



# THE ART EFFECT

Julie Woods, *Teddy*

2023 Annual Report

"Working with The Art Effect has opened my eyes to so many directions art can take you. I was taken out of my comfort zone to grow into the person I am today with the help of the excellent staff."

-Chanel Reed, Youth Curatorial Team

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Sirena Fitzgerald, *Since I was 8?*

THE ART EFFECT EMPOWERS  
YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP THEIR CREATIVE  
VOICE TO SHAPE THEIR FUTURES AND BRING  
ABOUT POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE.

# WE ARE THE ART EFFECT

As we eagerly dive into the pages of our 2023 Annual Report, we reflect with immense pride and gratitude on all we've accomplished together. In a year marked by challenges and triumphs, we've remained steadfast in our commitment to empowering youth through the transformative power of the arts.

At the heart of The Art Effect is a commitment to providing young people with opportunities to explore, experience, and excel. From our first Black exhibition, *quiet as it's kept*, which showcased the profound narratives of contemporary Black artists, to the dynamic three-day PKX Festival—a testament to youth leadership, creativity, and community engagement—we strive to create spaces where creativity and expression are valued. Alongside events like these, our robust arts and workforce development programs reached thousands of young artists.



Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt (R) with Gaye Mallet, Board Chair, 2013-2023 (L), Art After Dark

We don't do this work alone. Our work was enriched through collaborations with over 30 guest artists, speakers, and curators; strategic partnerships with organizations like the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet; and engagement with community organizations like New City Parks, and several local libraries, where we conducted our Arts for Healing program. In the Fall of 2023, we established a groundbreaking partnership with Dutchess Community College, offering our first college credit courses to Poughkeepsie youth through two of our after-school programs.

We also furthered our dedication to uplifting youth through increased access to the arts and workforce development programming. By awarding scholarships, creating youth-led public art projects, and embracing youth members on our board of directors, we continue to work on dismantling barriers and actively creating pathways for leadership.

As we look ahead to the future, we are filled with hope and anticipation for the countless possibilities. Together, with your unwavering support and partnership, we will continue to empower the next generation of artists, thinkers, and change-makers.

Thank you for your belief in our mission and for standing alongside us as we strive to make a difference in the lives of young people and our community.

With gratitude,

Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt  
Executive Director

## MISSION AND IMPACT

The Art Effect helps youth explore, experience, and excel in the arts by introducing them to visual arts and media, giving them the opportunity to develop real skills in these fields, and guiding them towards achieving their academic and career goals.

– 6,445 –

Total individuals served

– 1,030 –

Individuals served through school partnerships including, professional development and in-school residencies

– 207 –

Portfolios created by students at The Art Effect

– 165 –

Youth employed in arts and media workforce development

– 171 –

Programs and events

– 23 –

Students placed in jobs outside of The Art Effect

– 100% –

High school ArtsBridge seniors accepted to college who applied

– 95% –

Workforce development students reported feeling prepared to enter the workforce or apply for college

\* See more stats on pg. 10 & 11

*"The Art Effect – they embrace you. They allow the youth to really be part of the creative process so the community is able to have a new perspective on what youth can do."*

- Jaydee Thomas



Spark Studios

The Art Institute



“Collaborating with the youth at the Trolley Barn Gallery was a truly delightful experience. It’s inspiring to witness the emerging generation of cultural architects, curators, thought leaders, and engaged community members as they delved passionately into the intricate nuances of process and programming within the realm of visual arts exhibitions.”  
-Janice Bond, ART IS BOND. Gallery, Guest Curator



quiet as it’s kept Exhibition Opening

The Art Effect at the Trolley Barn trains youth as leaders who catalyze the community through the arts and re-energize downtown Poughkeepsie. This experience empowers youth to engage in transformative arts experiences that they curate.



# TROLLEY BARN GALLERY

## 2023 EXHIBITIONS

*Is It Me?* International Juried Exhibition  
Guest Curator: Emilie Houssart, Artist, New York  
March 10 – April 14

*PKX Reel Exposure* International Youth Photography Exhibition  
Guest Curator: Dondre Green, Art Director, Photographer,  
Chief Executive Officer at Bronx Narratives  
May 5 - June 16

*The High’s of Life* International Juried Exhibition  
Guest Curator: Dr. Kheli Willetts, Dira Professional Development  
July 21 - August 18

*Teen Visions* Youth Art Exhibition  
August 25 - September 9

*The Member Show*  
December 15 - January 26

*quiet as it’s kept*  
Guest Curator: Janice Bond, ART IS BOND. Gallery, Houston  
Guest Artist: Ransome  
October 6 – November 10

*quiet as it’s kept* was the first major exhibition of Black art at the Trolley Barn Gallery. It was curated by the gallery’s Youth Curatorial Team in collaboration with guest curator Janice Bond of ART IS BOND. Gallery in Houston and Hudson Valley artist Ransome featuring 26 artists from across the country.

“An exhibition like [*quiet as it’s kept*] is so important to Poughkeepsie because fostering that community relationship, and the familiarity of it, allows for peace and comfort within a group of people beyond familial lines.”

- Mary Boatey, Youth Curator and Exhibiting Artist



The High’s of Life Exhibition Opening



quiet as it’s kept Exhibition Opening

# PROGRAMS

The Art Effect provides youth with a comprehensive program sequence in visual and media arts education. Programs range from introductory courses that provide immersive experiences, to intermediate programs that use art as a hands-on tool for self-discovery and life skills development, to advanced art programs that prepare youth for entrance into higher education or careers.

## ARTS FOR HEALING

Supports emotional, physical, and psychological healing through art and creative expression events and workshops for individuals experiencing developmental, medical, educational, social or psychological challenges.

- Arts for Justice
- Expressive Arts Workshops
- Process-based Therapeutic Art Partnerships

## ARTS IN SCHOOLS

Expands student and teacher creativity in the classroom through arts-integrated learning and the needs of our partners.

- After School Enrichment
- Professional Development
- In-school Residencies

## COLLEGE & PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

Advanced artistic youth ages 14-24 learn through high-level art training, mentoring, and advanced educational experiences.

- Art Institute
- ArtsBridge
- DCC Dual Enrollment Courses
- National Art Honor Society

## SUMMER PROGRAMS

Professional artists and certified teachers help young artists ages 5-19 explore and excel in technical skills and creativity each summer.

- Arts Camps in Poughkeepsie, Red Hook, New Paltz
- Digital Literacy with Marist College
- Summer Art Institute



ArtsBridge/ART 100  
Visual Art Introductory Seminar



Spark Studios/COM103  
The Art and Craft of Video Editing

## SPOTLIGHT: College Credits Programs

The Art Effect's new Initiative allowed Hudson Valley youth to earn Visual And Media Art college credits while in high school. In partnership with Dutchess Community College, students chose from two dual enrollment courses through ArtsBridge or Spark Studios, at no cost.



Dutchess Arts Camp



Art Institute

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Empowers young voices, help build workforce development skills, provide paid work experience, and help youth get on a path to college and career success.

- Forge Media
- Media, Arts, and Design Lab
- Poughkeepsie Board of Artistic Youth
- Spark Studios
- Youth Arts Empowerment Zone Liaisons
- Youth Curatorial Team



Spark Studios



Summer Art Institute

ArtsBridge

Dutchess Arts Camp

## PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS

**112**

Total programs & courses

**34%**

of youth took more than one class

**24%**

of Dutchess Arts Camp participants are from Poughkeepsie

**100%**

of ArtsBridge seniors graduated high school

**148**

National Art Honor Society volunteer hours

**85%**

of students believe The Art Effect has helped them feel more empowered

**87%**

of students feel that The Art Effect programs help them progress toward their own goals



Arts Camp

National Art Honor Society



Reel Exposure Workforce Intensive

PK B.A.Y.



Trolley Barn Curatorial Team

**1188**

Total submissions for international juried exhibitions

**154**

Artists selected by the Youth Curatorial Team & exhibited at the Trolley Barn Gallery

**5**

Different countries represented in exhibitions at the Trolley Barn Gallery



Trolley Barn Curatorial Team



Spark Studios

**14**

Spark Studios films and photographs selected for festivals and competitions.

- The Mini Microcinema
- Lower Hudson Region 2023 Media Arts Show
- Teen Visions Exhibition
- PKX Reel Exposure Festival

**95%**

of workforce youth reported their skills improved over the course of their program

**\$77,819**

Scholarships distributed for Art Institute classes and summer camps

**142**

Students received Scholarships toward programming



Senior Project

MADLab

Summer Art Institute



Forge Media

Forge Media

**350**

Hours filming on set with Forge Media

**23**

Films produced by Forge Media

**18**

Youth hired by Forge Media

**8**

Forge Media Clients



## SPOTLIGHT: PK Board of Artistic Youth (PK B.A.Y.)

The PK B.A.Y. is a first-of-its-kind initiative in Poughkeepsie that was developed by a coalition of local youth-serving nonprofits to promote youth leadership and civic engagement. The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet is facilitating the initiative with grant funding from The Wallace Foundation. The PK B.A.Y. is comprised of 12 City of Poughkeepsie youth, ages 14-18, representing five local, out-of-school time programs including The Art Effect; Family Services; Community Matters 2; Nubian Directions II; and the Boys & Girls Club.



Forge Media

# STUDENT STORIES

## JOHAN HERNANDEZ

Spark Studios 2021, 2022, 2023  
Forge Media 2023

In the fall of 2021, Johan joined The Art Effect through Spark Studios without prior photography or production training. Yet, his work immediately impressed, showcasing an original and emotionally resonant style. His first film through Spark Studios, *Epoh*, has been honored in festivals and screenings such as Microcinema 2023, Reel Exposure 2023, and the Lower Hudson Region 2023 Media Arts Show. Johan also directed *Domi*, a Spark Studios' student collaborative film that received recognition at the PKX Art & Film Festival. Johan has been hired to produce many client projects with local production companies around the City of Poughkeepsie, such as AR Clips Productions, The Goodie Drop, LenScapeMedia, Sound Asleep Media, and is currently employed with The Art Effect's own production house, Forge Media.



## SIRENA FITZGERALD

MADLab 2022, 2023  
Art Institute 2022, 2023  
ArtsBridge 2022, 2023

Sirena's Art Effect journey began during her sophomore year in 2022 through ArtsBridge, The Art Effect's college access program. Quickly immersing herself in the program, Sirena's passion for the arts led her to also join the Media, Arts and Design Lab (MADLab) and the Art Institute, earning her recognition as she excelled in both. Her impact has extended beyond the studio; Sirena co-designed a large-scale public mural in Poughkeepsie, captured the essence of local community leaders through numerous portraits, and contributed as an event assistant for various family-focused arts events. Her dedication and prowess shine through not only in her academic endeavors but also in her innate ability to lead and collaborate effectively. As she approaches her high school graduation in 2024, Sirena is poised to continue her journey in higher education with aspirations to pursue art therapy.



## SIMON BENCA

Spark Studios 2021, 2022, 2023

Simon embarked on his journey with The Art Effect's Spark Studios in winter 2021 as a middle school student in a program typically designed for high school students, where he demonstrated exceptional photography and production skills through his personal YouTube channel. There, he crafted a series of short skits featuring original characters. Simon was the Assistant Director on Spark Studios' short film *Domi*, which premiered at the PKX Art & Film Festival. Simon's leadership, creativity, and collaboration skills continue to make him a standout student at The Art Effect. He has been nominated to join the Poughkeepsie Board of Artistic Youth, PK B.A.Y., a youth leadership committee, where he will work with local artists to create a public art project that will have a lasting impact on the youth of Poughkeepsie while simultaneously conducting research on youth engagement in the area.



## TAHLEEYA RAPHAEL

Spark Studios 2021  
ArtsBridge 2022, 2023  
Trolley Barn Curatorial Team 2022, 2023  
MADLab 2023  
Youth Arts Empowerment Zone Liaison 2023

Tahleeya's Art Effect journey began in Spark Studios when she was a shy freshman. As she immersed herself in the program, Tahleeya's confidence blossomed. Encouraged by her newfound self-assurance, she explored other Art Effect programs like the Trolley Barn Curatorial program, the Media, Arts, and Design Lab (MADLab), and ArtsBridge. Tahleeya also assumed a leadership role in organizing The Art Effect's annual PKX festival, showcasing her versatility across various programs. Tahleeya's impact transcended her local involvement; she was selected as one of seven high school students nationwide to address the Youth Police Initiative conference in Boston, MA. She will graduate High School in 2024 and plans to attend college and major in criminal justice and psychology.



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ESTER WELLS



PKX Reel Exposure Festival, L to R, Jasmine Garvin, alumna, actress; Magalie Laguerre-Wilkinson, Executive Producer of Nick News; Mary Stuart Masterson, Founder Stockade Works, actress, director; Ester Wells, Digital Producer at POLITICO; Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt, Executive Director at The Art Effect; Nile Clarke, The Goodie Drop

In 2023, Ester Wells, a distinguished multimedia storyteller and alumna of The Art Effect, hosted a panel of amazing professionals in the media industry for students at the PKX Reel Exposure Festival, reflecting the enduring ties that bring alumni back to our community. Ester began her journey with Spark Studios in 2015. During her time as a film student, Ester was deeply involved in Spark Studios where she honed her skills both behind and in front of the camera. Her talent and passion for journalism blossomed, leading to her work with Forge Media in 2016 on projects such as the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley Food Insecurity in the Hudson Valley video, where she often took the lead as the spokesperson, conducting interviews and representing her organization with confidence and poise.

Since graduating from Northwestern University in 2021 with a master's degree in video/broadcast journalism, Ester has made significant contributions to local and national news media. With a focus on Capitol Hill, energy and environmental policy, and sociocultural issues, Ester's reporting has garnered attention and acclaim. Her work has been featured in esteemed publications such as ABC News, POLITICO, and the CDC.

Formerly a member of ABC News' "Nightline" team and at Planned Parenthood, where Ester played a pivotal role in building and launching a national newsroom dedicated to sexual and reproductive health. Ester has most recently joined Politico as a digital producer in Washington, D.C.

As an alumna of The Art Effect, Ester is a testament to our mission of empowering young artists to find their voice and make a difference in the world. Her commitment to journalistic excellence and social advocacy serves as an inspiration to aspiring changemakers alike, embodying the transformative impact of art and storytelling on society.

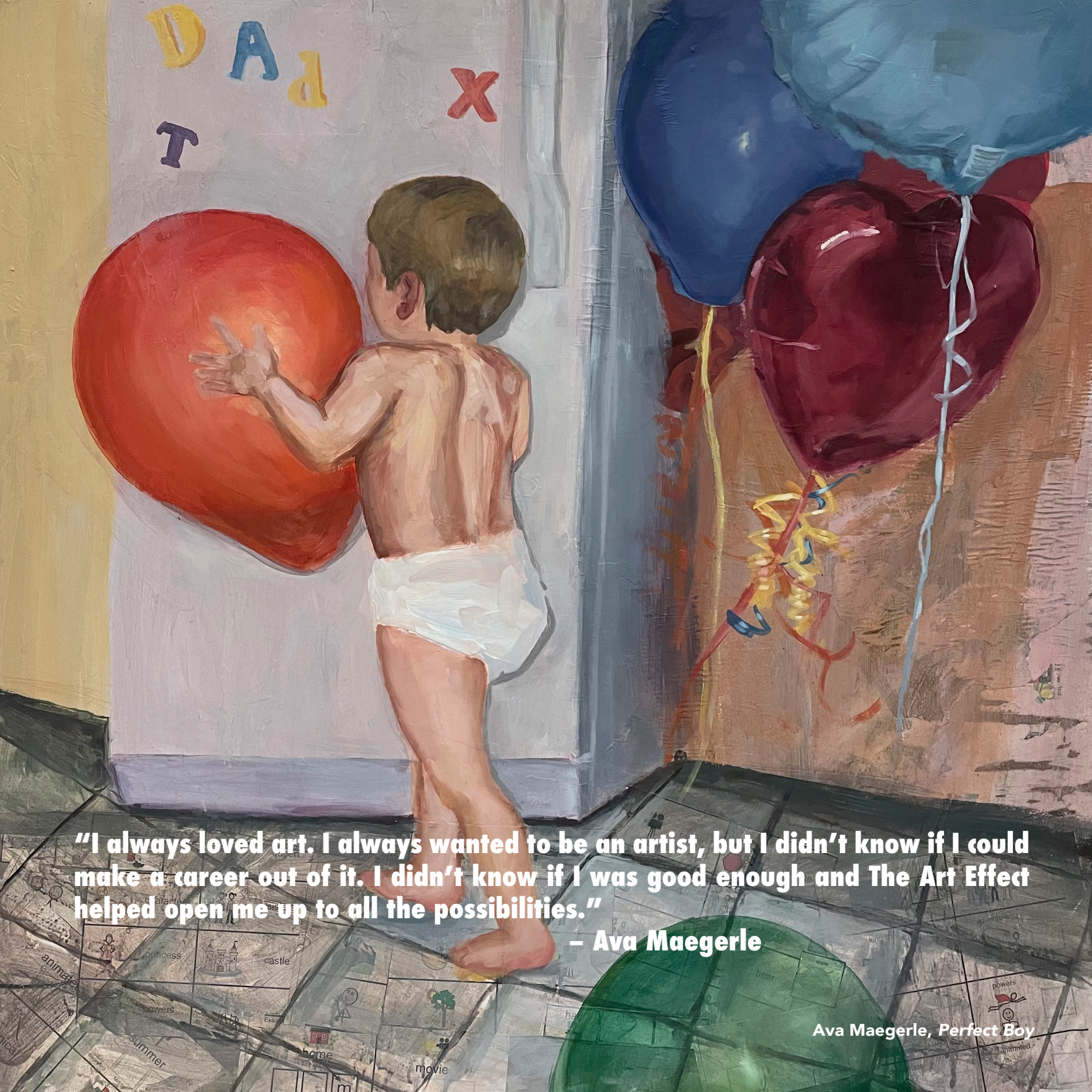
## ALUMNI BY THE NUMBERS

– 22 –

Alumni hired as teachers, counselors, and full time staff

– 6 –

Alumni came back to The Art Effect as speakers and guest artists for workforce development programs and events



**"I always loved art. I always wanted to be an artist, but I didn't know if I could make a career out of it. I didn't know if I was good enough and The Art Effect helped open me up to all the possibilities."**

**– Ava Maegerle**

Ava Maegerle, Perfect Boy



Lucas Goodwin, Pop art experimental portrait

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: GWEN GREENE



Gwen Greene's journey with The Art Effect is a testament to the transformative power of generosity. Her connection to our organization (then Spark Media Project) began in 2016 when we reached out to film her late husband, John D. Greene, showcasing his remarkable artwork. This collaboration not only highlighted John's talent but ignited Gwen's interest in our mission. Since that pivotal moment, Gwen's involvement with The Art Effect has been profound. Her support, including the organization's first stock gift, has played a vital role in our growth and impact.

Raised by a single mother, Gwen's upbringing instilled in her a sense of compassion and a drive to make a difference. Her passion for uplifting young students from underserved

backgrounds mirrors her late husband's dedication, embodying our mission to empower youth through the arts.

Beyond her contributions to The Art Effect, Gwen's philanthropic journey extends far and wide. Her influence has left a lasting mark at the University of Rochester, where her dedication led to the naming of the Gwen M. Greene Career and Internship Center. With over 35 years of experience in finance, politics, and television broadcast, Gwen continues to make a difference as Chairman of the Board at She's the First, empowering girls in low-income nations to access education.

Gwen's lifelong dedication to giving back, fueled by her passion for supporting and mentoring others, reinforces our appreciation for her unwavering commitment to the values of compassion and empowerment that define The Art Effect.

**"What drew me to The Art Effect continues to resonate, creating an opportunity for young folks from underserved communities to explore and develop their curiosity and ultimately their passion for creating art, in a warm, exciting, and supportive, environment."**

– Gwen Greene



Jun Kaneko, "Dangos" series  
Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, NY  
Donated by Gwen in memory of John D Greene

# 2023 SPECIAL EVENTS

The Art Effect hosted or participated in **25 events** through program showcases, exhibitions, community events, festivals, and galas! Highlights include:

## PKX REEL EXPOSURE TEEN FILM & PHOTO FESTIVAL May 5 - 7

The annual festival featured 20 youth photographs and 11 short films curated by local youth alongside guest jurors Dondre Green and Terry Nelson. Youth ages 14-19 from around the world including New York, Minnesota, Kansas, California, and France were featured in this year's festival. Over the course of the free, 3-day festival, more than 400 attendees participated in family-friendly activities, 24 hour film race, and an industry panel Q&A.

Featured projection artist William Koenig-Vinicombe, photographer and filmmaker, worked with Poughkeepsie youth during a Spark Studios workforce training intensive to create animated projection art. They debuted their collaborative project titled *Media Metamorphosis* on the Trolley Barn gallery windows on Main Street each evening of the festival.

A *Breaking into the Business: Insider Info from Film and Media Professionals* panel and brunch featured notable panelists from the film and media industry

including Mary Stuart Masterson, founder of Stockade Works, actress, director; Nile Clarke, The Goodie Drop; Hezues R., S.I.C. Film School, director; Jasmine Garvin, alumna, actress; Magalie Laguerre-Wilkinson, Executive Producer of Nick News. Festival partners included; ArtCentro, Boys & Girls Club, Charlia Frank, City of Poughkeepsie, Family Services, HUDSY, My KingdonKids, PKGO Arts, SIC Film School, The Goodie Drop, Teen Resource Activity Center (TRAC), and Stockade Works.



Breaking into the Business: Insider Info from Film and Media Professionals



Media Metamorphosis  
Projection Installation

## ART AFTER DARK October 28

This year's Art After Dark celebrated our honorees and featured augmented reality-enhanced artworks created by our youth and alumni with delicious food, live music, and immersive art experiences—all surrounded by the spectacular Black art exhibition, *quiet as it's kept*, in the Trolley Barn Gallery. The Art Effect was proud to honor artists James Ransome and Lesa Cline-Ransome, alumni John Olson, and community partner La Voz Magazine in 2023.

The evening was a wonderful success raising critical funds towards ensuring we can continue delivering life-changing arts education to youth in Poughkeepsie and the Hudson Valley.



Art After Dark, Staff and Students

## HUDSON VALLEY REGIONAL PORTFOLIO DAY November 3

Hudson Valley Regional Portfolio Day came back in person at a new, exciting venue the MJN Convention Center after pivoting the last three years to a virtual, week-long event in response to the pandemic. Portfolio Day gave 184 participants the opportunity to meet with 27 art colleges and universities to have their portfolios reviewed and discuss scholarship eligibility to major art schools and universities from across the nation. This event was free to all students.



Hudson Valley Portfolio Day

## 2023 AWARDS

The Art Effect was awarded two major New York State grants for our Trolley Barn Capital project: New York State Council on the Arts and Economic State Development awarded \$2.46M; and Regional Economic Development Council's Empire State Development Fund awarded \$2M.

The Trolley Barn Gallery Exhibition, *quiet as it's kept*, won the Dutchess County Tourism Storytelling Award of Distinction.

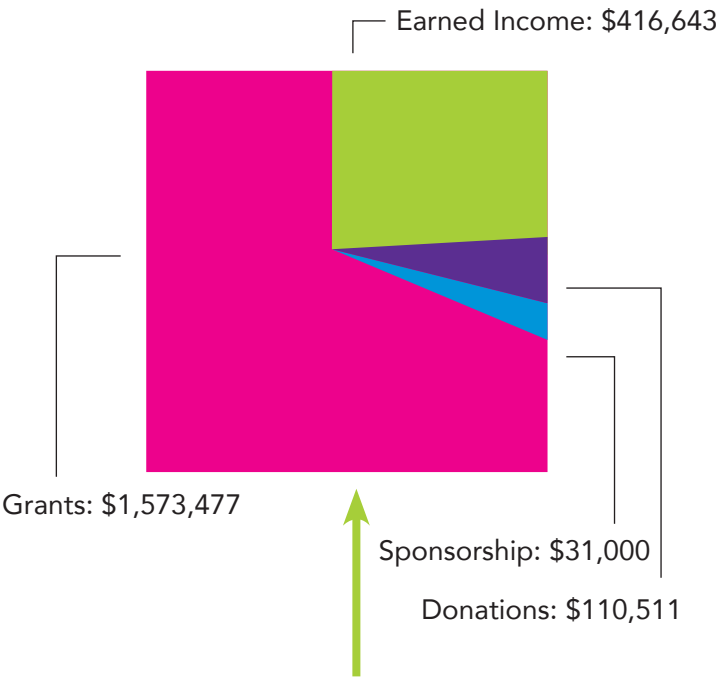
The Art Effect received the Regional Impact Award from SUNY New Paltz

Student Julie Woods received an "American Visions" award from the Alliance of Young Artists and Writers Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for her painting, *Buy 1 Get 1 Free*.

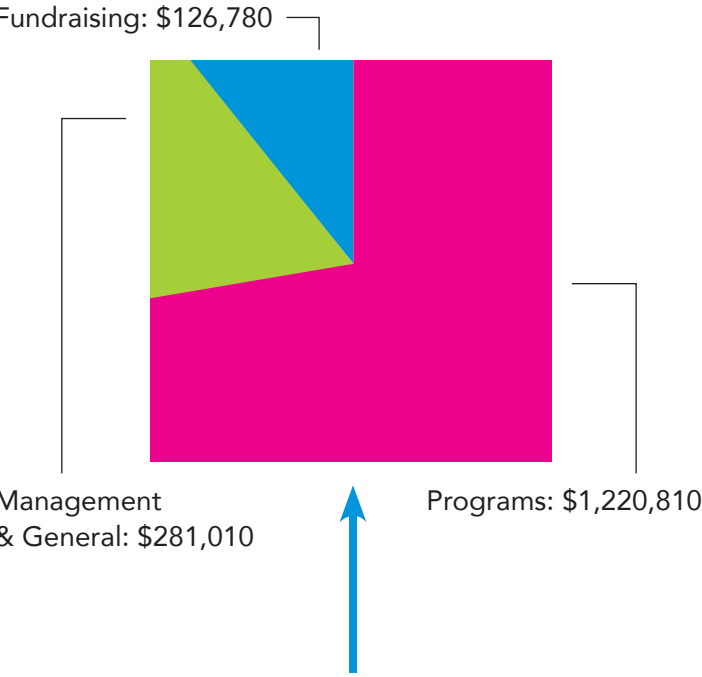
The Art Effect students received 8 Gold Keys, 8 Silver Keys, and 10 Honorable Mentions from the Alliance of Young Artists and Writers Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

FINANCIALS\*

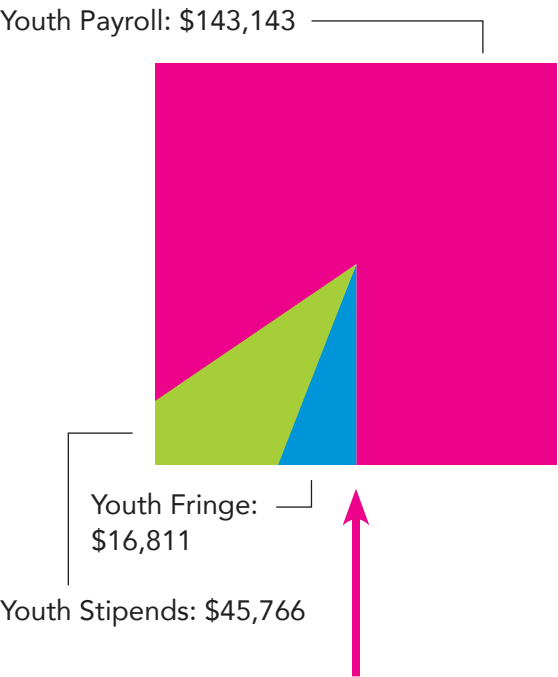
■ Total Expenses: **\$1,628,600**



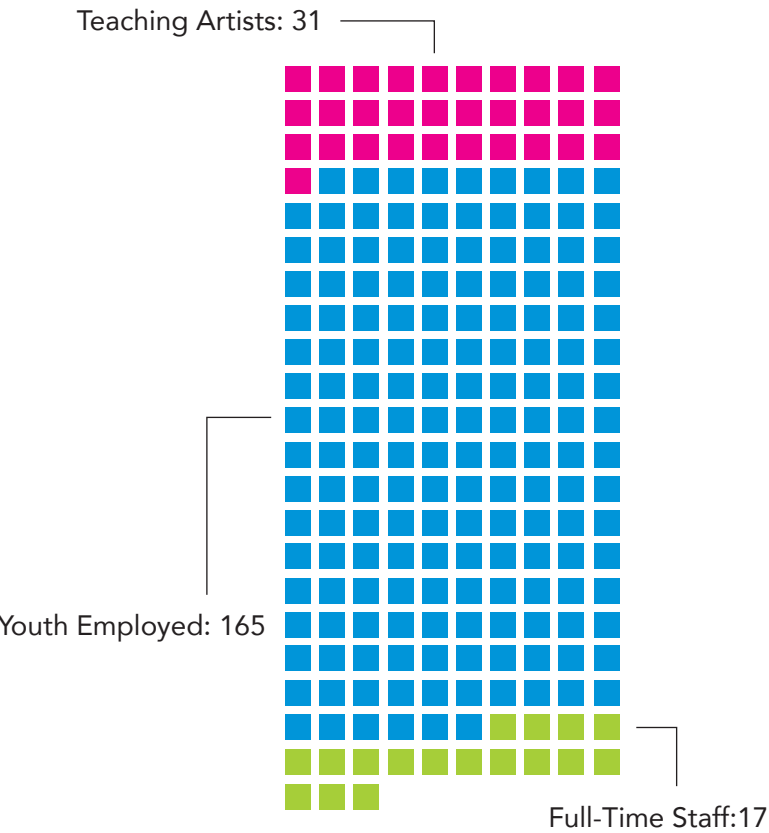
Income:  
**\$ 2,131,630**



**78%** of  
expenses go  
straight to  
**programs**



**\$205,720**  
directly  
to youth  
employment



\*unaudited financials

# TEAM

## Board of Directors

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**Karen Michel**

Independent Producer, NPR

**Teresa Quinn**

Retired Associate Dean of the College for Campus Activities, Vassar College

**Loretta Spence**

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

**Robert C. Watson Jr.**

Deputy Director of the EdRedesign Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Education

**Jaime Ransome**, *Trolley Barn Gallery Manager*

**Adam Reid**, *Media Programs Manager*

**Cory Spraker**, *Operations Manager*

**Morgan Suter**, *Studio Manager & Teaching Artist*

**Sarah Timberlake Taylor**, *Media/IT Coordinator & Teaching Artist*

**Paul Thompson**, *Director of Forge Media & Associate Director of Media Programs*

**Mirabai Trent**, *Marketing Design Assistant*

**David Wong**, *Community Art & Design Program Manager*

*\* As of December 31, 2023*

The Art Effect employs more than 30 incredible teaching artists, teaching assistants, counselors, and camp directors and CITs throughout the year. Thank you to all of our talented teachers and staff!

## Interns

**Phineas Cashman**, *Vassar College*

**Grace Change**, *Vassar College*

**Serena Cutaneo**, *Marist College*

**Jennifer Donahue**, *SUNY New Paltz*

**Juliette Giustiniani**, *Marist College*

**Valentina Gomez**, *Bolivarian Pontifical University*

**Jeong Stephen JuYoung**, *SUNY New Paltz*

**Paige**, *Dutchess County ARC*

**Lauren O'Hara**, *SUNY New Paltz*

**Tianna Perkins**, *Smart Staffing*

**Arlo Povill**, *Vassar College*

**Gari Puckrein**, *Vassar College*

**Tess Ruddy**, *Vassar College*

**Kyle Sclera**, *Marist College*

**Iris Thaoxaochay**, *Vassar College*

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**Mackenzie Zeytoonjian**, *Marist College*



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The Art Effect  
[www.thearteffect.org](http://www.thearteffect.org)

845.471.7477

45 Pershing Ave, Poughkeepsie NY

Trolley Barn Gallery:

489 Main St., Poughkeepsie NY