

For: **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
January 21, 2021

ARTSNOW

Contact: **ArtsNow**
Morgan Lasher
On behalf of ArtsNow and Black Artist Guild
330-714-4833
Morgan@AmpStrategy.com

BLACK ARTIST GUILD CREATED IN AKRON TO SUPPORT AND CELEBRATE LOCAL BLACK CREATIVE TALENT

Black artists in Akron are invited to join the Guild and help to co-create the organization and develop initial plans for advocacy, education, and collaboration

AKRON, OH (Jan. 21, 2021) — An idea sparked as part of the Akron cultural planning process is coming to life on Feb. 3, 2021.

During a community forum in the summer of 2019, local artists Dara Harper and Diane Johnson suggested the concept of a Black Artist Guild as a networking association and support system for Akron's Black creative talent.

"As a Black artist, it's easy to feel isolated from others and unconnected to opportunities in our region," explains Harper, who is now one of the lead community activators for the Guild. "We want the Black Artist Guild to be a solution to the data we see and the experiences we know."

In early 2020, Akron Cultural Plan that released that 97% of Akron residents who engaged in the process indicated that equity must be a priority for the arts and culture sector in the next fifteen years. On Thur., Feb. 3, 2021, Black artists serving, working, or living in Akron are invited to join a virtual public meeting to officially launch the Black Artist Guild and provide insight that will guide the next steps.

With initial funding from Knight Foundation and administrative support from ArtsNow, the group is set to discuss their founding principles and plans to impact the community.

"Though we hope to build the Guild as a home base and a place to connect and commune with fellow Black artists in Akron, the details on how we do that are ours to co-create," shares Dominic Moore-Dunson, dancer, choreographer, and also one of the lead community activators for the Black Artist Guild. "At our first public meeting, we're not presenting a concept to the community—we're building an idea together."

As for the initial vision of the Guild, Harper and Moore-Dunson agree that the group will encourage broad collaboration and connection, but most importantly, the Guild aims to be a beacon for the next generation to see themselves as artists and patrons of the arts.

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.

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

#

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.