

Open Call and Request for Proposals

THE DEMOCRACY CYCLE Request for Proposals

January 2025 Open Call

RFP Release Date: January 13, 2025

Application Deadline: April 1, 2025, 5:00pm EST

The Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC NYC) and Civis Foundation are pleased to partner on The Democracy Cycle, a new commissioning program designed to support new works that illuminate the promise, practice, imperfection, and opportunity of democracy.

Proposals are requested for new performing arts works following that theme from artists working in theater, dance, music, opera, and multidisciplinary performance.

What is The Democracy Cycle?

In January 2024, The Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC NYC) and Civis Foundation (a Galvan Initiatives affiliate) partnered to launch The Democracy Cycle, a new commissioning program designed to support new works that illuminate the promise, practice, imperfection, and opportunity of democracy.

Over a five-year period, The Democracy Cycle will commission and develop a total of 25 new performing arts works across the fields of theater, dance, music, opera, and multi-disciplinary performance. The commissioned works, to be selected over the course of three annual Rounds of Open Calls (2024, 2025, and 2026) will explore themes relating to the nature, practice, and experience of democracy.

Civis and PAC NYC have come together because of our shared beliefs to create this commissioning program. These shared beliefs are:

- We believe that democratic values are a global expression of humanity's striving to live with one another with respect and in peace.
- We believe that democracy, as practiced in the United States of America, includes a history of founding exclusions and that it has been, and must continue to be, the ongoing work of our society to expand upon the inclusive ideals embedded in our founding documents.
- We believe that democracy faces significant perceived and actual threats in the current moment, both domestically and internationally.
- We believe that the intersection of capitalism and democracy creates both opportunities and tensions.
- We believe that artists are the beating heart of democratic values because of their ability to imagine new worlds, envision new possibilities, and provoke meaningful discourse across any number of divides.

Our hope is that projects commissioned as part of The Democracy Cycle will enrich and expand the discussion around and participation in democracy – be it in the national, state, regional, or hyperlocal community realm – as it is practiced both within the United States and worldwide.

Each selected project will receive a total of \$60,000 in support, consisting of a \$30,000 commission and another \$30,000 to support the development process (research, readings, workshops etc.). The commissions will be awarded across three annual Open Calls, beginning in January 2024, and continuing in January 2025 and January 2026. In each Open Call, The Democracy Cycle will commission at least eight projects.

For more information, please read the following material and review our [Submission Guidelines](#) on the [PAC NYC website](#) and the [FAQs](#).

Alongside this Request for Proposals or RFP, applicants are encouraged to review PAC NYC's [mission](#) and Civis' [mission](#) before submitting proposal materials.

Commission Fee and Additional Resources

Commissions will be awarded over the course of three annual Rounds of Open Calls beginning in January 2024. Eight commissions were awarded in the [2024 Open Call](#). Eight commissions will be awarded in this the 2025 Open Call.

Each commissioned artist will be provided a total of \$60,000 to create a new performance work in theater, dance, music, opera, and multidisciplinary performance based on the idea of the promise, practice, imperfection and opportunity of democracy.

The \$60,000 award consists of a \$30,000 commission and a further \$30,000 to support each commissioned project's development process (research, readings, workshops etc.).

Timeline

January 13, 2025: Application portal opens for Round One Open Call

February 13, 2025, 1:00pm EST: Live webinar where the Democracy Cycle staff will give an overview of the steps to apply and the application elements, with an opportunity for questions and answers at the end. This session will be recorded and posted on The Democracy Cycle's web page on the PAC NYC website.

April 1, 2025, 5:00 PM EST: Deadline for the 2025 Open Call, applications due.

April - June 2025: Applications are screened for eligibility by The Democracy Cycle staff. Eligible proposals are reviewed by a minimum of two readers each. Using readers' evaluative scores, a list of finalists is developed.

Spring/summer 2025: A peer panel drawn from the fields of performing arts and the study and practice of democracy reviews finalists' proposals and selects at least 8 projects to receive the 2025 commissions.

Fall 2025: All 2025 Open Call applicants notified of their project's status.

Round Three Open Call will be announced in early 2026

How To Apply

Application portal opens: on January 13, 2025

Application portal closes: 5:00pm EST on April 1, 2025

The application consists of narrative questions and supplemental materials, including artist statement, project description, project development schedule and budget, work samples, and artist resume/CV and bio.

Please note: You will need to make a free account for yourself on Submittable in order to apply.

Submission Guidelines available [here](#).

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a commission from The Democracy Cycle, lead applicants must:

- Be generative artists who are currently creating new work in theater, dance, music, opera, and multidisciplinary performance
- Have created 2 or more completed and presented works
- Not be currently enrolled as a full-time student in a degree-granting program. PhD. candidates need to have completed their course/work by the application deadline to be eligible.
- Be eighteen years of age or older
- Propose a new project that is not a remount, has not yet been premiered, and is not planned to premiere before May 1, 2026
- Propose a new performance project meant to be developed and performed live, and planned to be completed in 2026, 2027, or 2028. Works may be interdisciplinary and can include collaborators in other artistic forms. At the time of application, a work may be in an early, mid, or late stage of development so long as it is not planned to premiere before May 1, 2026.

- Artists may either be U.S. citizens, or citizens of other countries. This is a national and international open call. Note: all artists commissioned are responsible for any tax implications involved in accepting a monetary award from a U.S.-based arts organization.

Proposals are not eligible if:

- The main purpose is the curation or documentation of existing work
- The proposed project has already premiered, or will premiere before May 1, 2026.
- The generative artist is enrolled as a full-time student in a degree-granting program
- The proposed project advocates by name for the success or failure of a partisan candidate for office or a political party
- The lead artist or any of the main collaborators are employees of, immediate family of employees of, or consultants to PAC NYC or Civis Foundation

Selection Criteria

Proposed projects must:

- Identify and respond to ideas or themes related to democracy, including core democratic principles and values (ex. political equality, majority rule, minority rights, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, among others)
- Be a work of performing arts intended to be performed live by live performers for a live audience in the disciplines of theater, dance, music, opera, or multidisciplinary performance
- Demonstrate clear potential for generating meaningful reflection and discourse on democracy and artistic practice, as informed by the artist's or collective's past achievements, work samples, artist statement, and project description.

Among the questions that will be asked during the selection process are:

- How will the piece address, expand, critique, or celebrate democracy, the practice of democracy, and democratic ideals?
- How will the artists and their projects stimulate meaningful reflection, discussions, and debate around the current state of democracy, particularly as it is experienced in the United States?

The Democracy Cycle primarily focuses on democracy as practiced in the United States although commissioned projects may include references to current or former democracies worldwide that inform or deepen our understanding of American democracy.

How Will Projects Be Selected?

After The Democracy Cycle staff screens applications for eligibility, each eligible proposal will be reviewed by (at least) two Readers. Using the assessments of those Readers, a pool of finalists will be identified. Those finalist proposals will move forward to a panel made up of experts in both the performing arts field and experts on democracy, who will select the 8 proposals to receive commissions in 2025. There will be a third Open Call in 2026.

Submission Guidelines, Resources, and Frequently Asked Questions

Please review our [Submission Guidelines](#)

Our FAQs are available [here](#). These FAQs will be updated based on the frequently of questions we receive.

You may download the [Request for Proposals](#).

Our live webinar will be on February 13 at 1:00 PM EST. The Democracy Cycle staff will give an overview of the steps to apply and the application elements, with an opportunity for questions and answers at the end. This session will be recorded and posted on The Democracy Cycle's web page on the PAC NYC website.

You may also sign up for a one-on-one consultation regarding eligibility at this [link](#).

You may download a PDF of the application questions [here](#). This is for referece only. All proposals must be submitted throug the [Submittable portal](#).

Please email democracy.cycle@pacnyc.org with any questions not answered above or in FAQs. Please allow at least 7 business days for an answer.

Reminder

Round One applications DUE April 1, 2025, 5:00 PM EST

The Democracy Cycle is a joint project of PAC NYC and Civis Foundation and is made possible by generous support from Civis.

PAC NYC / Perelman Performing Arts Center

Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC NYC), the cultural cornerstone and public element of the World Trade Center site, opened with its first public performance on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. Led by Board Chair Mike Bloomberg, Executive Director Khady Kamara, and Artistic Director Bill Rauch, the new performing arts center in Lower Manhattan is a dynamic home for the arts, serving audiences and creators through flexible venues enabling the facility to embrace wide-ranging artistic programs. The inaugural year features commissions, world premieres, co-productions, and collaborative work across theater, dance, music, opera, film, and more. The vision for PAC NYC first began 20 years ago when Mike Bloomberg, as Mayor of New York City, included a performing arts center as the cultural keystone in the master plan to rebuild the World Trade Center site following 9/11. PAC NYC's inaugural season began in September of 2023 and consists of commissioned world premieres and presented work including dance, opera, theater, music theater, concerts, and multi-disciplinary performances.

Our Mission: Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC NYC) creates connections by cultivating bonds between extraordinary artists and communities; with exemplary performances in active dialogue across the arts; in our flexible intimate spaces, inviting conversation and new relationships. Our art and our audiences reflect the dynamic energy of all five boroughs of New York City. We invite everyone to join us as we celebrate creative expression from around the world. PAC NYC is where the world trades ideas.

Civis Foundation

Civis (a Galvan Initiatives affiliate) advances the Common Good through investments in root cause advocacy, cultural work, and facilities that illuminate our interdependent future. We pursue our work independently and in collaboration with others whose missions align.

Civis believes that coalitions and partnerships can create winning campaigns for meaningful societal change. By leveraging the unique strengths of private sector companies, government programs, and nonprofit organizations, we are nurturing an American democracy with the constant capacity to effectively serve the welfare of all people residing in this country.

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DUE April 1, 2025, 5:00 PM EST**