

## NEWS FROM TCA: FEBRUARY 2020

[arts.texas.gov](https://arts.texas.gov)   [State of the Arts License Plate](#)   [Art Jobs](#)



Investing in a Creative Texas



San Antonio's Bihl Haus Arts' Forward, Arts! program is one of the first recipients of new TCA grant funds for arts healing activities for active service members and veterans. Scroll down to read more! Photo by Forward, Arts! instructor Russell Stephenson courtesy of Bihl Haus Arts.

### TCA March Commission Meeting in Fort Worth

The Texas Commission on the Arts will hold its next quarterly board meeting in Fort Worth on **March 12, 2020**. The meeting will be held at the **Fort Worth Community Arts Center at 1300 Gendy Street** in the Fort Worth Cultural District. The meeting will start at **9 AM** and will be open to the public. The public will have an opportunity to address the Commission; representatives of area arts organizations are encouraged to attend and to provide brief information on their organizations. For more information, please contact TCA Executive Assistant [Dana Douglass Swann](mailto:Dana.Douglass@arts.texas.gov) or [front.desk@arts.texas.gov](mailto:front.desk@arts.texas.gov).

### Texas Poetry Out Loud Finals February 22

The Texas Commission on the Arts will host the

Texas Poetry Out Loud recitation contest for high school students at 1:00 PM on Saturday, February 22, in Austin. The finals, graciously hosted by the [Bullock Texas State History Museum](#), will be open to the public and free to attend. 30 students will represent their schools in the competition. The event will be hosted by internationally renowned Texas poet Naomi Shihab Nye, who is also the national Young People's Poet Laureate for 2019-2021.



*The 2019 Texas Poetry Out Loud competitors.  
Photo: Amanda Klaus.*

The [Poetry Out Loud](#) recitation contest is a national project of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. This exciting program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage. High school students memorize poems and perform them in competition. At the state level, the winner and runner up receive cash awards and their school libraries receive money to help them buy poetry books. State winners compete in Washington, DC for a pool of \$50,000 in scholarships for students and cash awards for schools.

## Governor Abbott Appoints New TCA Commissioner



*Commissioner Charles  
C. Gaines*

Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Charles C. Gaines to the Texas Commission on the Arts for a term set to expire on August 31, 2023. Based in Round Rock, Commissioner Gaines is an advancement officer for Abilene Christian University. He is a board member of the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce and the Williamson County Children's Advocacy Center. Additionally, he is a member of the Round Rock Ascend Leadership Program and an alumnus of the American Israel Education Foundation initiative to Israel.

Commissioner Gaines received a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and a Master of Business Administration in Healthcare Administration from Abilene Christian University. TCA looks forward to welcoming Commissioner Gaines at our March 12 Commission meeting in Fort Worth.

## Support TCA: Get the Plate that Supports the Arts



TCA's State of the Arts license plate looks great on all kinds of vehicles, shows Texas pride, and supports public arts funding in Texas.

Available at <http://tinyurl.com/TXartsLP>, the plate costs a mere \$30 a year in addition to vehicle registration. \$22 of the \$30 fee goes into TCA's grants budget! TCA is grateful to the many Texas drivers who purchase the *State of the Arts* license

plate, and to the wonderful arts organizations that help promote it to their patrons.

## Coming Soon: 2020 Young Masters

Next month, the Texas Commission on the Arts and the [Texas Cultural Trust](#) (TCT) will name the 2020 class of Young Masters. The Young Masters program is a joint initiative that provides exemplary Texas-based arts students in grades 8-11 with the financial help they need to pursue

advanced study in the areas of visual arts, literary arts, music, theater, dance, musical theater, and media arts. The fifteen 2020 Young Masters will be awarded grants of \$5,000 per year for two years to further their studies in their chosen arts disciplines, all before they start college. The Trust and TCA have named 154 prior Young Masters, awarding almost \$1,000,000 to these aspiring artists since the program's inception in 2002. The program received 283 applications for the November 15, 2019 deadline.

## TEXAS YOUNG MASTERS



Mark your calendars: the Texas Cultural Trust will celebrate the 2020 Texas Young Masters at a star-studded event on **April 20 at Austin's ZACH Theatre**. Tickets will go on sale soon. For more information or to [support this program](#), visit <https://txculturaltrust.org/young-masters/>.

## Forward, Arts!: A TCA-Funded Program Serving Veterans through Art

In fall 2018, [Bihl Haus Arts](#), located in San Antonio, launched "[Forward, Arts!](#)" an innovative program offering drawing and painting classes taught by professional artist teachers to veterans who experience depression or are clinically or self-diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The mission of the program is to offer veterans opportunities for healing, wellness and community through engagement with the arts.

An early participant in the program had this to say about its benefits, "When I first came to the Forward Arts class I was unsure of what to expect. I came with a desire to learn to draw but a greater expectation was to find some relief from my symptoms. By the end of the first class I realized that I was able to relax and just focus on the instruction and drawing. In doing so the stress, the neuropathy, and moreover the pain levels that I had experienced had decreased or at least my focus had been distracted away from them. I have continued attending classes. **I have found that the three hours of class have become an oasis of relief for me.**

"I have found the requirements of the art class to be beneficial for me in other ways as well. The concentration helps me to focus and 'forget' about everything else for a while. The hand-eye coordination, attention to detail, and manual dexterity were initially challenging because of my tremors. However, **with the instruction provided and some suggestions I was able to find ways to make the tremors work for me in drawing,... almost always. This has helped me identify ways to work around the tremors in other aspects of my life as well.**"

Selected works created by Forward, Arts! participants were included as part of an exhibition titled "Beyond Service," which opened just before Veterans Day in 2019. The artworks in this



*Photo by Forward, Arts!  
instructor Russell Stephenson. All photos  
courtesy of Bihl Haus Arts.*

exhibition, organized by Wounded Warrior and participating artist Mario Lopez, were created by veterans who have served in various branches of the military during the Vietnam War and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Take a [virtual tour](#) of that exhibition!

This year, the Texas Commission on the Arts gave Bihl Haus Arts **\$7,000 Arts Respond Project Health & Human Services grant** made up of new funding TCA received in the 2019 Legislative Session for arts healing grants for active service members and veterans. With the help of these new funds, the program is expanding to a second location this spring, this time to provide art classes exclusively to women veterans, many of whom have also been diagnosed with Military Sexual Trauma (MTS).

**TCA encourages arts organizations to develop or expand on existing programs that serve and engage Texas veterans, members of active duty military, and their families. The next deadline to apply for an [Arts Respond Project Health & Human Services arts healing grant](#) for active service members and veterans is July 15, 2020.**

---

## Finding Work/Life Balance in the Arts: TCA Professional Development Webinar Series



*Allison Orr. Photo by Sarah Bork Hamilton.*

Did you know that it takes six weeks to form a new habit? If you resolved to have a better work/life balance in 2020, our next webinar comes just in time to help you stay on track! TCA's next live webinar, **Finding Work/Life Balance in the Arts**, will be offered at **2 PM Central on February 19, 2020**. Start your year off right by working smarter and making more time for your personal life! **Allison Orr**, Artistic Director of [Forklift Danceworks](#), will share tips on self-care for busy executive directors, artistic directors, or for anyone else in the arts! Allison will provide tips on

making time for the creative process, family, and relaxation even when your email and social media are blowing up. If you'd like to be better at keeping creative priorities in mind, time management, and knowing when and why to delegate or put off work, join us for our next live professional development webinar. [Register now](#) for the webinar-- it counts toward keeping that resolution!

Allison Orr is the founder and artistic director of Forklift Danceworks, a nonprofit dance company that activates communities through collaborative creative processes. Recently named a 2019 Dance | USA Dance for Social Change Fellow and a 2018 Doris Duke United States Artist Fellow, Allison was named Best Choreographer of 2016, 2017, and 2018 by the Austin Chronicle, Most Outstanding Choreographer of 2003, 2008 and 2013 by the Austin Critics Table, one of Tribeza Magazine's Top 10 Austinites, and one of eight "Extraordinary Texans" by Texas Highways Magazine. Her large-scale work *The Trash Project* was named a #1 Arts Event by the Austin American-Statesman, #1 Dance Event by the Austin Chronicle, and Most Outstanding Dance Concert by the Austin Critics Table. It is also the subject of a feature-length documentary film entitled *Trash Dance*. Currently a Distinguished Fellow of the College of Environment at Wesleyan University, Allison directed 2016's *The Artist in the City*, a hands-on course in her community-based dance-making practice where Wesleyan students embedded within the local water/wastewater department to create collaborative artistic projects with city employees. Allison has also taught children, adults over 65, and people with disabilities. Before founding Forklift Danceworks, Allison danced and studied with Deborah Hay and MacArthur Fellow Liz Lerman. Allison is a native Texan and holds an MFA in Choreography and Performance from Mills College and a BA in Anthropology from Wake Forest University.

If you aren't able to attend the live webinar, or if you missed our December webinar, [Navigating Nonprofit Life Cycles](#), good news! All of our professional development webinars are recorded and available [online](#) for free.

## Catching Up with Young Master Mia Heckler (Theater, 2016)

Since the Young Masters program started in 2002, the Texas Commission on the Arts and the [Texas Cultural Trust](#) have named 154 Young Masters, awarding almost \$1,000,000 to these aspiring artists. As we look forward to the designation of the 2020 class of Young Masters next month, we're catching up with **Mia Heckler**, who was named a Young Master only four years ago.



Mia Hecker. Photo: Earl Baudin.

Mia Heckler was a Bellaire junior when she was named a Young Master. She used her Young Masters funding to attend the [TUTS Humphreys School of Musical Theatre](#) in Houston in 2016. In 2017, she attended the [Performing Arts Project](#) in Tallahassee, FL. She writes, "Texas Young Masters allowed me to work with top professionals in 2016 and 2017 to receive high quality musical theatre training, alleviating the financial burden that typically comes along with it. I trained rigorously in voice, acting, and dance, then finished off 2017 booking a role in a professional production of *Godspell* [A.D. Players] at the end of my senior year of high school."

Mia has appeared in productions by HITS Theatre (*Grease*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *13 the Musical*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Shrek the Musical*) and Theatre Under the Stars (*A Christmas Carol*, *Mary Poppins*), among others. "Currently, I am originating a principle role in the new musical *Lady of Agreda*. The story follows Maria de Jesus, a Catholic nun, in Agreda, Spain. In the 1600s, the 'Lady In Blue' appears to Jumano natives in West Texas (at the time New Mexico) and introduces them to Christianity. She serves as spiritual advisor to King Philip IV, faces questioning by the Spanish Inquisition and holds the title of one of the nine most controversial figures in the 17th century! Our book is beautifully written by Marley Singletary with an enchanting score by composer and lyricist Cynthia Jordan. We just finished a successful reading, and the show will run March 12-April 5 at Queensbury Theatre in Houston." Mia also shares her talents in her work as a cantor and worship vocalist in churches around Houston.

TCA is proud to have contributed to Mia's early development as an artist, along with our partners at the Texas Cultural Trust.



Texas Commission on the Arts

anina@arts.texas.gov  
<http://www.arts.texas.gov>

Copyright © 2020. All Rights Reserved.