



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**651 ARTS Announces Details for its Spring 2023 Season Programming
Liminal Spaces: Homebound**

Programs and Initiatives Include:

3 RITES Roots Party

Portals: Traversing Black Continuums

Virtual Griot: Season 2

651: Song Salon

651 ARTS' Third Annual Juneteenth Celebration

Towards a Generative Theater: Works-in-Progress

**The Woodshed Network Residency Program for Women in Jazz
Created and Led by Jazz NEA Master Dee Dee Bridgewater**

**Institution Prepares to Celebrate its 35th Anniversary and Move into its
First-ever Permanent Home in Downtown Brooklyn in Spring, 2023**

(Brooklyn, NY – January 19, 2023) – 651 ARTS, Brooklyn’s premier institution for the African Diasporic performing arts, today announced details for the Spring 2023 programming part of its 2022/2023 season - “**Liminal Spaces: Homebound.**” Centered around the concept of liminal spaces (a metaphorical, physical or emotional place a person is in during a transitional period), this season's programming explores how these spaces have historically acted as a conduit to imagine and create more sustainable futures for Black people worldwide and offers an opportunity to think - individually and collectively - about “*how we will show up in the future that we imagine.*” Additionally, this season will mark two very important milestones for 651 with the legacy institution celebrating its 35th Anniversary this year and preparing for the grand opening of its first-ever permanent home located in the heart of downtown Brooklyn in late Spring/Early Summer 2023.

Signaling a major step forward in its continued growth and expansion, the core of 651 ARTS' Spring Season sees the institution deepening its artistic collaborations and expanding its programmatic footprint to include an exciting mix of new works, the launch of a new series as well as signature events and residencies. The season will kick off in February with 651's Residency programs including *Towards a Generative Theater: Works-in-Progress* – an initiative that will gather 651's resident artist cohort to explore the creative process of black theater-makers and the artists' journey from a liminal space to a finished work (February 4) and *The Woodshed Network*, a mentorship and career accelerator program now in its fourth year held in partnership with NEA Jazz Master and music legend **Dee Dee Bridgewater** for emerging self-identifying women artists in Jazz (February 27 - March 10).

In April, 651 will present choreographer, educator and curator **Edisa Weeks' 3 RITES Roots Party** - an interactive making and conversation space where audiences are invited to join the multi-disciplinary artist in her journey of making 1,865 roots out of paper and twine for the performance installation, 3 RITES: Liberty (April 1). The following month, the institution will premiere choreographer and STooPs founder **Kendra J. Ross'** new work **Portals: Traversing Black Continuums** examining everyday items that serve as portals to oscillate between Black past, present and the Afro-future (May 6, 2023). Also in May, the organization will launch a brand new series with **651: Song Salon** which centers artists in intimate conversations, musically and otherwise. Each Thursday in May, artists will be invited to share their performance or process in front of an intimate audience (May 4, 11, 18 and 25). For its Digital Suite programming, 651 will present the second season of **Virtual Griot** chronicling the story of 651 ARTS in preparation for the institution's move into its new Downtown Brooklyn home and the celebration of its 35th Anniversary (May 22 – June 12). "**Liminal Spaces: Homebound**" will culminate with the return of 651's annual **Juneteenth Celebration** – now in its third year - to be held over the course of the weekend commemorating Juneteenth (June 17-18).

"For 35 years, 651 ARTS, as an institution, has navigated both literal and figurative liminal spaces--and is now homebound. This season allows us build on that rich legacy, representing where we are at this threshold and in this space of transition and where we are going," said 651's Executive Director, **Toya Lillard**. "As 651 moves into a new physical space and into its 35th anniversary year, we look ahead toward a Black future – futures where we may survive and thrive. In that vein, we intentionally curated this season to reflect 651's space and role as an incubator for Black artistic creation and to set a new stage for Black artistry

In late 2022, **651 ARTS' launched its Home Warming Campaign**. The initiative is seeking to galvanize support around the organization's efforts to transform its new home into Downtown Brooklyn's premiere hub. Home Warming draws inspiration from the community-centered practice of bringing food, gifts, and good cheer to a new home with the goal to infuse its new space with the passion, enthusiasm, and generosity of 651 ARTS supporters as it embarks on this new chapter. Marking a watershed moment in the institution's history, the new 12,500 sq ft., multipurpose facility at 10 Lafayette will help to expand 651's programming and gather the multiple communities it serves in ways never before possible.

SPRING 2023 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

Towards a Generative Theater: Works-in-Progress

Date: February 4, 2023; *Time:* 5PM

Location: Weeksville Heritage Center - 158 Buffalo Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11213

651 ARTS will present a special event under its **Towards a Generative Theater (TAGT)** program – an initiative that considers the unique development, producing, and presenting needs for experimental Black theater. Made possible through the generous support of **The Black Seed Fund**, the primary objective of TAGT is to create a dynamic home for contemporary multi-disciplinary Black generative theater artists, as well as for Black theater critics, scholars, and audiences.

For *Towards a Generative Theater: Works-in-Progress*, 651 ARTS will gather its resident artist cohort - **April Matthis**, **Eric Lockley** and **Goldie Patrick**- to discuss their unique careers and art-making practices while defining generative theater and presentation within Black spaces. The artists will also present excerpts of the works they are currently developing with the aid of the grant. The presentation of these works will be followed by a panel conversation between artists, organizational leaders, archival specialists, and Black theater critics. In addition to the Cohort, panelists will include **Vinson Cunningham** (staff writer and theatre critic at The New Yorker) and **Lindsay A. Jenkins** (culture consultant, dramaturg, producer and educator). The discussion will be moderated by **Robyne Walker Murphy**.

The Woodshed Network

Date(s): February 27 – March 10, 2023

Location: Online

The Woodshed Network (TWN), led by NEA Jazz Master and music legend **Dee Dee Bridgewater** and artistic director and associate director **Tulani Bridgewater-Kowalski**, will return in Spring, 2023 - marking the program's fourth year. TWN program was conceived by Bridgewater as a mentorship and career accelerator program for emerging self-identifying women artists in Jazz through mentorship, knowledge-sharing, community interaction, professional development sessions and networking. TWN is a legacy program with deep roots in 651 and embodying the 651 values of cultivating artists and community

651 ARTS PERFORMANCES

Virtual Griot: Season 2

Date(s): May 22 – June 12, 2023; *Time:* 7PM

Location: Online (www.youtube.com/651ARTS)

651 presents the second season of *Virtual Griot* - an original digital series featuring performing artists in the role of Griots as they deliver powerful messages from their neighbors to the people in their neighborhoods. This season will chronicle the story of 651 ARTS in preparation for the organization's move into its new Downtown Brooklyn location. This year also marks 651's 35th

Anniversary! 651 ARTS is a legacy organization born in Brooklyn, NY in 1988 as an answer for a call to create programming that centers and values the performing arts and cultures of the African Diaspora. This season of *Virtual Griot* is dedicated to the capturing and telling of that legacy. Virtual Griot seeks to commemorate and bestow these stories upon new generations to preserve the stories of the Culture and its communities.

3 RITES Roots Party

Date: April 1, 2023; *Time:* 2PM

Location: Bed-Stuy Art House - 198a Lewis Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11221

651 ARTS presents **Edisa Weeks'** popular *Roots Party*, an interactive making and conversation space. Audiences are invited to join the multi-disciplinary artist in her journey of making 1,865 roots out of paper and twine for the performance installation, 3 RITES: Liberty. During the Roots Party people can come and go as they please, make roots, and enjoy a meal. The Roots Party includes the release of the first two Zines in a series of 3 RITES Zines.

651: Song Salon

Date(s): May 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2023; *Time:* 8PM

Location: TBD

651 ARTS will launch its new 651: Song Salon series which centers artists in intimate conversations, musically and otherwise. Historically, salons have played an important role as safe spaces where Black artists and creatives come together to gather, discuss and express themselves. The Song Salon is a supportive community, a place for creatives to try new things, revisit old things or simply to talk through things.

Each Thursday in May, artists will be invited to share their performance or process in front of an intimate audience. Artists for the inaugural season include: **Nicholas Ryan Gant (Ghetto Falsetto)** and **Candice Hoyes** with more to be announced.

Portals: Traversing Black Continuums

Date(s): May 6, 2023

Location: TBD

651 ARTS, in partnership with choreographer and STooPs founder **Kendra J. Ross**, will premiere *Portals: Traversing Black Continuums*, a dynamic multi-disciplinary dance work-in-progress and a multi-sensory journey through time, space, generations, and dimensions. Conceived by Ross, the show examines everyday items that serve as portals to oscillate between Black past, present and the Afro-future and delves into individual and communal experiences of those items to transport us across generations. Throughout the piece, Ross uses her Sankofic praxis-process inspired by the Ghanaian Akan term of looking back in order to understand how to intentionally move forward. Employing a fascinating range of portals including candy, salt and even Crown Royal bags, audiences will take a site-informed journey to collectively uncover traditions to a created Black Time Capsule, *Portals* reinforces 651 ARTS' commitment to the documentation, preservation and celebration of Black Arts and Culture - formed with movement, text, and dialogue. This program is created and led by Kendra J. Ross.

651 ARTS' Third Annual Juneteenth Celebration

Date(s): June 17-18, 2023

Location: The Plaza at 300 Ashland Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217

651 ARTS presents the ***651 ARTS' Third Annual Juneteenth Celebration***, an annual commemoration of African-American emancipation featuring a weekend of performances and activities. The Celebration will span over the course of two days and will be held outdoors at the institution's future home. This event is free and open to the public. Registration is required.

Since its founding in 1988, 651 ARTS has become a trusted convener of contemporary African Diasporic artistic expression, a champion and nurturer for emerging artists and their work and a vital cultural resource for its surrounding community. As it moves forward, part of 651 ARTS' mission is to preserve the legacy of Black culture in Brooklyn, celebrate the eclecticism of Black performance and to pioneer new visions of African Diaspora artists. This year – the transition year – is integral for the institution as it continues to lay the framework that will further help to reinforce 651 ARTS' role as a leader of African Diasporic culture while also establishing it an incubator for artistic innovation in the 21st century.

For additional information, please visit: www.651ARTS.org. For exclusive photos, updates and more, follow us on social: [@651ARTS](https://www.instagram.com/651ARTS)

About 651 ARTS

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651 ARTS' programs are made possible by gifts from generous individuals and grants from the The Bay and Paul Foundations, Baisley Powell Elebash Fund, The Black Seed, Con Edison, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Howard Gilman Foundation, Lambent Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New York Community Trust Mosaic Network & Fund, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, and Wallace Foundation. 651 ARTS is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council. This program is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

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