



Press Kit

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Organization Overview

What is Statement Arts? Our Mission

Statement Arts is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing the creative visual & performing arts to underserved and/or low-income individuals. We channel creativity to educate, to enhance intellectual performance, to empower and guide, and to build self-esteem. Statement Arts is committed to giving our students an intercultural and interdisciplinary arts experience to which they do not have access. Statement Arts believes in the power of art to inspire social, cultural, and environmental education to further a legacy of responsible global citizenship.

What We Do

Statement Arts runs educational outreach programs that provide a safe platform for our participants to come together and create. We nurture, build self-confidence, and enrich our students with creative experiences that will empower them throughout their lives and encourage them to be ambassadors for their own communities. We do this by teaching art, acting, photography, music, dance, film making, and writing.

Our Goals

- Provide a safe environment for students of all ethnicities, religions, and sexual orientations to come together, working towards a common goal.
- Build a solid individualized and artistic foundation for every student from which they may pursue their dreams.
- Make our students more aware of their surroundings and the opportunities therein.
- Establish an interactive creative arts forum that illuminates personal strengths, ignites academic curiosity and anchors the students in their individual education.
- Further civic responsibility by providing community outreach.
- Find students available scholarships for college and other special programs.

Organization Background

Statement Arts was conceived at the High School of Environmental Studies (HSES), an underserved public school in New York City's Hell's Kitchen. Inspiration for Statement Arts stems from the success of the ongoing Project: Urban Arts.

Since then we have been involved in numerous arts related projects as outlined below.

Current Projects

Urban Arts

Started in 2003, Urban Arts, is an art enrichment program whose goal is to supplement arts education in the New York City public school system.

In addition to raising money, we've also brought in professional New York City choreographers, actors, directors, casting agents, pianists, costumers and photographers to work with these talented students. Workshops, photo sessions, master classes, and rehearsals were all coordinated through Statement Arts.

Since the program's inception, we have directed and supported five full-scale musical productions including, *A Chorus Line*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Pippin*, *The Wiz*, and *Annie*. In addition to teaching them about the arts, we also instill the importance of teamwork, collaboration and commitment.

Think Theater

In August 2009, Statement Arts launched a new program for the children of LGBT families. We participated in the internationally acclaimed "Family Week" in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

Through an interactive, educational workshop, New York City theater professionals presented the play *Peacemaker* by David Holman, and lead children in post performance discussions. We pioneered the use of drama as an educational tool in "Family Week" and using theatre as a medium to promote social, emotional, and intellectual growth in LGBT communities.

We were inspired by educational drama programs and interactive drama for learning and change. Our program for young people will strengthen literacy, creativity, critical thinking, and life skills while guiding participants to examine important curricular and social themes and issues.

Based on feedback from 2009's successful event, we're developing a brand new play and interactive workshop on bullying for 2010, entitled *Super Ben*.

A Single Drop of Water

Our new program for 2010, *A Single Drop of Water*, is an arts based environmental awareness and education program that will use the arts, specifically photography, to document the journey of water. Our goal is to raise awareness about water, the importance of this precious resource, water pollution, and water scarcity in some communities.

The project will provide photographers with a platform for sharing their images and stories. The project will also provide inspiration to photographers with access to particularly underprivileged areas, where clean water is scarce, to document and share this scarcity in an artistic medium. Winning entries shall be exhibited in New York City, and will be used in future Statement Arts education materials to teach our students about water and inspire them produce their own artistic work to further awareness about water.

Future exhibits will include photography, theatrical performances and multimedia events.

Past Projects

IMPACT on the Gulf

Statement Arts and THE CULTURE PROJECT worked with a dedicated and knowledgeable alliance of arts organizations to create IMPACT on the Gulf.

IMPACT was an a human rights festival organized by the Culture Project, and hosted on 42nd Street by chashama, from September 28th through October 7th, 2006.

IMPACT on the Gulf showcased dynamic artistic endeavors that testified to the despair and hope that coexisted in the region affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Exhibits included theatrical performances, panel discussions, film screenings, jazz nights, readings and fundraisers.

Disaster Registry

As a continuation of our World Art Project, a response to the devastation left in the Gulf Coast by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Statement Arts organized the Disaster Registry to aid some of the families in need.

The Disaster Registry was an online registry, where families could list their needs and where other concerned citizens from around the globe could purchase them.

World Art Project: The Bayou Tour

In December 2005, 16 professional performers from New York City, traveled by bus to the Hurricane ravaged Gulf Coast to perform in the most neglected and forgotten areas. We called the project, "World Art" and invited local choirs, musicians and singers to join us for a week, while we brought music, holiday spirit, toys and supplies to those desperately in need.

Media coverage for this project included a spot on MSNBC:
http://risingfromruin.msnbc.com/2005/12/broadway_by_the.html#posts

Success Stories

Many of our students have already met with tremendous success including:

- Bill & Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarship recipient 2005
- Honor Roll & National Honors Society members
- A Sundance Film Festival participant
- Many students have gone onto higher learning institutions

Fact Sheet

Organization Name: Statement Arts, Inc.
Location: New York, New York
URL: www.statementarts.org
Date of Incorporation: May 18, 2006
Type of Organization: Nonprofit 501(c)(3)
Services: Project based arts programs.

Contact Information

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Biographies – Statement Arts Board

Liza Politi

Co-founder, President and Chairperson of the Board

Liza Politi graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, winning the Lee Strasberg Award for acting in her final year. She has spent the last 15 years working as an actress and model in New York City, appearing in countless television commercials and magazines. Liza has performed Off Broadway, in independent films and has been a spokesperson for Sensodyne, Volvo, Gerber's, Olive Garden, and Allegra advertising campaigns, appearing in Martha Stewart Living, O! the Oprah Magazine, Better Homes & Gardens, and Good Housekeeping. In 2000, Liza was presented with the Joseph P. Reilly Award from the Screen Actors Guild in recognition for her efforts in resolving a national strike.

After September 11th, 2001, Liza spent nine months at Ground Zero working with the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army. In 2003, the FDNY honored her for a community outreach program that she co-founded for them in 2001.

Liza has also worked as an event coordinator for The Allison Getz Foundation; an AIDS awareness program, September Space; a 9-11 Community Center and for Kids with Cameras; a non-profit organization based on the 2004 Academy Award-winning documentary, Born into Brothels, whose mission is to empower marginalized children through art. She currently works as a coordinator for National Geographic photographers, organizing International photography workshops throughout Europe.

Georgia DeFalco

Co-founder and Secretary

Georgia DeFalco graduated from the University of Illinois in 2000 with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and a minor in vocal performance. Upon graduation, Georgia lived in Chicago and worked at Davenport's Cabaret while teaching middle school in Hinsdale, IL. Georgia moved to New York City in 2001 with her now husband, award-winning singer/songwriter pianist and performer Johnny Rodgers. She immediately secured the position of vocal director at the High School for Environmental Studies in midtown and began building up the program to include Beginning and Advanced Choral and Musical Theater studies. Her after school programs include Gospel Choir, Women's and Men's Glee Clubs, and Madrigals. Her school groups have toured and competed around the United States.

Having no real funds in her public school, over the years Georgia has applied for numerous grants and thanks in part to the funding she received, her program at Environmental Studies was picked by Donor's Choose to be featured in a press conference with actress Claire Danes for their international re-launch in 2007. Georgia met Liza Politi in 2003 and teamed up to fill the immediate need for supplies, college audition preparation, and master

classes at Environmental Studies. Their partnership led to the creation of Statement Arts.

Georgia has completed the masters' program in theater at Hunter College in 2008 and received her Master's Degree in Educational Theater from City College in 2009. One of the first two graduates of this pioneer program, Georgia studied with top professionals in the field including Gwendolyn Hardwick, Tony Goode, Augusto Boal, and the Creative Arts Team. She currently mentors student teachers in educational theater from City College and NYU as well as student teachers from the music program at Teacher's College and Hunter College.

Doing her part for the environment, Georgia became a vegetarian and amateur raw foodist in 2007. She has worked with Team in Training, mentoring beginning triathletes while raising money for cancer research. Georgia has completed six marathons, including four in New York City, numerous triathlons including one Half Ironman, and is a member of New York Road Runners and the Asphalt Green Triathlon Club. She married John Rodgers on August 9th, 2008, and their new mini-dachshund, Maggie, can be seen running them around their neighborhood in south Harlem.

Nicola Kinsella

Vice President, Treasurer and Executive Director

Nicola Kinsella is Statement Arts' Vice President, Treasurer, and Executive Director and is responsible for the development of programs, financials, technical direction, and oversight of the organization's operations. Serving first as a technical consultant to Statement Arts, Nicola joined the Board of Directors in 2007 and accepted the roles of Vice President, Treasurer, and Executive Director in 2009. A seasoned professional with more than a dozen years experience in the areas of e-commerce, business analysis, project management and publishing, she has worked in corporations, both large and small.

Born in Australia, the desire to go "walkabout" started young. Her first overseas job was in London. She returned to Australia to get a Bachelor of Arts from Macquarie University, Sydney, and came to New York City in 1999.

Nicola became an avid sailor, racing and captaining sailboats throughout the eastern seaboard. She has competed in many races including, Newport to Bermuda, the Around Long Island Regatta and The Vineyard Race. She has also skippered charter boats throughout the Caribbean.

Another interest is photography. She loves to capture babies and small children in action and launched Nicola K Photography in 2003. She currently lives in New Jersey with her husband and young son.

Sarah Hamilton

Director, Founding Board Member

Sarah Hamilton graduated with Honors from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. During her time at school she spent a year at the Lee Strasberg Studio in

London where she earned the opportunity to work with members of the Royal Shakespeare Company. She appeared as Cressida in *Troilus and Cressida* and *Isabelle* in *Measure for Measure*. She has spent the last 10 years working as an actress and a voice over artist in New York City. She has performed On, and Off Broadway, in independent films, and has held the campaigns for Chapstick, Sony Television, Amstel Light Beer and has voiced hundreds of other commercials. Some of which are V-8 Splash, CoverGirl, Cosmopolitan Magazine, Dove Candy Bar and The Learning Channel along with hundreds of radio commercials. Sarah is also the voice of April Ryan the lead character in the internationally acclaimed and E3 Award winning video game: *The Longest Journey* and its sequel *Dreamfall*.

Sarah is an Actor, Director, Teacher and Fund Raiser. Her passion of the last decade has been to act as a catalyst for positive social change. She performed as a featured speaker at the Phyllis Newman Women's Health Initiative's *Nothing Like A Dame* benefit in 2006, which is part of the Actors' Fund of America. She was then asked to speak at the Easter Bonnet Benefit in 2006, which was presented by Broadway Care/Equity Fight AIDES (BC/EFA). Over \$300,000 was raised at *Dames* and over triple that amount at the Bonnet which is allocated to help artists in the industry who are unable to support themselves during a medical crisis. Sarah also helped to raise money for Kids with Cameras; a non-profit organization based on the 2004 Academy Award-winning documentary, *Born into Brothels*. Sarah was recently asked to sit as an auxiliary board member of Classical Action, a division of BC/EFA when they started a youth coalition for AIDS education.

Lena Kaminsky

Director

Lena Kaminsky is an actress and casting director. As an actor, Lena has worked at many regional theaters around the country. Some credits include *Doubt* at Northern Stage in Vermont, *Trying* at Hartford TheaterWorks, and *The Kansas City Repertory Theater* where she portrayed Janis Joplin in the rock musical *Love, Janis*. She spent a year touring with the George Street Playhouse outreach tour, bringing three shows focusing on conflict resolution to various age groups throughout the New Jersey area.

She spent the 2007 and 2008 seasons with the Adirondack Theater Festival's STAGWRITE! program, which hires professional actors to perform plays written by students based on their current curriculum.

As a casting director, Lena is an associated at Selective Casting, which focuses exclusively on casting talent for video and film productions, museum exhibits, not-for-profits, government agencies, and education institutions. She has led workshops on *The Business of Acting*, specifically for young actors just beginning their journey. Lena graduated from Emerson College in Boston with a BFA in acting.