

Student chairs Black Arts Festival

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aduples@tulane.edu

The Tulane University Black Student Union is gearing up for its largest-ever Black Arts Festival, a multi-day affair from Monday (Feb. 17) through Feb. 23 that highlights the work of community and student artists.



Known on the arts scene as FreeQuency, spoken-word artist Mwende Katwiwa spearheaded organizing the 2014 Black Arts Festival. Katwiwa is one of several community and student artists scheduled to perform or exhibit their work during the festival. (Photo from Black Arts Festival)

Mwende Katwiwa, a Tulane senior and chair of the Black Arts Festival committee, says that amped-up advertising and well-known names on the festival schedule are part of a larger scheme by the Black Student Union to engage the university's black student body.

"The arts can engage people in learning and dialogue in ways that traditional efforts can't," says Katwiwa, who is double majoring in political economy and African and African Diaspora Studies. "You don't need a formal education to understand it and it has a way of bridging those divides that exist among different groups of people."

Katwiwa hopes that students of all nationalities will find something of interest in the schedule of events.

Some of the festival's highlights include a lecture by actor and transgender advocate

Laverne Cox on Monday (Feb. 17) and a discussion with bounce musician Big Freedia and Tulane faculty member Marc Perry on the intersection of black arts, gender and sexuality on Wednesday (Feb. 19).

Weekend events include a performing arts showcase on Saturday (Feb. 22) and a visual arts showcase on Sunday (Feb. 23).

A full list of events with times and locations can be found on the [Black Arts Festival website](#).

This year's theme is *Enlightenment, Empowerment and Engagement: An exploration of Black Arts ?* to enlighten through the arts, empower the black community and engage the students on campus.