

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ARTS IN OUR NEW MAYOR'S ONE NEW YORK (HUFFINGTON POST)

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By Lane Harwell

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It is official: we have elected new leadership for the City of New York.

I write to welcome Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio and state my enthusiasm for working with the new Administration and City Council. I also call on New Yorkers who make and support the arts to act on opportunities at the core of De Blasio's vision for New York and framework for addressing inequity, [One New York, Rising Together](#).

I believe the advancement of the arts and culture sector, now and always, depends on oneness, by which I mean both our united advocacy for the work we do and our continued alignment with the issues at the table citywide; the arts and culture and the City are one. One New York, Rising Together invites our consideration of this alignment and commits to embracing input. It is time for our community, our industry, to engage.

Opportunities for the arts and culture abound. Here are some:

"Ensure Every Child Receives Arts Education" (One New York, Rising Together, page 19)

One New York, Rising Together responds to recent [National Endowment for the Arts](#) research on the correlation of arts and achievement in at-risk youth by setting a four-year goal of ensuring that every child in every school receives arts education. Thank you, Mayor-elect de Blasio. Yes to arts education, and yes to the arts for every New Yorker.

"Jobs for All New Yorkers, Growth for All Neighborhoods" (pages 4-10)

There is a lot in the outlined economic development policy that fits with the arts. For instance, a neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach, including the mapping and creation of economic hubs, may foster entrepreneurship and the application of [principles of creative placemaking](#). I see opportunity for expanded arts activity, increased collaboration among community stakeholders, and yes, economic and technical support. Also, proposed attention to workers rights and employment practices could serve many with arts jobs we know are struggling. (See, for instance, [Dance Workforce Census: Earnings Among Individuals](#), 21-35.)

Affordability (various chapters, e.g., Housing, pages 26-30, and Health Care, pages 47-51)

Underpinning the Mayor-elect's vision for New York is a welcome commitment to affordability, an urgent priority for those of us working in and trying to access the arts ([See my recent blog entry for testimony](#)). In particular, there may be an opportunity to increase affordable housing options for arts workers as part of a plan to build or preserve nearly 200,000 affordable units. And the described expansion of affordable health care may serve many in the arts currently lacking benefits. (Attention dance workers: One New York, Rising Together also advocates healthy lifestyles -- perhaps, dancing for every New Yorker!)

"Better Transit for New York City" (pages 31-35)

The de Blasio vision for transportation emphasizes speed, reliability and affordability, and includes investment outside of Manhattan. Such investment could serve the lion's share of arts workers, who, as data tell us, live outside Manhattan and commute to work, often to multiple boroughs -- as well as increase access and drive development at underused arts venues. The arts can be at the table in discussions about transportation.

"A Framework for a Sustainable City" (pages 52-56)

The framework put forward for a sustainable City may incentivize the arts and culture to consider infrastructure improvements and practices that advance sustainability, including the retrofitting and greening of arts spaces and investments to improve our resilience and ability to respond to an emergency such as Hurricane Sandy. Not only is it incumbent upon us to align with this framework, I also believe we can lead.

Immigrants (pages 36-40), LGBT (pages 57-59), Women (pages 60-63), and Seniors (pages 64-66)

Several populations of unique value to the arts and culture are spotlighted in de Blasio's vision. He envisions a safer, more accessible City for all immigrants, a key to the fabric of our creative lives; protections for the rising population of seniors; and equality for all New Yorkers, including the unlocked "entrepreneurial potential of women and minority-owned businesses." The paper may -- and I would be very glad for this -- invite us to consider anew the role of these populations in the arts and culture workforce and audiences and identify ways to expand the public value we create for all. (As just one reference point from the [Dance Workforce Census](#), 84 percent of dance workers under 35 identify as female.)

"A Government as Great as Our City" (pages 40-42)

De Blasio plans government reform that increases transparency and engages New Yorkers more greatly in setting priorities for our communities. Throughout this section of One New York, Rising Together -- from a discussion of unlocking public information to expanding participatory budgeting -- I see opportunity for us to speak up, make our case, and be heard. I have, in this blog, only called out some of the opportunities for the arts and culture in de Blasio's vision for the future; there are and there will be more. As they are priorities for New Yorkers, they will be priorities for the government of our great City.

I am enormously grateful to the current Administration for all it does for the arts and culture. At the same time I, for one, look forward to advancing the arts over the coming four years with the new Administration, City Council, and of course all of you. We are strongest when working together as one.

Please note: This article first appeared on Lane Harwell's Huffington Post Blog on November 12, 2013.
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