

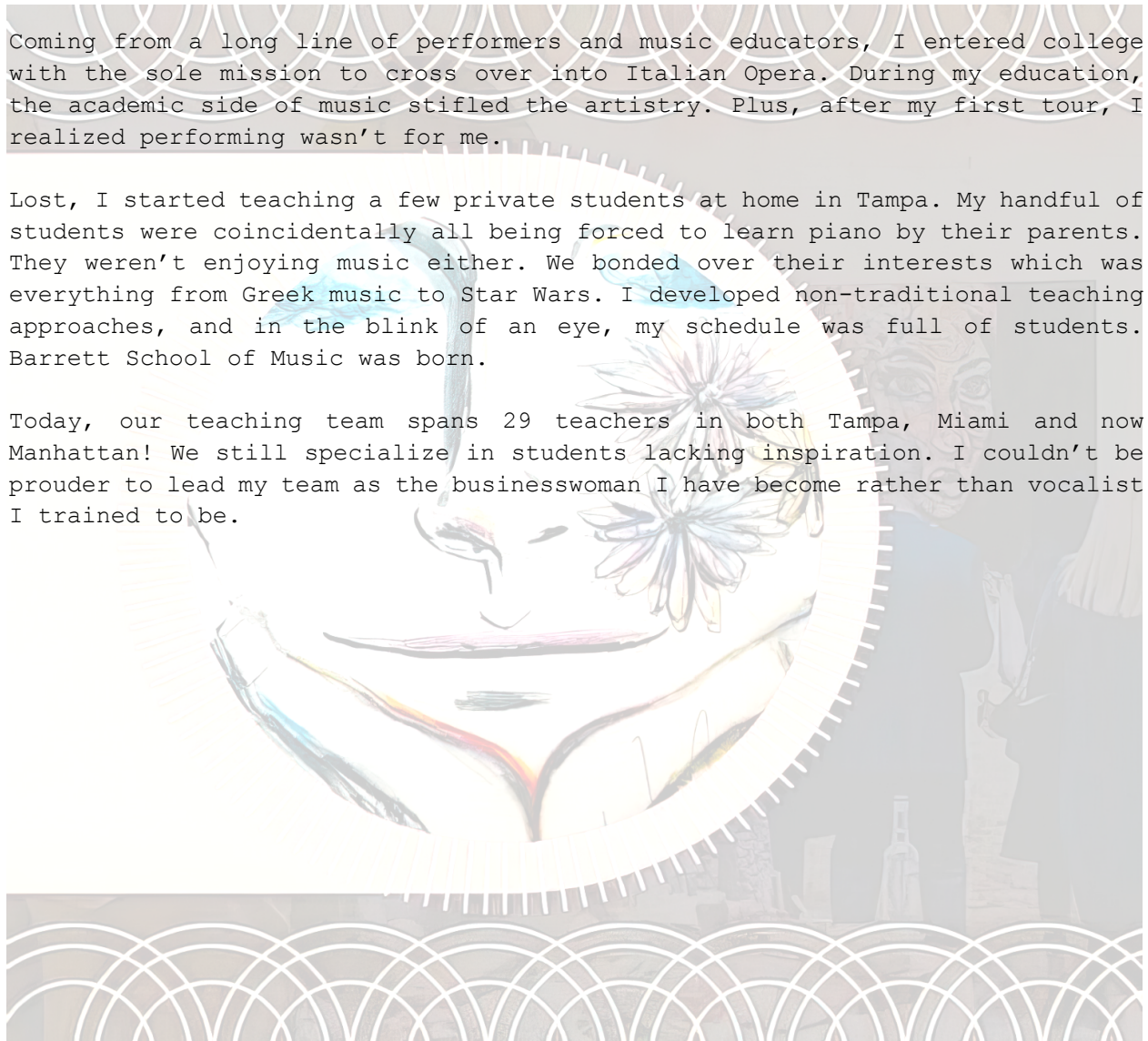
Laura Hollis, owner of the Barrett School of Music.

*Artist Statement*

Coming from a long line of performers and music educators, I entered college with the sole mission to cross over into Italian Opera. During my education, the academic side of music stifled the artistry. Plus, after my first tour, I realized performing wasn't for me.

Lost, I started teaching a few private students at home in Tampa. My handful of students were coincidentally all being forced to learn piano by their parents. They weren't enjoying music either. We bonded over their interests which was everything from Greek music to Star Wars. I developed non-traditional teaching approaches, and in the blink of an eye, my schedule was full of students. Barrett School of Music was born.

Today, our teaching team spans 29 teachers in both Tampa, Miami and now Manhattan! We still specialize in students lacking inspiration. I couldn't be prouder to lead my team as the businesswoman I have become rather than vocalist I trained to be.



# Fernando Silva

## *Artist Statement*

I find inspiration in the beauty of the everyday life.

I act as a collector of experiences on the canvas and my artwork is a depiction of moments lived in the present, and a bit of reflection on the past- particularly the history and life of the Impressionists painters.

For me the paint and my brush dance across the canvas, vibrating with energy.

I found a profound spiritual connection with New York city and the people around me, from them I absorb energy and I channel that energy into the canvas.

Fernando Silva.

## *Artist BIO*

Exhibitions and Art shows, Miami Art-Basel Week, Red Dot Miami, Wynwood Art District, Art Spectrum, Agora Gallery New York, Artavita Las Vegas Art Museum,

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and having lived for some time in Europe, self-taught artist Fernando Silva draws his inspiration from the impressionist styles of Van Gogh and Gauguin, as well as the contemporary New York artists. His Art embraces the vibrancy and diversity of the big cities. His colors and constructs reveal a relevance and passion for each subject, portraying with an elegant simplicity, especially New York's everyday life, captured through the eyes of a modern-day impressionist.

In his search for fulfillment, Silva captures the fragile, elusive motion of a city that is both alive and historic. Each work metaphorically proclaims the beauty and charm of places that those both familiar and unfamiliar with the city interpret as the essence of New York. Through movement and exaggeration, Silva's dramatic paintings connect profoundly to each viewer. This link is spiritual, imaginative, inescapably transcending from eye to heart the feeling that originally inspired the artist to create the work.

In this, Silva's works are fundamentally surreal and fluid, depicting landmarks and scenes imbued with an unstoppable optimism bestowed only by a truly imaginative observer. Silva's modern-day impressionist oils, Acrylics and Gold defy convention, extolling the virtues of the early masters, while adding the soul of a contemporary artist to each interpretive brush stroke.

Silva Finds inspiration in the beauty of everyday life. Silva's colorful oil painted canvases are both a depiction of moments experienced in the present, and a reflection on the past - particularly the history of Impressionist painting. Painting primarily cityscapes, Silva's paint dances across the canvas, vibrating with energy. Silva himself cites his upbringing in Buenos Aires as a strong influence on his art because of the colorful artwork on the streets and the admiration for tango dancers that he was surrounded by.

## Béatrice Jousset Drouhin

### Artist Statement

**Born** in Paris in 1969, Béatrice spent her youth surrounded by a family of artists. After her business studies, in 1998 she launches her own startup offering gourmet products online. She never loses her passion for painting, however, and soon enrolls in the school of Fine Arts in Dijon where she is awakened to various painting techniques. She takes special interest in acrylics and "impasto," or painting with a palette knife. Guided by her art professor, she discovers her passion for the warm colors with a special fondness for red and yellow.

In 2001 she embarks on her first exhibition in Burgundy where her work meets with resounding success. She decides then to pursue her passion and regularly exposes her canvases to the public in other cities throughout France and finally in Paris. She moves with her family to New York in 2005 and decides to devote herself entirely to her painting.

She draws inspiration from her many travels and in the beginning particularly from African landscapes. She continues to explore other themes inspired by her travel, but also by her feelings. Women are regular subjects of her paintings. Béatrice sketches silhouettes and suggests emotions through a palette of colors. She explores and expresses her feelings by painting what pleases her while being inspired by her surroundings.

Her vibrant paintings capture an artistic audience that always goes away moved and impressed.

Furthermore, Beatrice, a multi-talented artist, wrote her first novel in French in 2020, recounting the joys and disappointments of her expatriation. The book had a great success not only in France but also in the US among the French Community.

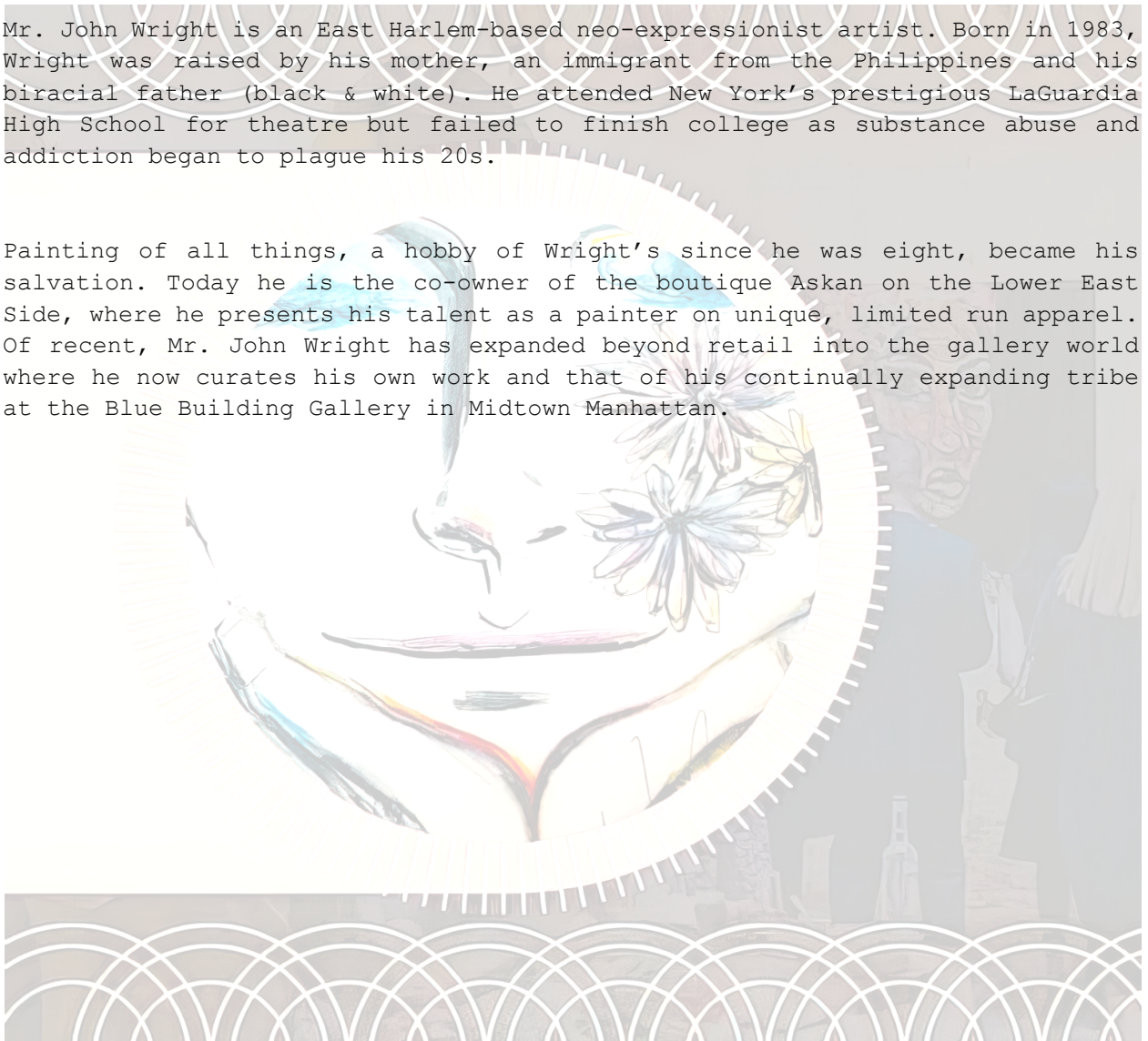
Endlessly in love with the desert landscapes, she plans to do a trek in the great Moroccan desert at the end of the year, hoping to find a new source of inspiration for her future paintings, and perhaps a second book...

# Mr. John Wright

## *Artist Statement*

Mr. John Wright is an East Harlem-based neo-expressionist artist. Born in 1983, Wright was raised by his mother, an immigrant from the Philippines and his biracial father (black & white). He attended New York's prestigious LaGuardia High School for theatre but failed to finish college as substance abuse and addiction began to plague his 20s.

Painting of all things, a hobby of Wright's since he was eight, became his salvation. Today he is the co-owner of the boutique Askan on the Lower East Side, where he presents his talent as a painter on unique, limited run apparel. Of recent, Mr. John Wright has expanded beyond retail into the gallery world where he now curates his own work and that of his continually expanding tribe at the Blue Building Gallery in Midtown Manhattan.



# Ling Ling Chen, Pianist

## *Artist Statement*

Born from Chinese immigrants in Australia, I was given a violin at the age of 3. 'Half hour practices every day', my parents would utter. Strings and I did not get along but the moment my fingers tinkled those ivory keys, magic. Soon thereafter, a 20 odd year love affair with the piano was born with most of my life spent alone in a practice room perfecting musical sentences from Beethoven to Tchaikovsky 7 hours a day. I became obsessed with the allure of channeling the sturm und drang, pastorals, and different shades of colors I could achieve on the piano. Eventually my career flew me across the world where I could connect people through musical experiences at the Sydney Opera House, Lincoln Center, Melbourne Recital Center, and World Trade Center to name a few.

I prepared for competitions and became an international laureate as the prize winner of the John Allison National Piano Competition and New York International Piano Competition, gold medalist of the International Youth Arts Piano Festival, recipient of the National Premier Awards, an AMF finalist and competitor at the esteemed Ettlingen, Keri Keri and Lev Vlassenko International Piano Competitions. Accolades aside, I fell in love with storytelling through chamber music, performing with some of the most incredible musicians from Eric Silberger to Zoe Black. The year 2017 marked a huge shift where I became the only pianist accepted to Olga Kern's studio at the Manhattan School of Music to complete my Master of Music. Suddenly, I was in the hustle and bustle of NYC. I soon became a Steinway Educator teaching over 200+ students and found joy sharing how to breathe life into compositions.

With the sudden onset of COVID, my journey took a different turn. I'm currently completing my MBA and lined up to work at TikTok after I graduate. Although I am pursuing an alternate passion, I still find myself foraying back into the creative space where my heart truly belongs. Afterall, I believe that music and art is the poetic language of the human spirit. It is simply the wine that fills the cup of silence. Today, I'm focused on educating artists on their brand and business, as well as collaborating with like-minded talents on meaningful programmatic projects.

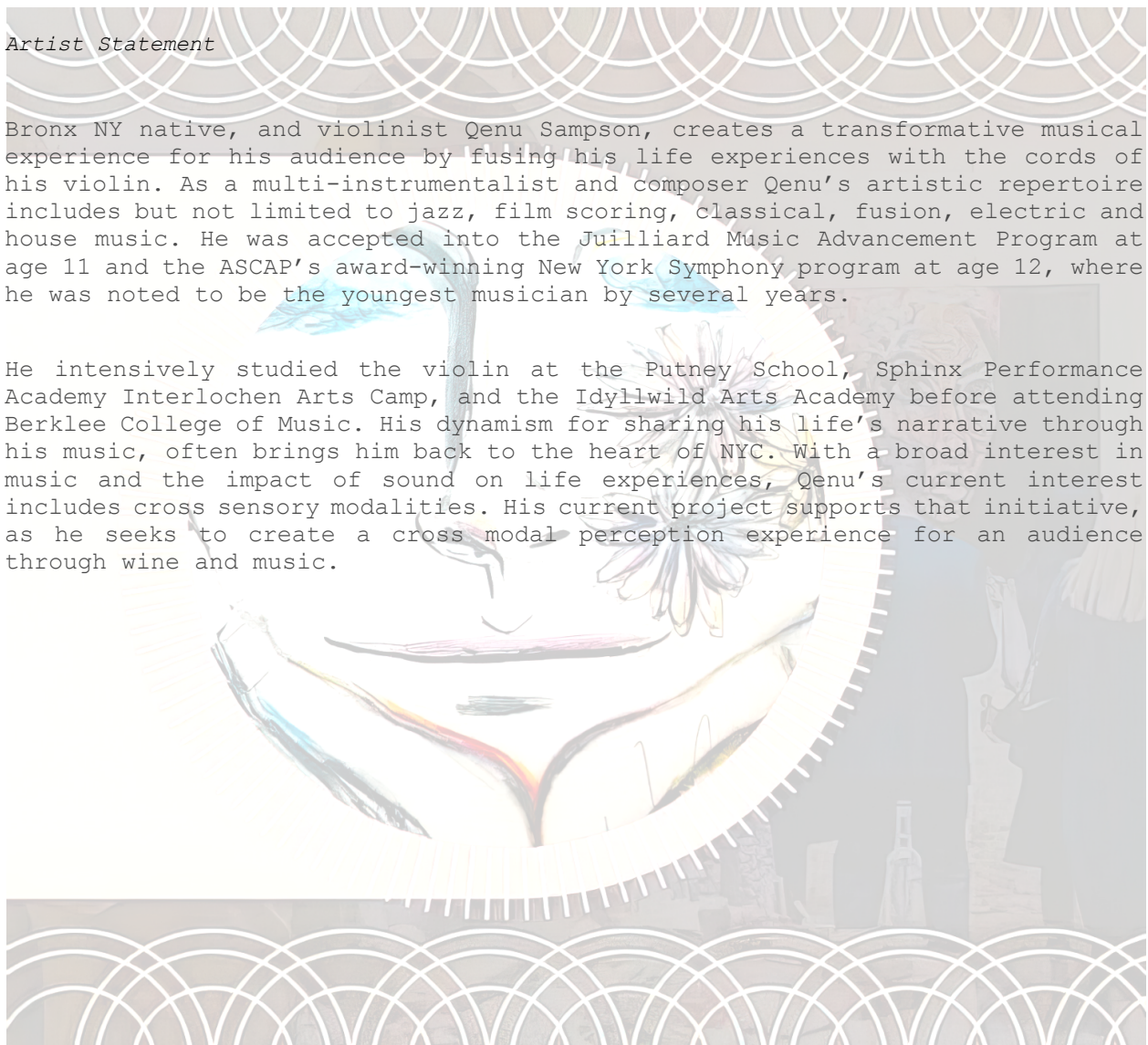


## Quenu Sampson, Cross Modal Violinist

### Artist Statement

Bronx NY native, and violinist Quenu Sampson, creates a transformative musical experience for his audience by fusing his life experiences with the cords of his violin. As a multi-instrumentalist and composer Quenu's artistic repertoire includes but not limited to jazz, film scoring, classical, fusion, electric and house music. He was accepted into the Juilliard Music Advancement Program at age 11 and the ASCAP's award-winning New York Symphony program at age 12, where he was noted to be the youngest musician by several years.

He intensively studied the violin at the Putney School, Sphinx Performance Academy Interlochen Arts Camp, and the Idyllwild Arts Academy before attending Berklee College of Music. His dynamism for sharing his life's narrative through his music, often brings him back to the heart of NYC. With a broad interest in music and the impact of sound on life experiences, Quenu's current interest includes cross sensory modalities. His current project supports that initiative, as he seeks to create a cross modal perception experience for an audience through wine and music.



# Al Diaz

## *Artist Statement*

Al Díaz's career spans five decades. Born and raised Puerto Rican in New York City, by age 15 he was an influential first-generation subway graffiti artist known as "BOMB- ONE." His friendship and artistic collaboration with high school schoolmate Jean- Michel Basquiat on SAMO©, (a late 70s Avant-garde graffiti tag project) has been noted often in contemporary art history. Díaz later contributed percussion to numerous musical recordings and performances, including Basquiat's historic 1983 record, "*Beat Bop*," (considered to be one of the earliest hip-hop albums).


Díaz is sought-after as an expert of New York City counterculture art. He appears often in publications, as a highlighted speaker for a variety of panel discussions at universities and museums (including Smithsonian Institution, the Brooklyn Museum, The New School and Christie's Education), and has been featured in several films, including *Boom for Real: The Late Teenage Years of Jean-Michel Basquiat*, BBC's *American Masters – Basquiat: Rage to Riches* and *Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child*. Díaz' current creative practice in Brooklyn includes gathering the standard "WET PAINT" signage used throughout the NYC MTA, and reconstructing them to create clever, poignant anagrams in various mixed media and public art formats. His work is shown and privately collected internationally.

In 2018, Diaz authored *SAMO©...SINCE 1978*, an in-depth, color illustrated history of the street art legacy that he began with Basquiat in the late 70s. A notebook that Díaz made with Basquiat in his teens is currently held in the collection of the Yale University Beinecke Library.



## Mekia Machine

### *Artist Statement*



Mekia Machine is a Jamaican-born artist who was raised in the USA for much of her life; she has a multidisciplinary practice that ranges across painting, sound, music and performance. Her work investigates aesthetic and societal norms through conceptions of time, identity, memory, and place, specifically in cultures where loss and trauma is a substantial part of daily life.

In addition to exhibiting, Machine was one of the winners of This Art is Your Art, 2016 with Artsy, The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and the White House Historical Association, for her short film on painting artist Alma Thomas's portrait which was part of a 4-month installation and she was invited to join First Lady Michelle Obama at the Celebration of 20th Century Art in the White House. Additionally, Machine was awarded the fully funded Liquitex | Just Imagine Residency in 2021. Mekia graduated from Columbia University with a BA in Visual Arts (2019) and is currently living and working in Harlem, New York City, with her two daughters Taylor and Nola.





# Kyzer

## *Artist Statement*

Kyzer, an emerging artist hailing from Washington Heights has been making his presence felt from uptown all the way to downtown. With his abstract approach he's been able to grab the attention of viewers and spectators with his raw attitude and unique style. In the year 2021 he had several art exhibitions in Lower Manhattan at places such as LAAMS, Clockwork Crosby and Ksubi's family + friends' exhibition. Using various mediums like acrylic, spray paint and oil sticks he delivers a breath of fresh air to the game with no remorse on expressing himself and conveying emotions through his pieces.

