**Intro Slide:**

Telling your Story

Presented by Mariclare Hulbert

Created for Arizona Commission on the Arts

**Webinar’s Intro.**

**Yvonne:**

Welcome everybody, thank you for joining us today, welcome to Dance in the Desert 2020.

I’m going to give a brief introduction and then I will hand it over.

For those of you who don’t know me, my name is Yvonne Montoya,

I am a dancemaker, a working artist mom, I live in Tucson Arizona, I am originally from Albuquerque New Mexico.

I started Dance in the Desert in 2018, after working with communities and seeing kind of the disconnect across geographies,

specifically for Latinx makers and we’ve been going strong since then.

I’m actually going to read from a paper so I don’t forget anything, so here I go.

Dance in the Desert: A Gathering of Latinx Dancemakers is an initiative that addresses systemic deficits in dance in the Southwest

by providing a space that redresses geographic isolation and centers local expertise--which is you all in the call.

The by invite only gathering serves Latinx dancemakers. There were two gatherings,

the inaugural one in Phoenix in 2018, last year’s gathering in Tucson in 2019. And we did have to postpone this year’s gathering

but we are very hopeful to have an in-person gathering in Douglas, AZ and Agua Prieta, Sonora,

which will be a binational exchange with Arizona Latinx dancemakers and Mexican artists from Sonora.

So, based on feedback from last year’s Dance in the Desert, we planned several webinars that were going to lead up to the in-person gathering,

and even though we can’t meet in person we are still meeting virtually and decided to move forward with the webinars at this time.

We are so happy to have you here with us today,

I want to make a brief announcement that the next webinar will take place Thursday April 30th at noon Arizona time

and it will be led by staff from the New England Foundation for the Arts and the theme is dance work samples.

So please write that down, save the date in your calendar, if you’re interested we will be sending out information and invites as well, but put that in your radar.

Also, very exciting, these webinars will mark the first time that Dance in the Desert community is opening up to members throughout Arizona and the nation,

so if you are new to Dance in the Desert, welcome we are so happy to have you here with us today, it’s a delight.

Regarding translations, some of you said that you would like to have the webinar translated into Spanish, I spoke with our translator, Ammi Robles who is joining us today,

she is based in Agua Prieta, Sonora, instead of translating the webinar in real-time, which was a little complicated on our end,

she is going to translate the recording, and we will make the recording available to you all, it will have the Spanish translations.

*Con respecto a las traducciones, se ha solicitado que el webinar (seminario web) se traduzca al español. Hablé con la traductora Ammi Robles, quien nos acompaña*

*hoy en esta llamada desde Agua Prieta, Sonora. En lugar de traducir en tiempo real, ella traducirá la versión grabada del webinar,*

*la cual compartiremos con aquellos de ustedes que solicitaron la traducción.*

So, a big thank you to Dance in the Desert 2020 collaborating partners Erin Donohue, Kesha Bruce, Anna Needham, Michelle Marji,

*Safos* Dance Theatre, Liz Lerman LLC, and AZArtWorker, a program of the Arizona Commission on the Arts funded by the Tremaine Foundation.

Also, a huge thank you to our funders the Flinn Foundation, the Ford Foundation. And thank you Steve Wilcox for your support.

Erin, it’s all you…

So, we are excited to share our first webinar today, Telling Your Story A Beginner’s Guide to Arts Marketing, PR, and Artist Statements.

This webinar will offer advice and tools for marketing, media relations, and messaging for diverse needs including artist statements for grant applications.

Our guest today is Mariclare Hulbert. Mariclare is an arts marketer and communications consultant

and she worked as Director of Marketing for Jacob's Pillow for nearly 10 years and now works with

arts, health and human services, and small business clients across the U.S.

Mariclare and I have a close connection because one of my dear friends worked for her at Jacob’s Pillow many years ago.

I’m just thrilled that we’ve been able to work with her for this workshop an she is a huge well of knowledge.

So, I’m just really grateful that she is here with us today, so Welcome to Mariclare! And I’ll turn it over to you.

**Mariclare:**

Thank you so much. Before we get started, normally I would turn my webcam off

but I realized it might be helpful for some folks to see my face while you hear my voice so, I will leave that on.

Feel free, as we said, throughout the presentation, to send any notes to Erin in the chat, she will probably save most of them until the end of the workshop,

so that we can get through everything, but she will definitely flag me if there are any questions that are really interrupting your learning.

So, if there is anything where it’s a really big issue and its going to affect the rest of the learning process for you,

please feel free to tag that as urgent and then Erin will pop in, and let me know, and I can explain whatever I might have missed.

**Slide “Today’s Agenda”**

So for today’s agenda, as Erin explained, we’re going to touch on Arts Marketing and PR Today,

as I see it from my perspective, we have about forty minutes together and then we’ll open it up for some questions at the end,

so obviously we can’t dive too deep into all these topics, but my hope is this gives you a really nice overview that can really support your work over these next few months.

The organizers and I chatted a couple of weeks ago and we were thinking,

“oh, should we push this off a little bit further to give folks some time to process what is happening in the world right now”, and then we thought no,

let’s keep it where it is, cause some of these tools can be very helpful to all of you as I know,

every single artist that I know is dealing with loss of income, a really precarious scary time.

so, we thought some folks may have a little more time to work on somebody’s marketing and messaging ideas.

So, my goal today is to really give you an overview and to give you some tangible tools and tricks that you can use at home,

that don’t cost you anything, and so that you can dive a little deeper into some of these topics during these very strange times.

And again, that is also to say there Is not this huge pressure to be super productive during this time either.

I think we are all dealing with a lot of grief, a lot of fear, and so please don’t put pressure on yourself to emerge from this the perfect marketer.

We will talk about developing your own story, about developing your own message points that are unique to you and authentic to your experience.

I’ll talk a little bit about the differences between marketing copy, media relations copy, and then some grant writing tips.

And then, I’ll also talk about really owning your narrative, which I know is incredibly important

whenever I work with artists that are artists of color or come from communities that have been historically underrepresented in our country

and in the stories that are told in our country, currently.

**Slide “About me”**

A little bit more about me, Erin touched on some of this, so we won’t take too much time.

I was at Jacob’s Pillow for nearly a decade, and I specialize in Marketing & Communications work for mostly artists and non-profit organizations.

Some of my current clients do include the Pillow, Dance/USA, and Kinetic Light, which is a disability arts dance company.

Personally, if it’s helpful for you to know, I identify as a white, straight, cis, non-disabled woman.

I am in an interracial relationship, my fiancé is an African-American black man, if that helps to give you perspective.

**Slide “One Size does not Fit All”**

Any time I give these presentations, I really wanna empower anyone, and I mostly use references to dance

because I know a lot of artists that are joining us today are dance artists,

but I realize this will be more widely shared so this can apply to any kind of art really, but one size does not fit all.

There is not one perfect marketing plan, or messaging plan that I will give you, or that I think everyone should use.

You can take any of this advice and fit it to what you need. If you are not sending out any emails right now,

start sending out maybe one email every couple of months. If you don’t do anything on social media,

start to think what you want to do with social media. If you have minimal experience in reaching out to journalists in your area,

geographically or in your field, start to think about that, there is no expectation that every single artist

is going to be able to do everything that’s on the marketing checklist.

**Slide “Stories Stick”**

Also, as we dive into this, I always like to acknowledge that a lot of artists are uncomfortable with marketing.

It can feel uncomfortable to talk about yourself in this kind of way.

A lot of artists that I know and work with don’t have big staff so they have to be their own marketer.

Marketing is inherently based in capitalism and that can make some folks uncomfortable.

When we talk about marketing and communications, I always like to remind people that were really talking about storytelling.

Big corporations have taken on much deeper of a storytelling approach when it comes to their marketing, because stories stick.

It helps us with learning, stories are easier to remember than facts and figures, stories don’t feel like marketing to the person that is receiving the messaging,

and there’s been tons of studies showing that when storytelling is used in an educational setting or an informational setting

it is remembered at a far greater rate. So, when I think about arts marketing, I always think about storytelling,

and who better to do storytelling than artists.

**Slide “Traditional PR, Today’s PR”**

The other thing I like to talk about when we talk about the landscape of arts marketing today,

and of course, as with everything in our world right now, this might be changing very quickly, it is changing very quickly.

But I think about traditional PR, and what used to be considered traditional PR, and what PR today is.

That really for me is a great example of how the landscape has shifted. So, about a decade ago, when we talked about PR,

it was mostly focused on media relations. Getting your story to a newspaper, or on TV, or maybe on an online outlet,

although it hadn’t exploded in this big way. The journalists held the power.

News media was considered a very important and trustworthy third-party endorsement in terms of delivering information.

PR used to really mean just Press Relations. I think we all know there were way more critics in the world, way more dance writers, way more arts writers.

Then we fast-forward to today’s market and today’s market, and todays PR integrates

content creation on the side of the organization or the artists themselves,

more photos, video, graphics, writing. Media has a role but not all of the control.

More and more companies, small businesses, art organizations, artists, are really owning and telling their own stories.

We can do that because we have multiple types of distribution channels. We have our own websites, we have blogs,

we have social media, we have YouTube, we have all of these tools in our fingertips

to tell our own stories in our own language, though our own lens,

and we don’t have to depend on a third-party endorsement from a media outlet to speak to a potential audience.

In terms of that trust, trust is shifted, fans, influencers, supporters, partner organizations, they are equally important to your audiences,

and when I say audiences, I don’t necessarily mean people sitting in the theater.

Audience can be someone who engages with your work through a workshop or class, or your writing,

or seeing you perform in a nontraditional space. Those people hold the same amount of trust,

as what the media used to, or a third-party endorsement used to.

In today’s world I really consider PR to be Public Relations, versus just Press Relations.

And yes, there is paid advertising and there is marketing, and there’s a lot of other things that go into talking about your work to the world,

but PR is the best example that I like to used when we are thinking about talking to the world about the work that we are doing and how to get the word out.

**Slide “Develop your message”**

So, we are going to talk first about developing our message.

I noticed in a lot of the feedback that folks sent in their survey responses, which was super helpful,

there a lot of questions about the nuance of messaging, how do I speak to different audiences,

what’s the right language to use? Hopefully this will help give a little path to how we can refine and develop our messaging.

S**lide “Types of Messaging”**

There’re a few different types of messaging, the kinds that I’m going to talk you on today are more Marketing Messaging,

we’ll talk about Media Relations messaging and how that might be different,

and I know Grant writing and messaging for grant’s applications was a huge interest,

so I connected with one of my colleagues to get some really great advice on grant messaging too.

**Slide “Copywriting + Messaging”**

Let’s start here. Often times when I am working with artists, they share concerns or insecurities about marketing themselves, sometimes about writing,

although many artists are gifted writers, but they became artists because they speak and they communicate best through their work.

It can be tempting to let your work just speak for you, but I want everyone to remember that

before anyone engages you with your work, they will engage with your messaging.

It’s pretty rare, unless perhaps you are giving a public performance, or you have a piece or artwork that’s on the public,

that someone might just walk on by and engage with your work while never receiving any advanced messaging.

Typically, they’re going to see something on social media first, or a friend might forward an email,

or maybe they have heard you speak before and now they’re on your email list so they get an alert from you about an upcoming opportunity,

or a partner organization is advertising some kind of workshop or opportunity that you’re offering.

Nine times out of ten, folks are going to be engaging with your messaging before they ever engage with your work,

so we are just underlining the importance of this.

**Slide**

Here is the usual approach that I take and I that I advise that artists take whenever you’re thinking about messaging,

we can apply this to your bio, we can apply this to the way that you speak about your art in a really broad sense,

you can also take this approach to a new project or a new partnership.

This approach can be used in a number of different ways for really anything you’re talking about.

First, you establish your audience. Who are you taking to and how do they get their information.

You can use this for media, you can use this for grants, you can use this for your email list.

Think About who you’re talking to, how do they get their information, and what is the kind of language they speak,

and by that I don’t necessarily mean traditional language, but I mean what is going to really capture that audience.

What’s the point? This might seem simple but we can get distracted by the details.

So, really, what are you trying to get across. Come up with your primary goal, your secondary goal,

and maybe your tertiary goal if you really have a third one.

But if we are trying to cram in ten really important points into this messaging,

then they’re all going to get lost. So, we really have to identify what our most important messaging is.

The outcome or goal. So, consider, what action do you want your audience to take.

Do you want them to fund your project, do you want them to attend a performance or a workshop?

If it’s not action based, how do you want them to feel once they’ve received this messaging.

Maybe it is more like an open letter, maybe it is an activist statement. It doesn’t have to be a ticket purchase or a workshop sign up,

it can be you are talking to folks through social media and you want them to sign up to your email list.

There can be a variety of outcomes or goals, but always be keeping in mind,

always be including a call to action, no matter what you are putting out into the world.

And finally, you’re going to match that messaging with content. So always consider what kind of video,

illustration, recording, graphic, is going to enliven your message and really drive home that point.

**Slide “Feeling Stuck”**

This is not as easy as it sounds, I know this. So, if you’re feeling stuck, here are some creative tools that might shake you out.

So, you are like, “I’ve been doing this work for forty years, I have my bio,

I don’t know how to re-work it”, or “I have my artist statement, I don’t know how to re-work it.”

So, if we need to freshen it up, identify five different adjectives that you feel really describe your company,

your work, your project, and then build from there. Try some free-flowing writing.

Really, give yourself ten minutes to write down as many words or phrases as possible that will apply to your work

and then go through and edit, but just let your creativity explore anything that comes to mind

when you’re thinking about your work for this particular project.

Ask trusted friends and family to share words or phrases that come to mind when thinking about your or your work.

Sometimes you might be surprised with the kind of feedback that comes back. It can also be sometimes helpful to flip the perspective.

What kinds of feelings or outcomes do you want to avoid. We’ll talk later about owning your narrative,

when perhaps your narrative is not the predominant narrative in this country.

But, what kinds of assumptions do people tend to make about you or your work, what kind of stereotypes do they attach to you?

Sometimes, illuminating that for ourselves can help us understand how we want to proactively address those items

and avoid those assumptions by going after it in a more proactive way.

**Slide “Other Messaging Tips”**

Some other more tactical tips. We always want to know what makes your art distinctive,

what makes you stand out or different, what makes you distinctive in your community, and to the rest of the world.

Those two things might be slightly different, they might be connected but there might be something

that is very special about what you do within your own regional community, or on your own artistic community,

and then there might be something else that you want to highlight in a slightly different way, in a broader sense.

As artists, we really have to try to avoid using jargon. And then, later in my bullet I say we also have to avoid talking to ourselves.

I’ve been in thus field for fifteen plus years and oftentimes when I am reviewing copy for clients or partners,

big circles saying, “what does this really mean?” I don’t understand what this means and I work with you.

So, if I don’t understand, how is anyone else going to understand? It doesn’t mean that we don’t have to use language

that is really particular to our art, that is totally ok, but just know that we might have to explain it.

We might have to try to put it in a different way so that a newcomer or someone that is reviewing a grant application

that has never heard of this particular kind of art, can get a good idea what you’re talking about, and then,

when you use that word again and again, they know what you are referring to.

Literally balance multisyllabic words and shorter words, balance short and long sentences.

Sometimes, in our writing, we can tend to be more academic, and when you’re looking at your messaging, go back and literally compare,

do you have a long run-on sentence, then if you cannot cut that sentence back, the next sentence needs to be much shorter.

I often talk about the “so what factor” which is asking yourself,

“why should folks care about this?” and “why should they care about this now?”

This applies to marketing copy, it applies to websites, social media, it really applies to a journalist,

when you’re reaching out to a journalist to write about you, must be news worthy.

Why is this important for them to examine in this moment and at this time?

There was a lot of questions in the feedback surveys about “how do I describe a certain kind of art

which maybe its origins are not based in English language, and I’m having to explain it in English?”

or “How do I explain that although I am technically a student I am a very seasoned professional?”

A lot of these questions, I always say “Get ahead of it!” We can do that on our websites, we can do that in grant applications,

so quotes and FAQs, in my opinion, are always a great way to establish credibility,

to establish some of those trickier questions that you’re like “everyone always asks me this!” Well, Frequently Asked Questions.

What is X kind of artwork or dance form? Laying out some of those questions that you are

constantly having to educate and engage people with, put it out in plain language for them.

Quotes can be super powerful, it doesn’t have to be a press quote, it can be a quote from a trusted partner at different organization,

or a trusted advisor, a trusted artist. Something that reflects your importance in the field, why your art stands out,

what makes you special? Sometimes, that makes us feel a little more comfortable,

because we are not saying it, we are reflecting back what others have said.

And if you say “I don’t have those,” ask for them! This is a really easy, free way that someone that loves and respects you and your work,

can give you a gift and then you can use that in your future communications work.

Brevity, don’t say something in fifteen words if you can say it in five or seven words.

We don’t need to go on and on if we can make a point in a briefer sense, and if you need help, ask for help, or if you have the funds, pay for help.

This doesn’t necessarily have to be “Oh I have to hire a marketing director, I have to hire a publicist”

Maybe you just need someone, and you would really appreciate paying for their time, for a couple of hours,

to look over your website, look over your artist statement and give you some feedback.

Perhaps, you know someone in the field already who has those skills and who might do you a favor,

perhaps you have fellow artists or a loved one that can help you look through that messaging.

People like to be asked for help.

**Slide “All, Tailored”**

So, when we talked about the difference between different kinds of messaging,

what I’ve laid out here is the elements that all messaging should have,

and then some of the elements that might be a little bit more tailored for certain kinds of messaging.

So, all messaging needs the 4 C’s: it needs to be clear, it needs to be concise, compelling, and credible.

We covered some of these in the previous slides. Concise, again, short sentences. Don’t go on and on if you don’t need to.

Impactful words that actually mean something, that aren’t full of jargon, that folks can understand.

That also goes along with clarity.

Compelling; really drill into what makes you and your offering to the world, different, unique, interesting.

What kind of an impact are you having in the world and in your community. And credible;

we’ll talk a little bit more, when we talk about grant writing, about the need to be fact-based and not biased,

this is huge when you’re talking to anyone in the media, when you’re making a press release.

You must be fact-based; don’t say you’re the first, the best, the only, because if it is not true,

folks will fact check that, and you will lose credibility there. Again, when we touched on terms of quotes,

soliciting some quotes from respected partner organizations, or other respected artists can help with credibility.

We touched on “all communications need to be rooted in fact, and authenticity. You shouldn’t be trying to boost yourself up,

to be something that you’re not, who you are and what you create is already, naturally good enough and valid.

We just have to figure out a way to describe it in an authentic manner.

All communications should have some form of education and delight, that’s why we are all on this business.

Not every piece of art, of course, has delight. Art does many things for us, sometimes it brings out very difficult emotions

or deals with difficult topics but in that case, we are trying to educate and engage.

So, keeping that in mind to whatever applies, to your craft, I realize not every artist is in the delight business.

All of this should be parts of the whole. So, don’t consider the grant application,

“Oh, that is going to this group of people, so it doesn’t necessarily have to reflect what’s on my website,”

we’ll talk a little bit in a moment about this, but everything has to work together.

Which is why I always recommend starting with that messaging exercise, and then you figure out distribution and formatting from there,

but you have your core messaging. And again, all part of your communication needs to feel authentic to you and to your art,

you don’t have to change yourself to try to fit into someone else’s box, it needs to reflect who you are and what you do in the world.

There is a difference between changing yourself to fit into a norm and editing your language a bit so it’s clear and has impact.

So, I’m on the side of making sure it’s clear and you have impact. So, then we talk more about tailoring messaging for certain outlets.

So, when I think of marketing, I think of websites and social media, those are two really great examples.

That copy should be shorter if you or your art does include some elements of delight, a little bit more of that delight, a little more personality,

know that so many people taking our content, scrolling through an iPhone, scrolling through a mobile phone.

And I think we have all been on websites, where if its super long, we’re gonna stop on the second sentence.

So, really think about your distribution, when we think about marketing copy.

If an email is going out, if its super, super long, folks are not going to get to the bottom of the email. They just aren’t.

So, you have to put the very important information at the top, and make sure things are nice and concise, and tight.

And when I talk about delight, for me, delight is a beautiful impactful image, you know,

even if your works tend to be more serious or deals with very powerful topics.

That delight angle, can mean just gorgeous thumb-stopping imagery, as I like to call it.

So, you’re scrolling and there’s something that makes you stop and go, “wow!”

So, then, when we talk about media relations, again, it will be similar to your previous messaging,

but it really must be totally fact-based, totally unbiased. If you’re writing a press release,

the goal should be that that journalist gets the press release and could copy and paste the entire thing

and put it right in the newspaper tomorrow, and they wouldn’t have to fact check a thing,

they wouldn’t have to rewrite anything, because you provided them with completely journalistic unbiased language.

The only exception to this, in a press release, is when you use quotes. So, if there is a quote from you, as the artist,

there is a quote from a colleague, or a presenting partner, that messaging can be biased,

and can talk about how “you are the most important artist of our time”, or “an excellent artist in this area.”

But every other aspect of anything that you’re sending to media needs to be so incredibly fact-based. Again, that goes to credibility.

Everything in our world is about relationships, you’re going to want to be building

a trusting relationship with any journalist that you’re pitching or trying to work with,

and if you’re not sending them fact-based information, your credibility just falls to the floor.

Then, grants, very similar to press release writing, we’ll dive a little bit into that in just a little bit.

But in grants, all the more so, you must define your difference and impact, you must be focusing on the outcomes of your work.

How does your work affect your community, the world, and your own geographic community and our broad community at large?

So, in all of your marketing copy, and all of your media relations copy, of course you want to define

your difference and impact but it’s most important to do that when you’re working on grant language.

**Slide “Grant Writing”**

Ok, so we are going to dive into grant writing here, and for this I got some help.

My good colleague, Candace Feldman, who is the managing director of Kinetic Light,

which is one of my clients, some of you may know her name because she used to live in and work in Arizona.

Candace has been on both sides of the grant writing process, so she has written plenty of grants,

she is also on a ton of grant review panels. So, I asked her for some additional advice when it comes to messaging for grant writing.

I will note to don’t stress about writing all of this down, I am happy to provide my slides to the Arts Commission and Dance in the Desert,

so they can send them out to you if you’re interested. So, grant writing advice.

Always attend the webinar that they offer, always ask questions.

I am so happy to hear that you’re having a presentation with NEFA a little bit later this month,

that is a wonderful opportunity for you all to ask a lot of questions. Similar to what we were talking about press releases,

one, avoid flowery language, your language needs to be concrete, authentic, and applicable.

Don’t make up words or use fancier words because they think it makes you sound special. Use just real, clear language.

Again, it has to be fact-based, don’t say you were the only artist who does this if it’s not true,

that will make you look so bad when they fact check it, and a lot of review panels do.

Really using this opportunity to educate and engage. So, a lot of the artists of color that I’ve worked with,

or artists that come from communities that have been historically underrepresented, it is, of course,

emotional labor to explain yourself all the time or to feel that you have to explain your art all the time.

But especially for grants, if we think about the fact that we are using the opportunity to educate and engage,

think of the doors that that can open for you. We’ll talk in the next slide about specific advice for artists of color

but that was one of the key things that Candace really honed in on is we must be educating review panels about your art,

I know that Yvonne and Erin have shared with me that a lot of the artists in Dance in the Desert feel very invisible,

they feel like they’re not on the national radar. Grant applications are the biggest way for you to get on the radar

because these highly respected folks in our field, are reading and discussing your application.

And even if you don’t get the funding, I hope you do, but even if you don’t,

you have opened up a number of new conversations for them. So, really think about that when you’re writing your applications.

As I said before, make sure your artists statement and application language correlate with your website.

If they’re reading your application, and if they go check your website, and none of that messaging is on your website,

your website is two years old, it includes none of this new messaging, it starts to chip away your credibility

and makes it look like you’re not really doing everything you’re saying you’re doing.

Candace noted, really answer the question that was asked. She said that she often uses the phrase “they didn’t land the plane on that question.”

Artists will answer what they think the question was asking or the question that they want to answer,

but really, they’re asking these questions because they want to know your answer to the question.

It seems simple but it can be really challenging. So, always double-check,

“have I answered this question or am I avoiding it for some reason?” Similarly, don’t talk about what you hope to do,

tell the panel what you are doing, and the impact you are having and then make your case for what you can do with more support.

She also noted, obviously make your financial needs clear, you have to make the case that you need this funding,

but show that you have support. They want to fund artists that are in a supportive community.

So, note any partners that you already have, note trusted advisors that are part of this project, if that’s true, and that will definitely help our case.

She also noted, that you should always ask for feedback, even if you don’t get funding, call the facilitator,

call the program manager and ask for feedback if they haven’t already given it to you.

Most panels should really be giving you feedback, but if they don’t, know that is completely within your rights

and we want to empower you to ask for that feedback.

And also, she noted, you never know, she’s been on plenty of review panels where the organization decided not to fund a project,

but someone on the panel, wanted to fund the project, or wanted to produce the show, or produce the exhibit, whatever that might be.

**Slide “Advice for Artists of Color”**

I specifically asked Candance for some advice for artists of color. And this is what she said:

Don't assume that the grant panel knows anything about you, your art, your culture, your environment.

You have to tell them about it, you have to explain it.

Do assume that your review panel is predominantly white, straight, cis. It’s sad, it’s just the reality,

the biggest panels are getting more diverse, but they will be predominantly be these things.

Again, use this opportunity to educate and engage. What I would love,

is if all of you are able to apply to a new opportunity that maybe you didn’t have time to apply to last year.

Imagine the wonderful conversation that will be happening about artists from the southwest

over the next three, six, nine months in these panels if you’re able to apply for one extra grant, or two extra grants.

Expand your horizons, seek out different types of funding. If your work has a social justice angle to it,

look into some of the social justice organizations that might be out there.

Don't hold back on your identity. The example that Candace gave is, in the past,

she’s noted that she’s looked at an application and asked herself, “am I being too black in this?”

and she noted that you should never ask that question, if you’re being your authentic self and

your authentic artist is too much for that organization or that grant panel, that wasn’t the right opportunity for you.

I also want to note that when I say, “you must be unbiased,” I’m talking about facts versus saying

“I am the best. I am the only artists here.” I’m not talking about personal history and experience,

personal history and experience is incredibly important and different from biased,

and you should absolutely address your own personal history and experience as it relates to your art.

If you are not a 501c3, find a fiscal sponsor so that you can open up to some new opportunities, and embrace partnerships.

There are a lot of different grant opportunities where you might not feel comfortable applying for that grant on your own,

but if you have a partner, an organizational partner, they might not be able to do the work that you do,

even though they’re a big organization, so if you partner together, it can be mutually beneficial.

**Slide “Use this time to research and learn”**

And then, we hope that you can use this time to research and learn.

Candace noted these were some of the foundations or organizations that she noted might be good opportunities for you.

The New England Foundation for the Arts as we mentioned previously, funds artists from all over the country, not just from New England.

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation as well. New Music, Surdna.

all of these Candace suggested looking into to see what sort of opportunities might be available to you outside of just your region.

And as I said, I will make sure that all the organizers have this deck, so that you don’t have to rush to copy all this down right now.

**Slide “Owning the Narrative”**

So, we are finishing up. I want to leave a little bit of time for questions. I’ll also note, I’ll say this at the end,

I will share my personal information, you are welcome to email me with questions too if we run out of time.

So, finally, I want to address owning the narrative. This is something that we really talk a lot about

when I work with artists of color or my disabled clients.

Oftentimes those artists are not comfortable with the narrative that is out in the world about their art.

Or there is not a narrative, they feel incredibly invisible. So, we are going to talk a little bit

about owning that narrative and some tools to do so. I have this picture of Sean Dorsey here,

because Sean, I believe, is a really great example of an artist who owns their narrative. Sean is a trans dance artist.

If you go to his website, to his social media, you go and look at any articles that are written about him,

super strong messaging across the board. It is incredibly clear who Sean is and what his art is about. We have no questions about that.

So, that is just one of the examples that I came up with when I think about someone who truly really owns their narrative.

So, the best way, in my opinion, to own that narrative, is to have your own really strong, succinct messaging.

If you have a great three-sentence description of yourself in a project, and then you also have a longer version,

and then you have your really long version, any partner you’re working with, any presenting organization,

any partner organization, journalist, is more likely to just use your language if it’s nice and tight and succinct.

If you send them three pages of information, they’re going to write them in their own words and that not might be words that you like.

So, really having your own strong messaging helps. Providing preferred and problematic language right up front, and letting them know

“Here are some ways that folks tend to describe my art and that I don’t like and that I am not comfortable with, please don’t use that.

I do like these identifying terms.” Be upfront with it, know that it’s ok to push back on problematic requests,

know that it’s ok to require review of any materials that are going out to the world about you. It’s also ok to say no to opportunities.

I think that a lot of artists think that “Oh, if this outlet reaches out to me and wants to write about me,

I have to say yes, because they own the power.” You don’t have to say yes to anything that you don’t want to say yes to.

So, if a journalist reaches out to you, and you read some of their past writings, and articles, and you’re like

“hmm, I just don’t know if they’re going to write about me in an authentic way, and a non-problematic way”,

It’s ok to say no, or its ok to express those concerns and make them aware of it. On the proactive side of that,

please seek out partners and journalist who do get it. If you respect someone who writes about your art form,

and you respect the way that they write about it, reach out to them. Ask them if you can add them to your media list.

**Slide Examples**

**Slide “Kinetic Light”**

So here are just a couple of examples that might help to empower you with your own ways of owning your narrative.

So, I work with Kinetic Light and as I shared before, we share preferred and problematic language before any media interview.

When I talk about topics, the main that we like to focus on is that

some of our artists are not super comfortable with only talking about their personal story,

they would much rather focus on the art. And at least one of our artists is very sensitive about the fact that

she does not like to disclose the source of her disability. It’s a question she won’t answer.

So, I prep journalists before they do an interview with that information. I also provide their preferred identifying language,

I make it clear that all of our artists prefer to identify as a disabled artist versus an artist with disabilities.

So, whatever version of that, belongs to you, feel free and empowered to share that.

We say no to opportunities if they don’t feel right to us, and we have very specific

accessibility requirements to any marketing or media partner that we work with,

which includes image descriptions, mindful photo cropping, various different things.

We share those in advance, and we make it clear that the must agree to maintain these accessibility requirements

or we are not the right partner for them.

**Slide “Germaul Barnes”**

Another example is one of my clients, Germaul, who was commissioned to create a work for a company,

which he was very excited about, but he was also a little concerned about being tokenized.

And so, we came up with a plan so that he could make the most of this opportunity while also maintaining his own voice.

So, we identified his communications priority, he required content review with the company,

so that he could see whatever was being sent out about him. We did some of his own media outreach,

which meant, the ballet company did their own media outreach but, Germaul and I reached out to the local publication

that wrote about African Americans in the community, because that felt authentic to receive it from him or myself,

representing him than the ballet company who had no connection with that outlet up until this point.

And then, Germaul really made the most of the opportunities that he was given. He wanted to participate in as many interviews as possible,

as I said, he wants to talk about his own art, he did not want others talking about his art on his behalf.

He was very active on social media during his whole creation period, he maximized media opportunities,

so just like this photo of him, he was being interviewed, he was taking selfies before he went in,

he was talking, he was sharing, and he too was a little uncomfortable at first, “what’s right to share, what’s just bragging,”

and I said, “the people that know and love you, and follow your art, are going to be interested

that you are getting this opportunities”, so we really maximized those opportunities so that he could talk about it in his own voice.

**Slide “Ideas for this time”**

So, some final ideas for this time, and the I’ll have a resource slide, and I’ll keep those while we are asking questions.

Again, if you have some extra time right now, please don’t feel pressured to be productive

if that’s not what you need to be doing in this moment.

But, if you’re thinking “what can I be doing during this time where I don’t have rehearsal in the same way,

where I am not creating in the same exact way that I was?” You can refresh your artist statement,

you can connect with a mentor or advisor, set some goals whether they’re broad goals or marketing goals.

I realized during this time, instead of 1,5,10 year, it might me literally be 1 month, 5-month goals.

Engage in a branding exercise, I will share some resources later. I wasn’t able to find a branding exercise that I recommend,

so I have a personal one that I am happy to send you, that I use with my clients, and that you can fill out on your own,

so feel free to email me if you’d like that. Make improvements to your website, learn more about social media strategy,

there are so many wonderful free resources out there. Look through Canva for graphic design templates,

there’s excellent templates on Canva, if you can’t afford a designer, that is great opportunity for you.

Update your digital portfolio, seek out these educational webinars, like we talked about. Research and apply for some grants.

**Slide “Resources”**

I’m getting a little tight, I am happy to stay on until at least 4:15 to answer questions,

so I’ll just note that here. And I will come back to this.

**Slide “Questions & Takeaways”**

But here is my email address, and my website, so if we can’t address your question, feel free to email me with your question.

I’m totally setting a boundary and telling you if it’s not something that we can dive into quickly.

But I am also happy to help if I can help guide you through your question pretty quickly.

I’ll return to this in a moment but know that you are welcome to email me.

**Slide “Resources”**

Some resources that might be good for you to look at. I really respect Capacity interactive, and TRG Arts,

they’re both arts marketing companies. A lot of their advice is more tailored to bigger organizations

but you can pick and choose what works for you. There’re excellent case studies on these websites.

Amy Jacobus Marketing which Erin mentioned, that is our mutual colleague friend.

Amy tends to work with independent artists, smaller companies, small businesses,

so she gives really great digital and social media advice, so follow her on Instagram.

She also has like a special Intro to Marketing kit right now that she is offering for, I believe, less than 20 dollars.

So, you might want to check her out. Purpose Productions is an excellent company that is led by folks of color, marketing company there.

Ashani Mfuko specifically, she talks about social media for dancers, but, her Instagram account is a great one to follow.

There is Americans for the arts, they have an arts marketing blog.

If you have questions about video, especially now, livestreaming, digital is very big,

Nel Shelby is based in New York, and she has case studies and advise on her blog and her website.

I also recommend following fellow artists and arts organizations that you respect, and looking at their websites,

at their social media accounts, you know no ideas are ever original when it comes to marketing.

Of course, we don’t want to copy each other’s art, but marketing styles and techniques, you can totally borrow those and make it your own.

And then, finally, Google and YouTube are personally my best friend, if I ever get stuck,

or I don’t know how to make this update to my website, or I am looking for a free webinar about XY & Z,

go to YouTube, go to Google, see what you can find there.

So, I will leave this slide up for now so that you can jot this down if you want to.

And at this point, I will take a pause, like I said, I am happy to stay on for another 20 minutes if we need it. Erin, do we have any questions that are already in the hopper?

One thing I’ll note, and while anyone is thinking about questions they might have, I’ll also say,

I am not offended if we don’t have questions, because it takes time to process this,

sometimes we have to marinate on everything that we just heard.

So, what I do want to know, and I had meant to say this previously, is, any of these experts that I note,

also I don’t recommend people that I don’t know and love, all these folks are lovely people as well.

So, especially during this time when I know finances are super tight,

if someone is offering a class or a webinar or anything that costs money, and you are really interested,

but you truly don’t have the money, I don’t think it’s a bad thing to reach out to that person; send them a message,

DM, and ask if they have any scholarship opportunities. Sometimes folks might have a little bit of support

and might be able to get you into the class for free, or they’re really trying to try out this new offering

and they just want more participants, sometimes they might be able to give you a discount,

the worst they can say is no and any of these folks that I’ve noted here work in our field,

they know it’s a very precarious time, they are not going to judge you for asking. So, I would always ask.

Ask if there are scholarship opportunities, ask if there’s a discount opportunity,

if there is some kind of learning opportunity that you want to engage in, but you just can’t afford at this time.

**Erin:**

Mariclare, we have a really great question from one of the participants, we’ve got a couple now in here.

First one is, “in your opinion, what are some fundamental components that an artist website should have?”

**Mariclare:**

Sure, sure. I always want to know a bio. I want to know what you’ve done.

The bio Doesn’t have to be your CV, doesn’t have to be three pages of information of everything you’ve ever done.

I’m interested in knowing if you studied somewhere, what you studied, who you studied with,

where your work has been performed or seen in the past, it just helps to give people reference points,

and it helps that credibility, as we said, if you do have connections where you taught,

or where you learned or where you presented that is great. I want to know the core about what you do.

I want to know why you create. And I don’t mean your mission, missions are really boring and dry sometimes.

Hopefully yours isn’t. But I want to know why you started creating or what drives you,

or what you’re motivated by, what your work does in your community, what is the core of what you do.

So often we get distracted by talking about ourselves in a fancy way. If you met someone at a party,

or you met someone who is kind of a dear friend, and they ask what you do and what makes you excited to get up every morning,

jot down what you would say to them, and then we can clean that up and tweak it and make it a little bit more professional.

But, I want artists to talk to me how they would talk to a regular person. I also want to see visuals, specifically dance.

Our world is so incredibly visual, so I want to see photos of you working, they don’t have to be professional,

iPhones can take beautiful photos now, I want to see you in action, or I want to see your dancers in action,

whatever your work looks like. I want to see photos or videos on what you do.

So, we’re talking bio, and we are kind of talking purpose. Like, what is your art, what is the purpose.

And then, I want to know how I can see more. So, what the call to action. For many of us that might be,

you can follow me on a social media channel or you can sign up for this email list, or you can see this show or workshop that I am giving.

So, tell me about yourself, give me a little bio information so I know it is credible and I know who else you’ve worked with,

give me some reference points, and then tell me how I can continue to engage with you.

I will add a caveat, because I know many of our artists on this call are feeling challenged by an invisibility feeling,

and or that the mainstream dance world doesn’t know as much about their art. So, in that case, for all of you,

I would recommend then, some sort of whether it’s a Frequently Asked Questions page

Or a “what is cumbia?” I am just reflecting on one question I saw on the survey response.

If you literally know that folks do not understand what cumbia is, try to explain it.

And it’s also ok if there is not a direct translation into English to literally say that, and to identify

that the essence of what cumbia is, is not something that can be directly translated to English, but here is the essence of that.

This is how I work with Kinetic Light, we know that inherent to our work is some level of education engagement.

So, that’s always an important part of what we put out there.

**Erin:**

Mariclare, one other question is, “what is a fiscal sponsor?” and the difference between a 501c3 and a fiscal sponsor.

**Mariclare:**

Sure, sure. Erin, we’ll get some really official language around that, but I’ll give my short version of it.

I just don’t want to give incorrect... 501c3, if you have a board of directors, you officially have that text designation.

Some funding organizations, certain grants are only for 501c3’s, or organizations. They won’t fund independent artists.

Some artists, either are independent artists or don’t want to go through the rigor that requires a full board or a 501c3,

or getting that text designation. In that case, you can partner with another organization and they will be your fiscal sponsor.

An example, is Fractured Atlas in New York, they’re one that comes to mind for me, I’m sure there are others in your region.

Sometimes you can approach a larger organization to be your fiscal sponsor, even if it’s not like a Fractured Atlas,

and essentially what it can mean if I understand correctly is that the grant application would go officially through that fiscal sponsor,

they may accept the money officially and then they pay you out. They usually take a cut. What I can do is,

I will collaborate with ACA and ask my colleague Candace what the appropriate cut is,

I believe she told me it should not be more than five percent, but I will find that out. I

t’s basically working with a larger organization who might have more infrastructure,

and it allows you to apply for some different sorts of opportunities that you might not have been able to apply for previously.

But like I said, I’ll touch base with Erin, and get a little more formal language so that I am not misspeaking.

**Erin:**

Just so you all know on this call, Liz Lerman LLC, we use Fractured Atlas as our fiscal sponsor,

I believe their cut is seven percent, so it’s a little bit higher than maybe what is ideal,

but then we are able to apply for major grants and funding, and also get tax deductible donations.

**Mariclare:**

That is a big one. If folks want to donate to you and they want to be able to write it off on their taxes,

if you’re not a 501c3 yourself, they can’t write it off, but if you are partnering with a 501c3, they can.

So, it enables artists to fundraise in a different way essentially.

**Erin:**

One other request that I think is wonderful and I think it is something that we can do in conjunction with ACA,

is a request for a resource list of grants and funders that you mentioned Mariclare,

and something that folks on this call can research, starting to schedule applications towards in this moment of a little bit more spaciousness.

**Mariclare:**

Yes, and on that note, I’ll go back a little bit and just note, it would be really great I think,

for this group of folks and ACA to look at specifically the Out Town grant program that the NEA offers,

I believe they are still running that, and that’s a lot about enlivening creative spaces,

and I just know from what I’ve talked about with Erin and Yvonne that so many of you do such a beautiful job of performances

and doing work outside of theater, outside of dance studios, in quote unquote, non-traditional spaces,

I don’t really love that term because it establishes a norm.

But, your art might really particularly fit nicely with the Our Town grant opportunities, which are about enlivening creative spaces.

Those do tend to be opportunities that you probably need to partner with a different organization

where they would handle a lot of the more administrative heavy-lifting, and then you are the talent and the artistry

and pushing innovation, and that could be a good opportunity for you,

but yeah Erin I am happy to send you this list, you can compare it with some of the resources that ACA already has.

Those were just some that came to mind when I asked Candace for national opportunities that would be open for artist in the southwest.

**Erin:**

Great! Tiffany, I think you put a question through, but it didn’t come out in the chat function,

so if you could retype that, that would be awesome if you still have a question.

Otherwise, I think we’ve gotten through most of the questions that have been posted here.

**Mariclare:**

Like I said, I will send that branding exercise to you Erin, so you can send it out to everyone.

But if anyone has more specific nuanced questions, you are welcome to email me, and I am happy to help.

Like I said, I would really take some time to follow some of those art marketers,

influencer folks on social media and see what you can learn during this time.

All of this is not like a snap your finger or you can start learning tomorrow, it is a learning process just like everything.

Did we get that follow up question Erin or should we finish up for today?

**Erin:**

How do you drive people to an artist’s website other than social media? I think that is a great last question.

**Mariclare:**

Sure, sure. We always want to think about arts marketing, in my opinion, as a circle, kind of in a cyclical function.

So, social media is indeed a good one. We talked about SEO, which is a search engine optimization that is super fancy.

But, google, so if you do flamenco, google flamenco artists and the region that you do your work in,

and they go to Google and see—is your website popping up? Or are you like in the third page?

So, the way that we can then combat that is, to build more researches on your website,

to make sure that you’re using language that applies to you. I mean, this is an extreme example, but, when we talk about SEO,

it means looking at your website and making sure that you are using the language that folks are going to search for you.

A good exercise for that is, jot down every possible term that you would want to pop up if someone googled it.

By that I mean, if you want to pop up if someone put “dance artist Arizona”, if you would want to pop up

if someone put “flamenco artists in the southwest”, jot all those down and then go to your website

and see if you actually use those phrases in your bio or on your website, because often, people don’t.

They’re using other kinds if phrases, or they say flamenco once, and never again.

And Google, the way that you show up a lot in Google is they literally have a ton of lot of bots that search through your website,

and make sure that you are a content rich website, all that means that you have plenty of really great photos and video,

and the better and more effective your website is, the sooner you’ll pop up and the earlier you’ll pop up on those searches.

So, if you’re not popping out on the first or second page, you should go back to your website and make some adjustments.

That is a good exercise to see if your website is easily discoverable as sometimes we would say.

Another way to make sure our website pops up easier is to make sure

that all of your images have alternative text on the back end, which just means a description of what is happening.

So, if you upload a photo of yourself and I’ll use the flamenco artist again, go into the back in your website and make sure there is “alt text”

or alternative text that says “flamenco artist raising up a red ruffled skirt with a musician, drummer in the background.”

Not only does that boost your search on Google, but it is good practice to be accessible to someone who is blind or non-visual,

and who is using an online reader to search the web, is going to know what your image is entailed now,

they will not be invisible to them. So, it ensures that your website is accessible and it also boosts your Google SEO.

Other ways of doing this is on any email you send out, I didn’t put Mailchimp on there, but Mailchimp is free,

up until you have a certain number of sign ups so, if you don’t currently send out emails,

sign up to Mailchimp, start to play around with that. But if you make sure that any message you send out,

that the photos link back to your website, that you include links to your website, make sure you have that link in your signature.

Making sure that you use hyperlinks in any material that you’re sending out by email,

that will ensure that folks are coming back to your website. So, those are two ways,

and a really simple way that a lot of people forget is making sure anything you produce has your website on it.

Sometimes folks just get really hurried, and there is a flyer or a business card or something,

anything you’re producing, make sure your website is included on there.

**Erin:**

I think that brings us to the end of our questions!

**Mariclare:**

Well thank you so much for giving me this opportunity, I really appreciate having the chance to chat with everyone today,

or to chat at you. I’m sorry we could have a deeper conversation. I really hope this is helpful

and I really encourage you to not feel pressured to do all of the things I recommended, pick the things that sound best to you and start there.

**Yvonne:**

Thank you so much Mariclare, and thank you all Dance in the Desert Community, we look forward to seeing you again at the end of the month.