

For Immediate Release: Monday, July 17, 2023
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**BAMBD CDC SAVES OAKLAND'S ONLY BLACK BOX
THEATER &**

OAKLAND'S OLDEST BLACK THEATER TROUPE
*Lower Bottom Playaz Has a New Home in the Black Arts
Movement Business District*

(Oakland, CA) – Culture is what makes the world go round in Oakland. It's why folks flock here, and it's why people stay. Unfortunately, making art and preserving culture in The Town is difficult and sometimes miraculous – especially if you are Black. As the politics and demographics of Oakland have shifted, pushing out large swaths of Black community members, Black artists have shouldered much of the impact of gentrification.

The Black Arts Movement Business District Community Development Corporation (BAMBD CDC) is pleased to announce it is the new leaseholder of 1540 Broadway, formerly known as Piano Fight and prior to that as The Flight Deck. The space will serve as a Black Cultural Center and house Oakland's oldest Black theater company as its resident theater troupe.

BAMBD CDC was founded to animate the Black Arts Movement and Business District and has been fighting for artist and art-making space since 2016. It has not had a physical address since its inception; it does now.

“This is about more than just having a new home for Black art,” said Dr. Ayodele Nzinga, founder and director of both BAMBD CDC and Lower Bottom Playaz. “Oakland elected and appointed officials pay good lip service to the importance of art in the cultural fabric of Oakland. They have consistently failed to make a substantive investment in ensuring that art – particularly Black art – has sufficient places to thrive, cultural kitchens if you will.

The new lease enables a three-year prototype to resource and sustains a cultural hub serving the Black Arts Movement District, Oakland’s only officially declared arts district.

The Lower Bottom Playaz is not new to the space. The theatre troupe has been in residence at the theater since 2014. It is where LBP became the first theater troupe in the world to complete the August Wilson Century Cycle chronologically. LBP is now the resident theater of the new cultural space.

“I founded BAMBD CDC to prevent further displacement of artists of color who at one time permeated West Oakland,” continued Dr. Nzinga. “The acquisition of this space is a crucial move to preserve art-making space in the Black Arts district and to sustain Oakland's oldest black theater company”

First up on deck in their new home is the fourth rendition of BAMBDFEST International Biennial. This year’s fest will include Monday night readings of new works by Black artists, cultural exchanges, conversations with Black artists across the diaspora, and August Wilson’s Radio Golf. Radio Golf

opens the Lower Bottom Playaz 24th Season appropriately titled “Songs Like Home.”

“BAMBD CDC looks forward to hosting a wealth of community building activity and continuing their support and advocacy for Oakland's artists and culture makers,” concluded Dr. Nzinga.

BAMBDFEST kicks off on July 31st. Radio Golf previews August 10, 2023. There will be an official and public relaunching of the space as part of BAMBDFEST.

BAMBD CDC has a long wish list for the space contact bamdbcdc.com to support this amazing effort and to get the most current event information.

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