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**NYC DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
ANNOUNCE SELECTION OF THE LOST COLLECTIVE FOR ARTIST RESIDENCY SERVING LGBTQ YOUTH IN
FOSTER CARE FACILITIES**

The Lost Collective will create opportunities for LGBTQ youth to express themselves, to experience NYC's cultural offerings, and to further engage them with the services and resources available through ACS.

The residency marks the latest expansion of Cultural Affairs' Public Artists-in-Residence Program.

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New York - The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) and the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) have announced The Lost Collective have been selected to serve as artists-in-residence with ACS. The Lost Collective – which includes Keelay Gipson, Rebeca Rad, Josh Adam Ramos, and Britton Smith – will enhance resources, support, and wellbeing of youth at five LGBTQ foster care facilities in Brooklyn and Queens by engaging them through creative practice.

"It is so exciting to see the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Administration for Children's Services join together and use the power of art to affect positive change for our LGBTQ youth," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "With The Lost Collective's wealth of experience and commitment to intersectional activism, I am certain that their creativity and artistry will support and empower young LGBTQ New Yorkers."

"The arts are a powerful tool to help young people express themselves," said **ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión**. "I am excited to partner with Cultural Affairs to expand services for LGBTQ youth in our system. Providing a supportive environment will help cultivate their talent and artistic abilities."

"Art has the power to reimagine, reframe, and transform the way we do things, and the way we see ourselves and the world around us," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. "The Lost NYC will use their interdisciplinary practice to work collaboratively with LGBTQ youth in the foster care system, opening new possibilities for education, inspiration, and self-identity. We are so excited to collaborate with the artists, youth, and our partners at ACS on this new PAIR residency."

The Lost Collective is a group of four artists – Keelay Gipson, Rebeca Rad, Josh Adam Ramos, and Britton Smith – who have extensive experience in New York theater as actors, directors, writers, musicians, producers, educators, and mentors. Their practice is rooted in the intersection of art and activism, and their work is focused on the voices of underrepresented populations, including people of color and the LGBTQ community. The collective mounted two productions of a play entitled *The Lost* in 2014 and 2015 that used spoken word poetry and hip hop/R&B music to tell a story about youths at the margins of

society and their struggle to create a space for themselves. Building on this experience, The Lost Collective will work collaboratively with ACS and residents at five foster care facilities throughout the residency to explore and engage with the experiences of the foster care residents. The residency will last for one year and will culminate in a public presentation of works created by the youth participants in tandem with the artists.

“Throughout our creative collaborations, we have witnessed firsthand the power of expressing experiences through art, and the empowerment of pouring your own story into characters that you guide and create through their life on the stage,” said **The Lost Collective**. “We are thrilled to collaborate with these young adults to create expressions of themselves through art that is uniquely their own.”

The residency is being supported by funding from DCLA and ACS. The PAIR program, inspired by artist Mierle Ukeles’ pioneering residency with the Department of Sanitation, integrates art and artists into City government to rethink critical civic issues using creative tools. The first new PAIR residency announced last year was with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, where artist Tania Bruguera is working to engage undocumented residents. The second residency, announced in November 2015, places Social Design Collective in residence with the Department of Veterans Services to better connect with female veterans.

The Lost Collective – Artist Bios

Keelay Gipson is a multi-disciplinary artist including work as an actor, filmmaker, director and award-winning playwright. As an actor he has performed in world premiere musicals such as *Quannah* (Pace New Musicals), with music by Grammy Award winner Larry Gatlin of the Gatlin Brothers, and *Darling* (Pace New Musicals) by Ryan Scott Oliver, conceived by Brett Ryback.

He has directed productions of *Red Light Winter* and *See What I Wanna See* (Studio 501) in New York as well as new plays and musical pieces including *Sign o’ the Times* (Duplex Cabaret Theater) and *#Looking* (54 Below) and a developmental workshop of the new musical *My Name is Annie King* (Johnny Mercer’s Writer’s Colony at Goodspeed Musicals). Regionally he has directed *Boeing-Boeing* at The Mar-Va Theater in Maryland.

His play *What I Tell You in the Dark* was recently selected as a Premiere Stages Playwriting Festival Finalist. His work as a playwright has been seen at the Wild Project, HERE Arts Center, 133rd Street Arts Center, The Theater at Alvin Ailey, Tom Noonan’s Paradise Factory, Pace University, The University of Houston, The National Black Theater, Rattlestick Playwrights’ Theater and New York Theatre Workshop. He is a playwriting fellow with The Amoralists Theater Company’s ‘Wright Club, a Lambda Literary Emerging Voices Playwriting Fellow, a Rising Circle Theater Collective INKTank Semi-Finalist, and a featured playwright as part of the Obie Award-winning 48 Hours in Harlem and the Fire This Time Festivals. He has been featured in Next Magazine, The Village Voice, Time Out New York and TheAdvocate.com. He helped adapt the New York Times bestselling novel *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* into a theater piece, directed by Julia Locascio, which was subsequently performed in NYC and Chicago. As co-Artistic Director of The Oneness Project, he means to explore questions focusing on social injustice through various performance based mediums.

His play *The Lost* was nominated for 12 awards and won 4, including Outstanding Musical/Play with Music, as part of the 2014 Planet Connections Theatre Festivity. Keelay trained at Pace University.

Rebeca Rad hails from Brazil by way of Florida & Michigan. After attending Interlochen Arts Academy as a theatre major on a full scholarship with presidential honors, she moved to NYC to attain her BFA from

Pace University. While in NYC, Rad began teaching, directing, and mentoring. She has directed and performed at various illustrious NYC venues with a breadth of companies: New York Theatre Workshop, Joe's Pub, Theatre 167, National Black Theatre, Other Forces (Incubator Arts), The Public Theater, Lincoln Center, The Bushwick Starr, Signature Center, Pace Gallery, Target Margin Theatre, The Flea, Theatre Plastique, Buran Theatre, Rady & Bloom, Feinstein's/54 Below, Wild Project, Poetic Theatre Productions, Superhero Clubhouse, The Brick, and The Duplex. She can be seen on screen on FOX, Discovery Channel, PBS, MTV, MTV2, MTVDesi, Multishow. Rad also works as a coach for students/professionals internationally with a focus in musical theatre and is the head of the Summer Scholars Musical Theatre Program at Pace University. She is the co-founder and co-Artistic Director of The Oneness Project, a socially conscious artistic community organizing event, and co-founder of the Immigrant Assistance Center in South Florida. Through her work as an Artist she strives to empower people, particularly marginalized communities, who are underrepresented and underserved culturally, to express their deepest desires, fears and dreams by developing their voices through various Artistic mediums so that they may actively shape their own futures and that of their communities with honest, purposeful civic dialogue.

Josh Adam Ramos is a freelance producer and an actor. His first major project as a lead producer, *The Lost* by Keelay Gipson, made its world premiere in the 2014 Planet Connections Theatre Festivity, receiving four Planet Connections Awards including Outstanding Book (Keelay Gipson), Outstanding Director (Rebeca Rad) and Outstanding Musical. In 2015 a reimaged production of *The Lost* played a sold-out limited engagement in midtown Manhattan. Josh has also produced the debut solo concerts of Britton Smith (*A Musical Exploration of Love* at Feinstein's/54 Below) and Donell James Foreman (*Sign o' the Times* at The Duplex). Josh currently serves as the Executive Director of The Oneness Project, a multi-faceted community organizing project, co-created with artistic directors Keelay Gipson and Rebeca Rad, centered around artistic responses to local and global social injustices.

As an actor Josh has appeared in productions across the country including *Oklahomo: Enforcer of Justice* (NYMF), Rachel Bloom's *Sing Out Louise!* (UCB Theater NY + LA), *Chautauqua!* (Public Theater), Ryan Scott Oliver's *Darling* (Pace New Musicals), Keelay Gipson's *What I Tell You in the Dark* (Wild Project + Premiere Stages), Iris Dauterman's *The Waypoint* (Berkshire Fringe + MASS MoCA), and three national tours with TheatreworksUSA. He is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association. Josh trained in the BFA Musical Theater program at Pace University.

Britton Smith grew up a curious music lover singing in the small Alpha Joy Temple in San Antonio, TX. It was there that he began to understand the power of music—the connection of the people experiencing it, and the unity among those creating it. His passion for music led him to attend the Booker T. Washington HS for the Performing & Visual Arts in Dallas, TX. Britton also studied at the Perry-Mansfield Performing Arts School on a full scholarship.

In 2008 Britton moved to New York City to attend Pace University. Upon graduating with a BFA in Musical Theater in 2012, he signed with Wolf Talent Group. Since then Britton has performed with some of the industry's most respected artists. He has performed on Broadway in *After Midnight*, as well as *The Fortress of Solitude* (The Public), *The Wild Party* and *Cotton Club Parade* (NY City Center Encores!), *For the Last Time* (Clurman Theatre), and *Central Park Breakdown* (NYMF & South Korea). Britton is also a composer and has written original music for *The Lost* by Keelay Gipson. He has performed his own music with The Songwriters Orchestra, as well as in his own solo show at Feinstein's/54 Below.

Britton is currently performing in the new hit musical *Shuffle Along* on Broadway at the Music Box Theater.