

Media Release

**Luminato Launches Year-Round
Artists in Residence Program**

August 20, 2020 (Toronto, Canada) – Luminato Festival Toronto’s Artists in Residence (AIR), an exciting new year-round Program aimed at establishing and supporting new relationships with Toronto artists, was launched in July. The program includes three 7-week residencies with weekly workshops, check-ins and sharings, which support and enhance participants’ work on individual projects. Meetings currently take place virtually, in adherence with COVID-19 health and safety regulations.

The inaugural AIR cohort is made up of 10 mid-career and senior Black artists, all of whom have robust practices, spanning multiple mediums. Plans are underway for a second cohort in the autumn of 2020, with a focus on Indigenous artists, and a third cohort is anticipated for the new year.

“With this program, I aim to bolster artists who have dedicated years building a definitive practice, who now face the deficiency in support that comes with being mid-career and senior artists. There is a drop off in resources and opportunities for artists who are a decade or more into their practice, especially for those working on self-produced projects, or without organizational support. Luminato’s AIR Program welcomes artists to envision their work on an expanded scale, recharge their imaginations, and start building new networks within their cohort and beyond,” said Dian Marie Bridge, Luminato’s Creative Producer and AIR Program Facilitator.

“Spurred on by the knowledge that the institutionalization of professional training restricts access and leaves many artists - particularly those in marginalized communities - feeling like they are alone, the aim of the residency is to build strong networks of artists, who are able to learn from and lean on each other’s knowledge, and ultimately step squarely into eldership roles within their particular field of practice,” said Bridge.

By sharing the different approaches that artists take to their work, skills can be transposed between practices, influencing work in ways that reflect each other while also addressing the nature and scale of Luminato; visionary, large-scale, multi-media works that explore challenging ideas. Although participation in AIR is not tied to any final product, there is potential for future project development with Luminato.

“I am grateful to connect with this remarkable cohort of artists, who Dian has brought together under the AIR umbrella, and I hope that we are launching some long-term relationships as well as this exciting new program,” said Naomi Campbell Luminato’s Artistic Director.

Artists in Residence: Summer 2020

July 13 – August 28, 2020

Selected in July, the inaugural cohort of 10 mid-career and senior Black artists are:

- **Djennie Laguerre** – Playwright, Storyteller, Actress, Arts Educator, Director
- **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard (Belladonna the Blest)** – Emcee, Playwright, Agitator

- **Evond Blake (aka MEDIAH)** – Mixed Media Artist: Murals, Graffiti, Digital Media, Printmaking
- **Nadijah Robinson** – Mixed Media Artist: Murals, Collage, Paint, Sewing, Silkscreen, Batik, Graphic Design, Performance
- **Natasha ‘Courage’ Bacchus** – Elite Athlete, Theatre Artist, Deaf Advocate
- **Natasha Powell** – Artistic Director Holla Jazz, Dancer, Choreographer, Teacher, Producer
- **Oluseye** – Multidisciplinary Artist: Paint, Photography, Performance, Sculpture
- **Ravyn Aariah Wngz** – Burlesque Storyteller, Dancer, Abolitionist, BLM Toronto Member
- **Travis Knights** – Tap Dancer, Performer, Choreographer, Speaker, Believer
- **Tuku Matthews** – Second Generation Jazz Vocalist, Theatre Artist, Songwriter, Musical Director, Melodic Adaptation/Composer, Vocal Mentor

For more information about this program please visit:

<https://luminatofestival.com/Our-Programming/Artists-in-Residence>

— 30 —

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About Luminato Festival Toronto

Luminato Festival Toronto is Toronto’s international arts festival dedicated to performance, media and visual arts, and programming that cuts across traditional artform boundaries and aspires to the highest level of artistic excellence. The annual June festival invites the world to celebrate creativity through a multi-disciplinary celebration of art and culture by presenting larger than life large-scale events, ‘unexpected encounters with art’ and performances in non-traditional spaces. Luminato works closely with Canadian artists to support the development and creation of distinctive new works, as well as presenting today’s most exciting artists from around the world. Luminato was founded in 2007 and will be celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Festival in 2021. For more information visit <https://luminatofestival.com/> or follow us on Twitter: [@Luminato](https://twitter.com/Luminato) | Facebook: [LuminatoFestival](https://www.facebook.com/LuminatoFestival) | Instagram: [@LuminatoFestival](https://www.instagram.com/LuminatoFestival) | LinkedIn: [Luminato](https://www.linkedin.com/company/luminato) | Youtube: [LuminatoEvents](https://www.youtube.com/LuminatoEvents)

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