



**Media Contacts:**  
Vanessa Leitman, National YoungArts Foundation  
[vleitman@youngarts.org](mailto:vleitman@youngarts.org)  
305-377-1140

Justin Holden, Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors  
[holdenj@finnpartners.com](mailto:holdenj@finnpartners.com)  
212-715-1572

**NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES  
1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL YOUNGARTS AWARENESS DAY  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2014**

**A Nationwide One-Day Event  
Encouraging Young Artists to Pursue their Passions and  
#KeepArtsAlive**

**MIAMI, FL (August 25, 2014)** – The [National YoungArts Foundation \(YoungArts\)](#), the non-profit organization that contributes to the cultural vitality of the nation by supporting the artistic development of talented young artists, today announces *YoungArts Awareness Day*, a nationwide initiative to “keep arts alive” on Monday, September 8. Encouraging everyone who has a creative instinct to take part, *YoungArts Awareness Day* will feature pop-up performances and events in Los Angeles, Miami, and New York City and invites artists across the country to create and share their own work, or their artistic experiences at museums and concerts via social media with the tags **#keepartsalive**, **#youngarts** and **#youngartsawarenessday**.

“*YoungArts Awareness Day* seeks to call attention to the fact that the arts are an indispensable part of our lives and that artists are viable contributors to the future of our country,” stated Paul T. Lehr, President and CEO of YoungArts. “Our goal is to activate the public and our more than 20,000 YoungArts alumni and to help keep arts alive by propelling young artists to pursue their passions, whether by applying to be a part of the YoungArts family or by other means.”

Over the past 33-plus years, YoungArts has contributed to the success of thousands of artists who have gone on to be successful leaders in their fields including: actors **Viola Davis**, **Andrew Rannells**, **Kerry Washington**, **Adrian Grenier** and **Anna Gunn**; artists **Doug Aitken**, **Daniel Arsham**, **Hernan Bas**, **Naomi Fisher** and **Jean Shin**; American Ballet Theater Principal Dancer **Gillian Murphy**; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Rehearsal Director **Matthew Rushing**; renowned choreographer **Desmond Richardson**; Broadway performers **Raúl Esparza** (four-time Tony Award nominee), **Santino Fontana** (Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *Cinderella*) and **Ryan McCartan** (*Heathers: The Musical*); vocalists **Josh Groban**, **Chris Young**, **Judith Hill**, Metropolitan Opera star **Eric Owens** and **Liisi LaFontaine** (who won “The Winner Is...”); writers **Jenji Kohan** (*Orange is the New Black*), **Christopher Castellani**, **Sam Lipsyte** (*New York Times* Best Seller) and **Tarell Alvin McCraney** (2014 MacArthur Fellow); musicians **Terence Blanchard**, **Gerald Clayton**, **Conrad Tao**, **Elizabeth Roe**, and **Dave Eggar**; cinematographers **Doug Blush** (*20 Feet from Stardom*), **Ethan Lader** and **Lucas Leyva**; and arts administrators such as American Ballet Theater Chief Executive Officer, **Rachel Moore**.

“YoungArts to me is an organization about the future,” remarked YoungArts Master Teacher and Academy-Award winning actor and director **Robert Redford**. “I think that art needs to play a greater role in the educational system we have. A greater role in society. A greater role in describing who we are as a culture. And I think YoungArts is organizationally set up to propel that.”

“At a time when funding for arts education is low—and the country is more focused on academic and athletic accomplishments—[YoungArts] continues to celebrate creative talent,” stated **Allegra Goodman**, YoungArts Alumna. “I had always dreamed of becoming a writer, but [YoungArts] validated my dream. I promised myself that if I ever became successful, I would come back to YoungArts Week and tell other kids that it is possible—you can make your dreams come true. There is nothing simple or straightforward about becoming an artist, but if you don’t mind the work you can find such joy.”

*YoungArts Awareness Day* coincides with National Arts in Education Week, which will take place September 7 through 13, when the National Education Association will celebrate, promote and showcase the immense role arts education has in producing engaged, successful, college and career ready students.

### **How to Participate in YoungArts Awareness Day**

A variety of free public events will be taking place to celebrate *YoungArts Awareness Day*. In Miami, where YoungArts is headquartered and **Mayor Tomás Pedro Regalado** has proclaimed September 8 as *YoungArts Awareness Day*, a mural by local YoungArts Alumnus (2014 Visual Arts winner **Lee Pivnik**) and a well-known Miami based muralist and visual artist **Douglas Hoekzema** (“Hox”) will be unveiled; pop-up performances by YoungArts Alumni will take place throughout the city; and a premiere screening of the HBO documentary special *Joshua Bell: A YoungArts MasterClass* will be held, followed by a YoungArts Salon and performance with Grammy Award-winning violinist **Joshua Bell** and YoungArts Alumni, sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. In New York and Los Angeles, pop-up performances will showcase YoungArts Alumni. Details to be announced soon.

Throughout the day, YoungArts invites all artists to share their work and tell their personal story of why the arts matter on social media and to connect with *YoungArts Awareness Day* through the tags **#keepartsalive**, **#youngarts** and **#youngartsawarenessday**. For inspiration, a playlist highlighting the work of select YoungArts Alumni will launch on Spotify [here](#), and specially commissioned limited-edition merchandise, designed by YoungArts Alumni Lee Pivnik, will be available on the [YoungArts Zazzle store](#). Proceeds from Zazzle purchases will support YoungArts programs, which provide promising artists with life-changing experiences with renowned mentors, access to significant scholarships, national recognition, and other opportunities throughout their careers in order to help ensure that the nation’s most outstanding emerging artists are inspired to pursue careers in the arts. Encourage young artists in your life to apply to YoungArts before October 17, 2014. Applications are available <http://www.youngarts.org/apply>.

Additionally, the public can help YoungArts keep the arts alive by texting “YA” to 41444, to make a donation to YoungArts in honor of *YoungArts Awareness Day*.

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION**

The National YoungArts Foundation was established in 1981 by Lin and Ted Arison to identify and support the next generation of artists and to contribute to the cultural vitality of the nation by investing in the artistic development of talented young artists in the visual, literary, design and performing arts. Each year, there are approximately 11,000 applications to YoungArts from 15-18 year old (or grades 10-12) artists, and from these, approximately 700 winners are selected.

YoungArts provides these emerging artists with life-changing experiences and validation by renowned mentors, access to significant scholarships, national recognition and other opportunities throughout their careers to help ensure that the nation's most outstanding emerging artists are encouraged to pursue careers in the arts. To date, YoungArts has honored more than 20,000 alumni, including Doug Aitken, Josh Groban, Jenji Kohan, Desmond Richardson, Kerry Washington and Vanessa Williams, with over \$6 million in monetary awards; facilitated in excess of \$150 million in college scholarship opportunities; and enabled its participants to work with master teachers who are among the most distinguished artists in the world, such as Marina Abramović, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Plácido Domingo, Zaha Hadid, Robert Redford and Bruce Weber.

In addition, YoungArts is working with world-renowned architect and YoungArts Artistic Advisor Frank Gehry to transform the recently acquired former Bacardi Tower and Museum buildings and three-and-a-half acre campus into its national headquarters, which will support expanded local activities in Miami and across the country.

For more information, visit [youngarts.org](http://youngarts.org), [facebook.com/YoungArtsFoundation](https://facebook.com/YoungArtsFoundation) or [twitter.com/YoungArts](https://twitter.com/YoungArts). To watch a brief video about YoungArts, [click here](#).

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