The City of Los Angeles
Department of Cultural Affairs
Performing Arts Division
The proposed for the Vision Theatre
A place to celebrate Leimert Park, heart of the Black community in LA, and home to such greats as Ella Fitzgerald.
Ray Charles

Kamasi Washington
A place to amplify Leimert Park, to invest in its future, and to incubate the next generation of artists in South Los Angeles.
A BRIEF HISTORY
The building has great historical significance to the city. It is one of the last few art deco theaters in LA.
and is a treasured Los Angeles venue.
Leimert Plaza, the park across the street, was designed by the children of Frederick Law Olmstead Sr.,
who designed Central Park In New York
Leimert Plaza Park was renovated and re-opened by Council President Emeritus Herb J. Wesson, Jr., Council District 10
The Leimert Cinema (aka Leimert Park Theater) opened with 1,100 seats on April 21, 1932. It was designed in 1931 by Stiles O. Clements of the architectural firm, Morgan, Walls and Clements.
Among other buildings of note, Clements also designed the El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood.
The Leimert Theater remained a movie palace until 1963. The last film screened there was “Bonnie and Clyde.”
In 1977 the Leimert Cinema became a Jehovah’s Witness Chapel known as The Watchtower. And then, years later,
Actress Marla Gibbs bought the property in 1990 and renamed it the Vision Theatre. Her dream was to create a 800 seat theater, making room for a larger mainstage, with class rooms (for performing arts studies) and office space.
• In 1992 the civil unrest in Los Angeles and an economic recession hit the area hard and the theater fell into foreclosure. The City acquired the property in 1999 and began plans for renovation.

• Phase I was completed in 2011 and included the renovation of the tower, marquee, lobbies, classroom and office spaces.

• Phase II is currently underway and includes the historic refurbishment and expansion of a 750 seat auditorium, the addition of an orchestra pit, lounge, green room, dressing rooms, work and meeting rooms, backstage area, quick change and fly loft.
The Vision Theatre is important from an architectural perspective.
There are many notable art deco touches: the lobby,
the front vestibule,
the iconic marquee and tower,
and the historic ceiling mural by Anthony Heinsbergen,
who was also commissioned by Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks to paint the murals
in the refurbished theater inside the Ace Hotel, as well as the
Pantages Theatre
Warner Grand Theatre
Heinsbergen also did the interior design for this LA City owned and managed venue, as well as
Los Angeles City Hall.
DCA’s goal is to continue the heritage, legacy and glory of the Vision Theatre for generations to come.
Be the cornerstone of community-based development and a cultural hub for the residents of Leimert Park,
South Los Angeles, and the City of Los Angeles as a whole.
FUTURE PROGRAMMING
The Vision Theatre is an important and vibrant gathering space available to the community.
For meetings and public presentations
Adult Classes…
Youth programming in the performing arts
Supporting education, families and...
The Leimert Park Cultural Hub:

Art + Practice
Café Haroun
Destination Crenshaw
Fernando Pullum Performing Arts Center
Hot and Cool Café
KAOS Network
Los Angeles Third Church for Spiritual Living
Leimert Park Plaza
People’s Street Programs
Sika
We Love Leimert
The World Stage
and the Crenshaw Cultural Corridor
Upon re-opening, we want to launch many new initiatives:
The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre
The Dance Theatre of Harlem
International Association of Blacks in Dance:

Lula Washington Dance Theatre
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Philadanco!
Dallas Black Dance Theatre
Cleo Parker Robinson Dance
As well as local artists to have a home in Los Angeles:

Hip Hop in the Diaspora
Ana Maria Alvarez
Brigette Dunn-Korpela
d. Sabela grimes

David Rousseve
Maura Townsend's Project 21Dance
Pat Taylor’s Jazz Antiqua

Taisha Pagget
Viver Brasil Dance Co
Willy Souly
Debbie Allen Dance Academy
Inspired by the NBTF in Winston-Salem and the Atlanta Black Arts Festival
A home for Black Theater in Los Angeles
inviting:
The Robey Theatre Company
WACO Theatre Center
Watts Village Theatre
Cornerstone Theatre Company
Amazing Grace Conservatory
and Ted Lange Productions
to name a few!
Staged readings to support emerging Los Angeles playwrights
A South Los Angeles Production & Festival Training Boot Camp
An Apollo Theatre - West
Vision Theatre
Black Comedy Festival
Vision Theatre Film Festival
YOUR FILM HERE!
Barbara Morrison
Jazz & Blues
Music Festival
BET Presents
Book and Author Festival and the Leimert Park Book Book Fair
UCLA Humanities - Black Arts and Ideas
Visual Arts Exhibition Space with LA Artists including partnering with cafés, shops, bookstores, and African themed boutiques in Leimert Park Village and along Crenshaw Boulevard.
Los Angeles
Black History Hub

Black Landmark Tours
Arts of the African Diaspora
Performing Arts festivals like Jewel’s Catch One
and major national holidays like the MLK Day Fest celebrating the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. 

Leimert Park community-based festivals

Blues & Jazz Festivals

Gospel Festivals
and holiday programming
Partnership with the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center
Salvador, Brazil

and our Los Angeles Sister Cities

Busan, South Korea

Giza, Egypt

Lusaka, Zambia
WHAT’S BEEN HAPPENING
Photo shoots archiving the ‘Visions’ mural, artists, business owners and community members...
... the Vision Theatre Construction Team and Community Stakeholders.
DCA gifted vintage seats and metal parts from the Vision to museums, theaters, artists and community members.
Construction is underway!
The beams have been raised!
Vision Theatre
Legacy Curtain

"Sankofa" by local artist, Wendell Wiggins, was one of three final designs voted on and selected by the community, will debut at the re-opening of the theater.
The Department of Cultural Affairs

Request for Proposals for the Management, Operations, Programming, and Engagement of the Vision Theatre Performing Arts Center
Occupancy is scheduled for 2023
The projection for the Vision Theatre is bold, bright and beautiful.
The Vision’s grand re-opening is scheduled for the 2023 – 2024 season
IN CLOSING
The Vision Theatre

will not only serve the nation and the world as a Class A, state-of-the-Art facility for dance, music, theater and film, it will serve as
the mecca of Black arts, culture and entertainment for Leimert Park, South LA, and the City of Los Angeles at-large
All-Access Pass!

Be sure to join the Vision’s official Facebook page @ www.facebook.com/thevisiontheatre/ to stay up to-date on the renovations and the grand re-opening!
We look forward to welcoming you at the Vision Theatre Performing Arts Center!