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“All of us need to keep planting seeds.”
A Children’s Theatre of the Mesilla Valley: Training a New Generation for the Film Industry

By Carol Cooper, Grant Program Coordinator

As New Mexico’s media industries receive more attention, one of New Mexico Arts’ grantees can point to over a decade of work in the field. Since its inception in 1992, A Children’s Theatre of the Mesilla Valley (ACT) has been instructing youth in acting for stage and screen ever since. In 2000, this instruction expanded to include screen writing and video production.

This independent Las Cruces children’s theatre encourages youth to participate as artists and audiences. For their summer 2004 movie production collaboration, high school students co-wrote a screenplay about a girl’s struggles with her parents’ death and subsequent thoughts of suicide. They then exchanged roles as producers, directors, crew, actors, and directors of photography for the film Disconnected. At the annual Organic Mountain Film Festival in Las Cruces, it won Second Place for Short Film in the high school division.

The festival’s Grand Prize for Short Film in the high school division went to student filmmaker James Suter for The Challenge, who also received First Place in the communal category for Tribal Tug of War. In addition to these productions, ACT also received other awards at the festival, including First Place for The Chase and Second Place for Bubble Wrap, both for Short Film in the middle school division.

Through ACT, students have worked on professional commercial and feature film shoots. They have produced three documentaries and five commercials for clients including New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition, Doña Ana County D.M.I., City of Las Cruces, and the Keep America Beautiful campaign.

In order to encourage youth to consider “out of the box” career opportunities, ACT is listed in the 2004 New Mexico Film Directory as a talent agent for the southern part of the state. Their members may register with the nonprofit as an actor, singer, dancer or musician, and be available to film industry representatives working in southern New Mexico and west Texas.

ACT’s distinguished mentors have included the late Tony Brooke, who worked in an elite World War II film crew, was Director of Photography (D.P.) on Hollywood films such as All The President’s Men, and countless national commercials. Others have mentored having D.P. Kenny Dixon of New York City and former ACT trainees who have gone to film schools at the University of California at Los Angeles and at San Francisco State University.

Constance Suter, ACT’s Artistic Director, has written, directed, and co-produced documentaries and narrative films in the Southwest and California as Constance Hasapopoulos. Ms. Suter was a principal actor in the film One Twenty Five in which she won the Gold Medal at the 2002 Houston Film Festival. She also wrote a screenplay that was a semi-finalist in the 2005 Boston Motion Picture Awards.

We congratulate ACT for the work that has led to film festival awards and new talent agency status. Thanks to such creativity and entrepreneurship, arts organizations in Las Cruces continue to contribute to local and regional economic development.

Artists in the Classroom – Workshops

By Ann Weisman, Grant Program Coordinator

New Mexico Arts is pleased to present a workshop for artists who would like to provide workshops in the schools. The free workshop will be presented as a public service by New Mexico Arts in nine communities: Deming, Des Moines, Farmington, Gallup, Hobbs, Mora, Mountairain, Raton, and Tucumcari.

The seven-hour workshop is designed to be an introduction to the practical aspects of working with schools. Topics covered include marketing, scheduling, working with educational representatives, on-site support, and community partnerships. The workshop will be of interest to all artists and groups who are considering working with schools.

Turbulent Stream

Aerospace
Powder coated stainless steel with metal grillwork 380 sq. ft.
Commissioned by the AIPP Program for the Toney Ataya Building, Santa Fe.

Western Arts Alliance (WAA) 2005 Annual Conference to be held in Albuquerque

Western Arts Alliance (WAA) Annual Conference is coming to Albuquerque in September, WAA, a membership organization of touring and performing arts professionals, is engaged in promoting and presenting the performing arts throughout the western states and provinces. WAA holds an annual conference every year to connect professionals in the field. Each year the conference is held in a different city in the West. Last year’s conference was in Spokane WA and the 2006 conference will travel to Las Vegas NV. The 2005 conference will be held this year in Albuquerque NM September 6-10, 2005. This year’s conference brings together authoritative speakers and programs, professional development sessions, showcase performances, endless networking opportunities, and a Resource Room, where over 2,600 artists are represented. Over twenty educational opportunities are offered, including in-depth pre-conference seminars and workshops.

The conference is beneficial for emerging presenters and artists, and there are plenty of educational opportunities to learn from colleagues through a mentor program, where new colleagues are matched with mentors. The conference is also useful for established and experienced presenters and artists by creating networking opportunities. Artists/Managers need to be members of Western Arts Alliance to attend the conference. Presenters do not need to join WAA to attend the conference; however, members receive substantial savings on conference registration.

For more information about the Western Arts Alliance, the Albuquerque conference, and fees and dates, visit www.westarts.org or call 505/274-4729. To join Western Arts Alliance, visit the website and click on the green “Join WAA” tab.
specific thanks to San Juan College and Octavia Fellin Library. We also give the Arts, Raton Arts Council, Des Moines Public Schools, County Commission for the Arts, Mountainair Public Schools & National Writing Project and has published numerous books for Aztec Ruins National Monument. She is an instructor in the on April 9, Gallup on April 16, and Taos on May 7. Uma has U.S. Krishnaswami will conduct the workshops in Farmington on April 29, Hobbs on April 21, and Mountainair on April 2. Beth is a consultant who provides training for artists and teachers on a wide range of arts education topics. She was the founder of VSA artists New Mexico, an organization that provides access to the arts and art instruction for people of all abilities. She has been traveling artists-in-residence for over 20 years. Uma Krishnaswami will conduct the workshops in Farmington on April 9, Gallup on April 16, and Taos on May 7. Uma has been an artists-in-residence for the Aztec Public Schools and for Aztec Ruins National Monument. She is an instructor in the National Writing Project and has published numerous books for children. Uma is a past president of the Northwest New Mexico Arts Council and has served on the New Mexico Advisory Council for Arts Education. While the workshops are free, participants will need to register by contacting Ann Weisman at New Mexico Arts, 800/879-4278 or awesman@dca.state.nm.us. Participants will need to bring money to purchase their own lunches on the day of the workshop.

Local hosts for the workshops are Deming Arts Council, Lea County Commission for the Arts, Mountainair Public Schools & Manzano Mountain Arts Council, UNM-Taos, Taos Center for the Arts, Raton Arts and Cultural Public Schools, Kennedy Hunting Lodge, and Tapetas de Lana. We also give special thanks to San Juan College and Octavia Fellin Library.

New Mexico State University’s Art Gallery Highlights Regional Artists Through Summer Regional Invitational

By Anna Byth, ARTSpeak Editor

Regional artists will be shown in June as part of an important exhibition hosted by New Mexico State University’s Art Gallery in Las Cruces. The gallery is the largest non-profit academic gallery in southern New Mexico and serves to promote the visual arts in the region. The gallery is free and open to the public six days a week. As part of their extensive exhibition program, the gallery hosted its first biennial exhibition in 2003. Based on that success, the gallery will hold this event biennially. The purpose of the exhibit is to present works by different artists and to work with original and challenging concepts and use creative techniques to further their perspective art forms, in cohesive exhibit.

Funded in part by New Mexico Arts, artists from New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah will be featured. Between 20-25 artists will take part in the exhibition showing three to nine artworks each, depending on media and size. The Second Regional Invitational will run from June 3rd through July 31st and will open with a public reception on Friday, June 6, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The gallery is located in the D.W. Williams Art Center at the intersection of University Blvd. and Solano Dr. in Las Cruces.

Gallery Director Mary Anne Redding will select the artwork for the 2005 Regional Invitational featuring emerging and mid-career artists, including New Mexican artists Sam Ace and Margo Donalson of Truth or Consequences; Marian Broenen of Las Cruces, Michael Metcalf of Silver City, and Mayumi Nishiida of Albuquerque. A catalogue will be produced in conjunction with the exhibit that features color pictures and brief essays about the artists and their work. The catalogue will further explain the reach of the show and the artists’ works. There is no fee for artists to participate, and regional artists will be served by having their works included in such a high profile exhibit in the Las Cruces area.

The gallery has received significant support from a $60,000 grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in New York to support the next two regional Invitational exhibitions. The foundation’s goals are to encourage curatorial research that furthers the field of contemporary art and to support projects that are challenging in form and content as defined by individual communities; the NMSU Art Gallery is committed to promoting the art and artists of the Southwest. The first biennial exhibition in 2003 featured 25 artists selected by Redding from nearly 200 studio visits and reviews of artwork in galleries and museums in southern New Mexico and Texas. Selected works represented a variety of media including sculpture, painting, drawing, photography, metawork, books, mono- prints, mixed media, and ceramic arts. Artists included Tim Billman, Roberto Cohen, Amy Lam Wai Man, Cecilia Stanton, and Virginia Marie Romero. More than 1,300 visitors attended the exhibit. The gallery purchased the artworks of four artists for its permanent collection.

For more information about this year’s Regional Invitational, contact Mary Anne Redding, Director, New Mexico State University Art Gallery, telephone 505/846-6110, or email mredding@nmsu.edu.

Updates on the Statewide Public Art Task Force

Since the Statewide Public Art Task Force was established and held its first meeting in July 2004, many short-term goals have been determined and are being addressed. At the December meeting, the Task Force decided to form subcommittees to accomplish specific duties. The subcommittees are Video, Advocacy, Legislation, Public Relations, Arts Councils, and Cultural Tourism. The subcommittees in tandem to accomplish the overall goals of the Public Art Task Force to:

• better inform the public of what constitutes public art programs, how they function within their communities, and to actively support and disseminate accurate and timely information;
• recruit individuals not directly involved with the administration of public art to speak to communities and enlist their support;
• work with people who reside within a community to spread the word about public art;
• promote active community support to create a visual and vocal presence throughout communities in NM;

The Public Relations and Video subcommittees are working to promote the project with a script and message for a short information film about public art, the selection process, and the benefits of public art to economic development and cultural tourism. The Arts Council subcommittee’s focus is to identify and share public art information with the arts councils and their partner in helping to spread the word about new public art projects to their communities and local artists. Technical assistance will also be provided to regions or communities interested in establishing their own public art programs.

Since cultural tourism and economic development go hand in hand, the subcommittees will collaborate with the NM departments of Tourism and Economic Development by promoting public art in both rural and urban areas of the state and explain how it can generate more tourism opportunities and mone tary benefit for New Mexico.

Questions about the Statewide Public Art Task Force can be forwarded to New Mexico Arts, Art in Public Places Program, or to city or county public art programs.

Artwork Installed at Toney Anaya Building in Santa Fe

Sculptor Brower Hatcher completed the installation of his artwork Turbulent Stream at the Toney Anaya building, 2550 Cerrillos Road in Santa Fe. Turbulent Stream is a graceful metal structure that wraps around both sides of a large winding staircase in the building’s lobby. The aluminum, powdered coated, glass, and stone structure presents the path the water takes as it flows downstream. The artist’s goal was to create a piece that “...whether you are walking up or down the stairs, it would feel almost as if you’re within this stream with cascades and currents all around you.” The complex weave of the artwork exemplifies the artist’s technical and engineering skills and demonstrates his ability to construct works that appear to be light, airy, and effortlessly floating in space.

Born in Georgia and a resident of Ruidoso, New Mexico, Brower studied engineering at Nashville TN and received an undergraduate degree in industrial design from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY. Following graduate studies at St. Martin’s School of Art in London, he became one of the faculty members at that prestigious institution. Later he taught at Bennington College in Vermont until 1985 and in subsequent years has continued to serve as a visiting artist and lecturer at numerous college campuses.

During his over thirty-year career, Hatcher has been commissioned to create many major works for public sites in Denver, Phoenix, Philadelphia, New York, and many other locations around the country.

OUT-OF-STATE OPPORTUNITIES

Deadline for submissions: August 1, 2005

The City of Palm Desert’s Public Art Program announces a new program titled Embracing the Desert: A Program of Temporary Public Art Projects. A design fee of $1,500 will be awarded to six artists for projects that include the following costs: model of the artwork, engineering specifications, materials, shipping and return shipping, crating, insurance, city permits, installation, and removal of artwork. Each selected project will be funded $5,000. During the installation period, all temporary public art projects will be included in local, regional, and national publications and will be included on the City of Palm Desert’s Public Art website with a virtual tour and map with locations for each of the projects.

The program is designed for artists who have very little or no experience in creating pub lic art projects. Artists who have worked as assistants to professional artists on public art projects or have done only one or two public art projects should apply. The program is designed to be an educational opportunity that will provide artists who to gain valuable experience in all phases of a public art project, including: design and engineering.

Divine - Veronika, Puppet Theatre Las Titiriteros, Christina Massoufe, 2003, Photo: Conrad Bookout.
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The purpose of the exhibit is to present works by different artists, ranging from original and challenging concepts and arts to creative techniques to further their perspective art forms, in cohesive exhibit.

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The gallery has received significant support from a $60,000 grand from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in support of the first biennial exhibit in 2003. The donor's goals are to encourage curatorial research that furthers the field of contemporary art and to support public art projects that are challenging and often experimental. The gallery has purchased the artworks of four artists for its permanent collection. The gallery purchased the artworks of four artists for its permanent collection.

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- recruit individuals not directly involved with the administration of public art to speak to communities and enlist their support
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The Public Art Task Force is also pursuing the following goals and objectives:

- define and publicize the terms public art and public art project
- promote active community support to create a visual and vocal presence throughout communities in NM
- facilitate the development of public art in the region
- coordinate exhibits, events, and conferences to promote the development of public art
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The Arts Council subcommittee's focus is to share public art project information and direct artists to their partner in helping to spread the word about new public art projects to their communities and local artists. Technical assistance will also be provided to regions or communities interested in expanding their own public art programs.

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driving force behind North Carolina’s very successful efforts to create loop tours designed to highlight artisans and craftpeople. I attended one of Anderson’s workshops in Oklahoma last fall, and she is dynamite.

It’s also clear to me that we at New Mexico Arts need to do a better job at educating our legislators about exactly what we do – and how the arts, and the programs we support, really do promote economic development in our state, especially in our rural areas. The recent study conducted for us by the Western States Arts Federation (WEST-AF) is a useful tool in this effort. The study is available, along with a handy two-page summary, at our website www.nmarts.org.

We’re also moving ahead with developing a plan to simplify our funding guidelines and grant application. We would welcome input from you in this effort.

I want to thank all of you who contacted legislators during the session and helped advocate on our behalf. It’s important that we continue this effort in the coming months during the interregnum. As I told the members of the New Mexico Arts Commission at our February meeting, I am in this for the long haul. The work our commissioners do in their home communities is also critical to our efforts to raise awareness about the vital importance of supporting the arts.

We also need to continue to thank our governor, our state legislators, and our congressional delegation for the support they provide to the arts. We couldn’t do what we do without them.

After a particularly long day at the Capitol during the session, I was struck by a quote posted on the bulletin board at my gym – where I had gone to work off some of my frustrations.

The quote by Robert Louis Stevenson, the 19th century Scottish author of Treasure Island and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (which seemed especially appropriate to me during the legislative session), said: “Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.”

That’s very good advice, especially when it comes to keeping things in perspective at the Roundhouse.

All of us need to keep planting seeds.”