

[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

Brooklyn Arts Council Announces Departure of Desirée Gordon, Appointed as New Executive Director of Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy



Desirée Gordon. Photos by: Oluwaseye Olusa.

[February 12, 2024 – Brooklyn, NY] – [Brooklyn Arts Council \(BAC\)](#) announced today, with deep gratitude and excitement, that Desirée Gordon (she/her), will be stepping down from her position at BAC as Innovation, Grants, and Strategic Partnerships Director to embark on a new chapter as the Executive Director of Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy.

For over four and half years, Desirée has led the charge for BAC’s Arts in Education (AIE), Brooklyn Innovation Institute (BII), and Grantmaking programs. Her vision and dedication have played a pivotal role in guiding our organization’s community engagement and impact efforts, elevated the organization’s commitment to equity and justice, and enriched the artistic and cultural landscape of Brooklyn. A few of Desirée’s many achievements during her time at BAC include:

- **Directing over \$4 million** to artists, organizations, youth, and older adults across Brooklyn through BAC’s AIE and Grantmaking programs, deepening critical investments in Brooklyn neighborhoods that lack traditional arts infrastructure and those most heavily impacted by systemic barriers.

- Developing BAC's **Creative Impact Spheres** (Creative Experiences – because art is powerful, Creative Ecologies - because artists and communities thrive when connected, and Creative Equations - because art innovates society) by which we designed our program paradigm with guiding principles of Creativity, Thriving, Wellness, Justice, and Innovation to unify and lengthen our strides toward a more just and joyful Brooklyn.
- Implementing BAC's [Creative Equations Fund \(CEF\)](#), an investment strategy dedicated to arts for social justice. As a part of CEF, she also formed BAC's **Social Innovation Fellowship**, a new professional development program where a cohort of artists, creatives, and cultural entrepreneurs will receive coaching, training, technical assistance, and funding. The 6-month pilot is set to begin in April 2024.
- Launching [BAC Wellness Studio](#), an innovative hybrid program that invests in the notion that the holistic well-being of Brooklyn artists is fundamental to the strength, prosperity, and spirit of the borough. The platform centers and nurtures the well-being of Brooklyn's creative community through digital programs, site-specific activations, resources, and professional opportunities at the intersection of art and healing.
- Conceiving the [Brooklyn Innovation Portal \(BIP\)](#) a new interactive platform that will connect artists to markets, audiences, patrons, collaborators, and each other; monetize creative services and content; and invest in Brooklyn neighborhoods by investing in Brooklyn artists.
- Building BAC's **Cultural Heritage Advisory Group (CHAG)**, individuals dedicated to embracing and highlighting the contributions of cultural heritage to Brooklyn communities. By promoting the diverse artistic expressions rooted in these rich traditions and by supporting Brooklyn artists who draw inspiration from their cultural heritage, CHAG helps preserve these important narratives for future generations.

Desirée Gordon shared, "I am grateful to have had the opportunity to imagine a new impact paradigm for Brooklyn Arts Council by activating wellness in our equity practice, centering justice in our investment strategy, enhancing our voice with storytelling, and modernizing our services with digital innovations. The lessons and the love from this experience will spill over into my work at Ifetayo as I continue leveraging culture and creativity for justice and joy. I look forward to finding ways to keep playing together in our creative ecosystem, locally and globally."

Rasu Jilani, Executive Director of BAC expressed, "Desiree's move from BAC to a new leadership position is a proud milestone. Though her departure is a loss for us, it's a significant gain for the Brooklyn Cultural Sector. As her collaborator and colleague, I'm immensely proud and look forward to supporting her in her new role and future collaborations."

Toni Williams, BAC Board Chair said, "There aren't enough adjectives to describe the kind of arts leader Desiree has been during her tenure at Brooklyn Arts Council. She is a leader for the time and brilliantly draws connections from the arts to the communities we serve. She is an aspirational leader who is kind, compassionate and intentional. We will miss her bold vision and creativity and look forward to all of the great contributions she will make at Ifetayo."

ABOUT BROOKLYN ARTS COUNCIL

For 57 years, Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC) has been the borough's leading nonprofit organization supporting artists and cultural groups in all disciplines. BAC reaches hundreds of thousands of artists and audience members each year through music, dance, film, and visual arts programs; web-based directories; arts education; urban cultural heritage initiatives; grants; training programs; and artist services. By creating and supporting exciting cultural events and platforms for Brooklynites, BAC provides forums for critical thinking and self-expression for young people and adults, enriches Brooklyn's cultural landscape, and generates engaging experiences that expand horizons. Learn more at brooklynartscouncil.org.

ABOUT IFETAYO CULTURAL ARTS ACADEMY

Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy empowers youth and families of African descent to achieve high levels of educational, professional, and artistic excellence. As a leading Brooklyn-based institution, we inspire future generations to develop a strong African-centered cultural identity and realize their power to transform social inequity. Learn more at ifetayo.org.

PRESS CONTACT

Marie Szalkiewicz

Communications Manager, Brooklyn Arts Council

mszalkiewicz@brooklynartscouncil.org

WEBSITE brooklynartscouncil.org

INSTAGRAM [@bkartscouncil](https://www.instagram.com/bkartscouncil)

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