

tcg national conference

chicago

June 20-22 2024

IMPACT REPORT





In 1871, a devastating fire swept through Chicago, reducing much of the city to ashes and leaving many of its residents displaced. It was a tragedy understood now as the consequence of poor planning and structural flaws. From that devastation rose a city more resilient, innovative, and architecturally sound than ever. **The historic fire became a catalyst for change, a critical point where the spirit of Chicago was forged—a spirit powered by grit, ingenuity, and a will to rebuild.**

The story of Chicago's transformation is in many ways the story of our field. As we gathered in the City of the Big Shoulders from June 20 - 22, 2024, we grappled with the idea of a field on fire. We mourned the loss of beloved institutions and amplified the alarm bells ringing across our ecology for change. Like Chicagoans, we came together determined and hopeful for what we could become.

The **2024 TCG National Conference**, our first national gathering since 2022, and our second hybrid conference, was a call to action and an invitation to worldbuilding. Together with the League of Chicago Theatres, we embraced the energy of Chicago's expansive theatre community, holding it as a springboard to start telling our stories anew. Programming exploded out of the confines of traditional spaces and into the city's cultural venues, historical sites, and hubs of innovation. We welcomed cherished thought leaders as plenary speakers; we shared knowledge and skills through breakout sessions, TCG Labs, and workshops; we gathered in affinity spaces around professional and personal identities; and we immersed ourselves in Chicago's neighborhoods through TCG Trips.

The impact of this conference is not just in the ideas shared or the connections made, but in the pathways we forged together – pathways that will guide us as we renew our commitment to a theatre ecology that is inclusive, resilient, and fiercely dedicated to its people.

We thank all who joined us in Chicago, in person and virtually, for their passion, creativity, and unwavering belief in the power of theatre to transform lives. As we continue to navigate the challenges ahead, we do so with the knowledge that, together, we are stronger than ever.

Emily Cachapero (she/her/siya)
Co-Executive Director: National and Global Programming

LaTeshia Ellerson (she/her)
Co-Executive Director: National Engagement



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#TCG24 by the numbers

Attendees

1,028 Total

- 914** In-person attendees
- 114** virtual attendees
- 526** first-timers
- 40 states** and **11 countries** represented
- 61** Black, Indigenous, and Theatres of Color (BITOC)
- 159** TCG member theatres
- 310** staff of TCG member theatres
- 86** TCG individual members
- At least **101** individual artists

Attendee Ethnicities

- 52.97%** BIPOC
 - 20.39%** Black
 - 14.29%** Latine
 - 10.11%** AAPI
 - 5.30%** Native
 - 2.89%** SWANA
- 51.04%** White

Attendee Gender Identities

- 57.74%** Cisgender women
- 33.11%** Cisgender men
- 7.65%** Nonbinary
- 0.83%** Transgender men
- 0.67%** Transgender women

Attendee Disability Identities

15.68% living with disability

All demographic data above are presented with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of no more than 5%. Some data sets total more than 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

Scholarships

113 Awarded (a record high)

More than **\$79,000** in value

- 77.78%** BIPOC
- 37.50%** people living with disability
NOTE: In comparison, 28.7% of the US population live with some type of disability ([CDC](#)).
- 24.14%** transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC)
NOTE: To put it into perspective, 1.6% of the US population self-identify as transgender and gender-nonconforming ([Pew Research Center](#)).



Sessions

- 47** breakout sessions
- 9** professional affinity groups
- 9** TCG trips
- 8** pre-conference affinity spaces
- 6** TCG labs
- 5** skills-building workshops
- 4** hub spaces
- 3** plenary sessions

Collaborators

- 268** speakers
 - 70.26%** BIPOC
 - 6.92%** transgender
 - 14.47%** living with disability
- 58** committee members
 - 55.56%** BIPOC
- 35** volunteers
- 22** venues in **14** neighborhoods

Economy Boost

At least **\$2,600,000 in economic impact** across the US.

This estimate encompasses total spending by both TCG and attendees and applies an [IMPLAN multiplier](#) to calculate indirect and induced spending.

More than 70% of the \$2.6 million economic impact occurred in the host city, Chicago.



The 2024 TCG National Conference: *Chicago* was supported locally by 58 committee members from 45 organizations.

Steering Committee

Miranda Gonzalez, Co-Chair

Marissa Lynn Jones, Co-Chair

Regina Victor, Rescripted, UChicago Arts + Public Life Chicago Critics' Table, Howlround Nat'l Advisory Council, Bard at the Gate, Chair of Programming Advisory

Ellyzabeth Adler, Chicago Danztheatre Ensemble

Kaiser Ahmed, Jackalope Theatre Company*

Tanya Bermudez, League of Chicago Theatres*

Tony Bondoc, League of Chicago Theatres*

Barbara Butts, Northwestern University

Sara Carranza, Teatro Tariakuri

Diane Claussen, The Theatre School at DePaul University

Emily Dillard, League of Chicago Theatres*

Tina El Gamal, Actor, Director, Educator, Arts Administrator

David Feiner, Albany Park Theater Project*

Michael Gennaro, Management Consultant

Lara Goetsch, TimeLine Theatre Company*

Luther Goins, Development and Management Consultant

Jacob Harvey, Fine Arts Building - Studebaker Theater*

Elsa Hiltner, Lawyers for the Creative Arts, On Our Team

Kara Jackson, League of Chicago Theatres*

PennyMaria Jackson, Steppenwolf Theatre*

Ollie Johnson, League of Chicago Theatres*

Logan Jones, Northlight Theatre*

Joe Keefe, Music Theater Works

Teri Lopez, League of Chicago Theatres*

Lorna Luebbers, Schuler Shook

Marisa Macella, Steep Theatre*

Yasmin Zacaria Mikhael, Dramaturg, Journalist, Oral Historian

Susan Padveen, Columbia College Chicago

Delaney Piggins, Chicago Shakespeare Theater*; DePaul University

Miguel Rodriguez, Albany Park Theater Project*

Hayley Ross, League of Chicago Theatres*

Doreen Sayegh, Pemberley Productions; Links Hall; League of Chicago Theatres*

Rosie Schultz, TimeLine Theatre Company*

Scott Silberstein, HMS Media; Arts Alliance Illinois, Lookingglass Theatre Company*

Carla Stillwell, Collaboraction Theatre, The Stillwell Institute, MPAACT Theatre

Jorge Valdivia, Chicago Latino Theater Alliance

Jeremy Wechsler, Theater Wit

Host Committee

Lawrence Adelson, Chico + Nunes; Independent Producer

Susan V. Booth, Goodman Theatre*^

Megan Carney, About Face*

Michael Constantino, Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts

Glenn Davis, Steppenwolf Theatre Company*

Amanda Delheimer, 2nd Story

Lorena Diaz, Teatro Vista*

Ilesa Duncan, Pegasus Theatre

Jon Faris, AMS Research

Audrey Francis, Steppenwolf Theatre Company*

Martine Green-Rogers, DePaul University

Jamil Khoury, Silk Road Rising

Kathryn M. Lipuma, Writers Theatre*^

Wendy Mateo, Teatro Vista*

Neel McNeill, Definition Theatre

Kimberly Motes, Chicago Shakespeare Theater*

Christine A Perez, Chicago Latino Theatre Alliance

Tyrone Phillips, Definition Theatre

Lisa Portes, UC San Diego (formerly DePaul University)^

Kacie Smith, Arts Alliance

Angel Ysaguirre, Court Theatre*^

* indicates TCG Member Organizations ^ indicates TCG Alumni Board Member

"I know that our suffering and silence and disconnected loneliness can be transformed from that hopelessness, cynicism, annihilation that makes us make easy choices into esperanza, hope." —ROBERT BARRY FLEMING



OPENING PLENARY

"The opening plenary was great. Such fantastic speakers from so many perspectives who weren't afraid to deliver their truth." —MORGEN CHANG (Programs Manager, Theater Mu)

ART BURST
[The Sandra Delgado Experience](#)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dr. Dorene P. Wiese,
White Earth Ojibwe

TCG REMARKS BY

Karena Fiorenza
LaTeshia Ellerson
Hana Sharif
Harold Steward
Merriquer Jenson

SPONSORED BY
PLAY ON
SHAKESPEARE

FROM THE ASHES:
**Provocations on the Future
of our Field**

Jesse Alick
Donato Fatuesi
Ife Olujobi
Jeanette Harrison
Yasmin Zacaria-Mikhael
Robert Barry Fleming

"By investing, not in the product, but in people, we will enrich the art, preserve its practitioners, and ensure that theater stays alive." —IFE OLUJOBI

“When I say it’s a kind environment, it’s generous. It’s direct. Everyone knows where they stand. It encourages those who want to seize and have agency to have accountability for their decisions. It encourages courage. Kindness means courage.” —JAMES RHEE, Bestselling Author of *Red Helicopter: A Parable for our Times*



“The Friday plenary was inspiring. I took so much to heart that will help in my day to day.”
—WESLEY FRUGÉ (Managing Director, Intiman Theatre)

CO-CHAIRS REMARKS

Marissa Lynn Jones
Miranda Gonzalez

TCG TRIBUTE TO TERESA EYRING

Peter Sagal, NPR’s
Wait, Wait...Don’t Tell Me
Lisa Mount, Artistic Logistics
Corinna Schulenburg
Teresa Eyring

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REMARKS BY

Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson,
National Endowment for the Arts
LaTeshia Ellerson

FIRESIDE CHAT

James Rhee
Karena Fiorenza
Intro by Jacob Padrón,
Long Wharf Theatre

“None of the things that we say we aspire to as a nation of opportunity and justice are possible without the intentional integration of arts and culture into all facets of our lives.” —DR. MARIA ROSARIO JACKSON

“As long as you’re living, your part of the future is yours, and Lorraine is a perfect example of the tragedy and the quixotic nature of life that hers was so short...the future should have belonged to her.” —IFA BAYEZA



CLOSING PLENARY

“It was so incredible to witness these legends of our field who are in different stages of life and work have incredibly complex conversations with each other. It was a perfect way to cap off the conference and it tied together so many conversations that had been had throughout the weekend.” —CONFERENCE ATTENDEE

ART BURST

Monica Beverly Hillz

TCG WELCOME

Merrique Jenson
Devon Berkshire

TCG TRIBUTE TO LAURIE BASKIN

Devon Berkshire
Laurie Baskin

SPONSORED BY

FDA Fisher Dachs Associates
Theatre Planning & Design

SO MANY TRUTHS:

**Lorraine’s Legacy and the Future
of Black Artistry and Activism
in the American Theatre**

Erika Dickerson-Despenza
Dominique Morisseau

Ifa Bayeza

Facilitated by Valerie Curtis-Newton
Intro by Jackie Taylor,
Black Ensemble Theater



SKILLS-BUILDING WORKSHOPS AND TCG LABS

COMPASSION TRAINING

"Very strong presentation on caregiving support needed for professionals to sustain working in the theatre industry!"
 –Rodney Matthews (Career Counselor, Entertainment Community Fund, Formerly The Actors Fund)

FINANCIAL STORYTELLING: TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR NARRATIVE

"The financial storytelling really helped me to not feel so alone in the financial struggles of our org as we heard from others about their strategies and challenges."
 –Jessica Bird Beza (Playwrights Foundation)

FROM CRISIS TO CHRYSALIS: A TCG MEGALAB FOR (RE)NEW(ED) BUSINESS MODELS

"From Crisis to Chrysalis was by far the best session I attended. It was so well facilitated. The facilitators had deep content knowledge. The session was designed extremely well to support attendees in networking, problem-solving, and gaining a deeper level of understanding. It allowed for a lot of content/topic choice, small group work, and large group share outs. It was well attended and designed—by the end, I felt like I'd had at least one interaction with at least 2/3 of the attendees. The topics we discussed were all rich and relevant. The session had the best meeting agreements I've seen in a theatre space and the best land acknowledgement I've heard in a non-native led theatre space. I totally stan Corinna, Lisa, and Mei Ann!"
 –Jess Carr (Executive Artistic Producer, Indy Convergence)

FROM PAGE TO STAGE: A DREAM SESSION CO-CREATING THEATRE'S NEXT CHAPTER WITH WRITERS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

"I could tell there was a lot of intention and thought that went into designing the session. From the agenda and handouts to the offering of beverages. I experienced kindness during this session. I learned about the Dramatist's Bill of Rights and a new method of hosting fishbowl conversations. This was the session that made me realize that I made the right decision to be at the conference. I finally was in the room with people who articulated experiences similar to mine, so that I can begin to process and move forward." –Conference Attendee

THE ART OF RENEWAL: IDENTIFYING AND ARTICULATING YOUR WHY

"Thank you for a wonderful and generative session! I'm excited to incorporate these tools for slowing down and observing my work into my strategic planning."
 –Clare Brennan (Artistic Director, Red Theater)

TO THE ROOTS: USING WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY TO SHARE POWER

"It was one of my favorites because of how interactive it was, how radically honest it was, and how values-based it was. I felt like I walked away with practical skills that I can apply at work and in life." –Conference Attendee

BREAKOUTS are 75–90 minute small group sessions that can manifest in a range of formats, from panels to roundtables to interactive performances. At this year’s Conference, there was also a selection of Breakfast and Lunch Sessions as well as Professional and Personal Identity-Based Affinity Groups (including the Artistic Leaders of Color and Managing Leaders of Color breakfasts, the Intergenerational Leaders of Color Meeting, and others), which provided an opportunity for theatre people to meet based on their professional roles in the theatre field, either as an independent artist or within an organizational structure.



BREAKOUTS AND OTHER SESSIONS

THE BERKSHIRE/COLUMBIA COUNTIES PAY EQUITY PROJECT: WHAT WE LEARNED. WHAT WE CAN DO.

“I am an HR person so I liked this session’s relevance to my work and learning about the speakers.”

–Conference Attendee

BEYOND THE STAGE: BUILDING AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THEATER

“What an incredible session. Everything in that space was beautifully orchestrated. I felt grateful to start the conference grounded in community.”

–Joe Hetterly (Interim Budgets Manager, The Public Theater)

BREAKING DOWN THE ROLE OF A REGIONAL THEATRE PRODUCER

“It was a great panel. The panelists were really smart and the moderator led the conversation really well. I teach undergrads and think this would be a really useful panel to bring to our university.”

–Conference Attendee

EVERY PRODUCTION IS A MOONSHOT: RETHINKING PLAY SELECTION

“Super concrete takeaways, organized presentation, great panelists, dynamic discussion.”

–Conference Attendee

HOW WE BELONG: CULTIVATING LOYALTY FROM BOARDROOM TO BOX OFFICE

SPONSOR: Wallace Foundation

“I enjoyed the use of data in this session, which made it easy to see the story being told and how the history of subscription performance and ticket sales in general has brought us to where we are right now. I appreciated the pragmatic message that subscriptions are working for some folks in the field. In particular, I resonated with the idea of successful theatres being those that are creating a feeling of belonging for members of the community and high-touch solutions for supporting patrons and artists.”

–A.J. Magoon (Marketing Director, Next Act Theatre)

THEATRE FUTURES

SPONSOR: Ford Foundation

“This was a very thoughtful panel that was committed to discussing complexities of the future of theatre with many ideas, and experiences, and actions, in response to questions and prompts that didn’t have easy answers.”

–Jessica Acosta (Marketing and Communications Manager, Dramatists Guild Foundation)

WORLD PREMIERE WISCONSIN

“I hope all arts leaders in attendance at the Conference review the video of this excellent presentation, and are as excited and inspired as I am by the success of this new works initiative.”

–Cheryl Coons (Dramatists Guild National Council, Lyricist/Bookwriter)

AFFINITY SPACES are for people who self-identify as part of a particular group to discuss their collective experiences, usually between 75 - 90 minutes. This year, Affinity Spaces were organized based on professional roles and personal identities, some as Affinity Lunches.



AFFINITY SPACES



PRE-CONFERENCE AFFINITY SPACES

TCG's National Conference Affinity Spaces are for people who self-identify as part of a particular group to discuss their collective experiences. These spaces often take the shape of conversational spaces and/or facilitated group discussions around a pressing topic/theme. TCG's affinity spaces allow TCG to bring communities together around shared areas of identity, and have occurred as a part of the conference and/or fieldwide gatherings since the 2014 National Conference in San Diego. These spaces have evolved over the years and for the past four conferences, they have been virtual and accessible to all regardless of conference attendance. In 2024, TCG held 9 virtual identity-based affinity spaces which included spaces for: API theatremakers, Black theatremakers, Latine theatremakers, Native theatremakers, MENA theatremakers, TGNC theatremakers, LGBTQ theatremakers, theatremakers with disabilities, and theatremakers with mixed identities.

INTERGENERATIONAL LEADERS OF COLOR (ILOC)

"It is a meeting I always make sure is first on my list because it recharges my battery and I'm able to go back out into the field and move from a place of abundance and joy in an industry so laden with scarcity and fear."
-Esteban Andres Cruz (Actor)

ARTISTIC LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERS OF COLOR BREAKFASTS

"To be able to just sit and talk with other leaders not from my community was something I was looking forward to most at this conference. We split into groups with different topics and I chose to go with Leadership Models. I began to just soak up as much knowledge and advice as I could."
-Kevin "Blax" Burroughs (Artistic Director, Oceanside Theatre Company)

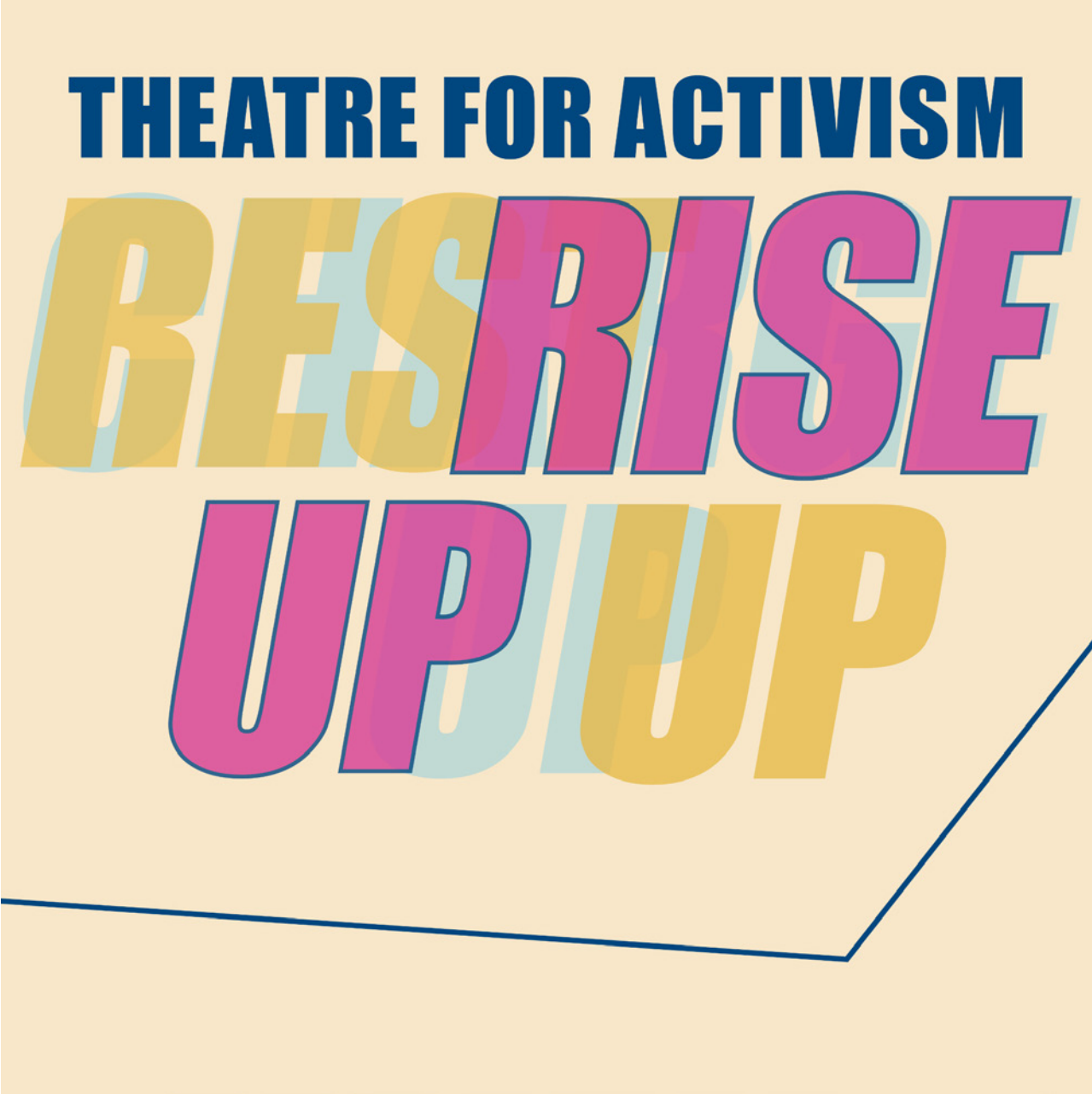
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND MANAGING DIRECTOR BRUNCHES

SPONSORS (Managing Director Brunch):
Evolution Management Consultants
Starkweather and Shepley

"As a young and new Artistic Director in this business, it was extremely comforting to know that the questions and issues I'm having is not just because I'm new. Artistic Directors who have been doing this for a while are still having those same questions and issues. To know that I am valid in what I feel and the fact that I was able to bounce off questions and ideas to gain knowledge was very much appreciated."
-Kevin "Blax" Burroughs (Artistic Director, Oceanside Theatre Company)

Over the past year and half, TCG's THEATRE FOR ACTIVISM series has sought to build knowledge around care, advocacy, and solidarity. THEATRE FOR ACTIVISM's three-part series concluded with **RISE UP**, a hybrid megaLAB that happened concurrently with our national conference and brought attention to accountability practices with the shared understanding that we have all messed up and will continue to mess up. This session was guided by four facilitators who support arts workers through conflict and support healing justice praxis in arts organizations and in their communities.

"The panel sharing was incredibly vulnerable, powerful and inspiring. I learned a lot and tremendously appreciate the lived experience shared in the space." –Kristin Patton (Founder and Lead Facilitator, Ensemble Consulting)



PROGRAMMING TRACKS

Bolstered by our mission to lead for a just and thriving theatre ecology, we've committed to centering the needs and experiences of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous People of Color), BITOC (Black, Indigenous, Theatres of Color), Transgender and Gender Nonconforming (TGNC), and Disability communities throughout our programming.

BIPOC and BITOC

"I felt welcomed into the community, and was able to hear experiences from a lot of people who I could relate to and also who offered me an additional perspective and ways of looking at things we face. I hope to be able to continue to attend again, and hopefully see people again, or talk to them for the first time!" –[Jessica Acosta \(Marketing and Communications Manager, Dramatists Guild Foundation\)](#)

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: API Theatre
Stereotypes vs. Authentic Engagement: Do We Still Need Grass Skirts and Dragon Dances?

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: Taking Up Space
A Black Convening

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: Latine Theatre
Performed Narrative and the Artistic Practice

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: MENA Theatre
Humanizing the Dehumanized: Using Theatre as a Source for MENA and Palestinian Empowerment

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: Mixed Identity Theatre – Reclaiming Our Power: The Mixed & Multi-Identity Affinity Space

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: Native Theatre
Theatre & Performance as Self-Determination: Shaping the Narratives of Our People

Discovering Common Connections: A Native/Indigenous Affinity Space

Mentor's Project for Designers and Technicians

Evolving Forward: From Theatre Company to Cultural Center

Intergenerational Leaders of Color (ILOC)

Artistic Leaders of Color Breakfast

Administrative Leaders of Color Breakfast

TCG TRIP: A Workshop on Beyond Land Acknowledgments and lunch at downtown's Center for Native Futures

TCG TRIP: A Discussion on Decolonizing Shared Leadership at UrbanTheater Company in Humboldt Park

Creating Equitable Institutional Partnerships: Commissioning BIPOC Artists for Multigenerational Audiences

Finding the Yes: Community-based Tactics for Moving Through Crisis

Staging Testimony: New Works by MENA Theatre-Makers

The Need for BIPOC Playwrights Groups

THRIVE! Gathering Space for BITOCs

Black Playwrights and Heightened Text

TCG TRIP: A Discussion on Small Theatres: Exposure & Equitability, with works from 4th Annual BIPOC Play Fest, with brunch option

National Latinx Theatre Initiative

Closing Plenary

SO MANY TRUTHS: Lorraine's Legacy and the Future of Black Artistry and Activism in the American Theatre

PROGRAMMING TRACKS

Bolstered by our new mission to lead for a just and thriving theatre ecology, we've committed to centering the needs and experiences of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous People of Color), BITOC (Black, Indigenous, Theatres of Color), Transgender and Gender Nonconforming (TGNC), and Disability communities throughout our programming.

TGNC

"The best panel of the conference...Very challenging, but necessary points brought up by the dolls on the panel."
—Conference Attendee

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: TGNC Theatre
Celebrating TGNC Camaraderie: Making Space for Gender Expansion in Theatre

Pre Conference Affinity Space: LGBTQ Theatre
It's Giving Intersectionality: An LGBTQIA+ Affinity Space Discussion

Gender Play, or what you Will (co-created by Will Wilhelm & Erin Murray)

Pride Party

Valley of The Dolls: Where Trans Women of Color are Already Leading the Field

Gender Performativity: Exploring "Gender Play, or what you Will" and Contemporary Approaches to the Classics

Disability

"This blew my mind. It not only gave me interesting information about sensory performances, but it made me think about how I experience theater and also how I can better set my child up for successes in a variety of non-theater-adjacent ways." —Conference Attendee

Pre-Conference Affinity Space: Disability Theatre
Disability in the Post-Pandemic Theatre World

Bespoke Sensory Performance Building

In addition to these communities, international activities have also been a vital part of TCG programs, long before 1999 when the US Center for the International Theatre Institute (ITI-US) merged with TCG. Since 2016, TCG has co-led the ITI-US with the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics (the Lab) at Georgetown University.

Global

"The Thai consulate outing was spectacular. It affirmed how important our connections to global communities are in our understanding of what is so fundamentally American." —Patrizia Acerra (Artistic Director, International Voices Project)

Global Theatre Initiative: Countering Isolationism and Fostering Collaborative Exchange

Staging Testimony: New Works by MENA Theatre-Makers

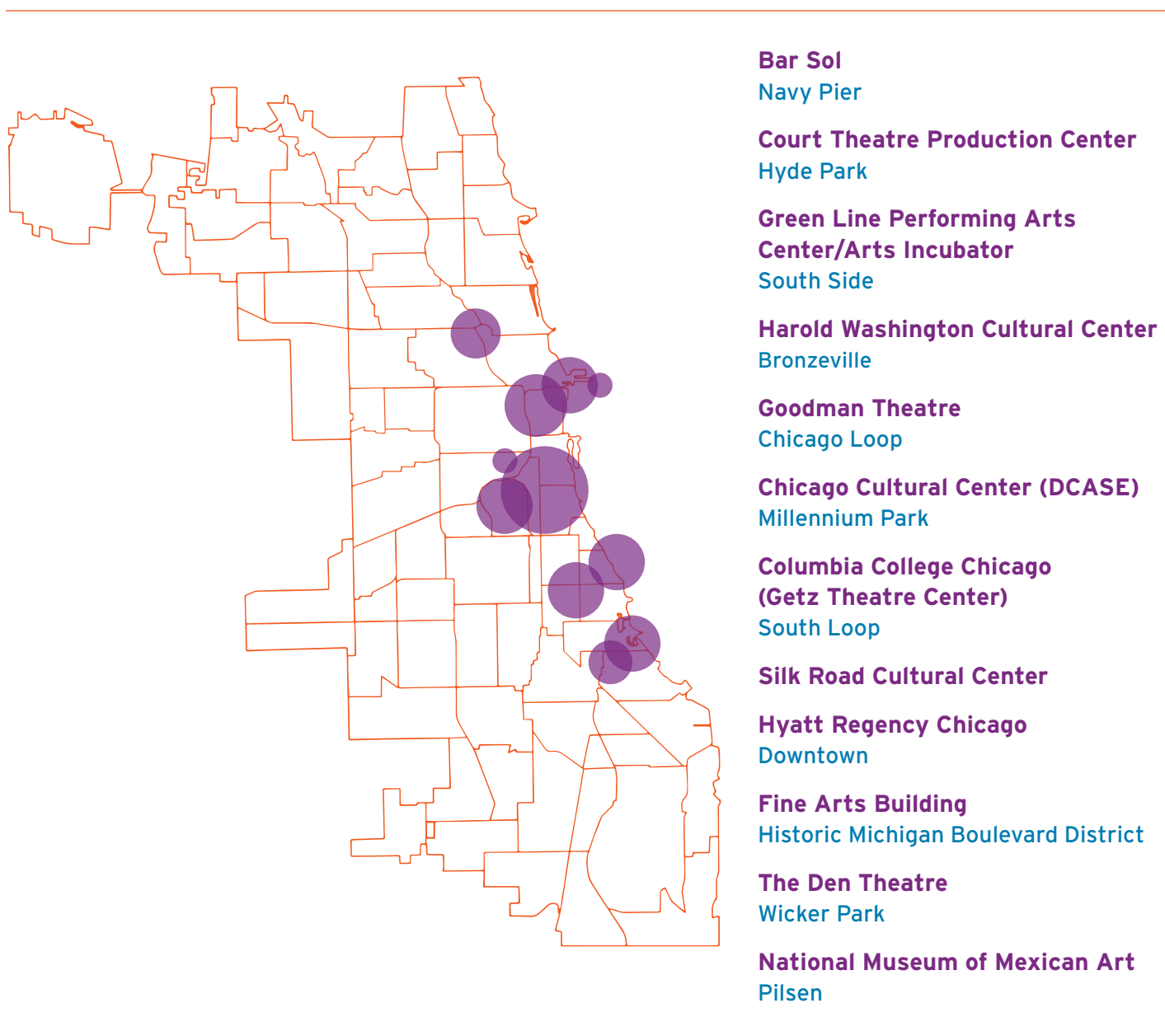
Global Dine-Around: Thai Cuisine And Performing Arts From Mother Earth

Southern Exposure: Theatre in the Americas



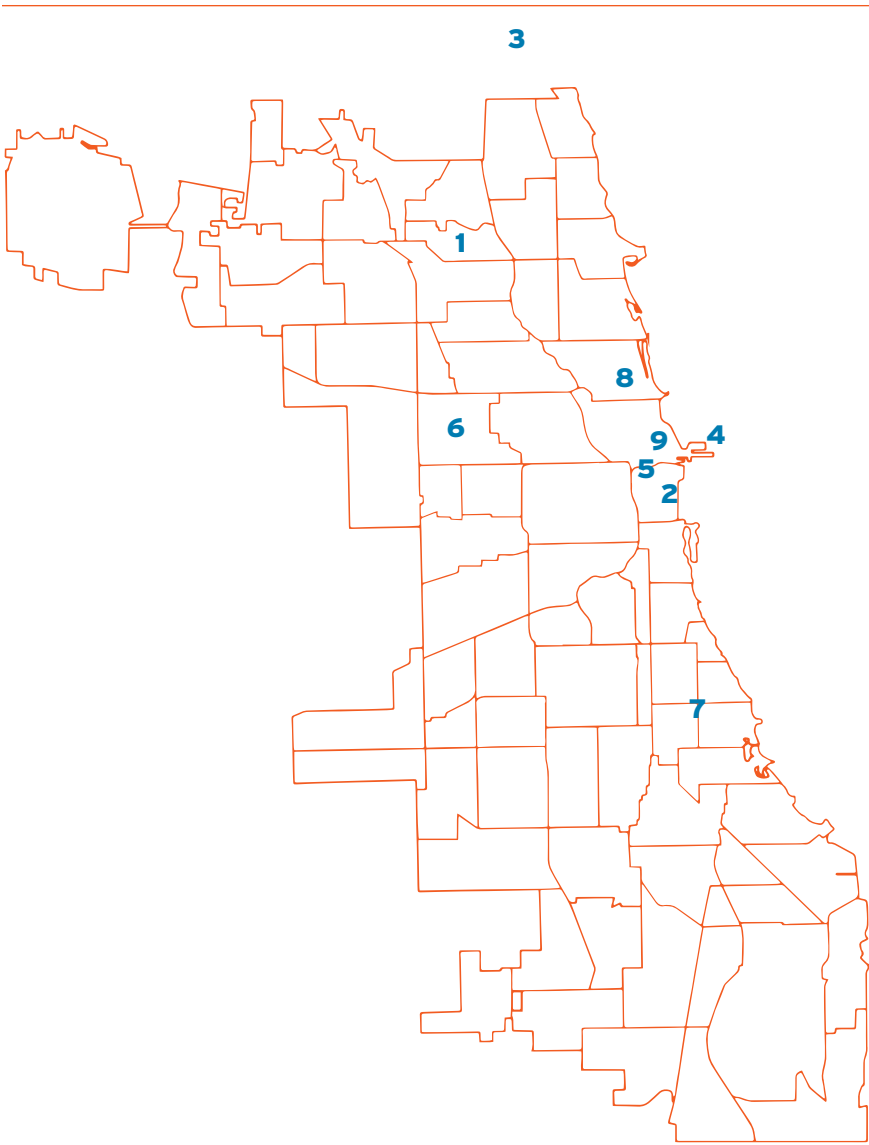
VENUES AND TCG TRIPS

This year's conference was unique in that we no longer stayed in one central location. Instead, we explored **22 venues in 14 neighborhoods** with a goal to increase the visibility of our host city's diverse neighborhoods to a national audience.





TCG TRIPS offered 2-3 hours of excursions to explore the Chicago community within and beyond the theatre scene, and visit some of the artists and cultural institutions that contribute to Chicago's dynamic personality.



- 1** Port of Entry: A hyperlocal production model of extraordinary scope, with Albany Park Theatre Project in Albany Park
- 2** A Discussion on Small Theatres: Exposure & Equitability
- 3** Walking Tour, Food Trucks, and Katori Hall's *The Hot Wing King* at Writers Theatre in Glencoe, IL, supported by Threshold Acoustics
- 4** Building for Adaptation: A Tour + Conversation on Flexible Spaces, with Charcoalblue, Chicago Shakespeare Theater and American Repertory Theater @ The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Navy Pier
- 5** A Workshop on Beyond Land Acknowledgments and Lunch at Downtown's Center for Native Futures
- 6** A Discussion on Decolonizing Shared Leadership @ UrbanTheater Company Humboldt Park
- 7** Immerse Yourself: Creating Dynamic Narrative Experiences for Your Audiences, a session within a Trip on the South Side, with visit to Saturday morning Farmers Market
- 8** Steppenwolf Theatre Company: Creating a Cultural Hub for Tomorrow: Tour, Panel, Mixer, and Laurie Metcalf in a World Premiere @ Steppenwolf
- 9** Freedom of Expression and the Future of American Authorship



TCG PUBLICATIONS

TCG Books had pop-up bookstores located at different venues throughout the Chicago conference. There were six bookstores in all, the most in TCG conference history!

In addition to hosting the Theatre Futures panel, *American Theatre* magazine published three pre-conference articles introducing attending artists to Chicago and its theatre and arts scene, as well as four post-conference articles reflecting on the learnings and experiences of four journalists, including two RLC attendees. The Theatre Futures panel was also turned into a special edition of *American Theatre's* Offscript podcast. [Full 2024 conference coverage can be found here.](#)

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN AUTHORSHIP

In this session hosted by TCG Books—as part of a trip to Chicago’s haven for theatre readers, The Understudy Books and Cafe in Andersonville—we explored how the artistic censorship emerging from today’s culture wars is affecting writers and theatremakers. Guided by Performing Arts Library’s new executive director, Roberta Pereira, a panel of preminent writers, theatremakers, and movement leaders guided us in a conversation on how we can move forward to better defend and advocate for artists’ rights on our stages, in our institutions, and in our communities.

THEATRE FUTURES

hosted by *American Theatre* magazine

It’s no secret that the nonprofit theatre is at a crossroads that has pushed us to reimagine, reorient, and reinvent the way we create art and do business. To speak to this moment, *American Theatre* magazine, with support from the Ford Foundation, has commissioned a series of 16 essays written by some of the brightest minds in our industry, inviting us to imagine vibrant possibilities for our artform. [This session, recorded by HowIRound](#), discussed what a brighter, more equitable future for theatre in the U.S. could look like, and how we might craft that future with new tools and perspectives.

FROM CRITIQUE TO COLLABORATION: JOURNALIST-ARTISTS COMMUNE FOR THEATRE’S EVOLUTION

In a time of declining arts coverage at almost every major news publication across the country, the conference brought together a panel of femme journalists and artists of the global majority for a conversation on the significance of criticism done in community, generational shifts in arts journalism, how diverse coverage can fuel the theatre industry, and how young writers can carve out space for themselves in cultural criticism. [The full panel was recorded by HowIRound and is available here.](#)



TCG GRANTEES



Several TCG grantees, scholarship recipients, and professional development program participants were able to join us in the Chicago Conference as part of their programs, which included pre-Conference days spent in professional development workshops, developing as a cohort and having conversations with local artists.

RISING LEADERS OF COLOR 2024 – CHICAGO

India Nicole Burton
Jamal Howard
Nora Carroll
Sierra Rosetta
Tiffany Fulson
Willow James

RISING LEADERS OF COLOR 2023 – NATIONAL COHORT OF JOURNALISTS AND CRITICS

afrikah selah - Boston, MA
Amanda Andrei - Los Angeles, CA

RISING LEADERS OF COLOR 2022 – PITTSBURGH

Justin Lucero
Parag Gohel
Sasha Schwartz
Shae Wofford

THRIVE! UPLIFTING THEATRES OF COLOR – NATIVE/INDIGENOUS THEATRES

Eagle Project, New York, NY
Ikidowin Acting Ensemble, Minneapolis, MN
Native Voices, Los Angeles, CA
Natives of The Apocalypse (NOTA), Santa Fe, NM
Safe Harbors NYC, New York, NY
Turtle Theater Collective, Minneapolis, MN

THE WILLA KIM COSTUME DESIGN SCHOLARSHIP 2023

Ka'iukapu Baker - Kaneohe, HI
Lia Wallfish - Chicago, IL

“Experiencing the TCG Conference gave me the opportunity to build community among generations of theater makers, share ideas, and imagine new ways of being with colleagues new and old. I left the conference feeling affirmed in my own practice, and the future our industry.” –[Nora Carroll, RLC24](#)

“The TCG Conference was a fantastic experience where I was able to find fellowship with our national theatre community, share information about our industry, and gain insights in the field. It was a unique opportunity that will undoubtedly lead to furthering my theatrical career.” –[Jamal Howard, RLC24](#)



EXHIBITORS AND SPONSORS



A special **THANK YOU** to our **EXHIBITORS** and **SPONSORS** who supported the conference with providing educational information, scholarships, and opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing!



Conference Staff

(AS OF JUNE 2024)

Devon Berkshire, Director of Fieldwide Programming

Katrina Herrmann, Conference Manager

Elise Pakiela, Conference Producer

Brian Balcom, Accessibility Coordinator

Frank Rose, Production Manager

Kim Grose, Plenary Production Manager

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