



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

TO THE SENATE

BY SENATOR THE HONOURABLE OWEN K. DARRELL, JP

MINISTER OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT

“MAKERSPACE”

WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER 2024

Madam President, it is with great pride and excitement that I stand before you today to announce a major milestone in the ongoing work of the Department of Culture—one that directly fulfills an important initiative outlined in our 2023 Throne Speech. Last week we took an important step in realizing a vision for creative empowerment and community enrichment, as we soft launched the Department of Culture’s MakerSpace.

Madam President, this project represents much more than the creation of a physical space; it is the manifestation of our commitment to providing artists, musicians, dancers, and performers with the resources and environment they need to

flourish. It is an investment in the cultural fabric of our island, and in the immense talent that resides within our people.

Madam President, the MakerSpace is designed to meet the needs of our visual artists, musicians, dancers, graphic designers and actors. Located within CedarBridge Academy, this facility provides access to rooms where our creatives can practice and perfect their craft without the burden of additional costs.

Madam President, for our visual artists, we have outfitted a room with easels and worktables, creating an inspiring environment for painters, sculptors, and all those who work with their hands and imagination. We recognize that many artists lack the luxury of a private studio, and with the Department of Culture MakerSpace, they will now have shared access to a place where they can explore new techniques, collaborate with peers, or simply focus on their craft. During the soft launch, this vision came to life as renowned Bermudian artist Carlos Santana Dill conducted a live art installation, joined spontaneously by Chyna Talbot in creating visual art in the Maker Space together. One attendee was so inspired, they bought Ms. Talbot's sketch directly from her easel!

Madam President, musicians will have access to dedicated spaces for rehearsals and practice, equipped with essentials like a drum kit and keyboards. These spaces will allow artists to refine their sound, prepare for performances, and develop new compositions without the burden of costly studio rentals. The MakerSpace aims to bridge this gap and nurture our island’s musical talent. During the soft launch, Gombey Festival honouree and drum teacher Dennis Parsons shared, “This is what I’ve been waiting for. I’ve needed this for years and can’t wait to elevate drumming in this space!” During the launch, attendees were treated to a performance by the newly formed Pink Sand band, led by the gifted Quinn Outerbridge. Their mellow tunes made it easy to picture a band using the MakerSpace for jamming and rehearsing.

Madam President, this space provides dancers, actors, and performers with access to a studio for auditions, rehearsals, and creative development. Whether crafting a new dance routine or preparing for a theatrical role, the studio fosters artistic expression and experimentation. Troika has already used the space for rehearsals, and during the launch event, Rated E! practiced in the dance studio, demonstrating its potential.

Madam President, the MakerSpace will be available Monday to Friday, from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm, with additional access available on the weekends by appointment. In the spirit of inclusivity, the MakerSpace will be open to all interested creatives. Creatives are invited to register as a MakerSpace user, after which they will go through a brief vetting process. Once approved, each individual will be assigned a unique PIN number, allowing secure and controlled access to the rooms. And most importantly, use of the MakerSpace will be **free of charge**. Upon learning this, Tawana Lee, Director of PHC Majorettes and Drum Corps shared, “This is what Bermudian creatives have desperately needed – thank you!”

Madam President, we know that artists and musicians often struggle with financial barriers in pursuit of their passions, and we wanted to ensure that this space remains accessible to all, regardless of income level or professional status. Whether you’re an aspiring musician practicing for your first gig, or an established artist preparing for an exhibition, the MakerSpace is for you.

Madam President, this marks the start of the first phase of the MakerSpace project. As we move forward, the Department of Culture is committed to listening closely to feedback from those

who use the space. We want the MakerSpace to grow, evolve, and adapt to the changing needs of our creative community. The voices of users and creators will guide future phases of this initiative. Our long-term vision is to ensure that the Department of Culture MakerSpace continues to meet the diverse and expanding needs of all our artists, musicians, dancers, and performers—transforming it into a thriving cultural hub. The legendary Bermudian singer Sia Spence was in attendance during the soft launch event and put it very well, “It’s great to know that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport thought of the island’s creatives, providing them a space to network and create. It can only evolve from here!”

And **Madam President**, make no mistake—the value of this space extends beyond the individuals who will use it. As we provide creatives with the environment they need to produce their best work, we are also enriching the broader community. The art, music, performances, and ideas born in this space will have a ripple effect through our society. Our local art scene will grow more vibrant, our musicians will inspire us with new sounds, and our performances will breathe life into our culture. When we give space for creativity to flourish, we uplift the entire community.

Madam President, of course none of this would have been possible without the help of many dedicated individuals and institutions. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to **CedarBridge Academy,** whose partnership in sharing their facility has been vital in making this vision a reality. Your commitment to education and community support goes beyond the classroom and speaks volumes about the importance you place on nurturing creativity in both young people as well as the community at large.

Madam President, I would also like to thank the **Ministry of Public Works** for their support in preparing and outfitting these spaces. Their expertise and hard work have ensured that the MakerSpace is not only functional but also an inspiring environment for all who use it. And thanks also to the numerous expert musicians and artists who brainstormed with the Department of Culture on what was needed to ensure that the MakerSpace would be as useful as possible to the people in our creative community including: Michael Walsh; Dr. Edwin Smith; Jonari Smith; Patricia Nesbitt; Richard Lathan; Derek Simmons Jr.; Keamon Woolaston; Rikkai Scott; Shanna Hollis; Sheldon Fox; Major Dwight Robinson; James Van-Lowe; Stephan Johnstone; and the numerous others who

responded to our public calls for feedback with detailed and thoughtful notes about their artistic practice.

Madam President, in opening the doors to the Department of Culture's MakerSpace, we celebrate the creative future of our island. We are investing in our artists, our musicians, our performers, and in doing so, we are investing in the soul of our community. I encourage all creatives, whether established or aspiring, to take full advantage of this resource. This is your space—built for you, and ready for you to shape it into something extraordinary.

Madam President, I look forward to seeing the incredible work that will emerge from the MakerSpace. Let's create, let's collaborate, and let's uplift our community through the power of the arts.

Thank you, **Madam President.**