VOL 4 2008

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

NEA ARTS

A GREAT NATION DESERVES GREAT ART

New Ways of Seeing

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO THE VISUAL ARTS

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Connecting Communities to the Visual Arts

From its earliest days the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) sought to assist museums and visual arts organizations reach new audiences. The NEA helped them discover the most effective ways to connect with their communities, to utilize evolving technology to provide access to visual material, and to determine best practices in the exhibition and care of art objects. Through its support of exhibitions, infrastructure, and programming, the NEA continues to partner with organizations both large and small, across the nation, to find the means to best serve the American public.

When the NEA was founded, museums and visual arts grants were administered within one program. It became clear, however, that the needs of museums and those of the generally smaller visual arts organizations required different approaches, and in 1972 an independent museums program was established. These have evolved so that within each area grants support the creation, exhibition, publication, and conservation of visual material. Though the agency no longer awards grants to individuals, increasingly we receive applications for residencies in both urban and rural communities. This provides artists with the opportunity to explore new approaches to their art and produce work while, often, giving those in the community where the residency occurs their first opportunity to interact with a working artist.

PHOTO BY KEVIN ALLEN

Museums & Visual Arts Director Robert Frankel.

The articles which follow highlight not only core grant activity, but also other ways that the NEA assists the visual arts field. Since it was established, the federal Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Program has grown substantially and has saved arts institutions more than $200 million dollars in insurance premiums. With the addition of coverage for domestic institutions, its reach will extend even further. American Masterpieces Visual Arts Touring allows for the creation of exhibitions, which give many in small and mid-size communities the chance to see material that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

The NEA's support of the visual arts provides communities throughout the country with the opportunity to discover new artists and new ways of seeing art, celebrating the crucial role art plays in people's lives.

Robert Frankel
Director, Museums & Visual Arts

ON THE COVER:
Artist Matthew Ritchie (right) visits with Teacher Institute in Contemporary Art participant Lisa Bade as part of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's program. Photo courtesy of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Breadth and Depth of It

NEA Support for Museums and the Visual Arts

The United States has a long tradition of federal support for the visual arts, from the 14th Congress's 1817 commission of four murals by John Trumbull for the Capitol Rotunda to FDR's establishment of the Federal Art Project during the 1930s that hired out-of-work artists for art production, research, and instruction. From the very beginning of the agency's history, the NEA has provided strong support for the visual arts, such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography.

In its first year, the NEA—besides giving grants to organizations such as the Philadelphia City Planning Commission "to acquire up to three pieces of sculpture for central Philadelphia" and the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art to "increase public interest in visual arts through expansion of museum resources"—set aside funds for 60 painters and sculptors "in recognition of past accomplishments and to encourage future efforts."

While the manner in which the NEA distributes support has changed over the years—there are now separate grant programs for visual arts and museums—the agency continues to seed the country's visual arts tradition with support to projects that enrich museum programs, ensure communitywide access to the visual arts in both urban and rural areas, and support innovative public interaction with the visual arts through public art work and educational activities. More recently, the NEA launched the multidisciplinary initiative American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius, of which the Visual Arts Touring component highlights the rich history of visual arts in the country.

The NEA also works to preserve the nation's visual arts legacy with funding for conservation projects. For example, in 1997 the NEA helped fund To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), a four-year public-private partnership project that supported research and restoration of more than 1,400 paintings, drawings, sculptures, and photographs held by six HBCU institutions.

The NEA also continues its public role of support for unique public art projects. In the early 1980s, the Arts Endowment helped fund the site study and design competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. More recently, the NEA was asked by Congress to administer the design competition for a statue of civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks to be permanently installed in the U.S. Capitol building, a project in partnership with the Architect of the Capitol, the Joint Committee on the Library, and the Chrysler Foundation.

While the projects on the following pages represent only a sampling of the NEA's ongoing support to visual arts and museum projects across the country, they all speak to the breadth of that support—from large-scale shows of world renowned master artists to residencies that actively encourage artists to regularly invite community residents into their studios.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAMSTOWN ART CONSERVATION CENTER

As part of the To Conserve a Legacy project, artwork from historically black colleges and universities, such as Samella Sanders Lewis's *Waterboy* (1944) in the Hampton University Museum's collection, were restored.

On Cloud Nine

Magritte at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Stephanie Barron's feet rest on a large swatch of cloud-covered carpet that she keeps under her desk at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). It's a memento from one of the most popular exhibits that she has curated in recent years: *Magritte and Contemporary Art: The Treachery of Images.* The NEA supported the exhibition with a $20,000 grant.

From November 2006 through March 2007, LACMA invited Angelenos to walk through a 12-foot-high door and into a world with clouds-on-blue carpeting, highways painted on the ceiling, and, of course, art on the walls. "You almost felt, when you walked into the exhibition, as if you were inside a Magritte painting," Barron said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

A view of the *Magritte and Contemporary Art: The Treachery of Images* exhibition, gallery space designed by California artist John Baldessari.

Belgian artist René Magritte possibly is most famous for his surrealist paintings of men wearing bowler hats. In *Magritte and Contemporary Art,* Barron set out to prove Magritte was not a purveyor of pop culture clichés, but a highly influential 20th-century artist. She chose 68 of Magritte's most iconic paintings—many on loan from European museums—and hung them alongside 69 works by 31 contemporary artists. The exhibition demonstrated how Magritte's approach to images and words strongly interested artists for generations after him, affecting the content and style of their own work.

Before installing the artwork in four rooms at LACMA, Barron took the unusual step of hiring the California artist John Baldessari to design the gallery space. "Baldessari is one of those artists who had an enormous affection for Magritte's sensibility," Barron said. He designed the exhibit space, which also included faux foam columns, and painted the walls in a way that played with viewers' depth perception. A few of the featured living artists were wary when they heard about the unorthodox gallery displays, but they trusted Baldessari's judgment.

Critics raved about the design. "It's magnificent, really," Andrew Berardini opined in *Artforum.* "And [it] highlights the irreverence in the LA aesthetic."

Given that southern California is blessed with several renowned museums, including the Museum of Contemporary Art and the J. Paul Getty Museum, it's easy to forget that LACMA is actually the largest museum on the West Coast. *Magritte and Contemporary Art* competed with dozens of other special exhibits in the area. Barron and Baldessari were amazed at how many people heard about the exhibit through word of mouth. Total attendance topped 140,000. More teachers, from second grade on up, wanted their students to see the exhibit than LACMA had time to take on tours. Some of the images from the collection are available in LACMA's online collection for educators' use.

"It's a show that has continued to resonate for people," Barron said. "It just clicked. We had terrific art . . . and we packaged the whole thing in an environment that was enormously visitor friendly."

Open Door Policy

Artist Residencies at McColl Center for the Arts

"Artist residency" usually implies a retreat from public life, allowing an artist to focus exclusively on making work. Charlotte, North Carolina's McColl Arts Center, however, takes a different view. Approximately 12 artists are awarded these fully funded residencies each year to pursue their creative development, while at the same time actively engaging with the host community. The NEA has provided continual support for the artist residencies over the years.

As Executive Director Suzanne Fetscher explained, "Most artists work in isolation and that has its place, and it's important. But I think there are times in an artist's career when they'd like to have more interaction. It gives them a whole other resource to use in the development of their work and their ideas."

McColl encourages this public conversation in several ways. Artists regularly leave their doors open during gallery hours as an invitation for visitors to walk in and experience work-in-progress. According to Fetscher, "It's a huge gift in both directions. It's a great opportunity for an artist to develop their skills in talking about their work, not just talking to their peers, but to talk to the person on the street. It's also a way for the general public to have a conversation with the artist, to demystify the creative process, to see the person behind the creation and why and how they do what they do. . . It builds mutual understanding and appreciation."

PHOTO BY MITCHELL KEARNY

Artist Colin Quashie, working in his studio, participated in the McColl Center for the Arts residency program.

To maximize this artist-community dialogue, the center also hosts regular open houses, at the beginning and end of each residency and on some Saturdays. Fetscher noted that the events draw a diverse audience. "We have families pushing strollers and green-haired students with tattoos and we have people who are dressed up who are stopping here before they go to the opera. There aren't too many places in Charlotte where you can experience that mix."

In addition, the visiting artists facilitate at least two outreach projects during their stay, often working with one of Charlotte's many community organizations. Projects have ranged from traditional lecture-demonstrations to an exhibition of work by the city's Latino artists curated by an artist-in-residence.

The center's outreach commitment also includes offering one residency spot to an art teacher from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district. The teacher/artist-in-residence in turn presents two in-service workshops for all of the district's art teachers based on the research and development accomplished during the residency.

Ultimately, this continuing dialogue between artist and audience aids his professional development as much as solitary studio time. Reflecting on his 2007 residency, artist Rob Carter wrote, "The McColl Center for Visual Art helped me expand my understanding of my work's relationship to a wider audience. My residency has helped me get much closer to the aspects of urban development that interest me, and actually feel that there could be a dialogue between the corporate and artistic worlds."

Opening the Dialogue

The NEA's Support of Visual Arts Journals

When Sylvie Fortin and Glenn Harper cross paths at art openings, they have plenty to talk about. As editors of two leading nonprofit visual arts magazines, they share a vision to cover the American and international arts scenes through an independent lens. The high level of quality they bring to that vision has led to the NEA supporting both magazines for many years.

Fortin edits the Atlanta-based magazine *Art Papers.* As its name suggests, *Art Papers* was at one time just that, a few stapled-together papers about contemporary visual arts in the southeastern United States. Since its founding in 1975, the magazine has gradually expanded its reach and refined its appearance. Fortin says being nonprofit frees her up to be "fearless and inquisitive." *Art Papers* has "complete editorial independence," Fortin said. "It's about having a sense of what matters right now in contemporary art, and bringing that work to our readers, whether it's in Nashville or South Dakota."

At *Sculpture* magazine, Harper follows a similar modus operandi. "We are looking to cover a broader range of art, and younger artists who aren't the flavor of the week in Chelsea," he said. "We have a mandate to not just cover New York." Case in point, the cover photo of *Sculpture*'s July/August 2008 issue was shot in the middle of a Nevada desert.

Each issue of *Sculpture* magazine has a print run of 18,000. About 8,000 of the subscribers are members of the International Sculpture Center (ISC), a New Jersey-based network for three-dimensional artists working around the world. ISC may be his publisher, but Harper says he's given few instructions other than to serve his readers well. "We try to keep a dialogue going, not just represent the critics," he said.

Harper also points out how vital the NEA can be for nonprofit publishers. "The NEA has been important for nonprofit magazines, not only for the funding, but to be a stamp of approval for the start-ups," he said.

The visual arts journals *Art Papers* and *Sculpture,* with support from the NEA, provide visibility to the contemporary visual arts.

The Arts Endowment also awards grants to nonprofit organizations that distribute visual arts literature. Two Manhattan-based examples include Printed Matter, a publisher that releases a series of pamphlets devoted to art and social activism, and Art Resources Transfer (ART), a resource center that collects used and surplus art books, then distributes them to underserved schools in urban and rural areas. Printed Matter, dedicated to the promotion of artists' publications, maintains a public reading room in the Chelsea section of New York where more than 15,000 titles by 5,000 artists are available for viewing. Founded in 1987, ART offers more than 490 titles by 90 different publishers to public libraries, schools, and alternative reading centers throughout all 50 states, distributing more than 200,000 free books.

Taking Another Look

Dallas Museum of Art's *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor*

Since 1930, the Dallas Museum of Art has evolved from an art association specializing in Texan art to an internationally renowned museum with a comprehensive collection boasting more than 20,000 art objects spanning 5,000 years. Recently, with support from the NEA, the museum took on another transformational challenge: broadening the perception of painter Henri Matisse to include his prodigious talent as a sculptor. In partnership with the Baltimore Museum of Art, the museum presented the touring exhibit *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor.* As curator Heather MacDonald explained, however, this wasn't the same old Matisse. "[This exhibit] was showing Matisse in context of his painting and drawing . . . but also bringing his work into conversation with painting, sculpture, and drawings by some of his contemporaries who greatly influenced him and who he greatly influenced. It had been more than 20 years since there'd been a major exhibit of Matisse sculpture. It's the area of his work least known, least reproduced."

Behind the scenes, the exhibit included a long-term study project by a curator and sculptor conservator who did intensive research on the artist's methods. MacDonald noted that their results were incorporated into the exhibit's educational modules. "We had two different computer-based interpretive displays. There was one interactive computer component on view that allowed you to take a couple of different sculptures and manipulate them three-dimensionally. We also had a really terrific short computer animated video program describing [Matisse's] lost-wax capture process in an intuitive, clear, easy way." The educational materials also included an audio tour, Web-accessible interpretive materials, and a fully illustrated catalog.

One especially striking companion project involved high school students. "We commissioned a New York-based choreographer . . . and she worked with students at the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing Arts. She choreographed an original movement piece based on Matisse's sculpture, exploring several different works on view in the exhibition. The students then performed the work two evenings at the museum."

In Dallas from January–April 2007, *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* also included work by Alberto Giacometti, Auguste Rodin, and Pablo Picasso, among others. The exhibit then traveled to the Baltimore Museum of Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, exposing more than 500,000 individuals overall to this new view of Matisse.

MacDonald credits the NEA with helping to make the show a success. "The scope and ambition of this project, in terms of archival, technical, and interpretive components, all of that would have been difficult without that kind of support early in the process. It was important to have the imprimatur of the NEA. It carries a weight and showed the intellectual seriousness of what we wanted to do."

Henri Matisse's sculpture *The Serpentine,* 1909, was featured in the Dallas Museum of Art's exhibition *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor.*

Insuring Art for Everyone

The Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Program

For Alice Whelihan, NEA's indemnity administrator, worrying about how art gets from point A to point B is a full-time job. Since 1980, Whelihan has quietly overseen the federal government's Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Program. Although she prefers to keep a low profile, Whelihan has been called "the fairy godmother for the nation's art museums." Thanks to her meticulous efforts, American museums have been able to insure hundreds of international exhibitions that traveled to the United States.

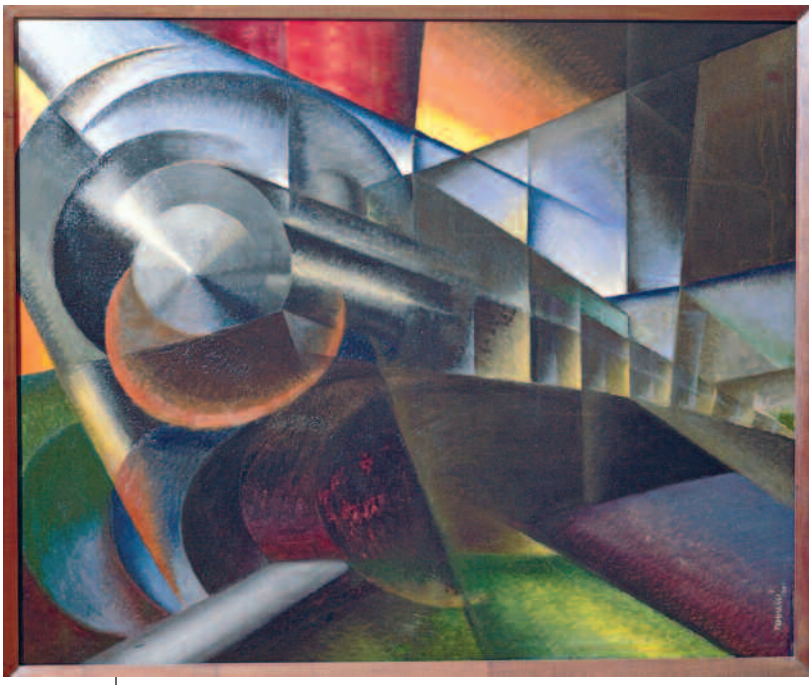

IMAGE COURTESY OF FONDAZIONE CASSA DI RISPARMIO, MUSEO PALAZZO RICCI, MACERATA

Whelihan's job is about to get more complicated. In 2007, Congress amended the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act to add a domestic component to the program, allowing for the first time artwork from U.S. institutions that are exhibited in-country to be eligible for indemnity coverage.

"I am so excited about this," said John Buchanan, director of museums at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. "It is one of the greatest things that the government can do for American art museums." Jennifer Russell, senior deputy director of exhibitions at New York's Museum of Modern Art agrees: "If you believe that the government should support culture, this is a pretty cost-effective way to support the museum world."

The U.S. government first got into the insurance business as a gesture of Cold War goodwill. The year was 1974, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art was attempting to host an exhibit of Scythian gold from the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the State Museum of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra. Congress approved special legislation insuring the treasures' trip to the States, and the Soviet government reciprocated by indemnifying the American and European paintings—among the finest in the Met's collection—that were sent overseas in exchange.

The following year found museums across the county lobbying Congress to establish a permanent indemnity program rather than offering insurance on a case-by-case basis. In December of 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act, legislation that gave the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities authority to oversee an indemnity program to insure international exhibitions that come to U.S. museums. All indemnity agreements are backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Treasury in the event of loss or damage to an artwork. The NEA administers the program on behalf of the council, a coalition of Cabinet-level departments and agencies. Since that time, the program has indemnified nearly 900 exhibitions, saving the organizers more than $230 million in insurance premiums. Landmark indemnified exhibits have included not only works by the likes of Picasso, Michelangelo, and Monet, but archeological gems like relics from the tomb of King Tut, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Magna Carta. Only twice in the 33-year history of the program has the program actually paid out treasury funds: once when two Israeli paintings were stolen en route to Tel Aviv, and once when a modern French sculpture was damaged in transit.

IMAGE COURTESY OF BIRMINGHAM MUSEUMS & ART GALLERY, PRESENTED BY THE FEENEY CHARITABLE TRUST

With the assistance of the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Program, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art's exhibition, *Art in the Age of Steam: Europe, America and the Railway* was able to feature such contrasting pieces as Ivo Pannaggi's Cubist work *Speeding Train,* 1922, and August Egg's realistic *The Travelling Companions,* 1862.

In recent years, American museum directors have become more and more worried about the rising costs of insuring artworks that travel within U.S. borders. The 9/11 attacks prompted insurance hikes across the country, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, companies raised premiums for museums located in so-called disaster zones.

Not long after Katrina battered the Gulf region, Buchanan got a call from the Met. The museum was preparing to close down its American wing for renovation. Would the San Francisco museums like to borrow 90 classic American paintings? Buchanan's initial answer was "Yes." Then he found out insuring the exhibit would cost $9 million.

"I just couldn't do it," he said.

The situation brought new urgency to the domestic indemnity debate. On behalf of San Francisco's museums, the city attorney's office contacted museum directors from across the country, gathering support. Buchanan also reached out to California legislators, who lobbied Congress to pass the indemnity legislation.

"It was a nonpartisan effort, and it was a great effort by Senator Dianne Feinstein, in particular," said Anita Defanis, government affairs director for the Association of Art Museum Directors. The indemnity legislation was included in the omnibus spending bill signed by President George W. Bush in December 2007.

Valuing the artworks is a crucial part of the indemnity process, explained Ian Kennedy, a curator at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri, currently on the international indemnity panel. "It's a fascinating process," he said. Each artwork proposed for an exhibit must be appraised in U.S. dollars, but the panel must also take into account how a work is valued in its home country. So for example, a Monet would set auction records anywhere, but a Russian masterwork is most valuable in Moscow.

In September, Nelson-Atkins opened an indemnified exhibit, *Art in the Age of Steam: Europe, America and the Railway,* the first major international exhibit the museum has hosted in 20 years. It's the perfect exhibit for a Midwestern industrial city, Kennedy said, and without federal indemnity, no one in Missouri would be able to see it.

Back to Basics

The Teacher Institute in Contemporary Art in Chicago

Located just a few blocks from Chicago's famous lakeshore, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) is a world-renowned teaching facility for the visual, museum, and literary arts. Founded in 1866, SAIC now offers six undergraduate and 13 graduate degrees as well as hosting an additional 2,000 students annually for continuing education. The school also offers summer institute courses for high school students, and other special programs. Each summer, SAIC also plays host to nearly 100 high school art teachers from across the U.S. for its Teacher Institute in Contemporary Art (TICA). In this interview the NEA speaks with TICA Executive Director Philip Baranowski.

NEA: What is the vision behind TICA?

PHILIP BARANOWSKI: Our mission is to have high school teachers work alongside contemporary [visual art] practitioners—both established and emerging—so they can get as much knowledge of the contemporary landscape as possible. At the same time, we want to have teachers reconnect with their own artmaking process, which is the fundamental reason they got involved in the first place.

The thing about teaching art in high schools is that it's a really difficult job, time consuming and demanding, yet teachers are very dedicated to their field and students. What's difficult for every one of them is finding time to deal with their own art practice. What makes them such a great population is that they're always thinking of the students first. Their art practice is put off to the side, neglected. We allow them an opportunity to connect with that artmaking spirit.

Each session is a mix of teachers from urban, rural, large, small, private, public, and at-risk student [settings]. We try to get a blend of environments so people can share their stories and their creative experiences with their students.

NEA: TICA is targeted to teachers who have been in the field for at least ten years.

BARANOWSKI: The specific nature of the program is to bring in teachers that are committed to teaching, not looking for a career change or graduate school. Once you reach the ten-year mark, [you] don't need help with teaching itself. What they need help with is the opportunity to connect with the two things I mentioned: their own art creativity and the contemporary art landscape.

NEA: What impact do you hope the program has on the selected teachers?

BARANOWKSI: TICA is a very intense week. [The participants] are busy 12 hours a day for six days. What I hope they walk away with—and I believe they do—is a profound sense that their work matters, that the jobs they do of reaching students to develop an understanding or direction in visual arts matters nationwide. I say to them often that tomorrow's artist is sitting in their classroom right now. And that does not mean just the major cities.

NEA: Can you walk me through how the sessions work?

BARANOWSKI: [The teachers] are involved in the studio from 9–4 doing painting or technology, whatever their studio subject is. A different visiting artist presents to them each day, and that visiting artist also participates in the studio. The reason there's a different visiting artist each day is because we want the participants to experience a breadth of contemporary art, not just a particular view. Evenings are made up of workshops and museum education, museum visits, and additional presentations from guest artists. We do a discussion about their high school art work, what their students do, and works of art in their community so we can discuss that important works of art exist everywhere. As [the participants] look at and understand their own art work and their community art work, they can play a role in the education of their students. We also discuss regional museums and

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Glass artist Josiah McElheny (left) visits the studio of TICA participant Ken Vanderstoep.

historical societies so they can discover that important art is everywhere, not just in major museums.

If they choose to continue their own studio practice, the participants can stay for what's called a studio extension week so they can continue uninterrupted in their own artmaking directions.

NEA: TICA includes free room-and-board and supplies for each teacher.

BARANOWSKI: High school art teachers need support, and often that's financial support. It's important that . . . they can have the opportunity unencumbered by cost. We want to reach the people that would have much greater difficulty finding the funding to participate in [a program in] Chicago for a week or two.

NEA: How important is Arts Endowment funding to the TICA program?

BARANOWKSI: Through the generous funding of the NEA, we are able to provide honoraria to a number of artists so they can take time out of their busy schedules to participate and also to provide the opportunity without financial cost to a huge number of teachers so the environment becomes one of willingness to participate. I've had many artists that have spoken very passionately about their time spent with the teachers and how important it was for them to come and share with them and engage with them. One thing that's really so profoundly fascinating about TICA is that all participants walk away changed from the experience, and that includes the visiting artists. They are so thankful that they came. It's a wonderful kind of experience.

Keeping the Arts Alive

NEA-Sponsored Conservation and Preservation Activities

Given the relative fragility of the medium, conservation practices are essential for protecting and preserving the visual art of the present and the past for future generations. Two NEA-funded organizations, Heritage Preservation and the Northeast Document Conservation Center, have developed programs that lead the way in the conservation of two very different art forms—murals and paper objects, respectively. While each organization's methods differ greatly, they are similarly devoted to preserving our artistic heritage and educating the public on the importance of conserving our nation's masterpieces.

Heritage Preservation is a nonprofit dedicated to saving historically significant objects in a variety of art forms through conservation efforts, education programs, and the promotion of disaster preparedness strategies for protecting cultural artifacts. One of its most successful programs was Save Outdoor Sculpture!, begun in 1989 with NEA support. Through this catalytic program, 30,000 publicly accessible outdoor sculptures were cataloged and assessed for conservation needs.

In 2005, Heritage Preservation created a new initiative, Rescue Public Murals, to protect another of the nation's diverse art forms, the mural. Murals are often created as part of larger community renewal, as was the case with Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program. This anti-graffiti project resulted in more than 2,700 murals, which served as a great source of community pride around the city's mural tradition. Integral to the Rescue Public Murals initiative is the development of a database, with NEA support, that will serve as a tool for learning about the art form, providing information on the community mural movement, and building awareness by showing the diversity of murals and city mural traditions.

Heritage Preservation has identified ten murals as the most significant and most endangered, and is developing recommendations for conservation, maintenance, and fundraising for each. Among the identified murals

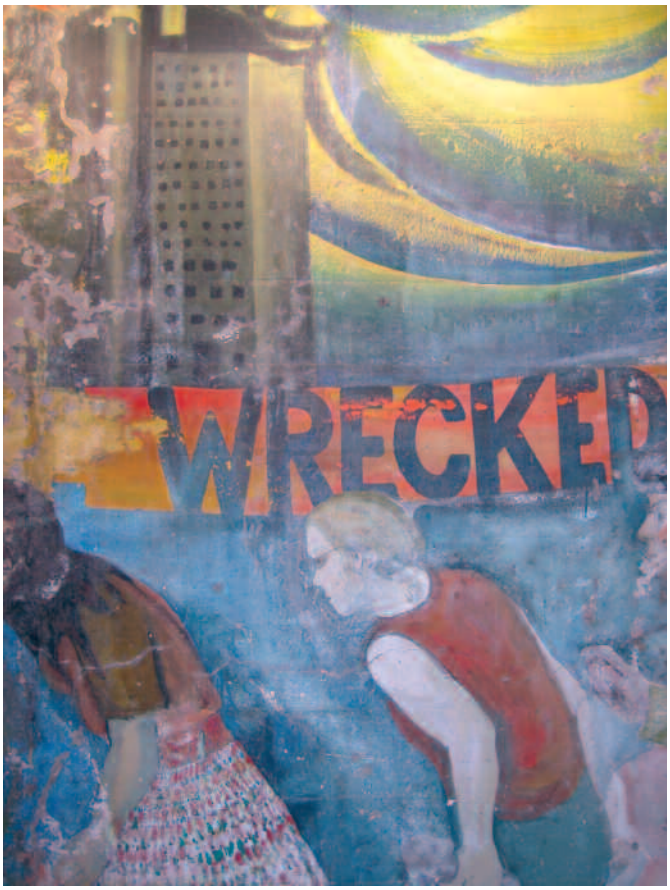

PHOTO BY WILL SHANK

The mural *Under City Stone,* 1972, by Caryl Yasko has been identified by Heritage Preservation as endangered due to exposure to pollution, dampness, and temperature fluctuations on the walls of a commuter rail underpass in Chicago.

at risk is Caryl Yasko's *Under City Stone,* which spans 200 feet of a commuter rail underpass on Chicago's South Side. One of the first community murals to be painted by a woman, the 1972 painting depicts 133 life-sized figures of all ages, races, and classes, many inspired by neighborhood residents who posed for the artist.

Since being added to the list, however, three of the ten chosen murals have been destroyed, a fact that Kristen Laise, vice president of Heritage Preservation's Collections Care Programs, says "is a sign that our work is both important and timely." Laise describes murals as essentially "ephemeral" due to challenges including weather, graffiti, and the sale or demolition of the property that acts as the mural's canvas. The comprehensive

database will preserve the murals through photography, identifying each by artist, location, and title.

The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) displays a similar dedication to the conservation of paper objects, including books and parchment. NEDCC works on individual client projects as well as educating cultural institutions in collection preservation and disaster planning. Projects have included the development of a statewide disaster plan for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and conservation treatment of a handwritten Syriac New Testament, currently part of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library collection at Yale University.

To further its mission, with NEA support NEDCC also offers highly competitive year-long, post-graduate internships in paper conservation. In addition to assisting in specific conservation projects, the interns work with NEDCC's field office, conducting surveys and providing outreach on preservation and conservation issues. Three weeks of the internship are devoted to the interns' specific interests, allowing them to travel and conduct their own research, or take a specialized workshop.

According to Walter Newman, NEDCC director of paper conservation, because of the program's intensity, one year at NEDCC is equal to three years elsewhere. At the end of their year, NEDCC interns have a variety of opportunities. Some choose to remain at NEDCC, many go on to positions with museums and libraries, and others start their own private practices.

As Benjamin Franklin noted in his memoirs, "Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge." Thanks to the work of Heritage Preservation and NEDCC, care is being taken to preserve the knowledge of our nation that resides in its artifacts, whether that repository is a map, a book, or a mural that outlines one community's journey.

Fifty Works for Fifty States: Spreading the Art

When one thinks of legendary art collectors, one thinks of billionaires in their lofty mansions or the carefree eccentric with easy access to cash. One doesn't usually think of a librarian or a postal worker living in a cramped apartment in Brooklyn, overflowing with artwork. Yet that would describe two of the more renowned art collectors of 20th-century art, Dorothy and Herb Vogel. After donating much of their collection to the National Gallery of Art (NGA) in Washington, DC, over the last two decades, they wanted to share their collection with more of the United States—which led to the innovative *Fifty Works for Fifty States* initiative.

Through *The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection: Fifty Works for Fifty States,* the Vogels are gifting 2,500 works by 177 artists to 50 museums throughout the country—one in each state. As Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery, noted in his foreword to the catalog on the project, the Vogels expect that "their gifts will significantly enhance the representation of contemporary art in all regions of the country." The initiative is a collaboration of the NGA, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The NEA is producing the catalog for the initiative, noting all the museums participating and providing 200 color plates of works from the collection, including one from each of the 177 artists represented. IMLS is creating a Web site (**www.vogel50x50.org**) that will bring together information about all 2,500 works in the initiative, linking to the 50 participating institutions across the country. The NEA-produced catalog will be completed in November 2008.

NEA Spotlight

Making a Difference through the Power of Poetry

Poetry Out Loud (POL) encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to hundreds of high schools nationwide. During the 2007–2008 school year, more than 225,000 students from more than 1,500 schools took part in the program—a partnership of the NEA, the Poetry Foundation, and the state arts agencies—culminating in a national finals contest in Washington, DC.

Yet the selection of the national champion is not the end for the talented teens. Throughout the year, many of the state champions act as Poetry Out Loud ambassadors at home and across the country. Last April, 2007 Washington State Champion Olivia Seward recited poems at the NEA's Congressional budget hearing. This past September, 2008 Poetry Out Loud National Champion Shawntay Henry of the U.S. Virgin Islands joined award-winning actors Sam Waterston and Joan Allen and poets Robert Pinsky and Kevin Young in an evening of poetry honoring the legacy of Abraham Lincoln. And the Poetry Pavilion at the National Book Festival in Washington, DC, regularly features recitations from state champions. Over the summer, POL champions recite at governor's awards ceremonies, state fairs, and youth festivals.

In their own words, from an anonymous online survey, teachers and project coordinators who have taken part in Poetry Out Loud discuss how the program is transforming English classrooms and equipping students with skills for success that will last a lifetime:

"Poetry encompasses all that I teach. . . . When students can see the underlying meaning in literature, they learn more about themselves and about the world around them."

PHOTO BY JAMES KEGLEY

Nevada State Champion Lainey Henderson (right) recites a poem for Senator Harry Reid (Nevada) and his staff during a visit to Congress.

"If for no other reason, the search for 'just the right poem' exposes students to such a vast array of forms and poems that the benefits are immeasurable. I heard more poetry being read aloud by students and more discussions about poems than I have heard in over 20 years of teaching!"

"The POL event was amazing. Despite initial resistance among the members of my class, only one student 'opted out' of learning a poem. And as they got into the class competition more, some of them realized they had picked weak poems out of laziness, and so they changed to better, more difficult poems to learn in order to be more competitive. The peer support was also incredible. My students all were rooting for their classmates, and when one of mine actually won the school-wide contest, over half the class wanted to travel to the state contest to be there in the audience for him. All this over poetry! I have never seen such enthusiasm from students for poetry before. This is absolutely the best time I have had teaching poetry to my students in my 25-year career."

In the News

Operation Homecoming documentary wins two Emmy® Awards

The documentary *Operation Homecoming,* based on the NEA's remarkable anthology and program on wartime writing, received two Emmy® Awards for Outstanding Informational Programming—Long Form and Outstanding Individual Achievement in a Craft: Music and Sound during the 29th Annual News and Documentary Awards ceremony on September 22. The film, produced by The Documentary Group and directed by Richard Robbins, aired on PBS in April 2007 as part of the *America at a Crossroads* series. Earlier this year, *Operation Homecoming* also received a 2008 Academy Award® nomination. The Boeing Company funded the NEA program and was the major funder for the award-winning documentary.

Congratulating the filmmakers, NEA Chairman Gioia said, "Once again, The Documentary Group has been recognized for its unforgettable presentation of the troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are delighted that the Operation Homecoming program has inspired this compelling work."

The Arts and the Hill

U.S. Representative Phil Gingrey (Georgia-11th District) (right) hosted NEA Chairman Gioia for a congressional district visit that included a grants workshop attended by more than 200 representatives of local arts organizations. In a statement announcing the visit, the Congressman noted, "It is an honor to welcome Chairman Gioia to northwest Georgia and to have the opportunity to demonstrate how local government, arts organizations, and private supporters are all working together to bring the arts to everyone in our community."

PHOTO BY STEVE THACKSTON, COURTESY OF KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICES OF CONGRESSMEN BOREN AND MILLER

NEA Chairman Gioia joined U.S. Representatives Jeff Miller (Florida-1st District) (left) and Dan Boren (Oklahoma-2nd District) (right) at the ribbon-cutting for the 2008 Congressional Art Competition, a national art contest for high school students. At the ceremony honoring the winners, Chairman Gioia gave a keynote address to the crowd of approximately 700 students, teachers, and parents about the importance of the arts and arts education. The winning artwork from each Congressional district and jurisdiction will be displayed in the Cannon Tunnel of the U.S. Capitol building for one year.

With Extraordinary Depth and Richness

Phoenix Art Museum Presents an American Master

In the fall of 1898, Ernest L. Blumenschein and Bert G. Phillips "discovered" Taos, New Mexico, due to a fortuitous wagon accident. Realizing almost instantly they were meant to settle there, Phillips and Blumenschein founded the Taos Artist Colony. They chose the most talented of the area's artists to join the Taos Society of Artists, which would become the early 20th-century's definitive voice of Western art in America. In a time when industrialization was dawning, Blumenschein's romantic yet realistic depiction of the true America west of the Mississippi made the deserts and villages of New Mexico a destination for artists.

In 2009, the Phoenix Art Museum, in cooperation with Albuquerque Museum of Art and History and Denver Art Museum, will debut *In Contemporary Rhythm: The Art of Ernest L. Blumenschein,* the most comprehensive retrospective ever focused on the artist, comprising 60 paintings and approximately 15 studies, preliminary sketches, photographs, and letters. Blumenschein was a master of color and composition. His early work focused on the mix of Hispanic and Native-American cultures of the Southwest, at that time an unexplored subject in U.S. art. According to Phoenix Art Museum Curator Jerry Smith, "The Taos Society proved to be a major influence on what people thought of Western art, which is, of course, American art."

The exhibition is funded in part with an American Masterpieces grant, which support projects that acquaint Americans with the artistic accomplishments of great American artists.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ALBUQUERQUE MUSEUM

***Star Road and White Sun,* 1920, was part of the Phoenix Art Museum's American Masterpieces exhibition *In Contemporary Rhythm: The Art of Ernest L. Blumenschein,* the most comprehensive retrospective ever focused on the artist.**

Blumeschein's mark on American visual arts is indelible. He remains one of the only artists ever to have paintings purchased by both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art. He also became an advocate for modernism, helping drive the National Academy to include modern art in its curriculum.

To further the museum's mission of educating and exposing people to high quality art, the Phoenix Museum has created a definitive 400-page guide on Blumenschein's life and works. It also has tailored school tours so the exhibit can be seen by a maximum number of students, even offering to pay for busing. With the rising costs of shipping and insuring artwork, outreach and educational activities often take a back seat. In recognizing this exhibition as an American Masterpiece, the NEA is making it possible for the Phoenix Art Museum to "do much more than just hang paintings on the wall," as Smith puts it.

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