



Creative Placemaking & Real Estate Development Speaker Biographies



Ellie Balk
Artist

I am a public artist and my work centers on mathematics and data visualization. Through color and abstraction, I create systems to tell information. I am inspired by data as a means to ignite conversation and investigation. The interactive nature of the large-scale work allows people to experience a connection to space and to each other. In the studio, I have been using data to

document space, time and sound by creating work that allows for interactive visual play through painting, printmaking, stained glass and sculpture. I am based in St. Louis and work internationally. My murals can be experienced throughout Brooklyn, New York, St. Louis, Missouri and in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Mae Rim, Thailand and Kassak Sud in Senegal, West Africa. I hold a MFA from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York and a BFA from Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

Photo courtesy of Bill Motchan



Jason Braidwood
President, Koman Group

As Koman's President, Jason oversees all aspects of firm operations. He has led half a billion dollars in transactions for the company, including CityPlace, the firm's flagship mixed-use office campus, Clayton on the Park, a 213-unit luxury apartment high-rise, and Centene Plaza, a 485,000 square foot Class A office development in Clayton. Most recently, Jason has helped guide Koman into downtown St. Louis with its 700 Market and Cupples 9 office developments. Each feature historic tax credit, tax increment financing and New Markets Tax Credit structures and total 280,000 square feet of adaptive reuse/historic rehabilitation.

Prior to joining Koman, Jason was Vice President of private equity fund Strength Property Partners, specializing in urban real estate development investments throughout the greater Midwest. Jason also served as Chief Financial Officer for Connektiv Companies, an urban development firm specializing in mixed-use brownfield projects, and was Financial Associate for Royal Oak, Michigan-based Milestone Realty Services.



Erika Fiola

Director of Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships, Regional Arts Commission

Erika Fiola is the director of Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis (RAC). Her primary focus is building and launching new programs for community impact. Erika also oversees the Community Arts Training (CAT) Institute, an innovative program centered on the belief that art has the power to be an agent for positive social change.

Previously, Erika served as the Impact Advancement Officer for ArtsWave in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she guided the strategic direction of a \$10 million grantmaking portfolio to align with ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action, a ten-year, data-driven plan to build a more vibrant economy and connected community.

Erika also served as the Strategic Initiatives Manager for Agenda 360, an effort of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber that led the implementation of a long-range community vision with a specific focus on issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, talent attraction, and public transportation.

Erika earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri – Columbia and a master's in urban planning and real estate development from Saint Louis University.



Garrick Hamilton

Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Koman Group

Garrick Hamilton is the Executive Vice President and General Counsel for The Koman Group, a commercial real estate development and investment firm specializing in Class A office, multi-family, retail and mixed-use projects throughout the Midwest.

Garrick has been a member of Koman's executive team since joining the firm in 2006 and is responsible for the coordination of all legal aspects of Koman's projects and investments. His professional duties include structuring significant commercial development and redevelopment projects involving complex economic financing packages, including tax increment financing, State and Federal Historic and New Market tax credits, Community Improvement and Transportation Development Districts, tax abatement and infrastructure development tax credits.

Garrick previously served as the President of the Missouri Growth Association, a commercial real estate political advocacy group, from 2013 to 2016, and currently acts as General Counsel to Pedal the Cause, a nonprofit initiative founded by the Bill and Amy Koman Foundation to raise funds and awareness for cancer research and patient care in St. Louis and San Diego. Garrick also serves on the Board of Directors for the Central Institute for the Deaf and the Downtown St. Louis Community Improvement District.

Prior to joining Koman, Garrick practiced law at Husch & Eppenger, LLC, in its St. Louis office.



Mallory Nezam
Multi-media Public Artist

Mallory Nezam is a creative consultant who loves cities and believes that we have the tools to make them more equitable and joyful. She specializes in creative placemaking, urban planning, cultural equity, and equitable community development. Her cross-sector practice engages government, artists, advocacy groups, elected officials and urban planners to de-silo the way we run cities. She has helped build inaugural Arts & Culture teams in non-arts organizations at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council of Boston, Transportation for America and PolicyLink. While at Transportation for America, she co-wrote a national field scan on arts, culture and transportation which continues to serve as a roadmap for creative placemaking in transportation. She currently tours the U.S. delivering workshops and trainings to local government, community organizations and arts institutions about the value of engaging arts and equity and collaborates on creative placemaking projects throughout the country. As a St. Louis native, she is the founder of St. Louis Improv Anywhere, and co-founder of #ChalkedUnarmed and the St. Louis Artists. Through her art practice she playfully disrupts public space using play and participatory performance. She holds a Masters of Design from Harvard's Graduate School of Design and her research focuses on the racial equity impacts of artists residencies in local government.