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KARAMU HOUSE ANNOUNCES ITS SPRING 2020 ROOM IN THE HOUSE ARTIST RESIDENCY RECIPIENTS

Funded through Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, residencies are awarded to visual and performing artists throughout Greater Cleveland.

(Cleveland, Ohio)—Karamu House has recently named its Room in the House artist residency recipients for spring 2020. Funded through a Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) “Support for Artists” grant program, these eight-week visual and performing art residencies are designed to help artists be more empowered and independent. Each resident receives a stipend, technical support and professional development. Typically, each resident also receives physical workspace within the Karamu House facility; however, the spring 2020 residency will proceed in a virtual environment that best supports each individual artist. Application for the Room in the House residency was open to Cuyahoga County-based artists with demonstrated excellence in, and commitment to, their visual arts or performance-based work.

Tony F. Sias, president and CEO of Karamu House, says, “Karamu has a long history of supporting emerging performing and visual artists. We are truly grateful to CAC for providing Karamu with the opportunity to work with these talented individuals—even during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.”

The selected Room in the House residency artists, include:

Kaylene Abernathy is a digital illustration artist who creates images for people of color with underlying messages of empowerment, representation, healing, manifestation and enlightenment.

Moises Borges De Freitas, a native of Salvador, Brazil, proudly celebrates his African heritage and culture through music (drum, guitar) and movement (Samba, Capoeira).

Jacoby DuBose is a film, music and stage artist, who will be creating an interactive performance that combines film, stage, and a live score to tell the story of an African American individual who wants to break the cycle of struggle in America.

Gary Galbreath is a piano professional with a passion for educating youth, where students learn self-discipline, how to read music, and perform songs.
Twelve Cuyahoga County-based, visual and performing artists completed a Room in the House residency in 2019, including:

**LaChance Hipps** is a dancer who held a mainstage performance to celebrate HBCU dance traditions. Through her work, she owns the responsibility of granting her students with the tools required to dance on a collegiate level, as well as the tools to be admitted, maintain, and graduate from a Black university.

**Lexy Lattimore** is a self-described black ballet dancer, teacher, performer, choreographer, writer, director and entrepreneur. Lexy choreographed “Two Ballets,” a performance that celebrated the African American experience featuring intergenerational performers and a ballet in the oral history tradition.

**Ephraim Nehemiah**, a poet and author, created an original poetry work. The work explored the dynamics of guardian-child relationships, traditions of parenting, the role of gender in societal conditioning, the performance of masculinity, and role of poverty.

**Caleb A. Wright**, a musician, singer and performer, created a concert series exploring the contributions of African Americans to the songbook of America, specifically in the jazz, gospel, and classical music genres.

**Chester Hopkins-Bey**, a multimedia artist, used Karamu as his medium to create a new piece with materials and other resources he found at Karamu House while exploring the legacy of this historic institution.

**Derin Fletcher**, a visual artist, creates paintings of African American faces. She took advantage of the large visual arts room with natural light and completed a large oil painting, her first in 10 years.

**Amanda King**, a conceptual artist and activist on the front lines of the tension between the state and the state of black America, created a photographic figurative tableau and exhibited a photograph exploring the idea of being ‘seen’.

**Joyce Morrow Jones**, a self-trained artist who incorporates many disciplines including multimedia, sculpture and fiber art, explored ancestry through the medium of doll sculptures.

**Rickey Lewis**, a visual artist, painted his artistic activism for social equity project called, “I Care About My Life & I Care About Your Life,” to produce positive artwork between the polarized entities of Black teens and law enforcement; to help change the stigma of opioid use and foster sustained dialogue.

**M. Carmen Lane**, an African American and Haudenosaunee (Mohawk/Tuscarora) artist, explored creating sacred space with the participation of the local Black community to depict the complexity and intersecting histories of the African American experience in Cleveland.

**LaSaundra Robinson**, a visual artist, took advantage of space and created large pieces for exhibition. Her work is about Black women finding themselves and being empowered to be who they want to be.

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Tanirah Watson, a visual artist, explored the appealing and unpleasant aspects of Cleveland communities. She created two large textile pieces, each based on interviews and cultural histories collected from people of color living in Cleveland. Subjects were of different ages, sexes, classes and other lived experiences.

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**About Karamu House**
Recognized as the oldest African American performing arts institute in the nation, Karamu House is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and featured in the Smithsonian’s African American Museum. Legendary artists including Langston Hughes, Ruby Dee, Robert Guillaume, Ron O’Neal, Bill Cobbs, James Pickens, Jr., Vanessa Bell Calloway and Imani Hakim have been associated with the 104-year old “place of joyful gathering” (the meaning of “Karamu” in Swahili.)

In 1915, Oberlin College graduates Russell and Rowena Jelliffe opened the Playhouse Settlement in an area called Cleveland’s “Roaring Third.” The Jelliffes wanted to build an environment where people of different races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds could come together to share common ventures through the arts. Karamu was established as a gathering place for racially diverse members of the surrounding community at that time. Today, Karamu is a beating heart for the entire community, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identification, or age. Core programs include socially relevant and professional quality theatre; arts education programming for all ages; and community programming, such as comedy, live jazz, and spoken word performances, that invites participation and engagement, reflection, and a re-commitment to cultural values.

For more information, visit www.karamuhouse.org.

**About Cuyahoga Arts & Culture**
Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) is one of the largest local public funders for arts and culture in the nation, helping hundreds of organizations in Cuyahoga County connect millions of people to cultural experiences each year. Cuyahoga County residents created Cuyahoga Arts & Culture in 2006 when they approved a tax on cigarettes to support arts and culture in our community.

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture is a strong steward of the public's money, investing nearly $12 million annually in organizations that bring arts and culture to life in our communities. Each year we support tens of thousands of arts and culture programs and events that enhance the lives of Cuyahoga County residents.

For more information, visit www.cacgrants.org.