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LOCAL ARTISTS FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO STILL FURTHER THEIR ARTISTRY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Funded through Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, Karamu House continues to offer paid artist residencies to visual and performing artists from Greater Cleveland.

(Cleveland, Ohio)—The Room in the House paid artist residency program, funded through a Support for Artists grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC), still continued this summer through the collective imagination and innovation of the artists-in-residence. Launched in 2019, this Karamu House program is a revolving eight-week, paid artist residency that helps artists become more empowered and independent through technical assistance and professional development resources. These Cuyahoga County-based artists, selected from a competitive application process, show demonstrated excellence in, and commitment to, their visual arts and/or performance-based work. Room in the House residencies were recently awarded to:

Corine Adams-Bell, a multidisciplinary visual artist—most fluent in acrylic paint on canvas—uses her work as a mechanism to draw awareness to the connection between the visual and mental components of artistic interpretation;

Talise Campbell, a performing artist, worked to create a platform where community members can learn about history, art, culture and folklore through a professional class series, lectures, interactive podcasts and culminating live virtual performances;

Mariama Whyte, a singer, songwriter and actor, who uses the art of storytelling through music, developed a performance around her artistic journey that incorporated music and drama; and,

Daniel Carlton, a filmmaker and visual artist explores narratives through his lens as a queer artist within the Black community. Carlton focused on the post-production of his short film, *Homegoing*, finalizing color correction, sound design and music composition for the film’s final edit.

“Artists are keepers of the cultural flame—and the voices of artists need to be amplified, especially during the dual pandemics of 2020: COVID-19 and racism,” says Aseelah Shareef, Director of Operations and Community Engagement. “With the continued support of Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, Karamu is able to engage visual and performing artists and allow them to continue to pour their talents (and artistic voices) back into the community.”

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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. Since 2007, CAC has invested more than \$195 million in 420 organizations both large and small, making our community a more vibrant place to live, work and play. For more information, visit cacgrants.org.