



**URBANO PROJECT LAUNCHES "CREATE, CONNECT, CATALYZE"
COMMUNITY DISCUSSION SERIES CURATED BY RAQUEL JIMENEZ**

What can artmaking contribute to civic life in our current moment of crisis?



BOSTON, MA — Urbano Project is excited to host "**Create, Connect, Catalyze**," a series of five community discussions curated by **Raquel Jimenez** that aims to create space to understand, reflect on, and chart new courses for civic change through the arts. Held virtually, March 31 - May 25, the project is funded by State Street with additional support from MCC, NEFA, the Boston Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture, and individual contributors.

Hosted by seven guest transdisciplinary artist-educators, each of the five sessions will invite participants to experience and examine a wide array of community-driven artistic practices through the lenses of cultural work, grassroots activism, and the guest artist's socially-engaged practice. Participants will also have the opportunity to engage with a broad array of community members in dialogue about connecting creative practices to support local organizing efforts. Sessions will unfold in three parts: 1) a hands-on creative experience connected to the session's theme, 2) a brief presentation by guest artists about their work, and 3) a collective closing reflection focused on personal and community action. **To register for any of the sessions below, please visit our [website](#).**

SESSIONS

Wednesday, March 31st, 6:00-7:30pm ET

Radical Care and Healing with **Emeka Ekwelum** and **Noor Jones-Bey**

How can our creative practices hold space for rest, reflection, and affirmation? In this participatory workshop with guest artists Emeka Ekwelum and Noor Jones-Bey, we will draw on traditions in Black feminist praxis and virtual artmaking practices to help us address this question. Furthermore, we will use our reflections to consider how community-centered artmaking practices can create space for radical care, healing, and justice. No prior artmaking experience is necessary, but curiosity is required.

Wednesday, April 14th, 6:00-7:30pm ET

Representation, Power, and Joy with **Paloma Valenzuela**

Whose stories do we consistently tell? How can we engage in creative practices that allow us to share more just, joyful, and robust stories? We invite you to explore these questions through an evening of conversation and storytelling with guest artist Paloma Valenzuela.

Wednesday, April 28th, 6:00-7:30pm ET

Identity and Solidarity with **Sam Richardson**

How can creative practices help us unpack our personal stories and community connections? We invite you to explore this question through conversation and artmaking with guest artist Sam Richardson.

Tuesday, May 11th, 6:00-7:30pm ET

Restorying Public Life with **Gabriel Sosa** and **Sara Rivera**

Where do we seek hope? How can we use the power of creative expression to acknowledge the present, while shaping a more hopeful future? We invite you to explore these questions through an evening of creative writing and conversation with guest artists Gabriel Sosa and Sara Rivera.

Tuesday, May 25th, 6:00-7:30pm ET

Creative Youth Development with **Cierra Kaler-Jones**

How can we support youth creative expression? What do young people want and need in their artmaking experiences? We invite you to explore these questions through an evening of reflection and conversation with guest artist and arts educator Cierra Kaler-Jones.

ABOUT THE CURATOR:

Raquel Jimenez is a PhD candidate at Harvard University, Boston-based educator, and scholar-in-residence at the Urbano Project. Raquel's work focuses on young artists and the creative learning communities that support them. This interest is reflected in her dissertation research, a multi-year investigation that examines how youth engage with public artmaking practices to reimagine the post-industrial forces undermining their community, and how community arts education structures this process. Raquel teaches courses on art and culture at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, collaborates with local artists on public art initiatives, and has held a variety of positions in nonprofit arts organizations. Her work is supported by the Ford Foundation and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Noor Jones-Bey is a trans-disciplinary educator, researcher and artist from the Bay Area, CA. She currently lives in Brooklyn, NY where she is a PhD candidate in Urban Education at the Steinhardt School and holds fellowships from the Ford Foundation and the Urban Doctoral Research Initiative at NYU. Her dissertation work examines intergenerational knowing of Black womxn and girls navigating in and out of schools.

Emeka Ekwelum is a transnational, multidisciplinary researcher, educator, artist, and curator from Boston, MA. He currently lives in Chicago, IL, where he is pursuing a PhD in Black Studies (African American Studies) at Northwestern University. Emeka's scholarly and creative interests converge at the intersection of history, critical theory, creative expression, comparative ethnography, and curatorial practice. His current research project examines the role of wonderment in contemporary and craft art collaborations between and amongst Black creatives.

Cierra Kaler-Jones is a social justice educator, writer, scholar, and artist based in Washington, DC. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership at University of Maryland - College Park studying minority and urban education. Her writing is featured in *Education Post*, *Nia Magazine*, *Midnight* and *Indigo*, *Medium*, and *EBONY*. She is the founder of [Unlock Your Story](#), a coaching and consulting business aimed at helping people tap into the stories that they are bravely meant to share with the world.

Sam Richardson is an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in photography, as well as video, sound, and writing. They are based in Los Angeles, CA. As an image-maker working in a documentary-informed practice, Richardson strives to unlearn, break open and find new ways of creating images that interrogate collaboration and photographic relationships in the context of the body, trauma, and care. They utilize their experience as a Crisis Counselor to

survivors in the ER of New York City, abolitionism, and personal history to enter their work with a practice of care and investigation into a personal and shared experience.

Sara Daniele Rivera is a Cuban/Peruvian artist, writer, translator, and educator from Albuquerque. Her poetry and fiction have been published in literary journals and anthologies. She was awarded a 2017 St. Botolph's Emerging Artist Award and won the 2018 Stephen Dunn Prize in Poetry. Her drawings, sculptures, and community-based installations focus on text-in-space as social intervention, and her public art projects are often developed in collaboration with youth.

Gabriel Sosa is an artist, educator, curator, and linguist. He draws from legal proceedings, personal archives, and contemporary visual culture to explore the mutability of language, the imperfection of memory, and the misinterpretation of both. Born and raised in Miami, he is based in Boston, where he is a lecturer at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

Paloma Valenzuela is a Dominican-American writer, director and actress originally from the city of Boston. In 2010, she started La Gringa Loca Productions, a multi-media production operation which has since produced stage plays and audiovisual projects both in Boston and the Dominican Republic.

ABOUT URBANO PROJECT

Urbano Project is an arts non-profit that brings together practicing artists across disciplines, local youth, and community members to learn and experiment through multidisciplinary and socially engaged art projects. Through artistic collaboration, participating youth and adults are challenged to create projects that span diverse artistic disciplines and curatorial themes, all rooted in the fundamental principles of collaboration, risk-taking, and creative and critical expression.

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