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New York City Department of Sanitation Announces Launch of “[Office of In Visibility](#)” Created by Department of Cultural Affairs Public Artist-in-Residence sTo Len

[NYC Public Artists in Residence](#) program positions artists as creative problem-solvers; [Office of In Visibility](#) to highlight relationship between New Yorkers, their trash, and those who collect it

NEW YORK – The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) today announced the launch of a new *Office of In Visibility* (OOIV) project, created by DSNY’s current Public Artist in Residence, sTo Len. The Public Artist in Residence program is administered by DCLA, and Len has been [embedded within DSNY as part of this program since October 2021](#).

The [Office of In Visibility](#) investigates the phenomenon of “out of sight, out of mind” through a series of interdisciplinary artworks. OOIV will create new dialogues that explore the intimate but often ignored relationship between the public and the approximately 10,000 DSNY employees who care for their discards every day. Under the OOIV banner, Len works with materials and sites within DSNY to create collaborative projects with employees based on historical research and interdepartmental inquiry. These projects collectively seek to expand awareness and appreciation for the tremendous work it takes to keep New York City healthy, thriving, and clean, and will include in-person events for interaction by the public.

“Every New Yorker has a role in creating trash, but very few do the work of collecting it – and outside that group, perhaps even fewer consider the work involved. New York’s Strongest truly are invisible all too often, and this project highlights not just the work in the street, but behind the scenes in our facilities – the planning and care that goes in to managing what nine million New Yorkers throw away, as if there were such a place,”

said **Jessica S. Tisch, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation.**

"sTo Len's work with the Department of Sanitation demonstrates the incredible power artists have to re-frame and re-imagine the world around us," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo**. "With the Office of (In)Visibility, Len as Public Artist in Residence with DSNY has created an exciting new way for New Yorkers to engage with the agency we rely on every day but too often take for granted. We invite city residents to take a dive into the Privy Pit, tune into SAN TV, and accept the artist's invitation to consider more deeply our relationship with the waste we produce and what happens to it once it's out of sight."

"As Public Artist in Residence, I've had the pleasure of following our waste stream and shadowing the Sanitation workers who keep it moving every single day. I'm excited to launch OOIV as a space to share these experiences with the public through a multimedia project that gives visibility to the Department while celebrating its history and exploring possibilities for a cleaner and more sustainable city for all NY citizens," **Len** said.

OOIV projects will include a video series entitled SAN TV (Sanitation Art Network Television) made on "outdated" Sanitation audio/visual equipment, and a revitalized historic printmaking studio now specializing in Sanitation-themed prints. An online participatory waste study called The Privy Pit asks for contributions from the public who can pick from a series of playful instructions that reconsider our waste habit rituals. These submissions will form the basis of a discard study collection viewable online and in a future exhibition. Through these on-going projects, OOIV will give the public the chance to see this vast operation from multiple angles and reconsider their own role in this essential partnership – the way in which they create the waste and then pass it on to others to collect and process.

The Office of In Visibility will be hosted on the DSNY homepage, and <http://www.officeofinvisibility.com/> will serve as an online hub as well. In addition, New Yorkers will have opportunities to speak to sTo directly about the work at two upcoming events:

- Eastern Queens Alliance Earth Month Expo
Idlewild Environmental Center
Saturday, April 30, 2022 | 10:30 am – 3 pm
- Exploring our Waste: A Creative Workshop with Artist sTo Len
MFTA Third Thursday
Thursday, May 19, 2022 | 6:30pm – 8:30pm

At this event, participants will be able to enjoy an evening of art-making at Materials for the Arts as Len leads a series of creative prompts, encouraging

New Yorkers to dive deeper into the items we discard and the people who process them. Learn more about Len's residency with DSNY including ride-alongs on Sanitation trucks, early morning roll call, and trips to waste processing centers across NYC.

"Arts and culture play a significant role in memorializing and honoring the stories of our city," said **Council Member Chi Ossé**. "And there is no doubt that our Sanitation workers are an important part of what makes New York great. Many New Yorkers often forget that our Sanitation Workers are key to ensuring our city is clean, healthy, and beautiful. I am excited about DSNY and DCLA's Office of In Visibility project that will honor the hard work and effort of our Sanitation Workers."

The PAIR program selects artists through an annual open call. Over a minimum of 12 months, the artists bring their creative practices to bear on a range of public challenges, from fostering a greater understanding of our public sanitation and construction agencies, to engaging with newly digitized public records that capture a pivotal time in New York City's history. The program was inspired by the pioneering work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, who has served as unpaid artist-in-residence at DSNY since 1977. Len was one of three current PAIRs [announced by DCLA](#) in October 2021.

In addition to its work with Ukeles and Len, DSNY has a longstanding commitment to the arts, including its [Trucks of Art program](#), in which collection trucks are painted, and the recent [Sanitation Celebration art exhibition](#), which featured work by DSNY employees alongside works by Ukeles and Len.