Community Shapes a New Mission Statement

MISSION STATEMENT: Ryman Arts transforms lives by creating access and opportunity for a diverse community of young artists through rigorous education in fundamental art skills and mentoring.

Ryman Arts has a new mission statement that reflects our history and the changing landscape of arts education and the needs of our community. Since January 2018, we gathered perspectives from our faculty, the Board, staff, funders, alumni, and community partners in higher education and youth development in many working sessions facilitated by consultant Deanna Cherry. Over the 18 month process, we identified the values of Ryman Arts, the methods that we will use to further these values, and the importance of our work in the community.

“We chose the iterative and inclusive process intentionally. We wanted to examine whether our focus on skill based art teaching was still relevant and whether there were other elements of our approach that needed to be adjusted or highlighted in the mission,” stated Executive Director Diane Brigham. Gathering community perspectives as the starting point of our process, we asked the following questions:

What would our community look like if Ryman Arts did not exist? And What makes Ryman Arts distinctive?

We heard how important Ryman Arts had become—as a pipeline to higher education, as the advanced art training most schools can’t offer, as mentors for talented, passionate young artists, and for the access it provides to creative careers.

Soon approaching our 30th anniversary, our core is the same, but we are continuing to evolve and grow, now with our new mission statement to guide us.
Ryman Arts in the Community

Workshop Inspired by Marvel Studios
Last summer, in anticipation of the Sklar Creative Visionary Award celebration honoring Marvel Studios President and Producer, Kevin Feige, 20 Ryman Arts students and alumni went on an exclusive behind-the-scenes Marvel Studios tour and took part in a week-long Marvel inspired workshop, creating a 20-panel collaboration with guidance from the Marvel Studios Visual Development team – Ryan Meinerding, Andy Park, Anthony Francisco, and Jackson Sze – and the Portfolio Creative Executive of Walt Disney Imagineering Scot Drake.

Ryman Arts Alumni Paint Onstage with Asia America Youth Symphony
Ryman Arts collaborated with the Asia America Symphony Association to present “Music on Canvas,” a performance of George Gershwin’s “An American in Paris,” featuring Ryman Arts alumni Petrina Mina (Ryman ’00) and Kiani Wish (Ryman ’16) painting live, onstage with the Asia America Youth Symphony.

Parent Appreciation Night
We held our first ever Parent Appreciation Night for parents of Ryman Arts students and alumni in May. Parents took a behind-the-scenes look at the creative field of themed entertainment at an open house hosted at The Hettema Group. Special thanks to our Board President Phil Hettema and his team at The Hettema Group for opening up their studios and being wonderful hosts for the evening.

Exclusive Career Tour at Warner Bros. Studios
Every spring, Ryman Arts partners with creative businesses, cultural institutions, and local organizations to provide our students and alumni with behind-the-scenes tours to learn about creative careers.

One of these tours took place at Warner Bros. Consumer Products. The discussion was led by Chief Creative Officer Soo Koo with Senior Design Manager Vin Seong, Design Manager Liza Gutierrez Nason, and Senior Designer and Ryman Arts alumna Elsy Mendez (Ryman ’05).

Thank you to our 2019 Career Tour Hosts
- Disney Animation Research Library
- Elizabeth Turk Studio
- Garner Holt Productions
- The Getty Villa, Antiquities Department
- The Hettema Group
- Jovenville
- Super 78 Studios
- Titmouse Animation Studios
- Walt Disney Imagineering
- Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc.
Rooted and Relevant

When Board President Phil Hettema asked me to lead a working group to update our mission statement last year, that phrase “rooted and relevant” kept coming to mind. After all, we were founded almost 30 years ago by icons in the creative world, and our namesake, Herbert D. Ryman was a beloved and influential artist. That gives us roots.

Our award-winning work in art education has evolved over time, and yet we still find deep value in focusing our studio teaching on core skills of drawing and painting. Over a generation, we have expanded to a larger geographic area, and the challenges facing young people today seem to be greater than ever. We wanted to be sure we remain relevant to the needs of today. Reaching out to our broad community: alumni, teachers, higher education leaders, artists, funders, employers, parents, government representatives, we listened deeply to their perspectives.

What makes Ryman Arts relevant today? A key part for me is the community we are shaping for young artists: a place where a young person can feel seen and heard. A safe and diverse community where you can really be challenged by the rigor in a nurturing way.

What’s next? I see us growing from strong roots, challenging ourselves to create even more access and opportunity for the next generation. Thank you for making this work possible.

Diane Brigham, Executive Director

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In November, we celebrated the inaugural Marty and Leah Sklar Creative Visionary Award, presented annually to an individual of singular creative vision and leadership who has made a distinctive contribution to the creative community: illuminating, inspiring, and expanding the impact, relevance, and reach of the arts through their work and creative vision. This award is named for two visionaries who were co-founders of Ryman Arts, Leah Sklar, an active member in community and educational initiatives, and the late Marty Sklar, the legendary President of Walt Disney Imagineering.

Stay tuned this summer when we announce this year’s extraordinary honoree. Join the celebration on October 25, 2019, at Neuehouse, Hollywood.
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Ryman Arts:
teaching young artists.
transforming lives.

Dates to Remember...

June 1 – 29: Ryman Arts Student Exhibition, California State University, Fullerton
July 14: Garner Holt Productions Presents An Evening at Walt Disney’s House, Los Feliz
August: Semester Begins at California State University, Fullerton
August 23 – 25: D23 Expo, Anaheim
September: Semester Begins at Otis College of Art & Design
October 25: Sklar Creative Visionary Award Celebration, Neuehouse, Hollywood

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