

Imagine Maryland

Date: July 25, 2008
Location: Theatre Project
45 W. Preston Street, Baltimore, MD
Forum: INDIVIDUAL AND EMERGING ARTISTS FORUM
Facilitator: Morrie Warshawski, Elizabeth Carven
Scribe: Janel Cohen

SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES:

What these artists appreciate about Maryland includes: cultural diversity, geographic diversity and proximity to the water, affordability, access to culture locally and in the region, the pro-arts government.

There are concerns about:

- an ageing audience
- lack of media coverage
- desire for more inter-generational experiences
- lack of a centralized source for arts information,
- need for a “hub” both virtual and actual
- need to come together and talk more often
- new technology
- a better website for MSAC

SOME KEY QUOTES:

“I came 24 years ago looking for productive studio space, this region has variety of spaces available and affordable. “

“Baltimore and MD aren’t well known in the dance world as being strong in dance. It’s difficult for us to get funding in the business community. We all have the same struggle.”

“Broad issue concern - when I go to poetry readings, a lot of the audiences are in their 40s-50s, I worry that there's nobody younger.”

“Seems as though in Baltimore, artists support the arts, but the general population supports sports.”

“[There’s] no one place to go to ... I just moved back and it has taken me 2 years to figure where to go what to do. As far as I know, there’s not one resource to find galleries- one resource available to public/artist to know where to go/show. One centralized source of good information.”

“We’re all talking about specific issues. I’m worried about a broader issue – superficiality. We’re symptomatic of what’s going on in our culture. As artists we need to explain why what we’re doing is important and valuable. We work really hard, and more people need to understand what we do. “

“I also found helpful the technical support workshops. They could be held more frequently.”

“Bring people together – we need a physical place to go to find billboards, artists, information.”

“The older generation wants physical place, but younger people may be in the virtual world. New artists are going to have new forms.”

“More community events like this.”

RAW TRANSCRIPT OF THE MEETING:

Welcome to Theatre Project from Ann.

Elizabeth Carven welcome –

Strategic Planning Meetings/ Forum Welcome

Hello and good afternoon. I am Elizabeth Carven with the Maryland State Arts Council. On behalf of Governor O’Malley and the Maryland State Arts Council I am pleased to welcome you to one of many *imagine Maryland* forums across the state. This will be an open and transparent process.

- *imagine MARYLAND* is a broad-based and inclusive planning process to help guide the Maryland State Arts Council’s (MSAC) work in the coming years.
- The plan will be completed and published early in 2009 and you can track the process on the Maryland State Arts Council’s website www.msac.org under Strategic Planning: *imagine Maryland*. Please visit the site.

I’d like to introduce you to the staff/council members with us, Carla Dunlap, Pamela Dunne, Sharon Blake, Janel Cohen, and Councilor Abby Hoffman.

Thank you for being here today and participating in *imagine Maryland*.

And now for a few housekeeping items:

- First of all, could you please fill in your name and contact information on the sign in sheet so we can keep track of who came to our meetings and also to keep you updated on the process. Minutes from this meeting will be up on our website in about 2 weeks, and soon our survey will be up.
- We also have some printed material for you:
 - Frequently Asked Questions,
 - a Press Release introducing *Imagine Maryland*,
 - a Timeline of the process (including other forums you may be interested in attending),
 - (May be substituted with flyer) our Annual Report which will have all the information you’ll need to know on the Arts Council.

At this point I’d like to introduce Morrie Warshawski, our consultant for this planning process.

Morrie Warshawski

- Story: A Farmer buried a treasure and died before telling his family where it was. They dug up everywhere looking for it in the farm and they didn’t find the treasure, but the

- next year, they had the best crop they ever had. MSAC is traveling around the state, tilling the soil, hoping for a good crop.
- Transparent process - all minutes from all the meetings are available on the website. We're doing about 12-14 issue based forums and 6 regional, and 23 one on one interviews, internal data review, internet survey. After all that data, we'll analyze.
 - Around the room for introductions.
 - Some types of art forms that are represented here today:
 - ♣ Artist - oil paintings, abstract
 - ♣ Story teller, actress, writer
 - ♣ Jazz musician, vocalist
 - ♣ Musician
 - ♣ Sculptor and performer
 - ♣ Found objects
 - ♣ Poet
 - ♣ Interdisciplinary, children's theatre, high school residencies
 - ♣ Painter
 - ♣ Visual artist, scenic artist
 - ♣ Digital media artist
 - ♣ Director of publishing collective, writer
 - ♣ Painter, drawer, ceramicist
 - ♣ Multi-arts
 - ♣ Resident studio artist, painter, sculptor
 - ♣ Poet
 - ♣ Photographer
 - ♣ Arts institution founder
 - ♣ Playwright, fiction writer, translator
 - ♣ Musician, jazz, education
 - ♣ Jazz bass clarinet, composer
 - ♣ Actress, producer
 - ♣ Playwright
 - ♣ Portrait artist, artist
 - ♣ Painter
 - ♣ Renaissance arts
 - ♣ Digital media, installations
 - ♣ Collage artists, curator
 - ♣ Artistic director
 - ♣ Fiction writer, creative nonfiction, fiction editor
 - ♣ Composer
 - ♣ Performance arts
 - ♣ Artist, Assistant director of arts center
 - ♣ Poet, writer
 - ♣ Gallery coordinator, painter
 - ♣ Artist, curator, college artist director
 - ♣ Webmaster
 - There is a set of question we are asking at the forums, that we will be asking you today.

- **WHY MARYLAND, WHAT KEEPS YOU HERE AS AN ARTIST? WHAT IS IT THAT YOU LIKE/VALUE?**
 - ♣ Soft shell crabs
 - ♣ Melting pot, at one point there were so many people further south coming to Maryland. We have everything you need here - geographical.
 - ♣ MD has a different flavor that would suit everybody
 - ♣ Baltimore - cultural diversity, cultivation, individual talents, individuality is encouraged
 - ♣ So many really good community theaters in the area, at one point there were 70 group part of the Baltimore Community Theater Alliance
 - ♣ I came 24 years ago looking for productive studio space, this region has variety of spaces available and affordable.
 - ♣ Lot of businesses doing stain glass. I am interested in starting stain glass.
 - ♣ Geographically lucky, we're so close to big cities and can go and visit, and/or we can collaborate with them
 - ♣ Broad and different interdisciplinary scene
 - ♣ Lots of artists, but no gallery row
 - ♣ After 20 years in NYC, can't afford to live there
 - ♣ Access, hub
 - ♣ Baltimore scene, lot of arts pockets that are accessible for an individual artist, but studio space not always affordable
 - ♣ Baltimore is a small town
 - ♣ Baltimore has a rich history, the historical stories that can be turned into plays, into jazz, poetry; the scene that's here is in pockets and if you're not sure where they are you can miss it. When I travel, can't wait until I get back home. We should create a scene.
 - ♣ Really value that our State government is pro arts.
- **HOW DOES THIS COMMUNITY VALUE WHAT YOU DO, DO YOU FEEL VALUED?**
 - ♣ Very happy this theater (Theatre Project) values us
 - ♣ Makes a difference in what the organization is when it comes to appreciation (smaller vs. large orgs).
 - ♣ I feel my work is not being valued; my published work is not yet in the Enoch public library. I don't think Baltimore really values writers
 - ♣ Baltimore and MD aren't well known in the dance world as being strong dance. Difficult for us to get funding in the business community. We all have the same struggle.
 - ♣ Senior community - I feel the contributions that older adults make are not as valued.
 - ♣ Plug for the Baltimore playwrights. Handouts available. Vagabonds producing In This Life. Longevity. We have playwrights who were produced in other festivals and other countries. Theatre is strong.
 - ♣ Broad issue concern - when I go to poetry readings, a lot of the audiences are in their 40s-50s, I worry that there's nobody younger.
 - ♣ Kids aren't reading. Promote for entertainment not just for study.
- **BREAK UP INTO SMALL GROUPS, WHAT ARE THE MAJOR ARTS ISSUES?**
 - ♣ Seems as though in Baltimore, artists support the arts, but the general population supports sports. Lost visual venue - "Art works this week"

- ♣ Business having leases for visual artwork - rent or lease art
- ♣ Possibility - MSAC registry for MD art place - internet locust - click on artist and that links to their website
- ♣ Media support - getting attention - idea: supplement in the city paper where artists could submit their info, supported by MSAC. Not enough media coverage.
- ♣ In PA they have something that represents individual artists -touring program (Sharon shared the MD roster info modeling after PennPAT).
- ♣ How do you make MSACs budget into best advantage - more accessible, better coordination among the agencies, MySpace page for artists set up through MSAC. MSAC could help coordinate media/etc to reduce duplication.
- ♣ More inter-generational, loss of knowledge not getting passed on to the youth.
- ♣ Where is the youth?
- ♣ Accessibility to afterschool programs not good - transportation of youth.
- ♣ Isolation of arts programs - being edited out or sidelined
- ♣ Not a strong unity in Baltimore - no hub. MSAC could be that hub for information.
- ♣ No overall enthusiasm among leadership to support events. No big art event (i.e. Kentucky derby). The City should be proud and promote
- ♣ No technology enhancement grants for digital artists. No emergency grants, assistance programs to be able to support and show work.
- ♣ No one place to go to was said earlier, I just moved back and it has taken me 2 years to figure where to go what to do. As far as I know, there's not one resource to find galleries. One resource available to public/artist to know where to go/show. One centralized source of good information.
- ♣ Gap between local arts and large institutions.
- ♣ Money issues, people like to look at art, but hard it's hard to sell
- ♣ More appreciation/opportunities for struggling artists. Hard to be an artist full time
- ♣ Different areas of local art communities could collaborate.
- ♣ Where are the literary agents?
- ♣ There are lots of programs for young kids, what I find a lack of is help for the parents of the children. Take another approach to helping kids
- ♣ In Chicago they have a program for emerging artist grants.
- ♣ Everyone loves artists, but they forget how much work goes into it.
- ♣ Art in Common - goal is to bring people/orgs together. Need hub.
- ♣ We're all talking about specific issues, I'm worried about broader - superficiality, we're symptomatic of what's going on in our culture. As artists we need to explain why what we're doing is important and valuable. We work really hard, and more people need to understand what we do.
- ♣ Lack of media attention to the arts to general public.
- ♣ Artists need to be proactive - write your own blogs, reviews.

- ♣ Hard to get in-state participation for dancers. Need to find ways to reach people and to support and collaborate with each other.
- **WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP BEEN WITH MSAC, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ITS WORK, ARE YOU AWARE OF ITS PROGRAMS, HOW CAN BE MORE HELPFUL**
 - ♣ About half the attendees get/have gotten grants from MSAC
 - ♣ I found MSAC very helpful, lot of good training programs. Their formula and the panels – they're generous; more events
 - ♣ NY Foundation for the Arts - reading info about arts, I use that as my base for research. MD could have a better website. When I go onto the MAAF/MSAC website, I find it hard to find resources.
 - ♣ When I was looking for artists work, a lot of the artists that got grants aren't even in the MSAC registries.
 - ♣ I'm curating a exhibit for MSAC- supportive - it's more a scholarly and academic acceptance for the MSAC gallery - very supportive of people who wouldn't be able to show in a gallery - not a commercial transaction
 - ♣ I was a panelist for MSAC – I also found helpful the technical support workshops, could be held more frequently.
 - ♣ Trying for individual grants, and I can't download stuff, technology - should be easier. Standardized system.
 - ♣ Long relationship with MSAC through literary arts, IAA grants, as far as poetry, literature, etc. a lot of stuff going on that I appreciate. Fundamental anxiety - problem there isn't a younger audience. People who run the literary organizations are all older. Nobody reads. Generational issue is important.
 - ♣ Generational thing is important, social divide but there are a lot of younger poets. Need to bridge the gap - older poets have knowledge, and younger poets are just babbling. MSAC - how to bridge the gap?
 - ♣ Bring people together – we need a physical place to go to find billboards, artists, information
 - ♣ Harford County trying to spearhead arts center for the county. Needs to be a place where we can come together. We've gotten grants from MSAC, and they are very helpful. We are trying to go to schools and bring to kids, but need money. How much is allocated if there is a program?
 - ♣ Older generation wants physical place, younger people may be in virtual world. New artists are going to have new forms.
 - ♣ Forum/Networking meeting or program: Bring in your own following - network with inter-generational, inter-discipline peers/artists/etc.
- Last - 5 minutes, 5 words - something you want to say
 - ♣ Expand media
 - ♣ I haven't thought of anything
 - ♣ Beef up communication
 - ♣ Get involved
 - ♣ More community events like this
 - ♣ Promote reading
 - ♣ Information about the arts for everybody

- ♣ More communication. More collaboration
- ♣ Collectors mart
- ♣ Arts can speak about Maryland
- ♣ No mention of artistic excellence
- ♣ Connectivity, virtual/physical
- ♣ Arts listing guide
- ♣ Promote Maryland arts using Preakness
- ♣ Support Baltimore communities
- ♣ Approve my art grant
- ♣ I'm Irish I don't know
- ♣ Support professional development
- ♣ Be aware of transportation issues
- ♣ Link together
- ♣ Poetry and fiction every year
- ♣ Next time free parking
- ♣ Emerge mainstream quality art
- ♣ Coordinate for the arts first
- ♣ Offer workshops for younger audience
- ♣ Virtual global changing world
- ♣ Demand is informed of supply
- ♣ Marketing educate the public

-Close of Meeting-