

OCTOBER 18 & 19, 2025

16TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS



JOY & INTENTION by Henry Michael Apodaca

LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT PRESENTS THE 16TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, 10/18 & 19 IN GENERAL JEFF MEMORIAL PARK

Honey dew settles on the corner of 6th Street and Gladys Avenue while Skid Row community members wait in anticipation for the 16th Festival for All Skid Row Artists (FASRA) in General Jeff Memorial Park. 16 years!!! The Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) has hosted this 2-day, annual event in Skid Row for the past 16 consecutive years. Navigating our programming requires much coordination with like organizations and Skid Row Artists, both in times of plenty and scarcity. Not only during quarantine did we manage a combined virtual and in-person festival (albeit for only one day), but also amidst these capricious times of funding insecurity facing arts organizations in the neighborhood across the board. With leadership exemplars like John Malpede and Henriëtte Brouwers, we maintained abilities to execute another instantiation of community that feeds back into the spirit of FASRA – that culture spawns from the ground up, and to recognize those individuals and organizations sustaining arts culture in Skid Row.

FASRA was born out of the 2010 study, “Making the Case for Skid Row Culture: Findings from a Collaborative Inquiry,” authored by John Malpede and Maria Rosario Jackson. In addition to initiating FASRA, LAPD spearheaded a register of artists to make known the multiple modalities present in the community. This ongoing register interconnects artists and organizations who would probably go under the radar otherwise. The discoverability and knowledge our register provides is golden for those wanting to create and connect with other like-minded people. This said, documenting our festivals and artists (in more ways than one) is a crucial task evidencing the nature of our community; that we remain in crisis to our society, yet hinge on artistic outlets as a form of survival. From my perspective, seeing community in action is entirely joyful, but cannot be fully appreciated without understanding catalytic intentions.

I joined the LAPD in April 2018, while in graduate school at UCLA studying media and community-based archives. Although a trained archivist for the LAPD’s Skid Row History Museum & Archive, yours truly began working the FASRA main stage from 2019 to the present. From the stage, one has a bird’s eye-view of all things transpiring during the festival. Whether I’m helping set up sound systems, arranging the park, or assisting artists before their live shows, I enjoy seeing our community come together to support their favorite local performers and engage with the informational and visual arts booths we organize alongside other organizations. However, this perspective truly reveals examples of community integration and development of greater self-awareness facilitated by sensory stimulation. Within this interactive environment, art seasons the broth for participation and inclusion. And there is no better recipe in my opinion.

This year’s festival was held with the participation of the following community-based groups and organizations: Creative I; Doodles Without Borders; the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL); Piece by Piece; The People Concern’s Studio 526; Life is Art; Sidewalk Project; and Skid Row Coffee. Additionally, Adam Johns documented on-site artist interviews; Jen Hofer created and typed poems on-site for community members; Monica Nouwens photographed and David de Roza video recorded both days of the festival. Volunteers and artists facilitated art workshops at the creativity stations and artists exhibited their work. Our Saturday Mistress of Ceremonies was the talented Lorinda Hawkins Smith, and our Sunday Master of Ceremonies was none other than the unforgettable George “Mr. Pancake” Herod. As in past years, the Skid Row Drummers played on both days of the festival, providing the upfront and background soundscapes for our audience’s pleasure throughout the entire program. And Food Not Bombs and the LA Catholic Worker brought food for everyone!

Saturday’s main stage performing artists included: Olusheyi Adeeko Banjo; Justin Berthalot; Windell Bridgewater III; Urban Voices Project; the artist known as “Blake”; Jus La’Delle; Bubba Rich (aka Adam Johns); Unapolagetic; Iron Donato; the Toilet Lady (aka Tom Grode); Ziff & Gary Brown; Lance Richardson; Mark Phillips; Unkal Bean; Nashaun Hammond & Jelly; PBK Andy; Mama Tabia; the artist known as “Ray”; Natosha Smith; Robin Hoodlum; Crushow Herring; the artist known as “Danny”; Big Mama Harper; Rock Dyamon; the artist known as “Pearl”; Silkie Harris & Gabriel; and Skid Row’s very own resident DJ, Sir Oliver, who closed out Saturday and opened on Sunday. With art on display by Kenneth Ros, Kaniah Chapman, Queen Mama Tabia, Destiny Bradley and Tracy Johnson.

Sunday’s main stage performing artists included: The artist known as “Daniel”; Preme; Lorraine Morland; Justin B; Tigga; Gabriel G.; Clancey Cornell; Rosa Miller; Nae’Lyn; Big Mama Harper (encore) & Kaniah; Robin Hoodloom (encore); the artist known as “Andrea”; Marco Garay; Lil’Bit; Alvan Hughes; Stephanie Bell; Curshaw Herring (encore); Adam Smith; Gerardo Bardo; Nancy Gross; Damion Wagner & The Dusk; Nono; the artist known as “Sam”; the artist known as “Hanna”; and Silkie Harris (encore) & Band. Considering the wide range of organizations and individuals contributing to FASRA, this was a star-studded event that had the audience shaking a leg from start to finish!!!

The FASRA main stage provides a platform for artists to showcase their talents – whether it’s music, dance, poetry, comedy, spoken word, or any other form of creative expression. Meanwhile, the park’s blacktop tightly stitches the community together through art-focused activities and sharing public information. The festival, very much in fashion of community writ mass, is a living organism with multiple functions and facets concurrently in motion. FASRA is what our community looks forward to and supports every year. As LAPD’s online homepage states, “the festival is two days of live, non-stop music and performance, visual art, and participatory workshops, showcasing the diverse talents of Skid Row residents.” Coming from someone who has been involved in 2019, this statement could not be any truer. So, what does all this effort mean?

In the case of making art, or making art happen, I circle back to notions of joy and intention. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary primarily defines joy as “a feeling of great happiness or pleasure,” and intention as “what one intends to do or bring about.” For myself, and so far as FASRA is concerned, joy is being able to experience and appreciate art forms in living color, while intention lays in creators’ purposeful motions of expression. In Skid Row, I feel they are hand-in-glove. Art as a tool is revealing and healing in the same brush stroke, public and private for both the spectator and creator. If I can push this idea a bit further, art creates planes of communication upon which ideas are exchanged beyond language. Yet, when we understand contexts behind why art exists, we are provided opportunities to better appreciate creations of others who allow us to peek into their mind. In foregrounding these definitions, I want to communicate this to stakeholders of the Row: Let us rejoice in our own and other’s intentions in bringing art about. No doubt we will find common denominators with others yet also learn from and more about each other. This is what FASRA is for me. This is what community in action looks like. A destination of discoverability – very much like our artist register – celebrating what community members have to offer, a space where all bodies matter. As John Malpede once wrote, “Art is about surprise.”

16TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS

THE ARTISTS:

GARY BROWN
SIR OLIVER
OLUSHEYI BANJO
CRUSHOW / SHOWZ ART
STEPHANIE BELL
UNKAL BEAN
CHELLA COLEMAN
KANIAH CHAPMAN
BIG MAMA
ROBIN HOODLOOM
ROSA MILLER
QUEEN MAMA TABIA
NEA'LYN
BLAKE DENHAM
CLANCEY CORNELL
PYAH AHUCHI TEHUTI EIL
WILLIAM MAYO
DARIUS DOBSON
MACK FLOYD
DARRIN WILKERSON
MARK PHILLIPS
URBAN VOICES PROJECT
LEEARV SOFER
KATE RICHARDS GELLER
CHRIS MACK
SALIQU M'BOUP
BARA
LORRAINE MORLAND
IRON DONATO
TOM GRODE -TOILET LADY
LEYLA MARTINEZ
FOOTIE - KEITH JOHNSON
SONYA C.
MARILYN IRIZARRY
AMANDA MELLOR
ANDREA KIM
ALVAN HUGHES
DANNY PARK
GERARDO DIAZ
TIFFANY AYALA
GERARDO BRAVO
JUSTIN BERTHALOT
CEDRICK CASHAR
'TONE TONE' TAYLOR
TIGGA / TALIK
STARSHEBA CALIFA
PBK VEGAN ANDY
PEARLINE
JUS LA'DELLE
ZIFF SISTRUNK
WINDELL HOWARD BRIDGEWATER III
SWAMIDONNIE
MARCO GARRY
ADAM SMITH
NASHAUN HAMMOND
JELLY
BUBBA RICH-ADAM JOHN
GABRIEL ORTIZ
SILKIE HARRIS
NANCY GROSS
IVAN ESTRADA
UNAPOLETTIC
STUDIO 526
ALICE CORONA
CREATIVE I
YOUNG MI CHI
PIECE BY PIECE
JOHN MONTGOMERY
SIEGLINDE VON DEFFNER
PASTOR RAY
KENNETH ROSS
DOODLES W.O. BOARDERS
HAYK MAKHMURYAN
JEN HOFER
DANNY SINGLETON
DANIEL TORRES
SAM
HANNAH
LIL' BIT
LORINDA HAWKINS SMITH
MR. PANCAKE
DAMION WAGNER
NOREEN AHMED
NICK LARCHENKO
THE DUSK
NONO
PREME
ROCK DYMON
VICKEY MATUREO

OLUSHEYI BANJO

I performed two of my songs, Celebrate Love and J-O-Y. I've been singing since I was like one and a half, and I wanted to be doing this professionally since I was 12, and at the age of 20 I started doing it professionally, and that's how I fell in love with it.



NEA'LYN

I think I started singing when I was five or six. Now, I'm ten. My apartment caught on fire last year. Me and my family were basically homeless for a year. In the next year or two, I hope my family can buy our own house so my dog can go outside, and I can just let her out the door.



ANDREA KIM

Today I performed a Korean folk ballad called Magic Lily. Actually, my grandfather passed away yesterday in Korea. I really appreciate the opportunity to be able to express a song for him.



WINDELL HOWARD

BRIDGEWATER III

I'm self-taught on the guitar. I'm actually a cellist. I learned how to play the cello in the high desert in Asperia. I started playing when I was 11 years old. I've been playing for 14 years.



STARSHEBA CALIFA

The worst sorrow that I experienced was the tragedy of losing my art from the cops coming and destroying it, and crushing it in the truck in front of my face, and calling it trash. It was horrible and devastating. But it also fueled me to fight back, and so that's what got me deep into organizing.



PEARLINE

I'm just coming out because I feel like this park is my family.



ROBIN HOODLOOM

I started out as a Christian rapper. And then there's something called Conscious Rap. Conscious Rap was the original form of rap. It was political, socio-political, religious themes.



ZIFF SISTRUNK

I came here because I live right across the street, and I was looking out the window seeing the tents go up. And something told me to come over here.



BLAKE DENHAM - LA PUBLIC LIBRARY

I'm here with the Los Angeles Public Library. We're doing some outreach, signing people up for library cards, handing out library resources. And I brought my guitar. We have some friends from the Midnight Mission, and they saw me with my guitar and told me I should go up and play.



I knew I was an artist when I accepted that you could be an artist and many other things. I could be an artist, and I could still be a librarian, and I could be a friend, and I could be a biker, and I could be all the things. I had this idea in my head before that to be an artist was to make it a career. But my experience has showed me otherwise. Now, I think an artist is someone who transmutes their perspective and experiences into something tangible and material. I do that through my poetry, and I'm learning how to do that through music.

I think the LA Poverty Department and the Skid Row Museum & Archive are really cool. Me and my colleagues at the Los Angeles Public Library, we do outreach here. In my work of being an artist, I try to organize spaces where people feel validated in their artistry. I think it is not enough just to believe that you're an artist. I think external spaces need to validate your artistry. That's an important part of feeling confident in being an artist. So, spaces like this are validating, where you can just go up and have time to perform a piece on the stage or be heard and be seen.

DANNY PARK - SKID ROW COFFEE

My family had a business here in Skid Row for now 30 years. So, that's kind of my personal relationship to the community. I went to art school for graphic design, and during art school we were supposed to pick an entity or an organization that we were inspired by, and do a rebranding project. And that's how I found out about LAPD. I found them online, and hit them up, and then talked to John and Henriette, and that's how I met everyone. LA Poverty Department... they're the OGs. They've been here long before me, and the work that we're doing is because of their precedence. I mean, if I remember correctly, they started around '84 or something like that, and that's when I was born. They led the way, even for my own personal development and ongoing learning journey in this neighborhood, this community, our city, our country, where we all find ourselves in the context of history and politics and situations these days. And they also led the way in creativity to health, being civically and community engaged, and all the things that comes with art to inspire life and vitality.



BIG MAMA AND KANIAH CHAPMAN

BIG MAMA: I came out here when Kaniah, my youngest, was three months old. And I found out there were so many people down here that had been so messed up by the system. So, I would explain it to them. Then I would come across people who didn't know how to read and write. Then it was people that could read and write, but couldn't comprehend. So, I would be down here, and I would explain the systems and all of that. Then somebody came to me saying they're hungry. So that's how the food thing started. And then people started calling me Big Mama.



My daughters went through all my notebooks. I had 250 notebooks of names, and how I helped each of them, and all of that. I've been constantly keeping myself going down here. Since I'm going through breast cancer, it's kind of difficult, but I make a way. I don't ever give up. Because I want to help everybody that needs help.

KANIAH: My mom inspires me. When I was really little, I was diagnosed with a bone condition that made it difficult for me to walk. I still have it to this day, but it's a lot more manageable.

When I was younger, I saw that as the biggest obstacle in my life: not really being able to move the way I want to, not being able to be like the other kids, not being able to run around and all that stuff.

Well, my mom was like, "No, you're going to be able to do that, but first we need to let you heal. You need to go through all these surgeries, all these other things, and I'm going to be there for you every step of the way."

I still shy away a lot. I actually have really bad anxiety. But I'm used to my mom being super outspoken. So, when it comes to certain things, like when I'm doing art shows like this, I try my best to be as open as possible, to get people to realize I might be very shy, might even stutter a little bit, but I'm still a genuine person who just wants to show off my art.



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LIL' BIT

I sang a song, and I did a small poem before I started the song. It just came from the top of my head, just for the community to know that we slip up and make mistakes. We're not going to be perfect, but we don't have to be perfect to be one community. We come from different areas, different cities, different states. I'm not from this city, but I've been coming down here throughout the years, so I've seen the good and the bad in this community. My song was a message that we have to rise up together. We have to remember that we are still going to have some breakdowns, but we need to come together.

I was partially deaf when I was a baby, so I wasn't able to communicate like others. So I went by vibrations, and I could feel the vibration of music, and that's when I started paying attention to music. But I didn't really sing until I was maybe in kindergarten. My teacher thought I had a perfect voice, out of all the kids. So that became my thing.

I try to bring a positive song here. I really don't like many sad songs. I don't want a lot of people to feel unloved, or not appreciated, or anything like that. I want people to be feeling at ease.



CLANCEY CORNELL

My husband and I sing Afro-Brazilian music, that comes from West Africa, through the diaspora into Brazil. So, we love singing Portuguese songs. We love singing songs that are in Yoruba—a West African language—that have to do with honoring forces of nature. I feel connected most when I'm singing about the wind or the fire, the rain or the water—mostly the water, if I had to pick one.



THIS IS CLANCEY'S 10TH YEAR SUPPORTING THE FESTIVAL!

JELLY

My name is Jelly. I'm from Rochester, New York, and I came here to Cali on a mission, on a journey, and that's to be famous—to chase my dreams, be somebody. I'm an artist, and I'm showcasing that.

It's my second year here with the Skid Row Art Festival. I love it. I love the energy, the people, the non-profit organizations, what we do here, as one and as many. It's everything.

I knew I wanted to do music when I was two years old, just hearing my mom. My mom would always play music in the house, and had a voice to carry the song, and I always wanted to be like my mom. My mom is my inspiration, and my kids too. And life inspires me. Life gives me motivation; life gives me creativity; life gives me imagination. I put everything that happens, all that energy, into what I'm trying to create.

When I got here, my first stop was in Downtown LA. And from Downtown LA, you're almost there in Skid Row—and that's how I heard of it. My first day here, I get to Cali, like, "I gotta be somebody. I want to be somebody, I have to be somebody." And Skid Row was the center of my support. You know, support for everything, you could get everything from Skid Row. Skid Row is the resource center.



JELLY AND NASHAUN HAMMOND

GABRIEL ORTIZ

I performed a couple songs. One of them was written by my friend, Robert, who passed away. It's a very sad song. It was his swan song, and it's very moving for me to be able to sing it for everyone else.

I don't need a gold record to be a success. I am one because I've done my own thing, even though it's been dark and rough. I was homeless for seven years, and I had enough of it. Being a starving musician just sucks. So, I got sober. I stopped using meth, I stopped drinking. I'm a permanent resident now of Skid Row. I've been housed. I've been in my new apartment for about 22 days.

I praise the Lord, and I thank God for everything he's done for me. All the seven years that I was homeless, I never went without. I always had food, always had clothing. But there's a lot of violence on the streets, and there's a lot of fear. We need to band together. The whole world's against us, so when we're against ourselves, that's just a terrible state.

Now, I have my own place in a single room occupancy, and I love it and I'm thankful for it. Now, I can sing and play all the time. I don't have to put up a sign and say, "Hey, donations please for food." I have all that now. I have a place to live, and so my musicianship is completely changing now.



LIFE IS ART - SHOWZART - SIDEWALK PROJECT



KENNETH ROSS - PAINTINGS



IVAN ESTRADA



CREATIVITY STATIONS - INFORMATION - FOOD



16TH FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS



16th FASRA T-shirt table with Stephanie Bell, Leyla Martinez & Shawne West.



LORINDA HAWKINS SMITH



SEAN GREGORY - MR. PANCAKE ANDREA KIM - HENRY APODACA



DAVID DE ROZAS



Clancey Cornell, Franny Alfano, Cathy Gudis signing up All Skid Row Artists.



LA POVERTY DEPARTMENT'S CREW: Stephanie Bell, Henriëtte Brouwers, Iron Donato, Tom Grode, Jaiye Kamson, John Malpede, Leyla Martinez, Lorraine Morland, ToneTone Taylor and **STAGE CREW:** Henry Apodaca, Sean Gregory, Zach Rutland, Lorinda Hawkins Smith and Mr. Pancake. **SKID ROW DRUMMERS:** Ptah Ahochi, Gary Brown, Bara, Darius Dobson, Mack Floyd, Omar Mathews, William Mayo, Saliou M'Boup, Nancy Gross and more drummers who joined in.

ABOUT LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT

Los Angeles Poverty Department is a multi-disciplinary arts organization that produces and presents artworks and events that instantiate the existence of the Skid Row community—affirming its assets, advocating for its rights, and supporting its aspirations. LAPD projects interweave exhibitions, publications, theatrical performances, public conversations, and cultural events. Programs are developed, produced, and performed collaboratively with Skid Row community members. Founded in 1985 by John Malpede, LAPD was the first performance group in the nation made up principally of homeless people, and the first arts program of any kind for homeless people in Los Angeles.

SKID ROW HISTORY MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

Since 2015, LAPD has operated the Skid Row History Museum & Archive in downtown Los Angeles. In addition to being the primary venue for the presentation of LAPD artworks, the Museum partners with Skid Row organizations and individuals to provide free space for their civic and cultural activities. Our community archive documents the 50+ year history of activism and agency in Skid Row. **Located at 250 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, 90012, the Museum is open to the public Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 2-5 pm and by appointment.**

ENORMOUS THANKS TO...

... **COMMUNITY PARTNERS:** our 'house band' the Skid Row Drummers, United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP), Studio 526, Doodles Without Borders, Piece by Piece, Creative I, the Hippy Kitchen, Food Not Bombs and Skid Row Coffee. Rec & Parks and its ambassador Gregory Young, DLANC and Council District 14.

... **VOLUNTEERS:** Franny Alfano, Clancey Cornell, James Cook, Cathy Gudis, James Delores, Ana Lara, Kimberly Welch, Shawne West. ... **T-SHIRT DESIGNED BY:** David de Rozas.

... **MC'S:** Lorinda Hawkins Smith and Mr. Pancake.

... **CREATIVITY STATIONS AND WORKSHOPS:** Piece by Piece, Studio 526, Creative I, Doodles Without Borders, Jen Hofer, Life is Art and Sidewalk Project, Urban Voices Project, Housing for Health, DLANC, LA Public Library.

... **INTERVIEWERS:** Iron Donato, Tom Grode and Adam Johns.

... **CAMERA MEN:** David da Rozas and Adam Johns.



ADAM JOHNS HAYK MAKHMURYAN



JOHN MALPEDE CLANCEY CORNELL ZACH RUTLAND

GET READY FOR LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT'S 17TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL FOR ALL SKID ROW ARTISTS COMING UP SATURDAY & SUNDAY OCTOBER 24 & 25, 2026

The Festival is 2 afternoons (12 - 4PM) of non-stop performances created and performed by Skid Row talents. We're talking about performance of all kinds: music, dance, more music, spoken word, poetry, theater and yes, even more music. Skid Row visual artists display their work and we'll have arts workshops, so anyone can make an artwork right there. If you want to perform or exhibit your work, contact us to get a spot at the festival.



JUSLADELLE WITH SILKHE HARRIS AND RHYTHM SKID ROW PLAYERS

CALL OR WRITE US!

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SKID ROW DRUMMERS AND ALVAN HUGHES DANCING

The 16th Festival for All Skid Row Artists is produced by Los Angeles Poverty Department. This year's festival is made possible with the support of California Arts Council's Local Impact program, the Department of Cultural Affairs of the city of Los Angeles, L.A. County Department of Arts and Culture, the Kindie project, Department of Recreation and Parks, DLANC and Council District 14.

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