

BALTIMORE SCHOOL *for the* ARTS

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16 Students from Baltimore, Maryland, Visit Ghana to Learn About Arts and Culture

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA – Sixteen students and four staff members from The Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA) will travel to Ghana from January 21-28, 2017, for an introduction to the diversity and complexity of West African arts and culture as part of the school’s year-long focus on contemporary Africa—*Africa Now: Global Creativity in Perspective*.

The Aya Centre, based in Accra, helped build the group’s customized itinerary. The student-artists will work with similarly-aged Ghanaian students and professional artists in theatre, dance, and music. They will also explore traditional Ghanaian woodcarving, textile production, and basket weaving. The students will visit African museums, universities, and cultural landmarks as well, traveling through Accra, Aburi, Nima, the Cape Coast, Elmina, and Kumasi.

“We’ve been focusing on contemporary African accomplishments this year at The Baltimore School for the Arts. We wanted to provide an experience beyond the space of the classroom. Art is a unifying factor across cultures,” said Tom Askey, BSA’s academic dean.

The 16 students were selected from an applicant pool of 85—almost one-quarter of the student population—last spring. Applicants wrote an essay and also interviewed with staff. BSA chose students who showed strength in comprehending both their individual potential for growing artistically and academically through the experience, as well as a vision for how they might share their experience with the whole school community.

“We are so grateful for the help of The Aya Centre in helping to coordinate and organize this trip. Ghana has an incredibly rich culture, and our students are very excited to experience it directly from other students and artists,” said Dr. Chris Ford, the director of the BSA.

There are representatives from each of the BSA’s four art tracks—dance, theatre, music, and the visual arts—on the trip. The students will document their journey in photos and video along the way, using equipment from the BSA’s Center for Collaboration and Technology (C-CAT). Upon their return to the

school, the students will work with their peers on projects that will be presented during a cross-disciplinary festival, Africa Now, which will be presented March 20-25, 2017.

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The Aya Centre is a single-purpose, multi-service organization designed to enhance the learning experience and cultural awareness of persons traveling to Ghana. The Aya Centre is also committed to contributing to the development of Ghana in particular and Africa in general. www.ayacentre.com/

The Baltimore School for the Arts is a nationally recognized public arts high school that provides its students with intensive pre-professional training in the arts in conjunction with a rigorous academic curriculum. BSA graduates go on to the most selective arts and university programs nationwide and achieve prominence in theater, film, music, dance, and the visual arts. Additionally, the BSA's highly acclaimed TWIGS program offers free after-school arts instruction to 750 city elementary and middle school children from schools across Baltimore, as well as other outreach initiatives to thousands more. Founded in 1979, the school is an integral and vibrant part of Baltimore's educational and cultural communities.
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