

ARKANSAS ARTS COUNCIL  
Program March 21, 2022

Program presented by:

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Topic: How the Arts Council works to benefit individual artists and small nonprofit co-op groups, especially in rural areas which are generally underserved and uninformed regarding services available.

Scarlet spoke first and told the group about the Council's grant program, which helps to connect artists with opportunities and inspiration at "ground level." The program offers grants this year to individual artists in three broad categories: Performing, Literature, and Visual, with several subcategories such as:

- Graphic novels
- Blues songwriting
- Contemporary crafts (fiber crafts, vintage pieces, etc., do not have to be functional)
- Community engagement (building communities through the arts)
- "Flash" fiction or nonfiction, 500-1,000 word pieces, a new literary trend
- Multi-sensory art (e.g. can incorporate sound; experience in more than one way)
- And others—9 categories in all, with fellowships awarded to 3 artists in each category.

Artists can go online, select a category to enter the grant portal, and follow the instructions. The deadline to apply for this year is April 16. The program will continue for 2 more years. Funding is through the Wingate Foundation in Little Rock, which also supports schools and museums.

The Council is also expanding its "Get Smart" programs that help with finding grants and grant writing, a memoir workshop, teaching tools for use by art teachers, and professional skills development. Scarlet is emphasizing public information, helping artists make connections.

There are matching grant webinars to help with developing a business plan, incorporating the arts into a school curriculum, workshops on writing individual "artist statements" that must accompany applications for grants and such.

The Council sponsors the Arkansas Living Treasure program, and nominations will reopen this fall to recognize people who have made a lifelong contribution to their art or craft.

Patrick then spoke, told the group about his own background and interest in historic preservation, black-and-white photography, drawing, painting, collages, etc. He said he has always been interested in art from early childhood. He taught for several years at the Arts Center in Little Rock and came to the Council to see what more concrete things could be done for individual artists and to bridge the gap between the casual artist and the entrepreneur.

The National Endowment for the Arts was created by Congress in 1966 to enable the states to receive federal funding for arts programs. There are 54 state arts agencies in the U.S. and they include possessions and territories such as the Virgin Islands, Guam, Samoa, etc.

There are grants for education, and general operating support for programs. The Mid-America Arts Alliance covers several states and helps artists to visualize and “monetize” their careers; how to increase revenue and negotiate contracts, how to protect an artist’s work (“intellectual property law”).

Patrick encouraged the group to look at available grants and see what fits as individuals or as an organization. He emphasized that a “creative economy” could not exist without individual artists. He cautioned about fundraisers, where companies or groups will ask for art pieces to be donated “for the exposure,” and the company holding the fundraiser gets the income with nothing going to the artist.

Other areas of interest and influence he suggested were getting the arts into veterans’ communities; the Thea Foundation for young artists; and an Arts Appreciation program that is just getting under way, to promote the idea that arts are vital for businesses, and trying to build a more sophisticated art market among business leaders.

There is a juried show, “Small Works on Paper” in May that travels around the state; he suggested that we could find venues for our own exhibits, or host other traveling shows. The Council’s website and Facebook posts call for entries, and they publish an e-newsletter.

Bottom line: there are many opportunities for promotion and funding for groups like ours, and the Arkansas Arts Council is eager and able to help!