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Artists hold forth at Harlem Arts Alliance Meeting **- New York Amsterdam News: Arts & Entertainment**

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Posted: Saturday, September 17, 2011 12:00 am

By ARLENE MCKANIC Special to the AmNews New York Amsterdam News |

The Harlem Arts Alliance (HAA) held its monthly meeting on Sept. 12 in a beautiful, faux-medieval room full of carvings and arches on the ninth floor of the Riverside Church. Presided over by HAA Chair Voza Rivers and Executive Director Michael Unthank, it began with everyone in the large crowd introducing themselves. Most of the folks were artists, and many of them belonged to HAA. HAA was also celebrating its 10th anniversary, having held their first meeting on Sept. 10, 2001.

The meeting covered topics like the Harlem Holiday Market, which will take place in the plaza of the Harlem State Office Building from Nov. 21 to Dec. 24, and Harlem Artists on the Square, which meets every Tuesday from 1 to 5 p.m. through the end of November, weather permitting, in cooperation with the Fresh Connect Farmers Market. They will also meet on the Harlem State Office Building's plaza.

Haowen Wang, the program manager for the Manhattan Cultural Council, announced his Creative Curricula and the stately Marcia Pendelton of Walk Tall Girl Productions introduced Brent Buell, director of Ibaya Ibo Mandingo's play "unFRAMED," which will be performed on Thursday, Sept. 15 and again from Sept. 22-24 at John Jay College. All performances will take place at the Gerald W. Lynch Theater, 899 10th Ave.

Mandingo had brought a self-portrait to the meeting, as he always paints a self-portrait in paint and earth as he performs the play. On that morning he acted out his stunning poem, "41 Times," about Amadou Diallou and the persistence of racism and police brutality in America, and his fears for his own sons. The poem, and Mandingo's performance of it, was cheered by the crowd.

Mandingo was followed by artist Roy Secord, whose Youth Art Instruction and Mural Creation Program will be working in tandem with the Harlem Children's Zone. Angela Hollis, president of the Hollis Group, announced her fall workshop development seminars.

Later, Kristin Rathbun of SpotCo announced that the play "The Mountaintop" will be coming to Broadway's Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre. It stars Samuel L. Jackson and Angela Bassett. "The Mountaintop" is a reimagining of the night before Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. It was written by Katori Hall and directed by Kenny Leon, who directed "Fences," which starred Denzel

Washington. Penny Maria Jackson of Harlem Stage also spoke to announce a series of plays for later in the month.

The next speakers were the enthusiastic Jeremiah Kyle Drake and Ward Nixon of the Theatre of the Oppressed, directors of "The Black Chronicles" and "La Cronica." "The Black Chronicles," directed by Drake, is 14 chronicles that span the 1700s to the 1950s and chart the Black experience in America. "La Cronica," directed by Nixon, charts the experience of Mexicans in America.

"Mexicans are the new 'Invisible Man,'" said Drake.

Tami Tyree sang a lusty version of "I Don't Know Enough About You," accompanied by her pianist, Rudi Mwogozi. Jack Lee spoke on behalf of HAA's Visual Artist Initiative Group of Photographers. The performance by the funny and versatile actor Daniel Beaty, who will soon bring his repertoire of 43 characters to Aaron Davis Hall, was so hilarious and spot-on that the audience gave him a standing ovation.

Tyrone Birkett of Convergence Musicworks presented a DVD of "Postmodern Spirituals," while visual artist Aleathia Brown presented Catherine Warren-Bishop, also known as Miss KittyRose, who showed a video of her beautiful, distinctive earrings and discussed her work with the Mary J. Blige Women's Center. Kojo Ade then led a tribute to the late Nick Ashford, and Ade Williams of the Apollo Theater made announcements pertaining to Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater and passed out nice, churchy Apollo Theater fans.

It was a very lively and productive morning for the Harlem Arts Alliance!

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