ARTCOACH PROGRAM, DELIVERED FOR CREATIVE COAST BY STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS
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PROGRAM: AMPLIFIER
Mobile Media-Capture Program (photography & videography)
3 instances (3 cities - Victoria, Port Alberni, Port McNeill)

TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

- PER DIEMS: what we created was sufficient for what was needed in most locations and on most days. There were minor deviations but the team generally was well taken care of inside the created food & hotel per diems.

- VEHICLE RENTAL: We typically had 3-4 teammates in a compact SUV or minivan fully loaded with equipment for this process. You could not get away with a smaller vehicle, and (if following the same format) a LARGER one would have made for a more comfortable trip and more room for equipment. We would recommend a 4pax cargo van in the future, perhaps something like this: https://sprintervans4rent.com/van/crew-and-cargo/

- TOWING EQUIPMENT: One of the variations we had explored for the project was towing a small trailer full of equipment. We ended up very grateful that this isn't how the project was delivered, as many of the small communities we visited had very broken roadways, potholes, twisty roads and tough parking spots. A trailer would have been a real problem, in some of the smaller communities we visited or went through (and PRICE would have increased significantly for ferries, insurance and gasoline).

VENUES & SPACES

- PHYSICAL SPACES: The nature of the portable studio project really allowed us to accommodate the various temporary production spaces that we were offered through our partner arts councils. We have three primary recommendations for future iterations:

    a. AUDIO MANAGEMENT: Where possible, have at least TWO independent rooms available for this process. In instances where we were capturing media in just ONE room, managing AUDIO for interviews and filming of performances was difficult, and required careful sequencing to ensure there

was nothing else happening in the room at that time. Having two rooms would allow for 2 different types of media capture to be happening simultaneously. Ensuring that the venue/building itself isn't creating lots of noise during these shoots is also pivotal, and should be factored in when creating agreements on host venues.

b. LIGHT CONTROL: Certain spaces had TONS of windows and made it difficult to control light for photo & video shoots. Other rooms had NO light and we didn't have quite enough with us. In each instance our team found a way to make it work but knowing in advance what the venue is like in terms of lighting - and controllability - will be helpful in planning future efficient shoots.

c. ARTIST COMFORT: We frequently were navigating the relationship between artist comfort / confidence, and the quality or fluidity of the media we were capturing with them (IE video interview). As artists spent more time with the team, or in front of the camera, they generally presented as more and more comfortable and this showed up in videos with them, being more relaxed, smiling more, sharing more insight about their worlds and creative process. We recommend their comfort remain a primary focus, and feel that anything we can do to have the artists we are capturing for photos, podcasts or videos feel SAFE, comfortable, familiar - will go a long way to translate into a) their overall experience of the project b) the EASE of the media capture for all parties and c) ultimately the QUALITY of the media captured.

HOSTS / PARTNERS

● ADVANCE PREP & COMMUNICATION: We found all the Arts Council partners & team members to be very available for communication and generally fairly quick to reply with needed information and details before Art Coach arrived to their community. We recommend at least one more fixed meeting about a week before the visit to go over final trip details and ensure that the delivery organization (Creative Coast or other) has all the required details about the venue, artists, artist mediums and so on.

● WORKLOAD & CAPACITY: In early discussions about hosting Art Coach, we heard from a number of prospective delivery partners concerns about their capacity to play a role in the program. Various partner prospects and Arts Councils were expressing being stretched with existing commitments, or understaffed, or underfunded, or dealing with major local issues - like in one instance, a series of local suicides within the community. Making every effort to have the program as EASY as possible for the local partner to delivery did, and we think will, continue to be a pivotal objective of

projects like this. Elements we might consider in seeking to 'make it easy' could include things like:

- An array of prepared materials clearly expressing what the project is and who it is for
- Registration protocols and online forms to allow artists to register WITHOUT the local partner needing to be involved
- No or low cost to participation - including staff hours
- The delivery organization handling additional elements of the program such as finding the venue for the program day(s)

- DAY-OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES: The program was set up in such a way that very little is needed from host communities or organizations during the delivery day, which mostly involved our photographers and videographers capturing media from the attending artists. The one role that seemed really important on the part of the host was really being the liaison with the artists - the 'familiar face' that the attending artists new and trusted. Participating artists expressed feeling vulnerable and exposed, and the host can play a space-holding and nurturing role that often our visiting production team cannot. Primarily this role would include welcoming the artists, introducing them to the visiting production team, checking in with them throughout the day and perhaps attending to other areas of care & hospitality. This may seem like a minor detail but we really noticed the difference where we did NOT have this person in place fulfilling this role throughout the production day.

COMMUNICATION / MATERIALS

- PROGRAM MATERIALS: It's clear that a major area for improvement is the materials that were created in advance in order to explain the program both to host communities, and to attending artists. While the materials created would need to be different for each of these groups, the common feedback we received was that the program offering was unclear and people didn't know what they were getting. We suspect PART of this issue was due to a few internal pivots we initiated to adapt around the demands of COVID, and PART of this issue was just timelines and a lack of internal marketing/communication wizardry to capture & express the exact nature of the offering. We recommend for future iterations that a deep focus is applied to this domain, and that materials are detailed and robust enough to help people understand the nature of the offering (in this case, "Amplifier"). We also recommend that the communication about these programs is captured in various mediums and in particular video, so that people with different learning styles can easily take in the information in whichever medium best suits their learning.

- CLARITY FOR ARTISTS: On arrival, many participating artists expressed an unclear understanding of the intention of the Amplifier day together. Some understood that it was a workshop/learning opportunity rather than predominantly a media capture day. Two artists, upon receiving this clarification, decided not to attend day of. They were directed to reach out to Creative Coast RE: AMA recordings and future registrations. Other artists expressed they would have brought MORE artists, if they had better understood the content and flow of the day.

- RELEASE FORMS: Recalling that the post-event USE of the captured media by the organization and delivery partner (Stream of Consciousness) was unclear, this might be an area that warrants further consideration for future iterations, to ensure that the release form accomplishes all the legal requirements that the delivery org needs fulfilled, WHILE not being jargony or packed with so much legalese that it intimidates participating artists.

ARTISTS & INTAKE PROCESS

- There were a few instances where the production team arrived to a community and there were participating artists who had types of art we weren't perfectly equipped to capture. We suspect that a more detailed intake process may be helpful, focusing in particular on the mediums of art that the artist works with. It would be helpful to know not only the mediums/disciplines the artists work in but also what pieces they intend to bring for the amplifier day so that our team can plan out media capture setup in advance to be able to provide the most useful assets to artists. That said, given the rural locations and word-of-mouth nature of how artists were finding out about the program people were sometimes showing up who didn't know in advance of the program. The only viable solution here to be able to service these artists is really just to have a very large and multifunctional production kit and team who are able to adapt on the fly to service whomever might show up (be it a poet, collage artist or rapper).

- It would also be helpful to know in advance what the artists intended use of the media is (website, which social platforms etc) so that the production team can understand their needs in advance and try to CAPTURE the media consistent with the ultimate intended use case for that artists. This supports both the packing of relevant gear and gives production team time to brainstorm interesting ways of capturing the art.

- A number of participating artists, while VERY excited to have an array of new media to use in their self-expression, communicated to us that they weren't sure HOW best they would later use or leverage these new media assets. It seems a natural fit to

have Art Coach (or future iterations) continue to evolve the multi-stage offerings, to support participating artists or groups to actually APPLY and use the media assets in various ways in their work. Perhaps the "low hanging fruit" herein is support with their social media platforms, websites, and online profile pages… along with increased opportunities to advance their learning in these areas. The "help desk" scenario as originally envisioned by Creative Coast might also be a terrific complimentary program to the Art Coach process.

PROCESS & DELIVERY

- PUNCTUALITY: We noted that artists were keen, and all arrived on time

- SCHEDULING: There was feedback that holding the Amplifier days on weekdays was a barrier to access for many artists. Three specific examples of artists who, according to a host Arts Council board member, were unable to participate due to the weekday were: a school teacher, an ER nurse and a Cannabis Store Manager.

- All of the artists expressed that their experience of the day was great. Much gratitude was expressed to the production team

- [Port Alberni] Melissa was very happy for both the Stream of Consciousness team expertise but also for the way we worked with the artists

- Some artists brought some in progress items and were able to work on them while the SoC team worked with other artists. This allowed for them both to capture some in progress work and to share some of their process with each other.

- A very core element that we noticed and heard about ongoingly was the artists being able to have conversations with each other and network, share resources, ideas, etc. Even in the smallest community we visited there were longtime resident artists meeting each other for the first time during the program. This was surprising to us but given the different mediums artists were working in, and their remote locations, it became clear that this was more common than we had expected. Continuing to focus on networking and peer mentorship as a core ancillary benefit of the program seems like high-value 'low hanging fruit' for future iterations.

- Another core benefit of the program was artists expressing to us that this project had them more clearly or strongly self-identify as artists - that the very process of documenting their works made them feel more 'real' and 'professional' as artists.

- Some of the attending artists there were new, and they expressed excitement at having interest in their work. "You are the first people who have been interested in my work" was a specific comment in this regard.

- QUANTITY OF ARTISTS: 4 or 5 participating artists per day allowed us to have a full day and take plenty of time with the artists on this project. More than 5 would have required a different structure to accommodate everyone and not feel rushed.

- The direct experience of the day (getting their photos taken, watching the team take product shots/video) was expressed to us as at least as valuable to the artists as the actual media captured. This allowed them to learn tips for their own future captures of their art when our production team would not be present.

- INTERVIEWS: Having a professional video interview captured is a very key media asset for most artists, and it's rare for an emerging artist to have such an asset. Given it may be unlikely for such an asset to be created again anytime soon, making the MOST of the Art Coach opportunity will go a long way to increasing the utility and shelf life of a video interview with an artist. We noticed that the interview QUESTIONS that were asked played a huge role in the answers and depth that were provided from interviewees, and we recommend more time and design being put into the interview questions for future iterations. We interpret that strong interview questions could be customised for each participant, providing a more cohesive, flowing and sophisticated interview. This would also cut down on post-production time, saving time and money in editing the interview after the fact.

PRODUCTION TEAM

- For the Amplifier, we generally had a team of 3 or 4 people. 2 production team, a project manager and a production assistant. We delivered ONE Amplifier with only two operators and it was much more difficult for the team to fulfill without at least one more person on hand to support the artists and manage their transitions between studio elements (IE art photography, then moving to portraits, then to video interview, etc).

- Even in instances where the local community host is present, we recommend a minimum viable team for this project to be 3 humans - 2 media production specialists and 1 project manager.

- Additional possible teammates could include:

- A videographer capturing media of the process itself ("BTS" or behind-the-scenes)
- An interviewer just to be with the artists during the video interview - ask the questions, create engagement, make them feel comfortable. This person could also potentially facilitate an onsite podcast while the project is onsite with the artists, and has all the required equipment in place

TECH / EQUIPMENT

- PACKING & OVERPACKING: We didn't always have reliable or detailed information about which artists were coming and what medium of art they were bringing for us to capture. For this reason, we greatly overpacked our equipment to be prepared for any & every possible scenario. This was possible because we own such an array of media production equipment, but future iterations may not be able to approach the project in this way. It seems clear that there will often arise situations where having extra equipment available saves the day. Future project iterations may need to decide between hiring a team like ours that has all the extra equipment available - OR - getting much more specific about what this project offers, and potentially narrowing down the types of media capture that would be available to participating artists (IE NOT shooting dance performances, or only shooting SINGLE camera interviews, or NOT doing timelapse videos of them painting, etc etc).

- POWER: Some of the spaces we were in had layouts / rooms that required longer power runs - recommendation: bring 5-10 LONG (25-50') AC cables & high-voltage power bars.

- Per the core intentions of the project, the equipment brought to each community focused on visual arts and visual artists. One consideration or opportunity for future iterations would be to also have audio-centric equipment with the mobile studio, allowing for proper capture of acoustic songs & drumming - spoken word poetry - electronic music or electronic/acoustic fusion music. This would require more physical space in the vehicles, and depending on what was being captured COULD also require an audio specialist as part of the travelling team. Likely this consideration would be explored based on the degree of demand for music & audio recording within this format. During the Art Coach events, there were two artists who were interested in recording music but given the visual-centric nature of the project the equipment we had with us was insufficient to that task. This might be an interesting opportunity to explore in future.

POST-PRODUCTION

- Spending some time as a team carefully mapping out all the anticipated post-production from a diverse multimedia project such as this will be a pivotal element for future iterations. Understanding the mediums you'll be working with, and roughly how MUCH of it (how many photos, how many hours of video, how many podcast recordings, etc) will allow for a more thorough understanding of the post-production requirements and timeframes. A deeper layer to this would be really digging in to HOW these assets might be used in the future, which will greatly inform how they are edited and prepared for use (for example - portraits for PRINTING need to be huge file sizes, where as portraits for social media would be much smaller. Another example, audio captured for a youtube video discussing an upcoming retreat doesn't need to be as perfect as the audio recorded to introduce an ecourse that you expect to be selling for the next 5 years).

- Managing all the media that came from each Amplifier day was a significant undertaking, and one that we (Stream of Consicousness) underestimated in terms of the raw hours required to capture, inventory, sort, name, render, backup, and upload to the project holder. It was also anticipated that SOME of that media management would occur during travel, but that proved difficult given varying access to the internet and ultimately inefficient while travelling. We recommend that in future there is one full week allocated PER amplifier day during which the vast majority of media post-production will be scheduled and completed.

- We also recommend multiple backup systems (including a cloud-based system) in place for all the captured media, as well as an administrative system of checks-and-balances to verify that these backup protocols are being used, successfully, throughout.