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The LP's new home (center). Artwork by Cievel Xicohtencatl, courtesy The Laundromat Project.

**THE LAUNDROMAT PROJECT MAKES A HOME IN BED-STUY,  
CONTINUING 15 YEARS OF COMMUNITY BUILDING**

**New York City** (September 30, 2020) — [The Laundromat Project](#) (The LP), the Black-rooted and POC-centered, New York City-wide arts organization dedicated to advancing artists and neighbors as change agents in their own communities, has announced it will be moving to **Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn**. Previously headquartered in Harlem with a community arts programming space in Hunts Point/Longwood (The South Bronx), The LP's move to Brooklyn will deepen its existing connection to the Bed-Stuy neighborhood. It also marks the organization's 15th anniversary, bringing its programmatic and administrative operations under the same roof for the first time ever.

The LP will use its new home to create collaborative programs with local Bed-Stuy neighbors and arts, culture, and civic entities; host community and neighborhood gatherings; offer art and community-building workshops; support artist commissions; and host art exhibitions, all while honoring and amplifying the legacies of long-standing neighborhood residents and those committed to sustained community support and advancement. The organization has committed to a ten-year lease in a storefront space located on Fulton Street near the intersection of Kingston Avenue, achieving a long held goal of building deep relationships of mutual support in a single neighborhood, after 15 years of experience supporting artists doing community-embedded work in predominantly POC neighborhoods all across the city.



“The Laundromat Project is thrilled to be returning to Bed-Stuy, a neighborhood with which we’ve been deeply entwined since our very beginnings as an organization, and home to such a rich arts and culture ecosystem,” said **Kemi Ilesanmi**, Executive Director. “We are eager to hold space for creativity and community building, especially in a post-pandemic future. We look forward to reconnecting and connecting with neighbors, finding our stride in the neighborhood, and amplifying the legacy of Bed-Stuy as a historically Black and culturally rich neighborhood.”

The Laundromat Project was originally conceived by founder **Risë Wilson** in 1999, a Bed-Stuy resident who held a vision of a functioning neighborhood laundromat that would house community arts programming. Wilson saw the laundromat as a de facto community space where neighbors gather by necessity, and where they could also come to know each other and form relationships that strengthen the fabric of their shared community.

By the time of The Laundromat Project’s official founding in 2005, the idea to own and operate a laundromat had evolved into the Create Change artist residency program: a model for community engagement in which The LP provided resources and financial support for New York City artists—primarily of color—to make creative, public projects in their local laundromats to engage neighbors. Since then, the idea of the laundromat as the primary place for engagement has expanded to include a variety of settings where artists and neighbors build relationships—including libraries, community gardens, public plazas, local cultural organizations, and the like. Over the past decade and a half, nearly 30 Create Change projects have taken place in Bed-Stuy.

The LP’s commitment to root its presence within a single New York City anchor neighborhood grew out of a strategic visioning process. In a nod to Wilson’s original vision of The LP as a lively, public, creative hub firmly embedded in a neighborhood, consolidating its programs and administration into a single home will situate the organization in the everyday path of local artists and neighbors, thus becoming part of the fabric of community life.

“From early projects at laundromats on Malcolm X, Bedford, and Tompkins Avenue, to education programs at BCAM High School, and workshops for seniors at the now closed Senior Center on Decatur & Stuyvesant, The LP’s roots in Bed-Stuy run deep. Bed-Stuy has long been a space of Black resilience, creativity, and entrepreneurship. I look forward to the ways The LP will build on this history in a post-COVID reality, and inspire artists and neighbors alike to dream forward the world we want to live in,” said **Risë Wilson**, founder of The Laundromat Project.

Bed-Stuy is home to a significant number of the 165+ artists who have participated in Create Change; as well as community partners such as Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza and STooPS; and several LP board members. The Create Change Residency and Fellowship Programs will continue to support artists from across the city.



“STooPS is so excited to have The Laundromat Project move its headquarters to Bed-Stuy! Since our inception, The LP has been an amazing partner and mentoring organization, showing us a shining example of how a clear mission and passion for community can be actualized with mindful action. The LP has already sown amazing roots in Bed-Stuy as a recognized and appreciated community organization, so we are excited to see how their move will help them blossom and continue to foster meaningful community building through art,” said **Kendra J. Ross**, Founding Director of [STooPS Bed-Stuy](#).

“As a Bed-Stuy resident, LP Board member, and Create Change Artist-in-Residence alum, I can’t wait to see The LP set down roots in Bed-Stuy. I think deepening pre-existing relationships here and having a space for community to gather will be really meaningful to both the org and the neighborhood,” said **Rasu Jilani**, current board member.

As part of an [institutional commitment](#) to **value place**, The Laundromat Project brings to its new home the intention to listen to and learn from the longtime residents of Bed-Stuy, its new neighbors. The organization has undertaken an ongoing listening tour comprising over 40 one-on-one meetings with community members and Bed-Stuy entities about their existing work and lives in the neighborhood. The LP will draw upon its five years of experience embedded in the Hunts Point/Longwood neighborhood via the [Kelly Street Collaborative](#) to prioritize a community-first approach to developing programs and art activations. The LP’s history of collaboration in Bed-Stuy, through nearly 30 artist projects and additional community partnerships, serves as fertile ground for its future in the neighborhood. As it transitions into the neighborhood—a process whose timeline is dependent on the current pandemic—the organization will continue to provide opportunities for the local community to express interests and ideas for what a new community arts space might bring to the neighborhood.

Learn more: [laundromatproject.org/bedstuy](http://laundromatproject.org/bedstuy)

### **ABOUT THE LAUNDROMAT PROJECT**

The Laundromat Project advances artists and neighbors as change agents in their own communities. We envision a world in which artists and neighbors in communities of color work together to unleash the power of creativity to transform lives. We make sustained investments in growing a community of multiracial, multigenerational, and multidisciplinary artists and neighbors committed to societal change by supporting their artmaking, community building, and leadership development. Since 2005, The Laundromat Project has directly invested over \$1M in 165+ multiracial, multigenerational, and multidisciplinary artists, 80 innovative public art projects, and a creative community hub in Bed-Stuy, while engaging over 44,000 New Yorkers across the city.



## **FUNDERS**

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