Dear Members of the Board:

I proudly announce the implementation of Artist Fees in our annual budget for all exhibiting/presenting artists and collectives with whom we work, as of ____________ 2012. It is our priority to make this positive change possible without the need for any staff or benefit cuts that would punish those whose income make it difficult or impossible to keep up with the current economic landscape, and will accomplish these goals with remedial pay cuts to the top administration (including myself) and some belt-tightening to some basic workplace extravagances. This is a groundbreaking and necessary step towards actualizing equity and parity within the arts community—and the economy at large—and reflects our institution’s commitment to remaining ahead of the curve on policy matters and innovation, in line with our mission statement and the laws that govern non-profit institutions and their funders.

Although our arts institution has been viewed in the past as overly beholden to the interests of our Trustees’ art and other investments/investors (real estate, corporate commercial interests, etc), we feel that now is the time to renew our ties with the public trust and take an ethical step forward by contributing to the income of the cultural producers with whom we work. We will implement an ‘Artist Fees’ line item comprising _____% of our annual budget allocations. As a non-profit institution which contracts the educational labor of—and objects produced by—artistic practitioners, we know that this policy change will expand our reach to a more diverse community of cultural producers whose economic reality we’ve been ignoring for too long.

__________________________ is/is not a collecting institution, and we know that this policy change is the best way to move forward into the future of our great city, in which rents and cost-of-living increases are no longer keeping up with income and minimum wage standards. We value and cherish the artistic community, without whose commitment and contributions we would not exist. We believe that both private and public funding and granting organizations should be accountable, guaranteeing that cultural institutions adhere to ethical labor-compensatory practices. As we know, it takes a village to build a culture. There are no longer any excuses that relieve us from our responsibility of paying the people with whom we work. We call on all other arts institutions to follow our lead.

As the Guerilla Art Action Group stated in 1969, “There is a group of extremely wealthy people who are using art as a means of self-glorification and as a form of social acceptability. They use art as a disguise, a cover for their brutal involvement in all sphere of the war machine.” We are ready, willing and able to support not only our Trustees, but also the people on whom many of these very art investors rely. We are proud to announce this change in course, to lead by example rather than rhetoric, to do the right thing in these trying times.

Sincerely,

__________________________
Executive Director