

August 2, 2013

To: Kristen Zaremba
Senior Public Art Project Manager
Alameda County Arts Commission

From: Evelyn Orantes
Oakland, CA 94610

Dear PAAC Members:

I'm writing this letter to express my interest in joining the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) for the City of Oakland. I have been a resident of the City of Oakland since 1996 and have been involved in the arts community as a cultural worker since then.

The importance of art in our society has guided me to a career in the arts as a museum professional at the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA). I started at OMCA as a volunteer for the Days of the Dead exhibition while I was a student at UC Berkeley. Upon graduation I was able to secure an entry-level position and have been an employee there for the last thirteen years. Currently, I'm the senior experience developer, a role that was created as part of the reorganization of our institution. In this role my primary responsibility is to create interpretive and participatory experiences for our museum visitors. In my various roles throughout the years at the museum, I have focused on community engagement, partnerships with youth, community based organizations and professional artists, as well as the development of my own artistic practice.

It was through my work on the Days of the Dead project at the OMCA, that I was able to explore my voice as a community artist. My first endeavor was with the exhibition *Espiritu Sin Fronteras* curated by Tere Romo in 2002. As one of the lead teaching-artists, I had the pleasure of working with high-school students from Hayward High School to create an installation in honor of their ancestors. In the years that followed I have created educational altars as part of the Days of the Dead exhibitions that have been used by thousands of school children to orient them to the elements of this tradition. These experiences built my confidence as an artist and inspired me to pursue other opportunities to participate in exhibitions and present my art at other venues like the Mission Cultural Center, the De Young and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

I would love the opportunity to apply all my experience as a museum professional and community artist to serve on Public Art Advisory Committee. I look forward to the opportunity of working with all of you.

Thank you for your consideration.
Evelyn Orantes

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Oakland Museum of California

Senior Experience Developer 2011- Present

- Creates interpretive and participatory experiences for visitors
- Adapts curatorial content for various platforms including exhibitions, programs, websites activities, and other resources
- Oversees evaluation and other research initiatives and incorporate findings to the development of offerings for the selection, supervision, training and evaluation of the experience development team
- Direct project teams, activities, and initiatives including the research, preparation, and administration of related budgets and timelines
- Develop, negotiate and monitor professional services contracts
- Oversee the work of consultants, volunteers, and temporary staff

Cultural Arts Developer 2004 – 2011

- Days of the Dead project director
- Advocate for special audiences (teen, multicultural, multi-lingual, special needs)
- Develop and monitor program budgets
- Work with the development department to fundraise and prepare reports for funders
- Recruit, train, and administer the Days of the Dead Exhibit Guide Program
- Recruit, hire, train and manage museum teachers, and program staff
- Develop and implement docent trainings for working with teens and diverse audiences
- Develop educational interpretive strategies and materials for reinstallation of Art Gallery
- Develop, implement and evaluate school and public programs (adult, family and youth) based on the museum's special exhibitions, collections and California themes

Co-Curator "The African Presence in Mexico: From Yanga to the Present" May 9 – August 23, 2009

- Develop and implement docent trainings in collaboration with History and Docent departments
- Facilitate project specific community advisory council meetings and incorporate feedback into program development and curate related programs

Co-Curator "Cool Remixed: Bay Area Urban Art & Culture Now" May 17 - August 17, 2008

- Recruit and lead co-creation efforts with youth organizations to develop exhibition elements and related programming
- Develop educational interpretive strategies, labels and materials

Education Projects Coordinator 2002- 2004

- Respond to inquiries and Spanish media
- Develop and implement outreach strategies to broaden collaborations with community organizations, schools, universities and community groups
- Coordinate and implement activities for youth and adult programs
- Manage overall operations of the Education office, including supervising interns and part time staff attending to administrative duties

Curatorial Aide 2000-2002

- Coordinate Youth interns and special projects
- Office management for the Education Department
- Provide administrative and logistical support for public programs and community meetings

Museum Teacher 1999-2000

- Facilitate Natural Science and History programs to diverse range of elementary students

Exhibit Guide Coordinator 1999

- Provide overall support, troubleshoot problems, coordinated shift debriefing meetings
- Address questions or concerns from Guides and docents

INDEPENDENT EXPERIENCE

Program Presenter, De Young Fine Arts Museums, February 25, 2011

- Develop and implement programming families and the general public in collaboration with Cultural Arts Program Specialist related to special exhibition *Olmec: Colossal Masterworks of Ancient Mexico*

Program Presenter, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington D.C. 2008 – 2010, 2013

- Develop and implement programming for families and the general public in collaboration with Cultural Arts Program Specialist related to the subjects of chocolate, corn, mask-making and Days of the Dead

Instructor, University of California Berkeley in collaboration with the Oakland Museum of California, Fall 2003 and Fall 2004

- Work with the Chicano Latino Agenda to recruit students, coordinate and facilitate a (2 unit) course about Days of the Dead

Consultant, Independent Film Channel, New York City, NY July 2004

- Advise the Independent Film Channel on an a pilot educational film project

Consultant, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington D.C. July 2004

- Assist the Museum Program Specialist for Latin America in developing programming and curriculum for Fall 2004

Guest Curator, Stand Gallery, San Francisco and Berkeley, California, March - April 2003

- Recruit and organize artist for two exhibitions of *"Pride and Prejudice: Interpretations of the American Flag"* and *"The Art of Movement."*
- Collaborate with a grassroots artist collective, educators and activists for a "pop up" gallery (temporary exhibitions in different alternative locations)

Guest Curator, June Steingart Gallery, Laney College, Nov. 2001, June 2002, Nov. 2002

- Coordinate artists, community organizations and student groups for special exhibitions *"Espiritu de la Comunidad: Honoring our Ancestors," "Taking It To The Edge: Contemporary Expressions for Latino Artists,"* and *"Puentes entre Corazones: Honoring our Ancestors"*

Exhibit Consultant, Berkeley Art Center, September – November 2000

- Consult staff on outreach and teaching guide for the exhibit *Ethnic Notions 2000: Black Images in the White Mind and Beyond*

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Boards

Board Member, Chicana Latina Foundation 2006- 2008

Board Member, Galeria de la Raza Regeneration, 2002- 2005

Committee Member, The Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya, Legion of Honor 2004

Art Panels

Program Panelist, Next Generation Innovation Grant, March 2011

Program Panelist, Alameda Arts Commission, Artist Selection Ashland Center, October 2010

Program Panelist, San Francisco Arts Commission, Immigrant Organization Grants, Dec 2010

Program Panelist, San Francisco Arts Commission, Native American Grants March 2010

Program Panelist, Cultural Funding for the City of Oakland, March 2009

Program Panelist, Alameda County Arts Commission, Public Art Panel, June 2008

Program Panelist, Cultural Funding for the City of Oakland, March 2008

Presentations

Presenter, California Association of Museums, "Translations" February 22, 2013

Presenter, California Association of Museums, "Community Collaborations", February 2012

Presenter, California Association of Museums, "Co-creation" March 3, 2011

Presenter, Cultural Connections, "OMG! OMCA: Backstage Pass," October 20, 2010

Presenter, San Francisco Emerging Arts Professionals, "Career Trajectories," October 26, 2009

Presenter, Gualala Arts Center, "Days of the Dead," September 14, 2009

Presenter, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "Frida Kahlo Teacher Institute," June 28, 2008

Presenter, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "Paul Klee Family Day," April 2008

Presenter, Judah L. Magnes Museum, Docent Training April 2007

Presenter, Judah L. Magnes Museum, "Family Day," April 9, 2006

Presenter, United States Mint, "Latino Heritage Month Celebration," September 23, 2004

Presenter, Fremont Main Library, "Making Altars for *Días de los Muertos*," October 18, 2004

Presenter, San Lorenzo Library, "Making Altars for *Días de los Muertos*," October 12, 2004

Presenter, Fremont Main Library, "Making Altars for *Días de los Muertos*," October 28, 2003

Presenter, Triton Museum, "How to Celebrate Days of the Dead", November 1, 2003

Presenter, California Association of Museums, "Museums and Community" July 18, 2003

EDUCATION

University of California Berkeley, 1999, BA in History

Thesis: "The Art of Movement: Chicano California Murals, Reception and Identity Formation,"

Universidad Complutense Madrid, 1997-1998

Santa Monica College, 1996, AA in Social Sciences, with honors

PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT

Smithsonian, Diversity, Leadership and Museums Training March 2002

Smithsonian, Institute for the Interpretation and Representation of Latino Cultures June – July 2004

LANGUAGES

Spanish: Fluent, written and verbal

REFERENCES

Available upon request.

PAAC 10-7-13 Item VI.