

## LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL (LMCC) AWARDS OVER \$1.3 MILLION TO 284 ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS



*Top row photos (l-r): Leonardo Sandoval & Gregory Richardson/Music From The Sole, photo: Leonardo Sandoval, Greg Richardson, Giselle Kaatsbaan, Christopher Jones; Kotchegna Dance Company, photo: Lisa Diomande; Jody Sperling/Time Lapse Dance, photo: Randall Fox; Bottom row photos (l-r): MICHİYAYA Dance Company, Inc., Alexandra Wood / Stephanie Carlos; Syma, photo courtesy of Grand Street Settlement Senior Art Project; Think!Chinatown, photo: Eric Sahlin Jenkins.*

March 9, 2021—**Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC)** announces today the awardees of over **\$1.3 million in grants** to 284 Manhattan-based artists and arts organizations via its Manhattan Arts Grants programs.

In a year of challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the awards aim to uphold the arts as essential to the health and livelihood of Manhattan’s neighborhoods and exemplify LMCC’s ability to nourish and amplify the cultural resiliency of Manhattan through steadfast and reliable investment. Often serving as a launchpad for emerging artists and organizations working across disciplines as well as a sustaining source for local cultural activity, LMCC continues to facilitate these fundamental, decades-long grant programs specifically to respond to current needs for direct financial support for artists and smaller organizations. The sector has experienced innumerable losses this year, with the very drivers of the city’s cultural life—the artists, arts workers and organizations themselves—placed in increasingly economically precarious positions.

Seventy percent of this year’s grants support artists and organizations living and working in Manhattan’s hardest-hit zip codes for COVID-19, reflecting LMCC’s priority of sustaining this creative network. 2021 grantees remain resourceful and imaginative as they continue to play important roles in their broader communities. They are engaging with crucial social movements, reflecting on the impact of the pandemic and fostering hope and connection through cultural activities in every corner of the borough.

As the **largest re-grantor of public funds for the arts in New York City**, LMCC has administered these critical resources for over 35 years. Funding is provided in collaboration with New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) in partnership with the City Council, New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (UMEZ). These partnerships demonstrate the strengths of NYC's diverse and hyper-local art and culture sector to adapt and respond with creativity and ingenuity, to reimagine gathering and sense of place and to build space for reflection and healing as we strengthen our connections for the future.

"It's so important to support artists who live and work in New York City, bringing their creative energy to our neighborhoods and communities and making our city a healthier, more vibrant place," said NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner **Gonzalo Casals**. "Throughout the pandemic, working artists and grassroots arts groups have faced incredible challenges alongside their fellow New Yorkers. We're proud to partner with LMCC to invest in their work in every corner of Manhattan, and to support programming that lifts up all New Yorkers through the unique power of culture."

"Supporting artists is critical to the overall health of our communities. NYSCA is thrilled to partner with LMCC to ensure that artists across New York City continue to share their vital work," added **Mara Manus**, Executive Director of the New York State Council on the Arts. "During this unprecedented and challenging year, artists are more essential than ever and will drive our state's recovery and renewal. NYSCA is committed to supporting our resilient creative community, which enriches the lives of all New Yorkers."

"Over the past four years, the UMEZ Arts Engagement program has enabled local artists and arts organizations to strengthen the cultural fabric of Upper Manhattan," commented **Blair M. Duncan**, President and CEO of UMEZ. "Our partnership with LMCC proved to be nimble during these challenging times, and together we adapted this year's program to meet the needs of our community."

LMCC's Executive Director of Artistic Programs, **Lili Chopra** said, "We are thrilled to regrant \$1.3 million to Manhattan artists and organizations who, in the face of precarity and uncertainty, inspire and strengthen their local communities. LMCC is proud to support artists' essential role in the enlivening and recovery of our city, particularly in the areas most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic."

**Diego S. Segalini**, LMCC's Executive Director of Finance & Administration, added, "Providing grants and making space for the Arts to thrive are essential to the recovery of New York. LMCC thanks our agency partners at DCLA, NYSCA, and UMEZ for supporting the work of local artists and community-based organizations throughout Manhattan, ensuring that all New Yorkers continue to have access to rich creative experiences and rewarding opportunities, especially during these otherwise challenging times."

"Our grantees are always a source of immense pride and inspiration," said **Ana Fiore**, Director of Grants & Services, LMCC. "Their 2021 projects emphasize the unique ability of artists, working in community, to create necessary paths for grief, healing, joy and celebration, and to transport us to realms of possibility and invention. Their generosity and ambition yields a more abundant City, neighborhood by neighborhood."

The 2021 grants to Manhattan artists and organizations are administered through three LMCC programs:

- **Creative Engagement** provides awards of up to \$9,000 to individual artists and organizations in their efforts to provide the public with rich arts experiences boroughwide. In 2021, LMCC is awarding 192 Creative Engagement grants totaling over \$847,000 in City and State funds.
- **Creative Learning** provides awards of up to \$9,000 to individual artists and organizations in their efforts to bring arts education and enrichment programming to youth, adults and/or seniors in community settings. In 2021, LMCC is awarding 34 Creative Learning grants totaling over \$147,000 in City and State Funds.
- **UMEZ Arts Engagement** provides awards of up to \$10,000 to Upper Manhattan fiscally sponsored individual artists and smaller arts organizations carrying out public-facing arts projects or programming in Upper Manhattan. This funding stream, now in its third year, aims to enhance the diversity and frequency of arts and cultural presentations in Upper Manhattan. In 2021, LMCC is awarding 58 UMEZ Arts Engagement grants totaling \$375,000 in UMEZ funds.

Supported projects in 2021 demonstrate an inspiring approach to safely creating and delivering engaging arts programming for audiences with projects staged virtually, at a distance in public parks and plazas and, later in the year, closer together. Opportunities abound for all New Yorkers to experience concerts, performances, public art installations, exhibitions, screenings, festivals, workshops, readings and more. **Below are several examples of 2021 projects and presentations, followed by the full list of grantees.**

- **Germono T. Bryant** presents *Brown Liquor and Blessed Oil*, a soul- and gospel-infused visual album exploring the duality of being raised in a world of brown liquor-fueled basement parties and spirit-filled churches featuring same-gender-loving performers.
- **Jerron Herman** presents *Hemi*, using his body as a locus to construct movement that parallels the activity from his impaired left side to natural phenomena like tectonic shifts or global migrations, articulating the strong thread between body and world.
- **Internal Creations** offers *Guitar in the Heights*, a series of hybrid virtual/in person guitar workshops for high school students with a curriculum rooted in the Latin tradition of classical guitar and bolstered through encouragement and empowerment—culminating in community performances in Washington Heights.
- **Mei Kazama, Banyu Huang and Lu Zhang** present *Ghost Stories Are All Love Stories*, a group exhibit curated by Huang featuring the multimedia work of the three artists, searching for modes of belonging and cyclical motions of time within the Asian American diaspora.
- **North American Photography Association** presents *2021 Global Chinese New Year*, an exhibition inviting photographers to submit works that capture scenes of Chinese New Year celebrations across the globe.
- **Bonita Oliver** presents *Seeking Truth*, a 360-degree virtual theatrical documentary examining the prismatic historical image of the woman who named herself Sojourner Truth, in an interactive performance.
- **Oyu Oro Afro Cuban Experimental Dance Ensemble** presents *Esperanza*, a dance drama of Afro Cuban folklore accompanied by live music, virtual interviews and

workshops of master artists to keep rich spiritual, musical and historical art movements of African descent alive.

- **Syma** offers *Art Kits for Seniors*, delivering home-safe art supplies to seniors for a series of online participatory workshops, culminating in an online exhibition and printed photos on view in neighborhood display windows.
- **TE AO MANA** presents *Heiva i New York: Centering Nature Through Polynesian Heritage*, a rare international Polynesian cultural celebration featuring an immersive and interactive cultural arts and crafts fair.
- **Carla Torres** presents *The Patio*, a floor mural created in collaboration with the members of the Polo Grounds tenant association to brighten up the experience of one of the plazas for its users and viewers.

To see a full list of supported artists and organizations by program visit the below links:

[CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT](#) [pdf]

[CREATIVE LEARNING](#) [pdf]

[UMEZ ARTS ENGAGEMENT](#) [pdf]

## SUPPORTERS

Creative Engagement and Creative Learning are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew W. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

UMEZ Arts Engagement program funding is provided by the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (UMEZ).

## ABOUT LMCC

Founded as Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, LMCC serves, connects and makes space for artists and community.

Since 1973, LMCC has been the champion for independent artists in New York City and the cultural life force of Lower Manhattan.

We envision New York City as a place in which artists and community in dialogue are creating a more just, equitable and sustainable society.

LMCC Serves Artists through:

- [Residencies](#) that enable artists to experiment and develop their work and ideas, with professional development, financial training and networking opportunities
- [Grant funding](#) to artists that support local/neighborhood projects
- [Presentation opportunities](#) that allow artists to share their work and creative process with the public

LMCC Serves Community through:

- [Free public programs](#) in Lower Manhattan that activate neighborhoods and bring people together through performances and rich artistic experiences

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- [Access to artists and the artmaking process](#) to build connections and dialogue between artists and audiences
- [Grant funding](#) for neighborhood arts and community-based organizations

**[www.LMCC.net](http://www.LMCC.net)**

**For more information, please contact  
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