

## **PRESENTATION 4: BETHANY YON & LISA MACKAY**

The complex issue that Lisa Mackay and Bethany Yon addressed was **How can the arts sector actively (rather than passively) respond to the changing economic and political landscape?**

In their presentation four ideas were developed prior to the world-wide pandemic and the final idea was developed in response to COVID-19, Lisa and Bethany explore how the arts sector can set itself up to more resilient and independent from changing political and economic landscape so that the arts can be financially secure enough to weather economic storms rather than always be in a reactive/response mode.

**1. BE CREATIVE** Arts professionals are highly skilled at finding novel solutions to unexpected problems, but what about expected problems? We can look creatively at the sustainability of the sector and what assets we already have and see what needs those assets could fulfill outside of our artistic accomplishments. Some of the assets we have include great collaboration between companies as well as sponsors, we have performance/rehearsal/gallery/storage space, we have artistic and administrative talent, and other monetary or non-monetary resources. How can we creatively build on what we currently provide culturally to create more revenue? How can we leverage the potential monetization of work already being done in the digital world? Is there a market for assets such as online museum tours, livestreamed performances, Facebook Live book readings and discussions, downloadable content for training or educational use, etc.?

**2. RALLY THE TROOPS** The arts is a deeply relational sector. Connecting with hearts and minds to share ideas and spark reflection is what we do best. If we can build connections through our artistic practice and offerings, why not inspire our colleagues, supporters, and fans to speak with one voice in times of economic and political shift? We have built audiences based on trust and relationships, why can't we lean on them to be an army of vocal advocates? When it makes sense to our mandates, how can we use our art itself to creatively muse on issues present in our current society and allow the work we present to motivate our consumers to act, in whatever capacity they have?

**3. CODIFY SOCIETAL VALUE OF THE ARTS** The value and importance of the arts can be built into our social systems in the same way that healthcare has been. Benefits

packages and remuneration by corporations could cover not only medical expenses but cultural expenses (eg. subscriptions, tickets, classes, materials). The arts can help with mental health, creative connection, and cognitive development which are important for individuals, companies, and the wider society.

How else can the arts be directly and consistently incorporated into a corporate environment in areas such as employee engagement, employee wellness, and team building? All arts-related spending, not just donations, should qualify for tax credits. This provides incentive to participate in the arts without affecting an expense line in the overall government budgets and increases governmental support by tapping a currently unrelated department.

**4. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE** In every field there is always going to be a range of perspectives from which we speak; arts included. As political landscapes change, could we work together as a sector to determine who amongst us best aligns with and understands those currently in power to be able to effectively communicate the collective shared needs and wants of the arts? Identifying a 'spokesperson' who can use the right language, perspective, and approach for each differing government when advocating would benefit the entire arts sector.

**5. COVID-19 OPPORTUNITIES** As artists, we have an opportunity to share our skills, techniques, and creative processes with a wider public who are looking to fill their time with meaningful and creative activities. Over time the wider public can recognize and place a monetary value on the essential contributions of the arts in a shared humanity as an outgrowth of this current situation. As organizations, we have an opportunity to advocate to those in power, reach out to our supporter base, promote and uplift the individual creative initiatives of our artists, pay our artists even with cancelled contracts, uphold promises to our community and reschedule work that was already in place, and find creative ways to share our work remotely.

We invite you to engage with this final 5 BOLD ideas presentations. What ideas captured your attention? Let Lisa Mackay at [lisa@rozsafoundation.org](mailto:lisa@rozsafoundation.org) and Bethany Yon at [bethanyyon@gmail.com](mailto:bethanyyon@gmail.com) know by emailing them, starting an online chat with friends or colleagues, answering [our short survey](#), or letting us know your ideas at [geraldine@rozsafoundation.org](mailto:geraldine@rozsafoundation.org).