



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Sample of a Successful Application

This document contains the narrative and walkthrough of a previously funded grant application. Every successful application is different, and this application may have been prepared to meet a slightly different set of guidelines. Each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations, as well as the requirements in the current notice of funding opportunity (NOFO). Prospective applicants should consult the current Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations NOFO at <https://www.neh.gov/program/public-impact-projects-smaller-organizations> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

The attached application is incomplete. Portions have been deleted to protect the privacy interests of an individual, and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information, and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

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Project Title: Strategic Planning for Historical Interpretation at the Ball and Socket Manufacturing Site

Institution: Ball and Socket Arts, Inc.

Project Director: Lydia Blaisdell

Grant Program: Public Impact Projects at Smaller Organizations

Request Narrative from Ball & Socket Arts

Summary:

Ball & Socket Arts is transforming a 63,000 square foot, 5-building industrial campus into an innovative and dynamic cultural destination for the central Connecticut region (and beyond). Built on the ethos of sustainability and historic preservation, Ball & Socket Arts (BaSA) will offer vibrant arts, culture, and historical programming and provide accessible and relevant experiences to a broad public audience. As of May 2023, BaSA is nearly done with Phase 1 construction.



BaSA requests an NEH grant to support a series of charettes with top-tier historians and exhibition designers and developers to identify, research, and select relevant and compelling historical themes to interpret for the public at the site. As of June 2023, BaSA has confirmed that Elizabeth Pratt Fox will lead these charettes. Participating historians and experts include: Labor historians: Cecelia Bucki (Fairfield University), and author Jeremy Brecher (freelance); Renée Tribert (Preservation CT); Diane Calabro (Town of Cheshire Historian); Cayetana Navarro (Cheshire Historical Society President); Ron Gagliardi (Local Historian); Thomas Mulholland (Historical Researcher); Paul Orselli (exhibition designer); Karyl Evans (documentary filmmaker); and Ilona Somogyi (co-founder of Ball & Socket Arts and design faculty at Yale).

BaSA occupies a landmark former factory building in downtown Cheshire. As BaSA transforms these vacant buildings into vibrant community spaces, the team aims to interweave the historical significance of these spaces, the former canals and railroads of Central Connecticut, and a worker-centric labor history of the area. The historical significance of these landmark spaces will be foregrounded and interwoven with the future uses, so that visitors, residents, and artists can engage with this past as they experience the site. BaSA requests funding to compensate these experts as they research, create, and develop a detailed interpretive plan that will explore the best way to tell the stories of the structure and the laborers employed there for over 150 years. Potential arenas and themes include: Labor/Laborers; Production; Consumers; Railroads and Canal; and Preservation.

Who worked at Ball & Socket Manufacturing? Is the tale of Lee and Grant both wearing *Ball & Socket* buttons at Appomattox true or an exaggeration? What was manufactured at the site beyond buttons? How can BaSA effectively bring this history to life for future visitors in the immediate future and in the longer term? What are ways to illustrate and share these histories both in physical site signage and online via engaging digital mediums? How did transportation related to industry shape the state's infrastructure?

Audience:

Ball & Socket Arts will be a major community hub and a welcoming venue for Central Connecticut residents to engage with history, arts, and the creative economy. In 2023, BaSA is launching a series of public programs, including: free public concerts, an exhibition space, writing classes, workshops with artists of all kinds, and public art throughout the exteriors. BaSA has commissioned studies on potential audiences

and found that there are many pockets of interest in such programs. BaSA is also exploring adding interpretive signage to the site. In time, this project will restore the community's faith that beloved, historic landmarks have value and can be repurposed for the good of all. BaSA has secured a CT Humanities Quick Grant in summer 2023 to install 2 interpretive signs at the entry points to the site to provide historical reference points and a summary of what these buildings were (along with a view towards what these buildings will be).

Current BaSA audiences are primarily local Cheshire residents, though staff hope in time to continually expand the organization's reach to include visitors and tourists from all over New England. BaSA currently has over 3,000 Facebook page followers and over 1,000 followers on Instagram. Our newsletter reaches roughly 2,000 individuals regularly with an open rate of over 25%. Anecdotally, audience currently skews older, white, and quite female, but the hope is to broaden our reach regularly and create compelling programming for all ages. BaSA regularly collaborates with other local non-profits like ArtsPlace (Cheshire's municipal arts center with classes for all ages), Preservation CT, and the Cheshire Historical Society.

BaSA's leadership aims to incorporate the humanities alongside the contemporary arts to enhance both. The history of the site is integral to the future of it. Understanding what these buildings were helps to make the public case for why preserving and maintaining landmark buildings matters. Visitors, designers, and contractors are surprised when we point to the railroad tracks and culvert that exist at the rear of the complex. Deeper interpretation and signage will support visitors' understanding of CT's rich industrial past. BaSA's leadership team have long planned to include an interactive, site-responsive historical exhibition in the front room of Building 1. BaSA will use the existing collections of the Cheshire Historical Society, other local historical resources, and will utilize digital means to expand access and encourage engagement. The space would utilize digital tools, and interactive models to engage with various themes from the region's history. One year might focus on the building of the canal, another on the industrial history and patents held by the Ball & Socket Manufacturing Company. How did state-wide transit affect commerce and labor? Why has so much of manufacturing left the area? The broad theme of making things is one that will run through all of BaSA's programming as the organization champions makers of handmade wooden instruments alongside the history of button-making at an enormous scale. The brick cathedral of Building 1 was built for industry and the team wants to enhance these buildings, while maintaining and celebrating their essence.

BaSA's team seeks to begin this approach correctly by calling together a series of exceptional historians, as well as an exhibition designer, a film maker and community leaders to identify key themes and a shared vision for how to activate and communicate the history of the site to the public, scholars, and students. Once the full project is completed and BaSA opens the site's major exhibition hall in Building 1, BaSA will become a dynamic site where a visitor could learn about history in the morning, grab a snack midday, and then see a visual arts show featuring a world-class contemporary visual artist. BaSA hopes that by including and exploring the history of the site with a comprehensive interpretive plan, the history can deepen experiences of the site and engage audiences to reconsider assumptions about the past. By sharing the history of manufacturing, BaSA hopes to foster new makers for today. BaSA is open to exploring physical signage, digital media, downloadable media, study guides, historian panels and talks, book signings,



and other avenues to convey these histories to the public. The charettes and the input from specialists and historians will determine what steps the organization takes going forward.

BaSA plans to find ways to activate the site 24/7, versus only when the buildings are open. BaSA's team believes that with engaging on-site signage (physical as well as potentially digital) we can teach visitors about the significance of the former coal house, or rail depot, at any time of day. To that end, BaSA recently worked with the *Grating the Nutmeg* podcast of CT Explored to dive into historic preservation and transformation of former industrial sites.

Activities and outcomes:

We request funding to convene between 2 on-site charettes (each about 4 hours in length) with historians, exhibitions designers, educators, a film maker, and the town historian to identify historical themes and priorities for historical interpretation throughout the site. We define a charrette as a collaborative planning process that harnesses the talents and energies of all interested parties to create and support a master plan that represents transformative change. These sessions would create the backbone of historical interpretation at Ball & Socket Arts (hitherto an all-volunteer organization until 6 months ago). This funding would address a significant organizational challenge of how to hold thoughtful space for accurate and compelling historical interpretation. With the current staffing, the team cannot afford a dedicated staff member to focus on that aspect of the work. NEH funds would alleviate this gap and ensure that the history receives the time, attention, and space that it merits.

We propose Elizabeth Pratt Fox as the director of this project. She is a resident of Cheshire and friend of the project and will be working pro-bono to support the development of a long-term strategic plan for the historical interpretation of the site. We have a commitment from 7 historians to participate in this series of meetings over a 10-month period. Their findings would be documented internally, and we would ask these specialists to provide (and to review) interpretive content for BaSA signage, website, digital content, and potentially even the planning and execution of an oral history documentary focusing on the workers who still recall their time working at Ball & Socket Arts (a dwindling resource).

The goal would be for these professionals to assess accurately the most compelling, relevant, and meaningful historical themes on the site and to provide recommendations for future programming, signage, digital media, and talks to deepen and communicate this historical interpretation with academics, the general public, and potentially school groups. What are the critical elements and historical themes that can be explored on our site? What historically marginalized individuals or histories can be brought to the fore?



BaSA's team and board have noticed a general lack of contextual awareness of the site in the Cheshire community. The death of manufacturing and connecting with the industrial and agricultural past of Cheshire as a place where products were made. BaSA hopes to encourage new generations to engage and to be active storytellers of their hometown. BaSA would also seek to recognize the labor of the people who built these

exceptional buildings, and the history of their treatment by employers. The goal is to inculcate a deeper value of tradesmen and manufacturing, in an area where nearly all of those industries have fled. The team expects to compare BaSA's history with the broader narrative of manufacturing in the region.

As a community drive and community-led organization, BaSA plans to engage experts to responsibly chart a path forward where historians have room to champion, interrogate, and expose the forgotten or unsung participants in the past eras of Cheshire and Central Connecticut.

BaSA's team has found so far that the documentation heavily favors the owners of the factories, as one can identify from even a cursory glimpse through the photographic images of the site. The staff and board are curious how to unearth and to highlight the history of the people who built these spaces, who came in every day to work at the factory. One piece of that is potentially working with a documentary filmmaker to spend time recording oral history interviews with community elders who can recall their own time working in the factory.

So many questions can be asked by one item recently donated to BaSA: a mere piece of wood. The simple foot pedal of a former factory worker with the impression of her foot (made from decades of one repetitive task) might be used to open discussions about the individual woman (and women!) who worked that pedal. What was her role, and the role of the other female workers like as laborers in the factory? Where did they live? What hours did they work? What challenges did they face? The outcome would be a comprehensive written interpretive site plan, co-created and approved by participants in the charette recommending future historical themes, and methods of sharing this history with visitors.



Relationship to the Humanities: The Cheshire Manufacturing Company was incorporated on April 11, 1850, for the purpose of "the manufacture, selling and dealing in buttons of every description." In 1901, the company merged with the Ball & Socket Fastener Company of New Hampshire and became The Ball & Socket Manufacturing Company. Averaging 2.5 million gross tons per year at its peak, Ball & Socket became one of the world's largest manufacturers of metal buttons. The company even maintained a sales office and stock room at 10 West 32nd Street in the heart of New York City's garment district. For many years, it was the largest employer in Cheshire, its workforce including many women who found their first employment there.

According to a local historian, there was a common saying in Cheshire that "sooner or later, everyone works at the Button Shop." After 144 years in business, changing markets brought an end to manufacturing at the site. Factory operations ceased in 1994. The property was sold to Dalton Enterprises, who owned it until Ball & Socket Arts bought it in 2014.

Ball & Socket Arts requests support to deepen our engagement with this rich labor history and to create a comprehensive interpretive plan for conveying historical information and humanities themes to the public at the site and through digital media. This project ties directly into BaSA's overall mission to provide the public with a local and regional gathering place fostering discovery, engagement, and creativity through a broad range of programming.

Ball & Socket Arts is a non-profit that is transforming the historic Ball & Socket Manufacturing Company site in Cheshire, Connecticut into a new hub for arts and culture. The project reclaims an abandoned factory in the middle of town and will reopen it as a forward-thinking, community-driven exhibition space and hub for historical and creative engagement. Ball & Socket Arts presents a model of how a non-profit can transform a former abandoned brownfield into a historical and cultural mecca. Once open, Ball & Socket Arts will offer audiences, cultural changemakers, and tourists a place to comfortably experience engaging, exciting cultural and history programming and events for decades to come (all on a carefully restored campus).

Ball & Socket Arts is currently renovating five buildings on the site with the aim of creating a community cultural hub for the city of Central Connecticut region. BaSA's site currently has 1 tenant, Sweet Claude's, operating a very popular ice cream shop. Construction is underway on-site for the upstairs of Building 2 and the entirety of Building 3, along with a rear parking lot.

Public programming is beginning in earnest in summer 2023, with free public concerts, writing classes and workshops for adults, visual arts exhibitions in the smaller gallery of Building 3, and public art commissioning programs. Located at a prime walkable and bikeable location, with direct connections to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, Ball & Socket Arts will drive tourism and spur economic activity throughout the West Main Village of Cheshire. This location also means that on-site signage can reach a dynamic array of folks from a family on a stroll, to an elder taking a bike ride, to a history-motivated tourist.

BaSA has proven to be a nimble organization that is well on the way to becoming a major destination in the CT and New England region. The final site plans feature: a versatile historical interpretation space in the front building, a main gallery set on an old factory floor, flooded with light from above; a music performance hall upstairs with seating for about 100; a smaller gallery space in Building 3 for showcasing diverse visual arts exhibitions; and much, much more. BaSA seeks support to lay the groundwork for a responsible, well-researched historic interpretation plan to ensure that our organization's programming, signage, and digital footprint tell the history of these landmark buildings, site, and region responsibly and to the highest possible standards, while also making this content accessible to the broadest possible audience.

Thank you for considering Ball & Socket Arts' request for support.



Ball & Socket Arts Organizational Profile

<https://ballandsocket.org/>

1. Relevant facts and statistics about your institution or organization:
 - a. Founded in 2011
 - b. Ball & Socket Arts is transforming an abandoned industrial campus into an innovative and dynamic arts destination for the central Connecticut region (and beyond). Built on the ethos of sustainability and historic preservation, Ball & Socket Arts will offer vibrant arts, history, and culture programming and provide accessible and relevant experiences to a broad public audience.
 - c. \$1,191,029 in FY 22 (budget has been quite variable the last few years due to construction cost variance)
 - d. 2 full-time staff members, and 1 part-time staff member as of June 2023
 - e. 200+ volunteers in the database. Ball & Socket Arts uses volunteers to help us host public events, inform the public, and to design and execute our projects.
 - f. Four out of five Ball & Socket Arts buildings appear on the State Registry of Historic Places. Ball & Socket was also listed in Renée Tribert's historical survey historic Connecticut Mills for Preservation Connecticut.
 - g. Ball & Socket Arts' campus Artcade and public signage is open to the public 24/7. Gallery and exhibition venue hours will be determined once construction is completed and programming commences in earnest.
2. Audience data:
 - a. As a very new organization, Ball & Socket Arts has not collected demographic information on audiences to date. Anecdotally, most are from Cheshire, though ultimately Ball & Socket Arts will draw visitors from the nearby states of New York, and Massachusetts. Staff plans to get quality data on that in the future and welcome resources around best practices to collect that information from our audiences in 2024.
 - b. 8,000 visitors (a conservative estimate based on sales at Sweet Claude's Ice Cream, our tenant's business)
 - c. Cheshire, CT has a population of 28,766 residents. The town is predominantly White (79%), with roughly 6% Asian Americans, 5% Hispanic residents, 4% Mixed Race, and 4% African American. There is considerably more diversity of races and ethnicities in nearby cities like New Haven and Waterbury. In New

Haven county, the population is significantly more diverse with residents identifying as 18.6 % Hispanic, and 12.5% African American as of 2020.

- d. Ball & Socket Arts has not collected economic demographics on our audience yet.
- e. Although New Haven County offers a wealth of historical and cultural resources, Cheshire as a town has very limited formal resources to support historical interpretation. The Cheshire Historical Society is a small house museum currently going through an extensive collections overhaul and inventory process. There is little to no interpretive signage reflecting the history of the town on public pathways.
- f. To date, Ball & Socket Arts has offered historical programming and materials to the public at no cost to them. Eventually, Ball & Socket Arts will open a dedicated historical exhibition area, which may have an admission fee, but that is roughly 5-10 years away. Outdoor on-site signage and downloadable resources will be offered at no charge. Ball & Socket Arts was featured on the June 15th, 2023 episode of *Grating the Nutmeg* podcast, offered to listeners at no charge courtesy of Connecticut Explored Magazine.

Work Plan

Project Timeline:

Grant Period of Performance:

March 1, 2024 to Feb 28, 2026

March 1 to April 31, 2024: *Project Planning*

Ball & Socket Arts staff confirm participation and survey availability of charette members. As of June 2023, all have agreed to participate.

May 2024 to May 2025: *Convening of 2 charettes (at least 1 on-site with meals provided)*

Elizabeth Pratt Fox convenes 2 separate 4-hour long charettes with the participating historians, exhibition designer, and filmmaker. Ball & Socket Arts staff will support these efforts by providing space and administrative support. Over the course of these charettes, themes for interpretation will be identified. Participants will also be asked to review any written materials created for the site's physical signage or online web archive.

The rough outline for these charettes is:

1. Introduction to the site and tour followed by on-site charrette with reports on the history of the site and labor and what we do not know yet (5 hours)
2. Review of notes from above meeting and input on possible exhibition and design ideas from participants
3. Second charrette (3 hours, held on-site or via online meeting platforms, depending on participant availability and locations).

Outside of the charettes, research will continue, led by Elizabeth Pratt Fox and with research by Thomas Mulholland, exploring the site and the workers, the design consultant will develop some ideas about how best to tell the stories and the film consultant will report on possible film ideas for the site and online. Rough budgets will be developed for all interpretative projects with consults from designers, exhibition developers, and filmmaker.

End of April 2025: *Interpretive site plan creation*

Rough draft created and shared by Elizabeth Pratt Fox in conversation with participants and themes identified from prior sessions.

May to September 2025: *Interpretive site plan review*

Full team critical review of interpretative plan and script by the full time, led by Elizabeth Pratt Fox.

October 2025 to December 2026: *Public interpretive Signage Design*

Long-term exhibition and on-site interpretive signage design and review, led by Elizabeth Pratt Fox in tandem with Ilona Somogyi, the co-founder of Ball & Socket Arts. Tentatively we hope to work with Paul Orselli Workshop to create these exhibitions.

January 2026: *Board review*

Ball & Socket Arts Board Review and formal vote on the approval of the Interpretive Site Plan, led by Ball & Socket Arts staff.

Ball & Socket Arts
NEH Request Submitted June 2023

February 2026: *Reporting and Evaluation*

Program Evaluation and Reporting via qualitative surveys to all participants, led by Lydia Blaisdell and BaSA staff members.

NEH Request Content and Design Team for Site Plan

Project Lead and Exhibition Developer:

Elizabeth Pratt Fox

Elizabeth Fox has assisted clients with institutional assessments and planning, collection assessment, and exhibition planning and implementation. Prior to forming her consulting company in 1997, she worked at the Yale University Art Gallery, Connecticut Landmarks, Wadsworth Atheneum and The Connecticut Historical Society. Her projects have won awards from the Connecticut Humanities, Association for the Study of Connecticut History, Connecticut League of History Organizations and the Association for the Study of State and Local History. The Connecticut League of History Organizations selected her to present several full-day workshops on curatorship and collection care and management and she has mentored twelve museums under the StEPS-CT program of the Connecticut Humanities and the Connecticut League. In addition to project management, she has been successful in assisting institutions as they seek the necessary funding to implement their projects. She served as a Peer Advisor, Connecticut Office of Culture and Tourism and chaired the Cheshire Historic District Commission. She sat on the Board of the Connecticut League of History Organizations for six years. She holds a B.F.A. from the University of Oklahoma and an M.A. in Art History from Tulane University.

Content: Labor History

Dr. Cecelia Bucki, Fairfield University,

Dr. Cecelia Bucki is Professor of History at Fairfield University (Connecticut), where she has taught for over thirty years. She has also taught at Yale University, Wesleyan University, and Hamilton College. Her specialties within U.S. history are social, labor and working-class, and immigration history, as well as American Studies. Her main research interest is the nexus of U.S. twentieth-century labor and urban politics, as demonstrated in her first book, the award-winning *Bridgeport's Socialist New Deal, 1915-1936* (University of Illinois Press, 2001). She has produced various public history projects, beginning with an industrial history of Waterbury for the Mattatuck Historical Society in 1980, as well as establishing the Connecticut Labor Archives for the UConn Library Manuscripts and Archives Division in 1984. She has also participated in social-studies teacher training in Connecticut. She was editor-in-chief of the academic journal *Connecticut History Review* from 2011-2017. She has held a variety of positions in state and national history societies, most notably as National Secretary of the Labor and Working-Class History Association (LAWCHA) from 2003-2018. She received the LAWCHA Award for Distinguished Service to Labor and Working-Class History in 2020. She has been a social-history consultant for the State of Connecticut Historic Preservation Advisory Board since 2016.

Content: Labor history

Jeremy Brecher, freelance author and historian

Jeremy Brecher is a historian, documentary filmmaker, activist, and author of books on [labor](#) and social movements. He is the author of more than a dozen books on labor and social movements. His work has centered on understanding and nurturing the process he characterizes as “common preservation,” in which individuals and group shift from futile and/or self-destructive efforts at self-preservation to strategies of collective action to promote their mutual wellbeing. From 1989 to 2001 Brecher served as Humanities Scholar-in-Residence at Connecticut Public Television and Radio, a position supported by the Connecticut Humanities Council.[40] He wrote the scripts for the documentaries *The Roots of Roe*, *Schools in Black and White*, *Rust Valley*, *The Amistad Revolt*, *Electronic Road Film*, *Brass City Music*, and *Dance on the Wind*, the last two of which he co-produced. Brecher developed and supervised the CPTV series *The Connecticut Experience* which included more than twenty documentaries on Connecticut topics.

Content: Mill History and Architectural Historian

Renée Tribert, Preservation CT

Since 2014, Renée Tribert has worked at Preservation Connecticut, the state’s non-profit advocate for the protection and continued use of historic buildings and landscapes. She serves as Project Manager for the *Making Places* Mill Program and provides preservation services. Renée specializes in providing guidance and assistance toward redevelopment of historic structures through networking, facilitating State and National Register eligibility reviews by SHPO, and historic tax credit application consulting. Other projects and activities include overseeing design and content updates to Preservation Connecticut survey websites, and inspections and resources for easement property owners. Previously she worked for 16 years in the technical and administrative fields of environmental consulting. Renée has an MS in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania, a BA in European History from Brown University, and is a Certified Housing Development Finance Professional through the National Development Council. A resident of Portland, she currently serves on the board of the Middlesex County Historical Society and of The Buttonwood Tree cultural and arts venue.

Content: Cheshire History

Diane Calabro, Town Historian,

Diane Calabro has lived in Cheshire since 1989. Diane was involved with the Historic District Study Committee and Historic District Commission from 2001 until 2009, involvement that was prompted by a 2001 site visit to the Ball and Socket property. She has been an active member of the Cheshire Historical Society since 2003 and served as the Society's president from 2012. She is also the Assistant Steward of Cheshire Grange Number 23. She has a bachelor's degree from Albertus Magnus College and an MBA from Quinnipiac University. Diane retired from Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceutical Company after 25 years of service. As the Town Historian, Diane curates a monthly display at the Cheshire Town Hall. She has also hosted Cheshire Trail Trekker walks sharing Cheshire's history live and on location. When she's not exploring Cheshire's past, Diane is taking art classes at Artsplace and tending to the family farm.

Content: Cheshire History and Artifacts

Cayetana Navarro, Cheshire Historical Society,

Cayetana Navarro (*pronouns: she/her*) is currently the President of the Cheshire Historical Society which has an extensive set of holdings concerning Ball & Socket Manufacturing items. She is also pioneering a role with the [Department of Medicine's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(ODEIM\)](#) in June of 2021 as the inaugural program manager. In this role, she helps guide existing projects and support the development and implementation of new ones that foster a diverse and inclusive department. The ODEIM and her role are unique within the School of Medicine and are a testament to the department's commitment to actively working toward a diverse, equitable, and more inclusive environment for students, trainees, faculty, and staff. In addition to this formal role within the School of Medicine, Cayetana is Co-lead of the [Clinical Care Working Group in the Dean's Advisory Council on LGBTQI+ Affairs \(DAC\)](#), a co-founder of the Indigenous Leaders at Yale group, and a member of the [Yale Latino Networking Group](#) and the [Yale LGBTQ Affinity Group](#). As one of the DAC Clinical Care Working Group Co-leads, Cayetana is helping lead an effort to create and build the first ever system-wide Yale LGBTQ Healthcare Program. This project, begun in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic, has brought together stakeholders from across the Yale health system (YNHHS, YSM, YSPH, YSN, and Yale Health). While much work remains to be done, tremendous progress has been made since she first started drafting a proposal in the late winter of 2020. Cayetana holds an MBA from John Hopkins and a Bachelor's degree from Wesleyan.

Content: Cheshire History

Ron Gagliarty, author of a historical book about Cheshire

Ron is a retired elementary art teacher, former leader of the Hamden chapter of SCBWI (Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators) for over 25 years. He has written local history books *Images of America: Cheshire* and *Naugatuck Revisited* for Arcadia Publishing. He is the Municipal Historian Emeritus for Cheshire and the former executive director of the Naugatuck Historical Society and Museum, former member of the board of directors there and for the Cheshire Historical Society and the New Haven Museum. He is the author of his Master's thesis entitled *The Butterfly And Moth As Symbols In Western Art*. He was the editor for *Cheshire Magazine* during 2017. He designed and captioned the illustrations for Dr. Dodson's book, *How to Father*. Ron can be seen hosting his longtime cable television show *30 Minutes With Ron* on YouTube. He is currently the director of the Ramon Beard Lock 12 Museum on the Farmington Canal in Cheshire. He is the founder and director of MICA (Made In Connecticut Arts) and the soon-to-be opened the Museum of Connecticut Cartoonists And Illustrators (MOCCAI) in the Barker Gallery at Foxwoods.

Historical Researcher

Thomas Mulholland

Thomas Mulholland is a Historian raised in Cheshire, Connecticut since 2003. His interest in history, especially that of local history, started at a very young age. He, alongside his family, were the original founders of Spirits Alive Cemetery tour. Thomas acts as the researcher for Spirits Alive Cemetery Tour, a theatrical historical performance and walking tour of Cheshire's historic Hillside Cemetery which has raised thousands of dollars for the Cheshire Historical Society over the course of seven years, but more importantly has kept the stories and history of our town's residents alive and relevant to the thousands who attended. His love of history runs deep; receiving the Connecticut League of History Organizations 'Award of Merit' for his third-floor recreation of a Cheshire Academy dormitory room in the Hitchcock-Phillips House as his Eagle Scout Project in 2016, as well as being awarded an international internship opportunity with the Connecticut State Library, WWI Centennial Commemoration, facilitating the excavation and restoration of trenches in Seicheprey, France in 2019, before graduating from Juniata College in 2021 with a degree in History and Museum Studies. Thomas has continued his professional life working for Connecticut Landmarks, the Cheshire Historical Society, and the Connecticut State Library and is currently employed as a museum educator at Mystic Seaport Museum in Mystic Connecticut. He also provides private genealogy research and now looks forward to supporting Ball & Socket Arts.

Design and Video

Exhibition Designer: POW! Paul Orselli Workshop

For over 40 years, Paul Orselli has worked to create inventive and playful museums and exhibits. He is now the President and Chief Instigator at POW! (Paul Orselli Workshop, Inc.) an exhibit design and development corporation that he founded. Paul has consulted on museum projects in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. His clients include such notable organizations as the New York Hall of Science, the Exploratorium, the National Science Foundation, ICOM, Muzeiko in Bulgaria, and Science Projects in London. He has taught and lectured at numerous universities on museum topics and has presented at professional conferences around the world. He is also a two-time grant recipient of the Fulbright Specialist program. Paul has also been the editor and originator of the four best-selling Exhibit Cheapbooks, originally published by ASTC, and has served on the board of NAME (National Association for Museum Exhibition).

Design and Video

Karyl Evans

Director / Producer / Writer / Editor

Karyl Evans is a six-time Emmy Award winning director/producer/editor/writer of documentary films. Ms. Evans, owner of Karyl Evans Productions in North Haven, CT, has produced many films about the history of Connecticut over the past 30 years for public television including *The New Haven Green: Heart of a City*, narrated by Paul Giamatti; *Grove Street Cemetery: City of the Dead, City of the Living*; as well as a series of one hour documentaries for public television about the history of African-Americans in Connecticut and the history of Connecticut's cities. Karyl Evans has been producing short documentaries on the lives of the women being

inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame for the past 15 years. Ms Evans is currently working on a history of the Yale School of Management and a history of Native Peoples of Connecticut. Ms. Evans was a full-time Professor at Southern Connecticut State University for two years, teaching documentary filmmaking and film theory. She is a Fellow at Yale University. For more information about Karyl Evans visit her website at: <http://karylevansproductions.com>

Theater Specialist

Iлона Somogyi, co-founder of Ball & Socket Arts, and Executive Director

Iлона is a faculty member in the design department at the Yale School of Drama. She has worked as a professional costume designer at regional and commercial theaters in New York City, around the country and in Europe. She has collaborated at non-profit theaters of many different sizes from very small artist initiated companies to multi-million dollar institutions. These include Hartford Stage, Westport Country Playhouse, Long Wharf Theater, Yale Repertory Theater, Williamstown Theater Festival, among many others. She received a BFA from Parsons School of Design and an MFA from the Yale School of Drama. She has been a Cheshire resident since the age of five.

Administrative Support, Evaluation, and Grant Reporting:

Lydia Blaisdell, Director of Programming at Ball & Socket Arts

Lydia Blaisdell has led artist residencies and created public arts programming throughout the Northeast. She also has a background in development and grant writing at several nonprofits, including SPACE on Ryder Farm, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and UJA-Federation. Lydia currently serves as a volunteer member on the Cultural District Commission for the City of New London. She holds an MFA from the Michener Center for Writers, and has been awarded residencies at Yaddo, Marble House Project, and Ucross. Lydia is thrilled to join the Ball & Socket Arts team at this critical moment of growth.