

NEWS RELEASE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 16, 2019

NATIONAL ARTS INCUBATION LAB TO LAUNCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

NORMAN, OKLA.— The University of Oklahoma Weitzenhoffer College of Fine Arts will launch the inaugural National Arts Incubation Lab from May 23 through 25. Eight outstanding artists will work with six leading experts of the arts industry. These artists are chosen by competitive application from across North America, and were selected on the basis of their artistic excellence and potential for breakthrough. Described by some as “SHARK TANK” meets “THE ARTS,” the Lab is unique for combining and amplifying the best of both startup investment culture and existing arts granting models.

The Lab administers a \$10,000 National Arts Incubation Lab Artrepreneur Award to the top artist project.

The eight artists, called Artrepreneurs within the program, are New York’s Attacca String Quartet, Toronto’s Against the Grain Theatre, Washington D.C.’s Boulanger Initiative, Dallas’ Julius String Quartet, Boston’s Miki Sawada, Oklahoma City’s M.J. Alexander, Utah’s Mundi Project, and Montreal’s Nune Melik.

The experts, called Expert Artrepreneurs within the program, are Raymond Bisha SVP, Naxos Records; Idris Mootee, CEO, Idea Couture; Kim Noltemy, CEO, Dallas Symphony Orchestra; Shanta Thake, The Public Theatre; Ryhna Thompson, President, Envision Management; and Max Weitzenhoffer, Chairman, Nimax Theatres.

After hearing the Artrepreneurs pitch their projects, the six experts are matched with the Artrepreneurs through a system gauging their interest and ability to help. The experts address the gaps and questions they have of an Artrepreneur’s project by setting objectives for them to achieve. Students within the College of Fine Arts’ Arts Management and Entrepreneurship (AME) program serve as the Graduate Consulting Team helping the Artrepreneurs reach these objectives.

“Few artists of international caliber have formal business training,” says Mary Margaret Holt, Dean of the College of Fine Arts. “If one of the questions an Expert has regarding a project can be examined and remedied, for example,

by a market analysis, the Lab does not leave the artist Googling how to build this framework. Our students work alongside the artists to create a more coherent narrative.”

The National Arts Incubation Lab’s unique system supports artists and their career projects through a central framework: boosting N.E.R.V.E. (Network, Expertise, Resources, Visibility, Experience). “They say raising a child takes a village,” adds two-time Tony Award-winning producer, Max Weitzenhoffer. “How much does it take to create a project which reaches thousands? We realize the dynamism of the 21st century arts market needs a 21st century support model: While grant agencies primarily support through monetary funds, we seek to support great art and artists through the five essential values in N.E.R.V.E.”

The Lab and all its activities are open to the public. Artist presentations to the experts begin Thursday, May 23, and continue Friday, May 24. The Lab culminates with a final session from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 25, after which the expert panel will choose the winner(s) of the \$10,000 award.

The \$10,000 National Arts Incubation Lab Artrepreneur Award is made possible by the generosity of Max Weitzenhoffer. OU faculty members supporting the program include professors Adrian Fung, Ron Bolen and Tom Lumpkin from the Price College of Business and Professor Jonathan Hils from the College of Fine Arts.

Dean Holt would like to thank the OU Price College of Business, Norman Economic Development Coalition, Tom Love Innovation Hub, Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth, and Norman Arts Council for their collaboration and support.

SCHEDULE:

May 23 and May 24 (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) at the OU Innovation Hub, 201 David Boren Blvd., Norman, Oklahoma. On Saturday, May 25 (1 p.m. to 3 p.m.) at the OU Gene Rainbolt Graduate School of Business, 865 Research Pkwy., Ste. 300, Oklahoma City.

The Weitzenhoffer Family College of Fine Arts, an integral part of the University of Oklahoma, recognizes the universal language of the arts and its crucial role in creating and sustaining a vibrant, culturally diverse environment. The college is committed to a standard of excellence in the fine arts encompassing the university’s mandate for teaching, research/creative activity and service. The faculty, staff and students are dedicated to the promotion of the arts within the state of Oklahoma, the nation and the international community.

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