

**Film and Video Arts Project Grant
February 1, 2018
General Expert Panel Comments**

Comments made by the expert panel during the assessment of applications submitted to the February 1, 2018 deadline are outlined below. Please note that these comments provide a summary of the expert panel's assessment and do not necessarily relate to every application submitted to this deadline. **The expert panel does not provide individual comments.**

Project Description

The expert panel favoured clear applications that presented projects of strong artistic merit, original concepts, opportunities for artistic growth, and a willingness to take artistic risk.

The project description should always start with a short statement of what the applicant is doing and the amount and type of support requested.

A premise is not a proper project description. The description should include an artist statement and demonstrate how the artist will execute their project. This includes timelines, the medium the project will be shot on, length of finished project, personnel involved, and the aesthetic. The panel members were looking for more than a synopsis or pitch.

The project description and budget should support and complement each other. Activities defined in the description should have a matching line item in the budget and vice versa.

The number of days on a principal shoot should always be mentioned in the proposal and budget. This will allow the expert panel to examine the budget in context.

Artists that wish to revive/change an existing work should provide an artistic justification for the reworking, describe the feedback obtained from earlier versions and indicate how this feedback is being used going forward.

Animation is not a generic discipline and the expert panel appreciates the variety and styles used in animation. The one thing that they have in common is the need for time for the artists to create. The panel supported those artists that requested subsistence for a specific time period and then supplied a detailed creation timeline that included processes and activities for the period where they requested support.

The Expert Panel was excited to see so many artists experimenting with more complex technologies such as 3D and 360. However, artists that were supported include an artistic statement as to why and how this technology was chosen, and how it informed their choices in the creation of their film/video art works. Similar to animation, many times the request is for subsistence. A detailed timeline for the period of support should be provided -- similar to the animators. The panel was also interested to know what future platforms these artworks would be displayed at.

The panel supported emerging artists and those artists trying new genres or formats if they had indicated some sort of formal mentorship or had surrounded themselves with an experienced team.

The jury gave priority to proposals that clearly indicated some form of growth for the artists involved.

Applications should be thorough but succinct.

The Expert Panel support documentarians that provided written proof of permission to film documentary subjects and provided proof of permission to use locales.

The Expert Panel was as interested in process as in the artistic statement. They supported artists that provided clear descriptions on how the work would be achieved.

The Expert Panel provided support to artists requesting support for production and creation if they indicated where this artwork would be shown or used. E.g.: does a screenplay already have plans to be filmed; on which platform will a newly created short film exist? Specify the afterlife of a creation.

Letters of recommendation from industry experts in support of a project or artist played a key role in determining support for many artists. This was especially important for emerging artists and artists changing genres.

Emerging artists were encouraged to start with smaller projects -- one episode instead of an entire series, a short instead of a feature length film. Further support for more ambitious projects can be sought at a later date once more experience has been gained, or a pilot has been filmed.

Support Materials

Video support should always be provided for at least the director and ideally all key creative principals unless the applicant is a writer. Even then, if writers have clips from their filmed screenplays, it is helpful to include them.

The video materials should be:

- short clips
- be relevant to the proposed project in some way
- be relatively recent
- a descriptor uploaded in the attachments as to what the artist wanted the panel members to focus on in the clips was also appreciated (as well as time codes, if applicable)

As per the guidelines, all video support material must be presented in the form of downloadable links either e-mailed to the address indicated in the guidelines, or as a separate attachment, as indicated in the GATE application. These “officially submitted” materials were viewed at the Expert Panel meeting. All other materials, such as links embedded in the project description, YouTube links (which are expressly not permitted in the guidelines) may or may not have been viewed or discussed at the panel meeting.

The Expert Panel found it difficult to assess the artistic ability and artistic merit of artists proposing film production/and or professional development that did not provide video support materials. These resulted in them getting a lower score and thus were given lower funding priority.

Resumes should be included for all principal artists and personnel.

If an actor is key to the successful creation of the artwork, resumes should be included for them as well.

Applicants should not assume that expert panel members will be familiar with previous work. The panel prioritized those applicants that provided support materials that clearly illustrated their artistic ability.

The first few minutes of the support video is what makes the most impact on an expert panel. Applicants are advised to be extremely selective of what they send in for the panel to see.

The GATE application system can sometimes be confusing. Applicants are encouraged to not wait until the final day to apply to leave room to learn the program, ask for assistance as needed and thus avoid support material and budget errors.

Budgets

The Expert Panel looked for indications of financial support other than the AFA, including other public and private funding bodies, fundraising and the artists themselves. For the panel, this indicated serious commitment on the part of the artists.

Budgets should reflect all funding sources, both pending and confirmed.

Those who use crowd-sourced funding as part of their financial supports should provide evidence of success in the past using this method as well as providing a link to the campaign they are currently running.

Large contingencies are not permitted by the AFA. Every funding agency is different. Artists should check with agencies prior to making assumptions on budget formats.

Production personnel should be broken out by role on the budgets and not lumped together.

Actors and crew should be compensated in a fair manner.

Artists should either request subsistence OR artists fees, but not both.

Marketing

Applicants that requested marketing support should provide a clear, detailed marketing plan. Indicating that applicants will use social media is not a complete marketing plan.

It is helpful if applicants demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about the intended target audience that they are marketing their work to: e.g. film festivals, broadcasters etc. The marketing plan should show that they have done their homework.

Professional Development/Training

The expert panel was Alberta focused. Applicants that were studying out of Alberta and did not indicate that they would be back to share their knowledge and pursue their art practice in Alberta, were given a lower priority.

Artists seeking basic film training are encouraged to find it within Alberta. The panel understood that extremely specialized or high level film techniques may have to be sought elsewhere,

Accessing assistance

The expert panel encourages applicants to make use of grant writing support available from the film collectives such as FAVA in Edmonton and CSIF, EMMEDIA and Quickdraw in Calgary and PRIMAA in Grande Prairie etc. They have expertise that can be tapped for everything from putting together a proposal to supplying equipment at lower rates.

Applicants are encouraged to also access the resources available from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) such as grant workshops and one on one consultation with the program consultant.