



Wave Hill

Wave Hill

Public Garden & Cultural Center

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Press Release

Wave Hill Announces the 2026 Van Lier Fellows

The New York Community Trust's Fund Supports Careers of Underrepresented, Emerging Artists

Bronx, NY, December 29, 2025 — Wave Hill has selected **Tarik Jeremiah Brown** and **Camille Cooper** as the 2026 New York Community Trust Van Lier Fellows, recognizing their unique artistic perspectives on human connections to the natural world. These emerging artists will engage with the garden's environment to explore the intersection of nature, culture, and site.

The Van Lier Fellowship, funded by the Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund through the New York Community Trust, provides early-career support to artists from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. As part of the Fellowship, Brown and Cooper will participate in Wave Hill's **Winter Workspace** residency from **February 24 to April 12, 2026**, and present site-responsive solo exhibitions in the **Sunroom Project Space** from **August 29 to October 11, 2026**.

During the Winter Workspace, artists receive studio space, a financial stipend, and access to Wave Hill's living collection. This program encourages experimentation, allowing artists to expand their practices while working on-site, and organizes studio visits and community engagement events with each artist.

The Sunroom Project Space provides emerging artists with the opportunity to develop and present site-specific projects that respond to the ecology of the site and history of Wave Hill. Each project is accompanied by a *Meet the Artist* program, offering visitors insight into the artists' creative processes.

Tarik Jeremiah Brown is a New York-based artist from Chicago. Working across time-based media to interrogate the resonances and tensions that surface when the past, present, and futures of the Black diaspora fold into one another, his outcomes often emerge through analog film practices, collage, sculpture, and digital image-making. At Wave Hill, Brown will engage sites of refuge and worship rooted in Black American antebellum history to explore topics related to storms, protection, elevation, and concealment. For the Sunroom Project Space, Brown imagines a site-specific installation titled *Hush Harbor* that will transform the gallery into a contemporary, antebellum-era gathering place for enslaved African Americans to congregate, worship, and engage in ritual privately, away from their captors. Brown's installation will center a sculptural mound made from earth, wood, and natural materials, drawing from the Proto-Indo-European roots of the word "harbor": heri (army, host) and bhergh (to hide, protect, rise, or ascend). Brown explains, "This etymology guides the works' dual relationship to protection and elevation, concealment as a means towards transcendence."



Tarik Jeremiah Brown. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Brown has exhibited internationally at Koppel Project Bank and Central Saint Martins in London, as well as the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He earned a BFA from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London.

Camille Cooper is a New York-based puppeteer, multidisciplinary artist, and self-identified transsexual from northern New Mexico. Cooper will use his time at Wave Hill to continue a project that explores the relationship between the historic treatment of trans people and insects through performance and sculptures made from transgender ephemera. This project, titled *SHOWPIECE*, utilizes a series of insect puppets made from the packaging of his hormone replacement therapy, the aesthetic language of mid-20th century big bug horror films, and the metaphor of entomological study to highlight the ways in which gender variant people are scrutinized by hegemonic society. Cooper will further develop *SHOWPIECE* for the Sunroom Project Space, creating a full insectarium installation with scheduled live performances, complete with plants and insects contextual to the grounds of Wave Hill. Cooper says that he would like to “turn the Sunroom into a space that is as lush as the butterfly pavilion at the American Museum of Natural History, but that is, upon closer inspection, a representation of the fantastic and creepy-crawly diversity of gender variance.”



Camille Cooper. Photo: Zoë Zimmerman.

Cooper has performed as a puppeteer with The Human Beast Box, Meow Wolf, The New Mexico Museum of Art, and PASEO Project, all in New Mexico; and at Snake in The Boot Collective, Pinc Lounds, Foreshadow Co., Concrete Temple Theatre, and Fictionville Studios, in New York. Recent performances include *Song of The North* at the New Victory Theatre, New York, NY, as well as touring internationally in Guanajuato, Mexico and Charleville-Mézières, France, with *PACKRAT*, a Concrete Temple Theatre production. Cooper earned a BA from Sarah Lawrence College.

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Wave Hill Incorporated is an independent non-profit cultural institution governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The City of New York owns the buildings and grounds of Wave Hill. With the assistance of the Bronx Borough President and Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature, Wave Hill's operations are supported with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature

About Wave Hill

A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill's mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

HOURS: Open all year, Tuesday–Sunday, 10AM–5:30PM (4:30PM in Winter). Glyndor Gallery: 10AM–4PM (May–November). Marco Polo Stufano Conservatory 10AM–Noon/1–4PM. ADMISSION TO THE GROUNDS: \$10 adults, \$6 students and seniors 65+, \$4 children 6-18. Free Thursdays. Free to Wave Hill Members, children under 6.

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