

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Public Arts Commission

FROM: Pauline Tannos, Public Arts Intern

DATE: November 14, 2014

SUBJECT: **Final Report by Grantee Collazo and Pierson on *The Housewarming Session***

Update

Grantees Isabelle Collazo and Dan Pierson have submitted their project's final report, which includes an expense report, a review of their performance, and other documentation.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Public Arts Commission review the attached documents and share any thoughts they might have with artist Isabelle Collazo, who is calling in to present at the meeting on November 18, 2014.

Prepared by:

Lisa Hatchadoorian

Attachment A. *The Housewarming Session's* Grant Form
Attachment B. *The Housewarming Session's* Final Report
Attachment C. Commentary on *The Housewarming Session's*
Attachment D. *The Housewarming Session's* Expense Report

GRANT AWARD FORM

Grant Award Form: Please complete the Project Questions below and include this page in your Final Report materials submitted to the address below.

The information provided in question #1 - 5 should be the same as the information on your Urbana Arts Grant Agreement with the City.

1. GRANTEE:

Name of Applicant or Primary Contact: Isabelle Collazo

Address: 2922 N Pulaski Floor 2
Chicago, IL 60641

Project Title: The BLUEPRINTING Project presents *The Housewarming Sessions*

2. TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDS AWARDED: \$1000.00

3. TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED TO DATE: \$500.00

4. GRANT PERIOD: April 1st, 2014 through April 1st, 2015.

5. EXPENDITURE DEADLINE: April 1st, 2015.

6. DATE OF PROJECT COMPLETION: September 6th, 2014

Isabelle Collazo

Envision 365 Grant Recipient

Final report for The BLUEPRINTING Project presents *The Housewarming Sessions*

Wednesday November 12, 2014

1. Since being awarded the Envision 365 Grant through the Urbana Arts Council, I founded a Chicago-based interdisciplinary collective called The BLUEPRINTING Project with artists Dan Pierson, sound designer, Anders Pollack, multimedia designer, Robin Lee, videographer, and Julie Boruff and Tia Greer, dance artists. I served as Artistic Director and Choreographer for our inaugural work *The Housewarming Sessions*, which we debuted in my apartment building in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago the last two weekends of August and later in an apartment building at 505 S. Race St in Urbana on September 5th and 6th. We used the grant funds for various things pertaining to the project: Artist fees, travel expenses, food and lodging, promotional materials, and various costume and set pieces for the work.

2. Before receiving the grant, the collective did not exist: it was just myself, Isabelle Collazo, and Dan Pierson with an interest in figuring out a way to connect movement and sound as well as other multimedia elements in performance. We had conducted several experiments but had not had space or funds to fully flesh out our ideas. Now, we are a dedicated group of artists with a website, an evening-length work, and a vision. We have print materials, a logo, photos, film, and an identity. This is a drastic shift from what we were before.

3. Number of hours spent on the project:

Planning

Planning rehearsal: 5 hours per week x 4 weeks per month x 3.5 months= 70 hours

Rehearsal: 9 hours per week x 4 weeks per month x 3.5 months= 126 hours

Dress rehearsals for Chicago and Urbana performances: 3 days at 12 hours each= 36 hours

TOTAL: 232

Administration

Phone calls, Emails, Social Media: 10 hours per week x 4 weeks per month x 3.5 months= 140 hours

TOTAL: 140

Promotion

Postering, talking to people in Urbana: 12 hours x 3 days= 36 hours

Designing posters and postcards: 15 hours TOTAL

Gathering addresses: 15 hours TOTAL

Filling out postcards and sending: 15 hours TOTAL

Website: 40 hours TOTAL

TOTAL: 121

Production

Filming for preview: 2 days at 12 hours each= 24 hours

TOTAL: 24

Final Presentation

Performances: 8 hours each performance date x 5 dates= 40 hours

TOTAL: 40

GRAND TOTAL: 557 hours

4. In Chicago, we had 15 audience members at both performances on the first night, 25 and 26, respectively, on the 2nd night, and 5 and 6 respectively on the 3rd night. In Urbana, we had 3 and 17 audience members on the first night, and 12 and 13 audience members on the 2nd night. This comes to 137 audience members total, 45 in Urbana.

There were six artists total who participated in the making of the project, four of whom went to school in Champaign-Urbana and still have ties to the city:

*Isabelle Collazo-Artistic Director and Choreographer

*Dan Pierson-Musician and Sound Designer

*Ander Pollack-Multimedia Designer

*Robin Lee-Videographer

Tia Greer-Dance Artist

Julie Boruff-Dance Artist

*University of Illinois alumnus

We had one guest artist from Urbana, Kate Kuper, lead the post-performance discussion on Friday evening, September 5th, 2014.

5. Working with the collaborating partners was challenging but ultimately, rewarding. My initial intention was to give all collaborating partners equal creative control so the piece was not just about fulfilling my own artistic desires. Once we got into the rehearsal process, it seemed as though no one was bringing outside ideas to the table, but rather, looking to me for guidance. Dan had some sound ideas but generally I was the driving force. I began to delegate tasks and take on a lot of the administrative responsibility and creative control. I came to realize that this was my project and although I could count on the collaborators to give opinions, insight, feedback, and to be authentic in the creative process, I would have to take the lead. Because there is little to no money in the line of work I am in, it was difficult to hold others accountable for work they hadn't finished. If I were to do it all again, I would invest more time in finding financial support and hiring a marketing director so all of the artists could be fairly compensated, and I would set clear expectations from the beginning and appoint myself as the director so there wasn't any confusion or resentment.

Besides this aspect of working with the collaborators, I felt as though we became very close and created something very meaningful. Everyone believed in the project and wanted to give extra time to make it the best it could be. We have plans to continue growing the work- we are showing a section of it in an elementary school in Chicago next week, another section at the Fulton Street Collective in December, and I am applying for several other grant and fellowship opportunities so we can expand and tour the work.

6. Please visit our website and watch the promotional video we created for *The Housewarming Sessions*:

www.blueprintingproject.com

<http://vimeo.com/103600544>

I have included a review written by University of Illinois Visiting Lecturer and Dance Educator Kate Kuper, who facilitated a post-performance discussion after our performance on September 5th. (Filed in Final Report Project Documentation.Collazo)

The Blueprinting Project: *The Housewarming Sessions*
Commentary by Kate Kuper

I am an audience member who likes to be informed before I attend a performance. I like to know about the influences and inspirations that spark an artist. When I know the backstory, I can experience things so much more fully.

Isabelle Collazo and her collaborators make that possible, through a website that allows viewers to educate themselves about the influences, background and source material for The Blueprinting Project. This dynamic form of a concert program is, in my opinion, a brilliant tool for aesthetic audience engagement and I want to see more of it!

Isabelle, as choreographer and Dan Pierson, as composer, have personalized and intimately shared their thoughts and processes through the use of technology. Influences, revealed through videos, images and text, give us access to their creative investigations.

Perhaps you don't know about Steve Reich's pattern music, or Anna Marie de Keersmaecker's dance making. Maybe you're not familiar with the piano hook from Petula Clark's hit "Downtown." How about memorable images of places you've never been? Now you can spend time with these images, sounds and concepts before they reappear -- fragmented, disrupted and referenced -- in *The Housewarming Sessions*.

Just as navigation through the website loops the visitor through visual and aural terrain, so the work itself also suggests a feedback loop. This is blueprint as mapping of experience.

One of Isabelle's themes includes capturing improvisation as choreography and revealing the process as the product. Working with Dan, she set parameters for movement improvisation in order to generate sound, and then captured those movement phrases as choreography, which were then danced back to sound. Working with other dancers, she did the same thing with conceptual investigation, such as using the literal idea of connection as a means of generating movement material.

The piece itself, as I saw it performed in an apartment in Urbana, played with disrupting notions of formality and etiquette, repeatedly building to crescendos of motion and behavior that bordered on the downright dangerous. The audience moved from room to room, perspective always changing depending upon where one was standing, squatting or sitting to see the work. This intimate and multi-sensory experience, not just for the eyes and ears but also for the nose (may I say that the scent of flowers played a role), was consistently compelling.

Here, I loop back to the knowledge base I garnered from the website. I

recommend you bring yourself into the loop, too. Investigate the site, attend a performance of *The Housewarming Sessions*, and be thrilled by these artists' commitment to exploration, collaboration and DIY theater spaces!

Type	Amount		
Artist Fees-Anders Pollack	\$150.00		
Artist Fees-Julie Boruff	\$350.00		
Artist Fees-Tia Greer	\$350.00		
Graphic Design	\$50.00		
Postcards	\$154.57		
Posters	\$128.04		
Post-Performance Discussion	\$50.00		
Slide Projectors	\$42.48		
Space Rental	\$150.00		
TOTAL:	\$1,425.05		

*Note: These are only expenses that have been supported by the Urbana Arts Grant fund