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MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO APPOINTS NEW MEMBERS TO THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION

NEW YORK—The de Blasio administration today announced the appointment of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission – including the return of five members, the appointment of 16 new members and the addition of four honorary members. The Commission is comprised of appointees from a diverse array of cultural and artistic organizations and practices, and will advise Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner of Cultural Affairs Tom Finkelpearl on issues impacting NYC’s cultural community. The Commission will be chaired by Susana Torruella Leval, Professor at Hunter College and Emerita Director of El Museo del Barrio, and Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas, Program Director for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund’s Pivotal Place program, will serve as Vice-Chair.

“The talented New Yorkers we’ve convened for this board represent a cross section of the most diverse and accomplished artists, administrators and advocates in this city. Under the leadership of Susana Torruella Leval, I’m confident the wisdom of this Commission will guide the Department of Cultural Affairs toward meaningful and sustained engagement with the city’s cultural communities to bring the arts to New Yorkers in all five boroughs,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

The Commission will guide the Department of Cultural Affairs in ensuring its programs reach New Yorkers in all five boroughs, and continue to strengthen and build upon the relationship between the City and NYC’s cultural and arts institutions. The Commission will meet with the Department of Cultural Affairs to advise on initiatives such as promoting diversity among our arts and cultural institutions by ensuring New Yorkers from every background are represented in a broad range of leadership and advisory positions in cultural organizations; creating affordable housing and workspaces so that NYC can remain a viable home for emerging artists; developing partnerships with local arts and cultural institutions to provide greater access to more New Yorkers; and developing the City’s first comprehensive cultural plan. The Commission will have its first meeting this winter.

As stated in the City Charter, the Commission is charged with formulating and recommending goals with regard to cultural activities and policy, fostering coordination among City, State and federal agencies and other organizations and institutions with respect to cultural activities, and compiling data and reports and submitting its findings to the Mayor and Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

The First Deputy Mayor Anthony Shorris, Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl, and Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver serve ex-officio. Historically, the Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), a position held on a rotating basis by directors of City cultural organizations, and the head of one of the borough arts councils, serve as non-voting, honorary participants of the CAAC. These entities will be represented by Thelma Golden, Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group, and Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer, Executive Director of the Queens Arts Council, respectively. Arnold Lehman, Former Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group and Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña, will also be joining them as non-voting, honorary participants. Per the City Charter, the 21 regular members of the Commission will serve on a staggered schedule.

“New York’s cultural community is woven into the fabric of our neighborhoods and is central to what makes our city such a vital, vibrant place to live and visit,” said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. “The members of the Advisory Commission reflect the diverse range of how residents experience the arts, and I look forward to working with this extraordinary group on making progress toward our goal of expanding access to the arts for every New Yorker, especially as we begin our work on developing New York’s first comprehensive cultural plan.”

“New York City’s cultural community will be well served by these new appointees to the Cultural Affairs Advisory Board,” said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “These individuals represent the great talent and diversity of New York’s arts and culture community, and will serve residents across the five boroughs by making New York friendlier and more accessible for the art and culture communities.”

“I am honored by this appointment, and delighted to join Mayor de Blasio and Cultural Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl in supporting artists and highlighting the richness and diversity of the arts in New York City,” said **Chair of the Cultural Advisory Commission Susana Torruella Leval**.

“I am honored to work alongside Susana Leval to help guide the work of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. This is such an exciting time for our City and for the nation. I look forward to making sure that culture remains a critical part of the key developments in our City and informs the national and international dialogue about culture and its role in cities” said **Vice Chair, Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas**.

“Being a cultural capital is a key part of who we are as a city,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I look forward to working with this commission and the Department of Cultural Affairs to leverage our artistic, historic, and cultural wealth to enrich the lives of New Yorkers.”

“Advancement of the arts is integral to the advancement of our society. The service of members of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission serve New York City well, especially with input from iconic Brooklynites like Candice Anderson, Steve Buscemi, Alan Fishman, Kemi Ilesanmi, Carmen Fariña, and Arnold Lehman. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for selecting a diverse array of artistic luminaries to take the lead on the Advisory Commission’s work in developing New York City’s first comprehensive cultural plan,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, said, “The diversity of Mayor de Blasio’s appointments to the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission is a representation of New York City’s wide range of artists as well as a representation of an eclectic mix of people from cultural communities in all five boroughs. Together we will increase access to the arts and culture in all communities throughout New York City and ensure every New Yorker – young and old – is afforded the ability to experience world-class art that make our city the cultural capital of the world.”

The following are new appointees to the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission:

Susana Torruella Leval will serve as Chair of the Commission and has been an art writer and curator of Puerto Rican, Latino and Latin American contemporary art in New York City since 1970. She was Director of El Museo del Barrio, from 1994 –2002, first serving as Chief Curator, and was named Director Emerita. Torruella Leval was Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) in New York, and Vice President and President Elect of the Association of Art Museum Directors. She has recently joined the editorial board of the International Center for Art of the Americas at The Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and has been named to the board of the Institute of Museum and Library Services by President Obama.

Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas will serve as Vice-Chair of the Commission and is the Program Director for the New York City portion of the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation’s Pivotal Place program where he oversees funding

for a portfolio of arts organizations in NYC, as well as the Pocantico Arts Collaborative. In addition to serving on various arts-related boards, he co-founded the Cuban Artists Fund in 1998, an international organization dedicated to helping individual artists and promoting cultural exchanges with the Cuban community.

Candice Anderson is the Executive Director of Cool Culture. Serving previously as the Director of Child Care and Head Start Collaboration at the NYC Administration for Children's Services, Anderson's career has focused on growing educational opportunity and life outcomes for children and families of New York City's underserved communities. She is a recipient of the Brooklyn District Attorney's Extraordinary Women Award.

Steve Buscemi is an American actor, director and writer. He has starred in and supported Hollywood and indie films, including *Parting Glances*, *New York Stories*, *Mystery Train*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Desperado*, *Con Air*, *Armageddon*, *The Grey Zone*, *Ghost World*, *Trees Lounge* and *Big Fish*. From 2010 to 2014, Buscemi starred in the series *Boardwalk Empire*, which earned him two Screen Actors Guild Awards, a Golden Globe, and two nominations for an Emmy Award.

Dr. Valerie Capers, a native New Yorker, is a celebrated educator, jazz pianist, and composer and arranger. She served for several years as Chairman of the Department of Music and art at CUNY'S Bronx Community College. Capers is the recipient of many honors and awards from a number of organizations and institutions, among them the Essence Magazine, Cuny Research Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Gabri Christa came to filmmaking after a successful career as a choreographer and dancer with companies such as Danza Contemporanea de Cuba and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. Christa has received a number of awards, including from the Guggenheim for choreography and an ABC television award for creative excellence for her short film "High School" and Pangea Day Festival's World's 100 most promising Filmmakers distinction. Her film KASITA won best short at the Harlem International Film Festival. She is in post-production for a documentary about Yoga Master Leo Floridas and is the Artistic Director of Snug Harbor Cultural Center.

Thelma Golden is Director and Chief Curator of The Studio Museum in Harlem where she began her career in 1987 before joining the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1988. After a decade at the Whitney, she returned to the Studio Museum in 2000 as Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Programs, and was named Director and Chief Curator in 2005. Golden was appointed to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House by President Obama in 2010, and in 2015 joined the Barack Obama Foundation's Board of Directors.

Lane Harwell is currently the Executive Director of Dance/NYC, the leading advocacy organization for dance makers and companies in the five boroughs. He received training at the School of American Ballet and performed with American Ballet Theatre Studio Company. Harwell chairs the steering committee for the New York Dance and Performance Awards and formerly chaired the Arts Committee at Municipal Art Society of New York. He is a member of the Arts Education Advisory Committee to the PEP, as well as committees for Hunter College, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York City Arts Coalition, One Percent for Culture, and Trust for Governors Island, among others.

Jane Steiner Hoffman is an environmentalist and former Commissioner of New York City's Department of Consumer Affairs. She has drawn attention to environmental causes through the Presidential Forum on Renewable Energy, which she founded and chaired, and through her book *Green – Your Place in the New Energy Revolution*. A graduate of Northwestern University, she is active on the boards of numerous organizations.

Kemi Ilesanmi is the Executive Director of The Laundromat Project, which brings arts, artists, and arts programming into community spaces, to amplify the creativity that already exists within communities. With nearly two decades experience in the cultural arena, she is inspired by the immense possibilities for joy and

social impact at the intersection of arts, justice, and community. She previously worked at Creative Capital Foundation and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

Sandra Jackson-Dumont is the Chairman of Education at the Metropolitan Museum of Art overseeing education, public programs, live arts and audience development. She was formerly Deputy Director for Education + Public Programs/ Adjunct Curator, Modern & Contemporary Art at the Seattle Art Museum where she oversaw programming across the Museum's three locations. Jackson-Dumont has worked at the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Whitney Museum of American Art. She has received numerous awards including the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation's Creativity Leadership Award and the Northwest Asian Weekly Foundation's Women of Color Empowered Award, and was named one of Seattle Magazine's Most Influential People in 2010.

Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer is the Executive Director of Queens Council on the Arts. She is the author and illustrator of *Rabbit Mooncakes*, a children's picture book about growing up in Queens through the lens of the immigrant experience, published by Little, Brown & Co. in 1994.

Simi Linton is an author, filmmaker, and arts consultant. Her writings include *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity, My Body Politic*, and the essay "Cultural Territories of Disability" in the forthcoming report *Disability. Dance. Artistry*. published by Dance/NYC. She is the subject of the documentary *Invitation to Dance*, which she and Christian von Tippelskirch directed and produced. Linton's consultancy practice, Disability/Arts, works to shape the presentation of disability in the arts. Linton was on faculty at CUNY for 14 years, was a Switzer Distinguished Fellow (1995-1996), Co-Director of the University Seminar in Disability Studies at Columbia University (2003-2007), Presidential Visiting Scholar at Hofstra University (2006) and a recipient of the 2015 Barnard Medal of Distinction.

Arnold Lehman, (Yale M.Phil, Ph.D; Pratt DHL), an activist museum director for over 40 years, is an advocate for public accessibility, diversity, community, innovation, and freedom of expression. His 18 years at the Brooklyn Museum brought over 200 acclaimed exhibitions and thousands of progressive educational programs to Eastern Parkway. Lehman was President of the Association of Art Museum Directors, three-term Chair of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) of NYC, and serves as a Trustee of the American Federation of Arts, on the Executive Committee of the Bard Graduate Center, and recently received the Wunsch Award for Excellence in American art. As a Ford Foundation Fellow, he advises on issues of social justice, creativity, and freedom of expression, as well as personally working on a project for the advancement of museum professionals of color. In addition, Lehman is Chair of the Board of Legg Mason Funds and Senior Advisor at Phillips.

Aedin Moloney is founder and producing artistic director of NYC's Fallen Angel Theatre Company, a nonprofit organization whose primary focus is to present plays written by and about Irish, British and American women. Moloney is also an award winning actress with U.S. and international experience.

Prerana Reddy is the Director of Public Programs & Community Engagement at the Queens Museum. She oversees cultural organizing initiatives alongside new immigrant communities with a focus on spatial and language justice. She helped initiate collaboration between the Museum and Queens College's Art Department to create an MFA concentration in Social Practice. She has also been a film programmer at Alwan for the Arts, an Arab & Middle Eastern Cultural Center, and a founding member of 3rd i NY South Asian film collective.

Dr. Cristián Samper is the President and CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society. Before joining the WSC, Samper served as Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, the world's largest natural history collection, and was the founding Director of the Humboldt Institute.

Kellie Terry is a Program Officer in Sustainable Environments at the Surdna Foundation. She began her career at THE POINT CDC, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the revitalization of the South Bronx through arts and culture, youth development and community development in 2002, and rose to Executive Director in 2004.

Terry is a graduate of Holy Cross and currently a candidate for a Masters' Degree in Urban and Regional Planning at Pratt Institute. She serves as the Board Chair of The New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and is a Board Director of The Bronx River Alliance and The Norcross Foundation.

Fred Wilson is an American artist who received a MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant" in 1999 and the Larry Aldrich Foundation Award in 2003. Wilson represented the United States at the Cairo Biennale in 1992 and the Venice Biennale in 2003. Wilson is a trustee at the Whitney Museum of American Art. His work is in the collections of The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Brooklyn Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, and The Whitney Museum of American Art among many other museums nationally and internationally.

Mayor de Blasio has reappointed the following members to the Commission:

Alan Fishman is the Chairman of Ladder Capital Finance, a commercial real estate finance firm. He serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Chairman of the Brooklyn Community Foundation, and member of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership.

Agnes Gund is President Emerita of the Museum of Modern Art and chair of MoMA PS1. She joined the MoMA Board in 1976 and was president from 1991-2002. She chairs Studio in a School, an organization she founded in 1977 in response to budget cuts that virtually eliminated arts classes from NYC public schools. A philanthropist and art collector, Gund serves on the NY State Council on the Arts and the boards of the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, among others.

Raymond J. McGuire is Citi's Global Head of Corporate and Investment Banking. He is the Chairman of the Board of the Studio Museum in Harlem and De La Salle Academy and serves on several boards including the New York Public Library, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Alex Hillman Family Foundation, the International Center of Photography and the Citi Foundation. He has received numerous honors including the Theodore Roosevelt Award from the Legal Aid Society and the John C. Whitehead Social Enterprise Award from Harvard Business School Club NY.

Robert Soros is President and Deputy Chairman at Soros Fund Management LLC. A graduate of NYU, Soros is Chairman Emeritus of the non-profit performing arts organization The Kitchen, and serves on the boards of numerous corporations and non-profits.

Judith Rubin is Board Chair of Playwrights Horizons, a non-profit theater dedicated to American writers and their new work. She is a member of the Tony Awards Administration Committee, the boards of Mount Sinai Health System, Collegiate School, New York Community Trust, and the executive committee of Theatre Communications Group. She is a trustee of the Laurents/Hatcher Foundation that awards both a major annual prize to a play by an emerging playwright, and production grants to theaters across the country. She served on the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Council of the NEA.

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