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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson

April 14, 2026

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom

Committee Members Present:

Karesia Batan, Chair
Eric Narburgh, Vice Chair
Kenny Greenberg
Pia Rahman

Committee Members Absent:

Anatole Ashraf
Lisa Charles
Stephen Cooper
Ryan Smith

Arts & Cultural Affairs Public Members Present:

Edjo Wheeler, Culture Lab

Community Board Members Present:

Isabella Bustamante
Kevin Davis

Community Board 2 Staff:

Rafael Nava, Community Assistant

Guests:

Ward Dennis, Pratt Institute
Sophonie Joseph, Pratt Institute
Andre Irving, Cucala Dance

YouTube Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMZnrJrF6es>

Note: Reference to the YouTube video and the associated time-in-meeting stamps are offered here as a service to community members who wish to review the meeting. (Approximate elapsed time stamps provided in these minutes refer to this video)

0:00:06 Karesia Batan, Chair of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

0:00:45 Pratt Institute

Ward Dennis and Sophonie Joseph, faculty of the Pratt Institute, introduced themselves and provided an overview of their advanced Historic Preservation and Urban Placemaking studio, for which their programs have chosen Sunnyside and Woodside as their fall study site. They shared the following information:

- Pratt Studios is an advanced studio for second-year students. Students are brought together in interdisciplinary groups, including planners, placemakers, historic preservation, and sustainable environmental systems students. For neighborhood-based studios like the one that will occur in Sunnyside and Woodside this fall, the semester is divided into the following four phases:
 1. Students gather data and information, including the history of the neighborhood they are working in and its historic resources, whether designated, listed on the National Register, or eligible for the National Register. Planning students may also assess existing conditions, including income, demographics, planning parameters, and zoning. Placemakers and sustainable environmental systems students also do their own research.
 2. Students either split into groups or identify projects based on their interests. Placemakers may focus on underutilized public spaces and explore ways to activate or redesign them. These projects are largely student-driven but may be informed by CB2's interests and needs. Preservation students may examine vacant historic sites that are difficult to reuse. Students may work individually or in small groups.
 3. Students engage in strategic planning, using information from the first two phases to create recommendations, particularly in areas of concern.
 4. Students prepare reports and presentations of their work.
- Ward Dennis hopes that students will present their work at the end of each phase, and that community board members and other stakeholders will provide feedback.
- There was also discussion of partnering with Pratt Institute on the Murals and Gates initiative.
- As a next step, the Arts and Culture Committee will help convene a coalition of local leaders (e.g., arts and culture, small business, architects and planners) to serve as the advisory group for the students, with the goal of settling the composition of that

group by the summer. The Pratt faculty will begin working on the syllabus for the fall studio in June.

0:23:30 Cucala Dance Update:

- Andre Irving shared that Cucala Dance's upcoming social is on April 25, 2026 ([click here to view Cucala Dance's event calendar](#)).
- *I am Kalli* is an upcoming solo performance ([click here to view the YouTube trailer](#)).

0:24:52 Culture Lab Update:

- Kenny Greenberg shared that Culture Lab's exhibition, *ROOTED: Artists of LIC*, is on view until May 31, 2026 ([click here for more details](#)).
- Edjo Wheeler shared additional programming information ([click here to view Culture Lab's event calendar](#)).
- Culture Lab's *The Frame* is a newsletter that highlights art entities in Long Island City to raise awareness of the neighborhood's arts and culture ([click here for more details](#)).

0:31:26 Teen Art Salon Update:

Isabella Bustamante, CB2 Board Member, shared the following information:

- During MoMA PS1's 50th Anniversary Block Party celebration, Fellows from Teen Art Salon's Drawing Allstars Fellowship program will be doing live portrait drawings.
- They offer classes for youth in Court Square, at the Irish Lofts building.
- While Teen Art Salon provides middle school programming at Queens Public Library and other libraries, she hopes to launch another middle school program based at the Irish Lofts building.

Committee Member Updates

34:54 Karesia Batan shared the following information:

- Queensboro Dance Festival will host a dance battle on April 18, 2026, and April 19, 2026. The latter will feature an adult hip-hop freestyle dance battle.

36:33 Eric Narburgh shared the following information:

- On April 21 at Sanger Hall, the Historic Districts Council's Six to Celebrate program will launch its 2026 class. He will be attending the event and shared that he has a free ticket available for anyone who is interested in joining him ([click here for more details](#)).
- Jane's Walk Weekend will take place from May 1, 2026, to May 3, 2026. Tours are free ([click here to learn more](#)). Several walks will take place in the CB2 district; interested participants can research them by filtering their search for walks in Queens.
- He will be hosting an arts and culture-focused tour of Sunnyside on May 3, 2026 ([click here for more information](#)).

39:27 Karesia Batan shared additional information:

- Council Member Won’s participatory budgeting will run from April 11, 2026, to April 19, 2026 ([Link to NYC Participatory Budgeting](#)).
- Diya Viji is the new commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs ([click for more information](#)).
- The committee plans to invite Anne del Castillo, a senior advisor from the Department of Cultural Affairs, to the next Committee meeting to discuss the Create in Place Program.
- Edjo Wheeler and Karesia Batan were assigned as co-chairs of the Arts and Culture Subcommittee as part of the LIC Oversight Committee. More details are forthcoming about the Committee and opportunities to stay involved and informed.
- The NYSCA reserve grant, administered by the New York Foundation on the Arts, has a deadline for May 5, 2026. ([Link to learn more](#)).
- Anyone interested in reaching out to property owners about installing murals on their property as part of the Murals and Gates initiative should contact her.

48:17 Public Member Updates

Edjo Wheeler shared the following:

- TF Cornerstone, in partnership with Culture Lab, is adding three more sculptures along the Long Island City waterfront, and offering a stipend of \$1,000 to \$3,500.
- There are 2 open calls for artists as well ([Link to learn more](#)).

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava