

Join Us in Welcoming Alejandro E. Torres, Loisaida's New Director

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Loisaida Inc. is off to a strong start in 2020 with the appointment of Alejandro Epifanio Torres as the organization's new Director.

Torres, a resident of the Lower East Side and integral part of the Loisaida team for six years, builds on his past achievements at the Loisaida Inc. Culture and Arts Center with a continued commitment to Loisaida's rich legacy and to guide this historic organization with renewed vigor well into the future. Most recently Alejandro established the long-awaited **Media Arts and Technology/Production Facility** and Digital Learning Lab, which has placed the organization in a key pivotal position to have an even greater impact on the community and the residents who call the Lower East Side their home.

Alejandro's expertise over a more than ten-year career as a cultural worker, as well as his deep commitment to civic engagement, the preservation of our Puerto Rican culture, arts, creativity, and issues of social justice, are embodied in his work ethic. His grass-roots work experience as a community organizer and visual artist in the Lower East Side, East Harlem, and South Bronx communities brings a unique blend of talent, skills and knowledge particular to those whose actions speak louder than words. His *'hands-on --- sleeves rolled-up'* approach to getting things done is the hallmark of his accomplishments in Loisaida. Alejandro worked as a Teaching Artist and Program Coordinator at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and apprenticed under artist Tamiko Thiel on AR technology as a leading artist of the **Mi Querido Barrio Project** through the Caribbean Cultural Center and African Diaspora Institute.

For six years Alejandro managed Loisaida, Inc. IT, Media, Marketing, Technology Programming and Operations at the new center facility. As the co-producer of the historic annual **Loisaida Festival**, Alejandro provided daily leadership and energy, to this important event that now attracts more than 28,000. To add to its success, this past year, Alejandro created the first ever **Loisaida Basketball Tournament**, that positively engaged over 400 LES youth and their families, as a part of the Loisaida Festival's key intergenerational activities.

Alejandro's interdisciplinary expertise, creative approach to media production, and his problem solving skills, have been a catalyst for many of the organization's successful efforts, such as the **Loisaida Artistic Residency Program**, acclaimed **Loisaida Exhibitions** -- various featured in the New York Times, and most recently, the **Loisaida Digital Learning Lab**, the organization's new multimedia technology and audio-visual arts production Hub, have paved the way for his well-deserved ascension. Loisaida, Inc. has been an affiliate of the Acacia Network since 2012 and has grown significantly with its support and the opening of its new Loisaida, Inc. Community Center.

Upon the recent departure of former Director, Libertad Guerra, Raul Russi, Acacia Network CEO, soon thereafter announced the appointment of Alejandro Epifanio Torres as the new Loisaida Inc. Director stating, ***"We are extremely proud to have Alejandro Torres ascend to the position of Director, where he will assume a significant leadership role in this community to ensure success for its brilliant emerging change makers, artist citizens, youth, and cultural workers in this new age of information technology, and changing workforce demands. We congratulate Alejandro as he accepts this new challenge. He has my full support and that of the Acacia Network, it's Chief Administrative Officer, Maria del Carmen Arroyo, and Angel Santini, Vice President of Special Projects, who will work closely with him to implement Loisaida's expanded vision in 2020 and beyond."*** concluded Mr. Russi.

"I am honored to have the opportunity to lead Loisaida Inc., a truly iconic institution with a mission to both empower youth and all residents to realize their full potential as creators in this digital age, and acknowledge, celebrate, and integrate the rich traditions, arts, and culture of its Puerto Rican founders," said Alejandro adding, *"I look forward to furthering our mission and to be inclusive of the diversity of this neighborhood through a cross-cultural disciplinary approach to civic engagement at the intersection of technology, media, and invention that champions the arts and culture as key to social and economic development."* Alejandro was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Alejandro earned his BFA (bachelor's degree in fine arts) in 2006 with a concentration in Painting, Sculpture, and Printmaking from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. He and his wife, are the parents of a four-year old son attending LES's **P.S. 63**, where Alejandro volunteers as a parent member of the STEM, Arts and Special Events Committees.