



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

# DCArts Teletownhall

## GOING FORWARD TOGETHER

A public teletownhall discussion with  
the Chairperson and the Executive Director of the  
DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities

**THURSDAY | OCTOBER 28, 2021**  
**10 AM**



GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



## CAH CHAIRPERSON & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Reggie Van Lee**  
Chairperson



**Heran Sereke-Brhan**  
Executive Director



## CAH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Heran Sereke-Brhan** has spent over two decades studying and conducting research on African histories and cultures. She grew up enjoying music and theatre performances in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where many of the artists were family members or friends. She understood early on the power of the arts to nurture the imagination and create community. To honor their lives and contributions, Heran later helped stage performances and compile and edit works of notable Ethiopian writers and playwrights.

Heran joined the Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH) as Senior Grants Officer in July 2017. Prior to joining CAH, she served as Deputy Director for the DC Mayor's Office on African Affairs. She has worked at such cultural and educational institutions as the School for International Training's Study Abroad Program, the Harn Museum at the University of Florida, Addis Ababa University, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art.

Heran holds a PhD in History with minors in African American and Caribbean History and African Art History from Michigan State University.





DC COMMISSION<sup>ON THE</sup> ARTS & HUMANITIES

## ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

HERAN SEREKE-BRHAN, PhD  
*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*



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## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### GRANTMAKING

- Awarded 998 grants to individuals and organizations in all 8 wards
- Total funding: \$28,829,890
- FY20: 1,040 grants; \$27,135,971



## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### GRANTMAKING & COVID-19

- 346 relief grants to individuals and organizations
- CAH Relief and Recovery grant provided \$5,500 for individuals. Funded 94% of applicants (266 individuals) for a total of \$1.4m
- FAB-Relief grant program awarded 80 organizations funding to pay rent/mortgage for a total of \$1.8m



## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### GRANTMAKING & COVID-19

- FY21 Organizational enhancements for 199 organizations for a total of \$4.1m
- Over \$7.3m in relief funds disbursed to DC's arts & cultural sector in FY21



## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESS

- December 2020, CAH Task Force on Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging delivers its final report with recommendations to the Board of Commissioners
- 18 of the 44 recommendations already implemented or in progress



## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESS

- FY22 General Operating Support grant: weighted review criteria on IDEA ranging in weight from 15-40%
- Grant windows open for up to seven weeks, extended till after work hours. Additional (new) workshops after award notifications and before payment process
- Collection of demographic data on panelists and grant applicants



## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- January – May 2021, online community engagement agency-wide
  - Tele-Townhalls: 2
  - Business of the Arts: 8
  - Artists Showcase: 4
  - CAH in the Community: 6
- Total attendance: 2,107 (less than 5 months)



## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### BEYOND GRANTMAKING

- Increased access to Commission meetings by livestreaming to YouTube
- New agency website – user-friendly design, with more updates to come
- New CAH Strategic Plan & Public Art Master Plan Update



## FY 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### BEYOND GRANTMAKING

- Create and Thrive! Serving the District's older adult community through arts learning experiences
- NEA Traditional Arts Partnership – will support local artforms such as Go-Go Music

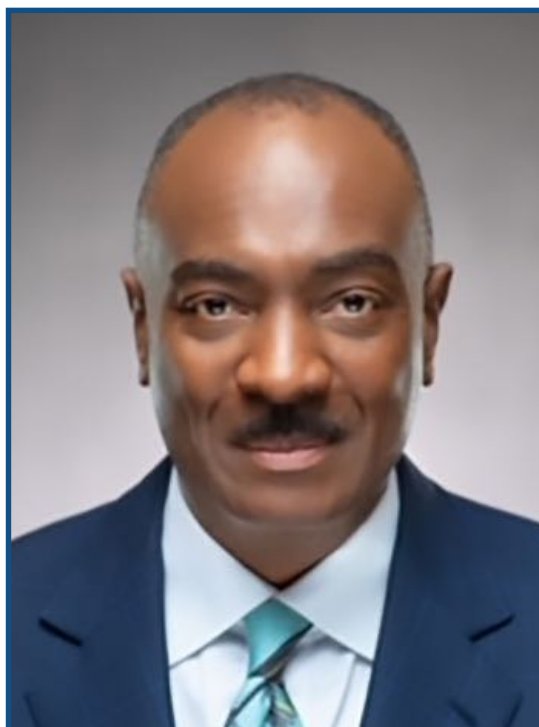


## FY 2022 OCTOBER

- 690 grant awards to date for FY22
- Over 12% are first-time CAH grantees
- Total funding awarded to date: \$25,256,17



## CAH CHAIRPERSON



**Reggie Van Lee** is Partner and Chief Transformation Officer at the Carlyle Group, helping ensure that the firm is maximizing its market competitiveness, driving growth and operating most effectively and efficiently as an institution.

Before joining Carlyle, he spent 32 years at Booz Allen Hamilton, where, before he retired as Executive Vice President, he led numerous business units across multiple industries. Prior to Booz Allen, he served as a research engineer with Exxon's production research company.

Reggie is a member of the board of directors of Fortitude Re, ProKarma, Gallup Inc, Deep Labs, OmniSpeech, the Women's Venture Capital Fund II, National CARES Mentoring Movement, the Coalition of African Americans in the Performing Arts, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Blair House Restoration Fund, Washington Nationals Philanthropies, Studio Museum in Harlem, the Public Theater, and the Juilliard School. He also serves as the Chair of the Washington DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser. Formerly, he served as Chair of the board of Washington Performing Arts and Vice Chair of the board of the Washington Ballet. He was named one of the top 25 consultants in the world by Consulting Magazine, selected as a Washington Minority Business Leader by the Washington Business Journal and named Black Engineer of the Year by Black Engineer magazine. He holds both a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from MIT and an MBA from Harvard University.



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## OUR COLLECTIVE AGENDA GOING FORWARD

REGGIE VAN LEE  
*CHAIRPERSON*



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# Three Pillars

GOVERNANCE/INTERDEPENDENCE

STRATEGIC PLAN

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS





## GOVERNANCE/INTERDEPENDENCE

Fully recognize the interdependence between CAH, the Council, and EOM + improve internal working relationships

- Enhanced bylaws
- Board Retreat
- Social events
- Committee assignments
- Quarterly one-on-one's with Chair and Commissioners
- Re-engagement with the Mayor's Arts Awards



## STRATEGIC PLAN

Emphasize CAH as a leader in ensuring all DC residents benefit fully from the transformative power of the arts and humanities

- More GOS funding opportunities to smaller orgs
- Facilitating ways to support beyond grants
- More intentional diversification of panels
- Showcase grantees at each monthly meeting
- Truth and Reconciliation mantra
- Creative economy working group
- Aggressive communications plan



## TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation of the 44 agreed upon action items from the Task Force on Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- Actions and timelines to be resourced
- Alignment with staff bandwidth and capacity



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# ***THIS IS A PLAN FOR SHIFTING THE PARADIGM***



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## GOING FORWARD TOGETHER

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



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## CAH EXHIBITION: *DC ART NOW 2021*

Throughout the year, CAH curates exhibitions through the Art Exhibition Grant and also its own exhibitions. These exhibitions are either mounted within the 200 I (Eye) Street Galleries or can be viewed through its virtual platform.

*DC Art Now 2021* is the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities' annual exhibition of selected work by finalists for the Art Bank Program grant.



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

The next Board of Commissioners meeting:

Monday | November 15, 2021 | 5:30 pm

