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HELLO!

I'm going to get right to the point: If Solving Sacramento is going to keep doing arts coverage, we need your financial support.

Between June 1, 2024 and July 1, 2025, we produced about 185 original arts stories, which were crosspublished 315 times by our news partners. We have a monthly podcast called "Creativity in the Capital" for which we

interview Sacramento artistic forces, including comedian Keith Lowell Jensen and photographer Janine Mapurunga, and a YouTube music series featuring excellent local bands like The Snares. We've also hosted five Hangout Gigs Live events where we collaborated with places such as Torch Club and Legend Has It to host a live podcast taping and video recording of musical performances.

We believe this high volume of coverage and wide exposure has been mutually beneficial — our news partners get quality journalism through their involvement in our collaborative; audiences get news on arts and local events they might want to attend or support; and organizations, venues and artists get their creative endeavors spotlighted. Despite being journalists, we feel

fine acknowledging our bias in that we absolutely do hope

our coverage has benefited Sacramento's arts community. We want artists to flourish and to be able to afford to live here, and to have buyers for their work, and for audiences to enjoy performing arts and live concerts, and for all of us to be exposed to art that makes us think critically and feel deeply.

We're very grateful that in 2024 we got a \$250,000 grant from the City of Sacramento to produce arts journalism. But

we're still trying to figure out just how to become sustainable and carry on beyond a year from now. We've tried selling sponsorship packages for our Hangout Gigs Live events; no takers. We've promoted ads for our weekly Sac Art Pulse email newsletter; nothing yet. We sold half-page ads for this print zine; we managed to sell about 10 for what we consider the very reasonable price of \$150.

But we can still use your help — let's do this! We sure want to see our arts journalism continue, and we hope you do too. If that sounds like an agreeable proposition, then reach out to us. Maybe you'd like to buy a half-page ad next time around (next zine coming early 2026)? Or sponsor our weekly e-newsletter? We'd love to hear from you! You can email us at info@solving sacramento.org. We'd also be very grateful if you're able and willing to make a tax-deductible donation to Solving Sac.

And save the date for our annual fundraiser! It'll happen the evening of Tuesday, Oct. 21 at the Torch Club. Details available soon at solvingsac.org.

Sena Christian Managing Director

COVER IMAGE (LEFT TO RIGHT): JAZEL MUÑOZ, ASHLEY TATTERSALL-DIAZ AND JULIE BERNA-DETH CRUMB SHARE A STUDIO AT THE NEW PRISM ART SPACE. SEE STORY ON PAGE 4 AND 8.

Cristian Gonzalez

PHOTO BY FRED GREAVES

SELLING ART IN SACRAMENTO

HOW SACRAMENTO ARTISTS ARE FINDING NEW WAYS TO CONNECT TO BUYERS

STORY BY MARIE-ELENA SCHEMBRI



elling art in Sacramento looks different than it used to. For veteran artist Tony Natsoulas, whose ceramic sculptures are in permanent collections at 18 different museums, including SFMOMA, the traditional market doesn't hold the promise it used to, particularly in his hometown of Sacramento.

He is instead connecting with his fans and collectors in a more direct way, building up a personal connection. "I've got a nice fat mailing list, and I have a newsletter and I have an open studio twice a year and I sell through that," said Natsoulas,

who studied under famed funk artist and UC Davis professor Robert Arneson.

Sacramento's art scene is a dynamic ecosystem, constantly adapting to economic shifts and social trends. At the heart of this evolution lies the art gallery — and while Sacramento has plenty of independent art spaces, museums and galleries, Sacramento's commercial art galleries can be counted on one hand; not by the handfuls like other California cities with strong creative economies.

The question arises: Where do people buy art in Sacramento, and is it working?

THE COMMERCIAL GALLERY MODEL

One of the longest-standing commercial art galleries in Sacramento is b. sakata garo, owned and operated by Barry Sakata in Midtown for the last 27 years. Sakata says he has maintained success through relationships and his reputation for having quality artists. His gallery is a holdout from the traditional art gallery model. He carefully curates artists from Sacramento and beyond to show in his gallery, hosts opening and Second Saturday receptions and promotes them through handmade fliers that he mails to patrons.

Sakata reports that while he still has a dedicated host of collectors, people are spending less on art than they used to, which he thinks is partly due to the uncertainty caused by the current political landscape. B sakata garo was one of a handful of galleries awarded grants of \$10,000 from the City of Sacramento's Creative Venues Grant in 2024-25, designed to aid and support the creative industries that were heavily impacted by the pandemic. Because he owns his building, where he also resides some of the time in a loft studio above, he is able to maintain the gallery despite a decline in the number of patrons in recent years.

For oil painter Patricia Altschul, who recently sold five of her paintings during a month-long exhibition at b. sakata garo, the closure of nearby galleries has had an impact on the public's interest in traditions like Second Saturdays, which have drawn thousands to Midtown for art walks and creative events over the last 30 years. Since 2023, Midtown Association has made a focused effort to revive the once-booming event.

"There were galleries close enough together that people could go from one gallery to another. Maybe they had to get in their car to go further out, but it felt as if it was all part of one event," Altschul said, adding that today people might visit a gallery to see a specific artist, rather than explore.

Still, Altschul is hopeful for the future of art galleries. "I do think that if you looked at trends over many years that you would see that art scenes go up and down. So I would believe that there is a resurgence that will happen," she said.

To Altschul's point, several well-known Sacramento art spaces — like Midtown's Kennedy Gallery, Jay Jay in East Sacramento and the Brickhouse Gallery in Oak Park — have shuttered their doors in the last few years. This is not just a Sacramento problem, even creative meccas like San Francisco, LA and New York have struggled to keep the art market afloat in recent years, losing both galleries and art museums.





These widespread challenges align with broader shifts in the global art market. According to Art Basel and UBS' latest report, the global art market saw a 12% decline in total sales last year. The report also noted, however, an increase in overall transaction volume and a rise in new and first-time art buyers among smaller art dealers. Art dealers reported that in-person art fairs were the market of choice for nearly a third of sales from new buyers. Globally and in Sacramento, people are still buying art, but are spending less, and many are seeking out direct connections with artists.

"I'VE GOT A NICE FAT MAILING LIST, AND I HAVE A NEWSLETTER AND I HAVE AN OPEN STUDIO TWICE A YEAR AND I SELL THROUGH THAT."

-Tony Natsoulas

At Elliot Fouts Gallery in Midtown, a shift toward a more personal connection to art might account for recent success with one of their artists.

Recently, the gallery seems to have struck viral gold, amassing a cult following for funk ceramicist Jeff Nebeker's colorful, lifelike ceramic donuts, cakes and other small sculptures. At around \$100 a pop, these palm-sized sculptures are not only accessible but wildly popular, striking a chord with audiences through social media platforms TikTok and Instagram. With each new monthly donut drop,

collectors from around the world log on and snatch up their favorites in seconds. The gallery declined to comment on financial information, but did not deny that Nebeker's work sells.

The gallery opened in 1999 and moved to its current Midtown location in 2012, with one of the largest spaces in the region at over 5,000 square feet. Boasting a collection including works by the holy trinity of Sacramento artists, the late Wayne Thiebaud, David Gilhooly and Gregory Kondos, the gallery has a long-standing reputation for housing high-quality art. Yet, without the use of social media platforms to connect to audiences and the gallery's website to sell them, Nebeker's adorable donuts might never have left his studio.

HOW ARTISTS SELL THEIR ART

For Sacramento artists like Tim Collom, online sales just make sense. Collom owned a gallery in Midtown for seven years prior to the pandemic and still has a public gallery space at the Sacramento International Airport where he exhibits his popular folk art and California landscape paintings as well as curates exhibits by other artists. Leaving his Midtown gallery behind in 2020, Collum cited issues like overhead costs, decreased attendance and not enough other galleries in the area as barriers to success. As an artist, however, Collum has found continued success through online sales.



"I think that online and the internet have really changed the way people buy art," Collum said.

Feeling that the commercial gallery scene in Sacramento doesn't attract enough serious buyers, Natsoulas prefers to sell his art himself. Artists like Natsoulas are connecting with fans and collectors directly more and more. By turning to other avenues, Natsoulas has seen his profit increase, since he isn't sharing commission with gallery owners, which can typically be anywhere from 30-50% of the sale price.

Younger artists like Jennifer Peart, who began her full-time artist career in 2022, look for opportunities such as art markets in addition to gallery exhibitions. Recently, Peart attended San Francisco's legendary SuperFine Art Fair as a first-time vendor, where she sold about half of her paintings on wood panels and earned new collectors and followers. She also sells prints on her own website, and is constantly exhibiting her work, diversifying her opportunities to sell art.

Peart's solo exhibition "State of Change: Visions of California," was recently on display at janeGallery, which opened in October 2024. The gallery, owned by Sacramento native artist Jane Mikacich and her brother John Mikacich, was once used as an office and storage for the neighboring restaurant, Limelight Bar & Cafe, which the Mikacich family has owned since 1975.

YOUNGER ARTISTS LIKE JENNIFER PEART LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES SUCH AS ART MARKETS IN ADDITION TO GALLERY EXHIBITIONS.

During the pandemic, Mikacich transformed the front windows of an overflow office and storage space next door into a socially distant exhibition space for her and her friends' art, leading to the formation of the Sacramento Arts Collective. Today, the 750-square-foot space operates as one of Sacramento's newest commercial galleries. The gallery recently hosted a solo exhibition for local painter Bud Gordon, who has exhibited work throughout the region since the 1970s and studied under Wavne Thiebaud at UC Davis. A small rear gallery showcases a collection of work by established artists like watercolorist Jerry Silva alongside newer talents such as Peart and painter Caiti Chan (who is scheduled for a solo show at janeGallery in August).

In 2023, another commercial gallery entered the scene. Timeless Thrills, which began as a clothing and apparel brand in 2011, transitioned into a dedicated art gallery after a handful of years hosting art events.

According to owner Tyler Wichmann, the gallery, which highlights the work of contemporary tattoo artists, photographers and ceramicists, "is thriving." Wichmann reported that during the opening reception for their exhibition, "Until the End" — featuring paintings by tattoo artists Eiland Hogan and Ian Carder — over 80% of the art was sold.

So is the old model broken? Maybe. Maybe not. The traditional art gallery hasn't disappeared, but artists in Sacramento seem to be seeking out alternative approaches to connect with buyers and create a sustainable art business.

ALTERNATIVE ART SPACES

Galleries like the Artists' Collaborative Gallery in Old Sacramento and Axis Gallery at Verge Center for the Arts in Southside Park are run by artists, often splitting the overhead costs by sharing rent and having members take turns staffing the gallery. These spaces seek to connect artists with opportunities while also empowering artists with more creative choices and ownership in marketing their own work.

Some, like the newly opened Prism Art Space on K Street in Midtown, serve as both studios and community spaces. (See sidebar story pg. 8) Prism, which had its opening reception on May 3, is operated by nine studio artists, including printmaker and curator Jazel Muñoz, Sacramento Arts Culture and Creative Economy commissioner Justina Martino and interdisciplinary artist Michael LaHood. The gallery's social media describes it as a space "built to nurture experimentation, collaboration and accessible exhibitions that invite the public in."

Other alternative spaces are incorporated into existing businesses, like WAL Public Market Gallery located on the ground floor of the Warehouse Artist Lofts building, or the Grounded gallery, located in the first floor space of the Grounded real estate agency building.

The Gallery By We Are Sacramento, sometimes referred to by its Instagram handle, "the Gallery 916," was started six years ago by a coalition of five business owners and creatives in Sacramento. We Are Sacramento started as a podcast interviewing people "who make Sacramento go around," according to COO Mari Padilla.



Eventually the space outside of the podcast studio became a location for pop-up events and makeshift galleries.

Realizing that there were not a lot of opportunities for artists to showcase their art in gallery spaces, they began to open up their tiny podcast studio for artists to have solo shows. When an opportunity arose to open a gallery space on Del Paso Boulevard in the summer of 2023, the group took a chance and has been hosting and selling local artists' work ever since, prioritizing an inclusive and accessible space, particularly for artists of color.

"We're totally wanting to bridge the gap between the traditional art galleries and our Sacramento culture," Padilla said, adding that the gallery brings in a diverse mix of buyers and art supporters who love to support local artists.

While a for-profit business, the gallery takes zero of the profits from art sales, instead supporting itself through space rental and fees for events like workshops and live performances. By being aligned with values of giving back to the community, the business is able to sustain itself, according to Padilla, who sees the shift to more community art spaces as a good thing.

"I love the thought of the creatives creating their own rules and the way that art galleries operate. ... I think that it's an amazing thing to see that we are all kind of just stepping up and making the changes that we know that are needed because we can't do it alone," Padilla said.

The challenges within Sacramento's art market reflect broader trends impacting the art world everywhere, but through a blend of traditional, innovative and collaborative approaches, the capital's creatives and gallerists are forging a new path to sustainable success.



ver since Michael LaHood, or "Hoodie," arrived in Sacramento in 2019 from Chicago, he stalked art spaces.

He had visions of multimedia projects, sculpture gardens and fire dancing that could happen in the same place — but he was looking for the right combination of adaptable space, location and community.

Deeply influenced by the work of Berkeley artist Susan O'Malley — whose electrifying prints shout "Buy the RV!" and "It is Possible!" — LaHood checked out all kinds of commercial property around the city. "I found bits and pieces, but what was going to become of the space really depended on the space itself." Prism Art Space on K street in Midtown lent itself to

becoming a combination gallery, studio, community room and even black box theater affectionately named "The Void."

The nine resident artists who all recently moved into their studios have interdisciplinary practices that branch in many directions. They share delight in the prospect of collaboration and expressed exhilaration at the plunge they are taking.

"There is a shock of excitement in being here — to feel this energy of being a part of something new and creative is really an honor. It feels like a special place and time," says Heather Hogan, whose proclivities include assemblage, linocut printing, laser and plasma cutting and sublimation photo collage.

Prism is located in a former Golden 1 Credit Union branch, which had a fake low ceiling and searing fluorescent lights. Now the commercial property between 21st and 22nd streets has transformed. It has a full glass front that enters into a roomy gallery with exposed beams, resurfaced floors and a long hallway down the center perfect for exhibiting small works.

The studios are atelier-style, occupied by two or three artists, with high airy ceilings and skylights, already kitted out with easels, cabinets and racks of trays and tools — exactly what creators need in a bustling workshop. The back of the building has a community room with a swanky kitchen and conference table.

The use of The Void is loosely identified; it can be a viewing room for films, a performance or installation space and it also serves as a kind of sensory deprivation tank where the artists can go sit with a little silence and recharge. When a resident has watched too much news, they are encouraged to go "scream into The Void."

Hoodie met Jillian Bruschera — a printer, papermaker, graphic designer and zine author — in the Interdisciplinary Arts program at Columbia College Chicago. They re-connected in Sacramento and their conversations fueled LaHood's search for space. "I've had a very nomadic practice. I never really had a studio with the exception of grad school," Bruschera says. "This is the first time I've paid money to do something for myself on this level, but I really needed this, and it's the right time and the right people."

Resident artist Chaitra Bangalore describes how the positive boost of being at Prism has already impacted her work. "This physical space [designed for art making] has made me more productive and joyful while creating. I hope to gather a larger community through Prism by showcasing work on South Asian culture and identity."

Bangalore shares a studio with Justina Martino (who is a painter, ceramist and writer) and Iso Marcus, a musician and ceramicist who comes from a social work background.

For Marcus, this space presents the possibility of sound and music playing a larger role in installation and interactive art here in Sacramento. "The Void activates this cave desire that all of us humans

have," they say. "We want to go into a cave and throw light on the wall and see what happens."

Julie Bernadeth Crumb occupies another studio with artists Jazel Muñoz and Ashley Tattersall-Diaz. In addition to their own art multiplicity of mediums, Crumb and Martino also run Art Tonic, which connects artists to community development projects.

Muñoz, a printer currently exploring linocut says, "It meant that I would be sharing space with my peers, a group of multidisciplinary, exceptional, collaborative individuals — so it naturally aligned. I feel reignited to elevate my work and evolve as [part of] a collective."

At Prism's first opening "In the Works" at the beginning of May, the excitement in the room was contagious. Members of the local creative community wanted to see the new art building and celebrate this unique group's maiden voyage.

The Sacramento region has a long history of upstart art enclaves that have made international waves: The Funk Movement, Royal Chicano Air Force and Norcal Noisefest to name a few. Prism follows in those footsteps, seeking to cast a wider net of experimentation, performance and interconnectivity.

"We start in this space, but we want to connect and collaborate with other spaces," LaHood says. "We want to create an ecosystem together."



BROADWAY

THE LAST REMAINING COSTUME RENTAL SHOP IN SACRAMENTO

STORY BY PATTI ROBERTS PHOTOS BY FRED GREAVES

Proadway Costumes caters to a vast array of events, productions, parties and festivals. The store has a strong, loyal following since it's the last remaining costume rental store in Sacramento.

Once, there were a dozen Sacramento shops that rented out costumes and props. But now Broadway Costumes on Franklin Boulevard is the only place people can borrow outfits for Halloween, theater and school productions, themed parties, drag shows, cosplay and steampunk events, as well as music videos and film productions.

The outside beckons customers in with its large mural of a castle surrounded by a huge green dragon. Once inside, owner Larry Dockter is there to show off his vast array of costumes, makeup, masks and wigs that he and his family have collected since opening in 1965.

Larry and wife, Deanna, are the third generation to helm this family-owned costume company. It was started 60 years ago by Dockter's grandparents, combining their businesses of costume rentals with their stage and theater lighting company.

"They bought out a costume shop in Los Angeles that was going out of business and brought the haul up here," Dockter says, while showing off one of the suits that still has an original tag labeled Dean Martin, 1953. "Many were from early movies and television shows."



COSTUMES

The shop has changed locations a few times over the years, with the grandparents eventually buying the current property and building the large two-story warehouse there. Eventually Dockter's parents and family members bought the shop from his grandparents in the mid-1980s, with Larry and his wife buying it a couple years ago.

Dockter starts the tour of his shop in the back, where tightly aligned costumes are grouped meticulously by historical periods and era;

Medieval/Renaissance: Popular for Renaissance fairs, Shakespeare plays and pirate-themed parties.

Colonial 1770-1790: Used in "Hamilton" as well as 4th of July presentations featuring George Washington, Betsy Ross, English and American soldiers; and more pirates.

1800-1880s: Borrowed for Civil War reenactments, Prairie and Western-themed parties and plays.

1920s-40s: Perfect for Flappers and Rosie the Riveter cosplayers, and offers a selection of '40s dresses, cocktail dresses and World War II themed clothes and accessories.

Then there are the more modern eras, including '50s sock hops, '60s hippie dresses and fringe vests, '70s flower power and disco and more current styles.

He points to one of many signs above the clothes racks that circle the walls and center areas. "This is the Roman/Grecian/Egyptian attire used in church plays mostly at Christmas and Easter," Dockter says, proudly pulling out a long robe. "Also, for skits about Roman and Greek Gods."

There are also racks of ethnic and cultural attire — African, Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern, Spanish, Mexican and European — alongside storybook characters such as Wizard of Oz, Cinderella, Snow White and Prince Charming.

Dockter notes that it's fascinating to see fads come and go. "Things can be a flash in the pan," he says. The movie "Barbie" was big the last couple summers, so there were a lot of people looking for pink outfits. Now it's "Wicked" and "Frozen." The demand for outfits from streaming television shows like "Bridgeton" and "Game of Thrones" usually last the longest.

"And then there are the classics that never go out of style such as 'Pirates of the Caribbean,' 'Star









Wars' and 'Star Trek,'" he says. "Our two biggest seasons are, of course, Halloween, and then Christmas with our Santa and Mrs. Claus suits."

Also in the back room are various props like old telephones, radios and cameras used in plays and backdrops for independent movies, music videos and social media posts.

Theaters also use the shop for their productions, though these primarily include smaller theater companies and school drama assemblies. "We work with small theaters and drama teachers in elementary, high schools and colleges," Dockter says. "Bigger theaters have their own warehouses of costumes, or they borrow from other large theater companies. We do have the larger ones come in periodically looking for makeup, or particular props or costumes."

"I go to Broadway Costumes for every show — our musicals and plays," says Jane McGinnes, Sacramento Country Day School drama teacher. "They have helped me costume 'Spamalot,' 'The Addams Family' and my current show, 'Shrek Jr.' I've also bought stage make-up from them — we needed a lot of gray hairspray and face paint for 'The Addams Family' ancestors."

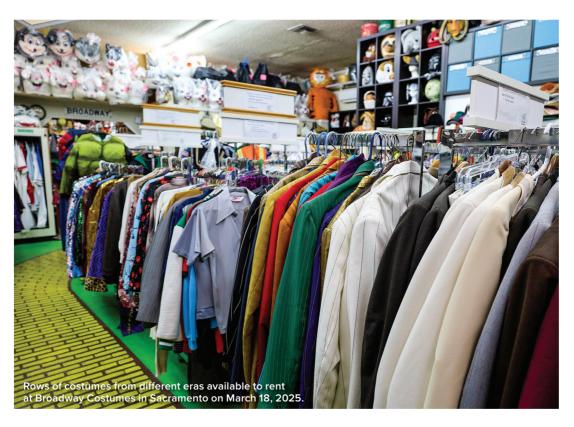
The front of the store is the retail section with wigs, hats and masks for sale, and a large selec-

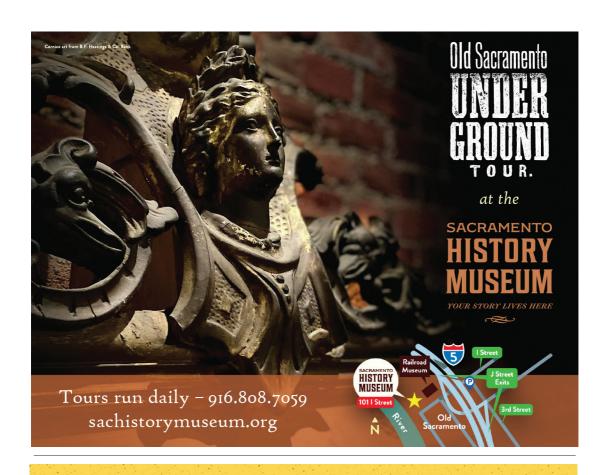
tion of makeup that includes every skin tone, as well as makeup kits for theatrical makeup classes at Sacramento State, Sacramento City College, Cosumnes River College, American River College, Folsom Lake College, San Joaquin Delta College and Jessup University.

Dockter also spoke about a few interesting and unexpected patrons. "We have undercover police officers come in and buy wigs, mustaches and hats to disguise themselves," he says. "And morticians looking for wigs and makeup for corpses who have lost their hair or to cover up scars from injuries or surgeries."

There are long-time customers who have been regulars for years, with many fond memories of Broadway Costumes. Vincent-Michael Damyanovich, of Vanguard FX Studio, is a visual and interactive artist and regular customer of the shop and has fond memories dating back to the '80s.

"I remember the first time walking into Broadway Costumes back in 1987 when I was only 7 years old — it was like being transported instantly to another world," Damyanovich says. "The feeling of wonder and possibility was so palpable. All these many years later much of the work I do in public art and other creative areas is aimed at evoking those very senses."







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acramento's music scene is busier than most think.

While San Francisco and Los Angele

While San Francisco and Los Angeles have long dominated as hubs for live music in California, Sacramento's music scene is quietly thriving with a healthy selection of small to arena-sized venues. On any given night, you can find a punk show in a dive bar, a jazz trio in a speakeasy or open mic nights at a winery or cafe.

Sacramento's venues — both new and old — are doing the work to keep the scene alive. From DIY gallery spaces to state-of-the-art stages, these spots aren't just places to see national touring acts; they are also home to an eclectic local community of musicians and bands.

ARENA VENUES

Most cities are lucky to have a venue big enough for arena acts within driving distance. Sacramento has the Golden 1 Center in Downtown Commons (DOCO). From Kendrick Lamar and Bad Bunny to Tool and System of a Down, it attracts arena-level touring artists to fill its 17,680 seats. This puts the city on the map for fans who might not otherwise think of Sacramento as a music destination.

Technically, the Golden 1 Center isn't the only venue capable of accommodating arena-sized (more than 5,000 people) events in the Sacramento area.

Nearby, Cal Expo regularly hosts outdoor festivals and touring acts, often in conjunction with the state fair: Heart Health Park and the Miller Lite Grandstand can hold 12,000 and 18,000 people, respectively. Miller Lite Grandstand hosted the multiday Country in The Park festival in May.

For truly massive crowds — and prime crowd-surfing real estate — Discovery Park hosts Aftershock Festival and Golden Sky Country

Music Festival. These festivals draw tens of thousands of metalheads, country fans and festivalgoers from across the country and internationally, occasionally offering smaller or local artists an opportunity to perform.

For those looking to follow their favorite artists on tour — Wheatland's Toyota Amphitheatre is a 45-minute drive, and Bay Area venues like Chase Center, Shoreline Amphitheatre and The Greek Theatre in Berkeley are all just a few hours away.

SMALL VENUES: THE HEARTBEAT OF THE CITY

In order to truly put your finger on the pulse of Sacramento's music scene, the only option is to visit its smaller venues. These are the places where local acts build their followings and where the community can play a direct part in sustaining the local music culture. These venues can be intimate, loud, unpredictable — in a good way — and they can feel like home.

Cafe Colonial is arguably the city's most iconic punk venue. Located on Stockton Boulevard, its no-frills setup and loyal community make it a go-to spot for local and touring punk, metal and hardcore bands, but it welcomes artists of all genres from singer-songwriters to experimental math rock. The cafe is great for both newer bands getting accustomed to playing live and seasoned professionals looking for a more intimate space.

The Starlet Room and Harlow's on J Street make for one of the city's most consistent pair of small venues; and they're located in the same building. The Starlet Room's polished and cozy interior is perfect for indie bands, singer-song-writers and up-and-coming hip-hop artists, while Harlow's open floor space and private booths can secure bigger touring acts or host parties featuring some of the city's favorite DJs.





The Torch Club on 15th Street has been family operated since its opening in 1934 (now in its fourth location). It's a staple in the local jam scene, featuring a blues jam and Sunday Sessions with LabRats every Sunday, and the folk-bluegrass-psychedelic-fusion band Mind X every Thursday night.

"It's really exciting. A lot of the older musicians are mentoring younger folks who are now filling those shoes and playing on our stages," says third-generation Torch Club owner Marina Texeira. "We're seeing a big uptick [in younger musicians] playing different genres. ... I think a lot of people took [the isolation of COVID] to hone their craft. Now they're excited to be out playing on stages again."

Another piece of Sacramento music history, Old Ironsides, has been serving energetic tunes and spirits ever since it became the first Sacramento bar to obtain a liquor license after prohibition.

Art lovers will appreciate Self Designs Art Gallery, which has moved from its location in Oak Park to a second story studio space right across from DOCO. This multi-use gallery welcomes everything from hip-hop showcases and poetry nights to experimental jazz shows. Its open layout, kaleidoscopic lighting and rotating art installations make for an immersive experience.

What better place to see your favorite local garage band than in a garage? While not a venue, per se, Sacramento Bicycle Kitchen supports local artists by featuring them in a Second Saturday series that runs from May to September. There's no cover charge, but proceeds from drink and snack sales help keep the volunteer operation going.

The owners of Palm Tree Brewing Company are responsible for reopening the doors of The Boardwalk in 2022 after the venue closed earlier that year. With improved lighting and sound, everyone from national acts to the local garage band are sounding and looking better than ever.

Goldfield Trading Post has two locations — one in Midtown and the other in Roseville. While the floorplan might vary, both spots are welcome additions for blues, metal, country and hip-hop fans who want a respectable selection of food and drink to go with their jams.

Butterscotch Den in Oak Park has all the makings of a great underground spot. The dim lighting, intimate stage and red curtains all contribute to a laid-back speakeasy vibe. Jazz fans can find the Maloney Jazz Trio here every Tuesday and Thursday, and those who swear by vinyl mixing can enjoy oldies and rock steady courtesy of the Soul N' Steady DJ duo.

Shady Lady Saloon in the R Street Corridor also taps into that 1920s speakeasy aesthetic, but offers a lot more space for dancing and mingling. Located a few doors down from Ace of Spades, the saloon has built a reputation as a hub for jazz, soul and swing, but it regularly features DJs who play cumbia, hip-hop and lofi selections.

For a more intimate dining-concert experience, consider Twin Lotus Thai on Folsom Boulevard. The restaurant regularly hosts jazz nights in its dining room: reservations required.

The Side Door's 110-capacity listening room is great for those wanting to immerse themselves in acoustic and roots-based performances; though the space is no stranger to oldies and jazz artists.

On the edge of the county, Old Folsom is home to a few spots that have been nurturing local blues, rock and country bands. Powerhouse Pub in Folsom has a busy calendar of original acts spliced in with cover bands and karaoke nights. Gaslight Company has kept its Wednesday open mic nights going for over a decade, and is welcoming to all sorts of artists from folk to metal and reggae. Folsom Hotel — which is a saloon, not a hotel — pumps high decibel levels out its doors with bluegrass, dance nights and seasoned touring country artists.

MIDSIZE VENUES

What about those middle tier venues bigger than the dive bar but smaller than the arena?

Sacramento Memorial Auditorium is one of the city's most historic venues. The space will host touring artist Luis "El Flaco" Angel this August. A few blocks away, the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center boasts a more modern design. While it hosts its fair share of conferences, speakers and comedians, you are just as likely to see larger metal acts, orchestras paying homage to video game and movie franchises and Tony Award winning musicals.

The Backyard — located behind Rock & Brews and Cal Expo — can be the perfect solution for those seeking an outdoor concert space year-round.

For those wanting similar crowd sizes, but indoors, Sacramento's newest midsize venue Channel 24 offers a generous amount of standing room, while balcony seats provide a clearer view of performances.

"We're certainly dedicated to being part of the community and fostering growth for artists out here," Channel 24 General Manager Jon Gunton says. "A local support act opened for Wallows on two sold-out nights ... opportunities like that, where local bands are part of the bill, are a big plus for us."

The Zittel Family Amphitheater is home to the Twilight Concert Series which runs from June to August and features a different act every Wednesday. And a couple miles away is the Rodeo Park which hosts the Folsom Pro Rodeo every year and features live country music in the saloon each night.

There are also a handful of midsized venues just outside of city and county limits. The Mondavi Center is on the UC Davis campus and is especially good at

hosting artists from a wide range of cultures. The Venue at Thunder Valley Casino Resort in Lincoln has great viewing angles of the stage and video projections that fill in any blind spots. The Harris Center for the Arts at Folsom Lake College stages performances from professional and student music and dance groups.

Anyone who is involved in the Sacramento scene knows that this list barely scratches the surface of live music in the city. For every venue with a website and a ticketing system, there are at least a couple backyard and house shows being organized by dedicated independent promoters. The DIY scene here is active and resourceful. You are just as likely to find your new favorite artist in a basement or bookstore as you are under an overpass in Lincoln: This is based on personal experience.

Local promoters are doing a lot of legwork to build niche communities throughout the region. Be sure to follow Fluxx Zine, 916 Growth Gigs, Nicole Gentry Presents, Sac Indie Music, ANK Entertainment and Sacramento Punk Shows to name a few.

"My goal is community-based — I want to expose as many people as possible to the great artists I know," Nicole Gentry, a local event organizer, promoter and musician says. "When the venue is invested in providing art to the people, it's a little easier to get things done."

At the moment, the scene isn't overly focused on clout and its artists are doing a good job at avoiding crab mentality. Small venues are taking more chances on new artists and audiences are more likely to come to a show even if they don't recognize any of the names on the bill.

Historically, Sacramento hasn't flaunted its music culture like California's more famous cities: but it should. ■



PHOTO BY STEVE MARTARANC





SACRAMENTO AND CULTURE

DEFINED BY CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS









acramento's vibrant arts and cultural offerings would be much worse off if not for the city's varied and diverse neighborhood fixtures.

That commitment is found through examples such as the historical Florin Square and the Sojourner Truth African Heritage Museum, through the wide array of programming provided by the Latino Center of Art and Culture near Broadway and Front Street, at Curtis Park's Side Door music venue, or the eclectic businesses and art galleries along Del Paso Boulevard and R Street.

Daniel Castaneda's VIP Cafe, with its eye-catching garden mural of a saxophonist visible from Del

Paso Boulevard, is a recent example of a business helping to revitalize its neighborhood by creating a community hub, offering barbecue meats and sandwiches with a Latin flair while hosting community and nonprofit events.

"I think it's very important for businesses to be open on the Boulevard," Castaneda says, noting that VIP Cafe opened in early 2024. "Because you're not going to have to go as far, and it's there for the people, for the neighborhood."

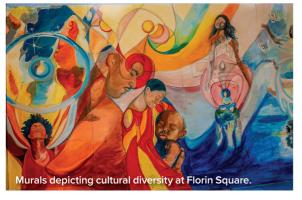
The importance of art and cultural offerings in neighborhoods, says Luisa Lavulo, chair of the Sacramento Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Commission, is how they can get community mem-

'S ARTS COMMUNITY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEVE MARTARANO









bers to participate and take ownership for what they create. The City of Sacramento's Office of Arts and Culture is dedicated to supporting, promoting and advancing the arts throughout Sacramento.

Lavulo says the city is attempting to connect better with the arts and culture community to let members know what resources are available. "The city does want to invest back into the community," she says. "It's just up to the commission to make sure that we're letting our constituents, in each of our districts, know that there are resources out there. There are grants out there for local artists, and we'd love for the local artists to take advantage of those."

Johnny Walker, creative director at CASA de ESPAÑOL on R Street, says collaboration with others along the R Street Corridor is the key to a strong neighborhood presence.

"We work well with WAL [Warehouse Artist Lofts] and the other galleries here," Walker says. "We are good friends with Twisted Track [Gallery]. We try and collaborate with them, and we try to draw people down here to see what we have going on."

While there are dozens of arts and cultural touchstones enriching the lives of Sacramento residents, here are a few examples where neighborhood community members are stepping up, and residents are benefitting.

WHERE EVERY

ACCESSIBLE ARTS PROGRAMS AND PERFO

STORY BY HELEN HARLAN

PHOTOS BY ANDRI TAMBUNAN



tand-up comedian Nina G has found a way to work her stutter and dyslexia into her act as a source of jokes. But it's not all about getting laughs — she's also all about representation in arts and performance in general.

"It's really nice to have that mix of advocacy and comedy at the same time," said Nina G, who is based in Pleasanton. "Most of all, being funny. That is the most important thing."

Nina G produces the Comedians with Disabilities Act, a group founded in 2010 by Sacramento comedian Michael O'Connell, who was known around town as "the wheelchair comedian." O'Connell died in 2016 from complications of muscular dystrophy. A small monument to his memory can be seen locally at Sacramento Comedy Spot, where owner Brian Crall built a ramp onto the stage for O'Connell in 2012.

"I really loved Michael, and if we could build him a ramp for him to feel more comfortable in our space, it had to be done," Crall said. "It's the legacy he left behind for other comedians."

The Comedians with Disabilities Act is a touring show with six core members and "an occasional newbie," according to Nina G. In the last year, the troupe has performed all over Northern California, including in SF Sketchfest and the Oakland Comedy Festival, and traveled to the East Coast. The show has included comedians with stuttering, dyslexia, dwarfism, amputation, addiction recovery, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, PTSD, autism, Tourette's syndrome, spinal muscular atrophy, hearing loss, cerebral palsy, blindness, and other conditions and disabilities.

In early May, Nina G brought the group to Sacramento's VFW Post 67 on Stockton Boulevard. Her set often slid into adult territory, incorporating her stutter into the setup for a punchline. "I don't fake my stuttering, and I don't fake my orgasms. No matter how long either one of those two things

ONE BELONGS

RMANCES BLOOM IN SACRAMENTO

takes," Nina G delivered to a packed house. "They have a lot in common, because if the other person would just shut up and stop interrupting me, I'd finish a lot faster."

The Comedians with Disabilities Act is just one of many local groups providing inclusive, welcoming and accessible art spaces for neurodivergent people and people with disabilities. These groups have been particularly visible this spring and summer in Sacramento.

SEND IN THE CLOWNS

On a Tuesday afternoon in mid-May, the actors of InnerVision Theater gathered for rehearsal in the Wilkerson Theater at R25 Arts Complex in Midtown Sacramento. Director Regina Brink kept it light as she and nine actors explored the stage and warmed up.

"How long is practice? I am getting tired," Brink joked.

"Are you lost?" asked Stephanie Jones, an InnerVision member and Brink's childhood friend from Long Beach.

"No, I am just blind," Brink said, sending the group into stitches.

The actors of InnerVision are all blind or low-vision. They took paratransit to rehearsal, and two brought service dogs — many used white canes as mobility aids to navigate the stage.

The group spent the afternoon rehearsing a piece called "Kaleidoscope," in which they play a game of goalball and then the team gathers at a bar to celebrate and tell stories. Goalball is a team sport played by people with sight impairments. Joe Hamilton, an InnerVision company member, competed twice in goalball at the Paralympics and won a silver medal at the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro.

Professional audio describer Ruthann Ziegler was also present at the rehearsal. Ziegler and her colleague Monique Savasta accompany live performances and rehearsals for InnerVision. "We provide a service for the blind and low vision, which is equivalent to what sign language interpreters do for the deaf. I use my voice, and they use their hands," said Ziegler, who also provides

audio descriptions for Broadway Sacramento as one of many accessibility options the organization offers to audience members.

At rehearsal that day, there was a lot of laughter, and no one was on their phones. "It's a break from what we normally do," said InnerVision actor Jeff Thom of spending time with the group, who are all friends who hang out outside of rehearsal. "It is enjoyable rather than, you know, tedious."

Jones echoed Thom and said she intends to participate with the company for years to come. "I'm here until the wheels fall off," she said. "But I don't anticipate them falling off."

InnerVision will perform "Kaleidoscope" at the 2nd Annual ALL IN: The Festival of Accessible Theater this June 27-29 at the R25 Arts Complex. The festival is a weekend of theater performances "by, for and about people who are neurodivergent, blind, low-vision, [d]eaf and hard-of-hearing," according to its website. It is a project of Short Center Repertory, a Sacramento theater company founded in 1988 that is a community outreach program of the Developmental Disabilities Service Organization.

"IT'S REALLY NICE TO HAVE THAT MIX OF ADVOCACY AND COMEDY AT THE SAME TIME. MOST OF ALL, BEING FUNNY. THAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING."

-Nina G, producer, Comedians with Disabilities Act



Over the years, Short Center Rep has worked with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. More recently, they have incorporated blind and deaf performers, which has led to the founding of InnerVision and TheaterV58, a company comprising deaf and hard-of-hearing actors. ALL IN is a showcase and collaboration of all three companies.

This year, Short Center Rep is collaborating with StarPointe Consulting, a for-profit agency that provides life coaching skills to individuals with neurological and learning disabilities. Short Center Rep's actors will be performing as clowns for ALL IN in a piece titled "Connect/Disconnect."

Sean Pacca is one such clown. He goes by the clown name "El Capitan." At a recent rehearsal, under the guidance of a clown technique instructor, Pacca expressed that clowning helps him let go of the rigidity he feels in everyday life and see common mistakes as "clown moments" that shouldn't be dwelt on.

"You could overcook a piece of steak or something, and it burns. That's a clown moment," Pacca said. "It's like, 'Hey, no, stuff happens. It's not the end of the world. You can always just start fresh."

AN EVENT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

For many autistic and neurodiverse children and their families, art programs can serve as a valuable means of expression. They could also produce a future artist. Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Beethoven, Mozart and Andy Warhol are all thought to have exhibited traits of autistic individuals. Seven-year-old Arta Bigdeli may one day find himself in their company.

Arta works with many mediums, but lately he has been into clay. He has created dozens of mini-sculptures of pop culture icons, including Sonic the Hedgehog, Nintendo's Mario and Pat-



rick Star from "SpongeBob SquarePants." Arta was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder before he turned 3 years old.

In late April at Luther Burbank High School in South Sacramento, Arta showed his clay works to the public for the fourth annual ART-TISM: A Sensory-Friendly Interactive Art Exhibit. He was one of just over a dozen neurodivergent children who participated in the exhibit in the East Gym. Arta's parents discovered the nonprofit ART-TISM after attending an "Art on the Spectrum" event at the Crocker Art Museum.

"We found out at age four that he has talents," said Arta's father, Ali Bigdeli. "He started with some drawings and paintings, and then we provided some Play-Doh, and he made beautiful stuff out of clay."

According to his mother, Haleh Khodaverdi, Arta can use simple sentences but sometimes prefers not to use spoken words. "It is still hard for him to request something or explain what bothers him," Khodaverdi said, adding of some autistic children, "art gives them an opportunity to illustrate whatever they can't talk about. They are not maybe fully verbal, but you can see in their artworks how they feel. I see that when [Arta] is drawing."

Arta's extended family turned up in support at ART-TISM, including an aunt who was the first family member to visit since the family's immigration from Iran in 2011. During the event, Arta got a free haircut from local groomer D. Speed The Barber, who set up a chair in a room just down from the gym.

"The barber was very understanding," Khodaverdi said. "Arta was watching his favorite shows from my cell phone, which he likes, so it worked."

ART-TISM is driven by Valene Byrd, a teacher, writer, autism advocate, special needs parent and former case worker in Brooklyn. The free event was inspired by the artistic journey of Byrd's son, Mateo, and was held at the end of April, during Autism Awareness Month. It was free and open to the public.

"Everybody has someone in their family or friends who has an autistic child. Someone is a special needs parent, and we don't talk about it. We just don't," Byrd said. "I have very hesitant parents who come in because they never experienced a safe space, and that's what we want to provide."

In addition to the art exhibits, the six-hour event included four color-coded interactive art stations that attracted dozens of kids and featured arts and crafts, painting set-ups and



a ton of Play-Doh. Jeremiah, 8, was especially drawn to the boxes of Legos at a green "Lego Land" station.

"We've already done the Legos," said Jeremiah's mother Danielle Steele. "Play-Doh is definitely a thing. Anything sensory is also always really fun in a controlled environment where we don't have to clean up."

Jeremiah was diagnosed with ASD at the age of four. He goes to school with Byrd's son and the families are friends. At one point during the day, Jeremiah took time to relax in the Calming Room, which was filled with books, fidgets, and sensory boxes in the library.

"Everybody is just very welcoming. There's no judgment," Steele said. "It's a safe space where your kid can be themselves."

MOST OF ALL, BEING FUNNY

At the Comedians with Disabilities Act at the VFW building in early May, headliner Adam Keys took the stage to close the show. Keys is a U.S. Army veteran and triple-amputee who relocated from the East Coast to Sacramento three years ago. His website states he is "99% dishwasher safe."

"Well, let's just address this right away, folks. Yes, I am an amputee, OK?" Keys said at the top of his set. "No. I am not contagious."

Throughout his act, Keys told jokes about various subjects like online dating, Luigi Mangione (arrested for allegedly killing the CEO of United Healthcare) and the military trauma that led to his disabled status. "This is the second worst day of my life," he said, referencing when he stepped on an improvised explosive device. "The first, of course, being the day I met my ex-wife."

Mean Dave, who is in addiction recovery, and Serena Gamboa, who has epilepsy, also performed at the show, as did Carmichael-based comedian Veronica Arent. Arent is deaf and calls herself a "fiery Latina." Both traits made their way into her set.

"I'm Mexican American. What that means is that I'm not Mexican, you know, for the Mexicans, and I'm not American, you know, for the Americans, right?" Arent said. "But coincidentally, I have moderate to severe hearing loss. And you know what that means? That means I'm not deaf enough for the deaf people, and I'm not hearing enough for the hearing people. I don't belong anywhere."

"You belong here!" an enthusiastic audience member shouted, without missing a beat.

BROADWAY AT MUSIC CIRCUS

ORCHESTRA SETS THE TONE FOR PERFORMANCES FROM BENEATH THE STAGE

STORY BY PATTI ROBERTS PHOTOS BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ

week before the opening of Broadway at Music Circus' "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," the orchestra members gather for their first group rehearsal. The musicians have already been practicing their parts alone, but now it's time to assemble in the orchestra pit and play together.

As the musicians tune their instruments and flip through their sheet music, conductor Dennis Castellano descends into the pit, lugging a massive folder containing the entire musical score.

The 13 orchestra members sit in sections of strings, brass, woodwinds, percussion and keyboards, waiting for direction from Castellano. With scores in front of him and a baton in hand, Castellano instructs the orchestra to play slower or faster — "bar 4, mezzo piano ... add a crescendo" — as he counts the beat with his baton.

"A one, and a two, three, four."

This is the start of group rehearsals. The musicians have a couple of days to rehearse the score together, and then they rehearse with the cast of actors and dancers. By opening night, the orchestra and cast become a coordinated team that performs eight live performances before enthusiastic audiences.

Violinist George Hayes rehearses during a preview show for "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" at Broadway at Music Circus on Wednesday, April 9, 2025. "One of my favorite rehearsals is when the cast and musicians combine," Castellano says. "I like to contribute to the dramatic values of the story through music. You know, we're not just playing music; we're also adding drama, tension, happiness and all the emotions to the story of the musical."

Orchestras are an integral part of musicals. The musicians are heard but not seen since they play in the orchestra pit to avoid distracting from the performances on stage. They provide musical accompaniment for the actors and dancers, create moods, enhance emotions and add depth to performances with various sound effects.

Castellano and the musicians, many of whom have been part of the Music Circus orchestra for years, have mutual respect. Castellano and Musical Coordinator Larry Lunetta select the musicians based on their previous work or recommendations from other musicians and conductors.

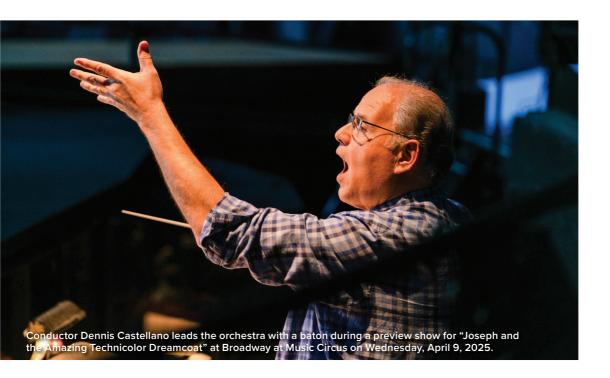
"We don't have auditions — it's all through reputation or personal contacts," Castellano says. "And many of them have been with us for years; they are regulars. Most are local — either Sacramento or Bay Area."

"Musicians must be able to handle a quick pace," he says. "Some people just shut down under pressure. Other people do exceptionally well."

Castellano has been with the Music Circus since 1981 as a musical guide — helping vocalists find the right notes and tempo — and as the conductor overseeing the orchestra.

"I was the head of music theater at UC Irvine for almost 30 years," Castellano says. "It was a perfect fit for my academic career since I could teach during fall and spring, and then I came up here for summer."

Even with the Music Circus now year-round, he still travels back and forth from his home in Irvine.



Music Coordinator Lunetta agrees with the importance of camaraderie in the orchestra. "When people are comfortable within their group setting, the music goes to a higher level because people are having a good time playing," he says. "It certainly elevates good music."

Lunetta is familiar with coordinating and playing in Music Circus orchestras while carrying on his family legacy. His father, Stanley Lunetta, played drums for the Music Circus for 54 seasons, and Larry started playing trumpet in the Music Circus orchestra in 1976. His son Henry now plays guitar in the same orchestra, making him a third-generation Lunetta presence.

"My dad was the personnel manager for the Music Circus, played in the orchestra as well, and taught at UC Davis," Larry Lunetta says. He was surrounded by music at a young age and has toured with a number of notable bands, orchestras and singers, including Paul Anka, James Taylor, James Brown and Barbra Streisand. Each year he circles back to Music Circus to play trumpet and help coordinate the orchestra.

"When I was young, many acts didn't want to use Sacramento musicians because they didn't think they were good," he says, "and my dad proved them wrong by hiring good musicians."

Percussionist Mario Sebastian agrees that the reputation of the Music Circus orchestra has soared over the years. "This is the best of the best gigs, and I'm honored to be part of it," Sebastian says. "If

you have Music Circus on your resume, it shines like platinum. I once dreamed of playing in New York, but with these shows, New York comes to us."

Sebastian plays a trove of instruments, including marimbas, vibes, chimes, gongs, tambourines and a MalletKAT control board, many of which provide sound effects.

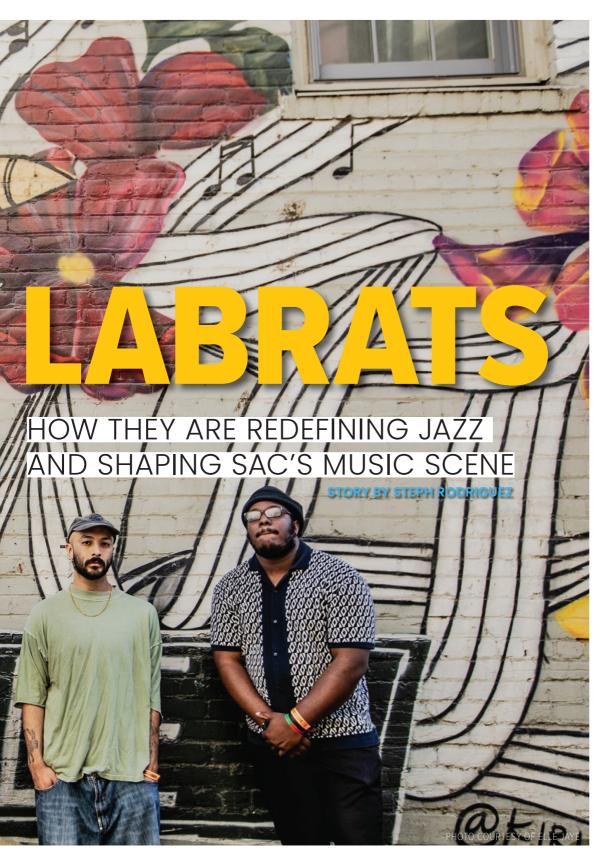
He has been the music director at Elk Grove High School for 20 years. Other orchestra members are music instructors at schools and colleges, freelancers at other orchestras and bands, give private music lessons and one has a radio gig — CapRadio musical host Jennifer Reason.

"We all have a passion," Sebastian says of his fellow musicians. Keyboardist Reason agrees, saying playing alongside her other bandmates is a thrill

The orchestra seemingly never stops working. Once "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" closes its run, orchestra members must begin learning new music for upcoming Broadway At Music Circus musicals.

According to Castellano, most of the musicians have been part of the Music Circus orchestra for years. "Because Music Circus has been here for 75 years now, there's a lot of people that have grown up and worked in it," he says. "They become very good at it. Mike McMullen has been around for 30 years now, working in the pit, playing flute, clarinet and alto sax. It says a lot about our team to have so many who have been with us for long."





very city has its own music culture and sound.
That's especially true for jazz, a genre so deeply rooted in Sacramento history that its improvisational style became a rhythmic reflection of the city's evolving identity throughout the decades.

While echoes of the city's jazz legacy still reverberate through winding alleyways, cobblestone streets and forgotten nightclubs of the past, there's a new generation of musicians redefining what the genre can be — and they're inviting everyone to collaborate.

A MUSICIAN'S MUSICIAN

Jacob Swedlow is the type of musician who'd skip math class in favor of his high school band room, immersing himself in drum fills, polyrhythms and snare exercises instead of quadratic equations. Even then, Swedlow was tuned into a different frequency as a part of Rio Americano High School's prestigious, nationally recognized band program, which flew students around the world to perform on prominent stages in New York and Italy.

Recognizing his unique ability to listen and interact with the talent around him, Swedlow earned a scholarship to the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, one of the nation's top institutions known for its rigorous jazz and classical programs. There, he deepened his passion for jazz while touring countries like Switzerland and performing in major music cities like Chicago before landing a residency at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

"I was very lucky to be playing music all around the world, and I realized that Sacramento is a unique place because it has a very highly concentrated set of amazing players," Swedlow said.

As Swedlow walked the streets of his beloved hometown, he noticed a disconnect — a lack of outreach and even camaraderie between other artists and bands across genres. So like any great composer, he set his ear to the ground and once again started listening. That's how LabRats was formed.

In 2022, the band started its jazz-fusion trio born from collaboration with a love for hip-hop and a desire to build something bigger than themselves.

"I wanted to use LabRats as a way to bridge gaps and have the metalheads meet the R&B folks and have the rappers meet the jazz players from Sac State — and to create a family and a community in the Greater Sacramento music world." Swedlow said.

Swedlow's vision for LabRats was so clear that it didn't take long for him to find the perfect combination of highly skilled, multi-instrumentalists to bring his sonic experiment to life. He describes keyboardist Joey Archie as "a hip-hop Duke Ellington," bringing in his lush harmonies and bold improvisation.

Miguel Recendez anchors the group with bass-synth grooves and adds depth with tuba and trombone, while also contributing as a producer and beatmaker. In 2023, Thomas Molina joined the band as its fourth member. A composer, producer and talent on the trumpet, Molina crafts a diverse spectrum of sounds using effects pedals that transform his horn into something entirely new.

Together, the band has introduced their take on jazz music to new audiences and performed on the same stages as renowned saxophonist and composer Kamasi Washington, Brooklyn-based rapper Talib Kweli and legendary emcee, GZA of the Wu-Tang Clan.

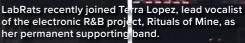
As LabRats carve out their own space within the conventions of jazz, they maintain a strong respect for the genre's rich heritage and its roots in Black American music. Swedlow acknowledged this responsibility candidly, noting that musicians who choose to perform this style must also recognize that they've become torchbearers for its long-standing musical tradition.

But when it comes to defining the genre, Swedlow said that jazz is inherently open to interpretation, making it a more nuanced and fluid form of expression.

"The word is tricky — jazz — because I can ask 15 different people to describe their version of jazz and I'll get 15 different responses," Swedlow said. "The reason why our jazz can reach a wide audience is because we don't think we're playing jazz."

He elaborated on how the band approaches genre and identity.





"I think we are all jazz heads to a nerdy degree. All of us literally have degrees in jazz, but I think we're way more focused on playing contemporary music that is in a lineage of music," Swedlow continued. "At the end of the day, we're playing Black American music, which I think is a far more fitting term for most of the music that comes out of America."

YOUR FAVORITE RAPPER'S FAVORITE BAND

LabRats' ability to interact and uplift the musical talent around them is witnessed by those who attend their Sunday Sessions, a collaborative weekly jam held at Sacramento's venerable Torch Club. It's a space where artists of all genres gather to create, connect and celebrate the music in real time.

It's also a space where LabRats have discovered new artists to partner with, leading to opportunities ranging from opening Sacramento's Concerts in the Park series to finding dynamic rappers and soulful R&B singers who help bring their compositions to life.

"We are very lucky to be at the forefront of very, very talented individuals every week at Sunday Sessions," Swedlow said. "So we're kind of spoiled in that sense where we kind of have a little platter of what's happening in Sacramento on a weekly basis."

Their growing reputation as a band who can easily vibe with just about anyone, led them





to become the backing band for the electronic R&B project Rituals of Mine, led by vocalist Terra Lopez. Lopez recalled grabbing coffee with Swedlow and bonding instantly over their shared love of music. Within 20 minutes, she asked if LabRats would join her permanently.

"They are creating true community, a scene where folks feel heard and seen and it's something so much bigger than music," Lopez said. "I was a fan long before I reached out to Jacob. ... There's a genuineness to him that is incredibly hard to find in the music industry, in life in general."

Beyond their work as dedicated musicians, LabRats also use Sunday Sessions as a platform for giving back, donating at least \$500 a month out of their own tip jar to different nonprofits that align with their values. These include Access Reproductive Justice, which supports reproductive care for uterus-bearing individuals, and Backline, a mental health resource for musicians where Lopez has served as community manager and head of artist partnerships for nearly four years.

For LabRats, this kind of community support is inseparable from their overall mission, and it's a reflection of their shared belief that jazz, at its core, is music driven by change.

"You can't play jazz without being an activist of some sort. Traditionally, it's been used to bring awareness to certain issues that folks are facing," Swedlow said. "Duke Ellington famously wrote for revolution-based music, same with Louis Armstrong and Charles Mingus, John Coltrane — all the people who we love and admire play this style of music for a greater reason. Even if you don't know it, when you choose to play jazz, you're choosing to be a part of a revolution."

In the three years since LabRats formed, the band has channeled their creativity and talent for collaboration to deepen their connection to the Sacramento music scene, seamlessly blending performance with purpose. They've proven that they're more than just background music — they're central to the rhythm and pulse of the city's artistic identity.

"LabRats will be one of the greatest music collectives Sacramento has ever had and it's because they realize what it's all really about — the community and sense of belonging. They have such a collaborative spirit in everything they do, and because of that, everyone who comes across them falls in love with them and roots for them," Lopez said. "There's nothing selfish about this group. They are in it for the long haul and for all the right reasons, and I think they are going to have a lasting impact on Sacramento because of that."

LATINO THEATER

CONTINUES ITS 50-YEAR RISE IN SACRAMENTO

STORY BY MARCUS CROWDER PHOTOS BY CRISTIAN GONZALEZ

n early April, Manuel Pickett gave a guest lecture in the Playwrights' Theatre on the campus of Sacramento State about his involvement with Latino theater. It was both a picaresque autobiography and an eyewitness history of Latino Theater in the Sacramento region.

Pickett founded Teatro Espejo — his Latiné community theater collective — in 1975 after spending several formative years touring and performing with the ground breaking Teatro Campesino led by Luis Valdez. Then he began teaching theater at Sacramento State in 1980, directing 40 productions in the theater and 15 more around the campus, before he retired in 2013. But Teatro Espejo lives on, and is celebrating its 50th year bringing Latino theater to the region while fostering other theater companies as well.

About 40 attendees were spread through the horseshoe-configured performance space. Pickett,

a stout man in a wide-brimmed straw hat and rectangular glasses, spoke from the stage while leaning on a lectern mostly ignoring his scattered notes.

After the talk, a gaggle of students formed around him, lobbing questions.

"There were five people who came up to me and wanted us to teach them how to do political theater on campus," Pickett said. "When people approach us, it's probably because they've been turned down by other places, and they've not had the opportunity. That's exactly why we remained a community theater."

To Pickett, being a community theater means "for and by" the Latino community.

"Very few plays we do are just for entertainment's sake," Pickett said. "They all have to have a purpose. That's the reason why I got into doing theater."



FROM THE FIELD TO THE PICKET LINE

Pickett came about his activism through life experience growing up in a knotty part of Fresno, working in the fields near there as a kid; his parents worked the fields, too. Pickett learned the guitar, becoming a paid musician by the time he was 12. After graduating from high school in 1968, the burgeoning Chicano consciousness movement claimed him. "People thought in terms of a physical revolution. And we believed that," Pickett said.

Pickett toured with Teatro Campesino as its musical director, going all the way to Mexico City. Teatro Campesino was formed during the 1965 Delano Grape Strike and Boycott organized by Cesar Chavez. Valdez trained with the original San Francisco Mime Troupe, so he naturally embraced social commentary, satire and taking performances wherever the action was. Campesino became an essential ingredient of Chavez's outreach.

"VERY FEW PLAYS WE DO ARE JUST FOR ENTERTAINMENT'S SAKE. THEY ALL HAVE TO HAVE A PURPOSE. THAT'S THE REASON WHY I GOT INTO DOING THEATER."

-Manuel Pickett, founder, Teatro Espejo

Riding a cramped DIY bench in the back of an overstuffed tour bus, Pickett brought socio-political theater to the people of California and Mexico.

"When I saw how empowered people got through performance, it started to make sense to me," Pickett said. "It gave me a direction. I knew I was going to be an activist all of my life."

With his own company, Pickett remembered making a theater piece out of an almond pickers strike, which Teatro Espejo performed on the picket line and throughout the region. The cover charge for these shows was a bag of groceries.

"People would bring all these bags of groceries, and we would put them in the truck and go take it to the almond workers who weren't getting paid while they were on strike," Pickett said.

There are fewer farm worker strikes these days, but Pickett's commitment to the struggle has never wavered. He also happily welcomes new members into his orbit. Teatro Espejo performances are a collective effort. "Anyone can become part of the group as long as they go through the training that we offer for free. It takes a lot of time, a lot of involvement, but it gives us some really dedicated people." Pickett said.



Richard Falcon's Teatro Nagual (TeNa) in Sacramento also has a connection to Cesar Chavez. TeNa initially grew out of Falcon's involvement with a 2006 Midtown California Stage production of "Let the Eagle Fly," a musical about the life of Chavez. After co-directing the production with Ray Tatar, Falcon contributed to productions in San Diego, Chula Vista and San Jose. He founded TeNa in 2006, and then incorporated it in 2009. He then began producing Latino-themed plays including "Manuelito the Lion Tamer," "Solderderas" and "Anna In the Tropics." Like most community-based theater groups they struggled to find venues.

"We started off at CalStage, then we produced at the Coloma Community Center (on T Street), which became a home for us for a period of time," Falcon said. "B Street offered us their space. It was wherever we could rent space to be able to do the shows."

Though Falcon did not know Pickett when Falcon first started his company, the two have become supportive colleagues sharing ideas, talent and connections in pursuit of similar objectives. Falcon even starred in Pickett's biographical play about the artist Diego Rivera.

In 2016, Falcon refined the company's mission under a broader artistic umbrella focusing on "issues of economic well-being, health disparities, environmental justice, immigration challenges, voter participation and stories relevant to the community" with Latino-based theater as its main vehicle.

"We've gone from quality theatrical programming, that's our first pillar, to our second pillar which is now what I call mobile social justice theatrical programming," Falcon said. "We create small ACTOS, or small 'Saturday Night Live' kind of sketches, dealing with issues that are important to the community — be it immigration, be it COVID, be it census, be it air quality, be it water quality — and we perform those in parks, or at town halls, or in schools — wherever."

The third pillar of Falcon's Teatro Nagual is growing the next generation of Latino arts educators. "Where are the Latino art educators for our students when 44% of the students that attend our

schools are Latino?" Falcon asked. "We are trying to grow that, so that gives us more opportunity to expand ourselves."

PASSING ESPEJO'S REIGNS ON

One of the most prolific branches of the Teatro Espejo tree has been actor/director/dramaturg Nicole C. Limón, founder of Matriarchy Theatre, a resident artist with Teatro Espejo, and an adjunct theatre faculty at Sacramento State. Pickett has consciously lifted Limón up as the emerging face and creative center of Teatro Espejo.

This spring Limón directed the romantic farce "House of Desires" by Juana Inés de la Cruz on the University Theatre stage while in the midst of several other projects.

"I'm kind of all over, doing a lot of things, but I'm primarily an educator, a director and an actor," Limón said.

Limón was the dramaturg — also known as a literary adviser — and intimacy coordinator for "American Night" in April by Richard Montoya at Folsom Lake College and the intimacy coordinator for the recent world premiere of "Everything Beautiful Happens at Night" at Cap Stage. She is the dramaturg for Cap Stage's current production "Unseen" and the intimacy coordinator for B Street's "Nosotros La Gente," an original world premiere work by its Executive Producer Jerry Montoya.

"The dramaturgy stuff I love just because I'm a research nerd, and the intimacy stuff I started doing because I just really felt it was necessary to be on the cusp of that as it's coming into our field." Limón said.

She holds an MFA in acting from UC Davis and studied at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto. "I loved storytelling — not just acting,



but directing and lights and playwriting and text analysis," Limón said. "I really fell in love with collaboration and creating with the community to tell a story."

Landing at Sacramento State, Limón worked with the student club Sons/Ancestors Players and Teatro Espejo. "I got introduced to social justice theater and theater that is combining entertainment with necessary stories that we need to hear that weren't being highlighted."

After Pickett retired from the university and Limón started teaching there he made her an intriguing offer. "He said 'I really need help with Teatro Espejo. I need you to help me save it," Limón said.

"I REALLY FELL IN LOVE WITH COLLABORATION AND CREATING WITH THE COMMUNITY TO TELL A STORY."

-Nicole C. Limón, founder, Matriarchy Theatre

"When you have an elder sit down and ask you for help, that doesn't happen very often. I could tell how important it was for him to ask the right person," she said.

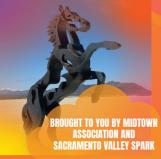
Limón had been on the brink of starting her own theater company, Matriarch Theater. "I put that on hold for about five good years so that I could really help sustain Teatro Espejo, and here we are at our 50th anniversary," she said. From Pickett she learned about creating opportunities and making space for everyone. "We have such a long legacy already, I wanted to make sure it was there for future generations."

Limón understands the political heart of Teatro Espejo even as she gravitates toward current issues of women's health and reproductive rights. "For me, the audience is universal but I think the stories are very specific," Limón said. "The beauty is in the specificity of the culture, the language, the point of view. They speak to everybody."

In 2021, Limón brought her theater company to life with a play by Tara Moses, a Seminole Muskogee woman. "The board of Teatro Espejo, unbeknownst to me, voted to completely fund Matriarchy Theater's first production, and we sold out pretty much every single show," Limón said.

"I did a lot of grassroots social media promoting in a very simple way," Limón said. "Because they're finally seeing themselves represented, they're gonna come, they're gonna show up, and they're gonna celebrate that story."









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'IN A NUTSHELL'

CO-CREATOR ON GOING FROM PAGE TO STAGE AND FINDING COMMUNITY THROUGH STORYTELLING

STORY BY CHRIS WOODARD PHOTO BY ELLE JAYE

torytellers are cracking open their personal and human tales at "In a Nutshell," a live storytelling series where performers share true stories in front of an audience.

Co-creator of "In a Nutshell," Amy Bee — a memoirist and book editor — says the format allows her to explore her own story in a way the page never could.

"You have your writer voice, you have your reading voice and then you have your storytelling voice," she says. "And all three of them are different."

For Bee, who has battled stage fright and often viewed herself as an outsider, telling stories aloud has become a new form of self-compassion and connection. The audience plays an active role too, and that connection is part of what makes the show resonate.

We spoke with Bee about how the series came to be, what makes Sacramento a natural fit for live storytelling and how vulnerability, laughter and community can coexist on stage.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED, AND HOW DID "IN A NUTSHELL" BEGIN?

I've always kind of secretly wanted to be a story-teller. I've had the thought several times that I'm a writer and I'm a book editor, and I mean, I like my writing, but I always kind of had this feeling, "What would it be like if I said these stories out loud?" I almost feel like they worked better out loud. I think some of the stuff that was actually kind of a weakness in my writing, I think ends up being a strength in storytelling.

I never really thought of it as something I could do until recently, and that came about from meeting Keith [Lowell Jensen]. I knew Keith because he's my husband's friend. My husband had emergency back surgery, and Keith was very, very kind to me, and he was the only person who reached out to me. Right then, I knew that he was somebody that I wanted to make my forever friend, and it kind of started from there. We started getting coffee with each other and writing stuff together. Stories seem to be a

place where we overlapped, and that's kind of how Nutshell came together.

IN YOUR VIEW, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TELLING A STORY ON THE PAGE AND TELLING IT LIVE?

I'm just starting out, but I feel like there could be a place where you could get experimental, and you can be reflective in your oral storytelling. With oral storytelling, you get to be the narrator of your own perspective, and the difference is that you're supposed to be slanted. I feel like that's really freeing.

So, if I were writing about being 8 years old, I would be writing from the 8-year-old perspective, and there's a lot more room for that in oral storytelling. I think that maybe it has to do with a lot of transitional words and ways that you write on paper. There's a lot more transitional stuff that you don't do when you're talking to someone out loud. You have to be a little more immediate and take out those kinds of clues you're giving to a reader. The person listening doesn't need the same clues. They have a different set of clues needed.

WHAT MAKES LIVE STORYTELLING FEEL ELECTRIC AND MEMORABLE? WHAT DO YOU HOPE PEOPLE TAKE AWAY?

Connection. People think of listening as passive, but it's not passive; it's active. There's this back-and-forth happening, and you can feel it. When people come out of it, at least when I come out of it, I feel really relieved and happy. I feel a reaffirmation of my humanity. They feel this sense of — even if the stories are sad or they touch on dark things — a feeling of OK-ness and camaraderie; "we're all in this together" kind of thing. I think they also feel invigorated and excited and ready to tackle the next day, which I think is kind of cool, too.



WHY IS SACRAMENTO THE RIGHT PLACE FOR A LIVE STORYTELLING SERIES?

One of the things I love about Sacramento is that there's a real underdog vibe here. There are a lot of cool things that come from Sacramento: great bands; great rap artists; movies and art. It can be true with storytelling too. It's about cultivating and growing what is already brewing here.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR "IN A NUTSHELL"?

We're always throwing ideas around, like how we're doing Wild Card nights now, which feature

seasoned and rookie storytellers. We hope to do some kind of regional touring and eventually a storytelling festival; ideally, a campfire festival, where people literally sit around a campfire and tell stories. We also want to do events like setting up a microphone downtown and see what would happen.

Mainly, we're gonna keep it going and introduce as many people as we can to storytelling.

The next "In a Nutshell" event will be at The Sofia, Home of B Street Theatre, on Monday, June 30. Tickets can be purchased here.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Solving Sacramento is a copresenter of the "In A Nutshell" series.

SOLVING SAC PLANS UPCOMING

HANGOUT GIGS LIVE FUNDRAISER

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN PHOTO BY XAVIER FIGUEROA



ave the date for Solving Sacramento's annual fundraiser on Tuesday, Oct. 21 at the Torch Club in Sacramento.

For this year's fundraiser, the journalism collaborative will host one of its Hangout Gigs Live events, which feature an interview with a local band for a live taping of the "Creativity in the Capital" arts and culture podcast, followed by the band performing several songs for the audience. Those songs will be captured for the "Hangout Gigs" video series on YouTube (youtube.com/@SolvingSacramento).

"Hangout Gigs is about supporting local music and showing Sacramentans the wealth of talent and originality that can be found here," said Solving Sacramento Arts Editor Cristian Gonzalez, who edits and produces the video series.

Solving Sacramento launched its Hangout Gigs Live series in October 2024, with jazz-fusion band LabRats taking the stage at Torch Club. The venue has since collaborated to showcase six-piece soul/funk/jazz band Cosmic Roots and indie band dogpatch, led by singer Emilee Durbin.

Hangout Gigs Live has also featured DJ Epik and Vinyl Honey at Legend Has It in downtown, and folk-rock singer Eduardo Faustino at Tupi Coffee in Southside Park. Originally from Brazil, Faustino also owns Tupi Coffee.

"Solving Sacramento does seminal work when it comes to covering important issues, especially [promoting] arts and local artists with these live Hangouts," Faustino said.

Then Solving Sac partnered with Amatoria Fine Art Books to host essayist José Vadi, who read from his book, "Chipped: Writing From a Skateboarder's Lens" to an intimate audience inside the bookstore on F Street.

Solving Sac launched these live events as microfundraisers for the collaborative, founded in early 2022 to uplift the region's local media ecosystem — but, even more so, to encourage engagement and fun among Sacramento residents, and to spotlight the high-caliber talent of Sacramento's music scene.

All Hangout Gigs videos — some recorded in studio — are available on YouTube, and "Creativity in the Capital" podcast episodes are on streaming platforms. The episodes have been co-hosted by Nick Brunner, who has since moved to lowa for a job in public radio, and by Casey Rafter, who had his own radio show while a journalism student at Sacramento State. Brunner's spot was recently filled by arts writer Helen Harlan, who in the early days of podcasting had a show devoted to "Seinfeld."

Details are still being fleshed out for the Hangout Gigs Live fundraiser, so sign up for Solving Sac's newsletter at solvingsacramento.org for updates.





ARTIST SP

CHAITRA BANGALORE RECLAIMS THE NARRATIVE AROUND BODY HAIR, IDENTITY AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE

STORY BY SRISHTI PRABHA

hen Chaitra Bangalore first started growing out her body hair, she wasn't trying to make a statement. She was trying to reclaim how she viewed herself. "It didn't feel good," she says. "It was uncomfortable."

But that discomfort became a catalyst for transformation, both personal and artistic. In the years since, the Sacramento-based high school art teacher and artist has developed pieces exploring identity, otherness and self-acceptance through the lens of her South Asian heritage. Her recent work displayed at Signa Rare Plants and Prism Art Space in Sacramento.

Bangalore never set out to become an artist. In fact, for much of her life, she didn't even feel comfortable calling herself one. "It still feels a little self-aggrandizing," she says with a laugh. "Like I'm asking people to look at me and what I've made."

Raised in Stockton, she grew up navigating the push and pull of cultural expectations. Sum-

Chaitra Bangalore explores the significance of body hair in some of her work.

mers spent in Bangalore, India, shaped her sense of home and belonging along with her artistic perspective, while a stable career path felt like the only option in her Indian American household.

"There was this unspoken thing," she says, "that pursuing something like studio art wasn't a smart decision."

Bangalore majored in design at UC Davis, later earning a master's degree in art education at the Rhode Island School of Design. Teaching became the practical path, but art remained her refuge. "I think art has always been the way I make sense of myself," she says.

After years of teaching by day and creating quietly by night, Bangalore started to embrace the title of artist in 2017 when she began working on a series on body hair — a subject shrouded in secrecy and cultural beauty norms. Like many Indian women, she had grown up with thick, dark hair that appeared early and everywhere, only to be relentlessly plucked, shaved or bleached. This would define her early voice: a visual exploration of shame, disgust and eventual healing.

"Growing out my hair while making art about it became this exercise in self-acceptance," she says.

One oil painting zooms in on Bangalore tweezing her upper lip — humorous, tender and defiant — poking fun at the pressure to remove something barely visible. "It's not about telling everyone to grow their body hair," she says. "It's about giving yourself the option and seeing how that feels."

Since then, her practice has expanded to include handmade paper — sometimes embedded with unexpected materials like hair — along with wool felting and oil pastels. While Bangalore experiments with craft-based media, she continues to use traditional techniques, including oil painting.

OTLIGHTS



One ongoing series draws inspiration from traditional South Asian games. She reimagines Moksha Patam — the spiritual predecessor to Snakes and Ladders — as a critique on colonial erasure. She also references Carrom, an Indian version of pool, and is developing a piece based on chess, which has origins in the Hindu epic Mahabharata.

"The British simplified these games," she says. "They removed the spiritual meanings, the symbols of reincarnation and rebirth."

Her work invites viewers to reflect on parts of history that have been lost or rewritten. "When I was thinking about putting the Om symbol at the start of the game — since it really does symbolize the beginning of everything — it felt tacky," Bangalore explains. "It's an overused symbol by Westerners to the point where it's been stripped of meaning. For me, it's been a good exercise reclaiming these symbols and reincorporating them into my life — they're mine to begin with."

Another installation centers on Rangoli, patterns traditionally drawn in Indian households to invoke prosperity and good fortune, which she reimagines across different materials. Though deeply influenced by her heritage, Bangalore said

her art doesn't always appear overtly Indian.

"Sometimes it's just color and texture and repetition — but all of it is rooted in my identity, in the internal struggles and questions I'm always navigating," she says.

Her process is slow and intuitive. It often begins with reading, journaling or noticing something subtle, like hair in a bathroom drain. She selects materials based on her mood: felting when she's anxious, painting when she's focused.

"It's not about big moments," she noted. "It's about a million little ones that shape who I am."

For Bangalore, representation continues to be a driving force. "I don't know many Indian artists in Sacramento," she said. "Sometimes I just want someone to walk into the studio and immediately understand what Rangoli is without me having to explain it."

Her upcoming projects include more gamebased pieces, a group show she's curating in November and a summer trip to Bangalore a tradition she maintains to reconnect with her roots.

"Even though I only spend 10 days there now, it recharges me every time," she says. "It reminds me of who I am and why I make what I make."

DONALD KENDRICK BRINGS BEAUTY THROUGH CHORAL MUSIC

STORY BY JUSTINE CHAHAL

passion for music.

Kendrick's father, a pianist, taught him
to play the instrument when he was 6 years old
and living in Toronto, His love for music grew

onald Kendrick's teachers fostered his

to play the instrument when he was 6 years old and living in Toronto. His love for music grew from there — he performed wherever he could, playing the organ at his church and joined his school's choirs.

He doesn't remember much from his science or math classes, he says, but he remembers everything from his music class and how influential his high school teacher Lloyd Erickson was in his desire to pursue a music career. Choir, for Kendrick, is an experience unlike anything else.

Now, the Sacramento-based conductor has traveled internationally with various choir groups, sharing this experience with others and educating any who will listen on the importance of choral music.

"There's so much bad stuff going on in the world and so much war and hatred, and we are bringers of beauty," Kendrick says. "We bring music to people and uplift them and inspire them by the texts we sing and by the kind of music that we perform. It helps to inspire and make people want to be better people."

Donald Kendrick is the founder of the Sacramento Choral Society & Orchestra/a nonprofit now in its 29th year.

Kendrick founded the Sacramento Choral Society & Orchestra, a nonprofit chorus with an orchestra which is quickly approaching its 30th anniversary. He has also been a part of other choral groups, including the Hamilton Children's Choir which he founded in Canada as well as the Sacred Heart Parish's Schola Cantorum.

The choral group has performed concerts across the world in locations like Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Great Wall of China; a fact that Kendrick takes pride in.

The chorus is made up of 150-170 volunteers, Kendrick says. The volunteers come from different backgrounds, including doctors and lawyers who joined the nonprofit to relieve the stress they face on a daily basis.

"One common goal is that they love to sing," Kendrick says. "They love to express emotions through their voice and they have changed the face of Sacramento in the last 29 years."

Kendrick likens his role as conductor to one of a teacher, where he must instruct choral members through his gestures, creating a language where he presents a visual cue which inspires a verbal response. His conducting work can lead others to new ideas and to develop themselves as artists, he adds.

Kendrick is no stranger to teaching. He originally moved to Sacramento in 1985 to teach at Sacramento State, becoming its director of choral activities. He says it was one of the happiest times of his life where he was able to travel, perform and record music with his students who had no experience doing so before. Through teaching, Kendrick says he was able to repay his own teachers including Erickson who he remembers fondly. Now, Kendrick's own students have pursued careers in education, promoting the importance of choral music in schools themselves, he adds.

After retiring as a professor, Kendrick has also considered what the future for SCSO holds in the event he is no longer there to lead the group. "I want to continue doing this forever but on the other hand, I know I can't go on forever," Kendrick says. "The other part of it is I'm glad that I'm in the position to offer this back to the city and to help bring in a new successor who will lead them to the next decades ahead."



EBEN BURGOON ON CREATING COMICS AND COLLABORATION

STORY AND PHOTO BY KRISTIN LAM

ben Burgoon used to want to work in foreign intelligence or for the State Department.

His career as a comics writer, artist and programs manager might seem like a far cry from that dream, but Burgoon's international relations degree from Chico State influences his philosophy and work.

Burgoon says his studies inspired his first webcomic, "Eben07: Covert Custodian," which was about spies and their janitorial staff, who were tasked with fixing post-mission messes; such as cleaning up after a volcanic explosion.

His degree also informs how he creates opportunities for others, including how he gave regional and emerging artists their first paid jobs working on his comic "B-Squad: Soldiers of Misfortune."

"It's better to make a tide that raises all ships than worry about the wind in your own sails," Burgoon says. "If you work with other people and you collaborate and you check your ego and really want to work together, where you can end up is much further than what you can do by yourself."

Burgoon grew up in the San Luis Obispo area and had a voracious appetite for comics, especially in sixth grade. But as he got older, Burgoon says he was discouraged from reading them.

"It's really a shame, because there's a lot of beautiful storytelling within the medium," Burgoon says. "I fell into that trap just like a lot of people do."

Nowadays, Burgoon doesn't just write and illustrate comics. He also teaches comic book and visual storytelling workshops at schools, libraries and comic book conventions.

Burgoon says Sacramento is one of the biggest regions for comic book shops and fandom. That's partly why he proposed the Crocker Art Museum host a comic book convention back in 2012

In an elevator, with two people from the Crocker's education department, Burgoon says he pitched the idea of bridging different groups. He explained that people who love comic books but aren't comfortable with museums could come to a convention and discover the Crocker's welcoming environment. Meanwhile, museum patrons could get exposed to the craft of comics and explore the medium with local creators.

Eventually, the staff said yes to Burgoon's idea and the first CrockerCon happened in 2013. The museum has continued the event and held the 10th annual CrockerCon in 2024, drawing nearly 1,200 attendees.

"Basically, what I had pitched in that elevator happened in year 10," Burgoon says. "And it was really, really beautiful."

The success of CrockerCon led to the museum offering Burgoon his job as public programs manager. His role involves outreach programs and the ArtMixes, which are monthly party events at the museum that can involve live performances and art activities. When he isn't working at the Crocker, Burgoon can be found at his studio at the Sierra 2 Center in Curtis Park. Although it isn't the State Department, his career has taken him to other countries including China, Germany, Egypt, Italy and Lithuania.

JAMES ELLISON III PROVIDES A SPACE FOR GUIDING BLACK ACTORS

STORY BY JUSTINE CHAHAL

ames Ellison III realized he wanted to act when he was 4 years old.

The young Sacramento native had participated in a skit, which was performed in front of his mother at their home for fun. His mother, who he remembers being sad before the skit began, slowly became happier as it continued, her somber expression turning into a smile.

Although Ellison had no lines in this skit, this change in his mother made him recognize just how powerful acting could be.

Now, Ellison is the artistic director of Celebration Arts, a Black theater company founded in 1986 and located at 2727 B St. in Sacramento. Ellison, who earlier this year received the Emerging Professional Award from the National Theatre Conference, says he wants to inspire young people to pursue their desire to act as he has.

"Celebration Arts is not just a theater, it's a training ground to be able to help guide and direct young actors and up-and-coming actors," Ellison says. "Those are things that are very rewarding, to see their progress and see them grow."

The community theater wants to provide opportunities for those who don't typically have many within the theater industry, Ellison says, especially actors of color like himself.



Ellison cites the works of playwrights August Wilson and Neil Simon as his current inspirations but as a child, he admired the actors on his television screen, including Gary Coleman who appeared on "Diff'rent Strokes." Ellison says seeing Black actors on his screen made him feel like he was able to pursue acting as a career.

Ellison didn't explore theater until his senior year of Valley High School because he grew up surrounded by people who were not interested in the arts. When Ellison, who was a class clown, delved into theater, he says he initially focused on comedy.

It was only under the guidance of Frank Condon, the previous artistic director of River Stage, that Ellison began to explore drama. When Condon had taught a class at school, Ellison performed a monologue from comedian and actor John Leguizamo. Condon told him he had to stop performing comedy in his class.

From there, Ellison acted in River Stage's production of "Chicago Conspiracy Trial" and he no longer felt the need to hide his desire to act, he says.

"As I started to get into the drama part, what everybody else thought, it just started to fade away because I didn't care anymore," Ellison says. "This is who I am, this is what I love. People are starting to give me good feedback, tell me I'm doing a good job, so I just dove into it."

After spending a brief time in Los Angeles where he produced music, Ellison returned to Sacramento where he was told to seek out Celebration Arts in 2003. He says he proceeded to call their number and spoke to his predecessor and Celebration Arts' founder James Wheatley. He was later cast as the lead in the play "T Bone N Weasel" which earned him an Elly Award nomination in the Best Actor in a Comedy category.

When Wheatley stepped down, Celebration Art's board asked Ellison to take over as interim director, which he was for two years before becoming the official artistic director. Ellison was hesitant to accept the role but now accepts the responsibility of the position and sees just how important it is, he says.

"We don't really get the chance to let our voices be heard and let our stories be told," Ellison says. "To be able to be the person standing at the front of the line checking folks in like that means a lot to me. It feels humbling, empowering."

JENNIFER PEART EXPLORES ALTERNATE POSSIBILITIES FOR ICONIC LANDSCAPES

STORY BY MARIE-ELENA SCHEMBRI

n her sunlit backyard studio, built by 37-yearold artist Jennifer Peart with the help of her father, a smattering of blues, greens and peaches pop against earth tones; Peart's signature color palette surprises and yet doesn't distract from the stunning locations she paints.

Encased in dynamic compositions that incorporate the natural grain of the wooden panels she builds and paints on, places like Yosemite or the Yuba River emerge as the sacred oases they have been to Peart.

Peart describes these as "visionary landscapes," imagining a future with sustainable relationships between people and the natural environment. Peart's paintings are inspired by possibility and the embrace of change, not replicas but rather re-interpretations of these natural landmarks through a hopeful lens.

"I'm imagining those landscapes in their most ideal state," Peart says.

Growing up near Placerville, art and nature are synonymous for this Sacramento teacher-turned-professional artist. When she left behind a 10-year elementary and art teaching career to focus on her art in 2022, Peart couldn't have predicted the success she'd find in just three short years.

While hiking in Yosemite over summer break, Peart realized she needed more time off from teaching. "I thought I would take a year off and reclaim my practice, and I didn't go back," she said, focusing instead on building her studio and pouring herself into her art.

Now, her watercolor, oil and acrylic paintings of California's iconic landscapes are garnering attention locally and beyond, with her art and studio featured in several publications, including Create! Magazine and In Her Studio. Despite the attention and a busy schedule of art fairs and exhibitions, Peart is as dedicated to her craft as ever. It's become a full-time job managing the demand, but her success is far from a "lucky break." She tends to her art practice like a garden, nurturing both the creative and the business side of things.

"I've had my creative goals — getting better at rendering, getting faster, getting faster at painting my landscapes and managing my time better because as most folks know, it's not all romantics



sitting alone in your studio painting. There is lots of backend work and creating a business plan, marketing plan, updating your website," Peart says, adding that applying for opportunities to show her work takes up a large chunk of her time.

"In January, February and March, I had an application due almost every day," Peart says, highlighting a work ethic that goes beyond the norm.

May is a busy month for Peart, with her monthlong solo exhibition "State of Change: Visions of California" at Sacramento's janeGallery, participating in an online exhibit, showing her work at Saratoga Art Show and an upcoming watercolor workshop at Casino Mine Ranch in Plymouth.

Still, she stays grounded in her purpose: to show people that a better way of coexisting with nature is possible.

"I'm not just painting pretty pictures of California. I'm thinking about what is the impact on that landscape? Is it bark beetle? Is it farm runoff, pesticide runoff? Does it trace back to the dams that were built? I love stories like the Klamath River being fully restored, that dam being brought down and the salmon returning and the indigenous folks celebrating the salmon. I think those things are possible and there are solutions to these problems," Peart says.

BALLET DANCER **JULIA FELDMAN**'S DEEP PASSION FOR CHOREOGRAPHY

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN

hen Julia Feldman is in the middle of choreographing a ballet piece, she can think of little else. It can be all-consuming, like how she felt when she choreographed for "Visions," a program of the Sacramento Ballet, where she has been a company member since 2011. The program had a triple bill — Feldman and two other choreographers — and was performed at The Sofia in late March.

This was Feldman's second full commission as a choreographer, but she has plenty of other experience from which to draw. For Sac Ballet's annual Beer & Ballet production each spring, any dancer who wants to choreograph can sign up to do so. These are shorter pieces and "a chance to dip your toes into choreographing," Feldman says. "I've done that with Sacramento Ballet every year since 2012, so I've really developed my passion for choreographing."

Raised in Davis, Feldman trained at Pamela Hayes Classical Ballet, a pre-professional school

Julia Feldman is a company member of Sacramento Ballet and a founding member of Capital Dance Project.

in El Dorado Hills, and attended Natomas Charter School's Performing and Fine Arts Academy. Her first job as a company member was with Sac Ballet. "I've just really loved being here, and I feel very lucky I've not had to go too far away," says Feldman, adding that she is one of the last ballet dancers in the company from the Sacramento region, as the other members now come from all over the United States and the world, including France, Australia and the Philippines.

In 2015, Feldman and a few other Sac Ballet members founded Capital Dance Project, which has been a "whole other adventure," she says. During that time, Sac Ballet was experiencing financial troubles and cut the season short — Beer & Ballet was canceled and dancers were laid off. "There was a bit of like, do we just say goodbye and go part ways until next season? But we have these ballets that we've started," Feldman says. "It was a pretty quick decision, just as a group, that we wanted to put on a performance ourselves and finish the ballets that we had begun."

In just 21 days, the dancers booked Crest Theatre, came up with the CDP name, started a website, found a fiscal sponsor, fundraised and marketed, and did everything else needed to put on an inaugural performance. They did the show for the sake of coming together, Feldman says, but they didn't know if anyone would show up.

"We just were really, really blown away by the support of our community that year," she says. "That particular performance is one that I will never forget — looking out and seeing a full house and being like, Oh my God, so many people came to see this. It was just a really incredible, empowering experience."

The CDP founders decided they didn't want this to be a one-time thing. They wanted to keep it going every summer between Sac Ballet's seasons. The group functions as a collective, Feldman says, with everyone sharing duties and having a chance to explore areas outside of dance. "If you're interested in development, in fundraising, in marketing, in poster design, website design, production management, anything and everything, we do [it] ourselves, and that's become a really core part of Capital Dance Project," she says.

KEIA KODAMA FINDS HER NICHE AS A SNEAKER ARTIST AND INFLUENCER

STORY AND PHOTO BY KRISTIN LAM

ultidisciplinary artist and influencer Keia Kodama recently turned 46 years old, but she still caters to her inner child.

Whether she's customizing shoes or creating an art installation, Kodama says she incorporates her experience as a 1980s kid and '90s teenager.

"My logic of life is everything I do is for the 5, 10, 15-year-old me," Kodama says. "About [how I] wanted to see these things and didn't see them."

Kodama moved to Sacramento from Los Angeles at age seven and has lived here since. Her passion for customizing shoes goes back to when she was in elementary school, drawing on her shoes, changing the laces, bleeding them out and adding materials. Today, she's customized shoes for clients including Nike, the video game Fortnite and a production company tied to LeBron James.

But her favorite shoes she has customized so far weren't part of a brand project. Kodama created Hair Force 1s, customized Nike Air Force 1s, as a homage to Black women and their hair experiences.

She styled hair as a side hustle for years, but stopped during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fall 2021, she treated the shoe as if she was doing a quick weave hairstyle on a client and used glue and clippers. Kodama posted the design on social media, drawing the attention of outlets including Essence and Hypebae.

"I think the Hair Force 1 was me showing everybody that when you customize a sneaker, it doesn't have to just be paint," Kodama says. "It could be something else; the sky's the limit. It was also stepping out of that comfort zone of this culture of a world being so set in a certain way and then doing something so different."

She didn't formally study art in school, but has a background in fashion and design. Kodama was first invited to be part of a fashion show in the early 2000s, after people kept asking her who made her clothes and telling her she should be a designer.

Kodama realized she liked styling more than making clothes and eventually pivoted to marketing and display visuals. For about 16 years, Kodama worked in visual production, designing window displays and mannequins such as inside



shopping malls. She decided to do art and influencing full time about four years ago.

But Kodama says she felt her official introduction as an installation artist versus a fashion designer took place in 2022. Kodama along with more than 30 other artists transformed the former PAC SAT satellite building located in downtown Sacramento into a temporary immersive exhibit called "Coordinates: Ice Pac."

She says taking her experience working for retailers and implementing her own creativity was the perfect marriage.

Kodama adds she is very conscious of the fact that not a lot of people look like her in the niche of collectible custom sneakers. Many sneaker artists live in the United Kingdom, but she has been able to create a community supportive of her work.

To those looking to get into art, Kodama encourages people to go to school or work for about five to 10 years. She recommends gaining the knowledge you need from companies and then applying it to yourself.

She says Sacramento's art scene has come a long way since she moved here as a child. Kodama also says she would rather be a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond.

"If I can't make it here, then how would I know how well I would do anywhere else?"
Kodama says. "So, let's see what we can do here and then we can take our act on the road."

SACRAMENTO STATE DANCE PROFESSOR **MELISSA MUGANZO** LIVES HER ART 24/7

STORY BY HELEN HARLAN

stage fright.

"I'm ready to go," Muganzo declares,
point blank, as she sits on the edge of the
Shasta Hall stage at Sacramento State on a rainy
mid-February Thursday before her Theatre 1

students arrive. "I'm a dancer."

elissa Muganzo says she never gets

However, the theater and dance professor, who earned her master's degree in higher education leadership at Sacramento State, is more than just that.

"I am an entertainer, I'm a humanitarian and I'm also an entrepreneur. In those three titles, I do a host of things," she says. "I'm an actor, I'm a professor, I'm a food business owner and I'm also a trained dancer."

Muganzo was born in Florida — raised in Rialto in San Bernardino County — before moving to Northern California for college. Many of Muganzo's talents fall under the banner of her brand Muganzo Entertainment. Her motto is "Do it afraid first, and then with confidence," which she has embodied since childhood.

"My first paid gig was when I was 15, and I choreographed for my friend's quinceañera. It

Muganzo also did hair as a teenager: single braids; weaves; wigs; crochets; and perms that sold for \$50 to \$75. She kept practicing this side hustle as an undergrad at UC Davis where she earned a bachelor's degree in community and regional development.

"I continued to do hair in the residence halls at Davis. I was even doing the administration's hair," she says. "They would come to my dorm, and I would do their hair."

During a production of "The Vagina Monologues" as an Aggie, Muganzo got bit by the acting bug. She went on to study acting locally at Studio24 in Folsom and was last seen on stage at The Sofia in Mosaic School for the Performing/Integrated Arts's production of "Dear Grandmother."

From 2023-24, Muganzo was an Artist in Residence for the City of Sacramento, where she worked with the Department of Transportation to help curate scripts, voiceovers and marketing concepts.

"My artist in residency with the City of Sacramento was actually something really, really special," she says. "I never saw myself as an artist working for any type of government entity, because I always felt that government was very restricting and red tape filled."

Pride is a big theme in Muganzo's brand and person. She identifies as a "proud queer Black woman with Indigenous immigrant roots in East Africa and the [Virgin] Islands." When individuals are threatened by her activism, the former Sac State Pride Center coordinator is ready to push back.

"I'm ready to have those conversations, to talk about the deep-rooted programming that is really harmful and how it's really important to support your student," she says.

So what about breaks? Muganzo says she doesn't need them and is just fine with that. "The cool thing about what I get to do is that I get paid to be myself. For a lot of people, they don't get to do that. Their artistry is like an outside gig, but they have to go back to this other life," she says. "This is my real life every day, all day, and I'm obsessed with it."



MIRANDA CULP CURATES TREASURES AT AMATORIA FINE ART BOOKS

STORY BY FELICIA ALVAREZ

iranda Culp floats among the densely packed bookshelves, her fingertips straightening up tomes on Roman architecture one moment and neatening a bundle of vintage street-art books the next.

At Amatoria Fine Art Books, the obscure share shelves alongside the classics. The store specializes in "coffee table" art books known for their stunning visuals and insights into a variety of art disciplines. Culp, who co-owns the bookstore, prides herself on curating a collection that both connects and supports Sacramento's artists.

"When you walk into our store, we don't want the typical books on Picasso or Michelangelo," Culp says. "We want the obscure lost drawings of Michelangelo and the obscure ceramics of Picasso. We're going for that next level of deep cut."

The store has long had a home at 1831 F St. in Sacramento, and for nearly 40 years was under the ownership of Richard Press, who ran Richard L. Press Fine and Scholarly Books on the Arts. Press sold the business in early 2020, but as the pandemic struck the store's future fell into a period of free fall.

Culp and her former business partner, Laurelin Gilmore, knew if no one stood up, the store and its long history in Sacramento's art community would be lost

The two reopened the store as Amatoria Fine Art Books in November 2020 and since then have worked to turn the store into a crucial hub for Sacramento's artists to connect and share resources. Both women are artists, with Culp specializing in writing and editing, and Gilmore specializing in painting and mixed-media art.

Many of the art books provide inspiration or research material for Sacramento's "commercial arts," Culp says, such as the city's architects, photographers and fashion designers. The majority of the collection is made up of used books, which Amatoria purchases from the public or acquires as donations from retiring designers who wish to share their books.

"We start at the cave paintings, and we cover all cultures," Culp says.

The shelves are lined with deep dives into lesser seen universes. In one corner, visitors will see a full section on Mesoamerican art and another will feature locally-published art treasures, historic brochures from Sacramento's art scene.



In her own art career, Culp has experimented with many of the mediums that the store specializes in, such as photography, acting and music. As a young adult, Culp was a Bay Area-based vocalist who sang with swing bands, jazz ensembles and a "bizarro 20-piece orchestra" that she describes as a cross between Frank Zappa and Mel Tormé with a maritime theme. Culp initially moved to the Sierra Nevada foothills after watching art scene friends get priced out of the Bay Area, and later moved to Sacramento 11 years ago as a fresh place to raise her daughter.

In more recent days, Culp is better known as a writer and editor. She's written a book on the history of Citrus Heights as well as a collection of erotic short stories. Her current projects include a novel that provides a portrait of Sacramento, from the vantage point of the city's underrepresented artists and unhoused individuals. (She also occasionally writes for Solving Sacramento.)

Culp knows the difficulty of self-publishing first hand, and hopes to help artists find inspiration and help with trivial production needs alike.

"One of the goals with Amatoria is for it to be a place where writers and artists can really congregate," she says. "Where they can meet up, exchange information and find really concrete resources."

REN ALLATHKANI HONORS PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND CULTURE THROUGH HER ART

STORY BY JUSTINE CHAHAL



en Allathkani's artwork "Within Our Lifetime" is the one she is proudest of.
The art piece, once displayed in the SOMArts Cultural Center in San Francisco, focuses on Yasser Arafat International Airport, Gaza's only airport located near Rafah before it was bombed in 2001. The project, which took the Palestinian American three months to complete, honors the airport as a symbol of the Palestinian-held dream for the future and freedom, she says.

When the piece was displayed in the SOMArts gallery many people — including Palestinians — told Allathkani they had no idea Gaza had an airport. "Being able to give people knowledge in this way while inspiring them, I feel like that's truly important to me," Allathkani says. "It made me feel like this is why I make my work. It's not only history, but to move people emotionally."

Allathkani is a Sacramento-based multidisciplinary artist who creates cultural art with a message, educating others with a message that humanizes Palestinians and shines a light on their history and culture. She obtained an art studio degree from UC Davis, and uses different mediums, including painting and Palestinian embroidery, called Tatreez. Tatreez is an art form that uses motifs based on Palestinian flora and fauna, meant to be passed down from mother to daughter to honor one's ancestors and the land itself, Allathkani says.

Allathkani says she has to constantly grapple with the fact she is trying to accurately represent

the homeland she has never visited. She also has to contend with the chance she may never be able to.

"I know I don't fully represent what it's like to be a Palestinian and that's something that I've had to accept," Allathkani says. "My knowledge and understanding will always be lacking whether I like it or not. Until I go there, there's always going to be that missing gap but it is a part of the history."

Allathkani uses Tatreez to convey what was lost of her family's homeland and what it is like to live in America, she says, finding imagery in books and speaking to Palestinians who are living in Gaza.

Allathkani's art has been used for protests, namely her digital piece representing Palestinian man Khaled Nabhan holding his granddaughter Reem's dead body. This not only spurred Sacramento-based artist Julie Bernadette to make riso prints of Allathkani's work but it has also been pasted on a bus station in Montreal and hung on the side of a building in Serbia, Allathkani says.

While Allathkani is happy her work has inspired others to act, she says she has now started criticizing how artists, including herself, have depicted these moments of distress. She believes this art presents the reality of the occupation but also wishes these families had privacy and that their deaths were not glorified and rebranded into something beautiful, she adds.

Allathkani says she hopes to obtain a master's degree and have a solo art show one day but questions what opportunities will be available to her as someone whose work focuses predominantly on Palestinian culture.

At times, it is hard for her to imagine a future because the current political climate impacts her work ethic and makes her question the purpose of her art, she says. However, Allathkani says she will persist nonetheless.

"Why am I making work for a place that doesn't even want to see it, that doesn't even want to see me exist?" Allathkani says. "I'm still going to do it because I can't imagine doing anything else. I refuse defeat because I keep thinking about the Palestinians back home and they're not giving up. They're still crafting, they're still creating and so that also motivates me — seeing them, how they persevere."

TANER PAŞAMEHMETOĞLU BLURS THE LINES BETWEEN ART AND NATURE

STORY BY FELICIA ALVAREZ

hen mixed-media artist Taner Paşamehmetoğlu is at work in his home studio outside of Elk Grove, it's a scene of loosely organized chaos.

One moment he's adding fine lines to a landscape, and the next he's cutting slivers out of a Target grocery bag. At least four art pieces are in progress, and he's unsure which, if any, will be shown in a gallery or sold. Well-recognized political figures stand on canvases next to pieces that blur the lines between art and science experiments.

"I like to be in a space that's not predictable," Paşamehmetoğlu says.

During his day job, Paşamehmetoğlu works in marketing where he's seen art often used as a means to sell more. His art practice is an escape from that, he says. As a self-taught artist that emerged out of the pandemic, his work has become a way for him to grapple with his own ideas around consumerism, American identity and the environment.

Paşamehmetoğlu's entry into art was through photography. He fondly recalls childhood trips to his parent's native Turkey, where he commandeered his father's new DSLR camera. In college at the University of Utah, that grew into a focus in photojournalism and an early career in sports photography, capturing visuals for the major league soccer team Real Salt Lake.

Sustainability is a constant thread in his work, as well as a nod to his experience as a second-generation American. Both of Paşamehmetoğlu's parents were born in Turkey and met in the U.S. as immigrants, as his father was pursuing a career in nuclear engineering

The last five years have seen Paşamehmetoğlu produce shows for the Midtown Association's Second Saturday programming and the Chico Art Center. In 2024, he was selected as a full-time artist in residence for the City of Sacramento, where he spent a year using art as a means to support the city's sustainability programming.

"My practice really kind of centers around this reimagining of the American dream for myself," Paşamehmetoğlu said. "One that isn't measured in money or career accomplishments, like I used to think it had to be."

Lately, his environmental focus has led Paşamehmetoğlu to experiment with using the elements themselves, where sunlight and rain have literally found their way into his pieces. His piece "Three Little Birds," began as a large canvas he repurposed from a thrift store. The canvas came with stock art of a few birds, which he covered up in heavy layers of acrylic, oil and spray paints that clotted together.

Then, he left the painting outside. The piece saw extreme heat days and stretches of heavy rainfall. After a full year, he checked on the results. Exposure to the elements saw a few sections of paint slough off in large chunks. It left behind streaks of threadbare canvas and revealed the gentle outlines of the birds that originally marked the canvas.

"I want to blur the line between nature and artist," he says. "Nature is a kind of collaborator in that way."

The piece is dotted with pixels, which have become Paşamehmetoğlu's signature. In his other works, be it a riff on a grocery store or a flowing landscape, viewers can spot a small, single-colored square. The pixel is an homage to his photojournalism days as well as a greater message.

"It's this idea that we're all made of something smaller," Paşamehmetoğlu says, "the idea of something that unifies us all."



ANYA MCINROY DOCUMENTS MILE-STONES IN THEIR MOST HONEST STATE

STORY BY JUSTINE CHAHAL

nya McInroy has known from a young age that life is fleeting.

McInroy had been diagnosed with kidney failure when she was 8 years old. She

kidney failure when she was 8 years old. She had always known she would eventually need a kidney transplant.

However, it was only shortly after Erik, her brother who had been diagnosed with Rubinstein-Taybi Syndrome, passed away in 2016 that McInroy was told she would need the transplant within a few years.

Thankfully, a childhood friend donated a kidney and McInroy was able to have the transplant in February of 2020 at 26 years old.

Now, the 31-year-old Sacramento photographer is marking the fifth anniversary of her operation. McInroy says facing her own mortality, compounded with processing the grief over her brother's passing, emphasized to her the importance of living life. This mindset impacts McInroy's work as a documentary lifestyle photographer.

"That dichotomy is endlessly interesting to me and fuels my passion for documenting human beings for who they really are," McInroy says. "I think we can go along with our life, just getting by forever. I think taking time to slow down and understand the people around us and just see the world is so, so important because not everybody gets to do that."

McInroy opts for candid photo subjects. She says she doesn't focus on a specific topic for her pictures — whether it be weddings or business gatherings — but instead is simply interested in humans as they are.



McInroy's love for photography partially stems from the creative household she grew up in. Her parents — both architects — raised her in Oakland. She says her parents encouraged their daughter to pursue photography after documenting her adolescence through pictures themselves. Her father used a Nikon F2 which she later used for her college courses at California Polytechnic State University.

McInroy started her photography business while she was majoring in art and design — with a concentration in photography — at Cal Poly.

McInroy's approach to photography is also inspired by Leon Borensztein, a photographer who lived a few houses away from her childhood home. After her mother and Borensztein bonded over their Polish background, they would visit his home and view the darkroom there, she says.

McInroy believes candid photography allows her to capture real emotions, especially during her clients' major milestones. This makes it easier for her to view her work as authentic, rather than purely transactional.

"I think when you allow yourself to exist as a person in a space rather than like a hired worker, the energy in the air just shifts," McInroy says. "It's really cool and you're able to access a side of them that typically wouldn't be visible to a stranger. These people are so much more than clients. To me, they're coexisting with me on Earth and facing their own set of challenges. Why fabricate a scene when each setting can be so uniquely theirs?"

McInroy moved to Sacramento in 2018 with her partner and found work in the city. She considers it a diverse place that is still growing into itself and creating its own culture. McInroy says she believes Sacramento has a great artist community.

McInroy says she wants to continue her documentarian approach to photography, accepting people for who they are in new and different spaces. She wants to move forward being as much as herself as possible, she added, while also encouraging others to be themselves.

"Everything around us is so interesting and so beautiful," McInroy says. "I think it's just so valuable to see people for who they are versus what they think they should be, or what the internet thinks we should be. ... That's really my goal."

HALEY TITUS BALANCES GRAPHIC DESIGN AND FINE ART IN HER WORK

STORY BY SAMIN VAFAEE

n the heart of Sacramento's vibrant art scene,
Haley Titus stands out as a creator whose work
bursts with color, movement and personality.
With her bold murals that light up dormant spaces
and blank walls, Titus's art creates positive energy that resonates with her audiences. The main
ethos behind all her work, she says, is unapologetically exhibiting a more feminine version of
creating art.

Although her relationship with art was on and off through her adolescence, she eventually went on to study graphic design at Chico State. After working 10 years in the advertising agency world, the pandemic gave Titus time to shift toward publishing her digital art onto blank walls.

"I never thought I'd be working full time in art, but it's been fun," Titus says.

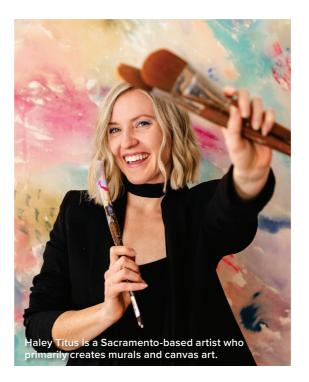
Today, her artistic practice includes creating murals, canvas art, ceramics and textiles. "I think I take a bit of a different approach than maybe a fine artist who professionally studied. I take more of a graphical approach of what feels good other than what I was taught to do," she says.

Titus has found that some of the principles she uses in graphic design — like the Gestalt principles — can be applied to fine arts as well. The Gestalt principles are psychological rules that explain how humans naturally organize visual elements, such as proximity — the spacing between visual elements — or continuity.

Titus's mural work draws themes from the town the mural is in; such as native plants or local culture and history. She has created murals in places such as Woodland, Lincoln, Lodi and Eureka. Her work is known not only for its bold color palettes and geometric shapes, but also for its positive messaging such as, "Keep Going, Growing, and Glowing" or "You Belong Among the Wildflowers."

"Sometimes the messaging is based on what I'm experiencing at that time in my life that I feel can help others to feel inspired or expand past their limitations," she says.

Her artistic process includes walking through a space with her client not only to spark some inspiration, but also to examine the space to keep the art cohesive and flow past the corners. One way she works with her clients is to create collective mood boards so everyone's visions are taken into consideration.



"The brain wants to finish a shape, so I think just letting it flow feels more natural," she says. "I try to bring in an eclectic mix of ways to weave in our two different visions."

With summer here, Titus is doing all kinds of work including personal murals in people's backyards as well as working with the City of Woodland for their Honey Festival on June 21. She will also be part of Sac Open Studios with the Verge Center for the Arts in September; art lovers will be able to enjoy her work on 8th Street in downtown Sacramento.

As a woman in the art industry, Titus is determined to infuse her work with femininity in a way that resonates with people of all identities.

"I sometimes get slack from male audiences that my art isn't structured enough," she says. "So I get a lot of praise for the murals, but a lot of people haven't quite come around to art that's more flowy and allows for softer edges and things that aren't as symmetrical and perfect. It's what speaks to me and I'd like to have part of my practice that's less controlled and see what comes through. The critics just give you more fuel to keep going."

ELAINA SWANSON ON ART AS A PERMISSION TO BE STRANGE

STORY BY SENA CHRISTIAN

laina Swanson, a self-described "weird art girl," uses art to embrace strangeness and messiness, and wants others to feel like they can too. Swanson is a Sacramento-based painter, writer and mixed-media artist, who explores personhood and coming of age in various contexts, including pop culture and American evangelicalism.

"I have always been driven by an impulse to create, but my work is also an instinctive attempt to be known; revealing myself to the extent of embarrassment in order to invite others to do the same and see each other as fellow strange creatures as opposed to being alone in our strangeness," says Swanson, who also works as a painter for B Street Theatre.

Raised in Folsom, Swanson says she can recall how in kindergarten, a craft box of pipe cleaners and pom-pom balls would make her "electrified," as she was drawn to the tactical act of creating. In high school, she grew interested in online creative expression, like TumbIr and DeviantArt, and considered eventually going to art school.

"At the time, it was kind of hard, because I was very much entrenched in church and church culture. I grew up very evangelical Christian," she says, which made her often question what was and was not allowed under her faith.

Swanson earned her BFA in painting and drawing, with a minor in biblical studies, at Biola

Elaina Swanson is a Sacramento-based mixed-media artist

who embraces strangeness and messiness in her art.

University, a Christian school in Los Angeles County. She says she still considers herself a Christian, even though she felt like an oddball in college — but, then again, she says, "The art department was full of other oddballs."

Upon reading comedian Jenny Slate's 2019 book "Little Weirds," Swanson realized something about her own artistic practice. She describes the book as a compilation of abstract, juvenile essays and musings — some straight-forward and autobiographical, and others fantastical and metaphoric. "When I finished that book," she says, "I was so overwhelmed with relief that there was someone else out there whose insides were as strange as mine, and that thought about the world in this way."

Swanson says she has always been willing to be "the most embarrassing person in the room," but has grown even less self-protective and more comfortable as she has aged into a now 30-year-old. Through her art, she ponders questions like: Who is she? Who is she allowed to be? She aims to uncover the emotional truths within various contexts, like life as a woman, or as a girl with ADHD, or with her "cringy" need for attention and the performative aspect of her as the jester — which manifests as Swanson being the funny friend in the group. Or how "women and neurodivergent people shape-shift to be understood," she says. Or to examine the role of guilt and shame in her life and identity.

"It's like a long scenic route, I guess, to saying something about myself that feels like something I can't actually just say by using a certain set of words in a certain order," she says. "The big reason why I focus on my pain points of shame and guilt, and doing things that are painfully sincere or embarrassing even, is in order to be the first one to kind of say the awkward thing, and then other people can go, 'Oh, thank God.' I want my embarrassment to be a source of relief."

Through her artwork, she is granting others the permission to be strange.

"My practice feels like a cosmic slumber party — equal parts confessional, chaotic and kind of sacred. Specifically, a place where you reveal parts of yourself you keep from daylight," she says. "I create from the awkward in-between spaces: between fantasy and reality; adulthood and girlhood; shame and self-acceptance."

20





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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; artbeatgallerysac.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; broad waysacramento.com.

CALIFORNIA CAPITAL ARTS FOUNDATION

Nonprofit arm of the California Capital Film Office: facilitating arts access in rancho cordova. 9845 Horn Rd #110, Sacramento, 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; calawyers forthearts.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; citysound soundbyte.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.ora.

CONCERTS IN THE PARK

Seasonal summer concert series ft. local musicians. Cesar Chavez Plaza 9th & J Streets; godown townsac.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. *creative mornings.com/cities/sac; instagram.com/cm_sacramento.*

CREST THEATRE

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

CROCKER ART MUSEUM

World-class art museum with an expansive collection, vibrant changing exhibitions, and creative experiences for all ages.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; demo artandbooks.com.

DREAMLAND CINEMA

Microcinema bringing the best in cult, indie, international and arthouse 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; dwell pointstudio.com.

ELLIOTT FOUTS GALLERY

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

GOLDFIELDS TRADING POST

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

GREEN VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY

A peripatetic company-community theater group with no set rehersal or stage space. 3823 V St, Sacramento, CA 95817; areenvalleytheatre.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 OF ART 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; thelatino center.org.

LEAVE YOUR MARK SACRAMENTO

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

LEBARONS FINE ART

Art gallery. 1714 Capitol Ave, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 444-1001; singulart.com/en/art-galler ies/united-statescalifornia/sacra mento/lebaron-s-fine-art-10503.

LIGHT OPERA THEATER

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

MUSIC CIRCUS

Touring broadway productions. 1419 H St, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 557-1999; broadwaysacra mento.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,

SACRAMENTO

Artist-Run for Over 35 Years 625 S St, Sacramento, CA 95811 Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 12-5pm Axisgallery.org



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Eureka Day

by Jonathan Spector October 15 – November 16, 2025

The Sound Inside

by Adam Rapp January 28 – March 1, 2026

Fat Ham

by James Ijames

Espejos: Clean

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and creativity within the theatre community. P.O. Box 162566 Sacramento, CA 95816; (916) 443-8229; sarta.com.

SACRAMENTO BALLET

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; sacramentochildrensmusical theater com

SACRAMENTO COMEDY SPOT

Comedy open mics, classes, improv and sketch shows. 1050 20th Street #130, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 444-3137; saccomedyspot.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; sacramentofrenchfilm 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; sacramentostorytellers quild.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; sacramentoyouthsymphony.org.

SAFE CREDIT UNION PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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

Free for All Welcoming open minds with open arms. manettishrem.org manettishrem.org manettishrem.org manetti shrem museum of art Photo Hung Q. Pham Photography Free for All COJO" Julio César Morales Breath(e): Toward Climate and Social Justice Opening August 7 UCDAVIS

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 American 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; stabcomedy theater.com.

STORIES ON STAGE

Taking local literature on to stage with dramatic readings by local actors. 1425 24th St. Sacramento, CA 95816; stories onstagesacramento.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; teatro espejo.com.

THE BACKYARD

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



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; cafecolonial 916 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; quildtheater.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/Play wrightsofSacramento.

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; twin lotusthai.com.

TWISTED TRACK GALLERY

Contemporary art gallery and mural org. 1730 12th St, Sacra-

mento, CA 95811; (800) 235-2356; twistedtrackgallery.life.

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; verge contemporary.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; viewpointphoto artcenter.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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