

GALLERIES

Artists Profiles

Maniobra

Maniobra is a cultural employment initiative providing guaranteed income and additional support for artists and collectives in Puerto Rico over three years. The initiative is profiled in an article in this issue of *Artivate* by Javier J. Hernández Acosta, who is involved as both an arts entrepreneur launching the program through the Centro de Economía Creativa and as a scholar. A selection of the arts programs operating with Maniobra support is profiled here alongside the artists and collectives leading the work.

Agua, Sol y Sereno



[Agua, Sol y Sereno](#) is a multidisciplinary theater collective that promotes democratization of art by producing plays, *comparsas*, creative workshops for all kinds of communities, videoart, exhibitions, and other performative acts. Its pedagogical component includes talks, conferences, and the Escuela-Taller (2021-present), which offers various courses,

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workshops, and seminars for people of all ages. The group concentrates its creative energy on processes linked to the social reality of Puerto Rico and the world as well as to the interiority of the human being. Since its incorporation as a non-profit organization in 1993, *Agua, Sol y Sereno* has promoted the development of Puerto Rican experimental theater aimed at achieving economic, social, cultural, educational, and political impact.



Kenneth Salgado, Cristina Vives, Cathy Vigo, and Pedro Adorno (*Agua, Sol y Sereno*).

Collective creation is a vital part of the development of works in which each member participates by proposing ideas, experimenting with objects, words, songs, and the body on stage. This process permeates the organizational structure of the group in which everyone has the opportunity to propose, develop, and lead projects from start to finish as well as have a voice and vote in important decision-making processes for the organization.

Maniobra support enabled hiring two full-time artists to operate programming: Kenneth Salgado and Cristina Vives. Both have artistic training and are part of the team of main actors of the project. Kenneth has worked as an actor, co-curator of exhibitions, and workshop facilitator. Cristina earned a graduate degree in Cultural Management and an undergraduate degree in Music and has been working with *Agua, Sol y Sereno* for more than ten years. In April 2023, the founders of the project, Pedro Adorno and Cathy Vigo, joined the group of Maniobra artists.

Colectivo el Ancón de Loíza



“El colectivo” [*el Ancón de Loíza, Inc.*](#), is a community-based non-profit organization anchored in a historic space on the riverbanks of the Rio Grande de Loíza where the Cortijo Family first developed *el Ancón* (The Barge) more than one hundred years ago. *El Ancón*, a barge without a motor pulled by a rope or by leaning on the river bottom with a stick, was used to cross between Piñones and Loíza Pueblo, as well as to transport people, cars,

and crops from the eastern area to San Juan and the rest of Puerto Rico. A treasured part of the heritage of Loíza and of Puerto Rico, *el Ancón* is the historic main entrance to the town. It was here that the Cortijo family began to build communication networks, offered as a public service in the spirit of solidarity. The vision of the “colectivo” is to continue this

legacy and to generate initiatives that promote cultural, educational, and tourist activity in the historic center of Loíza. The “colectivo” also works toward incubating social and creative enterprises to impact the youth community of Loíza.

[Juan Pablo Vizcaíno Cortijo](#), who is part of this collective as well as a Maniobra artist, is an Afro-Puerto Rican artist who has worked on the figure of the *Vejigante* for fourteen years, an artistic expression based on carving masks as a sign of Black Caribbean resistance. The figure of the *Vejigante* is an African expression. Born and raised in Puerto Rico with perspectives that address Afro-Caribbean approaches rooted in the culture of the *Taínos* (native people in the Caribbean and the Americas) and in all Afro-descendants, Juan Pablo, in addition to being an artist, is an activist for racial and environmental justice. Juan Pablo began his artistic work at the age of thirteen cutting hair and making designs with a razor, machine, and scissors. His activist work in support of communities, the environment, and racialized and oppressed groups has given him opportunities to present his art both locally and internationally. Juan Pablo currently works with reused materials, scrap metal, concrete, bamboo, wood, and mixed media. He mostly uses materials he finds in the streets of his neighborhood and has been exploring with digital art, animations, virtual reality, and NFTs.



Juan Pablo Vizcaíno Cortijo (collectivo *El Ancón de Loíza*)

Casa Silvana



[Casa Silvana](#) is a rural, self-managed cultural project focused on the development of experimental, contemporary, and Afro-descendant visual arts in Puerto Rico, mainly impacting Humacao and the eastern region of the archipelago. It is an integration of the residence and studio of the artist Edwin Velázquez Collazo and an alternative art space with an emphasis on the production of works of art, workshops, talks, conversations, conferences, exhibitions, micro artistic residences, as well as dissemination and promotion through digital media as documentation processes. Key projects include the curatorial practice, Edwin Velázquez’s studio and workshop, and cultural dissemination through [Puerto Rico Art News](#) among other platforms.

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Edwin Velázquez Collazo, born in Santurce in 1961, was selected as a Maniobra artist in its first year. In 1988 he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in Painting from the School of Plastic Arts and Design of Puerto Rico. He is an artist, curator, art critic, cultural manager, blog editor, and founder and former president of the Association of Visual Artists of Puerto Rico. He has had ten solo exhibitions in Puerto Rico and has exhibited collectively in galleries and museums both locally and internationally. He has won awards and distinctions from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, the Ángel Ramos Foundation, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Puerto Rico, and the Rockefeller Foundation.



Joyce De Jesús Martínez and Edwin Velázquez Collazo (*Casa Silvana*)

Recognizing the impact of *Casa Silvana* and its needs, during the second year (April 2023) Joyce De Jesús Martínez was brought into Maniobra. She was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, in 1971. She holds a Bachelor's degree in K-3 Education with a concentration in Special Education from the University of Puerto Rico and a Master's degree in Drawing and Painting from the Pontifical Catholic University. In 2014, she started a proposal according to her personal experiences. Due to a self-promise, she began using human hair as the main material in her works. Beyond the final product, she focuses on the process, giving special care to external elements and emotions and learning at the moment of creation. Believing that hair is a symbol of our interior or spirituality, De Jesús creates works with a memorial air and with the intention of evoking the true essence of being and its processes. With this idea of healing the interior and self-knowledge, De Jesús works as a collaborator with Edwin Velázquez Collazo at *Casa Silvana* and proposes to hold art therapy workshops as part of her artistic work.

El Cuadrado Gris



[El Cuadrado Gris](#) is a space for art, communication, education, and social action in the community of Barrio Obrero/Santurce. The space has hosted exhibitions, performances, concerts, live broadcasts, and community aid activities since 2015. It has become very important for the cultural community primarily due to its location and interaction with the community, but also for its focus on serving

many forms of media as an exhibit hall and cultural center with a focus on the documentation and dissemination of audiovisual and musical content. In 2021, the inaugural open-air terrace-theater was launched to host performances of theater, poetry, music shows, and films of cultural and social interest. The project also organizes programs of a social nature such as “*bicis para todos*” where donated used bicycles are received, repaired, and given away to those who need them in Barrio Obrero. *El Cuadrado Gris* also organized a solar energy program where solar lights were distributed to the community before, during, and after Hurricane Maria in 2017.



Ozzie Forbes in collaboration with Anna Astor Blanco and Javier Carrera (*El Cuadrado Gris*).

The team of founders includes Anna Astor Blanco (art director/curator) and Ozzie Forbes (communications director, music and editing department). Through Maniobra, the primary artist who receives the salary incentive is Ozzie Forbes, who is responsible for producing, directing, and teaching (multimedia) internet, radio, and educational television to young people as a legacy and social communication tool. Additionally, he creates and leads cultural and social communication media platforms such as [Radio Underground](#). Ozzie also coordinates international artists collaborations. As an indirect impact of Maniobra, they have also managed to provide frequent work for photographer and documentalist Javier Carrera.

Taller Comunidad La Goyco



[Taller Comunidad La Goyco](#) is a community-based cultural organization dedicated to defending the right to the city and cultural agency. It arises in the context of the closure of public schools in 2015 and the community’s need to rescue these spaces to develop a work agenda for the resident community in Santurce. After several years developing the project, in 2020 the Municipality of San Juan ceded the property to the *Taller Comunidad La*

Goyco organization. Its programming includes music, theater, art, and cinema, among others. It serves the surrounding community which mostly consists of older people. It serves as the headquarters of the main archive of the *plena* (Afro-Puerto Rican music)—*La Casa de la Plena Tito Matos*—and includes music, books, documentaries, art, and instruments. In addition, it offers conferences and workshops. *Taller Comunidad La Goyco*

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houses more than twenty artistic initiatives that include scenic design, ceramics, print making, design, and other workshops, making it an effective arts entrepreneurship incubator.

Mariana Reyes Angleró is the full-time executive director of *Taller Comunidad La Goyco* and is in charge of all initiatives that enable artists to carry out their work at the organization. She is a cultural manager with more than twenty years of experience in production and community management. She leads the coordination, recruitment, project development, and fundraising work as well as serving as the primary community liaison. She is in charge of supervising these areas and conceptualizing various programs that achieve the stability and growth of the project. In addition, Mariana is the lead responsible for solidifying the project of *La Casa de la Plena*, a key initiative that maintains the legacy of another of *La Goyco's* founders, the late musician and cultural agent Tito Matos.



Mariana Reyes Angleró (*Taller Comunidad La Goyco*).