



NEWS RELEASE

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Beth McClure, Director of Marketing and Communications
bmccclure@COCAstl.org, 314.561.4868

COCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KELLY POLLOCK SELECTED AS 2016 EISENHOWER FELLOW

*Prestigious Organization Seeks to Advance the Arts, Food Policy, Education and Entrepreneurship
with 2016 Selections*

(ST. LOUIS, MO) – COCA-Center of Creative Arts announced today that its Executive Director Kelly Pollock was named one of the 10 outstanding U.S. leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors selected as 2016 USA Eisenhower Fellows.

“Having Kelly as a part of this incredible global network will benefit not only COCA, but our entire region,” said Jesse Hunter, President, COCA Board of Directors. “The connections and insights she will gain through her travels, will help St. Louis to leverage our rich arts and cultural resources in new, effective ways, as well as to broaden their impact.”

Selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants from across the United States. Fellows will travel abroad on an intensive four- to five-week individualized professional program. They will meet with experts in their respective fields, with the goal of exchanging ideas and information to help them and their peers abroad better their communities and advance their professions.

During Pollock’s fellowship, she will travel to Brazil and Northern Ireland to explore how arts and culture are utilized in global cities as tools for inclusive social and economic development.

“I am particularly interested in how forward leaning cities are using their artistic and cultural assets to not only drive their economy, but also to address inequities that exist in their communities,” said Pollock. “I plan to explore how, through more intentional cultural planning, arts and culture can help shape a more distinctive identity for St. Louis and develop greater social and community cohesion in our region.”

She will meet with leaders from community-based arts organizations, similar to COCA, in order to glean best practices, while also establishing an international peer network from whom she can seek advice and with whom she can develop potential exchange programs.

Additionally, she will spend time learning from educators who have implemented innovative models to develop the creative capacity of their students and visiting effective placemaking projects to witness how art and design in public spaces can shape community engagement.

General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret), Chairman of Eisenhower Fellowships, said, “We are proud to offer this once-in-a-lifetime experience to this group of talented men and women. The fellowship is an opportunity for them to deepen their engagement with a global network of leaders and broaden their ability to positively impact society through their work.”

Eisenhower Fellowships is a private, nonprofit, non-partisan organization that fosters international understanding and leadership through the exchange of information, ideas and perspectives among leaders throughout the world. Since 1953, the organization has sponsored more than 2,000 Fellows from 111 countries.

Fellow St. Louisan, and long-time COCA supporter, Vanessa Cooksey, Senior Vice President and Head of Community Affairs, Wells Fargo Advisors, was also selected for a 2016 fellowship.

The complete list of 2016 USA Eisenhower Fellows includes:

- Mason Ailstock, COO, Research Triangle Park Foundation, Raleigh, NC;
- Quinn Bauriedel, Co-Founder and Co-Artistic Director, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Philadelphia, PA;
- **Vanessa Cooksey, Senior Vice President and Head of Community Affairs, Wells Fargo Advisors, St. Louis, MO;**
- Kathryn Finney, Founder and Director, digitalundivided, New York, NY;
- Daniel Gallant, Executive Director, Nuyorican Poets Café, New York, NY;
- Tatiana Garcia Granados, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Common Market, Philadelphia, PA;
- Jennifer Hashley, Director, New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Friedman School of Nutrition and Policy, Tufts University, Boston, MA;
- Susan Patrick, President and CEO, International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), Washington, DC;
- **Kelly Pollock, Executive Director, Center of Creative Arts, St. Louis, MO;**
- G. Nagesh Rao, Chief Technologist and Entrepreneur-in-Residence, U.S. Small Business Administration, Washington, DC.

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About COCA

COCA-Center of Creative Arts is a non-profit community arts center with a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts. COCA connects our community to the arts through programs that emphasize social and artistic diversity, economic and cultural accessibility, hands-on experience of the artistic process, and the highest quality in our faculty. Founded in 1986, COCA is a national leader in innovative community arts education. COCA annually serves more than 50,000 area residents of all ages through multidisciplinary, multi-cultural arts programs that include educational classes, camps and workshops, both on-site and in community venues; outreach; COCAbiz; COCA Presents; and exhibitions of contemporary art in the Millstone Gallery.