

PERFORMANCE SPACE ♥ NEW YORK STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026



ABOUT PERFORMANCE SPACE

Over the last 40 years Performance Space has been propelling cultural, theoretical, and political discourse forward. Futurity and world-building connect the interdisciplinary works presented here—works that have dissolved the borders of performance art, dance, theater, music, visual art, poetry and prose, ritual, night life, food, film, and technology, shattering artistic and social norms alike.

Founded in 1980, Performance Space New York (formerly Performance Space 122) became a haven for many queer and radical voices shut out by a repressive, monocultural mainstream and conservative government whose neglect exacerbated the emerging AIDS epidemic's devastation. Carrying forward the multitudinous visions of these artists who wielded the political momentum of self-expression amidst the intensifying American culture wars, Performance Space is one of the birthplaces of contemporary performance as it is known today.

As the New York performing arts world has become increasingly institutionalized, and the shortcomings within our industry were further revealed during the ravages and transformations of 2020, our focus has been not just on presenting boundary-breaking work but on restructuring our own organization towards prioritizing equity and access.

We seek to build deeper relationships with our artists and communities by creating new access points. Through annual town halls and guest-curated programs such as John Giorno Octopus and First Mondays, we welcome the public to actively shape our future and help us hold ourselves accountable. Programs like the revived Open Movement and the new Open Room invite the community in and reclaim the institution as a rare indoor public space in the ever-more expensive East Village.

Our search for new models is an embrace of the unknown—and an acknowledgement of transformation as a process of continuous inquiry, imagination, response, and accountability. Mirroring the spirit of experimentation artists have brought to our spaces across four decades, we strive towards something which does not yet exist. We believe this focus on changing the conditions in which art is made is just as fundamental as the art itself, and only serves to make it more substantial.

02020, the year-long project during which a cohort of salaried artists were invited together with the staff and board to re-envision Performance Space, initiated this transformation, and itself rapidly reshaped to meet artists' and community members' needs amidst the early days of the pandemic and uprising for racial justice. 02020 was a new beginning for us, a sharp and needed turn back towards artists to help rethink the institution for the future.



WHO WE ARE

STAFF

Constanza Armes-Cruz, Producer
KC Athol, Audience Services Associate
Paula Bennett, Senior Manager Institutional Partnerships
Sarai Frazier, Derek Lloyd Production Fellow
Yolene Grant, Communications and Marketing Manager
Pati Hertling, Deputy Director
Alex Reeves, Creative Technologist
Jazmin Romero, Programming Coordinator
Jenny Schlenzka, Executive Artistic Director
Ana Beatriz Sepúlveda, Head of Community Access and Inclusion
Andy Sowers, Production Manager
Kirsten Sunderland, Development Associate

COLLABORATORS

Strategy Group: Monica Mirabile,
Jonathan González, Jackson Polys, Sarah
Michelson, Ana Bé Sepúlveda.

BOARD

Roxane Gay, President
Suzanne Geiss, Vice-President
Meaghan Gragg, Treasurer
Debbie Millman, Secretary
Kerstin Brätsch
Nicole Eisenman
Jonathan González
Sophie Mörner
Ted Oberwager
Jackson Polys
Poppy Pulitzer
Frank Spelman

Colin Self



HOW WE GOT HERE

At the start of 2020 Performance Space committed to rewrite its Mission Statement, Vision, and Strategic Plan to adapt to the current needs of our community. This process included the participation of artists, current and former staff, board of directors, audience members, foundations, donors, neighbors, and peer organizations who have been in community with us through the years.

This Strategic Plan was drafted in collaboration with the Strategy Group (a working group formed by 02020 Cohort members and Staff) to map the strategies through which Performance Space intends to realize the five affirmations in our mission over the next 3 years. This is a collaborative work in progress.

MISSION

YES to ARTISTS

YES to RISKS

YES to COMMUNITY

YES to EVERY BODY

YES to _____

VISION

Performance Space New York is committed to supporting the intersecting and evolving roles of artists, arts workers, and communities in creating, presenting and amplifying radical artwork and art practices. Performance Space is dedicated to an ethic of accessibility, accountability, risk taking and trusting the voices of every person.

Alice Sheppard



OUR CURRENT CHALLENGES

ARTISTS: Forge deeper relationships with Artists. Create a space where they feel supported, welcome, and have agency within the organization.

ART: Support the creation of radical art by welcoming experimentation and risk taking.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: Steadily dismantle exclusionary structures by seeking the intersectional leadership of those who are most impacted by interdependent systems of disadvantage and therefore best understand how to undo these systems.

PUBLIC: Foster a more open, transparent and welcoming atmosphere where artists, community and audience members from all backgrounds can participate.

SUSTAINABILITY: Create a 3-5 year plan to finance our new goals and encourage long-term stability.

A dramatic, low-key photograph of two men in a dark setting, pulling on a dense, tangled mass of thin, gold-colored threads. The man on the left, with dark, curly hair and a beard, has several small gold and blue clips attached to his face and hair. He is wearing a dark, short-sleeved shirt. The man on the right, with long, straight dark hair, is also wearing a dark shirt. The threads are pulled taut between their hands, creating a complex web of lines that catch the light. The man on the left has a prominent tattoo on his right forearm. The overall mood is intense and artistic.

YES TO ARTISTS

Julie Tolentino and Stosh Fila

What does YES to ARTISTS mean at Performance Space New York?

Performance Space aims to foster care, accessibility, active listening, transparent communication, and integrity in all our relationships with artists and their work. We involve artists in leadership, programming decisions and strategic organizational planning to create deeper, long-lasting relationships with more trust and experimentation.

We commit to the following:

- Performance Space will commission artists from all backgrounds and contexts and in diverse media with a focus on underrepresented practitioners. We are developing an equitable fee structure for artists.
- We provide more time in our spaces to develop work and, if desired, specialized producers to address artists' specific needs.
- Artists' visions are honored above all else in regards to when, where, and in what medium their artwork is made and how it interfaces with the public.
- Artists participate in shaping our program through the Open Movement, Open Room, John Giorno Octopus Series, Keith Haring Lecture Series, First Mondays, Indigenous-led Programs and Disability Justice focused programs and activities.
- Artists will have direct participation in the board of directors and strategic planning by holding 50% of the board seats.

Martine Gutierrez

YES TO RISKS



What does YES to RISKS mean at Performance Space New York?

We commit to taking organizational, programming, and financial risks in order to experiment and institute new structures that better represent artists, arts workers, and the ever-expanding communities we serve. In order to support this kind of work, we aim to build equitable support structures for artists, art workers, and intersecting communities.

We commit to the following:

- Give unequivocal support for artists even when work is politically challenging or threatens funding.
- Nurture a culture of open communication and mutual respect that anticipates and prepares for the conflicts that can arise from risk taking.
- Practice accountability by sharing our vision, goals, and strategies at the annual Town Hall and assess what works and what doesn't so we can readjust accordingly.
- Foster a culture of experimentation through testing out new strategies and ideas focusing on those that advance our goals and discarding those which no longer align with our shared goals.

niv Acosta and Fannie Sosa

YES TO COMMUNITY



What does YES to COMMUNITY mean at Performance Space?

We understand our Community as an ever-evolving group of constituents who are galvanized and connected by the means of culture at Performance Space New York. As such we continuously create new points of access for community members so they have agency within the organization.

We commit to the following:

- We employ a Head of Community Access and Inclusion to create more access points within Performance Space for formal and informal uses, and opportunities for more community-centered programming.
- We offer two open, publicly accessible spaces and programs for communal use. Open Movement serves as a free space for lo-fi rehearsals and the cross-pollination of ideas. Open Room is intended as an accessible space for people to build community and define the space and its use.
- Community members are invited to participate in Performance Space's ongoing strategic work through our annual Town Hall and other direct lines of communication with our Staff.
- In addition to more artist seats on our board, we will create a board seat for an active community member who is familiar with the needs of our communities.
- We will join a consortium of small art non-profits to work on a climate justice proposal and start reducing Performance Space's carbon footprint.

Kia Labeija

YES TO EVERYBODY



What does YES to EVERYBODY mean at Performance Space?

We are working toward creating more ACCESS to programs, spaces, employment, and leadership positions by committing to the following:

- Focus on ensuring an accessible, inclusive, and sustainable environment for all artists, arts workers, and community members and especially those who have been historically excluded, such as BIPOC, poor and working-class, queer and trans, and disabled people.
- Work with our disabled community on a continued basis to advance our accessibility measures beyond ADA compliance.
- Ensure that Performance Space's DEIA strategies are devised, tested, and implemented across all positions and departments of the organization.
- We commit to working intergenerationally; engaging groups of all ages across our artists, staff, and community.
- Create a virtual platform that increases accessibility of our program for people who are physically or geographically unable to attend in-person and support artists whose work is native to digital environments.
- Offer affordable ticketing with a sliding scale.
- Create new curatorial and technical fellowships that offer educational and research opportunities to aspiring curators and production workers from underrepresented communities.
- Performance Space commits to transparent salary ranges and clear criteria for promotions and raises.
- Staff is welcome to all board meetings. Non-leadership staff will have a representative on the board who reports on staff-related matters at every board meeting.
- Performance Space will find new ways to connect to peer organizations, students and other researchers globally through the development of an online, publicly accessible archive of its key learnings from the 02020 project.

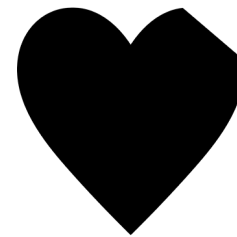
YES TO _____



What does saying YES to _____ mean at Performance Space?

Our community members have direct influence on the future of Performance Space and we actively invite them to share ideas and hold us accountable to change. The fifth affirmation is left blank to signal an open ended conversation with our communities.

What else should Performance Space say YES to?



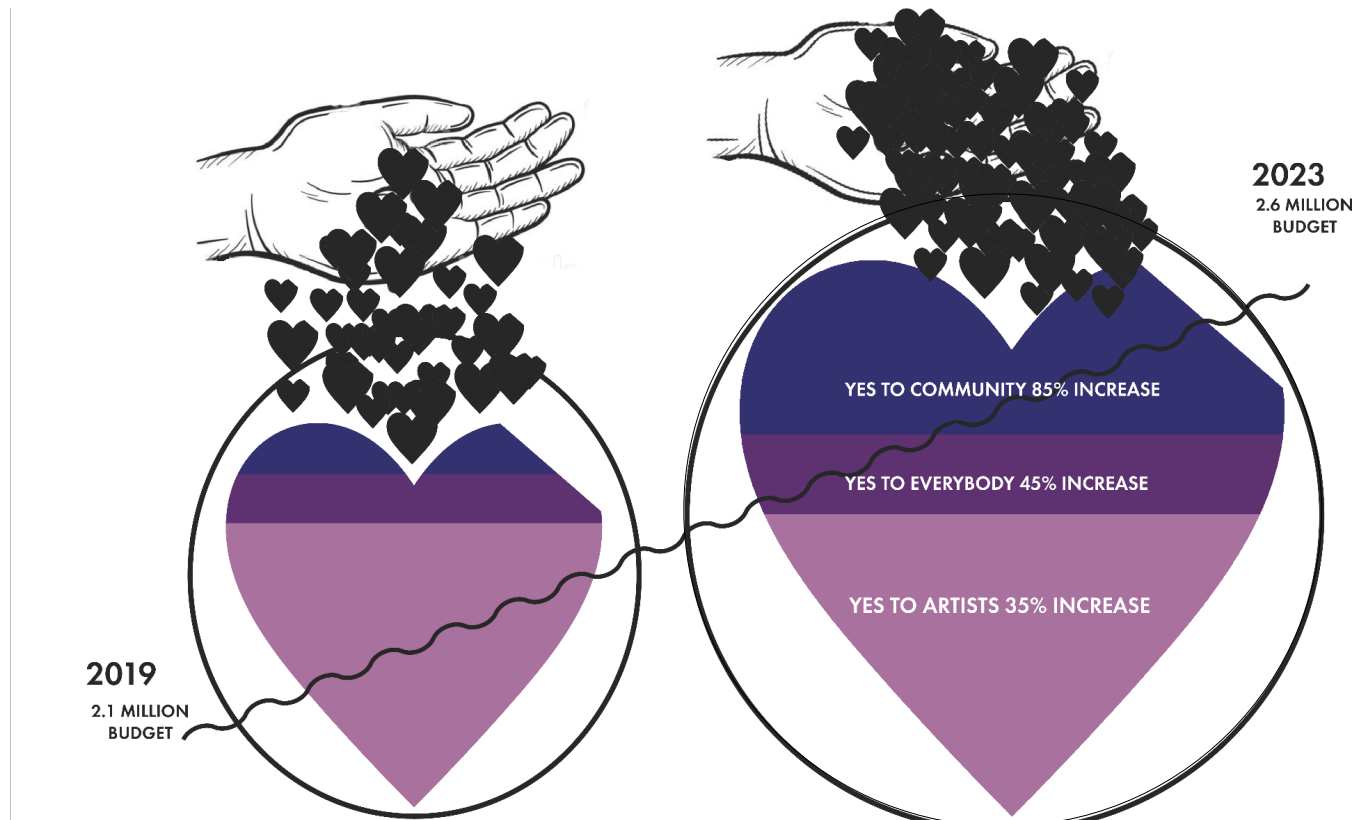
FINANCIAL VISION



Juliana Huxtable and Hannah Black

BUDGET INCREASE

In order to implement the Strategic Plan, Performance Space has been increasing its annual operating budget from 2.1 million to 2.6 million with the support from foundations, donors, and an artist-led benefit exhibition.





COMMUNITY CENTERED PROGRAMS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Derek Lloyd Production Fellowship

A one year fellowship opportunity to advance the career development of emerging technical artists in the performing arts.

Keith Haring Curatorial Fellowship

A two year fellowship opportunity for intellectually curious individuals, with or without formal academic training, who wish to pursue a curatorial career.

Open Movement

A weekly Sunday program, organized by Monica Mirabile, that offers movement improvisations and artist-led workshops of embodiment, dance, and performance exploration in Performance Space's theatres.

Open Room

A publicly accessible space for communal use. Community members are welcome to propose activations.

We the Youth - Keith Haring Lecture Series for Kids

A lecture series for children and their friends and families to meet luminaries who talk about ideas and social issues that are often left off of school curriculums.

John Giorno Octopus Series

This series invites artists and guest curators to organize an evening-length program with several artists working in any number of disciplines.

First Mondays - Readings of Works in Progress

A monthly series, organized by Sarah Schulman, where a selection of writers are invited to read and share their works in progress.





Photo credits in order of appearance:

rafa esparza, *bust: indestructible columns*, 2019. Photo by Natalia Mantini.

Precious Okoyomon, *FRAGMENTED BODY PERCEPTIONS*

AS HIGHER VIBRATION FREQUENCIES TO GOD, 2021. Photo by Da Ping Luo.

Colin Self, *Tip the Ivy*, 2022. Photo by Maria Baranova.

Alice Sheppard performing at *I wanna be with you everywhere*, 2019. Photo by Mengwen Cao.

Julie Tolentino and Stosh Fila, *bury.me.fiercely.*, 2019. Photo by Christelle de Castro.

Martine Gutierrez, *Circle*, 2019 Photo by Maria Baranova.

niv Acosta and Fannie Sosa, *Choir of the Slain (part X)*, 2019. Photo by Maria Baranova.

Kia Labeija, *Untitled, The Black Act*, 2019. Photo by Julieta Cervantes.

Ariana Reines, *DIVINE JUSTICE*, 2022. Photo by Rachel Papo.

Hannah Black and Juliana Huxtable, *Penumbra*, 2019. Photo by Rachel Papo.

ALOK speaking at We the Youth - Keith Haring Lecture Series , 2022. Photo by Santiago Felipe.

Jerron Herman performing at *I wanna be with you everywhere* festival. Photo by Mengwen Cao.

PERFORMANCE SPACE NEW YORK

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What else should Performance Space say YES to?

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