

# NASAA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY of STATE ARTS AGENCIES

Knowledge ▲ Representation ▲ Community

## 2023 Virtual Creative Aging Institute

### Speaker Bios

(in alphabetical order)



**Anne Alston, Mid-America Region Representative  
Program Specialist  
Nebraska Arts Council**

In her role as program specialist for the Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) Anne Alston works to ensure that all Nebraskans have opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts, including arts education in schools. She oversees NAC's Creative Aging Arts Program, Nebraska's Poetry Out Loud program, and various NAC initiatives to advance the arts throughout the state. Alston currently serves on the Nebraskans for the Arts Education Committee and Joslyn Art Museum's Learning and Engagement Advisory Committee. In 2018, the National Council of Teachers of English and the Nebraska Language Arts Council honored her with an Intellectual Freedom Award. Prior to NAC, Alston was a teaching specialist at Joslyn Art Museum and headed outreach programs at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts.



**Anne Basting, Mid-America Region Representative  
Program Specialist  
Nebraska Arts Council**

Anne Basting is founder of TimeSlips.org and professor of English and director of the Center for 21st Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Her work as an artist, scholar and change maker in the arts and aging field spans more than 25 years and includes several books (most recently *Creative Care*) and multiple large-scale, transformative arts projects that infuse meaning making into health and social service systems. <https://www.anne-basting.com/>



**Josh Chrysler**  
**Folklorist and Health & Wellness Specialist**  
**Wyoming Arts Council**

Josh Chrysler is the folklorist and health & wellness Specialist for the Wyoming Arts Council, a state agency that provides leadership and invests resources to champion, sustain and cultivate community through the arts across Wyoming. Chrysler manages the Health and Wellness in the Arts program, seeking to serve artists and arts organizations

working at the intersection of arts and well-being, including the Creative Aging program. Additionally, he runs the Folk and Traditional Arts program, which aims to identify, document, conserve and honor folk and traditional arts throughout Wyoming. Chrysler has a degree in English and philosophy from Colorado State University, along with an M.A. in folk studies from Western Kentucky University.



**Rebecca Cruse**  
**Deputy Director**  
**South Dakota Arts Council**

Rebecca Cruse is the deputy director at the South Dakota Arts Council, where she coordinates arts education, community development, and special programs along with communications, legislative relations, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and access initiatives and monitoring. Cruse has been with the agency since 2009. She holds degrees in theater, creative writing and Spanish and earned her Ph.D. in international public policy in 2019. Cruse lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota with her dog, Maui. They enjoy hiking, biking, paddle boarding, rock climbing, yoga and playing in the snow.



**Jess T. Dugan**  
**Artist**

Jess T. Dugan (American, b. 1986, Biloxi, MS) is an artist whose work explores identity through photography, video, and writing. Dugan's work is regularly exhibited internationally and is in the permanent collections of over 50 museums. Their monographs include *Look at me like you love me* (MACK, 2022), *To Survive on This Shore: Photographs and Interviews with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Older Adults* (Kehrer Verlag, 2018), and *Every Breath We Drew* (Daylight Books, 2015). They are the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and an ICP Infinity Award, and were selected by the Obama White House as an LGBT Artist Champion of Change.



**Vanessa Fabbre, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor of Social Work**  
**Brown School, Washington University**

Vanessa Fabbre, Ph.D., LCSW, is associate professor of social work at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis, where she is also an affiliate faculty member in the department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, the Institute for Public Health, and the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies. Fabbre's work focuses on the conditions under which queer and trans people age well, and what this means in the context of heteronormativity, transphobia and other oppressive social forces. She also strives to promote critical perspectives on social work practice and rigorous interpretive methodology in the social sciences.



**Monica Grable**  
**Arts Education Director**  
**Montana Arts Council**

Monica Grable joined the staff of the Montana Arts Council (MAC) as arts education director in early 2017. In her role at MAC, Grable is responsible for program design, partnership cultivation and policymaking designed to address and advance arts education needs in the state. Currently, she administers two arts learning focused grant processes under the Artists in Schools and Communities (AISC) program umbrella serving the learning needs of Montanans of every age and ability, directs a business development program for artists—the Montana Artrepreneur Program (MAP), coordinates Montana Poetry Out Loud, and provides leadership for MAC's Creative Aging initiatives and education related communities of practice. Grable's work at MAC follows 25 years dedicated to the parallel pursuits of secondary level visual art teaching and community-centered performing arts presenting. Previously the executive director of the Bitterroot Performing Arts Council, an arts presenting nonprofit, Grable has also held art teaching positions in Corvallis and Hamilton, Montana, as well as Minnetonka, Minnesota. She holds a B.A. in art and an M.A. in curriculum and instruction. The common thread connecting her professional passions is a deep desire to advocate for access to arts learning and to program transformative multidisciplinary arts experiences for all. A former member of the Arts Education Working Group, Grable is delighted to share this work with her national colleagues!





**Stephanie Haines**  
**Arts Education and Accessibility Manager**  
**Indiana Arts Commission**

Stephanie Haines is the arts education & accessibility manager at the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC). Haines oversees IAC's arts education program PACE (Partnering Arts, Communities, and Education) as well as Poetry Out Loud, the Indiana State Poet Laureate program, and the Regional Operating and Project grant program; she is also the agency's accessibility coordinator. Haines earned a master of arts degree in arts administration from Indiana University and a bachelor of science degree in visual art education from the

University of Indianapolis. She has more than 10 years of experience working with teaching artists and arts integration programming with specialties in professional development and artist lesson planning. Haines is a visual artist primarily in the mediums of painting and drawing.



**Meredith Hanley**  
**Program Director, Community Capacity building**  
**USAging**

Meredith Hanley serves as a program director at USAging, the national nonprofit association representing and supporting the network of Area Agencies on Aging and advocating for the Title VI Native American Aging Programs. She oversees [engAGED: The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults](#), a national effort funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), aimed at increasing the social engagement of older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers through training, technical assistance and outreach for the Aging Network. She also provides leadership for the [Commit to Connect](#) Coordinating Center, an ACL initiative committed to addressing social isolation and loneliness. Hanley oversees USAging's role in the [Grandfamilies and Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center](#), which is led by Generations

United to increase the capacity and effectiveness of states, territories, tribes/tribal organizations, nonprofits and other community based organizations to serve and support grandfamilies and kinship families.



**Sunil Iyengar**  
**Research & Analysis Director**  
**National Endowment for the Arts**

Sunil Iyengar directs the Office of Research & Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts. Under his leadership, the office has produced dozens of research reports, hosted periodic research events and webinars, and established research and data partnerships with the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Science Foundation and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. His office also leads strategic planning, program evaluations and performance measurement for the agency. Iyengar and his team have created and pursued long-term research agendas, founded a national data repository for the arts and launched two awards programs for arts researchers, including the NEA Research Labs initiative. He chaired a federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human

Development from 2011 to 2023. His office provides research support to Creative Forces: NEA Military Arts Healing Network. Iyengar leads a research funding partnership with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as part of Sound Health, an initiative of the Kennedy Center and NIH in association with the Arts Endowment. Guided by that initiative, Iyengar's office supports the Sound Health Network, in partnership with the University of California San Francisco.



**Kim Johnson**  
**Director of Arts Access**  
**Tennessee Arts Commission**

Kim Johnson is director of Arts Access at the Tennessee Arts Commission. Her position includes ensuring access to the arts for underserved communities, especially for ethnic communities, older adults, people with disabilities and military veterans. During her time at the Tennessee Arts Commission, Johnson has led efforts to increase the impact of the arts through initiatives like Creative Aging Tennessee I & II and the Tennessee Person-Centered Music Program, the Tennessee Arts Commission's \$1-million program that uses music to produce positive health outcomes for residents in nursing homes. As part of these initiatives, the first Creative Aging Teaching Artist Roster was formed, training was started for artists and nonprofits, grants funding specifically targeting older adult participation has increased, and

community partnerships were formed. Johnson has over 30 years in nonprofit management.



**Jennifer Kulik, Ph.D.  
Founder and CEO  
SilverKite Community Arts**

Jennifer (Jen) Kulik, Ph.D. is the founder and CEO of SilverKite Community Arts (<https://www.silverkite.us/>), a Seattle based company dedicated to strengthening communities by creating, facilitating and supporting creative aging programs and intergenerational arts experiences. Kulik has over 30 years of experience designing, administrating, evaluating and facilitating arts programming for older adults and youth as well as intergenerational programming. She holds a Ph.D. from Arizona State University and an M.Ed. from the University of Washington. Her studies and research have

focused on the impact of intergenerational program participation and dementia and the arts. Kulik received a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching fellowship in 2012 to conduct intergenerational arts action research in Singapore. In 2018 Jen received the prestigious Wall Service Award from her alma mater, Grinnell College, to support the development and facilitation of new intergenerational programs in partnership with five low-income senior living communities in King County, Washington. Kulik is a frequent presenter at local, regional and national conferences and consults with arts organizations, senior living communities and schools on arts program development and facilitation. Under her leadership SilverKite Community Arts received the Intergenerational Innovation Award from Generations United.



**Christine Leahy, Mid-Atlantic Region Representative  
Program Director, Arts in Education  
New York State Council on the Arts**

Christine Leahy is a program director at the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), in charge of the Arts Education and Facilities programs. Initiatives started under her tenure include the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Orchestras and Classical Music collaboration with the Music Program, the New York State Creative Aging Pilot, and the NYS Youth Media Symposium. In previous positions at NYSCA Leahy served in the agency's Literature, Visual Arts, Museum, Architecture + Design and Folk Arts programs. She formerly worked for the artist Jenny Holzer and in the Education Department at the Williams College Museum of Art, and has

written for *The New York Times* and National Public Radio. Leahy is a graduate of Williams College.



**Elizabeth "Like" Lokon, Ph.D.**  
**Opening Minds through Art**  
**Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University**

Elizabeth "Like" Lokon, Ph.D., founded Opening Minds through Art (OMA) in 2007 at Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University. OMA is an intergenerational art program for people living with dementia. OMA has been replicated in 200+ communities throughout North America. In 2023, she implemented OMA in Indonesia as a Fulbright Scholar. Lokon also developed ScrippsAVID (AVID stands for arts based, virtual, intergenerational, and dementia-friendly). ScrippsAVID is a video chat platform that connects generations to share art. Launched in 2023 with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the NextFifty Initiative, ScrippsAVID seeks to reduce loneliness and ageism. As an artist (B.A., UC Berkeley, B.F.A., California College of the Arts), gerontologist (M.G.S., Miami University), and educator (Ph.D., Miami University), Lokon frequently speaks on the intersection of the arts, dementia and intergenerational service learning and has published in these areas. She has presented her work in North America, Europe and Asia. Lokon is a fiber artist.



**Nathan Majoros**  
**Director of Programs**  
**Lifetime Arts**

Nathan Majoros is the Director of Programs at Lifetime Arts. A member of Lifetime Arts staff since 2012, Nathan is responsible for the planning and execution of Lifetime Arts' national initiatives. He has provided coaching and guidance to a variety of stakeholders, which has enabled the implementation of over 800 creative aging programs across the country. His expertise ranges from curriculum development to building sustainable partnerships. Nathan is an alumnus of the National Guild's Community Arts Education Leadership Institute, and a graduate of the University of the Arts, where he received his Master of Arts in Teaching and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees. Nathan is a visual artist, and primarily works as a painter and a printmaker.





**Tony Manfredi**  
**Executive Director**  
**Nevada Arts Council**

Anthony (Tony) Manfredi is the executive director of the Nevada Arts Council. His professional background combines 29 years of strategic planning, management, marketing, creative and fundraising services for both local to Nevada and international businesses and organizations. Manfredi is a graduate of the University of San Diego with degrees in communication studies (mass media emphasis) and art (with a dual emphasis in graphic communication and painting). For over a decade, Manfredi held multiple senior roles in programming and strategic marketing at PBD Reno (KNPB), earning awards and driving revenue growth. He has an extensive design and creative development background, including experience working for fast-growth companies with strong Internet based operations. Manfredi's expertise with interactive media, specifically web based marketing and site design (including both site analysis and user experience design metrics), integrated with marketing experience in direct-mail and email campaign production, provides an in-house expert in this field.



**Laura Roghaar**  
**Arts Learning Services Director**  
**Idaho Commission on the Arts**

Laura Roghaar is the arts learning services director for the Idaho Commission on the Arts, where she works to increase access to arts education and opportunities for artist-led learning for Idahoans of every age. She administers the Arts Education Annual Project grant, which supports high-quality arts education for preK-12th grade learners. Nongranteeing services in her portfolio include a teaching artist roster, the Teaching Artist Greenhouse training and pilot initiatives that seed workshops for older adults in community spaces following the creative aging model. Roghaar is a poet with degrees in English literature, communications and creative writing from University of California, Santa Barbara, and Boise State University. She is an experienced teaching artist who has facilitated creative writing workshops in community settings including schools, juvenile detention centers, shelters and libraries. Prior to joining the Idaho Commission on the Arts, Roghaar served as Idaho statewide coordinator for Poetry Out Loud, program director for The Cabin literary center and writing instructor at Boise State University.





**Sheila Dean Ross**  
**Program Officer, Arts Education and Accessibility**  
**Delaware Division of the Arts**

Sheila Dean Ross arrived at the Delaware Division of the Arts in 1996, accepting the newly created position as the technical assistance program manager for the Division, and in 2001, accessibility/ADA/504 coordinator responsibilities were added. As the technical assistance/accessibility coordinator, Ross created and managed grant programs designed to serve arts constituents of Delaware in the areas of technical assistance (strengthening the capacity of arts organizations to operate) and accessibility (ensuring that people with disabilities are equally able to access the arts in Delaware). In 2006, Ross became the program officer for the Division's Arts in Education and Accessibility programs, and continues in the

position presently. Responsibilities include management and oversight of all arts education programming that will serve schools, organizations with extra-curricular goals of serving the youth in the arts and projects that support lifelong learning in the arts. From 2018-2015, Ross was assigned the special task of managing and having oversight of the Poet Laureate program, working closely to promote the calendar, schedule and event opportunities for the 16th poet laureate, JoAnn Balingit. Ross is originally from Washington, D.C. where she received a bachelor of arts in music education from Howard University and a master of arts in arts management from The American University. In addition, she holds a certificate in arts administration from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



**Alexander Santiago-Jirau**  
**Director of Education and Community Engagement**  
**New York Theatre Workshop**

In his role at New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW), Alexander Santiago-Jirau (he/him/his) oversees all of NYTW's education and engagement initiatives, including the Mind the Gap (MTG) intergenerational theatre program, student matinees, in-school teaching artist residencies, after-school programs, master classes, administrative fellowships and community based programs. Some of his favorite work at NYTW has included developing educational materials and curating programming for the world premiere of David Bowie's and

Enda Walsh's *Lazarus*, directed by Ivo van Hove; the world premiere of Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown*, developed with and directed by Rachel Chavkin; *Othello*, directed by Sam Gold and featuring Daniel Craig and David Oyelowo; Heidi Shreck's *What the Constitution Means to Me*, and Jeremy O. Harris's *Slave Play*. Recent work has included facilitation of MTG devising intensive workshops in London, Chile, and North Carolina and the creation of NYTW's Youth Artistic Instigators ensemble. A Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) practitioner who studied and worked with Augusto Boal, Santiago-Jirau has facilitated many workshops throughout his career, particularly with youth, educators and immigrant communities. He is past president of the board of directors of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, Inc., a national organization

devoted to the work of liberatory educators, activists, artists and community organizers, and current vice chair of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable, a service organization for arts education practitioners. Santiago-Jirau has presented his work at numerous conferences and his writing has appeared in *The Independent*, *TYA Today*, *The Cross Border Project Blog*, "*Come Closer*": *Critical Perspectives on Theatre of the Oppressed*, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre of the Oppressed*, and *Applied Theatre with Youth: Education, Engagement, Activism*. He has taught Latin American and Latinx Theatre at Drew University and currently teaches Theatre of the Oppressed for the Department of Drama at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and the Educational Theatre program at NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. Santiago-Jirau holds a B.S. in urban and regional studies from Cornell University and an M.A. in educational theatre from NYU Steinhardt.



**Sudha Shreeniwas, Ph.D.**  
**Professor, Human Development and Family Studies**  
**University of North Carolina Greensboro**

Sudha Shreeniwas is professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Her research training is in sociology, demography and cultural anthropology, including quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. One part of her research agenda examines how family relationships affect health among adults in lower income, ethnic minority immigrant, refugee and transnational families, especially those of lower income refugee origin. Shreeniwas's research approach is largely community-engaged, where the communities partner in setting the research agenda and methods and benefit from

the results. Another research focus includes the links between arts participation and well-being among diverse older adults. Currently she is examining social prescribing for the arts, or arts on prescription, among older persons. She and her colleagues are conducting literature reviews and key informant interviews overseas and with U.S. counterparts, to see what lessons can be learned and folded into the U.S. healthcare system that serves older Americans. She is grateful to the National Endowment for the Arts and to UNC Greensboro for research support.



**Jill Sonke, Ph.D.**  
**Director of Research Initiatives**  
**Center for Arts in Medicine, University of Florida**

Jill Sonke, Ph.D., is director of research initiatives in the Center for Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida (UF), director of National research and impact for the One Nation/One Project initiative, and U.S. director of the EpiArts Lab, a National Endowment for the Arts Research Lab in partnership with University College London. Sonke serves on the steering committee for the Jameel Arts & Health Lab and served during the COVID-19 pandemic as a senior advisor to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Sonke is an affiliated faculty

member in the UF School of Theatre & Dance, the Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases and the Center for African Studies and is an editorial board member for *Health Promotion Practice* journal. Sonke is a dancer, a musician, and a mixed methods researcher and has 28 years of leadership experience in the field of arts in health. She is the recipient of numerous awards and over 350 grants for her programs and research in the arts and health.