



Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President

Community Board No. 2

43-22 50th Street, 2nd Floor
Woodside, New York 11377

(718) 533-8773

Fax (718-533-8777

Email qn02@cb.nyc.gov

www.nyc.gov/queenscb2

Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

April 8, 2025

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Committee Member Attendees

Karesia Batan, Chair
Eric Narburgh, Vice Chair
Ann Marie Baranowski
Kenny Greenberg

Committee Member Absentees

Anatole Ashraf
Lisa Charles
Stephen Cooper
Ryan Smith
Akello Thomas

Arts & Cultural Affairs Public Members Attendees

Edjo Wheeler, Culture Lab LLC

Community Board 2 Attendees

Evelyn Chango

Guests:

Queens Deputy Borough President Ebony Young
Jody Graf, Assistant Curator at MoMA PS1
Dirk McCall de Paloma, Executive Director of Sunnyside Shines Business Improvement District
Andre Irving, Cucala Dance Company
Nancy Bruno, LIC-A
Angel Gil Orrios, Thalia Spanish Theatre
Justin Martinez

Community Board 2 Staff:

Debra Markell Kleinert

Karesia Batan welcomed everyone to the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting.

Karesia Batan introduced Jody Graf, Assistant Curator at MoMA PS1.

Jody Graf gave a presentation about the new mural commissioning program at MoMA PS1 and the inaugural mural. The presentation slides are attached to the minutes under Attachment One. Jody Graf made the following points:

- After installing community murals, MoMA PS1 created a new mural commissioning program. The mural will face the public plaza at PS1's entrance.
- Legendary painter and graffiti artist Lady Pink will create the inaugural mural, which will be unveiled to the public on June 26th, 2025.
- Lady Pink was raised in Astoria, Queens, New York. In the 1980s, Lady Pink was one of the only women embraced within the graffiti scene. In 1981, some of her earliest works on canvas were shown at PS1 in an exhibition for the New York New Wave.
- Lady Pink's work has been exhibited in museums such as the Brooklyn Museum and the MET; currently, it's featured in the Museum of the City of New York as part of the Martin Wong Graffiti Collection.
- A rendering of the proposed mural was shown, drawing imagery that is emblematic of Lady Pink's practice, paying homage to Long Island City, including the 7-train line and the skyline seen from the roof of PS1. The digital rendering is found in Attachment One.
- Staff at MoMA continue to design opening programs and workshops that will coincide with the opening of the mural.
- The mural will be installed for a year, and MoMA staff have begun gathering nominations for the next mural, which is expected to go up in June 2026.
- For the new mural commissioning program, an artist will be selected for a new commission through a selection process led by a jury of local cultural leaders, including curators, organizers, and artists.
- Jody Graf will discuss with her colleagues whether it is possible to expand the mural program to other sections of the exterior wall.

Karesia Batan provided an update on the Bliss Theater:

- The developer who purchased the Bliss Theater is willing to discuss their future plans for building and lot with the Community Board; the Land Use Committee will invite them to a future committee meeting (after upcoming discussions regarding the OneLIC ULURP and Draft Environmental Impact Statement).
- She encouraged meeting attendees to attend upcoming Land Use Committee meetings for future updates.

Karesia Batan shared additional updates:

- Dirk McCall de Paloma is assisting the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee with its project to encourage Sunnyside business and building owners to allocate their external walls and rolldown gates for new murals by local artists; he will connect Karesia Batan and other committee members working on the project to property owners with public spaces they identified as ideal locations.
- The Director of Community Boards at the Queens Borough President's Office has agreed to host a convening of chairs and members of arts and culture-related committees from community boards across the borough in October or November 2025. This convening will allow arts and cultural affairs committee members across Queens to get to know one another's work and priorities, to better understand the borough's needs in the arts and cultural affairs sector, and to help community boards without similar committees organize and advocate in support arts and culture in their respective districts.

There was an update on the Historic District Council's (HDC) Six to Celebrate Program. The following points were made:

- HDC will work with Sunnyside Shines and members of the committee to develop a list of preservation projects and advocacy initiatives it can help support over the course of the program. These may include, but not be limited to, an application to include the Bliss Theater (or its façade) on the National Register of Historic Places, which might encourage the developer to preserve it during future planning.
- Committee members Eric Narburgh and Ann Marie Baranowski and Sunnyside Shines Executive Director Dirk McCall attended a launch meeting with HDC on April 2. As a next step, HDC will arrange a tour of the neighborhood next month or in June.
- Sunnyshine Shines will receive assistance from HDC through 2026.

- HDC will welcome suggestions or ideas for locations or concepts to help develop a map highlighting historically significant sites as part of a walking tour.
- A Six to Celebrate launch event will take place at the Stonewall Inn on April 29, 2025, which members of the community board will attend to meet representatives from other neighborhoods selected for the current cohort.

Nancy Bruno from LIC-A provided the following update:

- Arts Open is coming together on May 14th, 2025, to May 18th, 2025. On May 14 there will be a kickoff party at Focal Point, 43-50 12th Street, from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM.
- There will be open studios on May 17th, 2025, and May 18th, 2025.

Link to LIC-A's website: <https://www.licartists.org/>

Angel Gil Orrios from Thalia Spanish Theatre provided the following update:

- Spanish artists from Spain are performing Fuerza Flamenca, a music and dance show in the theater. The show will feature for one more week.
- Thalia Spanish Theatre is a member of the Alliance of Latino Theaters in New York; the alliance is made up of 9 theaters. Every year, from March 1st to April 30th, they have a festival in each of the nine theaters across the city.
- Later this month there will be a Spanish comedy with English subtitles in the theater.
- There's an upcoming tango production with guest artists from Argentina.

Link to Thalia Spanish Theatre's website: www.thaliatheatre.org

Dirk McCall de Paloma from Sunnyside Shines provided the following update:

- The Sunnyside Community Cultural Initiative has begun and takes place every Thursday from 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM. Each plaza features an hour of programming, usually beginning at the Lowrey Plaza and ending at the Bliss Plaza. A diverse group of artists is performing at the Sunnyside Community Cultural Initiative, and Evelyn Chango from Sunnyside Shines will continue to secure artists to perform.
- Eric Narburgh is also a member of the SunnyPride Planning Committee, and he wrote a draft call for artists to perform at the second SunnyPride event on Friday,

June 13 from 6-9 pm. The draft call is attached to the minutes under Attachment Two.

Andre Irving from Cucala Dance Company provided the following updates:

- Cucala Dance Company's next social will be held on April 26, 2025. It will feature the debut of the company's youth competition team, Cucala Futura, which will compete at the Poconos the following week.
- During the April 26 social, there will be a tango class, and Silvana, who teaches tango, will perform as well.
- Every Saturday, Silvana teaches tango classes at Cucala.

Link to Cucala Dance Company's website: www.cucaladance.com

Edjo Wheeler from Culture Lab provided updates and upcoming event information:

- Culture Lab was voted the best art gallery in Queens in the 2025 FourLeaf Best of the Boro poll (<https://bestof.qns.com/>).
- Upcoming and ongoing events include:
 - Reverb, a new series on queer history and culture; the inaugural speaker will be author Dr. Gillian M. Roger on Saturday, April 12.
 - Every Saturday from 8:00 PM until May 3rd, 2025, there will be free concerts in the front gallery.
 - Culture Lab is trying to provide more spaces for people or entities providing youth programming, e.g., Spring Swing, jazz and dance programming for children on Sunday afternoons.
 - From April 24, 2025, to April 27, 2025, Culture Lab and Queensboro Dance Festival will host the Arise Spring Dance Festival.
 - Speak Easier Language Exchange takes place on Saturday afternoons. People who want to learn a new language can visit Culture Lab and meet other people who want to learn other languages.
 - Standup comedy takes place every other Thursday.

- Currently, Culture Lab has an exhibition that Italian artists and New York artists created; at the end of the month, the entire exhibition will be sent to Italy, where it will be exhibited.
- On May 3, 2025, Culture Lab will open its outdoor programming, and every weekend, there will be a free concert in the parking lot until October.
- Culture Lab expanded the use of its space by other organizations, including AA meetings and fundraising events for the YMCA.

Karesia Batan and Edjo Wheeler shared information about an upcoming dance battle on May 3rd, 2025. They shared the following:

- As part of Culture Lab's outdoor programming opening, there will be a dance battle co-produced with Queensboro Dance Festival, Culture Lab, Dynasty Breaking NYC, and Bodega Dance Studio.
- The dance battle will feature hip-hop and break dance. There will be youth and adult divisions. Karesia Batan encouraged people to attend and said that they could register to compete on the day of the event.

Karesia Batan provided additional updates, including funding deadlines. She made the following points:

- Karesia Batan will attend the Arts and Real Estate meeting led by LIC Partnership on May 1st, 2025, at MoMA PS1. There are some requirements to attend, including being a 501 C3 arts and culture organization and membership in the LIC Partnership. This meeting will attempt to bridge the gap in communication between property owners, developers, building managers, and art and culture groups.
- The DCLA funding deadline is next month. Link to DCLA funding information: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dcla/cultural-funding/applying.page>
- The guidelines for NYSCA, which is state funding, will be released next month, and the application portal will be available in the summer of 2025. Link to NYSCA guidelines: <https://arts.ny.gov/FY2025OpportunityGuidelines>

Kenny Greenberg provided the following update on his light installations on Gordon Triangle and Vernon Mall. He shared the following:

- The NYC Parks Department has a rule that installations can be up for 9 or 11 months.

- LIC Partnership is working with Kenny Greenberg to determine if his light installations can remain for more time or if they could be relocated.

Eric Narburgh shared that Jane's Walk Weekend will take place May 2, 2025 - May 4, 2025. He will lead a Sunnyside tour on May 4 at 11:00 AM. The tour will begin at Thalia Spanish Theatre and end at the mural commemorating the former punk rock venue Coventry at Sanger Hall, with stops at murals, The Bliss Theater, the Bix Biederbecke memorial plaque, and other arts and cultural sites within Sunnyside.

Link for more information on Jane's Walk Tour: <https://www.mas.org/events/janes-walk-nyc-2025/>

Queens Deputy Borough President Ebony Young thanked the Arts and Cultural Committee and its meeting participants for their positive contributions to society.

Karesia Batan reminded the committee members of upcoming committee meetings such as Land Use and the Community Board 2 Meeting.

The committee meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava