

White Bear Center for the Arts

**2024**

**Impact**

**Report**



WHITE BEAR  
Center  
for the  
Arts

# WBCA's Mission Is To:

**Enrich Lives** by Celebrating Art

**Nourish Imagination** by Inspiring Creativity

**Build Understanding** by Connecting People

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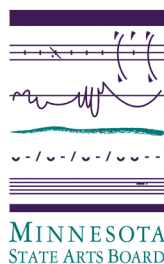
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*Shaila Cunningham teaching  
"Yoga in the Gallery."*



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grants, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

## Dear Friends of White Bear Center for the Arts,

Sometimes, viewing artwork in a gallery space lets us draw out deeper meaning, or exposes the beautiful rhythm of a repeated color or gesture. It helps to see which pieces are in conversation when hung side-by-side, and how they tell a broader story. Just like artwork soars when next to other art, I know that we artists and art-lovers are stronger together. As we reflect on another extraordinary year at White Bear Center for the Arts, I am thrilled to share the highlights and milestones that made this year unforgettable. But none of what you're about to read and see could have happened without you, and hundreds of people just like you. WBCA is only as strong as the students who enroll in classes, the patrons who enjoy our gallery exhibitions, and the donors who fund this magical institution. This year has shown just how powerful we can be when we create, together.

This year we looked back on WBCA's long history as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Northern Lights Juried Art Exhibition, honoring five decades of creativity and community connection in one of the most prestigious juried art shows in the East Metro.

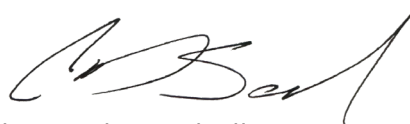
We deepened our commitment to center artists in everything we do. WBCA welcomed renowned visiting artists Elizabeth St. Hilaire and Steven Hill to lead transformational workshops, providing participants with opportunities to expand their skills in new and exciting ways. Our expanded class offerings, including the popular Fiber Open Studio, continued to build community by bringing people together to create, share, and inspire. With a record number of classes offered this year (1,430 to be exact!)—and an increased number of scholarships to ensure art remains accessible for all—we continue to fulfill our mission to enrich lives, nourish imagination, and build understanding.

One memory from this year that stands out for me was witnessing dozens of community members coming together to paint our beautiful new mural welcoming everyone to WBCA. The mural, designed by Jessica Turtle, was a true collaboration that exemplifies the power of art to bring people together. We also saw the return of the Summer Art Sale, showcasing the remarkable talents of both our teaching artists and students.

I don't have enough space to mention all the highlights from 2024, but I am deeply grateful to our donors, volunteers, teaching artists, and community members who make this work possible. Together, we're actively building a future where the arts thrive, connections grow, and creativity is celebrated.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

With gratitude,



Christopher Scholl  
Executive Director



*Musicians playing during the Summer Art Sale.*

# A Few 2024 Program Highlights

## Adding a Splash of Color



WBCA's new mural, visible on the east wall as you enter the parking lot, is a true community creation. Inspired by photos shared by WBCA students and visitors, artist Jessica Turtle designed and mapped out the vibrant piece. Dozens of volunteers then came together to bring it to life, adding their brushstrokes to brighten WBCA and transforming our east wall into a colorful, welcoming landmark for all who visit.

## Writers Take the Stage



Since joining WBCA as a writing instructor in 2022, Amber Guetebier has shaped the writing program with a clear vision: writing is an art form, just like any other. It requires space, time, dedication—and a supportive community. “There’s something magical about a group of writers finding their people,” Amber says.

Over the past year, she has engaged more than 100 students, whether through casual writing sessions, discovering their voices at Writer’s Speak: An Open Mic Night for the Community, or immersing themselves in intensive workshops.

## The Return of Mata Ortiz



In 2024, the beloved Mata Ortiz Pottery Sale made its long-awaited return. The town of Mata Ortiz is renowned for its intricate pottery, inspired by geometric designs rediscovered at the ancient Paquimé archaeological site.

After first visiting White Bear Center for the Arts in 2019, potter Cesar Bugarini and art dealer Jose Jimenez returned in 2024, bringing hundreds of finely crafted pots from Mata Ortiz artists. This year, WBCA hosted a vibrant series of events, including a pottery sale, live demonstrations, a hands-on workshop, and educational presentations during Jose and Cesar’s visit to White Bear Lake.





Artist mentors Kyle Frederickson and Sieng Lee “supervise” as interns install the High School Visual Arts & WriteNow! Exhibition

# The Studio Repose Experience

WBCA’s administrative offices were a little livelier in 2024, thanks to the first-ever cohort of Studio Repose, WBCA’s new High School Internship Program. Studio Repose offers high school students hands-on experience working in the arts. Interns played a vital role in installing exhibitions, designing promotional materials, editing a literary magazine, and learning directly from artist mentors—all while gaining valuable career skills.

For high school junior Izzy, the program provided both community and clarity. “I just wanted to be in a space where people shared my interests,” she said. “As a confused junior, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do in the future, but this experience helped me figure that out.”

Hannah, another junior, knew she wanted more art in her life but had exhausted the creative opportunities at her school. “I wanted to keep making art, but in a more unconventional setting,” she explained. She found that space in Studio Repose—and both she and Izzy are returning to strengthen their leadership skills with the 2025 cohort.

WBCA’s vision for Studio Repose was made possible by a workforce development appropriation from the State of Minnesota in the 2023 Omnibus Bill, securing funding with bipartisan support. After a successful first year, the second cohort is already underway. Reflecting on the inaugural group, Studio Repose Internship Administrator Lexi Munson shared, “They are a special group that went from strangers to colleagues and friends. I hope they continue to build on the bond they’ve created as they move through their lives and careers.”



# 2024 Exhibitions



## ***WBCA Instructor Showcase***

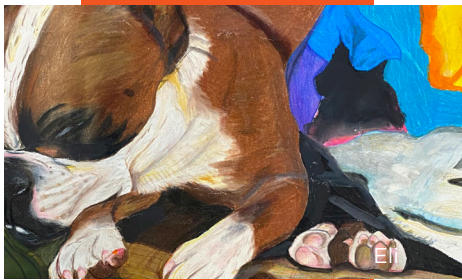
WBCA teaching artists do more than lead engaging and enriching classes—they are also accomplished professionals who bring deep expertise to their craft. The WBCA Instructor Showcase celebrated these artists by exhibiting a sampling of their work, highlighting the talent and creativity they share with our community.



## ***50th Annual Northern Lights***

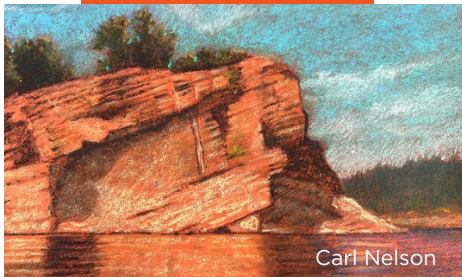
### ***Juried Art Exhibition***

The annual exhibition showcased 101 outstanding artworks, selected by jurors Neil Johnston, Helen Otterson, and Amy Wilderson. This milestone year marked 50 years of celebrating the remarkable talent of artists in our region.



## ***High School Visual Arts & WriteNow! Exhibition***

The 2024 High School Visual Arts & WriteNow! Exhibition brought together the creative voices of local high school students through both visual art and writing. This year, 127 young artists filled the gallery with their inspiring work, showcasing a vibrant display of talent and expression.



## ***Touch of Color***

Founded in 1997, the Lake Country Pastel Society brings together and supports pastel artists of all skill levels across Minnesota and surrounding communities. This year, WBCA proudly hosted their annual judged exhibition, with award-winning artist Lisa Fertig serving as the juror.



## ***Ode to my Umi***

WBCA partnered with Emerging Curators Institute to present “Ode to my Umi,” a powerful exhibition curated by Eshay Brantley. The multidisciplinary showcase honored the stories of Black grandmothers and mothers, highlighting the resilience, wisdom, and comfort passed down through generations.



## ***Into Nature Exhibition***

Each summer, artists can be found throughout the White Bear Lake area, capturing the beauty of the landscape for WBCA’s Into Nature Plein Air Competition. This year, 85 artists showcased 169 works, with juror Michele Combs selecting a curated collection for the official “Into Nature Exhibition.”



Mary Mathews

## ***Fire, Earth, Air, and Water***

The North Shore Artists League, a collective inspired by the communities and natural beauty of Lake Superior, presented “Fire, Earth, Air, and Water”—a stunning exhibition that captivated patrons with its cohesive storytelling. Featuring a diverse range of mediums, the exhibit reflected the elemental forces that shape both art and nature.



Sonja Hutchinson

## ***Light in Droplets***

With over 350 members, the Minnesota Watercolor Society is one of the Midwest’s largest communities of watercolor artists. “Light in Droplets” welcomed all active members in a vibrant, non-juried showcase of talent and creativity.



Cadex Herrera

## ***First Person Plural***

Through conversations and interviews with ten immigrant community members, local artist Cadex Herrera created a powerful two-part project: a film documentary that tells their stories and a series of striking 8-by-8-foot murals that bring their faces into the public eye. This was a Many Faces program hosted by WBCA.

## ***2024 Members’ Exhibition***

WBCA’s annual Members’ Exhibition showcased 219 pieces in a wide range of mediums, including pastel, photography, ceramics, writing, watercolor, and fiber arts. WBCA members expressed their passion for art and their support for WBCA through this vibrant and diverse exhibition.



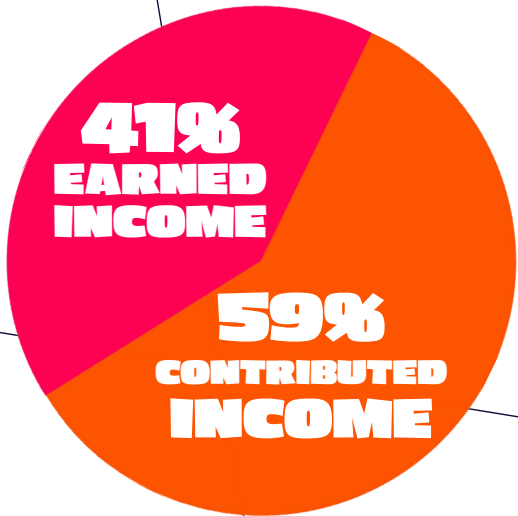
## ***Pop-Up Exhibitions***

Throughout the year, artists featured “pop-up” exhibits at both WBCA and the Hanifl Performing Arts Center next door. These exhibits highlighted the work of our teaching artists, including Susan Frame, Lisa Fertig, Jane Grant-Abban, Forrest Wasko, and Brianna Harrington. They also celebrated remarkable communities within WBCA, such as the ALS Association and the students in Susan Hartzell Vannelli’s SOAR! class, showcasing their creativity and spirit.





**1,430  
CLASSES  
OFFERED**



**229  
KIDS IN  
IMAGINE ART**



**157  
NEW  
CLASSES**



**350  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
AWARDED**

**2024 BY THE**



**19**  
**EXHIBITIONS**

**1,439**

**PIECES OF ART**  
in WBCA exhibitions

**812**

**ARTISTS**  
displayed their work in  
gallery spaces

**150**

**VOLUNTEERS**  
Shared 350 hours of their time

**THE NUMBERS**



**2024 Donors**

**“White Bear Center for the Arts is a gem of an asset to the northeast metro, from its physical building & grounds to its reach into the White Bear Lake area community, and to the state of Minnesota.”**

-Doug Bartolomeo

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