

Erie Arts & Culture IMPACT REPORT

Patrick Fisher
Executive Director



Q4 | DEC 2020

Erie Arts & Culture is committed to improving the lives of our region's residents. We have worked diligently in 2020 to weave culture and creativity into everyday life in our community so that the arts and humanities are recognized as integral to the lives of all people and essential to healthy, vibrant, and equitable communities across our region. The work of our agency is guided by a board-approved strategic plan with input derived from community stakeholders, strategic partners, cultural non-profits, and individual artists, all of whom have a stake in advancing the arts and humanities as indispensable to transforming lives, communities, workplaces, and methods of learning in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

The urgency of this vision is more apparent now than ever before. A global pandemic, heightened focus on social justice and racial equity, economic uncertainty, and a contentious election cycle have impacted our community and devastated artists, non-profit cultural organizations, for-profit creative businesses, and educational systems. In 2020, Erie Arts & Culture continued our commitment and planned work to advance our mission, while also pivoting and taking on new, urgent work in response to the needs that arose in our community as a result of the unique challenges presented this year.

As we enter 2021, Erie Arts & Culture will continue to work with our stakeholders and allies to ensure that we are squarely focused on manifesting a sustainable and equitable pathway forward for the cultural and creative sectors. We firmly believe in integrating the work of our sector into economic recovery and community development plans. We also know and will continue to advocate for our sector to be more representative of the diversity found in our community, which means investing in historically under-resourced populations. Working together, we can imagine a more equitable and stronger supported sector going forward.

On behalf of the staff and Board of Erie Arts & Culture, we appreciate your support and invite you to be a part of our mission in 2021. One of the easiest ways to support our work is by making an unrestricted donation to our agency. Your unrestricted gift will grant us the ability to be nimble and respond to community needs as necessary. I also welcome a conversation with you if you have questions about any of our programs and initiatives. You can reach me directly at patrick@erieartsandculture.org if you have any questions or you'd like to discuss making a contribution to Erie Arts & Culture.

Best Regards,

Patrick Fisher
Executive Director



Jade Mitchell

Creative Director

Quarter 4 Stats:

We promoted the work of over **35** artists for Artists Sunday. The sale brought in **\$2735** in profit directly to the artists.

We hosted **8** digital events on Facebook and Zoom.

Through our social media and blog, we promoted the work of over **100** artists.

The Variety Show has reached over **3,100** viewers since its airing on December 4.

We promoted over **30** paid opportunities for artists.

2020 : A year of increased digital media efforts and empathy

Digital media played a crucial role in our success as an agency in 2020. With in-person events limited or suspended, this year challenged us to adapt and implement new ways of advancing our mission and continuing our work in service to the community. As a result, our digital programming and marketing ramped up to hyper speed.

Besides leveraging technology and adapting swiftly, our success in 2020 was also owed to our team's blend of soft-skills and heart. We were forced into physical separation and not able to work together in an office environment. Our workflow changed, but our capacity for empathy and receptivity grew. With each new emotionally-exhausting news headline, we asked each other and our community "what support do you need?"

Some of the ways we responded to the needs of our community with digital solutions include;

Artists Sunday
PRO Network Webinars
End of Year Variety Show
Emergency Financial Assistance Fund
Critical Conversations
Paper Clips

We also used digital platforms to tell more stories about our sector and our artists.

As I near my one year anniversary with Erie Arts & Culture, I am proud of the work we've done on and off screen in 2020 and I am excited for the year ahead.

Sincerely,
Jade Mitchell

VIRTUAL
EVENT

Coming up next:



Paper Clips

Please join Abdullah Washington and Hayes Moses for the second installment of Paper Clips.

The first session starts on Jan 22.



Chanel Cook

Director of Programs and
Community Relations

2020 was tumultuous. It was a collection of unforeseen experiences that will not soon fade from memory. We witnessed a global pandemic, social and political unrest, and the loss of lives and jobs. Words and phrases such as pivot, transition, out of an abundance of caution, and unprecedented times have impacted our daily lives and all industries - the cultural and creative sectors included. Without question, it was a tough year. Although it was not exactly what I predicted as my first year with Erie Arts & Culture, the experience was invaluable and humbling. I am grateful for the steadfast will and resolve of our programming team, teaching artists, and grantees who ensured that the arts remained impactful and meaningful during a time of crisis.

All the best,
Chanel Cook

Arts in Education

Jennifer Dennehy - Rostered Teaching Artist

The implementation of arts education in school settings can help spark creativity in students and teachers. It aids in the development of personality and soft skills. Our Arts in Education teaching artist residency program has shown that children performing or participating in the arts are able to tap into their imaginative skills and improve performance in other areas of study. In 2020, many of our residency programs adapted to virtual platforms to keep the arts embedded in education.

Rostered Teaching artist Jennifer Dennehy offered both asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities to sixty-eight students each week at McKean Elementary. Her lessons incorporated and addressed language arts, social studies, and physical education standards.

Each week, students received a lesson pre-recorded by Jennifer. Students followed Jennifer's instruction and were then prompted to create, film, and submit an original dance composition to their teacher.

In addition to the pre-recorded videos, Jennifer conducted two Zoom classes in real time on Thursdays. A link to the recordings of the videos were provided to those students who could not attend the live classes. The links were made available for one week, allowing students to participate in the lesson at a time that was convenient for them.

Jennifer also worked with students in the autistic support program. With inclusivity in mind, she sent lessons to both the teachers and students' parents in advance of the Wednesday classes so lessons could be proactively modified, if necessary.

One goal of Jennifer's residency was to increase the students' understanding of cultural diversity, which was accomplished through teaching and learning folk dances from different cultures. In addition to learning the folk dances, students also learned about the country that the dance was from. They then performed the cultural dances at a culminating event at the conclusion of the residency, which was also held virtually.

Another goal was to work on kindness, empathy, and community building. One way this was accomplished was through discussing the roles, feelings, and situations that lead to bullying. After which, students were prompted to create dances that represented empathy.

The culminating event was held via Zoom in late November and offered morning and evening times. Students who submitted videos were featured and all students collectively performed two folk dances they learned as a group: Maim Maim, native to Israel, and Jarabe Tapatio, native to Mexico.



2021 Artist Fellows

In 2016, Erie Arts & Culture made a commitment to make a greater investment in the artists living and working in Erie County by establishing the annual Artist Fellowship program. The agency saw a need to provide artists with funding, specifically unrestricted funding, that could be used by artists to delve deeper into their creative processes and assist them in their pursuit of artistic development and growth.

In 2019, Erie Arts & Culture began awarding professional development grants to artists across three categories; emerging, mid-career, and established. Each category provided cash awards of \$2000, \$3500, and \$5500 respectively. Each year, applicants are reviewed by an independent panel of subject matter experts from outside of Erie County to reduce conflicts of interest. This year, applicants included a wide array of visual, performing, and literary artists, and panel members met virtually from Pennsylvania, Florida, and California.

AWARD RECIPIENTS THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

Emerging Artist - \$2,000

Corinne Justine

Creating art, specifically choreographing dance, has long been a part of Corinne Justine's life. From a young age, music and various inspirations, like love and self motivation, have led her to create projects that she will forever hold dear. For Corinne, sharing movement signifies the realism of life and how everything is interconnected. Being an entertainer and creator has shown Corinne that others rely on art and entertainment to enrich life, connect with one another, or reflect on personal or shared experiences.

Mid-Career Artist - \$3,500

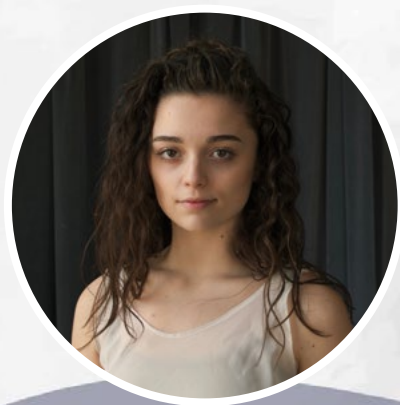
Ashley Pastore

Creating artwork is a necessity for Ashley Pastore. As a printmaker and new media artist, she believes that artwork functions as an alternative language, through the representation of objects and imagery. Ashley encourages different perspectives and knows that creative thinking is essential for the development of life. She specifically enjoys the re-presentation of everyday objects, including discarded items. Ashley's work portrays themes that can be translated through most people's lives, bringing us together in a culture that so strongly encourages separation.

Established Artist - \$5,500

Fredy Huaman Mallqui

Fredy Huaman Mallqui is a sculptor, classical woodcarver, and conservator of historical wooden objects and architectural elements. He is also a teacher of classical wood carving. As a full-time artist, Fredy seeks to achieve artistic excellence, recognition, and share his knowledge with others. Last year, Fredy worked with artist Alex Anthes, through Erie Arts & Culture's Creating with Community neighborhood residency program. Additionally in 2020, Fredy was honored with an award in the Erie Art Museum's annual Spring Show and commissioned for a public art sculpture by the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network.





Kristen Weibel recently connected with Dr. Gary Viebranz, Chair of Arts Administration, Penn State Behrend regarding the Logan Series: Music at Noon. Below, he describes the experience of project implementation during the pandemic.

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact of steps taken to mitigate its spread is something that the entire arts community had to adjust to during 2020. Because of our calendar structure and no summer programming, The Logan Series was fortunate in that half of our Music at Noon project had been completed by early March, a little more than a week before restrictions and closures were put into place. Our fall programming had been announced just when it became obvious that everything had to be put on hold and an alternate plan had to be developed, immediately.

We delayed the cancellation of our scheduled fall events as long as we could, while working to explore substitute programs that could creatively connect with our audiences through a remote platform. It wasn't too long afterwards that the Arts Across America project with the Boston Brass took shape. They had a goal of delivering a live performance from the Ramsdell Theater in Michigan to a presenting organization in each of the fifty states. Their mid-October date fit our schedule ideally and we were excited to partner with them as their Pennsylvania representative.

The Boston Brass was an ideal group to team with because of our shared commitments to arts in education. In addition to their live performance, they created additional video content that targeted student audiences. This content was made available to our partners in the schools.

An important part of the Logan Series' mission is to demystify the concert experience, and the concert experience had become more of a mystery than anyone had ever anticipated. A lot of discussion took place behind the scenes in preparation for the event. The delivery of a real time live performance over the internet created plenty of challenges. But, it also presented the opportunity for new experiences, especially related to community outreach.

The Boston Brass's live performance was originally scheduled to last an hour, but Covid-related mandates required a 15 minute intermission after the first half-hour. That break provided an unusual opportunity, as our live performances don't include a break. We were able to set up an online discussion board for students that were "attending" the performance, which allowed them to share their observations and raise questions related to the group and the performance. The depth of interaction was impressive and much greater than we anticipated. It allowed our audience to experience the second half of the performance with increased awareness and sensitivity. It also fueled a deeper follow up discussion at the conclusion of the performance. As we move forward, we'll consider how we might retain this type of discussion activity as part of the Music at Noon experience.

As we move into 2021, plans are underway to resume in person activities in September. We are solidifying plans to present a pair of online concerts this spring, similar to that of last year. We're also developing a backup plan to offer a live performance in April if the easing of current restrictions makes that a possibility.



Two Iraqi artists beautified New American owned markets on Erie's east side through a Building Bridges grant from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. Ali Alnashmi created a colorful painting depicting women from around the world for the large windows at the UK Supermarket, located at 1105 Parade Street. Ali explains, "I mix two ideas in this piece. I introduce women, because they give life to kids, they protect the family, they give love. The second idea is to make a connection between African, Arab, and Indian cultures. This also makes a relationship between them and the Erie community." The store owner, Pradip Upreti, also a resettled refugee, came from Bhutan. He speaks highly of Ali's painting, "This art is amazing. It is a wall of cultures. I like that anyone can learn something from this mural about Erie's cultures."

The second facade project was completed by Ghadah Hussien, also an artist originally from Iraq. She created a graphic pastiche of architecture and cultural objects from Syria, Iraq, and Erie. She says, "Almadina is the Arabic word for the city. I want to show our idea of home is a mix of where we came from and Erie." The owner, Mohamed Alnari, also from Iraq, is delighted with Ghadah's work, "We are not just a store. We are a place of culture. This mural is not just beautiful, it is important. The outside of the building now reflects what we have on the inside."

In addition to these new installations of public art, the Doris Duke grant also helped underwrite two episodes of Stay Home, Jam Together, the free online music series organized by the Erie Downtown Partnership. One episode features Mustafa Albalkhi on oud, Belal Aldehnah on doumbek, and Nibal Ab El Karim on vocals. The trio performs love songs from Syria, Palestine, and Egypt with intricate melodies and driving rhythms. The other episode features Mensura Berberovic, a ballad singer from Bosnia whose ancient songs demonstrate timeless bonds of family. Berberovic says, "My songs teach people that love is stronger than hate. To share my culture with this program is a dream come true." The episodes will air in the coming months.





The CHROMA Guild advances opportunities and access to resources for creative and cultural professionals of color in Northwestern Pennsylvania. The regional network builds both individual and organizational capacity by expanding equity and inclusion within the area's cultural and creative sector.

Annually, the CHROMA Guild elects Officers to serve in leadership roles. Officers help set strategic priorities and advance the work of the guild. Officers for 2021 include:

2021 OFFICERS

President:

Leslie C. Sotomayor II

Vice President:

Emidalys Serrano

Treasurer:

Esther Ortiz

Secretary:

Antonio Howard

VP of Advocacy:

Jermaine Beason

VP of Continuing Education:

Armando Reyes

VP of Networking:

Hayes Moses

VP of Advancing Opportunities:

Lourdes Jasso



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Sector Training Workshops

As Erie Arts & Culture advances its commitment to cultural equity and to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion, we invite executives of up to 25 non-profit cultural organizations in Northwestern Pennsylvania to participate in virtual training facilitated by Dr. Rhonda Matthews intended to revisit, refresh and establish a clear understanding of terms, concepts, principles, and practices related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusions – specific to the cultural sector. At the conclusion of the training, it is our objective to develop a collaborative action plan to advance DEI within the non-profit cultural sector in Northwestern Pennsylvania. Registration details will be posted on our blog at erieartsandculture.org/blog.

2021 WORKSHOP DATES

Session 1:

Saturday, February 6, 2021 | 10 AM - 1 PM

Session 2:

Saturday, February 20, 2021 | 10 AM - 1 PM

Session 3:

Saturday, March 6, 2021 | 10 AM - 1 PM

This training is generously funded by Highmark Health.



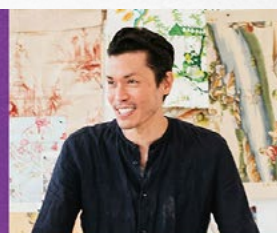
Brittany Watkins

Residency Recap | December 2020

Brittany M. Watkins is an interdisciplinary, conceptual artist based in the Southern United States. Her practice investigates the relationship between internal experience and external presentation rendered through a lens of social critique.

After spending her first twenty-five years in Carrollton, GA, Watkins relocated to attend graduate school at Florida State University. She has since received acclaim for her video-performance and installation work in the U.S. and abroad, having exhibited in venues ranging from international art fairs and museums to experimental, artist-run-spaces.

Brittany used her time in residence exploring the effects the pandemic is having on the human body and psyche, particularly the notions of isolation and personal health. She created an immersive installation in a blighted property in Erie's historic east side, which the Bayfront East Side Taskforce is slated to redevelop. To create the installation, Brittany scavenged abandoned and discarded objects. Erie-based artist Alex Staley served as Brittany's assistant on the project. The installation also served as a set for a video project, which was filmed using local talent.



2021 Visiting Artist Residencies



LONG ROAD PROJECTS

Erie Arts & Culture





Thank you for your generosity.



CELEBRATING
\$794,934
IN FUNDS RAISED



Our 2020 United Arts Fund surpassed its campaign goal of \$500,00!

The campaign total, which includes a \$125,000 contribution from Erie Insurance, totals \$794,934.48. This total was collaboratively raised between Erie Arts & Culture and its five Cultural Service Partners, which includes the Erie Philharmonic, the Erie Playhouse, the expERIENCE Children's Museum, the Flagship Niagara, and the Hagen History Center.

We also thank the corporate sponsors of the 2020 End of Year Variety Show and everyone who tuned in or participated.

The Discovery Trail is complete.

Look around the streets of Erie and you may discover some new artwork. Artists Jackie Quigley, Nick Warren, Brigette Davitt, and Scott Gladd created artwork that was installed on utility boxes - 24 sites in total - along State Street, Parade Street, French Street, Holland Street, and East 26th Street.



24
total boxes



SIX REASONS TO SUPPORT THE ARTS IN 2021

Advancing opportunities
for self actualization through
lifelong learning

Increase the happiness,
health, and wellbeing of our
communities

Stimulate innovation through
design thinking and creative
problem solving

Animate our neighborhoods
and commercial districts

Improve our economic
prosperity

Elevate our reputation
for creative and cultural
excellence on a national level

Thank you to our corporate sponsors

who supported our programs and initiatives
in the 4th quarter of 2020.



Lucky's Food Mart
Lucky's Speed
Check Gas Station