

# THERE'S A REASON ARTISTS HAVE NO MONEY.



It's not you, it's the system. Here's why:

- **More artists, less money.** The past 30 years have seen an exponential increase in the number of self-identified artists, but while creative output is at an all time high, established structures for supporting individual artists have stagnated or diminished.
- **Funding inequality.** Only 5.3% of all charitable giving in the U.S. goes to the arts. 55% of foundation funding for the arts goes to the 2% of organizations with budgets exceeding \$5 million. The NEA's budget of \$146 million represents just 0.012% of federal discretionary spending. In NYC, the budget for the Department of Cultural Affairs is only 0.25% of the entire city budget.
- **Trickle up.** Funds rarely trickle down to independent artists who work outside of the institutions and artists are often compelled to self-subsidize their services. To top it off, most major artistic innovations "trickle up" from the independent arts community, who remain largely uncompensated for their ideas and labor.
- **Art is subsidized for a reason.** In a market-driven manufacturing economy, increases in technological innovation result in greater efficiency, decreased prices, & better wages. In the economy of live performance (and education, healthcare, and other services that depend upon live human interaction), there's no way to increase efficiency. Thus, human-based goods require subsidy to remain competitive with the rest of the economy.
- **Art is a public good.** Some things that cannot "pass the market test" are still deemed valuable to society, such as clean air, water, education, and art. These are referred to as "public goods" because they contribute to the overall welfare and wellbeing of the general public. They innately add value to society by existing, even though the markets alone cannot support their costs.

## WE ARE CHANGING THE WORLD. JOIN US.

What if the economics of the cultural ecosystem is just a creative design problem to be solved collectively? We want to talk solutions, and we want your voice in the conversation.

### Meet us at these events:

**LAUNCH PARTY | Monday, January 13 @ 7pm | Free**

→ University Settlement, 184 Eldridge Street, Manhattan  
Celebrate a year of hard work and important research. We'll do a live presentation of the report and share music & wine. Learn about what our research has revealed & what you can do about it.

**TIME TO COMMUNE | Sunday, January 19 @ 3pm | Free**

→ Invisible Dog, 51 Bergen St., Brooklyn  
With an eye towards the past and the future, join us to discuss major revelations from the paper and implications for our community going forward. As BKCP shifts forms, we want to understand what we've learned, what we should learn next, & why.

# ARTIST ACTION ITEMS



What you can do to promote a fair & sustainable arts economy:

1. **Read the full report:** [www.brooklyncommune.org](http://www.brooklyncommune.org)  
Check out the full version for more in-depth reports, graphs, explanations, and recommendations to the field.
2. **Advocate everywhere.** Be transparent about how you and your friends support your art work, and talk about how it affects your life and goals. Start the honest conversation with friends, colleagues, the person sitting next to you right now...
3. **Endorse the petition:** [causes.com/campaigns/71858](http://causes.com/campaigns/71858)  
We aim to have broad public support when we take this research to those with most influence - sign your name to show your alignment with the ideas and solutions!
4. **Join the BKCP Facebook Group:** [FB.com/groups/bkcommune](https://www.facebook.com/groups/bkcommune)  
Stay engaged with the community online. Here is where we'll post info about future events, research, and actions.
5. **Be a citizen artist.** Organize politically, learn to be a citizen, and get involved in the public sphere. Advocate for policy changes you believe in. Remember, public officials were elected by you to serve you! Vote.
6. **Share skills & resources.** Ask peers for support in creating proper budgets, fundraising, skill sharing, etc. Use the diverse artist community at your fingertips to share info, contracts, grant calendars, and tech riders.
7. **Practice radical fiscal transparency.** Publish budgets and real costs on websites and in programs of each project. Be honest about what the project should have cost to encourage greater accountability in the field.
8. **Engage with your 21st century job skills.** Artists' collaborative creative practices are already valuable, as are their self-producing and social organizing skills. Identify, develop, & articulate those skills to the market.
9. **#BrooklynCommune** on Twitter to join the digital conversation. Tell us what you like, tell us what you hate. What ideas stand out? What do you think should be shared?

The Brooklyn Commune Project is a grassroots initiative organized by Culturebot.org and The Invisible Dog Art Center to educate, activate and unify performing artists of all disciplines to work together towards a more equitable, just and sustainable arts ecology in America. 9 months of research from 6 research teams and voices of more than 500 members of the community have resulted in a 52-page report, outlining the problem, the response, and the solutions. We invite you to read it & respond:

## [www.brooklyncommune.org](http://www.brooklyncommune.org)

\*This handout cost \$0.15 to print & represents over 1,000 hours of volunteer labor. Please consider passing it on before tossing.