

DVCAI

**CARIBBEAN
GLOBAL
CURRENTS II**

TALKING
ACROSS
DIFFERENCE

INTERNATIONAL
CULTURAL
EXCHANGE
PROGRAM

PANAMA

March 20th - March 28th, 2025



Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator (DVCAI) is a Miami based 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of DVCAI is to promote, nurture and cultivate the vision and diverse talent of emerging artists from the Caribbean and Latin diaspora through our exhibition, artist-in-residence, international exchange and outreach programs that celebrate Miami-Dade's rich cultural and social fabric.

www.dvcai.org

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

PANAMA



Photo by Izia Lindsay



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**International Cultural
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Photo by Lauryn Lawrence

Panama

ICEP 2025

Cultivated connections and racial identity as a site of resistance were echoed during the second Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator's second international cultural exchange trip to Panamá. From beautifully interconnected studio visits with Panamanian artists to conversations with institutions, practitioners, and galleries in Panamá, this journey encompassed a tenderness so apparent in the dialogues and spaces we were invited to.

There was a thread of connectivity in how each artist we met with echoed the remapping and unpacking of their Afro-Panamanian roots within their practice. In their unique way, each artist speaks to their relationship with the Panamanian landscape and ancestry. We found layers of connectivity and understanding for each of us on this journey. DVCAI has created and fostered significant impacts from these cultural exchange trips. Rosie-Gordon Wallace quotes, "I think that the power of these cultural exchanges is the magic of the different experiences from country to country, even when you go to the country the second and third time. It is not rich if you don't have a community engagement with the artists; it's almost performative if you don't get the local community."

The way Rosie has opened doors when doors are closed is apparent in how we are guided and seen in our personal landscape throughout this exchange. With the collaboration with architect and curator Gladys Turner Bosso, the local art community in Panamá and the institutions gathered and welcomed us in special ways that stand testament to time. This cultural exchange in Panamá was rich in connectivity and layering. These experiences will remain with us as we continue on our journey.

- Lauryn Lawrence



Photo by Izia Lindsay

Panama Take 2

Speaking of the overall impact of the ICE program, founder, president, and curator Rosie Gordon-Wallace always says it takes more than one trip for DVCAI's goals to fully realize. Nothing could be truer than in the case of Panama. Through careful planning including a rigorous selection of participant artists, on-the-ground liaison, local vendors (hoteliers, transportation service, catering, etc.), and the pool of Panamanian creatives, Caribbean Global Currents II surpassed expectations. Panamanian architect/curator Gladys Turner Bosso's expansive knowledge of the local art ecology proved indispensable. Her judicious choices allowed for a far-reaching understanding of the contemporary art ecosystem which cuts across mediums, as well as socioeconomic strata. Turner Bosso's careful mapping of the terrain helped us navigate the art landscape at the intersection of the historical, geographical, social, and political. We visited art studios in neighborhoods as diverse as El Cangrejo, El Dorado, Casco Viejo, Panamá La Vieja and the coastal cities of Portobelo and Colón.

Panama's modern art world is complex. Our visit was anchored by two significant references. At one end stands the father of Panama painting Alfredo Sinclair who passed in 2014 and at the other his living and practicing artist daughter Olga Sinclair. On the last day, taking in their figurative and abstract art at Olga's studio I recalled the conversations had with other creatives and art professionals the previous days. The current Panamanian art scene is intergenerational. We met with established artists like Aristides Ureña Ramos and Olga Sinclair. We visited mid-career artists Fernand Toledo, Esviel Jeffers, and Cisro Merel. The pool of emerging creatives included Sergio Smith, Risseth Yangüez Singh, Hugo González, Giana De Dier, and José Braithwaite. Located in Portobelo, the Taller Congo collective is made up of artists that run all career stages from amateur to established even if they do not necessarily enjoy the recognition or view themselves as such. The list comprises "Yaneca" Esquina, Ariel Jimenez, Virgilio "Titto" Esquina, Manuel "Tatú" Golden, Gustavo Esquina, Jairo Esquina, Loreyma Barrera, and Daffna Mahecha.

The art landscape cuts across genders. In addition to Gladys Turner Bosso, other women hold leadership positions. Carolina Haussman leads the non-profit Casa Santana. Maria Lucia Aleman directs the Museum of Contemporary Art. Ana Berta Carrizo is at the helm of Galería Arteconsult. Mariana Nuñez is Ciudad Del Saber vice president of communication. Along with Olga Sinclair and Risseth Yangüez Singh we met with several other female visual artists including Giana De Dier, Loreyma Barrera, and Daffna Mahecha.

Questions of under-representation and in-visibility abound in the works. Most of the artists we met are of mixed ancestry and interested in bringing to the fore the silenced or invisibilized lineage whether it is African ("Yaneca" Esquina, Ariel Jimenez, Virgilio "Titto" Esquina, Manuel "Tatú" Golden, Gustavo Esquina, Jairo Esquina, Loreyma Barrera, Daffna Mahecha, or Sergio Smith), Chinese (Cisco Mere, Aristides Ureña Ramos), East Indian (Risseth Yangüez Singh), Indigenous (Sergio Smith), or Caribbean (Giana De Dier). The construction of the Panama Canal, the US occupation, and environmental justice are other significant concerns creatives address.

- Alix Pierre, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer Spelman College
DVCAI Resident Scholar



ICEP PANAMA

The exchange, titled **Caribbean Global Currents II: Panama**, is organized by DVCAI and curated by Rosie Gordon-Wallace, in collaboration with the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC) and Diablo Rosso, with cultural liaison Marnie Walker of the International Women's Forum. The theme for this year's program, 'Talking Across Difference', will explore the contemporary art of the region and engage with issues related to nationhood, sovereignty, the shared history of the Panama Canal, and the post-canal impact on Caribbean lives.



El Cangrejo

El Cangrejo is a vibrant residential neighborhood in Panama City. It is known for its tree-lined streets and welcoming atmosphere. While it maintains a relaxed vibe, the area also buzzes with life thanks to its eclectic mix of small shops, cozy cafes, and local businesses that reflect the city's cultural diversity. At its heart lies Andrés Bello Park, a lush green space where residents and visitors enjoy leisurely walks, reading on benches, and children playing under the shade of large trees.

The neighborhood is also famous for its diverse dining options, offering everything from traditional Panamanian cuisine to international flavors. Colorful street art and unique architecture, including mid-century buildings, add to its character and make it a favorite among artists and young professionals. Its central location allows easy access to public transportation and other parts of the city, making it convenient while still feeling like a peaceful retreat. At night, El Cangrejo comes alive with a lively yet laid-back nightlife, featuring bars and music spots popular with locals. This blend of tranquility, culture, and accessibility makes El Cangrejo one of Panama City's most desirable places to live and explore.





Photo by Roy Wallace



Photo by Roy Wallace

Sergio Smith

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator, during its 2025 International Cultural Exchange to Panama, began its journey into the local artistic community with an inspiring visit to the home and studio of renowned artist Sergio Smith.

Smith, a graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Panama with a diploma in diversified arts, has earned the prestigious National IPEL Awards for Labor Culture three times—twice taking second place and once achieving first place in the painting category, awarded by the Ministry of Labor (Mitradel).

"I consider myself a visual artist because my work embraces both traditional visual arts and contemporary expressions that incorporate new technologies," Smith explains. "My current practice fuses classic canvas techniques with the energy and dynamism of urban art, which has become my primary focus."

With his refined execution and masterful use of shape and color, Sergio Smith has built a reputation that began on the streets of Panama. Today, he is celebrated as one of the country's most prominent visual artists and muralists, bridging the gap between tradition and modernity through his vibrant, innovative creations.

"As a visual artist, I've been active for many years, and as a muralist for most of my artistic career. Despite currently working in public spaces, I am also delving into large-scale sculpture, as well as using 3D modeling to create multi-use livable art."

"Madmagos"



Mad Hages

PLENA

LA MELODIA
QUE PRENDE
EL PARKING.

Photo by Sergio Smith







Photo provided by the artist.

Risetth Yangüez Singh

Risetth Yangüez Singh, visual artist from Panama. She intertwines the questioning and investigation of personal and collective memory that led to the re-appropriation of the discourses, images and narratives imposed by the system. Her works are spells made with the intention of transforming her own identity as a black woman, putting her body at the service of this search. She documents the living memory of her ancestors and at the same time, analyzes and questions the time in which she lives, representing feelings such as love and anger. opening paths and drawing lines to make her own space, like parts in her hair, untangling tensions, pains and nightmares, to wake up and offer herself the possibility of finding herself.

She has participated in multiple group art exhibitions at the University of Panama, YMCA, Contemporary Art Museum, Paiz Art Biennale in Guatemala, 193 Gallery in Paris and MAMM in Medellin. She has also participated in film festivals and workshops in Panama, Colombia, Costa Rica and Cuba. She is currently working on her first documentary feature film on the self-discovery of the Afro-Panamanian historical memory through her grandmother and herself.









Cisco Merel

Cisco Merel is an artist living and working in Panama. For more than 10 years, he collaborated closely with the workshop of renowned master Carlos Cruz Diez. Merel uses abstraction to address different themes in his work, such as architecture, social contrasts and popular art. In his work, he seeks to rescue the origins of the constructive and socio-cultural systems that surround us in contemporary times.

Merel uses photography, painting, sculpture and installations as a starting point to create a visual and investigative map in each project he develops. His work stands out for his ability to transform everyday experiences into something exceptional and for his ability to generate reflections on culture and society.

Photo by Michael Elliott









Photo by Michael Elliott





MAC Panama

(Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Panamá)

In 1962, a group of young artists, passionate about art, recognized the urgency of promoting the cultural development of Panamanian society and established the Panamanian Institute of Art (Panarte).

The Institute presented art exhibitions on a nomadic basis, as well as plays, concerts, film screenings, and literary gatherings. Despite not having its own facilities, Panarte held numerous exhibitions with renowned artists, receiving a work from each exhibitor as a donation, thus building a valuable collection.

In 1981, the opportunity arose to find a home for the collection by acquiring and remodeling the former Masonic Temple, located at the foot of Ancón Hill in the Canal Zone, now home to the Panama Museum of Contemporary Art.

Since then, the MAC Panama has held more than 800 exhibitions featuring Panamanian and international artists, expanding its art collection to over 1,200 works. It has also hosted the Panama Art Biennials, held countless public events, and developed an educational program for children, as well as artistic training opportunities, becoming a key player in the development of Panamanian art and an important art reference point in the region.

MAC Panama is a space for creativity, learning, and dialogue.



Los LABS tuvieron lugar en 2015 (Chiriquí) y 2017 (Ciudad de Bogotá) apoyados por la SENACYT, Think Arts Collaboratory, TEORÍA DEL PAPEL y la Alcaldía de Panamá. Estas experiencias dieron LAB de Arte y Ciencia en 2019, un taller interdisciplinario de permito facilitar la colaboración entre más personas a la vez, concentrado. De allí surgieron otras colaboraciones con científicos enfocados en capacitación de docentes así como la residencia de arte y ciencia, que en 2023 celebró 100 años de la isla de Barro Colorado.







From Left to Right. Antonio Murzi, Head of Board of Directors of MAC, Panama.
Rosie Gordon-Wallace, Founder/President/Curator DVCAI.
Maria Lucia Aleman Director MAC, Panama.



Photo by Roy Wallace



Centro de Arte y Cultura de Colón

Colón Art and Culture Center

The old Abel Bravo School in Colón got a makeover and now it's the city's new cultural and artistic hub. The Centro de Arte y Cultura de Colón (CACCO) has three buildings that take up 24,000 square meters. It's got everything you need to learn different art forms, like dance, plastic arts, performing arts, design, photography, gastronomy, and music. Oh, and it's also the home of the Mateo Iturralde library and its own auditorium.

Vision

Our vision is to become a go-to place for cultural and community management in the region. We want to help people appreciate and develop the arts, protect cultural heritage, and support the creative economy in a way that's fair and sustainable.

Mission

Our mission is to encourage creativity, bring people together, promote peace and harmony, and spread knowledge through training and fun activities that help the people of Colón grow and thrive.



Photo by Roy Wallace









The International Women's Forum

The International Women's Forum was launched in New York City in 1974, when the first generation of women leaders was breaking the glass ceiling in professional sectors from finance to fine arts. Forum founders lacked access to "the old boys' network," so the new women's network was born—to provide professional and personal support, to aid each member's success and to inspire the women who follow.

Women supporting women is more important today than when IWF was founded more than 50 years ago. The International Women's Forum now connects more than 8,000 preeminent women leaders in 77 Forums in 35 countries around the world. We are the only organization of this scale that builds significant relationships among C-level women across careers, cultures and continents.

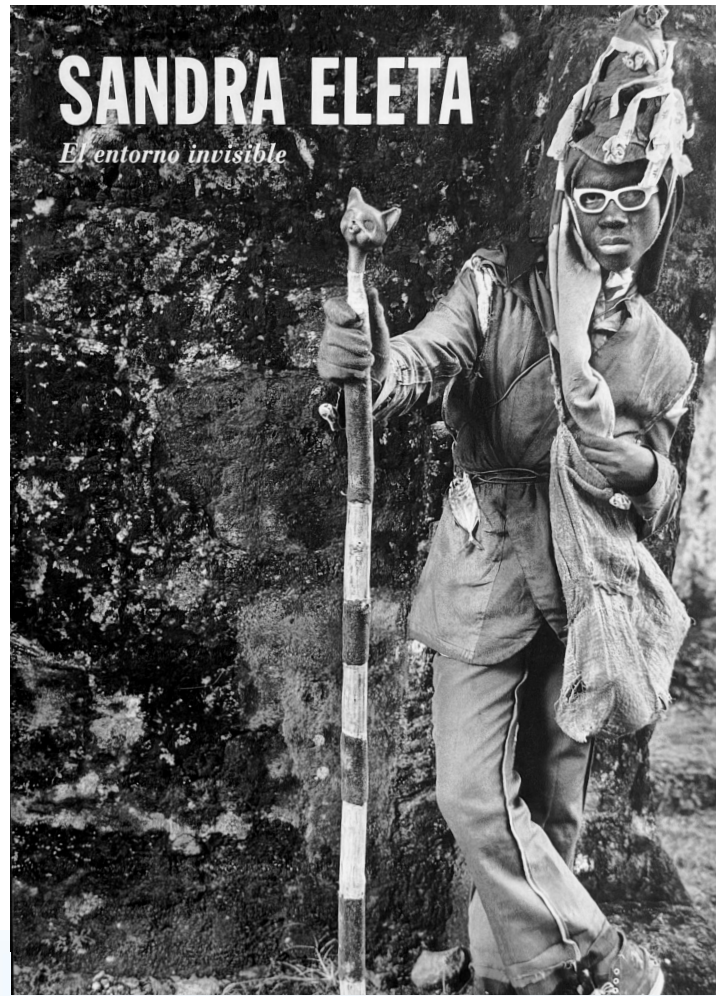




Sandra Eleta

Eleta is an internationally renowned photographer and co-founder of Taller Portobelo. In her description of her Portobelo photographic series, Eleta writes, "It could be said that with this series, my life and photography became one. When I arrived in Portobelo in the early seventies, I began photographing those who engaged me in some profound way, who seemed to resonate that which I felt deepest within me. Naturally wanting more, I drew nearer and dug deeper, hoping to fathom the very depths of their souls. I of course understood that I could not accomplish this alone, but eventually, winning their trust, they revealed themselves to me willingly, allowing their auras to repose in my lens. Then, much like an invitation to dance, we found ourselves locked in a mutual rhythm, completely unencumbered, completely in-tune. It was in this way the protagonists of this story revealed themselves to me: Josefa, a healer of the 'evil eye,' locally known as a 'curandera'; Palanca, who only seemed to find solace in the arms of his grandmother, Ventura; Putulungo, the octopus fisherman, who much like his prey could instantly change his interior from light to dark; Dulce, a little girl light in years but possessing all the wisdom and tenacity of her cimarrón ancestors; and Catalina, Queen of the Congos. It could also be said that with this series my photographic identity was born, and that as I came face to face with these images for the first time, I felt I was looking at myself, but from a renewed point of view."

Photo by Roy Wallace



CASA DE LA CULTURA CONGO

The Casa de la Cultura Congo is a public, open and integrative space, built as a pilot project, to be the headquarters of training workshops and artisanal production, with areas of historical interpretation and gallery of artistic expression, school restaurant and solidarity lodging. Intended to become a reference environment for the creation of new products and services with local cultural identity.

Mission

Promote the integral development of Portobelo and related cultural communities, through the preservation and dissemination of the natural and cultural heritage of the Bay environment.

Offer future tools such as the development of innovative initiatives, alliances with public and private institutions and national and international creative experiences that allow the exchange of Portobelo with the world.

Vision

To be the pioneering cultural foundation in Portobelo and a reference in the country in the promotion of initiatives to invigorate cultural heritage. *











Photo by Lauryn Lawrence



Photo by Roy Wallace

The Artists of Taller Portobelo



Virgilio "Yaneca" Esquina

Yaneca's art career began in the 1970s as part of the first Taller Portobelo that Sandra organized with artists from Panama City and abroad along with emerging artists from Portobelo. Yan-eca started with handcrafted jewelry and later began painting bastones – canes/walking sticks. Oral tradition records cimarrones using bastones to climb steep hills while escaping and as weapons to defend themselves against the Spanish enslavers and wild animals in the forest.

Yaneca however, elevated the tradition of bastón-making to an art form. His bastones are slender polychrome sculptures resembling mythical beasts as well as reptiles, birds and other tropical animals.



Ariel "Pajarito" Jimenez

Ariel began his art career as Yaneca's assistant. However, that relationship quickly changed as he began exploring ways of depicting Congo traditions in a series of narrative paintings. He later found his voice as he developed a personal style of painting. From that moment there was no stopping him. He became such a prolific painter that the other artists in the group began calling him la máquina - the machine.

In his portrait paintings, Ariel relies on the luminous effect produced by the juxtaposition of complimentary colors found in his tropical environment. The result is what the famed Impressionist painter Claude Monet once said, "Color makes its impact from contrasts rather than from its inherent qualities . . . primary colors seem more brilliant when they are in contrast with their complementary colors."



Virgilio "Titto" Esquina

Titto, is Yaneca's eldest son. He is meticulous in his work and his life. He is ambitious and is very proud of his culture, his family and himself. He considers the people of Portobelo to be beautiful and attempts to depict that beauty in his paintings. He is also a Congo drummer and a former semi-professional footballer (soccer player). Titto is ambitious. He is currently engaged in a political campaign seeking the office of Representative of Portobelo.

As an artist Titto is constantly exploring new terrain. In a recent series of Congo portraits, he has been exploring the power of the gaze in works of art. For example, in *El enigma de Kianda*, the eyes of the owl and the mermaid are powerfully engaging. While captivated by the eyes of the owl, the viewer soon realizes that the mermaid has locked her gaze on the viewer resulting in four eyes that will follow the viewer around the room.



Gustavo Esquina De La Espada

Gustavo is Yaneca's third eldest son. He is a poet, a song-writer, painter, graphic designer and sculptor. Regardless of medium or style, Gustavo is as meticulous as his brother Titto. Gustavo works on a variety of themes. In his early work he concentrated on depicting Congo kings and queens from previous generations.

Like Yaneca and Titto, Gustavo is always forging into new aesthetic terrain. His fascination with the past led him to creating narrative paintings that investigate the lives of his ancestors, the cimarrones. He is also very interested in exploring new media, as well as environmentally friendly works of art. Like many young people in the village, Gustavo is concerned about the deterioration of the bay and the surrounding environment. As a result, he has dedicated himself to repurposing discarded wooden cayucos – canoes – and remos – oars – into objects d'art. His most recent environmentally friendly art is his multi-purpose polychrome bicycle sculptures constructed with discarded bicycle parts. These sculptures function as works of art as well as utilitarian objects.



Manuel "Tatú" Golden

Tatú is a griot who collects stories told by the elders in his community and converts them into provocative works of art. He functions as a self-taught native ethnographer. In his paintings, material reality, mythology, history, folklore and spirituality coexist comfortably. His "La lucha del bien y el mal" - The Struggle Between Good and Evil" - is emblematic of a series that document the essential goal of Congo ritual play - good conquers evil. In this work, he depicts a captured diablo surrounded by the Congo royal court - the king - Juan de Dioso, the queen Maria Merced, and their son Pajarito carrying the Congo black and white Olag. Another important character in this work is the archangel representing the souls of the departed cimarrones - maroons.

Tatú's work lives at the intersection of Magical Realism and Afrofuturism.



"Arte Congo... artists journey on the congo coast of panamá" is a one-hour documentary film that chronicles the journeys of seven artists on a mission to research, preserve and promote Congo culture in the Republic of Panama thru works of art. The Congos of Panama are descendants of Africans that escaped enslavement during the colonial period.

The central theme of the story is centered on arte congo, a new Afrocentric Panamanian art movement that reveals the beauty, strength and resiliency of Congo culture. In 2018 UNESCO designated Congo culture in Panama as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The goal of the documentary is to honor the artists of Taller Portobelo - the Portobelo Workshop - by providing them with a platform to speak for themselves about their lives, their art, and their culture. Taller Portobelo is now part of the Fundación Bahía de Portobelo. The film also honors the Portobelo community, the people of Panama and the African diaspora.

An important objective of this documentary is to reveal aesthetic links between Congo culture in Panama, Africa and the African diaspora thereby elevating Congo culture, art and artists to a status of greater international recognition.

Taller Portobelo was founded in the mid-1990s by the celebrated photographer **Sandra Eleta**, **Virgilio "Yaneca" Esquina**, an elder in the Congo community of Portobelo and artist/cultural investigator/educator **Arturo Lindsay**.

View: www.congoartfilm.com



Photo by Michael Elliott

Fernando Toledo

Fernando Toledo, an Ecuadorian-born painter, has been creating art for over two decades. His career has spanned both his native country and the isthmus he calls home. In the early 1990s, Toledo emerged with determination, participating in two Panama Biennials, winning first prize in 1994, and receiving first place in the National Painting Prize of INAC in 1993. Renowned curator Monica Kupfer recognized his talent from the outset and assisted him in establishing himself in the Panamanian plastic arts scene. "Awards commit one to a career with a level of continuous improvement," states the artist.

Toledo holds a degree in art teaching specializing in painting from the School of Fine Arts of Cuenca. His drawing skills were refined during a year of work in an architectural firm. Canvas and acrylic are his primary mediums, with occasional use of oil. He paints what he perceives and experiences, transforming reality and transporting it to the canvas.

Being a migrant from an Andean city to a coastal city was a significant change that marked him. Elements of both cultures permeate his work. More recently, he has been inspired by the Panama Canal, refugee crossings, and migration in Europe, employing charcoal drawing on canvas to create imagined cities and landscapes. "When one migrates, they bring a part of their city, it is an exchange," he stated.

Esviel Jeffers

Esviel Jeffers Durruthy, born in Guantánamo, Cuba, and currently lives and works in Panama City. At the age of six he moved with his family to Isla de la Juventud. There he received the degrees of Agronomy Engineer from the Jesús Montané Oropesa University and Visual Artist from The Wifredo Lam Academy of Plastic Arts. His work has been exhibited in several editions of the Cuban Salon of Contemporary Art and in exhibitions in the cities of Havana, Panama and Copenhagen. The most recent, open to the public at Díptico Art Studio & Gallery, "PROTOTYPES": Utopia of the Departure", a solo exhibition coordinated by the Symbiotic program of Quorum Cultural Laboratory.









Ciudad Del Saber

Located in front of the Panama Canal, Ciudad del Saber is an innovative community that imagines, researches, learns, teaches, experiments, invents, creates and inspires, proving that another version of Panama as well as another world are possible. Fundación Ciudad del Saber a the Panamanian, private, non-profit organization in charge of leading this local project with global impact.





Photo by Roy Wallace

Archaeological site of Panamá La Vieja

Panamá Viejo: The Origins of a Historic City

Panamá Viejo, the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific coast of the Americas, holds a significant place in the history of the region. Founded in 1519, the city quickly became a vital hub for Spanish expeditions aimed at conquering the Inca Empire and served as a crucial link in the silver and gold trade routes that connected the Americas to Europe.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site

In recognition of its cultural and historical importance, Panamá Viejo was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, along with the historic district of Casco Viejo. This designation underscores the city's enduring legacy as a center of early colonial activity and its continued relevance to understanding the past.

Archaeological Significance

Today, the ruins of Panamá Viejo offer a glimpse into the city's original layout. Visitors can explore remnants of its streets, public buildings, religious structures, and residential areas. The site also preserves evidence of the Cuevaan aboriginal occupation, revealing layers of history that predate European colonization.

Destruction and Renewal

In 1671, the city faced devastation when the infamous privateer Henry Morgan led an invasion that resulted in its destruction. Rather than rebuilding on the same site, Spanish authorities relocated the city to what is now known as Casco Viejo. This marked the beginning of a new chapter, while the ruins of Panamá Viejo remained as a testament to the city's dramatic past.

Today, Panamá Viejo stands not only as an archaeological treasure but also as a powerful reminder of the resilience and transformation that shaped Panama's history.



Museo De La Plaza Mayor

Located within the UNESCO-listed archaeological remains of Panama Viejo, this museum offers a journey through more than 1,500 years of local heritage. Inaugurated on August 10, 2017, it honors the efforts of intellectual and preservation advocate Samuel Lewis García de Paredes, whose scholarship and vision helped safeguard the historical legacy of Panama's first city.

With over 350 pieces on display, complemented by murals, models, and interactive storytelling, the museum helps connect the archaeological ruins to Panama's evolving identity—from indigenous roots through colonial transformation to modern significance





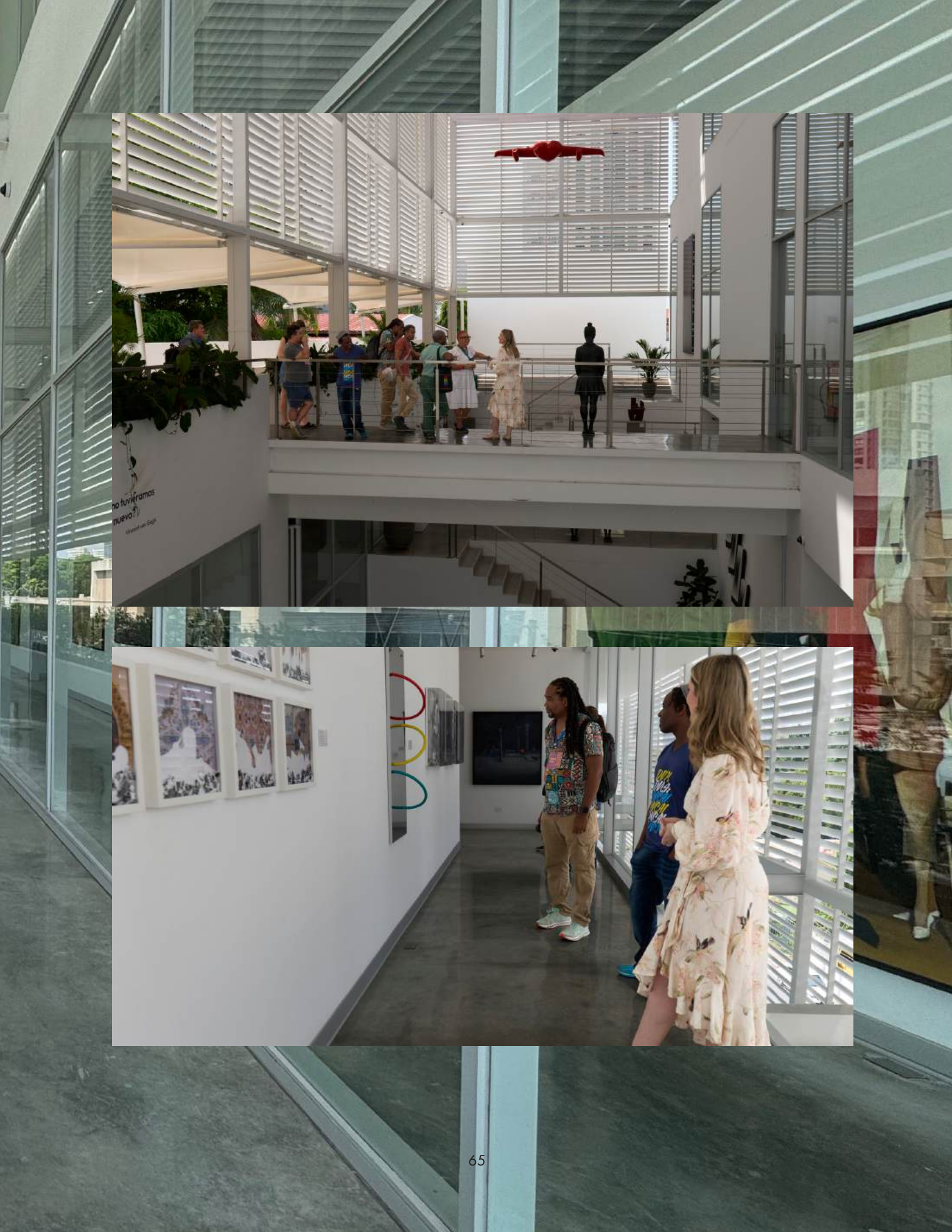




Espacio Arte

Espacio Arte Panamá, located in the Espacio Arte Center, is a new cultural platform in Panama City: a key place to experience contemporary visual art, a specialized bookstore, design objects, and antiques, all within an architecturally designed space for international curatorial projects.







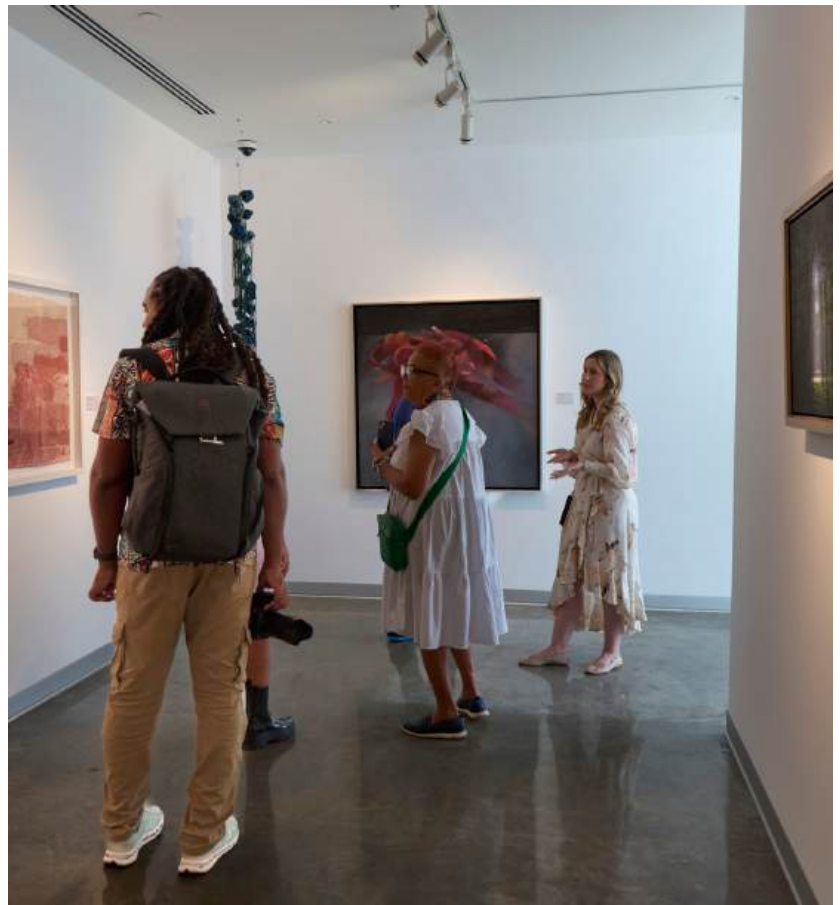








Photo by Roy Wallace





Photo by Michael Elliott

Aristedes Ureña Ramos

Aristides Ureña Ramos, a Panamanian artist born in Santiago de Veraguas in 1955, has resided and worked in Florence, Italy, for over two decades. Renowned for his multidisciplinary work, Ureña Ramos explores themes of history, culture, and identity through various media. His artistic journey began at the Accademia Delle Belle Arti in Florence, Italy, where he specialized in graphic arts and film.

After graduating from the Accademia, Ureña Ramos briefly returned to Panama in 1979 to teach at the Regional University of David before permanently returning to Italy in 1980. Since then, he has been a resident of Florence, creating a body of work that intertwines his Panamanian roots and Italian experiences.

Ureña Ramos's work often draws upon a "library" of references, including Panamanian history, Italian culture, and his personal experiences. He frequently incorporates the Chiquita Brands logo into his art, reclaiming collective memory and addressing the impact of banana enclaves in Panama.

Throughout his career, Ureña Ramos has participated in numerous exhibitions, both solo and group, across Europe and the Americas. His work has been widely recognized, with notable appearances at prestigious events such as the Venice Biennial in 1986, 1997, and 2001, as well as other esteemed exhibitions in Greece, Berlin, and Hamburg.

Currently, Ureña Ramos is engaged in an allegorical cycle, continuing his exploration of Panamanian history and culture.









Photo by Roy Wallace

CASA SANTA ANA

We are a non-profit foundation that connects people through contemporary art, seeking to understand current contexts and build a stronger and more inclusive community. Founded in 2015 by Johnny Roux, we hold exhibitions, publications, workshops, residencies, and community programs with the intention of making art accessible and relevant to everyone's lives.

Our casa is made up of an exhibition space and an apartment that houses our international artist residency program. Both components provide spaces for collaboration with artists, galleries and institutions, thus strengthening local and global bridges.

Through exhibitions by renowned international and local artists, we seek to open dialogues that allow us to better understand each other and make art relevant and accessible to all. Our publications seek to collect and share the life and work of local artists both inside and outside our borders.

Voces en acción is an experimental art workshop that has taken place every year since 2018. Led by artists Donna Conlon and Jonathan Harker, the 8-week workshop focuses on the conceptualization and production of artworks that open dialogues about our socio-political contexts and the issues that affect us, helping to build a strong and engaged artistic community.

Our children's library La Leonera will be a place where - through the relationship with reading, writing and contemporary art - the boys and girls of Santa Ana who are in a vulnerable state will be able to develop their full potential.





Photo by Roy Wallace

Giana De Dier

Giana De Dier is a contemporary collage artist whose work centers the experiences and heritage of Afro-Caribbean people who migrated to Panama during the construction of the Panama Canal in the early 1900s. Her art places particular emphasis on the experiences of Afro-Caribbean women, highlighting the ways they navigated and occupied space, formed relationships and built communities. In her collages, De Dier combines layers of paper, fabric, personal and archival records and photographs, to ignite conversations on memory, migration, family history, identity, and representation. Her collages re-envision and explore the possibilities of what might be absent from photographic and historical archives. Her work challenges the erasure and misrepresentation of Afro-Caribbean women in historical narratives, offering alternative perspectives that honor their contributions and histories.

De Dier studied visual arts at the University of Panama. Her collages have been exhibited at the Art Gallery of the IDB Employees Association, Washington; the Museum of Contemporary Art of Panama; the 58th. Carnegie International, Pittsburgh, PA; the 60th International Art Exhibition, Venice; the Museum of Modern Art of Medellin, Colombia; and 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, London, UK. Her collages are part of the collections of the Panama Canal Museum; the Museum of Contemporary Art of Panama; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Washington and the Guess Lawson Collection.. She has participated in art residencies at the Panama Canal Museum and the Delfina Foundation in London. De Dier lives and works in Panama City, Panama.







MUSEO DEL CANAL

The Canal Museum is a non-profit institution at the service of society, which rescues and promotes the historical memory of Panama and its Canal, being a platform for art and culture in all its expressions. We create memorable experiences that exalt Panama's heritage, promote diversity and sustainability, and encourage learning, research, enjoyment, reflection and cultural enrichment.



MUSEO DEL
CANAL

Photo by Izia Lindsay











Photo by Roy Wallace

José Braithwaite

Braithwaite is a Panamanian visual artist and photographer who, through observing the everyday, explores how processes of genocide have deteriorated the human environment. His work extends into alternative and unconventional spaces, where she develops a unique visual language that transforms her observations into installations and performances reflecting the social context. Often critical, visually powerful, and aggressive, he perspective challenges viewers to confront uncomfortable realities. Braithwaite's work has been exhibited internationally, including in Costa Rica, Panama, Hungary, France, Poland, England, the Netherlands, New York, California, and South Africa.







The Catholic Heart of Panama City

The Catholic Heart of Panama City beats in the historic district of Casco Viejo, where Roman Catholicism continues to shape both the skyline and the cultural spirit of the city. At its center stands the Metropolitan Archcathedral Basilica of Santa María la Antigua, consecrated in 1796 after more than a century of construction, with its twin Renaissance towers dominating Independence Plaza as a symbol of faith and history. Nearby, the unassuming Iglesia de San José houses the legendary Golden Altar, a Baroque masterpiece carved in mahogany and gilded with gold leaf, famously saved from pirate raids in 1671 by being painted black to avoid detection. Other notable churches, including San Francisco de Asís and La Merced, contribute to a sacred circuit that comes alive during Holy Week, when thousands of pilgrims and visitors traverse its storied paths. Together, these landmarks form a tapestry of devotion and architectural heritage, revealing Casco Viejo as the enduring Catholic heart of Panama City.





Photo by Izia Lindsay







Photo by Izia Lindsay



Galeria Arteconsult

With over four decades of experience as consultants and promoters of contemporary Latin American and world art, we have cultivated a deep understanding of the diverse artistic landscape. Our expertise encompasses a wide range of techniques, including acrylic and oil painting on canvas, photography, sculpture, paperwork, and a comprehensive selection of graphic design services.

In addition to our artistic offerings, we provide a comprehensive suite of related services. These include art appraisals, museum-quality framing, art handling, restoration, assembly, rental of artwork, consultancies for both private and corporate projects, collection management, packaging of artwork for international transport, purchase and sale in the secondary market, and more.

Established in 1979 in Panama City, we have consistently demonstrated our commitment to excellence and have garnered a reputation for providing exceptional services to both artists and collectors.



Ana Berta Carrizo
Director



Hinda Ehlers
Assistant Director





Photo by Roy Wallace



Photo by Roy Wallace

Hugo González

Hugo González is a Panamanian artist and architect whose multidisciplinary practice explores humanity's intervention in the environment through printmaking, painting, and concrete sculpture. He studied architecture at the University of Panama and has participated in key residencies such as "Círculo de Crítica" in Mexico and "Simbiótica" with Quórum Laboratorio Cultural, as well as the Julio Zachrisson Graphic Laboratory at MAC Panamá in 2022.

Since being selected for Panamá Instantánea in 2017, González has featured in numerous group exhibitions, including Debate at Ciudad del Saber (2023) and Restos de Derivas y Naufragios, produced with curatorial guidance from Quórum (2022). He is part of the permanent collection at MAC Panamá and was awarded by Fundación Marea Verde in the national "Reciclar EsCultura" competition in 2021.









Photo by Izia Lindsay





Photo by Roy Wallace

OLGA SINCLAIR

Plastic artist and sculptor, she began her artistic career at an early age under the tutelage of her father, the maestro Alfredo Sinclair. He studied Fine Arts in Madrid, at the Academy of Applied Arts and Artistic Trades and received three years of classical drawing instruction at the Arjona Studios. In Amsterdam, he studied the great Dutch masters of the eighteenth century.

She obtained her degree in Interior Design at the University of Santa María la Antigua (Panama), while studying engraving classes with the artist Giangrandi. He returns to Europe, to London, where she dedicates herself to research. In 2009 Arte al día magazine published her catalogue raisonné, "Olga Sinclair: obras-works, 1995-2008". She currently chairs the Olga Sinclair Foundation, whose purpose is to form integral human beings through contact with the arts.

Her work has moved from figuration to abstraction, always concerned with plastic experimentation. She has had more than fifty solo and two hundred collective exhibitions held in various cities in Asia, Europe and America.











Photographer Roy Wallace
Photo by Michael Elliott

Photo by Roy Wallace



Photo by Izia Lindsay







Mola Museum

The Mola Museum is a “virtual museum” dedicated to the art of the Kuna (Guna) Indians. The Kunas live on the San Blas Islands east of Panama, in the Darien region of Panama, and in Colombia. Kuna women make and wear blouses decorated with appliqued cloth, reverse appliqued cloth and embroidery. The blouses, and their decorative front and rear panels, are referred to as molas. The best molas are remarkable works of art. The Mola Museum is dedicated to promoting this amazingly diverse art form. Our collection focuses on molas and other Kuna art made prior to 1975.



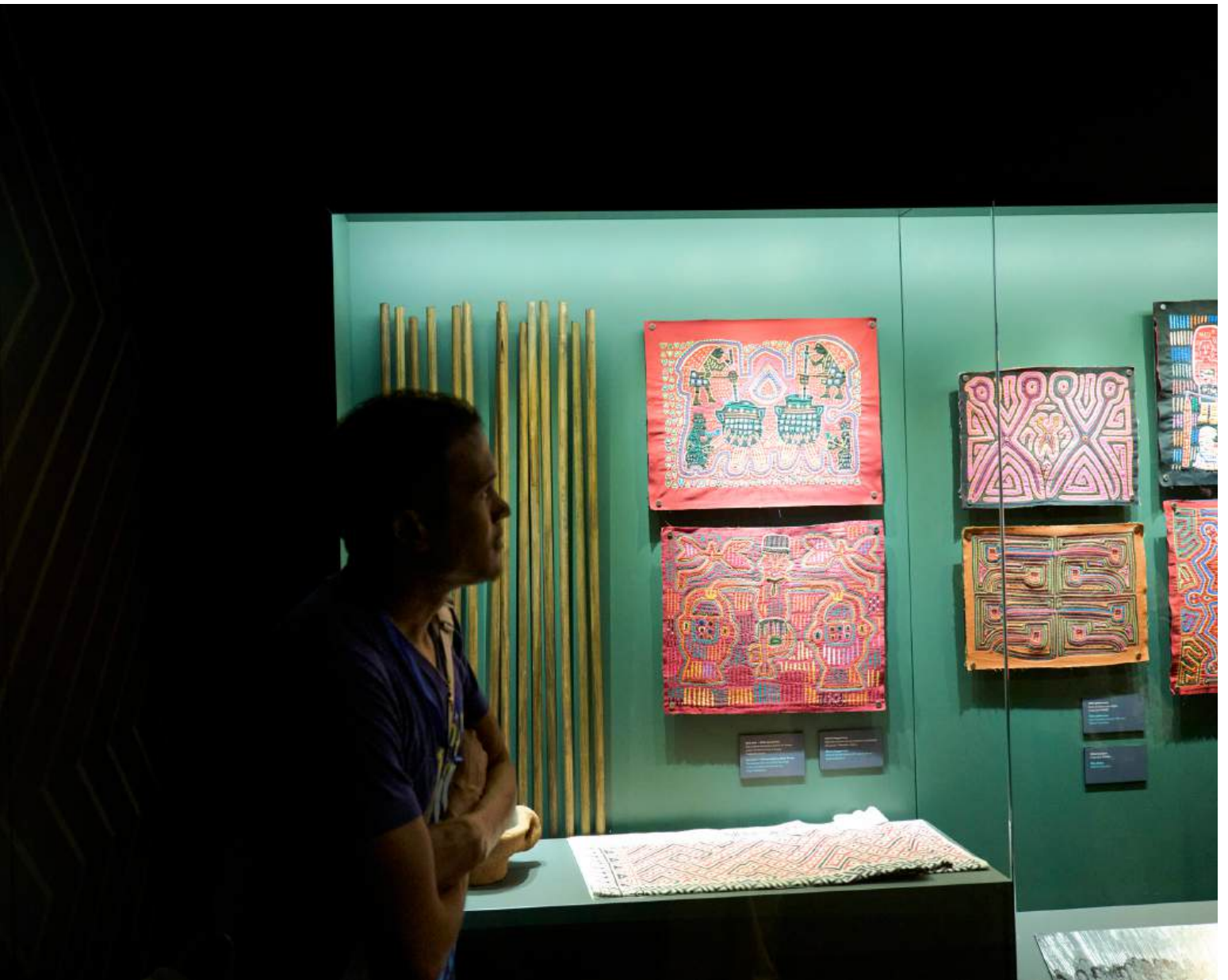










Photo by Izia Lindsay



Biomuseo

Biomuseo is a vibrant museum dedicated to the natural history and biodiversity of Panama, focusing especially on the formation of the Isthmus of Panama, a geologically recent event that dramatically reshaped the ecology of the Western Hemisphere. Situated on the scenic Amador Causeway in Panama City, the museum is the brainchild of world-renowned architect Frank Gehry, marking his first project in Latin America. Conceived in 1999 and officially opened to the public on October 2, 2014, Biomuseo stands out for its bold, colorful architecture that reflects the rich diversity of life it celebrates.

The museum's exhibits explore Panama's unique natural and cultural heritage, illustrating the critical role humans play in shaping the environment in the 21st century. Through immersive galleries, Biomuseo tells the fascinating story of how the rise of the isthmus connected North and South America, triggering major shifts in climate, animal migration, and the evolution of species worldwide. Beyond its scientific mission, Biomuseo aims to inspire visitors to appreciate biodiversity and promote conservation efforts both locally and globally.





Photo by Izia Lindsay











Photo by Roy Wallace



2025 ICEP Participants



Rosie Gordon-Wallace is a recognized curator, arts advocate, community leader and pioneer in advancing contemporary Caribbean diaspora art. She founded the Diaspora Vibe Culture Arts Incubator (DVCAI) to serve as a local and global laboratory dedicated to promoting, nurturing and cultivating the vision and diverse talents of emerging artists from the Caribbean Diaspora, artists of color and immigrant artists. Twenty-six years later, DVCAI is recognized as a global resource and one of the region's leading platforms dedicated to providing diaspora artists with a venue to explore and experiment with new forms and themes that challenge traditional definitions of Caribbean and Latin American art.



Alix Pierre, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer in the ADW program at Spelman College. His research focuses on the Diasporan retention and transformation of culture that includes a feminist perspective. He favors a transnational approach to Diasporic cultural production beyond the boundaries of nations and states. He explores the representation and visualization of black bodies, voices, thoughts, and aesthetics across media. Since 2015, he has been collaborating with the DVCAI as a scholar-in-residence. He is the author of *L'image de la femme résistante chez quatre romancières noires : vision diasporique de la femme en résistance chez Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, Toni Morrison et Alice Walker* (PAF:2014) among other accolades.



Ife Williams - Born in Atlanta, art has played a central role in her life since early childhood. Ife Williams began her formal training in sculpture at Interlochen Arts Academy in Northern Michigan, holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Sculpture/ Metalsmithing from the University of Michigan, pursued a Master's degree in Museum Studies at Syracuse University, and received a certificate of nonprofit organizational management from the Georgia Center for Nonprofits. Over the last three decades, Ife has worked actively as a maker in stone and ceramics while also serving in several administrative roles. She currently holds the position of Deputy Director at The Hambidge Center for Creative Arts & Sciences in Rabun Gap, Georgia.



Michael Elliott's artistic journey has taken him into a socio-political realm over the years, mainly focusing on painting as his medium but also photography at times. It is fair to say that photography has indeed influenced his style of painting, i.e., photorealism. Attending the Edna Manley College of The Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica in 1998, Michael honed his skill as a painter, developing different techniques in varying mediums while developing an awareness of social issues in Jamaica and throughout the world. Michael's work can be said to feature a wide use of symbolism to represent his themes, especially in the intimately tuned still life pieces.



Thom Wheeler Castillo lives and works in Miami, FL; Graduated from PNCA, Intermedia. Wheeler Castillo is interested in the landscape and ecosystems, past (art history) and present (Environmental Studies); he works from an interdisciplinary approach in his relentless pursuit of poetry, art history, earth science and anthropology. He is Co-director at Turn-Based Press, an artist-run print studio, whose mission is to offer facilities for printmakers in Miami, FL, as well as advance an appreciation for the medium and its history. He also produces works through experimentation and partnership that nurtures his visual work. One-half of the experimental Archival Feedback (along with Emile Milgrim), the duo engage in various critical dialogues of the moment, they approach the environment as a studio in the eld, their ears and tools guiding questions and intentions. The eldwork documents through sound a repeatable sensorial experience of the ever-changing landscape. AF expands their range working in other mediums including print-making, video, sound manipulation and installation and through collaboration with artists, musicians, and scientists.



Kurt Nahar, from Paramaribo, Suriname, started his art education at the Nola Hatterman Art Academy in Suriname and continued his studies at the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica. Nahar uses his art to express his thoughts and emotions on various subjects related to questionable social and political circumstances in Suriname and other countries worldwide. He believes that artists have a responsibility to expose their viewers to the social reality. He does so in a bold and often confrontational manner and thus hopes to increase awareness and stimulate discussion about the sensitive subjects that he brings to light. Political injustices, social inequality and the widespread abuse of power are among his main themes. His technique is inspired by the methods of his predecessors from the era of Dadaism. The use of collage techniques and simple objects is characteristic of his art.



Izia Lindsay is a mixed media artist who explores with both digital and traditional media. His artwork addresses symbolism in Caribbean iconography that is rooted in tradition but interpreted with contemporary ideas. Caribbean iconography is used as a basis to create his multi-layered artistic narratives. His subject matter tackles issues of identity and class in a post-colonial society. His research stems from material culture, indigenous societies, traditions and the ever-changing landscape of the Caribbean. Lindsay uses bold, geometric shapes that juxtapose and intersperse to form his multilayered artistic pieces. Lines and shapes are conceptually layered and can be characterized as controlled naturalism. The thematic whole is a cultural narrative reproducing the dualities of his turbulent, cosmopolitan, Caribbean life.



Roy A. Wallace travels with the DVCAI team as a Photographer and Logistics Manager. He is detailed and enjoys the mechanics of preparation and documentation. His technical ability provides our team with practical “can do support” and building infrastructure for our exhibitions.

“I produce my images in response to the demand to be an image. And yet it is a decentering act: there is no transparent, total subject; there is full knowledge of self.”

Roy loves photography and is a committed student of the craft. Born in Jamaica, he is an avid tennis player and coach. Educated at The University of Florida and Florida International University, he is a core working member of the DVCAI Team.



Asser St. Val is a DVCAI Catalyst Awardee, Multi-disciplinary artist, painter, sculptor, installation artist, graphic designer and musician, Asser Saint-Val was born in Port-de-Paix, Haiti, in 1974 and moved to South Florida in 1988. He earned BFAs in painting and graphic design from the New World School of the Arts / University of Florida. He received the South Florida Cultural Consortium Award in 2006 and 2011 for mixed media paintings and the Miami Dade county Artist Access Grant and The Diaspora Vibe Cultural Incubator grant in 2017. His work is represented in a number of private and public collections including The Rubell Museum, Dr. Arturo & Liza Mosquera Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library, Francie Bishop Good, and Mireille Chancy-Gonzalez Collection to name a few. He has participated in residencies at Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator (DVCAI), Jacmel, Haiti (Fosaje), Santiago de Cuba (Casa del Caribe & Taller Cultural “Luis Diaz Oduardo”), and in Jamaica, WI (Edna Manley College).



Lauryn Lawrence, a Jamaican and Dominican American artist and curator whose work examines her experiences as an Afro-Latina intersectional feminist. Born and raised in South Florida, where she is currently based, Lawrence holds a Master of Arts in Museums, Galleries, and Contemporary Culture from the University of Westminster, London, UK, and a Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Art History from Florida International University. Her multimedia works are both analytical and reflective. Lawrence emphasizes capturing representations of intersectional communities in society and paying attention to the relationship between people and their spaces.

Special Thanks:

DVCAI 2025 committee team members:

Rosie Gordon-Wallace , Kim Yantis, Izia Lindsay, Roy Wallace, Tanya Desdunes

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC) and Diablo Rosso, with cultural liaison Marnie Walker

Gladys Turner Bosso

Design: Izia Lindsay, M.F.A.

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Executive Director

Rosie Gordon-Wallace

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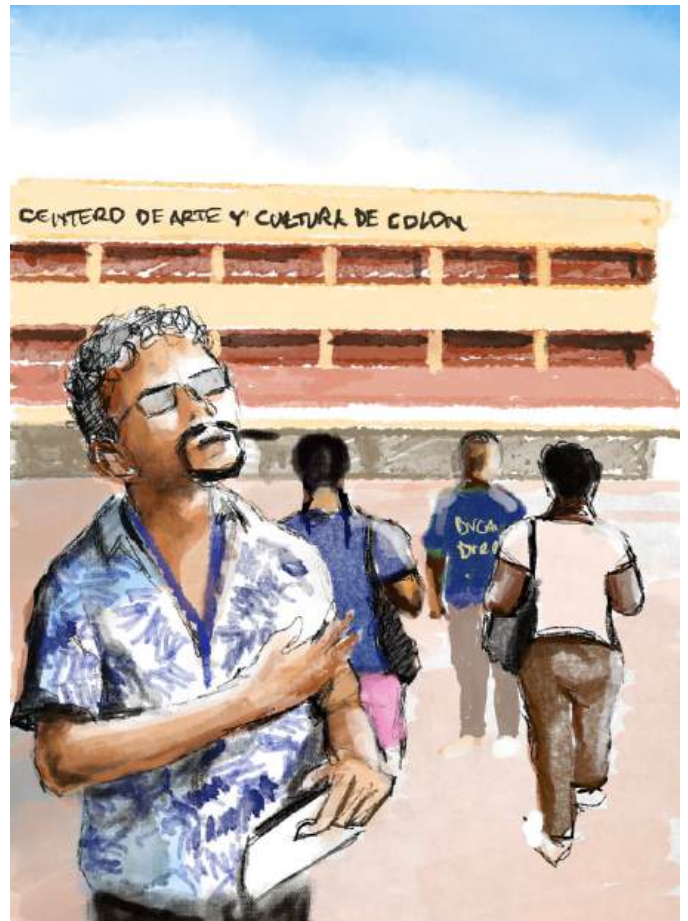
Joseph Cloud

Board Member



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Illustrations by Michael Elliott





Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator (DVCAI) will conduct its second International Cultural Exchange to Panama & "Caribbean Global Currents II: Panama."

The theme, 'Talking Across Difference,' engages with the region's contemporary artists in a conversation about the influences of nationhood and sovereignty, the shared history of the Panama Canal, and the post-canal influence on Caribbean lives and Panama-American lives in Miami.

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