



ARTS INNOVATION FUND

CASE STUDIES

Between 2006 and 2011, The James Irvine Foundation granted more than \$24 million through the Arts Innovation Fund. Led by 19 of California's leading arts institutions, the 28 projects in the initiative were experiments designed to create new relevance for audiences, artists and communities. Case summaries are presented here.

To learn more about the initiative, including findings and recommendations from its assessment, visit irvine.org/AIFassessment.

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These organizations sought to increase relevance in three important ways:

Audience Engagement

Many arts organizations worked to engage new and existing visitors and audiences by making arts experiences more personally relevant, participatory and social.

Organizations that tried this: American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Center Theatre Group, de Young Museum, Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Oakland Museum of California, San Diego Opera, San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Symphony

Community Engagement

Some arts institutions tried to strengthen the connection between their organization and the community, engaging historically underrepresented groups on their own terms.

Organizations that tried this: Hammer Museum, Oakland Museum of California, Pacific Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, The Music Center, The Old Globe

Artist Engagement

Some organizations focused on increasing artists' influence on institutions and their offerings, recharging their relationship with affiliated or local artists and focusing on their concerns and passions.

Organizations that tried this: American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, de Young Museum, Hammer Museum, La Jolla Playhouse, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

ACTOR ENTREPRENEURS

AMERICAN
CONSERVATORY
THEATER (ACT)

WWW.ACT-SE.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 1

American Conservatory Theater (ACT)

developed a pool of young entrepreneurial actors to generate their own theatrical work and provide audience members in their 20s and 30s with live theater experiences.

This work began with a question: “Why is it that people in their 20s are entering the theater in record numbers as artists, while their peers are less and less often in the audiences for theater?” The theater believed that its Master of Fine Arts (MFA) students could provide answers to the question as the conservatory redesigned its curriculum to place more emphasis on original theatrical work to be created or produced and presented by students themselves. New MFA curriculum has been phased in, and new staff has been engaged to support students’ production and marketing of their work, with an emphasis on reaching a younger audience through social media. New student works are now integrated within the theater’s programming, and students are given a more prominent place overall in public programs. The annual “Sky Festival,” a collection of short works by students, is a centerpiece of the effort, but classical and more traditional theater has also been presented in alternative, public venues. In the last three years, about a third of audience members for MFA performances have been under 40, and fewer than a quarter are current subscribers to ACT’s mainstage series.

REAL-TIME HUMAN INTERACTION

BERKELEY
REPERTORY
THEATRE

WWW.BERKELEYREP.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 2

Finding that students did not have sufficient familiarity with the San Francisco community to identify appropriate alternative venues for their productions, the company has established its own new small black box theater, The Costume Shop, for much of the work. Developing this versatile venue in San Francisco's Central Market neighborhood has led to a variety of other opportunities, including a city grant for ACT to host local artists and performing arts companies alongside innovative ACT Master of Fine Arts productions. Located in the heart of San Francisco, The Costume Shop has deepened the students' and the theater's ties to the vibrant local arts community through events such as 24 Days of Central Market Arts and Summer of Art festivals.

Berkeley Repertory Theatre's first project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund was part of a broader effort to reposition the theater's public image, deepen its connections to a more diverse and younger audience and to potential donors, extend the experience beyond the performance and make theater-going more affordable while protecting the organization's bottom line.

The theater conducted substantial research on its audience and donors, and on the perception of the company across several critical market segments

in the Bay Area. Working with an advertising agency, it created a new campaign, called Consider, that suggested Berkeley Repertory Theatre was about “thinking, surprise, open-mindedness and moments of enlightenment.” The ad campaign had nearly 2 million impressions. The theater hired a multi-media manager, now part of the full-time staff, to improve its web presence. Nearly 9 percent of website visitors went to the donor portal, and the theater saw a 94 percent rise in online donations.

Finding that its “audience craves real-time, human interaction that leads to a deeper connection to and dialogue about art,” the company made before- and after-show programming a regular feature in its lobbies, with tastings, docent presentations and parties that offer opportunities for the audience to “write, listen, respond, photograph and argue in the lobbies.”

Berkeley Repertory Theatre also designed a new tiered ticket pricing model that lowered ticket prices for young audiences, increasing the number of ticket buyers under age 30 by 116 percent.

The theater also undertook a second project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund with intent to increase relevance for audiences and professional artists.

CREATIVE INCUBATOR

BERKELEY
REPERTORY
THEATRE

WWW.BERKELEYREP.ORG

PROJECT 2 OF 2

In its second project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund, *Berkeley Repertory Theatre* converted a former warehouse on its North Berkeley campus into a creative incubator for new theater works. In 2012, it launched Ground Floor, a Center for the Development and Creation of New Work, with a summer residency program in which competitively selected writers, designers, directors, dramaturges, ensembles, composers, dancers, media artists and actors worked on new projects in a collaborative and open atmosphere.

The first cohort of 40 artists worked on 13 new projects. These included traditionally scripted new plays and conventional narratives, complex multimedia explorations of historic and contemporary events, highly experimental interdisciplinary works, and works featuring interactive elements.

Dan LaFranc's *Troublemaker*, developed at Ground Floor, was selected for production in Berkeley Repertory Theatre's 2012-13 season. Another, *The Food Project*, is a commission of 20 short plays about food in all its dimensions by 20 writers. In the words of one theater executive, Ground Floor "scaffolds residential opportunities for artists and makes the developmental and production process more transparent for audiences. It will, if it succeeds, result in a more engaged audience for a more diverse menu of theatrical products."

EXPERIMENTAL THEATER

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

WWW.CENTERTHEATREGROUP.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 1

Focusing on the Kirk Douglas Theatre, the smallest and newest of its three performance venues, *Center Theatre Group* began a series of experiments that broke from the subscription season model and produced more artistically adventurous work. The company reduced the Douglas subscription season from six to as few as three productions in some seasons, allowing it to invest in an eclectic mix of theater choices, known as DouglasPlus, which ranged from fully or minimally staged events to workshops and readings that utilized both traditional and non-traditional performance spaces and seating configurations. Many of these were offered at sharply reduced ticket prices to appeal to new audiences.

In addition to broadening Center Theatre Group's artistic portfolio, DouglasPlus helped the organization engage its audiences in new and innovative ways. The company significantly expanded its use of social media and installed a YouReview booth in the lobby, encouraging attendees to share their reactions to the shows. Some of the engagement techniques piloted at the Douglas — including concierge ushers, interactive lobby displays and live streaming of talk-backs — are now being implemented at Center Theatre Group's larger venues.

CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

DE YOUNG MUSEUM

DEYOUNG.FAMSF.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 2

DouglasPlus attracted a significant number of single ticket-buyers who had never attended the Douglas before. It also helped Center Theatre Group grow its audience under age 45, though it did not improve the racial diversity of audiences as the company had hoped, and revenues from ticket sales fell substantially short of original projections. In order to maintain accessible ticket prices, the company is looking for new sources of contributed income to support work at the Douglas.

San Francisco's *de Young Museum* (Corporation of Fine Arts Museums) launched Cultural Encounters, a multifaceted program intended to build on the museum's momentum in attracting a more diverse audience through less formal, more participatory programming.

"Friday Nights at the de Young" is a weekly, after-hours event series created to complement ongoing museum exhibitions. With music, dance, film, artist demonstrations, hands-on art-making and ancillary exhibitions, the series attracted nearly 2,000 visitors of diverse ages, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status each week in 2009–10. For "Artist Studio," the museum converted its education gallery into temporary studios, inviting local emerging artists to involve the public in their creative process

and lead on-site demonstrations and workshops. Through the “Connections” program, the museum commissioned responses to the de Young’s permanent collection by California artists, including, for example, an exploration of ancient and contemporary Egyptian music. The museum also offered a smartphone app that delivered behind-the-scenes insights into the museum.

Of first-time visitors at Cultural Encounters events, half were under age 35 and 30 percent were non-white, although non-white attendance dropped slightly during the grant period.

While Cultural Encounters sometimes surfaced departmental tensions, it brought a new balance between the museum’s academic and popular purposes, and it built important connections between the curatorial staff and those in the education and public programming departments, a persistent challenge for museums. With internal support growing, Cultural Encounters has contributed to significant shifts in the values and assumptions that guided the museum’s practice for over a century — to a more audience-centered institution focused on offering rich experiences to a broader public.

As an outgrowth of Cultural Encounters, the museum developed an artist fellowship program supported by a second Arts Innovation Fund grant.

ARTIST FELLOWS

DE YOUNG MUSEUM

DEYOUNG.FAMSF.ORG

PROJECT 2 OF 2

San Francisco's *de Young Museum* (Corporation of Fine Arts Museums) created the Artist Fellows program to deepen partnerships with the local arts community. The program grew from the artist residencies, commissioning and regular "Friday Nights at the de Young" events that were elements of its first Arts Innovation Fund project, Cultural Encounters.

The new program appoints four local artists from diverse disciplines as fellows for a full year. During this period, the artists are hired as museum employees and have access to museum staff and resources as they pursue their work. Fellowship activities are individually designed. Each fellow works with a collaborating arts organization from the San Francisco community. Fellows are required to present quarterly works-in-progress or finished pieces to the public, be in residence for one month in the de Young's Artist Studio and curate a discipline-specific or cross-disciplinary thematic work for Friday Nights events.

The first cohort of fellows was appointed in 2011. A second is now in place.

ARTISTS ADVOCATE

HAMMER MUSEUM

HAMMER.UCLA.EDU

PROJECT 1 OF 2

With its first Arts Innovation Fund grant, *Hammer Museum* (Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center) aimed to bring about artistic, programmatic and institutional changes with the perspectives of contemporary artists.

The museum established an innovative residency program of carefully selected emerging and mid-career artists — up to 13 in a single year — in the museum. Artists pursued themes dealing with pressing issues in urban and human affairs, including politics, race, housing, the emergence of China and the divide between art and everyday life. Their work included animation, sound, performance and more conventional art forms. Their projects, conducted at the museum and onsite in the community, involved interdisciplinary collaborations, performance, and social events and interactions. In the process, Hammer became a significant gateway to the art market and generated critical recognition for resident artists.

The museum also established an Artist Council that held regular and intensive meetings with staff leadership, often discussing how to develop a “different set of cultural values” and “upend the traditional hierarchies in the museum.” The council’s recommendations for Hammer’s website were given high priority, and the site has become an important venue for primary source material on artists and residencies. Hammer by-laws

VISITOR EXPERIENCE, BY ARTISTS

HAMMER MUSEUM

[HAMMER.UCLA.EDU](https://hammer.ucla.edu)

PROJECT 2 OF 2

now reserve two board positions for artists, and the museum has continued both the residency program and the Artist Council following the conclusion of the grant period.

In a second project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund, the Hammer Museum looked for new ways to bring artist perspectives to the museum experience.

Hammer Museum (Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center) sought to incorporate the perspectives of contemporary artists into visitor engagement and orientation, and institutional planning and governance.

The museum integrated visitor services and public engagement functions, and used several artist residencies to assist in this process.

One artist residency, for example, involved offering visitors leaves with interpretive prompts printed on them when they entered the museum. Another was an experiment and performance on the themes of welcoming, etiquette and hospitality as visitors entered the museum.

The museum's Artist Council, established with an earlier grant from the Arts Innovation Fund, developed a plan for Hammer Fellowships that link "social practice" artists with scholars from UCLA. The council also inspired a new show of

VISITOR RESPONSE TO CHANGING COMMUNITY

JAPANESE AMERICAN
NATIONAL MUSEUM

WWW.JANM.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 1

emerging artists from Los Angeles and advised the museum on new space designs that will help integrate the exhibit, education and programming environments.

The *Japanese American National Museum's* innovation project began with comprehensive research to better understand how to adapt as the Japanese American community changed within the context of broader ethnic shifts in California and the nation. One key finding was that ethnicity is not a stand-alone issue, but integrated with socioeconomic change, globalization, immigration, regionalism and technological change — and that the museum must be sensitive to all of these.

With this foundation, the museum developed a new strategic plan designed to better match changing expectations and increase the long-term stability of the institution. It established new priorities and experimented with new programming.

The museum presented several major exhibitions exploring multiracial identity, contemporary art and issues, pan-ethnic themes and popular culture. These included a photography exhibit that subsequently toured important museums nationally; an exhibit about Japanese gardens and gardening that drew on the lived experience

MORE EDGE FOR YOUR MONEY

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

WWW.LAJOLLAPLAYHOUSE.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 2

of many Japanese Americans; an ongoing experimental program, Salon Pop, that presents work by Japanese and/or Japanese American artists that has an impact on broader American culture; and Giant Robot, a retrospective celebration of the Japanese American pop culture magazine.

The museum has enhanced its presence online through social media and has expanded its earned income through entrepreneurial merchandising. It has also built the capacity to plan and execute exhibitions quickly and more efficiently, and discovered unexpected corporate sponsorship opportunities for its new programming.

Over the years, *La Jolla Playhouse* incorporated “Broadway-style” shows into its subscription season due to audience demand. But its current leadership craved to “go back to that edgy, riskier stuff that used to be more of our stock and trade.”

The theater’s first project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund, called The Edge, generated four productions departing from conventional theater themes, content or narrative styles, or that employed unusual media — from high-tech productions to Japanese folk puppetry.

The Edge shows were not part of the Playhouse subscription season and were sold on a single

ticket basis for short runs. Admission was less expensive than for subscription series shows. An email guide to each show prepared for ticket buyers proved so popular that the Playhouse adopted the practice for all of its productions. All Edge performances were followed with conversations in which theater staff asked the audience questions.

The Edge shows played to 65 percent of house capacity and attracted audiences averaging 10 years younger than those attending the Playhouse's subscription programming. The Playhouse expressed an understanding that "attracting and retaining an audience dedicated to daring new work will take time, consistent presentation, ongoing communication and creative marketing." The company concluded that new programming would need to generate new contributions from interested donors or earn back the costs of production at the box office. La Jolla Playhouse presented another Edge production beyond the grant period and has since incorporated the Edge concept into its next Arts Innovation Fund project, Without Walls, which continues to challenge theater conventions in new ways.

VENTURES OUTSIDE

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE

WWW.LAJOLLAPLAYHOUSE.ORG

PROJECT 2 OF 2

Inspired by an earlier Arts Innovation Fund project designed to produce edgier, more experimental work, *La Jolla Playhouse* pursued the same goal with a different approach. Its second initiative-supported project, called Without Walls (WoW), focuses on shows that do not conform to the conventions of the theater's subscription season. Productions are site-specific and presented in non-traditional venues outside the Playhouse's home theater complex.

The first of the shows took the audience on a walk along a mapped route through the local botanical garden while listening to a dramatic iPod presentation. Another consisted of several 10-minute plays performed in parked cars. The audience moved from car to car as the actors repeated the action. The most recent Without Walls production brought theater into a downtown nightclub. All three WoW productions have been wildly successful, exceeding expected audience numbers and receiving rave reviews from the press.

In its first two seasons, WoW has presented three works, and the Playhouse has announced that it will present a WoW Festival in October 2013 that will involve local, national and international artists and include at least two newly commissioned works. A WoW team of younger, midlevel staff has been given authority to develop programming suggestions, scout

VIRTUALLY PERSONAL

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
MUSEUM OF ART (LACMA)

WWW.LACMA.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 1

potential sites for productions in the community, identify prospective community partners for WoW productions and produce a single WoW piece from start to finish, thereby transforming the way the organization functions internally.

Anticipating that its audience expected more content to be delivered through new technologies, the *Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (LACMA) developed a multimedia tour of approximately 150 works in its permanent collection that visitors could access with customized digital devices at the museum.

The devices enabled the visitors to save a virtual tour of their favorite works and to access them online on their own computers after leaving the museum. The resulting usage data also provided valuable information to the museum about visitor experiences and preferences.

The project encountered several unanticipated challenges and delays. Obtaining rights to include related images proved to be far more time-consuming than originally anticipated. The cost of customizing the devices within the museum was considerably higher than anticipated, and only 100 were produced, just a third of the goal. And finally, technology has changed so quickly and dramatically that project leaders at the

SEASONAL PLATFORMS

LOS ANGELES
PHILHARMONIC

WWW.LAPHIL.COM

PROJECT 1 OF 1

museum now believe they would have been more effective in creating the virtual personal tour as a smartphone app. In September 2012, use of the devices was discontinued.

The *Los Angeles Philharmonic* Seasonal Platforms project was a multi-week series of cross-genre musical performances and public humanities programs, including panel discussions, video art installations, film series, webisodes and podcasts, all unified by a single theme. The series was designed to help the Philharmonic attract new and more diverse audiences by acting as a catalyst for a broader cultural conversation and presenting programs across genres.

Each platform was organized around a contemporary theme: urban space, California aesthetics and the transnational musical history of the Americas. The expansive format gave the Philharmonic freedom to develop creative partnerships across diverse musical genres and organizations, and encouraged audiences to attend concerts in genres that were new to them. The format also expanded media coverage beyond classical music press and critics.

According to the orchestra, the first platform, *Concrete Frequency*, fell short of sales goals, in part due to its abstract theme. The platform's

post-holiday timing, a traditionally slow sales period, also made it difficult to attract a broad audience. Subsequent platforms benefited from this lesson, and met the project's audience engagement goals. Forty percent of the audience for the third platform, *Americas and Americans*, had never been to a concert at Walt Disney Concert Hall, the orchestra's home. And more than half of the audience for the second platform, *West Coast, Left Coast*, was under 54 years old. The second and third platforms engendered greater audience engagement because the platform director was involved in both symphonic programs and popular programs, and because they incorporated artists already familiar to the orchestra's core audience in addition to less familiar artists.

Seasonal Platforms set a standard for more collaborative work by the orchestra's artistic, operational and educational teams, and has given the Philharmonic greater capacity and confidence to take on ambitious new programming initiatives. Platforms continue to be an integral part of each season. The *Americas and Americans* platform was reprised last summer at the Hollywood Bowl, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic will present a new platform called the *Brooklyn Festival* in spring 2013.

DUAL LOCATION EXPERIMENT

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY
ART SAN DIEGO (MCASD)

WWW.MCASD.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 1

Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD) planned to clearly differentiate programming in its two sites, dedicating its downtown location, referred to internally as The Lab, to cutting-edge artist-centric exhibition and programming, and its La Jolla site, called The Forum, to more traditional object-based exhibitions. But research early in the project suggested the museum's entire audience was interested in opportunities to have closer relationships with artists and experiences that demystified the artistic and exhibit process.

Recognizing that its original hypothesis about a divided audience was incorrect, MCASD further developed The Lab concept for both locations.

The new programming that emerged is flexible. An exhibition at the downtown location, *Viva La Revolucion: A Dialogue with the Urban Landscape*, extended beyond the museum's walls by commissioning murals in San Diego neighborhoods. A show in La Jolla, *Here Not There: San Diego Art Now*, featured cutting-edge work by emerging local artists.

In addition, the museum has made its website far more comprehensive and interactive; introduced smartphone guides to exhibitions; developed dedicated space, called thoughtLAB, for multimedia interpretive exploration of exhibit content; and started an e-membership program that has had significant success to date.

A MORE INVITING GALLERY

OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA (OMCA)

[MUSEUMCA.ORG](https://www.museumca.org)

PROJECT 1 OF 2

In the process, the museum has increased the number of visitors under 25 and substantially grown its presence on Facebook and other social media platforms. MCASD has also improved communication and collaboration across departments and between sites.

As part of its \$62 million facility renovation, *Oakland Museum of California* (OMCA) reinstalled the Gallery of California Art and enhanced art programming with intent to make the experience more family-friendly, attractive and responsive to a diverse audience, including those without a background in art.

The new gallery is the product of research, prototyping and testing on interactive exhibit features and printed materials, as well as a baseline survey of gallery visitors. It reinforces three main themes: California Land, People and Creativity. The museum took great pains to ensure that interpretive materials were simple, accessible and available in multiple languages. Volunteer docents were trained in storytelling and how to customize tours based on visitor questions.

After the gallery opened, third-party evaluators confirmed that the museum had increased the proportion of families visiting and that there was an uptick in the racial diversity of visitors. They

ACTIVATING THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

OAKLAND MUSEUM OF
CALIFORNIA (OMCA)

MUSEUMCA.ORG

PROJECT 2 OF 2

learned that visitors spent unusually long periods of time in the gallery compared with gallery visits in other art museums. Three-quarters of visitors rated their experience in the gallery as “excellent,” and three-quarters intended to return to the gallery.

OMCA applied the lessons learned during this experience to a second project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund and also to the redevelopment of its history and natural science galleries.

Building on lessons learned through the successful redesign and reprogramming of the Gallery of California Art, a project supported by its first Arts Innovation Fund grant, *Oakland Museum of California* (OMCA) looked for additional opportunities to “activate” the museum experience. The museum committed a full year to research and preparation, holding meetings with artists and others to build a slate of possible projects and seeking advice from peers doing similar work around the country.

“The Oakland Standard: experiments in work and play by the Oakland Museum of California” launched in February 2011 with a project website and event that drew more than 2,500 people. Through June 2012, OMCA created and presented

INVITING COMMUNITY TO PLAY

PACIFIC SYMPHONY

WWW.PACIFICSYMPHONY.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 1

programs on a range of platforms: live, web-based, commissioned work, public, by invitation, internal and external. All were “designed to nurture inquisitiveness, respond to the interests of our local Oakland audience and support the creativity of artists and the public.”

The programs, mostly events, explored California and Bay Area history and creativity in highly participatory and interactive ways. For example, “Hay Fever” explored the contemporary back-to-the-land movement in California. “Portraits from the Occupation” explored Occupy Oakland events. “Home Movie Day” screened curated home movies, including rare film by an African American Pullman porter who lived in the Bay Area in the 1930s.

Orange County’s *Pacific Symphony* aimed to build on and strengthen the county’s lively amateur music culture with projects “geared toward engaging the community in the verbs of music: playing, composing, discussing, writing and listening.”

“OC Can You Play — With Us?” launched in 2011 and offered amateur musicians the opportunity to play side-by-side onstage with the Pacific Symphony with no audition necessary. Due to overwhelming popularity, the project doubled its scope to accommodate almost 200 community musicians in its second year, and is fast becoming

STAR POWER

SAN DIEGO OPERA

WWW.SDOPERA.COM

PROJECT 1 OF 1

a popular annual tradition. The program continues to expand with the addition of master classes and sectionals for instrumentalists, and a contest called “OC Can You Sing?” that will allow vocalists to compete for a Pops concert appearance. Other activities include workshops in composition as well as critical and creative writing about music, chances for audience members to interact directly with musicians in an informal setting, and a community-based composition to be commissioned in 2014.

According to the orchestra’s leadership, “Long term, our investments in participatory community programs will pay dividends by contributing to the overall health of the musical ecosystem in Orange County.”

San Diego Opera’s subscriber base had eroded by some 10 percent, and though single ticket purchases had increased, the company worried that the market for opera was not robust enough to sustain the company without innovative new marketing, management and programming. With creative interest in diversifying its offering, the opera was also concerned about the market’s resistance to operas outside the “top five.”

San Diego Opera merged its marketing and development departments into a single, integrated revenue department that initiated a new “affinity marketing” strategy. And the company did a new

production of a less-familiar opera each year for three years, enhancing the appeal of these shows with investments in celebrity star power and high production values.

Although San Diego Opera attracted 14,000 “new and repeat” buyers over the course of the innovation project, the company concluded that the affinity marketing strategy it had chosen to pursue was too labor intensive and failed to take advantage of new opportunities in social media.

The revenue department was awarded an additional grant from The James Irvine Foundation to create a new online program entitled, “Participate,” integrating its Tessitura data system with a social media component to make the opera’s customer relations and development functions more efficient and effective. Two of the three new opera productions exceeded the company’s revenue targets, and San Diego Opera continues to produce new operas. (*Moby Dick* was produced in the 2011-12 season, and *Murder in the Cathedral* will be produced in 2012-13.)

NEW PRESENTING FORMATS

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET

WWW.SFBALLET.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 2

San Francisco Ballet launched an electronic media initiative designed to strengthen its marketing approach, broaden its artistic and audience development efforts, and create new revenue streams.

The company has agreements with several performing arts unions for its performances at the Opera House in San Francisco, and it worked with those unions to clear issues related to reproduction of performances and rehearsals. This opened a path to more media production for the website and for paid distribution.

San Francisco Ballet engaged a team of dancers to develop a social media policy that took advantage of their online activity while protecting their privacy. The company's Facebook fan base grew dramatically, with most of the growth among young dance students and fans, 20 percent of whom are from the Bay Area.

Behind-the-scenes videos were created for use on the website and at the company's twice-yearly Community Matinees. And the company produced a new high-definition video of its original ballet, *The Little Mermaid*. The video has been scheduled for broadcast on the PBS® series "Great Performances" and internationally, and it is for sale on DVD and Blu-ray Disc™. The new union agreements make it possible that the company will see a more significant return on this recording than its previous video production.

SOCIAL INSIDE AND OUT

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET

WWW.SFBALLET.ORG

PROJECT 2 OF 2

San Francisco Ballet received additional support from the Arts Innovation Fund for a second innovation project building on this project's gains in increasing audience relevance through digital and social media.

As part of an earlier project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund, the *San Francisco Ballet* experimented with technology and media to capture and distribute performances. Seeing greater potential in this area, the ballet embarked on a second project focused on using digital and social media to deepen and broaden its connection to large numbers of people.

A dedicated section of the company website now houses dozens of videos that can be conveniently downloaded to learn more about the dancers, repertoire, history, design, school and community programs of the San Francisco Ballet. And, at the time of this writing, the company had more than 141,000 Facebook likes, exceeding those of any ballet company in the United States outside New York City. The company has made a concerted effort to grow its local fan base, whom they hope to activate as ticket buyers. In the space of a year, the company has grown local fans from 2 percent of the overall fan base to 20 percent. San Francisco Ballet will launch a mobile website and mobile app early in 2013 that will offer

IN AND BEYOND THE EXHIBIT

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM
OF MODERN ART
(SFMOMA)

WWW.SFMOMA.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 1

audiences background information on programs and artists, mobile ticket purchases and links to relevant social media conversations.

In addition, the process has promoted a higher level of collaboration across departments, and staff members throughout the organization now have higher expectations that their input is appreciated and viewed as useful.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) tested approaches for collaborating with the public and Bay Area cultural communities to produce content, spark active museum audience participation, and reimagine relationships between visitors, staff and artists.

An exhibition called *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now* included installation of a photographic studio within the exhibit, where conceptual artist Jochen Gerz took portraits of visitors. The portraits were hung in the show, and all the subjects were given prints. *The San Francisco Examiner* reproduced the portraits in print and online, and photos were shared and tracked on Flickr. The experience led the museum to liberalize its policy on photography in its galleries.

Inspired by the potential of participatory art beyond the exhibit, the museum also organized

intimate discussions about art in its collection with staff, artists, writers and community members. The dialogue sessions were video recorded and posted to the museum's website — a practice that led to the development of Open Space, a blog that makes such conversations more open and public. In less than two years, Open Space had more than 300,000 hits, and the museum continues to invite guest bloggers without exercising editorial control.

The young audience at SFMOMA has been growing: In 2007, 28 percent of visitors to the museum were between ages 17 and 35. In 2009, 47 percent of visitors were between 17 and 35. The museum's new strategic plan contains ideas developed in the innovation project, and the design of the museum's soon-to-be-built new addition includes opportunities for public involvement and input.

SUBURBAN OUTREACH

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

WWW.SFSYMPHONY.ORG

PROJECT 1 OF 2

San Francisco Symphony wished to reach new audiences, and to cultivate new individual and corporate donors in the South Bay suburbs, which is home to many high-tech firms and employees.

Anticipating that travel to San Francisco was challenging for the busy families and young professionals in this area, the orchestra launched a new concert series at convenient venues in the South Bay.

This extensive outreach project also involved programming adaptations, corporate partnerships, a regional marketing taskforce, enhanced web capabilities and concerts — some free of charge — in venues located in the target communities.

The series did not, however, reach new audiences in ways deemed sustainable, falling short of its goal for a variety of reasons. San Francisco Symphony decided to end the series in the South Bay at the conclusion of this project. With a second Arts Innovation Fund grant, the orchestra focused on involving audiences more deeply and personally.

COMMUNITY OF MUSIC MAKERS

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

WWW.SFSYMPHONY.ORG

PROJECT 2 OF 2

A survey of the *San Francisco Symphony* classical music audience found that three-quarters played music at some point during their lifetime, that a third currently plays or sings and that as many as a fifth would be interested in opportunities to participate in a San Francisco Symphony program for amateur musicians.

In its second project supported by the Arts Innovation Fund, the orchestra responded to survey findings by establishing an amateur musician offering called Community of Music Makers. The program focused on “bringing our audience’s lives as musicians closer to the Symphony” and on “increasing empathy for the art form and communication with our musicians.” This platform of programs was designed to “support, encourage and sustain amateur music making.”

Research on similar successful projects led to a change of plans — from an audition for participants to an open policy for people at all skill levels. Staff were hired.

Three days after Community of Music Makers was announced, the program launched with a three-hour choral workshop in Davies Hall that reached full capacity of 400. San Francisco Symphony added woodwind and brass, string and chamber music workshops to the program. Symphony musicians coach all of the sessions,

THINK TANK

THE MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART,
LOS ANGELES (MOCA)

WWW.MOCA.ORG

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and the orchestra keeps barriers to participation low by making the registration fees very modest. Musicians and staff are enthusiastic about the project, but the orchestra is still working to fully understand the project’s “relationship to the Symphony’s mission, and how to measure its impact.” Ultimately, the orchestra hopes to “build a strong lifelong partnership with these participants, whose connections to the Symphony would be profoundly strengthened through this program.”

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA) created Think Tank, a group of non-senior MOCA staff, drawn from several museum departments, who were themselves young “creatives” between 25 and 44. Meeting weekly, the group investigated how MOCA might work with artists whose work does not result in the creation of art objects, how to engage and provoke younger visitors, how to maintain a cutting-edge identity and how to expand MOCA’s dynamic relationship with the public.

The group organized three-month residencies by Los Angeles-based artist collectives beginning in late summer 2008. Each group of artists organized three collaborative events, which generally involved audience participation. The resulting events included karaoke performances

of the text of Executive Orders at the museum, miniature golf through the staff offices, a night-time pharmaceutical bike tour of Los Angeles, a remote control toy car race through the galleries, and breakdancing at the museum.

These participatory activities attracted more than twice the audience of most non-exhibition programs at MOCA. A majority of the audience was under age 35, and a majority was part of the arts or academic sectors. The museum developed a dedicated website to promote and document the program, and to offer people opportunities to respond to their experiences.

Originally intended to be a three-year project supported by a grant of \$900,000, Think Tank was downsized to a one-year project when MOCA had a serious financial crisis and was forced to cut staff and programming substantially. The organization extended the residency project developed by Think Tank with a second Arts Innovation Fund grant.

ENGAGEMENT PARTY

THE MUSEUM OF
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The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA) produced Engagement Party, an experimental residency project that invited Los Angeles artists and artist collectives to present conceptual, socially-based public programs at MOCA. The project’s higher purpose was to “build and sustain engagement with the politically, environmentally, aesthetically and ideologically diverse citizens of Los Angeles.”

An interdepartmental group of mid-level MOCA staff with substantial familiarity with the Los Angeles art scene, known as the MOCA Think Tank, was responsible for the selection of the artists’ groups that participated in Engagement Party and for managing their residencies — three one-night programs over three months.

While the initial Think Tank grant closed, an additional grant from the Arts Innovation Fund extended the residency project launched by Think Tank members. The series resulting from it continued to present an eclectic collection of artists and participatory programs: dance performances, lessons, dancing in the galleries, do-it-yourself technology activated by audience participation and guided hikes through downtown Los Angeles. Diverse as they were, the programs were linked by the centrality of audience participation in the work of art itself, sometimes

TRYING ACTIVE ARTS

THE MUSIC CENTER

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referred to as “social practice art.” A scholarly publication, *Engagement Party: Social Practice at MOCA 2008–2012*, documents the entire project.

MOCA endured a sustained financial crisis that required deep staff and program cuts. The highly experimental Engagement Party was not always an “easy sell,” although its programs attracted audiences from 250 to 2,400 and garnered positive notice in the Los Angeles art community. Nonetheless, the museum leadership decided on recovery priorities that did not include Engagement Party, which was discontinued in spring 2012.

A half-century after its founding, *The Music Center* (Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County) recognized that Los Angeles had changed, and so had the ways people engaged in the arts. In the words of the center’s leaders, “We were still doing the ballet, symphony and theater, but there was more to be done to be able to be called the Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County. We asked ourselves how we could connect and be more relevant.”

The Music Center’s response was to pilot and launch Active Arts®, a program that complemented the formal in-venue programming

with informal, “everyday,” non-professional arts participation in public spaces on The Music Center campus.

Active Arts invited the whole Los Angeles community to come to The Music Center to participate in do-it-yourself art-making. As many as 10,000 people have done just that each year of the project. They danced, drummed, sang, played their instruments and shared their personal stories in eight regularly scheduled and organized programs. A group of 50 community members became active volunteer leaders called “Activators,” helping with the operation of the programs and contributing ideas to keep the programs fresh.

The Music Center received significant grants from several foundations to support the program, and used Arts Innovation Fund resources to validate and profile the informal art-making activities of Active Arts.

It deployed multiple strategies to diversify income streams, which included a mix of earned revenue via a presentational music series and unrestricted support via institutional giving.

The organization received a second Arts Innovation Fund grant to institutionalize this well-received program.

EXPANDING ACTIVE ARTS

THE MUSIC CENTER

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With support from a second Arts Innovation Fund grant, *The Music Center* (Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County) further deepened and strengthened its Active Arts® program, a year-round series of free or low-cost opportunities for the public to dance, sing, play music and tell stories in public spaces on the Center's campus.

By 2011, Active Arts had grown to include three ongoing dance programs, two sing-along programs, three music-making programs for “lapsed musicians,” public practice for musicians on the campus, group music-making, and a new photography/storytelling program about life in Los Angeles that attracted more than 18,000 online, text and call-in voters who selected entries to be posted on the Active Arts website.

An active, increasingly formalized corps of volunteers supports Active Arts programming, which is expanding with the addition of new community sites and partner organizations, including several local YMCAs. At community sites, the program introduces The Music Center to many people unfamiliar with the institution. By working together with partners, these collaborations enliven and activate people and spaces with new arts activity.

With the benefit of a strong champion on The Music Center's board of directors and supportive key leadership, Active Arts has become integral

ARTISTIC RESOURCE

THE OLD GLOBE

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in the fabric of the organization’s operations and mission. Developing sustained funding remains an ongoing challenge and a high priority moving forward.

When *The Old Globe* moved its technical center to southeast San Diego, the theater sought ways to become an artistic resource for students and residents of this low-income community.

The company distributed free tickets, initiated an education program in a local high school and offered paid internships in the scene shop. The centerpiece of its Arts Innovation Fund project was its effort to collaborate with residents on community productions, including *Emancipated*, which is based on stories of foster children who have aged out of foster care and face life on their own at age 18. The play was created with four “emancipated” foster youth and had public readings at The Old Globe and the local high school.

The theater marked its 75th anniversary with the development and production of *Odyssey*, a music theater event. This community collaboration featured a cast of 200, only three of whom were professional actors. Other performers included a gospel choir from a local church, a high school drum line, a local hip-hop dance group, young performers from theater training programs and

schools, several Old Globe volunteers and 50 more individuals recruited through casting calls hosted by a local YMCA and a church. *Odyssey* sold out three performances at the company's large outdoor theater in Balboa Park, and it was received with enthusiasm by the San Diego community.

The Old Globe credits *Odyssey* and the other community productions with increasing its “willingness and capacity to experiment with new ideas and new ways of working on a project.” And staff saw the “power of theater through fresh eyes and remembered why they wanted to work in this field.”

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