

East Side Arts Council is honored to work with the following literary, visual, and performing teaching artists, who provide quality arts programming for our after school programs. Throughout the year, we place teaching artists in contract teaching positions in after school programs at schools and rec centers, as well as in our summer programming. The artists in this roster have been chosen through an interview process based on both their artistic skills, their ability to teach students and their experience and passion for working with inner city youth on the East Side.

**Mica Lee Anders**

**Visual Art, Theater, Dance**

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Mica is an artist and arts educator based in the Twin Cities. She received her BA in both studio arts and Spanish from The University of Iowa. In 2009, Mica received her Masters of Fine Arts degree from the University of Minnesota. She has shown her artwork locally at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery at the University of Minnesota, The Minneapolis Foundation, and Art-a-Whirl. She has also presented her work in various venues across the Midwest, participating on a panel discussion at the Loving Decision Conference in Chicago. Mica has also exhibited internationally in Anji, China.

**Starri Hedges**

**Multimedia: Visual Art, Sculpture, Theater, Art for Healing**

[StarriFawn@gmail.com](mailto:StarriFawn@gmail.com)

For over 20 years, Starri has taught at such places as the Edina Art Center, Rivers Edge Childrens House, District 202, and Lucky Palm Healing Arts. In addition to her work with ESAC, currently Starri can be found working as CoDirector of Second Foundation School, EXCO free school, and as a guest artist with Yo Mama at Juxtaposition Arts. She holds a MA in Educational Psychology & Human Development from St. Mary's University, a BA in Holistic Education with a minor in Intermedia Arts from Metropolitan State University, and has trained in youth work and art therapies.

**Obed Alvarez**

**Aztec drumming**

[azteckdrummer@yahoo.com](mailto:azteckdrummer@yahoo.com)

Obed Alvarez has been with Aztec Dance group Kalpulli Yaocenoxtli for over 5 years and has been trained in Aztec drumming. He is one of the lead drummers for the local dance group. ALong with Mary Anne Quiroz, the leader of the dance group, he has put on numerous workshops on Aztec Drumming, Dance and Culture at several schools int he Twin Cities. Obed currently teaches Aztec drumming for Battle Creek Middle school, for the after school program.

**Emily Isenberg**

**Visual arts, drawing, painting**

[emi.isenberg@gmail.com](mailto:emi.isenberg@gmail.com)

Emily Isenberg graduated in 2008 from Cornell College in Iowa, receiving a BA in Art and certification in K-12 Art Education. She works with Minneapolis Public Schools Arts for Academic Achievement Program as a teaching artist integrating observational drawing strategies into traditional science, language arts and mathematics K-12 curriculum. She also

teaches for the Public Youth Programs at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

**Gita Ghei**

**Metal Arts**

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Sculptor artist and educator Gita Ghei has a degree in classics from Reed College in Oregon. She learned her trade in a bronze art foundry in Berkeley. She works primarily in metal and incorporates found natural materials, drawing and photography into her artwork. She also works as an artisan, doing patina work and sculpture maintenance. Her work as a teaching artist bridges different subjects through art, with a particular focus on natural sciences. She has shared a studio at the Anderson Center in Red Wing since 1995.

**Daniel Zimmerschied**

**Dance**

[d2z2.direct@yahoo.com](mailto:d2z2.direct@yahoo.com)

Daniel Zimmerschied teaches basic steps in hip-hop, break dancing, and popping in numerous community programs. He teaches foundational moves in a teamwork environment to help young

people discover their potential. His main focus is to inspire youth to dance in a way where they can express free movement and channel their energy in a positive way.

**Herbert Johnson**

**Hip-Hop Dance**

[Herbert\\_1@yahoo.com](mailto:Herbert_1@yahoo.com)

Herbert graduated from Perpich Center for Arts Education and has performed throughout the metro area in such places as the Guthrie Theater, Excel Energy and for the Ivey Awards. He has taught at Lundstrum Center For the Arts, Turning Point Studio, and the YMCA. He focuses primarily on hip hop but also teaches ballet, tap, and jazz.

**Karla Nweje**

**African Dance**

Karla Nweje is a choreographer, dancer, literary artist, and arts educator. She holds a BFA in Dance Performance & Composition from Brooklyn College/CUNY. As a literary artist, Karla is a published author and contributing write to literary journals and anthologies. She also writes and presents interactive workshops for youth. She has done on-camera projects, has produced several bodies of stage work, and continues to choreograph and write new material for students and for a broadening audience base.

She is a 2013 recipient of the Excellence in Educational Service Award (Ordway Center for Performing Arts). Karla is a regular presenter and speaker at arts and education conferences and consortiums and is the keynote speaker for the 2014 Creativity Festival. Within the state of Minnesota and beyond, Ms. Nweje continues to cultivate partnerships across organizations, programs, and school districts to make quality arts experiences accessible to all learners.

Karla Nweje is currently teaching as part of ESAC's in-school Global Dance residency at Phalen Lake Elementary.

**Jacqui Rosenbush**  
**Multimedia Sculptor and Painter**

Jacqui Rosenbush is a multimedia sculptor and painter. Her fascination with the subtleties and poetic nuances of nature drives the aesthetic of her work, utilizing materials such as wood, lace, wool, oils, and other natural objects. She is influenced by the deep sense of place that infuses much traditional folk art and the tactile quality that often partners it. Her teaching and mentoring experience spans the range of diaper-clad babies to wobbly toddlers, pre-teens, tweens, and teens, disabled adults, and immigrants. Drawing out life and inspiring creative growth in others shapes her meaning of being an artist.

**Edna Stevens Jr.**  
**Hip-Hop, Latin Dance, and African Dance**

Edna Stevens Jr. loved dance since her childhood growing up in Liberia with her parents, Edna Stevens Sr. and late beloved father, Mr. Anthony Benedict Stevens, who Edna feels would be very proud of her. Edna's passion for dance enhanced during her childhood years. She won the pageant at Bright Functional School right before relocating to America. In the US, Edna lived in New York modeling and dancing on MTV, VH1 and many music videos. Edna is the founder of Universal Dance Destiny and teaches a variety of dance, from African and Latin to break dancing and hip hop.

**William Harris**  
**Spoken Word**

William Harris is the spoken word artist known as Truth Maze. He uses his gifts and talents for many things: for self-expression of inner freedom, as a way to connect to life, experienced through the heart and mind. Art assists him in living, reveals how to find his truth and purpose, how to face his whole self and become a great source for love and knowledge. He believes art helps individuals to self-reflect, find their inner voice, and to create a sense of empowerment and growth. This can be discovered thru the art of spoken word poetry.

**Matthew Berdahl**  
**Break Dance**

Matthew Berdahl is a Minneapolis B-Boy who has been active in the “breaking” community in the Twin Cities area since 2003. Largely self-taught, Matthew also learned from others within the B-girl and B-boying communities in a collaborative and social creative process. This is something that defines the hip-hop/breaking arts and its dynamic culture of expression and community building is a strength!

Matthew is CEO of Mac wood chains and has made custom wooden jewelry for performing artists like Afrika Bambaataa, Phase 2, Bboy J-Sun and many more. His work is sold at the Fifth Element and the Lost and Found. As a dance instructor, Matthew’s classes explore the culture and history of hip-hop and breaking and talking about the significance and meaning of a dance style or movement. Matthew sees dance and movement to be a form of expression and beauty that empowers youth and individuals and that celebrates a culture of diversity and respect

**Neal Beckman**  
**Theater Arts**

Neal Beckman is an actor and teacher in speech and Drama. He was trained in theatre performance at Fordham University at Lincoln Center in New York City. He has worked with numerous theatres in and around the Twin Cities, including Door County Shakespeare, G.R.E.A.T., Nimbus, Savage Umbrella, and The Guthrie.

**Sara Kelly**

**Hip Hop Dance and Visual Arts**

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Sara Kelly has been designing Hip Hop youth programs for the past 6 years. She's passionate about giving others the same opportunities that ground her. She has Danced with Hype Dance Company, and New Heist Dancer Crew (Timberwolves Hip Hop Team) Has been in and directed Endoxou's Music video and she has been back up dancer for Agape, Trynese Jones, and G.U.Y (TJ Valtierra).

She has legally graffitied various walls and canvases in the metro area including the YMCA Skate Park and Urban Jerusalem's canvas installation. She directs a Ministry, which has a seasonal showcase and has conducted over 50 youth performances on various stages across the Twin cities presenting dance, rap, Graffiti and DJ-ing, music video and clothing design.

**Chia "Chilli" Lor**

**Spoken Word, Performance**

Chia "Chili" Lor is a spoken word, hip hop, and performance artist living in District 2, East Side. Read about her passion for art and education here: <http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/news/2013/12/16/our-stories-chilli-lor-hmong-artist-speaks-change>

**Shakun Maheswhari**

**Visual Arts, Folk Arts, Photography**

[www.facebook.com/shakuntaladesign](http://www.facebook.com/shakuntaladesign)

Shakuntala Design Inc.

Shakun Maheswhari a visual artist, folk artist and photographer, running her own art business “Shakuntala Design Inc.” since 1974. She teaches and does demonstrations, workshops, and residencies. She has participated in many art shows and art competitions. Art is her Life and passion.

Shakun began her journey with impermanent traditional Indian folk arts at a very young age. She loved to do her hands with henna, decorate fabrics with embroidery & her walls with paints. When she moved to the US, she studied both photography & graphic design. Shakun's art now reflects a combination of her knowledge of folk art, photography, graphic design, and storytelling. Shakun has won numerous awards over the years in both paintings and photographs and has shown work in various galleries and participated in art shows throughout the Midwest, California, and India.

**Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay**

**Poetry, Playwright**

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Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay is a Minnesota-based award-winning Lao American poet and playwright. Her play *Kung Fu Zombies vs Cannibals* was named Best Production of 2013 by L'Etoile Magazine, closed with a 92% capacity for its 3 weeks/12-show run, and is Theater Mu's highest grossing world premiere to date!

Her literary, theater, and advocacy work is made possible through generous support from organizations such as the Jerome Foundation, Mu Performing Arts, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, MN State Arts Board, Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota, Loft Literary Center, Joyce Foundation/Alliance of Artist Communities (IL), Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (DC), Asian Economic Development Association, and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (DC).

Vongsay currently serves on the Board of Directors for Intermedia Arts, Saint Paul Almanac, Saint Paul Foundation's Asian Pacific Endowment, Ananya Dance Theatre, Dispute Resolution Center, and the Asian Economic Development Association's Arts Advisory.

She's got a show on Minnesota Public Radio, is the Lead Chair for the National Lao American Writers Summit, and Chair of the Twin Cities World Refugee Day Celebration Committee. Get to know her at [www.saymoukdatherefugenius.com](http://www.saymoukdatherefugenius.com)



