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The arts connect.

Annual Appeal

Annual Report | 2020

Dear supporters of the arts in Lewiston and Auburn:

I am writing to thank those who have sustained LA Arts through this difficult year and to ask your support as we face the coming year with a bold new vision and ideas for realizing that vision. The following Annual Report details our experience this past year and our thinking for the future.

Jim Parakilas
Board Chair, LA Arts

Reshaping Our Vision

Shortly before the pandemic struck and before Black Lives Matter demonstrations were held in Lewiston-Auburn and around the country, LA Arts began a process of reassessing how we serve our community. Our strategic thinking discussions, which began in February and continued throughout the year, resulted in a new vision statement and statement of values.

Vision Statement

LA Arts provides opportunities for artistic experience and creativity to the whole Lewiston-Auburn community, and especially to those with the least access to the arts. LA Arts supports community members and organizations working in the visual and performing arts. Through the arts, LA Arts encourages community building in our cities.

Statement of Values

We exist in community, work for community, and are responsible to our community.

- We affirm our love and respect for the community of Lewiston Auburn.
- We commit ourselves to intentional listening and community responsiveness.
- We acknowledge that the arts can be a vehicle for gentrification, and commit to examining our work through an anti-classist, anti-gentrification lens.
- We celebrate the arts as a means of building community and expressing community identity.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

- We acknowledge the historical whiteness of LA Arts as an institution.
- We recognize that we do not currently reflect the diversity of our community.
- We commit ourselves to actively diversifying our board and staff.
- We commit ourselves to creating an organizational culture that rejects white supremacy and creates a space of equity and inclusion.

The arts are transformative, and the arts are for everyone to experience and create.

- We uphold the arts as a vehicle for social change, a conduit to joy, and a means of self-expression.
- We believe the arts are a springboard for learning, dialogue, and personal development.
- We celebrate everyone's artistic nature and commit to creating opportunities for all in our community to create, learn, and experience the arts.

We define the arts, art-making, and artists expansively.

- We celebrate the arts as a means of building community and expressing community identity.
- We celebrate all who engage in creative self-expression as artists.
- We dedicate ourselves to supporting artists of all kinds in our community.
- We commit to challenging our own biases about what constitutes art.

A grid of six video thumbnails. Top row: 1. A man with long hair in a black t-shirt sitting at a desk with a drawing. 2. A man in a yellow patterned shirt playing an acoustic guitar. 3. A person in silhouette performing a high jump against a bright sky. Bottom row: 4. A close-up of hands painting a face with a brush. 5. A four-person video call with participants in various indoor settings. 6. A woman with curly hair in a patterned shirt sitting in front of a colorful tapestry. Each thumbnail includes a video player interface at the bottom with a red progress bar and playback controls.

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2021:
Public
Art
Unveiling

2021:
Part-time
Community
Organizer

2021:
New
Art
Space

The arts engage.

laarts.org/support

New Public Art Underway

Through the pandemic, we and our partner, the LA Metro Chamber of Commerce, have continued working on the public art program that we had begun under a \$75,000 Maine Arts Commission Creative Communities = Economic Development Phase 2 Grant for implementation of Cultural Plan LA. This work has culminated in the commissioning of a major art work for each of the cities: an abstract granite sculpture by Hugh Lassen for the entrance to Great Falls Plaza in Auburn and an array of realistic sculpted foxes by Andy Rosen for a site in the canal district of Lewiston.



Bud Form (model) by Hugh Lassen
Credit: City of Auburn

As we prepare for the unveiling of these works in spring 2021, we are planning further public art projects that will give us an ever more beautiful and provocative cityscape.

Connecting to our Communities

As the pandemic wears on, the rising concern about racial justice in this country has encouraged us at LA Arts to think through the lenses of racial and economic disparities, about the very issues of access to the arts and support for artists that we raised in our strategy meetings in February. Our board discussions have turned to the questions of how we can better engage with groups in our cities that we have served less well, particularly immigrant communities, the disadvantaged, the disabled, and the elderly. Our first action emerging from this discussion is a decision to hire a part-time community organizer from the local immigrant communities to help us connect better with individuals and organizations in those communities. Once public health conditions permit, this employee will help bring us together with people in these communities to plan a public art work celebrating the contribution of African immigrants to the culture of our cities.

New Space for Expanded Programs

It is impossible, of course, to say exactly when and how we will be able to restart our in-person programming: public performances, exhibitions, in-person art walks, public art projects, and more. But we are planning all of those programs with new attention to serving the needs and interests of those who have previously had limited access to the arts. That means, among other things, that we are looking to replace our lost Downstage space with new space not just for performances, but also for workshops, lessons, and arts-making of all kinds, spaces that will support and bring together the working artists of our community and those who want to learn.

To bring this ambitious goal to life in these hard times, we rely on members of this community to entrust us with their generous gifts, which we appreciate deeply.



Sustaining Our Work

Our ability to keep going, let alone to keep providing arts programming for our constituencies, has been threatened by the restrictions required to fight the pandemic and the consequent economic hardship in our cities. We have been fortunate to receive generous grants in support of our work this year from the Maine Arts Commission, the Onion Foundation, the Maine Community Foundation, the Davis Family Foundation, and the Ladd Foundation. Recognizing the needs of the moment, these donors have either given us unrestricted grants or have shown us flexibility in applying the grant money to the specified purpose.

We have also been the fortunate beneficiary of generous sponsorships from local businesses, who have contributed to our programs and who have stood by us this year as we converted Art Walk LA into an online monthly event. And we anticipate a strong renewal this season of the individual donations that play an indispensable role in sustaining our work, as do the annual contributions from the two cities.

As we continue to redefine our organization, we hope you will support our work by making a generous donation.

FY 2020 Revenue



- City of Lewiston
- City of Auburn
- Other Public Grants
- Private Grants
- Corporate Donations
- Individual Donations
- Donated Goods & Services
- Program Service
- Other Revenue & Gains

Donation Gift: Songbird Notecards

Donate \$100 or more to support our ongoing community arts programs and receive songbird notecards with photos taken by photographer Dan Marquis!

Donate online at laarts.org/support or write a check to LA Arts and mail it to us at 221 Lisbon Street, Lewiston, ME 04240



Thank You, LA Arts Sponsors!

Champions: Acadia Insurance | Austin Associates | Bates College | Baxter Brewing
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Foundation | Onion Foundation. **Advocates:** Community Credit Union | LA Metro Chamber of
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