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## Ulta Beauty Announces 2024 MUSE Accelerator Cohort

*New This Year, Ulta Beauty and Fifteen Percent Pledge Announce \$10K Award for One Emerging Entrepreneur*

CHICAGO--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Ulta Beauty, the nation's largest beauty retailer, today announced its 2024 MUSE Accelerator cohort. Starting September 18, eight early-stage brands spanning cosmetics, skincare, haircare, and wellness, will embark on an engaging 10-week journey featuring a robust curriculum, mentorship, and funding to fuel growth and prepare for retail distribution.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240916612946/en/>

Ulta Beauty MUSE Accelerator 2024 Cohort (Photo: Business Wire)

The MUSE Accelerator, now in its third year, supports

Ulta Beauty's ongoing efforts to **m**agnify, **u**plift, **s**upport and **e**mpower underrepresented voices in the industry while curating a unique assortment that is truly inclusive and represents *All Things Beauty, All In One Place*® for beauty enthusiasts.

"As retail leaders and brand builders, we seek to create space and opportunities for all brands to thrive in our industry and nurture an inclusive assortment that reflects the beautifully diverse community we serve," said Monica Arnaudo, chief merchandising officer, Ulta Beauty. "We're focused on brand amplification, assortment growth and creating equitable guest and associate experiences so everyone can see themselves reflected in what we offer."

### Meet the 2024 MUSE Accelerator Cohort:

- **Jamie Melbourne & Tony Lecy-Siewert**, [APOSTLE](#): A cosmetics brand for men that provides clean, cost effective, and efficacious alternatives to traditionally marketed beauty products.
- **Audrey Ajakaye**, [AUDAJA](#): A professional-grade skincare brand reimagining skincare for all skin types and tones, with skin of color in mind, born from founder Audrey Ajakaye's lifelong battle with chronic eczema.
- **Amy Roe**, [BYROE](#): Upcycled superfood-infused skincare crafted with vegan and cruelty-free ingredients.
- **Amara Onwukaeme**, [FEMIGIST](#): A purpose-driven feminine care brand that provides plant-powered hormonal support and feminine wellness products along with educational resources and supportive community.

- **Mia Fiona Kut, [LUNA NECTAR](#):** A line of sustainable, waterless haircare products rooted in adaptogen theory, from Eastern rituals, combined with clinical actives. Dermatologist and trichologist-approved, Luna Nectar's mission is to kick the stigma of women's hair loss through all-natural, vegan, and cruelty-free products.
- **Nicol Varona Cancelmo & Cory Varona, [OCOIA](#):** Clean curl care for hermanas everywhere inspired by the Dominican Republic and created to simplify curly hair routines with clean, nourishing ingredients that uplift natural beauty and represent the Hispanic and Latino community.
- **Elimar Depaula, [QUEEN COSMETICS](#):** More than just a beauty brand, Queen Cosmetics is dedicated to designing products that transcend the ordinary, speak to your inner artist, and encourage self-expression and authenticity.
- **Dana Roberts, Jarrod Shaw, and Dr. Monica Williams, [REDDROP](#):** Created by an educator and a doctor to ensure that girls are prepared and empowered as their period journey begins, RedDrop offers superior products and empowering content to help grow powerful women.

To ensure a holistic, enriching experience that equips participants with real-life skills to succeed, Ulta Beauty has developed a robust 10-week curriculum focused on brand development, including:

- **Brand Strategy & Positioning:** An immersive, 360-degree planning session that provides tools, support, and resources needed for long-term success.
- **Retail 101:** Expert training on how to successfully launch, grow and thrive in a national, omni-channel retail environment.
- **Supply Chain & Logistics:** A critical course on planning for and navigating distribution channels to ensure optimal customer experiences.
- **Demo Week & Celebration:** An opportunity to pitch to Ulta Beauty retail merchants and network with investors.

Each brand in the 2024 MUSE Accelerator cohort will receive \$50,000 in financial support to help accelerate their businesses and valuable resources to establish a foundation for long-term success. **New to the program this year, Ulta Beauty and long-time partner Fifteen Percent Pledge will select one member of the cohort to receive an additional \$10K award.** The recipient will be selected by Fifteen Percent Pledge founder Aurora James and presented at the end of the program.

"Ulta Beauty understands that today's consumers want the brands they see on retail shelves to reflect the diversity they see in their communities," said Aurora James, founder of Fifteen Percent Pledge and creative director of Brother Vellies. "Fifteen Percent Pledge is proud to continue our partnership with Ulta Beauty and support the MUSE Accelerator program, an incredible resource for emerging entrepreneurs to build their brands. I am excited to meet the amazing businesses in this year's cohort!"

In addition to obtaining the critical skills and financial support needed to grow a business, MUSE participants become part of a community and support network of diverse leaders that helps empower each participants' journey. Ulta Beauty experts across the company, along with industry leaders from Meta, TikTok, Beauty Independent, Métier Creative, True Beauty Ventures, Power Digital and Pitts Leadership Consulting (PLC) will provide mentorship and insight to participants, a critical element for nurturing brand development and long-term success.

Additionally, over the course of the program, each brand will receive dedicated mentorship from industry leaders who are successfully building their brands. **MUSE Accelerator mentors for 2024 include Aliyah and Marco Marandiz of Sugardoh, Cassandra Thurswell of Kitsch, Tony Prado of Rizos Curls, Priscilla Tsai of Cocokind, Lillian Tung of Fur, Maeva Heim of Bread, Gina Woods of Donna's Recipe, and Abbas and Aamir Attarwala of Nemat.** These mentors are graciously offering their time and expertise to help shape the next generation of beauty leaders.

"Being a mentor and part of the inspiring Ulta Beauty MUSE Accelerator journey is an incredible honor," said Cassandra Morales Thurswell, founder and CEO of Kitsch. "It's amazing that Ulta is providing this platform for brand owners, and I hope that sharing my expertise can help guide and support emerging entrepreneurs as they navigate growth."

To learn more, visit <http://www.ulta.com/muse-accelerator>.

### **About Ulta Beauty**

At Ulta Beauty (NASDAQ: ULTA), the possibilities are beautiful. Ulta Beauty is the largest U.S. beauty retailer and the premier beauty destination for cosmetics, fragrance, skin care products, hair care products and salon services. In 1990, the Company reinvented the beauty retail experience by offering a new way to shop for beauty – bringing together All Things Beauty, All in One Place®. Today, Ulta Beauty operates approximately 1,400 retail stores across 50 states and also distributes its products through its website, which includes a collection of tips, tutorials, and social content. For more information, visit <https://www.ulta.com>.

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### **Ulta Beauty Media Contact:**

Crystal Carroll

Senior Director, Public Relations

[ccarroll@ulta.com](mailto:ccarroll@ulta.com)

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