



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Contact:

Steve Scarpa

Manager, Communications and Public Relations

Office: 860-695-6282

Cell: 860-559-4872

E-mail: [sscarpa@hplct.org](mailto:sscarpa@hplct.org)

### **Hartford Changemakers Murals Unveiled August 29 and September 17**

HARTFORD – Murals recognizing the contributions of people of color to Hartford’s rich history will be unveiled at virtual ceremonies taking place August 29 and September 17.

In an effort to update the traditional historical narrative of Hartford, Hartford Public Library worked with city teens, elders, and local artists to create public art celebrating the stories of city change makers from the Black, Latinx, and indigenous communities.

“We are so pleased to recognize people who have made a difference in the community, some who may not yet have been appropriately recognized for their contributions. The Library is here to share their stories, make sure they are remembered by future generations, and also to provide an opportunity for our young people to connect with and be inspired by the legacy and impact of these Hartford changemakers,” said Bridget Quinn-Carey, HPL’s president and CEO.

The murals, created as a result of a series of community workshops, will be at the following locations:

#### **Melanin - Albany Ave & Blue Hills**

Mural reveal: August 29, 3-5pm

#### **Art Box, Park Street**

Mural reveal: September 17, 5:30-7:30 pm

Viewers can watch both celebrations live streamed on Hartford Public Library’s Facebook page and YouTube channel. These live streamed celebrations will feature an unveiling of the mural celebrating Hartford Changemakers and a showcasing of artwork produced by summer workshop participants. Tune in for live dance and music performances, as well as a showcase of photography and storytelling.

Nygel White, HPL’s YOUmedia Program Coordinator and one of the organizers of the program, is honored to work on a project that he believes contributes to the empowerment of Hartford’s youth. The project gives them the ability to dream, he said.

"I think the fact that so many people from the community have been able to contribute to the development of the workshops has provided a glimpse of their ability to positively impact our city in ways that weren't always clear or available. I believe the celebration and culmination of all of the community work that has been taking place in the series of workshops will ultimately make the power of the people evident," White said.

The workshops, which have included photography, dance, storytelling, and poetry, have brought together people from all walks of life to explore untold aspects of the city's history through their own talents.

"The mural workshop, an all women group with women representing the North End and South End, Black and Latinx Hartford communities, and ages 13-68, have such an incredible joy to bear witness to. We've transferred all of the learning, discussions, and art sharing into designs and mural creations. Mural paint days have also included some of the participants' children. It's been a great way to deeply connect across the city, intergenerationally, culturally, and linguistically, in a way that we rarely get to do with site-based physical programming," said Jasmin Agosto, Education & Community Outreach Manager for the Hartford History Center.

"Participants in the storytellers workshop have focused on the 'unsung heroes' in their lives- the people who watched over them and others in their neighborhood, the people who fought for their communities in small and big ways, the people who kept Hartford alive and cared for. We need to keep telling stories of these heroes and sing their praise," said Liz Castle, HPL's programming manager.

### **Artist Instructor Bios**

#### **Mural Design & Painting - Lindaluz Carrillo & Mina Elise**

Lindaluz Carrillo is an Afro Peruvian artist born in New York and raised in the South End of Hartford. She is an urban artist and graphic designer. Carrillo uses typography, textile patterns and graffiti elements to tell a story about her life experiences and values. Her work reflects topics such as self-love, growth, resilience, and encouraging others to stand in their truth. Her work serves as a message to speak your mind with honesty and without fear, in order to embrace who you are.

Mina Elise is a fine artist and illustrator navigating this world as a queer Black femme from Hartford, CT. Raised by a lineage of artists and healers, she understands that to be black and creative is to be a work of art itself. Her work reflects her identity, while inspiring those to redefine what beauty, intimacy, and love looks like to them.

#### **Documentary Photography - Jasmine Jones**

Jasmine Jones is a photographer and filmmaker based in Hartford. Her work focuses on daily life, overlooked moments, and ignored communities. Her goal is to showcase those who should be seen and heard and to use her art as an outlet for them to tell their own stories.

#### **Dance - Ginette Christie**

Ginette Christie aka Gin is from Bloomfield, CT. She took her first tap class at the age of 6 with Cheryl Smith at The Artists Collective located on Albany Ave in Hartford CT. She started dancing at The Collective again when she was 14 years old. While she was there she also developed skills in visual/fine arts. She has trained and taught classes in hip hop, West African, and modern dance at Studio 860,

Northstar Dance Academy, The Dance Studio, Trinity College, Wellesley College, Connecticut College and more.

### **Dance - JuS**

Justin "JuS" Hughes is a versatile musician from Bloomfield, CT who has made his mark in the industry. JuS has been singing and dancing since the age of 6 starting with genres such as African, Tap, Ballet, Jazz, and Modern. Since the day he knew he had the talent to sing and dance, JuS has involved himself in numerous activities in the Boston, Connecticut, New York and Southern areas. At age 10, JuS began pursuing Hip Hop and found that he was able to excel much higher in this genre of dance. JuS is a self-taught Hip Hop street dancer that has worked his way into becoming one of the most versatile choreographers, hard hitting dancers and performers in the field today. Working and touring with artists such as, Madusa from def Poetry Jam, Pharaoh Monch and Slum village, for the "Beats for Peace Tour", JuS has also gained exposure to Sony/BMG Music entertainment. As a Choreographer, JuS has choreographed for artists that are breaking into the industry in front of Industry Executives from BET. Being an R&B, Soul, and Hip Hop singer, JuS has been able to utilize his talents and electrify every stage with his versatile performance. Attending Berklee College of Music in the heart of Boston, MA, Now CEO JuS of JuS Move Studios has become a well-known name throughout the East Coast. Currently JuS is working in the school system of Richard J. Kinsella Magnet School for The Performing Arts teaching music and dance to grades 4th - 8th, as well as the Thirman L Milner School teaching basic Keyboarding to grades 3rd-8th in Hartford, and the surrounding areas of CT.

### **Storytelling - Andre Keitt**

"It's in my blood..." says Andre Keitt Greatheart Griot, a native of Orangeburg, South Carolina, now residing in Connecticut, excelled in the cultural arts at an early age. Inspired by the storytelling of his grandmother, Martha Greatheart Thompson, "Mama Thompson", Andre has a lore of tales that he will envision forever. He has a B.A. in English from South Carolina State University. For ten years he was one of the host/producers of "Black Perspective" an Emmy award winning public affairs television show aired on WVIT, an NBC affiliate in Connecticut. Some of the subjects broached on this program were: African Folklore, The Spirit of the Native American, Music of the Black Church, and Holiday Traditions. He is a member of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (ALA) and has performed at library conferences in Columbus, OH, Milwaukee, WI and Winston-Salem, NC. Andre is delighted to be a teaching artist and literacy activity leader for students in Greater Hartford and surrounding regions for the following arts and humanities institutions: Hartford Stage Company, The Bushnell Memorial, Connecticut Humanities Council and Readers as Leaders, CT. He has also performed with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

### **Poetry - Versatile PoetiQ**

Versatile PoetiQ (aka Brittana Tatum) is a spoken word artist and rap poet with a mission to enhance student's abilities to understand and conceptualize poetry and spoken word. She uses an inclusive style of teaching that values success over a system and people over a plan. This enables her to connect with each student in deep, meaningful ways. A regular performer in the Hartford area hip-hop scene,

Versatile graduated from the University of Hartford and teaches spoken word at Hartford Academy for the Arts.

For more information about Hartford Public Library's offerings, visit [hplct.org](http://hplct.org).

### **About Hartford Public Library**

Now celebrating its 126th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. [www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org).