

DIFFERENTIAL EQUATIONS

NO LONGER

EMPTY

EMPTY





NO LONGER



EMPTY

**NO LONGER EMPTY EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Prepared for**

No Longer Empty  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



No Longer Empty's education programs underwent a transformation from 2017 to 2018 to place more emphasis on community involvement at every level of our education and curatorial practice. This report documents those findings.

In response to requests from teen participants for more intergenerational programming, we developed a pilot project that, in turn, revealed a resounding call for more opportunities for creative expression for young people in East Flatbush — from after-school arts programs to neighborhood events and public art projects.

This report explores and evaluates the goals of and impact made by our signature programs, reflects on how our education model enriches the lives of youth and elders with whom we work, and outlines next steps in continuing the development of our Education Matrix Model.

# NO LONGER EMPTY MISSION AND MODEL

A young visitor crafting his own sugar building in a workshop inspired by Brendan Jamison and Mark Revels' sculpture *Sugar Metropolis*, New York (2014) for the *If You Build It* exhibition. Photo: Whitney Browne.

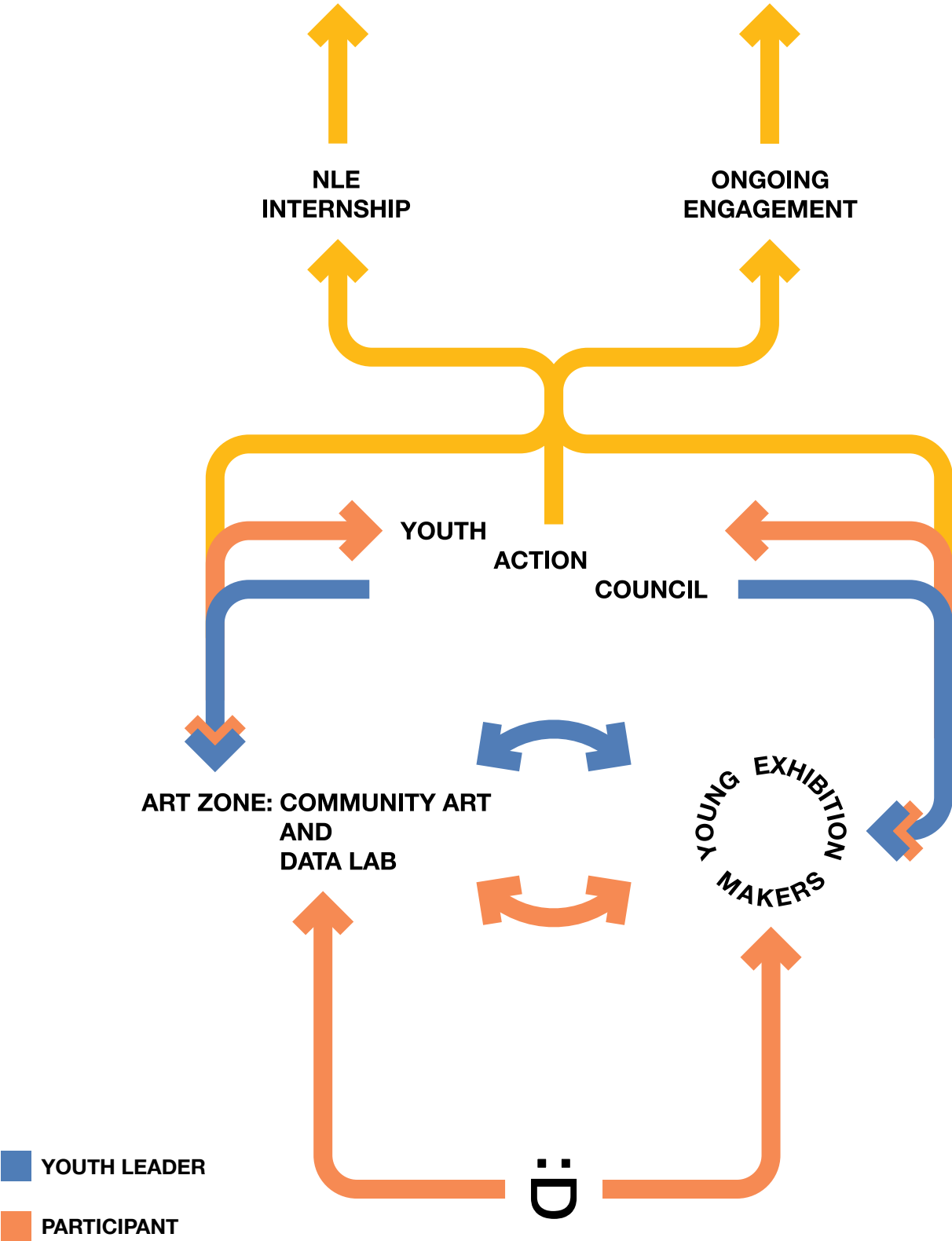


No Longer Empty curates site-responsive exhibitions, education and public programs in unconventional locations across New York City. Community engagement is central to this model and we work with a diverse group of neighboring residents, curators and artists in the co-creation of all aspects of our programming. By amplifying existing local networks and cultural resources, we are able to create and nurture artistic platforms for intergenerational collaboration and dialogue around social, cultural and political issues.

A synthesis of community interviews and site research drives the curatorial process, which aims to surface histories and local narratives. We meet and listen to members of the community — artists, residents, organizations and businesses — and distill local input with our own research to create an exhibition theme and related programming. Our work prioritizes the ways in which art acts as a catalyst for community-led conversations about place, local identities and visions for the future.

Since 2009, we have worked in unique urban spaces alongside community collaborators to foreground arts education as a tool for understanding, expression and amplification of existing community networks. Our site-responsive education programming, youth art exhibitions, and mentorship opportunities have inspired New York City's youth and families throughout the five boroughs to share their voices through collective storytelling and the re-imagination of public space through art. We consider ourselves accountable for collective participation and make every attempt to remove geographic, language and cultural barriers in order to incorporate the diversity of local audiences.

# NO LONGER EMPTY EDUCATION PROGRAMS



We have developed a Matrix Model that envisions various points of entry and continued development for the youth with whom we work. The model has youth entering through either our Young Exhibition Makers or ART ZONE programs, returning as peer mentors and continuing mentorship with staff through our Youth Action Council, internship programs and ongoing engagement.

*ART ZONE: Community Art and Data Lab* (ART ZONE) is an intensive, one-month intergenerational program for high school students (ages 14 to 18 years old) and elders (60+) to collaborate in forming a community think tank. Participants develop their own research methods (under the tutelage of No Longer Empty staff and teaching artists) and work with artists and designers to explore how local histories and desires can be expressed and amplified by the arts, and how the arts can be used as a resource by a neighborhood's different populations. Upon completion of the program, a designer produces a tangible creative project (i.e. a deck of cards, series of printed material, etc.) with significant input from program participants.

*Young Exhibition Makers* (Y.Ex) is a 15-week program that trains local high school students (ages 14 to 18) in all elements of exhibition making, from curation and installation to docent tours and exhibition management. Arts mentoring, youth leadership and real-life work experience are the pillars of this program; students learn creative writing, (public) art history, public speaking/oratory skills and media literacy through working closely with curators, artists and community leaders.

*Youth Leaders:* Alumni join Y.Ex or ART ZONE as a teen peer leader to engage further with our education programs.

*Youth Action Council* (YAC) is an academic year-long youth development program for teen alumni to continue their engagement by connecting with artists, scholars and activists to explore the intersections of the arts and social justice. Through workshops, facilitated discussions and skill-building exercises, YAC combines leadership development, political education and art-making. Engaging in cross-city conversations with other youth leaders, YAC develops two public events during their tenure, one of which is centered around engaging with other teens across New York City.

All of our youth programs offer stipends for participation.

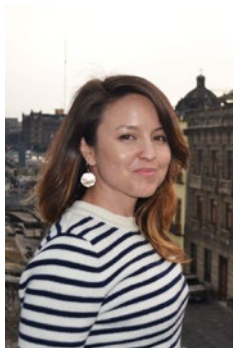
**PROJECT TEAM**



**MICA LE JOHN**

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, NO LONGER EMPTY**

Mica is a writer, educator, researcher of critical pedagogy and STEAM advocate. In her time at No Longer Empty, Mica has initiated the organization's Young Exhibition Makers program and Youth Action Council. Mica's work uses an intersectional lens to explore the relationships between art, education and social justice, and her writing is centered around the (de)construction of identity, space and temporality.



**SARA GUERRERO-RIPPBERGER**

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT,  
MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**

In her time at No Longer Empty, Sara Guerrero-Rippberger initiated the organization's first Community Advisory Council, ART ZONE: Community Art and Data Lab, and Fellowship in Education and Public Engagement. As Deputy Director of Education and Community Engagement at Museum of Moving Image, Sara is building upon her background as founding manager of the New New Yorkers Program at Queens Museum and draws from her doctoral studies on the social impact of video art production from urban Arab and Latin American art collectives.

# INTRODUCTION



In 2017, Health + Hospitals / Kings County (H+H / Kings County) in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, invited No Longer Empty to lead a program of our own design inside the former emergency waiting room, CG-91. The month-long program **ART ZONE CG-91: Community Art and Data Lab** (ART ZONE), incorporated an art exhibition, an intensive intergenerational community research project and public programming to engage local stakeholders including neighborhood residents and hospital staff. The month of July was dedicated to asking residents how arts programming could serve as a beneficial resource for their neighborhood.

Following the success of ART ZONE, No Longer Empty and H+H / Kings County engaged in deeper conversation about the types of creative and participatory spaces desired by community members. This resulted in a second collaborative project in room CG-91 in the following year: **Young Exhibition Makers** (Y.Ex), a paid program developed to train local high school students (ages 14 to 18) in all elements of exhibition making, including curation, installation, docent tours and exhibition management.

For the Spring 2018 program, we invited anti-violence youth organization, Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI), which had already been providing daily after-school programming for local middle school students at H+H / Kings County, to join us in carrying out the Y.Ex program. Over the course of three and a half months beginning in March 2018, 24 youth worked together to develop *A Story to be Told*, an exhibition exploring six, self-selected themes: Black identity, community violence, family matters, mindfulness, teenhood and gender equity. Here, Y.Ex began to expand on the findings from summer 2017 and built a series of programs that engaged a diverse range of community members, including hospital patients and other local youth.

The following stories, lessons and discoveries illustrate the ways in which any institution can create a space for conversations and connections using the arts as a means to community and individual well-being.

# SITE: H+H / KINGS COUNTY

<sup>1</sup> *History*. H + H / Kings County. Retrieved from <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/kingscounty/history/>

<sup>2</sup> Groves, S. (2018, February 22). Despite Historically Low Crime Across New York, East Flatbush Still Plagued By Violence. Retrieved from <https://bklyner.com/east-flatbush-violence/><sup>3</sup> Kings County Hospital 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Strategy

<sup>3</sup> New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. (2013). 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Strategy: Kings County Hospital. Retrieved from <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/kingscounty/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/08/chna-kings-county-2013.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. (2013). 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Strategy: Kings County Hospital. Retrieved from <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/kingscounty/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/08/chna-kings-county-2013.pdf>

In 2015, as part of a larger initiative to incorporate creativity and the arts into the larger campus, the hospital began talks with No Longer Empty to explore bringing a site-specific art exhibition to one of their vacant hospital buildings. These conversations led to the decision to build foundational educational programs as a way to research the space and engage with the community before developing a large-scale exhibition. This began in 2017 with the collaborative pilot project ART ZONE and continued in 2018 with the Y.Ex exhibition, *A Story to be Told*.

Additionally, in recent years, the hospital has hosted artist-in-residency programs from organizations like Residency Unlimited and Beautiful Distress, as well as a host of art therapy programs for patients and staff. From these experiences, the hospital has learned there is a desire from patients and caregivers for individual studio art spaces where patients can escape the sterilized aesthetic of a hospital and focus on the arts as a path towards self expression and wellness.

Since 1871, H+H / Kings County has been the setting for stories of both great triumph and great challenge. Founded as a state-funded public project to help an underserved community<sup>1</sup>, it became the site of the nation's first open-heart surgery and the first Trauma 1 unit. Cited in trauma surgery publications since the early 1900s and in local city-lore as the place where police officers asked to be sent in the event of a gunshot wound, the hospital's history has been shaped by the growing presence of violence in urban communities — East Flatbush's murder rate per capita is more than three times the NYC average<sup>2</sup>. Community members and surgeons initiated local violence prevention projects to reduce the recidivism associated with recurrent violent injuries. The hospital is still the only Level 1 Pediatric Trauma unit in Brooklyn and now includes affordable housing units and a nursing home on the campus<sup>3</sup>.

H+H / Kings County serves the surrounding communities of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Canarsie/Flatlands, East New York, Brownsville, Flatbush/East Flatbush, Lefferts Gardens and Prospect Heights. The racial and ethnic makeup of this area of Brooklyn is largely Black and Latinx (94%) with large populations from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Guyana, Barbados, as well as many South American and African countries<sup>4</sup>. H+H / Kings County offers its services in over 39 different languages to serve the needs of this diverse community.

Several spaces within the larger Hospital campus are currently unused or under-utilized due to lack of funds to keep them up to code for medical use. A shared hope amongst many staff members, patients and nearby residents is that funds could be raised to transform some of these areas into community art spaces to function in tandem with the hospital's medical and art therapy services, as seen in their partnerships with many arts organizations, including ours.

**ART ZONE CG-91:**

# **COMMUNITY ART AND DATA LAB**



Young visitor experiencing Shervone Neckles' *Give and Take* (2016) at ART ZONE CG-91, 2017. Photo: Josh Geyer.



# THE POWER OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

Over the course of four weeks in July 2017, a group of 22 teens and four elders from the surrounding neighborhood took a journey with No Longer Empty, hospital staff, a group of local artists and a social designer to transform a once-sterile, unused hospital space into a vibrant laboratory for generating and displaying community research. ART ZONE became an open space to think, talk, share and heal.

What happens when you ask a group of people what kind of new art space they would like for themselves, their neighborhood and the public spaces that surround them? In the summer of 2017, we set out to answer this question in room CG-91, located on the ground floor of Building C in H+H / Kings County.

Never before had the hospital had such a diverse group of local stakeholders convened to develop a new creative space together. ART ZONE welcomed over 700 visitors, many of whom became regulars and 200 of whom were interviewed by the core Lab participants about their desires for more arts-based community resources. Participants collaborated with artists and designers to engage with local residents and hospital staff to imagine how art and wellness fit into an equation for solutions to problems facing our cities, such as economic inequality, displacement, distrust of institutions, gentrification and loss of connection.

CG-91 became an exciting space for exploration and discovery where high school students presented their report on over-policing to local officers; elders shared their stories of struggle and success with teens; hospital staff were interviewed by previous patients about their needs for art and safety at work; and every corner of the room was covered in artwork. Through learning to conduct research in collaboration with neighbors, the program participants and our team grappled with these issues head-on.

***Please see Appendix 3 for information about the outreach and selection process.***

In order to conceptualize the borders of a neighborhood, participants engaged in conversations around the understanding of space and community that they, interviewees and hospital staff have about H+H / Kings County and the surrounding area. Decisions on where neighborhood lines should be drawn were often difficult to agree upon by participants: from Prospect Lefferts Gardens through East Flatbush and into Brownsville, it became clear that the intersections of history, politics, immigration and socio-economic differences have had a major impact on how these areas are perceived by both outsiders visiting and the residents themselves.

<sup>5</sup> New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. (2018). Creative Aging. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcla/programs/creative-aging.page>



## THE EXHIBITION: ART ZONE CG-91

In order to create a platform for the exploration and conversations to be had in the space, No Longer Empty staff (Rachel Gugelberger, Manon Slome and Sara Guerrero-Rippberger), curated an exhibition that featured the work of local artists, Shervone Neckles and Ezra Wube. The content was chosen to reflect the lively landscapes of people, buildings and energy of East Flatbush's past, present and future. The exhibition included:

- Two walls adorned with the beaded velvet and gold threaded handiwork of Shervone Neckles (*Give and Take*, 2016 and *Terciopelo: Bush Woman Collar Installation*, 2016) along with embroidered panels in the hallway outside of CG-91 (*Terciopelo: Healer*, 2016; *Terciopelo: Offering*, 2015-16; *Terciopelo: graine a base feuille*, 2014-16). The art intervention recalled the summers the artist had spent growing up as a child between East Flatbush and the Caribbean.
- A participatory portrait and stop-motion animation set *Flatbushtopia / A place to be* (2017) by local artist Ezra Wube. Visitors were asked to write or draw their knowledge of or favorite places in the neighborhood. Visitors also participated in constructing a diorama with objects, maps and drawings and then made changes based on their wishes for the neighborhood, tracing the real streets of the community with their imaginary dreams. The project concluded with a stop-motion animation of the process.
- A lounge area nestled between artworks and piles of textiles, plants, and vintage scientific equipment, which became a comfortable meeting and drawing place that invited participants to brainstorm and create together.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM: COMMUNITY ART & DATA LAB

The intergenerational component of ART ZONE grew out of requests from the young people who took part in our Jameco Exchange exhibition the prior summer. After interacting with such different publics, they wanted more opportunities for collaborative learning with people of all ages (especially elders). A four week curriculum was developed, centered around four main themes — community wellness, data collection through the arts, exhibition-making and public engagement — with an emphasis on developing deep-listening techniques.

In the early stages of program development, we felt that heeding the requests of teen alumni and incorporating an intergenerational element by inviting elders to the program would open dynamic and impactful opportunities for participants. The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs is exploring new channels for creative aging<sup>5</sup> and the concept appealed to us, aligning with the organization's community-responsive mission and model. The voices of a diverse group of East Flatbush youth and elders enriched the program in a meaningful way as evidenced in post-program feedback. Trusting that differences in experience and interest would lead to positive outcomes, participants were selected across a broad range of criteria including age, race, access to the arts and more.



Once the program began, a group of 26 participants sought to explore such questions as: What kind of new art spaces do people desire? How can these spaces add to community wellness? In an effort to find answers to these questions, participants surveyed the wider communities of staff and patients at the hospital, as well as surrounding neighborhood residents, in a variety of ways.

The vast majority of the teen participants were not engaged in the arts outside of the program and had never conducted community research. For many, their role in ART ZONE was their first job and first paycheck. The elders offered nurturing and knowledgeable support to the teen participants and many of the elders had an active personal interest and involvement in the arts and community development outside of ART ZONE. For the elders, their time in ART ZONE enabled them to strengthen their skills of working with a younger generation while also exploring their own creativity. Within the cohort, seventy percent of all program participants had never worked or learned in a multi-generational setting before. By the end of the program, many expressed the sentiment that “even though we are different ages, we still have a lot in common” (Justice Hamlin-James, teen participant).

# COMMUNITY ART AND DATA LAB CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Detail shot of *Flatbushtopia / A place to be* (2017) by Ezra Wube, 2017. Photo: Josh Geyer.



# CONDUCTING RESEARCH, DEFINING ART AND EXPLORING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

## *Central Elements of the Program:*

- Participants researched and assessed community needs under the guidance of a social designer, a community educator, a group of curators and a teaching artist.
- Participants' creative exploration of community was grounded in an understanding of neighborhood expertise and qualitative methods of inquiry, valuing community knowledge and experience as qualifiers for data collection.
- Over the course of the summer, images and words referencing survey and interview answers were written across a giant chalkboard — titled “Public Archive of Stories and Dreams” — which grew over several walls of the emergency room (see pages 30–32).
- “Public Archive of Stories and Dreams” transported visitors upon entry into a busy creative hub with designs, sketches, opinions, questions, thought-maps and solutions offered by community members.
- A mosaic of colorful Post-it notes with comments from passersby ushered visitors into the room by marking the entrance to the space, asking them to contribute their thoughts and feelings about the relationship between individuals, art and community wellness.



# PUBLIC ARCHIVE of

Over the last 2 months,

We asked 100 ppl in the neighborhood

How Old are you?

83

70

68

58

45

36

29

19

13

What pronouns

he/him

her/she

Where were you

Haitian

Brooklyn  
NY

Read about them here w/ our Public



# DREAMS & STORIES

How can the arts be  
used as a resource for  
community wellness?

What do you want  
from an art exhibition in  
your neighborhood?

Whose stories  
could be reflected  
and told  
in a  
neighborhood  
art exhibition?

Neighborhood to Share dreams, desires, & local stories w/ US.

What do you use?

No  
Preference

They/Their

What is your ethnicity?

3

African  
American

Where were you born?

What is your neighborhood?

Flatfish

Brownsville

Flatfish

Flatfish

Public Archive of dreams & Stories!

PUBLIC  
ARTS.

Gardens

PUBLIC  
space





**“Public Archive of Dreams and Stories,” generated by ART ZONE participants, 2017. Photo: Josh Geyer.**

<sup>6</sup> Original unit and lesson plans written by former No Longer Empty Director of Education and Public Engagement and art historian Sara Guerrero-Rippberger

<sup>7</sup> In valuing participant’s knowledge base, we defined “citizen researchers” as all who were members of a community based on a sense of association and belonging (as opposed to government terminology, anthropological inquiry or academic pedigree)

<sup>8</sup> Original unit and lesson plans written by artist/writer and current No Longer Empty Director of Education Mica Le John

<sup>9</sup> Bloom’s taxonomy is an educational classifying model that evaluates student cognitive, affective and sensory responses. This ranges from assessing comprehension of subject matter to student response to the subject itself.

<sup>10</sup> Socratic questioning models explore issues, ideas and problems in order to isolate aspects both known and unknown in order to find the truth in discourse. It challenges one to probe more into what answers are being given, as well as how the receiver interprets them.

<sup>11</sup> Social identity mapping incorporates reflection on three broad components of self: given, chosen, and core, and how they influence our lives and interactions; <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/sites/default/files/resources/Social%20Identity%20Mapping.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> The America Project: A Teaching Method for Collaboration, Creativity and Citizenship, 2009, “a multimedia guide to arts-based and artist-driven public exploration of the meaning of engaged citizenship”; <http://www.mappinternational.org/blocks/view/292>



## **LAB CURRICULUM<sup>6</sup>**

- Focused on four core themes:
  - Community wellness
  - Collecting community data through the arts
  - Community exhibition-making
  - Public engagement and programmatic design
- Comprised of activities that guided participants to becoming citizen researchers<sup>7</sup> and collectors of community data.
- Involved practicing the designing and leading of exhibition components such as displays, interactive installations, public programs, and tours.
- Highlighted the importance of including access for visitors with special needs, creating multi-sensory tours (including consideration for low/non-sighted visitors) and inquiry-based, thematic exploration of the exhibition space.
- Involved exploration in game design, the creation of gallery guides and collaborative map-making with social designer Manolo Ampudia.
- Incorporated workshops with artists who have a practice at the intersections of wellness and community.

## **DEEP LISTENING CURRICULUM<sup>8</sup>**

- Woven into the daily curriculum and influenced by:
  - Mindfulness practices and music composition,
  - Bloom's taxonomy<sup>9</sup> and Socratic questioning models<sup>10</sup>,
  - Social identity mapping<sup>11</sup> and
  - Teachings of the late poet and scholar Sekou Sundiata<sup>12</sup>
- Contained activities designed to enhance participants' interviewing process by examining bias, inferring meaning outside of the constraints posed by set questions, and developing and testing survey questions based on answers and critique.
- Included guided meditations, writing assignments, group work, and art-making activities.



**Robin contributing to a collaborative wall hanging, which used a social identity mapping activity to inspire participation, 2017. Photo: Josh Geyer.**

<sup>13</sup> "Man can learn nothing except by going from the known to the unknown" from *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (1865). Claude Bernard, French physiologist, wrote extensively throughout his career about what makes a scientist a true discoverer, and a scientific theory valuable.

## COMMUNITY ART AND DATA LAB IN EAST FLATBUSH

Over the course of four weeks, participants built connections with each other and the hospital while learning to use arts methods to collect community data about the desires and dreams of the many diverse and overlapping surrounding social networks. Each week, participants received training in a new learning module of citizen research, overseen by staff.

The program was conducted in an intensive collaborative format and participants were able to quickly establish relationships that strengthened and evolved throughout the program as they learned new skills together. In order to conduct their research, participants learned “by going from the known to the unknown” (Claude Bernard)<sup>13</sup>, gaining in-depth knowledge and understanding of their community through daily immersion.

*Week 1: **Design*** and implementation of arts-based community data research, using site-specific and social methods (i.e. ethnography activities conducted around the hospital, community-centric visual probes created from local imagery).

*Week 2: **Research collection*** and gathering of data from neighbors on community desires and demographic information through interviews, surveys and focus groups.

*Week 3: **Examination*** of emerging themes and results, culminating in the creation of a visual report in the form of an interactive game and small exhibition.

*Week 4: **Presentation*** of results and public engagement with participants curating and hosting a festival at the conclusion of the project.

Digital documentation and storytelling played a key role in the daily activities of ART ZONE and participants created a digital archive using iPads and iMovie software. Each week’s content was documented by the participants in a digital diary, which can be found online ([artzonecg91.tumblr.com](http://artzonecg91.tumblr.com)).

As a final element, participants were honored in a graduation ceremony, where stories of achievement and challenge were shared amongst this newly formed community. Letters of recommendation, award certificates and stipends were given to the 26 participants as a symbol of gratitude and appreciation for the work they conducted over the month of July.

Following the program, a designer developed a deck of cards in collaboration with program participants as a permanent object that could be used as a piece of ephemera from the project in addition to a teaching tool.



## GUEST SPEAKERS AND VISITING ARTISTS

*Manolo Ampudia:* Multidisciplinary designer with expertise in human-centered design, strategic planning, product design, data visualization and digital/print design. Resident Social Designer at ART ZONE.

Led workshops around design thinking, game design and community mapping; Designed “The Bold Truth,” a card game and teaching tool inspired by the work of program participants.

[manoloampudia.com](http://manoloampudia.com)

*Ashley Bass:* STEAM, Design & Technology advocate whose art projects are centered around wellness and different forms of healing with a focus on underserved communities.

Led “What’s your remedy?” workshop with participants (creating herbal remedy collages) and installation of their work in their space.

[about.me/ashleybass](http://about.me/ashleybass)

*Steven John “Doctor Sweatpants” Irby:* Photographer and founder of *Street Dreams Magazine*, a print and digital magazine that shares the photographic work and stories of artists around the world.

Artist presentation and discussion around public art and print media.

[instagram.com/stevesweatpants](https://www.instagram.com/stevesweatpants)

*Tattfoo Tan:* Artist who collaborates with the public on issues relating to ecology, sustainability and healthy living. His work is project-based, ephemeral and educational in nature.

Hosted ART ZONE participants in his Staten Island studio space for a ritual centered around personal objects; held workshop on last day of program with participants to create their own mystical cards in the style of his New Earth Resiliency Oracle Cards.

[tattfoo.com](http://tattfoo.com)

*Emmett Wigglesworth:* Muralist, painter, sculptor, fabric designer, poet and civil rights activist. Wigglesworth is known for his abstract and colorful murals inspired by his cultural heritage and life experience.

Led creative thinking and art-making activity with participants grounded in collaboration, cooperation and play.

[weusiart.com/emmett-wigglesworth](http://weusiart.com/emmett-wigglesworth)

# DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>14</sup>

ART ZONE participants created a weekly archive of their experience in the program to document what they learned and saw, 2017.  
Photo: Josh Geyer.



## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

In the early stages of program development, No Longer Empty felt that incorporating an intergenerational element could open dynamic and impactful opportunities for participants. We believed that by welcoming the voices of a diverse group of East Flatbush youth and elders, the program would be greatly enriched and enable new collaborations to take place.

ART ZONE was a time of experimentation and conversation for both No Longer Empty Staff and program participants. In order to explore the needs and wants of the community, we grounded our work within local knowledge systems. We believe the survey results reflect this deep probing and immersion.

<sup>14</sup> All participant and visitor demographics were self-reported



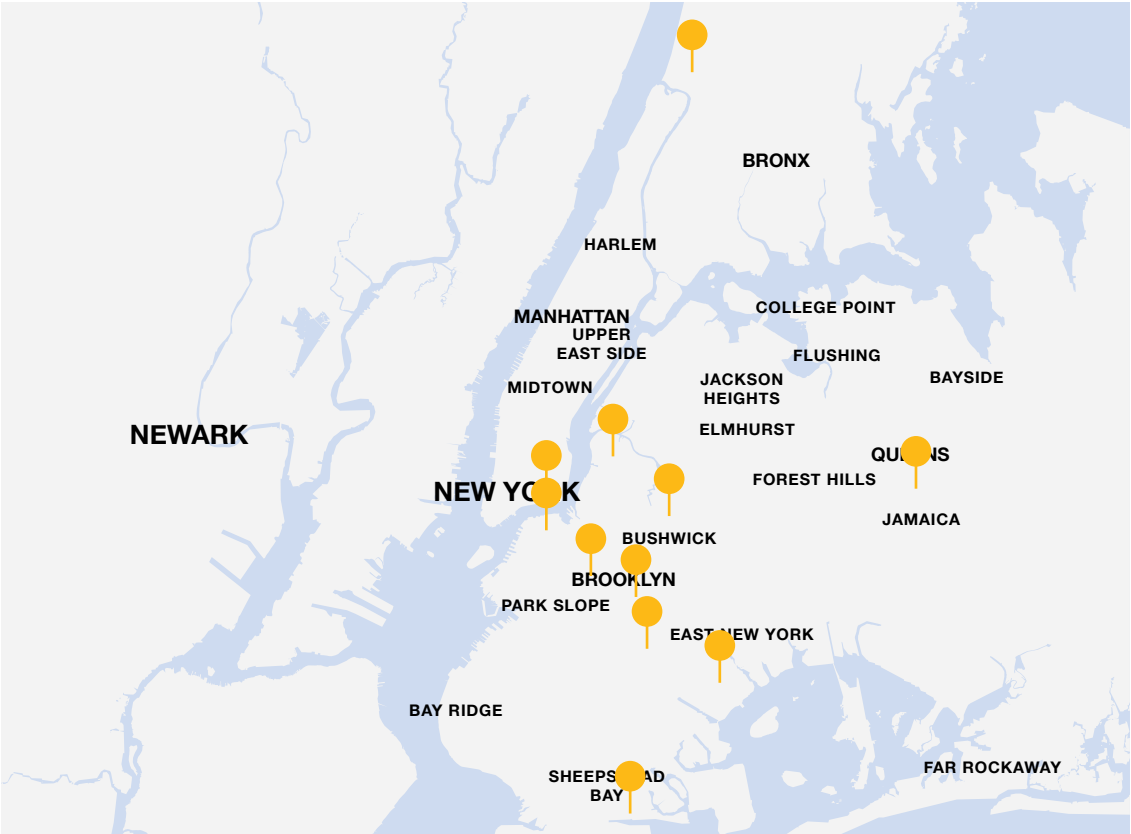




**PARTICIPANTS LIVED IN....**

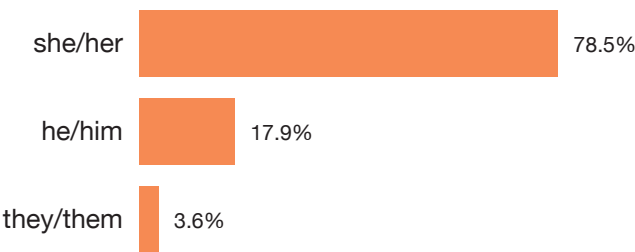
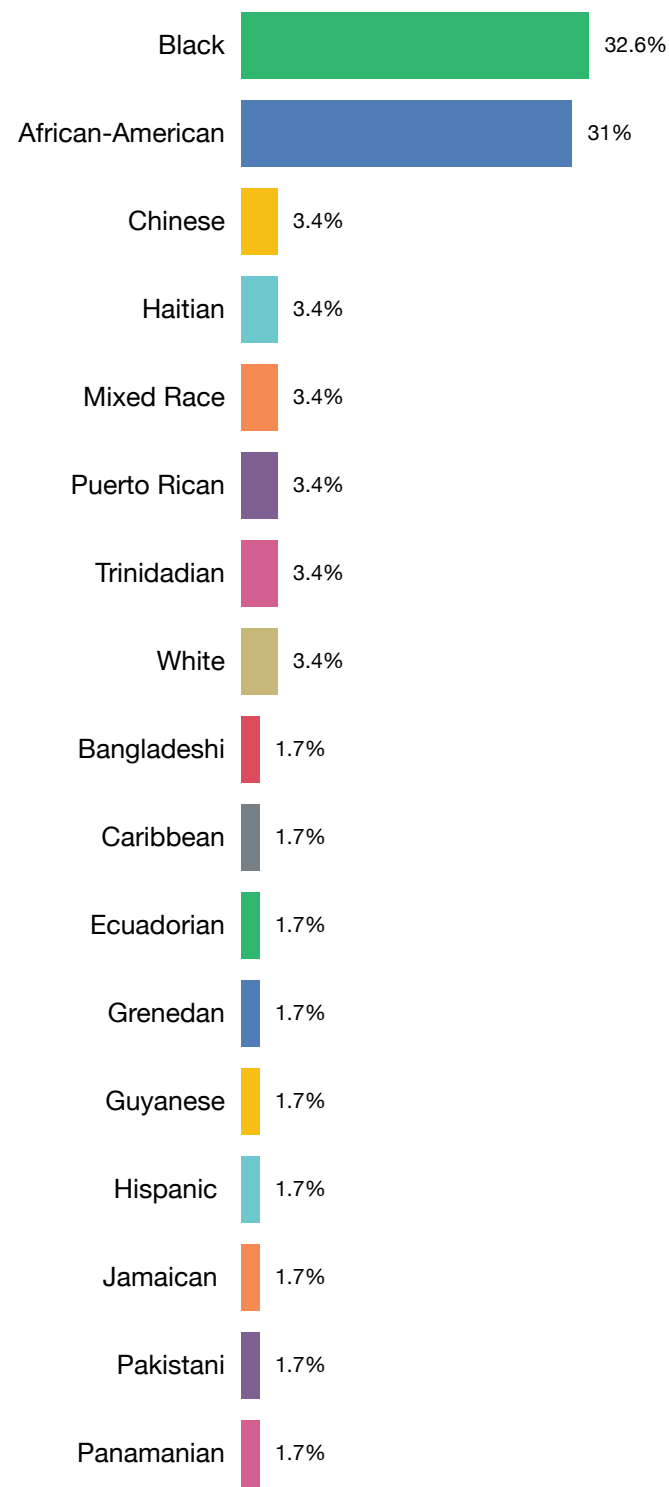


**TEEN PARTICIPANTS WENT TO HIGHSCHOOL IN...**

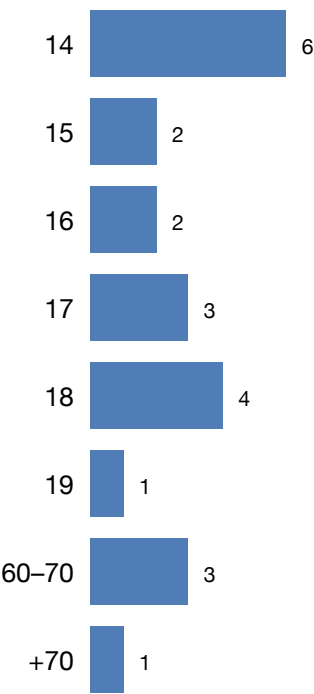




PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED AS...



PARTICIPANT AGES





## VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS

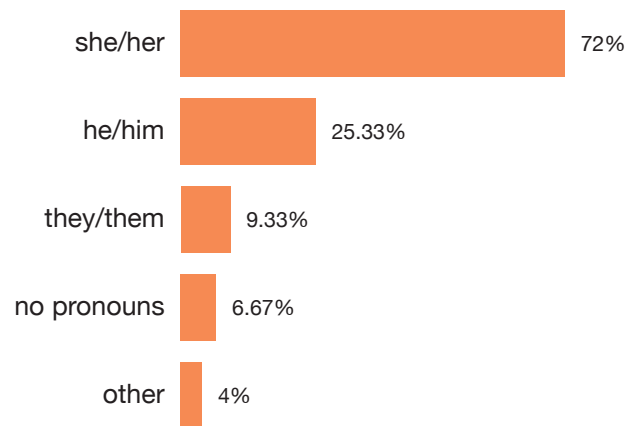
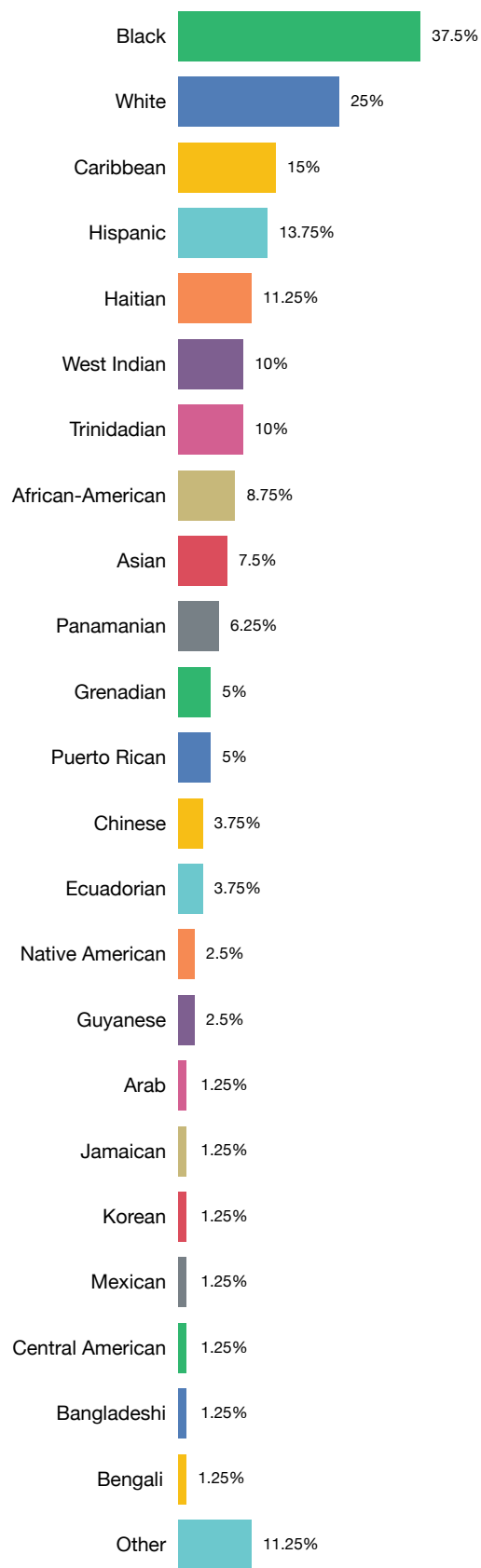
The intergenerational aspect of the program was reflected in visitor demographics. The majority of visitors were highschool age and many elder visitors joined them in seeing the space. Visitors came from all over the five boroughs of New York: from Marine Park in South Brooklyn to Jamaica, Queens; from Greenpoint, Brooklyn to Parkchester in the Bronx. Almost 10% hailed from the neighborhood surrounding the hospital and 17% of visitors came from Brownsville.

### VISITORS WERE FROM...

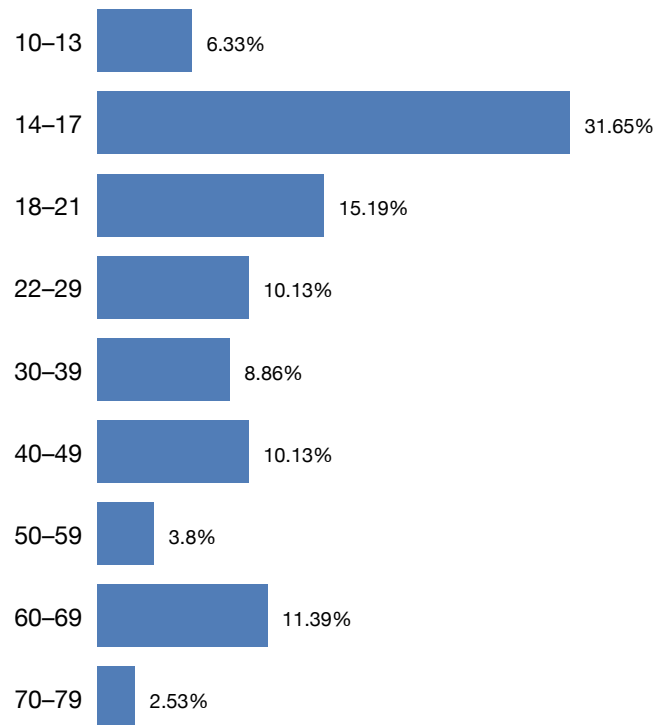




VISITORS IDENTIFIED AS...



VISITOR AGES



**FINDINGS**



In total, ART ZONE collected 200 responses to a survey related to the workshops and tours held in the space, the identities of those surveyed and the dreams of the community. The following illustrates findings for four main questions asked of local respondents through surveys, interviews and programmatic questionnaires. Completed by visitors, community members and program participants, the findings offer a selection of what community members in East Flatbush desire from a new local art space, the types of resources they want to exist and the aspects of their community they would like to see change.

A resounding cry for more community focused art spaces was sounded, particularly for ones that encourage intergenerational activities, especially in the creation and maintenance of community green spaces. Many offered solutions of public art projects to revitalize spaces, more time and places to make art for those who have little opportunity and more inclusive art activities for all ages, cultures, and abilities. Additionally, many respondents voiced a desire to see less poverty, crime, drugs and violence in their communities, and for these elements to be replaced with live music events, community centers that encouraged local youth development and art programs for children and teenagers. Quite a few responses also included calls for more performing arts spaces (especially dance) as well as opportunities for youth-focused art exhibitions and contests.

***A detailed report of answers to the survey questions can be found in Appendix 2.***



## KEY WORDS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS ABOUT THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS

*What does art bring to a community?*

Seeing Making Expression Togetherness  
Gathering Health Friendship Sharing  
Creativity Happiness Dance

*What would you like to see less of in your community?*

Graffiti Negativity Drugs Gangs Abuse  
Garbage Police Violence Crime  
Poverty Gentrification Homelessness

*What would you like to see more of in your community?*

Peace Planning Green Space Sense of Community  
Togetherness Art People Interacting Programs  
Cleanliness Jobs Music Events

*What kind of new art experiences would you like to see in your community?*

Public Graffiti Inclusive Murals  
Accessible Culture Community Painting

## RESULTS

**“I loved working in a hospital and bringing art into a unique space like that because every time I went to the program I felt like I was helping people heal.”**

— 17-year-old program participant

## **PROGRAM RESULTS**

### **UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY DESIRES**

Throughout ART ZONE it became evident that the rich cultural and artistic traditions of East Flatbush are very much alive and vibrant, however, the spaces for expression of these forms remain underrepresented.

Participants and respondents overwhelmingly expressed a desire for more opportunities to connect with creative arts practices and to build community across the dividing social lines of age, nationality, language and art genres. Of the visitors to the program, 40% had never been to an art exhibition before.

### **DEFINING “COMMUNITY WELLNESS” IN EAST FLATBUSH**

Throughout the course of the ART ZONE, the cohort’s definitions of “community wellness” evolved from a static focus on happiness to a more active and interpretive focus on collaborative community agency and connections. At the start of the program, feelings were broader and ranged from definitions of wellness as:

- “how happy, healthy and engaged a community is” to
- “a community that comes together to do what it needs to do”

Over the month of July, these interpretations transformed into understandings of community wellness as being about “more than physically healthy people...[to] connecting and supporting... neighbors and [the] neighborhood.” Participants began to conceptualize the definition as being malleable and interpretive, i.e. community wellness as a catalyst to “bring communities together to share ideas and create benefits for each other.” These endeavors involve both an individual and collaborative effort, underscoring how impactful the experience was.

**“ART ZONE CG-91 inspired me to use an empty space in an innovative way, and that we should engage everyone”**

— 17-year-old program participant

## **LEARNER RESULTS**

### **REAL-LIFE WORK EXPERIENCE**

An important element of the Community Art and Data Lab was creating an environment that empowered the youth participants to gain real work experience. This included pushing them to take part in activities with which they were not familiar (designing and giving tours), learning about (social) design and its many applications functions, and interacting with very diverse groups of people.

- By the end of the program, more than 80% of the participants felt more deeply connected to Brooklyn and East Flatbush, and this was reflected in their enjoyment giving tours to unknown visitors (i.e. community residents, hospital staff, and others who dropped in): more than 75% of the group expressed in a post-program survey that this was their favorite demographic to show around the space and introduce to the artists and their works.
- The experiences, workshops, and trips during the program increased many of the participants' understandings of art and design, especially as it relates to a socially engaged practice. The group specifically shared that workshops centered on design were highly beneficial for them, especially in developing visual reports of data gathered in their research.

### **ARTS MENTORSHIP AND SKILL-BUILDING**

Prior to the program, some participants felt that art was limited to drawings and paintings and expressed that the program had exposed them to many new mediums, interpretations and opportunities for self-expression outside of traditional forms. Participants built strong relationships with local artists and designers and mentor-mentee relationships were fostered through one-on-one conversations, collaboration as participants conducted research and guidance during tour development.

- Participants reported increased levels of comfort with planning and leading tours. At the beginning of the program almost 25% felt it was going to be somewhat or very difficult; by the conclusion, 82% felt it had not been difficult to plan and 60% felt it was “not at all difficult.”
- Participants expressed deep appreciation for the visits by guest speakers and artists who spoke about their careers and practices at ART ZONE.
- Confidence levels in public speaking and presentation skills increased consistently throughout the program and many of the participants expressed their new comfort in meeting strangers, engaging in dialogue and expressing their ideas about art, East Flatbush and pertinent social issues using qualitative data analysis.

**“ART ZONE CG-91 made me want to be involved! And learn more about process and people and relationships”**

—15-year-old program participant



## **LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

- More than three-quarters of participants expressed the massive impact that ART ZONE had on their understanding of art and their community/ies. Bonds to the arts shifted throughout the program, with the participants feeling their relationships to them had greatly deepened.

As evidenced by the surveys and interviews conducted by participants and staff, there was a strong desire for increased interaction with arts in East Flatbush. Many expressed the sentiment that art can fill a needed role in the community in order to promote happiness, community wellness and unity, and marveled at the profound healing effect that an art space at a hospital can have on its surrounding communities. Taking this feedback into account, No Longer Empty set out to build additional programming within H+H / Kings County that would focus on a space built for East Flatbush by East Flatbush.



## CHANGING A HOSPITAL ENVIRONMENT

No Longer Empty and H+H / Kings County embarked upon this pilot project in the hopes of exploring a large-scale project to incorporate more art spaces into the hospital campus. The result was the formation of a temporary space dedicated to art-making and the gathering of community ideas and opinions through art-based research methods. In collaboration with local residents, program participants offered an opportunity to explore new perspectives on the impact the arts have on wellness and healing, contributing to conversations already happening amongst hospital personnel.

Hospital staff from a variety of departments visited ART ZONE to share stories with participants and our team, create art and interact with the exhibition and artists. During many discussions, people commented on how much this program was needed in both the hospital and the community at large; one staff visitor shared his appreciation for a program like ART ZONE and spoke about how his relationship with his son is reinforced through art. At the end of their visits, many staff members were adamant about how beneficial the space was: as they work to take care of patients, this type of art space offered a necessary respite for self-care and self-reflection.

Powerful conversations were had, including informal dialogues between participants and local police around safety and communication, and enthusiasm from ER nurses for the production of a creative space that fostered a sense of groundedness and well-being. Some afternoons, retired staff would stop by with young grandchildren to expose them to art, forming some of the children's first interactions with professional artwork and artists.

Overall, ART ZONE acted as an accessible environment that welcomed and encouraged creativity and self-expression. As the project came to a close, the hospital featured the program in their internal communications, further confirming the effect that ART ZONE had at H+H / Kings County on all who engaged with the room and the participants who shaped it. It is clear that NYC Health + Hospitals / Kings County plans to maintain an ongoing commitment to creating opportunities for collaborative work to foster community wellness. From the intergenerational aspect to the overall appreciation for how the room was transformed, the program had a profound effect on the hospital community as a whole.

# **YOUNG EXHIBITION MAKERS 2018:**

**A STORY TO  
BE TOLD**



Mariel and Berchell during a tour of her group's gallery, "State of Mind," 2018. Photo: Julia Hickey.







Marie and Jade smiling for the camera during a special event for *A Story to be Told*, 2018. Photo: Mica Le John.





# THE IMPACT OF YOUTH-POWERED PROGRAMMING

What was to be the next step in the collaboration between No Longer Empty, H+H / Kings County and East Flatbush after ART ZONE ended? Taking into account community desires expressed in ART ZONE and the inertia of room CG-91 as a space for community engagement, it became clear that there was demand for a youth-centered program to engage local teens in using the arts as a tool for exploring their neighborhood and themselves.

Young Exhibition Makers 2018's exhibition, *A Story to be Told*, became a project and site for teens to articulate and explore pressing issues in their worlds; to share their perspectives with visitors and with one another; and to receive public speaking and project management training for personal and professional growth. Over the course of 14 weeks in Spring 2018, a group of 24 teens from the surrounding community (three of whom were former participants of ART ZONE and now peer leaders) joined us, hospital staff, teaching artists and guest visitors to transform the space into an art exhibition of their own making.

***Please see Appendix 4 for information about the outreach and selection process.***

No Longer Empty presented Y.Ex 2018 in partnership with Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI), started by H+H / Kings County emergency physician Dr. Rob Gore in 2009 to offer youth productive and safe alternatives to engaging in interpersonal violence.

## THE PROGRAM

Y.Ex grew out of our previous Y.Dot (Youth Docent) and Y.Lab (Youth Curatorial Lab) programs that were centered around the organization's large-scale exhibitions. In re-structuring our education model, we created Y.Ex to be used as a foundational resource for young people to engage with the arts in the communities we work in while also creating a pathway to cultivate long term relationships through our Education Matrix Model.

The main pillars of Y.Ex are arts mentorship, youth leadership and real-life work experience. Twenty-four teens were invited to join No Longer Empty and KAVI every Saturday from March through June in CG-91 to develop an art exhibition, along with supplementary tours and special events for neighbors, friends and the hospital community.



## THE EXHIBITION

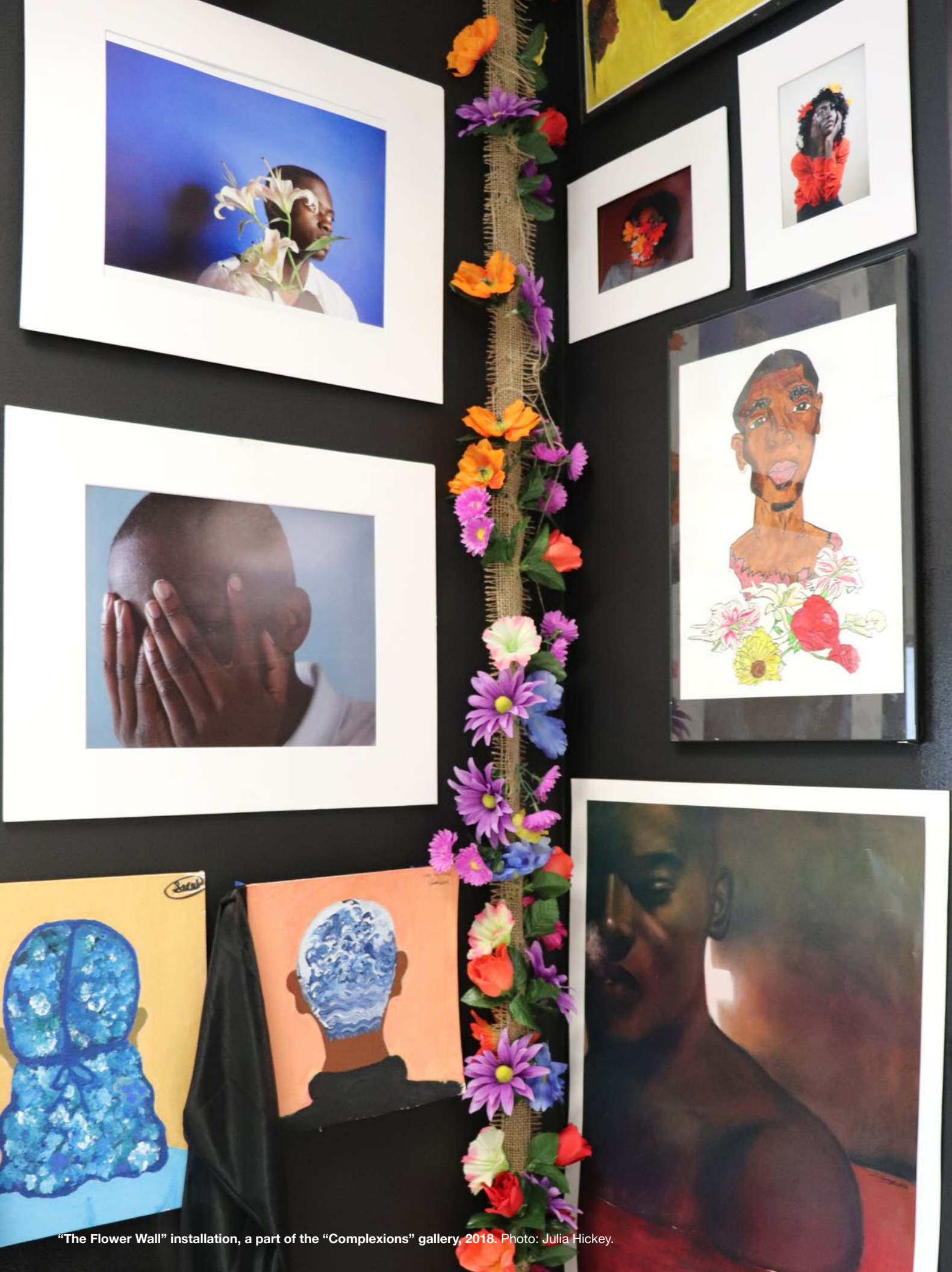
The program culminated in the exhibition, *A Story to be Told*, and the room was split into six gallery spaces focused on themes selected by participants. Each gallery in *A Story to be Told* featured an interactive component.

Y.Ex welcomed over 420 visitors over the three-week period that *A Story to be Told* was open, with curatorial tours by the Y.Ex'ers offered over three consecutive Saturdays. Education staff also offered tours by appointment during the week. The following section highlights some of the ways that combining youth-centered learning, collaboration and artistic expression formed new avenues for curiosity and creation.

After the exhibition was installed, Y.Ex participants surveyed visitors with a self-developed questionnaire that delved into personal experiences with questions such as “Have you been affected by police brutality?” and “What does family mean to you?” among others. These questions were crafted to provide the participants with more insight into how the subject matter of their galleries affected the lives of exhibition visitors.

***View Appendix 6 for a sample of the visitor survey.***

While the program's emphasis on discussion and discovery was beneficial for the youth in Y.Ex as they developed their show, it may have been more so for the adults who had the opportunity to hear their thoughtful and insightful voices. It excites us to meet a diverse group of young people engaging in art work, who are seeing careers in the arts as new possibilities for their futures and expressing a desire to continue this work into their professional careers. But even more, it gives us hope for the future of social change and civic dialogue as the youth in this program plan to make changes not tomorrow but today.



"The Flower Wall" installation, a part of the "Complexions" gallery, 2018. Photo: Julia Hickey.

## CURATORIAL STATEMENTS

**“Complexions” (Black Identity)** - Curated by Emely Evangelista, Nerma La France, Precious Kermon, Sarahfina Cunningham and Yewande Ogunleye

*Complexions* is showcasing black identity and breaking down stereotypes by expressing diversity within the black community through acrylic paintings, photography and sculptures. The color of our skin holds great importance to us. Where we are from and where our ancestors roamed has a big impact on us all, whether we are African, African-American or Afro-Caribbean. We all identify as black and we all love our complexion.

**“Individual Flowers Make a Garden” (Gender Equality)** - Curated by Jade Villegas, Tarek Youssef and Yasminka Radoncic

A flower is the most beautiful when it is paired with others — less so when it is standing alone. Similarly, people are the most beautiful when they stand together. This installation focuses on the various stigmas associated with gender, playing with the idea of women’s vaginas as flowers. Composed of an interactive piece, charcoal drawing and ink on vellum, this installation shares a common view of the issues of gender equality focusing primarily on women’s issues. “Individual Flowers Make a Garden” creates a message of equality, unity and value of all genders.

**“The Skin I’m In” (Community Violence)** - Curated by Benjamin Opoku, Can Chen, Jontay Beckles, Marie Massier and Ruby Mendez

The focus of this exhibition is community violence, such as gun violence and police brutality. We fashioned a crime scene using newspaper articles to portray many of the things going wrong in our world. In addition one side of the locker shows teens who are silenced because their elders believe they’re not intellectual enough to understand what is going on. The pieces chosen are diverse in medium, and include two paintings and an audio piece. Additionally, *Hope*, is a photograph that is part of a series titled *Dreaming* which is a set of theatrical representations of universal experiences and emotions.

**“Standing Strong” (Family Matters)** - Curated by Adrian Jones Gibbs, Jamal St. Louis, Megan Vega and Wade Roach

Family is a very important aspect in human life. Standing strong is about how family and friends have been there for you to support you. We try to make you feel at home with the aspects we used. The silhouette space invokes family and togetherness. The installation depicts two parents and their child forming a heart shape to represent love. It also symbolizes unconditional love in the child’s



struggles through life. The collages that the group made represent family and connect to the theme of family matters and standing strong. *Riverdale* shows us how friends become our family and what they believe in to stand stronger together. *Live, Love, Serve* defines what family does for us and how they make us feel.

**“State of Mind” (Mindfulness)** - Curated by Fariya Farah, Jeff Adolphe, Maria Jahangir, Mariel Martinez and Marvens Volcimus

Mindfulness is the sixth sense and addresses how some perceive themselves and the world around them. “State of Mind” sees to push one to reflect on what is within them as well as the outside world. Through paintings and drawings, these artists are exploring their relationships with the different aspects of their lives. *Intoxication* portrays the consequences of polluting your body and the environment; *The Fantasy of Planet Earth and Outer Space* addresses the expansion of the boundaries in a person’s mind and delves into the development of new perspectives outside of what is not real; *Dorothy* portrays a moment of bliss and taking a break from the stress and monotony of reality to feed your mind.

**“Who Am I?” (Teenhood)** - Curated by Dakaibo Tallerand and Kalia Asencio

This show explores the things that teenagers are involved in and their common struggles. It highlights and unpacks the things that they do which affect their tomorrow. The pieces chosen in this show draw inspiration from themes around identity, mainly outward facing understanding of it (physical) and inward (cultural).

# **YOUNG EXHIBITION MAKERS CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**



# DEVELOPING CURATORIAL PRACTICE, DESIGNING EXHIBITIONS AND ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

## *Central Elements of the Program*

- Participants explored curatorial practices, community-based work, and art-making under the guidance of an arts educator from No Longer Empty and community intervention educator from KAVI, with weekly guest visitors including curators, anti-violence workers, and professional artists.
- Five of the participants, including three who had participated in ART ZONE CG-91, received additional training as Youth Leaders in order to build on leadership skills, continue their investigation into arts careers, and form deeper connections with the community.
- Participants took part in every stage of the creative process of an art exhibition, creating original works from the first day to the last — ranging from collaged “Call for Submission” posters, to educational gallery guides for distribution at the exhibition, to artwork included in the show.
- Y.Ex participants took on a central role in constructing their own vision of a creative space: determining which social, political, and artistic themes they wanted to construct a show around; collecting and reviewing artwork submissions from other teens across Brooklyn; making additional works for the show; and physically installing and lighting the exhibition.
- Teens worked in teams to develop tours of each section and the themes in the show; practiced delivering and improving their tours with guest educators, and ultimately became articulate ambassadors for their own ideas and initiatives.

<sup>15</sup> Original Young Exhibition Makers program guide, unit and lesson plans written by No Longer Empty Director of Education Mica Le John

<sup>16</sup> *The NLE Curatorial Lab (NLE Lab)* is a socially conscious platform for experimentation in curating, and a professional development program for emerging curators and arts professionals interested in direct experience curating in an expanded field

<sup>17</sup> Original peer leader program guide written by former KAVI Community Intervention Coordinator Tendaji Bailey

## *Young Exhibition Makers Curriculum*<sup>15</sup>

- Focused on three core themes:
  - Defining “community” and “site” and the role art can play in different environments
  - Building a curatorial practice
  - Exhibition design, tours and programming
- Welcomed Y.Ex participants, with individuality in mind, to take the lead on shaping the development of their show and public events as the program progressed.
- Emphasized inclusive practices in developing exhibitions, with a focus on accessibility; this included creating multi-sensory tours (including consideration for low/non-sighted visitors) and offering tours in other languages.
- Incorporated art-making into the exhibition design process, empowering artists in the Y.Ex cohort to learn the process of being in a group show.
- Included creation of curatorial statements and gallery guides in workshops held by emerging curators from No Longer Empty’s Curatorial Lab.<sup>16</sup>
- Encouraged Y.Ex participants to further their public speaking and critical thinking skills through inquiry-based and thematic tours of the exhibition for visitors.
- Adapted the deep listening curriculum used in ART ZONE, especially building on identity mapping and personal development practices.

## *Youth Leader Curriculum*<sup>17</sup>

- Facilitated over two weekends prior to the start of Y.Ex. Peer Leaders joined teaching staff to develop personal leadership, team building, and group facilitation skills.
- Included reflect-and-shares on leadership styles, role-playing activities around conflict management and icebreaker/team building activities.
- Weekly check-ins were conducted with Peer Leaders during the 14 weeks of Y.Ex to offer support during the program.

Installation shot of "State of Mind," 2018. Photo: Julia Hickey.



Installation shot of "Family Matters," 2018. Photo: Julia Hickey.



## YOUNG EXHIBITION MAKERS IN EAST FLATBUSH

Y.Ex at H+H / Kings County was built around creating a welcoming environment that encouraged co-learning, both among Y.Ex'ers and with the teaching team. As the program progressed, participants were able to work with each other in ways that grew all of their knowledge, whether through sharing new information about the subject matter, discussing their gallery themes with visitors or pitching their gallery plans to their peers.

For the program educators, the structure of Y.Ex also created an exchange of ideas and information and initiated a program-long process of co-learning. With youth input and direction, the teaching team was able to learn more about the participants and their passions, allowing for fearless discussions around controversial topics and honest, supportive relationship-building with participants.

The program was divided into three integrated units, with 4-hour meetings for every session:

*Sessions 1-4: **Exploring*** arts careers, exhibition making and community-centered work through readings, group conversations and guest visitors including artists, community leaders and curators.

*Sessions 5-8: **Refining*** participant understanding of curatorial practice, exhibition planning and collaborative processes on field trips to arts institutions, artwork selection workshops, writing exercises, hands-on exhibition installation.

*Sessions 9-10: **Designing*** gallery experiences for visitors through planning and practicing of tours and developing public programs.

*Sessions 11-13: **Hosting*** public programming and tours for the community during Saturday sessions and weekday appointments.

Upon completion of the program, a graduation ceremony was held in CG-91 with friends and family in attendance. Here, participants were surprised with a physical catalog that documented the progress of the program and included images from the entire process of preparing their show. Program certificates, letters of support, stipends and individualized summer reading recommendations were offered to all 24 of the participants for the valuable work they did throughout Y.Ex 2018.

Documentation of the program was imperative to develop a professional portfolio of printed material that highlighted the contributions of Y.Ex to the show that participants could use for future work opportunities. This included the *A Story to be Told* gallery guide, installation images and headshots of Y.Ex (which can be found online at [yex2018.tumblr.com](http://yex2018.tumblr.com)).



Rebecca Pristoop discussing gallery guides with Y.Ex, 2018. Photo: Julia Hickey.

## GUEST SPEAKERS AND VISITING ARTISTS

*Natalie Daise:* Actress on the musical '90s children's show, Gullah Gullah Island, visual artist and storyteller.

Panelist for Artist Discussion: Identity, Creativity and Self-Care.

[nataliedaise.com](http://nataliedaise.com)

*Eva Mayha Davis:* Works with artists and creatives in the production of exhibitions, texts and events. As a curator and cultural liaison, her focus is on supporting multifaceted incubation spaces by increasing visibility and mediating conversations among artists, objects and audiences.

Led a curatorial presentation and discussion around site-responsive exhibitions and curatorial practice.

[evamayha.com](http://evamayha.com)

*Berchell Egerton:* Artist and designer (Afrooklyn) intent on bridging the gap between Brooklyn and Africa through textiles.

Led a flag making workshop and was chosen by Y.Ex as the Opening Day WorkRoom artist.

[instagram.com/afrooklynondada](https://www.instagram.com/afrooklynondada)

*Tamar Ettun:* Sculptor and performance artist. Ettun founded The Moving Company, an artist's collective creating performances in public spaces and a social engagement project with Brooklyn teens hosted by The Brooklyn Museum.

Led Inflatables workshop for a WorkRoom session.

[tamarettun.com](http://tamarettun.com)

*Dr. Robert Gore:* Attending physician and clinical assistant professor at H+H / Kings County. He is the founder and executive director of KAVI (Kings Against Violence Initiative), a hospital, school and community-based youth violence intervention prevention and empowerment program targeting teens and young adults that have been injured as a result of violence or at risk for violent and recurrent violent injury.

Panelist for Community Conversation: Wellness and the Arts.

[kavibrooklyn.org/directors](http://kavibrooklyn.org/directors)





*Sarah Makeba Daise:* Cultural History Interpreter driven to understand and shine light on Africana women/femmes and Africana History and Culture.

Panelist for Artist Discussion: Identity, Creativity and Self-Care.

[saramakeba.com](http://saramakeba.com)

*Jessica Maldonado:* Violence Intervention Specialist at Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI).

Led a discussion around community violence, trauma and self-care.

[kavibrooklyn.org](http://kavibrooklyn.org)

*Rebecca Pristoop:* Curator, art historian and performance artist. Her interests lie with contemporary art that engages politics or cuts through the limitations of traditional media.

Led a workshop to design and create gallery guides.

[pristoopcuratorial.com](http://pristoopcuratorial.com)

*Carlos Rodriguez-Perez:* Senior Associate Director of Wellness & Recovery, H+H / Kings County.

Panelist for Community Conversation: Wellness and the Arts.

[nyhealthandhospitals.org/kingscounty/pressrelease/carlos-rodriguez-perez-honored-for-community-commitment-through-art-intervention](http://nyhealthandhospitals.org/kingscounty/pressrelease/carlos-rodriguez-perez-honored-for-community-commitment-through-art-intervention)

*Niama Safia Sandy:* Cultural anthropologist, curator and essayist. She sees her role as that of an agitator; one who endeavors to simultaneously call into question and make sense of the seemingly arbitrary nature of modern life, while developing critical and creative modalities grounded in histories of the Black Diaspora.

Led a writing workshop to develop curatorial statements.

[instagram.com/\\_\\_\\_niama\\_\\_\\_](https://www.instagram.com/___niama___)

The 2018 Young Exhibition Makers at the *A Story to be Told* opening, 2018. Photo: Julia Hickey.









## DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>18</sup>

Y.Ex discussing docent tours during programming, 2018. Photo: Precious Kermon.



## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Our teen programs are youth-centered and built to offer a structured but flexible setting for discovery and creative adventure. This philosophy is built into the core of our programs, from how the curriculum is designed to continuing our relationship with alumni by offering additional programs for them to develop their skill sets. By valuing their different and wide-ranging knowledge bases, the teens of Y.Ex found a brave space for active listening and questioning<sup>19</sup>.

The program brought together teens aged 14 to 18 years from different high schools and neighborhoods to meet for the first time and exchange, represent and grow a range of perspectives and opinions. As one Y.Ex'er stated: "there was fluid communication between my peers and I. We talked to each other about our ideas and spoke to each other as friends."

Upon completion of the program, 74% of respondents named their peers and the collaborative process as one of their favorite aspects of the program. Creating opportunities for Y.Ex'ers to, "see other teens [as] aware and concerned for today's issues...[while] being able to relate to art and working through it to express society's situations,"<sup>20</sup> was an integral part of the program and played a large role in the success of *A Story to be Told*. To visitors of the exhibition, it was clear that the group was comfortable and confident in one another's knowledge and presence.

By placing the interests and desires of Y.Ex participants at the core of the program, students were able to meaningfully shape their exhibition. Whether it was choosing furniture to place in their gallery, creating shopping lists of needed materials for the teaching staff, or offering assistance to other curatorial groups with their projects, participants made a show that reflected their authentic selves and the issues about which they are passionate.

<sup>18</sup> All participant and visitor demographics were self-reported

<sup>19</sup> No Longer Empty's emphasis on brave spaces stems from the desire to foster environments that allow opportunity for dialogue and disagreement. Rather than a "safe space" where one may be apprehensive to engage in a provocative discussion, we encourage the meaningful connections that come from challenging lines of conversation.

<sup>20</sup> Anonymous feedback from Y.Ex participant during program evaluation conducted on 6/16/18



**PARTICIPANTS LIVED IN...**



**PARTICIPANTS WENT TO HIGHSCHOOL IN...**





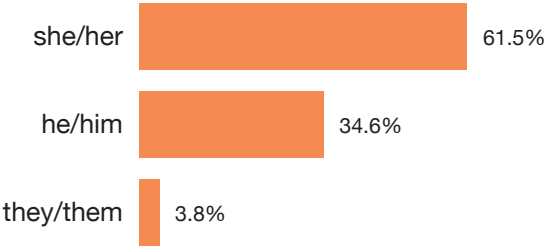
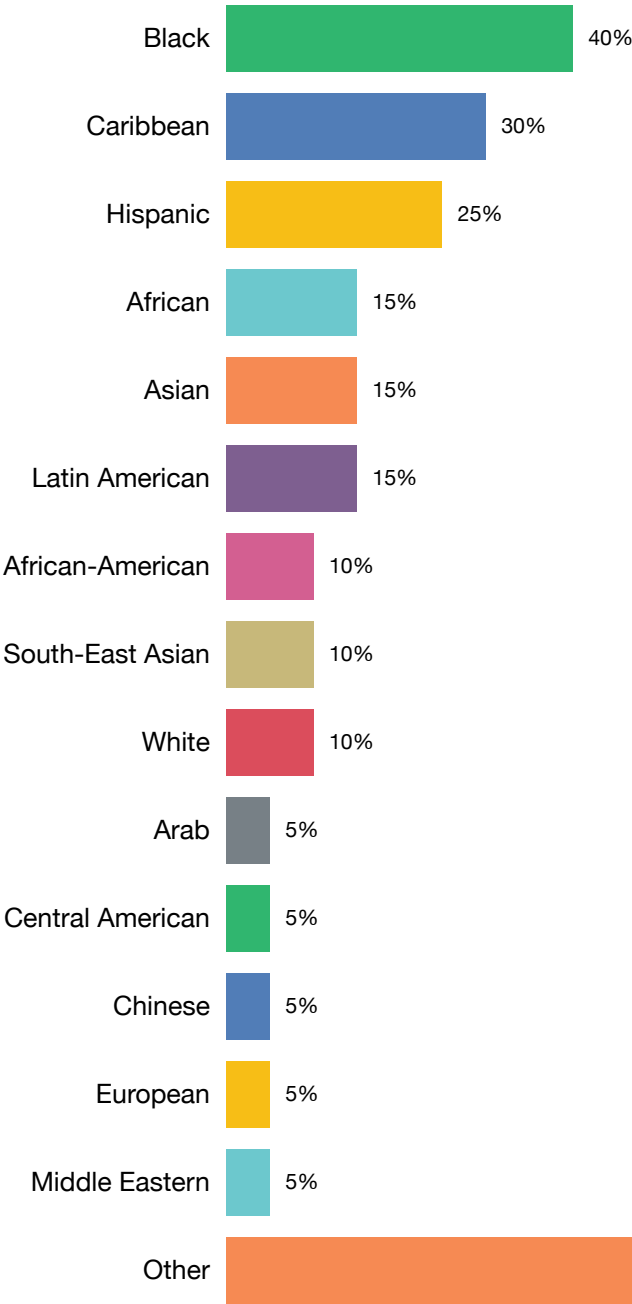


**I AM**

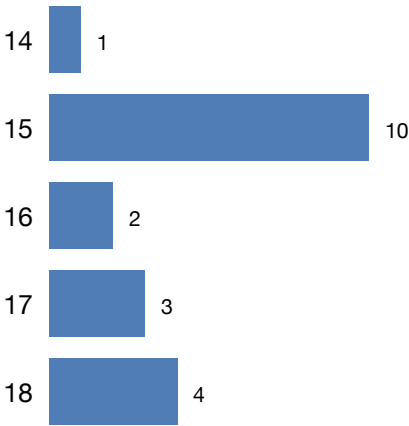
**W** Weird **is**  
**U** Unpermed **ROOTS**  
**B** Blawoo  
**J** Jaded  
**F** Funny  
**I** I am a **Queen**  
**B** Blawoo  
**E** Educated  
**T** TreyWay Drum  
**G** Gangsta  
**L** Latina but I look white  
**GDK** GDK  
**N** Nigerian  
**F** FEMINIST  
**I** Indigenous  
**Im** Black Web  
**W** Women  
**G.S.** G.S. 823-  
**Y** Young Beautiful  
**the** the Best  
**I** I can  
**BE** BE  
**an** an artist  
**W** Wavy  
**Y** Young  
**I** Intelligent  
**T** Talented  
**M** Mahatma  
**S** Shy  
**P** Pretty  
**to** to be  
**who** who I choose  
**D** Dance  
**M** Music is who  
**W** Woman  
**I** I am who  
**I** I love me  
**A** Athletic  
**G** Gia  
**T** Today's  
**can** can I  
**live** live  
**Musician** Musician  
**Ch** Chocolate  
**Me** Me  
**Supportive** Supportive  
**a** a believer  
**a** a person who wears glasses  
**good** good at math  
**B** Basketball Player  
**A** Athletic  
**L** Luck  
**H** Happy  
**hard** hard lover  
**Strong** Strong  
**Young** Young  
**Black** Black  
**Girl** Girl  
**AMAZING** AMAZING  
**N** N  
**H** Humble  
**A** Also  
**I** Impatient  
**Complicated** Complicated  
**Dar** Dark skin  
**P** Puerto Ricans  
**R** Rule!!!  
**Unapologetic** Unapologetic  
**intersectional** intersectional  
**a** a best friend  
**An** An  
**Academic** Academic  
**PROUD** PROUD  
**Intelligent** Intelligent  
**black** black  
**woman** woman  
**ARTIST** ARTIST  
**I** I am  
**Trinidadian** Trinidadian  
**PATIENCE** PATIENCE  
**F** Fabulous  
**I** I AM  
**S** SOMEBODY  
**Radient** Radient  
**PEUKTOR** PEUKTOR  
**complicated** complicated  
**W** WOOD  
**The** The future  
**R** R  
**PROUD** PROUD  
**SPAGHETTI** SPAGHETTI  
**MONKEY** MONKEY  
**CURIOUS** CURIOUS  
**DANCER** DANCER  
**T** T A M  
**BOFF** BOFF  
**MOM** MOM  
**rule!** rule!  
**Rich** Rich  
**Strong** Strong  
**SHY** SHY  
**My** My sisters and  
**sisters** sisters  
**brothers** brothers  
**keeper!** keeper!  
**Good** Good  
**C** C  
**Listener** Listener  
**Confident** Confident  
**Willie** Willie  
**W** Water  
**P** Proud  
**L** Latino  
**GOZ** GOZ  
**GOZ** GOZ  
**who** who I was  
**meant** meant  
**to** to be  
**myself!** myself!



PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED AS...



PARTICIPANT AGES

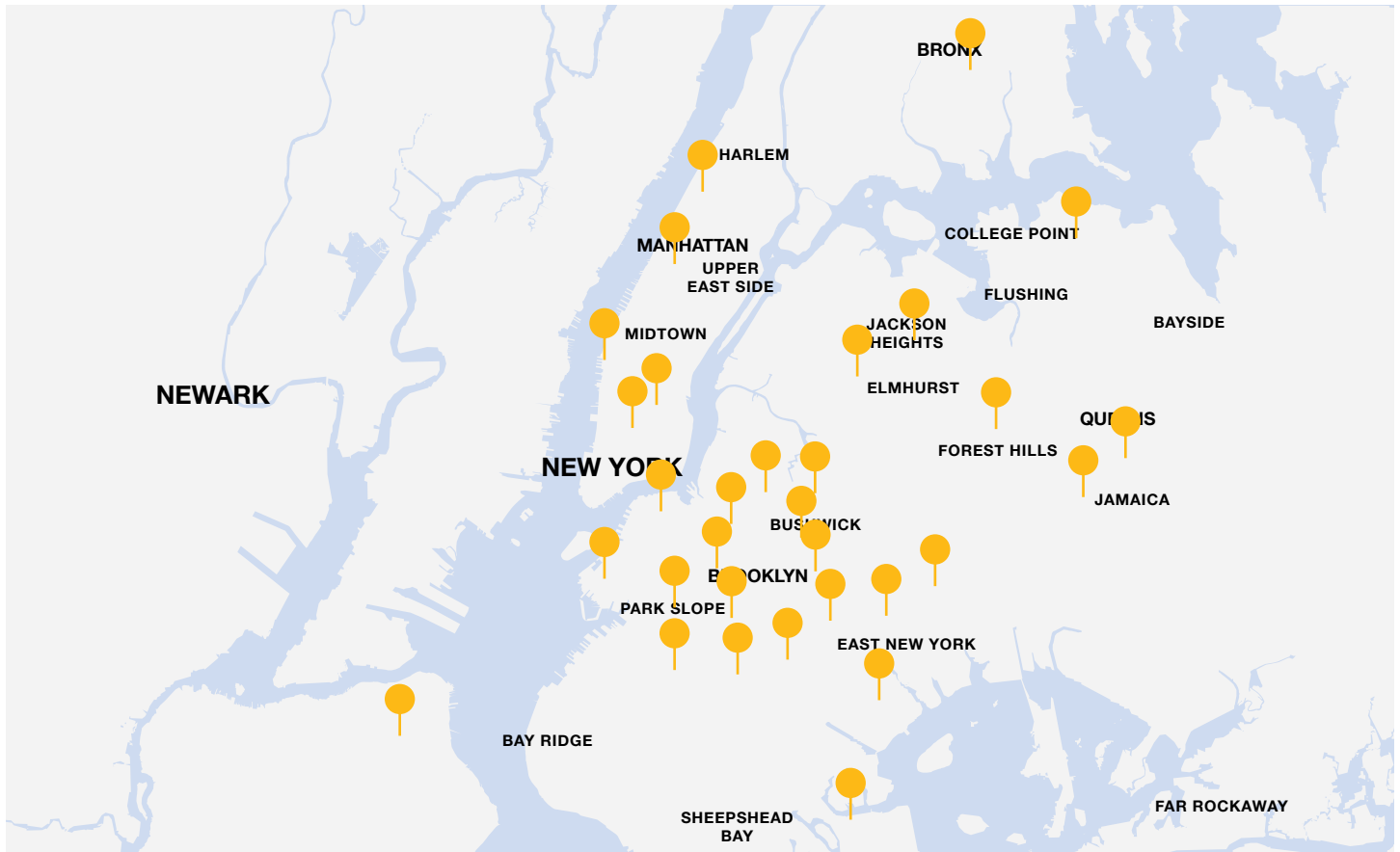




## VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Visitors to *A Story to be Told* ranged in age and the youngest visitor was 3 years old. They came to view the exhibition from all over New York: from West Harlem in Manhattan to Jamaica, Queens; from Staten Island to just down the street in East Flatbush. There were even visitors who live in Virginia, Michigan and Minnesota!

### VISITORS CAME FROM...

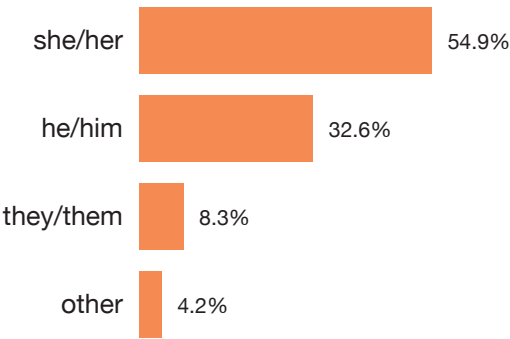
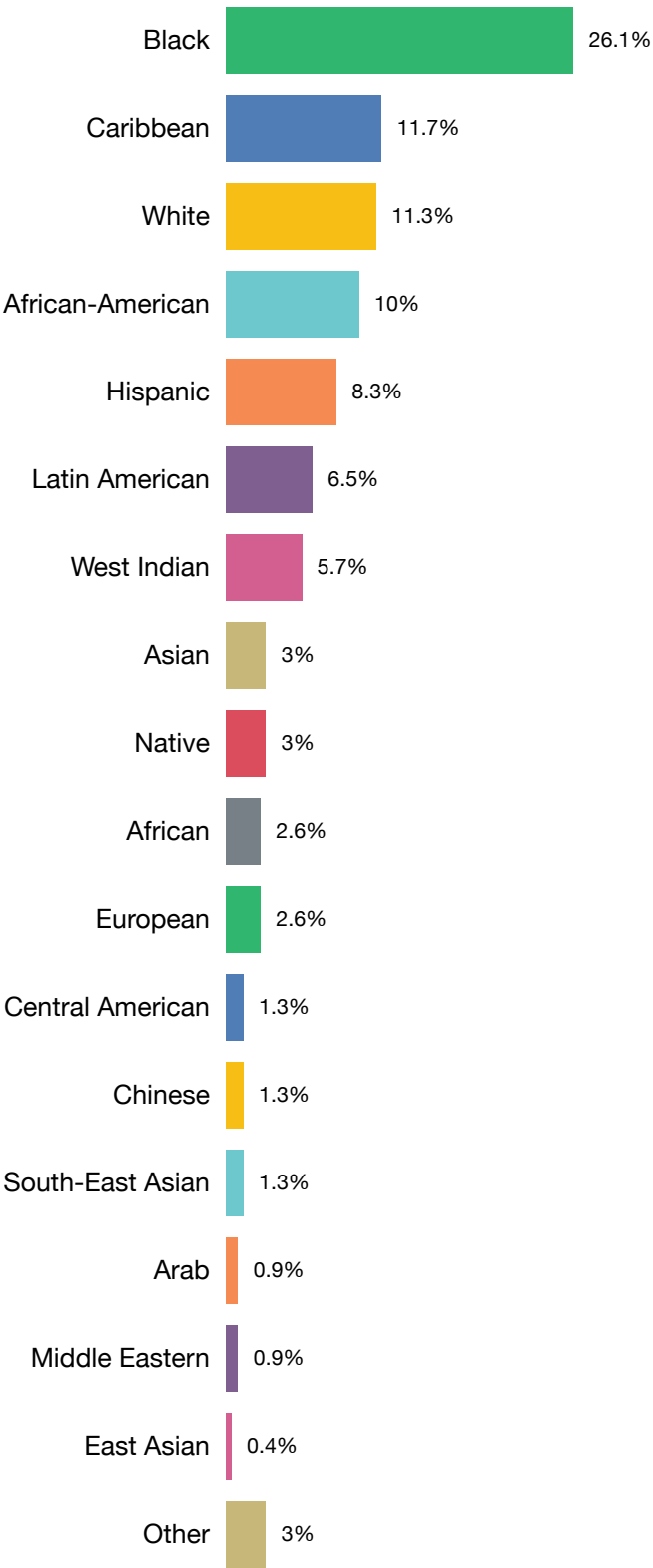


Installation shot of "Individual Flowers Make a Garden," 2018. Photo: Suzanne Tang.

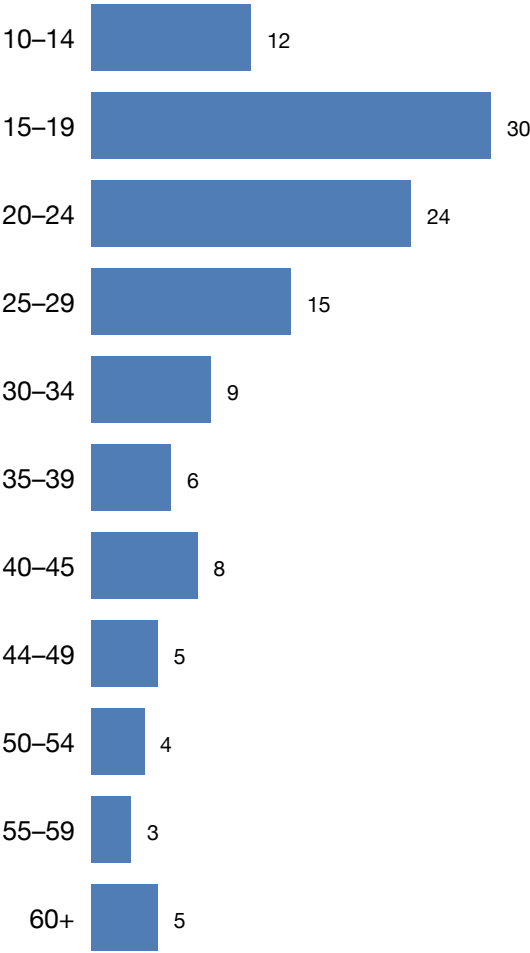


Can giving a tour of "Skin I'm In," 2018. Photo: Julia Hickey.

VISITORS IDENTIFIED AS...



VISITOR AGES



## **FINDINGS**

**“I feel very strongly in my ability to curate an exhibition. I have only ever seen it one-sided, where I am the artist submitting work. However, I now understand that curating is an art in and of itself.”**

—15-year-old Y.Ex participant



During the final weeks of the teaching section of Y.Ex, participants were presented with examples of visitor surveys we have used in the past and were given time to collaborate on creating a new survey they felt would best collect visitor feedback about their show. A final survey was drafted that encapsulated all of their questions, including many repeat questions from the ART ZONE survey, such as: “*What would you like to see more/less of in your neighborhood?*”

Many visitors to *A Story to be Told* commented on the short length of the exhibition (three weeks in June) and expressed a desire for it to be up longer so they could return with friends once summer was in full swing. Others commented that the volume of the show was great, but they wished there was space for Y.Ex to plan an even larger show!

The intelligence, ability and thoughtfulness of the youth in the program were consistently noted in written reflections by visitors. As well, visitors were awed by how deeply Y.Ex’ers understood and considered the subject matter in their galleries, as well as the youth’s conviction around possible change in our world.

“Skin I’m In” asked visitors, *Have you been affected by police brutality?* Thirty percent of the 61 who chose to respond indicated “yes,” whether directly, through friends, or a through deep concern for the issue itself.

“Standing Strong” asked *What does family mean to you?* Nearly 25% of those who responded simply wrote “Everything”. Many others emphasized togetherness, love, trust and support as the underlying aspects of family.

Sixty-five visitors chose to write in an answer to the open question: *What would you like to see less of in your neighborhood?* Of this group, 26% wanted to see both less “violence” and “crime”; 23% noted both “violence” and “discrimination”; and 15% wanted less “division” and “discrimination” in their communities.

When asked what they would like to see more of in their neighborhood, visitors reiterated many of the responses given the year prior: more intergenerational programs, opportunities for creative collaboration and youth art programs. Many also named the desire for more unifying community events to take place; public art that engages passersby; and healing spaces for women of color as well as the LGBTQ community. Overall, respondents wanted a stronger sense of “togetherness,” with respectful and open conversations around social issues—much like the brave space created by the Y.Ex’ers in CG-91.



## RESULTS

**“I’d like to find a job that is centered around art now.”**

— Y.Ex teen participant

<sup>21</sup> Of 126 surveys completed, 84 contained the question “Have you ever been to an exhibition, event or program created by No Longer Empty? If so, which one(s)?”

## **PROGRAM RESULTS**

### **ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITY**

We work to build deeper accountability to community and neighborhood as evidenced by relationships built during program development and delivery. Y.Ex 2018 was created as a way to extend our connections within the hospital community and surrounding neighborhoods, as well as to establish new ones. Stronger connections were made through the development of a partnership with KAVI and contact was established with over 100 more schools than the year prior. Additionally, we offered more tours to the hospital community (staff, patient groups etc.) than was possible before.

- Increased tour availability grew the visitors to CG-91 by 154 percent from 96 people (AZCG91) to 148 people (Y.Ex 2018).
- Of those surveyed,<sup>21</sup> 79% of visitors had not been to a No Longer Empty exhibition before, and 46% of them heard about it through word of mouth (rather than through a teen in the program, No Longer Empty/KAVI newsletter, etc.).
- 60% of visitors asked to be added to our newsletter.

### **CONNECTION TO THE ARTS**

Our programs aim to increase awareness of and appreciation for the arts and curation among young people. Program participants' self-reported evaluations revealed:

- 95% of program participants felt there was at least a 50% improvement in their knowledge of what is needed to develop an exhibition.
- 60% of participants felt they had improved their knowledge of socially engaged art by at least 2x.
- 55% felt that they had increased their ability to articulate their opinion about art by at least 1.5x.

**“I would like to apply for another internship,  
I found a very large piece of myself in this  
program.”**

— Y.Ex teen participant

<sup>22</sup> The Likert Scale is a 5 or 7 point scale that offers a range of answer options — from one extreme attitude to another, like “extremely likely” to “not at all likely.” Typically, they include a moderate or neutral midpoint (SurveyMonkey).

## **LEARNER RESULTS**

### **REAL-LIFE WORK EXPERIENCE**

One of our main learner goals is for participants to gain a broad but comprehensive understanding of employment opportunities in the arts. Y.Ex offered many opportunities for participants to meet arts professionals, from artists and curators to docents and public program developers. At the end of Y.Ex, every respondent took part in a two-step feedback process, with both short answer and Likert scale<sup>22</sup> surveys. The following was reported:

- All respondents felt they had increased the insight they had into the professional art world, and 70% of them felt this knowledge base had grown by at least 1.5x.
- 100% of the participants reported an improvement in understanding what artists do in developing their work, while 95% believed they now understood more holistically what a curator does as well.

### **LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Continuing to develop our training and mentorship relationships with youth is an integral part of No Longer Empty's process. We achieve this through ongoing engagement and facilitating connections to other local arts resources and like-minded peers. Y.Ex welcomed five youth to join as Youth Leaders: three from the ART ZONE cohort, one teen intern from Exploring the Arts, and one from KAVI's teen leadership crew—with the latter two now able to take part in all of No Longer Empty's other education offerings as either participants or youth leaders having now entered the No Longer Empty Education Matrix Model (see page 10).

Upon entering the program, each of the youth leaders expressed an interest in being a role model, learning and sharing knowledge about community-based artwork, and/or gaining experience in problem-solving and interpersonal mediation. These goals are built into the Y.Ex program throughout the planning and execution stages of the exhibition.

- Over half of the program participants indicated a desire to continue working in the arts and actively plan to seek out other arts internships and youth programs.
- No Longer Empty's Youth Action Council (launched during the 2018–19 academic year) was developed to continue our relationship with alumni; 75% of the applications for the first cohort were submitted by youth from Y.Ex who are looking to engage in more arts-related work as they continue through high school.

**“What surprised me most about today was the amount of welcoming teens explaining the art because it is not often that teens dedicate their time to exhibitions like this one. This made me realize a deeper connection with arts, diversity, and togetherness.”**

—15-year-old visitor from a Brooklyn neighborhood

<sup>23</sup> Of 126 surveys completed, 84 contained the question “Have you ever seen an art exhibition like this before?”

## **ARTS MENTORSHIP AND SKILL-BUILDING**

Y.Ex planned a robust schedule of public programs including a large exhibition opening event, teen-artist talks moderated by teen-curators, writing workshops and more. By growing their skill set in exhibition-making and programming, they were able to learn more about their communities as well as themselves. This targets our learner goal of participants acquiring skills in exhibition-making and programming as evidenced by evaluations and programming successes

- While 72% of exhibition visitors had been to an art exhibition before, 86% of those asked responded that they had never been to an art exhibition like *A Story to be Told* before<sup>23</sup>, which demonstrates the originality with which they executed the show.
- Over a third of visitors who were given tours by Y.Ex'ers emphasized how moving the exhibition was because of the work the youth poured into it (from art selection to the youth-centered style of tours, and more).

## LOOKING BACK



## OUR MODEL

By inverting our previous model and extending the period of community-driven research, No Longer Empty now engages the neighborhood in a more robust research process, which prioritizes existing knowledge systems and different approaches to research. This extensive method allows us to learn more about each neighborhood we work in by understanding what resources already exist in any given community, what elements the members of a community want to see more of, and how the arts can play a larger role in their lives. Moving forward, we are interested in finding new ways to connect to the neighborhoods in which we work through more partnerships and continued professional development for local artists both emerging and established.

**CHALLENGE:** In dealing with the complex, tiered levels of a hospital system it is sometimes overwhelming to navigate among the many stakeholders. This was improved after ART ZONE and was built into the planning/creation of Y.Ex.

**RESOLUTION:** Going forward we plan to continue to deepen our established relationships and welcome more partners into the planning and execution process of our programs.

**CHALLENGE:** While most communities offer resources, they are often not linked to each other and there may be disconnect between different groups working in similar spaces. This has been consistent in most areas of the city we have worked in.

**RESOLUTION:** We are building resource databases for artists in the communities where we are working, developing programming specifically around the concerns facing emerging artists and meeting with diverse groups of cultural workers/organizations to find points of intersection and potential assistance.

## ART ZONE CG-91: COMMUNITY ART AND DATA LAB

During ART ZONE, those most impacted by the harsh and quickly changing landscape of New York engaged in dialogues centered around people, site and the arts. Facilitating these investigative conversations has been undeniably valuable to how our education programs and curatorial process has developed over the last few years as it further immerses us in the lived reality of New Yorkers and helps us better understand how the arts can serve as a catalyst for positive community change. In future iterations of this program, we plan to experiment with significant changes to the length of daily sessions and the number of elders in the program.



**CHALLENGE:** While a one-month intensive during July (Wednesday through Saturday, 1-5pm) works well for most young people on summer break, older adults in the program have robust schedules and needed to rearrange things quite a bit.

**RESOLUTION:** Shift schedule to two eight-hour days per week or alternate each week between eight hour and four hour days.

**CHALLENGE:** The intergenerational aspect of the program proved valuable for both teenagers and elders, but the latter were significantly underrepresented compared with the youth population (22:4). Both groups requested more equal representation.

**RESOLUTION:** Devote significantly more lead time to elder outreach (begin a minimum of two months prior). As an organization that also tries to provide creative space for other organizations that may lack it, there is opportunity to partner with more older adult groups to make use of the space when the program is not taking place.

## YOUNG EXHIBITION MAKERS

The Y.Ex program furthered our engagement with the youth who took part in ART ZONE while also welcoming young arts workers to develop *A Story to be Told*, probing further into the concerns and passions identified the previous summer. Y.Ex transformed not only an emergency room but also the perceptions of the visitors that stepped into it, creating an exhibition that established a place of belonging and connection for young artists and curators in Brooklyn. Going forward, we plan to increase the number of sessions in the training portion and enlist guests to engage with Y.Ex more continuously throughout the program.

**CHALLENGE:** The number of sessions in the program did not allow for many trips for critical observation and analysis of professional/institutional exhibitions, which would have been valuable to their exhibition planning. Participants requested more “in the field” opportunities in the program evaluations.

**RESOLUTION:** Add additional days for field trips to exhibitions as well as studio visits with local artists. Build in more opportunities for group discussions outside of the Y.Ex space to ground them in the surrounding neighborhood.

**CHALLENGE:** While there were many insightful and engaging teaching artists and guest speakers, many only visited the space once (for their workshop) and were unable to return. In the final evaluations, participants expressed a desire for them to come back during the exhibition programming.

**RESOLUTION:** Ask guests to commit to both their scheduled workshop and a return visit (either for tour feedback prior to exhibition opening or the exhibition programming itself).

## **GOING FORWARD**

**“I enjoy being a part of this program and being able to work as a peer leader. I am proud of everyone. Hope this program continues to grow.”**

– 18-year-old Y.Ex participant

No Longer Empty is working with 11 alumni from past programs during the 2018-2019 academic year in the inaugural launch of Youth Action Council (YAC), which explores the ways in which art can be used as a tool for social change. From guest speakers, to field trips around the city, to art-making workshops, YAC will offer an opportunity for young arts professionals to develop their skills and interests in this field. Two public events will take place during the program's duration in order to empower the youth to engage with other young people around the various areas of study they have been immersed in such as climate justice, feminism and (im)migration.

We have had the honor of working with young people who return for further engagement: for example, one student who took part in ART ZONE as a teen participant returned as a Peer Leader during Y.Ex 2018 and again as a member of YAC. As an organization, we deeply value the maturing of our connections to the teens in our programs, their families and their community at large. In order to further support this experience, we have developed the Matrix Model to envision various points of entry and continued development for the youth we work with. The model sees youth entering either the Y.Ex or ART ZONE programs, returning as peer mentors and continuing mentorship with staff through the YAC and No Longer Empty internship programs.

In East Flatbush, we aim to move forward in developing more programs tailored to the desires of the community's youth and creating multi-and-intergenerational education opportunities. We have cemented a long-term relationship with NYC Health + Hospitals / Kings County that will enable us to further these initiatives in ways that remain relevant to local stakeholders over the coming years. The conversations, laughs and collaboration in No Longer Empty's programs in East Flatbush have set a strong foundation for the future programs we hope to develop with the hospital and the surrounding community. We look forward to our enduring relationship with East Flatbush and the brilliant teens and elders with whom we have had the privilege of working throughout the years.

As our programs continue to grow both within and beyond East Flatbush, No Longer Empty strives not only to develop new offerings for young people across New York City, but to also make our model accessible and replicable for others. For those interested in further discussion about the work outlined in this report please do not hesitate to reach out to us at [education@nolongerempty.org](mailto:education@nolongerempty.org).

# APPENDIXES<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Sample of quotes collected from visitor surveys completed during public programs, private group tours, and workshops with local youth groups during both ART ZONE CG-91 and Young Exhibition Makers

## APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY<sup>24</sup>

“ART ZONE CG-91 made me realize people need this space!”

– H+H / Kings County nurse [ART ZONE CG-91]

“I loved talking to people and sharing my view on things. As teens, we don’t get to do that very often so this was cool.” – teen participant [Y.Ex 2018]

“A place like this is much needed... especially in the summer.”

– Officer Paul Parkinson [ART ZONE CG-91]

“The thing that surprised me most [about seeing the exhibition] was that something so beautiful could exist in a space like this because there is so much hurting going on around here.”

– 21 year old visitor [Y.Ex 2018]

“What surprised me most about today was being in a hospital engaging with art because hospitals don’t have a very broad sense of health. It made me want to see more arts organizations really investing funds and energy to get to people.” – 31 year old visitor [ART ZONE CG-91]

“I feel very strongly in my ability to curate an exhibition. I have only ever seen it one-sided, where I am the artist submitting work. However, I now understand that curating is an art in and of itself.”

– 15 year old participant [Y.Ex 2018]

“Today [while visiting ART ZONE CG-91] I realized that I want more art spaces and more safe spaces in my community. Art can help people feel connected.” – 18 year old workshop participant from the Hetrick-Martin Institute, an organization helping LGBTQ youth dealing with homelessness [ART ZONE CG-91]

“I’ve never been to an art exhibition before or a workshop like this. I learned how to make art about the community.” – 10 year old workshop participant from SONYC (Kings Bay YM-YWHA) [ART ZONE CG-91]

“It was interesting to see how the youth is absorbing and interpreting and living the portraits of identity in today’s culture.” – 27 year old visitor [Y.Ex 2018]

“I never really thought about art before this program, and now I’ve seen so many young talented artists in this class and it’s made me think about how art can help us to do things better, solve problems, and get to know each other in a place like the hospital.”

– 67 year old summer program participant [ART ZONE CG-91]





## APPENDIX 2: FINDINGS EXPANDED (ART ZONE CG-91)

### **WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE LESS OF IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OR COMMUNITY?**

When asked this question, the most popular answer was that people wanted to see less violence (34%, or 67 respondents out of 200), followed by wanting to see less crime (16%, or 32 of 200) and less trash (14%, or 29 of 200). 6% (13 of 200) wanted to see less gentrification (expressed as an increased presence of chain stores/restaurants, construction, commercial buildings, wealthy college students, development, Uber, “over evaluation of incoming residents and the changes they want”, executives and hipsters, and “empty stores because the rent is rising”).

Six out of 200 wanted to see less graffiti and four out of 200 wanted to see less policing and less police brutality. Some 20% (40 of 200) listed other things they would like to see less of in their community: discrimination, empty buildings, catcalling, bars, homelessness, laziness, mental illness, negativity, poverty, cars, close mindedness, disrespect towards others, dog droppings, greed, adult basketball, political media uproar, people looking at their phones, rats, sagging pants, and inaccessibility of the arts (to name a few).

### **WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OR COMMUNITY?**

18% (36 of 200) of people responded to this question by describing a new object-based element they would like to see more present: more art, paintings, murals, community art, graffiti, flowers, food, people, public art, public design, sculpture, street art, and green areas.

15% (31 of 200) said they would like to see more specialized programs: after school for teens, arts-based, festivals, basketball tournaments, better housing programs, farmer’s markets, local art fairs, more arts activities, classes, and programs; more community activities, concerts, intergenerational activities, job development programs featuring diverse art forms, music and the performing arts, “neighborhood friendly painting”, open studios, mentorship programs, gender-specific programs, and summer camps.

13% (26 of 200) described wanting to see more of a certain kind of place: venues for art exhibitions and employment opportunities, art studios, better housing, more bodegas, more businesses owned by people of color, cleaner streets, community centers, healthy places to eat, gardens, parks, learning centers, cultural centers, recreation centers, social places where people from different backgrounds come together, places to hang out and connect through art in a public hospital.



Another 13% described wanting to see more of a specific kind of action — they wanted to see people coming together during an art project, to see the youth doing more art and more positive things, as well as more communication, art renovation and preservation, more community engagement, involvement and planning, more interaction and respect, and more people working together to activate blocks with urban design and support public places.

Still another 13% described a feeling they would like to have more of in their community — peace, unity, togetherness, generosity, balance, care, equality, happiness, kindness, love, creativity, quiet, safety, togetherness, “unity and planning like this,” and an increased interest/value in the arts and in “long term intra-community ties.” Almost an equal amount described an increase in a kind of space they would like more of: wild green spaces where animals roam, where health, wellness, and art were more accessible, people felt more safe to socialize, where adults can go to learn, where youth can make things, where there is music and where family is made of related and unrelated individuals.

### **WHAT KIND OF NEW ART EXPERIENCE WOULD YOU LIKE FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD OR COMMUNITY?**

When asked to imagine a new art experience, the largest amount of respondents (74 of 200) described a particular artform which they would like to see more of locally: murals, live local music venues, music and dance performances, painting, participatory arts, performance art and street theatre, abstract video and photo, portraiture, a recording studio, religious art, robotics, sculpture, street art, stuff for kids and experiences that highlight local histories (“things that happened back in the day.”).

Another large percentage (20% or 40 of 200) focused on the quality of experience they would like to have, asking for it to be immersive, interactive, accessible, social, magical, diverse, cultural, free, quietly magnificent, frequent, healthy, happy, motivational, community-driven, hands-on, educational, creative, interdisciplinary, flexible, welcoming, mutually helpful, one that brings people together to be human, by and for young people; for it to have “beauty and brightness.”

15% (30 of 200) described wanting to experience a new opportunity: the chance to hear and tell stories about art, to be able to show/share one’s own art, to converge with other inhabitants of the neighborhood, to display talent, to explore social/political issues across different art forms, to be more active through the arts, to see art made by people who live in your community, to meet more artist and to be able to celebrate art, to meet people of different ages through a connection with the arts, to use communal spaces for art, to have a safe place for Black families, and a place where there is an open door for participations from non artists.



7% (15 of 200) described a new kind of program they would like to experience (collective art festival, African drumming, dancing, music festivals, after school programs, art programs, street fairs, block parties and hands-on festivals) and 4% (9 of 200) described a new kind of place (a community space, garden, mural, exhibition space, museum, senior center).





## APPENDIX 3: OUTREACH AND SELECTION PROCESS (ART ZONE CG-91)

### OUTREACH

In preparation for the program, No Longer Empty reached out to over 137 organizations serving a diverse group of New Yorkers in the Brooklyn neighborhoods surrounding H+H / Kings County. Outreach was conducted by No Longer Empty staff and interns in English, Spanish, and French, and included info sessions and visits to local senior citizen centers, elementary, middle and high schools, medical clinics, community-based organizations, and out-of-school programs.

No Longer Empty staff invited the public to visit the space, and/or book a free tour or workshop throughout the month of July. Visiting groups came from numerous community-based organizations within New York; among them were the Kings Against Violence Initiative (youth anti-violence program based in Brownsville), Hetrick-Martin participants (a non-profit organization working with LGBTQ youth) and campers from Kings Bay Y SONYC (year-round programming for youth).

Active members of their community, No Longer Empty was able to connect with the surrounding neighborhoods to invite elder residents to apply to the Community Art and Data Lab. One elder learned of the program through a friend at her church, while another saw a poster in her physiotherapy clinic; through outreach to senior centers, another elder learned of the program from No Longer Empty staff and she went on to inform a friend who also was able to join the program. Their involvement in the program offered valuable opportunities for storytelling and the sharing of experiences. One of the elders made her way to New York as a child during the Great Migration, settling in Brooklyn in the late forties, and staying in the same neighborhood since then. Another was born and raised in New York, a Brooklynite for many decades and an active member of the local arts scene.

### SELECTION PROCESS

No Longer Empty invited teens and elders to apply for an intensive one-month Community Art and Data Lab, which took place over the month of July. Forty-six people applied to participate in the lab, either between the ages of 14 and 19 or 60 and older; many told us they had heard about the program through their therapist, a teacher, a church member, a guidance counselor, or coordinator in their community center. We offered interviews to all 46 applicants, of which 35 accepted. To reinforce No Longer Empty's values of accessibility and collaborative process, a group of 15 community advisors were convened to participate in a selection panel to help choose the participants for the lab program; this panel included hospital staff members, local residents, No Longer Empty board members, community leaders, and professionals.



We offered five paid youth leader positions to high school students who had previously worked with No Longer Empty on past art exhibitions in empty storefronts and small business commercial malls. In addition, two teen apprentices from the organization Exploring the Arts participated in the lab, as well as one blind high school student who was connected to us through City Access NY. These eight youth helped us co-teach the lab, for which we accepted 26 participants — four senior citizens and 22 teenagers — 54% either lived or attended school in the neighborhood, with the remainder coming from surrounding areas in Brooklyn; in addition, some young siblings and parents in their fifties and sixties were also regular visitors who took part in many of the lab activities. These participants were also paid a \$250 stipend for their month-long involvement.



## APPENDIX 4: OUTREACH AND SELECTION PROCESS (YOUNG EXHIBITION MAKERS)

### OUTREACH

Building upon the network developed during Summer 2017, No Longer Empty reached out to over 248 organizations serving the Brooklyn neighborhoods surrounding H+H / Kings County, inviting teens ages 14-18 to apply for the Young Exhibition Makers program using many of the same methods as ART ZONE: Community Art and Data Lab.

No Longer Empty staff invited the public to book a free tour and workshop in *A Story to be Told* during the month of June and to join Y.Ex in celebrating the show with its public programming, held during three consecutive Saturdays (and one Tuesday) while the exhibition was on display. Guests to the space visited for tours from various different demographics — from high school students (Brooklyn School of Music and Theater) to post-graduate scholars (New York University's Art and Education program), from Kings County Hospital patient programs (with cohorts ranging in age from 15 to 65) to feminist activists (Feminist Camp).

Of the 70 youth who applied through the online application and interview process, 24 participants successfully completed the 14-week program, receiving a \$250 stipend during the closing graduation ceremony. Five of the participants took on the role of Peer Leader (three No Longer Empty alumni, one Exploring the Arts Intern, and one KAVI youth leader) and were awarded a \$350 stipend at the end of the program.

### SELECTION PROCESS

Y.Ex participants decided upon themes for the exhibition. They created a call for submissions and designed and made posters which were sent out to schools and youth groups, inviting teen artists (13-19) to submit work related to the show's themes.

The artists of the pieces chosen received a \$20 gift card at the end of the show, and some took part in public programming once the exhibition opened (teen artist panel discussion, art-making activities with guest artists).





## APPENDIX 5: FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS (YOUNG EXHIBITION MAKERS)

“I feel that the program has given everyone the chance to improve themselves and others with their individual skills that they all shared with each other.” – 17-year-old Y.Ex participant

“Yes, I feel more connected to NYC more than ever because of the new experiences and places this program has took me to.” – Y.Ex participant

“After this program what I would like to do is get a job or paid internship that continues to focus on art and help teach about communities and the things and experiences happening around us.” – Y.Ex participant

“I see the way art affects people more clearly. Everything and everyone has an opinion and are affected by art and I hadn’t realized that until I saw it with my own eyes.” – Y.Ex participant

“[My perception of contemporary art and the art world] has improved mainly because I value it more. My time here has given me a creative outlet when I could have been home playing video games.” – Y.Ex participant

“I liked having the guest speakers because it showed how what we were doing and learning is relevant to our communities and our lives. It made what we learned seem more applicable to everyday situations.” – Y.Ex participant

When asked how difficult it was to put together a tour for the exhibition, 50% (10 of 20) said never difficult at all, while the other half stated sometimes difficult. And regarding how comfortable the participants were giving the tours 50% said not uncomfortable at all, 40% sometimes uncomfortable, and 10% very uncomfortable.

Participant ratings of the workshops/events found 70% felt installing the exhibition was very enjoyable and 70% found the listening activities (psychogeography, inquiry-based tours, talking to people about art) to be enjoyable.

When asked to rate their confidence levels on certain skills and abilities, 40% of participants were very confident in their ability to articulate their opinions about art and 65% felt confident in their knowledge of socially-engaged art. But 30% were only somewhat confident in being a leader, knowledge of socially-engaged art, and ability to be critical of art.

45% felt they improved a lot (+75% or more) in gaining insight into the professional arts world (curation, artists, educator). 60% improved (+50%) in their knowledge of what it takes to make an exhibition.

<sup>25</sup> Sample of quotes collected from visitor surveys completed during public programs, private group tours, and workshops

## APPENDIX 6: VISITOR RESPONSES (YOUNG EXHIBITION MAKERS)<sup>25</sup>

### **ONE THING I LEARNED TODAY WAS...**

- “Everyone is different but that shouldn’t separate us, we all have a story and need to understand each other to be equal” – 15-year-old visitor from Brooklyn
- “never underestimate the power of a passionate student” – 18-year-old visitor from Stuyvesant Heights
- “I now own the beauty that’s in me” – 57-year-old visitor from East Flatbush
- “not to discredit the artistic ability and deep understanding of life that young adults have” – 21-year-old visitor from Michigan
- “how active, creative, comfortable, and motivated youth are while breaking down, and calling out gender stereotypes and norms” – 33-year-old visitor from East Village

### **IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS ART’S ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY?**

- “should be everywhere, always, part of the everyday habits of our lives” – 53-year-old visitor from Prospect Heights
- “to express and serve as a platform for dialogue” – 45-year-old visitor from Lower East Side
- “It connects people from different cultures, unites them through sets of colors and impacts everyone. It reminds us how close we really are.” – 17-year-old visitor from Brooklyn
- “to document our past, understand our present and push our future to be a place for everyone” – 20-year-old visitor from South Carolina
- “to reflect feelings, issues and to promotes reflection and inspiration” – 54-year-old visitor from Flatiron District

### **WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

- “people coming together, doing things to help each other not being competitive and going against each other” – 43-year-old visitor from Bath Beach
- “more programs for the youth” – 43-year-old visitor from Brooklyn
- “discussion of uncomfortable issues” – 19-year-old visitor from Red Hook

### **TARGETED CURATORIAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **“SKIN I’M IN” ASKED, HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY POLICE BRUTALITY?**

- “I have not but several of my Muslim and black friends have been stopped and searched for appearing ‘suspicious’ even though they did not display such characteristics” – 17-year-old visitor from Brooklyn



“got caught at gun shooting, police harassment” – 32-year-old visitor from Brazil

“No, not personally but knowing that a Y.Ex member has been affected makes me sad”

– 33-year-old visitor from Hamilton Heights

“Not directly — watching news about it makes me angry and makes me want to do something”

– 21-year-old from Kentucky

**“STANDING STRONG” ASKED, WHAT DOES FAMILY MEAN TO YOU?**

Of 66 people who responded in the survey, 21 (31.82%) used the word ‘love,’ 15 (22.73%) used the word ‘everything’ and 11 (16.67%) used ‘support.’

“friends are the family that you choose” – 45-year-old visitor from Sunset Park

“love but also lost and pain and fear” – 54-year-old visitor from Ridgewood

“anyone who loves you and will show up for you” – 22-year-old visitor from Michigan

“respect, support, judgement-free, kind, honest” – 45-year-old visitor from Lower East Side

