



Weaving Traditional Arts Into the Fabric of Community Health

A BRIEFING FROM THE
ALLIANCE FOR CALIFORNIA TRADITIONAL ARTS

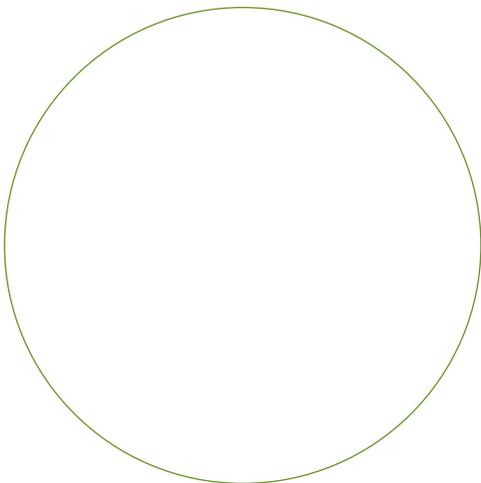




DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to the traditional artists of California who graciously participated in our research.

Thank you for your willingness to advance the state of the knowledge in the field of traditional arts.



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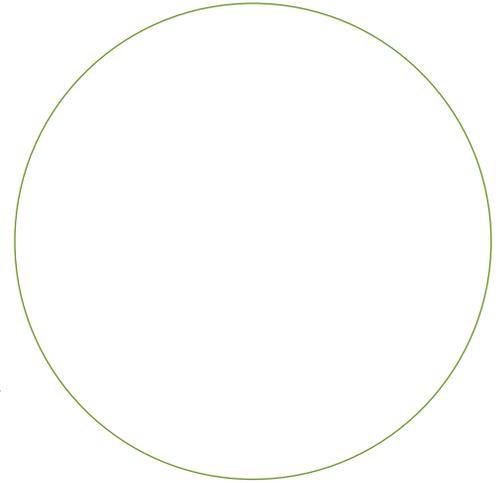
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OCTOBER 2011



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Detail of handwoven Laotian textile by ACTA
Master artist, Leanne Mounvongkham.
(photo: A. Kitchener)

The Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) is California’s designated organization charged with promoting and supporting ways for community-based arts and cultural traditions to thrive now and into the future. ACTA provides advocacy, resources, and connections for folk and traditional artists and their communities. Aware of mounting evidence that community-based arts may positively impact health and well-being, in 2006 ACTA commissioned studies by UC Davis researchers to formally evaluate health effects and other outcomes experienced by participants in two of its signature programs, the Apprenticeship Program and the Living Cultures Grants Program.

In this report, ACTA presents an overview of selected research in the emerging field of “arts-for-health,” with summaries of the UC Davis evaluations. A careful reading provides provocative and hypothesis-generating insight into associations between participation in, and performance of traditional arts, and the potential to promote individual and public health. Interviews and focus groups with master artists, apprentices, program directors, community leaders, and multiple generations of participants, reveal benefits at the individual, family, community, and wider societal levels. Notable effects include clarification of future goals, enhancement of physical and/or mental health, perception of positive social characteristics/self-esteem, desire to grow and continue learning, spiritual and emotional connection to art and culture, self-actualization, and enhanced identity.

As compelling as these qualitative findings are, objectively evaluating the impact of arts in health is challenging. With its deep connections to community-centered traditional arts, its sensitivity to the artistic process, yet its appreciation for rigorous scientific inquiry, ACTA is uniquely poised to partner with multidisciplinary health and social science researchers to create, facilitate, and evaluate novel health interventions utilizing traditional arts. Such partnerships hold the potential to support health *“as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”*

...For the health of the children, good health, mental, physical, health of the children. To bring spirituality, to bring structure, to bring discipline ... to feel good about the ethnicity ... to be proud of who they are. To have a cultural identity, to feel this is me. I am happy to be who I am.

- FEMALE INDIAN BHARATA NATYAM DANCER

ACTA'S MISSION

The Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) has long sent a taproot to the very center of the rich loam that is California's multi-ethnic cultural inheritance. Founded in 1997 by cultural workers, arts administrators, and traditional artists devoted to perpetuating California's cultural past, ACTA's mission is to provide programs and services to support California's diverse living cultural heritage and community-based arts. Of California's diverse populace of over 37 million people, 37% are Latino, 13% are Asian, 6.2% are African American; another 17% belong to races other than White. Unsurprisingly, ACTA's funded work supporting folk and traditional arts benefited the largest minority groups in the state: Asians (48%); Latinos (14%); African Americans (14%); Native Americans (12%). The organization's efforts have already helped to ensure that the state's future retains cultural elements from the past, and more, that these memes flourish and adapt in a dynamic process. (<http://www.actaonline.org/>).

A comprehensive definition of community-based art is *creative expression that emerges from communities of people working together to improve their individual and collective circumstances. Community-based art involves a wide range of social contexts and definitions, and includes an understanding of "communities" that includes not only geographical places, but also groups of people identified with historical or ethnic traditions, or dedicated to a particular belief or spirit.* (deNobriga and Schwarzman from: <http://wayback.archive-it.org/2077/20100906201249/http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/1999/10/communitybased.php>)

Folk and traditional arts, a form of community-based art, is created by tradition bearers: people who transmit what they believe, know, do, and create with others who share



Master artist Vishal Ramani (right) with Apprentice Nitya Venkateswaran, perform Bharata Natyam dances, which use movement and expression to depict Hindu mythological stories and themes. (photo: S. Chen)

a common heritage, language, religion, occupation, or region. These expressions are reflective of a community's shared and evolving standards of beauty, values, or life experiences. In ways distinct from the "fine arts," folk and traditional arts are highly participatory and are passed from one generation to the next as collective wisdom, rather than as a unique personal aesthetic. As well, folk and traditional arts cast a wide and inclusive net across the visual arts, music, and dance, but also embrace storytelling, cuisine and food preparation, crafts, life skills, celebrations, and architecture.

Recognized for its leadership, intellectual capital, and excellence in program administration, ACTA is the state-designated entity for all folk and traditional arts and artists. ACTA communicates directly with tradition bearers, is responsive to their needs, and provides resources for practitioners and participants alike to record, practice, share, and engage in these traditional art forms. By supporting folk and traditional artists, ACTA supports the health, longevity, and glorious diversity of communities across the state.

TRADITIONAL ARTS: A PATHWAY TO WELL-BEING?



Janice Ng (right) studies Kunqu opera, the oldest form of Chinese folk opera, with Master artist Sabrina Hou under an ACTA-funded apprenticeship. (photo: S. Chen)

We wanted to find a way to move beyond a series of individual anecdotes shared with ACTA staff ... that could begin to quantify ... the connection between community-based traditional arts and health.

- AMY KITCHENER, ACTA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ACTA's traditional arts grant beneficiaries, whether masters and apprentices, performers, or more passive participants, routinely sing the benefits derived from their experiences in a melody of cultural connection and enhanced sense of community; the refrain is one of personal fulfillment and growth. The sparkling descant to this song of accomplishment and purpose is the satisfaction of safeguarding an endangered culture or bearing a cherished art form along to the next generation. A faint but persistent polyrhythm has also been sounded: an abiding sense of well-being; the perception that physical and emotional health are supported and nurtured by engagement with the artistic or cultural practice. ACTA could not ignore the beat of these "secondary outcomes," to use the parlance of health research. As observed by ACTA's Executive Director, Amy Kitchener, *"We have known for a long time that community engagement in traditional arts has many types of positive effects that relate to individual and community health. . . we wanted to find a way to move beyond a series of individual anecdotes shared with the ACTA staff to a more formal evaluation process that could begin to quantify some of the important effects, particularly the connection between community-based traditional arts and health."*

THE CONNECTION OF COMMUNITY-BASED ART AND HEALTH

A rapidly evolving evidence base has begun to reveal associations between community-based art and health and its determinants, broadly defined. The overview of findings from this body of research, presented here, redound to the domains of spiritual and emotional growth, physical vigor, and sense of identity, at personal, family, and community levels. In some instances, studies reveal close associations between art engagement and specific measures of mental and psychological health. In others, the focus may be more distal, with the arts engagement providing a locus for community activity and activation - a threshold so to speak - across which health professionals and interventions may enter a neighborhood with credibility, welcomed by a community whose baseline level of willingness is highly engaged.

Against this backdrop, ACTA has increasingly recognized the potential and symbiosis of partnering with grantors engaged in health outcomes and public health research. Its depth and breadth of offerings in the traditional arts, centered in communities, its understanding and sensitivity to the artistic process, yet appreciation for the rigor of scientific research design and a credible evaluation process, have made it a perfect ambassador in the venues where art and science intersect. ACTA has begun to embrace a role as a translator and interpreter for these diverse, yet linked, disciplines.

ACTA ACTIVATES RESEARCH

In 2006, ACTA commissioned research to evaluate two of its signature programs: The Living Cultures Grants Program and The Apprenticeship Program. Teams from the University of California, Davis undertook this work. The initial phase, conducted by Elizabeth Miller, MD, PhD was designed as a qualitative, exploratory analysis to surface themes about health and other outcomes, and to provide some grounded theory to test in future research. The culminating phase, under the direction of Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola and carried out by a team led by Dr. Nolan Zane, conducted qualitative evaluations of the effectiveness and impact of the programs. The evaluations involved collaboration between ACTA and the UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities (CRHD) and the Asian American Center on Disparities Research (AACDR). The reports are available on the ACTA Web site at <http://www.actaonline.org/content/briefing>.

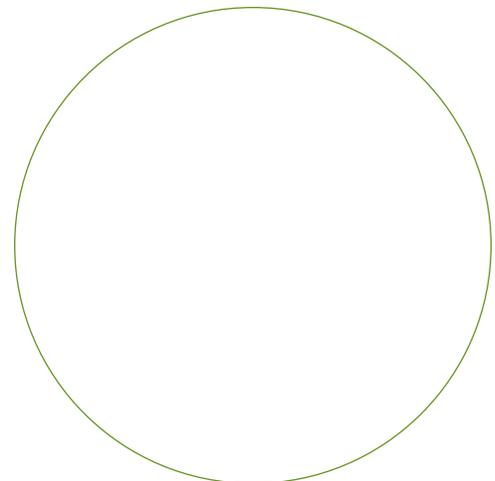
An overview of the state of the literature, and summaries of the UC Davis evaluations of these ACTA programs are discussed in turn below. A careful reading provides provocative and hypothesis-generating insight into associations between participation in, and performance of traditional arts, and the potential to promote individual and public health and well-being outcomes.

We propose a bold premise: ACTA, by engaging people in the traditional art forms of their cultures, fosters in them a sense of community, cultural pride, and personal achievement that improves their sense of well-being and may ultimately benefit their health, as individuals and as members of a community.

The avenues for design of interventions that partner ACTA's well-developed relationships with community-based organizations and artists with health outcomes researchers are myriad. ACTA is poised to leverage these opportunities to advance the state of the field through well-designed art-for-health interventions, and by helping to create a novel and thoughtful evaluation methodology.



Learning to "vogue" in an ACTA-supported workshop led by House and Ball Community "legends," organized by REACH LA, which serves African American and Latino gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in Los Angeles. (photo: A. Kitchener)



THE STATE OF THE FIELD: OVERVIEW OF THE ARTS-FOR-HEALTH LITERATURE

To envision how ACTA programs may positively affect community health, and be an agent to effect these benefits, it is important to understand health in a broad, or holistic, sense, “*as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity*” (Stuckey and Nobel, 2010).

This notion of health as well-being was once at seeming odds with conventional Western perceptions and medical practice. The latter tended to focus on treatment of physical symptoms or specific diseases. Yet, the holistic approach is increasingly neither foreign nor antithetical to California’s health care and medical establishments. Many hospitals and other health care providers endeavor to improve the well-being of their patients—as well as to relieve their symptoms—by enhancing the aesthetics of their environment, or by introducing arts-based therapy into treatment regimens. Public health’s attention to the so-called “social determinants of health” (which range from physical environment, health education or skills, to community cohesion and access to services), in particular as they pertain to health inequities, implicitly recognizes that well-being requires more than vigorous biomedical research on the pathogenic causes of disease.

The notion that art can contribute to health is not new—in fact, many cultures include some form of art, such as visual displays or dance performances, in their healing practices. Beyond the realms of illness and healing, an emerging literature shows that art contributes to health in a holistic sense through its ability to aesthetically improve the physical environment, provide an avenue through which emotions are expressed, lift spirits, or stimulate thought (Angus, 2002). Such benefits can certainly be reaped from passive participation: viewing exhibitions, attending the theater, or listening to a concert. However, more direct involvement with artistic creation or performance brings other rewards, whose implications for health have only in the past decade begun to be measured and appreciated (Angus, 2002; Rollins et al., 2009).

DOMAINS OF HEALTH EFFECTS

Self-actualization, health literacy, and communication

It is easy to intuitively understand how community- or tradition-based arts might lead to positive perceptions of health. The very practice of an art form, with its attendant focus on concentration and self-improvement, may provide a welcome distraction from illness or other worries, and a satisfying sense of accomplishment. The burgeoning field of community-based art and health research has hypothesized and begun to reveal other beneficial associations, including the development of coping or professional skills, more robust

The very practice of an art form, with its attendant focus on concentration and self-improvement, may provide a welcome distraction from illness or other worries, and a satisfying sense of accomplishment.

Teaching and learning traditional Triqui backstrap weaving techniques in Greenfield, California is part of the larger ACTA-supported Triqui Dreaming project, organized by the Movimiento Cultural de la Union Indígena. (photo: L. Kharrazi)



acquisition of health education, and increased emotional literacy for both patients and caretakers (Hamilton et al., 2003; Angus, 2002; Rollins et al., 2009). For instance, participation in drama performance can improve cognitive and psychological well-being in older adults, or increase medical staff's communication skills and empathy for their patients (Rollins et al., 2009). Drawing and painting can reduce stress and anxiety in adults and children undergoing cancer treatment by providing non-verbal ways to express their complex feelings (Rollins et al., 2009).

Community engagement outside of traditional health care settings

Further research suggests that engagement with art activities carried on outside of traditional health care settings, such as those supported by ACTA, e.g., in schools and community centers, can help community members to voice their health needs and explore the multiple facets—physical, psychological, social—of their health or well-being issues. These community-based activities, by drawing directly on community or tradition-based skills and aspirations, also have the potential to promote social connections, supportive networks, trust, and community engagement (Putland, 2008).

Intergenerational learning promoting health and wellness; engaging elders

Further potential benefits reach across generations within a family or community. In a recent literature review, Castora-Binkley and Noelker (2010) observe that participatory art programs for community-dwelling older adults represent a relatively new and emerging area of research; early findings suggest that this population derives physical and mental health benefits from arts participation. As these authors relate, performing arts programs in community settings for the purpose of promoting health and wellness have the potential to reach a broader population and a greater potential to focus on prevention of disease or disability rather than healing or ameliorating the effects of disease and disability.

Resilience, self-efficacy and empowerment of the younger generation

Involvement in the community is a form of social integration that represents potential protective factors to reinforce resilience in the presence of other risk factors (Nettles & Pleck, 1996; Vega, Aguilar-Gaxiola et al., 1998). In repeated studies, social integration appears to have a direct, positive association with mental health (Lin, Ye, & Ensel, 1999; Thoits, 1995). Ethnic and

cultural identification have also previously emerged as protective factors against mental health disorders. Ethnic or cultural identity involves the idea of psychological stake, the investment of time and effort, development of competence, and participation within an ethnic or cultural group (Oetting & Beauvais, 1991).

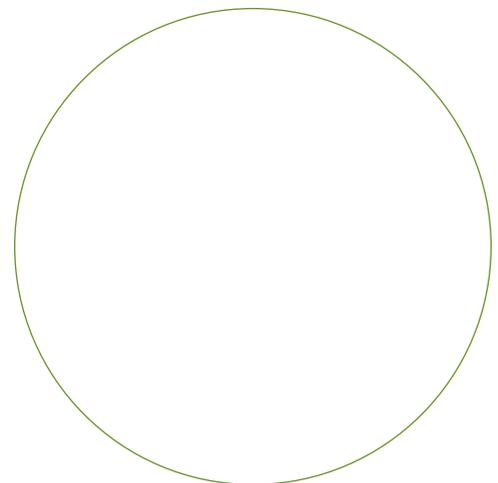
Another line of research suggests that engagement with a community provides the participant with a sense of personal empowerment. Empowerment is a process through which individuals and communities gain mastery over their affairs (Rappaport, 1987). Empowerment has been found to operate through self-efficacy, which has implications for psychosocial functioning (Bandura, 1986, 1989).

Evaluation methodology: the next research challenge

As noted, the past two decades have seen a proliferation of arts-for-health initiatives, both within and outside of health care settings (Rollins et al., 2009; Angus, 2002), attesting to the widening acceptance of art's healing potential. But to attract the support of funding agencies, key thinkers and promoters of the international field of arts-for-health recognize the need to create methodologies to more accurately and objectively assess the impact of interventions (Rollins et al., 2009; Angus, 2002; White, 2006). Yet, evaluation of arts-for-health interventions is the source of no small controversy, which can be summarized as a conflict between two perspectives (Putland, 2008): a health care perspective that demands rigorous evidence to prove art's link with health, and an art perspective that emphasizes the intrinsic benefits of art and resists art's subjugation to narrowly defined health goals.



Participants improvise during a weekly community jam or Bombazo, organized by the Bomba y Plena Workshop. (photo: L. Kharrazi)



ACTA grantee Bay Area Boricuas presents "La Bomba es Nuestra," a project that highlighted the regional folkloric dance, percussion, and song traditions from Puerto Rico known as bomba. (photo: L. Kharrazi)

SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE EVALUATIONS OF TWO SIGNATURE ACTA PROGRAMS

The participatory evaluations of ACTA's **Living Cultures Grants Program** and **Apprenticeship Program** were conducted in distinct phases. The initial inquiry was led by Dr. Elizabeth Miller between July 2006 and September 2007. The culminating phase, headed by Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola and conducted by Dr. Nolan Zane and team, took place between 2007 and 2009.

The research teams selected narrative interviews and focus groups as the main methodologies by which to collect information from ACTA's grantees. The goal was to identify key positive health-related outcomes reported by those participating in traditional arts programs.

Following, we provide descriptions of each of the evaluated programs, a summary of the common themes expressed by participants across programs and evaluations, and excerpts of the reports and interview transcripts. The complete reports may be found on ACTA's Web site: <http://actaonline.org/content/briefing>.

DESCRIPTIONS OF EVALUATED PROGRAMS

The Living Cultures Grants Program

The Living Cultures Grants Program (LCGP) funds the continuation of California's traditional arts and cultures by supporting non-profit organizations and community organizations that provide exemplary community-based traditional arts activities. LCGP may grant up to \$7,500 for California-based activities such as performances, cultural festivals, workshops, documentation and archiving of documentary photographic or audio recordings, and/or materials acquisition. Participants range from informal artist networks to larger institutions, and from arts organizations to social service providers.

Applications are solicited on an annual basis, and are competitively reviewed by a panel of California's folk and traditional arts experts and practitioners. (<http://actaonline.org/content/living-cultures-grants-program>) Grants are awarded according to the following criteria: (1) artistic quality and traditionality of the artists or tradition bearers involved in the project; (2) cultural significance of the tradition in the context of its community; (3) inclusion of cultural expertise in project planning; (4) viability of the project, as evidenced by a realistic work plan, appropriate budget, and qualifications of project personnel; (5) clarity of plans for evaluating impact; (6) evidence of community support and involvement in project planning; and (7) potential for long-term benefit to traditional artists or tradition bearers, target communities, or the applicant organization. In the 2011 grantmaking cycle, LCGP-funded traditional art forms and cultural heritage-based projects were stratified as: language instruction (4.1%), material arts (4.1%), music (34.6%), music and dance (48.9%), storytelling (6.1%), and theater (2.0%).



Wanaragua occurs every New Year's Day and Christmas, commemorating Garifuna ancestors, and serving as a tribute to historic resistance against colonialist forces. The Garifuna American Heritage Foundation United received ACTA grants to support the Garifuna Language and Culture Academy in southern California. (photo: S. Chen)



Master artist Jon Meza Cuero (left) sings traditional Kumeyaay songs with Apprentice Stan Rodriguez. Cuero is one of few individuals who knows the Kumeyaay Wildcat cycle of songs. Stan Rodriguez, who began learning Kumeyaay language and traditional singing at age 17 says, "The need to preserve my people's culture has been very important to me and by learning these songs I will be able to pass this tradition on to others." (photo: Chris Simon)

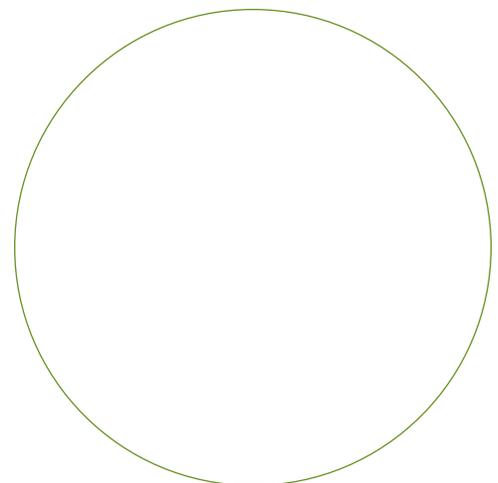
The Apprenticeship Program

ACTA's annually funded Apprenticeship Program (AP) encourages the continuation of California's traditional arts and cultures by contracting master artists to offer intensive, one-on-one training to qualified apprentices. Each contract supports a period of concentrated learning for pairs of master artists and apprentices who jointly apply to the program. (<http://actaonline.org/content/apprenticeship-program>)

As with LCGP grants, a panel of California's folk and traditional arts experts review the applications according to the following criteria: (1) traditionality of the art form; (2) artistic quality of the master artist's work; (3) demonstrated commitment and skill of the apprentice; (4) shared membership of the master artist and apprentice in a cultural community, (family, ethnicity, occupation, tribe, religion, etc.); (5) feasibility of the proposed work plan and timetable; and (6) urgency (for endangered art forms).

Six-month to 1-year contracts of \$3,000 are made with California-based master artists to cover master artist's fees, supplies, and travel. ACTA staff works closely with the apprenticeship team to articulate work

plans, gauge progress, and offer assistance and support. Near the halfway point of the project, ACTA staff documents the apprenticeship through recording and photography. The resulting archival materials become part of ACTA's permanent archival collections, which may be used publicly for educational purposes. Each apprenticeship team organizes some type of public offering (performance, exhibit, etc.), in order to share the results of their intensive apprenticeship experience.



IMPACT OF ACTA PROGRAMS: AN OVERVIEW OF RECURRING THEMES AND INTERWOVEN THREADS

The phased research reported by the UC Davis investigators revealed recurring themes of growth, health, and holistic well-being at the individual, family, community, and wider societal levels. The themes were remarkable both for the deeply personal insights shared and for the consistency of the responses across domains of artistic undertaking, diverse culture, array of languages, and disparate age and generational bands. As well, participants vividly described the multi-directional benefits of participation whether as a teacher or learner, or as a performer of the traditional art. These experiences shared by ACTA's participants, and the themes identified by the UC Davis researchers, are confirmatory of the research to date.

Participants reported personally meaningful individual-level benefits, including increased self-esteem, connection to tradition and community, and interconnected mind-body awareness and wellness, along with the healing qualities of the traditional art. At the family level, the joy and benefit of intergenerational activities, a sense of respect for elders and traditions, the transmission of cultural heritage and practices, and the mitigation of historical trauma were among the observations shared. Turning outward, at the neighborhood level, participants touted the benefit of a gathering space in which all generations could commune and communicate, leading naturally to the wider community-level impacts: perceiving the artist as a community leader and organizer, the activity as a means to bridge gaps across communities, and between generations in a single cultural or ethnic group.

[Dance] really put me back into understanding what life is all about and bringing a feeling of goodness and wellness within me. ... Mentally, physically, I am very, really truly happy.

- FEMALE INDIAN BHARATA
NATYAM DANCER

... storytelling is wellness, and the reason it's wellness for my family is because it puts my kids back in touch with my grandmother, of people that they never got to see. It inspires them to carry on their culture. That's wellness.

- FEMALE POMO NATIVE AMERICAN
BASKET MAKER

...it is not about the individual. It is about the community. You know, there is that saying, the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. ... are we helping those who are having a hard time?...are we doing the best we can for them, too? ...we can't really consider ourselves healthy when we have rampant substance abuse, or rampant alcoholism, or rampant diabetes. ...So, we are all striving to do better.

- MALE KARUK NATIVE AMERICAN
REGALIA MAKER

Growth, Health, and Holistic Well-being at Individual, Family, Neighborhood, and Community Levels

ACTA-supported programs and projects affected participants across the following domains:

Individual

- Personal Health and Well-being
- Artistic Development

Family

- Knowledge and Preservation of Culture and History
- Cultural Pride

Neighborhood/Community

- Increased Community Awareness
 - Enhancement of Community Resources
 - Strengthened Community Relations and Involvement
 - Increased Community Belonging
 - Teamwork/Collaboration (collective energy)
-

INITIAL PHASE: EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF TRADITIONAL ARTS ENGAGEMENT AND HEALTH

In order to explore the range of ways in which people engage in traditional arts and to identify potential mechanisms by which traditional arts involvement may have an impact on health overall, UC Davis' Dr. Miller conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with master artists, apprentices, program directors, community leaders, and elders engaged in traditional arts.

The research team conducted 10 individual interviews with 5 master-apprentice pairs from ACTA's round 6 cohort (2005-2006) of the Apprenticeship Program as well as 9 social network interviews with close contacts of each of these apprentice pairs. In addition, Dr. Miller convened 2 focus groups with a total of 10 participants each, drawn from ACTA's round 1 cohort (2005-2006) of the Living Cultures Grants Program.

Of particular note from these interviews is the cross-cutting emphasis at each of the individual, family, neighborhood, and community levels, on the importance of intergenerational learning. The strengths of learning from and about preceding generations, and the healing properties of the art itself, as well as tradition bearing, were salient. A link to Dr. Miller's synthesis of recurrent themes may be found at: <http://actaonline.org/sites/default/files/images/docs/initial.pdf>

The annual Fiesta de la Virgen de Fatima in Selma, California is celebrated by the indigenous Mixteco farmworker community from Mexico, with a music and dance procession that covers several miles. (photo: A. Kitchener)



Themes from Exploratory Investigation

- Emotional Health, Increased Spirituality, and Higher Levels of Self-Esteem
 - Connectedness to Family, Cross-Cultural Experiences and Traditions
 - Physical Health and Activity
 - Mental Health
 - Family and Intergenerational Relationships, Including Respect for Elders, Gender Differences and Expectations, Immigrant/Refugee Experience, Transmission of Culture and Traditional Practices
 - Community-Building and Organizing
-

CULMINATING PHASE: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF TRADITIONAL ARTS ON LIVING CULTURES GRANTS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

In the second phase of review, Dr. Nolan Zane's team conducted interviews of 23 participants from 6 other Living Cultures programs: Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with the primary purpose to document participants' perceptions of how the ACTA-supported program had been implemented and its outcomes. Questions concerned the effects of the traditional arts program on the participant individually, as well as how the program affected participants' relationships with their communities.

Following are descriptions of the groups from which interview subjects were drawn, and specific examples of the health and well-being, and community involvement themes extracted from the interviews. (http://actaonline.org/sites/default/files/images/docs/lcgp_evaluation.pdf)

Living Cultures Grants Program Descriptions

Au Co Vietnamese Cultural Center (San Francisco, CA), offered weekend and after school music lessons to children and youth aged 5-12 years. The program taught Vietnamese folk songs and provided instruction on the *danh tranh* (Vietnamese zither). Student musicians prepared to perform at the San Francisco Mid-Autumn Festival and at the Vietnamese American Performing Arts Celebration.

Coyote's Paw (Arcata, CA), passed on the tradition of constructing sinew-backed bows to men of different Northern California tribes, under the leadership of Master artist George Blake, of Hupa/Yurok descent. The sinew-backed bows, originally employed for subsistence hunting missions, are currently used by the Yurok, Karuk, and Hupa people for ceremonial purposes.

Filipino American Development Foundation (San Francisco, CA), conducted a lantern-making project from September to December 2009. Participants built traditional Filipino star lanterns (*parols*), which were presented at the Parol Lantern Festival.

Haitian Dance and Drum Retreat (San Francisco, CA), an annual event presenting discussion forums, classes, and workshops conducted by master artists, invited participants to perform in the *Veve Project*, which showcased 7 master artists from Haiti. A drummer master and Vodou priestess guided students/participants in their cultural performances.

Garifuna American Heritage Foundation United (Long Beach, CA), sponsored the Garifuna Culture and Language Academy, with a mission to preserve the Garifuna language, an Arawakan tongue spoken in Honduras,

Culminating Phase: Themes from Living Cultures Grants Program

- Knowledge and Preservation of Culture and History
 - Cultural Pride
 - Artistic Development
 - Impact on Personal Well-Being
 - Community Involvement
 - Teamwork/Collaboration (collective energy)
-

Guatemala, and Belize, as well as the culture of the Garifuna people. Year-round classes in music, dance, drumming, and language were provided for children and adults and broadcast live worldwide via the Internet. The Garifuna language, dance, and music have been proclaimed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as one of the world's Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Mariachi Master-Apprentice Program of the City of San Fernando (San Fernando, CA), was formed to preserve the tradition of mariachi music by educating youth with accurate historical and artistic instruction in this musical form. MMAP provided twice-weekly instrumental instruction for youth and young adults at all levels from beginner to advanced. Instructors were members of the internationally acclaimed Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FINDINGS FROM ACTA'S LIVING CULTURES PROGRAMS

Public performances and in-depth instruction allowed participants to experience culturally specific art forms and traditions in ways that challenged them, and enhanced their sense of personal well-being. Consistent with findings in the literature, LCGP program participants reported self-perceived health-related gains far beyond the mere absence of illness.

Well-being Effects of Living Cultures Grants Program

- Clarification of Future Goals
 - Enhancement of Physical and/or Mental Health
 - Perception of Positive Social Characteristics/Self-Esteem
 - Desire to Grow and Continue Learning
 - Spiritual and Emotional Connection to Art and Culture
 - Self-Actualization
 - Enhanced Identity
 - Community Involvement
-



“So if you imagine dancing across the floor and that’s just the basic part of it, there’s so [much] more going on with the body as it’s traveling and dancing that it’s incredibly difficult and probably the most difficult dance form I’ve ever done and I’ve done a good variety.”

- HAITIAN DANCE AND DRUM RETREAT PARTICIPANT

Dance workshop participant at the Haitian Dance and Drum Retreat, an annual event to develop the next generation of dancers and musicians in the San Francisco Bay Area. (photo: L. Kharrazi)

Physical and/or Mental Health

Approximately 21% of the LCGP participants reported that the program significantly influenced their mental and/or physical health. As noted in the published evidence, most of the programs made an impact on individuals' mental health but one program, in particular, challenged individuals physically – a recurring response from participants in the Haitian Dance and Drum Retreat was how physically demanding Afro-Haitian dance could be.

Positive Social Characteristic/ Self-Esteem

Among the most frequently mentioned sub-themes were enhanced self-esteem, confidence, and pride. In addition, some participants reported feeling more concerned for others' welfare, and the development of leadership skills, as described by this participant from the Au Co program: *"I am more comfortable with people that I don't know or haven't met before and ... it's just easier for me to have a relationship with that person."*

Self-actualization (self-improvement)

Self-actualization or self-improvement was another frequently cited theme. Through their involvement in the programs, many participants (22% of the sample) felt that they had grown as individuals, striving to meet their potential, largely resulting from challenges that they faced in the programs, whether pertaining to creativity or physical endurance. Participants reported feeling better about themselves when they learned to overcome the mistakes that they made.

Spiritual and Emotional Connections

A recurring theme reported by participants in the Coyote's Paw, Haitian Dance and Drum Retreat, and Filipino American Development Foundation parol-making project was spiritual and emotional connection, which for some manifested as a feeling of empowerment.

Afro-Haitian dance feeds my spirit and continues to make my warrior spirit shine and whatever I can do to prolong that, which is studying directly with Haitian masters, I'm there and I am so grateful for this dance form ... I can't explain like how blessed I feel ...

- HAITIAN DANCE AND DRUM RETREAT PARTICIPANT



Mariachi soloist with Mariachi Tesoro, the advanced student performing ensemble of the San Fernando Mariachi Master-Apprenticeship Program. (photo: D. Klebanow)

So, it's like performing, going out there. It's like you are almost talking to the people when you are performing, so you build confidence in yourself and when you are around other people as well.

- MARIACHI PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



Día de los Muertos altar, created as part of the Spanish Speaking Unity Council's annual festival. ACTA supported a grant for traditional Mexican cartonería (paper sculpture) artist Rubén Guzmán to mentor emerging artists to create altars in the Fruitvale community. (photo: M. Pongkhamsing)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS FROM THE LIVING CULTURES PROGRAM

Living Cultures Program participation also seemed to generate greater involvement within local communities. This engagement took several forms: (1) teaching and mentoring others as a means of giving back to the community, along with outreach efforts to get more people involved, (2) increasing culture and program awareness, and (3) establishing a sense of community.

Teaching and Mentoring/Outreach

Many individuals were inspired by the programs to give back to the community by mentoring or teaching others. Participants viewed themselves as vehicles to spread, share, and teach their knowledge to future generations. Some of the participants actively sought out and encouraged others to become involved. As described by an Au Co participant: *“Well, we want to like outreach to the community as well as our Vietnamese community. And we want to show them our culture as well as showing the Vietnamese youth out there that they have a place to go to for learning traditions...”*

Sense of Community/Extended Family

New friendships and acquaintances were established through participants' involvement in the programs. This seemed to result in a greater sense of community belongingness. The majority of the participants reported having a very good relationship with the instructor. Some of the programs functioned, for some individuals, as an opportunity to form social networks.

Teamwork/Collaboration

Some respondents referred to their experience as a type of collaborative group effort. A notion of collective energy was derived from some of the statements made by the participants.

It hits you on different levels: there's the energy of the people around me and there's the collective energy.

- HAITIAN DANCE AND DRUM RETREAT PARTICIPANT



Coyote's Paw, an indigenous art cooperative, is led by tradition-bearer and Master artist George Nixon Blake, a member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe of Yurok descent. In 2009, Coyote's Paw received an ACTA grant to hold a series of workshops to train a group of committed men from several different Northern California tribes to carry on the tradition of constructing sinew-backed bows. (photo: J. Freeman)

It's made me a more positive person for the community, for people who want to look up to me to learn these things. I think that's the kind of changes that it's brought to me, kids looking to me, “Hey, so when are we going to do the next bow session or, Hey, when are we going to learn how to make clappers?” Some of the kids are into sweating or “When's the next dance?”

- COYOTE'S PAW PARTICIPANT

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECT OF TRADITIONAL ARTS ON APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The UC Davis researchers' culminating phase interviews of ACTA's Apprenticeship Program consisted of 10 masters (45.5%) and 12 apprentices (54.5%); 2 masters were not available for interviews. The program funded various art forms involving dance (40.9%), music (31.8%), and material arts (27.3%) originating from places including Native California, India, Brazil, China, rural Mexico, the Philippines, and Laos. (http://www.actaonline.org/sites/default/files/images/docs/ap_evaluation.pdf)

Separate semi-structured interviews were completed for each master and apprentice from approximately 6 months to 2 years after the completion of the apprenticeship period. The primary purpose of the participant interviews was to document participant perceptions about how the ACTA program had been implemented. Topics addressed with the participants included: (1) skill development, (2) critical life experiences, (3) enhancement of community resources, (4) increasing community awareness, (5) strengthening community relations, (6) increasing community belonging, and (7) cultural pride.

Following are descriptions of selected master-apprentice pairs from which interview subjects were drawn, and examples of the health and well-being and community involvement themes extracted from the interviews.

Apprenticeship Program Participant Descriptions

Master D is a 59-year-old woman of Laotian ancestry, born in Laos. Master D learned Northern Laotian weaving from her aunt and grandmother. Master D is the mother of Apprentice D.

Apprentice D is a 29-year-old woman of Laotian ancestry. She was born in Vientiane. Apprentice D planned to take the knowledge and skills learned during her apprenticeship to teach this traditional Laotian material art form to Laotian youths.

Master F is a 69-year-old man of Armenian ancestry, a musician, and the grandfather of Apprentice F.

Apprentice F is a 10-year-old boy of Armenian ancestry. Apprentice F had some training in playing traditional music prior to his apprenticeship with his grandfather. He intended to take the knowledge and skills obtained from the apprenticeship to give traditional performances.

Culminating Phase: Themes from the Apprenticeship Program

- Enhancement of Community Resources
 - Increasing Community Awareness
 - Strengthening Community Relations
 - Increasing Community Belonging
 - Cultural Pride
 - Personal Health and Well-being
-



Apprentice Kami Thephavong (right) learns Northern Laotian weaving from her mother, Master Leanne Mounvongkham. Leanne is one of a few Laotian women who continued to weave after moving to the United States following the Vietnam War. (photo: A. Kitchener)

Master H is a 63-year-old woman of Pomo Native Californian ancestry who had been involved in the creation of Pomo baskets for over 35 years.

Apprentice H is a 35-year-old woman of Pomo Native Californian ancestry and the niece of Master H. She intended to finish a basket for her own family, to further the weaving tradition, and to teach her own children the art of basket weaving.

Master J is a 68-year-old man of Chinese ancestry. Master J has been involved in traditional Chinese Kunqu dance, which comes from the Kun Opera, for nearly 50 years – and has taught Apprentice J for 7 years.

Apprentice J is a 19-year-old woman of Chinese ancestry. Apprentice J intended to share her skills and training with her community by raising awareness and through outreach by the practice of her traditional art form.

Master K is a 74-year-old man of Mexican ancestry. Master K has been involved in traditional Mexican dance since childhood and initially learned from his father and uncle. He has worked with Apprentice K for 6 years. Both Master K and Apprentice K are valuable members of a local Mexican performing arts group, contributing to the group with music and dance.

Apprentice K is a 26-year-old woman of Mexican ancestry. She learns from Master K in weekly 1½-hour lessons at a local Mexican arts center.

[ACTA] gives support and gives the Master artist an opportunity to enhance his tradition with younger people and to have them learn so that the tradition doesn't die.

- MASTER F ARMENIAN MUSICIAN

I will work with anyone. I can detect in my group whether there is someone struggling with something and so I will pay more attention to them ... but overall [I] ... teach other people to become teachers. So they will go back to their own community and then they teach.

- MASTER H POMO NATIVE AMERICAN BASKET MAKER



Ty'ithreeha Allen (center) Dolli McCovey (left) and Aurelia Robbins (right), at an Ihuk Ceremony in 2006. Ty'ithreeha and Dolli's maple bark skirts were created by ACTA Apprenticeship Program Master artist Holly Hensher and Apprentice Paula Pimm Allen. Through prayer, accompanied by extensive research to relearn the old songs and create the regalia, including maple bark skirts, the Ihuk Ceremony was revived in 1996 by a dedicated group of Karuk ceremonial families, after not having been practiced for over 80 years. (photo: Paula Pimm Allen)

...working on maple bark skirts really impacts a young girl's self-esteem and self-awareness and will help her to be less likely to have an unplanned pregnancy at a young age...it is really showing those connections, we know it, we know who makes it and who doesn't and, you know, the ones that have those connections have a better chance.

- FEMALE KARUK NATIVE AMERICAN REGALIA MAKER

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FINDINGS FROM ACTA'S APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Among the findings that participants reported were:

Self-Improvement

The most frequently quoted theme (mentioned by 90.9% of the sample) emphasized how involvement in the art form gave the participant a sense of self-improvement, often unrelated to the art itself.

Taking your family with you and getting them up there (back to the mountains, to the river, to our gathering and ceremonial places) and bothering to pay attention to what is going on with the environment ... you have to have a spiritual commitment to be in the right frame of mind to do these things. So I think...traditional art forms are really important to help people understand, to help people prioritize those things that give their life meaning.

- FEMALE KARUK NATIVE AMERICAN REGALIA MAKER

Again, findings from the qualitative analyses indicate the program had an effect at both the community and personal level. Interview narratives suggested signs of strengthened connections between the participant and his or her community in addition to individual growth through mastery experiences.

Spiritual and Moral Growth

A number of the master artists and apprentices expressed a feeling of spiritual and moral growth in practicing their art form. Within the entire sample, slightly over one-third spoke specifically about the art form as a spiritual experience and related the art form to their non-physical self (i.e., their soul).

Physical Health

Reports of improved physical health came from master artists in the dance category. In one case, the art form itself was the mechanism by which the individual grew physically stronger. Another reference to physical health improvement emphasized the healing aspect of participation in art. In this instance, the art form was viewed as having a cleansing effect.

I will be teaching 15 [locally-based] Native Americans [basket making]...and it is paid for through the Indian health clinic. They see art as a healing. This last class I just did, which has been a month ago it ended, and that one was specifically geared for diabetics, for people who were bad diabetics.

- MASTER H POMO NATIVE AMERICAN BASKET MAKER

Well-being Effects of Apprenticeship Program

- Self-Improvement
 - Spiritual and Moral Growth
 - Skill-Learning
 - Feeling “Whole”
 - Physical Health
-

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS FROM ACTA'S APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Participants acted as catalysts through which other local community members became more aware of: (1) the art form, and (2) a particular cultural heritage. Public performances and exhibitions provided community members with experiences with culture-specific art forms and traditions.

The community is very interested. They've been excited and every time that we've been invited to play at different occasions or venues the community has turned out very, very well to see how the master and the apprentice can play together.

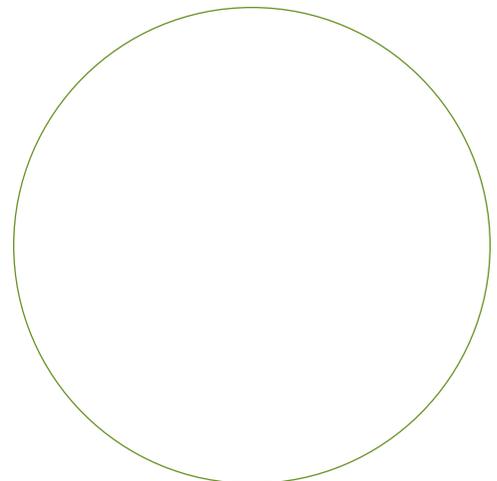
- MASTER F ARMENIAN MUSICIAN

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

As compelling as the reported benefits appear, it is important to note several potential limitations. The qualitative studies undertaken in all phases utilized a fairly small sample and the findings and effects that materialized might not be replicable in a larger sample. Additional evaluative studies are necessary to assess and confirm the effects of the ACTA programs' ability to enhance psychosocial factors that are related to both physical and mental health of participants.



Grandfather and grandson Richard and Andrew Hagopian performing at the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust in 2011. (photo: E.C. Morales)



CONCLUSIONS

A Future Role for ACTA

- Well-being of the Aging Population
 - Preventive Health Interventions for Youth and Young Adults
 - Well-being of New Immigrant Populations
 - Creating a Robust Evaluation Methodology
-



Dancers at Klez California's Yiddish Culture Festival, a San Francisco Bay Area festival that provides intensive immersion in klezmer music, dance, song and the study of the nearly extinct Yiddish language and its literature. A grant from ACTA supported master artists to engage actively and intensely with multi-generational participants. (photo: D. Pearlman)

Embracing the Traditional Arts to Promote Well-being and Health

As this review of ACTA's programs reveals through the eloquent expression of the participants, folk and traditional arts prize and capitalize on intergenerational learning and connection. As each generation adds to a tradition, often through informal teachings and oral traditions, the community's shared sense of beauty and craftsmanship, in turn, become a source of identity and pride. These are the very building blocks of well-being.

A Future Role for ACTA

ACTA's long-standing connections with California's cultural communities positions ACTA to be a pivotal partner with health researchers interested in designing or measuring health interventions utilizing traditional arts. ACTA's relationships also situate it as a logical partner for implementation of arts-for-health programs. Several avenues of future research are noteworthy:

Well-being of the Aging Population. The aging of the global population may be the hallmark of the 21st Century. The uniquely intergenerational nature of ACTA-supported traditional and folk arts, conducted wholly in and by the community, creates opportunities at the individual, family, and community levels to promote well-being in the growing generation of older citizens. Furtherance of traditional arts' integral themes of mentorship, connectedness, and community values synchronizes ideally with measures of preventive health and well-being, as traditionally measured.

Preventive Health Interventions for Youth and Young Adults. It is essential to involve a community in setting health priorities and implementing programs in response to local and national health objectives (French, 2009). Community empowerment interventions relying on respected community members and thought leaders engage the community and imbue it with a sense of responsibility for the interventions and outcomes derived (May et al., 1995). Additionally, adolescents and young adults, particularly those in underserved ethnic and racial communities, may be most vulnerable to poor health outcomes, as they visit traditional health care providers less frequently than any other age group, and receive the least amount of preventive care and counseling of all age groups (Ma et al., 2005; Fortuna et al., 2009). Developing interventions that utilize existing community structures, non-healthcare settings, and innovative methods, such as the arts, may empower this age group to engage in activities that may lead to better health outcomes and well-being.

Well-being of New Immigrant Populations. A full 27% of California's diverse population are immigrants. Approximately 75% of ACTA's program participants are practicing first generation immigrant traditions; a large proportion of the remainder support indigenous Native Californian practices. The inherent tension to maintain cultural identity while achieving social

integration, includes documented poor access to and utilization of health care among new immigrants. ACTA's trusted ties to immigrant communities may provide health services researchers with a critical inroad to promote community-based participatory assessments of immigrants' perceptions of health care, new ways to increase culturally competent health care delivery, and an opportunity to foster a better understanding among immigrant communities of the positive power of research to reduce disparities in health care access and outcomes.

Creating a Robust Evaluation Methodology. Synthetic boundaries and backward-looking resistance to utilizing art forms as a means to effect health benefits are fading. Resolution of perceived conflicts in the methodology used to evaluate art as an intervention may come from approaches that do not focus solely on the ultimate outcomes of an intervention—such as the quality of the art produced or the measurable improvement of a specific health indicator—but rather on the process of the arts-for-health intervention itself (Rollins et al., 2009; Angus, 2002). In the context of community-based arts-for-health

initiatives, process evaluation is likely best carried out by qualitative approaches such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, and case studies (Rollins et al., 2009), as are the ones that ACTA has already undertaken.

Well-designed programs and studies that adopt these approaches carry the dual advantages of monitoring the effects of an intervention while ensuring that the intervention remains steeped in the needs of the community it serves. From this perspective, ACTA's well-developed infrastructure and connections could play an important role in the field, by joining with those in the vanguard of arts-for-health research to partner in project design and implementation, community-art trainings, and in the development of evaluation methodologies to inform the design of meaningful interventions. This natural partnering may provide ACTA's next domain of contribution to California's people and their traditions.

Apprentice Sruti Sarathy (right) studied South Indian classical Carnatic violin with Master artist Anuradha Sridhar (left). (photo: S. Chen)



RESOURCES FOR THE INTERESTED READER

American Folklore Society

<http://www.afsnet.org/>

The American Folklore Society, founded in 1888, is an association of people who study and communicate knowledge about folklore throughout the world. Sections of the webpage include:

The AFS Review publishes a wide range of materials, including essays, notes, queries, as well as all the materials once included in the AFS Newsletter (news, reports, job postings, program listings, etc.).

About the American Folklore Society describes the Society and its activities.

The Folklore Commons, a wiki-style knowledge base of any and all information with relevance to the field, allows members to post information to pages in the following categories: About Folklore, About Folklore Studies, Organizations and Institutions, Consultants and Contacts, Publications, and Resources for Folklorists.

Forums provide space for members to discuss questions and issues in the field.

Smithsonian Center for Folklife

<http://www.folklife.si.edu/>

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage is dedicated to the collaborative research, presentation, conservation, and continuity of traditional knowledge and artistry with diverse contemporary cultural communities in the United States and around the world.

The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage is a research and educational unit of the Smithsonian Institution. The Center produces the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, exhibitions, documentary films and videos, symposia, publications, and educational materials. The Center conducts ethnographic and cultural heritage policy oriented research, maintains the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, and provides educational and

research opportunities through fellowships, internships, and training programs. The Center also produces major national cultural events consistent with its mission.

The American Folklife Center

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>

The twentieth century has been called the age of documentation, and folklorists and other ethnographers have taken advantage of each succeeding technology in order to record the voices and music of many regional, ethnic, and cultural groups, in the United States and around the world. Much of this priceless documentation has been assembled and preserved in the American Folklife Center's Archive of Folk Culture, which founding head Robert W. Gordon, in 1928, called "a national project with many workers." As we enter the twenty-first century the American Folklife Center is working on the critical issues of digital preservation, Web access, and archival management.

All of these images, sounds, written accounts, and myriad more items of cultural documentation await researchers at the Center's Archive of Folk Culture, where over 4,000 collections, assembled over the years from "many workers," embody the very heart and soul of our national traditional life and the cultural life of communities from many regions of the world.

The Society for the Arts in Healthcare (US)

http://www.thesah.org/template/page.cfm?page_id=1

The Society for the Arts in Healthcare is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation in Washington, DC. Founded in 1991, the Society for the Arts in Healthcare is dedicated to advancing arts as integral to healthcare by:

- demonstrating the valuable roles the arts can play in enhancing the healing process;
- advocating for the integration of the arts into the environment and delivery of care within healthcare facilities;
- assisting in the professional development and management of arts programming for healthcare populations;
- providing resources and education to healthcare and arts professionals;
- encouraging and supporting research and investigation into the beneficial effects of the arts in healthcare.

Arts Council of England: A prospectus for arts and health (UK)

http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/a-prospectus-for-arts-and-health/

This prospectus, produced jointly by the Department of Health and Arts Council England, celebrates and promotes the benefits of the arts in improving everyone's well-being, health and healthcare, and its role in supporting those who work in and with the National Health Service.

Arts & Health South West (UK)

Arts and Health: Understanding Evaluation

<http://www.artsandhealthsouthwest.org.uk/cmfiles/1719/AHSW%20Signposting%20Sheet%20Understanding%20Evaluation.pdf>

A guide to understanding arts and health evaluation.

The Arts and Health Foundation (Australia)

<http://www.artsandhealthfoundation.org.au/about-us/>

The Arts and Health Foundation aims to improve

individual and community health and well-being in Australia by increasing the knowledge, evidence and capacity of arts activities in all health settings.

State of the Field Report: Arts in Healthcare

<http://www.thesah.org/doc/reports/ArtsInHealthcare.pdf>

According to a report from the Society for the Arts in Healthcare, Americans for the Arts, The Joint Commission and the University of Florida Center for the Arts in Healthcare, benefits from arts programming include shorter hospital stays, less need for medication, and a boost for job satisfaction and employee retention.

Newly made Filipino parols, or lanterns, serve as a potent symbol of hope, blessing, family, and community solidarity, and are a staple Christmas decoration. An ACTA grant supported the Parol Lantern Festival & Parade organized by the Filipino American Development Foundation in San Francisco. The parol making project culminated in a parade through San Francisco's SOMA district, which was historically Filipino Town. (photo: M. Pongkhamsing)



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Front Cover Photos:

Top left: At the Fresno International Hmong New Year a young girl's mother adjusts her turban. (photo: Carl Costas)

Top right: Master artist Jorge Bonifaz Mijangos (second from left) with Apprentice Juan Francisco Parroquin and family practice the traditional art of Mexican son jarocho. (photo: S. Chen)

Bottom: Yafonne Chen studies traditional Chinese Wushu (sword dance) with Master Ling Mei Zhang. (photo: S. Chen)

Back Cover Photos:

Top left: Saddlemaker Garry McClintock, a Master in ACTA's Apprenticeship Program, working in his shop in Descanso, California. (photo: S. Chen)

Top right: Afro-Cuban batá Master drummer Juan Carlos Blanco Riera (right) works with Apprentice Menelike Turner. (photo: S. Chen)

Bottom left: Master artist Shaka Zulu (right) rehearsing with Apprentice Latanya Tigner on mukudji, an African still dance, a tradition originally performed by women in West Africa. (photo: S. Chen)

Bottom right: Master textile artist Ju Yang (left) and her daughter-in-law, Apprentice Pao Ge Vue, with the tiab dawb, a hand-pleated skirt that is an essential part of the traditional White Hmong woman's ceremonial outfit. (photo: S. Chen)

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WALTER & ELISE HAAS FUND



IN MEMORIAM

Norma Turner Behill (1931-2011) was a prominent elder and spiritual leader affiliated with the Central California Mono and Dumna tribes from the Auberry, North Fork, and Table Mountain areas. In this 1994 photo, she is “calling the wind” to help her winnow her acorn in the large redbud sumaya (gathering basket) she made. A recognized Medicine-person among Indian tribes throughout California, Mrs. Behill was also known statewide as a traditional basket maker, cultural expert, tribal historian, storyteller, and community activist. In the early 1970s Mrs. Behill became involved in the revitalization of traditional California Indian cultural and spiritual practices. She dedicated her life to working with Indian youth and children, developing cultural and education programs based on native traditional and spiritual teachings—which emphasized ‘Walking the Red Road’ and abstaining from drugs and alcohol. Mrs. Behill helped establish the first Native American alcohol recovery program in the Fresno area (Turtle Lodge), and served on the boards of several statewide organizations, including California Traditional Indian Health Program and California Indian Basketweavers Association. (photo: A. Kitchener)





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