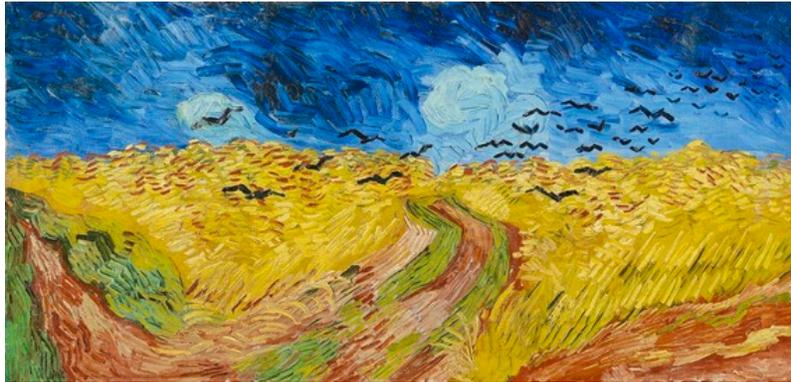


ARTERIES

THE LIFE BLOOD
OF ARTS IN
MONTANA



Wheatfield with Crows, By Vincent Van Gogh (1890). We each navigate blessing and torment in our own ways. Carry on.

Every artist, sooner or later, feels “a terrible discouragement gnawing at your psychic energy,” as Vincent Van Gogh wrote of in a letter to his brother, Theo, in June of 1880. The struggling artist asked, “Does what goes on inside show on the outside? Someone has a great fire in his soul and nobody ever comes to warm themselves at it, and passers-by see nothing but a little smoke at the top of the chimney and then go on their way. So now what are we to do, keep this fire alive inside, have salt in ourselves?”

What keeps the great fire in your soul burning? In many ways, it's artists whose furnace must burn brightest, because the light of art guides us through the confusions of the world. This week we ask two things in service to this light:

1. **Tell us about your light in the darkness.** A time a work of art helped you, healed you, strengthened or inspired you. Just a 100-word anecdote, a photo, a work of art. [Send it here.](#)
2. **If you're an artist,** consider joining our Art Works program (below). Part of your engine runs on revenue, and we want to help you build yours.

Have faith in the salt in yourself.

Krys Holmes
Executive Director
krys.holmes@mt.gov



COME MEET THE ARTS COUNCIL!

MAC invites you to a reception to meet our three new Arts Council members, and enjoy some time with staff in the stunning spaces of the [C.M. Russell Museum](#) in Great Falls. Join us **Thursday, Dec. 4, 5:30-7:30 pm** for light snacks, a cash bar, and time for conviviality. No agenda but to greet one another and be inspired. See you there!

SPOTLIGHT





Figure drawing just for seniors: boosting the creative potential of Montana's 60-and-betters at the Missoula Art Museum. Interested in learning more? Attend MAC's virtual Creative Aging conference.

Arts learning expressly for adults over 60 is widely recognized as a critical part of a fulfilling life. Creative Aging programs center on providing robust professionally-led arts workshops that initiate or deepen participants' learning in an artform, support their own daily practice, and help build community among peers. Creative aging programs also provide helpful revenue streams for teaching artists trained in this work and the organizations that sponsor them. With support from [Lifetime Arts](#), MAC has collaborated with Montana State Library to fund creative aging programs in numerous Montana towns. One great example that's been underway for a month: the Missoula Art Museum's Figure Drawing class, led by artist Bev Beck Glueckert.

Interested in learning more about creative aging workshops, or how to find training as a teaching artist for this kind of work? MAC will be hosting a virtual Creative Aging conference over two mornings, December 10 and 11, from 9 AM to noon to showcase recent work, provide professional development on Creative Aging-related topics, and connect those interested with professional teaching artists trained in leading workshops for older adults. The mini-conference is free. Email Monica Grable at Monica.Grable@mt.gov for details and the link.

FOR ARTISTS

Build your business, boost your revenue: MAC introduces its revamped professional development for artists program—previously called the Montana Artrepreneur Program, now called simply: **Art Works**. Open to all disciplines, from musicians to beadworkers, Art Works will help creative professionals develop entrepreneurial skills to sustain their practice. Using both virtual and in-person sessions, the program provides accurate and up-to-date information tailored to the needs of participants. More importantly, each cohort in the Art Works program is a group of collaborators, workshoping key elements like artist statements, presentations, and goalsetting together. No more laboring alone.

The program runs March-May 2026 and includes four in-person intensive workshops (specific dates/locations determined by the hometown & needs of participants) and four virtual meetings focusing on class content and prep work—plus homework and readings on your own. **We'll be rolling out information**, so stay tuned.

Program guidelines are [available here](#). Ready to apply? [Click here](#).

Deadline: Jan 5. Questions? Email Brian: Brian.Moody2@mt.gov.

Boost your success as an artist—in any discipline—in the new Art Works program at MAC. All artists are entrepreneurs. The goal of the Art Works program is to boost your entrepreneurial skills.

Call for art: MSU Bozeman seeks proposals for five original artworks to be installed on the campus Caring For Our Own Program (CO-OP) spaces in five different nursing buildings on campus. The CO-OP program supports Indigenous nursing students in their work to improve healthcare in Native communities. Proposals should honor Suzie Walking Bear Yellowtail, first Indigenous registered nurse in the



U.S. (Pryor, MT), as well as broader themes of community, empowerment, and belonging. Proposals due Jan 5th. [Learn more here.](#)

Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail (Apsaalooke) is known as the first Indigenous registered nurse in the U.S. MSU Bozeman now seeks 5 artworks honoring her legacy.



Creative West Artist Fund offers \$5,000 grants to individual artists in the West, plus a four-month coaching and community care series to help artists strengthen their practice, deepen networks, and nurture abundance. Artists must be engaged in creative or cultural work that contributes to community connection, cultural preservation, or creative innovation. [Learn more here.](#) Deadline Nov. 30th.

FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Creative Forces/NEA Military Healing Arts Network grant program is now open, accepting proposals for community-based arts engagement projects that support the health, well-being and quality of life for military and veteran populations, including family members and caregivers. Grants of \$10,000-\$25,000 can go a long way to addressing the needs of Montana's veterans and their communities. Deadline Jan 15th. [Click here for the link to learn & apply.](#)

Meanwhile, here are additional resources:

- [Sign up for office hours \[calendly.com\]](#)
- [Five Helpful Hints for Applicants \[youtube.com\]](#) (video)
- [Military and Family Needs Assessment and Literature Review: Considerations for Arts Providers and Creative Arts Therapists \[arts.gov\]](#) (report)



New York-based dance company Exit12, founded by a former marine, uses their NEA Creative Forces grant to provide 8-week dance courses for veterans to learn how to express the inexpressible through movement. What can your arts organization do for Montana's veterans? Photo by Alberto Vasari

Last call for arts education grants: MAC closes out 2025 with the final round of applications for the **AISC Experiences** grant program, providing up to \$2,500 (no match required) for a range of artist-led experiences, tools and supplies, or travel support to connect learners with hands-on arts experiences. (AISC: Artists in Schools & Communities. Sometimes acronyms are your friend.) For more than 50 years, MAC has distributed arts education funds from the National Endowment for the Arts to schools and communities across Montana to provide access to amazing arts learning opportunities for people of all ages.



The application deadline is December 11th. Find guidelines at the link above, or email Monica Grable: Monica.Grable@mt.gov.

With AISC support, students from the A VOICE at Two Eagle River School in Pablo worked with a variety of film camera formats including large format 4x5" and 8x10" view cameras, and medium- and small-format twin lens reflex cameras. In this picture students Josie Usher (left) and Allyah Seaton are setting up a still life image with a 4"x5" view camera. Photo by David J. Spear.

GOOD TO KNOW

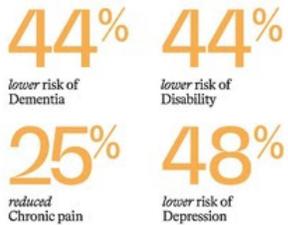
"An abundance of snows..." In its fall review of "must-see" art museum and gallery shows across the US, *The New York Times* featured the Montana-made exhibition of textile art called **"Threads,"** now on exhibit at the **Yellowstone Art Museum** and touring statewide through Montana Art Gallery Directors Association (MAGDA). Cool that in the NYT's hopscotch across America, they included this exhibit, created by Montana women who are artists, mothers and art teachers. [Click here to see MAGDA's current and upcoming Montana touring exhibits.](#)

"Fertile Ground," by Crystal McCallie, is just one stunning piece in the "Threads" exhibit, recently celebrated by *The New York Times*.



PROVEN HEALTH IMPACT OF THE ARTS

Arts participation is associated with better mental health, lower risk of depression, enhanced health behaviors, reduced loneliness, reduced participation in adverse health behaviors, and promoting healthy aging equal to the protective effect of weekly exercise.¹



You should know: Participating in arts activities *of any kind* helps make kids more likely to graduate, young adults more likely to vote, and all adults 20% less likely to be depressed. And older adults have a **higher mortality risk** if they do not engage in active arts. Don't believe us: These stats are collected from multiple studies from the World Health Organization. Spread the word.

What just happened? The National League of Cities posted a really brief rundown of how the government shutdown has affected local communities (hospitals, small businesses, children....) including 11,353 Montanans who work in federal civil service. [Read about it here.](#)

STATE OF THE ARTS

Do you receive the State of the Arts newspaper?

It's free, statewide, and fun to read. [You can subscribe here](#) to get one in your mailbox.

COOL QUOTES

"To keep on, to keep on, that's what is needed."

Vincent Van Gogh