**New York State Council on the Arts**

**Council Meeting Minutes**

**July 23, 2019 2:15 – 4:00 PM**

Present: Katherine Nicholls (Chair), Lisa Baker, Scott Eberle (joining via the WebEx video conferencing system (“WebEx”)), Joan Hornig, Janet Kagan, Jaynne Keyes, Hildy Kuryk, Eric Latzky, Laudelina Martinez (WebEx) (Co-Chair Performing Literary & Visual Arts Committee), Richard Mittenthal (Co-Chair Multidisciplinary Arts Committee), Nazee Moinian (after first vote), John Morning (Co-Chair Performing Literary & Visual Arts Committee), Rita Paniagua (Co-Chair Multidisciplinary Arts Committee), Hal Payne, Deborah Ronnen.

Quorum present: Yes

Others in attendance:

Mara Manus, Executive Director

Megan White, Deputy Director of Programs

Abigail Young, Deputy Director of Operations and General Counsel

Meeting called to order by Chair Katherine Nicholls at approximately 2:15 pm.

**CHAIR’S WELCOME**

**KATHERINE NICHOLLS:** Good afternoon and welcome to the New York State Council on the Arts’ July Council Meeting. To remind all in attendance; this is a public meeting that is being recorded. I am Katherine Nicholls, Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts. Thank you to our Council Members joining us via video conference and for those of you who traveled to join today us in-person.

I would like to take this opportunity again to thank our colleague Estrellita Brodsky, who has stepped off the Council, for her exceptional service to New York State. Estrellita was a vital member of our Council, and she will be missed by her colleagues and the staff.

I am very pleased to welcome Hildy Kuryk to the New York State Council on the Arts. We are thrilled to have her begin her service during such an exciting time for the Council. Please join me in welcoming Hildy.

We would like to underscore the importance of your attendance at each and all our meetings. As you know, in order to conduct business vital to the agency’s operations and mission, we must have a quorum in attendance.

At today’s meeting, we will review and vote on the REDC Panelist Roster for Fiscal Year 2020 as well as the Committee funding recommendations for five NYSCA Programs: Folk Arts, State and Local Partnerships, Architecture + Design, Electronic Media and Film, and Facilities.

Panel meetings began in May and will continue through September. We strongly urge Council to attend one or more of the panel meetings, either in person at our offices (where the panels are held) or via Webex. Council members who have attended in the past can confirm that these meetings present a valuable opportunity to observe NYSCA’s review process and understand the level of diligence and discussion to arrive at a decision.

As a reminder; only approved panelists may participate in the discussions. As per the ethics guidelines available in the Council Member Handbooks on page 10, Council members may only observe and learn at these panel meetings. Additionally, we ask that Council Members refrain from sitting at the main panel meeting tables. Please note that it is not required for Council members to attend the duration of the entire panel session; even an hour or two will give you clarity to the process. Please let Abby Adler know when you would like to attend a panel meeting.

For FY2020, NYSCA received 1406 applications in addition to 834 existing multi-year contracts from prior year awards. The programs we will be voting on today represent 16% of the NYSCA grantmaking budget and 24% of the Fiscal Year 2020 applicant pool.

I am also pleased to share that thanks to the diligence of our Operations staff, NYSCA maintains the highest percentage of on-time contracts of any State agency. Well done, staff!

**FY2020 PANELIST ROSTER**

**KATHERINE NICHOLLS**: The first agenda item is to review and vote on the panelist roster for the Fiscal Year 2020 REDC Program. Several panelists are being re-appointed for another year of service. They will be joined by new additional panelists. Each panelist may serve for up to three years, contingent on annual approval by this Council. Thanks to all the Council members who nominated panelists to participate.

*Megan White presents the Fiscal Year 2020 REDC panelist rosters. Council members in the room and on WebEx have an opportunity for questions or comments. At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, motion of the Council to approve the FY 2020 REDC panelist roster is made and seconded. The motion to approve the FY 2020 REDC panelist roster carries unanimously with the Council members in the room and on WebEx with no oppositions or abstentions.*

**PERFORMING, LITERARY & VISUAL COMMITTEE GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**KATHERINE NICHOLLS:** The Council will now review and vote on the Performing, Literary, and Visual Arts Committee grant recommendations for Fiscal Year 2020.

Performing, Literary & Visual Arts co-chairs, John Morning and Laudelina Martinez, and NYSCA’s Deputy Director of Programs Megan White will review the committee’s recommendations.

**JOHN MORNING:** The Performing, Literary & Visual Arts Committee reviewed requests to the Architecture and Design, Electronic Media and Film, and Facilities programs, 239 requests in total. 138 of these have been recommended for funding for a total dollar amount of $2,997,819.

**Architecture and Design** received a total of 93 requests, 29 are recommended for funding for a dollar amount of $747, 156. Architecture and Design program funded requests in the General Support, Project Support, and Independent Projects categories. In the General Operating Support category, grantees include The New York Landmarks Conservancy, The Architectural League for New York, and Hester Street Collaborative. First time General Support is also recommended for the Green-Wood Historic Fund, created to expand the Greenwood Cemetery’s scope of activities. Established in 1838, Green-Wood Cemetery, a National Historic Landmark, is recognized as one of the world’s most beautiful cemeteries. At the same time, it is also an outdoor museum, an arboretum and a repository of history featuring magnificent grounds, grand architecture and world-class statuary making it a destination for tourists and New Yorkers alike.

In the Independent Projects category, five requests are recommended, including a book that focuses on recent trends in the design of architectural systems that use soft robotic technologies to design new architectural forms, spaces, membranes, wearable devices, and interfaces; and another fashion design based project that supports the creation of an open-source, online portal that will provide the design community with 3D avatars of realistic, diverse body types.

*The Council then have an opportunity to review a video about the Greenwood Cemetery and to review the Architecture + Design funding recommendations (previously provided to all Council members) on the screen and to ask questions.*

**John Morning:** **Electronic Media and Film** received a total of 89 requests, 72 are recommended for funding for a dollar amount of $1,096,350. Categories include General Operating Support, Exhibitions and Installations, Film Festivals and Screenings, Regrants and Partnerships, and Workspace, Art, and Technology. Highly rated Exhibitions and Installations requests include Light Work Visual Studies in Syracuse, Times Square District Management Association, and Friends of the High Line. In the Film Festivals and Screenings category we find Brooklyn Academy of Music, Barnard College, and Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian among the recommendations. General Operating Support recommendations from a variety of applicants includes Chicken and Egg Pictures, African Film Festival, The Rosendale Theatre Collective, and Tribeca Film Institute.

Light Work Visual Studies in Syracuse NY is recommended for funding towards the Urban Video Project. The Urban Video Project is a year-round public architectural exhibition program that projects video art and experimental film onto the facade of the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, NY. In this clip, artist Isaac Julien talks about his work WESTERN UNION which concerns journeys made across the seas of the Mediterranean by so-called “clandestines” who leave Libya, escaping wars and famines. They can be seen as economic migrant workers who bear witness to modernity’s failed hopes and dreams, and who now travel across oceanic spaces some never to arrive or return.

*The Council members then have an opportunity to review a video about Light Work and to review the Electronic Media & Film funding recommendations (previously provided to all Council members) on the screen and to ask questions.*

**John Morning:** **Facilities** received a total of 57 requests, 37 are recommended for funding for a dollar amount of $1,154,313. Facilities support is available to non-profit arts and cultural organizations that own a building or have a long-term lease and have been funded by NYSCA for the past three years. There are three main categories. Capital Equipment, Design Studies, and Capital Projects.

In the Capital Equipment category, requests from almost every region of the states were recommended for funding, with requests ranging from kilns for art studio, lighting, Audio visual and sound systems, dance studio flooring, and assistive listening devices. Exterior building improvement and universal design renovation were among the projects recommended in the Capital Projects category, and organizations such as Historic Saranac Lake in the North Country, African Cultural Center of Buffalo, and Dance Theatre of Harlem were among organizations recommended for funding in Design Studies.

The Technical Assistance Grant program administered by the Architectural League has been recommended for increased support towards its regrant. In 2018 demand outpaced available funds, with a total of 68 requests being received from organizations across the state. Included in those requests are The Roberson Museum and Science Center (a longtime NYSCA grantee) which was funded for a building conditions study. That same year, the Rivoli Theatre in Sullivan County, which has not yet received NYSCA funds, also got support for a building conditions study. In many cases, small volunteer run organizations are caring for architecturally significant buildings in their community. There are many requests for small libraries and historic homes, as well as buildings that were originally schools, hotels, or offices that are being repurposed for artistic programs. The Facilities Program is pleased to continue support of these important efforts.

*The Council members then have an opportunity to review the Facilities funding recommendations (previously provided to all Council members) on the screen and to ask questions.*

This concludes the programs presented by the Performing Literary & Visual Arts Committee.

*Chair Katherine Nicholls then calls upon Megan White to read any conflicts for the vote on the Committee funding recommendations for the Architecture + Design, Electronic Media & Film, and Facilities programs and reminds the Council that those members cited as having a conflict will be deemed to be recused on their vote with respect to the applicable applications from the cited organization. Deputy Director of Programs Megan White then reads the conflicts:*

*Architecture + Design: Lisa Baker (Cornell University); Joan Hornig (Fashion Institute of Technology Foundation); Mahnaz (Nazee) Moinian (Barnard College); Electronic Media & Film: Lisa Baker (Cornell University); Laudelina Martinez (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute); Mahnaz (Nazee) Moinian (The Jewish Museum); Facilities: Hildy Kuryk (American Dance Institute, Inc.); John Morning (Henry Street Settlement).*

*At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion of the Council to approve the Committee funding recommendations for the Architecture + Design, Electronic Media & Film, and Facilities programs is made and seconded. The motion to approve the Committee funding recommendations for the Architecture + Design, Electronic Media & Film, and Facilities programs carries unanimously with the Council members in the room and on WebEx with no oppositions or abstentions.*

**MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ARTS COMMITTEE GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**KATHERINE NICHOLLS:** The Council will now review and vote on the Multi-Disciplinary Arts Committee grant recommendations for Fiscal Year 2020. Multi-Disciplinary Arts Committee co-chairs, Rita Paniagua and Richard Mittenthal, and Megan White, NYSCA’s Deputy Director of Programs, will review the committee’s recommendations.

**Richard Mittenthal:** The **Multi-Disciplinary Arts Committee** reviewed 100 requests in the Folk Arts State and Local Partnerships Program, 88 of these have been recommended for funding for a total dollar amount $ 3,689,851. The **Folk Arts Program** received 40 requests for funding. 33 were funded for a total dollar amount of $358,951.

The **Folk Arts Program** is dedicated to safeguarding and revitalizing New York State’s living cultural heritage of folk arts within the communities where they originate. The folk arts are traditional cultural expressions of ethnic, occupational and regional communities learned informally among families, friends, neighbors and co-workers rather than through formal education. Applications were reviewed in the Project Support, Folk Art Apprenticeships and Regrants and Partnerships categories.

Highly rated applicants include: The Genesee – Orleans Regional Arts Council for its Folk Arts programming, and Friends of Ganondagan, an educational partner to Ganondagan State Historic Site, which is the only such New York State site dedicated to Native Americans. It seeks to develop awareness of Native history/culture/living traditions-especially Seneca/other Iroquois; and to build informed relationships between Natives and non-Natives.

The Museum at Eldridge Street is recommended for funding for its Egg Rolls, Egg Creams, and Empanadas festival. The free festival will take place inside and in front the Museum’s Lower East Side facility and features folk artists from Chinese, Puerto Rican and East European Jewish cultures which have played an important role in shaping the community it serves.

*The Council members then have an opportunity to review a video about the Egg Rolls, Egg Creams and Empanadas festival and to review the Folk Arts funding recommendations (previously provided to all Council members) on the screen and to ask questions.*

**Richard Mittenthal:** **State and Local Partnerships** received 60 requests for funding. 55 were funded at a total dollar amount of $3,330,900.

NYSCA’s State and Local Partnerships Program supports collaboration with regional and local arts councils, multi- arts centers, and service organizations; and includes NYSCA’s Decentralization (DEC) Program, which reaches constituents in all 62 counties of New York through regrants. Support is offered in the following categories: General Operating Support, Organizational Capacity Building, Services to the Field, and Regrants and Partnerships.

11 Decentralization regrant sites are recommended for funding, with notable work being accomplished by Council on the Arts & Humanities for Staten Island, Genesee Valley Council on the Arts, and Queens Council of the Arts, which delivers regrants to one the most diverse boroughs in the country. Notable General Operating Support requests came from the Council on the Arts & Humanities for Staten Island, who is conducting introspective and groundbreaking work through its Expanding Audiences initiative; and Lake Placid Association of Music Drama, and Art; which provides a robust multidisciplinary menu of programming for its North Country community.

Services to the Field applicant Aaron Davis Hall is recommended for support towards Harlem Stage Partners an initiative through which they collaborate with nonprofit organizations to curate, co-present and co-produce performances that fit within their mission by sharing fiscal and administrative resources. The Wassaic Project in Dutchess County is recommended for General Operating support. Since 2008, The Wassaic Project has provided resources and support to emerging artists and its local community in four program areas: Summer Festival, Exhibitions, Arts Education, and Community Programs. The Wassaic Project also runs summer classes for adults and children, and a year-round drop-in studio space. Please take a few minutes to learn more about The Wassaic Project.

*The Council members then have an opportunity to review a video about The Wassaic Project and to review the State and Local Partnership funding recommendations (previously provided to all Council members) on the screen and to ask questions.*

This concludes the programs presented by the Multi-Disciplinary Arts Committee.

*Chair Katherine Nicholls then calls upon Megan White to read any conflicts for the vote on the Committee funding recommendations for the Folk Arts and State and Local Partnerships Programs and reminds the Council that those members cited as having a conflict will be deemed to be recused on their vote with respect to the applicable applications from the cited organization. Deputy Director of Programs Megan White then reads the conflicts:*

*Hal D. Payne (Arts Services Initiative of Western NY, Inc.).*

*At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion of the Council to accept the Committee funding recommendations for the Folk Arts and State and Local Partnerships Programs is made and seconded. The motion to accept the funding recommendations for the Folk Arts and State and Local Partnerships Programs carries unanimously with the Council members in the room and on WebEx with no oppositions or abstentions.*

**EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJORN**

**KATHERINE NICHOLLS:** Committee and Council members, NYSCA has determined that the Council has a basis to enter into executive session for our final agenda items. Section 105(1)(f) of the Open Meetings Law permits a public body to enter into an Executive Session to discuss: “...the … financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation.” I request a motion and second for a vote to enter into Executive Session to hear a report from the Executive Director on potential grant opportunities with specific non-profit organizations review and discuss the status of our strategic planning, including feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

*At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion of the Council to enter into Executive Session is made and seconded. The motion to enter into Executive Session carries unanimously with the Council members in the room and on WebEx with no oppositions or abstentions.*

*At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion of the Council to adjourn after the Executive Session is also made and seconded. The motion to adjourn after Executive Session carries unanimously with the Council members in the room and on WebEx with no oppositions or abstentions.*

We will now go into Executive Session. Before we do so, we respectfully ask all non-invited guests here with us to leave the meeting. *[Meeting continues in Executive Session.]*

Meeting adjourns at approximately 4:00 pm.