



Ten New York Arts Leaders Selected for Museum Hue Cultural Leadership Development Program

HueArts NYS Leadership Cohort Launches in Response to 2023 Report on Needs of Cultural Organizations Outside of New York City



NEW YORK, NY (June 20, 2024) – Museum Hue today announced that ten leaders from cultural organizations that are led and that present the histories and cultures of Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color (BIPOC) from across New York have been selected for the inaugural HueArts New York State Leadership Cohort (HALC). This esteemed group of arts leaders of color will participate in a six-month professional program designed to enhance their leadership skills and bolster the sustainability of cultural organizations serving communities across greater New York.

With generous support from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), the HueArts NYS Leadership Cohort will cultivate a thriving community of arts leaders who are well-equipped to navigate the unique challenges faced by leaders of color in cultural organizations. The HALC was created in response to the unique needs of cultural workers of color identified through the HueArts NYS research and [Brown Paper Report](#) released in 2023.

"The HueArts NYS Leadership Cohort represents a significant step towards a more equitable and thriving cultural sector, closing the gap in resources and professional development support for arts leaders of color across New York State," **Stephanie Johnson-Cunningham, Founder and Executive Director of Museum Hue** said. "We are incredibly excited to launch this program and support these talented leaders as they work to increase the sustainability of and advance their organizations and communities."

Led by facilitator Kemi Ilesanmi, Principal of KGI Projects, HALC fellows will delve into organizational leadership methodologies and best practices in cultural leadership. They will also become part of a network of like-minded colleagues, fostering collaboration and support among leaders of color within the cultural sector. The program will cover key topics including community engagement and cross-sector collaboration, resource development and fundraising, policy and advocacy communications, cultural marketing, and strategic planning. Upon successful completion of the HueArts NYS Fellowship, each fellow will receive a certificate of completion and a \$6,000 stipend.

"The critical contributions of BIPOC-led arts and cultural organizations expand our resources, enrich our cultural diversity, and elevate established and emerging artists," **Erika Mallin, Executive Director of the New York State Council on the Arts** said. "Through their leadership, we will create a more equitable arts and culture sector to further serve and strengthen communities across New York State. NYSCA is a proud supporter of Museum Hue and the HueArts New York State Leadership Cohort. Congratulations to all the accomplished arts leaders selected for this inaugural program."

Kemi Ilesanmi, HALC Lead Facilitator and Principal of KGI Projects said, "New York state's arts ecosystem can only thrive if all organizations have a chance to thrive. I am thrilled to support these arts leaders of color as they strengthen their visions, build their executive toolkits, and expand their networks as members of the inaugural HueArts NYS Leadership Cohort."

2024 HueArts New York State Leadership Cohort Fellows Include:

Michele Agosto

**Founding Member & Co-Director, Los Artistas del Barrio Buffalo
Buffalo, NY**

Michele Agosto is the Director of Arts for the Buffalo City School District, serving the children of Buffalo since 1994, with 10 of those years as an art teacher in the Black Rock area.

Michele's passion for the arts and education is notable as she is dedicated to ensuring equity in the arts for all students in Buffalo and WNY.

Michele is also the co-founder and exhibiting member of Los Artistas del Barrio Buffalo (LADB). Established in 2016, LADB is an arts collaborative whose intent is to promote and highlight the talents of Latino/a/x artists of every genre in WNY Latino/a/x, celebrating our cultural roots, heritage, and community. Born to Puerto Rican parents, Michele was raised in Washington Heights, NYC, but has made Buffalo her home, raising her two amazing boys, Alexander and Anthony.

Anu Annam

Founder/Director, SEA of Visibility

Huntington Station, NY

Anu Annam is the founder/director of the arts-based advocacy organization, SEA of Visibility, which provides events and education programs centering queer/BIPOC folx with invisible disabilities, aiding the integration of the disabled community into our cultural landscape.

An acclaimed artist, educator, and organizer/curator. They collaborate with institutions such as Teatro Yerbabruja, Patchogue Arts Council, MoCA of LI, and LI Museum. Their programs are featured at Community-Word Project, Symphony Space and Girls, Inc and more. They have won numerous arts, teaching, and community grants from NYSCA and Suffolk County.

They created the curriculum for SEA's Integrated Arts Education's E • STEAM Program, a multidisciplinary learning method for inclusive classrooms and Welcome to the Multi-verse, a tool to teach multilingual classrooms through comics.

Annam earned their BA from Tufts University and Boston Museum School. They had 20 solo exhibitions, and organized dozens of community performances and exhibitions.

Sukanya Burman

Founder, Sukanya Burman Dance

Jamestown, New York

Sukanya Burman is a first-generation Indian American dancer and choreographer trained in various styles such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Modern, Contemporary Dance, and Ballet. Sukanya toured internationally with Rhythmosaic Dance Company and later trained at the

Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance in New York City. She teaches and performs extensively in the US and India.

Recently, she founded the Sukanya Burman Dance, a non-profit dance company in Jamestown, NY. Sukanya's passion lies in bridging Western modern and Indian classical dance, fostering cross-cultural alliances. She strives to increase awareness, accessibility, and opportunities in dance through her curated performances and arts education efforts.

She has demonstrated the commitment to the success of women and people of color through creating paid opportunities for dancers of color and women/women identifying dancers. Notable achievements include being a 2022 fellow at Jacob's Pillow Curriculum in Motion Institute and a recipient of the NYSDanceForce NYSCI Award. She is also a 2023 NYSCA Support for Individual Artists grantee and a NYSDanceForce member.

Jaleel Campbell

Co-Founder, Black Artist Collective

Syracuse, NY

Jaleel Campbell is a creative and versatile designer with a Master of Fine Arts degree in Media Arts & Culture from SUNY Purchase College and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communications, Graphic Design from Cazenovia College.

As an Adjunct professor at Cazenovia College, Syracuse University and Onondaga Community College, Jaleel taught illustration courses, fostering students' creative concepts and problem-solving skills. Jaleel's artistic talents extend to illustration projects for diverse clients, including Crouse Irving Memorial Hospital, VH1, Target, and Ceaco.

Jaleel helps with the development of new programming and continued support of Black Artist Collective's existing events. His passion for creating knows no bounds. It is through these acts that community building comes to the forefront.

He is the founder of Jaleel Campbell Studios, securing grants and curating programming to enhance public efforts. With experience in fiber arts, digital illustration, and marketing, Jaleel brings a wealth of skills to any teaching role in the arts, inspiring and educating future generations of artists.

Jeremy Dennis

Founder, Ma's House & BIPOC Art Studio, Inc.

Southampton, NY

Jeremy Dennis is a contemporary fine art photographer and enrolled Tribal Member of the Shinnecock Indian Nation in Southampton, NY. Jeremy founded the non-profit Ma's House & BIPOC Art Studio, Inc. on the Shinnecock Reservation, where he explores Indigenous identity, culture, and assimilation through my work.

Dennis' series "Rise" and "Nothing Happened Here" (2018) address themes of belonging and decolonization from an Indigenous perspective. His earlier work, "Stories—Indigenous Oral Stories, Dreams, and Myths" (2013), brings Indigenous myths to life through staged supernatural images.

Jeremy has participated in residencies like the Andy Warhol Visual Arts Program (2023) and exhibited in venues such as the Mason Gross Galleries at Rutgers University. Jeremy holds an MFA from Pennsylvania State University and a BA in Studio Art from Stony Brook University. He also serves on several advisory boards, including the Boys & Girls Club of Shinnecock Nation. Jeremy lives and works on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation in Southampton, NY.

Dr. Georgette Grier-Key

**Executive Director, Chief Curator, Eastville Community Historical Society
Sag Harbor, NY**

Dr. Georgette Grier-Key is an internationally recognized historian, educator, advocate, and Culture Leader. She is the executive director and chief curator of Eastville Community Historical Society. Additionally, Dr. Grier-Key is professor at Medgar Evers College, specializing in the development of the United States of America and the modern Civil Rights Movement. She is an avid practitioner of grounded theory and sustainability models used to disrupt the agenda of traditional frameworks that have practiced institutional and structural exclusion.

Grier-Key is a well-regarded guest curator and consultant. She has been elected to various outlets that inform and further the study of art, history, preservation, and culture. Notably, Grier-Key is the president of the Museum Association of New York. She is one of the most outspoken advocates using and teaching cultural competence in celebration of Long Island's rich history of African American culture and BIPOC heritage. As a founding member and lead organizer of the Pyrrhus Concer Action Committee her expertise in preservation is

leading to the rebuilding of the formerly enslaved Pyrrhus Concer's homestead in the heart of Southampton's Village.

Hypatia Martinez

**Board President, Teatro Yerbabruja
Bay Shore, NY**

Hypatia Martinez is a Dominican American woman, and mom, raised in a West Indian neighborhood in Queens, NY, educated at Stony Brook University and NYU, and dedicated to blending the realms of artistic expression, wellness and social change.

Hypatia has always been interested in the complexities of human behavior, societal structures, decolonizing healing and systemic injustices. As a licensed clinical social worker, she has provided group and one-on-one therapy services to many communities but currently works with college students.

In 2018, Hypatia joined the board of Teatro Yerbabruja because she witnessed how artistic expression can transcend barriers, heal, ignite conversations and empower marginalized voices. She actively coordinates events at the Arts Center and the college she works for that weave together culturally responsive approaches to destigmatizing mental health, building community and connecting people to their indigenous ways of healing that often includes art.

Devon McLeod

**National Director, First Company Soloist, Kaleidoscope Dance Theatre
Auburn, NY**

Devon McLeod is a business minded, Marketing & Consulting executive with a Bachelor of Science in Business from New York University Stern School of Business. A Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar from NYU, President's Service Award Winner, and John Stevenson Leadership and Community Building Award recipient, her expertise lies in master organizational planning, process innovation, and is a highly skillful producer. Her event knowledge spans large scale festivals, theater productions, designer weddings, and intimate cultivation dinners.

Currently, Devon is a Senior Field Marketing Manager at Wunderkind and a Wedding Manager at The Get Together Events Co. in NYC. She's National Director and a First Company Soloist

for the Kaleidoscope Dance Theatre. Ms. McLeod has also held positions as Coordinator of Major Gifts and the Young Patrons Circle at the New York City Ballet and Production Assistant on Broadway. She's an executive at the New York Institute of Dance & Education Inc, the New York Dance Festival, and Reaching For Higher Ground Consulting. A McLeod Technique and Reinforced Motor Function certified expert, she has traveled internationally and nationally teaching and assisting in Workshops, Master Classes, and Teacher Certifications. She's on the NYU Stern Alumni Council, co-chairing the Black and Latino Alumni Committee.

Brenda Simmons

**Founder and Executive Director, Southampton African American Museum (SAAM)
Southampton, NY**

Brenda Simmons has dedicated most of her life with a sincere compassion to the empowerment of others. Her focus has targeted young teens, single moms, and abused women. Her compassionate journey was ignited from overcoming many personal obstacles and challenges.

Brenda obtained her Associate's Degree in Computer Information Systems from Suffolk Community College and her Bachelor's Degree in Community and Human Services with a Concentration in Family Advocacy from SUNY Empire State receiving the Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

She took on the role as Founder and Executive Director of the Southampton African American Museum (SAAM) aka African American Museum of the East End which had after a 16 year Labor of Love officially opened Juneteenth 2021. SAAM is the first African American site to be historically designated in the Village of Southampton and the first black barbershop in the country to be transformed into a museum.

Brenda has received several awards including the 2003 Woman of Distinction Award, Black Million Woman from Nassau County, 2011 Woman of Distinction Award from Suffolk County, 2nd District Legislation from Jay Schneiderman, 2013 Distinguished Student of Excellence Graduate Award from SUNY Empire State College. In 2022, Brenda received the Anne Ackerson Innovation Leadership Award from the Museum of Association of NY, and the Organizational Excellence Award from Preservation Long Island.

Reuben Tapp

Director, Sankofa Theater Festival/MMB Theatre 1 Project

Rochester, NY

Throughout his 20-year acting career, Reuben Tapp has explored national, regional, and commercial spheres, while also delving into applied theater and advocating for cultural diversity across stage, screen, and communities. Tapp received extensive training in Theater of the Oppressed, Playback Theater, devising, and improvisation which has refined his skills, enabling him to craft compelling narratives and forge deep connections with audiences.

Reuben has been deeply involved in initiatives like the MMB Theatre 1 Project, Avenue Blackbox Theatre, Imani Theater, MuCCC Theater, Kuumba Consultants, {theatre}+{náfsi}, RIT Diversity Theatre, and the Bronze Collective, driving empowerment and social change. His focus is on amplifying marginalized voices, celebrating diversity, and creating inclusive spaces where creativity thrives. As Reuben navigates the evolving arts landscape, he remains committed to using theater's transformative power to inspire, educate, and unite communities across cultural boundaries.

For more information about the HueArts NYS Leadership Cohort and to stay updated on the progress of the HueArts NYS Leadership Cohort, visit museumhue.org and follow Museum Hue on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [X.com](#) @museumhue.

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About Museum Hue

Museum Hue is the leading organization dedicated to advancing Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color in the cultural field. With over 400 institutional members, representing cultural and academic institutions across the United States, Museum Hue is dedicated to advancing the visibility and sustainability of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and other cultural workers of color within the cultural sector. Through research, advocacy, and community-building initiatives, Museum Hue strives to promote equity and inclusion in the arts and culture landscape.

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