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Bronx Council on the Arts Executive Director Bill Aguado to Receive The Skowhegan 2009 Governors Award for Outstanding Service to Artists

(Bronx – April 6, 2009) The Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture announced that Bill Aguado, Executive Director of the Bronx Council on the Arts, will be among five honorees being recognized as art-world leaders for their outstanding accomplishments, patronage, and service to the arts.

Cited as a major advocate for the arts, Aguado will receive the *Governors Award for Outstanding Service to Artists* at the 38th annual Skowhegan Awards Dinner on April 28, 2009, at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City. Other honorees are artists Merce Cunningham (performance), Paul McCarthy (sculpture), Catherine Murphy (painting), and arts patron Philippe de Montebello who will receive the *Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Award for Outstanding Patronage of the Arts*.

When speaking of this award, Aguado said "It is truly humbling to be considered in the same breath as my fellow honorees. But in truth I am always humbled by our artists and the extraordinary gifts they share with us. Artists are the true assets of our community."

Riverdale resident Bill Aguado has been Executive Director of the Bronx Council on the Arts since 1981. A graduate of Hunter College, he received an M.A. from Fordham University. His current board affiliations include: The Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College Foundation, Phipps Development Corporation, Citizens Advice Bureau, and the Non-Profit Coordinating Committee. In 2000 he was the recipient of the Governor's Arts Award. He is also the recipient of the Mayor's Arts Award in 2006 and was named to NYS Governor Eliot Spitzer's Arts, Culture and Revitalization Policy Transition Team. He was a juror for the inaugural Jane Jacobs Award. He was appointed to the Bronx Borough President's 2002 Transition Team and facilitated the design of the Arts and Culture Priorities Report. In April 2008, he was honored by his Alma Mater by being inducted in the Hunter Hall of Fame by Hunter College's Alumni Association.



Bill Aguado, Executive Director
of the Bronx Council on the Arts
Photo by Marisol Diaz

Bill Aguado has had many accomplishments over the year. Among them are the design and implementation of:

- Longwood Art Gallery — One of New York City's oldest and longest running alternative spaces providing opportunities for artists of color as well as focusing on themes and issues of concern to The Bronx and other urban communities;
- BRIO (Bronx recognizes Its Own) — A twenty year independent artist fellowship program offering 25 fellowships at \$3,000 per Bronx artist;
- Culture Venture Fund — Earned income training and grants program based on cultural assets;
- Bronx Culture Trolley — now in its fifth year it was declared as the best Trolley in New York City and largely responsible for making The South Bronx / Mott Haven area a tourist destination;
- Urban Artist Initiative (co-founder) — A city-wide grants program for-artists-of color in all disciplines (\$225,000 awarded to 140 artists in two rounds);
- ArtHandlers Training Program — Job training and placement program for underemployed and unemployed residents and artists of the Bronx and NYC (successfully trained over 250 arthandlers and placed them in many cultural institutions, fine art storage facilities, auction houses, etc.);
- Artisans Initiative — Designed to nurture and cultivate, and promote the work of local Bronx native, immigrant and Diaspora artisans, helping to create a sustainable source of income as well as developing a new audience for their craft;
- Bronx Cultural Card — Offers cardholders discounts and promotions at selected Bronx arts & cultural activities, businesses, and dining establishments;
- Creative Bronx! Black Book — a free directory of creative business resources in the Bronx that showcases businesses specializing in services for art collectors, galleries, museums and arts professionals.

The Bronx Council on the Arts (BCA), a private non-profit membership organization, is the officially designated cultural agency of the Bronx. For over 45 years, BCA has been a leading arts service organization working to promote the arts in the Bronx as well as supporting artists and arts organizations of all disciplines. The mission of the Bronx Council on the Arts is to encourage and increase the public's awareness and participation in the arts and to nurture the development of artists and arts and cultural organizations in our borough. The City has supported the Bronx Council on the Arts since 1973. Additional information on BCA can be found at www.bronxarts.org or by calling 718-931-9500.

Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, founded by artists in 1946, is one of the country's foremost artists' residency communities, providing visual artists with a collaborative and rigorous creative environment for the development of new work. Since 1946 Skowhegan has brought together some 4,000 artists — many of whom are among the country's leading artists — as students and faculty for intensive nine-week summer residencies at the School's picturesque 300-acre lakeside site in Maine. Additional information about Skowhegan can be found at www.skowheganart.org or by calling 212-529-0505.

Skowhegan honors artists, patrons, and those who have demonstrated outstanding service to the arts/artists each spring. The Skowhegan Awards are one of the oldest honors of their kind in the art world. The Governors Award recipient is chosen each year by members of Skowhegan's Board of Governors. Past recipients include Susan Sollins (2008), Ann Hatch (2007), Rick Lowe (2005), Irving Sandler (2002), Jonas Mekas (1997), and Marcia Tucker (1988).

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