

accessing public funds

Understanding what funders want to support, and how to write your application so that they will want to say 'yes' to your project, formed the basis of this training event, run by Emilia Telese.

Emilia is an Italian-born crossover artist based in Brighton. She graduated from the Fine Art Academy in Florence in 1996 and moved to the UK a year later. Previously the Artist Resource Manager at Fabrica Gallery in Brighton from 2000 to 2004, Emilia is now the Artists' Networks Coordinator for a-n The Artists Information Company.

Alongside her practice as an artist, Emilia works as a freelance art critic, journalist and project manager. Journalist collaborations have included A-N Magazine, Black Ice, and Stanza Rossa magazines.

This training event was held as part of **making art work**, the professional development scheme for visual artists in Suffolk. For more information about the scheme, please visit the Suffolk County Council web site at www.suffolkcc.gov.uk and follow the link from Leisure and Culture to the Arts.



making art work is a professional development scheme for visual artists in Suffolk, devised and managed by Suffolk County Council and part financed by the European Union European Social Fund and Arts Council England Grants for the Arts.

Golden rules of proposal making

• what?

Name your project – it gives it an identity. Explain briefly what it's about with relevance to the support/funding you are applying for.

• who?

Who are you? Explain briefly who you are and what you do. Make your description relevant to the case; if relevant and requested, attach a CV on ONE side of A4.

• when?

Add a timetable for your project, which includes the following stages:

- 1 research and development
- 2 production time
- 3 marketing/advertising time
- 4 presentation/showcase
- 5 evaluation

• where?

Where is your project taking place? Describe its location. Some funding bodies favour projects taking place in deprived areas, or any other particular areas, like schools, churches, public places. Is that your case? (Want to find out? Visit www.suffolkobservatory.info for statistics relating to Suffolk).

If your project is an exhibition in a gallery, have you identified the gallery and secured a place in their exhibiting programme? Is that place confirmed? Describe briefly the gallery, its profile and remit.

• how?

How are you going to make it happen? Describe the technical specifications required and how you're going to use any equipment that you are or you are not applying for.

Describe the process of making your project happen.

If you haven't filled in a budget with your application, add it here. It should include total income and expenditure, on 2 separate sheets of A4. Income and Expenditure totals

should match. If you've already included a budget with your application, explain it in detail and describe any relevant information that you think will be useful.

• why?

What is the philosophy behind this project? Why are you doing it? What will the grant achieve that you wouldn't achieve otherwise?

• benefits to the artist

How will this project benefit you? Describe short term and long-term benefits to you as an artist.

Are you part of a particular group of people who is given priority in a particular funding? Some funding bodies specify the people who they encourage to apply for grants. Are you one of them?

• benefits to the public

How is this project benefiting other people? What kind of people will benefit most from it? How many? Give an estimate. Describe short-term and long-term benefits to the public.

Notes on the Golden Rules of proposal making have been adapted from copyright material produced and supplied by Emilia Telese.

Making proposals

Whether applying for an advertised opportunity or initiating your own project, the key to getting your ideas realised lies in your ability to put over yourself, your work and your ideas in person and on paper.

Approaches

There are differences between the approach needed when artists apply for advertised opportunities, and when they seek to generate support and interest in their own propositions and ideas. A suitable word to characterise this is 'empowerment'. One approach has a greater degree of control, autonomy and empowerment than the other.

If you apply for a widely advertised opportunity, without doubt you'll be one of several hundred artists applying. Good slides, a clear covering letter and a carefully constructed CV should give you a decisive edge over other professional visual artists applying.

Even if the advertisement asks for artists to make proposals, most of the ideas and concerns informing the project brief will be essentially of someone else's construction. The best you can hope for is that someone will take a particular interest in your submission.

Even if you secure some interest, you still need to go a considerable distance to convince the project's organisers you are a suitable candidate. This may involve interviews or submitting more detailed information. At all stages, the power to 'select' or 'develop' your proposal lies firmly with people other than you.

But if you choose to construct the terms of reference and creative parameters of a project wholly conceived and initiated by yourself, the process of personal empowerment becomes all too obvious. You may not ultimately succeed in executing your idea, but at all times you will have been in a more empowered position — one of unilaterally developing and seeking to execute your own ideas about art.

There are drawbacks to do-it-yourself projects, not least of which is the amount of time spent on administration. But as a comparison, it is estimated that only 5% of an architect's time in any project is involved with the creative and imaginative work.

Making a proposal

Making a proposal is the opportunity to capture the imagination and interest of future partners or funders. It needs to anticipate and answer all the questions that the recipient is likely to ask about the project. It should cover the points below.

Aims

- Why you want to carry out the project
- Who the audience is
- What the benefits will be to you, the audience, community, others involved
- How the project relates to other work
- What the outcome will be — exhibition, environmental artwork, participatory event, etc.

Concept

- Design ideas or other visual material about a project including medium, size, subject
- Visual documentation of previous work

Practicalities

- Outline of how the project will be carried out and time-scale
- Breakdown of costs and possible sources of income if known.
- Consultation processes
- Supporting statements from those participating

Resources

- Workshop or other space needed
- Any planning or other permissions
- Services and access requirements
- Materials and equipment
- Transport
- Insurance
- Health and safety requirements
- Time-scale for acquiring resources

If you are applying to a scheme run by an arts council, regional arts board or local authority, guidelines and an application form will often be provided. Make sure you provide all the information asked for and contact the relevant officer if any of the details are not clear. Do not supply information that has not been requested.

Visual material you send should be tailored towards the application. Follow the application guidelines for the number, size and format of images submitted.

The brief

This provides contextual information about, for instance, the history of a site, aims of a host organisation or technical requirements for an artwork.

The brief provides all involved with a constant point of reference, and the material

to deal with legal disputes. It is important to get the brief right.

For artists' own initiatives the basis of a brief is your proposal. In effect, you are suggesting that through discussion, you mutually develop your proposal into a workable brief for a project.

As discussions progress, the project concept will inevitably develop. This is a natural part of the process of getting a project off the ground. The final brief evolves through a process of discussion, negotiation, amendment and agreement covering every aspect of the project.

It is vital all parties are in agreement with a final brief which needs to contain details of:

- What the artist(s) will do — make work, hold an exhibition, undertake a residency, etc
- Who they will work with
- Purpose of project
- Location or site
- If a residency or exhibition, information on venue and users
- Budget for each stage including fees to artist(s)
- Time-scale and deadlines
- Support and liaison points
- Resources and who will provide them
- Any constraints on content, materials, facilities, etc
- Health and safety

The more work done on materials, technical information, time-scales and budgets the more confident you will be about the proposal. This is particularly important for self-initiated projects.

Follow-up

Personal contacts are a definite advantage when you come to follow-up speculative submissions for projects. Once a proposal has been made, contact the person to whom it was sent and check whether they need more information or if they foresee any difficulties with it, and when it will be discussed.

If you know it will be taken to a particular meeting, telephone the following day for an

informal response. Be aware, however, that some organisations may not give information over the telephone.

Presentation

Whether making a speculative proposal or an application, the same principles apply. Keep the paperwork 'short and sweet'. Not everyone who reads it will be an expert in contemporary art, so avoid or explain art world jargon.

Quality control

Don't assume the originality and relevance of the creative aspects of your work carry most weight. There are other key factors which affect how a proposal will be received. The care put into supporting materials will give the people reading it confidence in your professionalism.

Submissions should be typed, concise, interesting and attractive but not over-designed, able to be photocopied — ideally no larger than A3 and produced in black or dark blue ink.

Visual material

Good visual documentation of previous work is the starting point for all successfully negotiated projects. It therefore follows that visuals included with a proposal must accurately represent your work and show it in the best possible light. Images, labelled with your name, title, date and medium, should be in focus and show nothing other than your work.

Many artists now also produce proposals as a photocopied and bound document with a cover. Photographs of previous work and linked to visual descriptions for a proposed new project can be bound in. There are also instances of artists producing their proposals in video format, this being particularly relevant for time-based or live work. Clips of previous work, linked with text or sound-track, can be used to present their ideas.

Portfolio

When putting together a portfolio to explain your proposal, consider how its contents are going to be presented and displayed to those making the selection. A few good quality and relevant pieces are preferable to a large quantity of previous works. A

portfolio should be easy to flick through, with all items labelled. Provide a descriptive list of what it contains, just in case anything goes astray.

Personal presentations

The offer to give a presentation provides artists with the opportunity to keep control of their proposal, to emphasise strengths and to convince people that an idea is worth developing.

When making a presentation, make as much generalised eye contact as possible with those you are explaining your idea to. Take along a copy of your proposal so you can refer to it. Take time before answering complicated or difficult questions, but a few seconds should never be allowed to become awkward and extended silences. If you feel very nervous or make a mistake, take a deep breath, or ask for a glass of water.

Presentations are essentially a two-way process: your chance to get a response to your proposal, as well as the opportunity for others to ask detailed questions and gain assurance you are capable of undertaking the project.

Notes on Making Proposals have been adapted from Visual & Media arts information sheets, supplied as part of the training event.

Summary of dos and don'ts

DO

- Be sure you know why you are applying to the particular trust
- Read carefully any available guidelines
- Check the trust's name and address
- Check that the name of the trust contacted corresponds with the trust named in the letter itself
- Check you are within the trust's priorities and area of benefit
- Sign the letter
- Ensure your organisation has a system for knowing who has written to which trusts
- Make sure that all necessary documents are enclosed
- Keep the basic application to 2 sides of A4
- Meet the deadline given
- Make the application specific, including a stated sum of money required

- Be specific about your activities and who uses them
- Ask someone outside the organisation to read through your application
- Have a clear organizational policy on writing to trusts
- If in doubt, check with the trust by phone before sending off an application

DON'T

- Make emotional appeals
- Ask vaguely for assistance
- Present shopping lists of needs
- Write a brief letter referring to lots of other papers
- Use initials of organisations
- Lose the files referring to the application
- Write over-long applications and then apologise
- Don't invite the wastepaper basket

*The summary of do and don'ts is reproduced from copyright material contained in the publication *Avoiding the Wastepaper Basket* by Tim Cook. Please see below for full details.*

Sample budget

Artists' fees

The Arts Council England recommends that artists with 3 years experience should be looking to charge £175 a day, minimum. However, if you are contracted for more than 10 days, this fee changes to a pro rata rate of £23,400 per annum. Check out <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/> for full details.

a-n The Artists Information Company also provides information on how to assess your daily rate as an artist, available via their web site at www.a-n.co.uk

When drawing up a budget, you should include the whole cost of the project – not just the bit for which you are applying for funds. You should also include any in-kind support you are receiving.

The following page contains a basic example of a budget. N.B. The categories in the expenditure column relate directly to the project timetable, as outlined on page 2, under the sub-heading, **When?**

EXPENDITURE

Research & development:

Travel	£100	
Accommodation	£150	
Postage, etc	£ 40	
		£290

Production:

Camera hire	£500	
Film	£ 75	
Editing suite	£450	
Transport	£100	
		£1125

Marketing/advertising:

Mail out	£ 50	
Postcards	£ 80	
Catalogue	£300	
		£ 430

Presentation/showcase:

Screen (hire)	£150	
Materials	£150	
		£ 300

Evaluation:

Admin time	£230	
Postage	£ 25	
		£ 255

Artist's fees: £2,600

TOTAL EXPENDITURE £5,000

INCOME

Earned income:

100 catalogues @ £1 each £100

Sponsorship, partnership or any other funder:

Artist's funding contribution £300
Local Authority Arts Fund £100
£400

Income in kind:

Transport in-kind £100
Marketing support from
Gallery £900
£1,000

APPLIED FOR: £3,500

TOTAL INCOME: £5,000

Useful bibliography & web sites

Fabrica - the largest resource for artists professional development in the South East
40 Duke Street Brighton SN1 1AG
tel/fax 01273 778646
email: ar@fabrica.org.uk
www.artistresource.org.uk

Avoiding the Wastepaper Basket,
by Tim Cook. Published by the London
Voluntary Service Council, 350 Holloway
Road, London N7 6PA.

Guide to Arts Funding in Britain
Available as a download from the
Department of Culture, Media & Sport at
www.culture.gov.uk/arts/funding_for_arts/default.htm

www.artscouncil.org.uk/
In addition to details of Grants for the Arts,
the web site contains a downloadable
pamphlet about how to evaluate projects.

www.emiliatelese.com
Emilia Telese is a crossover artist who
believes in art as multi-language creative
transformation. Selected work in
collaboration with Tim Mark Didymus is also
collected at www.shingtactical.com

www.a-n.co.uk
Provides a variety of guides for visual artists
(some available to subscribers only) on
rates of pay, setting up residencies, making
proposals etc.

www.awardsforall.org
Lottery funding for community events.

<http://www.dsc.org.uk/aboutdsc.html>
Directory of Social Change – information
and training for the voluntary sector

<http://www.suffolkobservatory.info/>
Social deprivation statistics, etc, relevant to
Suffolk

Department of Culture, Media and Sport -
direct link to pages on funding for the arts –
includes many very useful links to other
sites.
www.culture.gov.uk/arts/funding_for_arts/default.htm

Paul Hamlyn Foundation
The Foundation is interested in supporting
arts initiatives in the UK which address
inequality of access and opportunity,
particularly among young people, including
those 'at risk' and young offenders.
www.phf.org.uk/

Esmee Fairbairn
The Arts programme has two main areas of
interest: Serving Audiences and Supporting
Artists. They welcome proposals that fit the
aims of both of these, particularly proposals
that benefit audiences and artists outside
Greater London.
www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/

The Clore Duffield Foundation
A grant-giving foundation, with a particular
interest in supporting children, young people
and society's most vulnerable individuals.
www.cloreduffield.org.uk/

The Jerwood Foundation
This is a major sponsor of all areas of the
performing and visual arts and are
particularly interested in projects which
involve rewards for excellence and the
encouragement and recognition of
outstanding talent and high standards, or
which enable an organisation to become
viable and self financing.
www.jerwood.org

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
www.gulbenkian.org.uk/