DEAR FRIENDS,

The second year and cycle of Black Art Futures Fund sought to answer a question: can we give more in 2019 than we made possible in 2018? We did.

Because of our community of volunteers, we raised and granted $21,000 to small Black arts organizations across the country. We gained momentum—more leadership in the form of an inaugural Advisory Board, more volunteers who helped select grantees and showed up for post-award support learning calls, those who answered the call to raise funds for our third cycle in 2020, and brought along a few more donors as well.

The beauty of it all? Individuals made it possible. You gave year over year—and more. You brought your friends into the journey. You spread the word that we can all secure the future that is needed, what I like to call: The Blackest Artistic Future Possible.

Black Art Futures Fund believes that future starts with small arts, and especially small Black arts organizations.

In these pages we highlight the groups who have received funding, but so many more are worthy.

In 2020, we hope to do even more. 2020 will find us with so much to weigh, so many imperatives will volley for our already stretched resources: emotional energy, time, ability, finances, etc. When I think about all of what we are up against, I fret first, and then ask myself what all of this is for: what will the sum of all of it mean if we get to the other side, and beauty and meaning-making—art—don’t make it there with us?

Let’s secure the future for Black arts, together.

In solidarity,

DéLana R.A. Dameron, Founder

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Black Art Futures Fund (BAFF) is a collective of emerging and established philanthropists (comprised of arts workers, artists, writers, critics, and friends) working towards a Black artistic future that leaves no small, community-based organization behind.

Through grantmaking, collaborative learning opportunities for grantees, advocacy, and organization-to-donor cultivation, we seek to amplify and strengthen the future of Black art. BAFF was founded in 2017 by DéLana R.A. Dameron and operates as a philanthropic initiative of Red Olive Creative Consulting.
2019
IN NUMBERS

55
APPLICATIONS

$21,000
IN GRANTS

6
GRANTEES

15
STATES
As is no surprise, producing a robust concert and educational series takes a team of support. For 6 seasons, Castle of our Skins has operated as a volunteer-run organization with an administrative “team” of two carrying out the work of too many. With the Black Arts Future Fund grant, we are working hard to invest in our organizational growth and build a team of compensated administrators to help support the quality programming we provide. This season, we have hired our first part-time employee, are engaging in our first ever strategic plan, and actively cultivating relationships to help build a base of individual donors. Both the funds and the professional development training the Black Arts Future Fund provides have been hugely helpful and invaluable in this pivotal growing period for Castle of our Skins.
Bailey’s Cafe’s Black Art Futures Fund grant supported our Arts-Based Rites of Passage Program for young people ages 9 to 21. Our themes this year were authenticity in an age of social media, mental health and kindness. This summer we created a research team of three young women who did extensive research on mental health by visiting with local practitioners, organizations and institutions.

During our culminating performance, they shared their learnings through poetry, song, a resource sharing activity, and the narrative which linked all the performance pieces together. This is the first year that we had this component and it allowed us to dig deeper into the themes and, consequently, have them hold a more visible presence throughout the program.

The program was staffed by eight teaching artists, all professional artists and African/Caribbean American. The participants were all young people of color primarily African/Caribbean American. All of the young people are invited to co-create the culminating performance with their teachers and to bring in their own work separate from what is created in the sessions with us.

The culminating performance was our best to date.
The grant funds from Black Art Future Funds are being used towards the needed resources of positions in our office. The additional funds allowed us to contract with the University of San Francisco’s work study program and employ two additional long-term interns in our office this year. The employees’ role is to administer to our 450 season subscribers and handle all matters to the theatre engagement experience between patron and the company.

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Black Art Futures Fund grant funds are being used to support our ongoing programming this year, which has included or will include: Black Curators Roundtable with visiting curators Gee Wesley and Eileen Isagon Skyers, co-organized with the Stanley Museum of Art; Drawing the Future, an exhibition of black artists guest curated by the CAS at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse; a collaborative publication with arts and literary journal PromptPress; and a residency for Chicago-based curator Jamillah Hinson that will culminate in a group exhibition of black artists from the midwest in Public Space One’s gallery.

We are also using grant funds to develop two new resources for our program. The first is the Center for Afrofuturist Studies reading room and archive, which is a new permanent public-access space that hosts a collection of work and ephemera from our artists-in-residence and a rotating thematic exhibition of books and other media, as well as being a site for community-driven programs and collaborations. The Afro-Caribbean Mythopoetic Tradition, curated by artist and writer manuel arturo abreu, is the first exhibition in this space. The second resource is a new custom website that will serve as a robust and remotely-accessible robust archive for our program as well as a platform for digital artists’ projects.
With the Black Arts Future Fund Grant, we were able to create the Garden Fellowship Coordinator position to manage, program, and organize our one-year professional development fellowship that awards 5 Black Women Artists in Georgia an opportunity to elevate their careers and practice. We’ve seen an increase in productive, overall improvement of our program because of this investment. To be able to improve our organization’s operations with the aid of this grant has been a game changer. Thank you BAFF. We still have work to do but you are helping us get there.
The Black Art Futures Fund grant was used to help produce, *Monolith to Monarch*, an original show written and performed by viBeCompany. *Monolith to Monarch* is a CALL to TAKE SPACE for six black women weary of being forced into boxes that don’t fit and required to give up space that they don’t have. This show explores the METAMORPHOSIS they experience through unlearning years of self-sacrifice and silence, and the POWER that is held when they tell their own stories, honor their full humanity, and are unlimited by perceptions about who they are “supposed” to be. *Monolith to Monarch* is a theatrical CELEBRATION of the CHRYSLIS of the Black girl experience. *Monolith to Monarch* was written and performed by Chelsea Allison, Khadijah Boney, Monica Cancian, Nicose Christophe, Michelan LeMonier, Monique Letamendi and directed by Toya Lillard, viBe’s Executive Director. viBeCompany is viBe’s pre-professional group of young adult artists who receive ongoing training, paid performance opportunities, and who devise original theater for viBe’s invited performances. viBeCompany produces and performs one full length show each year.
Red Olive and BAFF intentionally aim to cultivate a creative ecosystem that makes space for administrators, donors, artists, and other supporters to participate in the reimagining of philanthropy. This year, we hosted a series of monthly gatherings that embodied this ethos as we collaborated with partners throughout New York City.

Our September Socialize & Sip held at the Brooklyn Academy of Music brought together art administrators of color from many organizations within the five boroughs and our Black Philanthropy Month forum, co-hosted with the Brooklyn Community Foundation, provided public space to honor, reflect upon, and extend the Black philanthropic tradition.

BAFF Board Members, Ope Bukola and Ed Brockhoff, organized intimate meals in Brooklyn and Harlem during the year at which Red Olive/BAFF community in the northeast met and celebrated one another. Together, these events raised more than $15,000 toward our 2020 grantmaking.

We were also thrilled to introduce ourselves to the national philanthropic community at this year’s Grantmakers in the Arts Conference in Denver, Colorado. Our Beloved Community: Collaborative Grant Making featured a dynamic conversation between Red Olive principle DeLana R.A. Dameron, viBe Theatre Experience Executive Director Toya Lillard, and Board Member Jessica Lynne.
Jessica Solomon

Currently, Jessica serves as Vice President of the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation. In her role she is sharpening the Foundation’s place-based grant making strategies, developing new programmatic initiatives, and deepening institutional knowledge to ensure more equitable impact across Baltimore. Prior, Jessica led Art in Praxis - a national consultancy applying creative practices to organizational development. There she designed and facilitated hundreds of capacity building initiatives and interventions to increase effectiveness of cultural institutions, municipalities, and community based groups.

Jessica is an emerging collector of contemporary black art, and a cultural worker, producing narrative-driven interactive experiences that shift hearts and minds, and spur action. Her first gallery exhibition was both time-capsule and time machine, Meridians, a 40-year (1997 - 2037) incomplete survey of DC Arts and Culture through personal and community-sourced ephemera, exhibited at Transformer Gallery in Washington, DC.
2019 marked a year of growth for Black Art Futures Fund. Our founding Executive Board continued to help steer the ship while we welcomed to the team our inaugural Advisory Board in the fall.

Professionally and personally, Ed has always endeavored to help build and support strong communities. For that reason, he was honored to be invited to serve on the foundation board for BAFF - with its mission to elevate and preserve Black arts and culture. While considerable financial resources are presently directed towards large and established organizations, limited funds are made available for emerging artists of color and the grassroots organizations that nurture them. This is exactly the gap that BAFF serves to fill - with a particular recognition that these organizations often have the most difficulty in sourcing non-project specific funding that enables them to cover basic operating costs and develop internal administrative capacity. Artists of color are an integral part of a strong community - sharing stories, preserving cultures, celebrating differences. Ed, through BAFF, is delighted to be able to play a small, but passionate, role in supporting artists and their sponsor organizations to strengthen communities.

Fatima Jones is a passionate communications strategist. She is currently the Senior Director of Communications and PR at the World Famous Apollo Theater. Prior to the Apollo, she served as the Director of Public Relations at the Brooklyn Museum and worked for more than a decade at BAM. Fatima has also served as a consultant to Ronald K. Brown/Eavidence, Weeksville Heritage Center and 651 ARTS. Fatima is a former member of the Bessie’s Dance and Performance Awards. She is also a mother, wife and dancer.
BAFF’s work would not be possible without a team of volunteers. Our volunteers support our fundraising initiatives and grant reading process.

**VOLUNTEERS**

Afton Battle
Lauren Rose Clark
Juliana Cope
Gabrielle Davenport
Maria Dautruche
Lauri London Freedman
Molly Gross
Sylvia Jung
India Mack
Ayo Oti
Leslie Shipman
Caroline Washington
Stephanye Watts

**LESLIE SHIPMAN**

Leslie Shipman, founder of The Shipman Agency, has spent 25 years promoting writers, and creating and managing literary events in New York City. She spent over a decade at the National Book Foundation, (which presents the National Book Award), where she was instrumental in creating events and programs. She consulted at PEN America, a leading advocate for free expression, and worked on the PEN Literary Awards, and the PEN World Voices Festival. Her poetry can be found in the Kenyon Review, BOMB, Tinderbox, Mid-American Review, Cosmonauts Avenue and elsewhere.

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**HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN 2020**

**GIVE**

BAFF started with a board collective financial gift of $10,000 to start the fund. In 2019, across the US, 55 applicants operating at or below $750,000 annually applied for funds from Black Art Futures Fund; one of the only general operating support initiatives for small Black arts organizations.

**SHARE YOUR TIME**

Volunteer to be an application reader, and help in the critical process of deciding who will receive grants, while learning about the great work across the country. Or, volunteer to host or help with a regional fundraiser to raise the funds that directly make up the grants pool.

**SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE**

Lead a learning call for current BAFF grantees. This is a perfect opportunity to help impact a cohort of organizations directly. Past learning calls have focused on Brand design and visual story-telling; Small shop fundraising tips; planning for a full year of fundraising; mobilizing volunteers to help fundraise for your organization; and seeking + securing major gifts.

**SHARE YOUR NETWORK**

Anyone can contribute to the fund, which is comprised primarily of individual gifts and company matches. Each dollar makes up the vital grants on which our organizations depend.

**SHARE YOUR LEADERSHIP + VISION**

Join our Advisory Board! We open calls periodically to individuals who want to get closer to our mission, and do the joyous work of shaping the future of Black art.
TEAM

DÉLANA R.A. Dameron
Founder of Black Art Futures Fund and Red Olive Creative Consulting

LAUREN CLARK
Grants Writing

ELISA GALINDEZ
Executive Assistant

ANTOINETTE GARDNER
Special Events

CATHERINE NTUBE
Communications and Grants Manager

YASMIN VERA
Branding and Creative