



Twelve New York City Leaders Selected for Museum Hue's HueArts Cultural Leadership Development Program

HueArts NYC Leadership Cohort Launches in Response to 2022 Report on Needs of NYC's Cultural Organizations



NEW YORK, NY (JUNE 26, 2025) – Museum Hue is pleased to announce that twelve leaders from arts and cultural organizations that are founded, led, and present the histories and cultures of Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color from across New York City have been selected for the second HueArts Leadership Cohort (HALC), following an inaugural group from New York State cultural entities outside the five boroughs. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

These outstanding arts leaders will participate in a six-month professional program designed to further enhance their skills and bolster the sustainability of cultural organizations serving New York City's diverse communities and cultivate a thriving network of arts leaders who are well-equipped to navigate the unique challenges faced by their cultural organizations. HALC was created in response to the unique needs of cultural workers of color identified through the [HueArts NYC](#) and NYS research and Brown Paper Reports, released in 2022 and 2023.

Facilitated by Brittany Bellinger, Director of Programs & Innovation at Museum Hue, this professional development program will build upon the foundational curriculum developed for last year's New York State cohort by Kemi Ilesanmi, Principal of KGI Projects. The program will cover key topics including community engagement and cross-sector collaboration, resource development and fundraising, policy and advocacy communications, cultural marketing, and strategic planning. Upon successful completion of the HueArts NYC Fellowship, each fellow will receive a certificate of completion and a \$2,000 stipend. Additionally, they will join a network of like-minded colleagues—including last year's 10 New York State fellows—fostering collaboration and support among leaders of color within the cultural sector.

For more information about the HueArts NYS Leadership Cohort and to stay updated on the progress of the fellows, visit www.museumhue.org and follow Museum Hue on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [X.com](#) @museumhue.

2025 HueArts New York City Leadership Fellows (with bios below):

Nakia Alston *Interim Development Director, Weeksville Heritage Center*

Adriana Burkins *Education Manager, Lewis Latimer House*

Adriana Carrillo Silva *Director of Guest Experience, Louis Armstrong House Museum*

Cynthia Carrión *Director of Government & Community Affairs, El Museo del Barrio*

Jesús Hernández-Bach *Executive Director, Latin Reel*

Brandy Heyward *Executive Director, Sisters in Sharqui*

Jiyoung Lee *Director of Programs, AHL Foundation*

Sophia Ma *Board Secretary, Asian American Arts Centre*

Catherine Ochún Soliz-Rey *Assistant Director, Garifuna Heritage Center for the Arts & Culture*

Bernard J. Tarver *Associate Producing Director, Liberation Theatre Company*

Karen D. Taylor *Founding Director, While We Are Still Here*

Farren Wood *Manager of Programs & Community Engagement, 651 Arts*

Nakia Alston is the founder of the Onyx Rose Collaborative, a consulting practice that supports Black-led and -serving institutions in unlocking sustainable resources without relying on deficit-based narratives. With nearly two decades of leadership in the nonprofit sector, Nakia is a strategic fundraiser, equity advocate, and relationship builder who has raised over \$30 million to advance youth development, racial and social justice, and arts and culture. Her work is grounded in a deep commitment to equity and centers on shifting resources to historically marginalized communities to ensure they have the tools, power, and visibility to thrive.

Nakia studied organizational leadership at Fordham University, where her scholarship explored the intersections of race, faith, and philanthropy. This academic grounding continues to shape her practice and her vision for justice-centered fundraising and movement-building. A proud Harlem native now rooted in Brooklyn, Nakia is also the mother of two bold, brilliant children who inspire her commitment to building a more just world. Outside of work, Nakia finds joy in literature, the arts, and exploring the living cultural history of New York City.

Adriana Burkins, Education Manager at the Lewis Latimer House, engages diverse audiences in the life and legacy of the Black inventor, humanist, and artist, Lewis Latimer, through STEAM education, community programming, and storytelling. She has worked in museum education for nearly ten years in various museums including the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City, where she also co-curated an exhibition on the collective power behind symbols and communication design. Adriana is passionate about culturally responsive education and community building through creative expression, and explores ceramics, stained glass, and printmaking in her spare time. She received her MA in Art History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her BA at Meredith College.

Adriana Carrillo Silva is a journalist, with an M.A. in Liberal Studies and an emphasis on Biography, Autobiography, and Memoir from The Graduate Center, CUNY. Currently, she is the Director of Guest Experience at the Louis Armstrong House Museum where she has developed her museum career since 2015. In her role, she has curated museum programs and experiences, hosted thousands of visits a year, and spearheaded a Trumpet Education program founded in 2023.

Her thesis, entitled *The Music in His Words: The Art of Sound and Folk in Louis Armstrong’s Manuscript for Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans*, “The Armstrong Story”, is a close reading of the jazz icon’s manuscript for his second autobiography, published in 1954, and a reconsideration of the isolated cultural elements that were stripped from the original version that reflect Black orality and music. This year, she brings her research of Louis Armstrong connections with New York City, including historic performances in Harlem, midtown Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn, and Louis Armstrong Day in Queens to Satchmo Summerfest in New Orleans. She has a passion for archives, public history, and storytelling, and the way they can transform lives and communities.

Cynthia Carrión is a human rights advocate and cultural strategist with over two decades of experience in government relations, stakeholder engagement, and nonprofit leadership. As Director of Government & Community Affairs at El Museo del Barrio, she leads legislative advocacy and community-based initiatives that amplify the voices and histories of Latinx and BIPOC communities. Her previous roles include Chief Programs and Engagement Officer at School in the Square, where she launched family support programs and dual-language schools, and Deputy Director at the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights. Cynthia has also held leadership positions at Amnesty International USA, the Urban Assembly School Network, and Manhattan Neighborhood Network. She brings extensive experience as a consultant,

having supported community-driven projects including the NYC Borough Based Jails Initiative, the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute (CCCADI), and Hour Children. The daughter of Puerto Rican and Dominican parents, Cynthia is a proud Afro-Caribbean New Yorker raising two daughters in the Bronx. She holds an M.A. in International Relations from The City College of New York and a B.A. in Latin American & Caribbean Studies / Media Studies from Hunter College. Her work centers on narrative justice, cultural equity, and building institutions that reflect and serve the communities they represent.

Jesús Hernández-Bach is a Cuban-American agent of change, programmer, and curator based in New York City. He is the founder of Latin Reel, a year-round social impact initiative at the intersection of film and social justice, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and community engagement. He served as Associate Producer and Production Manager on *The King* (2018), directed by Eugene Jarecki, and has collaborated with filmmakers such as Fernando Pérez and Fatih Akin. His work in the city include contributions to MoMA's Documentary Fortnight, Tribeca Film Festival, DOC NYC, NewFest and POV on PBS. His broader experience spans multicultural marketing strategy at Horizon Media, serving on the film & media jury at LMCC, and national arts leadership fellowships with NYFA, and Creative Capital. Jesús continues to center underrepresented voices and socially driven narratives in his creative and curatorial practice.

Brandy Heyward was born and raised in New York City. She left to complete her higher Education degrees in Rochester, N.Y. while continuing to pursue Art, Writing and Dance. While back home in NYC, Brandy created *Sisters in Sharqui* (pronounced shar-KEE) and *Harlem Hafla, Bellydance with Soul*, to address the lack of racial diversity in North African Dance performance and production. To reach out to Brandy and to see what she has created, please visit www.harlemhafla.com.

Jiyoung Lee is a Korean-born, New York City–based arts administrator. She currently serves as Director of Programs at the AHL Foundation, where she oversees curatorial projects, digital archives, and development initiatives that support Korean artists in the U.S. She has curated and produced exhibitions including *Palettes & Plates: New York Korean Perspective* (2024) and the ongoing *Space Uptown* series (2022 - Present). She also directs the *Archive of Korean Artists in America (AKAA)*, advancing its digital infrastructure to enhance research and public access. Her work includes overseeing institutional publications such as the *AKAA Interview Series* (2023), an oral history project featuring over 30 Korean artists, and *AHL Foundation: 20 Years of Legacy* (2023), a commemorative book celebrating the foundation's two-decade history. Previously, Jiyoung worked as Online Communications Manager at the Asia Culture Center under South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. She holds a Master's degree in Museums and Digital Culture from Pratt Institute.

Sophia Ma is a project manager, independent curator, and writer based in Brooklyn. Ma focuses on broadening the reach and understanding of artist of Asian descent and their work in the US. She is currently helping the transition of the Asian American Arts Centre into a research hub. She curated exhibitions in New York and Barcelona since 2021. As a juror for the 2025 SHIFT

Program at The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, the International Studio & Curatorial Program's 2023 Helen Frankenthaler Residency Program, and Residency Unlimited's 2024 Open Call for NYC-based BIPOC Artists, she has helped artists, arts workers, and cultural producers with access to great programs. She worked in development, programming, and operations for the Museum of Chinese in America and the event fundraising consultancy Projects Plus Inc. She has written for multiple art publications, including *Art Papers*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Art Spiel*, *Arte Fuse*, and *White Hot Magazine*. Ma received her MA in art history and curatorial studies from Hunter College in 2020.

Catherine Ochún Soliz-Rey is a cultural artist, and creative entrepreneur committed to preserving and amplifying Garifuna heritage through dance, music, and the arts. She serves as Program Director of the Garifuna Heritage Center, Inc. and Assistant Director of Wabafu Garifuna Dance Theater, the longest-running Garifuna dance company in New York. Through workshops, performances, and digital projects, Catherine empowers communities to embrace their identity, creativity, and cultural legacy. She is passionate about using the arts and self expression, as a tool for education, mental health, healing, and visibility.

Bernard J. Tarver is Associate Producing Director of the Harlem-based Liberation Theatre Company (LTC), established in 2009 as a home for the development of the next generation of emerging Black playwrights. He oversees social and mainstream media relations, donor appeal campaigns and since 2017 with the creation of their widely successful Writing Residency Program, co-facilitates monthly writing sessions. An artist himself, he is a published and produced playwright, stage producer and actor with television, stage, film and voiceover credits. He has worked previously as a trainer in organizational staff and board development in the nonprofit sector, and as a journalist and state government spokesman. A graduate of Syracuse University, he is originally from Poughkeepsie, NY and resides in Harlem.

Karen D. Taylor is driven by her passion to bring the cultural history of Harlem to the forefront of now, and to keep it relevant for generations to come. Inspired by the national discussion on “gentrification,” she is moved to steward the creation of programming that wraps the arts and humanities in a package that is a gift to the future. She previously consulted as the director of public history for Columbia University/Teachers College's Harlem Education History Project.

Karen has served as interim director for the Roundtable of Institutions of Color, housed at the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service, New York University, a research arm of the school that was devoted to assessing the state of African American and Latino communities. Karen has also served as managing editor for Scholastic Books and Amistad Press. As a fundraising development professional she worked for the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Feminist Press at the City University of New York (CUNY), and the Brecht Forum.

She has also conceptualized and produced academic conferences, concerts, and workshops for institutions that include the Apollo; Teachers College; Barnard; the CUNY Graduate Center's Office of Continuing Education and Public Programming; and New York University. While at the Feminist Press, she conceptualized and developed a fully funded educational program that

used the Press's publications to develop curriculum for incarcerated women at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility.

She has also curated art exhibits, including “Kamoinge’s Harlem: Then and Now,” “After the Flypaper: Harlem In Words and Images (1955-2018),” “The Harrises of Harlem: Eight Generations—The Mildred Harris Collection” and “Jazz Notes: A Tribute to an African-American Art Form.”

She also worked in various editorial capacities for the Smithsonian, Abrams, University of North Carolina, Audubon magazine, and Taylor & Francis—an academic and scientific publisher—as well as others. Her essay, “Still Occupied: My Report on the Safety of My Sons,” published in Transition magazine was cited in the Notable Essays and Literary Nonfiction Category, in 2016 Best American Essays, edited by Jonathon Franzen. Her piece, “The Adult Movie,” was featured in Transition magazine in 2022.

Karen is the recipient of the “Political Awareness and Involvement Award” from the New York Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.; and Monumental Women's “Moving History Forward Award.” She holds an MFA in Writing (Creative Nonfiction) from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and a BS in African American Literature from the State University of New York, Empire State College. She has been a Harlem resident for nearly forty years.

Farren Wood is a Brooklyn-based arts professional and cultural worker currently serving as Manager of Programs and Community Engagement at 651 ARTS. With experience across grassroots festivals, local government, and Black-led cultural institutions, she brings a wide-angle perspective to programming, operations, and relationship-building. Originally from South Africa and raised in Australia, Farren's practice is shaped by a diasporic lens and a commitment to legacy, clarity and care. Her work focuses on designing and supporting public programs while also building internal frameworks that strengthen how teams collaborate and how organizations grow. Having worked in both large civic systems and small, mission-driven teams, Farren is attuned to the relationship between vision and infrastructure—and is invested in creating cultural spaces that feel coherent, intentional and human.

###

About Museum Hue

Museum Hue is the leading organization dedicated to advancing Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color in the cultural field. With over 400 institutional members, representing cultural and academic institutions across the United States, Museum Hue is dedicated to advancing the visibility and sustainability of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and other cultural workers of color within the cultural sector. Through research, advocacy, and community-building initiatives, Museum Hue strives to promote equity and inclusion in the arts and culture landscape.