

NYC ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL RECIPIENTS OF ITS DISABILITY FORWARD FUND

Thursday, August 30, 2018

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By ArtForum

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The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) has announced the first-ever grantees of its CreateNYC Disability Forward Fund, a pilot initiative designed to support new and ongoing efforts to serve both artists and audience members with disabilities. The program builds on recommendations made in the CreateNYC cultural plan released by Mayor de Blasio in July 2017.

"The thoughtful, exciting programs receiving the inaugural CreateNYC Disability Forward Fund grants are a testament to the strong desire in our cultural community to open up opportunities for people with disabilities to engage in the arts as creators, leaders, and patrons," said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. "The projects go beyond removing barriers by lifting up and celebrating the creativity and diverse perspectives of this historically underrepresented group."

The fund will provide \$640,000 to twenty-two arts organizations and cultural institutions. Grants range in size from \$10,000 to \$35,000 and were awarded through a competitive application process. Each of the winning proposals was selected because it addresses one or more of the goals of the fund, which include, supporting new work created by or with people with disabilities, advancing the employment of people with disabilities who work as artist and cultural workers, and promoting diverse and creative approaches to engaging disability communities through cultural programming

Among the organizations receiving funding are BRIC Arts, which will work to engage artists and audiences with disabilities as part of its free annual arts festival 2019 BRIC OPEN; Dance/NYC, which will pilot a residency program creating opportunities for disabled dance artists; Flux Factory, which will commission new artworks by disabled artists engaging disability as a subject matter; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which will examine art and museum practices through the perspective of disability aesthetics; and the Roundabout Theatre Company, which will launch a new subscription series for its deaf audience members and expand its current Relaxed Performance offerings for patrons with Autism and other sensory needs.

"I applaud the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs for the inaugural CreateNYC Disability Forward Fund. It is of the utmost importance that people with disabilities have access to art, are afforded plentiful opportunities to be creators and cultural workers, and see themselves represented in art," said New York City Council Majority Leader, Laurie A. Cumbo. "Art serves to both affirm our humanity and expand our world, and for far too long people with disabilities have been left out of the equation. I look forward to seeing these efforts of inclusion continue to expand in the years to come." More information about the grant recipients and how to apply for funding can be found on the [DCLA website](#).

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