Sustaining the arts through networks & peer learning

June 2021
FABnyc & Buscada

FAB
NYC

BUSCADA

A note on challenging times

We were already in challenging times when this project began in mid-2019, and we were interested in how practitioners in the arts sustained themselves through these times.

We had little idea how much more challenging our times could get. 2020's double epidemics of COVID-19 and of long-standing racial violence threw so much of the arts world—and the rest of the world—into disarray. 2020 necessitated at the most basic level a rethinking about what is necessary and what is possible.

In a moment when it would be reasonable to wonder whether the "before-times" still have bearing on our current context, it was heartening to us to immerse ourselves in the rich conversations with arts practitioners and leaders we had in early 2020 and to facilitate new pandemic-era conversations that grew from that earlier work. We realized that even before this crisis, we knew we were already in crisis, but not only that, we had ideas of how to deal with it. The resilient, powerful conversations that fed this report transform our ways of thinking about the future. We are not without a roadmap for facing challenges; the strength and capacity to do that lies in the networks and peer learning that the arts have been building for a long, long time.

- Ryan Gilliam, FABnyc & Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani, Buscada
  June 2021

Contents

Networks & Peer Learning

Networks and peer learning spaces are central to sustaining the arts in challenging times, and are practices inherent in the arts at all times—where learning through multiple perspectives, and learning space creation are central.

In the two-year research project that fed this report, we came to understand the role that these spaces and connections play in four central needs for the future of socially engaged art / art in community. These needs are:
- To reimagine the field
- To work cross-sector
- To create spaces for leadership learning
- To sustain necessary networks in times of crisis

This research on networks and peer learning spaces took place before and during the COVID-19 crisis of 2020-2021. The process centered on grounded and iterative conversations with people and organizations doing values-informed work at the intersection of arts and community, so that any new initiatives would be shaped by the needs of the existing ecology of the field of community-engaged social justice-oriented arts and culture in New York City.

Learning through COVID

Everything changed after our first two roundtables in January of 2020. When New York City shut down in mid-March 2020, the aspects of peer learning and support that we had talked about became even more critical—often a question of individual and organizational survival.

In September 2020 we organized a follow-up roundtable conversation in this new world—by zoom—to better understand and reflect on the ways that peer learning and mutual aid groups had worked during the pandemic. We have increasingly come to understand peer learning as something that builds resiliency and sustainability, and we hope that what we've learned throughout this work can shape our responses to, and help us support each other through, whatever will come in the future.

Finally, in 2021, we hosted a larger gathering of practitioners (on zoom) for further discussion, for which we used the first draft of this report's findings as a catalyst for conversation. In this way, this research spans many parts of the pre- and during-pandemic period, reflecting much of the crisis, and much of the necessary learning that arts organizations were doing for their very survival.

FAB, DTA, networks & crises

This report's focus on networks and peer learning grew from practices inherent in the commissioning organizations, FABnyc (Fourth Arts Block) and DTA (Downtown Art): FABnyc's practice of collective action and network support programs and DTA's decades of youth engagement through creativity and theatre.*

FABnyc was founded in 2001 in response to a crisis, when a coalition of arts organizations on East 4th Street formed to fight their displacement from city-owned buildings. FABnyc's success in establishing the East 4th Street Cultural District was grounded in collective and cross-sector collaboration. Among FABnyc's core values are a belief in the strength of networks and the need to nurture them.

This work was also inspired by DTA's taking ownership and partial renovation of the building at 70 East 4th Street in 2017.** DTA deliberately positioned its space as a place for both community and culture. Its location, values, history, and accessibility via public transportation made it a site sought out before the pandemic for citywide convenings on issues of importance to social justice arts and community groups, making it a de facto space for gathering and learning.

The question of how networks evolve over time, through and beyond crises, is not academic for FABnyc & DTA; rather, it is part of their very makeup. Even while all initiatives are impacted by the pandemic, this project has deepened FABnyc and DTA's plan to create learning spaces that sustain peer networks, deeply informed by conversations with colleagues across the field.

*This project began in 2019 as a way to define a new and strategic working relationship between Fourth Arts Block (FABnyc) and Downtown Art (DTA). The two organizations aimed to organize their partnership into a form that was not a merger, but involved close coordination of mutually supportive roles building on the strengths and values of each.

** DTA became owner of the building in 2005, but was only able to take occupancy in 2017.

Process

Planning :: 2019

Gather people & organizations for interviews & focus groups

Buscada workshops with FABnyc / DTA team to define core ideas, interests, and questions

Buscada develops research tools (interview guidelines, strategies, questions), based on workshops

Buscada session with FAB team on facilitation, training to do interviews

Research :: 2019

Prep for individual interviews, possible future podcasts

Evolution of interviews for focus groups

Outreach & scheduling begins

Research & Analysis :: 2020

Roundtable 1 :: 1/16/20 :: Jan Cohen-Cruz, Meggan Gomez, Jules Rochielle, Clarinda MacLow, Hatuey Ramos-Fermin, Prerana Reddy

Roundtable 2 :: 1/30/20 :: Gonzalo Casals, Suzy Delvalle, Elizabeth Hamby, Kemi Ilesanmi

Roundtable, #3 :: 9/9/20 ::[on zoom] :: Meggan Gomez, Kemi Ilesanmi, Prerana Reddy

Analysis of roundtables:: discussion & creation of takeaways report, plan for 2021

Analysis & Event :: 2021

"Sustaining the arts through networks and peer learning"event and series of dialogues with arts leaders in response to report; grounded & iterative research :: 1/5/21

Analysis and inclusion of voices from event in report

Final report

Roundtable conversations 2020

Roundtable 1 :: 1/16/20

Jan Cohen-Cruz, New York University
Meggan Gomez, Theatre of the Oppressed New York
Clarinda MacLow, Culture Push
Hatuey Ramos-Fermín, The Laundromat Project
Prerana Reddy, A Blade of Grass
Jules Rochielle, More Art

Roundtable 2 :: 1/30/20

Gonzalo Casals, Leslie Lohman Museum
Suzy Delvalle, Creative Capital
Elizabeth Hamby, New York City Department of Health
Kemi Ilesanmi, The Laundromat Project

Roundtable 3 :: 9/9/20

Meggan Gomez, Theatre of the Oppressed New York
Kemi Ilesanmi, The Laundromat Project
Prerana Reddy, A Blade of Grass

At all events

Ryan Gilliam, Fourth Arts Block (FABnyc) & Downtown Art (DTA)
Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani, Buscada :: facilitator

Roundtable conversations 2020

Participants

We chose participants for our 2020 roundtables due to their leadership in community-based art in New York City and their active roles in shaping both learning spaces and networks in this field. The kinds of learning spaces they are engaged with range from community-based spaces of activism to artists' fellowships to the more formally-recognized learning spaces of universities. We crafted the groups to create settings for productive conversation, which meant keeping groups small, and ensuring that within each group each participant would find both familiar and new voices. We were also conscious of centering BIPOC voices in the conversation.

For our final roundtable in September 2020, we opted to invite people people back who had participated in earlier conversations. This was a way for all of us to reflect together on the changes that had taken place during the shocking time since our first conversations.

We recognize how much can hinder people from getting to spaces of learning and exchange, including conversations like these—illness, train delays, childcare—and recognize the commitment our participants made to be part of these exploratory conversations.

"Sustaining the arts through networks & peer learning" event 2021

Participants

Caron Atlas, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts (NOCD)
Katie Dixon, Powerhouse Arts
Christine Gaspar, Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)
Clarinda MacLow, Culture Push
Micaela Martegani, More Art
Danny R Peralta, The Point
Hatuey Ramos-Fermin, The Laundromat Project
Jules Rochielle, More Art
Prerana Reddy
Roderick Schrock, Eyebeam
Jessica Sucher, BRIC
Allison Freedman Weisberg, Recess Art

Convenors

Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani, Buscada :: facilitator
Ryan Gilliam, Fourth Arts Block (FABnyc) & Downtown Art (DTA)
Patrick Jaojoco, FABnyc
Dakota Scott, FABnyc
Imani Vieira, FABnyc

"Sustaining the arts through networks & peer learning" event 2021

Soft launch & iterative grounded research

This event, held on zoom on January 5, 2021, was both a soft launch of our research and a way of keeping the research grounded in practice. It was a way to learn through dialogue how work was evolving on the ground as the pandemic was shifting, and as arts organizations were asking new questions about their own work and what sustained them through this time. The event presented the four themes of this report and hosted themed breakout sessions.

Participants

As with our original roundtables, we chose participants due to their leadership in community-based art in New York City and their active roles in shaping both learning spaces and networks in this field. In particular, we were interested in being in dialogue with people who had found networks of one kind or another to be crucial through the time of the pandemic. Some participants who had contributed to the original process returned to this event. We also remained conscious of centering BIPOC voices in the conversations. As with everything, not all invited participants were able to attend, and this list represents those who were able to join the event.

The kind of space that's needed

Participants used our events:

- To brainstorm around leadership
- To discuss vulnerable issues of leadership
- As a space for reflection together
- To be with each other without an agenda

These ways of being together deeply informed our understanding of the kinds of networks and spaces that our field needs.

Even as our framing questions structured the conversations at our events and prompted significant insights on the role of networks, we realized that equally important was **the creation of a space for conversation**.

In our conversations, people frequently expressed that they needed open-ended spaces for reflection, and finding themselves in such a space, they used it accordingly. In this research, learning from what emerged was as important as getting questions answered.

What we learned

Four needs

Our roundtables and events explored how participants found space, and what they still needed, for learning and exchange in their practice.

Themes that emerged included the need to reimagine the field; cross-sector work as a new way for practitioners to learn; the support needs of leadership in the arts and the crisis of exhaustion; and finally, the qualities of networks that sustain this work, and how those networks can sustain, and be sustained, through crisis.

Four needs

Reimagine the field

- Break the non-profit model
- Create a values-based, not product-based, field
- Recognize the value of networks and facilitators

Work cross-sector

- Get arts into institutions
- Create cross-disciplinary networks
- Language and "translation" are crucial

Support learning spaces for leadership

- What learning spaces need
- How is learning applied?
- A crisis of "doing" needs space for reflection
- Values-driven POC-centered / majority BIPOC spaces are needed at local and national scales

Sustain networks through challenges

- Live in values
- Provide care & slowness
- Have repeated and regular experiences of community
- Discuss purpose responsively

Reimagine the field (1/2)

Strategies

Break the non-profit model
of funding and proving worth.

Practitioner voices

*"We need to stop making
this case. The case is made.
Arts and culture impacts
everything and it's in all the
things that we do. When do
we stop making that case?
We need to break the
nonprofit industrial complex".*
–Meggan Gomez

*"We've come from a nonprofit
model of how do we keep
things going? I think the next
few years are about [letting]
go of that mentality and really
living into something that's
going to be drastically and
structurally different."*
–Prerana Reddy

*"This year, I've been in a group
where we share resources with
each other, we approach each
other with abundance, and it's
amazing. That's not how the
nonprofit model is structured.
What does that look like at a
bigger scale?"*
–Christine Gaspar

Reimagine the field (2/2)

Strategies

Create a values-based,
not product-based, field.

Recognize the value
of networks and facilitators.

Practitioner voices

"What we have in common isn't necessarily what we do, but how we're organizing, and the fact that we're cross-disciplinary and interested in the social world. We need to realign so that the "buckets" of disciplines actually fit the world."
–Clarinda MacLow

"During the Cultural Plan, one of the things that was clear to me was the need for more thinking about the scale at which a community becomes legible to itself. ...What is the emergent possibility of this community to itself?"
–Elizabeth Hamby

"I think you hit on something around this ownership aspect of our own community, how we're a part of it, and how we contribute to it."
–Suzy Delvalle

"I think the case is made for the work, I think what's not made is the case for networks and for intermediaries [who] facilitate the work and provide the ingredients for the work to have impact. That role is often invisible."
–Caron Atlas

Work cross-sector (1/2)

Strategies

Get arts into institutions
that shape who we are
(eg. education & justice).

Practitioner voices

*"How do we get to be in the
water?" –Kemi Ilesanmi*

*"How can we reject a return to
normal, which implies a step
backward and a step away
from equity? [For] a step
forward at this time, [we need]
an artist's visionary capacity,
redoubling the effort to clear
space for an artist to build
a different kind of structure
for this work."
–Allison Freedman Weisberg*

*"The power we [as artists]
have is imagining what could
be, because this is what we
do. Doing that in collaboration
and working cross-sector is
powerful to think about."
–Hatuey Ramos-Fermin*

Language and "translation" are
crucial and can create either
access or barriers.

*"There's a lot of learning
another's language or sitting
in a room together and just
trying to make sense of what
you're [each] saying."
–Jules Rochielle*

Work cross-sector (2/2)

Strategies

Create cross-disciplinary networks that are not arts-exclusive.

Practitioner voices

"The legal empowerment network is saying the same stuff as the social practice— but do we ever say it in the same space?"
–Jules Rochielle

"If you've got someone interested, get them out to see for themselves the power of it."
–Jan Cohen-Cruz

"How do we break the silos where we are? It takes a lot of work. How [are we] not the only ones holding the information?"
–Hatuey Ramos-Fermín

Support learning spaces for leadership (1/4)

Strategies

Learning spaces need to have :

- Trust

- Supportive conversation :: for example, with mentors, former students, other EDs, and others

- Support to take risks, support to navigate institutions

- Structure that encompasses both constraint and openness

Practitioner voices

"There's a space of professional networking, which isn't always a place of trust. Where can you take a risk? That's a real concern."
–Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani

"Who can help me think through risk? [Who do] I see as an institutional thinker who has figured out how to shake things up, or build things up, in different places?"
–Prerana Reddy

"An opportunity to have something that's structured or regular to me...was the biggest way I felt I grew in a learning environment."
–Ryan Gilliam

Support learning spaces for leadership (2/4)

Strategies

Learning gets applied by:

- Learning that encompasses both theory and practice

- Embracing how learning can lead to change in an organization

Practitioner voices

"Ideas are important to me, but unless I get to live them out and see them lived out, it's incomplete. Unless I get to think about, read about, and dialogue about the experience, [it's] incomplete."
–Jan Cohen-Cruz

"I was interested in a collaborative model. I was curious about what other people thought. What keeps me compelled with CulturePush is that each person who comes in to be part of the organization shifts the organization drastically."
–Clarinda MacLow

Support learning spaces for leadership (3/4)

Strategies

The crisis of "doing" needs space for reflection.

- Unstructured time for reflection

- In a crisis of exhaustion, how can we heal, how can we feel joy?

Practitioner voices

"I look forward to having time to reflect on what we learn. It's important and I don't think we have enough of that."
–Gonzalo Casals

"We'll talk about power, about collaboration. But we'll also build in time for people to get to know each other."
–Hatuey Ramos-Fermín

"That's the state of crisis we're in. [Exhaustion] is an epidemic and we're not treating it. We come together because there's this need."
–Suzy Delvalle

"I feel as though joy is not allowed on the menu. My community cannot sustain itself if it cannot experience joy. If I'm in the business of sustaining community, how can I enter it as a joyless person? What I hear from people is that they're having to work while they grieve, and that is its own struggle."
–Ryan Gilliam

"I don't want to die of stress, and I don't want the people and peoples that I love to die of stress. We know racism kills us. I've lived in a place that didn't have racism as a factor and they don't have the diseases we have here." *–Kemi Ilesanmi*

Support learning spaces for leadership (4/4)

Strategies

Value-driven POC-centered / majority BIPOC spaces are needed at local and national scales.

Practitioner voices

"What does it mean to build strength together? We need spaces where a different way of knowing—for me, this is coming from a people of color-centered way of knowing—is actually foregrounded, or is one of the valid accepted, affirmed ways to be in the world."
–Kemi Ilesanmi

"It's not just about spaces, it's also about value systems, and outcomes that are in line with our communities. I feel like some spaces, even if they're led by people of color, may be feeding a system that leads us nowhere. It's not enough that we're leaders. What kind of leaders are we?"
–Danny Peralta

"It's not a physical exhaustion, it's an emotional exhaustion to continuously explain myself. I was on a panel yesterday ...and I said, "Damn, do you realize we're all people of color? When does that ever, ever happen at a grantmakers thing and what does that mean? How is that changing some of the discourse?"
–Suzy Delvalle

Sustain networks through challenges (1/5)

A central theme that emerged from conversations throughout these two extraordinarily hard years was the need for networks that sustain us and, in times of crisis, what's needed to sustain those networks.

When everything changed in March 2020, the aspects of peer learning and support that we had talked about became even more critical— often a question of individual and organizational survival.

Our conversations in September 2020 and January 2021 helped us understand the qualities needed for these networks and organizations to build resiliency in this new pandemic world. What follows are the qualities and roles of networks, and ways of working, that we identified from those conversations.

Sustain networks through challenges (2/5)

Strategies

Live in values

- Grapple with institutional and personal relationships, and navigating decisions made by other institutions. Be honest about one's own decisions.

- New, powerful networks can emerge from necessity, outside the usual way of working.

- Acknowledge where things are, let go of things that were planned, plan for now. A time of VUCA: Vulnerability, Uncertainty, Chaos, Ambiguity

- Keep values in the room, especially when talking about money.

Practitioner voices

"What are solidarities? Who are we in solidarity with? What does it mean to say something critical that isn't just about throwing somebody under the bus, but to challenge them to do something they wouldn't normally do. Thinking about who has power? What do we have power to do?"
–Prerana Reddy

"Being in the place where we actually are. Being able to let go of the expectations of what you what you thought you were going to do was a really big piece of like figuring out how to stay present and how to serve the people that that we serve."
–Meggan Gomez

Sustain networks through challenges (3/5)

Strategies

Provide care & slowness

- Slow things down.

- Acknowledge pain, hold open space for checking in.

- Provide care, through mental health support and financial relief. Participating in a network can also be beneficial when you feel you can help someone else.

- Talking can be the work. Meetings are touchpoints in the face of isolation. One-on-one relationships are just as important as a network.

- Decide to make the time for the network.

Practitioner voices

"We'll just figure out how to hold each other."
–Prerana Reddy

"For us, it was about how do we provide care? How do we show our our people that in this crazy time, we've got you."
–Meggan Gomez

Sustain networks through challenges (4/5)

Strategies

Have (and facilitate) regular and repeated experiences of community.

- Recognize the power, and health, of social capital.

- Recognize that fellowships and classes—even online—can be necessary, normalizing spaces in crisis.

Practitioner voices

"The idea of social capital is central—the connections you make with a community larger than yourself, and what you do with that social power, that power you build through connecting with others."
–Gonzalo Casals

"It is good for your health to trust people, to know where you can get help, that you're part of something bigger than yourself. Arts and culture are a good way of illuminating that, or a way of illuminating us to ourselves..."
–Elizabeth Hamby

"[Rise Rockaway] ended up working with a lot of artists. For young people, they needed a place to connect and a creative outlet to create something together, even online."
–Prerana Reddy

"[The fellowship] was a steady thing that recognized them as artists, so they did not talk about COVID. They got to be creative beings, still learning and being in community, meeting people and connecting."
–Kemi Ilesanmi

Sustaining networks through challenges (5/5)

Strategies

Discuss purpose responsively.

- Make space to rethink and talk about purpose

- Create networks for urgent organizing and new forms of leadership

- Kinds of networks that can help discuss purpose:
    - Collective :: e.g. a group of EDs
    - Internal :: Organizational leadership teams becoming their own support network
    - Prior personal networks, and one-on-one relationships

Practitioner voices

"How much of the mission is aligned with the moment? How much of it has to change? Does who we are still makes sense? And even if it does, can we make it sustainable? And how do we respond politically?"
–Prerana Reddy

"A big part is wanting to lead our own narratives. There's so much conversation about what's happening for us as members of the Black community—in our case, Black cultural organizations—but every Black thing is being touched by this moment. So how do we be proactive in that space? It's the beginning of a conversation [between 20-Black-led organizations], but it was exciting to have all these groups from around the country all say, 'Yep, I'll be on that zoom call.'"
–Kemi Ilesanmi

Concluding possibilities

Networks & peer learning in challenging times

Having learned from all these conversations, and through long experience, we understand networks and peer learning spaces as having the potential to be **pragmatic forms of mutual aid**, for and between organizations and individuals.

We see **network growth as enabling sustainability, leadership development, and transition.**

This project has left us with **a framework of questions, rather than prescriptive answers.** We have compiled these as questions to ask yourself if you are working in, or creating a network learning space.

On the following pages we suggest sets of questions to ask yourself around:
- How the network functions
- How programs function
- The people and voices in the group
- Managing time and change

Questions to ask yourself if you're forming or sustaining a network

Consider how the network functions

- Can the network be sustained when not in crisis?
  Can it adapt when new crises arise?

- Are different kinds of networks needed at different times?
  [e.g crisis, reflection, organizing]

- What's the balance / benefit of curated vs. open networks?

- Smaller networks can be more exclusive, but can
  sometimes be more effective. How can we balance these?

Questions to ask yourself if you're forming or sustaining a network

Consider how the programs function

- How do we develop a program that functions for people? How much time and attention can we ask of other people to contribute to shaping a program?

- What am I looking for from a learning space or network? How might that be similar or different from my colleagues?

- How are we ensuring that what we're building is coming from an authentic place?

- What signals a trustworthy space for me? For others?

- How do we create spaces in which people can be together to reflect, rather than making or doing anything?

- How can I as a leader support time for reflection for all folks in my organization?

Questions to ask yourself if you're forming or sustaining a network

Consider the people and voices in the group

- What will encourage people to make space and time for the group?

- What could enable people to make time for the group in their everyday lives? [e.g. childcare, a mix of synchronous and asynchronous communication etc.]

- Is there a mixture of familiar voices and new voices?

- How will we de-center whiteness in the group?
  What is needed to ensure a BIPOC-centered space?

- How big or small is the best size for the conversations we're trying to have?

Questions to ask yourself if you're forming or sustaining a network

Consider how to manage time and change

- How will we track that we're staying centered in values?

- How can we recognize when a network or learning space is not working?

- How would we approach changing or ending a network or learning space?

Thank you

Credits

FABnyc & Buscada

Fourth Arts Block (FABnyc) is a team of artists and organizers working to preserve, sustain, and grow the cultural vibrancy of the Lower East Side neighborhood.

FABnyc was founded in 2001 by a coalition of cultural and community nonprofits on East 4th Street to save their homes. Today our commitment to sustaining the cultural character and diversity of the community extends across the LES: from 14th Street to Canal, from Bowery to the East River.

FABnyc works in partnership with the LES community – bringing artists and arts strategies to:

- Fight physical and cultural displacement
- Build collective power and collaboration
- Increase equity and access to cultural resources and public space
- Support local resiliency and community health

www.fabnyc.org

Buscada creates vital spaces for dialogue to foster more just cities, by fusing art, design, education, and research. Led by Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani and Kaushik Panchal, Buscada's social practice is rooted in collaboration across disciplines, between people, and between communities.

With our participatory strategic planning and research services we co-design flexible tools and events that help organizations hone their missions, improve work culture, and engage communities.

Gabrielle is a professor of Urban Studies at the New School and Bryn Mawr College and we regularly lecture around the country. Our long-term work on housing, activism, engaged pedagogy, and social practice art on the Lower East Side is chronicled in Gabrielle's book *Contested City: Art & Public History as Mediation at New York's Seward Park Urban Renewal Area* (University of Iowa Press, 2019).

www.buscada.com

Appendices

Interview schedules for roundtable & individual conversations
Appendix 1: Roundtables 1 & 2 interview schedule
Appendix 2: Roundtable 3 interview schedule
Appendix 3: Individual interview schedule

All roundtable conversations were recorded and transcribed.

Appendix 1 : Roundtable 1 & 2

Questions ::

Learning
1. 1. We know everyone learns new things that move their practice forward - can you think of a recent time you learned something new (can be a small thing!) that ended up shaping your work? [an inspiration, something you read, a way you hashed out an idea?]

    a. To get specific about how you help your practice evolve / grow: What do you read? What media do you listen to? Where do you go? Who do you talk with? Other things?

    b. Are you part of any formal learning groups? [classes, workshops, panels, lectures, networks] More informal ways of learning? How did you become part of these?

    c. Moving to people that you work with - how do you support:
        i. Your staff's learning?
        ii. Artist / practitioner learning? (This may be an explicit part of some orgs, not as much of others…)
        iii. Learning for boards, audiences/communities, funders, electeds?

Appendix 1 : Roundtable 1 & 2

Sharing / network
2. Once you learn something, are there ways that you share it, or specific people you share it with? How? [can be one-to-one, or more public.]
  • Do you have a network that you talk with? Coalition work? Acknowledging that building, or participating in a network is challenging.

The field
3. To wrap up (or possibly to open things up further!), and move from specifics into envisioning :
  • Where should the field be in ten years?
  • And what do we need to do to get there?

Appendix 2 : Roundtable 3

Introduction script ::

Much has changed since we last met for a focus group to talk about what the space of FAB / DTA could be as a site that supports learning and connection in community engaged art practice, and where you find space for learning and exchange in your practice. Yet, many of the aspects of peer learning and support that we talked about have only become more important since March.

Increasingly, we have come to understand peer learning as something that builds resiliency and sustainability, and we hope that in coming together to reflect today, we can learn together to shape our responses to whatever will come this fall and winter.

[Share takeaways from earlier conversations]

Questions on next page.

Appendix 2 : Roundtable 3

Questions ::

Learning
1. Over the past few months, in the time of pandemic, what has learning looked like for you? Can you give an example of learning something new that ended up shaping your work? Was that different in March / April vs. now?

What are you looking for going forward this fall, in terms of sorting out this new world?

Who have you been talking with? Where are you finding support?

Network
2. Once you learn something, are there ways that you share it, or specific people you share it with? How? [can be one-to-one, or more public.]

Do you have a network that you talk with? Coalition work? Acknowledging that building, or participating in a network is challenging.
3 types of network?
How do we sustain them?

The field
In January, we talked about the field.
Do you think about it at the moment? Does that matter now?
Where should the field be in ten years? One year?

Appendix 3 : Individual interviews

Questions for Individuals

1. Since this is community engaged arts practice, what community/ies do you consider yourself working with? How did you first learn that this was a field of arts practice?

2. Everyone we're talking with is working at the intersection of art and social change. Can you tell me a story of an "aha" moment in your work?

3. We know everyone learns new things that move their practice forward - can you think of a **recent** time you learned something new (can be a small thing!) that ended up shaping your work? [an inspiration, something you read, a way you hashed out an idea?]

- To get specific - What do you read? What media do you listen to? Where do you go? Who do you talk with?

- Are you part of any formal learning groups? [classes, workshops, panels, lectures, networks] More informal ways of learning? How did you become part of these?

- Are there artists or projects that inspire you?

- Once you learn something, are there ways that you share it, or specific people you share it with? How? [can be one-to-one, or more public.]

Appendix 3: Individual interviews

4. There are many resources needed for this work - we'd like to talk about a few of them.

- How do you finance your work? [Out of pocket? Grants? What funders?]

- How do you find space to create and show your work? [Creative space, administrative space, presenting space? How do you learn about them?]

- Who do you work with to make a project happen? [individuals, communities, artists, coalitions?] Do you have any struggles connecting with these people or groups? If you could add one person to that team, what role would they have?

- Who is your audience? Do you have challenges in connecting to them?

- Are there any other resources that are necessary for your work?

Appendix 3: Individual interviews

5. We know these projects live beyond their first iterations, and beyond the moments in which people can experience them in real time.

- How do you find ways to extend the impact of your work over time? [years?]

- How do you document and archive your work? [writing, photos, video, etc] What do you use this for? [marketing, grants, showing process, something else?]

- Talking about extending your work - have you ever reshaped a project to respond to events or changes in community needs?

6. Now we're stepping out of specifics and moving into envisioning.

- Where do you see the field now, and where should it be in ten years?

- You've had X, Y, Z challenges/ideas… as DTA is working to support the field of community-engaged arts practice, what should we keep in mind?