a MESSAGE FROM OUR
MANAGING DIRECTOR
STEPHANIE OWENS

Over the last three decades, Atlanta-based NBAF has continued to drive its vision of a world where the contributions of artists of African descent are celebrated, integrated and elevated. We showcase Black artists from all over the country, presenting their work to our local audience. In the process, we have become a staple in the community for Black artists, who now have a platform to engage a broader audience and incorporate their art into the fabric of society.

The mission of NBAF is to expose, educate, engage and entertain by presenting and supporting art and artists of African descent, while broadening cultural experiences for all audiences. We are steadfast in our work to elevate multidisciplinary performances and create memorable experiences for a wide spectrum of patrons of the arts. We are also committed to working directly with emerging artists to expose them to arts disciplines and to support their growth and development.

One of NBAF’s integral strategic initiatives includes implementing year-round programming to uplift youth and emerging artists. Through programs like the MOVE/DANCE! program and the NextGen Artist Program, the NBAF is partnering with local organizations to provide enriching artistic curriculum in dance, fashion, film and visual arts to Atlanta’s youth while encouraging them to dream big and promoting health and wellness.

NBAF is now moving past the historic one-week festival and will integrate several aspects of the season into its year-round programming. NBAF is steadfast in its commitment to facilitate access to the arts for all audiences, without regard to their ability to pay. Our educational programs build positive self-esteem for economically disadvantaged students and we provide unique opportunities for families to enjoy the arts, eliminating barriers preventing exposure to enriching cultural experiences.

This three year plan (FY 2019-2021) will shape the future of our public programs, youth arts education programming, commerce opportunities for emerging artists, and the strategic direction and rebranding of the organization. We are grateful to the contributors of this strategic plan over the past several months. A special recognition to the community stakeholders, funders, partners, artists, staff, advisors, and board of directors, for the countless hours of information and feedback during our environmental scan process, and the board planning retreat.

As we propel forward, we have distinguished ourselves as a stellar arts organization. NBAF is proud to have been selected as a recipient of the 2018 Governor’s Award for the Arts & Humanities. This distinction is presented to organizations that make significant contributions to Georgia’s civic and cultural vitality through excellence and service to the arts and humanities. We will continue to build on the amazing legacy of NBAF to propel the next generation of artists.

Artfully Yours,
Stephanie Owens
Managing Director
BACKGROUND

Founded in 1987 by the Fulton County Arts Council under the guidance of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, NBaF is the oldest multidisciplinary arts organization in the U.S. focused exclusively on the art and artists of African descent. NBaF started as a seasonal arts festival and has evolved to present award-winning artistic and educational programming year-round in music, dance, film, visual, literary arts and fashion design. NBaF was recognized in 2008 by the U.S. Congress for the significant value NBaF adds to the cultural fabric of greater Atlanta and all of America. "NBaF remains deeply rooted in its commitment to presenting, celebrating and advancing the contributions of artists of African descent.

NBaF is an Atlanta based non-profit, that has built a celebrated reputation as a catalyst in the artistic community and has featured nationally acclaimed artists such as Maya Angelou, Wynton Marsalis, Manzari Brothers, Pearl Cleage, Katherine Dunham, Harry Belafonte, Maurice Hines, Maxi Priest, Cicely Tyson, August Wilson, Nikki Giovanni, Angie Stone, Alfre Woodard, Gladys Knight, Gregory Porter, Giwayen Mata, Radcliffe Bailey, Kenny Leon and Tyler Mitchell. Throughout the year, NBaF offers diverse programming including world class dance, music and theater performances, visual and literary arts presentations, film programs and ongoing arts education programs. NBaF remains committed to eliminating barriers for all audiences to consume and experience the culturally inclusive contributions of art and artists of African descent.

NBaF CREATES SUSTAINABLE ART

The history of NBaF provides a rich cultural framework to propel us forward to meet the unique needs of our diverse audience. NBaF began the conversation of inclusiveness to celebrate the accomplishments of art and artists of African descent more than 30 years ago. Out of the arms of NBaF we have provided the launch pad for several arts organizations and arts professionals. True Colors Theatre presented their introductory performances on an NBaF stage more than 15 years ago. Today, they are a thriving independent non-profit arts organization. NBaF also helped launch the arts careers of Radcliffe Bailey (international visual artist), Leatrice Ellzy (Arts Leader — Hammonds House Museum) and the Leslie Gordon (former head of Rialto Center for the Arts) to name a few. In addition, through the NBaF sponsored Fashion Forward: Student Fashion Design Competition, NBaF helped launch the design career of fashion designer Azede Jean Pierre. Jean Pierre credits her participation in the Fashion Forward Program to her success. "I am grateful that NBaF gave me a platform to launch my dream."

The important work accomplished by NBaF continues to positively impact the communities of Atlanta and beyond. As the organization moves away from a seasonal festival and toward cultivating year-round programming, NBaF will continue to facilitate the development of a broad stage that includes all artists and positively impacts and empowers all audiences. To reflect these changes, NBaF has changed its name to reflect the current vision and mission. We are now NBaF (National Black Arts) -- to indicate we are more than a festival. NBaF will continue to focus on creating opportunities to expose and uplift emerging artists and serve children in under-resourced schools without access to a creative based arts curriculum in public education. NBaF will also remain focused on presenting performances and workshops to the general public, ensuring our programs are accessible to all audiences, without financial restriction. NBaF will add an underrepresented cultural voice to established performances, using strategic partnerships and collaboration. Finally, NBaF will continue to present our Signature Fundraising Events, which offer memorable opportunities to expose, educate, engage and entertain.

GOAL 3

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

RATIONALE: Provide rewarding experiences for arts patrons to be engaged in establishing the viability and sustainability of the contributions of artists of African descent through service as a board member and/or as a member of the advisory council of NBaF.

• By 2021, NBaF raises 1.4 million in operating revenue to support the organization with a surplus of $100,000.
• By 2021, 90% of Board members report they have the tools and knowledge to be effective board members and stewards of the Arts.

STRATEGIES:

1. Ensure that the Board of Directors is a high-performing and well-functioning governing and fundraising body.
   a. Recruit new directors that are experienced and trained in nonprofit board management.
   b. Target interested stakeholders to serve that are stewards of the arts and committed to fiduciary governance.
   c. Ensure voluntary leadership that supports the philosophy of “giving and getting” to support the organization’s financial bottom line.
   d. Provide board governance training annually.

   Timeline/Responsible Party: Quarterly activities with program directors, CEO and school administrators.

2. Implement a resource development plan that meets the programmatic goals of the organization by building and strengthening a diversified revenue generation strategy from public and private sources.
   a. Grow organizational budget by 100k annually over next 2 fiscal years
   b. Engage all board members and friends in making connections to secure new donors.
   c. Continue to seek grant funding from corporate and private foundations and governmental sources.
   d. Increase funding support from individuals and mid-sized businesses.
   e. Leverage the marketing dollars secured from Bloomberg Philanthropy grant and support.

   Timeline/Responsible Party: Quarterly activities with staff, CEO and board engagement.
GOAL 2

INSPIRE POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

RATIONALE: Enroll students in select Title I schools in NBAF’s arts education programs which promote arts exposure, physical health and wellness, and an outlet for emotional expression which empowers and motivates students to excel academically.

- By 2021, 75% of students participating in an NBAF sponsored program report increased appreciation for the Arts.
- By 2021, 75% of students in the NBAF youth programs were exposed to possible careers in the Arts.
- By 2021, Teaching artists report that at least 60% of students demonstrate improved positive self-esteem through participation in NBAF’s arts programs.

STRATEGIES:

1. Deliver free, year-round arts education programming in select public schools that provide role models for interested students to support artistic exploration, academic improvement and early preparation for post-secondary education and/or careers.
   a. Maintain and/or expand the Move/Dance! Program in dance education at local public schools in underserved areas.
   b. Maintain and/or expand the NextGen Artist Program in film/media, fashion design and visual arts education at Atlanta public schools in underserved areas.

Timeline/Responsible Party: Quarterly activities with program directors, CEO and school administrators.
STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

EXPERIENTIAL ENGAGEMENT EVENTS: Experiential engagement events that expose, engage, educate and entertain audiences through fine art and cultural experiences.

YOUTH PROGRAMS: NextGen Artist, Move/Dance! and Fashion Forward expose youth in underserved communities to art and artistic professions.

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT: Using the NBAF platform and resources to help artists transform their art into commerce.
**RELEVANT AND MEMORABLE ARTS PROGRAMMING**

**RATIONALE:** Offer year-round, multidisciplinary programs that educate and expose audiences to emerging and established artists of African descent, ensuring their work is accessible, elevated, and well represented.

- By 2021, 85% of audiences/attendees report increased appreciation of emerging and established artists of African descent from the programs/performances hosted by NBAF.
- By 2021, 80% of audiences/attendees report being very satisfied with their arts experience.

**STRATEGIES:**

1. **Support emerging visual artists in transforming art to commerce.**
   - A. Facilitate the annual Fashion Forward: Student Fashion Design Competition
   - B. Present the annual Art Auction at the NBAF Gala, facilitating art sales for emerging artist
   - C. Assist artists to gain additional exposure and support their development
      - i. Provide professional development for artists
      - ii. Facilitate art exhibits, lectures and symposia
      - iii. Investigate the feasibility of creating a digital platform to display and sell visual art.

   **Timeline/Responsible Party:** Quarterly activities with staff, board, and CEO.

2. **Identify contributing artistic partnerships to curate an engaging artistic program experience that will create memorable experiences for audiences. These performances will present the work of artists unique to the mission of NBAF.**
   - A. NBAF will engage patron audiences by exposing them to diverse artists and creating memorable experiences and supporting NBAF through targeted fundraising efforts to support performance costs including robust tickets sales, resulting in positive net income and rave audience reviews.
   - B. Present year-round programming offered at free and/or below market cost to the public.

   **Timeline/Responsible Party:** First Quarter 2019; CEO responsible for Artistic Director. Board will support programming events.

3. **Utilize traditional marketing strategies and engage a new media approach to strengthen NBAF’s brand and reputation.**
   - A. Refresh brand by including new web site messaging, fact sheets, two-page description of NBAF, with talking points for board members and friends of NBAF.
   - B. Implement a digital media plan to continue to promote the NBAF brand.

   **Timeline/Responsible Party:** Quarterly activities with staff, CEO and board engagement.

---

**OUR VISION**

A world where the contributions of artists of African descent are celebrated, integrated and elevated.

**OUR MISSION**

To expose, educate, engage and entertain audiences as we present and support art and artists of African descent, while broadening cultural experiences.

**OUR VALUES**

**Expose**
- broad audiences through collaboration and programs to advance the art and artists of African descent:
  - Music
  - Dance
  - Film
  - Theater
  - Visual

**Educate**
- students offering award-winning programs to celebrate creative expression and diverse cultures:
  - Move/Dance
  - NextGen Artist
  - Fashion Forward

**Engage**
- audiences, highlighting emerging and established artists through experiential events:
  - NBAF Public Programs
  - NBAF Gala
  - NBAF Fine Art + Fashion

**Entertain**
- audiences by showcasing multi-disciplinary artistic performances, by broadening the cultural experience of diverse communities:
  - NBAF Experiential Engagement Events
STRATEGIC GOALS

RELEVANT AND MEMORABLE ARTS PROGRAMMING

INSPIRE POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM THRU ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE