



BLACKSTAR LUMINARY GALA

November 21, 2025 • The Switch House • Philadelphia, PA

ABOUT

BlackStar Projects is thrilled to present the 2025 Luminary Gala, an unforgettable night honoring trailblazers transforming the arts, culture, and media landscape.

The Luminary Gala is a must-attend event, bringing together artists, philanthropists, and BlackStar’s vibrant community of supporters to celebrate our work and raise vital funds for its continued growth.

As BlackStar’s premier fundraising event, the Gala raises essential resources to support our year-round programs, which empower Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists in the moving image field.

The evening will feature the Luminary Awards, presented to artists, cultural leaders, and collectives whose contributions align with BlackStar’s mission of creating a more just and liberatory world.

The 2025 Luminary Award recipients are Autumn Durald Arkapaw, Meshell Ndegeocello, Robert Townsend, and Third World Newsreel.



Host committee members Ernest Owens (top right) and Noura Erakat (bottom right) at the 2024 Luminary Gala.
Photos by Jirarud Key / BFA.

PAST HONOREES

2024

Annemarie Jacir
Louis Massiah
New Negress
Film Society
Tourmaline

2023

COUSIN Collective
June Givanni
Shannon Maldonado
Telfar Clemens
Babak Radboy

2022-2013

Mira Nair (2022)
Melenik Shabazz (2021)
Marcia Smith (2019)
Malik Sayeed (2018)
Ava DuVernay (2017)
Julie Dash (2016)
dream hampton (2015)
RZA (2014)
Howard University Film
Program (2013)



2024 Luminary Gala Honorees. Photos by Jiraurd Key / BFA

LOOKING BACK AT THE 2024 LUMINARY GALA

The second annual Luminary Gala, hosted in late 2024, was a beautiful evening of celebration, entertainment, and the Luminary Awards presentation.

Held at Philadelphia’s Switch House, last year’s Gala honored New Negress Film Society, Tourmaline, Louis Massiah, and Annemarie Jacir for their groundbreaking work in film and cultural advocacy.

The event was generously supported by Open Society Foundations, with additional sponsorship from Forman Arts Initiative, The Ogilvie Family Foundation, Sessions College, The Free Library Foundation, Hon. Frederica Massiah-Jackson, Rebecca O’Leary Art Advisory, Dream World Bakes, and Philadelphia Distilling.

The 2024 Luminary Gala Host Committee included:

Adjoa Jones de Almeida, Andre D. Carroll, André Robert Lee, Bill Adair, Dana Gills Mycoo, Deesha Philyaw, Ernest Owens, Irit Reinheimer, James Claiborne, Jenny Raskin, Kyle Easley, Lauren Jane Holland, Marcel Pratt, Sen. Nikil Saval, Noura Erakat, Nuala Cabral, Rachel Branson, Rakia Reynolds, Raymond Perkins, Reginald M. Browne, and Tina Farris.



“The depth of the evocative energy on display at BlackStar’s Luminary Gala in Philadelphia was hard to ignore. Hosted at the aesthetically stunning Switch House, the evening was filled with laughter, performances, fanfare, and plenty of fundraising.”

- ESSENCE Magazine

Sudan Green (L) and host committee member André Lee (R) at the 2024 Luminary Gala. Photo by Jiraurd Key / BFA.

ABOUT BLACKSTAR

BlackStar creates the spaces and resources needed to uplift the work of Black, Brown and Indigenous artists working outside of the confines of genre. Our programs provide artists opportunities for viable strategies for collaborations with other artists, audiences, funders, and distributors. And, we curate every aspect of our events to be intentional community building efforts, connecting diverse audiences in a Black-led space centered on joy and thriving.

Since its founding, BlackStar has expanded to meet the holistic needs of our audiences and currently offers a suite of programming, including:

- BlackStar Film Festival
- Curatorial Projects & Exhibitions
- *Seen*, a journal of film, art, and visual culture
- The William and Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar
- Year-round programming



“We’re interested in pushing against the boundaries of form and believe moving image artists can be the architects of a more liberatory world.”

-Maori Karmael Holmes,
Chief Executive & Artistic Officer

OUR IMPACT

BlackStar views cultural production as a key tool in addressing historical inequities for Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists.

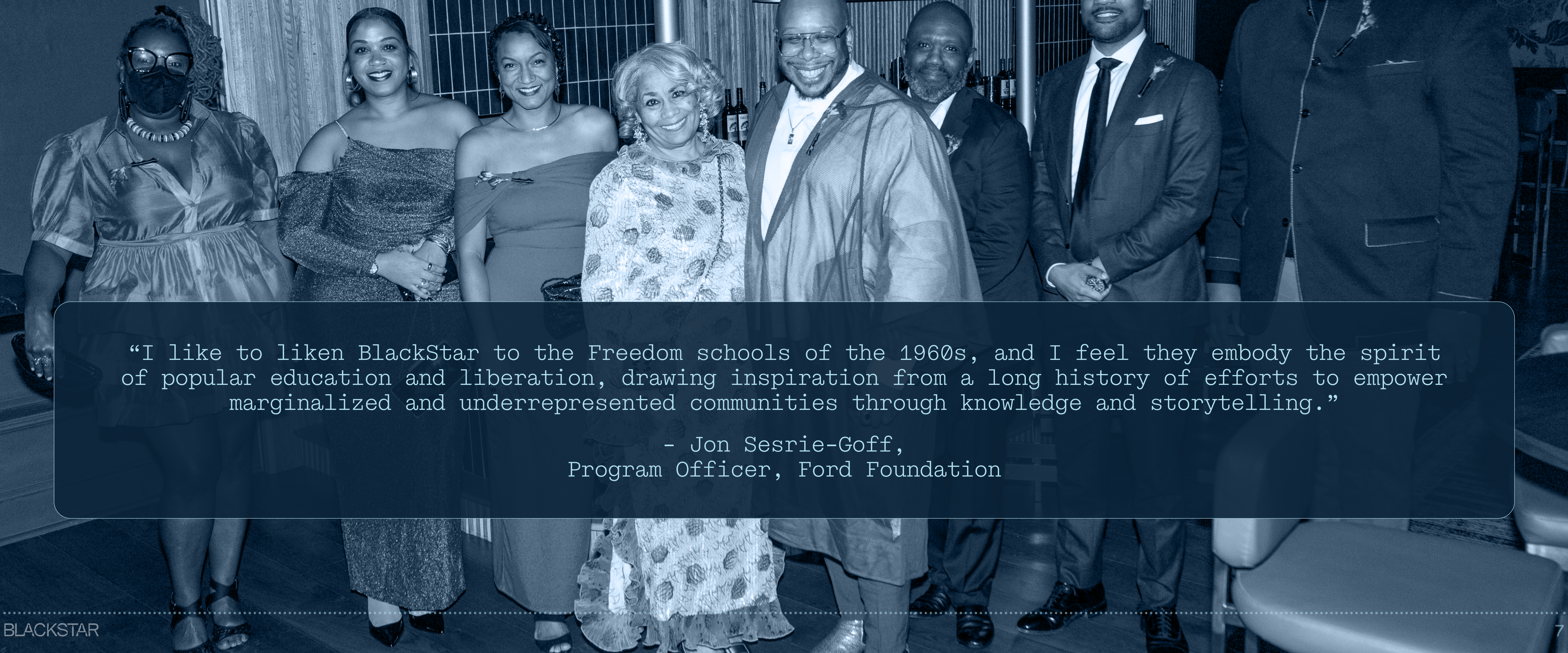
By creating opportunities for economic growth, creative expression, and community building, we focus on cultural healing and relational repair. We measure our impact through both qualitative and quantitative data, tracking the direct support we provide to filmmakers from these communities, the accessibility of our programs, and the strength of our partnerships with like-minded organizations in the arts, culture, and social justice sectors.



“At the BlackStar Film Festival, a Revelatory Understanding of Cinema”
- The New York Times



“BlackStar has become the premiere destination for experimental artistic endeavors, community, and conversation for Black and brown creators.”
- The Cut



“I like to liken BlackStar to the Freedom schools of the 1960s, and I feel they embody the spirit of popular education and liberation, drawing inspiration from a long history of efforts to empower marginalized and underrepresented communities through knowledge and storytelling.”

- Jon Sesrie-Goff,
Program Officer, Ford Foundation

SPONSORSHIP

By sponsoring the 2025 Luminary Gala, you’re directly supporting BlackStar’s mission to challenge systemic inequities in the media arts and beyond. Your contribution will help amplify the moving image as a powerful tool for social change and invest in the creative freedom of Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists.

As an artist-centered and artist-led organization, BlackStar is committed to creating care-focused spaces for creatives of color, providing them with the essential resources and support they need to thrive.

We recognize that artists of the global majority often face resource scarcity, isolation, and exclusion from funding and economic opportunities, while shouldering the weight of diversity and representation.

At BlackStar, we tackle these challenges with a thoughtful, strategic approach to programming, organizational structure, and partnerships with like-minded individuals, businesses, and nonprofits. Your sponsorship enables us to continue this vital work.



2024 Luminary Gala. Photos by Jiraurd Key / BFA

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Galaxy \$100,000 20 tickets to Cocktail Hour + Benefit Program Name and Logo on Digital and Printed Materials Premier Name + Logo Recognition onsite 30-second digital ad onscreen at the gala Full page ad in the program guide 10 All-Access Passes to BSFF2026	Constellation \$50,000 15 tickets to Cocktail Hour + Benefit Program Name and Logo on Digital and Printed Materials Prominent Name + Logo Recognition onsite 15 second digital ad onscreen at the gala Half page ad in the program guide 6 All-Access Passes to BSFF2026	Beacon \$25,000 10 tickets to Cocktail Hour + Benefit Program Name and Logo on Digital and Printed Materials Visible Name + Logo Recognition onsite Half page ad in the program guide 4 All-Access Passes to BSFF2026	Gleam \$10,000 6 tickets to Cocktail Hour + Benefit Program Name on Digital and Printed Materials Visible Name Recognition onsite 4 All-Access Passes to BSFF2026	Glow \$5,000 4 tickets to Cocktail Hour + Benefit Program Name on Digital and Printed Materials 2 All-Access Passes to BSFF2026	Blaze \$2,500 2 tickets to Cocktail Hour + Benefit Program Name on Digital and Printed Materials 2 Virtual Passes to BSFF2026	Shine \$1,000 1 ticket to Cocktail Hour + Benefit Program Name on Digital Materials 1 Virtual Pass to BSFF2026
---	--	---	---	---	---	--

IN-KIND OPPORTUNITIES

In-kind sponsorship for the Luminary Gala provides businesses and organizations a chance to contribute valuable goods or services while gaining visibility and recognition for their support.

These opportunities include:

- Sponsoring gift bags for gala attendees
- Alcohol and beverage donations as a sponsor of the cocktail hour and opportunities to highlight sponsorship through a signature cocktail;
- Event production support (e.g., audio/visual equipment, event furniture, signage,)
- Event design and decor, such as floral arrangements or branded decorations, and support transportation or travel needs, including shuttle services or hotel accommodations for out-of-town guests.
- Dressing and/or styling BlackStar’s leadership team, hosts, and honorees
- In-kind marketing trades (e.g., social media promotion and advertising)

We welcome in-kind sponsorship inquiries and look forward to discussing options should your business be interested in any of above-mentioned services or products, or services and products not listed above.



2024 Luminary Gala Attendee Gift: Floral Arrangement by Botanic Village

JOIN US

Join our supporter community today
as a BlackStar Luminary Awards Sponsor!

Become a part of one of the world’s most welcoming, inspiring, and collaborative organizations for filmmakers, writers, artists and cultural change makers of color. Support fiercely independent media and creators who are shaping and shifting the culture. Engage with our multicultural audience of tastemakers and influential attendees.

Questions? Please Contact:

Catherine Lee
Chief Operations Officer
catherine@blackstarfest.org



2024 Luminary Gala Attendees. Photos by Jiraurd Key / BFA