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## **From the Smithsonian To The Kitchen: African American Art Is Transforming The Home Decor Business**

**Carson, CA: November 2019:** Just a few decades ago black art was hard to come by in mainstream markets. Artists were largely only viewed at African American museums and at niche galleries. In 1995 two young African American males in South Los Angeles set out to bridge the gap between black art collectors and the everyday consumer. Shades of Color fuses black art into its product line to celebrate one of America's most influential cultures on household products including home décor, shower curtains, floor mats and kitchen aprons.

As of 2017, the home decor industry was worth \$582 billion, and is projected to increase to \$741 billion by 2023, according to the PR Newswire website. There has been an increase in home ownership which has tremendously impacted the home décor market, as stated on the Allied Market Research website.

While the home décor market is constantly expanding, there are still seldom companies that honor African American art on their products. Shades of Color's partnership with African American artists is proving to be a solution that brings art into the homes of the consumers that truly appreciate it.

"We work with artists to mass produce their art on products which exponentially increases exposure to their craft," says President, Adrian Woods. "Our artists are an extension of our family and are relatable from the girlfriends of Cidne Wallace to the strong black fathers by Frank Morrison to the more contemporary styles of Larry Poncho Brown. Our goal is to highlight these artists and be a driving force in ethnic home décor."

Black art is a reflection of American culture, and Shades of Color's community is making that art more accessible. All types of consumers have essentially become art collectors without even knowing it. The company's direct to consumer website features African American artists, a vast catalog of products and global conversations around culture and current affairs. With its ties to community involvement the company is also supporting its greater network. Schools, churches and community groups have earned well over \$2 million through the company's fifteen year fundraising program that is open to everyone.

What began in the mid-90's as strictly a calendar company is now a leader in an ethnic niche market selling through mass retailers, organizations, main street gift shops and quaint Afrocentric stores across the country. The flagship calendar line preserves history and brings facts, accomplishments and current milestones to light in a time when typical classrooms across the country are still neglecting to include Black History. The entire product line is infused with positive aspirations and imagery that embody this very important aspect of Americana.

"It is touching to hear the reactions," says Production Manager and Marketing Director, Janine Robinson. "Across social media followers comment on what it feels like to walk into their bathroom, for example, and see a reflection of themselves on a 70" x 70" panel that fills the room. It's not rare to get several comments saying, "That's me!" Not only does the product fill the room literally, the art and statements fill and ignite the spirit too. That is the part that makes it all worth it." #UpliftandInspire

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**ABOUT SHADES OF COLOR, LLC** Founded in 1995, Shades of Color, LLC is a small black owned business producing high quality calendars, stationery, kitchenware, home décor, bags and gifts. It licenses and commissions black art from renowned African American artists. The company manufactures and distributes its own collections to a global audience.

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