



Feedback from the Peer Jury

Since October 2023, after artsnb releases the results of its program competitions, general constructive comments and recommendations from the peer jury evaluation are available. Please note that these comments are summarized from the discussions in the peer jury meetings, and do not necessarily relate to every application submitted to that deadline. The goal of sharing this feedback is to provide some insight into the jurying process, and to strengthen future applications.

Summary of the peer jury feedback from the October 1st, 2023 competitions – Creation and Documentation

Creation Program

General Information and data:

- 154 applications submitted to the Creation program were evaluated by 7 peer juries, divided by artistic discipline.
- Dance and Theatre applications were juried together by a bi-disciplinary performing arts jury, since these two disciplines received too few applications to jury individually.
- Applications in Multidisciplinary Arts were juried alongside the discipline closest aligned with each respective project, as determined by artsnb staff.
- 4 applications were disqualified prior to peer jury evaluation due to ineligibility for this program.
- Grant assessment is a competitive process and budgets are limited. Remember that each competition receives a different set of applications and is evaluated by different groups of peer jurors. The 154 applications juried in this competition received the following results:
 - 45 applications received a status of "Recommended," and received funding.
 - 41 additional applications received a status of "Merit." This status indicates that the jury wished to recommend these applications for funding, but that the program budget was insufficient to fund all meriting applications.
 - 68 applications received a status of "Not Recommended." This status indicates that the jury did not recommend these applications for funding. It does not necessarily mean that the work lacks merit, rather, that the applications themselves were less competitive in the application pool received for this deadline.
- Of 45 grants awarded, 12 were awarded to applicants receiving their first grants from artsnb.
- Additional funding for the Artist in Residence program was provided by the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture (THC).
- For more detailed information including success rates by Category and by artistic discipline, please visit the [official press release](#) featuring the results of this competition.



General Feedback (all disciplines and juries):

Categories A, B and C

- The juries noted that many applicants submitted in the wrong Creation Category:
Category A for Established artists
Category B for Mid-career artists
Category C for Emerging artists
- The juries reminded applicants to apply under the category that best corresponds to their years of experience as a professional artist, according to the discipline-specific criteria in the [program guidelines](#).
- The juries cautioned that applying in a category below one's experience level does not increase an applicant's chances of receiving a grant.
Category C for Emerging artists
Category C for Emerging artists

Project description

- The juries appreciated project descriptions that clearly and concisely laid out the following elements:
- A description of the proposed work or works (e.g.: type, number, and scale or length of pieces to be created or performed; etc.) A feasible work plan (e.g.: estimated timeline of steps toward creating the final work; the roles to be carried out by the applicant and their collaborators; etc.) A brief statement on the applicant's approach to relevant themes (e.g.: why this project, and why now? how do the proposed choices of form or technique relate to the topic of the work? who is the desired audience for the work? what is the message or desired impact?)
- A brief explanation of how the proposed project will progress the applicant's artistic practice. (e.g.: how will this project challenge your skills? will this project allow you to make connections with new publics or collaborators? what are your ambitions for the completed artwork?)
- The juries also cautioned applicants to avoid overusing academic or technical language, and to prioritize clarity and specific details over abstractions. When it is necessary to use academic or technical language, the juries recommended defining these terms clearly, keeping in mind that the members of a peer jury come from a variety of artistic practices and backgrounds, and may not be familiar with every specialized concept.
- Budget
- The juries recommended including detailed budget breakdowns whenever an application includes multiple types of expenses, e.g., multiple types of materials, many different services required, collaborator fees, and explanation for any travel requested.
- The juries reminded applicants to consult the [program guidelines](#) to ensure they are not requesting funding for ineligible expenses.



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- For applicants listing revenues from additional funding sources (confirmed or unconfirmed), including grants from other organizations, the juries advised applicants to demonstrate which specific expenses will be covered by artsnb funding and which by other funding sources.
- For applicants listing revenues from additional funding sources (confirmed or unconfirmed), including grants from other organizations, the juries recommended explaining how the requested funding from artsnb would increase the scope or capabilities of the project.

Samples of work

- The juries wished to remind applicants that their samples of work should be relevant to the proposed project, demonstrating skills, techniques, or approaches that show the peer jury the applicant's capability to undertake the proposed project.
- The juries also recommended that applicants utilize the description boxes for each sample of work to indicate relevant information, e.g., dimensions, materials, applicant's role in a group performance, time stamps or page ranges, date the work was completed or performed, etc.
- Cultural Relationships
- Context from the artsnb team: this new section was added to the Project Information section of the grant application form in Fall 2023, and this Creation competition is one of the first competitions to have this field active. The intention of this field is to provide juries with additional information about the applicant's relationship to and protocols for engaging with communities involved in their projects.
- The juries shared the following recommendations for applicants completing this section of the application:
- The juries were critical of applications that did not include a response to the Cultural Relationships question when the project significantly relied on culturally specific spiritual or religious practices without stating the applicant's relationship to the relevant cultural practice.
- The juries cautioned applicants that a reliance on rhetorical shields (e.g.: "my friend or family member is from ___ community") is insufficient to demonstrate that the applicant has thoroughly considered how to engage respectfully with an identity that the applicant themselves does not experience.

Additional discipline-specific jury feedback:

Craft

- The jury noted that several applications were written with a focus on the artist's business practice, with little or no detail on their artistic practice and vision. While they appreciated seeing artists consider this side of their discipline, the jurors counselled applicants to consider that applications for artistic grants and business grants require



different approaches and kinds of information; artsnb jurors are asked to evaluate both the artistic merit and the impact and feasibility of the project.

Literary Arts

- The jury recommended outlining a clear work plan for the writing of new work, ie.: how much time will be devoted to research, writing a first draft, editing, workshopping, and other project activities.
- The jury recommended that applicants use the project description to explain the literary and technical choices they will make in the proposed new work, rather than only offering a synopsis of the narrative and/or themes to be explored.
- The jury found that some applications in this pool relied entirely on the success of the writer's previous works, without establishing a clear proposed project or rationale for the new work to be created.
- The jury appreciated when applications dealing with sensitive topics already had a sensitivity reader attached to the project, as this demonstrates both good planning and ethical practices on the part of the artist.
- The jury reminds applicants that if they are interested in developing their craft and challenging themselves, there is funding for mentorship or continued education through artsnb's [Career Development—Professional Development grant program](#).
- Media Arts
- The jury advised applicants to specify their role or roles within the proposed project to clarify their creative position within collaborative projects such as filmmaking.
- The jury especially recommended the inclusion of a detailed budget breakdown for applicants proposing larger-scale film projects with multiple collaborators and types of expenses, e.g.: collaborator fees, cast and crew fees, equipment rentals, etc.
- For projects seeking grants to subsidize projects already attached to a production company, the jury advised that these projects may be better served by film industry production grants.

Music

- The jurors felt that promotional/marketing projects, including music video production, did not suit the aims of the Creation program. Applicants seeking support for this type of project may be interested in the [Career Development – Professionalization and Promotion grant](#).
- Many applications had incomplete or missing information about project collaborators; jurors recommended including a detailed collaboration letter for active participants in the proposed project, which explains the roles and remuneration for each collaborator.

Theatre and Dance (Performing Arts)

- The jury emphasized the importance for applicants to demonstrate how the proposed project will further develop their artistic practice, even if this practice is well-established.



- Jurors recommended including a detailed collaboration letter for active participants in the proposed project, which explains the roles and remuneration for each collaborator.

Visual Arts

- For applicants proposing work about urgent or difficult topics (e.g.: war, mental health, immigration, climate change), the jury advised that applicants make it clear what their work aims to say about its topic, e.g.: what new approach or perspective will this project add to existing art about this topic? How will this project question or challenge previous narratives about this topic?
- For applicants proposing work in a new medium or style, the jury recommends that applicants explain their rationale for and the importance of that shift in their practice, and how they plan to go about it.
- The jury recommended that applicants include a sketch or prototype in their samples of work, to help the jury better visualize the proposed project.
- For applicants including samples of work that replicate or reinterpret work by other artists, the jury emphasized the importance for applicants to indicate the original source in the description.

Documentation Program

General data:

- 19 applications to the Documentation program were evaluated by a multi-disciplinary jury of peers.
- 2 applications were disqualified prior to peer jury evaluation due to ineligibility for this program.
- 1 application was withdrawn prior to peer jury evaluation as it was a duplicate application.
- Grant assessment is a competitive process and budgets are limited. Remember that each competition receives a different set of applications and is evaluated by a different group of peer jurors. The applications juried in this competition received the following results:
 - 5 applications received a status of "Recommended," and received funding.
 - 5 additional applications received a status of "Merit." This status indicates that the jury wished to recommend these applications for funding, but that the budget for this program was insufficient to fund all meriting applications.
 - 9 applications received a status of "Not Recommended." This status indicates that the jury did not recommend these applications for funding, but does not necessarily mean that the work lacks merit, rather, that the applications themselves were less competitive in the application pool received for this deadline.
- For more detailed information including success rates by artistic discipline, please visit the [official press release](#) featuring the results of this competition.



General Feedback:

- The Documentation program is intended to foster theoretical and critical discourse in the arts, as per the [program guidelines](#). The jury felt that many of the applications submitted to this competition did not include information on critical discourse or contextualization, and that those applications did not speak to the spirit of this program.
- The jury recommended including detailed budget breakdowns whenever an application includes multiple types of expenses, e.g., multiple types of materials, many different services required, collaborator fees, and explanation for any travel requested.
- The jury cautioned that applicants should not assume that their application will be evaluated by someone familiar with their past work, and recommended that applicants write a clear and detailed project description to explain concepts, themes, and past work if relevant to this project.