



GPS

Global Positioning
Strategy
for the Arts

Recommitting America to
International Cultural Exchange

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New Hampshire-based Akwaaba African Drum and Dance Ensemble, Ghana, performed at the FirstWorksKids Festival in Providence, RI (NEFA). Photo by Frank Mullin, courtesy of FirstWorks.

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Global Positioning Strategy for the Arts

Recommitting America to
International Cultural Exchange

A report to the Obama Administration
from the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations

Arts Midwest, Minneapolis

Mid-America Arts Alliance, Kansas City

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Baltimore

New England Foundation for the Arts, Boston

Southern Arts Federation, Atlanta

Western States Arts Federation, Denver

www.usregionalarts.org

January 2009



Japanese taiko ensemble TA0 performs in Chicago as part of the 3rd annual Global Rhythms Concerts in November 2007, presented by the Chicago Human Rhythm Project with support from Arts Midwest. Photo courtesy of TA0 and Chicago Human Rhythm Project.

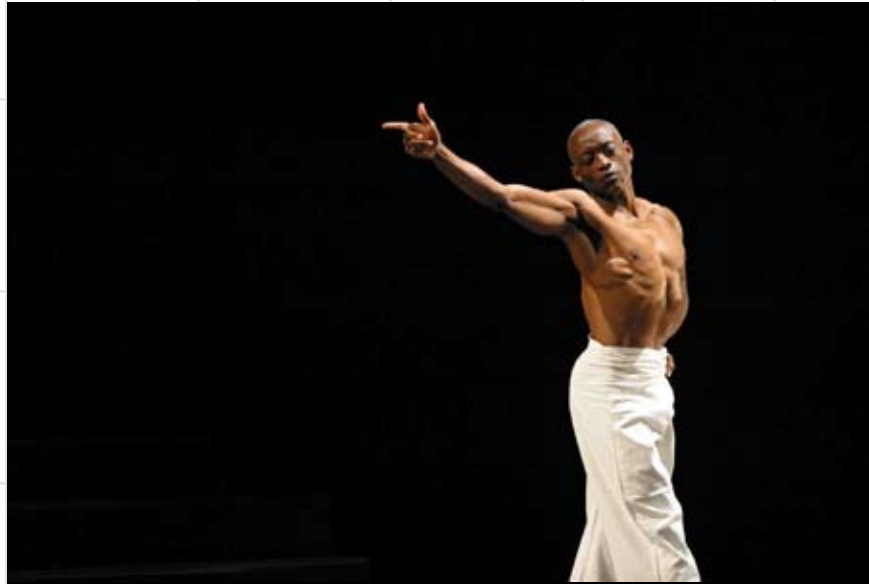
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology and commerce have made the globe a smaller place, yet U.S. international cultural exchange programs have not kept pace with this “flattening” of the world. Cultural exchange can have a positive impact on everything from U.S. foreign policy to commerce to our growth as individual participants in a global society—if there is more innovative programming, better coordination and greater investment.



The U.S. Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs) urge that the United States reinvigorate cultural exchange and offer

Internationally-known New York City-based dance artist Bill T. Jones. Photo courtesy of Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company.

this report as a resource to the Obama administration. Also informed by “voices from the field,” the report focuses on areas in which we have been actively involved internationally: performing and visual arts, literature and media. The U.S. RAOs are prepared to play a leading role as America recommits itself to international cultural exchange.

Among key points of this report:

- Full-throated cultural exchange achieves a variety of important public purposes that transcend individual federal agency agendas. It creates an environment for more effective diplomacy, enriches the education of our children, builds greater acceptance of different cultures within our borders, and prepares us to fully participate in the global economy and society.
- White House leadership is critical to revitalizing cultural exchange. Americans need to hear from their President why cultural exchange matters and deserves public support. White House leadership at the senior staff level can inspire greater collaboration among agencies involved in cultural exchange.
- The U.S. must increase its investment in cultural exchange in order to achieve its full potential, recognizing that economic recovery is our nation’s top budget priority. Increased funding should include ongoing, multiyear support for federal agencies and not-for-profits to ensure sustainability and enable longer-term cultural exchange planning. Among priorities for increased federal funding is restoring greater cultural affairs capabilities within the State Department.

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- Effective cultural exchange is two-way. It's not just about talking; it's about listening. One-time exchanges of exhibitions or performances are good, but not enough. True cultural exchange offers the opportunity for more profound and sustained engagement among artists and between artists and audiences.
- Using the British Council model as a starting point, a consortium of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can serve as primary partner to the government, ensuring efficient use of federal funds by tapping existing systems and networks for importing and exporting arts and culture. The consortium would also seek private funding to expand cultural exchange. While ultimately responsible to funding agencies, members of the consortium would act independently of the government in creating and managing programs.

Wen Li of the Inner Mongolian folk group An Da Union performs Humai, or Mongolian throat singing, at Hutchinson High School Auditorium in Hutchinson, MN, as part of Arts Midwest World Fest. Photo by Tiffany Rodgers.



INTRODUCTION



"I think we've got a unique opportunity to reboot America's image around the world and also in the Muslim world in particular," President Barack Obama told *Chicago Tribune* reporters on December 9, 2008. In an interview with the newspaper, the President promised an "unrelenting" desire to "create a relationship of mutual respect and partnership in countries and with peoples of goodwill who want their citizens and ours to prosper together."

Technology, commerce and an international focus have made the globe a smaller place. Yet international cultural exchange programs, for most Americans, have not kept pace with the "flattening" of the world. Merely importing or exporting an exhibition or performance can be valuable, but so much more can be achieved through a deeper level of engagement among artists and between artists and audiences.

With greater imagination, inquisitive thought, innovative programming, and leadership, international cultural exchange can have a positive impact on everything from U.S. foreign policy to global commerce to our own growth and maturity as informed and well-educated participants in a global society.

How do we get there? How do we go about improving international cultural exchange programs?

The opportunity and the moment have arrived.

America has a new President whose personal history not only cuts across cultures, but who as a matter of policy is committed to the importance of arts and culture not only in the improvement of America's image abroad, but also in the education of our children and the success of American businesses, communities and individuals in the international community and global economy.

A new approach is critical to improving overall cultural exchange substance and quality and to redefine what it could and should mean here and abroad.

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International educator, activist, researcher, and performing artist Sangeeta Isvaran from Chennai, India, presents in Denver, CO, 2007, at Open Dialogue XI: Global Connections to Cultural Democracy, the biennial conference of The Association of American Cultures. Photo courtesy of Roland Tanglao.

Toward that end, the six U.S. Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs) have collaborated on this report to provide a resource to the Obama administration as it develops new initiatives in arts and culture. We focus specifically on the fields in which we have conducted international cultural exchange administration and programming—performing arts, visual arts, literature, and media.

The strategies and approaches in this document were also informed by a series of interviews conducted late in 2008 with artists, arts organizations, current and former government officials, journalists, university officials, and others familiar with international cultural exchange. Like most lists of interview participants, ours was a subjective one. But we attempted to capture distinct and useful insights and believe we achieved that goal. (We emphasize that the views expressed in this document are solely those of the six U.S. RAOs and do not necessarily represent opinions of those we interviewed.)

In our interviews and internal analysis, we addressed key questions to be considered in reinvigorating publicly supported U.S. cultural exchange programs, such as:

- What exactly IS international cultural exchange, why does it matter, and what public purposes does it serve?
- What kinds of international cultural exchange programs work best? What are the characteristics of effective international cultural exchange programs?
- What is the status of existing U.S. international cultural exchange? How are we doing?
- How should we structure publicly funded cultural exchange programs to create a more effective, focused, and well-funded effort that involves the federal government, not-for-profit arts and cultural organizations, foundations, global corporations, and other entities involved in cultural exchange? How might all the various players work together to advance an agenda that would deepen the impact and broaden domestic awareness of international cultural exchange?

- Where should primary federal responsibility for international cultural exchange reside? The White House? State Department? National Endowment for the Arts? Other agencies?
- What kind of structure would best serve the public purposes of international cultural exchange? How might we create stronger public/private partnerships to achieve the goals of cultural exchange?

The U.S. RAOs are confident that this document will provide an essential resource to those charged with revitalizing federally supported cultural exchange programs. We stand ready to assist in the creation and implementation of a new approach to international cultural exchange by the United States. We believe our unique capabilities, perspectives, and experiences can be harnessed to an even greater extent to exponentially improve the quality and effectiveness of international cultural exchange programs.

A delegation of Vietnamese artists and arts administrators tour Mid-America Arts Alliance's exhibition fabrication facilities in Kansas City, MO, 2008.



SECTION ONE

GUIDING CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES, AND STRATEGIES

In developing a strategy for increased, more effective public investment in international cultural exchange, we have to ask what we are trying to accomplish. The RAOs and the opinion leaders we interviewed generally see the following as primary goals of international cultural exchange:

- Through person-to-person engagement, promote better understanding of other cultures among people from all countries.
- Give people in U.S. communities large and small the opportunity to learn about other cultures and in that way help them become more well-rounded as individuals, more open to new ideas, more welcoming of fellow Americans from different backgrounds, and better equipped to participate in a global economy and society.
- Engage the rest of the world on a deeper more humanistic level by presenting a more authentic version of U.S. culture and experience than what may be projected through popular commercial media such as music, fashion, and movies.
- Contribute to more effective diplomacy—its development and implementation —by using artistic expression to explore commonalities in human experience rather than focusing on or exploiting political and cultural differences.
- Support U.S. commerce in the global marketplace by helping U.S. businesses better understand the cultural environments in which they operate.



Opening reception for
*Wrapped in Pride:
Ghanaian Kente and
African American
Identity* at the
Boonshoft Museum of
Discovery, Dayton,
OH, 2006.

- Enrich arts education in our public schools by providing access to different forms and languages of artistic expression.
- Encourage action on global issues (climate change, for example) through artistic expression.

Asked to choose the single most important goal of international cultural exchange, those who participated in our survey generally cited the individual imperative: person-to-person exchange to promote better understanding rather than fulfillment of a specific policy or business goal.

No question, there is strong support for cultural exchange as a means of improving our relations with other countries and supporting our diplomacy. But the prevailing view of the RAOs and most of those we interviewed is that cultural exchange encompasses an agenda that is broader than diplomacy—as critical as diplomacy may be at this time.

Our organizations, and nearly all of the people we interviewed, believe America has not achieved the promise of international cultural exchange in recent years. Reasons cited include federal disinvestment, the lack of a cohesive strategy, an absence of interagency collaboration and a focus on one-way approaches—*talking without listening*. To the extent the U.S. has engaged in cultural exchange in recent years, it has been disproportionately one-way, short-term, and under-funded.

Bearing the above goals in mind, we offer the following recommendations for revitalizing international cultural exchange programs and policies by the Obama administration, in partnership with arts and cultural organizations, foundations, corporations, and other stakeholders:

Presidential Leadership

The personal involvement of President Obama will be significant in retooling our international cultural exchange program. Inspiration and leadership from the “bully pulpit” of the White House is vital to the success of U.S. cultural exchange efforts and can build broad public support for public and private investment in cultural exchange programs. The White House can serve as a powerful venue for convening



Public Art/Moving Site traveling public art project by Delwitt Godfrey, supported by NEFA. Photo by Delwitt Godfrey.

conferences or summit meetings on cultural exchange, as was the case in November 2000 when President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright convened the first-ever White House Conference on Cultural Diplomacy.

Increased, Sustainable Funding

Recognizing that economic recovery must be the top budget priority of the new administration, we must invest more public funds in cultural exchange to fulfill its promise as a means of building greater understanding between people, countries, and cultures. Increased federal funding should include ongoing, multi-year support to U.S.-based, not-for-profit entities to ensure sustainability and enable longer-term planning. Funding would also include provisions for private matching from foundations and corporations. In pursuing a more aggressive cultural diplomacy program, the administration might revisit legislation introduced in 2000 by then-Senator Joe Biden and then-U.S. Representative Jim Leach that would have authorized creation of not-for-profit entities to support State Department educational, cultural and arts programs.

Collaborative Interagency Approach Managed In The White House

While it would be tempting to look for ways to consolidate federal international cultural exchange, or place primary responsibility in the State Department, this important sphere of activity transcends specific federal agencies or agency agendas. There is no question diplomacy can be much more effective in an environment nurtured by cultural exchange. Cultural exchange has significant public value in informing smart diplomacy: somebody, after all, has to go out and clear the brush to get the land ready for planting. But we see cultural exchange as broader than cultural diplomacy —even though the terms tend to be used interchangeably. Cultural exchange has broad educational, cultural, economic, *and* diplomatic goals.



The Costas of Havana, Cuba, Family Portrait, c. 2005 from the ExhibitsUSA exhibition *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats*. Photo by Peter Menzel.

If used as a tool of specific foreign policy, cultural exchange becomes propaganda rather than a credible, honest exchange of experience and ideas aimed at helping citizens of different countries better understand each other for a variety of purposes. Therefore, we favor moving beyond the old model and forging an active partnership among federal agencies involved in cultural exchange that would be managed by the White House. White House leadership will provide greater strategic focus and collaboration, which will create synergies that will amplify public investment.

Because a number of agencies work in this field, it would be unwise to replicate the work with a new government office. We should work with what we've got to strengthen our program and the *mechanism* within the White House by which cultural exchange can be better coordinated and focused.

This interagency partnership will establish linkages to key not-for-profit and other private sector players, as well as to municipalities that are taking an aggressive approach to cultural exchange as a means of expanding global commerce through, for example, Sister Cities relationships. Through better coordination of cultural exchange activities, we will expand their scope and reach by finding new ways to cross-pollinate between programs.

Primary participating government agencies/entities should include:

- **U.S. Department of State**—Although hampered in recent years by limited human and financial resources, State retains key global assets simply by virtue of its “on the ground” presence in virtually every nation of the world. Its public affairs staff—including networks of local or foreign national hires in embassies and consulates—can provide invaluable links to global arts communities. But we need to rebuild State’s cultural exchange infrastructure, adding back embassy staffers with a background in cultural affairs. We also urge that programs managed by State have broad cross-cultural goals aimed at fostering understanding rather than strict linkage to specific foreign policies.
- **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**—NEA has maintained—and in recent years expanded—its staffing of and investment in international programs. However, the correlation of these programs to cross-agency plans remains limited, and the relationship of the NEA’s international programs to those housed within State is undefined at present. Like State, NEA has a significant asset base in its relationships with the broader cultural community, and an even more critical asset base in its relationship with state arts agencies and regional arts organizations—entities that should play a leading role in helping to build a broadly disseminated U.S. cultural exchange program.



Martha Graham Dance Company dancer Katherine Crockett performing *Cave of the Heart*. Photo by John Deane.

- **National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)**—While its experience in the international arena is more limited than some of the other federal partners, NEH has exhibited a growing interest in this area in recent years. Its capacity to help shape educational programs would be a great value to an expanded effort in this arena.



Photographer Yolanda Andrade presenting a gallery talk on *El ojo fino/The Exquisite Eye ExhibitsUSA* exhibition at Sheldon Fine Arts Center, St. Louis, MO, as part of an NEA-funded artist in residency workshop.

- **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**—The largest of the primary federal cultural support agencies, IMLS is playing a vital role in encouraging the development of globally minded leadership between U.S. and international museum and library executives. The network of leaders involved in this effort holds great potential to support an expansion of our exchange efforts. Furthermore, the vast network of IMLS grantees across the U.S.—representing libraries and museums in all disciplines—could provide a solid basis for national dissemination of exchange programs.

- Additionally, the **Library of Congress**, which has active programs in an array of nations, should be incorporated into the proposed

partnership. The **President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH)** has played varied roles in different administrations, including arts policy research and encouraging international exchange. One such example of PCAH’s work has been the expansion of the Coming Up Taller awards to include recognition of projects based in Mexico, China, and most recently, Egypt.

- Other partners in the interagency collaborative should include the Broadcast Board of Governors, **Office of the United States Trade Representative, U.S. Department of Commerce** and the **Smithsonian Institution**. This group of core partners in our proposed White House-led team could be supplemented from time to time (as appropriate) by representatives from **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**, to address refinements to the visa processes that would support cultural exchange.



Odaiko New England presents Japanese taiko drumming through performances and workshops.
Photo by Frank Mullin.

Consortium of NGOs as Primary Program Partners

To promote full use of existing private and not-for-profit resources—experience in the field, programming in the U.S. and abroad, access to funding, etc.—we recommend that a consortium of NGOs be designated as primary partners to the federal government in carrying out a revitalized cultural exchange program. This would also bring a measure of independence to cultural exchange, ensuring it is not merely an arm of the government pursuing a specific agenda.

Several people we interviewed mentioned the British Council as a potential model (at least in part) for this kind of entity. Funded by the British government, the Council operates semi-autonomously in carrying out its mission “to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide.” There is value in an organization that operates with flexibility and independence in carrying out publicly supported cultural exchange programs. The British Council model leverages private and not-for-profit participation and ensures that cultural exchange has a robust two-way component.

These primary partners—while retaining their independence—would receive federal funds, re-grant federal funds to organizations across the U.S., serve as co-funders and fundraisers, and help program two-way cultural exchange in collaboration with federal agencies.



Excited students show off handouts from a workshop with French Canadian ensemble Mauvais Sort at a workshop in Elgin, IL, as part of Arts Midwest World Fest. Credit: Colleen McLaughlin, Director of Development, Arts Midwest.

An Active Role for U.S. Regional Arts Organizations

While we understand we run the risk of appearing self-serving in this recommendation, the fact is that the U.S. RAOs are extremely active in this area and can play a valuable role as the U.S. reinvigorates its cultural exchange programs. For example, we would hope to play a key role in serving in a consortium of NGOs working in partnership with the government.

Yet another possibility might be to establish of a 501(c)(3) by the six U.S. RAOs to contract with various federal agencies to help carry out their respective cultural exchange programs. Additionally, a former federal official we interviewed suggested that the RAOs provide training to State Department public affairs officers as the agency retools its cultural exchange infrastructure.

The RAOs are well positioned to play an important role in this endeavor (a view shared by independent voices we interviewed) for a number of reasons:

- Our organizations have been active in international cultural exchange for more than 15 years.
- We cut across artistic disciplines in our programming, which includes the performing arts, visual arts, literature, and media.
- We have worked across jurisdictions, with federal, state, and local governmental agencies and with an array of foreign governments.

- We regularly program cultural exchanges in collaboration with artists and arts organizations in all 50 states, with a special emphasis on reaching those areas of the U.S. with little access to such global experiences.
- We have brought to the U.S. artists from scores of countries in Africa, Asia, South America, Europe, Australia, and North America.
- We have access to and a strong history of working with national and regional private funders across the U.S., and, in some cases, with international funders.
- We already have systems in place for coordinating import and export of cultural programs, and a distribution network that can introduce cultural exchange programs get into communities across the United States, especially mid-sized and smaller communities.

A Cultural Exchange Advisory Committee

A new Cultural Exchange Advisory Committee will provide the administration with valuable perspectives from representatives of cultural organizations, corporations and other stakeholders from around the country. This Committee will help expand linkages between public and private cultural exchange programs.

Improved Visa Procedures and Tax Regulations

Another key area for consideration by the Obama administration relates to visas and taxes. To bring more artists and arts administrators to the United States, we must ease their visa restrictions and improve tax procedures. The process to secure visas for non-U.S. artists is cumbersome and time consuming, often getting tied up in bureaucracy within the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security.



Musicians from the Inner Mongolian region of China play horse-head fiddles in a performance in Hutchinson, MN, as part of Arts Midwest World Fest. Photo by Tiffany Rodgers.



US Artists International artist Terrance Simien & the Zydeco Experience at the Stimmen Festival, Germany. Photo courtesy Terrance Simien & the Zydeco Experience.

As for taxes, we have different tax treaties with nearly every country, and depending on that treaty, sponsors of in-bound artists (such as the U.S. RAOs) are supposed to withhold up to 35 percent of the contracted artist fee and pay that to the Internal Revenue Service. The artist must then file for a refund at the end of the year, a refund the artist may or may not receive. This is a significant disincentive for performing arts groups from other countries to want to visit the U.S.

A National Information Database/Clearinghouse

A national online cultural exchange clearinghouse could be an extremely valuable asset in revitalizing our cultural exchange programs by bringing cohesion to disparate work in this field. It would provide information about public and private cultural exchange activities and direct interested parties to available networks of artists and arts organizations. It would provide a mechanism for tracking and evaluation. This clearinghouse could also serve as a means of promoting the value of cultural exchange to a broader audience via the Internet.

SECTION TWO

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMMING

Based on our experience in the field, we recommend that a new U.S. approach to cultural exchange embrace the following characteristics:

It Must Be Two-Way

Successful cultural exchange programming is bilateral. The key component of successful international cultural exchange programs rests in the term “exchange.” Our most successful programs occur when there is a true opportunity for an open exchange of ideas, experiences, and culture in the broadest sense, over a period of time that extends beyond a single performance or exhibition. And in our effort to provide a deeper understanding of U.S. culture, we must make sure to demonstrate, too, that we are listening—that we are interested in learning about other cultures.

Depth and Context Are Key

Programs should consistently include residency, educational, and networking components. Simply replicating other types of international cultural exchange for performing/visual artists and arts administrators really misses a huge multiplying effect into the community and beyond the artists themselves. The exchange needs to be much more than simply presenting a performance/exhibition/screening/reading. Contextualization of the art leads to a more profound, long-term impact on the audience(s). Discussion and the mutual process of reflection are critical.

Programs Should Have Broad Reach Across the U.S.

Programs should be widely dispersed geographically in the U.S., not just targeted to larger metropolitan areas. They should be broadly accessible to urban and rural communities in all 50 states and feature authentic cultural expression, both domestic and foreign. And, they should involve communities not normally served by such ventures: young adults, recent immigrants, and culturally specific citizens.

Artist Unknown. Krishna the Butter Thief, 16th century, Bronze from the ExhibitsUSA exhibition *Miniature Worlds: the Art of India*, the Leland C. and Paula Wyman collection of the Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA.



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A Little Bit of Money Can Go A Long Way

Government and private funds can go further if they focus on building or supporting artist networks and smaller independent groups rather than major, well-established cultural institutions. Smaller groups tend to be innovative and experimental, and perhaps in better touch with emerging cultural and artistic movements in other countries.

Cities Play a Major Role

Individual cities play a vital role in international cultural exchange through trade missions, Sister Cities programs, and other direct city-to-city collaboration. These city-based programs should be encouraged, nurtured, and facilitated by the federal government in partnership with multinational corporations and not-for-profits.

Interactive Technologies Stimulate Interaction

Interactive technologies can play a significant role in expanding networks of artists and arts administrators, especially when used to enhance and extend live artistic exchanges. Interactive technologies offer speed and accessibility, the ability to build online communities of artists, and the opportunity to share and archive live artistic experience. While online communities do not replace personal interaction between artists and audiences, they can in fact stimulate such interaction—in much the same way that the Obama campaign's groundbreaking use of new media spurred personal involvement in the campaign and participation in canvassing, phone banks, etc.



President's Committee of the Arts and Humanities presentation of Flauta Sin Fronteras U.S. Border Tour. Photo courtesy Flauta Sin Fronteras.

SECTION THREE

EFFECTIVE PROGRAM MODELS

We have found that the most effective international cultural exchanges between artists, arts administrators, and cultural leaders in the performing arts, visual arts, literature, and the media generally fall within the following categories:

- Cross-cultural, cross-border collaborative projects
- Community-based artist engagements and residencies
- Networks of active artists and presenters—creating, curating, contextualizing and touring work
- Artists and cultural leaders on presidential trips
- Grant programs
- Interactive networks for planning and programming or creating art and other uses of digital technologies

There are many effective approaches and programs in the field of cultural exchange managed by agencies and cultural institutions across the country. We offer the following projects, managed and implemented by the U.S. RAOs, as examples of what we believe are effective approaches. Additional examples are available upon request.

ExhibitsUSA (Mid-America Arts Alliance)

ExhibitsUSA is a national traveling exhibition program of Mid-America Arts Alliance. The program's primary focus is the organization, management, and interpretation of thoughtful and affordable museum-quality exhibitions of artistic or cultural significance. During the past 18 years more than 15 million visitors in more than 1,000 communities in all 50 states and abroad have viewed an ExhibitsUSA exhibition. Among the 24 exhibitions currently touring through ExhibitsUSA is *Cardinal Points/Puntos Cardinales*, a survey of contemporary Latino and Latin American art. The 55 mixed media works featured in the exhibition are by some of the most prominent artists of Latin America.

A principal goal of this exhibition is to make visitors aware of the broad range of artistic approaches pursued by these artists. Despite the



Enrique Chagoya, *Hand of Power*, 1997, Lithograph, from the ExhibitsUSA exhibition, *Cardinal Points: A Survey of Contemporary Latino and Latin American Art*, from the Sprint Nextel Art Collection.

stereotypes, there is no such thing as a homogenous “Latin American” style. The diversity of expressions found in the exhibition reflects the vastness of a region that encompasses 20 countries, people of numerous ethnicities and cultures, and wide-ranging social and economic conditions.

Visitors to the exhibition are encouraged to explore its rich diversity through the extensive educational materials that supplement the exhibition, including an exhibition catalog, family gallery guide, didactic panels, and narrative labels—all of which are bilingual. Additionally, the exhibition travels with a bilingual educational programming guide that includes docent training information, artist biographies, lesson plans for school groups, an extensive bibliography, museum program suggestions, 10 related books for adults and six related books for children, and an interactive CD-ROM.

Cardinal Points/Puntos Cardinales is traveling to seven U.S. museums during its two-year tour, including communities in Arkansas, Iowa, Texas, and the boot heel of Missouri, where large demographic shifts have occurred because of an influx of Latin American immigrants to rural, agricultural communities.

USArtists International (Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation)

USArtists International (USAI) is the single national initiative solely dedicated to the promotion of American performing arts abroad. Through USAI, grants are available to American dance, music and theater ensembles, and solo performers that have been invited to participate in international festivals anywhere in the world outside of the United States.



USAI is committed to ensuring that the impressive range of expression of the performing arts in the United States is represented abroad, and that the creative and professional development of American artists is enhanced through participation at significant international festivals.

Performances at key festivals provide American artists with opportunities for the exchange of ideas and practices with their colleagues in other countries, as well as exposure

USArtists International grantee Merce Cunningham Dance Company in performance at Perpignan Festival, France. Photo courtesy Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

to new and larger audiences. The participation of exemplary artists from the United States in international festivals helps develop audiences for, and greater appreciation of, the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the American performing arts.

Recent grants have been awarded to the theatre ensemble A Bit Above the Earth, of Sherman Oaks, California, for performances at the Kathmandu International Theater Festival in Nepal; the large musical ensemble Debo Band of Boston, for performances at the Ethiopian Music Festival in Addis Ababa; Doug Varone and Dancers of New York, for performances at the International Festival of Modern Dance "Isadora" in Krasnoyarsk, Russia; and dance collaborative Zoe/Juniper of Seattle, for performances at the Body Festival of Dance and Physical Theater in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Arts Midwest World Fest

Arts Midwest World Fest presents international musical ensembles in intensive week-long residencies in smaller Midwest communities. Its purpose is to foster an understanding of and appreciation for global uniqueness and differences.

Arts Midwest World Fest's objectives are to:

- present high-caliber, accessible international artists to small- or mid-sized Midwest communities;
- provide a multifaceted experience to community residents, particularly young people;
- integrate the artists and their music into a broader social, cultural, political, and historical framework;
- encourage young people to explore issues and understand concerns of diverse cultures; and
- create a lasting musical and cultural impact on participants.

This year, musical groups from Inner Mongolia, China; Israel; Veracruz, Mexico; and Québec, Canada are each spending a week in Midwest towns like Spearfish, South Dakota and Traverse City, Michigan. During each week-long residency, the musicians lead school concerts,

Los Utrera of Mexico hosts a student workshop in Elgin, IL, as part of Arts Midwest World Fest. Photo courtesy of Elgin Community College, Elgin, IL.



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musical and cultural workshops, and a public concert. To extend the cultural experience to the classroom, Arts Midwest provides participating communities with a curriculum that helps students and teachers better understand and appreciate the customs and traditions of the visiting ensembles.

As an example, musical ensemble An Da Union is providing a fascinating glimpse into the Inner Mongolia region of China. The group's music is created by twelve young and dynamic musicians who perform on traditional Chinese instruments and include a traditional type of Mongolian singing commonly referred to as "throat singing."

This landmark tour, supported in part by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, is the group's first in the U.S. and brings this distinctive culture to students and audiences across the Midwest. Partners respond to the events with comments such as, "At the end of the evening concert, there were tears in the eyes of Nevada, Iowa teachers who had worked with the group the day before. When An Da Union sang 'Auld Lang Syne,' and handed out scarf-gifts, it was clear that a life-long memory had been created from the interaction of music and teaching about Mongolia."

National Dance Project- International (New England Foundation for the Arts)

The National Dance Project (NDP) has supported the production and distribution of dance in the U.S. since 1996. The program aggregates public and private resources, is guided by a group of preeminent dance field leaders, and, through grants and services, is the only support system for the creation and touring of dance in the U.S. Each year, up to 25 different dance projects are featured in engagements in more than 250 communities across the country. Workshops, lecture-demonstrations, informal conversations between dance artists and community members, and other contextualizing activities accompany formally presented performances.



Toubab Dialaw Village, Dakar, Senegal. Japanese choreographer Kota Yamasaki, a dancer with Senegal-based Company JANT-BI, and Germaine Acogny, artistic director of Company JANT-BI, discuss a future collaboration with Urban Bush Women. This two-year collaboration led to a 2007 grant from the New England Foundation for the Arts for production and touring of *Les Ecaillés de la Mémoire* (The scales of memory), which was performed throughout the U.S.

From the program's inception, NDP has recognized that the inclusion of artists and projects originating abroad adds to the rich global dialogue. International activity and partnerships within NDP enrich opportunities for both U.S. communities to see international artists, and for American dance artists to develop lasting relationships internationally. In recent years, an average of 22 percent of projects have featured the artistic creations of foreign choreographers and their collaborators. To deepen and extend impact, NDP has developed projects with agencies associated with the governments of Australia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Mexico, and France.

Examples of NDP international projects include:

- A creative exchange and U.S. tour featuring Urban Bush Women (New York) and Compagnie JANT-BI (Senegal) culminated in a collaboratively created work about the importance of place and community.
- The Ilkhom Theatre of Uzbekistan collaborated with celebrated African-American choreographer David Rousseve (California) on a U.S. tour of dance theater work. Iconographic paintings by Usto Mumin inspired the new work.
- A U.S. tour of the work of French-Algerian choreographer Rachid Ouramdane, based at the Centre National Dramatique de Gennevilliers, in a suburb of Paris with a large Muslim population, was supported by NDP.

- NDP partners with The Africa Contemporary Arts Consortium (TACAC) that has brought outstanding African artists to the U.S., including Faustin Linyekula, Nora Chipaumire, Compagnie Tchétché, and Compagnie Heddy Maalem. The partnership is currently focused on developing productions and tours from countries of North Africa encountered at a May 2008 platform in Tunisia, hosted by Ness El Fen.



Senegal-based Company JANT-BI with Japanese choreographer Kota Yamasaki in preparation for a U.S. tour with Urban Bush Women as part of the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation of the Arts. Photo courtesy of Company JANT-BI.

- The Triangle Project brought together choreographers and their collaborators from Indonesia, Japan, and New England who, as a team of creative researchers, spent time in each other's countries to explore creative concepts, systems of support, and approaches to involving and engaging communities.

Convenings of International Experts and Perspectives (Western States Arts Federation)

Over the past 12 years, WESTAF has organized and managed 11 high-level forums, many including international presenters and participants. These forums have identified established and emerging voices in the area of cultural policy and engaged them in a dialogue that will inform cultural policy development in the region. The symposium-style dialogue is documented in published proceedings that are disseminated to cultural leaders across the country and abroad. These proceedings are also available in electronic format online.

Forum topics have included analysis of the concept of culture in the United States and abroad, considering the impact of global migration on existing arts and cultural communities, examining cultural policy-making infrastructures in the United States and abroad, and sharing information, ideas, activities, and successful models that strengthen arts and culture globally. Because of the network and reach of many of our international participants, each convening stirs a significant amount of international and domestic interest in the work of U.S. arts and cultural organizations and also expands and invigorates interest in international cultural exchange. Future forums will enjoy expanded reach due to the planned application of digital technologies such as Web video streaming, podcasts and interactive remote technology.

Examples of international presenters and participants in past WESTAF forums include:

- Vjeran Katunaric, professor of sociology at the University of Zagreb in Croatia, where his primary areas of research and teaching are ethnic relations, multiculturalism, and culture and development.
- Ilona Kish, secretary general of the European Forum for Arts and Heritage, an organization of cultural networks and associations that represents the interests of the cultural sector at European Union level.
- Doudou Diène, special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights.



Award-winning Zapotec poet, writer, and activist Natalia Toledo Paz, from Oaxaca, Mexico, presents in Denver, CO, 2007, at the biennial conference of The Association of American Cultures. Photo courtesy of Roland Tanglao.

- Gabriella Gomez-Mont, an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and thinker from Mexico City. She has worked in Mexico, the United States, and Italy; has exhibited her work in Japan, Mexico, and Europe; and has acted as contributor and editor for a number of national and international arts magazines.
- Aziz Ridouan, a young activist from Paris who cofounded the French Association des Audionautes, a group that provides legal services to individuals charged by major corporations for illegal downloading of music.
- Ivan Duran, the Belize-based director of Stonetree Records, a record label that works with artists in the Afro-Cuban, African-Belize and Caribbean music genre. His work involves producing, researching, promoting, and managing the tours of artists engaged in the Garifuna traditions (African-Belize).

Southern Arts Federation (SAF) Integrated Program Model

SAF's successful programs in multiple arts disciplines have regularly provided a conduit for international exchange. The integration of cultural exchange activities and relationships into current program models have allowed SAF to leverage additional impact by investing cultural exchange resources (artists, funding, attention) into program areas that already have solid infrastructure and constituent relationships. Using this model, presenters, artists, audiences, and communities, both in the South and internationally, have been connected to rich arts experiences from cultures other than their own. A sampling of these programs:

- **JazzSouth Radio** (1991-2003) was distributed free of charge on compact disc to 19 carriers in Australia (four affiliates), Brazil, Columbia (10 affiliates), Poland, Peru, Taiwan, and South Africa. Collectively, these international affiliates accounted for more than 47 million impressions annually.



The international cast of Barrage performs at the Southern Arts Federation's Performing Arts Exchange, which attracts attendees from outside the U.S. including Mexico, Canada, Australia, and Ireland. Photo David Batley.

- **Professional Development for Presenters and Touring Artists/Managers** (2003) Ann Rothery, former SAF National Arts Leadership Institute Manager, and Jorge Morales, a native of Mexico and a graduate of SAF's American Traditions (traditional arts professional development program), provided instruction and information through a series of professional development workshops in five Mexican cities of Durango, Monterrey, Culiacan, Hermosillo, and Tijuana. Artists and arts administrators from the states of Durango, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, and Baja California attended these seminars.



Grupo Siquisirí performs at Clayton County High School, Jonesboro, GA. Photo Southern Arts Federation.

- **Southern Visions Traveling Exhibits Program**—The University of Haifa (Haifa, Israel) hosted *Living Traditions: Folk Artists of the American South*, September 2003-February 2004. The NEA-funded traveling exhibit from SAF's ongoing program featured the work of nine master traditional artists and their apprentices. Georgine Clark, Visual Arts Program Manager for the Alabama State Council on the Arts, presented a series of lectures in Israel in association with the exhibit.
- **SouthArts Fund Touring Program**—a special project done through the NEA's Cultural Connections Initiative, the first United States tour of Grupo Siquisirí. An influential force in the traditional Son Jarocho music genre (which utilizes string instruments similar to the Bluegrass music tradition) Grupo Siquisirí, from the Mexican state of Veracruz, presented concerts in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee in spring 2007. In addition to a series of evening concerts, Grupo Siquisirí presented their music and heritage to elementary and middle school students, music majors at the University of South Carolina, and faith-based audiences. Ethnomusicologist Rafael Figueroa Hernández provided cultural context for all concerts and presentations.

SECTION FOUR

PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE

In seeking multiple perspectives on international cultural exchange, we surveyed a diverse group of thought leaders on the following topics:

- Defining international cultural exchange and why it matters
- The relationship between international cultural exchange and diplomacy
- Perspectives on government cultural exchange programs
- The limited version of U.S. culture projected through popular commercial media such as music, fashion, and movies
- Improving U.S. cultural exchange
- Restructuring federal cultural exchange programs
- Using interactive technologies
- Successful international cultural exchange starts at home.

This section includes verbatim responses to the above topics, reflecting the views of those we surveyed, as well as the views of the executive directors of the six U.S. RAOs.

We appreciate the participation of the following individuals and their passionate commitment to international cultural exchange:

- The Honorable Madeleine Albright, former U.S. Secretary of State, Washington, D.C.
- Ed Bachrach, founder, Build Cambodia, Chicago
- Jamie Bennett, chief of staff, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
- The Honorable James Collins, director, Russia and Eurasia Program, Carnegie Endowment for Peace; former U.S. ambassador to Russia; Washington
- Tabussum Haleem, executive director, Organization of Islamic Speakers Midwest; Chicago
- Joel Henning, *Wall Street Journal* cultural affairs columnist, law firm consultant, Obama Arts Policy Committee, former chairman, Governor's Commission on Financing the Arts and former member, Illinois Arts Council; Chicago
- Steven Lavine, president, California Institute of the Arts, Obama Arts Policy Committee; Valencia, California
- Anne L'Ecuyer, associate vice president of field services, Americans for the Arts; Washington
- Patrick Lee, artist, administrator of alivenotdead.com, online artist support community
- Robert Lynch, president and CEO, Americans for the Arts; Washington
- Adair Margo, chair, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Adair Margo Gallery; El Paso, Texas
- Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, president, Marlboro College, former executive director, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities; Marlboro, Vermont

- Joseph Montville, board chair and senior fellow, Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University, former senior diplomat, U.S. Department of State; Fairfax, Virginia
- Gregory Mosher, director, Columbia University Arts Initiative and Tony Award-winning director and producer
- Jennifer White Reding, associate director, Overseas Programs, Washington University, St. Louis
- Rhoda Rosen, director, Spertus Museum, Chicago
- Ann Rosenthal, executive director/producer, MAPP International (formerly MultiArts Projects & Productions), including The Africa Contemporary Arts Consortium, New York
- Lexi Saudargas, legislative assistant, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, Washington
- Elaine Shocas, former chief of staff to Secretary of State Albright; Washington
- Sue Spence, manager, International Market Development, Australia Council for the Arts
- Jay Tolson, news editor, Radio Free Europe/Prague, former senior writer, *U.S. News and World Report*, former editor, *Wilson Quarterly*
- Lilya Wagner, former vice president for philanthropy, Counterpart International, Washington
- Lois Weisberg, commissioner of cultural affairs, City of Chicago
- Cathy Zimmerman, co-director and producer, MAPP International, New York

The following executive directors of the U.S. RAOs also participated in the survey:

Rebecca Blunk, New England Foundation for the Arts, Boston

Gerri Combs, Southern Arts Foundation, Atlanta

Alan Cooper, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Baltimore

David Fraher, Arts Midwest, Minneapolis

Mary Kennedy McCabe, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Kansas City

Anthony Radich, Western States Arts Federation, Denver

Defining international cultural exchange and why it matters:

- *The mere import or export and presentation of a performance or an exhibition, while valuable, does not necessarily achieve the level of cultural exchange we intend. While an audience may learn something about another culture by watching a performance of, say, African dance, the experience only becomes a true cultural exchange when there is an opportunity for that dance company to spend time in a community, meet with the public, discuss the nature of their work, how it reflects upon their traditions or their contemporary history, and to reflect upon how the “visiting” culture relates to the “host” culture. This deeper cultural dialogue or cultural exchange*

also provides an enhanced environment for achieving 'cultural diplomacy' – a completely different creature but one that requires successful cultural exchange in order to succeed. (David Fraher)

- *It has to be bilateral, multilateral. It can't just be about importing or exporting work. We talk about movement in both directions with long-term sustainable relationships and an understanding of another culture and that culture's understanding of ours. It's a mutual and equitable relationship The United States is part of a global world, now more than ever. We need to become more engaged in conversations with the world, and cultural exchange is very helpful in understanding the cultures we are dealing with. (Ann Rosenthal and Cathy Zimmerman)*
- *I would define it broadly. I would define it as opportunities for people from here to go abroad and not as tourists and not at the highest levels, to actually ... perform at the grassroots level. The reciprocal is for people around the world to have the same opportunity here. (Joel Henning)*
- *The best international exchange happens one person at a time We have to learn more about each other or we will simply destroy the earth. (Gregory Mosher)*
- *The sharing of expressions of traditions and contemporary practice so that we experience anew how we are all very much alike while being very different. (Rebecca Blunk)*
- *Any exchange of cultural products between and among nations, whether promoted by governments or NGOs through formal programs (ranging from arts, speaker programs, scholarly exchanges) or through informal or incidental (Internet) or commercially driven efforts It's taking place all the time, sometimes in planned, programmatic ways but more often through undirected osmosis through popular culture, the media, the arts, immigration, etc. Its effects are not so much an accomplishment as they are texture of contemporary, everyday reality. (Jay Tolson)*
- *The core of it is creating artist-to-artist connections that cross borders. Once artists make connections, they make the next thing happen. So you always get a payback that's beyond the initial investment. (Steven Lavine)*

- *The opportunity for an individual, organization or community to physically exchange positions (people, delegations) between a United States participant and a participant from another country or culture. The exchange allows the participants to experience another culture, its art, its politics, its business— and allows participants from both sides to make new contacts that lead to longer-term dialogue and connection. (Robert Lynch)*
- *Culture [is] more than language, clothing and cuisine but something essential to human beings. Without understanding culture, it is easier to dismiss or disregard people People feel more open to different ideas and approaches after interacting with someone from another culture Removing the concept of “other” is so important. (Tabussum Haleem)*
- *If more Americans had a deeper understanding of other countries and cultures, they might make more effective choices regarding issues of international relations, trade and the treatment of immigrants In an increasingly global world, the arts can be a bridge to successful international business ventures. In many countries, the arts play a much greater role in the overall culture and can be an access point to trade and business development work or at least part of the language of business in other countries. (Anthony Radich)*
- *International cultural exchange is vital to the people and communities of the U.S. It touches on issues of creativity, economics and diplomacy. As the world shrinks and immigration from one country to another grows, it is vital that we work to understand the culture of others. A lack of understanding of the culture of others leads to fear, isolation and resentment. (Alan Cooper)*
- *[Visitor programs] broaden the horizons of ordinary Americans who learn from interaction with foreigners that they are much more interesting than the image of ‘the frightening other’ as they are often portrayed. Such visits can vaccinate against xenophobia. (Joseph Montville)*
- *It’s a way to open doors for international business. Artists get foot in the door for businesses. Business should fund more international exchange. (Lois Weisberg)*
- *I have seen the experience open minds and doors of aspiration among students and families in communities as diverse as inner city Detroit and Spearfish, South Dakota. (David Fraher)*

- *Exchange can create an 'event' that stimulates interest rather than relying on natural curiosity as a motivation for people to learn about other cultures. (Ed Bachrach)*
- *It can accomplish a great deal, including movement toward dialogue and mutual understanding, providing a neutral ground for discussion, broadening of our own perspectives and serving as a foundation for other activities, including business ... I think there is something sorely missing in a nation if arts and culture are not reflected in core values. The nation becomes boorish, uninteresting and unaware that it is part of a rich, global scene. (Lilya Wagner)*
- *The clock is ticking on this – there is urgency to it War and commerce are constant and are starting to frame the future of global relations. Civic peace is missing because arts and culture is not stepping up. I can see a counter-argument to 'there's not enough money.' I say that this is not an excuse any more. We cannot afford NOT to engage in international cultural exchange. (Anne L'Ecuyer)*
- *The U.S. has been able to count on people buying U.S. products because of the attraction of U.S. culture. And that's been defined as U.S. popular culture – rock 'n' roll and the movie The last eight years have gone a long way toward discrediting U.S. culture on every front. We are now seen as the problem rather than the solution. So it's going to be critical to project what is substantial and decent in U.S. culture for the world to take interest in U.S. products. You only buy into U.S. products if you think the U.S. has something special to offer It's about the moral, social and creative credibility of the U.S. (Steven Lavine)*

The relationship between international cultural exchange and diplomacy:

- *Everything we do in the area of foreign policy is presenting our own country in the most positive image - but you also put yourself in the shoes of the other country. The ideas of respecting their language, their history, their religion and their art is part of public diplomacy in many ways. But this is different from propaganda. Cultural diplomacy is about presenting the diversity of your own country and listening to what people are saying to you. It is not one-way. You have to listen as well as talk. (Honorable Madeleine Albright)*

- *If this is an effort to say how we are going to deploy public resources, then absolutely cultural diplomacy should be tied to U.S. foreign policy. If the funding is tied to the public sector, then yes, they get a say in the goal of the exchange. (Jamie Bennett)*
- *I don't want the arts to be a vehicle for a partisan policy, but rather an expression of a rapidly changing American society. The message the U.S. wants to send is that culture in America is a culture of immigrants. It's always the expression of outsiders, because America is a place where the outsider's voice can be heard (African-American influence on popular music, Jewish influence on Hollywood, e.g.). We are going to turn increasingly to Arab, Hispanic and Asian culture. We are always a culture in transition. (Gregory Mosher)*
- *In the U.S. government, no one is interested or speaks very much of cultural exchange. It's now called 'public diplomacy.' That's not exchange It ought to be separate. It shouldn't be a policy agenda, but one instrument of foreign policy. (The Honorable James Collins)*
- *Cultural diplomacy should be partially tied to U.S. foreign policy, but it needs to have the structural capacity to transcend that policy when U.S. foreign policy is shortsighted or otherwise limiting. Linking the effort to foreign policy does not necessarily mean the work needs to be dominated by the State Department. We need to find a creative structure that has links to State, but does not depend on it for core direction and/or core funding. (Anthony Radich)*
- *It's a lot cheaper than wars. (Joel Henning)*
- *Cultural diplomacy is completely independent from U.S. foreign policy. (Ed Bachrach)*
- *When U.S. foreign policy is visionary and embracing of "the other" and conveys respect, cultural exchange can be a real asset in making that policy successful. If our policy is flawed, presumptuous or inferior, cultural exchange should continue if only to offset negative effects. (Joe Montville)*
- *It should not be tied to foreign policy, except in the broadest way of promoting values that are compatible with those of the United States. (Jay Tolson)*

- *Cultural exchange should not be tied to foreign policy. For example, when we are at war with a region of the world that should not mean we have to be shut off culturally. Exchange is broader than that and should be maintained regardless of foreign policy. The whole policy with Cuba is insane. Up until relations were cut off ... our cultures were intertwined. (Ann Rosenthal and Cathy Zimmerman)*
- *This is a false dichotomy. Cultural exchange is inextricably tied to foreign policy, so any strategy for cultural exchange should be considered in the context of foreign policy. (Anne L'Ecuyer)*

Perspectives on government cultural exchange programs:

- *Cultural exchange is ridiculously under-funded and poorly organized.... There are huge implications for the U.S. image in the world....The state has no formal role. Sister Cities, arts presenters, the Woodrow Wilson Center, student exchange programs and DC embassies all have a role, but no one talks to each other. Some professionals have developed relationships, but there is no plan or strategy that is well organized to get the outcome we need for a civic mission. (Robert Lynch)*
- *Non-profit organizations have begun to achieve successes. But I do not think that the federal systems currently in place are structured to accomplish these tasks. For one thing, there simply is not enough funding. Secondly, there is an 'anti-import' mentality at play, especially in the regulations governing U.S. Department of State funding systems, which, in essence, cannot pay for costs associated with bringing international artists to U.S. communities to perform. A system based on export only – or even primarily – is a system aimed at "speaking at or to" international audiences. Our cultural exchange – and our cultural diplomacy – would both be better served if we listened at least as much as we spoke. (David Fraher)*
- *I think it's an enormous failing on the part of our political leadership that they have consistently been either oblivious or hostile to arts and culture generally or arts and culture specifically. It's one of the ways we can do a great deal to improve our international relations, and more importantly to improve our own culture. (Joel Henning)*
- *People have thought of [cultural exchange] as sending abroad the best that we do to show that freedom encourages artistic activity or imagination. Those things are fine symbolically. But in this era of globalized culture, I don't think they accomplish much in themselves. (Steven Lavine)*

- *No one keeps one general nationwide record of what is being exchanged. If we don't know what exchange programs are taking place, there is no way to gauge our accomplishments. (Lois Weisberg)*
- *There is not a current approach coordinated by any one entity – no communication between those doing it. (Gerri Combs)*
- *If you mean government-sponsored efforts, I would say they have been poor, and growing worse, ever since the end of the Cold War. The reasons are many, including the influence of America's own domestic culture wars. (Jay Tolson)*
- *What [has made] it more difficult is official government policies, attitudes, speeches of our president and senior leaders that show disrespect, contempt, arrogance toward other countries, people and cultures. What enhances it is the opposite: openness, respect, willingness to engage. (Joseph Montville)*
- *Within our region, if you are affiliated with a university your likelihood to experience international cultural exchange is improved exponentially. Otherwise I see very little international cultural exchange present in our region. (Mary Kennedy McCabe)*
- *In general, in order to do cultural exchange, it tends to take a significant amount of financing and infrastructure. It's missing the most 'local,' for lack of a better word. Maybe 10 or 20 percent of New York arts organizations are in a position to export culture. (Jamie Bennett)*

The limited version of U.S. culture projected through popular, commercial media such as music, fashion, and movies:

- *What's missing? Authentic culture, traditional culture, controversial and provocative work that does not appeal to mass audiences, work not competitive in the marketplace. (Gerri Combs)*
- *[Cultural exchange] only works if it's not your showboat culture, but the really vital things going on in your culture. (Steven Lavine)*
- *There is an entire ecosystem operating in the United States and what is exported is really only the greatest predators. This myopic view of American culture – largely commercial in operation – creates a stereotypical and often cynical notion of what matters culturally in the U.S. (Mary Kennedy McCabe)*

- *The local history, cultural expression of people who have come here and people who make their homes here is missing in that international representation.* (Rhoda Rosen)
- *Exchanges tell more stories of authentically lived experiences in the U.S.* (Anne L'Ecuyer)
- *What is missing is the wonderful broad spectrum of our non-profit and unincorporated art: wide-ranging offers of music, dance, local festivals, as well as our choruses, choirs, craft (quilters, etc.) and visual art. On a recent trip to France where I was asked on French public radio to talk about American culture, some of my comments about the breadth and depth of our traditional arts and our museum, theatre, dance and classical arts were met with great skepticism by foreign citizens who simply had no familiarity with this aspect of America and therefore found it hard to believe that it even existed. This situation is frankly shameful and our government needs to do something about it.* (Robert Lynch)
- *We need cultural exchanges that are more humanistic, that convey America struggling with its soul in an honest way. It keeps alive the faith others have in us of being honest and honorable.* (Joseph Montville)

U.S. cultural exchange:

- *Start out with a very explicit, very express statement of the importance of cultural exchange. With good leadership in government, people will believe in it. That kind of leadership is very important."* (Joel Henning)
- *The U.S. needs to have an actual policy with regard to international cultural exchange, but we don't have that culture here. We don't have a broad-based policy domestically or internationally.... If we could get policy makers, government representatives, artists and arts organizers and people in the field in a room together to start talking, then we might come up with a practical agenda In order for a program to be national, people from government, business, foundations and academia will need to be involved – everyone who will be engaged on a day-to-day basis.* (Ann Rosenthal, Cathy Zimmerman)
- *We can't do anything unless the government takes this commitment seriously and puts funds toward it.* (Rhoda Rosen)

- *In order for cultural exchange to really work, artists must spend a long period of time with people in other cultures. This requires a huge commitment of time, money, people and resources. (Cathy Zimmerman)*

On using interactive technologies:

- *Social networking and viral marketing could really be effective with introducing folks to new ideas in arts and culture. (Mary Kennedy McCabe)*
- *The Library of Congress has a World Digital Library. We can share culture and find culture and education through technology. It's very exciting with lots of potential. (Adair Margo)*
- *A choreographer participated in DanceWEB in Vienna, a live and in-person gathering of dancers. The group then started a blog to communicate. One artist began a project with a fellow dancer/choreographer from Serbia. They are currently developing a project that they will perform together, live, but are using the Internet to work on it now. (Cathy Zimmerman, Ann Rosenthal)*
- *Individuals can use the Web to become "curators in their own artistic experience." (Jamie Bennett)*
- *In fine arts, these things are not interchangeable. It is really important, it loses meaning and shifts meaning if it changes space, and we need to be careful of that. I know technology is huge, but physically experiencing [fine art] is required – absolutely required. (Rhoda Rosen)*
- *Social networking seems to reinforce individuals' narrow choices of media and cultural exposure rather than expanding such exposure. (Ed Bachrach).*
- *It's a new way to be aware of what others are doing [but] technology cannot replicate that 'goosebump' feeling when you experience something in person. But there other capacities of technology to create depth and meaning – we just need to figure them out. (Anne L'Ecuyer)*

Successful international cultural exchange starts at home:

- *It's important to send artists to the little cities that don't get them normally and also gives [small cities] the chance to learn about the importance of cultural exchange. (Lois Weisberg)*

- *Domestic cultural exchange will also help close the cultural divide that has made it more difficult to achieve a more effective government-sponsored international cultural exchange program [and] recognize the wisdom of cooling some of our own internal cultural debates. (Jay Tolson)*
- *In America we still have our own domestic problem of not celebrating the success that was right before us and rendering almost invisible the actually highly visible presence of culture and art in every aspect of our society. We need to start at home by better understanding, celebrating and supporting the culture that has become a core part of who we are as an American community while at the same time showcasing what it is that we have internationally. (Robert Lynch)*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The U.S. Regional Arts Organizations would like to acknowledge the work of Jasculca/Terman and Associates, Inc., (JT), a Chicago-based strategic communications and public affairs firm that designed and conducted the opinion research and served as principal author of this report. JT team members include the following:

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 Jessica Thunberg, project manager
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ABOUT THE U.S. REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

The U.S. Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs) are six non-profit entities that were established in the 1970s at the initiative of state arts agencies and encouraged by an act of Congress. The RAOs support and promote artists and arts organizations by developing and managing arts programs that serve people on local, regional, national, and international levels, and providing technical assistance to their member state arts agencies. The RAOs are supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, state arts agencies, other public agencies, and foundations, corporations, and individuals. The six RAOs are Arts Midwest, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Southern Arts Federation, and Western States Arts Federation.

COVER PHOTO CREDIT

USArtists International grantee Delirious Dance engages an audience member during a performance at the House of World Culture, Berlin, Germany. Photo courtesy Delirious Dance.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND RESOURCES

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