

2020-2024  
MID ATLANTIC  
ARTS  
FOUNDATION

# STRATEGIC PLAN



Cover: Upper left corner clockwise:

Dance Place, DC, hosted CONTRA-TIEMPO through the Special Presenter Initiatives program. Following the performance, company members and the community cast enjoyed a post-show dance party. Credit: Jonathan Hsu.

Mid Atlantic Tours brought Jane Bunnett and Maqueque to Flushing Town Hall in NY where teaching artist, Angela Rostick, gave dance lessons before the show. Credit: Ema Wang.

Weis Center for the Performing Arts, PA hosted Manual Cinema through an ArtsCONNECT grant. Here, members of Manual Cinema lead an afternoon lecture/demo for Bucknell students. Credit: Courtesy Weis Center for the Performing Arts.

In conjunction with an ArtsCONNECT supported engagement of Ananya Dance Theatre, Virginia Commonwealth University, VA held an indigo dying workshop with students and faculty in the VCU Craft & Material Studies department, along with VCU Dance majors. Credit: Lea Marshall.

Jazz Touring Network member, the Arden Club, DE, presented Makaya McCraven at Arden Gild Hall in October 2019. Credit: Joe Del Tufo.

Fanna-Fi-Allah, CA travelled to the Festival of Culture and Lands End Festival in France and Esperanzah in Belgium with support from USArtists International. Credit: Aimee Akasha.

Audience members joined Dan Zanes + Claudia Eliaza onstage during an engagement at the Grand Opera House, DE, supported through the Special Presenter Initiatives program. Credit: Moonloop Photography.

Kaia Kater and band take the stage at Carnegie Hall, WV with support from Mid Atlantic Tours. Credit: Phillip McLaughlin.

# Executive Summary

**M**id Atlantic Arts Foundation is pleased to share our 2020-2024 strategic plan. The plan and its goals stem from a period of deep listening and a desire to understand the needs of the region and the constituents we serve. The mid-Atlantic region is home to more than a quarter of the artists, creative workers, and venues in the United States. From the largest of urban centers, to rural mountain valleys, seashores, and an island Territory, the plan calls for MAAF to collaborate more closely with current as well as prospective future partners to maximize our strengths to better support and sustain the arts sector.

In the spring of 2019, MAAF began the planning process that would guide our work over the next five years. Through an inclusive approach that engaged over 1,400 individuals — including artists, creative workers, arts organization leaders, administrators, and others — **MAAF listened, learned, and set goals that will significantly change how we work in the years to come.**

Other key partners — state arts agencies, funders, collaborators, thought leaders, and constituents — helped frame the conversation and informed the final goals and objectives. A strategic planning committee comprised of board and staff members led the process, with guidance from the arts management consulting firm, Maren Brown Associates. Planning included a review of background materials and current state of the field, two retreats, in-depth phone interviews, six focus groups, and two online surveys.

From the outset of this planning process, there was strong consensus among board

and staff that MAAF needed to revisit and reimagine our role as a regional arts organization. This recognition led to the creation of a new mission and vision, as well as establishment of a set of guiding principles that will ground MAAF's work moving forward. Foremost among these principles is our commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. This framework positions MAAF to celebrate the uniqueness of the mid-Atlantic region and our constituents by creating responsive and relevant programs that support meaningful arts experiences.

Along with this shift comes a name change — over the next year you will see a rebranding of MAAF as we shed “Foundation” and become Mid Atlantic Arts — a name truer to our work and mission. We are excited about the challenges our new plan brings, and look forward to working with you to **transform our communities, the region, and beyond.**

# Guiding Principles

## **ARTISTRY AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION**

Mid Atlantic Arts values the pursuit of artistry and the promotion of creative expression. We believe that the arts are an essential part of life, enriching our human experience and contributing to communities' overall well-being.

## **DIVERSITY**

Mid Atlantic Arts values the abundant and expansive diversity that exists within our region, our nation, and the world. We honor and celebrate the mid-Atlantic's people, artistic and community resources and, most notably, our many forms of cultural expression, and believe them to be major sources of strength in our region.

## **EQUITY AND ACCESS**

Mid Atlantic Arts acknowledges that long-standing systems and practices within the arts sector have led to significant barriers to equitable access and investment for individuals and across communities. We are committed to the implementation of equitable practices through intentional and sustained focus and accountability.

## **CURIOSITY AND LISTENING**

Mid Atlantic Arts believes listening to and understanding those we serve leads to relevant and responsive programs and policies. We are committed to ongoing evaluation, analysis, and evolution of our work and practices. We are also committed to the development and support of learning communities, stakeholder convening, and the achievement of best practices to improve our services to the field.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS**

Mid Atlantic Arts values the relationships with our many trusted partners across the region, the United States, and internationally that extend the reach and impact of our programs. We recognize the National Endowment for the Arts, our state and jurisdictional arts agencies, fellow regional arts agencies, donors, funders, service organizations, and other stakeholders as key allies in fulfilling our mission.

## MISSION

Mid Atlantic Arts nurtures and funds the creation and presentation of diverse artistic expression and connects people to meaningful arts experiences within our region and beyond.

## VISION

Mid Atlantic Arts envisions a future in which artists and creators are actively engaged with diverse communities to energize the transformative power of the arts.

# Goal 1: EMBRACE AND PROMOTE EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESS

**Embed, model, and highlight** exemplary practices of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access in all of Mid Atlantic Arts' policies and activities to address long-standing barriers to equitable access and build a stronger arts sector.

## **Objectives:**

- Align Mid Atlantic Arts' policies, procedures, and practices with equity and accessibility statement principles.
- Engage diverse constituents in the conceptualization, design, implementation, and evaluation of programs, services, and initiatives to break down barriers to access and improve inclusivity.
- Develop a learning culture at Mid Atlantic Arts around equity, diversity, inclusion, and access principles and share lessons learned to promote knowledge sharing and the adoption of equitable practices in the field.
- Work with Mid Atlantic Arts' local, state, regional, and national partners to promote funding and other supports for the field to help advance equity.

## **Goal 2: SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE ARTS SECTOR**

**Invest in artists, creators, and organizations** through programs, services, and partnerships that support and sustain creative expression and enable new and diverse communities to experience this work.

### **Objectives:**

- Sustain Mid Atlantic Arts' essential role as an equitable grantmaker that supports artists, creators, and organizations through a variety of grantmaking initiatives.
- Strengthen arts networks by supporting learning communities, sharing promising practices, and providing financial support.
- Recalibrate existing programs and services to better support emerging models of arts practice and respond to both the current and evolving needs of artists and creators.
- Collaborate with Mid Atlantic Arts' state and jurisdictional partners to best serve the region by maximizing each other's strengths, aligning priorities, leveraging investments, and supporting learning and relationship-building opportunities.

## **Goal 3: ENLIVEN COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE ARTS**

**Foster partnerships** between the arts and other sectors to provide collaborative approaches that promote community well-being.

### **Objectives:**

- Articulate Mid Atlantic Arts' role in supporting community well-being through the arts.
- Cultivate connections among leaders working at the intersection of the arts and other fields that have demonstrable impact on community well-being in order to develop programs and services that meet community needs.
- Expand opportunities for artists, creators, and organizations to create and provide arts programs that engage new audiences and participants.

## Goal 4: BUILD INTERNAL CAPACITY

**Build Mid Atlantic Arts' internal capacity** to effectively respond to the needs of the field and address our mission.

### **Objectives:**

- Embody equity, diversity, inclusion, and access principles throughout the organization, through staff and board composition, awareness, systems, and structures.
- Create a new department of institutional advancement that is tasked with securing funding to support identified strategic planning goals and objectives.
- Improve Mid Atlantic Arts' operational efficiency, data collection, and systems of accountability through upgraded technological infrastructure and systems.
- Clarify Mid Atlantic Arts' value and rebrand the organization to better communicate its purpose and activities to the field.
- Strengthen Mid Atlantic Arts' staffing and financial capacity to respond to strategic planning needs and requirements.

# THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Our thanks to the participants in our surveys, focus groups, and interview research, along with the board and staff of Mid Atlantic Arts.

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