



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**651 ARTS' Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration:  
Sonic Liberation**

**Co-presented with Downtown Brooklyn Partnership and  
The Center for Fiction**

**Featuring DJ Reborn and Friends: Madison McFerrin, Kara  
Walker, Kara Young and DJs Lynnée Denise, and Quinnette**

**The Day will be Hosted by Kendra J. Ross**

**The Center for Fiction  
and  
The Plaza at 300 Ashland in Downtown Brooklyn**

**Saturday, June 18, 2022, 1pm - 8:30pm**

(Brooklyn, NY – May 26, 2022) - 651 ARTS, in association with Downtown Brooklyn Partnership and The Center for Fiction, presents its **Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration: Sonic Liberation** with **DJ Reborn** and Friends hosted by dancer/choreographer and STooPS founder **Kendra J. Ross**. Centering around the role that sound plays in the quest towards freedom, this year's Celebration will include a day of events and activities featuring a panel discussion at The Center for Fiction, community DJ lessons, and a dance party - both to be held on the Plaza at 300 Ashland in Downtown Brooklyn, on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 1pm – 8:30 pm.

Co-curated by **DJ Reborn** - a pioneering female DJ whose influence extends into other influential artist rites of passage activities - and 651 ARTS' Chief Curator and Director of Programs **Monica L. Williams**, this year's Juneteenth Celebration focuses on the concept of Black women as sound ambassadors and griots, and reflects on the legacy of somatic healing, intimacy and emancipation present in Black expressive culture, and sonic practices.

The day will begin at the Plaza at 300 Ashland with an invocation and live drumming followed by the opening panel at The Center for Fiction, “Sonic Liberation: In Conversation with DJ Reborn,” featuring a panel of world-renowned Brooklyn-based artists, including singer/musician **Madison McFerrin**, American contemporary painter **Kara Walker**, Tony-nominated Broadway actress **Kara Young** and global sonic scholar **Lynnée Denise**. The discussion will be moderated by Monica L. Williams and will spotlight the role of sonic liberation in Black art and Black womanhood.

The next part of the day will happen at the Plaza with **Kendra J. Ross** leading a line dancing demonstration followed by DJ Reborn and other Black women mixmasters providing one-on-one DJ lessons for all ages. 651’s Juneteenth Celebration will culminate with the Sonic Liberation Dance Party. Opening with Brooklyn Technical Highschool Lady Dragons, the dance party will draw from African Diasporic genres ranging from jazz, gospel, future soul, hip hop, dance, afrobeat, and more with DJ sets from multidisciplinary artists and world-renowned DJs **Quinnette**, **Lynnée Denise** and **Reborn**.

“We are so excited for this year’s Juneteenth Celebration. This year, we really wanted to create an aesthetic that feels like a return to the spirit of celebration. From there, we explored the concept of sound and how, through sound and music, we find celebration. We find joy. We find expression. We find freedom” said **Monica L. Williams**, Chief Curator and Director of Programs for 651 ARTS. “DJ Reborn and I have created experiences like this together for audiences of various ages for over a decade. It is exciting to come together at home in Brooklyn and continue to lift, to inspire and move others to get free.”

“651 ARTS’ mission is to deepen awareness of and appreciation for contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and to provide professional and creative opportunities for artists of African descent. 651 ARTS Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration: Sonic Liberation is an extension of 651 ARTS’ vision to be a leading institution in the performing arts ecology that illuminates the evolving stories and varied cultural experiences of the African Diaspora, and an institution whose impact and influence transforms individual lives, neighborhoods, and global communities,” says 651 ARTS’ Interim Executive Director **Toya Lillard**.

651 ARTS’ Juneteenth Celebration is an annual commemoration of African-American liberation, resilience and self-determination featuring performances, panels and community engagement activities that honors the brilliance and vitality of Black culture.

The Celebration’s location is also especially significant for the institution as the event will be hosted on the Plaza of 651 ARTS’ future new home at 10 Lafayette. The eventual move is a milestone in the organization’s history as it will be the first time in its history that 651 ARTS will have a permanent space in which to independently program and operate, allowing it to comprehensively foster artists and cultivate new audiences. The organization is expected to take residence in Spring, 2023.

Juneteenth is an annual commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States. Though the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves was signed January 1, 1863, enslaved African-Americans in Galveston Bay, Texas learned of their freedom from the Union Army, June 19,

1865, after the Emancipation Proclamation was announced. Juneteenth is the longest standing African-American holiday observed in the United States.

## **651 ARTS' SECOND ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION: SONIC LIBERATION SCHEDULE**

### **Sonic Liberation: In Conversation with DJ Reborn - Opening Panel Discussion**

*Time:* 1pm - 3pm

*Location:* The Center for Fiction

Monica L. Williams, 651 ARTS' Chief Curator and Director of Programs, will moderate this conversation with **DJ Reborn** and other Brooklyn-based collaborators from varied artistic disciplines about the role of sonic liberation in art and Black womanhood. Panelists include: singer/musician **Madison McFerrin**, American contemporary painter **Kara Walker**, Tony-nominated Broadway actress **Kara Young** and global sonic scholar **Lynnée Denise**.

### **Community DJ Lessons**

*Time:* 3:30pm – 5:30pm

*Location:* The Plaza at 300 Ashland

Those with dreams of getting on the ones and twos and moving a crowd will have the opportunity to get tips from some of New York's hottest DJs as DJ Reborn and other Brooklyn-based black women mixmasters will be on hand to provide one-on-one lessons! Open to all ages. Registration is required.

### **Sonic Liberation Dance Party**

*Time:* 5:30pm – 8:30pm

*Location:* The Plaza at 300 Ashland

651 ARTS' Juneteenth Celebration will culminate with the Sonic Liberation Dance Party – also taking place on the Plaza – that will draw from the African Diasporic genres within music and culture ranging from jazz, gospel, future soul, hip hop, dance, afrobeat, and more. Opening with the Brooklyn Technical High School Lady Dragons, the dance party will be helmed by multidisciplinary artists and renowned DJs **Quinnette**, **Lynnée Denise** and **Reborn**.

**Ticket Info:** Admission to events on the Plaza are free. Registration is required for the Community DJ Lessons. Tickets for the Sonic Liberation Opening Panel are free. Registration is required. All event registrations go live on May 20, 2022, on [651arts.org](http://651arts.org) via Eventbrite.

Please note: All local COVID-19 protocols will be followed in order to ensure the safety of the attendees.

For additional information, please visit: [www.651ARTS.org](http://www.651ARTS.org).

### **About 651 ARTS**

Founded in Brooklyn, NY in 1988, the mission of 651 ARTS is to deepen awareness of and appreciation for 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 in the field of Black performance.

### **About Downtown Brooklyn Partnership**

Downtown Brooklyn Partnership is a not-for-profit local development corporation that serves as the primary champion for Downtown Brooklyn as a world-class business, cultural, educational, residential, and retail destination. Working together with the three business improvement districts (BID) that it manages – the MetroTech BID, Fulton Mall Improvement Association, and Court-Livingston-Schermerhorn BID – the Partnership's diverse activities include attracting new businesses and improving the environment for existing companies; facilitating the construction of public spaces and streetscapes that promote an active and cohesive community; supporting and promoting Downtown Brooklyn's cultural assets; and encouraging a unified sense of place and an engaged civic community. For more information, visit [www.downtownbrooklyn.com](http://www.downtownbrooklyn.com).

### **About The Center for Fiction**

The Center for Fiction is a literary nonprofit that brings diverse communities together to develop and share a passion for fiction. Founded in 1821 as the Mercantile Library of New York in Manhattan, the organization is now based in the heart of the Brooklyn cultural district, with a 18,000 sq. ft. facility that offers New Yorkers an immersive cultural experience centered on reading and writing. Throughout the year, The Center for Fiction provides a vast array of public programming, reading groups, and writing workshops. The First Novel Prize and Emerging Writer Fellowships help build literary careers, and KidsRead/KidsWrite programs inspire an early love of reading and writing in public school students with author-led events. In recent years, the organization's programming has expanded to include storytelling in all its forms, integrating music, theater, dance, film, television, and the visual arts into its exploration of the best of fiction throughout history and today.

### **About The Plaza at 300 Ashland**

The Plaza at 300 Ashland sits at the heart of the Brooklyn Cultural District, adjacent to the brownstone Brooklyn neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Boerum Hill, and Park Slope. DBP has partnered with premier Brooklyn arts organizations such as BAM, BRIC, Brooklyn Public Library, Mark Morris Dance Group, MoCADA, 651 ARTS, and Theatre for a New Audience (TFANA) to

offer free, high-quality programming for everyone. Programming at The Plaza at 300 Ashland is made possible by support from Two Trees Management Co.

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