arizona commission on the arts
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Bulletin
Summer 2006 #282

What's New on the Web

For one of the best sites for arts and culture news from around the world, visit **www.ArtsJournal.com**. We're sure it will become one of your frequently visited pages.

The Americans for the Arts National Arts Education Public Awareness Campaign has begun its second phase. To find out more, visit **www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness**

Arts Midwest, in collaboration with the NEA, has launched a new initiative called *The Big Read: Creating a Nation of Readers*, designed to revitalize the role of literature in the nation's popular culture, and to bring the transformative power of literature into the lives of its citizens. To learn more go to **www.neabigread.org**

Teaching artists in Creative Writing, Dance, Folk Arts Performing, Folklorists and Interdisciplinary Arts interested in applying to the *Residency Roster*, should visit our website at **www.azarts.gov/residencyroster** to learn more about the program.

Now is the time to submit your ideas and designs for an Arizona quarter that will be issued in 2008. Gregory Sale, Visual Arts Director, is a member of the Arizona Quarter Commission. For more information, visit **www.arizonaquarter.az.gov**

Every year we ask you to reflect on our programs and services over the past fiscal year. Your feedback helps us fine-tune our work, document, and report the value of the arts to the State. Please take a moment to visit **www.azarts.gov** to complete the online survey. **Please respond by August 1, 2006**

Save the Date:
January 26, 2007
Southwest Arts Conference (SWAC) Glendale Civic Center, Glendale, Arizona

Executive Director Robert C. Booker (left) with Arizona Finalist Jordan McAlpin, Peoria (center), and NEA Chairman Dana Gioia (right)

Poetry Out Loud: From State to Finish

51 high school students from around the United States gathered at the historic Lincoln Theatre in Washington, D.C., on May 16 for the first **Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest**, sponsored by the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA) and **The Poetry Foundation**. The theatre seats were packed with parents, teachers, writers, and state arts agency Poetry Out Loud (POL) coordinators, and no one doubted that their state student representative would win the grand prize, a $20,000 scholarship. Jordan McAlpin appeared calm and collected, as she did in the Arizona state final. Kim Willey, POL Coordinator at the Commission, noticed Jordan from her seat. "The tension in the building was incredibly high, something akin, I think, to an opening night on Broadway. The energy in the room was to the moon, but Jordan was so poised."

The judges for the final competition were author and anthologist Caroline Kennedy; literary critic Michael Dirda; authors Azar Nafisi and Curtis Sittenfeld; and author, poet, and former NEA Deputy Chairman A.B. Spellman. Scott Simon, host of National Public Radio Weekend Edition, served as the master of ceremonies. Students first participated in rounds of regional finals. Twelve students then were selected from the 51 finalists who moved on to compete in the final round of recitations, each reciting two poems. In the end it was Ohio's Jackson Hille who took home the title of the first Poetry Out Loud national champion.

The launch of Poetry Out Loud at a nationwide level was a result of a successful pilot program that the NEA and The Poetry Foundation started in Chicago and Washington, D.C., in 2005. Poetry Out Loud has enticed over 250,000 students to recite and engage in poetry this year alone. The NEA and The Poetry Foundation will continue their partnerships with the state arts agencies and other participating organizations next year to broaden the range of student participation throughout the states. The competition provides high school students the opportunity to actively engage in poetry through classroom activities, memorization, recitation, and competition. "We saw the excitement that this program generated with students and teachers in the Phoenix Metro area," said Chris Burawa, Literature Director at the Commission. "We are working with the NEA to make Poetry Out Loud a statewide initiative next year."

For more information visit: Poetry Out Loud (www.poetryoutloud.org), National Endowment for the Arts (www.nea.gov) or The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org).

BREAKING NEWS

Arizona State Legislature Passes ArtShare Funding

The Arizona State Legislature passed a budget that includes **$5 million** in ArtShare funding. This amount, along with the $2 million already secured, completes the $20 million state commitment to the fund. For more information, **visit www.azarts.gov**.

Reading, Beyond the Lines

80%
of poetry readers first encounter poetry as children, at home or in school.

77%
of all readers were read nursery rhymes as children.

45%
of current poetry readers also had other forms of poetry read to them as children.

Readers
are highly social people, frequently engaged in the arts, sports, and community life.

Individuals who visit an art gallery and attend performing arts events are more than

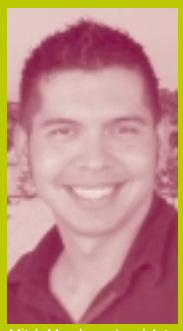
250%
more likely to be frequent readers than those who did only one or neither of these arts activities.

Poetry in America: Review of the Findings (Poetry Foundation, January 2006), www.poetryfoundation.org; *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literacy Reading in America* (NEA, July 2004), www.nea.gov.

ARIZONA citizens action for the ARTS

Visit www.AZCitizensforthearts.org for more information on the state's advocacy organization.

The Director's Column


Mitch Menchaca, Local Arts Development Diector

Recently Mitch Menchaca, Local Arts Development Director at the Arts Commission, hosted a group of emerging leaders in the arts. They gathered at our office to discuss issues and trends in their work and to grow together as leaders in Arizona's arts community. As I listened to their conversations it was clear that they all have a bright future in the arts.

However, I often wonder if we ever stop being emerging leaders. At 50, I hope in some respects that I am not there yet. My days are filled with new challenges, new experiences, and new learning. I am energized by the challenges in my new life in Arizona and the future of the Commission.

I took a walk the other day with Fran Cohen, the charming and energetic artistic director of Center Dance Ensemble and the director of the Arizona Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts. We talked about the impact the program has on the lives of our very youngest Arizonans. Early childhood education is indeed at the forefront of arts learning these days. Twenty-five years have passed since Fran brought the Wolf Trap model to Arizona, and the national organization will recognize her work later this year.

Fran Cohen leading a Q&A after a student matinee performance. Photo Credit: Tim Fuller

At a Sun City Chamber Music Society event, I heard Dimitri Drobatschewski give a pre-concert lecture to a group of over 200 people. With a gleam in his eye, he compared the composers, and spoke about their work and their careers. Without apology he talked about which he thought were brilliant and which were simply capable. The audience was captivated by his presentation. As the retired music critic in our community, he obviously is not slowing down.

I just learned that my neighbor Ramón was once a professor of Chicano studies at New Mexico State University. We spoke about the current Cheech Marin collection of Chicano art that is traveling across the country. He said years ago, Mr. Marin would come to visit his classroom and talk about his growing art collection. It must have been an amazing experience for his students to meet half of the duo of Cheech and Chong and learn of his passion for contemporary Latino art. Ramón, now a grandfather, is teaching his grandchildren Spanish while they play in the pool. I would bet a trip to the museum with him is also a special treat they enjoy.

As individuals young, old, and in-between, we constantly discover how we can learn from each other, become more creative, and grow personally and professionally as artists, arts professionals, and audience members. I challenge each of you to use the transformative experience of the arts to grow and emerge in your own community. I promise I will work to grow emerging leaders in Arizona. I know I will be emerging right alongside them. I hope you will too.

Robert C. Booker, Executive Director
Arizona Commission on the Arts

Residency Roster Auditions

If you are an Arizona resident and an artist, you might consider applying to be on the Arts Commission's *Residency Roster*. The *Roster* is a juried list of practicing Arizona artists/ensembles/companies, from all artistic disciplines, that work in schools and communities throughout the state, sharing their work processes and products with children and adults through hands-on activities, performances, readings, and exhibitions.

This year, the Commission will be accepting applications to the *Roster* in the following categories: Creative Writing, Dance, Folk Arts Performing, Folklorists and Interdisciplinary Arts. To read more abou this opportunity in our *Artists Guide to Programs*, visit our website. We will be accepting online applications through **September 21, 2006.**

For more information regarding the *Residency Roster*, go to www.azarts.gov/residencyroster.

"I think people can be shown that there are things you can do with poetry that can enrich their lives. . . .And there are a lot of poems like that that give us a little extra, a little special feeling about the world, a new way of looking at it, [poems] offer us language that we can use in addressing the world."—Ted Kooser, Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry

Faces in the Arts

We've added a new feature to the *Bulletin* focusing on the lives and works of Arizona artists. For the full text of interviews, including other questions and images, please visit our website at www.azarts.gov/artists.

Carol Test: Writer

Tell us about yourself and/or your background. I'm an Arizona native. I grew up in Phoenix. I received my bachelor's degree from Arizona State University, and then an MFA from the University of Arizona.

Carol Test (Chandler, AZ). Photo Credit: Chris Burawa

I started writing short fiction in college workshops, where I got a little encouragement and a lot of sound advice. Then, in graduate school, I was Co-Editor of the literary magazine, *Sonora Review*, and the publishing side of things taught me a great deal more, particularly about the importance of story and concentration of language.

Briefly describe the nature of the project you are working on now. I became interested in more fully exploring themes present in my short stories in a longer work. Particularly, I wanted to examine the different ways in which individuals lay claim to identity and how this is shaped by living in the desert Southwest. The result, the proposed novella, "Other Desert Cities," follows a young woman who returns home to find her family in chaos. One sibling resents her for leaving, another struggles with obsessive-compulsive disorder, and her father's hoarding has completely taken over the house. Throughout a long, rainless summer, she must confront the reality that she has her family in her and has got to find a way to live with that.

The inspiration for this story comes from two things: my father hoarded, and at one point, we had multiple households full of junk. I mean, all sorts of random things, hundred of pens and highlighters dried up, unopened, in packages, and silverware dating possibly to the Crimean War. While my family was excavating these Grand Canyon layers, it occurred to me that this was a good, intense, small-scale setting for a story. Also, I wanted to write about the contemporary Southwest – the cities – not many people are doing that.

Debra Edgerton: Installation Artist

Tell us about yourself and/or your background. I was born in Kansas. I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Kansas in Visual Communication and my Master's degree from Vermont College in Painting. I am half African American and half Japanese American. My parents met during the occupation of Japan after WWII, and my mom came to the United States with my dad during a time when the Japanese were not thought of highly. These circumstances lead to a suppression of cultural identity in our household when I was growing up.

It never occurred to me to ask questions about my family background growing up. I listened to the stories that were given to me and accepted that that was all that I was suppose to have. I guess I didn't realize how passive I was until my mom's death more than eight years ago. That experience, the suppression of cultural identity, and entering graduate school, started my exploration into the first of four themes that reoccur throughout my body of work: identity, memory, home, and displacement.

Briefly describe the nature of your project. My friend and fellow artist Marc Siegner and I are working on a collaborative project entitled, "Reconstructing Home." It is an examination of issues concerning the ever-changing concept of home and explores the difference of space versus experience in the dialogue of home and place. We are looking at perspectives that deal with binary topics that might include male/female perception, indoors vs. outdoors, movement vs. stability, and cultural differences. I believe that private spaces can create both comfort and alienation. It is that kind of dynamic that most interests me, that home can be thought of in many different ways and not all of them may be good.

Debra Edgerton (Flagstaff, AZ).
Photo Credit: Jenn Ireland/The Daily Sun

When I started this project, I thought Marc and I were vastly different in our views but I think the biggest difference comes from the way we communicate and interrupt things. Our priorities are different but the crossovers allow us to have a way into each other's dialogue. There are more layers than I had anticipated. When we talk in generalities, there seemed to be big differences, but in breaking down our thoughts and conversations, there are similarities that I didn't see in the beginning. Home has become this ongoing and shifting conversation.

Calendar

July 1
Grant Awards Announced
For a press release, visit our website at www.azarts.gov or call (602) 255-5882.

September 21
Application Deadline for Artist Projects Grants and Residency Roster *(Creative Writing, Dance, Folk Arts Performing, Folklorists and Interdisciplinary Arts)*
For an application, visit our website at www.azarts.gov or call (602) 255-5882.

October 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
Residency Roster Auditions
For specific dates and locations of panels or a list of panelists, visit our website at www.azarts.gov or call (602) 255-5882.

Save the Date - January 26, 2007
Southwest Arts Conference
Glendale Civic Center, Glendale, AZ

American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius

When you hear the term "American masterpiece," what's the first thing that comes to mind? A play by Tennessee Williams? The landscape photographs of Ansel Adams? A modernist dance piece by Isadora Duncan? Perhaps it's a Cole Porter song. The sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay. Or might it be your favorite Sondheim musical?

The National Endowment for the Arts in collaboration with the Arts Commission is pleased to announce **American Masterpieces**, a new and exciting program initiative that offers arts organizations large and small, urban or rural, help in bringing American artistic classics to their communities.

The initiative at the Commission will enable visual and performing arts organizations to build upon their current programming or create new programs in dynamic ways. Robert C. Booker, executive director of the Commission noted that this grant program would deepen and broaden the understanding of American masterpieces. One such example, he points out, was the recent production of *Oklahoma* staged at the Lyric Opera Theater at Arizona State University, which masterfully produced this landmark production. "I have always loved this work of musical theatre by Rogers and Hammerstein. What I had forgotten is how this work was such a groundbreaking play for its time. Audience members were able to see a firsthand production that is indeed an American masterpiece."

For this pilot year, the Commission will be taking applications for **Choral Music, Dance, Musical Theater, and Visual Arts.**

Please visit the Commission's website at www.azarts.gov/AmericanMasterpieces for more details about the program.

Before submitting an application, contact a program director in the appropriate discipline (for a listing of program directors, visit www.azarts.gov/about/staff.htm). **Applications will be accepted beginning September 21, 2006.**

Commission Hires New Assistant Director

Jaime Dempsey has been appointed as the new assistant director at the Arts Commission. She brings to the job a wealth of experience in nonprofit arts administration. Most recently, Dempsey worked as the program manager at the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University. Her interests include new play development, modern classic American literature, and Native American studies.

The arts community will have opportunities to meet Jaime over the summer at various Artist Workshops around the state. Check our website for places and times near you.

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