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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1972-2022

Fifty Years in the Making...

Aiken Center for the Arts made it! Celebrating fifty years in the making as a nonprofit is a reflection of the creativity, perseverance, and character of incredible people in this community. Those people came in the form of volunteers, staff, artists, students, educators, board members, donors, city leaders, and friends—all of whom deserve our deepest thanks for their support! When you support the Arts you uplift our community and contribute to the collective vivacity of our daily lives. The seeds you have planted in Aiken Center for the Arts have established deep roots over the past 50 years and are forming the foundation for future growth – growth based on intentionality and with the community at heart.

Aiken Center for the Arts has a clear mission: to inspire and educate by providing unique visual and performing art experiences for all ages. Whether you enjoyed an exhibition or orchestra concert, attended our Aiken Antique Show, experimented with a new art medium or discovered a local work of art in our Gallery Shop, you brought the Aiken Center for the Arts to life. Our galleries and classrooms provide inspiration and learning, sure, but also the social connections that are at the core of our mission. Each year, more than 40,000 people visit our galleries or classrooms. Please walk slowly through the pages of our annual report as we reflect on the many ways art has been expressed and shared within our community this past year.

Aiken Center for the Arts is looking ahead and searching for diverse ways to deliver our mission. Making art more inclusive and accessible to everyone is a high priority for the organization moving forward, and the staff and board of directors are using this lens to make decisions in all areas.



Nancy Wilds started Aiken Center for the Arts 50 years ago. She is pictured above with the current executive director. Caroline Gwinn. Here at the Arts Center we strive to create a space where people can gather in the spirit of community, to enjoy one another, and to celebrate art as a shared experience.

Kindly,

Caroline Gwinn

Caroline Hor

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF**

Board of Directors FY 2021 - 2022

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Gisela Sirrenberg

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Nancy Kempf



# AIKEN CENTER FOR THE ARTS BY THE NUMBERS:

40,137 in person art experiences

13,312 virtual art experiences

47,111 website page views and 17,359 new users

6,324 Facebook and Instagram followers, 26.9% increase from last year





Making art more inclusive and accessible to everyone is a high priority for Aiken Center for the Arts, and the staff and board of directors are using this lens to make decisions in all areas.

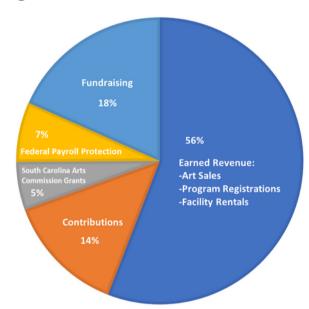


## FINANCIAL DATA

\$643,692 annual operating budget

#### How we earned it:

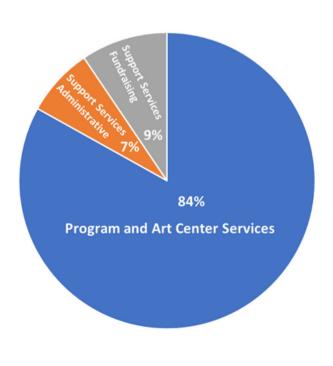
- Earned Revenue: Art Sales, Program Registrations, Facility Rentals
- Contributions
- South Carolina Arts
  Commission Grants
- Federal Payroll Protection
- Fundraising



## 84% of budget spent on programming

#### How we spent it:

- Program and Art Center Services
- Support Services Administrative
- Support Services Fundraising



## **EXHIBITING ARTISTS**

The ACA houses galleries on both the first and second floors of its building on Laurens Street. Our gallery exhibitions rotate every six weeks and each exhibition opens with a public reception featuring live music, meet and greet with the artist(s), and refreshments. Our exhibitions bring the work of both professional and emerging artists to our community. The Gallery Shop at Aiken Center for the Arts features unique, original artwork from 176+ local and regional artists in a wide array of mediums. Shop inventory changes month to month and reflects the dynamic creativity in our community.

## BY THE NUMBERS:

649 exhibiting artists

176 artists featured in Gallery Shop

26 original exhibitions in 3 galleries

\$134,517 paid to artists for commissions on art sales, a 78.8% increase



## **EMERGING ARTISTS**

#### **Creative Connectors Create: Rural SC**

From June 23rd to July 28th, the Aiken Center for the Arts presented the work of five rural artists in the main gallery exhibition, Creative Connectors Create: Rural SC. Throughout the year Aiken Center for the Arts is devoted to sharing the voices and works of diverse artists. With this exhibition, the Arts Center truly accomplishes both. This exhibition featured Creative Connectors Ernest Lee "The Chicken Man", Rajaskeher Y "Mr. Y", James Wilson, Robert Matheson, and Terrance Washington. While each artist has his own unique style, all are enlisted by the South Carolina Arts Commission as Creative Connectors to fuel local connection and discovery of creatives across Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties. Together, they are building a network and making names for themselves in rural communities like ours instead of leaving for larger, urban locales. However, networking is just the first step. Their voices come alive through community arts organizations like Aiken Center for the Arts – where artists and gallery viewers are brought together through experience and expression.

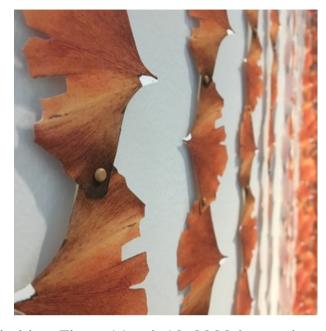






#### Refugium

Visiting artist Christina Laurel is a paper artist creating installations and two-dimensional art, all with a Japanese aesthetic. She exhibited a collection of her work in our main gallery alongside an art installation entitled "Refugium" from Feb 17 - Mar 25, 2022. Within the "Refugium" installation, her mission is to create an "exhale" moment, an oasis that offers a respite and refuge from our daily sensory overload. Suspended lace panels support a migrating pattern that freely rotates and responds to air movement. Perambulating – whether with shoes, walker or wheelchair – through the suspended cocoons and grounded totems of "Refugium," the viewer will become a part of the installation and a part of the art.





Stories From a Big Chair "Refugium" held on Thurs, March 10, 2022 focused on creating an "exhale" moment, an oasis that offers a respite and refuge from our daily sensory overload. Christina Laurel shared her thoughts from the big chair. "The late biodiversity scientist, E. O. Wilson, brought to my attention the fact that even butterfly species are endangered. The metaphorical leap to our own species is not far. Key to our survival is refuge within an oasis of calm, a balance to the sensory bombardment of our daily lives. "Refugium" is just such an oasis," explains Laurel. Sharing their individual experiences and thoughts on this topic alongside Christina were Shontavia Johnson, an award-winning lawyer, entrepreneur and academic; Dr. Cheryl Cummings, a licensed mental health professional and owner of Stairway Counseling Services, LLC and Future Generation Consulting & Training, LLC; and Robert Campbell, an artist and designer for conservation organizations worldwide and instructor at Aiken Center for the Arts.



#### STORIES FROM A BIG CHAIR

"Refugium" Thurs, March 10, 6-8pm

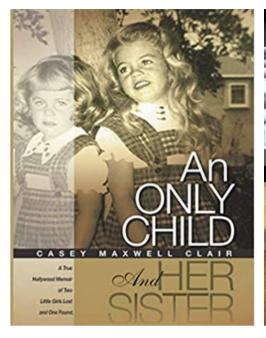








#### Hollywood Secrets







Hollywood came to Aiken! Casey Maxwell Clair and Christopher Beaumont, a husband and wife writing team from Los Angeles, shared their writing and lives with our community in October of 2021 at Aiken Center for the Arts.

The exhibition, "Hollywood Secrets" through the lives of Casey Maxwell Clair and Chris Beaumont, was featured in the Brooks Gallery {upstairs} from October 21st-December 3rd, 2021. This exhibit was curated from the memorabilia of Casey Maxwell Clair and Christopher Beaumont's families. As kids growing up in Hollywood, Casey and Chris knew their lives were different than the other kids. Sometimes in a good way—visiting a movie set, going to famous people's homes, getting an inside look at the "magic" of Hollywood. At other times, their lives were tragic and sad and all the glamour of Tinsel Town couldn't make it right again.

Casey shared her memoir, An Only Child and Her Sister, through an online book discussion series, as well as with disadvantaged teenagers from Helping Hands in Aiken. Casey's tale of a truly bizarre Hollywood life is both unique as well as universal. Descriptive scenes of pain and neglect live side by side with moments of humor, humility and triumph. Students read the book, got to know Casey, discussed the story, asked questions, and heard from Casey the message to never give up on your dreams.

Casey and Chris taught a Memoir Writing Workshop October 29th - 31st. This husband and wife writing team-authors of books, plays, tv sit-coms, dramas and feature-length films came to give students the tools needed to put their stories into words and build their own literary work, memory by memory.

Casey and Chris also joined us as guest speakers for Stories from a Big Chair on Thurs, October 28th. This evening was dedicated to "Reinventing," where new tricks are for dogs of any age. This session ran concurrent with the work of exhibiting artist Heather LaHaise in the main gallery exhibition "Every Dog Has Its Day" and "Hollywood Secrets" in Brooks Gallery. Storytellers for the evening included: Heather LaHaise, artist and dog rescue advocate; Casey Maxwell Clair and Christopher Beaumont; Cynthia English, CEO and founder of Global Scribes, a nonprofit organization which fosters global unity by connecting youth to build cultural understanding and worldwide community through the beauty and the power of the written word and creative expression; and Christopher Emanuel, Father Practitioner at Sky Is The Limit Foundation, which is a non-profit dedicated to educating, empowering and equipping willing fathers, families and professionals on non maternal paternity, parental rights, and adoption in relation to the Responsible Father Registry to combat adoption trafficking and promote ethical adoption practices.

#### Artist in Residence Daniel Maltz



In March of 2022, the Arts Center offered a Piano Masterclass to area piano students, taught by Viennabased fortepianist, Daniel Adam Maltz. He gave a masterclass on Classical era repertoire with a special emphasis put on issues of style and performance practice from a historical perspective. Pianists performed on a modern piano while being taught from the fortepiano.





Daniel Adam Maltz is devoted to performing on historic Viennese fortepianos — enabling modern audiences to experience the sound world of the Classical era — utilizing the vast range of tones and colors familiar to the composers. He brings his expertise in the Viennese sound, culture, philosophies, and practices of the era to his interpretations. He studied historical performance at the Royal Academy of Music in London and at Vienna's University for Music and Performing Arts.

Waterkolours Pop-up Exhibit





Aiken Center for the Arts held a Pop-Up Exhibition and Sale featuring Waterkolours Fine Art Gallery February 11-13. This exhibition featured fine art by notable African American artists.

About Waterkolours Fine Art Gallery: it is our mission to present the finest artworks by the premiere artists of our time combined with our ever-improving commitment to customer service. With a desire to present imagery that reflects our capacity for human greatness, it is our belief that culture is how a people celebrates & defines itself on the map of human history & world geography.







## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

## BY THE NUMBERS:

- 1,818 number of patrons who participated in artistic programs at the Arts Center
  - 216 offerings for arts experiences
    - 46 schools + community partners
    - 62 local and national teaching artists
  - 826 school students who participated in Good Morning Art or Author in Residence Program
- \$20,083

scholarships and outreach for youth and adult classes, Aiken Youth Orchestra and strings instruction, Joy in the Journey, Art and Music Camp for Special Needs, Author in Residencies and Good Morning Art.

#### Author in Residence Program with Dr. Walter Curry



ACA fosters community, equity and inclusion through a new outreach residency program with Aiken County Public Schools. This Author in Residence Program connects students in Aiken County Schools with Dr. Walter Curry, local author of "The Thompson Family: Untold Stories from The Past (1830-1960)" and "The Awakening: The Seawright-Ellison Family Saga, Vol. 1, A Narrative History". Combining education, creativity, and passion into student engagements, Dr. Curry shares real life ancestral stories in his book, which bring to life Aiken county's African-American history through the narratives of his own family. Discussions of the narratives in his books initiate conversation about the past to help students shape the narratives of their future.

Students at Schofield Middle School are reading his second book "The Awakening: The Seawright-Ellison Family Saga, Vol. 1, A Narrative History," and discussions focus on the sharecropping experiences of Dr. Curry's ancestors who lived in Barnwell and Aiken Counties. Dr. Curry points out that "this book is pertinent to Schofield students as it also incorporates Schofield Normal and Industrial Institute history with the story of Schofield graduate Floster L. Ellison Jr. who was a World War II veteran and co-founded the Palmetto State Barbers Association during the Civil Rights Movement in 1960." Dr. Curry talks about these narratives that are in the book and engages students by leading them through an exhibition of artifacts and images exploring sharecropping life of his ancestors in the book, showing that history is alive and an important source of connection to our communities.

Aiken Center for the Arts believes in the importance of this Author in Residence Program because it uniquely delivers our mission by sharing a local voice of untold stories from Aiken county's African American history, by inspiring area youth

through the personal story Dr. Curry shares of his journey to authorship alongside the educational enrichment. Dr. Curry's books provide as those narratives give real life examples of the concepts taught in the standards. Supporting local artists and authors through the Author in Residence Program celebrates rich human resources that are among us while opening opportunities for deeper understanding of the human experience.

This project is funded in part by SC Humanities, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The South Carolina Cotton Museum, and Mr. Jerry Morris author of the book "Barnwell County" have also contributed to this engagement.



Images are from a recent residency at Kennedy Middle School. Eighth grade social studies students engaged with Dr. Curry about his family, enriching their study of South Carolina history as they learned about actual people and their experiences in Aiken County from the Middle Passage to the Civil War

Five Day Painting Workshop with Booth Malone



Award-winning equestrian artist Booth Malone of Columbus, GA joined us for his annual oil painting workshop February 28 - March 4. Intermediate to advanced level oil painters worked with the subject matter of their choosing. This year's workshop placed an emphasis on composition and design, making their artwork visually coherent and "impactful".



Booth Malone has been painting horses, riders, and hounds (among other things), for more than thirty-five years. President of the American Academy of Equine Art from 2016 to 2020, he has been the Official Artist (OA) for the Virginia Gold Cup (1999); the Breeders' Cup (2006); Great Meadows Polo Tournament (2021); Montpelier Steeplechase (2019); Featured artist for the Masters of Foxhounds Association Centennial Exhibition (2007); Artist in Residence at Keeneland Race Track (2014). His work has appeared on the covers of Chronicle of the Horse, Keeneland, and numerous other equestrian-related magazines and publications. Burrland Road (2018) is in the permanent collection of the National Sporting Library & Museum (Middleburg, VA); Scene from a Spaghetti Western (1995) hangs in the lobby of the U.S. Pony Clubs Headquarters (Lexington, KY), Crossing the Potomac (2019) at the MFHA headquarters (Middleburg, VA). In 2022 his allegorical painting, Sláva Ukráyníi, earned the AAEA's Jean Bowman Memorial Award.

### Art and Music Camp for Special Needs



For the sixth consecutive year, the Aiken Center for the Arts has offered its Art and Music Camp for Special Needs. This program is designed to provide creative and artistic opportunities for individuals with traumatic brain injuries, cerebral palsy, and/or other physical and developmental disabilities. This year, with funding from The Gifting Tree Foundation, the Arts Center was able to expand the summer camps another week and also offer six one-day experiences throughout the year to provide continuity for participants. Camps are offered at no cost to participants and are designed to allow these individuals to have a successful, joyful art experience by providing an opportunity to participate in both visual arts and musical activities at their own level.

Camps are led SC Arts Access master teacher, Keith Tolen, who has extensive experience teaching art to those with disabilities. Keith is a visual artist from Columbia, SC and a former art educator of 35 years. He brings his unique gifts in support of this special population.





Our curriculum is designed with multi-disciplinary content that optimizes each student's language, attention, memory, executive function and motor control functions. For the individuals involved in the program, the benefits include the opportunity for a success-oriented creative outlet, social interaction with peers, and the positive self-esteem that comes from having their work displayed at the Art Center. These opportunities lead to the development of soft skills like communication, being part of a team or group, learning to make a decision, adaptability, leadership, kindness, independence, taking directions, empathy, and others. Our hope is that our community will continue to recognize the value in programs which impacts a special population on a deeper level.

## INTERNSHIPS AND WORK BASED EXPERIENCES



#### USCA Interns create take home art boxes

Over the past two years, ACA has worked with USCA interns each semester to produce take home art activity boxes. Created in response to the pandemic, we have produced 3 activity boxes with instructional videos for Aiken youth to enjoy at home.



#### **USCA Intern aides in the Special Needs Program**

Special Education major, Brooke Widener, has contributed to Aiken Center for the Arts and our community as an intern in our Art and Music special needs programming. Over the past two years Brooke has helped support and build community among this growing group of individuals experiencing art together.



## Vocational Rehabilitation Services



Partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, ACA has become a place for several individuals to have a paid work based experience. These individuals were introduced to the arts center through our Special Needs Camps and are now leaders in this program working as aides.

# MEMBERS, DONORS & SUPPORTERS



The success of Aiken Center for the Arts has depended on the generosity of our donors and volunteers over the years. We appreciate their long standing support and gratefully acknowledge their contributions.



GOLD





SILVER









**GOVERNMENT SUPPORT** 







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GIFTS OF \$10,000+

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H.G. Reynolds Company, Inc.

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Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC

**GIFTS UP TO \$7,000** 

Aiken Performing Arts Group Ms. Rebecca Cole

**GIFTS UP TO \$5,000** 

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The diversity in our arts and culture program enables us to be a place where residents of Aiken and the surrounding communities from all abilities, backgrounds, and interests have reason to be together. Through the generosity of Teresa and Fred Sturdivant, Aiken Center for the Arts is home to a beautiful Steinway Piano. We gratefully acknowledge this gift that will elevate the music that is shared in our galleries and broaden our community's access to such a wonderful instrument. Students of Aiken Music Teacher's Association regularly play performances at our openings (pictured above), the piano is also used for pop-up concerts throughout the year and is regularly played to accompany our Aiken Youth Orchestra performances.







The mission of Aiken Center for the Arts (ACA) is to inspire and educate by providing unique visual and performing art experiences for all ages.



AIKEN CENTER for the ARTS

Aiken Center for the Arts 122 Laurens St SW Aiken, SC 29801