ACCA Discussion Forum – March 10, 2021

KEY DRIVERS FOR CHANGE IN THE EVOLVING ARTS ECOSYSTEM

Note: These notes should be read in conjunction with the panelists' presentations.

Host: Victoria Steele, President ACCA

Moderator: Annalee Adair

Panelists: Kelly Hill, (Hill Strategies Research); Jane Needles (CHRC); and Valerie Sing Turner (Culturebrew.art)

Kelly: 4 drivers
1. Survival
2. The re-start?
3. Decolonization
4. Equity issues

Jane: Four primary themes
1. Finance and HR
2. Internet, tech and legislation
3. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility
4. Sub-sector tables (to drill down on individual topics)

Valerie: Racial bias/discrimination/prejudice + power = racism

For more information about CultureBrew.Art, check out their FAQs and Benefits for Artists. And sign up here to be notified when the Engager Portal launches!
1. Artist portal - Database of the artists BIPOC - $25 /year membership (not white).
2. Engager portal – engagers pay based on annual revenues – plus annual subscription.
3. Messaging – private and secure. For/between artists and engagers

GROUP DISCUSSION
- There have been **good and bad aspects in the financial management** realm. Wage and rent subsidy have made a difference for some; organizations are moving to Cloud accounting. What can we do with all this information?
- Individuals wanting to help Culturebrew.art can do so by spreading the word. There are Ontario-based organizations working in this space largely focused on screen-based artists. **A priority for Culturebrew is to ensure BIPOC artists are safe in the digital space.**
- Pandemic has accelerated **change on both sides of the coin: audience growth and precarity**. How do we respond to this and ensure that artists and organizations can succeed and thrive?

- New data was recently released regarding resources for small vs. large organizations. There is **heightened vulnerability among small organizations**, whereas an endowment obviously increases sustainability. The ASO-funded National Arts and Culture Impact Survey identified about half of the individual artists and organizations did not receive any funding from any government funders over the past two or three years. The recovery can't just be government funded – there have to be other means to help them get through.
- ACCA has an application in to the Canada Council for a project somewhat along the lines of LEAN with a focus on under-served, smaller racialized organizations.
- **There is much digital being developed**, a consolidation of research/case studies/models needed.
- There are two issues emerging in other sectors: Security and collaboration. Security – with the increased use of digital and desire to be on the web, there has not been a commensurate increase of the security skill level. Collaboration - we can now work together due to technology and a greater desire for sustainability on a global level.
- The median willingness to pay for digital is very low. The questions for the future are whether digital audiences will continue to be a factor, and if the future involves both digital and in person.
- Digitization is a tool that some organizations are using effectively to create work with artists collaborating across the country, using tools such as split screen photography. Links to donations have brought new donors in. And there are opportunities to reach more school kids.
- There's a pay-what-you-can app that might work for digital offerings: https://weshowup.io/
- Disability arts organizations have moved to digital and so can expand their reach – some are finding unexpected success. It raises the question of the potential online models for revenue generation.
- There is a new platform for revenue coming out of research in Alberta. This new national platform, The Public Place Network, is funded by the Digital Strategy Fund, and gives the owner operator control to place and manage their information online. This platform provides opportunities for members of our communities whose stories and messages have been under-represented by traditional media. The video streaming technology and platforms are built on the same global infrastructure that made similar streaming platforms like Netflix, YouTube and Vimeo possible.
- Cultural Spaces Fund (DCH) has experienced a large influx of requests for streaming equipment – from complex to basic. It is important that the purchase will enable the organization to have a place in the busy, polished field - if you want to monetize it has to be well done. Streaming will be a part of programming in the future.
- Some challenges Canada Council is observing in terms of the digital pivot are: A steep learning curve; access to equipment/infrastructure/expertise; need for training and skills development; monetization of content or services; the crowded market for online audiences; issues related to copyright/IP/collective agreements that need to be updated; and issues related to the digital divide. There are also silver linings: Renewed strategic planning; new audiences; new collaborations and networks; and new revenue streams.
- **What is ACCA's role helping with collaboration**? Maybe collaboration workshops or a handbook? The flip side of this is how we can work together without merging. Irreverent read: https://nonprofitaf.com/2021/02/stop-expecting-nonprofits-to-merge-its-annoying/
- DCH is funding a WorkinCulture Ontario pilot project for collaborative skills for festivals and events.
- Another resource is: https://www.muttart.org/muttart-releases-new-report-its-time-to-go-a-self-guided-workbook-to-assist-with-nonprofit-organizational-closure/
- And this in Calgary: On mergers and shut-downs: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/article-calgary-arts-developement-to-help-non-profit-arts-organizations-to/