

U.S. REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS



**REGIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE
SEPTEMBER 2008**

www.usregionalarts.org

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Arts Midwest

David J. Fraher, Executive Director
Barbara Robinson, Chair – *Cleveland, Ohio*

Mid-America Arts Alliance

Mary Kennedy McCabe, Executive Director
Jim Tolbert, Chair – *Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

Alan W. Cooper, Executive Director
Lisa Frigand, Chair – *New York, New York*

New England Foundation for the Arts

Rebecca Blunk, Executive Director
Andrea Rogers, Chair – *Burlington, Vermont*

Southern Arts Federation

Gerri Combs, Executive Director
Todd Lowe, Chair – *Louisville, Kentucky*

Western States Arts Federation

Anthony Radich, Executive Director
Keith Colbo, Chair – *Denver, Colorado*

For additional information about the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations, visit www.usregionalarts.org or contact National Coordinator, Mickey Smith at (917)520-0511.

ARTS MIDWEST

David J. Fraher, Executive Director

Midwest Arts Conference

In September, nearly 1,000 performing arts professionals will gather in Kansas City for the 21st annual Midwest Arts Conference, which will feature more than 30 wide-ranging professional development offerings; opportunities to see more than 70 performance showcases; ample business hours in the Marketplace; and Alan Brown of WolfBrown providing a keynote titled “Rising to the Challenge: The Future of Arts Marketing.”

Performing Arts Fund

In other performing arts activities, our Performing Arts Fund is providing more than \$550,000 to support 200 performing arts engagements across our nine states in 2008-2009; and planning and preparation continues for fall tours to nine Midwest communities by Los Utrera from Mexico and Mauvais Sort from Canada through *Arts Midwest World Fest*.

NEA Initiatives

Our management of NEA national initiatives continues with 40 theater companies participating in *Shakespeare in American Communities*; working with 12 selected venues through *NEA Jazz Masters Live*; and continued expansion of *The Big Read* to 208 U.S. communities, plus *The Big Read Egypt/U.S.* and *The Big Read* films.

ArtsLab

Finally, Arts Midwest is working with the Bush, F. R. Bigelow, Mardag, McKnight, and Saint Paul foundations to manage *ArtsLab*, a three-year program designed to build the capacity of sixteen smaller nonprofit arts organizations across Minnesota. Visit our redesigned Web site at www.artsmidwest.org.

MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE
Mary Kennedy McCabe, Executive Director

\$2.38 Million Cooperative Agreement Renewal from NEH

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) renewed its partnership with Mid-America Arts Alliance to continue NEH on the Road, a program that features compacted versions of large-scale NEH-supported exhibitions. The \$2.38 million cooperative agreement will increase the number of traveling exhibitions in that program to 12 and enable NEH on the Road to reach 120 additional communities across the country over the next three years with high-impact, low-cost, educational exhibition experiences. This is the third cooperative agreement between NEH and Mid-America for NEH on the Road, bringing the total investment by NEH in the program to \$4.88 million.

New Director of Performing Arts

Don Adams joined Mid-America in June as the new Director of Performing Arts. Adams, whose more than 35 years of experience covers public cultural programming, policymaking, and administration, came to Mid-America from the University of California Extension, Santa Cruz, where he was Director of the Arts and Humanities department. Adams, co-founder of the firm Adams and Goldbard, has consulted extensively with dozens of clients such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the Program for Art on Film, Arts International, Appalshop, the Kansas Arts Commission, and the Missouri Arts Council. He has written many articles and books, including *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development* and *Community, Culture and Globalization*.

New Exhibitions on the Road

We are pleased to announce that we have launched six new exhibitions, four ExhibitsUSA exhibitions and two NEH on the Road exhibitions. New offerings from ExhibitsUSA include *Return of the Yellow Peril: A Survey of the Work of Roger Shimomura, 1969-2007*, organized by Clemson University, South Carolina; *Nosotras: Portraits of Latinas*, organized by the Carlsbad Museum and Art Center, New Mexico; *Imaging Blackness, 1925-2002: Film Posters from the Indiana University Black Film Center/Archive*, organized by the Black Film Center/Archive at Indiana University, Bloomington; and *Linedrives and Lipstick: The Untold Story of Women's Baseball*, organized by ExhibitsUSA. The two NEH on the Road exhibitions are *Grassroots: African Origins of an American Art*, a cross-cultural inquiry of the South Carolina low county coiled basket, organized by the Museum for African Art in New York City; and *Carnaval!*, a global journey tracing the many ways that people celebrate the pre-Lenten carnival season in eight communities in Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas, organized by the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Performing Arts Grants Awards

Almost half a million dollars has been awarded to presenters for performances and educational activities by performing artists in FY09. Awards totaling \$487,000 have been made for 233 performing arts projects throughout the region. Grants by programs include the Regional Touring Program (\$412,120), American Masterpieces Dance (\$35,300), Latino Culture Project (\$30,580), and Travel Stipends (\$9,000) for next month's Midwest Arts Conference, which will be hosted in Kansas City. The Mid-America Arts Alliance Regional Touring Program is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts Presenting and Touring Grants.

MID ATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION
Alan W. Cooper, Executive Director

USArtists International Announces Global Expansion

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation announced a major expansion of USArtists International (USAI) effective with the September 2008 application round. Formerly limited to supporting dance and music ensembles invited to perform at international festivals in Europe, USAI will now encompass festivals anywhere in the world outside the United States. The program will also be open to support American theater companies and solo performances in all performing arts disciplines.

The Foundation received grants of \$500,000 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and \$100,000 from the Trust for Mutual Understanding in support of USAI. A program of Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, USAI is the only national initiative solely dedicated to promoting the work of American performing artists abroad.

Other International Work

In addition to USAI, the Foundation has been working with the NEA to support US poets traveling abroad to participate in poetry festivals. In April, Jayne Phillips traveled to Mexico City for a presentation of the new bilingual anthology of contemporary American short stories, *Lo que cuenta el vecino*; Suji Kwock Kim participated in the International Poetry Festival of Genoa in June; and Samuel Menashe was a featured guest at the Ledbury Poetry Festival in England in July.

The Foundation also supported performances of *Desaire de Elevadores* directed by Tea Alagic at DramaFest in Guadalajara, Mexico in August/September as well as the Fourth Edition of the *American Season* at the Centre for Contemporary Art – Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, Poland.

2009 ArtsCONNECT Performing Arts Touring Grants Announced

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation has awarded 62 grants through its 2009 ArtsCONNECT program. The grants will provide \$396,090 in fee support to performing arts presenters who will be presenting 12 ensembles. In keeping with the Foundation's commitment to increasing access to and greater understanding of the arts, many of the funded engagements will feature workshops, residencies, or classes in conjunction with performances.

ArtsCONNECT supports performing arts tours through presenter consortia and partnerships in the mid-Atlantic region. This year's projects include: Adrienne Young and Band, The Ahn Trio, Ballet Hispanico, Eiko and Koma, Hot 8 Brass Band, Kathy Mattea and Moving Mountains, Kronos Quartet, The Living Word Project/Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Pilobolus, Ragamala Music and Dance Theater, Rennie Harris Puremovement, and the String Trio of New York.

BNY Mellon Jazz 2008 Living Legacy Award Honors Pianist and Jazz Educator Kenny Barron

Jazz pianist Kenny Barron will be honored with the BNY Mellon Jazz 2008 Living Legacy Award in a special ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, January 24, 2009. The award is a program of Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and is sponsored by The Bank of New York Mellon.

The 2008 Award coincides with Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's 30th Anniversary and the 15th Anniversary of the Living Legacy Award. Event guests will enjoy a performance honoring the 2007 BNY Mellon Jazz awardee Benny Golson in the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater. The performance, *Benny Golson at 80*, salutes the 60-year career of the award-winning saxophonist and NEA Jazz Master with concert appearances by the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Al Jarreau, Ron Carter, and others.

Mid Atlantic Tours Announces 2008-2009 Venues and Dates

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation will support 46 engagements through its Mid Atlantic Tours program in 2008-2009. Performances by Inbal Pinto Dance Company, Cephas & Wiggins, Simon Shaheen, Christian McBride Band, and The Acting Company will take place throughout the region over the next year.

NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
Rebecca Blunk, Executive Director

American Masterpieces

\$570,000 in grants were made to 17 American dance companies to support the reconstruction and restaging of historically significant American dance works. Educational and interpretive components accompany each reconstruction. These projects together will receive up to \$510,000 in support for touring. Among the grantees is Boston-based choreographer Ann Carlson for her piece *Catch and Release*, a 30-minute site-specific work that is made with and performed by 8 to 10 highly skilled fly fishermen/women. NEFA was selected to develop AMD in partnership with the NEA and Dance/USA in 2005 based on its expertise in the design and delivery of performing arts grants programs. These grants represent the 3rd and final round of AMD funding through NEFA. Future funding for the program will continue through the NEA. For information on that process, visit arts.gov/grants/apply/AMDance.html.

Expeditions 2008 Grantees

NEFA awarded \$326,415 in grants, funding 16 cross-disciplinary touring projects that stimulate richer collaborative opportunities in arts touring and presentation in New England. Grants are made to New England-based non-profit organizations to support the planning or touring of projects with performing, literary, and/or visual arts components, such as New Orleans-based Hot 8 Brass Band, who brings New Orleans-style second-line parade street music to 6 New England venues. Accompanying the performances will be discussions on issues New Orleans faces today, outreach to local shelters, school performances, Louisiana-style dinners, jazz master classes, Grand Marshall-led workshops, and community parades. The tour was kicked off on 7/26 in Maine and will culminate in a region-wide tour in 2009.

Native Arts @ NEFA

Native Arts @ NEFA has implemented the National Native Artist Exchange. The program provides travel grants for Native artists to exchange artistic skills, knowledge and ideas, and to develop collaborative projects. One of the first grantees of this national component, Kelly Church (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Ojibwe in Michigan), a 5th generation black ash basket weaver from Hopkins, MI, conducted her artistic exchange at the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance annual market. Other recent highlights include a spring gathering featuring grantees from the regional Native Arts program, which included artist exchange and professional development. A Native Arts New England grant to the Aquinnah Cultural Center on Martha's Vineyard supported expanded opportunities for regional Native artists at the second annual artists market.

National Dance Project Production Grants

NEFA has awarded \$425,000 in grants to support the development of new dance projects during the 2008-2009 season. Fifteen contemporary dance artists and companies from 6 U.S. states and Australia will receive NDP Production Grants, ranging in amounts from \$15,000-\$31,000. The works will be available for national tours during the 2009-2010 or 2010-2011 performance season. Selected from a highly competitive applicant pool, these projects demonstrate multi-disciplinary collaborations, serve diverse audiences, and pursue creative and innovative partnerships between artists and arts presenters. For example, New York based Shen Wei Dance Arts will complete the *Triptych* project with *Re-Triptych Part III: The New Silk Road*, a bracing vision of the "new" China encountered during his time there choreographing the 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremonies.

Research at NEFA Receives National & Regional Attention

NEFA's groundbreaking research on the Creative Economy kicked off the Economic Development track at the AFTA annual convention in Philadelphia in June. The findings and recommendations in NEFA's report *The Creative Economy: A New Definition* (available at nefa.org/pubs/index.html) sparked lively conversation in a standing-room-only session. NEFA learned that Creative Economy advocates from several states, including Colorado, Texas and Wisconsin, are already using the data framework and methodology laid out in the report to create similar analysis of the Creative Economy in New England, making progress toward NEFA's goal of national adoption of this research model.

SOUTHERN ARTS FEDERATION
Gerri Combs, Executive Director

Performing Arts Exchange 2008

The layout of the city of Atlanta has allowed SAF to take bold steps in reshaping the attendee experience at the Performing Arts Exchange in September. The conference schedule has shifted to support a thoughtful flow from one activity to another. A regional booking conversation has been added so that Southern Arts Federation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and New England Foundation for the Arts can meet with their constituents to discuss challenges and opportunities facing presenting and touring in their regions. PAE 2008 focuses on the discipline of dance with five dance companies performing in various styles on the Juried Showcase stages, and a professional development session on communicating the aesthetics of dance to audiences. Liz Lerman of Liz Lerman's Dance Exchange, the conference keynote speaker, and will address the topic "Shapeshifting: New Forms for the Future". New this year are informal conversations with thought leaders and facilitated roundtables to broaden the approach to learning.

Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience

The Southern Arts Federation is proud to work in partnership once again with the National Endowment for the Arts to present 25 multi-week writing workshops throughout the country. For the first time, the workshops will be open to veterans as well as active duty troops with a focus on those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Writing sessions will be led by nationally acclaimed writers including Andrew Carroll, Tobias Wolff, Jeff Shaara, and Marilyn Nelson, and members of local literary organizations. Initial workshop sites include: Palo Alto VA Medical Center, Palo Alto, CA; Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC; Miami VA Healthcare System, Miami, FL; St. Louis VA Medical Center, St. Louis, MO; U.S. Marine Corps University Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA. In addition to SAF, other project collaborators include the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense. Support for the project is provided by The Boeing Company.

American Masterpieces

Tradition/Innovation: American Masterpieces of Southern Craft and Traditional Art, featuring artworks created by living Southern traditional artists and contemporary craft artists, will travel to nine Southern states through 2010. An audio guide includes the artists' stories in their own words through incorporation of field interviews, and indigenous and traditional Southern music. *Tradition/Innovation* has been featured in *American Craft* (June/July 2008) and *Southern Accents* (Sept/Oct 2008) magazines. Since the April update, SAF began offering free educational resources on the exhibit's media-rich website at www.traditioninnovation.org. From one-off presentation slides and classroom activities to complete lesson plans that span an entire semester, these education resources connect to national arts standards and provide cross-curricular connections to vocabulary, math, geography, science, history and social studies as well as an exploration of particular media such as fiber arts, book arts, baskets, wood, clay, glass and metal.

Emergency Preparedness

SAF has progressed in its three-prong approach to Emergency Readiness, Response and Recovery. Its internal agency plan will address the agency's business continuity in the event of an agency-related emergency -- employee/guest/board safety, data management, communications, financial activity and programmatic continuity. A regional approach to increase the number of arts organizations with emergency preparedness plans will be launched in the first quarter of 2009 with the support of a working group which includes a representative from each member state arts agency. The initiative involves developing a centralized Web site with planning tools (sample plans, consultant resources and other technical assistance tools) and links to aid and recovery resources, and an awareness campaign to build urgency around emergency preparedness and drive traffic to the Web site. This initiative is supported by the Flagler Museum, Palm Beach, FL. SAF is continuing the conversation with The Mellon Foundation regarding the design of a national technology-driven tool to capture data from arts organizations and use it to generate customized emergency preparedness plans.

WESTERN STATES ARTS FEDERATION
Anthony Radich, Executive Director

Tax District Proceedings Available

The published proceedings from a seminar on cultural tax districts are now available. Sponsored by the Washington State Arts Commission and WESTAF and held in Seattle, Washington, in February, 2008, seminar participants focused on the benefits, drawbacks, structure and impact of cultural tax districts. Participants examined several proposed, unsuccessful, and current tax district structures—such as Denver's Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, which yields more than \$42 million annually for arts and culture in a seven-county area. Printed copies of the proceedings are available upon request from WESTAF. An electronic version is also available for download from the WESTAF website by visiting the Publications page at www.westaf.org/publications.php. For more information, please contact Erin Bassity at erin.bassity@westaf.org.

The Creative Vitality Index Advances

The Creative Vitality Index (CVI), which is available from WESTAF, will expand later this fall to include comparative material from all 50 major metropolitan areas and all 50 states. Users of the CVI will still need to contract with WESTAF to receive the detail that supports index number for these geographic entities, but the comparative information will be greatly expanded. The CVI measures the relative health of an area's creative sector and includes for-profit as well as non-profit economic activity.

WESTAF Staff Member Attends the Festival of Pacific Arts

As part of a developing project at WESTAF, staff member Ryan Blum recently attended the 10th Festival of Pacific Arts in American Samoa. This festival takes place every four years and features performers and artists from across the South Pacific. If you would like more information on the festival activities, please contact Ryan Blum at ryan.blum@westaf.org.

Jury Buddy to Launch

WESTAF is pleased to announce the upcoming launch of a major enhancement to the jury component of its online application and adjudication systems for visual art, CaFE™ and ZAPP™. *Jury Buddy*, WESTAF's new Mac-based image-synchronization script, will allow jury administrators to create slideshows of image submissions in less than a minute. *Jury Buddy* will also communicate with the online scorecards of WESTAF's image-management systems, allowing for incredibly rapid removal of images that have not been selected to advance to the next round of jurying. For event and visual art administrators who have struggled over the years with the cumbersome process of removing slides from carousels or pulling digital images out of PowerPoint presentations between rounds, *Jury Buddy* provides a simple, fast, and user-friendly way to ensure that jurors spend their time looking at artwork rather than their watches.

ArtsSpaceFinder Project Initiated

In conjunction with the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs, WESTAF is developing software that will allow artists to locate arts space in Denver County. The software offers significant advances over existing platforms focused on artist space and will be available for adoption across the country once it is deployed in Denver.