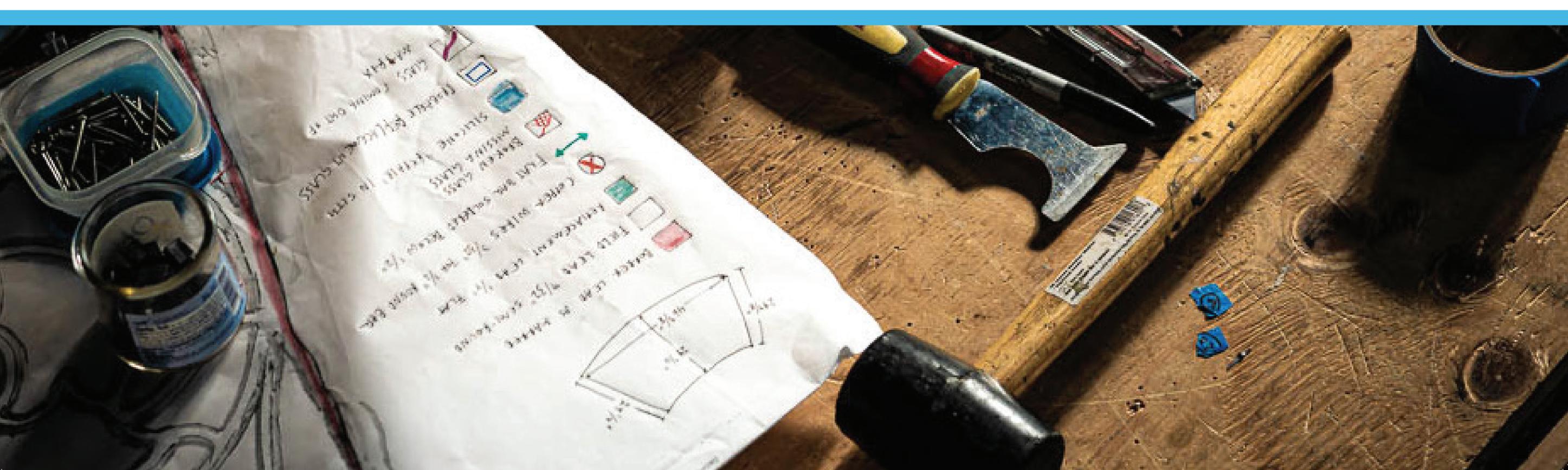


10 WOMEN MAKING AN IMPACT

The ten women featured in this room are preservationists, each shaping the field in unique and personal ways. They are contractors, specialists, activists, researchers, teachers, and scholars. They are business owners and hiring managers, striving to encourage more women and BIPOC to enter the preservation space. Read their words to meet these fascinating and trailblazing women.

We acknowledge that this is not the whole story of women in preservation. We would need infinite space to tell all of the stories that deserve to be told. The first room in this exhibit focuses on the origins of the historic preservation movement, which was primarily the domain of wealthy white women working to preserve places—like Dumbarton House—related to the founding of the United States. The women in this room represent only a fraction of the preservationists that are working today, continuing a long and robust legacy of women in preservation. We have presented a very small snapshot and are only scratching the surface of inspiring stories.

Photo Credit: Greg Tuzin



ARIANA MAKAU Nzilani Glass Conservation

Ariana Makau is drawn to photography, science, math, documentation, and hands-on work - a group of interests that meshed perfectly into a profession in stained glass conservation. Makau studied stained glass fabrication in Paris, earned (as the first woman in the world to do so) a masters degree in stained glass conservation in London, and worked in such institutions as the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all before founding her company, Nzilani Glass Conservation.

What does it take to start your own preservation-related business/organization?

Ignorance and ambition! Had I known what it would take to run a successful business at the beginning, I would have been too intimidated. But from the start, I knew Nzilani would provide something unique in the world of preservation based on our mission: "Be Safe. Have Fun. Do Excellent Work."

What types of challenges have you faced in your work?

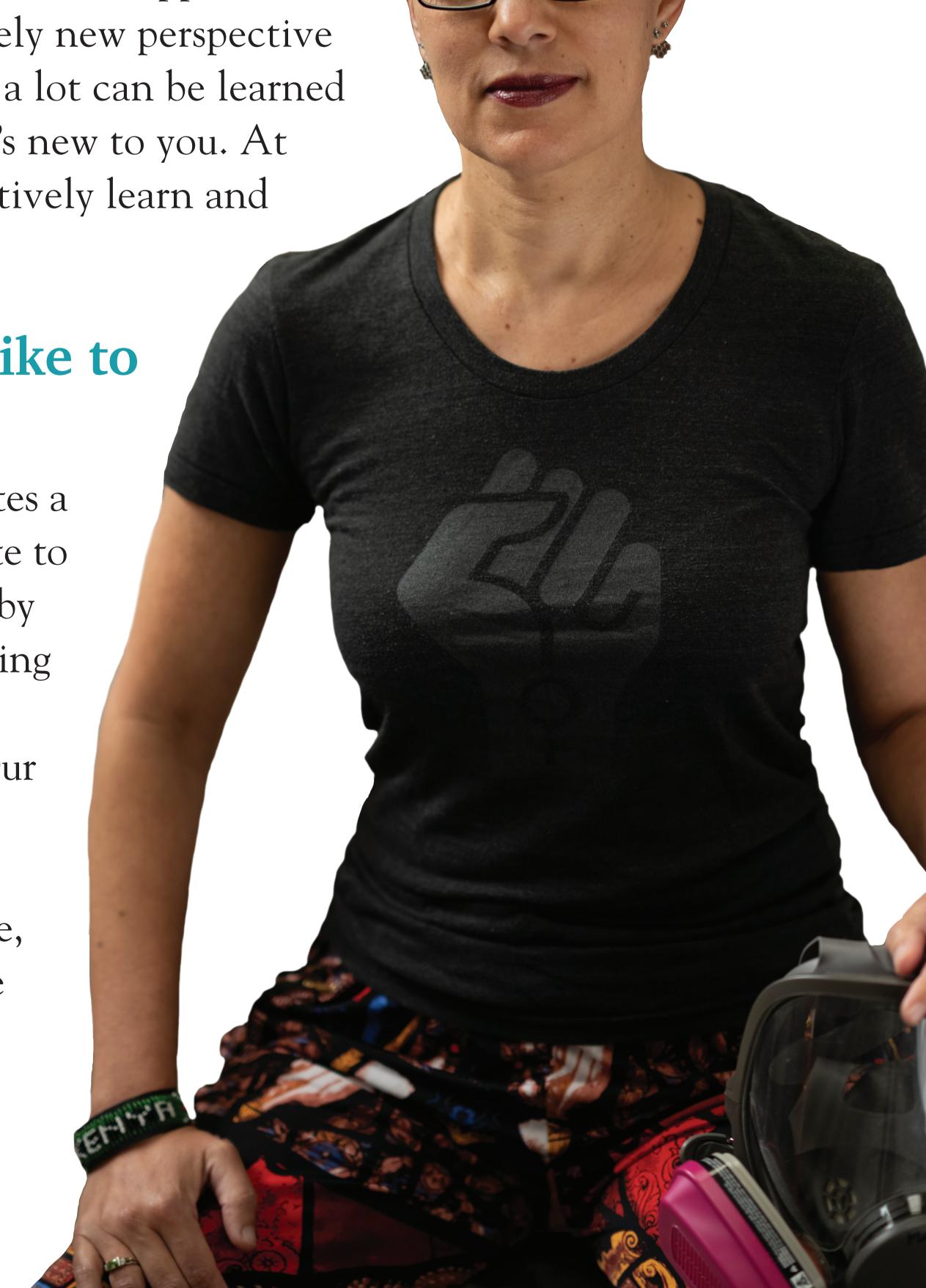
I learned that sometimes you can't convince a potential client that your company is the best choice for the job if they can't see past the fact that it's run by a Black woman. The same goes for traditional access to capital. I no longer expend an exorbitant amount of time trying to change someone's mind when there are other clients and funders who immediately see value in Nzilani's commitment to safety, fun and excellence in everything we do. It's important to preserve your integrity and align yourself with allies.

How would you encourage young people to become preservationists?

Be curious, ask questions and know your worth. Just because someone has been in the profession longer than you doesn't mean they have all the answers. You may come with a different approach that will advance a technique or propose an entirely new perspective through your life experience. Speak up. Likewise, a lot can be learned from observation before embarking on a task that's new to you. At Nzilani, attention to detail and the ability to positively learn and grow from your mistakes are keys to success.

Looking forward, how would you like to see the field change?

Having a narrow vision of who is qualified eliminates a wide swath of skilled people who want to contribute to the world of preservation and may be limited only by lack of opportunity. Valuing different ways of learning paired with variable skill sets will expand the possibilities of who can be part of our workforce. Our field includes: art history, research, math, drawing, working with your hands, troubleshooting and building things. You can learn these skills at college, an internship, or on the job. At Nzilani, we say the only thing that can't be taught is being inquisitive.



What project are you most proud of?

Recently we conserved a 118-yearold, ten-foot inverted stained glass dome. It involved working with engineers, architectural metalsmiths, fine woodworkers, and the Nzilani team. From the get-go we knew it was going to be challenging because we were working against gravity. The dome was so dirty that you could barely see any of the color underneath, but there were tiny flashes of glass jewels peeking through. The first day I laid eyes on it, I was convinced Nzilani HAD to do the job. We completely rebuilt all twelve panels on custom-built, wooden convex and concave "cradles". With the help of the metalsmiths, we designed an



Photo credit: Nzilani Glass Conservation

interlocking, complex curved steel bar grid to engage with the original frame to support the panels in place. The end result is this jewel of a piece in the ceiling with multi-colored and beveled glass. The colors transmitted on the floor through the glass add an ethereal quality to the space. It's wonderful to bring it back to life for another generation and we were recognized with a California Preservation Foundation Award for our efforts.

What is next for you?

As Nzilani has grown, I've made a conscious effort to incorporate an element of community engagement – in health and safety, plus outreach. We strive to make our profession more equitable by making ourselves more accessible to previously underserved people and projects. Continuing to align myself and Nzilani with others to amplify this vision should bring more exciting opportunities our way. For example, this summer I plan to work as the Preservation Expert with HOPE (Hands-On Preservation Experience – an offshoot of the National Trust for Historic Preservation) with an all women crew on a window restoration project in Oregon.

BRITTANY V. LAVELLE TULLA

BVL Historic Preservation Research

Brittany Lavelle Tulla is drawn to stories—to those of buildings, of objects, of people, of communities. She created her company, BVL Historic Preservation Research, out of her passion for and interest in the stories of every-day Americans as discovered through the study of historic architecture. Headquartered in Charleston, SC, Lavelle Tulla works with communities, organizations, developers, architects and private homeowners to honor the stories embedded in America's buildings and to advocate for their protection through the use and preservation of those buildings.



What does it take to start your own preservation-related business/organization?

A lot of passion and networking! The key is to meet as many people as possible, to expose your passion, intelligence, professionalism, and eagerness to as many people as you can in the preservation field. If you are passionate about preservation and dedicated to staying involved, even if that means volunteering for a non-profit/historic site or attending lectures in your hometown while you're getting your business off the ground, you will set an incredible foundation for your business that will carry you through those first few years of establishment.

What types of challenges have you faced in your work?

It is always difficult to research a building for a client who is ultimately going to demolish it. It is as if I am writing an obituary and although I am honored to be the building's last voice, it is absolutely heartbreaking because all the research in the world won't save it.

How would you encourage young people to become preservationists?

I think understanding the history of one's hometown and family is not only exciting, but essential. In my experience teaching at the College of Charleston, it is not until young people understand the history of their hometown through the buildings they pass or use every day that it truly clicks for them. Studying national history through textbooks only goes so far — it is not until they begin to apply that history to themselves, especially through family genealogy, that it begins to make a difference. Everyone comes from someone who comes from someone who all had journeys. What is your story?

Looking forward, how would you like to see the field change?

We are moving towards a more holistic view of history and to me, that is everything. We need to be telling more stories

of the average American: the unnamed citizen, the enslaved person, the woman, the immigrant - those who have been overlooked in history books for way too long. I am excited to see what the future holds for preservation because that time is NOW.

What project are you most proud of?

The Mosquito Beach
Historic District is
one of the projects I
am most proud of. It
was a project led by
the citizens of the Sol
Legare Settlement
Community in James



Island, SC to protect their historic main commercial corridor from impending development. The story my firm and I uncovered was one I will never forget, as is the memory of seeing the faces of the Sol Legare citizens in the crowd as I presented the Historic District nomination to the SC State Historic Preservation Office. They were so proud of their history and so thankful for a method to protect their community's main artery. It was an honor to be the head consultant on that project.

What is next for you?

I am working on several new exciting projects with my firm, BVL Historic Preservation Research, including National Register nominations for a postbellum Black farming community and an early 20th-century, Jewish-owned department store, house histories, historic restorations, etc.—all which will highlight the stories of even more Americans. I also intend to begin my journey towards completing a doctorate in history and have a few book proposals on my desk that I look forward to pursuing this year — one of which involves my family's history recent discovery of dozens of letters my 18-year-old great uncle wrote while at training camp and at the front during World War II before he was fatally shot in France.

ISABEL THORNTON Restoration Housing

Isabel Thornton, of Roanoke, VA, is an historic preservationist who is dedicated to urban planning and affordable housing. After spending time in both New York and Southern California, Thornton returned to her hometown of Roanoke to create positive development in historic neighborhoods. Her company, Restoration Housing, has a dual mission of restoring houses and providing affordable housing to people that need it. Of her work, Isabel says, "The rehab projects that our organization undertakes are tangible representations of the ideals that I have for all cities—that they may honor their historic built infrastructure and reinvest in underserved neighborhoods in a way that brings honor and dignity to its inhabitants."

How would you encourage young people to become preservationists?

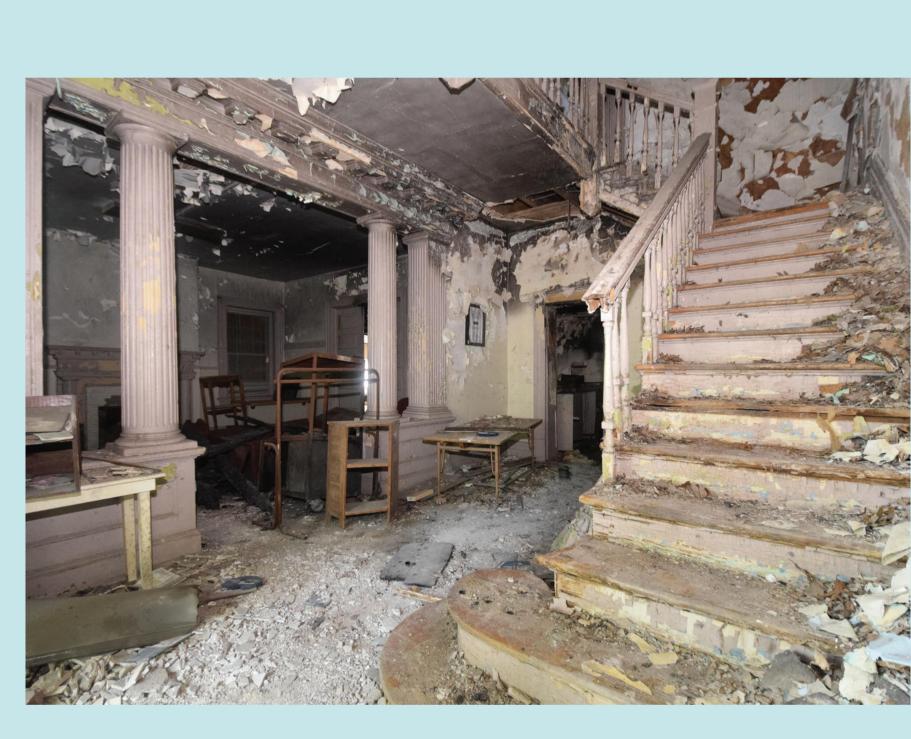
I would encourage them to join a local preservationist group if their city or town has one. Many do, and they are always looking for more young people to get involved. I would also encourage them to look for internships with developers who specialize in rehabs, architects, contractors, or historians. There are so many different avenues one could take to pursue the field of preservation. Through my internships, I was able to find the avenue that fit my personality best.

What are some of the challenges that the preservation field is facing?

There seem to be two main challenges from my perspective. First of all, there is a challenge with diversity. Many preservationist groups consist of individuals who are connected to their heritage and history, but that history isn't always broad enough to represent all aspects of the city or state that said preservation group is a part of. I would love to see more cross pollination between historians and neighborhood groups, more young people, more people interested in social justice. The second challenge to me is similarly connected to social justice. In my work, I've seen that much of the need for our organization's preservation work stems from lack of investment in neighborhoods that have been systematically devalued. There is so much work to be done to reinvest in these neighborhoods, and that's precisely what preservation is — a tool for reinvestment. In the past, it has largely been seen as a tool to prevent development or to idolize or romanticize the past. But I would argue that preservation can be so much more if used as a catalyst for reinvestment and a voice for underserved or marginalized communities.

What project are you most proud of?

I am most proud of the rehab of Villa Heights, which our organization completed in late 2019. Villa Heights is one of the oldest homes in Roanoke, built in 1820, and originally would have sat on a 3,000 acre tract of land.



Villa Heights
entryway before
restoration



Villa Heights
entryway after
restoration

It is a big, bold, blue antebellum mansion that sits on a hill surrounded by two hundred year old oak trees. It's quite remarkable. When we took the project on, it had been vacant for almost ten years and had suffered from a fire and an exposed hole in the roof. I had to get the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which was very difficult but rewarding. Then we had to secure additional grants from the city and Historic Tax Credits. Once the year-long rehab was complete, we leased it to a nonprofit that in turn actually subleases it to several other nonprofits, so it's a wonderful coworking space for area nonprofits now. It's full of light and has a beautiful energy.

What does it take to start your own preservation-related business/ organization?

I created this business because I saw a strong need in Roanoke for reinvestment in Roanoke's historic neighborhoods coupled with substandard affordable housing throughout the city. For a preservation-related business to do well, I would say that there has to be a need within the community that you are responding to in order for your business to gain traction and serve local residents. I have never believed in preservation just for the sake of preservation, such as moth-balling a beautiful old home so that it isn't torn down. If the building can serve a broader good by responding to its surrounding neighborhood's needs, then it stands a much better chance of remaining occupied and well-maintained for years to come. There always has to be relevance and use, and, of course, as a developer I would say that there always has to be a sound business model to ensure that the rehab and operational expenses are covered.

What is next for you?

We just finished the rehab of a circa 1893 Queen Anne home in the Southeast neighborhood of Roanoke, and it is now serving as four rental units for formerly homeless individuals. We're in the process of leasing the last two units and getting everyone moved in. We're also starting two more projects in the same neighborhood. All of them will be affordable rental housing once complete and all of them are over a hundred years old and are in states of extreme disrepair. This work never gets old, but I will warn that the stress of owning vacant buildings (as they can sometimes stay vacant for over a year while we perform due diligence) can be quite taxing.

LINDSAY JONES Blind Eye Restoration

As the owner and CEO of Blind Eye Restoration, Lindsay Jones has made a business out of her passion for old buildings and public art. With more than 15 years of experience in the construction industry, an MS in Historic Preservation, and professional roles spanning the country, she has created her dream contracting company in Ohio. Jones has been featured as an up and coming restoration professional in Preservation Magazine, been awarded contracts for art restoration with the City of Columbus and The Columbus Art Museum, and regularly lectures and gives hands-on workshops for local homeowners, trades training programs, and high school and college level students. Her business goals include encouraging more women to work in the trades, educating more people about preservation and the inherently "green" aspects of maintaining historic buildings, and teaching homeowners how to work on their own homes to keep more of those historic homes out of landfills.



What types of challenges have you faced in your work?

What we do crosses so many fields. I've had a great deal of support for my company, but I've run into issues with being a young woman in business, a young woman in construction, a contractor in an academic field, a contractor in a design field, and so forth. I have to remind myself that when I feel like I've pushed a boundary, it's not because I don't belong there. It's about making room for myself and my peers and women who will come after me so that we can more effectively do our work and be recognized for it.

What are some of the challenges that the preservation field is facing?

Issues that we are facing everyday in the hands-on preservation realm include: the undermining of the experience of tradespeople by the use of the lowest bidder system; the mindless waste culture of the new construction materials industry and HGTV houseflipping popularity for the

purpose of pure profit; the "Green Building" industry's lack of support for preservation and old building maintenance; the lack of effort in diversifying demographics within the trades; lack of formal education opportunities for the historic trades; new construction material companies having the money to advertise falsities about old buildings to sell their products and small historic tradespeople being unable to compete to get their message out on the same scale. I could go on!

"I had one client tell us she loves using [Blind Eye] because she likes her kids to see women doing this work and showing them that gender isn't a barrier."

Looking forward, how would you like to see the field change?

First, we need to have more women and people of color working in the trades. This means we need to increase education and career awareness in schools by creating more curricula for kids and teenagers, like the traditional shop class that introduces them to these skills early on. We can also increase awareness of historic spaces in our communities through grade school community history classes. I'd also love to see more schools advocating for the trades and apprenticeships as a viable career option rather than only

focusing on advanced degrees. Trades jobs are also some of the best paid positions out there and don't require advanced degrees or student loans.

What is next for you?

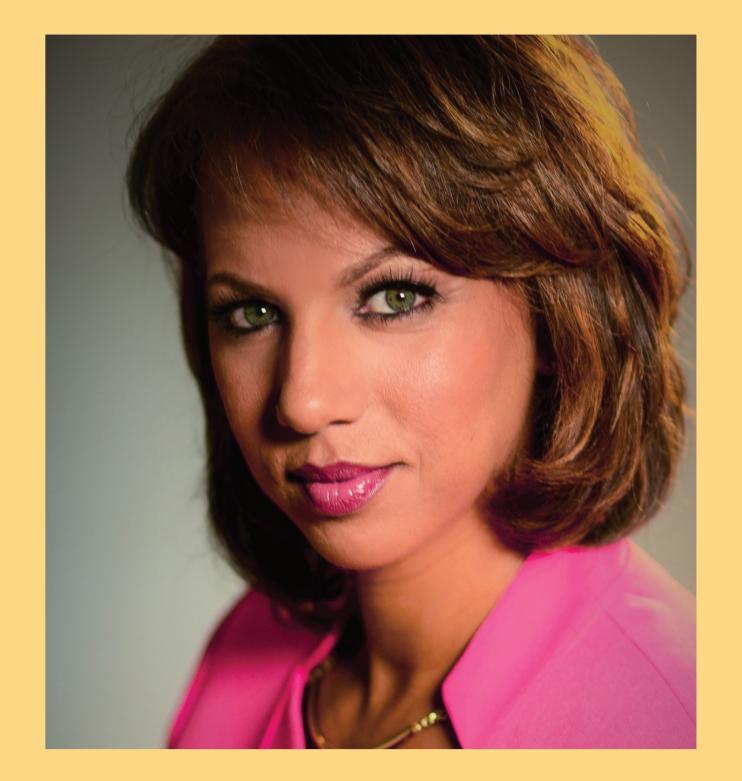
We're still a small operation, but long term I would like to add a trades training/apprenticeship aspect to my company. My crew is largely all women solely because they saw me and felt comfortable coming to me to ask for a

job on my crew. I feel a responsibility to continue to hold that space for more people, even when I am not necessarily in a place to employ everyone. I've found working in this industry that the most successful trades companies are the ones that support one another and help others foster new companies. The larger our industry gets and the more hands there are to help fix, the more work there will be for all of us in the future. Maintenance is cyclical, never one and done. There's room for everyone.

LISA FAGER

Mt. Zion - Female Union Band Society Cemeteries

Lisa Fager is a self-described student of history and nontraditional preservationist. For nearly 20 years, she has worked to preserve and protect Black communities by reflecting on the past and using her voice and actions to create meaningful change. Today, Fager is the Executive Director of the Mt. Zion - Female Union Band Historic Memorial Park, Inc. (Mt. Zion - Female Union Band Society Cemeteries).



The Mt. Zion - Female Union Band Society Cemeteries are two historic Black cemeteries with no distinct boundary markers located in the Georgetown neighborhood of Washington, D.C. The Montgomery Street Methodist Church (now Dumbarton UMC) established the "Old Methodist Burying Ground" in 1808 for its white and black parishioners, free and enslaved. In 1816, more than 100 African Americans left the church to form Mount Zion United Methodist Church, the first black church in Washington, DC, and obtained a long-term lease for the cemetery. Later in 1842, a mutual aid society of free black women, the Female Union Band Society (FUBS), bought adjacent land to bury their members. Whites started abandoning the Old Methodist Burying Ground in 1849 after Oak Hill Cemetery opened. Later, the Mount Zion-FUBS property fell into disrepair after burials ceased in 1950. In the mid-1970s, developers were prevented from obtaining the property through the efforts of local activists. The cemeteries are now listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a UNESCO Slave Route Project Site of Memory (the cemeteries were a place a refuge along the Underground Railroad). Today, Fager, descendants, students, and community members work to preserve the cemeteries and uncover the stories of the people who are buried there.

How would you encourage young people to become preservationists?

I believe young people bring innocence and energy to preservation. There is an enthusiasm for learning about history, discovering techniques to research, and determining how the past affects the present. Embrace that enthusiasm. The use of technology provides innovative ways to share the knowledge creatively or through multiple platforms, and young people are ideally situated to take advantage of advances in technology.

What types of challenges have you faced in your work?

Preserving history is a critical component to achieve our objective of racial reckoning to accept facts and understand impacts. While the work may be challenging, highlighting documentation helps to educate and exhibit how people lived, worked, and interacted in society.

What project are you most proud of?

My focus as a consultant to national civil rights organizations, such as the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, has been on projects that brought resources and access to historically underserved Black communities. I've been concerned with the absence of power and false narratives in the media. My intent is to seek truth and promote it to raise awareness to uplift communities of color to battle against false narratives and stereotypes. While I find it difficult to single out one project, my authentic desire to put forth the effort to support truthtelling is what makes me most proud.

What is next for you?

The Mt Zion - Female Union Band Society
Cemeteries is the project that has my attention.
My personal passion is to ensure that our history
is told accurately, with particular emphasis
on the life (and death) of Black people in
Georgetown and how their presence added to
our culture and fueled the growth of the city and
country. I believe it is important to preserve the
land, restore the grave markers, research and
rediscover their contributions, and tell their
stories to provide the proper context for how our
society can move forward to heal our country
and support the aspiration of fair and equal
treatment for all.

MERANDA ROBERTS

Meranda Roberts, who is an enrolled member of the Yerington Paiute Tribe and Mexican-American, entered the museum field a decade ago with the goal of challenging the way cultural institutions represent Indigenous communities. Through her work as a researcher, curator, and scholar, Roberts strives to recapture the beauty that colonialism attempted to tear away from Indigenous people and works to ensure that Indigenous people are properly understood. By correcting narratives, reconnecting Native peoples to museum collections, and creating spaces of healing, Roberts is preserving the cultural and ancestral heritage of Indigenous communities for future generations.



What types of challenges have you faced in your work?

Most of the challenges I face in my work are institutional, meaning that the structures that benefit the majority of my white colleagues do little to support me. For example, as an Indigenous woman, I place my cultural understandings/ teachings at the center of what I do. Also, the way that I identify with a collection or with history is probably different from how those who are not Indigenous would. Institutions do very little to try to bridge these gaps or educate their non-Indigenous staff on the perspectives Indigenous people bring to the workplace. I believe this is because doing so would mean having to reflect on how an institution maintains white supremacy culture within its organization. It would also mean having to find tangible solutions to race-based problems, which many spaces like to ignore until it is too late. However, this purposeful ignorance produces the same type of violence that settlers imposed on Indigenous people. I know this because in my work I have been labeled as a troublemaker or bully for not falling in line with the mission of a museum, for challenging the status quo when it comes to meaningful collaboration with Indigenous people, and for speaking up against outdated and discriminatory practices. My worldviews have been questioned, and I have often had to experience microaggressions from white colleagues and their allies.

How would you encourage young people to become preservationists?

I honestly think that this work all stems from the passion or interests that one has about their families or heritage. History always seems like it does not have a direct impact on our lives, but once you begin to explore how events affected those around you, you begin to better understand your place in the world. You also begin to understand why

the world is the way it is and how you could attempt to implement change.

To BIPOC, and those who identify as queer, transgender, or non-conforming, this work requires thick skin. These spaces were not created with us, or our needs, in mind. Therefore, we have to constantly fight for adequate representation. Our histories reveal the social fabric of our current society, and that reality scares a lot of people. But our ancestors paved the way for us to be here, and we are paving the way for our futures. Do this work with a good heart and open mind. Be willing to work with people from all walks of life and make space for others. Always remain humble and patient. Things change slowly, but they still change.

Looking forward, how would you like to see the field change?

This field needs to be much more accessible. It also needs to be more accommodating to the needs of BIPOC and Queer community members. I believe this starts when those working in this field acknowledge their own privileges and collaborate with communities in finding solutions that best serve all of those involved.

What project are you most proud of?

I am most proud of being the co-curator of *Apsáalooke* Women and Warriors at the Field Museum. I was a part of something that meant so much to the community and was able to connect descendants with items their family members created. I would say that the creation of this exhibition was one of the most humbling experiences of my life and has influenced the way I not only approach my work, but how I carry myself in the world.

SARAH MARSOM

Sarah Marsom's work as a heritage resource consultant is rooted in empowering the next generation of community advocates and increasing representation of lesser known histories. With 10+ years of experience working in the cultural resources field, Sarah specializes in education and outreach strategies in addition to strategic planning. In 2018, Sarah was recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as the recipient of the American Express Aspire Award during the 2018 National Preservation Awards and as an honoree of the inaugural 40 Under 40: People Saving Place's list. The National Council on Public History recognized her projects-Crafting Herstory and Dismantle Preservation with an honorable mention for Excellence in Consulting as a part of the 2021 Public History Awards.



Photo credit: Stephen Newport



Photo credit: Columbus Area Arts Council, I.M. Pei workshop

What are some of the challenges that the preservation field is facing?

In order for the movement to be equitable, it cannot continue to operate within a vacuum. This means the preservation field needs to recognize that the work being done is inherently political - the places we choose to preserve, the intangible histories we document, and the stories that are told; all of these aspects of the preservation movement are inherently tied to the tradition of excluding marginalized populations. Organizations fear loss of funding, donors, etc. if they take a stance, but in reality, by not being vocal advocates for justice/equity and against processes that have historically/currently are harming communities or destroying history they are ultimately doing themselves and the field a disservice. The preservation field is preventing itself from true equity and an ability to truly have a value for all, thus stymying its ability to be relevant and supported by the many vs the few.

What is next for you?

Building on the successful #DismantlePreservation
Virtual Unconference hosted in July 2020, and the
#DismantlePreservation: (un)Official 40 Under 40 list,
I look forward to continuing to find ways to empower

emerging professionals and cultivating a platform to elevate conversations on how the preservation movement can evolve. In July 2021, I'll be hosting a second #DismantlePreservation Virtual Unconference that will feature primarily students or recent graduates who are researching/working in cultural resources in a wide range of ways.

The #DismantlePreservation initiatives will continue to be intertwined with my advocacy efforts to help preservation practitioners develop labor equity to ensure people want to enter the field, grow as practitioners, and have fulfilling careers. In 2020, those efforts meant advocating for people to reconsider the field's hiring process with a specific emphasis on labor equity/salary transparency. To date, four job boards and one virtual preservation community space have implemented policies that require compensation information in order for job listings to be shared. And in 2021, I'm researching how internships operate to better develop strategies to help support and cultivate emerging professionals.

Check out the exhibit in person to see the object displayed here!

FIRST CO-CHAIRS OF LATINOS IN HERITAGE CONSERVATION, FOUNDED IN 2014

Desiree Aranda

Desiree Aranda entered the field of heritage conservation quite naturally thanks to both her family and her interests. Her mother is a Chicana artist whose work centers on cultural identity, lineage, and social justice, and her grandparents told stories about the Mexican-American neighborhoods where they lived as children. The stories that Aranda heard included the difficult recounting of how her grandmother's barrio, or neighborhood, in Tempe, Arizona was subjected to redevelopment that broke up and displaced her tight-knit Mexican community. An independent heritage conservation consultant, Aranda works with communities to document and preserve historic sites as a form of social justice and intergenerational healing.



Laura Dominguez

Laura Dominguez was introduced to social and cultural preservation by observing the women of her family as they shared photographs, documents, stories, and the general historical knowledge that reflected their heritage. This early foundation solidified her preservation passion and led her to an education and career in heritage conservation. As an advocate, scholar, and practitioner, Dominguez explores how communities of color challenge historical narratives and use their heritage to heal from oppression.



Sarah Zenaida Gould

Sarah Zenaida Gould works to abolish gatekeepers so that history can be more accessible to the public and representative of underserved communities. To do this, she fuses her role as a public historian and museum curator with a passion for connecting community knowledge with institutional knowledge and increasing equitable application of preservation policy in communities of color. Ultimately, Gould's work links heritage conservation and historic preservation to social justice issues like housing, access to quality health care and education, and protection of the environment.



What does it take to start your own preservation-related business/organization?

The two most important ingredients needed to create a preservation-related organization are identified need(s) and similarly-minded people willing to work together to address the need(s). Latinos in Heritage Conservation (LHC) formed to address the lack of Latinx mentors in the historic preservation profession as well as a desire for Latinx practitioners and advocates to provide mutual support, exchange ideas, and amplify local advocacy issues and projects to the national level. We experienced and witnessed situations in which existing Latinx community organizations and practitioners were often working to preserve our history and heritage sites in isolation or silos.

By leveraging our existing networks, we brought together a small interest group that explored the possibilities of establishing a national network or organization of some kind. Our small interest group then branched out to others, first during the 2014 PastForward conference in Savannah, GA, and six months later at our own national summit held in Tucson, Arizona. It was during our first national gathering in 2015 that we decided to become a nonprofit organization

Check out the exhibit in person to see the object displayed here!

and committed to hosting more national convenings.

As we developed, we asked ourselves critical questions like: who was out there doing the work? What existing models can inform our own structure? How might a national network interact with other national entities such as federal agencies and other NGOs? What would it take for us to sustain a national network or organization? We also

discussed collaborative processes: what does the "table" look like, and who needs to have a seat at it? What are our shared values, visions, goals, objectives, etc.? Our strengths and weaknesses? Structural barriers and other obstacles? Opportunities? Allies? How do we come together and co-create? And how might we evolve over time?

We've assembled a leadership body that represents a variety of professions and communities from multiple regions of the country, but still have a long way to go to become what we aspire to be: a national organization that reflects a diversity of Latinx experiences and communities. In working towards this goal, we continue to ask ourselves, how do we grow sustainably, hold ourselves accountable, and keep pushing forward?

What are some of the challenges that the preservation field is facing?

The preservation field is reckoning with white supremacy in all its forms. Historic preservation too often perpetuates settler colonial violence, imaginations, and interpretations of the past. For example, preservation has glorified elite histories and ignored the labor (often bonded and racialized labor) that produced capital and architecture. The preservation profession and movement needs to address this and other historical erasures of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC).

For decades, local, state, and federal governments and the real estate industry have targeted BIPOC communities and neighborhoods for redevelopment. Historically, those efforts resulted in widespread displacement and erasure—historic, cultural, and in the built environment. This erasure continues today, in some cases through physical redevelopment efforts and in others through gentrification or economic displacement. These forces, along with the growing inaccessibility of affordable housing and commercial spaces, property ownership, and capital, will continue to be major hurdles for BIPOC communities seeking to sustain cultural institutions, businesses, and heritage sites. What are the consequences of keeping historic buildings, but losing longtime residents?

Climate justice is another growing concern as our built heritage, arts and culture, foodways, and other forms of living history are at risk due to the threats of climate change. We know that climate change disproportionately impacts low income and BIPOC communities. Whose heritage will be most at risk and how will we (as a field) center their survival?

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about economic devastation to BIPOC communities, which will make any effort to preserve our heritage more challenging. In addition to economic hardships, we have witnessed the loss of longtime practitioners and keepers of cultural knowledge.

What is next for you?

LHC's national gathering, held every two years, brings together Latinx practitioners and advocates from across the country who are actively engaged or interested in preserving Latinx heritage. This September, LHC will hold Congreso 2021, during which we will celebrate and reflect on the 10-year anniversary of the launching of the National Park Service's *American Latino Theme Study*. In addition to continuing LHC's signature biennial event, we are excited to embark upon our second major initiative: the Abuela's Project.

The Abuela's Project is a multi-year digital preservation initiative designed to collect, curate, and amplify stories about places that matter to Latinx communities in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. It will weave together the educational, advocacy, and outreach strands of LHC's mission. We will invite the public to submit mappable content—including oral and written testimonies, photographs, artwork, etc.—elated to Latinx history and places. While still in the early stages of development, the Abuela's Project represents our first major effort to engage with Latinx communities in a significant and sustained way.

We see the Abuela's Project as a means of building upon the myriad efforts to identify, document, and preserve Latinx heritage that have taken place over the last decade and beyond. It will converse with academic and technical studies of Latinx heritage, while elevating the everyday voices that bring these resources to life, that care for and maintain them, and that are vested in their futures.

Through the Abuela's Project, LHC will document the social, cultural, and economic connections our communities forge through historic places and cultural assets. We will reimagine the meaning and purpose of historic registries, and question existing gatekeepers, evaluation criteria, and "ownership" of information. We will explore new interpretive possibilities and confront what it means to form and nurture attachments to places and communities in digital spaces, particularly now when the pandemic has changed the meaning of "the local." The Abuela's Project will begin to ask, does the future include "alternative" or "grassroots" registries?