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Press Inquiries: 631-324-0806

Samantha Young, syoung@guildhall.org

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GUILD HALL ANNOUNCES THE 2021 COMMUNITY ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE



L to R: Scott Bluedorn, Andrina Wekontash Smith, Brenna Leaver, Julian Alvarez, and Devon Leaver. Courtesy of Guild Hall

May 24, 2021—East Hampton, NY — Guild Hall, located at 158 Main Street in East Hampton, announced today the selections for the 2021 Community Artists-in-Residence program (CAIR), which will include two individual artists, Scott Bluedorn and Andrina Wekontash Smith, and an artist collective with Brenna Leaver, Devon Leaver, & Julian Alvarez. Public programs in association with the residencies will begin in June.

Established in the Summer of 2020, Guild Hall’s Community Artist-in-Residence (CAIR) program aims to support the creative economy, imagination, and civic life of the Hamptons through commissioning three regionally based artists to develop, present, and collaborate on new works. The CAIR program offers artists the opportunity to strengthen and expand their practice in socially engaged and/or participatory work. Artists are provided with creative and administrative support, a paid stipend, and an exhibition or performance platform.

Residents will collaboratively work with Guild Hall’s Learning and Public Engagement staff to realize and produce socially engaged work throughout the residency. This includes aiding in the concept of the work/project, connecting to community groups, curating, or producing final products, and more.

The program culminates with a public exhibition, performance, or presentation during Guild Hall’s Summer season. The presentation may take the shape of a curated exhibition, a staged-reading or performance in our John Drew Backyard Theater, or an outdoor installation on or off the Guild Hall campus.

Scott Bluedorn's residency project will focus on the history, practice, and revitalization of "The Tile Club;" a group of artists from the late 19th century, who met and painted on decorative tiles, often en plein air, on the Eastern End of Long Island. The group included artists such as Winslow Homer, William Merritt Chase and even architect Stanford White.

On the 90th anniversary of Guild Hall, this piece of local art history will be celebrated by the revival of the tradition and an exhibition of the original Tile Club member's work from the Guild Hall Permanent Collection, alongside the contemporary work from community participants in Bluedorn's Tile Club workshops.

Throughout the Summer Season, Bluedorn will guide several open studio workshops and plein-air painting sessions in which participants will work on ceramic tiles. Participants will be asked to donate at least one completed tile to the project for a public exhibition in Fall 2021. A talk will be given during the exhibition to discuss the historic significance of this artist group and highlight the Guild Hall Permanent Collection Tile Club Doors as well as the tiles created by the community during this residency project.

Tile Club: Plein Air Painting Workshops with Scott Bluedorn will take place on select Wednesdays from 5-7pm - 6/30 (Camp Hero), 7/28 (Gerard Drive), and 8/25 (Mulford Farm). **Tile Club: Open Studio Painting Workshops** will take place at Guild Hall on Saturdays, 6/19, 7/17, and 8/21 from 5-7pm.

Throughout the Summer season, resident **Andrina Wekontash Smith** will collaborate on an installation piece with the Guild Hall Teen Arts Council entitled *Racial Undertones: An Exploration of Race on the East End*. The project will be birthed from the explorations they have as a group. Using prompts, readings, and open dialogues as a jumping off point, students will explore their experience, awareness (or lack thereof), of race and racism on the East End.

"The introspection of race and identity has always been a focus of my work," says Smith. "Last summer, I directed a staged reading of *Africaville* at Guild Hall and moderated a conversation after the performance. This talk allowed our cast to share their individual experiences with racism, and the ways in which they channeled those experiences. Afterwards, several people reached out to me and said how much they enjoyed the conversation. It made me realize that there is a void of meaningful conversation regarding race and racism on the East End."

The collective of **Brenna Leaver, Devon Leaver and Julian Alavarez** will be working on a new film project, **Apex Ape**. "The Apex Department Store is an imposing white ziggurat and local landmark in Pawtucket Rhode Island, built in 1969," says Brenna Leaver. "In response to the advent of online shopping, the core of the Apex Department store slowly receded through the years, leading to its permanent closure in 2021. On a warm summer night in 1986, witnesses saw a massive albino ape scaling the side of the ziggurat. The merit of the building--whether nostalgic, or an eyesore--is highly contested, but nobody discusses what will happen to the Ape when his habitat is destroyed. *Apex Ape* will be an original creature and film compiling documentary interviews with local residents, and dramatic footage that captures the Ape's last dance before his home is demolished. *Apex Ape* will explore the death of brick and mortar, and the changing

nature of consumerism through the lens of dead-malls and local legend. It will examine how the inability to adapt to a changing environment inevitably leaves stragglers in the lurch.”

To develop the content, characters, and screenplay, the collective will be hosting several community roundtables with East-End residents regarding the changing face of the Hamptons. Topics will include the death of mom & pop shops, the transformation of East Hampton's store fronts, local legend, and the future of our community. The film will be produced in partnership with LTV and be screened at an off-site location towards the end of August.

“As the pandemic continues to affect artists and our East End community’s ability to work and participate in the arts, we are thrilled to expand the CAIR from a reactionary initiative to a pillar of our Summer 2021 program at Guild Hall. We are so excited to welcome and support this new group of artists through this program.” says Anthony Madonna, Guild Hall’s Patti Kenner Senior Associate for Learning and Public Engagement.

Education Programming is supported by The Patti Kenner Arts Education Fellowship, Lucy and Steven Cookson, The Hearthland Foundation, the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, plus funding from the Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Endowment Fund, and The Melville Straus Family Endowment.

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ABOUT GUILD HALL

Guild Hall, one of the first multidisciplinary centers in the country to combine a museum, theater, and education space under one roof, was established in 1931 as a gathering place for community where an appreciation for the arts would serve to encourage greater civic participation. For nine decades, Guild Hall has embraced this open-minded vision and provided a welcoming environment for the public to engage with art exhibitions, performances, and educational offerings. Art and artists have long been the engine of Guild Hall’s activities and the institution continues to find innovative ways to support creativity in everyone.

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For more information about this and other programs, visit www.guildhall.org.