2012 Alchemy Art Fundraiser

Event Report

Event Leads: Shannon 'Chw' Joiner and Trevor Register

Picture by David Stabler of Dwivian Media

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Event and Online Fundraiser Summary

The event was held on June 23rd, 2012 from 7:00pm until 2:00am. Breakdown, cleanup, and distribution of funds was finished quickly, and the Event Leads left the property at 2:38am. The event collected $2,417 in ballot funds and $1,219 in secondary funds (refreshments + auction) for a total of $3,406 raised at the event. The Online Fundraiser raised $2,662 bringing the total amount of funds raised to $6,068.

It's difficult to get an exact count on attendance by looking at just ballot sales because people can buy multiple ballots. We believe that it's a good rough indicator, though. Last year's ballot sales came in at $1,651 compared to this year's at $2,417. Given that, we think it's safe to say that attendance this year is at least on par or possibly better than last year.

While attendance was comparable or possibly better from last year, there was a significant drop in funds raised by the auction and refreshments. Last year's auction raised $1,366, and this year's raised $326, and this was the most significant hit to funding for this year's event. We believe that the the lack of a live auction led by a charismatic auction master greatly affected auction sales.

This year has been Alchemy's most ambitious year ever for art. There were 21 projects represented this year, just over double the number of projects relative to last year. The scope of these projects was also much more ambitious. The sum total of all the projects' minimum funding was $14, 909. Out of the 21 total projects, 5 of them were maximally funded, and 15 of them were minimally funded (the maximally funded projects are included in this 15). I (Trevor) believe that much of this increased ambition was due to Chelsea and Chw seeking out artists and encouraging them to submit.

Unfortunately, the event also cost more to put on than last year with a total cost at $1,885.02. Much of this cost was due to the venue and insurance. A more detailed budget may be found in the "Budget" section of this report. This year's event also raised less money than last year's event due to the drop in auction and refreshment sales.

This was the first year that an Online Fundraiser was implemented. The Alchemy community has grown far beyond Georgia, thus, many people outside the Atlanta area are unable to attend the event. The Online Fundraiser allowed all Alchemists to contribute regardless of their location. This effort was a huge success and raised an additional $2,662 in funds.

2012 also marked the first year that Alchemy provided matching funds for the artists. Alchemy, LLC earmarked a maximum of $10,000 to match the funds contributed by the community. Although the community in total only raised $6,068.61, The Board of Directors decided to use all $10,000 that had been earmarked. Distribution of matching funds followed the same distribution model as the refreshment and auction sales, which is to say that funds were distributed by the percentage of the votes that each artist received. If fund matching brought a project over its maximum budget, those overage funds were put back into the fund matching pool and were redistributed to other projects. We believe that fund matching also was a huge factor in the surge in projects and requested funding this year.

The total amount of funding distributed to artists this year came to $16,068.61.

Of the 21 projects that had presentations at the event, 2 were maximally funded, 2 were minimally funded, and 4 projects that didn't meet their minimum chose to not continue their fundraising efforts through the Online fundraiser. Of the 15 projects that chose to continue online fundraising in hopes of meeting their minimum or maximum, 13 of these projects received their maximum funding, 1 project was able to meet their minimum and get very close to their max, and 1 project failed to meet its minimum funding. Full details on each project's funding can be found in the "Fundraising" section of this report.

The DJ mixer went missing the afternoon of the event. It was set up with the other sound equipment around 11am that morning. There was about a 2 hour period during that day when nobody from the Event Lead Team, Art Team, or setup crew was present (we were all at lunch), but the venue was locked during this time. However, there are some unsecure windows into the venue. We strongly suspect that it was stolen.

Pre-Planning

The date for the fundraiser was set by the Board of Directors (BOD) at the February 2012 meeting and was set to be June 23rd, 2012. Trevor Register was selected as one Event Lead during the March meeting and was allowed to choose another lead. Shannon 'Chw' Joiner was asked and accepted within two weeks. Venue scouting began shortly after. We didn't have strict criteria, but we were striving to find a venue with like minded, art focused owners. Our one strict criteria was that the venue had to allow all ages. We looked at art galleries, previous art fundraiser and decompression venues, and venues popular within the local electronic music scene. Many of these venues were either too small, too expensive, or unavailable for the selected date.The B-Complex was recommended to us by a friend and, after our first scouting visit and some initial negotiating with the event organizer, we decided to go with the them. This decision was approved by the BOD at the May meeting.

After the venue was approved, we met the next day to outline the basics of the event: teams and volunteers, infrastructure needs like portable toilets, tables, and electrical equipment, time and duration of the event, music/entertainment, and basic layout for things like the gate and artist presentations. Chelsea Darling was selected as Alchemy 2012's art lead shortly after, and we began discussing things like engaging and attracting more art projects, building a community of Alchemy artists, and soliciting donations for the art auction. During the pre-planning phase, Chelsea was mainly responsible for coordinating with the submitting artists as well as acting as an "Art Advisor" providing an extraordinarily useful artist perspective.

From the second in-person meeting on, most of the planning was coordinated online via email and shared google docs. We had a final pre-planning meeting on June 21st to finalize details on funding procedures and categories, further social network outreach to advertise the event as well as disseminate important information, plans for the art auction, and a schedule for setup and breakdown for the weekend.

Teams and Volunteers

The teams we decided to implement for this event were gate, LNT, rangers, parking, voting table, web/technical, and refreshments. Alchemy's online volunteer system was utilized to staff each team. The team leads for these teams were as follows:

Gate, Voting Table, Refreshments.- Sarah Griffith

The gate team was responsible for collecting and handling money, distributing voting ballots, helping oversee cash drops, and explaining the voting procedure. The Voting Table team was responsible for entering in participant's ballots throughout the event. The refreshments team was responsible for serving refreshments and selling Alchemy cups.

LNT - Jill Mongato

The LNT team was responsible for ensuring that the event operated on a Leave No Trace policy.

Rangers - Chw Joiner

Rangers were responsible for assisting with conflict resolution as well as helping with possible medical, fire, or law enforcement response. (Note: Several candidates identified by a previous Alchemy/Euphoria Ranger lead were approached and asked to lead this team. Unfortunately, none accepted. Given Chw's extensive Ranger experience, he was comfortable filling this role at the event.)

Parking - Sean Gaines

The parking team was responsible for coordinating and directing an organized parking effort at the event.

Web/Technical - Patrick Murphy

The Web/Technical team was responsible for creating the ballot tracking system at the event as well as handling the technical side of the Online Fundraiser.

Silent auction table. Picture by David Stabler of Dwivian Media

Budget

Venue	$900.00
Parking Attendant/Security	$175.00
Portapotties	$228.50
Lockable Cash Box	$17.81
Light Bulbs	$32.31
Insurance	$338.00
Refreshments	$87.21
Paypal fees	$106.19
Total	$1,885.02

Fundraising

Total funding received by each project:

Synapses	$2,217.57
Evereman Burns 4U	$2,000.00
Off-Road Wheelchair	$1,021.00
DIRIGO	$1,327.00
Bitches Without Borders	$727.00
The Ten Shrines	$1,014.00
Serenia	$2,000.00
Wooly Unicorn and the Wandering Yurt	$1,200.00
Encender Cathexis	$500.00
Back Burner Cafe	$825.00
Circus Combustus	$800.00
The Cube	$504.00
Fire Garden	$360.00
PowerBright 5000	$273.00
Watch Our City Grow	$300.00

Here's a spreadsheet with more details for each project's funding. Projects that are stricken through elected to not continue their fundraising efforts through the Online Fundraiser, thus, the funds they raised through the event were distributed to the remaining projects. The Off-Road Wheelchair project held their own additional fundraiser after the event. With the funds from the event, online, and their own fundraiser, they were able to meet maximum funding. The details from their fundraiser are not given in this report.

Types of funds:

1. **Ballot funds** - Funds collected through the sale of ballots. Each ballot was $10. Participants were allowed to purchase multiple ballots.

2. **Secondary funds** - Funds collected through the silent auction, refreshments. Secondary funds also include funds from projects that didn't meet their minimum at the event and chose not to continue fundraising through the Online Fundraiser

3. **Online funds** - Funds collected through the online fundraiser.

4. **Fund matching funds** - The BOD dedicated a pool of $10,000 for fund matching. This money was distributed according to a percentage funds that a project raised relative to the total amount of funds raised.

Distribution:

1. Ballots were turned into the voting table, and the funds from each ballot were distributed according to the participants' votes.

2. Secondary funds were distributed according to the percentage of ballot funds a project received divided by the *total* ballot funds. **For example:**
   a. $1000 worth of ballots was sold throughout the event.
   b. $500 in secondary funds were collected.
   c. Project BURN ALL THE THINGS (BATT™) raised $100 through ballot funds.
   d. $100/$1000 = 10%
   e. Project BATT gets 10% of the $500 in secondary funds, which would be $50 for this example.

3. Fund matching funds were distributed according to a percentage funds that a project raised relative to the total amount of funds raised. **For example**:
   a. $1000 total funds were raised through the event and the online fundraiser.
   b. $5000 was set aside for fund matching.
   c. Project BURN ALL THE THINGS raised a total of $100. This means they raised $100/$1000 = 10% of the total funds raised.
   d. Project BATT gets 10% X $5000 = $500 in fund matching funds.
   e. Their total funds raised comes to $100 + $500 = $600.
   f. Other notes:
      i. No project received more than their maximum funding.
      ii. If fund matching brought a project over their max, those overage funds were put back into the Fund Matching pool and redistributed to the other projects that had not met their maximum. So, if Project BATT's max was $500, that extra $100 would go back into the Fund Matching pool to be redistributed to other projects that didn't meet their max.

4. Artists whose projects did not reach their maximum were allowed to take what funds they raised at the event that night and continue fundraising through the Online Fundraiser.
   a. If an artist whose project did not reach its minimum did not want to continue through the Online Fundraiser, their ballot funds were added to the total secondary funds which essentially redistributed those funds to the other artists.

b. Artists later signed an agreement acknowledging the receipt of the funds from the event. They also promised to bring their project as well as return the funds if the project didn't meet its minimum by the end of the Online Fundraiser or if their project didn't come to Alchemy.

5. Artists whose projects met their minimum with fund matching could either continue fund raising through the Online Fundraiser in order to reach their maximum, or they could stop fundraising and receive their fund matching funds.

6. For artists who chose to continue fundraising through the online fundraiser, their fund matching funds were not calculated until the conclusion of the Online Fundraiser.

7. Checks were distributed to each project after the conclusion of the Online Fundraiser containing their online funds and fund matching funds.

Cash Handling Procedures

Given that large amounts of cash were to be handled at the gate and refreshment table, we decided that simply having all of the cash at the gate and refreshment table until the end of the event wasn't the safest thing to do. Chw was able to arrange with one of the B-Complex's resident artists use of their studio for us to do cash drops into a small safe, which was provided by Chw.

1. Cash counted twice at gate/refreshment table by one event lead and one other team lead.

2. Amount to be dropped to the safe was logged and signed by the event lead and team lead. Both the gate and refreshment table had their own log sheets.

3. Cash was brought to the safe. Both event leads and the team lead were present for the drop to the safe. The safe had its own log sheet, and the cash was counted and logged again.

4. Distributing cash to the artists:
   a. The gate lead made a first count, and another volunteer made a second count. This cash was then bundled with the amount and project written on the cash wrap.
   b. One event lead then had each artist initial the amount of cash they were taking.

At one point during the night, we began to run out of small bills for change. $200 was signed out of the gate by Sarah, and she went to different gas stations and grocery stores in hopes of making change. She was able to make $100 in change and signed back in the $200.

Silent Auction

The community donated items to be auctioned off, and this year's auction was a silent auction. The silent auction raised $326 which is a notable decrease from last year. We believe that this decrease is due to the lack of a live auction led by a loud and charismatic person.

The opening and ending of bidding of each item was in a staggered, rotating number of hours, with the intention of ending bids when they received enough attention and when the buyer was still present to pay for and collect their art.

Thoughts from the Art Team (Chelsea Darling):

Not a successful model. Needed:
- A dedicated person managing the auction (without other conflicting duties)
- More awareness of the auction
- More art donations to the auction
- Ability to collect in forms other than cash
- Needs to be a live auction.

Picture by Photognome

Online Fundraiser

The Online Fundraiser utilized a free, open source shopping cart infrastructure called "Ubercart". This allowed us to track payments and orders as well as make donating to multiple projects in one transaction a quick and easy process. Each order that was placed generated an email to the Art Fundraiser email address with order details including how much went to each project. This information was also tracked in Paypal allowing us to be absolutely sure that people's donations went to their intended projects. As each order came in, we updated a Google spreadsheet listing each project's minimum, maximum, ballot and secondary funds received from the event, and online funds.

Paypal took a small cut of each online donation and changed slightly depending on the amount of the donation. The percentage cut from each donation was around 5%. The BOD chose for the organization to cover that cost, which is included in the budget for the event

Three projects, Simoom Visions, Zhulong, and Warwolf, did not meet their minimum funding and the artists for those projects decided to donate their ballot funds to the remaining projects. Those funds were funneled into the total secondary funds pool. The Flash Sculpture project was not present at the event.

Gate

Lead: Sarah Griffith

The Gate was open for 7 hours, from 7pm to 2am. The shifts were 1 hour long, with 2 volunteers working each shift. There were no problems getting people to sign up and the schedule was full as the event approached.

The system was pretty simple. Each ballot was $10. We kept track of every ballot we sold on a sheet. We had a locked cash box for the money and did regular (at least hourly) cash drops. While this system worked fine, most of the time, it was clear that it was hard to keep up with when things got busy. Next year, I think having one of the laptops or tablets would be ideal. I'd like to see us keep track of the money, as we take it in, the number of ballots sold and the number of participants through the gate as easily as possible.

We also had some simple supplies, like a First Aid kit, behind the Gate. I only got a single bandaid out of it, but we learned at Decomp, last year that it's easiest to have those things available at the Gate, as that's where people will come if there's an issue. Sean also had Alchemy's Lost and Found behind the Gate and said quite a few participants reclaimed their things.

There were a couple of people who missed their shifts, mostly due to arriving later than expected. It was never an issue to get someone else to step in. I think hour long shifts are really helpful with this. A quick pop isn't hard to get people to commit to. All in all, the Gate went entirely smoothly and we experienced no real issues.

LNT

Lead: Jill Mongato

Volunteers:

We had 2 volunteer shifts, 7PM-10PM and 10PM-2AM, 3 people per shift. The earlier shift filled up, but only 1 person signed up for the second one. As shifts were fairly informal anyway, this wasn't a problem and I could easily keep an eye on things myself.

During the Event:

I instructed volunteers to spend their shift doing whatever they normally did and having fun, but keep an extra eye out for wayward MOOP. I educated a couple participants who were wondering where the trash can was. There seemed to be very little trash left around, which is awesome. Camp Dirigo volunteered to help with LNT as well.

Post Event:

There was again very little LNT work to do. I recruited one of the Dirigo members to scout for trash, he found very little, and most of it was probably in the venue before we got there. I took out 3 bags of trash total, including trash from the bar area (bottles, etc).

Parking

Lead: Sean Gaines

Once it was decided that parking attendees on the street was not a viable option, Trevor secured a parking area for us with some folks down the street a little. A near-last-minute call out for volunteers netted us a usable number of folks to work it. Trevor, I believe, got most of them; I got all of one that I am sure of. We were very lucky in getting John Ross to volunteer for the parking team, as he arrived half an hour to an hour in and then stayed down at the lot almost the whole time except for near the end when I covered for him for a bit so he could actually go

see the projects and such.

For the most part, the lot afforded us plenty of space for everyone. The few times it did fill up, we parked some people in the grass in front of the building next to the lot. Otherwise though, people leaving before the end of the event meant that we didn't need to try to figure out anywhere else to park folks.

Incidents with parking were almost nil. One car got a flat tire from a nail in the gravel, and Photognome locked his keys in his running car and had to call a locksmith. There were no other incidents of note to my knowledge.

All in all, the parking for the event was a great success, especially given the last-minute change in how it was going to be handled.

Rangers

Lead: Shannon 'Chw' Joiner

There were no incidents requiring the intervention of a Ranger.

We had 2 Rangers monitoring the event (one an Event Lead Team member) inside and had radio communication to both the Gate where people paid and the paid security officer who was helping with traffic (parking in different lots and walking people to their cars as they left). I would recommend having Rangers do shifts just like the other teams - maybe two hours long next year. I also recommend using Alchemy radio's for communication between the parking team, ELT, Gate and security during the event. My recommendation on the number of Rangers varies due to venue but I would think two walking around inside, one walking around outside and checking in on the gate and possibly another to hang with parking and the paid security.

Refreshments

Lead: Sarah Griffith

The Refreshment Table was open for a total of 6 hours, from 7pm to 1am. The Shifts were 2 hours with 2 volunteers on each shift. Filling those shifts proved easy. Everyone likes serving the drinks, even when there's no alcohol involved.

At the event, everything went smoothly. Alchemy cups were sold for $5 each with unlimited refills of juice, soda or water. We did one cash drop, about halfway through the night. A couple of volunteers didn't make their shifts, but it was never hard to find anyone to fill in. All in all, it was a big success. People didn't seem to complain or feel at all thrown by the lack of alcohol.

Voting Table

Lead On Site: Sarah Griffith

The Voting Table was open for 5 hours, from 7pm - Midnight. The shifts were 1 hour each, with 1 volunteer on each shift. People filled up those shifts quickly and we entered the event with a full schedule. At the event, the Voting Table didn't start operating exactly at 7pm, as Patrick was still getting things set up and the first volunteer was running late. This didn't prove to be an issue, as people were just beginning to look at projects. In future, I'd suggest opening the Voting Table an hour after the event starts, as it's unlikely to be used before then.

We had a few spare pens and a box to collect ballots in, once they were entered. The results of each ballot were entered into the computer and were then viewable on a large projection for everyone to see.

Saving ballots proved useful. At one point, Patrick was making a couple of edits somehow we lost the totals. It was a bit time consuming re-entering the totals, but it was handled and the chart updated appropriately. That was really the only issue all night. Everyone showed up for their shifts. A single volunteer is all that is needed to run the Voting Table. Once we

approached 11:30, an announcement was made for everyone to turn in their ballots and then they were collected and saved.

Overall, the system worked really well and I don't see any reason to recommend major changes for next year. Obviously, changes could be required if we have a simultaneous online portion, but I can't really assess what those might be until we know how that might go.

Suggestions for future Art Fundraisers

- An FAQ on the Alchemy website explaining all the fundraiser procedures as well as an FAQ/tutorial for art project submissions.
- Proper permitting for alcohol sales.
- Move away from cash-only transactions and allow people to use credit/debit cards. This could possibly be the single best way to increase funding at the event.
- Food trucks! Many of these will come out for free if we can show a certain number of people will show up. We can support local businesses and help provide delicious noms to the participants.
- Get the contract sooner. The contract for a venue should be presented to the board several months in advance to allow for review and edits.
- **Hold the event sooner in the year, especially if we continue to do an online fundraiser.** Artists need more time to build their projects. We suggest no later than the end of April.
- Additional teams/volunteers: Add teams for deco, setup and breakdown (separate teams), people to represent out-of-town projects, and a 'put out all the fires' team whose purpose is to help with unexpected problems during the event. We also suggest designating a volunteer lead to help recruit and manage volunteers.
- Ballot and refreshment purchases should be tracked on a computer instead of being handwritten.
- The Online Fundraiser should show each project's minimum and maximum funding requests. It should also show how much each project has collected as well as show how much funding the project has with fund matching.

- Other possible venues:
  - The Goat Farm
    - The owners are extremely selective about what events they allow, however, they provide the venue **for free** as well as a myriad of infrastructure and services.
    - There's a vast network of artists that could be tapped into.
    - The event would need some overall theme (like Alchemy has every year), and that theme would need to be obviously present at the event. Any music would need to be some kind of live band. No DJ's.
    - Lots of extra work to make happen, but we believe it would be worth it.
  - The Art Exchange
    - Venue used for 2011 Decompression
    - Repurposed school. Different classrooms could be used for the different art projects.
    - Lots of outside space.
- Suggested timeline for planning the event:
  - 6-8 months out: Select a date and Event Leads. Begin venue scouting.
  - 4 months out: Present a venue and contract to the BOD. Choose team leads. Announce full event details to the community. Call out for art projects.
  - 2-3 months out: Begin recruiting volunteers. Get technical side of the online fundraiser ready. Present a full budget to the BOD.
  - 1 month out: Close art project submissions. Begin putting up art project content for the online fundraiser.
  - 1 month after: Submit event report to the BOD.
- Communication - need to have everyone who is involved in an email group.
  - There were a number of times that conversations went on and some didn't know about it because they were not in the CC'd line of emails.
  - Make sure the team knows what is happening before publicly talking about it.
  - Make a set of SOP (standard operating procedures) so that no lead has to guess what the BOD expects from this position as well as how to handle money at the event.
  - Clear communication with Volunteers leading up to the event - this is a one night show but for it to go smoothly communication is key!

- Track actual attendance at the event. Ballot sales are, at best, a rough estimate of the event's attendance.

Further Suggestions from the Art Team

By Chelsea Darling

- Make it more challenging to apply. People should have their proposals completely polished and professional. It was easy this year, but next year I want there to be more accountability on the artist so again, they will step up their game and take it even more seriously.

  How to do that? I propose we have their applications displayed online in their entirety. Everything they write, especially their itemized budgets, will be what everyone will read in order to decide whether or not to donate to the projects. This will also make everyone think a whole lot harder about their budgets from the get go, making it easier for more of them to get funded.

- Require that each budget level (Minimum budget and Maximum budget separately) is fully written out. No writing out the amount for minimum and have maximum be "Plus a bunch more."
- Add a third tier for budgets called the "Qualifying Budget." This will be the amount that will partially fund a project just enough for them to get started after the fundraiser.
  1. they are required to commit to the project after reaching this amount, and sign a contract to make it super serious.
  2. they can continue to receive money after this amount, but we make sure they know there is absolutely no guarantee made to them that they will receive any more than that, though methods for earning more will be made available.
  3. there is a higher level of fundmatching up to this level (150% up to Qualifying, 100% up to Minimum, 10% up to Maximum is one suggestion)
  4. this is the level that qualifies them to receive any more funding. If they do not receive this amount at the fundraiser, they lose all of the funds that have been raised.

- Have online donations open at the same time the physical fundraiser starts. This way more of the community can be represented, and more funds will be available upfront.
- Start the fundraiser much earlier in the year so there is still time for additional fundraising efforts + build.
- Make the numbers open for everyone to see online throughout the entire process, and MUCH easier to read (ie: charts).
- Here is a suggestion for the form they should fill out to send in proposals, which shows how the budgets would break down:
- Lastly, with all of these new rules and how confusing fundmatching is, we need to have an online FAQ of how everything works, and have it posted well before we start soliciting applications