



***The Future
of Maryland's
Arts Sector:***

***BEST PRACTICES
FOR DIGITAL ARTS
ENGAGEMENT***

Xiomara Rivera of Puerto Rican cultural arts group Cultura Plenera. Photo by Edwin Remsberg Photographs

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The Future of Maryland's Arts Sector: Best Practices for Digital Arts Engagement

Introduction

The arts sector experienced unprecedented loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The estimated total economic impact to date is \$5.5 billion, nationally, and \$14.6 million in Maryland. 95% of all scheduled events were cancelled resulting in 1.3 million Marylanders, and 57.3 million Americans, not attending arts events.

As an immediate response to the pandemic, the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC), Maryland State Department of Education's Fine Arts Office, Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance, and Maryland Citizens for the Arts collaborated to offer four public LISTENING SESSIONS. The initial sessions were attended by 250 stakeholders who shared recommendations and prioritized actions to mobilize support. Through the public sessions, consistent communication guided independent artists to think of themselves as entrepreneurs and arts organizations to think of themselves as small businesses, and, for both individuals and organizations, to encourage the pursuit of applicable state and federal loan and grant programs. In addition to the LISTENING SESSIONS, three recurring virtual communities were established to deal with immediate concerns in real time, provide updates, hold the space for peer-to-peer sharing, and offer relevant professional development. A common thread evident in all public sessions was re-envisioning of the arts in Maryland. Total constituents in the combined virtual sessions numbered greater than 1,000 attendees, and the information collected formed the basis for ***The Future of Maryland's Arts Sector: Strategies for Stability and Sustainability*** series of guiding documents.

Within days of the declared state of emergency, the MSAC staff began drafting Emergency Grant guidelines and applications for arts organizations and independent artists to distribute \$1M of MSAC and CARES Act funding (through the National Endowment of the Arts). 165 applications were reviewed and evaluated and funding was approved for 125 applications: 64 arts organizations (\$871,318) and 61 independent artists (\$128,682).

In other MSAC grant programs, the Council approved suspension of matching requirements to allow programming to continue without the need for private contributions, extension of funding timelines by request, and removal of restrictive language on allowable expenses. All outstanding Arts in Education grant agreements for the remainder of the current academic year were submitted for payment in full with no additional activity expected of teaching artists.

The culmination of the above-listed activity resulted in the formation of the Maryland Arts Recovery Task Force, composed of representatives from the Maryland arts sector, private philanthropy, and members of state government to provide guidance for the reopening and recovery of the arts in our State. The Task Force produced four documents:

- ***The Future of Maryland's Arts Sector: Strategies for Stability and Sustainability (Arts Leadership)***
 - Published for use by all Maryland arts stakeholders specifically inviting statewide arts leadership (Maryland State Arts Council, Maryland State Department of Education's Fine

Arts Office, Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Maryland Citizens for the Arts, and the County Arts Agencies of Maryland) to utilize the findings as guideposts for short and long term planning.

- *Encourage Collaboration*: How can artists and organizations work more collaboratively to strengthen their sustainability in the 21st Century?
- *Sustain Current and Create New Funding Opportunities*: What is the future of arts funding and how can expanded and equitable funding practices be ensured?
- *Design a Shared Marketing Campaign*: What is the unified message announcing a new vision for statewide arts engagement?
- ***The Future of Maryland's Arts Sector: Strategies for Stability and Sustainability (Arts Advocacy)***
 - Published for use by Arts Education in Maryland Schools and Maryland Citizens for the Arts to utilize the findings to guide advocacy planning.
 - *Strengthen the Arts Advocacy Message*: How is the importance of the arts as an economic driver, and as a necessity for the highest possible quality of life, brought to the attention of all lawmakers?
- ***The Future of Maryland's Arts Sector: Best Practices for Digital Arts Engagement***
 - Recommendations for artists and arts organizations developing digital content.
- ***The Future of Maryland's Arts Sector: Best Practices for In Person Arts Engagement***
 - Recommendations for MARYLAND STRONG: Roadmap to Recovery.

The COVID-19 pandemic acted as the inspiration for a reimagining of the work of artists and arts organizations across our State. The objective of the work of the Maryland Arts Recovery Task Force is to motivate an immediate and urgent response to artists, arts organizations, and arts audiences who have an integral and cost effective impact on Maryland's economy. By proactively investing in the social transformation provided by the creative sector, Marylanders will experience increased health and well-being as the result of an emboldened public spirit.

BEST PRACTICES FOR DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Arts Experiences, Exhibitions, and Performances Online

Prepare the Site	Prepare the Workforce	Site Control	Communicate Procedures for Stakeholder Confidence
<p>Identify your organization’s existing content (exhibit, performance, etc) and its potential to be made digital.</p>	<p>Identify your organization’s staff capacity for maintaining your digital engagement and allocate time and resources accordingly.</p> <p>Consider the accessibility of the content being presented. The National Endowment for the Arts offers guidance on making virtual arts businesses accessible to all audiences.</p>	<p>Poll your audience to determine their ability and preferred methods to receive or participate in online content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do they have access to Broadband/WIFI? ● What time of day will they engage with various art content ● Do they prefer live () experiences or pre-recorded ()? ● How much would/can they pay for a virtual experience? <p>Ask your local government and internet service providers about what is available for wifi accessibility, or “drive-in wi-fi” that may be offered by local libraries, schools, or recreation centers</p>	<p>Explore the opportunities virtual platforms and digital engagement provides to broaden the geographic reach to both artist and audience bases.</p> <p>Promote your events and artwork on the directories and events calendars compiled by state-wide arts organizations, County Arts Agencies of Maryland, and other local or regional organizations.</p> <p>Promote Maryland-based digital arts and culture programming on national lists and platforms to encourage digital tourism and promote the state’s offerings.</p>
<p>Determine the most appropriate digital format for presenting your material. This may include synchronous (live/interactive) or asynchronous (pre-recorded) formats, online media hosting platforms, or digital conference platforms and considerations about the legalities and risks of piracy and intellectual property theft in creating content that includes art, music, performance, etc accessible online.</p>		<p>Determine the best ways to engage audiences with your content and decide whether your online content should be free, donation-based, or have a fee (transactional, subscription-based, ad-based.)</p>	
<p>Creation of a centralized online resource that will support and inform artists and organizations wishing to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create 	<p>Develop a tool-library style program to loan or lease equipment necessary for filming and streaming programs online</p>	<p>1) Connect with state-wide resources, (libraries, public radio & television, larger museums & venues, CAAMs and regional arts groups), etc that have resources that financially and technically</p>	<p>Constituents who benefit from this impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual Maryland-based artists 2. Arts organizations of all sizes and types

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement ● transform existing non-digital content into ONLINE/DIGITAL arts programming (visual arts and performing arts) 	<p>When developing a state-wide Art focused service-corps consider an arts-tech/virtual programming focused arm that can assist organizations with developing and presenting digital content and programming</p> <p>Balance having in-person content that is translated online and creating content solely intended to be experienced online, where appropriate.</p>	<p>support artists and arts organizations creating of online programming. .</p> <p>2) Create a state-wide online repository of the work of Maryland artists and arts organization that will enhance the reputation and visibility of the state as a major force in the national arts arena</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. 4. Citizens of Maryland who are arts consumers 5. City, County, and State governmental agencies wanting to showcase and demonstrate the value of arts to the economic, educational, and social well-being of Maryland
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BEST PRACTICES FOR DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Arts Instruction Online

Prepare the Site	Prepare the Workforce	Site Control	Communicate Procedures for Stakeholder Confidence
<p>Instructors (arts and non-arts classroom teachers, teaching artists, etc.) research new and existing learning management systems considering what is best suited to different art disciplines, content goals, privacy settings, and engagement features.</p>	<p>Parents and classroom educators: Teaching artists, guest artists, or arts organizations leading instruction should be vetted by a reliable source to ensure content is appropriate and valuable for students.</p>	<p>Parents and instructors should check the online platform's privacy policies so the identity of children and families are protected.</p>	<p>Instructors communicate with parents about their encouraged involvement in arts-based learning.</p>
<p>Instructors utilize established online learning platform and procedures through the student's school or organization hosting the course.</p>	<p>Instructors seek training or professional development workshops about the basic skills in crafting effective online art instruction, to include considerations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amplification ● Lighting ● Camera ● Movement ● Pacing/Variety ● Use of technology, media, etc <p>Instructors connect with State and National art education associations for free online teaching resources.</p>	<p>Instructors ensure there are opportunities for students to learn how to succeed with online instruction, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technology or online platform tutorials before instruction begins ● Confirm children under the age of 13 have verifiable parental consent before accessing any online resources. ● Reviewing online classroom etiquette (proper attire, setting up their art space, taking breaks, etc.) ● Establishing a routine ● Set enough time for reflections and questions 	<p>Teaching artists collaborate with parents, classroom teachers, and other pertinent school contacts before moving instruction online or creating new online content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider students' access to the internet or WIFI, necessary materials, and tools, or other school requirements. ● Communicate with parents and teachers for alternative methods of learning for students who do not have access to safe internet resources.
<p>Instructors conduct several test runs of online content before going live. Instructors pilot their online content with a small group of students, or with educator colleagues.</p>	<p>State or local government and organizations should offer funding or an incentive/certificate programs for professional development in online teaching.</p>	<p>Instructors consider aspects of a program that invites parent participation during the activity, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent-student collaborative art making and performing ● Virtual family showcases ● Parents only programming 	<p>Constituent Impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and families 2. Arts and non-arts educators Teaching artists 3. Arts and community organizations that host or produce educational programs.
<p>Instructors will balance having in-person content that is translated online</p>	<p>Instructors ensure online content can invite communication,</p>	<p>Instructors communicate with parents about agendas/syllabi, technology controls, or any physical materials or space</p>	<p>Teaching artists, guest artists, and arts organizations offering supplementary online instruction:</p>

<p>and creating content solely intended to be experienced online, where appropriate.</p>	<p>engagement, and participation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lessons that include a mix of synchronous (in real-time) activities and ● Asynchronous activities (students complete independently on their own time). ● Identify aspects of the artform that lend themselves to online teaching, considering the possibilities and limitations. ● Identify aspects of the art form that lend themselves to a hybrid of online and in-person learning. 	<p>needed before starting instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Market your content on websites, online directories, and, ● Communicate with community based providers such as libraries, health care centers, or Parent Teacher Associations about your offerings. <p>Instructors have preparation meetings and reflection check-ins with parents as appropriate.</p> <p>Instructors set up “office hours” for parents to drop in, ask questions, or plan further activities.</p>
	<p>Instructors are familiar with Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education and any updates from the Maryland State Department’s Fine Arts Office.</p>		

Appendix I: Task Force Participants

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