

Commonwealth Awards go to festival, lit journal

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By Catherine Foster, Globe Staff | March 8, 2007

The Boston Cyberarts Festival , the literary journal Ploughshares , the Revolving Museum of Lowell , the educational program Express Yourself , and museum educator Peter O'Connell were all honored yesterday as winners of the 2006 Commonwealth Awards, the highest honors in the arts, humanities, and sciences given by the state. The Massachusetts Cultural Council announced the winners at a State House ceremony MC'd by Joyce Kulhawik.

The Revolving Museum and its founder, Jerry Beck , were honored for integrating the arts into a community. "Thousands of people have participated and pushed the Revolving Museum; challenged our definitions of art, community, and museum; and truly allowed us to celebrate our lives through art," said Beck.

An award for integrating arts and culture into efforts to spur new economic activity went to the Boston Cyberarts Festival, which last year generated a regional economic impact of nearly \$3 million, according to the MCC. Festival director George Fifield was on hand to accept the award.

Recognition for overall artistic excellence and impact on public life went to Ploughshares, the literary journal at Emerson College.

Express Yourself, a Peabody-based cultural organization that serves marginalized youths, was honored for developing a model education program in the arts, humanities, or sciences.

And museum educator O'Connell , the former director of the Tsongas Industrial History Center in Lowell, was recognized for overall excellence by an artist, humanist, or interpretive scientist.

The winners received a medal from Reed & Barton Silversmiths and an original artwork by Judith Motzkin . They were also given surprise \$2,000 grants at a breakfast hosted by Bank of America, which sponsored the ceremony.

Dan Hunter , executive director of Massachusetts Advocates for the Arts, Sciences and Humanities, gave Legislative Leadership Awards to Rep resentative Daniel E. Bosley of North Adams, Sen ator John A. Hart Jr. of Boston, and Sen ator Stanley C. Rosenberg of Amherst. He presented MAASH Commonwealth Awards to outgoing MCC executive director Mary Kelley and former MCC chair man Peter Nessen .

Past winners of the Commonwealth Awards, given biennially since 1993, have included Yo-Yo Ma, David McCullough, Raw Art Works of Lynn, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park. ■