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SMU's National Center for Arts Research and DataArts to Merge

SMU DataArts Will Become National Hub for Data Resources, Analysis and Education for Nonprofit Arts and Culture Sector

DALLAS (SMU) August 16, 2018 – SMU announces the merger of its National Center for Arts Research (NCAR), a leading provider of evidence-based insights on the nonprofit arts and cultural industry, with DataArts, the respected Philadelphia-based resource for in-depth data about U.S. nonprofit arts, culture and humanities organizations, effective immediately. The two are joining forces to strengthen the national arts and cultural community through data, the knowledge that can be generated from it, and the resources to use it.

The combined entity, SMU DataArts, will integrate the strengths and capabilities of both organizations, which have been closely collaborating since 2012. The merger will continue the core operations of both organizations and build on their existing successful programs. NCAR's research expertise, its partnerships with other data providers, and the resources of a major research university will be combined with DataArts' existing data collection platform and relationships with arts organizations and grantmakers. SMU DataArts aims to make data useful and accessible to all in the arts and culture field, illuminating strengths, challenges and opportunities for individual arts organizations and for the sector as a whole, to help ensure long-term stability.

Since its founding, NCAR has integrated national data on arts organizations and their communities to provide evidence-based insights and tools to arts leaders as well as groundbreaking research on the impact and viability of the nonprofit cultural industry. NCAR's

research is available free of charge to arts leaders, funders, policymakers, researchers and the general public. Its findings and tools have been accessed nearly 100,000 times by users from all 50 U.S. states and 166 countries. Its Key Intangible Performance Indicators (KIPI) Dashboard, a free online diagnostic tool launched in July 2016, has attracted more than 7,600 unique users.

DataArts, a non-profit organization, created and manages the widely used Cultural Data Profile, an annually updated national data set covering the financial and programmatic activity of 12,000 U.S. cultural nonprofits. Data and insights drawn from the Cultural Data Profile are used by grantmakers to steward their investments; by research institutions such as SMU to identify trends and develop findings about the sector; and by cultural institutions to improve their financial and programmatic operations. In the last year alone, DataArts users have produced 5,500 reports using their data and have registered more than 1,500 times for training sessions, webinars and online courses to develop their data skills.

"SMU DataArts is a natural extension of the mission of our university and our investment in data excellence," SMU President R. Gerald Turner said. "By combining the highest levels of academic research with widely accessible education and training programs serving the nonprofit arts industry, we can more effectively contribute data and knowledge to the arts and culture field. This merger will create new connections between SMU and cultural organizations in every part of the country."

Bloomberg Philanthropies is rallying behind the merger with major support for SMU DataArts' first three years of operations. In addition to the gift from Bloomberg Philanthropies, the one-time costs associated with creating the combined entity are funded in part by leading contributions from SMU DataArts board members and respected Dallas philanthropists Donna Wilhelm, Melissa and Trevor Fetter, and Diane and Hal Brierley, all of whom have been major supporters of NCAR since its inception. Additional gifts for transition expenses have been made by the Better Together Fund and The Greater Philadelphia Nonprofit Repositioning Fund.

SMU DataArts will be led by Dr. Zannie Voss, founding director of NCAR and SMU professor of arts management and arts entrepreneurship. SMU DataArts' headquarters will operate at SMU

in Dallas, with an office in Philadelphia, and will be a part of SMU's Meadows School of the Arts. Arin Sullivan, formerly vice president, director of programs and products at DataArts, will serve as deputy director of the new combined organization. SMU's Cox School of Business will provide substantial partnership through additional research and data management expertise for the new entity.

"Our collective vision is to build a culture of data-driven decision making for those who want to see the arts and culture sector thrive," said Dr. Voss. "With similar missions, shared stakeholders and complementary strengths and capabilities, we are confident that we can be more effective and of greater service to the field by uniting. I could not be more thrilled and honored to be joining forces with DataArts."

"I joined the DataArts board specifically because I believe that a healthy cultural sector is one of the underpinnings of America's political, economic and social welfare," said Rich Mintz, DataArts board chair. "DataArts and NCAR were already doing great work both separately and collaboratively to help cultural institutions better understand how to operate efficiently and meet the needs of their constituents. Bringing them together into one organization will enable them to support arts and cultural leaders even more effectively with data, resources and insights that increase impact."

ABOUT SMU
SMU is the nationally ranked global research university in the dynamic city of Dallas. SMU's alumni, faculty and nearly 12,000 students in seven degree-granting schools demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they lead change in their professions, communities and the world.

ABOUT NCAR
Established in 2012, the National Center for Arts Research at SMU (NCAR) provides evidence-based insights that stimulate the health and impact of the nonprofit arts and cultural industry and profession, equips leaders with tools and insights that strengthen communities, and shines a light on the relevancy of arts to drive engagement and expand participation in communities across the country. NCAR integrates data from DataArts' Cultural Data Profile and other national and

government sources such as Theatre Communications Group, the League of American Orchestras, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Census Bureau, and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. It assesses the industry from multiple perspectives, including sector/art form, geography, and size of the organization, and it determines what drives health from the organization's conditions and its community's characteristics. Recent publications include white papers on ways to improve working capital health, dispelling the myth that the arts are elitist, and diversity and equity in the arts, as well as reports on the health of the U.S. arts and cultural sector. NCAR also offers the KIPI Dashboard, a free online diagnostic tool that allows arts organizations to benchmark their individual performance in nine finance and operations categories against their peers.

ABOUT DATAARTS

DataArts, formerly the Cultural Data Project, was founded in 2004 to bring the language and leverage of data to the business of culture. The Cultural Data Profile (CDP) is DataArts' flagship service, which thousands of cultural nonprofits use annually to report their financial and programmatic information. DataArts serves as an important catalyst for data-driven decision making, resulting in stronger management for arts and cultural organizations, better informed funding policy for grant makers, and a rich information resource for advocates and researchers. In 2018, DataArts launched the Everyday Data initiative, partnering with arts and cultural organizations to share case studies of how data has helped transform their work. Examples include Sones de México, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, and DanceWorks Chicago.

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What our supporters are saying about SMU DataArts:

Better Together Fund:
"We are excited about the possibilities that will come out of the formal collaboration and merger of NCAR and DataArts. This innovative and bold strategy will ultimately increase impact and expand services to constituents. In this case, those services will reach thousands of Americans in the arts and cultural community. We are proud to support this important endeavor."

Nadya Shmavonian, director of The Greater Philadelphia Nonprofit Repositioning Fund:

"We at The Greater Philadelphia Nonprofit Repositioning Fund are excited to support this merger. It will preserve and strengthen the vital contributions that DataArts makes to deepen our understanding of the financial health of our region's cultural community, as well as other communities across the country. We are particularly delighted to be funding partners with the Dallas Better Together Fund on this national collaboration."

Diane and Hal Brierley:

"As NCAR board members, we are excited about the advantages this merger will offer to arts and cultural organizations of all sizes across the country. Solid data is critically important for sound business decisions, and this merger will make an unprecedented level of useful data readily available to arts managers to help their organizations not only survive, but thrive."

Melissa Fetter:

"The merger of DataArts and the National Center for Arts Research at SMU provides an exciting opportunity to equip arts leaders to make more informed decisions with high quality data and insights."

Donna Wilhelm:

"I invest my philanthropic support in transformational initiatives with expansive potential. From its inception, NCAR's vision and mission were strategically in sync with my own. SMU DataArts, through the merged expertise of NCAR and DataArts, creates a powerhouse of arts data research and capacity-building services empowering small, medium and larger arts organizations to reach their highest potential."