out when it’s so easy to just sit in bed on your phone and have relationships over text or social media,” she says. “That’s why it’s important to have those third spaces.”

THE RISE AND FALL — AND RISE — OF THE ALL-AGES SCENE

Longtime Sacramento music promoter Brian McKenna says the all-ages scene hasn’t really changed much in the 35 years he’s been booking shows. It’s always been a mix of venues that cater to a range of audiences, big and small. And because it’s a fickle business, spots open and close and prospects ebb and flow. Currently, he says, the landscape is vibrant.

“There are a good number of spots right now, probably as many as there ever were that I can remember,” he says.

McKenna started his career on his own in the 1980s before teaming up with another Sacramento booking mainstay, Jerry Perry, to form New View Music Productions in 1989. In 1994, he formed his own company, Abstract Entertainment. Whether it was at the El Dorado Saloons and Cattle Clubs of yesteryear or modern venues like Goldfield’s Trading Post or Harlow’s, McKenna says he’s always made a point to try to book all-ages events. And, just like back in the day, he adds, there’s still a healthy house scene offering occasional one-off gigs throughout the suburbs.

The main factor that’s changed, he says, is that city officials are actively trying to make the process easier for venue owners and bookers by simplifying permit processes and working with venues to navigate regulations.

“In years past it was more prohibitive to [book all-ages shows],” he says. “There was a lot of red tape and a cafe that held shows for 50 people had to go through the same processes as a venue hosting 400 people.”

Over at Café Colonial, booker Anna Gaitan says they’ve benefited from improved city efforts,

including assistance with adhering to the rules for required security presences or health inspections for the kitchen. As the Colonial’s audiences have grown from an average of 20 people per show to upward of 60, it’s critical to be afforded reasonable flexibility.

“A little grace goes a long way,” she says.

Historically, she adds, the city hasn’t always supported the scene, particularly during economic downturns. Less money and support meant fewer safe spaces for teens.

It helps, she says, that the city has opened up funding grants to smaller venues, including those without bars.

“It wasn’t always on the table for [venues] that operate at a micro capacity,” she says. “Now, we apply for everything even if it’s two years out. It helps us upgrade equipment or fix something that needs love.”

Now, Gaitan, who is in a business partnership with Jim Cornett, owner and general manager for Harlow’s, sees Café Colonial as both that safe space and a bridge between house shows and bigger spots. On the Colonial’s stage, artists can get their first shot playing to a group before moving on to larger shows. It’s also a place for teenagers to nurture a love for live music, whether they’re watching or playing.

“This is a labor of love that provides accessibility to arts, music and cultural events for children, teens and young adults,” she says. “It can



Ruby Copher in front of the Tower Theater box office in Sacramento.

help them [appreciate] or flourish in something they may not have been exposed to otherwise.”

Like McKenna, Gaitan says that while there’s always room for more places that regularly accommodate an all-ages audience, particularly post-COVID, the scene is trending with an upward traction.

“The young musicians who are starting their bands right now, they are the foundation,” she says. “I’m excited for the future of all-ages music in Sacramento.” ■

LIFETIME

DEBORAH PITTMAN'S JOURNEY FROM CLARINET TO CLAY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOAN CUSICK

Brooklyn-born Deborah Pittman devoted decades of her life to the clarinet, playing on Broadway and for the symphony orchestra in Sacramento. But that turned out to be merely an overture for a lifetime exploring the arts.

Pittman moved from New York to Sacramento in 1981, but after nine years with the symphony, she “decided it was killing my soul, it was killing my body, and I should take a leave of absence to find out if I wanted to continue.”

The classical clarinetist turned from performing to teaching — first at UC Davis, then at Sacramento State. At UC Davis, she led the Capital Arts Project, which brought together a teaching team of professional artists with art teachers of every level.

“When I put on my first institute for those

teachers in the summer, our artist was Sam Tubiolo,” Pittman says. “He did an activity one evening with the entire workshop. I went home that night and I did not want to go back to UC Davis the next day. I wanted to find a clay class as soon as possible. ... I was taken quickly, swiftly with passion for ceramic art.”

But Pittman’s artistic journey didn’t end at the pottery wheel. The multifaceted artist now balances ceramics, music, writing and filmmaking, including a recent film about her father called “The World According to Earl.”

“Do I love one more than the other? On some days,” she says about her various artistic endeavors. “On some days when I’m playing something really exciting, I get that feeling for the clarinet again.”



At the wheel, Deborah Pittman gently lifts the edge of a pot.

THE ARTS

Do you love one pursuit more than the other?

I probably don't love the clarinet as much as I used to. I have been playing the clarinet for 61 years. But when I discovered pottery, some of the things that appealed to me were no wrong notes, no playing out of tune. When you're classically trained on the clarinet, you really have to do it the way your teacher did it — the way his teacher did it all the way back to the first clarinetist that inspired Mozart — but I immediately felt like I didn't need to do that in pottery. That was incredibly freeing for me.

I was always trying to push the envelope, trying to do things differently. When we learned some new shape or form, I wanted mine to be distinguished in some way. I did not want to open the kiln to see 11 pieces that looked the same.

It's been a long journey from that initial throwing class because I don't like people to buy my pots and put flowers in them, I think they are art already. To make sure they don't do that, I tend to cut open my pots. They can't put water in it.

If you could change one thing, what would it be?

If I could change one thing, it really would be that every soul on this planet got to participate in some kind of art on a daily basis. I think the arts really heal.

I started playing clarinet when I was 10, in seventh grade. As a really painfully shy person, one day my clarinet teacher said to me — he was always giving me grief about not playing loudly enough — he was like, "Do you want to play for yourself or you want to play for people?"

"I want to play for people."

He was like, "OK, put your clarinet down, I'm going to tell you something. Your playing is never gonna change until your personality changes."

So on the subway going home, I was trying to unpack that and I thought, "Either that's a huge insult, or he's trying to tell me that, oh, I need to act confident. OK." Pretty much my personality changed that day. It wasn't really my personality yet, but I could act.



And so I think of the changes playing the clarinet started to make in my life, in terms of having somewhere to go — my bedroom — and something to do that my parents could hear. I was always a child that spent a lot of time in my bedroom. I'd either be reading, or what I call hiding. I don't know why, but as soon as they would hear me playing the clarinet, they'd think, "OK, she's OK."

Let me tell you, you grow up in New York and you get to the point where you're taking an average of one or two auditions a month. Your personality changes. ... So that would be my wish for the world — arts, and lots of it. ■

Read the full Q&A at sacramento.newsreview.com.

SACRAMENTO

AT 70, SACRAMENTO BALLET PLOTS A NEW TO CONTEMPORARY WORKS & BOUNDARY-

STORY BY MARYBETH BIZJAK PHOTOS BY ANDRI TAMBUNAN

Since 2021, Anthony Krutzkamp has been on a mission: to turn Sacramento Ballet into a world-class dance company that brings in-demand choreographers and innovative works to Sacramento audiences.

This year — the company's 70th anniversary season — Krutzkamp's campaign appears set to pay off, with a lineup featuring four world premieres as well as works by acclaimed choreographers Michael Pink and Young Soon Hue. People who think Sacramento Ballet is mainly a vehicle for armies of cute little kids to strut their stuff in "Nutcracker" are having their preconceptions challenged in a big way.

Krutzkamp joined Sacramento Ballet in 2017 as executive director to oversee the business end of things. At that time, Ron Cunningham and his wife, Carinne Binda, had run the artistic side for almost three decades, creating a company known largely for its focus on works by famed choreographer George Balanchine and by Cunningham himself.

A former principal dancer with Cincinnati Ballet, Krutzkamp has a business degree from Northeastern University and worked in management for Kansas City Ballet's Second Company before coming to Sacramento. In 2018, the Cunninghams were ousted by the ballet's board, with board president Nancy Garton telling The Sacramento Bee it was "time for us to look to Sac Ballet 2.0 so that we don't one day wake up to say, 'Oops! The parade passed us by.'" The couple's replacement, Amy Seiwert, lasted only a couple of years before COVID struck, forcing the ballet to lay Seiwert off and cancel the remainder of its 2020-21 season.



'TO BALLET'

COURSE — LOOKING BEYOND 'NUTCRACKER'
BREAKING CHOREOGRAPHERS



Enrico Hipolito, who plays Jonathan Harker, and Sarah Joan Smith, who plays Mina, rehearse for Sacramento Ballet's production of "Dracula" at SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center. "Dracula" was Sacramento Ballet's first production for its 2024-25 season.

In 2021, Krutzkamp was named artistic director while retaining his position as executive director, making him one of only a handful of executive/artistic ballet directors in the country. In his artistic role, the 43-year-old hires and trains dancers, and selects and mounts the works performed by the company, which has about two dozen full-time, salaried dancers. It is his “dream job,” he says. “I skip to work.”

Right from the start, Krutzkamp knew exactly where he wanted to move the ballet artistically. Balanchine and “Nutcracker” were fine — the classics had served Sacramento well for many years. But he envisioned opening Sacramento up to the greater ballet world by showcasing fresh, forward-thinking contemporary works, cutting-edge choreographers and increased theatrical values. In other words: newer, bigger, better.

He understood it would take several years to get the company where he wanted it to go — that it wouldn’t happen overnight. To work his way up to “Dracula” in 2024, he first had to

IN ORDER TO ATTRACT STAR CHOREOGRAPHERS, KRUTZKAMP WOULD HAVE TO PROVE THAT HIS DANCERS WERE EQUAL TO THE JOB.

do “Cinderella” a year earlier. And in order to attract star choreographers, he would have to prove that his dancers were equal to the job.

“When you want to work with a choreographer, they ask to see the company,” he explains.

In 2022, he held auditions in France and hired Australian dancer Ugo Frediani

and French dancer Maxence Devaux. The company, which also has dancers from the Philippines, Brazil and Japan, is one of the country’s fastest growing in terms of geographic diversity, according to Krutzkamp.

Every year on March 1, Krutzkamp publicly announces the lineup for the upcoming season. Because he wants the dancers to hear the news directly from him, he unveils the season to the company the day before the press release goes out. So on the last day of February 2024, the dancers gathered after lunch in Studio 1 — their airy classroom and rehearsal space on the second floor of CLARA. Formally known as the E. Claire Raley Studios for the Performing Arts, CLARA is a handsome decommissioned brick elementary school building on N Street that is



Sacramento Ballet dancers rehearse for the production of “Dracula” at SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center. “Dracula” was Sacramento Ballet’s first production for its 2024-25 season.

home to Sacramento Ballet, Capital Stage, an Irish dancing school and other arts groups.

Krutzkamp told the dancers they would perform the world premiere of Hue's "Romeo and Juliet" in February and a mixed repertory program called "Visions," featuring world premieres by leading choreographers, in March. They would kick off the season Halloween weekend (Nov. 1-3, 2024) with Pink's "Dracula" at SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center. "They were very, very excited," Krutzkamp recalls.

Longtime Sac Ballet fans needn't worry: The schedule also includes two old favorites: the classic holiday confection "Nutcracker" (Dec. 13–22, 2024) and "Beer & Ballet" (May 29–June 1, 2025), featuring choreography by the company's dancers, served up with a glass of beer or wine.

The dancers already knew of Pink and his celebrated take on "Dracula," one of the most frequently performed ballet versions of the classic tale of the bloodthirsty Transylvanian nobleman, based on the novel by Bram Stoker. Pink, a 68-year-old Englishman who in his youth danced with London Festival Ballet (now called English National Ballet), created "Dracula" in 1996 with music by composer Philip Feeney. The ballet, which has been performed all over the world, is known for its dramatic storytelling, sensual movements and athletically demanding partnering. (In one dreamy pas de deux, Dracula lifts and manipulates a sleeping Jonathan Harker like a rag doll.)

Krutzkamp worked with Pink in 2014 when he danced the role of Dracula in Kansas City and was keen to bring the ballet to Sacramento. About a year and a half ago, he called the choreographer, who is also artistic director for Milwaukee Ballet, to pitch the idea. "It was a pleasant phone call," says Pink, who employs a



Michael Pink, "Dracula" choreographer, directs Maxence Devaux, who plays Dracula, during rehearsal.



Maxence Devaux, who plays Dracula, and Enrico Hipolito, who plays Jonathan Harker, rehearse their pas de deux for "Dracula."

team of people to help companies like Sacramento Ballet stage his work.

His team first had to ensure that Sacramento could accommodate the elaborate production, which includes a massive bed weighing 500 pounds, built with a hidden trap door that allows Dracula to magically appear and disappear. Then, they negotiated royalties for the lighting, costumes, sets, music and choreographer. A major company like Boston Ballet with its \$30 million annual budget pays top dollar, while Sacramento Ballet, with a budget that hovers around \$4 million, pays less.

Pink typically spends the first and last week of the six-week rehearsal period with the company to help cast the leading roles, teach the choreography to the dancers and fine-tune the production before opening night. On Sept. 15, he flew into Sacramento at 10 p.m. and arrived



Maxence Devaux, who plays Dracula, and Wen Na Robertson, who plays Lucy, rehearse for "Dracula."



Maxence Devaux, who plays Dracula, and Wen Na Robertson, who plays Lucy, rehearse for "Dracula."

at CLARA early the next morning to meet with Krutzkamp and the dancers, who had just returned from their long summer break.

By early afternoon, Pink had started pairing up partners and teaching them sections of the ballet. Tall and commanding, he demonstrated many of the steps himself. Sometimes he would gather the dancers around his laptop to study video of Milwaukee Ballet dancers performing the moves. For a scene from the third act set in Dracula's tomb, he led the company through an eerie sequence in which the "undead" writhed and crawled on the floor, licking imaginary blood from their hands.

Pink says he knew nothing about the Sacramento company before coming to town and was pleasantly surprised by its caliber, adding, "There are very strong dancers here." After five days in Sacramento, Pink returned to Milwaukee, sending his rehearsal director to work with the cast for the next five weeks.

Pink wasn't in Sacramento for the final week of rehearsals because he had to prepare the Milwaukee Ballet for its opening of "Casanova" the same week. He regretted having to miss Sacramento's opening night of "Dracula." "I like to be present to hear the audience response," says Pink, noting that audience members, even non-ballet fans, frequently react to Dracula like he's a rock star. He has yet to meet a dancer who doesn't consider it the best male role in dance. "Forget Romeo, forget the prince in 'Swan Lake,' Pink says. "It's such an iconic character, with so many great moments."

Krutzkamp has attended seven opening nights of "Dracula," and each time the audience demanded a curtain call. "You expect that for 'Swan Lake,'" Krutzkamp says, "not 'Dracula.'"

Krutzkamp has already selected all the works for the 2025–26 season, as well as one piece for the season after that. He's proud of what he's accomplished since taking the reins as artistic director. Bringing contemporary Korean choreographer Young Soon Hue to Sacramento was a coup. She has danced for Ballett am Rhein in Germany, one of Europe's leading companies, and has created dozens of pieces and won multiple awards; until now, only one other U.S. company has performed her work.

She'll spend six weeks here working with the Sacramento company on "Romeo and Juliet." Krutzkamp believes she will elevate his dancers with her strong yet compassionate



Wen Na Robertson, who plays Lucy, rehearses her dance performance for "Dracula."

teaching style. "She expects a lot, but she does it in a caring way," he says. "I call it 'a kind demanding.'"

"Visions" also promises to level up the company's game. It features new works by Amy Hall Garner, who has created pieces for New York City Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; Alfonso Palencia, chief choreographer of Germany's State Theater Ballet Bremerhaven; and Thang Dao, who has choreographed for numerous companies. Sacramento Ballet dancer Julia Feldman will also debut a work she created.

During Krutzkamp's dancing days, his work as an international guest artist gave him a wide network of friends in the ballet world, easing his path in bringing groundbreaking choreographers to Sacramento. "I already have their phone numbers," he explains.

According to Sacramento Ballet's current board president, Alyssa Paoletti, the company

has benefited from those connections, and from Krutzkamp's talent in attracting great dancers and choreographers and innovative works. "I truly believe our productions and dancers rival any

"I TRULY BELIEVE OUR PRODUCTIONS AND DANCERS RIVAL ANY MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS."

-Alyssa Paoletti, board president, Sacramento Ballet

major metropolitan areas'," she says. "We have become an artistic hub because of Anthony, so you don't need to venture beyond our city for artistic excellence."

The changes Krutzkamp has implemented go beyond just providing

Sacramentans a few thrilling performances each year. A vibrant ballet company that looks past city borders raises Sacramento's profile outside the region, bringing in tourism, development and investment. It attracts people to downtown restaurants and cultural offerings. Perhaps most importantly, it improves the quality of life for the people who live here. "The creative process is happening here," Krutzkamp says. "It's a big deal. I'm very proud of that." ■

ARTIST SP

PRODUCER **ALEX SANDERS** HONES HIS CRAFT WHILE NURTURING OTHERS' PASSION FOR MUSIC

STORY AND PHOTO BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ

Alex Sanders (Prop the Producer) is a music producer, engineer and educator based in Sacramento, with a career spanning nearly two decades. Coming from a family of musicians, Sanders' musical journey started early, learning piano in first grade and eventually picking up the saxophone in middle school. Inspired by his father, who played saxophone and sang in a band, Sanders developed a deep passion for music.

"Music was just bar none, something I was really passionate about," Sanders recalls, noting that despite dabbling in sports and other interests, music remained his true calling.

High school marked a turning point in Sanders' journey, when he began songwriting and experimenting with music production. His first foray into digital music creation came through an unconventional route: the MTV Music Generator on the PlayStation One. This was his first music software and laid a foundation for his later work.

"That was the first time I really got my hands on [a] DAW, you know, digital audio workstation, like getting into making music — recording music," Sanders says. "I had a little USB microphone

... and I had friends that wanted to record. I was just looking for any reason to work in music."

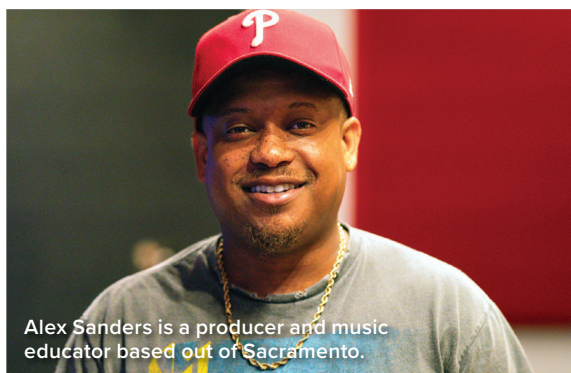
Today, Sanders' career is defined by his commitment not only to music but also music education. He works with the Sacramento County Office of Education and other organizations to bring music programs to schools, juvenile systems, and Native American reservations. Whether teaching music production, songwriting or the deeper technical aspects of sound, Sanders' goal is to make music accessible to everyone, particularly in underserved communities where arts programs are often the first to be cut.

"I want to make sure that creativity doesn't get lost, especially for the youth," Sanders says.

In addition to his educational endeavors, Sanders remains deeply involved in Sacramento's diverse music scene. He describes Sacramento as a "melting pot" of sounds, often overshadowed by the Bay Area but rich in its own right. "We don't have a specific sound, which means we can do whatever we want," he says, emphasizing the creative freedom that comes from this diversity.

Sanders' goals are both ambitious and grounded in community. He's aiming for a Grammy, having already been Grammy-considered and achieving several Billboard plaques. However, his current focus is more on nurturing the next generation of musicians and fostering creativity through his educational work. As he puts it, "I'm really big into energy, making sure that both parties are happy when collaborating, and creating without any boundaries."

Through his company, Track Cartel, and his presence on platforms like Instagram and Discord, Sanders continues to make waves, both sonically and by inspiring others to pursue their musical passions.



Alex Sanders is a producer and music educator based out of Sacramento.

OUTLIGHTS

ANTONIA PRICE EXPLORES THE ENDLESS NATURE OF ART THROUGH 'TIME LOOP' SERIES

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN

Time Loop #1” is fiber-based artist Antonia Price’s favorite of her pieces. It’s shaped as a wire circle with a fabric winding around it, “so it’s a continuous circle in your eyes,” she says. “If you start following the fabric, your eyes keep moving back and moving back and moving back.”

Price says the piece “just worked.” She is now onto “Time Loop #27,” creating out of the studio of her Curtis Park home. Like all her art, the Time Loop series represents abstraction, the final creation unknown “until it happens,” she says. “Because of the way I work with materials, [it] depends a lot on the interaction of the fabric — and I use a lot of wire and a lot of tension — how those things all work together. So the failure rate on these things is like 80%.”

Raised in Corvallis, Oregon, Price grew up in fiber arts; her mother is a weaver. She also played music during her youth and danced into her 20s. Price earned her degree in Spanish language and literature from University of Washington and lived in Seattle for about 13 years, where she danced for a small modern dance company. She also made costumes, sculptures and installations for dance productions. She moved to Los Angeles and earned a Master of Arts from California State University Los Angeles, often working on commission for designers who needed fiber sculptures for private homes, offices and businesses. She moved up to Sacramento in 2021.

For Price, creating art is like breathing. She says she can’t not do it. All of her pieces focus on the abstract. “So I’m working out the things that turn over in your mind, over and over and over again. When I’m having a hard time falling asleep, or when I’m stuck in traffic or whatever, my mind is rolling over these problems of shapes and numbers and colors and forms that I’m mak-



Antonia Price is a fiber-based artist who creates out the studio of her Curtis Park home.

ing. That’s where I’m putting my mind, instead of worrying about all of the other things there are to worry about.”

Being a fiber artist is about how she sees and processes the world. But it’s also something she inherited — and not only from her mother. “Fiber arts are a long, long tradition, as long as humanity itself,” she says, “and so I inherited this way of working from many, many, many generations before me.”

Price had a piece in a show at E Street Gallery in October and at Rumpelstiltskin on R Street for last December’s Second Saturday. While she continues to sell her artwork, she also teaches crochet and yoga, which provides a critical source of income in a particularly challenging career.

“Time Loop #1” still hangs in a corner of her living room. Something about the piece makes Price unable to want to give it away. “Every time I look at it,” she says, “my eye still goes around in that circle and it’s just so pleasing.”

DANIEL I. PAULSON EMBRACES HIS CURIOSITY THROUGH CHORAL MUSIC

STORY BY JUSTINE CHAHAL

Daniel I. Paulson grew up with a musical family, singing since he was a child in his kindergarten classroom in Tracy. As he continued to perform in choirs, his love for choral music only grew as the years went on.

Now, as an adult, Paulson who has lived in Sacramento for 25 years works as the choral director and founder of Vox Musica, a women's vocal choir that has served the Sacramento community since 2006 in its own unique way by innovating and curating work that is paired with another art form that its audience would not have heard presented through choral music before.

"We sing when words are not enough," Paulson says. "And it's a great way to be with each other, to share a message or to heal people, to enlighten them, to move them in some sort of way."

Paulson enjoys exploring the dichotomy between women's choir and other art forms like taika drums or electronic music, he says, adding

that he believes it's important for arts organizations to reinvent themselves in some way.

Paulson's work as a choral director involves establishing trust between himself and the chorus. Vox Musica provides a space for chorus members to be creative and have a say, acting as co-authors in the work chosen as opposed to fostering the common master conductor-apprentice singer relationship, he says.

Paulson also establishes trust with other artists that Vox Musica collaborates with, which is evident through its Nisenan Project. The project, originally established in 2016, is an ongoing partnership between the choir and Nisenan Tribe. It began when Paulson wanted to focus a project on the American River and, after doing some research, learned about the Nevada City Rancheria tribe.

Paulson then reached out to Nisenan spokesperson Shelly Covert who gifted her own song about a sacred drum to the choir. The choir continued to collaborate with the Nisenan tribe and was given permission to perform their music, he says.

"We just took really careful care about our relationship and honoring their music and telling their story was a really important part of that project," Paulson says. "It's a blessing and I don't take responsibility of being gifted their music lightly."

Whenever the songs are performed, members of the tribe are always involved, says Paulson, including Covert who is the only one allowed to sing a featured sacred mountain song. He also crafted instruments for these performances, including a bow-like instrument he fashioned out of a tree branch.

Paulson continues to push the vocal envelope in its 19th concert season. Its holiday concerts explored the work of medieval composer Hildegard von Bingen.

Paulson says he hopes that Vox Musica can find a new location to call home since it lost its previous space at Beatnik Studios, when the studio closed in 2021. He also wants to continue raising awareness of Vox Musica's work and solidify its place in Sacramento.

"I'm making music for people, not for myself," Paulson says. "I do this work for our community and it's not done selfishly."



Daniel I. Paulson is the choral director and founder of Vox Musica in Sacramento.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VOX MUSICA



DAVY FIVEASH EXPLORES IDENTITY AND BELIEF THROUGH VISUAL ART

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN

Davy Fiveash says he has always been a visual artist: He started coloring and never stopped. He is now an interdisciplinary visual artist represented by Archival Gallery in East Sacramento. He describes his art as being an exploration of “modern belief structures and how our adherence to them formulates our sense of identity and community.”

Fiveash attended The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and went to the Art Institute San Francisco for his MFA. Going to college to study art also brought him out of his isolated life growing up in the rural South.

“I grew up in Southern Georgia, about 10 minutes north of Florida, and there wasn’t a whole lot of culture,” Fiveash says. “So it was a solitary thing, until I went to school.”

In San Francisco, he met the man who later became his husband; his partner’s job as an attorney for the state of California led the couple to relocate to Sacramento about a decade ago. He says making a living as an artist here is tough, but also noted that’s true of artists living in most places. Fiveash had a show at Archival Gallery in October, but he often keeps his studio space open to visi-

tors, including for most Second Saturdays.

His work incorporates folk art and traditional art-making, he says, along with spiritual totems, icons and symbolism to understand how human beings look at the world. Fiveash loves making “something gorgeous” but also wants to bring out thought-provoking conversations.

“A lot of my work, most recently, has been about how we identify ourselves based on belief structures — the things we believe in,” he says. “It can be religion, it can be science, it can just be day to day: Do I believe this person who’s talking to me? Half of our identities ... are about the conversations we have with ourselves and with the world. So I’m really interested in what people put their faith or their belief in.”

Fiveash says throughout the course of his life as an artist, he has only made a handful of pieces that he wanted to keep in his house. One of his favorites is called “The Nightmare,” which he showed in the Mayor’s Gallery in the Office of the Mayor of Sacramento last year.

“It calms me down,” he says. “Artwork that can bring you serenity, I think, is the kind of art that I want to live with.”

FILMMAKER **JAIME TAFOYA** SHARES EXPERIENCE AS STROKE SURVIVOR

STORY BY JUSTINE CHAHAL

Jaime Tafoya fell in love with film when he was a child.

After his grandmother took him to see the 1968 “Planet of the Apes,” he says he developed an interest in photography. He would borrow his mother’s camera to make small movies, ranging from claymation to creating his own James Bond film. He proceeded to take courses through the now closed Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco, turning a serious hobby into a career.

“Being an artist is, no matter what medium you’re in ... you’re conveying your vision and you want to hopefully move people,” Tafoya says.

Now, with the release of his new documentary “Stroke – The Circle of Healing,” the Sacramento director hopes he can move others by sharing his experience as a stroke survivor.

The documentary, released through PBS KVIE in December, details Tafoya’s stroke in 2017 and his ongoing recovery, which includes not only physical therapy but mental, emotional and spiritual health to complete the “circle” of healing.

Tafoya says that while he hopes the general public raises their awareness of strokes from the documentary, he really made it with stroke survivors in mind.

In 2017, Tafoya was working as a chef for Bon Appétit Management Company in Maryland to pursue cooking, another passion of his. It was then that he experienced his ischemic stroke, which impacted the left side of his brain. Although his friends and family were not present physically, he says they supported him often. However, he adds that many stroke survivors have no one to turn to and feel isolated.

When the film came out, Tafoya says a woman reached out to him through Facebook to tell him she was moved because somebody recognized her struggle to rehabilitate. Tafoya says this is exactly what he wanted.

“I want to let them know there’s life after stroke because I went through all of those sharp phases,” Tafoya says. “What people don’t understand is the mental and emotional toll a health event can have on you. That can be a real big barrier to overcome, especially if you don’t have the support.”

Tafoya, who is of Native American heritage and whose great-grandfather is a part of the Northern Arapaho tribe, also included Native American professionals who spoke on how the group faces barriers to health care. Tafoya also speaks on how he utilizes the Sacramento

Native American Health Center’s Healing Ways program to use holistic medicine alongside his prescribed medicine.

Tafoya says he wants to continue directing and producing documentaries, specifically Native American-focused ones.

“I’m a huge Native American advocate,” Tafoya says. “This last half of my life, I’m going to devote myself to making more Native American themed films because that community has given me so much in terms of support and wisdom to get through these times.”



Documentary filmmaker Jaime Tafoya’s new film, “Stroke – The Circle of Healing,” chronicles his experience as a stroke survivor.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAIME TAFOYA

J. ROSS PARRELLI RAPS TO THE BEAT OF HER OWN PATH

STORY BY KATERINA GRAZIOSI

J. Ross Parrelli first began rapping when she saw a sign — literally. The Auburn native was a recent college graduate of Long Beach State in 2005 when she came across an ad announcing an emcee battle that would award the winner \$250. Strapped for cash, as many recent graduates are, Ross Parrelli hit the writing board and, eventually, took home the prize money.

“It was so awesome,” she recalls. “It opened up this whole thing inside of me.”

In college, Ross Parrelli was on an award-winning slam poetry team and says she has always had an affinity for words, but it wasn’t until she paired those words with a beat that she found her “thing.” After her victory, her music career quickly took off bringing together the band Adaca Soul and opening for rapper Raekwon, then moving to the East Coast to work with Wyclef Jean and eventually signing with Universal Records in 2015.

Despite working with John Legend, touring with members of Wu Tang Clan and performing alongside Jurassic 5, showbusiness wasn’t everything Ross Parrelli thought it would be and two years later, she quit the mainstream industry to focus on her nonprofit Beats Lyrics Leaders.

“I could only be authentic to myself,” she says, adding that the incongruous image of herself in the industry’s eye was ultimately the deciding factor. “People want to put you in a box.”

Founded in 2012, Beats Lyrics Leaders is a group of teaching artists and mentors that provide workshops, conferences, trainings, and other education opportunities to bring music and beat making, lyric writing, and leadership development to youth and educators through hip-hop music and performance art. Utilizing her own network of artists and creatives, Ross Parrelli has brought Beat Lyrics Leaders to schools in the Twin Rivers, Sacramento City and Elk Grove unified school districts, to name a few.

“I think my true craft, in my true art, is connection,” she says, “connecting people, connecting things, helping people connect to their purpose.”

Building on her bachelor’s degree in human development from Long Beach State, Ross Parrelli earned her master’s in leadership education from Mills College in 2022. She also sits on several local boards including Arts Council Placer County Board and Auburn Economic Development Com-



J. Ross Parrelli is a hip-hop artist and educator and the founder of Beats Lyrics Leaders.

mission. Economic development is key to Ross Parrelli’s work with Beats Lyrics Leaders.

“Music and art is what captures us as humans,” she says. “The other side of it is that it’s also economic, and arts and music, they drive our economy. The seventh largest economy in California is the creative economy. ... We can really use music and art as workforce development.”

Ross Parrelli is currently developing an entrepreneurship camp with Roseville Venture Lab to expand opportunities for youth in creative sectors.

“My inspiration are these students,” she says. “When you see that aha moment, like when you see a student, or a student of any age, really get something that you’re saying ... that life changing moment that they remember, that’s what inspires me.”

PERCUSSIONIST **JAY MYERS** ON THE POWER OF MUSIC

STORY BY **SENA CHRISTIAN**

Like many small town athlete-musicians, Jay Myers' halftimes during his high school football games were busy. He would rush to remove his football pads to play drums with the marching band, then hustle back for the second half of the game.

That was life in Cope, South Carolina, a town of about 100 residents, where Myers first started playing the drums as a child at the church his grandmother attended. He's been honing his chops ever since.

"Pretty much, growing up, all my life was drums," he says.

While attending SC Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities as a teenager, he studied percussion under top-tier musicians. "That was amazing, honestly, just learning about the history of music during the Baroque era, some early jazz

stuff — pretty much all of our homework being music history. It really taught me a lot about musicianship, performance and then being a musician."

From there, Myers joined the Air Force for about five years, which brought him to Sacramento. When his service ended in 2018, he picked the drums right back up and became a professional musician, composer and educator. He specializes in marching percussion, gospel, neo-soul, jazz and alternative music, according to his website.

This is his fourth season with the Sacramento Kings Drumline; he's the drum captain. He's also been hired as the co-director of the drum line for Sacramento State's new Black Honors College. He says this is a full-circle moment for him.

"I remember growing up as a kid and watching South Carolina State University marching down our small town, or going to the homecoming game, just watching the drum line, always just being enamored with the performance and the marching aspect and the cadences," he says. "Now being able to put my own touch and feel, and bring that slice of home to California, I cannot express how excited [I am]."

As if he's not busy enough, Myers also plays with the Symphonia Phonotone orchestra, which performs 1920s and 1930s syncopated jazz music around Sacramento and California. His band, Cosmic Roots, has been performing regularly at Powerhouse Pub in Folsom and at The Side Door in Sacramento. Last year, he released his solo EP "Diaspora," available on streaming platforms.

Myers is a firm believer that "music is a universal language" and it's been one of his goals to spread this language through music education. He has taught at Bach 2 Rock Music Schools in Folsom and at Music Lab Davis, and he offers private lessons. He says he has taught a spectrum of students, including those with learning disabilities or hearing deficits. "Teaching students, it's very fulfilling seeing them being able to progress through music," he says.

In terms of his own education, he has plans to return to school to earn his master's degree in music therapy. Both his mother and sister have worked as nurses, and he remembers visiting hospitals and nursing homes and seeing how older people respond to music. He was a witness, he says, to the power of music.



Jay Myers plays percussion with several groups, including Symphonia Phonotone orchestra and Cosmic Roots.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAY MYERS

JEFF MUSSER BRINGS GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE TO SAC'S ART SCENE

STORY BY HELEN HARLAN

As a 12-year-old growing up in East Sacramento's River Park, Jeff Musser spent his days doing typical things for boys in the late 1980s. He played baseball and video games, and rode his bike with friends, often getting into trouble.

"You could take all that away, and I would still focus on drawing. I didn't love to do anything else as much as I loved being in my room, drawing," Musser recalls.

As an adult, Musser is a contemporary figurative painter who has practiced worldwide for over two decades. Much of his work is influenced by issues of race and whiteness, which have affected him since childhood. Now 47, he is settled in Sacramento and lives with his partner, Phuong Tran, co-owner of local eateries Southside Super and Fish Face Poke Bar. His workspace in their downtown home is covered in collages he describes as paintings in progress.

"Collage is how most paintings start. I've also been creating collages on their own using spray paint, charcoal, ink and pencil as sketches for future paintings," Musser explains from his home studio, which he keeps at a frigid 60 degrees.

After graduating from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Musser spent two years working in advertising in The Windy City, designing promotional materials for McDonald's Happy Meals and various movies.

"I absolutely hated it because I wasn't painting or drawing when I got home," he says. "I can't be creative for someone else and not have a say in how it turns out."

Musser's C.V. reads like a well-stamped passport: He lived in Shanghai for one summer in 2014 and his work has been shown from Berlin to São Paulo to Brooklyn to Brea, California. He's featured in private collections, including Oprah Winfrey's, with whom he was connected in Chicago. He says meeting with Winfrey to discuss his work was "surreal."

Musser notes that life as a Sacramento artist has its pros and cons.

"You can pretty much do whatever you want and put on your own events without the pressures of needing to create works for sales or the demands of a commercial gallery that may push you to change your artwork," he says. "The



downside is that if you don't create conservative, easy-to-sell Sacramento cityscapes or Wayne Thiebaud-esque landscape paintings, it can be a tough road."

Musser's take on the necessary shifts in how the average person views art and artists goes beyond Sacramento.

"The change that needs to happen in people's minds is what I think has to happen in America at large: The arts are an essential part of society that we need to invest in," he says. "You can see the health of a community and people within it when they recognize the value of their creative contributions."

When he feels overwhelmed, Musser does what many do to vent: He posts exhausted SpongeBob SquarePants memes on Instagram, as he did on June 14 last year.

"That day, I don't remember exactly," Musser says with a laugh, reflecting on what motivated him to post the meme of the discombobulated yellow pop-culture icon. "It might have been around a deadline for this really big fellowship I was applying for, and I had to edit another draft of the proposal, but then I also had to spend a certain amount of time painting. I had to spend a certain amount of time answering emails. Sometimes, you're being pulled in so many different directions, and it just becomes overwhelming."

JULIE BERNADETH CRUMB ON USING ART AS PLACEMAKING FOR CULTURE

STORY BY KATERINA GRAZIOSI

Julie Bernadeth Crumb proudly comes from a family of fishermen and small business owners. Born in the Philippines and raised in the small coastal town of Pagadian City, she came to the U.S. with her mother in 2008. Now years later, her upbringing and love of her culture informs much of her work as an interdisciplinary artist.

"I choose to represent my identity through a multidisciplinary practice because I believe that the Filipino identity is complex, and there's so many different ... personal identities within the Filipino diaspora," she says. "I think that multidisciplinary practice is kind of like a metaphor for that."

After coming to the U.S. at age 10, Bernadeth Crumb fostered a drive she says has always been there: to create. Through a variety of art classes and networking with arts professors at Sacramento City College and later Sacramento State, Bernadeth Crumb ultimately decided on a studio focused major and graduated with a bachelor's in December 2023.

"I learned things like printmaking and the rudimentary skills required for digital art, and all of these things just interested me. I didn't want to

choose a specific practice," she says. "And I really think that when you're making art, the process that you choose needs to have meaning as well. ... It feeds into this curiosity and this joy and intuitive process that I don't think you should stifle."

While she dabbles in photography, specifically Polaroid film, and other mediums, Bernadeth Crumb primarily works with ceramics and printmaking. She recently showcased some of her work in two Bay Area exhibitions, "Refractions" at East Bay Photo Collective and "Inheritance" at Bituin Studio.

The studio, which is located in San Francisco's SOMA Pilipinas district, holds a special place in Bernadeth Crumb's personal journey. As a queer artist, she says being involved with Bituin's exhibition was "healing to be in that space and feel accepted and wanted in that space" with the queer Filipino community. Her work also centers on unlearning the systems of thought that came from her Catholic upbringing.

"I'm driven to, first and foremost, represent my people, because I still don't see a lot of Pinays in art spaces," she says, adding that there are few opportunities for showcasing art, particularly art that intersects with cultural identity. "It's an act of placemaking for my people."

Locally, Bernadeth Crumb was also part of the "Agimat" group exhibit honoring Filipino American History Month at the James Kaneko Gallery at American River College in October.

Along with recently completing a residency at E Street Gallery in Sacramento, Bernadeth Crumb is also the project coordinator for Art Tonic, which offers, among other things, grant writing services, writing workshops and professional development opportunities for artists and creatives in the Sacramento region.

On what's ahead, Bernadeth Crumb plans to continue using her art to advocate for representation.

"Artists create to put meaning into the world and to reflect on the things in our world that affect them and their community," she says. "[A] very important part of my work and where it's going to go in the future is what role it plays in spaces related to activism and cultural representation, because I think those two things are very intertwined."



Julie Bernadeth Crumb is a Filipino-American interdisciplinary artist based in Sacramento

PHOTO BY SHANI ZUBERI, COURTESY OF JULIE BERNADETH CRUMB



Kate Farrall creates art out of ARTHOUSE on R Street. She is also a business coach for artists and creatives.

KATE FARRALL BALANCES EXPERIMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN

Kate Farrall vaguely recalls reading a Carol Burnett book when she was a child that was about the jobs one could have when they grew up. “I was like, OK, I want to be the artist,” she says.

Farrall’s creative career began in earnest when she got a degree in art history with a double major in photography at University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She worked at a contemporary nonprofit gallery called Maryland Art Place in Baltimore, before relocating to the West Coast to attend graduate school for photography at California College of the Arts in Oakland.

“What I did was a lot of [analogue] camera-less photography and, at the time, that was not that big of a field,” Farrall says, in reference to the process of using various chemicals to manipulate light and draw out images. “Now I’ve moved on to continuing to do things in very analogue ways, but also more painting, more collage, more working with paper, sculptural elements to my pieces or maybe they’re just full-on sculptures,” she says.

One of her pieces, “Closing Loops,” is made from Juxtapoz Magazine, which she deconstructed, then sewed and wove back together into a huge wall piece. It has large loops pulled loose, to be, she says, “almost like an unraveling, but a beautiful unraveling.”

As with her camera-less photography — a concept hard for some to understand — Farrall says she tries to push the edges of what she thinks she can do with her art. “It’s very experimental,” she says. “It invites chance and mistakes, and doing things that other people would look at as wrong or a mistake.”

Farrall’s work can be seen in her open studio at ARTHOUSE on R Street every Second Saturday. In addition to making her own art, she provides business coaching for artists, educating them on strategies, tools and techniques to bring in a sustainable income through their creative endeavors.

She says the internet and social media have allowed artists to become better-equipped as entrepreneurs — and she is in a good position to advise her peers on how to take advantage of these opportunities.

While Farrall acknowledges that the entrepreneurial life is not an easy one, for her the drive and passion to create is something she has felt since childhood.

“It’s definitely something that is important to me as a human to be able to create, and see creation as a very essential element of what we do as humans,” she says. “People often ignore this part of themselves. ... I think that’s a tragedy to ignore that part, because when you don’t, you have a much fuller life.”

MIRABEL WIGON TURNS BROKEN SYSTEMS INTO REJUVENATIVE REFLECTION

STORY BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ



Mirabel Wigon in her home studio in Elk Grove.

Mirabel Wigon, an artist living in Elk Grove, didn't set out to become a painter. Her journey actually began in anthropology before a serendipitous encounter with a painting class changed her trajectory. "I was actually an anthropology major, but then I took a painting class, and I was like, 'woah,'" she says. "Maybe this whole time I wasn't so much interested in studying material culture, but being a contributor to it."

Wigon's love for painting evolved throughout her college years, and in 2014 she graduated from California State University East Bay with a BFA, a pivotal moment that solidified her dedication to art as a career. She also went on to earn an MFA in drawing and painting from CSU Long Beach.

Initially inspired by anime and comic books, she eventually shifted her focus to the complexities and possibilities of painting. Her current work is deeply influenced by her immediate environment, particularly the landscapes and environmental disasters in Northern California.

"It's changed so much over the years. Actually, like within that last five to six years — from grad school till now," she says. "I was making a lot of work about disparaging energy systems. Like, look at all this energy extractivism and how terrible that is."

Now, much of Wigon's work captures the beauty and destruction of the landscapes she calls home, reflecting on the wildfires and floods that have plagued the region. However, she also sees these catastrophic events as metaphors for transformation and resilience. Her current series focuses on the idea that environmental collapse can foster strength, codependency and renewal, offering viewers a chance to reimagine what could be possible.

"So there's this event and it's really terrible, but then in the paintings there are these portals which have a hopeful new future," she says. "How could I take something that has fallen apart, like a broken system, to be a catalyst for something rejuvenative?"

Wigon's process is just as intricate as her themes. Using a combination of digital maquettes, Photoshop collages and photogrammetry (a technique used to create three-dimensional models of objects based off of photographs) to inform her paintings. These models turn out glitchy, as she intentionally feeds the photogrammetry program less information than would be required for a life-like interpretation.

"I think that idea of the 'glitch' as an analogy to painting, because it's transformative," Wigon says. "So as the painting builds, it's like morphing, along with how the model is also being morphed and changed into something new."

Her work invites the audience to engage with the deeper, often unseen layers of meaning and process. Whether in her artwork or her teaching as an assistant professor of painting at CSU Stanislaus in Turlock, Wigon is passionate about sharing her creative process with others.

"It's like a reciprocal relationship," she says. "I'm sharing things that I get really excited about with them ... and then a student asks a question, or they have a series of things that they're trying to problem solve, and all of a sudden it's like, whoa that's super interesting. ... It's just like this feedback loop."

PAM AVERY ON THE WINDING ROAD TO BECOMING A STUDIO ARTIST

STORY AND PHOTO BY HELEN HARLAN

Pam Avery doesn't often listen to music when she paints her vibrant and dynamic abstract acrylic canvases in her studio in Boulevard Park. As one of 18 resident artists sharing four studios at The Art Studios, a co-working space and showroom between Bambini Restaurant and The Tattoo Shop on 17th and I streets in Sacramento, she says she doesn't need the distraction.

"Some music I can't paint around. Some people I can't paint around," she says. "Abstract is different. You have to really focus to get into the zone. And once it takes over, you can't have interference."

In addition to abstract, Avery practices figure painting and ceramics, which she throws at home on her patio. The Sacramento native tries to work at The Art Studios for short stints a few times a week, where she can come and go as she pleases, and she co-hosts the studio's Second Saturdays.

An El Camino High School graduate, Avery holds a bachelor's degree in studio art from UC Berkeley and a master's in art education from Sac State. She says she gravitated early to abstract painting because of one of its huge elements: color.

"Color is my thing," she says, full stop.

And yet, as an artist and a person, Avery is actually many things — or has been, at least. "It's been a long journey, traveling through schools and marriage and divorce and having a child, being a single mom, and now I have a grandson," she reflects. "The road was kind of windy."

While she was an art student at Cal in the 1970s, Avery fell into San Francisco's colorful belly dance scene, among the strip clubs, neon signs and seedy elements that defined Broadway's North Beach at the time. She danced professionally, sometimes seven nights a week, in clubs like Casbah and The Bagdad, which were just two doors down from each other.

"A close friend of mine encouraged me to join his [belly-dancing] troupe. At the same time, I was going to Berkeley and taking dance classes on the weekends and nights, as well as belly dancing, which turned into a career," she says.

In 1986, Avery's time in the Bay Area came to a halt when she decided to get practical and move herself and her son back to Sacramento. Inspired by her belly dance community in San Francisco, she started looking for art schools to earn her teaching credential.

After 21 years as an art teacher in the Twin Rivers Unified School District in North Sacramento, Avery retired in 2015. But she never stopped dancing.

When she looks back on her childhood, one in which she was encouraged to walk the steady path, Avery does so with the wisdom of a person who has been many things.

"My childhood upbringing was always, 'What are you gonna do? What are you going to do?' Dance wasn't enough. Art wasn't enough, you know? That kind of Puritan background — don't be too risky," she says. "And yet, I was risky."



Pam Avery stands in her workspace in The Art Studios between her abstract acrylics and ceramic works in November 2024.

NOELLE TAVARES STITCHES SACRAMENTO'S CREATIVE COMMUNITY TOGETHER WITH WEARABLE ART

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN PHOTO BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ

Noelle Tavares enjoys creating art, but the aspect of the work she especially likes is how customers respond to her wearables crafted under her brand Fine Tuned Inc.

"When I create certain pieces for customers or for clients of mine, the reactions that I do get after I reveal the piece to them ... is what really keeps me going," Tavares says. "It is good to know that it's appreciated, and they love it and they know this is something originally done for them and only them."

Raised in South Sacramento and a graduate of Luther Burbank High School, Tavares started her career as a cut-and-sew designer for her vintage line, Faedrah Clothing Co., around 2005. In 2011 she launched her rebrand, concentrating more on wearable art, like art pieces on denim and camouflage jackets. She has continued with this concept, but now also works with incorporating denim into paintings on canvas.

Tavares participates in showcases throughout Sacramento, and her clothing can regularly be found at FreeStyle Clothing Exchange. Her one-of-kind pieces can be purchased on her website.

For custom clients, she sits down with them to brainstorm — but she wants them to trust her

to do her own thing. "I like to tell clients, too, that this is like a rendition that I will be doing for them," she says. "They might give me a picture or something and be like, OK, I want to get this done. So I always like to tell them, well, with my pieces, I always like to not do just a copycat of that actual thing. ... I try to flip it into my own perspective, creatively."

Tavares came up in the local fashion scene in the early 2000s when there were only a handful of local creators and designers in Sacramento, she says. But now the field is becoming more saturated with the influence of social media.

"Nowadays it's like if you turn to your left or your right, someone is a designer, someone is an artist, someone is a stylist of that manner," Tavares says. "It's very common now that you'll find a lot of people that do what I do. But, at the same time, I feel like I've made it to the point in my career that my style is very distinctive."

Throughout her adulthood, Tavares' travels took her to Southern California for a stint and then New York almost became home at one point, "because I was really digging the scene out there." She took trips to the East Coast for her day job — she still works in the fashion retail industry — and elsewhere in the United States. But she always felt pulled back to Sacramento.

Now she wants to pay her success forward. Through Fine Tuned Inc., she hosts several community-oriented gatherings, including a movie night once a month featuring Black classic cinema at a coworking space on Del Paso Boulevard. She also does closet hauls, from clothing and accessories collected through the years, as her way of giving back style-wise and creatively. One of the big things she can do now, she says, is simply give advice to emerging artists and creators — something she didn't have during her rise.

"I came up during a time where it was kind of like I had to figure it out myself, because I didn't have anybody to go to, or any kind of peers that were doing the same thing I was doing," she says. "I pretty much had to teach and learn myself over the years. ... Now I look at myself and want to be a vessel to the community and be a helping hand, or something of that manner, to these up-and-coming creators that are out here now."



Noelle Tavares creates wearable art for her brand Fine Tuned Inc.

NINEFINGERS FINDS HEALING AND COMMUNITY THROUGH MUSIC AND FEARLESS EXPLORATION

STORY AND PHOTO BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ

NineFingers, the enigmatic musician with a penchant for blending styles, first picked up a guitar at 12 years old. Like many young artists, he found music through heartbreak, using his mother's guitar to channel emotions he didn't know how to express yet. But for Nine, this proved to be more than a phase. Music became a bridge that connected him to others in ways words couldn't.

"I was on the autism spectrum without realizing it, and so I felt very separate from other people," he explains.

Yet, once he started writing and playing songs, his music allowed others to see him for the first time. That early experience fueled a passion that would carry him through the next three decades — with a brief hiatus where dodgeball became his primary focus.

While music has been a constant, the styles and forms Nine embraces are anything but fixed. He describes his creative approach as "eating dessert first," meaning he follows whatever excites him in the moment.

"I just don't limit myself by worrying about whether I'm good at something or not," he says. "If I want to do it, I just do it, and I'm willing to be bad."

This philosophy has allowed him to dabble in everything from folk, punk and hip hop, with no particular loyalty to a specific genre. For Nine, music is about expression, not definition.

"Because what will happen is different people will be like 'Oh, you remind me of this person.' And they just want to hear more of whatever it is they happen to like ... there would always be like three different people saying three different song styles and each one trying to pull me in opposite directions," Nine says. "And so I was like, 'I just need to do whatever I want to do.'"

That fearless exploration can sometimes take a toll. His music is deeply autobiographical, and in his 2019 album "Loop," Nine confronted some of his darkest moments — PTSD, depression, alcoholism and losing his wife to addiction. Songs like "Lilith" and "PTSD Ferryman" forced him to dive into personal traumas, a process that was both dangerous and therapeutic.

"That was honestly dangerous for me to express because I had to really dive into my own traumas and triggers," he says.



NineFingers is a songwriter based out of Sacramento, where he performs, hosts open mics and runs a monthly songwriters circle.

Though terrifying, this intense process ultimately helped him heal. Nine refers to it as "speed-running" his PTSD, going through the depths of his trauma so quickly and so completely that he emerged from it with a newfound sense of freedom. "I haven't had a panic attack in seven or eight years," he says. For him, music was the lifeline that kept him going, and in many ways, saved his life.

But the impact of Nine's philosophy isn't limited to his own healing. Since moving to Sacramento nearly four years ago, he's found joy in fostering a sense of community through open mics and collaborative projects. Though he's worked with musicians in different cities, Sacramento stands out for its camaraderie. "This is probably the most supportive group of artists ... being kind to each other and wanting each other to succeed," he says.

However, he also admits to the challenges Sacramento faces, particularly the lack of venues that cater to indie musicians. "The city is failing its artists," he says, noting how quickly vital spaces can be shut down by a single noise complaint.

Despite this, Nine is committed to nurturing the local scene. His open mics are a space for musicians to explore and express themselves, regardless of their level of experience. And he helps organize a monthly songwriters' circle where musicians can show their work to each other and seek feedback. "I don't care how polished the performance is," he explains. "It's about nurturing artists to feel supported in a way that they continue to create art or start creating art." ■

CALIFORNIA'S SKATER HISTORIAN

STORY BY
CASEY RAFTER

PHOTO BY
KACHISIDE MADU

JOSÉ VADI CHRONICLES CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND CALIFORNIA IN MOTION

With a decade of life on the streets already showing on the skateboard's trucks and wheels, the Action Sports Kamikaze was worse for wear, but it was destined for a revival. In 1995, young José Vadi discovered and rescued his cousin's discarded skateboard from his garage. Vadi said the board was a Price Club brand and never was right, but he made it his own until the dilapidated trucks quickly fell to pieces.

Showing a tenacity that still follows him, he dropped \$20 on a Kmart Veriflex board. Vadi began skating as a teenager, grinding metallic ledges, curbs and loading docks near his home in Pomona. He easily settled into the world of skateboarding: an early opportunity to witness and take part in a community and culture that would become his own.

Now a man who finds himself in his late 30s, recovering from a wrist injury, Vadi still considers himself an avid skater. He said writing more about skating and connecting with other skaters through his writing cements that identity.

"I feel like even more of a skater now than I was when I was a kid," Vadi says. "It still shapes my worldview and how I build community and how I find joy and how I create joy for myself. But it's also physically taxing the older you get."

That sense of connection has informed his work as a filmmaker, playwright, journalist, essayist, poet and author. His work has appeared online and in print for The Atlantic, The Wall Street Journal and Free Skate Magazine.

In recent years, Vadi has authored two books: "Inter State: Essays from California" and "Chipped: Writing from a Skateboarder's Lens."

EARLY GRINDAGE

As a teenager, Vadi consumed skating culture via VHS tapes sold at local skate shops and still photography in magazines. On the journey to interpret his own experiences, Vadi found a voice in poetry. He says it was his way to articulate what he was seeing and experiencing as a teenager, a skateboarder, a Californian and a myriad of other identities he aligned with.

"It was the quickest thing to access and I could write multiple thoughts into multiple short poems," Vadi says. "Poetry felt extremely accessible and its connection to hip hop was key. I couldn't rap, but I could write a poem."

While in high school, Vadi had his poetry published for the first time after submitting to a PBS program called "Poetic License." Vadi says he broke into the spoken word scene while attending UC Berkeley to study history, which opened new opportunities to develop as an artistic writer.

"That became my gateway to the literary art world of the bay," Vadi says. "From there, I found mentors in the playwriting world and the theater world as much as the poetry world and really started finding my voice there."

As a poet, as a skateboarder and as a storyteller, Vadi artfully draws connections within the communities of skateboarders, field workers, immigrant families and working class families he's studied and written about — among many others — and presents similarities between them as they face displacement, gentrification, poverty and cultural shifts between generations.

The release of "Inter State" in September 2021 came only a few months after Vadi and his wife moved from Oakland to Sacramento. The move gave Vadi a chance

to get closer to his sister and allowed his wife — a McClatchy High School alumni — to return to her Sacramento roots. He says the experiences between releasing a book in year two of COVID-19 and releasing “Chipped” this past April, were vastly different from one another.

“We were at the first booster stage,” Vadi said. “A lot of ‘Chipped’ is kind of making up for lost time with ‘Inter State.’... I relied a lot on podcasts and stuff you can do remotely for ‘Inter State.’”

As a former skateboarder and a current writer, bookseller and events manager for San Francisco bookstore Green Apple Books, Kar Johnson found herself easily relating to Vadi’s work.

“I was just so moved through all of reading ‘Chipped,’ because it spoke to that young skater in me, in particular, his passage about the Rockridge BART station,” Johnson says. “It was funny reading that book. This must be what people in New York must feel all the time ... because so many books are set in New York. [In] so few do we get to see Oakland or Sac or anywhere in Northern California in such detail.”

In “Chipped,” Vadi assigns specific elements of culture to skateboarding including filming style, lingo, fashion and music. There are also negative stigmas assigned to the skateboarding community, which is a dynamic Vadi says he sees in communities of graffiti artists as well.

“Graffiti culture is huge,” Vadi says. “You’re finding a unique space to do your art. And you’re probably going to that space with music in your head, fueling that physical creativity. There’s a huge overlap of audiences.”

RECORDING, REPORTING, BECOMING THE STORYTELLER

As an artist, Vadi says his biggest deadline is mortality, but he feels an intrinsic responsibility as a writer to record history. He says he sees himself as part of a continuum of writers whose job it is to record a specific moment in time in order to better understand trends and larger social issues.

“While we’re here, we have to document or at least understand that we exist in a historical space,” Vadi says. “There’s a before and there will be a future. We’re the conduit between those two points ... I think the writer’s responsibility is to be honest and aware of their surroundings.”

Johnson again emphasized the value of Vadi’s writing as a reader who sees herself in the subject matter he covers. Johnson says she’s never experienced the kind of familiarity with a setting in a book in the way Vadi’s work offers. She says it



José Vadi is the author of “Inter State: Essays from California” and “Chipped: Writing from a Skateboarder’s Lens.”

was this connection Vadi showed to these places that motivated her to reach out to him when East Bay Booksellers, in the Rockridge neighborhood of Oakland, was lost to a building fire in July.

“I really honed in on him talking about Rockridge, because it’s a special neighborhood ... it was so weird sitting in my apartment and hearing him talk about the street right outside my apartment,” Johnson says. “[East Bay’s] building’s a total wash. ... They’re my neighborhood bookstore, so I just organized this event of East Bay writers to put together a fundraiser and José was the first person I thought of.”

Before the pandemic, Vadi made attempts to showcase a few pieces that would eventually end up as a part of “Inter State.” He says as a writer, he began by professing how he saw life as a Californian. Eventually, his mission evolved from being the teller to being the one posing the question to those around him: what does it mean to be a Californian?

When he read an excerpt from his essay “A California Inquiry (or California in Flames),” he discussed a fear of losing California as he watched his grandfather’s home sold off and reshaped from a plentiful garden to a flavorless yard. The responses from the readings he conducted showed him that he’s not the only one asking these questions of identity and place.

“It shouldn’t be surprising; we grew up in California schools reading Steinbeck and Kerouac. These tales of California over time,” Vadi says. “We’re so geographically diverse that we’re also geographically segmented. Whether it’s wildfires or getting priced out of their hometowns, you connect to this larger identity of what it means to be a Californian.” ■

'THE LAST' FRONTIER

AN ART HAVEN IN THE SACRAMENTO DELTA

STORY BY ANGIE ENG PHOTOS BY JAN LEBOSKI



Angie Eng is a conceptual artist and educator who moved to Locke in 2023. Her great-grandparents settled in the area in the early 1900s from China.

Artists are probably the most resourceful people when it comes to housing. To avoid high rents, they squat in abandoned buildings, live in warehouses, couch surf, house sit, sublet or sublet a sublet.

Art hubs like San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City — with their top dollar real estate values — have responded with rent control and stabilization laws, recognizing the pivotal role of cultural creators in a city's economy. In 1982, New York artists rallied behind the Loft Law, a landmark measure permitting creatives to inhabit converted commercial spaces as live/work studios. In the 1990s, I got lucky and found such a loft on the Bowery where I paid \$1,100 per month (cash only/no lease) for 2,000 square feet plus roof access; a huge perk in New York City.

It has long since been torn down and replaced by luxury condos.

The nationwide disappearance of affordable housing stands as a grim reality; few could have predicted that rental rates in California's capital might soar to nearly \$5 per square foot. In this inflated real estate market, where will artists go?

If you drive just 10 minutes south from downtown Sacramento along the Sacramento River, you will pass vineyards, small pear farms, fishing boats and signs like "Get fresh crawdads" or "Missing pet goat." A winding road hugs the river and passes the hamlets of Freeport, Clarksburg, Cortland, Vorden (where my grandfather was born) and then Locke, formerly part of Walnut Grove.

Hang a quick left at the “Welcome to Locke Historic District” sign and you enter a portal to the Wild West circa late 1800s and early 1900’s. It’s here a 2-strip, 14-acre tiny burg where you will find the last frontier of inexpensive rents to fit an artist’s budget.

Some readers have probably ventured down this all-eyes-on-the-road detour on their way to the Bay Area. Some may remember thrift and antique stores that lined the wooden storefronts open just two decades ago. On sunny weekends, bikers stop to frequent Al’s Place, aka Al the Wops, famous for their peanut butter steaks.

Following the Gold Rush, Chinese immigrant laborers undertook the Herculean task of constructing 1,100 miles of levees, transforming marshes into fertile farming grounds.

Locke proudly stands as the sole surviving town built by and for Chinese immigrants in the United States. From 1915 through the pre-World War II era, the area’s entertainment revolved around gambling, brothels and opium dens, catering primarily to the male farm laborer population who could not bring their wives due to the Page Act of 1875. Prohibition-era escapades drew white urbanites in search of moonshine and nocturnal diversions, creating a rare space where people of different races mingled freely amid the strictures of segregation, according to Jeff Lee, a grandson of the founder of Locke.

In 1952, Sacramento County ordered the few remaining gambling halls to close their doors. Little by little the ice-cream stores, the shoe store, the Japanese hair salon, the multiple boarding houses and the main grocery store followed suit. Those who hadn’t migrated south to the Bay Area or north to the state capitol spent their twilight years in this secluded Chinese American enclave.

Not until the counterculture movement of the 1960s did a wave of newcomers discover this rural sanctuary built on former Miwok territory. Over time, Locke’s homogeneous Chinese population diversified in both ethnicity and occupation. Connie King, Locke’s last unofficial Chinese American mayor, also represented the first wave of professional artist pioneers. The arrival of James Motlow in 1971 marked a significant shift — the first non-Chinese artist.

Motlow, a photographer, would become an important documentor of the last remaining original Chinese immigrants from its boomtown days: They have all passed on. By the 1980s, artisans, woodworkers, musicians, poets and artists were drawn to this tranquil retreat. Notable figures, such as Marty Stanley and DR Wagner, contributed to its vibrant creative community. For the past half-century, local artists have been hosting poetry readings, concerts, and exhibits. These



Alfredo Gochi is an architect, painter and furniture designer originally from Mexico City who has lived in Locke since 2011.

days you might catch local painters, Ning Hou, Martha Esch, Chris Spencer or Joy Kuo organizing plein air painting workshops. In the warmer months, The Pearl, a new music venue showcases fiddlers, yodelers, blues singers and bluegrass string bands.

Today, a remarkable 20% of Locke’s residents — or 14 of 78 — identify as artists or artisans. Yet, its bohemian allure faces an uncertain future; even this remote Delta berg is not immune to the pressures of gentrification, with post-COVID rentals already climbing to \$2.75 per square foot. Despite lacking modern conveniences like potable water, reliable cell reception or central heat and AC, artists may only have a few precious years to savor this hidden gem.

When the 300,000 gold diggers ventured to California starting in the 1850s to strike it rich, most didn’t consider wealth beyond a gold nugget. Few actually found gold. What they didn’t realize at the time is that the temporary settlements they built would contribute to the wealth of the nation; They constructed the levees to start the agriculture industry and the still-standing Wild West buildings that serve as a backdrop to American immigrant stories.

For the discerning eye of an artist, Locke and the surrounding towns of Isleton, Walnut Grove, Hood and Clarksburg, reveal themselves as inspirational goldmines — a testament to the notion that true wealth lies not in what we extract from the Earth, but rather in what we create and leave behind.

Angie Eng is a native Sacramentan and a conceptual artist and educator who moved to Locke in 2023 after 25 years in New York City and Paris. Her ancestors settled in the area in the early 1900s. ■

'A PERFECT TIME'

AT THE OOLEY THEATRE IN SACRAMENTO

STORY BY HELEN HARLAN PHOTO BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ



Elise Hodge's inaugural season as The Ooley Theatre's creative director began in 2024.

When Gerald Ooley returned to Sacramento from working in military intelligence in the Vietnam War in the early 1970s, he was a young man in his mid-20s with one thing on his mind: girls. But instead of hanging out at bars or nightclubs, he chose a different scene to pursue the fairer sex. He took acting classes at Sacramento City College.

"I was just following the halter tops and the cute girls, so that's why I took the acting class," Ooley, 76, said. "It wasn't a childhood dream or anything."

The acting bug bit, so Ooley took more classes on the craft and met more people. He went on auditions and took roles in local shows like "Harvey" and "Six Degrees of Separation." All the while, he worked full-time as a traveling salesman, hitting the road to sell electrical and plumbing supplies.

In 2003, the same year as Ooley's divorce from his wife of 35 years, an empty building at 2007 28th St. in downtown Sacramento became available to lease. By then, Ooley was well into his 50s, but he had the vision and idealism one might associate with the blush of youth.

"I said, 'I'm gonna build myself a theater here. A real theater,'" Ooley reminisced.

And he did. Ooley installed the stage, the 35 seats and the lighting, sinking \$30,000 into the

space after all was said and done. He put an awning out front and called it a most straightforward name: The Ooley Theatre. The performers came and put on comedy, plays and even opera, with Ooley renting them the space at a reasonable rate.

Though Ooley didn't appear onstage as an actor at his namesake theater, he took his love of life in the creative space a step further by building an apartment backstage and living in it for almost two decades.

"Theater makes a lot of noise, and if you want a place to sleep, you don't want somebody on the other side of the wall doing a show," Ooley said. "But it didn't bother me in the least."

In 2023, Ooley handed the lease of his namesake theater to Sacramento theater luminary Elise Hodge, whom he met when she began renting the space from him in 2014. That same year, Hodge turned Ooley Theatre into a nonprofit corporation. Her inaugural season as the group's creative director began in 2024. Her second season starts on Jan. 23 with the mounting of Agatha Christie's "Murder on the Nile" from Hodge's own theater company, The Artist's Collective.

Hodge, originally from Loma Linda in San Bernardino County, earned a degree in interior design from Sacramento State. When the acting bug bit, she worked in the L.A. theater scene before relocating to Sacramento, where she began producing shows 12 years ago. She said she's looking forward to 2025 and hoping that local theatergoers will see The Ooley as more than a "best-kept secret" but a legitimate venue for live drama, comedy, cabaret and more.

"I'd still like to see us being able to get more outreach into our neighborhood and more people knowing that we are here," Hodge said.

In addition to “Murder on the Nile,” Hodge’s 2025 season includes the Women’s Wit and Wisdom Theater Festival in March and another festival featuring 10-minute plays by local playwrights in June.

Sacramento comedian Buddy Rahming hosts his comedy night “Yeah Buddy!” at The Ooley Theatre once a month. Formerly called “Funny Bidness Comedy Night,” the evening showcases up-and-coming comedians from Sacramento, the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

“I’m very fortunate [that] Elise provides a space for artists to develop their craft and grow their vision,” said Rahming, who has worked with Hodge since 2023.

“Yeah Buddy!” will utilize The Ooley’s live-streaming capabilities, which Hodge installed when she took over the reins. The theater will also remain available to rent in Hodge’s effort to welcome and nurture local talent.

Shane Robert, director of The Ooley’s 2024 sold-out “Heathers; The Musical,” and a member of The Artist’s Collective, said Hodge is supportive of creative vision.

“Anytime you do a show there, Hodge] is just a really big support system,” Robert said. “She

wants to make sure that you have the show that you are envisioning.”

As she enters her second formal season in charge of The Ooley, Hodge said she has no intention of changing the theater’s name.

“When Mr. Ooley asked if I would take over, he requested I keep the name, given how much he had put into building the space. I felt this was a fair request and was happy to oblige,” Hodge said. “Besides, it’s a unique name, and it lent to a fun catchphrase, ‘Come say Oooh! at The Ooley Theatre!’”

As for Ooley, his days in the theater are far behind him. He’s settled in a double-wide in a trailer community in the Delta. Ooley is still a salesman, working part-time for Capitol Tarpaulin Company and enjoys “semi-retired things” like golfing and fishing. To say he still looks back on his time as a theater owner, tenant and enthusiast with fondness is an understatement.

“My whole life has always been doing something for somebody else, and this is something I just wanted to do for myself. It’s something I loved unconditionally,” Ooley said. “I miss being there right now. It was a perfect time.” ■

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SOLVING SAC LAUNCHES

HANGOUT GIGS LIVE

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN PHOTO BY XAVIER FIGUEROA



LabRats, a jazz/hip hop fusion band, took the stage for Hangout Gigs Live at the Torch Club in Midtown in October 2024.

Solving Sacramento has launched Hangout Gigs Live, a live event version of our music video series by (basically) the same name, which you can find at YouTube/Solving Sacramento.

In October, our first Hangout Gigs Live showcased LabRats at the Torch Club in Midtown. The jazz/hip-hop fusion band first sat down for a live episode recording for our “Creativity in the Capital” podcast, before performing several songs for the audience.

For our December event, we were pleased to welcome Cosmic Roots to the stage of Torch Club to perform some of their music, which blends sounds of jazz, funk and soul.

Our Hangout Gigs video series features local musicians performing one of their songs. Our other videos so far have highlighted underground rapper and singer TIP Vicious, Christian rapper Josh P., songwriter Beti Masenqo, haunted doo-wop band Steev and The Bitch Club, and indie band ghostplay. All are produced and edited by our Arts Editor Cristian Gonzalez.

To stay up-to-date on future events held at music venues around our city, follow Solving Sacramento on Instagram or sign-up for our weekly arts newsletter at the QR code. ■



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CREATIVITY IN THE CAPITAL

TERRA LOPEZ AND JOSH FERNANDEZ ON HOW THE PERSONAL INFORMS CREATIVE EXPRESSION

STORY BY NICK BRUNNER PHOTO BY FRED GREAVES



From left, musician and podcaster Terra Lopez, memoir author and Folsom Lake College professor Josh Fernandez and podcast co-host Nick Brunner share a laugh for a live episode of “Creativity in the Capital” during Solving Sacramento’s fundraiser on Sept. 5, 2024 at the CLARA auditorium in Midtown Sacramento.

Josh Fernandez has a long history in the Sacramento region as an author, educator, journalist, anti-fascist, martial arts enthusiast and poet. Last year, Fernandez’s memoir “The Hands That Crafted the Bomb: The Making of a Lifelong Antifascist” was published by PM Press.

Terra Lopez is internationally recognized for her music, art installations, podcasts and mental health work. She has a solo hybrid R&B-electronic project called Rituals

of Mine (formerly Sister Crayon), and her podcast “This Is What It Feels Like” with CapRadio won a first place award from the 2024 Public Media Journalism Association awards.

The two local creatives came together on Sept. 5, 2024 at CLARA auditorium in Midtown Sacramento for a conversation and live recording of our podcast, “Creativity in the Capital.” Listen to their conversation on streaming platforms. ■

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CREATIVITY IN THE CAPITAL

LARISA BRYSKI AND MICK MARTIN ON RECOGNIZING THE TALENT IN OUR COMMUNITY

STORY BY CASEY RAFTER

PHOTO BY FRED GREAVES



From left, musicians Larisa Bryski and Mick Martin, and podcast co-host Casey Rafter have a conversation for a live episode of “Creativity in the Capital” during Solving Sacramento’s fundraiser, on Sept. 5, 2024 at the CLARA auditorium in Midtown Sacramento.

Larisa Bryski is a champion of musicians, young and old. She co-founded and executive directs G.I.R.L.S. Rock Sacramento, a nonprofit that provides females and gender-expansive youth with experience in producing and performing music. She is also a solo artist with two albums, and she is an in-demand vocal coach.

Mick Martin is a Sacramento-based blues legend who has led Mick Martin and the Blues Rockers since 1983.

He got his start as a journalist writing for the Sacramento Union, where he wrote “The Movie Guide.” He has also hosted and produced “Mick Martin’s Blues Party” on the radio for more than 25 years.

The two musicians came together on Sept. 5, 2024 at CLARA auditorium in Midtown Sacramento for a conversation and live recording of our podcast, “Creativity in the Capital.” Listen to their conversation on streaming platforms. ■



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LOCAL ARTS DIRECTORY

1810 GALLERY

Edgy contemporary art gallery run by artists & supporting local emerging talent. 215 14th St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 801-8118; 1810gallery.com.

916 INK

Nonprofit literary arts organization, publishing, childrens creative writing workshops. 3301 37th Ave, Sacramento, CA 95824; (916) 826-7323; 916ink.org.

ACE OF SPADES

Mid-size venue for traveling and local musicians. 1417 R St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 930-0220; aceofspades.sac.com.

AMATORIA FINE ART BOOKS

Amatoria is the Sacramento region's only bookstore specializing in the arts. 1831 F St ste. A, Sacramento, CA 95811, amatoria.fineartbooks.shop.

ARTBEAT GALLERY

Gallery and gift shop. Focused on emerging Sacramento artists, Artbeat features a wide and diverse array of art in a variety of mediums and themes. 1107 L St, Sacramento, CA 95814; artbeatgalleriesac.com.

ARTHOUSE ON R GALLERY AND STUDIOS

Studio and gallery space for local artists. 1021 R St Floor

2, Sacramento, CA 95811; arthouseonr.com.

ARTISTS' COLLABORATIVE GALLERY

Local art gallery and sales. 129 K St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 444-7125; artcollab.com.

ATRIUM 916

Atrium 916 is a creative innovation center for sustainability and engineering solutions that build a kind, creative, and sustainable future for all beings. The Atrium, through community-driven ideas, builds systems and provides support for the formulation of new mission-driven, eco-friendly products, and services that drive a sustainable economy. 1020 Front St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 642-9415; atrium916.com.

AURELIO TORRES PEREZ METAL ART & LANDSCAPING

Metal art. 1021 R St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 870-2213; aurrelio.com.

AXIS GALLERY

Contemporary gallery inside Verge. 625 S St, Sacramento, CA 95811; axisgallery.org.

B. SAKATA GARO

Gallery of contemporary paintings. 923 20th St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 447-4276; bsakatagaro.com.

BENVENUTI PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Natomas Charter School performance venue. 4600 Blackrock Dr, Sacramento, CA 95835; (916) 491-1028; benarts.org.

BIG IDEA THEATRE

Regional theater. 1616 Del Paso Blvd #1, Sacramento, CA 95815; (916) 960-3036; bigideatheatre.org.

BLUE LINE ARTS

Arts gallery. 405 Vernon St #100, Roseville, CA 95678; (916) 783-4117; bluelinearts.org.

BROAD ROOM

Broad Room is a nonprofit arts that supports historically underrepresented artists through its free Art Supply Closet and affordable artist studio space. 1409 Del Paso Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815, broadroom.org

BROADWAY SACRAMENTO

Broadway theater/musicals. 1419 H St Box Office, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 557-1999; broadwaysacramento.com.

CALIFORNIA CAPITAL ARTS FOUNDATION

Nonprofit arm of the California Capital Film Office: facilitating arts access in rancho cordova. 9845 Horn Rd #110, Sacramen-

to, CA 95827; (916) 706-2000; calcaparts.org.

CALIFORNIA LAWYER FOR THE ARTS

Nonprofit organization founded in 1974 to provide legal services to artists and members of the creative arts community. 2015 J St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 441-7979; calawyersforthearts.org.

CASA DE ESPAÑOL

Case de Español is a Spanish-language school and cultural center in Sacramento whose mission is to share the Spanish language and the cultures of Latin America and Spain in a holistic and immersive way. 1101 R St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 346-4535; casadeespanol.org

CALIFORNIA MUSEUM

Local and state history that hosts frequent events. 1020 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 653-7524; california.museum.org.

CALIFORNIA STAGE CO./25 ARTS CENTER

Theater. 2509 R St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 451-5822; calstage.org.

CAPISTRANO HALL

Sacramento State's performing arts venue. 6000 J St, Sacramento, CA 95819; (916) 278-5191.

CAPITAL STAGE

Theater. 2215 J St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 995-5464; capstage.org.

CELEBRATION ARTS

Performing and training opportunities in theatre, dance, and music through a celebrated annual theater season, which showcases some of the nation's top award-winning Black playwrights of the Black experience. 2727 B St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 455-2787; celebrationarts.net.

CENTER FOR MUSICAL ARTS

Affordable music lessons in Sacramento for adults & kids from beginner to advanced. 2564 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 251-9223; centermusicalarts.com

CHALK IT UP

Annual chalk art festival. 625 S St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 234-0407; chalkitup.org.

CITY SOUNDBYTE

"Gym for artists" fully-equipped DIY production room, exclusive live workshops. 1614 X Street; (916) 550-3391; citysoundsoundbyte.com.

CLARA (E. CLAIRE RALEY STUDIOS FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS)

Dance school, performing arts venue, rental performance space. 2420 N St #110, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 794-2787; claramidtown.org.

CONCERTS IN THE PARK

Seasonal summer concert series ft. local musicians. Cesar Chavez Plaza 9th & J Streets; godowntownsac.com/events/signature-events/concerts-in-the-park.

CREATIVE MORNINGS

Once a month for a cup of coffee and an inspiring talk featuring Sacramento's most inspiring and influential creatives. creativemornings.com/cities/sac; [instagram.com/cm_sacramento](https://www.instagram.com/cm_sacramento).

CREST THEATRE

Movie and music venue. 1013 K St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 476-3356; crestssacramento.com.

CROCKER ART MUSEUM

Landmark fine arts museum. 216 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 808-7000; crockerart.org.

DEMO ART & BOOKS

Gallery, bookstore, music venue. 2211 16th St, Sacramento, CA

95818; (530) 750-9360; demoartandbooks.com.

DREAMLAND CINEMA

Microcinema bringing the best in cult, indie, international and art-house film to Sacramento. Shows at Thistle Dew Dessert Theatre, 1901 P St., Sacramento, 95811; thedreamlandcinema.com.

DWELLPOINT

Studios, workshops, recording studios. 530 Q St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 905-8335; dwellpointstudio.com.

ELLIOTT FOUTS GALLERY

Contemporary gallery dedicated to original landscape & still life paintings. 1831 P St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 736-1429; efgprivatecollections.com.

EMPIRE ARTS

Sacramento-based performing arts nonprofit with a mission to incubate unique, inclusive performing arts opportunities that create joy and community for a variety of experience levels. 2791 24th St, Rm 13 Sacramento, CA 95818; empireartscollective.org.

GALLERY 1075

West Sacramento's art gallery. 1075 West Capitol Ave, West Sacramento, CA 95691; (916) 617-5320; cityofwestsacramento.org/government/departments/parks-recreation/community-center/gallery-1075.

GERALD HANSEN LIBRARY FOR ART RESEARCH

Library at the Crocker Art Museum. 216 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 808-8856; crockerart.org.

GOLD LION ARTS

Music school. 2020 29th St #101, Sacramento, CA 95817; (916) 281-0400; [instagram.com/goldlionarts](https://www.instagram.com/goldlionarts).

GOLDFIELDS TRADING POST

Music venue. 1630 J St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 476-5076; goldfieldtradingpost.com.

GREEN VALLEY THEATER COMPANY

A peripatetic company-community theater group with no set rehearsal or stage space. 3823 V St, Sacramento, CA 95817; greenvalleytheatre.com.

GROUNDSWELL

Art consulting. 2508 J St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (530) 320-6423; groundswellart.com.

HARLOW'S

Music venue for traveling and local artists with two stages. 2708 J St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 441-4693; harlows.com.

HOWE AVENUE THEATER

Fulton-El Camino rec parks district stage with regional productions. 2201 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825; (916) 927-3802; fecrpd.com/howe-avenue-theater.

KINGSLEY ART CLUB

Student gallery within the Crocker Art Museum. 216 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 961-4654; kingsleyartclub.org.

KULTURE

Gift and art store selling Latin American wares. 2331 K St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 442-2728; kultureimports.wixsite.com.

LATINO CENTER FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Founded in 1972, the Latino Center of Art and Culture is a multi-disciplinary cultural center offering Latinx programming, art education workshops, and a community gathering space. 2700 Front St, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 446-5133; thelatinocenter.org.

LEAVE YOUR MARK SACRAMENTO

Art supply store. 1004 18th St., Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 502-7630; leaveyourmarksac.com.

LEBARONS FINE ART

Art gallery. 1714 Capitol Ave, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 444-1001; singularart.com/en/art-galleries/united-states/california/sacramento/lebaron-s-fine-art-10503.

LIGHT OPERA THEATER

Opera productions. 2791 24th St, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 285-5687; lightopera.sacramento.org.

MUSIC CIRCUS

Touring Broadway productions. 1419 H St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 557-1999; broadwaysacramento.com.

MUSICLANDRIA

Nonprofit on a mission is to break down barriers to musical exploration. 1181 6th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95818; (510) 705-3567; www.musiclandria.com

OAK PARK SPEAKER SERIES AT UNDERGROUND BOOKS

Features Black leaders in literature, media, entertainment, health, civil rights and more. 2814 35th Street Sacramento, CA 95817; sthope.org/oak-park-speaker-series-home.

OLD IRONSIDES

Small music venue. 1901 10th St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 443-9751; theoldironsides.com.

OUT THE WAY ON J

An intimate, curated, soulful experience in the heart of midtown Sacramento. 1612 J St., Ste 5, Sacramento, CA 95816; www.instagram.com/outthewayonj

PENCE GALLERY

Davis contemporary art exhibit. 212 D Street, Davis, CA 95616; (530) 758-3370; pencegallery.org.

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AUDITORIUM

Theater at Sac City College. 3835 Freeport Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95822; (916) 558-2174; scc.losrios.edu.

POETRY IN DAVIS

Bi-weekly readings by notable regional authors and open mic plus resources for writing scene in sac. 521 1st St, Davis, CA 95616; poetryindavis.com.

POETRY UNPLUGGED AT THE SILVER LINING

Biweekly long-standing poetry open mic at Silver Lining, formerly Luna's Cafe. 1414 16th St., Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 441-3931; facebook.com/JMpoetryunplugged.

POPS IN THE PARK

East Sacramento summer concert series. East Sacramento Parks, Sacramento, CA 95819; (916) 808-5240; eastsacpops.inthepark.org.

R AND M FRAMING

Framing store. 1200 S St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 400-3488; randmframinginc.schedulista.com.

RESURRECTION THEATRE

Theater troupe at Capital Stage. 1723 25th St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 223-9568; resurrectiontheatre.com.

SAC DANCE LAB

Offers dance training, including for styles like hip hop, heels, jazz, contemporary and jazz funk dance classes from beginner to advanced levels. 1807 Tribute Road, Sacramento, CA 95815; (916) 572-8336; sacdancelab.com

SACRAMENTO AREA REGIONAL THEATER ALLIANCE

The Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance is an inclusive group of community theaters, individual artists, technicians, and patrons formed to encourage collaboration, diversity,





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For 70 years, Sacramento Ballet has stood as a beacon of artistic inspiration within our community. *2420 N St. #100, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 552-5800; sacballet.org*

SACRAMENTO CHILDREN'S MUSICAL THEATER

Children's theater company. *2201 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825; (916) 905-7514; sacramentochildrensmusicaltheater.com.*

SACRAMENTO COMEDY SPOT

Comedy open mics, classes, improv and sketch shows. *1050 20th Street #130, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 444-3137; saccoedyspot.com.*

SACRAMENTO FINE ARTS CENTER

Established in April 1986 by independent art clubs. Sacramento Fine Arts Center is dedicated to the creation and presentation of the visual arts. *5330 Gibbons Dr B, Carmichael, CA 95608; (916) 971-3713; sacfinearts.org.*

SACRAMENTO FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

Annual regional film festival. *2634 28th St, Sacramento, CA 95818; sacramento frenchfilm festival.org.*

SACRAMENTO MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

Venue for traveling shows. *1515 J St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 808-5181; sacramento memorialauditorium.com.*

SACRAMENTO STORYTELLERS GUILD

Monthly storytelling events ft. local writers and performers.

1719 25th St., Sacramento, CA 95816; sacramento storytellers guild.org.

SACRAMENTO YOUTH SYMPHONY

55-member youth orchestra, the Sacramento Youth Symphony (SYS) now has a membership of more than 400 talented young musicians from all over the Sacramento Valley region. SYS offers beginning through advanced orchestral ensembles and presents more than 20 concerts per year under. *3443 Ramona Ave # 22, Sacramento, CA 95826; (916) 731-5777; sacramento youthsymphony.org.*

SAFE CREDIT UNION PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Big performing arts venue. *1301 L St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 808-5181; safecreditunion performingartscenter.com.*



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SEED

Pottery classes. 2130 20th St, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 228-4791; seedceramicstudio.com.

SELF DESIGNS ART GALLERY

Gallery with performance space: open mics, fashion shows, live music. 1117 18th St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 516-6479; selfdesignsartgallery.com.

SIERRA 2 CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND COMMUNITY

Circa-1929, Mission-style performance venue with a stage & outdoor spaces hosting a range of events. 2791 24th St, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 452-3005; sierra2.org.

SOJOURNER TRUTH AFRICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Institution offers multicultural murals, education & Asian, African, Latino & Native Amer-

ican art. 2251 Florin Rd #126, Sacramento, CA 95822; (916) 320-9573; sojoartsmuseum.org.

SOL COLLECTIVE

The Sol Collective Arts and Cultural Center is a 3,200-square-foot space providing art exhibitions, community workshops, youth programming and a platform for public organizing. 2574 21st St, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 585-3136; solcollective.org.

SOUTHSIDE UNLIMITED WORK OF ART STUDIOS

Art instruction and working spaces for the creatively minded. 8345 Folsom Blvd Ste 101, Sacramento, CA 95826; (916) 387-8080; southsideunlimited.com.

STAB! COMEDY THEATER

Small comedy theater and live podcasting space. 1710 Broadway, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 970-7822; stabcomedytheater.com.

STORIES ON STAGE

Taking local literature on to stage with dramatic readings by local actors. 1425 24th St, Sacramento, CA 95816; storiesonstagesacramento.org.

STUDIO TUPOS

Gallery and studio. 10149B Fair Oaks Blvd, Fair Oaks, CA 95628; (916) 76-1127; sacramento365.com/venue/studio-art-gallery-tupos.

TEATRO ESPEJO

Community theater company highlighting Chicano/Latine theater. Currently performing at California Stage, 2509 R St, Sacramento, CA 95816; teatroespejo.com.

THE BACKYARD

Outdoor live music venue located behind Rock & Brews Restaurant at Cal Expo. 1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815; (916) 277-8869; thebackyardsacramento.com.



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THE COLONIAL THEATRE

Venue for punk/DIY music scene, hosts zine fests, film fests, etc. 3522 Stockton Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95820; (916) 769-2309 or (916) 456-7099; cafecolonial916.com.

THE CREATIVE SPACE

Venue for arts, workshops, meeting, coworking, etc. 1525 U St., Sacramento, CA 95818; thecreativespacesac.com.

THE GUILD THEATRE

Historic venue hosting movie screenings, comedy shows, poetry events, theatrical productions and musical concerts. 2828 35th St, Sacramento, CA 95817; (916) 905-7024; guildtheater.com.

THE INSIDEOUT

Art viewing space in Flop House. 2100 I St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 905-7024; the-insideout.org.

THE OOLEY THEATER

Presenting a host of eccentric, moving, humorous, evocative, memorable, heartfelt plays by local playwrights. 2007 28th St, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 214-6255; emhboxoffice.com.

THE RED MUSEUM

The Red Museum is a volunteer-run DIY warehouse space on the edge of Downtown Sacramento. Local artists and musicians create here every day, and occasionally we open our doors to the community by hosting unique art and music events. 212 15th St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 750-4733; theredmuseum.com.

THE SACRAMENTO POETRY CENTER

Poetry reading center with weekly open mics and programming for all ages. 1719 25th St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 968-0304; sacpoetrycenter.org.

THE SESH

Backyard venue for music/comedy and recording studio.

2708 2nd Ave, Sacramento, CA 95818; thesesh.net.

THE SIDE DOOR

The Side Door is a hidden gem that has quickly become a beloved destination for music lovers. What began as an unexpected twist in the journey of The 5th String Music Store has blossomed into a thriving hub for intimate live performances. 2900 4th Ave, Sacramento, CA 95818; (916) 442-8282; thesidedoor.net.

THE SOFIA, HOME OF B STREET THEATRE

Promote cultural enrichment, social interaction, education, and literacy through the shared experience of live and virtual theater, and the performing arts. 2700 Capitol Ave, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 443-5300; bstreettheatre.org.

THISTLE DEW DESSERT THEATRE

Venue for theater, classes, workshops reading, etc. 1901 P St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 443-5099; thistle-dew.net.

THREE PENNY THEATER, THE PLAYWRIGHTS COLLABORATIVE

Monthly playwriting workshops. 1725 25th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816; facebook.com/PlaywrightsofSacramento.

TORCH CLUB

Jazz music venue with weekly showcase of local talent. 904 15th St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 443-2797; torchclub.net.

TWIN LOTUS THAI

Thai restaurant dinner and a show weekly jazz performances and monthly poetry readings. 8345 Folsom Blvd # 119, Sacramento, CA 95826; (707) 564-3277; twinlotusthai.com.

TWISTED TRACK GALLERY

Contemporary art gallery and mural org. 1730 12th St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (800) 235-2356; twistedtrackgallery.life.

UNIVERSITY ART

Art supply store offering classes and framing services. 2601 J St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 443-5721; universityart.com.

UNIVERSITY THEATRE

Sacramento State theater department venue. 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819; (916) 276-368; csus.edu/college/arts-letters/theatre-dance.

VERGE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Gallery and affordable artist studios. 625 S St, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 448-2985; vergecontemporary.org.

VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHIC ART CENTER

Nonprofit photography center with regular exhibits, workshops & student programs. 2015 J St Suite 101, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 441-2341; viewpointphotoartcenter.org.

WAL PUBLIC MARKET GALLERY

Gallery, affordable housing for artists, public market place. 1108 R St #311, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 498-9033; rstreetwal.com.

WEST SACRAMENTO BLACK BOX THEATER

West Sacramento theater. Turner Library Entrance, 1075 W Capitol Ave, West Sacramento, CA 95691; (916) 617-5322 and (916) 455-0163; westsacblackbox.org.

WILLIAM J. GEERY THEATER

49-seat theater for live performances home of experimental theater and more. Turner Library Entrance, 2130 L St, Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 448-9019; wjgeerytheater.com.

WOMEN'S WISDOM ARTS

Art, writing, and wellness programs for women. 1029 Del Paso Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815; (916) 838-2981; womenswisdomart.org. ■

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