



An Update from CCI President and CEO Angie Kim: Conducting New Research on What Artists Need Today

I am excited to share that CCI is undertaking a major, national research project; *Expanding Investments in Creatives*, to understand the current state of support systems for artists and the varied ecosystems in which artists and creatives operate. This study is in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), with funding support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The study will be the first comprehensive analysis of this topic since the Urban Institute's 2003 report, *Investing in Creativity*, which identified the kinds of support artists need (time and space, capital, markets and demands, training and professional development, community and networks, materials, and validation).

The seeds of this project began roughly a year ago when I spoke with 22 artists, heads of art schools, leaders of artist intermediaries and funding institutions, and venture capitalists who support creativity. What I learned was that there is widespread agreement that many aspects of the environment and market for artists' work have changed profoundly in just the past several years, including:

- The way that people want to engage with art and culture is changing, and perceptions of artists and opportunities for their work are shifting as well.
- Growing numbers of artists are working in partnerships with organizations and entities focused on community development and related grassroots movements.
- A growing number of business, government officials, and community leaders are valuing artists as assets in community building, neighborhood revitalization, and "creative placemaking."
- Growing numbers of artists are operating as "creative entrepreneurs," blurring traditional differences between nonprofit and commercial practice and opening new connections for artists with other creative sectors.
- Artists are using technological mediums to invent new artistic forms, and working with an increasingly diverse array of platforms including nonprofit cultural institutions, commercial outlets, public spaces, and online venues.
- Technology has also changed artists' business models in their use of crowdfunding platforms to finance artistic projects.
- Many degree-conferring art programs and schools are shifting their curricula from an exclusive focus on technique and artistic practice to include training in career sustainability.
- The costs of living and making work is rising much more quickly than most artists' incomes.
- Too few funding programs and training programs are adapting their policies and guidelines to keep pace with changes in the way artists are working today.

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My informal survey of field leaders revealed a strong appetite for a fresh national review of the emerging landscape of support for artists, the identification of model projects that respond to important changes in the system, and a distillation of the ways the existing system needs to change to stay current with their changing practices. This topic fit squarely in CCI's mission of supporting artists and the widening spectrum of individuals self-identifying as creatives.

The *Expanding Investments in Creatives* project will provide that contemporary report and a real time conversation online with those in and around artistic practice today. Through a review of recent research, regionally based roundtable discussions, interviews with a wide variety of leading practitioners and thinkers in a range of relevant fields, and a gathering of national thought leaders, the project will provide a high-level overview of major trends and activities in the field of artists' support, identify important models of practice, and locate emerging opportunities for impact. Designed as a form of action research, the project will engage your/public participation during the research process with real time report-outs on resources and social media conversations.

As a result of this project, a comprehensive view of major trends will be articulated, including information to inform NEA's mapping of the state of creativity; forward-looking practices will be identified and promoted across the field; and new opportunities for leverage and collaboration will be encouraged. It will also mark the first time that such information will be gathered from across nonprofit, public, and proprietary sectors. The combination of the field engagement activities and a final report available online will generate new knowledge about and activate interest in supporting a widening spectrum of creative practices in America. This will have ripple effects on a broad variety of funding programs, training programs, public-private partnerships and other elements of the artists' support system in the years ahead. So please stay tuned as we roll out the online-based action research component in the months ahead: We look forward to engaging you in this ambitious and important endeavor.

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