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September 15, 2025

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Committee Members Present:

Karesia Batan, Chair
Eric Narburgh, Vice Chair
Pia Rahman
Akello Thomas

Committee Members Absent:

Anatole Ashraf
Lisa Charles
Stephen Cooper
Kenny Greenberg
Ryan Smith

Arts & Cultural Affairs Public Members Present:

Edjo Wheeler

Community Board 2 Public Members Present:

Richard Mazda

Community Board 2 Staff:

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

Guests:

Father Carl Adair, Episcopal Mission in Sunnyside
Pau Tiu, 2025's Artist-in-Residence at Episcopal Mission in Sunnyside
Feliz Camille Tolentino, 2025's Artist-in-Residence at Episcopal Mission in Sunnyside
Andrew Ronan, Executive Director of LaGuardia Performing Arts Center (LPAC)
Molly Kurzius, MoMA PS1
Andre Irving, Cucala Dance Company
Erin Lee
Jorge Silva
Ms. Cas
Orestes Gonzalez

"Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth"

Karesia Batan, Chair of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

The Chair introduced Father Carl Adair of the Episcopal Mission in Sunnyside, who shared a Google Slides Presentation with information about the church's Little Window Gallery, its artist programs, and the broader impact of the arts on the community. The Google Slides Presentation, (Attachment 1) is attached to the minutes. He provided the following information:

- The Episcopal Mission in Sunnyside is located at 43-13 46th Street, Sunnyside, NY 11104.
- Jacqueline Gurgui, a ceramics artist, helped conceive the Little Window Gallery and presented the inaugural work.
- At the Little Window Gallery, each selected art piece is displayed for about a month, accompanied by a QR code where viewers can respond to a prompt. After the display period and collection of responses, the piece is given away through a random lottery to one of the respondents.
- Father Adair provides a small honorarium to the artist.
- The goal of the gallery is to spark neighborhood conversations about local art, featuring artists from Western Queens.
- Currently, a work titled Convergence by Francesca O'Malley is on display at the Little Window Gallery.
- Over the past year, the Episcopal Mission has hosted a monthly process art event on Sunday mornings, led by two local artist-educators and featuring activities such as textile collage, paper pulp, and recycled papermaking.
- The Episcopal Mission has commissioned local artists to create works for the church, including an altar cloth, a chasuble, and a table made from London Plane, a tree found throughout Sunnyside, which now serves as the altar.
- The Episcopal Mission supports an artist-in-residence program. Heather Jones, a non-binary singer and composer, was the inaugural artist and created a satirical opera of participatory theater titled One Body.
- The 2025 Artists-in-Residence are Pau Tiu and Feliz Camille Tolentino.
- Below is a link to the Google Slides Presentation that Father Adair shared:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1b91oofubkChlzLOCfIOEaKMSSvHilo5LdUZw_ASZCgo/edit?usp=sharing
- The Episcopal Mission's Instagram account handle: @way.of.love.in.sunnyside
- The Little Window Gallery's Instagram account handle: @little.window.gallery
- The Episcopal Mission's website: <https://www.allsaintssunnyside.org/>

Father Adair introduced Pau Tiu and Feliz Camille Tolentino, owners of Bad Student, a risograph art press. The PowerPoint Presentation, Attachment 1, documents their

experiences as 2025 Artists-in-Residence, programming, and participation in the New York Art Book Fair. They shared the following:

- Their artist residency at the Episcopal Mission began in June 2025.
- They have organized events, including zine-making workshops.
- Originally based in the Philippines, some of their workshops in Sunnyside, such as the recent Collage Portals workshop, were held simultaneously with participants in the Philippines.
- Bad Student received a grant from the Episcopal Church and used part of it to apply to the 2025 New York Art Book Fair. During the event, which drew a large crowd, many attendees expressed pride in their representation of the Filipino community.
- Bad Student typically invites individuals to events, who may then extend the invitation to others. Once the lineup is set, they issue an open call for Queens-based artists. They are also active on social media.
- Bad Student's Instagram account handle: @_badstudent
- Bad Student's email address: badstudent.info@gmail.com

The Chair introduced Andrew Ronan, Executive Director of the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center (LPAC) at LaGuardia Community College. He provided the following updates on the college's creative resources and upcoming programming:

- Mr. Ronan recently began his role at LaGuardia Community College. In his previous positions, including with the Department of Transportation, he advocated for arts and cultural programming in public spaces.
- LPAC includes a mainstage theater with seating for approximately 740 people and a smaller theater accommodating around 250 people.
- 29th Street has been closed and converted into a pedestrian plaza featuring a bright mural.
- Upcoming October events include the Rough Draft Festival, part of the New York Development Series, which nurtures playwrights by providing opportunities for readings.
- On October 9, 10, and 11, 2025, *Latin Lover* will be presented. The play is written, directed, and produced by LaGuardia Community College alumni.
- On October 17, 2025, at 6:30 PM, *Between Neighborhoods* will be performed. This production explores the lasting impact of the 1964-1965 World's Fair on the development of Queens, while addressing broader social issues, reflecting on Queens today in the context of political figures such as Donald Trump and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.
- LaGuardia Community College rents its facilities for community use. Mr. Ronan added that his goal is to bring the Queens cultural community to LaGuardia Community College.
- Mr. Ronan's Email Address: andrew.ronan46@lagcc.cuny.edu
- Sign up for LPAC's email list here: <https://lpac.myflodesk.com/join-us>

- Latin Lover - <https://www.lpac.nyc/upcoming-events/latin-lover>
- Between Neighborhoods: <https://www.lpac.nyc/upcoming-events/between-neighborhoods>
- Eric Narburgh, Vice Chair, suggested that the committee might visit LPAC and the mural on 29th Street. He encouraged Mr. Ronan to remain active with the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee and to provide event updates.

Richard Mazda, a Community Board 2 Public Member, who runs the Virtual Art Studios, The Secret Academy, and The Secret Theater, shared the following:

- Mr. Mazda announced the acquisition of new space in Long Island City on 44th Avenue.
- The ground floor will measure 9,000 square feet. While plans are not yet finalized, proposed amenities include a theater with seating, a reception area, a recording studio, classrooms, and possibly a greenroom.
- The property also contains a 7,000 square foot basement, with possible uses including a costume area, woodshop, or an engineering school for children. Plans for the basement are not finalized.
- The art center is being developed in phases. The three organizations Mr. Mazda runs will operate in this space.
- He added that art lessons will now be offered.

Molly Kurzius, Director of External Affairs at MoMA PS1, provided the following updates about MoMA's programming:

- MoMA hosted the New York Art Book Fair after a five-year hiatus. Organized with Printed Matter, the event drew more than 15,000 attendees over three days.
- It is the closing weeks for the remaining summer exhibitions.
- The first round of fall openings will take place on October 9, 2025.
- A major exhibition, Magnificent Product by Vaginal Davis, will open on October 9, 2025. This solo presentation has traveled through multiple venues in Stockholm, Sweden, and Berlin, Germany. The New York Times recently published a full-page preview highlighting Davis' work.
- A small exhibition by Greenlandic artist Inuuteq Storch, an Indigenous photographer, will open on October 9, 2025. The show will highlight personal stories of life in the Arctic, especially among indigenous communities.
- In October, MoMA will present Four Dilations, a small exhibition featuring several international artists presenting in New York for the first time. The show will explore concepts of time and temporal dilation, including the ways people experience time in the contemporary world and through digital means such as sculpture developed from time-based practices like dance, film, and sound.

- In November, MoMA will present a survey exhibition of Korean artist Ayoung Kim, titled the Delivery Dance Trilogy. This exhibition consists of three immersive video installations incorporating AI-generated graphics, video game engines, and motion-capture technology.
- The Sculpture Center will launch its new season later this week.

Edjo Wheeler of Culture Lab shared the following updates:

- This year, Culture Lab won Best Art Gallery for the Best Borough, Best Music Venue, and Best Theater Arts Center.
- Friday Night Jazz will take place every Friday in front of the gallery at 8:00 PM.
- Free concerts will be held every Saturday and Sunday until the end of October.
- Upcoming cultural festivals include theater from the New York Modular Society and Nice One Comedy.
- Speak Easier, a monthly language exchange, provides opportunities for participants to learn and practice a second language.
- Minor Relief, a production, will premiere on October 17, 2025.
- Xena: Warrior Musical Live will premiere on October 24, 2025.
- Attachment 2, attached to the minutes, provides information on Culture Lab's September and October events.
- Edjo Wheeler encouraged people to visit Culture Lab's website for additional event information. Link to Culture Lab's website: <https://www.culturelablic.org/calendar>

Karesia Batan, Chair of the Committee, shared the following updates on arts and cultural initiatives in the community:

- Sunnyside Drum Corps is recruiting drummers aged 9-18 years old. No experience is required. The flyer, Attachment 3, is attached to the minutes.
- Flushing Town Hall will hold a special meeting on September 17, 2025, to announce findings for the Cultural Mapping Project. The project, supported by a grant, seeks to create a cultural map and an online portal where users can search for artists, institutions, and organizations, with filters by area. Link to Flushing Town Hall's website: <https://www.flushingtownhall.org/event-detail.php?id=876>
- The Sunnyside mural at 40th Street and 47th Avenue has been restored. Link about the mural: <https://qns.com/2025/08/sunnyside-mural-restored/>
- Before summer break, Ms. Batan worked with Sunnyside Shines and contacted property owners to identify potential sites for new murals, as well as for the roll-down gates initiative. She noted that because Sunnyside was designated as one of the Historic Council's "Six to Celebrate" neighborhoods, potential murals could include historical subject matter that reflects the neighborhood's history.
- Discussions regarding the Bliss Theater have paused while the ONE LIC rezoning has come to the forefront of discussions.

- The City Council hearing on the ONE LIC is scheduled for September 17, 2025. She encouraged members of the arts and cultural community to testify at the hearing. Additionally, testimony can be provided in person, via Zoom, or submitted in writing up to 72 hours after the hearing. Link to testify at the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises on September 17, 2025:
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SH9iCmVrfrkWUN3M-Tf3b5jXo3g8lhxBq22ytwkYZrVUMkVUQkNDSIZNStHOUeFFUzg5Rlo3WVY4TC4u>
- Link about Planning and Land Use: <https://council.nyc.gov/land-use/>
- Eric Narburgh shared that, as part of the Historic Districts Council’s “Six to Celebrate” program, a survey will be conducted to gather suggestions for spaces, buildings, collections, and outdoor areas that may be candidates for preservation in Sunnyside. He added that the goal is to think broadly about cultural preservation in the neighborhood.
- The Sunnyside Makers Market will take place on September 21, 2025, in the evening. Local artists will participate, and the event will be held in the plazas under the 7 train, likely at Lowery Plaza.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava