



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **IFETAYO CULTURAL ARTS ACADEMY LAUNCHES *ARAMINTA SPACE GRANT*. INAUGURAL CYCLE IS PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DANCE/NYC**

New York, NY — **Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy** is pleased to announce the launch of the **Araminta Space Grant Initiative** during the year-long celebration of its 35th anniversary. This inaugural cycle of the grant is presented in partnership with the dance service organization, **Dance/NYC**.

Named after abolitionist and national hero Harriet Tubman—born Araminta Ross—the *Araminta Space Grant Initiative* activates Ifetayo's state-of-the-art studios as a haven for artists and cultural entrepreneurs as they journey towards creative and financial freedom. The grant initiative will invest more than \$60,000 into Brooklyn's local creative economy annually, interrupting the insecurity, displacement, and creative brain-drain that gentrification is imposing across New York City. Inspired by the Quilombos of Brazil, the compounds of Jamaican maroons, and the safe houses of America's Underground Railroad, Ifetayo's *Araminta Space Grant Initiative* contributes to an unyielding legacy of liberating landscapes.

"As a trailblazing anchor organization in Brooklyn, Ifetayo understands that sustainability for cultural arts education requires sustainability for cultural *artists*. We are proud and excited that our organization is, at 35 years old, a cultural resource that can be leveraged for investment in the cultural sector as well as education and empowerment for our youth," says **Desirée Gordon**, Ifetayo's new Executive Director. "Long committed to using culture for community development, our space grant initiatives advances Ifetayo's established practice of driving economic access and equity through programs like our Financial Education Institute, our IDA scholarships as well as Career Mentorship for students and alum."

For the inaugural cycle, Ifetayo partnered with Dance/NYC to connect to dancemakers within Dance/NYC's Brooklyn-based grantee pool to expand the impact of the initiative and to grow Ifetayo's family of artists. Collaboratively, the partnership has cleared a new pathway of belonging and sustainability for Brooklyn arts and dance that others will go along.

"Dance/NYC is thrilled to partner with this storied organization to offer pristine dance space to Brooklyn-based artists. To be able to make work rooted in a community organization in your own borough is a gift not enough dance makers have," says **Candace Thompson-Zachery**, Co-Executive Director of Dance/NYC. "Dance/NYC's ongoing research tells us that access to affordable space is a chronic challenge for dance artists, especially amongst small-budget dance makers and those that are BIPOC and/or immigrants. These space challenges have only deepened since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we applaud Ifetayo's efforts to fill that gap."

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The inaugural recipients will receive a space grant of 180 hours of space over 3 months to incubate and further develop their work as well as engage with Ifetayo's community through workshops and programming.

The first Araminta Space Grantees are:

- **Maria Bauman**, Artistic Director of MBDance and 2022-2023 grantee of Dance/NYC's Dance Advancement Fund. During her grant tenure, Bauman will develop her work "These are the bodies that have not borne" as well as present a workshop on reproductive wellness as a part of Ifetayo's Ife Grove Health and Wellness series.
- **Yahoteh Kokayi**, Founder and CEO of BK Music Learning and alum of Ifetayo's Youth Ensemble. The grant will serve as an incubator for Kokayi's company as he builds solid educational foundations with music-led activities, mindfulness, and movement. Kokayi will also be a featured guest for the Sankofa Strategies career mentorship series embedded in Ifetayo's Rites of Passage program.

Ifetayo's *Araminta Space Grant Initiative* debuts as part of a series of social innovation projects the organization is unveiling and reviving during its 35th anniversary celebrations. More information on Ifetayo's *Araminta Space Grant Initiative*, studio rentals, and the spectrum of youth education and community empowerment programs can be found at [www.ifetayo.org](http://www.ifetayo.org).



**ABOUT IFETAYO CULTURAL ARTS ACADEMY** | *Ifetayo is a culturally powered Social Innovation hub centering black children, black cultures, black communities and black futures. Founded in 1989, Ifetayo began as a six-week series of free modern dance classes for 50 students living in Flatbush. Since that time, Ifetayo has expanded to serve over 2,000 students annually through six interrelated programs in our Academy: Arts Education, Cultural Arts Program, Rites of Passage Program, Financial Education Institute/ Individual Development Account, Ifetayo Youth Ensemble and Marcus Garvey Cultural Heritage Program. Ifetayo serves an additional 5,000 youth and families through related programming and public performances. Through community investments and financial education, aggregation of wellness resources, and interdisciplinary creative learning - including culturally relevant arts training, personal development, family engagement, college and career preparation - Ifetayo builds pipelines to power connecting youth and families to opportunity, civic engagement, and collective sustainability.*  
**Social Media:** Instagram @ifetayoculture | X (Twitter) @IfetayoCulture | Facebook @ifetayoculture

**ABOUT DANCE/NYC** | *Dance/NYC's mission is to promote and encourage the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds core values of justice, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of its programs and operations. Dance/NYC remains committed to delivering programs that address disparities in the dance field by continuing to fill gaps in the availability of resources where they are most needed. It believes the dance ecology must itself be just, equitable, and inclusive to meaningfully contribute to social progress and envisions a dance ecology wherein power, funding, opportunities, conduct, and impacts are fair for all artists, cultural workers, and audiences.*  
**Social Media:** Instagram @dance.nyc | X (Twitter) @DanceNYC | Facebook @DanceNYCorg | LinkedIn

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