

**New York State Council on the Arts
Council Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2021 2:00 PM- 4:10PM
Held via Video and Teleconference**

Present:

Katherine Nicholls (Chair), Monica Angle, Scott Eberle, Aaron Flagg, Joan Hornig, Janet Kagan, Jayne Keyes, Hildy Kuryk, Eric Latzky, Andrea Louie, Laudelina Martinez, Elsie McCabe Thompson, David Alan Miller, Mahnaz Moinian, Catherine Schwoeffermann, Adriana Trigiani

Quorum present: Yes

Others in attendance:

Mara Manus, Executive Director, NYSCA
Abigail Young, Deputy Director of Operations and General Counsel, NYSCA
Arian Blanco, Program Director, Individual Artists and Special Arts Services, NYSCA
Karen Helmerson, Program Director, Visual Arts and Electronic Media & Film, NYSCA
Lia Capotorto, Interim Communications Manager, NYSCA
Abby Adler, Executive Assistant, NYSCA

Roll call conducted by Abby Adler and quorum was confirmed. Meeting called to order by Chair Katherine Nicholls at approximately 2:05PM.

CHAIR'S WELCOME

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: Good afternoon and welcome to the New York State Council on the Arts' July 27, 2021 meeting. I am Katherine Nicholls, the Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts.

Thank you to our Council Members for joining us today. To remind all in attendance; this is a public meeting that is being recorded.

At today's meeting, we will review and vote on Fiscal Year 2022 Restart NY: Rapid Live Performance Grant recommendations and additional FY2022 Panelist Roster recommendations. The meeting materials were sent to Council on Thursday July 22, 2021.

Today it is my pleasure to introduce nine new members to the NYSCA Council: Monica Angle, Lawrence Cook, Carolee Fink, Aaron Flagg, James Lemons, Andrea Louie, David Alan Miller, Catherine Schwoeffermann, and Adriana Trigiani - all confirmed by the State Senate and announced by the Governor on June 7, 2021. Each of our new Council members bring unique perspectives and experiences to their roles. Several have participated in NYSCA's grantmaking process throughout their expansive careers. Our newest members represent regions across the state including Western NY, Long Island, Capital Region, Mid-Hudson, North Country, Southern

Tier, and New York City. They join a Council that is truly representative of all reaches of the state. As we serve all New Yorkers, we do so with all regions in mind.

Today the NYSCA Council will vote on recommendations for two distinct items. First, we will vote on additional FY2022 panelist roster recommendations. This Council voted to approve panelists eligible for their second and third term of service at our June 8 meeting. These new panelists we will review today will enable the review of the Round 2 Partnerships applications. Additional first-term panelist nominations will be brought before Council for vote at our September meeting.

The State Legislature under the leadership of Governor Cuomo has allocated unprecedented and historic funding to NYSCA in recognition of the crisis situation that the not-for-profit arts sector has experienced since the onset of COVID-19 in 2020 and the crucial role the arts will play in the reopening and rebuilding of the state's economy. We are here to review recommendations for the Restart NY: Rapid Live Performance grants. As their names suggest, these grants prioritize the recovery of New York's expansive performance organizations, which include venues, artists, and groups. These grants are designed to promote and reinvigorate near term, in-person performance opportunities.

We would like to take a moment to recognize the NYSCA staff for their extraordinary dedication and careful reimagination of NYSCA's priorities, as well as their work to expedite the release of these funds to our grantees and facilitation of the safe reopening of our State.

A reminder that the FY2022 opportunities have been constructed to achieve the following:

1. Significantly streamline the application process to reduce burden for applying, especially for new applicants and smaller organizations.
2. Provide immediate support for live performance – an area of our sector that has had its doors shuttered since March 2020 with a significant unemployed workforce
3. Expand eligibility and access to funding for underrepresented communities, smaller organizations, and a broader range of artistic practices
4. Provide flexible funding to be responsive to the fluidity of our times

I recognize the work that has been achieved to bring these thoughtful recommendations before Council today on such an expedited timeline. On behalf of the entire Council and staff, we would also like to acknowledge our field, who persevered through the innumerable challenges of the last year, and who benefit so greatly from the funding that is being proposed to Council today. This funding is essential to the restart of the arts and live performances.

I am now pleased to welcome NYSCA's Executive Director, MARA MANUS. Thank you so much for your leadership, MARA, and we welcome your comments and background on today's grant recommendations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WELCOME

MARA MANUS: I would like to echo Katherine's recognition of our incredible Programs and Operations staff under the leadership of Megan White, Deputy Director of Programs, and Abigail Young, Deputy Director of Operations and General Counsel, respectively. They have all been working day in and day out to reimagine the future of NYSCA and our sector, and our product is reflective of our unwavering commitment and understanding of the needs of our field.

We realize that all sectors in the arts have been profoundly impacted by COVID-19. From closing their doors to reducing staff, no organization was unscathed. With the Restart NY: Live performance grants, our top goal was to prioritize the part of our sector that was particularly hardest hit – live performance. As we recover from 16 months of cancelled productions and a reduced arts workforce, the Restart NY: Live Performance grants that we will review today will bring vital resources to our field and reinvigorate live performance across the state.

We are bringing to you 773 recommendations for your approval today.

- 438 organizations
- 20% have operating budgets under \$100k
- We are thrilled to provide this immediate funding.
- We have developed a branding initiative for the Restart Grantees, which will bring the work of the recipients to the wider field in the most expansive way possible and support the marketing efforts of each grantee.
- Grantees will be encouraged to use the hashtag #restartNYgrantee for social media campaigns and monitoring. Additionally, grantees will be encouraged to fill out a simple questionnaire detailing their upcoming RestartNY performances. Lia Capotorto, Interim Communications Manager, and Sana Colter, NYSCA's VISTA member, will compile and track this list of Restart NY performances across the state.

As part of our continued FY2022 outreach, we organized and executed the first-ever NYSCA webinar week.

- We typically hold in-person opportunity sessions across the state. With consideration for safety and convenience, these sessions were reimaged for FY2022 to be held virtually in June and the week of July 12.
- Being a connector/convenor is a key strategic priority and we wanted to cast as broad a net as possible while offering high-touch support to our field.
- Building from our successful NYSCA PRESENTS webinar series, this was a new undertaking for NYSCA. I wanted to give a big shout-out to our producers Lia Capotorto and Abby Adler, as well as our staff who hosted the webinars, answered countless questions, and prepared materials.
- These responses from our field have been overwhelmingly positive.
- Like many aspects of our work, when we are able to hold these meetings in-person again, we will pursue a hybrid in-person and virtual model.

I would like to introduce Lia Capotorto and Abby Adler, who will share with us some key outreach outcomes.

FY2022 OUTREACH REPORT

LIA CAPOTORTO: Our Agency communications reflect our FY2022 funding goals as well as our strategic planning process. We are reaching applicants through constant updates on our website, e-blasts and letters to the field as well as through our social media presence. The NYSCA Team is always available to speak about our opportunities and we regularly communicate that with the field.

Since our guidelines launched, we have had significant website traffic. Our FY2022 funding page, which we developed as a “one –stop-shop” for our grantmaking, has outperformed our landing page. This could indicate that when applicants or viewers come to our website, they are going directly from a link, be it from social, email or another platform. Our webinar page has also seen significant pageviews, not including YouTube or live views.

The Restart NY Grants had a quick turn-around of 2 weeks for our Restart NY grants, we spread the word of this opportunity through many channels repeatedly. Ultimately, we wanted to make sure we answered as many questions as we could and reached all who were eligible.

For the first time ever, we made our funding opportunity sessions completely virtual this year. Our Kick-off and Restart NY webinars were held in June, and then we launched webinar week on July 12.

All live webinars were hosted by members of the program staff and each webinar culminated in an interactive Q+A. We also had 2 pre-recorded technical webinars, hosted by members of our operations team. This was truly an all-hands-on-deck achievement.

All webinars were recorded and posted on the NYSCA website. We also hosted 4 virtual office hours, where program staff answered questions in breakout rooms organized by topic.

ABBY ADLER: Registration was required for the webinars and office hours – which allowed us to gather advance questions and tailor our presentations to the needs of the field.

We received approximately 2,700 registrations and almost 2,000 people attended the live webinars and office hours. Please note that this data is a cumulation of the unique viewers at each webinar and does not include staff attendance.

Through our FY22 Webinar page (which syncs with our public Youtube channel), we have received 1,432 views to-date.

This bumps our total views (live webinars and recordings) to about 3,400. That's 3,400 interactions with NYSCA and our FY22 materials between June 17th and today.

I am happy to report that each live webinar had representation from ALL ten regions across the state. The breakdown of attendance at our LIVE offerings, so not including YouTube views, was consistent with NYSCA's regional grantmaking history.

Additionally, a majority of the attendees at our office hours on July 16th reported that they were not current grantees, meaning that NYSCA staff was able to provide incredibly high-touch, 1:1 support to individuals and organizations who are new to NYSCA or relatively unfamiliar with our process.

Following the outreach report, a motion is made and seconded to enter Executive Session. The meeting continues in Executive Session for Council members and invited guests until 4PM.

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: Welcome back to the public portion of the Council meeting for the New York State Council on the Arts. I am Katherine Nicholls, Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts. Thank you all for joining us. To remind all in attendance; this is a public meeting that is being recorded.

FY2022 Panelist Roster Recommendations

MARA MANUS: Each year, NYSCA solicits nominations from NYSCA staff, Council members, current panelists, current grantees, and the general public. Advisory panelists are selected from these nominees. As a reminder, all panel members serve single year terms, and may be reappointed for a term of up to three years.

At our June 8, 2021 meeting, Council voted to approve 175 returning panelists who will serve their second or third term during our upcoming panel review process. Today we are reviewing and voting on three additional first-term panelist recommendations who will serve on the Round 2 NYSCA Partnerships review panel. The application portal for Partnerships closes on August 2, and Council will review and vote on the recommendations at our September 9 meeting.

Last year, in an effort to cast a broader net to attract a wider range of panelists, we updated the language on our call for panelists, highlighted the call for panelists on our website, designed a flyer highlighting our call for panelists, and encouraged our service organizations to share the panelist opportunity. Through these efforts we attracted over 200 nominations, over half of which were new to NYSCA. We will launch our new FY22 panelist page on the NYSCA website this week, including a new panelist nomination form.

As a reminder, advisory panelists are required to act with impartiality with respect to the evaluation and rating of applications and to protect panel deliberations from any potential conflict of interest or the appearance of such a conflict. Prior to serving, panelists are required

to acknowledge any affiliations with organizations making applications to the Council and must comply with New York State Ethics Laws.

At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion is made and seconded to bring the FY2022 Panelist Roster recommendations and FY2022 Restart NY: Rapid Live Performance Grant recommendations to a vote.

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: I would now like to ask Abigail Young if there are any recusals to report. Those with a conflict will be deemed recused on their vote for the applicable application.

ABIGAIL YOUNG: Thank you Katherine. I have the following conflicts to report for the record:

1. **Albany Symphony Orchestra, Inc.:** David Alan Miller
2. **Classical Theatre of Harlem:** Elsie McCabe Thompson
3. **SARATOGA PERFORMING ARTS CTC:** Jayne Keyes

Following the reading of the recusals, the motion carries unanimously by the Council members.

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: Before we adjourn, my immense gratitude to the entire NYSCA Council, Leadership, and Staff for being here with us today. It is always a pleasure to share this space with you.

Today NYSCA has taken an important step forward in aiding the recovery of our not-for-profit arts and culture sector. These grants will no doubt make an incredible difference to the recipients as they begin to perform once again in communities all across New York State.

Over the last several weeks, the interaction between NYSCA and the field has been crucially important to assisting the field in preparation for applications for Fiscal Year 2022. I would like to thank the staff, but as importantly, members of our field who participated in this important process. We have created an effective dialogue and these sessions will remain available to support the field on NYSCA's website.

Recovery and restarting the arts is a multi-faceted, multi-year process, and we are at the very early stages of this today.

Our next meeting will be held on September 9 where Council will review and vote on the Round 2 Partnerships and FY2022 Panelist rosters. Between now and September 9, NYSCA panelists will be review the Partnership recommendations. The schedule for August panels is forthcoming and I encourage all Council members to make time to log on and experience this important part of our process. Attending panels provides you the most important context for when we come together in September to vote on recommendations.

On behalf of Council, we look forward to following the Restart NY performances as they begin to open across the state. We wish our grantees much success. We encourage you in your work and we are inspired by your commitment and dedication.

At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion for the Council to adjourn the meeting is made and seconded. The motion carries unanimously by the Council members.

Meeting adjourns at approximately 4:10PM.

End of Council Meeting Minutes.