



★ ★ ★ *New Community Visions* *part of the*
Transforming America's Communities Through the Arts Initiative

Arts & K-12 Education

Excerpted from *Arts & America: Arts, Culture, and the Future
of America's Communities*

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An Introduction

Dear Reader,

For the last 30 years here at Americans for the Arts, I have had the privilege of visiting and learning about a different community almost every week.

In multiple places in every state, I have witnessed firsthand the magic and majesty of the arts themselves and also their transformative power in helping to tackle social and community issues. Whether in a small town or a major population center, the same breadth of value is present. Magnificent, awe-inspiring performances and museum exhibits exist side by side with arts programs designed to accelerate healing in hospitals; musical performances with the homeless to bring comfort and perhaps new inspiration; hands-on visual and performing arts programs in military facilities to aid returning wounded service men and women in coping with PTSD or recovering from physical injury; or the myriad of other ways that the arts are a part of people's lives.

During my travels, I usually have the honor of meeting hard working local leaders from the government, business, and

education sectors as well as from the arts. When a mayor or county commissioner proudly talks about her home-grown arts treasures—while in the same breath explaining the economic and employment benefits of the arts to her community or the attractiveness of the arts offerings there as a cultural tourism destination—it is clear that the arts are valued as a source of pride and identity and as a positive contributor to growth.

Although the arts have delivered this spectrum of entertainment, inspiration, and transformative value for as long as humankind has existed, they have faced a roller coaster of recognition and marginalization in our country since even before our founding. We are now, however, at a moment where there seems to be an increased recognition of the broad value of the arts. That provides us with an inflection point at which to explore, discuss, and recalibrate what it takes to advance the arts and arts education in America. This book of 10 essays provides an opportunity to look at ideas that might help a community invent or reinvent how the arts fit into it. Our guest authors take a look at the kinds of thinking and mechanisms decision-makers, leaders, and citizens need in order to make the arts more fully part of the quality of experience that every child and every community member gets from living in a particular place.

Americans for the Arts is in the business of helping leaders build capacity for the advancement of the arts and arts education. We work toward a vision that all of the arts and their power can be made available and accessible to every American. The leaders that we help are generating positive change for and through the arts at the local, state, or national levels and across all sectors. Since our founding 55 years ago, we have created materials, management tools, case-making research and data, along with professional and leadership development training to help leaders carry out this important work. About 25 years ago, our publication, *Community Vision*, along with a series of companion pieces, was created to guide the process of expanding capacity for community development through the arts. But a great

deal has changed since then, so we have embarked on the three-year journey to update those tools, look anew at what the arts are doing in communities, and create materials that will help community leaders advance that work today.

In this book, 10 authors focus on just a few of the issue areas that the arts are working in today. These essay topics do not illustrate the only way the arts are working in communities. We are continually looking at other topics in other publications, tools, and discussions to help communities customize their unique approach to involving the arts in addressing their particular needs and goals. Such additional issue areas include: the re-entry of active military service members, veterans, youth at risk, crime prevention, immigration, technology, disease, drug abuse, housing, aging, faith and religion, and perhaps most importantly cross-cultural understanding and equity. This is a partial list of the challenges and opportunities where the arts are playing an important role.

To set some context for the future, we have also included an essay that lays out some thoughts on the history of art in community. My friend, Maryo Gard Ewell, has done more to document the history and sea changes of the last century of arts-based community development than anyone else I can think of. She says that she does it because a field isn't a field if it doesn't know its history. I thank her for her extensive contributions to our database of field knowledge, which Clayton Lord has been able to draw upon for his comprehensive history piece in this book. Maryo is also fond of saying that a field isn't a field without a few heroes in the mix. I count both her and her father, Robert Gard, mentioned in that history, to be among those heroes.

Our field of nonprofit arts organizations and individuals working to advance the arts and to create better communities through the arts is constantly evolving, constantly reinventing an understanding of itself and its role in this great American experiment. But the field

should never waver on the deeply rooted belief in its essential necessity to the world. We are in a period of evolving understanding right now. The broad transformative power of the arts as a means to help create solutions to a broad array of social and economic issues is a big part of the value of the arts in today's American Community.

The rising demand for deeper accountability for what the arts bring to the table in terms of social welfare along with the advent of new sources of data, technology, and processing power to make previously invisible connections visible brings us to a pivotal moment. The arts are poised to be fully integrated into a nuanced, deep, and powerful conversation about who and what is needed to create healthy, equitable communities for everyone.

The arts are valuable. Artists are essential. Arts education is critical to keeping America creative and competitive in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The arts are a strong partner in the solution to these challenges and can be even stronger in the future. The arts help transform American communities and the result can be a better child, a better town, a better nation, and perhaps a better world. My hope is that this book of ideas can help in that transformative journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bob Lynch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" and last name "Lynch" clearly legible.

Robert L. Lynch
President and CEO
Americans for the Arts



Arts & K–12 Education

— by *Talia Gibas* —

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This essay looks at pending changes within the K–12 American formal education system and the role that the arts may play in positively impacting those changes over the next 10–15 years. In particular, this essay proposes the following trends and associated arts interventions:

- What is expected of students will shift from simple fact recitation and rote memorization toward deeper and more nuanced learning via systems and concepts. This shift opens up opportunities for the arts to be engaged to create more well-rounded learning environments, as well as a need for the arts to step in to achieve equity in access to quality education.
- The blurring of boundaries between the digital and physical learning environment and the increased acceptance of

non-place-based learning environments as legitimate alternatives to in-school learning will increase, possibly increasing access to education, but also posing a very real possibility of niche learning experiences that may narrow the worldview of students. The arts will play a role in providing a commons for place-based engagement and learning, as well as an outlet for combating such insulated views.

— *C. Lord*

Fifteen years into a new millennium, we are at an exciting but precarious moment in American public education. As arts educators, we, like most Americans, have weathered a major recession but face an uncertain economic future. We have welcomed technological advances but struggle to keep pace as young people create, share, and access creative content in ways that seemed unfathomable a decade ago. We have had advocacy success but still labor to parse the conflicting policies and priorities that leave teachers and school administrators lurching from one reform effort to the next. Staying one step ahead of the evolution of education is urgent and difficult.

On the whole, in the next decade we can expect changing attitudes regarding the role of creativity in classrooms and new energy put toward rethinking how and when student learning takes place and how we measure it. We also have an urgent need to engage with issues of educational equity, which cast shadows over the progress we hope to make. We are at a crucial moment in which we must look beyond our own interests and prioritize what students, particularly the disadvantaged, will need for their future, over what we needed for our past.

Many of the challenges of public education in our country are complicated by our lack of a single, unified system. Individual states, not the federal government, bear responsibility for educating children. Our Constitution does not identify education, much less a *free* education, as a right. This leaves 50 separate systems dealing with such challenges as inequitable distribution of resources, uneven quality control, and entrenched social ailments such as poverty and systemic inequality.

Strategies and outcomes vary across states. Vermont's per-pupil spending is more than three times that of Utah. Across the nation, high school graduation rates range from an impressive 93 percent (Vermont again) to 60 percent (Nevada).¹ While statistics only tell part of any story, and many factors contribute to the success or challenges of any large-scale system, we know that swaths of the population are denied opportunities that could help improve their economic condition. Education is tied to earning potential, with the link between the two getting stronger with time.² Sadly, so is the relationship between student race and educational attainment.³

Comprehensive efforts to offset these realities are difficult to launch and even harder to sustain. In the absence of a constitutional mandate for education or unified national curriculum, our only major federal legislation is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Passed as part of the Johnson administration's War on Poverty, its subsequent updates and reauthorizations reflect see-sawing political values over time. Efforts to change it can quite literally last for years.⁴ Meanwhile, debates about school choice, teacher preparation, charter schools, teachers' unions, evaluations, career and technical education, and testing make clear that American society lacks a shared vision of what services public education should provide and how it should provide them.

Forecasting long-term changes in such a complex landscape is daunting, but three broad trends are likely to have a major

impact on the K–12 system: technological challenges to traditional “gatekeepers” of degrees/certification, changing workforce needs, and socioeconomic tensions. In addition to exposing or generating gaps between K–12 outcomes and social or economic needs in society, they have the added significance of relating directly to one or more frequently cited purposes for public school: to prepare children for college, career, and citizenship readiness.

The cost of higher education across the United States has jumped by 30 to 40 percent in the last decade.⁵ Despite this, a 2013 Gallup poll found that a mere 13 percent of chief financial officers of colleges and universities expressed strong confidence in the financial viability of their institutions over the next 10 years.⁶ This apparent contradiction is all the more troubling in light of the heavy burden on young people. As more and more students⁷ take on debt before entering an uncertain job market, some commentators warn that the higher education sector may “burst” in the same way the housing sector did in 2008.⁸

Under pressure to cut costs while serving a growing⁹ student population, many universities have looked to technology. Technologists, in turn, eye these universities’ vulnerabilities. Virtual entities like EdX, Coursera, and Lynda have yet to prove they can supplant degree-granting institutions, but they do challenge traditional gatekeepers of knowledge, training, and formal certification. That challenge may yield high quality, low-cost means of earning formal degrees, or upend the need for degrees altogether. No matter what, the unsustainable cost of a degree coupled with technological advances guarantees that higher education and traditional brick-and-mortar colleges will look very different in the next 10 to 15 years. As the K–12 system is only as good as its ability to prepare students for continued education and/or career entry, it will scramble to integrate the latest technologies and make other changes as colleges rethink how they operate.

At the same time as costs are rising for higher education, the needs of our workforce are changing. The last decade was marked by the rise of social networking and increasingly sophisticated mobile devices. It was also the decade of the Great Recession, a crisis from which the majority of U.S. households, particularly those who had less wealth

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when the recession began, have yet to recover.¹⁰ Our economy now seems more interconnected but also more fragile. The rise of “the Knowledge Society,” characterized by “universal and instant access to knowledge...the disappearance of generally long-term jobs dependent upon old knowledge...[and] the imperative for ongoing learning to update and connect current knowledge,”¹¹ calls into question the long-term viability of careers long considered accessible and stable, with little evidence they will be replaced in sufficient number or pay a living wage. According to economist David Autor, “Economic growth is polarizing, with job opportunities concentrated in relatively high-skill, high-wage jobs and low-skill, low-wage jobs.”¹² This poses two challenges to K–12 educators: to foster the “problem solving, intuition, and persuasion”¹³ needed for young people to thrive in the future economy, while acknowledging competition for jobs requiring those skills will be fierce.¹⁴

This is especially true given the lingering effects of the Great Recession, with its corresponding “hollowing out” of job opportunities. Income inequality has reached its highest levels since before the 1930s.¹⁵ Rates of wealth inequality (measured by how much capital people own, rather than how much they earn), are far worse.¹⁶ In 2009 and 2010, the highest earning 20 percent of families took

in nearly 60 percent of all income, but the wealthiest 20 percent of families owned a staggering 89 *percent* of all wealth.¹⁷ To make matters worse, these gaps have grown along ethnic and racial lines.¹⁸ This phenomenon, coupled with the stress of our collective adjustment to the Knowledge Society, will require schools, as well as all public institutions, to engage with rising social challenges.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW
AND HOW THEY SHOULD SHOW IT

Given the shifts above, a “college or career ready” student is no longer one who can recite facts from memory or fly through a multiple-choice test. Many K–12 classrooms, however, are still shaking off the cobwebs of “the age of accountability”—the increased federal and state scrutiny on school performance that began in the mid-1980s. Content standards, which describe what students should know and be able to do in each discipline at each grade level, have generated enthusiasm and derision ever since, but aligning with them remains a common metric of quality instruction. Most corresponding large-scale assessment systems are limited to fill-in-the-bubble tests that are better equipped to gauge students’ ability to recall information than their conceptual understanding.

Increased public backlash against testing,¹⁹ however, along with a newfound political interest in scaling back standardized assessment,²⁰ invites us to rethink how we measure what students learn. A 2014 report commissioned by Pearson, one of the largest testing companies in the world, calls for a “total cultural shift within society to accept a different ‘what’ and ‘how’ of assessment.” The authors add that rather than test scores, assessment may be a “series of qualitative descriptions of the extent to which a student may have demonstrated various attributes that cannot be quantified.”²¹

This shift fits well within the Knowledge Society, with what Pearson describes as “greater emphasis on deep learning of big ideas and organizing principles [with] more explicit and systematic attention to cross-curricular skills, capabilities, understandings, and dispositions.”²² While this isn’t the first time educators have called for a focus on interdisciplinary understanding, it is the first time that the call resonates with an interest shared by colleges and employers in technologically assisted means of identifying qualified candidates.²³

What might this mean in practice? Among other things, we may see increasingly sophisticated, individualized systems used by online learning platforms like Khan Academy and Duolingo creeping into classrooms, allowing schools to group students by relative mastery rather than grade level. As individualized systems grow, so too may an emphasis on student self-direction and choice. Required areas of study will shift with the Knowledge Society, with technological literacy and computer coding advocates making salient arguments for their inclusion in classrooms.²⁴ Competition for time during the school day will increase as a result. In the midst of these changes, what we have come to think of as a “standard” will change. Rather than a list of things students should know, categorized by discipline, they will shift toward broad skills students need to demonstrate or experiences they should have to be “college and career ready.” Policy changes regarding standards will favor fewer, broader competencies over a laundry list of disciplines.

Shifts in thinking about what students should know and how they demonstrate it have numerous implications for the arts. On the bright side, as interest in students’ abilities to demonstrate broad understanding and skills grows, classrooms may indeed make more space for creative practice. Artistic endeavors that are explicitly linked to in-demand skills (incorporating technology, for example, or the STEM²⁵ disciplines) are likely to be most welcomed by school leaders. This doesn’t mean that the arts always have to be “in service” to other efforts, but arts educators will have to adapt to

support schools' changing priorities, becoming, for example, familiar with “blended” modes of instruction.²⁶

While providing students opportunities for creative expression may be welcomed, expanding access to long-term, sequential, and discipline-specific arts instruction during the school day will remain challenging. The “four Cs”—creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication²⁷—will generate much interest and rhetoric, but they are not cultivated exclusively through the arts. Discipline-specific arts instruction, particularly in traditional media, does not always cultivate the cross-disciplinary literacy that is a hallmark of the Knowledge Society.²⁸ Nor will all young people, in classrooms with greater emphasis on self-direction and personalization, always choose to engage in what we consider artistic pathways. As much as we hate to admit it, a lot of what we think of as “arts education” does not necessarily resonate with students' experience of consuming or generating creative content.²⁹

This is particularly important to consider when advocating for what all students should have during the school day. The sentiment that all students have a right to learn, to create, and express themselves using a variety of media may resonate more strongly than arguing all students have a more specific right to learn how to draw or play an instrument. Embracing a broad view of what all students deserve is crucial because achieving “all,” rather than playing lip service to it, is a herculean effort that requires broad collaboration with non-arts educators and activists. While our K–12 systems will likely embrace new ideas, those same systems are designed to allow those goals to play out differently in high- versus low-income communities. According to Hill and Barber, “The education revolution has already begun [but] is likely to manifest itself first at the fringes and among the most progressive.”³⁰ Given the grim reality of economic disparity, the “fringes” equipped to embrace these changes and see early positive results will need technological infrastructure, ample resources, and a safety net to experiment. Those communities

will be relatively wealthy, while the less affluent will hear the rhetoric of “creative classrooms” with less substantive change.

As arts educators, our moral imperative is to engage with these equity issues, thinking ahead to how the arts can increase understanding and shared investment between segmented pockets of society. In so doing, we have an opportunity to mitigate the impact of socioeconomic divides and be on the front lines of reimagining the role of traditional classrooms, particularly as the need for public learning changes.

BLURRING BOUNDARIES OF SCHOOL
AND REDEFINED PUBLIC LEARNING

With the rise of technology and the Knowledge Society, boundaries between work, home, and social spaces blur. Mobile devices challenge conventions about where and how learning happens. In the coming years, educators will make “greater use of the home, and community, and other settings as contexts for 24/7 learning [with] increased reliance on sophisticated tutor/online instruction.”³¹

Evidence of the importance of out-of-school or informal learning experiences is seen via interest in the “gamification” of learning³² and online “badges”³³ that track what young people learn in and out of school. In the arts, this manifests in efforts like Boston Public School’s initiative allowing community arts providers to provide courses for high school credit,³⁴ or the burgeoning Creative Youth Development movement.³⁵ These and other efforts are exciting, but they also raise a question: how does the purpose of the K–12 classroom change when information and learning are available anywhere?

Consider one dark consequence of our newly unfettered access to information: our innate impulse to curate that information to reinforce what we already know. Media scholar Ethan Zuckerman, drawing on decades of work by social scientists, argues that our sense

“Artists in classrooms can help young people who are struggling to understand and challenge the myriad social and economic forces at play, amplifying voices from marginalized communities.”

of connectivity is more illusory and more dangerous than we realize. He describes homophily, or “love of the same,” as a “basic organizing principle of human societies and groups”³⁶ that threatens to undermine the positive potential of our new digital infrastructures. While the Internet allows us to step outside of the comfort of our own experience, he argues, we overwhelmingly choose

to interact with familiar people and modes of thought.³⁷

Furthermore, as our means of sifting through information become more efficient, we risk trading intellectual challenge for convenience. Zuckerman sees this reflected in the evolution of online search engines. “Exploring the Internet moved from directionless ‘surfing’ to goal-oriented searching,” he writes. “Companies like Google...built a business around the idea that you knew what you wanted to know better than any expert ever could.”³⁸

Could this portend a “nichification” of in- and out-of-school learning, in which individual parents, entire communities, or young people tailor their experiences and exposure to information to their pre-existing interests and values? As far-fetched as it may seem, the concept of “nichification” resonates with the American romanticism of individualism. It also has weighty implications for public schools. The word “public,” after all, implies “common,” but our longstanding emphasis on choice and decentralization in education policy has guaranteed that student experience from school to school is anything but. Self-imposed nichification of learning, particularly in light of the already worrisome gaps between high- and low-income communities, makes it all the more important that we foster diverse, challenging public spaces. We may not need a public classroom to learn content,

but we will need a “commons” in which individuals are required to explore different opinions and engage with issues they might not otherwise know existed. That is the secret to creating tomorrow’s engaged, informed citizens.

Whether or not such “commons” replace what we think of as schools, or evolve in alternate spaces, arts educators are uniquely positioned to play a role in their development. Artists in classrooms can help young people who are struggling to understand and challenge the myriad social and economic forces at play, amplifying voices from marginalized communities. They can serve as ambassadors in and out of classrooms to ensure students are exposed to a true diversity of thought and experience. Many are already on the forefront of exploring collaborative models between school and community. “Shared delivery” of arts education already examines how classroom teachers, school- and community-based artists, and external organizations can work together during the school day.³⁹ While shared delivery’s in-school focus is understandable for the time being, it could be expanded as boundaries between learning environments become more and more permeable. As many out-of-school arts providers are already thinking broadly about where learning can take place, this permeability invites opportunity for knowledge exchange within our own field.

While we can help combat homophily, we must be mindful that we are not immune to it. If we are indeed serious about committing to an ethic of equity, we must stand vigilant against an “us and them” mentality in which communities who seek out arts programs “get it” while those who decline them do not. We stand to gain nothing by peddling arts education as if it were a vitamin, foreign and unpalatable but secretly nourishing. Instead we may force new alliances by advocating beyond what we perceive to be our immediate needs, championing state and local policies that may address equity on a broader scale. We can foster public awareness of and engagement in issues of social justice. If we don’t, we run the risk of contributing to the very gaps we claim to fight against.



The challenges in the coming decades will be unlike any we have faced before. They will force us to examine our assumptions about the form and role of creative practice in young people’s lives, and about the experiences they will need to thrive in the future. They will be a breeding ground for new experiments and collaborations, while straining practices and delivery models that cannot be easily adapted to a hyper-wired, interconnected, and fragmented society. While difficult to navigate, they provide us an opportunity to think more boldly and broadly about creative expression, exploration, and performance as the backbones of formal and informal learning environments. They will also invite us to take a more active role in illuminating and combating social tensions. The dangers of inequity are real, and we are already painfully close to a two-tiered system of public education. If we use our strengths to promote interests broader and deeper than our own, however, we can help to stem that tide and work on the forefront of a more just and holistic system of public learning, inquiry, and dialogue.

NOTES

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14. See also Frank Levy and Richard J. Murnane, *The New Division of Labor: How Computers Are Creating the Next Job Market*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
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29. For example, “Young people [connect] the term ‘the arts’ primarily with visual art, specifically painting and drawing ...[not] with activities such as dancing, singing, design, digital media, or beat-making, which they indicated held significantly more appeal for them.” Denise Montgomery, Peter Rogovin, and Nero Persaud, “Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts,” The Wallace Foundation, November 2013, accessed January 23, 2015, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/arts-education/Community-Approaches-to-Building-Arts-Education/Documents/Something-to-Say-Success-Principles-for-Afterschool-Arts-Programs.pdf>, 12.
30. Hill and Barber, 24.
31. Ibid, 23.
32. See James Paul Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*, (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
33. See <http://www.badgealliance.org/> and <http://community.openbadges.org/> for more information.
34. See Boston Public Schools’ Arts Expansion Initiative (<http://www.bpsarts.org/>) or the Institute of Contemporary Arts’ School Credit Program (<http://www.icateens.org/school-credit-program>) for more information.
35. See Americans for the Arts’ September 2014 blog salon on Creative Youth Development, <http://blog.artsusa.org/tag/september-2014-blog-salon-2/>.
36. *Digital Cosmopolitans: Why We Think The Internet Connects Us, Why It Doesn’t, and How to Rewire It* (United States: Norton, 2015), 70.
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38. Ibid, 94.
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Arts in Healthy Communities: Additional Discussion and Resources

The Transforming America’s Communities Through the Arts initiative, of which New Community Visions is a part, is an effort by Americans for the Arts and our partners to explore more deeply the important, symbiotic structure of America’s modern communities and to better understand the role that the arts can play in amplifying the positive impacts of the many sectors that exist inside every community.

This book has focused on 10 sectors, but Americans for the Arts generally has identified 30 sectors that we believe need to be considered when talking about creating and maintaining a healthy community, many of which can be aided by arts and culture.

In the efforts encompassed by Transforming America’s Communities Through the Arts, as well as in the day-to-day work of Americans for the Arts going back nearly 60 years, we continue to pursue an expanded, better appreciated, and better understood role for the arts in healthy community development and maintenance.

For more resources related to the varied role of arts in community development, we recommend exploring the following Americans for the Arts resources—as well as the Americans for the Arts website in general—and the many great resources outlined in the endnotes of each essay.

New Community Visions

Keep track of the progress of New Community Visions by visiting www.AmericansForTheArts.org/CommunityVisions

Arts and the Military

Americans for the Arts is a founding partner of the National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military, and hosts the partnership’s website, www.ArtsAcrossTheMilitary.org, where you can

review full text of reports related to the role of arts in the lives of active military, veterans, and their families along with a list of upcoming events, a national network directory, and more.

Arts and the Economy

For more than 20 years, Americans for the Arts has been at the forefront of measuring the economic impact of the arts on American communities and the United States, most visibly through the Arts and Economic Prosperity reports (www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AEP). Americans for the Arts also generates bi-annual Creative Industries reports on all U.S. counties, and is working to launch a new program called the Institute for the Creative Economy as part of the Transforming America's Communities Through the Arts initiative. Find out more about both at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

Arts and Business

Americans for the Arts has a robust set of programs and trainings around the role of the arts in the private sector, most notably the pARTnership Movement, which showcases the role that the arts can play in bettering businesses and other private sector organizations (www.pARTnershipmovement.org).

Arts and Civic Engagement

For more than a decade, the Animating Democracy Initiative of Americans for the Arts has been exploring and developing the academic literature, case studies, and general knowledge and vocabulary around arts and civic engagement, social justice, and community health (www.AnimatingDemocracy.org).

Arts and Education

Americans for the Arts' arts education programming is a cornerstone of our belief in the role of arts in developing the communities of the future (www.AmericansForTheArts.org/ArtsEd). We work with more than 30 other arts education organizations across the country on advocacy, research, policy, and capacity-building. We also implement large-scale programs and partnerships like the Arts Education State Public Policy Pilot Initiative (www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SPPP), which seeks to encourage innovation around the adoption or adaptation of core arts standards in education at a state level, and the Arts Education Navigator series (www.AmericansForTheArts.org/ArtsEdNavigator), which creates easy-to-use advocacy plans and tools for parents, students, and teachers, as well.

In addition to these specific areas of work, Americans for the Arts also houses a trove of research, policy, and practice documents for arts organizations, local arts agencies, and others in the arts sector through our website, www.AmericansForTheArts.org

Arts and America: Arts, Culture, and the Future of America's Communities

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ABOUT THE NEW COMMUNITY VISIONS INITIATIVE,
PART OF TRANSFORMING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES
THROUGH THE ARTS

The essays in *Arts and America* collectively form the first phase of an initiative called New Community Visions—a national visioning exercise for local arts agencies, arts organizations, artists, and those interested in better understanding the future role of arts and culture in helping American communities thrive.

New Community Visions is part of a sustained, three-year suite of large-scale initiatives from Americans for the Arts that are together called *Transforming America's Communities Through the Arts*. Through those initiatives, we hope to:

- generate dialogue on a national, state, and local level around the creation and sustainability of healthy communities;
- activate a diverse set of programming and partnerships spanning public, private, and nonprofit sectors;
- lay the groundwork for a collective movement forward over the next decade and beyond;
- and help leaders and the public better understand and celebrate arts and culture as mechanisms for creating and sustaining healthier, more vibrant, and more equitable communities in the United States.

www.AmericansForTheArts.org/CommunityVisions

This project is made possible through an ever-growing list of funders, partners, and advisors.

FORUMS CURATOR AND DOCUMENTARIAN

Michael Rohd and the Center for
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Support as of April 30, 2015

NEW COMMUNITY VISIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The New Community Visions Advisory Committee, which has informed the nature and trajectory of the project, includes:

- Jennifer Cole, Metro Nashville Arts Commission
- Deborah Cullinan, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
- Carla Dirlikov, opera singer
- Randy Engstrom, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
- Tatiana Hernandez, Hemera Foundation
- Maria Rosario Jackson, The Kresge Foundation
- Michael Killoren, National Endowment for the Arts
- Ron Ragin, composer and artist
- Holly Sidford, Helicon Collaborative
- Nick Slie, performing artist, Mondo Bizzaro
- Regina R. Smith, The Kresge Foundation
- Katie Steger, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- Carlton Turner, Alternate ROOTS
- Nella Vera, Serino/Coyne
- Laura Zabel, Springboard for the Arts

REGIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL PARTNERS

The regional gatherings associated with New Community Visions would not have been possible without the participation of this growing list of regional, state, and local partners who have contributed thought leadership, proposed the names of participants, and assisted in crafting the regional events.

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Regional

- Arts Midwest
- Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
- Mid-America Arts Alliance
- New England Foundation for the Arts
- SouthArts
- WESTAF

State

- California Arts Council
- Georgia Council for the Arts
- Minnesota State Arts Board
- New Mexico Arts
- Oklahoma Arts Council
- Oklahomans for the Arts
- Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
- Vermont Arts Council
- West Virginia Division of Culture and History

Local

- Allied Arts
- Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia
- Arts Council of Oklahoma City
- Burlington City Arts
- Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
- City of San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs
- City of Santa Fe Arts Commission
- Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences of West Virginia
- Creative Santa Fe
- Cultural Development Corporation
- Flynn Center for the Performing Arts
- Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
- Macon Arts Alliance
- Metropolitan Regional Arts Council
- Minneapolis Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy
- Norman Arts Council
- Oklahoma City Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs