urbanworld
CASE FOR SUPPORT • THE PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL
"CINEMA WAS MY RITE OF PASSAGE."

JOHN SINGLETON
A MESSAGE FROM
STACY SPIKES
FOUNDER • CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

WE BELIEVE CINEMA IS THE
ULTIMATE CULTURAL AMBASSADOR

My vision was to create an essential space that would open doors, traditionally closed, for filmmakers of color and women. As a result, underrepresented content creators, that had widely been excluded, would have a forum to elevate the visibility of their stories, perspectives, and voices. What has distinguished Urbanworld from its inception is an unwavering commitment to inclusion.

What we curated and created was historic. From our first Urbanworld Festival in 1997, which launched with groundbreaking films, *Hoodlum* and *Soul Food*, to later screening audience favorites such as, *When Stella Got Her Groove Back* and *The Original Kings of Comedy*, the Urbanworld platform launched an epic shift for diverse content creators wanting to share their stories with the world.

We are intentionally inclusive and continue to redefine the perception of “urban” to transcend the traditional definition typically limited to race and ethnicity. Since our inception, we have consistently partnered with an ever-widening range of people who are breaking barriers around the world -- women filmmakers of all races and ages, LGBTQIA+ content creators, people of color, music artists, visual artists, playwrights, and actors, both emerging and established. Through our mission, Urbanworld actively contributes to the historical significance of presenting impactful and influential media art and culture, while serving as a vehicle for instigating change.

Of the 15,000+ people who attend our festival annually, many become powerful voices and advocates after viewing the stories we feature; hundreds of films and creative content that they would not normally see on any other platform but Urbanworld. Over the years, we have become an activist vehicle through the arts, in much the same way as the legendary Apollo Theater has for the past 50 years.

Inside a New York City venue, nearly 25 years ago, an event took place that changed the film festival landscape; we launched Urbanworld. We know the philanthropic community and broader community are essential to Urbanworld being firmly positioned to grow, scale, and have an even greater influence and impact on culture and social change. We look forward to the journey and opportunities before us.

CASE FOR SUPPORT • THE PEOPLE’S FESTIVAL
Urbanworld, a vital institution for underrepresented stories and storytellers, prioritizes inclusion of diverse creators and showcases work that speaks to their communities and beyond.

Our dedicated leadership and team are committed to providing a space that empowers collaboration and envisions a better world.

OUR COMMITMENT

MISSION
To provide a platform that highlights storytelling from around the world and fosters a community of distinct voices.

VISION
To advance the inclusion and impact of diverse content creators.
The Urbanworld Foundation, through its Urbanworld Festival, stewards one of the largest internationally competitive film festivals of its kind and among the most unique in terms of its mission. Urbanworld, through content creators and innovators, plays a pivotal role in forging an inclusive community by fostering bold voices, new narratives, and life changing storytelling.

An unparallelled cultural asset of international significance, the Urbanworld Festival presents a distinctive mix of perspectives, highlighted across skillfully curated programming, industry-driven conversations, and partner activations.

We offer content that helps to expand audiences’ view of the world. We are a vehicle for empowerment and social impact through media, artistry, and collaboration. We help to facilitate storytelling that changes lives.
Urbanworld Foundation was established in 1997 to fill a void — a platform to convene a diversity of content creators, innovators, change makers, social justice leaders, and advocates to share culturally relevant stories that represent a range of experiences, characters, and themes. These artists and activists have a common thread: their authenticity and pursuit of a platform to amplify their voices, stories, and impact.

After years of advocating for more content by independent storytellers of color to be shown at larger mainstream film festivals, and, without much success, working within the existing studio system to increase the numbers, music and film executive, Stacy Spikes pioneered his dream. He conceived a festival for audiences seeking to gather and view cinema uniquely told through the lens of filmmakers of color.

From the moment the “pilot” event was presented in New York in 1996, Urbanworld became a cultural phenomenon. Before Urbanworld, no international platform existed to showcase multicultural content across genres — films by and about people of color from around the world.

Through the convergence of creativity, community, and commerce, we welcome content creators, industry leaders, and audiences to Urbanworld.
OUR STORY

WE INSPIRE DIALOGUE, CONNECTIVITY, AND COMMUNITY BUILDING.

With a modest, yet mighty team of committed and caring industry professionals who love what they do...

Urbanworld Film Festival was founded to offer content creators, designated “other” within the mainstream, a launching pad to share their stories. The festival has actively endeavored to redefine the perception of urban by transcending a narrow focus on ethnicity and, in turn, offering audiences meaningful content shaped by cross-cultural relevance, tone, proximity, and sensibility. Our partners, our audiences, and our production team all proudly broadcast their positive experiences with Urbanworld to their respective ecosystems, helping us achieve our goal to build enduring relationships with stakeholders and maintain an unwavering reputation of excellence.

Organically inclusive through its open submissions process, Urbanworld offers exclusive industry networking opportunities within a welcoming environment. We provide a fertile atmosphere for fostering rich collaboration among creators. We distinguish our festival by the quality of the experience, our highly curated global content, and our longevity with setting the bar high for the artistic work, digital content, and music we showcase.

For over 24 years, we have found that the key to maintaining programming excellence at the highest level is inclusion, as we help to propel content creators, their talent, and their production teams to the next level.
Though their 2017 share was the largest posted for the group, it would have to almost double before people of color reached proportionate representation among film leads (39.4%).

**UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report 2019**

19.8% OF THE LEADS IN TOP FILMS FOR 2017, UP SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE 13.9% IN 2016.

Though their 2017 share was the largest posted for the group, it would have to almost double before people of color reached proportionate representation among film leads (39.4%).
“THE PEOPLE’S FESTIVAL”

We are widely known as “The People’s Festival” due to our accessibility, affordability, and inclusion. One of Urbanworld’s anchor attributes has been to create and nurture a familial environment that organically evolved from our signature high-touch relationships with artists, audiences, and advocates – a warm and welcoming community literally composed of people from all walks of life.

Urbanworld attracts 15,000+ attendees annually at its signature festival event.

Evidence shows that today’s diverse audiences prefer film and television content populated with characters to whom they can relate and whose stories drive the narrative.

UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report 2019
CONTENT

A slate of programming that includes studio, streamer, and network spotlight premieres, independent narrative and documentary features, a variety of shorts content (narrative, animated, docs, web originals, and music videos). Urbanworld’s screenplay competition is infused by our live staged screenplay readings, showcasing up and coming, as well as established actors. We primarily screen never-before-seen content as world premieres, and in other cases, reinforce momentum around deserving works.

INNOVATION

A pioneer in bridging the digital divide, Urbanworld curates dynamic conversations and presentations that highlight relevant subject matter, initiatives, and opportunities across the digital media landscape, including VR and AR innovation. Experts provide insights on the evolution of content creation, financing, distribution, marketing, and the future of our industry, specifically through an inclusive lens, broadening the context and vision beyond standard Hollywood perspectives.

MUSIC

Exclusive live events and after parties featuring a mix of established and emerging recording artists, musicians, and global DJs, many of whom align with Urbanworld’s calling through their craft, including music videos, soundtracks, and live performances, featuring artists such as Meshell Ndegeocello.

COMMUNITY

Opportunities to build new relationships and foster existing ones. Access to invaluable resources and skill-building. Space to hone craft and embrace a holistic mindset in the approach to storytelling. Selected content creators attend valuable pitch sessions, writing round-tables, retreat style master classes, and high level networking at the culmination awards ceremony.
“MAYA ANGELOU’S DIRECTORIAL DEBUT DOWN IN THE DELTA WILL MAKE ITS WORLD PREMIERE ON OPENING NIGHT OF THE SECOND ANNUAL URBANWORLD FILM FESTIVAL, WHICH WILL SHOWCASE 70 BLACK FILMS FROM AUG. 5-9 IN GOTHAM.”
ECONOMIC IMPACT

Through the curation, showcase, and distribution of content, Urbanworld has directly contributed to the trajectory of premiere industry talent over the years. Whether behind the camera or on screen, countless content creators and actors participating in Urbanworld have successfully advanced within the industry, with our festival marking a key milestone in their journey. The Urbanworld ecosystem enables the planting of seeds by emerging creators, followed by the harvesting of content — their ultimate output into the world. Many have collectively made substantial financial impact within the entertainment marketplace, and some individually have become industry powerhouses.

Urbanworld’s impact transcends cultural significance.

Tim Story
16 Career Films
Breakout Box Office, Fantastic Four - $334M
Total Worldwide Box Office - $1.3B+
Urbanworld Screening
Barbershop (UW 2002)

Lee Daniels
7 Career Films
Breakout Box Office, The Butler - $177M
Total Worldwide Box Office - $295M+
Urbanworld Screenings
The Woodsman (UW 2004)
Tennessee (UW 2008)

Gina Prince-Bythewood
6+ Career Film & TV Projects
Breakout Streaming Viewership, The Old Guard
- 72M Households Over 4 Weeks
Total Worldwide Box Office - $83M+
Urbanworld Screenings
The Secret Life of Bees (UW 2008)
Beyond The Lights (UW 2014)
Shots Fired — Limited TV Series (UW 2017)

Malcolm Lee
11 Career Films
Breakout Box Office, Girls Trip - $141M
Total Worldwide Box Office - $600M+
Urbanworld Screenings
The Best Man (UW 1999)
Roll Bounce (UW 2005)
Night School (UW 2018)
Demonstrate the power of diverse images and stories at the box office.

BLACK PANTHER ($1.3B)
CRAZY RICH ASIANS ($239M)

Demonstrate the power of diverse images and stories at the box office.
**Ava DuVernay — A Powerhouse Who Made Urbanworld Home.**

Our relationship has been reciprocal, and we would not be the festival we are today without her...

Urbanworld is fortunate to include one of the industry’s finest among its family. Initially serving as festival publicist for many years, Ava DuVernay became an early advocate for Urbanworld. In this role, she actively campaigned studios to premiere their splashy film projects at Urbanworld, and to have their high profile talent walk the red carpet. She ensured that studio executives understood the inherent value of our festival and our audience — she punctuated why we matter.

In 2004, Ava delivered Tom Cruise, Jamie Foxx, Jada Pinkett Smith, and Director Michael Mann for the festival premiere of *Collateral*, in Harlem at the Magic Johnson Theaters. It was an evening that left an indelible cultural imprint, courtesy of Urbanworld. Ava’s first short film, *Saturday Night Life*, world premiered at Urbanworld in 2006, ushering in the beginning of her career as a content creator.

As an independent filmmaker, she screened all of her projects at Urbanworld, sharing universal stories of love and loss through her personal lens.

With her first studio film, *Selma*, she activated support by Paramount Pictures to share a sneak peek of the first ever seen footage of the film, followed by a Q&A with Ava and lead actor David Oyelowo. It was an intimate gathering of Urbanworld family who were able to embrace the film early, as well as lift up this fearless filmmaker who was embarking on her next big chapter.

In the years that have followed, as her career trajectory has exploded, Ava has always remained a champion of what we do and who we do it for. From serving as our Festival Ambassador for our 20th Anniversary year, to headlining our Urbanworld Independent video series, to moderating Urbanworld Spotlight Screenings for *Queen Sugar* and *The Hate U Give*, to recommending filmmakers submit to Urbanworld, she is ever present. Urbanworld’s longstanding partnership with Ava’s multi-faceted company ARRAY has also been incredibly rewarding, allowing us to support their distributed films year-round, as well as serving as a pipeline for their film acquisitions.
“FESTIVALS ARE FOR BLOSSOMING. FESTIVALS ARE TO ENCOURAGE AND INSTILL CONFIDENCE AND ALLOW A FILMMAKER WHO IS EMERGING TO SHOW THEIR FILM AND GET THE FEEDBACK...IT’S ALL ABOUT BLOSSOMING. THAT’S WHY SPACES LIKE URBANWORLD, SPACES WHERE WE CAN DO THAT TOGETHER, ARE SO SO VITAL.”

AVA DUVERNAY
FILMMAKER
FOUNDER OF ARRAY NOW
A LEGACY OF SPOTLIGHT SCREENINGS

How Stella Got Her Groove Back
Dreamgirls • Soulfood
The Best Man • Barber Shop
Drumline • 4 Little Girls
Kings of Comedy • Hero
Out of Time • Rush Hour 2
Collateral • Law Abiding Citizen
The Secret Life of Bees
Beyond the Lights • Harriet
Queen of Katwe • Just Mercy
The New Edition Story
Marshall • The Hate U Give

A LEGACY OF RED CARPET TALENT

Spike Lee • Denzel Washington
Maya Angelou • Wesley Snipes
Sam Jackson • Jennifer Lopez
Tom Cruise • Mariah Carey
Jill Scott • Ice Cube • Chris Rock
Kevin Hart • Kerry Washington
Jada Pinkett Smith • Queen Latifah
Gabrielle Union • Viola Davis
Halle Berry • Jennifer Hudson
Kate Hudson • Tiffany Haddish
Chadwick Boseman • Rosie Perez
Sterling K. Brown • Gerard Butler
Jeffrey Wright • Cynthia Erivo
Josh Gad • Amandla Stenberg
Issa Rae • Jamie Foxx
URBANWORLD BY THE NUMBERS

4,084  
CONTENT CREATORS

1,607  
TOTAL # OF FILMS SCREENED

88,910  
NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

56  
PARTNERSHIPS

17  
UW PREMIERES TO NATIONAL BOX OFFICE

60%  
ATTENDEES PATRONIZE NON-SCREENING FESTIVAL EVENTS

2000+  
INDUSTRY ATTENDEES AT LIVE SCREENPLAY READINGS

804  
WOMEN DIRECTORS

1300+  
VOLUNTEERS

57  
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

900  
NYC PREMIERES
A MESSAGE FROM
GABRIELLE GLORE
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR • HEAD PROGRAMMING

WE ARE READY TO BE ELEVATED AND EMPOWERED

Urbanworld has been a steadfast partner to content creators in their mission to share culturally relevant stories representing a range of experiences, people, and perspectives. We are driven by our mission to foster a community of distinct voices and advance inclusion across the industry, as we endeavor to accurately reflect the world we live in.

Over the years, we have promulgated a sweeping range of underrepresented content creators and their art, and in the process, Urbanworld has achieved a place of immense cultural value and resonance.

We stand at the precipice of a critical time in our 24-year history, as an abundance of opportunities and expectations are before us. At this moment, Urbanworld is poised and positioned to achieve an even more significant role in shaping the global relevance of cross-cultural content and cinema. Our strong track record and strategic vision indicates our best work is yet to come. Now is the time to put in place resources that will sustain Urbanworld’s mission and impact in the coming years.

Our vision also includes enhancing the festival with virtual programming and broadening educational programs and outreach, year-round, to impact more people, in more places. We must also more fully implement efforts around audience development, social justice programs, and cultivation of next-generation content creators through mentoring and targeted programs.

Urbanworld: The Campaign To Support The People’s Festival is an opportunity for philanthropic partners to align with our legacy, empower our mission, and support us in activating change. Artists, audiences, advocates, and the larger community are looking to Urbanworld to continue providing a platform for universal content that speaks to them and transcends the boundaries of culture, ideology, generation, and language.

Urbanworld can meet these expectations and opportunities through the critical funding components we have identified. These include the need to build capacity, to ensure operations and infrastructure can meet the demands of stakeholders, and enable the organization to remain competitive. The funding effort will strengthen our long-term viability and sustainability and help to expand year-round programming.

Urbanworld is prepared and primed to achieve these goals and aspirations, provided there is accelerated philanthropic support. Our new $5 million campaign will be one of our most important journeys to date, and on behalf of the Urbanworld Foundation, our board, our staff, historical content creators, future creators, and our corps of volunteers, I ask that you join us and become a philanthropic partner supporting Urbanworld: The Campaign To Support The People’s Festival.

CASE FOR SUPPORT • THE PEOPLE’S FESTIVAL
THE $5 MILLION DOLLAR CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE’S FESTIVAL

This campaign will center on the mission-critical elements that made Urbanworld “The People’s Festival” and the leading multicultural film festival in the country. Robust funding will enable Urbanworld to scale as an organization over the next four years. To create a strong and sustainable future through education and programming initiatives, simultaneously continuing to deliver on its strategic vision and build a critical base of private and public support, the Urbanworld Foundation is seeking philanthropic partners to enable these critical funding components:

CRITICAL CAMPAIGN FUNDING CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS OF FOCUS</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTION BUILDING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Programming Infrastructure / Operations</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Technology Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff Growth, Retention &amp; Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Board Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROGRAMMING</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Equity &amp; Inclusion Initiatives</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Virtual Build Out &amp; Subscription Platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Program Staffing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stakeholder Development &amp; Engagement</td>
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<td>• Community Screenings &amp; Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Distribution Pipeline for New Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUCATION &amp; OUTREACH</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Youth Content Creators Outreach and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mentorships (Industry &amp; First Year Filmmakers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Content Creator Cultivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Urbanworld Documentary (25 Years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUSTAINABILITY</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Program Endowments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Nonprofit Prudent Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Filmmaker Emergency Relief Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Content Creator Pilot Project Fund</td>
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Philanthropic partners are the cornerstone of Urbanworld’s ability to advance a culture of inclusion for content creators and the audiences that benefit from their work.

Philanthropic support for this campaign will advance content creators and multimedia artists from around the world, as well as the continuum of a 24-year legacy of presenting a staggering array of content that fosters distinct voices and life changing storytelling.

If you would like to invest in Urbanworld and help ensure we are financially positioned for expansion and growth and that we remain an enduring source of creative expression, education, mentorship, and community building, we invite you to partner with us through giving.
“THERE’S NO OTHER FESTIVAL THAT HAS FURTHERED OUR COMMUNITY LIKE URBANWORLD HAS... IT’S ABOUT ACCESS.”

LISA CORTES
DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
GRATITUDE
HISTORICAL PARTNERS

HBO
FOUNDING PARTNER

AT&T
THE HUMANITY OF CONNECTION
WARNER BROS. PICTURES
WARNER MEDIA
BET
REVOLT
UMC
URBAN MOVIE CHANNEL
OWN
20th CENTURY FOX
ARRAY
THE ROOT
ESSENCE
WNBC
DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA
WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA EAST
PRODUCERS GUILD OF AMERICA
GABRIELLE GLORE
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR
GABRIELLE@URBANWORLD.ORG
917.691.5270

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@urbanworldfilmfest
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@urbanworld.film.festival

URBANWORLD FOUNDATION
174 WEST 4TH STREET #119
NEW YORK, NY 10014

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