

The MassQ Ball Is Back: Communities of Color Reunite to Celebrate Nature and Arts

Castle of our Skins, artist and designer Daniel Callahan, and The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, join forces for MassQ Ball 2025: Color

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, April 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Co-producers Castle of our Skins, multidisciplinary artist and designer Daniel Callahan, and The Arnold

Arboretum of Harvard University, join forces again for MassQ Ball 2025: Color — a large-scale celebration of ritual, performance, and cross-cultural arts, featuring the diverse artistry of Boston's communities of color. The event — last held at the Arnold Arboretum in 2022 — will

again be free, family-friendly, and take place this fall on Saturday, October 4, 2025 from 10-4pm in the Arboretum's Conifer Collection.

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Arboretum Director William (Ned) Friedman

The much-anticipated event will include a curated lineup of musicians, dancers, culture bearers, and visual artists from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds including: Anjali Nath (Classical North Indian Kathak Dance); Danza Orgánica (Social Justice Dance); Floor Lords (HipHop Dance); Hyde Square Task Force Ambassadors (Afro Latin Youth Music, Dance, and Theatre); Jean Appolon Expressions (Haitian Dance Ensemble); Gund Kwok (Chinese Lion Dance); Isaura Oliveira & Power of Skirts

(Afro-Brazilian Indigenous Performance Ritual); Cornell Coley (African Drum Circle); Steph Davis (Ghanaian Gyli); Dis N' Dat Band (Trinidad & Tobago Steel Pan); Christopher Robinson (ASL Spoken Word Artist Griot); Teen Empowerment (Spoken Word Artist Griots); Ifé Franklin (African American Ring Shout); Shaw Pong Liu (Chinese American Installation Artist); Andre StrongBearHeart Gaines, Jr. (Nipmuc Installation Artist); Crystal Bi (Taiwanese-American Installation Artist); Lilly Manycolors (Installation Artist); and Naoe Suzuki (Japanese American Installation Artist).



MassQ Ball 2025 logo Oct. 4 10-4

"MassQ Ball 2025: Color picks up from where we left off in 2022," Ashleigh Gordon, Artistic Director of Castle of our Skins, shares. "Our previous Ball at the Arboretum included a host of smaller panels and workshops in addition to the large-scale outdoor celebration that brought more than 1,500 attendees and over 120 artists together for joy, healing, creative expression and cultural celebration. For 2025, we're bringing even more artists, more audience, and more art-making together for a truly unforgettable experience."

At its center is Daniel Callahan's painterly practice of MassQing (MASS-king), which uses the human face as a canvas to create living works of art. "MassQing is derived from traditions of body decoration found all over the world," Callahan explains. "Its universality provides a natural platform for connecting seemingly disparate cultures and peoples together."

"For over 150 years, the Arnold Arboretum landscape has provided a free and open environment to connect the diverse people of Boston to the wonders and restorative power of nature," said Arboretum Director William (Ned) Friedman. "We are thrilled to collaborate with Castle of our Skins and remarkable artists like Daniel Callahan to craft unique experiences that make the Arboretum more welcoming and inspiring for everyone."

"We are pleased to partner with community movements, such as MassQ Ball, that share Arnold Arboretum's values of education and environmental equity in the landscape," said Jessica B. Pederson, Head of Public Programs at The Arboretum. "These growing relationships support our continuing efforts to engage all people of Boston and to offer innovative public programs that engage people with plants and one another."

MassQ Ball 2025: Color is supported, in part, by a Neighborhood and Downtown Activation grant from the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, The Celebrity Series of Boston, The



Griot Dzidzor Azaglo during the 2022 MassQ Ball



Andre Strongbearheart Gaines Jr. during the 2022 MassQ Ball

Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, and Create & Record LLC. To learn more visit www.MassQBall.com.

ABOUT CASTLE OF OUR SKINS

Castle of our Skins is a Black arts institution dedicated to fostering cultural curiosity and celebrating Black artistry through music. In classrooms, concert halls, and beyond, Castle of our Skins invites exploration into Black heritage and culture, spot-lighting both unsung and celebrated figures of past and present. For more information, visit www.castleskins.org.

ABOUT DANIEL CALLAHAN

Daniel Callahan is a multidisciplinary artist, filmmaker and designer. Merging a legion of disciplines including painting, digital photography, film, music, writing and performance, Daniel works to craft immersive experiences incorporating story, ritual, and the human form to explore aspects of resilience and mysticism. For more information, visit www.danielcallahan.com.

ABOUT THE ARNOLD ARBORETUM

The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University stewards one of the world's most comprehensive and best documented collections of temperate woody plants for research and conservation. This 281-acre preserve in the heart of Boston is open free every day from dawn to dusk. For more information, visit <http://arboretum.harvard.edu>.

Media Contact: Kelley Hollis, Digital Media & Marketing Manager - Castle of Our Skins
561-601-4599 / kelly@castleskins.org

Interviews available upon request.

Photos from past MassQ Balls are available [HERE](#)

Kelley Hollis

Castle of our Skins

+1 561-601-4599

[email us here](#)

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