



NEWS AND INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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More than 1,400 Arts Leaders to Convene in Philadelphia for the 2008 Americans for the Arts Annual Convention

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, will hold its annual convention in Philadelphia, June 20 – 22, 2008. This is the largest gathering in the nation of arts leaders and their partners in creative business, education, and government. The convention entitled, *American Evolution: Arts in the New Civic Life*, will explore a variety of important issues and topics facing the arts and education community.

"We are thrilled the convention will take place in Philadelphia, an innovative and diverse city that embraces the artists, innovators, and creators that are key engines of the city's recent renaissance" stated Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts.

With this year of democratic decision-making sweeping our nation, more than 1,400 arts leaders and practitioners will come together at the convention to share strategies for leading creative communities. Philadelphia, the birthplace of American democracy, is a choice host for the convention. With the third highest downtown population of any American city, hundreds of active cultural organizations (including three that are older than the country itself), and thousands of public murals, the city is alive with creativity. This year Philadelphia also celebrates its 50th anniversary of the first Percent-for-art ordinance during the convention with special tours highlighting local public art projects, and a presentation by critically acclaimed artist Pepon Osorio, who makes his home in Philadelphia.

"Visitors to the convention will discover a historically rich city that has evolved into one of the most exciting, vibrant arts communities in the country," said Peggy Amsterdam, president of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the local host for the convention.

Andrew Zolli, the celebrated futurist, will deliver the convention's keynote address on Saturday, June 21. Convention attendees will also hear about the role the arts are playing in

the presidential election, see the very best of the year's public art projects, and explore the very best of Philadelphia's arts and culture offerings.

"In this historic election year, we are delighted to have this most important cultural policy conversation happening here in Philadelphia under the leadership of Americans for the Arts and the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance," said Olive Mosier, director of Arts and Culture at the William Penn Foundation.

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Program Tracks**

Americans for the Arts offers eight different program tracks at this year's convention to ensure sessions that allow for both close connection with colleagues and expanded opportunities for crossover and collaboration within a variety of areas of interest. This year's program tracks are: Arts Education, Civic Engagement, Economic Development, Leadership, Preserving Diverse Cultures, Private Sector, Public Advocacy, and Public Art. The economic development track is generously supported by PECO. The arts education track is generously supported by the Wallace Foundation.

- **Innovators**

Convention attendees are invited to hear from pioneering individuals working in and around the arts. Innovator sessions are presented as a part of each convention track. Innovator sessions will feature:

- **Pepón Osorio**, Public Art Innovator
Friday, June 20, 9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
- **Claudine Brown and AB Spellman**, Preserving Diverse Cultures Innovators
Friday, June 20, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
- **Patricia Martin**, Private-Sector Innovator
Friday, June 20, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
- **Rob "Biko" Baker**, Civic Engagement Innovator
Friday, June 20, 4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.
- **Marianne Hughes**, Leadership Innovator
Friday, June 20, 4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

- **Jeffrey Brown**, Richard J. Deasy, Nick Rabkin, and Andrea Peterson, Arts Education Innovators
Sunday, June 22, 9:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
- **Meryl Levitz**, Economic Development Innovator
Sunday, June 22, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
- **Americans for the Arts Annual Report and Federal Update – Sheraton Philadelphia City Center**
Friday, June 20, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
The convention kicks off with President and CEO Robert L. Lynch and a special discussion of federal advocacy and the 2008 presidential campaigns.
- **Opening Event – Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**
Friday, June 20, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
The opening event for convention attendees, “Taste of Philadelphia”, will take place at the Kimmel Center for Performing Arts. West Philadelphia Orchestra and Kulu Mele African American Dance Ensemble will perform under the Kimmel center’s signature 150-foot glass-vault ceiling while guests enjoy cocktails, light refreshments, and special guided tours of this world-class venue.
- **Americans for the Arts Action Fund Event – Sheraton Philadelphia City Center**
Saturday, June 21, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Americans for the Arts Action Fund members’ reception and Political Action Committee (PAC) fundraiser is open to current members and all those interested in joining the effort to advance the arts politically in America. The Arts Action Fund PAC is committed to electing candidates who support arts and arts education in America.
- **Keynote Address – Andrew Zolli – Sheraton Philadelphia City Center**
Saturday, June 21, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Andrew Zolli is a young, brilliant, globally-connected leader of the next generation of futurists. He has a gift for seeing the strategic opportunities emerging at the intersections of brands and demographics, creativity and innovation, design and technology. In this exciting keynote, titled *The Road Ahead: Forces Shaping the Coming Decades*, Zolli outlines the trends that will shape the arts’ future and help arts leaders respond intelligently to the emerging complex changes—both globally and in their communities. Zolli’s insights are a marvelous blend of important content and fantastic delivery.

Zolli has been the futurist-in-residence for *American Demographics* magazine, *Popular*

Science, National Geographic, and National Public Radio's Marketplace. He is the editor of The Catalog of Tomorrow. He was named an Emerging Explorer by National Geographic and one of the Fast 50 for 2005 by Fast Company.

- **Public Art Year in Review – Sheraton Philadelphia City Center**

Sunday, June 22, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Since 2001, Americans for the Arts Public Art Network Year in Review has annually recognized the most exemplary works of public art produced in the previous year. The Year in Review celebrates the most successful, innovative, and creative public art projects and is the only national recognition process for artworks specifically created for public space. Eligible projects were completed in 2007 and submitted through an open call process. Curators Jody Pinto and Ted Landsmark select and present up to 40 projects from the submissions. The final projects will be available on CD for purchase from the Americans for the Arts Store.

- **Closing Event – Philadelphia Museum of Art**

Sunday, June 22, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Experience “The Vibrant Sights and Sounds of Philly” as the convention concludes with a special evening at the Philadelphia Museum of Art generously sponsored by the Phoebe W. Haas Charitable Trust B. This landmark institution’s magnificent collection showcases more than 2,000 years of human creativity and includes masterpieces of fine and applied arts from around the world. Within the museum’s grand architectural spaces, guests will enjoy cocktails and delicious gourmet food. The evening will be hosted by nationally-known and award-winning Philadelphia radio personality **David Dye from World Café Live**. In addition the night will feature two live acts, a local Doo Wop group, and The Blue Method, who will perform songs in tribute to the Philly Sound.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The generosity of a number of donors has supported the provision of scholarships to convention. Americans for the Arts will award 50 scholarships to members from across the country while the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the Independence Foundation will help support attendance by employees of nonprofit cultural organizations located throughout the state of Pennsylvania. All applications for scholarship assistance must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 29, 2008.

For more information about scholarships and to register for the convention, visit the *American Evolution: Arts in the New Civic Life* website.

SPONSORS

The local host for *American Evolution: Arts in the New Civic Life* is the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. The convention is supported by The William Penn Foundation, the Phoebe W. Haas Charitable Trust B, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, PECO, the Independence Foundation, and the Wallace Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Pennsylvania Tourism Office, Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation.

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.

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