

To the City Council of Baltimore

in re: COUNCIL BILL 21-0022R

I would like to voice my support for the proposed \$1M emergency relief fund to support Baltimore artists.

I'm an intermedia artist, writer, and musician who has worked in the city of Baltimore for nearly 20 years. I'm a strong believer in the unique nature of Baltimore's collaborative and adventurous arts communities — this is the energy that drew me to the city and which has allowed me to flourish as an artist. Of course, it's hard to flourish when resources are sparse and the institutions that are supposed to be helping us cannot.

As of this writing, I have not performed for a live audience in a year and three days. Before the pandemic, it was typical for me to perform multiple times per month, and while I was able to arrange a handful of online performances in 2020, there is no comparison for the lost income and lost audience. Performing artists are among the hardest-hit by this pandemic; we were the first to lose our livelihoods as everything shuttered; and we are going to be among the last to get back to work as we await our own vaccinations, the safe reopening of venues, and the safe return of audiences. I don't expect to "return to normal" anytime soon, and I'll be surprised if I set foot on a stage before 2022. But a return certainly won't happen unless the artists who make Baltimore's cultural landscape so vibrant are supported.

I have been lucky this year to have had an MFA program and contract work to tide me over and continue to grow my art practice. A lot of my artist colleagues (most of which is LGBTQ and/or BIPOC) have not been so fortunate, especially those who have not been able to access unemployment benefits or emergency healthcare. Struggling with non-functioning systems is exhausting and not great for artistic inspiration! It is important that this fund, if it is approved, should be systemically easy for artists to apply for and access.

An emergency artists fund for Baltimore would be a much needed balm for the artists of Baltimore still struggling after a year of quarantine, and the real beneficiary of such a fund will be Baltimore, the Greatest City in America.

Sincerely,

Rahne Alexander

Artist

rahne.com

