

*Americans for the Arts presents
the 20th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture
on Arts and Public Policy*



NancyHanks Lecture on Arts&Public Policy

an evening with

RobertMacNeil

Monday, March 12, 2007

Concert Hall

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Robert L. Lynch,
President and CEO,
Americans for the Arts

Good evening. I'm Robert Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. It's great to see all of you here—the people that we have with us tonight, and those who will be with us throughout Arts Advocacy Day to talk to the Congress of the United States about the value of the arts in America.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Americans for the Arts and our members nationwide, I welcome you to this, the 20th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. I'm really proud to be here on the anniversary of 20 years of amazing lectures. This lecture series is the pre-eminent forum for presenting the world's greatest thinkers as they freely express their personal thoughts and opinions on policy issues facing the arts and culture today.

Tonight, one thousand of us are gathered here on the eve of Arts Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill to learn more about art and how it affects all of us and our communities. We are one thousand people who support the arts and arts education. And even more importantly, one thousand people who work through the arts every day to make our communities better places. Thank you, and would you please give yourselves a round of applause.

We have here—from every region of the country—local, state, and national arts leaders. We have artists representing dance, literature, music, drama, and the visual arts, as well as many students and young emerging arts leaders who will become the next generation of change agents in their communities.

We are also joined by several elected officials and other government representatives. I'd like to take a moment to recognize a few of our special guests: the new chair of the powerful House Rules Committee and the co-chair of the Congressional Arts Caucus, Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, and the new chairman of the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, Congressman Norm Dicks, who now has oversight of funding for the arts.

From the performing arts world, we are also very pleased to be joined by legendary actress, dancer, and singer Jane Powell, who will accompany us on Capitol Hill tomorrow.

Also with us tonight are a number of members of the National Council on the Arts, who have been appointed by the President of the United States, along with Deputy Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts Eileen Mason. Thank you all for being here.

And finally, some of the hardest working people I know, the Board of Directors of Americans for the Arts. Board members, thank you.

At Americans for the Arts, our mission is to help advance all of the arts for all of America. And it is our shared belief that all Americans have a right to lifelong education in the arts, regardless of race, gender, age, or economic means.

Tonight's event really owes everything to the idea of community, and more specifically to the intersection of the arts and our own communities, wherever they may be. What has become crystal clear to me in more than 30 years of working in this field is that art truly begins at the community level, because at the very core of art is the expression of an idea—a need to inquire, a wish to challenge, and a hope to connect.

Americans for the Arts works to create better access to the arts in America in three ways: by creating a climate in which the arts can thrive in every community, by increasing resources for the arts and arts education, and by enhancing individual appreciation and citizen action in support of the arts and arts education.

To create that climate, you need both people and policies. Our work connects community leaders like yourselves, people of influence, citizens, funders, thinkers, and government officials—all of whom can make art a more integral part of every single community.

We create tools for local communities to make the case for the arts, and also to improve that case. We know that the arts have a huge economic impact on communities, and we are going to prove it once again this spring when we release the results of our third national study on the *Arts & Economic Prosperity*. Our last economic impact study, completed in 2002, revealed that America's nonprofit arts industry generates \$134 billion in economic activity every year and supports 4.85 million jobs. Impressive figures in and of themselves, but I can already tell you that the upcoming new data indicates remarkable economic growth in the nonprofit arts industries in just the last five years. We will be sharing some of these early results tomorrow at the extraordinary first arts-dedicated congressional public hearing in 12 years.

I want to say thank you again to the newly installed chairman of the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, Norm Dicks, for his vision and leadership. He is bringing well-deserved congressional and media attention back to the arts on Capitol Hill. And I'm very excited. I think that deserves another round of applause.

We have assembled a strong lineup of witnesses to testify tomorrow morning. They represent the full spectrum and power of the arts, and they include acclaimed jazz musician Wynton Marsalis; national arts philanthropist and co-founder of Black Entertainment Television Sheila C. Johnson; aeronautical engineering CEO and corporate philanthropist James

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Raisbeck; Providence (RI) Mayor David Cicilline; and film and stage actor Chris Klein. I will also join with these witnesses in providing testimony on behalf of thousands of cultural organizations, artists, and concerned citizens across the country.

Tomorrow's hearing relates very well to our third Americans for the Arts goal, which is fostering citizen interest in the arts and arts education. We want to ensure that every child, every student, every family has full access to the best quality arts experiences.

In recent years, you couldn't go anywhere without hearing about the Soccer Mom. She's been pretty busy. The Soccer Mom has showed up everywhere in our culture. She's in magazine articles and television segments, and these days she can even swing the outcome of an election.

At Americans for the Arts, we feel like it's time for the Arts Mom to take a bow. Because of an increasing demand and need for arts education, the Arts Mom is becoming just as ever-present in our communities as the Soccer Mom. These new leaders know how much art can offer to our families and to our day-to-day lives.

Again, this comes back to that idea of community. Our featured speaker, Robert MacNeil, is chairman of the board of directors of one of our country's most prized artist institutions and a very specific kind of community, an artist community—The MacDowell Colony. Founded in 1907 in Peterborough, NH, MacDowell is among the oldest artist colonies in the United States. A founder of the

American Academy in Rome, Edward MacDowell understood that the arts and community go hand in hand. But he and his wife could not have known so early in the 20th century that the colony would foster the work of more than 5,500 artists—including Thornton Wilder, James Baldwin, Aaron Copland, Alice Walker, Studs Terkel, and Leonard Bernstein.

In 1997, President Clinton awarded the National Medal of Arts to The MacDowell Colony for “nurturing and inspiring many of this century’s finest artists.” The Library of Congress is currently presenting the 100-year story of the colony in a new exhibit, which we hope you’ll get a chance to see while you’re here and when many of you are on Capitol Hill.

Tonight before our lecture, in honor of the MacDowell Colony’s 100th anniversary and in dedication to our speaker tonight, we have the opportunity to hear from poet Galway Kinnell, a seven-time MacDowell Fellow. Mr. Kinnell, also a former MacArthur Fellow, was the first State Poet of Vermont after Robert Frost, and someone who I have come to love and enjoy, hearing him a number of times when I was living in New England. Mr. Kinnell is the Erich Maria Remarque Professor of Creative Writing at New York University and a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. In 1982, his *Selected Poems* won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to poet Galway Kinnell.

READING BY GALWAY KINNELL



Pulitzer Prize winner Galway Kinnell reads his poem, “Oatmeal.”

As some of you know, at The MacDowell Colony all the people gather for breakfast and again gather for dinner, but so as not to disturb the working artists, lunch is quietly placed at each studio door.

Well, on one of my seven stays at MacDowell, where I got enormous amounts of work done, I decided I would try to get even more done, so I stopped going to breakfast and instead put some fine Irish oatmeal in a pot of water on the furnace register on the floor of my cabin, and in the morning I woke to the finest oatmeal this side of Ireland. But one day at dinner, a painter said to me, “Galway, how come we never see you at breakfast?” I said, “Well, I eat oatmeal in my studio.” He fell back a little bit and said in a voice full of alarm, “Alone?” I actually don’t know what he meant by his question, and he left the colony soon so I never had a chance to find out. But I gave the question some thought, and one morning after eating my oatmeal I sat down and I wrote “Oatmeal.”

OATMEAL

I eat oatmeal for breakfast.

I make it on the hot plate and put skimmed milk on it.

I eat it alone.

I am aware it is not good to eat oatmeal alone.

Its consistency is such that it is better for your mental health if somebody eats it with you.

That is why I often think up an imaginary companion to have breakfast with.

Possibly it is even worse to eat oatmeal with an imaginary companion.

Nevertheless, yesterday morning, I ate my oatmeal—porridge, as he called it—with John Keats.

Keats said I was absolutely right to invite him: due to its glutinous texture, gluey lumpishness,

hint of slime, and unusual willingness to disintegrate, oatmeal should not be eaten alone.

He said that in his opinion, however, it is perfectly OK to eat it with an imaginary companion,

and that he himself had enjoyed memorable porridges with Edmund Spenser and John Milton.

Even if eating oatmeal with an imaginary companion is not as wholesome as Keats claims, still,

you can learn something from it.

Yesterday morning, for instance, Keats told me about writing the “Ode to a Nightingale.”

He had a heck of a time finishing it—those were his words—“Oi ‘ad a ‘eck of a toime,” he said,

more or less, speaking through his porridge.

He wrote it quickly, on scraps of paper, which he then stuck in his pocket,

but when he got home he couldn’t figure out the order of the stanzas, and he and a friend spread

the papers on a table, and they made some sense of them, but he isn’t sure to this day if they

got it right.

An entire stanza may have slipped into the lining of his jacket through a hole in his pocket.

He still wonders about the occasional sense of drift between stanzas,

and the way here and there a line will go into the configuration of a Moslem at prayer, then raise

itself up and peer about, and then lay itself down slightly off the mark, causing the poem to

move forward with a reckless, shining wobble.

He said someone told him that later in life Wordsworth heard about the scraps of paper on the

table, and tried shuffling some stanzas of his own, but only made matters worse.

I would not have known any of this but for my reluctance to eat oatmeal alone.

When breakfast was over, John recited “To Autumn.”

He recited it slowly, with much feeling, and he articulated the words lovingly, and his odd accent

sounded sweet.

He didn’t offer the story of writing “To Autumn,” I doubt if there is much of one.

But he did say the sight of a just-harvested oat field got him started on it,

and two of the lines, “For Summer has o’er-brimmed their clammy cells” and “Thou watchest the

last oozy hours by hours,” came to him while eating oatmeal alone.

I can see him—drawing a spoon through the stuff, gazing into the glimmering furrows, muttering.

Maybe there is no sublime; only the shining of the amnion’s tatters.

For supper tonight I am going to have a baked potato left over from lunch.

I am aware that a leftover baked potato is damp, slippery, and simultaneously gummy and crumbly,

and therefore I’m going to invite Patrick Kavanagh to join me.

INTRODUCTION OF JANE ALEXANDER BY ROBERT L. LYNCH

I want to thank Mr. Kinnell for his reading for several reasons. One, of course, this is the week of the potato. St. Patrick's Day is March 17, and so that's a very special reference right there, but he touches on a crucial point that we should all consider that writing or painting or dance, really any art form, is not just an abstract practice—it boils down to connection between people. Art is alive. It should live and breathe, and as he indicates, perhaps dine with each of us daily. So thank you very much for that wonderful performance.

A dear friend of Americans for the Arts understood the vitality and inspiration that the arts can bring. Hinda Rosenthal, who was a sponsor of this lecture series for seven consecutive years, spent years supporting a number of causes from cancer research to arts advocacy.

Hinda passed away a few months ago, and we want to share our sympathies with her family as well as our heartfelt thanks for the support of her foundation. Hinda's gifts, her activism, her love of life, and her dedication should be a motivation for all of us to play a greater role in improving our communities.

And we are very fortunate to have strong partnerships with a number of philanthropic foundations, government agencies, and national organizations. The Betty R. Sheffer Foundation is another sponsor of tonight's event. And just this year, the NAMM Foundation—representing the International Music Products Association—has agreed to support the second phase of our very popular *Art. Ask for More.* PSA campaign. The *Art. Ask for More.* ad campaign, which many of you have seen on television and in publications nationwide, has demonstrated the need for arts in our schools to more than 150 million American households.

To get more information on the *Art. Ask for More.* campaign, you can visit us at www.AmericansForTheArts.org. There you'll

find 10 simple ways to get more art into children's lives. And you can also find a podcast of tonight's lecture and event.

Now it brings me great pleasure to introduce a true friend to Americans for the Arts, to the arts in America, and to me personally. Jane Alexander understands the arts from a number of perspectives, as a renowned actress and as a tireless citizen volunteer and politician. A four-time Oscar nominee for the films *Testament*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *All the President's Men*, and *The Great White Hope*, Jane has appeared in more than 50 screen roles. In addition, she received a Tony Award for her Broadway performance in *The Great White Hope*, directed by Ed Sherin, who later became her husband.

But from 1993 to 1997, Jane took her commitment to the arts one step further, serving as the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. She wrote about the experience in her memoir *Command Performance: An Actress in the Theater of Politics*. Today, Jane continues her political career as a Commissioner of Parks for New York State's Taconic Region, and she is a longtime member of the Americans for the Arts Artist Committee. This fall she can be seen in a new HBO television show and in a feature film with Morgan Freeman called *The Feast of Love*. Ladies and gentlemen, please help me welcome one of the great arts leaders I have known, our great friend, Jane Alexander.

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INTRODUCTION OF ROBERT MACNEIL BY JANE ALEXANDER



Actress Jane Alexander introduces Robert MacNeil.

Thank you. Thank you, Bob.

Robert MacNeil is a renaissance man—a man with many interests, a man of many skills, a man with immense curiosity about the world he finds himself in and intense compassion for those who inhabit it. Robin, as he is known, was born in Montreal and raised in Nova Scotia, where he still resides part of the time with his wife, Donna, and where his four children and grandchildren find occasion to visit and sail with him on his sleek, small yacht.

During his college years in Canada, Robin began his career as an actor, then an announcer for radio, which is not surprising with his sonorous and alluring voice. He was an aspiring playwright before he became a journalist, and he recently wrote a compelling play called *Karla* about the death penalty. Robin has a way with words and words have their way with him. He loves language, English in particular, which he chronicles in one of his most famous books *Wordstruck*. Like a sailor to the sea, he voyages again and again into the deep of language, thrilling us with his immersion on television and in his books *The Story of English* and the recent *Do You Speak American?* Rarely without a project underway, Robin uses the English

language to great and passionate effect in his own novels and memoirs.

One of his memoirs is entitled *The Right Place at the Right Time*, which aptly describes his remarkable 40 years in journalism. With NBC News in London in the early 1960s, MacNeil covered such major events as the wars in the Congo and Algeria, the construction of the Berlin Wall, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Transferred to Washington, DC, he reported on the civil rights movement and the White House. He wrote another memoir about that fateful day in Dallas when he was covering President Kennedy in 1963, a turning point in American history. Now 44 years later, he is spearheading, as host, one of the most important projects ever to be undertaken by public television: *America at a Crossroads*, about another turning point in our history—the post-9/11 world. The 12-hour series airs a month from now.

Robin has had a long and distinguished involvement with PBS. With Jim Lehrer, he co-anchored the Emmy award-winning coverage of the Watergate hearings in 1971. The remarkable MacNeil-Lehrer partnership lasted on air for more than 20 years, until Robin left in 1995, to the disappointment of millions of viewers who had rock-solid faith in the integrity of his nightly report out of New York.

Together, MacNeil and Lehrer have won major awards for journalism and both were inducted into the Television Academy's Hall of Fame in 1999. Ten years ago, Robin was graced with Canada's highest civilian honor for being "one of the most respected journalists of our time." Robin remains involved with the evening news and PBS and so many other projects that it is hard to catch him at home. But he always makes time for the arts through his own writing, visual and performing arts events, and his 14-year-long chairmanship of The MacDowell Colony—a National Medal of Arts winner in 1996, which is currently celebrating its centennial. The Nancy Hanks lecture could not be in better hands this year than that of the man I feel honored to call my friend. Ladies and gentlemen, Robert MacNeil.

ROBERT MACNEIL



Robert MacNeil delivers the 2007 Nancy Hanks Lecture.

Boy, to be introduced by Jane Alexander and preceded by Galway Kinnell, it doesn't get better than that.

I eat Irish oatmeal every morning, but not alone.

I did not know Nancy Hanks, but a friend of ours, Bob Kotlowitz, a writer who served on the literature panel, told me the other day, "All she had to do was walk into the room, and we were electrified by her presence." Considering her lasting impact on the arts in America, Nancy Hanks was a national treasure, as the Japanese say, and I am honored to be asked to speak in the lecture series that bears her name.

As with many of you, I'm sure, my life has been profoundly shaped by the arts, from when I was a small boy being read to from Robert Louis Stevenson and Dickens to today in our apartment in New York, where the bookshelves overflow onto the floors, to every horizontal surface, so that often to eat in the dining room, we have to move the books off the table first.

Encounters with certain books, certain pieces of music, certain paintings have been transformative, life-enhancing experiences. Some encounters with the arts have been practical, like putting me through college and, after several serendipitous accidents, providing me with a career. That career, journalism, for years led me away from art's metaphorical truths and guided me along the paths of literalism. But in latter years I have been trying, like a hang glider on a hilltop seeking the right puff of wind, hoping for a little metaphorical lift to my writings. That labored metaphor probably tells its own tale.

When I was young, several first encounters with works of art were really transformative. On my sixteenth birthday in Canada, my father, a sailor with a deep love of literature and music, gave me Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. It was a 78 album with Oscar Levant on the piano and the Paul Whiteman orchestra. My father must have known me better than I suspected, because the effect on me was electrifying. I think that music subconsciously implanted the conviction that, despite all the British conditioning of my Nova Scotia upbringing, something deep in me was American—50 years before I actually became a citizen. Gershwin's music seemed to know who

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I was. From the opening clarinet riff—I know from the Leonard Garment Nancy Hanks lecture that it's called a *glissando*—to the lush and orgasmic finale, my mind was open to possibilities I had not dreamt of, but innately recognized. I was moved by the impertinence, by the humor, the mockery of convention, the independence, the freedom, the romance and the irresistible tunefulness of Gershwin, all driven by the intoxicating jazz rhythms. All very American.

I had a similar experience upon encountering T.S. Eliot's, "The Wasteland," the same sense of awakening, of being transported into the modern world. Like the music, Eliot's words had the power to create in me an ache of recognition for emotions I had yet to feel in reality, of nostalgia for losses I had not suffered, a strong emotional undertow pulling me into situations that were entirely fictional, and yet seemingly quite familiar.

And there was another flash of recognition when my senior high school class was taken to see Laurence Olivier's film *Hamlet*. Until then, Shakespeare had been stuffed into me rather like the sawdust they used to put in old-fashioned dolls and much of it had leaked out. But this *Hamlet* seemed to enter the very pores of my being. I felt as though a giant hand had moved me many squares forward on the board of life. I knew much of what Hamlet was feeling—what late adolescent does not? But who has ever put it so exquisitely to himself? "How

weary, flat, stale and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this life." I went back to school, I grabbed the text and effortlessly, it seemed, memorized all the soliloquies, including those Olivier had left out of the film. I fancied myself, as Jane mentioned, something of an actor in school plays and could not wait to strut my stuff in Shakespeare. That chance came at college, and although a critic described my legs in green tights as looking like two limp asparagus—thank God for radio—a producer from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation came backstage and offered me work, acting in a live radio drama. Acting on the radio led to work as an announcer and then to TV and put me through the rest of college.

In between, during a drop-out year, after a summer of stock in Massachusetts, with \$67 in my pocket, I came to New York to save Broadway. After 10 days of eating grapes between chats with condescending producers, I was crossing Times Square on a very hot September day. On a traffic island, opposite the Camel billboard that used to blow smoke rings, a voice in my head spoke to me. Very distinctly, it said, "You'd make a lousy actor. You have a voice and some technique, but you're too stiff and constricted. You're meant to be the cool one behind the scenes, a writer." I didn't know whose the voice was, but I believed it and went back to college. Then I decided I was going to save the London stage as a playwright, but I needed to get married in the way young men in the 1950s needed to get married and thus to make a living, and that's how I became a journalist. So my advice to would-be journalists? Brush up on your Shakespeare.

One other event I'll add from my life with the arts—it was again my father, a shy man, at least to me, about matters sexual. But he gave me a copy of *Ulysses*, not an easy book to buy in those puritanical days in Canada, where even garlic was a controlled substance. His advice for life for me was that I wouldn't find anything more realistic about life than Molly Bloom's soliloquy.

My own major contribution to the arts is that three of my four children are artists. Cathy is a dancer; Ian, a stage designer; Will, a film editor. Their sister Alison is a social worker and mother. I



Robert MacNeil and Robert L. Lynch

"I REPRESENT AN ASPECT OF THE ARTS SCENE THAT AMERICA PIONEERED, RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS FOR ARTISTS. AND I BELIEVE THAT IN VIEW OF THE TRAVAILS IN PUBLIC FUNDING THAT PREVIOUS SPEAKERS HAVE DISCUSSED, BECAUSE OF THE OLD CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT AND BECAUSE OF THREATS TO THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE NEA, COLONIES HAVE COME TO FILL A GROWING AND VITAL ROLE."

—ROBERT MACNEIL

have read all the previous Nancy Hanks lectures with profit and with something like awe, because they comprise such a body of knowledge and practical experience in arts and public policy, so much idealism tempered with wisdom earned in the trenches that it made me wonder, what am I doing here? Eventually, I noticed that in none of the 19 remarkable lectures that preceded mine had anyone mentioned artists' colonies. And that explains my presumption in joining such a distinguished line of speakers. I represent an aspect of the arts scene that America pioneered—residential programs for artists. And I believe that in view of the travails in public funding that previous speakers have discussed, because of the old controversies surrounding government appropriations for the National Endowment for the Arts, and because of threats to the very existence of the NEA, colonies have come to fill a growing and vital role. And so I'm grateful to Bob Lynch and Americans for the Arts in recognizing that importance, since this is a particularly propitious year: the oldest residential program, the longest continuously running—MacDowell, Peterborough, New Hampshire—as has been mentioned, is 100 years old, and I've been privileged to be its chairman for the last 14 years, and that's how I wrangled this invitation.

Our colony, as you've heard, was founded by Edward MacDowell and his wife. The idea was that emerging artists of all disciplines needed a quiet place in which to work and live, free for a time from the practical burdens of life, a place where their work was taken seriously, where they would be stimulated by the presence of other artists of different disciplines. Edward MacDowell's firm belief was that artists benefited

from a cross-pollination of ideas. In time MacDowell became a prototype for other colonies around here and around the world. It now receives some 250 colonists a year: painters, poets, filmmakers, novelists, playwrights, sculptors, composers, architects, and interdisciplinary artists, who can come for up to two months. They are evaluated by committees of their peers. It is free. They are housed and fed. They eat breakfast and dinner together, except for those who eat their oatmeal alone. A basket lunch is delivered to their studios. No one disturbs them.

We run 32 studios all year round, in 450 acres of woodlands outside Peterborough, NH, a town Thornton Wilder used as the inspiration for *Our Town*, written at the colony and one of the most frequently produced plays of all time. MacDowell was where Leonard Bernstein composed his *Mass*. Aaron Copland had eight fellowships there and for six years was president of the colony. MacDowell was where, more recently, Michael Chabon wrote *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*, Jonathan Franzen worked on *The Corrections*, Wendy Wasserstein wrote several plays, and Ruth Reichl wrote her delicious and nutritious memoirs. Our colonists have won dozens of Pulitzers and Prix de Rome. And as you heard, in 1997, the colony was awarded the National Medal of Arts.

Long after Edward MacDowell died, the writer Upton Sinclair, who as a young man had studied music with the composer, wrote that Edward "was a friend of every freedom and of every beautiful and generous impulse. He hated pretense and formalism and all things which repress the free creative spirit."



Robert MacNeil

I'd just like to repeat that last clause, "all things which repress the free creative spirit."

Now why are such places needed, and apparently needed more today?

Two things in life can take care of themselves and always find ways to communicate—money-making and lovemaking.

A few years ago, a security guard at the Whitney Museum of American Art wrote with a felt pen on a Roy Lichtenstein painting, "I love you, Tushee. Love, Buns." Then he drew a heart and dated it: a true marriage of love and art. Or, perhaps, art, love, and money. The Whitney was sued by the painting's owner for \$2.5 million. I hope Tushee expressed her gratitude to Buns appropriately.

More and more in this culture, it is demanded of creative people to succeed by one criterion: what sells and inevitably what sells best.

But, for most creative people, the marketplace is the end of the process. If they land there, and are commercially successful, it is wonderful. Their paintings sell, their music is played, their novels are published, and so on. But that is the end of the process. If it were the beginning, the creative force might quickly wither, or be smothered, as we can see too often in art created only for the market.

Most paintings, music, poems, novels are born in an act of private communication with the self and perhaps, in the imagination, with some abstract but sympathetic viewer, reader, listener. It skirts the line between communications that are largely designed to exploit the consumer, and those which enrich.

The intention is everything. I love the remark years ago by Pauline Kael, the critic, who wrote that, "When you start thinking of the jerk audience out there, the rot sets in." It's hard to imagine a serious artist of any kind thinking the audience a jerk, but we're engulfed in mass media products that seem to do so.

Any serious work begins as a small seed planted in a soil of lonely confidence. The artist who plants it certainly hungers for recognition, and ultimately perhaps, fame. But the first spur is recognition by those who know the craft—the fellow practitioners, the peers, and maybe even the critics. The marketplace cannot always provide the spur.

Artists colonies exist to nurture creative people in the first stage, a stage each creative person has to relive again and again. To borrow a phrase *The New York Times* used about New York City, MacDowell is "an incubator of invention."

So are the more than 300 other residential colonies that have blossomed since the MacDowells founded theirs in 1907. Together they support some 8,000–9,000 artists a year, and some are helped by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Like the NEA, they provide emerging artists with the imprimatur of quality judged by experts in each discipline and found worthy, psychologically a moment of huge value for a tender ego.

But colonies have an advantage more relevant since the attacks on the NEA in the 1990s, which forced the endowment to reduce grants to individuals, and which, in turn, caused some foundations and corporations to drop individual artist support from their mission statements.

Our colonies provide a heat shield for people who wish to support artists, without subjecting those artists to tests of cultural purity or social acceptability. Artists who receive MacDowell fellowships do not have to pass through scanners for impiety, no urine tests for politically defined obscenity.

The NEA is still recovering from that dark period, still trying to restore its annual appropriation to the high point of \$176 million from which was cut 40 percent in 1995.

That period arose from a surge of political moralism, as fresh skirmishes in the culture wars reminded us that we live in a nation whose moral climate has often swung from the puritanical to the permissive, from the religious to the secular, a nation whose level of religious commitment is higher than any other developed country.

This swing to puritanism gained energy when political consultants and lobbying organizations discovered the catnip, and the fundraising power, of pandering to those who could be persuaded that art is decadent or immoral or homosexual and destructive of finer values. Thus, in the modern culture, wars were launched with Andres Serrano and Robert Maplethorpe as the principal whipping boys. And artists found themselves once again having to explain their value to the society.

I have called this talk “Out of the Disenlightenment,” so let me explain what I mean. We, in the democratic and developed world, are engaged in a novel struggle against a strand of fundamentalist Islam, people who believe that Western ways are corrupting

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—ROBERT MACNEIL

humanity and that our governments of men must be replaced by Islamic states ruled not by man-made laws but by God's law, Islamic law. And some among them are willing to carry that conviction into a Jihad against us, including terrorist attacks. Failing to overthrow the governments they view as corrupt at home, in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the near enemy as they put it, they turned to the far enemy, the West. And that led to attacks on U.S. embassies, a U.S. warship, and then 9/11.

However we see this struggle, as a war on terror that will last generations, or something more narrowly defined, there is no avoiding the fact that our fear of them has changed our lives, our idea of what makes us secure. It has radically changed our foreign policy and taken us into two inconclusive wars.

Curiously, this wave of Islamic fundamentalism coincides with a growth of fundamentalism here, both Jewish and Christian. I am not for a moment suggesting that our fundamentalists harbor any violent intentions. Their approaches are almost always peaceful and legal, and they use the institutions of democracy, politics, the media, and the courts to have their way. But the initial psychology is similar to that which inspires Islamic reformers.

Millions of Americans see our society in a continual drift toward looser standards, a world in which nothing remains sacred, no moral code unbreakable, almost no sexual taboo inviolable. They see mass entertainment and its advertising partners pushing a self-indulgent, material society, feeding a culture of pleasure and self abandonment in which all restraints are cast aside in the name of personal fulfillment and tolerance

“IT IS INEVITABLE THAT ARTISTS SHOULD BE THE TARGETS OF SUCH FUNDAMENTALIST ANXIETIES, BECAUSE IT IS IN THE NATURE OF ARTISTS TO PUSH THE FRONTIERS OF TASTE AND MORALITY, TO SHOW SOCIETY BOTH ITS PIETIES AND ITS HYPOCRISIES.”

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for lifestyles hitherto considered acts of the deepest immorality. Sodom and Gomorrah are recreated in the country that fervent Christians once thought of as the chosen place, because of its purity, where the end of time would happen. That idea has returned in force today.

This multifaceted anxiety has fed a surge of fundamentalism, especially among evangelical Christians, not new in American life, but stronger by a phenomenon that is new: its emergence as a major political force.

In 1995, summing up the growth of American conservatism, Irving Kristol argued that the emergence of religion-based, morally concerned, political conservatism might be the most important development of all. Writing in the public interest, Kristol said, “It is not at all unimaginable that the U.S. is headed for a bitter and sustained Kulturkampf, culture war, that could overwhelm notions of what is and what is not political.” He added, “We have lived through a century of ever more extreme hedonism, and no one who has bothered to read a bit of history ought to be surprised if it culminates in some kind of religious awakening. Just what form this renewed religious impulse will take, no one can foresee. We, all of us, could be in for some shocking surprises.”

Well, in the decade since Kristol wrote that, we’ve seen some skirmishes in the culture wars, and whether they’re destined to grow more virulent or fade away is of huge importance to American artists and the institutions that support them, like the National Endowments.

It is inevitable that artists should be the targets of such fundamentalist anxieties, because it is in the nature of artists to push the frontiers of taste and morality, to show society both its pieties and its hypocrisies.

In 2004, the Rand Corporation published an influential study of how exposure to art served democracy by helping citizens better understand unfamiliar people, attitudes, and cultures. Rand added that art “can be unsettling and provocative, and can lead us to question our routine and conventional perceptions of the world, forcing us to look with fresh eyes on private and public questions involving sexuality, love, marriage, family, spirituality, slavery, segregation, gender, ethnicity, colonialism, and war, just to name a few of the more obvious.”

Many of those categories can be deeply unsettling to people with fixed ideas on how their God intended us to live.

But our new fundamentalism comes centuries after two developments in Christianity that have not occurred within Islam. The first was the Protestant Reformation, a long and often violent struggle to end the exclusive authority of Rome. It not only opened Christianity to religious dissent, but it also fed a growing resistance to arbitrary political authority. That meant an end, ultimately, to the divine right of kings and the rise of democracy. In many Muslim countries, kings or authoritarian rulers are still in charge and democracy is rudimentary. Experience in Iraq shows the difficulty of trying to introduce it suddenly.

There are Muslims who want to see a reformation within Islam, to allow more open questioning of its restrictive lifestyles, especially for women. One of the most visible is a young Canadian woman named Irshad Manji, who frequently receives death threats for her outspokenness. She appears in a documentary series called *America at a Crossroads*, as Jane mentioned, that I am hosting next month on PBS. Incidentally, one of the hours in that series, “Operation Homecoming,” began with an NEA commission to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan to write about their experiences. A book was

published and now some of those pieces have been made into a documentary.

Two centuries after the Reformation, Christianity endured another intellectual cataclysm, the European Enlightenment, which produced the ideas and ideals on which the United States was founded. As digested by the founding fathers, those ideals are enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Indeed, at this lectern two years ago, Ken Burns said that Thomas Jefferson “distilled a century of Enlightenment thinking” in one remarkable sentence, beginning “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

One of the most radical ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers was the separation of church and state, and in America that translated into explicit guarantees of not only the freedom to practice any religion or none, but an absolute proscription against proposing any one religion by the state.

Separation of church and state, in Enlightenment thinking, meant that people should be governed by rational thought rather than the religious world view. Rational thought meant the rationality of science and the scientific method. Americans have been struggling with that one ever since, especially since the march of modernism, and of urban living, of galloping progress in science and technology has seemed, to religious people, to make American society ever more secular, godless, and willing to cast aside any firm attachment to morality based on religion.

An excellent example is the struggle over evolution, whether it should be taught in public schools, whether creationism should be taught instead or taught alongside it. Nothing better illustrates the tension between science and religion than Darwin's electrifying idea that humans have evolved from a long line of lower species, and were therefore not created as the Bible says, by God.

Not since the Scopes trial of 1925 has this issue aroused such wide controversy. Incidentally, the play about that trial, *Inherit the Wind*, is being revived on Broadway shortly, with Christopher Plummer and Brian Dennehy.



Steven D. Spiess, Jane Alexander, Robert MacNeil, and Robert L. Lynch

It must astonish the world that America, the world's most powerful nation, whose hard power rests, to a large degree, on its brilliance in science and technology, a nation that still wins a lion's share of Nobel Prizes for Science, would consider opening its educational system to challenging notions that have been settled by science for generations, would insist in some cases on putting into the minds of its children, who are not exactly leading the world in science as it is, the notion that the biblical account of creation is to be preferred.

In 1991, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences undertook a global survey entitled “The Fundamentalism Project.” In one chapter, “Christian Fundamentalism and Education in the United States,” Susan Rose wrote: “Until the 1970s, fundamentalist perspectives were largely ignored by mainstream education. But during the last two decades, fundamentalists have mobilized, voicing their grievances and extending the controversy over public education from the classroom to the courtroom. As a consequence, they have had a significant impact on religious and secular schooling in the United States. Across the nation, public schools have been pressured to remove books from classrooms and libraries, to teach scientific creationism as well as evolution, to eliminate sex education, to adopt textbooks that reinforce ‘traditional’ American values, and to avoid ‘controversial’ subjects in the classroom.”

The American Civil Liberties Union, which tracks these issues, notes two trends: that recent textbooks seem to be sliding toward respect for intelligent design and, in the classroom, teachers are adopting an increasingly skeptical approach in teaching evolution, saying it is only a theory.

But there is evidence that the effort to defeat evolution has faltered. That drive to force the teaching of scientific creationism or intelligent design has lost a lot of its impetus, following a court challenge and a decisive defeat in Delaware. There may be others, but the National Center for Science Education can name only one, Blount County, TN, where it is sure the school board has a policy that intelligent design has to be taught alongside evolution.

There have been many other manifestations of Christian religious influence on public policy: from the Terri Schiavo case to support for those who believe that Judea and Sumeria belong to Israel by Biblical right, to the New Jersey high school teacher recently taped by a student saying, “only Christians can go to heaven,” to the ongoing efforts to limit abortion rights, to federal restrictions on research using stem cells beyond a certain approved number to prevent the use of embryonic cells from aborted fetuses. But the pressure to continue research that might prove effective in treating some intractable medical conditions has been so great that a number of states have gone ahead and approved their own research.

What interests me more than individual examples is the different idea of intellectual freedom than is usually celebrated in this country. John Garvey, in that same study of fundamentalism I’ve cited, writes that fundamentalists are devoted

to the idea of freedom, but that “freedom is ultimately submission, even if it is voluntary submission. True freedom must not be confused with license, with actions that are inconsistent with God’s will.” That would make perfect sense to the Muslim fundamentalists whom we both fear today and scorn for seeming to live in the Middle Ages.

Garvey quotes Jerry Falwell as saying, “Freedom of speech does not include perverting and sickening the moral appetites of men and women. Liberty cannot be represented by sexual license.” Yet that is precisely what freedom of speech does mean, however distasteful a particular subject may be to any of us. And that is what creative freedom means, to think beyond the safe, the respectable, and the orthodox. That is what the Reformation meant. That is what the Enlightenment meant. It may even be what disobedience in the Garden of Eden meant. I always thought it was what the United States of America meant, what the music of Gershwin meant.

Fundamentalism arises from insecurity, from fear that the dynamics of a multiethnic, multi-face society will undermine the certainties of one set of beliefs, the comforts of known morality will cause defections, will dissolve the group, will weaken the power of its leaders, their sway over their flock, their material power, their fundraising. And that is a risk in this society—that assimilation, intermarriage, free thinking, will erode the purity of one sect—but that too is the essence of America. It happened from the earliest colonial days and happens today. We are a society constantly evolving.

I see evidence that the battle may have peaked for now, in part, because the national anxiety created by the attacks of 9/11 and the hot wars we are still fighting in response may have weakened the appeal of more spiritual battles. In his *Alexandria Quartet*, the set of novels about life in that city, Lawrence Durrell writes about the psychological effect of World War II on his collections of exotic expatriates, many of them artists. The narrator feels the need to console a friend from France, which has just fallen to the Germans, thinking, “France itself would never truly die so long as artists were being born into the world. But this world of armies and battles

“AND THAT IS WHAT CREATIVE FREEDOM MEANS, TO THINK BEYOND THE SAFE, THE RESPECTABLE AND THE ORTHODOX...I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS WHAT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA MEANT, WHAT THE MUSIC OF GERSHWIN MEANT.”

—ROBERT MACNEIL

was too intense and too concrete to make the thought seem more than secondary importance, for art really means freedom, and it was this which was at stake.”

It may seem to many Americans that events in this world today are too intense and too concrete to make concerns like art more than of secondary importance, that the so-called war on terror should have precedence over everything else. I heard a Washington insider say the other day that Iraq had sucked the oxygen out of every other issue here in the capital.

And it may be for the moment that Iraq has sucked the oxygen out of the religious right, which polls show included a lot of people who supported the war. Their leaders recently held a conference in Florida to complain that there is no presidential candidate whom they can comfortably support.

As William Safire told you last year and Leonard Garment earlier, President Nixon came to the support of the NEA because he thought supporting art would help bring Americans together from the cruel divisions created by the Vietnam War, even though Nixon told Safire, “there are no votes in it for me.” Well, the country is again divided over an unpopular war. And President Bush has been supporting modest increases, four million dollars a year, in NEA funding. As they say in New York, “go figure.”

The NEA survived the 1990s, and even though its funding has been reduced, if you take the total it has spent over the 41 years of its existence, it comes to almost \$5 billion. Since every NEA dollar leverages seven more dollars, that means approximately \$40 billion has been pumped into the arts across America and pumped into as many local corners of America as Nancy Hanks and her successors could find.

President Kennedy is often quoted in support of the arts. Less often quoted is what President Johnson said when the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities were inaugurated: “Our civilization will largely survive in the works of our creation. There is a quality in art which speaks across the gulf, dividing man from man, and nation from

nation, and century from century. That quality confirms the faith that our human hopes may be more enduring than our conflicting hostilities. Even now men of affairs are struggling to catch up with the insights of great art. The stakes may well be the survival of civilization.”

I think art can be an important weapon in the struggle against Islamic fundamentalism, which ultimately has to be a struggle in soft power, a struggle of ideas, if we can keep our own fundamentalist urges in perspective. In 1943, Winston Churchill warned that “the empires of the future are empires of the mind.”

“Freedom to Create,” the MacDowell slogan for this centennial year, carries a powerful message of American freedom. Washington took that to heart during the Cold War when the dissemination of American art overseas got federal funding as a major weapon against the propaganda and disinformation of the Soviet Union—our poets, our playwrights, and always most popular, our jazz.

I am glad that Laura Bush and Secretary of State Rice have launched the Global Cultural Initiative to increase exchanges among artists of many nations, beginning with films. It may take much more, perhaps on the scale of something like a whole new Fulbright program, to make a real impact on current global perceptions of the United States. And such a change in perceptions probably won’t happen until after we have decided as a nation to rely primarily again on our soft power—our ideals, our intellectual freedom, our creativity in all fields—to demonstrate what being the only superpower really means.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who was the first Nancy Hanks lecturer 20 years ago, reminded us shortly before his recent death of something John F. Kennedy said in his first year in the White House, the year of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the building of the Berlin Wall: “We must face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, that we are only six percent of the world’s population, that we cannot impose our will on the other 94 percent of mankind, that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity, and that therefore there cannot be an American solution to every world problem.”

Thank you.

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY STEVEN D. SPIESS



Steven D. Spiess, Chair, Americans for the Arts Board of Directors

Thank you so much to Robert MacNeil for presenting his thoughts tonight on creative freedom. One more round of applause, please.

Thank you so much. I'm Steve Spiess, the chairman of the board of directors of Americans for the Arts.

Tonight, I have the privilege of introducing our final performance by celebrated composer and MacDowell fellow, Anthony Davis.

A Grammy-nominated composer, Mr. Davis has distinguished himself as a performer on the cutting edge of improvised music. He is currently a professor of music at the University of California, San Diego and last year was awarded a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation.

Mr. Davis has composed four well-known operas concerning modern-day life: *X: The Life and Times of Malcom X*, *Under the Double Moon*, *Tania*, and *Amistad*. His works have been commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Atlanta Symphony, the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, Kansas City Symphony, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and he is the compos-

er for the critically acclaimed Broadway production of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, Parts One and Two.

Many organizations have honored Mr. Davis, including the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the New York Foundation of the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Arts Council, the Carey Trust, Chamber Music America, Meet-the-Composer Wallace Fund, and Opera America.

Please join me in welcoming Anthony Davis.

[Whereupon, Anthony Davis performed.]

Thank you very much, Anthony. That was wonderful. That brings us very close to the close of our event. I just want to thank once again all of tonight's presenters and the performers, and I want to give a special thanks to the Kennedy Center for once again continuing to the host the Hanks lecture series every year.

A round of applause for the Kennedy Center.

And finally, I'd like to invite all of you to join us at a special reception upstairs with our presenters and speakers tonight. There are volunteers at the back of the auditorium who will direct you there. I'd like to thank you all very much for coming tonight, for your support of everything that we do at Americans for the Arts and the Nancy Hanks lecture series, and we hope to see you again here next year. Thank you. Good night.



Grammy-nominated musician Anthony Davis performs.

ABOUT THE LECTURER



Robert MacNeil is Chairman of the Board of The MacDowell Colony, the nation's first artist residency program, which is celebrating its centennial in 2007. The MacDowell Colony awards fellowships to artists of exceptional talent, providing time, space, and an inspiring environment in which to do creative work.

Born and educated in Canada, Robert MacNeil was a journalist for 40 years with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Reuters News Agency, NBC News, and the BBC, culminating in 20 years as Executive Editor of the *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* on PBS. He is the author of three novels and three memoirs, *The Right Place at the Right Time*, *Wordstruck*, and *Looking for My Country*. He is co-author of *The Story of English* and hosted the award-winning BBC-PBS documentary series of the same name. The sequel, *Do You Speak American?*, was broadcast in 2005 when the companion book was published.

Mr. MacNeil is a trustee of the Freedom Forum Newseum, the world's first museum of journalism, now under construction in Washington, DC, and co-chairman of the Council of Conservators of the New York Public Library. He and his wife, Donna, live in New York and Nova Scotia.

The MacDowell Colony

In 2007, The MacDowell Colony, America's first multidisciplinary artist residency program, marks its centennial with a yearlong celebration of creativity. Over the course of these 100 years, nearly 6,000 exceptionally talented composers, writers, visual artists, architects, interdisciplinary artists, and filmmakers have been awarded fellowships to the colony—located in Peterborough, NH—so that they would have uninterrupted time and private space in which to do creative work. In 1997, MacDowell, a pioneering model for artist support, was awarded the National Medal of Arts, “for nurturing and inspiring many of this century's finest artists.” The works of Colony Fellows immeasurably enrich our nation's cultural life.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS



Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America. With more than 45 years of service, it is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. With offices in Washington, DC, and New York City, and more than 5,000 organizational and individual members across the country, Americans for the Arts is focused on three primary goals: 1) to foster an environment in which the arts can thrive and contribute to the creation of more livable communities; 2) to generate more public- and private-sector resources for the arts and arts education; and 3) to build individual appreciation of the value of the arts. To achieve its goals, Americans for the Arts partners with local, state, and national arts organizations; government agencies; business leaders; individual philanthropists; educators; and funders throughout the country. It provides extensive arts industry research and information and professional development opportunities for community arts leaders via specialized programs and services, including a content-rich website and an annual national convention.

Local arts agencies throughout the United States comprise Americans for the Arts' core constituency. A variety of unique partner networks with particular interests like public art, united arts fundraising, arts education, and emerging arts leaders are also supported. Through national visibility campaigns and local outreach, Americans for the Arts strives to motivate and mobilize opinion leaders and decision-makers who can make the arts thrive in America. Americans for the Arts produces annual events that heighten national visibility for the arts, including The National Arts Awards honoring private-sector leadership and the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards (in cooperation with The U.S. Conference of Mayors) honoring elected officials in local, state, and federal government. Americans for the Arts also hosts Arts Advocacy Day annually on Capitol Hill, convening arts advocates from around the country to advance federal support of the arts, humanities, and arts education. For more information about Americans for the Arts, please visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org.



The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, overlooking the Potomac River in Washington, DC, is America's living memorial to President Kennedy. Under the guidance of President Michael M. Kaiser, the seven theaters and stages of the nation's busiest performing arts facility with audiences totaling two million; Center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts welcome 20 million more. Now in its 35th season, the Center presents the greatest examples of music, dance, and theater; supports artists in the creation of new work; and serves the nation as a leader in arts education. With its artistic affiliate, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Center's achievements as a commissioner, producer, and nurturer of developing artists have resulted in over 200 theatrical productions, dozens of new ballets, operas, and musical works. The Center has produced and co-produced *Annie*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The King and I*, the American premiere of *Les Misérables*, the highly acclaimed Sondheim Celebration as well as the three-play *Tennessee Williams Explored*. The Center's Emmy and Peabody Award-winning *The Kennedy Center Honors* is broadcast annually on the CBS Network; *The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize* is seen on PBS.

Each year more than 11 million people nationwide, take part in innovative and effective education programs initiated by the Center—performances, lecture/demonstrations, open rehearsals, dance and music residencies, master classes, competitions for young actors and musicians, and workshops for teachers. These programs have become models for communities across the country. As part of the Kennedy Center's Performing Arts for Everyone outreach program, the Center and the National Symphony Orchestra stage more than 400 free performances of music, dance, and theater by artists from throughout the world each year on the Center's main stages, and every evening at 6:00 p.m. on the Millennium Stage. The Center also offers the nation's largest Specially Priced Tickets program for students, seniors, persons with disabilities, military personnel, and others with fixed low incomes.

ABOUT THE **NANCY HANKS LECTURE**

Nancy Hanks was president of Americans for the Arts (formerly the American Council for the Arts) from 1968–69, when she was appointed chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, a position she held for eight years. Until her death in 1983, she worked tirelessly to bring the arts to prominent national consciousness. During her tenure at the National Endowment for the Arts, the agency's budget grew 1,400 percent. This year marks the 20th Annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy, established to honor her memory and to provide an opportunity for public discourse at the highest levels on the importance of the arts and culture to our nation's well-being.

PAST NANCY HANKS LECTURERS

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2006 | William Safire, journalist |
| 2005 | Ken Burns, documentary filmmaker |
| 2004 | Doris Kearns Goodwin, journalist and author |
| 2003 | Robert Redford, artist and activist |
| 2002 | Zelda Fichandler, Founding Director of Arena Stage in Washington, DC, and Chair of the Graduate Acting Program at New York University |
| 2001 | Frank Rich, op-ed columnist for <i>The New York Times</i> |
| 2000 | Terry Semel, past Chairman and Co-CEO of Warner Bros. and Warner Music Group |
| 1999 | Wendy Wasserstein, playwright |
| 1998 | Dr. Billy Taylor, jazz musician and educator |
| 1997 | Alan K. Simpson, former U.S. Senator |
| 1996 | Carlos Fuentes, author |
| 1995 | Winton Malcolm Blount, Chairman of Blount, Inc., philanthropist, and former U.S. Postmaster General |
| 1994 | David McCullough, historian |
| 1993 | Barbara Jordan, former U.S. Congresswoman |
| 1992 | Franklin D. Murphy, former CEO of the Times Mirror Company |
| 1991 | John Brademas, former U.S. Congressman and President Emeritus of New York University |
| 1990 | Maya Angelou, poet |
| 1989 | Leonard Garment, Special Counsel to Presidents Nixon and Ford |
| 1988 | Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., historian |

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS LEADERSHIP

As the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in this country, Americans for the Arts works with a broad range of leadership, including corporate, philanthropic, and artistic leaders from across the country. Under the leadership of President and CEO Robert L. Lynch, Americans for the Arts' governing and advisory bodies and their leadership are as follows:

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