



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jonathan Harwell-Dye, Director of Programs  
(615) 460-8274 | [jharwelldye@abcnashville.org](mailto:jharwelldye@abcnashville.org)

## Arts & Business Council awards more than \$7,500 in cash and prizes at the annual *Periscope Pitch + Artist Entrepreneur Showcase*

*Artist entrepreneurs Jamila ‘Mimi’ McCarley, Keisha Becerra, Stephcynie Curry, Lyndy Rutledge and Kyshona Armstrong honored with top awards*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (September 9, 2021)—The [Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville](#) is pleased to announce the winners of the 8<sup>th</sup> annual *Periscope Pitch + Artist Entrepreneur Showcase* held at OZ Arts Nashville on Sept. 8. The event was the culmination of this year’s [Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training](#), a year-long intensive business development curriculum and mentorship program for local artists of all disciplines.

The Arts & Business Council’s first in-person, public event since March 2020, the nonprofit arts service organization adhered to strict health and safety protocols for the pitch and showcase based on current health guidelines and industry standards. All staff, volunteers and attendees were required to provide proof of vaccination, or a negative COVID test, at the door, and everyone was required to wear a mask while inside the building. Physical distancing was encouraged and seating was arranged so that parties could distance appropriately.

The evening began with the *Artist Entrepreneur Showcase* in which artists displayed their work and creative business plans to the public. Attendees browsed artists’ tables, engaged in conversation with artists about their work, and exchanged business cards and contact information opening the door to future collaboration and support. Following the showcase, eight artists pitched their creative business plans live on stage in the *Periscope Pitch* competition, hosted by [NewsChannel 5](#)’s Henry Rothenberg. A panel of four expert judges asked questions and provided feedback, scoring each of the pitches with regard to business acumen, artistic excellence, and overall presentation effectiveness. This year’s panel included: Brittany Cole, Founder, Career Thrivers; Gina Miller, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Entertainment One; Katie Shaw, Owner, Red Arrow Gallery; and James Worsham, Owner and Creative Engineer, Handy Dandy Productions. The audience was also invited to help select the winners, voting digitally for both their favorite business pitch and favorite showcase display. In the end, five artists walked away with more than \$7,500 in cash and prizes!

**Jamila ‘Mimi’ McCarly**, co-founder of Nashville is Not Just Country Music, won the Piedmont Natural Gas Pitch Perfect Award, with a cash prize of \$2,500, for her business helping up-and-coming local musicians create and license their music for film and television projects. Sync licensing has continued to be an effective and important revenue stream for artists, and Nashville is Not Just Country Music assists emerging talent in the creation and marketing of unique, commercially viable catalogs of music.

In a surprise tie, **Keisha Becerra** and **Stephcynie Curry** were both awarded the Fifth Third Bank Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award, a \$1,500 cash prize for each. Becerra is the founder of Xavier Arts, a creative company that focuses on diverse representation in art and media. Xavier Arts creates coloring books, notebooks, stationary, and more featuring women of color and showcasing the full diversity of people throughout the U.S. Stephcynie Curry is the founder of Paid2Play, a music festival that develops emerging musical artists by helping them create high-quality, well-produced content that demonstrates their value and helps them get “paid to play.”



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jonathan Harwell-Dye, Director of Programs  
(615) 460-8274 | [jharwelldye@abcnashville.org](mailto:jharwelldye@abcnashville.org)

**Lyndy Rutledge**, founder of Firefly Artisan Fair, won the Core Development Community Choice Award, a \$1,500 cash prize, for her business pitch. Firefly is an annual, night-time artisan fair focused exclusively on Nashville-based artists, artisans, and makers. Happening on Saturday, October 23, 2021, Lyndy hopes to attract event sponsors and increase attendance for the annual celebration of Nashville's creative spirit.

In addition, **Kyshona Armstrong**, founder of Your Song, walked away with the Southwest Airlines Best in Showcase Award for her impactful display showcasing her creative business. Your Song is a songwriting program for people of all ages, musical backgrounds, and walks of life. A singer-songwriter and musical therapist, Armstrong uses a therapeutic approach to songwriting in both individual and group settings to uncover the treasure in every person and reunite them with the world that needs them.

All five winners received a free round-trip ticket from Southwest Airlines.

The entire *Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training* cohort was honored with a graduation ceremony (listed alphabetically by first name): [Bliss Cortez](#) (Multidisciplinary), [Bradley Montesi](#) (Film/Television), [Cassie Pitman](#) (Visual Art/Wearable Ceramics), [Hunter Perschbacher](#) (Film/Television), [Jamila "Mimi" McCarley](#) (Music Publishing, Business Development)\*, [Jammie Williams](#) (Visual Art), [Janelle Faiman](#) (Multidisciplinary)\*, [Jenny Petite Steiner](#) (Visual Art), [Karen Matkosky](#) (Multidisciplinary), [Keisha Becerra](#) (Visual Art), [Kyshona Armstrong](#) (Music), [Lindsay Davis](#) (Visual Art), [Lyndy Rutledge](#) (Public Art/Creative Placemaking), [Monya Nikahd](#) (Multidisciplinary), [Natalie Jean](#) (Music), [Rachel Karr](#) (Visual Art), [Rebecca Titus](#) (Literary Arts), [Reza Filsoofi](#) (Multidisciplinary), [Sarah Clinton](#) (Visual Art), [Stephcynie Curry](#) (Music)\*, [Terrell Johnson](#) (Visual Art), [Tosha Pendergrast](#) (Multidisciplinary), [Ty Swint](#) (Multidisciplinary), and [Tyler Champion](#) (Visual Art).

*Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training* provides a cohort of artists with the tools to see their artistic vision through an entrepreneurial lens including training, exchange, mentorship, and exposure opportunities like the *Periscope Pitch + Artist Entrepreneur Showcase*. Applications for the class of 2022 open in early January at [abcnashville.org/periscope](http://abcnashville.org/periscope).

###

### **About the Arts & Business Council**

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville leverages and unites the unique resources of the arts and business communities to create a thriving, sustainable creative culture in Nashville.

We accomplish this through five main programs: Volunteer Lawyers & Professionals for the Arts, Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training, Fiscal Sponsorship, Education for the Creative Community, and Arts Board Matching, among many other resources and opportunities.

For more information, visit [www.abcnashville.org](http://www.abcnashville.org) or contact 615-460-8274.

**Photos by Tiffany Bessire.**