

FSA Retreat Attendee Bios



Gregory Volk

Gregory Volk is a New York-based art writer, freelance curator, and a former associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. He writes regularly for *Hyperallergic* and *The Brooklyn Rail*, and his articles and reviews have also appeared in many other publications, including *Art in America*. His book-length essay on German artist Katharina Grosse appears in the monograph *Katharina Grosse*, published in 2020 by Lund Humphries as part of their *Contemporary Painters Series*. Among his contributions to exhibition catalogues and books are essays on Joan Jonas (Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2007); Vito Acconci, in *Vito Acconci: Diary of a Body, 1969-1973* (Charta, 2007); Turkish artist Ayse Erkmen (Venice Biennale, 2011), and Icelandic artist *Ragna Róbertsdóttir*, in *Ragna Róbertsdóttir Works 1984-2017* (Distanz Verlag, Berlin, 2018). Additionally, he has curated numerous exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad. Volk received his B.A. from Colgate University and his M.A. from Columbia University.



Gustavo Santaolalla

Gustavo Santaolalla is a globally renowned multi-instrumentalist, songwriter, producer, and composer. His multi-phased career took him from his home in Argentina—where he founded and led the influential psychedelic folk-rock band Arco Iris in the early to mid-'70s— to Los Angeles, where he is currently based. He has recorded and produced albums in genres ranging from folk to punk to tango and ambient electronica. In addition to producing rock en español and Latin alternative acts such as Cafe Tacuba, Julieta Venegas, and Juanes, he is a two-time Academy Award-winning composer for the scores of *Brokeback Mountain* and *Babel*, in addition to scoring numerous films including *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *August: Osage County*, and the theme for *Jane the Virgin*, and *Making a Murderer*. His self-composed soundtrack for HBO's 2023 rendition of *The Last of Us* won acclaim across the international gaming industry. Santaolalla received Grammy nominations for his solo albums *Ronroco* and *Camino*. He is co-founder and leader of the electro-tango supergroup Bajofondo.



Alejandra Palacios

Alejandra Palacios is a Los Angeles-based photographer, originally from Argentina. Making a name for herself by contributing to alternative magazines, photographing artists, and live musical performances, she pursued formal photography education at La Escuela Panamericana de Arte in Buenos Aires. Gracing the pages of newspapers and album covers, Palacios met award-winning musician Gustavo Santaolalla in 1984, who hired her to photograph his project *De Ushuaia A La Quiaca*. Traveling Argentina alongside him, with renowned artist Leon Gieco and a recording studio, Palacios videotaped and photographed rural musicians of Argentina as a sort of musical map of the country, culminating in three albums, a TV show, and a book. Moving to L.A., Palacios married Santaolalla, where they continue to collaborate on many projects. She currently works as a freelance photographer.



Paul-Gordon Chandler

Paul-Gordon Chandler is the Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming and the Founding President of CARAVAN Arts. He grew up in Senegal and has worked extensively around the world in leadership roles within faith-based publishing, the arts, relief efforts, and development within the Episcopal Church. An author, art curator, peacemaker, social entrepreneur, and an authority on the Middle East and Africa, he is passionate about employing the arts for transformation purposes toward a more harmonious future. He has authored four non-fiction books in the fields of spirituality, interreligious peacebuilding, and the Middle East. In 2020, he was awarded by the Archbishop of Canterbury the Hubert Walter Award for Reconciliation and Interfaith Cooperation, the highest international award for outstanding service in the work of reconciliation and interfaith dialogue within the Anglican Communion.



Leesa Fanning

Leesa Fanning is an independent curator and contributing author/editor of the seminal volume *Encountering the Spiritual in Contemporary Art* (2018), published by Yale University Press and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Fanning is the former Curator of Contemporary Art at the Nelson-Atkins (1998-2018). While there, her contributions to the intersection of contemporary art and spirituality were evident in the exhibitions: Janet Cardiff's *Forty-Part Motet*; Bill Viola's *The Raft*; and *Wolfgang Laib: Without Place—Without Time—Without Body*. In addition to overseeing the contemporary art collection, Fanning's purview included the Noguchi Court and the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park. Fanning holds a doctorate in art history from the University of Kansas. She has taught art history classes on contemporary art and African art at The University of Kansas, The University of Missouri, and The Kansas City Art Institute. Today, as independent curator, she has curated *Life-Altering: Selections from a Kansas City Collection* (2022)—the Bill and Christy Gautreaux collection—and very recently opened a group show in New York City at the Sundaram Tagore Gallery entitled *Native American Art Now*. This exhibition included over 20 artists from Canada and the United States and 40 works of art. Many objects in this exhibition embody Native American spirituality in its myriad of forms.



Sam Samiee

Sam Samiee is a painter, essayist, and psychoanalyst-in-training based in Berlin and Tehran. His primary education in arts began at the University of Arts in Tehran. He synthesizes his research in art history, Persian poetry, and psychoanalytic theories into a vivid studio practice. His installations act as extended paintings, breaking from the tradition of flat painting and returning to the historic questions of how artists can represent the three-dimensional world in the space of painting. He employs a range of painterly attitudes from oil paintings to iPad paintings, figuration, abstraction, and incorporation of text, among other methods. He has exhibited his works at the 10th Berlin Biennale, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, Manchester Art Gallery, Dastan Gallery, Art Basel Hong Kong, and Liste Art Fair, among many other international presentations.



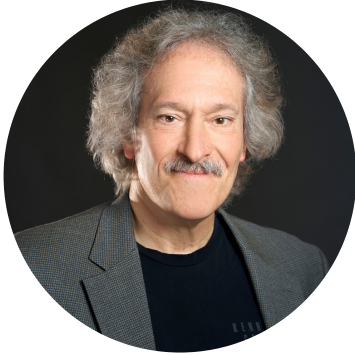
Cecilia González-Andrieu

Cecilia González-Andrieu is professor of theology at Loyola Marymount University. She completed her doctorate at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, and was first to combine systematic theology with religion and the arts under the late Alex García-Rivera. González-Andrieu is a leading scholar of theological aesthetics, in addition to working on issues of immigration, educational and worker justice. Author of *Bridge to Wonder: Art as a Gospel of Beauty*, and co-editor of *Teaching Global Theologies: Power and Praxis*, she co-chairs the LMU Latino Theology and Ministry Initiative, is an active supporter of the Ignatian Solidarity Network, and is an advisor for the Discerning Deacons Project. An alumna of the Hispanic Theological Initiative, she is Vice President of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the US, and is co-founder of LMU's initiatives with undocumented students. Awards include GTU Alumna of the Year and the O'Hara Graff Award from the Catholic Theological Society of America.



Jessica Ludwig

Jessica Ludwig joined the Morgan Library & Museum as Deputy Director in February 2017 after more than sixteen years of experience leading complex exhibition, capital, and operational projects, primarily at New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts. At the Guggenheim, Ludwig served as a Director of Exhibition Management and Special Projects, where she managed six departments and the planning and execution of exhibitions in New York and worldwide. As Director of ClarkNEXT and Design at the Clark Art Institute, she was a member of the leadership team implementing the museum's expansion, including a new building designed by Tadao Ando and the renovation of the original museum building by Selldorf Architects. At the Morgan, Jessica oversees a number of different functional areas at the museum, including Communications and Marketing, Facilities, Exhibition and Collection Management, and Visitor Services. She led the execution of the meticulous exterior restoration of J. Pierpont Morgan's Library and the award-winning garden addition completed in 2022 as well as the development of the Morgan's first Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion plan. She graduated summa cum laude in Visual and Environmental Studies from Harvard University. She is a committed Zen practitioner and serves on the board of Zen Mountain Monastery in Mt. Tremper, New York.



Ori Soltes

Dr. Ori Z. Soltes is A Professor of Art History, Theology, Philosophy, and Politics at Georgetown University. The former director and curator of the B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum in Washington, DC, he earned his B.A. in Philosophy from Haverford College, his M.A. in Classics from Princeton, and his Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Union Institute and University. He is the author of nearly 300 articles, exhibition catalogues, essays, and books, and is the writer, director, and narrator of more than 30 documentary videos. Among his books relating to art are *Fixing the World: Jewish American Painters in the Twentieth Century*; *Our Sacred Signs: How Christian, Jewish and Muslim Art Draw from the Same Source*; *The Ashen Rainbow: Essays on the Arts and the Holocaust*; and *Between Pasts and Future: A Conceptual History of Israeli Art*. Soltes has taught and lectured in more than 20 universities and museums nationally on subjects ranging from *Symbols of Faith: Art as an Instrument of Addressing God to The Body in Ancient Art*. Throughout the United States and overseas, he has guest-curated exhibitions that have focused on diverse aspects of Western art throughout the ages and art from across the world.



Nezekat Ekici

Nezaket Ekici is an internationally renowned performance artist born in 1970 in Turkey and currently residing and working in Berlin, Stuttgart, and Istanbul. With a career spanning several decades, Ekici's work encompasses installation, video, and photography. Her groundbreaking performances have captivated audiences, totaling more than 300 unique presentations in over 70 countries and 200 cities across four continents in prestigious museums, galleries, and biennials. She earned an M.A. in Art Pedagogy and holds a Fine Arts degree and an MFA with studies in Art History and Sculpture at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University and Fine Arts Academy Munich. In recognition of her exceptional contributions, Nezaket received the Paula Modersohn-Becker Art Award (2018) and was honored with the Rome Prize and a 10-month artist residency at the German Academy Villa Massimo in Rome (2016-2017). She has completed residencies at numerous institutions, including her recent residency at the Opera Village cultural and educational project in Burkina Faso, Africa and the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) in Brooklyn, New York, sponsored by the International Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin.



Graeme Mortimer Evelyn

Graeme Mortimer Evelyn has a reputation for creating site-specific work in places of worship, municipal buildings, and historical locations. A self-described “bridge-builder,” Evelyn engages input from the local community for his artmaking process that reorients perspectives of place when juxtaposed with his installations. Evelyn was raised Baptist-Pentecostal alongside Rastafarianism, later converting to Buddhism, and his spiritual experiences deeply inform his practice. Based in London and of Jamaican heritage, Evelyn has produced a varied body of work commenting on cultural social identity, the politics of historical entanglements and the psychological sensitivities involved in creating relevant work for spiritual spaces. He describes these narratives as forming “when fragments of relation, memory, society, identity, and modernity, which seem disparate at first, come together to form a whole.” His works have been exhibited, collected, and displayed by Princeton University Center for African American Studies, Cornell University, Kensington Palace, The Royal Commonwealth Society, Museum in Docklands, Gloucester Cathedral, Bristol Museums, The Royal Collection Trust, Church of England, and UNESCO. He is an FSA artist-in-residence for fall 2023.



Lanecia A. Rouse

Lanecia A. Rouse lives and works between Houston, Texas, and Richmond, Virginia. The daughter of a Methodist pastor, Rouse initially sought a vocation in ministry, which led her to Duke Divinity School. Her years working with Christian youth ministry led to an art therapy and economic empowerment project with homeless communities in Houston. Rouse was recently an Artists on Site: Series 3 Artist-in-Resident at Asia Society in Houston, and the 2020-2021 Artist-in-Residence for the Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning (CERCL) at Rice University. She is the Artist-in-Residence at Holy Family HTX Episcopal Church in Houston (2017-Present), and a co-founding Creative Director for the ImagiNoir Equity Group, an international alliance and community development and equity group of black activists, artists, writers, scholars, philanthropists, and educators. In addition, she is the Director of Justice and the Arts with project CURATE. She is also the leader of the Curation Team for Lanecia Rouse Tinsley Gallery of Holy Family HTX. Lanecia is a graduate of Duke University Divinity School and Wofford College. Aside from exhibitions, you can see her work at the Hardy + Nance Streets in Houston, and High Dawn Studios in Richmond. She is an FSA artist-in-residence for fall 2023.



Hassan Vawda

Hassan Vawda is currently an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Doctoral Researcher at Tate Modern and Goldsmiths University in London, as well as the lead engagement officer for the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm. His research focuses on religion and secularism within British art museums, from audiences to art history and curatorial approaches. He has curated and produced projects, programs, and research for Tate, INIVA, Barbican and other cultural and heritage institutions, as well as working on cultural and heritage projects with faith groups, community organizations and local authorities. In 2017, Hassan was awarded the Aziz Foundation Scholar in Applied Anthropology and Community Development at Goldsmiths, University of London around inclusion/exclusion within the cultural sector and ways of connecting with faith communities. He is an FSA scholar-in-residence for fall 2023.



Randy Robertson

GladdeningLight Founding Director Randall B. Robertson was first drawn to the marriage of art and spirit while studying the Italian Renaissance abroad in the 1970s. Robertson applied that passion towards his first performance art piece produced with Newbery award-winning author Madeleine L'Engle, *The Glorious Impossible*, combining Giotto's famed Scrovegni Chapel frescoes in Padua with musical passages of ancient sacred polyphony, classical, contemporary and secular works alongside Ms. L'Engle's narrative on the life of Christ. Presentation of *The Glorious Impossible* with Ms. L'Engle throughout North America led to encouragement from theologians John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg to create *Phos Hilaron*, a theatrical multimedia performance art piece. Robertson continues his work in performance art and events at GladdeningLight, a foundation whose mission is to explore the nexus of faith and art through spiritual retreats, hosted conferences and religious pilgrimage. GladdeningLight is a progressive Christian initiative open to all faith disciplines, representative of thoughtful spiritual seekers both inside and outside traditional religious practice.



Tyler Rollins

FSA founder and Executive Director Tyler Rollins has over twenty years of experience in New York City's contemporary art world and gained an international reputation as a leading advocate for some of the most compelling artists from the Asia Pacific region. A summa cum laude graduate of Yale University, he completed graduate work at the London School of Economics and earned an MA from New York University. In 2008, he opened a public gallery space, Tyler Rollins Fine Art, in New York City's Chelsea arts district, with a program focusing on internationally active mid-career artists from Southeast Asia. The gallery participated in some of the world's leading art fairs, and placed works by its artists in an impressive list of major museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, LACMA, SFMOMA, the Smithsonian Museum, M+, Centre Pompidou, and Tate Modern. Widely recognized as one of the most prominent gallerists in his field, Rollins presented museum-quality exhibitions over a twelve-year period at his gallery, which was described by the New York Times as "one of the most reliably interesting spaces in Chelsea." The gallery's exhibitions often highlighted links with spirituality, nature, and cultural traditions, and many had powerful religious themes, particularly relating to Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. Passionate about these issues, Rollins launched the Foundation for Spirituality and the Arts in 2021 in order to foster and support connections between art, spirituality and faith.



Leeza Ahmady

Born in Afghanistan, LSA Director of Programs Leeza Ahmady is recognized for curating noteworthy exhibitions, festivals, and experimental forums that educate the public about significant and often misconstrued historical, cultural, and spiritually-vibrant subject matters evident in the works of artists in the United States and abroad. Since 2005, she has directed New York's acclaimed Asia Contemporary Art Week (ACAW)—the premier US platform for leading museums and galleries dedicated to showcasing both reputable and lesser-known artists and dialogues from across all regions of Asia, including the Middle East. After studying theology, art history, and philosophy at St. John's University, Ahmady began creating compelling and unexpected encounters between art and the public at popular New York City night clubs to support artists immersed in site-specific installation, sound, performance, and new media works. Her groundbreaking research on post-Soviet Central Asia and the region's reorientation to pre-Communist nomadic and Islamic identities earned her an MA from Pratt Institute, with presentations at important international venues and exhibitions such as the Istanbul Biennale, Asia Art Archive Hong Kong, and dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany, and Kabul, Afghanistan. (2005-2012). Ahmady's highly distinguished collaborative approach to empowering the arts as a vital source for creating consciousness in society has enabled over 3000 diverse practitioners to present their perspectives at notable local and international institutions, art fairs, and auction houses, including: Asia Society, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Guggenheim Museum, MoMA, Sotheby's, Alserkal Avenue, Smithsonian Museum, Art Basel, ICI-Independent Curators International, and many more.



Julie Hamilton

FSA's Foundation Manager, Julie Hamilton, is a scholar, curator, and critic of contemporary art and film, based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Originally from central Texas, she is a graduate of both Baylor's Honors College and Duke Divinity School, where she studied classics, philosophy, art history, literature, and theology. Beginning as an arts consultant for non-profit arts organizations and Dillon + Lee Gallery in New York, she became a contributing writer to *The Curator Magazine*, an arts critic for *INDY Week* newspaper, and the arts editor for *The Other Journal*. Her current research and writing engages phenomenology, critical theory, and religion in contemporary visual art and film. These arenas of interest include performance art, Catholic material culture, feminism, surrealist and phenomenological film, curatorial pedagogy, and gastronomy. She has been involved with Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts (DITA), Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA), Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art (ASCHA), and the College Art Association (CAA), presenting at conferences, moderating academic panels, and contributing to their publications.