



WE ARE ENOUGH

Equity, Inclusion, and
Emergent Leadership in
Silicon Valley's Multicultural
Arts Community



WE ARE ENOUGH

Equity, Inclusion, and Emergent
Leadership in Silicon Valley's
Multicultural Arts Community

Maribel L. Alvarez, Ph.D.

Presented By:



School of Arts and Culture at MHP
1700 Alum Rock Avenue
San Jose, California 95116
Year of Publication: 2019

Index

Executive Summary Demone Carter	01
Introduction Maribel L. Alvarez, Ph.D.	03
The Program: MALI	05
What's Next for MALI?	26
Appendix A	27
Appendix B On the Day by Lorenz Mazon Dumuk	28

Executive Summary

To live and work in Silicon Valley is to swim in a sea of technology buzzwords. While most of these terms quickly become trite and overused, there is one tech sector word that I find useful; that word is “disruption.”

Harvard Business School professor and disruption guru, Clayton Christensen, says that a disruption displaces an existing market, industry, or technology and produces something new and more efficient and worthwhile. It is at once destructive and creative (Forbes).

I find this idea of destructive creativity helpful when thinking about the Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute’s (MALI) approach to leadership development over the past 10 years. While the arts sector is still wrestling with how to authentically speak to tenets of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the MALI program has been engaged in a decade-long experiment in hyper-local leadership disruption.

The Silicon Valley as a region and the city of San Jose specifically are bastions of demographic diversity. This is something both the city and its citizens have rightly held up as one of our best attributes. But that diversity is not reflected in our arts and cultural spaces and especially not in the rooms where decisions about the creative life of the valley are made. From the outset, the founders of the MALI program were tasked with solving a persistent problem that many assumed did not exist.

In order to hack away at the roots of systemic inequality locally, MALI’s founders had to devise a means to simultaneously disrupt the old order and put something more representative, efficient, and worthwhile in its place.

I have a unique and privileged vantage point on the MALI program as an alumnus (Class 4) and as the manager of the program since 2014.

I have been able to benefit from the leadership development MALI provides as well as see how it has worked for the artists who have been through the annual cohort experience. Each year, I get to see genuine moments of discovery and the seeds of interconnectedness that get planted in every MALI class. As MALI becomes more of an institution, we are working to articulate what has been called in the past 'the secret sauce' of MALI. Why does this particular approach work, and how can we expand and replicate this model?

To this end, the School of Arts and Culture commissioned acclaimed folklife scholar Dr. Maribel Alvarez from the University of Arizona to write a "brown paper" to help quantify MALI's local impact and direction for the future.

In "We Are Enough: Equity, Inclusion, and Emergent Leadership in Silicon Valley's Multicultural Arts Community," Dr. Maribel Alvarez explores the experiences of MALI alumni and founders, and places the program's progress in the context of Silicon Valley's broader development.

What I find most exciting about the future of MALI and my involvement with the program is being a part of a proverbial "long play." The MALI approach is not a knee-jerk response to non-profit foundational priorities but rather a sustained method for seeding and sustaining multicultural arts leadership one board appointment, job referral, and artistic collaboration at a time. In a world that is increasingly frenetic and fleeting, to be part of a lasting movement for change gives me hope for the future of the arts sector.

Demone Carter
MALI Program Manager

We are enough:

Equity, Inclusion, and Emergent Leadership in Silicon Valley's Multicultural Arts Community

Maribel L. Alvarez, Ph.D.

Demone Carter remembers his awakening. On a mild summer evening in 2010, he agreed to accompany a friend to a social mixer at a restaurant in a suburb a few miles north of San Jose. The event was sponsored by a program rumored to attract some of the “cool kids” from the South Bay arts scene. A working artist himself, running a Hip-Hop afterschool program at a local social service agency, Carter had struggled for some time to make sense of his place in the arts community. He felt appreciated at his job, but not really understood. Despite being involved with music, poetry, and dance from an early age, Carter was not entirely sure what people meant when they spoke about the arts as a “civic project” – a popular phrase used frequently by local politicians and nonprofit directors.

At the event, clusters of multi-generational professionals buzzed with excitement. Some exchanged phone numbers; others dissected the political headlines of the week. A few minutes after arriving, Carter met Tamara Alvarado, the event organizer. Effervescent and self-assured, Alvarado addressed Carter with a statement that seemed, at first, oddly improbable: “You need to consider running for political office at some point.” Incongruous with his self-image and career path at the time, Alvarado’s daring affirmation, nonetheless, drew Carter’s attention. Over time, his confidence in his abilities as an artist and a cultural producer grew. He began to sense there was cultural work to be done in the South Bay in a scale beyond what he had previously imagined. Nearly a decade later, Carter can still recall the tipsy sensation of feeling acknowledged in a way he had not been before. Driving back along the 680 Freeway to San Jose, he relished on the certainty of having found a community of like-minded creatives where he belonged.

¹The title of this paper is inspired by the poem *On the Day* by MALI graduate Lorenz Mazon Dumuk (Class 7). Read the poem in Appendix B.

**Driving back
along the
680 Freeway
to San Jose,
he relished
the certainty of
having found a
community of
like-minded
creatives where
he belonged.**

The Program: MALI

Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute

The program responsible for hosting the mixer Carter attended, the Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute (MALI), was established in San Jose, California in 2006. The program was created to address the barriers that prevented people of color engaged in Silicon Valley's arts, culture, and entertainment sectors from fully realizing their potential as leaders in the creative sector. Each year, a cohort of promising leaders – some well-established and others barely emerging – are invited to participate in an intensive training experience consisting of 12 months of arts management workshops, rigorous intellectual framing, and plenty of networking opportunities. Each cohort is made up of approximately 12 artists and other individuals from the fields of graphic design, dance, marketing, creative writing, or any number of artistic disciplines. There is no cost to participate in the program, but the selection process is competitive. The curriculum includes bimonthly all-day seminars, guest speakers, and an annual service learning trip to a multicultural project in California or other southwestern states.

While participants in MALI enter the program at different levels of experience in arts production or leadership roles, all share an identity as “people of color” engaged in expressive industries. Despite the indisputable diversity of ethnicities and racial mixtures in Silicon Valley, there is a growing perception among minority communities that the contributions of talented people of color are not properly appreciated. Over the years, MALI has earned a reputation for addressing this gap through what some observers call a “refreshing” approach that balances acknowledging the social gaps that impede progress on the one hand, without re-playing the usual clichés that saddle identity politics with acrimony. Combining philosophical underpinnings with a hard-nosed determination to see tangible changes in the Valley's cultural landscape, MALI has favored pragmatic solutions over platitudes. Rather than picking out single racially-based

“Diversity without equity is an empty performance.”

Roy Hirabayashi

cases at specific companies or institutions, MALI’s leadership points to the unspoken norms and assumptions that reproduce exclusion in the creative sectors more broadly. “Dynamics of power-sharing that are often invisible,” one participant said, “can often be more insidious to the real work of inclusion than blatant examples of evident discrimination.”

In approaching this work from the vantage point of “people of color” involved in artistic production, MALI also accepted the challenge of naming racial categories of privilege and disadvantage as part and parcel of its mission. While “white” is the signifier that defines exclusion for most people of color, the program organizers are also keen to the problematic uses of racial labels as a way of accounting for inequalities. In breaking through the encrusted walls of these social divides, MALI has done much heavy-lifting work. “We always understood the problem of multiculturalism to be something beyond hues of skin color,” said Roy Hirabayashi, one of MALI’s three co-founders. By “white,” Hirabayashi said, people of color and their allies understand implicitly a history that has to do with property rights, citizenship, marriage rights, and voting, with people of different races and ethnicities at different times being allowed or denied access to claim that category.² “People of color can look white, many of us have white relatives, or are of mixed ancestry,” Hirabayashi told me. “The reference to ‘color’ has become the necessary shortcut to speak about social equity,” he said. But at the same time, he noted, that is exactly what so-called diversity programs get wrong: the belief that if you change the color scheme of a meeting or a team, the work is done. “When we started MALI,” he said, “our aim was to achieve broad and sustainable equitable representation inside the chambers where decisions were being made. We always said that diversity without equity is an empty performance.”

Hirabayashi and others involved in MALI’s extended family speak with conviction about how calling out “white” blind spots or misbehavior is

²Stallings, Tyler, “Considering Whiteness as Ideology and not Biology,” KCET, January 22, 2013.

only a small part of the deeper work of equity they hope to accomplish. “The systemic organization of inequality can be referenced by the umbrella term ‘whiteness.’ This term implies an ideology and aesthetics that stand-in for an alleged ‘mainstream’ we are all supposed to fit into,” Carter explained one day in Spring 2018. “That system is the object we aim to disrupt.”

This insistence on analyzing the racial divide through structural factors instead of through personalities has implications for the way MALI alumni engage with gatekeepers. Advancing a case that is as simple as it is persuasive, MALI stresses that multicultural exclusion and disempowerment are detrimental to all sectors of society, not only to people of color. For Silicon Valley industries, the price of unequal participation may prove too costly: innovation itself may be at risk when creatives of color are absent from the trending narratives. “The most interesting innovations and visionary ideas often linger in obscurity, beneath the surface,” said Carter. At MALI, he said, “we make it a point to recognize what is not immediately visible as the start of something exciting.”

MALI was created to address the specific need for artists of color, but the residual value of their work has a resonance that speaks to the interests of the creative sector at large in Silicon Valley. The timing for a conversation about diversity in the tech industry could not be more auspicious. To satisfy their aspirations for global leadership, technology companies rely on a continuous supply of innovators and creative thinkers. In the age of digital media dominance, innovation hinges largely on winning points of cultural capital over people’s everyday life habits and expressions. The industry’s legendary success has been credited, in part, to the ability to detect cultural trends and connect products to people’s needs in real time and within the realms of their authentic cultural lives. Cultural diversity, as it turns out, underwrites each one of these transactions. Furthermore, culture stitches

together the frame by which these diverse demands of daily life “make sense.” In *Forbes* magazine in 2016, a business analyst wrote: “diversity offers two major benefits: it buffers change, by avoiding the riskiness of monocultures, but more importantly it creates the platform upon which innovation and adaptation operate.”³

While the industry has been successful in tapping diversity as a competitive advantage for marketing products (one needs only recall the rainbow of youthful iPod users in the product’s early ads), it has lagged in more substantive measures of employment, leadership, and social measures of impact in the local neighborhoods where, despite gains in jobs, the industry has produced other insidious forms of displacements.⁴ While the youthfulness of the labor force in the dominant social media companies has been recognized as a strategic advantage, class and racial divides continue to plague the industry.⁵ Some observers suggest that a loss of diversity in Silicon Valley’s reservoir of talent can potentially threaten the competitive edge of the larger trend-setting companies.⁶ As seen in shocking detail as recently as in the 2016 elections, the undue influences of dark sources in social media have renewed the call for stronger ethical commitments to a diversity of points of view.

Artists, designers, and entertainers hold an advantageous position in the cultural frontlines of these social transformations. Artists have the training, curiosity, and sensibility that makes them especially equipped to understand how public expressions and communications carry symbolic power. While in the United States we have grown accustomed to speaking about social change primarily in terms of election cycles and big policy overhauls, the most enduring changes in society often take place underground – in the everyday realms where culture shapes how we dress, eat, think, and talk to each other.⁷ As a system of meaning, culture assigns

³Tsusaka, Miki, “Three Key Ways for Companies to Succeed in the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” *Forbes*, January 18, 2016.

⁴Chan, Min Li, “The Google Bus,” *The Point*, Issue 14, <https://thepointmag.com/2017/examined-life/the-google-bus>

⁵Guynn, Jessica, “Silicon Valley’s race gap is getting worse, not better, new research shows,” *USA Today*, October 3, 2017; Wiener, Anna, “Why can’t Silicon Valley solve its diversity problem?,” *The New Yorker*, November 26, 2016.



Top.
MALI Program Manager,
Demone Carter, at 2016
MALI Art/Life Forum
Photo Credit:
Jonathan Garcia
(MALI Class 8)

Bottom.
Business Model Canvas
workshop at 2016 MALI
Art/Life Forum
Photo credit:
Jonathan Garcia
(MALI Class 8)

⁶Ioannou, Lori, "Silicon Valley's Achilles' Heel Threatens to Topple its Supremacy in Innovation," CNBC, June 20, 2018.
⁷Chang, Jeff, and Brian Komar, "Culture Before Politics," The American Prospect, December 6, 2010.

values to persons and points of view, while demarcating the boundaries that de-value others. The justification for a program like MALI is, therefore, cemented on a type of social dividend that exceeds transactional values, or, “what is good for the company.” The most fruitful arguments for the growth and expansion of a leadership-building program like MALI rest on a logic that understands cultural diversity as a vital necessity for democratic participation.

Within these democratic vistas, artists of color frequently serve as the town criers: they are the first ones to point out what is missing in our public conversations. “When leaders of color are cultivated and trained,” Hirabayashi said, “voices frequently unheard become amplified.” One positive result of these disruptions is that the taken-for-granted nature of what is accepted as “American culture” is shaken out of complacency. As creative leaders of color enter spaces of social planning, messaging, and infrastructure more purposefully, culture moves from being a catch-all signifier referencing only styles and trends traded in the marketplace and becomes instead a tool for including more people and welcoming them into more dignified, vindicated, possibly even healing forms of social intercourse.

Santa Clara County and its seat of government, San Jose, are widely recognized as the heart of Silicon Valley. Innovation is the calling card of the region. Diversity is a public value espoused frequently and visibly. But, despite the horizontality of social systems in the Bay Area, a history of openly racist policies haunt memory at every turn. Described on the one hand as the “Asian American heartland of America,”⁸ San Jose has also been the epicenter of several cultural and political benchmarks in Mexican American history. The local cultural landscape has been characterized by notable moments of simultaneous expansion and contraction along lines of race, ethnicity, and nationality. For ethnic and multicultural artists and organizations, the

happy times have brought about significant victories in the forms of new cultural spaces and buildings, parks, festivals, public art, and youth arts programs. But the dark times have been especially daunting as well, bringing cultural strife, distrust, embarrassment, and acrimony at all levels of the city’s cultural, economic, and social life. One study revealed that from 2006 to 2012, while the non-white population in the valley represented almost half of the total population (48 percent), little more than a third of all reported working artists were people of color (36 percent).⁹ A similar level of disparity affected occupations considered “positions of influence over the arts”: only 31 percent of chief executives, general operations managers, fundraisers, and education administrators were people of color.¹⁰ Even in some artistic disciplines where a greater representation by artists of color could be expected, the numbers showed significant gaps: 75 to 85 percent of working artists in dance, music, and writing in Santa Clara County are white.¹¹

“When leaders of color are cultivated and trained, voices frequently unheard become amplified.”

Roy Hirabayashi

⁸See <http://goldsea.com/Air/Issues/SJ/sj.html>

⁹Taken from 2016 US census data

¹⁰U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey

Since its inception, MALI has aimed to redress these imbalances. The program has attracted the attention of urban planners, philanthropic investors, and cultural policy experts interested in crafting a regional strategy for strengthening the cultural sector. Each year, MALI receives three times more applicants than the number of available positions. Approximately 96 percent of participants complete the full year commitment. Over its life span, the program has provided nearly 10,000 hours of direct instruction, mentorship, and networking, and MALI fellows have joined more than two dozen local boards, committees, or commissions after graduating the program. In exit and follow-up surveys, most alumni express a desire for continued involvement with the program. More recent cohorts have included participants from creative areas beyond the nonprofit arts sector. As a result, the program has seen growth in aspirations for artistic start-ups. A new cadre of cultural leaders of color are now interested in harnessing for cultural projects some of the same instruments that helped capitalize the major transformations in Silicon Valley industries: venture capital, open source, and prototyping.

MALI's goals are ambitious and aspirational. "Our original dream," Hirabayashi said, "was to really go where the action is – where decisions about this country's cultural life are being made day after day." Few would dispute that MALI has succeeded at igniting a conversation about arts and creativity in the South Bay that was not taking place before. "Or at least, not at the level of cross-cultural collaboration among people of color that MALI crafted," said one participant. Also, by linking the practices of leadership development to metrics of social equity and inclusion, MALI helped give the multicultural arts movement real teeth and not just the comfort of feel-good platitudes. But as one would expect, much remains to be done. Armando Castellano, a graduate from Class 4, described this senti-

ment succinctly at a MALI alumni meeting in early 2018: "I'm still too often the only one like me in the board rooms where I get invited to sit."

This essay attempts to bring the voices of MALI alumni and stakeholders in conversation with one another to help assess what the program has meant and where it might still grow in the future.¹² The academic field of leadership studies has exploded in recent years. Once an esoteric topic that interested only select scholars at elite business schools, today leadership books, seminars, online courses, and consultants crowd the halls of academia and Human Resource departments. Throughout its existence, MALI has resisted the temptation to favor formal academic training as the primary site of learning for emerging leaders of color. At the same time, intellectual rigor has also been an important component of the MALI brand. The mandate of the program, Carter reminded me in a recent conversation, "was always to push against narratives of deficit; academic jargon can make those deficits even more glaring when language gets deployed as a form of gatekeeping. We were determined to find a way to speak our truths intelligently without depending on obscure language or theories." To a large extent, MALI's work has been about complicating the framework of leadership training as much as it has also been a program that successfully offered training.

In 2006, when MALI came into existence, San Jose was halfway through one of the largest transformations experienced by an American city in the last century. Determined to shed vestiges of its agricultural past to become "the capital of Silicon Valley," throughout the 1990s the city had attracted heavy-hitter technology companies, transformed the urban core, invested millions in arts and educational facilities, and adopted progressive measures concerning living wages, gay rights, and green sustainability. Cultural diversity figured prominently in the city's make-up and was visibly reflected in its

¹¹Ibid

¹²A list of the stakeholders who contributed to this conversation can be found in Appendix A



Top. Jose Hernandez (MALI Class 9) at 2016 Art/Life Forum
Photo Credit: Jonathan Garcia (MALI Class 8)
Bottom. Screen Print workshop at STAND! 2018
Photo Credit: Rogelio Barrera (MALI Class 8)



Alice Chen and Quynh-Mai Nguyen of MALI Class 10 and 7, respectively, performing at the 2016 MALI Art/Life Forum

political, social, and economic leadership. The cultural sector had experienced tectonic changes during the same period. Alliances of multicultural artists and organizations forced the city's hand to stop investing art dollars primarily in the larger established cultural institutions. With a new modernized airport and an expansive Silicon Valley footprint, the city's hotel bed tax collections grew. Dozens of small, ethnic-specific art organizations and artist of color-led initiatives became beneficiaries of larger city grants. A vibrant scene of independent music producers, fashion and interior designers, maker-spaces, foodies, and alternative youth cultural offerings spread from downtown to East San Jose and other surrounding suburbs.

It was into this thriving arts scene that MALI

came to life. From the start, the program's founders made clear their intention to tackle the thorny questions of cultural equity, power, and influence that were affecting artists of color. But amidst those aspirations, a more immediate and practical need demanded change: whenever any leader at a cultural or civic entity thought they needed "diversity" in an arts panel, nonprofit board, or urban renewal planning initiative, the same two or three people were called upon to serve. The demand for service in "multicultural" slots filled disproportionately the schedules of Roy Hirabayashi and Raul Lozano, who were already stretched thin directing and managing their respective organizations – the nationally respected Japanese American drumming company San Jose Taiko and the long-standing



Poet/Arts Advocate Nikiko Masumoto keynote speaker 2016 Art/Life Forum.
Photo Credit: Jonathan Garcia (MALI Class 8)

Even when leaders of color were recruited successfully to serve on boards, the stigma of “tokenism” – being the “one” expected to speak for the “many” – impaired their capacity to bring about changes.

bearer of the Chicano theater tradition in San Jose, Teatro Visión.

Running into each other at the same meetings repeatedly, Hirabayashi and Lozano reached out to Tamara Alvarado, at the time serving as director of the valley’s leading Latino contemporary arts organization, MACLA (Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana), to help them devise a solution to the persistent claim by established power brokers that there were “not enough qualified people of color” to fill leadership roles. But the trio of leaders suspected the problems of inclusion ran much deeper. Even when leaders of color were recruited successfully to serve on boards, the stigma of “tokenism” – being the “one” expected to speak for the “many” – impaired their capacity to bring about changes. “As a matter of



Business Model Canvas Workshop at MALI Art/Life Forum
Photo Credit: Jonathan Garcia (MALI Class 8)

principle,” Alvarado said, “we adopted a policy that whenever anyone asked us for a recommendation for a leadership appointment we would refuse to give it unless the request was for three or more slots.”

For months, Alvarado, Hirabayashi, and Lozano met weekly to discuss the rapidly-changing arts scene in San Jose. As discussions about the future of the city intensified, they too felt the urgency to act. They came up with a plan to increase representation at the city’s boards and commissions gradually. In the meantime, a group of prominent art and business leaders had come together to envision ways for the arts sector to be closer connected to the Silicon Valley economic boom. Sometimes invited, and other times crashing the meetings, the trio of Japanese American and Chicana/o leaders soon became painfully aware that when they were not present to speak up, the needs of the culture-specific artists and organizations did not figure

in the discussions. They sensed the time was right for a more direct intervention. Informal conversations morphed into strategy. To alter the landscape of civic participation for the creative sector in San Jose and the South Bay, artists of color needed to be integrated in substantive ways into the decision-making bodies leading the charge for change. “The problem was not the lack of talented, natural leaders, or the desire of artists to contribute,” Lozano recalled at a recent MALI gathering. “The problem was the pipeline. We really hit a wall. We needed to start something, so our people didn’t have to wait until they turn 60 to be acknowledged as leaders.”

The three settled on the idea of creating a leadership training program. They looked to the arc of their own professional trajectories to offer a skeleton curriculum to get them started. Among the questions they asked were: what had to occur for each one of them to rise as leaders

in their communities; what skills did they have to learn; what barriers stood in the way? The initial questions generated other inquiries: what tools of the trade proved critical to their effectiveness? What lessons about leadership can arts leaders of color learn in a classroom? Which lessons could not really be taught but needed instead hands-on experiments, trial and error, or mentorship and networking?

All three founders were keenly aware of the help they had received from mentors at significant turning points. Lozano and Alvarado were graduates of the leadership institute of the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC), where each had experienced unique epiphanies that carried them through tough leadership challenges. In their minds, the value of proposing a new leadership program was unassailable. But one question lingered: can a hyper-local leadership program harness the same level of energy, rigor, and effectiveness that national capacity-building programs enjoyed?

One possible answer came via the example of the American Leadership Forum. The national ALF, founded in 1980 in Houston, Texas by prominent business leaders and university scholars, promotes the primacy of relationships as the cornerstone of leadership. The idea is simple: leaders inspire followers and people follow those they trust. The San Jose chapter of ALF has been a robust cultivator of local leadership. Many of the emergent leaders holding public office in the valley are alumni. ALF's training curriculum is anchored in experiential learning and networking. The program's alumni constitute a respected local network that calls on each other's expertise and social networks to advance changes on policy issues critical to the region's wellbeing. Participants in ALF work as a cohort for a year in high-bar projects that ask them to explore deeply their own skills sets and the local socio-political environment. "In a way, we needed to build our own version of the old

boy's network from scratch," reflected Carter, who became MALI's program manager in 2012 and is a member of the local ALF chapter. "People of color in the valley were brimming with potential to be leaders in multiple fields, but we needed to embrace a spirit of generosity with each other; we needed to seed our own networking with 'trade secrets' on the best strategies to create real change," he said.

When MALI was proposed, most of San Jose's established arts leaders took kindly to the idea. Diversity as a positive organizational outcome has never been a hard sell among institutional leaders in Silicon Valley, but prioritizing funding to launch the new program required some convincing. Lozano recalls worrying that MALI would be perceived only as a "feel-good" diversity proposal, with limited capacity to alter dynamics of decision-making among gatekeepers in the arts community. Hirabayashi, Lozano, and Alvarado also insisted on resisting the common expectation that MALI become a career-track arts management program focused on technical skills needed to run nonprofit art organizations. They believed MALI had to have intellectual and policy gravitas to achieve true transformational gains in multicultural leadership. Taking a page from the lauded leadership ideas advanced by Harvard Business School's professor John P. Kotter, whose 1990 essay *What Leaders Really Do*, revolutionized the leadership training field, MALI founders held firmly to the belief that forming "cultural leaders" was a distinct task, and in some cases even separate, from forming "cultural managers."

Kotter is relentless on this point: leadership and management are complementary – both are necessary for success – but they require different sets of skills. While Kotter sees management primarily focused on coping with the complexity of details, tasks, and activities involved in making successful organizations run, he insists leadership is, by contrast, about "coping with change." According to the Kotter



Erika Gomez Henao
at STAND! 2018.
Photo credit:
Vanessa Palafox
(MALI Class 10)

dyad, managers create and oversee budgets, write up strategic plans, organize staff, and make sure that targets are met with the highest quality. Leaders, on the other hand, do not “solve problems.” Instead, they set directions, look for patterns, form relationships, align people, and motivate and energize behaviors. In other words, leaders are persuaders and influencers. Some people are good at both leading and managing. Others function better when the roles are segregated.

For Lozano, these distinctions made sense. Growing up, he felt firsthand the difference that grassroots activism had made in San Jose through the civil rights and Chicano movements. He had seen unlikely leaders emerge from humble origins – without any academic certificates to vouch for their skills – to change the direction of history. This is what he wanted for MALI. Since the 1980s, when Lozano began to take leadership roles in the San Jose arts scene, the environment for making and promoting art by people of color had changed for the better. Overall, a greater level of fairness had emerged in the distribution of local grants. With the boom in the tech industry, the philanthropy pie had grown bigger. Lozano acknowledged these good trends but felt something was still missing. “You can learn anywhere how to write up a marketing plan,” said Lozano. “Another thing altogether is learning how to deal with power structures when you are the target of the marketing campaign. When you are the demographic group which the plan wants to influence, leadership takes on a different meaning. In my mind, MALI could only be effective if it dealt directly with these nuances of leadership.”

It is commonly said that behind every great athlete there is always a great coach. If this metaphor of athletic triumph is applied to MALI, then the program’s success must be credited in some measure to the coaching skills of Connie Martinez. In the early 2000s, Martinez was director of the Children’s Discovery Museum in

“When we act to do more than simply give a nice, polite nod to diversity, everyone is challenged to re-order their understanding of the change we aspire to create.”

Connie Martinez

San Jose. She also chaired the influential San Jose Arts and Culture Roundtable, a coalition of executive directors from the major cultural institutions. Martinez became the leading force behind an ambitious plan to re-center the arts as one of the distinctive assets of a broader Silicon Valley interest in creativity and innovation. In Martinez, MALI found a fierce advocate. She stood out among arts leaders in the Valley for her unique ability to perceive trends before others took notice, ask counterintuitive questions, and find win-win solutions. The plan she helped craft was launched under the name 1stACT Silicon Valley with an initial \$3 million grant from the Knight Foundation. Martinez made sure the plan included funding for MALI. For Hirabayashi, Lozano, and Alvarado, the long hours in strategic meetings and study sessions had finally paid off. They began recruiting the inaugural MALI cohort in 2008.

A meticulous observer of San Jose’s changing demographics, Martinez recalls coming into a daunting realization as she gathered data for the Knight Foundation request: the center of gravity for cultural vitality in the region had slowly shifted away from the large institutions and was moving towards adaptive, lean, small and mid-sized ethnically mixed organizations and younger, independent, artists of color. For too long we sat at the table with the usual suspects,” Martinez told me in a phone conversation in early 2018. “When we act to do more than simply give a nice, polite nod to diversity, everyone is challenged to re-order their understanding of the change we aspire to create,” she said. “The non-minority gatekeeper who hoarded resources and dominated conversations is challenged to make room for someone else at the decision-maker’s table. But the emerging artist of color is also challenged – sitting at the table where she was previously excluded, a new set of skills is now needed to achieve a more distributive model of social leadership.”

The concept of “social leadership” referenced



Omar Rodriguez (MALI Class 4) and MALI Co-Founder Roy Hirabayashi at 2016 Art/Life Forum
Photo Credit: Jonathan Garcia (MALI Class 8)

by Martinez developed out of what some social scientists considered was the shift from the Information Age to the Social Age – a period in history when change is happening so fast and in so many areas of our lives simultaneously that communication and relationships become the essential requisites for getting things done.¹³ In the convulsive scenarios of contemporary life (at work, home, and civic institutions), the leader is not so much a figure of authority as a co-creator of meaning among and with stakeholders. Training models of social leadership utilize art-based ideas such as “curation” and “storytelling” to reposition the role of the leader as someone who can help bring a broader level of connectedness and generosity to institutions and communities.¹⁴ Martinez saw MALI as a lab where these ideas could be tested.

During the initial years, 1stACT Silicon Valley incubated the program. Under 1stACT, MALI acquired the bearings of a formal program with

staff, a recurring annual cycle of activities, and operating funds. But 1stACT was always designed to sunset after achieving key benchmarks. MALI had to find a new institutional home and in 2011 the program was integrated as part of the activities of the newly established School of Arts and Culture at the Mexican Heritage Plaza in East San Jose. Alvarado, who had left MACLA to join Martinez as MALI’s first program manager, had since moved on to become the Executive Director of the new cultural center at the Plaza. “Looking back,” Alvarado told me, “it is a powerful statement that MALI landed as an anchor program located in the eastside of San Jose, in the same location where Cesar Chavez launched his first boycott against the Safeway grocery chain on behalf of farm workers.” This connection between MALI’s new home at the School and the legacy of civil rights in East San Jose offered the program a payload of symbolic capital that it has effectively mobi-

¹³See <https://julianstodd.wordpress.com/2014/06/13/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-social-age/>

¹⁴Consult Sea Salt Learning for more information on this concept: <https://seasaltlearning.com/social-leadership/>

lized into action.

If, as some scholars claim, “culture” is one of the most complicated words in the English language, “leadership” might as well qualify as a runner up. Some definitions of leadership are straightforward and expected: to influence others to achieve common goals, create vision for a desired future, and forge environments in which things can be accomplished. We tend to ascribe unique qualities to leaders. Thus, there is a common belief that only special people become leaders. Under this conventional wisdom, most of us are destined to be followers. MALI upends this notion. “One of the things we learned through MALI,” Alvarado said, “is that becoming a leader involves a two-part process: first you have to hear the calling in your heart, and then you have to start putting one foot in front of the other.”

Wisa Uemura knows well the “walking” part of becoming an effective leader. Currently serving as Executive Director of San Jose Taiko, her training with Hirabayashi began more than ten years before she replaced him as the head of the nationally-acclaimed Japanese American drumming company. “Empowerment can be rehearsed,” she said. If there is anything that MALI does exceptionally well, Uemura reflected, it is helping emerging leaders of color and artists to “take themselves seriously” as they step up in leadership positions when the time is opportune. “Teaching the courage to try is half the battle,” she said.

Uemura’s own experience as a member of the first MALI class was a crash landing in building the confidence to see herself as the torchbearer of a legacy leader. “We were the MALI guinea pigs,” she recalls with a chuckle. “My own idea of being a leader when I entered the program was that believing fiercely in a mission was all one needed. In MALI, I learned that recognizing one’s shortcomings with the same intensity as one embraces the mission is the sign of a great leader-in-the-making.” Intro-

spection, of course, can feel like a privilege many artists of color cannot afford. Uemura is quick to point out: “There is a kind of looking-in-the mirror habit that can be disempowering if it only reinforces the self-doubt you brought with you.” In MALI, she said, “I experienced the other kind of reflection, the practice often called ‘critical thinking’ – the kind that feels like an intense awakening.”

None of these moments of reckoning would be possible for emerging leaders of color, Carter elaborated, if the curriculum MALI offered were strictly transactional or technical. “We have structure and order, we know which seminars, activities, and speakers will address the cohort and help meet our instruction goals, but we also recognize that most of the success of MALI hinges on the lessons learned off the written page.” This distinctive flexibility in the MALI learning model, says Carter, is needed to refute the “scripts of disempowerment” that most artists of color have lived with all their lives. For example, the use of “artspeak” or academic

Empowerment can be rehearsed. If there is anything that MALI does exceptionally well it is helping emerging leaders of color and artists to take themselves seriously as they step up in leadership positions when the time is opportune. Teaching the courage to try is half the battle.

Wisa Uemura

jargon that are commonly used in conferences and panels feels intimidating and exclusionary to many artists. “When MALI participants come together, I see most of us hungry for the kind of information that doesn’t live in a book or that proper people may never tell you,” said Carter.

Leadership training programs, by design, depend on structure and predictability. By codifying learning objectives and mapping the sequence of the learning experience, programs gain reputations of success. The reflexive and informal learning environment that Uemura and Carter evoke within MALI can be difficult to sustain. To secure funding, MALI is expected to show “results” which are typically measured through data collection. MALI has crafted a hybrid evaluation model that combines measurable outcomes with “storytelling.” Legitimizing both modes of learning and evaluation – what Carter calls the balance between “the bureaucratization of an arts management curriculum” and the “warm bath of community,” emerged as one of the MALI program’s signature characteristics.

For Rodrigo Garcia, MALI Class 2, two factors account for MALI’s success in negotiating the tension between heart and intellect. First, he highlights the localized focus of the program. Secondly, he sees value in the clear mandate the program articulates to serve people of color. “Our needs as minority artists are not special,” he said, “or at least not any more special than anyone else’s needs, but they are specific.” The local focus and the year-long span of each MALI cohort offer unique advantages. “In MALI, the learning simmers. Because real life continues while you are in the program,” said Garcia; “you get the opportunity to bring back to the group in real time life events, successes, and failures that test what you are learning in the program.”

As a marketing consultant, event designer, and artistic agent, Grace Sonia Melanio works in the creative industries that make or break artists’ careers. When she joined MALI Class 3, she was not convinced that her perspectives on the

“business side” of art-making would align well with the program’s leaning towards social activism. “People’s arc of leadership development, especially here in Silicon Valley, is going to look very different than traditional career paths,” she told me on one afternoon while we ate lunch at San Jose’s Little Portugal district. “You are going to see people who may have even worked at high levels in social media companies for a while and then came back to do community grassroots work and then went back to grad school and then began their own creative production company – people with really mixed profiles and trial-and-error resumes,” she said.

When Melanio joined MALI, she was at a professional crossroads. Already highly skilled at breaking through glass ceilings and “showing up” unannounced in the “back rooms where deals were cut,” Melanio approached her leadership training as a personal reckoning. “I came to MALI because everywhere I went, I was fighting for relevance,” she told me. “I’ve been in too many places where people’s main agenda for me as a woman of color was to put me in my place.” MALI offered something different. “MALI was not exactly a ‘safe space’ in the way that concept is used commonly,” Melanio said. “It was never about feeling comfortable as much as about being challenged without that nagging feeling that your whole family’s story doesn’t fit.”

Not all cultures define leadership by standards of mastery and heroic self-making. In some cultural contexts in Asia, Africa, and among many indigenous groups in the Americas, the rear-guard position of a warrior who ensures safe passage or advancement for others is sometimes considered more honorable than the bravery of the front liners. However, as the use of the word “leader” spread in the English language circa 1400s from its origins in Old Germanic, Saxon, and Norse languages, associations to “going first,” “showing the way,” “marching ahead,” and “going forth,” solidified in popular speech. “Going forth” sometimes was interpreted-

“MALI was not exactly a ‘safe space’ in the way that concept is used commonly. It was never about feeling comfortable as much as about being challenged without that nagging feeling that your whole family’s story doesn’t fit.”

Grace Sonia Melanio

ed as dying, thus the linkages we make today between “leaders” as risk-takers who sacrifice all – an idea that is also supported by the capitalist economy which rewards risk with large pay-offs. Yet, even after we consider cultural differences, this general principle holds: a leader is someone who wants to influence what is happening. “All artists are leaders in one way or another,” said Garcia. “All artists hope that the ideas they project will have a resonance in people.”

For Erin Salazar, MALI Class 9, the resonance of her artistic work has been a long time forming. MALI was not the first leadership program Salazar completed. A graduate of the prestigious National Arts Strategy Fellowship and alumnus of the Emerging City Champions Fellowship supported by the Knight Foundation, she was curious to explore how a local program could help her connect with other artists of color in different ways than her previous experiences had afforded. Despite her successful interactions in the large national cohorts, which she credits with helping her see her assets in her community she had previously missed, she was hoping to find a sense of belonging among her San Jose peers. The road to becoming a cultural innovator had been lonely. “I was hesitant that MALI could work for me,” Salazar said. “I have a deep aversion for meetings with 100 Post-it notes on a whiteboard.” But MALI, as it turned out, mirrored the learning environment where Salazar felt most at home – open platforms that allow others to collaborate in real time.

Salazar had attracted attention in the local media for her efforts to create co-working studios for artists in downtown San Jose. She had moved heaven and earth to find the resources and the political will to advance her vision. Her project represented a bold and frontal response to the hyper-cost of housing and commercial real estate in Silicon Valley’s “capital” city. Initially, success was slow in coming but then it burst like a fire hydrant. Thrown into the spotlight as an organic leader, Salazar cred-

its MALI for helping her “up her game” at a critical point in her efforts. Acquiring a new vocabulary, she said, was a big gain. “One of the classes MALI offered during my time revolved around the concept of advocacy,” she recalls. “Up to that point I hadn’t realized that what I was doing in fighting for artist spaces was a form of advocacy on behalf of a greater idea of equity. MALI taught me to put intention behind the actions I was pursuing. MALI zapped away the fear I had of dealing with politicians to make the zoning changes we needed for the artist studios.”

From her vantage point as Performing Arts Program Director at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Emiko Ono has seen many diversity initiatives rise, peak, and falter. She points to MALI’s well crafted “point of view” on cultural identity and power imbalances as one of the distinctive features that has kept her interested in the program. “MALI’s approach transcends narrow ideological corners,” she said. The Hewlett Foundation was one of MALI’s early funders,

and it has continued to play a role in sustaining the program. Philanthropic support for initiatives that support artists of color and culture-specific organizations in the nonprofit sector is not as abundant as one would expect. Despite awareness about the importance of funding diverse arts experiences considering the nation’s changing demographics, a recent study found that philanthropic support for the smaller arts organizations (the segment of the field where people of color concentrate), has seen a steady decline. While people of color represent 37 percent of the total population in the United States, only 4 percent of all foundation arts funding is allocated to groups whose primary mission is to serve minority communities.¹⁵

As Ono sees it, the rationale for supporting MALI is to raise the leadership that can change that dismal distribution of resources. Just as the world watches Silicon Valley trends closely in technology and lifestyles, Ono hopes models of authentic social equity can also grow from the region. Performing the work required for equality



MALI Class 9 at La Raza Galleria

¹⁵Not Just Money: Equity Issues in Cultural Philanthropy, Helicon Collaborative, 2017. <https://medium.com/helicon-collaborative/not-just-money-part-1-abd18e277703>



Top.
MALI Class 7 at MACLA

Bottom.
MALI Class 10 at
Chaminade Retreat Center
Photo credit:
Vanessa Palafox
(MALI Class 10)

and inclusion is hard. Too often, as the late cultural activist Grace Lee Boggs said, artists are buoyed by the fire of rebellion against power structures, only to falter all too quickly into viewing themselves, again, “mainly as victims and expect those in power to assume responsibility for changing the system.”¹⁶ “Unlike rebellions,” Boggs added, “which are here today and gone tomorrow, revolutions require a patient and protracted process of transformation.”

MALI has been an experiment in balancing frontal critiques of inequality with the imperative to acquire skills to negotiate within those same power structures. Many social movements excel initially at deploying the narratives and slogans that motivate people to action. Sustaining the energy of a social movement within institutions, however, can be difficult. Translating fervor to curriculum is even harder yet. One element working in MALI’s favor towards this equilibrium is the clear focus on serving creative people of color.

“Each moment over the last forty years has had its own buzz words to address the challenges of diversity, equity, and inclusion,” Ono reflects. “The word ‘multicultural’ in MALI’s name holds steady over time and is still relevant today, signaling a very unique San Jose approach to respect for non-assimilation. To do this work without taking a defensive stance is hard; doing equity work in a way that is deeply connected to what we are called to be, or can be, as a community, that is what we can truly call success.”

By invoking an identity base upfront, MALI helped participants lower the pressure to prove their worth based on expected performances of specific ethnic pride. In other words, by liberating participants from having their “guard up” as the normative stance for learning, each MALI class was able to explore ideas, ambitions, and dilemmas that didn’t conform to a conventional curriculum. Garcia echoed this sentiment when he noted that when he finds himself in the company of other MALI classmates, he can feel his “shoul-

ders relax.” “People around me speak the same language of curiosity and struggle,” he said. Considering that racial identities always represent a form of social “performance,” Garcia said he appreciates the way MALI feels simultaneously intimate and demanding.

Over breakfast one chilly April morning in 2018, Alvarado elaborated on the same idea. “I can say in all honesty that MALI is not for someone who is at the Fisher-Price level of understanding their cultural identity; we are not in the consciousness-raising business in a conventional, militant, identity-politics model. The program is for someone who takes pride in who they are, but whose main interest resides in the question of how to catapult themselves to channel that awareness into social change and practical actions.” Uemura reinforced this point of view in her own assessment. “Yes, artistically, our specific heritages and cultures are our competency,” she said. “But we can also help shape the larger American story beyond our own ethnic identities. Our skills are transferable.”

Is there a secret formula to becoming a successful cultural leader of color? I asked Ono. “In my professional development,” she said, “the most valuable back pocket play I have found is the balance between technique and philosophy. Sometimes, on a practical level, this balance is expressed as a form of expertise that recognizes who is in the room and what agendas are driving the conversation. But at other times, it is the philosophy and the principles that helps remind me why I do the work I do.”

For Omar Rodriguez, Class 4, “doing the work” is the phrase that best captures what MALI offers. For Rodriguez, MALI pointed the way to a greater sense of personal responsibility. “I grew up surrounded by ‘artists’ of all kinds, and by this, I mean carpenters, welders, and landscapers. To me, leadership is work; you must do the work,” he said.

As MALI arrives at its tenth year, the program faces challenges common to many cultural org-

¹⁶<http://intercommunalworkshop.org/grace-lee-boggs-introduction-revolution-evolution/>

anizations: how will it sustain the good it has done in the world while at the same time pushing beyond the normative to keep fresh and relevant? On the one hand, there is the core programmatic mandate to continue building the cadre of creative leaders of color the program was charged to cultivate. On the other hand, the practical dimensions of deploying these leaders as assets across increasingly complex cultural and social sectors regionally and nationally become ever more nuanced. Considerations about MALI's ongoing development include questions about the program's form and function. A possible work plan for the next phase of the program could include some of the following elements: 1) Expanding learning opportunities for participants beyond the completion of the program, perhaps in the form of modular or topical workshops. Among the subject matters that could draw the interest of MALI alumni are questions of intellectual property and the establishment of norms and mechanisms of reciprocity in building multicultural social networks. In other words, how do people respond to the call for service after graduating MALI? 2) Building a more intentional peer-to-peer mentorship program among MALI alumni that would, in turn, keep people more authentically connected to the network. 3) Curating special events for MALI alumni, such as conversations with local decision-makers, that leverage the webs of relationships the program has woven and help foster among stakeholders an experience that feels "authentically MALI." 4) Maximizing MALI's organic strength as a program of the School of Arts and Culture at the Mexican Heritage Plaza, with an eye to expanding the MALI "brand" as a practice of leadership development rooted in creative placemaking with policy implications beyond the arts field alone.

MALI emerged in response to a tangible problem of cultural representation at a time and in a place experiencing significant transformations. As the program grew, the core mission to

animate into civic action leaders from outside the recognizable mainstream remained relevant. Relevancy meant that the problem of cultural equity persisted. As MALI alumni and administrators gather ideas for a re-boot – an organizing framework they are calling MALI 2.0 – some of the usual considerations of funding, staffing, and resources draw attention. But in carrying out due diligence for internal organizational development, it becomes equally important to consider changes in the greater economic, social, and cultural variables that flow from Silicon Valley to the rest of the world.

Barely twenty years ago, there was no Google or iPhone.¹⁷ In the local context, MALI emerged out a period in San Jose's history when aligning the assets of the cultural field to economic development commanded widespread attention and justified investments. Rightly perceived as part of a corrective strategy in the diversity of voices that weighed in on that consensus, MALI gained support and solidified its reputation and scope. But as the valley's prosperity expanded and confidence in its unique version of capitalism changed from a paradigm of "disruption" to one of triumphalism, it is unclear whether a commitment to examining the landscape of social inclusion remains a priority regionally.¹⁸

MALI can be strategic about positioning what the program has to offer at the intersection of these contested values and ideas. This task might require that MALI enter into even more cross-sectoral collaborations. How can MALI, from its homegrown East San Jose base, move into the center of gravity of Silicon Valley? And where exactly is that center located: is it a physical site like Stanford University, a city other than San Jose, a demographic sub-group, or an emerging community of interest? For MALI, these questions constitute a tri-fold challenge of optics, access to resources, and rootedness in a rich social history of cultural defiance.

In looking to the decades ahead, the chal-

¹⁷"Google turns 20: how an internet search engine reshaped the world," The Verge, September 5, 2018. <https://www.theverge.com/2018/9/5/17823490/google-20th-birthday-anniversary-history-milestones>

¹⁸See Evgeny Morozov, "Silicon Valley was going to disrupt capitalism; now it's just enhancing it," The Guardian, August 6, 2016.

Challenges confronting MALI 2.0 are no different than those faced by social movements everywhere. No one can ascertain with confidence what preparing cultural leaders of color in 2028 might demand. One strategic advantage MALI enjoys is their commitment to growing cultural thought-leaders and not simply arts technicians. If some of the current configurations of cultural life in America hold over the next decade – for example, distrust of public institutions, digital battlefields, polarizing moralities, growing economic disparities – social innovators who are prepared to work with greater degrees of cultural ambiguity and social imagination may yet become more urgent and essential. To the extent that MALI can continue to direct the conversation of social equity past the narrow alleys of single-issue identity politics and towards efficacious pragmatic social interventions, it can safely bet that its work would be on demand.

In the 2.0 version of its own best self, MALI will have the opportunity to rightfully claim being the kind of space where Silicon Valley creatives dive deeper to explore shifts in demographics and diversity. “I feel MALI gave me the coordinates I needed to understand where my work belongs and why it matters in the local environment,” said Garcia, who now serves as Artistic Director of local Latino and LGBT theater projects. “But a lot of questions linger for me about the specificity of the work involved in making my ideas flourish – not so much the how-to of grant writing, for example, but that deep understanding about the funding world, its vocabulary and assumptions, its potential and also limits, to be able to understand my vision and support the work I want to do,” he said.

This interest in more specialized training opportunities emerges in tandem with suggestions that MALI play a more active role helping drive capital to fund cultural entrepreneurship ideas. MALI is at an opportune crossroads to explore such an opportunity, because not many

philanthropic or cultural institutions in northern California have connected the dots between culture and innovation in this fashion. MALI’s renewed 2.0 identity can include a role as intermediary of cash investments between investors and leaders of color in cultural ventures through micro-loans or other financial instruments directed at artists willing to take social risks.

“For me, it has always been this rare combination of heart, mind, and opportunity built into the DNA of MALI that has made a difference,” Carter told me the first time we met. MALI came into being in the fateful year of 2008, even as some were readying to declare the end of the world (or at least of American capitalism) as we knew it. In that context of social and political anxiety, dozens of bright, ethically-minded, and energetic leaders of color found in MALI a grounding that, as Salazar put it, “helped zap the fear of engaging the world” in all its contradictory combination of beauty and precariousness. Beyond the challenges, MALI offered a promise of democracy, generosity, and equity. A task of this magnitude is a lifetime commitment.

What's Next for MALI?

- 1** Expanding learning opportunities for participants beyond the completion of the program, perhaps in the form of modular or topical workshops. Among the subject matters that could draw the interest of MALI alumni are questions of intellectual property and the establishment of norms and mechanisms of reciprocity in building multicultural social networks. In other words, how do people respond to the call for service after graduating MALI?
- 2** Building a more intentional peer-to-peer mentorship program among MALI alumni that would, in turn, keep people more authentically connected to the network.
- 3** Curating special events for MALI alumni, such as conversations with local decision makers, that leverage the webs of relationships the program has woven and help foster among stakeholders an experience that feels “authentically MALI.”
- 4** Maximizing MALI’s organic strength as a program of the School of Arts and Culture at the Mexican Heritage Plaza, with an eye to expanding the MALI “brand” as a practice of leadership development rooted in creative place-making with policy implications beyond the arts field alone.

Appendix A

Raul Lozano	MALI Co-Founder
Roy Hirabayashi	MALI Co-Founder
Tamara Alvarado	MALI Director 2008-2014
Connie Martinez	MALI Advocate: SV Creates
Emiko Ono	Program Director Performing Arts: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Arlene Biala	Senior Arts Program Manager: City of San Jose Arts
Demone Carter	MALI Program Manager MALI Class 4
Wisa Uemura	MALI Class 1
Rodrigo Garcia	MALI Class 2
Grace Sonia Melanio	MALI Class 3
Lilia Aguero	MALI Class 4
Omar Rodriguez	MALI Class 4
Armando Castellano	MALI Class 4
Kelly Chu	MALI Class 6
Leonela Torres	MALI Class 6
Cristina Velazquez	MALI Class 7
Erin Salazar	MALI Class 9
Daniel Fonseca	MALI Class 9
Itza Sanchez	MALI Class 9

Appendix B

ON THE DAY

by Lorenz
Mazon Dumuk

On the days I feel I am not enough, I will
bee my hand into the comb hidden inside my
chest, my fingers dripping with honey. I am
rich with sweetness.

On the days I feel I am not enough, I will
peacock into the wrinkles of my mind, stretch
out my feathers, dance – pearlescent plum-
age – I am full of imagination.

On the days I feel I am not enough, I will
cocoon myself with compassion, spin silky
threads of tenderness, snug myself against
the warmth of friends. I am deserving of care.



On the days I feel I am not enough, I will
elephant out my lungs, shout out the loss,
memories, and pain that just won't seem to
leave me. Exhale all of the bullshit, frustration.
Inhale this present moment. I am full of life.

On the days I feel I am not enough, I will
merman my spirit, keep on diving toward who
I am, keep on pushing for the more body
aches that surface back up, keep on pushing
for who I am. I am plenty brave.

On the days I feel I am not enough, I will
stare into that mirror, look at my face until it is
no longer covered in lies. I am enough.

Lorenz Dumuk performing at STAND! 2018
Photo Credit: Vanessa Palafox (MALI Class 10)

We would like to thank the following partners for their support:

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The Hearst Foundations

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

City of San Jose, Office of Cultural Affairs

The Castellano Family Foundation

Bank of America

