



## FIFTH ANNUAL ARTISTS CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

*“Where Nature and Culture Meet”*

Friday, April 24, 2026

9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Historic Thomas Center

302 NE 6th Ave., Gainesville, FL 32601

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Registration &amp; Continental Breakfast</b> | 8:00 am – 8:30 am |
|---|-------------------|

Sponsored by the *City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs*  
Registration Open, Networking, and Continental Breakfast

|                                    |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b> | 8:30 am – 8:40 am |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|

Chair Ken Cornell – Alachua County Commissioner  
Chair Carol Velasques Richardson - Arts Council

|                                      |                   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Session 1: What’s Up in 2026!</b> | 8:45 am – 9:15 am |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|

Presenter: *Judy Skinner*

Judy will present an overview of the upcoming 2026–27 Dance Alive season, highlighting key performances, educational initiatives, and community engagement opportunities. The session will also introduce the Khoury Family Center for the Arts, outlining its capabilities as a dynamic, mission-driven community space. Attendees will learn how nonprofits can leverage the Center’s resources—through partnerships, programming, and events—to expand reach, enhance visibility, and advance organizational impact within the arts and broader community.

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Session 2: Hacking Into Your Value Story</b> | 9:20 am – 9:50 am |
|---|-------------------|

Presenter: *Charles Duprey Langlois*

This session explores the CEM framework—Characters, Emotions, and Moment—as a strategic approach to compelling storytelling and marketing. Participants will learn how to identify and develop a “shared grace” character that audiences can authentically connect with, ensuring the product or service remains the solution rather than the protagonist. The session will examine how to uncover the core emotional drivers—stressors, concerns, and unmet needs—that shape audience behavior, and how to deliberately address and resolve those emotions. Finally, attendees will focus on crafting “the piece of magic”: the pivotal moment when the solution is discovered and the true value of the offering becomes clear, creating resonance, clarity, and impact.

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Morning Break</b> | 9:50 am – 10:05 am |
|----------------------|--------------------|



**Session 3: Developing a creative economy in Gainesville, Florida: Prospects and possibilities**

10:05 am – 10:35 pm

Presenter: *Chelsea Carnes*

This session provides a step-by-step look at producing a successful performing arts event, from refining an initial concept through execution on the day of the show. Topics include budgeting, booking talent, marketing strategy, production logistics, and on-site operations. Drawing on firsthand anecdotes from both successful and unsuccessful events at Alachua County’s premier concert and festival venue, Heartwood Soundstage, the presenter will share proven methods and cautionary lessons. Leveraging experience as Heartwood’s former Marketing Director and current Director, the session offers practical strategies for guiding events toward financial viability, audience engagement, and operational success.

**Session 4: the “M” and “B” Words for Artists**

10:40 am – 11:10 am

Presenter: *Michael Cooper*

This session examines the core frameworks and professional mindsets artists must adopt to advance sustainable creative careers. Emphasis is placed on reframing two often-avoided concepts: Money and Business. Attendees will explore why financial literacy is a necessity rather than an afterthought, and how to approach monetization strategically without compromising artistic integrity, authenticity, or impact. The presentation offers practical perspectives on aligning creative vision with sound business practices to support long-term growth and stability.

**Session 5: Maximizing Your Reach: Grant and Marketing Resources from Visit Gainesville, Alachua County**

11:15 am – 11:45 am

Presenter: *Jessica Hurov*

Discover how creative professionals can access funding opportunities and marketing support through *Visit Gainesville, Alachua County*. This session will highlight available grants, promotional programs, and strategic resources designed to help expand audiences, showcase their work, and connect with the local community. Learn practical tips for leveraging these tools to elevate your projects and grow your creative impact.

**Group Photo & Lunch**

11:45 am – 12:30 pm

Sponsored by *Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, FL*



**Session 6: Legal Protections for Artistic Creations**

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm

Presenter: *Taylor Col, Gray Robinson, P.A*

This session provides a practical overview of the legal landscape affecting artists, including copyright, right of publicity, and ornamental design protection. Attendees will gain a foundational understanding of how these areas of law apply to creative work, common risks and misconceptions, and the steps artists can take to safeguard their intellectual property. The session is designed to equip creatives with actionable knowledge to better protect their work, their identity, and the commercial value of their designs.

**Session 7: The Living Repertoire**

1:05 pm – 1:35 pm

Presenter: *Morgan Skelley and the Tuba-Euph Quartet*

A classical performance of multiple new works for Tuba-Euph Quartet, including multiple pieces by Gainesville based composers! The Tuba-Euph Quartet is a musical ensemble not often programmed and this presentation helps to shine light on the diversity of the ensemble!

**Session 8: Self Discovery with Digital Collage: A Guide for Absolute Beginners**

1:40 pm – 2:10 pm

Presenter: *Lisa Marie Mercer*

This session shares a personal and unconventional journey into digital art that began during hospitalization and recovery from a series of grand mal seizures that significantly impaired the speaker’s ability to think and communicate. With no formal art training, the presenter taught themselves to create digital collages using free, user-friendly smartphone apps. The session will highlight accessible tools for digital art creation, recommend the most intuitive apps for beginners, and provide reliable resources for sourcing public domain images. This presentation focuses on human creativity, resilience, and accessible technology and does not address or involve artificial intelligence.

**Afternoon Break**

2:15 pm – 2:30 pm

**Session 9: Arts Engagement as a Health Behavior: Frameworks, Emerging Evidence, & Insights**

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Presenter: *Alexandra K. Rodriguez*

This session examines arts engagement through the lens of health behavior, drawing on emerging research evidence and established theoretical frameworks. Participants will explore how creative practices influence physical, mental, and social well-being, and why positioning arts engagement as a health behavior is significant for research, policy development, and professional practice. The presentation will highlight key epidemiological findings, real-world applications, and opportunities to integrate arts-based approaches into broader health promotion and prevention strategies.



**Session 10: Where Nature & Culture Meet**

3:05 pm – 3:45 pm

Presenter: *Debbie Miller – Writers Alliance of Gainesville*

Members of the *Writers Alliance of Gainesville* present original short fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry inspired by the theme “Where Nature and Culture Meet.”

Featuring readers from the Alliance’s literary magazine, *Bacopa*, as well as participants from the January ‘26 Sunshine State Book Festival, this session offers a curated series of brief readings. The works reflect on landscapes, lived experience, and cultural identity, illuminating the deep connections between the natural world and human stories.

**Session 11: Developing a Creative Economy in Gainesville, Florida: Prospects and Possibilities**

3:50 pm – 4:20 pm

Presenter: *Dr. Kole Odutola*

As of late 2025, Gainesville’s creative economy is in a period of resilient transition—balancing ambitious local growth with significant state-level funding challenges. This session situates Gainesville within the broader context of Florida’s arts sector, which generates approximately \$50.8 billion in annual economic activity statewide, and examines how the city can more strategically participate in and benefit from that scale of impact. Leveraging the creative talent pipeline of the University of Florida alongside a strong nonprofit arts ecosystem, the presentation will explore how to develop a practical blueprint for growth. Key topics include strategies for accessing statewide arts revenue streams, designing compelling arts- and culture-driven tourism packages, and aligning creative assets with economic development and destination marketing goals.

**Session 12: Creative AI: Entangled When Synthetic Intelligences**

4:25 pm – 4:55 pm

Presenter: *Marlon Barrios Solano*

In this artist talk, Barrios Solano reflects on the promises and perils of working with artificial intelligence as both an artistic and research practice. Drawing from interdisciplinary work spanning performance, generative art, creative coding, and software engineering, the presentation frames AI not only as a tool, but as a material, a collaborator, and a site of critical inquiry. Combining conceptual reflection with brief real-time demonstrations, the talk offers a situated perspective on how contemporary artistic practice can interrogate, prototype, and actively reshape emerging forms of hybrid cognition and creativity.

**Closing Remarks**

4:55 pm – 5:00 pm