

## **State of the Arts is a Civic Forum to Elevate Public Conversation About the Role of Arts and Culture in Lafayette**



**Pictured:** Audience and panel at State of the Arts 2024

**LAFAYETTE, LA - May 27, 2025** - Acadiana Center for the Arts presents the third annual State of the Arts symposium, a civic forum spotlighting the essential role of arts and culture in shaping Lafayette's economy, identity, and future. All are invited to attend this free event taking place on Friday, June 13, 2025 at the Acadiana Center for the Arts.

Designed to ignite meaningful dialogue and strategic action, State of the Arts brings together leaders from government, business, education, and the arts to address the idea that arts and culture are not incidental—they are central. With more than \$1.5 billion in annual cultural sector revenue, Lafayette's creative economy is one of the region's largest economic drivers.

One of the day's most anticipated events is the keynote address by Dr. Christophe Jackson, which will explore how creativity transforms the brain, improves mental health, and builds social bonds. A Louisiana native whose expertise spans neuroscience, medicine, education, and the arts, Dr. Jackson's engaging, interdisciplinary presentation, delivered from the grand piano on the stage of the James Devin Moncus Theater, will blend performance with scientific insight.

Dr. Jackson says, "The intersection of arts, science, and medicine is where healing, humanity, and health meet. The arts have been integral to our lives prior to the development of language. My work is important because it more fully explores the benefits of the arts to connect us to ourselves and others more fully."



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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See the full schedule here: [acadianacenterforthearts.org/events/state-of-the-arts-2025](https://acadianacenterforthearts.org/events/state-of-the-arts-2025)

### Event Highlights and Featured Sessions

#### ***Plenary: Updated Economic Impact of Arts and Culture Report | 2:00 PM***

LEDA President & CEO Mandi Mitchell presents new findings from the first update in eight years to Lafayette's Cultural Economy Impact Report, with insights from LEDA's Brittany Deal and LEED Center's Jonathan Shirley.

#### ***Creating and Meeting Demand for the Arts | 3:00 PM***

A panel featuring Dr. Mark Rabalais (LPSS), Leigha Porter (PARC Village), and Scott Feehan (Festival International) discuss how education and programming build lasting arts engagement.

#### ***Culture as Community Development | 3:00 PM***

A deep dive into how local festivals and neighborhood events strengthen community ties with Tina Bingham (McComb Veazey Coterie, Habitat for Humanity), Anna Kojevnikov (AcA) and George Marks (NUNU Arts and Culture Collective).

#### ***Investing in Place to Attract Talent | 4:00 PM***

Michael Soileau (LFT Fiber), Andree Gounsolin (Tides Medical), William LaBar (CGI) and Molly Rowe (Hilliard Museum) examine the power of cultural vibrancy in attracting and retaining workforce talent.

#### ***The Artist's Journey | 4:00 PM***

A heartfelt panel of artists and their parents—including Clare Cook (Basin Arts) and Nanette Cook, Colette Bernard (Cocodrie Designs) and Shane Bernard —share stories of navigating creative careers.

In addition to thought-provoking sessions and engaging dialogue, State of the Arts 2025 will feature several exciting announcements, including new professional development opportunities for creative entrepreneurs and a call for artists for an upcoming public art initiative.

More information about the event can be found at [acadianacenterforthearts.org](https://acadianacenterforthearts.org).

Please contact Rachel Adams, Marketing Manager, at [rachel@acadianacenterforthearts.org](mailto:rachel@acadianacenterforthearts.org) to schedule interviews.



### **About AcA**

As the community leader in arts and culture, the Acadiana Center for the Arts (AcA) serves to bring elevating arts experiences to the people of Acadiana through many approaches including holding public concerts, presenting art exhibitions, providing grants to artists and cultural organizations, and bringing artists into schools across the region. AcA brings equitable access to the arts through year-round education and outreach activities and aims to build a more sustainable cultural ecosystem for future generations in Acadiana.