

Can Artists be Policy Makers - Notes

April 26th , 2019 | 5:00-06:18 PM

Report from the field

Organized by Darryl Ratcliff, [Creating Our Future](#)

Selected via Open Call with presentations by [Darryl Ratcliff](#), [Maya Crawford](#), [Arnoldo Hurtado](#),
Gwen Meharg

Creating Our Future has been grappling with the question: Can artists be policymakers for the last five years? We have gone from a group of artists and art lovers who had never been to a city council meeting to achieving citywide grant programs and directly shaping cultural policy in the city of Dallas, TX for the next decade. As we expand to other cities we want to sit and reflect on exactly how did this happen? What were the strategies we used? Where have we been strong and where have we failed? Is our success unique or are there lessons applicable to other parts of the country? Who else is doing this work and what might we learn from them? Perhaps most importantly can we as artists make lasting political change?

NOTES:

Darryl Radcliff: Good afternoon, I'm Darryl Radcliff and thanks for being with us this afternoon. This is my colleague, Maya. And my other colleague Arnoldo and we are going to talk to you a little bit and have a discussion together but before that we will walk you through some of the work that we have done in Dallas in the past 5+ years... so please feel free to get to the nuts and bolts of things but I feel like there is a way we can talk about that stuff but there is also the question of this spycraft, that I'm being a double, or triple agent, making stuff work.

(presenting picture) In 2013, this is an immigrant refugee community called "The green meadow- Dallas", what was happening on that time was lots of pocket of energy. And, there was a younger art scene in their 20s doing a bunch of DIY activities. We didn't have an office of cultural affairs in the city of Dallas, and there was such a gap post recession that most of weren't aware of its existence.

We had the opportunity to do panel called "Not Waiting for Permission" and kinda talked about what was going on and gave us an opportunity to talk about an issue and we chose "money" and how we can get it. And we found out that there is this thing that has a millions of dollars, and no one we knew had any of that money. This is called "State Affair Park," And it was the first place where we were invited into the city process.

We presented for about an hour on the need for individual artists funding and we were told that “have you heard of kickstarter?” and that was very disheartening. And that really laid the seeds for our future and we knew that wasn’t good enough.

(Presenting picture) This is my creative partner, etc. I wanted partners who weren't really in the art world—Marcus was an investment banker for example—Because there is a sense that we need to translate from the art world to the greater community. So we hosted a crawfish boil in Marcus’ backyard and about 150 people came for this event. So next thing we did was a series of think tanks—picture of the left is Margarita think tank. We had 3-4 of them and we were getting a needs assessment. The picture to the right is an “Michelada Think Tank,” which was inspired by the Margarita think tank. This is all Spring/early Summer 2014 and one of the things we decided was that we should do a party (“City Under Influence”) We wanted to accomplish a few things:

1. Come up with a list of needs, like the individual artist funding
2. Register for people to vote
3. City couldn't figure out how to give money to artists as an individual, so we wanted to change the city by being a group of artists doing it.

We partnered with an institution, a publication, a magazine, and a fashion art network, collecting creatives that we didn’t really know. It is crucial to know that we asked the artists to do what they do; there was this staffer who did a performance. And, I curated an art installation of a light artist, Patrik Romeo. So, we were just doing what we do as artists, but we are adding a layer of cultural responsibility to it and people paid \$10-15 at the door. Half the money went to a micro grants that we selected two artists who presented ideas and people could vote for, and the other half to pay performers and the artists.

And that kinda helped demonstrate these as the first individual artist grants if you will and made a case for it being possible, since we really just did this. Besides that we were getting folks to go to meetings. This is a cultural affairs meeting and normally no one goes to these meetings, and we got 30 people to go there and saying “we want money.” Essentially putting that pressure along side working with press. There were probably 5-6 media outlets at that time covering cultural events in Dallas and we were able to get them all on the same page on editorials around individual artist funding.

Poster: local response to Black Lives Matter

Going into 2015, it was the city council election, and we made a decision to work directly on the city council campaigns. So this was the event we did with “Weapons of Mass Empowerment” which was a local response to Black Lives Matter in Dallas. We had 500 people who were about to vote and we had candidates come as well. The Election happens in 2015 and we directly supported 6 candidates. There are 14 seats in Dallas and we were primarily in seats that were

in communities of color. We lost! 4 out of 6 candidates supported didn't win and I remember feeling like a complete failure after that election. Because A) I had no idea what I was doing B) we need goals.

The OCA decided to do some individual artists funding and they basically piloted it around 50k. At that point we started pivoting not just for the individual artist funding but also for cultural equity grants. I was fortunate to be one of the recipients and I decided to do a whole project around cultural equity and the need to that sub power intimacy at this Gallery. This was in our in gallery district which is very white, and so having 100s of people of color doing things that normally happen in art galleries of Dallas was significant.

I got a Facebook message from someone at the Office of the Cultural Affairs, that he wants to meet, so we met at [Ash Studios](#) and we started talking. Long story short, two things happened simultaneously: the two wins that we did get became very important. One was a new City Arts Council, Carolyn King Arnold, who got herself appointed on the arts rec library committee. What a council does first is that they do budgets. So, she brought up the need to cultural equity. And the other council person whom we supported was Monica Alonzo, and she seconded that. So, the Council dictated to the OCA that they would have to send at least 100,000 dollars in supporting equity for that budget year. But because we are also engaging staff, David got a memo from the council and he added another 100,000 dollars to that which created the cultural vitality program.

Picture: Dec of 2015. With Mayor and Giovanni an artist and running now for city council as we speak in Dallas.

We are learning this process, we are going to these meetings, but we are also having fun. We meet every week, with no agenda, we hold organic decompression time. I think that was one of the things that helped us sustain the peoples involved over the course of few years.

So between 2014-2016, we call that “the art is public good campaign” and we are creating artist grants for individual artists, and cultural equity.

We went from 0 dollar when we started to 750,000 dollars now annually, and the way in which it works is over 3 million dollars that the City of Dallas has made available for artists.

Now, what do you do when you have the resources? Equity is a central part of what we have done policy-wise. With “Michelada Think Tank,” we did an equity map of what happens if you are a cultural worker, where do you go? And, we met with 29 institutions, like public school, library, all the major museums, educational centers, etc. to create better pathways for artists of color in the city and we also met with 120 artists at the same time. That set the table and had all the players in the city talking about equity.

I am going to turn it over to Maya to tell you what happened next.

Maya Crawford: So in Summer of 2017, City of Dallas decided to create a new cultural plan and policy. The one that we have been currently working with was more than 15 years old, it had not been updated there were a lot of missing parts and a lot issues, things like the new artist funding program weren't implemented in the previous years. And part of that was to put together a steering committee. And, that process took a little over a year before the plan and the policy was completed.

And, we got input not only from local arts organizations, both small and larger, but also community members through community engagement and that was a big part of the steering committee's goal at the very beginning was to make sure that we were addressing the needs of the community and not telling them what they needed. And by doing that we did a lot of community outreach.

One of our main things with "Creating Our Future" as this process started was as I was sitting at the steering committee, I looked around and there was no one representing the Dallas music scene. We had people from the visual arts, theater, all sorts of performance arts, but we didn't have really from local music community. So made it our mission from the Fall of 2017 to Summer of 2018 to mobilize that community. We did the same kind of process as we did when "Creating Our Future" was founded. We put a call to action to local leaders in the music community which were not at all organized and leadership was hard to find. But, we partnered with some really great bar owners who held concerts at their bars. They offered their space for us to use and helped us spread the word for us. We partnered with people who ran local music blogs. Part of our process was to get people in the same room talking about issues, actually making them aware of how the city funding affects them. A lot of them, including artists across the board, didn't know what the city has to do with all these policies and how they affect them or can affect them. We mobilized people into action through key points we found during those meetings.

As a result, we did a lot of outreach to different type of organizations and artists and the music community and we pushed for a big change in the policy.

So our previous policy really focused on art organizations and there was no mention of artists as individuals and definitely no mention of musicians. So that all changed when we put together a new cultural policy. And also, the inclusion of equity, and inclusion of an equity statement, but also being able to steer the conversation around what equity is and what it is in our city and what should it look like.

This is just a snippet of the vision as far as the policy as you can see equity is at the forefront. Reads on the screen: An equitable, diverse and connected community, where residents and visitors thrive through meaningful arts and cultural experience in every neighborhood of Dallas.

I am going to pass it on.

DR: As we navigate our cultural plan, I have been invited by some artists in our neighboring city Fort Worth to talk about organizers there on and talking about our future there and Arnoldo who is going to talk about his work.

Arnoldo Hurtado: Hi Everyone. I was born and raised in Fort Worth. And, I have an “Arts Cream” truck. So as you can see in the image above, it is a refinished ice cream truck, and in my own language I was dealing with the accessibility of arts for the communities of color. So what I would do would be pop-ups for the people who looked like me.

I was very turned off by the institutional scenes and I found it very unaccessible, uninviting. So that was my own personal drama that I was dealing with and I found a creative way for expressing that and through experimenting with it, I found out people are really enjoying this.

It was something I could do as my practice. And because it is very mobile, I was traveling around Texas, from Fort Worth coming to Austin, Dallas and I would do pop ups everywhere. That is how I came across Darryl and the conversations started and got to see and learn through “Creating Our Future” that accessibility is a very important topic and what I was trying to talk about through my own language, but did not have the knowledge or the structure for what that could look like.

“Creating Our Future” is definitely a model that has made it accessible to our city, Fort Worth which have been historically very racist like many other cities in America. Let’s face it, it is real. And, especially for the institutions of art. So having that language made me comfortable that I am not the only one dealing with this type of issue.

So, the speed dating happened in Fort Worth thanks to “Creating Our Future” and it was a great way of modeling some of the meeting that we can have as artists, organizing. So, in my spectrum, I have never seen artists organizing before, it was always a very individualistic approach, everybody is trying to make a living with art, but “Creating Our Future” set the tone for what artists organizing can look like.

I knew this is what I have been doing with my community, which is a Spanish speaking one. In 2016, I started with the help of my neighbors, a group, nothing arts related, just taking care of the issues happening in our community. I got to see what are issues that are still plaguing my community and I was very pissed off about it.

I told myself I am going to knock on my neighbours doors and see if everybody is seeing what I am seeing because really pissed about it. Also, keep in mind that Trump has just become the president, so I told myself “fuck this,” like “no” so I went and knocked on doors and found out that everyone was scared in my neighbourhood and they were seeing what we were seeing,

domestic violence, drugs and drug use which was getting worse than when I was a child. So I knew we can't be going back and everything is getting worse in this community. We needed to make things better.

Long story short, I started organizing these little meetings where I would invite my neighbors to come talk about local issues. Once again, the overlap with "Creating Our Future" really helped us know what organizing can look like. So I definitely used some of those organizing skills.

After these meetings took place, one other major happened: Asking the community what is going on? Are you seeing it? Tell me what you are seeing. One of those things was definitely drugs, violence,...

I knew I was living in a culturally rich neighborhood but I was not seeing that visually. So something was wrong there. We have all sorts of culture of music, color and beautiful traditions, but where are they? They are not being expressed. So, we talked about visually changing the narrative of what our community looks like. This video shows an excerpt of what we did.

(Video playing)

As you can see from the video we made a little bit of magic happen in the parking lot of this grocery store (once was a grocery store that has become a sort of a game room). That was actually the same place we were holding those meetings. I asked the owner, and he was pretty onboard to give it a shot. A lot of work went into networking, knocking on doors and trying to start this dialogue: what can we create in Fort Worth with all of its history; the creeping of gentrification especially in the neighborhoods of color. Before we did the mural, having to do art washing, we made sure people understood the implications of introducing art to the neighborhood. So first, we did about 8 months of dialogue of educating the community, of rezoning, gentrification and what it means. We wanted to make sure people had the vocabulary and the understanding of what was coming or was already there.

DR: We wanted to spend most of our time in conversation with you. What questions, concerns and thoughts did people have?

AM=Audience member

AM1: Hi my name Marina, and I am the Director of the Philadelphia Art Alliance. From what I understand Philadelphia doesn't have a cultural plan? And, not many cities do. I am curious what you know about them and what can you share?

DR: Before Dallas had this whole cultural plan, we had the opportunity to work with some colleagues in NY through organizing around NYC cultural plan, and Boston has a cultural plan that inspired Dallas. I still have mixed feeling about cultural plans and who they serve. As artists there are moments that suck up a lot of energy and attention, so it is good to be both inside and

outside. We had Maya serving on Steering Committee to local consultants who have been organizing for three years before what the plan was. So that helped the flow of information. As far as the plan has shifted to policy, there are around 40% of total funding needs to get to organizations of color; Boards, staff, community has to be a certain level depending on size—around 20 percentile. So those are real changes that we gave ourselves 5 years to get there. If you don't need that, you won't be able to get money from the city.

MC: Plans are great, but they don't mean a lot unless they resolve in policy change. And, that is where you want to make the difference.

AM2: Hi, thank you for sharing. My name is Simona from West Wisconsin. My question is regarding artist unions. What are your thoughts on that as a structure?

MC: I don't have a lot of experience with unions. Unions are not allowed in Texas.

DR: It is an interesting form. For "Creating Our Future" we were talking about what type of thing we wanted to be, because we don't want to be identical to a pack or local party. Curious if anyone in the room has experience with unions?

AM1: I did meet someone here working on artist unions in Canada. There is expertise here in the Common Field Network.

AM3: My name is Chris Jordan from Washington. Our city is redoing and creating a new funding stream. We are trying to make those goals into politics, even though a lot of numbers and information can be grounded in certain demographic histories, but we often get hit by the fact that we can't discriminate and that acts almost like a wild card that is used against us, I am curious how y'all were able to navigate those and get the city to make explicit commitments to those benchmark?

DR: A) Time, B) I think it was helpful that we were person of color who were leading the organizing, C) the Think Tank that we did around the city, and D) Ash Studios, which acted as place based art project. There was a lot of demonstration. There was a lot of lack of imagination amongst the city official and council members because one of the issues in Dallas was (still is) that a lot of council members don't vote for arts funding because most of the funding has gone to serve large white legacy institutions, so they don't see it being as valuable to their constituents. When in fact it really is valuable. And by providing examples like what we did, and what people latch onto, and having that dialogue that culture is important with folks in other fields it can help. We also used the help of local media, which was very relational. I was an art writer, and I happened to be in good terms with a lot of writers around town. Even though sometimes we collectively didn't have much power we would use tactics like shame. We would use it as an avenue when we needed to push something forward.

AM4: How did you make legal to create a threshold? Sometimes that legal language could be a

cause for a lawsuit against the city for discrimination for example. How is it codified in your policy so city can say we can meet an affirmative action goal within the funding.

MC: Well they found a way. That is the difference between plan and policy. Plan says this would be nice and policy says this would be the law and what your guidelines should go by. Since it was such big part and such a big issue when the plan was assembled, it proved important to our council members and our city officials that equity and equity goals be stated in the policy. Not sure how they deemed it legal, but it was reviewed by the city attorney office. So, at least, in the City of Dallas, and that could change—someone could bring a lawsuit...

AM5: I just wanted to speak to your question, because codifying the right terms, especially when we are talking about the equity. We have people that will try to sue our state, our city—if we try to push too hard. So one of the things I'm hoping is going to start to catch on, which has been successful in Hawaii and, in some cases, and I think in one building in San Francisco is the language of historical legacy preference—particularly red line communities and so it's something that we're using when we're talking about what's happening in Chinatown, and in Seattle—what's happening in the Central District... integrating that, more overtly, talk about the heritage of art in these communities, and historically red-line communities and how that shapes our city is a way around the verbiage of race that the opposition will try to catch us up on.

AM6: My name is Matt. I live in Baltimore but grew up in Dallas. I just wanted to ask what particular traits about Dallas make the nature of the work you're doing different compared to other cities?

DR: Well, I guess the wonky answer would be from a cultural funding standpoint. Dallas, as well as Fort Worth, elected to not use a mechanism that cities like Austin or Houston or San Antonio used which is allocating a percentage of their hotel occupancy tax toward funding culture. Which I think many cities are 12%, 13%, on that tax. And we kind of tied all of that money into a convention center bond project. And so it's interesting that we had less funding, or, at least, funding from different sources. Our funding came from the general operating fund of the city. So it's interesting, that one of the big issues in the mayor/council race, as we speak, an allocation of taking money from pot and using that, finally, now that some of these bonds are rolling off—allocating a larger percentage of that to the arts is one of the big issues and, I think, hopefully, that will be kind of the next big win for the community because, I think, there are like eight candidates in support of doing that in some fashion.

AH: Can I add something real quick? So, I think, from my perspective, Fort Worth and Dallas are pretty different but they do overlap in some ways. Fort Worth very much has an ethos of cowboy, while Dallas is more cosmopolitan—at least that the way we see it in Fort Worth, bigger city. Fort Worth is now trying to embrace the fact that it's growing into a large city so it wants to be Austin, it wants to gentrify because gentrification makes money. So, with that said, being in the community, one of the things that I'm noticing is bringing culture to the forefront is super important, having the policy-making passion because you want to show the fact that, yeah,

there are people that have culture, there are people that celebrate culture, diversity is beautiful and it takes many forms, has been oppressed, in Fort Worth it has been oppressed, and in many parts of the country it has been oppressed and, so, the beauty of what's happening here organically is that before I met Darryl, we had already been performing and doing cultural events so it's not like we put this on to pass policy; it was organic. It just so happened that Darryl and Creating the Future saw what we were doing in Fort Worth and said "Wow! You're already bringing culture to the forefront? So now it's the next move. Let's pass policy so that we can fund what you're doing." Because we're doing this grassroots. We'd get together and we would do potlucks. You know poor people are giving to poor people and so, like, that's a big deal, and you can only imagine what's possible if there was funding behind this.

MC: Another thing that makes Dallas unique in comparison to a lot of cities of its size is that we have and extremely low voter turnout. So you don't have to get a lot of people to show up to make a difference. It's not a great thing but it is a real truth within our city. Also Dallas is seen as just a very large town. A large city, but has a small town feel. So after all the speaking to you about accessibility—there is a lot of accessibility to competitions, to change-makers—in our city, I know that it's not always current and relatively the same in other cities. To speak to your question that's a key feature of Dallas.

AM7: Hi. I'm Julia, I'm from Kansas City and I wanted to talk to Arnaldo about your project. You're moving beyond organizing artists to speak up for their own causes and moved into being an artist that organizes community to move forward with issues like gentrification which affect so many people and I'm very active in the affordable housing organizing, at the moment, and how all the issues of social justice have been connected to that and I just wondered a couple of things. First of all, what you think the most important ways in which artists move the community forward in ways that are not typical means. What do artists bring to the table to actually get community engaged? And then the second thing I'm interested in is the ways in which artists operate in city environments in places where decisions are made—not just as people that make things but as people that think differently and look at the world differently and I'm wondering if you're noticing more, kind of, invitation for that way of thinking in the experiences that you are having?

AH: So my experience is my own and so I'll speak to that. I do think that artists think differently and that can be translated visually, even in the way we speak and what we create and the way we move and work, socially. How we communicate with people and/or that a big element is when I approach my community. I live in my community, so that's a big deal, right there. I'm not an artist from Texas living in, I'm just going to pick a random place, Hawaii. So there's a lot of history with me and my community that nobody else knows. The nuances, the people, the local grocery store—I know that, because I had those conversations growing up in that community so I think for that reason, in itself, if I were to reflect my work there is a lot more powerful than if I were to relocate to somewhere else. And, in itself, that is self-gentrification, as well. Abandoning my community and making it open to who knows. Who knows what is going to move in and with what intention, right? So I think that is important thing for people of color to realize that when we

do move out of our communities, it's a dangerous move... Another element on top of this and maybe it will reveal another way of thinking, is the way, for example, that the way, in my community, a way that I was able to mobilize people was through social media. Facebook. So if you're at Facebook and it's disadvantages and it's horrible practices, and I saw an opportunity there so, for example, I started a group called the Moorshead Community four years ago. I had no idea what was going to happen with this group but I created it because I was frustrated and I wanted to vent. And I figured this would be a great venting place for other people that see the same things that I do. As time went by, I realized the power and the number of people that this message was resonating with. And now we are shy of 4,000 members specifically in my community and because I'm from that community people trust a little more of what I have to say so I do post a lot and then we use it as an educational tool, for example. Reviewing policies that the city council is trying to implement and bringing it to a wider audience that, otherwise, would have no access because the city website is not very intuitive. It's made that way on purpose so people don't know what the heck is going on. So interpreting that into Spanish and putting up all your opinions about what is going to happen next. Using that as a way to propose projects to the community and get feedback, in real-time: "Do you like this? What are your thoughts?" Going back to your question about the thinking of an artist, using that as a tool, as an opportunity, and seeing the positive in that as a creative space, as well. Social media can be a creative space.

AM8: Hi, I'm Megan from Houston, TX—so neighbors of you guys which is interesting because in Houston we do have hotel occupancy tax and we have the Houston Art Alliance which is a part of the city's cultural affairs office. It's its own non-profit entity gives out money, and the conversation about money is very prominent.

MC: Start small. Find out who your council member is, invite them to a meeting that you might have at your home with your community or ask them to have a meeting with you at lunch. I found Dallas councilors were very open to meeting with their constituents. Also looking for other organizations and people that are doing what you're doing, partnering with them.

DR: It's intentional that we always had strong allies, who believed in supporting individual artists, who were outside of the artworld, and that's been really helpful. And, frankly, and also very politically diverse, we even had a couple members on the board that were Tea Party republicans, we didn't agree a lot but we did agree that creativity should be supported so we were able to work together on that and, honestly, some of the grassroots communication strategies. So, you know, unlikely allies.

AH: If you are not comfortable meeting people face-to-face, once again—social media. That's how I started reaching out to my council member. I would tag them, become friends with them, letting them know they were upsetting. I started calling them out on social media—not in an attacking kind of way but asking questions like "Hey! Where is this money going? Can you tell us more about this?" And any time someone would say "Ask me in private", I'd say, "No, you're a public figure! Say it to everybody." And it depends on how you wanna work that but, for us,

social media has been very powerful. So use it for good.

AM9: I work at A Blade of Grass in NYC. I wanted to ask about the work you did around council members, and elections, in particular. I know NYC is having a big turnover for the last couple of years and that's one thing that some of us are starting to think about is how do we want to engage in the next election since there are going to be a lot of new faces in city council? And what did you do? Did you have a specific questionnaire? Do you have specific policy platforms that you ask people about? What was it that made you support one candidate over the other?

DR: Basically during the think-tank process we did have about 12 things and we translated them into specific policies, action points that we had them prioritized. And we voted collectively once people got information on various candidates. There is another artist advocacy group, [Dallas Area Cultural Advocacy Coalition](#) (DACAC), that works more with non-profits and they're really great about the questionnaire side and so we piggyback on their work with that and then we'll test-talk to candidates, so that's how we vetted and once we decided that this is the candidate that we believe in and felt like had an opportunity to win. First, we saw how many people were in their district that could vote, we assigned captains in each district who lived there to be the liaison because it's a different thing when someone lives in the council person's district or whether they don't and then sending people to actually work on the campaign—knock on doors, canvas, all of that. So that helped establish personal relationships and then we followed up with the council people like, “Hey, remember that thing you said that you would support? Can you support it?”

AM10: Hi, I'm Nat with Flux Factory in NYC. I have a question about non-profits becoming politicized. In NYC, if you get municipal funding, you have to sign paperwork that says you can't lobby for a specific politician or policy or kind of restricts your ability to do that. And it's appropriate in some ways because if you receive state funding through a council member, you shouldn't turn around and say that they should get re-elected. It's a conflict of interest thing and perhaps charities should not be getting into the political fray. But, in another sense, it seems like charities and their values should have something singular to offer in a political way. So I wonder if you have any ideas about how to thread this needle of when should charities and arts non-profits get involved in lobbying for politicians, for policies, perhaps more general issues?

DR: I'm not as familiar with the non-profits. We are individual citizens who care and, for me, it's also an art project. But my understanding is that a non-profit, as long as they do not go over a certain percentage, can advocate for themselves or their interests without any fear of being in violation of any laws and so I think what's happened, at least locally, in this election, there have been more non-profits that have been more proactive in making sure that people know what the issues are, as they relate to the arts community. There's a website where people can take a pledge to support the arts. One of the nice things about arts non-profits is that we have audiences and our audiences are also citizens and so there is a lot that we can do and for me it's been super interesting, as Arnoldo said, that you don't have to do anything different than you are already doing. We didn't, like, not make art. We kept making art, we added a layer. And then

there is access from board members who might have personal connections in other ways to city officials.

AM11: I'm an artist in Philly. Are you all using these platforms to talk beyond the political sphere, to talk to funders, or museums and galleries, or the arts press? Are you using this leverage to generate other kinds of change?

AH: Currently, for example, in Fort Worth I was approached by the [Amon Carter Museum](#), which is part of the cultural district in Fort Worth. They have, historically, done a lot more American art but they are trying to rebrand and with the help of Creating Our Future, I think that had an impact in terms of talking about the issues. I think it reached the ears and the eyes of the institutions because they are being called out or they want to be in the know of what the conversation is, currently. So with all the work that I'm doing in Fort Worth, they approached me and said, "We saw the cultural work that you're doing and we'd like to bring you along as part of community artists." So I'm part of an inaugural group of artists that the Amon Carter, this has never been done before, where they're trying to approach artists or communities that have not been reached before, for example, and seeing what we have to say so I definitely use that platform to educate staff at the museum, the people with money, cause that's who gives all the money. I talk about these issues all the time so it's not like I'm specifically using this conversation with them. Like, if you meet me in the street, the first thing I'm gonna talk about is your privilege, and how equity is an issue. And that's just me, so I bring that the same way I would with anyone else to those institutions.

DR: One of the reasons we defocus on municipalities is: A) it's our money, and B) scale. In 2016, I was fortunate enough to receive an artist's grant from the Dallas Museum of Art and at the beginning of it they were, like, this fund started in 1983 and we've given over a half-a-million dollars to individual artists which is great but I think because we worked, our efforts have generated over 3 million dollars in 3 years. That's just how big it scales and that's one reason we focus on that.

AM12: Emily Smith, from Richmond, VA, You mentioned Texans for the Arts and I was curious if there was an organized relationship between a statewide advocacy effort or if it was more relational or what the opportunities there were.

DR: There was definitely an awareness. We've gone to Arts Advocacy Day when the state legislature was in session and met with our state representatives, advocating for the arts on a state level which, unfortunately, most cities have larger funding, as a city, for the arts than the state does but and that's kind of an unfortunate reality, again, we partner in those ways and then Ann comes down and gives training and things of the nature.

DR: Final thoughts... I've kind of been sitting on a question of regional differences and I think one of the biggest differences is Dallas is the south, midwest some, and just smaller arts community is that your relationship with power is different because you are in a place where

there are fewer resources. There's not the opportunity. When I talk to a colleague in NYC and they're giving \$20,000. That \$20,000 has traveled like four different layers of things from its start to that time. Rarely, do individual practitioners get to meet the power but when you're in these places where that's not the setup, I encourage everyone in that place to take advantage of the fact that you can talk directly to power which can be scary, uncomfortable, risky but also that's an opportunity to create things that are more imaginative, more responsive. And the other thought—this is wild to me, personally, as an artist. Five years ago. I didn't imagine that now there are mayoral candidates who give me personal phone calls and we're talking, doing stuff on policy and the scale to that was three homies, then 12-20 homies who would meet regularly, and then when an event happens, you get the word out, 40 people at a meeting, 60 people at a meeting, 200-300 people at a party.

AH: I want to share that along with what Darryl was saying, the dynamics down there are a little different. I get to travel a lot, so it's a big deal to me, because people in my community, that's not the privilege. It's very rare for me, for someone in that community to be able to say, "Yeah, I've traveled around the world." So, I have to be careful sometimes when I say things like that because it can turn people off and they can be like "Oh, who do you think you are?" but that's a reality and, along with that, I want to share that it feels pretty damn revolutionary to know people and be alongside people that care, number one, and put into practice and manifest care because it's not everyday, in my experience, that I've met those individuals and so I'm very grateful. Because being a part of a community of artists, working alongside them, being here, this is crazy for me. I'm very, very grateful to be here to be seen with you guys. So thank you.

MC: I just wanted to speak to something he hit on, is the importance of having outlets outside of the arts. As Darryl said, the first rounders we had an investment banker, a financial planner, an oil & gas trader, looking to not just your colleagues but your patrons for help is huge. You kind of get in your bubble and tend to work in your bubble. But also looking outside of your current practice and thinking of the future, as we grow. We brought in the music community to help grow our base and help them organize and advocate for themselves. So it was huge, not only for them, but for the Dallas cultural scene and to art because that's more people that we can reach. Those are more people, more artists with different audiences and pushing our message forward. Just the importance of allies and looking outside your comfortable space.