

# MEDIA ARTS IN MINNESOTA

potential impacts of collaboration

# Introduction

The evolution of the media and arts has, particularly in recent decades, demanded an increase in collaboration between individuals and organizations in arts communities all over the world. Increased commercial rent, economic instability and cultural shifts have influenced the way artists and arts organizations function in today's environment. Collaborative models are attractive to arts communities for their practicality and added value. The proposed media center collaboration in Minnesota has the potential to create opportunity and economic stability within the media arts community of the Twin Cities. Our research team addresses the potential opportunities and challenges of a collaboration through this analysis, referencing the research question: How can these four organizations collaborate and best manage the collaboration?

Here we assess the options for the creation and management of a collaborative, shared-space media center anchored by these four primary organizations: The Minnesota Film & TV Board, Independent Film Project (IFP), Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN) and The Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul. Through conversations with the executive director of each of these organizations, we identified the following as important themes and inquiries that would in turn guide the research and analysis:

- the impact the collaboration could have on each organization's effectiveness;
- the impact the collaboration would have on funding;
- whether the collaboration could increase the visibility of the organizations; and
- whether the collaboration could increase the capacity of the organizations to serve their members, audiences and stakeholders.

These guiding questions provided the foundation for our analysis and ultimately, our recommendations regarding the potential collaboration.

It is important to note that an analysis of operational details related to the proposed media center collaboration is being conducted by a contracted arts consulting firm, Artspace. Our framework is dependent partly on the results of the Artspace feasibility study and should be noted as such.

The expertise of our research team lies in public affairs, urban planning and policy, which led us to focus our analysis on the management and governance of the proposed collaboration. The methodology and data collection strategies described in the following section will further outline our research design and how these methods provide us with the resources to address our research question.

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## Primary Collaborators

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### IFP Minnesota

IFP Minnesota's mission is to advance a vibrant and diverse community of independent film and media artists through networking, education, funding, and opportunities for showcasing their work. IFP MN envisions a world where expression through images is encouraged and valued. It is the goal of IFP MN to lead the way in supporting the independent filmmaker by creating a healthy and viable filmmaking community in Minnesota.



### Minnesota Film and Television

Minnesota Film and TV's mission is to create jobs and economic growth by promoting and supporting the state's production industry. And we believe the best way to accomplish that is one successful service request at a time.



### The Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul

The Film Society's mission is to foster a knowledgeable and vibrant appreciation of the art of film through a commitment to exhibiting the very best of contemporary and historical independent, local, national and international cinema to Minnesota audiences. In doing so, we inform our audiences about the cultures, histories, cutting-edge news and filmmaking artistry from countries around the world.



### Minneapolis Telecommunications Network

MTN's mission is to serve the residents of Minneapolis with tools, programs, and activities to engage and connect diverse residents and institutions through the exchange of ideas, stories, and information. In this way MTN strives to build a vibrant democracy in which all share social, cultural, and economic vitality.

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## Research Methods

The nature of organizational management typically calls for qualitative research that allows investigators to understand the nuances and complex relationships that exist in any organizational model. In order to fully capture the types of detailed information this project required, our primary data sources consisted of multiple in-depth, structured interviews. These interviews allowed us as researchers to identify common themes, areas of concern, and other nuances of personal and organizational opinion.

Initial in-depth interviews were conducted with the executive director of each of the primary organizations named in this potential collaboration. Secondly, our team contacted leaders of successful arts collaborations in the United States and Canada. These interviews allowed us to focus on multiple components that exist in successful collaborations, including funding, government relations, management, and economic impact.

A total of eight interviews were conducted, four with partner organizations and four with outside organizations. Our goal was for two of the four researchers to conduct each interview in order to ensure that we clearly understood and documented these valuable conversations. Phone interviews were the exception to this protocol, but were performed in a similar manner. All interviews were transcribed and organized according to a set of codes that guided the analysis process. This method allowed our research team to perform deductive reasoning to address the research questions described above.

The research team also identified a need to gather information from organizational staff about the potential impact of a collaboration. Although the number of organizational staff provides a small sample size, we believe it is valuable to include the perspective of staff members that may be affected by a collaboration in a new physical space. Staff from each primary organization were invited to participate in a brief online survey to provide valuable insight. More information about the staff survey can be found in Appendix B of this report. Throughout the data collection process we considered other potential stakeholders such as governmental and community representatives that could provide valuable input, however these sources were unmanageable in the time frame allowed to our team.

Primary source documents collected from each organization provided important information about funding streams and programs. The use of in-depth interviews, a simple survey and primary source documents allowed our team to map the appropriate data through analysis and provide appropriate recommendations based on our findings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in the area of media arts shared space collaborations is scarce and limited. The various needs that exist for different types of arts organizations are vast, so much of the existing academic literature is focused on one particular type of arts medium. Throughout the research process, we found almost no related literature to media arts specifically. We focused our literature review primarily on research around collaborative governance, the concept of placemaking, and economic impact through creative industries.

Governance structures in the nonprofit sector are varied and continue to evolve in time. According to Bryson, Crosby and Stone (2006), governance is “a set of coordinating and monitoring activities that enables the survival of the collaborative partnership or institution” (p.49). Environmental and contextual factors will naturally influence the effectiveness of any organization, and the chosen governance structure of the organization is just as complicated. Types of collaborative governance include:

- **self-governance:** decision making occurs in frequent member meetings;
- **lead organization governance:** one lead organization makes decisions on behalf of the collaboration;
- **network administrative organization governance:** a separate entity manages the collaboration (p.49).

Bryson et al. also cite the importance of building legitimacy, managing conflict and building trust as the foundational groundwork for a successful collaborative governance model.

Related specifically to various arts communities around the world is the concept of “placemaking.” This formalized concept is relatively new, but has existed informally for centuries in salons, plazas and markets, for example. The research around placemaking included here defines the idea as a moment when “...partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities” (Markusen et al. 2010 p.3). Markusen’s study provides evidence that opportunities for community members grew significantly through the creation of an arts and cultural center.

Research around “creative cities” concluded that “Large cultural institutions will always be important elements of a city’s creative fabric, drawing tourists, showcasing the highest calibre of talent, and serving as important economic anchors for a wide range of specialized suppliers in the city-region” (Evans et al. 2006, p.8). These large cultural institutions act as a “place” for individuals and groups to gather and exchange ideas or create art. As Minneapolis and St. Paul continue to grow and compete economically with other major cities, this benefit can be seen in projects at the Guthrie Theater, Walker Art Center, the Ordway and other arts organizations in the region.

Graeme Evans (2006) and a team of researchers studied the “creative economy” in London and Toronto, and how it has impacted the two cities (p.2). The city of London’s Creative London initiative supported strategies for economic growth and includes networking and relationship-building across sectors as well as the promotion of London’s creative industries, including theatre and film. The initiative was formed in 2003 and although experienced success, was abolished in 2010 following the global financial crisis.

From the many lessons learned through their investigation of Toronto’s and London’s creative economies (Evans et al. 2006), examples include findings that:

- “Cultural and creativity-based programs offer an effective way to address social exclusion and community renewal” (p.6).
- “Affordable space for creative activity and enterprise is a consistent and enduring issue” (p.14).
- “Multi-level, multi-sector support of the creative economy is critically important” (p.21).

These lessons, a vision for placemaking, and collaborative governance are all important findings from previous research and published literature. Visionary leadership and grassroots-level activity can form a strong foundation for collaborative work amongst arts organizations.

Although the literature around creative placemaking is a rich and an emerging field, there were clear gaps in the academic studies we found. The emergence of media arts centers are a new phenomenon, and planning for them can best be approached by reviewing case studies and successful implementations of collaborations.

## BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

The economic impact possible through a media arts collaboration in Minneapolis-St. Paul is far-reaching and highly valuable to the midwest region. As described in our literature review, “creative cities” have the ability to draw economic activity to the region and increase arts participation within local communities. Evans et al. (2006) report that “a set of creative industries producing ‘cultural goods’ – including film and television production, new media, electronic games, publishing, advertising, design, music, and the visual and performing arts – now generate a large and steadily increasing share of our international trade, employment, and gross domestic product, locally, regionally, and nationally” (p.2).

The evolution of arts and media, and the media arts industry, is primed for this type of economic activity under favorable circumstances. According to the 2013 Minneapolis Creative Vitality Index (CVI) Report, Minneapolis is home to a highly productive creative population and boasts a “creative vitality” score four and a half times higher than the national average. The economic contribution from creative industries in 2013 was estimated at \$700 million and a media center would add significant value.

Film and television projects typically require a significant amount of labor and equipment. This provides employment opportunities for local crews and industry. Our conversations with directors and managers of individual organizations made it very clear that these jobs are important to them as directors, and to the region’s economy. Ann Markusen’s research on placemaking provides concrete evidence that collaborative art spaces:

- recirculate residents’ incomes locally at a higher rate
- re-use vacant and underutilized land, buildings, and re-use infrastructure
- create jobs in construction, local businesses, and cultural activity
- expand entrepreneurial ranks of artists and designers
- train the next generation of cultural workers; and
- attract and retains non-arts-related businesses and skills (p.4).

Networking within the media arts industry is crucial. A Minnesota media collaborative could act as a boundary organization for the media arts community. Instead of organizational silos this space creates a boundary juncture, which according to Quick and Feldman (2014) is a place to join together instead of, be barriers (p.2). If this collaboration can create a common ground from which to work, it will posture these organizations to be more effective and resilient.

These benefits are the driving factors of the media center collaboration, and will continue to drive the project as it evolves. It is crucial that key stakeholders and leaders sustain this commitment to economic benefits and the myriad opportunities for the region and local communities.

## SUCCESSFUL MODELS

The work presented here required the research of successful cases of arts collaborations, which evolved into the interviews described in the methodology section of this report. Though only one of the cases reviewed is specifically a media arts organization, all organizations presented here provide constructive insights regarding funding, governance, visibility and benefits of collaborative space sharing.

**Open Book** is a space for everyone, a meeting place or quiet sanctuary, a destination for all who are interested in or inspired by the literary and book arts in Minneapolis, MN. The center houses three primary organizations: The Loft Literary Center, Milkweed Editions and Minnesota Center for Book Arts. Open Book has become a shining example of collaboration in the United States.

**A.R.T./New York** supports nonprofit theatre companies in New York City by providing four core programs: Funding, Training, Space, and Connections. Founded in 1972, A.R.T./New York assists over 300 member theatres in managing their theatre companies effectively so they may realize their rich artistic visions and serve their diverse audiences well. Over the years, A.R.T./New York has earned a reputation as a leader in providing progressive services to their members which have made the organization an expert in the needs of the New York City nonprofit theatre community.

**Méduse** is a cooperative of producers and presenters dedicated to the arts, culture, and community outreach. Opened in 1995, the 4,000 square-foot facility in Quebec City's vibrant Saint Roch neighborhood houses ten influential nonprofit arts and culture organizations—Antitube, Atelier de la mezzanine, Avatar, Bande vidéo, Engramme, Œil de Poisson, Productions Recto-Verso, Spirafilm, VU and La Manif d'art. These artistic organizations came together around a major urban renewal and building restoration project overseen by architect Émile Gilbert and funded by Heritage Canada, le Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Québec's Ministère de la culture, des communications et de la condition féminine, the City of Quebec, Gaz métro, Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins and the member organizations themselves.

**Ninth Street Independent Film Center's** mission is to secure a lasting space for the creation and dissemination of independent media that promotes democracy, community participation, cultural preservation, access and lifelong learning to a diverse community of artists and audiences. Founded in 2001 in San Francisco, Ninth Street has provided countless opportunities to community members and independent filmmakers in Northern California.

These examples of successful arts collaborations provide valuable insight into the collaborative process, governance and outcomes that are dependent on each locale's circumstances. After completing basic research of each organization, our team developed an appropriate interview protocol that would allow us to gather useful information related to the collaboration process.

# Discussion of Findings

Interviews and data collection allowed our research team to develop clear themes and acknowledge the concerns of each organization involved in the potential collaboration. Primary concerns heard throughout the process include the **financial impact** of a new media center, the challenge of **identity** within a collaboration, and a **governance structure** to manage a collaborative space. Here we will address the primary concerns heard from each director and how successful collaborative arts organizations have mitigated the same issues. Results of the staff survey can be found in the appendix of this report and in this section we outline in detail the common themes heard in all interviews related to both challenges and successes.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

Each director we spoke to voiced concerns around funding streams and the financial impact of a collaboration. The analysis of budgets and current funding statuses is outside the scope of this project, therefore we chose to focus our energy towards the management of funds and how funding streams may evolve within a collaboration.

Though a capital fundraising campaign is always a possibility, our data shows overwhelmingly that a capital campaign is not cost-effective and other funding options should be prioritized. Other collaborative arts organizations cited both public and private funders as being attracted to the concept of collaborative space sharing and none of those organizations have experienced major funding cuts as a result of collaboration.

Managing the changes in funding options, however, requires clearly written guidelines and bylaws that protect each organization. One collaborative organization

cited a written agreement that if one funder was working with one or two of the organizations housed in the shared space, a third organization would not be allowed to pursue a relationship with that funder. This type of non-competition agreement allows the organization to more effectively manage development efforts and alleviates competition for funding within the collaboration.

Ginny Loulouides of A.R.T./New York notes one strategy used by her organization, in which “you have to make it very clear to the funders that you are creating a savings through economies of scale. But that doesn’t mean that your mission does

not need to be funded as it was before”. Economies of scale, in this instance, are based on the fact that the organization is saving money through the sharing of space and basic resources, redirecting time and energy to vital programming. Funders respond positively to fiscal responsibility, thus economic balance through collaboration creates opportunities for continued support.

Fiscal responsibility in a shared space is enhanced by the addition of revenue streams through leasing space and managing the revenue in such a way that each organization benefits. The Ninth Street Independent Film Center in San Francisco allocates space to anchor tenant organizations and also opens their doors to filmmakers and producers that need a temporary space, studio, or screening room. This revenue stream lessens the burden of operational fundraising for anchor tenant organizations and allows them to focus primarily on programming and events. Organization directors cited that the tenant organizations housed in their shared collaborative space pay substantially less rent than they would in a standard commercial space, thus allowing them to save money on operational costs and reallocate energy to programming needs.

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### IDENTITY AND VISIBILITY

Through our conversations with the directors of each primary organization, we heard concerns about the potential loss of identity through collaboration. In addition, each of the directors is aware of the great potential for increased visibility and realize that economic pressure demands more visibility for the media arts industries in Minnesota. Our research shows that rather than a loss of identity and visibility, other collaborative arts organizations have experienced the opposite. Through a shared space and a joint public image, organizations in shared spaces have become more visible to the community at large.

In San Francisco, the larger “umbrella” organization of Ninth Street Independent Film Center manages the daily operations and financial details of the space, so that partner organizations like the Center for Asian American Media can shift the primary focus to their mission. Similarly, Méduse states that it “now has its own identity and each center has their identity. For example, when there’s an event in the center, a launch or an opening, sometimes they make two, three, or four openings together on the same night. So of course a lot of people will go around and tour four events. It makes visibility much better.” Through proximity to each other, the smaller organizations housed under one roof are able to leverage collective power to benefit everyone. A clearly defined governance structure can guide these processes to be inclusive and non-competitive for all organizations involved in the collaboration.

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### COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Lastly, the biggest concern voiced among the directors interviewed was the question of how the collaboration could best be governed. A collaboration can be managed in a number of ways, dependent on the needs of each organization. As described in this report, arts collaborations can provide economic growth and impact for a neighborhood or city when done successfully. Coupled with the challenge of funding, organizational governance is crucial to the success of any collaborative model.

All but one of the successful collaborative arts organizations included in this research are managed by a separate 501(c)3 organization and have reported great success with this model. Initial funding challenges and successes vary across these three collaborative groups, dependent on circumstances in each city. Each of these three organizations cited increased visibility and funding opportunities under the model of a separate entity that manages the collaborative space.

A board of directors for the managing organization handles governance issues related to their own mission, while the tenant organizations continue to focus on their respective missions and programming needs. The tax status of this entity

as a 501(c)3 organization allows for fundraising opportunities as needed, and other additional tax benefits offered to nonprofit organizations. As a champion of Open Book in Minneapolis, one director cited that,

*“The founders created Open Book as a separate 501(c)(3), and we decided that the Open Book board would include an executive staff member of each of the three founding partner organizations (The Loft Literary Center, Milkweed Editions, and Minnesota Center for Book Arts), one board member from each of the three founding organizations, and up to five community leaders. We wanted to protect the building for the future, and we knew that when leadership transitions occurred there would be new challenges; we just didn’t know what those challenges would be. We believed that including community leaders on the board was important. At the same time, we wanted the staff and board leaders of the founding organizations to be in the majority in order to ensure the fulfillment of the original vision and mission of Open Book.”*

As seen in the success and growth of Open Book, Ninth Street Independent Film Center, and A.R.T./New York, this model allows the tenant organizations to increase their own visibility and focus on programming.

One crucial component of any governance structure is the set of guidelines by which the organization operates. As defined by Emerson et al. (2012) in their work on collaborative governance, the concept refers to “the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished” (p.2). This indicates a level of power that organizations can leverage when carried out in partnership with public and private partners. The power of advocacy and community support is immeasurable and invaluable to any public-private-nonprofit collaboration. It is clear from our research that the partners of the proposed media center project must form strong cross-sector relationships.

According to our team’s research and that of notable academic researchers, successful collaborative governance includes well planned, openly communicated protocols, and the appropriate agreements to govern the umbrella organization. Trust, as noted by other successful collaborative arts organizations, is crucial to the creation and management of any arts collaboration. A written agreement provides the foundation for trust amongst all stakeholders, particularly the tenant

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## Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this report, our team has developed a set of long- and short-term recommendations for the media center collaboration project in question.

A collaboration cannot be successful without trust, communication and power (resources). Each of these components is related to the others through complex interdependent relationships. These relationships depend on clear communication of a shared vision, a clearly define governance structure, and increased opportunity for all members of the collaboration. Good communication is crucial to the exercise of power through advocacy and resources. Power and communication lead to a sense of trust among key stakeholder groups. These components are challenging to manage but provide a stable foundation for the collaboration when done effectively. The following recommendations are meant to guide the creation of these foundational components.

# Short-term

## CREATE COLLABORATION ADVISORY BOARD

The findings of this research indicate a need for clear and shared leadership and vision amongst all organizations involved. An advisory board comprised of a director or manager of each organization, a board member of each organization, and 2-3 community members would provide the most stable structure for guiding the collaboration project. Community members can contribute different and valuable perspectives to the collaborative process. This advisory board is then positioned to set the foundation for a transition to the collaborative model.

## ENGAGE IN A PLANNING PROCESS

The advisory board should develop strategies to address change, goals and processes. An overarching strategy should include a process for decision making, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, as well as contingency plans. This will provide the foundation for the future of the collaboration and any challenges and opportunities that will eventually arise. The collaboration requires its own identity and a branding strategy should be included in the planning process, which should be overseen and facilitated by the advisory board.

## STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT.

Every organization involved in the potential collaboration has existing relationships with city and/or state entities and representatives. Our research shows that the media center collaboration can be most successful with government support and funding. The tool kit provided in Appendix A of this report provides additional resources to support advocacy efforts and includes information about economic impact, community visibility and increased opportunity. Although this is beneficial for any nonprofit organization, it is especially crucial to include in the planning and transitional processes.

# Long-term

## CREATE 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION TO MANAGE AND MARKET COLLABORATIVE SPACE

Whether the space is owned or leased, it must be managed by an efficient staff to alleviate operational pressures from the tenant organizations. From our interviews with other arts collaboratives, the most common way these efficiencies are realized is through the creation of a separate nonprofit organization. This separate organization provides clear governance and accountability for all stakeholders. Marketing and communications strategies should be implemented for continued success and growth of the new organizational entity. The 501(c)(3) tax status is an added bonus, providing a path for fundraising and tax exemptions that contribute to organizational efficiency.

## DEVELOP CLEAR, WRITTEN AGREEMENTS THAT PROTECT AND SUPPORT TENANT ORGANIZATIONS

As our research shows, communication and trust are crucial to any successful collaboration. From the outset of any collaborative project, there must be an understanding of each party's needs and perspective, and a plan to support organizations that are potentially vulnerable. The advisory board and new board members of the 501(c)3 entity should be involved in this process, so the transition to a tax-exempt nonprofit organization remains supported as the collaboration evolves.

## SHIFT ORGANIZATIONAL ENERGY TOWARDS PROGRAMMING

One of the biggest advantages to being housed in a shared space for any organization is the ability to refocus energy towards current and new programs within and across organizations. It is clear from this research that sharing space allows tenant organizations to function more effectively and efficiently, while remaining true to their respective missions. Proximity within office space allows program directors and managers to network, advise, and/or collaborate for innovative programs that will serve local communities and the region.



## Conclusion

It is clear from this research that a media center collaboration in Minneapolis-St. Paul would be beneficial to the city and media arts industry in the midwest region. Logistical details must be carefully managed for maximum benefit to key stakeholder groups. Collaborating is an opportunity to not only reduce costs, share space and increase visibility, but also allows organizations and individuals within the collaboration to continue to flourish and grow.

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*People that learn to work together, not in their own interest but in the interest of their community, and it's wonderful to see people collaborate in an administrative way but also, of course, in an artistic way. There were a lot of projects that were born because the centers were in the same building.*

*~Marianne Coineau*

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Susan Smoluchowski - Executive Director, The Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul

Melissa Stone, Ph.D - Professor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Lucinda Winter - Executive Director, Minnesota Film & TV

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**ADVOCACY TOOLKIT**

This toolkit contains valuable resources and information to support advocacy efforts and funding opportunities for the collaboration. The existing research provides useful evidence around economic impact and collaborative governance in creative industries.

**Creative Vitality Index**

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-103117.pdf>  
<https://cvi.westaf.org/>

**A.R.T./NY:**

<http://www.art-newyork.org/research>  
<http://www.art-newyork.org/annual-reports>

**Open Book (Minneapolis):**

<http://www.openbookmn.org/story.aspx>

**Key facts:**

Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

Economic development quickens because arts and cultural investments help a locality capture a higher share of expenditures from local income.

Instead of traveling elsewhere for entertainment and culture, or going to a big-box retailer or shopping mall, residents are patrons of local talent and venues, earnings that re-circulate at a higher rate in the local economy.

As cultural industry incubators, creative places make valuable contributions to the national economy. More than 2 million Americans support themselves as artists, and the ranks of cultural workers exceed 3.8 million, or almost 3% of the nation's workforce. Many are entrepreneurs, some employ others; 65% of writers, 57% of visual artists, and 41% of musicians are self-employed.

Research shows that creative placemaking can foster American leadership in globally competitive industries that include: Movies, Broadcasting, Publishing, News media, Musical recordings and video, Social media, Advertising, Design services, Architecture, Video games (Markusen et al.)

**Planning process support:**

Bryson, John M. *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.  
 Aurora Consulting - <http://www.auroraconsult.com/>





# MEDIA ARTS IN MINNESOTA

potential impacts of  
collaboration

## ABOUT THE KEY PARTNERS



Find Your Voice

**IFP Minnesota** advances a vibrant and diverse community of independent film and media artists through networking, education, and funding opportunities.



**The Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul** aims to foster a knowledgeable and vibrant appreciation of the art of film through exhibiting diverse cinema.



**Minneapolis Telecommunications Network** provides tools and programs to engage residents and institutions through the exchange of ideas and information.



**Minnesota Film & Television** creates jobs and economic growth by promoting and supporting the state's production industry.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Would a collaborative media center where multiple media arts groups in the Twin Cities share space and operational resources add value to the participating organizations, the community, and the media arts industry? We investigate the potential challenges and benefits of collaborating with these stakeholders in mind.

Our research reveals themes and concerns we heard during in-depth interviews with executive directors of the four potential key partners. Informational interviews with successful collaborative arts models also contributed to our data. In addition to these sets of interviews, our methodology included surveying staff from each of the four organizations to gain additional perspective.

Each director voiced concerns around funding streams and the financial impacts of a collaboration. Analysis of funding streams is beyond the scope of our inquiries; instead we focus on recommendations for how funding streams may evolve within the collaboration. Additional findings include concerns around the potential loss of identity through collaborating. Our research shows other collaboratives have in fact shared, and profited from a joint public image. They reported sharing space was valuable when connecting with the community at large. Lastly, we heard staff and management voice concerns around leadership roles and governance structures. We investigated multiple governing structures and report on the most successful model, which focuses on creating a 501(c)(3) organization.

Based on the results of this study, we recommend the following short and long-term action items. In the short-term: create an advisory board for the collaboration, engage in a planning process, and continue to strengthen partnerships with local and state government. Thinking long-term, we suggest creating a 501(c)(3) organization to manage and market collaborative space, develop clear written agreements that protect and support tenants, and shift organizational energy towards programming. Coming together in a shared space provides opportunities for new projects, membership, and programs, and can propel all four organizations to successfully collaborate and impact the media arts industry.