

For immediate release: April 15, 2014

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EmcArts captures learning from cultural innovation in action - features Rockefeller Foundation grantees

7 short documentaries bring to life the work of Cultural Innovation Fund grantees

April 15, 2014—In 2011, The Rockefeller Foundation provided funding to EmcArts to document the work of 16 New York City cultural institutions ranging from the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) to the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) as they implement their Rockefeller Foundation Cultural Innovation Fund (CIF) awards. Each unique organization received a grant of up to \$250,000 to develop a project that enriches New York City neighborhoods, ignites our communities, inspires us with new artistic work, or builds a better future through art and design in New York City.

Today, EmcArts's project concludes with the release of seven documentary videos and in-depth written profiles featuring selected grantees, which capture learning and insights from their two-year projects. These videos build on [previous documentation](#), including a series of [audio postcards introducing each of the projects](#), [blog posts with updates on each of the projects](#), and [podcasts featuring the grantees](#). The cohort also convened in the fall of 2012 to learn from each other. Overall, the partnership provided a unique opportunity to share learning and insights about innovation in the culture sector with other organizations, funders, and the field.

Judith Rodin, President of The Rockefeller Foundation, says about the project:

"The Rockefeller Foundation has been proud to support EmcArts in documenting the work of our NYC Cultural Innovation Fund grantees. These documentaries further illustrate an important link between innovation and culture. By leveraging cultural interventions, these organizations have found bold and new ways to increase the resilience and vitality of New York City and its residents."

The seven documentaries will be released today on ArtsFwd.org as well as on the Rockefeller Foundation website. Each provides a unique insight into the importance of fostering innovation initiatives in cultural organizations right here in New York City, and the role that cultural organizations can play in addressing the challenges facing New York City and its residents.

Richard Evans, President of EmcArts, comments:

"There are important new strategies being developed throughout the professional arts and culture field, but too often they remain isolated and not widely known. Without shared opportunities for learning, the field struggles to benefit from fresh thinking, courageous experimentation, and innovative approaches to challenges. It is part of EmcArts's vision to move the dialogue around innovation and adaptive change from the margins to the center of our discourse in the arts."

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The seven featured projects include the barter network **OurGoods.org**; the Public Access Design program at the **Center for Urban Pedagogy**; a collaboration between **Groundswell** and the Department of Transportation to improve traffic safety in Hunts Point; a new collaboration between **Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education** and **Dancing in the Streets** to produce a South Bronx cultural trail; an online platform from the **Wildlife Conservation Society** where every resident can share their vision of a sustainable future for the city; **Chimpanzee Productions's** photo sharing event, Digital Diaspora Family Roadshow; and the **Brooklyn Academy of Music's** new BAM Fisher building. Each of these projects tackles the big issues shaping New York City's cultural and civic agenda today.

Edwin Torres, Associate Director of The Rockefeller Foundation, noted:

"The grantees of NYC Cultural Innovation Fund reveal how cultural interventions can play a central role in the creation of a more inclusive economy in NYC. By utilizing creativity not just as a product, but as a methodology, our grantees have facilitated the integration of greater community voice into the allocation of public and private capital, among other outcomes. Most importantly, they have revealed that NYC's residents have credibility and on-the-ground expertise."

About The Rockefeller Foundation

For more than 100 years, The Rockefeller Foundation's mission has been to promote the well-being of humanity throughout the world. Today, The Rockefeller Foundation pursues this mission through dual goals: advancing inclusive economies that expand opportunities for more broadly shared prosperity, and building resilience by helping people, communities and institutions prepare for, withstand, and emerge stronger from acute shocks and chronic stresses. To achieve these goals, The Rockefeller Foundation works at the intersection of four focus areas – advance health, revalue ecosystems, secure livelihoods, and transform cities – to address the root causes of emerging challenges and create systemic change. Together with partners and grantees, The Rockefeller Foundation strives to catalyze and scale transformative innovations, create unlikely partnerships that span sectors, and take risks others cannot – or will not. To learn more, please visit www.rockefellerfoundation.org.

About EmcArts

Recognized as the leading not-for-profit provider of innovation services to the arts and culture sector nationwide, EmcArts (www.EmcArts.org) serves as an intermediary partner for arts and culture funders, and as a re-granting agency and service organization for the arts and culture field around innovation. Our innovation programs support the development and implementation of mission-centered new strategies by cultural organizations of all sizes. The programs range from directly incubating specific innovation projects to introductory programs that enable new thinking and build a culture of innovation across local cultural communities. Through ArtsFwd.org, we are a center for leaders in the sector to share and learn about the power of effective innovation. EmcArts is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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