Brooklyn Arts Council to Pilot Social Innovation Fellowship Program This Fall

Brooklyn, June 25, 2024 — Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC), with support from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), is launching a six-month pilot of the Social Innovation Fellowship, a professional development program for creatives and cultural entrepreneurs. Beginning in Fall 2024, a cohort of 12 artists will receive coaching, training, technical assistance, and additional funding while critiquing and supporting each other to build their individual and collective capacity for transformative change and abundance.

The Social Innovation Fellowship is an extension of the Creative Equations Fund (CEF), BAC’s latest regranting initiative dedicated to arts for social justice, supporting hyper-local, community-engaged artists, arts organizations, and cultural entrepreneurs who have dedicated their creativity to solving social problems. Through this Fellowship, BAC asserts that Brooklyn neighborhoods are the incubators of distinct cultures and practices and looks to invest in the next generation of leaders who can foster approaches to racial, gender, and ethnic justice and ensure a self-sustaining Brooklyn arts community. By building the capacity of creatives to both generate profit and change, BAC is extending investment in arts businesses and assets that use their profits, partnerships, and/or practices to disrupt inequity and/or enhance economically viable and sustainable models of intervention for social good.

Preference for the Fellowship is given to grant recipients of CEF’s Social Innovation + Cultural Entrepreneurship category. This pilot iteration is an opportunity for cultural entrepreneurs to experiment with different capacity-building opportunities and pinpoint a curriculum that they find most beneficial to their creative endeavors. Each chosen Fellow will receive $1,500 in addition to their $10,000 – $15,000 CEF grant, further facilitating justice-centered access to the arts and cultural enrichment for local Brooklyn residents.

Each year, a Senior Fellow will lead the cohort through a self-developed, individualized curriculum. This year, BAC welcomes Jeremiah O. Ojo as the pilot’s Senior Fellow. As this year’s facilitator, Jeremiah will equip Fellows with entrepreneurial, community, and strategic skills to establish deeper knowledge of Brooklyn’s vibrant cultural tapestry and the greater creative economic landscape. Jeremiah is a cultural entrepreneur, artist, and educator dedicated to uniting and empowering African diasporic communities through his work in visual arts, community development, and business education. He is the founder of Creative Milieu, a business advisory firm offering technical assistance.
to minority-owned businesses within the creative economy. Driven by his passion for African diaspora visual literacy, Jeremiah also founded Ilèkùn Wa (Our Doors), a community-centered artist advisory, facilitating and cultivating opportunities for visual artists of African descent to create, sustain, and thrive in their art businesses.

The 2024 BAC Social Innovation Fellows are Asmaa Amadou; Harvey Leon; Sirlenda Maxwell; Ragnhild (“Ragz”) Bruland; Tilly J. Lapidos; Emma Alpert; Chief Baba Neil Clarke; Shaun Neblett; Danielle Brown; Vong Pak; and Rochelle Jamila.

Rasu Jilani, Executive Director of Brooklyn Arts Council remarked, "The Social Innovation Fellowship is a transformative step forward in our mission to support and empower Brooklyn's diverse creative community. With this program, we are expanding access to our professional development opportunities for under-resourced artists and advocating for increased cultural equity in our borough. This Fellowship not only highlights the incredible talent within our borough but also fosters a collaborative environment where artists can thrive and make a significant impact in their communities. We are excited to see the innovative projects and initiatives that will emerge from this pilot program, reinforcing BAC's commitment to social justice and cultural equity."

Senior Fellow Jeremiah O. Ojo shared, "I'm excited to bring my many years of experience as an artist, entrepreneur and educator to pilot this new fellowship program. I believe Brooklyn is the creative heart and engine of New York City and I am thrilled to be supporting the growth and transformation of this next wave of social entrepreneurs who are tackling our most pressing challenges through a creative and civic lens."

BAC’s Social Innovation Fellowship is supported by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) with the support of the Office of the New York State Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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ABOUT BROOKLYN ARTS COUNCIL
For over 57 years, Brooklyn Arts Council has been the borough’s leading nonprofit organization supporting artists and cultural groups in all disciplines. BAC reaches hundreds of thousands of artists and audience members each year through music, dance, film, and visual arts programs; web-based directories; arts education; urban cultural heritage initiatives; grants; training programs; and artist services. By creating and supporting exciting cultural events and platforms for Brooklynites, BAC
provides forums for critical thinking and self-expression for young people and adults, enriches Brooklyn's cultural landscape, and generates engaging experiences that expand horizons. For more information, visit brooklynartscouncil.org, and follow BAC's Instagram @bkartscouncil, Facebook @BrooklynArtsCouncil, and X @BKArtsCouncil.

ABOUT NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS (NYSCA)
The mission of the New York State Council on the Arts is to foster and advance the full breadth of New York State's arts, culture, and creativity for all. To support the ongoing recovery of the arts across New York State, the Council on the Arts will award $162 million in FY2025, serving organizations and artists across all 10 state regions. The Council on the Arts further advances New York's creative culture by convening leaders in the field and providing organizational and professional development opportunities and informational resources. Created by Governor Nelson Rockefeller in 1960 and continued with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, the Council is an agency that is part of the Executive Branch. For more information on NYSCA, please visit arts.ny.gov, and follow NYSCA's Facebook page, on X @NYSCArts and Instagram @NYSCouncilontheArts.

ABOUT JEREMIAH O. OJO (2024 SENIOR FELLOW)
Jeremiah O. Ojo is a cultural entrepreneur, artist, and educator dedicated to uniting and empowering African diasporic communities through his work in visual arts, community development, and business education.

He is the founder of Creative Milieu, a business advisory firm offering technical assistance to minority-owned businesses within the Creative Economy. Using a values-centered approach, Jeremiah has worked with various companies to build their capacity through operations, talent development, and management. Driven by his passion for African diaspora visual literacy, Jeremiah founded Ilèkùn Wa (Our Doors), a community-centered artist advisory, facilitating and cultivating opportunities for visual artists of African descent to create, sustain, and thrive in their art businesses.

With over 15 years of experience across banking, nonprofits, cultural institutions, and higher education, Jeremiah is known for his strategic and business management expertise, providing valuable insights into cultural entrepreneurship, business development, talent management, operations, business strategy, and arts education. He has lectured at Columbia University, Rhode Island School of Design, Sotheby's Institute of Art, Spelman College, and the Royal College of Art, London, on various topics, including arts administration, cultural entrepreneurship, values-based decision-making, and talent management.
Jeremiah holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Policy - Nonprofit Management from the Andrew Young School of Policy at Georgia State University and a Master's in Art Business and Management from Sotheby's Institute of Art and Claremont Graduate University's Center for Business & Management. Jeremiah is a 2023 NEW INC. Cultural Entrepreneurship Incubator Mentor at the New Museum of Contemporary Art and serves on the Advisory Board of Inversion Art and Brooklyn Level Up Community Development Organization. Jeremiah's work is committed to building equitable systems that protect and grow creative communities.

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