



PRESS RELEASE

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ARTSCONNECT INVITES ALL TOPEKANS TO PARTICIPATE IN PERFORMANCE OF SPOKEN WORD OPERETTA SLATED FOR MAY 24

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Brown v. Board case decision, internationally renowned artist vanessa german will co-write the operetta with Topeka poet August Mendoza and recording artist Angel Haze.

ArtsConnect is seeking members to participate in the spoken word operetta performance with the first rehearsal on March 11. [Sign up here.](#)

Topeka, KS — ArtsConnect is excited to invite Topekans to participate in the performance of a spoken word operetta entitled "The Sound of Courage" with the first rehearsal scheduled to take place on March 11th. Individuals interested in participating should visit www.artstopeka.org/loveandjustice to get more information and to sign up.

The Sound of Courage Community Choir, led by artist vanessa german, will perform the spoken word operetta and Topekans of all ages, backgrounds and experience levels are invited – with no singing required. The operetta has been commissioned by ArtsConnect and co-written by vanessa german, Topeka poet August Mendoza and recording artist Angel Haze. The operetta is set to premiere on the evening of May 24, 2024, at White Concert Hall on the campus of Washburn University in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education decision made by the United States Supreme Court in 1954.

The performance of the operetta will be accompanied by a series of new sculptural works by german, collectively entitled "The Museum of Love & Reckoning" which will open at the Rita Blitt Gallery on the campus of Washburn University on May 16th. The operetta will serve as an immersive soundtrack for the exhibition of sculptural works and will be submitted for consideration for a Grammy in the spoken word category.

"This exciting opportunity will bring people of all ages, backgrounds and performance levels together to bring to life a work of art inspired by voices, stories and memories," said artist vanessa german. "We endeavor to create a dynamic, intergenerational choir

to bring forth a tapestry of voices that will embody the spirit of love, justice and transformation. By elevating submerged stories – by using art to reckon with the difficult realities of desegregation – Topeka has an opportunity to set a powerful example for how communities can reckon with the past and move forward into a future that embraces the whole human experience.”

Underway since mid-2023, this project has received foundational support from the National Endowment for the Arts through the prestigious Our Town Grant Program and from Visit Topeka, Inc. Other supporters include Washburn University, the Mulvane Art Museum, Security Benefit, FHLBank Topeka, the Brown v. Board National Historical Park, the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission, and the Mid-America Arts Alliance. Fundraising for the project is ongoing and sponsorship opportunities are still available.

For more information about this project and to get involved in related activities, visit www.artstopeka.org/loveandjustice.

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About vanessa german

vanessa german (b. 1976, USA) is a multidisciplinary citizen artist working across sculpture, performance, communal rituals, immersive installation, and photography. The artist’s practice proposes new models for social healing, utilizing creativity and tenderness as vital forces to reckon with the historical and ongoing catastrophes of structural racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, resource extraction, and misogyny. Her work is held in private and public collections internationally, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the Wichita Art Museum; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville; and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford. Learn more at <https://www.kasmingallery.com/artist/vanessa-german>

About ArtsConnect

As Topeka’s premier arts engagement organization, ArtsConnect promotes the arts through building community connections and broadening the understanding of how the arts enhance our quality of life. Learn more at ArtsTopeka.org.