

November 25, 2013

Dear Mayor-Elect de Blasio, City Council Members (new and continuing), and Transition Team Members,

Congratulations! We, leaders from across sectors, write to share how arts and culture can and should play a vital role in achieving the inspirational One City Rising platform. We are thrilled to offer the attached **Policy Brief that lays out a vision of Arts and Culture as essential and integral to a more just and equitable city for all New Yorkers**. It is rooted in the values of creating a city that cares about our neighborhoods, insists on equality, and embraces civic energy.

Below we highlight key time-sensitive strategies the Mayoral team and City Council should consider right now to keep culture at the table during transition planning:

BIG IDEA #1: CREATE CROSS SECTOR STRATEGIES

Integrate arts and culture across policymaking and practice including, but not limited to: safe streets and transportation, arts education, juvenile justice, early childhood development, education, immigration, sustainability, housing, and community development.

***ACT NOW:** The Mayor should require that every city agency designate a staff member responsible for thinking about and integrating arts into their agenda with specific programmatic, policymaking, and funding goals. The Mayor's Office should create a position to facilitate and support arts-related interagency collaboration.*

BIG IDEA #2: INSPIRE PARTICIPATION

Build arts and culture into civic participation across the city to reach those who have been historically disenfranchised and to stimulate civic dialogue and action across difference.

***ACT NOW:** The Mayor should establish a citywide Office of Civic Participation and include arts and cultural leadership, methodologies, and partnerships in this office.*

BIG IDEA #3: CULTIVATE COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Revitalize New York City from the neighborhood up by supporting community leadership, cultural hubs, and vital social networks.

***ACT NOW:** Create a City Council staff position to act as a resource to council members in supporting small organizations and neighborhood-based culture in their districts to ensure that they have the same access to city resources and technical support that larger institutions enjoy.*

BIG IDEA #4: FURTHER CULTURAL EQUITY:

Prioritize equitable distribution of opportunities and benefits related to arts and culture.

***ACT NOW:** Appoint a Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner who will prioritize cultural equity in agency goals and programs. Select leadership that reflects the city's diversity. Develop a cultural plan for NYC that advances cultural equity and participation.*

BIG IDEA #5: THE FIELD IS YOUR FRIEND

There is a wealth of resources and allies among the artists, activists, and cultural organizations working for social change.

ACT NOW: *Establish formal mechanisms for practitioners to support and provide advice about the above policy recommendations through advisory committees and working groups.*

We need to work together and harness every resource that we have at hand – data, policy, community knowledge, civic energy, and creativity – to achieve a fair, equitable, and sustainable city. We need to be able to imagine a city where we can live meaningful lives in thriving communities and build the relationships and public will to get us there. Arts and culture makes a powerful contribution toward these goals. By fully engaging our creativity we can truly become, One City Rising Together.

In the upcoming weeks, as the transition takes shape, we look forward to highlighting other aspects of the attached brief.

Sincerely,

INITIAL SIGNATORIES

List in Development

To add your signature, visit: <http://www.miniurl.com/5T7S>

ORGANIZATIONS

ArtHome
Arts & Democracy Project
Asian American Arts Centre
Bangladesh Institute of Performing Arts
Bowery Arts + Science
Bronx Council on the Arts
Buckminster Fuller Institute
Center for Arts Education
Center for Media Justice
College Access: Research & Action
Councilmember Brad Lander's Office
Dance Theatre Etcetera
Downtown Arts
East River Academy, Rikers Island
ECE PolicyWorks
Educational Video Center
El Puente
Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc
freeDimensional, Zero Capital
Global Action Project
Groundswell
Hester Street Collaborative
New York Chinatown History Project

Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York (NOCD-NY)
Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
Ping Chong + Company
Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District
PolicyLink
Pratt Center for Community Development
Staten Island Arts (formerly COAHSI)
Sustainability Strategies
The Field
The Foundry Theatre
The Laundromat Project
The POINT CDC
The Public Science Project of The Graduate Center, CUNY
Transportation Alternatives
Urban Bush Women
Voices UnBroken
World Up

INDIVIDUALS

Affiliation noted for identification purposes only

Bill Aguado, Cultural Equity Group
Fay Chiang, Project Reach
Jan Cohen-Cruz, Public: A Journal of Imagining America
Rachel Falcone, Sandy Storyline
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Josh Lerner, Participatory Budgeting Project
Todd Lester, World Policy Institute
Rabbi Ellen Lippmann, Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives
Andrea Louie, Asian American Arts Alliance
Randy Martin, NYU
Meghan McDermott, Global Action Project
Jackie Miller, Only Make Believe
Joan Minieri, Community Learning Partnership
Eve Mosher, artist
Michael Premo, Housing is a Human Right
Marlène Ramírez-Cancio, Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics
Yasmin Ramirez
George Emilio Sanchez, artist
Amy Schwartzman, National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response
Sasha Sumner, Pratt Institute
Schawannah Wright, Columbia University

Sarah Zeller-Berkman, PhD, The Youth Development Institute

To review an up-to-date list of signatories, visit: <http://www.miniurl.com/5T7P>

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