



JULY 7, 2010

Arts Watch

A Weekly Cultural Policy Publication of Americans for the Arts

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

[Visual Art Project Collects, Displays, Sends Messages to President Obama](#)

KPBS-FM, 7/2/10

"I love you, President Obama. I really do.' 'STOP SPENDING.' 'Where's your promise of change and hope?' 'You are a good friend, Love, Jack.' These are just some of the sentiments expressed by San Diegans (including six-year-old Jack) at a recent San Diego Museum of Art event.

They were dictating letters to the president as part of artist Sheryl Oring's project *I Wish to Say*. Oring sets up shop in public locations with her vintage typewriter and takes dictation from anyone wanting to express their admiration, scorn, dismay, hopes, and opinions to the president of the United States.

Oring's hosted the project in cities around the country since 2004. 'The idea was sparked by my wanting to explore American public opinion during the second Bush election and it just took off from there.'

Oring archives the letters on her website and mails the originals off to the White House. She estimates she's typed more than 2,000 letters since the project began. However, she's never heard back from the Bush or Obama administrations.

Oring says, 'I would hope the president reads these, but even if he doesn't, it's kind of transformative for the person who sits down and talks to me. I think they have to think about what their priorities are and that's a really important aspect of the project.'

The letter takes the form of a postcard that is signed by the author. Oring has stamps available for people to decorate their card. Among the options are 'RUSH,' 'Important,' or 'Past Due.'

At the San Diego Museum of Art's Summer Salon series where Oring was a featured artist, attendees milled about the foyer as Oring and a friend sat in front of typewriters waiting for volunteers.

Oring says once someone approaches, she gets things rolling. 'Well, usually I say something like if I were the president what would you wish to say to me. And then it starts a conversation. Sometimes they know right away what they want to say and sometimes it takes a few minutes to think about it."

The read the rest of this article, visit the [KPBS website](#).

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ARTS WATCH UPDATE

*This new section of Arts Watch will update readers on specific news items that have

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appeared in previous editions.

Texas: Local Communities Grapple Over County Arts Hall Funding

The Dallas Morning News, 7/5/10

"Frisco is one of the nation's fastest growing cities, with one of the highest concentrations of retail in the Southwest and premier sports venues that are the envy of its neighbors. Yet its unwillingness to follow through on plans to help pay for a Collin County arts hall has become a source of frustration to its partner cities. The cities of Plano and Allen, who are also seeing tight budgets because of the economy, voiced their desire last week to go forward. But Frisco has fears about falling property values, plenty of debt already on the books, and a city council that's reluctant to raise its low tax rate. The soonest Frisco would sell any more bonds is next summer, and city officials can't say whether the arts hall would be among the projects getting funding."

<http://bit.ly/aLhCWl>

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CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Massachusetts: Arts Council Adds Local Color to Water Bills

Boston.com, 7/2/10

"Medford residents can look forward to a little something extra in their water bills this month, thanks to a project introduced by the Medford Arts Council to bring attention to local artists. Each water bill sent out in July will be accompanied by a postcard featuring original artwork by one of three local artists, depicting a Medford scene. The winning images were selected from more than 60 submissions sent in response to the Council's call for art, and more than 200 people voted on their favorite images in an online poll, council chairwoman Maria Daniels said last week...More than 14,000 postcards will be sent out to residents in what Daniels hopes will be an annual event to give the public a glimpse into the local art scene."

<http://bit.ly/bPJIEY>

France: United States Embassy Hosts Cross-Cultural Symposium on Technology, Art

The Huffington Post, 7/1/10

"The U.S. Embassy hosted a day-long symposium at the residence of the US Ambassador to France Charles Rivkin on June 24 to unite 100 cultural entrepreneurs and leaders of local arts organizations in Paris. 'Create Today' sparked an intercultural dialogue about startup challenges facing entrepreneurs in the United States and France and focused on the link between technology and art and how technology can be used to raise money and garner support for new cultural initiatives?...[Keynote speaker] John Maeda explained that scientists are looking for new ways to connect science and art. 'It's about body control, and therefore we have to understand the body.' He explained that design is about making solutions and art is about making questions. 'Art humanizes technology and makes it understandable,' he said. 'The right combination of intuition, design, emotion, and art lead to innovation.'"

<http://huff.to/cr85EY>

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ARTS EDUCATION AND THE CREATIVE WORKFORCE

North Carolina: New Arts Education Task Force Legislation Passes Unanimously

Encore Online, 7/6/10

"On the last day of June, Gov. Beverly Perdue signed the 2010–2011 state budget into law. In the current economy, the expectation for arts funding would be ordinarily low. However, anyone following the recent advocacy for arts education would know that Gov. Perdue's cabinet made creative growth a top priority for the state government. Karen



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Wells, executive director of advocacy group Arts North Carolina, says the intense lobbying for arts in schools would have been a hopeless effort were it not for their allies in the governor's office. 'It just doesn't get any better than to live in North Carolina,' Wells said. Arts North Carolina's project, Senate Bill 66, unanimously passed in the state senate. The bill will require a task force to create a plan for arts education in North Carolina public schools, starting in kindergarten and requiring arts classes for high school graduation. The task force will form this month and work toward a solid recommendation for the State Board of Education by December."

<http://bit.ly/aphbN7>

Illinois: Glee Inspires Summer Camps Across the Country

The Chicago Tribune, 7/5/10

"Inspired by the overwhelming popularity of the musical comedy-drama on the Fox Network, dozens of theater groups and arts organizations in Chicago and across the country have created *Glee* summer camps for kids using music and choreography from the hit show. Camps have formed in North Carolina, Florida, Arizona, Indiana, and Utah. In the Chicago area, *Glee* camps at the Circle Theatre in Forest Park and the Children's Theatre of Elgin just wrapped up their June sessions. At least 10 others are scheduled for July and August, with some already sold out...Camp directors said *Glee*'s appeal is due to several factors, including its wide range of music that covers show tunes, classic rock, pop, and hip hop...Shellee Frazee, coordinator of music programs for the Beverly Arts Center, said the show's central message is to be your own person, regardless of what others think. [In light of that,] Frazee said she and her *Glee* campers held several discussions on self-confidence."

<http://bit.ly/awfzol>

Canada: High School Student Authors Editorial on Music Education

The Leader-Post, 7/5/10

Credence McFadzean, a Canadian high school student who occasionally writes pieces for the paper, offered the following in an editorial published in *The Leader-Post* last week: "The general importance of musical education is highly touted to the public. We are often told that learning to play an instrument makes one smarter and that this is especially beneficial in the development of young people. However, I feel that most people will hear and accept this information and will not think about it to much further of an extent. Even those who do play music and experience this 'enlightenment' first-hand probably do not consciously dwell on the encompassing effects this sort of education has on them; either they chose to learn an instrument on an interested whim, or they are extremely passionate about music and its position in their lives is obvious and natural. In any case, the unparalleled significance and emotional connotations that music holds in the world is clear, and so its appeal in elementary and secondary educations is certainly no mystery. If I were to analyze the specific ways in which a band program strengthens a student or 'makes them smarter,' I would say that it does so physically and mentally, morally, and socially. And if this is true, then there is no excuse imaginable for a school to fail in integrating a music program in some shape or form."

<http://bit.ly/a5Gtky>

Maryland: Arts Education Group Offers Integration Summer School for Teachers

The Baltimore Sun, 7/2/10

"The 21st Century Learning Institute was launched last year by both Anne Arundel County Public Schools and the Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS) Alliance, which uses such programs to help improve the quality of and access to arts in the state's schools. Last year attendees included a contingent of teachers from middle school districts in Mississippi as well as teachers from a school in Milan, Italy. They combined their own arts initiatives with that of the Anne Arundel schools. The teachers from Milan are expected to return this year. 'It's a chance for practicing artists to pair with practicing teachers,' said Diane Bragdon, principal at Bates Middle School in Annapolis, who is working with AEMS to facilitate the program. She said that both artists and teachers shared their unique disciplines. 'The artists taught the teachers about songwriting, mime, drama, and visual arts of all kinds,' Bragdon added. 'And then the teachers showed the artists how to bring art more effectively in the classroom.'"

<http://bit.ly/8ZbHwV>

New York: Funding for Arts, Music Supplies in City Schools Falls 68 Percent

The Daily News, 7/1/10

"Spending on arts supplies and visits by cultural institutions has dropped drastically at city schools over the last three years, even as overall education spending has grown, a new report shows. While education spending increased by about 13 percent between 2006 and 2009, funding for arts supplies, musical instruments and other equipment fell by 68 percent, the report by the Center for Arts Education found. Spending on partnerships with city cultural institutions decreased by 31 percent—although the system did hire 139 more full-time arts teachers. By some measures, the result has been a reduction of arts classes. The percentage of high school students taking three or more arts classes dropped to 28% last year from 46 percent during the 2006 school year, Education Department data show. And only 39 percent of elementary school students met state arts education mandates. Arts advocates say the drop is linked to the Education Department's 2007 decision to stop requiring principals to spend a specific amount of their budget on the arts."

<http://bit.ly/dg8SEm>

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PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE ARTS

Texas: Corpus Christi City Council Makes Cuts to Save Arts Funding

Corpus Christi Caller Times, 6/21/10

"The Corpus Christi City Council unanimously agreed to ask city budget staff to cut spending in other areas by at least \$170,000 for arts subsidy payments. That decision came without much council member discussion and little talk about returning funding to other areas cut, such as park maintenance and street repairs. The council made the request during the first of the city's two budget hearings. The \$668 million budget must be approved by the end of this month and takes effect August 1...E-mails urging the council to fund the arts programs and asking arts supporters to attend the budget hearing circulated in the community during the weekend prior...Arts groups were warned a year ago not to expect money this budget cycle and last year, the arts programs received funding at the last minute, when the council decided to dip into other areas and raise parking ticket fines to pay for the programs."

<http://bit.ly/9IW21u>

South Carolina: Columbia's New Mayor Begins Term with Ballet Fundraiser

The State, 7/2/10

"Columbia, SC, Mayor Steve Benjamin started his term by hosting a fundraiser for the Columbia City Ballet, a move designed to show the city's support of the arts despite its leaner budget. At fifty dollars per person, the Capital City Club's 250-person dining room brought in more than \$12,000 for the ballet, which is in its 50th year...This is a wonderful start to a new era,' said William Starrett, the ballet's artistic director. 'It's great to see, one of the first things out of the gate here, he is supporting the arts.' Most of Columbia's support for the arts comes from the city's hospitality tax, the two cents on the dollar paid each time someone eats in a Columbia restaurant. The city divides about \$2.5 million the tax raises among the Columbia Museum of Art, EdVenture Children's Museum, Historic Columbia, and the Columbia Music Festival Association. Another \$2.5 million in hospitality tax money is dispersed to local arts groups by a hospitality tax committee appointed by city council. But the hospitality tax fund has been under attack recently as the city's budget continues to shrink as a result of the economy's strains on business license fees and property taxes, which make up most of the city's general fund revenue."

<http://bit.ly/dt9W4q>

New York: City Council Restores \$30 Million for Cultural Affairs Department

The Art Newspaper, 7/1/10

"In a surprising turnaround, the New York City Council decided at the end of June that it would restore about \$30 million to the Department of Cultural Affairs to spend on the arts, lessening the blow of the \$50 million in cuts initially proposed by Mayor Bloomberg in May. 'Thanks to the hard work and partnership of Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council,

the Department of Cultural Affairs will continue to provide a strong level of support to New York City's vital cultural community,' Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate Levin said. The Department of Cultural Affairs budget for 2011 was voted in at \$149.5 million. This includes \$28.9 million for programs and \$110.2 million for its Cultural Institutions Group, which provides funding to museums, zoos, and performing arts centers in city-owned buildings, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Museum, El Museo del Barrio, and the Studio Museum in Harlem. Almost all of these museums will see a dip in their funding from the city—but not as much as many feared."

<http://bit.ly/cZraSQ>

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THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Summer Concert Tours Struggle to Fill Seats

Associated Press, 7/4/10

"A slow economy and a glut of choices is turning the once ironclad summer tour season into something of a gamble. The evidence is everywhere. The always bankable Eagles have canceled dates. Christina Aguilera shut down an entire tour before it got started. Rihanna just canceled her tour opener. Add in what seems like a large number of injuries, illnesses, and mysterious happenings that have led to sometimes legitimate cancellations—U2's tour was postponed due to Bono's back surgery—and at least outwardly it looks like summer tours are starting to see the strain the rest of the music industry has been experiencing. Korn's Jonathan Davis calls it 'scary.' 'It's just a sign of the times,' Davis said. 'We're in a bad place now financially, everybody, and I think people are cutting back. Hopefully when this goes away, whenever it does, then things will get better, but it doesn't surprise me that people don't have as much money to spend as they used to.'"

<http://bit.ly/bFdXDz>

California: Artist Plans Cultural Hub in Former Supermarket

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, 7/2/10

"A local artist has residents here envisioning an artistic mecca inside the former Albertsons building at the top of Euclid Avenue in San Antonio Heights, CA. Rancho Cucamonga resident Don Wakefield is seeking to purchase the building and create an 'art garden' for artists in the community. 'A big difference is you go to a museum and you look at art on the walls. You keep walking, look at art—there's no food or beverages,' said Wakefield, who is a sculptor and designer. 'There's no one playing a violin or guitar anywhere. You just keep walking. It's like a trade show to me. It gets a little boring and I love the arts.' The plan for the center includes art exhibits, music, classes, festivals, food and wine menus as well as a rooftop garden. Wakefield expects The Art Garden will create up to 50 jobs...The 45,000-square-foot building has been vacant since 2007. There have been numerous break-ins and vandalism. Wakefield saw the building about a month ago and is hoping to get enough funding to pay the \$2.5 million price tag. 'We do have a few other building sites that were brought to our attention, but this is my favorite,' he said. 'It's really doable and the whole rooftop garden thing will work great.'"

<http://bit.ly/9pxrFQ>

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PHILANTHROPIC GIVING AND THE ARTS

District of Columbia: After Economic Crash, Region's Foundation Giving Fell 9.6 Percent

The Washington Post, 7/1/10

"Local foundations gave nearly ten percent less last year after the economy crashed, according to a new study...Giving was hit by reductions from longtime funders and hurt by

many foundations' restrictions on taking on new grantees...Giving by foundations in the area dropped 9.6 percent in 2009, to \$844 million, according to a study to be released by the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers based on research by the Foundation Center. The national decline in foundation giving, 8.4 percent, was the largest ever tracked by the Foundation Center. Although the economy is improving, the impact of the recession is likely to be felt for a while at local nonprofit groups. Still, given the heart-in-the-throat drop of the stock market in late 2008, the decline is far smaller than it could have been. 'What was surprising was that it wasn't a whole lot worse,' said Tamara Copeland, president of the grantmakers association."

<http://bit.ly/bW5uQA>

Michigan: Kresge Foundation Grants \$450,000 to 18 Local Artists

Detroit Free Press, 6/30/10

"The Troy-based Kresge Foundation announced \$450,000 in grants today to 18 literary and performing artists living in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties. The \$25,000 no strings fellowships, among the country's most lucrative for individual artists, are designed to give winners the financial breathing room to focus on their art. Fellows are also afforded professional development services to help with career building. The 2010 class of artist fellows reflects the extreme diversity of writers and performers working in metro Detroit, with awards going to, among others, novelists, poets, journalists, an art critic, playwright, classical and jazz composers, a flamenco choreographer, and songwriters working in hip hop and garage punk."

<http://bit.ly/aaMif9>

Theater Writer Cautions Against Voting for Financial Support for Arts

Chicago Tribune's The Theater Loop blog, 6/30/10

"There have been several of these popularity competitions in recent weeks—it's as if corporate giving has suddenly taken its cue from *American Idol*. And it's beginning to get out of hand. The Oracle Theatre is trying to get \$20,000 from Chase Community Giving. So is the Mary-Archie Theatre. A few days ago, says my inbox, the venerable Redmoon Theater was vying for \$50,000 from the Pepsi Refresh Everything Project...You certainly can't blame these arts groups for jumping through whatever hoops are required to snag some cash. No non-profit Chicago theater survives on box office alone (or on anywhere close to box office alone), and the levels of civic and state funding have taken turns for the worse this year...With so many cash-strapped corporations not supporting the arts or culture at all, it seems a tad churlish to go after those that do, however they go about spending their money. And I also see the argument from the givers' point of view."

<http://bit.ly/9eYjib>

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THE ARTS IN RECESSION

Alabama: Birmingham Arts Attendance Continues Decline

The Birmingham News, 7/4/10

"The faltering economy continued to take a toll on arts groups in the 2009–2010 season. For the second straight season, attendance at Birmingham arts events was down, reflecting an 11.3 percent drop compared with 2008–2009. From 2007–2008 to 2008–2009, the decrease was 9.6 percent. Among the seven organizations surveyed, only three groups—Alabama Ballet, Birmingham Children's Theatre, and Opera Birmingham—gained attendance, and those gains were modest. Attendance at the Birmingham Museum of Art was off 19.2 percent. Executive Director Gail Andrews cited cutbacks in school groups and a cafe renovation. 'Like most art museums in the country, the Birmingham Museum of Art continues to grapple with the challenges of the economy,' Andrews said. 'Even free museums like ours work hard to present stimulating, inspiring programming in an atmosphere where, for example, schools are cutting back on field trips because of scarce resources.'"

<http://bit.ly/deMHGL>

Maryland: County Arts Council Creates \$25,000 Recession Fund

BroadwayWorld.com, 7/1/10

"The Howard County Arts Council announces the creation of a \$25,000 artRELIEF fund to help alleviate the affect the extended recession has had on the local arts community. Seven Howard County arts organizations will receive artRELIEF grants: Candlelight Concert Society, Chesapeake Shakespeare Company, Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts, Columbia Festival of the Arts, Columbia Orchestra, Columbia Pro Cantare, and the Howard County Poetry and Literature Society. The average artRELIEF grant award will be \$3,500...Arts Council Executive Director Coleen West said, 'Nonprofit arts groups are used to operating on a shoe-string budget, but faced with lower ticket sales and a significant decline in contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations their already fragile budgets are at great risk. The Arts Council Board of Directors recognizes the difficulties our local artistic treasures are grappling with and is proud to be able to reallocate funds in order to provide some financial relief this year. In creating this one-time initiative, we hope to inspire others to support the arts in their time of need.'"

<http://bit.ly/bwGx1c>

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ARTS CANVAS: THE VIEW FROM THE FIELD

*Stephanie Evans, Local Arts Agency Services Coordinator,
Americans for the Arts*



A week and a half ago, Americans for the Arts staff were in trains, planes, and loaded down automobiles, headed for Charm City, Baltimore, MD, for our [Half-Century Summit](#). Since I work directly with Americans for the Arts' Emerging Leaders network and our leadership development programs, I spent time participating in [Goucher College's Leadership Symposium](#), and many of the leadership themed sessions at the Summit.

At the Summit, a recurring conversation in our sessions centered on how we as individuals and organizations could make professional development for our field a larger priority. And by priority, we don't mean a larger piece of our dwindling budgets. The majority of arts organizations are struggling to figure out how to do more with less, and we need to develop ways to continue making professional development a priority during this tough economy.

In the results from the [2009 survey to the field of Emerging Arts Leaders](#), I was shocked to discover that while 70 percent of our current emerging leaders consider arts administration their long-term career, only 28.5 percent either strongly agree or agree that there is room for career advancement within their organization.

How will the remaining 41.5 percent of those who want to stay in the field realistically do so when they don't feel they can grow?

To read the rest of Stephanie's post, respond, and to read other arts bloggers, please visit the Americans for the Arts [ARTSblog](#).

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Arts Marketing Project Webinar

Join us for the next National Arts Marketing Project (NAMP) webinar, *Intersecting Cultures: Latinos and New Media*, on Tuesday, July 13, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. EDT/11:00 a.m. PDT. The "Latin explosion" is an unstoppable trend in popular culture and national demographics. But many arts organizations are confused about building Latino audiences—is it a question of language, programming, or outreach? And how does a

marketer deal with the diversity within the Latino community? Join our presenter, Salvador Acevedo, who will share the most current research from his "Latino Experience in Museums" study, along with data on Latino use of new media. Find out ways to diversify your audience using social media and online tools! The webinar is free for members of Americans for the Arts and registrants of the 2010 National Arts Marketing Project Conference. To register, visit the Americans for the Arts [webinar](#) site.

Register Now for Open Dialogue 2010

The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) invites leaders both established and emerging to Open Dialogue 2010 in Chicago, August 12–14, to formulate action agendas promoting equity in cultural policy, funding, and leadership in the 21st century. At Open Dialogue 2010, participants will discuss policies and programs which individuals, organizations, foundations, and policymakers are encouraged to strategize and organize around in order to further advance cultural democracy and cultural equity platforms and programs in today's new era of change. Recognizing some quantitative progress in equity and diversity issues over the last three to four decades, it is most urgent at this historic time of change to evaluate and set forth action-agendas around TAAC's foundational pillars for real, substantive, long-term change. TAAC convenes artists and cultural workers that are reflective of our pluralistic society to inform and advocate for democratic cultural policy. To register, or for more information, please visit www.taac.com.

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