WELCOME!

In these troubled, fractured, arts-funding-threatened times, making art and building community have never been more important.

Our city is full of artists, writers, actors and musicians, many of whom quietly pursue their work at odd hours when they’re not busy earning a living.

KC Creates is proud to present Inspire, the Kansas City Corporate Arts Challenge. This citywide arts competition showcases the paintings, photos, poems, songs, stories and other works created by the talented employees of seventeen local Kansas City businesses and nonprofits.

We are indebted to ArtsKC for originating this program in 2007 as Art@Work, and for inspiring thousands of creative employees over the past decade to make art and share it with each other and with the public.

May Kansas City continue to deepen its commitment to the arts, and become an ever more hospitable place for emerging artists to grow and develop their work.

Cheryl Kimmi
Executive Director, KC Creates

Sarah Aptilon
Director of Community Relations, KC Creates

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

April 9-23 Visual Art Exhibition
Grand Hall, Union Station

April 9 Opening Reception, 2:00-4:00 PM
Grand Hall, Union Station

April 19 Performing Arts Semifinals, 7:00-9:00 PM
H&R Block City Stage, Union Station

April 22 Performing Arts Finals and Awards (all categories), 7:00-9:30 PM
H&R Block City Stage, Union Station

HOW IT WORKS

Over the past several months, each participating company has conducted an in-house competition or submission process in the visual, literary, and performing arts, and has entered its selected pieces to the citywide competition events. The competition is juried by a panel of local artists and community leaders, who will select overall “Best of Show” winners in each category.

As the convening organization for high-profile arts events in Kansas City, KC Creates serves to showcase the arts, connect artists with audiences and support Kansas City as an arts leader.

SPONSORS

The Star, KansasCity.com

Thank you to all the dedicated coordinators who made Inspire possible!

Sherri Jacobs
Heartland Art Therapy

Stann Tate
Menorah Medical Center

Nikki Crawford
Your Peaceful Space

Lydia Allen
Arts KC

Inas Younis
Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

Tammy Ledlow
Blue Rivet

Erica Immenschuh and Angela Guzman
Johnson County Government

Erin Manning
Truman Medical Centers

Kelly Reichman
Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy

Geoff Miles
Kansas City Clothing Company

Jessica Christman
825 Studios

Miles McMahon
Theatre of the Imagination

Jill Maidhof
Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City

Donna Miller Brown
Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Jasmin Williams
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

Victor James Dougherty
Unity Temple on the Plaza

Gary Katz
Mac MD
either in existence or forming across the country, with three women through participating in community-building activities, trust, respect and relationships between Muslim and Jewish Jewish sentiment. The goal of the organization is to build living in harmony and limiting acts of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment. The goal of the organization is to build trust, respect and relationships between Muslim and Jewish women through participating in community-building activities, dialogue and compassionate listening. There are 170 chapters either in existence or forming across the country, with three chapters in the Kansas City area. Please visit sosspace.org.

Every great shop has one. A purpose, a point, a focus. At Blue Rivet ours is to turn big ideas into authentic digital experiences. Our primary directive is to Be Bold and Do Great Work. We love Kansas City and we want to support local artists and craftspeople. We are #craftingdigital.

The KC Chamber knows Kansas City business. We are a membership organization that represents more than 2,250 companies and 300,000 employees across the Greater Kansas City region. While all the area’s largest employers are members of the KC Chamber, approximately 90 percent of Chamber members are defined as small businesses. We exist to make the Greater Kansas City region the best place to live, work, start a business, and grow a business.

Mac M.D. Inc., has over 35 years of experience with Apple products including desktops, laptops, network routers, iPhones, iPads, printers and other peripherals. We specialize in helping users get the most out of their Apple computer and iOS investments. Projects include outsourced IT support for large organizations, home support for users needing machine configuration and setup, network support, help desk troubleshooting, on-site, email, phone, and remote access support.

We strive to create apparel that embodies the beating heart of this city we love so much. From hanging out in Westport to listening to jazz on 18th and Vine to the Crossroads Art District and beyond. We believe in working alongside the Kansas City charities we partner with to allow us to do more than just give money. Every t-shirt bought from our store provides resources and creates awareness for local causes.

Theatre of The Imagination
Founded in 1998 by Miles McMahon, Theatre of the Imagination is proud to have enriched the lives of thousands of students all over Kansas City and beyond. Our staff consists of many local actors and theater artisans. Our programs instill a love and appreciation of the arts, and we encourage creativity, build self-esteem, and improve self-confidence.

Our mission is to be a continual source of nourishment for the increase of spiritual awareness by providing support and encouragement to the people of the community for the increase of peace and harmony in their lives, and to encourage the people who come to this center to collectively join together to further the peace and harmony in the world. We welcome you to join our spiritual community at Unity Temple on the Plaza.
Over the past few months, participating companies invited their employees to showcase their visual art in the following categories:

PHOTOGRAPHY  FIBER  PAINTING
CRAFT  2-DIMENSIONAL  3-DIMENSIONAL

Each company could submit a total of up to nine entries in the visual, performing, or literary arts. The works displayed here give just a glimpse of the talent found in each company.

See something you want to purchase? Artists indicate if their work is available for purchase on their exhibition labels at Union Station. Feel free to contact the artists directly and build your own collection of local art!

In addition to the Inspire popular vote, a panel of local arts professionals will review all the visual art entries and award one “Best-in-Show” honor. The visual arts award will be announced during the Inspire Performing Arts Finals and Awards Ceremony on Saturday, April 22nd, 7:00 p.m., at H&R Block City Stage at Union Station. A special thanks to our distinguished jurors for lending their time and expertise.
PERFORMING ARTS

Over the past few months, participating companies invited their employees to showcase their performing arts in the following categories:

MUSICAL SOLO  MUSICAL ENSEMBLE  SPOKEN WORD
DANCE ENSEMBLE  DANCE SOLO  STAND-UP COMEDY

Each company could submit a total of up to nine entries in the visual, performing, or literary arts. The works that will be performed at H&R Block City Stage give just a glimpse of the talent found in each company.

JURY PROCESS

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Emcee

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H&R Block City Stage, Union Station

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7:00-9:30 PM, H&R Block City Stage, Union Station

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Everything’s On Fire
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Samuel Kulikov & Maxx Marvel
Trevon Wainwright
Anna Joy Walker
Jimmy March
Miles McMahon
Brittany Slaughter
Carley Petersen
Gayle Price
Lauren Buser and Jylian Hudson
Rachel O’Brien
Peggy Chilson and John Hardesty
Victor James Dougherty

MUSICAL SOLO  MUSICAL ENSEMBLE  SPOKEN WORD
DANCE ENSEMBLE  DANCE SOLO  STAND-UP COMEDY

Your Peaceful Space

Series by Nikki Crawford

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LITERARY ART

Over the past few months, participating companies invited their employees to showcase their literary art in the following categories:

OPEN VERSE POETRY  CREATIVE NONFICTION
8-WORD STORY  STORY CHAIN  ONE-ACT PLAY
FICTIONAL SHORT STORY  MAGNETIC POETRY

Each company could submit a total of up to nine entries in the visual, performing, or literary arts. The works published here give just a glimpse of the talent found in each company.

OPEN-VERSE POETRY

Little Things
by Michael Young

You return anger
with understanding
And pay the toll
for whoever is behind you
You care for
a stray animal
Though you know
the hassles to follow
You allow a child
to wipe his face
On your shirt
because nothing else is handy
You give directions
to a stranger
Though it makes you
run late
You turn off their lights
and roll their window up
On a rainy day
though they will never know
You compliment
the night shift girl

Who has
nowhere else to be
You leave an extraordinary tip
for the waitress
Who needs the money
more than yourself
You whisper
"I love you"
Though they are asleep
and do not hear
But you wonder when
will you be a true hero
As you have always dreamed
and truly make a difference?
In this world of need
when will you rise high
And perform the great deeds
the big things?
Then in a moment
of rare clarity, you see
All those little things
are the big things.

He’ll Lead You Home
by Lori Sand

The road’s been long,
The going hard,
Now it’s time to fold your cards.
Take His hand, follow Him, He’ll lead you home.
You’ve been so brave,
And you’ve been strong,
You have fought the fight so long.
Take His hand, claim your reward, He’ll lead you home.
You are loved,
You are our friend,
We’re standing by you at the end.
Take His hand, trust in Him, He’ll lead you home.
There you’ll find peace,
And you’ll find rest,
Lay your head upon His chest.
Take His hand, reach out to Him, He’ll lead you home.
Close your eyes,
Open your heart,
The time has come for us to part.
Take His hand, hold tight to Him, He’ll lead you home.
We bid farewell,
But I won’t cry,
For I know it’s not goodbye.
But until we meet again, when I come home.

A Message From John Dewey
by Micah Margolies

The building stands regal—a school.
A tomb of education, a basilion of glory;
A dastardly bastard blasting ballast and stories,
And it serves well its purpose,
And my students, they learn,
But as soon as the bell rings, the class is adjourned,
And they leave because where they want to be is not there,
It’s not that they don’t care,
It’s just really not fair to expect these barred windows
to compete with the freedom of tall trees and fresh air,
So why do we?

"Let’s go outside," cries the class. "It’s so nice out,
let’s enjoy the cool breeze."
And I look outside, and I long to go, but I know
that state tests and curricula dictate that that would
be a mistake—
There’s excerpts to break down and textbooks to take down—
Well, so what if they’re barely awake? I ask you how
could I possibly keep their attention when the very mention
of breathtaking sunlight
becomes their sole comprehension,
So I furrow my brow for a sec and I think,
And I tell them to put down their books and we go.
Outside.
We take only a pen. And some paper. And a clipboard.
We go and we sit in the garden where nobody is bored,
And the paper is sinewy flesh getting carved by the pen’s
sword.
As I tell them just sit and allow your mind free just
to write, just to roam—is my sacred decree,
And they’re puzzled and look slightly funny at me,
Before delving—
For 45 minutes, I see—
They’re engrossed.
They’re involved.
And when the bell rings,
No one moves anywhere,
For out here, they can’t hear it,
And what’s more, out here, they’re where they want to be.

JURY PROCESS

In addition to the Inspire popular vote, a panel of local arts professionals will review all the literary art entries and award one “Best-in-Show” honor. The literary art award will be announced during the Inspire Performing Arts Finals and Awards Ceremony on Saturday, April 22nd, 7:00 p.m., at H&R Block City Stage at Union Station. A special thanks to our distinguished jurors for lending their time and expertise.

Sheri Purpose Hall  Laura Packer  Henry Fortunato

Our Greatest Teacher
by Micah Margolies

Love is not taught—
Rather, it is innately imbued into us since birth,
Helping us to elevate our self-worth and the worth of others,
A gift to lift life unlike any other on this earth.
Love is not taught—
Go to a playground and look around
And see children white, black, brown
Laughing together, falling down, and rising back up in unison.
We are born accepting creatures,
Features so minute as who you love or who you feel you are inside
Are easily pushed aside by small fries who feel no need to heed lies,
Hey, besides that, they say, when can you come over and play?
Love is not taught—
Rather, it is hate, its much less pulchritudinous playmate,
that fought its way through the purview of our minds
And makes our lives fraught with strife.
Hate—the ability to discriminate—is quite simply learned
by each child
In this world, it’s unfurled before each day in twisted and wild ways.
And as the child tries to emerge from this mild haze,
he instead finds himself in a tired daze.
And oh, unfortunately so many of them, of us, succumb
to our teachers and preachers
Who teach us to come to our senses and insult defenseless others,
Relentless in attacking and stacking the odds further
against those whose odds are already quite grim
And slim to none that they’ll ever succeed and be freed
in this land because it’s been decreed and pre-planned that
they are not worthy based solely on the color of their skin,
Or who they are within,
Or who they choose to lie beside at night and let their
love in.
How can so many care—to such a vile degree—that while
I can share me, for others it shan’t be,
And how can they not see that all this bigotry is distorting
our worldview into asymmetry,
And robbing the world of its most precious gift,
That present so perfect it always arrives right on time
And robbing the world of its most precious gift,
That present so perfect it always arrives right on time
right as soon as the baby’s alive—
The parents can feel it, the baby can too,
And it’s all around everyone as we rise up on through
our years
Until fears lead to tears and tear our love right on down
And we fall, not together, but separate, unequal
As our teachers and sages become screechers and ragers,
Inflicting our ears and our minds and our hearts
With the unwanted gift that tears loving apart.
A Walk With Sissy
by Micah Margolies

The metal bars jingle, vibrating tremendously.
The one inside circles once, twice, thrice in quick succession.
I’m sad for a moment—h’aw, Sissy, “I say. “You want to come out and play?”
She bursts free from her kennel, dashing pell-mell around the living room for a minute,
Too excited to even settle down to be petted down and now petting me
With so many kisses that I bet I’ll drown.
And I take her beautiful face and I say, “Sissy, I’m sorry that you had to be cooped up
In your kennel all day. I wish it didn’t have to be this way. But unfortunately,
If we leave you alone, well, you poop everywhere. And you eat things. You’re no good on your own.
And how does she respond? What’s my dog’s reply?
A wagging tongue. A saliva bath. She’s two years young,
and by my math,
She’s already lived a teen’s worth of dog years, her dog ears are floppy and her gait’s a bit sloppy, and her tail starts a waggin’, so I stand and I walk to the drawer, and she knows.
Oh yes. Sissy knows.
So let me tell you from her perspective how this glorious next part goes:
Dog leash!
Master, yes!
Out the door!
I’m out of breath!
Trees smell so good!
I was out of breath!
Another dog I see! Its butt smells so good!
Crosses my path, I don’t care!

It’s A Man’s World
by Inas Younis

It’s a man’s world
And that’s okay
Heaven was not where he was destined to play
It’s a man’s world
Where his origin begins
Evolving from fish with gills and fins
It’s a man’s world
Force him down on one knee
Because woman descended from Adam not he
It’s a man’s world and I am okay with that
Because man is animal and woman is not
It’s a man’s world
A world of Jinn,
where woman is governed by nature and man by sin
It’s a man’s world
And I won’t have it any other way
For my nature is sacred and his made to stray
It’s a man’s world
And he can keep it for free
With his shallow valleys and small mountain peaks
It’s a man’s world
I wish my sisters could see
That nothing can change this
not laws
not guns
not even poetry
It’s a man’s world
And a guest I will be
Just a guest until reclaimed by Eternity
Where my true lover resides and it’s with him I am free
For man will never know heaven without me.
No man has ever known heaven without me

Heaven’s Place
by Inas Younis

What do you say about heaven—divine
A place where men with women recline
A place where labor bears only fruit
No losses to be had
No frustration—only loot
What rapture is this, you dare to design
To whose pleasure should jealousy be blind

Admiration
by Lori Sand

I’ve met someone new, a photography guy.
Was strange how we met and I’ll tell you why.
I sent him a note right out of the blue.
This isn’t something I usually do.
His incredible talent simply blew me away.
It just left me speechless, there’s nothing to say.
His passion’s not buildings or things that are odd,
But the beauty of nature created by God.
His eye for detail is truly a gift.
An alternate universe. I felt the earth shift.
The beauty he captures is exceedingly rare.
My reaction is awe... I can only stare.
His talent’s inherent, a part of his soul.
Spotlighting the wonders of earth is his goal.
Each picture displays an undeniable flair.
Genius and passion are evident there.
So now when I see the moon hung in the sky,
I dream of his art and only can sigh.

Am I? Am I!
by Lori Sand

An artist is what I’d like to be,
Hanging my pictures for all to see.
Colorful hues, creative designs,
Oh yes, this is a dream of mine.
Charcoal, crayon, pencil and paint,
It’s very clear that an artist I ain’t.
Fanciful thoughts and frivolity,
I guess I’ll stick with poetry.
The life of an artist is but a dream, I know it,
For I’ve been blessed with the soul of a poet.
But now I can see, I’m an artist in part,
The weaving of words is truly my art.

Man standing before heaven’s light
Is but an agony to his lover’s plight
What will man give to see her there
Except through depression, death, despair
Woman has no choice, but nature to heed.
While Man has choice, to conquer by creed
To save
To love
To put her in a place
For nature was bound to be heaven’s place
Nature and nurture, the two become one
When woman is bound
And man has won
Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Sanity
by Inas Younis

Sometimes the only thing standing between man and total despair, when an arthritic premonition of an impending natural disaster prevents him from making any sudden moves, is a totally unromantic truth. A truth obscured by a newfound promiscuity, camouflaged as independence, and disguised by that proverbial brave face. The smug face of the modern man who, with lofty nonchalance, will tell you that the internal turmoil, the quivering anxiety that mitigates his every movement, is not the product of anything as unseemly as the oppressive loneliness of an annihilated spirit. But instead, he will manufacture a more sexy excuse for being so emotionally underprivileged. Sexy excuses with tag lines like closure and self-esteem, administered like gel-coated suppositories, compliments of a pop psyche world gone psychotic.

Sometimes the only thing standing between man and total despair, when everything in life takes on an intoxicating and futile picture flow, is a need for a meaningful exchange to counteract the psychic deafness of a world consumed by information overload.

In an age where politically we are the herd, and the rest of the third world does not even exist, and where polished and civilized men have retreated like shell-shocked rodents behind rocks cloaked as institutes of higher learning, we are the incorporated, well-adjusted, hyper-efficient, over-productive, civilized version of a suicide mission with no victims—only volunteers.

We are the demented progeny of an anesthetized culture whose casualty is consciousness. We are the latest and greatest spinoff of an enlightened society where self-worth is not determined by who you are, but who you do.

Sometimes the only thing standing between man and total despair are the symptoms of his modern neurosis. Whether it’s his morbid obesity or anorexic frame, his depression or his mania, symptoms are the resistance movement of an enlightened man. Symptoms are the sanitized reflex of a very unsanitary spiritual existence.

Sometimes the only thing standing between man and total despair are crazy people who are immune to the trifling amusements brought to you by the demagoguery of governments who are convinced that material prosperity and false rhetoric can finally do for Western hedonism, what the colonoscopy of colonialism supposedly did for eastern heathenism.

My At Home Audience
by Bess Wallerstein-Huff

One of my early childhood memories was when my mother would take me to department stores when I was three years old. She would roll my stroller into the three-way mirror outside of the women’s dressing room so that she could shop freely. Slightly closing each side of the mirror, Mom would enclose me into a reflective pyramid while she spun the clearance racks of The Jones Store. I chatted and laughed tirelessly at my triple reflection. I was my own best audience.

It was around that age that I realized my reflection was a great form of entertainment. On many occasions Mom would take me out of my high chair during lunchtime so that I could watch myself eat grilled cheese sandwiches in the narrow chrome strip of metal that was on the corner of the kitchen stove. There was something about watching myself do the most mundane tasks that seemed to be an endless source of fascination, perhaps this was a byproduct of being an only child. It was when I turned six that I realized what I wanted to do for a career. While most little girls my age wanted to be princesses or ballerinas, I desperately wanted to be a host on the QVC Network. Not just any host, but specifically one that sold Joan Rivers’ jewelry.

Whenever I flipped channels on TV, I always seemed to stop on QVC. The host had great poofy hair, plastic shiny coral nails that were an inch long and color coordinated clothes and make-up in rich jewel tones. The host would sit and measure the length of crystal laden broaches and pendants with her long talons saying things like “this rose gold crystalized ring is about one half inch in length and is perfect for the spring season” or “I can’t tell you how many compliments I’ve received from this pendant and today’s price is only $49.99, a fantastic deal for one of the most versatile pieces of jewelry you will ever own.” There was something oddly hypnotic and compelling about hearing Joan Rivers’ gruff voice while looking at glittery images of the sparkling crystalized Faberge eggs. I loved when the camera jumped to a close-up of a ring, rotating slowly on the television screen showing the intricate detailing and shiny gold stones.

It wasn’t long before I had the brilliant idea to host my own program. Digging in my mother’s jewelry box, I would find the fanciest costume jewelry she owned and sit in front of the full-length mirror behind the bathroom door through my parents’ bedroom. The phone cord would stretch to the mirror, if I ran it correctly over the bed and I would watch myself in the mirror playing the role of both Joan Rivers and QVC host. I’d measure jewelry with my fatubby fingers, describe it thoroughly, take phone calls from viewers and update the at home audience on the amount of time left to purchase jewelry before the clock ran out.

Occasionally my make-believe QVC program would interrupt my mother’s business calls—-”Yes, we can get that shipped out to you by next week, no problem,” my mother would say. “This diamond stud earring set is a perfect holiday gift for the woman who has everything.”

“Bess, I need you to get off the phone. I’m speaking to a customer.”

“Hello caller! Who’s this and where are you calling from today?”

“Oh...this is Loretta from Lancaster, Pennsylvania.”

“Loretta! Thank you for calling. Have you purchased Joan Rivers jewelry before?”

“BESS! I mean it. Get off the phone.”

Sometimes I would call the weather line instead. One day, I boldly decided that I didn’t want to pretend to be a QVC host, I wanted to actually apply for the position. I knew I was much too young at the time, but I mustered the courage to call the QVC number at the bottom of my screen and speak directly to a QVC customer service specialist. My mother had forbidden me to ever call the QVC number, but I figured that for a job interview, it was acceptable.

Hello, thank you for calling QVC. Please tell me your name and from where you’re calling.

I’m Bess Wallerstein and I’m from Kansas.

Please hold.

I held and held and held. All of the representatives were on another line and I was assured that I was next. Several recordings were played giving me options to purchase various items from other departments. I kept waiting to hear something about employment, but I never heard the correct prompt.

When I finally spoke to a person, I was asked my phone number which I gave. When I asked for my credit card, I froze. I didn’t have that information and after a few more questions, the operator realized I wasn’t anywhere near the age of 18 and was therefore not allowed to purchase anything and abruptly hung up the line.

8-WORD STORY

Conquest
by Nial Champ

Now that I am able, I am undeniable.