

Press Release

Artist Projects

Museum Launches New CAMHLAB Initiative to Support Artists in Production of New Work



Artists Tobe Nwigwe and Fat with family at their *Mintxibition* event at CAMH on Saturday, November 7, 2020.
Photo by Justin Stewart.

#CAMHLAB
#atCAMH
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HOUSTON, TX (November 12, 2020)—As Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) remains closed to the public due to COVID-19 safety considerations, the Museum is excited to announce a new program that directly supports artists in a moment when safe, accessible artist space is diminished in Houston. The program—called CAMHLAB—was launched in late October and the initial season will continue into December 2020 when the Museum will begin preparations for its planned reopening in early 2021.

CAMHLAB is an ongoing artist-in-residence initiative that gives the Museum to artists. The program supports artists working within, and in partnership with, the Museum to develop new work and new ideas. Launched immediately following CAMH's interior renovations in fall 2020, the residency was established in response to effects of COVID-19, particularly the loss of Houston-area performance and

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

5216 Montrose Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77006
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Hope Stone Dance. Photo by Sonya Sellers.



Artist Frewuhn. Photo by the artist.



Artist Marlon Hall. Photo by Payton Ruddock.

rehearsal space, to make CAMH’s galleries safely available for large-scale production and experimentation. Through both short-term residencies within the Museum and long-term collaborations with artists, CAMHLAB offers critical and early-stage direct financial, production, and spatial support of artists’ process and production of new work.

“The launch of CAMHLAB comes at an extraordinary moment in CAMH’s 72-year history,” says Hesse McGraw, Executive Director. “The Museum has just completed our first major renovation in nearly 50 years, and our galleries have been closed to the public since March due to the pandemic safety protocols. Our intention is to give the Museum to artists as the first step in re-imagining the Museum at this pivotal moment. We look forward to working with each artist to ensure the residency is maximally beneficial and supportive of their creative process.”

Each resident’s process will become public through a limited audience performance, a live stream, exterior project, or a form appropriate to the artist’s specific practice. As with all CAMH public programs, CAMHLAB residencies safely connect artists and audiences through catalytic and unexpected experiences of contemporary art.

The program kicked off last month by welcoming the Houston-based hip hop artist, Tobe Nwigwe and his collective, who transformed the Museum into a visual wonderland as the set design of his soon-to-be-released music video filmed entirely within the Museum. The artist—through social media—surprised his fans with a hashtag challenge to gain extremely limited access into the space and to attend an exclusive premiere of the video and an intimate Q/A session with the artist and collaborators on Saturday, November 7. Through a series of limited, timed-entry tickets, the Museum then welcomed thirty guests every half hour for an opportunity to view the artifacts from the intensive residency in a two-day installation Nwigwe titled *Mintxibition*, a title inspired by the specific hue that permeates throughout the artist’s new video production.

The current CAMHLAB participant is the renowned Houston-based collective Hope Stone Dance, who plan to use the Museum as a safe space for rehearsals as they continue to shift their focus from their usual in-person performances to those in the virtual realm. One of the objectives of their time at CAMH is to produce and submit videos to dance film festivals across the nation to showcase Houston’s breadth and professionalism of dance makers and dancers. Plans for safe, accessible, public performances are also scheduled for this CAMHLAB initiative.

Over the course of her six-day intensive residency later this month, multidisciplinary artist, Frewuhn, will facilitate a series of SoundLab performance installations and experiments with collaborators, cultural producers, and thinkers tinkering with the notion of Protest. The labs will be an intermedia exploration of themes of freedom,

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Visitors in Tobe Nwigwe's *Mintxhibition* at CAMH.
Photo by Justin Stewart.

ecology, decay, repair, and the fluid yet congealed formation one must embody to pass through Protest's many phases. Set within the white, vacant backdrop of the Museum, the process is very much the project.

In the midst of a pandemic's trauma, Community Amnesia Therapy—presented by Houston-based artist and anthropologist Marlon Hall—is the season's final CAMHLAB residency intended to present authentic human connection while remaining socially distanced. Hall states, "the trauma of life can dismember the mind from the body, and the body from the soul and we forget who we are, what we can impact, and sometimes even why we should get out of bed." Hall, along with a host of collaborators, will mount a series of separate healing experiences thoughtfully orchestrated and delivered through the multisensory use of film, music, art installations, salon dinner parties, and yoga to—as Hall states—"unearth beauty from brokenness."

Visit CAMH.ORG/CAMHLAB for more information regarding these artists, their process, and in-person and/or virtual programs for each of these CAMHLAB projects over the next several weeks.

Schedule of CAMHLAB Artist-In-Residency Program | Fall 2020

Tobe Nwigwe | October 24–November 8

Hope Stone Dance | November 9–15

Frewuhn | November 16–22

Marlon Hall | November 30–December 3

About the Artists

Tobe Nwigwe

Tobe Nwigwe is an enigma. The lyrics and tone of his music tell the story of a difficult upbringing as a first-generation-Nigerian kid in the Alief neighborhood of Houston, Texas. Tobe has a singular goal in life: "to make purpose popular." Through tremendous consistency and execution, Tobe's music and influence has infiltrated pop culture. It's positive promises spread across North America through two multi-city tours, a ground-breaking performance on NPR's Tiny Desk, made its way onto gaming platforms MLB and NBA 2K20, playlists curated by former First Lady of the United States of America, Michelle Obama, and Beyoncé and a host of festivals, concerts, blogs, and fashion magazines. Tobe's message has attracted fans across the globe, including culture heavy-weights: Erykah Badu, Sway Calloway, Jill Scott, and Dave Chappelle.

Hope Stone Dance

Founded in 1997, Hope Stone celebrates 23 years of artistic excellence and

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recognition in Houston, Texas. With a vision of “Art for All,” their programs serve a diverse population where the arts foster communities of creative, compassionate and problem-solving citizens. For over two decades, Hope Stone has committed itself to improving the quality of life for Houstonians through art.

The Hope Project—the group’s mindful arts education program—serves children and adults, ages 2-99 years, in their schools and facilities, where highly skilled artists teach the artistic disciplines of music, dance, and theater.

Hope Stone’s professional dance company, *Hope Stone Dance*, stages compelling and accessible new works that challenge, entertain, and educate audiences. Their performances are powerful, joyful, and intimately human, connecting to both children and adults.

Frewuhn

Singer-Songwriter, Franchelle Lucas known as “Frewuhn,” was born in Houston, Texas, surrounded by a collage of musical inspiration. Sonically, she embodies a peaceful flow and ambient strength. She is heavily influenced by 90s rock, R&B, country, and artists like Res, Santigold, and Stevie Nicks. Her love of the sacred wisdom of folk songs, the blues, and gospel is coupled with her first love of music found in church where she gained her initial performance experience. Her background in Theology and performance influenced her production of *The Color of Frequency* lyric poetry book and the *SoundLab* sonic experiment.

Frewuhn made her debut in 2008, singing with Alternative soul outfit Neon Collars, and has performed as a backing vocalist for many artists including CeCe Winans, and Solange. She released her first solo project *Stupid Carnival* in 2018.

Frewuhn is a messenger who encourages listeners to go beyond the simplicity of her narratives to encourage freedom and healing from within.

Marlon Hall

Marlon is a visual anthropologist, United States Department of Cultural Affairs Fulbright Specialist, a Tulsa Arts Fellow, and the Greenwood Art Project Anthropologist-In-Residence studying the 1921 Massacre of Black Wallstreet with lead artist Rick Lowe. He has 20+ years of experience in community film-making, cultural architecture, and visual anthropology with a proven track record of leading organizations, teams, and creative projects from end-to-end to include films, creative learning ecologies, social sculptures, and community art projects. His life intention is to cultivate human potential in ways that are whimsically beautiful and positively willful.