



Grantmakers in the Arts
Proceedings from the
1999 Conference

Strengthening the Arts Through Policy, Performance and Practice

November 14-17, 1999 San Francisco

Supporting Individual Artists – Models That Work

This session was constructed as a conversation among artists and funders on the big issues surrounding artists' support – why it's important to our culture, in what forms it is most useful for artists, at what stages in their careers, and how funders can leverage support for artists beyond the monetary value of their grants.

Moderator: Claire Peeps,
The Durfee Foundation

Panelists: Luis Alfaro,
playwright, Latino Theatre Initiative
Irene Borger,
CalArts/Alpert Award in the Arts
Sarah Lutman,
The Bush Foundation
Mick Moloney,
traditional Irish musician
Peter Pennekamp,
The Humboldt Area Foundation
Pamela Z,
composer/vocalist

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*Strengthening the Arts through
Policy, Performance and Practice*

In 1999 Grantmakers in the Arts celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and, as organizations periodically do, we took this opportunity to stand back, take stock of our work as grantmakers, and look to the future. As part of this process, we surveyed our membership and also asked a number of you to tell us what you were working on, how you were doing, and what was keeping you awake at night.

In fact, we found very few surprises. You talked about the need to sustain arts organizations and leaders, increase public participation, and support individual artists and their work. You also talked about your desire for more informed arts policy, better evaluation, and new linkages to the for-profit sector. These ideas formed the content of the 1999 conference.

But the spirit of the conference came from another place, another vision, that is equally a part of the essential GIA. John Gardner, the founder of Independent Sector, gave a speech in Oakland in 1998, in which he spoke of the immense promise and possibility of the work of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. He said of our work:

We are allowed to pursue truth, even if we are going in the wrong direction – allowed to experiment even if we're bound to fail, to map unknown territory even if we get lost. We are committed to alleviate misery and redress grievances, to give reign to the mind's curiosity and the soul's longing, to seek beauty where we can and defend truth where we must, to honor the worthy and smite the rascals with everyone free to define worthiness and rascality, to find cures and to console the incurable, to deal with the ancient impulse to hate and fear the tribe in the next valley, to prepare for tomorrow's crisis and preserve yesterday's wisdom, and to pursue the questions that others won't because they are too busy or too lazy or fearful or jaded. It is a sector for seed planting and path finding, for lost causes and causes that yet may win. This is the vision.

Although he wasn't speaking of our work specifically, I have not encountered a more eloquent expression of what it means to be a grantmaker in the arts. The 1999 conference began with its content firmly in hand and with this vision offered as a guide. Hopefully along the way, we explored each other's best funding efforts, shared lessons from our failures, and drew courage from our commitment to artists, art forms, and community.

Cora Mirikitani

1999 GIA Conference Chair

Cuthbert: *Good afternoon. I'm Neal Cuthbert. I'm a board member of Grantmakers in the Arts and a program officer from the McKnight Foundation in Minneapolis where I can do a little plug for next year's conference.*

The Twin Cities will be hosting next year's conference, and since you're all interested in supporting individual artists and models that work, I can let you know that one whole stream of the conference will be dedicated to looking at programs for individual artists and individual artists, and all of that kind of stuff, so...contact me or any of the other Minnesota people if you have ideas for sessions or topics that you think should be covered in next year's conference. So, a little plug there. But moving right along.

My task is to merely make one introduction and then turn this over and get out of here. I have the honor of introducing Claire Peeps, who is the executive director of the Durfee Foundation, a foundation that supports arts and culture in Southern California. Claire has an interesting background. She was the associate director of the LA Festival. She was also publisher of High Performance. She was the editor and director of education at the Ansel Adams Center and has worked consulting with a wide range of different kinds of institutions from the Getty to the Music Center of LA County, Arts Inc. She has a book coming out from St. Martin's Press in the fall of next year called Actions Speak Louder: American Activists Reflect on the Process of Change which sounds like a hell of a book. So with that, thank you all for being here this afternoon, and here you go, Claire.

Peeps: Thank you, Neal. The printed title of this session is *Supporting Individual Artists – Models that Work*. In fact, I think we're going to begin this discussion two steps back from that today, which is to look at some of the broader issues of how supporting individual artists is important to our culture; at what moment in an artists career support might be useful; in what forms; at what scale. Some of those kinds of broader questions.

I'm delighted that this panel is part of a through-line in the conference. There seems to be a great deal of discussion around support to individual artists that began with the weekend retreat at Bodega Bay. I know last night, I

wasn't able to attend, but I think many of you were here, Christine Elbel from the Fleishhacker Foundation organized a dinner around support to individual artists.

Our session will be followed over the next two mornings by roundtable discussions that will, in fact, get into the nuts and bolts of successful models, models that are working. I do encourage you to attend those sessions in which we'll be showcasing different strategies that range very broadly from a disciplinary focus to supporting artists through providing space rather than funding, to providing artists residencies in the corporate setting. So really it's a broad range of programs that we'll be looking at over the course of the next two mornings. I see today's session as a platform for a larger discussion that I think is going to continue throughout the conference.

This afternoon we're going to look then at this landscape through a slightly broader lens. And I think while we're all generally inclined to support the idea of individual artists grant programs, not a great many funders are in fact actively engaged in it – for very good and for complex reasons, which I think we will touch on today.

In Los Angeles, for instance, I think only about two or three percent of the overall grant dollars go to individual artists. Los Angeles isn't necessarily a good bellwether for the nation, but I think it's indicative of a general situation in which the weighting is not in favor of individual artists. I think that we are gaining some momentum, but I think that there are other trends in philanthropy right now that perhaps complicate the issue for us. Certainly the cross-sector funding that's going on, which is a very positive thing; and also the increased emphasis on outcomes, which came up briefly this morning. I think those kinds of issues complicate the horizon.

I'm very, very delighted today to be joined by a group of distinguished colleagues, whose work and whose opinion I hold in very high esteem. And I'm just going to introduce them very briefly to you before we launch into our discussion. And we do intend it to be a discussion, so I hope that we will have a pretty loose conversation here that will engage all of us.

Immediately to my left is Irene Borger, who is the director of the CalArts/Alpert Awards in the Arts in California, which provides substantial grants of \$50,000 each to a half dozen artists each year, to artists working around the country, early mid-career artists. The program is currently in its sixth year. Irene comes to the panel as a working artist herself. She's been the writer-in-residence with AIDS Project Los Angeles since 1990. She published last year on behalf of the Alpert Foundation a remarkable book called *Force of Curiosity*, which is made up of interviews with the Alpert Awards artists. It is great, great testimony and I think further amplification of this discussion today. Irene has also been involved in writing about artists and interviewing a great number of people for the *New York Times* and a number of other publications around the country.

Immediately next to Irene is Peter Pennekamp, the director of the Humboldt Area Foundation, which serves rural northwest California. He's recently initiated some really innovative grant programs that support traditional artists, and he'll be telling us about those. Prior to going to Humboldt, Peter was the vice president for cultural programming at National Public Radio. And prior to that, was the director of the Inner Arts Program at the NEA. So has a very broad perspective and a very broad history on support to individual artists.

Pamela Z, next to Peter, is a San Francisco-based composer and performer whose work is primarily in voice and electronics. She's toured widely throughout US and Europe and Japan, and has oodles of grants and fellowships and commissions to her credit, including a CalArts/Alpert award in the Arts, and an American Composers for a McKnight Visiting Composers Fellowship, among many others.

Next to Pamela is Mick Maloney, a musician, folklorist, arts presenter and advocate who's worked a great deal with radio and television with such PBS programs as *Out of Ireland* and *The Irish in America: The Long Journey Home*. He's played a very significant role, I think, in the revival of traditional Irish music and dance that we have seen, that certainly we all recognize through a show like *Riverdance*. And his work has had an enormous impact on the

community. In 1999, he was awarded the National Heritage Award from the NEA, and of course, has received many other grants over the years for his work.

And next to Mick is Sarah Lutman, who is in her new incarnation now as the Senior Director for Content Initiatives in Minnesota Public Radio, which is a truly awesome title. For the previous decade, Sarah served as the Senior Program Officer of the Bush Foundation, which is one of the longest standing fellowship programs for individual artists support in the country. It awards 15 fellowships of \$40,000 annually. She's also the former executive director of the Fleishhacker Foundation here in San Francisco.

And then, at the end, my very good friend and colleague Luis Alfaro, who's the director of the Latino Theatre Initiative at the Mark Taper Forum, a theatre based in LA; also poet, playwright, solo performer, director, curator, community organizer. Somebody who truly wears many hats and divides his time as a working artist on the one hand, and as a facilitator of other people's work on the other. He's a MacArthur recipient, a recipient of the playwright's fellowship, NEA/TCG grant, many other individual grants and organizational grants.

So as you can see, we initially tried to construct the panel as three funders and three artists but everybody's actually wearing many hats here.

We had a phone conversation a few days ago about this panel and what kinds of topics we might touch on. Peter remarked that he'd recently been at a conference for Grantmakers in Children, Youth, and Families, and that over the course of the three days, he saw not one child, youth, or family at the conference. We certainly didn't want to make the same mistake, and I think we are enormously privileged to have been proceeded in our session today by Ann Chamberlain's remarkable presentation, and I think it sets the stage well for our discussion. We would like to remember, in very much a first-hand way, why we're here for this discussion today and I asked the artists if we could be so bold as to have them present a little bit of their work, so we'd get to understand

their work better, before we launch into this discussion.

Luis, could we ask you to begin, is that okay?

Alfaro: Sure, absolutely.

The pressure is on. I thought what I would do just to open the panel this morning is, I write a lot of poetry about growing up in downtown Los Angeles; it's the basis of most of my work. But I thought it would be nice to write a little bit of an artist's manifesto about what's going on for me personally in my life right now, and in relation to, I think, what we're going to talk about. So this just a little... it's not fully baked yet, but I thought I'd read it to you.

Some days I wait for the poem to happen. But every day is when I go to Fred C. Nallis Boys' Prison, the Eagle Center for Gay and Lesbian High Schoolers, Camp Scott for Underage Female Felons, or St. Anne's for Pregnant Wayward Teens.

Some days, the words don't come. I lay out my canvas, a paper, and a pen, but they stay away. I burn incense to Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz, if a nun can write good erotic poetry, I should be able to write something decent, don't you think?

I read my Lorca, wondering why the only Latino artists I see on TV are always dead. I sit at the homemade altar, silence faced to let the words feel welcome.

Every day, I dramaturg someone's play; I help a designer clarify an image; I help an administrator sharpen a vision. Every day, I work with playwrights under 30 and mid-career artists, getting them ready for the regionals. But every day the regionals have trouble producing Asians, one percent; gay and lesbians, ten percent; people of color, five percent; people who are alive, 15 percent.

Every day, I help artists prepare for being ignored. Every day, I get hungry. Not artistically hungry, but the other kind. But some days is what they feed you for. Every day, is what I call contribution, the moment when I don't think I'm writing a poem but the space gets filled. Every day is when I'm dreaming of new ways forward. Every day is the dream state, the

happening when nothing else can. The every day of contribution is when I learn how to become a leader. Every day I do it because I love it.

Every day I do it because to not, hurts. Every day I do it because a world becomes in small increments a better place. Every day I do it because I miss seeing people at their best. Every day I do it because someone once did it for me. Every day I do it because it's the only thing I'm really good at. Every day I do it because my gut tells me to. Every day I do it because it connects the lonely. But some days is when they publish the poem. Some days is when the play gets produced. Some days is when the performance gets performed. One day my some days will become my every days.

That's my little poem.

Maloney: Well, I thought that I would do two short things. One is to sing an unaccompanied song, just a bit of it, because it's a very long song. And then to show a video, more of the performing arts part of our Irish traditional culture with music and dancing.

The song I'm going to sing is in the Gaelic language – we just call it Irish at home, and it's now only spoken by 60,000 people out of a population of 4.5 million as a first language. A lot of people understand it, speak a little bit, as a first language. And the song tradition is a real deep connection to our whole sense of self in Ireland. And people at all sorts of levels, conscious and unconscious, they can feel that.

The style of singing is Shannoles. Shannoles means old. Shan, old style. Shan is old and noles is way. Old style. It's a cappella. And it was traditionally sung in... just in the simple houses of people in the Gaelic-speaking districts, and, of course, most of Ireland was until about 150 years or so ago.

And the songs were more than pieces of art. They represent a deep sense of connection to history. We have a saying in Ireland that those in power write the history books, and those who suffer write the songs. And we've written an awful lot of songs, more than you could count on a wet Sunday.

This is a version of a song from the west of Ireland that's known in many European traditions and indeed in Appalachia, too, called Tirna Randall, Lord Randall. The story is the same in all the songs. It's a very strange tale of a young man being poisoned by his sweetheart and going back to his mother. And then very strangely she asks him what will he leave to various members of the family, and he goes through the various members. And then at the end of it all, she says, what will you leave your true love? And then the answer varies in the culture traditions. In the Irish one it's a pretty ferocious curse that heaven be closed forever to her and the gates of hell be open for her. It's a very lyrical song. Usually, he's poisoned in the song. And when he's asked what he's poisoned from in the song, he says a prothy niver flothing the oar, poisoned potatoes and golden plates. So...

Anyway, I'll just do a couple of verses of that and then I'll show you a video of a group that has been funded by the NEA for a good many years.

[Sings song]

In a sense, that kind of singing is very... It's not really a performing arts tradition at all in the sense that it was never designed for the stage and it was never designed to impress people, really. It was just something that was very understated. People always closed their eyes. It was in the very small houses of the people. Now, it's going through a metamorphosis and going through many different changes as young artists are using it as a springboard for collaborations with all sorts of other cultures and it's a very exciting time in this tradition. It was very marginalized over the years and associated with a rural background, a rural situation, which was poverty-stricken. And even in the society itself, it was looked down upon a lot. But lately, the culture and politics of it all have changed and now it's being elevated right to the center of the tradition almost like it's a sacred icon for aspects of who we are.

The traditions that are known, I suppose, to most people these days of the performing arts tradition of Ireland, are the instrumental music and the dance traditions. I would like to play you a little excerpt from a movie that's just been

made by Irish television on a group that I've been involved in here in America called The Green Fields of America, and it's a celebrated its 20th anniversary last year. There was a lot of hoopla and we had a big festival in Milwaukee that we were all part of. Over the years, it received a lot of funding from the NEA and from state arts foundations as well, to highlight a lot of traditional performers who wouldn't necessarily have been known even in their own community, who would certainly not have been full time, and who would have represented really a connection with an art form that even in the Irish American community was not known very well, the older stratum of the tradition, which had been really displaced by popular American commercial forms.

It's an interesting example of Irish step dance, in that it's kind of half way between a folk tradition in the sense of being informally passed on, and a more formal art tradition in that there are schools in the communities where it's formally taught. So it sort of bridges the gap between why folklore is often called folk, and elite culture. It really is its own category.

Over 20 years here, we've been bringing the various strands of music and dance together. People in Ireland thought the *Riverdance* just fell out of the sky, you know, in 1995. But, in fact, most of the artists involved had been developing their skills here in America with arts funding over the years. So that's why Irish television decided to do a documentary on *The Green Fields of America*, as it's called.

And this is in the way of being like a little world premier. This is only a work in progress. It's going to be shown in March of all months, next year. And so this is like a three-minute segment from this.

[video]

Thank you.

Pamela Z: Well, I'm Pamela Z and the work that I do ranges from solo work for voice and electronics to, in more recent times, large scale performances that have, up to now, often also been solo, using other media like projected images and working in a large space moving through the space.

I've also done compositions for new music chamber ensembles, like the Bang On A Can All Stars and the California Ear Unit, as well as composing music for dance companies and independent filmmakers and so forth. And for many years in San Francisco, I've worked off and on with a group called the Cube Chicks, which is a performance ensemble that consists of myself and another opera singer named Julie Queen and a Butoh dancer named Lee Evans.

I have gotten the bug to make larger, sort of theater pieces. Last year, I did a piece called *Parts of Speech*, which I did at Theatre Artaud with funding from the San Francisco Art Commission Individual Artist Commission grant, as well as some LEF Foundation support. And that piece was a solo piece and it was a challenge for me to make a piece that was big enough to fill a space like Artaud as a solo artist. So in order to do that, I worked with Lauren Elder, who designed a beautiful set that was basically tall monoliths throughout the depth of this very deep playing area that they have at Artaud that were also very tall so that I could appear at higher levels at various points in time. Larry Ackerman, who does multi-image projections, created this set made out of light that I was working in for much of the piece.

I was pleased with the fact that I was able to pull it off. I wasn't sure. I mean, the house is kind of a big house and I have four performances scheduled. So when it went well, I got inspired to try to do it again, and this year, or in 2000, I'm going to be doing another show called *Gaijin*, and I spent the first half of this year in Japan on a Fellowship from the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, so I got a lot of first-hand experience of what it's like to be a foreigner in a place where they really let you know that you're a foreigner. *[laughing]* And so I'm making a piece now called *Gaijin*, which is really dealing with foreignness in whatever form that one person might feel foreign, whether it's because they're in a foreign land or because maybe they feel like a foreigner in their own land. And in this piece, I'm going to use three other performers, three Butoh dancers, actually, Kinji Hayashi, Leigh Evans, and then a person I just recently met named Shinichi

Momo Koga. And it looks like I'll be doing it again at Theatre Artaud.

In any case, what I thought I would show you is something that's typical of the work that I do as a solo artist when I perform in not necessarily large-scale works, but when I perform my solo works that can be done in small gallery settings or in larger concert settings.

This particular video is of me doing a piece at the Lab Gallery in San Francisco. And the name of the piece is *Bone Music*, and it's a solo work that, this is just a short solo piece, it's about seven minutes long, I think. It makes use of my own voice, and I always like to work with found objects or found sound. Sometimes, I use sampled concrete sounds, and other times I sample my voice and found objects in real time as I'm working onstage. This is going to be an example of that. So you'll hear the sound of my own voice and one of my favorite instruments which is the Alhambra five-gallon water bottle, and a rack of digital delays so you'll hear three different digital delay units and some other multiprocessing units that I have in my rack there.

[video]

Peeps: Well, I think that was actually an extraordinary point of reference for the discussion, because the range of work in just three artists was extraordinary and begins to suggest why it's difficult, I think, to get one's arms around creating programs that support individual artists and might do so in ways that are both useful and equitable.

I would like to begin by thinking more from an institutional point of reference about how we begin to value creativity in a country in which the core of our activity is organized through institutions. I wonder, Peter, if you might lead off with some thoughts on that.

Pennekamp: Sure. I asked Holly Sidford, our colleague, what to say and Holly said, "Tell them you don't need a million dollars to do this work." So there, I've said my piece. *[laughter]*

I'm going to give three short vignettes about support that I think are all about it being

integrated into the work we do and the values being integrated into the work we do.

One has to do with witnessing. This year is the 50th anniversary of what we call the Robeson Riots. It's always struck me as an odd way to call it because Paul Robeson certainly wasn't rioting. It was something that I believe happened to him. People, mostly from New York but also from other parts of the country, organized to go to Peekskill, knowing that riots were going to happen. They loaded their children into cars and drove there because that was the profoundest witnessing they could provide. And the stories are amazing.

Borger: My mother was there, my mother was pregnant with me at that riot.

Pennkamp: See? Here we go. And we didn't even set this up.

But the notion of witnessing, in a comfortable time in society, is a hard thing for us to do. The stakes are lower but we're less apt to act, even in the face of much lower odds. But the need for the artist's voice to have a witnessing is certainly something that money right now has had something to do with. You know, we have philanthropy here certainly supporting what's happening at the Brooklyn Museum.

We had a beekeeper come into our office a couple of years ago. A long, tall hippie beekeeper who had inherited a little bit of money from his grandfather who wanted to create a foundation of world peace with I think about \$100,000. So we started talking, it turns out his grandfather is one of the organizers of the Robeson concert and was there. He's now working with Pete Seeger and others to set aside a family home in Peekskill to create a memorial, a lasting memorial to Paul Robeson and all the people who supported him. That's actually in the last six months gone from an idea to something that's really happening around a whole series of remembrances.

I think, again, the notion that remembering is part of our work. That this isn't all about the instant, that the artist is an artist now and over time.

I think the second one is caring. An interesting example that I was talking to someone about

yesterday was the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theater. Their founder, Carlo Mazzone Clemente, is now in his 80s and has never done anything to take care of himself. He has taken the royalties from his books and spent them on different artists' projects. It's not like anyone we've ever heard of right? Sort of the standard malady. But Dell'Arte now, simply takes care of it. They built it into their budget. Funders here who give them grants, you're always giving a little piece of that to Carlo. You might not know it. But for his house, his food, the things that will keep him involved with his art. And it's an example of an institution making a commitment that I think is unusual in this country to its artists.

The third one that I was thinking about was an artist named Brian Tripp, who's an American Indian contemporary artist, also a very powerful traditional artist, who's had one hell of a life. We call him the mid-career artist at this point. His father was killed in a logging accident way back when.

I recently ran into someone who had once been the director of the California Rural Indian Health Board and he said, "You know, I used to employ Brian Tripp." And that was sort of hard to tabulate. Anyone who knows Brian, knows the thought of him working... I think he was a health technician, which, you know, Brian is just way out there and I said, "Well, what did he do?" He said, "Well, he did his art." He said "That was our commitment. He was on State payroll and we paid him to do his art. He sat there in his corner and he set up and he did it." And that was just the right thing.

Brian ended up doing work that got a fair amount of attention for years but it was fairly self-destructive. Never had any management. Recently, a very traditional sort of patron took him under his wing, gave him studio space, started organizing his time. And in the last two years, he's had two shows in Japan; he spent six months in Europe. He's selling work all over the world, and his career has totally taken off

In all those cases, it's about nurturing and the role of the nurturer. Witnessing is something that we as a field don't particularly do well. Nurturing is often something that's difficult for us. The sort of immediate care of people's

specific needs are all difficult. They're all things that can be done in other sectors. All of which we can be supporting in the way we think of the work we do.

You know, we're a country that built our support of artists on the notion of our arts institutions; that it was a civilizing force. And a hundred years ago, when we were creating our arts institutions, it was a civilizing force. It was something we were doing to immigrants. And that DNA runs awfully deep in our work. We don't expect much of our institutions, whether it's us, whether it's others, in general. And I think because of that, we're trying to always find sort of a big fix for the artists that, in fact, should be lots of little fixes. It should be everyone taking care of the artist's pension when they get to be 80 and can't do it anymore. And doing the witnessing when the witnessing needs to happen.

None of those things play out very well in market economies, but I think they are things we can take stands on. At a GIA conference I think three years ago in Pittsburgh, Tia Oros from the Seventh Generation Fund talked about how you support the work they do. And she said, "You know, you can't support our dancers. To support our dancers is to destroy them. But you can give a grant to environmental groups that will fight the forest services spraying the areas that we dance in and collect the regalia materials in, so that we don't get poisoned and die of cancer in the process of doing it."

I think nurturing was one of Ann Chamberlain's points today. She was talking about how certain grants are helpful, but that time to think and be human within your work is an awful hard thing for us to do at this point.

Just briefly, the work that we're doing is...

We're working with all of the arts groups in our area to develop something called the North Coast Cultural Trust. And the deal that we've all made together is that we want at least 30 percent of the money that goes into the trust as it's raised – we're about one million dollars now – to be directly for funding individual artists; another third to be for institutions for projects; and another third to be for stabilization.

But the first money raised, in fact, has gone to the individual artists. We think that that needs to be the emblem throughout what we do. In fact, this is about the creative process and none of the institutions make any sense outside of the artist.

To create regalia, we've partnered with the Hewlett Foundation and the Seventh Generation Fund, that's all money going out to artists working in their communities. Based on that, there's now something called the Northern California Native Performance Fund, which is all the rural tribes from Central California up to the Oregon border. Hewlett just gave a \$180,000 grant. Most of that will end up going to individual artists, both traditional and contemporary, throughout the state.

I suggested at one point that we should be paying people for their time, and this woman in her 80s turns to me and says, "Honey, you don't pay people for their culture." We don't normally run into that do we? Different point of view. But for them, you don't pay people for their culture.

Peeps: I'd like to hone in on this issue of nurturing. Luis, could I ask you if you would talk a bit about what the actual effect of giving an artist money is on their quality of life?

Alfaro: Sure. I work at a big institution, it's a 25 million dollar regional theatre. I run a laboratory in the theater, one of many. And one of the things we've been trying to do is, when we give out funds, we call them commissions because we're interested in products that we can present on our stage. Somebody upstairs is always saying, "Where's the product? Where's the product? Where's the product?"

So we started to create these little banks of hours, which kind of came out of this other work that I was doing. I actually used to work for a union, and then I worked in the AIDS field for five years. And in the AIDS field, we had case managers who used to take on a client, people who were HIV positive, and help them get their lives together. Everything from housing issues, alcoholism and drug treatment, all of that stuff. So borrowing from that, we started to try to envelop the artist at our theater with a

lot of support around fundamental quality of life issues.

One of the things that never really happens in art institutions, is you never make connections to social service work or getting an artist on to job training programs. You know, if an artist is in fact going to spend three years in your company writing a play and the max that we generally give for that is about \$7 to \$10,000. What does that come out to every year? Not very much money. So we started to really envelop artists with these banks of hours. And the banks of hours are really designed for our institution to pay attention to an artist.

I thought that the way that I would get the company to pay attention to the artist was by asking company members to donate their hours towards this artist. So for instance, the artist has to come in and spend ten hours with the scenic designer and talk about their work. And the scenic designer guides them to the process of how their play would look on stage. The same for the literary manager, but also human relations and health resources and all that we have in the company. We can't necessarily offer the artist health insurance but we can definitely give them all the resources that are piling up there that our employees do have.

So that's just a very small way of giving a commission and enveloping the artist with all the stuff that comes with the company. And in the end, I kind of feel like that what we've done is we've tried to marry process and product, so that spending the three years with our company hopefully is about relationship.

And now I feel that what I'm doing in the company is building relationships outside of the company for the artist. Once the artist commits to a first draft, I spend a lot of my time sending it around the country and creating linkages. A lot of the artists that I work with aren't really produced in big regional theatres, like I was saying in the poem. They're produced in mid-sized houses, 100 seats to 250, 300 seats. Those are smaller theaters around the country, and there's hundreds of them!

So really, I spend a lot of my time saying, here, here, here. And I send plays, and I send resumes, and I also just send what the artist is

doing the next five to ten-year plan. And that's something we've started to do, which is really kind of corny and great, is to get an artist to do a five-year plan, which is kind of amazing.

Peeps: Actually, what you're touching on, I think, is the reciprocal relationship of what artists have to do and what institutions or funders can do to support the work. Irene and I have talked about this a bit too, the process of seeking grants and the relationship between the funder and the grantee. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that from your perspective at Alpert, Irene?

Borger: Sure. But first Luis, you made me think of this – anthropologist Barbara Meyerhoff is doing a study on the old community in Fairfax Street in Los Angeles. And she said, "You go in to buy a fish, but you come out with a relationship." [laughter] It had something to do with face-to-face relations!

There are so many ideas spinning. For example, Peter, those three words you used were really a reflection of the values that you're operating with. I think that has everything to do with how you build a program, how you set up an application. But I kind of want to go back to something really core.

Both for the artist and the funder, what is deeply needed? What will satisfy? You know, everything is needed. Everything is needed. So as a funder, if you're uncomfortable with what Jane Herschfield wrote, if you didn't hear her, the poet Jane Herschfield said last night, "Why not enjoy the thrill as a funder that artists have to sit down with every day? Why not not know what's going to happen?" But there are some funders, and you could hear this morning, people in the audience who felt like they were working for boards that needed to have a certain kind of resolution or product. That wouldn't be a good match, perhaps.

The Alpert Foundation is an artist-funded foundation. And so one of the values of the foundation was that artists are to be trusted. And artists are to be brought into the process at every level. So you have to ask what phase or aspect of making work are you as a funder most philosophically aligned with? Would you

be comfortable with a kind of a dream time? Or presenting products?

What Claire and I were talking about was the actual application process. And this goes back to what Pamela was saying on the phone, you know, it was taking you away from your work to do all your applications and to do all the managing of your career. Whereas Luis, it sounded like you reiterated this today, that you see all aspects of what you're doing as part of quote, "your work."

Alfaro: Absolutely. I think that part of my process of making art is helping others make art. I was thinking about a Guggenheim Grant I just wrote that was kind of like a poem. It's that, you know, challenging the foundation itself to sort of rethink how they sort of ask you to submit, and keep sort of pushing at the boundaries of that. I didn't get it but... That might tell you how they feel about it.

Borger: So just to use this as a prototype, how can you create an application process? I mean, I think the MacArthur is ideal. How wonderful to be able to call someone and tell them they've gotten an award without them having to go through the application process! I mean, that's extraordinary. But given that most people have to have an application process, then what could you do not to quote "make work" for an artist but to have them have an experience with the process that actually could be beneficial?

And so the questions, for example that we put together, actually, have turned out for quite a lot of people to be reflective ones. But you know, it's true, what happens to the person who doesn't get funded? You know, Sarah, you were talking about the difficulties, the problems. And I still see that as a problem, you know, what happens to the people who don't get funded? That really is difficult to deal with.

Lutman: Well, plus, if you are a person sitting there at your word processor and you're asked to take self-reflection seriously, and you make yourself extremely vulnerable but most of our processes are not personal enough to deal with the vulnerability of the people on the other end.

Peeps: I know Pamela, on the phone when we had our pre-conversation, referenced being derailed by some grant making processes, which I think is a pretty dramatic way to realize that actually, grant-making/grant-seeking can be very disruptive in an artist's life. Could you to talk a little bit about that from your practical perspective of trying to create work?

Pamela Z: Well, I think it's particularly difficult for a solo artist who does not have an organization around them. Because there are some people who work with a company and they've got a board and they have a development director, and they have, you know, somebody whose work it is to write and research grants.

The comment I was making in our telephone conversation was that, I've only been back from Japan for about three months, and during that time I've written five grants. Anybody who's written a grant knows how much time goes into doing that. Particularly, if you don't have any staff you're doing all of it, including authoring the material, going through all your past paperwork to answer specific questions about finances and anything else that might be in that grant, and the actual making eight or ten identical copies of everything. It's amazing how much time it takes. And then, of course, and if the grant isn't available online in any form, recreating the grant form on the computer so that you can type on it, because who owns a typewriter to put all of that information into those little slots and get everything organized the way it's supposed to?

It's such a major process. And the thing is, if I was going to get every single one of those five grants I wrote, then that would be great. But I'm not, I'm definitely not going to get every single one of those five grants that I wrote. I hope that I get some of them.

But in the meantime, needless to say, it was hard for me to make any work while I was doing that. I came back sort of brimming with ideas after my experience in Japan and ready to settle down in my studio and start making work, but I had all these deadlines I had to do that. And so I think that's kind of what I was talking about in being derailed is that what I found myself being when I got home was not

so much an artist but an arts administrator, because I have to wear all these different hats as a solo artist who doesn't have representation and doesn't have an organization around me or any of that. So that end of it is difficult.

Another thing that I brought up in our conversations has to do with the kinds of support that an artist needs. We've been talking about the difference between supporting an actual project like giving an artist a commission to make some specific thing, and then on the other hand, giving an artist money so that they can make whatever it is they make, or just to give them time to do whatever it is that they do. And I really feel that artists need both of those kinds of support. Fellowships like the Alpert Award are really important because, if you get nothing but grants that are specific to a particular project, you end up spinning your wheels to try to fulfill whatever it is that you wrote in that grant application and then the money's all gone. Usually, it takes more money than they gave you to do the thing that you wrote the grant for, and when you're done, you've made work but you've had to support that work and do it yourself. So it's really nice to sometimes be given a chunk of money that's just like "Here, you've been a good artist, now, support yourself in whatever way you need to do your work."

One other thing I wanted to say is that usually, when you get a grant for one thing you end up spending it for something other than what it was given to you for. And it always seem to go both ways with these two ways of funding that I was talking about. When you've been given a grant that's supposed to be for a particular project, maybe a big part of that budget that you write is your own artist's fee because you know that that funder values artists getting a fee. But in reality, you'll never have that artist fee because you'll use the part that you wrote as your artist fee to pay for all the extra stuff that you didn't put into the budget because you knew that it wouldn't balance with what they said they're going to give you.

And then on the other hand when you get a grant that's like a fellowship that was supposed to be, here, this is just money for you, usually that money ends up going into supporting a project or some projects rather than just sup-

porting you because whatever grant you got to do those projects wasn't enough to cover those projects. So it's a juggling thing.

Peeps: It takes a tremendous amount of time to seek out the applications and it's actually preventing you from doing work. And I know in the cases of traditional artists, many of whom are working as artists part time, the issue becomes even further complicated. They may be working in another profession entirely and being a professional musician as well. In addition, many of the grants we have are directed toward the creation of original work or to new work. Mick, how have you and your colleagues fared with that?

Maloney: Well, it's a really big issue when traditional and folk arts come up for funding – the whole notion of originality. I was amazed recently when I got in the mail the Pew Charitable Trust's latest grant application categories. I could not believe it – I thought I was seeing things – when I saw that individual folk and traditional artists could apply I really thought I was not awake. Because it was the first time I had ever seen a major foundation actually offer an individual fellowship, sizable, in the category folk and traditional.

As a folklorist, you know, we come up against the issue all the time of traditionality and originality. And it seems to me... I wonder why the whole notion of originality is so narrowly defined? I mean, this is the bitching and moaning part of my presentation. I suppose the second part will be, well what can we do, what are the things we can set in place. But I will indulge myself on bitch and moan for a while.

The thing we come against all the time in folk and traditional arts, is this concept of originality. Also the very notion of folk and traditional arts being a category. It doesn't do service to the complexity of what folk and traditional arts are. I mean, it's window dressing sometimes for local politicians, who say, well, it's a good thing to have and let's give them some money and keep them quiet. And let's make sure all the poor little ethnic groups and minorities get something, really to keep them quiet. And then they give it to the people least designed to do any kind of culture programming, community

organizations that don't know anything about art. And that tends to be unfortunately, the history of funding of ethnic arts, certainly in the Philadelphia area for a great many decades, even though it is changing.

But to get even beyond that to the notion of original and why original seem to be this category we have a whole new works, again, there's this notion it has to be created out of some kind of time and space that is not connected to some other time and space. I wonder where that thinking came from? Because the real world isn't like that at all. And when you get to folk and traditional arts, I've seen as many folk and traditional arts that value creativity of Irish music, which I'm involved in, it really values creativity.

If somebody was to play the same tune or sing the same song twice the same way, they would not be as well thought of as an artist who wouldn't. So it's deeply ingrained in the tradition. There's a tremendous respect for the piece itself, the music or the song or the dance. There's a tremendous respect for aspects of it and the style of it, but yet it's constantly evolving and there's an equal respect for the innovation that's involved in the performance of that. But then there's some forms... and we think that's a good thing, when we said that's original and therefore we qualify.

Well, I would be more belligerent and say, it doesn't even have to be that. How about those forms that value deeply adherence to a style, or adherence to a culture known? That it's deeply, almost sacred and significant in that tradition and in a lot of older traditions, that represents the cornerstone of a cultural identity of a people, a whole group of people. Why is that less valuable than to create something completely original? As if that was possible anyway.

And yet, we use this language; we accept this language as a given. And I'm amazed. Sometimes, I step back and say, why do we buy into this? Because life is much more complex than that. Art is much more complex than that. And this notion is tied in and bolstered by all the class issues that Peter was talking about this morning, and by all sort of elitist notions, too, relating to folk and minority art, which is another issue.

But beyond that even, the fundamental category of original is deeply offensive to me as an artist and as a folklorist.

Peeps: This leads in perfectly to the work I think Sarah's done over the past decade at the Bush Foundation, because you have experimented, I think, with dissolving some of those boundaries. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how that's worked?

Lutman: Well, first of all, I have to acknowledge that the actual director of our Fellows program is in the audience, so you can't really say that I've done the work because our program has been very well served from two different directors during the time that I worked at Bush.

But we did wrestle with this very question of folk and traditional art in our program about five years ago when we did our most recent review, and trying to figure out some way to be as generous aesthetically as we could be.

First of all, our region incorporates the Dakotas and Minnesota and western Wisconsin. And in those areas, the population and its interest and capacities and needs for cultural expression are about as varied as I think you can get. From extremely poor and remote tribal communities to urban areas that relate to New York and San Francisco and Paris and other places. It's very, very hard to come up with funding categories that can span those kinds of communities and deal with the art and artists in any kind of reasonable comparative way.

In thinking about the question of whether to have a separate category for folk and traditional art, eventually the way we went was to make our categories more simple; that is, instead of having a lot of categories, just have a few. And I think, actually, we could go a few steps further so that instead of having painting and sculpture and drawing and all these things, we just made them two dimensional or three dimensional. Then we tried to find panelists who could deal with that. Now we get knife-makers and gun-carvers and people who carve marble and people who do installation art, and all of that is three-dimensional, and it's up to the panel to deal with it. And we follow this down the line.

Now, we didn't go so far as to just do prose and poetry, or just words. But it does kind of beg that question like movement, sound, you know, dimension and things that hold still.

Now, since this happened in 1996, I have to say that the results are very frustrating because the kinds of questions that we're discussing right here we've been talking about for several years now. But the panelists are being introduced to this discussion oftentimes for the first time, and they haven't had the discussions with each other about how they value these different sources of creativity. And so one of the questions I have, is there such a thing as a model program?

I was somewhat taken aback by the title of our panel discussion this afternoon because I don't think there is such a thing as a model program. And the best that you can do is struggle with something that's locally relevant and imperfect, and to try to look at the mix of what's available to artists in your region and try to add to it – in the way that things are defined, and in the way that artists are picked, and what they get. Because what we need is a lot of different people involved in this imperfect struggle of artist support.

Peeps: I wasn't at the dinner last night but I understand the question was raised about at what moment in an artist's career is the support really useful. I wonder if I could ask the artists – Irene, Pamela, Mick, and Luis – to reflect on that a little bit about stages in your career when support has come, and how it's been helpful and at what stage. And also whether it's unfettered time, or whether it's been project-specific that's been helpful.

Pamela Z: Well, for me, I think like I said earlier, it's been kind of a combination of the two. When you want to do a big project, getting project-specific support is really important, because sometimes it makes it possible for you to do things that you couldn't do.

Also, I have to admit that as much as we don't like this idea, a lot of artists' projects are grant-driven projects. In other words, there are some guidelines that come out and say, we'll give you money if you do something that's commu-

nity-based. So artists will say, well, let's see, how could I angle my work to make it either be or seem more community-based? Or, you know, we'll give you work if the art is referring to this particular location or something like that.

And even though that sounds like an awful thing, in some sense, that could be a good thing because at least for me, I sort of find that I do more. It's kind of like you get more done when you have deadlines. When somebody gives you a deadline, then all of a sudden, you get things done because you simply have to. Also, I find that as an artist, there are times when I can do more when I have an assignment. So when I get a choreographer who approaches me and says, you know, this section of the piece is ten minutes long and the first half of it is supposed to be really frenetic and up-tempo and then it has this really slow section; suddenly there's this assignment. I just can't compose any ten minutes worth of music I want. It has to kind of fit something that somebody's asking me for. I find that that is a catalyst for me thinking in a way that I might not have thought and creating something new I might not have created.

But then on the other hand, there's all those ideas that you accumulate over the years of projects and things that you want to do, but you can never get to because you're busy fulfilling all of the specific deadlines and all of the specific assignments that you've been given. And those things fall by the wayside, unless you can figure out a way to force them into one or the other of these things. And so I think that that's where getting grants that are just for your achievement or for your time or for your life are useful.

And I kind of think those kind are most useful when they're really completely free. I know there's a lot of residency programs that say, well, we're giving away the gift of time, but it means you have to live for two months in this remote place without the tools that you're used to using and with no city around you – because somebody decided that that's really the way artists need to make their work. Maybe for some artists that actually is exactly what they need, but what exactly an artist needs is different for each artist.

For me, the, the residency that I got in Japan was great because I had to go live somewhere, but I could pick any place in Japan. I didn't have to be out in the mountains in Japan. I could be in Tokyo, if I wanted to, which I did, and have the stimulation of an urban environment and just be given time, just be paid to live, so that I could have time to just make some work and develop some ideas.

I think what happens, too, is that artists... for example, I have a friend who got a Djrassi residency and he was there for two months or whatever the period of time is, and he was telling me that he felt guilty because he didn't make anything while he was there. And I said, well, you did, you just don't know it. I mean, after he got back, he made a whole bunch of things that he wouldn't have made had he not had that two months. He spent most of his time hiking and he felt really guilty about it. That wouldn't have worked for me because I'm just not that kind of a person, but for him, that's exactly what he needed.

So it's hard to make a standard.

Borger: Can I jump in here? Because I want to argue for all stages for the following reason.

Last night, Jay Rosenblatt said he'd gotten a Guggenheim and a Rockefeller, but he was glad he hadn't gotten it early on, because you can see what's happened to certain people's careers if there's enormous focus – sometimes, early on, how it's really difficult to then proceed.

The Alpert is "early mid-career" which everybody has to keep redefining. Well, you know, what's early mid-career? And in the kind of conversations that I've had with other funders, and also nominators and artists, it seems like there is this enormous need for people much later in life. In some ways it's not as hip to support people who've been working for a long time who may be out of the limelight, but how necessary it is and what extraordinary work could be done.

At the same time, for me, working in the AIDS community, two years in a row I got to go to artist colonies and the third year, someone gave me a house for a month. And that came for me at a time when 11 people in my workshop had

died in a six-month period. So to go to a remote location and hike and write was just like the most perfect thing in world.

I was talking to Alan Cooper of Mid-Atlantic Arts, and he was telling us that they were funding these extraordinary artists' residencies, the artist and community programs, but they were also allowing during the allotment of time, that artists could then do the more focused individual work with their own materials rather than necessarily working with people. And I thought that was such an amazing thing, because a lot of times what happens is an artist will be funded for working in communities they may be passionate about, but then their own work doesn't get funded. And so I asked him, how did you know how to do that? What made you sensitive to that? And he said, we had an artist on the staff.

Maloney: Yeah, I was going to say that I have shared some of those same concerns. I was going to talk about maybe what I would particularly need at this stage of my own career. Like Luis, as much of my work goes into collaborations and arts advocacy and working in the general arts field as it does into performing. And somehow along the line, I suppose I have developed a need like all artists do for just time, time to myself to develop new projects.

In my own particular case, as a traditional artist, I love to develop projects that combine the arts and humanities. That's something I'm drawn to just personally. And also I feel something happening with audience, and one of the great strengths of traditional and folk arts in all manifestations, that they're tied into a social history that involves people's connection with their own past and also with other groups, too. Especially in America where there's such fluidity of interconnectedness between so many people.

I've found, for instance, in 1995, which was the 150th anniversary of the Great Irish Famine, I offered to a lot of museums and historical societies and cultural organizations across the country, a program that would be songs about the theme of the famine and songs about leaving and songs about adjusting and settlement. And to weave the story, which is, I

suppose humanity's theme, through song, which is the arts, I suppose, narrowly construed.

I found that it took me a long time to develop a program. We did a lot of research, a lot of reading and a lot of trial and error, just the normal things of you see what works and what doesn't work. And yet I found, when I had it down to the point where I was happy enough with it, that there was a connectedness between all those words that I could feel. The power of that in performance was something I was able to meet people afterwards, people in their 70s and 80s who were coming up and saying, now we know for the first time why our grandparents wouldn't tell us really what happened. And people of many different cultures.

A window was opened up that... a program that I found for me unites the heart, the soul, and the mind in a way that when I'm involved in something like that, I feel transcendent. I really feel that I'm doing what I should be doing.

But that would be me at this stage of my own career as a traditional folk artist. I think for the field generally of folk and traditional arts, there's so many stages in the development and I think learning is one of them. Apprentice grants are wonderful, they're wonderful for the people learning and also for the master artists who teach. And I think that's been a wonderful evolution in American arts funding; in folk arts over the last couple of decades.

And some art forms don't need it. Like, say, an Irish dancing school is economically self-sufficient. Very much so. So it doesn't need funding. And I think where you need cultural specialists to advise foundations of what maybe does need funding and what is less important. And then the business that Pamela's talking about, about artists' management and writing grants, all the kinds of things you have to do to stay functioning, and the tremendous time that that takes.

Obviously, we need help with that. Individual artists, I think, developing PR materials, just developing a mailing list, just an awful lot of tech support that you can't get if you're not tied to an institution; there is nowhere to get that.

I'm not aware of many ways that that can be channeled for folk and traditional arts through foundation funding.

Alfaro: I thought I'd very quickly say first, personally for me, I kind of felt that I didn't need any funding in the first ten years, like when I was just trying to figure out what the history of performance was and my way in it and trying to work through it.

But it was the time when I was really experimenting, after I got a sense of what I belonged to in the community and when I really wanted to sort of push the boundaries of that, that's when I wasn't getting any grants. And maybe because I was young then, I wasn't writing them right or something. But there's something that happened to me at that point and I think the support really came.

I got a grant from the Gay and Lesbian History Fund, which was a nonrestrictive grant that really allowed me to experiment with whatever I wanted to experiment with. And also, Arts Inc. linked me up to the Ryan White monies, and that's when I started really getting involved with AIDS work, and that was fantastic.

I started a small nonprofit called Viva, and we got a quarter of million dollars to do AIDS outreach through art materials. That was an amazing time for me just in terms of creating work.

And that was a great link between an arts agency trying to link you up into health services money, and also HUD, you know? So there was a lot of money that came in for me to really, truly experiment and push social change. And I had a lot of agendas, you know, but that was a really great way of expanding at that time.

I'd say that's a great argument for the early mid-career artist. You know, it's a time of intense experimentation, and it just sort of felt like all the arts funders I went to, just didn't get that I was trying to play with it all. You know? That I was trying to figure out what my way in it was. I was lucky because I think I got really supported by social service agencies, which is kind of an interesting way around it.

Peeps: Sarah, does Bush target career level?

Lutman: Actually, no. The guidelines say any level from emerging through mature, some language like that. You have to be 25 years old but there's no upper limit. And in fact, I think Maridel La Soeur got her Bush when she was in her 80s or 70s, and there are a number of older artists.

The panel has more trouble, I think, giving a grant of the size of a Bush to a young artist. They're worried about, will it wreck you if you get this \$40,000 when you're 26? But they do it. They've done it... almost every year, there's one artist in their 20s.

Our grants are a little different because we pay them over time. You don't just get a check. You get a check every month for a time amount that you pick. And we also require that if artists have a so-called straight job, that they forgo that. They can work up to one-quarter time while they have their fellowship, but otherwise they're really supposed to take that, not just as money, but as time. So our program is structured a little differently.

Peeps: I'd like to open it for questions for anybody on the panel?

Question: Because I oversee what I think is a proposal that is hard to do. I feel good that we give people \$200 to fill it out, but I feel bad that it's a hard one. I'm just curious about... If you ruled the world and you came up with the rules for what applications were like, what would you rather do? Would you like to be interviewed? Would you like to send in video tapes? Would you change the way questions are asked? And I think this is always going to be something of a game but I'd just like to rethink it.

Alfaro: I had a great experience with Claire, actually, at the Durfee Foundation because we gave out these individual artist fellowships, and what was really great about it was we tried to keep at a minimum the paper work that the playwright or the artist was involved in and really concentrated on professionals in the field doing advocacy work for that artist.

So the nominators were really, really important. Irene also asked me one year to be a nominator, and that was a great experience in terms of me sort of articulating what it was that this artist did, and really I had to do a lot of research, and it kind of took it away from the artist to some degree. And then the artist had a process of course. But I think that experience for me was great, and the experiences I've had like that were – where some sort of fieldwork has been done by the agency and then you come into it midway through the process and get to really build on that, what's being articulated about your work, you know, focus it in some way.

Pamela Z: Two of the most difficult grants I ever had to write, one I got, which was the Alpert, and one that I didn't get, which was a Guggenheim. Not necessarily the most labor-intensive but the hardest. But in a weird sense, also the most gratifying, because particularly the Alpert grant, it just consisted of some questions, but they were really, really heavy-duty questions asking me to reflect about my life as an artist. To talk about my vision, and to talk about what I feel that I've done, to actually list a certain number of what I thought were my most important achievements. And it didn't narrow it down to it had to be something like having created a work or having won an award or something like that. It could be anything. And I chose some things which were sort of like making this particular piece was a big achievement. And other things I chose were making the choice to move to San Francisco or, you know, something like that.

But by the time I was done writing that grant, I had learned a lot about myself and it really made me think. And I felt like the people reading it were going to really know something about me.

I've written other grants that were very, very difficult as well, but more in this kind of labor-intensive way, where they wanted a lot of statistical information. They wanted you to tell what your income had been over the past five years and break it down into which part of it was touring, in or outside of the United States, how much of it was shared work and so on.

So I think that a grant being difficult can come from different reasons. But I do think that maybe the most effective things for an artist, or what we feel is the most effective, is being asked for materials or information that's revealing about us as artists and about our work.

Maloney: Well, in general, I would have to say that, most grant applications I've seen in folk and traditional arts, most people I know who come from, say, ethnic communities, they couldn't fill those out. They just wouldn't be able. It's very intimidating. And even with the benefit of a couple of years myself in the arts field, I find it very hard.

And culturally, it's difficult, too. You know, in Ireland, if you boast about anything, you're dead meat. You know, you're finished. You're too big for your boots. And it seems that in a lot of grant applications, you have to tell people how wonderful you are. And if you don't, well, you know, you'd like to say, well, give me the money, I'm great, you know? But you have to really specify how wonderful you are. And that's very culturally inappropriate for a lot of people and a lot of cultures, you know, it's more understatement.

So there's a lot of help needed in the field that would be called folk and traditional arts, in my experience. And I think that's a very good point, I think there should be a lot of attention to tailoring the grant application process for who it's supposed to reach.

Pamela Z: Can I say one other quick thing about the grant application process? I think that I myself have said this and many other artists I know feel that the single most difficult part of a grant is choosing the work samples. I mean, we just agonize over that. It's really scary, especially when you do time-based work, and the guidelines say, "The panel will probably only listen to or watch three minutes." You know, that's just really, really scary.

Pennekamp: I wanted to second what Mick is saying, but I wouldn't restrict it to traditional artists. That any time you create a seed, I mean, that's all applications are is a seed, you know, how some things go forward and the majority of things kicked out, there's always a set of

values implicit in whatever seed you use. And if it's language-writ, it's a bias toward certain types of applicants, not necessarily based on the quality of their work or their ability to use the grant, but based on their ability to deal with a certain density of the format.

I think there's a part of the NEA mythology that goes way back, to when they first started I think that the grants to dance companies... Twyla Tharp theoretically wrote an application saying, "I choreograph dance. You fund it." Right? And that was the application. And at that point in NEA history, which I think was late '70s, she got the grant!

But there's a set of values there that's true of many people, not just traditional artists.

Question: I wanted to say something about this business of application and grantsmanship and as you call it "write a grant." That's a new expression. I've never heard that. Get the grant.

But we've had a revolution because we didn't have very much money to carry on in the way we had been before. Three hundred people had to turn into 140 people and a program revolution had to happen with that so that we could deliver our money.

And one of the things we looked at is, what were we asking the artists to tell us that we didn't really need to know? We talked to the jury – we call them a jury of peers, an assessment committee is what you call it now. And it was like we were asking for pages of endless things that really were not being determinant in whether or not grants were given.

We tried to simplify it really a lot. We just said we only want to hear 500 words about who you are; and another 500 words about what you want to do. And then we have supporting materials such as manuscripts and slides, which is *very* important.

And what we found out from really asking our peer assessors and our staff the right questions, is that if you get the right visual or audio or films – now we don't watch only three minutes of time-based work, we have a more lengthy assessment process for things that really are based in time like film and video. But we found

out that we could do it much simpler for the artist, much more rewarding for the staff and the panel. And that's just our experience, so it went from maybe ten pages of typical application, ten, fifteen, to three! And I think it helps people out.

Nevertheless having said that, because our programs are covering the vast area of accomplishment in the arts, we still turn down eighty percent of the people. Artists who are fully qualified to be eligible.

Question: I just wanted to ask the artists on the panel and perhaps the funders, too, what their response to Ann Chamberlain's remark at the end of her speech about how guilty she felt when she got a grant in relation to all those who didn't get a grant. It seems like a good lead because all of us who have any kind of programs where the grants go to individual artists, one way or another, so many good artists don't get funded. I would like to know what you would say about that.

Alfaro: Well, Claire and I actually had a conversation, I don't know if you remember, when I got the MacArthur. Luckily, I didn't go through the sort of hell that a lot of other MacArthurs I've talked to have gone through where, you know, that's it, you got it, and don't ever expect another grant again.

I think for me what happened is that I was lucky, you know, because I represent a community, I'm a community-based artist in my work. Well, what's great about it is the community took that grant. I actually gave the money away. And it wasn't because of guilt. I think I gave the money because I thought that – and I still do think that – money comes in other ways. And that elevated me to a level to be able to bring up issues around my community, and I was really humbled by the fact that tons of Latinos took ownership of that award. And actually, they had a reception without me for that award, which was very wonderful! And the gay community owned up to that award, and it was really kind of amazing.

I never feel guilty about the money. I think that what happens for an artist like me is the money is so minimal. Friends of mine who are working in the film business, unless you're getting that

kind of money, it's really so minimal. And for the kind of work that most of the artists I know do, it's really not even...

I just sent out a Cultural Affairs grant right before I came here, for the city of Los Angeles, and there was a lot of discussion about the impact of that \$10,000, and I thought, you guys! Ten thousand dollars for a year of work! And they're still going to have to present the work at the end. You're going to spend the \$10,000 presenting the work, believe me.

There's just this weird myth about individual artists. I don't know of a single individual artist, I mean, every individual artist I know collaborates to some degree. And the big issue with city funding seems to be these days is, you know, that those become subcontractors so you can't honor the notion of how collaborative this art form can be, because then you'd have to go and deal with liability, you'd have to deal with other people.

So anyways, what was interesting about that is that in the end, that money is community money and it's collaborative money, and you know, I hardly ever get to keep it. In fact, I pay to get it.

Maloney: Yeah I'd like to echo what Luis says, as well. Coming from a guilt-based culture myself, my first impulse when anything works is to feel guilty. I mean, I felt almost guilty when the video machine worked, I came 15 minutes early, and I did not expect it to work and I said oh, it works!

But I think the fact that again that there are so many collaborations involved and the whole culture that you're involved in gets honored any time an individual... especially coming from the folk and traditional arts and from ethnic communities. I've never heard anybody say that they didn't feel a sense of empowerment themselves when an individual artist got it. So that would be my take.

Pamela Z: Yeah, I think that that comes from a poverty mentality, which we have because we all struggle so much. And I know that when I have gotten grants in the past, or when I hear that people whose work I really admire get grants, my feeling is always oh, I'm so relieved

to know that this is the kind of artist that this goes to. And I get very happy about it.

But there is an odd thing that happens to you when you get a grant that's well publicized, especially a large grant. My colleagues have never treated me badly or, I've never felt like anybody was angry with me that I got something they didn't get. But I think that they see it as much bigger than it actually is because it is so out of reach for most people.

I got a pretty major award a couple of years ago. And still, if I'm around certain people and I'm being careful about money, they'll say, "You don't have to be careful. What are you... didn't you get that big...?" you know. I'm like...

Peeps: Pamela took the bus to the airport instead of a cab!

Lutman: We had some stories in our 1995 evaluation where actually Anne Focke, who's here, went out and talked to a lot of artists that we knew who were living in the region but had either never applied or never gotten a Bush grant. We were kind of curious to talk to the people who weren't participating, since we thought we knew quite a bit about the people who were.

Some of the rural artists talked about the impact on their lives as a person out in the sticks if they were to get a \$40,000 grant, in an economy where that might be enough money to live on for several years – the altered relationships with neighbors and other ranchers. I think it's a real phenomenon for some people that it does have sort of a lottery effect. That you're suddenly swimming in bucks. And I don't know what you do about that.

Pennekamp: But don't take that as a reason not to give grants in rural areas.

Lutman: No, I'm not, no, no. I'm just saying you have to acknowledge the complexity of all of this.

Peeps: I do remember, Luis, you telling me that a number of your friends were hitting you up for 60 bucks at the ATM machine!

Alfaro: Oh, yeah, absolutely. I got a lot of calls from people who wanted me to finance them. One guy called me, he wanted to know if I would put him through psychotherapy. You get a lot of those calls.

Question: I represent a public sector funder. We use review panels in open session. I'd be interested in hearing from panelists what from your point of view would be of the upside and downside of having your proposal discussed, considered, and evaluated, and that kind of exposed way.

Pamela Z: I always feel like the heavier impact of that is on the panelist! [laughing] I don't feel that the artists have to feel uncomfortable that some public might be there when their project was being discussed. I feel for the peer panel that wonders if the person they're talking about is sitting there listening to them talk about them. I've had two experiences from both sides.

My first experience with this was, I had a proposal in a few years ago for the Art Commission's Individual Artist's grant and they sent me a little note saying, yours is going to be reviewed and if you want to see this review, you can. And my heart – I mean, I was just like, oh, my God, I can't not go, because I'm too curious, but what if the people that are sitting there on the panel see me and it makes them terribly uncomfortable... I don't want to make them uncomfortable but I was too curious to stay away. I thought I could learn a lot from seeing what that process is.

I ended up going. I was sort of hoping it would be a big auditorium or something and they'd be up on a stage and I could slink down in a chair. And I come in and it was a room that was much smaller than this room and they're at a table like this and they all sit kind of around a circle with a lot of them with their backs to the chairs, just like that, they're right there. And I kind of came in and I saw that anyone who was sitting at the table, if they wanted to look over, could see me. And I sort of got into a chair... I felt really guilty like I was making a terrible situation for them, because all I could think is, you know, if I was sitting on a panel and they were discussing some composer's work and I knew that composer was sitting right there, could I

really say exactly what I thought? You know, because there would be a part of me that would feel like just somehow I'd have respect for that person and you know? I don't know. It would be hard, I think.

And so this year I did sit on a California Art Council panel and it was the same situation, public funding. It was a very small room, it was much smaller even than the art commission. It was a room that had room for the table and then a row of chairs around the wall around it. And sure enough a woman came in. Not very many people do this, but at this particular panel, two or three times during the day a person that we didn't know came in and sat down. And it was really strange. It made me a little bit feeling like, it's too bad that it has to be that way. I see the reason for it, but I just feel like does it impair the process if a panelist knows that that person is sitting there?

Alfaro: I love it. I think it's really about community responsibility. And I love the relationship that it forces with the panelists to the community, and I love what it does to the dialogue. It really does force you to engage in a public dialogue, which I think is great. I really think it's great.

I always think of them as the way I treat reviews from the artist's perspective. You go, and you take what you can take from it, and what you can learn from it and the rest you've got to just kind of let it go. Because I've been at some of those where they're really critical. You also have the option of not to be there, which I think is also great.

Maloney: Well, again, I think it depends on the community you come from, In some communities where people don't really say what they think very readily in public, I mean, I suppose at worst, it could encourage a kind of secrecy that wouldn't be very ethical.

But the opposite of that would be that I think people will then hold back a lot of what they really thought, because of the wider implications of things being reported and misreported of what somebody said, and then you have all the tradition really working.

I think the most rewarding panel experience I ever had was in the NEA Folk Arts, and I was just thinking, could we have said a lot of the things we said frankly to each other in the collegial setting in public? I think not. And I think at the same time the panel had a duty and discharged its duty to give applicants who were unsuccessful very, very good reasons as a panel why the application was unsuccessful. And I think that's what you have to take onboard, that responsibility. If you don't discharge that, then you really are being unethical. But I would be very fearful of making sensitive discussions open, but again it depends on the community.

Pamela Z: Well, I think part of it is coming to know the difference between anonymity and no anonymity. I think it's important for the artists to get a report back of what was said about their proposal and what the panel in general felt. But I think it's frightening for an individual who's a member of a community to have to go on record to their colleague as being the one who made the negative comments that made it so that their grant didn't pass through.

Question: I want to ask the funders if they provide comments to the applicants? And what reporting procedures do you require from grant recipients?

Borger: No. In some ways that's so that the panel can really speak freely. But the philosophical reason behind that is because in this process, the people who are nominated are all very gifted artists. It would be... it's out of place to review or give commentary.

Once in a while, especially with... because each of these five panels we have only give one award, there are several people who the panel agonizes over not giving the award. So I've encouraged them to come up with a kind of statement of what they particularly valued about the work. Nothing at all critical or shortcoming.

Peeps: We have a couple of different programs at Durfee that have been primarily by nomination. We're actually changing our music fellowship program this year to be an open application. We do provide feedback but not in a written form. We invite people to call, and so

it's up to them if they'd like to, and many do. And it's actually very helpful. I find it very helpful to bring closure.

In terms of accounting or reporting, we ask people to write us a letter a year later about what they've been doing, but that's all.

Lutman: Well, probably Julie Dagleish would be better to answer this question than I, but you have to realize the volume that we're working on precludes us writing individualized letters to 400 or 500 people with panel comments.

We have a two-step process where there are preliminary applications and then there is a final consideration in more depth of about 40 finalists. And I think one way or the other, somebody ends up talking to the people in that pool that don't make it. But, Julie, do you have anything to add there?

Julie Dagleish: We try to pass on useful information, that would help the artist improve their presentation in the proposal and sometimes we'll even encourage them in the letter, to call us so that we can talk about it.

Lutman: And what we mean by useful information is, for instance, if we couldn't figure out what materials something was made out of, or what sequence things actually went in, or what it really came down to was we couldn't figure out whether that was live or digital? I mean, really practical things about how your work was perceived by people who are trying to figure it out.

Alfaro: That concerns me a little bit, and a lot of the panels in the last year that I've been sitting on, especially the city and county grants, I've noticed that now the trend is not to give you any info.

And so many panels I sit on, especially city grants, you get bumped out for the dumbest things. It kills me that year after year, now that I've sat on the LA County Commission of Performing Arts, you see the same mistakes, and there's no response to it. I wish that there was something that could be done, especially around city cultural affairs stuff, because I notice that our cultural affairs department just

started also not to respond. Which is too bad, because I know certain people that just didn't sign the application or didn't date it, right out the door! Just little things like that where I think you could say to a panelist or somebody who's submitting, just say, look, it has to fit within this margin, you know, ten-point type. I mean, there were lots of weird little things like that and you think, well, there's also workshops, and there's that kind of trade-off. I wonder how much goes into the education about applying.

Peeps: We can take a last couple of questions.

Question: That's a very good point. We've used a lot of panel comments because we find it makes our job easier because we get better applications as a result. If you don't, you do get the same mistakes. But we don't attribute the comments to panelists so that the panelists are free to make the comments that they need to make.

Peeps: So the panelist provides comments but without attribution.

Question: In Santa Monica, Santa Monica Cultural Affairs Division, when we give out individual artist's grant, which is more for project-specific, public art works, whatever, and we have too many people to actually respond to because our organizational grants we always give comments back why the grant wasn't selected.

What I found very helpful, and people will really respond to, is being very clear about why the people's works that were selected, were selected, and passing that on to people who weren't. So they can learn, ohhhhh, that's what they were looking for, or that's what they do, or, you know, it's not mimicry, but it's just they can learn from that experience. I always feel that it's very important that a grant process, no matter what it is, be an educational process for the applicant in whatever way, whether they're a successful applicant or not.

Peeps: I think we're reaching the pumpkin hour. It's 4:30. And I would like to thank very much, my colleagues for being on the panel and all of you for joining us, thank you.

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