

It's Not  
About You...

It's About  
Them.

## Research Report

What Motivates Bay Area Donors to Give to the Arts and Artists

Commissioned by

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fund For Artists is a collaborative initiative of The San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation working regionally to build individual donor capacity and bring new resources to artists. Since 2004, with support from Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), the Ford, William and Flora Hewlett, James Irvine, Surdna, and Wattis Foundations and individual arts donors, the initiative has achieved unqualified success – raising over \$2 million and supporting 300+ artists throughout the Bay Area. In addition to the Matching Commissions program, the Fund For Artists initiative includes entrepreneurial and fund development training workshops for artists, collaborative marketing, donor celebration events, and research on the recession's impact on Bay Area artists.

The Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program (FFAMC) supports the creation of new artwork by Bay Area artists and expands the pool of individual donors engaged with artists and their work. Between 2004 and early 2010, this program funded 116 new works projects involving 181 artists. It stimulated over \$729,254 in contributions by more than 3,120 individual donors, many of them new to giving to artists' projects. In 2009, the sponsoring foundations commissioned Helicon Collaborative and WolfBrown to study the values and motivations of donors to FFAMC projects, and capture useful lessons about the program and the fundraising strategies used by its recipients.

This report reviews the findings of that study. It includes a distillation of the components of the FFAMC program; a demographic profile of donors to FFAMC projects and the values that motivate them; and a summary of fundraising techniques used by grant recipient artists and organizations. It also compares the demographics and values of FFAMC donors to those of a larger pool of Bay Area residents who contribute to mid-sized and large arts organizations.

To our knowledge, this is the first in-depth study of the psychographics of donors to artists and artist-driven projects. While it focuses only on the Bay Area, its findings may have national resonance.

**Values shape people's charitable giving.** The results of this study reinforce this finding from other research about individual donors. Connecting to the values and interests of potential donors is essential to success in any fundraising effort and raising money for artists' projects is no different. One person interviewed for this study put it succinctly, "If you want someone to donate to your organization or your project, you must first find out about their values, the things they feel passionate about. Successful fundraising doesn't start with you. It starts with them."

**Donors to artists and small arts organizations differ from donors to larger arts institutions.** The study finds that the values of donors to artists' projects in the Bay Area differ from those of donors to mid-sized and large cultural institutions in that region. The respective demographic profiles differ also. In comparison to donors to mid-sized and large cultural institutions, donors to artists and artists' projects are more likely to be:

- Artists themselves (professional or amateur);
- Young adults or mid-life (18-54), without children, and of diverse cultural backgrounds;
- Interested in social justice and environmentalism;
- Interested in diversity of cultures and points of view;
- Giving less than \$5,000 annually to all charitable causes;
- Interested in supporting small projects rather than sustaining institutions.

**Donors to artists' projects are moved to give by four connection points:** a personal relationship with the artist; a passion for the artform; an emotional or intellectual interest in the subject matter of the artwork; and an involvement with the culture or community touched by the project. Connecting on more than one of these points increases the likelihood of giving.

These and other findings from the research study do not imply that artists should change the focus of their work or how they do it in order to attract contributions from individuals. The research does suggest that artists and artist-driven organizations can connect more meaningfully and successfully with individual donors by appealing to donors' values and authentically energizing their interests. A companion to this report, *Field Reports from the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions Program: Unlocking the Potential of Individual Donors*, describes effective fundraising strategies used by FFAMC recipients. It is included in the Appendix to this report.

*This report was written by Holly Sidford, Marcelle Hinand Cady and Alexis Frasz of Helicon Collaborative, based on research conducted by Helicon and Alan Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin of WolfBrown. Alicia Vermaele and Barbara Fine contributed to Helicon's research components.*

### **East Bay Community Foundation**

The East Bay Community Foundation is a leading resource for mobilizing financial resources and community leadership to transform the lives of people in the East Bay with pressing needs. EBCF has identified two, inter-related issues that can lead to this transformation: Support for young children to succeed with a focus on the critical period of birth to third grade; and Enhancing economic opportunities for adults and families, particularly those with significant barriers to achieving employment and financial stability.

[www.ebcf.org](http://www.ebcf.org)

### **The San Francisco Foundation**

The San Francisco Foundation mobilizes resources and acts as a catalyst for change to build strong communities, foster civic leadership, and promote philanthropy.

[www.tsff.org](http://www.tsff.org)

### **Helicon Collaborative**

Helicon collaborates with creative people to re-imagine and energize the function of culture in communities. Our skill sets include research and analysis; organizational assessment; strategy development; program design, management and evaluation; and facilitation.

[www.heliconcollab.net](http://www.heliconcollab.net)

### **Wolf Brown**

Wolf Brown helps funders, nonprofit institutions and public agencies understand their potential, set priorities and fulfill their promise. While arts and culture is a focus of our work, we also serve important clients in the social service, health, environment, preservation, and other sectors.

[www.wolfbrown.com](http://www.wolfbrown.com)





Philip Huang, a young Berkeley-based performance artist, sat on the stage at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco, with co-panelists James Rucker from Color of Change and Perry Chen from Kickstarter.com, before an audience of 750 people. The panel moderator, Diane Sanchez of East Bay Community Foundation, asked him to speak about his experience raising \$1,200 from individual donors to match his Fund For Artists Matching Commissions grant. "When I got that grant, I was terrified," he said to Diane. "I had never asked for any money from anyone before - not 10 cents. I had no idea what to do."

Then he paused, stood up, and addressed the audience. "But I'm not going to talk about what I learned. I'm going to demonstrate it. Why TALK about getting donations? Let's GET some donations. Everyone, take out your wallets. Pull out some money and wave it in the air. I'm going to describe a project that I want you to fund. I want you to ask questions until you're satisfied, and then I want you to give me a contribution." He outlined his project: a tour of 24-Hour Fitness centers in the Bay Area. "You know, where people work out in front of the window, looking at an empty sidewalk. I'm going to do a show on that sidewalk. It's going to be called The Witness to Fitness Tour. I want to raise \$300 for this project right now.

"Ask me questions as if you were a donor. And when you're satisfied, I want you to make a contribution."

The house erupted. People shouted out questions: "Where will you do it?" "Who are the other artists involved?" "How long will it take you to develop it?" "What's the budget?" "How will I know when it's happening so I can see it?" Striding back and forth across the stage, Philip answered these questions and encouraged others.

"And now I want a competing proposal," Philip said. "Other artists can raise money this way today. Someone - come up here."

Michelle Tea, a writer and performance artist, jumped onto the stage. "My feminist writers' collective is going to do on-the-spot writing workshops in the dressing rooms of women's clothing boutiques downtown," she said. "The improv workshops will deal with body image, money, class, urban living. I need \$300 also, which includes a bail fund. Any questions?"

Everyone in the hall was laughing, talking to their neighbors, or shouting out responses to what was happening on stage. Audience members stood up to hand over money -- \$5, \$10, \$20 bills, coins and scrip. People in the balcony tossed money down to audience members below. "It's raining money at the Herbst Theater!" someone tweeted to a friend. After 10 minutes, Philip had raised \$207 for his project (in three different currencies); Michelle had raised \$187.17 for hers.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnT6eC0-tV0&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnT6eC0-tV0&feature=related)

## THE FUND FOR ARTISTS MATCHING COMMISSIONS PROGRAM

### Fund for Artists: 2004 – March, 2010

- \$658,750 awarded
- 116 projects commissioned
- 181 artists supported
- \$729,254 raised in matching funds
- 3,120 individual donors
- Donations ranged from \$2 to \$10,000
- Median gift: \$100

The Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program (FFAMC) is an innovative and inspiring funding mechanism that supports the creation of new artwork by Bay Area artists and expands the pool of individual donors engaged with artists and their work. The FFAMC was developed and funded by The San Francisco Foundation (TSFF) and East Bay Community Foundation (EBCF), with additional financial support from Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and James Irvine Foundation. Performing, visual and media artists and artist-run organizations can apply for matching grants – up to \$5,000 at The San Francisco Foundation and up to \$10,000 at East Bay Community Foundation – to develop and present new work. Recipients must secure matching funds from individual donors, preferably from those who have not given to them before.

The FFAMC was conceived by John Killacky at The San Francisco Foundation and Diane Sanchez at the East Bay Community Foundation. Armed with new national and local research on the conditions of artists in the Bay Area and energized by ongoing conversations with artists themselves, in 2003 they made a fresh and compelling case for funding artists' projects. "Data from the Urban Institute's Investing in Creativity Study and Joan Jeffri's Information on Artists III Study really depressed and motivated us," says Killacky. "The research showed that there are more artists in the Bay Area than in any other U.S. metropolitan area except New York City and Los Angeles. But there are far fewer grant programs for artists here than in many places with smaller artist populations. The research showed that despite high educational achievement, more than 60% of artists in this region earn less than \$7,000 from their art. This number has not improved in 15 years! This data also confirmed that artists have difficulty raising funds they can use to create new work and that more grants and contributions for this are needed. And, looking at larger trends in the arts field, we could see that future growth in giving is going to come from individual donations, not foundation or corporate support. So we thought, why not try to help artists help themselves?"

Currently in its fifth year, the FFAMC has awarded \$658,750 in grants to support the creation of 116 new works involving 181 artists. As of March 2010, the grants had been matched by \$729,254 in donations from over 3,120 diverse individuals, a significant number of whom were first-time donors. New work was created,

new donors were located, a new mechanism for connecting artists and donors was implemented. The initiative was a resounding success, and vastly exceeded the expectations of even its ambitious founders.<sup>1</sup>

## **DONOR MOTIVATION STUDY**

Who are the donors who contributed to the FFAMC projects and what motivated their gifts? What does this experiment teach us about how to expand individual giving? What are the keys to increasing individuals' support for artists and their creation of new artistic works?

In 2009, The San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation commissioned Helicon Collaborative and WolfBrown to conduct research on what motivates donors to give to artists in the Bay Area. To our knowledge, this is the first in-depth study of the psychographics of donors to artists and artist-driven projects.

The research project had six goals:

- To gather baseline data on the values and motivations of arts donors in the Bay Area;
- To compare the demographic and attitudinal characteristics of donors to FFAMC projects with other arts donors in the region;
- To understand what fundraising messages and techniques stimulated donors to give to the FFAMC projects;
- To summarize the key outcomes and elements of the FFAMC program;
- To develop a “toolkit” of case studies to help artists and small arts organizations better connect with potential donors;
- To identify additional funding strategies that could stimulate giving to artist-run and artist-centered projects and organizations.

This research study focuses on the values and motivations of donors. It is not an assessment of the FFAMC program, although some of the program's impacts will be discussed as they relate to the study goals.

## **Methodology**

The study had both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, and was organized to capture lessons from the FFAMC pilot, build a sense of community among the artists and organizations that participated, and further strengthen participants' ability to raise funds from individuals. The full methodology, list of FFAMC grant recipients and other details on the program are included in the Appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> A full description of the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program, including program guidelines, is included in the Appendix.



The study had six key components:

- **Participatory FFAMC donor interviews:** Teams from 35 FFAMC grantees interviewed 76 FFAMC donors about the motivations and values that underlay their giving to the FFAMC projects.<sup>2</sup>
- **FFAMC grantee interviews:** In one-on-one and group interviews, FFAMC grantees were asked about their experiences with the program and the lessons they learned about raising funds from individuals.
- **Surveys of FFAMC donors:** 1,899 FFAMC donors were canvassed about their broader giving practices through electronic and print surveys; 350 responded.
- **Donor Advisor interviews:** 10 representatives of donor-advised funds at The San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation were interviewed about their priorities for giving and what motivates their giving to the arts.
- **Survey of Bay Area donors:** More than 8,500 donors to mid-sized and large cultural institutions in the Bay Area were surveyed about their giving practices, using both electronic and print surveys.<sup>3</sup>
- **Research review:** Recent research about charitable giving by individuals was reviewed for relevant findings.

“If you want someone to donate to your organization or your project, you must first find out about their values, the things they feel passionate about. Successful fundraising doesn’t start with you. It starts with them.” – FFAMC donor

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

This complex project generated considerable data, which is detailed in the Appendix. The most important lessons fall into four categories: 1) components of the FFAMC program design that contributed to its success, 2) profile of Bay Area arts donors and the values that motivate them, 3) distinctive characteristics and values of FFAMC donors, and 4) successful fundraising techniques.

### **I. Key Components of the Fund for Artists Matching Commissions Program**

The FFAMC achieved its two goals: 1) it supported the creation of new works of art, and 2) it catalyzed

<sup>2</sup> WolfBrown trained teams of Board and staff members associated with FFAMC grant to conduct participatory interviews. The teams then interviewed individuals who had contributed to their FFAMC projects, exploring core values and motivations. The interviews were conducted at a central location, over the course of two weekends. At the end of each weekend, participants synthesized their own learning and shared their insights with others. This dynamic lesson in interviewing techniques was a transformative experience for many, energizing the participants and increasing the FFAMC team members' ability to interact effectively with donors in the future. Many participants indicated they would apply these techniques in their subsequent work with donors. A copy of the interview protocol is included in the Summary of the WolfBrown Research Report in the Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> Response rates for surveys were: 18% for FFAMC donors, 27% for donors to mid-sized organizations and 38% for donors to large organizations.

individual donors to contribute to those projects. One hundred and sixteen new works were commissioned; 3,120 donors contributed over \$729,254 to support these creations. In addition, it helped artists connect more meaningfully to a wider range of stakeholders and develop the skills and confidence to raise money for their work. Data from interviews with FFAMC grantees and the survey of FFAMC donors indicate several characteristics of the program design were important in the success of the fundraising projects:

- **Focus on new work**

The FFAMC's focus on new work addressed artists' pressing need for funds to cover the costs of creating new art. This was an unusual and welcome feature of the program, as many arts funding programs support the presentation of work but not its creation. FFAMC artists found that potential contributors were interested in their creative process, and this offered an opening for further conversation.

- **Project-centered**

FFAMC grants were focused on specific projects, which helped the grant recipients target their fundraising requests and gave donors assurance that they were contributing to something tangible. FFAMC grantees discovered that individual donors were willing to contribute to the full cost of producing the work, which foundation and corporate donors frequently do not support.

- **Small grants**

For many FFAMC recipients, raising the match was the first time they had asked individuals for contributions. The relatively small size of the FFAMC grants meant that the artists were not overwhelmed by the amount of money they had to raise to match the grant. And because modest donations could make a real difference to the fundraising goal, donors were incentivized to contribute.

**Small is beautiful**

“Our small size is an asset, something that gives us a great advantage with donors. I’ve heard many people say that they support us, and other small companies, because they can see they are having more impact here than they would giving a similar amount to a larger organization. And they also value the personal connection they can make with the artists here because we’re small. They wouldn’t get that at a larger regional theater.” – Patrick Dooley, Shotgun Players

- **Matching requirements**

The FFAMC program encouraged recipients to match the grant with new or increased donations from individual donors in small sums that would be manageable requests for people unfamiliar with fundraising from individual donors, and manageable gifts from people unused to giving to individual artists' projects. This challenged the recipients (artists and organizations) to think in new ways about raising money, including those who had experience raising funds from individuals. All FFAMC grant recipients had to broaden their donor base, and not simply rely on hefty contributions from a few supporters.

Ninety percent of donors reported that the match requirement was influential in their motivation to give, and 43% said it stimulated them to contribute more than they normally would have.

- **Time limit**

Grantees were given a fixed timeframe in which to raise the match: within 90 days for TSFF and EBCF grants to organizations and 120 days for EBCF grants to individual artists. This was an extremely important feature of the program. This requirement gave FFAMC recipients a concrete goal to work toward. It also created a sense of urgency that forced them to prioritize fundraising, which many felt they would have avoided without the deadline. The time limit also had a positive impact on donor giving. More than 70% of donors said that this pushed them to act quickly and not delay in making decisions about gifts.<sup>4</sup>

- **Organizing structure**

The FFAMC program itself provided important legitimacy and validation to individual recipient's fundraising efforts. Receiving a FFAMC grant was considered a seal of approval by both grantees and donors. Being part of this experimental initiative was also motivating. Participants saw themselves as contributing to a larger community effort focused on expanding support for artists and viewed their own success in fundraising as benefitting both themselves and the wider community.

## **2. Profile of Bay Area Arts Donors**

Surveys were sent to 1,899 FFAMC donors (the entire list of donors at that point), and to a cohort of more than 8,500 donors compiled from lists provided by 17 mid-sized and large cultural institutions in the Bay Area. Through these survey questionnaires and supplemental interviews, information was collected from three cohorts: 350 FFAMC donors, 485 donors to mid-sized organizations and 2,200 donors to large cultural groups. The data allows us to describe key demographic characteristics of the Bay Area arts donor pool and the qualities that distinguish those who contributed to FFAMC projects.

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<sup>4</sup> Many organizations use time-limited matching mechanisms with success. National Public Radio fund drives may be the most familiar example of this. Kickstarter.com, a web platform that helps artists find backers for their projects, allows a maximum of 90 days to secure full funding for a project or all donations are voided. Perry Chen, founder of Kickstarter.com, asserts that this time limit is essential to participants' fundraising success.

### **Demographics of Bay Area Arts Donors**

People who responded to the study surveys reflect the full spectrum of adults living in the Bay Area, and include people in all socio-economic, racial and educational brackets. In comparison to the larger Bay Area population, survey respondents in this study included higher percentages of females, people over 45 and Caucasians. The survey figures may be subject to some sources of bias, including loyalty bias (those with stronger loyalty to an organization are more likely to respond) and non-response bias (for example, women are more likely to take surveys than men).

### **Values and Motivations of Arts Donors**

Overall, donors to Bay Area arts groups are diverse with respect to their values, interests, giving behaviors and preferences for involvement with the groups they fund. In both interviews and survey results, we heard repeatedly about the values that shape donors' giving behavior and found clear patterns in the values held by people in our sample.

### **Five Primary Values**

The research surveys asked respondents about 23 different variables related to their values and philanthropic interests.<sup>5</sup> Five factors emerged as the most important motivators for Bay Area arts donors. Here we summarize the characteristics of those five values:

- **Humanism** – a concern for social justice and equal opportunity, appreciation for diverse viewpoints and perspectives; an interest in learning about different cultures; a gratitude for one's good fortune and desire to "give back" to others; a commitment to alleviating others' suffering. 82% of the sample indicated strong affinity with this value.
- **Distinction** – an interest in "great works that have stood the test of time" and artists with national or international reputations; a concern for sustaining the long-term future of key arts institutions; a desire to see "world class artistic programming" in the Bay Area. 61% of the sample indicated strong affinity with this value.
- **Localism** – a concern for one's community and for artists living in the community; an interest in awakening people's creativity and ensuring community members' access to cultural experiences; programs that serve children. 59% of the sample indicated strong affinity with this value.

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<sup>5</sup> The 23 variables were developed by WolfBrown based on its previous work on a number of other donor engagement studies, including work with a national cohort of major university presenters.

- **Bonding** – an interest in civic affairs and community improvement; active in expanding social networks and making new friends; strong family relationships and an active spiritual life; interest in arts programs that reflect one’s heritage. 50% of the sample indicated strong affinity with this value.
- **Progressivism** – an interest in being “on the leading edge of art and ideas;” individualists with iconoclastic leanings; valuing independent thought. 29% of the sample indicated strong affinity with this value.

From the level of affinity noted in each value, it is clear that some values are more prevalent than others. In addition, some values appear to correlate more closely with each other. For example, people with strong Humanism values also show strong preferences for Localism and Bonding. More detailed data analysis is included in the Appendix.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. Distinctive Characteristics of FFAMC donors**

Donors to FFAMC projects have a different profile than the other Bay Area donors surveyed. FFAMC donors are younger, more racially diverse and more likely to be single professionals without children. They are more likely to be artists themselves (or self-identify as artists), and to regularly engage in creative activity such as making crafts, painting, singing or playing an instrument.

FFAMC donors give less money but more time to charitable causes than donors to large cultural organizations, and their giving priorities are different. FFAMC donors are more likely to support social justice causes and environmental conservation, while donors to large organizations are more likely to support education, health and medical research. FFAMC donors are much more likely to align with the values of Localism and Progressivism, which are expressed by interest in community, creative outlets and art and ideas that are on the leading edge. Donors to large cultural institutions tend to favor the values of Distinction and Bonding, characterized by an interest in artwork and artists with national or international reputations, and the civic and social networks that surround established cultural institutions.

In their giving to the arts, FFAMC donors’ priorities also diverge from those of donors to large cultural organizations. While both FFAMC donors and donors to large organizations both strongly support the performing arts, FFAMC donors are three times more inclined to support smaller arts organizations, individual artists who live in their communities, and programs that are not supported by mainstream cultural institutions. Donors to large organizations gave priority to support for the long-term sustainability of specific arts organizations and world class artistic programming.

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<sup>6</sup> WolfBrown also developed a cluster analysis based on the data. Cluster analysis is a statistical technique used to group survey respondents into distinct segments based on a specific set of variables. The cluster analysis is included in the Appendix.

- In our sample, 36% of White donors to FFAMC projects self-identified as artists; while 47% of non-white FFAMC donors did
- 48% of FFAMC donors were mid-life or younger (18-54), without children, compared to 19% of donors to large organizations
- 81% of donors to large organizations were over 55, compared to 52% of donors to FFAMC projects
- Compared to donors to large cultural institutions, more FFAMC donors consider active engagement in the visual, performing or craft art either a vital activity or an occasional enjoyment
  - 50% of FFAMC donors engage in craft, compared to 35% of large institution donors
  - 46% engage in painting, drawing or sculpting, compared to 21% of large institution donors
  - 42% sing, compared to 21% of large institution donors
- 52% of donors to large cultural institutions gave over \$5,000 to nonprofits in the past year, compared to 23% of FFAMC donors

#### **4. Fundraising Techniques**

Both survey and interview results confirmed that connecting directly and on a personal level with a donor was a necessary pre-requisite for FFAMC grantees to secure matching gifts. Interviews with FFAMC recipients suggest that four kinds of connection enhanced the likelihood that donors would contribute. Connecting with a donor on one of these levels was helpful in securing a contribution; making connections on two or more increased the chances of a donation.

##### **Connection Points**

Donors respond to these connecting points:

- A **personal relationship with the artist**, someone in the organization or the person who makes the ask.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> FFAMC donors were five times more likely to want a connection with the artist than donors to large arts institutions. A request from a friend, colleague or family member (including those not affiliated with the organization) had the greatest influence on giving practices across all types of donors.



- A **passion for the art form** or the art medium.
- An **emotional or intellectual interest in the subject matter** or issue being addressed by the project.
- An **involvement with the culture or community** touched by the project.

In fundraising appeals, FFAMC recipients found that tying these connection points to a potential donor's values had great power. They also found that the connection points transcend categories of donors. For example, a donor who values Localism and a donor who values Bonding can both become involved in a project that serves a particular community. The values that motivate their involvement may be different, but the result – getting involved and making a financial contribution – can be the same.

**Connection Point: Culture and Community**

The Sangati Center received a FFAMC grant to commission vocalist Gautam Tejas Ganeshan and mridangist Anantha R. Krishnan to create a new work. A young organization, Sangati presents a variety of music and other programs focused on East Indian culture but lacks wide visibility in the Bay Area Indian community. Sangati used house party “friend raisers” to match its FFAMC grant. A group of South Bay and Peninsula supporters invited their friends to house parties, spreading the word about Sangati’s role in making cultural and social connections for East Indians in the region. Many of the donors to the FFAMC project are now regular audience members and participants in the Center’s cultural programs.

**Connection Point: Passion for the Art form**

A FFAMC grant supported musicians associated with Los Cenzontles, a troupe that promotes Mexican cultural traditions, to work with David Hildago of Los Lobos on a new music composition. To match its FFAMC grant, Los Cenzontles reached out to current fans of Los Lobos, attracting people who are interested in diverse regional Mexican music. This strategy helped Los Cenzontles exceed the FFAMC match requirement, expand their mailing list, increase their audience base for future performances and energize them for future fundraising.

### **Other Factors Influencing Giving**

The research illuminated other factors that influence the relationship with donors. These include:

- **Live conversation:** Talking directly with potential donors can increase their interest in an artist and his or her project. Direct conversations can also energize the person seeking the contribution. As participants in the interview exercise led by WolfBrown found, having a face-to-face conversation with a potential donor that explores that person's interests and values can lead to meaningful and lasting connections as well as financial contributions.<sup>8</sup>
- **Online giving:** Two-thirds of FFAMC donors have made donations online, and more than 60% of those who have not given online would consider doing so. On the other hand, nearly two-thirds of donors to large cultural institutions who have not yet given online reported that they would not consider this giving mechanism.
- **Giving time as well as money:** FFAMC donors are almost twice as likely to be volunteers with organizations to which they give than are donors to large institutions. More than 38% of FFAMC donors indicated that they get involved in benefit events, serve on boards or assist with events or programs of the groups they fund.
- **Contact pre-gift is more important than post-gift:** Two-thirds of all donors surveyed indicated that they prefer to have attended an organization's performances before they make a contribution. 42% of FFAMC donors indicated they prefer to get engaged with an organization personally before they make a gift; only 21% of FFAMC donors suggested they need a lot of post-gift attention.
- **Write your thank you notes:** Most FFAMC donors and donors to other cultural organizations desire timely acknowledgment of their gifts, information about the impact of their contribution and regular notice of upcoming programs or invitations to special previews or openings. There are outliers at both ends of this spectrum – people who want a lot of information and some who prefer very limited post-gift contact. Asking a donor which kind of contact they prefer is an important part of getting to know them.

### **Ways They Asked**

The importance of personal touch was reinforced by many stories that FFAMC grantees told about how they had "made the ask." At the start of their FFAMC projects, many were anxious about the matching challenge. By the end, most were surprised at how successful they had been. Participants who had never

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<sup>8</sup> See the WolfBrown Research Report in the Appendix for more information about the interview exercise.

raised money from individuals found it easier than they anticipated, and organizations with more fundraising experience discovered they could raise funds from an entirely new cohort of donors. Most grantees are using the lessons they learned matching the FFAMC grant to sustain or expand their cultivation of individual donors.

In interviews with FFAMC grantees, the research team explored the strategies that different groups employed. In most cases, grantees built their strategy around the content or subject matter of the new work -- disability issues, for example, or disparities in healthcare. Techniques they used to ask for contributions fell into three primary categories:

- **The personal ask: Start with those you know.**

Artists or administrators developed a list of people they knew who might be interested in the project because of the subject matter, the art form, the artist(s) involved or simply because they were friends. They approached those people in person or over the phone with a request for a small contribution (usually less than \$250). They made it clear that this was a one-time gift. This strategy was used most frequently by FFAMC grantees; starting with people already familiar with the artist or the organization is considered the most universally successful fundraising technique.

“I got on the phone and called everyone that had ever given us money and I made a personal appeal to them. It was close to 100 people.” – Robert Moses, Robert Moses’ Kin

- **The “friend-raiser”: Get those you know to ask others they know.**

Many of the grantees raised their match through events designed to build a friends network. These events were hosted by individuals, and occurred either at that person’s home or at the arts organization. The grantee worked with a board member, donor or other associate – whoever was going to be the host of the event – to create the invitation list, building on the host’s network of friends and associates. A pitch was made at the event and people wrote checks on the spot.

- **The “church” ask: Use public pitches as well as private ones.**

Grantees made appeals for special funding for the FFAMC project to audiences attending their ongoing programs, and “passed the plate” at performances. In some cases, board members gave a pitch from the stage before the performance or at intermission, occasionally offering to match the contributions collected at that time and place. These appeals frequently resulted in small anonymous contributions of cash; sometimes checks were later received through the mail.

*Field Reports from the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions Program: Unlocking the Potential of Individual Donors* captures lessons from the successful fundraising efforts by FFAMC grantees. This report is included in the Appendix.

**“It’s become a tradition.”**

“We had our first FFAMC in 2007, for \$6,000. With our Board’s help, we exceeded our match goal. It was so successful – artistically, organizationally, financially – we decided to do a matching commission project every year whether we got an FFAMC grant or not. Now, each year we create a template letter, generate a list of potential donors, and set a bottom contribution of \$150. We list the donors on our website, and two months before each opening, we invite the donors to a sneak preview. We give them the opportunity to meet the choreographer and the artists. Commissioning work this way has become a tradition here. Everyone loves it.” – Mollie McFarland, AXIS Dance Company

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study reinforce many of the tenets of successful fundraising in the nonprofit arts sector. These include the importance of understanding your donor’s values, having clear and specific fundraising goals, mobilizing social networks to identify potential contributors and making requests that don’t vastly exceed the donor’s level of capacity.

So what’s new in this study are what are the implications? There are several newsworthy findings in this report.

Most important, 3,120 donors and more than \$729,254 in new contributions attest to the fact that artists and cultural groups do not need to change the kind of art they make, or the way they make it, to attract contributions from individual donors. To be successful in fundraising, artists do need to understand the values and interests of potential donors, and make authentic connections to each one through relationships, interests or community and culture. But artists need not prescribe the circle of people who might be interested in their work. One project can attract donors with different priorities, if the project has multiple “value facets” and genuinely satisfies those different values.

Also of note is that the study’s quantitative data closely aligns with qualitative experience. The data reinforce what people in the cultural sector of the Bay Area know from experience: the vast majority of

donors to the arts share basic humanistic values, but the profile of donors to artists and small arts organizations differs in meaningful ways from the profile of donors to larger cultural institutions.

This study describes those differences in ways that artists and artist-driven organizations can use in their daily practice: Individuals inclined to contribute to artists are likely to be artists themselves. They are independent thinkers who are interested in their local community, concerned with awakening people's creativity and curious about different cultures and divergent points of view. Social justice and environmental conservation are important to them. They volunteer time, and they are more interested in small organizations and specific projects than in sustaining institutions.

The study also shows that a relatively modest financial stimulus, if structured thoughtfully, can produce significant returns in creating new artistic work, expanding the pool of arts donors, and boosting artists' confidence and ability to attract contributions. It's too early to know whether the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program has been a game-changer for the community of Bay Area artists as a whole, but the findings of this study demonstrate that for almost 200 artists, it has meaningfully catalyzed new ways of attracting financial backers.

The researchers believe that the lessons here are relevant to any efforts to expand audiences and deepen people's connection with the arts. As one of the project's advisors said, "The five values identified in this study, together with the powerful connection points, are essential "keys" to the arts audience "lock," and can be used singly or in combination to shape any transactions with consumers." This idea deserves more exploration.

Can the same results be produced elsewhere without a formal grant program and an investment of \$658,000? The results of the FFAMC make it clear that artists and funders in any community can learn from this model and replicate at least some of its results even without a special funding initiative. Artist service organizations can use these findings to educate artists and arts organizations about effective fundraising techniques. Artists who have been successful with these fundraising approaches can mentor other artists who are new to this work. The protocols developed by WolfBrown to assist FFAMC recipients interview their donors can be adapted to help neophyte fundraisers build stronger relationships with current and potential donors. And the key elements of the FFAMC program design can be helpful to any funding organization interested in effectively helping artists create new work and locate individual donors.

The story about Philip Huang and Michelle Tea at the start of this report is only one of more than 181 stories of Bay Area artists successfully raising funds and making friends for their work as a result of the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program. Consciously or unconsciously, Philip and Michelle acted out

many of the larger lessons about donor motivations captured by this report. They were able to raise almost \$400 in 10 minutes because they did four things:

- Connected to the values of the people in the audience (concern for creativity, local artists and progressive politics);
- Provided a tiny piece of spontaneous performance art (thus satisfying the audience's interest in art-making itself);
- Piqued people's interest and touched their emotions (by describing unusual performance projects which would happen in ordinary places – situations the audience members could imagine themselves being in);
- Built a short-lived but meaningful sense of community among the audience members (by doing something surprising that no one expected and would never forget).

Thousands of other artists can have similar or even greater success if they use the lessons of this report and remember that approaching individual donors starts with one fundamental idea: "It's not about you ... it's about them."



It's Not  
About You...

It's About  
Them.

## *Field Reports*

From the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions Program

Commissioned by  
San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation

THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION

*The Community Foundation of the Bay Area*



May, 2010

## Field Reports from the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions Program: Unlocking the Potential of Individual Donors

The Fund For Artists is a collaborative initiative of The San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation working regionally to build individual donor capacity and bring new resources to artists. Since 2004, with support from the William and Flora Hewlett, James Irvine, Ford, Wattis, and Surdna Foundations, Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC) and individual arts donors, the initiative has achieved unqualified success – raising over \$2 million and supporting 300+ artists throughout the Bay Area. In addition to the Matching Commissions program, other aspects of this initiative include artists entrepreneurial and fund development training workshops, collaborative marketing, donor celebration events, and research on the recession's impact on Bay Area artists.

This report captures lessons about successful fundraising efforts by grant recipients of Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program (FFAMC). It is a companion document to *It's Not About You ... It's About Them*, a research study on what motivates Bay Area donors to give to the arts and artists commissioned by The San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation. We hope the case studies of successful fundraising by artists that are highlighted here, together with the synopsis of lessons learned by the artists involved in FFAMC program, will inspire other artists and arts organizations in their fundraising efforts, help them tap new communities of donors and increase the funds available for artists' projects for many years to come.

### REMEMBER THREE THINGS

#### *1. Values shape people's charitable giving.*

*It's Not About You ... It's About Them: A Research Report on What Motivates Bay Area Donors to Give to the Arts and Artists*, commissioned as part of the Fund For Artists program, reinforces findings from other research and professional fundraisers' experiences: Connecting to the values and interests of potential donors is essential to success in any fundraising effort. Raising money for artists' projects is no different.

Five values are prominent among the Bay Area arts donors who were surveyed as part of the research project. These include:

- **Localism** – a concern for one's community and for artists living in the community; an interest in awakening people's creativity and ensuring community members' access to cultural experiences; and a commitment to programs that serve children.

- **Progressivism** – an interest in being “on the leading edge of art and ideas;” an inclination toward individualism and iconoclastic ideas; and a tendency to value independent thought.
- **Humanism** – a concern for social justice and equal opportunity; appreciation for diverse viewpoints and perspectives; an interest in learning about diverse cultures; and a gratitude for one’s good fortune and desire to “give back” to others.
- **Distinction** – an interest in “great works that have stood the test of time” and artists with national or international reputations; a concern for sustaining the long-term future of key arts institutions; and a desire to see “world class artistic programming” in the Bay Area.
- **Bonding** – an interest in civic affairs and community improvement; appetite for expanding social networks and making new friends; strong family relationships and an active spiritual life; and an interest in arts programs that reflect one’s heritage.

Donors to FFAMC projects are more likely than other arts donors to align with the values of Localism and Progressivism, which are expressed by interest in community, creative outlets, and art and ideas that are on the leading edge.

**Key fundraising lesson:** A critical first step in attracting individual donors is identifying the values inherent in your project (or organization) and conveying those values effectively to potential contributors.

## **2. Donors to artists and small arts organizations differ from donors to larger arts institutions in important ways.**

The research project found that donors to artists and artists’ projects in the Bay Area are more likely to be:

- Artists themselves (professional or amateur);
- Young adults or mid-life (18-54), without children, and of diverse cultural backgrounds;
- Interested in social justice and environmentalism;
- Interested in diversity of cultures and points of view;
- Giving less than \$5,000 annually to all charitable causes;
- Interested in supporting small projects rather than sustaining institutions;
- Sparked to give by their personal relationship with the artist, passion for the art form, interest in the content or subject matter of the piece, or connection to the culture or community involved.

**Key fundraising lesson:** Even people of modest incomes can make meaningful financial contributions. Understanding the demographic profile and values of people more likely to support individual artists can increase fundraising success.

### 3. Donors Respond to Four Connection Points

FFAMC grantees found that connecting on a personal level with donors was a necessary pre-requisite to a gift. Interviews with FFAMC recipients revealed that donors connected with a project or an artist in one of four ways. Connecting with a donor on one of these levels was helpful in soliciting a contribution. Connecting on two or more of these dimensions increased the chances of a donation.

Donors respond to these connection points:

- A **personal relationship** with the artist, someone in the organization or the person making the ask. Requests from a friend, colleague or family member had the greatest influence on the giving practices of Fund For Artists donors.
- A **passion for the art form** or the art medium. Familiarity with and personal involvement in the art form increases potential donors' interest in artists working in that medium.
- An emotional or intellectual **interest in the subject matter** or personal knowledge of the issue being addressed by the project. Even if a prospective donor has little interest in a particular artform or artist, an artistic investigation of a subject or issue they care about can attract their enthusiastic support.
- An **involvement with the culture or community** touched by the project. Artists' projects that honor, sustain or invigorate a cultural tradition, a place, a network of people or an important community story resonates even with people who have little connection to the arts.

**Key fundraising lesson:** Find the connection point or points that your potential donor will find meaningful and motivating. Identifying more than one connection point will strengthen donor engagement.

## FIELD REPORTS

Between January 2004 and March 2010, the FFAMC program awarded \$658,750 to 116 projects involving 181 artists. More than 3,190 donors contributed \$729,254 in matching funds to these projects in sums that ranged from \$2 to \$10,000.

Every one of the FFAMC projects is a compelling story. A list of the projects is attached to the end of this report. The eight profiles sketched here reflect the wonderful variety of the FFAMC projects and fundraising approaches. While each is distinctive, together these field reports capture many of the techniques used by others. They also illustrate the key lessons of the program as a whole – how artists raising money for their FFAMC projects consciously or unconsciously appealed to donors' values, attracted a particular demographic sub-group of arts donors, and made use of the four connection points to secure donations.

These field reports are drawn from interviews with the artists involved in the projects, or the executive directors of the arts organizations that received project grants.

### **Robert Moses' Kin**

The mission of Robert Moses' Kin is to use movement as the medium through which race, class, culture and gender are used to voice the existence of our greater potential and unfulfilled possibilities.

***FFAMC Grant from The San Francisco Foundation:** \$5,000 to commission Robert Moses to create **Redline**. (2004) Inspired by Moses' personal experiences and Harriet Washington's Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present. **Redline** investigates how minority groups are treated as experimental subjects in the name of scientific progress.*

"A few years ago, my sister had a serious medical issue. Family members showed up and tried to make sure she was getting appropriate attention and care in the hospital. We were all upset about the level of care she received, so I decided that I needed to address this in some of my work: Medical care for people who don't have the resources – the disparity of care. About the same time a book came out called *Medical Apartheid*. It was a jumping off place. That was the initial inspiration for the piece.

"Then we applied and received the FFAMC grant. The matching part was really simple. I got on the phone and called everyone that had ever given us money and made a personal appeal to them. It was close to 100 people. You have to understand that this is not the way that I work. I don't reach out to people that way

usually. I don't answer the phone usually. We don't usually ask people directly for money. People did give to this project because I asked them directly.

“Our core audience is very loyal. They will stick with us through any changes we go through. For our donors, the idea of artistic freedom is central. They give because of an issue or an idea we represent – particularly because some of our work is Afro-centric.



Performance of Robert Moses' Kin's ***The President's Daughter***. Photograph: S.Motta.



“I got on the phone and called everyone that had ever given us money and made a personal appeal to them. It was close to 100 people.” – Robert Moses

“Reciprocity is another motivation for giving, particularly for other artists. This is more about loyalty than subject matter. Also we find that the connection to a certain culture or community is a stronger motivator for our community than the connection to the individual artists themselves. I think it is the connection to the culture *and* the artistic form, combined. What you decide you like in artistic work is influenced by your culture. The artistic form gives me *access* to my culture or community. For me personally, I have to be engaged by the personality before I am engaged by the ideas of the work.

“Robert Moses’ Kin asks itself: ‘What do we push?’ We want to make sense to the audience. We often push an *idea*. Modern dance, contemporary art by itself, does not have enough of a base in our community to attract donors or audiences, because contemporary work is seen as poison. That contemporary work can address a pressing social issue surprises and interests people. But the idea has to connect to people’s personal experience. Sadly, a lot of people who gave to our project connected to the piece because of their own very negative personal experiences with the health care system.” – Robert Moses, Robert Moses’ Kin

**Takeaways from this story:**

- Connect on a personal level.
- Start with the people you know.
- Tell a story people can relate to.

**Relevant Resources**

<http://www.robertmoseskin.org>

Projects like Robert Moses’ commission are built on a personal story. This is the backbone of successful project fundraising, including online fundraising platforms such as Kickstarter.com.

<http://www.kickstarter.com>

**Los Cenzontles**

The mission of Los Cenzontles (The Mockingbirds) is to promote Mexican cultural traditions, creative expression, dignity, pride and cultural understanding.

**FFAMC Grant from East Bay Community Foundation: \$10,000 to commission musicians associated with Los Cenzontles to work with David Hidalgo to create *Songs of Wood and Steel*, a recording and performance that explores Mexican musical traditions (2007).**

“Working with master artists has always been at the heart of our work. We create through the process of passing down traditions. Our FFAMC grant paired Los Cenzontles musicians and singers with a master artist, David Hidalgo (best known for his work with Los Lobos), for a collaborative commission. When we work with folk artists, we learn an incredible amount. To have a grant that specifically supports that type of collaboration is very unusual. Most grants do not focus on that part of our work and we always have to underpay artists. The FFAMC was like candy – wow, we can do it right this time!”



**Los Cenzontles** in the recording studio. Photograph: Armando Quintero.

“Before applying for the commission we thought about a lot of people we would like to work with. David Hidalgo is a trendsetter in Mexican American music. Odd as it sounds, given his work with Los Lobos, he deeply appreciated getting paid – as opposed to asking him to work for free as often happens with better known musicians. Many people approach him for work, but it is actually rare for him to get paid at an appropriate level so that he can actually carve out time and make music. He was extraordinarily appreciative. The grant also provided Los Cenzontles funding for our musicians to work on the projects as well as to engage a publicist and publicize our work at a professional level for the first time.

“To make the match we reached out to our current donors, and we reached out to Los Lobos band’s base through their band message board. We also used other creative thinking. We focused on folks who don’t donate to us but we thought might donate to him. We built the fundraising into the schedule with him. The recording we did together was unbelievably spiritual and rewarding. It was a real high for us to work with David, and it was kind of contagious – other people were thrilled to be in on the event. Los Lobos is famous as a group, but the individual members are not well known. Hidalgo is shy as a person. It was the first time in his life he performed solo. He was visibly nervous. It kind of opened up a new avenue for him. He is doing more on his own now.

“We scheduled an event on the last night he was here. We invited people into the process of our music making. All the people at the performance were donors to the project. We listed all the donors on our CD. They received a copy of the CD and invitations to the premiere at Yoshi’s jazz club in Oakland. Many did attend the Yoshi’s event. We tried to make them feel as involved as possible. A total of 28 people matched the grant – including nine new donors for Los Cenzontles.

“Our primary connection to our audience is through the connection they seek to community.”  
– Eugene Rodriguez

“When Los Cenzontles started, most of our supporters were family members. Now, most people come to hear us because of the community work we do. There is a very strong sense of community here – a cultural community – that people feel strongly about. People like to see the transference of traditional culture from teacher to student. When people are physically here, it cements that relationship. So our primary connection to our audience is through the connection they seek to community. What started as immediate family has become very extended family. And it’s still evolving.” – Eugene Rodriguez, Los Cenzontles

**Takeaways from this story:**

- Serving culture and community simultaneously increases people’s desire to contribute.
- Many celebrities want to give back to their communities of origin.

- Don't forget the social part -- create events where people will have fun.

### Relevant Resources

<http://www.loscenzontles.com>

Los Cenzontles artists, like many others in the Bay Area, pursue crossover careers. This phenomenon is discussed in *Crossover: How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Nonprofit and Community Work*, by Ann Markusen, Sam Gilmore and others. This report was co-sponsored by the James Irvine Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC).

<http://www.Irvine.org/publications/publications-by-topic/arts>

### Shotgun Players

Shotgun Players exists to create fearless, provocative, relevant theatre.

**FFAMC Grants from East Bay Community Foundation:** \$5,000 to commission a new play by playwright Mark Jackson, called **The Forest War** (2005); \$5,000 to commission playwright John Costello to adapt Alfred Jarry's classic, **Ubu Roi**, into a new work, **Ubu for President** (2008); \$10,000 to support a collaboration between writer/director Jon Tracy and composer/arranger Daniel Bruno, called **Salt in the Wound** (2010).

“When we got our first FFAMC grant from to commission playwright Mark Jackson, in 2005, our fundraising strategy was to ask regular subscribers and people with a history of buying single tickets because Mark had just sold out the Julia Morgan Theater Cal/Berkeley and we thought raising funds for his new would be an easy sell with our base. This didn't actually work very well. We didn't make the match until we focused on audience members who had seen Mark's shows at our theater, and asked Mark to sign the letters of request that we sent to these people. We call that 'the personal connection campaign.'

“We took a different approach with our 2008 FFAMC grant, Jon Costello's adaptation of *Ubu Roi*. We segmented our email list and pulled out the people who had not given to us recently, and those that had a history of valuing our summer show (*Ubu for President* was one of our free summer theater pieces). We told this email list that we were looking for delegates for the 'Ubu for President' campaign. One person wrote in an online donation for \$1,000 and we got several other online contributions that were good sized. Most of our match for that project came online, when I thought that approach would just get us started.



“I think we were successful in this way because, since 2005, we have worked hard to gain a stronger sense of our audiences through email communications and other means. Shotgun now sees between 40% and 50% of the 4,500 people on our mailing list make contributions to the theater. We’ve segmented our ticket buyer list and know more about each person on that list. One way we built this knowledge was by holding a raffle at every performance. The raffle offers a chance to get information from audiences. We always ask one silly question. During our *Rosie the Riveter* show, it was “If you were a power tool, what kind of tool would you be?” And we always ask a serious market research question, such as “How did you find out about our show?” or a question about demographics, values or interests. By doing this Shotgun has captured really useful information on interests of our audience members, and we’ve captured email and mailing address information. About 80-90% of every audience fills out the raffle ticket questionnaire.



***The Forest War*** written and directed by Mark Jackson. Lead actress Caroline Hewitt (bottom center). Photograph: J. Palopoli.

“We now always looks for the ‘hook’ to use in our marketing, the theme or idea that will connect the play to the audience in a meaningful way. We ask ourselves, ‘*How can the nuance of what we are doing be made clear? What is the smart way of getting potential audience members’ attention?*’ Shotgun strives to be just as creative in the process of connecting with potential audiences and donors as we are in developing and producing plays.

“A lot of our supporters support us because we are a small company and they want to support struggling artists. They also say we are having the most impact and they feel a personal connection to what we do. I tell my audiences how much we pay our actors, and people respond to that. They want to live in a community that supports artists. They want to support serious work that takes on issues and upholds their values. And in every way we can, we try to make ourselves relevant to our community. It’s hard to get people to leave their houses unless you connect to what’s important in their lives.” – Patrick Dooley, Shotgun Players

#### Takeaways from this story:

- Connect with audience members individually and learn their interests and values.
- Make an emotional connection between the audience and the artwork’s subject matter.

#### Relevant Resources

<http://www.shotgunplayers.org>

Shotgun’s philosophy of getting to know each audience member individually is based in part on lessons they learned from the National Arts Marketing Project: <http://www.artsmarketing.org/>

#### AXIS Dance Company

The mission of AXIS Dance Company is to create and perform contemporary dance that is developed through the collaboration of dancers with and without disabilities; to teach dance and educate about collaboration and disability through community education and outreach programs; and to promote and support physically integrated dance locally, nationally and internationally.

**FFAMC Grants from East Bay Community Foundation:** \$4,000 to commission a collaborative piece by choreographer Sonya Dewaide and composer/performer Joan Jeanrenaud, called **Terre Brune** (2004); \$6,000 to commission a piece by choreographer Margaret Jenkins, called **Waypoint** (2005); and \$6,000 to commission performance artist Joe Goode’s piece called **The beauty that was mine, through the middle, without stopping** (2007).

AXIS Dance Company received its first FFAMC grant in 2004, and has been awarded two other matching commissions since then. The first FFAMC commission supported a collaboration between choreographer Sonya Dewaide and composer and musician Joan Jeanrenaud, called *Terre Brune (Brown Earth)*. The inspiration for this quartet came from two talented women artists: composer/performer Joan Jeanrenaud had undertaken with French Canadian writer Marie Savard. “The words and music in that piece evoked

strong images, moving from a personal perspective to a more global point of view,” said Sonya Dewaide. “I worked with Joan to build on that piece, using only four dancers to convey a sense of broad community and deep intimacy.”

This first project was so successful that AXIS exceeded the match requirement. After its second successful matching commission project, AXIS decided to do a new commission each year, with or without FFAMC funding. This has permanently changed the way Axis raises money and supports new work for the company.



**Terre Brune** choreographed by Sonya Delwaide. Photograph: Trib La Prade.



Each year AXIS determines its commissioning project. The company then creates a template letter to solicit commission funds. The letter outlines the opportunity for the prospective donor: his/her name will be attached to the piece wherever it tours, and listed on the AXIS website and its regular promotional materials. Contributions start at \$150, because the AXIS Board believes this is what a commissioning opportunity is worth. Donors are invited to a sneak preview two months before the piece is finished. At these events, all the donors are called onto the stage and given an opportunity to meet the commissioned artist(s) and the dancers. The preview night is designed to be a very intimate event, without stage lights and costumes, and it is followed by a talkback with the audience. The goal is for the donors to feel acknowledged, and integrally involved in the artistic process.

“Many of our long-time donors are involved in the disability community and believe in the social implications of our work.... Our home season is a gathering place and event that many in this community attend.” – Judith Smith

People have stepped forward to support the AXIS commissions year after year. The first tier of donors is AXIS board members and people that board members solicit. Many of the donors are friends and colleagues of the artistic director, including people she has known since she founded the company 20 years ago. Another cohort of donors includes friends and family of the dancers, and people who believe in the social mission of the company. Says Artistic Director Judith Smith, “Many of our long-time donors are involved in the disability community and believe in the larger social implications of our work. Our audience has become a community in and of itself. Our home season is a gathering place and event that many in this community attend.”

**Takeaways from this story:**

- Politics is personal and the arts can contribute to social change.
- Involve donors in the creative process.
- It's not charity, it's an exchange -- contributing to an artist's project has real value for donors.

**Relevant Resources**

<http://www.axisdance.org>

The Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training works specifically with community-based organizations and the connection between fundraising, social justice and movement-building.

<http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/>

### Sangati Community Center for South Asian Music

The mission of the Sangati Community Center for South Asian Music is to provide a venue for chamber music and community center focused on Indian classical music in San Francisco.

**FFAMC Grant from The San Francisco Foundation:** \$4,000 to commission Gautam Tejas Ganeshan, vocalist, and Anantha R. Krishnan, mridangist, to create and present new music in concerts featuring a traditional Carnatic (South Indian classical instrumentation of voice), mridangam barrel drum, and tanpura drone lutes (2006).

The word sangati in Sanskrit means "coming together" and the term has related musical meanings as well. In South Indian classical music, a sangati is a melodic development or progression, and "sangati" is used in North Indian classical music for the art of accompaniment. The Sangati Center received funding to develop new work for a series of acoustic Indian classical music concerts. The commission helped artists Gautam Tejas Ganeshan and Anantha R. Krishnan create new work that was presented in four concerts at the Sangati Center.

Founded in 2006 by Gautam Tejas Ganeshan, the Sangati Center has hosted over 300 public concerts of Indian classical music, making it an active venue in San Francisco. The Sangati Center has attracted more than 8,000 audience members in its three-year history, many of them new to one of the world's most subtle, rigorous, and beautiful art forms.

The Sangati Center raised the match to the FFAMC by holding three monthly "outreach concerts," in people's homes. Individuals interested in South Asian music, living in the South Bay and the Peninsula, were asked to host these house parties and invite their family members and friends. People from Sangati's mailing list were also invited. Artists volunteered or played at a discounted rate, and attendees were encouraged to donate. Ganeshan estimates that two-thirds of the donors are of South Asian heritage, and that these people's strong feeling for their culture was the strongest motivator for giving. The fact that the project involved commissioning new music based in this ancient musical tradition was also appealing to these donors, who were excited about the idea of the tradition being made new by living artists.



The **Sangati Ensemble** at a house concert. Photograph: Harsal Jawale.

The Sangati Center effectively tapped the interest of older generations of South Asian people in continuing cultural traditions. Their contributions supported the new work, and the series of concerts at the Center in San Francisco which primarily serves younger generations (many of South Asian descent, but some not). The music series has been a catalyst for the overall development of the Sangati Center, which in addition to music programs sponsors other community-building activities such as traditional cooking, greening programs, and neighborhood beautification.

“We found a way to link different generations of South Asians through the creation and presentation of new music based in our ancient cultural tradition. Everyone discovered something unexpected in this project.” – Gautam Tejas Ganeshan

**Takeaways from this story:**

- Build the community while you’re supporting the art.
- Start with the personal networks of the people you already know.

## Relevant Resources

<http://sangaticenter.org>

A guide on how to “party with a purpose” and raise money for your cause: *The Fundraising Houseparty*, by Morrie Warshawski, <http://www.warshawshi.com/books.html>

## ODC Theater

ODC Theater is dedicated to the life-cycle of the creative process. Its mission is to empower and develop innovative artists. Its goals are to participate in the creation of new works through commissioning, presenting, mentorship and space access; to develop informed, engaged and committed audiences; and to advocate for the performing arts as an essential component to the economic and cultural development of our community.

**FFAMC Grant from The San Francisco Foundation:** \$5,000 to commission the third and final work in a series by choreographer Sara Shelton Mann, called **Inspirare** (2007).

Choreographer Sara Shelton Mann came to the attention of Rob Bailis, Director of ODC Theater, as a result of the work of Contraband, her performance ensemble. A decade after Contraband's demise, she was trying to re-establish herself just as Bailis was building a season of performances focused on the values and people of the Bay Area region. He was looking for artists “who help make the Bay Area the Bay Area,” and he thought Sara fit that bill. Mann had a strong interest in dealing with the environment and global well-being and the FFAMC commission offered her a chance for her to do a major work in her own community.

ODC Theater had extensive experience in raising funds for commissions through foundation, government, and private patron/individual sources. Typically, these were sums of \$5,000 or more, awarded on a project by project basis from a variety of regional and national sources. In 2006, the Theater had established a Director's Fund, which was designed to maintain a \$5,000-\$15,000 annual pool of funds for commissions in the range of \$1,000 to \$5,000 that would be offered at the discretion of the Director. The Fund, established with a one-time award from the Hewlett Foundation, was replenished annually through Bailis' fundraising from individual patrons.

The challenge of the FFAMC award was not raising the \$5,000 match for Mann's work. It was the emphasis on new donors and multiple small gifts from patrons. That posed an opportunity for building capacity at ODC Theater and addressed an area where the Theater's fundraising repertoire needed enhancement. At

the start of the project with Mann, Bailis was confident that raising the matching funds would not pose a challenge.

ODC Theater had three months to raise the money. Direct mail was the company's first approach and it "100% bombed," according to Bailis. Next they decided to have a community party, which they calculated would raise \$1,200. They threw the party and lost \$200. At this point, Bailis says, "we were really beginning to sweat." They were two months in and had created a project deficit. "Next we did pass-the-hat at performances during our Project Artaud series, which had an audience similar to the one we hoped to attract for Sara's new piece. We raised \$800 that way. It still wasn't clicking," said Bailis.



**Inspirare** Created in collaboration with performers: Kathleen Hermesdorf, Maria F. Scaroni. Sound Design: Calvin LL. Jones. Video and Light Design: David Szasa. Text: Sara Shelton Mann. Photograph: Benji Young.

"To other organizations trying to raise funds in this way, I'd say: 'Cross the river where it's narrowest.' Start with the artist's own network and build out from there." – Rob Bailis



Finally Bailis realized that Mann's personal contacts and his own network were the most promising potential donors. With Mann's assistance, Bailis created a list of their personal contacts. They produced a list of 75 names, and determined what amount ODC could ask from each person. Mann approached her potential donors and Bailis wrote handwritten "love letters" to 15 of his close friends, including a demo of the work in progress. Then he called everyone he had written and asked for a specific amount of money based on what he and Mann had determined was appropriate. Most of the gifts were \$100-\$250. That got ODC close to the \$5,000 goal. For the last portion, ODC Theater sent emails with a PayPal arrangement to the other 60+ individuals on their master list, and asked for \$5-15. The organization made the match by trying a variety of strategies.

**Takeaways from this story:**

- If it is not working, don't try harder, try something different.
- Raising very modest contributions can sometimes be harder than securing larger gifts.
- Artists' own personal networks are important sources of support.

**Relevant Resources**

<http://www.odcdance.org>

Eight stories of individuals who have commissioned new works of music in different ways are included in *An Individual's Guide to Commissioning New Music*, published by Meet the Composer  
<http://www.meetthecomposer.org/publications>

**Philip Huang****Oakland Asian Cultural Center, fiscal sponsor**

Oakland Asian Cultural Center builds vibrant communities through Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) arts and culture programs that foster intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue, cultural identity, collaborations, and social justice.

**FFAMC Grant from East Bay Community Foundation:** \$1,200 for a new work by Philip Huang, a monologue titled **Semen and White Lace**, a 60-minute ode to sex, psychosis, and good tea (2008).

"I didn't ask for a lot of money. I wrote the grant for \$1,200. The grant range was up to \$10,000 but for me, two years ago, even \$1,200 seemed like an insane amount of money to try and match. I learned to manage the freak-out by doing things in a very detailed and systematic way. I made a list of 20 people I knew that had jobs, and I knew had some disposable income. Most of them I knew professionally from my AIDS work,

or I had a former professional relationships with. I thought that most were likely to give me \$75-\$120. I wrote a solicitation letter and I was very specific about what I was asking for. I did all of the asking in person, but I wanted to be sure that when I sat down and talked with someone I also could give them a written proposal in the form of the letter.

“Most of the people I approached didn’t even look at the letter. Most of them just took out their checkbook. I raised the entire match in less than a month. I was surprised about how easy things got once you started asking. I was raising money for a project that I had not created yet, and I had obviously never performed it before so I learned I had to bluff a little bit because the donor needs to have confidence in you that you will deliver the work. One of my donors actually wanted to give me the entire \$1,200. She had a history of investing in queer arts. And she said she hadn’t donated in awhile. It was her investment. She made a lot of money and she was very interested in supporting queer art, and she wasn’t an artist herself. Ultimately she wound up donating \$600.



**Philip Huang** in a performance funded by EBFA. Photograph: Joshua Lim.

“A lot of the people who donated to *Semen and White Lace* were people from the public health field since that that is my professional background. Because of this connection I brought my piece back to Oakland



Chinatown, and I did it as a fundraiser for the agency. This brought the project full circle – the people who invested in it got some benefit from it.

“I liked the matching requirement very much. I would have never done this project on my own, without the match. I never would have changed artistic direction, or changed medium on my own without the endorsement of the FFAMC grant. I believe that artists should chase things slightly outside of their personal comfort zone. For me, fundraising from individuals was definitely that. Having an externally imposed timeline and an externally imposed mandate was good. I think the match was also a motivator for my donors. Once I got clarity about what I needed and I asked for it, people responded to my sense of propose and vision.

“Everyone who donated to my project got a bottle of sake. I spent about \$400 on the thank you gifts and cards. All tolled, I had 256 donors, including some friends who gave me as little as \$7. They were my friends so it was important to pamper them.

“I think people will invest in a project because of its subject or because they want to be part of a certain community. But the real connection points are about one’s evolution as an artist. You have to start by using your personal connections, and if the work is strong enough and it represents something larger, then people will to connect to that larger theme, not just to you as a person or their friend.” – Philip Huang

#### **Takeaways from this story:**

- Confidence in contagious and if the artist is confident, it inspires donors
- Start with the people who know you
- Connect with people who are interested in the subject or are part of your community

#### **Relevant Resources**

Philip’s Video Club on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=116470580149](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=116470580149)

Philip Huang attributes much of his professional success to Business of Art training he received from the Center for Cultural Innovation: <http://www.cciarts.org/>. CCI’s publications include: *Business of Art: Entrepreneurial Training for Artists*, and *Business of Art: An Artist’s Guide to Profitable Self-Employment*.

#### **A Few Other Lessons**

To be successful securing donations for artists’ projects, artists, arts organization staff, board members and other fundraisers need to understand potential donors’ values and connect with them in authentic ways that are meaningful for the giver. But our case studies of success embody a few other truths worth noting.

- Artists' confidence has kinetic energy that people want to touch. Artists who effectively share their inspiration and ideas find their passion is contagious to others.
- People give to people. This is the fundraisers' mantra. The person with the closest connection to the potential donor should be the person who makes "the ask."
- If it's not working, don't try harder, try different. Many FFAMC artists projects had false starts in fundraising, but the most effective ones learned from disappointment, tried new strategies and kept trying different approaches until they got the right formula.
- Think about the forest while you're raising money for the trees. While raising funds for specific projects, it's important to raise friends for the longer term. Many FFAMC projects not only met their match but also attracted donors who have stayed with the artists/companies long after the project.

## **CONCLUSION**

In 2003, the Urban Institute conducted a national opinion poll on attitudes toward artists. Among other findings, this poll found that 96% of U.S. adults are moved or inspired by art in their daily lives, but only 27% feel that artists contribute a lot to the general good of society. There are many reasons for this startling discrepancy but clearly one of them is that not enough people are invited to participate in the creative life of artists and experience for themselves the positive impacts that artists' work can have on communities. The Fund For Artists Marching Commissions program has helped almost 200 artists in the Bay Area to create new work, and in the process of making that work overcome the disconnect between people's perception of "art" and "artists." While the matching requirement of the FFAMC grants was initially challenging to many, in the end most grantees found it easier to raise the matching funds than they anticipated. And for most, learning how to raise funds from individuals continues to return many benefits – social and psychological as well as financial. The program also demonstrated that raising funds from individuals is not a zero-sum game but rather a catalytic reaction. One artist's success does not diminish another artist's chances. In fact, quite the opposite: one artist's success serves as inspiration to other artists, and to other donors.

## APPENDIX

### **Other Approaches**

The Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program is one very successful mechanism to stimulate contributions to new work projects by artists and small arts organizations. Other innovative approaches have also been successful. A few of these models are described here.

### **Commissioning Clubs**

Individual donors pool funds to commission a new work and present it in the community. By joining forces, the donors are able to do what none of them could do individually. Commissioning club members benefit by sponsoring one or several artists, educating themselves about an art form, socializing with others while supporting the artist, and “being in on” the creative process and the premiere. An early example of this which was started in 1991, the Minnesota Commissioning Club, was developed by Linda and Jack Hoeschler, of St. Paul, MN and now operate through American Composers Forum. This approach has been adapted in numerous other communities across the county.

<http://www.composersforum.org>

### **Commissioning Funds**

Arts organizations commission an artist to create a new work and promote this to their existing donor base, inviting people to become “members” of the commissioning fund by contributing donations (or “buying shares”) that will cover the cost of the commission and its public presentation. Most commissioning funds set a minimum contribution (although that minimum can vary from \$5 to \$500 or more). All offer the fund members special invitations to the work’s premiere and opportunities to interact with the commissioned artist(s). Notable examples include Bang on A Can’s People’s Commissioning Fund and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra’s “Sound Investment” commissioning program.

[http://www.bangonacan.org/people's\\_commissioning\\_fund](http://www.bangonacan.org/people's_commissioning_fund)

<http://www.laco.org/soundinvest/>

### **Collaborative Commissions**

Arts organizations pool resources to commission a new work which each organization then showcases. Typically these are collaborations involving organizations in different communities who do not compete with each other for audiences. If adequate funding is available, the partnering organizations may invite the commissioned artist to present his/her work in progress during the commissioning process as a way to engage audiences and build appetite for the completed work. San Francisco Performances, Cal Performances

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and other presenters in the Bay Area, as well as numerous presenters across the country, have collaborated on commissioning projects. The Creation Fund of the National Performance Network is another example in which at least two presenting organizations partner to commission and present new work. American Composers Forum created the “Faith Partners” program, in which three congregations representing different faiths collaborated on commissioning one composer to write one piece for each congregation and a fourth that all three would share.

<http://www.npnweb.org>

### ***Individual Commissioners***

Thousands, maybe millions of people have a deep love of the arts and the capacity to commission new work by artists whose work is of interest. Acting individually, many of these people get involved in financing artists' work. There are as many approaches to this kind of patronage as there are individuals involved. One excellent guide for donors exploring the possibilities is *An Individual's Guide to Commissioning New Music*, published by Meet the Composer. This booklet reviews stories of eight individuals who have commissioned new works of music in different ways.

<http://www.meetthecomposer.org/publications>

*This report was written by Holly Sidford and Marcelle Hinand Cady of Helicon Collaborative, based on interviews and research conducted by Helicon as part of a study on the motivations of arts donors in the Bay Area which was commissioned by East Bay Community Foundation and The San Francisco Community Foundation and conducted by Helicon and WolfBrown. The full research report, “It’s Not About You ... It’s About Them,” and more information about the project partners, is available at*

[www.ebcf.org](http://www.ebcf.org)

[www.tsff.org](http://www.tsff.org)

[www.heliconcollaborative.net](http://www.heliconcollaborative.net)

[www.wolfbrown.com](http://www.wolfbrown.com)

**Fund for Artists Matching Commission Awardees  
2004 - Early 2010**

**Grants by East Bay Community Foundation**

Taraneh Hemami, Consuelo Jimenez Underwood & Ann Schnake / Arts Change  
Sonya Delwaide & Joan Jeanrenaud / AXIS Dance Company  
Rita Moreno / Berkeley Repertory Theatre  
Kurt Rhode / Berkeley Symphony  
Sean San Jose, Ricky Marshall & Ryan Peters / California Shakespeare Theater  
Jon Jang / Eastside Arts Alliance

Nikolai Kabaniaev / Diablo Ballet  
Carlos Mena / Dream Dance Company  
CK Ladzekpo / East Bay Center for the Performing Arts  
Favianna Rodriguez / Eastside Arts Alliance  
Daniel David Feinsmith, Amy X Neuburg, John Schott & Paul Dresher / Jewish Music Festival  
Jorge Lederman / Pacific Chamber Symphony  
Tomye Neal-Madison / Prescott Joseph Center  
Mark Jackson / Shotgun Players

Margaret Jenkins / AXIS Dance Company  
Carlos Reyes / Dancer Elixir  
Dan Cantrell / Jewish Music Festival  
Melissa Wortman / KITKA  
Shailja Patel / La Pena Cultural Center  
David Szlasa / Moving Arts Dance  
Daniel David Feinsmith / Pacific Chamber Symphony  
Marc Bamuthi Joseph / Youth Speaks

Albert Greenberg & Annie Hallatt / ALICE Arts  
Tania Padillia & Emily Butterfly / ArtsChange  
Belinda Reynolds / Galax Quartet  
Paul Flores / La Pena Cultural Center  
Mary Watkins / Oakland Opera Theater  
Elinor Armer / Oakland Youth Orchestra

Peter Howkinson / Pro Arts

Joe Goode / AXIS Dance

Mason Bates / California Symphony

Matthew Cmiel / The Crowden Music Center

Christina Agamanolis, Matthew Antaky & Lawrence LaBianca /

Fellow Travelers Performance Group

Eugene Rodriguez & Los Cenzontles / Los Cenzontles Mexican Arts Center

Paige Starling Sorvillo / Noodle Factory Performing Arts Center

Sonal Acharya / Opera Piccola

Atemu Aton / Savage Jazz Dance Company

Laura Elder / ArtsChange

Rigo 23 / Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

Naomi Kremer & Ariel Parkinson / Berkeley Opera

Octavio Solis / CalShakes

Mirah Moriarty, Rodrigo Esteva, Loren Robertson & Laura Inserra / Dance Monks

Akosua Mireku / Epic Arts

Cheryl Leonard, Rebecca Haseltine, Gilbert Guerrero & Kathleen Quillian / The Illuminated Corridor

Mateen Kemet / Intersection for the Arts

Ambrose Akinmusire / Jazzschool, Inc.

Nomi Talisman / Judah L. Magnes Museum

Anton Patzner / Moving Arts Dance

Philip Huang / Oakland Asian Cultural Center

Josh Costello / Shotgun Players

Larry Batiste & Clayton Richardson / Youth Movement Records

Delina Patrice Brooks / Youth Speaks

Khalil Shaheed / Dimension's Dance Theater

Emiko Saraswati Susilo & Rashidi Omari Byrd / Gamelan Sekar Jaya

Sarah E. Wilson / Intersection for the Arts

Kat Parra / The Jazz School

Dan Plonsey & Eric Kupers / Jewish Music Festival

Francis Wong / Oakland Asian Cultural Center

Scott Oliver, Mark Gergis, Maria Porges & Michael Blodgett / Oakland Museum of CA

Jill Togawa, Ellen Reiko Bepp & Masayuki Koga / Purple Moon Dance Project

Julie Plasencia / Rock Paper Scissors



Tamara Perkins & Jesse Dana / SF Film Society  
Shira Kammen & Ben Bernstein / The Singer's Gym  
Martha Boesing / Stagebridge

John Santos / Eastside Arts Alliance  
Daven Gee / Katahdin Productions  
Maston Bates & Benjamin Shwartz / Mercury Soul  
Dohee Lee / Oakland Asian Cultural Center  
Rebecca Mauleon / Oakland East Bay Symphony  
Omid Zoufonoun / Oakland Youth Orchestra  
Jon Tracy & Daniel Bruno / Shotgun Players  
Kerri Gawryn / Youth Movement Records

#### **Grants by The San Francisco Foundation**

Pandit Chitresh Das / Chitresh Das Dance Company  
Eva Tam / Door Dog Music Productions  
Taraneh Hemami / Intersection for the Arts  
Donna Keiko Ozawa, Bob Hsiang & Christine Wong Yap/  
Kearny Street Workshop  
Eric Myers, Dawei Wang, & Bik Lee / Melody of China  
Gyan Riley / Musical Traditions, Inc.  
Patrick Makuakāne / Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu  
Julio Cesar Morales / New Langton Arts  
Robert Moses / Robert Moses' Kin  
Meklit Hadero, Prasant Radhakrishnan, Sameer Gupta, Eliyahu Sills,  
Gabriel Teodos, & Todd Brown / The Red Poppy Art House

Robert Henry Johnson / African-American Shakespeare Company  
Lily Cai / Chinese Cultural Productions  
Rhodessa Jones / Cultural Odyssey  
Josef Norris / Kid Serve Youth Murals  
Sara Shelton Mann / Oberlin Dance Collective (ODC)  
Juba Kalamaka, Katastrophe, Robert Karimi, Sean Dorsey & Rhodessa Jones /  
Queer Cultural Center  
Guillermo Gomez Pena & Pocha Nostra / SF Camerawork

Fred Frith, Patrice Scanlon / SF Electronic Music Festival  
Octavio Solis and Larry Reed / ShadowLight Productions  
Marcus Gardley / Traveling Jewish Theatre  
Edwardo Madril / World Arts West  
Chinaka Hodge / Youth Speaks

Frank Fisher/Adventure Out Seniors Productions  
Eugenie Chan/Cutting Ball Theater  
Joan Jeanrenaud/Del Sol Performing Arts Organization  
Hyo-shin Na/Earplay  
Sia Amma/Global Women Intact  
Benjamin Levy and Mason Bates/LEVYdance, Inc.  
Hank Willis Thomas and Ryan Alexiev/Mission 17  
Janni Choi, Soo-Kyuny Chor, and Jiyon Son/Northern California Music & Art Culture Center  
Guatam Tejas Ganesha and Anantha Krishnam/Sangati Community Center for South Asian Music  
Anne Walsh/SF Camerawork  
Bay Area writers/Zyzyva

Brian Thorstenson/Alternative Theater Ensemble  
Anthony Brown/Fifth Stream Music  
Amy Seiwert/im'ij-re  
Seng Chen and Allan Manalo/Kearny Street Workshop  
Alexis Alrich, Moses Sedler, and Katrina Wreede/Mill Valley Philharmonic  
Travis Meinolf/Museum of Craft and Folk Art  
Marcus Shelby/Peninsula Ballet Theatre  
Ali Liebegott/RADAR Productions  
Gail Wight/San Francisco Center for the Book  
Gabriela Frank/San Francisco Chamber Orchestra  
Beth Custer/San Francisco Cinematheque  
Joanna Haigood/Zaccho Dance Theatre

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## Appendices

Commissioned by  
The San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation

THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION

*The Community Foundation of the Bay Area*



May, 2010

## **Appendix I: Guidelines for Fund For Artists Matching Commissions**

### **EAST BAY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION EBCF FUND FOR ARTISTS MATCHING COMMISSIONS**

Through the East Bay Fund For Artists, EBCF's goal is to provide support for composers, playwrights, choreographers, visual and media artists in the Bay Area; engagement of donors; and creation of new works for East Bay organizations. EBCF will be distributing \$100,000 over two years to match donor contributions on a 1-to-1 basis for the commissioning of new works by East Bay Area artists.

Grants of \$1,000-\$10,000 must be matched with individual supporter/donor contributions on a 1-to-1 basis. One of the goals of this program is to help organizations and artists deepen and expand their individual donor base. We encourage outreach to new donors, and prefer to see greater numbers of donors at small levels, rather than a single donor supporting the project. Government, corporate or foundation funding is not eligible to be matched. Organizations must make their match within 90 days; artists must secure their match within 120 days. EBCF support must be earmarked for artist(s) fees.

We are looking to support new work/commissioning at every level of the art eco-system, and encourage proposals from small ethnic arts groups that may not have a formal structure.

#### ***Eligibility Requirements:***

- You must be an organization or artist in Alameda or Contra Costa County
- You need to be a 501c3 or have a fiscal sponsor
- Exhibition spaces, performance presenters, media and arts organizations can apply
- Individual artists from all artistic disciplines are welcome to apply

### **THE SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION TSFF FUND FOR ARTISTS MATCHING COMMISSIONS**

The Fund For Artists Matching Commissions seek to support the development of new work by Bay Area artist and at the same time help small- to mid-sized arts groups diversify funding by attracting individual donors. The San Francisco Foundation challenges organizations in San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin Counties to raise up to \$10,000 in matching funds from individual donors. Selected applications will have up to three months after notification to raise matching dollars from individuals.

This program is designed to extend an opportunity to small- to mid-sized arts organizations to work with artists to commission new works and build the organizations' individual donor bases. Through the FFAMC, TSFF will award funds that must be matched on a one-to-one basis by individual donor contributions for the commissioning of new works by Bay Area artists.

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If your organization's budget is under \$2 million, you may apply for up to \$10,000 to be matched by individuals. If awarded, your organization will have up to 90 days to make your match before grant funds are distributed. All funds awarded from TSFF must go directly to the artist, although your organization's matching donations from individuals can be used to help underwrite presentation costs. Also, your organization and donors will become part of a psychographic survey of donor motivations.

***Eligibility requirements:***

- Exhibition spaces, performance presenters, and media and arts organizations can apply
- Organizations must be based in Marin, San Francisco, or San Mateo County
- Artists to be commissioned must reside within Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, or San Mateo Counties
- Your organization's annual operating budget must be less than \$2 million
- You must have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status or have a fiscal sponsor
- A public presentation of the work is required, although an in-process presentation (based on the discipline) is acceptable

## **Appendix 2: Fund for Artists Matching Commissions Recipients**

### **EAST BAY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

Taraneh Hemami, Consuelo Jimenez Underwood & Ann Schnake / Arts Change  
Sonya Delwaide & Joan Jeanrenaud / AXIS Dance Company  
Rita Moreno / Berkeley Repertory Theatre  
Kurt Rhode / Berkeley Symphony  
Sean San Jose, Ricky Marshall & Ryan Peters / California Shakespeare Theater  
Jon Jang / Eastside Arts Alliance

Nikolai Kabaniaev / Diablo Ballet  
Carlos Mena / Dream Dance Company  
CK Ladzekpo / East Bay Center for the Performing Arts  
Favianna Rodriguez / Eastside Arts Alliance  
Daniel David Feinsmith, Amy X Neuburg, John Schott & Paul Dresher / Jewish Music Festival  
Jorge Lederman / Pacific Chamber Symphony  
Tomye Neal-Madison / Prescott Joseph Center  
Mark Jackson / Shotgun Players

Margaret Jenkins / AXIS Dance Company  
Carlos Reyes / Dancer Elixir  
Dan Cantrell / Jewish Music Festival  
Melissa Wortman / KITKA  
Shailja Patel / La Pena Cultural Center  
David Szlasa / Moving Arts Dance  
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Paul Flores / La Pena Cultural Center  
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Mason Bates / California Symphony  
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Paige Starling Sorvillo / Noodle Factory Performing Arts Center  
Sonal Acharya / Opera Piccola  
Atemu Aton / Savage Jazz Dance Company

Laura Elder / ArtsChange  
Rigo 23 / Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive  
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Octavio Solis / CalShakes  
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Akosua Mireku / Epic Arts  
Cheryl Leonard, Rebecca Haseltine, Gilbert Guerrero & Kathleen Quillian / The Illuminated Corridor  
Mateen Kemet / Intersection for the Arts  
Ambrose Akinmusire / Jazzschool, Inc.  
Nomi Talisman / Judah L. Magnes Museum  
Anton Patzner / Moving Arts Dance  
Philip Huang / Oakland Asian Cultural Center  
Josh Costello / Shotgun Players  
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Sarah E. Wilson / Intersection for the Arts  
Kat Parra / The Jazz School  
Dan Plonsey & Eric Kupers / Jewish Music Festival  
Francis Wong / Oakland Asian Cultural Center  
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Jill Togawa, Ellen Reiko Bepp & Masayuki Koga / Purple Moon Dance Project  
Julie Plasencia / Rock Paper Scissors  
Tamara Perkins & Jesse Dana / SF Film Society  
Shira Kammen & Ben Bernstein / The Singer's Gym  
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John Santos / Eastside Arts Alliance  
Daven Gee / Katahdin Productions  
Maston Bates & Benjamin Shwartz / Mercury Soul  
Dohee Lee / Oakland Asian Cultural Center



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Patrick Makuakāne / Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu  
Julio Cesar Morales / New Langton Arts  
Robert Moses / Robert Moses' Kin  
Meklit Hadero, Prasant Radhakrishnan, Sameer Gupta, Eliyahu Sills,  
Gabriel Teodros, & Todd Brown / The Red Poppy Art House

Robert Henry Johnson / African-American Shakespeare Company  
Lily Cai / Chinese Cultural Productions  
Rhodessa Jones / Cultural Odyssey  
Josef Norris / Kid Serve Youth Murals  
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Guillermo Gomez Pena & Pocha Nostra / SF Camerawork  
Fred Frith, Patrice Scanlon / SF Electronic Music Festival  
Octavio Solis and Larry Reed / ShadowLight Productions  
Marcus Gardley / Traveling Jewish Theatre  
Eduardo Madril / World Arts West  
Chinaka Hodge / Youth Speaks

Frank Fisher/Adventure Out Seniors Productions  
Eugenie Chan/Cutting Ball Theater  
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Sia Amma/Global Women Intact  
Benjamin Levy and Mason Bates/LEVYdance, Inc.

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Janni Choi, Soo-Kyuny Chor, and Jiyon Son/Northern California Music & Art Culture Center

Guatam Tejas Ganesha and Anantha Krishnam/Sangati Community Center for South Asian Music

Anne Walsh/SF Camerawork

Bay Area writers/Zyzyva

Brian Thorstenson/Alternative Theater Ensemble

Anthony Brown/Fifth Stream Music

Amy Seiwert/im'ij-re

Seng Chen and Allan Manalo/Kearny Street Workshop

Alexis Alrich, Moses Sedler, and Katrina Wreede/Mill Valley Philharmonic

Travis Meinolf/Museum of Craft and Folk Art

Marcus Shelby/Peninsula Ballet Theatre

Ali Liebegott/RADAR Productions

Gail Wight/San Francisco Center for the Book

Gabriela Frank/San Francisco Chamber Orchestra

Beth Custer/San Francisco Cinematheque

Joanna Haigood/Zaccho Dance Theatre

## **Appendix 3: Study Methodology**

### **The research project had six goals:**

- To gather baseline data on the values and motivations of arts donors in the Bay Area;
- To compare the demographic and attitudinal characteristics of donors to Fund for Artists projects with other arts donors in the Bay Area;
- To understand what fundraising messages and techniques that stimulated donors to give to the Fund for Artists, artist-driven projects;
- To summarize the key outcomes and elements of the Fund for Artists program;
- To develop a “toolkit” of suggestions that could help artists and small arts organizations better connect with potential donors;
- To identify additional funding strategies that could stimulate giving to artist-run and artist-centered projects and organizations.

This research study focused on the values and motivations of donors. It was not intended to be an assessment of the Fund for Artists program.

The study had both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, and was organized to capture lessons from the Fund for Artists pilot, build a sense of community among the artists and organizations that participated, and further strengthen their ability to raise funds from individuals.

### **Phase I. Qualitative Research**

#### **• Kick off Meeting with Fund for Artist Grantees**

At the outset of the study, it was important to create a shared understanding of the goals and objectives of the study and to talk through the ways that grantees could be involved with the study, and to get their buy-in. Helicon and Wolf Brown convened study kick-off meetings in both San Francisco and Oakland, at the San Francisco Foundation and the East Bay Community Foundation to recruit grantees participating in the study. The consultants outlined the various research methods, discussed the planned participatory interviewing exercise, and explained how FFA grantees could benefit from participating in the study.

FFA grantees were subsequently asked to provide the consulting team with names and addresses of their organizational donors and donors to the FFA match, contact their donors and request their participation in the research projects, and assist the consulting team and the foundations sponsoring the project in outreach by phone, mail and email to their donors. During these meetings FFA grantee and artist participants were also asked to reflect on their experience fundraising for the FFA match, discussing what worked, what didn't work, and their overall experience with the process. This gave the consultants an opportunity to launch the “learning community” that formed through this research project and begin to facilitate an atmosphere of peer exchange and sharing of lessons learned.

- **Participatory Interviewing Exercise**

A major feature of the study was two cycles of in-depth interviews of Fund for Artists donors using a participatory interviewing technique developed by Alan Brown as part of The Values Study in 2004. Working in teams of two people, Fund for Artist grantees (i.e., artists, or board or staff members of grantee organizations) spent two days interviewing their donors about their core values and their motivations for giving to the FFA match, using a standard interview protocol. Overall 70 donors were interviewed over the course of two weekends by 40 grantees.

The introductory meetings with the FFA grantees allowed the consulting team to develop an appropriate interview protocol that explored the unique methods in which FFA grantees designed their donor solicitation processes, but focused on the core issues of the values and motivations that drive the donor's giving. Recruitment of the donors was done through a combination of online and telephone outreach. Each donor who was interviewed was paid \$50 for their time, and was given the option of donating their stipend back to the FFA grantee that had recruited them.

One cycle of interviews was conducted at the East Bay Community Foundation, while the other cycle was held at the San Francisco Foundation. Each interview weekend consisted of an orientation and training for the 15-20 people conducting the interviews; four rounds of interviews (over the course of two days); and a facilitated synthesis session and wrap-up. Over the course of the weekend, each team of interviewers conducted four interviews. One team member served in the role of Interviewer, while the other team member served in the role of Recorder. After each interview, the team members switched roles, so that each team member had an opportunity to interview two donors.

All teams participated in both the interviewing and the interpretation of results, which took place immediately after the last round of interviews on Day Two. The consulting team produced a synthesis document from each cycle of interviews with notes taken during the synthesis discussion when teams reported out on their interviews. In addition to the rich data produced through this interviewing exercise, a secondary outcome of this process was building the interviewing skills and training arts groups in a cost-efficient process for gathering input from their stakeholders.

- **Interviews with FFA grantee organizations and artists**

Originally the process of interviewing FFA grantee organizations and artists had been planned to give the consulting team a baseline understanding of the program from the perspective of the grantees. Because the FFA grantee interviewers found the interviewing process so beneficial to their work, the FFA grantee organizations and artists were invited to an additional peer exchange meeting not originally part of the research scope of work. This meeting had two goals: 1) To gain additional feedback on what grantees had learned from donors during the interviewing exercise, and 2) to discuss the correlations they found between the donors' motivations for giving and the fundraising approaches they employed.

During these interviews, grantees were asked to describe their fundraising process, and reflect on what they believe motivated their particular donors to give. From these conversations emerged a set of “connection points,” one or more of which were critical to the grantees’ success with their donors. These conversations also informed the consultant team’s understanding of the fundraising models that proved most effective with the FFA cohort of donors.

The grantee meeting was attended by over 25 grantees, and 10 telephone interviews were conducted with a diverse cross-section of grantees.

- **Interviews with TSFF and EBCF Arts Donor Advisors**

Ten people who serve as Donor Advisors to donor-advised funds at the San Francisco Foundation and the East Bay Community Foundation were interviewed about their giving priorities and motivations. These interviews were conducted either by telephone or in person. Understanding the values and motivations of this cohort of donors added texture to the quantitative data gathered later in the project through the survey of donor to major arts institutions.

- **Research review**

The consultants reviewed relevant research about charitable giving by individuals to put the research into context and inform the research protocols. A bibliography is included in Appendix.

## **Phase 2: Quantitative Research**

The second phase of the study was quantitative research on donors’ values, motivations and decision factors. This work built on Alan Brown’s donor segmentation work for the major university presenters (MUP) consortium, completed in 2007.

For this phase of work the consulting team surveyed two donor cohorts:

1. All Fund for Artist donors (approximately 1,900) for whom addresses were available.
2. More than 8,500 donors to mid-sized and large cultural institutions in the Bay Area.

- **Protocol Design**

The survey protocol was designed based on the results of the qualitative research conducted in Phase I and the consultants’ experience. After approval by the funding partners, it was tested with a small group of Fund for Artists donors in an informal focus group setting, and feedback was incorporated. (The survey instrument is attached in the Consolidated Research Report by WolfBrown.) Protocol topics included but were not limited to:

- Household characteristics
- Giving history in the arts
- Other causes supported
- Core values
- Various motivations for giving to an arts organization

- Pre-gift relationship with recipient organization
- Desire for recognition of gift
- Gift trigger (e.g., mail solicitation, personal contact with artist or board member)
- Affinity with artist support as a cause
- Interest in the specific artistic product itself
- Level of interest in participating in the creation process
- Technical aspects of giving (e.g., tax deductibility, preference for making multiple small gifts vs. one annual gift)

Given the differences between the cohorts of donors being studied, a slightly different version of the protocol was used for each group. Both are attached in the Consolidated Research Report.

- **Survey Administration**

This survey was conducted by mail in an envelope from the organization that received the gift. This method was intended to maximize the response rate, and ensure that donors who may be less email savvy were not excluded from the sample. The consultants oversaw all printing and copying of surveys and pre-stamped reply envelopes; shipped survey packages to grantee organizations, along with instructions for mailing the surveys out to their donors; and received completed surveys in the mail. The grantees addressed and mailed envelopes to their respective donors and made follow-up phone calls, or sent follow-up emails to encourage donors to complete the survey, using a script provided by the consultants.

- **Data Analysis and Model Preparation**

After the data collection work was over the consulting team oversaw data entry and prepared an SPSS data file for analysis. The analysis work took two forms and produced two deliverables. The first level of analysis compared and contrasted the demographic and attitudinal characteristics of each of the three donor groups (FFA donors, donors to mid-sized organizations and donors to large organizations), using all available variables. The consultants sought to understand how patterns of giving differ according to cultural community, artistic discipline, age of donor, method of approach and other factors.

The second track of analysis grouped donors into discrete segments based on their motivations for giving. The consultants used a combination of factor analysis and cluster analysis to assess the values underlying donor behaviors. The result of this analysis is a values analysis and an attitudinal segmentation model of arts donors. This analysis work involved a specialized subcontractor who does customer-modeling work for large consumer products firms.

- **Readers' Group**

The project invited three people with expertise in the arts, demographics and fundraising to discuss the preliminary findings. In two meetings, the team presented the findings to Moy Eng, Program Director for the Arts at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Salvador Acevedo, Principal and President, Contemporanea, and Priscilla Ying, East Bay Center on Fundraising.

## **Appendix 4: Organizations that Provided Names for Surveys**

Grantee Organizations who permitted use of their donor list for the mail survey include:

African American Shakespeare  
Akosua Mireku (Epic Arts)  
ALICE  
ArtsChange  
AXIS Dance Company  
Berkeley Museum (BAMPF)  
Berkeley Opera  
Berkeley Symphony  
California Shakespeare Co  
Chinese Cultural Productions/Gang Situ  
Chitresh Das Dance Company  
Circuit Networks  
Crowden  
Cultural Odyssey  
Cutting Ball Theater  
Dance Elixir  
Dance Monks  
Del Sol Arts  
Delina Brooks  
Diablo Ballet  
Dog Door Productions  
Dream Dance Company  
East Bay Perf Arts Center  
Eastside Arts Alliance  
Galax Quartet  
Gamelan Sekar Jaya  
Illuminated Corridor  
Intersection for the Arts  
Jewish Music Festival  
Judah L. Magnes Museum  
Kearney Street Workshop  
Kid Serve  
KITKA  
La Pena  
LEVY Dance



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Los Cenzontles  
Mateen Kemet  
Melody of China  
Na Lei Hulu I Ka Wekiu  
Noodle Factory  
Oakland Youth Orchestra  
Oberlin Dance Company  
Opera Piccola  
Paul Drescher Musical Traditions  
Philip Huang  
Prescott-Joseph Center  
Pro Arts  
Queer Cultural Center  
Red Poppy ArtHouse  
Robert Moses Kin  
Sangati Center  
Sarah Wilson/Intersection for the Arts?  
Scott Oliver  
SF Electronic Music Festival  
SFCamerawork  
Shadowlight Productions  
Shotgun Players  
Tamara Perkins  
The Jazzschool  
Traveling Jewish Theater  
World Arts West  
Youth Movement Records  
Youth Speaks

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## Appendix 5: Participants in WolfBrown Interview Exercise

### LIST OF GRANTEES WHO PARTICIPATED IN INTERVIEW EXERCISE

#### THE SAN FRANCISCO

#### FOUNDATION

June 12-13, 2009

Name	Title	Organization
Elisa Isaacson	Director, Foundation and Corp Relations	BAMPF
Aislinn Scofield	Executive Director	Earplay
James Leventhal	Development Director	Judah L. Magnes Museum
Amy Clare Tasker	Administrative Manager	The Cutting Ball Theater
Elisabeth Millican	Institutional Grants Manager	Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Ben Bernstein	Director	The Singer's Gym, Inc.
Jiyon Son	Program Director	Northern CA Music and Art Cultural Ctr
Debra Schwartz	President, Board of Directors	Oakland Youth Orchestra
Ellen Oh	Executive Director	Kearny Street Workshop
Noemi Castro	Performance Anchor	Red Poppy Art House
Maryann Shinta		Del Sol Performing Arts Organization
Roy Whelden	Artist	Galax Quartet
Rob Bailis	Director	Oberlin Dance Company
Suki O'kane	Project Coordinator	Illuminated Corridor
Melissa Soika	Development Director	SF Camerwork
Gang Situ	Artist	Chinese Cultural Productions
Rose Theresa	Director for External Affairs	Opera Piccola
Jayaranjan Anthonypillai		Red Poppy Art House

#### EAST BAY COMMUNITY

#### FOUNDATION

June 19-20, 2009

Name	Title	Organization
Sarah Wilson	Artist	Sarah Wilson Music
Kat Parra	Artist	Jazz School
Jim Huntley	Director of Development	California Shakespeare Theater
Benjamin Levy	Artistic Director	LEVYdance
Eric Myers	Director's Assistant	Melody of China
Joanie McBrien	Director of Development	Shotgun Players

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Michele Fromson	Development Director	The Paul Drescher Ensemble/Musical Traditions, Inc.
James Leventhal	Director of Development	James L. Magnes Museum
Favianna Rodriguez	Artist	EastSide Arts Alliance
Michelle Witt		Robert Moses Kin
Rob Taylor	Director of Development	World Arts West
Tamara Perkins	Founder & Director	Apple of Discord Productions, LLC
Melissa Soika	Development Director	SF Camerwork
Mateen O. Kemet	Writer / Director	Runaway FiLMWORX
Deborah Vaughan	Artistic Director	Dimensions Dance Theatre
Pauline Guillermo-Togawa	Circle/Board of Directors	The Purple Moon Dance Project
Mirah Moriarty	Artistic Director	Dance Monks

## **Appendix 6: Summary of WolfBrown Research Report**

If you would like to view the full report, please contact Rebecca Ratzkin ([Rebecca@wolfbrown.com](mailto:Rebecca@wolfbrown.com)) or Alan Brown ([alan@wolfbrown.com](mailto:alan@wolfbrown.com)) of WolfBrown.

In 2008, The San Francisco Foundation and East Bay Community Foundation commissioned Helicon Collaborative and WolfBrown to conduct a psychographic study of donors to the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program (FFAMC), a highly successful matching grant program that challenged Bay Area individual artists and small arts groups to raise funds from individuals.

### **The goals of the study were as follows:**

- To gather baseline data on the values and motivations of arts donors in the Bay Area;
- To compare the demographics and attitudinal characteristics of donors to FFAMC projects with other arts donors in the region;
- To understand what fundraising messages and techniques stimulated donors to give to FFAMC projects;
- To summarize the key outcomes and elements of the FFAMC program;
- To develop a “toolkit” of case studies to help artists and small arts organizations better connect with potential donors;
- To identify additional funding strategies that could stimulate giving to artist-run and artist-centered projects and organizations.

Research methods led by WolfBrown included an in-depth interviewing exercise with FFAMC grantees and donors in the summer of 2009, followed by an extensive effort to survey FFAMC donors as well as donors to other Bay Area cultural institutions.

Overall, the study finds that donors to Bay Area arts groups are diverse with respect to their values, interests, giving behaviors and preferences for involvement.

Interview findings suggest that giving is often precipitated by the making of one or more “connection points” with donors which, singly or in combination, can spark a gift:

- **A personal relationship with the artist or a board member:** many of the donors who were interviewed were motivated by a sense of collegiality or reciprocity. Knowing a person who is involved with the project engenders trust. (“I need to recognize some names on the staff or board.”) It also confers an element of social currency between the two parties.
- **A “passion” connection to the art form or medium:** many of the FFAMC donors were artists themselves, inherently and intimately connected to the art form, with a desire to support others pursuing similar paths. One donor said: “Music makes life worth living...when I’m singing nothing else matters.”
- **A value connection, which is either an emotional or intellectual connection to the subject matter or issue** being addressed by the project: for many of the donors interviewed, a

connection to something outside of the organization or art form was a significant motivator for giving. For example, one donor who felt strongly about her faith ended up giving to a music project because the music reflected her own sense of spirituality.

- A **cultural or community connection**: we found that FFAMC's focus on local and diverse groups generated participation among donors whose interest focuses on local and highly personal issues. With regard to the artist soliciting her gift, one donor stated, "I knew he would portray Oakland in a way that would make me proud to be a resident of Oakland."

When two or more of these "connection points" can be made with a donor, the data suggests the likelihood of a gift increases.

A quantitative survey delved deeper into motivations for giving and the values that drive giving behaviors. Both interview and survey findings point to values as useful constructs in understanding the diversity of one's donor base and in thinking strategically about how donors develop emotional bonds with causes.

Exploratory factor analysis identified five 'value and interest factors' based on a consolidation of 23 different variables. The results are just one lens through which to view donors, alongside giving potential, past giving behaviors and other relationships as described through the four connection points framework.

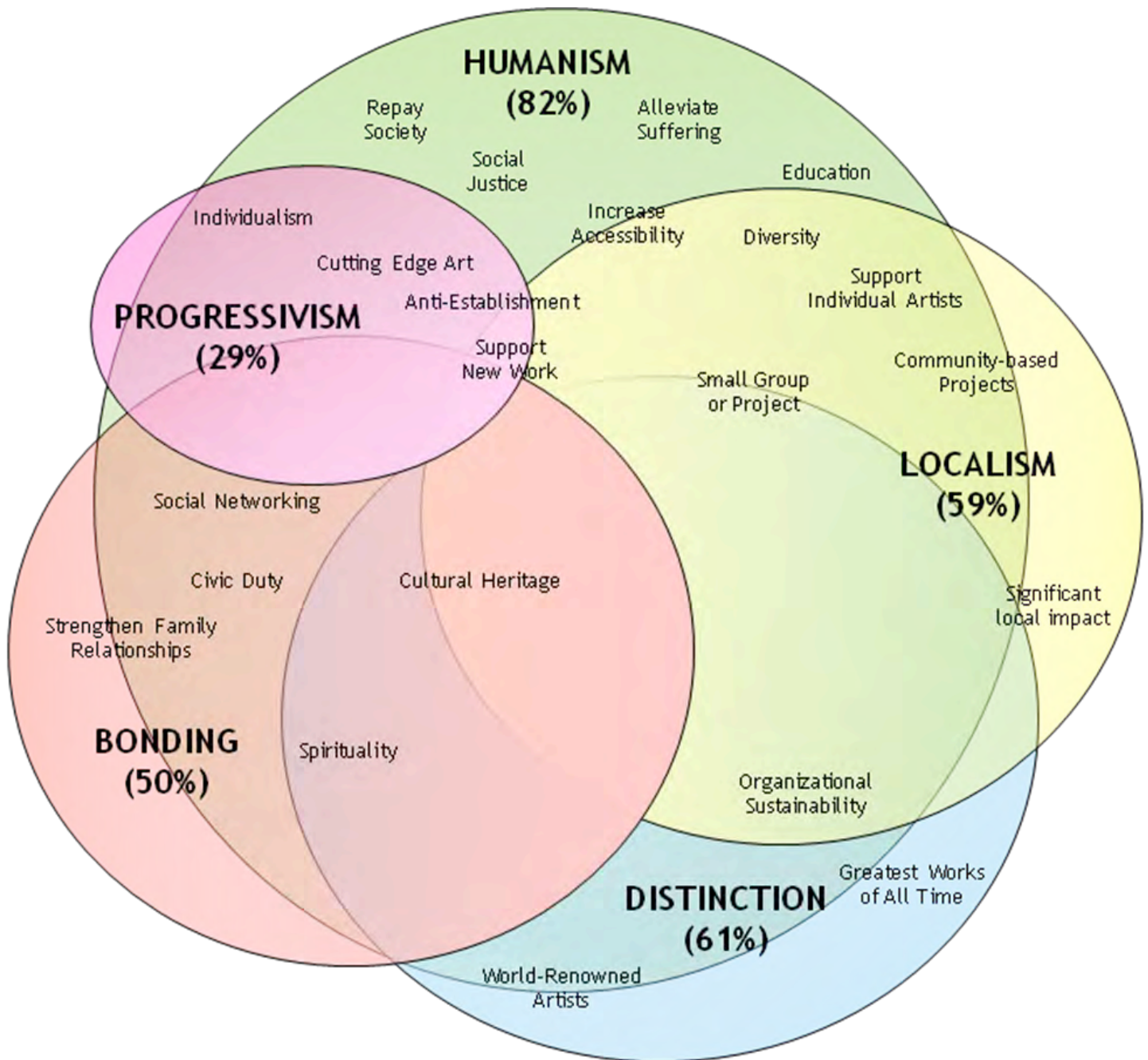
### **Descriptions of the five value factors:**

- Localism is a focus on community, individual artists and access to art outside of existing institutional structures. Many of the FFAMC donors connected strongly to Localism, as they were interested in new works by individual artists, and supporting community-based projects, and small arts groups outside of the mainstream.
- Humanism is about valuing social good, a sense of responsibility to the community and interest in cultural pluralism. This value is by far the most prevalent found within the sample of respondents. Most associate strongly with social justice, diversity, broadening access, and education.
- Distinction: this value dimension revolves around world class artists and art works. As expected, donors to larger-sized arts organizations related to this value system more strongly than FFAMC and other donors.
- Bonding: focuses on beliefs and practices that connect people and strengthen social bonds.
- Progressivism is about valuing individualism and cutting edge art and ideas. As artists and younger donors were more likely to connect to Progressivism, FFAMC donors as well as those to mid-sized and diverse organizations also reflected this value more strongly than others.

Thinking in terms of these value factors can help artists and arts groups establish deeper and more productive relationships with existing and potential donors.

The Venn diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the prevalence of each factor within the sample and their relationships to one another (e.g., the degree to which they overlap).

**Figure 1: Value Factors**



Another more complex lens through which to view donors is by typology or “cluster.” A statistical procedure called cluster analysis was performed on a large group of variables including giving behaviors, preferred levels of communication and desired recognition, alongside values and philanthropic interests. The

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analysis, conducted on the combined data set of FFAMC donors and donors to 17 Bay Area cultural institutions, revealed five typologies of donors:

- **Values-Driven Intrinsic** (25% of entire sample): Strong feelings about the arts and deeply held values across the board, highly engaged with the groups to whom they give, offering time as well as financial support. 33% of FFAMC donors are in this segment. They are most likely to be associated with Localism and Bonding as values, and are second most likely of all segments to be artists.
- **Community Altruists** (22% of entire sample): Not necessarily focused on the arts, they give a significant amount to a range of causes, in particular politically-oriented ones like social justice and the environment. 20% of FFAMC donors are in this segment. Half give over \$5,000 annually to all causes, among the highest of all segments. They are second most likely of all segments to be engaged in volunteer work.
- **Progressive Artist Champions** (19% of entire sample): Young and diverse, most likely to be artists and support individual artists in local communities that are typically not supported by the mainstream. 31% of FFA donors are in this segment. Although the overall sample skewed older (over 55), these donors are the youngest of all segments. They also have the lowest giving capacity and are most likely to be associated with Progressivism, and secondarily to Localism.
- **High-Touch Social Givers** (17% of entire sample): Influenced by their connection to the organization and people involved in the project, most likely to support world-class programming and internationally renowned visiting artists. 7% of FFAMC donors are in this segment. They are second most likely to have “high touch” scores (i.e., a high need for communication before and after making a gift). They are also most likely of all segments to dedicate a significant portion of their giving to the arts, and most associated with the Distinction and Bonding value factors.
- **Supportive Audiences** (17% of entire sample): Generally give on the basis of attending programs and do not need much attention before or after they make the gift; most likely on auto-pilot, giving to groups they already know. 9% of FFAMC donors are in this segment. They are the oldest of all segments, and although they associate most with Bonding, they are not as driven by different values as other segments, and do not require a lot of communication around giving (e.g., the exhibit low “high touch” scores).

The following chart (Figure 2) provides a quick reference guide to the five segments.



**Figure 2: Summary Descriptions of Segments**

SUMMARY SNAPSHOT OF SEGMENT CHARACTERISTICS	VALUES-DRIVEN INTRINSICS	COMMUNITY ALTRUISTS	PROGRESSIVE ARTIST CHAMPIONS	HIGH-TOUCH SOCIAL GIVERS	SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCES
<b>Demographics</b>					
% Under 45	21%	7%	27%	8%	6%
Diversity	M O R E	LESS	M O R E	LESS	LEAST
<b>Values &amp; Interests</b>					
Localism					
Humanism					
Distinction					
Bonding					
Progressivism					
<b>Giving Behaviors</b>					
Average Annual Giving	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$	\$\$\$	\$\$
% Towards Arts	\$\$	\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$	\$
Pre-Gift Touch					
Post-Gift Touch					
Tendency to Support Individual Artists					

## Implications

The overarching implication of all findings is that organizations and artists need to spend time talking to their supporters and understanding their interests, values, passions and relationships to their communities and arts organizations in general. Knowing who your donors are and what makes them excited about engaging in a certain organization or project will generate more effective and fulfilling relationships where “making the ask” becomes part of a larger conversation.

Get to know your donors. This doesn’t require expensive survey research, but rather sitting down and have a structured conversation with your donors, either one-on-one or in small groups, to learn more about their interests, passions and connection to your organization and art form. How much involvement do they want in your organization? How much evidence of impact do they want? We recommend that all major donors be interviewed using a protocol similar to the one attached.

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Diagnose your programming in terms of the underlying values that it speaks to within the donor base. If you are creating a project about an immigrant's experience, for example, note the values associated with women's and immigration issues, as well as identity building (e.g., culture, nation). How would this speak to your donor base? Remember that many donors support arts projects because they tap into values that have nothing to do with the art (e.g., social justice).

Learn to tailor development approaches (e.g., cultivation events, messaging) to different value systems. Take, for example, raising funds for a new commission by a local artist who is nationally renowned in his field. For some donors, a focus on the project's new and contemporary attributes, as well as support for a local artist would be most appealing (i.e., those donors who are more likely to be inspired by Progressivism and Localism as values). Other donors might be more attracted to the fact that this artist is well-known and respected nationally, as they may be guided by Distinction more than Localism.

Understand from the outset what level of involvement they would like, and what evidence of impact they need to see. Then develop different communications strategies targeted toward the amount of communication and involvement your donors desire. Perhaps this information can be collected at the time the gift is made through an opt-in system (e.g., "Check here if you'd like to be kept apprised of how your gift is being used.")

When talking to donors, consider:

- Messaging about values, and less about the specific details of the project.
- Making connections to value systems outside of the arts, when appropriate.
- The importance of personal connections and how you can improve them.
- How to follow-through on involvement opportunities and accountability.

## **Advance Briefing for Interview Teams Fund For Artists Grantee Interviewing Exercise**

**Prepared by Alan Brown**

### **Overview**

In June 2009, grantees of the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program, underwritten by The San Francisco Foundation and the East Bay Community Foundation, will participate in a voluntary qualitative research exercise. The purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate how individual depth interviewing can be used as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of donors' values, beliefs and motivations for giving, and to gain new insight into the success of the Fund For Artists program and how to replicate that success. Results of the interviews will inform the design of a quantitative survey of donors to be administered later in the summer.

This document describes the exercise and provides important background information that will help you prepare and make the most of it. A protocol document was circulated with this document, which is the interview script.

### **Three Simple Steps to Prepare**

Follow these simple instructions for conducting your interviews.

- Read this briefing paper to gain a sense of what will happen, and how you can contribute to the collective learning experience.
- Review the interview protocol and conduct a practice interview. Review the interview protocol distributed with this briefing and conduct a practice interview on a friend or family member. Imagine that the tables were turned and you were being interviewed. How would you answer each question?
- Show up at the orientation session with an open mind and a learning consciousness. We'll talk through the protocol during the orientation session and answer any questions you may have.
- Review the Respondent Profile Sheets that will be distributed at the orientation session. These sheets will provide you with essential background information about each donor that you interview.

That's it! You'll be ready to roll with your first interview.

### **Dates, Times, Locations**

San Francisco (Cycle 1)                      Friday – Saturday, June 12-13, 2009

Location: Office of the San Francisco Foundation, 225 Bush Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, San Francisco, CA 94104. Maps and directions will be provided.

East Bay (Cycle 2)                              Friday – Saturday, June 19-20, 2009

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Location: East Bay Community Foundation Conference Center, 353 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612. Maps and directions will be provided.

The exercise will take place from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday.

## **The Exercise**

The purpose of the interviewing exercise is to gain an organic perspective on donor issues, including why they contribute, the level of personal involvement they want, what makes them feel like their donation was a good investment, what level of accountability they expect from their beneficiaries and other issues. At the conclusion of the two-day exercise, Alan Brown will facilitate a synthesis meeting during which all of the interview teams will discuss what they learned and build a shared understanding of donor motivations.

You will be paired with another grantee representative and will work as a team throughout the exercise. Each team will interview three or four donors. There will be approximately 10 teams working concurrently each weekend.

Each team consists of an Interviewer and a Recorder. These roles are described in more detail below. Interviewers will conduct the interview, concentrating on guiding the conversation and probing the various questions. The Recorder's job is to capture (i.e., write down or type into a computer) the substance of the conversation and as much detail as possible so that it is not necessary to audio record the interview. To speed the learning process, Interviewers and Recorders should switch roles after each interview unless there is a strong preference to the contrary.

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## Detailed Schedule

The basic schedule will be identical in both locations.

### Friday (Day 1)

2:00 p.m.	Orientation and training session (large conference room); after a brief welcome from John Killacky and Diane Sanchez, Alan Brown will talk through the exercise, review the roles of the Interviewers and Recorders, and take questions.
3:30 p.m.	Practice interview (team members take turns interviewing each other, to break the ice)
4:30 p.m.	Break
5:00 p.m.	First interview (60 minutes)
6:00 p.m.	Quick debrief with your partner
6:15 p.m.	Break (dinner provided in conference room)
7:00 p.m.	Second interview (60 minutes)
8:00 p.m.	Quick debrief with your partner
8:15 p.m.	Break for the night

### Saturday (Day 2)

9:00 a.m.	Reconvene (light breakfast provided)
9:30 a.m.	Third interview (60 minutes)
10:30 a.m.	Quick debrief with your partner
11:00 a.m.	Fourth interview (60 minutes)
12:00 p.m.	Quick debrief with your partner
12:15 p.m.	Lunch provided
12:30 p.m.	Synthesis session facilitated by Alan
2:30 p.m.	Wrap-Up

## Background on Interviewing

Information obtained through depth interviews can be a vital source of information for artists, arts administrators and board members of cultural organizations. Sitting down with ticket buyers and donors and asking them about their experiences sounds simple enough. In reality, few cultural institutions or funders conduct qualitative research on a methodical basis, and many have slipped out of touch with their constituents.

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Conducting structured interviews is a highly disciplined type of research. The more forethought and preparation you bring to the interviews, the more you'll get out of them. This briefing paper discusses interviewing techniques and provides guidelines for conducting your interviews.

Interviewing is, by definition, a dynamic, unpredictable and participatory activity. The process of interviewing people yields valuable information that you would not get if someone else conducted the interviews and wrote a report for you. During most interviews, a great deal of data is communicated non-verbally, through body language, hesitation, gestures, and intonation. No matter how good the researcher, it's just not the same as experiencing the interview in person. This is why the exercise is participatory - you'll be doing the interviewing.

Knowledge is power only if you absorb it, understand it and believe it. With the researcher out of the way, the "filter" between you and your interviewees is gone. Rather, your own experience and perspective becomes the filter through which you absorb data. You can decide whether or not to believe what you hear, but you've heard it with your own ears. Hence, the value of the research derives not so much in the outcome as in the process itself.

There are several different types of interviews, including oral histories, evaluation interviews, and focus group interviews. We'll be using a structured topical interview as the primary means of gathering data. The overall topic of the interview is the donor's feelings about his or her own giving. The interview is structured because it is not an open conversation and by the end of the interview, you need to have answers to specific questions.

An interview, no matter how structured or unstructured, is really just a conversation between two unique individuals. The outcome of the interview is influenced by both of your personalities. The setting of the interview is also important. With a little practice, anyone with good conversation skills can become a good interviewer.

Good interviewing also requires a good set of questions. Asking the wrong questions (or avoiding the hard questions) is a waste of time. You may feel good by the end of the interview, but nothing is gained. Asking the right questions the right way, however, can unleash passionate, emotional, or even angry responses – which can be extremely informative.

The subject matter of these interviews is personal, and the exchange may get intimate and emotional. For a productive interview, you'll need to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

Which brings us to the hardest part of interviewing – listening. A good interviewer is a good listener. Listening requires a great deal of concentration. A good listener understands what the respondent is saying, and also thinks about what the respondent is not saying, or trying to say. Good listening is hearing between the lines, and gently coaxing the respondent to elaborate on a point (i.e., probing) until you have a satisfactory response. A good listener hears when the respondent is having difficulty answering a question, and re-phrases the question or illustrates a response drawing from her own experience. "Maybe I can help you with this question by telling you how I would answer it for myself..." Perhaps the most difficult aspect

of interviewing is simultaneously concentrating on what the interviewee is saying and also having a sense of where the interview is going – whether to probe deeper or move on to the next question.

Some questions are direct, while other questions involve asking people to tell personal stories. For example, “Can you remember when you felt especially proud of a gift you made?” Storytelling can be extremely useful in getting people to explain important events in their lives and to open up about difficult issues. While some people might have difficulty answering a question directly, they may be able to illustrate how they feel about something by telling a story. It's amazing how some people will tell you about experiences that happened 20 or 30 years ago, as if it were yesterday.

Of course, many people aren't able to articulate their motivations, values and deep feelings about something like supporting the arts, but this doesn't mean that they don't recognize these values subconsciously. Unfortunately, we can't hypnotize people and get an open connection to the subconscious, although there are more involved research techniques using symbolism and metaphors that effectively elicit people's subconscious thoughts.

The most difficult thing that this exercise will require of you is to infer some of the deeper meanings and values associated with contributing to the arts from what your interviewees tell you (and don't tell you) in a 60-minute interview.

## **The Interview Setting**

A comfortable, intimate setting can contribute a great deal to a productive interview. You'll be assigned to a private room or meeting space where your interviews will take place. The Interviewer should sit directly opposite the respondent, without a table in between, if possible. The general idea is a direct visual connection, so that you can observe body language. If you meet around a table, the Interviewer should sit just around the corner of the table from the respondent, but not too close.

The Recorder may sit anywhere else in the room, preferably with a clear view of the respondent. Remember that during the interview, the Recorder is a silent observer and not a discussion participant. As the interview progresses, the respondent should forget that there is anyone else in the room. At the end of the interview, however, the Interviewer may ask the Recorder if he or she has any further questions or clarification points.

## **Role of the Interviewer**

The Interviewer is the person who leads the discussion and assumes primary responsibility for the outcome. The Interviewer should be familiar with the protocol in advance of the interviews and, if possible, should conduct a practice interview.

The interview protocol is a road map for your conversation with the respondent. But there are many pathways to a successful, productive interview. Ultimately, each interview will have a unique flow. The protocol should be used as a guide to your conversation. The final authority on how you manage the conversation belongs to the Interviewer.



After posing a question, allow the respondent time to formulate a response. If the respondent has difficulty with a question, the Interviewer may re-phrase the question or provide an example of a response, drawing from his or her own experience. This can spark some ideas in the respondent's mind. Use this technique lightly, however, as you don't want to lead the respondent too far. The Interviewer will also "probe" on the respondent's answers, asking follow-up questions, some of which are in the protocol, but some of which may be asked spontaneously, such as, "Why do you feel that way?" or "Can you give me another example?"

Don't be afraid to manage the conversation proactively, if you can do so without offending the respondent. As you get into the protocol, try to do a minimum of talking, and avoid offering your own personal opinions on a subject.

Invariably, the respondent will digress or deviate from the protocol. This can be one of the more challenging aspects of interviewing – deciding whether to tolerate the digression in order to get useful data, or whether to bring the conversation back to the protocol: "I'd like you to hold that thought for a few minutes and we'll come back to it" or "I'd love to hear more about that, but in the interest of time, I really must bring the conversation back to the list of questions we've prepared for you."

It's not unusual for a respondent to preemptively answer a question that comes later in the protocol. Use your own discretion as to whether or not to allow this sort of jumping around within the protocol, bearing in mind that it can drive the Recorder mad. Generally, I encourage you to stick to the design as closely as possible without offending the respondent.

## **Role of the Recorder**

The Recorder's job is to capture the conversation in as much detail as possible, including some verbatim quotes. Notes may be taken by hand or typed into a computer, whichever the Recorder prefers. Some hints on note taking:

- Use the letter "R" to refer to the respondent
- If the respondent says something emphatically or repeatedly, underline the comment or idea in your notes, to suggest emphasis
- Circle comments or ideas that YOU think are important
- If you're typing notes into a computer, don't worry about spelling mistakes; getting the ideas down is more important

During the interview, capture any particularly interesting or representative comments that the respondent offers. You'll have to write (or type) fast. Use quotation marks to delineate verbatim comments such as:

"They made me feel like my gift was the lynchpin of the whole project."

You should also write down some of your own observations as you go, such as:

"R. is uncomfortable with this question."

"R. experiences art through her children, but not independently."

"R is frustrated for lack of a creative outlet."

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These observations will help you remember some of the key themes of the interview when you have the debriefing session afterwards. The role of the Recorder is essential. Without an audiotape, the Recorder's notes represent the best record of what transpired during the interview.

## **After the Interviews**

Allow yourself at least 15 minutes of time between interviews for the purpose of debriefing with your partner. Use this time to talk through the interview and identify the few most salient aspects of the conversation. Move question by question through the protocol and briefly discuss your impressions of the interviewee's answers and distill some key observations. What surprised you? How did this interview compare with others? This debriefing is an essential component of the process. Without it, you're likely to lose a great deal of the data.

Both Interviewers and Recorders should be prepared to summarize your interviews at the final synthesis session on Saturday, which I'll facilitate.

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this important learning exercise.

## **Contact Information for WolfBrown**

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## **About Alan Brown**

Alan Brown, principal of WolfBrown, is a leading researcher and management consultant in the nonprofit arts industry. He has studied audiences, visitors and patterns of cultural participation in almost every major market in the U.S. His work focuses on understanding consumer demand for cultural experiences and on helping cultural institutions, foundations and agencies to see new opportunities, make informed decisions and respond to changing conditions. He has authored numerous articles and reports on audience and donor behaviors, trends in cultural participation, engagement practices and the value system surrounding arts activities, and speaks frequently at national and international conferences.

## DONOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

*Donor Motivations Study*

*Commissioned by East Bay Community Foundation and The San Francisco Foundation*

Individual Depth Interviewing Exercises

June 12-13 at the Offices of The San Francisco Foundation

June 19-20 at the East Bay Community Foundation Conference Facility in Oakland

Prepared by Alan Brown

### Protocol Overview

Introduction by the Interviewer.....	5 minutes
Personal Passions.....	15 minutes
Core Values .....	10 minutes
Giving Behavior and Motivations .....	15 minutes
Fund For Artists Questions .....	15 minutes

[Notes to the Interviewers are bracketed.]

Italicized text may be read verbatim or paraphrased by the interviewer.

### Before You Start

- Review your Respondent Profile Sheet, which provides background information about the donor and identifies the project s/he supported (gift amounts will not be disclosed)
- Make sure your Respondent is comfortable, and has a beverage
- Introduce yourself and ask the Recorder to introduce himself/herself
- Explain that the Recorder is here to capture the conversation, but won't participate in the discussion until the end
- Make sure your Respondent has signed a Consent/Release form

### Introduction by the Interviewer

Before we start, I'd like to give you just a little background. Our conversation today is part of a study of donors to a special group of small and mid-sized arts projects led by Bay Area artists. Your contribution to [name of project/artist; refer to donor profile sheet] was matched through a program called the Fund For Artists Matching Commissions program underwritten by The San Francisco Foundation and the East Bay Community Foundation.

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Do you recall making this gift? [jar the memory]

Our conversation today is about the causes you support in general, and also about the specific gift you made that was matched through the Fund For Artists program. Our goal is to understand as much as possible about your experience as a supporter of the arts and other causes.

Regarding confidentiality, I can assure you that your name will not be associated with your comments. In other words, some of the things you say might be repeated, but will not be attributed to you. Is this alright with you?

Please be as candid as possible with your responses. If I ever ask a question that you'd rather not answer for any reason, just tell me you'd prefer to skip that question, OK?

I promise to let you go in 60 minutes.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

## Personal Passions (15 minutes)

To begin, I have some general questions about how your priorities and passions.

1. Outside of work, what activities, hobbies or interests are you passionate about? Anything else?  
[Capture the first few answers]

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2. How do you express yourself creatively? What are your avenues of creative expression? Any others?

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3. Are you involved with any groups, associations, or community organizations that indicate something important about who you are as a person? [Note: we are not talking yet about donations, just interests]

Probe: What's important to you about this group/cause/organization? [Look for the underlying value associations, aspirations, beliefs]

Probe: Are there any other causes in the community that you feel passionate about?

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## Core Values (10 minutes)

4. Think about all of your various activities, affiliations and causes that you support – all of these things that really define you as a person.

Are there any convictions, beliefs, or principles that you have as a person that connect your various activities or that explain why you do what you do?

Take as much time as you'd like. [repeat the question, if necessary]

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## Giving Behavior and Motivations (15 minutes)

Now I'd like to ask a few general questions about your giving.

5. How broad or focused are your donations? Can you give me some examples of different causes that you support financially? [Get a sense of the breadth or narrowness of philanthropic focus]

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6. Can you give me an example of a contribution that you made over the past several years that you are especially proud of – a gift that was especially meaningful to you?

Probe: What made it so meaningful?

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7. If you had \$10,000 to give to some nonprofit cause or project tomorrow, what would you choose to support? Why?

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8. Would you say that your contributions are motivated by a general desire to support organizations or causes that are important to you, or out of a desire to support specific projects or activities that you feel are particularly worthwhile? Why?

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9. How much personal involvement do you like to have with the organizations you support? How do you like to be involved? Can you give me some examples?

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10. How are you assured that your contributions are well used? Do you trust arts groups to use your funds wisely, or do you like to have some proof or evidence that your contributions were well-spent?

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Probe: Are you satisfied with the level of accountability that your beneficiaries provide you? Probe: What could be done to improve this?

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## Fund For Artists Questions (15 minutes)

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about the specific gift you made to [Artist/Program] for the [Name of Project].

11. What attracted you to give to this project? [Try to get a sense of emphasis: Was it the artist? The organization? The subject matter of the project?]

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12. Were you aware that your gift would be matched? If so, did this influence your thinking at all about your gift? How so?

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13. What personal involvement did you have with the project, if any? [Prompt if necessary:] Did you attend an event? Did you watch the creative process unfold?

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14. What was the outcome of the project for you? In other words, what is your assessment of the project? [See if respondent has formed an opinion about the efficacy of his/her gift.]

# APPENDICES

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Probe: Would you make the same gift again?

Probe: If so, would you do anything differently?

Probe: What would have made your experience as a donor even richer and more rewarding?

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## Wrap-Up

- Ask the Recorder if s/he has any questions or clarifications for the respondent.
- Remind the Respondent to pick up the honorarium on the way out.
- Thank You!

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