

Arts Council Update for Annual Report



For those who don't know us yet, The Arts Council is a sub-committee of the Washington Economic Development Committee and convened for the first time in February 2023.

Our Mission Statement: The Washington Arts Council is dedicated to increasing arts awareness and appreciation by supporting, promoting and connecting visual, performing, and literary artists, arts organizations and businesses. We celebrate the arts everyday by cultivating all types of creative exploration and artistic expression. We take pride in serving and connecting regional artists and the general public to information and opportunities that inspire a creative life. We promote, advise on, create, coordinate and encourage innovative programming, public art, artist services, inclusive youth programs, and community events and art-based initiatives. Cultural activities shall include, but not limited to, music, theater, dance, visual arts, architecture, history, literature and film. We aim to inspire a rich and vibrant arts community in Washington.

Each Councilor wrote an application and were appointed by the Board of Selectmen for an indefinite term. All meetings are public and Minutes and Agendas are posted on our Town's website page: <https://www.washingtonct.org/arts-council>.

Our current roster of Councilors includes the following multi-talented and generous-hearted volunteers:

- **Abdo Ballester**—Trustee Emeritus and Chairman of Special Events at the [Washington Arts Association](#) • Board Member, [the Cuban Artists Fund](#) (NYC) • Past President of the Santa Barbara, CA Chapter of the [National Society of Arts and Letters](#) • United Nations Affiliated (NYC)
- **Kent Burnham**—[Director of Theater Arts, The Frederick Gunn School](#) • Co-Founding Producing Artistic Director of Connecticut Theatre Exchange, www.cttheatrex.org • Professional director, actor, theatre-maker • Advocate of the Arts • Parent to arts-loving kid
- **Simon Holt**—[Executive Director of Washington Art Association](#) • [Founding & current Artistic Director & General Manager of Salt Marsh Opera \(Stonington, CT\)](#) • [Trustee &](#)

[Development Committee Chair of Community Music School in \(Centerbrook, CT\)](#) • [Board President of Ensemble Altera](#), one of America's leading choral groups based in (Johnston, RI) • [Director of Music at The First Congregational Church \(Old Lyme, CT\)](#) • [Director of The Anglican Singers \(New London, CT\)](#) • [Music Director of Cappella Cantorum \(Deep River, CT\)](#)

- **Fran Keilty**—Co-Owner, [The Hickory Stick Bookshop](#) • Vice-President, [Washington Business Association](#) • [Washington Economic Development Committee](#) • [Rotary Club of Washington](#)
- **Kirsten Leon**—Performing Arts professional for over 20 years as a Stage Manager, Theatrical Technician, and Arts Administrator with dance companies, theaters and festivals • [General Manager of Touring & Business, Pilobolus](#) • Connecticut resident since 2011
- **Tracy Liz Miller**—Co-Founding Producing Artistic Director of Connecticut Theatre Exchange, www.cttheatrex.org • [Full-time faculty in the University of Rhode Island Department of Theatre](#) • Professional theatre-maker, freelance actor, director, producer • Parent to arts-loving kid
- **Victoria C. Rowan** (Committee Chair)—Founder, www.ideasmyth.com, the Communications Collaboratory for Creatives • Event Curator, Writer, Editor • Trustee, [Stone Church and Meetinghouse](#) (New Preston) Co-Chair, [The Farmer's Table](#) (NW CT) • Programming Committee, [Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens](#) • Omnivorous Culture Junkie
- **Karen Silk**—Poet Laureate (Washington, CT) • Secretary, [Shakespeareance](#); Secretary, [Washington Environmental Council](#) • [Realtor, Sotheby's](#)
- Town Staff Facilitator, Michelle Gorra— [Economic and Community Development Coordinator](#) • Board Member, [Judy Black Memorial Park and Gardens](#) • Board Member, [Gunn Memorial Library & Museum](#) • Founding member of [SingOut! CT](#)

Here's what we did over our first four months of existence ending fiscal year 2023 (June 1st):

- Created our mission statement
- Published an summer arts calendar postcard distributed to everyone with a Washington mailing address
- Started manning a "Culture Kiosk" handing out fliers for arts events on Farmer's Market Saturday mornings (thanks, Washington Market for letting us park our sandwich board there!)
- Launched a Washington Arts Council logo contest
- Started the application process of getting the town of Washington officially recognized as a Cultural District
- Started planning our first fall Exhibit in Town Hall

We welcome you to our upcoming meetings and events and welcome your ideas and contributions!

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