

SAM AROS-MITCHELL, Ph.D.

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LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Indigenous artist-scholar and arts administrator with over fifteen years in higher education and a sustained record of founding and directing organizations from the ground up, securing funding from private, state, regional, and municipal sources, and holding long-term partnerships with Native communities and Indigenous organizations. Council Member of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, Online Editor of Theatre Journal, and Founding Chair of the Indigenous Performance and Research Alliance Working Group within the Dance Studies Association. Combines an active national research and creative practice, supported by the Jerome Hill and McKnight fellowships, with direct experience in curriculum design, fiscal oversight, personnel representation, editorial leadership, and board governance, the range of administrative fluency required to chair an academic department.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Theatre and Drama, University of California, San Diego / University of California, Irvine (Joint Doctoral Program), 2021

Dissertation: *Writing Indigeneity: Circularities through the Codices of the Native Body*

Committee: Julie Burrelle (Chair), Ross Frank, Jade Power-Sotomayor, Wayne Yang (UCSD); Tara Rodman (UCI)

M.F.A., Dance Theatre, University of California, San Diego

B.F.A., Dance, University of California, Santa Barbara

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION

Founder and Director, SAROS field/works, Minneapolis

- Founded the organization and set its strategic direction, annual programming plan, and partnership priorities.
- Develop and manage the operating budget, including revenue projections, grant income, artist and production contracts, venue costs, and accessibility expense.
- Recruit, contract, and supervise artists, designers, production personnel, and collaborators across each season.
- Hold funder, venue, institutional, and Native community relationships in the Twin Cities and nationally; write and report on all grants.

Founder and Producer, NE/X Festival (North East Experimental): A Festival of Indigenous Performance, Northrup King Building, Minneapolis, November 2025, ongoing

- Conceived, funded, and produced a multi-day, multi-venue festival of Indigenous performance; secured municipal, regional, and foundation support.
- Contracted Indigenous artists nationally; built Indigenous-led ASL interpretation into the founding budget rather than adding it after programming was set.

Founder and Producer, The Native Joy Play Festival, American Indian Center, Minneapolis, 2025

- Developed and produced a festival of new work by Native artists in partnership with an urban Indian center, coordinated with its staff, calendar, and community programming.

Co-Founder, Aros & Son LLC, Minneapolis

- Native-owned company supporting Indigenous publishing, collaborative media, and mentorship. Editor, Longview Road, poetry collection by Manny Monolin (Aros & Son Press, 2025).

Unit Chair, United Auto Workers 2865 (UAW), during doctoral studies

- Represented and advocated for fellow graduate student workers; direct experience in personnel representation and institutional negotiation.

Online Editor, Theatre Journal, Johns Hopkins University Press / Association for Theatre in Higher Education, 2026, present

- Serve as Online Editor of the field's flagship peer-reviewed journal, overseeing non-peer-reviewed online content including interviews, think pieces, and multimedia scholarship.

Founding Chair, Indigenous Performance and Research Alliance (IPRA) Working Group, Dance Studies Association, 2024, present

- Founded and chair a national working group convening artists, scholars, and community leaders around Indigenous performance research, embodied scholarship, and community-centered artistic practice.

Council Member, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA), 2023, present

- Book Prize Committee Member, NAISA, 2024, present; co-chaired the 2025 award for Best Subsequent Book in Native American and Indigenous Studies.

Board Member, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, 2025, present

Board Member, Minnesota Dance Force, 2026, present

Panelist, inaugural Blue Fox Arts Artist Fellowship (ARENA Dance)

Panelist, National Endowment for the Arts, Visual Arts discipline grant review process

Graduate Researcher and Editor, Theatre Forum Journal, UC San Diego, 2015, 2018

Vice President, American Indian Graduate Student Association, UC San Diego, 2019, 2020

- Led student professional development and mentorship programming for Native graduate students.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS & TEACHING

Guest Artist-Scholar in Residence, Carleton College, Spring 2026

DANC 270: Performance as Ceremony (6 credits), co-taught with Professor Judith Howard

Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance, Colorado College, 2025

Embodiment, Ceremony, and Indigenous Futurities

Visiting Assistant Professor, Theatre & Dance, Macalester College, 2023

Mellon Postdoctoral Scholar, Center for Imagination in the Borderlands, Arizona State University, August 2021, June 2023

Worked with poet Natalie Diaz and scholar Bryan Brayboy (Lumbee)

Instructor of Record, Arizona State University, 2021, 2023

Adjunct Lecturer, UC San Diego / UC Irvine Joint Doctoral Program, 2019, 2021

Instructor and Teaching Assistant, Department of Theatre and Dance, UC San Diego, 2013, 2020

Instructor, Department of Theatre and Dance, California State University San Marcos, 2019

Guest Lecturer / Artist-Scholar, UC San Diego, Indigenous Futures Institute

Residency Faculty, Seneca Iroquois National Museum, 2025

Dance Artist and Educator, Rincon Indian Reservation, Escondido, CA, 2014, 2016

- Multi-year reservation residency teaching dance.

Dance Artist and Educator, The Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, 2021

Mentor, UCSD Native American Student Association

- Mentored students in the Native American Student Association and the greater San Diego Native community; served as a mentor for the reservation-based Rincon Youth Luiseño Storytellers after-school program.

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS & GRANTS

Awards span private foundations, a state arts agency, a regional arts council, two municipal arts funds, and university and institutional fellowships.

Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship, Jerome Foundation, 2025, 2028

Heller Center Indigenous Fellowship, University of Colorado Colorado Springs, 2026

Creative Individuals Grant, Minnesota State Arts Board, FY 2026

Bridge Fund for Dance Residency, Red Eye Theater, 2025

Cultural Districts Arts Fund, City of Minneapolis, 2025

Festival Activation Program, Minneapolis Arts & Cultural Affairs

Project Grant, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council

McKnight Dance Fellowship, McKnight Foundation, 2023

Santa Fe Art Institute Residency, 2025

Native Directing Fellowship, The Guthrie Theater, 2020

Presidential Dissertation Fellowship, UC San Diego, 2020

Community Connections Graduate Fellowship, UC San Diego, 2020

Summer Dissertation Fellowship, Institute of Arts and Humanities, UC San Diego, 2020

UCIRA Grant, Dance Residency at Rincon Reservation, 2014

Fellowship for Indigenous Dance Residency, Banff Centre, 2013

International Theatre Institute Scholarship, Saratoga, 2006

PUBLICATIONS & SCHOLARLY WORK

Book manuscript in progress: Performance as Ceremony

Articulates embodied epistemology as Indigenous research methodology, developed through fieldwork, rehearsal practice, and Yaqui cosmological frameworks.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Aros-Mitchell, Sam, and Rosy Simas. "Playing Indian, Between Idealization and Vilification: Seems You Have to Play Indian to Be Indian." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 43, no. 4 (2020). Special issue: "Fraud in American Indian Communities."

Klein, Zoë, and Sam Aros-Mitchell. "Neither White Nor Surface: A Dialogue Between the Spaces of Dance, Indigeneity, and Adoption." *Movement Research Performance Journal* 52/53 (2019, 2020). Special issue: "Sovereign Movements: Native Dance and Performance."

Mitchell, Sam, and Julie Burrelle. "Dee(a)r Spine: Dance, Dramaturgy, and the Repatriation of Indigenous Memory." *Dance Research Journal* 48, no. 1 (2016): 41, 54. Special issue on Indigenous dance.

"José Limón, The Unsung and Yoeme Syncretism," in *Transcending Americanness: José Limón and the Borders of Modernism* (forthcoming 2025)

Proceedings, Public Writing, and Editorial Projects

"Embodied Cosmologies and Critical Choreographies." NAISA Conference Proceedings, 2025.

"I Observe You Observing Me: Dance and Performative Utopias." Walker Art Center Online, 2024.

Casebooks, *Theatre Forum Journal*: "LatinX 2018 Casebook," issue 54 (2018); "Without Walls Festival 2017 Casebook," issue 52 (2017).

"Blood Memory: A Native Dancer's Experience," *First Sound Movement* (2021)

Editor, *Longview Road*, poetry collection by Manny Monolin. Aros & Son Press, 2025.

INVITED LECTURES & CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

"Performance as Ceremony." Public lecture-performance, Arts Research Center and Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies, UC Berkeley, April 23, 2026.

"Performance as Ceremony: Embodied Archives, Indigenous Futurities, and the Afterlives of Limón." Current Topics in Dance Research Colloquium, Department of Dance, UC Riverside, January 29, 2026. NAISA 2026 Annual Meeting, Temuco, Chile, attended as NAISA Council Member.

"Embodied Cosmologies and Critical Choreographies." NAISA Annual Conference, Oklahoma City, June 2025.

"Interweaving José Limón's Choreography with Indigenous Cosmologies," University of Chicago, 2025.

"Land & Equity: The Art and Politics of Place." a2ru Conference, University of Wisconsin, October 15, 2020.

"At Archival Odds? Contributions at the Convergence of Indigenous and Dance Studies" and "Post Modern Dance and the Move Towards Innocence." NAISA Annual Conference, UCLA, May 18, 2018.

"Indigenous Dance Today." Symposium, Indigenous Choreographers Project, Culver Center of the Arts, UC Riverside, May 8, 2015.

"Performing/Theorizing Violent Landscapes: Dance, Dramaturgy, and Repatriation of Indigenous Memory" (with Julie Burrelle). American Society for Theatre Research Annual Conference, PAR Working Group, Baltimore, MD, November 21, 2014.

Featured guest, "Reminiscing on Twin Cities Dance with Sam Aros-Mitchell," *Studio Stories* podcast, Buzzsprout, June 2025.

CURATORIAL & CREATIVE WORK

Original Work

Juya Nokakamea (2026). Immersive dance theater drawn from the Yaqui creation story of the talking tree. Director, choreographer, co-composer, lighting design. Red Eye Theater, Minneapolis, July 9, 2026.

Wish | Body | Trace (2026). Danceworks 2026, Northwestern University, March 13, 15, 2026.

Fire Mother, Ash Sister (2026, in development). With Masanari Kawahara. New Works Festival, Center for Performing Arts, Minneapolis, April 3, 4, 2026.

The Wall is High: A Performance in Five Chapters (2025). Red Eye Theater, Minneapolis, March 5, 2025.

Entering Aniam (2023). Immersive sound and movement installation. Space 331 Residency.

Finding Sentience (2023). Commissioned by Carleton College for Semaphore Dance Repertory Company; Weitz Center for Creativity, November 2023.

Ania Bwia Bwia Tooohia (2023). New Works in Progress, Red Eye Theater, Minneapolis, May 2023.

Articles 1-30 (2023). Commissioned by Vision Dance Theatre, Grand OshKosh Theater, Osh Kosh, WI.

“Isn’t the air also a body?” (2022). Arizona State University, Artivists Festival, Margaret Gisolo Dance Theatre, Tempe, AZ.

Heartstrings (2020). Commissioned by Vision Dance Theatre, Grand OshKosh Theater, Osh Kosh, WI.

Reconstruction and Repertory

José Limón, The Unsung (Deer Solo) and Danzas Mexicanas (El Indio). Ongoing reconstruction and performance in collaboration with Dante Puleio, Artistic Director, José Limón Dance Foundation. Among the first Yaqui artists to reconstruct and perform these works; Limón and Aros-Mitchell share Yaqui ancestry.

Selected Performances

Rosy Simas Danse. Performer, teacher, and community engagement organizer, 2017, present. Includes A:gajë:gwah dësa'nigöewë:nye:' (i hope it will stir your mind), Walker Art Center, May 2026; she who lives on the road to war, Maui Arts and Cultural Center (2024), Weisman Art Museum and All My Relations Arts, Minneapolis (2022, 2023); Weave:HERE with poet Heid E. Erdrich, All My Relations/NACDI, Northern Spark, Minneapolis, 2019; Weave, premiere at the Ordway, St. Paul, MN, with tour stops at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center, Intercultural Journeys in Philadelphia, PA, the Alabama Dance Council, and the Poarch Creek Band of Indians, Atmore, AL, 2019; yödoishëndahgwa'geh, All My Relations Arts, Minneapolis, 2020 and 2021; Transfuse, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO, 2020; Skin(s), EastSide Arts, Oakland, CA, and Gimaajii-Mino-Bimaadizimin, Duluth, MN, 2017.

Duane Linklater, 12 + 2. Performer/collaborator in bison bison (dance_hum for dirtbath) with Tanya Lukin Linklater. Dia Art Foundation, Dia Chelsea, New York, September 2025.

Morgan Thorson, Untitled Night. Commissioned by The Great Northern, 2024.

Aniccha Arts (Pramila Vasudevan), Prairie/Concrete, 2023.

In the River, directed by Karthik Pandian, St. Paul, MN, 2021.

Residencies

Arts Research Center, UC Berkeley (2026); Center for Performing Arts, Minneapolis (2026); Santa Fe Art Institute (2025); Red Eye Theater Bridge Fund (2025); Space 331, Rosy Simas Danse (2022, 2024); MOVO Space Major Maintenance Residency (2021, 2022); The Guthrie Theater (2021); You and I Project Fellow (2023); Rincon Indian Reservation (2014, 2016); Banff Centre (2013).

ARTISTIC EMPLOYMENT

Rosy Simas Danse: performer, rehearsal assistant, community engagement specialist, dance teacher, Minneapolis, MN, 2017, present.

- Organized community engagement activities, taught workshops for dancers and non-dancers, and participated in discussions on Indigenous dance and other aspects of RSD work. Worked in collaboration with All My Relations Arts Gallery, Minneapolis; Eastside Arts Alliance, Oakland, CA; American Indian Community Housing Organization, Duluth, MN; the Maui Arts & Cultural Center, Kahului, HI; and a program with the Alabama Dance Council and the Poarch Creek Band of Indians.
- Mentor, Emerging Native Artists Cohort, Rosy Simas Danse.
- Facilitator, Muscle/Bone Technique Workshops, Rosy Simas Danse, 2025, present.

Curatorial Collaborator, Northrup King Building, Minneapolis

Contracting Partner, Indigenous Interpreters Organization, a Deaf-led collective serving accessibility at Native cultural events, engaged for every festival produced

Presenter, “Mother Earth’s Pandemic: The Doctrine of Discovery,” Indigenous Values Initiative and American Indian Law Alliance, 2020

TEACHING & CURRICULUM DESIGN

Courses designed and taught: Performance as Ceremony (Carleton College, DANC 270; Macalester College); Embodiment, Ceremony, and Indigenous Futurities (Colorado College); Body Archives: Memory, Ritual, and Resistance; Performance Ecologies and Land Pedagogies; Native American Film and Theater (UC San Diego); Culture, Arts and Technology (UC San Diego, Sixth College).

Areas of Expertise: Indigenous performance and Native American theatre; Indigenous research methodologies; choreography and composition; modern dance repertory and reconstruction (Limón technique); world dance and culture; dance dramaturgy; performance studies; land-based and site-responsive practice; Muscle/Bone technique (after Min Tanaka's Body Weather).

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA)

Dance Studies Association (DSA)

American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR)

Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE)

TECHNICAL & CREATIVE SKILLS

QLab, Logic Pro, Lighting & sound design, Movement analysis, Improvisation systems, Projection design, Grant writing

Languages: English (fluent), Spanish (conversational), Yaqui (basic oral comprehension)