

The Clemente

December 26, 2019

LIBERTAD GUERRA NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CLEMENTE SOTO VELEZ CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER, EFFECTIVE FEB. 18

The Board of Directors of the Clemente Soto Velez Cultural and Educational Center (The Clemente) is pleased to announce the appointment of Libertad O. Guerra as its Executive Director, effective Feb. 18, 2020. An urban anthropologist, curator, and cultural organizer / producer with extensive experience in arts administration, Guerra brings her experience in commissioning, programming, producing and marketing local and international cultural events, as well as firm roots in the cultural landscape of the Lower East Side.

She comes to The Clemente from the Loisaida Inc. Center, where she has served as Director and Chief Curator since 2014. At Loisaida she led the strategic update of the legacy organization's mission, forged a new inter-generational and multi-disciplinary program design and forum series that explored the cross-currents of how art and place is produced and consumed in a way that does not erase one group or another. She shepherded the Center through an intense period of growth, produced critically- and community-acclaimed exhibitions; developed a wide roster of institutional partners, and revitalized the historical Loisaida Festival, adding a depth of cultural offerings in Caribbean and Latinx music genres, street theater and performance-art platforms for emerging and established artists.

Elena Martinez, Interim Board Chair, noted, "Libertad's experience, knowledge and passion for arts, culture and social justice has long been in evidence in our community. She has internalized The Clemente's mission and will work tirelessly towards our shared goal of seeing it at its best, in all respects. We are extremely excited to have her join The Clemente as Executive Director and build on her own work as interim board chair."

Ms. Guerra said, ""I am extremely excited about becoming part of The Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural and Educational Center family, and looking forward to make this hidden gem of our cultural landscape shine to its utmost. I assume my responsibilities with an earnest sense of duty and in a spirit of consultation, openness, and collaboration with all. As one of two remaining Puerto Rican and Latinx cultural centers in our downtown area, under my leadership The Clemente will make the voices of these immigrant communities sing, and their achievements visible, in the ethos of cultural equity to which our city is committed.

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I also have plans to connect the incredible internal assets of our Center to the beautifully diverse, multi-cultural, and inspiring spirit of the Lower East Side that matters so much to us all and the world. Similarly, I wish to empower our staff, and our internal community of artists and cultural organizations to thrive and contribute to stewarding this cultural haven; adding public value, aesthetic wonder, and conviviality to our cultural discourse at a time when we need it most. The road ahead is full of possibilities and I want everybody to be part of it. ¡Pa'lante!, Forward!"

Libertad is a recipient of the [Lower East Side Community Hero Award](#) and the [NY ACKER Award for Avant-Garde Excellence](#) (both in 2019). She led the community engagement process and study leading to the [Loisaida Cultural Plan](#) policy advocacy document, and her work was featured in the New York Times best exhibitions of the year and listed within the [10 Galleries to Visit Now on the Lower East Side](#).

Libertad's previous experience includes educator and researcher at John Jay College and Hunter College Center for Puerto Rican Studies (CUNY); curatorial fellow at the Smithsonian Institute, and independent cultural worker /producer / founder of multi-arts collective 'Spanic Attack.' She is a Ford Foundation grantee for the project *Just X Changes* (2020-21), and part of the cohort of Global Arts Management Fellows at the DeVos Institute (2019-2021).

Libertad's is also a member of Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts/NY (NOCD-NY), a founding member of the environmental justice coalition South Bronx Unite, and serves on the board of the Mott Haven-Port Morris Community Land Stewards, the local community land trust.

Libertad received her Master's in Cultural Anthropology at Université Laval, Québec, and a second M.A. in Contemporary Art/ Urban Studies/ Museum Studies at NYU's Gallatin School. Her academic research has focused on Puerto Rican, Latinx, and NYC's aesthetic politics of place and collaborative art practices in immigrant urban settings; and recently published '[SovereignTies: The Shared Sovereignty of Trust, Culture, and Land](#)' for *FIELD Journal of Socially Engaged Art and Criticism*.