

Fairfax Artists Offer Exciting Residencies in Music, Theatre, and Visual Art



*South County Middle School student Lauren A. Douglas with Workhouse Arts Center artist Karen Kozojet Ching at the “Mixed-Media Expressions” reception in Lorton, VA on April 9th, 2015.
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Fairfax County, VA – Three Fairfax artists are currently placed at Luther Jackson, South County, and Stone Middle School providing creative, interdisciplinary, and engaging learning experiences for students by connecting music, theater and visual art with the core study areas of social studies, language arts, and mathematics.

The Arts Council of Fairfax County’s **Artist Residencies in Middle Schools** program challenges middle school students to:

- Expand their visual language by viewing the familiar and unfamiliar combined with short written statements in visual artist Karen Kozojet Ching’s **“Mixed-Media Expressions;”**
- Examine the influence of the media on public opinion through original theatrical works in theatre artist Bridget Tunstall’s **“The Living Newspaper;”** and
- Combine their written words with elements of music conceived as a personal musical journey in sound artist Jim Mason’s **“Discovering Your Soundtrack.”**

“We are delighted to connect professional artists with the County’s public middle school students,” said Linda S. Sullivan, President & CEO, of the Arts Council of Fairfax County. **“This program provides exciting opportunities to our Fairfax artists helping them to communicate their unique ideas and creativity, appropriate to grade and age level, in a public school environment,”** Sullivan continued.

In Ching's residency "**Mixed-Media Expressions**," South County Middle School students communicated their thoughts about transformations, relationships, boundaries and roles, by incorporating a personal message, poem, or narrative into an original multi-layered artwork accompanied by a short essay. Text and imagery were designed to convey a message about their role in the world.

"The artist residency has been a wonderful collaborative experience," said artist Ching who currently teaches at the Workhouse Arts Center. Ching continued: **"Being able to work hand in hand with aspiring young talent, seeing how their ideas take shape, and working with them to visually translate their thought processes into both images and words is an invaluable experience and prepares them to become creative problem solvers."**

In Tunstall's residency "**The Living Newspaper**," Luther Jackson Middle School students explore a style of American drama from the 1930s created by the *Federal Theatre Project* which helped establish contemporary community theatre in the United States. Through this residency, Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) students examine the influence of the media on public opinion.

"It's wonderful to see students use theatre to express both personal and public points of view about contemporary issues, such as bullying, teen suicide prevention or drug use," said Tunstall.

In Mason's residency "**Discovering Your Soundtrack**," Stone Middle School students will develop and combine their written words with elements of music including tempo, rhythm, melody and harmony in original compositions. Students will investigate and interpret challenges, questions and realizations of a personal musical journey as they follow a path to express an idea.

"We are going to demonstrate how lyrics, poetry or text gain new meaning and power when combined with music," said Mason. **"Students will learn about composing their own original music scores that will support their own lyrics, poetry and text. A range of music technology from iPad apps, loopers, and digital audio workstations will be used to analyze and create rhythmic structures and themes. These themes will be paired with tonal explorations using digital recording techniques for a final performance that will combine live musicians, choral singers, soloists, live percussion and pre-recorded tracks,"** Mason continued.

The Arts Council, in collaboration with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), launched the **Artist Residencies in Middle Schools** program in 2014. The program is designed to create opportunities for professional artists to share their expertise through unique arts education programming that supplements the FCPS curriculum and to engage middle school students in cross-curricular learning through the arts enhancing their skills in creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. The program has been funded in part by Dominion Foundation and Jean Schiro-Zavela and Vance Zavela, with institutional resources committed by the Arts Council and FCPS.

The Arts Council is conducting an artist call-out for the FY16 Artist Residencies in Middle Schools program. Professional Fairfax artists of all disciplines interested in conducting a teaching artist residency are asked to respond to the FY16 Request for Proposal at <http://artsfairfax.org/resources/opportunities/artist-residency-program> by May 22nd, 2015.

About the Arts Council of Fairfax County

Founded in 1964, the Arts Council of Fairfax County, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization designated as Fairfax County's local arts agency. It is the only umbrella organization serving and representing all forms of art in Fairfax County. The Arts Council of Fairfax County is the voice of the arts, dedicated to fostering dynamic and diverse local arts, ensuring that arts thrive by providing vision, leadership, capacity building services, advocacy, funding, education, and information.

The Arts Council is funded in part by Fairfax County, corporations, foundations, individuals, Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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