



## 2025 Conference Report

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## Conference Overview

Organized by Claudia Wilburn, SGCI President 2023-2025

The 2025 SGCI conference, *Puertograbando*, was successful and opened the organization to a new era that emphasizes the International in SGCI. Despite Puerto Rico's status as a US territory—a fact we had to remind visiting members and our shipping partners of from time to time—the Caribbean location, its colonial history, its rich and welcoming culture, and the island's place in the broader Hispanic diaspora gave the conference a global perspective we are excited to nurture. We welcomed a smaller, but excited and engaged cohort of members from around the world, and a large group of puertorriqueño artists who were pleased to welcome the conference in return and show off the island's outstanding print culture. This report is to serve as a guide for future conferences and is largely for internal use for future steering committees and board members.

We are so grateful to the people, institutions, and municipality of San Juan for their buy-in to the conference and their curiosity in what SGCI is about. From the opening reception Wednesday night it was clear the city and the steering committee was fully committed to making a lasting impression on the global print community. The steering committee should be very proud of their hard work. The conference attendees were largely very happy with their experience and inspired by the outstanding creativity, craft, and camaraderie of the local print culture.

We learned much from the beautiful culture, island, and people. The extraordinary artwork and the rich history of printmaking in Puerto Rico absolutely blew us away. We did our best to not take the partnership, patience, and trust of the community for granted.

Challenges that the 2020/2025 SGCI faced with the San Juan conference were daunting. A five year layover from the initial Puertografico conference meant we had a post-pandemic affected membership less able or ready to travel, while still being locked into contracts that counted on the more robust conference attendance; this is in reference to the attrition paid in 2024 for the Providence hotel being on the old contract. See that report for more details.

After the Madison Conference In 2022, the SGCI Board determined that it would be best to host the San Juan Conference in April 2025. In 2023, we hosted a hybrid conference to engage membership since we did not have the time to develop strong programming for a 2023 in person conference. It should also be noted that after the cancellation of the Puertografico conference in 2020, the board felt that because of the expectations that had built in the membership for a Puerto Rico SGCI conference, that SGCI needed to follow through with the commitment. The original planning for the 2020 conference was done by the 2018 board with significant paid help from Nydia Fernández Toledo and Ana Nicholson.

In 2023 Joseph Velasquez and Mike Smoot went to PR to lay the groundwork and view hotels in the area. The plan was to pay Nydia for her organizational services as was done for the 2020 conference. She received \$20,000 for her work done in 2019/2020 and the plan was to pay her another \$20,000 for work to be done in 2024-2025. Six months after the first trip for planning the new conference, Nydia requested an increase for her services to \$40,000 for her work doing administrative and planning communication for the conference. SGCI did not have that additional funding. We pivoted, Joseph had several other printmaking connections and suggested we organize a steering committee on the ground.

This led us to largely start from scratch with a conference rebrand (PuertoGrabando) and fresh local steering committee and strike a new balance with institutional buy-in around the city. Miraculously, the steering committee was led by Fraíxa Rodríguez Albizu and Marcos De Jesús Carrión, who had only

attended their first conference in Providence, with invitation from the SGCI board. This let them get firsthand experience with an SGCI conference. As no one on the Providence steering committee had been to an SGCI conference, we wanted to make sure there was continuity.

Many members of the committee were faculty or emeritus at Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Diseño de Puerto Rico (EAPD), La Liga de Estudiantes de Arte de San Juan (La Liga), and University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras (UPRRP) which were our institutional partners. Thank you to Migdalia Umpierre, Haydee Landing Gordon, Cresenciano Sotomayor, Mariceliz Pagán Gómez, Kristal Juan Rovira, Rafael Hernandez Vargas, Sebastián Román Soto, and Steven Rivera López for your integral help, often behind the scenes during the conference.

Gretchen Schermerhorn stepped down as Executive Director in October 2024, leaving a gap in administrative duties. Responsibilities to monitor emails etc. were divided among Board members, though much of the load fell to Claudia and Susan Czechowski, SGCI Treasurer. Cathy Savage stepped in to assist with all things Membership Works and registration related as a paid contractor. In February, Blake Sanders was hired as a part time admin to aid in conference correspondence and coordination, website build out and day to day membership work.

The roles and responsibilities of the Board and Steering Committee are listed within this document under the various headlines, those individuals have been asked to contribute to the details included in this document.

This report should serve as a source of institutional knowledge and should provide information for future conference planning post Covid. Detailed narrative related to complications in the planning and execution of the conference is outlined in the sections below as not to be overly redundant. One notable change from the 2020 conference plan is that UPRRP took a smaller role in conference events under the new island steering committee leadership, shifting the bulk of conference programming to the Caribe Hilton and the area surrounding EAPD in Old San Juan. The Steering Committee was a huge help in finding locations for exhibitions and demonstrations, more details about locations are included in sections below.

Additionally, the political climate in the US affected conference attendance and planning elements. When Donald Trump took office in Jan 2024, there was much fear about immigration issues and many did not attend because of the fear of travel. We do not have an actual count on the numbers but believe it could have been close to 100 potential attendees.



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## Theme

### **Puertograbando**

*The following text was included in the program and on the website to promote the conference:*

Set against the captivating backdrop of San Juan, Puerto Rico, we announce an inclusive conference experience for our members and Caribbean printmakers. In addition to the hallmark features that define SGCI conferences—exhibits, panels, and demonstrations—San Juan, Puerto Rico offers an expanded array of delights, including its stunning landscape and captivating Caribbean printmaking demonstrations and exhibitions. Our new vision is to delve into and appreciate the vibrant history of Printmaking in the Caribbean through bilingual demonstrations and panel discussions in English and Spanish.

Embracing inclusivity, we intend to extend invitations to local Puerto Rican artisans to participate in our vendor fair, enhancing the event with an extraordinary art market. With PuertoGrabando, we aim to infuse SGCI with an elevated international essence. Join us on this exhilarating journey as we collectively spread the ink within the global spirit of SGCI. We eagerly await your arrival!

*In most Hispanic Cultures the word printmaking translates into grabado, a word whose literal translation means relief, etching, and engraving (also means recording, the more you know) all in one. A more accurate translation would be “something that physically affects the surface of something else.” This word defines the discipline of traditional printmaking, and the artist who proudly learns it then earns the title of “grabador”. In Spanish, when we end nouns with -ando/-endo, you can transform them into a present continuous verb. For example: trabajar (to work) would become trabajando (working). Therefore, “Grabando” becomes the activity of being currently engaged in printmaking. Puerto, the first half of the name of the country Puerto Rico, means port in English. When combining both Puerto and Grabando, the phrase becomes an invitation to come to the port where printmaking is happening, as well as a way of referencing the island and it being the home of the next SGCI conference.*

### **Historical Background of Puerto Rican Printmaking**

Printmaking in Puerto Rico is far more than a mere artistic discipline; it’s an intricate tapestry woven with the island’s cultural, political, and social history. Emerging in the 1950s, printmaking became a powerful medium for artists to express their perspectives on issues such as colonialism, identity, and resistance. The works of renowned Puerto Rican printmakers like Lorenzo Homar and Rafael Tufiño not only exhibit outstanding technical skills but also embody the passionate voice of a community fighting for recognition and change. By capturing the spirit and resilience of the Puerto Rican people, printmaking serves as an invaluable vehicle for storytelling and preservation of heritage.

Learning more about printmaking in Puerto Rico offers a unique window into the island’s heart and soul. It’s not just about appreciating art; it’s about understanding the collective memory and experiences of a people through vivid, often provocative visual language. By delving into this artistic practice, one can gain deeper insights into the island’s past struggles, its ongoing narrative, and the vibrant culture that continues to thrive despite adversity. Embracing the study of Puerto Rican printmaking invites people to connect with a rich legacy of creativity and resistance, fostering a greater appreciation for the resilience and artistry that defines this Caribbean gem.

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## People & History

### Administrative Staff

Cathy Savage, Part-time Administrative Employee (2024-2025)  
Gretchen Schermerhorn, Executive Director (through September 2024)  
Blake Sanders, Part-time Administrative Employee (February-April 2025)  
Edna Belflour, Bookkeeper with 501 Commons since (2020-2025)

### SGCI Board Members

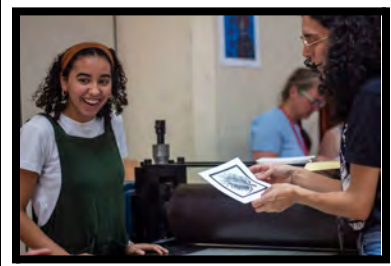
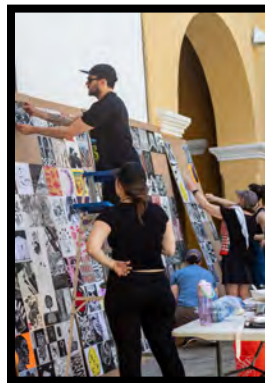
Claudia Wilburn, SGCI President  
Joseph Velasquez, Co-Vice President  
Michael Smoot, Co-Vice President  
Susan Czechowski, Treasurer  
Kamla Kakaria, Secretary  
Gaby Hurtado-Ramos, Student Representative  
Adriana Barrios  
Javier Flores  
Valerie Dibble  
Calvin Custen  
Fahimeh Vahdat

### 2025 Steering Committee Members

Fraixa Rodriguez Albizu  
Marcos De Jesús Carrión  
Migdalia Umpierre  
Haydee Landing Gordon  
Cresenciano Sotomayor  
Mariceliz Pagán Gómez  
Kristal Juan Rovira  
Rafael Hernandez Vargas  
Sebastián Román Soto  
Steven Rivera López

**Photos here from conference:**

[Album of Conference Photos Available Here](#)



## Branding and Communication

Joseph Velasquez connected us with graphic designer Gino Castellanos, who is bilingual, originally from the Caribbean, and very affordable. Since we were starting fresh, Joseph developed the new conference name, **PuertoGrabando**, and we felt it deserved a new logo and visual identity to match. Logo options were shared with both the board and the PR steering committee. The previous conference coordinator expressed concerns about the new design due to political considerations, but with the support of the current PR committee, we decided to move forward with the updated branding.

We produced a poster and postcards for the 2025 PuertoGrabando conference, which were distributed and promoted at the SGCI Providence Conference, SECAC 2024, MAPC 2024, and PrintAustin. This helped build early visibility and momentum.

Gino was also hired to design and organize the digital program, as well as promotional and wayfinding signage for the conference. Moving forward, it's important to ensure that wayfinding signage is available in both languages and present at all conference locations.

Based on the poster design, we asked Gino to create a T-shirt design. We then worked with local printshop owner and steering committee member Steven Rivera to print the conference shirts. We did not offer a preorder option and ended up selling out completely. After the conference, we set up an order form, printed additional shirts, and mailed them out. This was successful but did add extra shipping costs that could have been avoided with a preorder system.

Cathy Savage and Blake Sanders managed the website and handled online registration components.



T-Shirt Design



Poster Design

*The poster and postcard had a typo, but only 1 individual commented on it. The word Demonstrations was missing the n. As this was a poster seen at the providence conference and we had distributed more than 700 postcards, it is not a great look.*

*\*Logo is on the cover page.*

## Budget & Expense Report

SGCI Representatives: Susan Czechowski, Treasurer & Claudia Wilburn, President

Even though we had limited the number of rooms at the hotel and paid for the conference room rentals, in order to move forward with the contract we had to spend 45,000 on food and beverage tied to the conference. The board decided in keeping with DEIA and being equitable to all of the board members for their time leading up to and during the conference that a significant portion of hotel (50% hotel cost per person), per diem and travel (non profit government standards). Historically, SGCI boards consisted of largely funded academics and this is no longer the common experience. Also, colleges and universities are less likely to fully fund professional development conference work.

In planning the budget we were optimistic that we might be able to cover more cost with an increased attrition to the conference following success in Providence and higher numbers of attendees from Madison. There seemed to be much excitement in the community, unfortunately with world affairs, inflation and economic hardships, we simply did not have a high enough attendance to fully cover the cost of the conference.

Note:

- Hotel attrition at Providence cost SGCI \$40,000+ - this took what would have been a profit and changed it to a loss.
- Hotel contracts for conferences such as Providence and Puerto Rico require added cost for food and beverage in addition to the room rentals for events like panels, incubators, ballrooms, etc.
- The limited transportation that we had at the PR conference was necessary with the need for demonstrations and events across the city, but cost \$15000. This was also part of a decision made concerning DEIA and feedback about previous conferences not being accessible for all attendees. We were sure to have ADA compliant transportation for the conference events.
- SGCI historically has never worked off of grants, sponsorship or external funding and was entirely membership based. Most funds came from membership renewals and annual conference fees.
- There was still an outstanding \$30,000 of membership credit that attendees used, donated or lost from the cancelled 2020 conference. (i.e. this is 30,000 dollars that in a normal year would have been part of the conference income, instead it was another financial strain.) Some of these funds were used in Madison, Providence and Puerto Rico.
- As this conference was off the "North American" mainland there were also added very high costs for travel, mailing supplies, shipping art for exhibitions, vendors and exchange portfolios.

REVENUE	#	Est. Income	Totals	
Early Bird Professional Registration	110	\$ 250.00	\$ 27,500.00	
Reg Professional Registration	100	\$ 350.00	\$ 35,000.00	
Early Bird Student	100	\$ 150.00	\$ 15,000.00	
Reg Student	100	\$ 250.00	\$ 25,000.00	
Volunteer Professional	35	\$ 75.00	\$ 2,625.00	
Volunteer Student	35	\$ 50.00	\$ 1,750.00	
Member Daily Registrations	40	\$ 150.00	\$ 6,000.00	
Non-Member Daily Registrations	20	\$ 225.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$173,625
Open Portfolio Student	150	\$ 20.00	\$ 3,000.00	
Open Portfolio Professional	100	\$ 25.00	\$ 2,500.00	
Sponsors/Advertisers MATRIX LEVEL: one 1/4 ad in the program, one social media recognition, small logo placement on the Providence conference website and on the sponsorship board, and two tickets to the Award's Party	2	\$ 320.00	\$ 640.00	
Sponsors/Advertisers: Proof Level: 1/2 ad in the program, two social media recognitions, med logo placement on the Providence conference website and on the sponsorship board, and three tickets to the awards party	1	\$ 420.00	\$ 420.00	
Sponsors/Advertisers: Rainbow Roll Level: 1/2 ad in the program, three social media recognitions, prominent logo, placement on the Providence conference website and sponsorship board, thank you mentions at conference welcome and awards party remarks, four tickets to the awards party	2	\$ 520.00	\$ 1,040.00	\$2,100
Members exchange portfolio	150	\$ 25.00	\$ 3,750.00	
Vendor Program/Fair level one	17	\$ 375.00	\$ 6,375.00	
Vendor Program/Fair level two	5	\$ 675.00	\$ 3,375.00	
Vendor Program/Fair level three	3	\$ 975.00	\$ 2,925.00	\$22,125
Group Rate - 125 per person withing the group (6+)	20	\$ 125.00	\$ 2,500.00	
Juried Exhibition Application Fee	120	\$ 25.00	\$ 3,000.00	
Art Auction/Storefront			\$ 5,000.00	
Hotel funds tied to contract (use for local catering vendors)			\$ 8,000.00	
Local Printshop/Publisher Fair	15	\$ 200.00	\$ 3,000.00	Included with Vendor Numbers
Other Sponsorship Opportunities				
Grant Opportunities				
Shop Swag Income			\$ 1,613.00	
			\$ 164,513.00	

Costs:

EXPENSES	#	Cost	Totals
			\$ -
Plane Tickets & Gas Money for Board - Mid Year	1	\$500.00	\$ 500.00
ED & Student ticket	2	\$500.00	\$ 1,000.00
Per Diem for Board - Mid Year (research numbers, G)			\$ -
Hotel - Mid Year - 6 Double Rooms 5 nights	1	\$891.36	\$ 891.36
Additional Costs	1	\$300.00	\$ 300.00
Plane Tickets & Gas Money for Board for conference	10	\$500.00	\$ 5,000.00
Plane ticket Student	1	\$500.00	\$ 1,000.00
Per Diem for Board for conference (5 days) 11 board members at 118 or \$68	55	\$118.00	\$ 6,490.00
Hotel for board for conference	30	\$315.00	\$ 9,450.00
			\$ -
Logo & Poster of Puerto Rico & Digital Program (Gino)	1	\$2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
			\$ -
Food & Beverage	1	\$45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
F & B Taxes & Service Chagres Expected	1	\$17,217.00	\$ 17,217.00
Conference Room Rental			\$ 65,900.00
Buses	1	\$15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
			\$ -
Sign-language Interpreter (For specific events) (Per Hour)	5	\$100.00	\$ 500.00
			\$ -
<b>AWARDS</b>			\$ -
Emerging, Mid-Career, Excellence in Teaching, lifetime -stateside	4	\$1,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Student Award, graduate -stateside	1	\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Student Award, undergraduate -stateside	1	\$500.00	\$ 500.00
Student (Puerto Rico)	1	\$250.00	\$ 250.00
Emerging printmaker	1	\$250.00	\$ 250.00
Mid-Career (puerto Rico)	1	\$250.00	\$ 250.00
Excellence in Teaching (Puerto Rico)	1	\$500.00	\$ 500.00
Travel (Awardees)	6	\$400.00	\$ 2,400.00
Hotel (2024 Awardees)	6	\$1,260.04	\$ 7,560.24
			\$ -

			\$ -
Graphic Design: PreEvent Posters, Wayfinding signage, Shuttle Service Sinage - Handicap Sinage (Printing Costs)	1	\$1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
			\$ -
Conference Tote Bags & Aprons (Printed in Puerto Rico)	1	\$3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00
Shop Swag	1	\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Printed Name Tags		\$500.00	\$ 250.00
Lanyard Cords and Badges		\$500.00	\$ 500.00
Event or Exhibition Support	8	\$200.00	\$ 1,600.00
Other Catering (3 Exhibitions)	1	\$2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Awards Party	1	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Sound System/DJ/Entertainers	1	\$2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Other Convention Center Rental & AV Charges	1	\$8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Board & Steering Committee Meeting catering Sunday		\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Summer Public Relations Trip: Flight, Hotel, PerDiem (Claudia & Gretchen)	1	\$2,031.34	\$ 2,031.34
			\$ -
			\$ -
Shipping, Office Supplies and other minor expenses	1	\$1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
			\$ -
Social Media			\$ -
			\$ -
Taxes if seperate from above			\$ -
3% transaction fee registration			\$ 9,000.00
		<b>Total Cost</b>	\$ 226,839.94
		<b>Profit/Loss</b>	\$ (62,326.94)

Can we make a little cash back on excursions, Ask Discover Puerto Rico

## Hotel & Conference Venues

SGCI Representatives: Susan Czechowski, Treasurer, Claudia Wilburn, President

- The concept of “Island Time” was an adjustment during the process. This refers to a casual approach when it concerns planning, communication and clarity in contracts, the assumption being things will get done and adding pressure is unnecessary.
- We had trouble with e-checks and paper checks in Puerto Rico. We had to reissue several checks as different banks had different requirements.
- There were unforeseen costs related to venue rental or the cost of food for an event. Some of these elements were not budgeted but became necessary to the success of the conference. Attendees appreciated the daily breakfast and other receptions and chances to commune over food and drink. There is so much to do at a conference attendees will often choose panels and demos over eating, so when we can provide a meal, and a place to congregate and share plans for the day, it is appreciated. The layout for breakfast, with large round tables was particularly helpful for attendees to sit down and commiserate, sometimes with new acquaintances.
- The local steering committee helped to secure locations for conference events and exhibitions thanks to their connections.
- Joseph & Mike went to PR 2023, they looked at the Sheraton Casino and several other hotels with the Caribe Hilton being their top choice for size and location to old San Juan. This choice likely saved us money on transportation and made it easier for attendees to navigate the conference. The Hilton al



## Registration & Volunteers

SGCI Representative: Javier Flores



The atrium used for registration was a beautiful space, with access to a pond, seating, and wildlife that gave attendees a nice place to relax between events. While it was a bit tricky to navigate for first-time arrivals, having registration positioned near the primary lecture hall ended up being very convenient—especially for attendees arriving as major sessions were starting. This also meant wayfinders were already nearby and available to help during receptions.

The ribbons identifying conference roles, first-time attendees, and other distinctions were a smart, low-cost addition that people really seemed to enjoy. They helped create a welcoming atmosphere and made it easier to identify volunteers and staff.

One challenge was that dueling hotel events required the registration area to be broken down each evening. This, combined with rushed printing services, meant conference tags weren't always available when attendees arrived. Additionally, honoring local artists who stopped by the conference caused lanyard supplies to run out more than once. Some volunteers also did not fulfill their obligations, resulting in free or reduced access without actually serving the conference.

Placing registration near the vendor fair has proven effective in past conferences and again helped keep energy and traffic flowing through both areas. Pairing the vendor fair with the open portfolio was especially successful. Ideally, all three—registration, vendor fair, and open portfolio—could be located near each other, though this would require a larger footprint. This is where university partners can be particularly valuable.

There were a few logistical improvements to note. Name labels had to be cut to fit the lanyards, and in the future, facing lanyards toward members and allowing self-service could help streamline the process. Volunteers were not always well informed about locations or the daily schedule, so providing a printed daily schedule for volunteers would be helpful when assisting members. Overall, despite these issues, registration ran well.

On the volunteer side, one major issue was a lack of follow-through from some local volunteers. Those who did not attend meetings or respond to communication were still recognized on site, which felt unfair to volunteers who followed the process. Moving forward, if potential volunteers do not respond after two emails or fail to attend meetings, they should not be eligible for reduced conference rates.

That said, registration volunteers were extremely helpful and attentive, and attendees consistently commented on how positive their experience was at the desk. For an event of this size, it would also help if volunteers wore hats or vests so they were easier to identify.

I was responsible for both demonstrations and volunteer coordination, which proved to be too much for one person. Ideally, one to two additional people should support each area. While I managed, there were frequent issues with volunteers not responding—some up until the final week of the conference—and several changed their minds at the last minute. Volunteers need to commit to their roles, especially given the significant discount they receive.

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## Opening Night Event

SGCI Representative: Blake Sanders & Fraíxa Albizu

Wednesdays are often a comparatively quiet day for organizers to get their sea legs with registration and putting finishing touches on conference set up. Attendees usually roll into town during the day and registration opens that afternoon. There is typically a welcome address and reception for those who make it in for day one, though many don't arrive till Thursday.

Puertograbando began, on the other hand, with an unforgettable event that was spearheaded by the host city, a testament to the partnership we aimed to foster with San Juan. Conference attendees and SGCI were welcomed to the city by the Municipality of San Juan who hosted a reception with tapas and bar in the courtyard of the Museum of San Juan.

*The SGC's main opening exhibition was probably the most intricate and rewarding event of the conference to plan. It had many complexities, from its transportation logistics to its coordination and in-kind collaborations and sponsorship agreements with the municipality of San Juan (capital of PR), especially the mayor's office, to get buses approved, a cocktail, and other surprises for our guests. On top of that, I was also tasked with finding a venue for a large-scale all-PR printmakers exhibition. It was a great fortune that the museum of San Juan agreed to host and collaborate with the conference on both events. That provided security and a firm alliance with the events, and it really magnified the scale of everything. - Fraíxa*

Local charter buses (retrofitted school buses with intricate lighting, paint jobs, and stereo equipment!), provided by the municipality, transported the attendees from the conference hotel to the edge of Old San Juan. Folks then hiked the last half mile up a narrow hilled street to the museum. Many of the streets in the historical part of the city are extremely tight, making it nearly impossible for a charter bus to navigate. Luckily smaller, ADA compliant vans were available throughout the conference to transport those who needed it from door to door.

*As for the agreed sponsorship deal for this night, the collaboration included the transportation of approximately 500 members who would attend the opening of one of the main exhibitions, Huella Indelible; for this 10 school buses would escort the members of the conference from the hotel Caribe Hilton to the Museum of San Juan entrance in the old town. These buses picked guests up at 5 pm and got them pumped with music and lights during the ride. Another part of the sponsorship included a cocktail and drinks service and a surprise folkloric dance*

*performance. As part of the Museum's protocol, a very formal opening ceremony was held in which the museum's director, the mayor's wife, the SGC president, the head of the island steering committee, among others, offered brief speeches with motivational remarks on the importance of gratitude for this milestone in PR print history. - Fraixa*

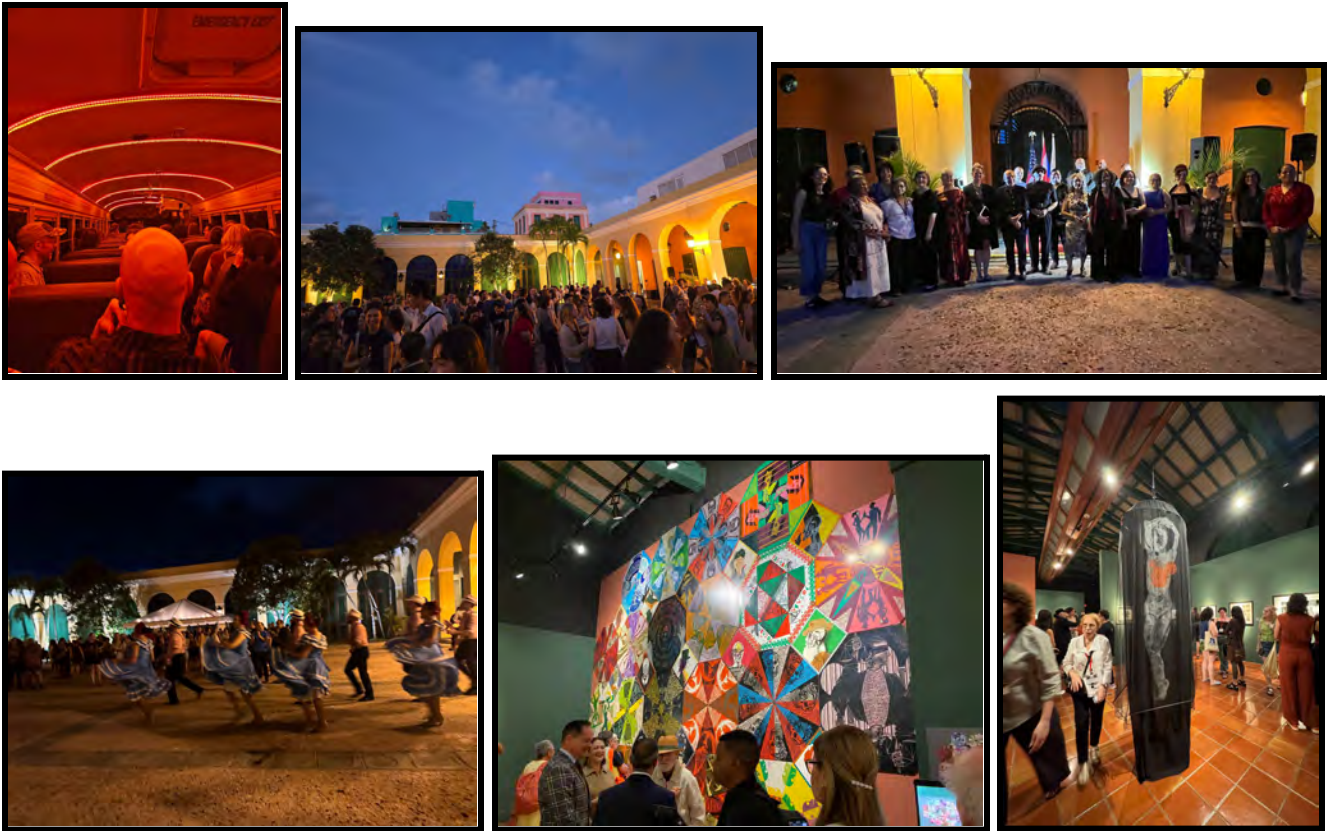
The event featured a welcome address with local dignitaries, Museum curators & staff (including Fraixa), and Claudia. This was the first instance where a dedicated translator would have helped. The city also arranged an incredible Bomba dance performance in the courtyard that energized the attendees.

*One of the challenges that came with this protocol was that it was too long, and I could notice guests getting tired. It's a rough bargain you take when collaborating with a government entity, but the guests powered through it, and the exhibition was well worth the wait. Luckily, guests were also treated to food and drinks as part of the cocktail party, and the museum courtyard provided a great space for a networking and social gathering on the first day. One surprise that I didn't even know about was the dance performance. The performance was coordinated by the museum director, and it proved to be a delight for everyone, bringing people into such a good mood with dance and song. To this day, we haven't had an exhibition opening as big and celebratory as the one for this conference. One of my highlights of the conference was seeing the queue line to enter the gallery go almost around the patio, and people going multiple times in the gallery to see the artworks. - Fraixa*

All of these festivities were meant to complement *La Huella Indeleble*, an exhibition at the Museum presented by the Jornadas del Grabado Puertorriqueño, Inc. The show featured dozens of prominent Puertorriqueño printmakers whose stunning work set a standard for excellence for the conference. The Jornadas del Grabado collective has been active since 2003, founded by Ada Rosa Rivera, Yolanda Velázquez, and Migdalia Umpierre to foster and support the island's print community. Printmakers and locals waited patiently for their chance to view the exhibition, which provided a first opportunity for the attendees to connect with the local art community.

*My task for this conference was a lot and complex. I was head of the island steering committee and key coordinator for most of the events in the galleries, universities, and other art spaces. Although I have to say that having a core team behind me really kept me grounded. It is definitely a 10 people or more job to take on a conference of this scale. I am thankful for having a full steering committee team that stayed focused throughout. I would recommend that future events of this scale have a secure and loyal team that you can rely on during the whole event. - Fraixa*

In all the exhibition and accompanying festivities set a new high bar for how a host community embraces the conference. A huge thank you to curators Mariel Quiñones, Angelica Rivera, Marilú Carrasquillo, Ada Rosa Rivera and the staff of Museo de San Juan for the exhibition and all their efforts, to Fraixa for drumming up support and coordinating with the museum, and to the Municipality of San Juan for the warm welcome.



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## Keynote Address

Keynote Address by Lifetime Achievement Awardee: **Haydee Landing**

Written by Claudia Wilburn

This event was well attended, as expected. There was, however, a breakdown in communication at the beginning of the keynote address regarding who was responsible for introducing Haydee Landing, which resulted in an uncomfortable and unprofessional moment. I was unable to pivot. I was informed that we were unprepared and already in front of the crowd. Fortunately, Maritza Dávila was in the audience and stepped in to handle the introduction.

The keynote address was delivered in Spanish. While Zoom's translation feature worked intermittently, the text was too small to be easily read from a distance. Some attendees used Google Translate's live feature on their phones, which proved to be much more effective. Encouraging the use of this app ahead of time would have improved accessibility for participants.

For future events, we will need more guidance and adequate time for trial runs when using translation services. This is another area where having an institutional host could be especially helpful, as they are more likely to have staff and resources available to support robust accessibility and accommodation needs.

Fortunately, for all the unfortunate issues during the address, Haydee's exhibition at Casa de Libro was well attended and well received. This became a gathering point for Haydee's former students and colleagues, as well as the broader San Juan art community to gather to pay tribute to her storied career.



## Presidential Panel

Written by Claudia Wilburn

*Chair:*

**Adriana Sybelle Muñiz**

*Panelists:*

**Margarita Fernández Zavala**

**Norma Vila Rivero**

**Consuelo Gotay**

**Poli Marichal**



I was extremely grateful to Adriana Sybelle Muñiz for chairing the Presidential Panel, titled *Matrix and Identity: Feminine Presence in Puerto Rican Printmaking*. Adriana curated a strong panel of four accomplished female printmakers from Puerto Rico, all of whom presented compelling work.

All panelists were bilingual and delivered most of their presentations in English. They were engaging speakers, and I very much enjoyed their artwork, stories, and personalities. Attendance was strong, and

the audience remained engaged and enthusiastic about the experience despite several technical challenges.

Once again, using Zoom as a translation tool proved ineffective. Speakers had to pivot when the Zoom translation feature became glitchy and difficult to read from a distance. Fortunately, the panelists were gracious, flexible, and handled the situation well.

There was also a miscommunication related to the AV setup. The laptop used for presentations was plugged into a power strip that was not itself plugged in, which caused a scramble mid-lecture as the computer lost power. While the issue was resolved, it was disruptive and could have been avoided with clearer setup checks.

Finally, the term “Presidential Panel” may be due for a rebrand. The president does not sit on the panel and may not always be available due to other responsibilities. It may be worth considering alternative language that still communicates the importance and headlining nature of this panel without requiring presidential involvement.

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## **Membership Exchange Portfolio**

We had a very positive print exchange for Puertograbando. There were 121 participants, well over 20% of the conference participants. One copy of the membership portfolio exchange, including a copy of the artist data sheets was donated to La Liga to be part of their collection.

We had trouble at the Providence Conference keeping Professional and Student Prints separate and had some confusion with awards in the different categories. So, for Puertograbando we opted to ensure the students felt more connected by only having one holistic exchange. The exchange is a way to make students feel welcome and integrated in the organization, and it’s a bonus when they can wind up with a print by a printmaker they look up to, so this single exchange should be carried forward.

Locating the membership exchange drop-off in the same room as the vendor fair was convenient for arrivals looking to get their bearings at the conference. It helped bring more people to Los Rosales and gave them another reason to visit, especially during the quieter times in C and D. This setup also benefited the vendors, as they wanted to be close to the action, and having more activities nearby made the area feel busier and more engaging. This allowed exchange volunteers and organizers the chance to interact more freely with attendees as they moved through the fair and dropped off prints for the exchange and the auction. Everything seemed to run smoothly, and there was always someone available to assist during the times when people dropped off their items.

Going forward, as prints are dropped off for the exchange it would be best practice to have a volunteer at the desk entering information for all prints into a spreadsheet. This should resemble the SGCI Archives intake form, so there is a record of the artist’s name, contact information, and the print title and medium. A photo of the print should also be included. This document can then be saved in the

organization's shared Drive, and passed on to the institution/collection that the exchange is being donated to for their archives/records.



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## Auction

62 items were donated by SGCI members. The auction netted \$2905 for the organization. We employed the GiveButter app for supporters to peruse the offerings and make bids online. This allowed supporters to make bids even if they weren't able to attend the conference. There were benefits to this, more eyes meant more potential support. It also created logistical issues when working out shipping for prints going to folks who weren't at the conference. Going forward it should be made clear that winning bids will include shipping for the prints. A reasonable time frame, roughly a month out from the conference, should also be noted so winning bids know when to expect the work, and that some grace should be given to conference organizers.

In addition, artists who agree to donate prints should also allow SGCI to continue to offer their work in future auctions/print sales/giveaways. Alternatively, they may ask to donate their prints to a partner institution (which would require an Archives-like form for record keeping).



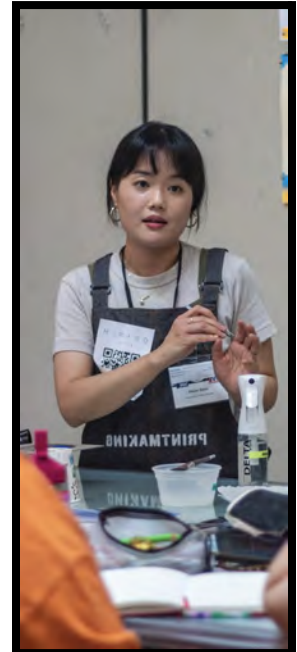
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## Demonstrations

Demonstrations were well attended and folks on hand had a good time. There was an attentive audience and engaged demonstrators. After some technical hiccups, which are par for the course during demos, artists and audience settled in well together.

Relying on a single, master spreadsheet for all conference events is a must here. Demonstrations infrastructure and materials were found on a separate document for island steering committee personnel that wasn't easily accessible for the coordinator. There should be a primary Demonstration Coordinator, with leads at each major demonstration location (in this case, at the hotel, at EAPD, and at LaLiga). These leads can then be in charge of arranging materials and equipment needs for the spaces on their site. Demonstrators were not prompt with communications and some dropped out late in the process. Putting the Demonstrations Committee in touch with demo artists from the moment they are selected will personalize the process and make artists take the needs of the organizers more seriously. Perhaps sharing the demos tab from the master spreadsheet will help artists visualize the scope of the planning as well.

Demonstrations were led by passionate and generous instructors. Many mentioned how they had been preparing and looking forward to the conference for a couple years (a positive that came out of having to originally postpone the conference). Neal Cox's pinhole Camera demonstration was among the demos attended where the instructors expressed positivity with the extra time they were given to prepare the demo.



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## Exhibitions

Fraixa, Marcos and the Steering Committee did the heavy lifting on helping to acquire spaces for the exhibitions. They were held at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), EAPD, Museo de la Casa Del Libro, La Liga de Arte, Museum of the Americas and the Hotel Caribe Hilton. We were so excited to celebrate the work of Puerto Rican artists in addition to the SGCI community through the conference exhibitions.

The Juried Exhibition was held in a beautiful space on the EAPD campus gallery “*Lorenzo Homar*”. The setting elevated the work, and the exhibition itself featured a strong and diverse body of prints in terms of content, approach, and representation. It was a thoughtful and compelling show that reflected the breadth of our community. Volunteers included members of the SGCI community as well as students and faculty from EAPD, and their support was greatly appreciated.



Unfortunately, the exhibition was only installed for the duration of the conference, and hardware was not allowed on the plaster walls. As a result, work had to be hung using museum putty, which proved insufficient—especially since the space was not consistently climate controlled. Artwork fell from the walls multiple times during the run of the show. In the future, it would be preferable to secure a venue willing to host the juried exhibition for at least a month, ideally beginning before and ending after the conference. This would allow for a more professional installation and greater public engagement. Any venue must permit small holes in walls for proper installation.

If possible, having the juror present during installation to consult on layout would be ideal. If that’s not feasible, more detailed installation notes during the jurying process could help guide the install team.

Shipping and receiving artwork created a significant burden. Much of the work—not just for the juried exhibition but for multiple shows—was shipped directly to Marcos or Fraixa (or even her mother). That level of responsibility should never fall on one person. In the future, a designated receiving space on campus or at a conference site must be secured in advance. All shipments should include prepaid return labels upon arrival. This was complicated in Puerto Rico, as some carriers treated shipping as international and would not honor prepaid return labels. This created delays and left Claudia, but especially Fraixa, managing returns weeks after the conference ended. That is not sustainable and needs to be structurally addressed going forward.

Other exhibition venues faced communication challenges. Some locations were not open during agreed-upon hours, and transportation did not always get attendees to sites reliably—including during the print hop. Climate control was also an issue at certain spaces, including university sites, where artwork was at times exposed to the elements. If environmental conditions are uncertain, artists must be informed in advance so they can make informed decisions and prepare accordingly.

Juried award winners should be formally acknowledged at the awards banquet in the future. Physical certificates or comparable recognitions should be prepared before the conference. This would require the juror to select award recipients during the initial jury process rather than after installation. This should be a task for the Award coordinator and/or Awards subcommittee, not a task that only relies on the president/ vice president.

Haydee's retrospective for the Outstanding Printmaker exhibition highlighted some of the broader challenges. While she intended to lead her own installation, she was not ready on the originally agreed-upon date. This resulted in scrambling for volunteers at a time when their support had already been allocated elsewhere. Clear installation deadlines and accountability are essential moving forward.

Pop-up exhibitions varied widely. Some were quick and easy to install, while others required significant time and infrastructure. In the future, the Steering Committee should rigorously assess exhibition proposals to ensure the scope aligns with available resources. Too much time was dedicated to exhibitions that were intended to be complementary rather than cornerstone components of the conference. A good example of this was the ones installed in the Museum of the Americas.

More broadly, we were short-handed and often accommodating venues that were not fully prepared to host print exhibitions. A comprehensive spreadsheet of venues (including alternates) should be developed early in the planning process. This should track space requirements, installation permissions, security, climate control, accessibility, transportation logistics, and liability coverage.

### ***On the Pop-Up Model***

It may be worth rethinking the pop-up format entirely. Many galleries and exhibition spaces are not equipped to execute high-quality exhibitions within such a tight timeline. The amount of planning required for a strong show simply isn't supported by the current schedule. A more effective model may be to install exhibitions well in advance of the conference, allowing the local community to engage with them, and keep them on view after the conference concludes. This would ease the burden on organizers, host venues, the Steering Committee, and the Board—while allowing for more fully realized and impactful exhibitions. Selecting fewer shows but investing more time and resources into each could strengthen the overall exhibition program.

Despite these challenges, the exhibitions themselves were exciting and meaningful. The work was strong, and the energy around seeing prints across multiple spaces was palpable.

For future conferences, clearer signage and announcements about bus routes would help attendees navigate exhibition sites. There was confusion at bus stops about which bus was going where. Open hours for each venue should also be clearly communicated in advance, along with accessibility information.

*Exhibitions, including Pop-ups, selected for the 2025 conference are listed below.*

**Juried Members Exhibition**

Jurors: Martin Garcia Rivera and Ada Rosa Rivera

**Haydee Landing, Lifetime Achievement Awardee Exhibition**

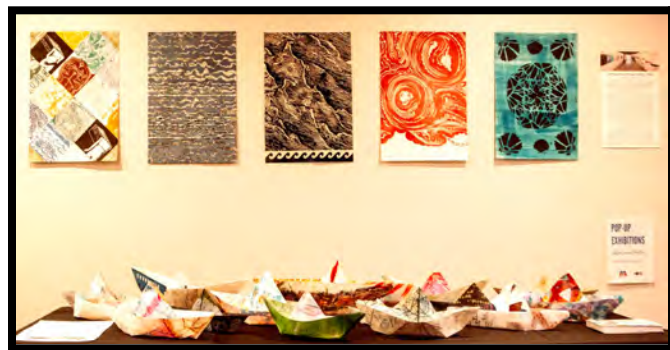
Organizer: Haydee Landing

**Prayer Flags for Puerto Rico**

Organizer: Beauvais Lyons

**Impresiones Dinámicas/Dynamic Impressions**

Organizers: Moses Ros, Luanda Lozano



**The “Old” New Normal/La “vieja” nueva normalidad**

Organizer: Carlos Llobet Montealegre

**Una buena impresión**

Organizer: Dareliz Alayon

**The Wind At Dawn/El Viento Al Amanecer**

Organizers: The Reid and Wilhelmina Peace

**Paper Boats Flotilla**

Organizer: Mary Sherwood Brock

**Leave The Trace**

Organizer: Marta Kubiak

**IEA Editions**

Organizers: Myles Calver

**Inside Out / Outside In -between printmaking and sculpture**

Organizer: Alicja Habisiak-Matczak

**Landscape Contemplations**

Organizer: Tomasz Matczak

**Printed with a Steamroller**

Organizer: Claudia Wilburn & Fraixa Albizu Rodriguez





**Elastic Memory**

Organizers: Eddy Lopez, Patricia Villalobos

**Dream Oath**

Organizer: Logan Bishop, Graduate Fellowship Awardee

**Print Pública**

Organizer: Jade Hoyer

**Sistema**

Organizer: Sheila Goloborotko

**Reinventing Invasives: Etchings on Papers Made with Invasive Plants**

Organizer: Rachel Singel

**The Smallest Distance Between Us: Challenging Otherness and Telling Stories**

Organizer: Kelda Martensen

**Can U See Her Project**

Organizer: Lillian Young

**The Ocean Inside - A print-video project**

Organizer: Eveline Koliijn



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## Panels & Inkubators

Oversight of Panels: Mike Smoot

Written by Claudia Wilburn & Blake Sanders

Historically, SGCI hasn't done many panel presentations that required a second call for participation. In the past, panel proposals were expected to include confirmed panelists from the start, so a second call wasn't necessary. For the Providence 2024 conference, we shifted this approach for a few reasons. Adding a second call for panel participation helped increase inclusion and gave more attendees the opportunity to be involved. Since we already do a second call for themed portfolio participation, adding panels to that process wasn't a heavy lift and ended up being well worth the time and effort.

Panels at Puertograbando were generally well attended, and having Mike Smoot on site at the hotel was a big help. Joseph Velazquez was also available on call and assisted with problem-solving when issues came up and extra support was needed. Huge credit to Gaby for hosting an excellent group of students during the student lightning rounds. Managing both virtual and in-person components could have been challenging, but everything ran very smoothly.

Translation support, however, did not work well with the current technology setup. Bilingual translation through Zoom isn't effective for live, in-person panels, and the tools we used didn't integrate well with PowerPoint presentations or Zoom recordings. For future conferences, we should look into a different platform that supports AI translation during presentations while also recording to Zoom, or consider hiring a live translation team with radios. Another option could be encouraging the use of translation apps like Google Translate, which may be more reliable for in-person events.

*Panels selected for the 2025 conference are listed below.*



**Decolonizing Printmaking: Sketching an Alternate Art World**  
Presenters: cloudwhite, Imar Hutchins

**Hello, Print Friend Oaxaca Documentary**  
Followed by a Q&A

**Wind Whispers**  
Chair: Eszter Sziksz

**Margins: Stories from Printmaking's Outlying Professions**  
Chair: Elysia Mann

**Towards Less Toxic Printmaking**  
Chair: Alicja Habisiak-Matczak





**Listening Within/Without Contemporary Printmaking Practices**

Chair: Heather Leier

**Mapping Personal Histories/Navigating Political Tides**

Chair: J. Leigh Garcia

**The Print Collection**

Chair: Beth Howe

**Conference Anarchy**

Chair: Nathan Meltz

**Elastic Memory**

Chairs: Patricia Villalobos Echeverría, Eddy Lopez

**Impressions of Leadership**

**The Future Prospects of Printmaking Ink**

Chair: Brandon Gunn

**Experiences of Cultural Exchange Through Printmaking**

Co-Chairs: Sol Gómez, Gina Reynoso, and Valeria Carrera



**Student Lightning Talks**

Chair: Gaby Hurtado-Ramos

**POSSIBILITIES/ POSIBILIDADES**

Chair: Georgia Deal

**Artist Books: Place and Space**

Chair: Jennifer Scheuer

**Prints in Motion**

Chair: Shannon Ferguson

*Inkubators selected for the 2025 conference are listed below.*

**Sea Change: Connecting Printmakers, Climate Change, and Research**

Deborah Cornell, Barbara Putnam, and Richard Cornell

**No Office Space**

Rae Helms and Francesca Lally

**The Changing Tides**

Sangmi Yoo & Rosenda Álvarez Faro



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**DEIA**

SGCI Representative: Javier Flores

Some of the biggest issues I found with Puertograbando was the wheelchair accessible parking, or lack thereof. Bathrooms were hit or miss in regards to accessibility at the various locations as well, so I usually just waited until I got back to the hotel if I could hold it. In the future having an accessibility consultant or DEIA Board or SC member to scout potential conference locations in advance would be recommended.

Many of the demonstration rooms were fairly accessible, and all of the elevators worked. The terrain where we were in Viejo San Juan was very hilly, and so I definitely had to depend on Lizeth to help push me a lot of times. The sidewalks were an afterthought in the city planning or planned for really skinny colonizers making it tough for the wheelchair.

We offered an ADA compliant shuttle with a wheelchair lift. This should be the practice going forward, especially in places like San Juan and Providence where streets are sometimes narrow and can't accommodate buses taking attendees door to door.

Someone had asked, through the DEIA email, about an ASL interpreter that was missed by the personnel monitoring the email. I did respond to this email but she never responded back after that. ASL interpretation, on top of the subtitles we've attempted to employ, would be meaningful for our members going forward. New board members check the DEIA email regularly and have been really helpful in all endeavors going forward.

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## **SGCI Awards 2025**

SGCI Representative for Awards,

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Lifetime Achievement Award: *Haydee Landing Gordon*

SGCI Emerging Printmaker Award: *Gino Castellanos*

SGCI Excellence In Teaching Award: *John Hitchcock*

SGCI Graduate Fellowship Award: *Rae Helms*

SGCI Mid-Career Award: *Reinaldo Gil Zambrano*

SGCI Undergraduate Fellowship Award: *Mariah Dechant*

Gamblin Emerging Printmaker Award: *Jacq Garcia*

Gamblin Undergraduate Award: *Madeline Goolie*

Gamblin Mid-Career Award: *Jill Ho-You*

Awagami Paper Award: *Ruth Alvarez Luna*

### ***Additional Puertograbando "On the Island" Awards:***

Excellence in Teaching: *Martin Garcia*

Emerging Printmaker: *Kristal Juan Rovira*

Mid-Career Award: *Ismari Carraballo*

Student Excellence Award: *Nilsa Rios Cruz*

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*\*\*See SGCI handbook for details about the annual award benefits.*

*The standard conference awards are voted on by the membership via the website. With each conference the Steering committee can also add/create awards to be given at their specific conference. These additional awards are sponsored by SGCI but the awards and awardees are selected by the steering committee. Additionally, the Lifetime Achievement Awardee is selected by the Steering Committee of the conference. [Click here for past awardees.](#)*

*Denise Bookwalter was the Awards Representative on the board during and after the Providence Conference. She was unable to continue in this role due to work and life commitments and was not replaced in time to manage awards for the Puertograbando conference.*

## Awards Party:

The venue for the Awards party was the atrium at EAPD. It was a gorgeous space, particularly at night. The event was extremely well attended. In fact, the committee underestimated the budget for food and drink. Perhaps this was a symptom of the extremely successful opening ceremony. As a result we underestimated food and beverage expenses, assuming that attendees would make an appearance at the party and then hit the town. Given the overall expense of travel and lodging at the conference, and the surprisingly large percentage of student attendees, we should have expected a good showing. In the future we should assume any opportunity for attendees to eat at the conference's expense, they will take it! The food choices were locally appropriate and the entertainment highlighted Puerto Rican culture as well. Whenever possible we should maintain that tribute to the host community.

Since the crowd was large and the space expansive it also meant our PA system was a bit underpowered. This made it difficult to get and hold the crowd's attention when actually giving the awards. If our final party is outdoors in the future a larger system will be required, or we get more gritty and use a bullhorn instead of a mic!

In the future, in addition to the set awards, conference organizers should make it a point to celebrate the juried show award winners at the awards banquet and/or at the reception for the Juried Exhibition. We should make it a point to announce when the awards will be presented in the exhibition open call to ensure award winners will be present at the opening and the awards party. We should also designate someone to photograph the award ceremony so we have a dedicated record of the event.



## Open Portfolio Sessions

SGCI Representatives: Gaby Hurtado-Ramos

Open Portfolio continues to be one of our strongest events and a real community builder within the conference. It consistently brings people together across institutions, career stages, and regions in a way that feels meaningful and energizing. This year was no exception—it was a great event. Placing it near the vendor fair was a smart move, as it helped keep traffic flowing between both areas and maintained a lively atmosphere throughout.

As in past years, I heard some of the same critiques. Because tables were not assigned, some participants settled into a spot and didn't rotate out between sessions. While assigning tables can be logistically challenging, it may be something we need to consider if this continues to be an issue. That said, the first-come, first-served model overall felt more flexible and worked better than pre-labeled tables in terms of ease and flow.

In hindsight, I (Gaby) should have secured the direct contact for facilities or table coordination ahead of time to ensure there were enough tables available from the start. That's an important takeaway: anyone coordinating a section of the conference should have the direct contact information for their host institution well in advance.

Volunteers were extremely helpful and essential to keeping things running smoothly—at least two are needed for this event. We also need to gently monitor participants who stay beyond their session time so that everyone has a fair opportunity to participate.

Overall, Open Portfolio remains a highlight of the conference and something people genuinely love. With a few logistical tweaks, it will continue to be one of SGCI's most impactful and community-driven events.



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## Career Mentoring Services

SGCI Representatives: Valerie Dibble

I was one of the organizers for the mentor–mentee session, and overall participation was great. We had strong interest from both mentors and mentees, and the platform provided for the session worked well.

That said, this type of session does require a fair amount of advance planning. In the future, it would help to include both a call for mentors and a mentee sign-up option during conference registration. Pairing mentors and mentees ahead of time would allow information to be shared with participants before or at registration. It would also be helpful to note mentor/mentee participation on name badges so people can easily identify one another.

We did run into some logistical issues on Saturday morning. The doors at the Caribe Hilton were locked, and we had to find hotel staff to let us in. This caused about a 15-minute delay and made the mentor–mentee pairing process a bit chaotic. For future conferences, having a sign at the volunteer table directing people where to check in for the session would help.

There was also some confusion among mentors and mentees about where and when to meet. Clearer communication ahead of time, better signage, and more detailed information in the conference program would go a long way in improving this.

On the day of the session, I contacted the hotel about an hour in advance to request early access to the room, but they did not respond. As a result, around 30 participants ended up waiting outside the Los Rosales room. The room was eventually opened, but about 10 minutes late. While frustrating, this was outside of our control.

Overall, interest and engagement were strong, and with clearer communication and improved logistics, this session could run even more smoothly at future conferences.



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## Outside of the Box Projects, Mobile Events & Looking Together

SGCI Representative: Claudia Wilburn

Novel projects are key here to stand out from the typical exhibitions. The print kite event was well attended and appreciated for its connection to the island's political history. Folks who found Margaret Craig's dimensional prints from Setting Seed appreciated the scavenger hunt and giveaway components. Participants took advantage of the tours offered by Casa De Libro and the Museum of San Juan.

Having the Print Collage hosted in the courtyard of EAPD's studio building was a great move as participants helped out with it's making while in between demonstrations.



**Print Kite**, Organizer: Koichi Yamamoto

**Setting Seed**, Organizer: Margaret Craig

**'Print-Collage' Mural**,

Organizers: Kathleen Stevenson, Andrew Rice, Maria del Mar Gonzalez-Gonzalez

**Ponte Gráfico**, Organizer: Dareliz Alayon

**Day Inking**, Organizer: Claudia Wilburn

**Language Guidebook**, Organizer: Savannah Bustillo

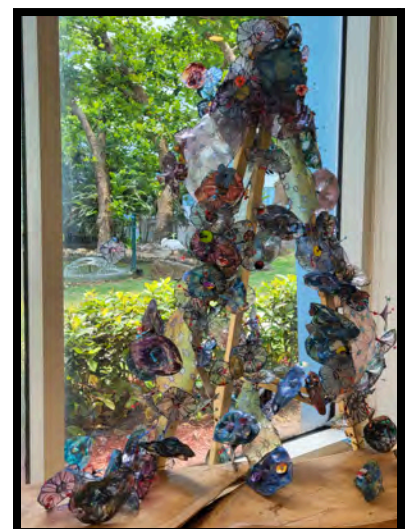
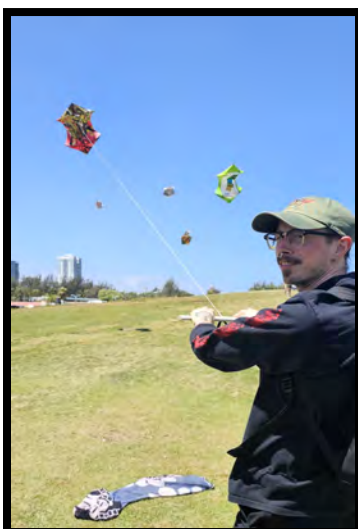
***Perspectiva es 20/20 (Hindsight is 20/20)***,

Organizers: Renee Covalucci, Deborah Cornell, and Migdalia Umpierre

**Looking Together Tours:**

Museum of San Juan

Casa de Libra



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## Transportation

SGCI Representative: Claudia Wilburn



The buses to the museum on the first night were a success, and the evening itself was fantastic. It was a great kickoff to the conference, and that exhibition ended up being one of the highlights. Overall, people seemed very happy, and I don't think most attendees noticed the internal hiccups we were dealing with.

The buses for the first night's events were provided by the Museum that hosted the party. They used dressed up school buses. I tried to get information about using school buses on the island but was unable to find a contact person for this. We used a transportation company for buses to and from demonstration areas, the print hop and

Most folks were satisfied with the buses and their availability, aside from the issue on the UPR route during the print hop.

### *Print Hop Transportation:*

There are solid examples from past conferences where the print hop worked really well. When possible, consolidating events into a single, central location creates a better experience and is much easier to coordinate. That said, not every city can support this kind of centralized setup.

I'd recommend moving away from relying on multiple shuttles, and instead keeping one shuttle mainly for accessibility needs. With taxis and rideshare services so widely available, most members are able to get around on their own—as many already do during the conference. Cutting back on shuttles could free up funds to put toward areas of the conference that have more impact.

One improvement would be making information about openings easier to access. Maps, schedules, and QR codes would allow members to independently navigate optional events without needing as much staff or volunteer support.

This approach may only work for a conference the size of MAPC. One thing that worked well in Manhattan was dedicating a single night to gallery openings within a concentrated downtown area. That kind of model could also work in a mid-sized city like Albuquerque. You might still need a bus, but it would only be going to one location. In New Orleans, for example, one night focused on Julia Street galleries, and another on St. Claude/Bywater, which featured more alternative spaces.

If buses are used, sharing routes and schedules ahead of time would be a big improvement. Even a printed handout distributed the day before or at the bus stop would be better than no information at all. Another alternative to a formal print hop could be providing a guide to shows and print shops that attendees can explore on their own time.

Finally, having a message board on the SGCI website for ride shares, roommates, or informal meetups could be a helpful addition for future conferences.

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## Themed Portfolios

SGCI Representative: Javier Flores



There was a huge effort to include all of the 2020 portfolios, along with issuing a new call for 2025 exchanges. In hindsight, we should have limited the number of new portfolios accepted more so than we did. Because we were essentially accommodating portfolios from two conferences, we ended up overwhelmed.

Moving forward, portfolios should be treated with the same level of care and intention as a gallery exhibition. That includes proper handling, clear installation plans, appropriate presentation, and thoughtful packing and storage.

At UPR, we installed several themed portfolios, and the biggest issue was a lack of clear information about where they would be displayed. Some were placed in areas exposed to the elements, which is not ideal for archival material or overall security. In the future, installation details—including exact locations and environmental conditions—need to be confirmed well in advance.

Another major challenge was installation hardware. In many locations, including the juried exhibition, we were not allowed to put small pinholes in the walls. This forced us to rely on museum putty, which is messy, unreliable, and in some cases stained the backs of prints. Whenever possible, we need permission to use small pins or nails for safer and more secure installation.

We also needed more support at installation sites from island steering committee members and designated site contacts. That expectation should have been clearly communicated. In several cases, we were left to install multiple portfolios ourselves, including those that had originally been intended for the 2020 conference. Not only was volunteer help limited, but in at least one location, the direct site contact did not assist at all.

Overall, there was a lack of coordination between the board and the steering committee to ensure enough hands were available for portfolio installation. For future conferences, it's critical to have reliable site contacts and confirmed volunteers ready to work at each location.

In spaces like UPR, some portfolios were exposed to the elements, compromising both the archival integrity and security of the work. Clearer agreements with venues about environmental conditions and installation methods are essential going forward.

A List of Themed Portfolios and Organizers are below:

**The AI Print Workshop**

Organizer: Dana Potter

**Tactical Communications - Comunicación Táctica**

Organizers: Rae Helms, Francesca Lally

**Salt & Blood of Hidden Kinships**

Organizers: Corinne Teed and Ron Abram

**Print A Bird on It**

Organizer: Daniella Napolitano

**Landmarking**

Organizer: Alex R.M. Thompson

**De los árboles, para los árboles**

Organizers: Kimiko Miyoshi, Tava Tedesco

**Collaging Identity**

Organizers: Dave DiMarchi and Brett Taylor

**Aunque naciera en la luna**

Organizers: Elisa Dore, Azin Yousefiani

**Lessons from Our Mother Tongues**

Organizer: Danqi Cai

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*\*\*2020 Conference Portfolios*

**\*\*Sumergir y Resurgir/Submerge and Reemerge**

Organizer: Ruthann Godollei

**\*\*Printilla**

Organizer: Kelly Nelson

**\*\*Celestial | Terrestrial**

Organizers: Andrew Kozlowski, Sheila Goloborotko, Jill Parisi-Phillips, Dmitry Tetin

**\*\*Disaster Relief**

Organizer: Jaime Knight

**\*\*Mestizaje**

Organizer: Becci Spruill

**\*\*Carpeta Gráfica: Cuentos, Mitos y Leyendas de América Latina y el Caribe**

Organizers: Reinaldo Gil Zambrano, Manuel Guerra

**\*\*Washed Over – Lithographic Stone as a Vessel of Resilience and Metaphor**

Organizer: Mark Bovey

**\*\*International Standards/Printshop Signage**

Organizer: Camilla Taylor, Linda Lyke

**\*\*MAPPING THE ANTHROPOCENE**

Organizers: Karen Oremus, Catherine Bebout

**\*\*Resurgimiento : Over Land and Sea**

Organizer: Myles Calvert

**\*\*We all come from Somewhere**

Organizer: Juana Estrada Hernandez, Calliandra Hermanson

**\*\*Lawful/Unlawful**

Organizers: Clare Samani, Carlie Salomons

**\*\*Tidalectics: A marine biology print portfolio**

Organizer: Eveline Kolijn

**\*\*Certum Tempus**

Organizer: Stephanie Alaniz

**\*\*ReDivEdCo**

Organizer: Barry O'Keefe

**\*\*Earth/Mother**

Organizer: Daniella Napolitano

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## Vendors + Publishers Fair

SGCI Representative: Adriana Barrios



Eighteen conventional vendors participated in the fair in Puertograbando. These included print product companies, publishers, and university programs. In addition, local print collectives and publishers from around Puerto Rico were invited to share their work in the Vendors fair. This inclusion was appreciated by the local community and effectively doubled the size of the fair. It also meant there was increased foot traffic in the fair from San Juan residents who were welcome to attend both the fair and the open portfolio.

The Vendor fair and Open Portfolio shared the Los Rosales space. It was also the hub for the auction and the member's portfolio drop off. All of this activity sharing the same space meant that the fair was well attended. The space was a bit difficult to find for attendees initially, and since it was on the ground floor of the parking garage, it wasn't the most inviting space to approach, but fit our needs well once inside.

It seemed that vendors appreciated being centrally located and having guaranteed visitors throughout much of the conference. The one request we've received for some time now is for the fair to be shorter (perhaps two days) so that vendors have a chance to enjoy the rest of the conference and the host community.

The communications with the hotel for access to Los Rosales was an issue. Sharing facility contacts with the steering committee and board in the future will make it easier to get a response from our institutional partners in a timely manner.

*\*SGCI is very grateful to our vendors for their participation in the conference.*

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## Conference Website and Program

Representative: Blake Sanders

The conference website was hosted on the SGCI site. Whenever possible, page text was in English and Spanish to maintain our commitment to a bilingual conference. The advantage was all web design could be done in house relatively quickly. The downside was a somewhat convoluted site menus navigation. In the future a more radical rebuild of the SGCI website menu hierarchy should be undertaken so that conference materials are highlighted and have ample representation on the homepage. As the conference develops the menus should be



altered so that newer, more relevant information is most visible. Compressing menus will also make it much easier to navigate on phones, where most of the membership is experiencing the site, especially during the conference. Archiving older materials as the conference progresses will make it easier to preserve the full conference, a necessary evil for when the organization is recruiting future conference partners, or applying for grants and other outside funding.

The conference registration was hosted on the site and built out via MembershipWorks. Registration discounts were afforded to local artists, something that was greatly appreciated by older Puerto Rican artists who felt acknowledged and respected by the organization. Something like this should be offered in the future if possible. In the registration form attendees were able to opt into the open portfolio, membership portfolio, sign up for the awards party, etc. However, once the form was submitted, participants were unable to return to form to edit their registration, like adding OP, MP, or cancelling their registration. This was handled in house by creating supplemental online forms for members to add on OP or MP to their registration where the changes were charged directly to their membership account. This solution required frequent announcements in newsletters to let attendees know the option was available and where to find it. In the future the Executive Director will consult with MembershipWorks to attempt to create a registration system that members can return to to make changes. Part of that system would allow attendees to cancel registration if circumstances arise where they can no longer attend. In those cases a set service charge would be enforced so that members have some accountability to the conference.

The program was designed by Gino Castellanos. This was the first time we had a program in both English and Spanish. This created significant design challenges on top of the translation work for Gino and we applaud his efforts. The program was available as a navigable PDF on the conference site. No hard copy was created. In the future a small run of a printed version would be welcomed by some conference participants. In this case there wasn't time to have a printed version in time after final edits. This was actually an advantage since some changes had to be made even during the conference. New versions could then be posted on the site and announcements made to the attendees.

There were many balls in the air as the conference approached so placement and times of some items were not finalized until weeks, instead of months, out from the start of the event. As a result there were many daily edits to the program that Gino was forced to make on his own. A single document was created for all Board members to place all daily edits in to streamline the process. In the future if a

single designer is hired, they need a dedicated proofreader who can catch all minor changes like grammar and spelling, and checking for scheduling accuracy. This could be a steering committee or board member. If it is a person in the designer's firm, for example, they should be in regular contact with conference organizers. Alternatively, a working version of the program could be made available to a dedicated rep for the organizer to make changes, then the designer can transfer those changes to the master document. Having a single person with access makes too much responsibility and too little teamwork.



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## Executive Board and Steering Committee Relations

Representative: Blake Sanders

San Juan provided a unique travel difficulty for the bulk of our board members. Many were not able to attend a site visit prior to the conference, and some didn't arrive on the island much in advance of installation and final conference set up. This meant the city and the hotel were new experiences for them at the start of the conference. Unfamiliarity made it difficult at first for organizers to help conference attendees navigate the conference hotel and partner institutions.

The relatively short organization period for the conference and the lack of site visits also meant there were limited opportunities for the Executive Board to gel with the local Steering Committee. As a result delineation of responsibilities was not always clear and Steering Committee members were often relegated to behind the scenes. While it's not uncommon for conference organizers to be unrecognized during the events, the cultural and political weight of the US's colonial relationship with Puerto Rico added to a strained dynamic. The expectation of the Island Steering Committee to be recognized, celebrated, and really get to show off the city's print culture is understandable and admirable. The opening event did a terrific job of highlighting the local culture. By the end of the conference, an exhausted Board and SC meant that same care was not demonstrated at the awards party. That must be remedied going forward.

If advance Board site visits are possible for future conferences, the Board should arrange for some sort of community outreach events, through live printing or demonstrations in local schools/printshops for example. Artwork created during these outreach events could be shown at the conference to illustrate the connection with the community. The goal should be to start giving back to the host community before the conference to build interest in the conference and trust in the organization's commitment to the city and its people.

In the future every attempt should be made to integrate Board members into Steering Committee subcommittees from the beginning of the conference planning process if possible. This will allow for some camaraderie to grow organically in case full board site visits are not financially feasible. An open invitation for Board members to attend steering committee meetings would help as well, with an expectation that the entire organizing cohort meet virtually at least monthly in the last 4 months leading up to the conference. The Steering Committee chair(s) should also be invited to attend Board meetings to provide a progress report and to witness how the Board is working toward the shared goals of the conference.

A mandatory meeting for all Board and SC members should be held Tuesday afternoon of the conference or Wednesday morning at the latest. This will allow last minute juggling of personnel as final setup takes place before attendees arrival. The week of the conference Board and SC members should be available at all sites where installation and set up is taking place to share the work. Having abundant volunteers with a concrete schedule on hand to make the work lighter will also help reduce pressure on organizers. Try to set up shared meals (and maybe scheduled drinks/activities) during set up and deinstallation days to nurture that camaraderie. A daily casual meeting over breakfast or at a reception should also be scheduled to give organizers a chance to swap stories, reflect on events, and ask questions and/or ask for help if needed. A robust text chain (or WhatsApp etc) should absolutely be

established so that everyone has the opportunity to request a hand or offer help. Board and SC members should also wear shirts or other identifying gear so attendees can be easily identified for questions.

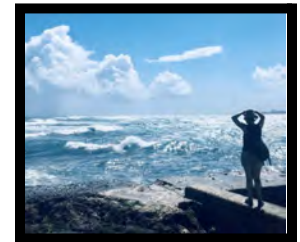
At the opening and closing events Steering Committee members should be recognized on par with the Board. As they are the boots on the ground leading up to the conference, and the key connections to the host community, they should get first recognition and should be the face of the conference throughout the week. Volunteers should be recognized broadly as well. The Board should be visible, too, as organizers, and as recruiters for future Board members. They are the face of the organization. A meaningful gesture of recognition and thanks with a physical award should be given to all organizers at the awards party. They are being compensated with memberships, but a boisterous and heartfelt thank you in front of the attendees and the community will be more memorable and appreciated.

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## Conclusion

Claudia Wilburn, SGCI Past-President (2023 - 2025)

If you have read through this document, thank you for your time and support of SGCI. It was documents like this, postmortem reports of past conferences, in addition to the handbook, that helped us organize and plan the conference structure for Providence & Puerto Rico. Both conferences had some difficulties on the back end, but my hope is that those who experienced the conferences as a participant found joy, community, connectivity, inspirations and picked up some local knowledge and good tools from our vendors. Puerto Rico, both the island and the community of artists is amazing. I hope that I can maintain some of the friendships I developed with the Steering Committee and look forward to returning to the island.



In my time working as President of the organization, I believe our board was able to effect some much needed changes and build upon some of the reforms set in motion by the previous board. In the time following the PR 2025 conference, the Board has changed hands and the direction they are going is full of promise. They have grown some of the proverbial seeds we planted and the 2027 Pittsburgh Conference planning is well underway, with a robust Steering Committee. Many thanks to Blake Sanders, his long hours of working as the Executive Director for SGCI helped to manifest this document and are laying the groundwork for truly international printmaking opportunities to our membership.