

**Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning
Announces 15 NYC-Based Artists
for
Jamaica Flux: Workspaces and Windows 2021**



August 13th, 2020 (New York) -- Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL) is pleased to launch the fifth iteration of its triennial *Jamaica Flux: Workspaces and Windows*, and to announce the names of the 15 NYC-based artists and artist groups that have been selected for the year-long endeavor.

Founded in 2004, *Jamaica Flux* supports the creation of interdisciplinary, research-based, site-specific artwork that is developed in collaboration with local residents and community stakeholders in Southeast Queens, and presented in public places along Jamaica Avenue.

Jamaica Flux 2021 will explore the interconnection of Jamaica's history, economic development, cultural heritage, and diversity to conceptualize topical, socially engaging projects. The exhibition will bring together artists, curators, scholars, local residents, community leaders, developers, and politicians to build on the cultural legacy of Southeast Queens and to catalyze the transformative power of the visual arts, generating creative responses to the anxieties and tensions of our present moment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, JCAL will keep with the spirit of "flux" to create work that is shaped by both the limitations and the demands of the times.

Independent curator-writer Danni Shen serves as Project Director of *Jamaica Flux 2021*. Heng-Gil Han, who founded Jamaica Flux and was a prior Project Director, serves as Project Advisor. The curatorial team, along with a committee of New York art professionals and local community leaders, selected 15 projects from a pool of proposals that artists submitted following an open call. Preference was given to emerging or under-recognized artists with strong artistic merit, and to artists who reflect local demographics or have substantial ties to Southeast Queens. Of the 15 selected artists and artist groups, 8 are Queens-based and a majority are artists of color. For the next year, the artists will conduct research and build collaborative community relationships (virtually and in person) as they create their projects. The showcase of site-specific work and public programs will run in the summer of 2021.

We're pleased to announce the 15 artists and artist groups participating in *Jamaica Flux: Workspaces and Windows 2021*:

Damali Abrams pursues a futurism largely sourced from the Guyanese diaspora, Afro-Caribbean folklore and religious practice, while combining found materials from popular culture. The artist will research the oral histories of culture-makers in Jamaica to create a series of collage portraits based on recorded interviews with local artists and business owners, supported by additional materials from the Queens Central Library.

Heejung Cho will create a large-scale, perspectival urban landscape print depicting Jamaica's diverse ecosystem, collaged from multicolored woodblock prints. As a Korean immigrant, the integration and friction between boundaries, places, people and cultures are the essence of what Cho aims to capture in her practice, which further explores notions of identity, memory and home.

Indranil Choudhury works with video and sound to consider how urban communities respond to technological and economic change. His practice reflects on the idiosyncrasies of late capitalism, such as large diasporas, obsession with speculative technologies, and the stress of urban life. Choudhury will collaborate with small businesses in Jamaica that cater specifically to immigrant communities, and create an experimental sound work.

Cody + Julian is a collaboration between artists Cody Ann Herrmann and Julian Louis Phillips. The pair prioritizes engagement and representation of communities vulnerable to economic and ecological displacement. Their project, *The Peoples Communication Commission (PCC)*, will create media and installations that repurpose the tactics of advertising campaigns to empower the general public to speak to those in power. The resulting work will include guerilla advertising, interventions and design workshops based on collaborations with residents, businesses, civic organizations and commuters.

Sherese Francis excavates various etymologies, histories and myths in the search for community stories that have been buried due to misinformation, stereotypes, cultural amnesia and social oppressions. The Southeast Queens-based poet and artist recycles found materials to create a unique, sacred and collective text. For her project *Art/I/Fact*, Francis will research collective memory in Jamaica by hosting a series of participatory public workshops to create 2-D and 3-D time capsule-like assemblages.

Linda Ganjian engages local architectural history as experienced through its residents. Her project, *Postcards from Jamaica*, will combine quotes and personal histories with drawings of significant neighborhood sites, as well as quotidian architecture that is vulnerable to redevelopment in an era of massive rezoning and change. Through community interviews that discuss memories of favorite buildings and sites, the artist will create a series of free, publicly-available postcards.

Hayoon Jay Lee pushes the boundaries of “otherness” through public performance and video. Lee will host an intercultural dinner, with conversation on topics regarding local food culture, socio-economic factors in relation to habits of consumption and food security. Research conducted at community organizations, such as women’s centers and soup kitchens, will further inform Lee’s Rice Lab installation, which traces the global history of rice.

Le’Andra LeSeur explores healing within absence and gestural language created through repetitive actions. As a Black queer woman, visual and sonic fragments become transcending elements that connect identities affected by systems of oppression. LeSeur’s project, *There is Only Language Between Us*, will host a community spoken-word and stream-of-consciousness writing workshop to compose a final sound installation.

Reuben Lorch-Miller interconnects his art practice and teaching experience as an educator working in District 29 public schools. Taking on the role of artist-as-facilitator, Lorch-Miller will collaborate with elementary school teachers and students, and community elders, to create and select a series of neighborhood flag designs for Jamaica, Queens. The selected designs will be produced as full-scale flags to be flown along the pedestrian plaza of the 165th Street Mall.

Firoz Mahmud delves into the histories of “Ship Jumpers” or “Tarzan Visa migrants”: refugees from Bengal and South Asia who traverse high-risk geopolitical borders, most of whom settled as immigrants throughout Queens, including Jamaica. As part of the Queens-based artist’s long-term practice focused on migrants, refugees and displaced people, *Migrational Influx: Promised Land* will research and collaborate with immigrant community members to create a series of multimedia works celebrating Bengali legacies, traditions and subcultures.

Nadia Misir reflects on relationships between diaspora, gentrification, grief, Guyanese identity and the way that histories of oppression reveal themselves in unexpected and mundane moments. The Queens-based artist will host public programming and collaborate with local residents to create a ‘zine that radically retells the history of Jamaica as a neighborhood, as well as a photographic chapbook of lyric essays that speak directly to urban planning documents, such as the Jamaica Now Action Plan.

Sari Nordman will develop *Tower*, a collaboratively engineered structure that reflects on the importance of understanding different cultural experiences and immigration when fighting climate change. Nordman will record and translate multilingual interviews to appear in videos projected on the installation. As a dance teaching artist for NYC public schools, Nordman will look for school partnerships to conduct climate-change workshops and gather calls for action from students, which will further become a part of the project’s virtual and physical archives.

Jessica Segall uses bureaucracy as a sculpting material, unpacking ideas of environmental conservation and belonging through her interspecies and site-specific practice. Alongside educational programming, the artist will discuss housing, urban and ecological health by co-creating platforms for osprey birds in Jamaica Bay, whose original habitat was clear-cut for housing development. In collaboration with local organizations, Segall will install a remote camera to produce a publicly-viewable live video feed of osprey nests built on the platform.

Misra Walker examines and research materials that stem from the black and brown working-class material conditions to address local struggle, global solidarity, and liberation from capitalism. The Bronx-based artist’s project *You can’t sit with us [working title]*, will create a series of public domino tables that reflect and are

specific to the Jamaica, Queens community to hold on to culture and resist against the erasure and displacement caused by development/gentrification. Community members will be invited to participate in political/popular education/discussions and a domino tournament.

Anne Wu creates sculptures that reconstruct architectural thresholds and vernacular landscapes to contemplate diasporic histories and communal identity. Wu's project will take the 165th Street Pedestrian Mall as a site of departure—the Flushing-based artist will enter each store between Jamaica Avenue and 89th Avenue and conduct interviews with store owners and employees. With collective input, Wu will select one item in every location to cast, resulting in a sculptural archive of cast objects and a photographic and narrative inventory of the Mall's economic microcosm.

About JCAL

Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL), founded in 1972, is a multidisciplinary arts center based in the diverse community of Southeast Queens. Our mission is devoted to offering quality visual, performing, and literary arts, and to providing accessible education programs to encourage participation in the arts. JCAL is temporarily closed in accordance with state and local guidelines. Normal operating hours: Open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm; closed Sundays and major holidays. For additional information, call JCAL at 718-658-7400 or visit JCAL.org.

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