
THE SHED Press Release

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The 2025 – 26 Open Call artists. Left to right, front row: James Caverly, Nicholas Oh and A young Yu (AYDO). Middle row: Andrew Morrill, Mel Corchado, Laurena Finéus, Jarrett Key, Zain Alam, Luis Vasquez La Roche. Back row: Katherine Paola De La Cruz, Marwa Eltahir, Patricia Encarnación, Tyson Houseman, Nehprij Amenii, Victor "MARKA27" Quiñonez, Avi Amon, Lily Yang (of Lily Honglei), Yelaine Rodriguez. Not pictured: Rudi Goblen, Chelsea Odufu. Photo: Dana Golan.

Seventeen New York City Artists and Collectives Announced for The Shed's Fourth Open Call, A Multidisciplinary Commissioning Program for Early-Career Artists

NEW YORK, February 4, 2025 – The Shed today announced the 17 New York City–based artists and collectives selected for its fourth Open Call, a dynamic commissioning program championing early-career artists across the visual and performing arts. These emerging talents, all living or working within the five boroughs, will create and present innovative new works, offering powerful reflections on the urgent issues of our time through the intersection of personal identity and historical narratives.

Twelve visual and performance artists/collectives including **Zain Alam**, **AYDO**, **Mel Corchado**, **Marwa Eltahir**, **Patricia Encarnación**, **Laurena Finéus**, **Lily Honglei**, **Tyson Houseman**, **Jarrett Key**, **Chelsea Odufu**, **Victor "MARKA27" Quiñonez**, and **Yelaine Rodriguez** and **Luis Vasquez La Roche** will unveil their work in a free exhibition in summer 2025 in The Shed's Level 2 Gallery and outdoor Plaza.

In summer 2026, five artists/collectives, **Nehprie Amenii**, **Avi Amon**, **Katherine Paola De La Cruz**, **Rudi Goblen**, and **Andrew Morrill** and **James Caverly**, will present multidisciplinary performances that push the boundaries of artistic expression.

"Since 2018, as we were planning our inaugural-year program, Open Call has been a cornerstone of The Shed with the mission of providing a vital platform for New York City's vibrant community of early-career artists. We believe strongly in investing in these artists and making their work accessible to everyone by presenting it free to audiences in our most prominent spaces. Our intentionally de-centered selection process is key to this program, ensuring a wide spectrum of artistic perspectives are represented on our stages and in our galleries," said **Alex Poots**, The Shed's founding artistic director.

Open Call embodies The Shed's core mission to champion innovative art and ideas across all disciplines and provides crucial support to these emerging voices, offering each artist a commissioning fee of up to \$15,000, tailored to the scope of their project. In addition to financial support, The Shed provides comprehensive production support and resources, empowering artists to fully realize their creative visions.

"We are honored to welcome this year's cohort of Open Call artists, whose practices reflect a deep engagement with the complex social and cultural landscapes of our time. These 17 artists and collectives bring rigor, imagination, and critical insight to their work, advancing dialogues that resonate across disciplines and communities. We look forward to sharing their boundary-pushing projects. This year's selections reaffirm the vibrant spirit of New York City's artistic communities and the vital role of art in shaping our collective narratives," said The Shed's Civic Program Team.

This year, nearly 1,000 proposals were rigorously reviewed by 72 arts industry leaders in spring 2024. The result: 17 exceptional projects poised to engage and inspire audiences with their inventive, timely, and culturally rich perspectives. This diverse cohort represents a vibrant cross section of artistic disciplines, from music performance, poetry, and puppetry to painting, sculpture, and video installations. Exhibition and performance dates and additional details are to be announced at theshed.org/opencall.

EXHIBITION ARTISTS – SUMMER 2025

Zain Alam

Meter & Light: Night: A three-channel audiovisual installation enacting the interlocking rhythms of time in Muslim life after sunset

Zain Alam (he/him) is an artist and composer of Indian Pakistani origin whose work is described as “a unique intersection, merging the cinematic formality of Bollywood and geometric repetition of Islamic art” (*Fanzine*).

AYDO

Border Ecologies: A video and ceramic installation exploring on-site documentation of the Korean Demilitarized Zone and the United States–Mexico borderland through sociopolitical, cultural, and environmental perspectives

AYDO is a multidisciplinary, collaborative duo founded by artists A young Yu and Nicholas Oh. AYDO’s practice is centered on diasporic reimaginations of precolonial ancestral cultural practices.

Mel Corchado

\$TICKY \$IN\$: A collection of sugar garments exploring sugar’s history and its ties to identity, fashion, and the exploitation of land and labor

Mel Corchado (she/her) is a Brooklyn-based, Boricua fashion designer and artist whose practice explores how fashion might confront narratives and shift consciousness in service of decolonization.

Marwa Eltahir

99 Names: My Liberation Is Tied to Yours: An immersive, audiovisual performance examining themes of loss, grief, and connection using imagery from the Afro-Arab diaspora

Marwa Eltahir (she/her) is a Sudanese American writer and performer based in Brooklyn. Her audiovisual essays examine narratives of movement, identity, and belonging across the diaspora. She is the founder of Our Political Home, an art incubator for trans and queer African storytellers.

Patricia Encarnación

Tropical Limerence: An installation of video, performance, and ceramics that examines how love, exotification, and power imbalances

influence relationships between the Global majority and the Global North

Afro-Dominican artist and scholar Patricia Encarnación (she/they) challenges colonial legacies. Their work observes Caribbean aesthetics through material culture, memory, and identity. Noted for residencies and awards, their art spans Documenta 15, the Tribeca Festival, and the Bronx Museum, supported by academic fellowships.

Laurena Finéus

Together, we could have made mountains: A collaborative textile and painting installation showcasing Brooklyn's Haitian migrant stories and exploring dreams, sacrifices, misconceptions, and collective scars

Laurena Finéus (she/her) is a Haitian Canadian interdisciplinary artist. In her practice, Finéus has been concerned with representations of Black geographies, maroon thought, and migratory histories through imagined landscapes. Finéus is based in Brooklyn.

Lily Honglei

KITES: Poems by an Immigrant: A painting series inspired by traditional Chinese kites that depicts Asian immigration stories reflecting the artist's family saga and community life

Lily Honglei (they/them) is a Chinese immigrant artist duo based in Flushing Chinatown, Queens. They recently presented at Flushing Town Hall, Chinese American Arts Council, and Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning.

Tyson Houseman

The Six Seasons: A live, operatic video performance and installation featuring soundscapes and lyrics sung in nēhiyawēwin (Plains Cree)

Tyson Houseman (he/they) is a nēhiyaw interdisciplinary video and performance artist, puppeteer, and filmmaker.

Jarrett Key

Hair Painting No. 40: A live performance in Key's "Hair Paintings" series, in which the artist uses their hair to create paintings honoring their grandmother, Ruth Mae Giles

Jarrett Key (they/them) lives and works in Brooklyn. They grew up in rural Alabama and received their MFA in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2020. The objects they make integrate sculpture, painting, and performance.

Chelsea Odufu

Echoes of Gold: A video installation foregrounding dance and movement to uncover the haunting legacy of the gold trade in Côte d'Ivoire

Chelsea Odufu (she/her) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work spans video installations, sculpture, photography, and film. She has exhibited globally, including at Paris Photo, Dakar Biennale, Photo London, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Victor “MARKA27” Quiñonez

Elevar La Cultura NYC: An immersive sculptural installation of a large Mayan pyramid, composed of ice coolers, textiles, and spiritual objects, activated by a mural and a projection, honoring the beauty and resilience of immigrant street vendors

Victor “MARKA27” Quiñonez (he/him) blends art forms such as graffiti, street art, vinyl, toys, and fashion with art activism. Drawing inspiration from Mexican masters and his heritage, his works reflect the empowerment and representation of marginalized communities.

Yelaine Rodriguez and Luis Vasquez La Roche

Residence Time | The Sea Is History: A mixed-media sculptural installation that reimagines the transatlantic slave trade's Door of No Return in Ghana as an archaeological ruin

Yelaine Rodriguez (she/her) is a Bronx-born interdisciplinary artist and scholar focused on examining Afro-syncretic religions through photography and video. She is pursuing a PhD at Northwestern University.

Luis Vasquez La Roche (he/they) is an artist and scholar who resides between Trinidad and Tobago and Virginia and works in New York City. They are interested in aspects of the transatlantic slave trade that manifest themselves in varying ways in the present.

PERFORMANCE ARTISTS – SUMMER 2025

Nehprie Amenii

“HUMAN”: An immersive, multimedia, puppetry stage play for multigenerational audiences that asks what it really means to be human

Nehprie Amenii (she/her) is a director, playwright, and puppeteer. With a passion for personal narratives, puppetry, and grand-scale spectacle, she's known for creating experiences that enchant the imagination and inspire new ways of seeing and thinking.

Avi Amon

Mother/Road: A multimedia meditation on grief, memory, family, and borders that draws on audio from cassette tapes Amon's parents carried with them when they immigrated to the United States

Avi Amon (he/they) is an award-winning, Turkish American composer and sound artist whose work has been featured at Ars Nova, DOCNYC, The Kennedy Center, PACNYC, Signature, Venice Biennale, and more. Amon is the music director at the 52nd Street Project and teaches at NYU.

Katherine Paola De La Cruz

Dirty Laundry: A performance exploring themes of burn out, toxic work culture, and the absurdity of résumés and cover letters at the end of the world

Katherine Paola De La Cruz is an Afro-Dominican dancer and choreographer based in Queens. Her work is born from a need to make direct political statements and to make visible often-ignored inner healing processes.

Rudi Goblen

FITO: An interactive concert-play combining live music, storytelling, dance, and spoken word to narrate the immigrant experience of a Nicaraguan man in the United States

Rudi Goblen (he/him) is a playwright, educator, and performer who creates devised theater work. He holds an MFA in playwriting from the Yale School of Drama.

Andrew Morrill and James Caverly

Thank You Ryan for a Clean Microwave: A play-within-a-play exploring the mystery of who cleaned the microwave in the coffee shop staff room

Andrew Morrill (he/him) is an Obie-winning theatermaker specializing in translation, playwriting, directing, and acting. His work has been featured at The Public, New York Theatre Workshop, Ars Nova, Deaf West, and more.

James Caverly (he/him) is widely known for his breakout role in *Only Murders in The Building*. When he is not acting, the multi-award-winning artist directs, produces, and writes stories for the stage.

Open Call Panelists and Reviewers

Panelists:

Jesse Alick, Torya Beard, Dejá Belardo, Darren Biggart, Kimberly Drew, Madame Gandhi, Luis Gutierrez, Tamara McCaw, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Larry Ossei-Mensah, Alex Poots, George Sanchez, Lumi Tan, Charmaine Warren, and Janet Wong

Reviewers:

Jason Aguirre, Juana Berrio, Alison Burstein, Nigel Campbell, Emmy Catedral, Jean Cooney, Jordana De La Cruz, Sarah Dhobhany, Tasha Douge, Sam Duke, Robyn Farrell, Jesse Firestone, Raynel Frazier, Kaitlin Garcia-Maestas, Danni Gee, Gabrielle Glore, Alessandra Gómez, Sheldon Gooch, Jody Graf, Anne Hamburger, Carl Hancock Rux, Dave Harper, Erica Harper, Daonne Huff, Adam Hyndman, Hitomi Iwasaki, Ivy Jones, Lisa Kim, Ladyfag, Jennifer Lam, Gabriela López Dena, Maggie MacTiernan, Gervais Marsh, Aaron L. McKinney, Mara Mills, Monica Mirabile, Marisa Morán Jahn, Seta Morton, Salvador Muñoz, Raelle Myrick Hodges, Benedict Nguyen, Kathy Noble, Najee Omar, Marlène Ramírez-Cancio, Alex Rosenberg, Erin Somerville, Luke Stewart, Herb Tam, Mei Ann Teo, Annabel Thompson, Terence Trouillot, Natalia Viera Salgado, Jay Wegman, Ayesha Williams, Justin Wong, Sasha Wortzel, and Eva Yaa Asantewaa

About Open Call

Since its inception as part of The Shed's opening season, Open Call has championed innovation in the arts, commissioning 114 early-career NYC artists and collectives to create and present boundary-pushing new work. The cornerstone program provides a launchpad for bold artistic visions, fostering the next generation of creative voices. Each artist received commissioning fees, production support, and experience working with a large cultural institution and navigating the commissioning process. Open Call continues to foster and support the next generation of NYC artists.

The fourth edition of Open Call is organized by Darren Biggart, Director of Civic Programs; Dejá Belardo, Assistant Curator; Christal Ferreira, Program Manager, Civic Programs and Visual Art; and Daisy Peele, Producer, with support by Public Assembly. Open Call was conceived by The Shed's Artistic Director Alex Poots, Tamara McCaw, former Chief Civic Program Officer; Emma Enderby, former Chief Curator; and Senior Program Advisor Hans Ulrich Obrist.

Support

Support for Open Call is generously provided by the Howard Gilman Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Additional support is provided by Sarah Arison, in honor of Misty Copeland and The Wescustogo Foundation.

About The Shed

About The Shed Under the leadership of CEO Meredith "Max" Hodges and founding Artistic Director Alex Poots, The Shed is a 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.