



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Maelynn Ford Appointed Executive Director of the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas**

January 13, 2025

Nassau, The Bahamas—**The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas (NAGB) is pleased to announce the appointment of Maelynn Ford as its new Executive Director, effective Monday, January 6, 2025.** Following an extensive eight-month search, Ford, a highly respected leader in the arts and education sector, brings a wealth of experience and a focused vision to advance NAGB’s role as an integral part of Bahamian art and culture.

“Finding the right leader for the NAGB was a challenging but rewarding process, and we are thrilled to welcome Maelynn Ford,” said John Cox, Chair of the NAGB Board. “Her academic background, administrative expertise, and demonstrated passion for the arts make her uniquely suited to guide the museum into an exciting new chapter. We are confident in her ability to further our mission as a space that fosters creativity, accessibility, and inspires pride through art.”

#### **A Proven Leader in the Arts and Education Sector**

Ford joins the NAGB after an extensive career spanning two decades at the University of The Bahamas. There, she held key roles, including Chief of Staff, and University Secretary and Director of Special Projects. She played a leading role in UB’s transition to university status, worked closely with the Ministry of Education, and coordinated major institutional events such as Commencement.

In addition to her role at UB, Ford completed a transformative two-year term as a Personal Assistant-Writer to the Rt. Hon. Perry Christie, then Prime Minister of The Bahamas, giving her a strong foundation in government operations. This experience, combined with her role on the working group for Expo 2020 Dubai, where she contributed to the design and programming of The Bahamas pavilion, reflects her expertise in navigating both governmental and cultural spaces.

Her membership on the Blue Flamingo Literary Festival committee and leadership on initiatives like the UB Goes Orange movement against gender-based violence further highlight her values, and her ability to bridge creative vision with effective management.

Ford's appointment is a full-circle moment in her career. She recounts, as a young writer at the University of The Bahamas (then College of The Bahamas), interviewing the NAGB's founding director, Dr. Erica James. Dr. James' passion for her work and the institution left a lasting impression. Reflecting on that moment, she remembered thinking how much she would love to have a role like that one day. "Twenty years later, here I am," Ford shared.

Her love for Bahamian art was nurtured by her aunt, Verona Seymour, who introduced her to iconic artists and writers like Amos Ferguson and Telcine Turner-Rolle. This exposure in her formative years inspired Ford to pursue degrees in the arts, deepening her appreciation for creative practices and their role in shaping identity and fostering community. She is a practicing poet and a familiar face at the NAGB, having contributed to several exhibitions, most notably *Refuge* and *As We Knew Him*, One Family's Tribute to Jackson Burnside.

### **Vision for the NAGB**

Ford's vision for the NAGB is clear: it's about education and accessibility. "Every school child should know who we are and, by extension, know Bahamian artists. They need to understand that careers in the arts are possible," Ford said. "If we don't educate our community, our pool of arts bastions won't grow. Art makes us human, and I'm committed to ensuring that the NAGB touches as many in our community as possible to spread this kind of humanity."

Looking ahead, Ford aims to expand the museum's programming beyond its walls, forging partnerships to bring Bahamian art to wider audiences. She hopes to build on initiatives like the recently opened satellite space, *The Lobby at Pelican Bay* in Grand Bahama, and explore more opportunities to "take art to the people."

Ford looks forward to collaborating with the NAGB's dedicated team. "This is a strong group of professionals who are deeply committed to the museum's mission," she said. "Certainly, I feel that same dedication, and together, we will enhance our programming and deepen our engagement with the community. I want everyone to know the NAGB's story and what we are doing here."

### **About Maelynn Ford**

Maelynn Ford holds a Master of Arts degree in Poetic Practice and a Bachelor of Arts degree (Hons.) in English from Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, UK. Her education and experience reflect her deep commitment to exploring language and the arts as transformative tools for education, community building, and sense of self. Ford has collaborated with a dedicated group of writers since 2018, fostering a community that challenges each other. She is an avid reader, a lover of Junkanoo, and a collector of Bahamian books and art. Her publication history can be found at [maelynnbacchus.com](http://maelynnbacchus.com).

Ford brings a dynamic blend of academic achievement, creative practice, and cultural advocacy, and is poised to lead the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas into a vibrant new era.

### **About the NAGB**

The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas is an art museum located in the historic Villa Doyle, a mansion from the 1860s that was thoughtfully restored and converted as a space to celebrate Bahamian art and culture. The museum is home to a significant collection of Bahamian artwork, from historic to contemporary, ensuring we honor our heritage while embracing new perspectives. Beyond its galleries, the NAGB offers an amphitheater, a museum store, and a dynamic calendar of workshops, talks, community events, and family programs. Admission is free to Bahamians and residents every Sunday.

Visit [nagb.org.bs](http://nagb.org.bs) for more information.

### **Mission & Vision**

The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas (NAGB) is a world-class museum with a passion for knowledge and a drive to push cultural boundaries. The NAGB collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets historic and contemporary Bahamian art. We exist to educate, uplift, and inspire.

As the leading art institution for The Bahamas, we will actively nurture and provoke a healthy cultural ecosystem, empowering multiple generations of Bahamians. By fostering robust partnerships locally, regionally, and internationally, and by building institutional capacity, the NAGB will become a changemaker in our communities. Through providing more opportunities for access, our public will gain a sense of pride and become active participants in writing their own stories.

### **Information**

For hours, admission fees, and to see what's on, visit [nagb.org.bs/admission](http://nagb.org.bs/admission).

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