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KARAMU HOUSE AWARDS VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS *ROOM IN THE HOUSE* FELLOWSHIPS

CLEVELAND, Ohio– January 10, 2023: Karamu House has announced that eighteen (18) local artists will receive awards through *Room in the House* fellowship (RITH). With generous support from Cuyahoga County residents through a Support for Artists grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture RITH, artist awards are designed to empower artists' creative practice through a \$5,000 financial award, digital exhibition presence and space at Karamu for creation, exhibition, and performance. Applications for the fellowship were open to Cleveland-based artists with demonstrated commitment to their visual arts or performance-based work and alignment to Karamu's vision of socially and culturally responsive art that celebrates the Black experience.

"We take great joy in this artist program. We hope this award creates bandwidth and allows the artists to expand in ways that will elevate their practice, while connecting them to Karamu's broader community. Our artists are keepers of the cultural flame. We are truly grateful to Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and the residents for providing Karamu with the opportunity to work with these talented individuals." says Aseelah Shareef, Karamu's Vice President & Chief Operating Officer.

2022 *Room in the House* Cohort -

PERFORMING:

Calil Cage, spoken word artist with a desire to share healing while creating a captivating experience. | <https://www.justcos902.com/>

Cornell Calhoun, former Arts & Culture Coordinator for Mayor Frank G. Jackson and the City of Cleveland, Ohio. He is an accomplished and widely applauded actor, producer, film maker, director, and an award-winning playwright. | <https://www.chc3.info/>



Siaara Freeman, celebrated national and international touring poet, writer, and teaching artist. | IG: @bookingsiaaraspeaksalot

Chris Jenkins, performer, educator, and author focused on promoting diversity in classical music nationally and internationally. Musician committed to the performance of classical music works by African American composers; public education for broad audiences about the aesthetic of African American classical music; and support for African American students involved in classical music.

Jeanne Madison, playwright, actor, and member of the Dramatist Guild. 2022-23 Playwright Fellow at Cleveland Public Theatre, 2022 National Black Theater Festival A-List Garland Thompson Sr. Readers Theater of New Works presenter. | <https://www.jeannemadison.com/>

Timar Majors, first generation Liberian-American hip hop artist constantly observing, learning and speaking on the environment to understand patterns of human experience. | IG: @dubyrodgers

Theresa May, active trumpet performer and educator who holds a Master of Music from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor of Music from the University of Dayton. | <https://www.theresamaytrumpet.com/>

Isaiah Pritchard, Cleveland-based dancer, and performer. | IG: @brutalcity_

Chris Webb, globally recognized spoken word artist, an Emmy-winning journalist, and a filmmaker from Cleveland Ohio. | www.chriswebbspeaks.com

VISUAL:

Keith Benford, Cleveland bred director, writer, actor, and dancer, dedicated to telling realistic and thoughtful stories in ways that ignite the audience's imagination and heals the heart of the community at the same time. | IG: @angel.3.7

Joi Carter, painter whose practice is a form of self-care and whose work encompasses Black people in candid moments. | FB: <https://www.facebook.com/joi.carter.52/>

Danny Carver, artist, and art educator who believes art reflects and represents the time, life, society, religion, beliefs, and the emotions of people. Experienced commercial artist using computer graphics technology to educate youth.

Larry Highbaugh, fine-art portraiture specifically, depicting various family structures and dynamics within the African-American community. | <https://www.larryhighbaughtccphotography.com/>

Mary K. Thomas, painter, art therapist and community activist creating place keeping and placemaking art to heal and give hope to our community.



Sharelle Thompson, photographer who investigates cultural identity melded with societal institutions such as family, religion, economy, and government as it relates to the Black experience.

Robin VanLear, visual and performance artist with a focus on engaging the public in art: the making of art, the appreciation of art, and the opportunity to interact with art.

Emanuel Wallace, photographer and journalist from Cleveland, Ohio, who has been the staff photographer for Cleveland Scene magazine since 2014; past contributor to Cleveland.com, Destination Cleveland and the Call & Post, among other outlets. | <http://emanuelwallace.com/>

Aaron Williams, Cleveland-based multimedia artist and entrepreneur blending the aesthetics of contemporary design, traditional painting, and street art to examine topics of social significance related to identity and culture.

On December 14, 2022, the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture board of trustees approved a \$120,000 grant to Karamu House to continue the Room in the House program in 2023. "We are grateful for Cuyahoga Arts & Culture's trust in Karamu's support for artists program and look forward to the 2023 program year. Applications for the 2023 Room in the House Fellowship will open in March 2023.

ABOUT KARAMU HOUSE

Recognized as the oldest Black performing arts institute in the nation, Karamu House is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and featured in the Smithsonian's African American Museum.

Legendary artists including Langston Hughes, Ruby Dee, Robert Guillaume, Ron O'Neal, Bill Cobbs, James Pickens, Jr., Vanessa Bell Calloway, and Imani Hakim have been associated with the 107-year-old "place of joyful gathering" (the meaning of "Karamu" in Swahili.)

Today, Karamu is a beating heart for the entire community, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identification, or age. Core programs include socially relevant and professional quality theatre; arts education programming for all ages; and community programming, such as comedy, live jazz, and spoken word performances, that invites participation and engagement, reflection, and a re-commitment to cultural values.

For more information about supporting Karamu House, visit www.karamuhouse.org/contributions.
Learn more about Cuyahoga Arts & Culture at www.cacgrants.org.

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