



AgX Meeting
Sunday, April 19, 2015
300 Summer Street

Present:

Brittany Gravely
Christina Hunt (beginning only)
Corrin Barnes
Douglas Urbank
Ernesto Livon-Grosman
Jeff Silva
Laura Ryan
Libbie Cohn
Matthew McWilliams

Mike Piso
Nic Brynolfson
Pam Larson
Robert Todd
Susan DeLeo

Special Guest:
Kevin Rice of Process Reversal

Agenda

Budget & Financial Issues
Handcranked Productions Lease Obligation

Kevin Rice Topics:

- Governance & Legal Identity
- Collaboration with Balagan
- Possible Process Reversal Equipment Donation

BUDGET & FINANCIAL ISSUES

Rob reported that the Budget & Financial Committee met and discussed a variety of issues.

The assumption is that AgX needs to generate a minimum of \$1,500/month to cover rent and other costs. The Budget & Financial Committee also worked to define “membership” as follows:

A Member is someone who:

Pays Member Dues
Votes
Contributes to Working Groups
Supports and Participates in Workshops
Participates in Community Outreach
Is Eligible for AgX Discounts

The Budget & Financial Committee also discussed creating Usage Fees as a way to generate income and disburse costs, for example: costs to borrow cameras and other equipment, costs for darkroom use. There could be a usage fees structure for Non-Members, a possible bulk rate for Students. Or, AgX could limit darkroom, optical printer and other equipment to members only. Pam raised the issue of the additional costs of offering rental, including insurance and maintenance.

Jeff suggested LIFT in Toronto as a model for membership, and read the membership levels from the LIFT website:

<mailto:http://lift.ca/about/lift-membership>

The group discussed Production Membership vs. General Membership with Production Membership having access to equipment and darkroom use. The group discussed the fact that some who are interested in becoming AgX members may not want or need a Production Membership. Libby suggested that the funding structure would probably change over time as membership changes and other methods of generating income are established. She suggested the possibility of establishing “peak” and “off-peak” schedules so that Non-Members would be limited to access only during off-peak times.

The group discussed the need for a Member presence in the space at all times when Non-Members would have access, which means we need “gallery sitters.” This could be a way for Members to offset membership fees. The group also discussed the “under-employed” members and student members, and ways to make AgX membership affordable to them.

Pressing need is to fund and complete build-out and of darkroom and set up other equipment such as optical printers. Rob suggested that rentals, workshops, and grants could become primary source of AgX funding. Rob suggested possible scenarios, such as a film camp of 6 participants which would include a shoot, hand-processing, and screening for perhaps \$600 with 2 instructors paid \$25/hour. However for the upcoming summer, at least, AgX needs the membership model. We need Dark Ops to determine lab costs in order to calculate fees.

Rob will focus on grants from such institutions as Mass. Cultural Council, Harvard University, Brandeis University, the City of Waltham. Suggested that soliciting members is essential because robust membership would be important in attracting grants. Bryan apparently has contacts with Waltham. Laura reported that MIT has an arts funding grant with quarterly proposal deadlines. Doug reported that so far there has been no response from Boston’s new “Art Czar” Julie Burros and that he was advised that she is extremely busy and reportedly takes a long time to reply. Doug will send a follow-up message to her however.

Rob stated that we need to approve a monthly cost of \$1,500 through at least the summer. That cost includes a guess on insurance, chemistry, disposal and additional utilities including Internet access. It could end up being more.

The group discussed possible membership periods, for example one-year, 3-month, and month-to-month and possible costs. Suggested month-to-month commitment would not qualify as membership. Usage fees could be higher for that level of commitment. Laura reported that the Lab & Operations Workgroup had discussed darkroom issues and probable need to manage or monitor hazardous chemicals. She argued against usage fees for Members as being a counter-incentive to Members using facilities. She also suggested fees would be challenging to manage. However if usage fees are established she does not think there should be exceptions for anyone, including Dark Ops personnel. She anticipated, though, that the primary users of the darkroom would be the ones that would end up having to help with management and training.

The group discussed ideas of possible payments tiers. Could they be based on income, a sliding scale? Corrin suggested one way to manage membership levels would be through issuing keys to Production Members only. Jeff referred to the LIFT membership levels and raised the possibility of Organizational Membership, for example for Brandeis or a production company. Rob calculated the income from workshops and wondered if they could subsidize rent by the fall. Rob and Jeff suggested that even if we can arrange to subsidize the costs AgX should maintain some cost for membership, such as \$10/month or \$25/month. Jeff suggested that General Membership would have to come with benefits to create an incentive for joining, such as screenings, an e-bulletin, access to listserve, access to web promotions and workshops, etc.

Darkroom & Operations Build-Out

Rob discussed the Build-Out including strong possibility of equipment donations. This needs to happen right away so that AgX is in a position to offer workshops this summer and raise funds. Laura stated that we need to understand what chemistry, plumbing and HVAC needs are required. Kevin said all the chemicals are toxic, but don't require special skills to handle them. Color and black and white chemistry waste can be mixed. Kevin speculated that chemicals waste disposal wouldn't be substantial. Could be consolidated for quarterly disposal. Process Reversal delivers its own chemical waste to disposal sites. Nic thinks Waltham may have chemical waste disposal process. Laura suggested a survey of processing needs, for example if no one wants color positive, we wouldn't need to provide those chemicals. Rob countered that, if only one person wanted color reversal, that would be enough. Suppose that person would be processing every week. Rob believes we should assume all processes. Jeff suggested members may not know enough about processing to understand what the possibilities are, and that Kevin has shown us a wide range of possible processes. Laura has experience with black and white chemistry and said that Kathryn is experienced with color chemistry. Also suggested Waltham artist organization may have paint disposal process in place.

Laura stated that she has access to cargo van.

Dues Commitments & Fundraising

Nic suggested a survey of members to determine ability to pay dues. Doug pressed for concrete method of determining who will actually pay. The group discussed possible terminology for the pitch to prospective members. Libbie proposed presenting the need in terms of the first 3 months. Jeff articulated the need as \$4,500 for the summer. Suggested each person should assume \$200 for the 3 months of upcoming summer. Corrin suggested advertising that the dues fee might decrease after the summer. Libbie said it would be important to identify options for “time commitments” in lieu of payment, for such tasks a “gallery sitting.”

The group discussed options for fundraising including Kickstarter, Indiegogo, etc. Matt recommends we consider Tilt which doesn't require percentage fee for closed groups, and closed groups wouldn't require need to solicit rewards for contributing. Rob wants to advertise workshops for this summer for college and highschool students. The group discussed the proposed survey to include asking if prospective members can contribute \$200 and, if not, how much? Or what in lieu of payment? The consensus was that most could contribute \$200 and several could pay up front. If AgX generates workshop and/or rental income, fall costs could be lower. Basic Membership fees could be supplemental income. The group discussed sliding scale. Laura advocated for flat \$200 fee for first 3 months. Others argued that that amount might be prohibitive, or that some may have no need of production equipment. Rob made case for usage fees. Jeff would like to have system established to accept payments right away.

It was determined that the attendees who committed to pay \$200 up front made up enough to cover the first month's rent.

Kevin suggested Dwolla as alternative to Paypal. \$.20 charge for each transaction over \$10. Suggested calling initial 3 months “Investment Period.” Later individual contributions would be rolled over into dues payments.

Rob was concerned about method for tracking individual payments, and would like system established for auto-payment. Kevin suggested that if Balagan is fiscal structure, member fees could be tax-deductible. Jeff described non-profit process. He is member of Studio 7 Arts which is now defunct, and Balagan is poised to take over Studio 7 Arts non-profit status.

Survey of Membership

The group discussed the possibility of two surveys: one being ability to pay and the other being facilities and processing needs. Ultimately it was decided that Laura would send out simple survey, due May 1, as follows:

1. Can you pay \$200? If not, how much can you pay? If you can provide time and labor in lieu of payment, what can you provide?
2. Identify processing requirements.
3. Identify format requirements.

Handcranked Productions Lease

The group reiterated its decision to proceed with taking over the Handcranked Productions lease obligation. The tentative schedule is to get a bank account in place by mid-May. At that point we should understand individual financial commitments from the survey. As stated above, there is already a commitment of funds to cover the first month's rent.

Matt volunteered to be AgX point person with landlord and possibly negotiate the terms of the lease. Matt will coordinate with Bryan. Could also look into options for support from City of Waltham. Rob said AgX would need to understand landlord policies for loading dock and other access. Mike stated that Bryan gave him keys to Handcranked, which he could make available to other AgX members.

KEVIN RICE ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Kevin stated that he, Mariya and Stefan have discussed equipment needs and possibility of Process Reversal donations. Process Reversal has warehouse in Pennsylvania stocked with film equipment and is looking into possible Troy, NY, facility. If that falls through, Kevin will press for donations or loans to AgX. Process Reversal is working with communities to set up labs and has been receiving substantial donations of equipment. Currently Process Reversal has Oxberry optical printer among other equipment.

Kevin has been looking into process of forming association of artist run labs in US to focus on site-specific equipment issues and be in position to accept donations. Association could be portal for institutions considering donations. He wants US association to emphasize cooperation rather than competition for acquiring equipment and supplies. Could organize conference of US labs, similar to international Filmlabs conferences. He has also started formulating database of technical information. Ernesto stated that Handcranked has technical resource manuals which should be preserved and shared.

Kevin noted that Filmlabs recently received 150 euros from European arts organization for its 2016 conference.

Website

Rob raised issue of AgX website. Kevin suggested AgX could share Balagan hosting at no additional cost. Kevin uses Wordpress which is easy to learn, but time consuming depending upon what is included. Brittany suggests Frank has experience with web templates. Matt discussed options for social media, for example how extensive members want website to be. For example, should it be a static page or include individual artist pages. Laura raised the question of whether wiki page should be public. Rob hoped that website could function as artist gallery for members.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is proposed to be May 16 or 17 at ANYEYE at Montserrat College of Art. Doug will check with Ethan.

End of Meeting Notes
Notes by Douglas Urbank

After the meeting, Brittany, Doug, Mike Susan and Kevin watched 2 Process Reversal films (including one of Kevin's) and 2 of Doug's films.

WORKING GROUP SIGNUP

Exhibitions & Screenings

Anto Astudillo
Carmine Grimaldi
Ernesto Livon-Grosman
Kathryn Ramey
Susan DeLeo
Valery Lyman

Planning & Administration

Brittany Gravely
Corrin Barnes
Douglas Urbank
Ernesto Livon-Grosman
Gen Carmel
Mike Piso
Anto Astudillo

Budget & Finance

Christina Hunt
Ethan Berry
Gen Carmel
Libbie Cohn
Matthew McWilliams
Mike Piso
Robert Todd
Valery Lyman

Lab & Operations

Christina Hunt
Ethan Berry
Frank Aveni
Kathryn Ramey
Laura Ryan
Mike Piso
Nic Brynolfson
Nicholas Bunch

Outreach & Website

Anto Astudillo
Brittany Gravely
Corrin Barnes
Frank Aveni
Matthew McWilliams
Nicholas Bunch