

# WHERE TO FIND **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** FOR YOUR BRILLIANT CAREER

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**W**hether you went to art school or are self-taught, chances are you've had to patch together the business training needed to succeed as a professional artist. And it never ends. You become adept at Facebook and then need to up your game on Pinterest and Tumblr. You win a local grant, but now you want to apply for a Guggenheim Fellowship. As your business grows, so must your business plan.



David Bruce Smith

Or you might be an artist who's also a leader in your community. Maybe you run a local nonprofit or work in communities making murals. How do you learn to balance that dual career?

For all of the pursuits that fall under your job description as an artist, where do you go to find the business training (also called professional development) that you need to succeed? Even those of you who attended art school probably focused more on the art and very little on the business of art.

Some artists I know have formed peer groups where artists teach each other. You can also read books, subscribe to this magazine — and you've definitely learned from the school of trial and error.

At some point, however, you may need to sign up for some formal training to help you with grant writing, fundraising, business plan writing, negotiating, being a leader and the myriad other skills you need to succeed as a small business person.

Where do you find this training?

The obvious place to look for the business training you need as a mid-career or advanced artist is in your community. But first, you may want to study a report released in early 2015 by the Pave Program in Arts Entrepreneurship at Arizona State University funded by the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTISTS IN THE U.S.

The report titled "How It's Being Done: Arts Business Training across the U.S." is a snapshot of what's being offered for individual artists in professional development. The report sought to answer this question: How is business training being delivered to artists across the U.S.?

You can use the report to see how the offerings in your community match up



2



3

2 *Centennial Park*, 2015, by Michael Jones, graduate of C4 Atlanta. Mixed media on wood panel, 36" x 48". Copyright © 2015 Michael Jones. Used by permission of the artist. 3 *Celebration and Dancing during Phagwah in Chaguanas, Trinidad*, 2012, by Jennifer Pritheeva Samuel, graduate of NAMAC's Creative Leadership Lab. Copyright © 2012 Jennifer Pritheeva Samuel. Used by permission of the artist.

against what's happening across the country. You can also use it for ideas about what you could launch in your own community. Or you may find programs listed that you could attend yourself.

The report identified 162 programs being offered at 78 different organizations in 31 states and the District of Columbia. These programs included everything from year-long workshops from national organizations to individual artists blogging about their own experiences. Everything in between included webinars, publications, one-on-one consultations, workshops and resource centers, to name a few.

These services were offered by local nonprofit organizations, art councils, state agencies, universities and national arts organizations. Many of these trainings are subsidized by outside funding. For example, your local arts organization presenting a grant writing workshop may be able to offer it to artists for free or at a low cost because they have government or private funding that cover the cost of the training. Some training is offered by companies or individuals who are for-profit entities. One example from the report is Alyson Stanfield's ArtBizCoach ([artbizcoach.com](http://artbizcoach.com)).

The full report can be downloaded from the Tremaine Foundation website ([tremainefoundation.org/resources](http://tremainefoundation.org/resources)). This foundation has a special interest in supporting artist careers with entrepreneurial and business training, so you can also research recent and past grant recipients that might offer programs you can enroll in ([tremainefoundation.org/recent-grants2](http://tremainefoundation.org/recent-grants2)).

## FIND TRAINING IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

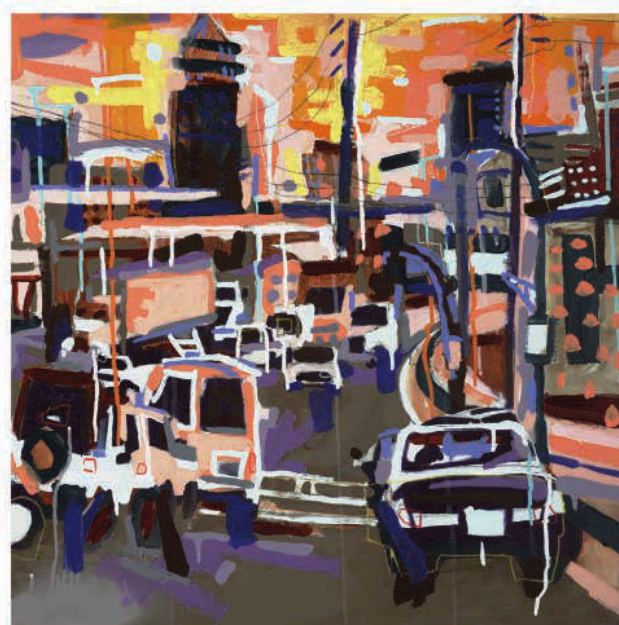
To find out what training programs may already exist in your locale, "contact your local funders," said Heather Pontonio, art program director at the Tremaine Foundation. Pontonio has her finger on the pulse of professional development across the U.S.

Pontonio advised artists not to be alarmed if the website at their local arts organization doesn't list any classes. In doing the report, Pontonio discovered that "nothing's archived." So, if classes have been offered in the past and next year's class hasn't been scheduled yet, "you might think nothing's going on," she said.

So, keep checking back and put your name on their mailing list. Then, speak up. Your local arts organization "needs to hear that there's interest from individual artists," Pontonio said. Many arts organizations are more focused on providing training for organizations and they're not thinking about individual artists. But if you express an interest, you could convince them to offer the training you need.

Once you've scoped out the local scene, expand your search. Three examples of business training for artists mentioned in the report include programs at the Queens Council on the Arts in New York City, C4 Atlanta in Atlanta and the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture that runs a Creative

“ The obvious place to look for the business training you need as a mid-career or advanced artist is in your community. ~ Gigi Rosenberg



4

Leadership Lab for select groups of artists and arts leaders from across the country.

## ARTIST HUB IN QUEENS, NEW YORK

The Queens Council on the Arts ([queenscouncilarts.org](http://queenscouncilarts.org)) was one of the organizations identified in the Tremaine report that offers professional development for the advanced artist.

"When you walk in you see blank walls," said Lynn Lobell, QCA's grants and resource director, who describes the council as a "connecting hub" for artists. The walls are blank so the artists can use the space for shows or hang work and get critiques for works in progress. The council serves literary, visual and performing artists.

"We've had literary readings, town hall meetings and dancers coming in to do multimedia projects," Lobell said. And with every use, the space transforms.

The council offers workshops on grant writing, fundraising, online marketing, audience development and other topics. It also offers the lab for artists who are looking for community and feedback on works in progress. Artists gather for portfolio reviews, critiques and networking.

[4] *Thursday Morning II*, 2015, by Michael Jones. Mixed media on wood panel, 24" x 24". Copyright © 2015 Michael Jones. Used by permission of the artist.

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### BUSINESS PLANS FOR ATLANTA ARTISTS

Ignite is an eight-week training at C4 Atlanta (c4Atlanta.org) for artists and other creatives that teaches participants how to develop a comprehensive business plan that includes planning, launching, managing and sustaining a career, a project or a company.

“At the end of eight weeks, they present to an outside panel,” said Executive Director Jessyca Holland. “But it’s not like ‘Shark Tank’. We challenge the artists to explain their business plan to people who aren’t familiar with it. When you have to explain your idea, it forces you to be succinct.”

This presentation is the “transformational piece” of the Ignite training, Holland said. “Artists come in and they have a good idea but realize it won’t work, so they need to make modifications. Or they have a good idea and they discover they can’t do it without help.”



5

The training that leads up to the presentation includes clarifying a mission and vision for your business, budgeting, financial planning and creating an action plan.

Hatch is a second program C4Atlanta offers that is “the answer to what’s next” after the business plan, Holland said.

“We saw a lot of artists doing work in communities. Some of them were working on community-led initiatives, public art projects, private commissions, murals or other installation pieces,” she said.

Hatch offers artists two essential skills for doing community projects. One is learning how to negotiate their contracts. “We didn’t want artists ripped off,” Holland said. The second skill is to learn how to work with a community.

Hatch artists learn how to understand contracts, negotiate, write proposals, work with city planners and learn best practices for working in a community, including managing everybody’s expectations. “If the community feels that they weren’t included in the process or their space is being invaded, there can be backlash with a community project,” Holland said.

### FOR ARTISTS BECOMING LEADERS

Many an artist may not think of herself as a leader, said Wendy Levy, executive director of the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (namac.org).

“I’m here to tell a story — I’m not here to change the world,” Levy has heard many artists say.

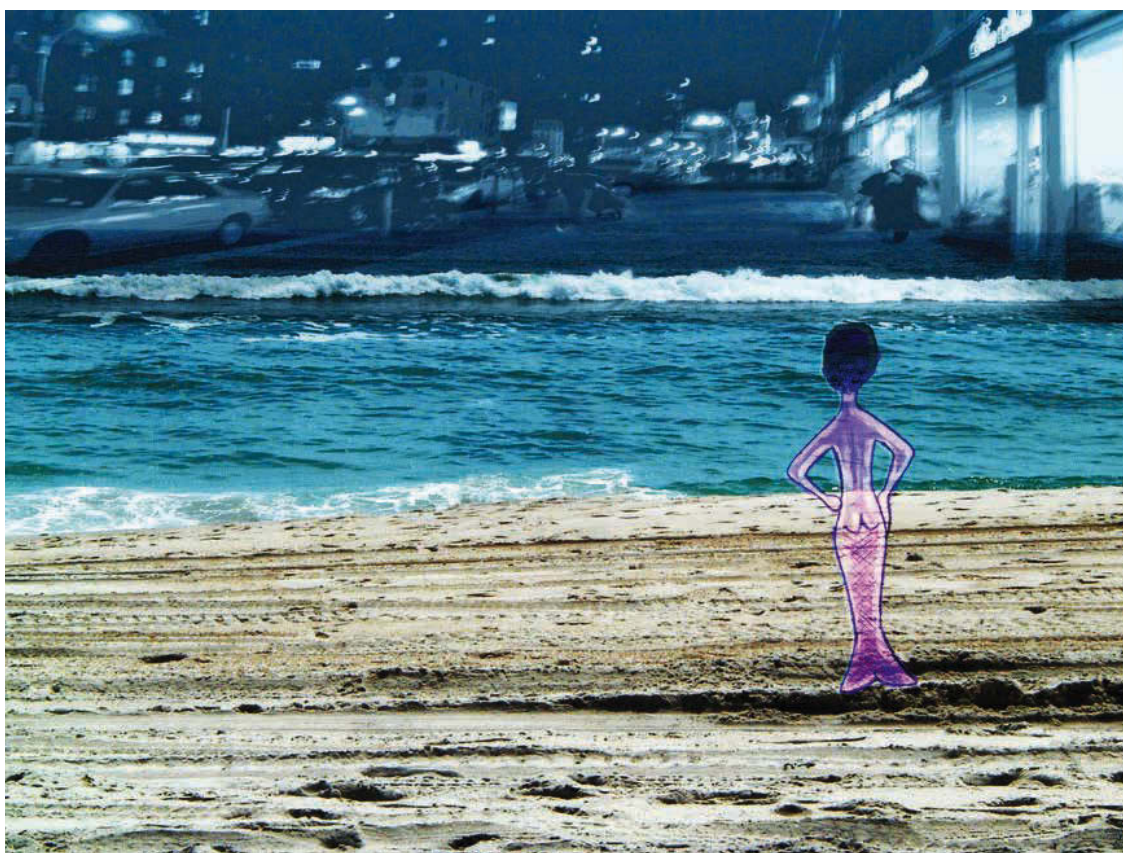
For 16 years, NAMAC has run a leadership program once a year for three days for a select group of 16 artists from around the country. The artists who enroll in the program understand the “power of art to help us make sense of what doesn’t make sense, or the power of art to help communities rise up,” she said.

According to NAMAC’s website, the lab allows attendees “to explore our capacity for true leadership from a creative perspective, break through the barriers that impeded our ability to listen, lead and effect change, and build a network of relationships that can nurture individual artists, bolster organizations and catalyze social movements.”

Last year’s graduates of the program included photographers, filmmakers, writers, musicians and other artists who are leaders. The group gathers at the Sundance Resort with mentors and advisors to explore challenges and obstacles, study innovation and resilience and share strategies.

“In the lab, we really explore what creative leadership means,” Levy said. The lab helps artists gain the skills to “work sustainably in the world and to make an impact where they work,” she said.

“A lot of arts groups operate in a culture of scarcity,” Levy said. “And there’s something about coming together that lets us start to believe in the abundance we already have.” The



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program is designed for artists and arts administrators who are leading nonprofit organizations, arts collectives and arts and culture institutions.

The program is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Warhol Foundation which means all costs to participate are covered, including transportation, meals and accommodations.

After the lab, attendees can take advantage of peer coaching, leadership circles and are encouraged to develop and lead programs at NAMAC's national conference.

## YOUR NEXT STEP

What can you do this week or this month to continue to build your skills as an artist leading — if not an organization — your own business? If you've already graduated from the current offerings in your community, here are some ideas for possible next steps:

- Start your own artist peer group. This could be a group that you organize that meets regularly for critiques and networking. Or choose a webinar or a book to study together. Artists help artists.
- Download the Tremaine report and research what programs exist outside your community that you could sign up for or apply for. You may find a powerful synergy from participating with artists from other parts of the country.
- Contact an artist coach and gather a group of artists together

and split the costs for bringing a teacher to your community. This is probably the most expensive option but this way you get a program streamlined to your group.

- Sign up for one-on-one consultations. These could be offered at your local arts organization or by an artist coach via telephone or Skype.
- Find out when Creative Capital ([creative-capital.org](http://creative-capital.org)) or Americans for the Arts ([americansforthearts.org](http://americansforthearts.org)) are coming to a location near you. These two organizations offer programs at different locations around the country.

The answer to your professional development will probably come in many forms. You may attend a seminar in another city and start a peer group in your own town. You may sign up for a few months of one-on-one consults via Skype and also network at events in your local gallery scene.

Artists are life-long learners, so your professional training will be a constant pursuit. There's nothing so powerful as when artists hone their business skills, and the training and help is here — in all its many forms. **PA**

*Gigi Rosenberg is the editor of Professional Artist. She's also an artist coach and the author of The Artist's Guide to Grant Writing (Watson-Guptill, 2010). She's been a guest commentator on Oregon Public Broadcasting, performed at Seattle's On The Boards, and been published by Seal Press, Poets & Writers, and Psychology Today. For the latest, visit [gigirosenberg.com](http://gigirosenberg.com) or reach her at [grosenberg@professionalartistmag.com](mailto:grosenberg@professionalartistmag.com).*

[6] *A Muse Mi Amor*, 2011, by Afua Kafi-Akua, graduate of NAMAC's Creative Leadership Lab. Digital photo collage on canvas, 20" x 16". [7] *So Here U B*, 2011, by Afua Kafi-Akua. Digital photo collage on canvas, 20" x 16". [8] *Ark Angels Do Amuse*, 2013, by Afua Kafi-Akua. Digital photo collage on canvas, 20" x 16". Copyright © Afua Kafi-Akua. Used by permission of the artist.