

Annual Report

Buffalo Arts Studio 2024–25





What began here in 1991 has grown into a pillar of the Buffalo arts community. Whether you're an artist, a student, an educator, or simply love how being around the arts makes you feel, there are so many ways to be part of this dynamic and tight-knit organization. We are grateful for your support and your presence as we look back on another year at Buffalo Arts Studio.

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Who We Are

Our Mission:

At Buffalo Arts Studio, we are committed to creating cultural connections in our community through exhibitions, public art, and educational programs. We also provide exposure and affordable studio space for local visual artists. Buffalo Arts Studio is a catalyst for self-empowerment and for the cultivation of new ideas and actions to enhance our region.

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Sydney O'Shei
Special Events and
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Buffalo Public Schools
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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

At Buffalo Arts Studio, we believe in the power of coming together through the arts. This year reminded us all just how essential that is.

Across our galleries, studios, and classrooms, we witnessed the ways contemporary art connects people, sparks dialogue, and builds community. Thousands of visitors engaged with meaningful exhibitions and programs that centered creativity, equity, and access. Together, we:

- Featured over 100 regional and national artists in our galleries, showcasing work exploring critical issues including social justice, environmental resilience, and cultural identity;
- Engaged over 750 youth and adult students through art classes, workshops, and school partnerships, working to ensure that creative opportunities remain accessible to all;
- Supported 30 studio artists, providing affordable space, peer support, and professional development to help sustain their practices;
- Built and strengthened our partnerships with local schools, neighborhood groups, and cultural organizations; and
- Revived Trimania with our TRIMANIA_REBOOT fundraiser, bringing thousands together for a night of joy, creativity, and community celebration.

These accomplishments reflect the dedication of our team, the passion of the artists we serve, and the

strength of the community that surrounds us, including you. Together, we have built a place where creativity thrives and connection is constant.

This past year also saw the continued growth of our educational programs, increased demand for community engagement, and renewed commitments to equity and accessibility in all aspects of our work. We've learned a lot, adapted to new challenges, and built meaningful connections along the way.

Looking ahead, while challenges to our mission may increase, we remain committed to living our values through our work. As we search for our former Visual Arts Shirley Verrico's successor, we are focused on finding a curator who will help guide this new exhibition's program chapter.

As you read through this report, we hope you feel a sense of shared accomplishment. This isn't just our story, it's yours too. Every class attended, every exhibition visited, and every artist supported represents a moment in which art brought people together and made our community stronger.

With deep gratitude,


Alma Carrillo
Executive Director



Artist Léwuga Benson laughs with BAS Development Coordinator Sydney Oshei at the *Fueling Change* exhibition opening.



BAS guests lean in for a closer look at Joan Linder's work at in *Fulfillment*.



Panelists and attendees gather at the October 25th *New Polluters* panel discussion.



Artist Stephanie Rothenberg and fellow *Aquadisia* performers pose in BAS's Joanna Angie gallery.



BAS guests sit to view B+M+W's artwork at the *Terrakwa* exhibition opening.



Artist Jay Carrier speaks with BAS visitors at his *Niagara it's Great to be Here.* exhibition.

Exhibitions

Our 2024/25 programming included six solo and six group exhibitions focusing on new works by students, emerging, and established artists, expanding opportunities for historically underrepresented artists and affecting change across the spectrum of gender, race, class, and physical and developmental disabilities.

Tales from the Porch 3

Aitina Fareed-Cooke & Get Fokus'd Prod.
July 26–September 7, 2024

Fueling Change: A Multimedia

Exploration of Niger Delta's Oil Crisis*
Léwuga Benson
July 26–September 7, 2024

The Dragons in Our Lives

Sarah Jane Barry
August 23–October 11, 2024

Fulfillment*

Joan Linder
September 27–November 9, 2024

Aquadisia*

Stephanie Rothenberg
September 27–November 9, 2024

Annual Studio Artist Show and Sale

November 16–December 22, 2024

Terrakwa: An Investigation of the Erie Canal

Across Time and Geography*
Bartow + Metzgar + Werbergig
January 24–March 8, 2025

Niagara it's Great to be Here.*

Jay Carrier
January 24–April 5, 2025

On the Rise II: Emerging Artists of Color

Guest curated by Julia Bottoms
February 28–April 5, 2025

Envision

Jump Start Biennial Student Exhibition
May 23–June 14, 2025

el·e·men·tal

Guest curated by Michele Agosto
May 23–June 14, 2025

Recollect

David Buck
June 27–August 8, 2025

* part of the *Waterfront View* exhibition series

Our Fourth Friday exhibition openings are generously funded by M&T Bank.

Series Spotlight: *Waterfront View*

Pictured above, *Waterfront View* was a series of exhibitions and workshops that examined how late-stage capitalism has shifted the view of water and waterways from a resource of collective benefit to a commodity of individual interest and shareholder profit. It also included the October 25th *New Polluters* panel discussion, which featured artists, academics, and grassroots activists discussing the environmental impact of cloud computing and crypto-mining on our community.

Community Access Gallery

This new program builds on our history of supporting emerging artists and artists of color. In the fall of 2024, Buffalo Arts Studio presented an exhibition by Sarah Jane Barry, whose show was displaced by the abrupt closure of BOX gallery and Hostel Buffalo-Niagara. We also supported Julia Bottoms as she curated *On the Rise II: Emerging Artists of Color*, an exhibition of six young artists of color, and Michele Agosto as she curated *el·e·men·tal*, which showcased the work of Buffalo Public Schools arts educators.

Renovations

During the Spring of 2025, BAS replaced the gallery track lighting system and fixtures and added two outlets to each gallery. The gallery and community space's general appearance was also improved by a full painting of the ceiling, including ductwork, pipes, and electrical conduit. It is so important to us that we present artists' work in a well-kept, well-lit environment where their pieces can take center stage. This year's renovations align with that goal and make possible more ambitious exhibitions in the future.



Studio Artists

Our **31 studio artists** work across mediums and inject life into Buffalo Arts Studio. Providing an engaged arts community and affordable studio space to working artists is a central part of our mission. This year, we welcomed six new artists:

Emma Brittain is an interdisciplinary artist who is based in Buffalo, NY. Her work centers on relationships between humans and the natural world. She finds comfort and conviction in the codependence of us all.

Bree Gilliam is a painter from Buffalo who is best known for her figurative oil paintings. She is deeply interested in social justice as well as celebrating people of color who inspire change in their communities.

Christina Riccio is a ceramicist who recently graduated with her MFA. Riccio's work incorporates themes of maximalism utilizing bright colors, pattern making, and sgraffito.

Kelly Schnurr is a multidisciplinary artist who merges her design background with fine art practices to celebrate the process of discovery and self-growth, using nature as her source of inspiration.

Emma Stanton is a painter born and raised in Corning, NY. Now based in Buffalo, she has most recently been using art as a vehicle for play.

Laura Valkwitch is a dedicated mid-career artist who works primarily with oil as her chosen medium. Laura brings to life the magnificence of the lake effect clouds of Western New York.



BAS staff and artists at our annual Studio Artist Potluck Meeting. Our studio artists are:

Beth Atanacio, Jozef Bajus, Madeline Bartley, Dennis Bertram, Kaylee Blesy, Julia Bottoms, Emma Brittain, David Buck, Claudia Carballada, Bree Gilliam, Bryan Hopkins, Cheryl Jackson, Erin Kearney, Elizabeth Leader, George Mai, Aprille Nace, Roberto Pachecho, Andrea Pawarski, Betty Pitts-Foster, Christina Riccio, Kelly Schnurr, Rebecca Schwarzberg, Kathleen Sherin, Emma Stanton, Deborah Stewart, Ann Steivater, Phyllis Thompson, Linda Toomey, Laura Valkwitch, Katherine Virag, and Muhammad Zaman.

OATS at Buffalo Arts Studio

OATS stands for **Outreach, Advocacy, and Technical Support**—this is how we track the work we do for our community. OATS activities include developing community partnerships, meeting with elected officials, and helping artists develop professionally; this year, the BAS team tracked **208 hours** of outreach, advocacy, and technical support.

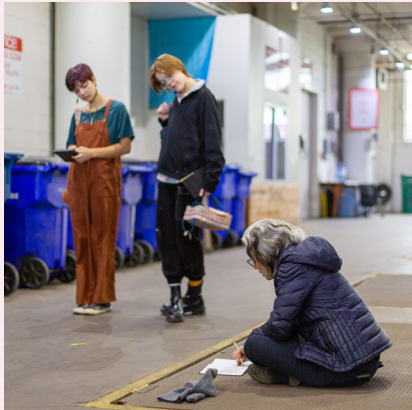


Muhammad Zaman is a longtime BAS studio artist, a valued member of Buffalo's artistic community, and a dear friend. When he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, BAS staff took on a major OATS project in which we worked closely with Hunt Gallery and Friends of Muhammad Zaman to coordinate a benefit for Zaman and his family.

Between August and October 2024, we logged 109 Advocacy hours working to make the benefit a success. Ultimately, Zaman was able to sell **348 artworks** to support his medical bills and his family's future.



Other OATS projects of the 2024–2025 fiscal year included planning meetings for Open Gardens, studio visits with working Buffalo artists, technical training sessions for local nonprofits, and more. When you support Buffalo Arts Studio, you are fostering not only our own organizational development, but also that of our wide network of community partners, neighbors, and friends.



Two students observe BAS exhibiting artist Joan Linder's demonstration during her Jump Start workshop.



BAS exhibiting artist Richard Werberg, of artist collective B+M+W, instructs Jump Start students during a youth workshop.



Teaching artist Ruby Merritt speaks with one of her students during a session of her adult oil painting class.



Teaching artist Clarimar Galarza works with a student on the pottery wheel during a session of her Youth Pottery class.



Students draw from a live model in our Youth Life Drawing course.



Studio artist and ceramics teacher Andrea Pawarski works with a student in one of her adult classes.

Education

This year, we ran **75 classes** and served **over 750 students**. Buffalo Art Studio's rigorous education program offers a wide variety of classes to local youth and adults, ranging from one-day workshops to multi-week courses. Our classes create fairly-paid work opportunities for artists and teachers from the region and help students of all backgrounds to engage their creativity and develop their skill sets.

Our youth program, **Jump Start**, offers comprehensive artistic instruction to students aged 13–18 who display an exceptional interest in the arts, **regardless of their ability to pay**. The program empowers youth to strengthen their skill sets, explore careers in the arts, develop a portfolio, and prepare for entry into higher education.



A Jump Start Young Curator's Course participant installs artwork in preparation for the exhibition opening.



Jump Start students join BAS staff on Daytime Buffalo to showcase their artwork and promote the exhibition.



BAS Education Director Jayne Hughes and Buffalo Public Schools Director of Arts Michele Agosto speak on opening night.



Exhibiting Jump Start students and Jump Start Extension program graduates pose with their work in BAS's Joanna Angie Gallery. The full exhibition took up two galleries and included a wide variety of paintings, drawings, sculptures, fabric works, and even tattoos, all made by current or graduated Jump Start students in school, during classes at Buffalo Arts Studio, or as part of their own personal artistic practices.

Jump Start Biennial Exhibition

Envision, May 23–June 14, 2025

With *Envision*, this year's Jump Start Biennial Exhibition, we were proud to showcase the talent and hard work of our Jump Start students. The exhibition consisted of **142 artworks** in a vast range of media, contributed by **over 35 past and present students**. This year, with the first iteration of our new Young Curators Course, our students took the exhibition into their own hands as they learned about and applied industry-standard curatorial and installation practices to their work. The Jump Start Biennial Exhibition marks an important milestone for many of our students—it is often here at Buffalo Arts Studio that they first have the opportunity to see their artwork hung in a professional gallery setting.

After a 7-year hiatus, 2025 saw the triumphant return of our beloved **TRIMANIA** fundraiser. We transformed all six floors of the Tri-Main center, featuring **over 200 artists** and **over 80 musicians and performers**, and welcomed **more than 4,000 guests**. The outpouring of support we received from our community was truly overwhelming.



We are so grateful to everyone involved—our sponsors, committee members, community partners, and volunteers; the artists and performers who animated our hallways and stages with their talent; each and every guest who trusted us with their night—for showing up for us, and for embodying **the best of what artistic community means to Buffalo**.

Visitor contemplates work by Joel Mulindwa in *On the Rise II: Emerging Artists of Color*



Impact and Finances



This year, through our exhibitions, classes, and events, we paid 124 working artists a total of **\$402,659** and provided them with \$14,612 in materials. We also supported young artists by providing \$11,480 in youth education scholarships. When you support BAS, you are directly contributing to the livelihoods of working artists in your community.



Over the 2024–2025 fiscal year, our total attendance reached **20,642**, with 58% coming from exhibitions, 20% from education and workshops, 20% from Trimania, and 2% from tours. We are proud to be a trusted institution in our community, providing essential, effective arts access and drawing in a wide range of visitors and students.



In 2024–25, our income came from a variety of sources: 23% from government support, 23% from non-government support, and 54% from earned income. Our earned income consists of funds raised from education department sales, our Annual Appeal, and our TRIMANIA fundraiser.

Sponsors and Partnerships

Major Funders:

Arts Services Inc. Creative Impact Fund; The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation; Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo; Erie County Cultural Funds; John R. Oishei Foundation; M&T Bank; Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Arts & Culture Initiative; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; National Endowment for the Arts Grants for Arts Projects; New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA) with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, Tri-Main Center

Education Funders:

Children’s Foundation of Erie County; Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo; Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts Grant; Erie County Cultural Funds; Garman Family Foundation; Josephine Goodyear Foundation; New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA); Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds; Simple Gifts Fund

Trimania Sponsors:

Beyond Support Network; Buffalo F.A.T.H.E.R.S.; Buffalo Fashion Runway; Buffalo Hive; Buffalo Spree; Casual Hand; Counsel Financial; Cultrue, Inc.; Dolce Panepinto, Attorneys at Law; Dyke Nyte; Earthbound Films; Eat Off Art; Explore Buffalo; Freed Maxick; Get Fokus’d Productions; Gold Standard Bass; Greyline Outdoor Advertising; In-Room Plus, Inc.; Iroquois Construction Services; Lawley Insurance; Lipsitz, Ponterio & Comerford, LLC; M&T Bank; Marketing Tech; Mohawk Place; Montante Solar; Mower; Music is Art; Napoli’s Clothing & Shoes; Nash Connors Attorneys; Polaner Selections; Rigidized Metals Corporation; Rupp Foundation; SE2 Silent Disco; Sportsmen’s Americana Music Foundation; Telesco Creative Group; Tri-Main Center; Try-It Distributing; Valu Home Center/Valspar; WBFO The Bridge; Wegmans

Your contributions are vital to the work we do for our community—thank you so much for your support.



