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The Rockefeller Foundation funds EmcArts to document Innovation in Arts Organizations

16 short audio postcards bring to life the work of the 2011 Cultural Innovation Fund grantees

February 2, 2012—The Rockefeller Foundation has 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 as they implement their 2011 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. Kicking off with a series of audio postcards released today, the partnership provides 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 is proud to support EmcArts in documenting the work of our 2011 Cultural Innovation Fund grantees as a means to further our understanding of the link between innovation and culture. It is our hope that our grantees will use this as an opportunity for support and reflection on their processes while adding to the field’s understanding of what it means to embrace risk-taking in the pursuit of bold and new ideas.”

The sixteen audio postcards, featuring images from each group with audio narration produced by award-winning public radio producers, will be released today on ArtsFwd.org as well as 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. The projects are highlighted in four groups including equitable access to cultural offerings, affirming and supporting communities’ expression, better supporting artists and arts organizations, and environmental resilience. Following the postcards, thematic podcasts and multimedia profiles of CIF grantees will be released throughout the next 18 months.

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’ vision to move the dialogue around innovation from the margins to the center of our discourse in the arts.”

The sixteen 2011 Cultural Innovation Fund projects include a new collaboration between Groundswell Mural Project and the Department of Transportation to improve traffic safety in Hunts Point; a new mentorship

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program for Latino filmmakers from the National Association of Latino Independent Producers; 3D dance films of local ensembles from Dance Films Association; and a new online platform from the Wildlife

Conservation Society where every resident can share their vision of a sustainable future for the city. From El Puente creating new opportunities for communities in Brooklyn, to Casita Maria and Dancing in the Streets empowering long-time Bronx residents, to Mary Miss designing interventions that highlight sustainability along the Broadway corridor, these projects are designed to tackle the big issues shaping New York City's cultural and civic agenda today.

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

"The diversity of the projects within the Cultural Innovation Fund creates great breadth for our learning. From how best to facilitate expressions of pride in one's community, to how best to elicit our preferred ecological designs for our city, culture creates dialogue and learning for the collective building of a better city."

About The Rockefeller Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation's mission to promote the well-being of people throughout the world has remained unchanged since its founding in 1913. Today, that mission is applied to an era of rapid globalization. Our vision is that this century will be one in which globalization's benefits are more widely shared and its challenges are more easily weathered. To realize this vision, the Foundation seeks to achieve two fundamental goals in our work. First, we seek to build resilience that enhances individual, community and institutional capacity to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of acute crises and chronic stresses. Second, we seek to promote growth with equity in which the poor and vulnerable have more access to opportunities that improve their lives. In order to achieve these goals, the Foundation constructs its work into time-bound initiatives that have defined objectives and strategies for impact. These initiatives address challenges that lie either within or at the intersections of five issue areas: basic survival safeguards, global health, environment and climate change, urbanization, and social and economic security. For more information, please visit <http://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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