



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Americans for the Arts and the Redford Center Release Recommendations from the Third Annual National Arts Policy Roundtable

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Redford Center Founder Robert Redford and Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, today announce policy recommendations resulting from the third annual Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable, entitled *The Arts and Civic Engagement: Strengthening the 21st Century Community*. Twenty-nine leaders from business, government, philanthropy, education, and the arts convened at the Sundance Preserve in September 2008 to address the unique role the arts play in fostering civic engagement and providing a creative space to discuss difficult social issues.

“Time and time again, it’s been shown that art and culture renew communities, foster innovative forms of expression and enrich democracies in ways that nothing else can,” said Robert Redford, co-convenor of the National Arts Policy Roundtable. “Art, in all its forms, says much about us as a people, a culture and a society, and how we let it take flight will determine much about the health and character of America.”

The Roundtable topic was selected through recommendations developed following its inaugural convening in 2006. Participants declared that in order to create the society we envision, it is important for citizens and the public- and private-sectors to work together in support of “advancing a cultural climate in which civic life may thrive.” This year’s goal was to better articulate how the arts can help create a more vital and participatory civic culture in our communities, workplaces, and nation.

Members of the Roundtable made recommendations in four key areas to help the arts achieve their full potential in this role:

1. Opportunities and Resources

Identify, develop and advocate for public and private sector policies, practices and initiatives that

advance the role of the arts in fostering citizen participation and better utilize the skills of artists and cultural organizations in helping individuals engage in civic and community life.

2. Research and Evaluation

Build a body of compelling stories and evidence that demonstrates how the arts foster civic engagement and contribute to healthy communities, healthy work environments, and a healthy democracy.

3. Messaging and Casemaking

Generate greater visibility for how “arts-based” civic engagement strategies fuel community building and problem solving.

4. Strategic Alliances

Advance strategic alliances across sectors that promote and establish common cause between the arts and proponents of civic dialogue, deliberation, and engagement.

“We are happy to see that the spirit and substance of the Roundtable’s recommendations are already being put into action by community arts groups and philanthropic organizations, as well as the federal government,” said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “The work of our Animating Democracy program will allow us to continue to strengthen the capacity of artists and cultural institutions for this work by providing training tools, dedicated research, and public policy support.”

The annual National Arts Policy Roundtable is the culminating event of a year-long discussion with experts and stakeholders and research on the topic by Americans for the Arts. Through generous funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, leaders on the issue from Public Agenda, American Public Media, and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) worked closely with this year’s Roundtable in helping to bring different perspectives and shed new light on the topic.

The Americans for the Arts National Arts Policy Roundtable is an annual forum of national leaders who share a commitment to the arts and a willingness to meet and recommend policies critical to the advancement of American culture. The Roundtable is composed of distinguished individuals who serve at the highest levels of business, government, philanthropy, education and the arts. Americans for the Arts and The Redford Center at the Sundance Preserve are co-conveners of the Roundtable—teaming the two preeminent national organizations dedicated to advancing the arts and creative industries in the United States.

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.

In 2007, the Redford family established the **Redford Center** as the focal point for the family's ongoing commitment to provoking change in some of the most compelling issues of our time. In the beginning, Robert Redford intended Sundance not only to preserve and protect wilderness, but also to be innovative and creative in the world of ideas. At its essence, the Redford Center is a year-round haven for independent thinking, inspired creativity and social change - all in one glorious setting. Additional information is available at www.redfordcenter.org.

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