



CONVERSATIONS AMONG "X" SERIES SCHEDULE

Premier Show

Wednesday, March 17, 4pm ET

**Topic: IMAGINATION IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC:
STORIES BY LATINX CREATIVES**

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." Albert Einstein

Today is the Premier of "Conversations Among "X"!

How has the pandemic impacted the work of Latinx artists and their stories? Has it narrowed the focus? Broadened it? Or simply changed the stories? Join Moderator Lorena Russi for an invigorating discussion featuring Latinx creatives from different disciplines. Send us your questions via email or listen live and send them via chat.



Moderator: LORENA RUSSI

Lorena Russi is a Queer-Latinx Pro Soccer Player turned Comedian and Filmmaker. Her decade in entertainment ranges from Writer-Director-Host for PBS to Writing-Producing for The Late Show w/ Stephen Colbert digital team. Follow her @ColonialManFace or follow her home, dealer's choice!



CARMEN FEBO



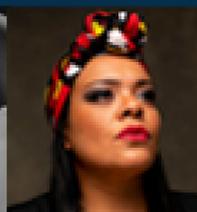
CHRIS
YONG-GARCIA

Panelists:

CHRIS YONG-GARCIA is a designer and cultural producer based in New York City. In 2008, he founded his own graphic design studio, Eyestorm Design. He is also the founder of Latin Lover Food & Travel Magazine; launched in January 2012, the publication strives to unite Latinos and non-Latinos with the common denominator, of love for Latin culture. More on Chris can be found [here](#) and [here](#).



KRISTIAN MERCADO



IVELISSE DIAZ

CARMEN FEBO- SAN MIGUEL was born in Ciales, Puerto Rico, graduating as a physician in 1973 when she moved to Philadelphia. Under her leadership, in 2016, Taller completed and moved into a stunning \$11.5 million, cultural center in the heart of Philadelphia's Latino community. In

2019 she was recognized as a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania. She currently serves on the city of Philadelphia Art Commission. More on Carmen can be found [here](#).

KRISTIAN MERCADO FIGUEROA is a Puerto Rican filmmaker whose music video PA'LANTE won the '19 SXSW Jury Award. He's directed comedy specials for Hannibal Buress and SNL's Sam Jay. Recently, his screenplay MELA received a Cinereach grant. His work is celebrated for its portrayal of working class struggles, systemic oppression and visionary mixed media style. More on Kristian can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

IVELISSE "Bombera de Corazón" DIAZ was born and raised in Humboldt Park, the heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican community. A life-long student and practitioner of Bomba, in 2009 she founded her own Bomba dance school, La Escuelita Bombera De Corazon, which has been providing classes to a diverse population in Chicago for a decade. She is a co-founding member and lead vocalist in Bomba con Buya. With 27 years of learning and continued studies, Ivelisse has become a well-known vocalist, dancer, and leader within the Bomba community in Chicago and beyond. More on Ivelisse can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Wednesday, April 7, 4pm ET

Topic: EVOLVING VISIONS OF THE FUTURE:

FROM IMAGINATION TO ART

"What if we get things right?" World Economic Forum

How does your vision of the future drive your work? What vision of “wrong” does your art address and make right? Join Moderator Jessie Fuentes, for an invigorating discussion featuring Latinx creatives from different disciplines. Send us your questions via email or listen live and send them via chat.



Moderator: JESSIE FUENTES

Jessie Fuentes, is an activist and educator in the Humboldt Park Community in Chicago, IL, popularly known as “Paseo Boricua”. Fuentes has participated in work empowering young people in the community, the campaign to release Oscar López Rivera, anti-gentrification work, education reform, and for the independence of Puerto Rico. Fuentes is currently the Dean of Student Affairs at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School. She strives to see a more just world through advocacy and policy.

Panelists:



MELISSA DUPREY RICHARD "TIAGO" SANTIAGO



NYDIA CASTILLO VICO ORTIZ

MELISSA DUPREY is a multidisciplinary artist with roots from Humboldt Park, Chicago. Her one-woman show, SEXomedy (2012), was developed during their monthly series for women of color in the arts and received a Chicago Reader Recommendation, a Member's Pick, and had a successful debut Off-Broadway in New York. Her full-length play BRUJAJA was selected as part of 16th Street's New Play Pop Up Reading Series for 2019. She is currently an Ensemble Member at UrbanTheater Company and Artistic Associate at Sideshow Theater. More on Melissa can be found [here](#).

RICHARD 'TIAGO' SANTIAGO is a renowned Puerto Rican artist who earned a BA in Fine Arts from Marist College in New York and a Master of Fine Arts from the Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore under the tutelage of Grace Hartigan and Sam Gilliam. More on Richard can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

NYDIA CASTILLO was born and raised in Puerto Rico. She retired from an extensive career in education and holds two master's degrees in the areas of Counseling and Instructional Leadership. Nydia is a Chicago actress and producer of her own cooking channel Cocina Castillo. She has been an Aguijón Theater ensemble member since 2003 and has been a part of UrbanTheater's familia since 2015. Some of her acting credits include Monday Falls on León Rodríguez, The Virtuous Burglar, The House of Bernarda Alba, Yerma, Eréndira, Las Soldaderas, Antígona, Within, Querido Voyeur, Blowout!, and Adverses (an adaptation of Electra.) More on Nydia can be found [here](#).

VICO ORTIZ is a proud Latin/x non-binary/gender fluid actor/activist born and raised in Puerto Rico. Their first breakthrough role in Hollywood was in the hit Amazon series, “Transparent”. More recently, Vico has had guest starring roles in “American Horror Story: 1984”, the Starz award winning series “Vida” and the GLAAD nominated Freeform comedy “Everything’s Gonna Be Okay”. Vico also recently received a Queerties Award nomination for their series regular role in the award winning digital series “These Them”. They will also star as a series regular in the upcoming Amazon Prime original post-apocalyptic horror “Narcos vs. Zombies” playing U.S. Military Sgt. Valencia set for release in 2021. More on Vico can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Wednesday, April 28, 4pm ET

Topic: ADDRESSING LATINX INVISIBILITY:

A DISCUSSION FROM THE TRENCHES

“The invisibility of Latinx artists is everyone’s concern.” Dr. Arlene Davila

Latinx artists have been historically invisible in virtually every aspect of their disciplines. How has this invisibility impacted their work? Join Moderator Lorena Russi for an invigorating discussion featuring Latinx creatives from different disciplines.. Send us your questions via email or listen live and send them via chat.



Moderator: LORENA RUSSI

Lorena Russi is a Queer-Latinx Pro Soccer Player turned Comedian and Filmmaker. Her decade in entertainment ranges from Writer-Director-Host for PBS to Writing-Producing for The Late Show w/ Stephen Colbert digital team. Follow her @ColonialManFace or follow her home, dealer's choice!

Panelists:



ADRIAN ROMAN

RAQUEL ORTIZ

ADRIAN ROMAN's work is informed by issues of race, migration and identity while exploring both the personal and historical memory of the two disparate worlds that I inhabit: the tropical landscape of Puerto Rico and the overpopulated cityscape of New York. His practice combines drawing, painting and sculpture within immersive installation environments composed of objects collected from different communities, from salvaged wood and window frames to historic artifacts and vintage photographs. The resulting environments can fill an entire wall or entire room, and often incorporate sound and aromatics that draw upon the history and memory embedded in the objects. More on Adrian can be found [here](#) and [here](#).



RHINA VALENTIN

WALDO CABRERA

DR. RAQUEL ORTIZ is an anthropologist, educator, and award winning children’s book author. Her scholarship focuses on the visual arts, culture, literature, music, and identity and includes *El Arte de la Identidad: Aproximación crítica al jibarismo puertorriqueño en la literatura, la música y las obras de arte* (University of Granada, 2011) and the documentary, *Memories on the Wall: Education and Enrichment through Community Murals* (2013). Her first picture book, *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural /Sofi y el mágico mural musical*, published by Arte Público Press (APP) was named an ILBA Best Educational Children’s Picture Book. Her newest book, *Vicki and a Summer of Change! ¡Vicki y un verano de cambio!* (Red Sugarcane Press, 2020) shares what happened in East Harlem, New York in 1969 when members of the Young Lords Organization united with El Barrio residents to make positive changes in their neighborhood. More on Raquel can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

RHINA VALENTIN A native New Yorker of Black, European, and indigenous ancestry, and award-winning artist and performer, Rhina has captured audiences with her humor while discussing adversity with honesty, representing the values of working-class women-of-color. Rhina has been featured on HBO’s *Betty la Flaca* and has appeared in nationally syndicated television commercials for Bally’s & 1-800-Flowers. Since 2006, Rhina has been hostess of the popular OPEN Friday talk show on BronxNet TV. More on Rhina can be found [here](#).

WALDO CABRERA is a two-time Emmy® Nominated journalist with over 30 years of professional advertising and marketing experience. After getting an advertising degree from Syracuse University, Waldo joined 4Kids Entertainment, the company that brought Pokémon to the United States. In 2009 Verizon added Waldo’s online news program to its FiOS1 News channel. Over an eight-year run, Waldo produced over 1,200 episodes that focused on outstanding people in the community. He continues telling the stories within the Hispanic community as the head of the media unit at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at CUNY Hunter College. More on Waldo can be found [here](#).

Wednesday, May 19, 4pm ET

Topic: GREAT STORIES IN ANOTHER GENRE:

STORYTELLING THROUGH MURALS

"Art imitates Life"

Does art simply imitate life or does art make life that is invisible to many visible to all? Join Moderator Jessie Fuentes, as she leads a discussion among Latinx muralists from across the US and Puerto Rico to talk about how they used art to reveal the truths they envision. Send us your questions via email or listen live and send them via chat.



Moderator: JESSIE FUENTES

Jessie Fuentes is an activist and educator in the Humboldt Park Community in Chicago, IL, popularly known as "Paseo Boricua". Fuentes has participated in work empowering young people in the community, the campaign to release Oscar López Rivera, anti-gentrification work, education reform, and for the independence of Puerto Rico. Fuentes is currently the Dean of Student Affairs at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School. She strives to see a more just world through advocacy and policy.



BETSY CASANAS OSVALDO BUDET



CRISTIAN ROLDAN SAM KIRK

Panelists:

BETSY CASANAS is a Visual and Public Artist, an educator, a community activist and organizer. She is the director of A Seed on Diamond Gallery (S.O.D.) and founder of Semilla Arts Initiative. She has 26 years of experience in the arts and has created over 50 murals worldwide. Having worked in communities of color around the world, she understands the importance of communities of color to see themselves reflected in the artwork and in the leaders of their communities. More on Betsy can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

OSVALDO BUDET is a Puerto Rican artist and graduate of Maryland Institute of College of Art. His work explores the physical and political dimensions of colonization and post-colonization, as a reflection of the culture and the interests of the systems we inhabit. Since 2008 he has been living and working in Berlin, Germany, San Juan, Puerto Rico, NYC, USA and Australia. His work has been exhibited at Museums including the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo (MAC-Museum of Contemporary Art of Puerto Rico), Museo Arte de Puerto Rico, Me Collectors Room Berlin, Stiftung Olbricht, BMW/ Gewandhaus, Leipzig, Germany, Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, Chicago, USA, Museum of Art of Fort Lauderdale, USA, MOLAA Museum, Long Beach California, USA and Dumbo Arts Center, NYC, USA among others. He has been commissioned to create environmentally-engaged work for the Umweltbundesamt, Dessau, Germany and Museum of Contemporary Art of Puerto Rico. More on Osvaldo can be found [here](#).

CRISTIAN ROLDAN uses mural painting as a community-based tactic to resist invisibilization, and objectification by outsider narratives. This practice serves to codify the local narratives to challenge the indoctrination by hegemonic discourses. His art practice and research is based on a dialogue approach where mural painting narratives emerge from the community. He creates public art with the objective to intervene in public spaces, as a way to raise consciousness, stimulate the imagination and preserve the collective memory. More on Cristian can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

SAM KIRK is a multidisciplinary artist, who explores culture and identity politics through her practice. Her artwork focuses on a variety of intersections which encompass a call to celebrate differences and enact change. Kirk's public murals often address social issues, as she intentionally uses the public space to spark dialogue around topics of equality and visibility for women, communities of color, and the LGBTQIA community. More on Sam can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Wednesday, June 9, 4pm ET

Topic: MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE:

FORGING A VISION OF REALITY

"Art Is Not a Mirror to Reflect Reality, but a Hammer to Shape It" Bertolt Brecht

Art in communities, performances, screens and the written word brings visions of reality to life. Join Moderator Jessie Fuentes, as she engages Latinx producers and directors in a discussion of how "art demonstrates its resilience" and has forged a vision of reality in their communities, performances, and screens. Send us your questions via email or listen live and send them via chat.



Moderator: JESSIE FUENTES

Jessie Fuentes, is an activist and educator in the Humboldt Park Community in Chicago, IL, popularly known as "Paseo Boricua". Fuentes has participated in work empowering young people in the community, the campaign to release Oscar López Rivera, anti-gentrification work, education reform, and for the independence of Puerto Rico. Fuentes is currently the Dean of Student Affairs at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School. She strives to see a more just world through advocacy and policy.

Panelists:



PERLA DE LEON



RICO PABÓN

PERLA DE LEON Is a Photographer/videographer and editor. She has taught media classes to High School and college students and was a NYC Board of Education Teacher Trainer in technology. Her photography work is in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and New York's El Museo del Barrio and Gracie Mansion. She is currently working on a large art installation. More on Perla can be found [here](#).



IVAN VEGA



ROSA EMANUELLI
GUZMAN

RICO PABON is an Emcee whose artistry and activism are one and the same, with poetic lyrics bound by the theme that life is worth fighting for, using truth and love as weapons. This theme combined with his rhythmic delivery make him one of the Bay Area's most dynamic MCs. He has shared

the stage with other international artists such as Damian and Stephen Marley, Ozomatli, Buju Banton, Femi Kuti, Zap Mama, Meshell N'degeocello, Maxi Priest and Sizzla, to name a few and has also performed with Hip Hop icons such as Run DMC, Wu Tang Clan, The Fugees, dead prez, Big Daddy Kane, and Kurtis Blow. More on Rico can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

ROSA EMMANUELLI GUZMAN is a Puerto Rican filmmaker and sociologist who aims to use the power of film to reflect Latin American realities, evoke solidarity, inspire change and entertain. She is the Co-writer, Creative Producer and Distributor of the documentary "Jurakán: Nation in Resistance," which was an Official Selection of the Havana Film Festival in 2017 and the Rincón International Film Festival in 2018, where it won Best Documentary. After "Jurakán's" successful impact campaign with 100 screenings, the conversations with the audience inspired her second and third feature-length documentaries. She has also worked as Assistant Director for the televised "60th Ariel Awards ceremony" in Mexico City. More on Rosa can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

IVAN VEGA is a husband, a father of two boys. Ivan is also an actor, photographer, producer, and Co-founder & Executive Director of UrbanTheater Company which turns 16 in May. Ivan also works with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center as a program manager for Safe Passage, an initiative that makes sure Chicago Public School students have a safe route to and from school. His overall work is deeply rooted in serving the Humboldt Park community. More on Ivan can be found [here](#) and [here](#).