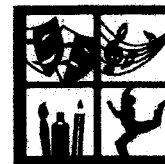




Visual Arts Division Faculty Biographies



Christine Mallouf, Program Director: Christine Mallouf is the Program Director of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Gifted/Talented Programs Conservatory of Fine Arts, Visual Arts Division. She grew up in Burbank, CA where she attended and graduated from Burbank High School. She studied at Valley Community College, Glendale College, Pierce College and California State University at Northridge. Christine's education continued at East Los Angeles Occupational Center and National Computer School, both schools specializing in the arts. She continues her art education at the Academy of Fine Arts. Christine's skills are varied and eclectic. Some of her many interests include painting, pen and ink, sculpture, ceramics, printing, mosaics and design. Having worked at many of the animation studios in Los Angeles, including The Disney Studios and Warner Brothers Animation, Christine is also quite proficient in computer graphics and animation (traditional and computer generated). Using her many talents, Christine has also worked in the advertising, photography, fashion, product and book illustration industries. There is no question that art is Christine's passion and that is evident in her personal and professional life.

Kathy Lee, Assistant Program Director: Kathy Lee has worked for the Conservatory for 8 years and currently serves as the Assistant Program Director of the Visual Arts Division. Before this career, she was a fashion designer in Los Angeles for BCBG and was in charge of the Nordstrom collection. The job allowed her to travel to many cities in the US, as well as other countries in Europe. She has been involved in both domestic and international fashion shows. She holds a fashion design and merchandising degree from Los Angeles Trade Technical College and Paris Fashion Institute.

Blanca Alvarado, Substitute: Blanca Alvarado has been working at the conservatory of fine arts for 13 years as an art teacher, and it has been both an honor and a real, fun challenge for her! She currently works as an art teacher for the LAUSD Arts Education Branch, serving different elementary schools throughout the year. Before becoming an art teacher her goal was Child Development. She earned both her Bachelor's Degree in Child Development and also her Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from Cal State LA. Her passion for the arts led her back to school to acquire her Single Subject Credential in Art. Currently she has been considering her teaching practice and expertise as her primary form of art expression, because teaching art requires a lot of creativity, time, knowledge, dedication, planning, and passion. Lately, she's been dedicating some time learning how to draw the figure form and creating different forms of three-dimensional art. Her personal philosophy is to be happy, love life, respect yourself and others, never stop learning, and value both creativity and knowledge. Peace!

Cuauhtémoc Arrieta, Instructor: Cuauhtémoc Arrieta has extensive experience as a creative director and art director for different agencies in Mexico City and Los Angeles over the past years, which has provided him with a full understanding and ability to execute ad conception, creation, management, production, post-production and all tasks necessary to run multiple campaigns. It's the job of an Art Director/Creative Director to be able to decipher trends that are actionable, recognize excellent ideas and produce creative innovations that deliver results. As a respected Art Director/Creative Director he has a solid background working for and interacting with diverse, high-profile accounts. He has learned the craft from the ground up working in roles such as Copywriter, Art Director and Creative Director. He has been working at the Conservatory of Fine Arts for five years. His personal philosophy is "Recognize excellent ideas and produce creative work that delivers results." His educational background includes: Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas (ENAP) and the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.



Gifted/Talented Programs
 (213) 241-6500

Conservatory of Fine Arts
<http://achieve.lausd.net/GATE>

Greg Checketts, Substitute: Greg Checketts has been an instructor with the Conservatory of Fine Arts for the last five years as a professional expert. His day job since 2003 has been working as a character layout artist for the television show "The Simpsons." His other professional credits include working as an animation artist at Warner Bros, Dreamworks, and Fox Television Animation on such projects as "Futurama", "Spirit", and "The Iron Giant." He earned his B.A. from Michigan State University in Theatrical Design, and did post graduate work at Brandeis University. In his spare time, Greg is a ballroom dancer, and he is currently in post production on an independent animated short film he has written, directed, and art directed called "Dog Housecalls" which he is hoping to enter into film festivals next year.

Audrey Cotright, Instructor: Audrey M. Cotright has been designated a professional expert as an art teacher at the Conservatory of Fine Arts for 20 years & counting. In the early days of her career, she received an Art Scholarship from Otis Art Institute, later followed by a Bachelor of Arts from U.C.L.A. As her interests navigated to include the study of law, she also pursued and received a Juris Doctorate. As a professional exhibiting artist, Ms. Cotright has shown her work at extensive venues in Los Angeles, Santa Ana, Culver City and more. In addition to depicting excellence in her own work, she has demonstrated a heartfelt passion in teaching art to children for which she has received several awards, such as a Certificate of Recognition for Efforts Encouraging Artistic Appreciation & Creativity in Children from the California State Assembly and a Certificate of Tribute for Community Activism in Art from the city of Los Angeles. She even led tours for children in Paris at the Louvre! Her philosophy in teaching involves love and passion for art with excitement in guiding her students to discover their unique gifts...for her, that's contagious.

Dianna Franco, Instructor: Dianna Franco started working as a substitute art teacher at the Visual Arts Conservatory and she is now an art teacher for this program. Dianna has five years officially working with this team. Moreover, she is currently working within various education programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Dianna obtained a bachelor of Fine Arts from California State University Long Beach where she specialized in painting. Dianna exhibited this year in the group show, "Pop-Up," at the Art Center Gallery of Manhattan Beach, California. Furthermore, she recently had a solo-exhibition at the AVD Gallery in Pomona, California.

Nicole Marquez-Johnston, Instructor: This year marks the start of Nicole Marquez's 9th year working for the Conservatory of Fine Arts. She has been teaching for LAUSD since 2008 as a substitute teacher and a fine arts teacher. She received her expertise in art through taking courses from Pasadena City College where she received her AA degree before transferring over to Cal State LA earning not only her Bachelor's in Arts degree in Art Education, but also her Master's and teaching credential in art. She has the privilege of collaborating with other educators to enhance her teaching practice in addition to making art a fun and enjoyable experience for teacher and student alike. Some of her personal interests and hobbies include reading, drawing, watching movies, listening to different varieties of music, and she is a big fan of Star Wars, Harry Potter, and Disney.

Tomas Parra, Instructor: Tomas Parra has worked for the Conservatory of Fine Arts for a total of seven years (1998-2003, 2016-present). His teaching experience spans twenty-five years. He has taught elementary students and adults at Bell HS Adult School Program. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Woodbury University, Burbank. He also has a Master's Degree in Education from The University of Phoenix, Pasadena/Woodland Hills. As an artist, he appreciates stimulating shapes, vibrant colors and functional design. He likes to sketch, draw, paint, and build. His artworks reflect all that moves him. He is often influenced by his surroundings. He sees beauty in a human form, an inspirational space or location, a colorful sunset, an interesting animal or plant. He gets inspired by innovative automobile design, mechanical parts and industrial details. He also enjoys the aesthetics in a building interior, the feel and look of classic architectural forms throughout the exterior. Over the years he has painted portraits, landscapes and created cultural displays. He has built small scaled models of residential projects. His favorite artworks are large scaled paintings and street murals because they can be appreciated by many and often represent the embodiment of history and culture.



Atilio Pernisco, Instructor: Atilio Pernisco is a Los Angeles painter, who makes contemporary impressions of suburbia Los Angeles. Existential at its core, his work interrogates the human condition in the quotidian moments that are marked by absence and anxiety. This absence turns Atilio into the observer and chronicler of the repetitiousness of life, observing this process in itself as some sort of spectacle. As a result, the actual process of painting is done with a liquid fluidity – with his marks striving for a glimpse of something more authentic in the now. His works have appeared in many group exhibitions in Los Angeles.

Jessica Perry-Martin, Substitute: Jess Perry-Martin is a proud Banana Slug, with a degree in Fine Arts and Education from UC Santa Cruz, and a teaching credential in the Visual Arts from CSUN. She has devoted her career to arts education and advocacy, with 15+ years' experience teaching middle and high school students as well as professional student teachers. As an AP Studio Art teacher and appointed AP advocate, she and her students represent the legislative needs for AP access and equity for all students. In the role of master teacher in the CSUN Art Education program, Mrs. Perry-Martin supports the development of future teachers in her spare time. She is an Innovation in the Arts grant recipient and has proudly helped many students pursue their dreams of attending art colleges. As a teacher at ArTES, Mrs. Perry-Martin works passionately to bring a love of the Visual Arts to all her students. She believes that with practice and a willingness to work hard, anyone can be an artist.

Ewa Pietraszak, Instructor: We all love fairytales. They scare us, they teach us life lessons and they make us happy. Ewa Pietraszak's goal is to tell adult stories through lyrical, expressionist and surrealist visual imagery and some found object or reclaimed art to keep a memory; because memories are quintessential to art. We are all connected and art connects us the most. She currently has 6 series: 1) Abstract Expressionism and Found Object Art: Acrylic on Canvas. 2). Feminist Series: Gender Roles and what it's like to be a Woman. 3) Christianity: Religion vs. Faith, Iconography vs. Hypocrisy. 4) Endangered Species Series. 5) Trees: Spiritual Beings- A Metaphor. 6) Children's Book: Narney the Narwhal (in progress). Ewa holds a B.A. from U.C. Irvine.

Sergio Raygoza, Instructor: Sergio Raygoza is an LAUSD high school visual arts teacher currently working at LIBRA Academy. He has been working as an instructor for the Visual Arts Conservatory for over ten years. He has a Bachelor's of Art in Art Education and a Masters' degree in Curriculum and Instruction. The reason why he has committed himself to this great profession is that he really enjoys working with students who he feels have the potential to become great young artists and productive citizens. What he has learned along the way is that every single student has a voice, and in many instances, art is the best way for them to express their thoughts and concerns.

Rachelle Scarpin, Instructor: Ms. Rachelle Scarpin has been with the Conservatory of Fine Arts for 7 years as a visual arts instructor. She also works as a Specialist for Apple, freelance cosmetologist and designer of jewelry and hair accessories. She also works on her own art and enjoys costuming design. She studied Fine Art with a minor in Art History. She is a licensed cosmetologist and certified floral designer. She has had her artwork in the "Picture This" gallery for a Frida Kahlo art exhibit. Her jewelry has been sold in "A Pin-Ups Closet" and "Moss & Rock." She has done hair for Blizzard for "BlizzCon" and worked with airbrush artist Mark Frazier. She is a lover of all things creative and enjoys everything from photography to mixed media.

Lisa Seid, Instructor: Lisa Seid is an artist from Orange County. Her new projects include repurposing obsolete technology into wearable works of art and creating models for her 3D printer. She is currently substitute teacher for Orange Unified School District and a training mentor and Mac/iOS technician for Apple. She has been an instructor for the Visual Arts Conservatory for 9 years. Lisa received a certificate in Interactive and Print Media where she learned audio/video/animation design and print publication and Bachelor of Fine Arts from California State University, Fullerton, with an emphasis in crafts/metalsmithing. She is pursuing a Master's degree in Education Technology with Multi subject credential to fulfill her lifelong dream of being a teacher.



Gifted/Talented Programs
(213) 241-6500

Conservatory of Fine Arts
<http://achieve.lausd.net/GATE>

Carlos Vargas, Instructor: The central preoccupation unifying Carlos Vargas' work is an engagement with the practice of the old masters, particularly those of the Dutch and German expressionist periods. Their perfection of craft, their exploration of narrative modes, and their explicit connection to history and politics are a source of continuing fascination and inspiration to his work. I incorporate contemporary iconography and themes in a classical Memento Mori fashion that serves as a reminder of human error: a reminder of the fact that humans fail and make mistakes. His work draws inspiration from artists such as Jan Weenix, Chaim Soutine, Edouard Manet and Peter Shire's use of color. Ceramics as a material has permanence; it is how we are able to learn about ancient cultures. There is beauty in these traditions and his aim is to create work that will stand the test of time that will give future generations insight into the way we live today as well as things we worship. He spotlights traditional gods and goddesses in both clay and paper and highlights funeral arrangements as an art form. His current body of work examines issues related to the environment and deals with the Hindu concept of spiritual awakening and the impermanence of life and death. Carlos' goal is to create a body of work that uses mixed media and suggests an association with traditional nineteenth-century Memento Mori painting and sculpture. He refers to himself as a Mexican artist. Carlos identifies his work and himself with the fusion and dynamics of his newfound interest in the Hindu philosophy.

Brianne Wyatt, Instructor: Brianne Wyatt is an artist from Los Angeles who creates acrylic paintings using an uncommon method of industrial power tools. She received her B.A. and M.A. in Studio Arts at California State University, Los Angeles. Her work is about releasing of energy and ties her work to the electromagnetic spectrum connecting art with science. Various elements from music, color and movement, including using a full body method to paint, are all forms of energy she uses to create her expressive work. The work she creates varies from her origami series of paintings to her sculptural paintings that use bright vivid colors as her inspiration.

Alejandro Zendejas, Substitute: Alejandro Zendejas has worked for the Conservatory for the past 8 years as a substitute teacher and visual arts professional expert. He received his BA in Studio Art from the University of Southern California in 2008. He has professional experience in the field of painting. Alejandro wrote the article "*Collection Illuminates Spirituality: Rico Lebrun,*" published in the Daily Trojan on April 24, 2001.