



AgX Meeting
Sunday, August 23, 2015
AgX Space (Handcranked Productions)

Present:

Brittany Gravely
Douglas Urbank
Ethan Berry
Frank Aveni
Genevieve Carmel
Matthew McWilliams

Michelle Finn
Mike Piso
Morgan Hoyle-Combs
Robert Todd
Stefan Grabowski
Susan DeLeo

Agenda

Budget & Finance Update
Dark Ops Lab Buildout Update
Outreach & Website Update
Kickstarter / Indiegogo Update & Possible Benefits
Membership Tiers
Process Reversal Equipment Donation
Work-in-Progress Screening
Nobuhiko Obayashi & Steve Cossman Visits
Waltham Open Studios

PRE-MEETING DISCUSSION

Members provided updates on personal projects and what they've been up to since the last meeting.

DARKROOM / LAB BUILDOUT

The group toured the lab and donated equipment and reviewed progress and what remains to be done. Donated equipment is substantial, including the Longbow equipment donation. Stefan and Matt have organized the donated and loaned equipment on tables in the room adjoining the lab room.

Ethan and Mike have made impressive progress on the lab build-out. There is some more work to be done on the plumbing and venting of the space. The sink still needs to be installed. Needs for the room addition were discussed, including the ramp into the darkroom, the actual room construction, painting of the interior (black) and addition of

plastic to eliminate light leaks. A staging area needs to be cleared for construction of the room walls.

Ethan plans to finish plumbing Sunday, August 30 and would appreciate some company.

The group scheduled the room building for Saturday, September 12. If there are enough volunteers to help, Ethan believes the room can be built in one day. Anyone who is available to help should volunteer, regardless of skill level. An additional date may be needed to finish up with painting, installing plastic, etc., and that need will be assessed on September 12. The assumption is that the lab and adjoining room construction should be complete shortly after the 12th.

Ethan has spent approximately \$300 to date on the build-out.

PROCESS REVERSAL EQUIPMENT DONATION

Donation of Process Reversal's Oxberry optical printer was discussed at length, including how to get it to Waltham, how to physically get it into our space, assembly and training. It is approximately 13 feet wide and 5 feet tall and can only be disassembled into 2 large pieces. A truck with a lift is needed to transport it from Process Reversal's warehouse in Pennsylvania. Kevin Rice may agree to fly to Pennsylvania, transport the equipment to Waltham and also help assemble it, in which case he'd have to return the vehicle. In that event AgX would definitely compensate him. Alternatively we would rent the vehicle, travel to PA and return with the equipment. Stefan reported that trucks with lifts are apparently not available for one-way trips. The group would like to have Kevin on site for training, if possible.

BUDGET & FINANCE UPDATE & MEMBERSHIP TIERS

Matt reported that we have collected roughly half of the membership payments that we hoped to receive, based on our past survey and informal polling. In addition to Ethan's out-of-pocket costs for lab build-out, Matt paid June's rent in full and has not been reimbursed, so our current bank balance does not reflect actual available funds.

The group discussed possible reasons for why interested parties aren't contributing. It is hoped that once summer is over, the lab is complete, and workshops begin, those who aren't currently contributing will become paying members.

Matt stated that \$67 per month per member is not sustainable if there aren't more contributing members.

The group discussed membership tiers and membership time commitments.

There are individuals who cannot afford the regular monthly amount (which may have to be increased). One obvious tier is student memberships, at perhaps \$25 per month. However there are also others that we would like as members who are not currently able to afford the regular membership cost. We want to encourage contributions in any amount.

The idea of creating a production facilities membership vs. a membership that does not include production access was considered. Doug argued against this tier structure, saying that the identity and mission of AgX is tied to having a space, lab and equipment and those who want to be part of AgX should want to support that. Otherwise AgX could be an informal screening group with no need for a permanent space.

Sliding scale was discussed as a better option. The group decided that an approach is needed that doesn't require a lot of management. The group settled on trying an honor system approach where interested parties who are not students could pay an amount between the student cost of \$25 and the "optimum" membership cost (which is currently \$67 per month, but may need to be increased).

The idea of providing temporary access to the lab and equipment for appropriate fees was considered. A separate cost for darkroom access for still photography, possibly hourly, was considered. The option of general rental fees was considered, but no decision was made.

The question of a time commitment for membership was also discussed. Brittany suggested an option for temporary usage might be a single month of paying the membership dues. Susan raised the question of setting time commitments for membership, such as 3-month or 1-year commitments.

Ethan suggested creating temporary "fellowships" in which non-members could propose projects for approval by the group, for a possible access and usage fee. Ethan argued that the group should consider the ramifications of these decisions in terms of management time and energy required. He suggests we should avoid setting policies that require significant management time and try to keep the focus on the spirit of AgX as an open collective of shared volunteerism.

Stefan described the structures of the two French labs he visited as potential models. [L'Etna](#) is more of a community space whereas [L'Abominable](#) is more focused on equipment. Each has different financial needs.

Doug will send a membership dues payment reminder on the 25th of each month with the option for student or sliding scale payment.

KICKSTARTER / INDIEGOGO UPDATE & POSSIBLE BENEFITS

Gen updated the group on initial work done by the fundraising subgroup. This is a big task and AgX will need the help of a majority of its members for this campaign. Gen has drafted a script and will send it out to the listserv for review.

The group discussed a "conventional" campaign with a script and pitch made by members vs. a more creative approach similar to a previous [Balagan Kickstarter video](#) from 2013, which featured minimal text in favor of imagery. Stefan suggested that the audience for that video did not require as much text whereas an AgX campaign needs to communicate much more about what we're doing and want to do.

Possible imagery includes: stills and footage of the AgX space and lab, 2 to 3 members on screen, footage “around the table” with members, product footage of past workshops, clips of member films. The script could include: who we are, what we’ve accomplished and hope to accomplish, rent, equipment and other costs, what AgX means to individual members. Gen would like to shoot for having the script done by September 5.

Our possible audience was reviewed, including: potential members, individuals who support our mission who may not be filmmakers themselves, other film organizations, supporters from outside the Boston area, still photographers who may be interested in darkroom access.

Sources of existing footage and stills were explored. The group discussed candidates for the on-screen portion of the video, as well as voice-over work. Some of our members, such as Rob, have far-reaching connections and name-recognition, and is a good candidate for on-screen.

The date set for video work is Sunday, September 27 at our next meeting. [Note: this is a correction from the September 26 date that Gen proposed at the meeting, which is a Saturday rather than that Sunday.] Gen will reach out to members for source materials. She can provide a video camera, and is willing to input source material and do initial editing. But she’d like help with that job.

Possible “rewards” were discussed including swag, magazine subscriptions, member DVDs, work-in-progress screenings with member feedback, living room screenings, member artwork.

Since the campaign would be a lot of work, the possibility of raising the target beyond \$5,000 was considered. Instead \$8-10,000 was suggested. An alternative is “stretch grants” where the lower amount is the target, but the campaign identifies other expenses that could be funded if the target is exceeded. Those expenses might include: rent, chemical supplies, workshop instructor fees, additional equipment purchases, funding of AgX residencies, lowering membership dues.

A press release and social media campaign were discussed. Morgan volunteered to work on the press release. Stefan has ideas on that and will work with Morgan. Media should be alerted a couple of weeks in advance of launch. Stefan suggests a particular outreach to the Providence, RI, film community, to such groups as Magic Lantern, AS 220, and Dirt Palace.

The group agreed that the target launch date should be postponed from September 1 to October 1.

GRANTS

Possibilities for AgX grants were reviewed, including Local Cultural Council (LCC) grants (October 15 application deadline with notification around January). LCC is part of Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) that supports community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences annually. Grants might be pursued for both Waltham (where AgX physical space is located) and Jamaica Plain (where AgX organization was established; in other words: Stefan's house).

A New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) touring grant, for a possible screening series, as well as the Andy Warhol Foundation grant were suggested as possibilities. Mike suggested the possibility of individuals applying for grants to cover AgX membership dues.

OUTREACH & WEBSITE UPDATE

The need for an email platform such as Mailchimp was discussed. Also the need for a general email address. Stefan stated that agx@agxfilm.org has been established for that purpose. The [Facebook](#) page is live and is attracting "likes." Ethan will ask that AgX be added to the international list of artist run film labs at <http://www.film labs.org/>.

Regarding the AgX logo, Brittany sent out further drafts for review and comment.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS SCREENING

Susan has been trying to schedule a work-in-progress screening for September but has had some difficulty coordinating with Valery, who has been away for the summer, and other members of the screening subgroup. She will go ahead and set a screening date for a weekday starting not earlier than 7:00 PM to allow for travel time for those with day jobs.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

The agenda items Waltham Open Studios planning and the visits by Nobuhiko Obayashi and Steve Cossman were highlighted as important upcoming events for AgX needing further discussion and planning.

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, September 27, 1:00 PM at AgX (Handcranked Productions).

End of Meeting Notes
Notes by Douglas Urbank

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

Lab & Operations

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

Outreach & Website

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Corrin Barnes
Frank Aveni
Matthew McWilliams
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