

Artist Forum - Round 2 | Overview & Chart Notes

Sunday, November 2nd | 1:00pm - 3:00pm | BMHQ - Zocalo

Facilitated by: Sarah Fisk, Harley K. Dubois, Crimson Rose, BettieJune Scarborough, Tomas McCabe

Present (23): Josh Lease, Eli Peterson, Greg Ames, Kathy Tej, David Boyer, David Boyer, Marco Cochrane, Julia Whitelaw, Andy Daniel, Susan Daniel, Matisse Enzer (+1), Darrell Hunger, Oleg Lobykin, Margaret Long (+1), John Devenzia, David Normal, Stacey Reineccius, Brenda Berlin, Jess Hobbs, Ross Asselstine, Zach Coffin

Attended via Fuze (1): Becky Neil

MISSION

The mission of the arts program of Burning Man Project is to change the paradigm of art from a commodified object to an interactive, participatory, shared experience of creative expression.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Take responsibility for your own outcomes
- Listen for understanding
- Speak from your own perspective
- Be present (mindful of devices/interruptions)
- Advance notice of recordings

GOALS

1. Inform artists what Burning Man Arts Program strategy is
2. Listen to artists about what they want Burning Man Arts to be
3. Investigate key areas of improvement and development
4. Develop a spirit of partnership with artists to co-create our future

CURRENT BURNING MAN ARTS PROJECTS

- New grant contracts
- Improving the grant process - including a Letter of Intent (LOI) for BRC Art
- Considering partnerships

2014 ORG CHANGES = BURNING MAN ARTS (DIAGRAM)

- BRC → BMP - December 27th, 2013
 - BRC: Art on the playa
- BRAF → BMP - July 23, 2014
 - BRAF: Civic Arts & Grants to Artists

2015 → BURNING MAN PROJECT (DIAGRAM)

1. BM Arts
2. Civic Engagement
3. Social Enterprise
4. Philosophic Center

5. Culture
6. Education

OVERARCHING QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATIONS

- What would you keep in place?
- What would you change?
- What do you need?
- What would make you happy?
- What do you want to contribute? Or how do you want to participate?

CLOSING PROCESS

- Sarah brings people together
 - Closing: Q&A w/ Harley
 - Little Gems & Issues
 - Questions & Comments
 - What do you like about Burning Man?
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BREAKOUT GROUPS

SMALL GROUP PROCESS

- 5 topic stations
- Give everyone big post-its and markers to write with and have them roam around writing their comments under the topics (okay to add a check mark next to a post-it already written if you agree with it)
 - Time allotted: 30 minutes
- Pick one topic to have a more formal discussion and look for “key issues” and “little gems” e.g. brilliant ideas
 - Time allotted: 20 minutes
- Popcorn comments & key take aways
 - Time allotted: 20 minutes

TOPICS

1. Grants
2. Services
 - Business
 - Consulting
 - Heavy Equipment
 - Food on playa
3. Civic/Community Engagement & Change
4. Opportunities

- Local
- National
- Global
- Intergalactic

5. Other

TOPIC GROUP POST IT NOTES

→ See link for Artist Forum – 11.02.14 – Breakout Group Notes

TOPIC GROUP MEETING NOTES (iPAD NOTES)

1. Grants

- GRANTS
 - Timing is key - know grant sooner
 - Ability to apply for fixed amount with a yes/no answer
 - Need to be able to plan based on grant amount
 - Limits on what you can spend grant money on is problematic, transpo and crew food are absolute necessities
 - What about a bridge loan to help with cash flow issues?
 - E.g. I have \$30,000 in my Kickstarter but it doesn't close for two weeks, a loan on the balance would be critical
 - Consider a two-year grant option
 - What about a Bay area-specific grant opportunity?
- CONTRACTS
 - A one-sided concern. BRAF contract was negotiable whereas BRC is take or leave it - "insulting"
- INSURANCE
 - BRC shifting liability onto artists, but artists can't get insurance. How about an insurance pool?
- INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
 - No other festival wants as much ownership as BM does. Can BM return old rights to artists? License OK, but ownership problematic
 - Suggestion: Mirror clauses and give more rights to artists, don't want as many hoops to jump through to use images taken on playa. Can we control concerns of BM but give affirmative right to use images in certain contexts?
 - Artists want to hear what problems are being solved in the contract and help find mutually-agreeable solutions
 - Need help for first-time artists in particular with these contract negotiations.

2. Services

- Think of things that delay setup/build time, and find/offer solutions.
 - Ex: Get artists radios and radio channels - provide a clear directory for services
 - Ex: Commissary meals that mirror your build-time is ideal. It's one less thing for the artist to worry about/take up time (also have water/restrooms at the same location is helpful)
 - Possible on-site delivery orders to build-site?
 - Costs to pay for meals could come out of pocket or your grant - optional
- Insurance umbrella to make insurance overhead costs more clear to artists - through an organization that helps (BM?)
- Accessible or shared Artists space for building - a common facility that artists could share the cost and expenses.
 - Ex: Lots of military spaces/warehouses in Oakland, SF, Alameda, and Marin - someone just needs to take the time to talk to these and see if there's any deals that could be made for services. Benefit a lot of people and could inspire new artists to build on a larger scale, because they have the space available to them now
- Transportation. Pod Company is great, but doesn't fit most large-scale pieces.
 - Freight train service would be fantastic. Containers could be pre-organized, and Gerlach has a site for freight deliveries. Fairly no weight/size limits and the expense is fairly inexpensive per pound v. truck transpo
- Team building and conflict resolution for artists
 - Ex: "Honorarium Lite" - an idea that featured a non-honorarium artists on the BM front page that would spotlight needs/support
- Solar initiative needs a better solution for more storage, and supplies. Needs converters and the batteries - artists didn't know what to do if they didn't bring it themselves.
- Heavy Equipment and fuel departments work great!
- Storage for Art. Artists need to have access. The container process BM offered a few years ago didn't work well because of access for some artists. Others have said it worked well and cut down on transpo costs for things they could leave in NV year-round for the event (i.e.: speakers, supplies, tools).

3. Civic/Community Engagement & Change

- How to create more connections and systems with local orgs, city orgs and mentors (such as SFAC's community programs, neighborhood art centers, public schools, art centers)
- How can some of the collaborative granting structure from BMP be extended into the existing non-profit arts communities (SF and beyond)
- Supporting dialogue in the existing arts networks, that connect Burning Man Arts to other organizations
- Bring visibility to BM art and artists on a regular basis
- BM to weigh in on current artist issues
- More recognition for the artists and the work

- Artist residencies, in schools, communities, etc.

4. Opportunities

- Help artists sell art after the event
- 2-year event cycle - It's hard to make the big pieces in 6 months, artists need more time in grant cycle
- More professional schmoozing to help show and sell art on a higher level to raise perception of high-end art
- Helping sell art would encourage more permanent large scale fine art
- Encourage artists to do more large scale fine art by helping sell the large pieces
- Contacts to sell the big art, artists don't have these contacts and connections
- Artists are not connected to people with money
- Most people who contact artists with large-scale art don't have the money to bring the piece out. It would be helpful for BM to step in and help connect artists with the money

5. Other

- Can BMP help distribute schwag for fundraisers?
 - Ex: for a Kickstarter?
- Where could a sculpture art gallery (or shows) be located off playa?
- Copyright and intellectual property rights seem like an issue
- Maybe give "wildcard " grants to pieces that do NOT otherwise get selected?
- Give artists access to the BM volunteer database to find people with specific skill sets to help with projects
- Access could be anonymized so BMP passes through the request without revealing the receivers' personal info
- Make it easier for artists to share their techniques for solving various real-world issues such as:
 - Financial survival
 - Volunteer recruitment
 - Insurance
- Little Gem - There is a lot of need for info that other artists have
 - Intensify support for collaboration between artists
- Pollution - how to have less?
- Creative destruction without burning
 - Ex: A huge group pulling down a piece and putting the pieces in containers or something
- Address a big reason for burning art is not to take it home, so make it reasonable to take apart and provide the pieces for reuse
- If there was a bigger electrical grid, or more solar, there could be fewer diesel generators
- Volunteers - how do volunteers get their needs met?
- Publish a "how to" guide for getting grants

CLOSING

ISSUES & LITTLE GEMS FROM GROUPS

- Artist radio “LOOP” for fast feedback
 - Better communication
- Help with team building
- Up-front information (guide)
- Collaboration between artists (support)
- Transportation purchasing
- Large spaces for art-making
- Taking art into the community (& schools, etc.)
 - Both logistically and in a culturally consistent way

QUESTIONS

- Q) LOI: Do we need exact cost?
 - A) General, speculative budget
- Q) LOI: Can we submit more than one?
 - A) Yes, the goal is to respond quickly
- Q) What percentage of invited LOIs are granted?
 - A) LOI is mandatory
 - BRAF: Accepts 100 out of 300 LOI's, 15 Grantees, reject obvious “no” projects
- Q) How much money this year?
 - A) Hopefully more than last year
- Q) Per project, how much?
 - A) Big project \$60-\$80K
 - As small as \$500
 - No average
- Q) How does someone get involved with grant contract?
 - Need to know soon

COMMENTS

- How to choose which artists participate in contract meetings
 - Suggestion: Public call-out

HOW DID THIS GO?

- Happy to be included before decisions are made

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT BURNING MAN?

- Access to tools
- Community
- Artistic freedom