

2021 Diversity in Arts Leadership Program Mentors



Bryan E. Glover is the **Deputy Director of Grants and Programs** at **The Bronx Council on the Arts** and will be mentoring **Leon Caleb Christian** this summer. He has lived in New York City since 2006, working as an independent arts producer of dance, performance art, theater, music, and film, as well as a skilled manager for multiple nonprofit arts groups. He was named one of twelve Fellows in the 2015-2017 inaugural cohort of the Field Leadership Fund, an initiative to impact diversity and equity in the arts sector. He is a founding member of the Obie award winning theater producing collaborative Harlem9, and served as a founding board member of Freedom Train Productions, the groundbreaking Black LGBT theater

company based in Brooklyn in the mid 2000's. Especially interested in enhancing and promoting the careers and voices of LGBTQ artists of color, Bryan has served on the boards of several community-based organizations including the Gay and Lesbian Education Fund, the Washington Peace Center, the Counter Narrative Project, and Adodi National.



Ashley Renee Watkins (she/her) is a **Teaching Artist Facilitator** both at **Lincoln Center Education** and as an **independent consultant** and will be mentoring **Harrison Clark** this summer. She is a classically trained multi-genre vocalist, songwriter, and teaching artist facilitator. As an artist, she keeps the many layers of her sound present in her music. The New Orleans born artist has been based in New York City since 2014 – the year she appeared on NBC's America's Got Talent with her opera and multi-genre duo ACTE II. Ashley Renee released her first EP project "Roux" under her artist name *A. Renee* in the fall of 2019. It captures the many experiences and narratives of her as an artist and a woman of color. Ashley Renee has worked nationally as a facilitator over the past several

years, serving on the teaching artist faculty of Lincoln Center Education as well as consulting in arts education and advocacy with cultural institutions in cities throughout the United States. She holds a Master's degree in voice & operatic performance from the University of Oklahoma.

Elise Drew León is **Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** at the **School of American Ballet (SAB)** at **Lincoln Center** and will be mentoring **Vivian Gonzalez** this summer. In her role, she works to ensure that SAB is a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization according to its behaviors, policies, and practices. Prior to joining SAB, Elise worked as an artist, administrator, and teacher. As a member of the Limón



Dance Company, she performed throughout the US and abroad, most notably to Africa as a cultural ambassador for the US Department of State. Additionally, Elise performed with Mark Morris Dance Group in *The Hard Nut*, Luna Negra Dance Theatre in Chicago, and was a founding member of TAKE Dance under former Taylor dancer Takehiro Ueyama. A 2014 Princess Grace Dance Honorarium recipient, she was designated a Rising Star in the Performing Arts by the Puerto Rican Day Parade in 2015. While performing, Elise served as The Ailey School's Summer Housing Coordinator, where she broadened their subsidized housing program and developed staff leadership training. She has taught for Adelphi University,

The Ailey School, Bryant Park Moves, LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts, and New York University. Elise holds a BFA in Dance from Fordham University. She received the Distinguished Young Alumna Award from Westover School in 2018 and completed the BAM/DeVos Institute for Arts Management Fellowship and Dance/USA's John R. Munger Research Fellowship in 2014-15. Most recently, she was a 2020 CUP Fellow as part of the Council of Urban Professionals, an organization committed to inspiring, elevating, and empowering the next generation of diverse business and civic leaders. Elise is dedicated to ensuring that the performing arts is as inclusive and equitable as possible. She has spoken on panels for the Diversity in Arts Leadership Internship and the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program, has served as a grants panelist for ArtsWestchester



Emma Osore is a participatory design and equity, access, and inclusion practitioner and will be mentoring **Fabia St. Juste** this summer. She led Americans for the Arts' first Equity in Arts Leadership national program portfolio, is a founding member of BlackSpace Urbanist Collective, and a commissioned mixed media visual artist. Emma leverages her expertise to poise early-stage and mid-career leaders to work together for social impact. She earned her undergraduate degree in Urban and Regional Studies at Cornell University and Master's in Public Administration at Baruch College where she was a National Urban Fellow.



Esther Jeong is an experienced diversity and inclusion leader with global business experience designing employee engagement and business inclusion strategies for technology companies. She will be mentoring **Brian Le** this summer. As a culture catalyst and inclusion strategist, she brings data-driven solutions to building and strengthening inclusive, equitable, and collaborative team environments. Esther has worked at Infor, Google, Moody's, Bloomberg LP, and the Arts & Business Council of NY. Esther received a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology from Wheaton College (MA), conducted a Fulbright fellowship on Korean dance and completed the Coro Leadership NY program.



Gina Callender joined **Con Edison** in 2000 as part of the Management Intern Program and will be mentoring **Rafael Abdulmajid** this summer. She currently works as **Director in Strategic Planning**. Her responsibilities include managing the CECONY Gas Long Range Plan, Orange & Rockland's Electric & Gas Long Range Plan, Steam Long Range Plan and studies that explore Electrification and define pathways to obtain 80X50. Prior to this assignment, she has worked in many areas of increasing responsibility including: General Manager in Substation Operations Planning Department, Section Manager of Gas Engineering Oil to Gas Conversation Group, Section Manager in Bronx Gas Construction, Area Manager in

Manhattan Electric Construction, Project Specialist working on the Public Service Commission (PSC) Management Audit Team, Field Operations Planner in Queens Gas Distribution Services, Engineering Supervisor in Manhattan Energy Services, Energy Analyst in Energy Management, and Chief Construction Inspector in Manhattan Construction Management. Ms. Callender has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Manhattan College (Riverdale, NY) and an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, NY) with a concentration in Management. In 2014, she received the Company's highest award, the Living Our Values Award (LOV Award), which has been the highlight so far in her career. Gina has been mentoring in Americans for the Arts Diversity in Arts Leadership (DIAL) Program for over 16 years and in Manhattan College's mentoring program for over 7 years. She is also an active mentor in Con Edison's Corporate Mentoring Program and Con Edison's LDP (Leadership Development Program) where she coaches new hires in their respective assignments for future success. In her spare time, she enjoys travelling, snowboarding, practicing yoga and teaching meditation and yoga www.GinaCallenderYoga.com.



Jesse Obremski, a native New Yorker, graduated from LaGuardia High School and The Juilliard School, under the direction of Lawrence Rhodes, and with additional development at The School at Jacob's Pillow with multiple years at The Ailey School, Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts, and Springboard Danse Montréal. He will be mentoring **Austin Kim** this summer. Obremski, an Eagle Scout Rank recipient, Asian American Arts Alliance Jadin Wong Dance Awardee (2016), Interview En Lair's "Dancer to Watch" (2017), and Dance Magazine's March 2019 Dancer "On The Rise" has performed with Diversity of Dance, Brian Brooks Moving Company, Peter Stathas Dance, Kate Weare Company, as a company member with

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Buglisi Dance Theatre, WHITE WAVE, and has performed ensemble, soloist, and principal roles with The Limón Dance Company. Obremski has had the honor to perform for the Obama family at the inaugural White House Dance Series as well as for the Olympic recognized FINA World Tournament 2019 in South Korea. In 2019, his dance film "No Words" was selected and presented by HBO at Lincoln Center through The Dance Films Associations. Obremski also proudly serves on the Board of Diversity of Dance and



Originally from Virginia, **Kelsey Kramer** (she/her/hers) is a Brooklyn-based performance artist and administrator and will be mentoring **Aurimar Baez-Collazo** this summer. Since moving to New York, Kelsey has worked with choreographers and artists LuisaInnesFree Dance, Emily Kohl Mattingley, KIT District, Eric Gotshall, and Shannon Hummel/Cora Dance. Kelsey is half of JACKS -a moving, making duo with collaborator Lexie Thrash. JACKS' performance and film work has been presented at venues and non-traditional performance spaces in New York City, Washington, D.C., Berkshire County, MA, Montreal and Spain. Kelsey's own work has been presented at SITUATIONS Gallery, Abrons Arts Center, Cora Studio

Theater, Dogtown Dance Theater in Virginia, and internationally in China as part of the Sichuan Dance Project. From 2018-2020 she served on Dance/NYC's Junior Committee (JComm) and held the role of Operations Coordinator. Currently, she is Program Manager in the Belfer Center for Innovation & Social Impact at the 92nd Street Y and serves as Board Secretary for Cora Dance.

Kimberly Denise Williams is a **Manager** in the **Government, Regional and Community Affairs Department at Con Edison** and will be mentoring **Jennifer Villa** this summer. In her role she serves as a representative of the company to elected officials and community-based organizations in Washington Heights, Inwood, and Manhattan's west side. As part of her responsibilities, she oversees the



relationship with over 25 non-profit organizations in these neighborhoods. Kimberly joined Con Edison through the company's leadership development program and was formerly a supervisor in their Construction Management Department. Outside of the office, Kimberly has maintained her passion for writing and the arts. She has written articles for several publications and websites. Additionally, she's penned creative pieces that have been performed by community arts groups. Her volunteer efforts include serving on the Black History Committee at the Lenox Road Baptist Church, Stuyvesant High School's Black Alumni Diversity Initiative, and previously mentoring through p.s. alumni and OCA NY-Asian Pacific American

Advocates. For the last four summers, Kimberly has had the pleasure of mentoring through the Diversity in Arts Leadership Program. Kimberly is a graduate of Harvard University where she studied History and African and African American Studies. She also has a Master of Science in Media and Communications from the London School of Economics.



Leah Krauss joined the Mertz Gilmore Foundation in 2009 and is currently the **senior program officer** for **Dance and Special Projects**. She will be mentoring **Sarah Cecilia Bukowski** this summer. The Dance Program provides operating support for contemporary dance presenters located throughout the five boroughs and makes discrete investments to advance the dance field by improving conditions for individual artists. In addition, Leah is an advisory board member for Dance/NYC and served as co-chair of New York Grantmakers in the Arts. Prior to Mertz Gilmore, Leah was senior program officer at the New York Community Trust, where for 12 years her areas of responsibility included arts and culture, arts-in-education,

and historic preservation. Additional experience in the arts includes five years at the Arts and Business Council where she recruited, trained and placed business executives as pro-bono management consultants with nonprofit arts organizations. Leah graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in art history from the University of Pennsylvania and a J.D. from University of Pennsylvania Law School. For three years, she practiced bankruptcy law, and also served with Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts in Philadelphia.

Lesley Hunter is an experienced musician, dancer, program coordinator and educator with over twenty years of experience working in the arts. She will be mentoring **Alexander Gomes** this summer. Her resume boasts of successful years as a music teacher and marching band instructor in Central Virginia and as a Dance and Music Instructor for numerous non-profit organizations in New York City. Ms. Hunter has taught all genres and levels of music and dance, as well as provided private instrumental instruction and lessons as well as taught general music and theory. Additionally, she has served as a Program



Developer, Coordinator and Manager for programs across the five boroughs of New York City. Ms. Hunter has served the arts community through work with such organizations as the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and continues to enhance her ability to serve the non-profit community with her MBA at New York University in Performing Arts Management. Her passion for music, dance, theatre and love of the arts makes her consistently strive for opportunities to apply her gifts in a way that will bring the arts to all BIPOC communities.



Roman V. Jackson is **JobsFirstNYC's Vice President** and will be mentoring **Kaleb Stevens** this summer. In this role, Roman leads the organization's community, education and policy solutions work, where he focuses on identifying, designing and advancing practices and policies that achieve better outcomes for young adults. Before joining the JobsFirstNYC team, he worked at JPMorgan Chase as a program officer for its Private Foundation Services team, where he engaged with over 60 foundations and worked closely with trust officers, trustees, and grants managers to manage the day-to-day operations of grantmaking, including making grantmaking decisions. Before joining JPMorgan Chase, Roman worked for six years at the Annenberg Foundation. There, he managed various aspects of the Annenberg Alchemy Leadership Seminars for nonprofit executive directors and board members and served as a grantmaker in the Community Grantmaking Program. He also worked at the Harlem Children's Zone, where he served in various roles, including multimedia arts instructor and research assistant to the director of education and quality control. He serves on the board of Broadway Housing Communities, where he is also chair of the Development and Marketing Committee. Roman holds a bachelor's degree in government and legal studies from Bowdoin College.