

CREATIVE CAPITAL: 2001 Year End Report

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Creative Capital's Evolving System: What We're Learning

During 2001, we developed a sequential system of support for the artists whom we fund. We will continue to refine this model in response to the needs and interests of funded artists, but this is the strategy that currently guides our work. Throughout the life cycle of a grant, Creative Capital seeks to:

1. Support the Project

Each funded artist has an initial planning meeting with the Creative Capital staff, and many participate in follow-up meetings as well. At these meetings, the goal is to help the artists develop project plans and determine the ways in which Creative Capital can help fulfill those plans. Once their projects are underway, artists can also benefit from promotional support on the Creative Capital website and, if appropriate, assistance with the development of a business plan. We also make additional financial support available in the form of Strategic Financial Support, Special Opportunities Funding and Project Follow-up Support.

2. Support the Person

We are interested in artists' ability to sustain themselves over the long term. This goal is being accomplished primarily through the Strategic Planning Project, created for us by Colleen Keegan, which focuses on personal and career planning.

3. Nurture the Community of Artists

The Artists' Retreats provide funded artists with an opportunity to meet each other and become familiar with each other's work. It is our hope that, over time, this will foster a community of artists willing to share experiences and information with each other. The Retreats also feature skills-building workshops and consultation opportunities with a wide range of arts professionals.

4. Engage the Public

While we are committed to helping funded artists promote their individual projects, we also recognize that there are opportunities to maximize the impact of the projects by promoting the work of grantees collectively. In 2003, we will work with the grantees to package and promote their work based on both discipline and subject matter.

Support for the Project

Support for the specific artistic projects funded by Creative Capital takes two forms—financial support and technical assistance support.

A. The 2000-01 and 2001-02 Grantmaking Cycles

Review of the applications to the 2000-01 visual and media arts program took place between January and May 2001, with the public announcement of new grantees at the end of May. Of the 2,803 applicants, 43 artists were awarded grants, with the average initial grant award being \$9,300 and the total amount awarded \$400,000. With the addition of these new artists, Creative Capital is currently supporting 118 projects.

Complete project descriptions can be found on the Creative Capital website: www.creative-capital.org.

In anticipation of the 2001-02 grant cycle, we circulated more than 14,000 print applications and refined the process by which people could apply online. We held public meetings in 16 locations this year, reaching more than 600 people in person, and the staff served on or attended numerous panels and conferences. We also held four online chat sessions the week prior to the deadline. Two chats were initially scheduled, but they immediately filled up so we added two more. Applicants were grateful to have direct contact with a staff person to answer their questions.

As a result of this work, we have received approximately 2,200 proposals this year, in the performing and emerging arts fields.

Applicant Statistics

1. An amazing 93 percent of the proposals came in via the Internet, in contrast to 71 percent last year.
2. Applicants are 54 percent female and 46 percent male.
3. The top ten states from which we received proposals are: New York (40 percent); California (18 percent); Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois (3 percent each); Texas and Washington (2.9 percent each); Maryland (2 percent); Minnesota (1.7 percent); New Jersey (1.6 percent). The top ten states represent about 78 percent of the total applications received. More than 10 proposals were received from an additional 19 states, with 8 of those states representing more than 20 proposals each.
4. Eleven percent of the applicants are African American; 5.7 percent are Asian American; 5.4 percent are Latino(a); 1 percent are Native American; 12.6 percent listed themselves as "other"; 63 percent list themselves as European American; the remainder did not respond.

The proposal evaluation process will continue through January 2002. Panels will be held in April and we will bring the new group of selected projects (between 30–40) to the May 2002 board meeting for final approval.

During this period, Creative Capital also:

- ◆ Significantly increased the capacity of our website, including refining our system for accepting applications online. We created an online interface that accepts applications, checks them for completion, and responds to the applicant with a confirmation receipt that allows them to view their application as submitted.
- ◆ Awarded second round funding to 21 of our current artists. All Creative Capital grantees have the opportunity to apply for follow-up funding support.

Of the 75 initial grantees, 43 chose to do so and 21 were awarded additional support by the review panel. A total of \$200,000 was awarded.

To date, Creative Capital has awarded a total of \$384,500 in Supplemental Funding to 79 artists to further develop and expand the impact of their projects and nearly \$50,000 in Special Opportunities Funding to allow 37 artists to take advantage of unique exhibition and promotion opportunities. The multi-layered opportunities to apply for financial support are in keeping with our venture capital model and allow us to support projects throughout the entire creative process.

B. Technical Assistance Support 2000-01

Creative Capital remained engaged with funded projects throughout the year by providing artists with technical assistance and professional development services. Artists work in partnership with Creative Capital staff and a network of consultants to create flexible, customized project development plans. Questions that inform this plan are: What does this artist need in order to fulfill his/her vision for this project? What will help this project reach its audience? How might this project further this artist's career? How can Creative Capital help artists to gain access to resources that they may be unable to find on their own? Because we operate in a way that is different from most funders, this year we created an Artist Handbook, which introduces the range of services we offer and which answers many basic questions.

***Artist Quotes:** "The opportunities for additional funding with internal grants such as Special Opportunities Support and Follow-up Project Support has been extremely helpful to my project. The various meetings with consultants have also been very helpful in terms of defining the possibilities as well as the limitations of my work."*

—Roddy Bogawa

"Funding from Creative Capital has been instrumental in supporting the creative process of this project. We have been fortunate in approaching the goal of being able to pay a living wage to the dancers...and support an administrative infrastructure."

— John Jasperse

Support for the Person

An overarching goal of the program is for funded artists to be better able to develop their own careers at the end of the grant process than they were at the beginning. We knew that an important part of ensuring this would be providing opportunities for artists to acquire skills in the areas of marketing and public relations, fundraising, and planning. We were extremely fortunate to attract Colleen Keegan, a strategic planning consultant with extensive experience in the corporate sector, who has designed a professional development program specifically for Creative Capital artists.

This program has been enormously effective. At our most recent artists' retreat, it was startling to see the changes in artists who had gone through the intensive planning

process. The sense of control that many of these artists feel they now have over their own futures represents a significant advance. Colleen has worked with approximately 25 of the original group of 75 funded artists; we expect that an additional 20–25 artists from the current group of 43 will choose to participate in the program. Colleen also has been working with the staff on a *Strategic Planning for Artists* workbook. The first version was distributed to participants in the Strategic Planning Workshop at the Retreat.

Further, we believe it is our responsibility to share what we are learning with the larger artist community. Therefore, we plan to encourage some of the artists who have themselves been through this program to facilitate workshops with artists in communities across the country. We believe that peer-to-peer training, with artists who have benefited from participating in the process themselves as the "experts," will be both effective—and unprecedented.

In addition, on the website we offer the **Artist Toolbox**, an annotated collection of career-resource sites that is accessible to the public. Topics addressed in this resource section include arts organization management, career management, fellowships and grants, festivals, touring and residencies, legal and financial issues, technology, and websites specific to the various artistic disciplines.

Artist Quotes: *"I am moving ahead with the project on a scale far more ambitious that I had previously envisioned. Towards this end, Colleen Keegan's professional expertise and mentoring has been invaluable."*
— Wendy Jacob

"I found the strategic planning process tremendously valuable. I always thought that organizing goals would take something away from the creative process, but in fact, it freed me up to think about how the art I create fits into my whole life." —Tracie Morris

Nurturing the Community of Artists

Our second Artists' Retreat was held at Wells College in Aurora, NY, August 8–12. Fifty-five of our 118 projects were represented, and significantly, while 52 percent of funded artists attended the first retreat, this year 77 percent (or 33 out of the 43 newly funded projects) were represented. While the basic elements of the retreat remained unchanged (presentations by artists, skills building workshops and individual consultations), we made a few refinements that strengthened the event enormously.

The **presentations by the artists** are the heart of the event, and collectively they were incredibly powerful. A number of the artists commented on how inspiring it was to see work from other disciplines, which happens all too rarely. Artists are asked to talk about specific project needs as part of their presentations, on the theory that there is a tremendous brain trust present—approximately 60 other artists and 20 arts professionals. We ask returning grantees to talk about something they found

particularly helpful over the past year to provide insights to the new group of grantees about ways to best utilize our services.

This year we added a day dedicated solely to the **workshops**. Because this day was primarily for the new grantees, it also gave them an opportunity to get to know each other before the consultants and previous year's grantees arrived.

We also required artists to sign up for **consultations** prior to the meeting. This meant that everyone knew with whom they would be meeting before they arrived, which allowed the artists to go into the sessions prepared with specific questions. Finally, we **added a session** that put grantees and consultants together by discipline. This created a place to address issues specific to each discipline.

It was a very successful meeting, and the retreat is an efficient way for us to deliver some of the advisory services that are an integral part of the program's design. In addition, they are proving to be a very effective way to build a community of artists who can continue to be available to each other over time—long beyond their period of involvement with Creative Capital.

***Artist Quotes:** "...at the retreat the richness of the work, the depth of the conversations and the breadth of future possibility made me so impatient, so wanting to do better, work harder and risk more. I left the retreat a different person—one who sees where I could and should be going in the coming years."* —Steven Bognar

"My initial consultation with Creative Capital was seminal. I was urged to articulate the project's community focus, and to develop the project in that context first. My discussions with the staff, and other artists at the retreat, were essential in expanding my own definitions of art and activism. My project has been defined and re-defined with the guidance of Creative Capital." — Alex Rivera

Engaging the Public

As our strategies for supporting the project, the artist, and the community have evolved, Creative Capital has become increasingly committed to helping to connect our funded artists to the cultural institutions who engage the public with contemporary art. Toward that end, we are designing a program of project promotion through which Creative Capital will analyze the work we have supported, package the funded projects based on both discipline and theme, and market the work to a broad community of institutions that will include both traditional arts presenters and less-conventional presenters from other fields. This program will be researched in 2002 and unveiled in 2003.

Our recent efforts to raise the profile of the work have centered on the development of our website, www.creative-capital.org. We view the web as a critical tool in promoting the work of our funded artists. Towards that end, we created the **Creative Capital Artists** section, which allows our funded artists to have their own pages on our site.

Artists' pages have been designed for all 118 artists whom we support, with project descriptions and biographical information. We are currently emphasizing to artists the importance of including samples of, or links to, their work on the site. Many of the grantees, having now seen their peers' pages, have begun to send material to enhance their pages.

Notably rich uses of the website include:

Erika Blumenfeld (visual)

http://creative-capital.org/artists/visual/blumenfeld_erika/blumenfeld_erika.html

Craig Baldwin (media)

http://creative-capital.org/artists/media/baldwin_craig/baldwin_craig.html

Maya Churi (emerging fields)

http://creative-capital.org/artists/emerging/churi_maya/churi_maya.html

Jennifer Monson (performance)

http://creative-capital.org/artists/performance/monson_jennifer/monson_jennifer.html

As more artists add substantive samples of their work to their pages, we will increase our use of this section of the site as a promotional tool. An additional benefit is that this section allows all the artists to remain current as to the work being done by their colleagues, which enhances our efforts to build community.

Artist Quotes: *"Creative Capital's financial support has given the project publicity through its networking and web publications."*

—Portia Cobb

"I feel like my stature as an artist increased and the project itself gained more visibility because of the support from Creative Capital. I am thrilled to be a part of Creative Capital's mission and I feel like the inspiration and energy behind the organization has really supported and inspired me to follow through with a hugely ambitious and radical project."

—Jennifer Monson

CONCLUSION

The filmmaker Roddy Bogawa, one of our funded artists, recently wrote:

"Where has Creative Capital been all these years? Why hadn't anyone thought of this before? Perhaps the only positive result of adversity is that those concerned with culture and the importance of the arts in our society have come together to not simply contribute monies as an economic band

aid for the present but to lay a foundation whose importance and value may only truly be measured in the future. Let's protect Creative Capital and do all we can for its continuance."

As Creative Capital approaches the end of its third year, to date we have granted more than \$1.5 million to individual artists (initial grants plus supplemental and special opportunities funding), and we look forward to welcoming a new round of artists to our 2001–02 roster.

Because Creative Capital depends on gifts from individuals, foundations, and businesses to support the work of individual artists, none of our work would be possible without the generous support of our many donors (<http://www.creative-capital.org/general/html/funders.html>). If you are interested in becoming a supporter of Creative Capital, please visit the “How to Support Our Activities” section of the website (<http://www.creative-capital.org/general/html/support.html>). Contributions of any size are welcome and are fully tax-deductible. Planned gifts, including bequests and dedicated trust arrangements, are particularly welcome as we begin to build an endowment to create a permanent source of support for individual artists.