

**Visual Arts Organizations  
Innovating in New York's Capital Region**

**Summary Report**

documenting a series of meetings that included

Albany Center Galleries  
Albany International Airport Arts & Culture Program  
Arts Center of the Capital Region  
Earlville Opera House  
Lake George Arts Project  
Mandeville Gallery at Union College  
The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College  
University Art Museum, University at Albany, SUNY

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**Visual Arts Organizations  
Innovating in New York’s Capital Region**

**Summary Report**



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# Visual Arts Organizations Innovating in New York's Capital Region

## Summary Report

### Introduction

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The Visual Arts Program at the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) brought together eight visual arts organizations throughout the Capital Region to share information and ideas that would ultimately lead to strengthened visual arts programs. Through two meetings, staff members shared winning curatorial and audience engagement strategies, and peers learned from and taught each other. Colleagues from Albany International Airport Arts & Culture Program, the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, and the University Art Museum, University at Albany, SUNY gave prepared remarks and also participated equally in conversations and group exercises with staff members from the Arts Center for the Capital Region, Albany Center Galleries, Earlville Opera House, Lake George Arts Project, Mandeville Gallery at Union College. This report summarizes these discussions.

The meetings were convened at the behest of Elizabeth Merena, Director of NYSCA's Visual Arts Program, and NYSCA's Visual Arts Panel, a group of peer reviewers who make funding recommendations. Following the 2005 review cycle, the panelists identified a need to foster broader dialogue among visual arts organizations in the Capital Region to ensure that audiences benefit from the best and most innovative exhibitions possible. Knowing that these visual arts organizations have since met and learned from each other, the NYSCA panel will expect more from the region when it reviews applications again in 2006.

Merena noted that the visual arts programs assembled were united by a spirit of tenacity, persistence and commitment to the region that is commendable and that the challenge going forward is for each to become a "*top notch, cutting edge beacon in the area.*" The groups were encouraged to develop stronger and more risk taking visual art programs in which seemingly disparate exhibitions are linked by a unifying curatorial vision and organizing philosophy.

Ian Berry, Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs and Curator at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College and a member of NYSCA's Visual Arts Panel, further encouraged the group to step outside of their comfort zones and create more adventurous and daring shows. Riskier exhibitions require more explanation and education for traditionalist supporters but they also provide a community with a forum for discussion and an opportunity to learn and grow.

Sharon Bates, Director of the Arts & Culture Program at the Albany International Airport, echoed this point and spoke about the enormous responsibility that arts organizations have to shape a community's aesthetic experience. This is especially meaningful in a region that as Berry noted has simply not sustained a viable commercial art system. She reminded the group

that at their organizations, they are the experts and must educate everyone from the top down and the bottom up about their program and its content. At the same time, staff must routinely demonstrate that their programmatic goals are fully aligned with the objectives of one's host institution. Constant education will result in a Visual Arts Program that is valued and seen as an essential component of the larger institution.

Organizations which are already "working down to the bone" are not asked to do more with less. As Janet Riker, Director of the University Art Museum, University at Albany, SUNY, noted: while Program Directors can't work any harder than they already do, they can work smarter. Advance planning and collaboration are key strategies that can increase efficiency and impact.

Participants at the convenings defined the multiple roles the Visual Arts Program Director assumes and outlined the exhibition process from conceptualization through evaluation. This exercise clarified the need for many to return to their organizations and create new job descriptions. It also encouraged them to more effectively communicate the scope of their work and activities with their institutional leadership. An examination of resources resulted in the realization that each group really needed more of the resources they already had in place (human resources, space, artists and audiences). And, it turned out that there were as many different structures for exhibition advisory committees as there were organizations in the room.

The group next outlined strategies that lead to the creation of innovative exhibitions that can fulfill the call to become cultural "beacons" for the region. Key components included: embracing a consistent curatorial vision, planning, collaboration, leveraging success, integrating a program into the life of an organization and connecting it to the community, opening a new dialogue with artists, serving untraditional communities, and extending a project's lifespan.

The group explored public engagement strategies and clarified the distinction between broadening, diversifying and deepening participation. In order to increase public participation and ensure that organizations are delivering high impact and innovative exhibitions, success should be measured against the goals set at a project's inception.

As part of this project, each participant set new short and long term goals for their Visual Arts Program. Implementation of these positive and thoughtful changes has already begun. The group also committed to meeting again independently and exploring some of the many cooperative marketing and thematic exhibition opportunities that might brand them collectively as a regional force.

The participants in this project were enthusiastic, open to new ideas and ready to teach and learn from each other. The words and concepts documented herein are largely their own.

*A final word of thanks and acknowledgment:*

*The meetings and report were made possible by the vision and guidance of Elizabeth Merena and the tremendous support of Christine Leahy, the two individuals that are the heart of NYSCA's Visual Arts Program.*

## **The Roles of the Visual Arts Program Director**

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Throughout the meetings, it became clear that each Visual Arts Program Director was called upon to serve multiple functions. While this is often the case in small nonprofit organizations, juggling the roles of content developer, producer, fundraiser, publicist, educator and evaluator can pose challenges. By enumerating these roles, staff members gained new insight on how to clarify their positions within their organizations and educate institutional leadership about the value and scope of activity associated with their work. The roles identified are:

- **Exhibition Development**
  - Determine exhibition content.
  - Set goals for the project; decide at the beginning how you will measure success.
  - Organize and run exhibition committees.
  - Develop timelines for multiple exhibitions that are shared with organizational leadership and integrated into organization's overall annual planning.
  - Recruit outside curators as necessary.
  - Recruit participating artists through calls for work and studio visits.
  - Conduct all registrarial duties regarding exhibition loans, making shipping arrangements, documenting the exhibition, art handling, and maintaining archives.
  - Design and install the show.
  - Develop all interpretive materials; write essays, object labels, and wall texts.
  - Evaluate programs.
- **Education**
  - Plan and conduct art education programs and activities for the public.
  - Educate and inform internal staff about the value and content of all programs.
- **External Communications**
  - Enhance positive community relations by attending other events within the organization, exhibition openings at other venues, chamber of commerce and community meetings.
  - Act as ambassador for participating artists: shepherd the artist through the organization, and translate the artist's language and sensibility so that it is accessible to the community (e.g. wall labels, press releases, etc.)
  - Develop language to convey exhibition content with the public through press releases (magazines, newspapers), websites, promotional materials, faculty syllabi.
  - Fundraising – individual donors, grants, sponsorships.
  - Plan parties/cater events that cultivate donors and provide connections to dealers.
  - Provide Press interviews.
  - Maintain website.
- **Administration**
  - Manage and mentor staff, interns, and volunteers.
  - Perform fiscal management duties and administrative tasks.
  - Ensure legal issues addressed in contracts, loan agreements.
  - Serve as creative resource for the organization in terms of fundraising ideas, other program development, product licensing and merchandising.

## **The Exhibition Process: From Idea To Installation**

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After identifying the role of the Visual Arts Program Director, the group defined the process of exhibition development from conception through public engagement. Surprisingly, many noted that even within their own organizations there is a general lack of understanding of the time and process involved in exhibition development. Others noted that it is incumbent upon staff members to always communicate the tasks at hand with the organizational leadership. Effective communication and education are key to ensuring that Program Directors are supported and their value is not just articulated and understood but clearly aligned with the institutional goals and mission. The following timeline maps the process of one project's development.

- The idea for a project is conceived.
- Research potential artists, curators, collections through artist/studio and collections visits or call for artists; conduct research online and at the library.
- Identify players. Select artists, collections, curators.
- Create a budget proposal and project timeline.
- Advocate for the idea and secure enthusiasm of organization leadership and appropriate committees.
- Fundraising: prospect research, solicitation and funds secured.
- Reflection: compare ideas and goals with resources in hand and readjust as necessary.
- Draft contracts with artists, lenders, etc.
- Produce the work and negotiate ideas with the artist as necessary.
- Design the exhibition; determine connections to be made between objects and artists; and ensure that adequate equipment (pedestals, lighting, paint) are in place for installation.
- Engage the board and community at large in the project.
- Publicize the project through press releases, program announcements, interviews.
- Deinstall and return all objects to lenders.
- Evaluate project success.
- Repeat.

Throughout a given year, the Visual Arts Program Director will have multiple projects operating simultaneously at different points of the timeframe above. One exhibition may be in process of installation, while another is at the conceptual stage, still another is in the advocacy stage, and still another is in the fundraising stage.

## Resources

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In order to mount successful exhibitions and visual arts projects, a multitude of resources are needed. And while the participating organizations had many resources, they needed even more. Interestingly, there wasn't so much a need for *new* resources. The organizations largely wanted more of the resources they already had in place, such as more staff, more exhibition and storage space, and so on.

### Resources In Hand

- Space
- Human Resources
- Artists
- Audience
- Promotional capability
  
- Strong art community
- Committees
- Museums, special collections and private donors willing to loan artworks
- Energy and commitment

### Resources Needed

- Space
- Human resources: staff, volunteers, interns, consulting curators
- New Artists
- Bigger audiences, more diversity
- Increased outreach and promotional skills
  
- Money
- Equipment
- Professional network to provide advice on artists, approaches and feedback

## **The Role of the Advisory Committee**

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It was agreed that advisory committees have the *potential* to play supportive and helpful roles for arts organizations. They can build goodwill in, and provide important connection to, the community. If they are effectively managed, the committees can give critical feedback, raise new funds, and become valuable advocates for the program with an organization's board and the community at large. The committees can also become good places to "try out" prospective board candidates and gauge their commitment and involvement.

Too often, however, committees are high maintenance and time-consuming -- a big detriment for short staffed organizations. Some committees overstep their roles and attempt to become curators themselves. While committee members may lack curatorial expertise and training, they often have veto power on particular projects. This can result in watered-down exhibition content that the committee may love but that funding panels will dismiss.

Despite the negatives, many organizations see tremendous value in advisory committees to their exhibition programs. The committee can provide an imprimatur, validation and back-up support for Program Directors when they are curating risk taking shows. To be successful, the committee must be managed and roles and responsibilities clearly defined. Annual planning, written job descriptions for staff and committee members (including terms of service), gallery policy that includes curatorial vision statement and the number of exhibitions produced each year were all recognized as a means to clarify roles and effectively manage committees. Several resources provide guidelines for board and committee responsibilities, including:

- Board Source (<http://www.boardsource.org/>)
- American Association of Museums (<http://www.aam-us.org/>)
- Gallery Association of New York State (315/824-2510)

There were nearly as many advisory committee structures as there were individuals in attendance at the convenings. The following list documents the models in place in the Capital Region:

### **National Advisory Committee**

- Functions like a board of trustees by providing stewardship, advocacy, donor cultivation, fundraising, and financial support.
- Consists of 15 members, some are high profile individuals, who are college alums in art-related fields, collectors, college and museum staff.
- Meets twice a year, once in New York City.

### **Larger Advisory Committee**

- Consists of 20 members largely from the arts community.
- Serve as advocates and sounding board.
- Available for input by email and telephone, does not formally meet.

### **Exhibitions Committee**

Exhibition committees may or may not be Board committees and typically have 6 to 12 members composed of artists, curators, collectors, past staff, board members, community members. Four different versions of this committee were defined by meeting participants:

- Committee meets three times a year, reviews calls for slides and proposals, and networks to help produce exhibits. Reports to larger board twice a year.
- Committee is comprised entirely of individuals from *within* the college (in this case, the umbrella organization for the Visual Arts Program) but does not have veto power.
- Committee approves specific artwork, assists with senior staff approval.
- Committee meets monthly, is involved in every aspect of a show.

## **Strategies That Create Innovative Exhibitions**

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Throughout the convenings, the conversation repeatedly pulled back to this central question: how do you create exhibitions that are innovative, successful, and valued by the communities you seek to serve? The following strategies are employed routinely in the Capital Region in service to this query.

- **Embrace a unifying vision**

Exhibitions that emerge from a larger and defined curatorial vision are more likely to meet with success from the funding community and attract audiences. Ultimately, excellent programming that develops from a strong cohesive point of view will bring people through the doors. Regardless of whether one is working with outside curators or developing all exhibitions in-house, there should be some consistency or through line in an organization's programming. The vision may be eccentric, it may vary in taste from those of the funding community, but there should be evidence of a sound curatorial premise in all projects that ultimately tie back to a larger curatorial vision for the organization. Creating a conceptual connection between all projects must be deeper than working with the same artists or curators. Organizations should challenge themselves to find new ways of looking, and new contexts for interpreting the artists they show—this is particularly important if an organization has a commitment to working with a finite community of regional artists.

- **Plan for success**

Organizations should allow for enough planning time in the process of exhibition development to ensure that opportunities are clearly defined and evaluative measures are in place.

- **Collaborate**

Collaborations with partnering institutions provide the opportunity to share resources, increase project scope and reach, develop new content, and serve new audiences. The Tang, for example, has co-produced publications with other institutions; and the cost-sharing allowed them to maximize their own limited resources and expand the scope of their offerings. Collaboration also provides an opportunity to work with institutions with whom an organization wishes to emulate. Co-produced exhibitions and publications not only provide larger project budgets but also link an organization's name with that of a more prominent institution. Collection sharing is another collaboration that can introduce audiences to new subjects. When the Shaker Museum in Chatham was closed for renovations The Tang presented selections from the collection. The Earlville Opera House's collaboration with Golden Artist Colors connected them to a larger network of artists, shared the workload for exhibition development, and attracted new audiences into the gallery.

There is also opportunity if one considers internal collaboration. Within the university setting, faculty members can become collaborating curators, essayists and funding partners as they have

access to funds an arts organization might never tap. Exhibition and advisory committees also provide advice and access to content, audience, and funds.

Inspired by this discussion, Albany Center Galleries determined to deepen its connection with the Albany Library, its landlord. By illustrating where the Galleries goals are in alignment with those of the Library and with a new mantra “to keep the line of communication open” there have been discussions about cost-sharing, refurbishing some of the Library’s cases to include information on the Galleries and shared programming interests, and increased presence of the Galleries in the Library’s printed materials. The Galleries will reciprocate and urge its visitors to access the Library’s services and seek new measures that demonstrate how the programs are supporting each other. The simple act of talking and sharing concerns created great momentum.

- **Leverage successes**

Successful exhibitions require successful fundraising efforts. While some grants may not be large enough to make much impact on a project budget, they can be used to leverage new and additional funding. With a NYSCA grant in hand, other foundations can be approached to match the State’s initial investment.

Connections can also be cultivated and ultimately leveraged into donors and artists. The board can connect organizations to funds and resources. The Tang has had great success by cultivating a network that has yielded access to artists who previously would have been untouchable.

Albany International Airport understands the value of leveraging the perception of an organization in the marketplace. The airport successfully positioned its program as a national public model at a meeting of airport art programs with a top notch presentation and a big picture understanding of where the program fit into its field. The result? Their positioning statement is now repeated by others in the field.

- **Integrate your program into the life of the organization**

Before any exhibition can be mounted it must first be valued by the organization’s key stakeholder, staff and board members. Thus it becomes crucial that the Program Director always seeks opportunities to personally involve executive staff and board. At the Albany International Airport, Visual Arts Program staff meet regularly with the CEO, prepare visual images and narratives about the projects for board meetings, and provide board members with brief language on the program so that they can speak comfortably about it. All employees receive emailed information about new installations and gallery tours. Board members officiate at openings. By taking an active role in educating all employees and board members about exhibitions, the Program has become an indispensable art expert and resource for the airport at large.

By connecting to other parts of an organization (board, university committees), an organization opens the door to new opportunities. Attending events and meetings where decisions are made is one way to influence change within a larger organization and might lead to basic but important

issues such as securing appropriate signage within a larger campus. Board members can also connect organizations to elected officials who can assist in having the organization proclaimed an attraction and promoted on signage on the state's highway system, for example. Building solid internal connections and networks of decision makers today can also be invaluable should controversy arise later on as key supporters can be called upon to provide backup or help solve problems down the line.

Inspired by this conversation, Visual Arts Program staff from the Arts Center of the Capital Region realized that its leadership transition provided an excellent opportunity to communicate program goals, articulate how the program is in alignment with and central to the larger institutional mission, and clarify roles and responsibilities. Towards that end, exhibition posters will be placed in the Board room (as is done at the Albany International Airport) to increase program visibility, staff is interacting more with the board to ensure understanding of the centrality of the exhibition program to the institution (including providing quantifiable information on participation and anecdotal testimonials), and new and more clarified job descriptions will be drafted.

- **Connect program to community**

Working to connect a Visual Arts Program to the community builds good will and raises visibility and presence. Making floats for the town Flag Day Parade and organizing rotating exhibits in neighboring restaurants connect Visual Arts Programs to the community at large and may open doors when donated flowers or paint from local suppliers are needed for the next exhibition installation and opening.

Creating exhibitions in abandoned buildings can improve the image of a downtown community. Coordinating openings with neighboring cultural institutions become marketing mechanisms that build a “buzz”, attract tourists and have economic impact. This can create funding opportunities given current public sector interest in linking cultural tourism with economic development.

- **Open a new dialogue with artists**

With a seemingly finite group of artists working in the Capital Region, how can the visual arts organizations continue to engage them creatively and do so without replicating what has already been done? Some place an emphasis on working with artists who are under-recognized or emerging. Another strategy is to look at the work of regional artists in a new context or to engage them in new ways. This might mean juxtaposing their work with that of another collection of artists or by giving them the opportunity to work in a new site. In order to make this happen, however, Program Directors must be in dialogue with the community of artists through site visits and calls for images<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Discussion ensued over artist calls and changing technology. No longer do artists work with slides and yet digital image formats still have not been standardized. Many organizations lack the financial resources to invest in new technologies that will allow artist images to be quickly reviewed. The question of how to best serve artists, address rapidly changing technology, and meet the demands of an exhibition review panel remained open.

- **Design projects that reach into non-traditional populations**

Some groups have found success by creating exhibitions that step outside of the traditional art consuming public. The Arts Center of the Capital Region exhibition *Factory Direct* resulted in an arranged and unlikely marriage between contemporary artists and local industry. Not only did it provide a catalyst for artists to make new work, but the strategy also attracted new audiences to the organization. The Arts Center has continued to pursue this strategy in exhibitions such as *The Auto Show* which also explored the intersection between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture and sought new audiences.

- **Extend the lifespan of a project**

The exhibition can extend its reach if it is understood to have a lifespan that doesn’t end when the show comes down. The exhibition can broaden its impact through continued presence online and in print through the organization’s publications and newsletters and story placement in media sources beyond the art press. The website has the potential to become another curated space that can host artists’ projects and document the organization’s curatorial work.

## Engaging The Public

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Most arts organizations want to expand their audiences and reach, to increase their engagement with the general public. This does not necessarily mean that one has to do more when time and resources are already stretched to the limit. With careful planning, time and effort can be maximized.

Before an organization begins this work, it might ask:

- Who are the people you want to bring in the door?
- How old are they, what are their other interests?
- What is your competition for them?
- What are the barriers that keep them from coming?
- What is the best way to communicate with them – email, snail mail, or an ad in a local publication?

Kevin F. McCarthy and Kimberly J. Jinnett's publication *A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts* (RAND Corporation, 2001) codifies three ways to increase participation:

- Broaden audience: attract more people who are like the people already coming.
- Diversify audience: get different types of people to attend.
- Deepen participation: get the people who are already coming to come more frequently (e.g. to more lectures and all exhibitions).

Participation is not just about showing up at an exhibition opening. It also includes submitting to open calls, volunteering and contributing funds.

It is important to recognize that there are barriers that may inhibit participation. In diversifying audience, the barriers are perceptual. For someone who has never participated, they may ask: why should I do this? My mother never went to museums, etc. When broadening audience, those perceptual questions have already been answered. Instead, these prospective participants want to know: how much does it cost, where do I park, are the hours good for me? To deepen audience involvement, an organization must consider their direct experience: did I go to a lecture there last month and was it boring, or, I went to an opening and was it exciting?

The University Art Museum, for example, wants to broaden audience and attract more students. But first it has to define that goal more clearly: *What* students? Graduates? Undergraduates? Art majors or non-arts majors? Problems and barriers might be hours of operation or lack of knowledge about public hours. Non-art majors might not know that the program exists, or where to find it. Mindful that quality programming may ultimately be the best audience development tool, The Lake George Arts Project wants to deepen its audience by showing non-traditional, challenging work. The expectation is that visitors will return time and again based upon a visit that is interesting, memorable, as well as educational.

Because different reasons keep different populations from attending, evaluation is an important strategy that can provide valuable information about current audiences and inform reasoned decisions. Talk to audiences. Learn who is coming – are local artists attending, are you hitting your targets? Find out what brings visitors to the gallery to a particular event. Weather, subject matter, and operation hours can all affect participation, and it is important to stay in touch with these external factors so that an organization can learn both from its successes and its mistakes.

Measuring participation means reaching beyond capturing just the total number of visitors to the galleries each year. One should look at ways to quantify impact, progress and significance. Ask, who is participating, how they are participating, and why does this fulfill the goals of the Visual Arts Program *and* the goals of the host institution? For example, it might not be appropriate for a university museum to set a goal that seeks increased participation from seniors, when the university leadership would prefer to see the museum deepen its service to undergraduate students. Instead, it might make better sense to track the attendance of students and non-students, document participation in classroom trips, or tabulate the number of contact hours spent with students. Documentation of this quantifiable information becomes critical in reports back to the host institution and can impact future resource allocations and decisions.

## **Measuring Success**

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Setting goals at the beginning of a project ensure that the appropriate measurements are used to define an exhibition or program's success upon its completion. The way to evaluate whether an exhibition is innovative or successful differs from constituency to constituency. Too often, organizations fall into the trap of putting all of their energy into securing a big critical review. And if the review is negative, then the exhibition might be deemed a failure. A faculty member, on the other hand, might judge the exhibition a success if it led to a great class for 45 minutes regardless of what the local papers said. The CEO, board, alumni, members, donors and participating artists, will all use different tools to assess and appraise "success".

Convening participants enumerated the following measures for evaluating project success:

- **Attendance**
- **Artists created a new body of work**
- **Response of faculty, teachers and their students**
- **Employee feedback**
- **Increased visibility and press coverage**

Inspired by this conversation, the Mandeville Gallery at Union College determined to increase its visibility on campus. The Gallery placed a banner in the college center advertising its new exhibition, papered the campus with posters, installed panels in the newly renovated campus center, and distributed publicity packets to every university official in its chain of command, including the college's forty-person board of trustees. The Gallery received features in the local papers and positive feedback from the community.

- **The "buzz" factor**

Motivated by the convenings, the Earlville Opera House created a "buzz" for its exhibitions through a new collaboration and volunteer and board involvement. The local library (located across the street) hosted a brown bag lunch event that featured a slide presentation followed by a gallery tour; attendance was at capacity. The program will be replicated with local artists and for the board to inspire their commit to the Visual Arts Program. A new gallery volunteer committee will create a greater sense of gallery ownership in the community.

- **Creating a dialogue between exhibitions**

At the Earlville Opera House, one measure of success is if the two galleries provide supporting context for each other. In one instance, the community gallery displayed quilts by local artisans while the national gallery showcased quilts by artists from throughout the country.

## Goal Setting

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While it was important to bring the groups together so that they could learn from the best practices in their field and in their region, it was also important that each group left the meetings inspired to take action. The groups were asked to set short and long term goals for their Visual Arts Programs. While some of the goals have been mentioned in the course of this narrative, the following list summarizes the goals set. If a number appears in parentheses, it reflects the number of times the goal was mentioned by meeting participants.

### Short Term Goals

- Collaborate with other organizations
- Cultivate and engage board and its committees more fully (3)
- Self evaluation and assessment (3)
- Increase visibility
- Clarify job description to maintain primary focus in the gallery
- Define and build audience (3)
- Schedule exhibition calendar
- Review evaluation for gallery
- Website as alternative way to publish and improve its outreach message (2)
- Upgrade physical plant (3)
- Identify new artists

### Long Term Goals

- Collaborate with other organizations (4)
- Cultivate, create, engage support system with resources (e.g. Advisory Board) (3)
- Dedicate more time for research and curating
- Diversify exhibits
- Transform artist calls to digital
- Participate in more professional development opportunities (conferences, studio visits, gallery visits) (2)
- Build staff and use more guest curators (3)
- Build board
- Publications intern
- Leveraging grants more
- Secure endowment and new facility
- Increase visibility (2)

**Appendix I: Meeting Dates and Locations**

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**Meeting Dates and Locations**

January 9, 2006

The Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs

February 6, 2006

The Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs

## Appendix II: Meeting Attendees

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## Appendix III:

## Evaluation

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Participants were asked to evaluate the meetings on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 meaning the individual strongly disagreed and 5 meaning s/he strongly agreed with the statement.

	Average Scores	
	<u>1/9/06</u>	<u>2/6/06</u>
I learned from my peers.	4.43	4.83
I felt I was able to contribute my own experiences to the discussion.	4.71	5.00
I have a better understanding of my organization and the role it plays in our region.	3.86	N/A
I feel a part of a group of peers.	4.86	4.83
I took away new information that will inform my work.	4.43	4.67

Respondents were also asked:

*What aspects of the convening were most valuable to you?*

- Validation and motivation.
- Ways to improve recognition and value of the program internally and in the community.
- Peer discussion—some of the comments were “inspirational”.
- Confidence building—others share similar problems, concerns, insecurities.

*Name one thing you learned that you will immediately apply when you return to your organization.*

- Internally promoting the program within the organization.
- Engage organizational leadership in the program by cultivating board and staff.
- Evaluate audience and quantify the visitors experience.
- Tenacity.
- Examine Advisory Committee’s role.
- Create Board of Trustee handbook.
- Extend the life of past exhibitions through editorial coverage, websites, and presentations.
- Peer discussion is beneficial and meetings such as this one should continue.

*How will a written report that summarizes these two convenings help you?*

- Report will provide support as new ideas are implemented.

*With whom will you share the report and why?*

- The Board-it will be a great way to communicate with them.
- Staff and colleague professionals.