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# THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING  
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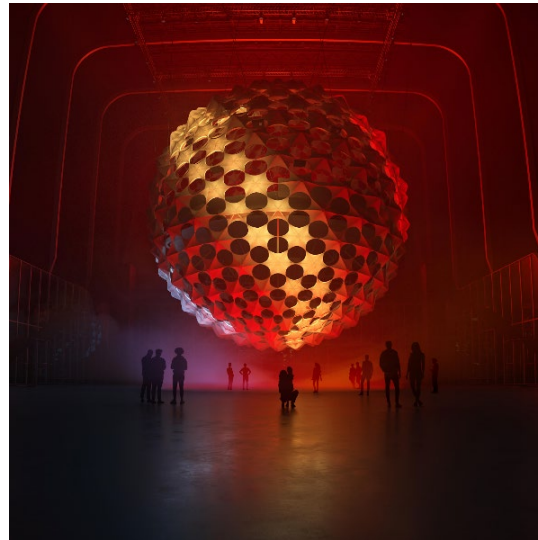
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The Shed presents **Sonic Sphere**, a revolutionary new architectural space/multisensory spherical concert hall suspended in The Shed's soaring **McCourt**

Featuring immersive, 3-D sound and light explorations of innovative music created and curated by Carl Craig, Yaeji, Steve Reich, and The xx, with live performances by Madame Gandhi, yunè pinku, UNIQU3, and Igor Levit with visual artist Rirkrit Tiravanija

**Sonic Sphere** runs June 16 through July 30, 2023; tickets go on sale **May 5**.



A rendering of Sonic Sphere in The Shed's 115-foot-tall McCourt space, 2023. Courtesy The Shed.

[Click here to view the press kit](#)

**NEW YORK, May 2, 2023** — **Alex Poots**, Artistic Director of The Shed, today announced the New York premiere of **Sonic Sphere**, a revolutionary new architectural space featuring immersive, 3-D sound and light explorations of music by boundary-pushing artists, running June 16 through July 30.

The vast, 65-foot-diameter spherical concert hall is suspended in midair in The Shed's soaring, 115-foot-tall McCourt space. Sonic Sphere is being created by avant-garde consciousness architects **Ed Cooke**, **Merijn Royaards**, and **Nicholas Christie**, and the broader **Sonic Sphere** community including lighting designer **Polina Zakh**. Sonic Sphere is based on an idea initially proposed by composer Karlheinz Stockhausen. The artist curation for Sonic Sphere at The Shed is led by **Alex Poots**.

*"We are excited to bring this architectural, experiential statement to the middle of the most vibrant city in the world. This spherical concert hall asks questions about the type of architecture that best serves our cities and communities. How can it adapt to our changing societal needs, bringing us together at a time when technology is driving us apart."*

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—Sonic Sphere Team

Inside the sphere, an audience of 250 people congregates in specially designed seating and a netted area in the center to experience music as a spatialized soundscape created by more than 100 speakers that move sound above, below, through, and around their bodies. Dynamic lighting on the sphere's surface completes the hyperreal, multisensory journey. Multiple 45-minute live and recorded sets will be offered each day including:

- Transformative listening sessions and complete recorded albums featuring bespoke remixes of **The xx**'s essential, self-titled debut album and influential composer **Steve Reich**'s groundbreaking *Music for 18 Musicians*
- A playlist tracing one branch of electronic music's family tree by legendary Detroit techno artist, DJ, and producer **Carl Craig** and a never-before-heard compilation by hypnotic Brooklyn-based musician, singer, DJ, and producer **Yaeji**
- Rising London-based singer-songwriter-producer **yunè pinku** on June 14 and 16; Jersey Club Queen DJ and producer **UNIQU3** on June 23 and 24; world-renowned pianist **Igor Levit** on June 30 and July 1 performing Morton Feldman's *Palais de Mari* in collaboration with visual artist **Rirkrit Tiravanija** who is creating a visual counterpoint for Levit's performances; live performances by electronic music producer, drummer, artist, and activist **Madame Gandhi** on July 12 and 13

The Sonic Sphere team works through rapid iteration. The version at The Shed is the 11th and most advanced Sphere so far, after iterations of increasing size and technical sophistication, beginning at Chateau du Feÿ's creative commune, and appearing since in London, Mexico, at Black Rock City, and in Miami.

"As a teenager I had read in an obscure book of Stockhausen's Kugelauditorium, which appeared at the 1970 World Expo Osaka fair, alongside the first mobile phone. It was obviously a ridiculously cool idea, far more interesting and important than the phone. In the decades that followed, I became increasingly confused that since 1970 our society had created 15 billion mobile phones but no further spherical concert halls. The Sonic Sphere project aims to re-prioritize shared real-world experience and to make the outer horizons of consciousness accessible to all, in the name of new modes of perception and action for a world that requires them," said **Ed Cooke**, Sonic Sphere Co-Founder.

"My first experience of clubbing was during a cold winter in early '90s Rotterdam. The interference patterns of visual, sonic, and kinetic waveform transmissions that flooded the dance floor and enveloped me were deeply transformative. Along the dance floor's perimeter, bass-bins sent out shock waves that rattled your ribcage and tweeter horns above them fired a percussive hailstorm into the twitching

crowd. Waveform transmissions collided as ephemeral geometries that liquefied the physical architecture, turning the shadows on the walls into windows to infinity. Sound and space had switched sides; steel and concrete were evanescent, and the DJ was an architect. It was my first experience of how the combined forces of music, light, and collectivity can suspend the laws of physics. Sonic Sphere is a sensory laboratory that does exactly that; it bends time, expands consciousness, and punctures our perception of reality,” said **Merijn Royaards**, Sonic Sphere Co-Founder

“In a visually orientated age, Sonic Sphere centers the wonder of sound and music in an interdisciplinary experience,” said **Alex Poots**, Artistic Director of The Shed. “The creative invention and sheer ambition of Sonic Sphere offers such a range of possibilities to explore for years to come.”

### **Ticketing**

Tickets for Sonic Sphere go on sale May 5 (Shed member presale begins on May 3). Sonic Sphere runs Tuesday through Sunday with multiple programs offered throughout the day.

All tickets are general admission. The listening platform is entered via three flights of stairs or an accessible lift. For additional information and tickets, visit [theshed.org](http://theshed.org).

### **Special Event**

This year’s Mirror Ball celebrates the opening of Sonic Sphere on June 28 at The Shed. The party will include performances by **Music for Heart and Breath Trio** (Arcade Fire’s Richard Reed Parry, Cibo Matto’s Yuka Honda, and Parker Shper) and **Merijn Royaards** (Sonic Sphere’s Creative Director), as well as a new mix by Brooklyn-based musician, singer, DJ, and producer **Yaeji** and a live set by electronic music producer, drummer, artist, and activist **Madame Gandhi** to close out the night. The benefit will support The Shed's future productions that welcome innovative art and ideas. Tickets will be available May 3. Single tickets \$250. VIP packages start at \$500. For more information about Mirror Ball email Jessica Kepler, Associate Director of Events, [Jessica.Kepler@theshed.org](mailto:Jessica.Kepler@theshed.org).

### **About the Sonic Sphere Creative Team**

Created by avant-garde consciousness architects Ed Cooke, Merijn Royaards, and Nicholas Christie as a community project, Sonic Sphere aims to challenge the relationship between technology and experience, and proposes a new type of participatory cultural space: one that allows us to invent and share real-world experiences with each other as well as being a new playground for artists. In the exponential age of AI and VR, Sonic Sphere rejects any notion that consciousness is computation, or that it is solitary, and instead asserts that the path to infinity lies in shared human experience. The Sonic Sphere community embraces rapid iteration and continuous reinvention.

### **Sonic Sphere Creative Team**

**Ed Cooke** (Impresario) is a multidisciplinary explorer of consciousness. A former memory champion, he is the co-founder and chairman of Memrise, the popular language learning app; a pioneer of online parties; a published author; and the instigating co-founder of Sonic Sphere, where he leads the team. His writing has appeared in the *Guardian* and the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. He's currently working on a general theory of parties.

**Merijn Royaards** (Creative Director) is a sound architect, researcher, and performer guided by convoluted movements through music, art, and spatial studies. The interaction between space and sound in cities with a history/present of conflict has been a recurring theme in his multimedia works to date. His 2020 awarded doctoral thesis explores the state-altering effects of sound, space, and movement from the Russian avant-garde to today's clubs and raves. He is one part of a critical-essay film practice with artist-researcher Henrietta Williams and teaches sound design for film and installation art at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

**Nicholas Christie** (Engineering Director) has helped realize a menagerie of unusual structural and sculptural projects, both professionally and recreationally. As delivery lead for the Sonic Sphere, he is now working to take Sonic Sphere at The Shed from dream to reality.

### **Sonic Sphere Artists**

#### **Carl Craig**

Carl Craig is a multidisciplinary visionary whose eclectic tastes and influences all converge on his "main discipline"—*Carl Craig*. The Detroit pioneer's lifelong pursuit of independence and self-gratification is the catalyst behind three decades of innovation and achievement within the realm of electronic music. As the mastermind behind Planet E Communications over the last 30 years, Craig conceived and nurtured a platform that preserves his independence, while also providing a liberating space for a range of international artists. Under a variety of aliases—69, Paperclip People, C2, and many more—he has produced six LPs, the most recent being *Versus*. His back catalogue includes credits on over 600 remixes for a diverse cross section of electronic music artists. In 2008, Craig was nominated for a Grammy for his rework of Junior Boys' "Like A Child." Forever an ambassador for his hometown, Craig pays homage to Motor City with his Detroit Love compilations and events, by spearheading the city's electronic music festival and running his own artist agency, Detroit Premiere Artists. His creative dedication to Black excellence has led to a series of educational projects in recent years. His "All Black Vinyl" Instagram series, showcasing a record from a Black artist each day of February, evolved into the 2022 "All Black Digital" partnership with Beatport and Quincy Jones's Qwest TV. More recently, his immersive installation *Party/After Party* opened at MOCA Los Angeles following its 15-month 2020 debut at Dia Beacon. In 2022, the Carl Craig

Synthesizer Ensemble presented at Carnegie Hall's AFROFUTURISM Festival as well as at the 59th Venice Biennale.

### **Madame Gandhi**

Madame Gandhi is an award-winning artist and activist known for her uplifting, percussive electronic music and positive message about gender liberation and personal power. She began producing music in 2015, after her story running the London Marathon free-bleeding to combat menstrual stigma went viral around the world. She has been listed as Forbes 30 Under 30 in Music, and her 2020 TED Talk about conscious music consumption has been viewed over a million times.

"Waiting For Me," shot in Mumbai, India, won the Music Video Jury Award at SXSW Film Festival in 2021 and her 100% Organically Sourced x Sound MANA nature sound pack won the New Wav award at the 2021 Splice Awards. Her third studio album, *Vibrations*, was released in 2022, following the release of her previous albums *Voices* (2016) and *Visions* (2019). In June of 2022, Gandhi completed a masters in music science and technology at Stanford University's CCRMA where she spent time in Antarctica sampling the sounds of glaciers melting to create empathy and awareness around climate change.

### **Igor Levit**

With an alert and critical mind, Igor Levit places his art in the context of social events and understands it as inseparably linked to them. The *New York Times* describes Igor Levit as one of the "most important artists of his generation." Levit is *Musical America's* Recording Artist of the Year 2020 and the 2018 Gilmore Artist. In June 2022 his album *On DSCH* was awarded the Recording of the Year Award as well as the Instrumental Award by the *BBC Music Magazine*.

As a recitalist Levit regularly performs at the world's most renowned concert halls and festivals. He is a regular soloist with the world's leading orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the Vienna Philharmonic. In the 2022 – 23 season, Levit is presenting his new recital program in Berlin, Hamburg, London, Madrid, Milano, New York, Paris, Prague, and Rome. Levit is one of Vienna's Musikverein's portrait artists of the 2022 – 23 season. In June 2023 he will join the San Francisco Symphony and Esa-Pekka Salonen for a multi-week residency. In spring 2021, Levit and the Lucerne Festival announced a multiyear collaboration for a new piano festival curated by Levit, with its first edition taking place in May 2023.

Born in Nizhni Novgorod, Russia, Levit completed his piano studies in Hanover with the highest score in the history of the institute. In spring 2019 he was appointed professor for piano at his alma mater, the University of Music, Theatre, and Media Hanover.

For his political commitment Levit has been awarded the 5th International Beethoven Prize in 2019 followed by the award of the "Statue B" of the International Auschwitz Committee in January 2020. His 53 Twitter-streamed live house concerts during the lockdown in spring 2020 garnered a worldwide audience, offering a sense of community and hope in a time of isolation and desperation. In October 2020, Levit was recognized with the Order of Merit of the

Federal Republic of Germany. In Berlin, where he makes his home, Levit plays on a Steinway D Grand Piano kindly given to him by the Trustees of Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells.

Exclusive Worldwide Management: Kristin Schuster, Classic Concerts Management GmbH

### **yunè pinku**

Southeast London-based newcomer yunè pinku layers wistful, syrupy vocals over production that draws from the UK rave canon but with a restless, textural slant. In her music, yunè pinku (*yunè* comes from a nickname she had as a kid and means "cloudy" in Japanese, while *pinku* nods to her love of claymation penguin show *Pingu*) taps into many facets of being a young person in the early 2020s. A love letter to the dance floors that have been deeply missed throughout the pandemic, her music also expresses an apathy that comes with having your life torn apart at such a crucial time, as well as inhabiting a world at the mercy of capitalism and climate change.

Half-Malaysian and half-Irish, yunè pinku grew up in London while never feeling like she was fully welcome there. Traces of her childhood can be heard in the shuffly garage rhythms of her production, although as a teen she was more into '70s and '80s music like Joni Mitchell, The Kinks, and the Bee Gees than hip-hop or grime. Nowadays, she likes, as she says, "more experimental, tech stuff where people do something cool vocally with a tune—like combine things that you wouldn't think to put together."

Having collaborated with rising Australian dance star Logic1000 on "What You Like," and released her critically acclaimed debut EP *Bluff* in 2022, yunè pinku is on the cusp of releasing her sophomore solo EP *Babylon IX* (out April 28). As well as Logic1000, she has been co-signed by Joy Orbison, who invited her to contribute a guest mix to his Radio 1 residency.

### **Steve Reich**

Steve Reich has been called "the most original musical thinker of our time" (*The New Yorker*), and "among the great composers of the century" (*The New York Times*). Starting in the 1960s, his pieces *It's Gonna Rain*, *Drumming*, *Music for 18 Musicians*, *Tehillim*, *Different Trains*, and many others helped shift the aesthetic center of musical composition worldwide away from extreme complexity and towards rethinking pulsation and tonal attraction in new ways.

*Double Sextet* won the Pulitzer Prize in 2009 and *Different Trains*, *Music for 18 Musicians*, and an album of his percussion works have all earned Grammy Awards. He received the Praemium Imperiale in Tokyo, the Polar Music Prize in Stockholm, the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale, the BBVA Foundation Frontiers of Knowledge Award in Madrid, the Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall, and the Gold Medal in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

### **Rirkrit Tiravanija**

Born in Buenos Aires, the Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija is widely recognized as one of the most influential artists of his generation. His work defies media-based

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description, as his practice combines traditional object making, public and private performances, teaching, and other forms of public service and social action. Winner of the 2005 Hugo Boss Prize awarded by the Guggenheim Museum, Tiravanija was also awarded the Benesse by the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum in Japan and the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lucelia Artist Award.

He has had exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Guggenheim Museum of New York, the Reina Sofia museum in Madrid, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Hirschhorn Smithsonian, Glenstone Museum, Luma Foundation in Arles, and at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam that then was presented in Paris and London. Tiravanija is on the faculty of the School of the Arts at Columbia University, and is a founding member and curator of Utopia Station, a collective project of artists, art historians, and curators. Tiravanija is also president of an educational-ecological project known as The Land Foundation, located in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where he maintains his primary residence and studio.

### UNIIQU3

The Jersey Club movement is being hailed by music authorities such as *Pitchfork* and *Billboard*, as the next big wave in dance music. The 135-bpm genre is the heartbeat of the city of Newark, New Jersey. Thankfully, this movement has found its first lady to pave the way into the future. UNIIQU3, born Cherise Gary began her music career as a sought-after vocalist in the club scene, and has recently solidified herself as one of the most electrifying producers in the game. From throwing some of the East Coast's hottest DIY events, like her signature event, #PBNJ, that unifies club music in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Jersey, to now spreading the vibes across the globe from Australia to South America leaving her impact wherever she goes.

In the past years she's worked with Versace, VICE, Red Bull Sound Select, MTV, Boiler Room, and more to provide a unique experience to a variety of diverse audiences worldwide. Her records have been obliterating festival and club sound systems through the hands of some of the most influential people in dance music such as Skrillex, A-Trak, Anna Lunoe, Michael Brun, and MikeQ. She's also shared the stage with notable artists and DJs such as Rae Sremmurd, Skrillex, Baby Tate, Leikeli 47, and MIA, to name a few. As a performer, UNIIQU3 is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser who moves effortlessly from hard-hitting bass music to hip hop and R&B along with her own live cuts. She also had the opportunity to perform at Coachella, Afropunk, and Primavera Sound and continues to hit festival and tour stages internationally. She has a Splice Kit (*Clubhead Kit Vol. 1*) and hosts the radio shows #ClubQueenRadio on Sirius XM BPM and Club Chronicles on NTS.

UNIIQU3 is the future of dance music, continuing to raise the bar by pushing the genre forward. Her mission as a creative artist is to unify people from all walks of life through the power of music, spread love, and give opportunities to talent in her hometown. She does this by curating events and holding her annual seminar

“beUNIQU3,” which serves to teach young minorities about the music industry. She believes that you can do whatever you want as long as you work hard and stay true to yourself. Make sure to check out her latest *Heartbeats* EP, out now.

### **The xx**

The xx are Romy Madley Croft, Oliver Sim, and Jamie Smith. The group formed in London in 2005 and released their debut album, titled *xx*, four years later. The album reached number three on the UK charts and won the prestigious Mercury Music Prize. *Coexist*, The xx’s second album, was released in 2012, reaching number 1 on the UK and number 5 on the Billboard album chart in the US. *xx* and *Coexist* have since sold over four million copies between them.

In 2013, The xx traveled to Manchester to perform 18 sell-out shows in a specially constructed, 60-capacity venue as part of MIF13. The show, *The xx in Residence*, was later adapted and transferred to New York, where it ran to wide acclaim for 25 similarly intimate performances at the Park Avenue Armory. Also in 2013, the group curated its own festival, *Night + Day*, which was held in Lisbon, London, and Berlin.

In 2017, The xx reunited to release their third album, *I See You*. The album marked a new era for the band, both sonically and in terms of process. While *xx* and *Coexist* were both made in relative isolation in London, *I See You* was recorded between March 2014 and August 2016 in New York; Marfa, Texas; Reykjavik; Los Angeles; and London, and was characterized by a more outward-looking, open, and expansive approach. Produced by Jamie xx, *I See You* was The xx at their boldest yet, performing with more clarity and ambition than ever before. It debuted at number 1 on the UK album charts and number 2 on the US chart, ultimately topping the charts in eight countries.

Meanwhile, all three members of The xx have launched successful solo careers. Jamie xx has become one of the world’s most renowned electronic producers and released his Grammy, Mercury Prize, Ivor Novello, and BRIT Awards–shortlisted album *In Colour* in 2015. Sim’s debut album, *Hideous Bastard*, was a huge critical success, accompanied by a Yann Gonzalez–directed queer horror movie, *Hideous*, which premiered at the 2022 Cannes Semaine de la Critique festival while Madley Croft’s solo releases—featuring production from Fred again..., Stuart Price, and Jamie xx—have positioned her as one of 2023’s most exciting artists.

### **Yaeji**

Yaeji is a NYC-via-Seoul producer, DJ, and vocalist, whose introspective, dance floor–ready tracks have made her a global icon occupying a space all her own. After breaking out with her 2017 debut EPs that featured singles “Raingurl” and “Drink I’m Sippin On,” the multifaceted artist featured on Charli XCX’s 2019 album *Charli*, has gone onto produce remixes for Dua Lipa and Robyn, collaborate with the beloved Seoul-based polymath OHHYUK, sell out two headlining worldwide tours, and launch her bespoke lifestyle webstore, *JI-MART*.

Born in Flushing, Queens, in 1993, she has roots in Seoul, Tokyo, Atlanta, and New York City, all serving as the backdrop for her singular, hybrid sound that synthesizes influences of Korean indie rock and electronica, late ’90s and early 2000s hip hop and R&B, and leftfield bass and techno. With her critically-



acclaimed 2020 mixtape *WHAT WE DREW* *우리가 그려왔던*, she sharpened her vision as a musician who is creatively unbounded by language and geography, leading to partnerships with PAC-MAN and Heaven by Marc Jacobs. Named by *Pitchfork* as one of the “25 Artists Shaping the Future of Music” in 2022, she’s also graced the cover of *Crack*, *The FADER*, *MixMag*, and *Burdock* among others, and has been featured in programming at the V&A Museum, Serpentine Gallery, and MoMA PS1. Her highly anticipated debut album, *With A Hammer*, which arrived April 7, 2023, via XL Recordings, sees Yaeji excavating her inner world with full force, resulting in her most thrilling and personal work yet.

#### **Polina Zakharova**

Polina Zakharova is a multimedia artist and a founder of the Hard Feelings Studio. A creative visionary, her expertise includes CGI, 3-D mapping, laser programming, lighting, interactive installations, and set design. She works mostly in music and fashion where she created CGI worlds for The Weeknd, Drake, Post Malone, Cardi B, Billie Eilish, Olivia Rodrigo, Ian Schrager, etc. for their tours and installations. An innate artist, Zakharova brings forth an eye for the spectacular, an instinct for originality, and a diverse range of experience and knowledge that is deeply embedded in all of her creative conquests.

#### **Upcoming at The Shed**

***KAGAMI***: The groundbreaking mixed reality concert composed by legendary pianist, Ryuichi Sakamoto, runs June 7 to July 2, 2023 in The Shed’s Griffin Theater. Tickets go on sale May 5.

***Open Call***: The Shed’s commissioning program returns with a new group of emerging NYC artists. Ten visual artists will present new work in a group exhibition fall 2023: Minne Atairu, Jake Brush, Cathy Linh Che & Christopher Radcliff, Armando Guadalupe Cortés, Lizania Cruz, Bryan Fernandez, Luis A. Gutierrez, Jeffrey Meris, Calli Roche, and Sandy Williams IV. In summer 2024, in The Shed’s Griffin Theater, the remaining eight commissions will feature immersive, multidisciplinary performances by Kyle Dacuyan, The Dragon Sisters, Kayla Hamilton, Nile Harris, NIC Kay, Asia Stewart, Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre, and Garrett Zuercher.

***Here We Are***: The final musical by composer Stephen Sondheim begins September 2023 in The Shed’s Griffin Theater.

For more information, visit [theshed.org](https://theshed.org)

#### **About The Shed**

The Shed is a new cultural institution of and for the 21st century. We produce and welcome innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity, to build a shared understanding of our rapidly changing world and a more equitable society. In our highly adaptable building on Manhattan’s west side, The Shed brings together established and emerging artists to create new work in fields ranging from pop to classical music, painting to digital media, theater to literature, and sculpture to

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dance. We seek opportunities to collaborate with cultural peers and community organizations, work with like-minded partners, and provide unique spaces for private events. As an independent nonprofit that values invention, equity, and generosity, we are committed to advancing art forms, addressing the urgent issues of our time, and making our work impactful, sustainable, and relevant to the local community, the cultural sector, New York City, and beyond.