



Circle of Advisors Bios

STRENGTHENING SAA RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIVE COMMUNITIES

Alice Bioff, Inupiaq | Native Village of Koyuk (Alaska)

Circle of Advisors Co-Chair

Alice Bioff is a rural development leader and creative entrepreneur from Koyuk, Alaska. Since 2010 she has worked in the Community Planning and Development Department of Kawerak Inc., an Alaska Native regional tribal consortium. As Kawerak's business planning specialist, Alice provides technical assistance in small-business development to Alaska's Bering Strait region residents. She has worked for native nonprofit organizations for over 25 years since attaining her B.A. in rural development from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. In addition to her economic development experience, Alice is the founder and owner of Naataq Gear, which produces functional and beautiful Alaskan Qaspeq (kuspuk) garments. With her Inupiaq values close at heart, she strongly advocates for small-business owners and their role in Alaska's diverse economic landscape. Alice serves on the boards of the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

Sean Falcon Chandler, Aaniiih (Montana)

Circle of Advisors Co-Chair

Sean Falcon Chandler is an artist and enrolled member of the Aaniinen (Gros Ventre Nation). He is also the president of Aaniiih Nakoda College, located on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. In 2016, Sean was appointed to the Montana Arts Council and in 2022, he was elected to the board of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. He acquired a bachelor of arts degree in art in 1997 and a master of arts in Native American studies in 2003 from Montana State University-Bozeman. He also attained a doctor of education degree in educational leadership from the University of Montana in 2014. Sean has always been involved in art, starting at an early age when his father taught him the traditional arts of his ancestors, including hide and tipi painting. Integrating those early teachings, His canvas paintings using oil, oil paint stick and charcoal communicate the contemporary life that he lives. Themes of racism, loneliness, depression, anger, humor, stereotypes, sovereignty, dependency and cultural genocide reside within his work, which has been collected by the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings, Montana. Most recently, Sean was selected as one of five artists for the 2023 Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship of the

Eiteljorg Museum of Indianapolis. He resides in Harlem, Montana, where he creates most of his artwork in his home studio.

Tahnee Ahtone, Kiowa | Mvskoki | Seminole (Missouri)

Tahnee Ahtoneharjo-Growingthunder has served in many roles arts as a tribal liaison, government advisor, museum consultant and curator. She currently is the Curator of Native American Art at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. Tahnee began her career as an educator, working in museums and school districts through Johnson-O'Malley Act federal programming. Tahnee taught various art practices as well as natural and cultural history. She earned degrees from the Institute of American Indian Arts and Harvard University before pursuing a Ph.D. at Swansea University, specializing in international diplomacy and relations between sovereign tribal nations and the United States. Tahnee has held leadership roles with the Kiowa Tribal Museum and the Oklahoma History Center, serving as a liaison to Oklahoma's 38 federally recognized tribes. She also has been a curator with the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center in Connecticut and has served as a consultant to state and local governments in Oklahoma, Massachusetts and New York. She received curatorial fellowships with the Center for Curatorial Leadership and the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation Journalism Fellowship for Curators. Her art practices are wide ranging, including beadwork, textiles and shawl dancing.

Mary Bordeaux, Sicangu Oglala Lakota (South Dakota/New Mexico)

Mary Bordeaux is on the Museum Studies faculty and is director of the Balzer Gallery at the Institute of American Indian Arts, where she teaches a variety of topics including arts administration, exhibitions management and business development. Mary is the cofounder and codirector of Racing Magpie, a collaborative space with a Native art gallery and artist studios in Rapid City, South Dakota. Racing Magpie offers various support services to Native artists and serves as an incubation space for arts at the intersection of community development, placemaking and creative leadership. Mary received her bachelor's degree from the Institute of American Indian Arts and her M.F.A. from the University of the Arts; both degrees are in museum studies with an emphasis on exhibition design and planning. She is currently working on her educational doctorate at Saint Mary's University, exploring Lakota epistemology and Lakota women's leadership. Mary was previously vice president of operations and programs at First Peoples Fund. She also has held curatorial positions with The Heritage Center at Red Cloud Indian School and The Indian Museum of North America at Crazy Horse Memorial. She serves on the boards of the South Dakota Arts Council and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

Anna Needham, Red Lake Ojibwe (Arizona)

Anna Needham is a theatre artist, Indigenous rights advocate and arts administrator. She currently serves as the tribal relations manager for the Arizona Commission on the Arts, acting as the agency's liaison with the 22 tribal nations in Arizona. Anna developed the foundational Tribal Consultation Policy for the Arizona Commission on the Arts, the first for a state arts agency. Anna graduated from New York University's Tisch School of

the Arts, where she received a B.F.A. in theatre with a minor in producing. She participated in the 2018 spring cohort of the Native American Political Leadership Program at George Washington University. In various roles at different public-sector arts agencies, Anna has led programs that promote artist development and has served as a resource for culturally specific communities on how to navigate and access government resources. She participated in the development and implementation of the first national Native Arts and Cultures convening held in February 2020. She has served as a grant panelist for other local, regional and national funders, including the National Endowment for the Arts.

Gerard Rodriguez, Yaqui | Nahuatl (Oregon)

Gerard Rodriguez facilitates Indigenous-led projects and efforts to reclaim land, protect water and practice traditional Native stewardship in what is now called the Portland, Oregon, metro area. He currently is the associate director of Tribal Affairs and Engagement for the Willamette Falls Trust, an organization working to facilitate public access to Willamette Falls through a consortium of funders and tribes. Gerard has worked with many nonprofit organizations to lead Native programming and engagement initiatives, notably with the Friends of Tryon Creek State Park, the Confluence Project and Friends of Zenger Farm. Gerard also has a policy background, having served as a legislative aide in the Oregon state legislature. He supported metro Portland in its Indigenous community engagement efforts for the successful Parks and Nature Bond, notable for its innovative inclusion of people of color. He serves on the board of the Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, a studio and creative center located on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in the foothills of Oregon's Blue Mountains.

endawnis Spears, Diné | Ojibwe | Chickasaw | Choctaw (Rhode Island)

endawnis Spears is codirector of Upstander Academy, a professional development program that helps educators to reduce bias and create more inclusive curricula and schools, public conversations and spaces. She is also the director of outreach and programming and a founding member of the Akomawt Educational Initiative, an Indigenous education and interpretive organization that collaborates with museums, K-12 schools, universities and public institutions to transform how history and contemporary issues are taught. endawnis consults extensively with federal government agencies, higher education, school districts, museums and cultural organizations, leading trainings and advising on collaborations with Native constituencies. Previously, endawnis worked for the Heard Museum, the Museum of Northern Arizona, the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, the Muscogee Creek Nation of Oklahoma and the Narragansett Indian Tribe and was a Peabody Essex Museum Native American Arts and Culture Fellow. She received her bachelor of arts degree in anthropology from the University of Denver. She is the 2021-2023 Tribal Community member in residence at Brown University, a position established to strengthen Indigenous studies and provide support and mentoring for Native

American and Indigenous students on campus. She is a board member of the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

Jarica Walsh, Osage (Oklahoma)

Jarica Walsh is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma, where she received her bachelor of fine arts degree in media arts with an emphasis in filmmaking. She currently works at the Oklahoma Arts Council, where she is the department lead for the visual and public art staff. In this role, she provides oversight of the agency's Art in Public Places program, guides the delivery of high-quality curriculum resources, shepherds the curation of artworks exhibited in the Oklahoma State Capitol and manages the collections of art owned by the state of Oklahoma—including the Capitol Art Collection, the State Art Collection and the Public Art Collection, among others. Jarica previously served as associate director of the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition, where she managed the Artist Survival Kit professional development series and oversaw artist grants and fellowship programs. She was born in Pawhuska of Osage and mixed European heritage and is a proud member of the Osage Nation.

NASAA Staff

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