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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 17, 2016

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**TEXAS CULTURAL TRUST RECEIVES \$60,000 FROM THE MEADOWS FOUNDATION FOR
ARTS & DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM**

***GRANT TO FUND TEACHER TRAINING FOR LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS WITH INNOVATIVE ART &
TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM ENGAGING AT-RISK STUDENTS***

AUSTIN, Texas – Texas Cultural Trust (TCT) is pleased to announce a matching grant from The Meadows Foundation. The grant of \$60,000 will provide support to high school fine arts teachers from low performing schools to use the Trust's Arts & Digital Literacy initiative, an innovative arts and technology curriculum for engaging at-risk students. This funding will help serve 100 additional Texas teachers, as well as provide ongoing support to more than 800 trained teachers at the Arts & Digital Literacy Institute: Digital Pioneers, scheduled for August 1-3, 2016, at the Austin ISD Performing Arts Center. For more information, visit www.txculturaltrust.org.

"Engaging today's students, especially at the high school level, is challenging with the demands and expectations of preparing students for college and workforce readiness," said Jennifer Ransom Rice, Executive Director of the Texas Cultural Trust. "The arts can serve as a vital tool in those efforts - keeping students engaged, encouraged, and most importantly, in school."

The Texas Cultural Trust, in partnership with the University of Texas at Austin College of Fine Arts, developed this innovative and impactful curricula in 2010. **The Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative** is a project based fine arts curriculum for high school students that establishes the connection between fine arts education and digital media. The Arts & Digital Literacy courses are aligned with the new TEKS standards for Fine Arts and count as state fine arts credit for graduation. The teachers' guides for this curriculum are available to download for *free* at www.txartandmedia.org, and include an entire year's worth of day-by-day lesson plans for all four Media Communications courses (Art and Media Communications I & II; Music and Media Communications I; Theatre and Media Communications I; and Dance and Media Communications I & II

"The mission of the Trust is to be the leading voice for the arts in education, advocacy, and economic impact of our state, and nowhere is our mission more evident than in our Arts & Digital Literacy program," said Judy Robison, Board Chair of the Texas Cultural Trust. "Having the support of such a standard-bearer as The Meadows Foundation, helps us train this critical population of teachers on the front lines of closing the gaps. Our fine arts program addresses that issue by teaching technology and preparing Texas students for the 21st century work place."

"We believe our courses elevate our fine arts teachers to be the conduit by which technology is taught," said Rice. "And that the fine arts are an intrinsic part of preparing our students for the 21st century creative workforce." A recent study done by the Texas Cultural Trust shows that students who complete more arts classes have up to 15

percent higher pass rates on standardized tests, are half as likely to drop out, and are 4 percent more likely to enroll in higher education. Their research also shows 80 percent of Texas voters support increased funding in arts education for schools.

"Digital Pioneers," the 2016 Arts & Digital Literacy Institute, will provide hands-on professional development for high school fine arts teachers who want to make a significant impact in their classrooms by fully integrating technology into their creative classroom. The Arts & Digital Literacy curricula creates conditions within the classroom that allow for the innate skills of creativity to thrive and become habits of mind. Fine arts teachers will thoroughly engage with the program, as well as experience the new Curriculum Delivery System, an online platform with daily lesson plans, rubrics, power points, and other tools to pioneer the digital world into their fine arts classroom. The Institute will also feature a Keynote address by Dr. Bob Duke of KUTs *Two Guys On Your Head*, and a presentation by Dr. Brent Hasty of MINDPOP. Instructors will receive 20 CPE hours for attending the Institute. To register, please visit www.txculturaltrust.org.

About the Texas Cultural Trust

The Texas Cultural Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to be the leading voice for the arts in education, advocacy, and economic impact in Texas, spotlighting the artistic excellence of our state. Programs of the Texas Cultural Trust include the biennial Texas Medal of Arts Awards, Texas Women for the Arts, the Texas Young Masters Program, the Arts & Digital Literacy Initiative, and the *Invest in the Arts. The Arts Perform* Legislative Campaign, as well as support for programs of the Texas Commission on the Arts and other qualifying state agencies. For more information on TCT, please visit www.txculturaltrust.org.

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