

Thursday, April 9, 2026

ART HEALS: EMPOWERING PRACTITIONERS TO LEAD



Zimmerli Art Museum | Rutgers

This event is presented by the Zimmerli Art Museum in collaboration with Middlesex County, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon, The Arts in Health Initiative, Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and the Museum of Modern Art (NYC).

Funding is provided by the Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners through the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund. For information on events, go to MiddlesexCountyCulture.com.

Made possible by funds from Middlesex County, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts



MIDDLESEX
COUNTY · N.J.

JORDAN SCHNITZER
MUSEUM OF ART
University of Oregon



RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK
Mason Gross School of the Arts

AGENDA

**New Brunswick
Performing Arts Center
(NBPAC)**
11 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

9:00 am CHECK-IN & COFFEE/TEA

9:50 am SOUND BATH WITH SARAH YEUNG
(Arthur Laurents Theatre)

10:10 am WELCOME REMARKS
(Arthur Laurents Theatre)

Maura Reilly, Ph.D., Director, Zimmerli Art Museum

James M. Cahill, Mayor, City of New Brunswick

Charles Kenny, Middlesex County Commissioner

10:30 am KEYNOTE ADDRESS
(Arthur Laurents Theatre)

**THE ART OF WELL-BEING IN PRACTICE:
EMPOWERING LEADERS THROUGH MUSEUMS,
NARRATIVE, AND CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Lisa Abia-Smith, Director of Education, JSMA

Dr. Elizabeth Lahti, M.D., Associate Professor of
Medicine and Director of Narrative Medicine, OHSU

Rosemarie Oakman, Museum Program Manager
for Well-Being and Community Engagement, JSMA

11:30 am LUNCH AND NETWORKING (NBPAC 2nd floor)

12:30 pm

SESSION 1 WORKSHOPS

CREATIVE AGING: PROCESS-BASED ART MAKING

Practitioners explore innovative, process-based approaches for leading older adults and individuals with memory loss in art-making that removes fear of failure and emphasizes creativity as a joyful, open-ended experience. Using the **Attention, Reflection, Creation, and Connection (ARCC)** framework, participants gain hands-on strategies to inspire creative exploration, encourage personal reflection, and foster meaningful social connection.

— **GROUP A** (Rehearsal Studio)

Lisa Abia-Smith, Director of Education, JSMA

Rosemarie Oakman, Museum Program Manager for Well-Being and Community Engagement, JSMA

— **GROUP B** (Robert & Joan Campbell Donor Lounge)

Dr. Elizabeth Lahti, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of Narrative Medicine, OHSU

Sophie Raiskin-Wood, Art Heals Program Assistant, JSMA

MEET ME AT MOMA AND PRIME TIME PROGRAMS (Arthur Laurents Theatre)

Staff from MoMA's Access Programs and Initiatives cover the basics of planning museum programs for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, then delve into the delicate balance of prompting open conversation while also incorporating art historical information. Participants discuss how to plan a tour, from choosing a theme and artwork, to sequencing, and scaffolding conversation.

Lara Schweller, Ph.D., Associate Educator for Access Programs and Initiatives, MoMA

2:00 pm

FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE
from NBPAC to Zimmerli Art Museum

Zimmerli Art Museum
71 Hamilton Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

2:30 pm

SESSION 2 WORKSHOPS (Galleries)
**CLOSE LOOKING THROUGH THE ARCC
FRAMEWORK: ATTENTION, REFLECTION,
CREATION, AND CONNECTION**

Join your selected group to learn practical strategies for engaging older adults and individuals living with memory loss in gallery settings through interactive, accessible approaches grounded in the ARCC framework. Participants explore how close looking can cultivate **Attention** through curiosity-driven observation, invite **Reflection** by encouraging personal meaning-making and dialogue, support **Creation** through imaginative and expressive responses to artworks, and foster **Connection** by building shared experiences and social interaction.

Museum Educators, Arts, and Cultural Professionals —

Lisa Abia-Smith, JSMA

Medical Professionals — Dr. Elizabeth Lahti, M.D., OHSU

Long-Term Care Professionals — Rosemarie Oakman, JSMA

General Interest — Sophie Raiskin-Wood, JSMA

4:00 pm

CLOSING RECEPTION (Lobby)

5:00–6:00 pm

WELL-BEING CONCERT (Lower Dodge Gallery)
registration required

To conclude the Art Heals Symposium, attendees and members of the community are invited to gather at the Zimmerli Art Museum for a Well-Being Concert with **Christina Bouey** (Assistant Professor of Violin Music), **Yoon Lee**, piano, and **Grace Ho**, cello, hosted by the Arts in Health Initiative at Mason Gross School of the Arts and created in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute.

Carnegie Hall's Well-Being Concerts combine world-class musical performances with elements of self-care and mindfulness, animated by growing evidence that music helps people heal and thrive. Each concert creates an immersive and nurturing environment in which audiences and performers share the soul-nourishing benefits of music, cultivate meaningful connection, and explore practices that support well-being long after the performance ends.

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

(in order of appearance)

SARAH YEUNG

Sarah Yeung is the founder of SKY Sound Yoga, offering yoga, sound and vibrational healing, and Reiki to clients in New Jersey and worldwide. Her work is rooted in a personal journey that began over fifteen years ago during inpatient rehabilitation, shifting her path from business to holistic healing.

A trauma survivor in long-term recovery, Yeung brings a compassionate, trauma-conscious approach, focusing on stress, addiction, and emotional healing. A certified yoga instructor (eRYT-500), Reiki master teacher, and sound healer, she has trained and taught across the U.S. and Asia since 2010.

MAURA REILLY, PH.D.

Maura Reilly, Director of the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University and Professor of Art History, is widely recognized for advancing equity in the arts. She has held senior roles at major institutions, including Executive Director of the National Academy of Design and founding curator of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum.

Reilly has organized over two dozen exhibitions worldwide focused on underrepresented artists and social justice. She is the author of *Curatorial Activism* (2018), a *New York Times* top art book, with *Museums & Social Justice* forthcoming in 2026.

JAMES M. CAHILL

James M. Cahill, a lifelong New Brunswick resident, has served as mayor since 1991. Under his leadership, the city has undergone a dramatic transformation, with more than \$7 billion in investment supporting residential, retail, educational, and healthcare development. He has fostered key partnerships among the private sector, Rutgers University, healthcare institutions, Middlesex County, and the New Brunswick Development Corporation.

Cahill holds degrees from Middlesex County College, Rowan University, Rutgers University, and a J.D. from Seton Hall School of Law.

CHARLES KENNY

Commissioner Charles Kenny has served Middlesex County since 2013 and joined the NJTPA Board of Trustees in 2017. He is committed to improving residents' quality of life by expanding access to affordable programs and services.

Previously a Woodbridge councilman (1997–2013), he supported small business growth, strengthened emergency services, and led initiatives to improve parking and pedestrian safety. Kenny chairs the County's Infrastructure Management Committee and has served as a Woodbridge firefighter since 1985, including as captain. He is a graduate of Middlesex County College.

LISA ABIA-SMITH

Lisa Abia-Smith is Director of Education at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon and a Teaching Professor in public policy and management. A national leader in museum education and arts in health, she advances models connecting museums with higher education, healthcare, and community well-being.

She founded Art Heals, an internationally recognized initiative integrating art observation into programs for medical professionals, patients, and caregivers. Her scholarship focuses on arts-based medical education, and she is co-author of *Harnessing the Power of Museums* (forthcoming).

DR. ELIZABETH LAHTI, M.D.

Dr. Elizabeth Lahti is a clinician educator and hospitalist at Oregon Health & Science University and Director of Narrative Medicine in the School of Medicine. She teaches reflective practice and narrative approaches to medical and interprofessional learners, focusing on identity, resilience, and the human experience of care. A co-founder of the Northwest Narrative Medicine Collaborative, she brings together healthcare professionals, patients, and artists to explore illness and healing through storytelling. A two-time OHSU Education Innovation Grant recipient, her work appears in journals including *Journal of the American Medical Association* and *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

ROSEMARIE OAKMAN

Rosemarie Oakman is Program Manager for Well-Being and Community Engagement at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon. With over fifteen years of experience, she develops arts-based programs for diverse audiences, focusing on older adults, individuals experiencing memory loss, and their care partners. Her work emphasizes inclusive programming that fosters cognitive engagement, social connection, and quality of life across healthcare and community settings. She holds degrees in fine arts, nonprofit management, and gerontological studies, and has co-authored research in the *Journal of Arts Education* and the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*.

SOPHIE RAISKIN-WOOD

Sophie Raiskin-Wood is the Art Heals Program Assistant at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon. She facilitates workshops for diverse audiences, including individuals living with Alzheimer's disease, children with disabilities, cancer survivors, Spanish-speaking families, and medical students. Her work emphasizes accessibility and inclusion, advancing museums as spaces for connection and well-being through art observation and creative

engagement. Raiskin-Wood is a graduate of Wesleyan University and has held positions with the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice.

LARA SCHWELLER, PH.D.

Lara Schweller is Associate Educator for Access Programs and Initiatives at The Museum of Modern Art. She advances accessibility and disability equity across exhibitions, programs, and visitor experience, contributing to education initiatives for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and people living with Alzheimer's disease and their care partners. She also supports Prime Time, a program for adults 65+, and develops social prescribing partnerships across New York City. Schweller holds a Ph.D. in Visual Studies from the University of California, Irvine, and a B.A. from Harvard University.

CHRISTINA BOUEY

Christina Bouey is a Canadian American violinist praised for her expressive artistry by *The New York Times* and *New York Post*. She is Assistant Professor of Violin at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, and concertmaster of the Albany Symphony. A graduate of the Boston Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, and The Juilliard School, she has performed internationally at venues including Wigmore Hall. Bouey is the founding first violinist of the Ulysses Quartet and a prizewinner at major international competitions. She made her Carnegie Hall debut performing the Tchaikovsky Concerto.

IAN KOEBNER

Ian Koebner is the inaugural Endowed Chair and Associate Professor of Arts in Health at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University. An artist-scholar and former Director of Integrative Pain Management at UC Davis, he explores how art and aesthetic experience can advance individual and public health. He serves as Strategic Advisor for Health and Wellness at Carnegie Hall, contributing to the Well-Being Concerts. His research examines how artistic experiences shape emotion, social connection, and well-being, advancing interdisciplinary approaches that position the arts as integral to human health.

YOON LEE

Yoon Lee is a pianist praised by *New York Concert Review* for performances “equal to Beethoven’s virtuosic demands.” She has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and venues across the United States, Europe, and Asia, with broadcasts on WQXR and KBS. As a soloist, she has performed with orchestras including the Carl Maria von Weber Orchestra of Dresden and the Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra. A sought-after collaborator, she holds a DMA from the Manhattan School of Music and is on faculty at the Heifetz International Music Institute and The Juilliard School.

GRACE HO

Grace Ho is a Taiwanese American cellist praised by *South Florida Classical Review* for the “warmth and flexibility” of her playing. She is a founding member of the Ulysses Quartet and serves as Principal Cello of the Albany Symphony, Guest Principal of the Miami Symphony, and a member of the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra. As a soloist, she has appeared with orchestras across Europe and Asia. The Ulysses Quartet has won top prizes at major international competitions. Ho holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and the University of North Texas.



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