



# CREATIVE GUTS



## Strategic Plan 2022-2025



# ABOUT

Creative Guts is on a mission to awaken creativity within people of all ages by curating an environment for connection, collaboration, and the opportunity for gutsy creatives to share their stories with the world. Creative Guts' program of work is rooted in creating opportunities for people to share their creativity, collaborate and connect with one another, and feel empowered and encouraged to explore their creativity.



Creative Guts strives to serve two primary audiences, as a platform for existing creatives and a jumping off point for not-yet-creatives.

We serve existing creatives by offering opportunities for them to share their work and tell their stories through the podcast, zines, critique nights, open mics, art challenges, tiny art exchanges, and more. Our goal is to strike a balance between curated opportunities (e.g., the zines and the podcast) and opportunities that are open to all (e.g. tiny art exchanges, open mics).

We aim to serve not-yet-creatives by offering programming that aims to unleash the inner artist in all. Our goal is to create more programming targeting this group and ensure these individuals feel encouraged to be part of the Creative Guts' community. Better serving this audience emerged as a strategic priority over the next 3 years (more below).

Creative Guts program of work consists of:

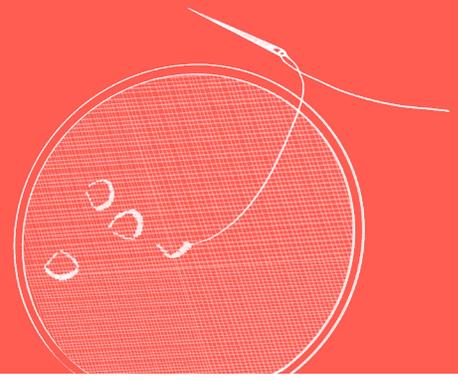
# The Podcast



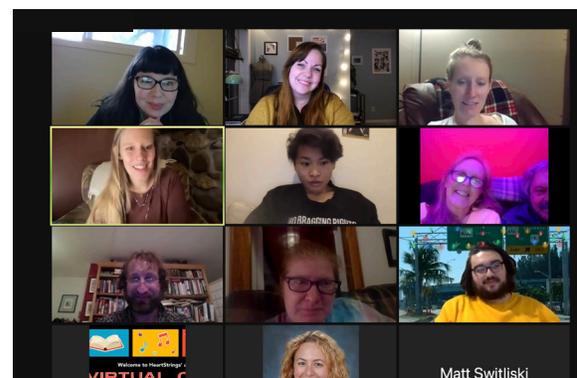
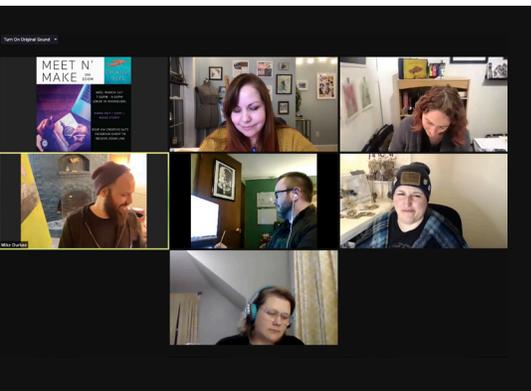
On our interview-style podcast we interview various creatives working in diverse disciplines to explore the roots of their creativity, dive into their hearts, and better discover how creativity connects us to the world around us.



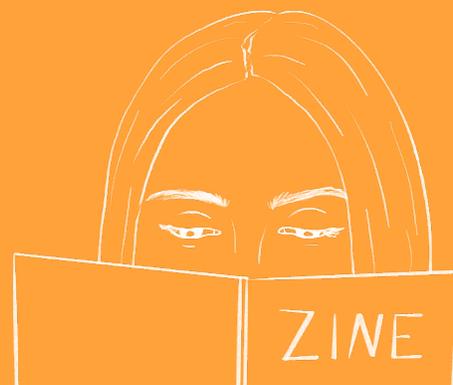
# Events



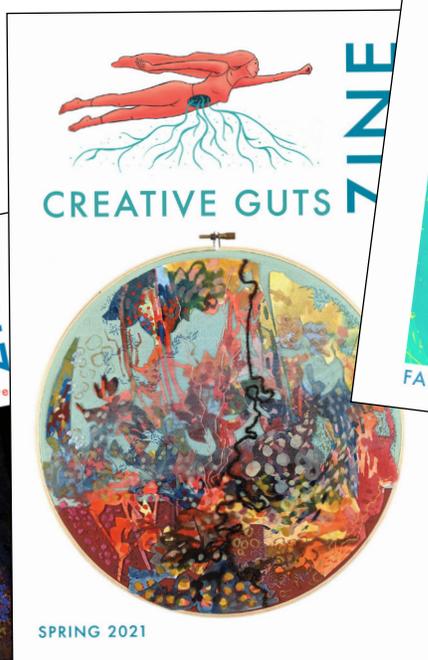
Events: Over the past two years, Creative Guts has hosted a slew of events starting with our first event, a Stitch 'N Bitch, in January 2020. Our Stitch 'N Bitch and subsequent Meet 'N Makes (both in-person and virtual) are an opportunity to bring creatives and not-yet-creatives together to connect and create together. Creative Guts has also hosted two open mic nights — one in person and one virtually.



# The Zines



Starting with the Spring 2020 Zine, Creative Guts has published four small magazines featuring the visual and written works submitted by creatives around the state and the globe.



Digital copies are available for free on the Creative Guts website and physical copies were available for purchase.

# Other fun things like the #Gutstober Challenge Tiny Art Exchange and the #ShopNHLocals Directory



The Tiny Art Exchange, while challenging to orchestrate, has been one of the most rewarding things we've done. Folks from around the globe mailed each other surprise pieces of tiny art! Creative Guts' goal of connecting creatives was global and incredibly heartwarming. The #Gutstober challenge, modeled after the famous #Inktober drawing challenge, offered creatives around the world with prompts to guide their doodles and masterpieces throughout the month of October.

**GUTSTOBER**  
by Creative Guts #gutstober

1. Bird	17. Cozy
2. Mail	18. Vegetable
3. Fog	19. Record Player
4. Building	20. Limitless
5. Typewriter	21. Queen
6. Weightless	22. Home
7. Raindrops	23. Guts
8. Supplies	24. Otherworldly
9. New Hampshire	25. Bunny
10. Mountain	26. Leaves
11. Favorite Color	27. Polaroid
12. Telephone	28. Torrential
13. Roots	29. Haunted Woods
14. Window	30. Brain
15. Maker	31. Bones
16. Holes	

CreativeGutsPodcast.com



Creative Guts has started building a list of NH creatives who are selling their works online and/or in-person in NH shops. We started with a list of our podcast guests and it grew from there with a submittable form on our website. Anyone who makes and sells creative works in NH can be on this list for free. We continuously add to it to enhance this resource.

# ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Creative Guts began in spring 2019 when Laura Harper Lake and Sarah Wrightsman decided to start a podcast. The idea was simple: interview creatives — digging deep into their hearts, their stories, and their art — and release episodes into the world every Wednesday morning. Creative Guts started as a passion project, but quickly took on a life of its own. The response to the podcast was very positive: creatives at varying stages of their craft were enjoying the opportunity to share their stories, hear the stories of other creatives, and connect with one another.

Creative Guts became a connector — folks in our network were meeting one another and creating opportunities to collaborate. We hosted our first event — a Stitch 'N Bitch — in January 2020. In the backroom at Art Up Front Street in Exeter, NH, surrounded by original art from the first ever guest on the Creative Guts' podcast, a dozen women gathered to work with their hands on knitting, embroidery, crotchet, and more while connecting with one another.



**THE ROSE BRYANT  
INTERVIEW IS RELEASED!**

Simultaneously, Creative Guts was collecting submissions for our first ever Zine. When we chose the theme for the first ever Creative Guts Zine, Gutsy, we had no idea the Zine would be released during a once-in-a-lifetime global health crisis. The coronavirus pandemic challenged the Creative Guts team, but we persevered. Just before the pandemic, in early March 2020, Creative Guts hosted a Meet 'N Critique and gathered artists once more in the backroom at Art Up Front Street. We didn't know the Meet 'N Critique would be our last in-person event for more than a year.

Throughout the pandemic, Creative Guts published three additional Zines (including one youth Zines), hosted six virtual Meet 'N Makes and two open mic nights, and organized a global tiny art exchange. The Creative Guts team continued to interview creatives for the podcast, although at a very different pace. Interviewing virtually gave us the opportunity to talk with creatives in New Jersey, Canada, Missouri, and Australia.



This time gave us the opportunity to reflect on the previous two years and consider the future of Creative Guts. This is why in December 2020, Creative Guts began the process of incorporating as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Laura and Sarah worked to assemble a Board of Directors, draft bylaws, create a budget, and prepare the organization for the future. In March 2021, Creative Guts was granted tax exempt status from the IRS.

# 2022-2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As a newly formed nonprofit, the Creative Guts team embarked on a strategic planning process and developed the following strategic priorities to guide our work over the next three years:

Achieve financial stability;  
Expand our network;  
Develop a consistent brand;  
Grow our capacity through good governance; and  
Better serve aspiring creatives.

## Achieve Financial Stability

Creative Guts began as a passion project, meaning Laura and Sarah were spending their personal money to execute this project. Now that Creative Guts is a nonprofit, our top priority is to shift recurring costs to the organization, expand on what is currently possible programmatically, and ensure programs are accessible to all.

Achieving financial stability includes:

- Getting our accounting in order for financial reporting and tracking.
- Using our existing network and building on our network to grow relationships with potential donors and sponsors.
- Developing fiscal partnerships that make sense. For example, by looking for funding with art supply stores (Michael's, Joann Fabric, Dick Blick, etc.); graphic design and marketing firms; radio stations; for-profit dance studios, venues, and museums; and more.
- Building our donor list and executing a digital appeal to prepare for future mail appeals. Exploring grant opportunities, developing relationships with funders, and applying for grants.

## Expand Our Network

Growing our network by being present in the community and building relationships with local community groups is key to creating a well-rounded, successful organization.

Growing our network includes:

- Being present in the community by tabling at community events, like the NH Maker Fest.
- Leaving marketing materials in our communities, e.g. coffee shops, public libraries, museums and other art spaces, free little libraries, and more.

- Attending art-related conferences and connecting with larger arts organizations, like the Women's Caucus for Art and the NH State Council on the Arts, to ensure Creative Guts has a face and a presence in the arts community in New Hampshire.
- Developing partnerships with organizations, including those not directly related to the arts. For example, schools, nursing homes, and more.

## **Develop a Consistent Brand**

Over the past two years, Creative Guts has gained a following on Facebook and Instagram. Despite seeing some returns on this effort, our presence on social media has not been strategic or consistent.

**Developing a consistent brand includes:**

- Being consistent on social media, with a focus on Facebook and Instagram.
- Take advantage of existing networks on other platforms. For example, Sarah will occasionally share relevant content with her LinkedIn connections.
- Revisit the social media calendar and take advantage of Facebook's Business Suite to schedule posts on Facebook and Instagram.
- "Replay our greatest hits" but reusing and repurposing content. For example, by posting quotes from past episodes.

## **Grow Our Capacity Through Good Governance**

Successful nonprofits are built on good governance, including a strong Board of Directors with diverse skill sets and networks.

**Growing our capacity through good governance including:**

- Growing the Board of Directors through thoughtful recruitment taking into account time, talents, and networks.

## **Better Serve Aspiring Creatives**

Throughout the Strategic Planning retreat, the goal of serving the aspiring creatives came up several times. While Creative Guts does an excellent job serving the creative community, empowering those that do not yet identify as creatives was cited as a potential weakness.

**Better serving aspiring creatives includes:**

- Creating a mentorship program to connect creatives with aspiring creatives.
- Offering a "medium speed dating" so those who do not yet identify as creatives can try various art forms/mediums with demonstrations from artists.
- Lower the barrier to entry and make art less intimidating and more fun!