

Essential Learning...*In The Arts*

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ARTS EDUCATION
COLLABORATIVE

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Leadership Academy to Take Center Stage at Regional Arts Education Day

This year marks the 5th anniversary that the Arts Education Collaborative has been putting together a day focused on talking about issues relevant to arts education in the region. This year's theme, *Imagination & Creativity: A Civic Evolution*, focuses on the power of the arts as a catalyst for change. With Pulitzer prize-winning playwright Edward Albee giving the keynote address in the morning, the afternoon will focus on regional leaders who have taken it upon themselves to make a real difference in their community. The afternoon sessions will be facilitated by graduates of the Leadership Academy and will focus on topics such as: the healing nature of the arts, responding to a need in your community, the relevance of rigor, and responding to the environment.

AEC fosters the development of leadership skills in arts education teachers or educators at cultural organizations through the Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy is a year-long intensive professional development experience where participants learn valuable teaching skills and acquire confidence needed to increase the visibility and credibility of arts programs in their schools, districts, and/or organizations. Each Leadership Academy participant will create an action plan that focuses on an identified school, district or organizational need. In addition, each participant will work with a seasoned mentor to help identify individual professional goals and turn action plans into reality. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2008-2009 school year and can be obtained by going to: www.artsedcollaborative.org/LeadershipAcademy.html.

Regional Arts Education Day will be held on **April 28, 2008** from 9 am to 3 pm at Soldiers & Sailors National Military Museum Memorial. Participants are eligible for five ACT 48 hours and the cost for attending is \$55 (includes a continental breakfast and lunch). For more information and to download the registration form, visit www.artsedcollaborative.org/calendar.html.

Bi-Annual Professional Development Survey Coming Soon!

Every two years, the AEC takes a barometer reading of the needs of arts educators in the region by conducting a survey on professional development. As the AEC continues to serve arts educators throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania, we look to educators to know what the areas of need are in ongoing professional development. As past years can attest, we will use the results of the survey in making decisions regarding content that we develop by using expertise that exists throughout the country and the region. Your participation in the professional development survey is critical to the organization's short – and long-term programmatic development!

In early May arts educators in the region will be receiving a communication with a link to this year's bi-annual professional development survey that will be conducted for the first time online. Thank you, in advance, for your support as we work together to *foster student creativity and achievement in, with and through the arts*.

For more information, questions, or comments regarding the upcoming professional development survey, contact Dana Casto at castod@artsedcollaborative.org.

The Standards and Critical Thinking

by Michael Cerveris, AEC Program Associate

In recent months, the AEC has been called upon to assist teachers in dealing with a particularly challenging element in the Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standards, that of aesthetic response. Through feedback from several surveys, we learned that teachers were somewhat perplexed as to how to motivate, demonstrate, document, and more problematic, to assess, what students were thinking in regard to their personal reactions to a work of art. To explore this area, the AEC has hosted workshops in music and the visual arts. Our goal is to progressively deal with each of the art forms in this regard and eventually broaden the discussion to consider how the essential elements of aesthetic response are universally manifested in all the art forms. Even as we presently explore this dimension of the standards, it is becoming clearer that there is not only much work to be done by teachers themselves to feel comfortable with 9.4 of the standards (aesthetic response), but that we at the AEC need to explore a range of methods and strategies to deliver this needed assistance.

As area educators and the AEC continue to address the particulars of this issue, I would offer the suggestion that we collectively look to building a more active and wider ranging context of thinking and dialogue about qualitative values in regard to the arts. Since the inception of the state standards, there have been various reactions regarding their implementation. Something that can be said with certainty is that we are now being challenged professionally to apply critical thinking to the arts in ways not addressed in previous times. Through the standards, we are being encouraged to think about the arts more consciously and even objectively. We are being prompted to look beyond the initial exposure to a work of art. Historically, the arts have been admitted to the pantheon of essential life experiences simply by virtue of their ever present reality; of their essential intrinsic value. But in an age of growing accountability and scrutiny, even those values of an intrinsic experience are deemed necessary to be

examined. And, this should not be interpreted as a gratuitous burden. It is, in fact, an opportunity to gain even deeper, richer and more profoundly moving interaction with all of the dimensionality of the arts. We are being encouraged to embrace a perspective that automatically blends together the tactile/visceral experience and the critical/cognizant values into one seamless encounter with a given work; where formalism and experientialism operate simultaneously, as both sides of a coin. Looked at from a post-modern perspective, it speaks to a sea change in the viability of the arts as being in tandem with the re-valuation of other components of society including social, cultural, political, and economic constructs.

What will it take for us as a community of activists to encourage this state of awareness where critical thinking as well as intuitive awareness are both valued? For one thing, it may mean that artists, arts educators, and arts administrators be less defensive when expected to authenticate the value of the arts to a credulous audience, particularly students. It needs to be done in such a way as to invite those yet to experience that two-sided coin of combined intuition and critical thinking to encourage those to give it a try. It may also require abandonment of taking refuge behind the 'mystery' of the arts as opposed to applying common aspects of critical thinking, multiple perspectives, challenged assumptions, and authentic perception as essential elements of a personal aesthetic experience. Fortunately, the tools for developing a personal aesthetic are not that elusive. It requires utilization of our everyday common sense of inquiry along with a willingness to be totally present to a work of art without bias or pre-judgment. To be completely attentive and open to possibility is to create a receptivity that, especially when students it find mirrored in their own mentors, can set a pattern of response that is essential to the goals of 9.4. We owe this to ourselves as well as our students. A personal aesthetic is vital as the functional ingredient in aesthetic response for everyone.

A Dream Come True

by Dr. Sarah Tambucci, Director, AEC



This is unlike any message that I have ever crafted.

As a 'lowly' art teacher on a cart, I came to know in a very real and visceral way that art teachers were merely teachers in name. I was a 'free period' and a 'baby sitter.' I had no real status in the educational community and was disgruntled with the reality.

I questioned the status of the 'specials' and eventually arrived at the realization that there is no status. We fulfill a need and a purpose. We are a necessary element in fulfilling the requirements of the teachers' contract.

My personal journey in transforming my professional decorum from 'extra' to 'extra-special' is relatively short and sweet. I realized that the power of a teacher is limitless, that students transcend all expectations and that the future of our very democracy relies on our ability to educate our citizens to be critical thinkers.

The analysis of the problem began with a critical consideration of what was going on around me. There were teachers volunteering to complete minimal tasks but none of the second layer folks in power knew or understood my agenda. My mission was clear; I needed to learn all that I was able to learn about educational leadership, leadership skills, goal setting, action planning and evaluation. With these tools I began to see paradigm shifts and philosophical changes.

I came to understand and believe that arts educators lacked the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead. And lead is what we need to do. Five years ago, the Arts Education Collaborative initiated an experiment to test an hypothesis – arts educators need to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to advance arts education as *central* rather than peripheral to what happens in schools – and they need the support to help them.

The vision became a reality. This year we celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Arts Education Collaborative Leadership Academy. Sixty arts educators, including arts education staff from arts and culture organizations in

western Pennsylvania, have become an 'army' of arts education leaders at the school and community level.

We salute their efforts. Their diligence, resilience, and focus have every so gradually and effectively begun to transform arts education in the region from 'nice' to 'necessity.'

We salute the sample of Leadership Academy participants who will share their stories, their frustrations and numerous successes at Regional Arts Education Day – April 28, 2008.

Please join us in honoring these teachers' efforts as they continue to place arts education on the regional agenda at the grass roots level.

– The dream is a reality.

In The News...

Fine Foundation Grant Goes To Carnegie Museum of Art For Young Audiences Engagement Project

In March, Carnegie Museum of Art announced an award of \$150,000 from the Pittsburgh-based Fine Foundation. The award is for a new initiative that will use new media to expand the museum's outreach efforts for teens as it relates to the 2008 Carnegie International. Two groups of local teens, one in the spring/summer and one in the fall, will spearhead the project for CMA by contributing content to the International's website, assist in developing teen-focused educational programming, and to help museum visitors of all ages investigate and respond to the exhibits of the International. Teachers will also be able to interact online with their students by blogging at http://blog.cmoa.org/schools_teachers/.

The Carnegie International, widely known as one of the preeminent international surveys of contemporary art in the world, was founded in 1896 by Andrew Carnegie. The only regularly scheduled global survey art exhibition in North America, it is also the only one anywhere presented in a museum. For more information on the International, visit <http://blog.cmoa.org>.

In The News (cont.)...

Communities Explore Arts-Based Civic Engagement

Arts and Civic Engagement Forums are occurring in four communities across the nation to look at best practices as it relates to arts-based civic engagement. The communities that are participating are: Champaign-Urbana, IL; Columbus, OH; Los Angeles, CA; and Palm Beach, FL. These forums will bring together local arts organization leaders, artists, and community partners to address ways to support and advance arts-based civic engagement work in local communities. For more information, visit <http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/a4atoday/issues/2008-03-28/3.html>

Opportunities & Offerings

Frick Art & History Center

What: ACT 48 Workshop: Images of Steel

Where: Frick Art & History Center

When: Saturday, April 19

This workshop examines the question, "What do landscapes say about a region?" Using a multimedia approach, teachers will examine the landscapes of artist Craig McPherson's Pittsburgh river and industrial scenes and the lives of those who may have inhabited those landscapes. Curriculum connections will include links to the PA Standards: Arts and Humanities; Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening; and History. Boxed lunch included. 5.5 activity hours awarded at the conclusion of the workshop. Cost: \$10 teacher members. \$14 non-members. Contact: education@TheFrickPittsburgh.org. or 412-205-2022. Registration and pre-payment required.

Carnegie Museum of Art

What: 2008 Carnegie International: Teacher Open House

Where: Carnegie Museum of Art

When: Wednesday, May 14, 4-8 pm

Experience this planet's most intriguing art right here at Carnegie Museum of Art during an exclusive open-house for teachers on May 14 for the Carnegie International. Douglas Fogle, exhibition curator, will share his insights, and you will have the opportunity to tour *Life on Mars* and to share your feedback with Museum staff. Enjoy wine and appetizers, and receive Act 48 credit for helping us develop interdisciplinary connections to

your curriculum. \$10 admission; advance registration required. For more information or to register, call Carnegie Museum of Art's group visits office at 412.622.3288 or visit http://blog.cmoa.org/schools_teachers/special-events.php.

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

What: Artist Residency Projects

Where: Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

The Pittsburgh Center for the Arts' Artist Residency Projects work in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts to place practicing professional artists in schools, nonprofit service agencies, and community organizations throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. They are designed to have lasting benefits for all participants: students are fully immersed in an art form and see how it connects to life and learning, teachers are exposed to alternative ways of experiencing and sharing the creative process and what it brings to their classrooms, and administrators recognize the ways in which the arts fully engage students and impact their learning across the curriculum. For more information, visit http://www.pittsburgharts.org/community_residencies.php

Carnegie Museum of Art

What: High School Engagement Project

Where: Carnegie Museum of Art

When: Beginning Late April

Carnegie Museum of Art's Department of Education eagerly announces *Zero Gravity*, the *Life on Mars* High School Audience Engagement Project: a new five-month, museum internship program open to highly motivated high school students, ages 14-18. *Zero Gravity* engages students with *Life on Mars*, the 55th installment the *Carnegie International*, which opens May 3 and runs through January 11, 2009. Teens will interact with museum staff and participating artists and shape content of their own space within the *Life on Mars* participatory web site: <http://www.cmoa.org/ci08lifeonmars>. Interns must be recommended by a current high school teacher and commit to Thursday evening meetings at the museum beginning in late April, as well as to weekly shifts staffing the exhibition's education lounges during the summer. For more information and to receive an application for one of your students, contact Teen Coordinator Sharmila Venkatasubban: venkatasubbans@carnegiemuseums.org

Mattress Factory

What: Teacher Workshop: *Squish & Squeeze: Felt Making in the Classroom*

Where: Pittsburgh Public Theater

When: Wednesday, July 9th, 9am-3pm

Enjoy an introduction to basic hands-on techniques for wet-felting wool while making beads, bobbles and other objects. Discussion will include the rich history of the ancient process of felt making and its presence in various cultures around the world. During lunch enjoy an informal presentation by Karen including samples of her work in felt as well as her participation in a project in Kyrgyzstan where she worked with *Women's Co-ops* to help design hand-made felt products. The afternoon will continue to explore basic felt making techniques and then incorporate simple methods to create jewelry – samples of necklaces, earring, bracelets, and pins will be shown. The cost for the workshop is \$25 and ACT 48 credit is available.

Upcoming Events

Pittsburgh Public Theater

What: *Rabbit Hole*: Open Stage Student Matinee

Where: Pittsburgh Public Theater

When: April 23, 11:30 am

Show Description-A couple that seemingly has it all is forced to confront the ultimate loss. Playwright David Lindsay-Abaire balances honesty with humor, and tragedy with hope in this moving five-time Tony Award-nominated play exploring a family's journey to find their

Please submit your Upcoming Events & Opportunities to Dana at: castod@artsedcollaborative.org
Due to limited space, submissions will run on a first come, first served basis.

way out of the darkness after their lives are suddenly—and forever—changed.

For more information on the Open Stage Student Matinees, please call the Education Department at 412.316.8200 ext. 715 or visit us on the web at www.ppt.org. To make reservations, call Group Sales at 412.316.8200 ext. 704.

Children's Festival Chorus

What: Mendelssohn's *Elijah*

Where: Carnegie Music Hall, Oakland

When: Friday, April 25, 8pm

To bring to life one of the most popular and dramatic oratorios of all time, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, the 8-to-15 year-olds of the Children's Festival Chorus will join the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, guest soloists including Metropolitan Opera star Timothy Noble, and the Academy Chamber Orchestra. For one night only, audiences can follow the breathtaking, tragic, and ultimately rapturous story of the prophet Elijah. For more information and tickets visit www.themendelssohnchoir.org or call 412.394.3353.

Pittsburgh Glass Center

What: Mother's Day Make-It-Now

Where: Pittsburgh Glass Center

When: May 10 & 11, 10am - 4pm

Try something new before or after brunch on Mother's Day weekend. Make your own glass flower at Pittsburgh Glass Center. For \$25, local glass artists will guide participants through a hands-on experience in the Hot Shop twisting and pulling molten glass and sculpting it into a colorful glass flower.

Pre-registration is not required, but we suggest calling ahead because time slots fill up fast; however, walk-ins are always welcome. We offer many times throughout the year to "Make-It-Now." For more details or to register call 412.365.2145 ext. 201.

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