A POSITION PAPER:
Thoughts and Recommendations for the Future of Latino Arts in the United States
Since its inception, the National Museum of Mexican Art has been committed deeply to the young Latinos and future Latino art leaders. Presently, there are five young women from Chicago's Mexican community who are part of the Museum’s full-time staff who began as interns. Our commitment to youth and the next generation extends beyond the interns we hire for our programs and departments, to the various youth arts and media programs the Museum has organized since it opened its doors in 1987.

This year, the Museum celebrates twenty-five years of dedication to Mexican art, culture, and community. We are excited to present the position paper of the Crescendo Cultural Taskforce as part of our celebratory activities to mark this great year.

From the onset, the level of enthusiasm regarding Crescendo Cultural, a historic taskforce of young, Latino, art professionals brought together to participate in effectively shaping the future of the arts in the U.S, has been fantastic. This is the first time that such a convening has taken place and the publication of the position paper is timely. Latinos are now the largest group of color in the U.S. at 16% percent of the total population and their voices and participation will make a positive impact on the arts.

Background

The National Museum of Mexican Art is not an institution that wishes to work alone. Its commitment to preserve and present the Mexican culture to a diverse audience is shared with many organizations across the country – some of which have been in existence longer than the Museum. We understand that our sister organizations that present art and culture from Latino ethnic groups play vital roles along with us in educating the current and future generations of the United States. The Museum has collaborated with several Latino organizations since it began its operations.

With the beginning of the recent economic recession, we observed that the survival of several Latino arts organizations across the country was in jeopardy. National and local arts funding had been cut dramatically.

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Naturally, members of the Museum staff became increasingly concerned about this new reality. We began to ask ourselves - why are Latino arts organizations so vulnerable? What else can we do as an institution to assist our fellow organizations to continue to preserve, present, and educate about the Latino arts and culture? How can collaborative efforts and the growth of Latino arts continue in isolation? As the largest Latino arts organization in the U.S., the Museum understands that we have a responsibility to serve organizations committed to similar goals. The future of the Museum is intrinsically tied to them as well. We do not want to work in isolation. It benefits no one.

Museum staff had several discussions about what the possible underlying challenges were for many arts organizations particularly those like ours. These challenges ranged from weak organizational management and lack of a diverse funding base to poor marketing and audience development. Yet, what challenge continued to surface to the top was the need to nurture the next generation of Latino arts leaders.

The birth of Latino arts organizations across the country was a direct result of efforts by baby boomers who participated in and observed the expansion of civil rights and women’s rights coupled with the growth of Latino populations who fought for more representation and equity. Now more than three decades later, the boards and executive management of these Latino arts organizations must begin to pass the leadership torch to the next generation whose experiences are often very different from theirs. For this to succeed, the next generation must have the skills, experiences, and opportunities to continue the preservation of these organizations and take them to the next level.

What makes the younger and upcoming generations so different?

The Reuters article, “Global Seagulls and the New Reality of Immigration,” highlights a phenomenon that has grown increasingly relevant with the newer generation of immigrants and also extends to our U.S. born children.¹ The global world has shrunk and our access to current news and developments from our native or ancestral country has expanded exponentially. Young Latinos in the U.S. through Internet access or frequent plane flights can more easily learn and enjoy their heritage, culture, history, music and art than previous generations. Moreover, they have increasing and up-to-date access to news, music, dramas, documentaries, and comedies in Spanish with the rise of broadcast, cable and satellite networks. The new reality of immigration has indeed made nations more than just physical places but a vast and growing network of people and ideas.

Latinos in their teens, twenties, and thirties are also different from their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents in other significant ways. Racism continues to exist but generally it is not as blatant as it was a generation before. Instead racism is hidden within existing power structures and this extends to the arts world. Increasingly, Latinos interact socially with individuals outside of their ethnic groups as they attend school and begin to work. Many young Latinos have benefited from the sacrifices that their parents or previous generations fought for in terms of access to education, housing, and career opportunities. In the past decade as Latinos have become the largest people of color population in the U.S., they have witnessed the visible growth of their communities and neighborhoods. Furthermore in many regions and cities across the U.S., Latinos are the majority or comprise sizeable populations.

Today Latinos can maintain their cultural traditions and adopt American cultural practices with a freedom and ease that previous generations of ethnic immigrants could only dream to attain. U.S. society has begun to shift from the melting pot model to a salad bowl model – where many cultures and groups reside in this country and have the potential to succeed while being perceived as American also. Latinos do not have to assimilate to succeed in the U.S. or lose their language, culture, or identity.

Even with these changes, the reality for Latinos in the U.S. is far from perfect. We must acknowledge that much more is needed to assist the socio-economic and political development and growth of Latino communities across the U.S. Latino arts and culture can play a fundamental part in shaping the dialogue and moving towards a more promising future for everyone.

Arguments have been made that Latino cultural institutions are not needed or soon will not be needed. Opponents argue that there are too many ethnic-specific or cultural-specific institutions — why should they be supported along with the other arts organizations that are not ethnic-specific? These challenges are made to ethnic-specific art organizations because opponents may not understand or fully appreciate the benefits of these institutions or the value of cultural identity and art

¹ Chrystia Freeland, Reuters (October 6, 2011)
For individuals and their communities. Without adequate support, the next generation of Latinos will not be prepared to take on the current and future challenges that threaten Latino art throughout the U.S.

**The Crescendo Cultural Taskforce Creation**

The National Museum of Mexican Art set out to host a convening of young Latino artists and art professionals to discuss the state of Latino arts and culture in the U.S. and their ideas and concerns about what the next steps should be. As part of this process a select group of participants, 35 years and younger, came together for Crescendo Cultural.

During its twenty-five years of programming and service, the Museum has a long and proud tradition of providing mentorship to culturally specific arts organizations across the nation and has created mentorship programs to help facilitate discussions and future partnerships. In this vein, Crescendo Cultural is a program designed to encourage mentorship. But instead of seasoned art professionals mentoring the next generation, the next generation of art leaders will educate cultural institutions, universities, private and government funders, and scholars about what should be the agenda and goals for the preservation and presentation of Latino arts and culture in the U.S.

To secure a diverse and highly experienced taskforce, the Museum decided to conduct an application process for participants throughout the country. We posted application information on our website and sent email blasts through our extensive list serve. We sent emails and letters and made calls to arts leaders who participate with or work in Latino cultural institutions including museums, cultural centers, theaters, dance companies, studios and performance networks. We targeted specific artists and art leaders whose work the Museum staff had become familiar with or knew about through other artists, cultural leaders or conferences.

As a result of these efforts, our call for applications received a huge nationwide response that allowed for a high caliber of Crescendo Cultural taskforce participants. We chose to select 14 instead of the proposed 10 participants from a diverse applicant pool of professionals.

**The Process**

During the months preceding the convening, staff prepared an agenda through an ongoing conversation with participants about proposed topics. Given the short time frame of two days, the Taskforce was keenly interested in selecting topics of upmost interest to the participants and those that are most pressing for Latino arts preservation and presentation across the country. To supplement the convening’s discussion, Museum staff and Taskforce participants distributed studies, reports, and articles about arts and culture, arts education, organizational and board development, and fundraising to the Taskforce.

During the convening on July 15th and 16th, 2011, Crescendo Cultural Coordinator Linda Xóchitl Tortolero facilitated and moderated the discussion. Twelve topics were chosen for the convening’s discussion all of which were analyzed in great depth. Through a lively and engaging conversation, topics of the current state of affairs for Latino arts and culture in the U.S. and the participants’ role in its future became increasingly prevalent. Participants understood deeply the significance of clearly defining the scope of Crescendo Cultural including its objectives, goals, audience and how to disseminate, distribute and promote the final position paper.

The Museum staff hopes that Crescendo Cultural will one day serve as a model for engaging populations of young artists and art leaders to become a louder voice and more active participant in arts and culture throughout the U.S.

Sincerely,
Carlos Tortolero
President

With a generous grant from The Joyce Foundation, the National Museum of Mexican Art was able to create and coordinate the Crescendo Cultural Taskforce. We thank Ellen S. Alberding and the Board of The Joyce Foundation for their continuous support. Our sincere thanks goes to Michelle Boone, who while serving as the former Senior Program Officer of The Joyce Foundation and now the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, believed in the purpose and goals of the Taskforce from the very beginning. Ariana Cervantes of The Mexican Museum in San Francisco assisted our staff with note taking during the convening and for this we thank her. Special gracias to Elsa Saeta, Director of the Women’s Center at DePaul University for taking the time to give the paper a final review. Finally, the Museum also would like to thank our amazing staff that assisted with the coordination of this project.

Acknowledgments
Purpose

The Crescendo Cultural Taskforce joins a series of national collaborative efforts that seek to uproot the institutional practice of discrimination that permeate throughout the arts and culture sector in the U.S. This paper offers recommendations toward that end. Inequity in the arts exists in the United States as evidenced by funding practices in the arts. The majority of arts funding is still allocated to organizations including museums, symphonies, and opera companies that serve mainly white (European and European American), wealthy audiences despite their declining attendance. It is crucial that the next generation of Latino arts leaders continues to advocate for increased equity in funding to the arts and adamantly encourage funders to allocate dollars to institutions and programs that better represent our U.S. demographic reality and our country’s cultural fabric.

To address the long-standing marginalization that has occurred against ethnically specific art organizations and those that serve people of color including the Latino population, philanthropic support (from individuals, public and private foundations as well as from federal, state and local sources) must be given more equity. Additionally, funding must be given more broadly to organizations that serve diverse communities across racial and ethnic backgrounds and across economic lines within these communities.

Through this paper, the Crescendo Cultural Taskforce hopes to address these issues and the current state of affairs through the lens of a younger generation of Latino arts leaders.

We have a profound concern about the future role of Latino arts in our communities and U.S. society. Topics that require utmost attention and that will be touched upon, are:

- Sustainability and capacity building are fundamental for all Latino arts organizations. Therefore, diversifying the funding base of arts organizations is an essential component to address both areas.

- Future generations of Latino arts leaders must be nurtured through a commitment to increase intergenerational collaboration. Mentorship and training will support both healthy transitions of power and adoption of new ideas and tools.

- Individuals and organizations vested in Latino arts must increase the number of allies who will be donors, arts advocates and enthusiasts. This will inevitably lead to increased financial support for Latino arts, sustainable arts organizations, and larger audiences.

- Investment in the capitalization of arts organizations and artists will lead to independent programming and decision-making that is reflective, relevant, and responsive to our changing communities.

- The broader supply and demand economic model applies to Latino arts organizations as well. Thus, they must be attuned to the ever-changing needs and demands of Latino communities and to the breadth of Latino arts programming that is already in place. Adaptability and commitment to positive change are crucial.

- Arts education for Latinos of all ages will stimulate the development of future allies, advocates, and enthusiasts for the arts. Programming in arts education must be prioritized.

- Art therapy is an untapped resource for Latino communities. More efforts are necessary to introduce art therapy programs at social service and arts organizations and to encourage the development of Latino art therapists.

In this precarious time when arts funding sources have been cut across the board nationally, it becomes imperative to make a strong case for Latino arts and to articulate their impact on the greater community. Artists form part of a community’s living archives – they along with our youth, parents, and grandparents are the embodiment of cultural continuity and patrimony. Supporting Latino artists, arts organizations, arts education, and funding are absolutely necessary for Latino arts and culture to continue to thrive in our current social fabric.

Audience

Whoever constructs and represents culture, affects the conceptions that are formed about that culture. Art functions within a matrix between auction houses, art dealers, collectors of art, museums, art critics, art historians, and universities. This matrix affects standards and practice and manages art what is, recte what art the public has access to and how it is perceived. This matrix extends to the players and institutions within theater, dance, music, literature, and other artistic forms, and highlights the important role that various aspects of the art world have in determining conceptions about a particular culture. Taking this into consideration, the Crescendo Cultural Taskforce thoroughly considered the audience for the position paper. The position paper should appeal to a broad range of individuals and organizations with a stake in Latino arts within the U.S., from mainstream to those in the margins such as: think tanks, universities, professors, museums, theater and dance companies, cultural centers, galleries, performance art centers, arts educators, transnational organizations, foundations, government agencies and funders, professional arts associations, and social/mental health service organizations. The Taskforce’s audience includes visual artists, musicians, dancers, performers, authors, actors, arts educators, and arts administrators within the Latino community.

It is imperative that Latino arts organizations also target audiences outside of the Latino community. Building bridges to new audiences of distinct ethnic/racial communities, age groups, arts communities, etc. will increase the likelihood of an organizations’ success and longevity.

The United States is a nation of tremendous diversity and Latino arts organizations, in light of their ethnocultural focus, must reach beyond their traditional audiences. More than ever, Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic classes have shown a great interest in other countries and the global cultures. Americans, not just Latinos, must become educated about Latino history, arts and culture within the national narrative because our history and contributions have been ignored far too long. One pathway to broadening audiences is through the development of strategic partnerships and collaborations with non-Latino organizations and educational institutions.

The Crescendo Cultural Taskforce does not propose this as an all-inclusive, comprehensive or formal policy paper. Instead the position paper presents the ideas and observations of the young Latino artists and art professionals in the Taskforce. We know that there is a sincere and widespread interest in the paper and anticipate that it may act as a catalyst for new ideas and programs that will positively impact Latino art and culture in the U.S. We urge Latino arts organizations and art organizations to find and create opportunities to work together to support and promote Latino arts. We are confident that the next generation of Latino arts leaders will advance the practical
Defining Latino Arts and Its Greater Impact

Who are Latino/as? What is Latino?

It is impossible to begin a discussion about Latino arts without first defining who Latino/as are. It is best to start simply and describe what they are not. Latinos are not the monolithic group, ethnicity, or race that the United States government and media make them out to be. This hemispheric identity is too richly complex for narrow categorization based on a group of common interests, languages, practices, beliefs, and concerns. Latinos are people residing in the U.S. who are immigrants or descendants of people from Latin America. Like all immigrant communities, there are often vast ethno-cultural and socio-economic differences from first generation through later generation populations in the U.S.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census' demographics on the country's Latino population, there are about 50,500,000 Latinos living in the U.S. reflecting about 9% of the entire U.S. population. This is a 43% increase from the 2000 U.S. Census. This does not reflect all undocumented immigrants or those of mixed race or racial heritage.

Latino Ethnic Demographic Breakdown according to 2010 U.S. Census

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<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>31,798,258</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salvadorian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominican</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guatemalan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombian</td>
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<td>Honduran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>534,556</td>
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Oversimingly, Latinos identify themselves by their ethnic or national origin first and not an "umbrella" racial definition. Many Latinos identify themselves by shared cultural traits rather than race (which usually refers to physical traits). We acknowledge that the term Latino/a is not a perfect term. It is a term like Hispanic, used primarily as a racial/ethnic category or social construct in the United States. Yet among many young Latinos, it is the preferred "umbrella" term or category for multiple reasons:

1) Hispanic is a term adopted by the Federal Census Bureau and imposed on the Latino population; 2) Hispanic refers to "Spanish origin" which by emphasizing whiteness or European descent, downplays the contributions of other groups. This is especially important considering that many Latinos may not identify with European ancestry and have stronger indigenous and/or African cultural heritage; 3) Latino/a is a more inclusive term that encompasses post-colonial lives, African diasporas, and a hemispheric sense of belonging that includes Brazilian Americans; and 4) most significantly Latino/a is a matter of self-empowerment, sustaining diversity, and our freedom to choose the identities that best describe who we are.

Many Latinos also use multiple categories or terms to describe themselves. An Afro-Dominican born in Philadelphia may describe herself as Dominican, black, Latina and American, or an Ecuadorian raised in Los Angeles may call himself Ecuadorian, Latino and American. It is critical to have a full understanding and appreciation of the complexity of what it means to be Latino/a in the U.S. Identity is key to the human experience and more so in multicultural societies where discrimination based on identity continues as a pervasive and often blatant practice.

Race and the Latino Identity

Racism and discrimination remain prevalent and pervasive throughout Latin America. Unfortunately, we do not often have conversations about race in Latin America and among Latinos in the U.S. The legacy of the three largest groups inhabiting the Americas: indigenous, African, and European - led to the formation of cultural traditions and practices separate and apart from a person's bloodlines or DNA. These groups blended together to create varied and distinct Latin American cultural traditions and practices. Even if some Latinos do not have direct African, European or indigenous heritage, their culture often incorporates these elements through language, diet, religious beliefs, world view, and traditions.

An increased interest in Afro-Latino studies both in Latin America and in the U.S. over the past two decades highlights the growth of an Afro-Latino consciousness. Afro-Latino movements across the two continents have yielded great discussion about what it means to be black and Latin American coupled with an expanded effort by Afro-Latinos to increase their communities' empowerment. Being black, as a political state of being exists beyond the African-American experience, and extends to countries like Brazil, Jamaica, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Guyana, Antigua, and South Africa as well.

Increasingly across the U.S., indigenous families have also emigrated from Latin America. Indigenous groups continue to be systematically marginalized and displaced from their lands, contributing to immigration. The arrival of indigenous groups from Latin America makes the Latino experience in the U.S. richer and more complex. Many indigenous children and their parents speak Spanish as their second language, if at all. With distinct languages, cultures, and experiences based on myriad indigenous identities, how does the greater Latino population in the U.S. successfully represent their voices in the national discussion of arts and culture? What cultural forums are available where indigenous communities can represent themselves and their creative work? What alliances can emerge between the greater Latino community and indigenous communities in the arts?

The indigenous and Afro-Latino populations remain isolated and/or discriminated against in Latin America; an extension of colonial culture and deep rooted institutional racism. How can this cycle be broken once they are in the U.S. How do Latinos, most who are of mixed ancestry, illuminate their issues regarding arts and culture within this larger discourse on national to trans-American cultural production and social justice?
Latino arts professionals have a responsibility to ensure that indigenous populations in the U.S. have a welcoming space to display their arts. They can also assist them to identify and work with collaborators who are invested in the promotion of indigenous scholarship, art and culture within our communities. The lived experiences and worldview of indigenous populations must be ethically portrayed always with their direct input and approval. Indigenous populations akin to Afro-Latino communities merit opportunities to represent their own stories, arts and cultures within and outside arts organizations, schools and other learning environments.

As vital groups of the Latino Diaspora, Afro-Latino and indigenous communities must be included in the preservation, presentation, and development of Latino arts. The greater Latino community has a responsibility to engage its Afro-Latino and indigenous components and must identify and develop ways to educate the larger population about this often hidden or ignored dimension of “Latino-ness”. Moreover, we must acknowledge and celebrate Latin America’s place within the African Diaspora and encourage African American and Latino solidarity through our shared African cultural roots.  

**Embracing a Broader Latino Arts Aesthetic**

Racial identity politics has negatively influenced the manner in which Latino arts have been consumed, produced, portrayed, and excluded in arts education. This has trickled down into the ways Latino arts are “taught” in public schools and universities. Without describing and affirming the complexities of the Latino/a identity, we cannot explain the grave error of an essentialized worldview of indigenous populations must be corrected. Funders also should fund art developed beyond the accepted Latino arts. Neither should Latino arts professionals have a responsibility to the accepted Latino arts aesthetic or who are regarded as insufficiently Latino. 

What fate awaits Latino artists who do not conform to the accepted Latino arts aesthetic or who are regarded as insufficiently Latino? Must they relay their own stories, arts and practices other artistic forms, concepts, and practices? Will they receive the support, recognition, and visibility given to more traditional Latino artists? Will funders overlook traditional artists for not conforming to mainstream conventions? Increasingly, Latino artists have emerged as practitioners of non-Latino arts. These artists are influenced by a global world and do not necessarily desire to create art that preserves or interprets the works of their predecessors who explored their identity through their art. Yet, they too should participate in the ongoing dialogue about Latinx arts and educute Latinx professionals from all fields - curators, producers, educators, art professors, and critics - about the diversity of Latino arts and culture. Increased awareness and sensibility will lead to a fuller representation of Latino arts and artists in the field. Latino artistic traditions, themes, and practices.

Many contemporary Latinx artists seek to create new art by discussing particular themes through a Latinx lens – such as a performance art piece about Germany’s Weimar Republic, apartheid in 1980s. 

What fate awaits Latino artists who do not conform to the accepted Latino arts aesthetic or who are regarded as insufficiently Latino, arts? What fate awaits Latino artists who do not conform to the accepted Latino arts aesthetic? Will funders overlook traditional artists for not conforming to mainstream conventions? Increasingly, Latino artists have emerged as practitioners of non-Latino arts. These artists are influenced by a global world and do not necessarily desire to create art that preserves or interprets the works of their predecessors who explored their identity through their art. Yet, they too should participate in the ongoing dialogue about Latinx arts and educate Latinx professionals from all fields - curators, producers, educators, art professors, and critics - about the diversity of Latino arts and culture. Increased awareness and sensibility will lead to a fuller representation of Latino arts and artists in the field. Latino artistic traditions, themes, and practices.

A former arts funder highlights the dangers of a simple definition can threaten those Latino artists who explore the social and political complexities of the Latino identity through their work, should be dismissed for not embracing a more universal aesthetic. Neither should Latino artists feel compelled to tone down the identity-based or political themes of their work to gain acceptance by the mainstream or absorbed into their organizations or supported by philanthropic institutions. Latino arts will not flourish if it does not evolve and remain relevant to Latinos. Latino artists must have the ultimate power to decide the direction of their art and the mainstream must become more flexible to true freedom of artistic expression. Anything less would be discriminatory.

There is an urgent need to educate mainstream arts professionals from all fields - curators, producers, educators, art professors, and critics - about the diversity of Latino arts and culture. Increased awareness and sensibility will lead to a fuller representation of Latino arts and artists in the field. Latino artistic traditions, themes, and practices.

The "high art vs. low art" conundrum also compounds the situation when in actuality more equity is needed. All arts deserve equal footing and oftentimes, certain art forms such as folk art, textiles and fabric arts, and performance art are not provided with the same levels of financial support and opportunities. In addition, Latinos should gain an enhanced appreciation of traditional folkloric arts, dances, and music as living and evolving components of Latino arts culture, families and communities. Traditional folkloric arts and the new, exciting interpretations inspired by them form part of an incredibly important continuum of Latino arts and culture for present-day and future generations.

**Latinos in the Mainstream – Ensuring Diversity**

With the dramatic increase of the Latino population in the U.S., the influence of Latino cultures permeates U.S. society. But as bearers of these traditions and representatives of their communities, Latino artists and artists professional must carry the torch and become the foremost presenters of Latino arts and culture. Otherwise, the integrity of what it is to be Latino/a or what constitutes Latino/a will continue bound by limited categorizations defined by others outside of Latino communities.

The lack of Latino representation in arts organizations such as museums, performing arts centers, theatres, and dance companies thwarts the development of broad Latino audiences and culture for present-day and future generations. More Latinos are needed at mainstream arts organizations. Although many organizations already have retained Latino professionals, their integration into the leadership and ability to make positive changes to programming varies widely. Possible
They represent Latino arts by being wholly who they are and by being part of the communities they choose.

**Best Practices: Latino/a Arts Professionals in the Mainstream**

Indeed, Latino arts professionals working in the mainstream face numerous challenges. Nevertheless, they can create positive impact for their communities within these organizations. In addition to providing proactive guidance or ideas, they should:

- Actively seek opportunities to engage various circles of influence to change systems, policies, and practice;
- Pursue opportunities to engage and transform policies and practices; and,
- Maintain continued connection to community to voice and perspective, and to remain adaptive, relevant, and responsive to changing community needs.

**Latino/a Accessibility to Institutional Arts and Culture**

Since institutional organizations, most often in the mainstream, receive the majority of public and private funding for the arts, their boards and staffs have a responsibility to attract audiences that will sustain the organization over time. Today, the U.S. has more artists and arts and cultural groups of color, however, philanthropy does not reflect that reality. Art and cultural groups with budgets of $5,000,000 or greater represent less than 2% of the sector, yet in 2009, these larger groups received 53% of all arts and cultural funding. Overwhelmingly, artists and cultural organizations of color are smaller organizations by budget and size. In order to increase funding equity, large companies also should provide corporate giving grants or sponsorship funds for Latino arts organizations of all sizes and types. Foundations and corporate giving programs are part of a public investment, which should include a diverse approach to the arts.

Latinos are significantly underrepresented in mainstream visitorship and audiences. Admission fees for most arts organizations make attendance or participation challenging for a wide array of communities. Information about discounted fees, free days, or special programs is often not widely or effectively disseminated to the target community. Without access, many Latinos do not reap the benefits of the arts and are less likely to become its champions. Designing programs and initiatives that are focused on “demand-side” decision-making will ensure that individuals attend the arts experience they value the most. Art organizations should provide opportunities for individuals and families to attend their institutions and participate in their programs by seeking resources to help facilitate greater accessibility. Philanthropy has the opportunity to play a significant role in increase access to these institutions and to ensure an interest or “demand” for specific types of arts and cultural programming. Funders that put the responsibility for building demand and providing accessibility on arts organizations will lead to increased attention to audience development and service to broader communities’ interests and needs.

The question of accessibility naturally informs the perceived public value and whether arts are seen as a luxury or as dispensable. Creating a strong message about the impact of arts and culture articulates more persuasively the value of art within the Latino community. Impact highlights include: increased knowledge of sequencing, motor dexterity, and 21st century technological skills and improved literacy, discipline, and self-esteem. It is important to include these highlights and provide examples as part of the messaging Latino arts organizations employ for its advocacy, fundraising and communication efforts.

**Increasing Inclusivity of Latinos in the Mainstream**

The issue of inclusivity is also of supreme importance as it is Latino accessibility to the arts. If Latino artists are excluded from mainstream institutions directly or indirectly, not only will their voices and works be denied to large audiences, but also discriminatory and inaccurate productions may result.

Playwright Stephen Adly Guirgis publically discussed his disapproval of non-Latino actors in the role of Puerto Rican characters in a production of his play “The _” at TheaterWorks in Hartford, Connecticut. He expressed his great displeasure in ArtsBeat: “What I do care about – deeply – is that I wrote a play where the two leads are clearly Latino, and Latino actors were completely shut out of the casting process for those two roles.24” He discussed how theaters wish to broaden their audiences and then some make decisions that are “non-inclusive”. This is not the first or last time a theater director or producer will cast white actors for Latino roles. Designing an open casting call. Still today Latinos are shut out of roles designed for them. Theaters, like other arts organizations, should not subject audiences to the “time warp” that Guirgis felt when he saw this production without Latino actor representation in a city with a 40 percent Latino population.

The recent staging of a more modern Cuban-rendering production of Much Ado About Nothing at the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington D.C. provides an example of Latino misrepresentation in the arts. Some considered the changing of two minor characters to “Juan Huesos” and “Jose Frijoles” as demeaning and stereotypical. Further the accuracy of Cuban cultural references infused in the play was called

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23 Center for the Future of Museums (AAM) has recorded a decline in minority visitorship to museums. http://culturalpolicy.uchicago.edu/publications/Demographic-transforma-

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The question of accessibility naturally informs the perceived public value and whether arts are seen as a luxury or as dispensable. Creating a strong message about the impact of arts and culture articulates more persuasively the value of art within the Latino community. Impact highlights include: increased knowledge of sequencing, motor dexterity, and 21st century technological skills and improved literacy, discipline, and self-esteem. It is important to include these highlights and provide examples as part of the messaging Latino arts organizations employ for its advocacy, fundraising and communication efforts.

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26 Further the accuracy of Cuban cultural references infused in the play was called

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into question. Taking the possible audience reaction into consideration—one Latino director was especially concerned about the association of those characters by Latino students to members in their community.22 Theater and dance companies need to improve their outreach to Latino actors, dancers, producers, theater designers, etc. and provide them an opportunity to participate in staging plays and choreographing shows that are Latino and non-Latino. By doing so, they will increase their cultural sensitivity and competency and lessen the possibility of inaccurately portraying Latinos and their community. It is inexcusable for a theater company or arts organization to not engage Latino communities when producing or curating works that depict or feature Latinos, their art, and culture. Latino artists, like all artists of color, deserve fair representation of their work, which can truly broaden their audiences.

The Potential Role of Latino Arts in Latino Communities

For some Latinos defining the arts or even Latino arts is difficult. The term “art” is problematic for many non-Latinos and Latinos alike because of its historical entitlement in elitism and rampant cultural appropriation by the West. This dissonance is further complicated by the lack of visibly celebrated contemporary Latino artists and Latino art champions within their communities. Engaging Latinos in the arts, however, is a matter of broadening the understanding and acceptance of the role of culture in the community. Overwhelmingly, Latinos love their cultura and embrace their tradiciones. Unfortunately due to issues regarding access, many Latinos do not always recognize the arts as a vibrant part of la cultura. Perhaps as a result of internalized racism or misunderstanding, too often Latinos fail to appreciate or give the same validity to Latino arts as they do to art shown at mainstream spaces. Without the integration and cultivation of the vital role of culture in the larger arts landscape, and versus (or specifically the vital role of the arts within the cultural landscape) financial support and audiences will diminish. Additionally, the lack of understanding of arts’ role and benefit to Latino communities acts as a strong impediment to arts organizations, artists, and arts educators working in marginalized communities that need dynamism and fiscal development.

The value, contribution, and impact of the arts must be communicated at every socio-economic level of Latino society. To do this there are several areas that should be addressed and confronted:

- Adopt language and messages to discuss arts and culture in order to gain allies within the community and among those who have decision-making power to increase support for Latino arts. At times, art and culture can be misconstrued as iconoclast or as luxury, and therefore unnecessary;
- Promote Latino arts and culture as a crucial component of public education policy as it relates to classroom and after-school instruction and across disciplines. This will help counter the prevalent decline of arts education in schools that serve Latino and African American children which results in fewer opportunities to educate the next generation of artists and creative thinkers;23
- Increase strategic communication marketing efforts with set goals to reach audiences using accessible media - print, internet, mobile efforts, social media, television, radio and others; and
- Employ accessible terms and concepts as part of the messaging effort that would make the arts relevant to everyday issues and concerns such as neighborhood beautification, social justice, innovation, job creation, academic discipline, workforce readiness, tourism development, and creative knowledge production.

To sustain Latino arts and culture in the U.S., Latino parents and their children must also become champions and advocates of public art education. The significance of arts education as a fundamental part of academic success with equal standing to other academic fields and its role in cultural preservation and inter-cultural understanding should be consistently and effectively emphasized. Latino arts organizations can be key advocates for art education’s important role in preserving Latino culture and encouraging academic success.

By providing a path for empowerment, voice, community building, and the dissipation of silence, art therapy must also be encouraged as an incredible asset for recovery, growth, and cycle of healing for Latinos who need social and mental health services. Efforts should be made to integrate artistic and cultural literacy for adults, perhaps by providing art workshops, classes, tours, and artist talks to adults. As a result, Latinos will not only expect public art education and art therapy that includes Latino arts and culture, but also demand it.

Artistic Programming- Curatorial Production and Presentation

When an organized and unified voice is crafted, Latinos may begin to see the integration of Latino arts and culture further woven into the fabric of society in the U.S. as new art advocates are developed.

Artistic representation and programming that embraces both “traditional” and new Latino artistic expressions are needed. The introduction and support of non-linear modes to curate exhibits and produce plays and concerts can lead to more dynamism and energy for artistic production and thus, increase and diversify audiences. There are cyclical creations of new art forms from the time of the ancient Americas until today. With the limitless explosion of new and traditional Latino arts, Latinos have additional tools to educate others about the complexities of the Latino identity.

Since U.S. born Latinos, non-immigrants, will fuel the increase in Latino population, the Latino identity will move away from the immigrant experience and perhaps, lessen its cultural ties to Latin America.24 Nevertheless, curators and producers should continue to maintain and support artistic and cultural practices, traditions, forms and expressions rooted in Latin America and the earlier Latino experience.

Due to a deficiency of scholarship and the lack of dialogue with curators and producers who may have a wider knowledge of the great Latino arts dynamic, the mainstream has greatly ignored Latino arts or has emphasized certain art forms or styles over others. The lack of visibility of Western art in mainstream institutions leads to a decline in financing that results in “slow, halting research” where fieldwork and scholarship is genuinely needed.25 This actuality makes the case again for the need to support Latino and Latin American art historians and scholars to write in a collective way about Latino and Latin American artists. In turn, these experts are necessary to educate others within regional and transcultural/transnational contexts.

The Presentation of Latino Arts in the Mainstream

Latino artists and art leaders should challenge mainstream institutions to operate differently when curating and presenting Latino arts forms. Some have begun to do so: “Since mainstream museums participated in the construction of...”

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misconceptions and negative portrayals of Latin American and Latinos over time. It is now their responsibility to educate the North American public about the relevance and contributions of Latino Americans and Latinos in the U.S.⁴³ Many consider mainstream institutions as the supreme authorities on all art forms, and funders and donors allocate the majority of funding resources to these entities. Therefore, it becomes more crucial that they engage Latino curators and producers to diversify the frames and themes of visual and performing arts programming.

Mainstream arts organizations must produce new material beyond the traditional standards. In its analysis of NEAs 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPA), the authors of Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums highlight the lower attendance numbers of particular arts in the U.S. especially “traditional ‘high culture’ activities like jazz, ballet, non-musical theater and classical music.”⁵ By increasing the number of new exhibitions and productions of Latino arts at mainstream and non-mainstream organizations, attendance will increase, new generations of art enthusiasts will develop and more diverse audiences will be engaged.

Further, it has been observed that many mainstream organizations are eager to “address the new changing demographics of their museum’s neighboring communities” and build their audiences by showcasing art from institutions in Mexico.⁶ Granted Mexican art is one example of Latin American art and there may be immense interest to see that art within the Mexican and Latino communities, yet the mainstream cannot be long-term, proactive commitment to develop Latino/a audiences and patrons. It is critical that Latinos’ experiences and their accessibility are valued, and that Latinos’ contributions are recognized by becoming more inclusive and representative of these publics.

Expanding Public Consciousness and Interest in Latino/a Arts

Curators and producers are tastemakers - it's their job to introduce artists, ideas, forms, and styles into society. At the same time, they have the power to present new material in an exciting way in the limited amount of arts spaces available to present new exhibitions and performances.⁴ This in turn may increase and diversify audiences for the art itself. Latino arts organizations must embrace innovative forms, styles, and techniques at every level of artistic and cultural production. Alternative ways to present art outside of galleries and theater performance areas are also needed.

To attract interest, arts organizations should support new production endeavors by engaging new allies and creating partnerships for marketing and audience development; this includes seeking free public service announcements and news coverage and utilizing the Internet and social media platforms. Also it has been noted that Latinos value cultural activities that emphasize “family unit” and include educational components.⁴² Creating complimentary educational units or activities in-house, or through coordination with partners can help meet this family demand.

Today, Latinos are the largest ethnic or racial group in the country – this is the present-day U.S. reality. To survive long-term, the vast majority of mainstream organizations will have to adapt their programming to meet a U.S. demographic that continually shifts.⁴⁶ Some institutions already have jumped on board by hiring, contracting, or commissioning curators or producers with expertise in Latino arts – such as the Smithsonian Institution, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art or the Goodman Theater in Chicago. Recommendations for mainstream and non-mainstream arts organizations include:

- Create outreach initiatives to recruit artists for submission, make information available and accessible on how, what, when and where to submit to these registries.
- Research Latino artists, conduct studio visits so producers and curators can familiarize themselves with their artistic productions, read their works, or attend their performances.
- Organize community advisory committees from a diverse cross section of the population to assist with identification of new artists and styles. They can help to promote new programs that target different cultural groups in their communities such as free music and dance showcases. By doing so, organizations identify new audiences that can potentially serve as allies and donors.
- Establish a young or all ages Latino arts biennial that is free of restrictive themes. Adopting broad curatorial themes allows for the inclusion of new talent and pieces from the organization’s permanent collection or repertoire and highlights works that the mainstream should collect or commission instead of recycling the same works and performances.⁴⁷

By becoming more inclusive and representative of Latinos, the mainstream organizations do not have to discontinue exhibitions based on European or American curatorial and production themes that have been historically celebrated and celebrated. Instead they need to broaden their presentation of works, exhibitions and performances based on themes and topics that reflect the cultures and interests of their local communities as well.⁴⁰ Latino artists, however, also must take responsibility for increasing their exposure. Most institutions have a slide registry that compiles images of artists and information on file for the purpose of selecting artists for future exhibits and programs. Visual artists should submit to registries at ethnic and mainstream institutions alike to ensure maximum exposure for their work. Smaller, alternative venues or organizations should also be pursued if an artist’s access to bigger institutions is limited.

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Curators and producers are tastemakers - it’s their job to introduce artists, ideas, forms, and styles into society. At the same time, they have the power to present new material in an exciting way to engage new Latino/a audiences and patrons. It is critical that Latinos’ experiences and their accessibility to art in the mainstream are enhanced and the commitment by mainstream arts organizations to make improvements is sincere. Helpful steps include making the organizational websites more user-friendly, having materials translated into Spanish, and hiring a responsive staff.

40 Comparisons across cultures are helpful in order to describe a particular work of art, but the danger lies when the comparison to something European or American is validated and when it is only considered valuable if it is like the mainstream box. 41 For instance, a slide arts curators go beyond the traditional curatorial approach and consider multi-disciplinary approaches, then they will become producers. 42 Farrell and Medvedeva at 14. 43 Kerry Lengel, "Despite Hispanic Population Growth, Latino Theater Still Struggling to Find Audience in Phoenix," The Arizona Republic, March 12, 2008. 44 The infancy of Latino/a arts is relative to the time span of other cultural historical features for which the most part are longer. For one overview of Latino/a arts see "100 Years of Latino Theatre in America" Latinopia.com (March 6, 2010) (http://latinopia.com/latino-theater/100-years-of-latino-theatre-in-america/).
Arts organizations of all types should identify new partners from different arts mediums to increase audience size and to make improved and unique cultural productions. Those who are interested in the arts and patronize their programs will most often have a natural interest in more than just one art medium. Cross-partner productions and events can diversify and expand the audiences for participating arts organizations. For example, a theater and a visual arts organization can team up to sponsor the production of a play about an artist’s life or create joint arts education programs for adults and children.

Another means by which to increase the success rate of new Latino productions and exhibitions is to bridge the divide between the organization’s programming and art education departments. Whenever possible complementary arts education programs should align with the exhibitions, presentations, and performances of the organizations. Often these arts organization departments or teams work in isolation and do not collaborate on creating dynamic programming. Even if an organization does not have arts education staff, it should submit a grant to contract arts educators to create complementary programs or materials to increase their audience and broaden their reach by providing classes or workshops and distributing materials.

Today more and more Latinos have achieved celebrity status, fame and wealth in various sectors of the entertainment industry. They are a potential pool of allies to tap into for support of Latino arts and culture. Latino arts organizations should use their networks and make efforts to connect with Latino celebrities in order to secure new allies: encouraging them to invest and collect artwork, sponsor productions in the performing arts or traveling exhibitions, or fund arts education programming. Actor and comedian Cheech Marin has been an avid collector of Chicano art for many years and has amassed an impressive collection — as a result, the profile and value of the works of several Chicano artists has increased. Latino star power can help elevate the public consciousness and appreciation of Latino arts.

Latino arts organizations should advocate for Latinos to collect and invest in artwork — sculpture, paintings, prints, folk art, textiles, ceramics, drawings, photography, mixed media, etc. They should encourage them to donate works to their collections too. By doing so, these organizations help build a visual public for Latino arts within their communities which can translate into other forms of assistance. Organizations should create an acquisitions committee or council that invites community members to collaborate with the board and staff to recommend works to purchase or commission and provide funds or raise funds to increase the collection.

Permanent collections impact programming; this is especially true in times of economic challenges when institutions seek to curtail expenditures. Therefore, artists need institutions to collect their artwork and institutions should have budgets for this purpose or a means to subsidize purchases. Arts organizations should identify resources to support these new artistic endeavors. In addition, they can develop internal mechanisms or formal programs to develop new curatorial talents and theater producers. Increased opportunities to present new talent in performances and arts exhibitions will follow. But artists too should consider donating works to different permanent collections or performance arts organizations in an effort to broaden his or her exposure and audience.

Art as a Catalyst for Social and Economic Development

The arts can be a catalyst for fundamental social and economic growth. It can also be a point of collaboration with diverse partners to accomplish mutually beneficial goals. The arts offer opportunities in creative community development initiatives and public education advancement both encourage on-going engagement. With the proper support, artists and arts organizations can develop their communities into cultural destinations where visitors may serve as audience members and patrons of local arts productions and local businesses. Money raised can then be funneled back into the socio-economic development of that community. Collaborations such as these are successful when there is a true reciprocal relationship and all parties are benefiting without exploiting a community and its cultural production. The intent is to empower the original residents and future generations within these communities, never to displace or replace them as too many of our communities have suffered.

Activism and Community Engagement

Historically, the works of many Latino artists are influenced by current events and challenges affecting their society and the world. The emerging Latino arts organizations and artists of the 1960s and 70s tended to gravitate to socio-economic or political issues or causes based on the needs and interests of their community. Today, many Latino arts organizations continue to follow a mission focused on community engagement and/or current issues and events facing the community. This has led to organic alliances with organizations and others that share these needs and interests.

Community activism through the arts offers an opportunity to partner with socio-political awareness or grassroots campaigns. The partnership possibilities can touch on key issues for Latino communities such as environmentalism, physical and mental health, gender and sexuality, access to quality education, human or social rights, to name a few. The marriage of art and activism often leads to cultural organizing, placing art and culture at the center of an organizing strategy and also about doing it from a particular mission, vision, tradition, cultural identity, and community of place or worldview.

Arts engagement with communities also can lead to positive social development such as public tours, talks with the artist, curator, producer, musician or artist, and free art workshops. Real Art Ways (RAW) in Hartford, Connecticut offers Film Fieldtrips that address cultural and civic learning through film and discussion for different age groups. Community MusicWorks provides free after-school music education and performance programs that build meaningful long-term relationships between professional musicians, children, and families in urban neighborhoods of Providence, Rhode Island. For the production of the play, “The House on Mango Street,” Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre organized a youth council, which assisted in the creation of a youth event that included youth spoken word poets and an informal dialogue with the youth, actors, director and playwright.

Our Allies

Who are the potential allies and partners for Latino arts organizations? Parents, children, youth, elders, art therapists, arts educators, librarians, political

46) For a more complete working definition, see Amalia Delcyo, “Cultural Organizing Working Definition and Framework,” Arts & Democracy 47) For more information about licensing audience or visitors, see Barry Groves, “A visitor guide to Nina Simon about cultural institutions increasing community artists and value engagement” 48) Arts in a web-resource for victims of sexual assault that is based in Austin, Texas.
leaders, elected officials, economic and housing development officials and organizations, tourism partners, and people with disabilities or differently-abled. Through joint efforts in programming, fundraising, and advocacy, Latino arts organization and allied with community interest at heart can both gain new audiences.

The arts have a significant impact on local and national economies. As just one example, nonprofit theaters contributed $19 billion to the national economy in 2010. This economic impact of the arts and culture extends to a broader audience, voters and leaders who have the power to reach out to elected officials. Arts advocates argue that the public should understand art and culture as a “public good” because of the larger impact beyond a personal experience – such as increased neighborhood pride and vibrancy. Attaching buzzwords like “creativity,” “empowerment” and “quality of life” are essential and powerful when describing the impact of the arts.

Some of the most promising allies are youth. Engaging them to support the arts and advocate for arts education and youth programming to share the arts’ positive impact on their lives. They can tell their own stories through their works, use their own voices or engage in new, digital media. Like Youth Radio or Media Arts Center San Diego, young people can tell their own stories through their works, use music and dance companies threatened if they do not invest in representing and hiring Latinos. Across the nation, there are cases of traditional, European or white American based arts organizations that are struggling for survival in terms of resources and audience. Investment priorities should change to reflect the changes in the American demographic and artistic landscape. As a simple business argument, arts organizations should consider creating programming that reflects other cultures, and when, possible make promotional information available in several languages. Latino arts organizations and artists must work towards increasing Latino artists, who are Puerto Rican, or Cuban, should act as allies and partners with other Latino groups who want to produce their own shows, curate their own exhibitions and create their own scholarship.

Potential Collaborations
Community partnerships offer artists and arts organizations the opportunity to engage audiences around social causes and issues. Socially responsive art collaborations have the capacity to inspire, raise the visibility and awareness of a campaign towards positive change. Possible collaborative projects include:

Youth programs through art activism that take on ecological concerns or family mental health, partnerships between dance companies and organizations helping individuals with disabilities or special needs;

Youth partnerships with social service organizations to produce videos that discuss sexual harassment or proper nutrition;

Health awareness campaigns or fundraising events for schools or educational programs can easily be joined with arts programming.

57 Ford Bell, President of the American Association of Museums, states: “the big challenge is going to be how museums deal with the increasingly diverse American public, which could be 30% of more Hispanic by 2050. If you go to a museum, and don’t see anybody else who looks like you, versus to state and the biases are not reflecting the community you may be less likely to come back, or even to go in the first place.” Martha Lubin, America is Changing – But Are Its Arts Museums? The Art Newspaper, Issue 204, July/August 2009 (http://www.metmuseum.org/articles/America-is-changing-but-are-its-arts-museums-2009-2010). At one example, New York’s National Dance Institute has had special partnerships with Brigham Young University, a school for people with visual impairments, through its Comprehensive Music Program for Young People and the American Sign Language and English Lower School (RS, 347). Some Latino artists and organizations have infused health concerns and issues to their work, NYC-based Puerto Rican, Latino and American artists and organizations at the 1995 June Hunt Festival created an exhibit of meal made from crops and local community food staples to make an impact. In her experiences undernourishment/stem cell transplant. Tony volunteers at various hospitals assisting patients to create their own healing arts books. Mónica Agudelo Drugs, a former music organization, Bronx has had its design, La Dura tambiem como La Calle (Calle also cured). The storyline highlighted how music, in particular can be useful for AIDS awareness campaign and to reduce the impact of drugs on the community. Their popular program, the “Closed and Solved” dances, provided a safe space for individuals in recovery to party without the threat of drugs and alcohol found in bars and clubs.
A theatrical company can stage a play about the effects of a deportation on a Latino family and use it as an opportunity to invite Latino youth from an after-school program to see a professional theatrical production.

The following collaborations illustrate real ways of making this work. The issuance of a postage stamp in honor of Ruben Salazar, the journalist slain during the 1970 National Chicano Moratorium March against the Vietnam War in East Los Angeles, was assisted in part, by the production of a short documentary on his life, which increased awareness about his life's work. The New Mexico Housing Authority, in collaboration with Working Classroom, a grassroots arts organization, produced a bilingual/bicultural comic book to educate the Latino community about predatory loans.

Supporting Artists and Artist Communities

Independent artists should be able to rely on the support of art councils and organizations for professional development assistance and promotion of their work. In some cities, arts and business councils, professional arts organizations, and artist guilds provide resources and services, yet many Latinos do not know to turn to these entities for assistance. Access to resources about career advancement, small business management, and educational opportunities should be advertised and disseminated and made readily available to artists in the Latino community.

Latino artists can benefit tremendously from basic professional skills such as submitting a well-written artist statement or representative portfolio that can assist them in their career. Often curators cannot find biographical and contact information about an artist. Latino arts organizations can provide an invaluable service by hosting classes and workshops that allow artists to garner vital skills such as the creation of a portfolio, trademark and copyright, grant writing, marketing and brand development, and client cultivation and service.

Creating a Viable Network of Latino Artists and Art Professionals

What has become increasingly evident is that there is a need to fill in the void and create Latino arts professional networks. Most networks of Latino artists across the U.S. are organized locally and informally. They may or may not consist of museum professionals, theater managers, art professors, etc. Is there a need to create a more inclusive Latino arts network? Absolutely. The potential benefits are extraordinary. By including more diverse artists and professionals across practices, the opportunity to learn, share, and access resources grows and the support network expands.

Art organizations can encourage and support artist networks for increased interaction and communication among artists, either in person or by using sites such as Meet Up, Cover It Live, Tumblr, Twitter, artzines, etc. Other opportunities include taking advantage of free to low cost online tools such as Google+ and Skype for conference call meetings and online, instantaneous presentations with other parties. The Martignano International Residency for Artists – MIIRA - connects experienced artists of various countries and backgrounds in an international residency exchange. Creating an international exchange among Latino artists and artists from across Latin America will lead to collaborations and unique partnerships and provide for greater exposure for all participants.

On another level, arts organizations can create networking events for the artists or performances or workshops where artists can engage their audiences and seek out their participation. Hosting free jam sessions for the community is a fantastic way for musicians or poets to gain exposure and allows them to try new and creative ideas. Providing artists with commissions, working stipends, or grants also helps artists explore new ideas, create, and then showcase them.

Networking among artists and art professionals is essential for the creation of artist communities. Vibrant communities can support each other and collaborate based on common interests.
and needs. Arts organizations should consider hosting networking opportunities for artists and art professionals to dialogue and find mentors. The bringing together of artists in formal settings such as presentations on topics of art, technology, or business and professional development can attract artists of different generations. Coffee hours with artists or lectures hosted by curators and producers also may provide an informal opportunity to encourage exchange among artists.63

Mentorship

Formal and informal mentorships are important for any profession, and artists and art professionals can benefit from increased guidance and access to information provided by the mentoring relationship. Latino arts organizations should play a role in encouraging and forming mentorship programs and opportunities within their community. The sustainability of these organizations is dependent on an active, vibrant, and growing Latino arts community. Since artists founded many existing Latino arts organizations, these leaders have a responsibility to pass on knowledge and skills that otherwise may not be readily available to the next generation. For example, how can a Latino artist or art professional present their work or lecture at art clubs, universities and schools? An experienced mentor can provide that know-how, who to request these opportunities from, how to network, and most importantly, how to eloquently discuss and engage an audience about their work. Mentors can educate mentees about other career options within the arts such as philanthropy, art therapy, or arts education. On a practical level, a mentorship program can be as simple as listing willing mentors that artists can turn to with questions and for advice. Online discussion boards or blogging about questions, suggestions, new opportunities or developments also can complement resource guides that arts organizations and others create and maintain.

Professional Development Networks and Resources

Latino arts organizations should continue to encourage and lead the production of professional development presentations, in-person or online as webinars, available for a reasonable, discounted fee or free. In order to advance scholarly discourse on Latino arts and culture, they should instruct artists on how to maintain archives of their careers such as papers, sketches, promotional materials of their work (posters, postcards, fliers, etc.). Artists must be proactive in forming collective discussions, and networks to assist each other with common interests and needs.

Independent Latino artists should always approach their local arts councils for assistance. These councils can provide information with funding, resources, and opportunities that will support their artistic productions. Many artists seek ways to supplement their incomes, and a professional training program is an excellent way by which arts organizations can assist artists. The Bronx Council on the Arts has an art handler program training that may lead to employment opportunities in galleries, museums, archives, and auction houses.64 Third World News Reel offers a six-month documentary training program that covers pre-production, production, and post-production.65 This program serves as a jumping board for many in the documentary world and some return as instructors to teach master classes. Arena Stage in Washington D.C. dedicated to American theatre has a student playwrights project which employs teaching artists to work with middle and high school teachers to encourage the growth of “new voices” among students.66 Other arts organizations such as the Studio Museum in Harlem and the National Museum of Mexican Art host formal artist-in-residence or internship programs, which have helped to catapult the careers of many artists of color.67

Arts organizations have the greatest capacity to assist artists and bring their artwork to the forefront because many understand their professional needs and have networks by which exchange and mentorship can thrive. They help limit the barriers of entry for many artists who seek greater opportunities to showcase their work. Sometimes artists get lost in the education departments of institutions and their art practice and careers lie dormant. Through its Master Artist grant, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC) provides mentor and mentee stipends.68 More established artists and identified mentees apply jointly for the stipends and both benefit professionally. The Steel Yard in Providence offers subsidized courses in jewelry, welding, blacksmithing, ceramics, and glass casting. Artists have access to affordable studio space, the metal shop, teaching opportunities, contract work through public art projects and a private projects workshop at no cost.

Online resources and new media can also be useful. Leveraging online resources and new media outlets can benefit these communities. Minneapolis’ Walker Arts Center leads the way in providing a dedicated online networking space for local artists to connect both with the museum and with other artists through its Walker Blogs.69 Hive Archive offers What It Takes: Your Indie Business Buzz - informal monthly meetings for people who wish to develop their creative work into a sustainable living. Establishing an email list serve to promote programs, activities, events, exhibits and performances is a useful way for arts organizations to encourage networking and promote the arts. As a way to gain a greater understanding of the grant application process, independent artists should participate on grant review panels. It is also an excellent opportunity to network and learn about the work of other artists and arts administrators.

Building Artistic Spaces and Communities

Many artists want the opportunity to exchange ideas and bounce feedback with fellow artists and arts organizations. In essence, an open studio will assist them in developing their art through constructive criticism in a friendly, safe place that many artists may not have had since school. Moreover, these artist gatherings permit the natural development of mutually beneficial art projects and engagements. Latino arts organizations can assist with the coordination of an open studio by providing the space, inviting special guests who are established and reputable artists to discuss their work and critique others, and inviting their senior curatorial or programming staff to attend.

Several foundations like Ford and Kresge have allocated resources to the creation of artist spaces for studio art and performance. Some of these spaces are live-in and others are not. When possible, Latino arts organizations should seize the opportunity to apply for these grants or assist artists to submit a request and/or participate in these funding opportunities. Established organizations can provide financial stability, infrastructural, and resource development expertise for the discussion and management of new artistic spaces.70

Arts organizations should consider the possibility of joining forces with other arts or community organizations that may also benefit from new spaces. Through partnerships, multiple organizations can fundraise, manage, and use the new spaces for both artistic and other community needs. New art and cultural spaces
for the benefit of artists, arts organizations, and the community have the potential to develop into vibrantly accessible spaces.71 As shown in multiple examples, dynamic art and cultural spaces can enhance socio-economic growth. In some areas, art and cultural spaces have led to community-driven tourism development. Thus, another strong argument for investment in art spaces and other related programs is its potential economic impact on communities.

Building Latino arts communities, assisting Latino artists, and expanding community audiences can help end the stagnation in certain areas of the country or to stir the development of the art scene in other regions.

71 Villa Victoria Center for the Arts in Boston is a program of Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the social and economic power of the community through education, economic development, technology, and arts programming. http://www.villavictoriaarts.org/

Improving and Developing Organizational Management

When “[a]sked about the significance of the declining attendance figures for the arts in this country, Rocco Landesman, the Chairman for the National Endowment of the Arts gave a characteristically unequivocal response:

You can either increase demand or decrease supply. Demand is not going to increase. So it is time to think about decreasing supply.72

His comment may have been directed primarily to theaters, and it definitely ruffled feathers and generated buzz. Nonetheless, it does require us to reflect on something that cannot be ignored - the growing expansion of nonprofit arts organizations when economic resources have diminished and audiences have shrunk. It would behoove any responsible art director or administrator to keep this in mind. Latinos eager to build new arts organizations or start art programs, particularly in Latino arts “deserts,” must be cognizant of the numerous challenges. The demand for Latino arts can and should be cultivated and diversified throughout the U.S., despite the challenges to create, sustain, and grow Latino arts organizations.

Latino arts leaders must be able to demonstrate that Latino arts - exhibitions, presentations, performances, education classes and programs, art therapy sessions, and workshops make a social impact worthy and necessary of public and private investment. The expected return on investment is an exciting, healthier, and more informed and creative society.

Latino arts organizations should focus on several areas for increased development so they may sustain and expand. Capacity building strengthens the infrastructure of an arts organization and builds its resistance to the downward spiraling effects of a weak economy and changes to the needs and demands of the communities it serves. Focusing on organizational development is particularly beneficial in communities where new Latino arts organizations are needed and new Latino communities have formed. Most importantly, however, stronger Latino arts organizations will be able to withstand economic downturns. They can articulate their mission, align programming to it, and demonstrate impact as new challenges and developments arise.

Leadership

Latino arts and the arts world in general, suffer a common dilemma – founders and executive directors who do not share leadership with or pass it on to the next generation. Founder’s Syndrome and succession planning, which have interested funders and consultants for many years, does affect and generate some alarm about the survival and success of several Latino arts organizations across the country. It may lead to extreme stress about how an organization can identify and then train the next generation of leaders especially if opportunities for growth and fresh perspectives are denied or limited.

Tied to the issue of leadership is the flatness that many nonprofits have with regards to personnel organization. Many nonprofits have “charismatic founders” that often neglect the management of their organization and the creation and practical application of an organizational chart.73 Funders are challenging nonprofits they support to effectively strengthen their human resources and management skills in order to help secure their sustainability. Latino arts organizations leaders and directors must learn effective management skills and mentor employees to have the same in order to prevent a vicious cycle of ineffective or poor management.74

What can be done internally and externally to emphasize the need for a change in leadership, or a transition plan? Latino arts leaders must be made aware of the underlying dangers of not planning for a change in leadership in their organizations. One way to do so is educate colleagues about the failures of some organizations that did not adapt new strategies and prepare for leadership transitions. Leaders must provide a platform and/ or opportunities for younger staff to engage, offer ideas, and take leadership roles on particular initiatives. For example, if there is a new exhibition, fundraising initiative, or theatrical performance to manage, a more junior member of the staff should be allowed to lead it. Conversely, younger staff at arts organizations should actively seek ways to gain the attention of upper management by introducing new ideas. Latino arts organizations should create young advisory councils to provide suggestions and assistance to the Board of Directors. These councils provide a platform for leadership cultivation to pursue the organization’s mission and goals. Young Latino professionals are eager to become involved in their community in ways that enrich their lives. They seek meaningful engagement that will inspire them to serve and in turn, encourage their peers to donate their time and/or money to the organization. Council members can support and advocate for mechanisms to help bolster fundraising and programming efforts. Through this process, some may become future members of the Board of Directors where they can further advocate for their interests and ideas.

Arts organizations, like any corporation, business or nonprofit entity, cannot remain static. If they do not evolve, they will not flourish or survive. By inviting younger generations to participate in the decision-making process, an arts organization can identify and adopt new ideas, projects, and modes of communication, and diversify audiences, which will assist it to adapt to the ever-changing demands of the public. In short, staying in tune with younger generations’ interests will promote the growth of Latino arts organizations which will be better equipped to stay on the cusp of Latino arts as it continues to expand in all directions.

The boards of Latino arts organizations must be diverse in every aspect. Traditionally, their first or founding boards are comprised of members of the community who may be artists, arts professionals, educators and at times, local business leaders. For the launching of an organization, it is important, without question to have commitment of passionate board members. Nevertheless, as the arts organization grows, so should its board to support its further development by identifying new connections and sources for funding, innovation, and collaboration.

A synergistic Latino arts organization will actively

71 Villa Victoria Center for the Arts in Boston is a program of Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the social and economic power of the community through education, economic development, technology, and arts programming. http://www.villavictoriaarts.org/


74 id.
recruit individuals to serve on the board who can bring multiple resources and who can act as spokespersons. It is imperative, however, that board members help fundraise and provide a personal donation. Funders increasingly ask whether board members provide monetary donations to the organization on the premise that an organization cannot successfully raise funds when its power structure does not also give. Yet, Latino community representation on the boards of Latino arts organizations should not be dismissed simply because community members may not be able to make monetary contributions. Residents of the community where these arts organizations are located should be included on their boards as well.

Mentorship
Latinos arts organizations should provide mentorship opportunities. Their boards and staffs can benefit tremendously from learning exchanges through which questions, advice, and ideas are shared with specialized consultants or other art and non-arts organizations with long track records. Non-arts organizations can also be helpful mentors to Latino organizations. Nevertheless, time and resources are often obstacles for organizations that wish to take advantage of mentorship opportunities. Many Latino arts organizations have smaller staff sizes that cannot dedicate the time or resources to other projects or needs. Funders should be cognizant of this reality, and many are, by providing grants, which enable and nurture mentorships. Within an arts organization, there may be natural mentorship or beneficial relationship opportunities by tapping into the networks of their boards and young advisory councils. Coordinating social events or organizing special projects can ease the creation of these connections.

Volunteers
Volunteers are a fantastic resource for all nonprofit organizations and the arts are no exception. Yet, many Latino arts organizations neglect or fail to dedicate the time and do not have volunteer recruiting or coordinating personnel. Volunteers may become future board members or donors or may have connections to possible funding resources or collaborative partners. Organizations should dedicate time to establish a pool of volunteers who can benefit them in multiple ways; this can be accomplished through networking or recruitment events that target professionals, high school and college students, and senior citizen community residents for example.

It is important that organizations train their volunteers to purposely perform the expected tasks and provide them with the messaging that they should use in explaining the organization’s mission, vision, and programs. The attitude “any little task will do” does not hold for all volunteers who wish to make a significant impact. Some individuals want opportunities to apply their technical or professional skills. Latino arts organizations should identify and jumpstart special projects capitalizing on their volunteers’ skills, with regards to fundraising, administrative, accounting, marketing, IT, etc. For example, volunteers could be enlisted to assist using new media or tackling IT issues, or making personal calls, or drafting letters to donors expressing appreciation.

Handling volunteers does present another host of challenges. Who will recruit and supervise them? Who will train them? In larger nonprofits or arts organizations, volunteer coordinators are important assets and are usually full-time staff members. Latino arts organizations should look to other organizations as models for volunteer coordinators and strategies for working with volunteers.

Identifying a volunteer to serve as the volunteer coordinator is one possible solution. Another possibility is to recruit a Board Member or a Young Advisory Council Member to take on this task.

Internships
Overwhelmingly, young Latino arts professionals rely on internship opportunities to solidify their interests and hone their skill set. Latino arts organizations should provide internship positions or establish a formal internship program (paid/unpaid) to assist the development of the next generation.

University interns are valuable assets and organizations can cultivate them as its next generation of talented leaders. Also, many cities and municipalities coordinate summer youth employment programs that provide eye-opening, professional opportunities as well as support for nonprofit organizations. Arts organizations should consider tapping into this human resource and invest in the next generation’s development. The impact of internship programs has been incredible, with many interns learning about different aspects of the museum world. For example, el Museo del Barrio and the National Museum of Mexican Art have internship programs; several of their full-time employees are former interns.

Growing the Individual Donor Base
Individual donors are an absolutely necessary source of nonprofit revenue especially those serving the arts. For many mainstream arts organizations, individual dollars have always comprised a crucial percentage of the revenue breakdown. The percentage of individual giving is often very low at Latino arts organizations, which is troubling given that government, foundation, and corporate grants have dwindled for the arts.

Equally as troubling is that data reveals that only 1% of foundation funding is “designated to benefit Latinos,” a figure that has remained steady over the past decade while the Latino population has expanded greatly. This 1% allotment is for all types of programs and services to Latinos including arts and culture.

Individual giving must become a top priority for all Latino nonprofits because it allows for community empowerment and autonomy by lessening dependency on both private and government funding sources. Therefore, to tap into individual donors and expand the donor base, Latino arts organizations should adopt fundraising best practices such as clear messaging, donor tracking, donor base development and diversification.

Latino arts organizations, like many nonprofit and community organizations serving Latinos, face the enormous challenge of encouraging a culture of philanthropy among Latinos. Generally, philanthropy in Latin America is limited to family and church. This is in part due to the extreme lack of distribution of resources and the concentration of wealth among a select few. Despite this historically limited practice of philanthropy, Latinos in the U.S. are often exposed to the benefits of philanthropy without knowing its role in their communities.

Latino arts organizations should develop their own donor bases within their communities by approaching local businesses and community members. Performances, receptions, classes, and workshops can provide organizations the opportunity to promote their organization and begin to engage donors. Another helpful way to stimulate giving is by providing potential donors examples of how even small gifts make an impact since person to person assistance is the most common giving pattern among Latinos. For example, Latinos are often donors as many send millions of dollars in remittances back to families in their home countries. Providing incentives to give through raffles, silent auctions that include artwork by artists, and strategies for working with volunteers.

75 Boys and Girls Clubs is an example of a nonprofit organization that has a strategic approach for working with volunteers. Another resource is the annual National Conference on Volunteerism and Service; the conference hosts workshops and sessions on various matters of volunteerism.

76 Foundation Funding for Hispanics/Latinos in the United States and in Latin America, The Foundation Center in collaboration with Hispanics in Philanthropy [2011].

77 Only recently has Latin America witnessed the development of corporate sponsorships, private and corporate foundations, and institutions.

The organization’s development staff should determine the interests of each potential donor and how to apply that information for the benefit of the organization. For example, the individual may come from a family of educators and could become a great donor to arts education, or s/he may wish to honor a deceased loved one and may hope for a naming opportunity. In turn, once their personal interest is sparked, the potential to make them donors is increased too. Latino artists too should be encouraged to donate works of their art or their time to work on a specific creative project or educational program. The parents of children who participate in educational programming should be considered as potential donors as well as the youth.

Moreover, organizations should encourage donors to give bequests of artwork or money from their retirement plans and to provide them with long-term or annual giving options. Organizations should provide many opportunities for engagement too – whether through curators talks, special performances or attending a student workshop. When potential donors are engaged or involved with the organization, the likelihood to give will increase. Making donations should be made as easy as possible and include various options – online, check, credit card and PayPal.

Cultivating Young Donors
Young donors should be identified and engaged early. This is especially important when arts organizations provide youth programs and arts education. Many people are embarrassed or feel uncomfortable asking for donations. However, if a young person is educated early about the importance of sustainability of the organization that they care about which includes about the importance of sustainability of the organization’s need for a development program, they will become a great donor to arts education, or s/he may wish to honor a deceased loved one and may hope for a naming opportunity. In turn, once their personal interest is sparked, the potential to make them donors is increased too. Latino artists too should be encouraged to donate works of their art or their time to work on a specific creative project or educational program. The parents of children who participate in educational programming should be considered as potential donors as well as the youth.

Youth can be further challenged to come up with creative fundraising ideas that align with their artistic interests. Youth participants who have established themselves as leaders and models among their peers can be given the opportunity to serve as spokespersons for the organization and program. Youth advisory committees can help reinforce the team-based principles and serve as agents of change in their organization and community. Additionally, as they graduate or move on from programs into college and careers, organizations should do their best to maintain a database that includes the names, contact information, and professional affiliation of students and interns who have participated in their programs. In turn, the former students and interns can be invited to form part of an alumni group of potential donors, board members, and even return as full-time staff for the organizations.

At every level, Latino arts organizations can sow the seeds of introducing the emergent Latino middle class and professionals to the value of art and supporting it. Introducing youth to artists in the community who make their living through the sale of their work and to curators and registrars who take care of institutional collections are some of the ways to engage young people. Along with all donors, youth should be encouraged to personally collect art and to assist with the acquisition of artwork for museums. Then they will be more likely to provide funding to commission a play or concert, a member, visitor, or attendee, and support the allocation of public money for the arts and education, purchase and donate artwork.

Artists, art educators, and art professionals naturally gravitate towards participation in art organizations. To survive in the ever-changing arts world, Latino arts organizations should actively reach out to Latinos with no affiliation to the arts but who may be potential donors, volunteers, or board members. Board and staff members must network to identify new blood for the organization to accomplish this goal. They must attend conferences, summits, benefits, forums, community engagements, lectures, and more, and talk to new people. Latino arts organizations should organize special events to attract new audiences such as curator-led exhibition tours, coffee talks with artists and performers, special performances, and cocktail parties. They should seek out leaders of professional associations and guilds to collaborate on these special projects. If necessary, arts organizations should invest in networking workshops for their board and staff members to improve their skills and identify exciting, networking initiatives.

To effectively create, maintain, and expand an individual donor base, accurate and useful data records organized by an advanced database system are absolutely necessary. This database is a valuable tool for communication and marketing needs. Arts organizations should seriously consider such an investment to assist in the diversification of its funding base and to effectively develop individual giving strategies.

Collection and Donation of Artwork
Philanthropy in the arts also encompasses the collection and donation of artwork. Granted this may be limited to those with higher disposable incomes, but artwork is priced at all levels and every purchase helps sustain artistic expression and exhibition. The donation of art allows Latino arts organizations to become the primary depositories to preserve and showcase Latino arts, which increases their prestige and ability to attract and serve a larger audience. Creating a sizeable collection is especially important for art institutions when economic times are tough. The rising costs of renting exhibitions, insurance, and shipping are heavy expenditures to finance for already financially strapped institutions. During the most recent recession, many museums turned to their collections to curate new exhibitions because the public’s primary concern is about “presentation” and “content.” The availability of a collection provides strong options for museums to continue to support their mission.

Brand Development and Marketing
Not-for-profit organizations like for-profit companies should enthusiastically embrace the development of a visible brand for marketing purposes. They must create an authentic brand identity and own it. Developing a brand is a powerful marketing and promotional tool that many arts organizations across the country have yet to use. Latino arts organizations cannot be left behind. Consultants and volunteer-based organizations like Taproot Foundation assist with branding development for not-for-profits. A well-developed brand can assist an organization, or even an artist, to establish an identity. The brand becomes part of a larger marketing effort that includes the organization’s website, social media platforms, business cards, stationary, logo, tagline, and more. A good brand will be professional, eye-catching, and memorable. It also can assist the organization to gain allies and create the appropriate messages to convince them to assist in various ways. Latinos must unapologetically own the brand and public identity of the organizations they create...
and represent. Certainly, it is understandable that Latinos fear brand development as a tool as many fear the brand image may be misconstrued as stereotyping or other forms of generalization. Yet, brand development can be done properly when it is led and approved by the organizational leadership. Care should be given by the organization to not overlook the mission statement when creating the brand and strive to be as inclusive and consistent as possible.

Business Best Practices

Senior management and board members must have the appropriate skill set to manage the needs of an arts organization no matter what size or type. With an appropriate and responsible business model, the organization can establish a strategy which will positively impact its long-term growth. Adopting an appropriate business model is crucial not only for an organization but for artist, arts educator, or art therapist as well. When adopting one, the organization or art professional must keep in mind that one size does not fit all. An organization’s leadership must work together to build one that is best suited for its needs.

Sound business practices will allow for the organization to achieve its short and long term goals – particularly sustainability and growth:

- Strategic plans should be developed to assist the organization to develop its infrastructure and programming according to its needs.
- The organization’s audiences must be defined to ensure that its programs, products, and services reflect the audience it hopes to attract.
- A plan to create and sustain a network of supporters and resources should be adopted to help sustain and foster development for the organization and the artist.
- Budget planning for short and long-term goals should include efforts to mitigate risk and increase capital and operational reserves while striving for a surplus.
- The creation of an endowment should be considered by the organization as an empowerment method provided that the endowment’s investment gains are greater than fees incurred.
- Executive staff and boards must have skills in or appropriate assistance with tax and investment financing.
- The mission or programming should not respond to funders’ changing focus areas. Consistency of the organization’s mission and vision is fundamental and must heed the needs and demands of the audiences it serves and hopes to attract. Instead of trying to adapt the mission or programming to meet a potential funder’s focus area, identify new funders and donors that have similar interests to your organization.
- A Latino arts organization cannot carefully plan for its future growth without a commitment to evaluation of its performance, service, and gaps. Contract experts who can help create effective evaluation tools and train staff to use them and modify them as necessary. Seek funding opportunities to initiate and expand evaluation efforts.
- Effective communications and marketing strategies for artistic and arts education programs like plays, performances, exhibitions, youth classes, adult workshops and internships must be created and followed.
- Questions to consider include: How do organizations promote their programs?
- How extensive are their community, multilingual outreach methods and relationships?
- Is their prioritization to higher income communities, businesses, and corporations?
- Are their appropriate marketing efforts to target Latino communities?83
- Latino arts organizations should work towards greater financial independence from public or government funding that will allow them to be less restricted by political or policy constraints. A persistent problem exists for many nonprofit organizations that are too dependent on public funding. Typically, public funding comes with strings attached as to how it can be spent, in what areas, and for what issues. To be innovative, arts organizations must have the financial stability and freedom to present controversial topics, issues, and programming when the occasion calls for it.
- A balanced mix of dollars from various sectors and sources such as government, foundation, corporate, and individuals protects the organization from a troubled economy or shortfall in one or multiple sources. Diversifying funding sources also frees the organization to establish and curate programming of its own choosing.

All these ideas can form part of a strategic “business” plan for both arts organizations and artists. Latino artists should also begin to adopt professional practices that allow them to thrive.

Exploring Different Models and Practices

Like Latino arts organizations that should adopt different structural models in response to the needs of the arts community, artists too explore different business and financing models. New models to finance projects include program-related investments (PRIs) and donations through social media and innovative earned income opportunities. In Illinois, Michigan, Utah, Louisiana, North Carolina, Vermont, and other states, hybrid business models such as low-profit liability companies or L3Cs are recognized. L3Cs are a legal business entity created to allow investments in socially beneficial, for-profit ventures.84 One example of a hybrid model is Public Matters an interdisciplinary social enterprise made up of artists, media professionals, and educators in California. They work with communities to design and implement integrated new media, education, and civic engagement projects for social impact.85

Art for Change, an East Harlem arts organization that provides arts as social change programming for the community is another example of a different arts organization. Volunteers run the organization through various committees, and management is operated by a rotation of board members. They serve on different committees, lend their expertise in specific areas or develop experience in others.86 This model is just one type of grassroots and community-based approach available to Latino arts organization.

Latino arts organizations should adopt new promotional, marketing, and publishing trends available through new media and the Internet. This becomes increasingly important as all types of institutions adopt environmental-friendly policies and stay away from print publications. Fundraising practices also have evolved dramatically with the arrival of new media tools and computer software programs. Although some of these practices may be expensive to use, the investment in purchasing equipment and

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Many Latinos have reservations about the role of experts with regards to their families, neighborhoods, communities and arts and culture. The concern arises from the negative ways that historically Latinos have been studied, discussed and portrayed by non-Latinos due to lack of intimate understanding and familiarity. Yet, experts play significant roles in arts organizations and as arts professionals. Latino arts organizations should retain experts in order to collect, share, and archive knowledge. Mainstream organizations also should employ and contract well-qualified Latino experts. Due to the demands for interpretation and portrayal of Latino arts and culture, experts must be well educated about the history and current praxis of various Latino arts forms.

Latino experts of varied professional and non-professional backgrounds are intellectual and cultural resources in the community and should be retained as needed. But retention may be difficult when other factors come into play such as salary, ambition, or desire to pursue another career path. To counter a flight of Latino experts from community or ethno-specific arts nonprofits, organizations must step up to the plate to expand and develop their reputations for excellence and innovation. To retain talent, Latino arts organizations must provide healthy work environments, competitive salaries and benefits, and secure resources. As a preventative measure, they should create mentorship opportunities between generations of established and up-and-coming Latino professionals.

Institutional Elitism and Perceptions of Expertise
Given the elitism within academia and other prestigious institutions, Latino experts may not always be given adequate credit or recognition for their knowledge and experience. There is no doubt that at some level scholarship is essential for expertise but there are other factors to take into account when determining who is an authority. Arts organizations must embrace different understandings of what it means to be an expert that encompasses other mechanisms by which a person can be or become an expert.

A controversial reality is the frequent reliance of non-Latino experts on Latino arts and culture by mainstream organizations. Experts have both critical and personal views. A personalized perspective is more easily accessed when the expert is a member of the community. Latinos, like other groups, often believe experts must have a life-long relationship to their community to represent their culture and people. This begs the contentious question: Who better than a Latino/a to represent Latino arts and culture? There is a role for non-Latino experts to play because they can help to create alliances and enhance communication between different communities. Unfortunately, there remains a tremendous lack of Latino experts in the mainstream to effectively represent, discuss, organize, and program Latino cultural production. One way to address this shortage is to broaden the definition of “experts” to include members of the Latino community that are not academics or professionals such as barrio intellectuals, gifted artists perhaps with little formal education, and working class men and women who contribute to the arts and whose expertise is often ignored by mainstream organizations. Latino experts must be given the opportunity by mainstream and non-mainstream organizations to share their knowledge in their own voice and on their own terms.

Experts Surround Us
As previously stated, mainstream arts organizations continue to receive the bulk of arts funding and often obtain funding through specific grant initiatives to diversify their audiences. When this happens, they have an ethical obligation to hire or contract the services of Latino experts and artists. The excuse that there are no “qualified” Latinos out there with requisite expertise cannot be allowed to continue. Latino/a experts are out there and can be found via various arts, university, and community networks.

Community experts should be included as part of the larger voice of Latino arts, culture and community. They are wealthy repositories of history, art, traditions, and ways of seeing that should be invited by arts organizations to participate and dialogue. Finding community experts and including their knowledge and participation should be part of the artistic curatorial and programmatic process. At the Esperanza Justice Center in San Antonio, Texas, community curators presented an exhibit based on the narratives of Westside residents and the community’s landscape. The exhibit included old photographs collected from barrio residents and printed onto large tarps and exhibited in outdoor venues on the facades of arts organizations, senior homes, local businesses, and private houses. Teatro Luna, Chicago’s all-Latina theater joined forces with the Guadalup Cultural Center in San Antonio to do the initial draft of an interview-based project titled “Machos.” The women of Luna interviewed eighteen San Antonio men and then organized their stories from these interviews and community workshops. The result was a ninety-minute show where the actresses performed in drag. In both examples, the voices and experiences of community experts were intentionally included for cultural productions.

Latino arts organizations should actively identify and seek community experts within their communities. Parents, grandparents and great-grandparents encompass multiple ways of Latino/a knowing, often

Latino Arts and Cultural Experts

Internet access to Latino arts is key. Organizations should explore the creation of an online or virtual catalog or brochure for an upcoming exhibition or performance that would be available through e-books and computers (to accompany or replace a print version) or an online presentation of an educator workshop. In 2012, the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston launched a digital archive Documents of 20thCentury Latin American and Latino arts - an exciting development for art scholarship and programming.86 El Museo del Barrio and the national Museum of Mexican Art have plans underway to make their collections accessible online. Further, organizations must be cognizant of websites that rate their performance and feedback from visitors.

87 Groupon Grassroots is an additional tool for raising funding sources. 88 icadaocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/
transmitted through storytelling, demonstrations and daily work. The potential for intergenerational programs that can incorporate understandings of our elders as experts with younger individuals can lead to the development of new Latino experts.

Marketing experts have noticed that recent generations of Latinos have an interest in cultural items and knowledge from the past. Retro-acclimation has been defined as a: "conscious search for ethnic identity or roots, especially by second-, third- or fourth generation Hispanic-Americans who have lost some or most of their cultural traits." Many Latinos form part of this phenomenon although it is not exclusive to them, since members of other ethnic, racial and regional groups have also begun to reach back. Latino elders should be considered the community's experts for this retro interest.

Collecting that knowledge, although an immense challenge, has enormous value for preserving Latino culture. StoryCorps is a great model to follow for Latino organizations interested in preserving Latino knowing. The Institute for Latino Studies at Notre Dame has focused on collecting oral histories to document the history of Latino arts and culture from writers, poets, artists, and leaders from across the U.S.

**Latino Scholars of Arts and Culture**

Without question, academic research in Latino/a arts and culture is extremely important. A proliferation of timely and relevant exhibition catalogs, textbooks, lectures, articles, films and other scholarly works, depend on the Latino/a presence in academia. The Smithsonian, Taller Puertorriqueño, the Mexican Museum, research libraries, and universities are just some of the institutions that have a substantial collection of Latino archives – papers, artifacts, interviews and rare books - that should be used for scholarship of all kinds. Increased participation in scholarship will foster Latinos participation in the national discourse on arts and culture. Mainstream institutions must represent the intellectual work of Latino/a cultural workers. With this expectation, resources and access to university and support networks for graduate students and performance arts should be increased. Endowments should be established to fund students dedicated to pursuing arts careers in academia.

The mainstream arts world prides itself on precise expertise in art history, theory and criticism, color theory, visual pedagogy, music theory, and performance art. Encouraging and enabling Latinos/as to study one of these specialized fields is an essential facet of Latino/a visibility and cultural transformation. Each specialization utilizes its own particular lexicon and Latinos must be able to use the language while integrating their own expressions and meaning making.

Executive directors at arts institutions often hold a master's degree or doctorate in an arts or business related field, as do department heads, and cultural critics. Regardless if the academic degree is used for scholarly research and teaching, or leading an organization, Latino/a participation in the university system is essential so that Latinos can continue to develop critical, sincere, polyphonic, and significant scholarship, clout, and sound organizational strategies.

**Arts Education**

Sadly, the story is not simply that art education is in danger. It has already been eliminated from many school districts' curricula in the U.S. Many elected officials and school administrators argue that funding limitations prohibit art education instruction and that the arts cannot hold up to other academic subjects and new standardized testing requirements. This huge gap in the curriculum of public schools everywhere reflects a shift in the public's attitude toward the arts. Teach-to-the-test imperatives required by No Child Left Behind, render the arts frivolous, un-academic use of time. Further, arts education is considered a luxury and many low-income students do not have the opportunity to engage in the arts at school. Latino communities, particularly children living in low-income neighborhoods, are affected by this tragedy nationally.

Arts education in schools develops the "potential audience" of arts organizations; without it the "health of the arts ecosystem will be in jeopardy." A survey conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts found that since 1982, African Americans and Latinos have been negatively impacted by a "collapse in arts education" and arts attendance by young adults in these communities has declined more than among whites. In another survey, the percentage of Latinos, ages 18 to 24 who reported having taken one art class during their life, dropped from 47% in 1982 to 28% in 2008. The decline is a result of dramatic cuts in arts education funding over the last few decades, denying Latino and African American communities access to formal artistic development while at school.

In a letter to school and education community leaders, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated: "The arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think creatively. These qualities can be especially important in improving learning among students from economically disadvantaged circumstances." Duncan's letter acknowledges the immense value of arts education at the very top and encourages increased support throughout the schools. Mary Stone Harley and George W. Noblit highlight:

As artists, students are the central meaning makers, meaning-making is an interactive process that enables individuals to give order to experience and to communicate it to self and others… Thus student voice, which is often ignored particularly for disfavored ethnic and racial groups, is empowered. Engagement in the arts may provide a means of redirecting the anger, anxiety and alienation reported by numerous students of color and students who live with the challenges of poverty. The National Visual Arts Standards published by the National Art Education Association (NAEA) acknowledges that the "arts are a way of knowing" through which students increase their ability to understand the world. No matter what type of art they create, students "learn how to express themselves and how to communicate with others." The NAEA recognizes the cultural diversity of the U.S. as a "vast resource for arts education" and highlights how the "construction of curricula attend to issues of ethnicity, national custom, tradition, religion and gender." Moreover, research now regards culture as a set of tools, perspectives and capabilities that students can deploy in the pursuit of learning. When these tools, perspectives and capabilities are suppressed or denied, students are educationally disempowered... A student receives from his or her culture a racial identity, and for [Latino] children and youth, their racial identity can connect them to a wider project of racial uplift.

Ironically, scholarly research in arts education

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93 Mike Bohrer, "Power young blacks and Latinos attend art events" LA Times, (March 5, 2011).
94 Stone, Harley and Noblit, at 5.
96 Id. at 4. 97 Stone, Harley and Noblit, at 5.
is in step with critical, relevant, and culturally sensitive theoretical and practical developments in teaching, art making, exhibiting, and community engagement via traditional and new media. The arts are "cultural productions" that support ideals of freedom, defy rigid interpretation, and can be used to create culturally responsive programming that can lead to "the learning of wide range of competencies" by young people.27

Elliot W. Eisner highlights the influence of materials and activities with regards with how a student is "challenged to think": "the curriculum is a means and ends in itself. What is needed is the overall change in the frames of references" about the arts and culture and people of color and their significant impact on their academic achievement.28 An organized campaign for art education in public schools is needed to increase economic support in school districts and among policy makers across the country. Advocates and allies must use messages that highlight how art education is fundamental to well-rounded academic success and literacy development, and should be given equal standing with other academic subjects. Without this support, arts education in schools will continue to be eliminated from the general curriculum. As a result, children and youth, Latino and non-Latino, will obtain the benefits and rewards that arts can have on their academic and personal lives.

Some recommendations for increasing the role and impact of arts education in Latino communities include:

- Both parents and educators must be enlisted as advocates and encouraged to promote arts education in schools and throughout the community. To engage them as allies, parents and educators must be informed about the benefits of arts education. Once engaged, the home and school will help to create the next generation of champions for the arts and arts education.

- The recruitment of arts education allies outside of schools and arts organizations will assist to further develop the potential roles of arts education, to pursue efforts and activities for cultural preservation and reclamation, and to support inter-cultural understanding in Latino communities.

- Arts organizations and educators should undertake efforts to extend artistic and cultural literacy to adults, via art workshops, classes, tours, and artist talks. These learning opportunities need not be limited to formal settings but can take place in community centers, senior residences, places of worship and social service organizations.

- Arts organizations should include and expand art courses, workshops, and programs, and allocate resources for the publication and promotion of arts education materials. Making these programs and materials available online and using new social media to promote them and to engage new audiences will increase accessibility.

- Art organizations should offer alternative spaces outside of school for classes, workshops, and teen programs exploring various artistic expressions and forms.

- Funders should provide resources to facilitate the publication of resources and papers that will inform school districts, principals, teachers and parents about the role of arts education and its contributions to the community.

- Grants dedicated to the development of arts education materials and academic papers and the participation of conferences and convenings will assist with the creation of much needed scholarship and curriculum materials and facilitate the discussion of best practices and learning new ideas and models.

Additionally, an online platform for the publication of projects, research, and curricula by Latino/a art educators, teaching artists, and allies in the field can be a powerful vehicle to encourage the necessary scholarship and foster others in discussion. Given that excellent Latino/a arts and cultural education requires specialized knowledge and experience, the creation of an independent educators journal would be one possible avenue to strengthen and promote the field (also available online). Latino/a teaching artists also should write and document their experiences and expertise through a journal, blogs, and other platforms.

Another pressing need is greater scholarship aimed at the development and the implementation of innovative programming for the growing population of children 0-3 years and their parents. The U.S. Latino population consists largely of children and youth and many of their needs have not been addressed. The arts should be a significant component of the curriculum used in schools and community organizations when serving this population. Due to the visual, performative, and intuitive nature of the arts, making art can be a sanctuary and playful companion in language and literacy skill development between children and their families.29 Arts education programming for young Latino children should not lag behind. By identifying and targeting the parent audience, schools and arts organizations can establish activities that will increase support networks among Latinos.

When possible, art educators and schools should embrace new technology and media in their arts instruction with children, youth, and families supporting not only the arts but also 21st century skills and competencies. This approach links the arts with other professional skills, and strengthens the contemporary value and application of arts education in students’ overall learning. For example, creating an internship program where
Increased professional development and assistance are crucial, and can strengthen the caliber of art educators and help quiet any misconceptions about their skills and capacity. Art educators, including teaching artists, should be empowered to discuss the value of their work, their art, and the positive impact of their efforts on children and youth. Like all teachers, they need to have adequate preparation and ongoing professional development so they can maintain standards for education and growth increasingly expected in schools. They must have 21st century skills, dedication to their profession and their students, persistence to compete for available positions, and then withstand the job's everyday challenges.

Part of the struggle is ensuring that teaching artists are aware of available resources. Reaching out to local arts councils, co-ops, galleries, colleges and universities about resources, programs, and teaching opportunities is an excellent way to start. These "target" organizations also can be potential partners to provide professional development courses and resources.

Latinos and arts organizations should actively support the implementation of the National Accepted Teacher Artists Hourly Rate, in order to provide arts educators a fair, livable wage standard. It benefits teaching artists who rely on teaching for their livelihood; it further validates their value as educators and contributors to their communities; and it will assist them to acquire other benefits such as medical and retirement saving plans.

Other suggestions to enrich the arts education field within organizations, universities, and schools include:

- Develop transnational partnerships centered in art education projects, symposia, and conferences.

The campaign for arts education must include efforts to increase professional development of art educators especially in the Latino community. Presently, there is a shortage of Latino arts educators in public schools and mainstream institutions with expertise in Latino and Latin American arts. The thematic interests of many arts educators remain culturally homogenous focused on European or White American cultures; these educators often seem unaware of the ethical dimensions of teaching about other cultures in the U.S. Multicultural arts education frequently suffers from its formulaic approach to teaching about the Ancient Egyptians or Aztec Civilization and often omits any mention of their contemporary descendents, their arts, and their relationship with the U.S. It is no wonder that few Latinos/as concern themselves with issues of representation at arts institutions, in publications, and within popular culture.

Many teaching artists face a negative stigma - those who teach cannot "do" (in the real world). A career in the arts may be rewarding on many levels but it is not always rewarding financially. Indeed many artists decide to teach as a way to supplement their income, pursue their passion for teaching, or reap the professional benefits and increased waivers from deportation and bills like the DREAM Act. As part of the Latino community, art educators along with teachers and professors, should align with the best interests of youth who wish to succeed. It is they who will be the future advocates and allies for arts education, arts and culture in their communities.

### Art Therapy

Art therapy services and programs are often overlooked resources to support the recovery, growth, and cycle of healing for Latinos who need mental health and social services. The benefits of art therapy - such as increased coping skills, stress reduction, and self-soothing effects, and lessening the stigma of mental illness - should be promoted in the Latino communities. Advocates should use a strong message that highlights these benefits through all communication and media platforms.

- Arts education projects that engage Latino/a epistemologies and lived experience, to foster empowering, de-colonial pedagogy and healing.  
- Engage ecological curricular content and approaches to arts education to educate a new generation of critical consumers and makers of material culture that respect the environment and our roles as caretakers of the planet.
- Launch accredited Teaching Artist Certification programs.

Latino arts educators also should take up causes that support Latino youth and their parents such as increased waivers from deportation and bills like the DREAM Act. As part of the Latino community, art educators along with teachers and professors, should align with the best interests of youth who wish to achieve success. It is they who will be the future advocates and allies for arts education, arts and culture in their communities.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART • CRESCENDO CULTURAL

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107 Art therapy should adopt non-traditional vocabulary to show centrality of our cultural patrimony and our bodies of knowledge to highlight its urgency and utility.

108 Engage ecological curricular content and approaches to arts education to educate a new generation of critical consumers and makers of material culture that respect the environment and our roles as caretakers of the planet.

109 Arts education projects that engage Latino/a epistemologies and lived experience, to foster empowering, de-colonial pedagogy and healing.

110 Art therapy services and programs are often overlooked resources to support the recovery, growth, and cycle of healing for Latinos who need mental health and social services.

111 The benefits of art therapy include increased “self-understanding and insight to personal problems” and a greater understanding of the grief and personal trauma tied to immigration. Moreover, a study has been conducted on the benefits of certain types of art therapy for older Latino adults who may gain from “enhanced self-perceptions and improved cognitive performance”.

112 Academics have noted an increased demand for art therapy as it relates to Latino communities, lending to a lack of understanding of its benefits for patients and clients. The accessibility of art therapy to Latinos also is further challenged by the shortage of practitioners of color - less than 10% according to a 2009 survey of American Art Therapy Association members.

113 In Latino communities, there exists a pervasive, negative stigma and shame regarding mental illness. Additionally, those Latinos who seek support may be more restricted if they are not English-speaking, due to the lack of Spanish-speaking therapists and counselors. The practitioner’s ability to communicate in Spanish can enable the Latino client to help break away misunderstandings and fear about seeking help for depression, anxiety, emotional trauma, physical and mental abuse, sexual assault and rape. Among Latino outpatients, the most common problems are depression, low self-esteem, isolation and loneliness which are intensified by “cultural and identity conflicts” as a result of immigration.
Art therapy as a profession must be encouraged among Latinos who are interested in the arts and helping others. Schools, universities and arts organizations should provide platforms through lectures, workshops and career counselling, by which art therapists can discuss their field and recruit potential practitioners.

Funders should provide grant opportunities for new art therapy programs with different Latino client populations, increased scholarship regarding these programs, and encourage partnership among scholars, arts organizations, schools and social service organizations for enhanced program implementation.

The American Art Therapy Association and other professional art therapy organizations should increase outreach to ensure greater diversity among practitioners. A resource guide for interested individuals and art therapists will boost accessibility to informational opportunities, professional development classes and workshops (this may be similar to the one discussed for artists).

Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino

The Crescendo Cultural Taskforce discussed the implications and challenges of establishing the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino for the present and future of Latino arts and culture. There is no argument that Latinos deserve a national stage in Washington D.C. to showcase Latino arts and culture in the U.S. Yet, greater concerns and needs exist and should be addressed by Latino leaders inside and outside the arts and cultural spheres of influence.

The idea to create the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino arose when in 1994, a Taskforce distributed a report, “Wilfull Neglect,” highlighting the failure of the Smithsonian to represent Latinos in their exhibitions and that the establishment of a Latino museum would address this issue. Presently, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture is in the midst of construction and follows the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian opened in 2004. The proposed National Museum of the American Latino (NMAL) is in its planning stages.

Undoubtedly the history, art, culture and contributions of Latinos in the U.S.A. deserve a place in Washington D.C. so that visitors to our nation’s capital can learn about Latinos. Nevertheless, there are significant issues to take into account. As mentioned previously, Latino arts organizations are struggling with the economic downturn. Raising funds, sustaining programs, expanding facilities, and maintaining staff have always been the day-to-day challenges for these organizations. But all these challenges have escalated tremendously. The scarcity of resources coupled with the negative and cynical views of arts and culture prevalent in the American society and government begs the question: should a national museum be built when some Latino arts organizations are barely making ends meet and may not survive?

Indeed, a national Latino museum elevates the profile of significant Latino contributions to our country and to the American people. Hence, there is a strong argument that the allocation of more resources for the NMAL would most likely increase resources for Latino arts in general. But the proposed Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino is years in the making. What happens to the survival of the already existing Latino arts organizations throughout the country where there is an immediate need to introduce or establish arts programs? It is not simply a matter of competing for the same dwindling resources.

Have there been serious discussions in Washington D.C. and among the advisors of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino about the needs of Latino communities on local and regional levels? Have efforts been made to increase cultural and arts resources to the growing and new Latino populations in Louisiana, Kansas, and Alabama, for example? Serious efforts and innovative ideas are needed now to sustain existing Latino arts organizations in order to prevent Latino arts and culture from disappearing from communities. At the same time, other cities and regions with Latino constituencies may wish to create their own arts organizations. Will funders, officials and leaders support their efforts and interests to reach and provide programming to Latinos and non-Latinos?

Symbols are undoubtedly important. Beyond the symbolism of a National Museum of the American Latino, our nation’s Latinos need positive cultural arts outcomes where they live. Therefore, an in-depth discussion and planning process should address how this proposed museum will benefit other Latino arts organizations to stir more recognition for Latino arts and culture, to raise and create resources, and to identify points of collaboration for programming.

As Latino/a artists and arts professionals, we wish to offer a critical look at the Timeliness and consequences of participating in the synthesizing of our communities within a singular building. Given the urgency to embrace innovation in terms of fundraising, digital technology, new media, and the expansion of arts education programming, a successful NMAL cannot be fashioned from old...
models. The leadership and curatorial staff must challenge themselves to create a new kind of museum that can experiment with different interactive models for a 21st century audience. Museum professionals must embrace fresh, innovative approaches, and imagine the museum as a biosphere or laboratory. As such, it is important to consider the expansion of the Smithsonian Latino Virtual Museum and not only the creation of a physical museum – in other words, let’s create a living, evolving museum online evocative of the liminal spaces Latinos/as negotiate, redefine, and thrive in everyday.

Another consideration is that dedicated NMAL funds could be distributed across national Latino/a arts and culture organizations for exhibition, research, and public program development, in the form of a NMAL Affiliates Program. Alternatively, funding could be set aside to open satellite NMAL museums maintained, curated, and promoted by Latinos throughout the U.S. The goal then is to expand Latino/a exhibition beyond the Mall, and ensure local programmatic relevance, scholarly research, and advocacy. By strengthening this online education initiative and broadening its reach, it can serve as a valuable, state-of-the-art tool for all kinds of educators too.

The NMAL leadership and supporters should consider the experiences of the National Museum of the American Indian and soon-to-be-inaugurated National Museum of African American Art and History. Moreover, they should reflect on a multitude of questions:

- How will the NMAL determine peoples represented? More specifically how often will specific groups get a dedicated exhibition? How much gallery real estate will each group have in the permanent galleries?
- Will the voices, viewpoints, and experiences of Latino elders and youth be considered and given balanced representation?

All these questions must be addressed impartially and with an understanding that each Latino ethnic group’s role in shaping American history, present and future is unique. When the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino opens its doors, it will not be enough for it to serve as a physical building for visitors to gain a cursory understanding of Latinos. It must be capable of withstanding the challenges of all museums and remain relevant to current and future generations. Otherwise, its raison d’etre will become less impactful in the long term because the Museum will fail to take into account the larger and ever-involving picture. Museums cannot be merely landmarks but educative tools for personal and community inquiry and evolution.

The Crescendo Cultural Taskforce advocates for the inclusion of young Latinos in the planning, curatorial, and programming aspects of Smithsonian National Museum of American Latino. Do the planners understand the important contributions that young people can make so that the Museum is relevant to them? It is up to young Latino arts professionals and all young Latinos to insist that their voices be heard and included. Young Latinos cannot permit their own experiences to be ignored by community leaders to argue that they could not serve as advocates to discuss the ideas and recommendations that young people can make so that the Museum is relevant to them.

Taskforce members stressed the importance to create a national grassroots plan for expanding the dialogue that the position paper initiates. To do so, Crescendo Cultural will need to increase its capacity to raise funds to support these goals and ideas. This plan includes participating in conferences to gain allies and educate others: Latinos and non-Latinos. These conferences and forums include: New American Voices, National Consortium in Higher Education, Latino Arts Now at Hunter College and UCLA, Macondo Foundation, Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR) American Association of Museums, Grantmakers in the Arts, National Art Education Association, Americans for the Arts, etc. Attending these conferences and forums, and preparing panel-based sessions will diffuse the position paper and new ideas about Latino arts in the U.S.

Crescendo Cultural Taskforce members can and should serve as advocates to discuss the ideas and recommendations set forth in this position paper. But, there are more potential leaders at national, regional and local levels that should be identified and recruited. At the same time, it is vital to inject into the discussion the viewpoints of Crescendo Cultural in other Latino arts networks. The Taskforce does not purport that it incorporates all the views and ideas of young Latino arts professionals. To expand and diversify the dialogue, the Taskforce believes strongly in the importance of including other young Latino voices and promote the need for Latino arts professionals to work collaboratively. Crescendo Cultural hopes to invest in a marketing plan that involves telecommunications, new and social media such as a website, Facebook page, Wikipedia, Twitter, smart phone and smart tablet apps.

Another idea is to host Crescendo Cultural plenary discussions, convenings or informal gatherings in selected cities to allow for more regional-based discussions. Monthly or quarterly webinars or conference calls will provide a regular platform to discuss ideas, form new recommendations and collaborations. By increasing the opportunities for discussion, Crescendo Cultural can attain more expertise from individuals that have other professional experience in business, community organizing, fundraising, etc.

The members of the Crescendo Cultural Taskforce acknowledge that this position paper does not reflect every aspect or viewpoint about the current state and future of Latino arts and culture in the U.S. The Taskforce hopes that the efforts involve the cooperation of experts to advise in the exhibitions or displays of specific Latino regional and ethnic groups?

Future of Crescendo Cultural

Next Steps

Originally, the National Museum of Mexican Art had envisioned the Crescendo Cultural Taskforce’s first convening to be a stepping stone for a national conference of Latino young art professionals, but it soon became apparent that other needs existed. The initial idea of creating a position paper of policy recommendations for a larger audience around Latino arts and culture was still relevant, as it served as the framework for a larger plan of action.

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The members of the Crescendo Cultural Taskforce acknowledge that this position paper does not reflect every aspect or viewpoint about the current state and future of Latino arts and culture in the U.S. The Taskforce hopes that the efforts to
described above will address some of the holes in this paper, for example: music and musicians; literature, writers and poets; filmmakers; other Latino ethnic groups and smaller towns and rural areas not represented by the Taskforce.

All Taskforce members hope to support the continuation of this group in order to take on the needs outlined in this paper. Members here expressed an interest in dividing into teams to create a resource guide for artist, to invest in resource materials, and to post these materials online through a Crescendo Cultural-sponsored website.

What Does Crescendo Cultural Hope to Achieve?

- Effective policies to support Latino arts and culture – organizations and artists.
- Greater, equitable funding and investment from all government, corporate, and individual funders.
- Increased cross-disciplinary collaborations between ethnically specific and mainstream institutions.
- Heightened awareness about the importance of the Latino arts, and its valid and deserved place in the greater American experience.
- Larger audiences for Latinos arts programs, galleries and exhibitions from Latinos and non-Latinos; the expansion of outreach efforts to attract audiences.

The Taskforce recommends the creation of a nationwide marketing plan to promote Latino arts and culture. To complete a marketing plan, short and long-term goals must be determined, corresponding marketing actions and tools identified, and measurable outcomes defined. Furthermore, the plan should include activities to increase the profile of Latino arts at a local level with the collaboration of community-based organizations and Latino arts organizations. The involvement of young and seasoned Latino arts leaders and organizations in the plan is crucial for the organization of individuals and groups into a dynamic, collaborative network.

An effective plan will build informational networks among Latino arts leaders and create a stronger platform to gain new allies for Latino arts and culture. The end goal is to increase resources for Latino arts and culture through a more equitable allocation of public and private resources that will support arts education, youth arts programs, theater, museums, literary workshops, cultural centers and musical, dance, and drama productions.

Young Latino arts leaders are responsible for staying informed and serving as active participants in arts presentation and performance, arts education, art therapy, arts advocacy and all things related to the promotion and continued enrichment of the arts. Even if one is not an artist, a curator, arts educator, art therapist or arts administrator, it is the responsibility of Latinos to articulate the importance and value of Latino arts in the U.S. and the rest of the world with clarity and authority.

Profiles of Crescendo Cultural Taskforce Members

Lizzet Alvarez
Mexican and Salvadoran and raised in Los Angeles, CA
Assistant Manager of Community Engagement at the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Maryland
Prior to joining The Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts, Lizzet worked at the Ford Theatre in Los Angeles as the Manager of Community Bridges, a community engagement and outreach initiative created to more accurately reflect the demographics of Los Angeles County in Ford programs. Through the initiative, the Ford saw a dramatic increase in participation by Latino audiences from 13% to a steady 40% and in Asian Pacific Islander audiences from 4% to 10%. While at the Ford, Lizzet programmed a family performance series, curated a performance art and playreading series by artists of color, and developed J.A.M. Sessions, the Ford Amphitheatre’s participatory arts series. She also established the Ford’s first partnership with the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department to expand J.A.M. Sessions out into the community.
Lizzet’s first taste at working with an arts organization was as a Los Angeles County Arts Commission Intern at Plaza de la Raza, a visual and performing arts school. Lizzet believes in the arts as a tool that can help shape a healthier and more equitable society.
Lizzet is a former Arts Management Fellow at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

Alma Minerva Carrillo
Mexican, born and raised in Jalisco, Mexico and San Antonio, TX
Program Director at The Steel Yard in Providence, RI
Alma serves as the Program Director for the Steel Yard, a non-profit industrial arts community organization in the industrial valley district of Providence, Rhode Island. Prior to joining the Steel Yard in 2006, she studied Government and International studies at the University of Notre Dame and the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. Alma also holds an advanced degree from Brown University in Public Humanities and Culture.

During her practicum at the National Museum of American History (NMAH), Alma helped organize the collection of oral histories and material culture of former Braceros in southern California, Arizona, and Mexico for the Bracero History Project. In 2007, she received the Smithsonian’s Minority Internship Program Award and participated in the Latino Museum Studies Program (LMSP) to continue work on the Bracero History Project and to learn the institution’s practices and methodologies with access to collections, lectures, workshops and panels.
Alma sits on the Board of Directors for New Urban Arts, a non-profit nationally recognized for empowering young people to develop a creative practice they can...
sustain throughout their lives through yearlong free out-of-school programs and for the Hive Archive, a non-profit, feminist art organization committed to fostering creative and artistic growth, collective learning, and relationship across differences for local artists and allies who are committed to ending sexism.

Aurora Anaya-Cerda

Mexican, born in Los Angeles, CA and raised in Jalisco, Mexico and Los Angeles, CA

Manager of Family Programs and Cultural Celebrations at El Museo del Barrio in New York City

At El Museo del Barrio, Aurora plans family programs directed for its audience and the surrounding community, which develops social capital among museum guests and creates bridges between the Latino community and others. Using El Museo del Barrio’s resources as a platform, Aurora collaborates with the smaller institutions, serving as the connection to broader audiences. The collaboration with community groups and schools has helped to strengthen and expand the current coalitions.

In the height of the economic meltdown of 2008, Aurora Anaya-Cerda founded La Casa Azul Bookstore, an online resource promoting children’s literature, educational programming and literature by Latino writers. This spring, La Casa Azul Bookstore opens in East Harlem, as a bookstore, café and gallery. Before moving to New York, Aurora Anaya-Cerda was a middle school English teacher.

Raquel J. Gutierrez

Mexican and Salvadoran from Los Angeles, CA

Manager of Community Partnerships at Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles, CA

Raquel is a community-based performance writer, playwright, community organizer and cultural activist. Gutiérrez is one of the co-founding members of the performance ensemble, Butchilis de Panochtlián (BdP), a community-based and activist-minded group aiming at creating a visual vernacular around queer Latinidad in Los Angeles. Raquel’s earned her BA in Journalism and Central American Studies from the California State University at Northridge and her MA in Performance Studies from New York University. She has performed nationally as a performance and literary artist, been a community documentarian for the last 15 years, published in journals and anthologies, served on a number of grant panels and is currently the Manager of Community Partnerships for and a member of the Young Hispanic Leaders Program and the National Young Latino Leaders in the Arts Task Force.

Robert Hernandez

Mexican from Colorado

Carlos E. Castañeda Postdoctoral Fellow in the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin


Yasmin I. Hernandez

Puerto Rican, born and raised in Brooklyn, NY

Independent Visual Artist based in New York City

Yasmin’s work is rooted in struggles for personal, spiritual and political liberation. Her 2011 mural in East Harlem, Soldaderas, honors the work and legacy of painter Frida Kahlo and poet Julia de Burgos, inspiring continued solidarity between the Mexican and Puerto Rican communities. Her project Bieké: Tierra de valientes explores the people’s fight against US military maneuvers and contamination.

Aurora Anaya-Cerda

Founded in 1973, MLA is the only Latina-led organization in the nation and provides an array of social services and advocacy initiatives that promote non-violence, reproductive health and leadership development.

Working from a participatory action framework, Amy developed Arte y Acción, an arts activism program that fuses art therapy and youth development practices to provide urban Latina youth with greater access to arts education and mental health services; to cultivate youth civic engagement in relation to social issues impacting the Latino community; and to strengthen positive personal and cultural identities of the youth. Through this program, the youth learn more about how to use art as a practice of expression, self-care, and as a way to give voice to—and make meaning from—their experiences.

Her current work is focused on creating a community partnership between MLA and the Children’s Research Triangle to provide greater access to a social justice model of mental health care for Latina youth through trauma-informed art therapy programming. Amy is a recent graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she completed her master’s in Art Therapy.
in Vaques. It debuted in 2009 at Vaques’ Museu Fuerte Conde de Mirasol and is now touring the main island of Puerto Rico. Recent projects focus on more personal themes, exploring the cycle of life and death in tribute to her brother who passed from cancer in 2010. Another project, Linea negra, inspired by the midwife-assisted home births of her two sons, examines injustices in the birthing industry and demands that women once again drive the birthing process.

As an educator Yasmin has worked with the Studio Museum in Harlem, El Museo del Barrio in New York City, and Taller Puertorriqueño in Philadelphia. She continues to offer workshops and presentations at organizations and campuses throughout the US and Puerto Rico. Her art can be viewed on line at www.yasminehernandez.com.

Carolina Kaufman
Colombian, born in Bogota, Colombia and raised in Puerto Rico

Education Technology Manager at The Art Institute of Chicago

Fusing her interests and professional experiences in the visual arts, digital media, and education, Carolina assists the Art Institute’s efforts to anticipate and respond to the its evolving education technological needs and opportunities through the Department of Digital Information and Access. As a native Spanish speaker and writer Carolina often contributes greatly to support online and onsite initiatives supporting Spanish-speaking audiences.

Bringing more than a dozen years of professional work in education technology, Ms. Kaufman has established multimedia digital arts programs for community-based organizations including the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network impacting the lives of young people from all backgrounds, bilingual educators, and adult learners on the international level.

Ms. Kaufman received her Masters in Education Technology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a BA in Art History and Studio Art from Wheaton College.

Gabrielle Marie (Lopez) Uballez
Mexican, born and raised in Albuquerque, NM

Visual Arts Program Director at Working Classroom in Albuquerque, NM

Gabrielle is responsible for the artistic direction of the visual arts program; she manages major public art works, visiting artists as well as the summer street conservatory. Working Classroom is a visual arts and theater non-profit that serves historically ignored communities. Prior to her position at Working Classroom, Gabrielle was the Special Projects Associate at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Gabrielle has been involved with the art community since she was a teen. During her previous 10-year involvement with Working Classroom incorporated, she participated as a student, public art apprentice and instructor.

At the Studio Museum, Gabrielle managed responsibilities for its special events and fundraising efforts. She assisted in planning events and trips for high profile patrons, including VIP tours of museums, New York City galleries and fairs as well as national and international art venues. She also created presentations, proposals and letters targeted at high-end sponsors and donors.

Beyond her involvement in the visual arts, Gabrielle is profoundly passionate about regional Mexican cuisine and runs the blog Gabriela’s Kitchen. The legendary Mexican chef and cookbook author, Zarela Martinez, currently is mentoring Gabrielle about the traditions and techniques of the Mexican kitchen.

Leilani Cherie Montes
Guatemalan and Mexican, raised in Los Angeles, CA

Media Maker & Union Organizer based in New York City.

Leilani Montes is first and foremost an organizer and an advocate, in her professional, activist and personal life. She is a labor organizer for 1199 New Jersey, the health workers’ union; lead coordinator of AF3IRM, an activist organization of transnational women, and a filmmaker and arts event organizer.

In 2011, she led AF3IRM in a seminal multimedia exhibition by 14 transnational female artists around the theme of Arrivals/Departures: Women’s Experience of Migration Under Globalization. At the moment, 8 transnational women artists are being gathered into the 2012 AF3IRM multimedia exhibit, this time around the theme of La Bracera: Women & Work, which opens on April 19th.

Ms. Montes also represented AF3IRM at the 2011 Latin American & Caribbean Feminist Conference, Encuentro XII, in Colombia, Bogota.

Born and raised in California, Ms. Montes founded the Chapinas Unidas, a network of Guatemalan-American women and allies focused on issues of peace and justice in Guatemala and raising awareness of the continuing femicide in that country. As the daughter of an immigrant Guatemalan woman who worked at a Los Angeles sweatshop for 15 years, sewing brand name clothes she couldn’t afford, Ms. Montes seeks to delineate in her film and media work the texture of life for the uncelebrated men and women of various ethnic communities. The film that she co-directed, Since Salazar, about Chicano activist and journalist Ruben Salazar who was killed in a police attack in Los Angeles, played to standing-room-only crowds and was used by Democracy Now.

Her past professional experience includes field union organizing in New York City and community facilitation for HIV/AIDS education and faith organizations in Los Angeles.

Irma Carolina Rubio
Mexican raised in Lubbock, TX

Graduate Student & Instructor of Art Education at Pennsylvania State University

As an artist, teacher, and emerging researcher, Irma Carolina presently works towards completion of a Ph.D. in Art Education and Women’s Studies at Pennsylvania State University, where she manages the School of Visual Arts Zoller Gallery and teaches visual arts integration within the general K-5 education curriculum. She holds an advanced degree from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Community Art Education.

For over ten years, Irma Carolina has worked within multifarious pedagogical spaces, creating and implementing intergenerational narrative based art projects, teaching art for social justice at K-12 public schools in Illinois and Texas, and developing innovative museum education programming. As Manager of Education at the Museo Alameda, a Smithsonian Affiliate in San Antonio, TX, Irma Carolina served as bridge between distinct grassroots community arts and culture organizations, artists, and K-12 schools, galvanizing each group’s vision within the foundational fabric of MAs burgeoning education programs structure and vision.

Irma Carolina worked as personal assistant to author Sandra Cisneros for two years prior to pursuing doctoral
Tanya Saracho
Mexican born in Sinaloa, Mexico, raised in Mexico and Texas and lives in Los Angeles

Resident playwright emeritus at Chicago Dramatists, resident playwright emeritus at Goodman Theater and commissioned by Teatro Vista; an adaptation of “The House on Mango Street” for Steppenwolf Theater (2009); “Our Lady of the Underpass” with Teatro Vista (2009); “Surface Day” with Steppenwolf/Chicago Children’s Humanity Festival (2008); “Jarred (A Hoodoo Comedy)” with Teatro Luna (2008); “Kita y Fernanda” at 16th Street Theatre (2008) and “QuitaMitos” with Teatro Luna (2006) and Next Theater (2011).

Her plays include: “El Nogalar” inspired by “The Cherry Orchard” at The Goodman Theater; and F. Javier’s “The Cherry Orchard” at Teatro Luna (2006) and next Theater (2011).

Prior to his role at the Foundation, F. Javier was the Director of Villa Victoria Center for the Arts, a program of Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA), for almost 6 years. He was the catalyst for the implementation of a strategic business plan that improved the operational, programmatic and financial health of their arts programs. F. Javier guided the plan to focus upon: diversification of funding; widening the impact of programs through community outreach and audience development; and furthering IBA’s mission through the execution of systems that improve marketing and branding.

Marlon Eduardo Torres
Venezuelan, raised in Caracas and lives in Durham, N.C.

Senior Program Officer for Arts and Culture at The Boston Foundation

At the Boston Foundation, he is responsible for articulating and implementing the Foundation’s new sector strategy and leveraging national arts investments and philanthropy for the Greater Boston Region.

Prior to his role at the Foundation, F. Javier was the Director of Villa Victoria Center for the Arts, a program of Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA), for almost 6 years. He was the catalyst for the implementation of a strategic business plan that improved the operational, programmatic and financial health of their arts programs. F. Javier guided the plan to focus upon: diversification of funding; widening the impact of programs through community outreach and audience development; and furthering IBA’s mission through the execution of systems that improve marketing and branding.

Marlon has received the Friars Foundation Award for Excellence in the Arts and the Gruber Family Scholarship at Binghamton University. He is also a 2009 National Dance Week honoree through the Chapel Hill Triangle Youth Ballet. Marlon is a certified project management professional (PMI®), has an MBA in marketing and communications and holds a B.A. in theatre.

Crescendo Cultural Taskforce Coordinator

Linda Xóchitl Tortolero
Mexican, born and raised in Chicago, Ill.

Proteus Fund Diversity Fellow at the Nellie Mae Education Foundation in Quincy, MA.

Linda began her professional career in nonprofits as an administrator and fundraiser. Most recently, she served as the Special Projects Director at the National Museum of Mexican Art. In this role, she supervised new projects and activities that augment the museum’s programming and capacity.

Prior to her tenure at the Museum, she served as the Development Manager of Mujeres Latinas en Acción. Throughout the country, Mujeres is recognized as a leader in providing culturally proficient services in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault, parent support, homelessness prevention, and Latina leadership. In 2001, Linda established the Pilsen/ Little Village Information Center to serve as a Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Distinguished Service Award in 2006. She has a Bachelor’s in History of Modern Latin America and Political Science from Brown University and a Juris Doctor from the Northwestern University School of Law.

opportunities and programs. Linda also has practiced litigation in various practice areas at Schiff Hardin LLP including: insurance, employment, corporate regulations, intellectual property, environmental, constitutional and commercial law. As a law student, she gained extensive experience as an intern at the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern Law’s Bluhm Legal Clinic and the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago. She was awarded the Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Distinguished Service Award in 2006. She has a Bachelor’s in History of Modern Latin America and Political Science from Brown University and a Juris Doctor from the Northwestern University School of Law.
Special Note to Readers:

Want to learn more about Crescendo Cultural and its Taskforce members? Please contact: crescendo@nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org

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Formerly the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, the National Museum of Mexican Art opened its doors to the public in 1987. Celebrating its 25th Anniversary, the Museum is now one of the most prominent Latino cultural institutions in the country. Our permanent collection includes more than 7,000 pieces of art representing 3,000 years of creativity. We welcome more than 160,000 visitors annually and provide educational programs to 70,000 K-12 students. The National Museum of Mexican Art is the only Latino museum in the country that is accredited by the American Association of Museums.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART

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