



Grantmakers in the Arts
2003 Conference

THE EDGE

Proceedings from the Conference

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KEYNOTE: MELANIE BEENE

WHAT ARE WE DOING? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Melanie Beene will guide (and perhaps goad) us as we explore the sometimes competing interests raised through GIA's 2003 Field Inquiry. Where are the edges that distinguish our interests one from another? What are the lines that draw us together? How can GIA best use its resources on behalf of arts grantmakers so you, in turn, can strengthen the place of arts and culture in our communities? Between January and June 2003, GIA conducted a members survey and listened to members and other arts grantmakers in sixteen cities. After a brief report about what we heard, we will invite you to help us illuminate differences, identify common interests, and help set GIA's future directions.

Melanie Beene consults with arts organizations and foundations, and has been arts program officer for the James Irvine Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Last fall, as a GIA board member, she chaired the planning committee and kicked off the 2003 Field Inquiry. We welcome her back to challenge us as we imagine GIA's future.

October 21, 2003, 12:00 p.m.

MELANIE BEENE: I'm Melanie Beene, an erstwhile grantmaker, and my charge today is to lead you in a conversation about where we're going, what we're doing and what we care about as a field of arts philanthropy, bearing down on some of the issues that came up from the field-wide inquiry that we launched at this very meeting a year ago in Charlotte.

Since that time, 257 of you have responded to the online survey and now we know who the average GIA member is. The typical GIA member is a 47-year-old white female who's been in the field for a decade and who identifies herself as an artist, who's actually practicing an art form – that was a surprise – and whose arts grantmaking budget has stayed the same. Even though the field may feel in great distress, you all seem to have had pretty level budgets.

Since that time a year ago, your executive director, Anne Focke, has gone to sixteen cities and met with 366 people from 320 organizations in thirty-nine states. At every one of those listening tours the board was present and listening to what the field had to say. More than half the people at those meetings weren't even GIA members. Many of you were at this conference because of that meeting and we welcome people who are at a GIA conference for the very first time.

I would encourage people who are here for the first time to look around and make contact with the people in this room. These are going to be your most valued professional colleagues. The generosity of spirit among GIA members in their willingness to share their expertise and their wisdom is unbelievable. They also have great conferences with great goody bags as you'll notice from your blue umbrellas and your poetry books, thank you Linda Breneman. I only wish mine had had a flashlight and a magnifying glass. *[Laughter]*

What we're not going to do today is go over what came out of the listening study. You all have that publication that Anne sent. What we're going to do in the next hour are three things.

We're going to revisit your personal connection to the arts. We're going to have a group conversation, probably a messy conversation, should I say edgy conversation, about why we fund the arts, what do we agree on, what don't we agree on about what's valuable in the arts. We're going to spend a few minutes getting your vote on where GIA should focus its attention in new directions over the next year.

One of the themes that came out of the listening tour that was brought up over and over again is, as a field we need new ways of talking about the arts. We need new language, we need fresh arguments. The old arguments aren't working, they're stale. Other colleagues are having more success within our foundations in arguing in their fields. What we're talking about, the language doesn't work anymore. Laura Zucker I think calls it the "faceless general value of the arts for the faceless general public." It came out in different ways from different people.

One of the things we want to do today is move on this issue, because the listening tour hoped to surface, what are people thinking about, and what are people concerned about.

The thought was we should put this on the table right away, in that some people's old stale arguments might be somebody else's fresher arguments. Also new people are continually coming into the field, and they may not know all the old arguments of the people who have been around for years. I hope you'll pick up another angle, and at the very least, we'll know where our work is cut out for us.

Let me give a little context in that this is going to be an ongoing, unresolved dialogue. There is no unified field theory on why we should fund the arts, why the arts are valuable. As a field we don't even necessarily agree on what the vision of the good is. We've never really made a statement about what success looked at. We've never as a group had a conversation about what we value, what we care about.

People are using a variety of arguments based on context, who they're speaking with, to what end, what results they want, who's the beneficiary of that argument. Are they speaking to the City Council is one argument, to a major donor might be another. In different regions of the country the arts are being talked about differently. Rural and urban speak about it differently. There are a variety of different points of view on why we should fund the arts and why they're valuable.

I think this is important besides the fact everybody talked about it over the last year. When I got to Seattle this week I went to the play "Omnium-Gatherum" that ACT is doing. It's playing in New York. There's a line in the play where the dinner table conversation is about funding the arts and everyone starts laughing. Then everyone in the audience starts laughing. And you wonder...

We're in real trouble if our own people are laughing at us. We've got to get better stories,



we've got to get more inspiring stories, we've got to connect people with what it is about this work that we think is valuable.

So you may hear conversations, arguments, points of view asserted today that you don't agree with. You may see arguments you don't like. This is the reality of where we are. It's a multiplicity of approaches, people are using lots of different ways of asking, why fund the arts?

So we want to get these on the table and we're going to open it up for people to say what's working and not working. We're as interested in what you're using that's not working that you don't think has traction for you anymore. So think about what has been going on for you.

I want to also say a little bit more about the messy conversation. When the board of GIA tried to have this conversation at a recent board meeting, it just went all over the place and it was very frustrating that we don't seem to have a unified feeling about what we're doing. I want you to tolerate the multiple approaches and think about what's working and not working.

I want to start with John Kreidler. John, you have a long view. Not that you're an old-timer necessarily, but I think for some of us these arguments have gone in and out of vogue. When I entered the field we were trying to get around that argument, and then it's coming back again. So if you could set up the context for us of your point of view on the long view.

JOHN KREIDLER: These days I work in the land of the Philistines, Silicon Valley. For those of you who don't know what Philistines are, the dictionary says it's people who are intolerant of intellectual or creative thinking. Silicon Valley is a place that's driven very much by instrumentalities of making money and making technology, and it does it brilliantly, but it's a place that's driven by these practicalities.

I am very long in the tooth, I'll take that rap any day, and I like to think back to the early days of art support in this country, in the early days of this organization. A lot of us still believe that the arts in a way is like religion. It's not as though you should have to stand up in front of anybody and justify the Lutheran Church or Buddhism on a cost-benefit basis. It's true of a lot of things in life.

If you scratch the surface of my values, I believe that the arts are an intrinsic value, they are a public good. They don't need to be justified in a certain sense. But if I use that argument where I work, basically I get dismissed from the room. Nobody wants to accept that notion.

This really happened. A couple of years ago I made that statement in a gathering of some business consultants in Silicon Valley and some venture capitalists. Somebody said, "Intrinsic good huh? Show me the metrics on that one will you?" It's like it just went whoosh, right over the top.

I work around a lot of people who are extraordinarily successful but have never had training in the arts or in religion or any of it. It's passed them by in their lives. I don't think it's two-faced to do this. I in my work have developed a number of rationales that seem to work with the people that I'm around.

The ones that seem to fly the best these days in a place like Silicon Valley, and I think it's maybe a little more extreme than a lot of places around the U.S. but not out of character with the country, is people are still very willing to accept the notion that the arts have some very significant part in early childhood development, brain development, all of that. There are some metrics that go with that. That seems to get some traction for us.

The notion that the arts contribute to a vital community continues to attract some people. Silicon Valley's kind of a disposable place, disposable of its own people as a matter of fact, because people come from all over the world. A lot of times that doesn't have as much traction as some other ways of justifying the arts because the notion is people are just coming and going so why invest in the community. Some people who see it as a long-term proposition that it'll grow into something other than what is now, accept that.

The third one is the argument that's been raised around the creative economy, and that successful places need a mixture of creative people, artists and arts organizations being a big part of it. All of those more instrumental arguments do hold some water.

But I have never given up on the intrinsic argument, I still believe that. I think a lot of people here do.

BEENE: Can we hear from somebody who has non-disposable people in their community? Ben?

BEN CAMERON: Yesterday in the breakout that we had there were a number of delights. Not only listening to grantmakers who are far smarter about this stuff than I am, but falling in love specifically with Pat Graney, and also hearing Susan Trapnell from ACT who really put something together for me for the first time. We talked a lot about arts funding and arts needs.



I had a conversation with a businessperson in a community who said, "Look, from my point of view, I look out in the field, I see more theaters than ever. I see more people wanting to be artists than ever. I see more actors than ever, more directors than ever, more designers. So you talk to me about you're in such trouble. What's the problem? I don't see it." That was an interesting, sobering moment.

So often we talk about the need for arts and what we need and need, need, need, need and the need emphasis can be wearying. Where Susan rallied the room yesterday was she said, We have to stop talking about ourselves as the need and position ourselves as the solution.

She said we're increasingly living in a time where a no taxation philosophy is creating communities none of us want to live in. And it is we who will be the solution to the problems that the government and the corporate sector cannot fix.

Part of your comment about matrices and matrix that drive us a little bit crazy, is so often we're asked to respond in metric systems that prioritize efficiency rather than effectiveness and impact. We haven't really been able to quantify the impact we have on people's lives in the same way. There may be something in turning the corner about our value, if we stop talking about our need and start talking about ourselves as the solution to others' social needs.

BEENE: Thank you. Belinda?

BELINDA TAYLOR: I'm absolutely delighted that I'm following both Ben Cameron, and John Kreidler.

In California I'm part of a project, the Arts Marketing Institute, funded by the Wallace Foundation, that's trying to change the conversation in the way that you're talking about. We started by talking about values and trying to connect with what people value. We value art. What does everyone else value? You start making those connections.

In the final analysis what works for us and seems to be working for the people we're talking with, is to position arts as the way that everyone in a democracy can have a voice. As something that other people can identify with very strongly, no matter what their experience with arts has been in the past. So voice and democracy are the way we're framing the conversation.

BEENE: Great. Thank you.

MOUNT: I'm Lisa Mount with Alternate ROOTS. I was in the same session that Ben was in

yesterday, and of the many things that Susan Trapnell said that were very smart, that really resonated with me, was that the nonprofit organizations and the arts in particular are the repository for the things we believe in in our community.

I watched Danielle Brazell, the artistic director of Highways Performance Space in a curtain show, a pre-curtain speech, announce to her audience that Highways is a faith-based organization because without faith we would never make it through what we're trying to do! *[Laughter]*

In my tiny community of Sautee Nacoochee, Georgia, which is so small we don't even have a stoplight, all we have is a stop sign. Our Arts Center, which is what drew me to the community, is the only secular gathering place we have. If you want to get together with people you can go to church, or you can go to the Arts, Cultural and Environmental Center.

I think reminding ourselves of the arts as a function of secular belief and our faith in one another and collective action is another powerful argument.

BEENE: Great, thank you.

PORTIS: I'm Beverly Portis with the Pittsburgh Community Foundation. I just thought that word "faith" was a wonderful segue to the thinking that perhaps we need to explore some different paradigms.

As we talk about having this dialogue, are we talking to the same people? Are we talking to ourselves? I was just speaking with a Senator who said, I thought in a beautiful way, "We don't know what we don't know." So if we're the ones in the room, we still don't know what the draw would be or what the engagement would be.

As we think about faith-based engagements, certainly in particular communities, and the African American community would be one of those, to not engage them is a huge, massive oversight. As we talk about collaborations and partnerships, the opportunities that exist within those types of partnerships and that level of engagement can really, really change the information that we receive, consequently how we frame and shape our approach and the look.

We might need to challenge ourselves to our openness to a new paradigm, and who would be in that conversation, as opposed to us having it among ourselves and coming up with some really groovy ideas. They sound so good to us!



When we think about faith-based engagement, looking at the information that we're receiving which should then influence what we craft and how we reframe it, to include the repositioning and the re-crafting of the language.

BEENE: Thank you, sounds good. There was actually some talk on the listening tour, particularly in the South, about involving the churches more as a natural ally.

CRUZ: Hi, I'm Pat Cruz, I'm with the Warhol Foundation Board, I'm director of Aaron Davis Hall in Harlem in New York.

One of the things that has frustrated me over the years, is that frequently the dialogue that we have with one another is always in a vacuum. We can talk about democracy and we can talk about the intrinsic value and I think we should. We're never linking ourselves to or making collaborations with the people who share values with us. Those people are in education; those people are concerned with healthcare; those people are concerned about employment and economic opportunities in a society that is very wealthy but whose resources are not going where we as citizens want them to go.

We have to link up with other citizens. So that it is not an either/or – I'm not trying to compete with the Board of Education in terms of doing arts programming. When my father went to school and when I went to school, arts education was a part of all of our learning. It's not anymore, and we're seeing the results of that in this society.

As we try to convince and persuade either audiences or legislators, we realize that we're working at odds with them rather than with them in terms of solving all of our combined issues.

I have to say this because I can't not say it. Whenever I'm in a room like this and we look at ourselves and we look at the world and we don't look at America's activity in this war effort, and what that has done to this society, I don't know how we can do that! I don't know how we can not take a leadership role and be a voice against this activity. Because otherwise we're just silent and we're sitting by and we're seeing our whole society and the world with it go down the toilet. We have a larger role that we have to play. *[Applause]*

BEENE: Thank you.

BRUNNER: I'm Helen Brunner and this must be the time when the activists and the rabble rousers get up, thank you Pat. *[Laughter]* I just

want to say that I've been heartened to hear more conversation at this conference about linking and alliances with the social change movement, with the economic justice movement, with other advocacy efforts.

We can do this in very practical ways. I know for instance Claudine and Nathan Cummings made a grant to Public Knowledge to bring the creative community into the public domain debate. I know that Warhol just made a grant to Working Today to bring the creative community into the health insurance debate.

There's a lot of organizing expertise outside of this field and we can support those groups to bring creators and the creative community to that organizing effort. In doing that and in working in coalition with those groups, we demystify the arts, we demystify this notion that artists are people who choose to be poor. We are to make it clear that art is real work. We're contingency workers. We suffer from the same problems that people who work in contingency jobs suffer from. So that's one point.

Bill Gates, Sr. made a very eloquent presentation this morning about the estate tax. He said in framing that debate, he's often accused of being a social engineer and he said, "I'm not a social engineer, I'm just a bill collector."

Culture brings a lot to this country, and we just need to start collecting the bills. Thank you.

BEENE: Thank you. Neal?

CUTHBERT: I'm Neal Cuthbert. I'm with the McKnight Foundation. We're a family foundation in Minnesota. The McKnight Foundation is primarily a human service funder, and we have an arts program that functions within a human service context.

When I came to the foundation to develop the program, that was something that I felt was real important to try to figure out. How could an arts program make sense in this context? How could it have meaning and value and speak to this broader mission?

They probably would have allowed us to develop an art-for-art's-sake program but I didn't think that would have the kind of legs or have the kind of integration into the culture of the foundation that would make sense in the long run.

I had to develop a context that was about human service because art in my mind – my background is as an artist – art is a human activity. It's an animating force in people's lives.



It's a communicating force. It's an energy that forces change in people's lives and in people's communities. It's an activity in a community of people trying to make sense of how they live their lives and how they live together.

That's a social good that fights isolation, that brings people together. That's the context that the program that we have at McKnight lives in, and that's how we talk about it internally and try to talk about it in the community.

I often say it's art in a community development context. It's not that we make our arts organizations create community development plans, it's what we look for in arts organizations to see how they live in their communities because they're providing meaning to people. They're engaging people in their activity and in their quest for what they're doing.

To me it's always been particularly clear in our rural communities. In a lot of our rural grantmaking, where there's a lot of distraction and noise in the larger cities, in some of the smaller towns, there can be small rural arts groups that can literally transform how a community thinks about itself, how it behaves economically, how it behaves as a citizenry, how it plans its future.

There was a small town of 900 that was essentially going to let the old main street close down and move to the highway which was a mile or two away from the downtown. This art center started from this young artist, and the activity that happened around the art center changed how the town thought of itself, which was just this profound thing!

You can't look for that, you can't plan for that, but it's the kind of thing that is part of the power of what art does among humans. So that's how we talk about it, and those are some of our arguments.

BEENE: Thank you. Both the human service and community development argument.

JEANNE BUTLER: One issue I think that is absolutely critical to how we go forward and especially in the aftermath of 9/11, is cultural diplomacy. We have an extraordinary opportunity as funders and looking at artists and the role that they can play and that we can play in the whole issue of cultural diplomacy. It's something that we need to put on our agendas to look to in the future.

BEHNKE: I'm John Behnke. Yesterday I had, I wouldn't say an epiphany, but an idea, as I

was drifting in and out of a little bit of sleep. *[Laughter]* That is, it does get down to the demystification of art. We all think art is great and we live by it, we swear by it, it's what motivates us in our daily lives.

I thought of the daily life of everybody and what do they talk about? If we wipe out personal issues, I rotated around ideas like politics, but people on the right now only can talk to people on the right, people on the left can only talk to people on the left because they get all edgy and ready to strangle each other. Or sports. Football people can talk to football people but they don't talk to hockey people, because they don't understand each other's games.

That leaves the general conversation that people discuss. They talk about fashion, they talk about what that person's wearing, how funny they look or how great they look. They talk about TV, they talk about movies. They talk about this and that.

All that's art. That is the fabric of our daily life. When people recognize that, I think it's more of an education of recognizing that art is in our life, no matter who you are, and that kind of hammers home the importance of it.

BEENE: Thank you. Anybody want to challenge that? *[Laughter]* Or add something else?

TAYLOR: I'm not going to challenge it, no. I'm Andrew Taylor, I direct the graduate business degree program in Arts Administration in Wisconsin. We look at this issue a lot, of how you argue for the arts. There are basically four clusters of arguments.

There's the economic and the social, and the psychological and the civic. They're all right and they're all wrong simultaneously. When art has an impact, the impact is a byproduct of extremely vital artistic experience. Everything else is dependent on that core.

Certainly it helps education; certainly it helps build social community. Certainly it does those things, but those are all footprints of the giant which is the creative vital experience between creative works and individuals.

For economics I could say, if you want economic activity build a sewer system. You know it's economically more efficient, but it doesn't give you what we get. I'm just suggesting there's a dark side to every one of these functional arguments for the arts in that if your goal is to be functional, there's other more efficient ways of doing it which is a dangerous place to go.



The other dangerous word that I hear a lot is “partnership.” It’s dangerous because it reinforces the myth that we have a choice, that we have to form an alliance and that we don’t actually influence everything and are not influenced by everything already.

It’s not that we don’t engage with the world, we’re interconnected all the time. Do we inform those connections or do we pretend they don’t exist? So partnership is a weird word that actually separates us, and we need to watch how we use it. Thank you.

BEENE: Thank you.

BROWN: I’m Claudine Brown and the issue that I care about is one that I cared about when I was on the other side, and I probably care about it now more that I’m a funder. It’s the notion of our being a bad cheap date.

Notwithstanding how much money we give, we have short attention spans. We have lofty and high goals, but we don’t stay with the relationship, and we often do almost as much damage as we do good when we pull out of a relationship just as it’s beginning to do really well. We don’t talk to our colleagues to see if there is someone else who can take up at least some of the work.

I have seen initiatives all over the country, and we have done some because we have a short attention span too, unfortunately, where just as our grantees are doing exceedingly well, we move on the next good idea.

One of the things that I would like to see happen, and I love the metaphor for the next conference about “the dance,” is that we think about dancing with our partners for a little bit longer. Both with our funding partners as well as our grantees, so that they’re more stable when we decide to pull out.

I would like to think that we were doing the good that we say we’re going to do. But at the point where we raise an institution up or give people the ability to think that they’re going to succeed and really pull out, we’re not doing the good that we could be doing in this community.

BEENE: Good point. It also reminds me of what Lucy Bernholz said yesterday about when you plan these initiatives are you planning who’s going to carry on the work on the front end?

MYRA MILLINGER: I’ve lived in a state now for twenty years, where one can only do business if you’re willing to put aside your intrinsic values, because by and large the values that I uphold are

so antithetical to the values of people I have to deal with to achieve anything.

In picking up on what Claudine has said about partnerships, I would say that perhaps we need to be a little more promiscuous and be willing, and I know it’s something that a lot of us aren’t comfortable doing. We have to find not only longer term relationships between ourselves and our partners in funding collaborations, but begin to be comfortable sitting at the table with the heads of the utilities, and the heads of the public sector organizations that run our cities and our states, and take a place as a comfortable and confident partner, rather than as the way at least in my area we are perceived as alms for the poor and a handout, we have got to be confident that we are a major, major sector.

We don’t like to see ourselves as a sector comparable to the sewer systems and the utilities, but we really are a major sector. It’s becoming evident to me at least in regional areas of this country, that it’s as we become a party to that public dialogue, there’s a paradigm shift in the way in which we are treated. That is going to have longer term relationships, but it’s going to take our willingness to build those relationships and sleep with partners we might not have wanted to before.

I’m a nice girl from Massachusetts. *[Laughter]*

BEENE: These metaphors are getting out there! We’ve gone from the dance to the bad date to the overnight. *[Laughter]* Anybody want to speak up for marriage? *[Laughter]*

LOWRY: I’m Rebecca Lowry, as the youngest member of the board of GIA, this is actually only the third conference I’ve been to. I was struck last night during a discussion we had with former board members of the great deal of labor of love and the great deal of work that has come before me in order to have this resource available for members of my generation, and how incredibly honored and grateful I am to have inherited this. I just wanted to say thank you. It has really touched me.

What also has impressed me is the first conference I attended at Mohonk, and the discussion that began there. I’ve seen a movement and a progress in these discussions and they haven’t been stale and I have been particularly invigorated by the opportunities that have arisen. At the Makah nation pre-conference of which I am a survivor... *[Laughter]* ...to have this lovely person from New York and a traditional Makah carver talk about concepts of art and that there is no word for art in the Makah language, and



discussing the room for innovation in traditional art forms and these different cultural paradigms that make us all so rich.

To have an edgy discussion that is respectful and productive and learning, really impressed me. To have this conversation then at a round table the next morning and discussing funding artists on the margin, take off from that momentum and go more in depth, of how foundations are now changing their criteria and who they fund to reach the quality of the artist they want to reach. Being stronger listeners to the artists in the communities they want to reach, and having a much more active relationship as opposed to the ivory tower mentality, and being an active participant. Those boundaries and tensions have been really interesting, so I look forward to continuing this dialogue.

BEENE: Thank you. Thank you for the point of view you bring us, to the board, too.

CREMIN: I'm Lisa Cremin, I'm with the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund, which is a part of the new power base within the community foundation field. *[Laughter]* Now we know why community foundations are so important.

I wanted to touch on two things that have been resonant in my life and my local community over the past several years. One of them relates directly to what Myra was saying around having an active presence in the unglamorous area of civic leadership and the choices that we make when we spend our time. We all have way too much to do and are often trying to decide which show to see or, for me it's become a matter of deciding at which meeting I'll show up.

I just spent a week at a regional leadership institute with county commissioners, urban planners, engineers, school board officials, and a lot of people who kept coming up to me and saying – there were fifty of us for a week, “Can you tell me again what you do? What do you do?”

I anticipated spending a week talking about regional issues around water and air and traffic. I expected to be the one who would always have to say, Okay, now the arts has something to do with education and all of these things. But I found that by simply being present, I didn't have to bring it up. That was very powerful and it was very redeeming. People are thinking about it but with a little bit more visibility they will make the case on our behalf.

BEENE: That's a great point. I've noticed that at Council on Foundations even when we don't have a program, they seem to get the arts in there.

CERVENY: I'm Kathleen Cerveny and I have follow up from what Lisa and Myra have just said.

Whatever we can do to help the community understand that artists are people just like anybody else, that have families, that care about the same things, that are contributing members of the society. The more we can do to showcase the artist as a real human being, a real person that cares and has values, the better off we'll be.

By showing up at the kinds of meetings in your civic community where other people show up to care about how the community is run, is certainly one way by maybe making some compromises from time to time, to be on somebody else's agenda, can often have great benefits.

The arts helped pass the health and human services levy in Cleveland last May and everybody knew it, and it's meant a lot to our community. The more we can stand up and be people in society as well as artists, the better off we'll be.

BEENE: So we've made the democracy argument, we've made the intrinsic argument, we've made the showing up argument in community.

I thought it was interesting when you were talking about native communities, Rebecca, that sometimes art works best when there are not words for it. We're talking about seeking new language, and yet it seems really integral in native communities where they don't even have a word for it. What is that paradox about?

I'm also interested in listening to all of you who on the listening tour said the arguments aren't working. Can somebody give us some examples of what isn't working, or where they're frustrated, or within their own foundations maybe making these arguments that they're having difficulty with?

TUCKER: I'm Kris Tucker. I'm the director of the Washington State Arts Commission.

I work a lot with the legislature in Washington and like many legislatures across the country, ours is dealing with a significant budget shortfall, somewhere between ten and twenty percent of the total budget is in the gap status, and the legislature is really strapped with that. We're going to be seeing it at the national level of course too, eventually. That's about expenditures on corrections and health and defense. Those are things that are chasing agenda instead of providing quality of life issues.

When I meet with legislators, if I go in and talk with a legislator about our budget is this and



we need this, or the proposed cut is this and I'm asking for this, I could put any one of a number of nametags on. I could be the Director of the Arts Commission or Parks or Corrections or Health or any kind of issue like that, so I think that that message is really wrong.

We've done a lot of advocacy for the arts around the dollars, around providing more dollars, that more is better and our arts organizations need more and our artists need more.

When I really make progress with legislators is when I talk with them about their experience, and I think that's really the intrinsic part. It may not be where we end but it has to be where we begin. If we really see that arts changed lives, their kids lives, their own life, if we can find that arts experience that the person across the table has had, that made a difference to them or that they hope for for their children or grandchildren, or for future generations, those are the intrinsic values of the arts that can only be told by stories.

That opens the doors where we can talk about the other values of the arts to provide opportunities for retention and recruitment of the workforce, for downtown revitalization, for public art. For all of those other things with youth at risk and part of our park and recs programs and the other things.

But I think if we don't start at least or have in our brain an opportunity to talk with people about the intrinsic value of the arts, we're just another face with another nametag.

BEENE: Really good point. I like the story part of that too. Anybody have stories to tell?

PRUDY KOHLER: This isn't exactly a story, but you were asking about what doesn't work.

There's something about this whole issue of when you talk about supporting the creation of new work, there's got to be a product, or it's got to be successful. This is not a new idea, but it's a frustration. One of my frustrations sometimes is having to write reports or the ever popular evaluation concept, of how you evaluate or how you say something about a new work that was awful! *[Laughter]* Or it just didn't work! But it was very cool that the artist did it, or that we funded it, because it gave somebody a chance to try something.

So that's a frustration. It's not a big frustration, but you asked. *[Laughter]*

ANNE FOCKE: It was a frustration to Prudy Kohler at the Irvine Foundation.

BEENE: Yes, can anybody help Prudy out with how to deal in that circumstance when part of the generative arts are about creating new stuff, and we have a really high expectation in our field of the success that we're supposed to get compared to say someone like in a laboratory in science.

AUDIENCE: [Inaudible]

DARROW: I'm Leni Darrow from the New York Foundation for the Arts. I have one thing to add to this conversation, which is that it seems to me we do a pretty decent job of getting funding for arts, but it seems to me that one piece that there is a gap for is support for advocacy.

Other nonprofit groups that I've been involved with for things like nature conservation or refugee rights have a component built in to their organizations that promote advocacy for their groups. It just seems to me that in terms of talking about how we can be better advocates for the arts, we ought to be thinking about whether or not we have adequate resources to do that, and what we might need in terms of additional support from foundations or others in order to enable us to achieve that goal.

BEENE: Thank you, that's a good point and one of the five things we're going to vote on shortly.

SNYDER: Andrea Snyder from Dance/USA, and one of the frustrations I think that the arts professionals feel, the practitioners feel is the decline of risk taking, and the fact that we don't know how to talk about risk as a positive thing. People are so fearful of it. If we can turn that conversation around as we're trying to turn the language around about so many other things here, within our own disciplines and within the whole entire arts field, if we can figure out a way to look at the term of risk as a positive thing and not a negative thing, then maybe we have a chance to step forward.

BEENE: I just met someone at this conference who was a risk manager before. Maybe we need a little bit more on risk management.

STRAW: I'm Silvana Straw, I'm with the Community Foundation in Washington, D.C., and I'm going to just quote John Killacky from this morning's session.

We will continue to have issues about what we're doing right and wrong if the money doesn't trickle down and artists continue to be bottom feeders. John shared a statistic from the Investing in Creativity study that 79 percent of awards going to artists are under \$10,000 and that two-



thirds of those funds are under \$5,000 grants, so I see a little problem there.

BEENE: Thank you for that.

NEWIRTH: Rich Newirth of the San Francisco Arts Commission. I will probably get a couple people to throw things at me for saying this, but in terms of arguments that I don't think work anymore, I'll just say two words that I don't want to ever speak again and it's, "economic impact." [Applause]

BEENE: Can we have a comment from somebody where the economic impact is working for them?

AUDIENCE: I want to speak for the dark side. And throw something at Rich at the same time. A couple things before I comment on that one. First of all I think that we have both a real edge and a real obligation to simultaneously hold a lot of ideas. That's false, that's true. What he just said, false and true.

Simultaneously a lot of ideas about what art is, because it's not the same as it was for me when I started in this business thirty years ago. Simultaneously about what art support is, because when I'm talking to a congressperson or I'm talking to a mayor or I'm talking to a private sector leader, those are different funding sources, and simultaneously what the motivations for those people are.

As an example, about a month ago the House of Representatives convened and voted for \$10 million more for the National Endowment for the Arts. And I videotaped it, just in case this ever came up. [Laughter]

I was struck that the twenty Congress people who got up there and testified, all but one were positive, and all but one of the positive ones quoted only economic impact information. They didn't quote any of the other arguments. I was struck by that.

Like I said before, it's just one of the many arguments. It is not the argument. But if it works in a particular situation for a particular decision maker, by all means use it. That's the dark side.

SCHULMAN: I'm Kary Schulman from Grants for the Arts in San Francisco. What occurred to me listening to all this is long ago when I was quite young, younger than most of you in this room, I was a fan of French film and there's a line in a film by Jean-Luc Godard, I forget the name of the film but, it's a political situation, there's a strike, there's a great deal of unrest, and the people who are trying to address this situation are a bit in despair because they say, "Where do we start?"

And the answer is "Everywhere at once."

That's really the only answer for us at this time. I don't like the instrumentalist arguments about the arts either. I don't like the economic impact argument. I don't like the save girls from teen pregnancy argument. I don't like the keeps kids off the streets argument. I don't like any of those instrumental arguments. But there's a place for them and we have to make them in those places.

I also think that we could run a risk of pigeonholing ourselves politically. There are artists who are, dare I say, Republicans! And some of them are very good. [Laughter] One can be a good artist without being what most people in this room would consider a particularly progressive person. One can be a very, very progressive person, have their heart in the right place and in fact make, dare I say it, bad art.

So we really do have to start everywhere at once. It sounds like we've got five things that we can think about to start, and that's probably plenty. If we can keep those things going and then maybe add something, drop something that isn't working.

Art's been around forever. It's not going to go away because we make one wrong decision or get our priorities a little twisted. We'll get it right in the end.

ELLIOTT: My name is Claude Elliott from the Rhode Island Foundation. I think oftentimes there's a disconnect about what we say and what we do.

We talk about art has been a vehicle for bridging community, and specifically a vibrant community. But when I go to some of the things that we're funding, I'm more surprised when I actually see a performance that has a universal theme, that the audience really reflects the demographics of the community or where the project itself is talking about many different experiences, not just one experience.

BEENE: Thank you.

WALL: My name is Bethany Wall from Mertz Gilmore Foundation in New York City and the other word that came up around the economic impact time was the word leveraging. I think we have to just be careful about what we are leveraging? Is that really working?

Someone I've talked to in New York City around parks and funding for parks which is pretty bleak in New York, talks about the lotto education problem. Money gets designated for



something, earmarked for something and is essentially just replaced, it's just moving money around. We have to be really careful about that and mindful of what we are and are not leveraging.

BEENE: Great, thank you for that.

RODRIGUEZ: I'm Janet Rodriguez from JPMorgan Chase and I want to share something. Yesterday one of the round tables I attended was the impact of the lack of national funding on quote "marginalized institutions." These are institutions of color. These are institutions that have been around for thirty, forty, fifty years who were started with principles that we are theoretically about. We invite these institutions to be presenters and speakers at our gatherings. These institutions are really hurting.

I know everyone in here's a liberal Democrat, so I'm not trying to offend anyone, but we need to start practicing what we're preaching. We need to take a close look at our own varied communities and do an inventory of how many institutions of color are left. And how we help sustain them. It's a really big problem and it's going to get worse.

It's almost embarrassing to have them here in our audiences and they're going back to maybe a closed shop. I have to share that with you and I share that because I was a little put off that this was a roundtable discussion, where we actually had an artist, Donald Byrd, who talked about how he felt his failure had a lot to do with the lack of foundations understanding not just his artistry but what the challenges are. We tend to look at arts organizations with the same lenses, and we can't.

I know a lot of us do not do that, but I say that because I'm hoping that at our next gathering, that this is an issue GIA takes on, not a roundtable discussion for ten people.

BEENE: Thank you for that, and I'm sure Kathleen will have you on her program committee for next year.

I'm just going to segue now to how GIA works, and a lot of the success of this organization is that fuel of volunteer energy, so thank you for that.

One of the things that Anne did when she went around the country and came back from these sixteen cities was write down every single suggestion anyone made about what they would like to see GIA do. It was a big long list, and she organized into five what she called "streams of activity."

These are not necessarily new directions, they're really add-ons to stuff that GIA is doing already, and they're probably more emphases than directions, but we want to go through them and get your input as the members, on where your interests are, what you would like to see GIA do, on top of everything they're already doing. We're not going to drop anything. If there are extra resources of time and money, where would you like to see the organization push more.

I'm going to go through these, but I also want to preface it by saying, the membership and the board are very, very happy with GIA. It's actually a very strong, well-managed, well-financed organization. We're the envy of most affinity groups because of the sort of intellectual rigor of our publications and the quality of our exchange. There's nothing wrong, but I think part of our strength is that we're always trying to figure out where to push.

I'm going to run through these five potential streams of activity, and I'm going to ask you to vote by standing up. We just want to get a rough eyeball. There will be an online survey so that people who are not here can vote later in the year, but this is just a heads-up right now for the board planning.

The first activity is the one we've been talking about, making a better case for the arts. This might involve creating a repository of the extensive arguments along these different axes, these will all be compiled in a repository on the Web site, potentially bringing together some of the indicator studies that I know Rockefeller and people have been working on. We could put all this material in one place so if you want to make an argument that you haven't used before, the materials will be easily available to you.

Number two is increasing access to and use of research. There's a lot of research that's happening that we don't know about and there's even more that we know about that we don't utilize. We don't know how to utilize, we don't take the time to figure out how to put in to practice what we know...

Number three is advocacy. What is the appropriate role? Also gathering information on how to do advocacy better and putting that in one place. We need a robust Web site so people can access the materials that are already happening.

The fourth is reaching beyond the current membership, and this is what Lucy Bernholz was talking about yesterday. This came up on the listening tour. People said we have to go beyond the usual suspects, we need to get involved in our



organization. More trustees, more people from other fields, these donor-advised funds. Make relations with the new philanthropy, the new wealth, and see ourselves beyond who we are.

The fifth stream of activity would be reaching in more deeply. That is increasing the opportunities for exchange among members. If you voted for this, the staff would put more attention to what they already do organically which is broker relationships between all of you on what they know you're interested in.

A number of people were very specific about discrete topics that they wanted more exchange around. This could be through certain mechanisms like telephone forums, maybe a member directory by interest, maybe having regional meetings around certain topics. The topic list went on for several pages. People want to talk about trustee/staff relationships. They want to talk about grantee/grantor relationships, creative economies, funding individual artists, arts and education. Any number of topics, but this would require work to manage.

I'm going to read through these five quickly. Think about which one, you only get to vote for one. You're going to stand up and vote. We're not going to count it. Everybody's going to be looking and we're going to eyeball this.

The first one is making a better case for the arts. The second is increasing access to and use of research. The third is becoming a more effective active advocate for the arts. Four, reaching beyond the current membership. And five, increasing opportunities for exchange among members.

[Voting process]

BEENE: I think it's between three and four. Does anybody disagree with that?

FOCKE: Those who voted for the others!

BEENE: They're related too. And we're going to do a real survey. We're going to merge three and four. The tribe has spoken. Go enjoy the conference. Thank you for your patience. Thank you very much.

END

