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Art Lines

The E-newsletter of the Arkansas Arts Council

February 2010

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Arts Council Now Accepting Fellowship Applications; Deadline: May 7

Up to nine Individual Artist Fellowships will be awarded this year to deserving artists in Arkansas in the following categories: **choreography**, **literary non-fiction** and **works on paper**.

Interested artists can download an application online by clicking [here](#) or request one from the Arts Council. Deadline to apply for the \$4,000 fellowships is Friday, May 7, 2010.

"The Individual Artist Fellowships recognize individual artistic ability," said Executive Director Joy Pennington. "Historically, artists who have received fellowships demonstrate a major career commitment to the art discipline for which they apply and have created a substantial body of work. Artists make up the core of the 34,000 Arkansans who work in creative enterprises, and it is important to recognize their economic and artistic contributions to our state."



To be

eligible for fellowship awards, an artist must be at least 25 years old and must have been an Arkansas resident for at least one year at the time of application. Previous fellowship recipients are not eligible to apply.

For more information, call (501) 324-9766 or e-mail info@arkansasarts.com.

Congratulations to the Artists Selected for 2010 Small Works on Paper

The Arkansas Arts Council would like to congratulate the talented artists whose work was accepted for the 2010 *Small Works on Paper* touring exhibition. Click [here](#) to view the list of artists and the 10-city tour schedule.

This
year's



exhibition, which features 39 works by 39 Arkansas artists, launched in Searcy at the beautiful Searcy Art Gallery. Many artists and guests attended an opening reception at the gallery in January. (To view all the photos from the reception, visit our new online [photo gallery](#).)

More than 300 entries were submitted for this year's *Small Works on Paper* exhibition, said Joy Pennington, executive director of the Arkansas Arts Council. "We were very pleased this year with the variety of work," Pennington said. "From contemporary to traditional, there is something that will appeal to everyone."



Now in its 23rd year, the *Small Works on Paper* exhibition showcases up to 40 small-sized visual works (no larger than 24 x 24 inches) by Arkansas artists in a year-long traveling show to 10 galleries, often in rural areas or small towns.

Four artists were selected to receive purchase awards ranging from \$200 to \$1,000 each. The award winners are [James P. Bell](#) of Fort Smith, [John Bridges](#) of Little Rock, [Evan Lindquist](#) of Jonesboro and [Dennis McCann](#) of Maumelle. Purchase award winners receive the cash amount equivalent to the value of their selected works. Funded by entry fees, the purchase award pieces become part of the exhibition's permanent collection.

The juror, a professional from the arts community, selects the artwork and designates pieces for purchase awards. The exhibition was juried by Suzanne Bloom, a professor of art at the University of Houston. Bloom holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

For more information on *Small Works on Paper*, e-mail Cheri Leffew at cheri@arkansasheritage.org.

Small Works on Paper on Display in Batesville

The *Small Works on Paper* touring exhibition is now on display at the Lyon College in Batesville.

The



annual juried exhibition, sponsored by the Arkansas Arts Council, is currently housed in the Kresge Gallery on the Lyon College campus at 2300 Highland Road. The exhibition will remain on display through Feb. 26. A public reception is slated for 5-7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 18, at the gallery.

Hours of operation for the exhibition are 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Admission is free.

Retro Works Exhibition in Helena Through March 20

Small Works on Paper: Retro Works has arrived at the Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas in Helena. The exhibition will be on display through March 20 in the college's Hendrix Gallery on 1000 Campus Drive. Admission is free. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

SWOP: Retro Works is a retrospective collection of 30 outstanding works created by Arkansas artists between 1989 and 1997. The works were previously featured in the annual *Small Works on Paper*



touring exhibitions and were purchased with grants from the International Paper Foundation and donated to the Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas. The Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas partnered with the Arkansas Arts Council to curate *SWOP: Retro Works*, which will travel to various educational institutions, galleries and museums across Arkansas during the next year.

Artist Spotlight: Sleepy LaBeef

It's a Saturday night in the historic Argenta district of North Little Rock. Large crowds of people of all ages have gathered to listen to a night of Arkansas music legends perform for a fundraiser for the *Oxford American* magazine.

It's 11 o'clock and the audience is awaiting the last act of the night. A tall and portly man, wearing all black, drinking a large cup of coffee, discreetly steps onto the stage. Standing six feet six inches tall, the man quietly picks up his red guitar and with a booming baritone voice begins belting out a rockabilly tune.


Young and old immediately pack the dance floor to groove to his infectious tunes. He continues to rock the stage with electrifying energy for more than two hours, leaving his fans exhausted but wanting more ... not exactly something you would expect from a man who is 74 years old.

But this Arkansas native is used to performing three-hour sets. He has lived more than 50 years of his life on the stage and on the road. To Sleepy LaBeef, performing live is what it's all about ... he loves the music and loves to perform.

The Arkansas Arts Council is proud to have [Sleepy LaBeef](#), a living roots legend, on the [Arts on Tour](#) roster.



Born in 1935 in Smackover, Ark., Sleepy was the youngest of 10 children raised on a 40-acre truck farm. He and his siblings helped work the farm, growing cotton, watermelon and okra. Sleepy was born Thomas LaBeff. (The original family name was LaBoeuf, the family changed it to LaBeff, and Sleepy changed it to LaBeef.)

 Sleepy LaBeef as a young boy In the first grade, he was nicknamed "Sleepy." "Because it always looked like I was half asleep and half awake," he explained. "I had droopy eyelids."

From the age of 12, Sleepy said he knew he wanted to play guitar. His brother-in-law owned a guitar, so Sleepy traded his .22 rifle for the guitar and started playing music in church. By the age of 14, he had quit school and at 18, he took his guitar and moved to Houston, Texas. There, he sang gospel music on local radio and put together a bar band to play at honkey-tonks, as well as popular radio programs such as the "Houston Jamboree" and "Louisiana Hayride."

In Houston, his career took off. He and George Jones were opening for Elvis Presley. He also shared the stage with musical greats such as Roy Orbison and Carl Perkins. It was in Houston where he began recording singles. His first single, "I'm Through," was issued on Starday Records in 1957.

In 1964, Sleepy moved to Nashville and signed a deal with Columbia Records. He had his first chart success with the single, "Every Day," in 1968. At the end of the decade, he signed with Shelby Singleton's Plantation label and earned a top 20 hit with "Blackland Farmer."

While in Nashville in the late 60s, Sleepy added acting to his repertoire when he played "The Swamp Thing" in Ron Ormond's cult classic horror movie, "Monster And The Stripper," also known as "The Exotic Ones."



With the exception of that acting gig, Sleepy continued to perform his music and make albums through 2008. He toured nationally and internationally, performing up to 300 shows a year. Because he was constantly on the road, Sleepy eventually earned another nickname: "The Road Warrior."

When asked to describe his sound of music, Sleepy calls it "American Roots." "There are no limits to what I can play ... foot-stomping hillbilly music, hand-clapping gospel, blues, country, rock 'n' roll ... it all originated in America," he said. His ability to play almost any tune earned him yet another nickname during his career: "The Human Jukebox." It has been said he can play up to 6,000 songs.

Sleepy said he grew up listening to a variety of music, from his mother singing as she plowed the fields to country music on the Grand Ol' Opry to blues music on radio station WLAC in Nashville. All of these sounds influenced his sound today, which others have described as "American rockabilly," "pure Arkansas" and "pure Americana."

Sleepy has made many TV and radio appearances throughout his career, including a performance and interview on "The Conan O'Brien Show" and a performance on "Austin City Limits." Click [here](#) to watch his performance of "Strange Things Happening" and his interview with Conan O'Brien.

The New York Times describes Sleepy as "a living, breathing guitar-picking history of American music," while the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* says: "... LaBeef is the genuine article. Without him, the new regime of rockabilly would have less to emulate. Some music cooks, LaBeef roasts."



He names Sister Rosetta Tharpe from Cotton Plant, Ark., as one of his major influences, as well as Red Foley, Big Joe Turner and Hank Williams. In turn, a variety of musicians have listed Sleepy as their influence, including Brian Setzer and Bruce Springsteen.

Though he is still touring today, he says he has reduced his shows from 300 a year to 150 a year. "There's just no place like home," he said. "I don't like being away from my family for so long these days."

Today, Sleepy lives in Springdale with his wife, Linda, and their three daughters and enjoys every moment with them after living on the road for so long.

Although Sleepy is more well-known in Europe than he is in the United States (because he had No. 1 hits in Europe), Sleepy says his heart will always be in his country. "They treat us great in Europe, but when we go back to America, a lot of people don't know us," he said. "But we have fans here who have been good to us, and we'd rather be here than anywhere else."

If your organization would like Sleepy LaBeef to headline an event, please visit our [Arts on Tour page](#) for details on how to apply for a grant.

Diverse Arts Scene in Arkansas Is the Topic of Parks and Tourism Article

The Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism recently published a great article about the diverse art scene in Arkansas, and we would like to share it with you. In this article, Arkansas Arts Council Executive Director Joy Pennington shares her thoughts about the abundance of arts offerings in Arkansas.

By Zoie Clift, travel writer
Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism

Though often underplayed, the art scene is alive and well in Arkansas. Blues and banjo musicians, actors and architects, potters and poets, fashion designers and film crews...all have left their artistic imprint in the state over the years.



"The diversity of the cultures and regions in Arkansas has fostered a wide range of excellent visual, literary, and performing artists and venues throughout the state," said Joy Pennington, executive director of the Arkansas Arts Council. "This diversity encompasses the Blues musicians of the Delta and the internationally known blues festival in Helena-West Helena, the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival and an abundance of art and music festivals throughout the year."

Even with a broad scope of artistic outlets, the state is still somewhat of an under-the-radar art destination.

"I think the biggest misconception is that you have to visit a big city or go out of state to experience a thriving art scene when, in reality, there is so much incredible art right here," said First Lady of Arkansas Ginger Beebe. "What I have seen in the past few years is a growing awareness of the talented artists in our state. There are more art galleries and more businesses that carry crafts made by Arkansans."

Multi-year projects such as the Arkansas Creativity Economy Project (funded by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation)



have also been initiated to enhance the state's creative assets. "The concept of a creative economy combines aesthetics and design with economic development in our state," said Beebe, who is on the advisory board for the project. "Craftsmanship, architecture, and even digital innovations can exhibit both beauty and functionality. Through the panel I hope to promote awareness of the arts in sometimes unexpected markets."

According to Pennington the state hosts an assorted range of arts.

"My impression is that Arkansas is best known outside the state for our rural roots, including Ozark folk music, country music and traditional crafts," she said. "While these are important aspects of our culture, we also have a strong tradition of literary arts as well as modern art galleries, symphony orchestras and high quality venues like the Arkansas Arts Center, Arkansas Repertory Theatre and the Walton Arts Center. When completed, the Crystal Bridges Museum (in Bentonville) will be one of the premier sites in the world for those interested in modern architecture, as well as housing the world's finest collection of American art."

Click here to read the full article: <http://www.arkansas.com/arts-crafts/news/article.asp?articleID=1361>.

National Endowment for the Arts Seeks a New "Art Works" Logo

National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Rocco Landesman announced that the NEA has released a request for proposals (RFP) for a new "Art Works" logo; the RFP is available at www.arts.gov/artworksdesign.

The new logo should incorporate all three of the meanings of "Art Works" and tie them to the NEA in such a way that the proposed logo might be used alone or in conjunction with the NEA's current logo.



The phrase "art works" has three meanings: "art works" are the plays, paintings, dances, films and the other works of art that are the creation of artists; "art works" describes the effect

of art on audiences and viewers, art works to transport, transform, inspire, and challenge us; and "art works" is a reminder that arts workers are real workers with real jobs who are part of this country's real economy.

Chairman Landesman said, "Those two words – "art works" – pretty much sum up everything we are about at the NEA, and I hope you will see them everywhere. Art, artists, and arts professionals work to change the communities they inhabit: they are placemakers and help create livable, sustainable, complete communities. I look forward to having a logo that conveys that."

Complete information about the RFP requirements and instructions for submitting may be found at www.arts.gov/artworksdesign. Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. EST on Friday, February, 26, 2010.

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- Receive updates on what's happening at the Arkansas Arts Council.
- View photos from events and exhibitions.
- Interact with other artists and arts enthusiasts from around the state.
- Read local and national articles related to the arts.
- Receive news on national and state art competitions.

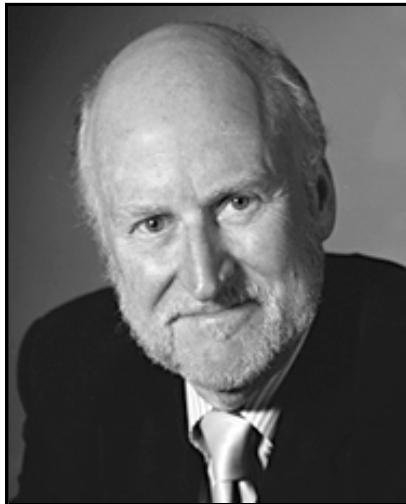
NEA Chairman Illustrates How "Art Works" in Communities

National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Rocco Landesman recently gave a speech at the annual meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM). In his speech, he addressed the role of smart design and artists and arts organizations as place-makers and announced the NEA Mayors' Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary Initiative.

In his address, Landesman made some excellent points about how the arts make a major positive impact in building communities. Here are excerpts from his speech:

Art works. I mean this in a number of ways.

One of our jobs at the NEA is to fund the very best art works: paintings, sculptures, plays, ballets, operas, concerts. Our support is based on simple criteria: excellence and merit.



Art works in another way that each of you gathered here this morning know very well: it transforms people and communities. The child who is in fact left behind by programs that train teachers to train students to perform on standardized tests, that child - who has a special talent or passion or imagination - will realize his or her potential on the stage or in the studio or in the orchestra.

Even those of us who are not artists can vividly recall those special, transcendent moments, when we have been deeply affected by a love song, a dramatic twist, a breath-catching, gravity-defying climax in a dance, a spontaneous, unexpected riff in a thrilling saxophone solo. At these moments we take temporary leave from our quotidian, habitual, exigent daily life and for an instant we become more ourselves and more than ourselves. We are better.

And art makes communities better: prouder, more cohesive, individuated. We know and recognize cities by their special architecture and parks and sculpture gardens and neighborhood arts fairs. And there's no such thing as just music: there's hip-hop in L.A., jazz in New Orleans, blues in Memphis, country in Nashville, soul in Detroit and Broadway musicals in New York. Art not only moves us, it tells the world what is special about us.

Art works.

But I didn't come here at 7:30 a.m. just to wax poetic about poetry. You each have cities to run and it's your luck that you've been elected to run them at an especially bad time. Tax revenues are declining, bond markets are inhospitable, state support is shrinking every month, basic services are endangered, social instability is a lurking possibility which brings me to the third iteration of "ArtWorks."

No one has a magic bullet, certainly not I, but I would suggest that when the goal is neighborhood revitalization, economic growth and civic engagement, art works. Arts workers, and there are 5.7 million of them in this country, are

part of the real economy, they not only pay taxes and buy meals and cars and send their kids to college, they attract economic activity.

Artists are entrepreneurs, small business owners all, great placemakers and community builders. Bring artists into the center of town and that town changes profoundly. We know now that people do not migrate to businesses; it is the other way around. Businesses look for a skilled, motivated, educated workforce, and will move to where that is. And what does that workforce look for? In survey after survey, the answer is education and culture.

People follow other people. To turn upside down one of my favorite lines, from the movie Field of Dreams, "If you come, they will build it."

When artists do come and form clusters and build cultural institutions, what happens? Everything good. I'm sure most of you are familiar with the work of Richard Florida about the importance of the "Creative Class" in our fast-changing economy.

For now, my reference point is recent work by Mark Stern, Susan Seifert, and Jeremy Nowak based on a 10-year study at the University of Pennsylvania of the catalytic role of the arts in Philadelphia and Baltimore. Three general conclusions stand out:

1. The arts are a force for social cohesion and civic engagement. In communities with a strong cultural presence, people are much more likely to engage in civic activities beyond the arts. Community participation increases measurably and the result is more stable neighborhoods.
2. The arts make a major difference in child welfare. To quote, "Low income block groups with high cultural participation were more than twice as likely to have very low truancy and delinquency rates."
3. Art is a poverty fighter. In the cycle I have already described, artists form clusters, cultural institutions are built, people gravitate to them, and the businesses follow. The businesses hire and the virtuous cycle continues. And arts jobs leverage other jobs. Buy a ticket and see a play. You see the actors on a stage. But behind those actors are administrators, designers, ushers, stagehands, costume makers, and just outside the building are parking lot attendants, cooks and waiters.

To continue reading Landesman's full speech, visit <http://www.nea.gov/news/news10/micd-remarks.html>.



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