

## Professional Development Grant Narrative

### Description:

This Professional Development Grant would enable Lydia Paar (myself), co-founder of the NOMAD (The Network of Mutual Artistic Development, formerly Flagstaff Artery), a painter and writer, to attend the Alliance for Artist Communities (AAC) Emerging Programs Conference in April of 2015. As an artist who has attended two residency programs, I would like to learn from this conference more about which programs are offered in my areas of work, as well as how to mimic the processes they use to cultivate creativity in my own daily artistic process.

As a co-founder of a new 501(c)3 arts exchange nonprofit and website ([www.nomadinternational.org](http://www.nomadinternational.org)), attending this conference will also be a perfectly timed introduction to help me learn about the “business” of growing and sustaining successful, supportive arts communities.

### Quality of Learning Activity:

The AAC Emerging Programs Conference, which focuses programming and workshops specific to establishing and fostering effective communities of creators, is the single most relevant upcoming conference that could aid BOTH the operational goals of NOMAD and myself as an artist who relies on residency programs and “retreat”-style processes (such as balancing privacy with supportive community) for her own work.

Workshops I am most interested include (see Supplemental Materials Description for the full list of topics currently available):

- The Dolphin Tank elevator pitch session, which will help me hone my communication skills on all my projects while under time constraint, especially because I went way over time on an important grant presentation two years ago and lost the grant!
- The Relevance of Place workshop, which is an important topic to me as I consider future graduate school choices and how locale may impact my own personal work, as well as why different kinds of locales might affect working members of the NOMAD network (and how to cultivate space-appropriate residency opportunities for them).
- The Business Planning and Program Development workshop and all workshops listed under the Nonprofit 101 Pre-Institute training sessions will be of incredible use to a relative newcomer (me) to the business side of the arts world, both in strategizing the sale of my own written and visual works and for NOMAD organizational structuring and management process.

Impact:

I have been a multimedia artist (mainly writing and visual arts) my whole life, but only within the past few years have I begun to understand social organizing around the arts to be one of my primary passions as well. I love sharing creative process and helping people of all walks of life to see themselves as natural creators who can improve lives through their unique creative contributions. Because I love this process, I am attracted to NOMAD and to similar organizing projects, which allow me to engage a myriad of creative skills: the visual art and writing skills I have practiced for years in elucidating, inspiring, and promoting project missions, as well as newer skill sets I'm learning on multimedia projects such as videos, slideshows, and music samples to further promote artists, their processes, and their works.

However, I never went to business school (or even took a proper business class, only some workshops), and I am only now beginning to learn how my skill set must include a facility with budget tools, knowledge of studied and proven marketing techniques, and organizational structuring and management processes if my own personal creative projects and NOMAD are to succeed.

This AAC conference and those like it will do much to help me supplement these missing areas of knowledge while I decide what further long-term schooling I may need or determine how much I can accomplish with my creative projects with various levels of short-term training (like these conferences). In addition to building my current skill sets in multiple aspects of artistic support, the AAC Conference will help me to gauge what *future* steps I need to take toward continuing to help my own creative work, and that of others, to flourish. It will allow me access to experts who can help to answer these questions.

## Biography:

Lydia Paar received her MA from Northern Arizona University in Creative Writing in 2011 and has been active in the Flagstaff Arts Community for the seven total years she has lived there. Her work has included completion of the novel, *The Z(e) Scale*, assisting with Firefly Gatherings Art and Music Festival, organizing and MCing for the Green Room's Artslam weekly open arts night, selling her paintings locally, and developing NOMAD (The Network for Mutual Artistic Development), a couchsurfing.com-style website that allows artists to create their own artistic housing and knowledge exchange with each other across the world.

She has taught creative writing, technical writing, and composition at the university level, been awarded two arts residency retreats for writing, and continues to work as a writer, painter, and adjunct instructor for Northern Arizona University.

Some highlights from her creative and professional history are listed below:

### Professional and Volunteer Experience:

- \* Co-founder/Director of NOMAD (Network of Mutual Artistic Development), 2013-present
- \* Instructor (adjunct) for undergraduate Composition, Fiction writing, Technical writing, Intensive English and Criminal Justice (co-instructor) courses at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ, 2009-present
- \* Assistant to Director & Arts & Learning Workshop Coordinator/Grantwriter, Firefly Gatherings, Flagstaff, AZ, 2014-2015
- \* Art Slam Organizer and MC, The Green Room, Flagstaff, AZ, 2014
- \* Writing Tutor, Writing Center at Northern Arizona University, 2009-2010
- \* Managing Editor, *Thin Air Magazine*, 2010-2011
- \* Senior Editor, *Alligator Juniper Magazine*, Prescott, AZ, 2007
- \* Editorial Intern for CALYX Press, Corvallis, OR, 2006-2007

### Awards, Conferences, and Honors:

- \* Finalist, Glimmer Train Short Story Award for New Writers, 2015
- \* Publication in the following literary magazines: Four Ties Lit Review (2012) Bloodstone Review (2014), and Alligator Juniper (2007 & 2008)
- \* Workshop leader, creative writing, Firefly Gatherings, 2013-2014
- \* Presenter, Peaks Conference (Northern Arizona University), 2011-2014
- \* Judge, Young Authors of Arizona, Regional Scholastic Writing Awards, 2012
- \* Residency recipient, Edna St. Vincent Millay Colony for the Arts, 2011
- \* Presenter, Southwest English Graduate Symposium (Arizona State University), and Associated Writing Programs Pedagogy Forum, 2010
- \* Scholarship recipient, Sybil Hall Shott Scholarship, 2010
- \* Merit fellowship recipient, Summer Literary Seminars Fiction Contest, 2010

### Professional Development Grant Supplemental Materials Description:

Workshops and panels are specifically targeted toward people and organizations working in the arts residency field and will include (taken from the website:

<http://www.artistcommunities.org/events/2016-emerging-program-institute/schedule-glance>.

- *Artist Residencies at a Glance*
- *The Relevance of Place*
- *Business Planning/Program Development*
- *Making the Case/Distinguishing Yourself*
- *Dolphin Tank-helpful feedback-driven elevator pitch sessions*
- *Ask an Expert*
- Also optional, which I have registered for, is the **Pre-Institute training | Nonprofit 101**: A day of workshops and discussions for those developing new organizations.

Topics at the Nonprofit Pre-Institute Training will include:

- What makes a nonprofit + lifecycle of nonprofits
- Defining your program + developing your elevator pitch
- Board recruitment + management
- Strategic planning
- Resource development
- Organizational oversight

\* The full agenda and schedule will be announced in March, as per their website, so I cannot include it in the Supplemental Materials Section itself. However, I did include there an invitation email from the Director of the AAC to attend their last conference (I was unable to), whom I have been in correspondence with on arts community topics since 2014, in order to demonstrate contact with and commitment to the content the AAC provides.