



Center for the Creative & Performing Arts



ADVANCING THE ARTS AT SMITH

Art adds depth and meaning to life.






A photograph of a stage performance. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several people are visible against a large, bright blue circular projection on the back wall. The silhouettes appear to be of people sitting or standing in a row. To the right, a microphone stand is visible. The stage floor is dark and reflective. In the bottom right corner, a red object, possibly a jacket or bag, is visible. The overall atmosphere is dramatic and artistic.

Art makes us think.

MITH COLLEGE



The image shows a workshop or classroom environment. In the foreground, a light-colored workbench holds several items: a red-handled tool, a small black electronic device, and a box filled with various colored markers. Behind these items are several sheets of paper with colorful, abstract drawings. In the background, a large black fume hood is visible, with several papers pinned to its top edge. The scene is lit with warm, indoor lighting.

Art fuels creative approaches
to problem solving.





Art illuminates big ideas in ways that other forms of media can't.







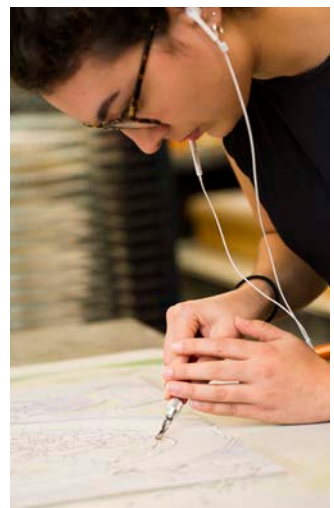
Art connects cultures, enriches communities and sparks movements.

Art Is a Humanizing Force.

True leaders know the value of arts education. They understand how participation in the arts opens minds to new ways of thinking, how it builds teamwork and increases our understanding of the world around us.

The power of art is undeniable.

At Smith, we have always placed the arts at the center of students' educational experience. In laying out the college's educational philosophy, Smith's first president, Laurenus Clark Seelye, noted that the best education must be grounded in the humanities and arts. Courses in the arts, he insisted, should be "elevated to equal rank" as the study of Latin and mathematics. In the years since, Smith's commitment to the arts and humanities has expanded and grown to include the full spectrum of producing and performing arts: dance, music, theatre, film and media studies, studio arts, digital art, and digital music, along with concentrations in museums, poetry and book studies. It is not uncommon at Smith to find students who major in neuroscience, minor in music, and play in the Jazz Ensemble.





This sort of multidisciplinary approach to engaging with the arts prepares our graduates in innumerable ways for a lifetime of creativity, curiosity of mind and collaborative approaches to problem solving. Celebrated curator Thelma Golden '87 has said that her understanding of culture comes from studying and following the work of artists. Internationally recognized scientist Jean Merrill '69, whose research has contributed to the study and treatment of multiple sclerosis, credits the arts courses she took as an undergraduate for opening her mind to new ways of thinking and approaching her work. "It was from my experience in arts courses that I recognized I had another side to me that needed to be exercised," she said. "Smith is where I learned to be both scientific in its strictest sense and creative in its most open sense."

Our commitment to educating the whole student is continuing as we take the next step in advancing the arts at Smith: founding the **Center for the Creative & Performing Arts.**

"Smith's liberal arts education instilled in me the importance of thinking critically and communicating clearly—skills that have been essential in both my academic and professional life post-Smith."

—Curator and scholar Kathryn Calley Galitz '86

Introducing the

Center for the Creative & Performing Arts

A New Vision for the Arts at Smith

The times require bold and innovative thinking. In establishing this center, we have set our sights—and expectations—high.

- We want students to dig in, explore and experience first-hand how the arts add depth and meaning to life.
- We want students to be inspired and challenged by what they see, hear and touch.
- And we want the world to recognize Smith as a destination for innovation, transformation, expression and creativity.

The Center for the Creative & Performing Arts will catapult Smith into a new position of influence in the arts and humanities, ensuring that every student engages with the arts throughout her time at Smith and graduates with a lifelong appreciation for the power of the creative process.

The center will unify arts planning and programming across campus. By taking a more intentional approach to developing partnerships with distinct academic departments, we will strengthen the presence of the arts at Smith and extend the benefits of exposure to the arts to all students at every step of their Smith journey.



The center will be guided by five key goals:

1. **INCREASE THE VISIBILITY** of the arts at Smith.
2. **SEED CREATIVE PROJECTS** that add richness and meaning to the educational experience.
3. **SERVE AS A HUB** for the creation of cross-disciplinary initiatives that pool the resources and talents of the creative arts departments at Smith: art, dance, film and media studies, music, and theatre.
4. **COORDINATE ARTS-RELATED PROGRAMMING** across campus.
5. **BUILD A NETWORK** of performers, artists, and other partners to provide internships, practical experiences, and career placement for students and graduates.

The center will support Smith's mission to educate women of promise for lives of distinction and purpose by

- making creative problem solving a distinctive element of the liberal arts at Smith
- elevating Smith's reputation as an institution committed to producing lifelong participants in the arts—as patrons, pioneers, audiences and innovators
- cultivating women leaders who bring a deep and practiced understanding of the creative process to all aspects of their professions.



How Arts Education Will Evolve at Smith

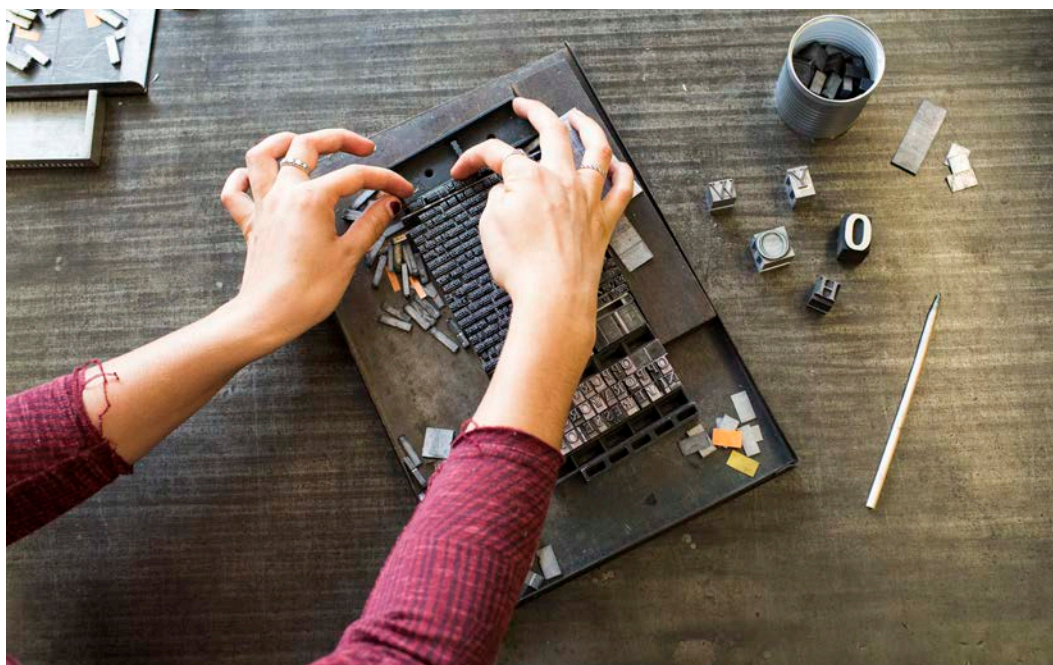
The Center for the Creative & Performing Arts will encourage students of all majors to make the arts a central and significant part of their Smith experience from day one. By being exposed to the arts in various forms and in consistent and coordinated ways, students will develop critical thinking skills, learn to work collaboratively to solve problems, build confidence, and enjoy a deeper, richer understanding of different cultures and experiences.

The result: a powerful pipeline of graduates ready, willing and able to take on leadership roles in established industries—in and outside of the arts—as well as those that have yet to be discovered.

Through the work of the center, Smith's approach to arts engagement will evolve in profound ways. Specifically, here are four key areas of activity that will guide our plans in the coming decade:

1. DEVELOP YEAR-LONG THEMES

Imagine a year of productions and performances devoted to the topic of climate change or the #MeToo movement. The Center for the Creative & Performing Arts will partner with departments across campus to coordinate and develop a unifying, timely and topical theme that will guide and inspire curricula, events and performances that bring the entire campus together through the arts. When seemingly disparate departments come together to address a major social issue, innovation and creativity thrive and the power the arts has in opening minds and changing perspectives becomes real.





2. SECURE NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Creating the Center for the Creative & Performing Arts opens up access to sources of funding currently unavailable to Smith. We want to seek out and secure regular sources of funding to support student and faculty initiatives related to the arts, including commissioning original artworks.

3. CREATE NEW STUDENT-RUN PERFORMANCE SPACES

Smith's already rich arts culture is evident in the fact that most of the current performance spaces on campus are booked solid throughout the year. The center will aim to establish additional creative spaces to display student work, enjoy performances and experience the arts in more intimate settings. Through projects like organizing an exhibition, producing a show or managing a theater space, students will bolster their leadership abilities and learn practical skills like arts administration, marketing and team building.

4. AFFIRM SMITH AS A CREATIVE DESTINATION

A wave of innovation is sweeping Smith's campus. From Design Thinking to makerspaces, Smith is cultivating a culture of creativity. Investing in and elevating the arts is a critical component of this effort. By centralizing and strengthening the presence of the creative arts, we will establish Smith as a place where students immerse themselves in an array of creative endeavors, where women are encouraged at every turn to explore and express the originality of their own imaginations.

"Smith was the first place that I felt comfortable taking creative risks. I could be my crazy, dramatic self and be surrounded by people who took my passion for the arts as serious work... Smith is where we learn to dream of the red carpet."

—Writer and director Afreen Gandhi '15



something is changing

Notable Moments in the History of the Arts at Smith



Stage set for the class of 1889 senior production of *Electra* at the Academy of Music

1875

In his inaugural address, Smith's first president, Laenus Clark Seelye, calls for the creation of a gallery of art at Smith.

1880

The Art School of Smith College is established. It is abolished in 1902, as art courses become part of the curriculum.

1882

The Hillyer Art Gallery opens.

1885

Fourteen students from Hubbard House form the Glee Club, Smith's first singing ensemble.

1910

Smith receives an anonymous gift of \$25,000 to "increase the facilities for instruction in the arts."

1919

The Smith College Museum of Art is first established as a public collection.

1925

Smith's music library moves to Sage Hall, the college's newly constructed music hall.

1936

In a speech, President William Allan Neilson declares that teaching arts is performing a great public service by "providing a sensitive and intelligent public."

1948

Iva Dee Hiatt becomes choral conductor at Smith, a position she holds until 1972.

1952

Thirty members of the Chamber Singers embark on a European tour, performing 16 concerts in six cities.

1964

Eleven students organize *Beauty in the Beast*, an exhibition of 30 drawings, sculptures and paintings depicting animals in 20th-century art. At the time, it is believed to be the largest student-led exhibition at the museum.

1968

The Mendenhall Center for the Performing Arts opens, providing modern facilities for the practice and enjoyment of theatre and dance, including classrooms, two theatres, dance studios, a TV studio and the Josten Performing Arts Library.

1984

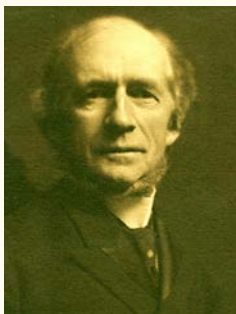
Smith hosts an all-female version of *Henry V*, with 10 women playing 31 roles.

2003

After a \$35 million renovation, the Museum of Art reopens with new and expanded spaces for the art department, art library and galleries.

2015

Sharonjean Moser Leeds '67 and her husband, Rick, donate \$1 million to renovate the Crew House dance studio on Paradise Pond.



“Art has the power to reach everyone.”

—Joan White Harris '52 (right), arts advocate and philanthropist, with Andrea Hairston '74, Louise Wolff Kahn Professor of Theatre and Professor of Africana Studies



Smith Women in the Arts

Smith women are involved as leaders in the arts at every level, from actors to activists, curators to collectors, and painters to publicists.



Kimberly Drew '12, blogger and museum social media director



Erin Morgenstern '00, best-selling author of *The Night Circus*



Thelma Golden '87, renowned museum curator



Merrill Garbus '01, singer/songwriter



Sandy Skoglund '68, installation artist



Munit Mesfit '03, singer



Rebecca Rabinow '88, renowned curator and museum director



Kate Soper, composer, singer, Iva Dee Hiatt Professor of Music



Philanthropic Opportunities

Smith College is deeply committed to inspiring and educating women to be lifelong participants in the arts as creators, innovators, patrons, and audiences. To give momentum to our plans, we are seeking new endowed funds for the Center for the Creative & Performing Arts, its directorship, and its programs. These much-needed funds will go far in helping us to develop an array of new creative opportunities for students and faculty and strengthen the connections alumnae have to campus through networking, residencies and internship placements.

Philanthropic opportunities to support the Center for the Creative & Performing Arts include:

Endowing the Center (staff and programs): \$10 million

Endowing the Center's directorship: \$3 million

Endowed Programming Fund: \$250,000+

Endowed Internship Fund: \$150,000+

For more information about supporting our plans, please contact:

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