



15 New York Arts Leaders Selected as Fellows in Museum Hue's 2026 HueArts Leadership Cohort Program

MUSEUM HUE

HUEARTS LEADERSHIP COHORT

Fellows from Nonprofit Arts & Cultural Institutions of Color in New York

 Tiarra Brown	 Connie Byun	 Eugenie Cha	 Yasmar Cruz	 Dennis Darkeen
 Élan Cadiz	 Lesley Hunter	 Rashida Ladner-Seward	 Lila Nazemian	 Citali Ortiz
 Lai-Lin Robinson	 Miesha Shih	 Soraya Sussman	 Jana Lynne Umipig-Candelario	 Reggie Williams

April - Sept 2026 | MuseumHue.org

NEW YORK, NY (MARCH 27, 2026) – Museum Hue is pleased to announce that 15 leadership fellows from arts organizations across New York have been selected for the 2026 HueArts Leadership Cohort (HALC). This is Museum Hue's third annual professional development cohort supporting staff from culturally-specific arts nonprofits founded, led, and dedicated to the histories and cultures of Black, Indigenous, Latino/e/x, Asian, Middle Eastern, and all People of Color. The program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Museum Hue's fellows will participate in a six-month professional program from April to September 2026 designed to further enhance their skills and bolster the sustainability of culturally-specific arts organizations serving diverse communities throughout the state. HALC was created in response to the needs of cultural institutions of color identified through Museum Hue's HueArts & Cultures research in New York City and State, which has since expanded to include the Northeastern United States.

Facilitated by Brittany Bellinger, Director of Programs & Innovation at Museum Hue, this professional development program builds upon the foundational curriculum developed by Kemi Ilesanmi, Principal of KGI Projects. The program will cover key topics including community engagement and cross-sector collaboration, resource development and fundraising, policy and advocacy communications, cultural marketing, and strategic planning. Upon successful completion of the HALC Fellowship, each fellow will receive a certificate of completion and a \$2,000 stipend. They will also join a network—including an additional 22 HALC program alumni—fostering advocacy, collaboration, and changemaking efforts throughout the sector.

For more information about the 2026 HueArts Leadership Cohort and to stay updated on the progress of the fellows, visit MuseumHue.org and follow Museum Hue on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) @MuseumHue.

2026 HueArts New York City Leadership Fellows (with bios below):

Tiarra Brown, *Executive Director*, Huntington African American Museum
Connie Byun, *Founder & Curator*, 3RD ETHOS Gallery
Eugenie Cha, *Executive Director*, Remix ↔ Culture
Yasmar Cruz, *Executive Director*, Danzartes
Dennis Darkeem, *Founder & Executive Director*, RedMoon Arts Movement
Élan Cadiz, *Workshop Manager*, Children's Art Carnival
Lesley Hunter, *Director of Finance and Operations*, Urban Bush Women
Rashida Ladner-Seward, *Artistic-Executive Director*, Universal Temple of the Arts
Lila Nazemian, *Programs and Marketing Director*, ArteEast
Citlali Ortiz, *Community Outreach and Engagement Manager*, Willie Mae Rock Camp
Lai-Lin Robinson, *Creative Producer*, Angela's Pulse
Miesha Shih, *Founder & Co-Director*, Brewer Harris Projects, Inc.
Soraya Sussman, *CEO, President, and Co-Founder*, The AreitoTaino Group
Jana Lynne Umipig-Candelario, *Director of Arts and Cultural Organizing*, El Puente
Reggie Williams, *Co-Founder & Co-Director*, Black Film Space

Tiarra Brown is Executive Director of the Huntington African American Museum. Her Curatorial career has brought together exhibitions such as: *Paradise/Mash-Up*, a solo exhibition of new and recent paintings by Andrae Green at the Boston Center for the Arts' Mills Gallery; *Harlem Renaissance and Transatlantic Modernism* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a landmark exhibition that reexamines the Harlem Renaissance within a global modernist context; *Juan de Pareja, Afro-Hispanic Painter* at The Met; and *At the Dawn of a New Age: Early Twentieth-Century Modernism* at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Brown's curatorial ethos is rooted in her early work with the Rutgers Oral History Archives, which continues to shape her approach to work emphasizing storytelling, lived experience, and the reclamation of overlooked voices within art history. She holds a master's degree in art history from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts and dual bachelor's degrees in history and art history from Rutgers University.

Connie Byun is a Brooklyn-based curator and creative producer whose work explores the intersection of art, public space, and community engagement. She is the founder and curator of 3RD ETHOS, an independent art gallery that champions emerging and underrepresented artists through exhibitions, public art, and cultural programming. With over a decade of experience in design and production, she brings a multidisciplinary approach to curatorial practice, project management, and creative placemaking. Since founding 3RD ETHOS in 2017, she has led projects with NYCEDC, NYC Public Markets, NYC Parks, and the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center. Her curatorial and public art practice is rooted in transforming public spaces through artistic experiences that celebrate cultural identity and empower artists and communities.

Eugenie Cha is a writer and interdisciplinary artist whose work explores how memory, violence, and public space intersect with sites of contestation, resistance, and movement. Her practice has taken her to artist residencies and fellowships in Finland, Morocco, Cameroon, and Senegal, where she served as the 2025 RAW Académie Observer. Her work has been presented in group exhibitions and public readings at the Arabic Language Institute in Fez; doual'art in Douala; A.I.R. Gallery in Brooklyn; and Accent Society in New York City. For more than 15 years, Eugenie has worked in global development, supporting civil society organizations and activists across West, Central, and East Africa, and Norway, as well as socially engaged public arts and organizing nonprofits in the United States. She holds an MSc in Migration Studies from the University of Oxford and a BA in Literature and Africana Studies from Bard College. Driven by a belief in art and culture as catalysts for bringing people together and shaping community through creative work, Eugenie currently serves as the Executive Director of Remix → Culture. She lives and works in Brooklyn.

Yasmar Cruz is a Puerto Rican artist, educator, and nonprofit leader with over a decade of experience based in New York City. She holds a BA in Performing Arts & Public Relations from the University of Puerto Rico and a Master's in Education from Hunter College at the City University of New York. Yasmar is the founder and director of Danzartes, a nonprofit arts and culture organization that specializes in educational programs, artistic creation, and cultural performances. She has worked with youth educational programs and nonprofit organizations to develop, implement, evaluate, and deliver culturally relevant curricula for over 2,000 students. She is a recipient of the Innovative Cultural Advocacy Fellowship (ICA) from the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute (CCCADI). In 2021, she was awarded the Community Impact Award for a holistic wellness initiative incorporating dance and yoga with BIPOC women during the pandemic. She was also a recipient of the Ford Fund & Watson Foundation International Fellowship in 2023 for the wellness initiative. Ms. Cruz is certified in Hatha Yoga, Mindfulness & Meditation, Reiki Healing, and Ayurveda & Stress Management.

Dennis (Catē hvla/RedMoon) Darkeem is a Bronx-based interdisciplinary Artist and founder of RedMoon Arts Movement, an Afro Indigenous Cultural Hub and nonprofit Community Arts School. Working across painted murals, collage, sculpture, and community-engaged projects, his practice transforms elements of nature into fine art rooted in cultural memory and urban ecology. His work invites communities to learn, reflect, and take pride in their neighborhoods through participatory art experiences.

Élan Cadiz is a Harlem based artist for 26 years whose art and practice are grounded in the documentation of her personal narrative through the use of portraiture, domestic and historical imagery. Cadiz's artworks explore the ways societal and personal histories overlap and affect individual relationships, power dynamics and identity. Élan's formal training began in the High School of Art & Design. After graduation, Cadiz explored Advertising and Design at the Fashion

Institute of Technology for two years and shifted interest. She graduated from City College of New York City with a BA in Studio Art in 2008. Élan received her Masters in Fine Art from the School of Visual Arts May 2018 and received the Martha Trevor Award / Worldstudio AIGA Scholarship, Paula Rhodes Memorial Award, and the School of Visual Arts Merit Scholarship.

Lesley Hunter is an accomplished musician, dancer, and arts educator with over twenty years of experience spanning performing arts, arts education, and arts administration across both nonprofit and for-profit sectors. She has collaborated with leading organizations including the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Urban Bush Women, Arts Administrators of Color Network, Black Curators Dance Performance, Americans for the Arts, and the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable. Throughout her career, Lesley has curated, developed, and managed arts programs across all five boroughs, bringing a thoughtful and community-centered approach to program design and implementation. She has also served as a music teacher and marching band director in Central Virginia, and as a dance and music instructor for numerous nonprofit organizations in New York City. Lesley holds an MBA in Performing Arts Management and Administration from New York University and brings a collaborative leadership style that empowers artists and organizations to grow and thrive. She is passionate about expanding access to the arts and intentionally seeks opportunities to uplift and engage BIPOC communities through inclusive, innovative programming.

Rashida Ladner-Seward is a visionary nonprofit leader, arts advocate, and educator whose career spans more than two decades at the intersection of youth development, arts education, and community engagement. She began her career at the NYC Police Athletic League (PAL), where she directed hallmark programs including the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), the In-School Youth program (now Learn & Earn), and one of PAL's earliest K–5 afterschool programs under the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD). Rashida also worked for ExpandedED Schools, a New York City-based nonprofit committed to ensuring all children have access to enriched learning opportunities beyond the school day. There, she served as Vice President of Program Excellence from 2017-22 and as Chief Program Officer from 2022-25. As the Artistic and Executive Director of Universal Temple of the Arts since 2021, Rashida provides the artistic vision and executive leadership that ensures Universal Temple of the Arts (UTA) continues to inspire, educate, and unify diverse communities. Rashida has a B.A. in journalism from New York University, and a Professional Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership from the Austin W. Marxe School of Public and International Affairs at Baruch College.

Lila Nazemian is an independent curator and the Programs Director at ArteEast in New York. In 2022, she joined the Brooklyn-based Transmitter gallery as a co-director. Her research and curatorial practice are focused on reimagining approaches to histories from the Middle East/Southwest Asia North Africa (SWANA) and Central Asia regions in an effort to counter narrative revisionism and collective amnesia. Central to her investigations are examining artist and community based approaches to subverting institutional forms of knowledge production and dissemination. Nazemian teaches part-time at NYU Steinhardt's Department of Art & Art Professions. She received a B.A. in History from Scripps College, California; and an M.A. in Near Eastern Studies from N.Y.U., New York. She was a QAYYEM 2019 Curatorial Fellow, was among the inaugural participants of the 2018-2019 Interdisciplinary Art and Theory Program in New York and participated in ICI's 2018 Curatorial Intensive in Bangkok.

Citlali Ortiz is a cultural worker and arts advocate with seven years of experience developing and supporting arts-related programming within the nonprofit sector. Their work is rooted in community building, creativity, and creating spaces for self-expression. Outside of work, Citlali finds joy in crafting in all its forms, painting, curating playlists, and attending the many arts programs that New York City has to offer.

Lai-Lin Ting Robinson is a Creative Producer, Curator, and Performance Artist from Washington, D.C., based in New York City. Rooted in anti-racist principles, her work holds space for artists to thrive, grounded in care and respect for creative practice. Lai-Lin has worked with organizations including Urban Bush Women (UBW), Angela's Pulse, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Louis Armstrong Center, Harlem Stage, Little Island NYC, NYC FREE Festival, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Théâtre XIV, Balich Wonder Studio, and FIFA Club World Cup. Lai-Lin curated and co-produced Urban Bush Women's CCI 2.0 Pilot Producing Program and co-created and co-produced When Black Women+ Speak, a landmark conversation series as part of the UBW's 40th anniversary. Lai-Lin holds a BA in Communications and Media Studies from Fordham University, was trained at The Ailey School and in Broadway Dance Center's Professional Program, and is the recipient of a 2016 New York Community Trust Fellow, all foundational to her commitment to dance education, performance and fostering creative collaboration.

Miesha Shih is a curator, cultural leader, and entrepreneur whose practice is dedicated to expanding access to contemporary art through exhibitions, public programming, and community partnerships. As the Founder and Co-Director of Brewer Harris Projects, the only women- and Black-owned contemporary art gallery in Upstate New York, she leads a platform dedicated to amplifying underrepresented artists, fostering new artistic viewpoints, and championing diverse voices. Along with curatorial roles at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, she has written for the Guggenheim Museum on artists including Anish Kapoor, Hank Willis Thomas, Leslie Hewitt, and Ryan McGinley. Having lived and studied in London and Brazil, her work is informed by a global perspective that considers the intersections of art, culture, and history. These experiences shape her approach to curatorial practice, with an emphasis on context, dialogue, and cross-cultural exchange. At Brewer Harris Projects, Shih's work centers on building a thoughtful, inclusive space where contemporary art engages audiences and contributes to conversations around identity, representation, and cultural memory.

Soraya Sussman is a theatre and film producer and writer based in Queens, NY. She has attended HB Studios Theatrical Producing Course (2019), New York, Manhattan Neighborhood Network El Barrio Firehouse Community Media Center, NY (2018) - Film & Television Production Course. In 2019, she co-founded MARLEX Films, LLC., which produced three short films: Xtra Dirty, Let Me Down, Don't Put Me on Hold, Please. In 2019, she co-wrote Stygian Fields, a full-length film script, currently in pre-production. In addition, she attended Voices of America NY Workshop - The Playground Experiment Group - Scriptwriting course (2020). In 2024, she co-produced the Off-Off-Broadway play "Constellations" by Nick Payne at the Chain Theatre in NYC, which was nominated for the 2024 HOLA award for "Outstanding Achievement in Theatrical Design." Furthermore, in 2025, she participated in the TRU Resource Theatre Foundation Production Program in NY. Soraya is currently developing an original play to present as a stage industry reading in Queens, NY, in 2026.

Jana Lynne (JL) Caldetera Umipig-Candelario Is a Creative Justice Cultural Organizer who uses their expression/creation work to transform the world. For almost 20 years, she has conducted intergenerational educational and cultural organizing work using multi-disciplinary arts in detention centers, rehabilitation centers, community centers, as well as on the land and in the homes of those in need. For 15 years, she has been in service and leadership at El Puente (EP) shaping programs for Arts and Social Justice rooted healing with young people in Williamsburg Brooklyn and is a founding member of the Global Justice Institute supporting the codifying of curricula to match EP's 40 years of service to the Afro-Latino movements. Through partnership with EP she was a recipient of the Creatives Rebuild New York (CRNK) Working Artist initiative where she created convening spaces for intergenerational dialogue and devised performance creation. At the closing of the CRNY Grant period in 2023, JL rejoined the El Puente team full-time as the Director of Arts and Cultural Organizing. JL is currently working on a body of work meant to support intergenerational decolonial healing for diasporic communities called *The Re-memberings of a Colonized Child* which includes writing an Expressive Memoir, a Children's Book, a Multi/Mixed Media Script and Performance, and Oracle Deck.

Reggie Williams is a filmmaker and the co-founder and co-director of Black Film Space, a Brooklyn-based nonprofit dedicated to advancing the careers of Black filmmakers through skill-building programs, community, and access to resources. Since co-founding the organization in 2015, Williams has led its growth from a grassroots meetup into a national creative network reaching over 40,000 filmmakers and creatives. Under his leadership, Black Film Space has developed mentorship programs, workshops, grants, and large-scale convenings that support Black creatives at every stage of their careers. In addition to his work leading Black Film Space, Williams is a screenwriter and director whose storytelling explores humanity through comedy, romance, and character-driven narratives. His work has screened at festivals including the Urbanworld Film Festival, Pan African Film Festival, and Roxbury International Film Festival. Williams is committed to building sustainable ecosystems for Black artists while continuing to create work that humanizes Black characters and expands representation across film and television.

About Museum Hue

Museum Hue is the leading organization dedicated to advancing Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color in the cultural field. With over 400 institutional members, representing cultural and academic institutions across the United States, Museum Hue is dedicated to advancing the visibility and sustainability of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and other cultural workers of color within the cultural sector. Through research, advocacy, and community-building initiatives, Museum Hue strives to promote equity and inclusion in the arts and culture landscape.

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