

**Hong Kong Arts Development Council
International Arts Leadership Roundtable 2017**

Plenary 3: Exploring Boundaries of the Arts

Exploring the Creative Landscape

**Full transcript of speech by
Dr. Jane CHU, Chairman of National Endowment for the Arts [USA]**

The National Endowment for the Arts support the arts in so many different ways. We make financial grants to arts programme throughout the United States. And also to more than 450 translations of literature from 82 other countries and 69 languages. We made grants to attract students, and educators, and audience members, who could not buy their own tickets. And grants to deliver arts programme to communities across the nation from arts programme in music, dance, theater, visual arts, museums, opera, creative writing, poetry, design, to featuring some of the top artist in Jazz, and folk and traditional arts. We make financial grants for the arts in schools, and concert halls, on radio, television, digital. We make grants to people for the arts in disabilities. So, over the past 5 decades the National Endowment in Arts has made more than 147,000 grants, totaling 5 billion dollars in 16,000 communities across the United States.

But, today what I want to talk to you about is one of the ways that we make financial grants through a programme called [Creativity Connects](#) because we're beginning to see many people in the United States who include the arts in crossing the boundaries, in non-arts project.

For example in Gainesville Florida, for a moment you might think that you're in a wrong place if you're admitted to the hospital there. Because musician were hired there to stroll through the emergency trauma unit, performing soothing music. Patients in the Intensive Care Unit work with artist to draw and paint. Because this hospital in Gainseville Florida believes that there's a relationship between medicine and art that can provide a therapeutic qualities beyond just medicine alone. Surgeons noted that those arts patients who underwent a surgical procedure were calmer and they had a propensity to heal faster.

In Fargo, North Dakota, artists are working with the local government to create a public art space that is connected to a city storm water basin. In Houston, Texas, artist came into a very poor neighborhood and they painted, and they display their artwork. And they help transform run-down places to live, and they transform them into a clean-positive neighborhood where many low-income, single-mothers, and their children lives.

In the New York City at Carnegie Hall, artists work with teenage mother to compose lullaby for their newborn babies. This encourages a very strong bond of love when the parents sing their lullaby to the baby.

In New Orleans, Louisiana, people who walk into the Lusher School in New Orleans can find all 1600 students, kindergarten through 12 grade, all participating in the arts as the school curriculum is based upon integrating the arts into all subject in order to learn both art skills and engage in critical thinking. So, second-graders learn about place value in math by analysing Kandinski's paintings; third-graders all take violin lesson; fourth-grader through sixth-grader learn about the solar system through dance. By the time they reach high school, Lusher's School students choose an art disciplines that might be creative writing, dance, drama, music, media arts, visual arts. The results of this art based education programme are proving to be valuable to the Lusher school as their graduation rates are at 95%-98%, and that's much higher than the United States national average. Lusher graduates go on to become engineers, scientist, athletes, as well as artist. The students and the alumni all win awards. They exhibit their arts from Chicago to New York, all across the United States.

In Boston, Massachusetts, the Mayor of Boston wants the art to be connected to other parts people's lives, so he created a very high level cabinet member of his government to include the arts. So, to connect the art to housing for low-income resident, or in new construction, or in the police department, or the arts in the transportation department, or the arts in public health department.

In Los Angeles, California, movie actor, Tim Robbins brings theater performances to prison; where those who are incarcerated learn acting skill and they acted in play. At the same time, they cultivate skill in a non-violent communications through the arts in social skills, developing their own self-esteem, their own creativity. So, what it used to be that for every 10 people in the United States who were release from prison, 4 of them would commit another crime and return to prison. But now, the prison with the theater production has reduced that recidivism rate down to 0%. The prison guards also noted a kinder and a more humane interaction with those are incarcerated who are participated in theater productions.

In Tacoma, Washington, there's an arts programme to teach creation of sculpture made from glass to military soldiers who suffer from physical and psychological wound of war. This art-form of glass-blowing is so challenging, and risky, and complex, and requires such precision. This creative process keeps the soldiers focused and engaged, and the soldiers who have participated in this programme called *Hot Shop Heroes* have said that the programme has awaken their creativity, and that fosters their imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and healing.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there's an art organization that engages older adults with memory loss, by encouraging them to imagine stories, and poems, and songs, to create live performances, and visual, and sounds installation. So, artist and trained nursing home staff work with the resident in Wisconsin nursing homes to create and record original stories. The objective is to replace the pressure to have to remember which the patient cannot do. Instead, they get to replace it with the freedom to imagine through the arts. Residents are energized, and caregivers are amazed by the depth of the stories. Further, they noted that there's so much of substance and depth inside the resident than just a memory lost.

In Whitesburg, Kentucky, one of the economically poorest regions of the United States, and nearly 25% of all of people living there are in deep poverty. But an art organization there is creating movies, and videos, and its community radio station, and an art gallery, are teaching them how to make string instruments. And now, more than 1.5 Million dollars has come back to the local economy through the salaries and the arts.

In 12 military installations across the United States, the National Endowment for the Arts uses art therapist to work with our service members and veterans who have a traumatic brain injury condition. The results have been so effective because they get to create the arts programme. They can manage their stress better. Family members say that they are more experienced in having better relationship. And medical clinician says that the programmes are non-invasive to the patient.

So, I hope that these examples of the arts programme in the United States show our belief that the arts are valuable for everyone because we do not believe that the arts only belong to some people but not others. We're very committed to finding ways to every individual from child to grandparent, and everybody in between to have an opportunity to find their creative voice in the arts. Because the arts instill our lives with values, connection, creativity and innovation. So, we think everything counts. Beauty, art for art sake. And let us discover and appreciate the beauty of our lives. And we can have a very positive impact on our everyday lives.

I'm very grateful to the Hong Kong Art Development Council for giving me this opportunity to attend the meeting. And I want to congratulate you, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council for your good work also in helping the arts to thrive in Hong Kong. Thank you.

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