

NEA ARTS

NUMBER 3. 2015

ART ALL AROUND US

THE CONNECTION OF CREATIVITY
TO, WELL, EVERYTHING



THIS ISSUE

Art is everywhere, whether you know where to look or not. It's the design of your soda can and cereal box, or the graphics of that videogame your kid is currently obsessed with beating. It's the songs you sing in church or synagogue, and that quilt your grandmother made you years ago. It's the mp3s you bop to on your way to work, and the books stacked on your bedside table. It is all art, and it affects our lives in ways both subtle and obvious, expected and unexpected.

In this issue of *NEA Arts*, we examine some of the more unexpected ways the arts interact with American life. In Wisconsin, an artist residency at the Kohler bathroom fixtures factory is changing the face of industry. In Massachusetts and New York, art has become a vehicle for empowering domestic workers, and in California, art and agriculture have come together to reinforce community. Poetry has enlivened public transportation systems across the country, and art—from dance to music to design—affects the NFL game day experience in more ways than you might realize.

To strengthen such partnerships between the arts and non-arts sectors, the National Endowment for the Arts recently announced a new initiative called Creativity Connects.* Through a report, interactive graphic, and grant opportunity, Creativity Connects will examine the country's current arts infrastructure, identify areas and industries where creativity exists, and fund new opportunities for arts organizations to connect with new sectors.

As you read through this issue, we hope you'll take a closer look at your own world and begin to see the ways the arts and creativity affect—and enhance—your life.

Please visit www.arts.gov/50th/creativity-connects for more information on Creativity Connects.

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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

(Cover) Artist Mary Teabo and friend at Clarence Scott Hill Ranch in Winters, California, participating in YoloArts' Art and Ag program, which invites farmers to open up their land to local artists. PHOTO BY SANDRA JENNINGS JONES

FROM FIELD TO CANVAS

YOLOARTS' ART AND AG PROJECT

BY REBECCA GROSS

Farm Family Archive by Alan Fishleder, taken as part of the YoloArts' Art and Ag program.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

▼
Yolo Countryside, an oil on
canvas by Patris Miller, created
as part of the Art and Ag program.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



FRANK MULLER HAS AGRICULTURE in his blood. He was raised on a farm, and now runs Muller Ranch in Yolo County, California, northwest of Sacramento, with his two brothers, son, and nephew. The ranch boasts several thousand acres of walnut groves, sunflowers, vineyards, tomato fields, almond trees, and pepper plants. But despite his close ties with the landscape and all it produces, he said the inherent beauty of his farmland once escaped him. “I’ve been to the finest art galleries all over the world,” he noted, “but when you look at these Impressionist paintings of Paris and the countryside, I never thought that our farms in our area could look like that.”

Through his involvement with Art and Ag, a project of YoloArts, his line of sight has shifted. For the past decade, Art and Ag has invited farmers to open their land to local artists, providing unique opportunities to capture private landscapes that would otherwise remain inaccessible and unseen. In turn, money raised through art sales goes toward preserving the farmland of Yolo County, which boasts 255,000 acres of what is considered to be prime farmland.

The interaction has proven to be mutually beneficial. “From a farmer’s standpoint, we’re able to honor what they’re doing, help them tell their story about the value of the land,” said Danielle Whitmore, executive director of YoloArts. Meanwhile, artists gain a new creative outlet and a greater sense of where they live.

For artist Rebecca Ryland, “it’s almost like a religious experience to get outside and get up in the hills.” She began to participate in Art and Ag after moving from Montreal, and noted that the program became an ideal way to form a connection with the cultural community, the land, and the people who worked it. “I think a lot of landscape painters have respect for or an interest in agriculture as a subject matter,” she said. “But I think now almost all of the artists know a lot more about the people and about what they do, and that might change their art.”

As it turns out, this change in perspective is infectious. By sharing their artwork with the subject matter’s proprietors, artists have a rare opportunity to reach a uniquely pertinent audience. “I might walk by and say, ‘I’ve got to get rid of that pile of junk,’” said Muller, who now serves as a liaison between artists and farmers for Art and Ag. “And [artists] paint it and turn it into something that’s a work of art rather than a mess. They have a different way of looking at things, and it’s helped me look at my farm differently than I normally have.”

The program began in 2004 when Annie Main, owner of the organic Good Humus Farm, was raising funds to turn her farm into a conservation easement, meaning her land would be preserved as farmland for perpetuity and protected from developers. As part of her fundraising efforts, she invited local artists to her farm for a morning of painting, with the under-

standing that the artwork created that day would be auctioned off at a special dinner under the apricot trees. Over a champagne lunch Main had prepared for the artists as a thank you, the group realized that this could be the start of something much larger.

Main began to organize planning meetings, which she said were initially difficult as artists and farmers sought to find common ground. But eventually, it felt like a “no-brainer,” and the relationships formed between the artistic and agricultural worlds proved strong enough to carry the program forward. “Those collaborative ties—that’s what makes community community,” said Main. “Ideas are easy, but it does take the community to make it go.”

Main informally ran the program herself before handing management over to YoloArts, where it would enjoy new opportunities for growth and funding. Today, Art and Ag maintains much of what Main had first envisioned. Every month, 30 or so artists visit a selected farm in Yolo County; in total, an estimated 300 artists and 70 farms have participated in the program to date. Typically, the proprietor introduces artists to his or her land and agricultural philosophy before letting them roam and create. Throughout the day, artists have an opportunity to learn about the growing process, while farmers are able to experience the artistic process firsthand. Muller said it can be an eye-opening experience for both.

“In one case, the farmer spent 15 minutes telling [artists] what they couldn’t do,” remembered Muller. “Ten minutes later he was opening up gates and had his arm around artists walking them through areas that he told them were off-limits. It brings out something in farmers. When they see that someone’s appreciating their farm or their ranch, it clicks a switch in them. It’s really amazing, the whole process.”

Main’s original mission for land preservation has also remained intact. Every November, work created during, or inspired by, these farm visits is auctioned at Art Farm, an annual celebration hosted by YoloArts that brings together artists, farmers, community members, and local food and wine vendors. This year, the event featured work from 65 regional artists and snacks from nearly two dozen local farms and vineyards, providing valuable exposure for both groups.

Part of the \$35,000 raised will go to the Yolo Land Trust, which has preserved 11,000 acres of farmland through easements since it was founded in 1988. Yolo Land Trust is a fitting beneficiary, said Whitmore, as art can also be a vehicle for preservation.

“Part of the benefit of this program is that we have this



▲ **Rick Plocher, owner of Cache Acres Dairy, with his sculpture.**

PHOTO BY JANICE PURNELL

► **Artist Carol Stone at Longview Ranch in Winters, California.**

PHOTO BY JANICE PURNELL

historical, visual retrospective of our county,” said Whitmore. Referencing the drought that has recently plagued California, she said, “These last couple of years will be ones when the visual images will be different. They’ll be brown. I think it’s that historical piece that is visually really impactful.”

Last spring, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, YoloArts launched a new spin-off of Art and Ag called Artful Plate. During Artful Plate’s three-week period, participating restaurants served special, locally sourced meals inspired by handmade artists’ plates, which were in turn inspired by Yolo County’s agricultural landscape.

With this new program, which will return this spring, “Not only are we talking about farms, but we’re talking about what the farmers are creating—the produce,” said Whitmore. “So we’ve taken it to the next level of creativity—the culinary side—while using the produce that the farmers are preparing.”

The organization has also helped bring culinary creativity and its associated health benefits to the younger set. As part of the Yolo County Farm to School movement, YoloArts collaborated with the county’s agricultural department to design a nutrition guide for school cafeterias, which included recipes using local produce, as well as artwork from Art and Ag participants.

“There are so many connections,” said Janice Purnell, manager of the Art and Ag project for YoloArts, as she spoke about the relationship between art and



agriculture. “You wouldn’t think there’d be but there are a million connections.”

Perhaps this isn’t surprising given that agriculture, like art, is itself an act of creation. At its essence, it is the process of taking raw soil and transforming it into orchards, plant beds, gardens, and food. It requires an intimate knowledge of medium, tools, and technique to achieve the ideal tomato, avocado, or wine grape—each of which can be a multisensory masterpiece in its own right.

It’s a concept that rings true with Frank Muller. “I tease my artist friends, ‘We do the same thing. We just have a bigger canvas.’” ▲

► **Trapping the Sunrise by Alan Fishleder, taken at Mezger Zinnia Patch in Woodland, California, as part of the YoloArts’ Art and Ag program.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



FROM A FARMER'S
STANDPOINT,
WE'RE ABLE TO HONOR
WHAT THEY'RE DOING,
HELP THEM TELL
THEIR STORY
ABOUT THE VALUE
OF THE LAND.



Mary Teabo takes in the hills of
Clarence Scott Hill Ranch.

PHOTO BY JOCK HAMILTON

EMPOWERING THROUGH ART

Artist Marisa Morán Jahn leads participants at a Domestic Worker Disco workshop during the Allied Media Conference in Detroit in co-choreographing a dance while learning about the growing movement for domestic workers' rights.

PHOTO BY MARISA MORÁN JAHN



THE BRAZILIAN WORKER CENTER'S CAREFORCE PROJECT

BY PAULETTE BEETE



WHILE MANY OF US MAY take benefits like eight-hour workdays, protection against workplace sexual harassment, and workers compensation insurance for granted, these benefits didn't exist until the passage of fair labor laws in the 1930s. While the National Labor Relations Act and the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act improved things radically for many workers, domestic workers were purposefully excluded from the law's protections because most of those workers were African American. Today, domestic workers—nannies, housekeepers, and home care aides among them—are still fighting for basic workplace protections. That's where artist Marisa Morán Jahn and labor activist Natalicia Tracy come in.

Jahn is the executive director of Studio REV-, a New York-based nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of low-wage workers, immigrants, and women through creative media. She began her work with domestic worker issues in 2010 after New York State passed its Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, the first ever in the United States. Domestic Workers United, an NYC-based group and organizing member of the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), asked for her help in getting the word out about the new law. For Jahn, "getting the word out" involved not only spreading information about the new rights of domestic workers but also empowering the workers to see themselves as a community that could take the fight into their own hands. According to the NDWA, 95 percent of domestic workers today are women and 46 percent are immigrants—two groups that have historically been marginalized and disenfranchised.

"To me the arts are particularly useful for building a movement, building a sense of cohesiveness, and empowering a group of people who may not have thought of themselves as a group before," said Jahn.

She developed several platforms for spreading that message. One of the first ideas was to develop a mobile app, the Domestic Worker App, that could connect users to a call-in radio show that broadcast humorous, educational vignettes about the types of situations domestic workers regularly run into. Jahn described the programming as "Click and Clack for nannies," referring to the former hosts of NPR's popular *Car Talk* radio program. It was important to Jahn that the program be accessible by any basic cell phone—not just smartphones—so that the workers—many of whom work 60-hour weeks in addition to caring for their own households—could access the show whenever they had free time.

It was also critical that the radio broadcast feature actual workers' stories using actual workers' voices. As Jahn

explained, "[Domestic workers] feel invisible and creating artwork around [their work] dignifies the labor that domestic workers do." To collect the stories and promote the project, Jahn designed the NannyVan, a brightly colored van and sound studio that she drove across the U.S., stopping at places such as workers' centers, parks, and other places where domestic workers and employees might gather. According to Jahn, news of the app spread by word-of-mouth even before she did any official advertising, and the app now gets as many as 1,200 calls each month.

Jahn also designed palm-sized cards about the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights that participants could share with their peers as well as poster-sized artworks that could be displayed throughout the community at both workers' spaces and cultural spaces such as museums.

In New York City, Jahn also worked with participants of a dance exercise class targeted to domestic workers. Working with class leaders, Jahn transformed the class into an organizing tool by incorporating gestures reminiscent of the workers' daily tasks, such as mopping and ironing. According to Jahn, the dance fulfilled several roles in addition to providing exercise to those in a physically demanding job. "It's a communication piece and a way for them to feel as if they can talk about being part of a larger movement they may not have known they had been part of. It's also a way for them to empower themselves in their bodies or through their bodies." The group also performed in public, which Jahn said was "a really lively way for the public to get involved and understand what's happening."

In 2013, Jahn joined forces with Natalicia Tracy, executive director of the Brazilian Worker Center. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, the center—a recent NEA grantee and an affiliate of the NDWA—is active in domestic workers' advocacy, education, and leadership training, among other areas. Tracy asked Jahn to work with the center and its partners on an ongoing project to create tools with a health and safety emphasis. As Jahn explained, "Domestic workers have not been traditionally covered under OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] laws... they face a disproportionate amount of health injuries, workplace injuries, more than, for example, someone who is a receptionist who is covered by the [existing] labor law." The partners developed posters, games, comic books, and dance movements to help inform the workers of potential hazards and how to mitigate them.



▲ Studio REV-/National Domestic Workers Alliance's NannyVan at the U.S. Department of Labor for a presentation on the Domestic Worker App.

Left to right top: Natalicia Tracy, Tiffany Williams, Barbara Young, Emily Spieler. Left to right bottom: Palak Shah, Marisa Morán Jahn.

PHOTO BY ANJUM ASHARIA



▶ **Business cards advertising the Domestic Worker App's New York version, designed and illustrated by Marisa Morán Jahn.**

PHOTO BY ANJUM ASHARIA

▼ **Draft of the Know Your Rights poster for Massachusetts domestic workers, designed by Jahn.**

IMAGE COURTESY OF
MARISA MORÁN JAHN

Before partnering with Jahn, Tracy and her team had already seen the powerful effects of injecting the arts into their work. For example, the center frequently holds focus groups to make sure its advocacy work matched the needs of its constituents. They employ theater exercises, drawing projects, and even singing in order to draw out the workers and make the meeting spaces more engaging. “When you come to those spaces for meetings, even to learn about your rights, you want to bring some creativity into those spaces because that might be the only fun that person’s going to have for the whole month,” said Tracy.

The center had also created a traveling exhibit of black-and-white photos of female domestic workers, which has been exhibited in locations such as college campuses, bank lobbies, and libraries. The exhibit allowed workers who often feel invisible to be seen and created a safe zone in public spaces to talk about the stories of the women captured in the photographs and the issues they face as nannies and housekeepers. As Tracy explained, “The idea is to show them as human beings, to really humanize the issue. What I’ve seen is how people open up in those spaces. It opens opportunity for talking and to share stories and to talk about people as just being human beings.”



Having already experienced the power of the NannyVan, Tracy was eager to adopt many of the arts tactics employed in New York to mobilize Massachusetts workers around the state’s newly passed Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights as well as to advocate for a similar law in Connecticut, where the Brazilian center has a branch. The project, which recently received NEA funding, is now known as the CareForce and comprises a superhero poster series celebrating domestic workers and a Domestic Worker Disco, which the partners describe as “stroller figure eights and mop waltzes that encode ergonomic info while promoting workers’ health and safety, weaving together their stories, and making visible the labor of domestic work that’s often rendered invisible.”

The CareForce project also includes a new and improved version of the NannyVan—CareForce One—which uses augmented reality technology to encourage participants to listen to stories of fellow caregivers as well as to tell their own. To turn on the system, the user points a smartphone at the vehicle, which then triggers a 40-second report called “the superhero report.” Each short audio burst will demonstrate the importance of the work caregivers and other domestic workers do. Jahn cited one superhero story in which a caregiver coaxed an Alzheimer’s patient who had stopped speaking back to speech through dedicated attention and conversation. After listening, workers are encouraged to share their own “superhero” stories in audio or video form.

The project team is also working with Oscar-winning filmmaker Yael Melamede to create digital shorts from the footage gathered as CareForce One tours the country.

While Tracy and Jahn agree that getting legislation on the books to give domestic workers access to the same rights and benefits as other workers in the U.S. is an important goal, they also stress that the way in which the arts transform the conversation to empower each individual worker is some pretty powerful stuff. Jahn described that power as, “Hundreds of people who say to us, ‘You know, I never identified as someone who had any rights.... I now think about myself differently.’”

TRANSFORMING *Journeys*



Poet Bob Holman writing a personalized poem at the Poetry in Motion: The Poet Is In event at the Fulton Center on April 23, 2015.

PHOTO BY MARC A. HERMANN/
MTA NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

THE POETRY IN MOTION INITIATIVE

BY MICHAEL GALLANT

HEAVEN

Patrick Phillips b. 1970

It will be the past
and we'll live there together.

Not as it was *to live*
but as it is remembered.

It will be the past.
We'll all go back together.

Everyone we ever loved,
and lost, and must remember.

It will be the past.
And it will last forever.

Poetry
in
Motion



Mary Temple, West Wall, East Light, Morning, 2011

"Heaven" (title) 2011 by artist. Reproduced with permission by University of Virginia Press. Screened artwork © Mary Temple, West Wall, East Light, Morning, 2011. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design.

▲ Patrick Phillips' poem "Heaven," as part of the Poetry in Motion initiative.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MTA
NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

IF YOU THINK THAT THE ARTS IN NEW York City only come to life within the rarefied atmospheres of Carnegie Hall, Broadway theaters, or the Metropolitan Museum of Art—think again. In a city revered for its widespread creativity, even grabbing the nearest subway train or bus can become an experience elevated by art. Case in point: the Poetry in Motion initiative, sponsored by the Metropolitan Transit Authority and Poetry Society of America and supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

"It will be the past / and we'll live there together," begins one particularly striking poem, beautifully printed atop a backdrop of leaves and stone-like fragments and recently posted in hundreds of train cars and buses across the New York transit system. "Not as it was to live / but as it is remembered. / It will be the past. / We'll all go back together. Everyone we ever loved, / and lost, and must remember. / It will be the past. / And it will last forever."

Those evocative words come from the poem "Heaven," written by Patrick Phillips. It is among more than 200 poems that have been shared with subway riders, bus

passengers, and rail commuters since Poetry in Motion's inception in 1992. As with "Heaven," each work is coupled with museum-quality visual artwork, reproduced on large posters, and posted publicly to reach more than seven million customers every day.

The goal is a simple one. "We are bringing poetry to the daily experience of our customers," said the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Sandra Bloodworth. "We want them to know that an agency cares enough to bring the arts to their journey."

Bloodworth serves as director of the MTA's Arts and Design program, the arts arm of the agency, launched in 1985 in conjunction with a major reconstruction of the New York City transit system. Today, nearly 2.6 billion people traverse the city on MTA trains every year, their journeys augmented by the site-specific, permanent installations created by more than 300 artists, all commissioned through the program that Bloodworth currently leads. Though Poetry in Motion is just one initiative that she oversees, it is amongst the most visible—and widely loved—that the city has to offer.

"We aim to share poetry that is powerful and meaningful," she said, "hopefully bringing a thought to ponder, or a smile that our customers might not have otherwise experienced."

Poetry in Motion began when Elise Paschen, the then-executive director of the New York-based Poetry Society of America (PSA), visited London on a reading tour and spotted a poem by English poet Michael Drayton displayed publicly on the Tube, London's own subway system. Inspired, she began to wonder if publicly placed poetry could elicit a similarly striking effect in the U.S.

Simultaneously, the then-president of New York City Transit, Alan F. Kiepper, was also visiting London and became similarly impressed with the display of word-based art. "It was a case of synchronicity and serendipity," said Alice Quinn, who currently leads the PSA. "When Alan returned to the U.S., he poked around and landed on our organization as a place to phone. He and Elise put their heads together and launched this program. Immediately, it became immensely popular."

The buzz surrounding New York's creation of Poetry in Motion quickly inspired similar installations in the public transit systems of Chicago, Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, and Houston, as well as Washington, DC. Years later, recession economics halted some of those programs, as transit authorities chose to use the space occupied by the poems to generate much-needed advertising revenue.

But the poetry initiatives proved resilient. Poetry in Motion itself returned in 2012 after a few-year hiatus, and similar programs in Los Angeles, Portland, and Nashville continue to thrive. In Nashville, for example, local students and songwriters continue to be commissioned

to craft poems displayed for public enrichment.

In New York City's current iteration, Poetry in Motion introduces two poems quarterly, up to eight total each year, with newer poems gradually phasing out older ones. The first poem to be displayed in 1992 was an excerpt of Walt Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; more recent installations feature works from poets as widespread as Maya Angelou, Jeffrey Yang, Vera Pavlova, and Lao Tzu.

The process of choosing poems begins with the PSA, which pre-selects packets of roughly 15 to 40 works and offers them to the MTA for review. Bloodworth and her colleagues make the final selections, pair the poems with artwork, and post them in train cars across the five boroughs.

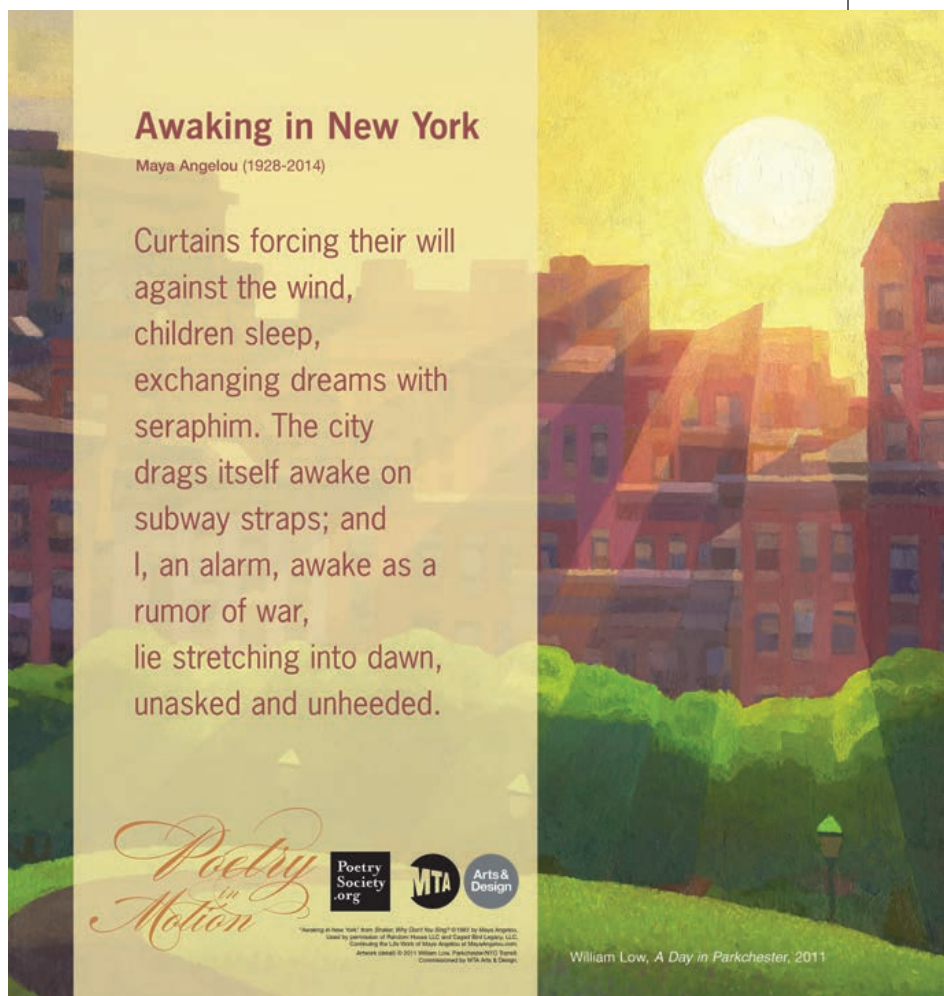
When initially gathering poems, Quinn looks for works that can easily be experienced in between stops, but also ones with staying power. "It must be a poem that can be re-read endlessly with delight and feeling," she said. "It can't be something that will be spent for you if you've seen it once or twice." The PSA also seeks out diversity in its choices, picking works from poets of dramatically different ages, voices, and backgrounds.

The collaboration between the MTA and PSA extends beyond the subway car as well, and the PSA co-presents readings in honor of Poetry in Motion poems and installations. In 2014, thousands attended two days of poetry-related festivities at Grand Central Terminal, where Poetry in Motion works were projected on the walls of Vanderbilt Hall and acclaimed poets occupied old-fashioned desks, working on typewriters under green library lamps to craft individually customized poems for the attending public.

In 2015, the MTA and PSA also hosted a similar program called Poetry in Motion: The Poet Is In at the MTA's new Fulton Center transit hub. For the program, poets were paired with customers and composed poetry for them on the spot. "The concept was inspired by the *Peanuts* character Lucy Van Pelt's advice booth," said Bloodworth.

Though it may not be as obvious as with music and film, poetry is a tremendously popular art form, affirmed Quinn. "As we know from memorials and weddings, when we want to celebrate, we reach for a poem," she said. "So putting poetry out there, where subway riders can have a surprise encounter with it, serves as homecoming for many, a rendezvous with an art form that, at some point, they treasured and are thrilled to return to."

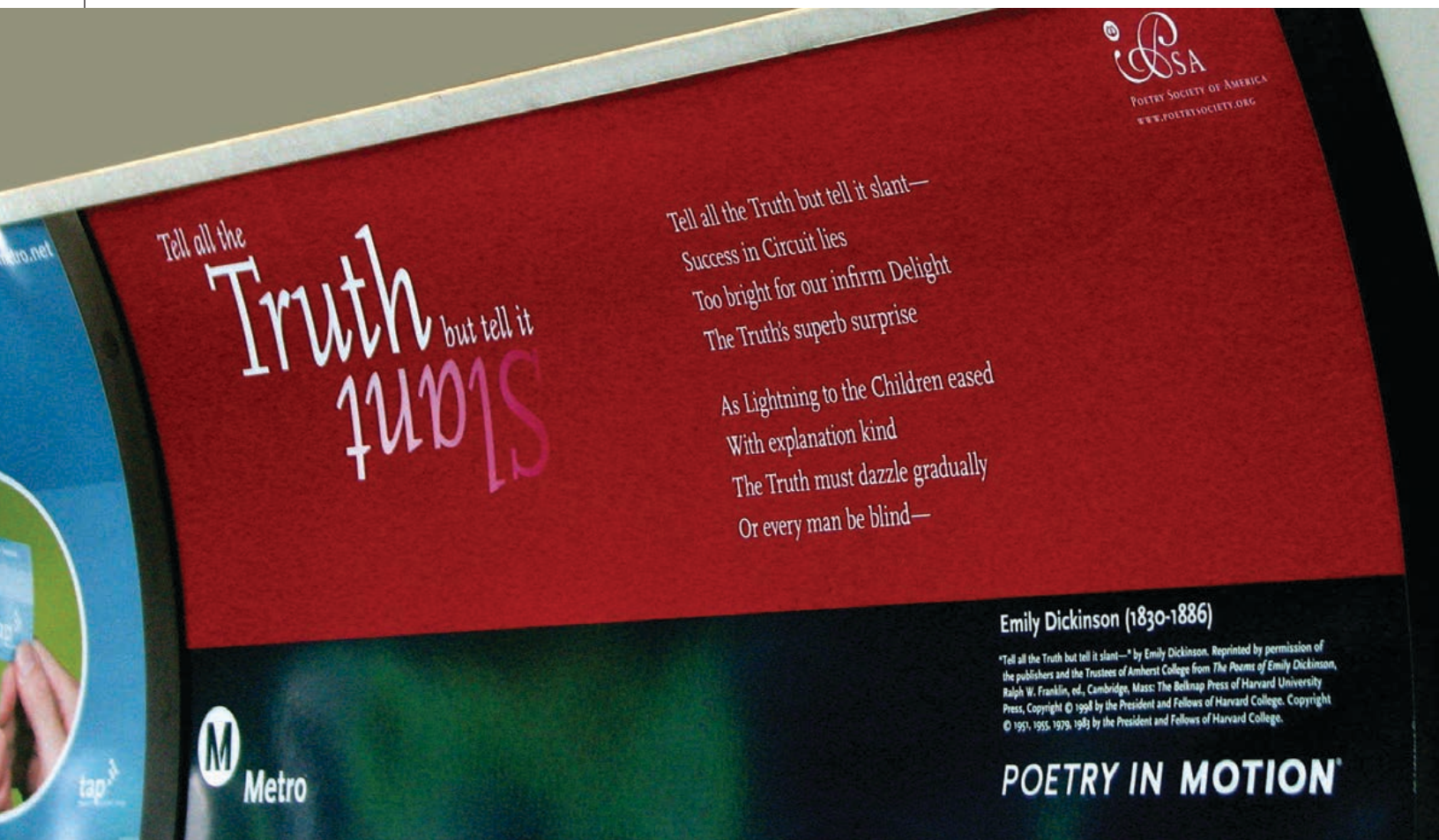
Quinn recalled watching a woman become engrossed in the Poetry in Motion poem "Wilderness," by Lorine Niedecker, during a trip on the 1 train from 14th Street to 96th Street. "People often memorize the poems, which is so gratifying," she said. "This woman was reading it over and over and obviously trying to get it by heart. I was so moved, because it's a very hard-hitting poem."



▲ The Poetry in Motion poster of Maya Angelou's poem "Awakening in New York."

PHOTO COURTESY OF MTA
NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

“So putting poetry out there ... serves as homecoming for many, a rendezvous with an art form that, at some point, they treasured and are thrilled to return to.”



▲
An Emily Dickinson poem on the New York City subway as part of the Poetry in Motion initiative.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MTA
NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

For Bloodworth, Poetry in Motion is about more than distracting subway-goers from their commutes. “Introducing quality art tells the public that we are dedicated to providing a meaningful journey,” she said. “From the beginning of the Arts and Design program in 1985, we immediately saw the reaction of the public experiencing art introduced into the transit environment—and the difference it made in proclaiming that these spaces are important, our customers travel here, and we want it to be a good ride!”

It’s clear that poetry has power, she continued, a unique ability to transform people’s journeys. “Art, poetry, and music are not a panacea, but they are powerful in bringing a quality experience to a century-old subway system,” she said. “I see the program continuing into the future, bringing poetry to millions of people every day.”

The fact that poetry—as well as art and music—exist within the New York subway is a worthy end unto itself, continued Bloodworth. “No one has to explain to a New Yorker why the arts are important in our lives and to our city,” she said. “They know. And that’s probably the thing I love the most about living in New York.” ▲

Michael Gallant is a composer, musician, and writer living in New York City. He is the founder and CEO of Gallant Music (gallantmusic.com).

LEADING AT HALFTIME

A LOOK AT THE ARTISTIC ASPIRATIONS
OF THE BALTIMORE RAVENS

BY DON BALL



The Baltimore Ravens football team is named after an Edgar Allan Poe poem, "The Raven."

PHOTO BY PHIL HOFFMANN,
COURTESY OF THE
BALTIMORE RAVENS



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▲ The Marching Ravens are one of only two marching bands in the NFL, and have been in existence since 1947.

PHOTO BY SID KEISER, COURTESY OF THE BALTIMORE RAVENS

PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THE “ART” OF FOOTBALL, but they aren’t referring to art literally—rather they are talking about the skill and technique required to play the sport well. But there is an art to football, perhaps unnoticed consciously by the majority of the audience on any given Sunday (or Monday night...or Thursday night). This can be as simple as the design of the team logo or the uniforms—the colors, the shapes, the patterns. Or it could be something much larger, as large as the design of the stadium itself in which the game is played. To take a look at where art is around us during a football game, we turned to the NFL team the Baltimore Ravens—possibly the only major sports team named after a literary work.

The team’s name came from the poem “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe. Poe died in Baltimore (most miserably if truth be told), where he was buried, so his connection to the city was well-established. It wasn’t the team’s owner who chose the name, however—it was the people of Baltimore. “The first promise we made was that we’d bring this [naming of the team] back to the fans in some way,”

said David Modell, then-assistant to the Ravens’ president. This involved focus groups to narrow down the possibilities, and then a poll through the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper, in which the name Ravens was overwhelming the choice by four to one. The site of the Ravens’ playing field, M&T Bank Stadium, was built a short distance from Westminster Hall and Burying Ground where Poe is buried (his headstone decorated with an engraved raven).

The current stadium, built in 1998, is located at the site previously occupied by the William Knabe piano factory; today, a stone mosaic of piano keys is displayed at the stadium in its honor. Although the practical aspects of designing a stadium took precedence (moving large groups of people safely), the design firm also wanted to include aesthetic elements that related to the team and the community. Since the stadium was located right in the city (as opposed to many stadiums that live in the suburbs), Baltimore’s architecture served as a basis for some of the design.

“[We were] pulling from the city, the character, the history

of the old industrial buildings, the brick warehouses, and things like that,” said Ben Stindt, the design architect on the project, which was managed by the firm Populous (formerly HOK). “Back in the day when a lot of those industrial buildings were built, the brick was a handmade modular type of architectural unit of masonry.... That brick has a special feeling that said, ‘Hey, this is Baltimore.’ This is downtown, this is the character of all the shops and bars and restaurants and street life that you go to.” Stindt went around the city and noted all the different architecture, the historic buildings, and the brick details, and then tried to mimic that in the stadium design elements. “The actual bricks we used were iron-flashed brick—to make them look antique. Maybe a lot of people don’t [notice], but when you walk around that stadium, you have a sense of the context, that beauty that’s such an historic part of Baltimore.” The design also helped the stadium fit right in with the surrounding architecture, making it seem like the stadium had always been a part of the city.

It was not just buildings that they relied on—Stindt also looked at the steel bridges around the city, and mimicked the arches and truss work in the upper decks of the stadium. There were some playful artistic additions as

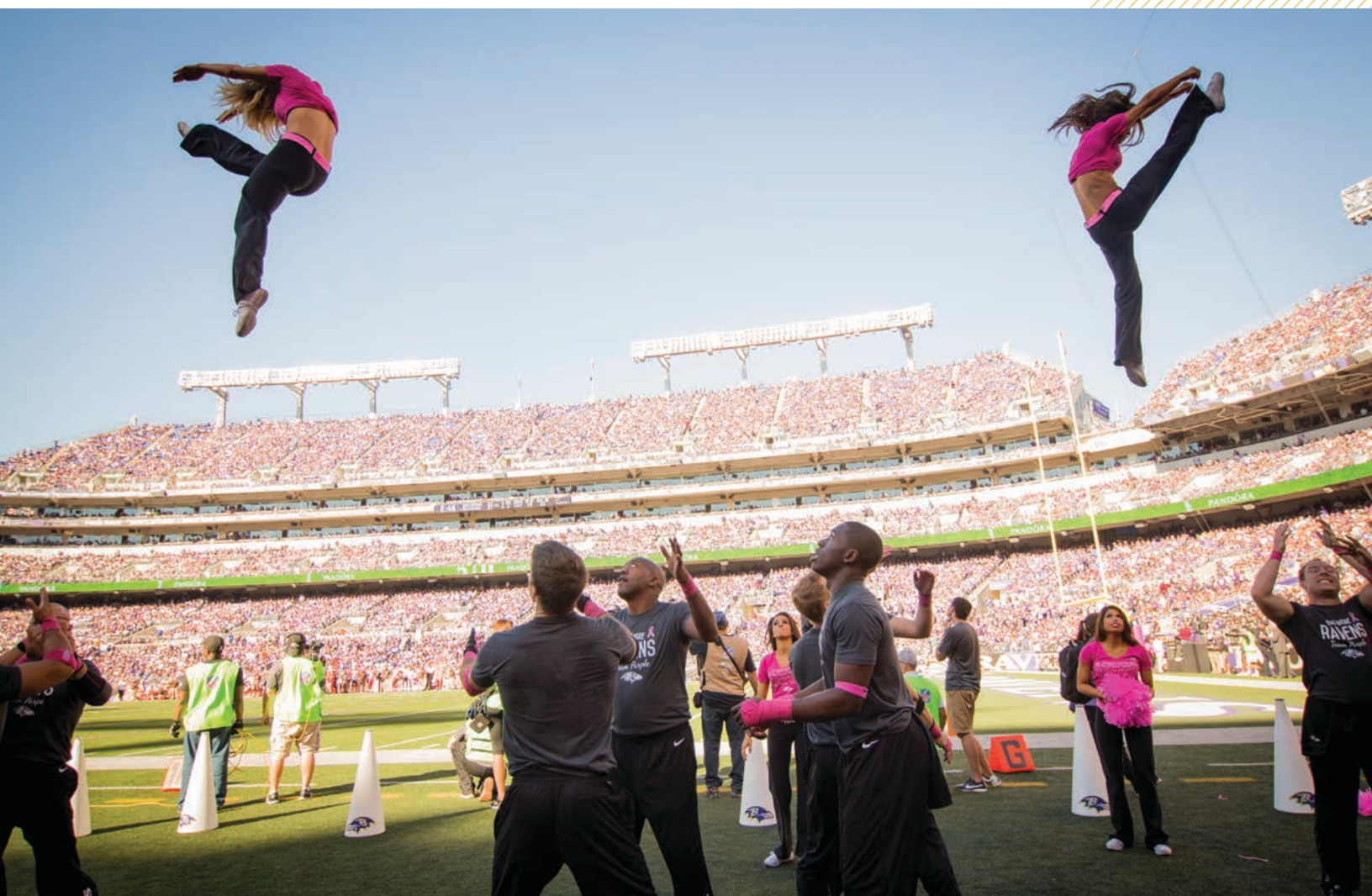
well. For example, outlined between the hash marks near the statue of Johnny Unitas near one of the stadium entrances, unnoticed perhaps by those walking over it, is a classic passing play diagrammed in the X’s and O’s of football parlance. Also, in tribute to the new team, the outline of the Ravens logo was embedded in some of the brick detail work.

When the stadium was completed, the football team’s marching band (only one of two NFL marching bands in the league) changed its name from the Baltimore Colts Marching Band to the Marching Ravens. In case you had any misconceptions about the power of music, the band continued functioning as the Baltimore Colts Marching Band even after the Colts football team left town in the middle of the night in 1984. For 12 years, it played at Baltimore functions and at the request of several NFL teams during their games, until Baltimore acquired a new NFL team. In fact, the band played at the Maryland State House during a crucial vote for the building of the stadium and was the reason for the success of the vote, according to then-Governor William Donald Schaefer.

The band is not made up of full-time professional musicians, but instead of people who love both music and football, 150 members strong, and topping 200 when

▼
The Baltimore Ravens’ Cheerleaders include a stunt team that performs highly complex gymnastic maneuvers during the games.

PHOTO BY JILL FANNON,
COURTESY OF THE
BALTIMORE RAVENS



▶ **M&T Bank Stadium, home to the Ravens, was designed to mimic and pay homage to Baltimore's architecture.**

PHOTO BY SHAWN HUBBARD, COURTESY OF THE BALTIMORE RAVENS.



counting staff and equipment crew. According to Dan Fake, the musical director, most of the people who join the band have six to eight years of musical experience, usually through high school, college, or a military band, and almost all have full-time jobs (Fake is a high school music teacher).

For the Marching Ravens, game days start in the morning outside the stadium, marching through the tailgate parties in the parking lot and down RavensWalk. Once in the stadium, they do a pregame concert for the fans as they are getting to their seats, rousing them for the game with the “Raven’s Fight Song” or the White Stripes’ “Seven Nation Army,” which has become a fan favorite. The band then performs a halftime show, usually a series of songs grouped thematically, with a new theme for each home game. As a marching band, the musicians go through drills as they play, creating an intricate choreography that blends the musicians’ need for keeping time with innovative and aesthetically pleasing designs for the crowd. Both before and after halftime, the band sits in the stands and plays during timeouts and big plays. After the game, they march back through the parking lot.

For such an intricate program, you would expect a goodly amount of rehearsal—but the Marching Ravens meet just once a week, for three hours every Wednesday night. “We are known as the ‘Miracle Band,’” said John Ziemann, president of the Marching Ravens and a member of the band for more than 50 years. “We’ve been called that around major colleges, because most bands get seven days a week, three or four or five hours a day. We only get three hours from 7-10 p.m. on a Wednesday night. That’s it.” And yet the Marching Ravens are considered a premier marching band, having played in national events such as the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade as well as local Baltimore events such as the July 4th parade.

One of the most important aspects of the marching

band to Fake is that the fans are “getting music in a non-concert setting.” Playing music that the audience knows but in a different context helps bring them into the music. “Sometimes it gets a little hard for us as the teachers, or even as the performers,” said Fake, “to find the beauty in some of the songs when they’ve been taken from guitars and put into a marching band. But when you come across it, and you start to have a bit of personality that goes along with the music, it can be a pretty spectacular thing.”

A bit of personality would be a good descriptor for the Ravens’ cheerleading crew as well. “I feel like the band and cheerleaders and the mascot all bring energy into the stadium,” said Tina Galdieri, director and coach of the Baltimore Ravens Cheerleaders. “I think we have a dual role: A big part is entertainment, doing really good dances and having good performances, and things like that. And to keep [the crowd] interactive and interested and rooting for the team.”

But it also involves a great deal of creativity and work. A whole choreography routine requires anywhere from 12 to 15 hours of practice and the same strenuous workout and risk of injuries as professional dancers face. In addition, the Ravens Cheerleaders have a stunt team made up of male and female members that performs gymnastic feats—tumbling, leaping, throwing women into the air like fireworks. All of this takes not only hard work, but an artistic sense to create the routines. “I absolutely do think that what we do is art,” said Galdieri, “partly because of the choreography and our performance level and how we look at dance as art.”

People coming to a football game aren’t looking for art though. They’re looking for a tough, often brutal, complex sports contest. And yet it is there anyway, surrounding the crowd whether they recognize it or not, because even in the most unlikely places there is an element of creativity that blooms and makes itself known. ▲

Bigger Working

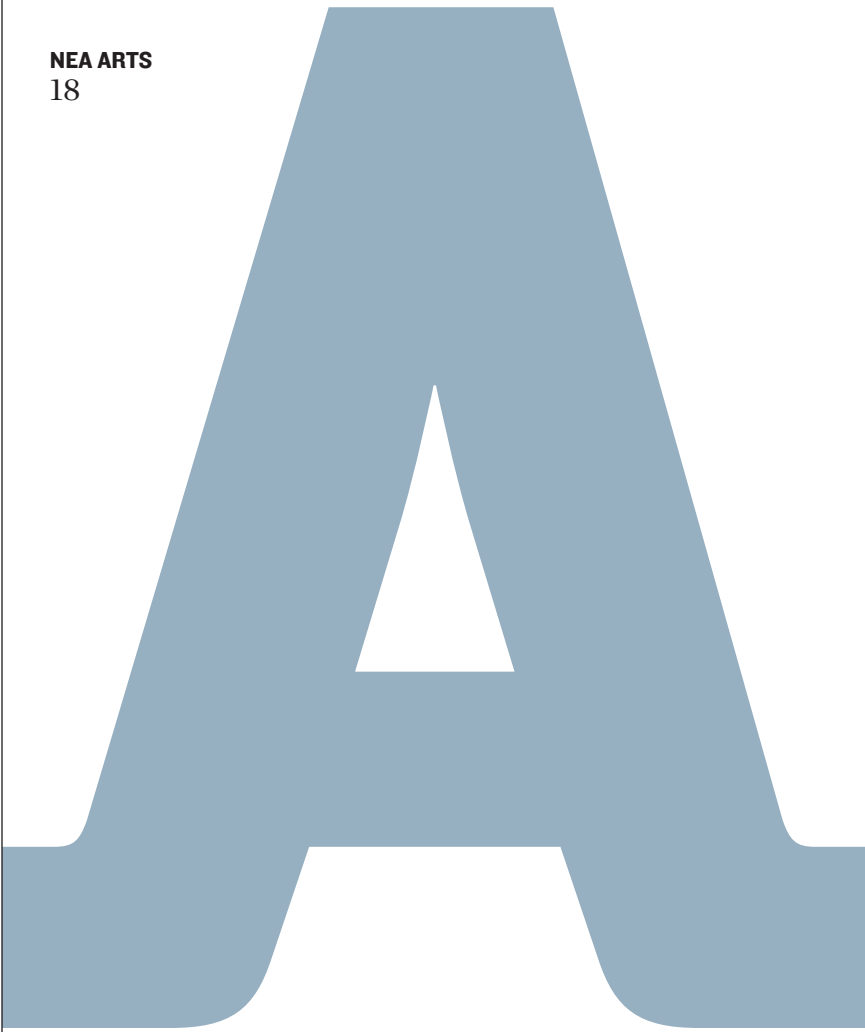
KOHLER COMPANY'S ARTS/
INDUSTRY RESIDENCY PROGRAM

BY VICTORIA HUTTER



All photos courtesy of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Arts/Industry
artist-in-residence
Deborah Fisher in
the Kohler Co.
Pottery, 2002.



FEW BLOCKS FROM LAKE MICHIGAN IN SHEBOYGAN, Wisconsin, the Kohler Company factory floor vibrates with the industrial maelstrom of production. The hiss and thump of machines mix with the rumble of passing forklifts. Classic rock and country music blare from dueling radio stations. And in row after row, parts for sinks, toilets, urinals, and bathtubs are made and assembled, before their delivery to bathrooms around the country.

It hardly sounds like an ideal environment for contemplation and creativity. But through the Arts/Industry residency program of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (JMKAC), it works. Each year, 15 to 18 artists are selected from approximately 300 applicants to spend two to six months in the Kohler factory, where they can use the factory's materials and equipment to create original work.

Throughout the residency, they have access to the factory's three main areas: the Pottery, the Iron and Brass Foundry, and the Enamel Shop. In the Pottery, slip-casting is done, pouring liquid clay into funnels inserted into plaster molds that are designed and produced onsite. In the foundry, liquid brass or iron is poured into molds, and pieces are ground into gleaming sinks and other products. The Enamel Shop is where powdered glazes are applied to hot cast iron to create the familiar sinks and bathtubs.

Sculptor and installation artist David Franklin recently completed his second residency at Kohler. "The factory



creates an environment where the production potentials are extraordinary because of the materials that are available,” he said. “Since I was here before, I went home thinking, ‘What kinds of projects could be made at Kohler, in that environment, with those resources, that could make the most of that opportunity?’ That opened my imagination to ideas that were beyond my normal way of thinking. How can I make my own little factory that I get to create in the pottery so it can be used to its best advantage with all its resources? There is a potential that exists here that doesn’t exist anywhere else.”

Artist and designer Ted Lott echoes that sentiment. One of the objectives of the Arts/Industry program is to encourage artists not only to imagine big but also to create big, taking from industry its size and scale. Lott worked in the Foundry at Kohler and hopes to use that experience to continue working with metals to produce more durable work that can be sited outside. The residency encouraged him “to work bigger and know that I can pull that off.”

Even the hiss and hum of factory life can become a welcome part of the experience. Sculptor and visual artist Leslie Fry has now been through the Arts/Industry program twice. “I remember in the beginning thinking, ‘Oh my God, how am I ever going to concentrate?’ There are all these workers coming by and asking questions and

then tours come through and you have to stop what you’re doing and talk to them,” she said. “But by the time I left, I was in love with the place. When I got back to my own studio, I felt lonely and that it was just too quiet.”

The seeds of the Arts/Industry program were sown in 1973 with the exhibition *Plastic Earth* at JMK-AC. Conceived by Ruth DeYoung Kohler, director of JMKAC, and sponsored by Kohler Co., the exhibition marked the company’s 100th anniversary and featured 87 contemporary ceramic artists. For DeYoung Kohler, having such an exhibition dedicated to clay was a natural given the arts center’s and the company’s missions.

To open the exhibition, the arts center and the company collaborated on a seminar that brought the exhibiting artists for a tour of the Kohler factory and demonstrations of industrial technologies. As reported in a subsequent article in *Ceramics Monthly*, “Later in the evening at the reception for the artists held at the J.M.K. Arts Center both ceramicists and engineers were heard to express the

Karen Thuesen
Massaro, *Glaze Flow
Blocks*, 1976, part of
the John Michael
Kohler Arts Center
Collection, gift of the
artist.





Urinal with Tongue, 1974,
by Jack Earl, one of the first
artists-in-residence, part of
the John Michael Kohler
Arts Center Collection,
gift of the artist.

hope that these discussions would mark the beginning of an ongoing cooperation between individual artists and industrial technicians.”

Those discussions did in fact lead to a four-week, pilot residency in 1974 for two ceramic artists, Jack Earl and Tom LaDousa, who refashioned and redefined Kohler products into witty works of art. In 1976, eight artists joined Earl, working primarily in the Pottery. That year the residency expanded to allow artists to create original work. Then, beginning in 1984, residencies were offered year-round. Since the Arts/Industry program began, it has graduated more than 500 artists. In addition, JMKAC offers two other artist residency programs: Connecting Communities, which brings together artists and specific communities to collaborate on art projects; and ExAIR (Exhibition Artists-in-Residence), which offers students the opportunity to meet and work directly with artists working at the center. Both of these programs have been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

In a video about the Arts/Industry program, DeYoung Kohler speaks of the impact of the residency on the artists that she has seen over the years. “It’s amazing how many people have seen this program as transformative and changed the way they work, changed their goals for their careers. It’s astonishing how many people have thought it was THE pivotal moment in their careers.”

Every artist that has passed through the residency has benefited from the Kohler technicians, or associates, who teach the artists how to safely use the equipment and can demonstrate techniques of slip-casting, glazing, and casting molten brass, among others. Associates bring their considerable wealth of knowledge to advise or problem-solve an entirely different challenge from their own day-to-day, and most artists quickly realize that the associates are skilled craftspeople in their own right with creative ideas and insights.

“Brass” Bob Halfmann is an engineering technician III at Kohler overseeing the melt operation for all the brass that’s made into faucets, fittings, and artwork. Halfmann has been with Kohler for 40 years, and involved in the Arts/Industry program since 1990. He likes meeting the different people that come through the program and having input into their work—but only when that input is necessary or requested. Whether Halfmann is helping make faucets or a work of art, the goal is the same: “to make a good piece.”

Daniel Mihalyo, co-founder of the Seattle-based archi-



tecture firm Lead Pencil, likened the experience to being at a university with professors around to offer guidance and assistance. In fact, Mihalyo credited the associates and their expertise with helping him and his partner Annie Han complete their project. They came to Kohler to create 3,600 ceramic urns to house the cremated remains of patients who had died at the Oregon State Hospital, a mental institution established in the 1880s. The original remains had been found in deteriorating copper canisters. As part of a larger project to honor the memory of those who had died at the hospital, Mihalyo and Han created new resting places for patients. Using plaster molds—a common technique in industrial settings, where mass production is the standard—the work was completed at a far greater pace than would typically be possible.

But the artists are not the only ones who benefit from the Arts/Industry program. With the increased presence of onsite creativity, Kohler has the opportunity to learn new techniques, processes, and possibilities for their products.

In 1976, artist Karen Thuesen Massaro was watching Kohler glazers and the way they were able to gauge the movement of glazes during firing. This led her to develop a method of layering glazes to look like marbled paper. Kohler was thrilled with Massano’s technique and introduced a limited edition of marbled plumbing ware in 1984 as part of Kohler’s Artist Editions. The Artist Editions line continues and is a direct result of having artists-in-residence in the factory.

The example, and indeed the program, is indicative of how the human interaction between artist and associate on the factory floor can lead to something greater than any one individual or company. “The program broadens everyone’s understanding of what the arts are and what factory life is,” said ceramicist Miranda Howe, who participated in her first Kohler residency in the fall of 2015. “It’s a symbiotic exchange of how we perceive each other.” ▲

▲ Arts/Industry artist-in-residence Dan Price (right) with Kohler Co. associate “Brass” Bob Halfmann in 2013.



Amy Bennett
Heydays

The Good Life

When some people talk about money
They speak as if it were a mysterious lover
Who went out to buy milk and never
Came back, and it makes me nostalgic
For the years I lived on coffee and bread,
Hungry all the time, walking to work on payday
Like a woman journeying for water
From a village without a well, then living
One or two nights like everyone else
On roast chicken and red wine.

Tracy K. Smith b. 1974

Poetry
in
Motion



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Amy Bennett, *Heydays* (2011), 86th Street Subway Station, NYCT.
Commissioned and owned by MTA Arts for Transit and Urban Design.



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Tracy K. Smith's poem "The Good Life"
as part of the Poetry in Motion initiative.
Read more about it on page 9.

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