



NEWS AND INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

05/30/2006

Arts Leaders Convene to Explore the Role of the Arts in a Demographically Shifting Society

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts will hold its annual convention—the largest gathering of local and state arts leaders in the nation—in Milwaukee, WI, June 3–5. The convention, entitled *Living Cultural Democracy: Arts In Changing Communities*, will focus on the arts' role in communities that are being transformed by shifting demographics. Community arts and business leaders will engage in lively exchanges on the implications of demographic trends, funding patterns, promising practices, and expanding influence, and explore opportunities for cultural development in an ever-changing landscape.

Keynote speakers will include:

- **Juan Williams**, Senior Correspondent for NPR & Fox Television political analyst, June 3
- **Hector Cantú**, award-winning journalist and co-creator/writer of *Baldo*, the syndicated newspaper comic strip, June 5

"The theme for this year's convention is timely and relevant and offers a different perspective on the issues of immigration, mobility, and racial and ethnic fusion that we as a nation face and constantly grapple with," stated Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "We are pleased to be holding our convention in Milwaukee, a city that is leveraging its collection of cultures, creativity, and vibrant arts community to build its future."

As part of the convention, a series of innovator interviews will allow arts leaders to listen in on conversations with innovative and pioneering individuals working in and around the arts. The innovator series includes interviews with **Rebecca Ryan**, founder of Next Generation Consulting, Inc. and **Cora Mirikitani**, president and CEO of the Center for Cultural Innovation. **Abel Lopez**, associate producing director of GALA Hispanic Theater, will interview both women on June 4.

The convention will also feature artists in residence who will entertain attendees and reflect on the convention proceedings. Four spoken word artists from across the country will use their young, vibrant voices to promote positive social dialogue. The artists are **Paul S. Flores, Laura "Piece" Kelley, Kwabena Antoine Nixon,** and **Ishle Yi Park.**

The Americans for the Arts 2006 Annual Convention also consists of special events and visits to some of the Milwaukee area's most unique sites, plus an **Americans for the Arts Action Fund** fundraiser with legendary singer-songwriter **Peter Yarrow.**

Prior to the conference, three preconferences will be held:

- ***Creating Common Ground: Arts Education Practice and Policy***
This preconference will explore how lawmakers, educators, artists, and administrators are securing arts education for all students;
- ***Material Meaning: Process, Product, and Preservation***
Public art professionals, community leaders, and public artists will discuss a variety of issues regarding public art today, such as technology, advocacy, and preservation; and
- ***The Evolving Role of United Arts Funds: Serving Changing Communities***
Arts leaders explore how United Arts Funds evolve to meet the needs of our nation's changing communities.

The local host committee for *Living Cultural Democracy* was led by Tony Forman, executive director, Cultural Alliance of Greater Milwaukee along with The Wisconsin Arts Board, Arts Wisconsin, United Performing Arts Fund, The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, Visit Milwaukee, Spirit of Milwaukee, Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD), and Arts Alliance of Waukesha.

The United Performing Arts Fund is the sponsoring host and a platinum partner of *Living Cultural Democracy*. Additional platinum partners are Ellen Zilli's Catering & Zilli Hospitality Group and The Richard & Ethel Herzfeld Foundation, Inc. Sponsors include Brico Fund, LLC; Forest County Potawatomi Community Foundation; Hilton Milwaukee City Center; Marcus Corporation Foundation; The National Endowment for the Arts; Northwestern Mutual Foundation; Roundy's Supermarkets, Inc.; and Wisconsin Arts Board.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.