

## Office of Cultural Affairs

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **San José creative license ambassadors announced: San José residents given a “license to create”**

**San Jose, Calif., (October 10, 2018)** – The San José Office of Cultural Affairs is thrilled to announce the first San José Creative License Ambassadors. The role of the Creative License Ambassadors is to champion the power of creative expression and engage members of the public in finding their own creative voice. Rotating quarterly, ambassadors will serve a term of approximately three months, during which time they will develop a hands-on creative project to share at public events, publicly champion diverse creative experiences citywide, and promote the new Creative License offered through the Office of Cultural Affairs. The first Creative License Ambassadors are:

**Fall 2018:** Corinne Okada Takara, Visual Artist and Arts Educator

**Winter 2019:** Franco Imperial, Artistic Director, San José Taiko

**Spring 2019:** Barbara Day Turner, Founder and Music Director, San José Chamber Orchestra

**Summer 2019:** Rodrigo García, Artistic Director, Teatro Visión

In addition to being practicing artists with strong community networks representing a diversity of creative disciplines, all of the Creative License Ambassadors are alumni of the Creating Connections training. Creating Connections is a national initiative aimed at making the arts a valued and expected part of everyday life. This initiative advocates for creative expression as a means to foster meaningful connections with people, our community, and ourselves. The Ambassadors will be putting this philosophy into action through their creative projects.

The first Creative License Ambassador, Corinne Okada Takara, started her ambassadorship in September. She debuted her creative project at the Viva Calle SJ open streets event on September 23, 2018. Takara’s collaborative community project, “Layers of SJ” explores San José’s rich community identity through photos and collages of artifacts from San José’s past and present. At public workshop events, people are able to use the photo stickers of San José-specific objects to create a collage creature or vehicle. San José residents are invited to submit their own photographs of

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objects for use in the project by tagging the images with the hashtag #layersofsj on Instagram and Twitter. Collages from the different events will be posted online. More information about the project can be found online at <https://layersofsj.weebly.com/> Takara will be bringing her “Layers of SJ” project to the Japantown Halloween event on October 31 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Look for her near Roy’s Station at 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Jackson Street, San José.

To further promote the power of creative expression, Office of Cultural Affairs commissioned local artist and designer, Carlos Perez to design a physical Creative License. The colorful lenticular (3-D) license will be given out at events. To receive a license, the recipient needs to sign the back, acknowledging their creative powers and granting themselves license to create. The license is a playful reminder that the cardholder has creative license to express themselves; although you don’t need a license to create, sometimes you need a reminder.

#### **About the Creative License Ambassadors:**

**Corinne Okada Takara** is a Bay Area artist/arts educator who creates technology-integrated art projects that aim to engage and connect communities. Her public collaborative work explores the use of modern day products to preserve cultural heritage and memory while honoring the colliding and merging stories that arise in rapidly shifting neighborhoods. She has contributed to the urban landscape of San José through a range of transit art enhancement projects. These include art crosswalks and enhancements for overpasses structures and bus stops. Takara has designed nationally recognized youth art projects in East San José and has developed numerous community pop-up makerspace events in partnership with the de Saisset Museum, the San José Public Library, the Tech Museum of Innovation, and the Alliance for Youth Achievement.

<http://www.okadadesign.com/>

**Franco Imperial** is Artistic Director for San Jose Taiko (SJT). Imperial has composed over 20 original works for SJT and has led collaborations with artists such as Abhinaya Dance Company (which won the 2011 Isadora Duncan Dance Award for Outstanding Achievement in Music/Sound/Text), five-time Grammy Award-nominee John Santos, NEA Heritage Fellow Danongan Kalanduyan, artist/teacher Dan Sabanovich, The Bangerz (DJ Crew for JABBAWOCKEEZ), and Aswat Ensemble. He is creator/producer for Swingposium, a collaboration with Epic Immersive & Wesley Jazz Ensemble. He is a member of the Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute (MALI) and has led workshops for the North American Taiko Conference, European Taiko Conference, and Intercollegiate Taiko Invitationals. Imperial has honed SJT’s unique style and created a voice for the current generation while honoring the group’s 45-year legacy. He leads SJT in artistic projects that align with its three pillars, which are that performing art: is a catalyst to move audiences from awareness to action; is a way to foster connection, cultural understanding, and widespread creativity; and opens hearts and minds, building a more just and equitable society.

**Maestra Barbara Day Turner** is the founder and music director of the 28-year-old professional San José Chamber Orchestra (SJCO). A graduate of SJSU with a master’s degree in music, she is an ardent advocate for new music, premiering more than 200 new works since her career begin at the age of 16. Locally she has worked with the San José, Silicon Valley, Redwood, Nova Vista and South Valley Symphonies, the SJ Repertory Theatre, American Musical Theatre SJ, sjDANCEco and the Margaret Wingrove dancers. Named the 2012 SV Arts Council “On Stage” Artist Laureate, she has conducted opera, musical theatre and symphonic music in Germany, Mexico and throughout the US and frequently performs as a harpsichordist. Discography includes Howard Hersh’s Piano Concerto, seven recordings with SJCO, a PBS award-winning DVD of Roumanis’ opera *Phaedra & the Naxos* release of Henderson’s opera *Nosferatu*. During her 18 years with Opera San José, she led the premieres of three American operas in addition to multiple works of the standard repertoire.

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For 15 years, Maestra Turner was resident conductor and Music Administrator of the Utah Festival Opera. She is a frequent adjudicator for the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions and annual judge for the Irving M. Klein International String Competition, in addition to serving on the advisory boards of Opera NEO and the Delphi Trio, and on the board of directors of the National Women's Philharmonic Advocacy group. This summer, Maestra Turner joined the faculty of the Aquilon Music Festival in Oregon.

**Rodrigo García** is the Artistic Director for Teatro Visión. He succeeded founder Artistic Director, Elisa Marina Alvarado. Rodrigo is an accomplished director, actor, educator and translator. He graduated from the National Institute of Fine Arts in Mexico City with a major in modern dance and theater. He is also the founder and Director of "Teatro Alebrijes," a Latinx LGBTQ theatre ensemble that creates original work in Spanish. Garcia is a graduate of the Theater Communications Group (TCG) New Generations program, a graduate of the Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute (MALI), and member of the National Association for Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC).

***About the San José Office of Cultural Affairs:***

*The City of San José recognizes that the arts and culture are essential elements in the character and quality of life in a vibrant community and seeks to ensure that San José is an effective hub of a wide array of arts and cultural opportunities throughout Silicon Valley. The Office of Cultural Affairs, a division of Economic Development in the City Manager's Office, is the lead City of San José agency for stewarding a vibrant arts sector.*

***About the City of San José***

*With more than one million residents, San José is one of the most diverse large cities in the United States and is Northern California's largest city and the 10th largest city in the nation. San José's transformation into a global innovation center has resulted in one of the largest concentrations of technology companies and expertise in the world. In 2011, the City adopted Envision San José 2040, a long-term growth plan that sets forth a vision and a comprehensive road map to guide the City's anticipated growth through the year 2040.*

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