

To Our Fellow Michiganders:

We, the executive leaders of arts and cultural institutions in Southeast Michigan, have been proud to serve you through our work and be your neighbors in our communities, and we now share your unsettling feelings of uncertainty as emerging health and economic crises progressively paralyze public life.

Previously, in times of turmoil, you have relied on our festivals, concerts, plazas, and galleries as places to gather and heal collectively, and it saddens us that during a time of such great need for connectivity, our best strategy for progress is distancing.

Please know that despite temporary physical separation, **we are fighting to stay connected and maintain our capacities** to be educational centers for youth, favorites for locals, weekend activities for families, and attractions for tourists. Some of those strategies include digital innovations that will offer **new spaces of inspiration and imagination**.

Amid the challenges our organizations are facing, we understand that prioritizing community health is foundational to our ability to survive and recover from these crises—and we appreciate government officials acting prudently and decisively to protect our ability to thrive for generations. We also understand that we must simultaneously look toward the horizon and envision a new, prosperous future.

Our sector has historically been tied to prosperity, reinforced by March 2020 data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis showing **the arts and culture sector represents 4.5% of GDP**. For context, that is greater than the transportation and construction industries, and five times greater than agriculture.

As a creative field that is critical to economic and social vitality, we invite you join us in processes of regenerating our communities:

- help us ease the burden of these crises on our **employees, artists, and contractors** who in so many ways define our work and now experience personal hardship bigger than rainy day funds;
- remember to visit us—digitally—and check out the updates and explore the **new content** we are frequently posting on our websites and social media pages for you and your family; and
- work with us to protect the **landmarks** you adore (and prepare them for your return); you have invested in these cultural assets over the years and we want you to enjoy them for years to come.

As we work within the cultural sector to coordinate and collaborate across the organizations we lead, we also aspire to work outside of our sector and create clear channels of connection with allies to invest in our communities together. Thank you, be well, and email [wrush@culturesource.org](mailto:wrush@culturesource.org) to get connected.

Sincerely,

**Diana Abouali, PhD**  
Arab American National Museum

**Neil Barclay**  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History

**Wayne Brown**  
Michigan Opera Theatre

**Dominic DiMarco**  
Cranbrook Educational Community

**Phil Gilchrist**  
Anton Art Center

**Ron Kagan**  
Detroit Zoological Society

**Mike Michelon**  
Ann Arbor Summer Festival

**Patricia Mooradian**  
The Henry Ford

**Anne Parsons**  
Detroit Symphony Orchestra

**Omari Rush**  
CultureSource

**Salvador Salort-Pons**  
Detroit Institute of Arts

**DeLashea Strawder**  
Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit

**Matthew VanBesien**  
University Musical Society

*On behalf of CultureSource's [160 member nonprofit organizations](#)  
throughout Southeast Michigan.*