FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

651 ARTS Announces the Launch of The Artist As Resident Initiative

With an Open Call for Submissions for The Neighborhood Project
A Program Under the Initiative Focused on Emerging Creatives

BROOKLYN, NY - (May 14, 2020) – 651 ARTS, Brooklyn’s premier institution for the African Diasporic performing arts, today announced the launch of its inaugural Artist As Resident Initiative with a call for submissions for The Neighborhood Project, a program under the Initiative focused on emerging creatives. The Artist As Resident Initiative centers around Brooklyn’s collective of artists and the diverse neighborhoods throughout the borough they represent and will include The Neighborhood Project, the Micro-Works Project for online content and community-building, and the Artist-As-Resident Feature Presentation Series.

For The Neighborhood Project, 651 ARTS is seeking three emerging Brooklyn-based artists to partner with small businesses within their neighborhoods, and to re-imagine these spaces as homes for art making and community engagement. Under the mentorship of 651 ARTS staff and special guests, selected artists will create a live performance at a public space or small business near their homes. The performance will investigate what it means to live in Brooklyn today particularly in the aftermath of the global pandemic. Curated by artist Najee Omar, The Neighborhood Project is designed to foster community connections and to propel Diasporic artists further in their careers with the support of their neighbors (key dates are included below). Artists can visit https://www.651arts.org/neighborhood/ to submit their applications.

“As the world continues to navigate through this global health crisis, as an arts institution at the epicenter of the pandemic in this country, serving a community disproportionately impacted by pandemic, it has been important for 651 to be thoughtful, deliberative, and specific in our response. What does 651 look like on the other side of this? How do we best serve our artists and audiences? And it really came down to staying true to and reinforcing our core mission and values – which primarily include addressing social justice issues through our work, nurturing and supporting the work of artists across the African Diaspora.
and our deep commitment to the Brooklyn community,” said David J. Roberts, Executive Director of 651 ARTS. “Before this, we were already working on a version of Artist As Resident that allowed us to strategically interconnect our Brooklyn artists to their communities in fresh and new ways. Now, existing in this new normal, we wanted to amplify that idea and sought to expand the concept into a holistic initiative that would allow us to focus on specific areas under each program. With The Neighborhood Project, we have an opportunity to spotlight, support, and celebrate emerging artists and we are thrilled to see it come to life under the curation of artist and organizing activist Najee Omar.”

Key Dates:
- Application Period: May 14 – July 3, 2020
- Project Begins: Fall 2020
- Public Performances: Winter 2021

Programs Under The Artist-As-Resident Initiative

- **The Neighborhood Project:** 651 ARTS will provide three emerging Brooklyn-based artists with the opportunity to partner with small businesses within their neighborhoods, and to re-imagine these public spaces as homes for art making and community engagement. In addition to work-in-progress performances, the residencies will include professional development and networking opportunities for the artists.

- **Artist-As-Residence Feature Presentation Series:** This series anticipates the reopening and return to social gathering in the near future and will celebrate the diversity of the neighborhoods of Brooklyn through unique live performances, placing established performers in non-traditional settings – from the open storefront of a merchant block or down an old street to a great hotel bar. The artists in this series will perform in the neighborhood in which they live or frequent.

- **The Micro-Works Project for online content and community-building** - A part of 651’s commitment to connecting with its local artist community, it will include a survey of the needs and experiences of artists now, and a virtual town hall with a guest facilitator. The project will culminate in an opportunity for dozens of locally-based artists to create 1-3 minute micro-works on video to be distributed and shared across 651’s and the artists’ social media platforms.

Since its inception in 1988, 651 ARTS has become a trusted convener of contemporary African Diasporic artistic expression, a champion and nurturer for emerging artists and their work and a vital cultural resource for its surrounding community. As it moves forward, part of 651 ARTS’s mission is to preserve the legacy of Black culture in Brooklyn, celebrate the eclecticism of Black performance and to pioneer new visions of African Diaspora artists. Under the leadership of Executive Director David Roberts, 651
ARTS is currently in the midst of a major phase of strategic planning, growth and expansion. Before moving to its new home at the much buzzed about cultural spaces at 300 Ashland Place (now known as 10 Lafayette) anticipated for late 2021, the organization has begun to reimagine its artistic and institutional footprint, continuing to lay the framework for the next decade and reinforcing its role as an incubator for artistic innovation in the 21st century.

**About 651 ARTS**

Founded in Brooklyn, NY in 1988, the mission of 651 ARTS is to deepen awareness of and appreciation of contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and to provide professional and creative opportunities for artists of African descent.

651’s signature programs have featured pioneering black choreographers from around the world including Germaine Acogny, Nora Chipaumire, Carmen de Lavallade, Diane McIntyre, Bebe Miller, Abdel R. Salaam and Jawole Willo Jo Zollar. As part of its commitment to the furtherance of conversations and celebration of Diaspora music, the institution has presented dialogues and performances by Somi, Hugh Masekela, and Grammy-winning artist Betty Carter, to name a few. Theatrical and text-based works by Anna Deavere Smith, Sekou Sundiata, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Ntozake Shange, Okwui Okpokwasili and Maria Bauman are representative of the hundreds of artists and productions featuring solo creations, collaborations, emerging artists, and works-in-development all produced by 651’s visionary leadership.

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