

Imagining America and Partners for Arts Education announce new, year-long artist series

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, a national consortium of colleges and universities based at Syracuse University committed to public scholarship in the arts, humanities, and design, and Partners for Arts Education (PAE), a Syracuse-based organization that provides funding and support to deepen and enrich educational experiences in and through the arts for students, teachers, and artists, announce a new collaborative arts initiative, "The Hyphenated Artist Series." The series will enhance and promote the region's cultural activity by exploring expanded opportunities for artists in combinations such as artist-educator and artist-organizer.

"The Hyphenated Artist Series," for which PAE received a grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, is the first phase of a larger initiative between Imagining America and PAE to incubate new opportunities with those in the arts and cultural sector. The series aims to provide a way for people to continue to expand their skill set--including an entrepreneurial component--through which people explore the transfer and enhancement of arts and cultural skills in order to maximize ways of making a livelihood in central New York in the arts. Working together, the two organizations hope to evolve the initiative, perhaps eventually into a community institute with a physical, downtown presence.

The series will also help convene partner populations including colleges, community service organizations, arts and cultural citizens, education, economic advocacy consortia, and resource providers to pool knowledge.

"The constant learning that happens as part of the creative process is shared by campus and community citizens alike. This is an opportunity for us to demonstrate the real entrepreneurial capacities that are common to artistry in all forms," says PAE executive director Laura Reeder.

"This series expresses the recognition that artists' skills have many terrific applications in the work world. The community-campus partnership is so important given how much student-artists learn alongside people already making their lives in the arts and cultural sector and how crucial it is for universities to share resources beyond their immediate constituencies," says Jan Cohen-Cruz, director of Imagining America.

"The Hyphenated Artist Series" will offer a slate of public presentations, seminars, and workshops by a variety of community-focused writers and artists from the performing and visual arts, beginning in March 2008 and running through December. Events will take place at SU's Warehouse and elsewhere. Some of the artists and events include:

Solo performance artist and union activist Marty Pottenger will perform and speak. Incorporating media and oral histories, Pottenger, currently working out of Portland, Maine's City Hall, uses theatre to encourage people to think about issues, ask questions, and engage in dialogue with others in their communities.

Artist Jerry Beck will discuss his work with the Revolving Museum's yearlong public art series and urban revitalization project in Lowell, Mass. that involved more than 1,000 artists, youth and community members in his community.

Lauren Unbekant, actress and education director at Syracuse Stage, and Len Fonte, retired theatre education teacher, will present a lecture, "Audience or Aesthetic? The Education Dilemma in Cultural Organizations."

Georgia Popoff, local poet and community educator, and Phil Memmer, director of the Downtown Writers Center at the YMCA, will present " Many Voices: Poetry and Creativity in Community Literature."

Dancers from Urban Bushwomen, a company founded in 1982 by choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, will share their work bringing untold and under-told histories of disenfranchised people to light through dance.

All of the "2008 Hyphenated Artist Series" events will be free to the public. Times and further details will be available through PAE, <http://www.arts4ed.org>, 315) 234-9911, and Imagining America, 315) 443-8590, <http://www.imaginingamerica.org>.