



BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) announces 2022 Jack Nusbaum Artist Residencies

Five selected artists—Rena Anakwe, The Brooklyn Nomads, Fana Fraser, Smriti Keshari, and Christopher “Unpezverde” Núñez—span multiple genres and disciplines



From top L to R, clockwise: Rena Anakwe, The Brooklyn Nomads, Fana Fraser, Christopher “Unpezverde” Núñez, Smriti Keshari

August 5, 2021/Brooklyn, NY—For a second year, BAM welcomes a broad spectrum of artists across a range of disciplines and backgrounds to its artist residency program. Five compelling artists/artistic teams will receive space and unrestricted honorariums to use in the development of their work. This year’s residencies are supported by Cowen Inc. in memory of Jack Nusbaum, a devoted BAM patron who believed deeply in the principles of mentorship and nurturing the artistic process.

Five members of BAM’s programming team chose the artists through a cross-collaborative and transparent process ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and genres. Those selected for BAM’s 2022 Jack Nusbaum Artist Residencies are: **Rena Anakwe** (interdisciplinary artists/performer); **The Brooklyn Nomads** (a collective of musicians from different cultural and stylistic backgrounds with roots in Middle Eastern and Arabic music traditions); **Fana Fraser** (artist/ performer/director); **Smriti Keshari** (multimedia artist/filmmaker); and **Christopher “Unpezverde” Núñez** (visually impaired choreographer, Joi performance artist, educator, curator, and accessibility consultant). Hi-res images of the artists can be accessed [HERE](#).

“BAM remains committed to nurturing a wide range of artists during all stages of their development,” said BAM Artistic Director, David Binder. “With this program, these artists will be given space and resources to cultivate their work, no matter what phase they are in.”

These dynamic, New York-based artists will receive honorariums and the use of BAM’s rehearsal rooms and theaters including the Hillman Studio/the Fishman Space, and carte blanche access to The BAM Hamm Archives Center. Artists are encouraged to create freely with no obligation to present the work at BAM. The program, which began in 2020-21, represents BAM’s largest artist residency initiative to date and underscores its interest in forging relationships and supporting artists as they create new work and develop their artistic practices.

“On behalf of Cowen and in memory of our colleague, Jack, we are thrilled to contribute to the Jack Nusbaum Artist Residences at BAM,” said Jeffrey M. Solomon, Chair and CEO of Cowen Inc. “The pandemic brought hardship to many industries, but few were impacted as intensely as the arts. We are proud to honor Jack’s legacy and his tremendous impact on our organization by helping to rebuild New York City’s cultural community by supporting BAM and the artists who will benefit from this important program.”

About the artists:

Rena Anakwe is an interdisciplinary artist, performer and healer working primarily with sound, visuals, and scent. Exploring intersections between traditional healing practices, spirituality and performance, she creates works focused on sensory-based, experiential interactions using creative technology.

Most recently, Anakwe was awarded a 2021-2022 MacDowell Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Arts, and is currently a 2020-2021 resident of the Jerome Foundation AIRspace Residency for Performing Artists at Abrons Arts Center. She was a 2020 Radiophrenia commissioned artist, a 2019 ISSUE Project Room artist-in-residence, a 2019 Abrons Arts Center Sound Series commissioned artist, and a 2018 Signal Culture artist-in-residence. She has collaborated, produced, and shown work at New York City institutions including: Engarde Arts/Brookfield Place, Weeksville Heritage Center, Dia Foundation, Fridman Gallery, Knockdown Center, Lincoln Center, MoMA PS1, CultureHub, Pioneer Works, and Montez Press Radio. Most recently, under the moniker A Space for Sound, Anakwe released the first in an ongoing audio series titled “Sound Bath Mixtape vol. 1”, through New York City-based label and collective PTP. Anakwe is based in Brooklyn, by way of Nigeria and Canada.

She is a graduate of: the Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts (MPS), The Actors Studio Drama School at Pace University (MFA) and New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business (BS.) aspaceforsound.com

The Brooklyn Nomads is a cross-cultural band rooted in Arabic music traditions. As a collective of more than 15 musicians from different cultural and stylistic backgrounds, the Nomads explore songs, ornamentations, and improvisation techniques across a geographical region that stretches from West Asia to North Africa, creating a listening experience that captures the energy and richness of that part of the world, and engages in conversation with other musical traditions, including Flamenco, Gypsy, Balkan, Caribbean, Latin, West African, and more. In a world where there is more connection than ever, and more disconnect than ever, the Brooklyn Nomads invite you all to find a home with us.

Fana Fraser is a Caribbean Futurist, interdisciplinary artist, and creative thinker. A 2021-22 Jerome Hill Artist Fellow in Dance, 2021-22 Performance AIRspace Resident at Abrons Arts Center, and 2021 Caribbean/The Future Space resident, Fana was shortlisted for the 2020 BCLF Elizabeth Nunez Caribbean-American Writers' Prize. A full spectrum doula in training, Fraser's movement practice is framed by narratives of eroticism, power, and compassion. Her live performance work has been presented at several venues including Brooklyn Museum, Gibney, ISSUE Project Room, Wassaic Project, Knockdown Center, BAAD!, Trinidad Theatre Workshop and the Dance & Performance Institute. She served as Rehearsal Director for Ailey II from 2016-20 and as a co-director and consultant for Pepatían from 2018-21. Fraser has taught as a guest artist in dance programs at University of the Arts, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Sarah Lawrence College, Adelphi University, University of Georgia, and Appalachian State University. As a performer she has worked with Camille A. Brown & Dancers, Raja Feather Kelly, Samita Sinha, The Metropolitan Opera, Sidra Bell Dance New York, The Francesca Harper Project, Ailey II, Andrea Miller for Hermès, and with Ryan McNamara at Performa 13, Art Basel Miami, Guggenheim Works & Process, Frieze New York, and The ICA Boston. An Honors graduate of the Ailey/Fordham BFA Dance Program, Fraser was born and raised on Kairi, in Trinidad and Tobago.

Smriti Keshari is an Indian-American filmmaker and multimedia artist whose work covers a spectrum of the moving image from traditional, linear filmmaking to art installations and live performance. She brings an experimental approach to exploring under-represented themes and experiences outside the mainstream.

Keshari is an artist-in-residence at Pioneer Works and the National Theatre in London. Her work has been supported by the MacArthur Foundation, Carnegie Corporation,

Ford Foundation, and others. She has spoken about art and social change at the United Nations, the BBC, SXSW, Bloomberg Philanthropy and TED. She was a TED Prize finalist and a 2016 Foreign Policy's Global Creative Thinker.

She is known for her acclaimed multi-media installation, the bomb, which was heralded as “a stunning avant-garde approach to a plea for nuclear disarmament.” the bomb has been shown throughout the world at film festivals (the Berlinale, Tribeca), music festivals (Glastonbury), art institutions, on Netflix and at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony.

Most recently, Keshari's DIS|INTEGRATION, a film created over four years charting the rise and fall of Donald Trump's presidency, premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM).

She is currently in development of the new performance piece, Anatomy of An AI, with the choreographer Bobbi Jene Smith.

Keshari brings a collaborative spirit to all her projects, previously having created work with author Eric Schlosser, artist Stanley Donwood (Radiohead), choreographer Bobbi Jene Smith, musicians Marius de Vries, Matthew Herbert, The Acid, installation designers United Visual Artists, filmmakers Sanjay Rawal, Kevin Ford, amongst others.

Christopher “Unpezverde” Núñez is a visually impaired choreographer, educator, activist, curator and accessibility consultant based in New York City. His performances have been presented at The Brooklyn Museum for The Immigrant Artist Biennale, The Kitchen, Movement Research at The Judson Church, The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, Battery Dance Festival, Performance Mix Festival, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and Dixon Place, among others. His work has been featured in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Dance Enthusiast* and *The Archive*—The Leslie-Lohman Museum bi-annual journal. He has held residencies at New Dance Alliance (LiftOff, 2018), Battery Dance Studios (Space Grant, 2017-2019), The Kitchen (DAP, 2019) and is currently an artist-in-residence at Center for Performance Research (AIR, 2020-2021) and Movement Research (2020-2021 Mertz Gilmore Foundation Artist-in-Residence). As a performer, his most recent collaborations include *Dressing Up for Civil Rights* by William Pope L, presented at MoMA, and *La Procession* by Nacera Belaza presented at Danspace Project. Núñez was invited to share his story as a queer, disabled, and formally undocumented artist during Immigrant Heritage Week 2020 by the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Núñez received his green card in 2018 but he continues to be an advocate for the

rights of undocumented immigrants, particularly those that are disabled and queer. He holds a BFA in Science in Performing Arts from the National University of Costa Rica.

For information contact Sarah Garvey, sgarvey@BAM.org or Cynthia Tate, ctate@BAM.org

Credits:

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