

# Mississippi Arts Commission - Artist Fellowship Guidelines

Next application deadline: March 1, 2010

***Please Note: Visual and Literary artists must submit their applications through eGRANT system.***

Please submit Artist Fellowship applications no earlier than 30 days prior to the March 1 deadline. Applications received prior to this date will be returned.

## Overview

MAC's Artist Fellowship program is focused on honoring Mississippi artists who demonstrate the ability to create exemplary work in their chosen field. The agency awards fellowships of up to \$5,000 in several categories each year. The program does not require a cash match. Professional artists living and working in the state are eligible to apply.

The Artist Fellowship program is highly competitive - only a small number of the total applicants each year receive an award. Applicants who are not awarded a fellowship may re-apply. They also can receive written feedback from the review panel on their application. Artists who receive a fellowship from MAC are ineligible to re-apply for five years.

Artist Fellowships are awards of merit. While applicants are not required to submit information on how they might use the funds, MAC expects the recipients to dedicate the funds towards expanding their ability to create new work. Fellowship funds may not be used to support academic research or study toward an academic or professional degree.

## Who May Apply

You may apply for an Artist Fellowship if you are a professional artist producing work of high artistic quality. Individuals are considered to be at the professional level if they are:

- a professional artist producing work of high artistic quality. Individuals are considered to be a professional artist if they
  - earn at least part of their annual income in their artistic disciplines,
  - consider their artistic endeavors as a career,
  - maintain a high level of artistic quality, and
  - make a significant time investment in their artistic disciplines through practice, performance and production;
- more than 18 years of age;
- not a full-time student; and
- a permanent, legal resident of Mississippi at the time of application and throughout the grant period. Applicants may be required to show proof of residence.

## Artist Fellowship Categories

Applicants should select the appropriate category listed below. Under MAC's current plan, certain artistic disciplines alternate every other year. For this coming fiscal year (July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011) MAC will be accepting applications in the following categories:

- Folk Arts: performing arts traditions such as blues guitar, old-time fiddling and traditional dance (staff contact: Mary Margaret Miller, 601-359-6034 or mmiller@arts.state.ms.us)
- Literary Arts and Media Arts: for poetry and fiction or film and video (staff contact: Diane Williams, 601-359-6529 or dwilliams@arts.state.ms.us)
- Performing Arts: for music composition, choreography or interdisciplinary arts (staff contact: Allison Winstead, 601-359-6546 or awinstead@arts.state.ms.us)
- Visual Arts and Design Arts: includes painting, sculpture, works on paper, photography, architectural design, fashion design, graphic design, landscape architecture (staff contact: Kim Whitt, 601-359-6037 or kwhitt@arts.state.ms.us).

During the next fiscal year (July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012), MAC anticipates accepting applications (deadline: March 1, 2011) in the following categories:

- Crafts: includes clay, fiber, glass, leather, metal, paper, wood, and mixed media
- Folk Arts: for artists who are masters of traditional, community-based visual art forms such as basketmaking, woodcarving and quilting
- Literary Arts: for creative nonfiction, playwriting and screenwriting
- Performing Arts: for music, theater, storytelling and dance performance
- Visual Arts: includes painting, sculpture, works on paper, and photography

### **Review Criteria for Design, Literary, Media, Performing, & Visual Arts**

Artist Fellowships are reviewed through a "blind" panel process. The review panel does not know the names of the applicants nor receives information about their academic or professional achievements. Their discussion and feedback is focused solely on the artistic excellence of the submitted work samples. Artist Fellowship review panels determine an applicant's artistic excellence by reviewing the following three components:

- The originality and vision of the work
- Technical skill and mastery of the artistic discipline, and
- The technique or process used to create the work.

### **How to Apply: Design, Literary, Media, Performing, and Visual Arts**

**Please note:** Visual and Literary artists must submit their fellowship application materials through the eGRANT electronic grant system.

Please submit the following. The review panel will not see these documents. However, they are required to document your status as a professional artist and gather required information for reporting purposes:

One copy of

- Artist Fellowship Application Form
- A biographical description (up to two pages) in which you discuss your development as an artist

- Your current artistic resumé (this document should detail your work as a professional artist only. Do not include information about your non-arts work)

Also, two copies of the following (the review panel will see these items):

- Appropriate work samples (see the appropriate work sample format for each discipline listed below). The samples must have been completed within the last three years.
- A list that describes the submitted work samples. These descriptions should include the titles and completion dates of each work sample. If appropriate for the art form, please also include the medium and the approximate dimensions of each work. Neither your name nor any publication or exhibition information about the works should be included in the list.
- An artist's statement (no more than 500 words) which provides insight into the applicant's submitted work samples. Describe your vision and creative process. Please also include any relevant details on special processes or techniques you utilized to create the sample work. The statement should be written in first person and present tense. Please do not include any biographical information or professional achievements within the statement.

## **Review Criteria for Folk Arts**

Applicants in the Folk Arts Fellowship category are also reviewed through a "blind" process, but the panel is provided with the applicants' narratives. This allows them to understand an applicant's connection to their artistic tradition.

Applicants should address the following review criteria in their proposals:

- Mastery of the artistic discipline (30 points)
- Traditionality of art work (30 points)
- Potential for creating new work of even higher quality during the grant period (40 points)

## **How to Apply: Folk Arts**

Please submit one original and one collated copy of the following items in the order listed:

- Artist Fellowship Application Form
- Narrative (two-page maximum) in which you discuss your development as an artist, emphasizing how you learned your artform. Make sure to relate the description of this development to the work samples that you submit (your name should not appear on or within the narrative)
- Your current artistic resumé (this document should detail your work as a professional artist only. Do not include information about your non-arts work.)
- Appropriate work samples (see the required formats listed below. The samples must have been completed within the last three years.)
- A list describing the submitted work samples. These descriptions should include the titles and completion dates of each work sample. If appropriate for the art form, please also include the medium and the approximate dimensions of each work. Neither your name nor any publication or exhibition information about the works should be included in the list.

## Work Sample Formats

Work samples are the most important component of an Artist Fellowship application. Submitted samples that do not meet the following guidelines will not be considered in the review process:

- **Visual Arts:** One set of digital images that feature six different samples of work completed within the last three years (up to three views of the same work are permissible). The images should be saved in JPEG format at 72dpi, with no image wider than 1600 pixels. **Note:** The samples must be submitted through the eGRANT system.
- **Literary Arts: Creative non-fiction, playwriting and screenwriting:** Typed samples of creative non-fiction, playwriting or screenwriting (15-20 pages total) completed within the last three years. If your submitted work sample is an excerpt from a longer work, you may include a one-page synopsis of the work as a whole. Published work must be submitted in typed manuscript rather than published form. The sample must be formatted using a 12-point font size and one inch margins on all sides of the page. Neither your name nor any publication information should appear on the samples. **Note:** The samples must be submitted through the eGRANT system.
- **Media Arts:** Three copies of a DVD or VHS tape with 5-10 minutes of excerpts from work completed within the last three years. VHS tapes should be cued to the section to be reviewed. The list of work samples should include, for each excerpt, the title, length, date completed, technique, original format, genre (documentary, experimental, etc.) and the specific role of the applicant in creating the submitted work.
- **Folk Arts & Performing Arts - Music Performance – Instrumental or Voice:** Three copies of a CD containing at least three but no more than five songs, recorded within the last three years. The CDs should be clearly labeled with the song titles only. The work sample listing should include the names of the composer and featured performers (except the applicant), the instrumentation, title, duration, the role of the applicant for each work and the date completed.
- **Performing Arts - Theater, Storytelling, or Dance Performance:** Three copies of a DVD or videotape sample containing one complete work or several shorter works, clearly labeled with the titles only. The work sample listing should include the names of the writer or choreographer and performers (except for the applicant), title, duration, the role of the applicant in each work and the date completed. For group performances, please note on the work sample list which performer is the applicant.

## Return of Work Samples

Applicants who want their work samples returned by mail must provide a self-addressed mailer with sufficient postage affixed to it. The samples may also be picked up between July 1st and August 30th at MAC's office during regular business hours. Please make arrangements with the program director managing your application before visiting the office. All work samples will be discarded after August 30th if no instructions are given for their return.

## **Dates to Remember**

March 1, 2010 – Artist Fellowship application deadline

April 2010 – Review of applications by the grant panel (the specific panel date will be available by mid-March. Applicants are allowed to attend panels.)

June 2010 – MAC Board meets and makes final funding decisions on all applications

July 1, 2010 – Applicants are notified whether their application was funded or not. No information on the grants (including whether or not an applicant will be receiving an award or the amount of the award) will be available from MAC prior to this date.