Featured Artists and schedule announced for 27th annual Art & Soul celebration showcasing Black visual art and music in Indianapolis this February

Popular annual festival will be centered around the theme “Kings & Queens” with live performances, a visual art exhibition, and a “Next Level” experience.

Indianapolis (January 9, 2023) - Indy Arts Council announces the full schedule and the four 2023 Featured Artists as part of this year’s Art & Soul, its largest public program that has kicked off Black History Month in Indianapolis since 1996 and helped expand the City’s awareness and appreciation of African American art and music. Art & Soul, supported annually by Lilly Endowment Inc., will take place in February 2023 celebrating the theme “Kings & Queens.”

“Art & Soul is a great way to celebrate Black History Month, highlight the talented Black artists in our city, and give recognition to the Featured Artists alumni and program partners who have led and been a part of building the Indianapolis arts and culture community,” said Indy Arts Council Director of Equity Partnership Channie Jones.

2023 ART & SOUL FEATURED ARTISTS
For more than 25 years, Art & Soul has helped launch the careers of emerging Black artists in central Indiana. Four Featured Artists are selected annually to be spotlighted at Art & Soul events. In addition, the Featured Artists receive year-long career development support. Indy Arts Council partnered with Asante Art Institute, FLAVA FRESH!, iibada Dance Co., Indy Jazz Fest, and event producer Valerie Phelps to develop this year’s program and select the four Featured Artists:

● Brandon Douthitt, jazz musician
  Douthitt picked up a saxophone for the first time at age 11, starting an award-winning musical journey that has led to performance gigs throughout the U.S., including Indy Jazz Fest, CUNY Jazz Festival, AFROPUNK, Highline Ballroom, and more. He graduated in 2015 from Butler University with a bachelor of arts degree in music and earned a master of music degree in jazz performance from Queens College in 2017. Brandon taught music at Kentucky State University before moving back to Indianapolis, where he teaches and performs. Read his full bio.

● Jamichael Kyng Pollard, visual artist and tattoo artist
  Pollard is the founder and owner of KyngPen Art. He specializes in portraits, using colored pencils, and acrylic and oil paints. Along with his work as a portrait and tattoo artist, he creates live paintings and does face painting at events. Pollard’s artwork has been featured in multiple solo and group exhibits, from
2019’s FLAVA FRESH 16! to the 2022 Kyngdom Art Show. Pollard is also a substitute art teacher and works with children and adults. Follow him on Instagram @kyngpenart_tattoos or visit his [website](#).

- **Crystal V. Rhodes, author and playwright**
  Rhodes has written over 20 plays that have been produced throughout the U.S. She has received multiple awards, including the Black Theatre Alliance Award for Best Writing of a Play for Stoops and the Ivoryton Playhouse Women’s Playwright Initiative’s Elle Award for her one-act play 1200 Miles from Jerome. Rhodes has written for television, newspapers, and magazines and is the author of 14 books, including her most recent novel, Someone Like Them. Visit her [website](#) to learn more.

- **Adrienne Jackson, dancer**
  Adrienne D. Jackson grew up learning West African dance as a member of Alayanfè, a youth dance company based in Durham, N.C. As an adult, she expanded her study of modern and contemporary dance in Chicago. In Indianapolis, Adrienne served as assistant artistic director of libada Dance Co. before performing with Kenyetta Dance Co. She directs local dance ministries and also teaches students. In 2012, she founded Create Freedom Art Projects, a contemporary dance company and community of artists. She is continuing her West African dance training and also studying hip hop dance. Follow her on Instagram @CreateFreedomArtProjects.

### 2023 ART & SOUL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
Three events in February will feature a visual art exhibition and multiple music, dance, and theater events at different venues.

- **Friday, February 3 - Art & Soul kickoff**
  An open house-style event featuring a First Friday art exhibition opening at Indy Arts Council’s Gallery 924 and performances in The Cabaret (924 N. Pennsylvania St.) Free admission. Food & drink available for purchase.
  - Exhibition: 6 to 9 p.m., debuting work by 2023 Featured Artist Jamichael Kyng Pollard and featuring works from previous Art & Soul visual artists. The show, curated by FLAVA FRESH!, ends March 23.
  - Performances: Doors open at 5 p.m.; show from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Featuring all four 2023 Featured Artists, plus local performers Chantel Massey, Okara Imani, Bashiri Asad, Native Sun, Stephanie Allen-Stevenson, Create Freedom Arts Projects, Allison Victoria and more.

- **Wednesday, February 8 - 2023 Featured Artists Showcase**
  The Jazz Kitchen (5377 N. College Ave.)
  - 7-8:30 p.m. (doors open at 5 for drinks and dinner)
  - Tickets: $15-$20, [thejazzkitchen.com](http://thejazzkitchen.com)
  - Stage performances by Featured Artists Brandon Douthitt (music) and Crystal V. Rhodes (theater), plus live painting by Jamichael Kyng Pollard (visual artist). Appearances by Rob Dixon and more.
Saturday, February 25 - Mainstage Celebration & Wes Montgomery 100-Year Tribute

Vendors, refreshments, dancing, and live music at Indianapolis Artsgarden (110 W. Washington St.)

4:30 to 7 p.m. (doors open at 4 p.m.)
- General admission: FREE; cash bar available. New this year: “Next Level” experience ($15), which includes balcony seating, food, dancing, cash bar, and a 360 red carpet photo booth. Tickets available here.
- Show kicks off with a Rob Dixon-led tribute to Indianapolis native Wes Montgomery, the late, legendary jazz guitarist who would have turned 100 in March. Celebration features all four 2023 Featured Artists with appearances/performances by Dr. Lasana Kazembe, Jillian D. Jones, DJ Rusty Redenbacher, Damon Karl, Alaina Renae, Staci McCrackin and more.

In addition, 2023 Featured Artist Brandon Douthitt will perform as part of a Black History Month Tribute showcasing seven local artists from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday, February 17, at Indianapolis International Airport.

2023 ART & SOUL PROGRAM PARTNERS
Art & Soul, supported annually by Lilly Endowment Inc., is presented by Indy Arts Council in partnership with Asante Art Institute, FLAVA FRESH!, iibada Dance Co., and Indy Jazz Fest. Venue partners include The Cabaret, Indianapolis International Airport, and The Jazz Kitchen.

CONNECT WITH ART & SOUL
Please follow @ArtsCouncilIndy and #ArtSoulIndy on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn to join the celebration. For more information, visit indyarts.org.

ABOUT INDY ARTS COUNCIL
Indy Arts Council fosters meaningful engagement in the arts by nurturing a culture where artists and arts organizations thrive.

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