

Film and Video Arts Individual Project Grants September 1, 2022 Submissions General Panel Comments

Comments made by the expert panel during the assessment of applications submitted to the September 1, 2022 deadline are outlined below. Please note that these comments provide a summary of the panel's assessment and do not necessarily relate to every application submitted to this deadline. **The panel does not provide individual comments.**

Project Description:

- The panel appreciated artistic endeavours that experimented visually, expressed passion for the subject, and pushed artists out of their comfort zone.
- The panel appreciated well put together grants, with an accurate detailed budget, were concise, outlined development processes, supplied relevant support materials, and demonstrated a passion for the project.
- The panel appreciated applicants who opened with a sentence outlining exactly what they were doing and what they wanted the AFA to support, i.e.: "I would like to request \$15,000 from the AFA to film my seven minute animation that I have been developing for the past two years." This permits the panel members to read the rest of the application with this context in mind. A log-line/elevator pitch is valuable but, on its own, is not enough in an application and should be saved for the project description.
- For those attempting a new process, i.e. switching from play writing to screen writing, having mentors is encouraged and having a mentor included in the application was make or break.
- For artists switching genres, i.e. comedy to horror, or live-action filmmakers incorporating some animation, panel members appreciated evidence of research and development in the new area.
- The panel found that many applicants had trouble expressing their ideas and thoughts, and recommends grant writing workshops either through the AFA or through sector collectives. Many support organizations are experienced in assisting applicants and applying criteria for a wide range of industry funders.
- The panel suggests that all key creatives (DOP, Editor, Director) are named and CVs provided as it was sometimes unclear what role the applicant was playing within this project.
- The panel found many projects could have benefitted from the use of a story editor or equivalent story mentor position.
- Applicants that specialize in different mediums need to explain their proposal in simplified non-technical terms (in layperson language) as the panel is comprised of many film disciplines.
- Applicants who work in specific genres such as horror or comedy would benefit from understanding the history of the genre and where their work fits within this context.
- Thematic mood boards/look books were sometimes provided, but applicants need to explain why these examples were provided in the context of their project. Where and how do the images of the look book apply to the story, or the meaning of the project? Any visuals provided should help tell their developing story.

- Applicants should understand the types of films the AFA supports versus other film programs. This affects approach and terminology for the application and how the panel assesses projects.
- Applicants should provide a sense of who the potential audience is for their film/screenplay. What is the impact beyond the artist?
- The panel recommends that applicants check whether their experimental work might be a better fit in the AFA's Visual Arts and New Media funding opportunity. Applicants should check with AFA consultants to discuss which discipline might be the best fit for their project prior to submission.
- Applicants may apply for different phases of their projects. Applicants should indicate which phase they are requesting support for from the AFA. Applicants should not be afraid to apply for just one phase as appropriate.
- The panel read through many applications and preferred simple black text on white background. The use of colours and "over design" can make reading difficult. Images are best used in support material. Applicants should check spelling, grammar, and timelines.
- The panel found many projects exciting and creative, but the budgets may have been unrealistically optimistic. Some of the processes required to do the project seemed beyond the applicants' current ability.
- The help of a qualified mentor went a long way in assuring panel members that the project would be viable.
- The panel felt that some proposals were premature as they were not yet at a stage where they were ready to ask for funding support.

Budget:

- The budget portion of the application is weighted heavily in adjudication. Those who are new to budgeting should find resources either from the AFA or film collectives for advice and support.
- Budgets should be precise enough to demonstrate what the entire process will be, but not so granular that it becomes confusing or onerous.
- Budget comments in the provided boxes are useful for the panel. Define and break down the units and explain where rates are from. Are they industry standard, artist-run centre rates, etc.?
- Applicants should provide context if key creatives are paid less than industry standard (e.g. a friend doing you a favour for free, or an honorarium). There are industry standard rates for animators, story editors, etc. and those who deviate from these rates should justify/explain.
- Artists deferrals for fees should be indicated in the expenses and balanced out in the income so that it nets to zero or to the agreed upon honorarium.
- If the project is dependent on funding from other sources, applicants are advised to provide a Plan B illustrating how the project would be done if the additional support does not materialize.
- \$15,000 is not a large amount in the grand scheme of things. Contingency should not be more than 5% of the budget. 30% contingencies that other funders request do not apply at the AFA. Applicants should be aware what each agency sees as appropriate.
- Applicants requesting subsistence should define the expense. Subsistence supports housing, transportation, food, and childcare, and expenses that do not fit in those categories are not supported by the AFA.

- 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.

Support Material

- The panel found it difficult to assess the artistic ability and merit of applications related to production without video support material.
- Don't supply materials that are not directly relevant to the project at hand. Context as to why applicants submit materials is helpful, i.e. "...please see clip A to see how I use dialogue."
- Those applying for projects in middle stages of production should supply a rough cut or snippets. These are more helpful than screen grabs.
- When applicable, if there is an animatic or motion test, panel members would appreciate seeing it.
- Applicants are advised to adhere to the AFA guidelines regarding length of video clips. The panel is not required to watch beyond this, so judicious curation of the clips should showcase your past work to its best effect.
- For writing samples, 15 pages is suggested, but not mandated. All writing samples should be formatted in industry standard. For more experimental or non-traditional works, provide a context for the script/writing/story structure/planning.
- Number support material in the order you wish the panel to view. This should be detailed in the body of your project description.
- Applicants applying for writing only would benefit from supplying a draft from whatever stage applicants are at the time of application.
- It is advantageous to include support material relevant to the genre and media proposed in the application. For example, if you are seeking funds for a dramatic project, it is helpful to supply a dramatic video sample rather than a short documentary.