



ARTIST AS SHAPESHIFTER

By Robyn MacNair

In this rapidly transforming world, artists remain the ultimate shapeshifters. They're not just creators; they're visionaries who navigate the ebb and flow of cultural and technological tides. From the cunning Kitsune of East Asian folklore to the mischievous Coyote of Native American stories, artists have historically mirrored these figures, using their craft to challenge norms and redefine boundaries.

Today, as we stand at the intersection of art and generative AI, the artist's role is more crucial than ever. They bring depth, intention, and a critical eye to an era dominated by instant solutions and digital immediacy. Research underscores this, revealing that creative practices are foundational to developing adaptive, innovative mindsets needed in today's AI-driven landscape. This April, we celebrate the resilience and ingenuity of artists who continuously reinvent themselves and their art.

They teach us that in a world obsessed with answers, the beauty of questioning and transformation through art can illuminate the most authentic paths forward. How do we find joy in the slow and challenging journey of creation? How do we savor the beauty found in struggle, in not having all the answers, and in the rich mosaic of experiences that shape us? Let's embrace the transformative power of art to redefine the possible and design a life that truly resonates with our deepest needs and creative spirits. Here's to living fully in the mystery and celebrating every moment of our creative journey.

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SAUSD ARTS PODS

Listen in on topics creativity, collaboration, communication, and all things arts magic



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CELEBRATIONS

We applaud the incredible achievements across SAUSD! From the spirited first-place victory of Carr Mariachi at the CABE conference to the showcase of over 16 musicals in PK-12 schools, our students and staff shine brightly. Our recent professional learning communities were a hub of collaboration, where educators shared challenges and innovative solutions, strengthening our commitment to arts education. Join us in celebrating these milestones and the vibrant spirit of our arts community!



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She works hard to teach our kids how to sing and how to use the keyboard. I have seen some of the kids that I personally work with come out of their shell using music. It's amazing to see them be able to express themselves. Ms. Lugo is a pleasure to work with!

– Gavi Valdez



COMING UP

Spring Break

- April 7 - 11

ALT Meeting (Zoom)

- Info email Thursday, April 17
- Special Guest Thursday, April 24

District Based Art Staff ILT

- Monday April 14

Whole Group PD

- Thursday April 24

SAUSD Arts Festival Support

- Choral Share April 16
- Mariachi Festival April 30





ARTS IN EDUCATION

By Robyn MacNair

Did you know that March is Youth Arts Education Month? This time is set aside to celebrate the impact of the arts in nurturing young minds and enriching communities. At its heart, arts education isn't just about fostering creativity; it's about crafting a space where every student can express themselves and connect deeply with others. Creativity is a fundamental aspect of being human. It is our birthright.

Boca de Oro, our vibrant arts and culture festival, embodies this spirit. It draws people from all walks of life—students, educators, leaders, and families—to engage in music, dance, theater, film, storytelling, visual arts and more! This festival is a testament to how arts education serves as a cornerstone of innovation and a bridge between generations, cultures, and ideas.

In an era where generative AI and automation are rapidly advancing, it's our human capacity to imagine, create, and inspire that shapes our future. The creative process, integral to every academic discipline, prepares our students not just to face tomorrow but to redefine it. Let's continue to champion the arts in our schools, ensuring every child has the opportunity to see themselves as creators, capable of shaping a world that embraces and celebrates their unique contributions.

As we honor the power of arts education, let's make sure that the arts continue to be a vital part of every student's education, providing them with the tools to dream and build a better tomorrow.



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CELEBRATIONS

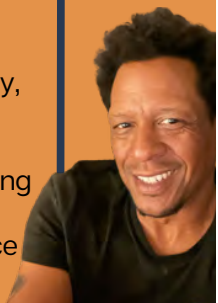
This month, we've been thrilled to honor the originality and talent of our students at LitCon, alongside recognizing the dedication of our staff at the Orange County Music and Arts Administrators (OCMAA) awards. Congratulations to our inspiring nominees—Cyndi Herman, Joseph Kaye, Nena Keller, Adrian Scherger, Diana Torres, and Judi Westing—and to our award recipients: James Raneri for Elementary Music, Lindsie Hardy for Elementary Vocal Music, Sarah Winant for Elementary Theater, Rich Marting for Secondary Theater, and Brenda Fausto for Arts in Special Education. Each of these individuals exemplifies how the arts foster not only individual excellence but also a thriving, connected community.



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As our elementary schools, including Adams, Franklin, Garfield, Heroes, King, Lincoln, Madison, and Roosevelt-Walker, expand their musical programs, the need for expert guidance has never been greater. Enter Brian Crawford, who has been instrumental at Lincoln Elementary, mentoring musical staff and enhancing our productions. His dedication to structuring, systematizing, and enhancing our productions has been instrumental in elevating the performance experience for both students and staff.



COMING UP

Boca de Oro

- Saturday, March 1

ALT Meeting (Zoom)

- Thursday, Mar. 14

Secondary PLC's

- Theatre/Dance Mar. 13
- Music/Vocal Mar. 18
- Visual/Media Mar. 27

Open House

- Intermediate Mar. 20
- Elementary Mar. 27

NAEA Conference

- Mar. 20 - 23



SAUSD ARTS THIS MONTH IN THE ARTS

ISSUE 43 | 02/01/2025



THE HEART OF EXPRESSION

By Robyn MacNair

David Lynch once mused about the fascinating interplay between darkness and creativity, observing, 'Anger and depression and sorrow are beautiful things in a story, but they are like poison to the artist. You must have clarity to create.' His insight resonates deeply within the arts, where the exploration of human emotion often leads to profound creative expression and healing. His words echo in the realm of arts education, where art serves not just as a reflection of our experiences but as a powerful tool for emotional and social resilience.

The arts equip us to navigate and transform our darkest experiences into profound creative expressions, aligning closely with social-emotional learning competencies that are increasingly valued across all sectors of the workforce. According to the World Economic Forum, creativity tops the list of skills for the future, intertwining with emotional intelligence to foster an innovative, resilient workforce. As we teach, learn, and heal through the arts, we not only enhance individual well-being but also create stronger, more empathetic communities.

May we continue to ask ourselves: How might I [and the arts] be a sanctuary for healing and growth, especially during challenging times? Through painting, music, performance, storytelling, dance, and many more ways we express our humanity, we not only enhance individual well-being but also strengthen our communities. Let's explore how, amid uncertainty and turmoil, the arts empower us, bringing people together and fostering justice and understanding.

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CELEBRATIONS

With over 25 years of teaching experience in SAUSD, Caran Holland has been a beacon of passion, joy, and love for many of our students. As a mentor to many of our SAUSD Arts educators, Caran has supported several colleagues and students to find their joy and path in the arts! At this year's California All-State Music Education (CASMEC), Caran was awarded Outstanding Music Educator award! We are thrilled and filled with gratitude to honor our own Caran Holland!



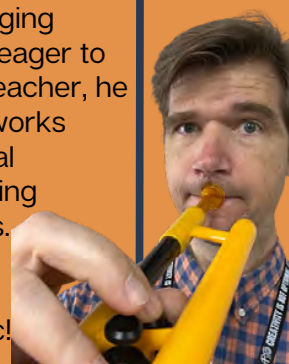
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Students adore Mr. Vismantas, whose passion for music illuminates every lesson, creating a fun and engaging environment that makes them eager to return. More than just a great teacher, he is a supportive colleague who works tirelessly on our school's musical productions, profoundly impacting students' growth as performers. Thank you, Mr. V, for inspiring our community and enriching our school with the joy of music!



COMING UP

District Based Arts ILT

- Monday, Feb. 3

ALT Meeting (Zoom)

- Thursday, Feb. 13

Holiday

- Monday, Feb. 10
- Monday, Feb. 17

LitCon Presentations

- Wednesday, Feb. 19

Duty Day

- Friday, Feb. 21

BOCA SAVE THE DATE MARCH 1, 2025



SAUSD ARTS THIS MONTH IN THE ARTS

ISSUE 42 | 01/01/2025



THE UN-ARTIST

By Robyn MacNair

As we step into the New Year, let's redefine what it means to be an artist. Inspired by Allan Kaprow's vision and Pollock's innovations, we're encouraged to view art not just in galleries or theaters but in our everyday actions. Often, we limit ourselves by claiming, "I'm not an artist." Yet, creativity surrounds us—in a cleverly arranged classroom, a perfectly seasoned dish, or innovative solutions to daily challenges.

Creativity is not exclusive; it's a crucial skill and our human right that we all possess and can enhance. It's time to undefine ourselves to truly find ourselves, embracing the unlearning process to adopt a beginner's mindset—much like children or playful puppies, always curious and exploring without fear.

This month, let's break down the barriers that confine our creativity. Encourage one another to view every environment as a canvas, where every action is an opportunity to create and innovate. Whether you're drawing, designing, teaching, or leading, harness the creativity within to transform and enrich our world. Embrace the "un-artist" in you, exploring the boundless potential of creativity in the everyday. Here's to a new year filled with inspiration, exploration, and artistic expression!



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CELEBRATIONS

After celebrating our students showcasing their learning on stages throughout the district in over 48 performances on stages small, large, indoor, and outdoor, SAUSD Arts wants to pause and celebrate the community that is created and connected through the arts from winter singalongs, to mariachi festivals, instrumental music, rock, band, vocal, gallery and art walks, caroling, and simply gathering with our staff, students, parents, families, and community members alike, we celebrate to chance to share the joy of the arts with all.



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The District Based Arts Ensemble comprised of: Phil Herrera, Jessica Ulloa, Gabbi Poveda, Jade Li, Israel Lizarraga, and Alejandra Morales, cover 35 school sites, releasing the entire 5th grade and some 6th grade classes for 1 hour! With their joy, and expertise in band, violin, vocal music and visual arts, SAUSD Arts is proud to provide more opportunities for more students in various art forms while providing sites with the space to design learning experiences intentionally! [Click for more!](#)



COMING UP

Winter Recess

- Wednesday, Jan 1 - 3

First Day of Spring Instruction

- Monday, Jan. 6

District Based Arts ILT

- Monday, Jan. 6

ALT Meeting (Zoom)

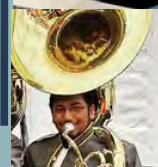
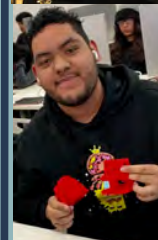
- Thursday, Jan. 9

Holiday

- Monday, Jan. 13

Whole Group HS/IS PD

- Thursday, Jan. 23



By Robyn MacNair

As the year winds down and winter break approaches, we find ourselves surrounded by the sights and sounds of celebration. Decorated hallways, homes, and classrooms inspire creativity. Wrapped gifts spark curiosity—what's in the box, the bag, or written on the card? It's a season of wonder, reflection, and connection.

This time of year reminds us of something essential to the human experience: the transformative power of play. Play isn't just for children—it's foundational to how we all learn and grow. When we allow ourselves to follow curiosity and see the world differently, we ignite creativity and build genuine relationships. These moments of joyful exploration echo the philosophical foundations of the arts, where discovery, imagination, and expression thrive. The arts, at their core, embody this spirit of play. They invite us to experiment, to embrace wonder, and to create without the constraints of perfection. Whether it's painting, singing, dancing, or simply doodling, the arts reconnect us to a sense of possibility. Rediscovering play, even as adults, helps us nurture these authentic relationships while reigniting our sense of wonder.

As we celebrate the end of the year and welcome the next, let's lean into the creativity and connection that the arts—and play—bring into our lives. Here's to a season of inspiration and joy.



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We celebrate the incredible support for the arts in all its forms—whether it's attending a performance, encouraging a student to pursue their creative passions, or advocating for arts education. Throughout history, the arts have been championed as a reflection of humanity, resonating deeply with our shared experiences and emotions. This winter, as our students shine in performances and showcases across the district, we honor their creativity and the joy they bring to our community. Thank you for celebrating the arts with us and for supporting the next generation of creators and dreamers!



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Mrs. Lerma brings music to our classrooms with a nurturing approach that makes every student feel comfortable expressing themselves. Seeing students proudly sing on stage at flag ceremonies—especially those who might not typically participate—is a testament to her positive influence. Her ability to differentiate lessons and include all students at their level makes her an invaluable part of our school community. We are so fortunate to have her!

-- Pat Ingles



COMING UP

District Based ILT

- Monday, Dec. 2

ALT Meeting (Zoom)

- Thursday, Dec. 12

Duty Day Student Free HS

- Friday, Dec. 20

Modified Day ES

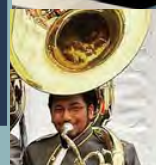
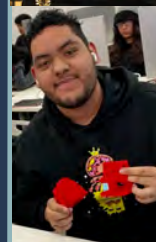
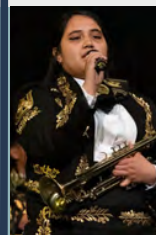
- Friday, Dec. 20

Stuff a Bus

- Friday, Dec. 20

Winter Break

- Monday, Dec. 23 - Jan. 3



SAUSD ARTS THIS MONTH IN THE ARTS

ISSUE 40 | 11/01/2024



COLLECTIVE IMPACT

By Robyn MacNair

"Nothing begins with us. The more we pay attention, the more we begin to realize that all the work we ever do is a collaboration. It's a collaboration with all the art that's come before you and all the art that will come after. It's also a collaboration with the world you're living in. With the experiences you've had. With the tools you use. With the audience. And with who you are today." Rick Rubin, The Creative Act

The arts are at the center of an interconnected ecosystem, fueled by a shared purpose—a universal heart that beats through collective impact. Every mural, performance, and arts program touches not just individuals but entire communities, influencing education, well-being, economic vitality, and social connection. What we create in the arts has a ripple effect, inspiring growth, healing, and transformation. When we engage in the arts, we engage with each other—and the impact reaches far beyond, shaping a more vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable future for everyone.

As we gather in the various spaces and communities of which we are a part, let us all be mindful of the impact of our actions and who belongs at the table of "arts education." In SAUSD Arts, we believe all means all. There's a space for everyone to be their wildly beautiful and expressive individual selves who each contribute to the fabric of a great big quilt of colors, textures, shapes, and materials. Soar high to see the big picture and the collective impact of our intended and unintended collaborations.



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CELEBRATIONS

With new funding from the Arts and Music in Schools (AMS) initiative, SAUSD Arts is excited to expand opportunities for all students, because when we say "all," we mean it. This year, we're thrilled to welcome Naomi Kadinoff, formerly of Villa Intermediate, as we grow our arts ensembles to reach every 5th-grade student. Districts statewide are also increasing their commitment to the arts, hiring more educators and bringing transformative experiences to every classroom. Together, we're building bridges that connect the arts to every learner.



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They hit the ground running as a new addition to our school! In such a short time, I have seen shy and introvert kids come out of their shell using music and singing. The girls do a great job at using music to help students be a better version of themselves. Keep up the good work!

-- Gavriela Valdez



COMING UP

Duty Day & Superintendent Breakfast

- Friday, Nov. 1

District Based ILT

- Monday, Nov. 4

OCMAA Organization Presentation

- Thursday, Nov. 7

CAEA Conference

- Friday, Nov. 8 - 11

ALT Meeting (Zoom)

- Thursday, Nov. 14

Veterans Day

- Monday, Nov. 11

Duty Day Elem. / Parent Conferences

- Monday, Nov. 18



RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

By Robyn MacNair

As October begins and spooky tales take center stage, conversations around the rise of generative AI are just as chilling—focusing on its impact on jobs, creativity, and humanity. In a world where humanity has constantly evolved, where do the arts fit in when generative creation puts humans and AI in the same room to explore possibilities? Artists like Heather Dewey-Hagborg are 3D-printing human faces from discarded DNA, raising questions not just about what technology can do, but what it should do. These advancements challenge our understanding of identity, surveillance, and creativity. Are we at risk of losing what makes us human?

We're witnessing machines replicating music, storytelling, and visual arts with uncanny precision. But how do we, as generative humans, stand alongside this technology? Can AI and human creativity work together to build a more equitable, healthy, and creative world—like the very foundation of the arts? At SAUSD Arts, we're embracing this challenge. Through our Graffiti Arts Program (GAP), mural restoration projects, and collaborations with community artists, we ensure Santa Ana's cultural and creative legacy thrives. These projects, along with our efforts to make theatre spaces safe and welcoming, preserve the human element of art—stories shaped by experience, emotion, and community. As technology shapes the world, it must complement, not replace, the irreplaceable spark of human creativity. This October, let's celebrate the intersection of art and technology while keeping the human touch at the center of it all.



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CELEBRATIONS

Two Century students, Angelina Farias and Valeska Morales, both juniors, have been selected to participate in the prestigious Orange County Young Curators (OCYC) program at the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA) for the 2024–25 school year! The OCYC program brings together high school juniors and seniors from across the county to explore museums, contemporary art, and curatorial practice through hands-on projects. We also want to shout out Angelina Guerrero and Alison Garcia from Century for attending World Savvy Conference and engaging in conversations about AI in education and its possibilities at Google!



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We want to give a huge shout-out to our incredible Choir Teacher, Jocelyne Ramirez! Jocelyn's energy and professionalism are truly inspiring. She has a deep commitment to student success, which shines through in the strong relationships she builds with her students and her connection to our [LRCA] community. We are especially excited as she takes on the ambitious project of producing a musical this year! Thank you, Jocelyne, for your dedication and passion—you are making a difference every day! -- Ms. Cordova



COMING UP

District Based ILT

- Mon. Oct. 7

Secondary PLC's

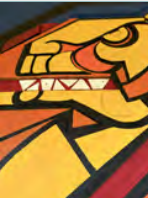
- Theatre/Dance: Oct. 10
- Music: Oct. 17
- Visual / Media: Oct. 24

Art Liaison Team

- Thurs. Oct. 10

Literary Arts Listening Session

- Mon. Oct. 21





REDEFINING PERFECT IMPERFECTION

By Robyn MacNair

Throughout the centuries, humanity has continuously pushed the boundaries of creativity, bringing forth innovations and inventions that have reshaped our world. From the first images on cave walls to the latest advances in generative AI, the human capacity to create remains a powerful force—whether taught, learned, practiced, or simply innate.

However, when it comes to the arts, the pursuit of perfection can often stifle the very creativity that drives us. The idea that we must practice for 10,000 hours to achieve mastery, popularized by Malcolm Gladwell in *Outliers*, suggests that perfection is the ultimate goal. Yet, this notion is flawed. Even after years of practice, the end result will vary from person to person, artist to artist. Why? Because creativity is not about replicating a perfect formula—it's about individual expression, self-discovery, and the beauty of imperfection.

If we strive only for perfection, we risk losing the unique voices that make art so powerful. Art is not about one correct way to create; it's about exploring the limitless possibilities that arise from our differences. Embracing imperfection allows us to grow, to connect more deeply with ourselves and others, and to honor the journey of creation as a deeply personal and transformative experience. As we move forward, let's celebrate the imperfections that make each of us—and our art—unique. It's in these imperfections that true creativity, connection, and authenticity are found.



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CELEBRATIONS

SAUSD Arts is celebrating the expansion of the arts and community with musicals in schools across the district! Connecting not only students and joy, families and staff, SAUSD Arts is making connections department wide with building services, purchasing, budget, and facilities to ensure our spaces are ready to house the magic of creativity and community alike.



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Jeremy has been a huge support to my students and I this year- covering classes during my sick days, providing extra in class support/tiers of differentiation to students who need it and providing irreplaceable support for the Willard Jazz students as they prepared for and engaged with our trip to Washington D.C. this year. Willard Musics' success this year would not have been possible without his dedication and musical prowess.



COMING UP

Labor Day

- Mon. Sept. 2

Back to School Night IS

- Thurs. Sept. 5

District Based ILT

- Mon. Sept. 9

Art Liaison Team

- Thurs. Sept. 12

College & Career Fair

- Thurs. Sept. 12

Secondary PD

- Tues. Sept. 24



ISSUE 37 | 08/01/2024



THE FUTURE OF ARTS EDUCATION

By Robyn MacNair

As we envision our 2024-25 school year, let's challenge ourselves and encourage one another, our students, and colleagues, to create art that challenges conventional narratives and embodies authentic living to imagine all the possibilities as we consider our now and the future. As we navigate a world filled with complexities and injustices, let us harness this power to create meaningful change.

Art has always been a powerful form of rebellion, challenging the status quo and pushing the boundaries of conventional thinking. In its essence, art disrupts the norm and offers alternative perspectives, questioning societal structures and norms. Whether through provocative imagery, bold performances, or innovative compositions, artists express dissent and inspire change. This space to create an authentically unique voice within each individual creator is the type of engagement we hope our students are experiencing in the classroom. Those who experience the art with an open mind and capacity to consider multiple perspectives, create space for civil discourse in allowing all voices to be heard.

If art, at its core, is about resisting the status quo and envisioning new possibilities, then as Albert Camus suggests, every artist rejects the world as it is, constructing a unique universe through their own creativity. Each act of creation becomes an expression of identity and vision, challenging societal norms and reshaping our understanding of beauty and justice.

Rick Rubin, a renowned music producer, encapsulates this sentiment well: "The best art divides the audience." This quote underscores how impactful art often polarizes, provoking thought and discussion. It's through this division that art fosters a deeper examination of cultural and social issues, encouraging individuals to reflect, challenge, and ultimately transform their worldviews. By daring to be different and to speak truth to power, art becomes a catalyst for social change, embodying the spirit of rebellion

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CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate the many ways the arts have continued to connect families and communities through our summer programs. Highlights include summer musicals for grades K-8 and 9-12, Rock Band, and Visual Art Camp at OCMA. We also honor our community artists and the Santa Ana Artist Coalition for their collaboration in restoring the Sergio O'Cadiz Mural at Monroe Elementary. These programs and projects highlight the power of art to bring people together and enrich our community.



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SHOUT OUT

Sofia is a thoughtful and amazing arts leader, who always takes the time to listen and thoroughly understand what I am saying or asking. She thinks deeply and comes up with interesting responses that inspire me as an art educator and help me to see what might be possible. Sofia is an amazing presenter and a brilliant thought partner, always keeping our end users (our students) and their best interests and holistic development in mind. -- Naomi Kadinoff



COMING UP

Duty Day / PD

- Wed. August 7 - Thur. Aug. 8

First Day Fall Instruction

Monday August 12

Back to School Night Elementary

- Thursday August 22

Back to School Night High School

- Thursday August 29

