



Advisory Body: **Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County**

Meeting Time: **Second Wednesday of the Month**, conference room, Office of
Communications and Media, **10 Douglas Drive, Suite 210, Martinez**

Chair: **Commissioner Teresa (Tess) Snook O'Riva**

Staff person: **Executive Director, Roger Renn**

Reporting Period: **January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015**

I. Activity

2015 has been a seminal year for the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County. After spending the better part of 2014 creating a strategic plan formulated with the help of a consultant,* AC5 has spent considerable time this year executing this new strategic plan.

After an exerted effort, the Commission was able to add an Alternate Seat and fill all but one AC5 Commission Seats. This allowed the Commission to spend time on the execution of the strategic plan in 2015. At the same time the California Arts Council was able to increase the State-Local Partnership Grant award and AC5 hired an experienced Executive Director.

*Using available grant money from the California Arts Council, Angelia Tahiti Consultants was hired in 2014 to guide the process of setting a course for AC5 for the next two years. The outcome was a document titled: Strategic Strategies for 2014-16.

AC5 is excited to be working with Veterans in Contra Costa County by bringing the California Arts Council's Veterans Initiative in the Arts program to them in the form of a new program titled ABOUT FACE: Building Veterans' Self-understanding through Self Portraits.

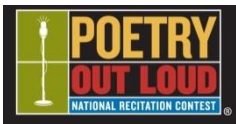


This new program will offer Veterans an opportunity to explore portrait painting as a way of self-expression. Through a generous grant from the California Arts Council the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is offering portrait painting workshops to Contra Costa County Veterans free of cost.

II. Accomplishments

With County funding of \$14,248, and \$29,665 total grant funding from the State, the Commission was able to accomplish its mission of *“advancing the arts in a way that promotes communication, education, appreciation and collaboration throughout Contra Costa County so that we may grow creatively as a community that preserves and celebrates our diverse cultural expression.”*

As California recognizes the importance of the Arts (and Culture) a hearing on the *“Creative Economy”* was held in Sacramento. Both Commission Chair Snook O’Riva and Executive Director Roger Renn attended this hearing along with Confluence 2015, a state-wide gathering of Arts Commissions in April 2015. An increase in State funding was the result of the conference and the Assembly hearing. Some AC5 programs offered as a result of both State and County funding for 2015 included:



Poetry Out Loud has been a well-received program brought to Contra Costa high schools for the past nine years. Our POL program coordinator, Robin Moore, has expanded the program to 14 schools, the largest participation of schools to date. It was rewarding to have Delta Vista High School, at the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility in Byron, participating for their second year. Arielle Herman, a senior at Monte Vista High School in Danville, won the county wide competition. Arielle traveled to Sacramento in March to compete in the statewide competition of 44 counties. She wasn't a finalist, but did well and proudly represented Contra Costa County.



Arts Café is a relatively new program. This year AC5 began collaborating with the County libraries and local arts associations to offer richer programs. Last September, in conjunction with the Concord Library and Concord Art Association, Arts Café hosted Judy Gittelsohn as she demonstrated the use of watercolor paints. More joint programming is planned for 2016.

Art Passages offered two great shows this year. Women of Conscience featured photographs by Victoria Alvarado in the lobby of the Contra Costa County Administration Building. At age 65, she traveled throughout California photographing with a 35mm camera. Her project began in 2001 by selecting Latina women in various fields throughout California who were making significant contributions to their communities. These women are role models for the next generation of youth.

An Ordinary Year, An Extraordinary Time showcased Steven Burchik’s photographs. The exhibit included more than sixty photographs portraying the images of ordinary soldiers, villagers and children trying to get through each day during an extraordinary conflict. This exhibit carries special significance since this year, 2015, marks the 50th anniversary of the official start of the Vietnam War, when US ground troops were sent to the conflict. It also marks the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.





Arts Recognition Awards were awarded to three outstanding artist: Mr. Rhu A. Bigay, an Aviation Artist, Ms. Pamela Freund-Stiplen, Artistic Director for the Gold Coast Chamber Players and Mr. Peter Maund, Percussionist and Music Educator. Each advanced the appreciation of the Arts and Culture in Contra Costa County. AC5 also recognized Dr. Darwin Marable for his over 12 years of service as AC5 Commissioner for District II.

The National Gallery of Art offers a free-loan program to community groups and non-profit television stations. Partnering with Contra Costa Television (CCTV), AC5 has selected programs from this collection for airing to the larger community.



Commissioners participated in judging panels for State Assembly high school art contests and other panels throughout the year. AC5 was also involved with special Board of Supervisors' cultural celebrations including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Cesar Chavez Celebration, and Veterans Day Ceremony.

III. Attendance/Representation

AC5 Commission Meeting Attendance for 2015

Name	%	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
District 1													
Vacant		canceled			canceled		canceled			canceled	canceled		
District 2													
Darwin Marable	4/4	canceled	✓	✓	canceled	✓	canceled	✓		canceled	canceled	N/A	N/A
Lore Konieczny		N/A Not a Commissioner at this time											
District 3													
P.J. Shelton	1/5	canceled			canceled		canceled	✓		canceled	canceled		
District 4													
Elizabeth Wood	3/5	canceled	✓		canceled		canceled	✓		canceled	canceled	✓	
District 5													
Tess O'Riva	5/5	canceled	✓	✓	canceled	✓	canceled	✓		canceled	canceled	✓	
At Large													
Y'Anad Burrell	4/5	canceled		✓	canceled	✓	canceled	✓		canceled	canceled	✓	
Geoffrey Meredith	5/5	canceled	✓	✓	canceled	✓	canceled	✓		canceled	canceled	✓	
Alternate													
Cindy McCann	0/1	N/A Not a Commissioner at this time											
Executive Director													
Roger Renn	3/3	Not Staff at this time			canceled	✓	canceled	✓		canceled	canceled	✓	
		canceled					canceled			canceled	canceled		
CANCELED	5/10	canceled			canceled		canceled		NO MEETING	canceled	canceled		NO MEETING

AC5 Commissions represent all the art disciplines, except music, and it represents the many diverse ethnic groups who live in Contra Costa County. Commission Seats were filled by qualified citizens applying from all over the county. In 2015 this included filling District II, and an At-Large Seat.

AC5 meets 10 times a year. Except for the months of August and December, the commission was scheduled to meet the second Wednesday of each month. Meetings were canceled 50% of the time in 2015 lacking a quorum per Brown Act and the Better Government Ordinance. Of the meetings held, three Commissioners had a 100%

attendance record. One seat remained vacant the entire year. Due to employment commitments one Commissioner only attended one meeting.

IV. Training/Certification

New Commissioners received an orientation, which included viewing *Brown Act and Better Government Ordinance, What You Need to Know* presentation and viewing of the *Ethics Orientation for County Officials* presentation. All Commissioners update their Brown Act Training annually.

V. Proposed Work Plan / Objectives for 2016

“Arts education fosters creative, critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration. Viewed in this context, creativity has become as important in modern education as mastering specific language and computation skills.”

—2014 Otis Report on the Creative Economy of California.

At its September 2015 meeting the Arts Council reiterated its support for SLPP and the critical role that Counties play in supporting arts and culture in our communities. Furthermore, the Council awarded a significant increase in funding to Contra Costa County, their partner through this program.

Our State-Local Partnership Grant application received a score of seven out ten (historically AC5 has received 4 points). Mr. Renn attended a California Arts Council meeting held in Santa Cruz where the Arts funding distributions were discussed and awarded. CAC members noted the attendance and interest of SLPP recipients. AC5 sees a robust engagement with Arts and Culture providers throughout the county in 2016.

Starting with our strategic plan we hope to:

- Continue our support of Veterans by offering four ABOUT FACE painting workshops in the spring. AC5 will also work with the Medicine & Rehabilitation Services at the Veterans Hospital in Martinez to bring this program to brain-injured patients and Veterans suffering Post Deployment Stress.
- Continue to work with local artists and the County Library to offer more varied and interesting Arts Cafés so that we may grow creatively as a community and celebrate our diverse cultural expression.
- With the success of Art Passages, expand our Public Arts program by exploring a college internship position that could make our gallery shows more professional and foster art education for our youth.
- Finally, with the support of Student Programs, Contra Costa Office of Education we hope to apply for a planning grant to offer art outreach to the court schools.

Ac5 deeply respects and appreciates the County’s desire to promote arts education, celebrate the artists in our midst, and build our community through the arts. AC5 Commissioners look forward to serving our community in 2016.

