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Arts & Business Council awards more than \$7,500 in cash and prizes at the 2024 *Periscope Pitch + Artist Entrepreneur Showcase*

Artist entrepreneurs Angela Grant, Stephen Joel Watts, Alvaro Hernandez and Lily Wujek receive top awards.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (September 5, 2024)—The [Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville](#) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2024 *Periscope Pitch + Artist Entrepreneur Showcase* held at OZ Arts Nashville on September 4. 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 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 about their work, and networked with business leaders, community members, and fellow creative entrepreneurs, 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 hosted by **Isaac Kirk**, actor, writer, and Director of Equity & Inclusion at Third Coast Comedy Club.

Before the Pitches began, 2023 Periscope Alum and Piedmont Natural Gas Pitch Perfect Award recipient **Bryson Finney** took to the stage to share his experience with the program.

"I know there are artists just like me all over our community who are looking for guidance, direction and mentorship," said Finney. "We have a gold mine right here in the Periscope program!"

Finney, the founder and artistic director of the We Are Nashville Festival, highlighted his experience in the Periscope program's weekly small group sessions with his classmates and group leader, Periscope 2021 alum Mimi McCarley calling it a safe space for questions, comments and growth. He credited those sessions along with his mentor with helping him take his festival to a new level this past spring. The festival hosted over 2000 attendees and Finney established a non-profit to continue to offer artistic programming for aspiring young artists.

After each artist's pitch, a panel of four expert judges asked questions and provided feedback. The pitches were scored on business acumen, artistic excellence, and presentation effectiveness. This year's panel included: **Em Wilder**, Program Manager (Twendé), Nashville Entrepreneur Center; **Evan Roosevelt Brown**, Curator + Creative Director; **Jeremy Cowart**, Artist, Photographer + Creator of [PORTRAITLAB.CO](#); and Singer-Songwriter **MORGXN**. The audience also helped select the winners by voting digitally for both their favorite business pitch and their favorite showcase display. While the scores were tallied, the audience was treated to a live performance by musical artist, activist, educator and Periscope 2023 alum **Ariel Bui**. Ultimately, four artists were awarded a combined total of over \$7,500 in cash and prizes!

[Angela Grant](#) (**literary arts, artistic wellness**) won the night's highest honor, the Piedmont Natural Gas Pitch Perfect Award, receiving \$2,500. Founder of **Angela's Anchor**, Angela leverages 15+ years of expertise to guide individuals through grief and loss. Her passion for writing, event curation, and counseling converge in transformative grief retreats. She is currently seeking investment to renovate the barn on the family farm where she grew up into a retreat center so she can help more people in their journeys through grief.

[Stephen Joel Watts](#) (**literary arts, public art/creative placemaking**) earned the Fifth Third Bank Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award, receiving \$2,000. Stephen is a writer who builds curriculums, conducts workshops, and

curates public art at the intersection of race, gender, and social justice. The goal of this work is to build awareness of the patterns of power and control that connect all forms of oppression. He is partnering with other artists to create spaces for self-expression through storytelling that include a physical magazine, a digital magazine, and curated artist showcases.

[Alvaro Hernandez](#) (visual art, photography) received the Backstage Strategies Community Choice Award for receiving the most audience votes in support of his business pitch, receiving \$1,500. The Venezuelan-born, Nashville-based street photographer had dedicated himself to establishing "The Confident Photographer," a workshop for individuals like himself who suffer from social anxiety to help them build confidence through the art of street photography.

[Lily Wujek](#) (fine jewelry) earned the Southwest Airlines Best in Showcase Award for her impactful display showcasing her creative business, receiving \$1,500. Lily's display highlighted her line of sterling silver fine jewelry with precious gemstones as well as her bespoke, solid-gold jewelry pieces. Her design style exudes the ethos, "There is beauty in simplicity," and her jewelry collection prioritizes craft, comfort & elegance. She designs and makes every piece from her studio in Nashville.

All four winners also received a round-trip flight voucher for two from Southwest Airlines to further their creative business.

The entire 2024 *Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training* cohort was honored at a graduation ceremony to close the event. They are (listed alphabetically by first name): [Ania Diallo](#) (visual art, multi-disciplinary), [Anne Buckle](#) (music), [Bryan Ruby](#) (music), [Diedre Husak](#) (visual art), [Derrick Johnson](#) (visual art, photography), [Dina Rae Capitani](#) (visual art, literary arts, multi-disciplinary), [Hannah Dorfman](#) (drama, theatre, performance art, music), [Jamaica Shaw](#) (fashion/textiles, visual art, paper engineering), [James Lauderdale, Jr.](#) (literary arts, magazine publishing, spoken word), [Kenny Grass](#) (film/television, visual art), [Kevin Page](#) (visual art, public art/creative placemaking), [Kimberly Clo](#) (visual art), [Leslie LeChance](#) (literary arts, visual art), [Logan Elder](#) (visual art, photography), [Lydia Underwood](#) (multi-disciplinary, interior design), [Meghan Guilfoil](#) (visual art), [Mehuman Ernst](#) (multi-disciplinary, music, podcaster), [Nija Woods](#) (visual art, therapeutic art), [Roz Malone](#) (music, therapeutic art), [Sahara Moon](#) (music), and [Sarah Atenhan](#) (drama/theatre/performance art, dance).

Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training is a program of the Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville originally created in partnership with the Nashville Entrepreneur Center, Metro Arts: Nashville's Office of Arts + Culture, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Mayor's Office of Economic & Community Development. The Periscope is presented by Amazon, with program support provided by Backstage Strategies, Fifth Third Bank, Piedmont Natural Gas, Southwest Airlines, and the Tennessee Entertainment Commission. Additional operating support for the Arts & Business Council is provided by the Tennessee Arts Commission, Ingram Charities, the Marlene and Spencer Hays Foundation, NWI Nashville, HCA Healthcare Foundation, Mike Curb Foundation/Curb Records, Core Development, and The Core Fund of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee.

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About the Arts & Business Council

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that 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 programs including Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training, Volunteer Lawyers & Professionals for the Arts, Arts Board Matching, Fiscal Sponsorship, Education for the Creative Community, Creative Advantage Corporate Training, and Project Management & Consulting, among many other resources and opportunities. For more information, visit www.abcnashville.org or contact 615-460-8274.