

# THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING  
545 West 30th Street  
New York, NY 10001

**Twenty-Seven New York City Artists Announced for the Second *Open Call*, The Shed's Large-Scale, Early-Career Commissioning Program, Beginning Summer 2021**

For more information, please contact:

**Selected by 50 Cross-Disciplinary Arts Industry Professionals and Artists**

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The 27 artists selected for the second edition of *Open Call*. First row, from the top (left to right): Ladi'Sasha Jones, Anne Wu, Kenneth Tam, Le'Andra LeSeur, Benjamin Akio Kimitch, Simon Liu; second row (left to right): Nazareth Hassan, Emilie Gossiaux, Emily Waters, Cindy Tran, AnAKA, Justin Hicks; third row (left to right): Tajh Rust, Eleanor Kipping, Caroline Garcia, JJJJerome Ellis, Pauline Shaw, Niall Jones; fourth row (left to right): DonChristian Jones, Yo-Yo Lin, Zachary Tye Richardson, Leslie Cuyjet, Ayanna Dozier, Merche Blasco; fifth row (left to right): Aisha Amin, Esteban Jefferson, Ana María Agüero Jahannes. Courtesy The Shed.

**NEW YORK, December 9, 2020** – The Shed today announced 27 New York City-based artists for its second *Open Call*, a large-scale, commissioning program for early-career artists across performance, visual arts, and popular culture. Each artist, who lives or works in the five boroughs, was selected by The Shed along with 50 external industry professionals and artists across disciplines to create and present new work at The Shed beginning in summer 2021 and continuing into 2022.

Artists receive a commissioning fee of up to \$15,000 depending on the scope of the proposed project, in addition to production support and resources to develop their new projects. In June 2021, 11 artists will present their work in a group exhibition in the Level 2 Gallery and nine artists will have performance and participatory projects in The McCourt (configured as an open-air plaza) and in off-site partner spaces. Seven artists will present their performances at The Shed in 2022. Admission is free to all *Open Call* events.

“During these unprecedented times, we remain steadfast in our commitment to local artists at early stages in their careers. Launched two years ago as a recurring commissioning program with generous investment from The Shed’s supporters, *Open Call* is designed to provide the time, space, and resources that these artists need to develop their practice, expand their audience, and continue to contribute to our city’s vibrant and diverse culture,” said **Alex Poots**, Artistic Director and CEO. “From the onset of *Open Call*, we have worked with industry professionals across the arts to shape this program and expand our curatorial process. We’re grateful to our 50 colleagues from the arts community that participated in this year’s process to select this next cohort of New York City-based artists.”

*Open Call* continues to be integral to The Shed’s institutional and civic vision: to produce and welcome innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity, and to build a shared understanding of our rapidly changing world and a more equitable society. Panelists and reviewers in a wide range of disciplines—from the visual arts to digital media to theater and dance—reviewed more than 1,500 proposals in May and June of this year, a significant increase from the 900 applications received from the inaugural call for proposals in 2018. With a city-wide focus, the panels selected the following 27 inventive, thought-provoking, risk-taking, timely, and culturally sensitive proposals that will provide sustained impact for a wide range of audiences.

The second edition of *Open Call* is organized by Emma Enderby, Chief Curator; Tamara McCaw, Chief Civic Program Officer; and Solana Chehtman, Director of Civic Programs, with Alessandra Gómez and Adeze Wilford, Assistant Curators, and Maggie MacTiernan, Director of Artist Services. Dates and additional details are to be announced. Full project descriptions are available at [theshed.org/opencall](https://theshed.org/opencall).

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## ARTISTS

### **Level 2 Gallery, Summer 2021**

#### **Aisha Amin: *The Earth Has Been Made a Place of Prayer***

*An immersive installation inviting you into Masjid At-Taqwa, a historic Brooklyn mosque*

Aisha Amin is a NYC-based filmmaker working across documentary, narrative, and experimental forms. Her work focuses on creating portraits of unique and diverse communities within the US and covers such themes as identity, community, religion, and gentrification.

#### **Ayanna Dozier: *Cities of the Dead***

*Abandoned architectural plans for a “Negro Coney Island” reimaged in photos, film, and architecture*

Ayanna Dozier is a Brooklyn-based writer, lecturer, curator, filmmaker, and performance artist. Using performance and discourse, she embodies and challenges the singularity of history and authenticity.

#### **Caroline Garcia: *The Headless Headhunt***

*A performance installation and act of mourning that contends with diasporic grief for the loss of a mother*

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Caroline Garcia is a culturally promiscuous, interdisciplinary artist working across live performance and video through a hybridized aesthetic of cross-cultural dance, ritual practice, and new media.

**Emilie Gossiaux: *True Love Will Find You in the End***

*Hybrid sculptural figures criticizing and collapsing constructed hierarchies among human and animal, real and mythic, abled and disabled*

Emilie Gossiaux is an interdisciplinary artist currently based in New York City. Her work explores the phenomenology of dreams, memories, and multisensory experiences.

**Esteban Jefferson**

*A memorial and tribute to Jefferson's friend, New York City artist Devra Freeland*

Esteban Jefferson was born in New York and never left the city. His work oscillates between architectural drawing, loose color washes, and areas of intense, hyperrealistic focus. His recent show *Petit Palais* (Tanya Leighton, Berlin) continues his exploration of race, identity, and the legacies of colonialism.

**Le'Andra LeSeur: *There is no movement without rhythm***

*A multichannel video and performance fostering communal healing by uplifting musical traditions of the African diaspora*

Le'Andra LeSeur is an artist working primarily with video, installation, and performance. Her work celebrates Blackness, contemplates the experience of invisibility, and seeks to dismantle stereotypes surrounding Black female identity.

**Simon Liu: *Devil's Peak***

*A hyperkinetic multichannel video installation surveying Hong Kong through personal memory, recent social upheaval, and postcolonial legacies*

Simon Liu is a film artist who interrogates rapid shifts in the psychogeographic fabric of Hong Kong through a range of cinematic forms. His works act as a storage mechanism offering potential reexaminations of the city's history and his own shifting notions of selfhood as a person of Chinese/English descent born in a former British colony.

**Tajh Rust: *Passages***

*A meditative installation of mirrored and painted glass panels alluding to the history of transatlantic migration*

Tajh Rust is a visual artist born in Brooklyn and working between Brooklyn and New Haven, Connecticut. His work explores modes of representation and relationships between identity and space.

**Pauline Shaw: *The Tomb-sweeper's Mosquito Bite***

*A monumental abstract, felted tapestry exploring memory and diasporic experience through MRI scans.*

Pauline Shaw is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in New York. Her practice questions how personal history and cultural knowledge are acquired and preserved.

**Kenneth Tam**

*A video and sculptural installation using Taoist principles to explore ritualized violence in fraternities*

Kenneth Tam's practice takes the form of video installations that include moving-image works and sculpture. He lives and works in Brooklyn and was an artist-in-residence at the Kitchen. His work explores themes of gender performativity and the negotiation of identity.

**Anne Wu**

*A sculptural installation celebrating architectural styles created by immigrant communities in Flushing, Queens, as expressions of adaptation and innovation*

Anne Wu is a Queens-based artist making sculptures and installations that reference the material cultures of Chinese immigrant neighborhoods to reflect on personal history, collective identity, and inherited memory.

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**The McCourt, Summer 2021**

**AnAka: *AKTIV8* Archive Portal**

*A multimedia performance that encompasses communal ritual healing through visuals, music, and movement*

AnAka is a storyteller documenting spiritual omnipresence within the global rituals of creation. AnAka's many mediums of creation encompass a practice entitled *AKTIV8*, a movement to revolutionize sacred wisdom continuation through the creation of an archive.

**Merche Blasco: *Vibrant Strata***

*A meditation through amplified vibrations on interconnectedness, our capacity for mutual transformation, and the urgent need to listen to each other and the world*

Merche Blasco is a New York-based artist and composer who builds imprecise technological assemblages that catalyze embodied forms of live electroacoustic composition and new modes of listening.

**Leslie Cuyjet: *Blur***

*An investigation of visibility and invisibility enacted between performers, audience, and objects*

Leslie Cuyjet is a choreographer whose work conjures lifelong questions of identity, disrupting traditional narratives, while demonstrating the angsty, explosive, sensitive, pioneering excellence of the Black woman.

**Nazareth Hassan: *Untitled (1-5)***

*A chamber choral text performance that explores the pleasure, violence, and necessity of disembodiment.*

Nazareth Hassan is a southern writer and musician based in Brooklyn whose play *VANTABLACK* was most recently performed at the Theatertreffen Stückemarkt in Berlin (2019). He is fascinated by how people live in between.

**Ana María Agüero Jahannes: *Field Day***

*A reimagining of track and field that centers joy, aesthetic liberation, and athleticism for Black queer and trans people*

Ana María Agüero Jahannes is a space-maker, acrobatic dancer, and handicrafter based in Brooklyn and New Orleans who illuminates the potentiality of Black imagination and intelligence.

**DonChristian Jones**

*The artist's live album performance and homage to '90s Philadelphia, the Black womxn who raised him, the music they sang, and the cars they drove*

DonChristian Jones is a New York-based artist, singer-songwriter, and producer. His work spans musical and time-based performance, albums, video, and public murals, blending genres of painting and performance installation.

**Ladi'Sasha Jones: *Black Interior Space***

*A participatory and generative project reflecting on Black interiority through a theoretical index, a game set, and workshops*

Ladi'Sasha Jones is a writer and curator based in Harlem. Her work explores Black Americana and the conditions of Black interior life through text and design works.

**Cindy Tran: *Sonnet Crown for NYC***

*A filmed sequence of sonnets that honors local businesses and the communities that enrich and sustain New York City*

Cindy Tran is a poet whose work explores compliance, alienation, and estrangement, while creating an imaginative shelter of memory, grief, and desire. She lives in Brooklyn.

**Emily Waters: *Look Back At It***

*Narrative theater, Afro-diasporic folklore, poetry, and communal healing centering Black queer survivors*

Emily Waters is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist grounded in a Black theater tradition that explores the roles of witness and testimony in collective and intergenerational healing.

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**Level 4, 2022**

**JJJJJerome Ellis: *BENEDICTION***

*An experimental exploration of the poetics and musicality of stuttering*

JJJJerome Ellis is a stuttering, Afro-Caribbean composer, performer, and writer. His current practice explores Blackness, music, and disabled speech as forces of refusal and healing.

**Justin Hicks: *A better way than any other way that they have ever known...***  
*A triptych of song, sound work, and video that animates the Black imagination in nature*

Justin Hicks is a multidisciplinary artist and performer who uses sound and music to engage themes of identity and value. He creates live and recorded works with voice and electronics.

**Niall Jones: *a n u n r e a l***  
*A performance environment that blurs the boundaries between wilderness and theater*

Niall Jones explores the structural, environmental, and affective conditions of the theater to engage an ongoing fascination with the physicalities of labor, fantasy, and social life.

**Benjamin Akio Kimitch**  
*A performance reimagining and challenging commodified East-meets-West stereotypes in dance*

Benjamin Akio Kimitch is a dance artist whose works are deeply influenced by his mixed-race Japanese American heritage and childhood training in Chinese dance.

**Eleanor Kipping: *Daddy Issues***  
*A solo performance attempting to reconcile life in the '80s and '90s alongside the AIDS crisis and the artist's family history*

Eleanor Kipping is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist, educator, and arts administrator. Her work explores the experience of the Black diaspora female body; public, private, and civic negotiations of race, gender, and class; and the effect and practice of violence and surveillance on the body.

**Yo-Yo Lin: *Lets/Be/Together***  
*A multisensory performance detailing experiences of isolation and togetherness, technology and the human body*

Yo-Yo Lin is a Taiwanese American, interdisciplinary media artist. She explores the possibilities for self-knowledge using emerging, embodied technologies. Her recent work explores the generative nature of illness.

**Zachary Tye Richardson: *The Available Bodies***  
*A participatory performance offering therapeutic healing for the LGBTQIA-POC community in a safe space of solidarity*

Zachary Tye Richardson is a Brooklyn-based performance artist, interested in using the body as a vessel to manifest queer offerings that amplify solidarity while researching the affects of solitude

### **Open Call Panelists and Reviewers**

Noel Allain, Laura Aswad, Stephanie Baptist, Marlène Ramírez-Cancio, Suhaly Bautista-Carolina, Eric Guy Booker, Kim Brandt, DeForrest Brown Jr., Roberto Carlos Lange (Helado Negro), Amy Cassello, Solana Chehtman, Jocelyn Cooper, Jordana De La Cruz, Emma Enderby, Hatuey Ramos-Fermín, Andrea Geyer, Alessandra Gómez, Karen Grimson, Marcela Guerrero, Carlos A. Gutiérrez, Carmen Hermo, Andria Hickey, Patton Hindle, Raelle Myrick-Hodges, Paolo Javier, Rachel Katwan, Danielle King, James King, Andrew Kircher, Sophia Marisa Lucas, Tamara McCaw, Larry Ossei-Mensah, Jocelyn Miller, Claudia Norman, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Daniel S. Palmer, Alex Poots, Sheetal Prajapati, Prerana Reddy, Maricelle Robles, José F. Rodriguez, Brian Rogers, Ali Rosa-Salas, George Emilio Sanchez, Alex Santana, Marianna Schaffer, Arden Sherman, Julia Solomonoff, Susan Thompson, Yara Travieso, Carmelita Tropicana, Ela Troyano, Diya Vij, Jasmine Wahi, Adeze Wilford, Abbey Williams, Lauren Argentina Zelaya, X Zhu-Nowell

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### **About Open Call**

Launched as part of The Shed's inaugural year program, *Open Call* is a large-scale commissioning program for early-career NYC-based artists. For the first iteration of *Open Call*, 52 artists and collectives were commissioned to present their intentional and boundary-pushing new work beginning in May 2019. Each received commissioning fees, production support, and experience working with a large cultural institution and navigating the commissioning process. *Open Call* continues in fostering and supporting the next generation of NYC artists.

*Open Call* was conceived by The Shed's Artistic Director Alex Poots, Tamara McCaw, Chief Civic Program Officer; Emma Enderby, Chief Curator; and Senior Program Advisor Hans Ulrich Obrist.

### **Current and Upcoming Programming**

*Howardena Pindell: Rope/Fire/Water*, an exhibition on the brutality of racism and the healing power of art, is on view at The Shed through April 11, 2021. For ticketing, safety, and further details visit [theshed.org](https://theshed.org).

*Up Close*, The Shed's digital commissioning series, continues with *Phases and the In-Betweens*, a new multipart work by **The Brothers Sick** with collaborators **danilo machado** and **Yo-Yo Lin** premiering on January 13 through February 11. All *Up Close* projects are available to access for free at [theshed.org/upclose](https://theshed.org/upclose).

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### **Support**

The Lead Sponsor of *Open Call* is the TD Ready Commitment.

Support for *Open Call* is generously provided by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Howard Gilman Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and The Shed's Creative Council. Additional support is provided by Jody and John Arnhold | Arnhold Foundation.

The creation of new work at The Shed is generously supported by the Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Commissioning Fund and the Shed Commissioners. Major support for live productions at The Shed is provided by the Charina Endowment Fund.

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### **From Our Sponsor**

The TD Ready Commitment is TD's Corporate Citizenship platform designed to help open doors for a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow. As part of that commitment, one of our goals is to help people feel connected to their community. Art fosters the learning of new stories and an understanding of this moment in time, and gives voice to who we are. At TD, we believe this can be achieved in part through experiences like The Shed's *Open Call* program, as it reflects the championing of artists and ideas that reflect our shared landscape. The roster of artists will lead to the creation of knowledge and shared experiences, ultimately contributing to an inclusive future. Connected communities begin with conversation and reflection, and artists help us see the world around us in new ways.

—Stuart Keeler, Senior Curator, TD Art Collection

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### **About The Shed**

The Shed is a new cultural institution of and for the 21st century. We produce and welcome innovative art and ideas, across all forms of creativity, to build a shared understanding of our rapidly changing world and a more equitable society. In our highly adaptable building on Manhattan's west side, The Shed brings together established and emerging artists to create new work in fields ranging from pop to classical music, painting to digital media, theater to literature, and sculpture to dance. We seek opportunities to collaborate with cultural peers and community organizations, work with like-minded partners, and provide unique spaces for private events. As an independent nonprofit that values invention, equity, and generosity, we are committed to advancing art forms, addressing the urgent issues of our time, and making our work impactful, sustainable, and relevant to the local community, the cultural sector, New York City, and beyond.