

CC TESTIMONY

DCA CULTURAL PLAN 2.27.17

Good afternoon.

I am Susana Torruella Leval, and am honored to function as Chair of the Mayor's Cultural ^{Advisory} Commission.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

During the past year, I have been privileged to observe the process of drafting a Cultural Plan for the City of New York. It is the most ambitious cultural initiative I've observed during my forty years' work in this City's art world.

The Cultural Plan's priorities --- equity, access, and diversity -- have emerged from hundreds of community meetings convened over the past six months. The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), a national leader among cultural agencies, has gathered the City's artists, its cultural organizations, art experts, community leaders, activists and residents, and included other NYC agencies as potential partners. The process is intended to produce a living blueprint for the availability and distribution of cultural activity throughout the five boroughs.

Now in its final stage of information-gathering, the final Plan will prioritize cultural activity issues repeatedly voiced at community gatherings in all boroughs: equity, access, affordability, education --- ^{importantly} all within parameters that prevent displacement of local culture and community through sensitive

planning and development. Affordable housing and workplaces for artists are a high priority. I have never seen such a wide net cast, nor have I experienced listening and participation at such an intense level.

The Cultural Plan will next go to the editing stage, culling the research of the past months, and ~~around~~ ⁱⁿ April communities will again have input into the process. Upon its release ⁱⁿ July, the Cultural Plan is projected to function as a blueprint for action, and the real work will begin: helping communities implement solutions to the concerns and issues they identified; finding funding to implement those solutions; intense analysis and evaluation of what's working and what isn't as ~~implementation~~ ~~goes~~ goes forward.

Over time, I am certain the Cultural Plan will be internalized into the complex workings of the City's machinery. Why do I believe this? Because we New Yorkers profoundly believe the arts are the lifeblood of this City. When this integration happens, I hope all New York City residents, and especially artists, will believe that the Cultural Plan was drafted with them in mind, and that it can work.

Thank you.
Susana Torruella Leval
Chair, Mayor's Cultural Commission



It is particularly important that individuals feel the Plan has omissions or problems. We've heard input about their objectives at this point.