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NEW YORK CITY LAUNCHES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FOR CREATENYC: A CULTURAL PLAN FOR ALL NEW YORKERS

City's first-ever comprehensive cultural plan will provide a roadmap for increasing equity and access to art and culture for city residents.

A draft plan incorporating community input will be released in 2017 for a public comment period.

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Bronx, NY – Today, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs launched the public engagement process for CreateNYC, the City's first-ever comprehensive cultural plan. Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl joined hundreds of members of the cultural community, partners, stakeholders, and local leaders at Hostos Community College's Center for the Arts & Culture in the Bronx to unveil the name, logo, and website for the initiative, announce upcoming public events, and introduce a set of tools to empower community groups to organize events and generate public engagement in the process.

"New York City is an international beacon for creativity and free expression, and that is thanks to the vibrant cultural community that calls our city home," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "My Administration recognizes the incredible power of art and culture to lift up residents in all corners of the city, to give us common ground, and to express who we are. Culture has been a core part of our work, from engaging immigrant communities to giving our public school students quality education. That's why it's essential we take a hard look and identify ways that we can ensure that this source of unity and strength continues to improve and connect with even more residents. With the launch of CreateNYC's public engagement process, I encourage every resident to speak up and let us know how culture is important to them."

"From the transformative experience of engaging with a work of art or transcendent calm achieved in a botanical garden, to the regional benefits generated by attracting visitors from all over the world, to the social gains that cultural access brings at the community level, art and culture are woven into the fabric of New York City," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. "With the CreateNYC cultural plan, we are hoping that residents from all over the City will weigh in on what's important to them. With our partners, we're committed to engaging residents from the full breadth of our city's diverse communities, making sure that the plan we deliver next year speaks for all New Yorkers."

This marks a major milestone in the creation of the city's first-ever comprehensive cultural plan. In May 2015, [Mayor de Blasio signed legislation](#) requiring DCLA to lead creation of the plan, and a draft will be published in early 2017. Public input will be the backbone of CreateNYC, providing a long-term blueprint for the efforts and policies of the City and its partners in expanding access to cultural opportunities for all New Yorkers. The plan will also examine a number of issues crucial for maintaining New York City's cultural vibrancy, including affordable artist workspace; access to arts education; and the role of culture in public space.

Specific components of today's announcement include:

- Unveiling the visual and digital identity for the public awareness effort, including **name, logo**, and other visual elements for **CreateNYC: A Cultural Plan for All New Yorkers**
- **Digital engagement**: unveiling of the first "Question of the Week" on Twitter, which will be updated regularly throughout the engagement process, and official launch of www.CreateNYC.org, the hub for public input, upcoming events, updates, and more information about the cultural plan
- Plans for a slate of **upcoming workshops** for community input in all five boroughs. Three are currently scheduled:
 - November 14 @ New York hall of Science, Queens
 - December 6 @ BRIC, Brooklyn
 - December 14 @ Schomburg Center, Manhattan*For more information and updates on future events, visit www.createnyc.org*
- Introduction of **toolkit that will empower community groups** to host public engagement events in their neighborhoods; there are both physical and digital versions of the toolkit available
- **"Ping Pong with the Commissioner"**: plans for one-on-one conversations about art and culture with Commissioner Finkelppearl over games of ping pong, along with regular open office hours
- Initial **questions for framing public feedback**, including "If you were in charge of the budget for arts and culture in NYC, what would you fund?"

"The NYC Cultural Plan opens a new opportunity for more dynamic relationships between artists, arts organizations and neighborhoods across the five boroughs," said **Rosalba Rolón, director of Pregones / Puerto Rican Traveling Theater and member of the Citizens Advisory Committee**. "Together we CREATE and in doing so, we must ignite a mutually supportive system that is sensitive to the well-being of each sector that contributes to the daily practice of the arts and culture in New York City."

In August 2016, DCLA [announced the selection of Hester Street Collaborative](#) (HSC), a respected New York City-based nonprofit organization focused on community-driven design, planning, and development to take the lead in creating the City's first ever comprehensive cultural plan. HSC is working with DCLA to seek expansive range of data and feedback to create a vital, inclusive plan that can serve as a roadmap for building a more vibrant, inclusive, and equitable cultural sector that serves all New Yorkers. The primary goals for CreateNYC are to maintain New York's role as an international beacon for the creative community and expand opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with the city's unparalleled cultural assets. A draft plan will be released in early 2017. Following a public comment period, the CreateNYC cultural plan will be released in summer 2017.

"Community engagement will be the foundation that the cultural plan is built upon," said **Betsy MacLean, Executive Director for Hester Street Collaborative**. "We want to meet New Yorkers from all walks of life where they are, talk to them about what they care most about and use their ideas to shape the plan."

The New York City Cultural Agenda Fund in The New York Community Trust awarded funds to 10 local organizations to support additional public engagement programming for CreateNYC, helping to ensure that a broad range of voices are reflected in the final plan. Foundations contributing money to the fund include the Booth Ferris, Lambent, Stavros Niarchos, and Robert Rauschenberg foundations and the David Rockefeller and Rockefeller Brothers funds. Recent grantees include Amerinda, the Asian American Arts Alliance, BRIC, Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, Center for Arts Education, King Manor Museum, Loisada, Martin E. Segal Theatre Center, New York Foundation for the Arts, and Staten Island Arts.

"CreateNYC offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for New Yorkers to help shape a creative and equitable vision for our City," said **Kerry McCarthy, program director for thriving communities at The New York Community Trust**. "We are happy to join our partners to amplify voices from underrepresented communities and ensure that our cultural plan works for all New Yorkers."

“I’m delighted to serve as the Chair of the Cultural Plan Citizens’ Advisory Committee,” said **Ben Rodriguez-Cubenas, program director of the Charles E. Culpeper Arts & Culture program at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund**. “Working together, I know we can further strengthen New York City’s great commitment to arts and culture.”

About Hester Street Collaborative

For the last fourteen years, Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) has worked as an advisor to communities throughout New York City to develop transformative plans and projects through inclusive, participatory processes. HSC’s team of planners, architects and community organizers works with residents, community-based organizations, small businesses, city agencies, and elected officials to develop innovative community engagement tools that maximize resident input. That input is paired with research, data and analysis, ensuring meaningful civic engagement, optimal community benefit and implementable results. Most recently, HSC has collaborated with residents in Manhattan for the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan, completed in February 2016.

About CreateNYC Citizen’s Advisory Committee

The creation of the cultural plan will be executed in close collaboration with the Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is comprised of appointees from a broad array of cultural and artistic organizations and practices, and other related fields. It is charged with advising DCLA on the development and implementation of the plan, which will address several topics related to cultural activities in the city, including the availability and distribution of cultural activities in the five boroughs, the relationship between cultural activities and social and economic health and welfare, housing and workspace needs of artists, and increasing arts education and cultural activities in public schools. The CAC is chaired by Ben Rodriguez-Cubenas, Chair of the Cuban Artists Fund, Vice Chair of DCLA’s Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission, and Program Director for Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Charles E. Culpeper Arts and Culture Program. Members of the committee were [appointed by Mayor de Blasio, the City Council, and Borough Presidents](#).

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