



NYC Parks



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## **Ecological Artists Begin Year-Long Residency with Scientists and Environmental Practitioners to Explore New Imagination for Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Cities**

As part of the Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program, eleven artists have been selected to collaborate with the USDA Forest Service, The Nature of Cities, and local agency teams to explore innovation and new imagination for more sustainable and green cities. The core questions of the program include: how are artists changed when they collaborate with scientists? How are scientists changed when they collaborate with artists? How can collaboration create new ideas and new directions that can inform sustainable, resilient, and inclusive cities?

The Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program was founded in 2016 to explore the intersection and interdisciplinary nature of the study of cities and urban planning, artistic expression, and scientific ideas through collaborations with artists and urban ecology practitioners. This year, the Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program has expanded this year to support artists across the United States and internationally. This year's partnerships include:

- USDA Forest Service:
  - Northern Research Station - NYC Urban Field Station, Baltimore Field Station, Philadelphia Field Station, Springfield, MA Urban Field Station
  - Rocky Mountain Research Station - Denver Urban Field Station
  - USFS International Programs in the West Bank
  - International Institute of Tropical Forestry in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic
- New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Resources Division and Arts in Parks Program
- State of Hawaii: Kaulunani, Hawaii's Urban & Community Forestry Program

*"I am thrilled to participate in the UFS Arts program for the fifth year here in New York City and to welcome our largest and most diverse cohort of artists and*

*agency teams of researchers and land managers across the United States and now the world. I look forward to questioning, exploring, and learning together on critical issues facing urban ecosystems and city dwellers and how we might imagine, understand, and realize new solutions to those challenges."*

*- Lindsay Campbell, Research Social Scientist, USDA Forest Service - NYC Urban Field Station*

This year's artists were selected from a pool of competitive applications which represent the diversity and creativity of their respective cities. Three artists were chosen to work with three different agency teams based out of New York City.

**Michele Brody** is a place-based public artist from The Bronx. Her work "Nature in Absentia; Monarch Migrations" is a framework for a series of multimedia installations illustrating how the loss of natural biodiversity in New York is in stark contrast to the City's ever expanding cultural diversity. The project will consist of a series of free community paper making workshops, which will eventually become part of an immersive installation titled "Monarch Migrations". This new work will focus on comparing the life cycles and migratory patterns of monarch butterflies with the migrations of humans and the plants that support the life cycles of these butterflies.

*"I am excited to collaborate with the amazing team of specialists the Urban Field Station has put together for my project. I am grateful and honored to learn from everyone's experiences, contacts and scientific backgrounds as my project takes off and develops over the year." - Michele Brody*

**Tommy Cheemou Yang** is an indigenous Hmong designer, researcher, and educator focused on insurgent urban and architectural transformations. His residency, partnership with NYC Parks, will focus on the importance of storytelling and ethnography in the production of socio-natural-based solutions in a project entitled "Reflective Urban Ecologies - The Ecology of Four Chinatowns". The intended outcome of this project will be a live digital humanities archive of how Chinese Americans and immigrants have remade and embedded a larger ecosystem in the city, providing a Just model and transition to how we think, write, and map urban fields.

*"Two years ago at the height of the pandemic, I spoke of my grandmother during my commencement speech at The New School - how she was my shade and umbrella in a world filled with uncertainties. As part of the incoming family for the 2022-2023 Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program, I hope to nurture and care for a way of making, mapping, writing, and communicating with the communities, colleagues, scientists, and localities I meet in hopes that we can grow into shades for each other." - Tommy Cheemou Yang*

**Ania Upstill** is a queer and non-binary artist who will be working with the NYC Urban Field Station on a project entitled "Applying a Queer Lens to Scientific Narratives". Their project will focus on the questions of how we write and make art about the world in ways that make individuals feel connected to their natural environment. In particular, their work will examine

how a queer arts lens can encourage people to notice and appreciate the social-ecological systems they are a part of in a new way.

*"I'm very excited about the opportunity that this residency presents for cross-pollination, especially on this crucially important topic of resilience and inclusivity. We can all live better when we listen to and learn from one another, and I can't wait to learn from, and collaborate with, the scientists involved in the Urban Field Station Collaborative Arts Program." - Ania Upstill*

The New York City Urban Field Station (<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/nyc>) is a unique scientific collaboration between the NYC Parks, the USDA Forest Service's Northern Research Station, and the non-profit the Natural Areas Conservancy. First launched in 2006, the Urban Field Station provides a location for this long-term research partnership promoting applied science on urban ecology, conservation, stewardship, and ecological literacy to support ecosystem management and human well-being. The facility is designed as a shared office and lab where city and federal scientists work hand-in-hand to address critical land management questions relevant to NYC and other cities across the country.