2115 Mid-Hudson

Annual Report 2016







MESSAGE

2016 was a great year for Arts Mid-Hudson. After receiving feedback from members, artists, business leaders, and the public, Arts Mid-Hudson finalized a three-year strategic plan that will incorporate increased community engagement, funding/grant-making, and arts and cultural events across Dutchess, Ulster, and Orange Counties.

In Dutchess County, 2016 marked the year that Robert Kelly served as the first Dutchess County Poet Laureate. 2016 was also the 30th anniversary of establishing the Dutchess County Executive's Arts Awards, where people across Dutchess County are recognized through public nominations for their service to the arts and community. We are proud to honor the past, while recognizing the people that make a difference in Dutchess County today.

In Orange County, 2016 was the third year that Arts Mid-Hudson administered the New York State Council on the Arts regranting program. One grantee was Ophra Wolf, who received funding through this program for an individual artist commission, "The Dress Project," a multi-media exhibit telling the story of 20 Newburgh women and their memories around their special dress, featuring narrated interviews, performance, and an art installation.

In Ulster County, Arts Mid-Hudson served as the lead partner in organizing the launch of Art Walk Kingston, held in the fall with over 70 participating artists and drawing local visitors and tourists from New York City, Connecticut, and New Jersey. This event will continue annually to shine a light on local artists to promote sales, increase tourism, and a create a positive economic impact to the region.

The geography we serve covers 2,825 square miles, much of which is rural, creating a challenge for our limited staff to be on location in each community. Nonetheless, in 2017 we look forward to continue building on the relationships we have forged and establishing new ones through our various workshops, events, and outreach.

As the new year begins, we reflect on our mission to provide vision and leadership to support thriving and diverse arts in the Mid-Hudson Valley, and look ahead to serving our region long into the future.

(Grace) Angela Henry, Chair, Board of Directors

Linda Marston-Reid, Executive Director

FOLK ARTS PROGRAM

The Folk Arts Program continues to engage cultural, ethnic, and religious communities in the Mid-Hudson Valley through ethnographic documentation and collaborations to present educational, interactive cultural public programs. In addition, our staff folklorist provides technical assistance to grassroots and established community organizations working to enhance cross-cultural understanding.

Arts Mid-Hudson has been supporting folk arts research and programming since 1991, and since 1998 has hosted a staff folklorist whose principal tasks include documenting traditional forms of creative expression of occupational, ethnic, religious, cultural, and regional/place-specific communities in our area; and producing authentic, educational programs and events highlighting cultural traditions practiced in our region. Public programs presented in collaboration with community organizations aim to expand awareness of and appreciation for our region's rich cultural heritage.

The Folk Arts Program is funded primarily by New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and the County of Dutchess, with additional support this year from Stewart's Shops and the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley.

Front Cover: MICRO in Kingston (DEC Funded Program)



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & FUNDING

Arts Mid-Hudson awarded more than \$267,000 for arts programming in our region during 2016. This funding provided essential support to 83 organizations, artists, libraries, community groups and collectives offering a variety of arts and cultural activities throughout Dutchess, Orange and Ulster Counties. Arts Mid-Hudson's funding programs also provide technical assistance and professional development to artists and groups in our region. Sharpening our focus on accessibility to a wide variety of constituents, in 2016 we served over 200 people in grant information seminars, and saw an uptick of nearly 75% in our technical assistance calls/meetings from the previous year, confirming that this is a much needed and utilized service. All of this contributed to an overall increase of 18% in grants and awards from 2015.

Through the following grants and awards programs, Arts Mid-Hudson makes available county and state cultural dollars to every part of our region, making possible an extraordinary array of cultural activities.

The Decentralization
Program is a re-grant
program from NYSCA; the
primary goal is to support
emerging initiatives of
excellent artistic merit that
directly engage local
communities. Priority is
given to artists/organizations
proven to be effective and
fiscally responsible. In 2016
AMH awarded \$116,885 to 54
projects that served 20,000+
people in our region.

The Dutchess County
Partners in the Arts
program provides support
to organizations that enrich
the vibrant arts scene in
Dutchess County. In 2016,
14 organizations were
funded for programming
that reached residents and
tourists in Dutchess County.
Funding for this program
is provided by Dutchess
County Tourism.

The Dutchess County
Performing Arts Funding
was a special initiative in
2016, that provided support
for increased marketing and
small capital projects to four
performing arts venues/
organizations. Funding
provided by Dutchess County.

The Ulster County Cultural Services and Promotion Fund is designed to provide organizations with the resources to build capacity, grow long-term support and visibility, produce special projects and broaden public participation in the arts. In 2016, ten organizations received awards through this initiative. Funding provided by the Ulster County Legislature.

All funding decisions are made through a process of peer review with panels selected by Arts Mid-Hudson. Funding decisions are determined based on criteria such as: artistic merit, clarity and feasibility of proposal, locations served, and community benefit. In 2016, 51 volunteers reviewed over 120 applications, and made funding recommendations which were then approved by the Arts Mid-Hudson Board of Directors. *See all funded artists & programs at ArtsMidHudson.org

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT & ARTS SERVICES

2016 began with Robert Kelly, the first Dutchess County Poet Laureate presenting his poem, Do It Now, during the State of the County opening address. Kelly presented his poetry and participated with other poets in Dutchess County during the year. 2016 was the third year that Dutchess Handmade, a pop-up shop in our front gallery area, was stocked with locally-made artisan products for collecting and holiday sales, grossing \$20,241 in sales for the year. New services included a social media workshop held at Arts Mid-Hudson to increase ability for artists and arts organization to promote their work.

ADVOCACY & PUBLIC AWARENESS

Arts Mid-Hudson's work advocates for the arts across the region through branding and support for local marketing initiatives. Art Along the Hudson, a 10-city collaborative marketing initiative, began to work closely with Arts Mid-Hudson in the latter part of 2016 to utilize a mobile-friendly web application that will be operational in the first quarter of 2017. Art Walk Kingston was launched in 2016, a two-day event that brought visitors to Kingston for a weekend of art exhibits, open studios, and performances with over 70 artists participating. The Queen City Arts Initiative is an advocacy project working to revitalize Poughkeepsie, "The Queen City of the Hudson" through arts-driven partnerships with local artists, residents, and business owners with funding and support for culturally vital programs along the Main Street of Poughkeepsie. Significant events included Javier Moreno's "Air, Visual Concert for Nomads," funded in part by a project grant. This multimedia light projection on the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory was accompanied by a live musical performance, encouraging local residents to linger and enjoy an outdoors summer concert. It also brought residents together downtown and provided an opportunity to reimagine the area as a place to experience music and art programming. In Orange County, the Hudson Valley Jazz Festival was a funded effort that brought community together.

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* Key volunteer support by John Dinwiddie, Marilyn Dvozenja, Stela Nikolova, Gully Stanford

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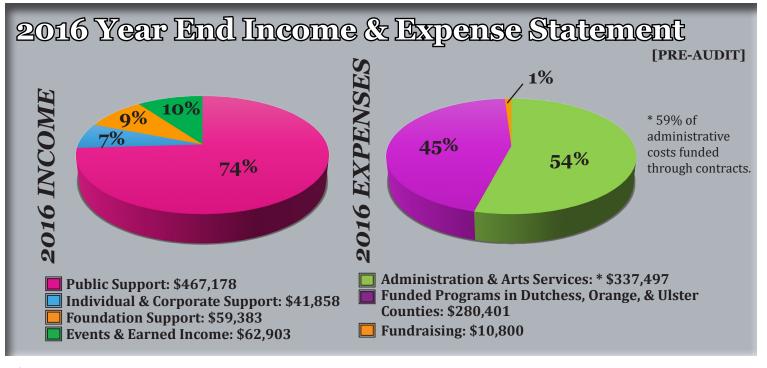
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Photo by MDT Photography from the Ulster County Cultural Services and Promotion Fund Reception

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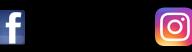
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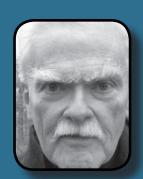
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2016 Dutchess County Poet Laureate

Robert Kelly



In the long years before the Civil War sheep were everywhere in Dutchess County. In fact, Dutchess was the sheep and wool center of America. But then the mills and factories moved away south, fleeing the growing power of new labor unions. Deep defeated South, cheap labor. Away the mills went and the sheep, obedient as ever, followed right after. **Leaving Dutchess County pretty empty** except for artists, who are people who don't have the sense to go south. What are artists anyway? They make new things — things that have never been known in the world before: pictures, texts, songs, sculptures. Each work of art — good or bad, boring or thrilling — is unique, never before, ever. Art is wonderful. And even better if the sheep came back.