



## ArtPride New Jersey Announces Statewide Black History Month Celebration of African Americans in the arts

*Programming throughout February includes theater, art exhibitions, and musical performances*

**BURLINGTON, N.J., February 1st, 2024** – This February, in celebration of Black History Month, [Discover Jersey Arts](#) honors the work and impact of African American voices in the arts. The contributions of African American artists have been transformative — from The historic Harlem Renaissance, to the Black Arts Movement and the innovative works of emerging contemporary artists. Discover Jersey Arts, an ArtPride New Jersey Foundation program, celebrates the contributions of both artists and organizations throughout New Jersey — highlighting events, performances, exhibitions, artist spotlights, feature stories, podcasts, and more. As the organization steps into this celebratory month, it invites the community to join in acknowledgment of the profound contributions of African American artists through active participation.

ArtPride New Jersey is laser-focused on its continuous commitment to anti-racism. They demonstrate an unshakable dedication to nurturing an inclusive environment where diversity of artistic expression is not just celebrated, but recognized as a pivotal force in driving community cohesion and mutual respect.

Adam Perle, the President and CEO of ArtPride New Jersey, reflects on the organization's unwavering commitment, stating, “In a world where the expression of our authentic selves through art forms an essential pillar of communal learning and appreciation, Discover Jersey Arts stands at the forefront of fostering understanding and recognition”. This month and beyond, the organization will spotlight events, performances, exhibitions, artist highlights, compelling feature stories, insightful podcasts, and much more. “ArtPride is committed to highlighting artists and arts organizations from historically excluded communities all year long. The arts have always been a means of healing and justice, and ArtPride continues its celebration of the artistic voices from African American communities in New Jersey during Black History Month. We encourage everyone to explore the variety of performances, exhibits, workshops, and discussions this month and throughout the year.”

### Featured programming will include:

- **Featured Exhibition: “[Alonza Adams: A Griot’s Vision](#)” at Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick, N.J.** - Alonzo Adams, a griot from Harlem, New York, captures and immortalizes contemporary Black experience through his storytelling artistry. Drawing inspiration from a diverse array of artists, his work has graced solo exhibitions and prestigious venues such as Rutgers, Howard University, and Essence. Organized by Donna Gustafson, Chief Curator, the exhibition showcases Adams' evolving artistic voice, from fresh studio creations to cherished pieces collected by admirers worldwide, marking a significant homecoming for the Mason Gross School of the Arts alum and Rutgers African American Alumni Alliance Hall of Fame inductee.
- **Featured Performance: “[The Color Purple, The Musical](#)” at Progressive Theater, A NJ Nonprofit Corporation in Newark, N.J.** - "The Color Purple" musical, adapted from Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, is a powerful and emotionally charged theatrical experience that explores the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. Set against the backdrop of the American South

in the early 20th century, the musical follows the journey of Celie, a resilient African American woman, as she navigates through the challenges of abuse, sexism, and self-discovery. The production has garnered critical acclaim for its moving narrative, stunning performances, and soulful musical numbers, making it a must-see for audiences seeking a poignant and uplifting theatrical experience.

- **Featured Performance: “[Break! The Urban Funk Spectacular](#)” at Stockton Performing Arts Center in Stockton, N.J.** - BREAK! The Urban Funk Spectacular traces the history of Hip Hop Dancing. It is an electrifying show for the whole family, featuring a high-energy tribute to this creatively charged American art form, which finds its roots in the inner city streets. A combination of pure physical strength and agility propels this group of New York's finest urban artists through a show of breathtaking movements to a pumping soundtrack with a live DJ and master percussionists. Cast members are supremely talented artists from the world of 'break dancing,' 'locking,' 'electric boogaloo' or 'popping,' 'power tumbling,' as well as DJ-ing and bucket drumming.
- **Featured Performance: “[Respect: A Tribute to Aretha Franklin](#)” taking place at multiple locations in N.J.** - New Jersey Symphony celebrates the life and work of Aretha Franklin in a series of concerts performed throughout the state. A tribute to the Queen of Soul, this program features symphony favorite Capathia Jenkins and three-time Grammy Award-nominee Ryan Shaw performing such iconic hits as “Respect,” “Think,” “A Natural Woman,” “Chain of Fools,” “Amazing Grace” and many others.

The complete list of ArtPride New Jersey’s Black History Month member calendar of events across the state is available [here](#).

### **About Discover Jersey Arts**

Discover Jersey Arts is a program of the ArtPride New Jersey Foundation dedicated to increasing awareness of and participation in the arts statewide. The JerseyArts.com website showcases New Jersey’s creative community with feature stories, videos, and podcasts; highlighted events; details on Jersey Arts Membership; and other content. Discover Jersey Arts was cofounded and is supported by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

### **About the ArtPride New Jersey Foundation**

The ArtPride New Jersey Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that promotes the value of the arts to New Jersey’s quality of life, education, and economic vitality through research and a variety of programs and services. For more information about ArtPride, visit [ArtPrideNJ.org](#).