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Cambridge Arts Council awards 32 grants

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CAMBRIDGE - With \$55,000 to grant this year from the city and the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Cambridge Arts Council (CAC) awarded 32 grants through a competitive process. Funding goes toward a variety of creative and innovative projects that are of outstanding artistic quality and demonstrate community benefit.

Announcing the recipients, Mayor E. Denise Simmons lauded the vitality of the Cambridge cultural community, saying, "The arts enhance the lives of everyone living and visiting Cambridge, and express the unique character of this community. Cambridge understands that funding for the arts and the creative economy is vital to the livelihood of our city."

A volunteer panel of residents and arts professional with expertise in the arts reviewed applications for 2008, ensuring that the voice of the community is integrated into the decision-making process. Applications were submitted in three discipline areas: music and literature, theater and dance, and visual art/film and video.

The grant recipient projects span from dance to theater, film, music to site-responsive visual artwork, creating opportunities for everyone to connect with the arts, all year long, and throughout Cambridge's neighborhoods.

Upcoming programs include:

- Ralph Brancaccio's "Y Project," a temporary public art installation developed to promote a greater understanding of social issues surrounding the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Spring/Summer).
- Community Art Center's "The Recognized Girl," an exhibition of self-portraits by teen girls designed to engage participants to reflect, research and examine popular images of women and to compare and consider their own unique images (Spring).
- Captioning for Ayisha Knight-Shaw's play, "Hey Sistah, Welcome Home," which deals with difficult issues such as rape, anorexia and body image, to be performed during Deaf Awareness Week (Sept. 21-27).
- RiverSing 2008, the fifth annual celebration of autumnal equinox, presented by the Charles River Conservancy and Revels Inc., brings music, puppetry and light to the Weeks Memorial Footbridge next to the Charles River (Sept. 21).

CAC grant recipients include the following:

Music and Literature

- Back Bay Chorale, Concert of Mendelssohn's "Elijah."
- Cambridge Community Chorus, 2008 — "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast."
- Cambridge Symphony Orchestra, 2008 Public Concert Series.
- Charles River Conservancy, RiverSing 2008.

- Handel and Haydn Society, Educational Outreach Series.
- North Cambridge Family Opera, “Powers of Ten” Festival Chorus/CSF.
- Passim Folk Music and Cultural Center, Culture for Kids.
- Tunefoolery Concert Ensembles, Music Scholarships for Participants.

Theater and Dance

- Actors’ Shakespeare Project, “The Tempest” with A. Epstein at Miller’s Crossing.
- Akhra: The Dancing Grounds Inc., “He Who Burns.”
- Art of Black Dance and Music, “Teaching About Kwanzaa” (documentary).
- Ayisha Knight-Shaw, “Hey Sistah, Welcome Home” (captioning).
- New Repertory Theater, New Rep on Tour (Cambridge Public Schools engagements).
- Prometheus Dance Inc., 2008 Elder's Dance Ensemble, “Sacred.”
- They Gotta Be Secret Agents, Poste Restante, 2008 world premier.
- Underground Railway Theater, Page to Stage, A Young Playwrights Festival.

Visual Art/Film and Video

- Asperger’s Association of New England, AANE art exhibitions.
- Ralph Brancaccio, “Y Project,” temporary public art installation.
- Cambridge Arts Council (PAYC), Public Art Youth Council (Spring).
- Community Art Center Inc., “The Recognized Girl,” film diaries.
- Yetti Frenkel, Cinquain Poetry and Fold-out Book Project.
- Karen Frostig, “Legacy of War,” visual art exhibition.
- Thomas Gearty, “Twice Seen,” visual art exhibition.
- Lumen Eclipse, LE: 60 - First One-Minute Film Festival.
- North Cambridge Artists’ Open Studios, 11th Anniversary Portfolio and Brochure.
- Anna Wexler and Nadja Oertelt, Co-Producers, “Awaken,” documentary.

PASS Grants

- Agassiz Baldwin Community.
- Cambridge Family and Children’s Services.
- Cambridge Public Schools, Visual and Performing Arts Departments.

· Community Art Center.

The Cambridge Arts Council is part of a grassroots network of 329 local councils that serve every city and town in the state. The program is the largest, most decentralized one of its kind in the United States. The state Legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which then allocates funds to each local council. Decisions about which activities to support are made at the community level by a board of municipally appointed volunteers. Projects include concerts, exhibitions, radio and video productions, field trips for schoolchildren, after-school youth programs, writing workshops, historic preservation efforts, lectures and festivals.

CAC acknowledges the following volunteer panel of Cambridge artists, educators, arts administrators and professionals who participated in this review process.

· Music and Literature: Janet Axelrod, Aliyah Gary, Shelley Neill and Kiera Wilhelm.

· Theater and Dance: Rosanna Alfaro, Alan Brody, Brenda Divelbliss, Karen Krolak and Rosalind Thomas-Clarke.

· Visual Art/Film and Video: Phyllis Bretholtz, Jennifer Gilbert, Archy LaSalle, Calvin Lindsay Jr. and Andrew Mroczek.

For more information on the CAC Grant Program, visit www.cambridgeartscouncil.org. or call 617-349-4385. The deadline for the 2009 CAC grant proposals is Oct. 15.

