



Director of Scottsdale Public Arts looks to inspire younger generations of artists

ASU alumna Kim Curry-Evans said she wants to channel the awe she felt looking at art as a child



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Photo by Shalandra Benally

(http://www.statepress.com/staff/shalandra-benally) | The State Press

ASU alumna and director of Scottsdale Public Arts, Kim Curry-Evans, poses in front of a new installation on the Scottsdale Waterfront in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Monday, Nov. 5, 2018.



(mailto:?subject=Director of Scottsdale



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By Clinton Barney (http://www.statepress.com/staff/clinton-barney) | 11/08/18 1:14pm

Kim Curry-Evans found herself in awe as a little girl when she experienced art. Now, she hopes to use her position as the current director of Scottsdale Public Arts to inspire younger generations through a public arts event.

Curry-Evans said she grew up with an appreciation for the arts after going to the Louvre Museum on a family trip through Europe to visit her dad, who was stationed in Germany at the time.

She said the opportunity to experience great art at a famous museum at such a young age expanded her perspective on a world outside of what she saw on TV or in the movies.

"It was seeing beauty in different ways, and in this case, it was by the way of visual arts," she said.

When it was time to choose a career path, she struggled between her love of art and family pressures to pursue a more practical degree.

"The focus, as it would be in many families, but particularly in African American families, was about (going) to college to get a degree that's going to put food on the table," she said.

For this reason, Curry-Evans entered college at ASU to pursue a degree in business.

Struggling academically, she transferred to Mesa Community College to continue school in a way that was more manageable given that she was also raising a family.

Curry said one arts history class at MCC was all it took for her to reconnect to her childhood memory of being in awe of the art she saw in Paris.

"Taking that arts history class I think just reconnected me to the childhood experience and there was honestly no looking back after that," Curry-Evans said.

With a new sense of direction, she returned to ASU and graduated with a degree in arts history in 1987.

After graduation, she spent time "working where there is work" before landing an internship with The Metropolitan Museum of Arts (<https://www.metmuseum.org/>) in New York.

Since then, she has traveled across the country, spending time in Sacramento and Raleigh, North Carolina to bring awareness of public arts and work to new generations of underrepresented artists, bringing new voices and perspectives into the artistic sphere.

"My passion had always been about working with African American artists and bringing in nationally known artists to be able to work with communities, so that they can learn more about the great work that these artists are doing," Curry-Evans said.

She said she maintains the priority to teach, connect and enable young and underrepresented artists by exposing them to local, national and international artists and showing them the power of easily-accessible and enjoyable public art.

When she returned to the Valley, she decided to use her new directorial role to inspire artists and the public through Scottsdale's developing public arts event, Canal Convergence (<https://canalconvergence.com/>), in the same way.

Starting in 2012, the annual festival was designed to showcase local artistic talent, making use of a barren, empty canal in order to make something beautiful for the public to enjoy.

Canal Convergence 2018, will run from Nov. 9 -18 and will feature intricate and interactive displays that combine light, water and art on the Scottsdale Waterfront.

"I've seen the evolution of Canal Convergence from a very small idea that's grown and grown. We've just gotten so many fabulous artists out here and great art interaction with the public," Wendy Raisanen, curator of exhibitions and collections manager at Scottsdale Arts, said.

Canal Convergence Water + Art + Light 2017



Curry-Evans said she wanted to expand this event to teach the public the importance of arts through bringing in diverse artists.

"We're thrilled ... that we have this caliber of an event that not only celebrates local artists, but also national and international artists," Karen Churchard, director of tourism and events in Scottsdale, said. "It's a great way to really showcase what artists can represent."

Curry-Evans said she hopes her time spent working on Canal Convergence is inspirational not only for her predecessors but also for the up-and-coming artists that experience the event.

"I hope it's ... an easy transition to the next generation and hands that will find the new, fun and exciting ways of showing the following generation how important the arts are for our lives," Curry-Evans said. "I hope they can take that into their lives just like how I did as that little girl at the (<http://>)Louvre."

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