

We enthusiastically nominate Shelley Trott, Director of Arts Strategy & Ventures at the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, for the Scrivner Award. Shelley demonstrated tireless leadership and commitment in implementing a creative grantmaking approach that led to the development of the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST), a nonprofit venture that works with San Francisco arts organizations to secure permanent homes.

CAST procures properties and stabilizes leasing opportunities while working with arts organizations to strengthen their financial and organizational capacity to navigate the real estate market. Because of Shelley's vision, the Central Market neighborhood is one step closer to bolstering its identity as a vibrant, thriving home for the arts—a promising haven for promoting creativity and community participation.

CAST is a resourceful way to address a pressing issue facing the arts community. Having witnessed the displacement of arts organizations caused by the 1990's dot com boom, Shelley was anxious about the fate of organizations residing in the Central Market neighborhood.

Once a vibrant theater district, the area lost much of its glamor when traffic was diverted away as a result of the new public transportation system. Central Market devolved into a distressed landscape of liquor stores and adult theaters. It also attracted many arts nonprofits due to the low rents.

In 2012 the City introduced policies to ameliorate blight in this area and this has created dramatic changes. Now a promising new district with a fast-growing economy, arts nonprofits are being squeezed out, facing eviction and higher rents. With few viable alternatives for relocation within the city, coping with the tumultuous San Francisco market threatens the stability and future of arts organizations.

Shelley's growing concern led to quick action. She sought out a long-term solution that would create a more level playing field for arts nonprofits. She initiated conversations with the Northern California Community Loan Fund (NCCLF), which provides financing and expertise to strengthen low-income neighborhoods. NCCLF developed an innovative business model to address the plight of arts organizations.

The model forges strategic funding collaborations, including public-private partnerships, and leverages municipal and federal incentives that will enable arts nonprofits to exercise purchasing power with CAST's assistance.

Shelley spearheaded a meeting between the Foundation's Board and NCCLF. What followed was a "20 minute decision," whereby the Foundation's Board swiftly resolved to champion NCCLF's proposed model by creating CAST as a nonprofit and awarding \$5 million in seed money.

With Shelley's guidance, the Foundation skillfully put this exciting and new philanthropic strategy into action. Since launching last November, CAST has implemented a plan to stabilize the arts in Central Market, purchasing two buildings on behalf of neighborhood arts organizations. This a promising start that's gaining national attention.

A major transformation is underway in Central Market and the arts are critical to its revitalization. CAST is bold and creative, not only in its approach, but in the depth of its collaboration with public, private, and philanthropic sectors. Simply put, Shelley's efforts have created hope and opportunities for arts organizations at a time when both seemed impossible.



Community Arts Stabilization Trust

CAST: Why We Exist

When arts organizations have stable homes, protected from a volatile real estate market, they are free to be the trailblazers that make San Francisco a global hub of innovation and creativity. In economically diverse neighborhoods like Central Market and the Tenderloin, community arts organizations act as a connecting point for people of different economic and cultural backgrounds to understand and bridge their differences through participation in the arts.

<http://cast-sf.org/>

Mission

The mission of CAST is to create stable physical spaces for arts and cultural organizations to facilitate equitable urban transformation by:

- Acquiring properties to sustain arts in selected San Francisco neighborhoods
- Building the capacity of cultural organizations to lease or own property
- Bundling leases to sustain affordable rents for those not prepared to buy
- Leveraging funding to achieve the goal

CAST is:

- Creating a new and inventive approach to asset development for cultural organizations
- Contributing to neighborhood revitalization strategies with arts at the center of economic and community development
- Demonstrating a new philanthropic strategy for the arts by recycling financial resources and forging unprecedented public-private partnerships
- Mitigating space challenges for arts organizations in one of the hottest real estate markets and most important cultural communities in the US
- Serving a mix of cultural organizations, artists and a community of people that is diverse by age, race, gender, economic status and cultural background

Partners

Kenneth Rainin Foundation: The Kenneth Rainin Foundation enhances quality of life by championing and sustaining the arts, promoting early childhood literacy, and supporting research to cure chronic disease. The Foundation believes that people trying to affect change need an early champion for their ideas. Like its founder, the Foundation listens to and invests in innovative and collaborative projects that can achieve real breakthroughs and make life better for us all. KRFoundation.org

Northern California Community Loan Fund (NCCLF): NCCLF is proud to assist with the formation of CAST and developing the model to stabilize community arts organizations in a rapidly escalating real estate market. NCCLF provides financial management and real estate consulting services to numerous arts organizations in Central Market. They are pleased to work with CounterPulse and the Luggage Store Gallery, whose community programs provide neighborhood residents an opportunity to engage with the creative arts. Their ability to stay in the Central Market neighborhood will enable their programs to flourish and become anchors in the artistic community. NCCLF.org

San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development OEWD supports the City's ongoing economic vitality by strengthening its neighborhoods, businesses, commercial corridors and workforce. Its goal is to ensure that the City will always be one of the best places on the planet to live, work and play. OEWD.org/Development-Projects

CAST in the Media

Western City: [Inspiring the Creative Economy: How Cities Increase Economic Activity Through Innovation and the Arts](#)

SFAQ International Arts and Culture: [San Francisco's Mid-Market Tango](#)

The BoldItalic: [Fixing the Housing Crisis with Artist Owned Buildings](#)

krfoundation.org: [The Art of Change: Imagining Central Market](#)

ABC News: [Project Hopes to help artists stay in San Francisco](#)

The Bay Area Reporter: [Lee, Kim announce real estate deal to help arts groups](#)

SF Chronicle: [Nonprofit helping arts groups stay in Mid-Market](#)

SF Bay Guardian: [New pilot program helps arts nonprofits find new homes](#)

Western City: [Inspiring the Creative Economy: How Cities Increase Economic Activity Through Innovation and the Arts](#) (Craig Watson, May 2014)

“Many California communities received a significant amount of arts investment through their local redevelopment agencies and had to get creative after redevelopment was eliminated. San Francisco found one partnership with the Community Arts Stabilization Trust, launched with a \$5 million seed grant from the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. The program aims to help long-time arts organizations acquire space and move out of the competitive rental market. For example, the trust supported the acquisition of a former porn theater for a performing arts group that will run a capital campaign and purchase the building back. The funds are then returned to the trust for the acquisition of another asset.”

SFAQ International Arts and Culture: [San Francisco's Mid-Market Tango](#) (Lani Asher, April 2014)

“Shelley Trott, Director of Arts Strategy and Ventures at the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, lived through the first dot-com boom and realizes the urgency of saving existing art spaces. The Rainin Foundation, along with the Northern California Community Loan fund, created CAST (Community Arts Stabilization Trust), whose mission is to help stabilize at-risk arts group in the city.”

The BoldItalic: [Fixing the Housing Crisis with Artist Owned Buildings](#) (Noah Sanders, April 2014)

“Working with government agencies, civic leaders, businesses, funders, and artists alike, [CAST] ‘celebrates, promotes, and preserves artistic and cultural traditions and innovations.’ It supports preexisting, permanent spaces for artists who are on the verge of being pushed out. The organization helps arts organizations own the spaces they tentatively call home. As of now,

CAST has purchased the former porn theater, The Dollhouse, as a future home for CounterPULSE. CAST has also purchased the Walker Building, home to 25-year-old gallery mainstay, the Luggage Store, to provide financial security and stability as Mid-Market goes through the upheavals of development. The idea is that CAST will provide both the financial and organizational springboards for these organizations to become successful enough to repurchase the buildings in 7 to 10 years.”

krfoundation.org: [The Art of Change: Imagining Central Market](#) (Shelley Trott, March 2014)

“Artists intimate the future, reveal possibility and show us a way through. How can the center of this struggle, the center of San Francisco, become the center of equitable innovation and transformation? Certainly no single art project or gesture of good faith will solve all of the problems plaguing Central Market or San Francisco, but the hope is it will help us take one step forward. Not a simplistic, blaming or divisive step, but an artful step.”

ABC News: [Project Hopes to help artists stay in San Francisco](#) (November 2013)

“San Francisco artists say they are being driven out of the city by escalating rents. Now, an innovative pilot project in the mid-Market Street area has been created to try to stop that exodus, one building at a time.”

The Bay Area Reporter: [Lee, Kim announce real estate deal to help arts groups](#) (Seth Hemmelgarn, November 2013)

“A major transformation is underway on Central Market, and arts are central to that revitalization,” stated Lee. “Long-time neighborhood institutions like CounterPULSE and The Luggage Store not only anchor the growing arts district but maintain the fabric of creative nonprofit organizations that characterize Central Market.”

SF Chronicle: [Nonprofit helping arts groups stay in Mid-Market](#) (John Cote, November 2013)

“. . . a novel collaboration between the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Northern California Community Loan Fund, Mayor Ed Lee's office and others has created a nonprofit that is buying buildings to allow arts groups to remain in or move into Mid-Market.”

SF Bay Guardian: [New pilot program helps arts nonprofits find new homes](#) (Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez, November 2013)

“In a packed press conference just outside The Luggage Store on Market, the foundation-funded Community Arts Stabilization Trust announced Wednesday that it would purchase two properties for the longstanding Mid-Market nonprofits. Risky renters no longer, both nonprofits will soon own their own buildings, shielded from the ebbs and flows of rent surges.”

Shelley Trott, Director of Arts Strategy & Ventures



Shelley Trott has an extensive career in the arts, having worked for over 20 years as a funder, dancer and choreographer, producer, administrator, fundraiser, teacher and filmmaker. She co-founded Rapt Productions with Austin Forbord in 1997, the premier documentarian of the performing arts in the San Francisco Bay Area. She was the project manager for Stage Left, an Emmy nominated documentary film led by Rapt Productions, and created an accompanying engagement campaign, which included a curriculum for high school students and online tutorials. Among her many notable filmmaking credits is Artists in Exile: a Story of Modern Dance in San Francisco.

Ms. Trott also co-produced the annual Bay Area International Children's Film Festival in Alameda, California, from 2008-2012. She was nominated for two Isadora Duncan Dance Awards in performance and design, and her choreography has been presented in numerous festivals. Using her experience in the arts and her management expertise, she developed a program to help small and mid-size dance companies achieve sustainability and success.

For the past five years, Ms. Trott has played a key role in leading the Foundation's grantmaking programs in the arts. Her responsibilities have included developing and implementing a geographically focused funding strategy in San Francisco, managing an initiative to provide technical assistance in marketing for arts organizations, and analyzing grantmaking priorities and trends. She administers the Foundation's Visibility Awards, which supports innovative and experimental multidisciplinary art performances, and created the Foundation's new Impact Grant program, designed to build the capacity and improve the effectiveness of emerging arts organizations while assisting more established groups in navigating critical organizational transitions. During her tenure, she has collaborated with funders to leverage expertise and resources to support various arts initiatives.

Ms. Trott earned a BA in dance from Wesleyan University and an MFA in performance and choreography from California Institute of the Arts. She served as Board President for the contemporary dance company, KUNST-STOFF, for five years, and currently co-chairs the Arts Loan Fund Steering Committee.

Blogs by Shelley Trott

[The Art of Change: Imagining Central Market](#) (February 2014)

“Some might say that this initiative is pie in the sky. Perhaps, but our aspirations are rooted in letting art do what it does best—elucidate, dissect and transform points of tension. Artists intimate the future, reveal possibility and show us a way through. How can the center of this struggle, the center of San Francisco, become the center of equitable innovation and transformation? Certainly no single art project or gesture of good faith will solve all of the problems plaguing Central Market or San Francisco, but the hope is it will help us take one step forward. Not a simplistic, blaming or divisive step, but an artful step.”

[Balancing Creativity With Capacity: The Impact Grant](#) (September 2013)

“I’ve been asked on a number of occasions why the Foundation is offering this program. One of the reasons relates to my background as a dancer, choreographer and artist/entrepreneur. I struggled, just as many of our grantees have, with the overwhelming and counter-intuitive task of building and maintaining an organization to support my art. My frustration with that struggle led me and some of my dance colleagues to start a service organization in 2000 called Bay Area Performing Arts (BAPArts).”

[Fruitvale Station Hits Home](#) (July 2013)

“This is what great filmmaking and storytelling does. It allows us to find ourselves in others, no matter how different we look or what gender we are, our sexual preference, ethnicity, race or background. When art works, our differences are rendered meaningless and our shared humanity is revealed.”