



Cultural Placemaking Conference

Thursday August 21, 2025

Providence Public Library

150 Empire Street, Providence, RI 02903

Zoom Webinar ID# 884 7221 1423 / P.C. - 338254

8:30 a.m. **Doors Open**

9:15 a.m. **Opening Remarks:** Raymond Two Hawks Watson, Esq.

9:45 a.m. **Keynote Speaker Remarks:** Gregorio Lucena Scarpella

10:15 a.m. **Presentation 1:**

Realizing the Value of Community Cultural Assets – Dr. Brian Hendrickson, Kevin Inglesby, & Donald W. King

11:30 a.m. **Presentation 2:**

AAPI Identity – Jeannie Salomon, Ellen Duong, Sonia Reyes, & Jessica “Jay” Wong.

Place, People and Power: Investing in Indigenous Economies for a Just Transition – Alexander Brave Journey Sterling

12:45 p.m. **Lunch/Presentation 3:**

Strategies for Effectively Engaging Municipal Government – Dr. Silas Pinto

1:45 p.m. **Presentation 4:**

Cultural Tourism Throughout the Diaspora – Queen Ama Nimley, Amb. Nana Efua, Jamari Bey, Esq., Antonia Francilis, & Maria Cosme

3:00 p.m. **Closing Remarks:** Raymond Two Hawks Watson, Esq.



Cultural Placemaking Conference

Friday August 22, 2025

Providence Public Library

150 Empire Street, Providence, RI 02903

Zoom Webinar ID# 884 7221 1423 / P.C. - 338254

8:30 a.m. **Doors Open**

9:15 a.m. **Opening Remarks:** Raymond Two Hawks Watson, Esq. & Shey
Rí Acu Rivera

9:45 a.m. **Keynote Speaker Remarks:** Ethan Kent

10:30 a.m. **Workgroup Sessions 1:**
Cultural Placemaking “Storming & Norming” Sessions

12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

1:30 p.m. **Workgroup Sessions 2:**
Cultural Placemaking “Performing” Sessions

2:45 p.m. **Workgroup Report Outs / Q & A**

3:30 p.m. **Closing Remarks:** Raymond Two Hawks Watson, Esq.

2025 CULTURAL PLACEMAKING CONFERENCE

SPEAKERS' BIOS



Keynote: Gregorio Lucena Scarpella is the Director of the Global Cultural Districts Network (GCDN) and is responsible for the management and development of the network and the stewardship of its members. Scarpella devises the network's overall strategy and oversees its portfolio of content and activities, including the GCDN annual convening. Scarpella holds a Master's degree in Arts & Cultural Management at King's College London, and a Bachelor's degree in Communications and English Linguistics & Literature from Université de Neuchâtel. Born in Brazil into a multicultural family, Greg was raised in Switzerland and is fluent in English, French, Portuguese and Italian.



Keynote: Ethan Kent works to support public space organizations, projects, and leadership around the world to build a global placemaking movement. In 2019 Kent co-founded PlacemakingX to network, amplify and accelerate placemaking leadership and impact globally. Kent has helped initiate and grow 24+ regional placemaking networks covering much of the globe, while also supporting the PlacemakingUS network, and the Social Life Project. Kent builds on more than 20 years of working on placemaking projects and campaigns with Project for Public Spaces and has been integral to the development of placemaking as a transformative approach to economic development, environmentalism, transportation planning, governance, resilience, social equity, design, placekeeping, digital space, inclusion, tourism and innovation.



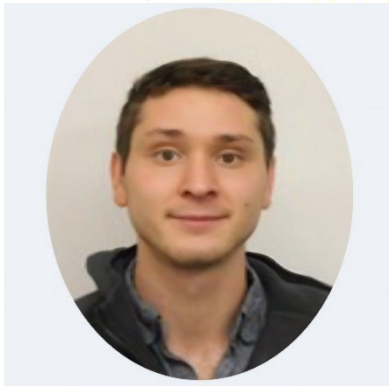
Raymond Two Hawks Watson, Esq. is an attorney, advocate, educator, cultural practitioner, convener, and business professional with over eighteen years of experience in nonprofit leadership and executive administration. Watson's skills consist of program development & implementation, grant writing, motivational speaking, leadership & cultural development consulting, community organizing, and event planning, supplemented by an extensive background in promoting and supporting cultural equity & cultural development initiatives in the Rhode Island community.



Donald W. King is a Creative Professional, Educator, Art Director, Festival Producer, Branding/Marketing Specialist and Socio-Musicologist with more than 25 years of notable accomplishments. A graduate of Brown University, King has extensive experience and expertise in the fields of the arts, literacy, and education, including developing and producing large scale, multi-stage festivals and events, cultural arts institutions, music venues, and brands in highly competitive markets.



Dr. Brian Hendrickson is a professor, poet, and researcher whose career focus is on using community engagement, multimedia storytelling, and other engagement opportunities to identify ways to make learning in the classroom and community more equitable and impactful. Hendrickson possesses a range of skillsets in areas such as project management, professional and technical communication, assessment, and curriculum



Kevin Inglesby is a representative of the Sand Hill Band of Lenape and Cherokee Indians and the Federation of Aboriginal Nations of the Americas (FANA) as he serves as the Nimmuog Council's First Seat Holder. Inglesby is a PhD Candidate in the Applied Anthropology & Cultural Heritage program at the University of Montana and also teaches anthropology 406: Contemporary Issues of Indigenous Peoples.



Ellen Duong is a dedicated volunteer at the AAPI History Museum, where she combines her passions for community engagement, self-reflection, the arts, and learning through play. Duong envisions the museum as a vibrant space where stories are shared, communities come together, and lifelong learning thrives. Born and raised in South Philadelphia, Ellen's perspective has been shaped by both her own experiences and those of her parents, whose generation endured significant hardships and trauma. Duong's journey of self-discovery and identity development is ongoing, and she brings this personal insight to her work at the museum.



Sonia Reyes graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences. Reyes is currently the Program & Outreach Coordinator at Books Are Wings, non-profit organization. Reyes is interested in non-profit management and specializes in Filipino-American history.



Jeannie Salomon is the driving force behind the creation of the first-ever AAPI History Museum in the United States, a groundbreaking initiative ensuring that AAPI voices and histories are no longer overlooked. With a deep passion for historic preservation and community empowerment, she has transformed a long-standing gap in representation into a powerful movement for awareness, education, and change. Salomon is also the Founder & Executive Director of the AAPI History Museum located in Providence, RI.



Jessica "Jay" Wong is a second-generation, mixed-race Chinese American who currently serves as a Program Officer at Mass Cultural Council, where she oversees the Local Cultural Councils and Cultural Districts across the Commonwealth. Previously, Wong was the Program Director and Interim Executive Director of the Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islander Commission. Wong also serves on the board of the Commonwealth Seminar and as Co-Chair of Asset Mapping for the Asian American and Pacific Islander Arts and Culture Collaborative under The Asian Community Fund. Wong has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from UMass Amherst and a Master's degree in Public Administration with a minor in Asian American Studies from UMass Boston.



Alexander “Brave Journey” Sterling is the CEO and co-founder of Turtle Island Community Capital (TICC). With ancestral roots in the Ramapo Lenape Nation, Cuba and the African diaspora and a deep commitment to relational finance, Sterling brings two decades of experience in clean energy, community development, and impact investing. Sterling is a frequent speaker at RE+, SOCAP, and other national convenings on climate finance and Indigenous-led investing, driving attention and interest to build a capital ecosystem by bringing together philanthropy, investment and Traditional Ecologic Knowledge. Sterling holds a degree from the University of Rhode Island, and serves on national advisory communities advancing equity in finance and environmental justice.



Dr. Silas Otniel Rodrigues Pinto’s career spans roles in activism and education, including serving as director of the School Psychology Program, co-director of Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Program and faculty in the Department of Education at Tufts University. Pinto directed a martial arts and cultural center focusing on wellness and impacts of intergenerational trauma in Rhode Island for 22 years. Pinto received his Ph.D. in School Psychology from the University of RI and completed his post-doctorate work at the Met High School as a school psychologist and at Brown University’s Center for Alcohol and Addictions Studies as a treatment provider and research analyst.



Shey Rí Acu Rivera is an interdisciplinary artist, cultural worker, and arts administrator with 15 years of experience in cultural work and 'placekeeping' projects. Rivera's artistic creations span a myriad of topics, from home to capitalism to queerness and magic. Rivera has an MA in Global Arts and Cultures, as Presidential Fellow at Rhode Island School of Design, a BA in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR-Rio Piedras), and graduate studies in Contemporary Media and Culture from the University of the Sacred Heart, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Rivera also counts on years of on-the-ground experience as a practitioner in the arts sector, alongside long term and trusted relationships with communities of artists and culture bearers across geographies.

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