



## Immigrant Artists Town Hall DCLA and NYFA

03/27/2017

- What are the needs of immigrant artists? To support the making of art in NYC?
- How do you survive and thrive as an artist? And what is essential to maintaining this?

### CHALLENGES

#### SPACE

- Space to create our work: gallery, creation, workshops, parks (permitting)
- Working in sculpture, looking for affordable and convenient space is a challenge. Seeking workshops to partner and provide access re: materials; network of friends / friends of friends to find space, affordability is extremely prohibitive
- Working space is the main issue – studio in DUMBO since 2000 (rent is \$50/SF); also member of an artist org working on Governor’s Island, why is some of this underutilized space accessible for organizations of exhibitions but cannot be used for affordable artist studios? All affordable workspace for artists are eroded.
- Same space needs for all visual and performing arts – through bookings – creation of networks to navigate. What can the City do to help, since often we struggle more than others in accessing work space? Space Finder is for events, not useful for workspace (studio or performance).

#### AFFORDABILITY & COMPENSATION

- Income is severely low in Residency Programs
- Affordability of housing is insurmountable – government support of artist housing!
  - Programs for support and education about access to affordable housing
  - Understand artists as whole persons, with families, etc.
- Spaces that are affordable are not family oriented
- Artist residencies are great for career, but severely inadequate for the number of artists in NYC. Propose artist in residence with CBOs or for neighborhoods (start in rezoning neighborhoods?) or Residency in Space (looking at the whole of NYC as it evolves.
- There is not enough compensation for artists who are not permanent residents. What can be done

to provide equitable scale for sponsored artists?

- o Jobs – not able to supplement the rest of living expenses as an artist with income from art practice or from grants and residencies

## **AFFORDABILITY & HEALTH OF CULTURAL SECTOR**

- o As an artist, complexity of completing applications is completely overbearing.
  - Crowdsourcing is more fruitful than grant opportunities
  - Increasing support to artists through orgs that provide grants – is this a good idea? Depends on the level of understanding and interest in their portfolios. Who reviews applications? How are “expert panels” chosen and do they have a wide range of expertise across content areas, cultural relevance, disciplines?
- o Increase TRANSPARENCY – invest in efforts toward outward relationship building, connect with artist groups, networks, recognize that we are already organizing and tap into that – don’t make work
  - NYFA, Facebook, LMCC has some reach within arts community
  - The aspect of trust and authenticity of jobs or residency opportunities postings can be an issue (legality, payment, etc.)
- o Grants – create opportunities for earning; need professional development to work with other orgs, groups (such as BIDs, Merchant Associations, LDCs) for new, creative residency opportunities like [Art in Marketplace, Bronx](#), or [Queens Council on the Arts ArtHotel Residency program](#).
  - NYFA Social practice – grants for cultural exchange
- o Low-income immigrant artists who come to the states who have already had access to or training within MFA program are at a big advantage.
  - NYC support fellowships for immigrant artists?
  - Pay fee for work
  - NYPL free introduction, access to new technologies for MFA artists, continuing education at in-depth skill level for artists

## **ACCESS**

- o More access to networks and guidance from government and service organizations.
  - Incubate skill sharing, free/set up system to convene and facilitate exchange
  - Creative capital rising costs – establish support fund to offset costs of workshops prioritized on vulnerable, immigrant artists
  - Explore partnership with libraries for Artist Development Series:

- NYPL system has good courses, more frequent, consistent, and different levels
- Good for resources, more about women entrepreneurship series, access to certain kinds of people - connections
- We have contact with our countries' consulates, but find it difficult to navigate between different cultures and systems. More active exchange between countries to support the arts and artists.
- Be more explicit in the inclusion and support of literary arts – hardly any grant or fellowship opportunities, the humanities are a part of the arts.
- Grant support in amount and access to application: literacy barrier as well as cultural barriers, many immigrants come from places where asking the government for money is just not done. Education on the systems for actual “Fair Process” and provision of the tools necessary to compete at equitable level: multi-lingual supports, training, etc.
  - NYFA Doctor’s Hours Precedent: connection to well established artists as a new immigrant artist is key, scale up translation program model
- Access resources from those who understand your experience
- What is the plan for artists from vulnerable communities, backgrounds? How are they protected? Supported?

#### OTHER, PUBLIC ART, ARTS ED

- Understanding how artists are defined as a career:
  - Musician wages decreasing; provide guidance about joining unions (permanent residency requirements?)
    - Most of the time immigrants fall through the cracks of the current structures – union access required money and recommendations.
    - How is it possible to regulate this better?
  - **Recommendation:** Open up more funding for performances in public spaces; street art (harbinger) also public communication and cultural exchange; or partner with BIDs to employ artists to fill in the gaps, create infrastructure for artists’ access to existing models, business owners, etc.
- Collaborative teaching, incorporate arts in other subjects in K-12 and higher education systems
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  - » Always encourage multiple access points and artists expression to all kinds of learning

**>>Recommendation:** Actively enforce Universal Design Standards

**>>Recommendation:** All educators need to be prepared for all learners, teachers should only have one license, certification



