

Office Hours with the Commissioner

WHAT WE HEARD: MANHATTAN

TERMS

Defining terms is essential – language needs to be more consistent throughout the plan.

- How are arts and culture defined in the cultural plan? Need definition of term, discipline, business type, scale, scope, impact, etc.
- Define community.
- Define insider terms like workspace or cultural sector.
- Define workspace.
- Define artist.
- Define cultural workers.

EQUITY

- Can't cut our way to equity – the plan can be a mechanism to unlock more resources.
- The notion of equity is based in the definition of culture and the decision/position from the agency about programs/content which receives funding, is seen on stage, promoted by the City.
- RE: Increasing diversity in staff and leadership:
 - Equity as an employment tool is important, but does not reserve additional funding to white, exclusionary, central district organizations.
 - Equity funding needs to reach communities where they are.
- Increased language access is key to increased equity – not only for artists / cultural organizations to access funding but also for audience engagement.
 - Engage through Spanish language media (radio, TV, news), laundromats, grocery stores, and park bulletin boards.
- Support arts, culture, and science as safe for all New Yorkers: more emphasis on how DCLA and others will work to reach undocumented communities throughout NYC, especially northern Manhattan, Hamilton Heights, Washington Heights, East Harlem.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Resiliency damages not acknowledged. Many arts orgs were debilitated by Sandy and were not able to complete their programs, permanently lost space, etc. Integration into resiliency needs not to be only forward looking, but also addressing remuneration for historic impacts/losses.
- What is the methodology of this section? What are you measuring and looking to impact? Dollar amounts in investment and output? Employment?
 - This needs to more directly engage and mobilize the arts and cultural sector in order to be effective. Otherwise, we end up with economic development that pushes out the small and mid-sized orgs.

AFFORDABILITY

- Support and acknowledge organizations already providing affordable workspace to artists and groups. There are several, this is not a standalone idea by the City, we have been doing this for a long time to support our fellow artists. Acknowledge the great work and support us, because we are struggling.
- Co-working spaces are a great way to build networks. Invest in these spaces that can also double as spaces for sharing communication, to spread the word.
- Spread the word by getting people together – creating opportunities to convene regularly (co-working spaces, shared rehearsal spaces)
- Increased access to underutilized space:

- DCLA to help non-profits access underutilized spaces, such as corporate offices – partnership with Google for student dance space.
- Partnering with libraries is more complicated than the proposals make it seem. Libraries need increased resources and funding to build capacity to host cultural organizations, programs, etc.
- CUNY sites! CUNY Dance model is fine, somewhat inaccessible to wide audience. What we need are service learning partnerships with universities. For this kind of partnership to be effective, the faculty and administration need to be convinced that true partnerships with arts and culture organizations are possible and benefit student education, the institution, and the organizations.
- Improve access to affordable housing for artists: missing opportunity Certified Artist Network
 - Digital network that artists can engage through to share opportunities about programs, projects, space availability, etc. You say Craigslist for artists – actually make something like this that is way more low-key and likely more effective mechanism to communicate (Slack, message boards via DCLA website, facebook groups)

CITYWIDE COORDINATION

- Utilize community/neighborhood media to spread the word.
- Partnerships between agencies are not clear; DOHMH NYC Mural Arts Project should be in collaboration with DCLA, is it? Communicate more transparently upon which projects agencies collaborate.
 - DOE, DSNY, DOHMH, others?
- No recognition of permitting processes, why?
 - As an arts organization trying to do programming in public space, the number of permits and different processes are prohibitive to leading quality programming. NYPD has become exorbitantly aggressive in restrictions for cultural events in public space. DCLA can step in and help streamline this process, be an advocate for our success.

HEALTH OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR

- Support expanded employment opportunities for local artists ...
 - #3 Broker connections between non-profit and for-profit cultural businesses and City services. We are 501c3 orgs, but we are also entrepreneurial small businesses. We should be treated as such, include our orgs in opportunities to access small business loans and other business services.
 - #3 what about MOME? There are many benefits to small businesses and arts organizations through MOME (namely advertising and awareness); how can DCLA facilitate our accessing these services?
 - #3 Grant funding from other City agencies is a mystery and often completely different processes. We need help knowing how to approach and partner with these other agencies.
- Address mid-sized organizations more fully. NYSCA provides much better support to our organization than DCLA. What does NYSCA identify in us that DCLA doesn't? DCLA needs to do a better job determining what mid-sized organizations need and how they can help mid-sized organizations stay healthy.
- Is there an opportunity to provide grant support to cultural organizations to provide childcare? This is a significant barrier for many to participate in cultural programming, both as artists and as patrons.

ART AND CULTURE IN PUBLIC SPACE

- Actively encourage, support, and strengthen public spaces as vital places for creative expression and community building.
 - Add #2: Inclusion of immigrant respect in cultural programming in accessible public spaces, many immigrant communities utilize public spaces for cultural activity in different ways – these need to be respected and elevated.
 - Corona Plaza + Immigrant Movement International as precedent

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

- Map more inclusive data – build out locally with community partners. We need a map of all the arts and cultural assets in communities. Northern Manhattan is so often left out mapping – such as on SpaceFinder.
- Do not ghettoize my work because I am an artist or arts organization in a “diverse community” or “underserved neighborhood.” I want my work to be able to serve/be seen by many different populations. We grow by reaching out of and within our communities.