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Council on the Arts

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NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AWARDS \$40 MILLION DOLLARS TO SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURE ACROSS THE STATE

*NYSCA Confirms Unwavering Commitment to the
Recovery and Rebuilding of Arts and Culture*

**Grants Distributed to 1,225 Arts and Cultural Organizations, Supporting Nearly 150
Artists Across 10 Regions**

3/1/2021 — New York — The New York State Council on the
Arts (NYSCA) announced today that 1,225 arts and cultural organizations

across New York State will receive \$40 million in grant funding.

“During an unprecedented and most challenging year for our sector, New York State arts and cultural institutions have continued to showcase their inspiring resiliency, creating and connecting with their communities in the most innovative of ways” said **NYSCA Executive Director Mara Manus**. “New York is the home to countless cultural anchors that fuel our creative economy and New York’s artistic ecosystem. NYSCA is grateful for Governor Cuomo’s commitment to recognizing the valuable role the arts are playing in building our economy back from the damage done by the global pandemic.”

NYSCA’s funding prioritizes underrepresented regions and communities as well as small and medium sized organizations. This year, NYSCA awarded over \$31 million of its total awards to organizations with operating budgets under \$5 million.

NYSCA’s Special Arts Services Program awarded \$2.5 million. This program focuses on providing access to arts for historically underrepresented communities, including African American/Caribbean, Latinx, Asian, Native American, LGBTQIA and immigrant communities. Underrepresented populations are also reached through NYSCA’s State and Local Partnership program, with NYSCA providing \$7.2 million. State and Local Partnerships manages NYSCA’s decentralization and regrant program, which strengthens arts and culture’s reach across New York’s 62 counties.

NYSCA prioritized General Operating Support (GOS) by awarding \$17.8 million to assist organizations that faced immense challenges during the COVID-19 Pandemic with New York State on pause. NYSCA distributed \$16.7 million in new grant awards and \$23.3 million in multi-year grants. New funds were disbursed across NYSCA’s 15 programs.

NYSCA is grateful for Governor Cuomo’s dedication to reopening the arts and supporting New York’s unparalleled creative culture during these extremely challenging times. NYSCA has remained steadfast in developing and expanding the rich cultural resources of the State for more than 60 years—and will continue its mission by providing vital funding across New York.

“In many ways, arts and cultural organizations make up the fabric of their communities and have proven to be instrumental in the financial, social, mental, and physical health of New Yorkers” said **Katherine Nicholls, Chair of the New York**

State Council on the Arts. “NYSCA recognizes the immensely challenging climate for arts and cultural organizations across New York. It is the State’s priority to reopen the arts safely and to support a return of the arts to our daily lives.”

Arts and culture are a driving force in our State’s economy. This year’s funding will ensure the recovery and sustainability of arts and cultural organizations that are the beating heart of New York State’s culture. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the \$120 billion arts and cultural sector accounted for nearly 8% of the state’s economy, and nearly 500,000 jobs.[1] This year has devastated the creative community with more than 2 million creative arts jobs lost nationally, including thousands in New York.[2] As our economy and society continue to recover, the arts remain determined to reimagine, rebuild, renew. New Yorkers look forward to the reopening and recovery of the creative sector.

NYSCA recipients include:

Arts Services Initiative of WNY, Inc (ASI): State & Local Partnerships Program funding will support ASI in serving as the DEC Re grants site for Erie and Niagara Counties and promote arts and culture throughout the eight-county region of Western New York.

Bright Hill Press: Literature Program funding will support this literary center and facilitate poetry readings and writing workshops for youth and adults in the northern Catskills. When the pandemic forced the organization to switch to primarily online programming and close their space to the public, they conducted weekly arts workshops for more than six months, offering tutelage and supplies to foster youth.

The Buffalo International Film Festival (BIFF): Electronic Media & Film Program funding will support this annual city-wide film festival that exhibits over 100 local and international experimental, documentary, and narrative films. In response to the COVID-19, BIFF successfully pivoted the 2020 festival to digital platforms and socially distanced drive-in screenings.

Cherry Arts: Theatre Program funding will support Cherry Arts’ mission to bring artists and audiences together across numerous boundaries and disciplines. Cherry Arts will continue their innovative programming utilizing social distancing and digital platforms to launch exciting and dynamic new works in New York’s Southern Tier.

Classical Theatre of Harlem: Theatre Program funding will support award-winning

theatrical productions anchored in the context of the African Diaspora and the continuation of unparalleled service to the Harlem community. Productions are supported by an array of educational and literary programs that are offered to underserved populations in Harlem and beyond.

Developing Artists Theatre Company: Special Arts Services Program funding will support rigorous year-round theater training and performance opportunities that teach youth from across New York City to fight for positive social change through arts education.

DreamYard: Arts Education Program funding will support Bronx-based youths and communities to identify pathways to opportunities through dynamic arts programming. In 2020, this organization used their arts center as a food distribution site, ultimately serving over 100,000 free meals, bagged groceries, and produce, and in 2021 will continue their essential services to their community.

Harlem Needle Arts: Visual Arts Program funding will support expanding the narrative of fiber, textile, design, and needle arts in the African Diaspora to public audiences through *The Business of Art*, a 2-day professional development conference, providing assistance in the business of artmaking along with a networking opportunity.

Lake Placid Sinfonietta: Music Program funding will support music performances and education for all ages throughout the Adirondacks. This year, a six-concert series and half a dozen free park events will be streamed online. This digital pivot will ensure programming reaches a broader audience, including younger people and populations in prisons and senior facilities.

Memorial Art Gallery: Facilities Program funding will support the completion of the third phase of a gallery lighting retrofitting project, benefitting galleries showcasing European, ancient Middle Eastern, and Islamic art. This upgrade will enhance the visitor experience and reduce energy usage.

Museum of the Chinese in the Americas (MOCA): Museum and Special Arts Services Program funding will support the celebration of the living history of the Chinese experience in America through creative virtual offerings. Programming includes a virtual exhibit, *Trial by Fire: The Race to Save 200 Years of Chinese American History*, which maps the recovery of the museum following a devastating

fire in 2020.

Nia Witherspoon, Theatre Artist and Playwright: Sponsored by Home for Contemporary Theatre and Art through the NYSCA Individual Artist Program, Witherspoon will create an immersive theater experience that presents women and trans folks of color with opportunities to re-encounter their sexualities through the lens of the sacred, in the hopes of increasing bodily autonomy.

Preservation Buffalo Niagara: Architecture + Design Program funding supports the promotion and protection of the architectural legacy of Western New York while centering narratives of urban renewal and redlining. Continuing the new *Modern WNY* programming, the organization will encourage more people to appreciate and explore modernist buildings across the region.

Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY): Folk Arts and Arts Education funding supports the celebration of traditional arts and folk culture of the North Country through arts programming and archival initiatives led by traditional artists. In 2021, support will allow TAUNY to move their community-based learning projects to an online learning format.

West Kortright Centre: Presenting Program funding will support vibrant and vital community services and arts programming for audiences in the Southern Tier, including performances that bring a diverse and eclectic mix of performers from around the world.

A complete list of recipients is available [here](#) and [here](#).

About the New York State Council on the Arts

The New York State Council on the Arts preserves and advances the arts and culture that make New York State an exceptional place to live, work and visit.

NYSCA upholds the right of all New Yorkers to experience the vital contributions the arts make to our communities, education, economic development and quality of life. Through its core grantmaking activity, NYSCA awarded \$43.8M in FY2020 to 2,500 organizations statewide through direct grants and regrants in our 15 programs, the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) initiative and the Mid-Size Capital

Project Fund. NYSCA funding supports the visual, literary, media and performing arts and includes dedicated support for arts education and underserved communities. NYSCA further advances New York's creative culture by convening leaders in the field and providing organizational and professional development opportunities and informational resources.

Created by Governor Nelson Rockefeller in 1960, and continued and expanded to the present day with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, NYSCA is an agency of the Executive Branch of the New York State Government. For more information on NYSCA, please visit www.arts.ny.gov, and follow NYSCA's Facebook page, Twitter @NYSCArts and Instagram @NYSCouncilontheArts.

[1] US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Endowment for the Arts. 2020. *The Arts And Cultural Production Satellite Account*. [online] Available at: <https://apps.bea.gov/data/special-topics/arts-and-culture/summary-sheets/Arts%20-%20New%20York.pdf>

[2] Florida, R., & Seman, M. (2020, August). Lost Art: Measuring COVID-19's devastating impact on America's creative economy (Rep.). Retrieved https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20200810_Brookingsmetro_Covid19-and-creative-economy_Final.pdf

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