

## New leader of Bronx Council on the Arts showcases creative side of boro

by Damon Beres

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Ask what the [Bronx Council on the Arts](#) strives to communicate and [Deirdre Scott](#) will tell you: "The Bronx is not burning anymore, and people need to know that."

The arts council has long served to aid artists and develop culture in a borough that many associate only with poverty and violence.

Recently named BCA's new managing director, Scott's got big shoes to fill.

[Bill Aguado](#), former executive director for the past 30 years, officially handed the job to Scott on July 1. He will maintain what Scott calls more of a "consulting" position as BCA president. Scott says she is tasked with living up to Aguado's legacy.

A cultural professional with more than 20 years of experience in cultural and organizational development, Scott spent the past seven years as director of technology at The Studio Museum in [Harlem](#).

Now she said she is hoping to infuse BCA's foundation with new ideas to keep it on track and moving forward.

"We've actually spent a very long time, more than a year, in planning out this transition," said Scott, who previously served on the BCA's board.

"These are very, very fragile economic times, and we don't want to be going through a huge amount of instability as we're trying to stabilize the people that we serve and keep them moving. We hopefully built the transition in a way that allows for BCA to keep growing and keep going at the same time."

To that end, Scott has a "very important" new initiative underway. Working with the board of trustees and a consulting firm, the BCA is planning to create an endowment to ensure stability for the foreseeable future.

Though many think paint brushes and canvas when they think art, checkbooks have been just as important to the BCA through its 40-plus-year operation, says Scott.

"We run a successful series on making your art your business," said Scott. "It helps artists and organizations leverage more of their resources, but also to provide them with more professional tools, so that they can better live by their craft, as opposed to burning the midnight oil."

But there's much more to the BCA than finances.



Deirdre Scott, who was named managing director of the Bronx Council of the Arts this month, is on a mission to support borough's artists amid financial instability.

*Photo: Florescu for News*

Scott hopes to expand BCA's use of technology and the Internet to bring the community together.

She plans to broaden the scope of BRIO - Bronx Recognizes Its Own - which she describes as "one of our key programs that celebrates Bronx artists in many important disciplines." BRIO celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

The BCA also sponsors the Cultural Card program, which offers discounts and promotions on Bronx attractions and exhibits. It runs the free Bronx Culture Trolley, which moves through the lower Grand Concourse to allow passengers to sample restaurants, cultural attractions and venues.

"We are supporting world-class creativity up here," said Scott. "The creative culture in the Bronx is of equal, if not greater, value than any other. We have folks here from all over the world. I would like to build on that already sound foundation and create a pathway toward international knowledge about what's happening here in the Bronx arts and culture."

And how is this pathway paved? Through the artists, of course.

"They become ambassadors, essentially, not only for BCA but for [Bronx County](#)," said Scott. "We've spent a lot of time building important relationships. Now is the time to deepen that and carry that conversation further." ■