

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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Thursday, March 28, 2024

Start: 10:15 a.m.

Recess: 12:06 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Carlina Rivera, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David M. Carr
Shahana K. Hanif
Kamillah M. Hanks
Crystal Hudson
Farah N. Louis
Chi A. Ossé
Sandra Ung
Nantasha M. Williams

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

A P P E A R A N C E S

Alton Murray—Deputy Commissioner, New York City
Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)

Lance Polivy—General Counsel, New York City
Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)

Ryan Max—Chief of External Affairs Director, New
York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA)

Regina Bain— Executive Director, Louis Armstrong
House Museum

Tiva Baloi— Education and Public Programs
Coordinator, The Green-Wood Cemetery

Jessica Baker Vodoor— President and CEO of Snug
Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden

Susan Hapgood— Executive Director for
International Studio and Curatorial Program

Jaimee Todd— Artist at Artworks Residency
Program, Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning

George Sheer— Executive Director of Elizabeth
Foundation for the Arts

Gonzalo Casals—Co-Director at Culture & Arts
Policy Institute

Yelena Keller— Assistant Curator for Studio
Museum in Harlem

Yazmany Arboleda—Civic Engagement Commission;
Artist-In-Residence for the Civic Engagement
Commission in New York City; Inaugural People's
Artist for the City of New York

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Joseph Rizzi—Director of External Affairs at
Federation of Italian American Organization of
Brooklyn, In support of Resolution 0074-2024

Angelo Vivolo—Self, In support of Resolution
0074-2024

John Gabriele, Junior— President of the Columbia
Association of NYC Department of Sanitation, In
support of Resolution 0074-2024

1 COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, and welcome to
3 the New York City Committee Hearing on The Committee
4 on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International
5 Intergroup Relations. At this time, please place all
6 electronic devices to vibrate or silent mode.

7 If you wish to submit written testimony you may
8 do so by sending it to testimony@council.nyc.gov ,
9 once again that's testimony@council.nyc.gov.

10 At no time during the hearing is anyone to
11 approach the dais. Thank you for your cooperation.

12 Chair Rivera, we are ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: (GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING IN)

14 Good morning, I am Council Member Carlina Rivera,
15 Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs,
16 Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations.

17 Welcome to our hearing on: Oversight - Where Are
18 NYC's Artists-in-Residence?

19 In addition, today the Committee will hearing
20 Resolution 0074-2024 a Resolution recognizing April
21 17 annually as Giovanni da Verrazzano Day in the City
22 of New York, Sponsored by Council Member David Carr.

23 Now I will call on Council Member Carr to make a
24 brief statement about this resolution.

25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair Rivera,
3 thank you for having this hearing and for hearing
4 this resolution today. Giovanni da Verrazzano is a
5 figure of great significance to New Yorkers of
6 Italian descent. The community in the 20th century
7 was looking to name a major landmark in the City
8 after one of its own that would represent the
9 significant contributions and presence of the Italian
10 American community in the City of New York. And that
11 is what ultimately led to the naming of the
12 Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge, which connects the
13 boroughs of Staten Island and Brooklyn, and
14 particularly now the two different parts of my
15 district which span both sides of the bridge. And he
16 continues to be an individual in history who connects
17 Italian Americans to the narrative of American
18 History. By sailing into New York Harbor, he was the
19 first European to reach New York. And from their
20 perspective to have discovered it, of course we know
21 that it's not the way to phrase it today, but
22 nevertheless, it was a landmark moment in what
23 ultimately became the American story. April 17th is
24 the day that he first sailed into the harbor, so we
25 are looking to recognizing April 17th annually as

1
2 Giovanni da Verrazzano Day, because the exploration
3 and subsequent settlement by individuals who
4 ultimately are the ancestors and forebearers of many
5 of us here in New York - from the 16th century until
6 the present day -and in particular, this April 17th
7 is the 500th Anniversary of that particular voyage,
8 so we look to acknowledge at to make it a day of
9 celebration as it intends to be for Italian Americans
10 across the City of New York.

11 I urge my colleagues to support this resolution,
12 and I thank the Chair, of course, for her
13 consideration and support, thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

15 Now for today's oversight hearing: Where Are
16 NYC's Artists-in-Residence? The answer to that
17 question, or certainly should be, everywhere. We know
18 from our incredible arts and cultural community
19 organizations that artists-in-residence who are
20 creating and exhibiting or performing their own new
21 works, as well as teaching artists, who are bringing
22 arts education activities to so many audience, are
23 doing their work across the five boroughs in schools,
24 senior centers, libraries, City agencies, botanical
25 gardens, factory spaces, and more. These artists are

1 supported by a variety of public and private funders
2 including our own Department of Cultural Affairs, the
3 New York State Council on the Arts, and many
4 philanthropic organizations to whom all of us are
5 grateful. We're also grateful for artists-in-
6 residence who are creating paintings, musical
7 compositions, dances, sculptures, and theater pieces.
8 and more - and who are giving us a glimpse of them in
9 galleries, on stages, and in public spaces.
10

11 As New York City is recognized as the greatest
12 city in the world because of our arts and culture
13 sector, we are grateful to the over 3,500 teaching
14 artists working now to give our youngest New Yorkers
15 in schools, and our oldest New Yorkers in senior
16 centers, a chance to engage with the Arts - either by
17 making art, by exhibiting or performing art, or by
18 appreciating the works of other artists. New York
19 City would not be New York City without all of them.

20 According to the Center for an Urban Future, our
21 city is home to more artists than ever with tens of
22 thousands of them here and so many hungry for an
23 opportunity to create and share their talents across
24 generations.
25

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2 Today we look forward to learning more about the
3 programs that work with our youngest and oldest New
4 Yorkers and everyone in between. We hope to hear
5 about the impact of CASA programs, which operate in
6 our public schools and after school hours, and about
7 the SU-CASA programs which operate in our senior
8 centers. Impactful artist programs like that of the
9 Bronx Arts Ensemble, a nonprofit who saw their budget
10 cut this past year adversely affecting their ability
11 to support the professional teaching artists who
12 provide arts education courses in more than 40 public
13 schools in the Bronx every year. These residencies,
14 which last either the full school year or one
15 semester, provide public school students with free-
16 of-charge classes and music, dance, visual arts
17 theater, and musical theater. Great musical
18 organizations, like the Louis Armstrong House Museum,
19 which offers the Armstrong Now Artists-in-Residence
20 program to provide established and emerging artists
21 with a platform for creating new work inspired by the
22 artifacts and documents in the Armstrong archives.
23 Artists-in-residence spend time at the museum for an
24 intensive period of research and rehearsal and then
25 present a public performance of their work at the

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2 museum. A previous Armstrong Now artist-in-residence
3 was the Grammy award-winning artist Esperanza
4 Spalding. I am thankful to these organizations as
5 well as the Association for the Development of Vocal
6 Artistry and Neighborhood Culture Enrichment, also
7 known as MORE Opera to Wave Hill, to the Green-Wood
8 Cemetery, the Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical
9 Garden, the International Studio And Curatorial
10 Program, and Lincoln Center, who provided a number of
11 fantastic examples of the work of their artists. And
12 it's mentioned in our briefing paper provided for
13 this Committee Hearing.

14 And let me just say one final word about the
15 Public Artists-in-Residence or PAIR Program, which I
16 know we will hear about from the Administration, it
17 embeds artists in our own City agencies. It started
18 in 2015, and the PAIR Program uses artists to tackle
19 civic issues in creative ways. DCLA works together
20 with each selected City agency to choose a focus for
21 the arts project and then to choose an artist for the
22 project. Three or four artists partner with agencies
23 every year, and in the past that's included Health +
24 Hospitals, Department of Sanitation, Commission on
25 Human Rights just to name a few. And these agencies,

1
2 all of whom serve New Yorkers, have benefited from
3 the creative insights of our city artists. And to
4 just give one example, Gioncarlo Valentine in the
5 City Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes was a
6 partnership. Valentine, a photographer and writer
7 worked with OPHC, that's the Office for the
8 Prevention of Hate Crimes, to find creative ways to
9 tell the stories of Black transgender and gender non-
10 conforming individuals in New York City - including
11 what their needs were and what they faced. Valentine
12 noted that he hoped that folks who feel a sense of
13 prejudice or confusion around the realities faced by
14 transgender and gender non-conforming people will be
15 moved to educate themselves and show up for their
16 community. It's our hope that our city also continues
17 to follow this same mission and motivation and
18 support the work of artists.

19 Through funding and creative partnership, we can
20 remain a place where art civic engagement and
21 expression can live harmoniously, even in the
22 unlikeliest of spaces.

23 Now I want to acknowledge my colleagues on the
24 Committee who are present: Council Member Ung, who
25 has joined us remotely, Council Member Louis, Council

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2 Member Carr, Council Member Hanks, and Council Member
3 Ossé.

4 I want to also thank the committee staff who put
5 together this hearing, my own staff, just incredible
6 people, and everyone who is here to testify.

7 And just a reminder, if you'd like to testify
8 please fill out a slip with the Sergeant at Arms, and
9 make sure that we have your name - and state your
10 name prior to your testimony for the record.

11 And we're ready to start with the panel of DCLA
12 Administrators. Christina, please swear them in.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, good morning, please raise
14 your right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
15 whole truth, and nothing but the truth, before this
16 committee, and to respond honestly to council member
17 questions?

18 PANEL: (AFFIRMS)

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, you may begin when
20 ready.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Good morning, Chair
22 Rivera and members of the Committee, I am Alton
23 Murray, Deputy Commissioner the New York City
24 Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) here to testify
25 on today's topic: Where Are NYC's Artists-in-

1 Residence? I'm joined by several of my colleagues
2 here today, Lance Polivy, our general counsel, and
3 Ryan Max our Chief of External Affairs Director.
4

5 Artists are the lifeblood of New York City, and
6 we are committed to making sure they can continue to
7 live and work here. We gain so much from being a
8 place where art isn't just presented but actually
9 made. We attract artists from across the world, and
10 our city is much stronger for it. We also recognize
11 that the ongoing affordability crisis threatens our
12 status as a global arts hub. That's why we are
13 pushing for records level of affordable housing - the
14 Adams' Administration financed a record number of
15 affordable homes last year, alongside other supports
16 for working people -including artists. That will keep
17 New York City at the forefront of the global arts
18 community. These efforts include the Mayor's City of
19 Yes for Housing Opportunity proposal, which will help
20 build a little bit of housing across the entire City,
21 a big step towards addressing our housing and
22 affordability crisis.

23 Working with groups like the Entertainment
24 Community Fund, ArtBuilt, and EDC we also support
25 efforts to get artists into affordable housing while

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2 creating affordable artist works space. On top of
3 this, DCLA remains the largest supporter of arts and
4 culture in America. Just last month, we announced
5 over \$52 million in grants for approximately 1,031
6 cultural groups. These groups put artists to work in
7 communities across the five boroughs. This includes
8 nearly \$3 million in support of local arts councils,
9 that in turn provide funding to individual artists
10 and collectives. In spite of the fiscal crisis we
11 face as a city, we're proud of this ongoing
12 investment in our artists and arts community. While
13 we support artists in many ways, artist residencies
14 are particularly a powerful way that organizations
15 and institutions can enter into a mutually supportive
16 relationship with artists. Artists need space and
17 resources to do their work, and depending on the
18 nature of the residency or fellowship, artists can
19 also contribute their unique skills and ways of
20 seeing the world.

21 DCLA Public Artists-in-Residence program, or
22 PAIR, is one example of the latter. PAIR was
23 established, as you said, Chair Rivera, in 2015 when
24 we placed the inaugural artist in the Mayor' Office
25 of Immigrant Affairs. There, artist Tania Bruguera

1 explored ways of building trust for the new IDNYC
2 Program within the immigrants and undocumented
3 resident communities. The model and idea for PAIR,
4 though, stretched back to 1977 when artist Mierle
5 Ukeles began working as artist-in-residence with the
6 New York City Department of Sanitation. She would
7 serve in that role for several decades. Some of the
8 projects she created there remain landmarks for
9 performance art. For example, in *Touch Sanitation*,
10 Miss Ukeles shook the hands of over 8,000 DSNY
11 employees telling each of them in the process: "Thank
12 you for keeping New York City alive." In the process,
13 she radically reframed the sanitation workers' labor,
14 and increased the visibility and dignity of their
15 work in the eyes of their fellow residents.
16

17 In 2021, we placed the first PAIR artist with
18 the Sanitation Department since Miss Ukeles when
19 artist sTo Len began working there. Over the next two
20 years, he built on Ms. Ukeles' work diving into the
21 Department archive, and exploring the often
22 underappreciated work it performed for our city. He
23 reactivated a decades-old print shop and digitized
24 decades-old archival videos all under the banner of
25 his *Office of(In)Visibility*. Len is now engaged in an

1
2 artist residency program in the Queens Botanical
3 Garden showing how these creative collaborations can
4 lead to greater cross pollination within our cultural
5 community. *Literally*: Len's project at QBG, is a
6 durational exhibition that will grow and respond to
7 the seasonal transformation occurring at the garden.

8 Since 2015, we've placed 24 artists-in-residence
9 within 21 agencies. Most recently, we had artists
10 working with DDC, Department of Homeless Services,
11 and Health + Hospitals. I attended the unveiling of a
12 permanent new mural at Lincoln Hospital, created as
13 part of our PAIR artist Modesto Flako Jimenez's
14 broader residency with the Department of Health +
15 Hospital. Flako worked with Health + Hospitals, *Guns*
16 *Down, and Life Up* program to give its youth
17 participants creative outlets to express themselves.
18 This was followed by a showcase at Carnegie Hall last
19 year, which demonstrated the many principles and
20 projects that Flako's young collaborators created.

21 Another public artist-in-residence is Yazmany
22 Arboleda, he was embedded in the City's Civic
23 Engagement Commission in 2021 shortly after the
24 office was created. This meant that CEC integrated an
25 artist's perspective in the foundation of their work

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2 and the results have been remarkable. They created
3 The *People's Bus*, a former Department of Correction
4 bus that Mr. Arboleda transformed into a community
5 center and arts hub on wheels. Artists-driven
6 festivals and designs are also at the center of their
7 public engagement effort. All thanks to the openness
8 and integrating of artists into our work from the
9 ground floor.

10 The PAIR model is also being adopted by other
11 cities. Los Angeles's Creative Strategist Program,
12 for instance, places artists, art administrators, and
13 other creative workers in local government agencies.

14 At Materials for the Arts, DCLA's beloved
15 created reuse program, artists-in-residence have
16 become a powerful way that we give artists financial
17 aid, materials, and free space.

18 The MFDA Artists-in-Residence program was founded
19 in 2012. Since its inception, the program has
20 showcased a remarkable diversity of artwork that can
21 be made through repurposed material that might
22 otherwise be thrown into landfills. Over the years,
23 MFTA has welcomed 27 resident artists to share their
24 innovative work, which is displayed prominently in
25 the MFTA Gallery at the end of their residency. Their

1
2 artworks serves as inspiration to the thousands of
3 organizations, teachers, students, and members of the
4 public passing through, illustrating the
5 transformative potential of MFTA supplies.

6 Building on the success of the Artists-in-
7 Residence program, in 2023 MFTA proudly introduced
8 the Designer-in-Residence program which supports
9 emerging designers by providing them with studio
10 space, a stipend, and a platform to exhibit their
11 work. This month, MFTA launched a call for a Visual
12 Artists-in-Residence offering young designers
13 unlimited access to MFTA.

14 Through DCLA's Cultural Development Fund and
15 Cultural Institutions Group, we also support
16 residency in all shapes and sizes across the city.
17 Here are 10 illustrative examples:

18 Established in 1976, Brooklyn's Dieu Donn e is the
19 leading nonprofit dedicated to artists using the
20 process of handmade paper making. Their residency
21 program includes the Workspace Residency, serving
22 emerging artists, and the Lab Grant Residency,
23 serving mid-career artists.

24 The Apollo Master Artists-in-Residence program
25 engages artists for a three-year period to produce,

1
2 present, and create new work and events to support
3 emerging and established artists of color.

4 The International Studio and Curatorial Program,
5 one that I personally experienced, is a subsidized
6 studio program developed specifically for emerging
7 and early career artist based in New York City. The
8 program offers works space and professional
9 development for seven artists each year a one-year
10 residences with the option to renew for a second
11 year. The programs take place in tandem with ISCP's
12 acclaimed International Residency Program.

13 Through La MaMa's Residency Grant, artists-in-
14 residence are given time, space, and resources to
15 make work using new creative tools and formats at the
16 intersection of online and live theater. These
17 artists present the past, present, and future of this
18 pioneering organization.

19 Residency Unlimited provides residencies for
20 local artists from underserved communities via the
21 2023 Voices of Multiplicity and 2024 New York City
22 Artist Residency Program.

23 Studio Museum in Harlem Artists-in-Residence
24 Program gives emerging artists of African and Afro-
25 Latinx descent an opportunity to develop their

1
2 practice in an 11-month residency. The program has
3 incubated some of the most acclaimed artists of our
4 time, including Jordan Casteel, David Hermans, Simone
5 Leigh, Kerry James Marshall, Mickalene Thomas, and
6 Kehinde Wiley. While the Studio Museum's New Home is
7 being built, they've continued their artists-in-
8 residency program in partnership with MoMA and MoMA
9 PS1 where you can currently see the latest cohort's
10 work on view in Long Island City.

11 The Bronx Museum's AIM Fellowship, established
12 in 1980, is the museum's flagship artist development
13 program. It provides resources to guide emerging
14 artists through the often challenging professional
15 practices of the art world. Since forming the AIM
16 Fellowship has provided pivotal career support to a
17 diverse roster of over 1,200 of New York's most
18 promising artists.

19 Snug Harbor on Staten Island has the Performing
20 Arts Salon Saturdays (PASS) Artists-in-Residence and
21 Performance Program, which supports the creation and
22 development of new work in dance, music, theater,
23 and multidisciplinary performances.

24 Weeksville Heritage Center's Artists-in-Residence
25 program connects working artists from the African

1 diaspora to the history and culture of Weeksville. It
2 leverages the organization Hunterfly Road House as a
3 site of inspiration, creation, and exhibition for
4 work that speaks to the present and helps make
5 Weeksville history relevant and resonant.

6
7 The Public Theater has a wide range of residency
8 fellowship and other programs that support writers,
9 musician, and multidisciplinary performance artists
10 in the creation of their work. This includes a
11 partnership with Brooklyn College that grants time,
12 space, and resources to both professional artists and
13 CUNY theater students; a social just justice
14 playwright and residence program that supports women,
15 Femme, and non-binary scholar playwrights of the
16 African diaspora through a two-year engagement and
17 more.

18 We are also proud to partner with the City
19 Council under the Cultural After School Adventures
20 (CASA) and SU-CASA programs. This year, the City is
21 investing more than \$21 million in supporting artists
22 and arts organizations that work with students and
23 seniors throughout the New York City area. Last year,
24 New York Times ran a story with the headline, *The*
25 *Changing Role of Artists-in-Residence* to back its

1
2 claim that, "art institutions are moving away from
3 residency program that support artists in seclusion
4 and towards those that engage with their
5 communities," they led with Queens Museum, where an
6 artist was preparing for a show that was culminating
7 for two years of residency work deeply rooted in the
8 museum engagement in the neighborhood of Corona,
9 Queens.

10 The residencies we support across the city, and
11 our own PAIR and MFTA residency programs reflects
12 this broader trend. Supporting artists does not mean
13 giving them cloistered space away from society,
14 increasingly, it is a way to closer to the art
15 community.

16 I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on
17 this topic, and I am happy to take questions, thank
18 you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you so much for your
20 testimony and mentioning the article in the Times. I
21 think that was last April, and it said there, I think
22 very clearly most artist recognize the significance
23 of interaction for their own careers. And I know many
24 of our arts and cultural institutions are doing that.
25 There are these incredible programs currently

1
2 implanted. I think for many of the council members,
3 why we are so interested in supporting our artists is
4 because not only do we think it's a mandate by the
5 City, but it is becoming such an increasingly
6 unaffordable place to live that we want to continue
7 to attract talent. So, whether it's housing as that
8 major barrier, ensuring that we have programs that
9 provide that lifeline, that offer stipends - of
10 course money, paid opportunities, but also
11 mentorship. I know their programs really do vary very
12 differently, not just across the city, but across the
13 country - some that provide childcare- just very sort
14 of interesting creative aspects of these programs
15 that I think we can learn from.

16 So, again, I just want to thank you for your
17 testimony. How many Artists-in-Residence or teaching
18 artist programs does DCLA fund - either directly or
19 through the Cultural Development Fund? And do you
20 have an approximation of how much funding that is in
21 direct funding and in CDF grants?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So we recognize the
23 value of arts and arts groups and their importance to
24 our economy, unfortunately we do not have the
25 financial qualifying number of the investment.

1
2 However, we do know that 450 CDF grantees provide
3 direct service to New York City Public Schools. This
4 in turn employs hundreds of teaching artists, 230
5 indicated that they provide programming to people
6 with disabilities, and 320 indicated that they
7 provide professional development programs. So, we do
8 not have the actual quantifiable figures, but we know
9 anecdotally that artists who are working for arts
10 organizations that we support are providing the
11 services that we are mandating.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Have you considered putting
13 together the number of programs as a data point at
14 the very least?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We would certainly
16 entertain that. We do think that it would be onerous
17 on our nonprofit partners, because they will have to
18 break down and quantify the data, and it would be a
19 challenge for them. But, we will definitely entertain
20 and look into that.

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I mean, I appreciate what you
22 are saying, the last thing we want to do for our
23 nonprofits is make any more sort of administrative or
24 cumbersome responsibilities, I get that, I worked at
25 a nonprofit for many years before becoming a

1 councilwoman. I would think it's just recognition for
2 them, they know the work that they're doing. They
3 know exactly what happened ,you know, when those cuts
4 came down, and they know exactly what was affected.
5

6 So, in that way, it could be an interesting
7 exercise. But, I always appreciate that you check in
8 with them fist before asking them to do anything in
9 addition.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes, we will look
11 into that, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: According to DCLA's 2019
13 Action Plan, DCLA supports now PAIR projects annually
14 with various City agencies and offices to develop
15 creative solutions to civic challenges. How does DCLA
16 choose the City agencies to work with, and which City
17 agencies... I said, had been chosen in the past, but
18 you actually went through... we went through quite a
19 few of them between our own testimonies. So, how do
20 you choose which agencies to work with, and how do
21 you choose the civic challenges that have been a
22 focus in the past.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, this starts with
24 an open call from our commissioner to all agencies.
25 The artists then respond through an open call, and

1
2 the artists then submit statements, work that they
3 have done, and then we try to pair them with the
4 agencies. It's a mutually beneficial relationship
5 where agencies have expressed an interest in hosting
6 the artists, and then our agency, through our public
7 art employees, evaluate the right match for each
8 agency with artists to implement the program.

9 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Have you thought about
10 increasing the number of agencies that you work with
11 - from the three or four you work with now?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We are open to it,
13 but it's also the agencies that have to express an
14 interest. When we put out an open call, the agency
15 also has to match and express an interest.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Does DCLA or any other agency
17 keep track of how much funding comes into the City
18 because of its international artists-in-residence
19 programs?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Unfortunately, it
21 goes back to the question, we do not, because we
22 think it would be onerous on our partners to gather
23 that information. But, also, we would be willing to
24 explore that possibility.

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2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Do you have any information
3 on some of the work you're doing with international
4 artists-in-residence programs?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We will get back to
6 you on that.

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Currently we do not.

9 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Does DCLA or any other agency
10 keep track of where emerging artist are living and
11 working in the City, and do you believe that emerging
12 artists are now or could be a stabilizing force in
13 underserved communities?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: (NO RESPONSE)

15 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: You mentioned housing a
16 little bit at the top of your testimony, but it was
17 very brief.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes, that can be a
19 stabilizing force, but, no, we do not have the
20 factual information of where they are. We do know
21 that they work for arts organizations that are
22 throughout the City and that most of our artists and
23 teaching artists still do live in New York City.

24 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay. I think the push, I
25 know certainly in my own community, and there's been

1
2 examples of it in El Barrio, you have these creative
3 spaces where there's performance space, but also
4 actual artists housing. And I realize that artist
5 housing is also an interesting sort of legal
6 discussion in terms of preferences, but I do feel
7 like the push there is especially important and
8 certainly something that the City should be looking
9 into. I know in my own community we have some ideas.
10 It's not easy, but, again, just to get back to the
11 spirit of the city and how we have to keep as much
12 talent here as possible, it... considering it's so
13 unaffordable at the moment.

14 I want to recognize that we have been joined by
15 Council Member Hudson. And I am actually going to go
16 to council member questions if that's okay.

17 Council Member Ossé?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you and good morning.
19 I have a couple questions that want to ask, uh, the
20 first is to start off, with artists of color, in in
21 particular Black artists, are often not given the
22 same opportunities and visibilities, as you know and
23 shared in your testimony, as white artists. How is
24 DCLA working to bring more Black artists and artists
25 of color into these residencies, say like The Public

1
2 Theater, as well as some of the larger cultural
3 institutions?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Most of the
5 residencies are in underserved communities. And from
6 my own personal experience, most of the artists are
7 artists of color. For example, Flako's *Guns Down,*
8 *Life Up* project, the artist was of Latinx descent. He
9 worked in communities of color to give young people
10 an opportunity to express their lives, which in turn
11 ended with a mural that was created with the artists
12 and the students. And it was installed at Lincoln
13 Hospital in the Bronx followed by a project, with the
14 same students from underserved communities, at
15 Carnegie Hall. This program allowed not just artist
16 practice their craft, it allowed students from
17 underserved communities to contribute to this
18 project.

19 I saw another exhibition , an installation, that
20 was done by Kameron Neal. He was an artist that was
21 at the Department of Records. His project looked at
22 film that was recently declassified, which lead to
23 our current surveillance society. And his work was
24 installed in Sunset Park and then it was installed at
25 Lincoln Center. This allowed the opportunity for

1
2 communities... different communities to experience
3 the work, to engage in conversation. So, it's
4 important to stress that we do put a lot of emphasis
5 in making sure that the artists' statement, the work
6 the artist is interesting in doing relates to the
7 current situation and challenges that we have in the
8 city.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: So, could you go more in
10 depth into our DCLA is making that connection between
11 said artist and whatever institution or project that
12 they are working on? Maybe what the outreach process
13 looks like, how these individuals are found to be
14 brought into some of these projects?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, there is an open
16 call for our artist statement and samples of their
17 work. Then there is an interest, the agency expresses
18 an interest, then we match the open call with the
19 agency, and we look at the applications and figure
20 out what subject matter of are of interest to the
21 city as a whole. From there, we pair the artist with
22 the agency, and they have to embed themselves in New
23 York City, because they spend about three months
24 working within the agency to fully understand the
25

1
2 workings of the agency and the community they are
3 going to serve.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Is DCLA doing any
5 partnership or outreach work with CUNY on getting
6 young students involved within New York City who work
7 in the arts on joining some of these residency
8 programs?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, our work with
10 CUNY comes through our CUNY Culture Corps Program.
11 But, Artists-in-Residence is a different program,
12 it's really for professional working artists who
13 truly have an understanding of their mission.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Sure, mm-hmm.

15 Those are all my questions for now, thank you

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you

17 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

18 Do you have plans to expand support for the
19 existing artists-in-residence or teaching artist
20 programs?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We fund organizations
22 that apply for funding, so we're hoping that with the
23 Council's help we can reach more programs that are
24 offering arts education in schools, whereby we will
25 then have more support for teaching artists.

1
2 Pertaining to the PAIR program, we are always
3 open to the idea, but it's a partnership - agencies
4 have to express an interest so then we can do the
5 match.

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I think the agencies are one
7 part of the work. I think the partnership with the
8 community based organizations, they're the ones who
9 are experts in outreach, and cultivation, and
10 professional development. And you should certainly
11 work with the Council, because we do know our
12 districts very, very well. But ,you know, your
13 organization does have the lion's share of the
14 funding. And, so, you mentioned in your testimony
15 over a thousand organizations were funded, and we
16 know that was an interesting process this year but,
17 these organizations did receive it. Are there
18 barriers to providing support to these programs? If
19 so, what are they?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: There could always be
21 more outreach. We can do more outreach on our part;
22 the Council can do more outreach on their part.
23 Borough presidents' offices can do more outreach. So,
24 the barrier would be getting the word out, and we
25 look forward to partnering with the Council, with

1
2 borough presidents' offices, uh, with the
3 Administration to get more interest from underserved
4 communities.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: When you say getting the word
6 out, do you have programs that are not necessarily
7 being filled? I mean, I feel like the programs, a lot
8 of them are at capacity, and there's a lot of room
9 there for expansion even in the PAIR Program, right?
10 It's three to four agencies, even if it's that the
11 agencies are the ones that have to respond, there are
12 certainly other programs I feel that that can be
13 expanded to support more artists.

14 So, you mentioned outreach and what the Council
15 can do. Our initiatives are very, very limited, uh,
16 in terms of the Council work. So, what do you mean by
17 getting the word out?

18 LANCE POLIVY: What we mean by getting the word
19 out is that the more applicants who have artists-in-
20 residence to our CDF program, the more organizations
21 that do artist residencies that we'll be able to fund
22 (sic). So, if there are artist residencies out there
23 that are not applying, if we expand the pool of
24 applicants who do artist residency work, more of them
25 will get funded. So, that's what we mean by

1
2 increased outreach, if we have more of those programs
3 in our candidate pool, then we can fund more of those
4 organizations.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay, we've been joined by
6 Council Member Hanif.

7 How do you anticipate that City budget cuts in
8 the immediate future will affect your ability to
9 support artists-in-residence or teaching artist
10 programs?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: The City has done a
12 very good job at (INAUDIBLE) the budget cuts. We
13 anticipate that we will be able to ramp up our
14 program and be at full throttle the way we were
15 previous to the PEGs.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Do you think, uh, you're
17 still discussing restoration of the Fiscal Year 24
18 budget cuts, correct?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Excellent, uh, actually,
21 Council Member Hanif, do you want to ask questions?
22 Okay, I got you.

23 The Action Plan also imagined that teaching
24 artists should be provided with professional
25 development, along with certified arts educators, in

1
2 order to expand access to arts education for
3 multilingual learners and students with disabilities.

4 How many teaching artists have been provided with
5 this professional development?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Approximately 320 of
7 our partners... nonprofit partners indicate that they
8 do provide teaching artist opportunities, which is a
9 form of professional development training.

10 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: So they provide you said 320?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes, 320 of our
12 nonprofits, and they hire many, many, many teaching
13 artists that ,you know, expands that way.

14 LANCE POLIVY: And another aspect to that
15 question, Council Member, is that we're really proud
16 of the work that MFTA does with respect to training
17 New York City School teachers to do arts education in
18 their schools. So, they do free programs at MFTA to
19 help train public school teachers to then do more
20 innovative arts programming in their schools and to
21 give them the free supplies to do it.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: This has come up many times
23 in the Council, especially now in budget season and
24 ensuring that our schools have ,you know, enough
25 artists, and I know it varies across the school

1
2 systems, and many times they're reliant on the
3 artists that teach, who are associated with CASA and
4 SU-CASA, so while... I think the DOE in the
5 Preliminary Budget Hearing, said that it was probably
6 like 90 percent of schools that had some sort of
7 artist within the facilities themselves - a lot of it
8 is part-time. So, as great as that is, and the
9 number... the statistic that the Chancellor gave was
10 great, but we know it's very minimal, and it could be
11 maybe 60 minutes, and it's only one class at a time.

12 So, what other plans does DCLA have to expand
13 teaching artist program to be more expansive in their
14 outreach, specifically to multilingual learners and
15 students with disabilities?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We plan to encourage
17 and do outreach to underserved communities, to
18 encourage to find new partnerships and new nonprofits
19 who can fill these gaps.

20 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay, all right so something
21 that I've asked... you know what, I'll save this
22 question for afterwards.

23 I will go to Council Member Hanif.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you Chair Rivera, and
25 thank you so much for being here.

1
2 I'd like to know how DCLA is incubating Asian
3 and South Asian artists-in-residence and what you're
4 noticing the barriers are or obstacles in bringing in
5 or recruiting this community of artists?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, understanding the
7 Asian, Asian American Community is important to us. A
8 few years ago, one of our Asian American artists had
9 a really wonderful campaign at the height of Asian
10 hate. She worked in the CDC Office where she created
11 a Stop Asian Hate Campaign, you might have seen them
12 on (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Absolutely...

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So that...

15 CHAIRPERSON HUDSON: It's a brilliant campaign...
16 (CROSS-TALK)

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, that is the kind
18 of project that we encourage and support, and that
19 came out of our PAIR program.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So, is DCLA working on
21 expanding that work? Or, how are we making sure that
22 this community is not left out, or that there's more
23 work being done to really support this community of
24 work? Because, oftentimes what I witness in my
25 community, as one of the few South Asians elected an

1
2 office, and of course, uh, from a community that is
3 often insular and doesn't promote... or stigmatizes
4 the arts and culture as a career opportunity. We want
5 to be able to encourage the arts. In a household
6 where my sister was an artist, and our parents did
7 not encourage the arts as a path, it's important for
8 me to see our city services and agencies have those
9 opportunities and encourage pathways to be able to
10 seek artists-in-residence.

11 I see that the work with ArtBuilt is mentioned
12 here in your testimony. ArtBuilt is a critical
13 organization in my district, particularly in
14 Kensington, which is a dense Bangladeshi working
15 class community, and they've done incredible work
16 over the last decade to support Bangladeshi youth in
17 their in their mobile studio, uh, to do incredible
18 artwork and poetry class... from poetry classes to
19 making kites, to doing multilingual work, and so much
20 more. So, I would love to just hear and be involved
21 in anything that entails specifically the Asian and
22 South Asian community.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, we have to go to
24 unusual places to find those artist who are doing
25 special works that are not on the radar. Just to give

1
2 you an anecdotal story: Last week I went to a
3 (INAUDIBLE) gathering, and there was a gentleman of
4 Southeast Asian descent by way of Guyana, and he is
5 working on a film festival, and he was not aware that
6 there are opportunities for his festival, even though
7 he's not a nonprofit, he's an independent artist, he
8 was not aware that he can apply to the Arts
9 Council...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Sure...

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Queens to get funding
12 and resources for his film festival. So, having those
13 conversations in unusual places, and going where
14 artists are not in the traditional webinars and
15 community meetings is where we will find new projects
16 and highlight the work that we are trying to do in
17 underserved communities.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: That's really wonderful,
19 and I'd love to have a list of those resources as
20 well so that we can share it out from among our
21 offices, thank you.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you, to the Council
24 Member.

1
2 Are any of the artists-in-residence or teaching
3 artist programs that you fund also supported by any
4 private corporate or philanthropic funding?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Because our dollars
6 only go so far, I can say I went to ISCP for a site
7 visit a few months ago, and they have a list, uh,
8 board list of their other funders. So, our funding
9 does help, but a lot of independent residencies
10 depend on other funders and funding sources to
11 maintain the program.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: So, you ,uh, work
13 cooperatively with any private funders to support
14 some of these programs that we're discussing today?

15 LANCE POLIVY: It's a requirement for all of our
16 CDF grantees that DCLA funding cannot support 100
17 percent of any project. So, for any CDF grantee, it's
18 a requirement that they need to go out to private
19 philanthropy, corporate donors, foundations to find
20 additional support. Uh, so for any of the 450
21 organizations that Deputy Commissioner Murray
22 mentioned earlier, they are inherently having to go
23 out and find partners for a percentage of that
24 funding.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: So what is the role that you
3 all are playing in assisting them? I only ask because
4 recently I met with the Deputy Mayor and her team,
5 and because of the cuts that have transpired some of
6 the, I guess, strategy is to see how we can help
7 organizations get to the Mellons and the New York
8 Community Trusts. Those were specifically mentioned,
9 because clearly ,you know, they're large, they're
10 established. But even if that were to happen tomorrow
11 ,you know, even if every single community based
12 organization and nonprofit figured out a way to not
13 just engage with but also secure private funding, I
14 mean, there's still the loss that has happened over
15 the past few months, and especially this fiscal year,
16 in terms of how their budgets have been affected.

17 So, are you actively having conversations with
18 philanthropy, with private funders? Are you working
19 with community based organizations to help them sort
20 of navigate what could be ,you know, a difficult
21 situation?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We have advised
23 nonprofits on an individual basis and point them in
24 directions for sources of funding. One of the things
25 that our grant does, is it does give legitimacy to

1
2 the organization, because having a DCLA grant
3 certifies that you are a worthy organization when you
4 go to philanthropic partners looking for additional
5 funding.

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I agree, I think the grant
7 certainly gives ,uh, another source of credibility.
8 But, in order to, uh, qualify for it, you have to
9 show that you're also seeking private funding. So
10 it's kind of an interesting cycle.

11 Do you think that public... that private or
12 other public revenue streams could be increased to
13 cover the loss of City funds?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: (INAUDIBLE) any good
15 corporate citizen would be more than willing to
16 participate and partner. Arts and culture is such a
17 vital part of New York's economic system that we need
18 private-public partnerships for all these programs to
19 survive. As we deal with our financial crisis, it's
20 incumbent that private partners, whether it's a
21 foundation or corporation, step up to continue to
22 make sure that New York City is a hub for creativity
23 and innovation.

24
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I agree, I think we do need
3 private partnerships to assist, but what is the City
4 doing about that?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: We are always willing
6 to explore convenings, and we're talking to
7 individual organizations. We've had conversations
8 with other foundations about the possibility, but
9 nothing has matured into a full commitment.

10 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I mean I think... I think
11 what I've heard from many cultural organizations and
12 institutions is, unfortunately they have this feeling
13 that ,you know, the City thinks that they're going to
14 be okay, it's all going to work out, that private
15 funding is going to come through. But they've
16 actually seen a lot of private funding and
17 philanthropy almost walk away from the sector. So,
18 that's been incredibly difficult for them to face.

19 So, I feel like as much as the City can be doing,
20 I don't know if it's the Mayor's Fund, whatever it
21 is, there really have to be some, I guess ,you know,
22 pun intendent, creative solutions here, because we
23 all agree it's lifeline, it's the vibrancy it's what
24 attracts everyone, but, you know, we had
25 organizations that were zeroed out by the City as

1 well. So, that is a really, really hard blow. And I
2 know that we are discussing restoration potentially,
3 and hopefully at some point, expansion.

4 But these artists-in-residence, I mean, these are
5 incredible individuals that, as you know, not only
6 have careers when they walk into these residencies,
7 but they will go onto establish (INAUDIBLE) because
8 of some of the credibility that New York City has
9 lent them in offering them these opportunities.

10 So, is DCLA doing anything specifically to
11 ensure that artists can continue to live and work in
12 New York City? What did CreateNYC say about this
13 issue- the affordability issue?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So, we are funding as
15 many organizations as we can. We are very much aware
16 that there is a challenge. It's an unfortune... It's
17 a perfect storm, right? Corporations are moving away
18 from funding the arts. We are faced with financial
19 challenges. We continue to have dialogue with
20 nonprofits. We continue to have dialogue with our
21 foundation friends. We continue to search for a
22 solution. There isn't anything that we have
23 permanently locked down, but the conversations are
24 ongoing.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Sorry they're ongoing about
3 what exactly, though? What are we doing to ensure
4 that artists can continue to live and work here?
5 Because CreateNYC we ,you know, that was a huge
6 initiative. Are there things that you're taking from
7 there and trying to push forward in terms of
8 conversations and initiatives? In terms of the
9 affordability crisis? What we're doing for artists?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I would like to... I
11 will get back to you on that. There's nothing I can
12 point (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay.

14 All right, well lastly, I mean, you mentioned
15 outreach, but how could the City Council better
16 support this work?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Just getting the word
18 out... (CROSS-TALK)

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: (INAUDIBLE) limited... our
20 limitations...

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes, raising
22 awareness of the work that we're doing every chance
23 you get. Uh, inviting us to participate in your
24 community hearings... meetings. Bringing to our
25 attention organizations that are worthy. Just being

1
2 in partnership with DCLA. I cannot stress enough, it
3 comes from outreach, engagement, and finding those
4 funding deserts that we are not aware of. So, it will
5 take collaboration on our part, on the Council's
6 part, and the local borough presidents, so that we
7 can find the artists and arts organizations that are
8 not on our radar.

9 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay, well, I do feel like
10 you are going to hear.. There are going to be some
11 organizations testifying, they have submitted
12 testimony, uh, many of them, are certainly worthy and
13 should be considered ,you know, for restoration, for
14 expansion.

15 I do feel like it's such an important time right
16 now in terms of the recovery that the return on the
17 City's investment as you know is 99 to 1 in terms of
18 the how much money the City funds these cultural
19 organizations and groups. And supporting the artists
20 specifically, I feel is everything.

21 So, I don't really have any more questions. I
22 know you're going to get back to me on a couple of
23 items, which I am looking forward to, and, of course,
24 always working closely with the nonprofits and
25 community based organizations to ensure that we are

1 asking the right things of them. And ,you know, not
2 putting too much on them in terms of administrative
3 or cumbersome responsibilities, but they do have all
4 of these incredible stories, and anecdotes, and data,
5 and I know you have seen it over and over again, but
6 I cannot stress enough how important they are to the
7 fabric and the culture of New York City.
8

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I 100 percent agree.
10 We do hear a lot of stories, especially from our
11 program officers who are talking to our grantees on a
12 continuous basis - whether it is how to craft a
13 better application or what went wrong this time. And
14 they hear the challenges every day. We are investing
15 in this community, not just financially but our time,
16 and we are all in this together to find a solution -
17 as we struggle with corporations leaving this sector,
18 higher prices for rent for space, lack of space. So
19 it is an ongoing challenge that we will all continue
20 to fight to figure out a way through all of it. Thank
21 you for your time.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you for your testimony,
23 thank you very much.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay, thank you, very, very
3 much to the Administration. I know open the hearing
4 for public testimony. I want to remind members of the
5 public that this is a formal government proceeding,
6 and that decorum shall be observed at all times. As
7 such, members of the public shall remain silent at
8 all times. The witness table is reserved for people
9 who wish to testify. No video recording or
10 photography is allowed from the witness table.
11 Further, members of the public may not present audio
12 or video recording as testimony, but may submit
13 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at
14 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

15 If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please
16 fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant at Arms
17 and wait to be recognized. When you are recognized,
18 you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing
19 topic: Where Are NYC's Artists-in-Residence?

20 If you have a written statement or additional
21 written testimony that you wish to submit for the
22 record, please provide a copy of that testimony to
23 the Sergeant at Arms.

24 Christina, if you will, please call the first
25 panel.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we are going to start
3 with in-person panelists. Please come up to the table
4 once your name has been called.

5 And our first panel will be Regina Bain, Tiva
6 Baloi, Susan Hapgood, and Jessica Vodoor.

7 (PAUSE)

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, you may begin when you're
9 ready.

10 REGINA BAIN: Thank you, can you hear me? Hello?
11 There were are.

12 Hello, I am Regina Bane, Executive Director of
13 the Lewis Armstrong House Museum in Corona, Queens.

14 In 2020, we invited a group of leading artists
15 into the house and archives to reflect. The result
16 was the creation of 27 original works of music,
17 poetry, dance, and film inspired by one of the
18 greatest artists of all time. Four seasons later, the
19 Armstrong Now Artists-in-Residence Program deepens,
20 contextualizing Armstrong within constellations of
21 Black making, thinking, and vitality. The residency
22 provides both established and emerging artists with a
23 stipend and a platform to create new work inspired by
24 the vast collections of the Armstrong archives.
25 Artists spend time at the museum for an intensive

1
2 period of research and rehearsal- presenting a public
3 performance at the museum and often beyond.

4 Last year, a signature Armstrong Now project
5 brought open rehearsals to students from the Summer
6 Youth Employment Program, a free performance in the
7 Armstrong Garden for hundreds of our neighbors, a
8 performance at the Newport Jazz Festival for
9 thousands, and then back to New York for a premiere
10 at the Jazz at Lincoln Center - and now back to
11 Queens College at the Kupferberg Center -all of which
12 was incubated on 107th Street in Queens. We love to
13 shoutout the names of our artists and collaborators
14 and they include: Amir Leon, Antonio Brown, Matthew
15 Whitaker, Allen Latur, Ulysses Owens, Bruce Harris,
16 Marquis Hill, Giveton Gelin, Naomi Extra, Kayla
17 Farrish, Christian Sands, Ben Stamper, Jake Goldbas,
18 Daniel J. Watts, and so many more.

19 This is economic, educational, and cultural
20 vitality for our community. Thank you to all who
21 support the space and time it requires to help us all
22 reflect on the past, so that we can move into the
23 future.

1
2 Armstrong Now applications are open right now on
3 our website: Lewis Armstrong House.org (TIMER
4 CHIMES) See you in Queens.

5 TIVA BALOI: Good morning, Committee.

6 My name is Tiva Baloi, I am the Education and
7 Public Programs Coordinator at the Green-Wood
8 Cemetery in Brooklyn. Thank you for this opportunity
9 to add to conversation about arts residencies in New
10 York City. Personally, this is my first time
11 speaking to a city council committee, so thank you
12 for giving me this chance.

13 It probably goes without saying that an arts
14 residency at the Green-Wood Cemetery is among the
15 more unique opportunities for artists in New York
16 City. Green-Wood created its Artists-in-Residency
17 Program in 2021, and that year we received over 900
18 applications. The year-long residency provides one
19 artist individual or performing arts with the studio
20 space in one of Green-Wood's historic buildings, the
21 landmarked Fort Hamilton Gate House, and an
22 honorarium to create an installation or performance
23 at Green-Wood. The artist gets full access to the
24 Cemetery's professional staff, archives, and
25 historical collections. They can even speak to the

1
2 grave diggers if they want to. The whole point is for
3 the artist to be inspired by Green-Wood's history,
4 monuments, and environment. At the end of their
5 residency, they produce a site specific work and then
6 speaks about their work to the public as part of our
7 programming series.

8 Unfortunately, I don't have enough time right now
9 to tell you about all the great work these artists
10 have been able to produce, but each one has gotten a
11 lot of press attention as well as attention from the
12 public; they've expanded their own careers and shared
13 their art with our South Brooklyn Community. And they
14 have also brought new perspectives and ideas to how
15 we at Green-Wood can interpret our own space for the
16 public.

17 We at Green-Wood urge the City Council and
18 Department of Cultural Affairs to support the
19 Artists-in-Residence Program at Green-Wood and to
20 support all arts residencies across all five
21 boroughs, they're great for artists (TIMER CHIMES),
22 they're great for New Yorkers, and they're great for
23 expanding the arts in New York City, thank you.

24 JESSICA BAKER VODOOR: Good morning, Chair Rivera
25 and members of the Committee, my name is Jessica

1
2 Baker Vodoor, and I am the President and CEO of The
3 Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden in
4 Staten Island. We are a member of the Cultural
5 Institutions Group, and we were founded in 1977 as a
6 very expansive place where nature, education, and
7 history unite to bring dynamic programming events and
8 festivals to our diverse community. We welcome nearly
9 500,000 annual visitors; however, we found that
10 Staten Island has still the lowest rate of arts
11 participation in our city. And to us, artists-in-
12 residence programs help us bridge that gap. The City
13 Council funding supports our efforts to create a more
14 culturally connected and thriving community. Snug
15 Harbor has received SU-CASA funding since 2020, and
16 since that time we've served 423 seniors with this
17 work. Our teacher artists who work with our seniors
18 foster creativity, build community, and reduce
19 isolation amongst our seniors. Snug Harbor's CASA
20 programs combine art with environmental science and
21 create sustainable school gardens. We have served 247
22 students with this program since its initiation. Our
23 CASA and SU-CASA programs have supported seven
24 teaching artists with employment on average at \$2,680
25 per year. We feel these programs are imminently

1 replicable, and we really would love to have these
2 programs in every single school in Staten Island.
3 We're very grateful to our council members David
4 Carr, Kamillah Hanks, and Majority Leader Borelli
5 for recognizing the value of these programs in Staten
6 Island to our community. Our baseline funding also
7 supports subsidized studio space for 39 individual
8 artists and companies, including Art Lab's School of
9 Fine Arts and Staten Island's Conservatory, and we
10 also fund staff time for our past performing arts
11 residency, which is unique in New York City for
12 providing (TIMER CHIMES) space for artists to live
13 and create and present new work. That is my time. I
14 have submitted additional written testimony, thank
15 you for having us today.

17 SUSAN HAPGOOD: Good morning, Council Member
18 Rivera and Committee members. Thank you for providing
19 the opportunity to testify about artists'
20 residencies, a topic at the heart of everything that
21 I do. My name is Susan Hapgood, and I am Executive
22 Director of the International Studio and Curatorial
23 Program.

24 Located in an old printing Factory in Brooklyn,
25 ISCP, as we're known, is the largest international

1
2 arts residency program in the country and the fourth
3 largest in the world. We welcome 100 artists every
4 year, and our public programs bring over 10,000
5 visitors annually - mostly New Yorkers. Our Ground
6 Floor Program, which Alton Murray spoke about
7 earlier, offers studios to New York City artists for
8 less than one-third of the market rate for a going
9 studio. And to answer your question, the question of
10 this hearing: Where Are NYC's Artists-in-Residence?
11 There are lot of them at ISCP in East Williamsburg.
12 We are also part of the Rethinking Residencies
13 Working Group of 15 New York City artists-in-
14 residence programs, which produced a book last year
15 that I've shared with you - there it is - I've shared
16 a few of those with you, it's titled Bringing Worlds
17 Together, and it is a book about arts residencies, so
18 it's totally on topic. As Nova Benway wrote in the
19 book, "In a culture where art sales command high
20 prices yet artists are notoriously undervalued,
21 residencies stand for the importance of supporting
22 not just art but the people who make it." Our
23 programs are the kindling for New York City's diverse
24 and thriving Arts and Cultural. ISCP brings in, from
25 outside of New York City funding, any government

1
2 funding, foundation funding - we bring in \$750,000 a
3 year from outside of the of the city. And while
4 galleries and museums are the most visible parts of
5 the arts economy, residencies nurture the creative
6 kernels of new ideas that go on to receive broader
7 recognition. (TIMER CHIMES) Uh-oh, I will try and be
8 super quick - the best way to make progress on
9 diversity and accessibility goals is to invest at the
10 ground level. We have uh an NEA Grant for artists of
11 color from New York City as well as a fund for
12 artists from Africa. We deserve more support and
13 recognition. Kindling, pipelines, catalysts and seeds
14 these are all apt metaphors to describe what artists
15 residencies are to the broader cultural well-being of
16 the city. Thank you

17 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you, if I could just
18 ask and any one of you can ,you know, offer comments,
19 what's been the biggest challenge in running your
20 programs, and what else could the City do to support
21 these programs especially given current fiscal
22 constraints? I mean more funding would be ideal.
23 Let's start there.

24 SUSAN HAPGOOD: More funding, but I think one of
25 the things that was raised earlier was the connection

1
2 to private sources of funding and reaching across the
3 aisle, whatever you call it, to introduce us to
4 people in big foundations where we might not have
5 connections would be very helpful.

6 REGINA BAIN: Agreed, and the conversation about
7 housing is very important for the folks that we work
8 with, the younger artists especially, some of them
9 have said, I was considering leaving the city, and
10 this opportunity gave me a chance to stay and work to
11 do and expand upon. So we want to offer opportunities
12 that provide economic viability for our younger
13 artists.

14 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I saw the Louis Armstrong, I
15 saw some of the artists that you went through, and I
16 went down such a wonderful like path in looking into
17 their work and what they've done. So many are
18 celebrated, and all of you are doing such incredible
19 work.

20 Are your main sources of funding for your program
21 from the City or a mix?

22 JESSICA BAKER VODOOR: At Snug Harbor our funding
23 is about 60 percent from the City, and then the other
24 40 percent made up by private foundations and state

1 support as well as small contributions from
2 individuals.

3
4 TIVA BALOI: (BACKGROUND NOISE) We don't receive
5 funding from the City, but we do receive about
6 \$50,000 from the CDF and DCLA, and it has to stretch
7 across all of our programming not just the artists-
8 in-residency programs.

9 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Right, I mean, that is
10 substantial. Do any of my colleagues have any
11 questions?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I am looking at the
13 artists-in-residence from Green-Wood Cemetery. You
14 mentioned that there were 900 applicants?

15 TIVA BALOI: There were in 2021.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: In 2021. And how many were
17 accepted?

18 TIVA BALOI: Just one.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Just one?

20 TIVA BALOI: Yes, there's just one.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Just one out of 900! And so
22 that means that 899 were rejected. So, either these
23 folks applied for other, like, in other places and
24 hopefully they got acceptance letters in other art
25 spaces and hubs or they didn't.

1
2 TIVA BALOI: Yes.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: So, could you talk a little
4 bit more about what the likelihood that they did is?
5 Are we in a place where we can affirmatively say that
6 they did or they didn't? That is part one of the
7 question.

8 And, then, uhm, given that there is, like, we are
9 seeing this overflow of applicants, are we seeing
10 this kind of an overflow in most places where
11 applications open up when there is a call for
12 applicants in every hub or space? Is the volume of
13 applications this many?

14 TIVA BALOI: At Green-Wood, after the first year,
15 we did move a nomination process for the second and
16 third, but we are going back to having an open call.
17 So, we are hoping that, uhm, this year, we are still
18 in the process of selecting, there's an internal
19 group that reads through all of the statements and
20 reads through all the applications. Hopefully there
21 will be more opportunities across the city that can
22 provide something similar. We don't have the ability
23 to accommodate more than one artist residency a year.

24 SUSAN HAPGOOD: I was just going to say that, yes,
25 every opportunity we announce, we get huge numbers of

1
2 applicants. It is a testament to the quality of the
3 cultural life in this city. Of course we want to say
4 yes to everybody, but we can't, we don't have enough
5 funding to accommodate everybody.

6 JESSICA BAKER VODOOR: I would just add that one
7 of the things that we have done at Snug Harbor to try
8 to continue that pool of artist selection to be
9 representative of the artists who are applying. And I
10 agree, we have generally overwhelming application
11 numbers for the small spots that we have. One of the
12 efforts that we have made is to try to incorporate
13 awarded artists into the next panel selection
14 process. So we invite artists who have participated
15 in our residency program to participate with us in
16 the selection of the next cohort. And we have found
17 that that has both grown our numbers by getting them
18 to connect us to artists we may not be reaching in
19 our normal advertising process, but also, hopefully
20 democratizing the process of selecting those artists
21 through our open call as well.

22 REGINA BAIN: Lastly I will say, definitely the
23 search is still on for the artists who are not
24 selected for where they can both create as well as
25 simply exist and be in their lives. I will shoutout

1
2 the Cultural Solidarity Fund for the work that they
3 did to provide stipends to so many artists during the
4 pandemic and afterward, a collective of organizations
5 and individuals who came together for that support.

6 Thank you for the work of artists-in-residence
7 programs, but also thank you to the work of the
8 Cultural Solidarity Fund for all of the artists.

9 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you for shouting them
10 out, the Cultural Solidarity Fund. You know, we take
11 very seriously the connection to private sources. It
12 just isn't... Doesn't necessarily seem to be
13 accessible especially equitably or even... there are
14 so many barriers that continue to face ,you know,
15 smaller, I would say organizations though that
16 represent marginalized communities, Black Indigenous
17 organizations run by people of color, there are so
18 many things there but...

19 I just want to thank you for your testimony. I
20 also understand ,you know, a lot of this funding that
21 comes from the City, you all are dependent on, and I
22 think that's our responsibility to you - that's our
23 duty to your organization, because you provide so
24 much more than just a work of art, which is so
25

1
2 important. The way you elevate humanity, you bring
3 people in, it's incredible.

4 So, the housing opportunity is something that is
5 very, very important to us. I think that I have said
6 before, the Council is laser focused on doing what we
7 can to focus on creation and preservation in order to
8 keep people in their homes and in their communities.
9 So, thank you all for your testimony today, and thank
10 you for your work around the city.

11 PANEL: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, our next panel will
13 be Gonzalo Casals, Jaimee Todd, and George Sheer.

14 (PAUSE)

15 JAIMEE TODD: Good morning my name is Jamie Todd,
16 and I'm a multi-disciplinary artist based in
17 Sunnyside, Queens. Like many aspiring artists, I
18 moved to New York City 20 years ago with a dream of a
19 thriving art career, through persistence and hard
20 work I managed to show my art in various nonprofits
21 and cultural institutions throughout the city. But,
22 in spite of these opportunities, I still felt like I
23 needed the support that would advance my art career-
24 which was especially important to me as a Black woman
25 artist.

1
2 In 2023, I was chosen alongside four other
3 minority artists to be a part of the Artworks
4 Residency Program for the Jamaica Center For Arts And
5 Learning or JCAL. The goal of the residency was to
6 empower BIPOC artists with the resources and skills
7 to navigate the complexities of the art world. For 10
8 months we intended curated seminars with art
9 professionals sharing their expertise in areas
10 including contracts, marketing, intellectual
11 property, and Legacy planning. One of my residency
12 mentors even recognized my potential and invited me
13 to participate in the Harlem Fine Art Show where I
14 sold over \$2,000 worth of artwork and made valuable
15 networking contacts. Because JCAL recognizes that
16 artists are the economic and cultural background of
17 New York City, they consistently pay them for
18 showcasing their work. The grant funding for my
19 residency allowed me to cover numerous art expenses
20 including my first art studio, which has been an
21 absolute gamechanger in my creative development.

22 Programs like Artworks are now endangered by the
23 deep and harmful budget cuts ordered by Mayor Adams
24 to DCLA this year. They're especially harmful to
25 communities of color who will disproportionately

1
2 suffer from loss of jobs, which are critical drivers
3 of our economy.

4 I urge Mayor Adams to reverse the \$20 million in
5 cuts from this year, and I ask all City Council
6 members to refuse to vote on any budget with \$15.5
7 million dollars in cuts for next year. Artworks and I
8 need your support. Thank you for your time.

9 GEORGE SHEER: Hello, my name is George Sheer, I
10 am the newly appointed Executive Director of the
11 Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts at 323 West 39th
12 Street in Manhattan. It is a pleasure and an honor to
13 present to you this morning.

14 The EFA is a 501(c)(3) public charity founded in
15 1992 serving artists and communities in New York and
16 around the world. At our property we have 90 artist
17 studios, three galleries, and the historic Robert
18 Blackburn Community Print Workshop, whose Legacy
19 dates to the Harlem Renaissance.

20 EFA is a unique and increasingly rare gem in
21 Manhattan where whole artist is nurtured. While we
22 provide advanced support for the creation exhibition
23 and selling of artwork, our mission focuses on
24 building and sustaining artist communities here in
25 New York. EFA Studios offer merit-based jury

1
2 processes to select New York visual artists to
3 receive two years of subsidized studio with potential
4 for Renewal. This allows artists to anchor themselves
5 in the city and advance their creative and
6 professional careers.

7 Additionally, we further our mission through
8 studio-based residencies for printmakers,
9 international artists, and artists working at New
10 York City cultural institutions. We are proud to be
11 an intergenerational diverse community working across
12 all 12 floors, at all levels of professional
13 development and personal background, supporting each
14 other in the advancement of New York's cultural
15 identity. This creative hive is shared with the
16 community through public programs, exhibitions,
17 performances, open studios, and events.

18 I'm addressing the City Council today to invite
19 you to support the artists and arts organizations of
20 this great city. We are a proud member of the Garment
21 District Alliance, a district that most intensively
22 faces the challenges of economic uncertainty in the
23 commercial real estate market.

24 I'm pleased to say that our studios are fully
25 occupied and in demand. With every economic downturn,

1
2 the arts are a key ingredient in bringing together
3 public and private partnership that reverse economic
4 trends, catalyze social and market growth, and if
5 done right, support communities in their place.

6 EFA is an actively-supporting key strategies of
7 the creative NYC Cultural Action Plan (TIMER CHIMES)
8 preserving long-term affordable artist workspace,
9 supporting employment and professional development,
10 and artist creating public art.

11 I welcome you to join me and visit EFA, and thank
12 you for your time.

13 GONZALO CASALS: Buenos dias, and thank you, Chair
14 Rivera, for allowing me to testify today, and thank
15 you, Council Members Carr and Hanif for staying and
16 listening to the people.

17 My name is Gonzalo Casals, and along with
18 Mauricio Delfin, I co-direct The Culture And Arts
19 Policy Institute.

20 A common thread of my career has been to center
21 artists in every project I have been involved in, and
22 I'm here today to share some recommendations for
23 expanding and resourcing the New York City Department
24 of Cultural Affairs and PAIR Program.

1
2 I'm going to not make a case for it, it's great
3 when the Administration, the Council, and the Sector
4 is in agreement when a program is great like this
5 one.

6 There are three or four sort of opportunities to
7 improve the program, which is: One, is to protect
8 artists' intellectual property, unfortunately artists
9 working on PAIR, they sign off the intellectual
10 property of their work with the City every time they
11 work with the City. That is unique, even when artists
12 sell their work they retain their intellectual
13 property. You know, you buy the object, you pay for
14 the experience, but intellectual properties always
15 belongs to the artist. And that's, I'm sure,
16 something that can be changed (INAUDIBLE) to City
17 law. Then we need to ensure that artists in the PAIR
18 Program receive proper compensation, and I'm going to
19 talk in a minute about the details and how it can be
20 done in a fairly easy way. Then, for sure, we need
21 to expand the resources and support of DCLA to manage
22 the program effectively by fostering collaborations
23 with other partners outside the City, and I'm going
24 to speak about those.

1
2 I don't have to say much more about intellectual
3 property, the beauty of this program that was put
4 brilliantly together by Commissioner Finkelppearl, is
5 they use and micro purchase ,you know, policy to
6 allow really quickly for agencies to hire these
7 artists. Agencies can spend only \$20,000 doing a
8 competitive program, so the DCLA would give \$20,000
9 to an artist, the hosting (TIMER CHIMES)... should I
10 keep going? The hosting organization would give
11 another \$20,000, and artist would receive \$40,000 to
12 work for a year. Unfortunately, \$40,000, if you think
13 of a full-time job, it pays less than living wage;
14 if you calculate it as a part-time job, 20 hours,
15 it's only less than \$30.00 an hour. And just for
16 reference, teaching artists get \$60 an hour, per
17 teaching hour, art handlers get (INAUDIBLE). And
18 again, we're having artists getting paid less than
19 those two other jobs that are service jobs, and
20 they're still giving away the intellectual property.
21 However, we can take advantage of the MWBE Program
22 which allows to do non-competitive purchases up to a
23 million dollars. We can do this, this will not only
24 incentivize the PAIR Program to be more equitable,
25 but also would allow us to spend more money on the

1
2 residency every year that artists do. In doing that,
3 there's a few ways that you can do that, number one,
4 we can ask artists and Yazmany Arboleda here is an
5 example, to become S-corp, and by doing a S-corp you
6 can certify SMWB enterprise and be able to receive
7 more money from the City with (INAUDIBLE) competitive
8 process; two is what might be complicated for
9 artists, a third party could be created to be an
10 escort and funnel ,you know, the payments for artist
11 from the agencies; and the third one, which might
12 take the work of the Council, is maybe expand the NWE
13 program to allow LLCs, which are very simple to set
14 up, I set up one for my consulting work, and allow
15 them to be certified as an MWBE program. And, then,
16 of course, DCLA cannot be able to tell you this, but
17 it will be ideal that there will be a dedicated
18 person in the agency to manage this program -
19 headcount, headcount, headcount, and put pressure on
20 OMB; and then the last one is, the program has been
21 such a success that it doesn't have to be anymore
22 between DCLA and another agency. I'm going to give
23 you an example of one of the organizations in your
24 district - the Artist Alliance, along with
25 (INAUDIBLE) they have done amazing research on

1
2 (INAUDIBLE) an artist employment programs in the
3 70's, and they're trying to see how we learn from
4 those lessons to create more artist employment in the
5 City. DORIS, Department of Records and Information
6 Services, has 80 boxes of files about (INAUDIBLE), it
7 would be great if the two organizations put some
8 money towards an artist residency, along with some
9 money from the City, to have an artist go for a year
10 go over those files and really help us understand a
11 little bit more about how we can change policies
12 around artists' employment. (LAUGHTER) That is all,
13 unless you have questions. I can tell you a little
14 bit about...

15 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Uhm...

16 GONZALO CASALS: artist housing and what
17 (INAUDIBLE) is doing with this. You had questions
18 about CreateNYC, and also the (INAUDIBLE) of artists,
19 if you have any questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Well, the one thing I wanted
21 to... Well, thank you for your testimony. I really
22 appreciate it, and I am very happy to hear ,you know,
23 you made a sale. You were able to share your art, and
24 I wish you many more, as much success as you would
25 ever wish and desire.

1
2 I think the protecting intellectual property part
3 is so interesting. So, I thank you for that
4 recommendation. Proper compensation, expanding
5 sources of support, the fact that the money currently
6 or the stipends currently offered, I know, are the
7 most that some organizations can do, but really the
8 math can be less than minimum wage. The S-corp
9 incorporation, the MWBE certification, all of that
10 dedicated person at DCLA for the program, uh, I think
11 are all great recommendations. So, I just want to
12 thank you for bringing solutions to the table. I
13 will certainly follow up on that.

14 I had read about the program at the Department of
15 Records, and I was curious about it. So, that was
16 City Lore... (CROSS-TALK)

17 GONZALO CASALS: No, I'm proposing that City Lore
18 and Artist Alliance could do that...

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Oh! Okay...

20 GONZALO CASALS: But, again, bringing ,you know,
21 City Lore and Artist Alliance can raise money, pay
22 for half of the residency and work directly with
23 DORIS, and then DORIS will pay the other half. I'm
24 saying that we can invite private partners to
25 contribute... (CROSS-TALK)

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: No, I think it's interest...
3 it's very interesting to look at something that
4 worked ,you know, decades ago and how we can...

5 (CROSS-TALK)

6 GONZALO CASALS: Expand it...

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: yes, expand it and of course
8 tailor it to be more modern and of our time. So, I
9 thank you for that, it's great.

10 Any questions?

11 Well, I will certainly follow up with you on the
12 artist housing, because I know you did a lot of work,
13 and you never say this, but you were our former
14 commissioner, (LAUGHTER) and it was such a pleasure
15 working with you, and I am so grateful for what
16 you've done for my own district and my own community,
17 but also the City, so thank you. And I want to thank
18 this panel for your testimony and for the work that
19 you are doing, thank you.

20 PANEL: Thank you

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Our next in-person
22 panel will be Yazmany Arboleda and Yelena Keller.

23 (PAUSE)

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And you can begin whenever you
25 are ready.

1
2 YELENA KELLER: Good morning, I am Yelena Keller,
3 Assistant Curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem.
4 Thank you, Chair Rivera, and members of the Committee
5 for the opportunity to testify today.

6 Since 1968, the Studio Museum has been recognized
7 for its catalytic role in advancing the work of
8 visual artists of African and Afro-Latinx descent
9 through its iconic Artists-In-Residence Program.
10 Proposed as a founding initiative by artist William
11 T. Williams, the program sits at the heart of an
12 institution centered around artists. The residency
13 program grants three emerging artists local,
14 national, and international with an unparalleled
15 opportunity to develop their art practice inside the
16 museum across 11 months, culminating in a public
17 group exhibition. Individuals selected for the
18 residency receive institutional guidance,
19 professional development, research support, studio
20 space, and a stipend of \$37,500 paid out over the
21 residency year.

22 Through the financial relief afforded by the
23 stipend, the museum is able to offer artists-in-
24 residence a period of deepened engagement with their
25

1
2 studio practice away from the commercial demands of
3 the art world at a pivotal point in their careers.

4 Since its founding, the Studio Museum is proud to
5 have supported nearly 150 artists through its
6 Artists-in-Residence Program. As a program geared
7 towards emerging artists the residency offers a
8 foundational opportunity for creative and
9 professional growth with many of our past
10 participants becoming some of today's most
11 significant and innovative artists. The program's
12 alumni include recipients of prestigious fellowships
13 and awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, MacArthur
14 Foundation, Pollock-Krasner Foundation to name only a
15 few.

16 The demonstrable impact of this residency program
17 on our artists is reflected not only in the various
18 collections stewarding their work or incredible
19 awards and fellowships recognizing their outstanding
20 achievements, but in the fact that some, like Kehinde
21 Wiley and Titus Kaphar, have gone on to create their
22 own artist-centered residency programs.

23 One of the most remarkable attributes of this
24 program is its commitment to (TIMER CHIMES) fostering
25 a sense of community and collaboration among

1
2 residents through public programs, workshops,
3 critical dialogue partners, and studio visits with
4 community organizations and schools, artists have the
5 opportunity to engage with their peers, mentors, and
6 the broader Harlem community forging connections that
7 transcend artistic boundaries and ignite meaningful
8 conversations. Thank you

9 YAZMANY ARBOLEDA: Buenos dias, thank you Chair
10 Rivera and Committee members, for allowing me to
11 testify today. My name is Yazmany Arboleda, and I'm a
12 queer Colombian American artist who builds community
13 by inviting people to imagine possible futures
14 together.

15 In 2020, I was elected as the artist-in-residence
16 for the Civic Engagement Commission. The Residency is
17 meant to last a year. In the fall of 2021, the CEC
18 and I decided that our work together was too valuable
19 and that it needed to continue. I became the
20 Inaugural People's Artist for the City of New York in
21 2022. I continued my work with the Civic Engagement
22 Commission to this day.

23 I come before you to testify on the impact the
24 PAIR Program has had on the well-being of our New
25 York City communities. In only four years, the Civic

1
2 Engagement Commission and I have developed numerous
3 projects and initiatives that have engaged hundreds
4 of thousands of New York City residents. I will name
5 three of the most meaningful ones for you today: The
6 People's Bus, a retired New York City Corrections
7 vehicle that has been transformed into a beautiful
8 community center on wheels, the People's Bus has
9 spent the last three years traveling across the city
10 in a series of events we often call The People's
11 Festival. In our first summer we engaged over 10,000
12 residents across all five boroughs, we employed 148
13 artists, and more than 50 community members. We also
14 created a youth program titled the People's
15 Fellowship, that had 27 young people between the ages
16 of 14 and 21 years old. All of these participants
17 were paid \$18 to \$20 an hour for their labor.

18 In the summer of 2023 we turned the People's Bus
19 into Tippi, the Tender People's Money Monster, a
20 large scale puppet - the People's Bus in drag - which
21 teaches New Yorkers, young and old, about our
22 citywide participatory budgeting program. We engaged
23 over 100,000 residents who voted on what kinds of
24 projects they felt would be most beneficial to their
25 communities. These 46 projects are being implemented

1
2 (TIMER CHIMES) now... if I may continue... While the
3 numbers only give you an idea of the scale and impact
4 in engagement and employment, the outcomes of these
5 projects are restoring dignity, unlearning harmful
6 practices, and co-creating meaningful belonging.
7 However, nothing paints a picture more than a story.
8 This year we're launching the Sunnies. I welcome my
9 colleague at the Civic Engagement Commission to share
10 what they look like with you all. (NO MIC) They
11 weren't finished on time...

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Sorry, sorry, we just...

13 YAZMANY ARBOLEDA: Each council member will be
14 receiving one Sunnie, that's Shahana Sunnie, actually
15 that's being passed around. But the idea is that each
16 council member will receive an optimistic yellow
17 creature in the near future before May 1st. They are
18 making their public appearance for the first time
19 here today, hundreds of these heartfelt creatures will
20 begin to appear all over New York City on May 1st.
21 They represent New Yorkers from the future that are
22 modeling for us how to take care of each other.
23 They're an optimistic yellow and they are heart-
24 forward. That's why we were calling them Sunnies, New
25 York City's Sunshine Sentinels, they are inviting us

1
2 all to vote on the People's Money and engage in
3 participatory democracy through our citywide process.

4 Here's what makes the work so powerful: These
5 sculptures are being crafted by and handmade by head
6 of household immigrant mothers. The idea is to
7 provide economic empowerment to families who should
8 be adapting to our city with dignity and not with
9 shame.

10 Thank you for your time and recognizing the
11 importance of the Artists-in-Residence Program in
12 building a more inclusive and vibrant New York City.
13 I strongly urge a continued investment in these
14 programs, which I believe are meaningful and enrich
15 our city in ways nothing else does. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Well thank you so much. I've
17 been on the People's Bus in the Clemente parking lot.
18 It was such... it's on my Instagram.... (LAUGHTER) it
19 was such a beautiful experience. It was incredible.
20 The story and the interaction was something that was
21 really an unforgettable moment. And clearly this one
22 will also go down in the books here.

23 Can you... You said that that the sculptures are
24 being crafted by head of household immigrant mothers?

1
2 How did you engage these families? How did you find
3 these women?

4 YAZMANY ARBOLEDA: You know, a huge part of, it
5 all of the work that I do is collaboration and
6 interdependence and so Libertad Guerra at the
7 Clemente and Andrea Gordillo and others have been
8 supporting how we think about how we connect -
9 Unlocal, AID FOR LIFE, we're partnering with
10 organizations that are actually creating immigrant
11 integration centers in our public schools on
12 weekends. So, many of these organizations have
13 rosters of people who have experience before... Most
14 people don't know, but there's people who are
15 crossing the border who are lawyers, who are trained
16 in all kinds of capacities, and the more we can
17 understand their skill sets and their histories, the
18 more we can actually benefit.

19 For me, these little sculptures, the idea that
20 they'll show up in public spaces, and we'll be able
21 to say, immigrants are making them to make our city
22 more beautiful, because we belong, makes a statement
23 in itself I will also share that the People's Money,
24 the participatory budgeting process, really is
25 inclusive of all kinds of challenges throughout all

1
2 of our communities. I believe it's more than 50
3 percent of the of the different ideas that have come
4 forward in that process identify often marginalized
5 communities, immigrants specifically in support of a
6 more holistic understanding of how we bring well-
7 being to our entire city.

8 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I really appreciate this
9 panel because the Afro Afro-Latino experience and
10 ensuring that you know we are supporting that, I
11 think they're right away they're very cheerful and
12 happy. And then to know that you've intentionally not
13 just recognized but sought that the people that are
14 coming here, not only do they have these incredible
15 backgrounds, and certifications, and education but
16 that there's such tremendous artistic talent in the
17 175,000 people that have joined us since last
18 spring.... (CROSS-TALK)

19 YAZMANY ARBOLEDA: Enormous opportunity. I always
20 say, in a state of emergency, there's also a state of
21 emergence. To recognize that is critical.

22 I will tell you in my first year as a PAIR, my
23 budget was \$20,000, and it became half a million
24 dollars within four months of trying to tell the
25 story of The People's Bus and the People's Festival,

1
2 which directly went to employ artists in communities
3 that need economic empowerment immediately in the
4 present.

5 When I think of about the recommendation by DCLA
6 to have the Council focus on awareness, I think to
7 myself, awareness doesn't pay the rent actually. We
8 have to think about economic decisions and places
9 where we can look at how policy is transforming where
10 budget lines fall and how we can really allocate
11 funding in a way that's meaningful and that is
12 tangible, so that we can pay the rent and not just
13 try to exist but thrive in our city.

14 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I agree. Awareness is great,
15 but I agree that we have to pay our artists, and we
16 have to ensure that we're funding these programs.

17 This is this is beautiful, thank you so much for
18 making our day. I don't I don't know about you, but
19 I'm like... to do you want to ask them something?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Well thanks for being here.
21 And I'm super excited, because not only is this a
22 beautiful arts experience, but it's going to be
23 covered across our city, and I'd love to know where
24 exactly in our city it'll be focused. But, also it's
25 integrating civic engagement, and it's integrating

1
2 one of my favorite initiatives, participatory
3 budgeting, which has taken a kind of like backseat
4 in the City Council - although Participatory
5 Budgeting Vote Week is coming up within the City
6 Council in April. And I like that the Arts is so
7 powerful that it can capture civic engagement in such
8 a way that it doesn't need to be shared in words,
9 that it can be visually explained and visually
10 casted, with just, like, sculpture or with just some
11 with just some arts symbolism. People, our community
12 can be told how to navigate City and City services,
13 and share how exactly they want the city to be
14 transformed.

15 So, one, where are the sculptures going to be?
16 How large are these sculptures? And what language
17 capacities, once people are using the QR codes? And
18 is the QR code associated with sharing ideas, voting
19 for PB, or getting involved with an organization? I
20 mean I'm just bubbling with ideas. Are people getting
21 plugged into organizations? I mean in other cities, I
22 know that the similarity with the link NYC kiosk or a
23 variation of the kiosks that other cities have, have
24 the services that a person could get involved with.
25 Is it similar to that? And then how much money is

1
2 being spent on this? And is it different from the
3 CEC's Participatory Budgeting Funding, or has that
4 also increased, too? Those are some of my questions.

5 YAZMANY ARBOLEDA: Thank you for all those
6 questions, Council Member Hanif.

7 These little figurines are all going to be around
8 10 inches tall, this is their actual size. The idea
9 is that there's more and that they will up in places
10 asking us to look up and be optimistic. They're going
11 to be appearing in partnership with many
12 organizations throughout the five boroughs. We're
13 thinking about who are the partner who are interested
14 in creating installations? We're thinking that they
15 might be protesting in Union Square, they might be
16 waiting for taxis at Grand Central. But really when I
17 think about the Brooklyn Museum and all these other
18 locations - Prospect Park, there's a collection of
19 them that are going to be gardening throughout the
20 city and climbing trees. There's a collection of them
21 that will be honoring our sanitation workers,
22 thinking through, gosh, who really makes our city,
23 and how do we really bring forward their stories?

24 The budget, one of the things that has been an
25 incredible part of my journey as a public artist-in-

1 residence with the Civic Engagement Commission has
2 been that sitting in rooms with the people who are
3 deciding how to think about budgets - I'll give you
4 the example, our Communications Budget this year was
5 \$300,000 that was just meant to go to advertising in
6 all the different languages - the 11 official
7 languages of New York City, et cetera, and to be able
8 to sit in those rooms and hear, oh, there's money for
9 advertising in this way, and like, communication in
10 in this way, and that's called Communications, and
11 that's called Advertising - all of that can be art
12 actually. How we think about advertising and art, and
13 how often these systems in our agencies. "Oh, you
14 just pay for a vendor to do X," well those vendors
15 could actually be artists doing the work.

17 So, when I sit in the rooms, I'm, like, oh, my
18 gosh, can we pull from that budget and from that
19 budget?" How do we think about what's possible, and
20 how do we actually mobilize it towards the
21 communities, in their hands, that can actually
22 benefit from this economic resource?

23 So, I think right now the budget for these
24 installations specifically is around \$100,000, but it
25 also includes commissioning Mookntaka, a Brooklyn-

1 based artists collective, to do an inflatable version
2 of them that will be unveiled at some point in May.
3 We also hired the Professional Arts Workshop to
4 create two 12-foot tall puppets that will be going on
5 parades throughout May and June. So, the evolution of
6 these yellow creatures, and how we invite others to
7 imagine what they are and how heart-forward they
8 exists among us, is a super playful journey of
9 investing in artists, investing in communities that
10 should be served financially, and really thinking
11 about how we cross pollinate across all of these
12 spaces.
13

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Is it connected to PB
15 cycle? Yeah... (CROSS-TALK)

16 YAZMANY ARBOLEDA: Oh, yes, so just to be clear,
17 they are showing up on May 1st, because our voting
18 period for the Participatory Budgeting process is May
19 1st through June 12th. So, for those six weeks, they
20 will appear in the middle of the night every so
21 often, unexpectedly, surprising New Yorkers as they
22 wake up in the morning in different parks, plazas,
23 and different locations. I welcome the Council and
24 anyone who is listening to me, to reach out and tell
25 us where they should appear, what should they be

1
2 doing? If they are modeling how we take care of each
3 other and the future, literally we are making them
4 right now, so the hope is to be as participatory as
5 possible and really involve everyone who wants to
6 join us in this movement. When people click on the QR
7 code - that will appear next to them - they will be
8 able to vote directly on the projects of the second
9 cycle of the citywide Participatory Budgeting
10 Process, they will be able to learn which projects in
11 their districts, in their borough and literally vote
12 as part of the journey. So the hope is to get as many
13 New Yorkers as possible, but it is entirely about the
14 People's Money. At some point, we considered calling
15 them Pennies, but the consensus, we did a
16 participatory voting period for the CEC, and the
17 staff chose to call them Sunnies, because they are
18 Sunshine Sentinels.

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you. I think we all
20 agree, arts and activism have always coexisted and
21 empowered the other. It is clearly the foundation for
22 civic engagement. So, thank you, that was wonderful,
23 and we are looking forward to supporting you all.
24 Thank you for your work. Muchas Gracia.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. That concludes our
3 in-person testimony.

4 We will now transition to remote testimony. For
5 virtual panelists, once your name is called, a member
6 of our staff will unmute you, and the Sergeant at
7 Arms will set the timer and give you the go ahead to
8 begin. Please wait for the sergeant to announce that
9 you may begin before delivering your testimony.

10 Our first virtual panel will be Joseph Rizzi,
11 Angelo Vivolo, and John Gabriele.

12 Joseph, you may begin when the sergeant starts
13 your clock.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is starting, you may
15 begin.

16 JOSEPH RIZZI: Good morning, thank you Chair
17 Rivera, can you hear me?

18 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Yes, we can hear you loud and
19 clear, thank you for being here, and for your
20 patience.

21 JOSEPH RIZZI: Thank you for giving me the
22 opportunity to express my feelings.

23 First of all, thank you and the Committee for
24 allowing me to speak. I would like to send a big
25 thank you and appreciation to Council Member David

1 Carr for his initiative. This is really something
2 that deserves a big applause, because it's
3 recognizing a person who ventured out in the world
4 that was unknown to a good part of the world at the
5 time. We could compare him to Neil Armstrong and the
6 people that made the first landing on the moon, uh,
7 going somewhere where they had no idea where they
8 were going to, not even knowing if they were going to
9 make a back alive - some of them didn't even do that.
10 But, they gave a start on something that has created
11 the greatest boroughs - Brooklyn and Staten Island
12 the greatest city, New York City, the greatest state
13 of New York, and the greatest country in the world.
14 So, we owe it to this person, Giovanni da Verrazzano,
15 a debt gratitude for what he did - coming to this
16 world and kickstarting a great new chapter in the
17 history of the world. So, the world will recognize
18 that, the world will thank you for considering this
19 day. I'm looking forward, on behalf of the Federation
20 of Italian American Organization of Brooklyn, and I
21 am Joseph Rizzi, the Director of External Affairs. I
22 look forward... we look forward, as well as all the
23 millions of Italian Americans to celebrating what
24 will be the Giovanni da Verrazzano Day.
25

1
2 Thank you again, (TIMER CHIMES), Council Member
3 Carr for your initiative, and we support you 100
4 percent. Thank you again for giving me this
5 opportunity.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

7 Angelo Vivolo, you may begin when the sergeant
8 starts your clock.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is starting, you may
10 begin.

11 ANGELO VIVOLO: Thank you, thank you for this
12 great opportunity to speak to this Council. I must
13 start and take some time first to say how I am, as a
14 proud New Yorker, and want to congratulate all those
15 who spoke before me in reference to the arts. It is
16 the heartthrob of New York City, and it would make
17 New York City great. I congratulate them and thank
18 them for their efforts.

19 Now, on behalf of the resolution that Council
20 Member Carr has presented, it is... there are over
21 800,000 Italian Americans in New York City - proud of
22 Italian Americans, and we're proud of the fact that
23 Giovanni da Verrazzano... we're celebrating on the
24 17th of April, the 500th anniversary of his
25 exploration of the New York Harbor. Actually 80 years

1
2 before Hudson discovered the area. So, we are looking
3 forward to the approval of this resolution, because
4 we think that this is most deserving. I hope that
5 everyone looks positively on this, and at the end
6 grants this resolution to go into effect. So, I thank
7 you for your time, and I once again, I congratulate
8 those who spoke before me. I really was very
9 impressed with everyone's testimony.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for your testimony.

11 John, you may begin when the sergeant starts your
12 clock.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is starting, you may
14 begin.

15 JOHN GABRIELE, JUNIOR: Good morning Chair Rivera,
16 council members, and everyone on the call. My name is
17 John Gabriele, Junior, and I am the President of the
18 Columbia Association of the Department of Sanitation.
19 My organization was founded in 1936 and is primarily
20 made up of Italian Americans from around New York
21 City - that mostly work for DSNY or have since
22 retired.

23 I am happy to be here today to reiterate our
24 support for the resolution recognizing Giovanni da
25 Verrazzano annually on April 17th. I would like to

1
2 thank Council Member David Carr for bringing this
3 resolution forward through the Council, and thank all
4 of you for being here today.

5 Our Italian culture here in New York City remains
6 vibrant, and in our culture we continuously recognize
7 those that came before us and who have paved our way.
8 Giovanni da Verrazzano certainly has contributed to
9 New York City's history as the first European to set
10 sail into New York Harbor. Recognizing this history
11 is important for our future generations.

12 For me, as a fourth generation American of
13 Italian descent, I live in Staten Island, and I work
14 in Brooklyn. Verrazzano was a common name I've heard
15 my entire life, and, daily, I drive over the
16 Verrazzano Bridge, and I'm reminded of the work that
17 Italians contributed to our city - whether that be
18 the explorer who pulled into New York Harbor 500
19 years ago, or those who have worked and work
20 throughout our city. In speaking here today, I am
21 proud to share that my late grandfather, Salvatore
22 Gabriele, was a carpenter and spent time on the
23 construction of the Verrazano Bridge, which he was
24 proud of - as Italians are always proud of what they
25

1
2 do - and he has left my family with cherished
3 memories and photos of his work.

4 In closing, personally and on behalf of the DSNY
5 Columbia Association, we support this resolution and
6 your consideration. Again, I would like to thank
7 Council Member (TIMER CHIMES) David Carr and those on
8 this call for their support of Giovanni da Verrazzano
9 Day. I look forward April 17th to commemorate the
10 500th year anniversary and recognizing Giovanni
11 annually, thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Thank you, Chair. I just
14 want to thank John, Joe , and Angelo for testifying
15 today. These are three great leaders of Italian
16 Americans and Italian-American affiliated
17 institutions. I so much appreciate their support and
18 speaking on behalf of so many of us for whom Giovanni
19 da Verrazzano is an important figure, and the naming
20 of the bridge across the Narrows was a touchstone
21 moment for all of us as a community, and why I'm so
22 looking forward to celebrating this milestone
23 anniversary this coming month, thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

1
2 That concludes our remote testimony. I will just
3 do a last call for those who registered to testify
4 via Zoom, but do not appear to be online. S. Amir
5 Elivert (phonetic) and Corey Rodrigues (sp?)?

6 Okay, seeing no one else, I would like to note
7 that written testimony, which will be reviewed in
8 full by committee staff, may be submitted to the
9 record for up to 72 hours after the close of this
10 hearing by emailing it to testimony@council.nyc.gov.

11 I will now turn it back over to Chair Rivera for
12 closing statements.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you to the panel that
14 appeared virtually and for your testimony and support
15 of the Resolution, and of course to everyone who
16 joined us today, and to the staff for making it
17 happen.

18 With that, we conclude our committee hearing,
19 thank you.

20 (GAVEL SOUND) (GAVELING OUT)
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25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage

and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 27, 2024