

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE TO JULY 14 FROM PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED JUNE 25 DATE.

CONTACT:

Marie Jacinto,
HAA Director of Communications
marie@haatx.com
713.581.6126 direct
832.628.9010 mobile

Carey Kirkpatrick
Principal, The CKP Group
carey@theckpgroup.com
832-453-4511 cell

**EXPERTS ON LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES FROM ACROSS THE U.S.
JOIN HOUSTON ARTS ALLIANCE FOR
A NATIONAL CONVERSATION:
HOW LOCAL ARTS COMMUNITIES ORGANIZE**

Experts from Chicago, Los Angeles, Sacramento and National Endowment for the Arts give perspective on the various ways in which U.S. cities organize and advance the arts

HOUSTON, TX — Experts in the field of Local Arts Agencies (LAA/LAAs) from across the country will join Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) for a round-table discussion entitled ***A National Conversation: How Local Arts Communities Organize*** on Tuesday, July 14, from 2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m. in the Founders Club at The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby Street. Moderated by HAA President + CEO **Jonathon Glus**, the conversation will focus on how other American cities organize themselves through the arts, the form and function of their LAA models, and trends across the country.

The distinguished experts participating in the round-table conversation are **Michael Killoren**, Director of Local Arts Agencies & Challenge America for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); **Olga Garay-English**, arts consultant and former Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs; **Jody Ulich**, Convention & Cultural Services Director, City of Sacramento and previous President of Fort Worth Arts Council; and **Matthew J. Nielson**, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Cultural Planning and Operations Division for the City of Chicago.

The afternoon will kick off with the **round-table discussion at 2:30 p.m.** followed by a **reception at 4 p.m.** The event is free and open to the public. RSVPs are strongly recommended. For more information, visit <http://houstonartsalliance.com/engagement/nationalconversation/>.

America's cities organize themselves in a variety of ways to support and advance the arts, culture and creative sectors. Often called the arts ecosystem, the local field may include nonprofit arts/cultural organizations, individual artists, cultural tourism programs, preservation conservancies, community and educational institutions, advocacy organizations, arts education initiatives, professional associations such as art dealers and artist unions and various forms of discipline-specific service organizations. These systems grow organically, and often in tandem with LAAs. These cultural intermediaries, LAAs, are created in various structures and have varying roles in their respective cities, shaped to the needs of their community.

More

A National Conversation: How Local Arts Communities Organize

“Every community organizes itself through the arts in a unique, organic fashion,” stated Glus. “Each city is different. We look forward to hearing from these national experts on trends in local arts agencies and the role they play in their communities.”

“I am honored to bring a national perspective to this conversation, and I applaud Houston for having this dialogue,” said Killoren. “Local arts agencies are like snowflakes: no two are alike.”

As defined by the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA), Local Arts Agencies “provide a wide range of programs and services to help support and enable arts and culture at the local level. LAAs are intermediaries, serving artists and arts organizations, local residents, visitors and other partners. No two LAAs are alike – whether they serve a single village or town, a large city, county, or a multi-county region. Some LAAs are departments of local government, others are nonprofit organizations, and still others are hybrids of the two.” The NEA goes on to describe characteristics of LAAs, explaining that “LAAs may present and/or produce arts programming, commission and manage public art, administer grant programs, provide technical assistance to artists and arts organizations, and guide cultural planning efforts. Still others may own, manage, and/or operate cultural facilities and be actively engaged in community development, and partner with entities in tourism, social services, public education, housing, economic development, and public safety. All strive to enhance the quality of life in their communities by working to increase public access to the arts.”

Americans for the Arts presents a similar description of LAAs, noting that “there are more than 5,000 LAAs in the U.S.: 75% are private nonprofit organizations; 25% are agencies of city or county government. LAA budgets range from all-volunteer to over \$150 million.”

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EVENT DETAILS: A National Conversation: How Local Arts Communities Organize

Tuesday, July 14 (2:30 p.m.)

Location: Founders Club, The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts
800 Bagby Street, Houston TX 77002

Seating: The event is free and open to the public. RSVPs are strongly recommended

TIMELINE: 2:30 p.m. – Round-table discussion

4:00 p.m. – Reception

PRESENTER: Houston Arts Alliance; **Moderator - HAA President + CEO Jonathon Glus**

PANEL PARTICIPANTS:

- **Olga Garay-English** – Arts Consultant and former Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
- **Michael Killoren** – Local Arts Agencies & Challenge America Director, National Endowment for the Arts
- **Matthew J. Nielson** – Deputy Commissioner, City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events - Cultural Planning and Operations Division
- **Jody Ulich** – Convention & Cultural Services Director, City of Sacramento

About Houston Arts Alliance

Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) is a nonprofit, public-private initiative that invests in Houston's arts and cultural sector, advances Houston's reputation as an arts and culture destination, and works to elevate the quality of life for all Houstonians through arts and culture. As the city's designated local arts agency, HAA provides programs and services for the arts and cultural sector and awards approximately 225 grants annually to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists. The Alliance is the custodian of the city's art collection; takes permanent and temporary art to Houston's public spaces; presents free Folklife + Traditional Arts programming; nurtures up-and-coming arts organizations through its capacity building programs; connects the business community with the arts; convenes the field as necessary, and provides the latest information and research on cultural policy, economic development and Houston's folklife.

HAA's primary partner is the City of Houston. Approximately 55% of HAA's budget comes from Hotel Occupancy Tax and 30% from the City of Houston's Percent for Art Program, which supports commissions of new civic art projects as well as conservation of existing artworks. The remaining 15% of HAA's budget comes from private fundraising (grants/contributions/other revenue) for programs and special projects. HAA is committed to raising funds for only those projects and initiatives that the Arts Alliance is uniquely positioned to provide the community.

For more information, visit houstonartsalliance.com. For events in the region, visit Artshound.com.

About Olga Garay-English, Arts Consultant and former Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

Olga Garay-English most recently served as Senior Advisor on Local and International Cultural Programs to City of Los Angeles Councilman Tom LaBonge. She is Creative Strategist to UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance; Program and Resource Development Consultant at the Emerson College Office of the Arts; Senior Advisor on International Cultural Affairs to Fundación Santiago a Mil in Chile; and Director of the California Institute for the Arts (CalArts) Latin American/Latino Initiative. Olga was Executive Director of the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (2007-2014) managing a FY13/14 \$50-million budget portfolio and raising \$23 million for DCA and its programs. As Founding Program Director for the Arts for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (1998-2005), Olga was responsible for one of the largest national arts funding programs in the United States; while at DDCF she awarded \$145 Million to the country's leading presenting organizations, theaters, and arts training institutions for young people as well as national service organizations to re-grant on behalf of the Foundation. Olga was named a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in 2012 in recognition of her "significant contributions to the arts, literature, or the propagation of

these fields." In 2011, Los Angeles Magazine named Ms. Garay-English one of ten "Game Changers", women who make an impact in LA every day. In 2006 she was awarded a "Bessie," the New York Dance and Performance Awards, for sustained contribution to the field of dance.

About Jonathon Glus, Houston Arts Alliance President + CEO

As the first Chief Executive Officer of Houston Arts Alliance (HAA), Jonathon Glus provides strategic leadership to Houston's local, nonprofit arts agency. Beginning in 1999 and prior to his post in Houston, Mr. Glus served the City of Pasadena, CA as executive director of the arts and culture where he was responsible for the city division that supports, expands and promotes the cultural sector. Under his leadership, Cultural Affairs managed an extensive private development public art program and curated a city-owned public art collection. The division also managed an annual arts and culture grants program and provided on-going technical assistance to both arts and cultural organizations and individual artists. The division managed a cultural tourism program which included the biannual ArtNight, biannual ArtsWeekend, and the triennial 16-venue multi-disciplinary Arts & Ideas Festival. As cultural advisor to the Mayor of Pasadena, Glus conceptualized and developed international projects such as the Rachmaninoff International Piano Competition & Festival. In 2005 and under Mr. Glus's direction, the city developed Cultural Nexus, the city's 10-year cultural plan.

Prior to working in Pasadena, Mr. Glus held the position of executive director of the Evanston Arts Council in metropolitan Chicago. In that capacity, Mr. Glus managed a staff of more than 50 and directed a visual and performing arts complex that included galleries, two theatres, studios and gardens. He was responsible for three regional festivals; an arts camp and apprentice program for more than 500 youth; an extensive city art collection; and was heavily involved in cultural tourism.

Prior to Chicago, Mr. Glus served as an associate curator and exhibitions coordinator at the International Sculpture Center in Washington, D.C., where he previously served on the editorial staff of SCULPTURE magazine.

Mr. Glus's master's work was in art history at the University of Illinois; his undergraduate work was in urban economics and public policy at Indiana University and the University of Kent.

About Michael Killoren, Local Arts Agencies & Challenge America Director, National Endowment for the Arts

Michael Killoren serves as the director for Local Arts Agencies and Challenge America at the National Endowment for the Arts. He is responsible for the grantmaking processes for Local Arts Agencies (LAA's), developing partnerships to advance the LAA field as a whole, and the Challenge America program.

Most recently, Killoren served as director of Seattle's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, a cabinet-level position, from 2002 through 2010, where he led the city department's funding and public art programs, developed policy initiatives to increase public access to arts and culture, and established a groundbreaking partnership to restore arts education in Seattle Public Schools.

Prior to July 2002, Killoren was Seattle's first director of cultural tourism for Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau, where he launched an initiative to promote the region's cultural assets. He also served as an arts program coordinator and later executive director of the King County Arts Commission, where he worked to increase access and participation in arts and culture, with a focus on rural and suburban communities. He also served as managing director of the Alice B. Theatre, all three organizations based in Seattle. For three

and a half years prior to moving to Seattle in 1993, Killoren was part of the programming staff at the Sheldon Arts Foundation in St. Louis, Missouri.

Killoren has served as president and vice-president of the U.S. Urban Arts Federation of Americans for the Arts, and as a member of the Downtown Seattle Association Marketing Committee, among other community service positions. He has a BA in media arts from Webster University in St. Louis and completed graduate studies in telecommunications at Indiana University, Bloomington.

About Matthew J. Nielson, Deputy Commissioner for the Cultural Planning and Operations Division of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

Matt Nielson is Deputy Commissioner for the Cultural Planning and Operations Division of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), where he oversees venues, initiatives and policies that make Chicago an international cultural destination and enhance the quality of life for its residents.

Currently, Mr. Nielson's responsibilities include the management, operation and function of Millennium Park, the Chicago Cultural Center, the Historic Water Tower/Water Works complex, and the Clarke House Museum. This role also includes oversight of leasehold and arts partner agreements with the Millennium Park Foundation, the Chicago Children's Choir, the Lookingglass Theatre Company, StoryCorps, the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, the Chicago Park District, After School Matters and Choose Chicago. He also worked with the adoption and ongoing implementation of the 2012 Cultural Plan of Chicago, which has provided over \$5 million dollars in support for free neighborhood cultural programming, arts education and new grant opportunities.

He has over 20 years public and private sector experience in arts and cultural facilities management, real estate development and urban planning which includes target projects for the Democratic National Convention in 1996, revitalization of Chicago Housing Authority mixed-income communities, the Lookingglass Theatre project, and numerous restoration projects at many of the cultural venues overseen by DCASE.

Mr. Nielson received a Bachelor's Degree from Iowa State University in Community and Regional Planning, and graduate study in Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He also serves on the Planning Advisory Council to the Chair for the Department of Community and Regional Planning, College of Design at Iowa State University.

Mr. Nielson is a member of the American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute and the City Parks Alliance.

His civic involvement includes service on the Board of Directors of the Howard Brown Health Center, the League of Chicago Theatres, and the Glessner House Museum.

About Jody Ulich, Convention & Cultural Services Director, City of Sacramento

Ms. Ulich currently manages convention operations and a range of associated cultural services for Sacramento. This includes facility administration for the Convention Center, Center Theater, Memorial Auditorium and Runyon Theater. The Department has a budget of \$18M, and oversees a staff of 245. In addition, the department oversees the Crocker Art Museum, Fairytale Town, Sacramento Zoo, Powerhouse Science Center, Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, Historic Old Sacramento Foundation, Sacramento Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the Sacramento Region Performing Arts Alliance.

Prior to Sacramento, Ms. Ulich served in similar positions with the Arts Council of Fort Worth, the Cultural Services Division of Tempe, AZ and the Office of Arts and Culture for the City of Phoenix, AZ.

She received her degree at Oklahoma City University and has spent her entire career working in the arts. She serves on the United States Urban Arts Federation Board; IAVM Performing Arts Committee and has been named honorary AIA Fort Worth. She and her husband, Chip, have two daughters and currently reside in Sacramento.