



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Americans for the Arts Awards Scholarships to Eight Emerging Leaders

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, received support from the Joyce Foundation to re-grant professional development funds to emerging arts leaders of color from the Great Lakes region. Eight emerging arts leaders were awarded grants to partially off-set the costs to attend three Americans for the Arts events: Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, DC (which took place March 31–April 1, 2008), the Annual Convention in Philadelphia (June 20–22, 2008), and the National Arts Marketing Project Conference in Houston (November 9–2, 2008). The eight awardees are: Julie Bates, Kim Dabbs, Joel Díaz, Kamilah Henderson, Hoang Nguyen, Witt Siasoco, Rupal Soni, and Adam Thurman.

The Emerging Leader program at Americans for the Arts works to identify and cultivate the next generation of arts leaders in America. Through special meetings and networking opportunities taking place across the country, the program encourages new arts leaders to participate fully in the field. Emerging arts leaders bring fresh perspectives, new ideas, and vibrant energy to careers that build their foundation on creativity and council members are committed to enhancing that leadership capacity. New professionals are valuable to the arts community, and the members of the Emerging Leader Council are dedicated to see that the support for the arts continues for generations to come.

Joyce Foundation scholarship awardees were given \$2,500 each to cover the cost of attending the three Americans for the Arts events. Following each convening, awardees will write a reflection of their experience. In addition, Americans for the Arts works to connect scholarship awardees with mentors in their communities.

"We are proud to contribute to the advancement of these bright and talented arts leaders," stated Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "Dedicated and ambitious leaders are essential to the success and growth of arts and culture in this country."

Brief bios of the scholarship awardees follow:

Julie Bates

Literary Programs Manager, Intermedia Arts - Minneapolis, MN

Julie Bates is a Twin Cities writer and spoken word poet with a passion for community arts administration. She currently works as Literary Programs Manager for Intermedia Arts, a multidisciplinary, multicultural arts center in Minneapolis. She manages the highly successful literary and spoken word programs that have become a part of Intermedia through its merger with SASE: The Write Place in 2005. Bates studied creative writing at Metropolitan State University.

Kim Dabbs

Executive Director, Michigan Youth Arts Association - Birmingham, MI

Kim Dabbs is the Executive Director of the Michigan Youth Arts Association (MYAA), a nonprofit arts education organization that plans and produces the Michigan Youth Arts Festival. Following the completion of her Art History degree from Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University and receiving her M.P.A. in Non-Profit Management from the University of Michigan in 2005, she accepted her current position at MYAA.

Joel Díaz

Outreach & Marketing Manager, Wexner Center for the Arts - Columbus, OH

Joel Díaz joined the staff of Wexner Center for the Arts in 2006 as the Outreach & Marketing Manager. In this role, Joel spearheads university and community outreach initiatives, working to develop new and diverse audiences, and strategizing with the marketing team on ad placement and marketing tools. Díaz is a graduate of Ohio State University's Max M. Fisher College of Business.

Kamilah Henderson

Program Manager, Arts of Citizenship at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, MI

Kamilah Henderson is Program Manager of Arts of Citizenship at the University of Michigan, where she is responsible for managing the faculty grant program and co-planning capacity-building programs for faculty, students and community partners in public scholarship. She

engages with community-based organizations to match their interest for projects with that of faculty and graduate students. On fellowship, Henderson earned an M.F.A. in Dance Performance and Community Engagement at The Ohio State University in 2005.

Hoang Nguyen

Project Manager, Arts in Transit Metro - St. Louis, MO

Hoang Nguyen is a project manager at Metro, Arts in Transit. Metro owns and operates the St. Louis Metropolitan region's public transportation system. As project manager, Hoang oversees such projects and programs as the Art Bus Fleet and Poetry in Motion. She also manages special projects and temporary installations, and most recently, the installation of Arts in Transit's latest work of public art at one of Metro's newest MetroLink stations. Hoang studied Graphic Design and Sculpture at Washington University in St. Louis, where she graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture.

Witt Siasoco

Program Manager of Teen Programs, Walker Art Center - Minneapolis, MN

Siasoco joined the Walker Art Center in 1998 to work with the Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council, a visionary program designed to connect teenagers with contemporary art and artists. Formerly, Siasoco worked as a coordinator of the Young Artist Cabaret at Intermedia Arts, a monthly open mic for young artists and a Grantmakers in the Arts Assistant for Arts Midwest, a regional arts organization.

Rupal Soni

Program Director, Neighborhood Writing Alliance - Chicago, IL

Rupal Soni is a multi-disciplinary artist and community organizer who uses art and creativity to build community and empower marginalized voices. She is currently the Program Director of the Neighborhood Writing Alliance, an organization that provokes dialogue and promotes change by creating opportunities for marginalized adults in Chicago neighborhoods to write, publish, and perform works about their lives. She is also the associate editor of their award-winning publication, the Journal of Ordinary Thought.

Adam Thurman

Director of Marketing and Communications, Court Theatre - Chicago, IL

Adam Thurman is the Director of Marketing and Communications for Court Theatre in Chicago. Previously he was the Executive Director of the Congo Square Theatre. During his tenure at Congo Square the company experienced significant increases in both earned and contributed revenue. Thurman holds a B.S. in Marketing from Eastern Illinois University as well as a law degree and Masters Degree in Human Resources from the University of Illinois.

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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