

CLOSE LISTENING: A NATIONAL CASE FOR THE VALUE AND IMPACT OF FOLK & TRADITIONAL ARTS



2018 NEA National Heritage Fellow and *Altarista* Ofelia Esparza (R) with Concert Host Martha Gonzalez (L). Photo by Tom Pich.

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Hyatt Regency Baltimore Inner Harbor
300 Light Street, Baltimore, Maryland

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**National
Endowment
for the Arts**
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Welcome!

Welcome to the National Endowment for the Arts' first-ever national Folk & Traditional Arts Convening. We look forward to three days of hearty discussion, articulating the shared values of the field, underscoring the impact of folk and traditional arts practice on community life, and highlighting the value of traditional arts projects and programs within the broader arts sector and in our society as a whole.

Together, we include traditional arts practitioners, representatives of national, regional, and state folk arts agencies, as well as cultural advocates, community leaders, festival directors, educators, and museum curators. We now begin an exciting conversation with one another, where we share and listen to ideas, identify regional and national priorities and assess the needs of the field. Together, we can explore strategies for raising the public's awareness of folk and traditional arts and – by sharing our collective story – increase support for the field.

Sincerely,
Cliff, Bill, Cheryl, and Jennie
NEA Folk & Traditional Arts Staff

Special Thanks:

Steering Committee:

Karen Abdul-Malik, Perkins Center for the Arts
Pat Atkinson, Nevada Arts Council Folklife Program
Chad Buterbaugh, Maryland Traditions (MSAC)
Juan Días, Sones de Mexico Ensemble
Chitra Kalyandurg, Kalanidhi Dance
Jon Kay, Traditional Arts Indiana/Indiana University
Amy Kitchener, Alliance for California Traditional Arts
Selina Morales, Philadelphia Folklife Project
Theresa Secord, National Heritage Fellow and
Penobscot Nation Basketmaker

Convening Consultant:

Holly Sidford, Helicon Collaborative

Transcriptionists:

Jennie Williams, Indiana University
Max Yamane, University of Maryland

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies:

Pam Breaux
Eric Giles
Sylvia Prickett

National Endowment for the Arts:

Mary Anne Carter, Acting Chairman
Tony Chauveaux, Deputy Chairman for
Programs & Partnerships
Cliff Murphy
Bill Mansfield
Cheryl Schiele
Jennie Terman

Jen Hughes
Adam Kampe
Andi Mathis
Patricia Moore Shaffer
Krystal Tomlin
Erin Waylor



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30

- 12:00 – 2:00 PM** **Check-In at the FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/ANNAPOLIS ROOMS (FLR 2)**
- 2:00 – 2:15 PM** **Welcome: Value of Folk & Traditional Arts**
- **Pam Breaux** (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies)
- 2:15 – 2:45 PM** **Introductions** (interactive activity)
- **Facilitated by NEA Staff**
- 2:45 – 3:30 PM** **Shared Language** (interactive activity)
What is the work that we do (in all its diversity), and what are the common threads and words that link us all together? What is the language we use to communicate – individually and collectively – to others what it is that we do?
- **Facilitated by NEA Staff**
- 3:30 – 4:00 PM** **National Folk & Traditional Arts Infrastructure Report**
- **Amy Kitchener** (Alliance for California Traditional Arts)
 - **Betsy Peterson** (American Folklife Center, Library of Congress)
- 4:00 – 4:15 PM** **-BREAK-**
- 4:15 – 5:15 PM** **Presenting Ourselves: the Arts and Cultural Heritage**
The folk and traditional arts is one of the primary ways that the arts sector engages with cultural heritage and community identity. This panel features celebrated traditional arts practitioners who have harnessed local, state, and federal arts resources to fortify and amplify cultural heritage in a variety of contexts.
- **Vicky Holt Takamine** (PA’I Foundation) will conduct a Hawaiian *oli* (chant).
 - **Bau Graves** (Old Town School of Folk Music)
 - **Carolyn Mazloomi** (National Heritage Fellow, Women of Color Quilters Network)
 - **Wisa Uemura** (San Jose Taiko)
 - *Discussant: Theresa Secord* (National Heritage Fellow, Penobscot Nation Basketmaker)
- 5:15 – 5:30 PM** **-WRAP UP AND CLOSE-**
- 6:30 – 8:30 PM** **Local Traditions Field Trip**
Dinner and Short Discussion and Performance at Nepal House*
Prem Raja Mahat and his wife Kubita are the proprietors of Nepal House, a Mt. Vernon neighborhood restaurant that serves as a hub for Baltimore's Nepali diaspora. Prem is also a master in traditional Nepali music and has received multiple Apprenticeship Awards from the Maryland State Arts Council. There will be a short performance and brief remarks. *Dinner will be pay your own way at Nepal House, 920 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21201

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31

8:45 – 9:00 AM

FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/
ANNAPOLIS (FLR 2)

Wednesday Welcome and Recap

- **Cliff Murphy** (NEA Folk & Traditional Arts)

9:00 – 9:30 AM

State of the Field

Cliff Murphy, NEA Director of Folk & Traditional Arts, presents an overview and highlights from the recent *State of the Field* report from the NEA Office of Research & Analysis. This presentation will include a short PowerPoint, and will examine where we've been, where we are, and where we may be going.

9:30 – 10:30 AM

State of Communities: State Folklife Programs

Most states in the country have an agency tasked with the mission of documenting, sustaining, and promoting traditional arts and cultural heritage. These programs were seeded by the NEA beginning in 1974, and provide a variety of resources and strategies useful to a wide range of cultural communities and practices.

- **Joey Brackner** (Alabama State Council on the Arts)
- **Bradley Hanson** (Tennessee Arts Commission)
- **Amanda Hardeman** (Florida Folklife Program)
- **Steven Hatcher** (Idaho Commission on the Arts)
- **Ellen McHale** (New York Folklore Society)
- **Langston Wilkins** (Tennessee Arts Commission)
- *Discussant: Cheryl Schiele* (NEA Folk & Traditional Arts)

10:30 – 10:45 AM

-BREAK-

10:45 – 11:45 AM

Checking in with Friends of the Field

A group of civic leaders and innovative thinkers in the arts and cultural heritage talk about the value they have found in collaborating with traditional artists and cultural heritage organizations.

- **Jamie Bennett** (ArtPlace America)
- **Steve Kidd** (National Humanities Alliance)
- **Holly Sidford** (Helicon Collaborative)
- **Erik Takeshita** (Bush Foundation)
- *Discussant: Amy Kitchener* (Alliance for California Traditional Arts)

11:45 – 12:00 PM

-BREAK-



12:00 – 1:30 PM
Breakout
CONWAY (FLR 1)

WORKING LUNCH

Storytelling: The Art of Performance, Preservation, and Practice

Since its founding in 1965, the NEA has recognized storytelling as an integral element of folk and traditional arts. A half century later, it has become one of the most significant public mediums in folklife and cultural heritage. Our panel shares stories of the value and impact of the performative, preservation, and practical roles of the art of storytelling. We will explore why telling our stories matters.

- **Karen Abdul-Malik** (Perkins Center for the Arts) (*Discussant*)
- **Charlie Lockwood** (Texas Folklife)
- **Kiran Singh Sirah** (International Storytelling Center)

12:00 – 1:30 PM
Breakout
**FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/
ANNAPOLIS (FLR 2)**

WORKING LUNCH

Storytelling as a Medium for Media

This panel focuses on how folklorists and cultural advocates have harnessed the power of modern media to share community stories and amplify awareness of cultural heritage.

- **Sara Camp Milam** (Southern Foodways Alliance)
- **Emily Hilliard** (West Virginia Humanities Council)
- **Ada Smith** (Appalshop)
- *Discussant: Selina Morales* (Philadelphia Folklore Project)

1:30 – 2:30 PM
**FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/
ANNAPOLIS (FLR 2)**

Intersections & Collaborations with other Sectors

Cultural heritage work is not confined to the realm of the arts. Key figures discuss how they have collaborated with a variety of non-arts sectors to fortify communities and cultural heritage in surprising ways.

- **Troyd Geist** (North Dakota Council on the Arts - Wellness and Ageing)
- **Amy Kitchener** (Alliance for California Traditional Arts - Correctional Facilities and Recidivism)
- **Laura Orleans** (New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center - Working Waterfront Festival and Economic Development)
- **Lori Pourier** (First Peoples Fund - Financial Literacy and Banking)
- *Discussant: Jon Kay* (Traditional Arts Indiana)

2:30 – 2:45 PM

-BREAK-

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2:45 – 3:30 PM

Breakout

CONWAY (FLR 1)

Impact & Apprenticeships

In 1978, the National Endowment for the Arts launched a Traditional Arts Apprenticeship program. This program has since become a staple of the field, with deep impact in cultural communities across the nation. This panel includes perspectives from different apprenticeship models.

- **Sergio “Checo” Alonso** (Mariachi Master Apprentice Program – City of San Fernando)
- **Maggie Holtzberg** (Massachusetts Cultural Council)
- **Theresa Secord** (National Heritage Fellow, Penobscot Nation Basketmaker)
- *Discussant: Chitra Kalyandurg (Kalanidhi Dance)*

2:45 – 3:30 PM

Breakout

**FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/
ANNAPOLIS (FLR 2)**

Impact & Heritage Tourism

Cultural Heritage Tourism is a booming industry that carries financial potential and unintended consequences. Key figures in folk and traditional arts discuss how they have served as a critical mediator between heritage tourists and cultural communities.

- **Amy G. Cisneros** (Indian Pueblo Cultural Center)
- **Adrienne Decker** (Utah Division of Arts & Museums)
- **Jack Hinshelwood** (The Crooked Road: Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail)
- **Michelle Lanier** (North Carolina Division of State Historic Sites)
- *Discussant: Jen Hughes (NEA Design & Creative Placemaking)*

3:30 – 3:45 PM

-BREAK-

3:45 – 4:30 PM

Breakout

CONWAY (FLR 1)

Impact & Archives

Virtually all of the folk and traditional arts organizations funded by the NEA have robust cultural heritage archives – some public, some private, but all vital to understanding who we are and where we are going. Key figures from the field discuss how archival materials inform and impact living traditions and art making.

- **Meg Glaser** (Western Folklife Center)
- **Ruth Olson** (Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Culture)
- **Nicole Saylor** (American Folklife Center, Library of Congress)
- *Discussant: Chad Buterbaugh (Maryland State Arts Council/Maryland Traditions)*

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3:45 – 4:30 PM

Breakout

**FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/
ANNAPOLIS (FLR 2)**

Impact & Festivals

The economic impact of festivals has been well researched and documented. Less understood is the impact that folklife festivals have on creating understanding across cultural, generational, and philosophical divides.

- **Leia Maahs** (Southwest Folklife Alliance - Tucson Meet Yourself)
- **Don Marshall** (New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation - Louisiana Blues & BBQ Festival)
- **Sabrina Lynn Motley** (Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage - Smithsonian Folklife Festival)
- **Julia Olin** (National Council for the Traditional Arts - National Folk Festival)
- **Alix Webb** (Asian Americans United - Mid-Autumn Festival)
- *Discussant: **Pat Atkinson** (Nevada Arts Council)*

4:30 – 4:45 PM

**FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/
ANNAPOLIS (FLR 2)**

-WRAP UP AND CLOSE-

5:30 – 7:00 PM

No-host Local Activities: Sign-up and Dinner on your own

Sign-up for a local activity or dinner with new colleagues and old friends

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1

8:45 – 9:00 AM
**FREDERICK/COLUMBIA/
ANNAPOLIS (FLR 2)**

Thursday Welcome and Recap

- **Cliff Murphy** (NEA Folk & Traditional Arts)

9:00 – 10:15 AM

Word on the Street: Urban Folklife and Innovation through Close Listening

Folk and Traditional Arts is a field that distinguishes itself by listening. We do this not only to learn from one another, but also to understand how our programs might be most responsive and useful to the communities we serve. This panel discusses how listening and responsiveness drives the field in new and innovative directions.

- **Michael Knoll** (HistoryMiami Museum)
- **Virginia Millington** (StoryCorps)
- **Selina Morales** (Philadelphia Folklore Project)
- **Steve Zeitlin** (City Lore)
- *Discussant: Juan Días (Sones de Mexico Ensemble)*

10:15 – 10:30 AM

-BREAK-

10:30 – 11:15 AM

Regional Breakout Session

Participants break out into groups according to geographical region and discuss next steps to continue conversation and action to move the field forward.

11:15 – 12:00 PM

Wrap up and Closing Thoughts

- **Cliff Murphy** (NEA Folk & Traditional Arts)

12:00 PM

Pre-Conference End

Contacts

Alabama State Council on the Arts

Joey Brackner
joey.brackner@arts.alabama.gov

Alliance for California Traditional Arts

Amy Kitchener
akitch@actaonline.org

American Folklife Center

Betsy Peterson
epet@loc.gov

American Folklife Center

Nicole Saylor
nsay@loc.gov

American Folklife Center

Michelle Stefano
mstef@loc.gov

American Folklife Center/Library of Congress

John Fenn
jofe@loc.gov

American Folklore Society

Jessica Turner
afsexec@indiana.edu

American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture and Humanities

Bernadette Fruean
bernfruean@gmail.com

American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture and Humanities

Dr. Mary Taufetee
marytaufetee@yahoo.com

Appalshop, Inc.

Ada Smith
ada@@appalshop.org

Asian Americans United

Alix Webb
alix.webb@aaunited.org

Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College

Beth King
kinge@dewv.edu

Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, UW-Madison

Ruth Olson
reolson3@wisc.edu

CERF+

Carrie Cleveland
carrie@cerfplus.org

City Lore

Steve Zeitlin
steve@citylore.org

Connecticut Historical Society

Kate Schramm
kate_schramm@chs.org

Connecticut Office of the Arts

Tamara Dimitri
tamara.dimitri@ct.gov

Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum

Jay Orr
jorr@countrymusichalloffame.org

Creative Alliance

Maria Gabriela Aldana
maria@creativealliance.org

Delta Blues Museum

Shelley Ritter
shelley@deltabluesmuseum.org

First Peoples Fund

Lori Pourier
lori@firstpeoplesufund.org

Florida Folklife Program

Amanda Hardeman
amanda.hardeman@dos.myflorida.com

Folk Alliance International

Aengus Finnan
director@folk.org

Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center

Cristina Balli
cballi@texasfolklife.org

Helicon

Holly Sidford
hsidford@heliconcollab.net

History Miami Museum

Michael Knoll
mknoll@historymiami.org

Hmong Cultural Center of Minnesota

Mark Pfeifer
torontomail@yahoo.com

Idaho Commission on the Arts

Steven Hatcher
steven.hatcher@arts.idaho.gov

Illinois Arts Council Agency

Susan Dickson
susan.dickson@illinois.gov

Independent Artist

Theresa Secord
wikepi@gwi.net

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

Amy G. Cisneros
acisneros@indianpueblo.org

Indiana University

Jennie Williams
jsw4@iu.edu

Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

Jessabet Vivas Capo
jvivas@icp.pr.gov

International Storytelling Center

Kiran Singh Sirah
kiran@storytellingcenter.net

Kalanidhi Dance

Chitra Kalyandurg
chitra@kalanidhi.org

Kalanidhi Dance

Anuradha Nehru
kalanidhi.company@gmail.com

Kentucky Arts Council

Mark Brown
mark.brown@ky.gov

Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Rebecca Cordes Chan
rchan@lisc.org

Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Lisa Rathje
rathje.lisa@gmail.com

Louisiana Division of the Arts

Maida Owens
mowens@crt.la.gov

Maine Arts Commission

Kathleen Mundell
culturalresources2001@yahoo.com

Mariachi Master Apprentice Program

Sergio Alonso
checoalonso3@msn.com

Maryland State Arts Council

Chad Buterbaugh
chad.buterbaugh@maryland.gov

Maryland Traditions

Ashley Minner
ashley.minner@gmail.com

Massachusetts Cultural Council

Maggie Holtzberg
maggie.holtzberg@state.ma.us

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

Theresa Colvin
theresa@midatlanticarts.org

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

Jesse Porter
jess@midatlanticarts.org

Mid-America Arts Alliance

Christine Dotterweich Bial
christine@maaa.org

Minnesota State Arts Board

Rina Rossi
Rina.Rossi@arts.state.mn.us

Mississippi Arts Commission

Maria Zeringue
mzeringue@arts.ms.gov

Missouri Arts Council

Deborah A. Bailey
baileyda@missouri.edu

Missouri Arts Council

Lisa Higgins
HigginsLL@missouri.edu

Montana Arts Council

Tatiana Gant
tatiana.gant@mt.gov

Museum of International Folk Art

Aurelia Gomez
aurelia.gomez@state.nm.us

National Council for the Traditional Arts

Julia Olin
julia@ncta-usa.org

National Council for the Traditional Arts

Lora Bottinelli
contactlora@gmail.com

National Endowment for the Arts

Jennifer Hughes
hughesj@arts.gov

National Endowment for the Arts

Adam Kampe
kampea@arts.gov



National Endowment for the Arts

Bill Mansfield
mansfieldw@arts.gov

National Endowment for the Arts

Andi Mathis
mathisa@arts.gov

National Endowment for the Arts

Clifford Murphy
murphyc@arts.gov

National Endowment for the Arts

Cheryl T. Schiele
schielec@arts.gov

National Endowment for the Arts

Jennie Terman
termanj@arts.gov

National Endowment for the Humanities

Mary E. Downs
mdowns2000@aol.com

National Humanities Alliance

Stephen Kidd
skidd@nhalliance.org

Native Arts and Cultures Foundation

Lulani Arquette
lulani@nativeartsandcultures.org

Nebraska Folklife Network

Dylan Wall
dylanawall@gmail.com

Nevada Arts Council

Patricia Atkinson
patkinson@nevadaculture.org

Nevada Arts Council

Rebecca Snetselaar
rsnetselaar@nevadaculture.org

New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center

Laura Orleans
director@fishingheritagecenter.org

New Hampshire State Council on the Arts

Kayla Schweitzer
Kayla.Schweitzer@dncr.nh.gov

New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Kim Nguyen
Kim.Nguyen@sos.nj.gov

New Mexico Arts

Lilli Tichinin
Lilli.Tichinin@state.nm.us

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation

Don Marshall
dmarshall@jazzandheritage.org

New York Folklore Society

Ellen McHale
emchale@nyfolklore.org

New York State Council on the Arts

Robert Baron
robert.baron@arts.ny.gov

North Carolina Arts Council

Zoe Van Buren
zoe.vanburen@ncdcr.gov

North Carolina Folk Festival

Amy Grossmann
agrossmann@ncfestival.com

North Dakota Council on the Arts

Troyd Geist
tgeist@nd.gov

Old Town School of Folk Music

Bau Graves
bgraves@oldtownschool.org

Oregon Folklife Network

Riki Saltzman
riki@uoregon.edu

PA'I Foundation

Vicky Holt Takamine
vicky@paifoundation.org

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

Dana M. Payne
danpayne@pa.gov

Perkins Center for the Arts

Karen Abdul-Malik
kabdul@perkinscenter.org

Philadelphia Folklore Project

Selina Morales
smorales@folkloreproject.org

San Jose Taiko

Wisa Uemura
wisa@taiko.org

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Sabrina Lynn Motley
motleys@si.edu

Sones de Mexico Ensemble

Juan Dies
juan@sonesdemexico.com

South Arts

Teresa Hollingsworth
thollingsworth@southarts.org

South Carolina Arts Commission

Laura Marcus Green
lgreen@arts.sc.gov

South Dakota Arts Council

Josh Chrysler
chrysler.joshua@gmail.com

Southern Foodways Alliance

Sara Camp Milam
saracamp@southernfoodways.org

Southwest Folklife Alliance

Leia Maahs
swfolklife@gmail.com

State Historic Sites of North Carolina

Michelle Lanier
michelle.lanier@ncdcr.gov

Story Corps

Virginia Millington
vmillington@storycorps.org

Tennessee Arts Commission

Bradley Hanson
bradley.a.hanson@tn.gov

Tennessee Arts Commission

Langston Collin Wilkins PhD.
langston.wilkins@tn.gov

Texas Folklife

Charlie Lockwood
clockwood@texasfolklife.org

The Crooked Road

Jack Hinshelwood
jhinshelwood@thecrookedroad.org

Traditional Arts Indiana/Indiana University

Jon Kay
jkay@indiana.edu

University of Maryland

Maxwell Yamne
yamanemh@terpmail.umd.edu

Utah Division of Arts & Museums

Adrienne Decker
adriennedecker@utah.gov

West Virginia Humanities Council

Emily Hilliard
hilliard@wvhumanities.org

Western Folklife Center

Meg Glaser
mglaser@westernfolklife.org

Wisconsin Arts Board

Kaitlyn Berle
kberle@travelwisconsin.com

Women of Color Quilters Network

Dr. Carolyn L. Mazloomi
carolynmazloomi@gmail.com

