

New York City's Cultural Planning
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We are the Directors of Disability/Arts/NYC (DANT), an arts advocacy organization comprised of disabled artists, academics, and activists committed to furthering disability artistry in New York City. We formed in the fall of 2016 to craft a meaningful disability arts platform for NYC and to strengthen the coalition of disabled artists and allies who reside and work here. We are the only comprehensive disability arts organization in NYC, supporting artistry across all genres.

DANT initially organized in response to what we noticed about the DCLA's cultural planning process. We observed that the DCLA itself and its consultants (FutureWorks, Ithaka S&R, and Hester Street Collaborative) did not possess expertise in disability arts, nor did they previously state a commitment for the plan to be inclusive. Since that time, the DCLA has made a number of public statements about their interest in incorporating disability perspectives into the plan, yet we remain concerned that the process leading to the Plan may not adequately address disability equity and inclusion. We strongly believe that planning for equity must be equitable itself.

We recently convened a public meeting about the state of disability arts. We are in the process of distilling priorities from the focus groups we held at the Convening, and we will soon release a White Paper with specific recommendations about disability equity and inclusion in cultural planning.

To begin the process, though, based on DANT's work over the past 7 months, we are providing here 5 recommendations to demonstrate the scope and vision of DANT'S work, and our commitment to infuse disability perspectives and ensure disability equity throughout the Cultural Plan. Ultimately, though, we wish to underscore the urgency we feel about our constituent group's vulnerabilities with respect to a plan that purports to serve all New Yorkers.

1] We recommend that the Cultural Plan reflects a broad and comprehensive view of the issues facing disabled artists who work in NYC, and those facing people who aspire to careers in the arts. The plan should articulate ways to account for and redress the historic and persistent patterns of discrimination in the preparation of artists, from kindergarten through conservatory training, and the lack of recognition of the work of disabled artists across all genres.

2] We recommend that any initiatives within the Cultural Plan concerned with redressing discrimination faced by a variety of constituent groups, whether via what are labelled 'diversity' or other measures, incorporate meaningful and clearly articulated

plans for disabled people as both consumers of and makers of art. Further, we recommend that any future research conducted to assess the state of the arts in NYC, include disability in meaningful and conspicuous ways. In particular, research should be initiated to address the shortcomings of the data collected in the Diversity in New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Community study prepared by Ithaka S&R.

3] We recommend that all RFPs adhere to guidelines that include criteria for equitable inclusion and support of disabled artists. Further, that all advisory councils, grant review boards, and other overseers of the distribution of funds spelled out in the Cultural Plan, incorporate proportional [to population] representation of people with disability expertise.

4] We recommend that the Cultural Plan recognize both access/accommodation issues with respect to disabled people, as well as opportunities to advance disability artistry. There have been in recent years advancements in making cultural institutions more accessible to disabled people - as audience, as students, etc. But there has been considerably less attention paid to endeavors that prepare artists, and ones that bring disability artistry to audiences.

5] We recommend that the Cultural Plan mandate the formation of an established Disability/Arts Task Force, or other similar entity, to oversee the fulfillment of these goals, and to ensure that procedures for their implementation are followed.