



2021 NYC-Based Artist Residency Program

RESIDENCY UNLIMITED

2021 OPEN CALL

FOR NEW YORK CITY-BASED
ARTISTS

Deadline: March 1, 2021 11:59 pm EST

On February 1, RU invited NYC-based artists who identify as Black, and whose research-based practices fill in gaps in historical knowledge, to apply for the 2021 NYC-Based Artist Residency Program. Four artists were selected from 57 applications reviewed by a panel of arts professionals together with RU.

Panelists:

Alaina Simone, artist liaison, art consultant, and curator

Christopher Udemezue, visual artist, founder of RAGGA NYC & CONNEK JA, and 2020 RU alum

RU Guest Curator **Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger**, an NYC-based curator with a focus on place-based practices

Residency Description

On April 5, RU welcomed the sixth cohort of artists participating in the NYC-Based Artist Residency Program: Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess (Southeast Queens), Elvira Clayton (Harlem), Zachary Fabri (Brooklyn) and Helina Metaferia (Harlem & Brooklyn). During their three-month residencies, the artists focused on research and the development of multidisciplinary projects around the history of artists in Southeast Queens, prison abolition, Black liberation activist archives and the largest slave auction in the history of the United States. The residency took place from April 5 to July 2, with the majority of studio visits taking place online due to Covid-19. The culminating exhibition took place June 23 - July 7 at the Andrew Freedman Home in the Bronx, with an opening reception and artist's walk-through on June 26, and a closing reception with performances on July 7.

- **4 participating artists**
- **10 studio visits each**
- **4 artist salons**
- **4 discussion groups**
- **4 instagram takeovers**
- **4 field trips**
- **1 group exhibition**
- **exhibition walk-through with the artists**
- **closing performances**

Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess



[Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess](#) is a Queens-based artist, reiki practitioner, and educator. Her work largely references the Afro-Caribbean folklore and aesthetics that she was immersed in born to parents from Guyana and growing up in Southeast Queens. Culturally and politically a Caribbean nation, Guyana is the only English-speaking nation in South America. Growing up Abrams heard many stories about mermaid sightings in Guyana, as well as other supernatural phenomena that are considered mundane in the Guyanese diaspora as well as other Afro-Caribbean cultures. This contributed to a lifelong fascination with mythical creatures and magical experiences. Inspired by second-wave Black Feminism, her research-based work visualizes Black utopias via mixed media collage, performance, video, and installation, referencing folklore, fantasy, and magical realism from Black Atlantic cultures. Abrams' work often embraces a DIY aesthetic learned from early Hip-Hop culture as well as 90s riot grrrl zines made up of xeroxed cut-outs.

Elvira Clayton



Elvira Clayton is a multi-media artist working across installation, performance, oral history collection, assemblage, collage, sculpture, and performance. Born in Lafayette, LA. Clayton grew up in Houston, TX. Inspired by ancestral reverence, Clayton's practice explores matriarchal lineage, personal, historical, and re-imagined memory. Much of her work is research-based with a focus on people who lived under American slavery, a process through which she honors her own enslaved ancestors. Clayton's art pieces are ritualistic vessels that hold the stories of forgotten people. She is currently focused on a series of research-based works that use slave-era textiles and craft practices to look at and tell stories related to American Slavery.

Zachary Fabri



[Zachary Fabri](#) is an interdisciplinary artist who mines the intersection of his personal life and local community with concerns around cultural commodification, gentrification, and public space. Often complicating the boundaries of studio research, site-specific performance, and social practice, Fabri immerses himself in environments such as Target stores, the Trump SoHo Hotel, and the streets of Harlem. This context-specificity has yielded work that includes drawing, photography, video, performance, installation, and sound art.

“The play and tension between the ephemeral and tangible, the physical and metaphysical, the political and poetic, are essential binaries to be experimented with and deconstructed, writes the artist. “Critical discourse is important to complete the work, as I often embrace themes that need to be unpacked, such as the intersection of race, class, religion, and popular culture. The foundation of my art practice is a daily process of finding intimacy in all things large and small – whether it is a specific neighborhood or the architecture of a building – the work is contingent upon this.”

Helina Metaferia



[Helina Metaferia](#) is an interdisciplinary artist working across collage, assemblage, video, performance, and social engagement through which she tells overlooked stories that center Black bodies in positions of power and vulnerability. Informed by written and oral archives and somatic practices, Metaferia often uses her own body as a medium, as well as the bodies of participants/collaborators in her community. She is interested in how documentation and relics preserve live art in the absence of the artist, expanding the lifespan of the work beyond ephemeral moments and becoming art unto themselves. As an Ethiopian-American, Metaferia's work draws upon traditional African art sensibilities, where art and ritual often intersect, and art objects are infused with an experience or aesthetic that layers their meaning. The subject of Metaferia's interdisciplinary projects has ranged from critiquing the bias in art historical canons that perpetuate myths of Western male exceptionalism; advocating for the overlooked labor of BIPOC women activists; redefining notions of citizenship as it relates to forced (im)migration; and more. In a political climate where Black lives continue to fight to matter, and women courageously call out sexual violence, her work seeks to reconcile with the contradictions of what it means to be American.

Three-month Residency Calendar: April

5: Residency begins and artists meet with RU staff and program guest curator

9: Virtual Welcome Cocktail Hour

14: One-on-one visits with RU curator-in-residence Andrea Bell + Virtual tour of *Lorraine O'Grady: Both/And* at the Brooklyn Museum with Jenée-Daria Strand, Curatorial Assistant for the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art

15: Artist Salon: Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess

20: One-on-one visits with Alaina Simone

21: Artist Salon: Elvira Clayton

22: RU Instagram Takeover by Zachary Fabri

27: One-on-one visits with Sara Reisman

28: Artist Salon: Zachary Fabri

29: RU Instagram Takeover by Elvira Clayton

Three-month Residency Calendar: May

5: Artist Salon: Helina Metaferia

6: RU Instagram Takeover by Helina Metaferia

6: One-on-one visits with RU curator-in-residence Suzanne Vogel

7: Field Trip: Artist tour of the exhibition *Shaun Leonardo: The Breath of Empty Space* at the Bronx Museum

13: Field Trip: *A Higher Power*, Elvira Clayton's first solo exhibition at Yonkers Riverfront Art Gallery

18: One-on-one visits with Isabella Indolfi

20: RU Instagram Takeover by Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess

26: Reading/Discussion group led by Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess

Three-month Residency Calendar: June/July

2: Reading/Discussion group led by Elvira Clayton

3: One-on-one visits with Anne Ellegood

8: In-house artist presentations

9: One-on-one visits with Manon Slome + Reading/Discussion group led by Zachary Fabri

15: Reading/Discussion group led by Helina Metaferia

16: One-on-one visits with Anne Ellegood

19: Field Trip: Juneteenth Jubilee at Fort Greene Park with performances by Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess and Elvira Clayton + the unveiling of a new mural by Helina Metaferia at MoCADA

20-21: Group exhibition installation at Andrew Freedman Home

23: One-on-one visits with Gabriel de Guzman + Group exhibition *Storying* opens at Andrew Freedman Home

26: Opening reception of *Storying* with a walk through of the exhibition by the artists

July 7: Closing reception of *Storying* with performances by the artists inside the exhibition and on the grounds of AFH

Guest Curators/Critics April - June



April 14: RU curator-in-residence **Andrea Bell**'s interests include global modernism and the theory and practice of drawing. She is particularly committed to interrogating the western viewpoint and institutional critique of the post-Enlightenment inheritance. She received her Ph.D. from NYU's Institute of Fine Arts and has held fellowships in both Europe and the United States. Bell's writing has appeared in such publications as *Studiolo* revue d'histoire de l'art de l'Académie de France à Rome, *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures* and the *Americas*, and *Whitehot Magazine* of Contemporary Art. She teaches Art History and Criticism at Parsons School of Design. Bell is co-founder of *Do You Like Art*, an online streaming platform that makes progressive Art History courses accessible to everyone.



April 20: **Alaina Simone** is a gallerist, artist liaison, and consultant. Her practice focuses on the intersection of power, identity, race, gender, and the environment in the United States, Caribbean, and abroad. Since 2009, Simone has worked as an artist liaison to interdisciplinary artists such as Howardena Pindell, Fred Eversley, and Barbara Nessim. She has worked with the Estate of Arman, Merton Simpson, Allan Stone, and James Van Der Zee. Simone is a founding board member for Verbier 3-D Foundation Sculpture Park and Artist Residency Program in the Swiss Alps. She is the producer and co-founder of *Take FIVE (T/5)*, a site-specific exhibition series and an immersive multi-venue installation and performance series in the Caribbean.

Guest Curators/Critics April - June, continued



April 27: Sara Reisman is the Chief Curator/Director of National Academician Affairs at National Academy of Art and Design. From 2014-2020, she was the Artistic Director of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation where she led art and social justice activities and the annual open call grant-making program, curated thematic exhibitions and public programs at The 8th Floor, and organized and edited publications such as *Elia Alba: The Supper Club* and *Mobilizing Pedagogy: Two Social Practice Projects in the Americas* by Pablo Helguera with Suzanne Lacy and Pilar Riaño-Alcalá. Prior to joining the Foundation, Reisman was the Director of New York City's Percent for Art program at the Department of Cultural Affairs, where she managed more than 100 permanent public art commissions across the five boroughs.



May 6: RU curator-in-residence Suzanne Vogel is a French curator based between Abidjan, Ivory Coast and Paris, France. She is in charge of exhibitions and publications at Galerie Cécile Fakhoury, a gallery dedicated to contemporary African artists with locations in Abidjan, Dakar, and Paris. After studying philosophy and political science, Vogel worked for the Editions Gallimard in Paris, for the Quarto collection where she focused mainly on two publications: *La beauté du monde* by Jean Starobinski and *Un concert d'enfers: vies et poésies*, about the lives and works of Rimbaud and Verlaine. She has curated exhibitions for the gallery, including *Silentium*, by Sadikou Oukpedjo, *Innocente* by Dalila Dalléas Bouzar, *Un est multiple* by Elladj Lincy Deloumeaux and *The Souls of Black Folk* by Roméo Mivekannin.

Guest Curators/Critics April - June, continued



May 18: Isabella Indolfi (2020 RU curator-in-residence) is a curator working between Italy, Russian, and Armenia. She is the founder and art director of the Biennial Public Art Festival SEMINARIA, which develops community-based public art projects in unconventional spaces in a small medieval village in the south of Italy. In 2019, she was guest curator of Cyland Media Art Lab for which she curated the International Media Arts Festival *CYFEST12: Chaos & Cosmos*. Indolfi is a member of the Manager Committee of the COST European Cooperation in Science and Technology. She has curated exhibitions at the Hermitage State Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, Cà Foscari University in Venice, Italy, and Cafesijan Museum in Yerevan, Armenia. Indolfi holds an MA in Sociology and New Media from the University La Sapienza of Rome, Italy.



May 19: Monica Montgomery is the new Curator of Special Projects + Programs + Social Justice at the Smithsonian Institution Arts + Industries Building. As an independent curator, she uses her platforms to be in service to society, working at the intersection of equity, welcoming + belonging, and diversity in museums and culture. Montgomery has curated over 40 social justice, contemporary black art and public history exhibitions, experiences, and festivals with the South African Embassy, Brooklyn Museum, Portland Art Museum, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Weeksville Heritage Center and The New School, among others. She is CoFounder and strategic director of the Museum Hue, leading the multicultural organization in advancing the visibility and viability of BIPOC in museums.

Guest Curators/Critics April - June, continued

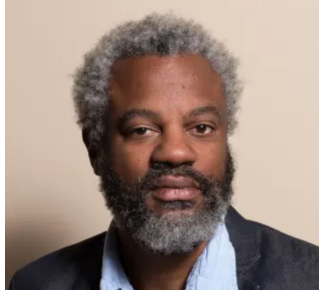


June 3: Anne Ellegood is Executive Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art Los Angeles. She was Senior Curator at the Hammer Museum from 2009-2019, and has held curatorial posts at the Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden in Washington DC and the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City. Ellegood has organized numerous exhibitions, including co-curating *Made in L.A. 2018*, and *Take It or Leave It: Institution, Image, Ideology* (2014). In 2017, Ellegood organized the first North American retrospective of the work of Jimmie Durham for the Hammer, which traveled to the Walker Art Center, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Remai Modern in Saskatoon. She is currently organizing an exhibition with Connie Butler titled *Witch Hunt*, which will present the work of fifteen mid-career feminist artists this fall at ICA LA and the Hammer Museum. Ellegood received an MA in Curatorial Practice from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.



June 9: Manon Slome was co-founder and Curator at Large of No Longer Empty (2009-2020), an organization that sought to engage broader audiences and access for contemporary art through site-specific and community-responsive exhibitions in non-traditional spaces throughout NYC. She was Chief Curator of the Chelsea Art Museum from 2003 -2008 where she worked with such artists as Leon Golub, Mona Hatoum, and Miwa Yanagi and curated the group exhibitions *Dangerous Beauty*, *Such Stuff as Dreams are Made on* and *The Incomplete*. At the Guggenheim Museum (1995-2003), Slome organized *Africa: The Art of a Continent*, *China: 5000 Years* and *The Art of the Motorcycle*. Recent exhibitions include *José Parlá: It's Yours* at Bronx Museum (2020) and *Mel Chin: All Over the Place* (2018). She is currently working on a book that looks back at the 12 years of No Longer Empty, and will serve as a handbook for curators, artists or community organizers looking to work beyond traditional venues and practices for contemporary art.

Guest Curators/Critics April - June, continued



June 16: Hamza Walker is the director of LAXART, a nonprofit visual art space that promotes developments in contemporary culture through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. From 1994 to 2016, he served as Director of Education and Associate Curator at the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, a non-collecting museum devoted to contemporary art. Exhibitions include the *2016 Made in L.A.* at the Hammer Museum (along with Aram Moshayedi), *Teen Paranormal Romance* at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (2014), *Suicide Narcissus* (2013) and *BLACK IS, BLACK AIN'T* (2008), both at the Renaissance Society.



June 23: Gabriel de Guzman is the recently appointed Director of Arts & Chief Curator at Wave Hill, a 28-acre estate in the Hudson Hill section of Riverdale in the Bronx that consists of public horticultural gardens and a cultural center. From 2017-2021, he served as Curator and Director of Exhibitions at Smack Mellon where he curated *Land Akin*, *Empathy*, and *Uproot*, among others. From 2010-2017, de Guzman was Curator of Visual Arts at Wave Hill, where he organized the Sunroom Project Space series for emerging artists, as well as thematic group exhibitions in Glyndor Gallery. As a guest curator, de Guzman has organized exhibitions at Dorsky Gallery Curatorial Programs, En Foco at Andrew Freedman Home, Carriage Barn Arts Center, Rush Arts Gallery, Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance (NoMAA), and the Bronx Museum's 2013 AIM Biennial. He earned an M.A. in art history from Hunter College, City University of New York.

Post-Residency Curators/Critics Visits



July 29: Lumi Tan met with Helina Metaferia as a result of an introduction made during Metaferia's residency at RU. Tan is Curator at The Kitchen, a non-profit, multi-disciplinary performance venue and art space located in NYC, where she organizes exhibitions and produces performances with artists across disciplines and generations. Among the artists she has recently worked with are: Ed Atkins, Glasser and Jonathan Turner, Sam Falls, Liz Magic Laser, Mary Lucier, Sahra Motahlebi, Laurie Spiegel, Danh Vo, Xiu Xiu, and Anicka Yi. Tan previously held positions at the FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Zach Feuer Gallery, and MoMA/PS1. Her writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *Frieze*, *The New York Times*, *The Exhibitionist*, and numerous exhibition catalogues.



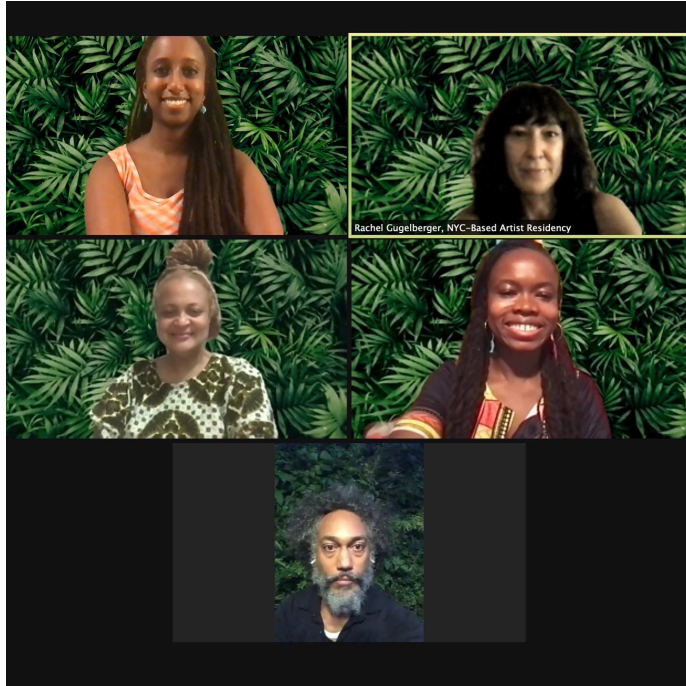
August 3: Corina Reynolds met with Helina Metaferia at her LMCC studio. Reynolds is the Executive Director of Center for Book Arts in NYC where she focuses on connecting artists through a diverse program of exhibitions, panels, conferences, and classes. Her passion for the art of the book has led her to curate exhibitions, organize conferences and panels, publish books, and teach about the book arts in the US and abroad. In 2012 Reynolds co-founded Small Editions, an artists' book publisher and curatorial residency program in Brooklyn, NY with the goal to expand the public understanding of artist's books. At Small Editions she published over 30 artists books, some of which are held in collections at Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.

Post-Residency Curators/Critics Visits, continued



RU curator-in-residence Gabriela Davies is meeting with all four 2021 NYC-based alumni. She is an independent curator and cultural producer based in Rio de Janeiro. From 2016-2021, she was curator and director of Galeria Aymoré, a not-for-profit that showcases contemporary Brazilian art. The clash between communal identities and the visual arts informs her current research around displacement, identity, and the history of the color pink. Davies received an MA in Culture, Criticism and Curation at Central Saint Martins, London and an MA in History of Art from University College London, UK. Davies has served as a juror for the Arte Laguna Prize (2020) and the PIPA Prize (2019, 2018), and for several years she managed talks and conferences for the ArtRio Art Fair. During her residency, Davies is researching art and the digital realm as means to establish a virtual exhibition space that steps away from the Online Viewing Room model and gives way to experimentation and critical discourse.

Program Images. Left: screenshot from discussion group/workshop led by Helina Metaferia. Right: Exhibition site visit at Andrew Freedman Home.



Culminating Group Exhibition

Storying

June 23 - July 7, 2021

June 26, 2 pm: [Exhibition walk-through with the artists](#) followed by an opening reception 3 - 6 pm

Andrew Freedman Home, 1125 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY, 10452

On view Wednesday - Sunday, 12 pm - 6 pm

Curated by RU Guest Curator Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger

The exhibition title *Storying* is borrowed from the words of Kevin Young in *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness* (2012), in which the author speaks to “a shadow book —a book that we don’t have, but know of, a book that may haunt the very book we have in our hands” and to the innovation of storying which “calls into question our very notion of progress” to focus on process instead. Through oral histories, the epistolary form, ritual vessels and a performative time capsule of our current moment, the works in *Storying* recall lesser-known events through processes that yield emotional and political solidarity while honoring the past, as well as accounts that have yet to be written.

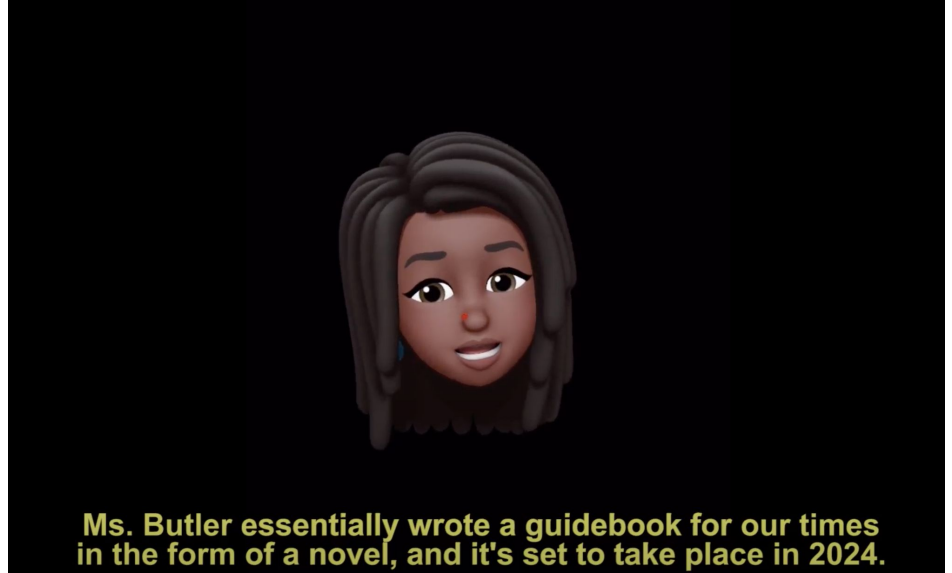
With a sense of urgency in response to the rapid gentrification of the neighborhoods of Southeast Queens, **Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess** developed *A Brief People’s Art History of Southeast Queens*, drawing from oral histories and archival research to preserve the rich art histories of a multicultural community of predominantly (im)migrant working and middle-class Black, Indigenous and people of color. Elvira Clayton employs slave-era textiles and craft practices to tell stories related to American slavery; a process through which she honors her own enslaved ancestors. Hand-stitching texts taken directly from archival and slave-related documents onto her work, she creates ritualistic vessels that hold the stories of forgotten people, committing their life experiences to memory. In *Jimmy’s Hand*, an installation of charcoal drawings and assorted objects, **Zachary Fabri** ruminates on the circumstances of a letter written by activist and writer James Baldwin in 1970 to political activist and author Angela Davis while she was in prison. The installation is the first iteration of a multidisciplinary project, *An Open Letter to My Sister*, that fuses drawing, collage, voice performance, video and sound to activate a discourse around prison abolition. With a focus on Baldwin’s salutation, edits and closing—Fabri generates a series of utterances that express unanimity around the dismantling of systemic oppression. Helina Metaferia’s *Meet Me In The Cloud* is a multichannel video installation generated from a performance that she presented live via Zoom on December 4, 2020, that serves as a time capsule of our fraught moment in U.S. history -- isolation brought through a global pandemic, uprisings for Black lives, an economic downturn, a tense election year. Mining the digital realm, Metaferia has created a compilation of experimental gestures as an inquiry into her overarching question: “How does one survive the perceived apocalypse

Exhibition views, left to right: Zachary Fabri, Elvira Clayton, Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess and Helina Metaferia





Exhibition details left: Zachary Fabri, *Jimmy's Hand*, 2021, Charcoal drawings on paper and wood, table, chair and assorted objects. Right: Elvira Clayton, 2021, *Osnaburg*, twigs, shells, thread, and copied archival photographs.



Exhibition details left: Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess, *A Brief People's Art History of Southeast Queens*, 2021, Paper, fabric, plant medicine and glitter on vinyl. Right: Helina Metaferia, *Meet me in the Cloud* (Act I, detail), 2020/2021, Multichannel video installation.

Closing Performances

Storying Closing Reception and Performances

Wednesday, July 27, 6 - 8 pm

Andrew Freedman Home, 1125 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY, 10452

Performances began on the front grounds of the Andrew Freedman Home with *Rice and Cotton Hands*, an audience engagement work by Elvira Clayton. On the lawn, Helina Metaferia facilitated a participatory performance, which considered embodiment, intimacy, and vitality in our current screen-dependent, tech-obsessed era. Expanding on the research of his temporal installation *Jimmy's Hand*, Zachary Fabri invited visitors to experience a new sound score performed in the interiors of the Andrew Freedman Home. The evening closed inside the exhibition where Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess, embodying Afro-Caribbean expressions of the Divine Femme, collaged alternate realities live to *The Glitter Priestess 90s Girl Reparations Playlist*.



Closing performances/socially-engaged works left: Elvira Clayton, *Cotton and Rice Hands*. Right: Helina Metaferia, *Virtual Garden*.



Closing performances left: Zachary Fabri reading “An Open Letter to My Sister, Miss Angela Davis,” by James Baldwin. Right: Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess collages alternate realities live to The Glitter Priestess’ 90s Girl Reparations Playlist.

Testimonials

The RU Residency for NYC-based artists was amazing. I learned a lot and I was able to connect with a brilliant group of artists and several art professionals from around the country, and also three from Europe. - Damali Abrams the Glitter Priestess

One of the best experiences of my life. - Elvira Clayton

This was my first virtual residency. I had no preconceived thoughts about how it would function entirely over zoom, but I was not really open to exploring dialogue in this virtual manner. However, I was pleasantly shocked by the ease with which I functioned in this virtual space. Zoom wasn't always a beautiful platform to engage with, but its restrictions were outweighed by the benefits of the geographic leisure of one's home. All of this is only true because our cohort was expertly selected and curated. Furthermore, I send the highest praise to Rachel for doing the impossible of coordinating so many schedules, while also facilitating an ongoing group dialogue that continues to resonate. - Zachary Fabri

The 2021 NYC-Based Artist Residency Program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the city council, the Cowles Charitable Trust, and generous support from Mina Aslan, Amika Cooper, Martha Garcia, Georg and Renate Gugelberger, Rose-Marie Labaguis, Reynard Loki, Ed Luscombe, Mica Le John and Michael Taylor, Loren Madsen, Manon Slome and Jeffrey Walkowiak.



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