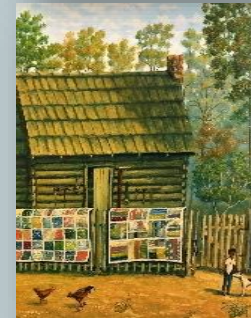




BLACK BELT TREASURES CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

*Cultivating Art Across Alabama's Black Belt
One Artist, One Work Of Art, One Story at a Time...*

The *Mission* of Black Belt Treasures Cultural Art Center is to foster, develop, and promote economic development initiatives aimed at creating jobs and increasing the income of local residents through the marketing of arts, crafts, literature, food products, and other items unique to Alabama's Black Belt and to cultivate and provide arts education in the region.



OUR VISION...

An enhanced regional economy with arts-related jobs and tourism stimulated through BBT's emphases on showcasing the creative spirit and marketing the heritage arts and culture of Alabama's Black Belt;

and

Become a region-wide venue for arts education, revolving around the preservation of the region's heritage arts and culture, with area residents and visiting artists active in a flourishing arts environment incorporating exhibits, workshops, demonstrations, and celebrations.



The What And Why...

- Opened in 2005 following a regional tourism assessment.
- Strategically located in center of Black Belt region with the intent of drawing visitors off the interstate to experience the art & culture of the region.
- A vacant auto dealership was renovated as the BBTCAC Gallery. → →
- 6000 SqFt body shop partially renovation began in 2019 as the Black Belt ART House –Pottery Classroom, Kiln Room, Art Classroom, Artist Studio.

Future Addition: changing gallery, textile classroom, artist incubator spaces, large classroom workshop space, art supply storage.

- Focus on painting a positive image of the region, in spite of years of negative press.
- Black Belt Teaching Artist Program added in 2016 to meet growing need for arts enrichment in schools and continuing heritage arts traditions.



BBTCAC In Numbers

Artists

Began with **75**

Have worked with over **530**

Currently almost **350**

To date **\$2,194,614** in Sales

\$1,536,230 returned to Artists

Tourism

Visitors from all **50** states and **35** other countries

Annually **12-14,000** visitors

Group tours from **4 to 75**

Education

2023-24– over **12,000 people** reached

14 Teaching Artists presenting programs in-schools, and **20** Teaching Artists presenting at Community Programs

Workforce

Board = **11**

Full Time Staff = **3**

Part-Time/On Call = **6**

Contract Staff = **2**

Senior Aides = **1**

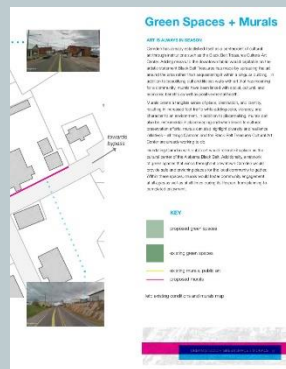
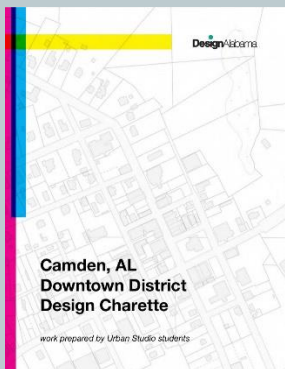
Volunteers = **16**

Teaching Artists = **20**



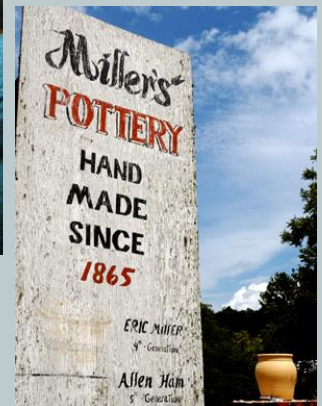
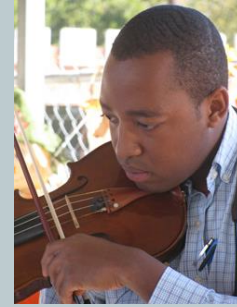
The Community Connection...

- Located in a renovated former car dealership in historic downtown Camden...
- BBTAC continues to invest and participate directly in revitalization, tourism, and creative placemaking.
- Downtown Revitalization Team
- Creative Placemaking Projects: Murals, Mosaic Benches, Quilt Trail
- Black Belt ART House & Artist Residency
- Artist Demonstrations & Events
- Public Art partnerships
- Tourism Initiatives – partnering with downtown businesses, museums, and nonprofits for Events, Civil Rights & Cultural Tours, Weekend & Day Trips, Programs, and more...

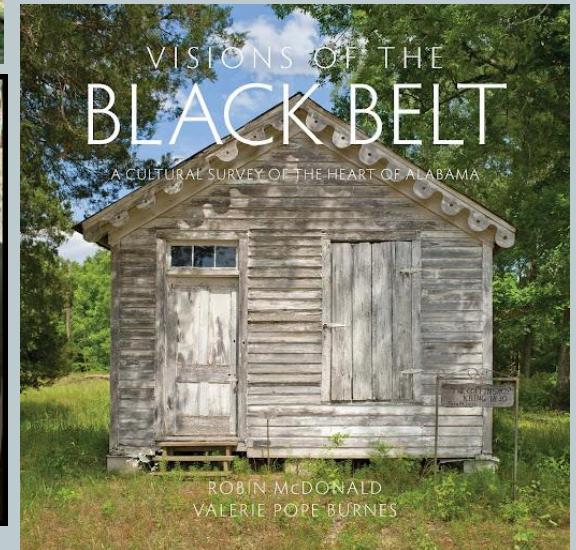
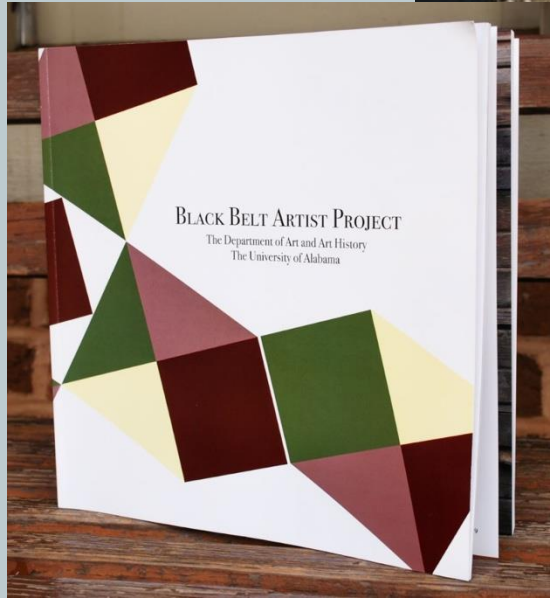
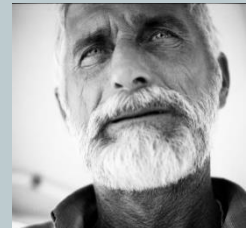
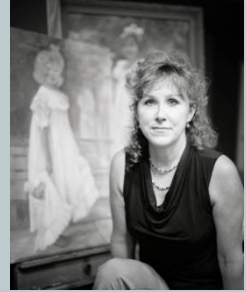


Why We Do What We Do...

Artists



Every artist has A story to tell...





bbtreasures

Message Follow ...

166 posts 1,100 followers 390 following

Black Belt Treasures

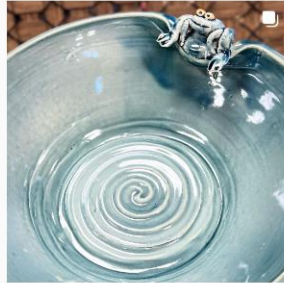
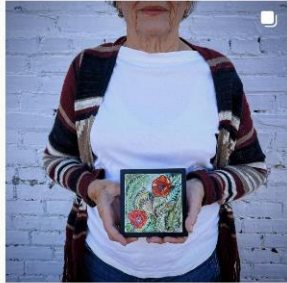
Nonprofit organization

We are a non-profit cultural arts center that exists to encourage the arts in the Black Belt region of Alabama | Camden, AL
blackbelttreasures.com



The Press

POSTS REELS TAGGED



Posts

Filters

Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center is at Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center. 16h · Camden ·

Look who we had the pleasure of seeing in the gallery today!

Mary Croley came to visit and brought in several new pieces of her art. Beautiful pieces at awesome price points! Stay tuned to see more of her work here on social media, the gallery & our website!



Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center is at Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center. 6d · Camden ·

Charlie "The Tin Man" Lucas (Dallas County) has created a fun & meaningful piece of art called "The Do Rag Women"

A fun collection is featured in the gallery at a great price point of \$145. Add grit and a story to your home with one of Charlie's women.

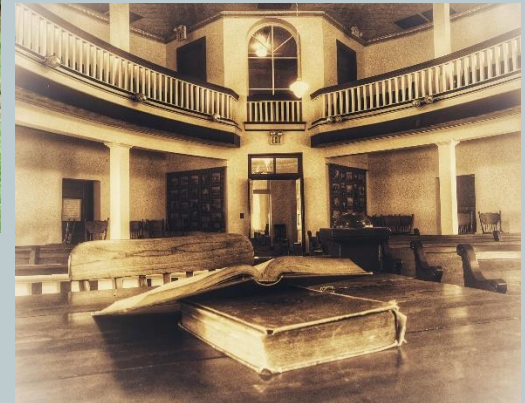
<https://www.blackbelttreasures.com/.../219-do-rag-women.aspx>



Social Media Marketing



Tourism...Across the Black Belt



Arts Education Youth

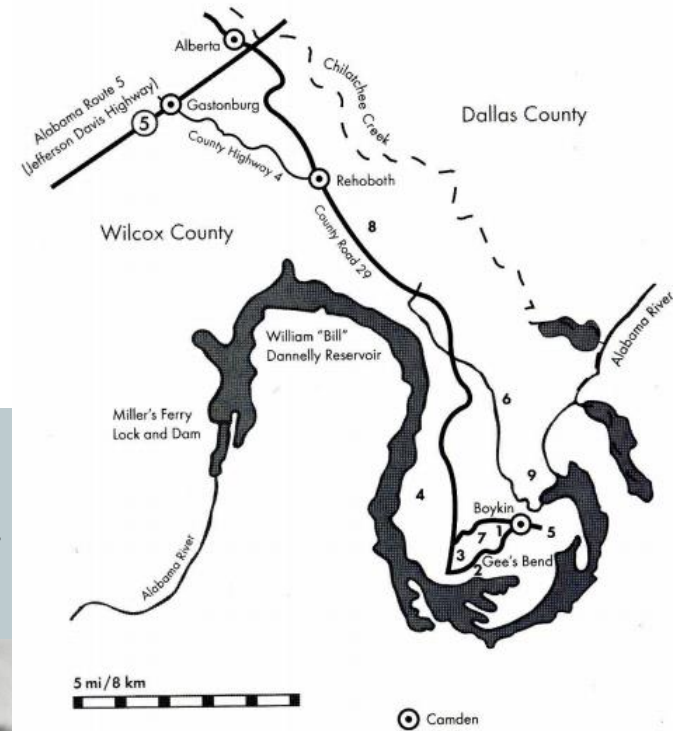


Arts Education Adults



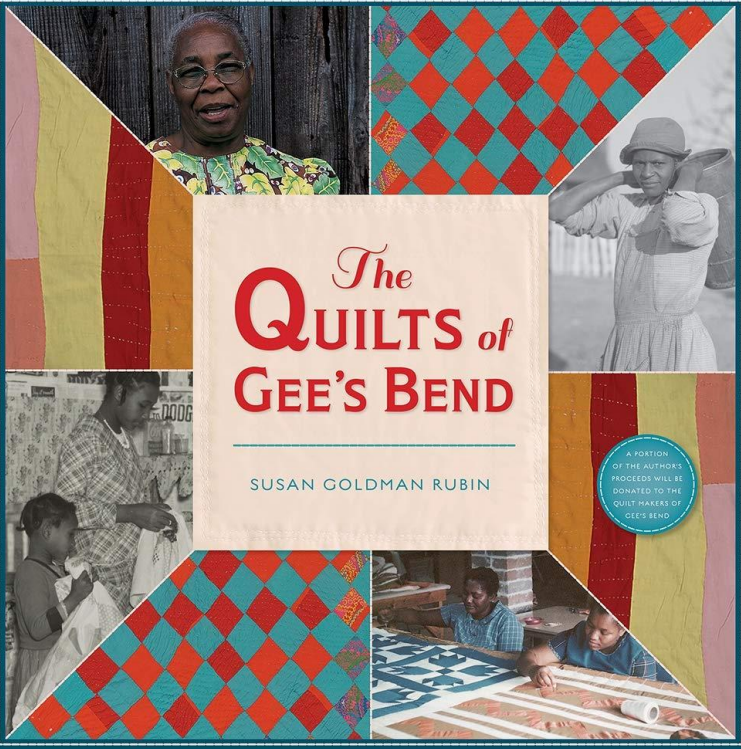
In this 1937 image by Farm Security Administration photographer Arthur Rothstein, [Gee's Bend](#) quilter Jorena Pettway sews a quilt as two young girls hold the fabric for her.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Stitching a Continuing Thread Through History..

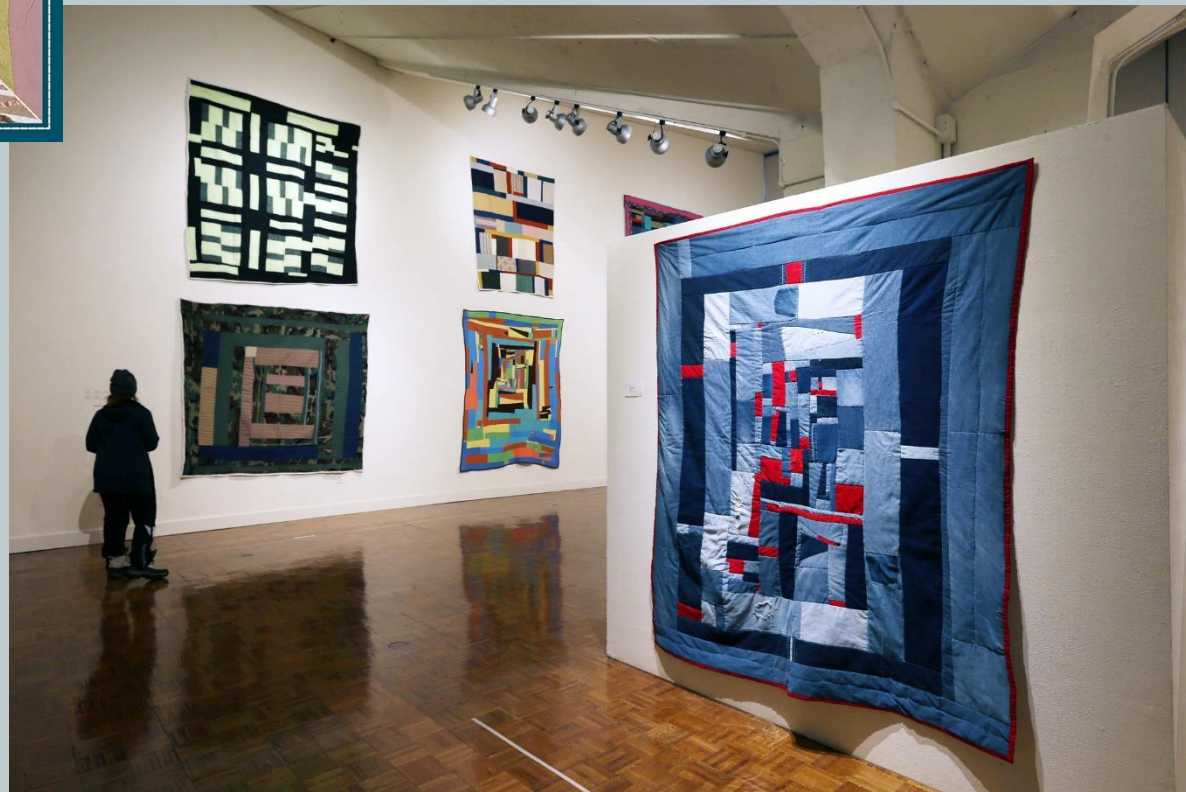




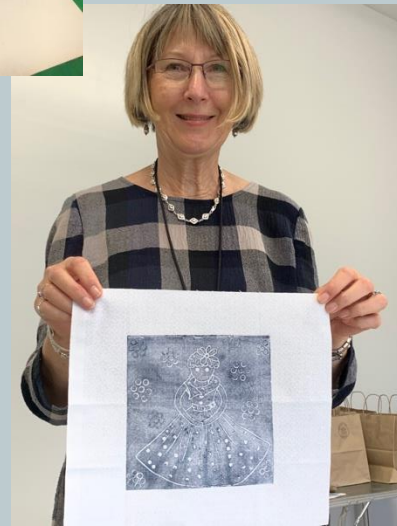
The QUILTS of GEE'S BEND

SUSAN GOLDMAN RUBIN

A PORTION
OF THE AUTHOR'S
PROCEEDS WILL BE
DONATED TO THE
QUILT MAKERS OF
GEE'S BEND



Fiber Arts Based Arts Education







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Home / Blog / Anderson comes home from New York City, opens Shoe Shop museum

Anderson comes home from New York City, opens Shoe Shop museum

The first time I met Mrs. Betty Anderson was in Black Belt Treasures in Camden. She stopped and introduced herself. Anderson has a smile that lights up her whole face, the kind that makes you grin from ear to ear as well.



The woman has a way of making you feel at home. After all, it's not often you get to meet a walking history lesson. I was told long before I began my summer of "Living Democracy" in Camden that I needed to visit with her and hear her story, so I did.

Her father ran a shoe shop in downtown Camden. Anderson was one out of six other children, and the shoe shop was their way of life. She spent many days hanging out at the shoe shop with her father.

Once the Civil Rights era began, Anderson found herself in the heart of it all at the young age of 15 when she marched on Bloody Sunday and participated in the march from Selma to Montgomery.



Reflecting on her time as a young activist, she shared one particular portion of the march to Montgomery in vivid detail. Her left shoe had a hole in the sole. Imagine walking for miles and miles to reach Lowndes County and realizing you have to walk much, much further with a giant hole in your shoe. Anderson

Communities

Collinsville	↕
Elba	↕
Chatom	↕
Camden	↕



Through *WealthWorks* BBTCAC focuses on identifying opportunities in its service area while engaging partners to both build and capture wealth (i.e., intellectual, financial, natural, cultural, built, political, individual, and social).

BBTCAC's planning complements and incorporates traditional economic development methods, while intentionally creating more value that is rooted in local people, places, and organizations.

While BBTCAC's service area is impacted by poverty, unemployment, under-performing schools, and economic centers which have been abandoned or are in disrepair, BBTCAC has identified several "underutilized resources" through which the arts enhance the region's wealth.

Learn more:

Education Amplifies Arts and Crafts Value Chain written by Carrie Kissel, the Associate Director of NADO (National Association of Development Associations).

https://www.wealthworks.org/sites/default/files/resources/BlackBeltTreasures_final.pdf

wealthworks

Education Amplifies Arts & Crafts Value Chain

— The catalysts

Capitalizing on assets: In the early 2000s, Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission, Ala-Tom Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D), and the University of Alabama Center for Economic Development worked together to inventory assets for a tourism initiative. These partners identified individuals with a wealth of artistic talent throughout the 19-county Black Belt region and working in a variety of heritage crafts and fine arts.

Opportunity for new perspectives: Some counties in the Black Belt region have poverty rates over 30 or even 40 percent. Unemployment is higher than the state and national averages, and underemployment is over 20 percent for many of the counties, according to the Alabama Tombigbee Regional Council Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS, an economic development plan for part of the Black Belt region).

Strengthening the economy: Artists from households that are struggling financially, as well as those whose finances are more stable, are becoming more economically resilient with new markets opened up through the Black Belt Treasures

Cultural Arts Center (BBTCAC), a nonprofit that began operation in 2005. By tapping into the expertise of regional institutions and artists and connecting with tourism and education stakeholders and community leaders, BBTCAC now coordinates an arts and culture-based network of partners, with impactful roles in education and tourism.

— The value opportunities

Creative individuals throughout the region create artistic products by quilting, basket making, pottery, sculpting, and woodworking. Some complete projects simply as a hobby, while others rely on much-needed earned income. Either way, their ability to market their products was often limited before BBTCAC opened, and they often settled for the prices that they felt they could get for their work, rather than asking for a price that fully valued their time and artistic talent.

BBTCAC opened its main gallery in Camden, Alabama in a vacant car dealership in 2005, and later opened a satellite gallery in the Greenville Chamber of Commerce in Butler County, Alabama. BBTCAC also hosts a website with an online sales platform,

along with information about the region and the artists. Initially serving 75 artists, BBTCAC's roster has grown to over 450 artists in 2018, representing a variety of artistic traditions, and with artists from across the whole income spectrum, as well as artists of all ages and races.

BBTCAC plays an important role in helping artists establish fair market prices and increase their household financial security. BBTCAC uses a juried process to accept artists' work in the gallery. This process is an important one to establish measures of quality and justify pricing. It has been important that the juried process be inclusive of diverse media and artistic styles, especially including local heritage crafts such as quilting, pottery, and basket-making.

Alabama counties served by BBTCAC

Courtesy BBTCAC

BBTCAC has identified ways of providing valuable opportunities for *experiential learners*. A broad spectrum of educational opportunities allows BBTCAC to be inclusive to a diverse group of people ranging from visitors to residents.

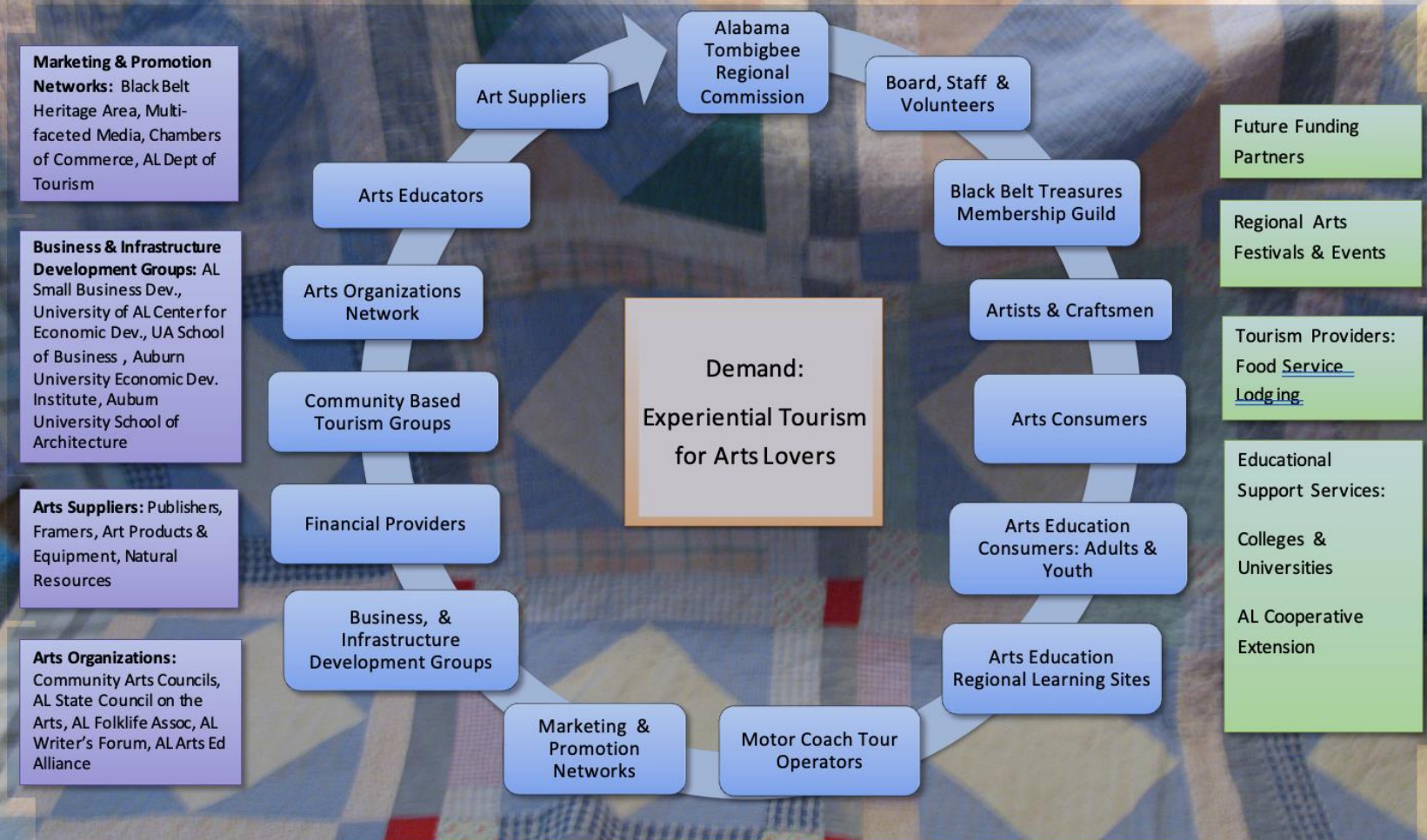
In teaching about the **cultural heritage of Alabama's Black Belt**, BBTCAC is ...

- inspiring an **appreciation for the region's cultural heritage**, thereby, improving the **region's image**;
- providing **hands-on art experiences** as a vehicle to **cultivate conversations and consciousness, build community, and create opportunities** for positive social change;
- **supplementing and strengthening curriculum** in area schools through integration of regional arts and culture learning opportunities; and
- **growing the economy and addressing the poverty** of individuals within the region.



Black Belt Treasures

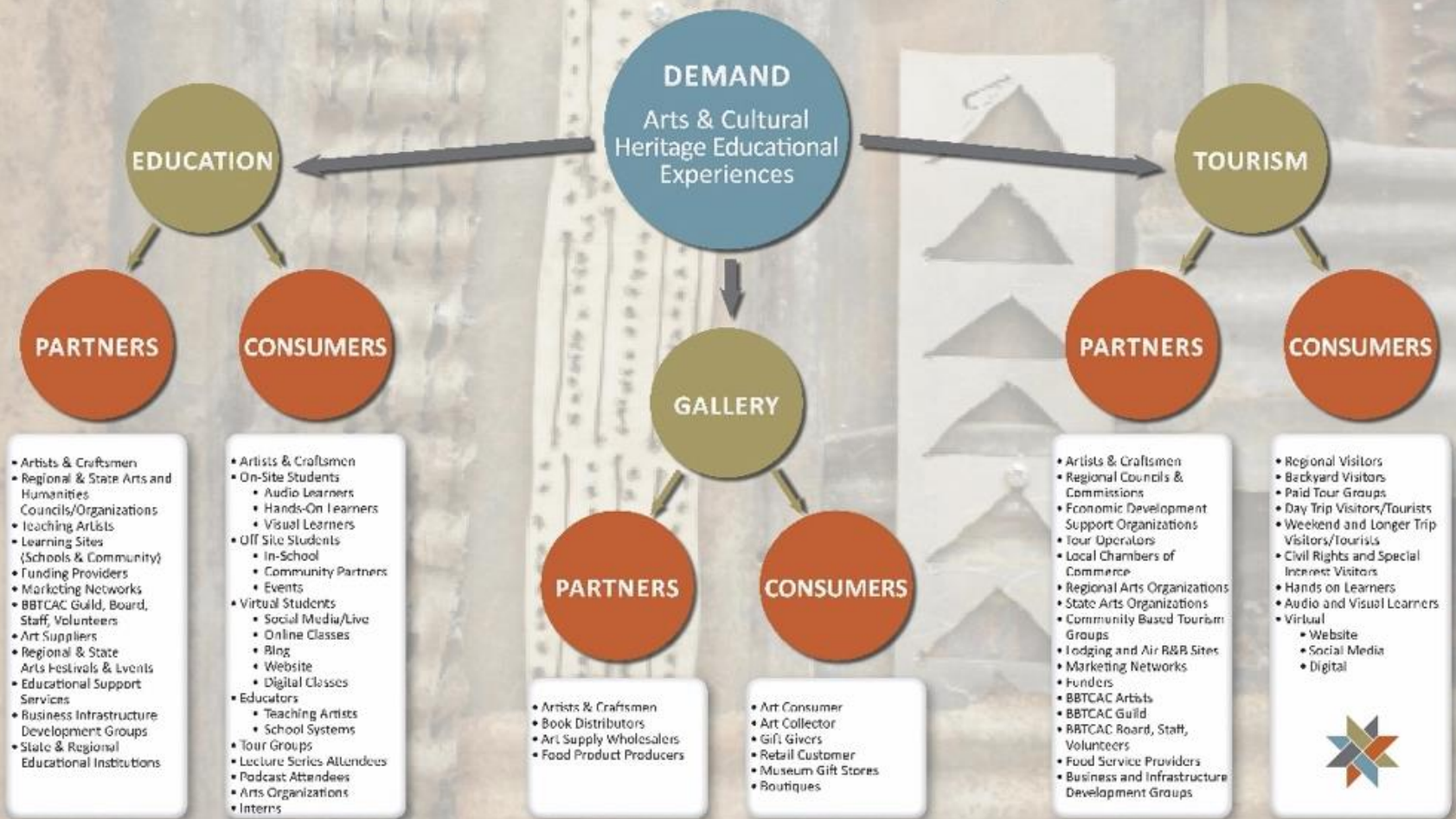
Value Chain Map



rev: 10/05/2012

Value Chain Intermediary: Black Belt Treasures

Black Belt Treasures Cultural Arts Center Value Chain Map





The Wealthworks Inventory

The Community Capital assessment demonstrates the assets on which BBTCAC is built and how it is growing those capitals through its concerted effort.

•**Individual capital:** The value chain is built on the individual capital in the form of artists' technical skills in the medium with which they work. BBTCAC's educational activities expands on individual capital for artists and creative entrepreneurs through the ArtsCultivate program and other ongoing programs and to develop art and business skills, and for other makers and individuals through networking, programs and educational events.

•**Intellectual capital:** Regional artists hold significant creative intellectual capital and drive innovation culture through the pieces they produce. BBTCAC has partnered with intellectual capital assets such as museums, regional arts organizations, (ie. Souls Grown Deep) and colleges and universities to access analysis and build opportunities.

•**Social capital:** Groups that have a focus such as textiles, book discussion, and more bring together residents to celebrate the region's heritage and connect over shared interests. The annual festival Hog Wild for Arts brings residents together to celebrate arts and food. BBTCAC builds social capital by bringing artists together and helping them learn from each other.

•**Natural capital:** BBTCAC's gallery space represents infill development in an established community. Several artists use reclaimed wood and other natural materials in their art, and natural capital represents a major source of inspiration for both longtime regional artists and new residents. In addition, partnering with Alabama's Black Belt Adventures, Alabama's Nature Journaling Club and Cornwallis 1828 are growing programs based on the region's natural capital.



•**Built capital:** Gallery and office space enable the value chain to exist, along with other built assets that facilitate tourism activity. Ongoing renovations will serve as an arts business incubator with shared studio space and equipment for creative entrepreneurs, classroom space for the adult and youth student, and community gathering/meeting space.



•**Political capital:** A BBTCAC staff member was appointed to the Alabama Course of Study Committee for Visual Arts, providing a role in the state's approach to primary education. State-level associations and connections may lead to opportunities. Presentations at local, regional, and state meetings such as ATRC events and the Alabama Association of Regional Councils annual conference ensure local government officials are aware of the breadth of BBTCAC's work and impact. Staff members also serve on several state-wide arts and civic boards (ie. ALVAN, Design Alabama, Alabama Folklife Association, among others).



•**Financial capital:** BBTCAC has accessed funding for capital expenses and to develop and deliver programming from a variety of public and private funders. Guild memberships indicate that local individuals and businesses are willing to invest their own resources in the work of BBTCAC.

•**Cultural capital:** The region is home to a rich cultural heritage related to the arts including literature, music, visual arts, fine crafts, and culinary arts. Arts festivals, workshops, and experiences visiting the gallery and speaking with artists celebrates and grows this cultural capital. BBTCAC refers visitors to other cultural assets in the region, such as the Gee's Bend Quilt Collective, Gee's Bend Ferry Terminal, and Camden Shoe Shop Museum. BBTCAC has been a supporting partner in the 20 year effort in recognizing the region as the Black Belt National Heritage Area (legislation 2023).





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