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For Immediate Release: April 5, 2019

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NYC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES FOUR NEW PUBLIC ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Public Artists in Residence (PAIR) program, launched in 2015, embeds artists within City agencies to address pressing civic and social issues through creative practice

Artists will focus on community engagement and social justice issues while working in four City agencies: the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department for the Aging, the Department of Records and Information Services, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability

New York – The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) today announced four new appointments as part of the City's Public Artists in Residence – or PAIR – program. PAIR, which DCLA **launched in 2015**, places artists-in-residence at City agencies to address pressing civic issues through creative practice. The four newest PAIRs will focus on community engagement and social justice issues through their work with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department for the Aging, the Department of Records and Information Services, and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.

"The Public Artists in Residence program is grounded in the recognition that our city's artists can offer fresh insights and strategies for tackling the challenges at the heart of local government services," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. "This extraordinary new group of PAIRs promises to do exactly that – to expand meaningful connections between our City agency partners and the New Yorkers they serve."

The PAIR placements announced today are:

- **Artist Taja Lindley in residence with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH):** Taja Lindley is an artist, healer, and activist based in New York City. Through iterative and interdisciplinary practices, she creates socially engaged artwork that transforms audiences, shifts culture, and moves people to action. She uses movement, text, installation, ritual, burlesque, and multi-media to create immersive works that are concerned with freedom, healing, and pleasure. Her performances, films, and installations have been featured at Brooklyn Museum; La Mama Theater; New York Live Arts; the American Repertory Theater at Harvard University; the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma; the Carver Museum in Austin, Texas; the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, California; and more. She is the founder of Colored Girls Hustle and a member of Echoing Ida and Harriet's Apothecary. In addition to being an artist, Lindley is actively engaged in social movements as a writer, consultant, and facilitator. Most recently, she served as a Sexual and Reproductive Justice Consultant at DOHMH, facilitating a community-driven process that created The New York City Standards for Respectful Care at Birth.

DOHMH Residency

As a PAIR at DOHMH's Center for Health Equity, Lindley will use community engagement strategies that deepen the collective understanding of how racism and gender oppression affect birth outcomes. Working out of the Tremont Neighborhood Health Action Center, she will start by exploring how the voices of pregnant and parenting Black people in the Bronx can advance reproductive justice and inform changes in medical practices and government policies.

- **Artist Laura Nova in residence with the Department for the Aging (DFTA):** Artist, athlete, and activator Laura Nova generates site-specific action-oriented projects which invite participatory energies of neighbors and strangers alike, particularly within the urban landscapes of older adult and migrant communities. She uses cardio, comedy and cooking to create activist audiences who, in turn, reveal and preserve stories of both people and places. Recent commissions have included multi-year social engagement projects such as *Silver Sirens*, an older adult cheerleading squad championing healthcare, gender equity, and anti-ageism; and *Moving Stories*, a senior-led storytelling and walking tour. Nova has shown her work at national and international venues, including the New Museum's IdeasCity Festival, the River To River Festival, the Brooklyn Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Real Art Ways, Substation Gallery in Johannesburg, South Africa and the National Arts Center in Tokyo, Japan. She is an Associate Professor of Creative Arts and Technology at Bloomfield College.

DFTA Residency

Nova's PAIR collaboration with DFTA will deepen the City's understanding of ageism and its impact on older New Yorkers. She will challenge societal misconceptions around age and discrimination embedded in language, social practices, policies, and institutions. Her creative solutions will help DFTA further its mission of eliminating ageism and ensuring the dignity and quality of life of NYC's diverse older adults.

- **Artist Julia Weist in residence with the Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS):** Since pursuing her MLIS degree, New York-based artist Julia Weist's artistic practice has centered around archives, collections and information resources. She uses them to explore the relationship between media production and cultural context, and to understand how the velocity of information originates in its accessibility. Her work has recently been exhibited at the Queens Museum (New York City), the Hong-Gah Museum (Taipei), Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (Rotterdam) and Rhizome, the New Museum (New York City). Through her work with many cultural institutions on ambitious archival projects, Weist attempts to transform impenetrable data sets into discovery tools capable of offering paths for exploration rather than fixed sets of stories.

DORIS Residency

During her residency, Weist will work primarily with DORIS's colonial collection, which offers a detailed account of everyday life in New Amsterdam but can be intimidating as a resource. Through study and interpretation of the collection, she will create a unique experience for a wider audience that helps emphasize the role of the historical record in modern discourse and community engagement. She will also explore how an artist might help develop the Colonial records to better represent the perspectives of the indigenous and enslaved populations of the period.

- **Artist Janet Zweig in residence with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability (MOS):** Janet Zweig is a New York based artist working primarily in the public realm. Nature and sustainability have played a critical part in her recent projects. These include working with a San Diego climate scientist to create a kinetic sculpture at a new library that visualizes climate change data and the vanishing of natural resources in a direct way for the community. She also worked with engineers to create a large-scale installation on the Sacramento River that orients viewers to drought and flood conditions. Her public works are installed around the country, and her sculpture and books have been shown widely. A Rome Prize recipient, she teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design.

MOS Residency

In all of Zweig's work, she attempts to speak to viewers both as communities and as individuals, sometimes tapping into their talents and energy to develop content. During her residency she will use these and other art strategies to support MOS's efforts to convey to New Yorkers how they, personally and collectively, can make a positive difference in issues around sustainability. She hopes to use the opportunity to reach New Yorkers in a way that empowers them to drive change on a local level and understand the collective impact of their actions on a global level.

Images of the 2019 PAIR cohort and their work are available [here](#). Learn more about PAIR on [DCLA's website](#).

"The Health Department welcomes artist Taja Lindley, whose profound work highlights how racism can impact health outcomes in communities of color," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. "The arts can play an important role in engaging New Yorkers and inspiring them to advocate for change. I thank the Department of Cultural Affairs for giving us an opportunity to participate in this great program."

"Art is a powerful tool to translate complex ideas, like climate change, into visceral calls to action," said **Mark Chambers, Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability**. "We're excited to partner with Janet Zweig and DCLA to engage the hearts and imaginations of New Yorkers around what it means to create a city and world that is carbon free."

"We are excited to welcome public artist Laura Nova to help us expand our perspectives on ageism and empower our staff to unlock new approaches to serving older New Yorkers," said **Department for the Aging acting Commissioner Caryn Resnick**. "Through the SU-CASA program, which places artists in senior centers, we have already seen art play a role in increasing quality-of-life for older adults. We look forward to expanding our partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs by participating in the PAIR program for the first time."

"We are thrilled to host artist Julia Weist in the Municipal Archives," said **Pauline Toole, Commissioner, Department of Records & Information Services**. "Her innovative interpretive skills will help us reach new audiences and facilitate opportunities for greater research, knowledge-sharing, and storytelling based on the Colonial-era treasures of New York City's four-hundred year history."

Each PAIR placement will last a minimum of one year. The residency begins with a research phase, during which the artist spends time at the agency meeting staff and learning about its operations and initiatives while also introducing the artist's practice and process to agency staff. The research phase concludes with a proposal from the artist outlining one or more public-facing participatory projects that will be implemented during the remainder of the residency. Artists receive a fee, as well as in-kind resources such as desk space with the partner agency, and access to DCLA's **Materials for the Arts** creative reuse program. PAIR is supported with funds from the City of New York.

PAIR was inspired by artist Mierle Ukeles' pioneering artist residency with the NYC Department of Sanitation, which started in the late 1970s. Since its 2015 launch, PAIR partnerships have included:

- **Rachel G. Barnard** with the Department of Probation
- **Tania Bruguera** with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
- **Onyedika Chuke** with the Department of Correction (Rikers Island)
- **Bryan Doerries/Theater of War** with the Department of Veterans' Services
- **Batyana Fazlalizadeh** with the NYC Commission on Human Rights
- **Ebony Golden** with the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence
- **The Lost Collective** with the Administration for Children's Services
- **Mary Miss** with the Department of Design and Construction
- **Social Design Collective** and **Christine Tinsley** with the Department of Veterans' Services

About NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening New York City's vibrant cultural life. DCLA works to promote and advocate for quality arts programming and to articulate the contribution made by the cultural community to the City's vitality. The Department represents and serves non-profit cultural organizations involved in the visual, literary, and performing arts; public-oriented science and humanities institutions including zoos, botanical gardens, and historic and preservation societies; and creative artists at all skill levels who live and work within the City's five boroughs. DCLA also provides donated materials for arts programs offered by the public schools and cultural and social service groups, and commissions permanent works of public art at City-funded construction projects throughout the five boroughs. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/culture.

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