ANNOUNCING THE CULTURAL EQUITY INCUBATOR

A COLLECTIVE CENTERING CULTURAL LEADERS COMMITTED TO RACIAL EQUITY AND CREATIVE JUSTICE

BOSTON, (MA), the Cultural Equity Incubator (CEI) is a collective action shared workspace designed by and for arts and culture leaders committed to racial equity and creative justice. The CEI is a paradigm shift in creative collaboration, space making, resource sharing and community care. The initiative will take up a two-year residence at Midway Artist Studios in Boston’s Fort Point district beginning in June 2021. CEI core partner organizations include: Abilities Dance Boston, Art in the Antilles, Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston, Arts Connect International, Danza Orgánica, Digital Soup, Dunamis, MASSCreative, Midday Movement Series, The Flavor Continues and StageSource.

The CEI was born out of #culturalsalvation (#cs), a grassroots movement centering BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) -led and -serving arts organizations in Massachusetts. #cs started organizing in March 2020, prioritizing intersectional racial equity through funding, media and policy in the arts and culture sector. The organizations of #cs and CEI are moving their respective communities towards collective action and equity, using a commons approach inspired by organizations like: Culture Works Philadelphia, Social Impact Commons & Boston Ujima Project.
With support from the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture and The Boston Foundation, the organizations of the CEI will take the next two years to test a shared approach to non-profit fundamentals like governance, fundraising, marketing, infrastructure and programming. Through this process, the collective aims to decenter the white supremacist work ethic embedded in the US non-profit business model, instead centering community care and joy while pursuing intersectional racial equity. The space that the CEI will function out of, Suite 103 within Midway Artist Studios, was originally developed as an arts and culture shared workspace in 2013 by the Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston.

**CEI cohort participants and other community members speak to the importance, potential and promise of the CEI:**

"Across my life, I have witnessed the spiritual bankruptcies of the white-dominated american arts & culture sector. This Cultural Equity Incubator platforms our community in embodying the modes of kinship we inherit from our ancestors, while seeding vibrant futures for our descendants. This is the work of my life and I'm ecstatic at the opportunity to live it out through a relationship like this."

- Micah Rosegrant, Arts Connect International

"I was encouraged and inspired to be a part of the Cultural Equity Incubator because of the shared values that deeply resonated with my personal and professional world-building model. In value-based work like this, practitioners of color often feel isolated and marginalized in the arts sector. I wanted to be a part of a community that prioritized togetherness, belonging, and integrity. To be in solidarity with other like-minded and open-hearted arts workers is a unique privilege that I couldn't pass up. I feel incredibly thankful to walk this uncharted path with these collaborators."

- Romy St. Hilaire, Art in the Antilles

"In what was easily the most isolating year most of us have ever faced, we've collectively come to understand the power and necessity in being in community with each other. The opportunity to do so with these particularly phenomenal people unified in the purpose of supporting our sector in deeper and more intentional ways was one of the easiest and most exciting decisions we've ever made as an organization."

- J.Cottle, Dunamis

“I am interested in joining CEI because equity is a focus of my own artistic practice. In my experience, cultural workers in Boston often find it difficult to produce creative work due to the capital overhead -- a paradox in a place culturally diverse but divided in the shadow of biotech and academia. I'm excited about the opportunity to work with others who are passionate about what they are doing and focused on connecting back to their communities. In a time when the future of performance feels unclear, it brings hope to be a part of such a supportive collective.”

- Lani Asuncion, Digital Soup
“The CEI brings together organizations and artists who strive for intersectional justice work and building bridges with the Boston community. That is why Abilities Dance Boston is incredibly excited to be a part of this opportunity.”

- Andrew Choe, Abilities Dance

“We are ecstatic to host in residence the Cultural Equity Incubator, we look forward to supporting each of your important work and collective growth.”

- Raber Umphenour, Midway Artist Studios

“The Boston Foundation is proud to support this community-driven, BIPOC-led initiative that is guiding our arts and culture sector towards a more just and collaborative future. We look forward to seeing the new ways of working that CEI imagines and brings into being.”

- Eva Rosenberg, The Boston Foundation

About the CEI:

The Cultural Equity Incubator is a collective action shared workspace designed for and by arts and culture leaders committed to racial equity and creative justice serving small to mid-sized organizations, sole proprietors, and artists working in the arts and culture sector who are committed to racial equity and creative justice. It is a collaborative community invested in supporting one another - and the sector - in building racial equity and creative justice. To learn more about the Cultural Equity Incubator visit [www.culturalequityincubator.org](http://www.culturalequityincubator.org)

Participating Organizations:
Abilities Dance Boston:

Abilities Dance Boston is a performing company designed to provide a professional platform for dancers of all physical abilities. We strive to increase inclusion in dance and in the arts for folks with disabilities. Our productions involve choreography that emphasizes the dancers’ strengths, original music that is tailored to the movements and abilities of our dancers, and access points and technologies to increase accessibility for our audiences. We teach intersectional disability rights, provide lectures and movement workshops, and facilitate conversations with our community partners about inclusive practices in their spaces to bring back to their communities. Outside of our company productions, we have performed and showcased our work in festivals and events such as: the MFA, Peabody Essex Museum, Boston Contemporary Dance Festival, GRUNT Festival at Links Hall in Chicago, markeddanceproject’s 10th anniversary show at Gibney in NYC, The Series: Vol IV at the Ailey Citigroup Theatre, and more.

www.abilitiesdanceboston.org

Art in the Antilles:

Art in the Antilles (AITA) empowers artists of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora to equitably bridge access to the arts sectors. With Art in the Antilles, Caribbean immigrants and descendants of the Caribbean build community, connect resources, deepen their cultural and historical knowledge and have professional development opportunities in order to equitably navigate the growing creative economy. AITA empowers black Caribbeans of immigrant backgrounds to design their own futures. We help to cultivate the artist identity for Afro-Caribbean people. We celebrate our black culture in the Caribbean and de-stigmatize the perception of an “Artist” in our communities. We make art and creativity accessible, prosperous, and a part of our innate identities. www.romysthilaire.com

Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston:

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston, Inc. is dedicated to leveraging the strengths and resources of the business and legal communities to build knowledge, organizational capacity, and infrastructure in support of the individual artists and arts and cultural organizations in our region. Our goals are: 1) to provide quality direct legal services to the creative professionals and arts and cultural organizations that could otherwise not afford it, 2) to provide innovative and relevant professional development programs that address the complex needs of artists and arts and cultural organizations, 3) to support diverse communities through the identification, development and ownership of safe, affordable, permanent, and equitable creative spaces, and 4) to invest in and support arts and cultural organizations’ boards of directors with qualified business and legal professionals and ongoing board development trainings. www.artsandbusinesscouncil.org
Arts Connect International:

Arts Connect International’s (ACI) mission is to build equity and inclusion in, and through, the arts. We believe that all people deserve to live creative and expressive lives on their own terms, making cultural equity and creative justice the focus of our work. We practice and strive towards creative justice through emergent, responsive and iterative work. Our work includes: 1) sector supports, featuring the Cultural Equity Learning Community, an anti-racism training for sector leaders, alongside consulting services, 2) leadership development, including our Community Ripple Grants, Youth United Artists Program, Artist in Residence Program, and Leadership Retreats, 3) community convenings, most recently manifesting in our nation-wide Arts Equity Summit, and 4) research, with our most recent publication, *Moves Towards Equity: Perspectives from Arts Leaders of Color*, released in 2019. [www.artsconnectinternational.org](http://www.artsconnectinternational.org)

Danza Orgánica:

Danza Orgánica is a Boston-based dance theater company that creates antiracist, antipatriarchal and decolonizing work. Through high-quality performance, education (Dance for Social Justice™), and our annual festival We Create, we work with-and-for communities interested in embodying a liberated future. We honor our right to express our BIPOC experience, joyfully reimagine ourselves in liberated BIPOC bodies, and leave a legacy that sheds light upon an untold side of history. We are in solidarity with BIPOC, LGBTQI, and communities that face racial, ability-based, economic, xenophobic and/or colonial oppression. [www.danzaorganica.org](http://www.danzaorganica.org)

Digital Soup:

Digital Soup is a Boston based collective that offers multimedia supportive environments making space for queer under represented artists, specifically those from AAPI & BIPOC communities, to perform and share new and experimental public performative works that communicate through the form of new media — video, projection mapping, VR, experimental sound, puppetry and other kinds of works that combine these practices to create happenings that encourage togetherness and feed community. [www.digitalsoup.events/](http://www.digitalsoup.events/)

Dunamis:

Dunamis ignites agency and transformative growth for emerging artists and arts-managers of color by serving as a nexus for professional development, community-building, consultation, production, advocacy and developing equitable pipelines for access and leadership in creative spaces. We give folx the support they need to grow into greater and more complete versions of themselves. [www.dunamisboston.org](http://www.dunamisboston.org)
**MASSCreative:**

MASSCreative advocates for a well-resourced and equitable creative sector that is essential to the economic and civic vibrancy of Massachusetts. Working with residents, artists, creative and culture workers, leaders of local arts and cultural organizations, MASSCreative advances the public policy, grassroots advocacy capacity, and cross-sector alliances necessary to creating a Commonwealth where art, culture, and creativity are a valued part of everyday life. Together we will make Massachusetts a creativity-driven state from the ground up. [www.mass-creative.org](http://www.mass-creative.org)

**Midday Movement Series:**

Midday Movement Series is a grassroots education and advocacy initiative changing Greater Boston’s cultural landscape by cultivating a new, diverse generation of dance leaders. Founded in 2015, MIDDAY was designed for artists to break from historic resource barriers and gaps and instead focus on what is possible when communities come together and nurture young leadership. MIDDAY was founded to center leadership development, talent retention, and community-building across Greater Boston's dance sector. MIDDAY uses dance to create a sense of home and place for all dance-lovers who believe that movement has the power to spark individual passion and ignite community spirit. Website: [www.middaymovement.org](http://www.middaymovement.org)

**The Flavor Continues:**

The Flavor Continues (TFC) is a non-profit organization based in the Greater Boston area spearheaded by members of the street and club dance community. Starting as an organization focused solely on curating live dance events, TFC soon found themselves at the intersection of historical and community preservation, education, and public health. “The flavor continues” was first used as a moniker, eventually evolving into a statement representing the organization’s consistent dedication in providing for their community. Seeing value in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual blessings various street and club dance cultures have brought to the world, TFC believes in returning the same honor to the culture. Now, TFC seeks to evolve the culture by continuing to serve through transformative and novel methods in its programming pursuing the creation of a sustainable foundation for the street and club dance community. [www.theflavorcontinues.org](http://www.theflavorcontinues.org)

**StageSource:**

StageSource provides leadership and services to advance the art of theater in the Greater Boston and New England region. Our mission is to unite theater artists, theater companies, and related organizations in vision and goals that inspire and empower our community to realize its greatest artistic potential. [www.stagesource.org](http://www.stagesource.org)
About Midway Artist Studios:

Midway Artist Studios is unique as the largest artist rental building in Boston and provides artists at all stages of their career a place to work and live in Boston.

Midway supports artists on all levels, from providing affordable studios, to encouraging the flow of ideas and skills between disciplines and generations. Through the proximity of artists practicing diverse disciplines, new collaborations, learning, ideas, organizations and opportunities can be generated; supporting the creation of work that otherwise might not have been created. [www.midwayartiststudios.org](http://www.midwayartiststudios.org)