

***Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning  
Presents  
Four-Day Multicultural Arts Festival:***

***Building Equity Thru Art:  
Pulling From the Past to Shape our Future***



**November 17, 2020 (New York)** -- Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL) is thrilled to announce Building Equity Thru Art: Pulling From the Past to Shape Our Future, a four-day festival of cultural presentations, panel discussions and workshops designed to highlight immigrant, Indigenous and Native American artists and voices, and representing the diverse communities of Southeast Queens.



**For Immediate Release**

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The nine distinct events of *Building Equity Thru Art* will run exclusively on [JCAL's Youtube platform](#) from Thurs., Dec. 17 through Sun., Dec. 20.

*Building Equity Thru Art* is the culminating event of the first year of JCAL's new pilot program, [Building Equity for Immigrant, Indigenous and Native American Artists](#). Supported by a two-year grant from New York Community Trust and managed through a Core Council of artists and arts administrators, the program is dedicated to researching, engaging and promoting underrepresented artists in our community, and to providing greater access for audiences to see and to experience their work. *Building Equity Thru Art* also aligns with JCAL's "Community First, Digital First" 2020-21 season, which prioritizes programs and events most relevant to the diverse community of Southeast Queens. These virtual programs will be 100% free and suitable for viewers of all ages.

"JCAL is indebted to the work of the Building Equity Core Council -- especially as the pandemic has unfolded," said Leonard Jacobs, JCAL's Interim Executive Director. "From Roberto Múkaró Borrero, Building Equity's coordinator, to his fellow Core Council members Tecumseh Ceaser, Trace DePass, Romanee Kalicharran, Rafael Landrón, Kevin McEwan, Vera Solovyeva, Paige Stewart and the late Kevin Tarrant, their thoughtful programming has been an invaluable asset to JCAL, and we can't wait for this festival to begin!"

"When JCAL talks about amplifying unrepresented and under-represented voices, our Building Equity program immediately comes to mind," added Courtney Ffrench, JCAL's Interim Artistic Director. "We remain grateful for New York Community Trust's support of JCAL for this effort, which is a game-changer for our institution, but, equally important, for immigrant, Indigenous and Native American artists in our artistic community."

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## **Festival Lineup:**

### **The Tale of Anyabwile (The Unchained): Immigrant stories Through Dance and Song**

**December 17, 7-8:30 PM**

*The Tale of Anyabwile (The Unchained)* is a work in dedication to the struggles of the African, Caribbean and Hispanic generations to highlight the obstacles they have overcome through immigration. This program highlights the contributions made by immigrant people of color and also showcases the extraordinary journeys they have endured.

On Dec. 17, The Kingdom Tribe will show their finished dances, poetry, live singing and art that bring the struggle of immigration to light. This is the finale of an eight-week, free intensive by teenagers of the NYC area, as well as an adult dance intensive. Tune in live to talk with some of the artists and project directors Paige "Queen TuT" Stewart and LaShon Sostres.

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### **The Syncretism of Borícua Cultural Tradition Thru its Distinguished Custodians**

**December 18, 7-8pm**

An investigative documentary of the fundamentals of the nuances of Boricua Bomba music and dance Thru archival footage and in-person interviews with elders and culture bearers. This program will include a Q&A with Bomba masters, historical investigators and cultural leaders. Panelists include: Don Angel Reyes, Don Felix Romero and Kasike Roberto Múkaró Borrero.

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### **Live Bomba Dance Workshop with Don Angel L. Reyes Romero**

**December 18, 8-9pm**

A live Boricua Bomba Dance workshop with Don Angel L. Reyes Romero. Participants will have the rare opportunity to learn this form of dance from a cultural icon with live drumming, explanations and interactive feedback.

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## **Beading Workshop with Vera Solovyeva: Indigenous Beading Techniques From Siberia**

**December 19, 3-4pm**

In this workshop, participants will learn how to make a beaded sun-shaped necklace with Vera Solovyeva (Sakha, Russia), who will also make her own as well. According to the Indigenous Sakha tradition, this type of necklace also doubles as a “protective-type of amulet” because of its sun imagery. The sun is very important to the Sakha. During this program, Solovyeva will discuss and show some of the related rituals performed during a summer solstice event that took place in California in 2014. She will also explain Sakha traditional patterns and their sacred meanings.

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## **Litty Committee Presents: Poetry & Dialogue**

**December 19, 5-6:30pm**

Local Poets of Color will share poetry and stories including a Q&A. Tune in for an evening of engaging and dynamic poetry from some of the community's brightest stars.

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## **Puerto Rico Report Back and Poetry, Part II**

**December 19, 7 - 8:30pm**

Puerto Rico has suffered through extreme hurricanes, recent earthquakes, political unrest and now the COVID-19 pandemic, but its people remain resilient. This program is Part II of the update on the current situation in Puerto Rico, including a Q&A. The update will be presented by Ben Ramos and followed by poetry readings from Angel Martinez, Nancy Mercado and Rafael Landron. This program is co-hosted by Prolibertad.

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## **1,000 Years a Witness**

**December 20, 1- 2:30pm**

*1,000 Years a Witness* is a documentary on Shinnecock elders talking about their childhood days. It is the first in a series of documentary shorts capturing indigenous elder stories both in the U.S. and abroad. It is directed and produced by Bryan Downey, and produced by Ojibwe citizen Ginew Benton and Shinnecock Indian Nation citizen and Seventh Generation Stories Productions' Alli Joseph in collaboration. Following the screening will be a talkback with Downey and Benton.

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## **We Are Still Here: Caribbean Indigenous Peoples**

**December 20, 3 - 4:30pm**

The United Confederation of Taíno People and the Caribbean Amerindian Development Organization co-host a special program featuring Caribbean Indigenous Peoples, including cultural presentations by the Kasibahagua Taíno Cultural Society and a panel discussion on contemporary Indigenous Peoples from Borikén (Puerto Rico), Dominica, Barbados and Guyana featuring Tai Pelli, Damon Corrie and Ivince Auguste. The program will be moderated by Kasike Roberto Múkaró Borrero and include a Q&A.

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## **Kwanzaa**

**December 20, 6-7:30 PM Performance / 7:30-8:30 PM**

Kwanzaa is a celebration held across the US and in other nations of the African Diaspora. It is observed from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, culminating in a feast and gift-giving. Kwanzaa celebrates what its founder, Dr. Maulana Karenga, called the seven principles of Kwanzaa, or *Nguzo Saba*, consisting of "the best of African thought and practice in constant exchange with the world."



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Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the following principles: *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination), *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility), *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba* (Creativity), and *Imani* (Faith). This year, things are going to be a little different, but the amazing quality of dance performances and good storytelling will still be the same! Following the celebration, tune in to meet the choreographers via Zoom.

**About JCAL**

**Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning** (JCAL), founded in 1972, is a multidisciplinary arts center based in the diverse community of Southeast Queens. Our mission is devoted to offering quality visual, performing, and literary arts, and to provide accessible education programs to encourage participation in the arts. JCAL is temporarily closed in accordance with state and local guidelines. Normal operating hours: Open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm; closed Sundays and major holidays. For additional information, call JCAL at 718-658-7400 or visit [www.JCAL.org](http://www.JCAL.org).

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