

NOTRE DAME ARTS INITIATIVE

2025 YEAR-END UPDATE

By transcending conventional boundaries — between art forms and across disciplines — Notre Dame's Arts Initiative is mobilizing the transformative power of the arts to advance knowledge, invigorate learning, and foster human solidarity.

"In our first year, the Arts Initiative has energized a renewed focus on the role of the arts in a liberal arts education. By supporting innovative faculty research, hosting visiting artists, launching student programming, and deepening collaborations across and beyond campus, we're making great progress toward a thriving creative ecosystem rooted in Notre Dame's longstanding commitment to the arts."



Michael Schreffler

Director, Notre Dame Arts Initiative; Associate Dean for the Arts; Professor, Department of Art, Art History & Design

FOSTERING ARTS RESEARCH & CREATIVE PRACTICE

The Arts Initiative is advancing Notre Dame as a premier destination for instruction, research, and practice in the arts by focusing on **3 research priorities** developed in consultation with faculty:

- **Arts in Action** (socially engaged arts for more just and equitable societies)
- **Sense and Transcendence** (arts and spirituality)
- **Techne Futures** (arts and design, science, and technology)

Funded

4

interdisciplinary projects led by faculty teams representing 7 academic departments.

Launched a

2-year

interdisciplinary postdoctoral and post-MFA fellowship program.

Submitted

\$1M

in external funding proposals for arts research and practice.

Worked with the Franco Family Institute for Liberal Arts and the Public Good to develop dedicated arts tracks in **3 faculty grant programs**, enhancing the institute's longstanding commitment to the arts.



DEVELOPING THE NOTRE DAME ARTS BIENNIAL

The centerpiece of the initiative's commitment to cultivating a campus and community arts ecosystem is a six-month arts biennial, **an international arts festival rooted in the creative spirit, intellectual energy, and iconic traditions of Notre Dame and our region**. The inaugural biennial, running January-June 2027, will present a constellation of exhibitions, performances, workshops, courses, and symposia across the visual, literary, spatial, and performing arts.

Launched
artsbiennial.nd.edu

and opened multiple opportunities to participate in biennial programming. The inaugural theme is *symbiosis*, embracing connectivity between individuals, groups, ideas, and disciplines.



BUILDING THE PATH FROM STUDENT TO PROFESSIONAL

The Arts Initiative is preparing culturally engaged global citizens by offering students early and sustained exposure to the arts.

- Facilitated student access to **8 visiting artists** in fall 2025 through class visits and workshops, public talks, and small group discussions. Collaborators included the Creative Writing Program, DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, Department of Art, Art History & Design, Department of Film, Television & Theatre (FTT), Institute for Latino Studies, Lucy Family Institute for Data & Society, Raclin Murphy Museum of Art, the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, and the School of Architecture.
- Launched a new Student Arts Fellowship program, **funding 16 graduate and undergraduate fellows** representing **12 programs** of study across the College of Arts & Letters, the College of Science, and the Mendoza College of Business.

8

visiting artists

16

student fellows



DEEPENING COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION



Engaged

200+

internal and external stakeholders

and began collaborative planning with campus and regional arts partners to champion shared goals and expand biennial programming.

Launched an **arts newsletter**

to increase direct engagement with partners and audiences.

Joined a2ru (Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities)

to advance thought leadership and increase national visibility.

PROVIDING TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

The initiative spearheaded a one-credit Studio Art/FTT course that brought students into sustained proximity with 2025 Initiative on Race & Resilience artist-in-residence **Brendan Fernandes**. Through regular class meetings, behind-the-scenes arts experiences in Chicago, and collaborative performance-making, students were inspired to reimagine the role of the artist and their art.

"I want to keep exploring a different kind of authorship — the designer as instigator, the artist as collaborator, the work as an open score that others can perform into being."

Sara Abdolmotallebi, MFA student & course participant

