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Sam Curtis

WORK MONEY WORK MONEY WORK

A collection of thoughts, ideas and budgets to
accompany 'EXHIBITION CANCELLED'

NTS CONTENTS

I am an artist.

I was invited to put on an exhibition of my artwork at Blank gallery by Johanna Berger. The exhibition was to be part of HOUSE Contemporary Art Festival. Unfortunately the festival didn't receive the funding applied for from the Arts Council of England. I realised I was unable to fund my intended exhibition by myself. So I cancelled it.

Rather than leave the opportunity, I felt that it was a great space that could be put to good use during

the busy festival season. So I decided to invite local businesses and organisations to use the space to promote their products and services. Alongside this, I asked each business or organisation to run a series of workshops and demonstrations for the public.

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the process of funding large art projects, Judy Stevens and Chris Lord have given a step-by-step account of how they funded this year's HOUSE Festival.

HOUSE Festival Funding

By festival organisers Judy Stevens and Chris Lord

We are the directors and creators of HOUSE festival - Brighton's new curated visual arts festival, taking place during the May festival season.

After a successful pilot festival last year, we worked out we would need a budget for this year's festival of: £171,248

Of this, a large percentage (around 2/3rds) were in kind costs, and the costs we have are kept low by sharing print, distribution, website and PR with partner festival, The Artists Open Houses. We applied to ACE (Arts Council England) for a grant of £65,956 with 10 % matched funding agreed from Brighton and Hove City Council.

This sum was to fund 7 of the 13 HOUSE projects, including payments to artists, curators, construction and installation costs, print, distribution, marketing, website, PR, signage, and administrative costs.

Our ACE arts officer supported our bid and, as supported bids are generally successful, we were reasonably optimistic. However, our bid went in just before ACE's three month period of closure, whilst it relocated to Manchester.

As a result we were up against around 15 - an unprecedented number - of other (mostly much smaller) supported bids, and so were unsuccessful.

We received this news in late March. This left us with less than two months to secure funding to enable HOUSE to go ahead.

BHCC's (Brighton and Hove City Council) arts officers, who are sympathetic to and supportive of HOUSE, suggested that although we would lose their matched funding for the ACE grant, we would be eligible for other funding from them. Their grants officer suggested we apply immediately for a Grant for Smaller Organisations, which has a maximum limit of £5,000.

I spent a morning with an extremely helpful BHCC funding officer-discussing every aspect of our application in great detail. Although we had missed the official deadline for that round of applications, we were granted an extension and had the bid in on the following Monday morning, as requested.

We were phoned an hour later and told we weren't eligible for this grant as, although HOUSE festival operated last year on a tiny budget, because the Open Houses festival has a budget over the £35,000 limit, we weren't considered to be a small organisation.

We had provided all accounts and budget sheets and explained that the two festivals had entirely separate budgets and bank accounts, but were still rejected

We had also applied for a £7,800 Awards for All grant, mostly to cover an educational package of artists' talks, tours and workshops. We heard in April that this too had been unsuccessful, because although there is no mention of the fact in their guidance notes, they had changed their funding criteria at the start of the year and no longer fund arts projects.

However, we had already received generous sponsorship support of £3,000 from VisitBrighton for the artist-led tours of Phoenix studios and, through a policy of holding of a succession of meetings, giving presentations at potential sponsors events and general persistence, we managed to secure a reasonable amount of business and private support from a number of local businesses and private individuals.

Brighton and Hove City Council finally provided a grant of £1,500 which meant we were able to cover at least most of our essential core costs.

The entire budget for HOUSE festival now is: £11,160. This sum has been used to cover a percentage of construction, installation, print, web, PR, evaluation and volunteer coordination costs.

We have had to drop three of the biggest planned projects, including that of headline artist, Nigel Shafran, but are pleased and gratified that 10 projects are able to go ahead. This is largely due to artists, curators and other parties giving large amounts of their time for free.

We have built up a substantial pool of local business sponsors, many of whom would like to work with us in the summer to play a greater part next year.

A philanthropist we approached some months ago, has now contacted us to begin discussions around working together on plans for next years HOUSE Brighton festival too has suggested working as a partner organisation in future, including joint grant applications.

It's been tough putting on HOUSE festival this year - but we believe we are now beginning to lay good foundation for the future.

HOUSE BUDGET

Income

Sponsorship

Arijo Ghost (icrossing)	1,500
Victor Boorman & Co	1,000
Spectrum Photographic	500
Jane Earncliffe	500
Arden Entertainment	350
HOUSE Open entry fees	960
Advertising revenue	1,000
Visit Brighton (Phoenic Studio Tours)	3,000
Healy's Solicitors	250
Brighton Festival (Festival prize)	600
BHCC (Brighton & Hove City Council)	1,500
total	11,160

Expenditure

Brochure/Leaflet/Latest print (at cost)	2,000
Banners, boards, handouts, evaluation forms	635
Website	300
PR/Marketing	750
Volunteer coordination	250
Evaluation	200

Venue Cost

House Open (materials, install, venue hire, Festival prize)	2,350
Outside In (materials)	400
HOUSE- Garden (film & projector hire)	425
'Exhibition Cancelled'	450
41 Kensington Place	400
Phoenix Studio Tours (Visit Brighton)	3,000
total	11,160

Income

Funding

Brighton & Hove City Council	450
Girlfriend's sold unwanted large mirror	50

Sales

75 x Booklets (projected figure)	225
total	725

Free Labour (estimated)

4 x Volunteers	112 hours
Artist	155 hours
Curator	75 hours
Artist Assistant	36 hours
total	378 hours

Expenditure

Materials

Flyers to attract businesses	5
Wood	155
A1 Posters	70
Paint+screws	60
Booklet printing	110
Leaflet holders+Business card holders	45
Fylers to promote event	32
Travel expenses	222
Refreshments for Volunteers	30
total	729

Projected Loss

- £4.00

BUDGET EXHIBITION CANCELLED

WORK MONEY

After initially thinking we would not receive any funding towards 'EXHIBITION CANCELLED', we found out 2 weeks before it opened that we'd be able to get £450 towards covering costs from Brighton and Hove City Council.

WORK MONEY

Over the past 6 years I have been exhibiting and working on projects as an artist in my spare time whilst juggling jobs. Over this time I have had about 26 exhibitions, given talks and participated in symposiums. I have received some funding for travel and had one fee of £300. I have spent more than I have earned.



HOBBYIST OR PROFESSIONAL

The general dictionary definition of:

A **HOBBYIST** is someone who pursues an activity for pleasure or to relax. The activity is outside of their main occupation.

A **PROFESSIONAL** is someone engaged in an activity as a paid occupation for which they will have undergone specialist training and education. It's also described as someone who operates commercially in a field normally dominated by hobbyists or amateurs.

Something for nothing

What are the reasons for doing something that earns no wage?

- The love for it
- To make other people happy
- Intrigue
- To look good in front of others
- To help people less fortunate

Like an entrepreneur injects money into a new business to kick-start it, it's a gamble to spend money and contribute labour to an activity where the profits are little or none to begin with. But it's the hope of making financial gain in due time that spurs us on to become successful in what we do and to keep on investing in what we believe in.

Freebies

People who work in the creative industries tend to work for free now and then in the hope that getting their work seen may get them some paid work in the future. It can be a risky strategy as the pay-off is never certain and so earning a living can be precarious.

The workshops and demonstrations held by local businesses in 'EXHIBITION CANCELLED' are free to members of the public. This strategy is not new to business as you can often encounter a vegetable peeler demonstration in a shopping centre or get a free piece of cheese at the deli counter. But by the businesses involved here offering something more intimate and engaging through workshops and demonstrations in the contemporary art template, it could be a strategy for aiding business through economic difficulties.

Exploitation

Art and business have a long relationship based around exploitation. Mostly business exploiting art, such as when it sponsors the production of an exhibition. But in more recent years art has attempted to take advantage of this exploitative relationship through capitalising on the sponsorship opportunities available. Quite often this is to arts detriment and business comes off shining through its support of culture and showing it has a social conscience.

More recently artists have exploited business by using it as subject matter within their work to make a protest about the unethical nature of business activity. This unleashes a controversy which can benefit the artist through exposure but can also ironically benefit the business, even bad press can be good press.

With this project, my aim as an artist was to promote the businesses and set-up a way for them to engage with new potential customers in a different setting, i.e. the art gallery. This setting can be a place for people to relax their defences and entrust in what they experience, but it can also be a place where people are suspicious and difficult to convince of a truth. Through my own choice I have invested money and many hours towards promoting these businesses, yet at the same time this activity could better my status as an artist if the project is successful. So we are all taking risks by investing in something that may not necessarily benefit us, whether it's financially, culturally or socially. We are also all involved in an exploitative relationship whereby we are using each other's presence and status to help ourselves up our own ladders of success.

Collaboration

Although it's interesting to think about it in terms of exploitative relationships, the process of organising this project has brought about more of a sense of collaboration than exploitation. A sense of coming together in times of economic difficulty to do something different and like a common phrase I have heard from business owners involved:

“ Well what have I got to lose? ”

This project is not supposed to be art, I cancelled the exhibition, but I am an artist, this project is part of an art festival and it's situated within an art gallery.

Traditional sponsorship of art by business works by business bettering its public image through attaching itself to art's social and political agenda and it's increasingly mainstream popularity. This project's aim was to twist this by using business as its context and

subject matter and by business getting something more than just an advert at the back of a catalogue. In this model, art gets to explore life in close detail by working with business, business is then rewarded by the public attraction art can bring and the creative strategies it employs to promote business. Art is rewarded by business's strong links to life, attracting a non-art audience, thus breaking down the elitist stigma attached to art.

Although art and business are described here as distinctly separate entities, arguably we now find art is as much business as we think business could be as much an art.



Saturday 15th May

- 11am – 1pm **Avante Gardening** are offering a free workshop – your chance to pick up some tips from a seasoned professional and get greener fingers!
- 2pm – 3pm Fancy watching how Threading is done? Or even being a model? **Lash and Thread** will be on hand to show what can be done and give information on their accredited beauty courses.
- 3pm – 4.30pm Learn about Polish cuisine and the restaurant: **Sami-Swoi** from it's staff as you try a few samples!
- 11am – 6pm Come and chat to our friendly builder from **Sackville Construction** who will be available to give 1-to-1 advice and guidance.

Sunday 16th May

- 11am – 1.30pm Young or old! Come and get involved in a game of Warhammer and learn from Portslade based, **Gambit Games**, how to play and about many other game systems.
- 2pm – 3.30pm Watch the amazing professional singers from **Vocademy** perform and then join them for a free singing lesson.
- Contact for times Does your dog need a makeover? **Waggie Tails** can show you what's possible with a dog grooming demonstration.
- All day every day Find out about **The Martlets Hospice** and see how you can personally make a difference.
- All day, every day. Do you love toys the way they used to be? **Kids Dreams** have a wide range of toys and games for all.

Sunday 23rd May

- 11am-1.30pm **Gambit Games**
- Contact for times **Waggie Tails**