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# Backstage

A Monthly Newsletter from EBRPSS Department of Fine Arts

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*'Science will get us out of this, but the Arts will get us through this'*



# FINE ARTS

## Overview:

- Park Forest Middle joins Mckinley Middle with new NHSDA Chapter
- BRCVPA "Mud Painting"
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- Coronavirus & The Arts
- Contests & Celebrations
- National Arts News Spotlight

EBRPSS Department of Fine Arts is proud to bring "Backstage" to our EBR School Community, a monthly email newsletter celebrating all things Fine Arts in the District. During such an unprecedented time in our global community, Backstage is our attempt to stay connected, informed and united as we push forward during this academic year. We are delighted to bring you this first issue and hope that you will choose to support our efforts. We welcome celebrations, and newsworthy events for each issue, and encourage you to send information that you would like highlighted. Each issue will also include current and past national news articles highlighting education in the Arts. Thank you for your tireless efforts as Arts Educators. We have so much to be proud of and look forward to shining the light on our wonderful programs and teachers. For clickable links be sure to download the PDF attachment of the newsletter.

**Fine Arts Teachers: Don't forget to spend your MOI funds by November 6th and turn in all paperwork to Ms. Griffin by November 13th.**



## Park Forest Middle School Chapter of NHSDA



The National Honor Society for Dance Arts™ (NHSDA) is a program of the National Dance Education Organization, created to recognize outstanding artistic merit, leadership, and academic achievement in students studying dance in public and private schools in K-12 education, dance studios, cultural/community centers, performing arts organizations, and post-secondary education. Park Forest Middle School Dance Department, under the Direction of Winter McCray is proud of their new NHSDA Junior Chapter. They are excited to offer this unique distinction to their dancers and look forward to a future of dance scholarship, community service and performance as a Chapter. Park Forest joins McKinley Middle Junior Chapter as the two NHSDA Junior Chapters in the State of Louisiana.

## BRCVPA Cave Art with Ms. Adkinson



Kindergarten students have been discussing the question "What is Art?" and learning about when drawing first began. They began by reading a book called "The First Drawing" where they learned about the earliest cave drawings. Next, they began their roles as little cave people by foraging for natural art media from nature. They used those materials to create their very own cave drawings by rubbing leaves and painting with mud that they mixed.



## MMAMS Obtains Donation of Student Pianos

Early in the semester, the music teachers at MMAMS worked hard to run a productive music class. For piano classes, if a student didn't have a piano or keyboard at home, Mrs. M. Wilkinson-Nelson, Orchestra teacher at McKinley Middle Magnet suggested that they purchase a mini keyboard.

"If families couldn't come up with something for their student to practice on at home, students could print a paper keyboard and use that as a practice tool or download a keyboard app for their phone. A new 6th grader in my Intermediate Piano class went home and told his parents that some students were playing 'paper pianos'. That afternoon, I received an email from the student's parent offering to purchase some mini keyboards for students who couldn't afford a piano. Within days, ten keyboards arrived at McKinley Middle. They were bigger and nicer than the ones I had suggested. Thanks to this new student and his family, ten students are learning piano at home! Many thanks to this parent, who wishes to remain anonymous, from the administration of McKinley Middle Academic Magnet School, and the East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System!!!



Amy Griffin, art teacher at Scotlandville Magnet High School, taught a special lesson on Frida Kahlo & Diego Rivera for Hispanic Heritage Month. She impressed her students by dressing up like Frida, "unibrow" and all! It was fun. Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter known for her many portraits, self-portraits, and works inspired by the nature and artifacts of Mexico.



Art teachers researched platforms for digital programming and overwhelmingly agreed on **FLEX**. They have been actively sharing their new knowledge with each other during virtual meetings. <https://theartofeducation.edu/flex/>



## As the coronavirus upends schools, experts say don't forget the arts

By American Heart Association News

For some parents and schools, education amid a pandemic will mean a focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. But brain experts say, don't forget the singing, dancing and painting.

Arts education often is seen as a frill. But research shows it boosts educational performance. Exposure to the arts can have direct and indirect benefits to mental and physical health. Far from being a luxury, they fill an essential human need."

Sometimes they say that the arts are like exercise," said Susan Magsamen, executive director of the International Arts + Mind Lab within the Brain Science Institute at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore. "Exercise is something that helps you with your whole body, right? It helps your stamina. It helps you maintain your balance. It helps you sleep better. It helps your brain work better. The arts are like that, too," for brain development.

Theater, for example, teaches empathy for differing views and lets students explore complicated issues in a safe space, she said. Choir builds socialization skills. Learning to play an instrument teaches resilience. They also bring happiness – which can be in short supply during a global health crisis. "You can't learn if you don't feel safe," she said. "You can't learn if you're depressed."

**To read the full article visit:** <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2020/08/28/as-the-coronavirus-upends-schools-experts-say-dont-forget-the-arts>

# SOUTHBOUND PROJECT AT LSU MUSEUM OF ART



**LSU Museum of Art**  
AT THE SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS

## NEW SOUTH PROJECT

### CALL FOR ART: STUDENT EXHIBITION

On view at the LSU Museum of Art beginning October 22 is *Southbound: Photographs of and about the New South*, which brings together 56 photographers' vision of the South and provides a glimpse into the region. The South is a complicated place where history, race, folklore, and religion all collide with the future. But what do you as a young artist in Baton Rouge have to say? How do you see the South?

We challenge you to respond to the exhibition through writing and imagery.

- What does the South mean to you?
- What does that look like?
- What does it mean to be 'Southern'?
- What do people not understand about the South or is missing from how people represent the South?

### RULES

#### THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

**Writing:** 200 words or less, Word document or JPEG.  
**Images:** Medium resolution as JPEG (cellphone photos accepted)

A limit of three submissions per artist, no fee.

Please submit work as a Word Document or JPEG to: Grant Benoit, gbenoit1@lsu.edu

Schedule a virtual group tour of *Southbound*: [bit.ly/lsumoavirtualtour](http://bit.ly/lsumoavirtualtour)



# SPRING ART AND MUSIC SHOW

Plans are underway for an EBRPSS Spring art and music exhibition. Gallery venues for student artwork include The SHAW Center for the Arts, The Old State Capitol, The Old Governor's Mansion, The Louisiana Art and Science Museum, The River Center Branch Library, and The LSU Museum of Art. EBRPSS student musicians will perform at several downtown venues as spectators stroll among the galleries. Southern University Human Jukebox Band members will make special appearances to perform with the EBRPSS students.



### TEACHERS:

JOIN BATON ROUGE GALLERY, EBR SCHOOLS, & ARTIST APRIL HAMMOCK FOR A NEW PILOT PROGRAM

- > LEARN ABOUT THE GALLERY
- > HEAR ABOUT APRIL'S WORK, DIRECTLY FROM THE ARTIST HERSELF
- > PARTICIPATE IN A VIRTUAL MASTERCLASS ON SHAPE AND COLOR, LED BY APRIL



Baton Rouge Gallery ("BRG") is proud to announce, in partnership with East Baton Rouge Parish Schools' Fine Arts Program, a new pilot program that will give students an in-depth look at - and understanding of - the work of living, professional artists.

The Virtual Masterclass & Gallery Tour series, kicking off in October 2020, will allow for a safe, virtual experience that encourages interaction between students and accomplished visual artists and gives them the opportunity to talk with artists about their process, their techniques, and even their career.

<https://www.batonrougegalleries.org/virtual-masterclass>

The DeBose Festival is accepting applications for their 2021 Virtual Festival. Click here to apply TODAY!



### Playmakers Presents

*Game of Tiaras* by Don Zolidis,  
Directed by  
McKinley Middle Talented Theatre Teacher &  
Playmakers Board Member

Shane Stewart

featuring Talented Theatre students from  
BR High and McKinley Middle Students

Also, Assistant Directing are Talented Theatre Teacher  
Joni Bankson from McKinley Middle and  
BR High Student and Student advisory board member  
Nicholas Herring.



When the aging king of a Magical Kingdom (England) decides to split his empire between his three daughters, Cinderella, Belle, and the Snow Queen (who in no way resembles a copyrighted character), terrible tragedy ensues. Terrible, hilarious tragedy. Combining the gut-wrenching plot twists of *Game of Thrones* and the soul-numbing despair of Shakespearean tragedy, this adaptation of *King Lear* will leave you dying with laughter as the body count mounts. When you play the *Game of Tiaras*, you win or you die.

Friday, November 6th at 7:00 pm  
Saturday, November 7th at 7:00 pm  
Sunday, November 8th at 2:00 pm

Tickets can be purchased at [PlaymakersBR.org](http://PlaymakersBR.org) or by calling (225) 578-6996. Once your purchase is complete you will receive a special link to view the show online. General Admission: \$15

## GOVERNOR'S MANSION CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

Every year, ornaments designed by Louisiana students trim the trees inside the LA Governor's Mansion. This year's theme is All Things Silver and Gold. Each school may send a maximum of 10 ornaments to be displayed. Ornaments should not exceed 5 inches in height or width and 1 inch in depth. Students may use any medium or mixed media to create their works. Please attach (or include with ornament in a ziplock bag) student's name, grade, school, city, and art teacher's name. Email Susan Arnold at [sarnold@ebschools.org](mailto:sarnold@ebschools.org) if you plan to participate so that she can make arrangements for delivery of the ornaments. Ornaments must be ready for pick-up by November 16th.



# Contests...



## LSBA ART CONTEST

LSBA is proud to announce the Louisiana School Boards Association Artwork Contest and Exhibit as part of our Annual Convention. This year, instead of physically submitting original artwork to our office, we ask that school systems submit a photo of the original artwork being submitted in each category.

[Click here for submission details.](#)

## 2020 EBRPSS HOLIDAY GREETING CARD CONTEST

The annual EBRPSS Holiday Greeting Card Contest is now underway, and student submissions are currently being accepted. The selected artwork will be featured on the district's annual Holiday Greeting Cards. One winner will be selected from elementary, middle, and high school (for a total of three winners). Additionally, all three winners and their teachers will be formally recognized at the December School Board Meeting.

[Click here for contest guidelines.](#)

## New to the team...



### Liberty High Has a New Art Teacher

Matthew Barton is from Birmingham, Alabama. While there he earned his BFA in sculpture and ceramics at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Afterwards, Matthew went to Louisiana State University and earned his Masters in Fine Arts. Recently, he lived in New Orleans working as a fabricator for the design company GoodWood Nola and taught courses at Tulane University. Welcome to the team Mr. Barton!!

### Fine Arts Department Adds a Visual Arts Specialist

Susan Arnold has joined the EBRPSS Fine Arts Department as a new resource for teachers. She is now our Visual Arts Instructional Specialist, having been a classroom teacher for 34 years. In EBRPSS, she taught at Buchanan Elementary, Woodlawn High School, and Liberty Magnet High as well as schools in Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes. Additionally, she taught drawing, design, and art education courses at McNeese State University. Her B.S. Degree in Psychology and Master's Degrees in Sculpture and Art Education are from LSU. Susan's certifications include LA Ancillary Visual Arts, LA Art K-12, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification: Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Art, Advanced Placement Studio Art, and LA Educational Leadership Level 1. She is also a certified evaluator for the LA Talented Visual Arts Program. We are delighted to have Susan on our team. She's a total ROCK STAR!

*Please contact her at [sarnold@ebschools](mailto:sarnold@ebschools) if she can be of assistance to you.*

# Celebrations

The LA Capitale Chapter of the LINKS, Inc. selected Ms. Salima Hassan, art teacher at Park Forest Middle School, to hold a poster contest for her students to encourage voting in the upcoming election. **The winning entry was created by Nevia Bates and Ever Oscabar. Look for their poster around Baton Rouge, and please, VOTE!!!**



**Roxi Victorian, Dance Director at Mckinley Middle Magnet, launches new Professional Dance Company in Baton Rouge. Nyama Contemporary Dance Company LLC, is an audition-based contemporary dance theater company rooted in African American cultural traditions. The new company aims to provide a professional space for Black Dance Artists and Creatives to train, explore, create and perform dance arts works that fully embrace the African American aesthetic and rich cultural history. NCDC is a member of the National Black Dance Alliance, The International Association of Blacks in Dance, and the National Dance Education Organization.**

**They will be one of the companies in residence at the new Cary Saurage Community Arts Center, opening in the Summer of 2021. Victorian is delighted to promote diversity and inclusion in our local dance community. We look forward to supporting her efforts.**  
**#representationmatters. [www.nyamadance.com](http://www.nyamadance.com)**

## THE CHECKUP

### Using Arts Education to Help Other Lessons Stick

The arts can be a source of joy in a child's day, and also come in handy for memorizing times tables.

*by Perri Klass, M.D.*

In "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," Betty Smith's 1943 autobiographical novel about growing up poor in the early 20th century, the public school that the heroine attends is a pretty bleak place. But "there was a great golden glory lasting a half-hour each week when Mr. Morton came to Francie's room to teach music."

He taught them classical music, the book continues, without telling them what they were learning, setting his own words to the great works. "Little boys whistled part of Dvorak's New World Symphony as they played marbles. When asked the name of the song, they'd reply 'Oh, "Going Home."' They played potsy, humming 'The Soldiers' Chorus' from Faust, which they called 'Glory.'"

Francie also looked forward to the visits of the drawing teacher; "these two visiting teachers were the gold and silver sun-splash in the great muddy river of school days." Arts education in schools has introduced many children to great painters and great music, and helped them through their first dance steps or tentative musical endeavors. It can serve as a bright spot in the schoolchild's day or week, a class that brings in beauty, color and joy, and which is not about testing.

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These subjects are often under threat either from budget cuts or from the inexorable demands of academic testing and "accountability," but insights from neuroscience suggest that arts education can play additional important roles in how children learn.

Paul T. Sowden, a professor of psychology at the University of Winchester in England, warned that in Britain, as in the United States, arts and humanities subjects have suffered in recent years as the emphasis shifted to science and technology.



It's important, he said, that arts education be available equally to everyone. But arts education, he said, is a chance to build resilience and determination in children, as well as to help them master complex skills.

Arts education encompasses many disciplines: "I'm talking about everything from music, drama, dance, design, visual arts," Dr. Sowden said. And the goal goes beyond the specific subjects, he said: "You're looking for opportunities in the arts education context to encourage children to ask questions, to use their imaginations, but also to approach their work in a systematic, disciplined way.

"When children are younger, arts education helps develop their capacity for collaboration, for creativity, and even for asking questions. As they get older, he said, "their executive function is much more developed, their ability to sustain attentional tasks is much greater." For them, arts education can offer the chance to refine and polish a skill over time, or revise a project until it is as good as it can be.

Sometimes the arts are taught in a very set curriculum, Dr. Sowden said, but there are real advantages to teaching in a more exploratory way, where children can experiment. And both parents and teachers can encourage children to explore, he said; "that's the way you get the biggest benefit, not just learning to reproduce a particular work by Monet or dance sequence." The skills that children master in arts education, he said, may be transferable to other curricular areas.

# SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED

Mariale Hardiman, a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Education, where she directs the neuro-education initiative, was interested in how children do — and don't — retain what they learn in school. "A lot of the information we teach doesn't stick.

"What she saw as a school principal, she said, was that when arts were integrated into the curriculum, "learning became more visible." Teachers told her "the children would remember the information better when they taught it through the arts.

"So though arts education has many other benefits, she said, such as creative thinking, her studies have focused on children's memory for academic subjects, comparing what children remembered 10 weeks after material was taught. Researchers wrote two different versions of the curriculum, matched for content and timing, both involving active learning, but one including arts education. For example, in an arts integrated curriculum, students would sketch their vocabulary words, or learn some of the material as songs, or act out molecular motion with their bodies.

The children who had learned the material in the curriculum that made use of the arts remembered more, and the effect was largest among the children who were less strong academically, the "lower performers.

"We found the biggest difference with children at the lower level of achievement," Dr. Hardiman said. "Could this be at least one lever for closing an achievement gap?" After all, these are often the students who are condemned to dreary drill and repetition, in hopes of bringing them to a higher level: "What if the arts are a lever of school reform, better than the drill and kill we do with remedial students?"

In a 2019 article in the journal *Trends in Neuroscience and Education*, Dr. Hardiman and her colleagues described the results of a randomized controlled trial looking at fifth-graders who were taught science content, some using techniques from arts education, and others with more conventional instruction. The researchers again saw an effect on the students with more limited reading skills; they remembered more science if they had learned with the integrated arts methods.

So why might the arts integration help children's memory? "Arts allow for elaboration, allow for repetition," Dr. Hardiman said. "Memory is certainly enhanced through repetition, the more you revisit something, the more you remember it." And the visual and performing arts also allow children to elaborate in creative ways on the material.

The advantage of learning through the arts will come as no surprise to anyone who grew up with the "Fifty Nifty United States" song or learned how a bill becomes a law from *Schoolhouse Rock*. Some of today's children are learning history from the lyrics of "Hamilton.

"I suddenly remembered a rather mournful tune from decades ago, in high school, when a science teacher told us we would be tested on the elements with a charge of positive 2 and a friend and I set them to a chant; I can still name them, in order, and when it comes to chemistry, I am definitely one of the less able students."

Arts integration should not replace arts education," Dr. Hardiman said. She suggested a "three-legged stool," with one leg being arts education, including dedicated classes in visual and performing arts, and the second arts and cultural offerings, such as artists coming into the school or visits to museums. The third leg would be the integration of the arts into the teaching of other subjects. "Parents can easily do simple arts activities with kids," Dr. Hardiman said, and can incorporate these ideas around homework or just in spending time together. Maybe it would help to put the multiplication tables into a song, or ask children to sketch their ideas, or use body poses to show the emotion that a character in a story is feeling. Ronald Beghetto, a professor of educational psychology and the director of Innovation House at the University of Connecticut, studies creativity in educational settings, which, he said, "can be manifest across all different disciplines. "We tend, as adults, to overplan and overstructure young people's experiences," Dr. Beghetto said. While structure is important, he said, so is "letting kids determine their own problems to solve, their own ways to solve them." Arts education, he said, can provide those structured opportunities that foster creativity. "Working through some creative endeavor, we're really resolving uncertainty," he said. "We approach the blank canvas."

## Source:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/04/well/family/using-arts-education-to-help-other-lessons-stick.html>