



**Aixa Pascual** - Atlanta Regional Commission Senior Communications Strategist, Writer & Content Creator

Aixa is a communications and community leader with more than two decades of experience in external affairs, media relations, communications, marketing, publications, journalism, partnership development, community engagement and arts/culture initiatives. Previous employers include Time, BusinessWeek, People and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. She is experienced at working and communicating with C-suite executives, government leaders, external partners and cross-functional teams. She is a strategic, creative, critical and global thinker who understands the big picture while paying attention to details. She is an expert at formulating and asking relevant questions to elucidate and frame issues.



**Erika Smith** - Manager, TechSpark Metro - Microsoft Philanthropies

Erika is a social innovator focused on creating economic opportunities for communities of color. She leads Microsoft's philanthropic strategy for the metro communities (ATL, LA, CHI) focused on advancing digital equity and inclusion by cultivating BIPOC tech talent, developing digital transformation programs for small businesses, demystifying tech, and expanding partnerships to deliver collective impact. Over the last ten years, Erika has created a movement to amplify and catalyze investment to drive economic growth while preserving culture. She led the Economic Opportunity Portfolio for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, resulting in increased investments in smaller, community-based organizations, developing a youth leadership program to ascertain how Black and Brown youth want to participate in the local economy, and establishing partnerships throughout the SMB ecosystem to deliver programming at Pittsburgh Yards. Additionally, Erika served as the Assistant Director of Southside Community and Economic Development with Invest Atlanta. She developed a regional, place-based strategy focused on economic mobility and wealth building in Atlanta's underserved communities. These efforts shifted how organizations approached community engagement, program development, and collaboration. Erika's career spans 20 years, including advancing fintech in Nigeria, working in strategic marketing functions at the top US banks, and co-creating Uhuru Concepts, a social innovation and marketing firm.



**Franco Bejarano** – Clinical Social Worker

Franco is an artist and social worker in Atlanta, GA. He received his MSW from UGA in 2016 and currently works in the field of homeless services. Franco uses his artwork as interventions tackling societal issues and mental health through the mediums of portraiture, children’s books, and art therapy. His work is rooted in the belief that the therapeutic and impactful powers art has on individuals and communities lies in not just the finished product, but the process, the engagement, and the message it can transmit. Since 2017, Franco has been creating life-size portraits of people experiencing homelessness with whom he has formed strong personal relationships throughout their journey in housing them. In 2021 he was awarded a proclamation by Atlanta City Council for his housing work.



**Briana X. Camelo** – Office of Cultural Affairs Public Art Administrator

Briana is an artist and Arts Administrator living in Atlanta, GA. She was born in Colombia, South America but moved to the US at an early age. First living in the northeast, and later moving to the southeast region where she has called Atlanta her home for the past 20 years. Her art education began at Atlanta College of Art and Design but went on to receive her BFA in Photography from Savannah College of Art and Design. Her love of art in all its forms has led to not only making art but also becoming an advocate and supporter of other artists and arts organizations around the city. She has collaborated with many institutions, artists, and businesses to advance the efforts of art as a part of our daily lives.



**Brian Hebert** - Arts Clayton, Executive Director

Brian Hebert is a visual artist/curator/educator that was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. Brian studied art at Southern University A&M College under Robert Cox, Martin Payton and Randall Henry receiving his BFA in 1997. In 2001, Brian and his family moved to Metropolitan Atlanta, to help start and build the visual arts programming at the Southwest Art Center. After almost two decades, Brian decided to leave the organization in 2018 to pursue outside artistic ventures. While at the Southwest Art Center, Brian organized and curated countless exhibitions and visual arts projects and programs. In 2020, Brian taught in the Henry County School System during the pandemic as a visual art instructor teaching both virtual and in-person, before accepting the position as Executive Director for Arts Clayton, Inc.



**Dorian McDuffie** - Atlanta City Studio Public Art Manager

Dorian is a public art project manager who is currently focused on incorporating art in the right-of-way to creatively enhance the efforts of the City of Atlanta Department of City Planning. Adding beauty to accessibility and efforts to keep citizens safe is her passion. She has been involved in public art in various capacities for well over 15 years. Citizens of and visitors to the great city of Atlanta can see her mark in almost every neighborhood. Dorian is the recipient of several awards for her work. An award she is particularly proud of is the “Women of the Year Award” given to her by Atlanta’s Mayor Shirley Franklin. When not making art happen, Dorian can be found out and about enjoying the fruits of the labors of artists and other arts administrators.





**Christopher Swain** – City of East Point Public Art Coordinator

Christopher is a native of Atlanta, Georgia who has worked for the City of East Point for 22 years where he originally served as the Business License Coordinator, until his recent appointment as Public Art Program Coordinator. He completed the Atlanta Regional Commission led ALMA (Arts Leaders of Metropolitan Atlanta) training course. He is also a member of Americans for the Arts. Personally, Chris is an avid collector of Tribal African Art and artifacts from various cultures. He is passionate about Africa and her countless contributions to the world and has spent the last 25+ years visiting countries such as Egypt, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Niger, Rwanda, Togo, Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, Benin, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Jamaica, Brazil, and Cuba attending numerous cultural arts festivals, cultural celebrations, and spiritual ceremonies. These travels have allowed him the opportunity to enjoy music, dance, sculpture, puppets, costumes, paintings, etc. Through a global lens which he has meticulously documented through photos and videos. Christopher has participated in everything from tomb excavations in Egypt, to gorilla trekking in Rwanda, to weaving Kente cloth in Ghana. He has also attended various arts and culture events throughout the United States and regularly visits museums across the country to engage the latest exhibitions by a myriad of artists.

Christopher Swain is also a patron of the arts and regularly donates funds to support artists and exhibitions at local museums including Hammonds House Museum, Spelman College Museum of Fine Arts, and the High Museum of Art. Chris has recently written a children's book which is illustrated by an artist friend from Cuba. The painted illustrations will be featured in an exhibition scheduled for Fall 2023 to celebrate Afro-Cuban artistry and culture. Art in its many manifestations is the joy of his life!



**Member Ex Officio: Josh Phillipson** , Principal for Arts, Culture and Creative Placemaking at the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC); former Chair of MARTA Council for the Arts

In this role, he manages the Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta leadership development program, the ARC's cultural forums, and leads the implementation of the ARC's Arts, Culture, and Creative Placemaking strategic plan. Through the plan, the ARC seeks to encourage a metro Atlanta that values arts and culture as essential for building a thriving, inclusive, and economically healthy region, and recognizes the transformative role of art in addressing broader civic issues.

Prior to the ARC, Josh worked at the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta on the Foundation's Metro Atlanta Arts Fund, which provided grants and capacity-building assistance to metro Atlanta's small and mid-sized arts organizations. In addition, he managed the Foundation's Grants to Green program providing grants to improve the water and energy efficiency of nonprofit's buildings and served as a liaison for philanthropic work throughout the 23-county region.

Josh has a theater degree from Emory University and has since served as the board chair for the Theater Emory board. He was a Southeastern Council of Foundations Hull Fellow and is an Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta graduate. He is currently on the board of Dad's Garage Theatre Company and is the chair of MARTA's Artbound advisory committee.