For Immediate Release

LITTLE ISLAND ANNOUNCES
THE HEARTBEAT OF A CITY
Four National Youth Poet Laureates reimagine the next New York
SEPTEMBER 11, 2021 AT 8:00PM

Featuring Jellystone Robinson-Frazier, Kara Jackson,
Meera Dasgupta, and Alexandra Huynh

Free Tickets Reservations Available Now at littleisland.org

NEW YORK (September 1, 2021) – Little Island, New York City's new public park in
Hudson River Park by W. 13th Street, and Urban Word/NYC announced today The
Heartbeat of a City, an evening of poetry with four National Youth Poet Laureates at 8:00
pm on the 20th anniversary of September 11th. Hosted by Mahogony L. Brown, the one
night only event will inspire you to reflect on the past and look to the future of New York
City. Performances include new work from National Youth Poet Laureates—Meera
Dasgupta, Alexandra Huynh, Kara Jackson, and Jellystone Robinson-Frazier.

“The voices of young people have always been the guiding light for how we pick up and
rebuild after any national tragedy,” said Julia Kraus, Producer. “It felt right for Little Island
to give the stage over to four of our National Youth Poet Laureates to commemorate the
20th anniversary of 9/11, reflect on the pandemic, and show us how they want us to move
forward and rebuild as a nation.”

Free ticket reservations are available now by visiting littleisland.org

Mahogony L. Brown is the Executive Director of JustMedia, a media literacy initiative
designed to support the groundwork of criminal justice leaders and community members.
This position is informed by her career as a writer, organizer, & educator. Browne has
received fellowships from Agnes Gund, Air Serenbe, Cave Canem, Poets House, Mellon
Research & Rauschenberg. She is the author of recent works: Chlorine Sky, Woke: A
Young Poets Call to Justice, Woke Baby, & Black Girl Magic. As the founder of the diverse
lit initiative, Woke Baby Book Fair. Browne’s latest project is a poetry collection
responding to the impact of mass incarceration on women and children: I Remember Death By Its Proximity to What I Love (Haymarket Books). She is the first-ever poet-in-residence at the Lincoln Center and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

**Meera Dasgupta** was the youngest ever National Youth Poet Laureate in 2020, and New York City Poet Laureate at 16 years old. A Van Lier Fellow, Federal Hall Fellow, Climate Speaks Winner, & Scholastic Arts and Writing Winner her performances have been featured by the NY Times, PBS, Apple, Grist, the Apollo, Bryant Park etc. and she has been invited to perform at Carnegie Hall, the Teen Vogue Summit, TEDxCUNY, amongst many others. Meera uses the intersection between social justice and poetry to uplift the voices of historically underrepresented communities.

**Alexandra Huynh** is an 18-year-old Vietnamese American poet from Sacramento, CA. She is a 2020 Sacramento Youth Poet Laureate, a program of Sacramento Area Youth Speaks, and serves as a Western Regional Ambassador. In 2021, Alexandra became the 5th National Youth Poet Laureate of the United States, where she will serve as a cultural ambassador and representative of the national youth poetry community. As a second-generation individual, Alexandra employs poetry as a tool of self-reclamation and social justice for marginalized communities. She embodies a radical pride in her Vietnamese heritage and seeks to write her story outside of the context of whiteness. Through poetry, she hopes to give students a vocabulary to articulate their lived experiences and empower them to shape their future. In fall 2021, she will be a freshman at Stanford University where she aims to combine her passions for creative writing, science, and civic engagement.

**Kara Jackson** is the daughter of country folks. She is the author of *BLOODSTONE COWBOY* (Haymarket Books, 2019). Jackson served as the third National Youth Poet Laureate from 2019-2020. Jackson made her musical debut with her EP *A Song for Every Chamber of the Heart*, which was self-released. Through a multidisciplinary approach, Jackson attempts to document her lineage in a country that demands its erasure. Her work has appeared in *POETRY, Frontier Poetry, Rookie Mag, Nimrod Literary Journal, The Lily, and Saint Heron*. Jackson is a TEDx speaker. She is a junior at Smith College.

**Jellystone Robinson-Frazier** is a filmmaker, activist, and student. She was born and raised in Chicago’s Bronzeville neighborhood. In April of 2018, she was named the National Youth Poet Laureate of the United States. Frazier was also the Youth Poet Laureate of Chicago. Frazier studied and honed her craft in the highly-regarded Young Chicago Authors program, where she was a member of its most rigorous program for young writers, Louder Than A Bomb Squad. Frazier’s writing addresses the intersections of young, queer, and colored identities living in marginalized areas. Her work has appeared in *Breaking the Chains* magazine, *South Side Weekly*, and the anthology *Voices of the East Coast*. She was also profiled by *Vogue* magazine. Her first poetry chapbook, *Graphite*, was released released by Haymarket Press in fall of 2019. Frazier has performed her work at the Library of Congress and New York’s Federal Hall. Frazier is a member of Assata’s Daughters, an inter-generational grassroots organization of
women and femme-identifying people working to deepen, sustain, and escalate the Black Lives Matter movement. She is a Davis-Putter scholar and currently attends Columbia College Chicago, where she is studying Cinema Arts and Sciences.

Health and Safety Protocols for Ticketed Events

In accordance with current New York State and CDC guidelines, both vaccinated and unvaccinated guests can attend events. Unvaccinated visitors will be required to wear their masks when they cannot maintain 6-feet of distance from others. Children under the age of 2 are not required to wear a mask.

Ticketing

The Heartbeat of a City is a free ticketed event. A portion of free tickets will be distributed to some of Little Island’s non-profit partners. All other free tickets will be available for reservation through Little Island’s website. All tickets are general admission.

All tickets will be electronic/mobile-only and are available for reservation now by visiting www.littleisland.org. There will be no tickets available to reserve on-site. Your ticket also serves as your timed entry reservation to the park.

Savory Hospitality will serve local and responsibly sourced food and beverage daily including Breakfast and coffee from 7:00 am to 10:30am; Lunch from 11:30 am to 4:00pm; and 5:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Little Island Food and Beverage is designed for all ages to explore the intersection between food and art in an environment that is welcoming, whimsical, playful, relaxing, and fun.

Sign-up for our mailing list at littleisland.org for park and programming updates.

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About

Little Island is a new public park, primarily funded by the Diller-von Furstenberg Family Foundation with support from the City of New York, in Hudson River Park. The park features a lush, seasonal, landscape with rolling hills, walking paths and open lawns, and dazzling views of New York City. Little Island is one of the latest additions to the fourmile-long Hudson River Park, which runs from Chambers Street to W. 59th Street. Little Island has a 687-seat amphitheater, an intimate stage for 200 visitors, and an open plaza, all designed to host a range of programming for all ages, from theater, dance, and music to food and beverage experiences to educational programs and community events. Little
Island provides New Yorkers, and its visitors, with a unique urban oasis—a place for experiences that ignite imagination, foster spontaneity and play, and support camaraderie and connection. [www.littleisland.org](http://www.littleisland.org)

**About Urban Word**

The National Youth Poet Laureate Program, an initiative of Urban Word, celebrates our nation’s top poets who are committed to artistic excellence, civic engagement and social impact. Founded in New York City in 2008, the Youth Poet Laureate Program partners with local and national literary arts organizations across the country to elevate youth voices at the forefront of social change. Program partners and supporters include the Academy of American Poets, the Library of Congress, the Poetry Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Youth Poets Laureate have touched every media outlet and major stage in the country including at the White House and on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. To learn more about our work or to start a program in your region, please visit [www.youthlaureate.org](http://www.youthlaureate.org).

Urban Word elevates youth voices and leaders at the intersection of the literary arts and civic engagement. Through the transformative power of the written and spoken word, Urban Word provides young, creative voices, often those that are marginalized, the tools, training, and platforms to rewrite the narratives that shape their lives and to own their agency in directing the future of their communities. As one of the oldest youth literary arts organizations in the United States, Urban Word annually serves more than 25,000 NYC youth between the ages of 13 and 19 through its local and school-based programming including free virtual workshops, special events & slams, our weekly open mic, and our annual Summer Institute. As the founder of the National Youth Poet Laureate Program, we created and presently curate a model for youth poetry and civic engagement replicated in communities across the country.

**About the Hudson River Park Trust**

The Hudson River Park Trust is a partnership between New York State and City charged with the design, construction, and operation of the four-mile Hudson River Park. Both the Trust and the park itself are governed by the Hudson River Park Act, a 1998 law that established the park and its requirements. Guided by a vision for a magnificent waterfront park, the Trust continues to advance park construction and ensure the park’s future financial self-sufficiency by developing the remaining commercial nodes.

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