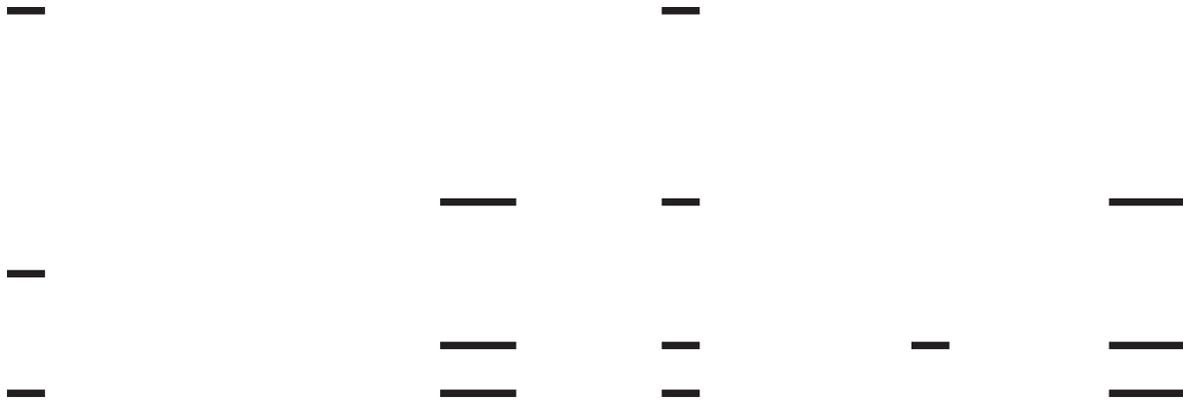


— Staying Alive: Some thoughts on opportunities for private funding for small scale visual arts organisations in New Zealand



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Against a background of reduced public funding for arts organisations, and following the publication in 2010 of two major reports into private sector philanthropy in New Zealand, Artspace (Aotearoa) Trust commissioned this report to consider the roles that small scale visual arts organisations play in New Zealand and how these might offer opportunities to attract new income from the private sector. Noting the high level of dependency of small visual arts organisations on public funding and the leanness with which these organisations operate, there is no question that new sources of funding must be found. It is generally acknowledged that sustainable private sector funding will depend on long term, mutually beneficial relationships, where both parties derive advantage from the interaction (“win-win” relationships). Public funding organisations (local councils or Creative New Zealand (CNZ)) are generally aware of the work of arts organisations and applications for funding tend to focus on meeting the funding criteria set by the funder. When looking to develop a relationship with a private sector funder (either an individual, a group of individuals or a company) the potential funder is less likely to know the particularities of the work of the art organisation, making it essential to develop a “case for support”, which will include convincing articulations of “who we are”, “what we do”, “why it is important” and “why it is exciting”. Moreover, it becomes essential to measure and articulate the value of the work done by the art organisation in a meaningful way.

Once an organisation has developed a compelling case for support and has the tools and language to communicate this with appropriate urgency and passion, the opportunities the organisation can offer to potential funders will become more apparent. For partnerships with corporate funders, there will never be a one-size-fits-all solution for a sector as diverse as the small visual arts organisations, since each organisation has a specificity dependant on their practice and on the context in which they work, however this paper outlines case studies from similar international (UK and Australia based) organisations which illustrate how they have identified and developed opportunities. Equally, support from individuals can be sought and achieved in a number of different ways, including support for specific projects, support through Patron Programmes for individuals, seeking funding from philanthropic groups and crowd funding initiatives. This paper discusses the above options in depth and with reference to case studies from overseas organisations.

—“To talk about small institutions is to talk about a way of working rather than a question of scale, be it physical or institutional. Working intimately with artists, choosing the parameters of our relationship to the politics of representation, and being flexible yet professional, is what differentiates us from museums or artist-run spaces [...] perhaps smallness is in how we behave as institutions.”¹

Mai Abu ElDahab, Binna Choi, Emily Pethick,
“Smallness” in *Circular Facts*. Stenberg Press,
2011, p. 87

This report has been written for and made public by Artspace NZ in response to both increasing interest in the opportunities that private sector philanthropy offer to the arts and a reduction in real terms in public sector funding for small scale arts organisations in New Zealand. The aim is to look at the role that small-scale visual art organisations play in the arts ecology of New Zealand, and understand how this might open up opportunities to attract new income from the private sector.

For the practical purposes of this research, a small organisation is defined as having an annual turnover of around or less than NZ \$1 million, however, in the course of this paper it will become apparent that small visual arts organisations are defined by more than scale. In an essay entitled *Smallness*, it is suggested that:

“To talk about small institutions is to talk about a way of working rather than a question of scale, be it physical or institutional. Working intimately with artists, choosing the parameters of our relationship to the politics of representation, and being flexible yet professional, is what differentiates us from museums or artist-run spaces [...] perhaps smallness is in how we behave as institutions.”

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Research for this paper is based on informal interviews and conversations with stake holders including Directors and Board Members of New Zealand-based not-for-profit visual arts institutions, artists, Directors of commercial galleries, collectors, private philanthropists, public funders and individuals at the Arts Foundation.² A number of the people interviewed fitted into more than one of the above categories. In addition the author drew on previous experience working with small scale visual arts organisations in London,³ and web-based research into similar scale organisations in Australia and the UK.

As such this report offers ideas rather than recommendations, with the aim of stimulating thought which in turn might prompt appropriate actions on the part of individual small scale visual arts organisations.

2 Those who generously gave time for interviews and conversations with the author are recognised at the end of this report

3 Specifically, working with Common Practice London, a collaboration between The Showroom, Chisenhale Gallery, Studio Voltaire, Gasworks, Matt's Gallery, LUX, Electra, Mute Publishing and Afterall Publishing— see www.commonpractice.org.uk

—“It is perhaps safe to claim that the days of governments in New Zealand, the UK, Canada and Australia providing the lion’s share of funding and support for many arts organisations, are either numbered or over.”

The Allen Consulting Group, *The art of the possible: strengthening private sector support for the Arts in New Zealand* commissioned by Creative New Zealand (2010, p. 6)

Small scale, not-for-profit, visual arts organisations in New Zealand are currently heavily dependent on public funding either through Creative New Zealand and/or from local councils. A recent study of the sector in London showed similar organisations to be around 63% dependent on Arts Council England for core funding.⁴ In a 2012 press release, Creative New Zealand stated: “In New Zealand at present, the average percentage of funding for arts and cultural organisations from government is 80%, while the average percentage of funding from individuals is just 3%.”⁵ This applies to arts as a whole and while no rigorous study of the small scale visual arts sector has been done, a quick analysis of institutions interviewed for this project suggests a dependency of between 50% and 70% on CNZ or local council funding. The balance comes from a mix of sources, including private foundations, donations from individuals and commercial activities (courses, sales of editions and books, venue hire etc).

Since the financial crisis in 2008, many parts of the world have seen radical cuts in public funding for the arts. At the same time, competition for the (shrinking) pot of public funding increases as contemporary visual arts continue to have a high profile all over the world and more and more organisations and artists seek funding. Both shrinking public funds for the arts and increased competition for the same pool of funds are real issues in New Zealand,⁶ and as a result, many of those interviewed have seen either a freezing or a decrease in public funding over the last few years.

4 Sarah Thelwall, *Size Matters*. London, Common Practice, 2011, p. 6. —see www.commonpractice.org.uk/Common-Practice-London-Size-Matters.pdf

5 <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/en/news/1-05m-creative-giving-programme-launched>

6 The Creative New Zealand budget for visual arts has gone from \$4,648,482 in 2009/10 (15.3% of total budget) to \$4,047,136 (10.9% of total budget) in 2012/13 (source CNZ).

Small scale arts organisations operate on very tight budgets. This is described in detail for the UK-based sector in a recent research paper, *Size Matters: Notes towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations*, and the same is true in New Zealand, where an organisation operating on an annual budget of less than \$500,000 can be putting on 10–15 exhibitions each year, many involving new commissions or work that has never been seen in New Zealand, working with 50–100 artists, and delivering an active public programme of events, plus an education programme each year. Annual expenditure tends to be split fairly evenly between programming costs (including artists fees and commissions, production, publication and occasional marketing costs), staff salaries (generally covering one director and one to three more part-time employees) and overheads (rent, rates, utilities, maintenance etc). Staffing levels are at an absolute minimum, with any additional labour requirements fulfilled by teams of regular volunteers (often art school students). Any upgrade to facilities or purchase of equipment requires specific fundraising. There is no surplus for investment in employee training and development, or for marketing or publicity beyond the bare minimum required by the programming, let alone for accrual of funds for the future. The result is that salary costs and overheads are essentially fixed costs and any reduction in income, however small or large, must be matched by a reduction in the programming budget—the core business of the organisation. Thus in the current environment of static or reduced public funding, it is essential that alternative sustainable sources of funds are found.

—“To sustain themselves in this environment, as part of good risk management to broaden their external revenue base, and to continue to engage the community, arts organisations need to secure more support from the private sector.”

The Allen Consulting Group (op. cit, p. 6)

2010 saw the publication of two major reports into private sector philanthropy for culture in New Zealand; *The Art of the Possible: strengthening private sector support for the Arts in New Zealand* written by The Allen Consulting Group, commissioned by Creative New Zealand, October 2010 and *Growing the Pie: Increasing the level of cultural philanthropy in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Report of the Cultural Philanthropy Task Force to the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, Hon Christopher Finlayson, December 2010.

Both reports set out to identify how Government and CNZ might work with arts organisations to ensure that the cultural sector becomes better placed to access private sector funding—businesses, trusts and foundations, individuals—as a viable source of external support. Both reports made a series of recommendations. The two recommendations most pertinent to the sector this paper is focused on are:

— **Gift Aid:** Both papers acknowledged a favourable tax regime for giving in New Zealand, but determined that it was not always appropriately understood and/or utilised by donors and recipients.⁷ In addition, they advocated the introduction of a “Gift Aid” scheme, to enable donors to gift the tax that they are eligible to claim on donations, to the recipient of the donation. In practical terms this would mean that for every \$1 donated by a donor eligible for Gift Aid (ie paying tax in NZ) the organisation would receive just under \$1.30 (assuming a rate of tax of around 30%). In the current situation, for every \$1 donated, the donor can claim back approximately \$0.30 against tax.

— **Capacity building in Fundraising:** Both reports recommended development of fundraising capability and capacity within the arts sector through mentoring and education programmes, to counteract an absence of staff dedicated to fundraising, and a lack of knowledge around grant writing and knowing “how to make the ask”. The aim is to better position arts organisations to engage and build relationships with potential private sector funders and have the capability and capacity to apply for grants and ask for funding.

⁷ A programme of promotion of knowledge and awareness of tax incentives for giving, to potential high level donors is recommended in both reports. The payroll giving scheme was deemed to have potential but still be in its infancy and underutilised. In addition, the Philanthropy Task Force found that not all recipients either knew or made clear their “donee status”, meaning that potential donors would not know whether they could reclaim tax against their donation.

These two reports address Arts and Culture as a whole—music, performance and visual—and the vast range of organisations and individuals involved in the production and dissemination of culture, including major national organisations such as Te Papa Tongarewa, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and the Auckland Theatre Company, as well as the myriad of small not-for-profit arts organisations and individual artists who make up the culture spectrum of this country. As such, they must be generalist in their approach, and their advice should be applied appropriately within any particular organisation.

Arguably, the most tangible outcome of these reports to date for the small scale visual arts sector is the Creative Giving Programme launched by Creative New Zealand in 2012, investing NZ \$1.05 million over three years to enhance the arts and culture sector's ability to source private sector funding. This initiative includes a mentoring programme for selected arts organisations, a series of workshops and master classes on various aspects of fundraising, an incentive scheme enabling organisations to apply for match funding for new donations from private sources or new business partnerships over \$5000, up to a ceiling of \$20,000 per organisation and an advocacy programme highlighting the benefits to be gained from investing in the arts.⁸ One area of capacity building that this programme does not address, and which is potentially problematic, is seed funding for initial costs (salaries and research) in developing a fund raising capacity within an organisation. For small organisations, a lack of fundraising capacity is often as much to do with lack of staff as with lack of skills. There is an urgent requirement for seed funding to pay someone to do the work required in developing fundraising, prior to the money coming in.

When looking specifically at the space of small scale visual arts organisations and their particular situations, four comments made in these reports are particularly relevant to thinking about potential private sector support:

“...Increasing cultural philanthropy in New Zealand will depend on a range of initiatives and involve all parties—government, business, individual New Zealanders and the cultural sector itself. Each of these needs to step up and take responsibility for growing the resources the sector needs and deserves”⁹

“...of the three sources of private sector support for the arts in New Zealand—individuals, trusts / foundations and business—it is business, and especially corporations, that are likely to be the source of significant and sustainable additional support for the Arts [...] while individual giving will remain an important component of the revenue of arts organisations, it is unrealistic to expect that the wealthy philanthropists will be the primary source of funds from the private sector.”¹⁰

“Rather than focus on simple philanthropy, the interests of arts entities and corporations will best be served, and mutual value for both sectors maximised, if genuine corporate/arts partnerships are encouraged and celebrated.”¹¹

“As a small, developed economy, the success and impact of pursuing any of these recommendations is underpinned by looking for creation of shared value—the classic ‘win, win’—for each stakeholder.”¹²

⁸ <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/en/arts-development-and-resources/creative-giving>

⁹ *Growing the Pie: Increasing the level of cultural philanthropy in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Report of the Cultural Philanthropy Task Force to the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, Hon Christopher Finlayson (December 2010, p. 17)

¹⁰ The Allen Consulting Group, *The Art of the Possible: strengthening private sector support for the Arts in New Zealand*, commissioned by Creative New Zealand (October 2010, p. 58–62)

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 7

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 9

Traditionally, the arts sector as a whole and the small scale visual arts sector in particular, have been dependent on public funding. Multiple different organisations apply for a set pool of funding from government bodies. Whether this is administered by Creative New Zealand or local councils, the funding body develops policies and in accordance with these policies, sets criteria for allocation of funds which are used to evaluate applications, or are incorporated into funding agreements. The policies of the funder tend to be re-visited from time to time (CNZ are planning a review of their visual arts policy in 2014) and as a consequence, the criteria by which applications are evaluated and funding is allocated will change from time to time. This approach to allocation of funding encourages a culture in which arts organisation need to understand the policies of the funding bodies, and tailor their applications to fulfill these requirements.

To maximise benefit within this system, a small visual arts organisation needs a good relationship and open lines of communication with the funding body, in order to clearly understand funder requirements, and interpret their own work to fit the criteria of the funder wherever possible. If the funder/applicant relationship is strong, this mechanism also offers some opportunity for the applicants to feed in to the funder's development of policy and criteria, through advocacy, particularly at times of policy review.

In theory this sets up a productive conflict where both funder and arts organisation jostle to improve the behaviour of the other—the funder sets policy which aims to encourage the arts organisation to behave in ways which will (in the view of the funder) maximise the effectiveness of arts organisation in cultural production, exhibition, and dissemination of critical ideas, while the arts organisation seeks to influence these policies with advocacy from the coal face. Kim Einarsson, Director of Konsthall C in Stockholm, describes this as part of the political work of the organisation:

—“We try to engage actively in discussions on our present cultural policies and future funding systems, by giving direct feedback to the funding bodies and politicians. Sometimes it can be complicated to bite the hand that feeds you but I think that these are important roles for any publicly-funded art organisation, particularly in a time when neoliberal cultural policies attempt to direct us toward entrepreneurial management and private funding.”

Kim Einarsson, Director Konsthall C, Stockholm, in conversation with Emily Pethick “Beyond Representation”, in *Circular Facts*, p. 55

In practice, there are complexities. Firstly, arts organisations which have the resources (people and time) to dedicate to maintaining a relationship with funders, will have more influence on policy. This tends to be the larger more established organisations, where it is possible to identify a staff member (often the Director) who can make time available for a relationship and advocacy role with funders. In smaller organisations, the Director is generally responsible for creative and curatorial direction, strategic and administrative direction, fundraising, communications, marketing, strategy, planning and a fair amount of the day to day administration. It is not therefore surprising that advocacy tends to be squeezed out other than when applying for funding. Similarly, it is near impossible for individual practitioners to have much influence on public funding bodies through advocacy.

Another significant layer of complexity comes from the criteria used to measure the performance or value of a funded organisation. The methodology for measuring value does not provide a one size fits all solution. Not only do different art forms (music, theatre, dance, visual arts etc) require different methods of evaluation, but also within one art form different events will require alternative methods of evaluation. For example, the value of an art exhibition in a major gallery is often measured through the metric of visitor numbers, however, this is not really useful for an exhibition in an experimental artist-run space, where, although only a handful of people may see the exhibition, if one or two of those are influential, ie curators or collectors, the exhibition may lead to re-exhibition of the work in a larger institution or biennial, or new projects for the artist, and as such will be immensely significant. This question of how best to measure value of the work of small visual arts organisations will be addressed further below.

While the mode of working with public funding organisations depends on two of the essential fundraising requirements, namely good relationships between funder and arts organisation and seeking win-win solutions (the output of the arts organisation meeting the requirements of the funder), it allows the arts organisation to take their eye off the ball in communicating to the wider world “who we are”, “what we do”, “why this is important” and “why this is exciting”. The biggest risk is that the arts organisation changes their behaviour to meet the requirements of the funder, without reference to their role in the wider arts ecology (for example, it is not hard to see how a requirement for increased audience numbers can lead to less experimental and “safer” exhibitions). Most organisations do manage successfully to identify how they can meet the requirements of funders, while still fulfilling their core mission. At the same time, in a public funding regime the need for an organisation to define and articulate its particularity is less urgent. In stark contrast, articulation of “who we are”, “what we do”, “why this is important” and “why this is exciting” is fundamental to growing new sources of financial support.

—“We were lucky when we had our financial meltdown in 2005. We were forced to confront central questions, when others were complacently receiving their funding. No one asked them, “Why do you exist?” We were asked because our funders didn’t believe we should exist. That was quite healthy because we had to think carefully about what the point of our existence was; what we could usefully provide for artists and audiences. Having to answer these questions compels you to consider your role and relevance. If you can answer them convincingly, then it is easier to explain to others why you should exist. Then you can change their opinion rather than have to adapt to their ideology.”

Frances McKee, Director CCA Glasgow, “Losing Control” in *Circular Facts*, p. 49

Inherent to arts public funding bodies, is some understanding of the cultural sector, and often some historical knowledge of many of the organisations who apply to them for funding making it unnecessary to constantly reiterate the role the organisation plays in the wider arts ecology. As discussed above, under a public funding regime, the “case for support” focuses on how the organisation meets the funding body’s criteria for awarding grants and measuring performance. So although the mission of the organisation is often practiced, it is rarely clearly articulated.

In order to attract private sector support, it is essential to articulate clearly and concisely what you do and why it is important, if meaningful, long-term, mutually beneficial relationships are to be established. For every potential new funder, it is necessary to make a clear case for support which must include “who we are”, “what we do”, “why this is important” and “why this is exciting” and explore where there may be areas for mutual value creation.

As a background to thinking about how small scale organisations function, the 2011 publication, *Circular Facts*, a collection of writings by international curators, directors and collaborators discusses the role of small organisations in the cultural field and how they envision the future. These essays consider the factors that define the relevance of small scale arts organisations as publicly-funded organisations, how they qualify their relationship with the public, and at the same time question the premises on which small organisations articulate their positions and how they work and participate in both the art world and public life. Clearly there are no universal conclusions as to how small scale arts organisations function, but these essays offer interesting perspectives for thinking about how they differ from larger organisations and from each other.

—“This smaller scale does come with several advantages: not only is it much cheaper to maintain a smaller physical space, but this intimacy will also favour a face-to-face encounter and demand a more active and immediate engagement. [...] Since they invest in face time rather than in ad time, these small institutions build their audience as a result of a self-selecting process. In other words, the people who pay attention are not the ones who are encouraged to do so, but the ones who choose to do so. Since anyone is invited to attend any of the exhibitions or events, this is not a case of speakeasy or strategic exclusivity, but it creates a space for a self-selected and engaged community of people who care. The goal is not to engage in a competition to attract more audiences, but to establish a smaller gift economy for anyone who is curious enough and makes an effort to come by for a visit, whether as a friend or a stranger.”

A case for support will be very specific for each organisation depending on its mode of practice, and the contexts it works within, however there are characteristics common to many and which differentiate the small organisations from their larger counterparts (e.g. museums and public galleries) and as already mentioned, small organisations are often defined by how they behave rather than by their output. For example (and by no means comprehensively) some of the vital determinants of successful small visual arts organisations might include:

— Small scale visual arts organisations are fundamentally *producers*, either through the commissioning of new art, or enabling new research or education projects, or publishing new writing. This is in contrast to larger organisations which generally exhibit works of art already in existence, or sell books or journals published by other organisations. Moreover, this production is not simply a case of providing “funding”, but rather, production thought as “...initiatives that are interested in production, but also become spaces for discussion; where projects can be contrasted as they’re being carried out, thus effectively working as co-producers. They don’t necessarily finance projects, but they do nourish organisational processes.”¹³

— *Intimacy*: small scale arts organisations generally operate out of small galleries. As Anthony Huberman, Director of The Artist’s Institute, New York has written:

“This smaller scale does come with several advantages: not only is it much cheaper to maintain a smaller physical space, but this intimacy will also favour a face-to-face encounter and demand a more active and immediate engagement. [...] Since they invest in face time rather than in ad time, these small institutions build their audience as a result of a self-selecting process. In other words, the people who pay attention are not the ones who are encouraged to do so, but the ones who choose to do so. Since anyone is invited to attend any of the exhibitions or events, this is not a case of speakeasy or strategic exclusivity, but it creates a space for a self-selected and engaged community of people who care. The goal is not to engage in a competition to attract more audiences, but to establish a smaller gift economy for anyone who is curious enough and makes an effort to come by for a visit, whether as a friend or a stranger.”

— *Criticality* is central to the practice and products of small scale visual arts organisations evidenced by the success of projects they have initiated, and the achievements of artists who have shown in these spaces either early in their career or at critical points in their career.

— Working with less established artists or with artists at critical stages in their careers, and commissioning new works and projects, small organisations not only take risks and *experiment in their own programme*, but also *support artists to take risks* and experiment at *crucial stages in their careers*.

— *Legacy and Cultural Impact*: Projects and commissions initiated in small arts organisations frequently continue to have impact both nationally and internationally, long after their initial exhibition at the commissioning organisation, through inclusion in exhibitions in larger galleries/museums and at biennales around the world, often becoming seminal works in an artist’s career.

Any small visual arts organisation in the world will have multiple other points of difference to add to those described above, and together these form a framework which starts to explain, “who we are”, “what we do”, “why it is important” and “why it is exciting”.

From this framework the tools that are needed to communicate with funders (verbal communications, websites, printed material etc) can be developed. Perhaps one of the most important is the opening paragraph of the “about” page of an organisation’s website. While funders are unlikely to come cold to a website and offer funding, they are likely to go to the website to confirm what they have been told, do further research into the philosophy and activities of an organisation. A clear statement of the mission of the organisation is essential.

Case Study 1: The Contemporary Art Society, London

The Contemporary Art Society is a UK based charity, which for more than a century has been purchasing the work of artists early in their careers and donating it to museums throughout the UK. This work is supported, both financially and critically, by membership and patron programmes for individuals (introducing collectors to the work of critically respected artists) and through contemporary art consultancy services offered to companies, public institutions and individuals. The opening paragraph on their website reads:

“Contemporary Art Society: Encouraging an appreciation and understanding of contemporary art by a wide audience and donating works by important artists to museums and public galleries across the UK”

The messages that come from this statement include:

- Enjoyment (appreciation)
- Learning (understanding)
- Available to all (wide audience)
- Curatorial knowledge (important artists)
- Charitable public role—a good cause (donating works to museums)
- Nationwide (not London-centric)

Case study 2: Chisenhale Gallery, London

Another example of a strong articulation of the work of the organization is the opening page of the Chisenhale Gallery Supporters Booklet:

“Chisenhale Gallery supports the production and presentation of new forms of artistic activity and engages diverse audiences, both local and international.

This expands on our award winning, 30-year history as one of London’s most innovative forums for contemporary art and our reputation for producing important solo commissions with artists at a formative point in their career.

We enable emerging or under-represented artists to make significant steps and pursue important new directions in their practice. At the heart of our programme is a remit to commission new work, supporting artists from project inception to realisation and representing an inspiring and challenging range of voices, nationalities and art forms based on extensive research and strong curatorial vision.

For audiences, Chisenhale Gallery provides an opportunity to experience the process of art production intimately—this is a place where art is not collected for presentation but where it is made—and this in itself provides important learning opportunities to critically reflect and participate. As such Chisenhale Gallery operates alternately as an exhibition hall, production agency, research centre and community resource.”

The other question that plays a significant part in developing a case for support and has a major impact in the relationship between funder and arts organisation is “how good are we at what we do?” What is the value of the organisation? For small visual arts organisations, current methods of evaluating performance rarely tell the whole story, and can obscure some of the strengths inherent in the practice of the organisation.

A very standard—and on the surface not unreasonable—method of evaluating an exhibition is by counting how many people see it—audience numbers. However, as touched on above, audience numbers are only one factor in measuring the success of an exhibition, particularly for the type of exhibitions that small arts organisations strive to create. Measures that should perhaps be included in the evaluation process are who the audience is comprised of (curators, artists, students, collectors, academics, critics, and specific communities) and whether the work or the exhibition has an afterlife in other exhibitions, nationally or internationally, or in a major collection, private or public?

The frustration in the UK, over how the performance of small arts organisations might best be evaluated, led *Common Practice* to commission research into the operations of small visual arts organisations, resulting in the publication of the research paper *Size Matters: Notes towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations* in July 2011. This paper confirmed that: “...the metrics currently used [in the UK] to assess the modes of operation of all arts organisations—centred on attendance figures and shifting definitions of external income—are more appropriate to large organisations. This highlighted the inherent disadvantage faced by the small scale sector in being expected to deliver on the same fronts as its larger counterpart while lacking the resources and opportunities to move beyond the ‘hunger level’— [...] economies that are currently posited as offering a chance of achieving sustainability.” [...] *Size Matters* argued that we “need to develop ways of measuring a wider variety of types of value being delivered by small arts organisations, considering value according to fiscal, artistic, social and societal parameters.”

Following *Size Matters*, *Common Practice* instigated a sector wide working symposium in 2012, which was reported on in the paper *Value, Measure, Sustainability: Ideas towards the future of the small scale visual arts sector*. This discussion takes a more conceptual approach to ideas of value and suggests that as producers, whose strengths lie in their diversity and risk-taking, the value of small visual arts organisations manifests itself in a long-term contribution to the sector, without which larger-scale organisations could not

thrive. Moreover, it was concluded that this dynamic connection is generally unrecognised and financially unrewarded. The paper goes on to suggest that a step towards increased recognition might involve recourse to narrative techniques as a “...persuasive means to demonstrate the value of their work without the need for any kind of calculus. The changes brought about by their [small scale visual arts organisations] interventions in the cultural landscape need to be reported in new and appropriate ways. Stories about the aesthetic encounters mediated by small arts organisations can offer nuanced particular and memorable accounts of their work.”

In New Zealand, local council funding of arts organisations tends to focus on audience numbers as a metric of success. CNZ on the other hand asks for narrative reports that include a Manager’s report covering artistic activity alongside audience numbers, thus offering the opportunity to outline the quality of the exchange in addition to approximate numbers of visitors. If enlightened private sector funding is to be sought, there is a need for small arts organisations in New Zealand to think about how the value of their work might best be understood by new partners.

Value, Measure, Sustainability raises questions as to the “desirability, and ultimate efficacy, of positioning new metrics according to which diminishing resources will be allocated”

The paper goes on to say:

“...if as a sector, UK-based small scale arts organisations find themselves obliged to continue redefining metrics according to which their work is measured, two avenues were suggested:

The first is to return to a consideration of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were introduced by ACE [Arts Council England] in 2011 as a qualitative means of differentiating core funded organisations. In December 2011, the detailed earlier focus on KPIs was deemed “too complicated” and the National Portfolio Organisations were instead compelled to:

- Indicate what you are doing to ensure that excellent art happens and how you will know you have been successful
- Implement an improved method for audience data collection and interpretation

- Increase the amount of activity made available to audiences digitally
- Increase the organisations engagement and reach
- Indicate the organisation’s expected amount of contributed income in 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.

As we have seen, such exigencies are inappropriate to small arts organisations because they maintain the expansion of audiences and increase and diversification of income as key markers of good organisational management. Knowing these measures to be inimical—perhaps even antithetical—to their *modus operandi*, small visual arts organisations might instead come together to act as an advocacy group to devise KPIs more appropriate to their way of working.

The second avenue that suggests itself when considering metrics more appropriate to small visual arts organisations was the evaluation of their work according to its impact. The concept of impact encompasses a wider ranging and subtler understanding of the work of small organisations (for example footfall describes the initial reach of a project, but ignores the significance the project has on those who encounter it). Given the complexity of their work, the impact of small arts organisations is best understood through project-based narratives, and provides a potential key to sustainability ...”

In *Circular Facts*, Francis McKee, Director of CCA Glasgow, addresses the question of valuing arts organisations in terms of opportunity for cultural investment more directly. “...in terms of our situation, the Arts Council no longer exists, there’s a new entity called Creative Scotland, which insists it isn’t a grant-giving body, nor a cash machine. They’re there to make strategic investments across the country in terms of festivals and intellectual exports from Scotland. So we have to figure out what we want to do, why we want to do it, and then how we make them agree to let us do it. That seems like a better way to function in this new environment than to succumb to the rhetoric of creative industries.”¹⁴

When looking for support from the private sector (as well as from the public sector), being able to communicate the value of your organisation is essential and some thinking around determining value, either as individual organisations or in a sector-wide forum, is essential for small arts organisations in New Zealand.

¹⁴ Francis McKee, “Losing Control” in *Circular Facts*, p. 46–47

15 Fund development is a term used by Guy Mallabone, an internationally recognised consultant in raising funds in the not-for-profit sector. It infers the development of relationships which generate funding over the longer terms, as opposed to fundraising which suggests the one off provision of funds. See *Excellence in Fund Raising in Canada*, Editor Guy Mallabone (Canada, Hillborn Group), 2011

16 Guy Mallabone, *Factors critical to successful fundraising*, http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/assets/paperclip/publication_documents/documents/220/original/guy_m_-_factors_critical_to_successful_fundraising.pdf?1342762290

Seeking corporate partnerships

Case study 3: Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne

The essential features of successful private sector support for arts organisations—sometimes referred to as “fund development” rather than “fund raising”¹⁵—are long-term relationships and mutual value creation (win-win for funder and arts organisation). Although there may be a strategic planning and administrative focus for fundraising within an organisation, these are built and developed, not by one person, but by the organisation as a whole—the Board and the executive staff.

Once an organisation has developed a compelling case for support, and has the tools and language to communicate this with appropriate urgency and passion, the opportunities that the organisation has to offer to potential funders will become more apparent and the organisation will be in a position to invite support from the private sector.

At this stage it is useful to look at how organisations in other parts of the world are developing opportunities for support from the private sector. There will never be a one-size-fits-all solution for a sector as diverse as the small visual arts organisations, since each organisation has a particularity, dependent on their practice and on the context they work within. However, case studies might illustrate how specific organisations have identified and developed opportunities.

“An effective fund development programme and campaign, knows and understands its stake holders. It takes time to understand who might have an interest in [the organisation’s] work, who has linkages to [the organisation], and who has the greatest potential to give, and continue giving,”¹⁶

Small visual arts organisations need to identify areas where the interest of a commercial organisation might overlap with their own practice. This overlap may come from the core business of the company, the interests of the clients of the company, the interests and skills of employees of the company, or a desire for the company to associate itself with the “brand” of the small visual arts organisation.

“Gertrude Contemporary is valued nationally and respected internationally as a dynamic centre for the production and presentation of contemporary art. With the artist placed firmly at the centre of our community, we foster a culture of risk, collaboration and critical-thinking to generate innovative programs that engage audiences in creative exchange”

go to:



<http://www.gertrude.org.au/about>

In the above statement (the opening paragraph of the “about” section of the Gertrude Contemporary website) the following benefits are offered as an association with Gertrude Contemporary:

- National and international reputation
- Dynamic
- A centre
- Artist as focal point
- Risk taking
- Collaboration
- Critical thinking
- Innovation
- Offering a creative exchange—*dialogue*

Looking at the information about companies who support Gertrude Contemporary (described as sponsors) these values are played out in the relationships that have been developed over the last thirteen years, and at the same time, the examples of existing partnerships are utilised in support of an invitation to others to join. Partners for Gertrude Contemporary include two design companies supporting the design of publications, the website and a major rebrand of the organisation, a catering company supporting the hospitality requirements of the Gertrude Contemporary Patron events and Proclaim Management Services, a company providing claims management services to insurers.

The case study of Gertrude Contemporary’s engagement with the corporate world performs a number of the critical characteristics of successful not-for-profit / corporate partnerships. Namely, the engagements are long term, the partnerships create value for both partners, they are based on some sort of synergy, either through the core business of both partners, a shared audience/market, or aspirations of the two brands. In identifying potential corporate partners for arts organisations in New Zealand and developing an offer specific to any one of them, these are essential starting points.

Seeking partnerships with Trusts and Foundations

Private Trusts and Foundations are legal entities set up and endowed by an individual, a family or a group of individuals, generally for the purposes of philanthropy. Some companies also set up foundations for the purposes of philanthropic giving and there are certain industry foundations (for example community gaming trusts like the Lion Foundation, which return a proportion of the profits made from gambling to the community, through charitable organisations). Trusts and foundations tend to have a funding policy outlining the activities and types of organisation they are interested in funding, but the specificity and stringency of this varies significantly.

Decisions on which applications are successful and which are not, are generally made either by a Board or Trustees/Directors of the Trust/Foundation.

The best known and most active Trust offering funding in support of contemporary visual arts projects in New Zealand is The Chartwell Trust. However, there are other trusts and foundations which support, either in practice or on paper, arts and culture. In addition there are trusts and foundations which may not directly support arts organisations, but might look favourably at some element of the work of an arts organisation. For example, a foundation interested in supporting organisational sustainability, might be persuaded to offer a one-off grant to a small arts organisation as seed funding, to employ a fundraiser for six to twelve months, to give them time to start raising funds over and above the cost of the fundraiser's salary.

Unlike a public funder, these trusts and foundations are less likely to know and understand the work of small arts organisations, so the case for support that articulates the urgency and the excitement of the work of the arts organisation, in terms that apply to the interests of the trust or foundation is essential.

In order to benefit from private trusts and foundations a significant investment in research, relationship development and grant writing, is required. Relationships are based on an understanding of the trust/foundation's objectives and how these might fit with those of the arts organisation. It is vital to understand the philosophy and procedures of the Trust or Foundation prior to applying for grants, and as with public funding bodies, there may be specific criteria to be met, in order to be successful in applying for funds. There is also usually some form of reporting requirement, which needs to be actively fulfilled, in order to maintain and develop relationships with the funder.

For organisations interested in international work, it is possible to seek international funding from Trusts and Foundations which support international exchange, (for example the Asia New Zealand Foundation, a partnership between the public and private sector, dedicated to building New Zealanders knowledge of Asia). This is already happening in New Zealand to some extent. Again, to use these sources imaginatively requires investment in research, understanding, relationship building, grant writing and reporting.

Seeking partnerships with individuals

Support from private individuals can be achieved in a number of different ways.

Individual support for specific projects: In some cases an individual can be approached for significant support for a particular project or initiative. This generally requires a donor who already has a philanthropic mind-set, a long standing, close relationship between the donor and the organisation, and a clear matching of the interests of the donor and the project to be supported. Such funding is very specific to the project (the organisation cannot use the funds for other things) and is one-off for each project. This type of support is usually the result of the donor being convinced of the importance and value of the project and the return for the donor is generally the satisfaction of supporting something they believe to be worthwhile, plus acknowledgements in publicity material, websites, annual reports etc, and an ever-strengthening relationship with the organisation through the Director or members of the Board.

Individual support through a Patron programme: In other cases, individuals can offer significant support to an organisation on an annual basis, through a Patrons programme. The most successful programmes are generally designed to offer two levels of financial support with a series of benefits attached to each level, enabling more tentative supporters to start at a lower level and if/when appropriate, progress as the relationship between the organisation and the patron becomes more established.

With small visual arts organisations there is a real opportunity for the patrons programme to embody the mission and the practice of the organisation, making it an integral part of the work of the organisation (rather than a fundraising add-on) while at the same time offering a point of differentiation from the programmes offered by other organisations. As such, the benefits are based on the particularities of the art organisation. For example, if an organisation puts artists at the centre of its practice and supports the production of new works of art, then the Patrons programme should focus on introducing collectors to the work of these artists in a meaningful and engaging way, and highlighting the process of production. This may include meetings and talks with artists, studio visits, access to planning of exhibitions and commissions etc, with the higher level supporters being offered the more personal and intimate experiences.

Case Study 4: The Showroom, London

go to:

The Showroom offers Patron programmes at three levels, Benefactors from £3000 (approx NZ\$6000), Founding Patrons from £1000 (approx NZ\$2000), Patrons from £500 (or £600 for couples).



<http://www.theshowroom.org/support.html>

“Benefactors £3000 pa

Benefactors comprise a circle of key supporters of The Showroom’s re-development whose involvement is vital to enabling and sustaining our organisation, and are appreciated in a number of ways. They are invited to informal dinners with the artists in our programme and are kept informed of developments in the gallery throughout the year. These relaxed events are designed to keep our Benefactors at the heart of what we are doing.

The support of Benefactors is credited and appreciated in the following ways:

- Invited to an annual supporters dinner
- Acknowledged on all gallery publicity material, the website, and on a panel displayed in the building
- Invited to special exhibition previews with the artists
- Sent copies of all Showroom publications
- Entitled to free attendance at all Showroom events and seminars, and priority booking

Founding Patrons £1000 pa

Founding Patrons enable the organization to function and their support feeds directly into artists’ productions, in particular guaranteeing artists’ fees and seed funding for artists’ projects.

Founding Patrons are credited and appreciated in the following ways:

- Invited to an annual supporters dinner
- Kept informed of key developments in the gallery
- Acknowledged on all gallery publicity material, the website, and on a panel displayed in the building
- Offered 50% discount on hire of the space for one event
- Invited to special exhibition previews with the artists
- Sent copies of all Showroom publications
- Entitled to free attendance at all Showroom events and seminars, and priority booking

Patrons £500 pa/£600 pa for couples

The support of Patrons feeds directly into artists’ commissions, guaranteeing artists’ fees and seed funding for artists’ projects.

The support of Patrons is credited and appreciated in the following ways:

- Invited to an annual supporters dinner
- Acknowledged on all gallery publicity material, the website, and on a panel displayed in the building
- Invited to special exhibition previews with the artists
- Sent copies of all Showroom publications
- Entitled to free attendance at all Showroom events and seminars, and priority booking”

Patron programmes provide organisations with a source of income that does not have to be tied to one particular project or initiative. However, it is essential that potential and actual patrons understand how their money is used and why this is important. The Showroom meets this need by stating:

“The Showroom’s Supporters Scheme of Benefactors, Founding Patrons, Patrons, is crucial to us sustaining our ambitious and innovative programme of artists commissions, participatory projects, talks and events.

As a registered charity The Showroom has to raise 100% of its income. At a time when funding is more difficult to raise than ever, we are hoping that those who regularly visit The Showroom, and appreciate the opportunities and support that we give artists early in their careers, will choose to join our Supporters Group to help us continue this important work.

This support will enable us to continue to give artists more opportunities to realise ambitious projects and will ensure that The Showroom’s neighbourhood receives a groundbreaking education programme.

Unlike other galleries, The Showroom can offer all our supporters a personal relationship with the gallery that is attentive and worthwhile.”

In New Zealand, two of the most significant Patron programmes for supporters of the visual arts are the Auckland Art Gallery Patrons and New Zealand in Venice Patrons Programme (more than sixty patrons each donating at least \$5000). More recently, more than seventy people have been brought together under the title of “Contemporary Benefactors” with the aim of supporting contemporary programmes at Auckland Art Gallery. Each of these has a very significant mission (acquisition of New Zealand art for Auckland Art Gallery/support for the New Zealand pavilion at the Venice Biennale/supporting the contemporary exhibitions programme at Auckland Art Gallery). Patron programmes initiated by smaller arts organisations in New Zealand are less structured and are currently, probably less successful.

While patron programmes for individuals offer a significant source of income, they are time intensive (both in terms of administrative time and, relationship building time, which will involve Director and Board level engagement) and have significant costs associated with them (staff costs to implement the programme, actual costs of the programme etc). *The Value, Measure, Sustainability* report states that “On the question of philanthropy, only around a quarter of the organisations represented at the April meeting [the working symposium for directors of UK based small visual arts organisations] had dedicated benefactor programmes, and many felt that the success achieved by such programmes elsewhere relied on the kind of pro-active, sustained and aggressive policies that only larger organisations, with resources dedicated to such activity, can pursue. In this context, the expectation of the UK government and its funding bodies that the philanthropy model can be directly transposed from large to small organisations is at least in significant need of refinement, if not altogether unrealistic.”¹⁷

Whether there is a market for Patron groups initiated by and in support of small arts organisations in New Zealand, has yet to be really tested in the market place and to a large extent will depend on the capacity and networks of each individual organisation, alongside the offer they make to individual patrons. However, considering some of the established patron groups in New Zealand, it appears that there is a genuine interest in contemporary art, which is currently being fed by the museums, but with the right programmes, collectors could be introduced to more experimental work, and these programmes have the potential to also attract a new generation of supporters who lean less towards philanthropy for the sake of a good cause, and more towards philanthropy in exchange for a worthwhile experience.

Funding from Philanthropic groups of individuals: There are a number of examples world wide of groups of individuals who are brought together, outside of any arts organisation or institution, with the philanthropic aim of donating funds to the arts as they see fit. As mentioned above, one of the most recent additions in Auckland is the “Contemporary Benefactors” formed to support the contemporary programmes at Auckland Art Gallery. While Contemporary Benefactors has been set up with the intention of supporting Auckland Art Gallery, it remains a stand-alone philanthropic group. A longer standing, Auckland-based group, is ARTFIVE0, a philanthropic group engaged with contemporary visual art, which supports artists and organisations on a project by project basis.

These charitable groups are, or operate as a private foundation, often run on a slightly more informal basis. Indeed in the UK, the most active private funding group for contemporary visual arts, Outset, has moved from a philanthropic group of patrons to become a foundation where the funding is raised from patrons. These philanthropic groups tend to be less specific about their funding criteria, making good relationships vital for arts organisations to understand their interests.

Membership programmes for individuals: Membership programmes offer individuals a low-cost route to association with an arts organisation. In order to generate sufficient revenue to cover costs (let alone to raise money), these depend on economies of scale, not always achievable by small organisations. Firstly, there is the administration of managing a database/list of members and asking them for membership fees on an annual basis. In addition, members are generally looking for more return than a credit in a list in the annual report. If a gallery charges an entrance fee for certain exhibitions, free entry can be part of the offer, otherwise some form of low cost events / invitations need to be arranged. It is true that membership can introduce potential patrons to an organisation, provided that the organisation has an active engagement with all its members in order to identify prospective patrons. Internationally, some organisations are looking to members for financial support through some sort of public “ask”, which may be linked to a specific project, a particular moment in time for the organisation, or sometimes a seasonal ask. This is essentially crowd funding through the organisations own network (email, website and database contacts), using their website and paypal as a platform.

Crowd-funding: The last few years has seen a significant rise in interest in crowd-funding models. Wikipedia describes crowd funding as:

“...the collective effort of individuals who network and pool their money, usually via the internet, to support efforts initiated by other people or organizations. Crowdfunding is used in support of a wide variety of activities, including disaster relief, citizen journalism, support of artists by fans, political campaigns, startup company funding, motion picture promotion, free software development, inventions development, scientific research, and civic projects”

go to:



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowdfunding>

The Arts Foundation in New Zealand have recently launched the crowd funding website, *Boosted*, specifically for raising money for arts projects. This has already been used successfully by a number of arts organizations and individuals. Some of the key advantages of *Boosted* include:

- Provision of a platform for collecting funds from multiple individuals efficiently
- Provision of a platform for individuals and organizations to ask either their own networks or existing networks that can be identified as having a potential interest, for funds
- It enables donors to claim tax relief on money donated, even if the recipient does not have donee status (or is not a registered charity), since all the funds are donated through the Arts Foundation.
- There is a mechanism by which match funding can be used to encourage donors to donate

Areas of *Boosted* that are currently being considered, and may be addressed over time include: developing a database of donors with details of their interests (art form, geographic, special interest etc), so that new networks can be accessed by individuals and organisations seeking funding; and improving the mechanisms for leading potential donors to the *Boosted* website, via Facebook, twitter, instagram etc.

Boosted offers arts organisations the opportunity to raise funds for specific projects, rather than for ongoing running costs. To maximise the chances of successfully reaching target funding, these projects should be tangible to the funders and have some element that the funders can directly experience (for example attend the opening and see what their money has paid for), since the payback to funders is an engagement with the project and joining with others in this engagement. The ultimate success of *Boosted* will depend in part on individuals (artists) and organizations using it at an early stage in the establishment of *Boosted*, for projects with a high likelihood of reaching target funding: projects which grip the imagination of the public; where the end result can be experienced by the funding public, where the funding target is realistic; and where there are existing networks of supporters who can be brought to the *Boosted* website.

Funding and issues of independence

An article published in *Art Monthly* in September 2013 opened by asking “How public are national galleries and museums today, and what exactly is the cost of the private sponsorship of public art?” It goes on to argue that sponsorship of art by large corporations is an engagement with mass spectacle and high cultural prestige, as “...a deliberate public relations strategy that has long understood the power of patronage in the manufacturing of consent [...] Today, in situations in which art is financially dependent on a private sponsor, art’s agency clearly cedes to the controlling voice of the chief executive.”¹⁸

While small arts organisations rarely provide the mass spectacle (or audiences) that large corporations are looking for, the question of independence and curatorial and artistic freedoms need to be considered when accepting funds from anyone. If the heart of a small visual arts organisation is the curatorial integrity and criticality of the work it does, it is vital that this is not affected by those offering funds. Without doubt, there will be occasions when it is inappropriate for a particular commercial organisation or individual to support a specific project, as a result of their independent interests—at the simplest level, collectors may want to support a favourite artist and offer funding in return for an exhibition of their work—or funding might be offered with inappropriate conditions attached—again in very simple terms, a company may wish to have a say in the outcome of a commission they are helping to fund—but there is always the opportunity to not accept the funding and this is both the privilege and the responsibility of the Director and the Board of any institution. In seeking and securing funding, institutions must be clear about what they are offering in return, put in place measures to ensure that they have curatorial freedom and be prepared to refuse money that comes with unacceptable conditions. This is not always as easy as it sounds, and cases are not always clear cut, but it is an issue that Directors and Boards will need to address, both in terms of a general policy and on a case by case basis.

¹⁸ Colin Perry “Art and Oil” in *Art Monthly*, No. 369 (September 2013), p. 7

There is little doubt that there are opportunities for small scale visual arts organisations to develop new sources of funding by working with the private sector and if these are carefully thought out, they offer the possibility of enhancing the work of the institution in more ways than just through financial gain. In order to achieve this, organisations will need to develop compelling cases for support which articulate the particularities of each organisation, the urgency and importance of what they do and the impact that their work has, both culturally and in the wider community, in the short and the long term. This will help the organisation identify opportunities to work with selected partners in the private sector—individuals, groups of individuals, private trusts and foundations and companies—in sustainable partnerships which offer real benefits to both parties, without requiring compromise on the part of either partner. Given the nature of small scale visual arts organisations, there is no “one-size-fits-all” plan for private sector fund raising, but each organisation must look to its own particular modes of practice and seek opportunities for partnerships that either compliment or expand on its core work, while at the same time fitting the desires and aspirations of partners, be they individuals, trusts and foundations or companies. As publicly funded organisations, the small scale visual arts sector have rarely needed to express the importance of what they do, and while the specific practices of small organisations will probably never attract huge audiences, a clearer articulation of their ways of working and the impact this has, offers the potential to find new partners, collaborators, friends and supporters for the future.

Books

Mai Abu EIDahab, Binna Choi and Emily Pethick (eds), *Circular Facts*, (Sternberg Press 2011)

Guy Mallabone, *Excellence in Fund Raising in Canada*, (Hillborn Group, Canada, 2011)

Newspapers, Journals and Magazines

Colin Perry "Art and Oil" in *Art Monthly*, No. 369 (September 2013):7

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http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/assets/paperclip/publication_documents/documents/130/original/private_sector_support_for_the_arts.pdf?1322728133

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http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/assets/paperclip/publication_documents/documents/220/original/guy_m_-_factors_critical_to_successful_fundraising.pdf?1342762290

Other Websites

go to:

<http://www.boosted.org.nz/><http://www.chisenhale.org.uk><http://commonpractice.org.uk/><http://www.contemporaryartsociety.org/><http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/en/arts-development-and-resources/creative-giving><http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowdfunding><http://www.gertrude.org.au><http://www.nzatvenice.com/patrons/><http://www.outset.org.uk/england><http://www.theshowroom.org>

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Staying Alive: Some thoughts on opportunities for private funding for small scale visual arts organisations in New Zealand

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