



For Immediate Release

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**LMCC (LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL) PRESENTS  
*THE UNINTENDED BLUES* BY LESLIE WAYNE  
AT THE ARTS CENTER AT GOVERNORS ISLAND,  
JULY 24-SEPTEMBER 27**

**Part of LMCC's 25th River To River Festival, the exhibition of large-scale landscape paintings and multimedia works captures the beauty of our natural environment and renders with graphic clarity one of our greatest existential threats**

**Free (RSVP-requested) opening event July 23 at 5pm**

**LMCC (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council; President & CEO Moe Yousuf)**, the non-profit that has, since its founding in 1973, been a champion for independent artists in New York City and the cultural life force of Manhattan, presents ***The Unintended Blues*** by acclaimed artist **Leslie Wayne** (July 24-September 27; opening event: July 23 at 5pm). In the Upper Gallery at the **Arts Center at Governors Island**, Wayne's large-scale paintings document melting icebergs in the Arctic Circle and aerial views of vulnerable US shorelines, while three multimedia works engage viewers with issues around present day climate science. *The Unintended Blues* is part of LMCC's 25th River To River Festival.

Wayne's paintings depict the endangered edges of water and land from Northeast Seattle to Jean Lafitte, Louisiana to the intersection of the Hudson and East Rivers—physically underscoring the work's urgency to New York itself, where it is displayed in the former munitions warehouse turned 40,000 square foot arts space on the New York Harbor Island. As

these paintings capture compromised coastlines and ecosystems another series portrays fast-deteriorating melting glaciers — emphasizing the causal connectedness of these imperiled sites.

Wayne began her artistic career as a plein air landscape painter in her 20s, but shifted toward abstraction when she moved to New York—realizing she was, as she recalls, “more interested in art as an analog to the experience of being in nature rather than in making pictures of nature.” Decades later, as she was flying across the country, and saw the extraordinary patterns of the landscape from above, she began taking photographs that ultimately resulted in her series, *This Land*—a collection largely of aerial landscape paintings of the American West captured from airplane windows. “For me to come back now and make pictures of nature feels like a full-circle,” she describes. “It was very coincidental; I wasn’t planning on it. I had all the photos on my phone, and they sat around for a good year. And then, COVID hit and it became the perfect moment to explore this idea of climate urgency in my work.”

Consistently struck by climate data (for instance, that according to the UN, by 2050 more than 3 billion people are expected to live in port cities built on low lying elevations with an increased risk of rising sea levels, severe storm-surge flooding, damage from high storm winds, and land subsidence), on another flight up the East Coast, she looked out the window at the Chesapeake Bay and instinctively felt it needed to be a painting. The view was simultaneously beautiful and made graphically clear one of our greatest existential threats. “From an aerial view, you get to see what’s at stake in a way you don’t on the ground,” she realized.

From many photos she took out the airplane window, she stitched together a panorama that would become *The Unintended Blues*’ first and title work: a vertiginous 100” x 234” triptych that, in oils in wistful blues and glitter, creates a simultaneous sense of awe and fragility in its depiction of the Chesapeake Bay.

Wayne says, “Artists are in a unique position to bring awareness to issues of great urgency like this by reaching the hearts and minds of viewers, not just with information but with the poetic force of their creativity. For this exhibition, I hope to achieve that by transporting viewers with paintings that portray the splendor of what we stand to lose by our inaction, and with immersive multi-media works that explore not just the visual, but sound, dimension, and direct audience engagement.”

**Moe Yousuf, LMCC President & CEO** said, “What moves me most about Leslie Wayne’s work is the way it carries both force and intimacy. This new body of work speaks powerfully to the natural world, to the fragility and resilience of our landscapes, and to the ways memory, material, and place shape how we understand the world around us. To watch Leslie generate this extraordinary exhibition, monumental in scale and ambition, over the past year has been

remarkable.”

Yousuf added, “At LMCC’s Arts Center at Governors Island, Leslie’s work will anchor a season of programming that brings artists, audiences, and partners into conversation around art, climate, sustainability, education, and public imagination. We are proud to present this exhibition and can’t wait to share it with the public.”

For the series, Wayne used many means of gathering source imagery: Google Earth (as for *Lafitte*, 2025, of the Louisiana wetland community facing severe environmental threats driven by rapid coastal land loss, intense hurricanes and rising sea levels); a pilot friend “who gamely flew along the coast of Texas to find [her] a captivating view” (as for *Matagorda*, 2025 depicting a beach at the mouth of the Colorado River by which two major plastics manufacturers operate); and open-source image banks (including a government study monitoring coastal erosion in Washington, for *Paved Paradise*, 2025, a view of a development site on the edge of Lake Washington). A friend on expedition in the Northwest Passage, meanwhile, photographed melting icebergs — which Wayne used as the basis for a series of paintings of areas experiencing accelerating ice loss, around Griese Fjærd, Canada’s northernmost civilian community; Melville Bay, an active glacial sector characterized by enormous glaciers, massive icebergs, and fields of pack ice all year round; and elsewhere in Greenland.

Three multimedia works open *The Unintended Blues* into other dimensions of emotional engagement and interaction. Two combine tangible materials with projections of lapping water, emphasizing the space’s tense relationship to the water around it. *Swept Away*, 2025-2026 features marine tug lines—the most basic tool used to tow in and moor items ripped away in extreme flooding conditions—around a large wooden spool; video at its foot creates the effect of water seeping from the sculpture. *Submerging*, 2025 – 2026 was created from footage taken in the waters of South Brooklyn near Sheepshead Bay, and is projected onto the back wall of an elevator shaft in the space, creating an immersive experience of being overtaken by rising sea water.

The interactive work *Message in a Bottle to Congress*, 2026, meanwhile, is a list of 78 science and climate-based words culled from the over 350 words and phrases banned by the Federal Administration, and serves as an invitation to viewers to express their own thoughts on paper about the climate debate today and the importance of science. Their words, rolled up and placed in a large antique five-gallon water bottle, will become an integral part of this work in perpetuity and a permanent record of public opinion in the summer of 2026.

The River To River Festival, now in its 25th year, is the centerpiece of LMCC's programming and a vital articulation of its vision—a summer public arts festival celebrating artistic and creative diversity, and presenting live art and installation in public spaces and in partnership with leading institutions in Lower Manhattan. This year, beyond *The Unintended Blues*, the festival includes ***my tongue is a blade***, the durational movement practice from **Sweat Variant (Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born)**, co-presented with **Governors Island Arts**, June 19 & 20; ***CATCH 5th of July Weekend Spectacular!***, hosted by **Carmelita Tropicana** and showcasing downtown luminaries and emerging artists alike, July 5; **esperanza spalding** in concert, August 8 presented in partnership with **Battery Park City Authority**; and, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of 9/11, a world premiere work from **Bill T. Jones** speaking to a forever altered world, September 10, 12, & 13, presented in partnership with **Battery Park City Authority** and **New York Live Arts**.

### **About Leslie Wayne**

Leslie Wayne is an artist whose work lies at the intersection of abstraction and representation. While she's most known for her highly dimensional abstract paintings based on geology, her recent aerial landscapes conjure up deep questions about the American landscape, its mythologies and the environment. Wayne has exhibited nationally and internationally, and her work is in numerous public collections. She has received awards from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, Francis J. Greenburger Foundation, Pollock Krasner Foundation, NYSCA, and NYFA, among others. She is represented by Jack Shainman Gallery.

### **Funding Credits**

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*River To River* is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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### **About the River to River Festival**

**River To River** is downtown New York City's summer arts festival celebrating artistic and creative diversity across disciplines, with live performances and exhibitions.

The festival was created in the aftermath of 9/11 to heal and celebrate New Yorkers' resiliency through the power of art. Since 2002, hundreds of thousands of attendees have experienced the work of hundreds of artists and performers. **River To River** is a celebration of what is possible when artistic creativity, cultural institutions, civic bodies and corporate entities come together in mutual support.

### **About Lower Manhattan Cultural Council**

Since 1973, **LMCC** (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council) has supported artists across New York City. As an arts council, we fund, develop, and present work from neighborhood-based projects to major public programs that help define the city's cultural and civic life. We make the arts accessible to all New Yorkers.

Visit [LMCC.net](http://LMCC.net) to learn more

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