Executive Director Report \ February 2018

2018 has started off with a bang and has not let up. If you subscribe to our newsletter you know that the city and the Cultural Council are already having a very big year. The next few months will be so busy you won’t be able to escape seeing the Cultural Council and our programming, events, and initiatives. Of course, there is always so much CSG activity that one would need several clones to just keep up. For brevity, I’ll hit the high points.

* We’ve been making strides with this year’s advocacy initiatives. CCGJ and the CSG organizations have coordinated our approach to the administration along with a strategy to drive home the value of the investment in our Cultural Service Grant Program.
* We’ve folded in our current Action Plan with ambitious goals for future years into our Strategic Implementation Plan. Agency growth and continued positive outcomes for more of our community hinge on better support from the public and private sectors.
* We’ve had lots of action around our VyStar lecture series. Just this morning, Brian Greif, the filmmaker behind Saving Banksy was on First Coast Connect discussing his film and lecture TONIGHT (2/15) at Space42 in the CoRK district. We also have secured the subject of the film an original Banksy, that will be on display in the library through Public Art Week in April.
* Also on the VyStar series is Floyd Norman who was just featured as an iconic superhero by Bill Ferry’s Comcast on demand program. Floyd is joining us at FSCJ South on March 29. He is the first African American animator at Disney. We’ll screen his film and have a Q & A after with an illustrator professor at FSCJ.
* In June Deanna Haggag, CEO of United States Artists will lecture for us on the future of artist funding in the United States. USA gives 50, $50,000 unrestricted grants each year to artists nationwide. Deanna’s lecture will be at the Cummer Museum.
* We’ve been hard charging on Public Art Week (April 1-7), which will again feature Public Art Tours, the Banksy piece, multiple panels, charrettes, and the DIA Urban Art Phase 2 Call to Artist Q & A.
* We’ve been working with the Durkeeville Historical Society on the Lavilla Jazz & Heritage Festival and it is shaping up to be a great event. The LJ&HF is April 22 at Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing Park. The festival is free and runs from noon to 7pm. We’ll have a self-guided Heritage walk around Lavilla with current and historic points of life in the Lavilla district which is rich with arts and cultural heritage. Net proceeds from this event will go to augment funds for public art at the site.
* Our Arts Awards is the biggest fundraiser we have. We’ve implemented multiple changes that will transform the event. It will be a seated dinner with table service, a real awards ceremony (like the Golden Globes), and a big party afterwards (also like the Golden Globes). Abel Harding is our Host Committee Chair. Our Master of Ceremonies is national radio host and Peabody award winner Al Letson. The event will be in the East Club of EverBank. We’ll have the largest art installation of any Arts Awards, produced by the Castano Group, along with a DJ and a big band! We really need help with this year’s awards in terms of sponsorships and selling tickets. If you would like to be part of this work group or serve on the host committee, let me know. In the coming days, I’ll ask that you assist with making some asks on behalf of the Cultural Council. This is going to be a great investment and an epic event.
* We’ve been working with the Center for Arts in Education and have begun implementation of their curriculum on preparedness for a creative career with 150 8th grade students at YMLA/YWLA. We will have another cohort of rising 9th graders and hope to have paid interns for alumni of the program as well.
* In November, Americans For the Arts will be hosting a business luncheon on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the arts and business. This is a national event and recognition of our work in this area. If you are interested in taking part in the event or helping on the steering committee, please let me know.
* October 2019, Jacksonville will likely host the Art Schools Network Annual Conference. Jackie and I have been working on landing this large conference (300 attendees) in Jacksonville and have a great draft agenda of events and activities. Showcasing Jacksonville as a world class city of art will be huge as these conference attendees are leaders at every art school in the country, from elementary to Julliard. Exciting!