



Nick Slie is a New Orleans-based performer, producer and cultural organizer that works with his company, Mondo Bizarro, to use art as a tool for understanding what makes us commonly human and individually unique. Nick's creative endeavors range from interdisciplinary solo performances to large-scale community festivals, from innovative digital storytelling projects to site-responsive productions. Since 2002, his wide array of imaginative projects such as *Flight* (2007-2011), *Loup Garou* (2009-Present), *Race Peace* (2008-Present) and *Cry You One* (2013-Present), have been experienced in art centers, universities and outdoor locations in 34 states across the country and occasionally abroad.

His most recent work, *Cry You One*, a 2.5 mile outdoor processional performance and online storytelling platform, premiered in October 2013 in St. Bernard, LA and has since toured to nine rural and urban locations throughout the United States. In spring of 2014, *Cry You One's* live performance was adapted into a cultural organizing salon that toured to five states along the Gulf Coast. Working directly with local, regional and federal policy makers, salon participants created a collaborative action plan that was presented to President Obama's Restore Council.

For more than a decade, Nick has been passionately engaged in rebuilding his hometown of New Orleans, collaborating across sectors on a vast array of local performance and arts-based civic engagement projects. From 2004-2008, he served on the Executive Committee of Alternate ROOTS and is the former board chair for the Network of Ensemble Theaters. He currently serves on the inaugural APAP Artists Committee.



Savannah Barrett is the Director of Programs for Art of the Rural, and co-founder of the KY Rural-Urban Exchange. She serves on boards for the Center for Performance and Civic Practice, the Robert E. Gard Foundation, and the Louisville Flea Off Market. She earned a Masters of Arts Management from the University of Oregon, and is an alumnus of the Muhammad Ali Program at UofL and from the KY Governor's School for the Arts. She previously guided programs for the Center for Community Arts and Cultural Policy, the Louisville Visual Art Association, the Oregon Folklife Network, and Paul Paletti Gallery. Savannah was raised on and now owns a 7th generation homeplace in Grayson Springs, KY, where she co-founded a local arts agency in high school.



Josh May, Whitesburg, Appalshop

Josh May is a writer, producer, picker and grinner from Magoffin County, Kentucky, now serving as Appalshop's Communications & Marketing Director. Before joining Appalshop staff, he previously worked as communications consultant for Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute as well as producer for June Appal Recordings. Additionally, Josh runs the DIY record label Karmic Swamp, is a founding member of the worker-owned cooperative Roundabout Music Company in downtown Whitesburg, KY, and is active in regional and national organizing efforts including the Media Action Grassroots Network and the Stay Together Appalachian Youth Project.



Sarah Calhoun, Owner, Red Ants Pants, Producer, Red Ants Pants Music Festival, Director, Red Ants Pants Foundation. Tired of wearing men's work pants that didn't fit, Sarah Calhoun designed pants that would fit, function, and flatter working women. Opened in 2006, Red Ants Pants is based out of White Sulphur Springs, Montana where the storefront, distribution center, and international headquarters all reside in an historic saddle shop; all products are made in the USA.

Calhoun's hard work has brought her national recognition over the years: in 2015 as the Montana representative in the Small Business Majority's Small Business Leadership Summit in Washington, DC. In 2012, named the National Women in Business Champion for the Small Business Administration. In 2011, invited by President Obama to attend a White House forum on jobs and economic development after serving as a US Delegate to the APEC Women in Business Summit hosted by Secretary Clinton in San Francisco. Closer to home, she was named the 2011 Entrepreneur of the Year for the State of Montana by Governor Schweitzer.

In 2011, Calhoun created the first annual Red Ants Pants Music Festival, where 6,000 fans came to celebrate rural Montana in a cow pasture. Over the years, fans have enjoyed headliners including Merle Haggard, Emmylou Harris, and Charley Pride. The Red Ants Pants Foundation was formed as the non-profit branch of the project, in support of women's leadership, working family farms and ranches, and rural communities. The festival continues its success into its seventh year on July 27-30, 2017, aiming to improve upon the authentic, rich community culture the 16,000 attendees enjoyed during the record-setting 2016 festival.



Cecily Engelhart, Director of Communications, Thunder Valley CDC. Cecily is a member of the Ihanktonwan Nation through her father and a descendant of the Oglala Lakota Nation through her mother. She grew up with two outspoken Native grandmothers who inspired her to make positive change in Indian Country. After attending a protest on her reservation in 2008, she became frustrated at the lack of media coverage concerning grassroots activism in Native communities. This led her to get a degree in American Indian Studies from the University of South Dakota where she focused on food sovereignty and the effect of media on mainstream attitudes toward Native American communities. Wanting to gain insight from the experiences of other indigenous communities, she then studied at the University of Auckland to get a PgD in Māori Studies as a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholar in 2012. After returning to the United States she graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz with an MA in Social Documentation where she created her thesis film, *Siouxtable Food*. For the film she interviewed several change makers in Očeti Šakowin communities, including Nick Tilsen of Thunder Valley CDC. She was immediately interested in becoming involved in the organization's comprehensive approach to creating Lakota-rooted systemic change in Indian Country, and joined the team in the fall of 2015. Cecily loves cooking, wild ideas and the hearty laughter she gets to share with her family, friends and coworkers.



Kaziah Haviland, Director of Design and Planning, Thunder Valley CDC. Kaziah was raised splitting her time between Philadelphia and rural Vermont. The overlapping hardships faced by both the rural and urban communities surrounding her childhood inspires her current work. Kaziah is an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow placed at Thunder Valley CDC in Porcupine, SD. Her work explores community driven design, social, cultural and environmental sustainability and the intersection of public art, creative place-making and architecture in rural and urban environments. In 2006, Kaziah earned a Bachelor of Arts with honors from Connecticut College where she was a double major in Architectural Studies and Italian. In 2013, Kaziah earned her Master of Architecture degree from The University of Texas, Austin. She received SEED certification in 2011. Kaziah is a LEED Green Associate and is working toward her architectural license through NCARB.

Biographies



Chris Lezama, Epicenter Principal of Economic Development. Since 2011, Chris Lezama has been a force in leading change in Green River. He worked closely with the City to develop its first housing plan, co-established the active defacto chamber of commerce, and acts as Epicenter's Principal of Economic Development. He coordinates community events, facilitates local efforts to improve quality of life, and never takes his finger off the pulse of the community. Chris graduated from University of California at Santa Cruz with a BA in Sociology and Modern Literature.



Maria Sykes, Principal of Arts and Culture, Epicenter. Maria Sykes found rural community development and arts administration by way of architecture and design. She graduated from Auburn University's College of Architecture and Planning, a program known for a focus on community-engaged rural design, with dual Bachelor of Architecture and Interior Architecture degrees. Sykes typically works in isolated, rural places, but finds her work is often applicable to communities of any size or location. Sykes co-founded and is the Principal of Arts & Culture of Epicenter, an award-winning design-based non-profit organization in Green River, Utah, a rural desert town of only 952 people. In addition to directing Epicenter's ongoing arts and design programming such as the Frontier Fellowship residency program, she presents on her place-specific and socially-engaged practice and consults on rural projects internationally. During her time at Epicenter, the collective's work has been honored by Utah Governor Gary Herbert, the Utah Housing Coalition, the Community Foundation of Utah, the Utah Division of Arts and Museums, Curbed, and the Design Futures Council. Sykes loves small town living, winter canyon hiking, front porch sitting, and summer river swimming.



David Jones II is a Musician, Visual Storyteller and Co-Founder of Pioneer Collective - a creative visual media agency and global community that empowers millennials to pioneer their projects and business with meaningful purpose and disruption. Commissioned with the prestigious Kentucky Colonel award at age 21, David's youthful energy and passion for community, creativity and technology led to the creation of this unique agency, which is comprised of marketing experts, visual media specialists and content creators that understand how to navigate the maze of modern marketing through community building & compelling visual storytelling. In addition to his efforts with Pioneer Collective, David has recently been tapped as Project Director for the renovating the nationally historic Lincoln Theater in his hometown of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He also records & tours with his internationally recognized band, Honeyvibe."

Biographies



Monique López, Planning Coordinator at Kounkuey Design Initiative, works with communities to design and develop Productive Public Spaces (PPS) that attempt to improve the physical, social/cultural, and economic opportunities.

Previously, as a Senior Planner and Policy Advocate with the Environmental Health Coalition, Monique worked to promote a more sustainable and equitable regional transportation network that advances public transit and bike/pedestrian infrastructure projects in overburdened communities. Working with residents she has been able to help secure over \$120 million in transit and active transportation investment in environmental justice communities in San Diego.

Early in her career, Monique worked on air quality policy issues in environmental justice communities in both Los Angeles and Imperial County with the Coalition for Clean Air and the American Lung Association. During this time she co-authored an environmental health ballot initiative, which passed by 68% of county voters, to prohibit the importation and disposal of sewage sludge in Imperial County, and helped to coordinate a successful grassroots political campaign.

Monique has a Master's degree in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon and a Master's in Political Science from California State University, Long Beach. She earned her B.A. in History and Political Science from Vanguard University.



Joseph Kunkel, Executive Director, Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative (SNCC). Joseph, a Northern Cheyenne Tribal Member, is the Executive Director of the Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative. He is a community designer and educator working on building capacity in Indian Country. As an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow, Joseph worked directly with the Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative (SNCC), and the Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority (SDTHA). His most recent work with SNCC has been to research and share exemplary Native American Indian housing projects and processes nationwide. This research work has developed into emerging best practices for Indian Country, leading to an online Health Homes Road Map for affordable housing development in Indian Country, funded by HUD's Policy, Development, and Research Office. His professional career has centered on community-based design, ranging from material research, fabrication and construction to community-based planning, design and development. While at the SDTHA Joseph help to lead the development of a 41-unit Low-Income-Housing-Tax-Credit development, along with a housing master plan for the housing authority, which started with an Our Town grant funded by the National Endowments for the Arts, and led to an ArtPlace America grant award.



Ashley Hanson holds an MA degree in Applied Theater from the University of Manchester, with emphasis on the role of theater in the sustainable development of rural communities. She is the co-founder of PlaceBase Productions, whose site-specific work is focused on uniting communities and strengthening sense of place through exploring collective narratives in accessible performances. In her role as the Program Director with the Minnesota Theater Alliance, she supports regional networks around the state to connect rural theater-makers to each other and state-wide resources. In addition, she is a co-founder of Curious Incidents, an event planning collective that produces creative, immersive experiences in unique and underutilized spaces. She calls herself a Freelance Arts Enabler, working with artists, city departments, organizations and communities of all sizes to bring abstract visions into concrete realities. Ashley has received fellowships from the Creative Community Leadership Institute, Creative CityMaking, and the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture. She is also a founding member of the Yes!Lets Collective of artists, musicians and community enthusiasts, and she plays ukulele and sings in the folk/ Americana band, The Family Trade. She released her first solo album, *The Kirkbride Sessions* which explores the underbelly of ruralness in September 2016. With each project, her place- and issue-based work strives to reconnect individuals with their shared values to inspire stewardship of their community; combining shared knowledge with collective action to move a community from where they are to where they want to be.

Community Heart & Soul: How Story-telling Strengthens Rural Towns

Theme // Advance Civic Culture



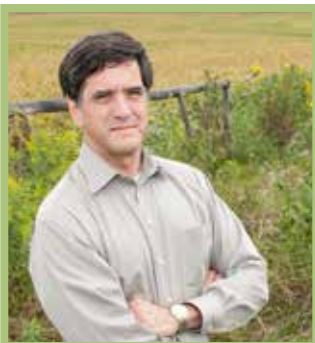
Alexis Halbert is a Senior Associate of Programs for the Orton Family Foundation and has worked with the Community Heart & Soul process since 2012, first serving as the project coordinator for the North Fork Valley Heart & Soul Project and then as a volunteer in the Foundation's Champions Program. An experienced researcher, facilitator, and project manager, Alexis has directed teams across the country in both nonprofit and for profit businesses for almost 20 years. Alexis also served as the president of the Paonia Chamber of Commerce for four years and on the board of directors for the Colorado Renewable Energy Society. Alexis received her B.S. in Globalization and Natural Resource Management from the University of Michigan and studied project management at San Francisco State University. With each of her closest family members are born in a different country, she has many beautiful places that she calls home, including the Bahamas. Alexis has lived in Colorado since 2010, and currently resides in Denver with her husband Matthew and two cats, Percy and Magic.



Jason Neises is the Community Development Coordinator at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (CFGD). He works with rural communities in the CFGD seven-county region to implement Community Heart & Soul, a planning and development process designed to increase participation in local decision-making and empower residents to shape the future of their communities in a way that upholds the unique character of each place. Originally from Dubuque, Neises has spent most of his career in adult education and working with non-profits, including Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Chicago Architecture Foundation, and the Peace Corps. He volunteers in the community with the Dubuque County Historic Preservation Commission, Cub Scouts, Master Gardeners, the Dubuque Winter Farmers' Market, and the Thomas Determan Global Perspectives Endowment. Neises has an education degree from the University of Northern Iowa. He lives on a small farm north of Dubuque with his wife and two boys.

Integrating Community Health, Arts and Culture

Theme // Cross Sectoral Innovation



Keith J. Mueller, Ph.D., is Gerhard Hartman Professor and Head, Department of Health Management and Policy, College of Public Health, University of Iowa. He is also the Director of the RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis and Chair of the RUPRI Health Panel. He has served as President of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) and as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services. He has also served on national advisory committees to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. He has published more than 220 scholarly articles and policy papers, and received awards recognizing his research contributions from NRHA, RUPRI, and the University of Nebraska. His PhD is in Political Science from The University of Arizona, and he completed a faculty fellowship with The Johns Hopkins University.

Biographies



Joe Berry, is Vice President for Entrepreneurship with the Greater Owensboro Economic Development. In this capacity, Joe assists start-up and high tech companies—as well as traditional small businesses—with strategic planning, capitalization, product development, and numerous other services. He also acts as Executive Director to the eEmerging Ventures Center for Innovation—the Owensboro office of the Kentucky Innovation Network, which covers the seven-county GRADD region, and the Owensboro Centre for Business & Research, a 37,000 square-foot high-tech business incubator in downtown Owensboro.

Joe is very active in the Owensboro community and has served on boards of directors and advisory boards for numerous organizations, including the Kentucky Life Sciences Council, the RiverPark Center, Theatre Workshop of Owensboro, and the Owensboro Life Science Academy. In his spare time, he enjoys life with his beautiful fiancé Haley, is an avid reader, runner, and (reluctant) adventurer.



Dr. Jennifer Conner has extensive experience in behavioral research, clinical health services research, grant administration, community-based public health programming, and policy evaluation. She has brought together academic institutions, hospitals, schools, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, municipalities, and non-profits to investigate and evaluate a broad range of health topics, including childhood obesity, respiratory illness, traumatic brain injury, cancer, and birth defects. She has also examined healthcare system topics such as access to quality care, safety net benefits, and incentive-based insurance. Dr. Conner served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas School of Public Health, supporting community-based projects in San Antonio and its four contiguous counties. In 2011, Dr. Conner was appointed as Policy Subcommittee Chair for the San Antonio Mayor's Fitness Council. She launched several faith-based obesity prevention programs and developed several community gardens in the area. More recently, Dr. Conner worked with the Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care to investigate health disparities and evaluate disease prevention and health promotion strategies across the state. She is now continuing those efforts with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. Dr. Conner serves on the Lake Village Economic Development Commission and was instrumental in launching the Mayors Mentoring Mayors program to advance comprehensive community health and wellness. Dr. Conner was appointed to the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention Executive Committee and served as Built Environment Subcommittee Co-Chair for many years. Dr. Conner recently graduated from the Delta Regional Authority DLI Executive Academy and was accepted into the Community Development Institute – Central.



Debbie Zuerner Johnson is a graduate of Apollo High School in Owensboro Kentucky and the University of Kentucky where her major was Family Studies in the College of Human Environmental Sciences now the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. She is presently pursuing her Master's degree in Organizational Leadership. Debbie is the Director of Community Engagement at Owensboro Health where she oversees the Community Benefit work and community engagement of the hospital, the Community Health Needs Assessment, Implementation Strategy and its grant programs. Debbie serves on the UK Daviess County Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Council and County Extension Council, the YMCA, is a County appointee on the Mayor and Judge Executive's Alliance for a Drug Free Owensboro Daviess County, and previously served on the University Of Kentucky Division Of Community Medicine Advisory Board. She serves on the Executive Committee of Healthy Horizons and co-facilitates the Access to Care action team. Debbie is a member of the Association for Community Health Improvement and the Owensboro Noon Rotary Club. Prior to coming to Owensboro Health, Debbie served as Director of Community Solutions for Substance Abuse, worked as a regional prevention specialist with RiverValley Regional Prevention Center, a coordinator for the Kentucky Integrated Resources in Schools initiative, worked with women with domestic violence and substance abuse addictions, was coordinator for Family Connections in the Foust community in Owensboro and in case management with the Virginia Alcohol Safety Action program.

Surveying the Creative Rural Landscape: Deeper Reflections on the Work of the “Place-based Innovations” Presenters

Theme // Innovative Rural Practice



Sarah Lovan is arts program officer for The McKnight Foundation. She joined McKnight in 2005, and has been an officer since 2012. She currently manages the curation of the Cynthia Binger Boynton lobby gallery at the foundation offices. Lovan is an active member of the Program Officer Network through the Minnesota Council on Foundations as well as the Racial Equity Funders Collaborative. She is also a part of Next Generation’s regional network in Minnesota.

Prior to McKnight, Lovan worked at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in development. While at MCAD, she studied drawing and photography through its continuing education program. A native Minnesotan, Lovan received her Bachelor of Arts degree in cultural studies and comparative literature with an emphasis in music from the University of Minnesota. She believes in the power of the arts and artists and recently facilitated a Paint the Pavement project with her neighbors. Lovan is married to a drummer and has two children.

University Engagement in Rural Creative Placemaking

Theme // Rural Arts & Culture Research



Sam Meade Cordes, Professor and Associate Vice Provost, Emeritus, Center for Regional Development, Purdue University. Dr. Cordes spent eight years at Purdue University, retiring in 2011 with Emeritus status. While at Purdue he served in several capacities including (a) Associate Vice Provost for Engagement (b) Founder and Co-Director, Center for Regional Development (c) Assistant Director and Program Leader, Cooperative Extension and (d) Professor of Agricultural Economics.

Subsequent to his retirement from Purdue, Cordes has served in a number of consulting roles. For example, he served as Senior Advisor to the University of Nebraska for two years in support of the development of the Rural Futures Institute. He currently leads the Rural Policy Research Institute’s (RUPRI) Spatial Analytics Initiative.

His career in higher education focused on rural policy and community and economic development. He is a native of South Dakota and received his undergraduate degree from South Dakota State University (SDSU) and his PhD in Agricultural Economics from Washington State University (WSU). Prior to joining Purdue University, he held faculty and various administrative roles at the University of Nebraska and the University of Wyoming; and was also a Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin. He began his academic career as a faculty member at Penn State University.

His various awards include the Distinguished Researcher Award from the National Rural Health Association; the Founders Award from RUPRI; Graduate School Alumni Achievement Award from WSU; and the Distinguished Alumni award from SDSU.

Biographies



Nick Benson currently serves as the University of Iowa's Director of Community Development and Outreach for the Provost's Office of Outreach & Engagement.

Nick also serves as the Program Director of the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC). He shapes the university's community development initiatives by leading the IISC, the RC&D partnership, and other community outreach efforts. He enjoys engaging departments across the university and communities throughout the state in mutually beneficial partnerships that innovate on both the university's public mission and the challenges facing Iowa's cities and small towns. Nick earned both his master degree in Urban Planning and Juris Doctorate from the University of Iowa, and is a licensed attorney in Iowa. Nick previously worked in Planning and Community Development for the City of Iowa City and for Leff Law Firm.



Jennifer Drinkwater is an assistant professor with a joint appointment between the department of art and visual culture and Iowa State University extension and outreach.

She has a B.A. in both studio art and anthropology from Tulane University and earned an M.F.A in painting from East Carolina University. Her paintings have been exhibited nationally in juried and group shows, and she has had solo exhibitions in Iowa, New York, Illinois, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, and Washington, DC. Her work has been featured in *New American Paintings* and *Studio Visit* magazine. Her personal work and teaching often explore how we bring artwork from the studio into the world, and accordingly, how this work can both build and shape community. During the past few years, she has partnered with communities in Iowa and Mississippi in various community art projects, programming and theatre productions. She helped to organize a community-wide steamroll printmaking event in Perry, Iowa, created installations in restored prairies in Nebraska, collaborated on public art projects in vacant sites on Iowa main streets, spearheaded a community knit-bombing project, and painted two murals with middle school children on a juke joint in the Mississippi Delta.



John Fenn is an Associate Professor in the Arts and Administration Program (AAD) at the University of Oregon, and currently serves as the program's director.

His academic training is in folklore and ethnomusicology (Ph.D., Indiana University, 2004), and he brings an ethnographically-grounded perspective to research and programming focused on the roles of creative and artistic practice in communities. He has conducted fieldwork on arts and culture in Malawi (SE Africa), China, Indiana, and Oregon—exploring a wide range of practices, traditions, and groups. He merges his training in the ethnographic exploration of creativity in everyday life with an interest in public presentation, stewardship, and interpretation of artistic expression.

As a faculty member at UO, he trains future arts and culture sector leaders to engage the social, technological, economic, and political dimensions of community and creativity. He seeks to provide students a balance between practical skills and critical inquiry that emphasizes the interplay between social, technological, and cultural facets of creative communities. This balance serves students as they move into the 21st-century workforce—readying them for shifts in existing jobs as well as preparing them for professional opportunities that may not exist right now.



Leslie Finan has directed the University of Iowa's Arts Share program since 2003. Arts Share works with the Division of Performing Arts, the School of Art and Art History, and the Writers' Workshop to coordinate workshops, performances, and residencies throughout the state. Arts Share has recently moved to the Office of Outreach and Engagement as it continues to expand and partner with other programs such as the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities and the Grant Wood Art Colony.

Leslie received her bachelor's and master's degrees in piano performance from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and a PhD in musicology from The University of Iowa. Before working at Arts Share she taught at Coe College.

State Innovations in Arts Engagement, Investment and Infrastructure

Theme // Rural Investment and Infrastructure



Colleen Landkamer was appointed to serve as USDA Rural Development State Director in Minnesota on July 13, 2009. Since then, Rural Development has invested approximately \$7 billion throughout rural Minnesota.

She is a former elected Blue Earth County, Commissioner for 21 years and, prior to that, a Congressional Staffer.

Colleen served as President of the National Association of Counties, an organization that represents 3,069 counties across the nation. In this leadership role, she advanced issues important to local government and rural economies and advocated building a stronger America through idea sharing, partnerships, innovative planning and transparency.

She formed, implemented and served as the first chair (5 years) of the NACo Rural Action Caucus and continues her involvement. The caucus is comprised of county officials across the nation who have redefined and shaped the landscape of how local government leadership creates meaningful progress in collaboration with federal lawmakers surrounding rural economic growth and sustainability.

Colleen led the Campaign for Renewed Rural Development, which is a group of 28 national organizations to empower and influence Congress in a non-partisan way to support rural communities through investments in infrastructure, healthcare, housing, economic development and alternative energy.

She attended the Army War College, was a Humphrey Institute Policy Fellow and a Columbia University rural policy fellow, and is a graduate of the Senior Executive Program in State and Local Government from Harvard University and the 2005 New York University leadership program.

In 2000, American City and County Magazine named Landkamer, "County Leader of the Year."



John Davis is the founder and Executive Director of Lanesboro Arts. His work with the Lanesboro Arts Campus initiative resulted in its selection as one of the top 12 Small Town Artplaces in America for 2013 as well as a 2014 Bush Prize for Community Innovation Award winner. In September of 2014, the City Council of Lanesboro, MN passed a unanimous resolution proclaiming “That the entire community be designated as an Arts Campus”, becoming the first small town in America to make such a proclamation. Mr. Davis was the recipient of the 2011 Visionary Leadership Award from the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits for his community-building work in the arts in Lanesboro, MN (pop754). His innovative work in New York Mills, Minnesota (pop1,000) has been recognized as a national model for rural economic development in the arts, and New York Mills, MN was twice recognized as one of the top 100 small arts town in America. Davis is also the creator of the Great American Think-Off philosophy competition and the Kids Philosophy Slam program. Davis has over 25 years of experience with small town and rural creative social change work. He is a national speaker on rural arts issues, risk and innovation. His work has been featured on National Public Radio and broadcast on C-Span; it has also been featured in Corporate Report Magazine, USA Today, The New York Times, and the NBC Today Show.



Anne Katz is executive director of Arts Wisconsin, Wisconsin’s independent statewide community arts action, service, and development organization, whose mission is to nurture, serve, promote, and speak up for the arts and creativity in Wisconsin and all of its communities. She guides Arts Wisconsin’s programs and activities, serves Wisconsin’s diverse and ever-expanding creative community, and advocates and builds partnerships in the public and private sectors for the arts and creative industries on the local level. Under her leadership, Arts Wisconsin received the 2004 Governor’s Award in Support of the Arts from the Wisconsin Foundation for the Arts. Anne was an Arts Administration Fellow at the National Endowment for the Arts in 1988, and was a member of the 2014-2015 class of National Arts Strategies’ Chief Executive Program, a global leadership program focused on community cultural development. She has received the Alene Valkanas Arts Advocacy Award from Americans for the Arts, the “Service to Music” Award from the Association of Wisconsin Symphony Orchestras, and the Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Award, and has been recognized as one of the 25 most powerful arts leaders in the country, according to “Barry’s Blog.” Anne is a nationally sought after speaker and has been a review panelist for numerous local, state, regional and national grant programs. She serves on the board of directors of the Wisconsin Public Radio Association and the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council and is a past chair of the State Arts Action Council, the national network of statewide arts service and advocacy organizations affiliated with Americans for the Arts. She is a graduate of Brandeis University and studied drama at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, England.



Zachary Mannheimer, Vice President of Creative Placemaking, Iowa Business Growth Company. After a road-trip from NYC to 22 cities around America, Zachary chose and settled in Des Moines in 2007 to found the Des Moines Social Club, an arts and educational non-profit. Since opening its doors in 2009, DMSC has hosted over 5000 arts related events and seen over 1,000,000 patrons. Founding the non-profit from scratch, Zachary has raised over \$14,000,000 towards the downtown project, where he served as Executive Director from 2008 - 2015. Zachary has articles published in: *The New York Theater Review* and *American Theater Magazine*. His theatrical work and DMSC has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *USA Today*, *Politico*, *The Village Voice*, *The National Journal* and *The Des Moines Register*. Zachary has directed and/or produced over 25 pieces of professional theater and outdoor festivals. He has been awarded the 2011 Des Moines Citizen of the Year Award, 40 under 40 in Des Moines’ *Business Record*, 40 under 40 for the national *New Leaders Council*, The Iowa Governor’s Volunteer Award, and the DSM Young Professional of the Year Award in 2009. In 2016, Zachary began a new position at Iowa Business Growth as the Vice President of Creative Placemaking. Zachary serves on the boards of Iowa Public Radio and the Iowa Rural Development Council. He holds a dual BA in Theater Arts and Philosophy from Muhlenberg College and shares his home with his wife Sarah, daughters Mira and Fiona and son Benjamin.

Center for Performance and Civic Practice: The Catalyst Initiative

Theme // Advance Civic Culture



Mark W. Kidd is Director of Strategic Operations of the Appalachian Artisan Center in Hindman, Kentucky. The AAC supports new and established artists and craftspeople as they work to build their skills, participate in the living traditions of the region, and bring their work to markets. Mark also facilitates workshops and residencies that incorporate theater, low-cost media, and cultural organizing. Mark is a founding member of Handbarrow, a team of artists and nonprofit community development practitioners based in Central Appalachia. Handbarrow was a member of the first cohort of community-based arts organizations to be selected for the Center for Performance and Civic Practice's national Catalyst Initiative in 2014. In 2016, Handbarrow also became a member of the first cohort of arts organizations in Appalachia to be accepted into the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation's SEED program. Mark serves as a board member of Appalshop, Alternate ROOTS, and serves on the steering committee of the Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange. He is a longtime member of the Appalachian Studies Association. Mark was one of six national recipients of the Theatre Communications Group's New Generations / Future Leaders Fellowship in 2012 and 2013 on the basis of his work in the Appalachian coalfields. Mark co-created the "Appalshop Innovation Lab" curriculum for community leaders to use narrative and low-cost media practices to link community expertise with policy issues and to create opportunities for change from the ground up. His prose has been published by Americans for the Arts, the Daily Yonder, the Kentucky Caver, and Animating Democracy.



Rebecca Martinez is the Catalyst Initiative Project Coordinator for the Center for Performance and Civic Practice. Also an ensemble member of Sojourn Theatre, she has worked as a creator/performer, choreographer, facilitator, teaching artist and director for multiple national projects including How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes, Finding Penelope, Islands of Milwaukee, On The Table and the two year Artist-in-Residence collaboration with Catholic Charities. Rebecca has worked nationally with companies such as Artists Repertory Theatre, Portland Playhouse, Kansas City Rep, Milagro Theatre, Oregon Children's Theatre, INTAR, FringeNYC, One Minute Play Festival, the 52nd Street Project, Cherry Lane, the Lark, Young Audiences, and Creative Arts Team. Rebecca is a Co-Curator of Working Theater's Directors Salon, a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, INTAR's Unit52, the SDCF Observership Class, the Latina/o Theatre Commons Steering Committee, and an Associate Member of SDC. She is a recipient of the SPARC and SU-CASA residency awards and the Lilla Jewel Award for Women Artists.



Nikiko Masumoto, Agrarian Artist and Farmer. Born in the Central Valley of California, Nikiko Masumoto spent her childhood slurping over-ripe peaches on the Masumoto Family Farm (an 80-acre organic farm in Del Rey, CA). She has never missed a summer harvest. In 2007 she graduated from UC Berkeley with a B.A. in Gender and Women's Studies. It was there that she realized she wanted to return to the Valley to farm. But first she completed a M.A. in Performance as Public Practice from UT Austin. Her research focused on the performance of memory and Japanese American history. Daily, she apprentices with her father on the family's small organic farm. She has continued her creative work, most recently (2016) publishing her second book, co-authored with her father "Changing Season" is a collection of essays about generational transition on the land. Continuing community engaged work, in 2016, she and a small team of colleagues created the "On Tap" project: a landscape guided journey to explore histories & futures of the Kings River watershed connecting people, place, and policy. She is currently a Future for Good fellow with the Institute for the Future, earlier this year completed National Arts Strategies Creative Community Fellowship, working on a collaboration with master taiko player and composer Roy Hirabayashi, and serves on several non-profit and community boards (Western States Arts Federation, Alliance for California Traditional Arts, California State University Fresno College of Arts & Humanities).

The Promise of the Promise Zones: Linking Rural Arts and Economic Development

Theme // Cross Sectoral Innovation



Jen Hughes currently serves as a community solutions specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts. In this position, she manages federal, philanthropic, and local relationships to strategically integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work. She currently oversees the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design as well as a technical assistance program for NEA's creative placemaking grantees. Previously, she managed the Our Town creative placemaking grant program which has invested over \$30 million in over 380 communities to execute design, arts engagement and cultural planning projects that impact the quality of life in local communities. Her prior experience includes working in both local government and the private sector. A Philly native, Jen holds an undergraduate degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a Master of City Planning from the University of California, Berkeley.



Sandi Curd is the Promise Zone Coordinator, a position created when Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation was named the first rural Promise Zone in the nation. Curd is a Whitley County farmer with 25 years of experience in the fields of health care and agriculture. She is also a consultant to Leadership Tri County and a former president of the Whitley County Farmers' Market board of directors. Curd has a bachelor's degree in health sciences from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in health care administration from the University of Minnesota.



Susan DuPlessis, Program Director for Arts Participation. A program designer and community builder, Susan DuPlessis has a wide range of experience in creative, placebased work--from working nationally in major media markets to locally in small rural communities. Currently, a program director at the South Carolina Arts Commission, she has more than 25 years experience in community building, relations and engagement within arts and corporate settings. A native South Carolinian, she has worked across the state in a variety of roles--always using the arts as connective tissue that binds people and place to one another.

Her work demonstrates the value of relationship building and respect of people and place. Most recently, her efforts have centered on a new initiative within South Carolina's Promise Zone called The Art of Community: Rural S. C. She has also co-directed the development of significant partnerships including one with the four-state Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission and also with the Riley Institute at Furman University. Creating more relevance and connection for the state arts agency throughout South Carolina and beyond, these partnerships also address issues of equity, inclusion, capacity and leadership. In earlier manifestations of her career, she worked as an individual artist doing documentary-style, community-based photography that addressed issues of aging, housing, health, workforce and social cohesion.

Advancing Rural Community Arts

Theme // Innovative Rural Practice



In Patrick Overton serves as director of the Front Porch Institute in Astoria, Oregon. The Institute, created in 1996 while he was a tenured faculty member at Columbia College in Columbia, Missouri, is dedicated to creating resources for community arts and community cultural development. In addition to his teaching responsibilities at Columbia College as Associate Professor of Communication and Cultural Studies (1985-1999), he served as the founding Director of the Columbia College Center for Community & Cultural Studies which focused on developing resources, curricula, and training experiences to enhance rural and small community cultural development. His work in this area is now incorporated in his role as Director of the Front Porch Institute. He is the recipient of the 1997 Missouri Arts Award, recognizing his “creative and outstanding service that has made an important and lasting contribution to the arts in Missouri.” In addition, in 1997, the Missouri House of Representatives passed a special resolution honoring his work in Missouri.

Obtaining a Ph.D. in Communication in 1987, Overton studied as a Gregory Fellow and a College of Arts and Science Graduate Fellow at the University of Missouri. His area of concentration was organizational communications with collateral work in community development. A teacher, scholar, poet, playwright, author, lyricist, speaker, and visual artist, Overton has devoted his entire adult life to exploring human communication, designing and building organizational systems that enhance the development of the human community.



Ashley Hanson holds an MA degree in Applied Theater from the University of Manchester, with emphasis on the role of theater in the sustainable development of rural communities. She is the co-founder of PlaceBase Productions, whose site-specific work is focused on uniting communities and strengthening sense of place through exploring collective narratives in accessible performances. In her role as the Program Director with the Minnesota Theater Alliance, she supports regional networks around the state to connect rural theater-makers to each other and state-wide resources. In addition, she is a co-founder of Curious Incidents, an event planning collective that produces creative, immersive experiences in unique and underutilized spaces. She calls herself a Freelance Arts Enabler, working with artists, city departments, organizations and communities of all sizes to bring abstract visions into concrete realities. Ashley has received fellowships from the Creative Community Leadership Institute, Creative CityMaking, and the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture. She is also a founding member of the Yes!Lets Collective of artists, musicians and community enthusiasts, and she plays ukulele and sings in the folk/ Americana band, The Family Trade. She released her first solo album, “The Kirkbride Sessions” which explores “the underbelly of ruralness” in September 2016. With each project, her place- and issue-based work strives to reconnect individuals with their shared values to inspire stewardship of their community; combining shared knowledge with collective action to move a community from “where they are” to “where they want to be.”



Christina Rusnak is a multifaceted composer whose work reflects a diversity of styles and points of view. Passionate about composing about place and the human experience, she actively seeks to integrate facets of landscape, culture, history and art into her work. Her goal is to compose music that is thought provoking, engages the performers and the audience.

She has written for chamber ensemble, women’s choir, and orchestra as well as jazz, and electro-acoustic works. The Dallas Contemporary Museum commissioned her to create a work celebrating their new art space at 161 Glass in 2009. FEAR: The Unspoken Geography explores perception and interaction with public spaces. An avid hiker, Ms. Rusnak has been commissioned to create works for the US Forest Service, National Parks and Monuments and Wilderness areas in the US and most recently traveled to Cuba to record work with vocalists in Havana. Ms. Rusnak works with communities and organizations to bring music, culture, and heritage into public spaces. Her recordings are available on Parma Recordings.

Integrating Agriculture, Landscape, Arts and Culture

Theme // Rural Arts & Culture Research



Matthew Glassman, Co-Artistic Director, Double Edge Theatre, is an actor, writer, and director who has been working with Double Edge since 2000. In this capacity, Glassman co-leads the creation and performing of Double Edge's indoor performances and spectacles. Most recent work includes writing the script of *Cada Luna Azul*, an original spectacle performance which takes inspiration from Latin American magic realism, imagery, and parade. Glassman co-created and performed in *The Grand Parade*, which premiered at Arena Stage in 2013, followed by tours around the US and overseas. Glassman created Double Edge's Art & Survival series which has brought nearly 100 artists, activists, thinkers, and practitioners for inter-disciplinary collective thinking sessions as well as co-led 2011's National Rural Arts Convening. In 2014, Glassman initiated the theatre's Springfield Initiative, a multi-year engagement with underserved communities in the city of Springfield, with a focus on the city's youth population. Glassman has led training and given lectures at colleges and universities around the country including Emerson College, Yale School of Drama, College of the Atlantic, and Columbia College. For his work in education, Glassman was awarded the Mary Lyon Foundation "Spirit of Adventure Award" for innovative support of local education. Glassman also leads the theater's development strategies toward achieving long-term sustainability. Glassman has served repeatedly as a grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, sat on the board of the Network of Ensemble Theaters, the advisory board for Art of the Rural, and currently serves on the National Advisory Council for Howlround.



Matthew Groshek lives and works in Rudolph, Wisconsin. He and his partner steward a small 40 acre family homestead; growing food, keeping bees and chickens and restoring buildings, orchards and garden beds. The site is host to the Sedge Meadow Cultural Residency Program, as well as numerous smaller projects that bring cultural practitioners, their inquiry and artifacts to the landscape. Groshek also engages his teaching practice on the site, with students from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point exploring and responding to the rural environment with place-based experiential work.

He also serves on several community development committees and is launching a bread CSA service



Donna Neuwirth is co-founder and Executive Director of Wormfarm Institute a Wisconsin – based non-profit organization whose mission is to integrate culture and agriculture to build thriving communities across the rural/urban continuum. After many years in art and theater in Chicago, Neuwirth and co-founder Jay Salinas moved to a small farm in Wisconsin. Seduced by the life in the soil and struck by the parallels in process between farming and art making, they formed the Wormfarm in 2000 and began an Artist Residency program.

A self-described Impresario, Donna has developed numerous ambitious projects at this fertile intersection of culture and agriculture including the annual award-winning Fermentation Fest – A Live Culture Convergence which received both NEA Our Town and ArtPlace grants in their initial year of funding. Working in partnership with county government and the local Chamber of Commerce, the Fest has grown into a significant agri/ cultural/ tourism event. Former NEA Chair Rocco Landesman has called Wormfarm "the poster child for creative placemaking". Wormfarm received the 2010 Governor's Award in support of the Arts, was named nonprofit business of the year and recently received the Distinguished Service to Rural Life Award from the Rural Sociological Society. Donna has a BFA from The School of Art Institute of Chicago.



Jay Salinas is Co-Founder of Wormfarm Institute and serves as Director of Special Projects. Jay is an artist, farmer and educator who holds a BFA from University of IL Champaign and an MFA in Sculpture from University of Cincinnati. He has operated a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm since 1995. His teaching experience ranges from Chicago public housing projects to university art departments. He initiated Artward Bound – a rural art and gardening immersion program for urban youth and he coined the term “cultureshed” in conjunction with Regrowth and Renewal the Wormfarm’s first social sculpture project. His farm/earth work includes a 4 acre organic vegetable garden, and working with immigrant Hmong, Latino and Amish farmers providing education, technical and marketing assistance. He served as Co-Director at Milwaukee’s Growing Power for three years and currently serves as Project Coordinator for the Farm Art DTour.

Defining and Designing Collective Placemaking Impacts

Theme // Rural Investment and Infrastructure



Justin Archer Burch is the Director of Programs with the Delta Regional Authority which serves the 252 counties and parishes across eight states in the Mississippi Delta Region and Alabama Black Belt. Justin has a B.A. in political science from Ole Miss and an M.S.S. in social science from Mississippi College. He additionally has post-secondary credit at both Harvard and Purdue University. Justin is a national W.K. Kellogg Foundation Fellow in Battle Creek, Michigan and has a commitment to where equity meets workforce development. He has previously been the program lead for community development at the Foundation for the Mid-South and the site director of the Delta Workforce Funding Collaborative where in 2015 he received the System’s Change Award from the Investors’ Committee at the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Prior to his work at FMS, Justin previously worked for the 2012 presidential campaign, Mississippi Senate, and the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund. Justin lives in Little Rock, Arkansas with his fiancé Cameryn Miller.



Christine Muehlman Gyovai is the Principal of Dialogue + Design Associates based in Charlottesville, Virginia. She has over fifteen years of experience in facilitation and training with a focus on increasing community and environmental sustainability, and she holds certificates in mediation, charrette systems, and permaculture design. She holds a M.P. in Planning from the University of Virginia and a B.S. in Environmental Studies from Burlington College, and she is a member of the National Roster of Environmental Dispute Resolution and Consensus Building Professionals. She lives at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two young children.

Biographies



Alexandria Marie Sentilles is a second year graduate student in the Urban and Environmental Planning program at the University of Virginia. She earned her B.S in Sustainable Development from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Alexandria has worked throughout the Appalachian region addressing issues of community development, civic engagement, and environmental sustainability. She is an intern at the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia and has worked on the Clinch River Valley Initiative since 2015. She currently resides in Charlottesville, Virginia.



David Terrell is the Director of the Indiana Communities Institute (ICI) at Ball State University; and the Director of the RUPRI Center for State Policy. The ICI was formed with the mission to help communities transition from economies based on physical capital investment and attraction to economies based more heavily on human capital. It does this by performing research that informs state and local policy, and by engaging communities and organizations through training. The RUPRI Center for State Policy provides research and policy guidance on impacts on the rural dimension of states policies and initiatives.

Mr. Terrell previously served two Indiana Lt. Governors in various positions, including Senior Advisor and Deputy Chief of Staff, where he oversaw five state agencies. He also started the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, a state agency dedicated to rural community economic development. Under Mr. Terrell's leadership, OCRA gained national recognition for state-level community economic development policy.

Before joining OCRA, Mr. Terrell consulted with communities on economic and workforce development issues. He has experience in strategic planning, leadership development, and expanding economic and community development capacity.

Mr. Terrell spent nine years in manufacturing, spending most of that time as the plant manager for a steel wire manufacturer in Southern Indiana. He began his career in the Indiana Department of Commerce, in the Business Expansion Division.

A graduate of Indiana State University who earned his MBA from the University of South Florida, Mr. Terrell lives in historic Madison, Indiana, on the Ohio River.

Civic Filmmaking: Tales from Two Communities (Lanesboro, MN & Plattsburgh, NY)

Theme // Advance Civic Culture



John Davis is the founder and Executive Director of Lanesboro Arts. His work with the Lanesboro Arts Campus initiative resulted in its selection as one of the top 12 Small Town Artplaces in America for 2013 as well as a 2014 Bush Prize for Community Innovation Award winner. In September of 2014, the City Council of Lanesboro, MN passed a unanimous resolution proclaiming “That the entire community be designated as an Arts Campus”, becoming the first small town in America to make such a proclamation.

Mr. Davis was the recipient of the 2011 Visionary Leadership Award from the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits for his community-building work in the arts in Lanesboro, MN (pop754). His innovative work in New York Mills, Minnesota (pop1,000) has been recognized as a national model for rural economic development in the arts, and New York Mills, MN was twice recognized as one of the top 100 small arts town in America. Davis is also the creator of the Great American Think-Off philosophy competition and the Kids Philosophy Slam program.

Davis has over 25 years of experience with small town and rural creative social change work. He is a national speaker on rural arts issues, risk and innovation. His work has been featured on National Public Radio and broadcast on C-Span; it has also been featured in Corporate Report Magazine, USA Today, The New York Times, and the NBC Today Show.



Julia Devine fosters local arts, culture, and civic engagement in the historic town of Plattsburgh, NY, on Lake Champlain. She is the Coordinator of the Center for Public Service at SUNY Plattsburgh where she works to strengthen the civic bonds between the campus and the community. She also teaches in the Theatre and English departments with a focus on acting and professional writing. Julia is Co-Director of Outside Art (OA): Plattsburgh Public Art Project. Her work with OA has been featured on Mountain Lake PBS. She was a 2015-16 National Arts Strategies Creative Community Fellow. During that time, she created a civic art film Burgh, which has been shown throughout the region; it serves as a pilot for a digital humanities project in place-based filmmaking. Julia received her M.F.A. in Acting from Harvard’s Institute for Advanced Theatre Training and has over 15 years of experience as a cultural nonprofit professional. Originally from Philly, Julia also plays keyboards/accordion in the band #famousletterwriter.



Erin Dorbin has a vibrant background in community organizing, neighborhood revitalization, public arts, creative placemaking, preservation, place-based storytelling and public history. Her work in immigrant and oft-overlooked neighborhoods of Milwaukee has been acknowledged by the American Association for State and Local History (2013, Award of Merit), Chicago’s Metropolitan Planning Council (2012, Runner-up, Space In Between: Placemaking Chicago Contest), and Americans for the Arts (2013, Best of Public Art Projects). A native of rural southwest Michigan, with years of experience in urban environments, Erin believes that the most powerful role an individual can hold is participating in the process which determines the look, feel and character of the place in which they live.

Biographies



Kara Maloney is the Organizational Assistant at Lanesboro Arts. As a recent graduate of Luther College with a double major in business and art, she is filled with ideas and is excited by new opportunities in the field of arts administration. Kara grew up in Minneapolis but has since grown to love and call home to rural Minnesota. She has worked or interned at *Artistry* in Bloomington, MN, *Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum* in Decorah, IA, and *Springboard for the Arts* in Saint Paul, MN, as well as volunteering at *Courageous HeArts* in Minneapolis, MN and *Commonweal Theatre Company* in Lanesboro, MN. In her new role at Lanesboro Arts she has been focusing on advancement and leading a creative placemaking program in the community.

Enhancing Rural Intercultural Dialogue and Programming

Theme // Cross Sectoral Innovation



Kiley Arroyo is the founding director of the Cultural Strategies Council, a vehicle for interdisciplinary and intercultural research, strategy, and organizational learning. The CSC has significant experience working with a diverse range of partners to conceive, develop, and implement transformative community development initiatives that imbed local arts, culture, and resident creativity. The CSC works with CDCs, foundations, non/ for-profit enterprises, municipal agencies, and academic institutions. This work is predicated on the belief that creativity is a strategic resource that individuals, organizations, and cross-sector partnerships can leverage to advance greater equity, community vitality, and resilience with a particularly focus on marginalized groups. The CSC collaborates with partners at the local, national, and international levels and builds on Ms. Arroyo's academic training art history, architecture, public policy, and systems change. Ms. Arroyo is dancer whose creative practice continually informs and inspires her professional work. Ms. Arroyo's work has been featured in the 2012 Venice Biennale, the Netherland Architecture Institute's Architecture of Consequence exhibition, and MoMA NY's Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanism. Ms. Arroyo has lectured on cultural policy at UC Berkeley, the California College of Art, and the National University of Taiwan. She is an advisor to Art of the Rural's Next Gen Initiative, Minneapolis's Creative CityMaking program, and a fellow at the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Policy Research. She lives in Northern California with her partner, who helps to ensure her life is enriched by rock and roll.



Amrita Ramanan is the Director of Literary Development and Dramaturgy of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), located in the heart of the Rogue Valley in Ashland. Founded by Angus Bowmer in 1935, OSF has grown from a three-day festival of two plays to a robust theater arts organization that annually produces eight-months of performances and community events throughout their season. Inspired by the company's namesake playwright and the cultural richness of the United States, OSF reveals the collective humanity of the world onstage through illuminating and inclusive interpretations of new and classic plays, further enhanced by the kaleidoscope of rotating repertory. Amrita formerly held the positions of Associate Producer and Dramaturg with Double Edge Theatre (Ashfield, MA) and Artistic Associate/Literary Manager with Arena Stage (Washington, D.C.). In October 2015, Amrita received a grant through the Network of Ensemble Theaters to become a Local Organizer and utilize various principles in grassroots organizing and movement building to activate and expand the practice of ensemble collaboration and co-creation throughout western Massachusetts. In March 2016, she was appointed to the Network of Ensemble Theaters' board.



Nick Slie is a New Orleans-based performer, producer and cultural organizer that works with his company, Mondo Bizarro, to use art as a tool for understanding what makes us commonly human and individually unique. Nick's creative endeavors range from interdisciplinary solo performances to large-scale community festivals, from innovative digital storytelling projects to site-responsive productions. Since 2002, his wide array of imaginative projects such as Flight (2007-2011), Loup Garou (2009-Present), Race Peace (2008-Present) and Cry You One (2013-Present), have been experienced in art centers, universities and outdoor locations in 34 states across the country and occasionally abroad.

His most recent work, Cry You One, a 2.5 mile outdoor processional performance and online storytelling platform, premiered in October 2013 in St. Bernard, LA and has since toured to nine rural and urban locations throughout the United States. In spring of 2014, Cry You One's live performance was adapted into a cultural organizing salon that toured to five states along the Gulf Coast. Working directly with local, regional and federal policy makers, salon participants created a collaborative action plan that was presented to President Obama's Restore Council.

For more than a decade, Nick has been passionately engaged in rebuilding his hometown of New Orleans, collaborating across sectors on a vast array of local performance and arts-based civic engagement projects. From 2004-2008, he served on the Executive Committee of Alternate ROOTS and is the former board chair for the Network of Ensemble Theaters. He currently serves on the inaugural APAP Artists Committee.



Ashley C. Smith, Development Director, Lyric Theatre. A native of Lexington, KY, Ashley C. Smith graduated from the University of Kentucky in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. Pairing her effective, strong communication skills, and work ethic she achieved a combined 10 years of experience in the healthcare, non-profit, and hospitality industries. As the first Development Coordinator at the Lyric Theatre and Cultural Arts Center, Smith brings her track record for producing success. Under her leadership, The Lyric has secured partnerships with leading companies such as Forcht Bank, EHI Consultants, Toyota Manufacturing, PNC Bank, LG&E/KU Foundation, Keeneland Foundation, PNC, and the University of Kentucky. She is tasked to present and produce fundraising efforts through grant writing, program development, and cultivating strategic partnerships. Smith refines her development skills as a member of the Bluegrass chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Currently, she serves as the Scholarship Chair. In addition, her community participation includes Not The Only One in the Room, a women of color empowerment group. She has served on a Management Team Member and Vendor Services Manager for crave food + music festival, a 2 day event visited by over 100,000 annually.



Jeremy Staab is a Program Manager at First Peoples Fund, overseeing the Native Artist Professional Development program (NAPD) and Native Artist Economic Building Grant. First Peoples Fund is a national non-profit that supports Native artists in sustaining the cultural fabric of tribal communities while cultivates entrepreneurial initiatives and community development programs for Native artists and the systems that support them. Mr. Staab is certified business coach of FPF's NAPD curriculum, facilitating over 20 trainings since 2011. He is also a 2014 alumni of the First Peoples Fund's Artist in Business Leadership fellowship program. In 2014 Mr. Staab also received his Master's in Business Administration through Baker University, Baldwin, KS. His undergraduate studies were completed at Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, KS in Business Administration. In his tenure with Ho-Chunk Community Development Corporation (HCCDC) from 2007-2012, Mr. Staab administered technical assistance centered on small business and entrepreneurial development with emphasis on market development and financing for his clients. Mr. Staab also provided consultation to artists consigned to HCCDC's subsidiary company, Woodland Trails Art Gallery, through reviewing and drawing contracts, appraising and pricing artwork, marketing coaching, as well as providing assistance to artists in writing and maintaining a business plans. This work led HCCDC to partnering with First Peoples Fund in 2010.

The Importance of Local Context in Rural Placemaking

Theme // Innovative Rural Practice



Carver County Commissioner Randy Maluchnik is an avid champion of local government with a tireless effort towards reducing unfunded mandates through local control and flexibility with agreed upon outcomes with our State and Federal government partners. The government closest to the people serves the people best is his motto. Randy served as the Military and Veterans Liaison for Congressman David Minge, and as a Veterans Service Representative with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Commissioner Maluchnik is dedicated to providing the best federal, state, and county services possible for our members of the Armed Services, our veterans, and the families that make their service to our country possible.

Commissioner Maluchnik represents the Third District on the Carver County Board being elected to the Carver County Board in 2006, and reelected in 2010, 2012 and currently unopposed for reelection in 2016. Randy serves as County Board Liaison to a number of committees including the Carver County Community Development Authority, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Secretary of the Metropolitan Inter-County Association, Member of the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Advisory Board, and President of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance. Commissioner Maluchnik is a Past President of the Association of Minnesota Counties and participates at the national level with the National Association of County Officials (NACo) serving as Chairman of the Highway Safety Committee, Vice Chair of the Committee on Arts. Commissioner Maluchnik holds a Master's Degree in Vocational Education from the University of North Dakota.



Michelle Wodtke Franks has been Executive Director of Golden Hills RC&D since 2014 and has worked in the nonprofit world for more than 25 years. She lives with her husband, Peter Franks and children Eleanor and Wyatt on an acreage south of Hastings, Iowa (pop. 120) along with an assortment of rescued animals with no agricultural value. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa, and completed her MA at the University of Cincinnati. Michelle is a fifth generation Loess Hills native and after living for several years in Pittsburgh, PA and Cincinnati, OH, she convinced her Pittsburgh-born husband to return to small town Iowa to raise their children in wide open spaces under a big blue sky. She is a passionate advocate for the transformative power of art and culture in small towns and has assisted in the formation of the Southwest Iowa Arts Council and the Southwest Iowa Art Tour.



Jamie Horter is an artist based out of rural Lyons, NE (pop. 850). She works primarily in rural places and believes in art's efficacy to shape and enhance quality of life in rural communities.

Jamie's work creates opportunities for everyday citizens to become more engaged in the conversations and decisions impacting their communities. She utilizes the relation between institutions and individuals to bring community members into discussions and actions around citizen-led community development. Her site-specific projects are interdisciplinary, multi-generational, inclusive, and involve collaborators.



Zack Jones is a self-taught oil painter. He started his journey in 1999 at the age of 25. While living in Cave Creek Arizona he met artist Sergio Ladron de Guevara. Despite the obvious age and cultural differences the two instantly connected and their teacher/pupil relationship continues to grow. Much of Zack's knowledge and inspiration comes from Sergio's sixty years of experience and encouragement to paint themes that involve a personal connection. In 2006 Jones relocated to his hometown Malvern, IA. Since relocating the forty-two year old artist has painted regional scenes, helped create an artist cooperative gallery in the Old Market, spent two years at Corning Iowa's Art and Residency Program while continuing travel to Cave Creek Arizona to work on an ongoing series. In the spring of 2012 Zack purchased a 140 year old church in his hometown Malvern. Project Art Church is Zack's permanent studio and gallery. Currently he is working on a 360 degree sky scene in the upstairs cathedral. Jones's artwork is diverse. Currently vintage doors with abstract trees hang and smaller format water colors featured at Gallery Eppley in Omaha. Zack is gaining popularity through a diverse body of work which includes, small format mixed media, oversized oil paintings and most recently public murals. As a small town advocate Zack Jones spearheaded the Southwest Iowa Art Tour which just completed it's third year. With the help of area artists and organizers the Art Tour aims at connecting communities through art and revitalization.

The Role of Rural Education and Knowledge Systems

Theme // Rural Arts & Culture Research



Jocelyn Richgels is the Director of National Policy Programs for the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI). RUPRI conducts policy-relevant research and facilitates public dialogue to assist policymakers in understanding the rural impacts of public policies and programs. With RUPRI since 2004, Ms. Richgels ensures that our nation's policymakers access and utilize the research and practice conducted by the RUPRI initiatives as they consider legislation that impacts rural America. She directs the policy and outreach efforts for the RUPRI Rural Health and Human Services portfolio and closely tracks the rural development policy dimensions of the nation's Farm Bills. Ms. Richgels was born and raised on a family farm in rural southwest Wisconsin and her understanding of rural America stems first-hand from this experience. She has over 15 years of public policy experience, beginning her career as staff to a Member of Congress from Minnesota, who represented one the most rural Congressional districts in the country at the time. Ms. Richgels received a Masters of Public Policy from the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland – College Park. She graduated with honors from the Management, Finance and Leadership specialization, with a research emphasis on rural policy analysis. Ms. Richgels' undergraduate degree was earned at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.



Lisa Donovan, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Fine and Performing Arts Department at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Previously, she served as Associate Professor of Education and Division Director of Lesley University's Creative Arts in Learning Division. Lisa has broad experience working as an arts educator and administrator in a variety of arts organizations including Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Berkshire Opera Company, Barrington Stage Company, University of Massachusetts' Department of Theater, Boston University's Theater, Visual Arts and Tanglewood Institutes, and also served as Executive Director of the Massachusetts Alliance for Arts Education. Donovan is the co-editor and co-author of a five book series on arts integration with Shell Publishing. She has received funding from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts for research on arts education. Lisa is a member of the Arts Education Partnership's National Strategic Planning Advisory Committee and serves on the ArtsEdSearch Research Advisory Board. In Berkshire County she is cofounder of the Berkshire Arts Education Network, and a member of the Professional Learning Network for arts specialists in Berkshire County. She has also designed professional development offerings in STEAM topics through an Improving Teacher Quality grant for early childhood educators. Lisa lives with her husband Rick and sons Alexander and Jack in Lee, Massachusetts.



A native of Pikeville, Ky., **Dr. Bruce Parsons is the founder of The Holler.** Parsons previously served as the Director of New Media and Instructional Design and founder of the Esports Scholarship program at the University of Pikeville. Before working at UPIKE, he served as a filmmaker and educator at the Appalshop, a non-profit media arts center located in Whitesburg, Ky. Parsons received his Doctorate in education leadership and instructional design from Morehead State University and a MFA in filmmaking from the Ohio University School of Film.

Aligning State Arts Agency and USDA Rural Development Outcomes

Theme // Rural Investment and Infrastructure



Teresa Kittridge is the Vice President and C.O.O. of the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) and holds a M.A. in Organizational Leadership and a B.A. in Business Administration. Teresa's career has included service in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. She has also been elected to public office. For the first 20 years of her career she served as an elected Officer of the Minnesota House of Representatives. Following her work in the state legislature, she worked Washington DC and led National Policy Programs for RUPRI. In addition, she has over a decade of experience in building and leading National and International businesses in publishing as and Executive for Coughlan Companies and built and served as President of MNREM, the Minnesota Renewable Energy Marketplace.

Teresa served in public office as school board director and board chair and is an active civic and community volunteer



Iowa Regional Network Co-Chair: Matthew Harris has served as administrator of the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, since 2011. He also serves as a member of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs leadership team, which in addition to the Iowa Arts Council, encompasses the State Historical Society of Iowa, State Historic Preservation Office, State Historical Museum & Research Centers, State Records and Archives, and Produce Iowa - State Office of Media Production. A Cedar Falls, Iowa, native, Harris earned a degree in public relations from the University of Northern Iowa and worked in advertising for the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center before working in development for Des Moines Performing Arts, Iowa's largest nonprofit performing arts center, for more than six years.



Colleen Landkamer was appointed to serve as USDA Rural Development State Director in Minnesota on July 13, 2009. Since then, Rural Development has invested approximately \$7 billion throughout rural Minnesota. She is a former elected Blue Earth County, Commissioner for 21 years and, prior to that, a Congressional Staffer. Colleen served as President of the National Association of Counties, an organization that represents 3,069 counties across the nation. In this leadership role, she advanced issues important to local government and rural economies and advocated building a stronger America through idea sharing, partnerships, innovative planning and transparency. She formed, implemented and served as the first chair (5 years) of the NACo Rural Action Caucus and continues her involvement. The caucus is comprised of county officials across the nation who have redefined and shaped the landscape of how local government leadership creates meaningful progress in collaboration with federal lawmakers surrounding rural economic growth and sustainability. Colleen led the Campaign for Renewed Rural Development, which is a group of 28 national organizations to empower and influence Congress in a non-partisan way to support rural communities through investments in infrastructure, healthcare, housing, economic development and alternative energy. She attended the Army War College, was a Humphrey Institute Policy Fellow and a Columbia University rural policy fellow, and is a graduate of the Senior Executive Program in State and Local Government from Harvard University and the 2005 New York University leadership program. In 2000, American City and County Magazine named Landkamer, “County Leader of the Year.”



Lori Meadows has served as executive director of the Kentucky Arts Council since 2005 and has been with the agency since 1997. Prior to her tenure with the council she served as director of Kentucky Save Outdoor Sculpture! and the Kentucky Textile Project. She has served on panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and other state arts agencies and public art advisory committees for the Federal Art-in-Architecture Program, the Smithsonian Institute, the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the Commonwealth of Kentucky and has served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and other state arts agencies.

She is currently co-chairman of the Kentucky Working Group for Next Generation: the Future of Arts and Culture Placemaking in Rural America, serves on the executive board of South Arts, the board of Louisville Arts and Cultural Attractions, and the Kentucky 225th Anniversary Commission.



Bill Menner was appointed Iowa’s state director of USDA Rural Development by the White House in July, 2009. In that position, he oversees an organization that provides housing, community facility, energy and business support across Rural Iowa. Between 2009 and 2014, Rural Development invested more than \$4 billion in loans and grants in rural communities and businesses in Iowa.

Prior to his appointment, Menner served as executive director of Poweshiek Iowa Development, a county-wide economic development organization based in Grinnell. In addition to acting as the county economic development director, he led downtown development, historic preservation and tourism efforts in the City of Grinnell.

Menner also spent 14 years as a public radio reporter, seven covering government and politics – including the 1992 and 1996 Iowa caucuses. He is the author of two books about Grinnell, one of which tells the story of the Merchants National Bank, a national historic landmark designed by the legendary architect Louis Sullivan. A native of the Cleveland, Ohio-area, Menner is a graduate of Ohio State University with a BA in journalism and an MA in political science. He has four children who range in age from 20 to 25.