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In June we welcomed hundreds of visitors through our doors to attend the 2021 River to River festival with Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Audiences city-wide were invited to view Nora Chipamiure’s Nehanda, a piece conceived as an opera and offers a legal and philosophical defense for the first hero of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle. The artist Esperanza Spalding incubated the Songwriters Apothecary, developing a structure for the collaborative development of new compositions designed to offer enhanced salutary benefit to listeners. Spalding’s project kicked off the new micro-residency program with the artists Junktown Duende, Jorge Gonzalez, Kevin Quiles Bonilla, Alicia Grullon, and John Maria Guitierrez, and we commissioned public works by Molly Crabapple, Brian Buckley, Laura Nova & Karina Aguilera Svirsky.

The second biannual International Puppet Fringe Festival NYC took place, to critical and public acclaim, at The Clemente. Despite unprecedented circumstances, our team together with Teatro SEA held a safe festival with theater troupes from several nations with more than 40 events and thousands of attendees. We partnered with the Museum of the City of New York to mount an uptown and downtown (at The Clemente) exhibitions and launched the first ever Puppet Week NYC with the support of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment.

We partnered with the City of New York to sponsor the Open Culture Program and the City Artists Corp in an effort to support artists, jumpstart the creative economy, and bring arts and culture to communities in new, public, and safe ways. We showcased more than 30 artist grantees in the month of October, and became co-presenters of the celebrated Salsa Stories series, which brough weekly salsa classes to Suffolk Street.

Thanks to all of your support, we began 2022 with a newly expanded staff of emerging and visionary cultural workers, writers, artists and producers on our team and our board. We are excited to usher in a new era of connectivity, solidarity, and creativity that will activate every corner of our community.

Pa’lante,
- Libertad

Dear Clemente Community,

I write at a moment of precipitous change—both within The Clemente community, our neighborhood, and our society at large. The Clemente has always understood the role of the artist in society as both generative and service oriented. Our successes in this crucial year could not have happened without you, our supporters, trusted friends, champions, and cultural workers who touch every corner of our celebrated building here in this historic Lower East Side/Loisaida.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR
The Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural & Educational Center Inc. is a Puerto Rican/Latinx multi-arts cultural institution rooted in NYC’s Lower East Side/Loisaida. While focused on the cultivation, presentation, and preservation of Puerto Rican and Latinx culture, we are equally committed to an international latitude, determined to operate in a collaborative and polyphonic manner in order to provide subsidized working space and venues to artists and small arts organizations that reflect the cultural diversity of the LES, house and promote original and independent producers, offer support services and sustainability pipelines to our internal and external communities of practice. We are guided by our namesake’s legacy of building multigenerational leadership, local power, and mutuality.

MISSION

28 Total amount of subsidized events & opportunities
65 Artists in residence
15 Organizations in residence
50,000 Estimated visitors
2021
Seasonal Staples:

Mallory Lewis and Lamb Chop performing at the 2021 International Puppet Fringe Festival.
Día de Reyes - Loisaida

The Clemente and Teatro SEA continued the Three Kings Day Celebration, now a tradition in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. As part of the celebration, the two organizations hosted a toy drive that benefited 3,000 children.

Open Studios

Open Studios is an open platform for local arts and cultural workers within and external to The Clemente building to showcase new work in a wide range of media and supports the thriving creative community of the Lower East Side.

In 2021, due to the COVID19 lockdown, more than 20 events were hosted virtually and co-produced with the Public Space Open Art installation featuring more than 30 resident artists which flanked the facade.

Vision Festival

Art for Arts’ Vision Festival brought together the buoyant voices of hundreds of artists of various disciplines—Free Jazz, poetry, visual arts, conversations—to speak the message of hope and justice with unfettered creativity.

International Puppet Fringe Festival NYC

The Clemente hosted the second biannual International Puppet Fringe Festival NYC with our partners, Teatro SEA. Together we featured more than 40 puppet shows, short films, and artist talks with international puppet theater companies. The Puppet Fringe Festival is the first ever international fringe festival dedicated to puppetry.

This year, we joined efforts with the Museum of the City of New York to celebrate the exhibition Puppets of New York and celebrate for the first time ever Puppet Week in the city of New York.

Borimix: Puerto Rico Fest

We reopened our doors to the celebrated, annual Borimix: Puerto Rico Fest. Featuring dozens of performances, talks, panels, and the Stone Yucayeque exhibition, the festival highlighted the impact of Puerto Rican identity, arts, and culture within the city, nation, and hemisphere and its intersections with other Latinx identities. This year’s edition was dedicated to the fifth centennial of the founding of San Juan.
EXHIBITS & CURATORS PROGRAM

The Intradiasporic Curators Program provides funds, gallery space, technical and marketing support to visual artists of diverse cultural backgrounds, reflecting the mission of The Clemente. We were proud to present the following exhibitions this year:

**eMeLe-K: Social Reckoning**
**Curator:** Anderson Pilgrim and Alexis Mendoza.
**Artists:** Carla Armour, Diogenes Ballester, Tanda Francis, Michael Kelly Williams, Ademola Olugebefola, TAFA, Nelson Alvarez, Ed Andrade, Diego Anaya, Pablo Caviedes, Wildriana de Jesus Paulino, Franck de las Mercedes, Darwin Erazo, Alex “Fdez” Fernández, Julia Justo, Rafaela Luna, Yani Monzón, Naivy Pérez, Moses Ros, Luis Stephenberg, and José Luis Tejada.

**Subversive Kin: The Act Of Turning Over**
**Curated by:** LAZO
**Artists:** Alva Mooses, Claudia Kaatziza Cortinez, Mauricio Cortes, Rodrigo Moreira, Blanka Amezkua, Carlos Enrique Martinez Ramos, Catalina Tuca, Christian Camilo Diaz, Dani Greenfield-Campoverde, Daniella Portillo, Dolores Furtado, Gabriela Salazar, Gina Goico, Leticia Ortega Cortes, Luciana Pinchiero, Julia Brandão, Mario Navarro, Paolo Mentasti, Pedro Wainer, Sabrina Merayo Nuñez, Sofia Quirno

**You Enter Dancing/There’s Always Sign: To Accept the Impermanence of Things**
**Curatorial Text:** Tatiane Santa Rosa.
**Artists:** Alva Mooses & Mauricio Cortes

**Sobre/Mesa**
**Curated by:** LAZO
**Artists:** Alva Mooses, Claudia Kaatziza Cortinez, Mauricio Cortes, Rodrigo Moreira, Blanka Amezkua, Carlos Enrique Martinez Ramos, Catalina Tuca, Christian Camilo Diaz, Dani Greenfield-Campoverde, Daniella Portillo, Dolores Furtado, Gabriela Salazar, Gina Goico, Leticia Ortega Cortes, Luciana Pinchiero, Julia Brandão, Mario Navarro, Paolo Mentasti, Pedro Wainer, Sabrina Merayo Nuñez, Sofia Quirno
Curator: Ashleigh Alexandria

Regla: Soul of the Community

Curator: Quintín Rivera Toro
Artists: Myritza Castillo, Colectivo La Puerta, Danny Rivera Cruz, Vanessa Hernández Gracia, Karlo Andrei Ibarra, Yamcy Leslie, Mónica Rodríguez Medina, Marisol Plard, Chemi Rosado Seijo, Garvin Sierra

A Culture In Flames: Puerto Rican Art Of Resistance In The Xxi Century

Curator: Paul Smith
Artists: Robert Birmelin, Stephen Petegorsky, Ram Rahman, Paul Smith

A Poet In New York Or New York In A Poet

Curator: Alejandro Cámara. Frías
Artists: Mauricio Alejo, Alejandro Almanza Pereda, Balam Bartolomé, Tania Candiani, Lívia Corona Benjamin, Gabriela Galván, Pablo Helguera, Mario Navarro, Claudia Peña Salinas, Adrián S. Bará, Bosco Sodi

Puppets of New York: Downtown at The Clemente

Curators: Leslee Asch and Monxo Lopez

En Comunidad: Latinx Photography Now (Ahora)

Curators: Marilyn Montúfar & Enio Hernandez
Artists: Marilyn Montúfar, Vanessa Briones, Enio Hernandez

Transformation: Objects and Images in Relation

Curator: Petrina Dacres/Tide Rising Art Projects
Artists: Alicia Brown, Camille Chedda, Dominique Hunter, Katherine Kennedy, Tessa Mars, Wendell McShine, Sharon Norwood, Oneika Russell

Good & Bad Government

Curator: Leslee Asch and Monxo Lopez

Ghost Stories Are All Love Stories

Curator: Banyi Huang
Artists: Lu Zhang, Mei Kazama, Banyi Huang, Maya Yu Zhang

A Poet In New York Or New York In A Poet exhibition, October 2021.
The Fight to Free Leonard Peltier - Honoring Indigenous Culture & Heritage

**Curator:** Thalia Yarina Carroll-Cachimuel  
**Artists:** Sonia Guiñansaca, Pachi Muruchi, Layqa Nuna Yawar, Jasmine Shawna, Eloy Bida, Young Mer; Original Kichwa art from Otavalo, Ecuador created by familía Cachimuel; art by Maja Z. (8th grade artist, activist and student); & When We Fight, We Win! The Podcast episodes on ex-political prisoners Oscar López Rivera and Elizam Escobar.

Stone Yucayeque/ El Yu-cayeque de Piedra

**Curators:** Melissa M. Ramos Borges, Irene Esteves Amador, Carlos Ortiz Burgos, Miguel Trellas  
**Artists:** Vincenzo Amato, Grimaldi Báez, Rogelio Baez-Vega, Bemba P.R., Tari Beroszi, Johnny Betancourt, Lionel Cruet, Tony Cruz Pabón, Sofia Gallisá Muriente, Zaida Goveo, Lorenzo Homar, Karlo Andrei Ibarra, Leo Laboy y LA PUERTA, Natalia Lassalle, José Lerma, Ada del Pilar Ortiz, André Marcel Pagán Rolón, Kevin Quiles Bonilla, Carlos Raquel Rivera, José Rosa, Camille Rouzard, Aaron Salabarrías, Garvin Sierra, Yiyo Tirado, Rafael Trelles, Nitza Tufiño, Rafael Tufiño, Migdalia Umpierre, Rebecca Zilenziger
Through our willingness to produce programming in a spirit of responsiveness & collaboration, The Clemente:

- Landed national coverage for our Three Kings Day Celebration, and distributed 1,000 toys to children in Baruch Houses with Teatro SEA.

- Co-presented the 20th annual River to River Festival, which featured works that explore female identity, the African diaspora, colonialism, and other socio political issues, and included a residency of the artist, esperanza spalding.

- Designed and constructed an outdoor venue with the support of FABNYC, The Van Alen Institute’s Neighborhoods Now Project, and FCA Architects.

- Co-presented the celebrated Shakespeare In The Parking Lot summer series.

- Became an official venue partner to the unprecedented City Artists Corps initiative to showcase over 30 artists grantees impacted by the COVID19 pandemic throughout the month of October.

- Secured a designation of our surrounding Suffolk Streets and Norfolk Streets as Open Culture streets, where we partnered with Salsa Stories, who brought monthly Salsa engagement to the community.

- Hosted community giveaways with House of Good Deeds.

- Co-produced the 1st ReHecho/ Remade Fair of upcycling and design with live performances by PincLouds, and workshops by local artisans.

- Launched our first ever fundraiser - Suffolk Street Solidarity- jointly with the Bluestockings Cooperative, our new neighbors!
WE BUILT AND CONTINUED PARTNERSHIPS WITH:

- Museum of the City of New York
- Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
- Queens Theater
- Arts for Art
- The Drilling Company
- Teatro SEA
- Issue Project Room
- Bluestockings Cooperative
- Vera List Center
- EmergeNYC
- Artists Alliance Inc
PUBLIC ART & COMMISSIONS
Esos árboles que aprietan las manos de ángeles descalzos para sentir la tierra gritar entre sus dedos
A Collaborative Partnership Jumpstarts Intergenerational Dance Making in Lower Manhattan’s Public Spaces

As a part of the 20th annual River to River Festival, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council collaborated with The Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural and Educational Center to commission the works of three generations of dance artists—from emerging, mid-career, to established—to be developed and presented at the festival over two years, with support from the Rauschenberg Foundation.

In 2021, nora chipaumire and Mariana Valencia, two widely respected and politically engaged artists, were tapped to develop and present new productions, with the opera Nehanda by nora chipaumire, and the dance work Futurity by Mariana Valencia.

Once Upon a Time in the LES

As part of our micro-residency program, The Clemente commissioned the Junktown Duende collective to create an LES and puppetry inspired play with community collaborators, which, premiered at the International Puppet Fringe Festival 2021. Junktown Duende provided free of cost community art workshops and developed a 3D mural in the Kabayitos theater vestibule.

Esos Árboles mural, La Tierra Prometida multi-media installation, and Life-Line photo exhibition

Installed new permanent and semi-permanent installations throughout the building and outdoor fence for Clemente Open Studios, and with artists Molly Crabapple, Brian Buckley, Laura Nova & Karina Aguilera Svirsky.
The Clemente’s newly inaugurated micro-residency program embraces process and the playfulness of trial and error. Envisioned as a space for learning, sharing knowledge, and strengthening community, this program assisted in growing and strengthening creative art practice with flexible time commitments and opportunities to complete a specific project, commission, or prototype within the span of 1 to 3 months.
Esperanza Spalding’s Apothecary Lab

Songwriters Apothecary Lab is a live installation where esperanza spalding and her fellow songwrights, researchers, and mentors created the eponymous album. The creation of this original music, which the lab shared with visitors during the River to River festival, continues Spalding’s exploration over the past years of how musicians might meaningfully incorporate therapeutic practices and knowledge into their work.

Kevin Quiles Bonilla

An interdisciplinary artist born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He explores ideas around power, colonialism, and history with his identity as context. He currently lives and works between Puerto Rico and New York.

Junktown Duende

This puppeteering collective sourced local “trash” materials, in a collaborative process to transform the neighborhood’s garbage into beautiful art, puppets, costumes, shows, and murals with the vision of gifting the community’s own stories back to them.

John María Gutierrez

A multidisciplinary artist who performs on screen and stage nationally and internationally. From Washington Heights, a hood of NYC, his/their works weave movement, music, singing in English and Spanish, and experimental theater to unwind a complex urban disparity brought on by social and systemic failings.

Jorge Gonzalez

Following a recent trip to Mexico to connect with his paternal roots and learn traditional tallow candle-making techniques, Jorge Gonzalez sets up a new iteration of Taller de Oficios as a candle-making workshop site for 10 days at Studio 406.

Alicia Grullon

Moves between performance, video, and photography. She channels her interdisciplinary approach towards critiques of the politics of presence—an argument for the inclusion of disenfranchised communities in political and social spheres.
Advocating for Cultural Equity

The Clemente was proud to participate in the steering and advisory committee to the Hue Arts Initiative to organize the first map of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color cultural organizations in NYC to foster a deeper understanding of the role of these organizations. We also expanded the membership of the Latinx Arts Consortium of New York to include more than two dozen organizations across the city.

As part of our mission of heritage conservation and provocative collaboration, The Clemente reopened our doors for the 16th annual Borimix: Puerto Rico Arts Festival, and presented the opening of the festival at Taller Comunidad La Goyco in San Juan, Puerto Rico, cementing our sisterhood with the cultural organization. The event was attended by a dozen new councilmembers and by Puerto Rican Councilwomen Carlina Rivera and Diana Ayala, Assemblywoman Jessica González-Rojas, Senator Gustavo Rivera, as well as a dozen frontline environmental, labor, and mutual aid activists from the island.
PRESS
“A Puppet Festival Returns to New York, All Grown Up”
- The New York Times

“Who’s Pulling the Strings? A celebration of the puppets that have always lived among us.”
- Vulture Magazine

“A Program Will Map POC-led NYC Arts Organizations to Encourage Equity”
- Hyperallergic

“a month long celebration of Boricua culture and pride featuring art and music”
- Tiempo, ABC News

“Puppets Are Immigrants Too: How New York City Turned Ancient Traditions into Cutting-Edge Art”
- Howl Round

“Nueva York celebra la llegada de Los Reyes Magos en el Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural Center”
- Telemundo
In 2021, The Clemente Inaugurated a new board of 11 directors ranging in expertise from legal, media, arts, community, finance, and architecture backgrounds.

Verónica Relea  
Chair

Urayoán Noel  
Vice Chair

Richard Morales  
Secretary

Anisha Steephen  
Treasurer (through December 2021)

Diego Leonardo Robayo  

Annya Ramírez-Jímenez  

Guido Hartray  

Jorge Irizarry  

Annya Ramírez-Jímenez

Beatriz De La Torre  

Jorge Vazquez  

Karina Aguillera Skvirsky

Life Line installation by Laura Nova and Karina Aguillera Skvirsky as part of the Photoville Festival.

LEARN MORE

The Clemente is grateful for its previous board and the leadership of Elena Martinez, Betsy MacLean, and Christine Licata.
STAFF
Tal Sharon
Rentals and Events Manager

Andrea Gordillo
Development Director

Sofia Reeser Del Rio
Senior Program Manager

Victoria Collins
Office and Communications Manager

Diomarys Mendez
Administrative and Communication Assistant

Libertad O. Guerra
Executive Director

Claudia Cortínez
Exhibitions Manager

Danny Rodríguez
Building Manager

Chris Cruz
Frontdesk & Security

Mitchell Torres
Frontdesk & Security

PREVIOUS COLLABORATORS

Gian Higuera  Jacqui Dugal  Tatiana Jorio  G. Anglero  Alva Mooses  Najah Zakiyah Eldridge
Supporters

$100,000 and above

The Mellon Foundation
The Ford Foundation
The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

$50,000 – $99,000

New York City Councilmember Margaret Chin
The Henry Luce Foundation, the Willem de Kooning Foundation, and Teiger Foundation through the Coalition of Small Arts New York

$10,000 – $49,999

The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature
New York Humanities
Lower Manhattan Cultural Council in partnership with The Rauschenberg Foundation
Nat Dean

$1,000 - $9,999

FAB NYC
Morgan Everhart and the Somashekar Ketz Fund
Jonathan Marvel
Brooke Lehman
“As an emerging artist, I have a great appreciation for organizations like The Clemente for providing space for exhibitions with concepts and ideas that are forward-thinking, for the trust, and for helping those ideas come to fruition. Through every single step of the process, we felt supported. I've also seen over the years how meaningful The Clemente is for the community and as a Colombian artist feel excited to be seen and recognized as part of the Latin American community.”

- Tatiana Arocha

“Solidarity means allowing space for voices from all backgrounds to be heard. The Clemente opened their doors to a project that uplifted Indigenous artwork without question. They put their trust in me and allowed space for our vision to come to life. The morals and standards set-fourth by The Clemente aligned exactly with that of our project and I am forever grateful for the solidarity that The Clemente community offered and continue to offer to BIPOC creators.”

- Thalia Carroll-Cachimuel
DONATE

Your support makes this work happen. A general donation allows us to keep our doors open as a hub of responsive arts and collaboration, supports our services to the field, artistic community, and protects our legacy for generations to come.
THANK YOU!