

A MESSAGE FROM JOHN M. ROHMAN CHAIR



John Rohman
Photo: Ken D'Errico

Having just returned from a National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) board meeting, I thought it might be interesting to share some of the activity that is happening on both the national and state levels. NASAA is the umbrella organization for all state arts agencies like the Maine Arts Commission.

When we compare Maine to other states, it's very rewarding to know that Maine's Governor and legislative leaders are very aware of the positive role the arts play not only in our Maine culture but also in the Maine economy. Yes, we have had to make cuts, and yes, we are very aware of the impact of the economy on our arts community, but at the same time we have the real sense that we are in this together with all Maine citizens.

The reality is that in some states the arts agencies have been bearing a disproportionate share of the economic pain. Dramatic reductions in these particular states will definitely hamper the rebound when it occurs (and it will occur!). Especially in the state of Maine with our "asset-based" economic development, the arts are extremely important to the eventual rebuilding efforts. I am pleased that we are all on the same page with this recognition.

By now most are aware of the success that was realized with the federal stimulus portion that was dedicated to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The result is that the Maine Arts Commission will realize a measurable increase in its ability to award grants. There are guideline limitations to these dollars, but the reality is 100% of this money does flow into Maine's art communities. In addition to the stimulus dollars, we are very hopeful that the NEA will receive an additional \$10 million from their normal federal appropriation. This again will translate into more money available for Maine artists and organizations. We are very fortunate to have strong support from both our senators and representatives on these federal issues. Representative Pingree is another in a long succession of supporters of the arts in Maine and the nation. Senators Snowe and Collins and Representative Michaud have made their support well known, and we can certainly call them real friends.

When then U.S. Congressman John Baldacci was in D.C., his expansion for our young artists with the Arts in the Capitol program was a real shot in the arm for these young artists. His support for us, together with Maine's First Lady, Karen Baldacci, has only gotten stronger.

In all times, but especially these economically tough ones, we are fortunate to have enlightened leaders that understand the strong social and economic value of the arts.

John M. Rohman Chair

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LETTER FROM
DONNA McNEIL
DIRECTOR



Donna McNeil
Photo: Shoshannah White

Greetings Friends,

On warm days, around 30 degrees, I can smell the sea and the composting earth and know spring is near. The nation too seems to be awakening from a national malaise, and we are all generally more upbeat—happier. These turnings will help us as we face the economic struggles ahead.

The cultural sector, except for film with attendance at record levels, is up 17.5% from last year and rising according to a front page March 1 article in the *New York Times*, has been hit early and hard by the economic downturn. Typically placed in the “discretionary spending” line, the gallery system is crashing and burning from Chelsea to Congress Street, with similar stories in the performing and literary arts. Artists are facing tough times with no social support systems like unemployment insurance or health care.

Each of us is aware of the local effect of the recession on the cultural sector, and we at the Maine Arts Commission are sensitive to the situation and expect the field may turn to government to assist them through this time. Private foundations and donors, previously reliable funding sources, have seen their charitable resources, typically invested in the stock market, decimated. Although grim, there is solace in our unity of purpose, empathy and resourcefulness, and some relief to be found.

The Maine Arts Commission has instituted a help site on the main page of our website. NYFAsource, www.nyfa.org, is also a wonderfully comprehensive site for artist assistance of all kinds. The Maine Arts Commission will also receive additional dollars from the National Endowment for the Arts to be distributed to the field for job creation. I heartily thank all of you that made the effort to help us advocate for the inclusion of the arts in the stimulus package. **It worked!** Please watch the grants page of our website, www.MaineArts.com, for details on the distribution of those additional funds.

Most importantly, as creative people we know how to cope in lean times. We are, after all, creative. It will serve us well as we employ our innovative skills to the times. We have the tools to retool—they are innate to our being—and I am certain that as in the depression of the 1930s, new ideas, new approaches and new materials will flourish. I believe the coming months and years will mark this period as a renaissance of fresh ideas, marking the early part of the 21st century as the start of a major shift in art making and art marketing. I am hopeful and forward-looking with great positivity and anticipation.

HAIL SPRING.

ARTS IN EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM PROVIDES VITAL, RICH ARTS EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS ACROSS MAINE.

The Maine Arts Commission's SMART grant program supports projects that broaden investigation and integration to support full access to learning in and through the arts. The intention of the SMART grant program is to fund projects, both in schools and in arts organizations that provide meaningful, rich and lasting arts education experiences for pre-K-12 students. These may include projects such as residencies, workshops, performances, exhibition tours, traditional arts demonstrations, mentorships and professional development for teachers.

The maximum award for SMART grant program projects is \$10,000. In this round the SMART grant program funded 10 projects that support full access to learning in and through the arts by emphasizing artistic excellence, and significant and inclusive planning.

One of the recipients of the SMART grant program was the Colby College Museum of Art! The Colby College Museum of Art *Lively Spaces* program allows participants to respond creatively to visual art through choreography, movement and dance, creative writing and theater. The program, now in its third year, is for children enrolled in the George J. Mitchell Elementary School's Before and After School Program and extends Colby Museum's educational programming into the summer. A public performance at the conclusion of *Lively Spaces* showcases the students' newly acquired knowledge and skills, and typically draws hundreds of community members to the museum. Colby Museum's Mirken Curator of Education Lauren Lessing reports that along with other programs, *Lively Spaces* accounts



Lively Spaces program

Working with instructors Kim Gordon and Wendy Baker, students in the 2008 program practice pose, gesture and expression with Alex Katz's painting *Pas de Deux* (1983, Oil on canvas, 132" x 360"). Gift of Paul J. Schupf, LL.D., '06, in Honor of Hugh J. Gourley III).

for the more than doubling the number of schoolchildren visiting the museum over the past two years.

Lessing went on to say, "We really appreciate this award and will certainly make the most of it. *Lively Spaces* actually supports two major goals: to teach art through movement and performance and to give the community a deeper sense of ownership in the Colby Museum collections. The museum holds these objects in trust for the people of Maine, and we want to strengthen our bond with the community. We are thrilled that the success of this program is assured to continue through the support of this grant.

"Students typically come in wide-eyed and interested, but they leave completely engaged and return to the pro-

gram with parents in tow. I want every student to graduate from school having known a deep relationship with this museum and possessing a foundation of art knowledge that was built here. We want public schools to feel the museum is like an arm of what they are doing. The SMART grant program makes an invaluable contribution to that reality."

Another successful applicant from this round of grants is **Add Verb Productions Arts in Education** for *Say It Loud*, a Maine-based youth education program that uses hip-hop to break social, cultural and racial barriers.

In April 2008 Add Verb produced a weeklong hip-hop arts-intensive program at Casco Bay High School (CBHS). In

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Add Verb Production's *Say It Loud*

MC Joe Kosnow (aka Bread) and Casco Bay High School student Ehklas Ahmed during Add Verb Production's *Say It Loud*.

Photo: Marita Kennedy-Castro, 2007

response to student interest, Add Verb and CBHS have continued to provide access to training and performance opportunities, including an after-school hip-hop club and a second hip-hop arts-intensive program scheduled this spring.

"I love the incorporation of music, word and dance. I appreciate having [*Say It Loud* as] an outlet to express myself and to expand my confidence. I did something out of my comfort zone, and I felt so great afterwards," said Kyara, a CBHS student.

CBHS is an alternative high school located in Portland, Maine. The student population is a rich mix of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds. More than 30 languages are spoken in this district: Many students are new Americans relocated by refugee programs, and many are students who have not found success in more traditional schools. The *Say It Loud* program is committed to the youth development process and strives for merit in performance, training participants in peer support and constructive criticism.

"I don't [usually] talk to people, but when I come to *Say It Loud* I talk to people. Now I am not shy or scared. I talk to everyone. I make new friends in *Say It Loud*," explained Eugénie, a new Mainer and CBHS student.

Facilitative artists work with the students and faculty to create a supportive but challenging environment in which big, sensitive and controversial topics can be explored. The deepening of connection, respect and understanding that occurs in the artistic process not only serves to strengthen the individual participants but transfers to strengthened relationships in the regular classroom and beyond.

"I was able to let myself go...and create this powerful person I always knew I could be..." —Kyara

"I grew from being extremely self-conscious to confident and strong," said Kyara. "I was able to let myself go...and create this powerful person I always knew I could be. I just needed to find it. Everyone [who participated] bonded in a way that we never would've if we hadn't had this opportunity. My peers and I all grew through the [*Say It Loud*] program, and we all learned so much about each other and ourselves."

The other superlative projects the SMART grant program will support this year include: **State Street School, Brewer** for two professional dance artists who will bring together dance, mime and National Dance Institute philosophy to 5 fourth-grade teachers and 105 students every week in coordination with five topics in the classroom curriculum; **Figures of Speech Theatre**, for the *Teen Ensemble Project*, a four-month-long after-school program pairing Freeport teens with artists from Figures of Speech to create student-driven ensemble theater using mixed stage media; **Haystack Mountain School of Crafts**, for a community-based artist residency and *Student Mentor Program* for high school students; programs with local schools, community and Maine teen programs, and expansion of Center for Community Programs; **LIA Arts**, for *Arts-in-Education Programming* encompassing artist residencies, *ArtsPass* and professional development opportunities for teachers; **Maine Alliance for Arts Education**, for *Building Community Through the Arts* in residencies with drama and dance artists — students in 14 rural high schools create original performances on social issues and present them at conferences; **Deer Isle-Stonington Schools and Opera House Arts**, for support through *Changing Education Through the Arts Year 3: Deepening Practice in the Classroom*, professional development for teachers and related student enrichment activities; **The Telling Room**, Portland, for *At the Table: Comics & Stories* with Portland ELL students and comic book artist Henry Wolnyiec; and **York School Department**, for the *Arts: Passport to India and Pakistan*, a community approach to promoting global understanding through K–12 visual and performing arts. //

A SUCCESSFUL FOURTH YEAR OF POETRY OUT LOUD

The Maine Arts Commission administered another successful Poetry Out Loud competition in Maine this year. There were 2,700 competitors across the state that battled through contests at the high school level, then at regional semifinals and, lastly, at the state final in Camden.

The winner, who went on to represent Maine at the national finals in Washington, D.C., was William Whitham from Bangor High School, while the winner of second place went to Alice Hofgren from Waterville Senior High School. Both students were challenged as they emerged from the initial group of 26 semifinalists, finding themselves in a final group of ten. William enthralled the audience with his rendition of "The Secret of the Machines" by Rudyard Kipling and went on to take first place by reciting "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth. Alice enchanted the crowd with her performance of "Sonnet CXVI: Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds" by William Shakespeare.

William is a junior attending Bangor High School who enjoys acting, flying kites and reading Noam Chomsky. His



Poetry Out Loud State Finalists at the Camden Opera House.

Photo: Darren Setlow

favorite subjects include English and Chemistry, and he is avidly interested in politics.

He was a big hit with the crowd at the state poetry finals, raising laughter and admiration as he calmly proclaimed his life ambition to graduate from high school. After the final, William expressed how thankful he is to live in a world where he can receive a trip to Washington for simply taking part in a competition such as Poetry Out Loud.

Maine Arts Commission member Felicia K. Knight was the host for the finals. Featured speakers and participants included Maine's First Lady Karen M. Baldacci, Maine Arts Commission Chair John M. Rohman and Maine Arts Commission Director Donna McNeil.

Maine's State Champion William Whitham.

Photo: Darren Setlow

The Poetry Out Loud competition is made possible by a unique partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation and all of the nation's state arts agencies. It begins with over 250,000 students across the United States competing; over 2,700 of those competed within Maine this year. As winner of the state final, William receives \$200; his fellow students also benefit as their school receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. William also received an all-expenses-paid trip (with a chaperone) to compete in the national finals in Washington, D.C., in April. The second place finalist, Alice Hofgren of Waterville Senior High School, will receive \$100, with \$200 going to her school library. //

More details of the Poetry Out Loud competition can be found on www.MaineArts.com.

MAINE'S 2009

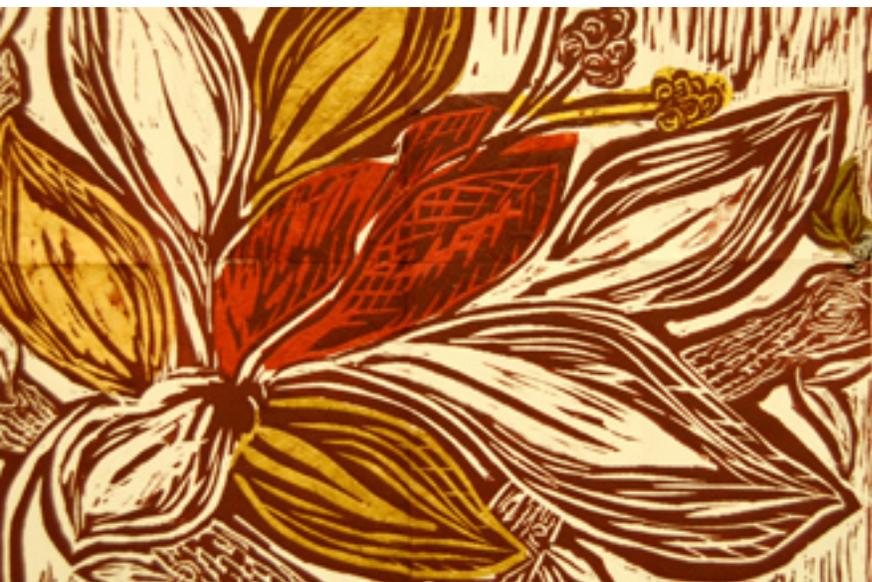
CONGRESSIONAL ARTS AWARDS

Each year, the U.S. House of Representatives sponsors a competition for artworks created by high school students from every congressional district in the United States. The program recognizes the importance of student art on a grand scale: the winning entries are displayed in an exhibition in the U.S. Capitol for one year, beginning in June. This is the second year that the Maine Arts Commission has been involved in this competition. The agency held a digital competition, where all high school students from the public/private

sector, with the help of their teachers or parents, submitted their work electronically. Expert jurors were enlisted to choose the winners, from 112 statewide submissions, for Maine's First and Second Congressional Districts.

The winners of the 2009 competition, Suki Nesvig of Waynflete School and Michele Jaffarian of Rangeley Lakes Regional High School, will meet with Governor Baldacci and congressional representatives at a Blaine House Reception. This competition represents a

close partnership between the Maine Arts Commission and Maine's Congressional offices. Both Congresswoman Chellie Pingree and Congressman Michael Michaud are highly enthused by this program and have provided their full support throughout the process. The Maine Arts Commission will be seeking submissions for next year's competition in January 2010; for further information, please contact Paul Faria at paul.faria@maine.gov, or call 207/287-2790. //



CONGRATULATIONS

to Maine's 2009 Congressional Arts Awards Winners and Runners-up.

FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

FIRST PLACE WINNER (TOP LEFT)

Suki Nesvig, Portland, senior at Waynflete School
Art teacher Judy Novey. *Untitled*, Woodblock relief with chine colet, 15" x 19", 2009.

FIRST DISTRICT RUNNERS-UP

Alex Bucaro, Portland High School
Christina Carver, Rockland District High School
Ike Voorhees, Waynflete School

SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

FIRST PLACE WINNER (BOTTOM LEFT)

Michele Jaffarian, Rangeley Lakes Regional High School. Art teacher, Sonja Johnson. *Bindings*
Colored Pencil, 8.5" x 11", 2009

SECOND DISTRICT RUNNERS-UP

Sheila Currier, Dexter Regional High School
Erin Aitken, Edward Little High School
Michael Peitersen, Edward Little High School



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

OF THE TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The Traditional Arts Apprenticeship program of the Maine Arts Commission works with communities on conserving their cultural traditions through apprenticeships, fellowships, program development and project support.

Now in its 20th year, the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship program began as a way to encourage master traditional artists to pass on their skills to the next generation. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Folk and Traditional Arts program, Maine's apprenticeship program has funded over 200 master and apprentice teams working together on everything from bateaux building in the St. John Valley to Penobscot root club carving on Indian Island.

The Apprenticeship program has acted as a kind of aquifer for traditional culture, nourishing elders and new generations of traditional artists while also planting

the seeds for cultural conservation organizations like the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance or the cultural advocacy work of step dancer Cindy Larock, who began as an apprentice of master Quebecois step dancer Benoit Bourque and now encourages a whole new generation of step dancers.

Both the Apprenticeship program and the Traditional Arts Fellowship program bring much needed recognition to those artists who are so much a part of the Maine landscape: the person who knows the right tree for basketry, the right words to an Acadian lullaby or the right bowing technique for a fiddle tune. Although many of these talented artists might shun the limelight or even be re-

luctant to take on the term "master artist," they are in fact the keepers of their traditions, what Barry Lopez calls "local geniuses." They help communities and cultures learn about themselves.

Kathleen Mundell, the newly appointed Traditional Arts Specialist at the Maine Arts Commission, will continue to work on strengthening the traditional arts field. Recently, the Maine Arts Commission created the Maine Folklife Network, bringing together cultural conservation organizations to work on promoting traditional arts statewide. For more information on the Traditional Arts programs, please contact Kathleen at mainetraditionalarts@gmail.com or call 207/236-6741. //

The Apprenticeship program has acted as a kind of aquifer for traditional culture, nourishing elders and new generations of traditional artists...

[Left] Hands of Penobscot beader & basketmaker Jennifer Neptune.

[Bottom left] Master basketmaker Theresa Secod teaching apprentice Shannon Secod Penobscot basketry.

[Bottom right] Penobscot basketmaker & beader Jennifer Neptune sewing collar.

All Photos: Peter Dembski



A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE



Primordia

Mark Nutt

Oil on Stretched Canvas

30" x 40" x 2.5"

2008

Make no mistake, the newest grant to be added to the Maine Arts Commission's available sources of funding is a purebred "marketing" grant that supports both individual artists and non-profit organizations. It is possibly the only grant of its kind for artists in the nation at the moment.

As a bit of background, this grant materialized from the agency's efforts across the state within the last four years. After visiting 40-plus communities and providing workshops for over 1,400 Maine artists, the agency paid attention to feedback forms and to workshop attendance figures. The most visited workshops involved marketing, grants and technology. Therefore, an easy step of mixing grants and these two elements

was undertaken, providing the Good Idea Visibility Grant and Good Idea New Media Grant to the field.

The first deadline for these grants was December 12, 2008. The application process was limited; recent applicants to the regular Good Idea Grant were not allowed to apply within the same fiscal year, making a lesser number of applications more manageable, or so it was thought.

It is pleasantly nice to be wrong, and some 46 applicants submitted grant applications for the Visibility Grant, with nine of these applicants being new to the agency's granting process. Two of the nine new applicants were funded along with eight other applicants. This goes a long way in dispel-

ling any thoughts that new applicants would find the process difficult.

An expert panel that is highly experienced in the field of marketing was assembled to review the inaugural grant process, and to add pressure, the entire process was moved to a paper-free process to avoid wastage of our precious natural resources and taxpayer money.

The panel and new process worked seamlessly. The grant review took 6 hours, and the resulting 10 grants recommended for funding were perfect examples of what this grant was created to support.

Successful applicants Matthew Lajoie, Alicia Anstead, Cobscook Community



Paper Mines, a double CD set by Bird Microphone and Cursillistas, was released in a limited edition of 47 copies. Packaged in a stitched canvas gatefold sleeve, with full-color transfer art (by Alyce Ornella) on the cover and Gocco print, ink, paint and pastel coloring on the inside gatefold.

Learning Center and Mark Nutt are great examples of how Maine's artists and organizations are marketing themselves.

In recent years Matthew Lajoie's independent record label—L'animaux Tryst Field Recordings—has worked with Maine musicians and artists to release musical documents in limited-edition, handmade art packages. His philosophy is that the artist's hands should be in the album as much as his or her voice, and thus many of the albums have been lushly packaged in hand-sewn sleeves, homemade recycled patchwork quilts and mixed-media collages or in individually hand-painted cases created by the musicians themselves.

The label focuses almost exclusively on underground Maine musicians, and most of these artists count releases on L'animaux Tryst as their debut or sole albums that have been made available to the world. Nearly 50% of Lajoie's custom-

ers are from outside the United States. These customers rave about the handmade and homemade aesthetic of the albums, which they understand as a pure document from the artist's hands from start to finish, a window for these strangers into contemporary Maine culture.

Though the label has had modest success, grant money was sought to assist marketing efforts.

The grant received from the Maine Arts Commission will pay for an ongoing banner ad at the top of each page of the Foxy Digitalis review website, where a large number of new customers have learned of the label. In addition, the grant will purchase a print ad in May's edition of *The Wire* magazine to coincide with the release of two new records.

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Shakespeare in Stonington Joan Jubett and Melody Bates in Opera House Arts' Shakespeare in Stonington 2007 production of *Taming of the Shrew*.
Photo: Linda Nelson



Opening and dedication of the Cobscook Community Learning Center's Don Furth Bandstand and Amphitheater in October 2008.
Photo: Kara McCrimmon



Cobscook pottery studio. Kevin Thompson (right), resident potter.
Photo: Kara McCrimmon

The grant will also cover the production of an official printed “label catalogue” that would be included with each order (so that customers who order one record become aware of others) and would accompany copies sold at local retailers Strange Maine, Time-Lag Records and Bull Moose Music.

Noted Maine journalist Alicia Anstead sought funding for Shakespeare and the Journalist in the 21st Century. In her own words, this is an arts and media project that reinforces a role for professional arts journalism while increasing the visibility of the arts and artists involved in a production of Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at the Stonington Opera House. At the heart of this proposal is the belief that “old” media is no longer the only viable resource for disseminating arts coverage and information in the community. With the cataclysmic downsizing of Maine’s newspaper industry and, consequently, of critical and insightful arts coverage that mediates between arts/artists and community,

the role of the arts journalist is in flux. Oscar Wilde saw the “critic as artist,” and the components of this project—an on-line network, live community “reads,” postperformance talk backs and a published monograph—are intended to employ the skills of the journalist to broaden community awareness, increase meaningful participation and deepen understanding of the arts and artists.

Located in Trescott, the Cobscook Community Learning Center (CCLC) has been offering arts programming since 2001 and organizes a range of formal and informal educational activities for people of all ages. This programming thus far has included traditional and fine arts, such as pottery, fiber arts, painting, stained glass, creative writing, stone masonry, blacksmithing, Native American beading and quilt work.

The CCLC sought grant support for the production of a video to increase participation in the arts at the center, both in terms

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of program participants and artists as instructors or facilitators; it will also increase marketing to funders who have a particular interest in arts.

For the production of the video, the CCLC turned to an established independent producer, Geno Geng, of Downeast TV in East Machias.

Already highly successful at creating, sustaining and promoting arts opportunities within its region, the CCLC now seeks innovative strategies for promoting themselves statewide, throughout New England and further afield.

With an already established presence on YouTube (a video hosting site), and more recently on Facebook (an online social networking site), the creation of a high-quality video will augment CCLC's online presence and feature prominently on the its website, www.thecccl.org, and at their other online venues. It will also be distributed on DVD to chambers of commerce, other arts organizations, funders (both current and prospective), artists, schools and anyone who might benefit from receiving information about arts at the CCLC. It

will also be aired on Downeast TV, which is watched by people throughout their region.

Visual artist Mark Nutt expanded on the video creation idea with his application, making it part of an overall promotional outreach tool that includes a professional-quality video (DVD), a CD of select paintings, a letter of introduction, a resume and business cards.

His idea is to use the video as a promotional tool to reach prospective galleries, museums and patrons. It addresses requests already received from architects and potential clients inquiring about his work—revealing who he is as an individual and artist and illustrating how he paints while highlighting his motivation.

The video will include interviews with individuals impacted by his work—other artists, professors, gallery owners and viewers alike, much like a documentary. //

You can read more about the other successful applications, or apply yourself, on the pages of the Maine Arts Commission's website, www.MaineArts.com.

Already highly successful at creating, sustaining and promoting arts opportunities within its region, the CCLC now seeks innovative strategies for promoting themselves statewide, throughout New England and further afield.



Verge Mark Nutt, Oil, Acrylic, Cut Flooring Nails on Masonite Panel, 26"x49"x4", 2007

NEW MEDIA GRANTS

Awardees have been selected for the inaugural year of the Good Idea New Media Grants. Recipients selected by the review panel were Lucinda Bliss, in support of her Bandaged Deer Animation and Presentation, a project that is based in the medium of animation; Joseph Brunette, to assist in the creation of a lens adapter that will enable a video camcorder to produce footage that looks

like motion picture film; and Karen Lewis, to support the installation of *My Beautiful Obsession: Wozzeck* in image, sound, object and performance.

This new grant program is designed to foster the growth of Maine's artists by supporting the creation of new works that creatively engage or innovatively incorporate new or emerging technolo-

gies for means of artistic expression or professional development. Any "good idea" that furthers an individual artist's creative growth through technology and new media is eligible for the grant. //

For more information, visit www.MaineArts.com.



Photo Exodus I-IV is a series of 35-mm photographs originally created for the 2008 exhibit *Sublime Climate* at the Thompson Gallery in the Garthwaite Center for Science and Art in Massachusetts. After being asked to participate in the exhibit, I struggled with the didactic task of creating work on the issue of climate change. It was out of that struggle that I became interested in reconsidering "monumental," wondering whether it might be applied to delicate representational work and asking how a playful, even beautiful, visual language can speak to grave ecological (and other) matters. The *Photo Exodus I-IV* series was the genesis of my current drawings and my technological expansion into video and animation. —Lucinda Bliss

COMMUNITY ARTS & HUMANITIES GRANT PROGRAM

The Maine Arts Commission and Maine Humanities Council have shared a joint community-based grant program for more than five years. This program is funded by the New Century Community Program created in 1999 by the Maine Legislature to provide matching grants and services to local cultural agencies. Community Arts and Humanities grants assist organizations in Maine as they investigate and present stories and cultural expressions of the state, its communities and its people. To date, this grant program has funded hundreds of small projects that share both a distinct arts and humanities component in communities across the state. Community arts programs build communities through the arts, helping citizens discover their cultural assets and assess their cultural needs. The humanities explore the nature and value of human experience through literature, history, theology and the disciplines of social and political science.

The range of potential projects is limited only by the community's imagination. By having an application deadline that rotates and a grant limit of \$1,000, the process is meant to be less formal than either of the two partners' major grants categories. This allows smaller projects to "see the light of day" by achieving critical and sustainable support.

Compelling examples include an award to the Saco Museum to fund public programs related to the exhibition *Heat Stroke: New England Wax Artists Working in Encaustic* (April 3–May 30, 2009). This special exhibition features work from New England Wax (N.E.W.), a regional association of artists who work in encaustic, a beeswax-based painting medium. Encaustic, which translates as "to burn in" in ancient Greek, is a time-honored painting medium using hot wax that dates back to the fifth century B.C. The art form regained currency in the American art scene with the work of

Jasper Johns and other postwar painters. Today, encaustic artists combine traditional techniques with contemporary media and materials, contributing to its resurgence. N.E.W. brings together artists in this region who are dedicated to investigating this challenging medium. The works on view demonstrate the unique quality of encaustic painting—luminous and translucent layers of color and a sensuous surface—as well as the variety of approaches to the technique. Maine artist Kim Bernard, founder and chair of N.E.W. and a faculty member at the Maine College of Art, will detail the history of the encaustic medium from ancient times to contemporary uses today in a lecture to be presented during the exhibition.

Jessica Skwire Routhier, museum director, believes that "this program [Community Arts and Humanities] is particularly valuable as it's becoming harder and harder to find corporate sponsor-



[Left to Right] Steve Kecskemethy, Julia Adams, Ronald Lantz and Paul Ross, members of the Portland String Quartet at the historic Meeting House at the Sabbathday Lake Shaker community during the Maine Festival of American Music: Its Roots and Traditions, 2007.

Photo: Woody Leland



Hippodrome Kim Bernard, 2007,
plywood, encaustic, and lead,
25"x43"x19"
Photo: Kim Bernard

ship for museum exhibitions and programs. Museums need more than ever to keep offering thoughtful and appealing programs." She continues, "I think it's an especially good program for smaller museums and cultural institutions—the \$1,000 award is something that can really make a difference for places like the Saco Museum, and the application process is something that can be relatively easily managed even with a small staff."

The third season of the Maine Festival of American Music: Its Roots and Traditions, also supported by a grant from the Community Arts and Humanities program, took place June 25–28,

2008. Held in the historic 1794 Shaker Meeting House at Sabbathday Lake—one of Maine's most beautiful and acoustically perfect venues—this unique four-day festival presented American music in the broader context of the world's great chamber music and brought composers, guest artists and fine instrument makers together with the distinguished artistry of the Portland String Quartet. This June, during the festival's fourth season, renowned pianist Virginia Eskin, music historian Steven Ledbetter and members of the Shaker community will continue this musical celebration with special focus on *Ragtime: American Originals!*, accompanied by Shaker folk art, music and commentary. The chamber music of late 19th century New England composer George Whitefield Chadwick will be featured. (For ticket information and reservations, contact: 207/926-4597.) //

For more information about the Community Arts and Humanities program, please contact Kathy Ann Shaw, senior development associate & accessibility coordinator, Maine Arts Commission, 207/287-2750, kathy.shaw@maine.gov or 877/887-3878—TTY/NexTalk; or Victoria Bonebakker, associate director, Maine Humanities Council, 207/773-5051, or vbonebak@mainehumanities.org or visit www.mainehumanities.org/grants/arts-humanities.doc.

PAPERLESS OFFICE

In an ongoing effort to direct more funding to the field while protecting our environment, the Maine Arts Commission has taken a big step toward a paperless office. No longer will the agency be sending bulky paper-filled binders through the mail so grant reviewers can read applications. Now reviewers receive a single CD, formatted so they can click through the application images and link to the applicant resume, narrative letter or supplemental materials anytime they wish.

The last round of grants administered by the Maine Arts Commission served as a test run for this new system, and we are pleased to announce it worked exceptionally well.

The Maine Arts Commission is currently working on an online panel review system.



A question and answer session with Director Aron Gaudet and Producer Gita Pullapilly of the award-winning Maine-based documentary film, *The Way We Get By* at the Strand Theatre, Rockland, Maine. Photo: Sean Carnell

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

AWARDS NEARLY \$100,000 IN GRANTS TO MAINE COMMUNITIES

Fourteen Maine communities will receive just under \$100,000 in grant funds aimed at strengthening local arts organizations in Maine. The communities stretch from Lille, in the St. John Valley, to Stonington and Portland. Three local arts organizations will be using funds to enhance their presence on the internet. *L'association culturelle et historique du Mont-Carmel*, in Lille, will use funds to develop a website showcasing its collection of religious and historical materials from the St. John Valley. The museum's physical presence is in the imposing twin-tower structure of Notre Dame du Mont-Carmel, a former Catholic church built in 1909 on the northern edge of Maine. The web museum will make artifacts from Acadian and Quebecois culture accessible via the internet.

The Portland Chamber Music Festival will be revamping its website at www.pcmf.org. In addition to keeping its audience informed about the festival, the website will provide links to other performing arts organizations in the Portland area, including PortOpera, Friends of the Kotschmar Organ and the Choral Arts Society.

Writing will be the focus of a project sponsored by Add Verb Productions in Portland. Add Verb Productions will develop online and networking tools for its Queer and Allied Writing Project. The project will support the development of plays, monologues and poetry that will build, strengthen and sustain Maine's youth gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer community.

In Camden, the Camden International Film Festival will be working through Maine Media Workshops to strengthen its infrastructure by adding professional staff, developing a board and implementing an effort to acquire 501(c) 3 nonprofit status. The festival currently operates on an informal basis, without nonprofit status. Festival organizers see the improved administrative infrastructure and nonprofit status as essential to the festival's growth.

Opera House Arts, in Stonington, also plans to develop a position for a program director, as well as two paid internships as part of a major effort to move into a second decade. A new development position will be created at the Tides Institute.



Portland Chamber Music Festival performers (left to right) Andrus Madsen, harpsichord; Alison Harney, violin; Michael Kannen, cello; and Peggy Pearson, oboe in concert at the Abromson Community Education Center in Portland.

Photo: Russ Burleigh



Staff of the Tides Institute and the Maine Arts Commission on the roof of the institute during reconstruction.

The Camden International Film Festival (CIFF) is proud to be recognized for its dedication to developing Maine communities through arts and culture. It's our mission to generate interest in independent documentary film, examining our cultural landscape through nonfiction storytellers from Maine and beyond. This grant will ensure the creation of a sustainable organizational structure that will allow CIFF to continue its growth and impact in the Maine arts community.

Ben Fowlie, CIFF Founder and Director

In tough times, fund-raising and marketing are also on the minds of some local arts organizations. After receiving recognition from the New England Museum Association for the catalog for its recent *Portraits and Voices* exhibit, Museum L-A is pressing forward with a feasibility study for a capital campaign, while Portland's Telling Room is developing a long-term fund-raising plan. An umbrella marketing plan will be the focus of efforts in Bangor. The project will develop a marketing plan

servicing eight cultural organizations in Bangor. The project will include a logo that can be used by all of the organizations, a website and a brochure that will promote all of the cultural entities in Bangor. In Bath, meanwhile, cultural organizations are partnering with Regional School District 1 to create a strategic plan for arts and culture collaboration in the community. Similarly, the Eastport Arts Center, in Eastport, will use grant funds to conduct a strategic planning retreat. //

SUMMER AND FALL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAINE ARTISTS

In 2009, the Maine Arts Commission will offer a number of grant programs to artists of all disciplines with two deadlines: one in June and one in September. The schedule for Fellowships, Traditional Arts Apprenticeships and Good Idea Grants in all categories is listed below.

JUNE 12, 2009

Individual Artist Fellowship Program

Rewards artistic excellence, advances the careers of Maine artists and promotes public awareness regarding the eminence of the creative sector in Maine.

Traditional Artist Fellowship Program

Rewards artistic excellence, advances the careers of Maine artists and promotes public awareness regarding the eminence of the creative sector in Maine.

Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program

Assists Maine's communities to preserve valuable artistic traditions. The program provides an opportunity for master traditional artists to pass on their skills to qualified apprentices.

Please visit individual grant program guidelines, mainearts.maine.gov/Grants/index.shtml#ArtistGrants, for more information and staff contact information.

SEPTEMBER 18, 2009

Good Idea Grant Program(s)

Contemporary: Supports and fosters the growth of Maine's artists. The parameters of the grant are purposefully broad. They include any "good idea" that furthers an individual artist's creative endeavor(s).

New Media: Fosters the growth of Maine's artists by supporting the creation of new works that creatively engage or innovatively incorporate new or emerging technologies for means of artistic expression or professional development. Any "good idea" that furthers an individual artist's creative growth through technology and new media is eligible for the grant.

Arts Visibility: Assists Maine's artists and arts organizations by providing the means with which to increase the visibility of specific artistic projects. Any "good idea" that supports an individual artist or organization through increased visibility is eligible for the grant. //

ARTS ADVOCACY

TAKES FRONT BURNER IN LEWISTON-AUBURN

Arts organizations in Lewiston and Auburn are making sure they are heard! Working together they are monitoring policy makers and initiating dialogue to raise the profile of the arts in Lewiston-Auburn. Organizations including L/A Arts, The Public Theatre, Maine Music Society, Museum L-A, Lewiston Public Library, Community Little Theatre and the Franco-American Heritage Center have been meeting informally for the past several years, and structured more formal gatherings, beginning last fall, to come together on a regular basis and strategize on ways to work together to promote the local arts.

One strategy being used is a regional publication, The Lewiston-Auburn Arts and Cultural Calendar. The calendar began as an annual publication over 15 years ago. Increased arts and cultural activity in the area prompted a change,

Morrison points to some successes resulting from bringing arts organizations together.

initially to a semiannual publication which progressed to the current three editions per year. Similarly, the annual print run increased from 10,000 copies, distributed locally, to over 40,000 copies distributed throughout the state. Andrew Harris, L/A Arts executive director, comments, "The calendar has helped identify and solidify the region's arts offerings, and because of the joint outreach efforts, arts groups see themselves as part of a larger canvas."



Gallery 5, Lewiston, one of four new art galleries established in Lewiston-Auburn recently. Photo: Cheri Donahue

Public Theatre Director Chris Schario sees another goal of the regional arts collaboration as presenting a unified voice for the arts when communicating with the governing bodies of both Lewiston and Auburn as well as county government. Schario and other arts leaders see an urgent need for there to be greater understanding of the power of the arts in building exciting communities and creating a substantial economic impact in the region.

Recently collected statistics solidify the argument of the importance and economic impact of the arts. Both Harris and Schario see a need for ongoing statistical gathering to validate these findings. However, even the initial numbers gathered show the positive effect of the arts. Understanding this helps to solidify the various arts groups' awareness of how they can and should work together. "Still," Harris comments, "some policy makers just don't understand the positive economics associated with the arts." He points to the recent Coburn Amendment to the stimulus bill in Congress, which attempted to remove

Continued →



Noel Coward's *Private Lives* at Lewiston's Public Theatre
Photo: Janet Mitchko

Andrew Harris, L/A Arts executive director, and Tammie Grieshaber, Gallery 5 Curator, prepare for the opening of Gallery 5's newest exhibit.
Photo: L/A Arts



arts funding from the federal economic stimulus package, as a clear example of the lack of understanding. Androscoggin Chamber of Commerce President Chip Morrison notes it's a challenge for arts organizations to promote themselves with policy makers. "The way to do that," he says, "is to get local decision makers to come to arts events—and get arts supporters to show up at meetings of public bodies."

Morrison points to some successes resulting from bringing arts organizations together. He fully endorses the Lewiston-Auburn Arts and Cultural Calendar and acknowledges its importance to the business community. He also cites the emergence of four new galleries over the last couple of years: the Community Gallery at the L/A Arts office, Gallery 5, Art and Java at Willie Bean's coffeehouse and the Art and Ale Window Gallery at Gritty McDuff's. "It's not just neat," says Morrison, "it's a miracle."

Arts organizations in Lewiston and Auburn continue their dialogue with policy makers, trying to convince them to support the arts wherever and whenever they can. Schario notes that sometimes this can include seemingly little things, like helping to clear sidewalks for patrons or ensuring a prominence of arts and cultural events on the cities' web pages. "This is something they can do without spending money, to push arts and culture forward."

Despite the progress being made in Lewiston and Auburn, both Harris and Schario are quick to point out there is much more to be done. "It's about educating people, about educating the community," says Harris. "Getting the attention of policy makers is a slow process," remarks Schario. "Right now, I count just getting their attention a success." //

ART INTERNSHIPS

The Arts Internship resource page on the Maine Arts Commission website has been very successful in pairing internship seekers with arts organizations since its creation six months ago. The page allows for opportunities to be posted so that internship seekers can become aware of needs within arts businesses.

Internships provide the opportunity to gain professional experience, meet people in the field of your interest, develop skills, bolster your resume and participate in a personally rewarding activity. Interns are often considered for paid positions within the organization if they perform well. If an organization cannot hire their intern, they will often recommend them for positions elsewhere.

A recent success story is that of Sadie Bliss who joined the Maine Arts Commission as an intern and has since gone on to become the assistant manager of the Center for Maine Crafts Association:

"An internship with the Maine Arts Commission afforded me invaluable arts administration experience and an insider's perspective of state government's role in Maine's creative economy. I will use my knowledge of their programming and grant opportunities as I continue to work in the arts in Maine."

PUBLIC SCULPTURE GRANT

Public Art Lecture Series
Swoon

Image from *Drown Your Boats*
Installation at New Image Art Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
2009



In an ongoing effort to support public art in Maine, the Maine Arts Commission and the Harry Faust Art Fund have created a one-time competitive grant program offering up to \$20,000 for artists, nonprofit organizations and for-profit organizations in Maine to create public sculpture. Grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000 are available for projects that promote the quality of public

spaces through the creation of artwork that is sculptural in nature. The purpose of the grant is to encourage the creation of public sculpture by Maine artists and designers within the state of Maine. The upcoming deadline is June 30, 2009.

The funding for this grant is made possible by the Harry Faust Art Fund, an endowment left by Harry Faust just before his death. Harry Faust was the owner of The Framemakers picture framing business in Waterville. He was a member of the Waterville Arts Council, a supporter of Railroad Square and the Maine International Film Festival, and a driving organizational force behind the Waterville Intown Arts Festival. He was an avid art collector and bicyclist and participated in 17 of the 18 Trek Across Maine events staged by the American Lung Association of Maine. Harry enjoyed traveling

and was fond of encountering public artworks in cities like New York and Montreal. His hope was that his funds would be used to create engaging public artwork the people of Maine could enjoy and be inspired by.

2009 EVENT SERIES

The Maine Arts Commission is in the process of hosting the 2009 Public Art Lecture series. The key participants include Maine College of Art hosting a lecture by Amy Franceschini and supporting Marty Pottenger's work with *Undoing Racism*, a multimedia collaborative project with students, staff, faculty and local community members; Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance presenting *MTA Arts for Transit: Along the Way* by Amy Hausmann; *SPACE Gallery* having New York artist Swoon speak about her work; *The Tides Institute and Museum of Art*



Harry Faust



U Maine Orono
Colvin Hall
Shelf with Light Houses
Graham Wood
Wood and electronics
2008

inviting Sue Clifford, Parish Maps Project Coordinator and co-founder of the Common Ground Fair, to travel from England to Eastport to present an overview of her work, participate in a public panel discussion and lead two workshops; and the Waterville Arts Council organizing *Community and the Meaning of Place*, a symposium on the role of public art in community revitalization.

Other organizations are getting involved, including the Juice Conference, Waterfall Arts in Belfast, UNE in Portland, the Boothbay Botanical Gardens and more. The purpose of the series is to promote conversation and awareness about the shared environment in general and specifically. This theme is intended to attract topics and lecturers that reflect current

innovations in the realm of public art, with an emphasis on work that serves some purpose that extends beyond merely artistic considerations. The series will have events throughout 2009. More information can be found on the Maine Arts Commission website.

PERCENT FOR ART CONTRACTED

Bangor Courthouse has selected three artists to address the interior space of its new Bangor facility. Edward Harrow has been commissioned to create "Spring Trail on the West Branch," a bas-relief wood carving of log drivers on the Penobscot. Jan Owen will be creating four works of calligraphy and paper for areas on the first floor, using legal documents as her source material. Nina Jerome has been selected to cre-

Continued →

ate "Penobscot Intersection," six painted triptychs, one for each of the six courtroom entryways.

PERCENT FOR ART COMPLETED

Colvin Hall at the University of Maine Orono has had its artwork from the Percent for Art program installed. The selection process that was started in 2008 had honors students representing the site in the selection process. The two works commissioned were a tile mosaic by Cynthia Fisher entitled "Igniting a Passion for Learning" in the library and Graham Wood's installation on the top floor "Colvin Hall Shelf with Light Houses."

ARTS IN THE CAPITOL

The Equinox Petroglyph Project Traveling Art Exhibition, April through June

Following the success of the Dennis Pinette *Expansion of Logic* exhibit at the Capitol comes the 22-women exhibit *The Equi-*

nox Petroglyph Project. Over 100 pieces of artwork have been created through the Equinox Project, a sampling of which will be exhibited at the Capitol complex and the Maine State Museum from April through June.

The exhibition has already shown at the University of Maine in Machias and at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor. After its stay at the Capitol, it will be at the Tides Institute in Eastport from September 18 through October 11. To learn more about the project, please go to the exhibition website at www.equinoxpetroglyphproject.org.

All Arts in the Capitol events are free and open to the public. The works are installed in offices of state employees and require some flexibility on the part of visitors and respect for those working in these offices during the time of a visit. At times, exhibitions may not be accessible due to meetings. Visitors with special needs are encouraged to call ahead to make sure your visit is as enjoyable as possible. //



*Dawnland Survivor's
Tears—in the Wake of
Unspeakable Sorrow*
Birchbark, acrylics
32"x32.5"
Kathy Pollard



Arts in the Capitol
Equinox Petroglyph Project
The Ledges on the Equinox
Romantha Burow
Felted Wool, 40"x46"
2008

**EXHIBITIONS ARE SELF-GUIDED AND MAY BE VISITED
WITHIN THE PRESCRIBED TIMES:**

Maine Arts Commission Office
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

Maine State House
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Blaine House
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
(please call ahead at 207/287-2121)

PETERSON KAMWATHI

QUIET POWER



Peterson Kamwathi

Photo: Sara Nics

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Kenya

Dust, potholes, brownouts, mud, stick, tin, grain sack, cardboard, dung, wattle, textiles, beading, storybook animals, fearless color and heat: it is winter 2009. There, as an American whose country had just inaugurated its first African-American president and one with Kenyan blood, I was instantly embraced and celebrated. I had been alerted by Mark Bessire, Director of the Portland Museum of Art and frequent traveler to Africa (Aimee Bessire, who has a PhD in

African studies, and he are building a school in Tanzania), to look up Peterson Kamwathi.

Peterson Kamwathi was working as an artist in residence at the Kuona Trust Museum Art Studio, Nairobi, where his studio rent is subsidized by his efforts at cataloguing a collection of art books recently donated by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. A hot, dry February afternoon down a dusty road found him: gentle, soft-spoken, articulate, sturdy in his beliefs, confident

in his work. I spoke with him on two occasions—the work was so compelling that I returned again for a formal interview session.

The studio is small, part of a series of wooden structures and donated Oxfam containers serving as work spaces, laid out in the garden behind a larger common building that houses the Kuona offices, exhibition spaces and library. Like much of Kenya the series of studios is behind a gated fence with a security guard, an indication of a darkened

underbelly of poverty and crime softened by a languid and steamy atmosphere, tropical flowers and ready smiles.

Peterson Kamwathi is engaged in a series of large-scale charcoal drawings in response to the 2006 Kenyan election. Disputed results set off violent protests quelled by the inauguration of a coalition government from the two leading parties. The deal calmed things down for a time but my ready conversations with the politically attuned and jocular "Joes" on the street revealed corruption is rampant and people are not generally happy with the compromise. As with our own election in 2002, our hanging chads and questionable vote count were repeated in voting form 16A, Kenyan style: louder, physical. There is an undercurrent rumbling here. Kenyans are taking note of our peaceful yet profound change in government and wondering, if Americans can overcome race to elect a new leader, can Kenyans overcome the tribalism that drives politics in their country? Will the metaphorical Kili-manjaro spew?

Although interested in politics as a child observing the Kenyan/Ugandan war in the '80s, Peterson had been subscribing to a more market-driven approach to art making with his woodcut portrait series. Compelled by circumstance, he cast away commercial concerns and threw himself first into a suite of prints which examine the various factors in Kenya's long debate over a new, as yet unrealized, constitution. The most recent work is a series of eight, possibly more, approximately 4' x 8' punch-in-the-gut charcoal on paper panels, each depicting one of the institutions involved in the election: the media, police, domestic government officials, election officials, observer nations, the United Nations, European Union, African Union, peacemakers, warmakers and so on. "Big issues with enormous consequences require big size," says Peterson. The scale is purposeful, engulfing the viewer in the discussion, absorbing the visual space. The subjects are shoulder to shoulder, a wall, standing between the viewer/voter and the results—you stare at one another. Powerful, direct, darkly wrought, the panels form a barricade to open and fair elections, to democracy. They suggest complicity, masked illegalities.

Untitled, Peterson Kamwathi,
Graphite and charcoal on paper, 2009

[Continued](#) →



I see Peterson Kamwathi in a continuum of artists who, compelled by events, stepped away from their more conventional engagements and created work in reaction to events.

I asked Peterson if he considered himself a political artist. Refusing to be buttonholed, he shies from classification. Not a propagandist, rather, an archivist, Peterson sees himself as a recorder of history, one step removed from social commentary. Striving for objectivity, the series, although reactive to a specific incident, intends to describe an event without taking sides. A fine line to walk, he's found his voice there.

Fine art is under the radar in Kenya even for the Minister of Culture, who rarely attends exhibitions. Therefore, when asked if freedom of expression in the arts is a strong tenet, Peterson indicated it was unnoticed and therefore unrepressed. This is in stark contrast to the media, which is legally subject to censorship and government control of media houses. Ownership of works of fine art is typically motivated by those interested in acquiring the symbols of class and modernity, a rarified group in third world Kenya.

I see Peterson Kamwathi in a continuum of artists who, compelled by events, stepped away from their more conventional engagements and created work in reaction to events: Goya's "The Second of May," 1808 and "The Executions of the Third of May, 1808," Manet's "The Execution of Maximilian," Picasso's "Guernica," Chagall's "Troyer," Georg Grosz's political caricatures, Sue Coe's "How to Commit Suicide in South Africa," William Kentridge's "Felix In Exile," Fernando Botero's "Abu Ghraib" series and so many more. Although aware of these works, Kamwathi does not particularly see his place in this history. He is more interested in what he needs to get out of his head and his heart onto the paper. Curators and art historians will do the categorizing. Does he care about audience? Yes he does. Is he motivated by them? No.

As an American abroad, I can't help noticing the stencil of Barack Obama's portrait on Peterson's studio wall. "Talk to me about this," I ask. Peterson lights, "He is a symbol of hope. He inspires people to greatness and euphoria. He has Kenyan blood. He instills pride in Kenyans." Peterson uses Obama's face to express these ideas. The *Time* magazine image is a relaxed and open moment, "not a king, just a smile." On the 19th and 20th of January Peterson began "tagging" tree stumps and rocks, organic canvases from the earth, with his Obama stencil. That preinaugural moment has passed and he is musing where Obama will take him next. He sees him flying. // Donna McNeil, Director



Peterson Kamwathi and Donna McNeil

Photo: Sara Nics



MAINE VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS

Artists and arts organizations that face challenging legal issues will now have a place to turn to for legal advice as the Maine Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts has opened its doors in Portland.

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts programs exist countrywide; they are each independently established, managed and sustained. In general these organizations support the arts communities in the areas in which they rest by providing legal and educational services to artists with limited financial resources.

Maine Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (Maine VLA), originally named Maine Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts, was created and run by Elizabeth Adams and lasted for about 10 years until Adams left the country and could not keep the organization running. Sadly, no one stepped in for her, and in her absence the organization was administratively dissolved.

The organization has now reemerged due to the inspiration of Casey Gill-Summar of the Tennessee VLA and the hard work of Nicholas Holton and Ezekiel Callanan, who attended the National VLA Conference in Minneapolis, in April 2008. Confident that Maine needed this type of resource once again, and backed by three heavy-hitting board members from Maine's notoriously generous legal community, Callanan and Holton incorporated Maine Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts as a nonprofit corporation, organized under the laws of the state of Maine, on June 23, 2008.

Today Maine VLA's mission is to provide statewide access to effective legal counsel for artists and nonprofit organizations with limited financial resources, to educate broadly on arts-related business and legal issues, to offer me-

diation services to facilitate nonlitigious dispute resolution, to generally support artists and to foster cooperative relationships between the artistic and legal communities.

To fulfill this mission, Maine VLA refers Maine's artists to experienced Maine attorneys who have agreed to provide their services free of charge, or at a reduced fee, to those who cannot afford it. They also help artists make business connections and relationships, aiming to further the artist's business. Other services include hosting and participating in educational seminars and producing educational materials that cover arts-related aspects of the law. **||**

You can read more about the Maine Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts on their website, at www.mainevla.org.

Artists and arts organizations that face challenging legal issues will now have a place to turn...



Alison Ferris

MEET THE NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE MAINE ARTS COMMISSION

...I believe that fostering the human imagination is crucial, especially now that we, as a state and as a nation, must radically reimagine our future.

Alison Ferris has joined the Maine Arts Commission as the new assistant director after 12 years as the curator of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

Arguably, one of the most notable contributions Ferris has made to Maine's cultural community in recent years is that of overseeing, alongside former director Katy Kline, the installation of the entire Bowdoin Museum of Art when it reopened in the fall of 2007. This reopening followed a major renovation and expansion by the acclaimed architectural firm Machado and Silvetti.

"I am delighted to have this opportunity to devote my time, energy and expertise to the Maine Arts Commission," explained Ferris. "This agency, under the directorship of Donna McNeil, has

done inspiring work supporting and advocating for the arts and artists in Maine, and I am proud to be a member of her team. I believe that fostering the human imagination is crucial, especially now that we, as a state and as a nation, must radically reimagine our future."

Outside of her recent curatorial duties, Ferris was a key leader for the Maine Print Project in 2006, a statewide collaboration of 25 art institutions that organized exhibitions and educational programs celebrating 200 years of printmaking in Maine. She oversaw the production of the accompanying book, *The Imprint of Place: Maine Printmaking 1800-2000* published by Down East books. Ferris has also published numerous essays in exhibition catalogues, journals and art magazines; she has also served as a panelist and juror all over the country.

For eight years before moving to Maine, Ferris worked in curatorial positions at two alternative art spaces: Film in the Cities (St. Paul, MN) that specialized in film and photography and the Kohler Arts Center (Sheboygan, WI) that focused on emerging artists (of all media), as well as crafts and the work of self-taught artists. At Kohler she was also deeply involved with the nationally renowned artist residency program, Arts/Industry, where artists may work in the Kohler Factory. Her first position following graduate school was co-manager of the Morris Fork Crafts Co-operative, an economic development project in southeastern Kentucky (a remote part of Appalachia) that enabled people with skills in traditional crafts to earn much needed cash income and, in turn, worked to preserve the region's craft heritage. //

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MISSION The Maine Arts Commission shall encourage and stimulate public interest and participation in the cultural heritage and cultural programs of our state; shall expand the state's cultural resources; and shall encourage and assist freedom of artistic expression for the well-being of the arts, to meet the needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state.