

**New York State Council on the Arts
Council Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2021 2:00 PM- 3:20PM
Held via Video and Teleconference**

Present:

Katherine Nicholls (Chair), Monica Angle, Lawrence Cook, Scott Eberle, Carolee Fink, Joan Hornig, Jayne Keyes, Eric Latzky, James Lemons, Andrea Louie, Laudelina Martinez, David Alan Miller, Mahnaz Moinian, Catherine Schwoeffermann, Adriana Trigiani

Quorum present: Yes

Others in attendance:

Mara Manus, Executive Director, NYSCA

Megan White, Deputy Director of Programs, NYSCA

Abigail Young, Deputy Director of Operations and General Counsel, NYSCA

Leanne Tintori, Program Director, State and Local Partnerships and Dance, 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 2:08PM.

CHAIR'S WELCOME

KATHERINE NICHOLLS:

Good afternoon and welcome to the New York State Council on the Arts' September 9, 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. As authorized by the Governor and the New York State Legislature on September 1, 2021. This meeting will be conducted by teleconference and video participation. A recording and transcript of the meeting will be made available on the NYSCA website.

At today's meeting, we will review and vote on Fiscal Year 2022 Partnership Grants, FY2022 Restart NY: Live Performance Grant recommendations, and FY2022 Panelist Roster recommendations. The meeting materials were sent to Council on Friday, September 3, 2021.

It is my immense pleasure today to recognize our new Governor, Kathy Hochul, who is the first woman to assume the office. On behalf of the NYSCA Council, Staff, and the arts sector, we extend our congratulations and excitement. Throughout her many years of service to New York State, Governor Hochul has been a powerful advocate for the arts and a frequent attendee of our grantee's performances, openings, and groundbreakings. We are at a critical juncture for

our state, and we look forward to working with the Governor and her team to advance the arts sector and support a dynamic and multi-year recovery for the state. This morning New York has sworn in a new Lieutenant Governor, Brian Benjamin. During his tenure as state senator, Senator Benjamin represented District 30, which includes areas in Harlem, East Harlem, and the Upper West Side. He also served as the Senior Assistant Majority Leader. On behalf of the entire NYSCA Council and staff, we wish our Governor and Lieutenant Governor every success.

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 as well as additional panelists for NYSCA Partnerships at our July 27th meeting. The panelists we review and vote on today will participate in the review of the Round 3 applications in October.

We will also review and vote on the FY2022 Partnership grant recommendations, which include grants for Partnerships and the Statewide Community Regrant Partners, formerly known as the Decentralization Sites. This support will expand NYSCA's current network of valued regrant partners to reach New York's vast and diverse community of artists and organizations. A healthier field is a more inclusive field, and increased support at the local level will ensure more communities, organizations, and individuals have access to NYSCA funding.

The application portal for the NYSCA Partnerships opportunity opened July 19 and closed August 2. Application to this opportunity was by invitation only. The review panel for the Statewide Community Regrant Partners was held on August 16, and the panel for the Partnerships applications was held on August 26. Many thanks to our Council Members who were able to attend these meetings, and we hope that they were informative.

I would like to take this moment to recognize the NYSCA staff, under the leadership of Abigail Young, Deputy Director of Operations and General Council, and Megan White, Deputy Director of Programs. With their leadership, NYSCA has redeveloped the application process and launched a new application portal. Our staff has worked collaboratively with the field and been responsive to ensure their greater understanding of NYSCA's new opportunities. Their extraordinary dedication throughout this process to reimagine NYSCA's priorities has been exemplary, and we share our immense gratitude with them.

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

On behalf of the entire Council and staff, we would also like to acknowledge New York State's incredible artistic field who persevered through the innumerable challenges of the last year. We remain inspired by their considerable dedication to provide support and programming to their communities over these last 18 months.

I am now pleased to welcome NYSCA's Executive Director, MARA MANUS. Mara, I would like to say a few words about your exceptional leadership over this last year as you have committed yourself wholeheartedly to guiding the agency through this very challenging time.

Mara has worked steadfastly to provide vital context to the Chamber, New York State Division of the Budget, and the Legislature regarding the impact of the arts on New York State and the devastating toll of COVID on our sector. Mara has also worked collaboratively and creatively across sectors with our partners at the Office of the Aging and Department of Corrections to ensure the continuation of crucial creative programming. Mara and the NYSCA team's efforts have provided critical context and paved the way for our historic funding. Our vast and diverse arts sector that spans all 62 state counties is at the center of all we do here at NYSCA. The state's recognition of the arts has resulted in the historic level of funding that NYSCA has received for FY2022, and we acknowledge how vital this funding is to our sector's recovery and future.

Mara, we thank you so much for your leadership and I am pleased to turn this meeting over to you. We welcome your thoughts and updates!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WELCOME

MARA MANUS: Thank you, KATHERINE, for your kind words. None of this would be possible without the incredible team, as you mentioned under the leadership of Abigail Young and Megan White. It is indeed a giant team effort.

I wanted to echo Katherine's remarks about Governor Hochul, who has been a champion of the arts in New York. I have had the pleasure of sharing the stage with her, and it has been thrilling to see her support the arts across the state throughout her tenure as Lieutenant Governor. We are also so grateful to the Legislature and the Governor for this historic \$105 million investment in the arts for FY2022.

Over these last 18 months, there has been a heightened awareness nation-wide of the critical impact that arts have on the health of individuals and communities. This awareness has propelled New York State to meet the outsized needs of our sector in our multi-year recovery with a historic FY2022 funding appropriation.

It is now really all of our jobs to build on the considerable momentum underway in keeping our state colleagues and electeds informed about the successes and challenges in the reopening and recovery of our sector so that we can continue this vital work. I greatly look forward to our

collaborative efforts in the months and years ahead as we continue to provide resources to organizations and artists whose work nourishes our lives, spirits, and economies.

Restart NY

I'm pleased to provide an update on our Restart NY: Live Performance Grants. This Council voted to approve 773 Restart grants to 438 organizations across the state at our July 27th meeting. I am delighted to report that Restart performances have already launched in all 10 regions of our state, from Torn Space in Buffalo, NY to the Glimmerglass Festival in Mohawk Valley. As part of our communications initiative, we have received nearly 200 responses to our performance tracking form. To-date, approximately 140 performances have occurred and 250 are scheduled.

For this initiative, our grantees are continuing to use our special hashtag: #restartNYgrantee, which has been used in over 100 posts.

We have created a page on our website detailing the schedule of restart events happening each week. The page is routinely updated as grantees fill out their forms. The Restart Events page lives under our NYSArts Now tab. Please check this page regularly for weekly updates!

We look forward to continuing to see restart grantees host performances through December 2021 and I want to give a shout out to Lia Capotorto, NYSCA's Interim Communications Manager, and Sana Colter, NYSCA's VISTA Member, for developing and leading the charge on this comprehensive communications initiative!

FY22 Outreach

Being a connector and 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.

As part of our continued FY2022 outreach, we held 4 additional Zoom Office Hours throughout August, reaching 133 organizations and individual artists, 30% of whom indicated that they are first-time applicants.

To-date, NYSCA has held 7 live webinars, 2 pre-recorded webinars, and 8 office hour sessions, reaching almost 4,000 people. This breaks down to 2,100 live attendees and 2,583 virtual views through the NYSCA website and Youtube channel. In the month of August, our webinar virtual views increased by 80% (increased by 1,151 views). We will continue to produce our NYSCA Presents webinars, including one for our Capital opportunities which we will be posting in September.

While the arts are persevering and reopening, we are all keenly aware of the challenges that lie ahead in the ever-evolving COVID crisis. NYSCA will be hosting listening session on an ongoing basis to stay abreast of our field and how the health crisis is impacting them in these fluid times. Our recovery is multi-faceted, and we are honored to stand by our field as we navigate these ongoing challenges together.

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

MEGAN WHITE: 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. At our July 27, 2021 meeting, we voted to approve three additional first-term panelist recommendations who served on the Round 2 NYSCA Partnerships review panel.

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 launched our new FY22 panelist page on the NYSCA website in July 2021, including a new panelist nomination form. The deadline for panelist nominations was August 20, 2021. We received over 70 nominations, many of whom are included in the Council Meeting materials.

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, FY2022 NYSCA Partnership grant recommendations, and FY2022 Restart NY: Rapid Live Performance grant recommendations to a vote.

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

MEGAN WHITE: Thank you Katherine. I have the following conflicts to report for the record:

1. **NYS Dance Force:** James Lemons
2. **Just Buffalo:** Andrea Louie

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 another 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 reopen in communities all across New York State.

Our next meeting will be held on November 16, where Council will review and vote on the Round 4 Capital panelist roster and the Round 3 Support for Organizations, Support for Artists, Recovery Grants, and Special Opportunities grant recommendations. We ask that you please hold the entire day for the meeting.

The schedule for the Round 3 review panels in October 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 important context for when we come together in November to vote on recommendations. A reminder that Council members audit panel meetings, and are expected to remain muted and with their cameras turned off.

On behalf of Council, we wish our grantees much success and we look forward to witnessing your work over the next year. We are grateful for your dedication and the incredible impact you have on our state.

As Executive Director Manus noted, our recovery is a multi-faceted and multi year process. New Yorkers continue to respond to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, and now combined with the recovery from recent storms; Henri and Ida, we rise to meet the challenges we face. That is what New Yorkers do!

It is crucial that we remain vigilant and observe the health and safety protocols set out by the State. We applaud the arts and culture sector across New York for your diligence and focus in this area of response. Your commitment to public safety has allowed us to be reinvigorated by your work. We are thrilled to enjoy the return to live performance and eagerly await the upcoming fall season! To all of our grantees, thank you. Your work inspires us and enriches our lives and the vitality of our communities.

Again, I would like to thank the NYSCA staff, council, and panelists, as today in doing our civic duty we have approved close to \$8 million in vital funding in support for New York's vital arts and culture sector.

I wish everyone good health, and this concludes our Council meeting for today! I will now ask for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting.

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 3:20PM.

End of Council Meeting Minutes.