

2021 UMEZ ARTS ENGAGEMENT GRANTEES

DANCE

Dances For A Variable Population	<i>Revival 5 Hybrid Festival:</i> Through free outdoor and online dance performances and workshops featuring older professional dancers, REVIVAL 5: Hybrid will engage 675 Upper Manhattan residents as audience members and participants through a hybrid in-person/virtual dance festival designed to connect our community through joyful dance at this moment of disconnection and loss.
Gabrielle Lamb/Pigeonwing Dance	<i>Pigeonwing Dance's Carpet Series:</i> an outdoor popup performance that takes place on a Persian carpet in parks and on sidewalks across New York City, showcasing the talents of five contemporary ballet dancers and a rotating array of musicians.
General Mischief Dance Theatre	<i>Get Lifted:</i> an interactive series of outdoor and virtual performances of collaborative dance works. The family-friendly series culminates in an uplifting weekend of full-length distanced performances at Aaron Davis Hall, City College and online. The work celebrates finding joy amidst uncertainty, self-discovery, and as part of a powerful collective.
Vado Diomande / Kotchegna Dance Company	<i>Kekene XV - The Gathering 2021:</i> Every year Kekene –The Gathering commemorates Vado's miraculous survival from natural anthrax in 2006 with a dynamic weekend offering a Saturday performance of West African village dance, drum, song, chant and drama featuring Kotchegna Dance Company and Ivory Coast master soloists, and a Sunday of workshop classes by master instructors.
Elliott Ortiz	<i>5 Paths To Uptown Stories:</i> a dance-theatrical piece presented on a stage that emulates a maze, intending to reshape a human adventure. Six performers depict different thought-provoking experiences of urban life and current events that conflict with existing realities, by choreographer Elliott Ortiz
Oyu Oro Afro Cuban Experimental Dance Ensemble	<i>Esperanza:</i> a 50-minute dance drama of Afro Cuban folklore with live music and dance performance accompanied by the virtual interviews and workshops of master artists, to keep alive the rich spiritual, musical and historical art movements of African descents which are celebrated in the upper Manhattan community.
Leonardo Sandoval & Gregory Richardson / Music From The Sole	<i>Music From The Sole:</i> Tap dancer and choreographer Leonardo Sandoval, with composer Gregory Richardson, will present a 4-part workshop series, and 2 performances at the National Dance Institute. With a full cast of 3 dancers and 5 musicians, the workshops and performance will explore the essence of tap as both music and dance.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND LITERATURE

The American Slavery Project	<i>The American Slavery Project: "Reverberation Series":</i> A series of 3 Audio Dramas with immersive soundscapes and minimalist visual score, and one filmed theatrical solo performance all with themed panel talkbacks, via YouTube, and FBLive that will speak to the reverberations, subtle or crude, American enslavement has had throughout the 20th and 21st Centuries.
ArtCrawl Harlem	<i>Focus On Freedom...</i> curated by Nakia Hicks and Isoul Harris are multi genre art exhibits and discussions that offer an exploratory look at the ways in which the diaspora of Black people in NYC have used Art as a means of protest, representation, education and to affirm.

Barrio Independent Productions (BIP)	<i>Frenzy Short Films 2021</i> : a bilingual (English-Spanish) script-writer contest focus on mental health featuring short films with exhibitions on line.
Gwendolyn Black	<i>Visual Arts and Jazz Day</i> : a free public all day event held every 2nd Friday in June for school students and the entire community that celebrates the visual arts and jazz, highlighted with art and music activities along with live performances
Creative Stage Collective	<i>The CSC Summer Shebang!</i> : an original musical sketch comedy review devised and performed by a diverse, multi-generational Harlem-based troupe. The Summer Shebang! is designed for entire families to enjoy together.
The Gatekeepers Collective, Inc.	<i>Learning to Love</i> : Towards facilitating SGL people's consolidation of fragmented identities, and greater acceptance of sexual diversity TGC will mount Learning to Love, a public art and performance initiative highlighting the work of eight emerging same-gender-loving artists sharing narratives of trajectories of self-acceptance through art to facilitate during Pride Month in 2021.
HIGHER GROUND FESTIVAL	<i>Higher Ground Festival</i> : a Northern Manhattan arts initiative which brings together local artists to network and create interdisciplinary, stage-based collaborations presented free to the community at large.
Korea Art Forum	<i>For Community-Building</i> : a participatory art-making event at Inwood Hill Park. Ten artists will each produce art with a group of participants while discussing issues relevant to the Inwood community. Detailed documentations of all activities will be made accessible online.
La Casa de la Herencia Cultural Puertorriqueña, Inc.	<i>The Kings of Salsa</i> : a musical production based on the life of pianist Richie Ray and vocalist Bobby Cruz, one of the most famous international duos, interpreters of "Salsa" music. This show tells their difficult journey towards fame, how they became the Kings of Salsa and converted to Christianity.
NYC Kidsfest	<i>The 16th Annual NYC Kidsfest</i> : a Performing Arts festival held in Jackie Robinson Park and simultaneously held online as a virtual festival.
Pan American Musical Art Research, Inc (PAMAR)	<i>Latin American Cultural Week</i> : a multi-venue festival, organized by Pan American Musical Art Research (PAMAR) showcasing the rich and diverse cultures of the Americas through music, dance, & theater performances.
Tami Tyree/Echoes of Our Ancestors	<i>The Frederick Douglass Continuum</i> : an annual program of music, theater, talks, and oratory in celebration of abolitionist, journalist, statesman, and social reformer Frederick Douglass. Events are wide-ranging and enlist the talents of Harlem artists, civic and community leaders led by the producer, performer and curator, Tami Tyree.
Word Up Community Bookshop	<i>Uptown Kid Lit</i> : a series of outdoor and virtual literary events for youth in upper Manhattan.
Yaffa Cultural Arts Inc.	<i>Stories For change Celebrates Harlem</i> : a 4 part concert series with accompanying panels. Audiences will have the opportunity to engage with panelists via the virtual format. This installation incorporates the power of the arts to heal as a counter story to the fear and rage of the current narratives.

MUSIC

Annette A. Aguilar & StringBeans	<i>Women In Latin Jazz Festival</i> : Annette A Aguilar & Stringbeans is Latin Brazilian jazz group. One of their focuses is Women in Latin Jazz. In 2014 Annette A Aguilar created the Women in Latin Jazz Festival in Northern Manhattan. They enjoy presenting music to their communities and everywhere.
Natu Camara and MOVE NYC	<i>Let the Music Speak with Natu Camara & MOVE NYC</i> : Outdoor Live Music & Dance harnessing the healing power of the diverse cultures of Africa and sharing them with the Harlem community in collaboration with MOVE NYC who work with talented, historically marginalized and underrepresented artists—particularly Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian.

Courtney's Stars of Tomorrow	<i>Feel the Spirit II</i> : Building on the original goals of Feel the Spirit to teach, revitalize, and preserve African-American spirituals, Feel the Spirit II seeks to highlight the full scope of the spiritual's dramatic and theatrical possibilities through a performance of staged arias and ensembles from the oratorio 'What Manner of Man is this?'
DJ LiKWUiD	<i>The Mothership</i> : a Virtual + IRL healing journey experience that celebrates black and brown women (and feminine identified energy) in music. Each journey pays homage to selected "Mothers" of yesteryear led by our present day "conductors" that includes some of the tri-state areas leading DJs.
Dona Carter Ensemble	<i>"Comfort", Comfort for Our Families</i> : a musical drama presented online. Too often parents lose children and families lose loved ones because of unnecessary violence. Sorrow can be overcome with compassion and lives rebuilt with love. Our program combines drama and music to bring comfort to those in need.
Ekmeles	<i>Ekmeles in Upper Manhattan, 2021</i> : Ekmeles vocal ensemble, a Washington Heights-based contemporary music group, plans to perform three concerts in Upper Manhattan in 2021, including three world premiere commissions. The twelve confirmed works include three by Black composers, and six by women composers, reflecting the ensemble's commitment to programming that reflects our community.
El Taller Latino Americano	<i>El Barrio Canta Su Historia III</i> : a project of self-discovery, recuperation and sustainability. Latin American, World Music and culture, rediscovering the city's urban map. The two concerts will honor and represent the diversity of cultures in El Barrio not just as a place but as a concept, "El Vecindario".
The Harlem Chamber Players, Inc.	The Harlem Chamber Players will present a <i>Black History Month Concert</i> , in partnership with Harlem Stage, and premiere videos from their online series (Harlem Walking Tour and Artist Profiles) featuring various musical artists and Harlem figures – past and present.
Harlem Presents, Inc.	<i>The Harlem Opera Festival</i> : presenting approximately eight emerging opera singers of color over the course of four Sunday evenings in July 2021. The shows will precede the Classical Theatre of Harlem's Sunday evening theatrical performances.
Jazz Power Initiative	<i>Jazz Power ON Live series</i> : featuring performances, stories and interviews with jazz and latin jazz artists, and youth from JPI's programs, in a community-oriented virtual setting. Streamed live on Facebook and YouTube, Jazz Power ON Live is hosted by pianist/singer Eli Yamin, and is offered free of charge.
loadbang	<i>loadbang Presents: Adapt/Adjust</i> : Washington-Heights based experimental classical ensemble loadbang has commissioned over 350 new works for their unique instrumentation. This Spring they take an unprecedented step and perform adapt/adjust, a program of works not originally written for the group.
Los Pleneros de la 21 (LP21)	<i>The Cultural Legacy Project 2021</i> : Rooted in the rich tapestry of traditional Puerto Rican music and dance expressions, the Cultural Legacy Project 2021 presents two time-honored cultural performance events by Los Pleneros de la 21, NYC's preeminent artists in Bomba and Plena, welcoming everyone to enjoy these artistic expressions and community celebrations.
NAMA HARLEM	<i>SHOWTIME at NAMA HARLEM</i> : presenting live music of Jazz and Rhythm & Blues to the Harlem community on a regular weekly basis.
The Overlook	<i>The Overlook Presents: "If the stars align"</i> , a free, outdoor festival at historic uptown locations curated and performed by The Overlook, a string quartet of renowned performers and uptown residents committed to bringing high-quality chamber music performances to their neighbors spotlighting repertoire by Black composers.

Qubit	<i>Credo: A Surveillance Mass</i> : Through the ancient form of the Mass, Credo enacts the mystery of faith, historically provided through organized religion now updated for the present-day as we encounter it through the Internet. A evening-length concert event, Credo combines personal data from the audience members' digital lives with instrumental music, singers and video.
SIRIUS QUARTET	<i>Progressive Chamber Music Festival</i> : With eight groups performing over two nights, the Sirius Quartet will curate the fifth annual Progressive Chamber Music Festival. Dedicated to promoting eclectic genre-bending new music by NYC composer-performers, the festival serves as a nexus/sounding board for innovative musicians to showcase and exchange ideas.
Taikoza	<i>Japanese Music Concert</i> : a series of concerts to introduce and bring Japanese music to the community of Northern Manhattan, with free concerts in the parks and workshops for the community.
Tenth Intervention	<i>La operación</i> : a chamber work with dance by Latinx composer Nick Dunston written in response to the government-imposed sterilization practices on women in Puerto Rico between 1930-70. Performed by Tenth Intervention, "La operación" explores the composer's own intersection of identities, generational trauma, and personal history.
Alicia Waller	<i>Louder, Then</i> : A visual album recounting the personal and sociological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. While exploring universally recognizable themes like solitude, fear, loss, anxiety, and financial uncertainty; the visual album will closely examine the pandemic's impact upon predominantly Black communities in the Upper Manhattan neighborhood of Harlem.

THEATER

Blackberry Productions, Inc.	<i>We Wear the Masks</i> : a docu-drama based on workshops and dialogue with young people and police officers addressing the fear, pain and unrest stemming from the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and violence against Black bodies, presenting three interactive public performances for West Harlem audiences.
K. Hernandez Friend	<i>Rewriting Ramona</i> : a two-part, collaborative performance series featuring songs, poetry, and monologues centered around the multiethnic Native American experience - participants will re-examine the Indigenous narrative in the historical fiction novel, "Ramona" by Helen Hunt Jackson.
Jugando N Play	<i>The Neighbors - Los Vecinos - Las Vecinas</i> : a multilingual interactive theatre experience for young audiences on Zoom. Young audiences will join the neighbors in our Zoom building. As our vecinos prepare for the yearly party, how can we be a good neighbor to someone who just moved to our building?
LaVern Rector	<i>Exotic Dancer From Harlem</i> : a play that reflects an era when exotic dancers also known as "shake" dancers as they were called back then were popular in Harlem. Inspired by my late friend Betty Brisbane to write this play and to pay homage to her.
UP Theater Company, Inc.	" <i>A Bam Play</i> " by Lizzie Donahue presented by UP Theater Company follows a group of barnyard animals who, under the direction of an owl, attempt to produce a play. But when the animals' offspring are pulled to fates unknown, their priorities for the play shift.

VISUAL ARTS & MEDIA

African Diaspora Film Festival, Inc. (ADIFF)	<i>World Black History Program</i> : In the context of the Black Lives Matter movement, ADIFF 2021 plans to present a selection of films about the multiple dimensions of Black History as a way to bring deeper understanding our collective journey to the Black Lives Matter movement.
Marta Chilindron	<i>The Neighborhood</i> : an interactive work composed of translucent brightly colored Polycarbonate panels, linked together. The 'wall' mirrors the skyline of Marcus Garvey Park's surrounding buildings, the Fire Watchtower and the social activities that take place in the park.

DWYER CULTURAL CENTER	<i>VIRGINIA: De Boriquín a Nueva York</i> : an exhibition of a mother of Afro-Puerto Rican heritage who lost her life to Covid-19. The backdrop of her story is a time-line of Puerto Rico and NYC during her life-span from 1936 to 2020. Leading up to the exhibition is a series of poetry-workshops focused on the Afro-Latino experience.
Feggo	<i>Portraits of my Community</i> : an exhibition of 30 artworks in mixed media, portraying people in Harlem, Washington Heights and Inwood. The artworks are social commentaries inspired by the beauty and resilience of long time residents, newcomers and immigrants. The works celebrate the neighborhoods' vibrant and diverse intertwining of cultures.
Harlem Needle Arts (HNA)	<i>Painted Thread</i> : a public textile installation and exhibition series located at select Harlem parks. The series amplifies the Black diasporic experiences through various forms of textile art.
Inwood Art Works	<i>Film Works Alfresco</i> : a curated free outdoor cinema series presenting independent and popular films, with live pre-show entertainment by local artists, that culturally resonate with the Northern Manhattan community. Film Works Alfresco is New York City's only English and Spanish language free outdoor cinema series.
Christine Toy Johnson	<i>EMPRESS MEI LI LOTUS BLOSSOM</i> : a short film by Christine Toy Johnson, presenting a watch party followed by an online talkback about Asian American representation and stereotypes in the media.
Mame Lucas	<i>Quietus</i> : a month-long exhibition of infrared thermal photography and collage works on paper exploring mortality, spirit and transformation by Harlem artist Mame Lucas. Accompanying is a legacy photography series 'Deidades' by Bardo ∞ Project collaborator Latinx artist Manuel Pecina; at Kente Royal Gallery, with an artist talk and workshops.
Bonita Oliver	<i>Seeking Truth</i> : a 360 degree virtual, theatrical documentary examining the prismatic historical image of the woman who named herself Sojourner Truth. Surrounded by digital art representations, actors and musicians will distinguish the documented and imagined voices of this influential orator and itinerant preacher in an interactive performance.
Susan Stair	<i>Ascending the Mountain</i> : a public art installation that celebrates the urban forest that grew up the mountain of Manhattan Schist leading to the Harlem Fire Watchtower. Visitors climb the stairs viewing the artwork in three parts as the mountain changes from rock to forest.
James Top	<i>Graffiti. Black. Book. Word Writ Large</i> : a project with four elements: 1.) creation of an iconic graffiti black book of dramatic proportions, 2.) the artwork of historic graffiti artists and noted contemporaries, 3.) a "creation" video featuring the artists in action and in thought, and 4.) an installation experience.
Carla Torres	<i>The Patio</i> : a floor mural created in collaboration with the members of the Polo Grounds tenant association. It is located at one of the plazas within the development to brighten up the experience of its users and viewers.
Venus Radio Theater (VRT)	<i>The Muck</i> : an audio play that exposes the devastation that systematic oppression and racism have on African American communities. With live theater effectively shut down, audio plays protect the safety of our artists, while still giving access to NYC's rich theater tradition to the Upper Manhattan Community.