

Grantee Name
Wooster Group, Inc.
Project Title
To support Young Jean Lee's Interactive Web Series with The Wooster Group
Project Progress and Successes
<p>In year one, Young Jean Lee proposed a media project based on a short film script, "A Meaning Full Life," by Bronx high school student Sheikhar Boodram. The film would eventually be posted on both Lee's and The Wooster Group's websites. The film shoot brought together artists from Lee's work and the Group's company. Wooster Group members and associates included Cynthia Hedstrom (producer), Kate Valk, Paul Lazar and Wallace Shawn (performers), Zbigniew Bzymek (filmmaker) and Enver Chakartash (costumes). Others on the production team, Christopher Casey (production manager), Lydia Fine (production designer) and Damian Calvo (sound recordist), had previously worked with Lee.</p> <p>In year two, Bzymek filmed additional interviews with Lee and Sheikhar Boodrum, which were to become a second part of the film. Editing took place at discrete times, between other projects and commitments. After several work-in-progress versions, which we all viewed together, Lee and editor Kevin Palmer came up with a final rough cut. Color correction and sound mixing will take place in year three. The Group anticipates releasing short teasers of material from "A Meaning Full Life" on our website this coming year in advance of the live theater performances.</p> <p>During most of June 2015, Lee was in full-time residence at The Performing Garage, the Group's home-base. Responding to online interest and questions, Lee arranged a series of meetings and conversations with Wooster Group members, associates, and outside guests. These discussions, filmed by Bzymek, centered on the Group's process of making work, with a particular focus on the recent production, CRY, TROJANS! (Troilus & Cressida). During 2013-15, the Group also laid the groundwork for tracking and collecting statistical information for the project. Essential to the success of the project is our ability to measure and analyze the audience for "A Meaning Full Life" and other works that we release on the web. Our goal is to link the online audience to actual attendance at performances in the final year of the project. At the beginning of this initiative, we consulted with the digital marketing firm Capacity Interactive to upgrade our website's analytics tools. We have also invested in a new data management system to more closely integrate communications and ticketing. These improvements allow us to better capture and track detailed information that will be needed to assess the overlap, if any, between the project's online and live audiences.</p>
Challenges / Obstacles / Failures Encountered in the Project
<p>As our "Building Demand" project evolves, it is challenging to let it grow organically -- to be responsive to changing circumstances and new ideas. In these situations, we've relied on the collaborative impulse, rather than to being reactive or programmatic. When concerns surfaced or new ideas required a shift in thinking, meetings were quickly called and concerns and ideas were openly discussed among the primary Wooster Group staff and Young Jean Lee. These challenges have led to a more invested and layered approach to the project.</p>

What was learned from these that might be of benefit to others?
A flexible approach and responsiveness to the reality of changing circumstances have been essential to the growth of our project.
Links to relevant website(s) and/or project publications, reports, etc.
http://thewoostergroup.org
If someone wishes to speak with your organization further about your project, would there be a willing contact? Y/N
If yes, please provide contact name and information for preferred method of contact (email, phone, etc).
Cynthia Hedstrom; chedstrom@thewoostergroup.org