**Denver Foundation’s Arts Affinity Group** is a giving circle comprised of arts lovers and supporters who each have committed to fund arts learning activities in Metro Denver. The group gathers quarterly for meetings that include presentations from arts leaders about topics that are applicable to the group’s grantmaking interests. The group also has committees for deeper donor engagement through grantmaking, education, and outreach. To date, the AAG and its partners have awarded $180,000 in grants.

**Mission Statement:**
As advocates for learning through the arts, The Denver Foundation’s Arts Affinity Group (AAG) provides grants to advance innovation and engagement in the Denver metro arts community.

Art Tank 2015 winner Ian Cooke demonstrated Quetzalcoatlus from his album Antiquasaurus.

The Denver Foundation’s Arts Affinity Group (AAG) is pleased to partner again with the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation and Colorado Creative Industries to announce the third annual Colorado Art Tank. We are calling for proposals of arts-based ventures (all disciplines welcome) that respond to the concerns or learning needs of an identified market, and that are innovative, unique, and new to Colorado, AND that will knock our socks off. The top ventures will walk away with the funding to make their project a reality.

*We’re not looking for business as usual, but business unusual.*

**WHAT IS COLORADO ART TANK?**
Colorado Art Tank is a funding initiative of the Arts Affinity Group. Its purpose is to make strategic investments in Colorado’s best, new, and unique arts-based ventures. At a live event in February 2017, successful applicants will pitch their innovative ventures to a panel comprised of representatives from the Arts Affinity Group and its institutional partners who, along with an audience of community members, will award at least $65,000 in grant funding to the top scoring ventures at the event.

What is an “arts-based venture,” you ask? It could be many things, but in the context of this funding program, it’s an arts product, project, or idea that is innovative, creative, strategic, and reaches beyond standard engagement and practices to facilitate or accelerate learning through the arts. All disciplines of art are welcome, but artistic quality is key.

Any stage of development is eligible, but what this initiative does not fund is business as usual. (We do think what you already do is really important, which is why we have other resources to support your work! Visit denverfoundation.org for a list.) Intrigued? Read on!

**WHO’S ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?**
At the time an application is submitted, applicants must fit one of the following qualifications:

- Metro Denver-based nonprofit, tax exempt 501(c)(3) arts and culture organization
- Metro Denver-based arts and culture ventures with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor
- Metro Denver-based individual artists of any discipline, in conjunction with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor

*Please note, fiscal sponsors may also apply, and an organization may sponsor multiple projects.*
HOW DO I SIGN UP?

We wish everyone could come straight to the community event and pitch in person; however, we've developed a short application process to help narrow the invitation list.

The application is a two-page Letter of Interest (LOI) which will be reviewed by Arts Affinity Group members based on the published review criteria. Up to six ventures will be selected to pitch at the community event. Applicants will be notified of their application status on or close to December 8, 2016.

I'D LIKE TO SUBMIT A LETTER OF INTEREST - HOW DO I APPLY?

STEP 1: Create a two-page Narrative addressing all the following:

- Provide a descriptive title and a brief, one-sentence description of the venture.*
- What is your venture? How does it address learning through arts and demonstrate exceptional artistic quality? Describe it in detail.
- Whose brainchild is this? Describe who you are and, if applicable, the team or organization involved.
- Why is this venture important? Describe how it meets the criteria for Impact.
- Who will this venture serve, engage, respond to, target, etc? Describe how it meets the criteria for Responsiveness.
- What are the envisioned outcomes? Describe how it meets the criteria for Visibility.
- Describe how you will use the funds within calendar year 2017. Historically, grant awards have ranged from $10,000 - $30,000. Please include an estimated project budget.
- Is this an existing program or new venture? How does it fit into your organization’s programs and budget?

STEP 2: Choose an Image

- Provide one JPEG, GIF, or PNG image that best represents this venture's potential. Be creative.

STEP 3: Obtain a Letter of Support (Individual Artists only)

- Individual artists must provide a letter of support from the partnering nonprofit organization demonstrating commitment to the venture. Save the letter of support as a PDF document and title it with the partner organization's name (e.g. ABC Arts Organization_Letter of Support_Artist).

Please note, additional information may be requested.

STEP 4: Submit materials via email

- Attach all files in a single PDF and email to: aag@denverfoundation.org.

All applications must be submitted electronically by the deadline: 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 2, 2016

Incomplete or late letters, or letters which do not follow the instructions will be ineligible for review or funding.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I'M SELECTED TO PITCH AT THE COMMUNITY EVENT?

If you're selected, congratulations! Mark the community event date (February 7, 2017) on your calendar and start preparing your pitch. Check out Question #3 on page 3 for detailed information about the presentation requirements and suggestions.

In order to continue in the application process, applicants are required to participate in person at an orientation to be held January 2017, and to receive training prior to pitching their idea. They must also comply with all technical requirements.

HOW WILL I BE REVIEWED?

Initial applications along with the presentations at the community event will be scored on the following review criteria for a potential total of 50 points:

- **Impact** (30 pts): The venture* is innovative, new, and artistically accomplished with potential to initiate change.
- **Responsiveness** (10 pts): The venture is creative and strategic in the way it responds to the concerns or learning needs of an identified market.*
- **Visibility** (10 pts): The envisioned outcomes of the venture are viable and visible, reaching beyond the applicant's standard engagement and practice.

* See the Art Tank Vocabulary (page 3) for a description of “venture,” “market,” and other program vocabulary.

AAG Chair Rick Acosta presenting winners, Pop Culture Classroom, at Art Tank 2015

Letter of Intent Application Deadline: 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2016 | Staff Contact: Christiano Sosa, csosa@denverfoundation.org or 720-974-2606
SO, WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE AWARD AMOUNTS AND HOW CAN I USE THE FUNDS?

Award amounts will be determined by score. The top scoring ventures will be awarded a portion of the $65,000 pool – each amount to be determined at the community event, after elements of the ventures presented are weighed. Applicants must be willing and able to execute a phase of their venture at different funding levels, if selected.

Additionally, the audience gets a vote! At the Art Tank event, the venture receiving the most audience votes will receive an **Audience Award of at least $1,000**. This award could be delivered to any presented venture and does not have to be awarded to one of the top three ventures selected by the panel.

If awarded, funds from the program can only be used for costs associated with implementing the proposed venture. Read “Art Tank Will Not Fund” for restrictions for the use of funding.

ART TANK VOCABULARY

**Innovation** | Concerning the search for and the discovery, experimentation, development, imitation and adoption of new programs, new process, and new organizational design and structure. Importantly, please describe how your proposed venture is innovative within the context of your work.

**Learning** | Arts learning is the opportunity for people of all ages to experience, engage, and explore the arts.

**Market** | Your community, organization, peer group, new audiences, the broader field, etc. It is up to you, but the “market,” in this context, is whoever the venture targets, responds to, engages, or serves.

**The Pitch** | The five-minute presentation given at the community event, if selected.

**Product** | Something tangible. A tangible “thing” currently in any phase of development: conceptualization, design, fabrication, testing, marketing, or evaluation.

**Venture** | The product or idea being proposed.

ART TANK WILL NOT FUND*

- Applications submitted by for-profit organizations.
- Festivals or seasons of work.
- Grant administration or processing fees taken by an umbrella/parent organization as a percentage of the total award, with the exception of fiscal sponsors.
- Debt reduction.
- Re-granting.
- Religious institution-led or religious group-sponsored projects not open to participation by non-congregants.
- Religious institution-led or religious group-sponsored projects whose primary purpose is the religious socialization of individuals, or which exist as parts of religious sermons or services.
- Lobbying expenses.
- Expenses related to the construction of facilities.
- Food or beverage for receptions and hospitality functions.
- Fundraising projects.
- Equipment or capital expenditures.

* This list is not comprehensive.

ART TANK FAQ

1. **I’m an individual artist or a member of an artist collaborative. Am I eligible to apply?**

Yes, but make sure to follow these steps:

**Step 1 | Find a nonprofit partner**

Individuals or groups of artists must find a nonprofit, tax exempt 501(c)(3) partner for their proposed projects. Individual artists may act as the primary contact, creator, or overseer of the proposal. However, payment will be made to the partnering organization and not directly to any individual. Partnering artists and organizations are responsible for determining their own funding priorities.

**Step 2 | Acquire a letter of support**

Individuals or groups of artists must acquire a letter of support from the Director/President of your sponsor clearly demonstrating that the organization is willing to act as a partner and supports the proposal. The maximum length of the letter of support is one (1) page and must be submitted with the online application. Applications submitted by individual artists or an artist collaborative which do not include a letter of support will not be eligible and the applicant will not be asked to present at the community event.

2. **What do you mean by “business unusual?”**

We love this definition, provided by Karina Mangu-Ward of EmcArts in her blog post for the National Arts Marketing Project:

“Business unusual means letting go of the certainties of the past... in pursuit of a spirit of inquiry and experimentation towards new approaches... [It] means developing the muscles needed within our organizations to respond to this period of immense change in the way people engage in the arts.”

3. **If I’m selected to pitch, what should I think about when developing my presentation?**

To get those presentation juices flowing, here are a few ideas, bits of advice, and some straight up no-nos. Also, check out last year’s winners: [https://www.denverfoundation.org/aag](https://www.denverfoundation.org/aag)
ART TANK CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Things to Think About (all concept presentations may...)

• Use images and/or audio/visual support. This will have to be negotiated with us prior to the event, so be prepared to plan ahead.
• Incorporate art as part of the presentation. Remember artistic excellence is something we are looking for.
• Involve more than one person. Don't bring the entire orchestra, but if you think it takes more than one of you to get the point across, bring the team.

Some (not so) Subtle Recommendations (all presentations should...)

• Be fun, engaging, and exciting!
• Explain what it is you're proposing. If the audience cannot take away a clear understanding of your concept, no amount of jokes, stunts, or magic will help. Be clear.
• Be well-rehearsed. Before you present for your community, show your concept presentation to your friends, neighbors, family, whomever else you'd like. You don't want the time that counts to be your first.

The Nitty Gritty Details (all presentations must...)

• Be no more than 5 minutes. You will be politely cut off after 5 minutes—another good reason to make sure you're well-rehearsed.
• Be family friendly. Remember, this is a community event, so nothing above PG. If you wouldn't perform this pitch in front of your grandma or your kids, don't do it here.
• Be presented by a living person associated with the concept. No robots or stand-ins; not your computer, not your Apple Watch, not your granddad (unless he's on the team).

Additional details for the live pitch will be provided to those applicants selected to present at a community event.

4. Who is this mysterious panel?
The panel is comprised of philanthropists, artists, art professionals, community, and business leaders from the AAG and its partners. They will be asking questions about the projet and engaging in dialog with the presenters. Presentations will be evaluated based on the published review criteria.

5. What will the February 7th community event be like?
Fun! The event will be free and it will be held at in Hamilton Hall at the Newman Center. At the end of the day, some concepts will be funded, but the goal of the community event is to provide a supportive and welcoming space to try out something new. Regardless of whether your concept is selected, there will be an audience of people who will have a chance to learn about your awesome venture, and who know what kinds of partnerships you might discover?

6. When will I find out if my venture has been funded?
Grant recipients will be announced publicly during the closing proceedings of the community event. 2016 grantees include: Lighthouse Writers Workshop, Youth on Record, VSA / Access Gallery, Molina Speaks, Narrator’s Playground, and PlatteForum.

7. This sounds really fun, but I've never pitched an idea before and I'm a little nervous.
We're pretty new at this too, so we'll be offering some training and other opportunities for feedback.

ART TANK SUPPORTERS:

ABOUT THE DENVER FOUNDATION

The mission of The Denver Foundation is to inspire people and mobilize resources to strengthen our community. Since 1925, The Denver Foundation has helped generous people like you to be catalysts for good by building charitable legacies. As Colorado’s oldest and largest community foundation, we help people give back to Metro enver in ways that are meaningful -- to them and to the community. The Arts Affinity Group is a giving circle of The Denver Foundation.

ABOUT BONFILS-STANTON FOUNDATION

The Bonfils-Stanton Foundation believes that extraordinary arts and leadership are key to building a vibrant Colorado. Every day, it strategically invests in imagination and innovation, because cultivating the creative spark is vital to making the community an exciting place where people want to live, work, and thrive. Since its founding, the Foundation has distributed over $56 million in charitable contributions. More information is available at www.bonfils-stantonfoundation.org.

ABOUT COLORADO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Colorado Creative Industries, Colorado’s state arts agency, is a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Established to capitalize on the immense potential for our creative sector to enhance economic growth in Colorado, the mission of Colorado Creative Industries is to promote, support, and expand the creative industries to drive Colorado’s economy, grow jobs, and enhance our quality of life. http://www.coloradocreativeindustries.org/