



Liliana Bakhtiari

<p>What is your personal background and experience in the arts?</p>	<p>I am a supporter of arts and culture through donations., I am a regular participant as an arts patron., I am the partner of an artist (theatre, dance, music, visual arts, film, etc.), I have collaborated with artists on events and projects</p>
<p>What arts activities have you attended, participated in, or supported in the last few years (preCOVID to the present)?</p>	<p>Dance, Music, Theatre, Literary Arts (including book festivals or book clubs), Film (including film festivals), Visual Arts</p>
<p>What percentage of the Georgia economy revenue is made up of art and art related activities?</p>	<p>4.60%</p>
<p>The total economic impact of arts-related activities (pre-Covid-19) in the Atlanta region represents...</p>	<p>Over \$700 Million</p>
<p>The Atlanta region lost a net of __ arts and entertainment related jobs from 2019 to 2020.</p>	<p>54,000</p>
<p>Do you have an Arts Platform for Atlanta?</p>	<p>In progress We will be releasing a policy video on our social media platforms next week.</p>
<p>Please share your thoughts on the creation of an arts district in the city of Atlanta that would support affordable studios, affordable rehearsal space, affordable housing, and affordable presentation space (theatre, blackbox, gallery, meeting space, etc.).</p>	<p>This is a huge priority for me. So many of our art spaces have been closed down throughout the pandemic, and many continue to shut their doors due to skyrocketing real estate costs, which many of our small and midsize arts organizations cannot afford. With established arts districts throughout the city, we have the opportunity for creative placemaking that can support artists in all mediums, at all levels, and continue to develop our unique cultural voice as a city. While one central arts district is a huge priority, I would take it a step farther. I think we also need to incorporate arts districts into our neighborhood zoning and masterplans. These can be folded into existing neighborhood commercial districts or be proposed on currently unused land. These districts, large or small, must include affordable artist studios and affordable workforce housing, so that our artists can afford to live and work in the city, and we must have them in every part of the city, not just the most affluent/majority white neighborhoods. Not only will they serve as a hub for creativity</p>

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	<p>and culture in our city, but they will be important economic drivers. The arts generate more economic activity than professional sports or any other major event. It is time that we start recognizing arts and culture for its enormous economic impact, and allocate appropriate space and funding within our city.</p>
<p>Please share your thoughts on providing relief funds from the American Relief Funds Act (ARPA) to arts organizations and artists to recover, rebuild, and restore Atlanta's creative economy.</p>	<p>My partner and so many of my friends and chosen family are artists. Being a gig worker in Atlanta was already hard, and COVID made it 10 times harder. With our theatres shuttered, in person events cancelled, it has been a rough time for our artists, and a lot of the pandemic relief that was being offered did not apply to some of our small non-profits or individual artists. And this manifested in more ways than just loss of income, a lot of the artists I know have been pushed out of the city due to increased affordability issues and lack of relief funds, and many of our gallery spaces and creative hubs have had to close due to rising property costs and loss of business. As our next councilmember, I would advocate for the creation of new small business assistance programs targeted at cultural drivers like event venues, theatres, studios, and galleries so that we can keep these creative spaces open in our city. I think we also need to be sure that people feel safe returning to indoor live art events, which means pushing for vaccination and COVID safety measures to be fully met city wide. But, this is an intersectional issue, where it is not just about supporting our arts organizations and spaces but also about supporting the people who are responsible for the culture in our city. That means investment in quality of life staples like housing and transportation. We watched over these last few years as Mammal was forced to close, as Bakery was forced to relocate, as HiLo Press had to shut its doors, and as SFQP has fought to find their own space to steward. And these are just a few. The organizers in those spaces each became burnt out and struggled as a result of barely being able to live here and provide for themselves. As our next councilmember, I will push to continue the rental assistance programs the we began during the COVID pandemic, I will include artists as part of our essential workforce as we develop workforce housing, and I will make sure our transit projects are shovel ready for federal dollars so that our artists can afford to live in and get around the city.</p>
<p>What is your vision for the arts in Atlanta, a major airport hub, film hub, and economic</p>	<p>I say it all the time, our arts and culture are the lifeblood of this city, it's what makes Atlanta, Atlanta and why we love living here. In District 5, I think about our diverse and vibrant music scene in East Atlanta Village, I think about the incredible public</p>

engine of the Southeast?
(What does it look like,
feel like, sound like? Who
are the people? There is
no wrong answer.)

art initiatives in each neighborhood that instill pride and share each neighborhoods unique character and history with those who visit, and I think about all of the small galleries and artist markets that I frequent each week. These things not only exemplify the diversity and character of district 5, but they draw visitors from all over, which means more economic investment in our local businesses. For every dollar that we invest in the arts, we see a minimum \$4 return. That is a huge number. I think District 5 is a great example of a part of Atlanta that really values its arts and culture, and it shows in how much we have grown in the last 4 years. For me, art intersects with everything. I have personally been involved in several art activism projects, including a voter engagement bus which we painted and drove around the state during the 2018 elections, and the Black Futures Matter project, which raised awareness and specific demands for action in defense of not just Black lives but Black Futures. I think the most important way to bolster our creative economy is by investing in the artists who live and work here directly. We have so many artists who live in Atlanta . What better way to improve their quality of life than to directly invest in their work and let it shine through right in their backyard. I believe that District 5 can lead by example. We have a lot of independent organizations in our district that are working neighborhood by neighborhood to provide arts programming and opportunities but they need more support to keep those programs going. Some of the pillars of my arts and culture policy plan for district 5 would include investment in our creative spaces as an integral part of our neighborhood commercial districts, so assisting cultural venues, galleries, and studio spaces dedicated tax credits and grants, this is especially important in our incredibly competitive real-estate market; I would dedicate a portion of my district budget to public art projects and community arts programming in each neighborhood both providing employment opportunities for local artists and investing in expression of our neighborhoods' unique and diverse cultures. And finally, I would work with our neighborhoods to establish plans for cultural districts as we create our neighborhood masterplans. These can be folded into existing neighborhood commercial districts or be proposed on currently unused land, but as we plan for our District's growth, we need to proactively plan for creative placemaking as well. Additionally, I would want to find solutions for some of the bureaucratic barriers that are currently in place for public art

	<p>permitting and access to funding so that more projects from more diverse artists can manifest in District 5.</p> <p>If we want to move forward and become a true arts city, we need to take a real look at how our arts and culture is funded and where that funding is going. Our city office of Arts and Cultural Affairs has particular programming that receives funding each year, like Elevate and Jazz Fest, and those initiatives tend to distribute money to the same circles of artists, and our larger arts institutions like the High Museum and Atlanta Ballet always receive funding. Additionally, large cultural events often bring in artists and curators from outside of Atlanta, rather than investing in local artists. We have an incredible pool of independent artists here, we have to start really investing in them and giving them the resources they need to thrive, especially given how much revenue our artists generate for our city. In order to appropriately allocate resources we need a City of Atlanta cultural plan. We haven't had one in 15 years. As our next councilmember, I would also push for the creation of a Policy Director for Arts position in the Office of Cultural affairs to lead the charge on building this plan and I would advocate for the creation of an Arts & Culture Advisory Board made up of cultural stakeholders from our music, film, dance, visual art, public art, theatre, and arts administration communities to begin the process of creating a Cultural Development plan. I say it all the time, we need to be talking TO the people who will be affected by policy, rather than about them. So we have to be sure we have artists and cultural leaders not only at the table but leading the way as we shape our cultural plan. Once we have an artist led plan, it will be up to city council to allocate funding in an equitable way, and in that capacity, I am committed to prioritizing BIPOC led, independent, and small non-profit arts organizations who are so often left out of the equation.</p>
<p>Is there any other information you would like voters to know?</p>	<p>The last thing I want to share is my commitment to Atlanta's non-profits arts and cultural landscape, which so often suffers from chronic under-support. My partner Kris is an artist, and was involved with a local non-profit art organization here in Atlanta for 10 years. I come from the DIY arts and non-profit part of our creative community, plus many of my close friends are artists and/or non-profit organizers. I consistently hear from all of them that not only are they chronically underfunded, but what little government funding they do receive is often the first thing to be cut when our city and state leadership is looking to reduce its budgetary bloat. I think this is completely backwards. We see it time and time again, investment in local arts and culture is a</p>

huge economic driver, and I am not just talking about the big institutions. We are talking about an over \$600M industry in the City of Atlanta alone, imagine what would happen if we actually invested in it. As our next councilmember, I will advocate for increasing and diversifying our budget for Arts and Culture in the City of Atlanta, and I will work with our state partners to re-introduce legislation for a dedicated 1/10 penny sales tax that could be a game changing revenue stream for our city's cultural programming, and I will fight for the city to have more freedom over how to spend our hotel/motel tax which should arguably be going towards arts and culture instead of further investments into sports and entertainment, given that the arts still earns more than those industries. With these extra dollars, I would like to expand our city grant programs to include BIPOC specific grants, and placemaking grants for cultural investment in our under-resourced neighborhoods. Currently, I believe we have a volunteer Task Force that is in charge of distribution funds. While I like that many of the folks on the task force are artists and cultural leaders, I have seen a lot of divisiveness arise from the decisions made by the task force, and have seen artists pitted against each other. I would like to take another look at the makeup of this task force, and alternative ways of selecting and cycling members so that we aren't creating gatekeepers to the limited funding that we do have. Similar to our housing stock, I think we have a missing middle for arts funding. So I hope to find ways to invest in our independent and small non-profit arts organizations to build our cultural landscape and help our artists thrive in the City of Atlanta.