



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

651ARTS.ORG / BROOKLYN, NY

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Table of Contents

	PAGE
A Message from our Executive Director	03
Introduction	04
Our Guiding Principles	05
Our Programming	07
Impact & Outcomes	21
Home Making	28
Looking Ahead	29
Financial Overview	30
Our Team & Board	31
Acknowledgements & Gratitude	33
Conclusion	34
Photo Credits	35

A Message from our Executive Director



Toya A. Lillard

Dear 651 ARTS family,

It is with excitement and deep gratitude that we present 651 ARTS' 2024 Annual Report! We are grateful for the opportunity to report to our community of stakeholders and supporters, and review our activities, metrics, and outcomes in FY24.

In the last year, 651 offered a **robust** season of in-person programming, deepened our partnerships, engaged in exciting collaborations, all while also preparing for the **long-awaited move** into our first permanent home at 10 Lafayette Ave (aka "L10"). In accordance with the implementation of our strategic plan, we launched year two of a \$2.7M Home Campaign that began in Fall 2022 to energize our stakeholders, underwrite FF&E needs for the new space, and establish an operating fund to bridge the gap between increased operating expenses and growing contributed revenue over our first five years in the building.

We received significant funding increases and opportunities from Howard Gilman Foundation and Altman Foundation, and **an increase in individual donors and major gifts!** After 36 years, 651 ARTS finally has a permanent home and we are so grateful to you, our community of supporters, for making it possible for us to offer innovative programming while also serving our artist communities in new and exciting ways!

It is with great pride that we offer you this review and reflection of all that we accomplished in FY24, and to give you a glimpse of all the new offerings to come in our new space, including a **rental program!** Thank you for all that you have done to make it possible for 651 ARTS to begin this new chapter.

With deepest gratitude.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toya A. Lillard'.

Toya A. Lillard
Executive Director

Introduction

651 ARTS IS A 36-YEAR-OLD DYNAMIC AND VISIONARY ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO SHOWCASING AND UPLIFTING BLACK ARTS AND CULTURE WITH A MISSION ROOTED IN INCLUSIVITY, CULTURAL PRESERVATION, AND ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE.

651 ARTS creates spaces for transformative experiences, community engagement, and meaningful dialogue. Through a range of programming, from thought-provoking conversations and immersive theater experiences to community-centered events and collaborations, 651 ARTS amplifies the voices and contributions of Black artists, fostering a stronger and more vibrant artistic landscape. Guided by a commitment to partnerships and collaboration, our organization forges connections with like-minded organizations and artists, combining resources to maximize impact and create innovative artistic experiences. As a catalyst for creativity and cultural expression, 651 ARTS inspires audiences, engages communities, and celebrates the rich tapestry of Black arts and culture in Brooklyn and beyond.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OUR MISSION | OUR VISION



Our Mission

651 ARTS deepens the awareness of and appreciation for contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and provides professional and creative opportunities for performing artists of African descent. 651 ARTS presents live dance, music, and theater events in venues throughout Brooklyn, producing programming for our immediate community and the general public to participate in intergenerational lifelong learning, civic, and social engagement through meaningful exposure to art, artists, and ideas.

Our Vision

To be a leading institution in the performing arts ecology that illuminates the evolving stories and varied cultural experiences of the African Diaspora, an institution whose impact and influence transforms individual lives, neighborhoods, and global communities.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES CONTENT

VALUES

6



1. Diverse African Diaspora
2. Artistic Excellence
3. Knowledge
4. Integrity
5. Community
6. Strategic Risk

ACTIONS

5



1. Produce
2. Present
3. Partner
4. Educate
5. Incubate

HOME

1



To serve as a haven for Black artists and creators passionately dedicated to nurturing and showcasing their talents; to champion, celebrate and elevate Black artistry, innovation and expression.

OUR PROGRAMMING

2023 / 2024
SEASON

For the 2023/2024 programming season, 651 ARTS relied on the partnerships and collaborations within our arts community as we prepared to unwrap and activate our brand new space at L10. It was a season of seeing long-held ideas come to fruition as we presented premieres of work whose cultivation and development we supported pre-COVID.

We opened the season in Fall 2023, premiering Edisa Weeks' **3 RITES**, a trilogy of work that poignantly interrogates why life, liberty and happiness were included as unalienable rights in the United States Declaration of Independence. **3 RITES** explored what the right to life, liberty, and happiness means today, who has access to these rights, and how they manifest in the body.

We opened Winter 2024 with the second season of **Virtual Griot**, an original digital docuseries featuring creatives in the role of Griots as they relay the stories responsible for keeping history, tradition, and culture alive. *651 ARTS: The Past and Future of Culture Architects* commemorates the organization's origin story, as told by the powerful Black women who spearheaded it. (Still available to stream on youtube.com/651arts.)

The Art of Making Space was a powerful panel conversation to toast Women's History Month. Featuring Cynthia Gordy Giwa, Emily Anadu, Erica Harper and Fatima Jones as panelists; four women who are defining in real time the strategies they employ to hold and create space for Black arts, culture, and archive.

Spring saw us reuniting with long-time collaborators, Black Dance Stories, for our inaugural **Black Dance Convening**. A timely and much-needed coming together of the community, defining their own needs and requirements to sustain the health and future of Black Dance in NYC.

We closed out our season in a celebration of Black Joy, Art and Freedom with the second volume of **We Outside: A Brooklyn Juneteenth** - our annual collaboration with The Soapbox Presents and quickly becoming a Downtown Brooklyn cultural highlight.

This season was testament to the power of collaboration, integrity and trusting the process. Thank you to our artists who continue to trust us with their creative vision, and the partners without whom we could not make any of this happen.

FY23 (875)

FY24 (1,403)

ATTENDANCE

+60.34%

+160.34%

Attendance Growth YOY

3 RITES:

Life, Liberty, Happiness



3 RITES: Life, Liberty, Happiness by DELIRIOUS Dances / Edisa Weeks was a trilogy featuring three interactive performance rituals that integrated dance, live music, text, visual installations, community discussions and shared meals to humorously and poignantly interrogate why life, liberty and happiness were included as unalienable rights in the United States Declaration of Independence. *3 RITES* explored what the right to life, liberty, and happiness means today, who has access to these rights, and how they manifest in the body.

Life

=

Future

Liberty

=

Past

Happiness

=

Present

3 RITES was produced by Maríya Wethers and commissioned and presented by 651 ARTS, with co-commissioners The Billie Holiday Theater, Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Mount Tremper Arts, and National Performance Network.

3 RITES: Life

FALL | CHASHAMA AT 1155 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS

The season opened with a public presentation of *Life*, a work-in-process.

The *Life* rite began in The Greenroom, an interactive educational space where the audience participated in creative reuse workshops which focused on tasks such as making beads out of plastic straws, crafting musical instruments out of discarded objects, and much more. The audience transitioned to move through the Black Spirit Room and The Wasteland, which were performance installations made from plastic trash, and a mash-up between a DIY Haunted house, Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory and a dance performance.



*We have not inherited the earth from our parents,
we are borrowing it from our children.*

Wendell Berry

3 RITES: LIBERTY

FALL | MARK O'DONNELL THEATER

Connected like a puppet to objects that have informed the Black experience in America, multi-media artist **Edisa Weeks** alternates between black face, white face, storytelling and visceral dance to dig into the foundations of Liberty in America. As our nation grapples with confederate monuments, Black Lives Matter, fake news, and economic stratification, *3 RITES: Liberty* humorously and poignantly insists on a reckoning with our past and present.

THE PROMISE OF AMERICA: ENOUGH ALREADY!

For the duration of the performance run, the lobby at The Mark O'Donnell Theater exhibited artwork and dance videos by Benjamin Banneker High School Students. Francie Johnson (Dance Teacher); Mathew Mecca (Art Teacher).

3 RITES: Liberty is about confronting America's selective amnesia, to undo toxic systems of oppression.

Edisa Weeks



3 RITES: Happiness

FALL | WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER

In **3 RITES: Happiness**, Weeks investigated how laughter and pleasure reside in the body. The rite was about self-care, and making time to relax, laugh and recharge for the labor to uphold the values of life, liberty and happiness. It featured four dancers and commissioned music by Nathaniel Braddock, played live by the Occidental Brothers Dance Band International, whose sound is a lively combination of Highlife and Dry Guitar.

The rite began with the Happiness Fête where the audience was invited to engage in a collective celebration of wellness and joy by participating in portrait sketches, massages, Delirious Hair Designs, learning line dances, sharing a meal, and more. The Fête was followed by laughter-cises, and a performance that culminated in a dance party with the audience.

*The happiness rite is a celebration of communal-care and self-care
The ritual pampers the senses and spirit
The ritual is grounded in Black Joy
The ritual celebrates being our most authentic selves*



Virtual GRIOT

[SEASON 2]



WINTER | [YOUTUBE.COM/651ARTS](https://youtube.com/651arts)

A Griot is someone who passes on their society's history, especially through stories, poems and music.

VIRTUAL GRIOT is an original digital docuseries featuring creatives in the role of Griots as they relay the stories responsible for keeping history, tradition, and culture alive. The series' second season, **651 ARTS: The Past and Future of Culture Architects**, commemorates the organization's origin story, as told by the powerful Black women who spearheaded it.

Season 2 of Virtual Griot presents an opportunity to finally tell the 651 story and explores why access to history and context is an institutional, personal, and spiritual requirement. Featuring some of the performing arts world's most dynamic leaders including **Mikki Shepard**, **Maurine Knighton**, **Shay Wafer** and **Toya A. Lillard**, this iteration of *Virtual Griot* was directed by **Elisha Lawson**, who also directed the series' inaugural season - and is narrated by **NSangou Njikam**, who wrote and starred in the first season. A nod to the Sankofic practice of looking backward to inform how we move forward, *651 ARTS: The Past and Future of Culture Architects* serves as both a collective memory and as a blueprint for the future.

Episode 1: Foundations



How do you build a legacy organization?

Foundations introduces 651 ARTS and its co-founder Mikki Shepherd as she walks us through the organization's origins, from conception to realization. Shay Wafer and Maurine Knighton (who also led the acclaimed institution) discuss the history, influence, and very necessary presence of organizations like 651 ARTS in Brooklyn, then and now.

Episode 2: Get With the Program



Get with the Program explores the cultural and programmatic contributions made by 651 ARTS both institutionally, as well as the distinct individual contributions made by each leader. Through groundbreaking programs in theater, dance, music, and festivals the landscape of the performing arts was redefined, whilst paving the way for the remarkable programs that have since emerged from 651 ARTS. Nothing short of visionary.

Episode 3: **Money Mountains**



Money Mountains touches on the obstacles faced by 651 ARTS and how they were not unique or unknown to cultural institutions of color. Specifically, the pursuit of financial support from entities who were more inclined to back predominantly white institutions, looking to cultivate Black audiences. Overcoming systemic barriers by means of partnership, relationship and community is a timeless strategy for folks of color, and one that allowed 651 ARTS to continue its mission of promoting Black artistry and cultural exchange.

Episode 4: **Pioneering the Future**



In *Pioneering the Future*, we investigate what the future looks like. 651 ARTS current Executive Director, Toya A. Lillard, talks about the full circle moment that found her leading an institution in which her predecessors are also her mentors.

The Art of Making Space



WINTER | THE CENTER FOR FICTION

The Art of Making Space was a panel conversation and toast to Women's History Month that featured four women who are defining in real time the strategies they employ (knowingly or unknowingly) to hold and create space for Black arts, culture, and archive.

How do Black women hold and create space for one another while navigating systems where, too often, individualism and hyper-competitiveness are rewarded?

- It means **engineering places at tables** that weren't necessarily built for you.
- It means **charting a path** for those who may follow.
- It means **resource sharing** and storytelling.
- It means **redefining what is possible** from a place of abundance.

OUR PANELISTS INCLUDED:

Emily Anadu

Founder and CEO, The Lay Out

Cynthia Gordy Giwa

Founder and Co-Creator, Black-Owned Brooklyn

Erica Harper

Vice President of Learning and Engagement, Weeksville Heritage Center

Fatima Jones

Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Dance Theatre of Harlem



The conversation was moderated by
Robyne Walker-Murphy.

Black Dance Convening

Thanks to all who attended our first ever *Black Dance Convening*, held in partnership with Black Dance Stories at the Mark Morris Dance Center. Members of the Black dance community in New York came together to discuss the health and future of Black Dance Artists. This was a wonderful day of holding space, being in community and dreaming (with actionable steps) towards a future that ensures the health and longevity of its people.

The Black Dance convening will help to solidify and define the way that we present dance and create guideposts for care as we seek to build a holistic model for nurturing Black dance artists. Programs like this focus very specifically on 651 ARTS' dedication to **incubation**, of both our artists and the ecosystems to which we belong. We value opportunities to create in collaboration with our artist community and this program was a true testament to our deepened relationships with the artists that we present and support.



The Black Seed Cohort

Creative Residency New Orleans



The Black Seed Cohort (April Matthis, Eric Lockley and Goldie Patrick) are 651's resident theater-makers and participants in a program created to illuminate the history of multi-disciplinary Diasporic theater, and consider the unique development, producing, and presenting needs of this important genre of Black theater through three interrelated investments:

1. Institutional archival work that will articulate a 651 canon.
2. The creation of new experimental Black theater work through developmental artist residencies.
3. Black theater criticism, in tandem with the artistic residencies, in order to document and begin articulating a replicable model for contributing to the growth and vitality of groundbreaking Black theater artists, the institutions that support them, and the audiences receiving their work.



This year 651 ARTS hosted an inaugural cultural immersion residency for the cohort in New Orleans, Louisiana. This residency made up Part 2 of this investigative project, and was devised with the specific purpose of putting artists in intentional communities with a variety of cultural organizations, both within and outside of NYC. The residency provided the cohort with the time and space to explore new ideas and projects, as well as an insight into the craft and creative process of other Black makers around the country and the brilliant work being produced.

Special thanks to the following institutions for their generosity and time, we look forward to welcoming you into our new space:

Antenna | Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans | The Black School | Junebug Productions | New Orleans African American Museum

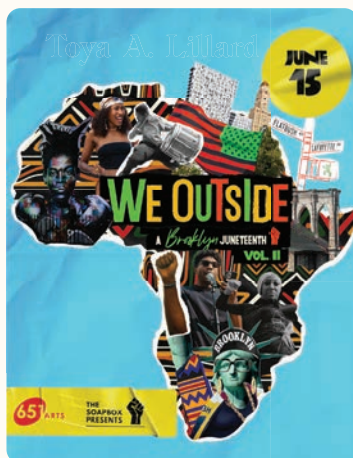
We Outside!

A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II



651 ARTS and The Soapbox Presents came together again to bring you our **Fourth Annual Juneteenth Celebration!** Taking place once again on The Plaza at 300 Ashland, ***We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*** filled Downtown Brooklyn with Black Joy on Saturday, June 15, 2024.

651 ARTS' Juneteenth Celebration is an annual commemoration of African-American liberation, resilience and self-determination featuring performances and community engagement activities that honor the brilliance and vitality of Black culture.



We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II is presented in partnership with **Downtown Brooklyn Partnership.** Programming at The Plaza at 300 Ashland was made possible by support from Two Trees Management Co. This year we brought back favorites from last year as well as new segments.

With a record turnout, our season finale exemplified Black excellence and joy, melanating the Plaza and cementing our position as a home for Black Arts in Brooklyn.

THE LINEUP

Stoop Sessions, Freedom Songs

Explores our journey through protest music to a party of radical joy.

Made Black

Curated by Brooklyn Pop-Up features a market filled with Brooklyn's finest Black artisans and entrepreneurs. Find contemporary fashion, accessories, home goods, handmade jewelry, and more—all Made Black.

The Cypher: Rep Your City

Invites participants to share stories of their cities, countries, and cultures through dance.

Young, Gifted and Black

Celebrates HBCU culture with marching bands, majorette squads and a step show!

Melanated Notes

Pairs poet with musician for an aural exploration of freedom.

We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II



651 ARTS-Supported Works

MX Oops Unfinished Animal

APRIL 25-27 | NEW YORK LIVE ARTS SUPPORTED BY 651 ARTS

UnFiNiShEd aNiMaL is a party and multimedia performance that uses the vibrant aesthetics of queer nightlife culture to reveal how cognitive bias connects us all. This is a journey toward wholeness, through bass, bars, and ecstatic bodies in motion. *UnFiNiShEd aNiMaL* tells the story of humanity coming to grips with our collective inheritance, a ramshackle meshwork of cognitive processes evolved to survive, not for self-awareness. An interdisciplinary approach invites the audience to meditate on what might be unfinished about human cognition and how these biases keep us from building a better world together.



5x5 Block Party Series

AUGUST 5 | FULTON ST AND WASHINGTON AVE
SUPPORTED BY 651 ARTS

Celebrating 50 years of hip hop, these free block parties and events—one for each borough, going from afternoon into night—featured hip-hop royalty, renowned DJs, street art by LISA Project NYC and curated markets by The Layout Co.



Downtown Brooklyn Arts Festival - Lollise

SEPTEMBER 30 | THE PLAZA AT 300 ASHLAND ,
PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DOWNTOWN
BROOKLYN PARTNERSHIP

The Downtown Brooklyn Arts Festival is an annual celebration of the neighborhood's cultural community and the artists, writers, and performers who inspire its creative spirit. Afrofuturistic soulstress and Botswanian artist Lollise, captivated the audience with her most popular songs, including *The Booty* and *Afronaut*, exploring themes of sexual liberation, Afrofuturism, and colonialism. Featuring her signature out-of-this-world outfits, of course.



IMPACT & OUTCOMES

Our latest season fortified our efforts to fulfill 651 ARTS' mission: deepening the appreciation of contemporary performing arts and culture of the African diaspora in Brooklyn.

This season focused on the potential pitfalls Black arts practitioners face and how they may manifest. We approached this from a holistic perspective by exploring preventative practices, analyzing trauma responses, and discussing ways we can collectively build towards a healthier and sustainable landscape for Black artists across the diaspora.

We have made a substantial step forward in materializing our dream of creating a cultural hub for Brooklyn's community of Black artists.



Impact & Outcomes

"Y'all brought together the Culture and community so well! *Juneteenth* is a celebration. I don't often get to attend block parties. I traveled from a different state to be there. It was well thought out and organized. My own city didn't have an event comparable (in quality) like this. More than a DJ spinning music you brought together so much Cultural expression through the arts. The youth involvement and participation really is heartwarming."

Sage Woods
We Outside! attendee

"This trip was a gift. It reinvigorated me around how I can become a better storyteller and was such a wonderful opportunity for me to pour into myself without an immediate expectation of output. The reward was in the experience and in the knowing that my artistry would indeed be served and enhanced by being steeped within a different culture. Without question I am changed and a clearer and freer artist due to this time away from my status quo.
Thank you 651 ARTS for contributing to me."

Eric Lockley
The Black Seed cohort, cultural immersion residency in NOLA

"Such events give voice to our real history, which our children especially need to know"

Yvette Taylor
We Outside! attendee

"We worked with 651 ARTS on the promotion and video capture of *We Outside: A Brooklyn Juneteenth* for the last two years and it's truly always a pleasure working with the team! Last year was amazing and this year was even better. What's most impressive is that everyone on the team is genuinely passionate about the mission at 651 ARTS and that really shines through in their enthusiasm for and dedication to the work they do. As Black creatives ourselves, it's particularly special to us that we're given a platform that allows us to uplift other black creatives and artists. We're looking forward to shining more light on more and more Black art in the future! Let's make next year our best year! Much love to the dream team Farren Wood, Toya Lillard, Robert Henderson, Alisha Delissaint and Ishmael Muhammad!"

Kevin and Ryan Gebon
Milk Glass NYC

"The space and intentionality to dream, to imagine, and perhaps most importantly to rest - are key tenets to my pedagogic approach to creating. The care, compassion and consideration of the 651 ARTS team made this possible for me. I am extremely indebted and grateful for their hard work, their right energy, and their willingness to support me as an artist"

Goldie E. Patrick
The Black Seed cohort, cultural immersion residency in NOLA

"Your *Juneteenth* celebration has become part of the cultural fabric of Downtown Brooklyn. The joy you bring to our community is a testament to your mission and we cannot wait to be outside for your Fifth edition!"

Julissa Vale
Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

Impact & Outcomes

"651 ARTS is dear to my heart, as 651 ARTS has informed me as an artist. Early in my career I performed with Reggie Wilson's Fist & Heel Performance Group in a split bill presented by 651 ARTS. A few years later, in 2009, I attended 651 ARTS' *FLY: Five First Ladies of Dance*, an incredible evening of solos by contemporary dance luminaries - Carmen de Lavallade, Dianne McIntyre, Bebe Miller, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Germaine Acogny. 651 ARTS vision and commitment to deepening the awareness of and appreciation for African Diasporic contemporary performing arts and culture was reflected in the diversity of ideas and styles shared in that performance. Seeing Black women excel as dancers, company founders, and artists, was thrilling, affirming, and inspired me in making my own work. Fast forward to 2023 and I was ecstatic that 651 ARTS was presenting 3 RITES: Life, Liberty, Happiness by my company DELIRIOUS Dances.

Dreaming BIG takes courage, time, persistence, and support; and I'm forever grateful to 651 ARTS for presenting the 3 RITES trilogy and supporting risk taking and the making of original work. 3 RITES interrogates why Life, Liberty and Happiness were included in the U.S. Declaration of Independence as inalienable rights, what do the rights mean for Black people in America, and how are the rights being upheld. The work involved three immersive and interactive performance experiences, multiple community partners, and were performed over three months in three different venues. 651 ARTS embraced the challenges that each rite and location introduced, and the 651 ARTS team were a joy to work with in figuring out solutions.

651 ARTS has a wonderful legacy of supporting innovative work by African Diasporic artists in a range of mediums; so it is exciting that at this juncture in 651 ARTS history, they will finally have their own home to incubate, present, and archive work!"

Edisa Weeks
651 ARTS Artist

"Participating in *The Art of Making Space* was a transformative experience, both personally and professionally. It was an honor to share the stage with such remarkable women in the arts, and being included among them affirmed my work in such a meaningful way. But the conversation moved beyond our accomplishments. It was an honest, vulnerable exploration of the challenges, setbacks and triumphs we've encountered in our careers. This collective storytelling built a strong sisterhood in the room — a community that continues to motivate and support me.

I'm forever grateful to 651 ARTS for convening brave spaces where Black women can share their stories, inspire one another and forge connections. My journey as a new board member began within this context, and I'm so excited to help advance 651 ARTS' vital mission."

Cynthia Gordy Giwa
651 ARTS Board Member and Black-Owned Brooklyn

"It was a thrill to partner with 651 ARTS, whose work we respect and admire. At Brooklyn Pop-Up we value being part of the rich and supportive arts community that 651 ARTS fosters and celebrates. It is an absolute honor to be asked to curate the maker section, Made Black, for the joyous *Brooklyn Juneteenth Vol. II* celebration, and to work with organizations like The Soapbox Presents. Together we lift up independent makers, designers and small businesses, all of whom make Brooklyn and this vibrant city the best in the world!"

Aimee Kellner
Brooklyn Pop-Up

"Collaborating with 651 ARTS has been a DREAM. It's not often that you find institutions that value care in the ways they do and that makes all the difference: thoughtful engagement, impactful and soulful programming, and genuinely wonderful people. I feel so lucky to be in community with them!"

Erica Harper
Weeksville Heritage Center

It was a real honor being on the panel for *The Art of Making Space* but what resonated with me most was the feeling of being taken care of by the 651 ARTS Team. From the curation and moderation to the prep calls and day-of hospitality to the location and post-event communication. Every aspect felt intentional and thoughtful.

Fatima Jones Barrett
Dance Theatre of Harlem

PUBLICITY & MEDIA COVERAGE

This year, 651 ARTS shifted our strategy to prioritize organic press outreach. This pivot resulted in unprecedented placements for our Juneteenth celebration, *We Outside!*, in publications such as *Time Out New York*. We were also featured in area-specific publications such as *The Dance Enthusiast* for *3 RITES* and *We Outside!*

A notable feature was Executive Director Toya A. Lillard's *We Outside!* segment on Spectrum News NY1's *In Focus* to a staggering audience of over 2.2 million viewers. Our intentional combination of organic press coverage and targeted social media ads led to outstanding ratings and a substantial increase in attendance for our in-person programming.

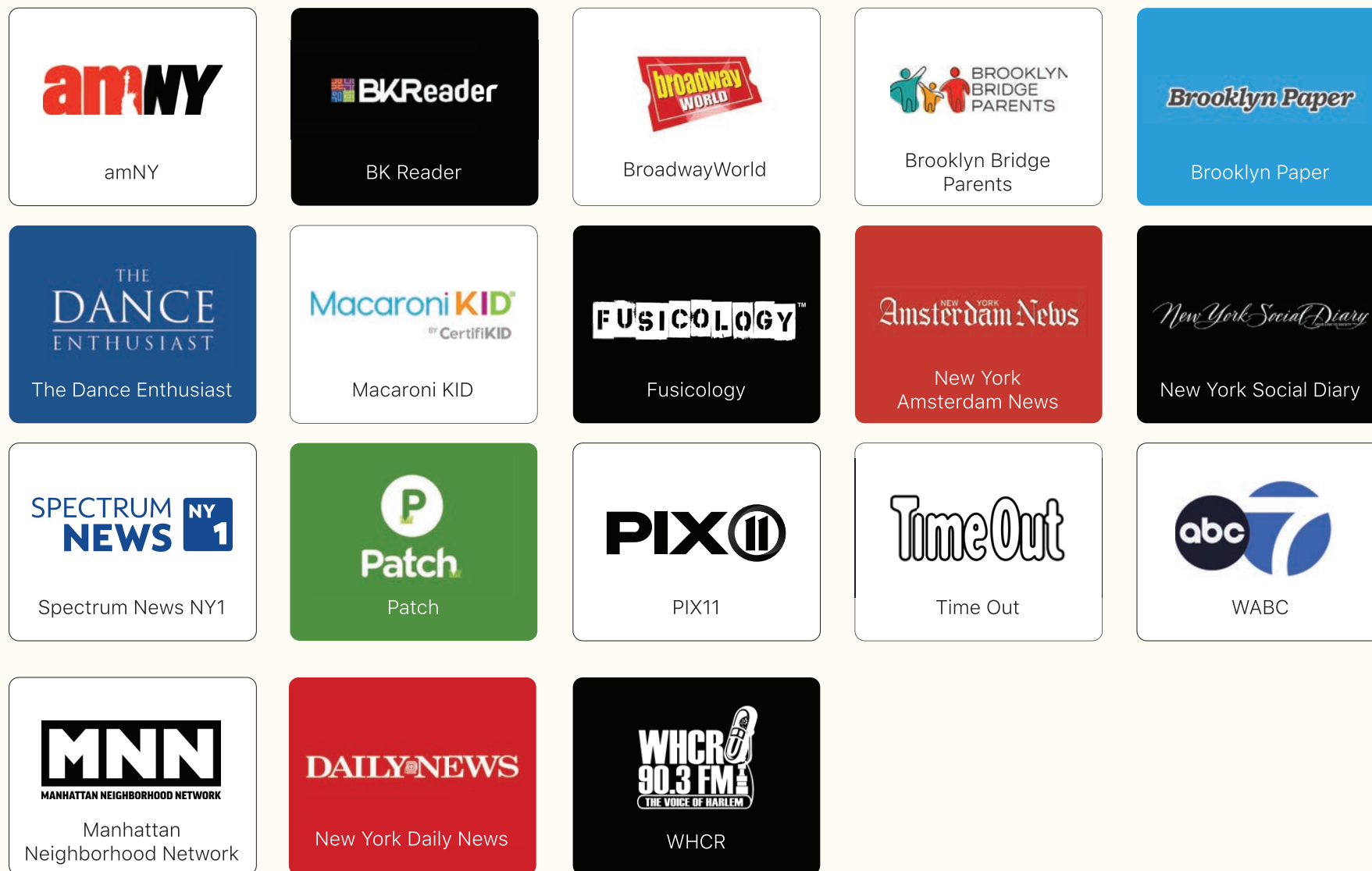


208.4_{mln}
TOTAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

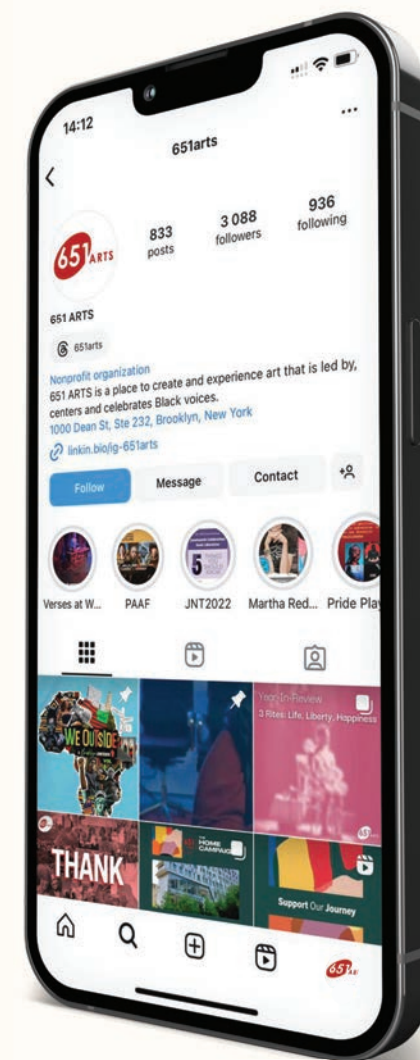
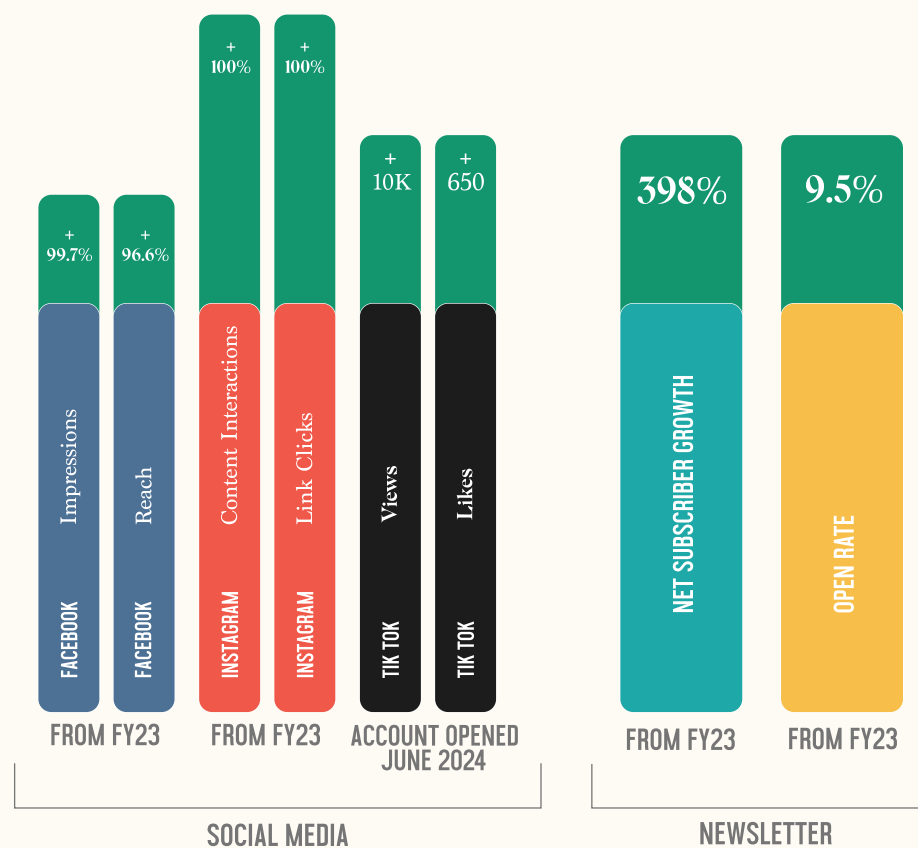
29
PIECES OF COVERAGE

Publicity & Media Coverage:

651 ARTS has been featured in:



DIGITAL IMPACT



At 651 ARTS, we firmly believe that partnerships are the cornerstone of our success in advancing our mission, strengthening our programming, and maximizing our community impact. Throughout the year, we had the privilege of collaborating with like-minded organizations and companies that share our commitment to showcasing and uplifting Black arts and culture. These partnerships allowed us to combine resources, amplify our reach, and create transformative experiences for our community.

Lead Institutional Partners

- Altman Foundation
- The Bay and Paul Foundations
- The Black Seed Fund
- Booth Ferris Foundation
- Burberry
- Con Edison
- Ford Foundation
- Howard Gilman Foundation
- Lambent Foundation
- Mertz Gilmore Foundation
- Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
- National Endowment for the Arts
- New England Foundation for the Arts
- New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
- New York Community Trust Mosaic Network & Fund
- New York State Council on the Arts
- Wallace Foundation

Community Partners

- Antenna
- Black Dance Stories
- Chashama
- Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans
- Junebug Productions
- Mark Morris Dance Center
- Milk Glass NYC
- New Orleans African American Museum
- New York Live Arts
- The Black School
- The Center for Fiction
- The Mark O'Donnell Theater at the Entertainment Community Fund Arts Center
- The Soapbox Presents
- Weeksville Heritage Center

HOME MAKING

Home Making is year two of our three-year Home Campaign, a fundraising effort that draws inspiration from community-centered practices to collectively infuse our new space with the passion, enthusiasm, and generosity of 651's supporters as we embark on this new chapter of our legacy. Following the *Home Warming* initiative in FY23, which raised approximately \$50,000 to outfit our spaces, *Home Making* supports our care for artists and audiences as we start operations at 10 Lafayette—and as we welcome you, our community, into our home.

As 651 ARTS moves forward in presenting innovative Black art from the African Diaspora, *Home Making* will build on our strong foundation toward new heights. The support of the 651 ARTS community has been vital to securing the physical necessities that will enable us to deepen our programming and gather with the multiple communities we serve in ways never before possible.

Thank you for your enthusiasm and dedication in service of art from the African Diaspora that authentically reflects community, ambition, and self-determination.



Thank you for believing that Black Art Matters.

Home Making

Home Campaign by thenumbers

Board-led initiative with the first **\$25,000** pledged coming from Board leadership.

Over **\$60,000** raised in donations from individual supporters.

\$780,000 pledged and raised through institutional and government support, almost a third of which comes from first-time partners eager to support the organization.

Home Making is the second year of the Home Campaign, a multi-year initiative to build 651 ARTS' legacy and community in this new era. Aligned with the Strategic Plan led by P.S. 314, 651 ARTS will Stabilize, Sustain, and Scale our singular model for nurturing Black artistry to better uplift our communities and meet the opportunities of the next 35 years.

Home Campaign Major Partners

- Booth Ferris Foundation
- Howard Gilman Foundation
- Lambent Foundation Fund, a fund of Tides Foundation
- Mertz Gilmore Foundation
- New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

\$25k

BOARD LEADERSHIP

\$60k

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

\$780k

INSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Home Making

Financial Overview

\$932,779

In pledges + gifts
in Fiscal Year 2024

FY24 support provided by:

\$100,000+

- Howard Gilman Foundation
- Lambent Foundation

\$20,000-\$99,999

- Altman Foundation
- The Bay and Paul Foundations
- The Black Seed Fund
- Booth Ferris
- Con Edison
- Mertz Gilmore Foundation
- New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
- New York State Council on the Arts

\$5,000-\$19,999

- Obadele Davis
- Ford Foundation
- Claude Johnson and William Terry
- Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
- National Endowment for the Arts
- New England Foundation for the Arts
- Bahia Ramos
- Lise Suino
- Wallace Foundation

\$1-\$4,999

- Milton Appling
- Carissa Baquiran
- Theodore Bennett, Esq.
- Andre Bowen
- Amy Cassello
- Tanisha Christie
- Katy Clark
- Michelle Coffey
- Toni Cohen
- Karen Collishaw
- Andres Duran-Rueda
- Dana Edell
- Rachel Gay
- Iris Grattan
- Robert W. Henderson, Jr.
- Blaise Jacinthe
- Traci Jones
- Kinsey Keck
- Traci Lester
- Bridgett Lindsey
- Linda Lopes

OUR TEAM



Toya A.
Lillard

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Farren
Wood

MANAGER OF PROGRAMS &
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Robert W.
Henderson, Jr

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION
& OPERATIONS



Alisha
Delissaint

PROGRAM & EXECUTIVE
ASSISTANT



Ishmael
Muhammad

MARKETING MANAGER

Our Team

Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is comprised of dedicated and passionate community members who are committed to 651 ARTS' mission to deepen awareness of and appreciation for contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and to provide professional and creative opportunities for artists of African descent.

This year we are proud to welcome **China Moses** and **Cynthia Gordy Giwa** to our Board of Directors!

China and Cynthia are both Brooklynites who have a passion for uplifting Black art and providing space for art makers in Brooklyn and beyond.

We are delighted to have their insight and experience guiding our mission, vision and impact during this historic moment in 651 ARTS' history.

Our Board

- Robyne Walker Murphy, Chair
- Lise Suino, Treasurer
- Theodore Bennett, Esq., Secretary
- Obadele O. Davis, Esq.
- Cynthia Gordy Giwa
- Johari Jenkins
- Claude M. Johnson
- China Moses
- Bahia Ramos
- Malik Yoba



Acknowledgements

An extraordinary team of supporters helped us reach this pivotal moment in 651 ARTS' journey. We're deeply indebted to our beloved artists, partners, Board of Directors, sponsors, and **community** for guiding us closer towards fulfilling our mission and vision.

Our team thanks Candace Jackson (*CJAM Consulting, LLC*), David Oldham and Leith ter Meulen (*Landair*), and Meredith Kane and Ruobing Chen (*Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP*) for all of their patience and support this fiscal year.

651 ARTS extends gratitude to our founder Mikki Shepard, and former leaders Shay Wafer and Maurine Knighton. We are so grateful for their participation in *Virtual Griot* and we cherish their continued dedication to championing contemporary artists representing the African diaspora.

We uplift Georgiana Pickett who served as Executive Director of 651 ARTS from 2004 to 2011. She is loved and missed dearly, may she rest in peace.

The appreciation we have for you is immeasurable; no metrics can scale to the amount of love we have for our community. Thank you for believing that Black art matters.



Conclusion

We enthusiastically look forward to serving the artists and community of Brooklyn from our new permanent home. FY24 was a year of magnificent growth, which laid a firm foundation for us to build upon.

651 ARTS remains committed to uplifting Black art and community, which we will now do from our home: 10 Lafayette Ave. Our team is so excited for you to see what we create next.

Appendix

Photo Credits:

- **Page 1:** Anthony Artis - *We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*
- **Page 3:** Alex Bershaw - *We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*
- **Page 4:** Alex Bershaw - *The Art of Making Space; We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*
- **Page 5:** Inward Productions (Our Mission), Farren Wood (Our Vision) - *Virtual Griot (Season 2)*
- **Page 6:** Tony Turner Photography - *Black Dance Convening*; Alex Bershaw - *3 RITES: Happiness*
- **Page 9:** Alex Bershaw - *3 RITES: Life*
- **Page 10:** Alex Bershaw - *3 RITES: Liberty*
- **Page 11:** Alex Bershaw - *3 RITES: Happiness*
- **Page 12:** Jamal Lawson - *Virtual Griot (Season 2)*
- **Page 13:** Inward Productions - *Virtual Griot (Season 2)*
- **Page 14:** Inward Productions - *Virtual Griot (Season 2)*; Jamal Lawson - *Virtual Griot (Season 2)*
- **Page 15:** Alex Bershaw - *The Art of Making Space*
- **Page 16:** Tony Turner Photography - *Black Dance Convening*
- **Page 17:** Farren Wood - *The Black Seed Cohort*
- **Page 18:** Darin Gilliam - *We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*
- **Page 19:** Anthony Artis - *We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*; Alex Bershaw - *We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*
- **Page 20:** LaBú Productions - *UnFiNiShEd aNiMaL*; Farren Wood - *Downtown Brooklyn Arts Festival*
- **Page 21:** Alex Bershaw - *The Art of Making Space*
- **Page 24:** Ishmael Muhammad - *We Outside! A Brooklyn Juneteenth, Vol. II*
- **Page 28:** Tony Turner Photography - *Black Dance Convening*
- **Page 33:** Alex Bershaw - *The Art of Making Space*

Thank You



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