



April 14, 2020
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UPDATE ON THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS FROM CO-DIRECTORS LIZ FISHER AND TOM GRIGGS

The **International Festival of Arts & Ideas** will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a variety of online artistic experiences, virtual food experiences, cell phone-guided walking tours, and various NEA Big Read activities. The virtual Ideas programming centered on the theme “Democracy: We the People” will feature interactive events and conversations with vital thinkers, including 2012 Inaugural Poet Richard Blanco, award-winning scholar Dr. Khalilah L. Brown-Dean, NEA Big Read Author Stephanie Burt, and renowned writer Anand Giridharadas. All programming will be free.

The Festival's Co-Director **Tom Griggs** said that the Festival is committed to its mission that arts and ideas bring people together and have a positive economic impact on New Haven. “We have retained all staff members hired before March 1st and we are working on ways to support our local New Haven artists with virtual opportunities. We are also partnering with our local business community, especially the restaurant and bar industries who have always served the Festival so well. Nonetheless, we are deeply disappointed for the artists who are no longer able to perform for Festival audiences this year, as well as all of the hardworking members of our production team and other seasonal staff.” In addition, The Festival has joined the Together New Haven network to participate in local efforts to support and promote local businesses and plan for economic recovery.

In a [video statement](#) released by the International Festival on Tuesday, April 14, Co-Directors **Griggs and Liz Fisher** said, “This year’s Festival is going to be very different from any we’ve done before. This isn’t the 25th Anniversary we imagined, but it’s a Festival we can all take part in—and love. While it won’t be possible for us to continue with the live programming that we had planned, we’re excited by the new virtual and physically distanced program that we are re-imagining, to virtually embrace our audience, artists, and community, and to deliver, in a new way, all the things you know and love about the Festival.”

Virtual and physically distanced programming will begin online in the coming weeks on a rolling basis. Details will be announced weekly and will be shared on the Festival’s website, www.artidea.org.

MORE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS

The International Festival of Arts & Ideas celebrates and builds community, engages with vital issues, and promotes the arts. Each year, we highlight the City's diverse and culturally rich community with events featuring world-class artists, thinkers, and leaders. The Festival's additional programs include the annual Visionary Leadership Award and educational opportunities like the High School Fellowship Program. The Festival was established in 1996 by Anne Calabresi, Jean M. Handley, and Roslyn Meyer, who envisioned an annual celebration in New Haven—a city steeped in a rich array of cultural and educational traditions—distinguished from other arts festivals by its fusion of the arts with events centered on sharing ideas.

The Festival is presented with major support from Yale University, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Connecticut Office of the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts with additional support from The City of New Haven, KeyBank, The Whitney Center, Yale New Haven Health, the Avangrid Foundation in partnership with United Illuminating and Southern CT Gas, Connecticut Humanities, a non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and our generous community of individual supporters.

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