After a successful first year, The Denver Foundation’s Arts Affinity Group (AAG) is pleased to announce a new, innovative grantmaking program modeled after the highly acclaimed Arizona Art Tank. After its first round of grants in 2014, the AAG wanted to look beyond the standard arts funding practices, and instead borrow ideas from the tech industry, the world of entrepreneurship, venture capitalism, and even reality television. What resulted is the Colorado Art Tank!

The AAG is interested in making strategic investments in Colorado’s best arts-based ventures, and the Colorado Art Tank is its newest funding initiative. This year, Bonfils-Stanton Foundation and Colorado Creative Industries have partnered with the AAG to increase the amount of funds available. Individual artists and nonprofits are encouraged to participate.

A Donor Giving Circle in the Spotlight!
At one live event in Metro Denver (January 21, 2015), up to six selected applicants will pitch their innovative ventures to a panel of AAG members, who, along with a community audience, will award grant funding to the top scoring ventures at the event. A total of $65,000 will be awarded.

An arts-based venture could be many things, but in the context of this funding program, it’s a “business unusual” product or idea that is innovative, creative, and strategic, and that reaches beyond standard engagement and practices to facilitate or accelerate learning through the arts.

For more information on the Colorado Art Tank, including the application for this exciting, donor-driven project, please visit http://denverfoundation.org/donors/page/the-arts or contact Christiano Sosa or Kelly Purdy at 303-300-1790.

The AAG has adopted the definition of “Business Unusual,” 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 (often thought of as “best practices” in our sector) in pursuit of a spirit of inquiry and experimentation towards new approaches (perhaps “next practices”).”

The top four highest scoring ventures will receive awards at the Colorado Art Tank community event.

About the AAG
The AAG is a giving circle comprised of arts lovers and supporters who have each committed $1,200 in 2014 to fund activities in arts learning 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.

AAG Mission Statement
The AAG desires to strengthen organizations by providing grants to nonprofits that utilize innovative techniques to provide arts learning, as well as enable the AAG to work within the community to further learning through the arts.