

Gilbert Garcia

1. Do you have an Arts & Culture policy plan or policy statement?

If so, please send a copy.

I support increasing the Quality of Life for all Houstonians and Art and Culture play an important role in achieving that goal. To show my dedication to this important issue, I released a 7-point Pledge to Houston to elevate Houston to be one of the great world cities. Art and culture enhance the aesthetic apparel of Houston but also contribute to community unity, education, and economic development.

2. How do you personally participate in the arts and culture both in Houston and when traveling?

I am passionate about the arts and my wife DeeDee and I are large donors. We support, finance and produce Broadway shows. We have been involved in the production of "Tina", "Cinderella", "New York New York" and "Over The Rainbow." I am an official Tony nominated producer of New York, New York. I feel supporting these shows is an excellent way to contribute to the cultural landscape and bring the joy of theater to audiences. In Houston I personally support financially and attend plays and musicals at The Hobby Center, The Miller Outdoor Theatre, The Alley, and the AD Players and even the funny Houston Night Court. Supporting and attending local productions is crucial for nurturing the art community and promoting a thriving cultural environment. I also love concerts and attend every chance that I can! In addition I am on the Board of the Children's Museum and I support their summer programming and love the educational programs they put on for children.

3. What specific strategies would your administration undertake to ensure the growth and stability of the creative sector?

I think Education is an important part to ensure the stability of the creative sector so I would work with all the school districts to ensure students have access to arts programming. This would also ensure appreciation for the arts and encourage possible creative careers for some students. I would also advocate for our arts organizations and artists with favorable art policies making sure every group has a seat at the table so that every voice is heard. I would collaborate with other

government entities to ensure our communities are enriched with art by supporting more marketing and increasing visibility for our artists. This may mean that we use social media to highlight our local artists to attract more audiences and encourage a thriving art scene.

4. What opportunities exist for Houston’s artists and creative community to work more closely with city departments?

Public Art can be added to city projects murals or mini murals or sculptures and housing to make areas more desirable and vibrant. City Buildings can also incorporate public art and art shows/exhibits in libraries and city buildings and parks and even surrounding areas like the airport. Which would create opportunities for artists to show their work and engage the community. By collaborating with city departments new grants can be sought to fund public art initiatives. These grants can support the creation and maintenance of public art installations. Public- private partnerships are another valuable avenue for securing funding and resources to support the arts. I believe opportunities exist to work with the super neighborhood alliances to identify needs in each area of town to create a comprehensive plan for public art. This would ensure that the projects would align with the specific characteristics of each neighborhood making them more meaningful and impactful. During my time as Metro Chairman, I was intentional in adding art at different Metro locations created by Houston artists. This showcased the local talent we have in our diverse community.

5. The amount of public funding for the arts through grants is currently limited to HOT funds. Would you consider any additional funding mechanisms and if so, please explain?

I would be open to exploring different options for funding the Arts in Houston. I would encourage more Public/ Private Partnerships and work with developers to ensure art is part of each development.

6. Which recommendations would you prioritize from the FY22 Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) Equity Review?

I believe the city’s art collection implemented in the Civic Art Collection funded by the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) SHOULD reflect the ethnicities of the

citizens of Houston as determined in the census. This will ensure that we strive for diversity and representation in the collection that will celebrate the rich cultural heritage and diverse identities of all of Houston's residents. I have first hand experience and commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. My firm Garcia Hamilton and Associates is minority owned and run and I have won many diversity awards. It would be my goal to foster a sense of belonging and cultural pride among different communities by including art from various ethnicities.