

# BEYOND THE WHITE BOX

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# THE PROBLEM

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# ABSTRACT

**BASED ON THE SYSTEMIC BIASES AND LACK OF SUPPORT FOR BLACK ARTISTS & DESIGNERS IN THE PRIMARY ART MARKET, THIS STIGMA DISCOURAGES BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES FROM PURSUING A CAREER IN THE CREATIVE ARTS. MY GOAL IS TO UNDERSTAND THE UNDERLYING ISSUES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS DISPARITY, BY ANALYZING THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF BALTIMORE CITY AS A CASE STUDY**



**“ART BY BLACK AMERICAN ARTISTS ACCOUNTS FOR 1.9 PERCENT OF ALL AUCTION SALES BETWEEN 2008 AND MID-2022, OR \$3.6 BILLION OF THE TOTAL \$187 BILLION”**

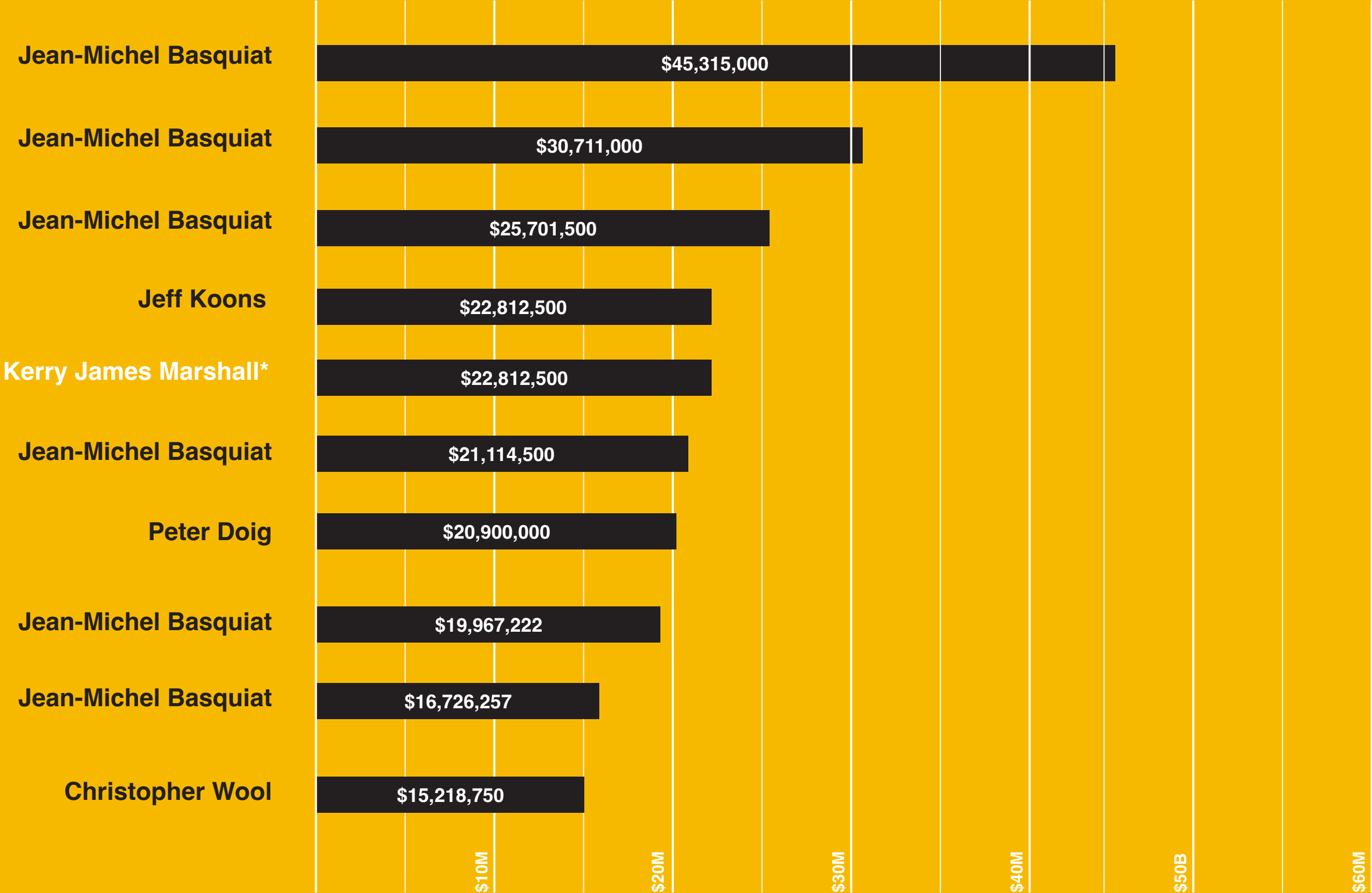
**-ARTNET**

**JEAN MICHEL BASQUIAT ACCOUNTS FOR 70% OF THOSE SALES**

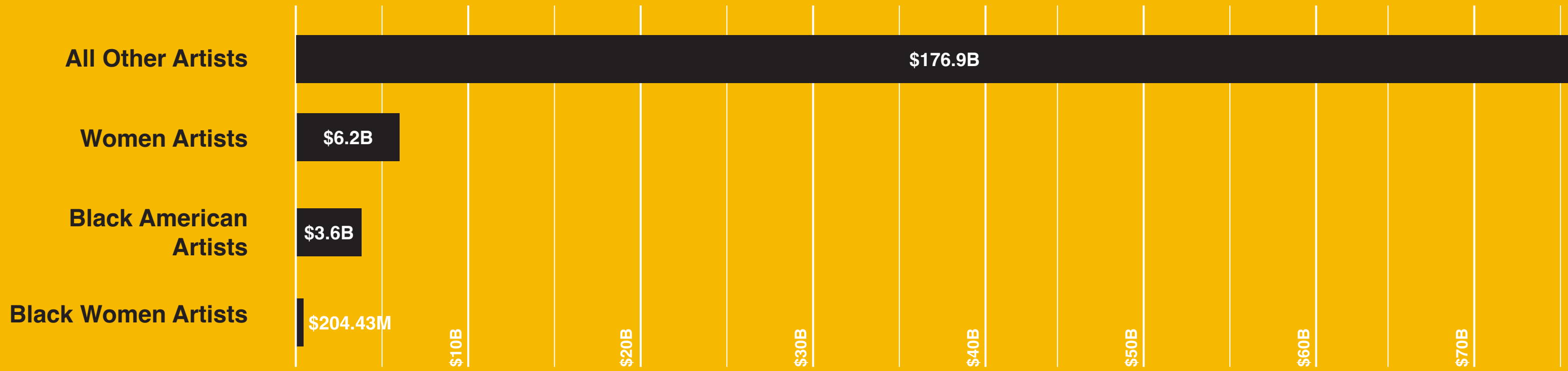


TOP 10 CONTEMPORARY ART AUCTION SALES  
(2018)

THE BURNS-HALPERIN REPORT 2022



TOTAL INTERNATIONAL AUCTION SALES



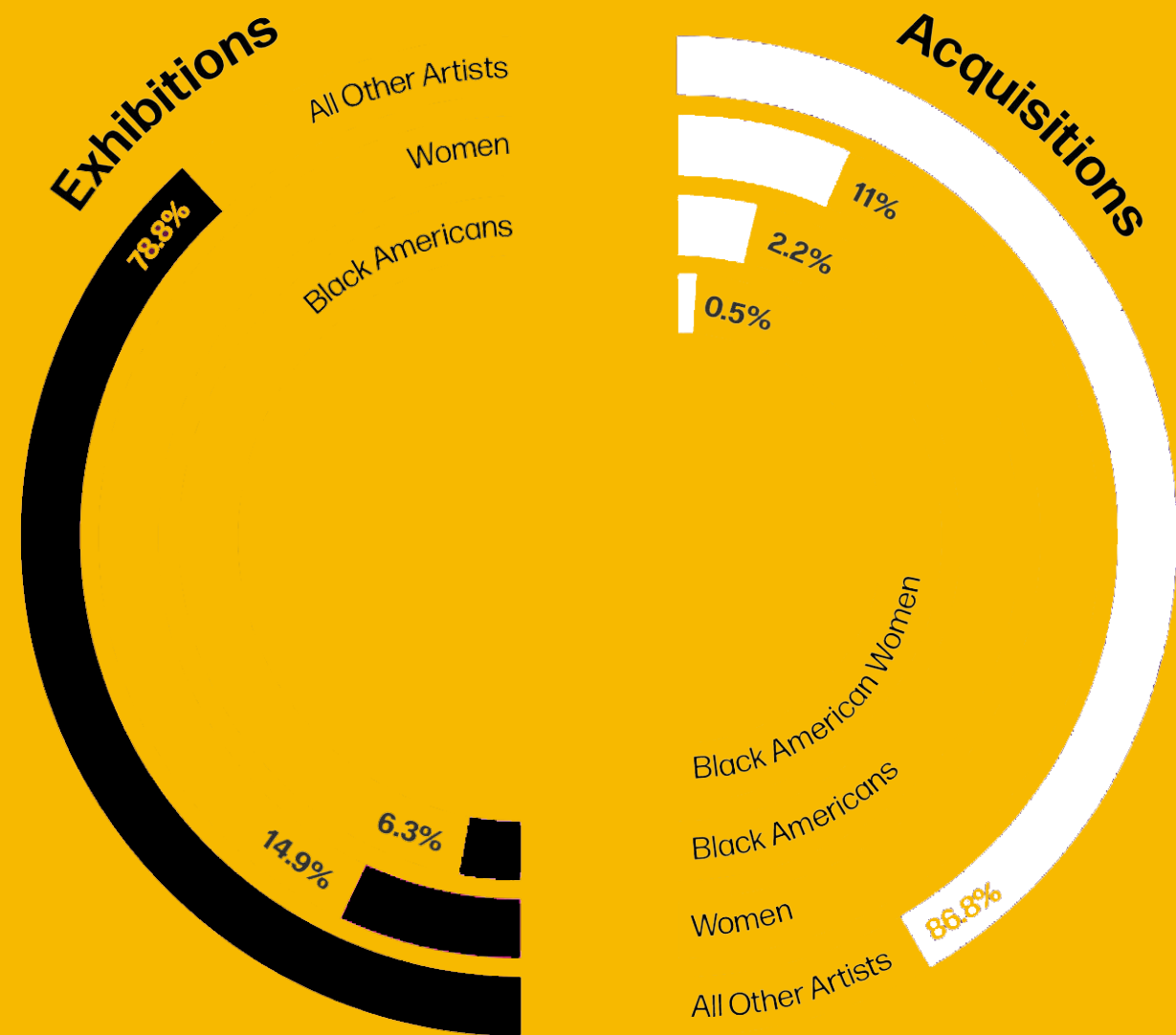
THE BURNS-HALPERIN REPORT 2022

ART BY BLACK AMERICAN ARTISTS ACCOUNTS FOR 1.9 PERCENT OF ALL AUCTION SALES BETWEEN 2008 AND MID-2022,

OR

\$3.6 BILLION OF THE TOTAL \$187 BILLION.

REPRESENTATION AT U.S. MUSEUMS  
2008-2020



**ONLY 2.2 PERCENT OF ACQUISITIONS AND 6.3 PERCENT OF EXHIBITIONS AT 31 U.S. MUSEUMS BETWEEN 2008 AND 2020 WERE OF WORK BY BLACK AMERICAN ARTISTS.**

THE BURNS-HALPERIN REPORT 2022



# INTERVIEWS

# G2



# CHARLY PALMER

ARTIST/  
COLLECTOR



“ THE GATEKEEPERS  
ARE WHITE OR BLACK  
PEOPLE THAT HAVE BEEN  
INDOCTRINATED AND  
LOWER THEIR STANDARD  
OF LIKENESS. SO THERE  
IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE  
THAT STRUGGLE UNTIL  
WE GET TO A POINT  
WHERE WE CAN CONTROL  
THE NARRATIVE AND OUR  
STATEMENTS ”



### What challenges have you faced working with galleries or any other

*“So there’s a combination of ways in which we are exploited. Blackness is exploiting what it’s in. But I’m here to tell you right now that black season is over with. White corporations feel like they’ve given what they needed to to show that they care and let’s get back to life the way it is. So you have to as a creative person, say i’m not creating for y’all, i’m creating for us, and i’m creating for me. I i’m not even going to apologize. You need to examine you to kind of ask yourself the question: Why are you uncomfortable with my blackness? i’m not going to let go of that. I’m going to announce it and promote it as much as I can like for me as long as I live.”*

### What is your take on artists feeling like they have to cater to a white audience to be successful?

*“There’s an interview with Tony Morrison where the reporter asked her “are you going to write a book in which the main charecter is black?” This is Toni Morrison... Toni’s response was “Do you realize how racist that question is? Would you ask a white writer if they considered making the main charecter black?” The reason for that is that white people look through the lens of whiteness and everything is about them. And so we have to be careful, because too often we think about them when we’re creating. Sometimes it’s like I don’t want them to be offended. So those kinds of things we have to always be conscious that they’re watching, but let them watch all they want to. I’m not going to adjust my existence or my art to make you feel comfortable.”*

### Do black artists need their own gatekeepers?

*“We need to establish at some point our own with people that got money. When Ernie Barnes work sold for 25 million or whatever it sold for, only to find out recently that you know Eddie Murphy bought the originally and he did a duplicate, That’s not going to increase the value of Ernie Barnes work too much because this was a black man that had wealth that always wanted that piece*

*and purchased it. But that’s where it’s different. If we were to create and establish a market determinant value, now know everything that has Ernie Barnes’s name on it will increase in value. But that was a black man buying a black art piece. f it was a white person, and they would like especially established white collector who purchased it, or any bars for for 25 million. The price would have gone up the price of his work after that would have gone up.”*



# JERRELL GIRBS



ARTIST/

ENTREPRENEUR

“ IF YOU GET INVOLVED IN IT (THE ART MARKET) YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND IT. **IT'S A GAME.....** SO IF YOU CHOOSE TO PLAY THAT GAME, EVENTUALLY, **YOU'LL FIGURE OUT WAYS TO WIN** LIKE ANYTHING ”



**Did you face any challenges at the beginning of your career? If so how has that impacted your perspective of the industry?**

*“When you get into the art market, and you’re starting to put yourself in that space you have to realize that It’s a business, you know what I mean? I think a lot of artists struggle with being able to balance the two, understanding that you’re in the business of selling your work. You in the business of creating works. Now, you have a choice to sell them or not, but if you choose to step into the art market and be a part of that ecosystem, that’s what it breeds. It has to be a fine balance, and if you’re going too far on the business side, that’s terrible for your practice. I was too caught up on the business side during 2022 and I was so unsatisfied in terms of my practice. It made things difficult for me. I had gotten away from my love for what*



Photo Credit: Evan Jenkins

*I was doing, because I was so focused on the business. It’s not all about money... You have to really tap into understanding that you are an entity now, and it’s not just like Oh, i’m a painter like someone is going to sell my paintings for me like, yeah, that’s surface level. But it goes way deeper than that”*

**How would you describe your relationship with the art world or the art market? How did you find your place within it?**

*“Oh, good question, I think it is showing me that it is*

*like any other business. You know what I mean? You gotta be on point. You gotta be a good time manager. You gotta be really committed, invested to your practice, and what that forces you to do is kind of eliminate a lot of other things. I’m going through the process of figuring out how to have a solid foundation in order to build upon. And it can be a challenge at times. The market, is the market right? And business is business. If you don’t want to get involved with it, you don’t want to play that game, don’t do it. You don’t have to. If you get involved in it (the art market) you have to understand it’s a game, and and there are principles, and there are things that you have to figure out in order to continue to grow.... So if you choose to play that game, eventually, you’ll figure out ways to win like anything else right, or you’ll figure out ways to make it easier for you.”*

**How do you feel about the rise and recent support of a of black artists during 2020?**

*I think people started to make decisions based on their emotions. I think people who have been fighting to have their voices heard for so long had an opportunity at that moment to be heard by people were preoccupied with other things. Figurative painting of black and brown bodies, and black artists in particular, were at the forefront of that moment. I think you could go either way with it, and I think there are scenarios and examples that can fill any gap or any question right? But I believe more people, from my experience, have been more committed to working to change how things are structured, and being more intentional about the decisions that are being made, and who they being made by.*

# MELAINE FERDINAND- KING



CURATOR

“A LOT OF IT (RECENT SUPPORT FOR BLACK ART) IS **SHALLOW**, I THINK A LOT OF INSTITUTIONS ARE CHECKING BOXES **AT THIS POINT UNDER THE GUISE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**. I DON'T THINK THEY ARE **INTERROGATING** THE IDEA OF DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION.”

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

# 63



**“WE NEED TO CREATE OUR OWN CURRENCY”**

**“WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO MERGE ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND BUSINESS”**

**“WE NEED TO REINVENT WHAT A GALLERY IS. GALLERIES SHOULD BE MULTI-MODAL/USE”**

**“THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF CURATORS AND COLLECTORS OF BLACK ART”**

**“GALLERIES ARE IN A POSITION TO OFFER PROGRAMS THAT CONNECT THEM TO A BROADER AUDIENCE”**

**“THE GATEKEEPERS ARE WHITE OR BLACK PEOPLE THAT HAVE BEEN INDOCTRINATED AND LOWER THEIR STANDARD OF LIKENESS. SO THERE IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE THAT STRUGGLE UNTIL WE GET TO A POINT WHERE WE CAN CONTROL THE NARRATIVE AND OUR STATEMENTS”**

**“WE NEED TO MAKE ARTIST’S SPACES MORE ACCESSIBLE BY CREATING**

**“WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO MERGE ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND BUSINESS”**

**“SOME GALLERIES CAN BE PREDATORY, COLLECTING LARGE SUMS OF ARTIST PROFITS”**

**“GALLERIES NEED TO CULTIVATE DIRECT RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARTSITS AND COMMUNITY”**

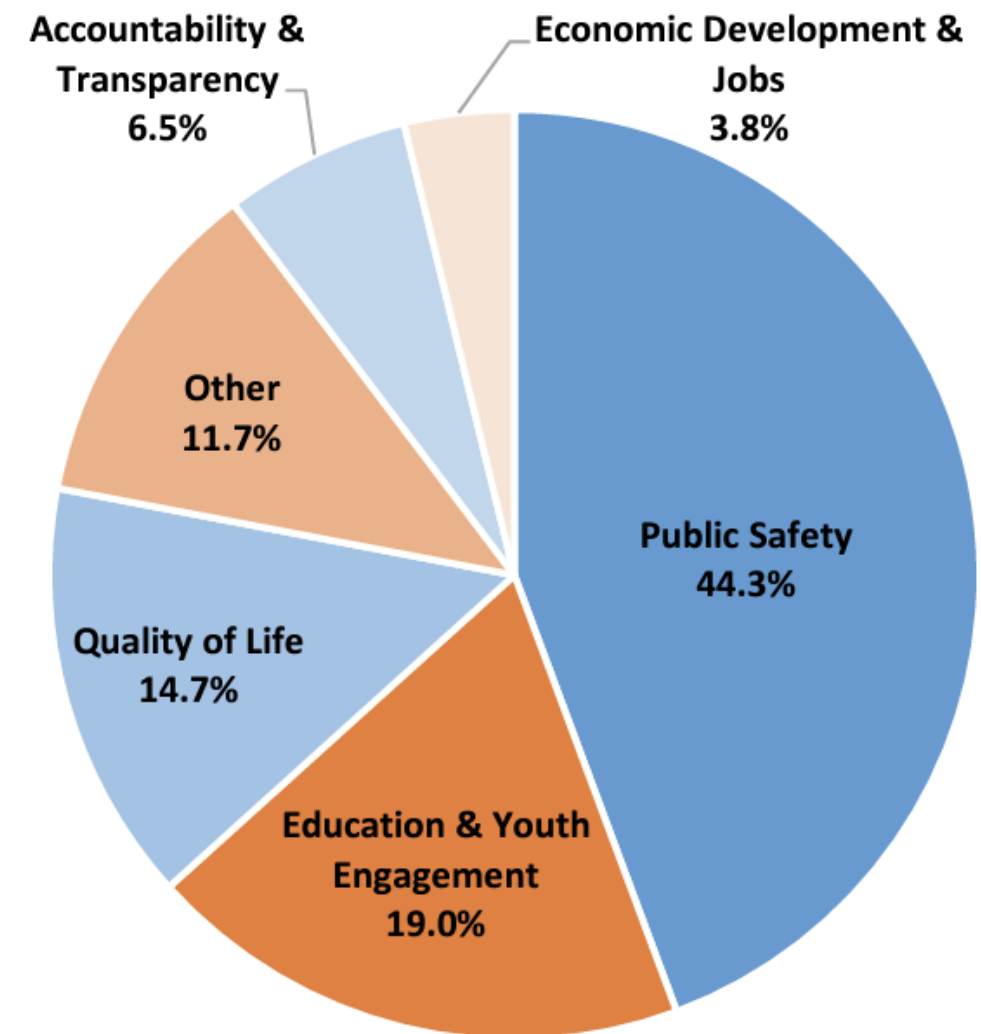
**“THE TRADITIONAL GALLERY DOES NOT ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY”**



# BALTIMORE, MD



**POPULATION: 569,93**  
**62.6% BLACK POPULATION**  
2020 US CENSUS



**FISCAL 2020 EXECUTIVE  
BUDGET SUMMARY**

**“SINCE THE START OF 2023, FIVE CHILDREN UNDER 18 HAVE BEEN FATALLY SHOT AND ANOTHER 21 HAVE BEEN INJURED BY GUNFIRE, ACCORDING TO BALTIMORE POLICE.**

**THREE CHILDREN WERE KILLED WITHIN BLOCKS OF THEIR SCHOOLS.”**

**-CBS NEWS**

# Teenager Arrested in Baltimore Squeegee Worker Shooting

Police say a 15-year-old was arrested on Thursday and charged as an adult in connection with the fatal shooting of a motorist during an encounter with people cleaning windshields for cash at a downtown Baltimore intersection.

**TEEN VIOLENCE: 24 murdered, 510 arrested this year in Baltimore City**



Photo by: Michael Seitz

By: WMAR STAFF

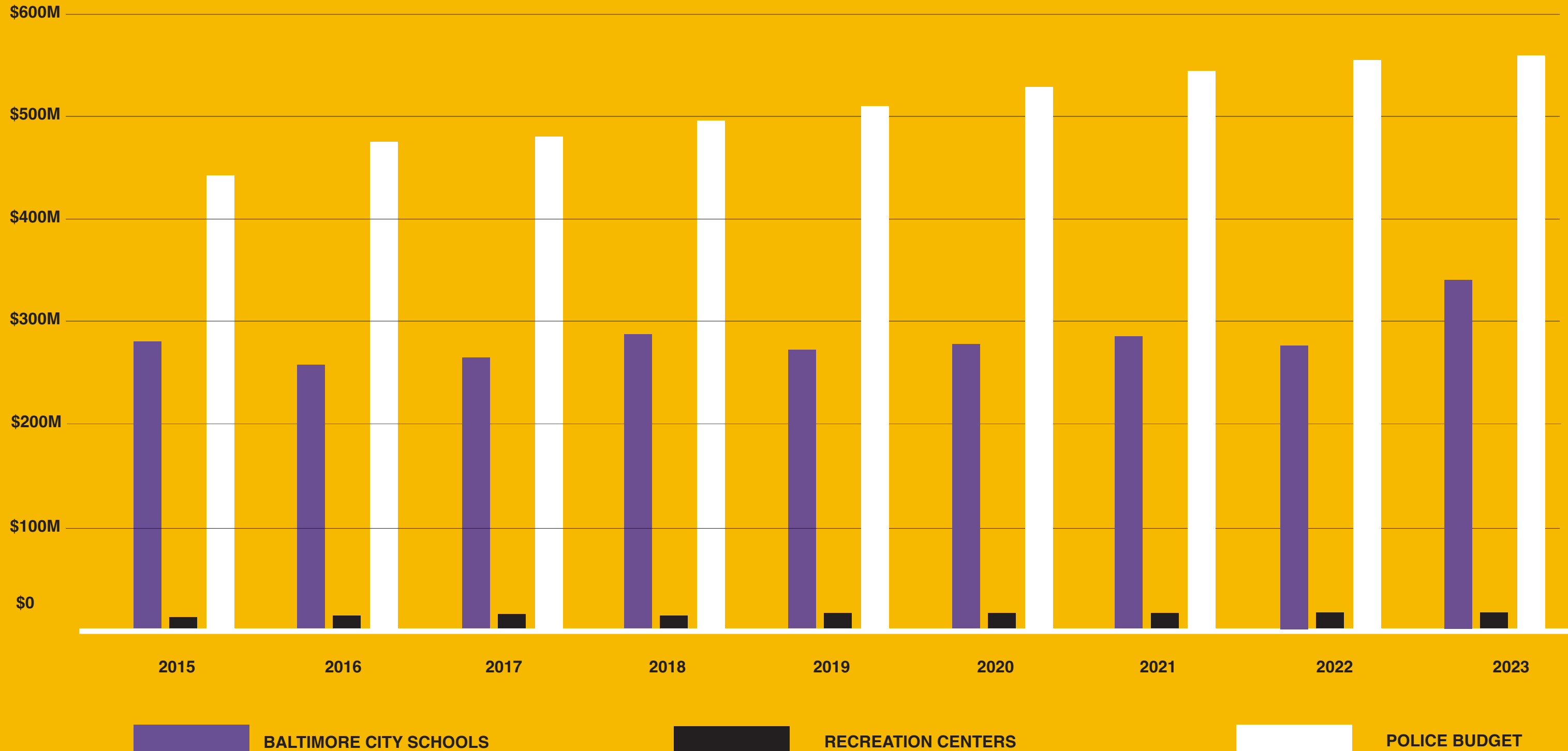
Posted at 9:55 PM, Aug 11, 2022 and last updated 10:39 AM, Aug 12, 2022



LOCAL NEWS >

**Baltimore sees troubling rise in violence involving teens**

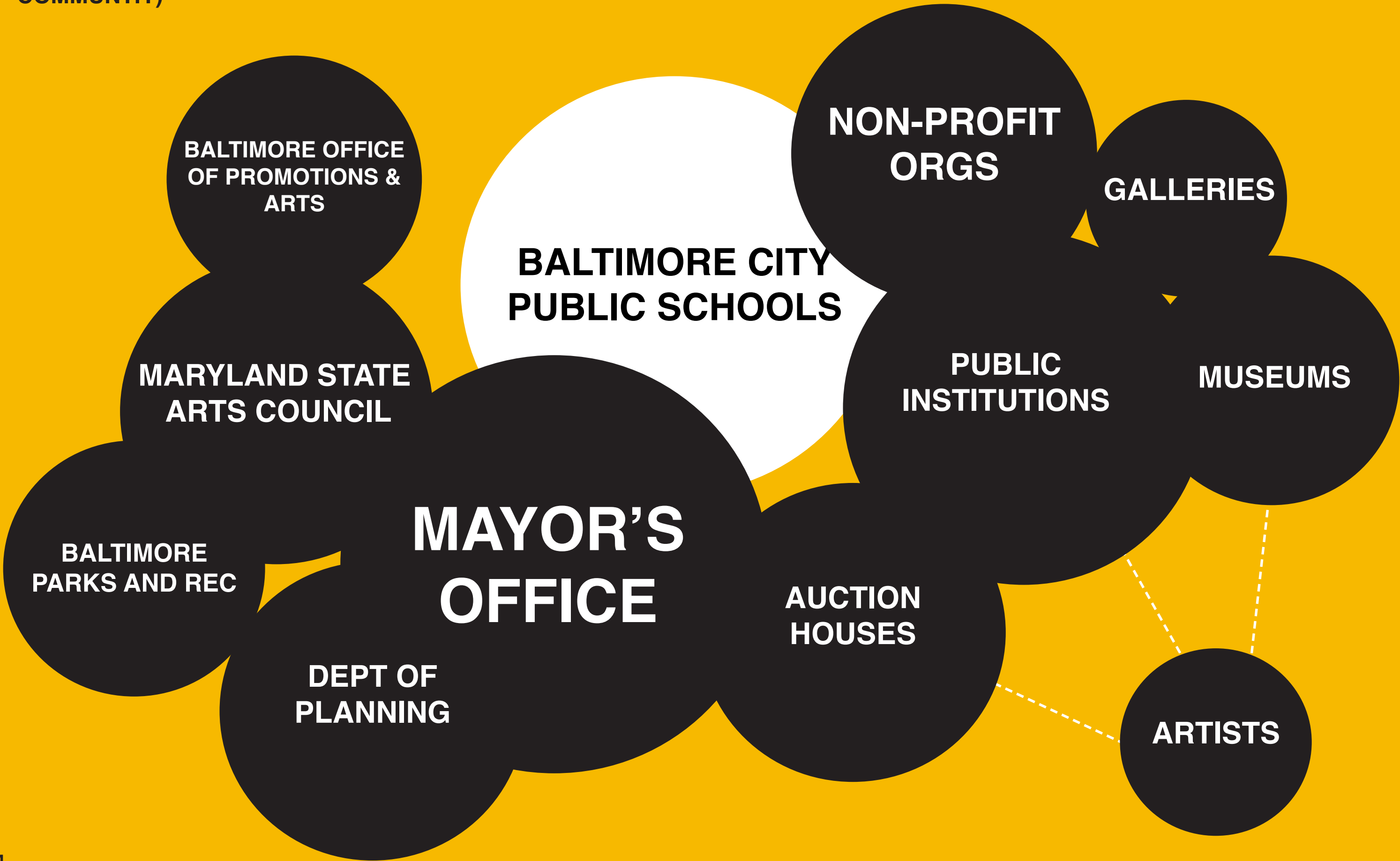
**“THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REC CENTERS PEAKED AT 130 IN THE LATE 1970S AND EARLY 1980S, BUT FELL TO JUST A FRACTION OF THAT—AROUND 40—BY THE MID 2010’s AS FUNDING TO OPERATE THEM DROPPED.”**



**FROM 2018 TO 2020, THE DISTRICT WENT FROM 218 ARTS TEACHERS TO 174—WHICH AMOUNTS TO ROUGHLY ONE TEACHER PER SCHOOL AND LEAVING MANY WITHOUT ANY ART CLASSES FOR STUDENTS.**



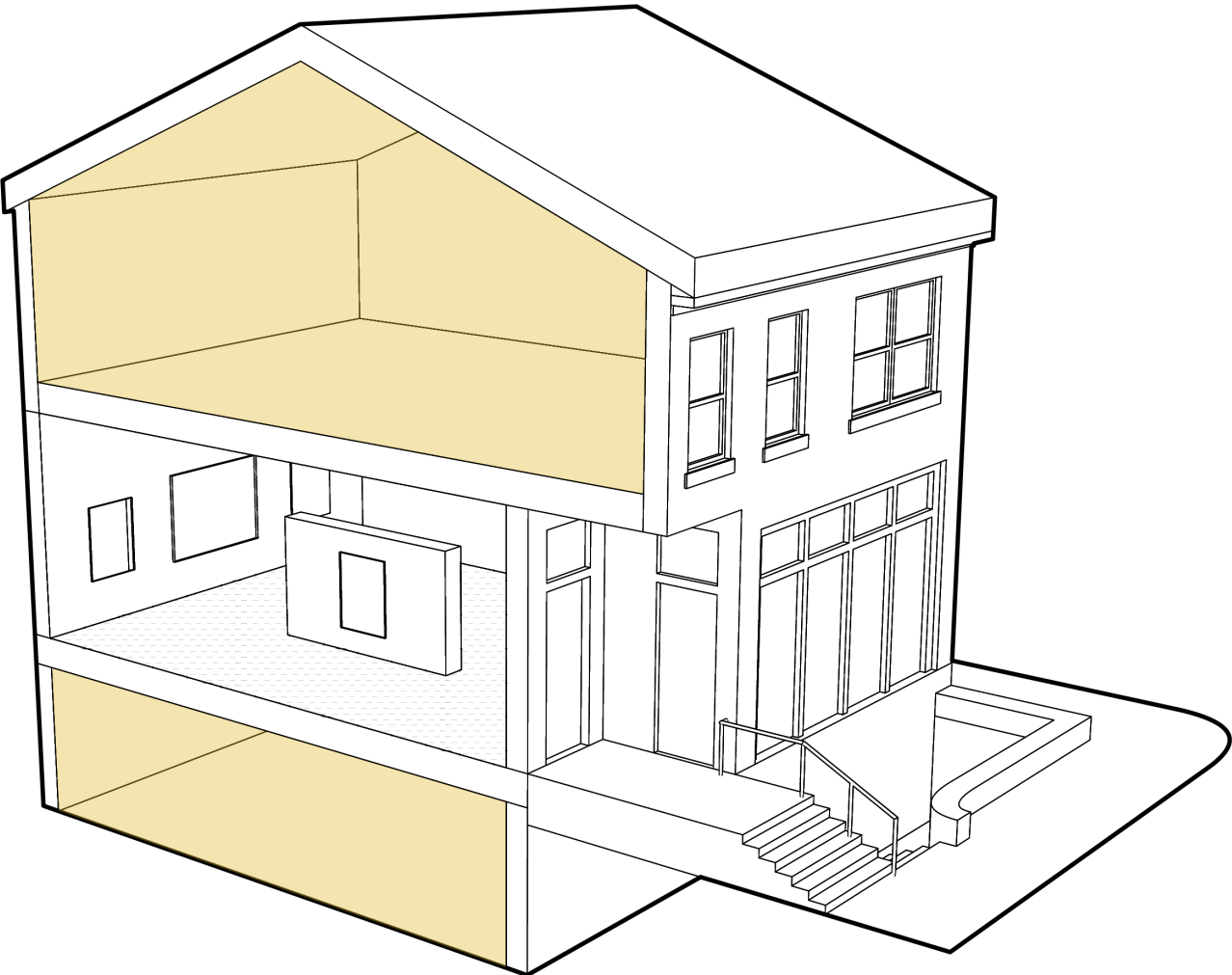
KEY PLAYERS (LARGER THE SIZE, THE GREATEST IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY)



**IT'S CLEAR THAT WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT OR RELY ON AN **ARCHAIC SYSTEM** DESIGNED TO **EXCLUDE** MULTIPLE DEMOGRAPHICS TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITIES AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN A WAY THAT BENEFITS ALL PARTIES. IN ORDER TO THRIVE AS CREATIVES **WE MUST CREATE OUR OWN SYSTEM AND SPACES.****

- SUBSIDIZED LIVE/WORK STUDIOS FOR ARTISTS
- FILM SCREENING FOR EMERGING FILM MAKERS
- AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING
- MANDATORY BI-WEEKLY WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS HOSTED BY ARTISTS TO MAINTAIN RESIDENCY
- GALLERY IS NOT FOR PROFIT, ARTISTS KEEPS ALL PROCEEDS
- ART SPACE, NOT A GALLERY, FOR LOCAL EMERGING & EXPERIENCED ARTISTS
- A SPACE THAT CULTIVATES DIRECT RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARTISTS AND COMMUNITY
- INVITE CURATORS AND CRITICS AND EXPERTS FOR THOUGHTFUL AND INSIGHTFUL DIALOGUE
- WORKSHOP SPACES
- COMMUNITY ROOMS FOR EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS
- UTILIZE CITY AND STATE FUNDED GRANTS FOR OPERATING COST.

ALTERNATIVE ART GALLERY CASE STUDY



EXISTING GALLERY



NEW PROGRAM



EXISTING TENANTS



PROPOSED ARTISTS SPACE

- 1. GALLERY/EVENT SPACE
- 2. FILM SCREENING/ LECTURE ROOM
- 3. COMMUNITY ROOM/ WORK SHOP
- 4. SEMI-PRIVATE ARTIST STUDIOS



BALTIMORE CITY GRANTS FOR ART ORGANIZATIONS



Mayor Brandon Scott  
& the City of Baltimore

CREATIVE  
BALTIMORE  
FUND

**FREEFALL  
BALTIMORE**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: AUGUST 7th

BALTIMORE  
OFFICE OF PROMOTION & THE ARTS MSAC

COMMUNITIES  
THRIVE

**Arts in  
ACTION**  
ARTS EDUCATION GRANTS

GRANT INFO SESSION  
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 29 | 2PM

REGISTER HERE:  
[bit.ly/aia-meeting](https://bit.ly/aia-meeting)

APPLICATIONS OPEN: November 14, 2022  
APPLICATION CLOSES: December 16, 2022

**BALTIMORE**  
OFFICE OF PROMOTION  
& THE ARTS

## MARYLAND STATE BASED GRANTS FOR ART ORGANIZATIONS

- HERITAGE AWARDS
- A&E DISTRICT OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT
- NETWORK ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT
- HERITAGE AWARDS
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY GRANT
- PUBLIC ART ACROSS MARYLAND CONSERVATION GRANT
- PUBLIC ART ACROSS MARYLAND NEW ARTWORKS GRANT
- SPECIAL REQUEST GRANT
- MARYLAND TOURING GRANT

# THANK YOU



# PAINTINGS

# G4





**CHARLY**

**OIL ON CANVAS**

**46" x 36**

**2023**





**MELAINE**

**OIL ON CANVAS**

**46" x 36**

**2023**





**NATE**

**OIL ON CANVAS**

**46" x 36**

**2023**



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# 65

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<https://www.wbalTV.com/article/decline-in-rec-centers-could-be-to-blame-for-baltimore-youth-violence/28565015>

<https://studioburns.media/category/the-burns-halperin-report/>

<https://bbmr.baltimorecity.gov/budget-publications>

<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/district-overview>

## CASE STUDIES

### **Black Artist Research Space**

<https://www.blackartistresearchspace.com/>

### **Guilty by Association**

<https://gba.family/>

### **Rebuild Foundation**

<https://www.rebuild-foundation.org/>

### **Black Rock Senegal**

<https://blackrocksenegal.org/>

## LITERATURE

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