



The Visual Arts Bring Cultural, Economic, and Social Benefits

Remarks by **Governor Dr. Kevin Greenidge** at the
Official Launch of the 2024 Crop Over Visual Arts Festival

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Good evening, ladies and gentlemen,

Please join me in extending the heartiest congratulations to the National Cultural Foundation on 50 years of Crop Over – a significant milestone worthy of major celebration. The Foundation has a lot in store for us this year, and we at the Bank wish them a successful, rewarding, and safe Crop Over.

In recognition of its commitment to the arts and culture over the years, and in celebration of this golden anniversary, the Bank is increasing its support of the Festival. I'm pleased to announce that, besides our support for this exhibition, we have increased our backing for the festival this year to platinum sponsorship. Stay tuned! You'll hear more about our deeper involvement in Barbados' sweetest festival in the coming weeks.

Today, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to sponsoring this visual arts exhibition. As we did last year, we're injecting \$80,000 into this event to support Barbadian sculptors, painters, photographers, other visual artists, and lovers of this medium.

This year's display, themed "Diffusing Borders in Colour, Motion, and Form," has three components. The first is particularly special for us at the Bank because it showcases, for the first time ever, 16 pieces from the Bank's collection, many of which you have never seen, along with pieces from the national collection. We acquired our works over the years from this exhibition, and either a jury or former Governor selected them.

Of interest is the one common thread in their stories. Our exhibits speak about Barbadian history, our cultural uniqueness, our love of music and festivals, our collective and individual struggles, and our ongoing interrogation of who we are as a people. Their collective portrayal of Barbados is, in other words, both critical and celebratory, and – apart from pleasing the eye and intriguing the mind – the artists help us ask important questions about who we are and where we are going. They reflect our theme of "Diffusing Borders in Colour, Motion, and Form."

We are delighted that you can enjoy them along with pieces from the national art collection over the next few weeks. I encourage all art lovers to come to view these exhibits.

The second exhibition, "Diffusing Borders in Colour, Motion, and Form – Contemporary Practice," is open to all practicing artists.

And the third exhibition, "Diffusing Borders in Colour, Motion, and Form – Reconnections," is a collaboration with a Nigerian gallery. I commend the NCF for this inspiring concept reflecting the exhibition's theme. I love how we are using the visual arts to help us diffuse borders that block our minds from attaining freedom and encourage us to replace negativity with positivity. I firmly believe in these two principles of mental liberty and accentuating the positive. They've been the guiding principles of my life.

As I said last year at my first exhibition as Governor, I intend to continue our support of this exhibition and build on that legacy of support for the arts and artists in Barbados that my predecessors started. Our commitment and support are built on the premise that the arts enrich us as a people, a country, and an economy.

Supporting the visual arts in Barbados provides significant cultural, economic, and social benefits. I wish to identify three such benefits.

The first is cultural preservation and national identity. Supporting the visual arts helps to both protect and promote Barbados' unique culture, heritage, and identity. The visual arts reflect our island's history, and contemporary experiences, fostering a sense of pride and unity. By investing in the arts, the Central Bank ensures that Barbados' cultural legacy is preserved for future generations, enhancing national cohesion and cultural continuity.

Next is economic development and tourism. The visual arts sector contributes to economic development by attracting tourists and creating jobs. Art galleries, exhibitions, and festivals draw visitors, increasing tourism revenue and promoting Barbados as a culturally rich destination. Additionally, supporting local artists and art-related businesses stimulates economic activity, creates employment opportunities, and encourages entrepreneurship within the creative industries, diversifying the economy. As I stated in my economic reports, we're seeing a pent-up demand for recreational and creative services, and we must continue to reap the benefits of those opportunities through activities like these. People engage in these activities, generating significant economic hype for businesses and the country. On that note, I encourage businesses to use the incentives announced in the budget this year for the purchase of artwork to retrofit their offices. You can't buy today because this first expo features the Bank's pieces and artwork from the national collection. Be sure to return for the other exhibitions in the series.

The final benefit I wish to address is social impact and community engagement. Our investment in the visual arts has profound social benefits, including fostering creativity, critical thinking, and community engagement. Arts programmes provide educational opportunities, particularly for young people, enhancing their cognitive and social skills. Moreover, the visual arts serve as a platform for dialogue and expression, addressing social issues and promoting inclusivity.

So, we shall continue to promote this exhibition because of its transformative and enriching powers for our society and community. That's my pledge to artists and the Foundation.

Before I conclude, join me in congratulating the NCF and all its stakeholders for continuing to include this exhibition in a festival that music dominates, and for the sustained growth of Crop Over during the

past 50 years into a viable economic activity in our softer tourism months. I wish you success in executing our cultural calendar's biggest and most economically rewarding festival.

Happy Crop Over! Happy Season of Emancipation!

Enjoy the events safely.

Thank you.