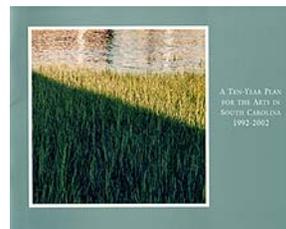


A Ten-Year Plan for the Arts in South Carolina 1992-2002

Client: South Carolina Arts Commission

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Content Sample

Preface

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state of South Carolina to join with private patrons and with institutions and professional organizations concerned with the arts to insure that the arts... will continue to grow and play an ever more significant part in the welfare and educational experiences of our citizens. It is further declared that all activities undertaken by the State in carrying out this policy shall be directed toward encouraging and assisting, rather than limiting, the freedom of artistic expression that is essential for the well-being of the arts."

- An Act to Create the South Carolina Arts Commission, 1967

Since accepting this legislative mandate in 1967, the South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC) has labored to increase the importance and presence of the arts in The Palmetto State. On the occasion of SCAC's silver anniversary, it is time to take stock of the past 25 years and also to look ahead 10 years — which takes us to the dawn of a new century. In this last decade of the old century, money for the arts is in short supply as the economy struggles to recover from the longest recession since World War II. This is a 10-year state arts plan. We do not expect all of our goals to be accomplished next week.

A 10-year, comprehensive plan to guide arts development in South Carolina from 1992 until 2002 has evolved from input from hundreds of South Carolinians over the past year. This broad input is the result of the South Carolina Arts Commission's determination to include as many constituents as possible in the long-range planning process.

The process used in formulating the new South Carolina State Arts Plan is called the "'Canvas' of the People," a unique, comprehensive statewide planning process designed to help the Arts Commission assess the needs of its constituents and set priorities for future programming. The 'Canvas' process involves surveys, public opinion polls, public hearings, constituent working groups, and task forces which examine the state's artistic and cultural needs, create visions, set priorities, and develop support for advancing the arts in South Carolina.

The 1992 'Canvas' used to formulate the new 10-year plan is the fourth 'Canvas' conducted by SCAC. Previous 'Canvases' were conducted in 1980, 1984, and 1987. Numerous priorities identified in those earlier 'canvases' are already realities, including the much-praised Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC) Plan, the Rural Arts Program, the Artist Development Program, the Challenge Grant Program, and developing South Carolina as a second home for Dan Wagoner and Dancers, an internationally-acclaimed modern dance company from New York.

The Arts Commission has also advocated and supported other significant initiatives that have advanced the arts in South Carolina, including establishing the Joint Legislative Committee on Cultural Affairs; reactivating the South Carolina Arts Foundation to stimulate business support of the arts; establishing the Spoleto Festival and the Governor's School for the Arts; establishing the South Carolina State Museum with its art exhibition space and also the South Carolina Film Office; creating performing art centers in Columbia and Greenville; and launching the Artistically Gifted and Talented Program under the Education Improvement Act and also the Target 2000 Arts Education grants.

Based on priorities identified in the 1987 'Canvas,' the Arts Commission began to build coalitions with other state agencies and organizations to help make priorities become realities. Over the past four years, three long-range plans have been developed as a result of these partnerships: (1) the Arts in the Basic Curriculum Program (ABC Plan) - to incorporate the arts as a basic component in the state's education curriculum; (2) Cultural Visions for Rural Communities — to develop a comprehensive action plan for cultural development in rural South Carolina; and (3) a Design Arts Plan — to design more livable communities, restore the landscape, create a "sense of place," and improve design excellence in South Carolina. A fourth project, to develop a folk arts initiative and preservation plan, is currently under way. These four plans (all part of the new 10-year plan) and their resulting coalitions created an environment of collaboration upon which the 1992 "'Canvas' of the People" was developed.

This latest 'Canvas' began with the gathering of preliminary research data through a needs assessment and an "environmental scan" of external factors that are expected to have an impact on the arts; a phone survey of the general public; questionnaires sent to arts organizations, artists, and community organizations, and one-on-one interviews with 30 business, government, education, and community leaders in the state.

This preliminary research was used as a basis for discussions at three public meetings held in August 1991 in Spartanburg, Florence, and Charleston. In addition, statewide public forums were held August 16th and 17th in Columbia to discuss 10 specific interest areas, namely, arts councils, cultural diversity, presenters, media arts, music, theatre, dance, visual arts, crafts, and literature.

Suggestions emanating from those sessions were passed onto 12 expert Working Groups formed to (1) assess the needs of the interest areas detailed above; (2) develop a vision of where these areas should be 10 years from now; and (3) design strategies to get us there. These working groups met for two (or occasionally, three) all-day sessions in September, October, and November 1991 to fulfill these charges.

In July 1991 (and again in December) a 30-person Steering Committee, composed of representatives of the 12 Working Groups and Members-at-Large, met to review the work of the SCAC staff and the Working Groups, and to decide which goals and objectives the SCAC would adopt for the next 10 years. In November 1991, SCAC staffers identified common themes, objectives, and strategies. A third session of the Steering Committee was held on January 8, 1992, to discuss strategies for implementing the objectives and approve a draft plan.

The nine members of the South Carolina Arts Commission met January 17, 1992, to review the draft plan. About 500 arts activists across the state also read the plan and were invited to comment on it. A sneak preview of the proposed plan was presented at the 5th Annual Statewide Conference of the Arts in Columbia on February 18 and 19, 1992.

The new 10-year South Carolina State Arts Plan is a comprehensive one that includes priorities (called "Objectives") and ways of making those objectives happen (called "Strategies"). The Goals, Objectives, and Strategies of the plan will serve as the foundation for the development of SCAC's Annual Work Plan, Arts Programs, State Appropriations, Requests and Grant Proposals. The SCAC will monitor the plan annually with assistance from organizations and individuals who helped formulate the plan.

The South Carolina Arts Commission invites these partners -- federal, state, and local government agencies, artists, arts organizations, businesses, schools, and individuals -- to join us to make the plan happen. This is truly an arts plan for everyone, evolving from input from everyone.

Vision for the Arts in South Carolina in the 21st Century

"Strategic planning is worthless — unless there is first a strategic vision."

-John Naisbitt, Megatrends

As management expert John Naisbitt suggests, all good plans are based on worthwhile visions. Our new 10-year state arts plan is based on a vision created by the South Carolinians who participated in the Arts Commission's most recent "'Canvas' of the People."

The word "vision" sometimes suggests a dream or fantasy. But that is not the case here. The Arts Commission's previous long-range plans for the arts and culture in South Carolina were also based on visions — many of which have become realities.

So what is the vision of where the arts and culture should be in South Carolina 10 years from now? What we do in the next decade lays the groundwork for the new century dawning just eight years from now.

In the next century, we envision a state where the arts are an essential part of everyday life, where the arts are considered a basic component of education, where South Carolinians recognize and honor the entire range of cultural and artistic expression, where the level of artistic and cultural activities is a major factor in whether a new company locates here.

In the next century, we envision a state where the arts are fully integrated into society, including economic development strategies, health and social services, education, tourism, and government; where state and local economic development agencies understand the importance of the arts and culture in attracting investment to their communities; where a wide range of people have the necessary skills to obtain funding for a variety of projects.

In the next century, we envision a state where the artist is universally recognized as an integral part of society; where artistic quality is taken for granted; where artists feel a sense of community, rather than isolation; where a stable social and economic environment exists for the arts; where comprehensive arts legislation is in place that gives adequate protection to this constituency.

In the next century, we envision a state where arts organizations are culturally and ethnically representative of the state; where cultural opportunities are available to all South Carolinians - whether they live in large cities or tiny hamlets; where all students have equal exposure to the arts - and equal opportunity to participate.

And in the next century, we envision a state where audiences appreciate new, emerging cultural forms; where the public is excited about new works in all cultural disciplines; where children's contributions to the arts community are recognized and included in the community of artists; where a vital, risk-taking arts community lives productively and produces its fruits without censorship or political pressure; where South Carolina is a national leader in arts education, resulting in a higher quality of education for all students; and where the South Carolina Arts Commission is an even stronger public voice for the advancement of the arts in the state.

By means of the "Canvas" process, over 500 South Carolinians have crafted this vision that was endorsed, in turn, by the South Carolina Arts Commission. These South Carolinians believe that the arts and culture are a vital part of our daily lives, and so they will collaborate - individually and organizationally - to make this vision happen. Citizens, government, business, education, artists, arts organizations: all will work as one, and

eventually, this vision will become reality - as have earlier visions. For as Henry James wrote in 1915: "It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance...and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process."