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**SAN FRANCISCO’S “SEASON OF BLACK ART” (SOBA)**

**CELEBRATING BLACK CULTURE & CREATIVITY**

**NEW ART SERIES THROUGH FEBRUARY 2024**

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**“SEASON OF BLACK ART” FINALE ‘BLACK ART SYMPOSIUM’ EASES ON DOWN THE ROAD WITH SALUTE TO “THE WIZ” ALONG THE WAY**

*“Season of Black Art,” the free to the public art series, launched in October of 2023*

*culminates during Black History Month with the “Black Art Symposium, February 10th.”*

**San Francisco**-“**Season of Black Art”** (SOBA), the ‘Black Excellence’ free art series launched in October 2023, included the path of the ‘Yellow Brick Road’ as the **African American Art and Culture Complex (AAACC)** embraced the Broadway show “The Wiz” joining Mayor **London Breed** in welcoming the new sensational hit.

Season of Black Art artistic director, **Rodney Earl Jackson Jr**., co-founder of SF BATCO, San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company and founder of the New Arts Theatre Festival, emceed Mayor Breed’s News Conference highlighting “The Wiz.” [Click here for the recorded news conference](https://youtu.be/-8isHB9FT4k?si=PPxN-SVybinp1aXj): <https://youtu.be/-8isHB9FT4k?si=PPxN-SVybinp1aXj>

Leading up to “Celebrate Black Dance,” the fourth and next to the final installment of the AAACC based art series, and prior to the January 18th standing ovations of opening night of “The Wiz,” the “Season of Black Art” included a special presentation, “Creative Conversations,” with cast member, Olivia Jackson (not related to Rodney Earl Jackson Jr.), who multi-tasked by being interviewed by Aide to Mayor London Breed Tyra Fennell and Jackson, providing a mini-dance class for the audience pack and pausing in the midst of the event for an interview with KTVU’s 4 pm January 11th show produced by Kait McAfee. A Columbus, Mississippi native, Jackson told Heather Holmes that it was incredible being a part of “The Wiz” cast. The extraordinary cast features five-time Emmy Award®-winner **Wayne Brady** (“Whose Line is It Anyway,” Kinky Boots) as The Wiz, award-winning recording artist **Deborah Cox** as Glinda, **Melody Betts** (The Factotum, Lyric Opera of Chicago) as Aunt Em and Evillene, **Kyle Ramar Freeman** (A Strange Loop) as Lion, **Phillip Johnson Richardson** ("Sharper," A24), and recording artist **Avery Wilson** ("On Top of the World") as Scarecrow. **Nichelle Lewis** (Hairspray, National Tour) makes a star turn Broadway debut as Dorothy. In a touching moment of the interview, KTVU Anchor Holmes commended and affirmed the young actress/dancer Jackson was worthy of being a part of the star-studded cast.

According to African American Art and Culture Co-Directors, **Melorra Green** and **Melonie Green**, affectionately known as “**The Twins**, the synergy of “The Wiz” and “Season of Black Art” affirms the purpose of the AAACC’s role in stimulating and sustaining the work of artists resulting in a catalyst to improve the economy by getting people out of their homes and spending money. “The Arts impact the economy and studies show our work helps mental health,” said **Melorra Green**. “Thanks to Mayor Breed’s office, collaborating with a Broadway show like “The Wiz” is a win-win,” added Co-Director of AAACC, Melonie Green. “Our youth were inspired at the ‘Creative Conversations’ event, a good thing for their mental health and San Francisco always gets a financial boost when people get out and spend money to produce and see art.”

In October, the month, the free to the public, “Season of Black Art” began, Forbes Magazine’s **“**[**The Economic Impact of Local Arts and Culture Businesses**](https://www.forbes.com/sites/timothyjmcclimon/2023/10/16/the-economic-impact-of-local-arts-and-culture-businesses/?sh=56b4a69b25aa)**”**

(<https://www.forbes.com/sites/timothyjmcclimon/2023/10/16/the-economic-impact-of-local-arts-and-culture-businesses/?sh=56b4a69b25aa>) explained the impact of the arts on the U.S. economy: “Nationally, the nonprofit arts and culture sector generated $151.7 billion of economic activity in 2022 — $73.3 billion in spending by arts and culture organizations and an additional $78.4 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences.”

Earlier in the year, In May The New York Times chronicled the impact of the Arts on mental health with [**“How the Arts Can Benefit Your Mental Health (No Talent Required)”**](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/22/well/mind/art-mental-health.html) : <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/22/well/mind/art-mental-health.html>.

The African American Art and Culture Complex, the home of over 200 emerging and unsung artists and businesses assisted by Mayor Breed’s “Dream Keeper Initiative,” kicked off The New Year with SOBA. Saturday January 13, 2024. the public was invited to celebrate the New Year with **Rodney Earl Jackson Jr.,** Director of “The Season of Black Art (SOBA) **; Melorra Green** and **Melonie Green,** Executive Directors of AAACC; and Bay Area legendary black dance companies featuring the work of **Tania Santiago**; **SFBATCO**; **Redbone**; **PushDance**; **Traci Barlow**; **Robert Moses Kin**; **Terrence Paschal;** **SF Lines Ballet’s** **Natalya Shoaf**; and **Lonnie Green’s Tart Productions**. It was a packed house of revelers getting ready for the opening night of “The Wiz.”

The interactions with the producers and cast of “The Wiz” aligns with the fifth and final installment of “Season of Black Art-Black Art Symposium,” Saturday, February 10th.

The event precedes the last performance of “The Wiz” at the Golden Gate Theater in San Francisco on Sunday, February 11, 2024.

The purpose of the art series, “Season of Black Art,” has been to give an elevated platform to uplift unsung artists whose art otherwise would have been overlooked had it not been for Mayor London Breed’s visionary creation of the Dream Keepers Initiative.

Artists who have been among the cohort of incubated individuals and grassroots arts organizations at the AAACC will present their art to the Black community, all communities of San Francisco and the world during the five-month series to further expand their reach and artistic prowess. The universal appeal of art and its power of healing benefits all peoples.

“The Season of Black Art” series has been described as a “house warming party” or in a sense, a “homecoming celebration” spanning five months as it has given the community of the Fillmore and wider San Francisco and visiting tourists an opportunity to see how the three-floor building has been transformed via the input of local artists. [See the AAACC Transformative Tour with New Conservatory Theater Center.](https://www.facebook.com/jackie.wright.3990/posts/pfbid04ZSgBQGfiRC6bia15oyaqMZpG77ZUZe6UW8qZ1EjHfssepwCcYKX615owUJqRe9tl) Centered in the Fillmore, AAACC is open for all to attend events and host events for all of San Francisco and its visitors. It is another stop on San Francisco Tours list.

Listen in as Rodney Earl Jackson Jr. speaks with the host of “Live in the Bay” Olivia Horton about “Season of Black Art:” <https://www.kron4.com/live-in-the-bay/season-of-black-art-series-uplifts-local-artists-and-businesses/>

Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend the free event. “Season of Black” Art is an opportunity for people of all cultures, ethnicities, orientations, races and creeds to experience the beauty; connectedness; and positivity of cultural exchange.

**“Black Art Symposium**,” the finale of “Season of Black Art” includes a Networking Hour for Black Artists & Creatives, two focused conversations on topics including Trauma-Informed Funding for Black Artists facilitated by **Ashley Smiley** and the other on Authorship & Ownership of Creative Works facilitated by **Crystal Mason**, and a Creative Vision of the past, present and future of the AAACC with Special Guests **Joan Tarika Lewis** and **Veronica Blair** - both AAACC YBCA Creative Corps Members. **Marcel Sanchez** will be taking portraits of Black Artists & Creatives. The evening culminates with the **Say It Loud Fashion Show** produced by **Mario B Productions**.

Additionally, attendees can also contribute their stories to the **Black Dreams Archive**. The opportunity is open to all, no matter ethnicity or culture, as experiences shared include the African Diaspora for the Black Dreams Archive.

Black Art Symposium gets underway with doors opening at 4 p.m. on Saturday, February 10th at the African American Art and Culture Complex, 762 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA. 94102. The program begins at 4:30 p.m. ending at 10 p.m. Registration for the free event is required. The public is encouraged to register for seating and refreshment considerations For free tickets go to [www.seasonofblackart.org](http://www.seasonofblackart.org).

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Iconic “Season of Black Art” image by Christopher Burch aka Goya Goon, a member of AAACC Cohort funded by Mayor London Breed’s “Dream Keeper Initiative.”

**In Related News**

**The African American Art and Culture Complex Appoints New Managing Director/Broadway World**

<https://www.broadwayworld.com/san-francisco/article/The-African-American-Art-Culture-Complex-Appoints-New-Managing-Director-David-Mack-20240115>

**ABOUT**

The **Season of Black Art (SOBA)**

SOBA will illuminate and educate the Black community about itself and to engage communities of all ethnicities to have a fuller view of the Black experience besides the rigidity of news and limited media narratives, The African American Art and Culture Complex (AAACC) presents a captivating celebration of Black creativity and culture at the Season of Black Art showcase in San Francisco from October 2023 through February 2024.  **SOBA** series of extraordinary events will feature hundreds of talented Black artists and collectives, presenting a diverse array of artistic expressions. Audiences will experience thought-provoking speaker series, interactive presentations, and inspiring performances. It is for Everyone. Featured artists and ticket details will be posted regularly at seasonofblackart.org  as they are announced.

**The African American Art and Culture Complex** (AAACC) is operated with a vision to be a space for Black Creatives and Communities to thrive. AAACC is a space for Black creatives to present, gather, and learn, while being a space for all to experience Black art and culture. Individuals and organizations are engaged that align with its mission and core values: Creative Equity, Excellence, Freedom of Expression, Fun & Innovation and Health & Wellness.