



## American Repertory Theater

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### AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER ANNOUNCES STEERING COMMITTEE FOR “CREATING EQUAL”

**Collective of Artists, Organizers, and Facilitators to Engage in Collaborative Art-Making  
Inspired by the Themes of “1776” to Foster Connection and Civic Engagement**

**Cambridge, MA—American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University**, under the leadership of Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, announces today the Steering Committee members of **Creating Equal**, a new collective of artists, organizers, and facilitators who will generate public art-making projects, arts-based workshops, connectivity events, and original artworks in conversation with the themes of the musical **1776** in order to foster civic engagement in Greater Boston.

Steering Committee members include:

- Janice Amaya (they/them)
- Erin Genia (she/her)
- Elizabeth James-Perry (she/her)
- Timothy Patrick McCarthy (he/him)
- Brisa Areli Muñoz (she/her)
- Brenna Nicely (she/they)
- Alessandra Panares (she/her)
- Moe Pope (he/him)
- Ireon Roach (she/her)
- Micah Rosegrant (they/them)
- Jessi Stegall (she/her)
- Imani Pearl Williams (she/her)
- Karen Young (she/her)

See below for more information about each Steering Committee member.

Those who participate in **Creating Equal** events, to be held in spring and summer 2021, will respond to topics from the United States Declaration of Independence, interpreting them through the lens of our nation today.

**Creating Equal** Steering Committee members will also create their own artistic responses to the topics, processes, and relationships that emerge throughout the project.

“Theater as practiced in Western culture shares its origin story with democracy. **Creating Equal** gives us the opportunity to catalyze the power of personal narrative, to reckon with the origin of our American democracy, and to lift those who might not see themselves reflected in the Declaration of Independence. I hope that through this hyper-collaborative initiative, the intentional barriers that divide and polarize us

begin to fade, and the threads that link us become more apparent,” says Dayron J. Miles, A.R.T.’s Senior Advisor for Civic Engagement and Strategic Partnerships.

Additional information about events and how to participate will be released in the coming weeks. Those interested in receiving updates are encouraged to sign up at [AmericanRepertoryTheater.org/CreatingEqual](https://AmericanRepertoryTheater.org/CreatingEqual).

Education and Engagement support for **1776** and **Creating Equal** is provided by **Ford Foundation**. Additional education and engagement support is provided by **Bank of America, Fresh Sound Foundation, Klarman Family Foundation, and Mass Humanities**.

*Mass Humanities receives support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and is an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this event do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

## **ABOUT THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **JANICE AMAYA** (they/them)

Janice Amaya is an actor, theatermaker, and organizer based in New York City. There they have been working for years with organizations such as the New Sanctuary Coalition, Performance Space New York, the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, and Pipeline Theatre Company, to name a few. They are also a founding member of The Hummm, a theater collective whose aim is to democratize the experimental. Currently they are touring and leading virtual engagements with *CARTOGRAPHY*, a show that combines simple storytelling with interactive video technology to recount experiences of modern-day migration from a youth perspective and empowers viewers of all ages to share their experiences of searching for home. They are extremely excited to be back at the American Repertory Theater, where they trained at the Institute for Advanced Theater Training (Class of 2016).

### **ERIN GENIA** (she/her)

Erin Genia, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate/Odawa is a multidisciplinary artist, educator, and community organizer specializing in Indigenous arts and culture. Genia’s work in these areas is focused on amplifying the powerful presence of Indigenous peoples on the occupied lands of America in the arts, sciences, and public realm to invoke an evolution of thought and practice that is aligned with the cycles of the natural world and the potential of humanity. Genia’s artistic practice merges Dakota cultural imperatives, pure expression, and exploration of materiality with the conceptual. Erin is fluent in multiple modes of expression: sculpture, fiber, sound, performance, digital media, painting, printmaking, jewelry, and ceramics. Her work has received attention from diverse audiences, and been exhibited nationally and internationally at the Urbano Project in Boston, the Venice Biennale, Ars Electronica, the Museum of Northwest Art, and the International Space Station. Erin has an M.S. in Art, Culture and Technology from MIT, an M.P.A. in Tribal Governance from the Evergreen State College, and studied at Institute of American Indian Arts. She was awarded the 2019 MIT Solve Indigenous Communities Fellowship and the AAF/Seebacher Prize for Fine Arts in 2018. Erin’s public art commissions include the Minnesota Historical Society and the City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture. Erin is an artist-in-residence for the [City of Boston](#) and works with the New England Foundation for the Arts Public Art Team on the project *Centering Justice: Indigenous Artists’ Perspectives on Public Art*.

### **TIMOTHY PATRICK MCCARTHY** (he/him)

Timothy Patrick McCarthy is an award-winning historian, educator, and human rights and social justice activist who has taught on the faculty at Harvard University since 2005. The adopted only son and grandson of public school teachers and faculty workers, Dr. McCarthy currently holds a joint appointment in the Graduate School of Education and John F. Kennedy School of Government, where he is Core Faculty at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. He is also the Academic Director Emeritus and Stanley Paterson Professor of American History in the Boston Clemente Course, a free college

humanities program for lower income adults, and co-recipient of the 2015 National Humanities Medal. Twice named one of *Harvard Crimson's* "Professors of the Year," he is the recipient of the 2019 Manuel C. Carballo Award, the Kennedy School's highest teaching honor. Educated at Harvard College and Columbia University, where he earned his Ph.D. in History, Dr. McCarthy is the author or editor of six books, including the forthcoming *Stonewall's Children: Living Queer History in the Age of Liberation, Loss, and Love* (New Press) and *Reckoning with History: Unfinished Stories of American Freedom* (Columbia UP). He is a member of the Board of Advisors of the American Repertory Theater, where he hosts and directs **The A.R.T. of Human Rights** and ***Resistance Mic!***.

**BRISA ARELI MUÑOZ** (she/her)

Brisa Areli Muñoz is a Brooklyn-based theater director, cultural worker, and arts educator. Her expertise lies in devising original participatory works, and she is currently the Artistic Director of the New York City Department of Education's All-City Theatre. Muñoz seeks to develop cross-sector collaborations between organizations and communities, and has facilitated work with urban planners, architects, international mediators, social workers, educators, organizers, and artists. She has been published in the *Journal of Mediation* on her work with peace-building educators in Dohuk, Iraq. Muñoz obtained her Masters in Applied Theatre from the City University of New York, including additional Master's coursework in Organizational Change Management at The New School. She is currently on the directing team for American Repertory Theater's upcoming production of **1776**.

**BRENNA NICELY** (she/they)

Brenna Nicely is an educator, arts administrator, facilitator, and fiber artist who serves as the Education and Engagement Director at the American Repertory Theater, a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University, owner of FreshWeft Handmade fiber arts, and an Alumni Co-Organizer for artEquity. Recent production credits include work at A.R.T., Boston Experimental Theatre, Fort Point Theater Channel, Moscow Art Theatre, and Goethe-Institut Boston.

**ALESSANDRA PANARES** (she/her)

Alessandra Panares is a queer Filipina poet, playwright, and lifelong storyteller. Born in Texas, she spent much of her childhood overseas in Asia. She returned to America to study at Creighton University in Nebraska, earning degrees in Psychology and History, with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. Upon graduation, she decided to call Boston home. She has since built connections with local historians, creatives, activists, and her cat. In 2020, Panares had the pleasure of having her first play, *It Comes at a Cost*, virtually produced by Third Citizen Theatre Company. She also began volunteering with Allston-Brighton Mutual Aid (ABMA) and was selected to be part of the 2021 SPARK Boston Council. It is her hope that her work with ABMA, SPARK, and now **Creating Equal** is just the beginning of a life devoted to civic engagement and continued community care.

**MOE POPE** (he/him)

Moe Pope, born and raised in Roxbury, MA, is a lyricist and visual artist who reflects on equality, love, family, community, and the human experience through his music. With over 20 years in the music industry, Pope has been a part of the bands Mission, Electric Company, Project Move, and is currently the lead vocalist in the Boston based hip hop band STL GLD. Known for their genre infused sounds, STL GLD draws from indie rock, punk, soul, jazz, and various other genres to create their unique style of music, which culminates in a live experience that you can only understand by being at their performances. Rich with visual art, unique collaborations between musicians, and interaction with the audience, STL GLD challenges the perception of what hip hop is supposed to be. Having released a piece of art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in the form of a hip hop album and engaged in a historic collaboration and performance with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Moe Pope is shattering limitations imposed on hip hop that never should have been there. Currently, he is working on his fourth studio album with STL GLD.

**ELIZABETH JAMES-PERRY** (she/her)

Elizabeth James-Perry is enrolled with the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head-Aquinnah in Massachusetts. An internationally known artist and speaker, Elizabeth makes distinctive wampum shell jewelry, porcupine quillwork, and northeastern twined textiles. She cultivates many of the plants used in natural dyes; the rest are wild harvested in a sustainable way. The artist was awarded a Traditional Arts fellowship in 2014 from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. A member of a Nation that has long lived on and harvested the sea, James-Perry's is a perspective that combines Algonquian traditional ecological knowledge, genealogy, art and science in her ways of relating to life on the North Atlantic. Her new recording about King Philip's Sash, linking the rare textile to the colonization of Native homelands, will be included in the upcoming *Hoist/Acknowledge + Listen* exhibit as part of the initiative to replace the Massachusetts State Seal; the recording will also be played before the Massachusetts State Legislators. She worked as an archivist for Radcliffe's Digital Indian Petitions Project to make historic tribal documents available online to tribes, the public, and educators. Film credits include producing shorts between 2005 - 2007 on King Philip's War, with support from Mass Humanities grants; and the background scenery photography in Dartmouth for *As Nutayunean*, the Wampanoag Language Reclamation film. Among her tribal mentors she counts her mother Patricia James-Perry, a scrimshaw artist, along with her cousins Nanepashemet Tony Pollard and Helen Attaquin. She was honored to be a 38th voyager aboard the historic *Charles W. Morgan* whaling vessel as a descendant of the Gay Head crewmembers. James-Perry continues to shore up oral traditions and conducts research in local and European museums. She was employed for more than a decade in the Aquinnah Tribal Historic Preservation Office. Elizabeth holds a degree in Marine Science from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. [elizabethjamesperry.com](http://elizabethjamesperry.com)

#### **IREON ROACH** (she/her)

Ireon Roach is a Chicago-bred writer, performer, curator and teaching artist. Her writing has appeared in *Hoochie*, BU's feminist mag, with plays in Boaton University's 20/21 Season, and Reground Theatre Festival in Boston. Roach will soon be published in Lindsay Clowes and Nadia Sanger's collection *Living African Feminist Theory* (2021) on Afrocentrism and performance. She was last seen in *SCHOOL GIRLS; or, the African Mean Girls Play* (SpeakEasy Stage Company) and *Laughs in Spanish* (Boston Playwrights' Theatre). Film/television credits include "Chicago P.D.", Jennifer Reeder's *Knives and Skin* (2019), and Nia DaCosta's *Candyman* (2020). Her work strives to communicate regrounding as a means to unearth—our bodies, our histories, ourselves.

#### **MICAH ROSEGRANT** (they/them)

Micah Rosegrant nurtures divinity to mother liberated futures for queer and trans peoples. They emerge beauty out of the english language's colonial landscape, centering breath / memory / space in all they do. They are an Artist in Community Fellow at Arts Connect International, and their writing is published in *The Wave*, HowlRound Theatre Commons, *CONSTRUCT zine*, and *The Margins*. They craft art for healing with communities including Asian American Theatre Artists of Boston (AATAB), The Theater Offensive, Pao Arts Center, Company One, and StageSource. Find them online at [bit.ly/micahrosegrant](http://bit.ly/micahrosegrant) and @micah\_pdf on IG/Twitter.

#### **JESSI STEGALL** (she/her)

Jessi Stegall is a multimodal artist committed to facilitating and documenting creative processes through arts-based research. She is a graduate student at the Center for Bioethics at Harvard Medical School, where she researches the intersections and ethical underpinnings of creative therapies and arts education. She studied Expressive Art Therapy at Lesley University and is a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Jessi has been an artist-in-residence at the Harvard ArtLab, National Parks Service, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the New Museum, and is a research-practitioner at the Partnering Lab.

#### **IMANI PEARL WILLIAMS** (she/her)

Imani Pearl Williams is a lover of inclusion, collaboration, and art, so she's very excited to be a part of this committee. She's recently been a part of the *Pippin* national tours (Ensemble, u/s Leading Player) and an immersive theater experience aboard *Celebrity Edge* (Eden). She will appear in the A.R.T.'s upcoming revival of *1776* (Standby) and is thrilled to be working with A.R.T. in yet another way. Black Lives Matter, love is love, and wear your mask :)

### **KAREN YOUNG** (she/her)

Karen Young is a cultural organizer, artist, and educator living in Boston, MA. She combines taiko and creativity with community organizing strategies to elevate issues of power, identity, and marginalization. Influenced by Japanese-American taiko activists of the 70s, Young is most interested in the intersection of art, grassroots organizing, and policy. As a Boston Artist-in-Residence, she used the arts to bolster the voice of elders concerned about street safety from BCYF Grove Hall Senior Center in Dorchester. She is a Live Arts Boston awardee, the founding director of The Genki Spark, co-founder of the Brookline Cherry Blossom Festival, and is a 2019-2021 Boston Foundation Neighborhood Fellow. As a Boston AIR mentor and advisory group member of Radical Imagination for Racial Justice, Young remains committed to preserving and growing a diverse arts ecosystem in Boston.

### **ABOUT 1776**

They knew they would make history, but not what history would make of them. Fed up with living under the tyranny of British rule, John Adams attempts to persuade his fellow members of the Continental Congress to vote in favor of American Independence and sign the Declaration. But how much is he willing to compromise in the pursuit of freedom? And who does that freedom belong to? This new production of the Tony Award-winning musical reexamines the pivotal moment in American history.

Directed by Jeffrey L. Page and A.R.T. Terry and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus, the A.R.T.'s revival production of **1776** will feature a cast that reflects multiple representations of gender, race, and ethnicity and is comprised of performers who identify as female, genderqueer, non-binary, and trans. The production was postponed from May 2020 and will be rescheduled for a later date.

Production support of **1776** is provided by **Katie and Paul Bittenwieser, The Linda Hammett Ory & Andrew Ory Charitable Trust, Allison Johnson, and Serena and Bill Lese**. Additional support is provided by **Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine, Janet and Irv Plotkin, and Professor Mark V. Tushnet**. Production support of the run of **1776** at Roundabout Theatre Company is provided by **Elizabeth Armstrong**.

### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER**

**American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.)** at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work that is driven by risk-taking and passionate inquiry. A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. Diane Paulus began her tenure as Artistic Director in 2008. Under the leadership of Paulus as the Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director and Executive Producer Diane Borger, A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by programming transformative theatrical experiences, always including the audience as a central partner. A.R.T. is committed to a long-term process of centering anti-racism in its practice, policies, culture, pedagogy, governance and organizational structure.

Throughout its history, A.R.T. has been honored with many distinguished awards including the Tony Award for Best New Play for ***All the Way*** (2014); consecutive Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical for ***Pippin*** (2013) and ***The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*** (2012), both of which Paulus directed, and sixteen other Tony Awards since 2012; a Pulitzer Prize; a Jujamcyn Prize for outstanding contribution to the development of creative talent; the Regional Theater Tony Award; and more than 100 Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards. Additional Broadway productions include ***Jagged Little Pill***; ***Waitress*** (also US National Tour and in London's West End); ***Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812***; and ***Finding Neverland***. Under Paulus's leadership, A.R.T.'s club theater, OBERON, has been recognized annually as a top performance venue in the Boston area, and has attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, A.R.T. is committed to playing a central role in the cognitive life of the University, catalyzing discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members. A.R.T. is engaged in a number of multi-year initiatives with partners at Harvard that explore some of the most pressing issues of our day, including collaborations with the Harvard University Center for the Environment to develop new work that addresses climate change and with the Healthy Buildings Program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to develop a Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater that prioritizes a commitment to ethics, equity, and anti-racism as a guiding principle. A.R.T. plays a central role in Harvard's undergraduate Theater, Dance & Media concentration, teaching courses in directing, dramatic literature, acting, voice, design, and dramaturgy. A.R.T. staff also mentors students in the Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club working at the Loeb Drama Center and OBERON.

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists, and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area.

A.R.T. acknowledges that its theaters are situated on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Massachusetts Tribe.

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