

## **Kentucky Arts Council Board Meeting**

Headley-Whitney Museum Lexington, Ky

June 14, 2024, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Staff:** Chris Cathers, Sarah Schmitt, Nicole Griffin, Macie Lowe, Tamara Coffey, Cynthia Warner, Mark Brown, Brett Ratliff, and Dave Blevins

**Board:** Lennon Michalski, Dior Cotten, Mary Michael Corbett, Randall Vaughn, Marcheta Sparrow, Elizabeth Griffith Mudd, Everett McCorvey, Janel Samuels, Brook Forrest White, Margaret Prim and Wally Dant.

### **Meeting Began at 1:30 p.m.**

**Everett McCorvey** calls meeting to order. Asks Chris to give the land acknowledgement.

#### **Chris Cathers: Land Acknowledgement**

“A Land Acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

Today over 170 American Indian Tribes are represented by their members living and working in the Commonwealth. Let us honor those who were here and those who are here now and build on the legacy of stewardship of the land they left for us unto the 7th generation.”

#### **Juneteenth Acknowledgement**

“It is fitting to acknowledge that we are meeting five days before Juneteenth, the day slavery ended in the Confederacy in 1865. Specifically, it marks the day liberation came to enslaved African Americans in Texas, two-and-a-half years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the executive order known as the Emancipation Proclamation. It is a day of celebration, to be sure, but a reminder that justice delayed is justice denied. This year, on Juneteenth and every day going forth, we hope that the tragedies resulting from police violence and other senseless acts of racial hatred will be the impetus for action that leads to a justice that is long overdue.”

**McCorvey** asks to take attendance on Zoom: Dior Cotten, Mary Michael Corbett, Elizabeth Griffith Mudd, Wally Dant, and Janel Samuels. Acknowledges people around the room: Tamara Coffey, Lennon Michalski, Randall Vaughn, Brook Forrest White, Randall Vaughn, Marcheta Sparrow, Everett McCorvey, Chris Cathers, Macie Lowe, Sarah M. Schmitt, Mark Brown, Cynthia Warner, Nicole Griffin, Dave Blevins, Lori Meadows, and Teresa Day.

Thanks everyone and calls for an approval of minutes. Motion for approval: Marcheta moves and Randall seconds. All in favor and the minutes are carried.

**Cathers:** Thanks Christina Bell at the Headley-Whitney Museum for allowing KAC to have the meeting at the museum. Christina makes remarks of being thrilled to have KAC; says Headley-Whitney have been

there for 56 years from 1968. Four Kentucky artists are in the current exhibit, “Radiance”. These artists have been working all their lives and sharing their art with the community.

**Cathers continued:** Welcomes Brett Ratliff to the Kentucky Arts Council as the arts organization director. Brett is a 2022 United States Artists Fellow in Traditional Arts. He teaches and performs traditional Appalachian musical styles and repertoire, especially mountain banjo styles of his native eastern Kentucky coalfields. Brett has been invited to share music and stories of his home at several national and international venues. He has also performed on more than a dozen recordings. Born and raised in Van Lear, Ky., Brett has spent his career as a community arts organizer throughout eastern Kentucky, supporting infrastructure for the practice of folk and traditional arts, resulting in more than 20 years of experience teaching, practicing, and programming, with a special focus on the cultural diversity of these localized traditions. Throughout his career Brett has taught and served these traditions both within Kentucky and at the national and international levels, including guest lectures at institutions like Wesleyan University, Berea College, Stanford University, and the University of Kentucky, in addition to cultural exchange lectures and performances among other folk arts communities in Mexico, Canada, England and Ireland. Brett also maintains an active national service profile, including juried membership with the Alliance of California Traditional Arts Tap Root Initiative and as a cultural arts consultant for the National Parks Department. As arts organization director Brett will work to build expansive coalitions and partnerships across the Commonwealth, encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion while cultivating a sense of community and place.

#### **Staff Reports:**

Introduction of Brett Ratliff, Arts Organization Director, Sarah Schmitt, Cynthia Warner, Mark Brown, and Tamara Coffey

**Brett Ratliff:** “It’s a lifelong relationship that has worked up to a position in the arts council.” First met Mark (Brown) in the late 90s.

Cathers brings up the Kentucky Arts Partnership (KAP) grant and asks Sarah to explain these grants.

**Sarah Schmitt:** Explains that they were there for the first part of the cycle and had the exact same number of organizations that applied, 107. Not a lot to say in terms of revenue. Expresses those bad pandemic years are beginning to fall off. The organizations can retain financial reporting. Working on the guidelines being agile, respecting their challenges while maintaining the integrity of the program. Brett joined us in less than a week before the first panels began. Brett handled these changes well. Thanks board members who served as chairs, Marcheta, Randall, Lynn, Stephanie. All went well with lots of great comments. Six panels were divided into tiers. Passes to Brett.

**Ratliff:** Since we’ve gone through the panel process, he’s been able to go through the data, find trends, and get to know the organizations better.

**Cathers:** Gives thanks to Brett, Sarah and Macie for their collaborative effort and made the panels happen smooth. Asks Cynthia to report next.

**Cynthia Warner:** “The last time we spoke we just finished state finals for **Poetry Out Loud**, Lexi Wilson is our state champion. In April, Cynthia went to Washington, D.C., for the Nationals competition. Lexi did not place but her original poetry got runner up in the national finals. This is very nice because this is her

original work. Quite a fun experience. This past week, she and her teacher were asked to speak at the teacher's conference in Lexington and got to recite her poems and original work. Believes more teachers will apply because of this next fiscal year. Secondly, we had the Teaching Artist Directory with 13 applications which was a large jump from previous years. Teachers were juried in our directory with various disciplines and are a part of our Teaching Art Together program. Panelists from other states as well as Chris and Macie. Marcheta was our chair for the **Teaching Art Together** and **TranspARTation**. We had one application for the Teaching Art Together program which was Dixie Magnet in Lexington. Hopefully next year there will be more applications which provide artist residences that work with students and learn artistic skills. TranspARTation grant had 11 schools apply that can go on field trips with organizations in our TranspARTation Directory and the Kentucky Arts Council pays for the mileage so that they can go on these trips."

**Lennon Michalski** asks Cynthia when the next time is when the Teaching Artist can apply for the next cycle, which is next Spring.

**McCorvey** suggests Cynthia send this out to all board members so that they can share when applications open to more schools.

**Mark Brown:** Discusses **Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeships**, for which we had 13 applications of all which were approved. This is the most we've had in the past. The applications come from all over the commonwealth including oral traditions, storytelling, music and dance, a wide array of artists. Continued support from the South Arts In these mountains program. Last year they supported two of our apprenticeships. Hopes to get an update on the potential support. Also the "Continent to Commonwealth" exhibit is coming to a close which he installed last week at the Paul Sawyer Public Library in Frankfort. Wrapping up a community scholars' series in Hazard, Ky., in partnership with the southeast Kentucky African American heritage center, a pilot program. Finally, a partnership with the Kentucky Historical Society: Kentucky History Day on June 1.

**Tamara Coffey:**

**Kentucky Writers' Day**, Wednesday, April 24, in the Brown-Forman Room at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History in Frankfort. Kentucky Poet Laureate Silas House was joined by former poets laureate Richard Taylor, Joe Survant, Maureen Morehead, Frank X Walker, George Ella Lyon and Crystal Wilkinson and well as the 2023 Kentucky Youth Poet Laureate Amy Roblero-Perez of Bardstown. There were around 30 people in attendance and the event was followed by a simple reception.

After lunch, the celebration continued with a 2-hour Kentucky Poets Laureate reading at the Paul Sawyer Public Library in Frankfort. All the poets who attended the Writers' Day event were there along with former poet laureate Jeff Worley. Our partnership with the Paul Sawyer Public Library makes it possible for people who genuinely enjoy literature to go beyond the very limited readings offered during our event. There were approximately 50 people in attendance.

**2025-2026 Kentucky Poet Laureate Nominations are open. Nominations will be accepted through Sept. 30.** We have included Spanish language guidelines and nomination form on the website. There's a link under News on the main page. Nominations are welcome from anyone in Kentucky or outside of the commonwealth. Nominees must be published authors of fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry and play or scriptwriting, who are full-time Kentucky residents.

**Kentucky Touring Grant**, panel met on May 1 on Zoom with Marcheta as the panel chair. We had received eight applications ranging from the eastern part of the commonwealth to the western part and a few in central Kentucky. Our panelists were well pleased with all the applications and scored all of them highly. Each of the organization received touring funds will present at least one Performing Artists Directory performer.

**Individual Artist Fellowship**, was open this year in three disciplines: media arts, musical composition and songwriting. Media arts received 10 applications, three were for the emerging artist award. Musical composition received two applications and songwriting received six. We combined musical composition and songwriting into one panel.

The musical composition and songwriting panel met on May 15 on Zoom with Lennon as panel chair. The panel was comprised of songwriters/composers from New York, Mississippi and California, each with different expertise and experience but all well qualified and eloquent in discussion of the applications.

The media arts panel was scheduled to meet on May 8. There were multiple scheduling conflicts which resulted in a decision to determine awards strictly by panelist scores. We've talked about transitioning to this type of panel review—similar to panel reviews by the National Endowment for the Arts and several other state arts agencies.

#### **Executive Directors Report – Chris Cathers**

“On Thursday, March 14, high school students from around the state competed at the **Poetry Out Loud** state championship at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History in Frankfort. This poetry recitation competition determined who would represent Kentucky at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals in Washington, D.C. The winner was Lexie Wilson of Williamstown High School. The runners-up were tied, with Bella Stone of Beechwood High School and Silas Coogle of George Rogers Clark High School both coming in second place. Congrats to these talented young people!

#### **Creative Industry Summit Series - Artist Talk With Ming Xuan Talley and Yanya Yang**

**Asia Institute-Crane House** Director Joel Buno facilitates a conversation with Ming Xuan Talley of Louisville and Yanya Yang of Lexington. Both artists' works appear in the “Continent to Commonwealth” exhibit, and both were recently commissioned to create portraits for the permanent exhibit in the Capitol, Kentucky Women Remembered.

We celebrated the best in Kentucky literature and the writers who contribute to our literary heritage on **Kentucky Writers' Day**, 10 a.m. April 24 at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History.

Amy Roblero-Perez, Kentucky's Youth Poet Laureate read an original poem. Silas House read from his work and updated us on his first year as Kentucky Poet Laureate. We heard readings from several former poet's laureate. That same day Paul Sawyier Public Library in Frankfort hosted the former poet's laureate for an afternoon of readings.

In celebration of Writers' Day, the arts council presented a podcast episode featuring Kentucky's Youth Poet Laureate.

Congratulations to the Southeast Kentucky African American Museum and Cultural Center for being named one of three recipients of a \$30,000 In These Mountains Infrastructure Grant from South Arts. The Southeast Kentucky African American Museum and Cultural Center will use In These Mountains Infrastructure funds to further their goals of identifying and perpetuating traditional arts and culture in the African-American community of Southeast Kentucky. The story of the African American in this region has been left untold; the history and culture is not taught or passed on to the next generation. They believe that if these voices do not speak, the sound of silence will prevail, and no one will know that there was (and is) a Black presence in these mountains. SEKAAMACC wants to tell their story in the context of the overall local history, re-inserting the pages back into the history book. Their goal is also to show how the cultures in this area intersect and examine what we share.

Even though the Kentucky Derby is over, you can still enjoy the Governor's Derby exhibit through July 1 in the State Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort. This year's theme is "Commonwealth Landscapes" and features the work of 45 artists from across the state. Visiting hours at the Capitol are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.

June 1 is Kentucky History Day, presented by our partners in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, the Kentucky Historical Society. The Kentucky Arts Council will be represented by several Kentucky Crafted artists showing and selling their work, as well as Kentucky folk artists Lavon Williams and Debra Oden-Williams. They will demonstrate traditional woodcarving and lead a safe carving activity for families.

And the next day, June 2, go to Kentucky Performing Arts in Louisville for the closing reception there for the "Continent to Commonwealth" traveling exhibit, featuring work by Asian and Asian American artists in Kentucky. Several exhibit artists will be at the reception to meet and chat about their work. Visitors will be treated to live performances by the River Lotus Lion Dancers, Cultura Philippines and Hui Kaululehua. The reception runs from 3-5 p.m. After "Continent to Commonwealth" ends its stay in Louisville, it will move to Paul Sawyier Public Library. The exhibit will be there from June 10 to July 22, when it will end its tour."

### **Accepting artwork for the Governor's Derby Exhibit**

Theme: Commonwealth Landscapes

Exhibit runs May 3 - July 1

Theme: Commonwealth Landscapes

From the Appalachian Mountains in the east, to the Mighty Mississippi in the west, and the cavernous karst lands and gorgeous gorges in between, Kentucky is filled with beautiful and inspiring landscapes. The arts council invites artists to submit work that captures the many natural wonders that spread across the Bluegrass State.

**McCorvey:** Amazed by how many grants and programs the arts council is spreading throughout the state. It is important because it makes the work of the arts council visible. KAC can show the type of work we do then we can share the request of more funds. Expresses excitement; thanks Chris and staff. Recognizes the difficulty, especially with the low amount of money the arts council is getting from the legislature. Asks board to review abstentions and asks to make knowledge of when this happens.,

Explains importance of having a quorum so we can vote on these grants to get them out in the commonwealth.

### **Reviewing Grants:**

Beginning with the **Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship** grant. Reads the purpose of the grant, which is: The purpose of the Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Grant is to honor traditional artists and encourage the continuation of Kentucky's living traditional arts by funding master artists to teach skills and practices vital to their cultural heritage to less experienced artists within their communities. They can request up to \$4000. There were 13 applications, and the recommendations were to fund all that were submitted.

**Individual Artist Fellowship and Emerging Artist Award:** The purpose of the Individual Artist Fellowship program is to support Kentucky artists engaged in creating artwork of high quality and to recognize creative excellent in practicing, professional Kentucky artists.

The purpose of the Emerging Artist Award is to directly support the advancement and continuation of Kentucky emerging artists' careers and creative work.

Music Composition and Songwriting which the same purposes apply. Recommendation follows.

**Kentucky Touring Grant:** The Kentucky Touring (KYT) Grant is a matching grant that helps make quality public performances available to the people of the commonwealth. This program provides nonprofit organizations with support to book performers of dance, music, theatre, and storytelling a have been adjudicated into the Performing Artists Directory. Eligible presenters include nonprofit organizations with annual budgets under \$1,000,000 (including arts organizations, public libraries, churches, schools, cooperative extension offices, social service agencies, community-based organizations serving Kentuckians, health departments and institutions with a residential population); nonprofit presenting organizations based within colleges, universities and K-12 public schools with organizational budgets under \$1,000,000; and Kentucky state and city parks. Pleased to see the number of applications that came through.

**TEACHING ARTIST DIRECTORY PROGRAM** The Teaching Artists Directory is a roster of adjudicated artists of all disciplines, who not only produce high-quality work, but also have the skills and competencies to work in educational settings. The directory serves as a resource for schools and organizations who seek to employ professional teaching artists. Each artist receives a curated profile page on the Teaching Artists Directory featuring a biography, photos, residency plan examples, contact information and links to external content. All approved teaching artists are eligible for teaching residencies in Kentucky schools through the Teaching Art Together Grant. All except one was recommended.

**TEACHING ART TOGETHER Fall 2024** The Teaching Art Together Grant lets teachers collaborate with practicing, professional artists on the design and implementation of innovative one-to-four-week residencies. Residencies provide teachers with the tools to continue to incorporate the arts into the curriculum after the residency is completed. Had a wonderful panel with sibling art agencies throughout

the United States. The feedback that we get from the state agencies let us know we are doing a great job as they are taking notes on our process.

**Fall TranspARTation Grant** The TranspARTation Grant Program enables Kentucky teachers and schools to offer students high quality arts experiences by providing transportation funding. Grants will be based on the mileage from the school building to the arts organization or performance venue and the number of buses necessary.

**Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program — Tier 6** The purpose of the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program is to ensure that year-round participation in the arts is available to the people of Kentucky by providing unrestricted operating support to arts and cultural organizations.

The program provides support for the operating costs of arts and cultural organizations in the following tier:

Tier 6 - organizations with operating revenues of less than \$100,000

**Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program — Tier 5-6** The purpose of the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program is to ensure that year-round participation in the arts is available to the people of Kentucky by providing unrestricted operating support to arts and cultural organizations.

The program provides support for the operating costs of arts and cultural organizations in the following tiers:

Tier 5 - organizations with operating revenues of \$100,000 to \$499,999

Tier 6 - organizations with operating revenues of less than \$100,000

**Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program — Tier 5** The purpose of the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program is to ensure that year-round participation in the arts is available to the people of Kentucky by providing unrestricted operating support to arts and cultural organizations.

The program provides support for the operating costs of arts and cultural organizations in the following tier:

Tier 5 - organizations with operating revenues of \$100,000 to \$ 499,999

**Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program — Tiers 4-5** The purpose of the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program is to ensure that year-round participation in the arts is available to the people of Kentucky by providing unrestricted operating support to arts and cultural organizations.

The program provides support for the operating costs of arts and cultural organizations in the following tier:

Tier 4 - organizations with operating revenues of \$500,000 to \$999,999

Tier 5 - organizations with operating revenues of \$100,000 to \$ 499,999

**Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program — Tiers 3-4** The purpose of the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program is to ensure that year-round participation in the arts is available to the people of Kentucky by providing unrestricted operating support to arts and cultural organizations.

The program provides support for the operating costs of arts and cultural organizations in the following tiers:

Tier 3 - organizations with operating revenues of \$1,000,000 to \$2,499,999

Tier 4 - organizations with operating revenues of \$500,000 to \$999,999

**Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program — Tiers 1-3** The purpose of the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant Program is to ensure that year-round participation in the arts is available to the people of Kentucky by providing unrestricted operating support to arts and cultural organizations. The program provides support for the operating costs of arts and cultural organizations in the following tiers:

Tier 1 - organizations with operating revenues of \$5,000,000 or more

Tier 2 - organizations with operating revenues of \$2,500,000 to \$4,999,999

Tier 3 - organizations with operating revenues of \$1,000,000 to \$2,499,999

**This concludes all grants to be reviewed.**

**McCorvey:** Breaking the Kentucky Arts Partnership into tiers have made the organizations have the opportunity for funding, gave them an opportunity based on their budgets to be fully considered.

**Cathers:** That and the staff has done a tremendous job of evaluating to make sure this grant is really equitable and spread out amount the organizations.

**Schmitt:** Explains how the arts council divides funds for the KAP grant. A percentage is taken out of the organization's revenue of an average of 3 years.

**McCorvey:** Explains that the board must advocate to the legislatures about funding needed for the arts. The arts council staff cannot.



**Marcheta Sparrow:** The cut from the great recession in the cabinet. Asked to cut agency budgets 13 times. Three agencies were hit the hardest in terms of funding were the heritage, parks, and the arts council. We don't see the general assembly looking at that.

**McCorvey:** The historical perspective is important. Chris and the staff are doing a great job to make a case for the needs of funding through the grants and programs.

**Sparrow:** Explains that the arts are an important economic builder in Kentucky.

**McCorvey:** Asks for a motion to approve these grants. Randall Vaughn motions and Dior Cotten seconds. All in favor.

**McCorvey:** Asks board to review monitoring reports.

**Cathers:** Thanks Lori Meadows and Teresa Day from Kentuckians for the Arts (KFTA) to speak.

**Lori Meadows:** Passes out an overview and summary of the arts funding that was approved in the state budget this year. The total arts funding for the bill is under 8 million dollars. This speaks to Marcheta's point was included in the governor's budget was 2.5 million dollars, but it did not pass in the legislature. Explains that it is important for us not to be complacent. Makes note of Florida and Arizona state art agencies have been zeroed out in both states. Came as a great shock in Arizona. Some of the legislatures are supportive of the arts but it doesn't mean that they're supportive of the Kentucky arts council. The total amount for facility improvement was 21 million dollars. However, the arts council needs more money that provide over 100 organizations in Kentucky operating support. It's wonderful to see the funding but the arts councils funding needs to go up. The arts are seen more and more as tourism enhancements. The numbers really tell the story, so it's important for us to be aware and share.

**Terresa Day:** Encourages the board to talk to legislatures and KFTA is trying to meet with the legislatures this summer. Says to let them know what the arts council is what the arts council does, because some do not understand or how it works. Try to reach out to your legislatures. They recently had some meetings to reach out to promote NEA funding and arts education funding. In some cases, the legislatures were kind of encouraging to get them newsletters. Launching the newsletter in July. In Paducah July 11 to talk about challenges that the organizations have and how KFTA can help. Are they getting local or city or county funding.

**Sparrow:** recommends the board to become friends with the Kentucky league of cities and with the Kentucky association of county executives.

**McCorvey:** Makes note that at one point they had an elevator speech card to discuss when they have opportunities to meet legislatures. Asks anyone if they have any other comments to make in regard to the KFTA report. Then moves on to Around the Commonwealth to discuss things that are going on with the board.

**Dior Cotton:** A big shout out to the arts council for all that they do and there is representation for all that they do everywhere you go. Always warms their heart to see the efforts throughout the state. Also says that Kentucky Writers' Day was wonderful and beautiful. From a personal perspective, had a loss in the

family in the last few months. Work perspective, they will be celebrating their 20-year anniversary with the company. They are now a member of the Kentucky Derby board.

**Mary Michael Corbet:** Recovering from rotator cuff surgery. Lori gave an amazing report and asks Chris to make sure they all get a copy of the report.

**Margaret Primm:** They just wrapped up their 46 year (Pennyroyal Arts Council) and announced their 47th season. Kentucky Edition is on the road and will film on Wednesday so they're looking forward to that. Busy summer with art and theatre camp.

**Wally Dant:** Did get a chance to attend the Kentucky Writers Day in Frankfort and heard from Nelson Co. young poet laureate. Most encouraging to see youth picking up the ball and supporting the future. The youth and their involvement in the arts is really inspiring.

**Lennon Michalski:** Abstains from work with the living arts and science center because they just started a position this week. Anything related to that they can not vote on. Tonight they have figure art drawing classes.

**Randall Vaughn:** in 14 months will hopefully see a significant piece going up. Working with the committee to celebrate their anniversary in 2025.

**Brook Forrest White:** Honored to be here. Studio is hitting tourist season, in Louisville top ten tourist attractions which is glass blowing. Amazing to be a part and received a fellowship from the arts council years ago and it has really helped his art career throughout the years. Thinking of new ways to be involved.

**Marcheta Sparrow:** Nothing to report other than how impressed she is with the staff of the arts council and this grant process was a wonderful experience to be involved with and were so impressed with the people chosen to be in the process.

**McCorvey:** Thanks everyone, involved with it's a great night for singing at University of KentuckyK. Offering free tickets to the board and staff if interesting in attending. Performers plus orchestra with about 400 costumes in the show. Last Saturday Gov. Beshear came to serve as the guest orchestra conductor. The mayor also conducted. Randall's wife is the stage director for the show and has been there for 31 years. Wonderful opportunity for the students to be engaged. I think that is all the board members.

**Cathers:** Thanks everyone for coming out to the Headley-Whitney Museum. Special thanks to the staff for an amazing job. We are the fun cabinet to work in but also the fun cabinet to be involved in. We can work solutions no matter what the issue. Looks forward to what's ahead for us. Thanks Lori and Teresa for being there and speaking and reminds everyone if they haven't already to get a new license plate. Thanks the board for today's meeting and for approving the grants. Brings attention to some dates: The Derby's Exhibit, September board meeting. We also translated our poet laureate guidelines into Spanish. Thank you for attending today.

**McCorvey:** Thanks again, asks for any other comments, then asks for a motion to adjourn. Randall motions.