



## URBANO PROJECT NAMES LANI ASUNCION, JOSEPH MADRES, AND SARAH PLOTKIN AS SUMMER 2022 ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

*Two Youth Artist Projects (YAP) and a Community Art Project (CAP) focus on themes of DEMOCRACY and OUR PLANET, OURSELVES*



Lani Asuncion, "ISLE OF THE BLESSED" (2021) performed at Starlight Central Square, Cambridge, MA.

**BOSTON, MA** — Urbano Project is excited to announce that **Lani Asuncion**, **Joseph Madres**, and **Sarah Plotkin** will be the summer 2022 Artists-in-Residence, leading two Youth Artists Projects (YAP) and a multi-age Community Art Project (CA) being held in-person throughout July and August at various locations in Boston

Asuncion's "Performance: History/Ritual/Identity" will investigate how performance is connected to history to explore identity and create a deeper sense of place; Madres' "Making Oasis" will focus on placemaking to transform a neglected green space in Hyde Park into a place that opens up new possibilities for the local community and ecosystem; and Plotkin's "Through Our Eyes: Reflections on Climate Justice in Our Communities" will amplify stories of climate justice through the lens of documentary theater and performance-based practices.

Urbano's 2021-2022 programs explored the curatorial theme of "**Democracy**" as a lens to imagine a more inclusive and equitable society: how can art encourage social action to develop and nurture a democracy that benefits and empowers us all? Artists-in-Residence Asuncion, Madres, and Plotkin will mark the transition to Urbano's 2022-2023 curatorial theme, "**Our Planet, Ourselves**," which seeks to explore this idea of interconnectedness between our planet, our bodies, and ourselves through practices of placemaking, performance, and art activism. How do we think about environmental justice activism, and how may art function as a platform to advance notions of care and co-evolution?

**Lani Asuncion** will lead the Community Art Project (CAP) "[Performance: History/Ritual/Identity](#)," in which community participants will work to define identity through research on the history of specific sites in Boston and the embodiment of ritual through performance. In the end, the group will collaborate to create a public performance that acclimates work developed throughout the course, aiming to find points of connection and community healing. Sessions begin July 6 on Wednesday evenings at the Cultural Equity Incubator in Boston's Fort Point district. [Learn more here](#).

**Joseph Madres** will lead "[Making Oasis](#)," where Youth Artists will work together to transform a neglected green space in Hyde Park into a place that opens new creative possibilities for the local community and ecosystem. They will collaborate to build site-specific art installations including **wall mosaics, mobiles, found object and mixed media sculpture, earthworks, and land art**. The Youth Artists will collaboratively design and facilitate placemaking as a local experiment in natural democracy—an Indigenous political practice pre-existing Western notions of democracy that acknowledges the rights, agencies, and participation of all members of our natural communities in political life. Through their placemaking experiences and contributions, Youth Artists will develop skills and produce new knowledge as community artists, arts-based researchers, and local activists. Sessions begin July 11 on Mondays and Wednesdays in Hyde Park. [Learn more here](#).

**Sarah Plotkin** will lead "[Through Our Eyes: Reflections on Climate Justice](#)," which invites Youth Artists to explore ideas of climate justice through documentary theater and other performance-based practices. Youth Artists will amplify stories of climate justice from Boston-based leaders and their own experiences, and learn how climate change is directly affecting our communities. In the end, they will present an interactive, public performance and invite the audience to create their own collaborative, collective response. Sessions begin July 19 on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Egleston Square Library. [Learn more here](#).

Youth Artists Projects and Community Arts Projects are in-depth, long-term artistic explorations of Urbano's annual curatorial theme through the mentorship of the Artist-in-Residence, resulting in projects that are presented in the public realm, physically and virtually. Participants are paid a stipend for participation and all art materials are provided. **Urbano's Summer 2022 [Calls for Youth Artists](#) and [Call for Participants](#) is now open and accepting applications.** Visit [www.urbanoproject.org](http://www.urbanoproject.org) for more information.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



**Lani Asuncion** is an interdisciplinary multimedia artist creating socially engaged art in both private and public spaces. Weaving a visual language guided by historical research, community engagement, and experimental performance connected to their identity as a queer multiracial Filipinx-American. Asuncion integrates new media technologies and transmedia storytelling through ritualized performance to encourage conversations that magnify connections to facilitate healing in the face of cultural violence, oppression, and ancestral intergenerational trauma narratives. Asuncion received their Master's Degree in

Fine Arts in Performance and Video at the University of Connecticut. They are founding member and Director of Digital Soup who are core members of the Cultural Equity Incubator (CEI) partnering with Arts Connect International (ACI). Their work has been exhibited in Honolulu, Boston, Philadelphia, and Houston, and they have been awarded artist residences at the Studios at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Vermont Studio Center, Santa Fe Art Institute, I-Park, Elsewhere, The Wedding Cake House, Queer.Archive.Work, Caldera Arts Center, and BigCi in Australia. For more information, visit Asuncion's [website](#). (Photo credit: Sasha Pedro)



**Joseph Madres** is passionate about teaching, learning, community-cultivating, and forms of collaborative cultural production and symbolic creativity. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Teaching, Curriculum, and Society department in the Lynch School of Education & Human Development at Boston College. He is particularly interested in the transformative potential of the arts in providing

possibilities for natural communities (the human and more-than-human) to imagine and realize alternative ways of living justly and equitably. Madres considers himself an a/r/tivist -- a lived practice merging artmaking, research, teaching, and activism -- and encourages the youth and communities with whom he works to join him in becoming co-a/r/tivists to provoke transformative change at the local level. For more information, visit Madres' [website](#).



**Sarah Plotkin** is a director, deviser, educator, and cultural worker based in Boston. She collaborates with community artists and professional artists of all ages to build original theater that celebrates stories of community, connection, and creation. Her work sits at the intersection of theater, storytelling, and community organizing, and uses tools from those fields in service of liberatory, collaborative art-making. Plotkin was the Founding Artistic Director of Electric Eye Ensemble, a collaborative theater company exploring American myths through a revisionist, feminist lens. She is also the founder

and lead facilitator of Artist Gym, a creation and creativity workshop series for adults and teens. Plotkin works as a freelance director and teaching artist in the Greater Boston Area with organizations like ArtsEmerson, Wheelock Family Theatre, Open Door Arts, and Arlington Children's Theater, among others. She also facilitates anti-racism workshops with Jewish communities through Kavod. She holds an MA in Theater Education and Applied Theatre from Emerson College, and a BA with a focus on Directing from Sarah Lawrence College. For more information, visit Plotkin's [website](#).

## **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.

**Contact:** Nina Berger, Urbano Project

**Phone:** 617-543-1595 | **Email:** [ninaiberger@gmail.com](mailto:ninaiberger@gmail.com)

[www.urbanoproject.org](http://www.urbanoproject.org)