



Bios of Artist Professionals for the Vermont Street Stairs Pool Selection Panel

Kevin B. Chen has been involved in the SF Bay Area arts community for close to 20 years as a curator, writer, and visual artist. He has been a Program Director at Intersection for the Arts since 1998. Prior to this position, he was Programs Manager at Kala Art Institute, the largest independent printmaking workshop and gallery in North America. He has served on numerous selection panels, including Creative Capital Foundation, Alliance of Artists Communities, City of San Jose, Chamber Music America, SF Arts Commission, Alameda County Arts Commission, Arts Council Silicon Valley, California College of the Arts, SF State University, San Francisco Art Institute, SF Friends of Chamber Music, Djerassi Resident Artists Program, and Headlands Center for the Arts.

He has served on the Community Advisory Board of SFAI, the Board of Directors for SF Camerawork and Locus Arts, Headlands Center for the Arts' Program Committee, and currently serves on the Artist In Residence Program Advisory Board for Recology. He has served as an exhibition juror for Root Division, California College of the Arts, CSU Chico, Oakland Art Gallery & Pro Arts, Asian Pacific Fund, SF Camerawork, and Academy of Art University, and has written catalog essays published by Paper Museum Press, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Light Work, Chinese Culture Center of SF, The Third Line – Art Gallery in Dubai, and Kearny Street Workshop.

His own work in printmaking, sculpture, collage, and illustration has been exhibited locally at Southern Exposure, San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, Ampersand Gallery, Jack Fischer Gallery, Blankspace, Barbara Anderson Gallery, Mission Cultural Center, Kearny Street Workshop, CSU Chico, and nationally at Angel's Gate Cultural Center (San Pedro, CA), City of Brea Art Gallery (Orange County, CA), Bruno David Gallery (St. Louis, MO) and The Kitchen (New York, NY).

Courtney Fink, Executive Director of Southern Exposure (SoEx) since 2003, has 16 years of experience developing the capacity of visual artists and the systems that support them. Ms. Fink is responsible for guiding SoEx's vision and the organization's commitment to support artists and youth in a dynamic environment, in which they are encouraged to develop and present new work and ideas. She has led the organization through tremendous transitions over the past three years including several relocations and has developed major new program initiatives. Prior to joining Southern Exposure, Ms. Fink held positions at California College of the Arts and Capp Street Project in San Francisco, as well as Franklin Furnace in New York.

In her SoEx leadership role, Ms. Fink recently developed with SoEx's Curatorial Committee, SoEx Off-Site, a major yearlong series of public art projects, and the acclaimed exhibition Practice Makes Perfect: Bay Area Conceptual Craft. She curated The Way We Work, which was selected by Artforum as one of the best exhibitions in 2004 and developed SoEx's grant program Alternative Exposure. Ms. Fink is currently involved in several national arts field-building projects, in an effort to develop new networks connecting visual arts organizations locally and nationally, in partnership with the National Alliance of Media Arts and Culture, and the Warhol Foundation.

Ms. Fink has served as a juror for Creative Capital, Headlands Center for the Arts, San Francisco Arts Commission, and the San Francisco International Film Festival among many others institutions nationwide, and has lectured locally and nationally, including Portland State University, Stanford University, Capital City Arts Initiative in Nevada,

the 2007 NAMAC conference in Austin, Texas, and InFest, an international convening of artist-run culture in Vancouver, Canada. Ms. Fink also publishes books under the small press she founded, Art Workers Press. Originally from Los Angeles, California, she holds a B.A. in art history and fine arts from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY. Courtney also serves on the Board of Directors of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

Lex Leifheit provides artistic vision and strategic direction for SOMArts Cultural Center (South of Market Arts, Resources, Technology and Services). Over the past three years, SOMArts has established the Studio Series and Commons Curatorial Residency, increased participation in the Affordable Space Program, renovated its ceramics studio, launched a new website and received more than \$1,000,000 in grants and in-kind donations from previously untapped resources.

Lex has been a passionate advocate for the arts as a catalyst for change and community building for more than ten years. As an outreach coordinator, festival planner, teaching artist and assistant director, she helped launch Wesleyan University's Green Street Arts Center. As producer and host of weekly radio show The Art Agenda, she interviewed hundreds of artists about their work and helped community-based art find a wider audience in central Connecticut (2006–2008). As an artist and teacher, Leifheit directed award-winning plays while an artistic associate at Secret Theatre (1999–2004), taught playwriting to teenagers, founded the High Street Writers Collective, lived and worked in an artist co-op, and studied at the Moscow Art Theater.

Previous employers include Wesleyan University's [Green Street Arts Center](#) and [Center for the Arts](#) in Middletown, Connecticut, as well as the [Eugene O'Neill Theater Center](#) in Waterford, CT. Leifheit has served as an artistic associate of Secret Theatre, board member for the Middletown Foundation for the Arts, and vice president of the North End Artists Cooperative. She been a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, California College of the Arts' Engage award. She served on the steering committee of Emerging Arts Professionals, San Francisco Bay Area and was vice-chair of the Emerging Leaders Council of Americans for the Arts. She loves radical collaborators, storytelling, and art that explores boundaries, and is continually amazed by her good fortune to be living in San Francisco with her husband [Dan McKinley](#).

Leifheit received her Master of Arts Liberal Studies degree from Wesleyan University and attended Drake University on full scholarship, where she received a BFA in Theater Performance.

Ellen Oh has served as IDA+CBPA Program Administrator since November 2011. Previously, she was Executive Director of Kearny Street Workshop (KSW), the nation's oldest Asian American multidisciplinary arts organization, where she learned to be a jack of all trades. At KSW, she was not only responsible for the program vision and development, but also the fundraising, marketing and financial management that supported it.

Ellen has an M.A. in Arts Administration from Columbia University and has spent over ten years working nonprofit arts organizations both nationally and internationally. Her experience includes serving as Associate Director of Marketing for Sundance Institute, where she developed and produced all the publications, ads, merchandise, envirographics, and motion graphics for the film festival. She worked in marketing and community outreach at the Asian Art Museum of SF during its move from Golden Gate Park to Civic Center. She has also had short stints at the Atlanta Olympics, the Smithsonian, the Boulder Philharmonic, the Venice Biennale/Korean Pavilion, the Sydney Biennale, Art Production Fund, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum.

Renny Pritikin was born in New York City, and received a BA from New School College, NYC, and an MA from San Francisco State in Interdisciplinary Arts. He was co-director of New Langton Arts in San Francisco from 1979 to 1992. He was chief curator at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts from 1992 to 2004. He was director of the Nelson Gallery and Fine Arts Collection at UC Davis from 2004 until 2012. Career highlights include a lecture series in Japanese museums as a guest of the State Department in 1995. That same year he was a Koret Israel Prize winner and traveled extensively in Israel. In 2002 he was the curator for the United States exhibition at the Cuenca, Ecuador Biennial. In 2003 he received a Fulbright Fellowship to lecture in museums throughout New Zealand. He has been a senior adjunct professor in the curatorial practices graduate program at the California College of the

Arts in San Francisco since its inception in 2003. Pritikin gave early support to such noted artists as Nayland Blake, Nancy Rubins, Fred Tomaselli, Barry McGee, Margaret Kilgallen, Chris Johanssen and many others. He is known for bringing work from popular culture into the museum context, including retrospectives of the work of auto customizer Ed Big Daddy Roth, the tattoo artist and painter Don Ed Hardy, the futurist and Blade Runner designer Syd Mead and the magician and historian Ricky Jay. In the past two years he has written catalogue essays for Cornelia Schulz (Sweetow Gallery SF), Trimpin (University of Washington Press), Tony May (San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art), Julia Couzens (Stanislaus State University), John Bankston (beta pictorus Gallery, (Birmingham AL), Youngsuk Suh, (Stanislaus State University) Jim Melchert (Sanchez Gallery, Pacifica, CA), Chris Taggart (Center for Contemporary Art, Sacramento, CA), and Dean De Cocker (JayJay Gallery, (Sacramento)).

Rebeka Rodriguez is a photographer, event producer, and arts administrator living and working in San Francisco. She is currently the Program Director of Education & Community Engagement at Intersection for the Arts, one of San Francisco's oldest alternative non-profit multidisciplinary arts organizations. Rebeka co-edited *Prison/Culture*, an investigation of incarceration as an integral part of the American experience. She serves on the board of directors for RADAR Productions, a San Francisco-based non-profit that produces literary happenings around the Bay Area and beyond; and produces *Bring Your Own Queer*, an annual daytime music, art and performance festival in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

Maysoun Wazwaz is the Program Manager at *Mills College Art Museum*. Formerly she was the Exhibitions Program Manager at Southern Exposure and was the only staff member, outside of the executive director, who had worked in each of Southern Exposure's locations since moving from their original space in 2006. In her capacity as program manager over the past 2.5 years Maysoun has worked with over 200 artists through solo, group and juried exhibitions as well as through artist residencies and public art projects. Maysoun co-produced *SoEx Off-Site* (2006-2007), a yearlong series of public art projects which used new techniques for exploring and mapping public space. She also helped produce groundbreaking exhibitions such as *Free Enterprise* (2007), *Vapor* (2008) and *Hopeless and Otherwise* (2008).

In addition to her work at Mills College Art Museum, Maysoun serves as a member of Visual Aid's exhibitions committee. Visual Aid is a non-profit arts organization supporting artists living with life threatening illnesses. In April of 2008, Maysoun was invited to participate in the San Francisco Art Institute's MFA Studio Visits as an outside curator. This program gives MFA candidates the opportunity to receive feedback from professional curators from the local arts community.

Maysoun has a long history as a dancer and is most inspired when dancing or watching other people dance. Although most of her college classmates would not know this due to the amount of time spent performing in dance concerts and taking dance classes, Maysoun received a BA in Art History from Bard College.