

Concept - The Kansas City Artists Coalition (KCAC) is a space/network for artists to exhibit their work, see lectures and panel discussions, and connect with other artists. For this story, I'm curious about the local service they have provided - has KCAC created a platform for artists in the region who formerly struggled to find an outlet for their art? I will be investigating what kind of impact the coalition has had on the artistic community of and around Kansas City: has the coalition accomplished what it's set out to do, how do local artists feel about it, has it faced any obstacles in the community or with local government. In order to get more of a sense of the story, I will do a preliminary interview with Executive Director Janet Simpson to hear what she says about the coalition and get recommendations for people to talk to. I'm going to keep an eye out for artists who could create a scene for the story by talking about their work as it is displayed in the exhibition space and also for other artists or local people who might provide some tension/drama for the story with differing perspectives on the coalition.

MM comments in blue:

Keep pursuing what interests you here. We don't have a story -- yet. I'm not convinced that a performance space or organization makes the best "character" for this story. (Though sometimes a "thing" can be a character -- like an historic building for example. But this story needs to feature an interesting, creative, talented artist.) Who is the living embodiment of KCAC's success? What artist? Consider the audio/visual possibilities. Go to that person and explore their life and work and we might put the KCAC in proper perspective. Good to talk to the Executive Director for leads but I'm doubtful she's who we want to feature.

So far, tension is lacking... but if you get the right artist you may find the tension is between pursuing a passion and making a living... or perhaps between pursuing art and withstanding negative judgments... or between working in isolation versus gaining coalition support?

Keep pushing!

Kareem:

Thanks for the tips, Mike! I agree, the coalition itself cannot be the character and does not provide the tension on its own. I will contact the Executive Director Wednesday (hours are Wed-Sat) and hopefully find that artist who embodies KCAC's success or stands apart from KCAC or has contributed great audio/visuals that can be the focus of the piece... I'll keep you posted.

Focus Statement - (Two sentences are ok)

Host Intro -

In the once-depressed River Market area of Kansas City, locals flock into a building known as Artspace. Sitting alongside the Missouri River, the structure houses the Kansas City Artists Coalition, a non-profit organization. For the last three decades, the coalition has given artists a reason to call Kansas City home. Kareem Estefan reports...

Script -

[fade in Michael Lasater's "One, Two"]

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

Janet Simpson is leading me down the stairs of the Kansas City Artists Coalition.

JANET SIMPSON [sounds of walking downstairs]:

"This gallery is in a basement, so we call it The Underground"

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

Currently, the Underground's walls are lined with art made by Kansas City

residents, including Michael Lasater's installation "One, Two."

[bring up sound]

Executive Director Simpson says the coalition has 1000 members from the area,

and is committed to the success of local artists.

[fade out sound]

JANET SIMPSON:

"At the same time, we have always wanted to bring in artists and introduce them to Kansas City."

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

With the grant money the coalition now offers, Simpson has brought in artists from

as far away as Israel. But back when artist Philomene Bennett helped found the

Kansas City Artists Coalition in 1976, no one was coming to Kansas City to make

art, or even look at any.

PHILOMENE BENNETT:

"That was kind of the catalyst that started the whole thing, figuring that if we don't do something here in Kansas City people are just going to fly right over us, it'll be Dallas and Chicago and they won't even care that anyone exists here."

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

It wasn't just outsiders who didn't care. Even the local art critic dismissed Kansas

City art.

PHILOMENE BENNETT:

"He really led us to believe that if you were any good, you shouldn't be here."

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

But, Bennett and her friends didn't want to go to more established art centers. They

envisioned an organization that welcomed all artists in the region and provided a

lively, supportive community. In 1976, Hugh Merrill graduated from Yale

University and left the East Coast to teach at the Kansas City Arts Institute. He

became an early believer in the coalition.

HUGH MERRILL:

"It had the energy of a lot of beginning small organizations, everything was Mom & Pop, and you did what you had to do on any one day. There wasn't an Executive Director that didn't empty a trash can. It was that kind of thing, everybody did what had to be done."

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

That early commitment remained as the coalition grew into a well-known

institution with a \$300,000 budget. And as the organization developed, Janet

Simpson noticed changes in the River Market area as well.

JANET SIMPSON:

"We hadn't been here very long by the time I came on in 1989. And I would routinely get calls from people asking me if it was safe to visit the gallery. So I think the big difference is I never get those calls anymore."

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

As Kansas City developed, the artist Shane Evans moved here to work at

Hallmark. Since then, he has achieved national recognition, showing

the children's books he illustrates on shows like "Oprah." He'll soon be travelling

to South Africa to research a book project on HIV, thanks to a grant from the

Kansas City Artists Coalition.

SHANE EVANS:

"So it's a good place to be nurtured as an artist. I love New York, I love visiting, etc. but the daily grind I think would have slowed the process."

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

With more galleries moving in, Kansas City has clearly developed an audience for

art. But as the city evolves, rent prices may be tougher on the next generation of

artists. In any case, artists like Hugh Merrill who arrived here decades ago are

happy to call this city home.

HUGH MERRILL:

"Back then when people would ask me where I was from, I would say New York, but I'm living in Kansas City. And I just cut that out."

KAREEM ESTEFAN:

That's from someone whose prints have been shown not only in the Kansas City

Artists Coalition, but also New York's Museum of Modern Art.

For Next Generation Radio, I'm Kareem Estefan in Kansas City.

Visuals

First of all, let's talk about equipment.

I will have a professional Canon kit available for you to use.

I will check out the equipment to you under my supervision. In other words, If you're going out to shoot I will go with you.

The reason: The equipment belongs to my company and I have to make sure it's used properly and doesn't get damaged.

Here's the equipment list:

- 1 Canon Mark II digital camera (top of the line)
- 1 17-35 mm lens (for wide angle photography)
- 1 70-200 mm lens (for tighter pictures)
- 1 Mark II dedicated flash.

I will have additional accessories for us to play with.

Let's talk aesthetics:

Think of the visuals the same way you think about sound. Pay attention to details and diversify your presentation.

Shoot wide to establish a sense of place

Shoot tight (faces, hands, details in the way a person dresses)

Think about motion and action (Person has to be doing something!)

Think light and composition (set up your photo shoots early in the day and late in the afternoon for better light)

Shoot low, shoot high, go beyond the obvious. Kneel, stand on a chair, put your camera on the ground. Look for a high-overhead positions.

Patience: sometimes you have to wait to capture the right moment. Have an idea what you want to say with your photograph, wait for that relationship and snap the picture.

Think of pictures the same way a painter thinks of a canvas. Every part of the picture has to have a reason why it's there. If there are distracting elements in the background eliminate them by moving around. Look through the camera and dissect the image in quadrants, if something doesn't belong, eliminate it.

The ultimate Multimedia presentation will have 2 minutes of sound Attached to 20 images (This is a lot you will have to do a lot of shooting). The images will run as a slide show as the sound is narrated.

We will use the software SoundSlides to accomplish this.

Here are a couple of examples of some recent work I've produced (To give you an Idea

what we are going after) :

One on San Francisco's cable cars:

http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/_travel/cable_cars/

One on the endangered California Condor, threatened by a wildfire:

http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/_national/condors_wildfire/

Since you are on the radio field, your sound will be crisper with smoother transitions.

My suggestion is to dedicate on day of the project just to make pictures. After you have gathered and edited your sound.

Hope this helps,

Marcio Sanchez.