

## MARCH 2011 SEMINAR SUMMARY

### Alternative Sources of Arts Funding: Looking Beyond Sponsorship and Grants

#### Facilitator:

**Louise Walsh** - Since May 2003, Louise has been the founding Director of Artsupport Australia, an initiative of the Australia Council for the Arts to grow cultural philanthropy in Australia. During this time Artsupport has facilitated over \$50 million of philanthropic grants and donations for the arts and cultural sector. Louise has also worked on many major projects including the Sydney Olympic Bid, where, after its success, she worked for the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG), the City of Sydney on the Look of the City program, and the Sydney Symphony.

#### Panel:

- **Julianne Campbell**, General Manager, Performance Space
- **Lisa Hamilton**, Individual Giving Manager, Museum of Contemporary Art
- **Michelle Kotevski**, Executive Producer, Urban Theatre Projects

Louise Walsh invited the panelists to share their experiences of seeking alternative sources of arts funding. All three panelists receive assistance from Artsupport in their endeavours to expand the philanthropy bases of their organisations. Performance Space is in a special program with Artsupport and has received funding for 2 years to employ a part time staff member whose sole focus is the development of philanthropic investment. Lisa Hamilton has been working at the Museum of Contemporary Art for 6 years in fundraising and is also being mentored by Artsupport. The relationship between Artsupport and Urban Theatre Projects, who are based in Bankstown, Western Sydney, also reflects Artsupport's intentions to focus on growing more philanthropic support for the arts in Western Sydney.

Louise Walsh commenced the conversation with Julianne Campbell, *General Manager Performance Space* by asking 'What has been the impact of the fundraiser role at Performance Space?'

In 2006 Performance Space raised only \$200 in donations. A lot of philanthropy came from conventional sources. Since the philanthropy mentorship project started with Artsupport in 2008, Performance Space has raised a quarter of a million dollars. Louise Walsh asked what challenges Performance Space faces in raising funds. Julianne Campbell explained that Performance Space is a challenging "brand" as it is an organisation which takes risks with its program. Therefore fundraising strategies that might work in other contexts are not necessarily applicable. The journey for Performance Space has been about finding an authentic voice to encourage ongoing philanthropic support. Success has come from building relationships with existing and potential benefactors; hence the fundraiser role at Performance Space is now described as Relationship Manager. Louise Walsh also mentioned that, with the assistance of Artsupport, Julianne Campbell undertook a six month sabbatical, mostly in the United States. Walsh and Campbell later discussed this in more depth.

## MARCH 2011 SEMINAR SUMMARY

Louise Walsh then introduced Lisa Hamilton, *Individual Giving Manager, Museum of Contemporary Art*, whom she explained has managed with fundraising to tap into niche markets e.g. female donors. Before joining the Museum of Contemporary Art, Lisa Hamilton's background was in the performing arts. Since joining the Museum she has identified a market for women who could not attend evening events and with Lisa Poulson, an enthusiastic gallery volunteer, began networking with this potentially untapped market. Initially, this group started out having morning teas in people's homes, utilizing Lisa Poulson's social network and from there, this has grown into the Ambassador program for which membership costs \$1,000 per annum. Lisa Hamilton, Louise Walsh explained, is good at demystifying the art, another likely contributing factor in the success of the Ambassador program. The target demographic is women who are either working part time or are not in the workforce, for whom part of the attraction of membership is the social aspect of enjoying the artwork. There is an opportunity for women to learn about the art together as there are regular talks by curators and other specialist gallery staff.

Michelle Kotevski, *Executive Producer, Urban Theatre Projects*, is also being mentored by Artsupport. Urban Theatre Projects had tried crowdsourcing funding for one of their projects so Louise Walsh invited Michelle Kotevski to describe some of the challenges she encountered with crowdsourcing. Urban Theatre Projects received some funding from sponsors to take the first Australian theatre show to South Africa's National Festival of Performing Arts in 2010. These sponsors included the Australia Council, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and other local business and community groups. However, there was still a shortfall which led Michelle Kotevski to investigate crowdsourcing funding. When she found the website Pozible ([www.pozible.com.au](http://www.pozible.com.au)) it seemed straight forward to upload the project to the website, set a fundraising target and date, and offer some rewards to sponsors. However, the challenge with crowdfunding sites like Pozible, is that unless all the funds are raised by the due date, the fundraising project is deemed unsuccessful, negating any funds raised short of the target. Pozible does not have Deductible Gift Recipient status so it was important to offer good incentives and rewards to encourage people to donate. While Michelle Kotevski's aim was to find something low cost and easy, crowdsourced funding proved to be labour intensive and stressful. Urban Theatre Projects utilized social networks to generate interest in their project on Pozible but when it came close to the deadline, not enough money had been raised so Urban Theatre Projects faced losing the sponsorship they had attracted. The only way to ensure that this didn't happen was for Michelle Kotevski to employ her mother's credit card at the eleventh hour to cover the deficit. ([www.pozible.com.au/index.php/archive/index/20](http://www.pozible.com.au/index.php/archive/index/20)).

Louise Walsh then asked Julieanne Campbell to talk about the key learnings from her overseas study trip. Campbell had arranged to visit United States Artists ([www.unitedstatesartists.org](http://www.unitedstatesartists.org)) in America and Artangel ([www.artangel.org.uk](http://www.artangel.org.uk)) in London. In planning her trip, she was looking for learning opportunities which would take her into new territory for arts funding practices and ideas. For three months Julieanne Campbell worked with United States Artists who provided her with great opportunities to see how they operate as an organisation whose sole purpose is to promote and advance fundraising for the arts. United States Artists started with seed funding of twenty two

## MARCH 2011 SEMINAR SUMMARY

million dollars in 2005 from Ford, Rockefeller, Prudential and Rasmuson foundations. Their website hosts crowdsourced funding and serves as a gateway to information about all aspects of arts funding for individuals and organisations. United States Artists also offer Fellowship grants of fifty thousand dollars every year.

During her time there, Julieanne Campbell also had the opportunity to hear leading cultural theorist Arlene Goldbard speak on the importance of the arts. Goldbard is a significant contributor to cultural policy discussions in the United States. ([www.arlenegoldbard.com/about-2](http://www.arlenegoldbard.com/about-2)).

Campbell also highlighted the level of resources allocated to prospect research at United States Artists. In the everyday working life of an arts manager, opportunities for prospect research are rare. In brief, prospect researchers source publicly available information about high income earners and their patterns of giving. Sources of information include business and financial publications and public records. Prospect researchers then propose potential donors to an organisation, based on the donors' propensity for giving and their interests i.e. cultural, social justice, scientific or medical research. ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prospect\\_research](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prospect_research))

Louise Walsh then asked Lisa Hamilton: 'How do we get younger people coming in to arts spaces and also to participate as donors?'

Hamilton explained that the demographic of the Museum of Contemporary Art is such that the audience is younger than the age of the organisation's Ambassadors or patrons. Overseas the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Whitney and the Tate Modern in London all have young patron program so the Museum of Contemporary Art has tapped into similar opportunities locally. With the support of local galleries and dealers, assistance from the Museum's Ambassadors and other sponsors, the Museum of Contemporary Art started conducting focus groups to identify how to engage with the younger audience as potential financial benefactors. The outcome is a model which differs from many other donor programs where the donor receives a financial incentive. Organisations can offer either material benefits such as catered events or financial benefit such as tax deductibility, but not both. Hence it is essential to ascertain the needs of the donors they seek to attract before setting up a donors group. Members of the Young Ambassadors enjoy activities which include guided walks through cultural precincts in Sydney, events hosted by the Museum of Contemporary Art especially for them and also learn about collecting art. It was interesting to note that this younger market was more interested in the experiences that membership would provide than in potential tax deductibility. The Museum of Contemporary Art has done their research and invested in a position to develop this market.

Michelle Kotevski then talked about what lies ahead for Urban Theatre Projects. She spoke of efforts to lift the profile of Urban Theatre Projects locally by building and improving relationships with local business leaders. Urban Theatre Projects is now looking for board members who will fit with where the organisation is going, as a theatre group keen to consolidate a strong identity within the Bankstown community.

## MARCH 2011 SEMINAR SUMMARY

Julianne Campbell highlighted a rather adventurous and quirky fundraising strategy which proved to be very effective. At one of the Performance Space Open Call for Artists events, a particularly entertaining performance gave rise to the idea of using an 'infomercial' style email to Performance Space subscribers. A link to a video in which the character effectively sold the idea of donating to Performance Space in a very tongue in cheek parody was not only amusing; it was very effective in reaching the target audience.

There are differing opinions on the extent of arts philanthropy in Australia, while some would argue we host a generous giving culture in the arts; others would argue that we are yet to keep pace with philanthropy in the United States and United Kingdom for example. There is much we can learn from overseas initiatives such as United States Artists which operates on a phenomenal scale as yet not seen in this country.

One of Australia's better known philanthropic funds announced on 28 March 2011 a new program of grants for individual artists reported to be \$80,000 per artist for 15 artists. More information about the Myer Foundation's changes to its arts funding program will be announced at workshops across the country ([www.myerfoundation.org.au](http://www.myerfoundation.org.au)). This announcement coincided with the SAMAG symposium on the 28 March 2011 and should be a note of encouragement on the topic of arts philanthropy in Australia today.

### Recommended websites

[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/philanthropy/artsupport\\_australia](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/philanthropy/artsupport_australia)  
<http://www.urbantheatre.com.au/>  
<http://www.pozible.com.au/>  
<http://www.unitedstatesartists.org/>  
<http://www.arlenegoldbard.com/>  
<http://www.mca.com.au>  
<http://www.artangel.org.uk/>  
<http://www.bac.org.uk/>