

Thursday, October 20, 2022 | For Immediate Release

Dancer and Visual Artist Kemi Craig is Victoria's New Artist in Residence

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria-based dancer and visual artist, Kemi Craig, has been selected as the City's new Artist in Residence. Craig works through performance, installations and site-specific artworks.

Kemi is the City's third Artist in Residence. Her term will be October 2022 through until November 2024. The City of Victoria's Artist in Residence program aims to 'keep art in mind,' providing the opportunity for a professional artist to work collaboratively with City staff and the community to identify and develop a creative artwork or project to augment one or more capital projects annually over a two-year term.

Through her lived experience as a woman of African descent, Craig's art utilizes dance, analogue and digital visual technologies to center experiences for people with racialized and gendered bodies. She is inspired by Black history and Afrofuturism, dance that expresses and augments what we do every day, DIY culture, visual histories, and pop cultural production.

"I am excited about the process of making art and working collaboratively to create performances that share agency with other artists, as well as create opportunities for audiences to participate by becoming activators and storytellers," said Craig. "The opportunity to serve as the Artist in Residence for the City of Victoria will assist me in bringing art to public spaces where people are every day. I look forward to creating alongside you all."

Her aim during the residency is to create multi-sensory, site-specific installations and performances with community and audience engagement. Her practice is well-aligned with the City's Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan, which identifies the need to provide opportunities for interpreting and sharing Victoria's local history, as well as highlighting innovative artistic experiences that bridge technology and creative practice.

Kemi Craig's submission was one of 39 applications the City received in response to a Request for Expressions of Interest, which was open to artists and artist teams who are residents of British Columbia. Three artists were shortlisted, and Kemi was selected unanimously by the Selection Panel, which included members of the City's Art in Public Places Committee as well as local arts professionals.

"The expression of diverse identities and perspectives through art has a long and storied history, and we could not think of a more extraordinary artist to continue this tradition at the City of Victoria," said Elizabeth Matheson, Chair of the Art in Public Places Committee. "The innovative combination of technology and art in Kemi's practice challenges viewers to consider our relationships to the spaces we occupy. We can't wait to see all that she accomplishes to make public art more accessible, equitable, and innovative."

Kemi holds a Master's degree in Fine Arts from the Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Since graduating, she has exhibited and performed through local arts centers and across BC and Canada. Her film and video work has been exhibited at local galleries such as the Legacy Art Gallery, Flux Gallery, the Ministry of Casual Living as well as the Victoria International Film Festival and Antimatter Media Arts Festival.

Kemi has worked as an arts educator with local organizations such as ArtsReach, Art Starts in Schools and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria as an Artist Educator where she is also serving as a guest Curator. She is dedicated to mentoring BIPOC youth and works to support groups such as Coup de Dees and Melanin Magic. For the past three years, Kemi has been an Artist in Residence with Dance Victoria. She has also danced as a solo artist and company dancer at local community events, and for a documentary about the experiences of local Black dancers. Most recently, she performed at the Art in the Open Contemporary Arts Festival in Charlottetown, PEI.

Meet and Greet

The public is invited to meet Kemi Craig. The evening event will feature an artist talk and demonstration from Kemi as well as an opportunity to ask questions. All ages are welcome at this free event. Light refreshments will be available.

Date: Tuesday, November 22

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: City Hall Antechamber, 1 Centennial Square

For more information about the Artist in Residence program visit: victoria.ca/artistinresidence

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Attachment:

Head Shot- Kemi Craig Victoria Artist in Residence

