



# Art Lines *online*



April 2009

## Welcome to the Arkansas Arts Council e-newsletter!

### Arkansas Arts Council to Distribute \$302,100 to Arts Nonprofits

The Arkansas Arts Council will distribute \$302,100 to Arkansas nonprofit arts organizations through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant program was signed into law by President Barack Obama on February 17, 2009. Under this program, the National Endowment for the Arts is distributing \$19.8 million in one-time grants to state art agencies and regional arts organizations to preserve jobs in the non-profit arts sector that are threatened by the economic downturn.

The Arkansas Arts Council will expedite distribution of \$302,100 in Arkansas to non-profit arts organizations for salaries and contracted expenses to preserve jobs in the arts.



Completed applications must be postmarked or delivered to the Arkansas Arts Council by 4:30 p.m., May 29, 2009. Applicants will be notified of the grants awarded by June 19, 2009. All applications will be reviewed by the Arkansas Arts Council staff and awards will be approved by the members of the Arts Council.

Click [here](#) for application guidelines, or call (501) 324-9766 for more information.

### Applications Are Now Being Accepted for Arts on Tour Grants

It's no surprise that nonprofits are feeling the effects of the weak economy. From cutting back staff to cutting back services, nonprofits are doing everything they can to survive.

Fortunately, the Arkansas Arts Council has a program that can reduce expenses for Arkansas nonprofits that present performing or visual artists at events.

The Arkansas Arts Council is inviting Arkansas non-profit organizations to apply for grants from its statewide Arts on Tour program. Grant applications are being accepted for performances and exhibitions that are scheduled for July 1-December 31, 2009.

The Arts on Tour program was developed by the Arkansas Arts Council to provide fee support to eligible nonprofits that showcase artists listed in the Arts on Tour roster. Eligible presenters include nonprofit organizations (theaters, libraries, museums, social service organizations, etc.) and schools and government agencies.

Presenters can choose from an online roster of more than 200

Arkansas performing and visual artists, ensembles and groups, and apply for reimbursement of 40 percent of the artist's contract fee.

All AOT artists are interviewed and auditioned and evaluated for artistic quality and touring readiness.

The Arts on Tour roster features a full web page for each artist or group and includes a photo, brief bio, performance fee range, availability, contact information and a link to the artist's web site.

Applications are available at the Arkansas Arts Council office or online at [www.arkansasarts.org](http://www.arkansasarts.org). For more information, contact Jess Anthony at (501) 324-9768, or email [jess@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:jess@arkansasheritage.org).



Classically-trained soprano Deleen Davidson is a member of the Arts on Tour roster. Together with the Muses, she provides music that blends various classical art forms, vocal and instrumental, along with dance, poetry and visual art.



Brenda and Ellis, a husband and wife duo, are members of the Arts on Tour roster. They provide entertainment and music ranging from blues and jazz to pop, rock and country.

## Arkansas Arts Council is Now Seeking New Artists for Arts in Education Roster

The Arkansas Arts Council is now accepting applications from artists who want to join the Arts in Education roster.

Performing, literary or visual artists who are interested in working with teachers and students in schools or after-school/summer programs are encouraged to apply.

Application are available online at [www.arkansasarts.org](http://www.arkansasarts.org).

Completed applications must be postmarked or delivered to the Arkansas Arts Council by 4:30 p.m., Friday, July 10, 2009.

The Arts in Education program places professional artists in Arkansas schools and communities to work directly with pre-K to 12th grade teachers and students to demonstrate their art forms and share their ideas, creativity and talents in curriculum-based arts activities.



An Arts in Education artist teaches a young boy art techniques.

For more information, contact Cynthia Hass at (501) 324-9769 or e-mail [cynthia@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:cynthia@arkansasheritage.org).



Still on the Hill, an AIE artist and Arts on Tour member, teaches young children about folk music.

## Doug Stowe of Eureka Springs is Selected as 2009 Arkansas Living Treasure

Doug Stowe vividly remembers the day in college when he was working on the restoration of an antique Ford. His mentor, who was helping him that day, said, "Doug, I don't know why you are studying to be a lawyer when your brains are so clearly in your hands."

In response to his mentor's advice, Doug began taking pottery classes in college and later moved to Eureka Springs to become a potter. In 1976, he began working with wood at a small furniture shop to supplement his income. This is when he discovered his true calling to be a woodworker.

Doug Stowe has been selected by the Arkansas Arts Council as the 2009 Arkansas Living Treasure. Now in its eighth year, the Arkansas Living Treasure award recognizes an Arkansan who is outstanding in the creation of a traditional craft, who has elevated his or her work to the status of art, and who actively preserves and advances the art form through community outreach and educating others.

Joy Pennington, executive director of the Arkansas Arts Council, said the award not only recognizes individuals who create traditional crafts, but also ensures that we help encourage the continuation of these crafts for years to come.

From 1976 to 1995, Doug was a self-employed craftsman making custom furniture and a line of small boxes. In 1995, Doug wrote his first book and has since written numerous articles for a variety of woodworking magazines. He has published five books and one woodworking DVD, with his next book and DVD scheduled to come out in fall of 2009.

In 2001, after noting a severe decline in participation in crafts by younger generations and specifically a decline in woodworking programs in schools, Doug developed the Wisdom of Hands program at Clear Spring School in Eureka Springs.

The purpose of the program, he said, is to demonstrate the value of woodworking in general, non-vocational education. His belief is that all children can benefit from the intellectual development that woodworking can provide. Today he is the director of the program and also a teacher at the school.

Doug has also become an international advocate for hands-on learning for children. He has twice presented papers on the subject at universities in Finland and Sweden.

Doug continues to write regularly for a variety of woodworking magazines, and he also contributes daily to a blog that attracts readers from all over the world.

Doug only uses native Arkansas woods in his work, and he is entirely self-taught.

A reception to honor his work will be held Sunday, May 17, from 2-4 p.m. in the Conference Room Conservatory in the Crescent Hotel in Eureka Springs.



Doug Stowe



One of Doug Stowe's exquisite furniture pieces made of Arkansas wood.

For more information about Doug, visit his website at [www.dougstowe.com](http://www.dougstowe.com), or read his blog at <http://wisdomofhands.blogspot.com>.

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## ***Small Works on Paper* Moves to Fort Smith**

The Arkansas Arts Council traveling art exhibition known as *Small Works on Paper* is on the road again ... this time making a stop in Fort Smith.

The exhibition will arrive at the Fort Smith Arts Center on Thursday, May 7, and will remain on display there until May 22. A reception from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, will kick off the exhibition.

Admission is free and hours of operation are Tuesday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Fort Smith Art Center is located at 423 N. Sixth Street.

Now in its 22nd year, *Small Works on Paper* is presented annually by the Arkansas Arts Council. It showcases up to 40 small-sized visual works (no larger than 24x24 inches) by Arkansas artists in a year-long traveling show throughout the state.

More than 300 entries were submitted for this year's exhibition, which was juried by Edwin Pinkston, professor emeritus at the Louisiana Tech University School of Art.

For more information on *Small Works on Paper*, visit [www.arkansasarts.org](http://www.arkansasarts.org), e-mail [cheri@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:cheri@arkansasheritage.org), or call Cheri Leffew at (501) 324-9767.



*Bandages* by Mary Shelton is one of the featured works in the *Small Works on Paper* exhibition.

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## **The Arkansas Arts Council is on Facebook**

The Arkansas Arts Council has hopped on the social media bandwagon and is now on Facebook!

If you are a Facebook user, please become a fan of our page. Fans will receive regular updates from the Arts Council and have the opportunity to network with other artists and arts supporters from around the state.

To find our page, simply type "Arkansas Arts Council" in the search box on your Facebook account home page.




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## **Last Call: Deadlines for Fellowship Applications and Governor's Arts Awards Are Just Around the Corner**

Procrastinators, have no fear. There is still time for you to apply for an Individual Artist Fellowship and/or nominate a person or business for a Governor's Arts Award. Both forms can be picked up at the Arts Council office, or online at [www.arkansasarts.org](http://www.arkansasarts.org).

The deadline for the Governor's Arts Award is Friday, May 1; the deadline for an Individual Artist Fellowship is Friday, May 8. Completed forms must be postmarked or delivered to the Arkansas Arts Council by 4:30 p.m. on the day each is due.

The annual Governor's Arts Awards recognize Arkansans for their

outstanding contributions to the arts community.

Nominations are being accepted in seven categories: Arts Community Development, Arts in Education, Corporate Sponsorship of the Arts, Individual Artist, Folk Life, Patron and Lifetime Achievement. Each nomination will be judged on the significance of the contributions made, the range of the individuals and groups served and the length of time and degree of the activity or contributions.

For more information on the awards, contact Cheri Leffew at (501) 324-9767 or e-mail [cheri@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:cheri@arkansasheritage.org).

Arkansas Arts Council artist fellowships are unconditional awards that recognize individual artistic ability. The three categories for this year are contemporary and traditional crafts, short stories and film and video.

For more information on the fellowships, contact Sally A. Williams at (501) 324-9348, or e-mail [sally@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:sally@arkansasheritage.org).




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## Artist Spotlight: Poets in the Streets

### POETS IN THE STREETS

T.J. Medel admits that the reason he started writing poetry in high school was to "get girls." Today the 21-year-old uses poetry to get young girls and boys inspired and excited about the spoken word.

"Poetry is not just a hobby for me. I live it. It's what I love to do, what I was bred to do," he said.

Amoja Sumler, 34, started writing poetry in the fourth grade. The Chicago native, also known as "The Mo-Man" by his friends and fans, said that poetry is "the blood that pumps through him."

Together, these passionate poets are part of a nonprofit literary organization based in Little Rock known as Poets in the Streets.

The mission of the organization is simple: "Bringing about education and healing through creative writing and spoken word."



Amoja and T.J., along with other poets and writers in the organization, travel the nation teaching creative writing and poetry workshops at schools and universities and performing slam poetry at events, festivals and other venues.

Poets in the Streets is a member of the Arkansas Arts Council's Arts on Tour roster, as well as the Arts in Education roster.

Poets in the Streets was founded by Amoja five years ago. Since then, its members have represented Arkansas in numerous poetry slams across the nation, including the Southern Fried Poetry Slam in Birmingham, Ala., the second largest poetry slam in the nation.

Amoja said the organization moves beyond the attempt to just engage youth in poetry; it also encourages them to have the will and courage to let their voices be heard.

"We are so passionate about teaching the spoken word to children that we often give our workshops for free," he said. Getting the students excited about literature and poetry is what matters, he added.

T.J. agreed. "The kids are always my number one concern," he said. "Poets in the Streets are skeleton-crewing the youth poetry movement in Arkansas."

A native of New Jersey, T.J. started performing poetry when he was 17 years old as a member of the New Jersey Youth Slam Team.



T.J. Medel

Although T.J. has performed, competed and won numerous slams, he said his passion is teaching positivity through the arts. Currently, he is teaching after-school poetry workshops twice a week in Cabot and Pine Bluff. He recently developed the first youth invitational poetry slam in Arkansas.

At the same time, T.J. is pursuing a degree in performing arts at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He also studied acting for a year at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York.

T.J., who describes his poetry as "blunt" and "in your face," has a few goals he would like to accomplish while here in Arkansas. He is currently training to become executive director of the organization.



Amoja "The Mo-Man" Sumler

"I would like for Little Rock to try to support an event like the Southern Fried Poetry Slam, the second largest in the nation," he said. "I predict that in five years, with the current growth rate, we will have an event like that here."

T.J. noted that he started out working with 30 students and is now working with almost 300. "There is so much potential in this state," he said. "If the youth only knew their potential ... the poetry scene here could explode."

He is also hoping to send the first Arkansas youth slam poetry team to compete at the international slam poetry competition, Brave New Voices, in Chicago, a competition that T.J. has participated in himself.

Amoja, who has a degree in English from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, also has some important goals for the organization.

He would like to bring poetry to the masses. "The poetry of many modernists like Pound and Elliott is so cerebral. Our goal is to take poetry to another level ... to the blue-collar level," he said.

He explained that people must be entertained before they can entertain notions of deciphering deeper meanings in poetry. "We should hear the spoken word and feel it ... instead of being so busy trying to understand it," he explained.

Amoja said that although poetry is taught in school systems, the dynamics of the delivery are not emphasized. "A poem should have a life on paper, but it should be alive as spoken word as well," he said.

Both Amoja and T.J. are excited that Poets in the Streets are performing in the upcoming ArtWeek event, a collaboration of the 2nd Friday Art Night and Argenta Art Walk museums and galleries that includes 10 days of performances, exhibit openings, demonstrations by performing and visual artists and more. The festivities will begin on Friday, May 8, and end on Sunday, May 17.

For more information on the workshops and performances of Poets in the Streets, e-mail [poetsinthestreets@gmail.com](mailto:poetsinthestreets@gmail.com) or call (501) 541-0681.

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## The Weekend Theater to Present *Rabbit Hole*

The Weekend Theater, located on the corner of 7th and Chester Streets in downtown Little Rock, will present *Rabbit Hole* on May 8, 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23.

The Weekend Theater is a 2009 recipient of a General Operating Support Grant from the Arkansas Arts Council. The non-profit theater produces socially significant plays for the Central Arkansas community



Winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for drama, *Rabbit Hole* is about a family recovering from the death of a child.

David Lindsay-Abaire wrote the drama after fellow playwright Marsha Norman told him to write a play about something that frightened him. A father, Lindsay-Abaire began shaping a story about a husband and wife who lose their only child in a freak car accident. In the aftermath of this life-shattering accident, a young husband and wife find themselves drifting perilously apart. *Rabbit Hole* charts their bittersweet search for comfort in the darkest of places ... and for a path that will lead them back up into the light of day.

Curtain times are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Individual tickets are \$14 and \$10 for students and seniors over 65. Reservations are encouraged.

For more information, call (501) 374-3761, or visit [www.weekendtheater.org](http://www.weekendtheater.org).

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## Top of the Rock is Recruiting New Singers

Top of the Rock is looking for a few good singers. A member of the Arkansas Arts Council's Arts on Tour roster, Top of the Rock is an award-winning a capella female chorus with more than 60 members. The chorus is a member of Sweet Adelines International, the world's largest women's singing organization.

The chorus is inviting interested female singers to check out their weekly rehearsals every Tuesday evening through June 16 at the Woolly Auditorium at the Arkansas School for the Blind in Little Rock, located at 2600 W. Markham St.

"We are actively looking for new members, and we are making this opportunity available to any woman who has seen our performances, who loves our style and who would like to try us out," said Peggy Gram, one of the Top of the Rock directors.

Interested singers should arrive at the auditorium on any Tuesday evening through June 16 at 6:45 p.m. for a short vocal evaluation. The guests will then be paired with a chorus member for the rehearsal.



Top of the Rock Chorus

For more information, call Christa Newburg at (501) 517-0059, e-mail [topoftherockchorus@yahoo.com](mailto:topoftherockchorus@yahoo.com), or visit [www.topoftherockchorus.com](http://www.topoftherockchorus.com).

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