



PHOTO BY VANCE JACOBS

Chairman's Statement

A NEW CONVERSATION, A NEW CONSENSUS

As the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) moves past the midpoint of the first decade of the new century, we find ourselves leading a compelling new conversation about the role of government funding of the arts and arts education—a new conversation that has led to a new consensus of broad support for such funding.

The NEA has introduced into this conversation topics such as “artistic excellence,” “arts presentation and arts education,” “arts and civic engagement,” and “democratic reach.” Discussion and exploration of each of these ideas has led us, as an agency and as a nation, out of the “us versus them” artistic arguments of the last century and into the new consensus of the new century: Government support of the arts and arts education is an investment in our future.

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

In 2006, the NEA continued to support all the arts in all the disciplines across all the states and jurisdictions. More than \$100 million was distributed in more than 2,200 grants. Hundreds of millions of Americans—including millions of children and youth—have benefited from Arts Endowment grants, broadcasts, and National Initiatives.

These grants included between 30,000 and 40,000 concerts, readings, and performances. Among them were American Masterpieces: Choral Music concerts involving eight choral festivals around the country, including a free concert in our nation's capital, “America Sings!,” which showcased significant American choral works performed by as many as 325 singers from a dozen American choruses.

Support from the NEA has helped provide some 4,000 exhibitions, including visual and media arts, and more than 10,000 artist residencies in schools and other

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The two-volume bilingual poetry anthology, Connecting Lines/Líneas Conectadas, features work from Mexican and United States poets.

locations. We have supported artistic excellence in organizations as large as the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, and the Metropolitan Opera in New York City to those as small as Figures of Speech Theatre in Freeport, Maine, and the Caribbean Dance Company in the American Virgin Islands. From those as longstanding as the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, est. 1907, to those as new as Youth Speaks in San Francisco, est. 1999.

Our efforts to promote artistic excellence reached across our southern border in 2006 to the literary achievements of Mexican and American poets. The NEA published, with Sarabande Books, *Connecting Lines* and *Líneas Conectadas*, a two-volume bilingual anthology of work by poets from Mexico and the United States. The anthology resulted from the collaborative efforts of the National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, and the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Each volume contains the work of 50 poets from the postwar generation writing in diverse styles.

Sharing America's artistic excellence and that of other countries was expanded even further with the announcement of the NEA's International Literary Exchanges. These will provide American readers access to literary works by contemporary writers of other countries and provide foreign readers access to the work of acclaimed American writers, especially poets. Projects will include either publication of dual anthologies or specific translation projects. Projects are currently in development with Pakistan, Russia, Mexico, Greece, and Spain. In all instances, the NEA will work with literary and governmental organizations to complete the projects.

COMBINING ARTS PRESENTATION WITH ARTS EDUCATION

The Arts Endowment's commitment to arts education has grown with each National Initiative as well as within our Learning in the Arts direct grants. All of our National Initiatives have education components and, in some cases, are driven primarily by the desire to educate young people to the power of art.

The goal of Shakespeare for a New Generation is to awaken America's youth to the power of live theater. Since 2003, more than 16 million middle and high school students have benefited from the free teacher resource kits that are available through that program. Since 2005, more than six million students have learned about the history of jazz through our NEA Jazz in the Schools program. And tens of thousands more Americans—young and old—have learned about their own artistic and cultural heritage through American Masterpieces presentations in dance, choral music, visual arts, theater, and musical theater.



*As part of California Shakespeare Theater's Student Discovery program, students participate in a post-show discussion with the cast of *As You Like It*.*

PHOTO BY JAY YAMADA

Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth direct grants continue to give students opportunities for exposure to and instruction in dance, classical music, folk and traditional arts, and visual arts—opportunities that used to be as much a part of the school day as math and reading, but which have become lost over the years to budget cuts and redesigned curricula.

If we don't give our children access to the arts in their schools, we don't give them a chance to become fully formed, well-rounded human beings. Arts education is as necessary to a child reaching his or her full potential as any of the sciences or language arts. With this in mind, the NEA puts great emphasis on arts education.

In 2006, the NEA supported youth writing programs in Poughkeepsie, New York, and San Francisco, California. We helped awaken students to the excitement of dance in St. Louis, Missouri, and

Atlanta, Georgia. We taught photography to students in Pablo, Montana, and Chicago, Illinois. In short, we introduced millions of students across the country to the entire spectrum of the arts—and to their transformative power.

ARTS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

During the past five years the NEA has rebuilt its Research and Analysis department into a leader in national opinion, giving arts organizations, arts administrators, artists, opinion makers, and legislators the hard data they need to illustrate the role that the arts play in our nation, our states, our communities, and our lives. In much the same way that the FBI or the Labor or Education





At Miami, Florida's Vizcaya Museum & Gardens, a 17th-century Italian figure of Neptune was shattered during 2005's Hurricane Wilma; in 2006, the statue was restored with support from an NEA grant.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIZCAYA MUSEUM & GARDENS

Departments issue statistics and studies in their realms, the NEA does so in ours.

In 2006, we issued a survey titled *The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life*. Extrapolated from our 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, these data are indisputable in showing that people who are involved in the arts are more active, engaged, and involved public citizens.

People who regularly avail themselves of literature, theater, opera, dance, and other arts are demonstrably more active in their communities than those who do not. Their lifestyles reflect the same level of vigor and social commitment as those of sports enthusiasts. A healthy engagement with the

arts is a sound indicator of civic and community health.

DEMOCRATIC REACH

Because we know the difference that availability to a thriving arts community can make to our youth and families, the NEA has made a priority of reaching every community. To be truly national, the National Endowment for the Arts has awarded at least one direct grant for every 760,000 Americans. Every member of Congress can return to his or her district and find at least one arts organization that is receiving catalytic support from the NEA. I say catalytic because for every dollar the NEA grants, seven to eight additional dollars are generated.

Think of the difference that can mean to a rural or inner city dance company, orchestra, or small museum. Think of the expanded horizons open to young people who are able to see live theater, hear live jazz or chamber music.

These direct grants are in addition to NEA National Initiatives that may be available in cities and towns as well as NEA dollars that go to state arts agencies and then to local arts organizations.

We also reached into areas whose artistic health was severely compromised by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma in 2005. In times of loss and devastation, people are especially needful of the solace and inspiration the arts can provide. The NEA invested more than \$700,000 in 34 direct grants and additional support to the Gulf Coast in 2006 to help arts organizations move forward with reestablishing their vital place in the lives of their communities.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

As we move forward, the NEA is eager to continue the national conversation and build the positive consensus surrounding the necessity of keeping the arts in our lives, of introducing them to our children as early as possible, of the transformative power they can have at every stage of our lives, and of the part they play in defining us as a nation.



Dana Gioia
Chairman



Chairman Gioia tours the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum with Harry Philbrick, the museum's director, and U.S. Representative Christopher Shays (Connecticut) during a trip to southwestern Connecticut in 2006.

PHOTO BY TERRI GARNEAU