CENTER FOR PUPPETRY Arts®

Center for Puppetry Arts

Visitors' Guide/ Social Story

Welcome

Hello, and welcome to the Center for Puppetry Arts! Whether you're here to visit our Worlds of Puppetry Museum, watch a fun puppet show, build your very own puppet in our Create-a-Puppet Workshop™, see a film, take part in Discovery Days, or enjoy another wonderful puppet-type activity, this guide will help you navigate the Center so you can have the best possible visit!

1st Floor: Ticket Sales Office

After you wind your way up our entry ramp, you'll make the first stop of your day: the Ticket Sales Office!

To your left is the ticket counter, where you can purchase or pick up tickets for any of our events, or ask one of our friendly Museum Services members located at the yellow desk any question you might have about your visit. On your right is our Museum Store, where you can find books, games, and of course: puppets! If you see something here you want to check out again, but you're headed to a show, don't worry: you'll pass back through this area on your way out!

Just in case you didn't know, you're on the first floor now. Our stairwells are labeled, and the elevator lists the things to do on each floor, but again, just so you know: your journey today started on the first floor.

Atrium

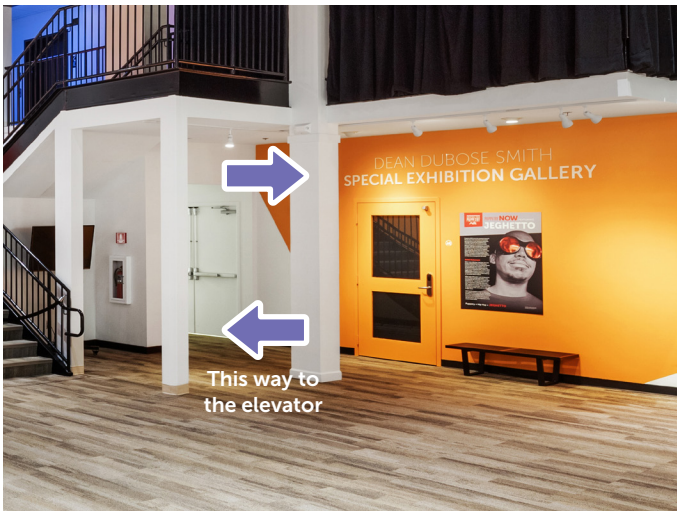
From the Ticket Sales Office, you'll head through sets of double doors, through a Breezeway (open hallway), and into our Atrium (officially called the Love Family Atrium).

Breezeway

Across the Atrium is the entrance to our Worlds of Puppetry Museum. Both galleries in the Atrium are marked with orange shapes.

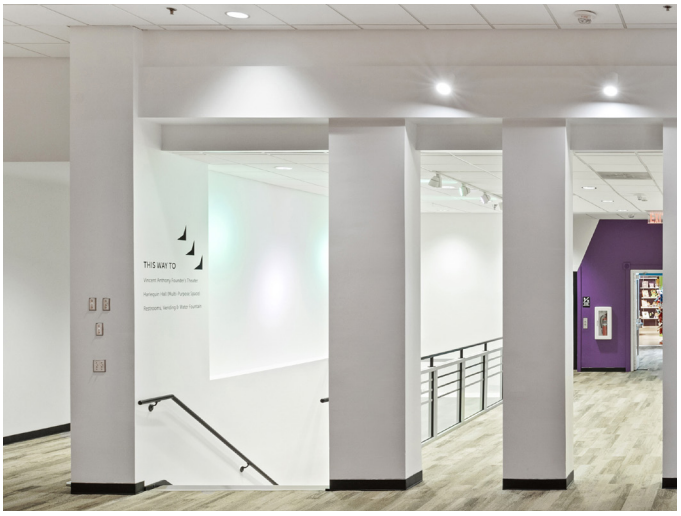
Across the Atrium to the right, up a flight of stairs and behind the black curtain, is our main puppet stage! We call it our Mainstage Theater.

Atrium (continued)



Just behind the bottom of the staircase leading up to the Mainstage Theater is our Special Exhibits Gallery, which is like a miniature puppet museum with rotating exhibits.

There is also an elevator that will take you up to the mainstage theater.



To your immediate right as you enter the Atrium from the Breezeway is a staircase leading down to the Ground Floor, where you'll find Harlequin Hall, vending machines and restrooms, and the Vincent Anthony Founder's Theater.

To find the restrooms closest to the Ticket Sales Office, make your way into the Atrium and you'll find the restrooms located along the wall to the left, directly across from the entrance to the Worlds of Puppetry Museum.

There's a water fountain close by, too.

Worlds of Puppetry Museum

The *Worlds of Puppetry* Museum is made up of two areas: the Jim Henson Collection, with puppets from Sesame Street, the Muppets, Fraggle Rock, and more; and the Global Collection, featuring puppets of all varieties from all around the world.

But before you begin, take a look to the right and you'll see Oliver the Elephant, a blue elephant puppet inside a display case. A sign on Oliver's case asks you to look for his image throughout both sides of the museum. When you see his picture, that's an invitation to slow down and read a special message just for you, or to try out a fun activity, or to check out a cool material that a puppet is made out of—something that will help you understand and enjoy the museum even more! We call it our Kid Track—and kids of ALL AGES can enjoy these fun things to do!

Worlds of Puppetry Museum (continued)

As soon as you enter the main doors of the museum, you're greeted by an old, tough-looking Sicilian knight named Orlando – you can discover this by reading the artifact label on Orlando's display case. Throughout the museum, you'll find information about each puppet on these artifact labels, which are small signs on the cases by every puppet that tell you all about the puppet (they are like the one you saw on Oliver inviting you to enjoy the Kid Track). If you look to the left of Orlando, you'll see the entrance to the Jim Henson Collection. To the right of Orlando is the entrance to the Global Collection. Orlando is a good landmark to remember in case your group gets turned around or separated.

The Global Collection

Here you'll find all sorts of puppets from all sorts of places! We have string puppets from Asia, rod puppets from Africa and Europe, hand puppets from South America, shadow puppets, stop-motion puppets, and more! The Global Collection is divided up by continent, and there is no set pathway for walking—go exploring! Remember to look for Oliver's image and for the Kid Track interactives throughout the Global Collection, like masks, water puppet controls, and a do-it-yourself puppet show with a dragon!

The Global Collection (continued)

Although there is one main entrance to the Global Collection, a partition featuring a world map splits that entrance in two: the geographically-themed exhibits start with puppets from The Americas and end with Asian shadow puppetry, which is behind the water puppets and the Japanese Ningyō jōruri (also known as "Bunraku"). Some of the turns in the exhibit might make it hard to see the other people in your group if they're too far ahead, but never fear! If you get turned around, just head back where you came from, find Orlando in the entryway, and wait there and you'll soon be reunited with your group.

You'll exit the Global Collection the same way you entered, and voila!
You're back in the entryway with Orlando!

The Jim Henson Collection

To enter the Jim Henson Collection, turn to the left when facing Orlando and walk toward the big picture of Jim with all his puppet pals! The Jim Henson Collection is structured to provide a historical overview of his life and work, and when you've walked the whole loop-shaped exhibit, you'll come out right next to where you went in.

The Jim Henson Collection starts with Jim's early career, then progresses through his workshop, through a Sesame Street area, through a mock-up of a television puppet studio, and then into the Muppets and all of his other creations. Find Oliver to check out the Kid Track interactives throughout the Jim Henson Collection, from pull-out drawers and tumblers full of puppet goodies to a Muppet face magnetic board. Don't forget to also enjoy the interactivity of the on-camera puppet acting stage in the television puppet studio!

The Jim Henson Collection (continued)

The on-camera puppet stage interactive in the fifth area of the Henson Gallery is pretty wide open, and there's a possibility that it could overwhelm some people, so it's best to try this one out with a buddy!

As the Jim Henson Collection is constructed in the loop-type fashion mentioned earlier, it is possible to lose sight of your group if they get too far ahead, but never fear! If you pick a direction and keep walking, before long you'll find yourself in the familiar entryway again with Orlando!

There are no restrooms in the Worlds of Puppetry Museum. There are marked exit doors throughout the Worlds of Puppetry Museum in case of emergency, and Center staff is always here to lend a helping hand. If the volume of the TVs in the exhibits is too loud, don't hesitate to ask any of our staff to get you a set of noise-reducing headphones to borrow for the duration of your visit!

Mainstage Theater

From the Atrium, our upstairs theater—we call it our Mainstage Theater—can be found by (you guessed it!) heading up the big staircase! At the top is a black curtain, through which is the entrance to the theater. There is also an elevator to every floor of the building. The Mainstage Theater is the larger of our two theaters, and it holds over 300 people during a sold-out show. You enter at the top back of the theater, and you'll walk down some more stairs toward the stage. You'll be seated on benches with cushions and, though there aren't separated seats, there will be plenty of room for you to sit comfortably and find your own space. There is an exit at the bottom of the stairs for after the show (or during-the-show emergencies). Please note that no strollers or baby carriers are allowed into the theaters. They are allowed everywhere else at the Center.

Finding a Seat

For most shows, seating is split into VIP l (the first few rows from the bottom) and General (all the other seats); for especially big shows, we may assign seating—all information will be on your ticket, and as always, Center staff is here to help you!

Our theater (or "house," as you might hear some of our staff call it) typically opens twenty to thirty minutes before showtime. In most cases, if you arrive before showtime, you will be greeted at the entrance by a member of the House staff (also called "ushers" or "House Managers"); present them your ticket, then be sure to keep it handy in case you've purchased a Create-A-Puppet Workshop and/or Worlds of Puppetry Museum admission! We hand out programs at the door, which are full of all kinds of neat information about the show and about the Center for Puppetry Arts. Depending on your Membership status and the size of the audience, one of our House Staff may point you to a row of seats, take you to a specific seat, or just give you free reign to sit wherever you'd like!

As all our seating is bench-style, we recommend sitting near the outside (at the end of the row) if you think you'll need to leave during the show (you can come back in whenever you'd like during the performance, but please enter through the top stairs again!).

During the Show

Before the show, the house lights (the ceiling lights inside the theater) will be on; this is plenty of light to see by, to find a seat, and to read your program, but it is less light than outside the theater—you can hold hands with someone in your group, hold the railing to walk down the stairs, or ask the House Manager to illuminate your path with his/her flashlight. Sometimes, we have music playing before the show at a low volume. Usually, the puppet stage will be set and ready to go—it always looks super neat and inviting, but please don't go onto the stage before, during, or after the show; our performers need to know everything on stage is exactly where they set it, and that there are no obstacles for them during the show so they can be safe.

Once the show starts, you'll notice the house lights dim (become less bright); we will usually have a brief safety and procedures announcement from our staff. This announcement comes through the speaker system, and it is delivered at about the same volume as the show; if this volume is too loud or too soft, please ask a House Manager for assistance. The house lights will stay at a low level for the entire show; lighting on the stage can go from all-the-way dark to very bright, depending on the scene. Don't worry if it gets all-the-way dark—that could mean it's night-time in the puppet show, or the characters are preparing for their next scene!

If anyone in your group decides, at any time and for any reason, that any element of the show is too challenging, just head for the entrance you came in and ask a House Manager for assistance! If the volume of the show is too loud, don't hesitate to ask any of our staff to get you a set of noise-reducing headphones to borrow for the duration of your visit. We also have some fidget toys to borrow if your hands need to be kept busy during the show. Just ask and we'll get something fun for you!

A Note about the Puppets and Performers

The Center for Puppetry Arts puts a lot of puppets on stage—from talking goldfish to buzzing bumblebees, two-foot-tall rabbits to six-foot-tall bears, and every size and shape in between— and while they look and sound as if they come to life magically, they are almost always controlled directly by a human performer. No matter what the puppet looks like, you can be sure there's someone close by with a rod or wire or button or device making the puppet move. Members of your group who could be startled by seemingly-autonomous puppets might like to know that after every show, and sometimes before, we have a demonstration, or "demo," where the puppeteers show us a bit of behind-the-scenes puppet work. During these demos, puppeteers come out from behind (or above, or below, or inside!) the stage and address (talk to) the audience directly. This is a great opportunity for everyone to see how our performers manipulate the puppets to create the illusion of movement and life.

From the top of the stairs where you entered the Mainstage Theater, the restrooms are downstairs and across the Atrium to the right. From the lower exit of the Mainstage Theater, you'll walk straight across the Atrium, and the restrooms are on your left.

The Special Exhibits Gallery

The Special Exhibits Gallery, located beside the staircase for the Mainstage Theater, is a unique, smaller museum space that we fill with all sorts of awesome puppet displays. It is substantially smaller than the Worlds of Puppetry Museum; the entrance is the exit. If time is of the essence, you can walk through the whole exhibit in just a couple of dazzling, blurry minutes (of course we'd love for you to see and read and watch and listen to everything!).

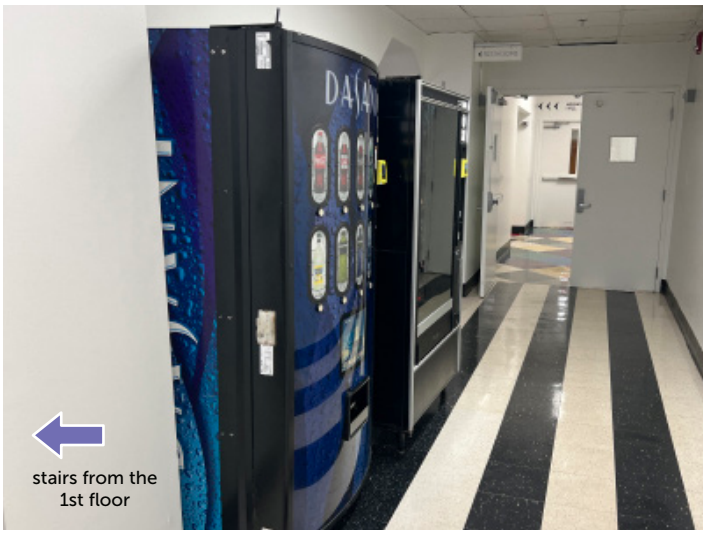
It changes, so don't be surprised if there are different puppets in this room the next time you come visit!

Leaving the 1st Floor

If you want to get to the Ground Floor for a show in the Vincent Anthony Founder's Theater, or the 2nd floor for a Create-A-Puppet Workshop™, you'll need to take one of two sets of stairs: either the stairs in the breezeway between the main Atrium and the Ticket Sales lobby or the stairs just beyond the lower exit for the Mainstage Theater (we'll call that set of stairs the "2nd Floor stairs.") You can also take the elevator (to the left of the Atrium/Ticket Sales Office doorway as you face the main entrance to the building).

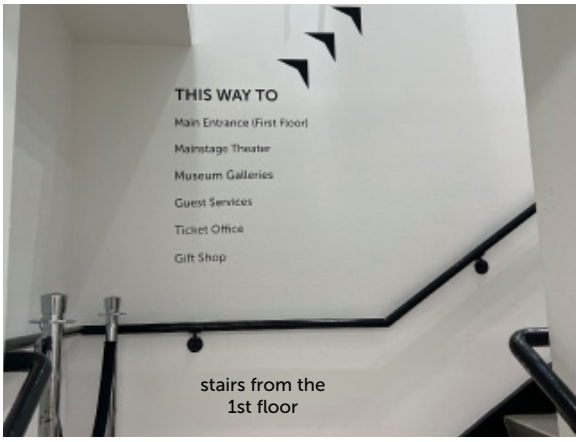
Ground Floor: Welcome

Whether you took the elevator or the stairs down, you've made it to the Ground Floor! There is a water fountain on this floor.



There are vending machines with snacks and drinks down here next to the Atrium stairs, and there are bathrooms at the end of the hallway.

A lot of behind-the-scenes work happens on the Ground Floor, so please observe all signage asking you to stay out of one place or another. This is entirely for your safety and comfort and the safety and comfort of our performers, office staff, and production crew, not because we don't want you to feel welcome!



Harlequin Hall

If you came down the Atrium stairs, take a left! If you got off the elevator or took the 2nd Floor stairs, just keep walking past the vending machines and bathrooms -- on your left is Harlequin Hall, where we have all our birthday parties, group lunches and some fun special events! Sometimes, during an evening show or a film event, we might open Harlequin Hall to sell refreshments, but usually it'll be either closed up or full of kids celebrating birthdays.

Please note: the white double doors in this picture will likely be closed when you visit but there's a chance they may be open. This hall leads to the Museum offices, the Nancy Staub Puppetry Research Library (this cool place is available by appointment only), and a set of restrooms that we use when things are really busy. If the doors are closed, please observe this as an "Employees Only" area.

Vincent Anthony Founder's Theater

Unless you're going to a birthday party, you're probably on the Ground Floor to see a puppet show in our Downstairs Theater. Take a right at Harlequin Hall (you'll see some signs there that say "Downstairs Theater"). At the end of that hall, look to the right, and voila! There's our Downstairs Theater! It's the smaller of our two theaters, and it holds about 150 people during a sold-out show. You enter at the bottom of the theater, and you'll walk up stairs to get to most of the seats. You'll be seated on individual chairs, and there will be plenty of room for you to sit comfortably and find your own space. The door you came in will be the one to use after the show (or during-the-show emergencies).

Finding a Seat

For most shows, seating is split into VIP (the first few rows from the bottom) and General (all the other seats); for especially big shows, we may assign seating—all information will be on your ticket, and as always, Center staff is here to help you!

Vincent Anthony Founder's Theater (continued)

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*From the **Downstairs Theater exit/entrance**, the restrooms are to the left of Harlequin Hall, just before you reach the vending machines.*

Playground!

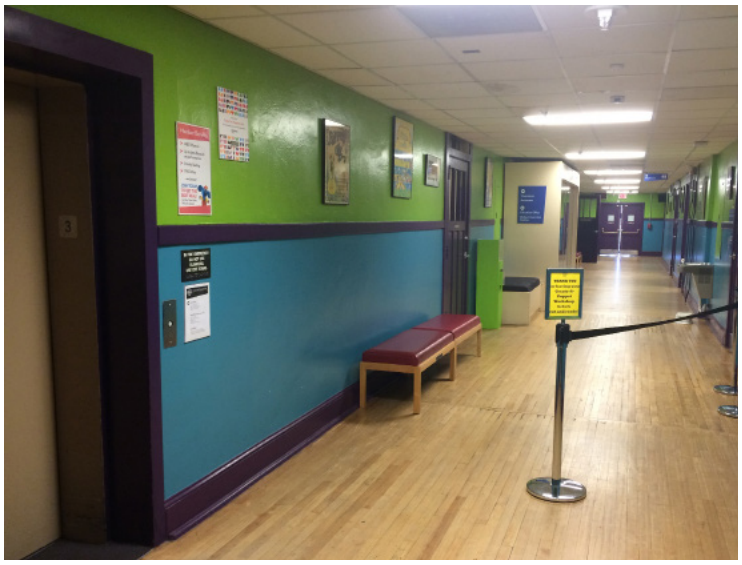
If you're inside the building and want to go to our playground, called the Isdell Family Play Area, you'll need to head outside the building and walk towards 18th Street. You'll see a sidewalk and a gate at the end of the building accessed off of the parking lot. If the gate is open, that means the playground is open, and you're welcome to go in and explore and play!

We have all kinds of awesome play structures and there are benches you can relax on, too. It's fenced in to provide a safe boundary for playing, and guiding everyone to stay out of the street.

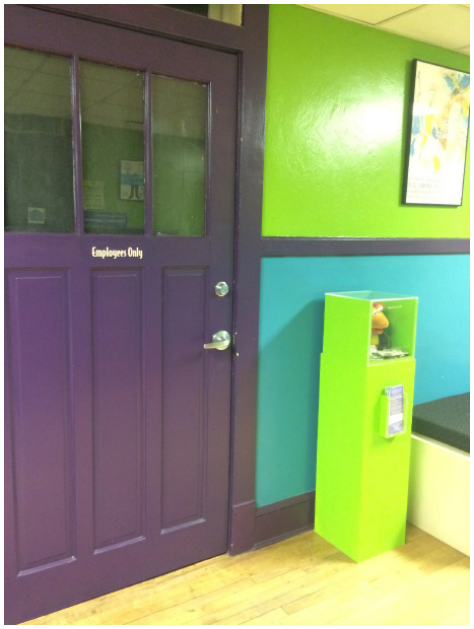
Leaving the Ground Floor:

To leave the Ground Floor, whether you're headed to the Create-A-Puppet™ Workshop on the 2nd Floor, the Museum on the 1st Floor, out to the Playground, or just headed home, you'll need to get back to the 1st Floor via the elevator, the Atrium stairs, or the 2nd Floor stairs.

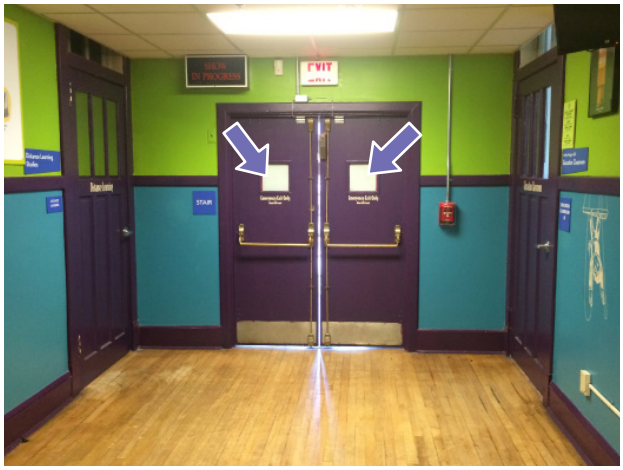
2nd Floor: Welcome



Whether you took the Ground Floor stairs or the elevator, you're now on the 2nd Floor! Here, you can make puppets in our Create-A-Puppet Workshop™, take part in Discovery Days activities, or just take a seat on a bench in the hallway and catch your breath.



As with the Ground Floor, we have a lot of puppet business going on up here -- the Education Department offices, Distance Learning studios, and various puppet museum projects fill all the rooms except the classrooms (where you'll be doing your Create-A-Puppet Workshop™ or some Discovery Days stuff). Though some doors in the hallway may be open, ask permission before you go in as it might be someone's private work space or office! As with the downstairs, if the doors say "Employees Only," that's a clue to not go in there for your own safety and security.



Please note that the stairwell at the far end of the hallway (on the 18th St. side of the building) is for staff and emergency use only! An alarm might sound if you try to go through this door, so please don't try to exit the 2nd Floor this way or you may be startled by a very loud noise.

Create-A-Puppet Workshop™

The 2nd Floor is home to our Create-A-Puppet Workshop™, a fun and friendly place to build a paper puppet in the style of the current puppet show! We design and produce more than a dozen unique puppets for the Create-A-Puppet Workshop™ every season, so even if you've been here before, you can count on being able to build a brand-new puppet this time!

To get into the Create-A-Puppet Workshop™, you'll need a Create-A-Puppet Workshop™ ticket. If you have a ticket to see the puppet show, check the end of it and you'll likely have a Create-A-Puppet tear-off stub; if you bought a show-only or Museum-only ticket, you can visit the Ticket Sales Office to purchase a Create-A-Puppet Workshop™ ticket.

"Building a puppet?" you're asking. "That sounds complicated!"

Don't worry! Our paper puppets are designed to be built by little kids with adult help, or by adults with little kid help. We have instruction sheets and sample puppets on display in each room, and members of our Education staff (we call these great folks "Teaching Artists") are always available to lend a helping hand! Once you've built your puppet, you can decorate it to your heart's content, play with it on one of our classroom stages, and take it home with you!

Our Create-A-Puppet Workshop™ rooms are actually repurposed classrooms from when the Center used to be the Spring Street Elementary School—see if you can spot the blackboards, closets, and windows from the original rooms! Most of our rooms, which can hold up to fifty patrons, have bright lights and music playing. If either of these atmospheric things is too much, please let a Center staff member know; often, we can accommodate a quiet space for puppet construction.

Remember, too, that we're happy to loan you a set of noise-reducing headphones to borrow for the duration of your visit if the volume in the workshop room is too loud. Don't hesitate to ask any of our staff.

Leaving the 2nd Floor

After you've built your puppet, you'll head back towards the elevator or the 2nd Floor staircase and take that down to the 1st Floor for the Museum, Mainstage Theater, Museum Store, Special Exhibits Gallery, or the main exit. You can take the stairs or the elevator all the way down to the Ground Floor for Harlequin Hall or the Downstairs Theater.

The restrooms on the 2nd Floor are located between the first and middle classrooms, across from the puppet display case. There's a water fountain here, too.

We're so glad you came for a visit. Come back again soon!

CENTER FOR PUPPETRY Arts®

Georgia COUNCIL for the Arts™

This program is supported in part by Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency - the National Endowment for the Arts.