



For Immediate Release
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LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL (LMCC) ANNOUNCES 25TH ANNUAL RIVER TO RIVER FESTIVAL AND 2026 SUMMER PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAMMING

**Upcoming highlights include concerts, exhibitions,
dance works, residencies, and festive community gatherings, with artists
including Bill T. Jones, esperanza spalding,
Sweat Variant (Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born), Leslie Wayne,
Nichole Canuso, Moriah Evans, and more**

**Multidisciplinary offerings fill Lower Manhattan and Governors Island
with art, community, and bold ideas**

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, announces a robust slate of programming for 2026. From residencies and exhibitions in the organization's idyllically situated 40,000 square foot **Arts Center at Governors Island** to major dance and music events in Wagner Park in Battery Park City, LMCC brings New Yorkers together in stunning locations for a summer of vibrant, thought-provoking art, performance, and community. (These presentations come as open invitations: they are almost entirely free and family friendly.) Anchored by the 25th annual **River To River Festival**—which this year features a new work from two-time Tony Award-winning choreographer **Bill T. Jones**, commemorating the 25th anniversary of 9/11; the OBIE

Award-winning **CATCH** series of performance parties; a concert from five-time Grammy Award-winning jazz legend **esperanza spalding**; and more—LMCC’s 2026 programming supports and showcases visionaries across a spectacular range of artistic disciplines. (See 2026 Programming Calendar section below for full calendar and details.)

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, 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; **Leslie Wayne’s** landscape paintings and multi-media work exploring issues around climate and sea level rise, **The Unintended Blues**, July 23-September 27; **esperanza spalding** in concert, August 8; 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.

Public programming also takes place throughout the summer in the Arts Center at Governors Island, the first permanent home for arts and culture on the island. Having opened in 2019, the Arts Center is a hub for exhibitions, performances, workshops, and generative residencies emphasizing work that engages issues of climate, the environment, and sustainability.

LMCC residencies at the Arts Center at Governors Island promote the development of groundbreaking artistic work and respond to the needs of artists, helping preserve New York as a site of artistic experimentation and discovery. **The 2026 Arts Center Residency** fosters creative exploration for projects at the intersection of art and climate. Through September, the residents will share their ongoing artistic practices at a monthly series of free **Open Studios** (May 16, June 20, July 30, August 22 & September 26). From month-long **Arts Center Dance Residencies**, celebrated choreographers will share work through in-process showings. **Moriah Evans**, “the kind of smart, convention-questioning choreographer who conceives of her work as research” (*The New Yorker*), offers an in-progress showing of her immersive performance **[.../*^%<>€£¥\$&@!!!!^^^]** on May 16, as part of May’s Open Studios activations. **Nichole Canuso | Branching Paths** will preview **Lunar Retreat**, a new interactive performance installation on June 20 as part of Open Studios. Choreographer **Anh Vo** will share in-process work **A sign, a signal, a delivery, a deliverance** as part of Open Studios on September 26. Throughout the summer, LMCC will offer free family-friendly **All-Ages Climate Art Workshops** at the Arts Center, each led by a current 2026 Arts Center Resident (July 25, August 1, 15, & 29).

2026 programming at the Arts Center kicked off earlier in April with an Earth Day Celebration, followed by *Labor of Love: An Interactive Celebration of our Hardworking Ecosystems*, part of May Day at the Arts Center and the Creative Labor, Creative Conditions campaign, presented in partnership with Doris Duke Foundation. Both events featured work from OBIE-winning artist **Greg Corbino**.

Moe Yousuf, LMCC President & CEO said, “This year’s programming at LMCC brings together the arts across disciplines, the communities they reach, and the physical environments in which they unfold. It represents our most ambitious season of work since the pandemic. The works come together as different ways of making sense of the world we’re in right now. You see that in artists responding to a city and a world transformed by 9/11, and in work that engages the realities of a changing climate. What I’m drawn to is how these pieces reflect each other and the city around them, creating accessible spaces for people to reflect, to gather, and to find each other.”

2026 PROGRAMMING CALENDAR

River To River Festival

my tongue is a blade

Sweat Variant (Okwui Okpokwasili and Peter Born)

June 19 + 20 | 6:00 pm

What are the limits of our attention, and how do those limits test the strength of our bonds? ***my tongue is a blade*** is a three-hour movement performance-practice rooted in relation, memory, and reflection. Four performers commit to remembering one another, holding one another, bearing one another, and sustaining the world that contains them. A rich visual and sonic landscape invites the audience to witness this shared practice and to resonate within it.

Reservations are open and available at lmcc.net

my tongue is a blade on Governors Island is presented as part of Governors Island Arts' INTERVENTIONS performance series and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC)'s River To River Festival.

CATCH 5th of July Weekend Spectacular!

Hosted by Carmelita Tropicana
Sunday, July 5 | 2:00-8:30 pm

CATCH is everyone's favorite Obie Award–winning, itinerant, rough-and-ready series of performance parties. Satisfying the promise of New York City since 2003, *CATCH* gives stage to an ever-expanding universe of emerging artists and downtown luminaries — pouring equal portions of community, love, and beer.

The Unintended Blues

Leslie Wayne

Thursday, July 23 - Sunday, September 27

Free | Open for public viewing every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 12:00–5:00 pm

Leslie Wayne's new exhibition, ***The Unintended Blues*** documents rising sea levels through aerial landscape paintings of vulnerable US shorelines and melting icebergs in the Arctic Circle. Additional pieces including sculpture, video, and public engagement will directly connect viewers with issues around present day climate science. In these works, Wayne captures the beauty of our natural environment and renders with graphic clarity one of our greatest existential threats.

esperanza spalding: In Concert

Performance at Wagner Park in Battery Park City

Free | Saturday, August 8 | 7:00 pm

From uplifting serenades to haunting ballads, **esperanza spalding's** latest offering showcases embodied classical jazz training through the long-standing rite of improvisation. Synthesizing styles from the ancient to the innovative—spalding will debut never-before-heard works and will be joined by dancers, some of her best-known collaborators, and jazz's brightest stars.

Presented by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) in partnership with Battery Park City Authority.

Bill T. Jones World Premiere

Bill T. Jones with music by Samora Pinderhughes featuring Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company
Performances at Wagner Park in Battery Park City

Thursday, September 10; Saturday, September 12; Sunday, September 13 | 7:00 pm

A world premiere commissioned by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC). Visionary artist **Bill T. Jones** responds to a collaboration between himself and LMCC, originally scheduled to premiere on September 12, 2001, on the plaza between the Twin Towers. Commemorating the 25th anniversary of that suspended moment—and all that has unfolded since—this premiere brings dance back to Lower Manhattan, shaped by resilience and the passage of time.

Commissioned by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) and presented in partnership with New York Live Arts and Battery Park City Authority.

Arts Center at Governors Island Public Programming

The Tempestry Project

May 16 - September 27, 2026

On Display in the Arts Center at Governors Island

New York City's first **Tempestry Collection**. Created by a community of volunteer knitters, the project features sixteen hand-knitted panels or "tempestries," each depicting a full year of the city's daily temperature data rendered into various colors. Part of the nationwide **Tempestry Project**, a collaborative fiber arts offering a unique, hands-on perspective on environmental change. The Tempestry Project is presented by Madison Square Park Conservancy and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

Arts Center Open Studios

May 16, June 20, July 30, August 22, September 26

12:00-5:00PM

With Open Studios, LMCC invites the public into the workspaces and creative processes of the 2026 Cohort of Arts Center Residents. These open house events are free and welcoming, informal, and accessible to all ages.

Art Center Dance Residency Works-in-Progress Showings

Moriah Evans

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May 16 | 4:00-5:00PM

Studio A2 | RSVP Required

An in-process showing of a new work by choreographer **Moriah Evans**.

[.../*^%<>€£¥\$&@!!!!^^^] is an immersive performance that confronts the body as an ambivalent place of political and existential conundrums. The work unfolds in a manner that prioritizes non-linear thinking and embodied ways of knowing. The showing will feature collaborators Malcolm-x Betts, Chloë Engel, João dos Santos Martins, and Varinia Canto Vila.

Nichole Canuso | Branching Paths

Lunar Retreat (work-in-progress)

June 20 | 12:30pm, 1:30pm, 3:00pm, and 4:00pm

Studio A3 | RSVP Required

Lunar Retreat is a multi-sensory performance inspired by the gradual distance growing between the Moon and Earth. This immersive journey invites audiences to wander, witness, and reflect on how we move through care, loss, and transformation—both individually and collectively. Selected sections of the developing performance installation will be shared audiences for feedback and reflection.

Anh Vo

A sign, a signal, a delivery, a deliverance

September 26 | 4:00pm

A sign, a signal, a delivery, a deliverance brings Ca Trù, a rare northern Vietnamese chamber music tradition, into dialogue with possession rituals. Drawing from Ca Trù's austere, trance-like soundscape and its precise rhythmic structures, the project explores quieter states of losing oneself.

All Ages Climate Art Workshops

July 25, August 1, 15, and 29, 2026

Throughout the summer, LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island will host free Saturday All Ages Climate Art Workshops. These family-friendly events invite participants to engage in hands-on, creative experiences, and to take home their artistic projects. Each workshop will be led by **Nobuho Nagasawa** and **Sari Nordman**, both current 2026 Arts Center Resident Artists, sharing an activity related to themes of art and climate. All ages are invited to connect, create, and be part of LMCC's artistic community.

Funding Credits

Funding for the *River To River Festival* is provided by The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, Howard Gilman Foundation, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, and The Robert Lehman Foundation.

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.

Additional funding for *Leslie Wayne: The Unintended Blues* is provided by The Deborah Buck Foundation and Morgan Stanley Blue Rider Group.

Additional funding for *esperanza spalding: In Concert* is provided by Battery Park City Authority.

Additional funding for the Bill T. Jones project is provided by Battery Park City Authority, The National Endowment for the Arts, and Harkness Foundation for Dance.

Support for LMCC's Arts Center Residency Programs is provided by The Cowles Charitable Trust, Jacques and Natasha Gelman Trust, The Norman and Bettina Roberts Foundation, Stony Brook University, and Tiger Baron Foundation.

Support for The Arts Center Dance Residency program is provided by Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels and Harkness Foundation for Dance.

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 to learn more

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