

Local Arts Network Newsletter

ARTS & CULTURE FOR ALL

“What we do as storytellers is important, not only in terms of connecting to audiences, but also ... in helping to drive the discourse ultimately toward legislative progress. So, we’re all in it together. And artists do have a role, if they are informed and responsible, yes, to absolutely comment on the times.”

Jeffery Wright 2024 Nancy Hanks Lecture

watch the recording of the full lecture including Representative James Clyburn and Hakeem Jeffries [here](#)

Artists as Activists

How do we **rethink** the way we think about the arts? A thought-provoking discussion hosted by Nashville Public Television, Daniel Singh, [Metro Arts](#) Executive Director, and Lydia Yousief, Director of the [Elmahaba Center](#), shed light on the need to rethink our approach to the arts through an anti-racist lens. The conversation resonated with a call to action, urging us to deconstruct entrenched power dynamics, confront historical injustices, and empower artists in leading the change. A thread through the conversation was the notion that art is not neutral. It carries within it the weight of societal biases and historical imbalances. How are local arts agencies acknowledging this reality and recognize the role of the arts in perpetuating or challenging systems of oppression? However, the path to radical change is not without its challenges. Singh acknowledged the necessity of addressing past mistakes and incremental progress before meaningful transformation can occur. Both cautioned against complacency, emphasizing that comfortability can be the disease to movements.



As I reflect on the insights from Singh and Yousief and the quote from Jeffery Wright above, I see a way to harness the transformative potential of the artists, culture bearers, and creatives in our communities. This work demands a reevaluation of our assumptions, a commitment to equity, and a willingness to challenge the status quo.

[Click here to watch on Youtube](#)

More resources from Metro Arts Nashville and their community:

- [Legal brief supporting use of race in government policies](#)
- [Metro Nashville Human Relations Commission Report on the Arts](#)

Two cities in California have instituted a Drag Laureate Program (akin to the City Poet Laureate), and leaned into supporting the artform of drag!

San Francisco's Inaugural Drag Laureate!

The City's first-ever Drag Laureate will serve as an ambassador for San Francisco's LGBTQ+, arts, nightlife, and entertainment communities.

Congratulations to the singular D'ARCY DROLLINGER for being named to this honor!



Alt Text: Person with voluminous blonde hair in a brown and white dress sitting in front of a building



The City of West Hollywood's Drag Laureate serves as an ambassador of West Hollywood's vibrant drag culture and arts, using the position as a platform to promote the City through the artform of drag performance.

Congratulations to Pickle for being selected to serve!

Alt Text: Person in black top with tulle sleeves, light purple skirt, pearls, black heels, and big blonde hair poses in front of a vibrant purple backdrop.

Check out AFTA's tracking of related legislation [here](#).

Two AFTA Opportunities

Community Conversation on Creative Placemaking & Keeping April 9th, 3 PM ET

We hope you will join for the second Member Community Conversation of 2024! This conversation will be facilitated by four local arts leaders who attended the Creative Placemaking Summit at the beginning of March as part of a cohort with Americans for the Arts. Laura Shaw from Paint Love, Abby Smith from The Marietta Arts Council, Vanya Foote from Smyrna Arts Council, and Emily Mottola from Decatur Arts Alliance will lead an exciting virtual Community Conversation on how they are re-rooting in their communities through creative placemaking and keeping.

Register for free for this live virtual event [HERE](#).

FREE Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Self-paced Course April Through September

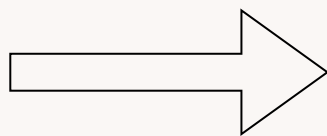
We're excited to invite you and your networks to sign up for a FREE monthly Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) course! These modules help arts leaders learn how to use their power and sphere of influence to create more equitable policies and practices for their organization and with their external stakeholders. The 6-module series, created in partnership with Dr. Melissa Crum of Mosaic Education Network, offers tools for how to understand the arts ecosystem, the role of leaders in stewarding that ecosystem, and how to cultivate connections for change within that ecosystem.

Reserve your spot [here](#)! You'll receive each course on the first Monday of each month over the next six months.

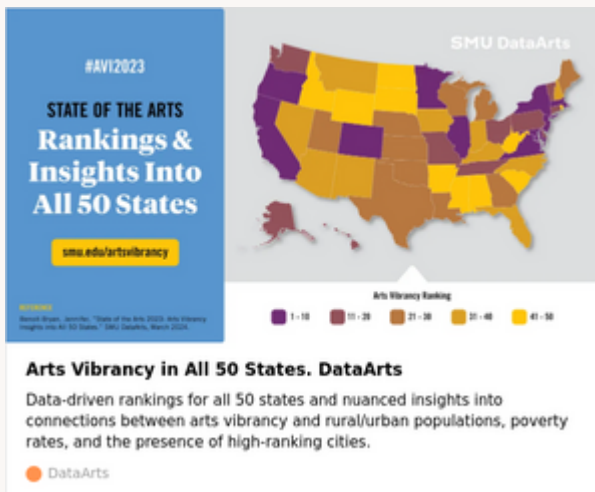
FEMA and NEA Webinar on Disaster Resources for Artists and Art and Cultural Institutions



FEMA and NEA host a webinar on Disaster Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Resources for Artists and Arts and Cultural Institutions. This webinar highlights government and non-government resources that help promote collaborations between emergency management professionals, artists and arts and cultural institutions. The webinar includes presentations from the National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response, Craft Emergency Relief Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Want to learn more? Citizens' Institute on Rural Design has TWO upcoming public webinars on disaster preparedness
Part 1 - March 27, 2024, 2:00PM ET
Part 2 - April 17, 2024, 2:00PM ET



New Research Alert

Findings from SMU Data Arts' first-ever state analysis shows that states with high scores on arts vibrancy generally have lower poverty rates; but having low levels of poverty doesn't guarantee a top arts vibrancy ranking. Check out the Most-Arts Vibrant States to see where yours is ranked!

REACH OUT FOR A CHAT

Let's chat!

GET TO KNOW US BETTER

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<https://www.americansforthearts.org/>

