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ARTSXCHANGE
40TH ANNIVERSARY
artsxchange.org



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ArtsXchange celebrates 40 years of cultivating community

Year of events to reflect organization's historical influence, impact on Atlanta arts scene

EAST POINT, Ga. — The ArtsXchange has amplified a quiet corner of East Point since 2017. But its roots in Atlanta go back to 1984 and its reach now spans 40 years of cultivating community, whether as a lobbying arm for public arts funding, a launching pad for now celebrated artists, or a creative home for legends to learners.

“The ArtsXchange is a living example of the power of artists to create their own destiny,” said co-founder and Executive Director Alice Lovelace.

The 40th anniversary theme, based on its facade mural, *Cultivating Community* by Charity Hamidullah, honors the ArtsXchange’s commitment to grassroots community building and celebrates its fruitful history that is often overlooked.

That history will be commemorated in various ways, including *A Room of Her Own*, an exhibition of women artists with current or past studios here, May 5-June 22; homecoming weekend June 7-9; the annual fundraiser Sept. 21; and the 7th Annual Ebon Dooley Arts & Social Justice Awards Dec. 7.

“There are so many artists who helped to make the last 40 years possible,” Lovelace said. “We could not see 40 years into the future, so this year is a monument to those people who did what was needed every day, one day at a time.”

The ArtsXchange is home to many firsts in Atlanta’s rich cultural story. Many artists grew to prominence in their former studios, including Kevin Cole, Rocio Rodriguez, and Charmaine Minniefield. Master artists like Jim Alexander and Lisa Tuttle still create from their studios here every day.

The vision of late activist, scholar, poet and organizer Ebon Dooley, the ArtsXchange changed the dynamic of the Atlanta arts scene when the original Arts Exchange opened in Grant Park in 1984. Dooley, alongside Lovelace, answered the need for a multiethnic, multidisciplinary and socially engaged arts center.

“This place allowed me to define my own world and influenced my thinking about community, culture, and the power of art,” said cultural worker and Board President Cheryl Johnson, who took dance classes and performed there as a teen. “Even when the roof was leaking and the wood floors needed work, it still felt safe. It was always a place to be uniquely ourselves, whatever that meant to each of us.”

For 40 years, the ArtsXchange has been a point of creative exchange for artists, activists, and long-silenced community voices. With a range of free and low-cost offerings, it keeps the arts inclusive and accessible in an industry that can be exclusive. Through its performance spaces and exhibits, it remains an uplifter of emerging and marginalized creatives. And with its sprawling community garden, meaningful partnerships, and active role in its new East Point neighborhood, the ArtsXchange remains a leader in applying the arts to solutions for social issues from food security and health equity, to economic opportunities and cultural preservation.

“We are an institution built by, for, and with working artists and the community we serve,” said Lovelace. “We are still the place where aspiring artists can find a home and other artists to support them. That gives me hope that another 40 years is possible.”