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ARTS NOW

AKRON BLACK ARTIST GUILD MAKES PLANS TO MOBILIZE WITH AN INTERACTIVE EVENT IN MARCH

Black Artist Guild will host activist and civil rights leader Lisa Scails

AKRON, OH (Feb. 11, 2021) — Last week, more than 50 Black artists in Akron joined the first meeting of the Black Artist Guild to co-create the organization and develop initial plans for advocacy, education, collaboration, and plans to impact the community.

The Guild, composed of Black artists serving, working, or living in greater Akron, received initial funding from Knight Foundation and administrative support from ArtsNow. Last week's public launch prompted national news coverage and opened with a performance by local artists from Blaak Media.

One of the Guild's first action items was inviting civil rights leader Lisa Scails, who currently serves as executive director of the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut, to facilitate a discussion for the Black Artist Guild entitled *How to Mobilize the Movement as Black Artists*.

Led by Scails, the Cultural Alliance is dedicated to empowering the arts community to grow the economy and enrich people's lives. Before joining the Cultural Alliance, Scails was a civil rights activist for many years, including serving as president of the NAACP CT State Conferences of Branches. As an entrepreneur, Scails worked as a diversity consultant and developed best practice policies, presented workshops, and implemented programs for business, schools, and political systems.

"Our first meeting was an overwhelming success," shared Dominic Moore-Dunson, dancer, choreographer, and one of the lead community activators for the Black Artist Guild. "We left our official launch feeling energized and ready to create a place to connect with each other as Black artists and with the broad community."

"We're honored to have Lisa Scails facilitate our virtual discussion of how we build this Guild to celebrate and connect Akron's Black creative excellence," added Dara Harper, a visual artist and also one of the lead community activators for the Guild.

On Wed., March 3rd at 5:30pm, Black artists and creatives are invited to join the virtual conversation where questions for the evening's discussion will include: *What are our priorities? What do we need to achieve them? And how do we activate as a collective?*

To join the virtual event, please visit eventbrite.com/e/how-do-we-mobilize-as-black-artists-tickets-140013607469. Registration is free but is required so the Guild can send Zoom details to attendees.

The group is also seeking input and data. Black artists in greater Akron are encouraged to submit responses to a short survey that will be used to inform plans for networking, advocacy, education, and collaboration for the Guild.

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For more information, to take the survey, or to RSVP to the virtual event on March 3, 2021, please visit ABAGuild.org.

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ArtsNow works to leverage the arts and culture in Summit County to support and strengthen the region's economic and social vibrancy. Learn more at ArtsNow.org.

Akron Cultural Plan was created by those who live, work, or play in Akron. The Cultural Plan developed a vision and recommendations on how residents, organizations, artists, and businesses can build upon our collective history and create a path to the future. Ten community-wide priorities were identified: Equity, Access, Education, Talent, Engagement, Resources, Connections, Placemaking, Economic Impact, and Public Art. To learn more about the plan or to help advance its priorities, please visit AkronCulturalPlan.com.

Black Artist Guild advocates for, cultivates, and amplifies the work of Black artists, makers, and designers. The Guild provides a platform for artistic and diverse views and ideas to be exchanged, supported, and executed. Learn more at ABAGuild.org.