

## 2023 CPAL Annual Conference: Opening Remarks

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Whenever people say my name, tenacity is sure to follow. It's great to see everybody here. I know so many people in the room, and I know that many of us are being challenged by these particular issues. And I'm thrilled that you're here to potentially learn about and possibly, eventually take action. So I say to you, good morning, everyone. And thank you all for being here. Truly.

I want to thank Susan Reynolds for spearheading us actually having an office and having an office within the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof (Foundation) for two days a week, which is all we needed to get this going. So I thank you, the Milton Resnick and Pat Passlof Foundation, their staff, and the board for agreeing to house the CPAL office and this landmark visual artists' legacy event. Additional gratitude for early support is Ted Berger, who was always present. And we'll be hearing something from Ted on Wednesday; Val Hird who's in the audience somewhere who stayed the course and now resides on the CPAL board. She will also be on a panel; but most significantly, Olga Viso, who helped fine-tune a pitch in our early stage, which was meant for UVM and Williams College, but that premise didn't quite work out. It may in the future, who knows, there certainly is an educational component to this that's necessary. Getting scholars etc. involved is paramount; Saul Ostrow, Christina Hunter, and Christine Vincent, from the Aspen Institute, provided early guidance, and continue to introduce us to funders.

The Aspen Institute's study was really why I started this process. I mean, it was an ongoing dialogue between Ted and me, for many, many years. But when Christine put out the "Artists as Philanthropists" study, it provided stark information about the financial sustainability of a single legacy and one of the main reasons why we're here and for the seven years of devoted research. It caused such a stir, and it led to CPAL. The study confirmed that a single sustainable legacy costs \$11 million. So that's enough to really send a shiver down your spine, but \$11 million and you're sailing, you've got it, you've got your legacy. But many will never reach that. And yet they are significant to our writing, our history, and our scholarly pursuit. And so we are engaged in this premise of revision thinking about how things go down in history. At \$3 million, which was the second tier that was studied, it really meant that you had a loved one,

a devoted person, or you also had potentially an asset like a condo or a loft space or something where the artwork was being stored, which then reduced your overhead, as well as, you know, the loved one would then replace the potential staff person. Those are huge amounts of money, as you all know, those of you who are in business. And each one of you is in business, as artists or otherwise. At a million according to the study, there was a 70% fail rate. So it's just too much. It's just mind-boggling.

Specifically, this was done between 2010 to 2015. Early conversations that shaped this research were had with people like Ruth Fine who placed the Vogel collection, Sarah Bouchard, Glenn Gissler, again Christina Hunter from the Nancy Graves Foundation, and Susan Reynolds, Michael Klein, Julie Martin, Marco Nocella, Shervone Neckles, Maria Nevelson, Lowery Stokes Sims, Julia Schwartz, Joyce Pomeroy Schwartz, and Natasha Becker. All of those people really contributed one way or the other. So I just want to get into the conference right now and be grateful there. And I would like to give an extra-large shout-out to our supporters, the Brooklyn Rail, who was our media sponsor, and really generated enough activity to actually get tickets rolling, and I thank you Phong for this. Artists Thrive, which is the Tremaine Foundation initiative, Art Omi Pavilion at Chatham through the Francis Greenburger Donor Advisor Fund, Sally Heller on behalf of the Thomasina Donor Advisor Fund, Mosaic Artspace on behalf of the John Kalafatis and Maria Pierrakeas Trust. I hope I didn't mash that name up too badly. But very special thanks to Andreas Kokkodis, who was really instrumental and did a lot of the printing and so much more, and James Triga. We have a very special team person here and that's Hongyu Zhou, and she has been incredible. And many of you have interacted with her to this point. Sorry, this is always maybe the part that becomes a little tedious, but it's absolutely essential because we need people coming back and supporting and continuing this because it's a huge endeavor. So our mighty board is three right now, but that is growing. It's Val Hird, Kurt Sung, Jenny Scobel, and myself, of course. Our mission, the Center for the Preservation of Artists' Legacies, CPAL, aims to address the legacy challenges faced by visual contemporary artists and their life's work. It seeks to implement strategies to promote equity in the stewardship of multiple individual artistic legacies with innovative cross-disciplinary solutions. So it's going to take a lot of imagination to get this, this done.

The conference is our first program with three underlying goals. The panels reinforce each of these goals, and these are the underlying objectives. To inform and encourage artists and their loved ones to learn about what is involved with legacy and to take the initiative to address the details associated with this pursuit. Two, this endeavor aims to outline an innovative solution to address legacy by proposing a collective shared location premise to house, and this is a flagrant number, as many as we can, 35 to 75 artists, through an economy of scale premise. This is complicated, and we're working on it. We need finance people, we need good thinkers in this area, and this location will also act as a resource center for those facing legacy issues. So it's not just going to be about the legacies themselves, it is also going to be a place where you can come and find out what to do at what stages and with active programming. It is meant to be a model. And it's meant to be replicated around the country because as you all know, nothing exists right now. It's a very complicated field. The third goal is to inform and encourage funders to consider this field of new revenue streams, which sparsely exists right now. This is happening almost through ticket sales, I swear to you, funding is very, very challenging. Our funders were terrific and came on board so we could make it happen. We made things like the video recordings and you know, just things have come together. We thank everybody. But more needs to be done and the expenses are coming.

So the three-day conference is "The Work, The Will, and The Way." It's a simple formula: do the work, find the will, yes, there's a double entendre there, and secure the way. Doing the work is cataloging, registering, numbering the works, dating photographs, you know, photographing the work, and attributing, and antidotal chat about the works so that scholars have some context. They understand where it came from, what the timelines are, et cetera. There are wonderful panelists here today, who will speak to this topic and share relevant information and their personal experience; the will is I mean, you've either got to go and talk to a lawyer, and you also have the will, you've got to find the will to do that. Or perhaps we can do it collectively. You know, with larger sessions that really address these topics and issues. Secure your way. This is challenging, but you need to find a way forward. Your work is very relevant, and we take this very seriously because you are a document of our time. Artists have traditionally taken control of their destinies. There are many examples of collective approaches to problem-solving, from the Bauhaus collective to the Westbeth, from Magnum to inventing residency programs. And then implementing professional career development when we needed it. This is the same thing, we

just got to push forward. We are an ever-expanding field and that's a good thing. It has taken seven years of research to vet and conclude the issue surrounding artists' legacies, the successes are a few the failures are many. Hopefully, these three days will help.

What is relevant to our historical and cultural heritage? We cannot predict this. We rediscovered Hilma af Klint (1862-1944), just two years ago or so. William-Adolphe Bouguereau, I know everybody is like who the hell is she talking about here, From 1825 to 1905, during his lifetime, he enjoyed significant popularity in France, the United States, and Canada, and was given numerous official honors, received top prices for his work as a quintessential salon painter of his generation. He was reviled by the Impressionists avant-garde by the end of the 12th century, Bouguereau and his art fell out of favor with the public due in part to changing tastes. In the 1980s, a revival of interest in figurative painting led to the rediscovery of Bouguereau's work, you know, we just don't know. It's just unpredictable.

What will be relevant and what will be helpful to the future is arcane. We can only assume understanding this, and it cannot be defined by who has enough money alone. So there's a lot of work here. What is relevant according to time alone is a very challenging thing. We can choose a collective approach and help each other. Once again, that is the way forward. Artists have always done this. We're going to do it again. So there's going to be a sign-up sheet for artists who are willing to sit around a roundtable and talk this through because we've got to figure out this economy of scale and how to make this work.