

# C2C KICKS OFF ARTS ROUNDTABLE SERIES

**Connect2Culture brings together local artists for professional development discussions**

by Stacey Lindsay  
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A common goal of a roundtable discussion is to help those in attendance weigh on subjects that may otherwise be avoided or unknown. Such was the case on Nov. 18 when Joplin-based community arts agency Connect2Culture commenced its 2015-2016 Arts Roundtable Series. Presented by the Kansas City Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for Arts, attorney Donald R. Simon led the first discussion titled "What Everybody Should Know About Contracts."

Artists, advocates, and affiliates gathered at Spiva Center for the Arts to listen and engage in Simon's presentation that broached the hard-hitting topic of how to protect one's intellectual property.

"It's about trying to get a lot of artists to think of themselves in terms of entrepreneurs," Simon said. "If you want to make a living out of doing what you love, you have to think of some of what you do in terms of a business."

Simon covered the basics of needing and having a contract. He said according to his experience, the intersection of art and business can often be a sensitive and uncomfortable subject for artists.

"There is a feeling out there that artists are meant to subsidize or give their craft away or be willing to work for free," he said. "No one would ever ask the owner of a shoe store to give a pair of shoes away for free or... for exposure. So it's not only changing the mindset of our purchasers of creative art but also of those who make it, to make them believe that this is a real job."

Connect2Culture conceptualized the roundtable talks two years ago with a goal to provide arts organizations and businesses, cultural institutions, and artists a means to learn about topics and current issues related to the arts - and to bolster connections between creatives.

"They are professional development programs for the arts community to educate them and empower them and to bring them all together in one room," said C2C Community Arts Director Emily Frankoski. "Often they are so busy with their own projects, with their heads down, they aren't

looking for collaborations."

The discussion topics cover the arts spectrum, ranging from contracts to media relations. Connect2Culture chose the topics for its current series based on feedback from prior events.

"What was exciting about the 2015/2016 season was that all of them were suggested on the evaluations from 2014-2015, so we are offering things that the community needs and wants instead of just picking what they should know," Frankoski said.

The next discussion - scheduled for Feb. 1 - will cover capacity building and the lifecycle of non-profit organizations. According to Frankoski, anyone involved or interested in the arts is welcome to attend. "There really is something for everyone."

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- Donald R. Simon,  
Kansas City Volunteer  
Lawyers and  
Accountants for Arts