

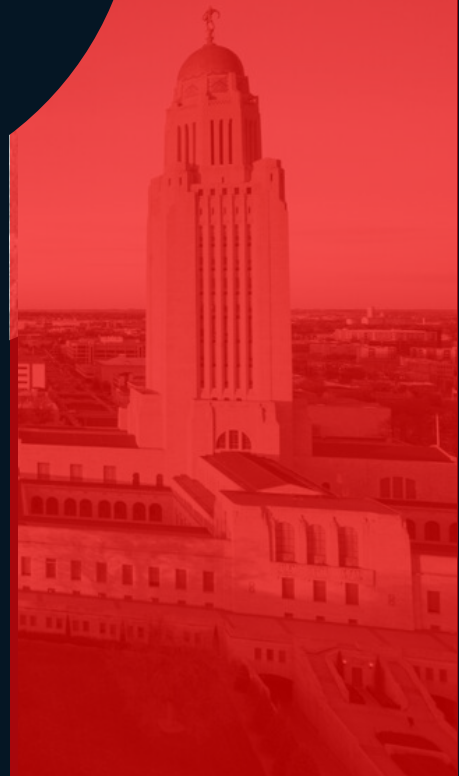
ANNUAL

REPORT

A circular inset image showing a rugged, rocky mountain peak in the background and a covered wagon in the foreground. The text "2021/2022" is overlaid in white on a dark circular background.

2021/
2022

**NEBRASKANS
FOR THE ARTS**



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Staff Transition

In August 2021, Nebraskans for the Arts (NFTA) announced Petra Wahlqvist as its new Executive Director, following the retirement of former ED Doug Zbylut. Interim ED Skyler Dykes was Petra's immediate predecessor, and handed Petra the reins in July and August.

As an arts and nonprofit professional with over 20 years experience, Petra is thrilled to deepen her role as full-time arts advocate and to help shine a light on the integral role the arts play in creating a brighter future for all Nebraskans. Petra is a former NFTA board member, the former Director of Education and Community Engagement at the Lied Center for Performing Arts, and the Co-Founder of Blixt Locally Grown, a Lincoln nonprofit dedicated to growing goodness with the arts.

We warmly welcome Petra, and thank Skyler for her awesome work in the interim!



NebraskaArts Awards 2021-2022

Each year, Nebraskans for the Arts honors two Nebraska school or school districts that have supported and encouraged achievement in the media arts, visual arts, dance, music, or theatre

We are happy to share photos from our two NebraskaARTS Award celebrations that took place in Spring 2022:

Central City Public Schools (March 25)

- Central City Public School hosted their award ceremony before the High School's performance of the musical *The Addams Family*. Speakers included the Central City Public Schools Superintendent, the Board of Education President, and NFTA board members.

Sheridan Elementary School (April 8)

- Sheridan Elementary School hosted their award ceremony in connection with their annual Art Fair. There was singing, dancing, a string quartet and lots of visual art works on display



Nebraska Arts Advocacy Day

The 2022 Nebraska Arts Advocacy Day took place on February 16th in a virtual format, due to the global pandemic. The keynote speaker was David Holland from Westaf, pictured below, who gave a federal update. Nebraska Arts Council's ED Suzanne Wise gave a presentation on how to navigate the Nebraska Legislature's website, and lots of great advocacy tips.

In Session 2, advocates were then able to connect with each other across the state, and plan their upcoming meetings with Senators to advocate for the arts and arts related bills.

Since Arts Advocacy Day, Nebraska arts advocates participated in 13 meetings with 14 State Senators!



2022 Legislative Session In Review

The 107th Legislature, 2nd regular session finished on April 20, 2022. The next regular session will start January 4, 2023.

Here are the results for the three bills for which NFTA constituents advocated:

- **LB 1014 - Shovel-Ready projects**

LB1014, which contains \$100 million in federal ARPA fund for Shovel-Ready capital projects, was signed into law on April 13, 2022.

- **LB927 - Additional funds for Nebraska Creative Districts**

LB927, which contains additional funds for certified Nebraska Creative Districts, was signed into law on April 19, 2022.

- **LB 325 - Art Therapy Practice Act**

Unfortunately, LB325 was not heard in this session. The plan is for it to be reintroduced in the next session.

Poetry Activated Competition 2022

In May 2022, Nebraskans for the Arts, in partnership with the Nebraska Arts Council, invited high school students (grades 9 – 12) across our state to participate in the second annual Nebraska Poetry Activated: A poetry-writing competition for students.

Poetry has the power to captivate, illuminate, and motivate. In reflection of this, Nebraskans for the Arts welcomed Nebraska students to compose and submit an original “advocacy poem” - a poem that brings to light an issue in their community, advocates for something about which they are passionate, or encourages progress in a specific area of society.

2022 Nebraska Poetry Activated competition winners:

1st place (prize: \$200)

- **Aliyah American Horse**, Gordon-Rushville High School | *Shed No Tears, Unci*

2nd place (prize: \$100)

- **Max Veasman**, Skutt Catholic High School | *... and they call her canvas*

3rd place (prize: \$50)

- **Sophia Doyle**, Callaway High School | *The Wounds We Have Caused*

Finalists:

- **Kenzie Mattox**, Lincoln Southwest High School | *Sixteen Going on Nineteen*
- **Devin Konicek**, Burwell High School | *The Unknown*

Poetry Activated judges:

- Jeevan Narney
- Zedeka Poindexter
- Ann Quinlan



Fun Fact

Did you know that the trophies that NFTA distributes are actually pieces of art?

In this report, we want to shine a light on the special trophies our winners receive!

NebraskARTS Award trophies

The glass art for the NebraskART awards is created by NE artist Peg Watkins, and the color of the glass is based on the winners' school colors. We attach a plaque with the award information to the base, and voila - a unique trophy for each NebraskARTS recipient!

Poetry Out Loud trophies

Although the Poetry Out Loud program is coordinated by Nebraska Arts Council, NFTA assists a little bit by providing the trophies for the winning students. We purchase glass globes created by local artists at the Omaha Hot Shops Art Center, and place them on wooden bases with plaques for unique awards.



KANEKO Exhibition

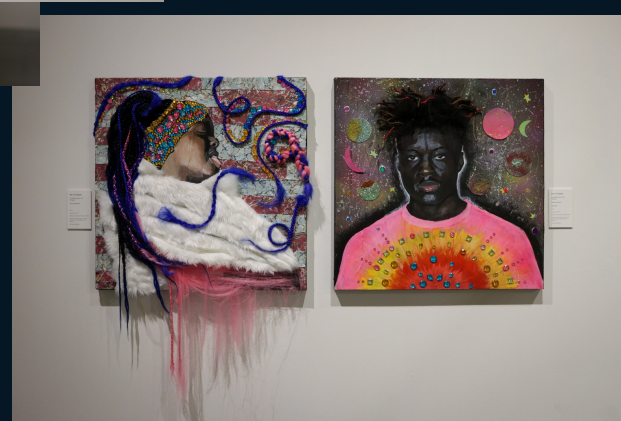
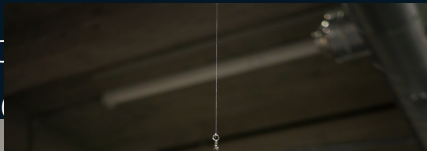
In February 2022, NFTA held our inaugural pop-up exhibition at KANEKO, featuring works by students from four of our recent NebraskaARTS Award winning schools and school districts:

- Central City Public Schools
- Sheridan Elementary School, LPS
- Blackburn Alternative Program, OPS
- McCool Junction Public School
-

The exhibition, which is part of our Black Cultural Month, ran from February 10-27, and was open to the public.

A huge thank you to the artists who made this possible, and to the students, teachers, and community members who supported the featured schools!

Thank you to the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts for allowing us to use their frames.



2022 Summer Intern

We are excited to introduce our summer intern, Jack Coghill.

Here is a little bit about Jack:

"I am from Omaha, Nebraska, and I am about to enter my senior year at Nebraska Wesleyan University. I am currently enrolled in the Acting B.F.A. program and have participated in several Wesleyan Theatre Company productions, both faculty-directed and student-directed. After graduation, I plan to pursue a career in voiceover. When I'm not performing or studying, I prefer to relax by playing video games, reading comics, and watching various television shows and films, particularly animated movies and shows, as I like to follow the careers of people I could potentially work with in the future. Over the course of this internship, I'm hoping to gain more exposure to the arts industry, expand my skill set, and strengthen my network by building as many connections as possible."

Welcome Jack!



Nebraska Arts Advocacy Network

If you are interested in being a part of arts advocacy efforts year-round, consider joining the Nebraska Arts Advocacy Network - a grassroots coalition of arts administrators, arts educators, artists, and arts patrons committed to advocating for arts and culture in Nebraska.

You can learn more, join the network, or request additional information by visiting the link below:

<https://www.nebraskansforthearts.org/nebraska-arts-advocacy-network/>



NFTA Board Members

Our board represents a cross-section of our state and has a passion for the arts and their broad impact on communities, schools, and individuals.

Board List

- President: Rex Barker, Music Educator | Omaha
- Secretary: Suzanne Wise, Nebraska Arts Council
- Treasurer: Jarod Ockander, David City Public Schools | David City
- Vice President of Arts Education: Danielle Laurion Omaha South High School/UNO | Omaha
- Vice President of Legislation and President-Elect: Jamie Ulmer, Community Players | Beatrice
- Vice President of Marketing: Chris Hochstetler, Stuhr Museum | Grand Island

At-Large Members

- Steve Barth, Crane River Theater | Kearney
- Francene Blythe-Lewis, Vision Maker Media | Lincoln
- Matthew Boring, Lied Center for Performing Arts | Lincoln
- Brent Comstock, BCom Solutions | Auburn/Lincoln
- Gary Davis, Music Educator | Kearney
- Jerome Dubas, Visual Art Educator | Hastings
- Jason Fischer, Surreal Media Lab | Omaha
- Darrel Huenergardt, Huenergardt Law Office | Lincoln
- Patsy Koch-Johns, Theatre Educator | Lincoln
- Daniel Martinez, Musician | Lincoln
- Ruth Meints, Omaha Conservatory of Music
- Vijay Olander, Dancer and Choreographer | Lincoln
- Betsye Paragas, Arts Administrator | Omaha
- Marty Skomal, Arts Administrator | Omaha
- Anne Sorensen-Wang, FNBO | Fremont
- Steve Tamayo, Bluebird Cultural Initiative | Omaha
- Bart Vargas, Visual Artist | Omaha
- Barbara Zach Lee, Lincoln Symphony Orchestra | Lincoln

Executive Director

Petra Wahlqvist

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SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to extend a huge thank you to the following organizations for their generous support!



A partnership of
National Endowment for the Arts and
Poetry Foundation

Join NFTA Today!

Your membership in Nebraskans for the Arts helps us reach out to policy makers and community leaders as we share the impact of the arts on our economy and the importance of arts education to our children. Memberships start as low as \$25/year.

For more information on our organization or how to get involved, visit our website and follows us on all our social media platforms:

Website: <https://www.nebraskansforthearts.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/nebraskansforthearts>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Neb4TheArts>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/neb4thearts/?hl=en>