

May 13, 2025

PRESS RELEASE: The IAAM Creatives Collection

Contact: Paul Holston, Marketing & Communications Manager
at paul.holston@iaamuseum.org; IAAM Marketing Division at media@iaamuseum.org.

International African American Museum Launches IAAM Creatives Collection to Uplift Local Creative Economy

Charleston, S.C. — The International African American Museum (IAAM) is thrilled to announce the launch of the **IAAM Creatives Collection**, a new retainer initiative designed to foster collaboration and provide opportunities for entrepreneurs within the creative and imaginative industries throughout the Lowcountry and the Carolinas.

This initiative reaffirms IAAM's commitment to investing in the local community by identifying and partnering with a curated group of talented creatives. This includes, but is not limited to designers, photographers, artists, makers, storytellers, and cultural innovators who deeply embody the spirit and diversity of the region. Selected partners will be integral in contributing their unique skills to IAAM's evolving programming, exhibitions, and overall membership and visitor experiences through paid, project-based opportunities.

"The IAAM Creatives Collection is more than a partnership — it's a love letter to our region's brilliance and a bold commitment to uplift real talent already doing incredible work," said Ashlei Elise, IAAM's Chief Marketing Officer. "By expanding their reach and investing with our shared vision mind, we're building legacy, creating impact, and giving back in a meaningful, lasting way. This is good work — soulful, bold, and community-powered — and it's how we continue to fulfill our mission at IAAM every day."

The IAAM Creatives Collection is built on the principles of:

- **Project-Based Opportunities:** Providing creatives with paid engagements that directly contribute to IAAM's programming, exhibitions, membership and storytelling initiatives.
- **Community Investment:** Demonstrating IAAM's dedication to supporting local talent through professional development, increased visibility, and fair compensation for their contributions.

- **Collaborative Growth:** Fostering a dynamic environment of mutual inspiration and building a sustainable ecosystem for the creative community.

IAAM is proud to announce initial cohorts of creative partners who will contribute their expertise to the museum:



- **Henry D. Smalls, Just Show Out Events:** Serving as an event coordinator focused on IAAM’s membership-focused events. Smalls is a visionary leader in the event planning industry, renowned for his innovative approach and commitment to excellence and brings expertise in logistics, creative vision, and operational efficiency. His goal in working with IAAM is to ensure that every event aligns with the museum’s mission and enhances its visitor experience. Under his guidance, Just Show Out Events, operating out of Charleston and Columbia, S.C., has earned a reputation for transforming clients’ visions into reality with unparalleled professionalism and creativity, orchestrating a wide array of events from intimate gatherings to large-scale concerts. Their comprehensive services extend to catering, offering delectable bites and exquisite entrées.



- **Collyn Strother, CROO Design+Studio:** Serving as a graphics designer for IAAM. A North Carolina native and creative professional, Strother blends art, design, and community. He is the owner of CROO Design+Studio, the creative lead behind the streetwear brand Wise Mind Movement, and manages Gallery 13, a space championing modern pop art and emerging talent. A proud Fayetteville State University graduate, Strother's distinctive aesthetic tells a story and emphasizes emotion. His past work includes branding for the Arts Council of Fayetteville-Cumberland County's "We Are The Arts" campaign and leading the City of Fayetteville's "Yellow Movement" public art initiative.



- **Trenise Elmore, Your World on Film:** Serving as a photographer and videographer for IAAM. Elmore is a servant leader, storyteller, mother, and the visionary behind Your World On Film—a creative photo and video agency based in Charleston, S.C. Passionate about helping people tell their stories authentically and impactfully, Your World On Film is a creative hub that fosters connection, collaboration, and intentional creativity through visual services, mentorship, and workshops.



- **Tip Hughes, Tip Hughes Designs:** Serving as a graphics designer for IAAM. Hughes is a seasoned Jamaican American graphic designer and marketing strategist with over 12 years of experience leading public-facing campaigns across various sectors. With a background in graphic communications, she combines strategic vision with creative expertise to craft thoughtful and effective marketing solutions. Known for translating complex ideas into compelling visuals, she actively volunteers her talents to uplift Black and brown students in the community, focusing on mental health, educational access, and food access.

Through the IAAM Creatives Collection, the museum aims to build a robust network that not only directly supports its mission but also amplifies the unique and vital voices within the local creative economy. IAAM welcomes those interested in sponsoring our IAAM Creatives Collection. Those interested in learning more on how to support our new initiative can inquire more at marketing@iaamuseum.org.

About the International African American Museum

The **International African American Museum (IAAM)** explores the history, culture, and impact of the African American journey on Charleston, South Carolina, the nation, and the world, shining light and sharing stories of the diverse journeys, origin, and achievements of descendants of the African Diaspora. Located at the historically sacred site of Gadsden's Wharf, IAAM honors the untold stories of the African American journey. Learn more at www.iaamuseum.org and follow IAAM on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [BlueSky](#).