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**The MAX Partners with Mississippi Arts Commission for Public Art Convening** Event will include a keynote, panel, and opportunities to visit with funders and artists

MERIDIAN, Miss. (October 14, 2025) – On Saturday, November 1, 2025, artists and community leaders from around the state are invited to the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (The MAX) for a day all about public art.

The event will kick off with the announcement of a new opportunity for site-specific work at The MAX. Then, Mississippi Arts Commission Executive Director David Lewis will share information about MAC's [Mississippi Public Art in Community Grant](#), recently launched in partnership with the Levitt Foundation and funders from across the state to provide multi-year support for community engagement, design, installation, and activation of accessible public art.

Headlining the convening will be **Sandra Bloodworth**, 2024 recipient of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Medal. Over her 36-year career at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Arts & Design program—28 of them as director—she commissioned hundreds of artists and built one of the largest and most diverse public art collections in the world. A native of Charleston, Mississippi, she began her career as community arts coordinator at the Mississippi Arts Commission, earning degrees from Mississippi College, the University of Mississippi, and Florida State University. Bloodworth is co-author of three books on art in the transit system (*Along the Way*, *New York's Underground Art Museum*, and *Contemporary Art Underground*). Sandra lectures on public art, advises institutions and communities, and leads a full studio practice as a painter. In her keynote, she will share insights from a lifetime of work in public art and its enduring connection to place.

"We are pleased to partner with The MAX, which has done an excellent job of bringing together great arts organizations that are working to support the industry's collective

understanding of public art and its implementation," said Lewis. "This event is an excellent opportunity for organizations that have an interest in MAC's new public art grant to learn more about the mechanisms of public art and get inspired through innovative ways to bring public art to life."

After the keynote, join the conversation with a panel including:

**Lawson King**, whose artwork draws on his background in psychology and upbringing in the Mississippi Delta. Since 2012, King has taught art throughout the Delta, often in schools without art programs. He also taught at Delta State University, where he earned his BFA in Sculpture, and continues to serve on the committee for the Mathews-Sanders Sculpture Garden. A MAC Artist Fellowship recipient, Lawson's work has been exhibited at the Mississippi Museum of Art, the Grammy Museum Mississippi, and the University of Mississippi Museum, as well as galleries and outdoor exhibitions nationwide.

**Reshonda Perryman** is an artist, graphic designer, and muralist whose notable works include the JXN Icon Series in Jackson, the Jam Session series in Hattiesburg, and the Medgar Evers Library mural—each serving as a vibrant celebration of place, culture, and history. As the former director of design and creative engagement for Visit Jackson, she spearheaded public art and community engagement initiatives that deepened connections between residents and their city.

**Carlton Turner** is an artist, agriculturalist, builder, researcher, and co-founder/co-director of the Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Sipp Culture). He has more than 20 years of organizational development and management experience working in the arts and culture sector. He currently serves on the board of First People's Fund, Grantmakers in the Arts, College Unbound, and the National Black Food and Justice Alliance. Carlton is a founding partner of the Intercultural Leadership Institute, former Executive Director of Alternate ROOTS, and a lead partner in the Southern Black Farmer Community Led Fund. He lives and works in Utica, MS where his family has been rooted for eight generations.

**Melody Moody Thortis** will moderate the panel. She has 20 years of experience exploring methods for place-based change in the nonprofit, government, and philanthropic sectors. Melody is currently director of strategic impact for the Community Foundation for Mississippi, and former director of grants for the MS Arts Commission. She holds degrees in art, international development, and a post-graduate certificate from the National Consortium of Creative Placemaking and the Institute of Art and Design at New England College.

Following the panel, attendees will have the opportunity to get technical assistance and information about grant opportunities from the Mississippi Arts Commission.

The schedule of events for the convening is:

- 10 am Welcome + mural announcement
- 10:30 am Keynote
- 11:30 am Panel discussion
- 12:30 pm Meet the MAC to learn more about funding opportunities

This event is presented in conjunction with The MAX's current temporary exhibition, *Cecelia Moseley: Remnants of Language*, which features oversize metal sculptures, prints, and a vivid acrylic installation. Cecelia's public art can be seen on display at the Mississippi Children's Museums in Meridian and Jackson, the Mathews-Sanders Sculpture Garden in Cleveland, MS, in Oxford, MS, and Rosemary Beach, FL.

It will be a busy day for The MAX, which has a full day of free programming:

- 8 am – 12 pm Earth's Bounty
- 9 am – 5 pm The MAX opens with free admission all day
- 11 am – 1 pm Art activity in classroom

Additionally, The MAX is partnering with Soulé Steam Museum and the Meridian Railroad Museum for Whistlestop Weekend to present a screening of *This Property is Condemned*.

Have you ever looked at the railroad car behind Meridian's Union Station and wondered what its story is? The Ella G shines alongside Robert Redford and Natalie Wood in *This Property is Condemned*. This 1966 film was partially shot in Pass Christian, and is an adaptation of a Tennessee Williams play that reflects some of the ways rail has shaped Mississippi culture.

On loop in the Alexander Family Church gallery all day, the film begins at 10 am, 12 pm, and 2 pm.

### **About The MAX:**

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience (The MAX) is an arts and cultural center in the heart of downtown Meridian that celebrates Mississippi's creative legacy through interactive exhibits, workshops, and live performances. The multipurpose facility contains a two-story Hall of Fame celebrating the state's groundbreaking artists like Walter Anderson, William Faulkner, Morgan Freeman, Jim Henson, B.B. King, Elvis Presley, and Leontyne Price to name a few, along with over 20,000 square feet of interactive exhibits, art studios, a recording studio, and performance spaces. Every visit to The MAX is a unique experience that leaves visitors feeling inspired and in awe of

Mississippi's global impact on music, literature, art, and entertainment. Visit [www.msarts.org](http://www.msarts.org) to learn more.

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