



February 2, 2024

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Richard Okonkwo

(410) 230-0200

[rokonkwo@baltimoreculture.org](mailto:rokonkwo@baltimoreculture.org)

## **GBCA CELEBRATES NEW CHAPTER WITH PLACEMENT OF 2024 URBAN ARTS LEADERSHIP COHORT**

*Celebrating a Decade of Cultivating Arts Leadership, Equity, Inclusion,  
and Community Engagement in Baltimore*

BALTIMORE, MD – [The Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance \(GBCA\)](#) is proud to announce the placements of the 2024 Urban Arts Leadership (UAL) Fellows, marking a significant milestone as the program celebrates its 10th anniversary. This year’s fellows, Rhythm Ajanku, Gloria Badmos, Khari Harrison, Tracie Jiggetts, Kion Lumford, FAITH McCorkle, Melvin “Sage” Trusty, and Sierra Smith, embody the program’s commitment to cultivating arts leadership and upholding the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the arts and cultural sector. They will be joining esteemed organizations across the region, contributing to the legacy of leadership, innovation, and community engagement that has defined the Urban Arts Leadership Program for a decade.

“It is my task and honor to train emerging leaders for the arts sector in Baltimore City and beyond. These amazing human beings come to Urban Arts Leadership with purposeful intention and a readiness to conduct the business of the creative world,” said Kibibi Ajanku, GBCA’s Director of Equity and Inclusion. “I would say the same of our selected host organizations; the pairing of Fellows and hosts will definitely bring exciting outcomes.”

Central to the Urban Arts Leadership Program is the strategic placement of fellows to premier arts and cultural organizations, offering them essential real-world experience that is pivotal for their professional and personal growth. These placements not only introduce new perspectives to the host organizations but also enable fellows to leverage their distinct insights on impactful projects, thereby advancing the GBCA’s mission of enriching the arts sector with leaders grounded in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“The host organizations are key partners in the UAL experience and provide valuable real-life leadership opportunities for the fellows,” said Jeannie Howe, GBCA’s Executive Director. “Likewise, the fellows bring their talents to bear in these new settings, bringing fresh perspectives and a commitment to excellence while expanding their networks and deepening their experiences in the arts.”



**Rhythm Ajanku** joins the [Baltimore Museum of Art](#) with a vibrant background in digital marketing and a passion for public arts education, ready to blend these worlds to enhance visitor engagement and learning.



**Gloria Badmos**, with her extensive experience in strategic communications, will craft a targeted marketing strategy to broaden the reach and deepen the community ties of the [Arts Council of Anne Arundel County](#).



**Khari Harrison** brings a keen focus on social justice and inclusion to [Mid Atlantic Arts](#), where he will be instrumental in advancing initiatives that champion accessibility and equity within the arts sector.



**Tracie Jiggetts**, known for her innovative event planning and community engagement efforts, will conduct a comprehensive sector assessment to bolster the [Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance's](#) membership and programming efforts.



**Kion Lumford's** commitment to social activism and creative approach to multimedia storytelling will power his campaign at [Fight Blight BMore](#), addressing urban renewal and community empowerment.



**FAITH McCorkle's** expertise in arts advocacy and program development will be pivotal as she refines the independent artist track, ensuring valuable resources and support at the [Maryland Citizens for the Arts](#).



**Melvin "Sage" Trusty** will utilize his research acumen and dedication to cultural preservation to lead the Cultural Research Archive Project, enhancing the [Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance's](#) outreach and educational mission.



**Sierra Smith** will merge her skills in grant writing and program evaluation with her enthusiasm for youth development in her role at the [Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation](#), enriching arts programming for the community's youth.

GBCA is profoundly grateful to Baltimore Gas and Electric, Baltimore National Heritage Area, Inc., the Bunting Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and PNC Foundation for their support of the 2023-24 Urban Arts Leadership Fellowship.

For more information about GBCA and its programs, please visit [www.baltimoreculture.org](http://www.baltimoreculture.org).

### **About Urban Arts Leadership**

The Urban Arts Leadership (UAL) Program, powered by the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA), aims to shape a diverse generation of arts and cultural leaders. Focused on equity and inclusion, UAL offers training, mentorship, and real-world experience to emerging arts professionals, addressing the underrepresentation in arts management. Celebrating ten years, UAL stands at the forefront of promoting artistic excellence, community engagement, and social justice in Baltimore's arts sector.

### **About the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance**

The Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA) creates equity and opportunity In, Through, and For arts and culture in Greater Baltimore. With a focus on innovative marketing, targeted educational resources, and strategic financial support, GBCA serves as a catalyst for elevating arts and culture. Through groundbreaking initiatives, GBCA not only amplifies the voices of artists and cultural organizations but also champions equity and inclusion across the cultural sector and the broader community.

###