This exhibition is a journey across America through the lives of individuals whose creativity is rooted in their cultural identity and community.

Each of the artists featured here is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts’ National Heritage Fellowship, the nation’s highest honor in folk and traditional arts. These individuals are ordinary to the extent they remind us of people we know in our families or among our neighbors and friends, but they are extraordinary in their passion and commitment to artistic excellence.

They are innovators and teachers, eager to share their skills and knowledge, and dedicated to time-honored traditions.

This multimedia exhibition, featuring a sampling of those who have received the award, demonstrates the diversity of their contributions to America’s cultural fabric, and challenges viewers to reflect on those who are contributing to the cultural legacies in their own lives and communities.

This exhibition was developed by Documentary Arts, Inc. and Michigan State University Museum.
WHAT ARE Folk & Traditional Arts?

Every group with a sense of its own identity is made up of individuals who share in what they traditionally believe, do, know, make, and say. Over time, these beliefs and activities become traditions.

These traditions are often learned informally from members of a group and they connect group members to each other.

Participating in traditions also connects people to their past, is a central part of life in the present, and provides a means to carry cultural knowledge into the future. These traditions are at the heart of all cultures – including our own – throughout the world.

Adapted from “What is Folklore,” American Folklore Society. http://www.afsnet.org/?page=WhatIsFolklore
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS

The exhibition features the photographs of Alan Govenar, who has documented the recipients of the National Heritage Fellowship since 1982. Over the years, Govenar has utilized different approaches to photograph the National Heritage Fellows, exploring process, context, and performance. For this exhibition, he created a series of portraits with the subjects lit as if on stage against a black backdrop. In so doing, he enables the viewer to interact with the subjects face-to-face. The images highlight the intensely human qualities shared by the artists as well as the spontaneity of interaction between the photographer and the artists.

ABOUT THE MULTIMEDIA

THE TOUCH SCREEN
View videos and photographs of featured artists and their work, read their biographies, and listen to performances and interviews.

THE COMPUTER STATION
Explore and learn about ALL of the NEA National Heritage Fellows from 1982-2011. Included in this resource are 368 biographical entries, 4,643 photographs, 1,724 music and interview segments, and 553 videos.

QR (Quick Reader) CODES
These provide direct links to selected artist biographies, additional photos, and audio and video samples of their work.
Around the world, programs honor individuals who have made signature contributions to the cultural heritage of their countries. In America, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) established the National Heritage Fellowship Program in 1982 to recognize individuals “for their artistic excellence and their efforts to conserve America’s many cultures for future generations.” A separate NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship program was also established that year.

Since its inception, the NEA National Heritage Fellowship has honored those known and loved by millions. Many other honorees are well known and lauded within smaller communities.

Collectively the contributions of these honorees have enriched our American cultural heritage. As former NEA staff member Bess Lomax Hawes once stated, “These Fellowships present to Americans a vision of themselves and of their country, a vision somewhat idealized but profoundly longed for and so, in significant ways, profoundly true.”

Recipients of the National Heritage Fellowship Award are selected on the basis of nominations from the public. Up to eight awards are given each year. NEA Heritage Fellowship Concerts, held annually in Washington, D.C. at the time of the awards ceremony, publically celebrate the recipients.
CREDITS

This exhibition was developed and created by Alan Governar of Documentary Arts, Inc. and Marieke MacDowell of Michigan State University. It was made possible by the financial and in-kind support of the National Endowment for the Arts, Documentary Arts, Inc. and the Michigan State University Museum/Traditions Program. The Helen Frankerd Fund and the MSU Museum. Great Lakes Traditions Fund provided support for the installation of the exhibits and related programming at the MSU Museum.

Institutional Design: Alan Governar, Lynn Swanson. Martha MacDowell, Mary Womoll, Juan Alvarado

Curatorial Consultant: C. Kurt Dowhurst

Graphic Design: Misty Hands

Digital Educational Programmers: Mary Womoll, Martha MacDowell, Lorna Swanson, Hicah Ling, Dennis Blair & Alyson Rik

Marketing & Communications: Lora Helby & Stephanie Ploeger

Multimedia Invitations: Sunny Wong & Paul Valtierra

Logistics: Julie Levy-Weston

The multimedia in this exhibition was produced by Documentary Arts, Inc. and supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Project Director: Alan Governar

Tech Screen Design: Kieran Lynn & G&G Partners

Production Assistance: Jason Johnson-Searles, Ilene Garcia, & Ben Davis
The DVD-ROM was produced by Documentary Arts, Inc. with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, Ohio Arts Council, Art Happens, and American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

Project director: Alan Govenar

DVD-ROM technical design: Alan Hatchett, Andrew Dean, & Daniel S. Dunnam

Flash programming: Chris Griffith

Copyediting: Jay F. Brakefield

Production assistance: Bia Garcia & Alex Wagner

The on-line Masters of Traditional Arts Education Guide is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, has extensive resources for connecting the exhibition to informal and formal learning situations.
The artists in this exhibition all share a passion for what they do. Many of the National Heritage Fellows speak of discovering an enthusiasm for their art at an early age and never tiring of trying new things.

**REFLECT!**

Think about someone in your life that is known for a creative effort connected to their culture or community.

*What do you think has motivated this participation in their art and what do you think fuels their continued participation?*
Traditional arts are often deeply tied to a sense of place. The natural and cultural resources of a location are interconnected with the creation and meaning of traditional arts. Traditional arts help link people to place and community; they strengthen a sense of identity and uniqueness.

**REFLECT!**

Choose one artist in this exhibition that interests you.

*Which features of their images, songs, stories, and art clearly connect that person or their art to a particular place or community?*

*How might this art be different if the artist moved to another location or found themselves in a different community?*

*What traditions make you feel tied to your own place or community?*
Traditional knowledge and skills typically are learned by one individual teaching another. This teaching often takes place in informal settings like family homes, religious centers, community centers, studios, and workplaces. Many masters of traditional arts are also excellent teachers. These artist/educators help ensure that skills and knowledge about the art and culture are learned and perpetuated by others.

REFLECT!

What skills have you learned outside of school?

Who has taught you?

How was the experience of learning something outside of school different than learning inside of school?

What skills and knowledge are best taught one on one? Why?

What traditional skills and knowledge do you have that you would like to pass on to someone else?
The National Heritage Fellows strive for excellence and share a passion for meeting and exceeding the expectations of their communities. Many of the individuals featured in this exhibition have already been honored by the communities that know them and the traditional arts they embrace— from country music associations to quilters' guilds and tribal governments and cultural groups.

**REFLECT!**

Choose one of the artists here.

*How does their art connect to their community?*

*What do you think makes that particular art "excellent" and who is the judge of that excellence?*

*How might differences in what "excellence" in art means affect understandings?*

*What are across cultures and communities?*
LISTEN!
MUSICAL MASTERS

Musical selections of each of these performers can be heard on the soundtrack being played in the gallery.

Match the music with the artist.
EXPLORE!
MORE ON THESE AND ALL NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLows

Whether you are researching a particular art form or artist or randomly exploring America's vast cultural landscape, what you’ll find here is amazing.

Access and search comprehensive documentation of the NEA National Heritage Fellows, 1982-2011.

The DVD-ROM was produced by Documentary Arts, Inc.
Evalena Henry, Peridot
2001, Arizona
San Carlos Apache basketweaver

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2001_06&type=bio

READ EVALENA'S ANSWERS TO THESE AND MORE QUESTIONS:

Why do you think your artistry is valuable to your community?
How do you go about finding the willow you use?
What is the long piece of leather on the basket?

http://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2001_06&type=int
Burden Basket

Made by Evalena Henry
(San Carlos Apache), Arizona, 2006

Collection of Michigan State University Museum; acquired by purchase as part of the 2006 “Carriers of Culture: Native Basket Traditions” Project
Sonia Domsch
1986, Kansas
Czechoslovakian American lace maker

http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=1986_04&type=biography

http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/sonia-domsch/#photos
Lace

Made by Sonia Domsch
Kansas, 1986

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Lacemaking cushion and lace in progress

Made by Sonia Domsch
Kansas

Bobbins
Handmade by Mr. Domsch

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Earl Barthé
2005, Louisiana
African American master plasterer

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/earl-barthe/#bio

VIEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/earl-barthe/#photos

READ BARTHÉ’S ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS:

How did you get started in decorative building arts?
How does one become a good plasterer?
How were you involved in the politics of plastering in New Orleans?
Has the plastering tradition changed much over the years?
What advice do you have for young plasterers?

http://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2005_02&type=int
Konstantinos Pylarinos
2000, New York

Greek American Orthodox Byzantine icon
woodcarving


http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/ Konstantinos-Pylarinos/#photos
Dome

Made by Kostantinos Pylarinos
New York

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Stencil for use in drawing design on wood

Made by Kostantinos Pylarinos
New York

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Dove

Made by Kostantinos Pylarinos
New York

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Icon screen

Made by Kostantinos Pylarinos
New York

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Jesse McReynolds
1999, Tennessee
Bluegrass Musicians

Esther Martinez
2006, New Mexico
Native American Storyteller

Treme Brass Band
2006, Louisiana
New Orleans Brass Band

Albert B. Head
2012, Alabama
Traditional Arts Advocate

Henry Queen
2007, North Carolina
Appalachian Musician

Nicholas Benson
2007, Rhode Island
Stone Letter Cutter and Calligrapher

Philip Simmons
1992, South Carolina
Ornamental Ironworker

Sophiline Cheam Shapiro
2009, California
Cambodian Classical Dancer
and Choreographer

Darlene and Paul Bergren
2012, North Dakota
Dog Sled and Snowshoe Designers
and Builders

Paul Dahlén
1998, Minnesota
Swedish-American Fiddler

Violet de Cristoforo
2003, California
Haiku Poet and Historian

Bob Carlin
2007, North Carolina
Banjo Player in
Joe Thompson’s Band

Chitresh Das
2009, California
Kathak Dancer and Choreographer

Dudley Laufman
2009, New Hampshire
Dance Caller and Musician

Amma D. McKen
2009, New York
Yoruba Orisha Singer

Edwin Colón Zayas
2009, Puerto Rico
Cuatro Player
Pat Courtney Gold  
2001, Oregon  
Wasco Sally Bag Weaver

The Paschall Brothers  
2001, Virginia  
Tidewater Gospel Quartet

Martin Goicoechea  
of the Basque Poets  
2003, Wyoming  
Basque (Bertsolar) Poets

Peter Kyvelos  
2001, Massachusetts  
Oud Maker

Eddie Kamae  
2007, Hawaii  
Hawaiian Musician, Composer, and Filmmaker

Wilho Saari  
2006, Washington  
Finnish Kantele Player

Roland Freeman  
2007, Washington, D.C.  
Photo Documentarian, Author, and Exhibit Curator

Steve Taylor  
of the Birmingham Sunlights  
2009, Alabama  
A capella Gospel Group

João Oliveira dos Santos  
(Mestre João Grande)  
2001, New York  
Capoeira Angola Master

Agustin Lira  
2005, California  
Chicano Singer, Musician, Composer

Ezequiel Torres  
2010, Florida  
Afro-Cuban Drummer and Drum-Builder

Teri Rofkar  
2009, Alaska  
Tlingit Weaver and Basketmaker

Laverne Brackens  
2011, Texas  
Guilter

Elaine Hoffman Watts  
2007, Pennsylvania  
Klezmer Musician

Henry Gray  
2008, Louisiana  
Blues Piano Player and Singer

Horace P. Axtell  
& Andrea Axtell  
2008, Indiana  
Nez Perce Drum Maker, Singer, and Tradition Bearer
Irvin L. Trujillo  
2000, New Mexico  
Rio Grande Weaver

Jelon Vieira  
2006, New York  
Capoeira Master

Doyle Lawson  
2006, Tennessee  
Gospel and Bluegrass Singer, Arranger, and Bandleader

Joel Nelson  
2009, Texas  
Cowboy Poet

PJ Hirabayashi  
2011, California  
Talko Drum Leader

Johnny Gimble  
1994, Texas  
Anglo Western Swing Fiddler

Nancy Sweezy  
2006, Massachusetts  
Folklorist

Jim “Texas Shorty” Chancellor  
2010, Texas  
Fiddler

Mary Jackson  
2010, South Carolina  
Sweetgrass Basketweaver

Yacub Addy  
2010, New York  
Ghanaian Drum Master

Walter Murray Chiesa  
2008, Puerto Rico  
Traditional Arts Specialist and Advocate

Frisner Augustin  
1999, New York  
Haitian Drummer

Joseph Cormier  
1994, Massachusetts  
Cape Breton Violinist

Dr. Manoochehr Sadeghi  
2000, California  
Persian Santur Player

Charles M. Carrillo  
2000, New Mexico  
Santero

Bill Graves  
2009, Alabama  
A capella Gospel Group
LeRoy Graber  
2008, South Dakota  
Willow Basketmaker

Ledward Kaapana  
2011, Hawaii  
Ukulele and Slack Key Guitarist

Vanessa Paukeope Morgan  
1989, Oklahoma  
Kiowa Regalia Maker

Warner Williams  
2011, Maryland  
Piedmont Blues Songster

Lynne Yoshiko Nakasone  
2012, Hawaii  
Okinawan Dancer

Dale Harwood  
2008, Idaho  
Saddlemaker

Andy Statman  
2012, New York  
Klezmer Clarinetist, Mandolinist, and Composer

Roy Hirabayashi  
2011, California  
Taiko Drum Leader

Judith McCulloh  
2010, Maine  
Folklorist and Editor

Dr. Michael White  
2008, Louisiana  
Traditional Jazz Musician and Bandleader

Harold A. Burnham  
2012, Massachusetts  
Master Shipwright

Sue Yeon Park  
2008, New York  
Korean Dancer and Musician

James Taylor  
of The Birmingham Sunlights  
2009, Alabama  
A capella Gospel Group

Barry Taylor Bethesda  
of The Birmingham Sunlights  
2009, Alabama  
A capella Gospel Group

Jim Griffith  
2011, Arizona  
Folklorist

Molly Neptune Parker  
2012, Maine  
Passamaquoddy Basketmaker
Jeronimo E. Lozano
2008, Utah
Peruvian American retablo maker

How did you learn to make the altar boxes?

How did coming to the U.S. affect your work?

Are you able to pass your tradition on to others here in the U.S.?

Why are you so engaged in this tradition?
Retablos

Made by Jeronimo E. Lozano
Utah

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.

Retablos are a Latin American traditional art that historically was of religious subjects but today are also of non-religious activities. Shown here are retablos depicting a range of subject matter, including a musical instrument factory, a hat factory, a ceramics factory, a mask factory, a scene of a group of people chasing a bull, Jesus with a flock of sheep, a carnival parade, a Nativity scene, and a diorama “I'll Love You Always”. One retablo is fitted into a matchbox, another into the shell of a pistachio nut and yet another in a Chiclets gum box.
The Tragedy in Uchuraccay:
The Killing of Eight Peruvian Journalists Retablo

Made by Jeronimo E. Lozano
Utah

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.

Retablos are a Latin American traditional art that historically was of religious subjects but today are also of non-religious activities.

About the tragedy...
On Jan. 26, 1983, eight Peruvian journalists (Jorge Luis Mendivil, a photographer for the daily Observador, Pedro Sanchez Gavidia, a reporter for Diario de Marka, Jorge Sedano of La Republica, Arnador Garcia Yanqui of Oiga magazine, Oscar Willy Retto of El Observador, Eduardo de la Pinela of Diario de Marka and Felix Gavilan and Antonio (fantes, two reporters from Ayacucho) and their guide, Juan Argumedo, traveled to Uchuraccay high into the remote and sparsely populated areas of the Andes to report on the increasing violence and alleged human rights abuses during the era of the Shining Path. Upon arrival and in uncertain circumstances, the journalists and their guide were attacked and murdered with machetes and axes. A commission headed by Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa determined that the Uchuraccay indigenous peasants – mistaking cameras for weapons and the reporters for guerrillas – killed the journalists and their guide.

For more information, go to:
Julia Parker
2007, California
Kashia Pomo basketmaker

http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2007_08&type=int

How did you get involved in basketweaving?
What advice do you have for young weavers?
What are challenges to carrying on the basketmaking tradition?
What has been your greatest source of pride or happiness in your artistry?
Frank Newsome
2011, Virginia
Anglo American Old Regular Baptist Gospel Singer

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2011_06&type=bio

LISTEN TO HIM SING “BEULAH LAND”
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2011_06&type=int

LISTEN TO MORE OF NEWSOME SINGING
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/frank-newsome/

READ NEWSOME’S ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE:
Did you come from a musical family?
How did you get your first guitar?
When did you start singing in public?
How did you feel when you got the news you were going to get the National Heritage Fellowship?

http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2011_06&type=int
Frank Newsome
Virginia

Anglo American Old Regular Baptist Gospel Singer

WATCH AND LISTEN
TO FRANK NEWSOME SING
Video footage courtesy of Alan Govenar
Bettye Kimbrell
2008, Alabama
Anglo American quilter

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2008_03&type=bio

VIEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/bettye-kimbrell/

READ KIMBRELL’S ANSWERS TO THESE AND MORE QUESTIONS:

What are your earliest memories of quilts and quiltmaking?
Why do you say “your stitches reflect your character”?
What do you look for in terms of an excellent quilt?
What is unique about your quilts?
What advice do you have for younger quilters?
What keeps you quilting after all these years of doing it?

http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2008_03&type=int
Kudzu Quilt

Made by Bettye Kimbrell
Alabama

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Norma Miller
2003, Nevada & Florida

African American swing dancer and choreographer


http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/norma-miller/#photos
Norma Miller
Nevada and Florida

African American swing dancer and choreographer

WATCH NORMA MILLER DANCING IN VIDEO EXCERPT FROM "DAY AT THE RACES"
(1937, Marx brothers)
Video footage courtesy of Alan Govenar
Milan Opacich
2004, Indiana
Serbo-Croatian American tamburitza instrument maker

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2004_07&type=biography

LISTEN TO HIM PLAYING
“Kadrem Ti Se/ Imateli Pari”
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2004_07&type=bio

LISTEN TO OPACICH TALK ABOUT MAKING AN INSTRUMENT
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/milan-opacich/

READ OPACICH’S ANSWERS TO THESE AND MORE QUESTIONS:
How did you learn to make and play instruments?
What designs do you use in making instruments?
Is the tamburitza music tradition strong in the U.S.?
What changes have you seen in tamburitza music?
What have you done to teach music?
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2004_07&type=int
Prim

Made by Milan Opacich
Indiana

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Mozell Benson
2001, Alabama
African American quiltmaker

READ BIOGRAPHY

VIEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/mozell-benson/#photos

READ BENSON’S ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS:
What kind of advice would you give to someone just starting out quilting?
Who helped you get started in quilting?
Are you passing your skills to any younger people?
Are there people who influenced your style of quilting?

Quilt

Made by Mozell Benson
Alabama

Collection of Documentary Arts, Inc.
Sidiki Conde
2007, New York

Guinean American drummer, singer, and dancer

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2007_02&type=bio

LISTEN TO CONDE PERFORM "Na"
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2007_02&type=bio

VIEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/sidiki-conde/

VIEW CONDE IN VIDEO EXCERPT FROM Alan Govenar’s “You Don’t Need Feet to Dance”
2013, Documentary Arts, Inc.
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/sidiki-conde/
Sidiki Conde
New York

Guinean American drummer, singer, and dancer

WATCH SIDIKI CONDE IN VIDEO EXCERPT FROM ALAN GOVENAR’S “YOU DON’T NEED FEET TO DANCE” (2013, Documentary Arts, Inc.) Video footage courtesy of Alan Govenar
Qi Shu Fang
2001, New York

Chinese American Beijing opera performer

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2001_09&type=bio

VIEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/featured-artists/qi-shu-fang/#photos

VIEW A SHORT SEGMENT OF HER PERFORMANCE
http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org/qi-shu-fang/

VIEW MORE OF HER PERFORMANCE IN VIDEO EXCERPT FROM Alan Govenar’s “Master Qi and the Monkey King” 2012, Documentary Arts, Inc.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NndNBCQIW44

READ A SHORT ESSAY BY TERRY LIU ON HER
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2001_09&type=int
Qi Shu Fang
New York

Chinese American
Beijing opera performer

WATCH QI SHU FANG PERFORM IN VIDEO EXCERPT FROM ALAN GOVENAR’S “MASTER QI AND THE MONKEY KING”
(2012, Documentary Arts, Inc.)
Video footage courtesy of Alan Govenar
Kamala Lakshmi Narayanan
2010, New York
Indian American Bharatanatyam dancer

READ BIOGRAPHY
http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=2010_07&type=bio

LISTEN TO HER ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS:
When did you first start dancing?
Do you remember the first time you performed in front of an audience?
What was it like being in the Indian film industry?
What is the history of Bharatanatyam?

WATCH HER STUNNING PERFORMANCE AND HER EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE DANCE IN ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OL1n8hnHic

REFLECT!
Narayanan is posing in the dance form’s nine classical positions expressing nine moods: delight, laughter, sorrow, anger, heroic, fear, disgust, wonder, and peace.
Can you tell which pose goes with which mood?