

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA's 2025 BLACK ARTS COUNCIL BENEFIT TO BE HELD ON APRIL 3, HONORING SIMONE LEIGH, PAMELA J. JOYNER, AND ALFRED J. GIUFFRIDA

Evening Will Feature a Special Performance by Phony Ppl

NEW YORK, March 17, 2025—The Museum of Modern Art's Black Arts Council will host its annual benefit on April 3, honoring artist **Simone Leigh**, MoMA trustee **Pamela J. Joyner**, and philanthropist **Alfred J. Giuffrida**. The benefit will feature a special performance by Phony Ppl.

Founded in 1993 as the Friends of Education by Dr. Akosua Barthwell Evans, Agnes Gund, and David Rockefeller Jr., the Black Arts Council is a community of patrons, philanthropists, collectors, and art enthusiasts dedicated to the visibility, access, and appreciation of art and artists of the African diaspora at The Museum of Modern Art.

The evening will be highlighted by a special musical performance by Phony Ppl and DJ sets by Aku & Niks and Gale Scott. Afterward, guests will be treated to a unique dessert experience by Camari Mick, executive pastry chef at the Michelin-starred restaurant the Musket Room.

Proceeds from this benefit support the continued impact and influence of the Black Arts Council through acquisitions, exhibitions, and educational programming. Tables and tickets can be purchased [online](#) or by emailing specialevents@moma.org.

WHAT: #BlackArtsCouncil

WHEN: Thursday, April 3, 2024

6:30 p.m. Cocktails

8:00 p.m. Dinner

WHERE: The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York

HOST COMMITTEE:

Wemimo Abbey, Derrick Adams, Sarah Arison, Brandon Blackwood, Anita Blanchard and Martin Nesbitt, Amy Goldrich, Agnes Gund, Alvin Hall, Thelma and AC Hudgins, Glenn Ligon, David and Susan Rockefeller, Shamina Sneed, Mickalene Thomas, and Reginald Van Lee.

MoMA

11 West 53 Street
New York, NY 10019

HONOREE BIOS:

Simone Leigh

Over the last 20 years Simone Leigh has created a multifaceted body of work incorporating sculpture, video, and installation, all informed by her ongoing exploration of Black female-identified subjectivity. Leigh describes her work as auto-ethnographic, and her salt-glazed ceramic and bronze sculptures often employ forms traditionally associated with African art. Her performance-influenced installations create spaces where historical precedent and self-determination commingle.

Leigh was born in Chicago in 1967 and first began exhibiting her work in the early 2000s. She has had one-person exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Modern, London; the Studio Museum in Harlem; and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, among others. In 2014 she presented *The Free People's Medical Clinic* in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, a project commissioned by Creative Time. Her work was included in the 2012 and 2019 Whitney Biennials. Leigh is the first artist to be commissioned for the High Line Plinth: her monumental sculpture *Brick House* was unveiled in April 2019. Leigh represented the United States at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022 with her exhibition *Simone Leigh: Sovereignty*. Her work was also included in the central exhibition, *The Milk of Dreams*, for which she was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Participant. In 2022, she presented *Loophole of Retreat: Venice*, a three-day symposium curated by Rashida Bumbray that featured presentations by over 60 artists, writers, performers, and activists. In 2023, her 20-year career survey opened at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, and traveled to the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the California African American Museum in Los Angeles. Leigh's bronze works will be featured at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens in a solo presentation that will open in late April 2025. The Royal Academy in London is organizing a large-scale solo exhibition of the artist's work in fall 2027.

Pamela J. Joyner and Alfred J. Giuffrida

Pamela J. Joyner has nearly 30 years of experience in the investment industry. She is the founder of Avid Partners, LLC, where her expertise has been the alternative investment arena. Currently, Joyner is focused on her philanthropic interests in the arts and education. Joyner is a trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago, the J. Paul Getty Trust, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In 2020 she joined the board of trustees of The Museum of Modern Art in New York, and in 2021 she became the co-chair of MoMA's Painting and Sculpture Committee. In 2020, with others, she also founded the Black Trustee Alliance for Art Museums. Previously, Joyner's philanthropic involvements have included service as a member of President Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, a trustee of Dartmouth College, a trustee of the New York City Ballet, a trustee and co-chair of the San Francisco Ballet Association, and work with other arts and educational organizations.

Fred Giuffrida began his career at the law firm of Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle, a predecessor of Nixon Peabody LLP, and served as its managing director for five years. In between stints at Nixon Hargrave, he was an executive officer of a venture-funded start-up, Empire Airlines. Giuffrida received a BA from the University of Notre Dame, followed by a JD from Harvard Law School. At the end of 2022 Giuffrida retired as managing director of Horsley Bridge Partners, where he worked for 27 years, and today serves as a manager and treasurer of Blue Sky Trust, LLC. Giuffrida has been an active supporter of the visual and performing arts as well as various charitable causes, performing roles including chairman

elect of the Nevada Museum of Art and director of the Renown Health Foundation and Friends of New Curators.

PERFORMER BIO:

Phony Ppl represents the cream of Brooklyn's young musician crop—each member is a classically trained musician and the product of parents who gifted their children musical DNA, exposure to the greats, and, most importantly, space for exploration and self-discovery. The collective was formed after several jam sessions throughout high school and different iterations of the band, allowing them to hone in on their sonic influences. Phony Ppl takes pride in their genre-less sound, but throughout the years, they have experimented with jazz, hip-hop, R&B, reggae, soul, rock, and many more subgenres. The band has received praise from the likes of Tyler, The Creator and Childish Gambino; performed with Erykah Badu, Jill Scott, and the Roots; and delighted audiences at music festivals, late-night television appearances, and their own residency at New York City's legendary Blue Note.

Lead vocalist Elbee Thrie, a former Manhattan School of Music student, brings warmth through his vocals and lyrics. Aja Grant, a trained composer, provides cowriting, keys, and the bulk of the band's arrangements. Strings are manned by guitarist Elijah Rawk and Bari Bass, Phony Ppl's visual artist and bass player. The crew's heartbeat is percussionist and former Music Conservatory student Mathew Byas, whose father is DJ Jazzy Jay of the legendary Zulu Nation.

**** PRESS MUST REQUEST ACCESS TO ATTEND. ****

PRESS CONTACTS:

Stephanie Katsias, stephanie_katsias@moma.org
Brea Demery, brea_demery@moma.org