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George Rodrigue
Foundation of the Arts

An internship report submitted to the graduate faculty
of the University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

Master of Arts
in
Art Administration

by

Jennifer Maurer

B.A., Beloit College, 2002

May 2012

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ABSTRACT

This is a report on the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts (GRFA) following an internship with the organization from June until September 2011. This report consists of an organizational summary, an account of the internship, SWOT analysis, best practices and concluding thoughts.

Modeled after the Thea Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas, GRFA advocates the importance of art in youth development, and its mission is reflected by George Rodrigue's testimony of the positive influence of art in his life.

INTRODUCTION

The George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts (GRFA) was founded in 2009 as a 501(c)(3) exempt private foundation to advocate the importance of the visual arts in youth development. This is a report of GRFA made after an internship there in the summer of 2011, and consists of an organizational summary, an account of the internship, SWOT analysis, best practices and concluding thoughts. GRFA is modeled after the Thea Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas, and its mission is reflected by George Rodrigue's testimony of the positive influence of art in his life. GRFA's mission is accomplished through scholarship programs, art supply donations, public awareness campaigns, and providing educational resources to educators in Louisiana.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

About the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts, Inc.

Area of Interest:

Art; Education; Advocacy

Tax Status:

501(c)(3) exempt private foundation, EIN # 26-3623732

Location and Mailing Address:

George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts, Inc.

747 Magazine Street

New Orleans, LA 70130

Contact Information

Phone: 504.324.9614

Fax: 504.324.0541

Email: info@georgerodriguefoundation.org

Website: <http://www.georgerodriguefoundation.org>

Mission, as stated by GRFA:

“George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts (GRFA) advocates the importance of the visual arts in the development of our youth. GRFA encourages the use of art within all curriculums and supports a variety of art educational programs.”¹

Objective, as stated by GRFA:

“In 2009 George Rodrigue formed GRFA as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. In addition to providing financial assistance in the arts and other areas, GRFA will plan, develop, and implement a series of unique educational art programs that are specially designed to enhance and expand art curriculums, despite continuing state and federal cutbacks.”²

Board

George Rodrigue, President

Jacques Rodrigue, Secretary

Wendy Rodrigue, Director

Andre Rodrigue, Treasurer

Staff

Jacques Rodrigue, Executive Director

Marney Robinson, Director of Education

Wayne Fernandez, Director of Development

Gus Anderson, Director of Operations

History of GRFA: 2009 - 2011

GRFA was founded in 2009 by Louisiana artist George Rodrigue and his family. The purpose of the Foundation was to give back to the community and advocate the importance of visual art in youth education. George Rodrigue first became involved in raising money for charity after the terrorist attack of September 11th. In response to the event he created an edition of one thousand prints of a painting to benefit the American Red Cross. The fundraising campaign was called Blue Dog Relief. The prints all sold within weeks raising \$500,000. The success of this fundraising campaign encouraged another in 2003, raising \$350,000 to benefit the International Child Art Foundation.³ In 2005, in response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, George stepped up Blue Dog Relief and designed a series of six prints. These prints raised \$1.5 million for the Southeast Louisiana Chapter of the Red Cross, the New Orleans Museum of Art, the United Way, and other smaller non-profits. Wishing to contribute more in the community, George and his family created the George Rodrigue Foundation of the

Arts. The Thea Foundation in Little Rock, Arkansas, served as a model for the Foundation, and provided direction for programming.⁴ In June 2009 GRFA was formed as a private foundation to advocate the importance of the arts in youth education.

The Foundation started with a small office in Metairie, Louisiana managed by Executive Director Jacques Rodrigue (son of George Rodrigue), Director of Development Wayne Fernandez, and Director of Operations Gus Anderson. George Rodrigue made a donation to the Foundation to cover the initial organizational costs. Marney Robinson joined the organization later in 2009 as Education Director. At the start, the Foundation took steps to create awareness of its mission and establish relationships with schools in Louisiana by organizing classroom visits and encouraging students in their art. The first annual GRFA Art Contest for senior high school students was announced in late 2009. These initial programs were funded by art sales and donor contributions.

2010 was a busy first year for the Foundation: an interactive website was launched, the Print Donation Program was expanded, and the first college scholarships were awarded to the winners of the GRFA Art Contest. Also, George's Art Closet was launched, a program to provide art supplies to Louisiana schools.

GRFA began 2011 by joining Twitter and launching an interactive iPad app. Also in January, the staff visited the Thea Foundation in Arkansas and learned more about arts integration in education. In mid-May the Foundation moved to its current address at 747 Magazine Street in the New Orleans Arts District. The new location provided greater visibility, accessibility, and space for programming. In June the organization took advantage of the new space and hosted its first summer art camp. Also that month, a new fundraising campaign, Arts 4 Education, was launched to coincide with an exhibition of George Rodrigue's work at the LSU

Museum of Art. Capitalizing on the new location GRFA opened its doors and shared its mission during the June Arts District Art Walk and again in August during White Linen Night. In late 2011, the Foundation announced a second scholarship opportunity for Louisiana high school students: the GRFA Digital Art Contest. The year ended with the news that the 2012 Scholarship Art Contest 1st place artwork would be used for the Louisiana Bicentennial Poster.

Advocacy

GRFA believes that the visual arts are essential for youth development. To promote its mission and to create awareness of the value of the visual arts in child development the foundation addresses the question, “Why Arts in Education?” The Foundation makes its case for encouraging the visual arts in youth education using two approaches. One, the Foundation presents how a classroom benefits from arts integrated learning. Two, it describes the benefit of art in personal development. GRFA provides reports and research by arts education professionals to support its arguments.

The benefits of arts-integrated learning are discussed by GRFA and supported by the report “Reinvesting in Arts Education” done by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in 2011. This report analyzes recent research in art and education and provides conclusions about the impact of the arts in education. The report presents five ways art improves the scholastic experience: academics improve; discipline problems are reduced; attendance increases; graduation rates soar; and motivation and engagement increase.⁵

The benefits of art in personal development are also emphasized by GRFA. Online and in discussion the organization shares “Ten Lessons the Arts Teach”, an excerpt from Elliot Eisner’s book *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. (See appendix.) Elliot Eisner, an authority in discussions of art and education, shows teaching the arts as broadly advantageous, helping children both in school and in their personal development.

Another question addressed as part of GRFA advocacy is, “Why teach the arts?” The response, as stated on the Foundation’s website: “The arts provide the opportunity to enhance creativity, self-confidence, and self-discovery in all students.”⁶ The answer synthesizes above arguments about the intrinsic value of the arts and their positive role in a person’s development, as well as how art education helps children in school. The Foundation shares art-in-education research on its website and also in its publicity and development work.

Arts-Integration

GRFA recommends an arts-integrated education for children. As the Foundation defines it, “Arts integration means teaching every subject by using the visual and performing arts to enhance the learning process. Subjects are connected, rather than separated. This teaching method caters to the way all students learn, engaging each child and giving them a path to success.”⁷ Arts integration, unlike traditional art education, is an approach that favors embedding the arts in conventional education lesson plans for core academic subjects. The fine arts and performing arts are worked into math, reading comprehension and writing lessons. This approach helps students express and understand various concepts and points of view.

Articles and reports shared by GRFA on its website educate and provide resources for those interested in current information and influential work about education and art. Currently the research page on the website has four links to important reports and studies.⁸ The Arts

Education Partnership, a private, nonprofit coalition promoting the role of art in education, published two of the reports posted on the GRFA website. *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts* and *Student Social and Academic Development*, published in 2002,⁹ and *Champions of Change: the Impact of the Arts on Learning*, published in 1999,¹⁰ are both very influential compendiums of essays on the social and academic effects of the study of the fine and performing arts. The third resource included by GRFA is *Increasing Arts Demand Through Better Arts Learning*, a report from the Wallace Foundation published in 2009.¹¹ The most recent addition to the resources webpage is *Re-Investing in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools*, a report issued in 2011 by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.¹²

Educational Programming

1. Scholarship Programs

The Foundation awards college scholarships based on artistic merit to Louisiana high school students to encourage individual participation in the arts. Two art contests – GRFA Art Contest and GRFA Digital Art Contest – are now in place and open to all junior and senior high school students regardless of students' GPA or future college studies. Each year George Rodrigue chooses a new competition theme. The Foundation is currently working to set up education partnerships with post secondary education institutions that will match the amount of the GRFA scholarship awards for a student accepted to the institution. To date, the Savannah College of Art and Design has become a GRFA Education Partner by agreeing to match the scholarship amount of any art contest winner accepted as a full time student.

2. GRFA Art Contest

The first annual GRFA Art Contest was announced in late 2009. The theme of the 2010 contest asked students to share what they love best about Louisiana. Over 300 entries were received and sixteen finalists were asked to attend the GRFA 2010 Art Contest Luncheon on March 27th at the Sheraton Hotel in New Orleans. At the awards luncheon ten students received \$27,500 in scholarships. The awards ranged from \$500 to \$5000. All of the finalists, including the scholarship winners and six students receiving honorable mentions, were each given \$250 gift certificates to Dick Blick Art Supplies and an original silkscreen print by George Rodrigue. In total over \$35,000 was given in scholarships and art supplies and all the finalists were recognized for their artistic achievement.

The 2011 GRFA Art Contest theme was “Speak out with Art.” GRFA received entries from 424 junior and senior students from 118 cities and towns across Louisiana. This was over a 30% increase in entries and a 50% increase in cities represented over the previous year. Eleven seniors and five juniors were selected as finalists and asked to attend the Art Contest and Scholarship Award Luncheon on March 26th held again at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. At the luncheon, guest judges selected the winners from the final entries. The Foundation awarded \$45,000 in scholarships and art supplies that day. The awards to seniors ranged from \$1000 to \$6000, and junior students received cash awards ranging from \$250 to \$1500. Again all the finalists received art supplies and an original silkscreen print by George Rodrigue.

The 2012 Art Contest theme was “Louisiana’s Bicentennial.” This year, in addition to the scholarships and cash awards given to seniors and juniors in Louisiana, a design was chosen from the entries by the Louisiana Bicentennial Commission to be used as the official poster for the Louisiana Bicentennial. Twenty finalists, thirteen high school seniors and seven juniors, were

selected from nearly 500 entries in over 120 cities in Louisiana. In February, at an awards luncheon at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Orleans, over \$50,000 was given in college scholarships and art supplies. The first place junior high school entry was announced as the official Louisiana Bicentennial Poster.

3. GRFA Digital Art Contest

Introduced in late 2011 the GRFA Digital Art Contest challenged Louisiana high school students to create a 3D fully rendered model created on a computer reflecting the theme of the Louisiana Bicentennial. The Foundation worked in partnership with the Louisiana Technology Council (LTC) and the Louisiana Digital Gaming Initiative (LDGI) to provide \$15,000 in scholarships to the five Louisiana high school students. The top five finalists will be notified in mid-April 2012 and asked to attend an awards luncheon in New Orleans. The scholarships will range from \$1000 to \$5000.

4. George's Art Closet

Introduced in 2009 and officially launched in 2010, George's Art Closet is one of the Foundation's first programs. It was created to offset the lack of funding for art supplies in public schools in Louisiana created by state budget shortfalls. Without adequate supplies, teaching art is a struggle for educators. Accepting art supplies and monetary donations for art supplies, GRFA assembles and distributes "Art Closets", which are customized art supply kits, to schools in need in Louisiana that have applied for the program. Selected elementary schools receive Art Closets valued at \$1500 and packed with construction paper, clay, tempera paint, and other age-appropriate art supplies. The middle and high school Art Closet includes acrylics, mediums, watercolors, pastels, brushes and more valued at \$2000. In the application for an Art Closet,

educators may make special requests depending on the school's needs. Many of the art supplies are considered necessary to any basic art class and will serve art classes for a number of years. The application for George's Art Closet is available on the GRFA website along with criteria. All public, private and parochial schools in Louisiana are eligible to apply. The Art Closets are awarded to schools throughout the year on a rolling basis in the order that they are received and as funds become available. In 2011 over \$47,000 in art supplies was given to schools in Louisiana through George's Art Closet.

5. Summer Art Camp

The first annual Summer Art Camp took place in June 2011, just a month after the foundation moved to its new location at 747 Magazine Street in New Orleans. With the new location came space to hold 20 children and their creative energies. Marney Robinson, the Education Director, ran the first GRFA Summer Art Camp for two weeks. The first week of camp, for children ages 4 – 6, titled *Oaks, Cajuns, and Blue Dogs Galore!*, was held June 20 – 24 from 9 -12 pm. The second week was themed *Made in Louisiana*, ran the following week, June 27 – July 1, and was open to children ages 7 – 9.

The summer art camp will be expanded in 2012 to include five weeks for children ages 3 to 15. The art camps will be organized by the week for different age groups: 3 and 4 years, 5 and 6 years, 7 to 9 years, 10 to 12 years, and 13 to 15 years. The classes will again be held at the Foundation's location on Magazine St. Just as last year, registration will take place on a first-come, first-serve basis and payment will be required to reserve a space. The cost has not yet been announced. In 2011 GRFA charged the subsidized cost of \$75 dollars per student with two scholarship positions open per week for children without means otherwise to attend the camp.

GRFA Summer Art Camps are designed to encourage children in the visual arts by sharing with them a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, design foundations, and age-appropriate subjects. Also, the Foundation promises “children will study and use the work of contemporary artists as a spring board for projects. Camps also will integrate learning in music, history, math, science, and more.”¹³

6. Classroom Resources

Classroom Resources are designed to help educators integrate visual art into the classroom. Lesson plans, activity sheets, and slide shows, along with a history of the Cajuns and a biography of George Rodrigue are included in the resource section of the GRFA website.

The Lesson Plan Database currently consists of 11 lesson plans and an invitation to educators to share any completed projects. The lesson plans each offer a directive with goals, a list of materials needed, recommendations on assessing the lesson, additional related classroom activities, education benchmarks and content standards, and interdisciplinary connections. For example, *Cutting Up with the Leaders of the Past and Present* is a lesson plan in which “students will study portraits by George Rodrigue and create their own photo-collage of a famous figure they have researched.”¹⁴

GRFA Development

1. Print Donation Program

The Print Donation Program was started in 2009 to raise money for both the Foundation and participating organizations. The print donation program sells select Blue Dog prints by George Rodrigue to non-profit organizations for \$500 each. The market value of these prints is estimated to be more than \$500. GRFA encourages non-profits to buy the prints at the discounted

rate and to then sell them for a profit for their organization. According to the Foundation, the program has “helped over 500 organizations raise over \$1 million at their fundraising events through silent auctions, raffles, and more.”¹⁵ In the case the sale of a print does not exceed the \$500 investment made by an organization, GRFA will accept the return of a print and refund the \$500. The prints are only available to the public through the Foundation and are not for sale in any Rodrigue Gallery.

2. Arts 4 Education

Both a fundraising effort and a commemoration of the Louisiana Museum of Art exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River*, GRFA sold the limited edition George Rodrigue print *A Number One Tiger Fan* from June 2011 to January 2012. The print was available for sale through the foundation, the website www.arts4education.org and the LSU Museum of Art in the Shaw Center in Baton Rouge. The print sold for \$500 plus tax. This fundraising effort was identified as Arts 4 Education, and was described by GRFA as “benefit[ing] the arts and education in Louisiana.”¹⁶ Publicity for the campaign included a guest appearance by George and Jacques Rodrigue on a morning news show, GRFA newsletter announcements, and a website for Arts4Education to promote the sale of the print. Proceeds from the sale of the print went to the LSU Museum of Art, the Tiger Athletic Fund, and the Foundation.

II. THE INTERNSHIP

The internship description that follows began in June 2011 and ended the second week of September. The primary location of the internship was the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts at 747 Magazine Street in New Orleans. During the internship, I worked with Operations Director Gus Anderson, Development Director Wayne Fernandez, and Education Director Marney Robinson.

June 2011

1. Arts 4 Education

During my first few weeks at the GRFA, I helped process Arts 4 Education orders for the sale of the print *A Number One Tiger Fan* by George Rodrigue. The \$500 sale of the print was a fundraising campaign called Arts 4 Education, timed in tandem with the opening of a retrospective of George Rodrigue's work at the Louisiana Museum of Art in the Shaw Center in Baton Rouge. Proceeds for the sale of the print went to GRFA, LSU Museum of Art, and the Tiger Athletic Fund.

2. Summer Art Camp

The week before GRFA Summer Art Camp, I helped Education Director Marney Robinson organize and prepare camp materials. We finalized registration of students for the camp and organized art supplies. Several days were spent gathering materials, including tables, chairs, and juice boxes at Sam's Club, craft materials at Michaels and recycled shutters at the Green Project. Another few days were spent preparing for the camp activities.

The 2011 summer camp, in its first year, was two weeks long. The first week of camp was June 20 to June 24 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the GRFA location on Magazine Street. The camp, titled *Blue Dogs and Cajuns Galore!*, was for children ages 4 – 6. Staff of the summer camp included Marney Robinson, two volunteers and myself. Our mornings began greeting children as they arrived, and helping them get started with an individual art activity until everyone was there. The camp was planned with multiple short activities, well-timed with breaks for hand-washing and cleanup. Halfway through every morning we stopped to read a story and have snacks. Each day children took artwork home with them. During that first camp, projects included painting and decorating three-foot cardboard oak trees, drawing family portraits, building paper-mache animals, forming clay into favorite foods and painting large tulle butterflies.

The first day of *Blue Dogs and Cajuns Galore!* we discovered one child was actually three years old. As expected, he required additional help with the art activities. However, I was surprised to see differences in ability, focus and knowledge of art between all the children, even those of the same age. I realized there was a great difference in behavior, capability, and familiarity with art materials between the 19 children. Some were very patient and would have spent all day on their projects. Other children sped through the activities, always eager to start something new. (Hence, our reasoning for planning every day with more activities than we were likely to start.) Also, the use of paint and brushes was entirely new to some children. Sometimes children pretended the paint brushes were magic wands, and sometimes the simple order of operations in applying paint to a brush to paper required explanation.

As part of my observations of that week, I think all of the children were inspired by colors and how they mix together. To illustrate, for many activities children received a full

palette of paint. Funny enough, with all the colors available, the one we did not provide – brown – was noticeably the favored color of many projects. The result of mixing some colors, and mixing some more, and then mixing them all together produced for the children a range of terrific brown projects. Brown became the color of discovery and experiments in mixing, and the various shades were much admired by the proud young artists. I heard young artists compliment one another on their mixing and “really cool” and “pretty” browns.

The second week of art camp, June 27th to July 1st, was titled *Made in Louisiana*. This camp was for children 7 to 9 years old. The activities for this week concentrated on Louisiana’s landscape and culture. The children worked with clay, paint, watercolor, collage, oil pastels, paper-mache and more. The activities for this age group tended to be longer, as the children were able to give more attention to their projects. Among their many activities they built skyscrapers and shotgun houses out of boxes and paper-mache, drew stories, and made mosaics out of red beans and rice.

July 2011

My internship during July was spent processing Arts 4 Education orders, ordering art supplies for schools, familiarizing myself more with the work of George Rodrigue, creating slide shows of George Rodrigue’s paintings for the Education Resource website page, and attending and assisting with events associated with George Rodrigue’s exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River* at the Louisiana Museum of Art in Baton Rouge.

1. Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River

Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River was an exhibition held at the Louisiana Museum of Art from July 24th to September 18th. GRFA was involved in special events, docent training, and student tours associated with the exhibition.

The Foundation had not originally planned to be involved in the exhibition. However, last minute changes and lack of personnel at the LSU Museum of Art obliged GRFA staff to step in and help. The Education Director already had much experience assisting with an exhibition of George Rodrigue's work. Before being employed by GRFA, she was the Associate Director of Education at the New Orleans Museum of Art when it hosted Rodrigue's 40-year retrospective exhibition. It was very natural for her to step in and organize exhibition activities, docent training and lead school groups. In late July, I accompanied the Education Director to Baton Rouge multiple times to assist with activities associated with *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River*.

2. Educator Preview

The Educator Preview of *Blue Dogs and Cajuns* was held on July 21st from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., a few days before the opening. The LSU Museum of Art and GRFA sent invitations to area educators. Registration was required even though the event was free. The Education Director and I arrived early to set up. Twenty or so educators attended the event, and each received an educator manual on the exhibition. George, Wendy and Jacques Rodrigue were there too. The event began with a lecture by Wendy Rodrigue about George's work. After Wendy's lecture everyone continued on to the exhibition where George spoke about his work and addressed questions from the educators.

3. Draw with George and Book Signing

On July 23rd I accompanied the Education Director to Baton Rouge for the kid-friendly event *Draw with George* at the Hilton Baton Rouge Capital Center. *Draw with George* was promoted with the following copy: "What is the best way to learn how to draw Blue Dog? From the artist, himself, of course! Follow along as George Rodrigue shows you how he creates a Blue

Dog portrait. After you have drawn one of your own, enjoy a yummy Blue Dog treat while Wendy Rodrigue reads *Are you Blue Dog's Friend?*¹⁷ The event was free with museum admission, but tickets were required as seating maxed out at 300. Tickets were provided through the LSU MOA Museum Store.

The event was promoted by GRFA and the LSU MOA and held in conjunction with *Blue Dogs and Cajuns*. That day we left New Orleans early, picking up 200 blue dog cookies from Maple Street Patisserie on our way out of town. When we arrived, we spent an hour setting up for the event in a large conference room at the Hilton. A dozen or so large round tables with chairs were set up for guests. We placed blue dog cookies on all the tables, along with crayons and paper. We brought in a large primed canvas, paints and brushes and set up an easel on a stage. The event began at 11 a.m. and lasted an hour. Following a welcome to all the attendees and short introduction on the Foundation, George and Wendy took the stage. George painted on stage with his back to the crowd so all could see him paint. While George worked, Wendy narrated and then read the children's story *Are You Blue Dog's Friend?* After the event all the attendees were encouraged to walk across the street and see the exhibition at the Shaw Center. A book signing by George Rodrigue started at 1 p.m. across the street in the atrium of the Shaw Center for the Arts.

August 2011

August was a busy month for GRFA. Time was divided between the office in New Orleans and the Shaw Center in Baton Rouge. Here is a timetable of events:

- August 4th, *Young Professionals Night: Meet and Greet with George Rodrigue*
- August 6th, White Linen Night

- August 11th, Docent Training
- August 15th, School Tours begin
- August 19th, *Musings of an Artist's Wife: Lunch with Wendy Rodrigue*
- August 20th, *In the Kitchen with Chef Paul Prudhomme and George Rodrigue*

1. Forum 35 Event, August 4th

The evening of August 4th Forum 35 co-hosted the event *Young Professionals Night: Meet and Greet with George Rodrigue*. This was another event scheduled to coincide with the exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River*. It was held from 5:30 - 8 p.m. on the River Terrace of the fourth floor of the Shaw Center for the Arts. The \$10 suggested donation included admission, refreshments and music. Promotion included selection of a raffle winner for George Rodrigue's print *#1 Fan Tiger Fan*, the same print being sold to benefit the Arts 4 Education campaign.

Forum 35 is an active Baton Rouge young professionals group known for various projects including the annual Art Melt, currently the largest multi-media, juried art exhibit in Louisiana. Forum 35 worked previously with the foundation in 2010, donating a GRFA Art Closet kit to local Baton Rouge school Dufrocq Elementary, and encouraging other organizations to do the same. The Young Professionals Night was another opportunity for the group to contribute to George's Art Closet.

GRFA and Forum 35 worked together to organize the event. A few weeks before the event food vendors were called for donations of sandwiches, hors d'oeuvres, and the like. Forum 35 was extremely helpful recommending vendors and finding a vendor to supply the bar.

The day of the event, I accompanied the Education Director to Baton Rouge early to conduct school tours. After the tours we drove around Baton Rouge to pick up food donations from vendors. This took a few hours. We met a volunteer from Forum 35 at the Shaw Center when we returned and began to set up for the event.

The fourth floor of the Shaw Center is an open space with doors opening to the River Terrace. With a bar and several tables set up for food the space was limited and could comfortably hold about fifty people. The outdoor River Terrace was much larger, measuring 4800 square feet. The Shaw Center suggested the entire indoor and outdoor space held 400 people. Unfortunately, it was August in Baton Rouge, and the terrace was a furnace, limiting the capacity of the area.

Three of us (the Forum 35 volunteer, GRFA Education Director, and myself) set up on the fourth floor of the Shaw Center. We brought tables up from another floor, arranged food and flowers, moved cocktail tables to the terrace, set up a registration table, and a raffle table. A local musician arrived to play for the event. A liquor distributor dropped off bar donations. Two bartenders arrived to set up the bar. Jacques Rodrigue arrived with the raffle prize.

Right on time, at 5:30, guests arrived. Over one hundred Forum 35 members were counted. The idea had been to attract the young professionals working in the area to stop by after work. The space was quickly filled inside due to the inhospitable weather on the terrace. The food and bar held out until the end. The musician played a guitar for the two and half hours. Midway through the evening George Rodrigue addressed the crowd, spoke about the Art Closet and choose the raffle winner. He then invited everyone to go upstairs where he would talk more about the exhibition.

The event, although scheduled to end at 8 p.m., did not. People stayed until around 8:30 and then slowly drifted on to other things. Break-down of the event included the same three of us who had set up earlier. The Education Director and I first helped the Forum 35 volunteer load her car with items she had contributed. We then returned items to the Shaw Center and packed the rest to take back to New Orleans.

2. White Linen Night, August 6th

White Linen Night, an annual art event on Julia Street in New Orleans was an opportunity for GRFA to present itself to the community at large. The new location at 747 Magazine Street, just around the corner from Julia Street, allowed the Foundation to participate in the activity.

I arrived about an hour and half before the event and helped put up signage directing people to the Foundation. Throughout the evening I welcomed visitors to the Foundation, answered questions, and shared information about the GRFA programs.

3. Docent Training, August 11th

The first day of docent training, August 11th, was led by Wendy Rodrigue, George's wife. She shared her intimate understanding and thorough knowledge of George Rodrigue's biography and work with three docent volunteers and myself. We looked at slides of George's work and thought of ways to discuss the work. Another day we met again in Baton Rouge at the LSU MOA to walk through the exhibition and familiarize ourselves.

4. School Tours Begin, August 15th

School tours began on August 15th. GRFA had not originally planned to provide docent training or give school tours of the exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River* at the

Louisiana State University Museum of Art. Unfortunately, the LSU MOA was unable to recruit docents for the school tours. GRFA Education Director Marney Robinson had been Associate Curator of Education at the New Orleans Museum of Art during George Rodrigue's retrospective there in 2008. It was during the show there that she met George and became acquainted with his work. During the NOMA show she gave school tours and provided docent training to volunteers. Robinson, because of her background and previous experience, by default found herself organizing docent training and leading school tours in Baton Rouge for the last month of the exhibit.

The school tours, as advertised by the LSU MOA, were available weekdays from August 15th to September 16th. Teachers were encouraged to sign up early for one of four tour times. LSU MOA expected the time slots to fill up quickly. The LSU MOA did require a \$2 fee per student. Teachers were free.

5. Lunch with Wendy, August 19th

Musings of an Artist's Wife: Lunch with Wendy Rodrigue was another event held in Baton Rouge in conjunction with the exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River*. The name of the ladies luncheon was borrowed from Wendy Rodrigue's blog of the same name. The event was promoted with the following copy: "Wendy Rodrigue has had a unique view of the trials, successes, and inspirations of a prominent artist."¹⁸ It was planned that during the lunch Wendy would discuss George's work, and then lead a tour of the exhibition.

The day before the event, Marney Robinson and I bought flowers for centerpieces and chocolates from Sucre for favors. I spent most of the day and early evening making centerpieces of blue iris and yellow roses. The following morning, Marney and I left for Baton Rouge and arrived early at the Hilton Baton Rouge Capital Center to set up for the 12 p.m. luncheon.

Approximately 40 people were registered for the event. The luncheon cost \$50, and \$40 for LSU MOA members. When guests arrived all were invited to register for a drawing of a framed print of George Rodrigue's painting *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River*. The event started a few minutes after noon. As planned, Wendy spoke about George and his work, and then led everyone over to the LSU MOA for a guided tour. Marney and I stayed at the Hilton, cleaned up and headed back to New Orleans.

6. Chef Paul Cooks, August 20th

Yet another event set to coincide with the exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River* was *Cajun Weekend - In the Kitchen with Chef Paul Prudhomme and George Rodrigue*. On Saturday August 20th, Chef Paul Prudhomme and George Rodrigue met on the stage of the Manship Theater in the Shaw Center to cook and paint, and talk about their work and Cajun culture.

The event was 90 minutes long and began at 1 p.m. in the Manship Theater on the second floor of the Shaw Center. Tickets were free with museum admission. Samples of Chef Paul's cooking were shared outside the auditorium before the event. When everyone sat the theater was nearly full. Prudhomme and Rodrigue were introduced to the audience as long time friends, both supporting the other's talents. Prudhomme had been the subject of several of Rodrigue's paintings and some of Rodrigue's paintings had special places in Prudhomme's restaurant K-Paul's. Both men are from small Acadian towns in Louisiana and gained fame celebrating their Cajun backgrounds. On stage, Prudhomme was assisted by his friend Shawn McBride, and George was accompanied by his wife Wendy. As George painted and Chef cooked a roux, Wendy and Shawn moderated the afternoon event. Afterward guests were encouraged to go

upstairs to the exhibition in the Shaw Center. Chef Paul and George sat at a table in the Shaw Center Atrium outside the museum shop and were available for book signings.

September 2011

I completed my internship with the GRFA the second week of September, just as classes were beginning for the fall semester. The last few weeks of the internship I continued to go to Baton Rouge to observe and help with the school tours, and processed orders for Arts 4 Education.

III. SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- GRFA is open and engaged in learning strategies that will more effectively reach students in the arts. The GRFA staff has studied the A+ Schools Program in North Carolina and Oklahoma, and continues to learn about arts-integration. The Foundation invites informed opinions and creates relationships with other like-minded organizations, such as The Thea Foundation.
- The organization benefits from strong branding. Artist George Rodrigue and his Blue Dog paintings are well known in the region, and GRFA benefits from this association. The strong brand association generates awareness and credibility for the Foundation.
- The Thea Foundation in Little Rock, acts as a mentor to GRFA. The relationship between the organizations provides GRFA with guidance and foresight in its choice of programming.
- The Foundation has clear goals. The organization wishes to provide schools in Louisiana with art supplies through its program George's Art Closet, provide educators with arts-integration resources, and create public awareness of the benefit of art in youth development.
- GRFA has been successful in fundraising through its Print Donation Program.

Weaknesses

- Website calendar is not active, and online resources are not featured prominently on the website.

- GRFA does not have a donor management system (DMS). Currently the Foundation relies on various spreadsheets to keep track of donors, donations, and friends of various programs. A donor management system would accurately organize and streamline fundraising and outreach efforts.
- GRFA limits its interest to the visual arts. This is inconsistent with the arts-integrated approach to learning advocated by the Foundation. Arts-integration uses both visual and performing arts in its educational strategies.
- The Education Director is currently the only staff member with professional experience in art and/or education. As a result, the Education Director manages and implements all of the GRFA educational programming. This situation limits the possibility of peer review within the organization as well as opportunities for the Foundation to grow its educational programming.

Opportunities

- GRFA can create more public interest in the value of art-in-education. New Orleans, as a cultural center, presents numerous opportunities to connect local art with educational programs. The attention given to the arts in New Orleans by locals and visitors can benefit an organization such as GRFA if the positive relationship between art and education is encouraged and valued.
- GRFA can engage educators in learning strategies that will more effectively reach students in the arts in the following ways:
 - a) By hosting workshops and discussions for educators about arts-integration.
 - b) By building its database of educators in Louisiana and including them in invitations to events and in newsletters.

- c) By providing educators with up to date information on the national discussion of arts-integration.
- d) By providing more arts-integrated lesson plans.
- e) By building working relationships between educators and artists.
- GRFA can create opportunities for people to make non-monetary gifts to support GRFA and its mission. Providing altruistic activities for people either without monetary resources or unwilling to give monetary support, creates support, awareness, and goodwill in the community. Identifying local community volunteer opportunities for artists and educators is a good start. It would allow others who want to help a way to become involved in the mission of the Foundation.
- Collaborations with other local organizations and artists.
- Corporate sponsors for George's Art Closet.

Threats

- The possibility of physical damage to GRFA property and interruption of its activities is a concern because of the annual threat of hurricane and/or flooding due to geography.
- GRFA's long-term development and success in programs such as the scholarships and George's Art Closet will depend on continued financial support. Without George Rodrigue's art print donations and financial contributions the Foundation risks loss of financial support and stability.
- Regarding the board of GRFA, succession plans need to be made to ensure the future of the organization.
- The identity of GRFA is currently interrelated with that of the George Rodrigue Gallery and the artist George Rodrigue. The involvement in the summer of 2011 of the

Foundation in the exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River* blurred the lines of distinction between artist, gallery and nonprofit. GRFA must clarify its relationship to these other entities.

IV. BEST PRACTICES

Staffing

In regard to staffing, the best practice is to consider how many staff members are needed to reach a goal. There is no standard ratio because goals and staffing practices vary. The GRFA would benefit from a team effort in arts education and resources development. In similar organizations it is standard to have more than one staff member working on art and educational initiatives.¹⁹ An organization like GRFA that is interested in providing arts programming and resources would benefit from having a Program Coordinator as well as an Education Director.

ArtsEdge

ArtsEdge is the Kennedy Center’s “free digital resource for teaching and learning in, through and about the arts.”²⁰ This website is focused, helpful and current. It provides support for teaching and for learning in the arts, with regular features, daily stories, and well-organized and cited resources. The website is a treasure trove of education resources, art news, and art projects for educators, families, and students. The main page is friendly and efficiently laid-out with a clear top menu with tabs for Educators, Families, Students, Themes and Multimedia.

Unnoticed at first, the entire website is actually a collection of arts integration resources for educators, families, and students. The draw of the website is not arts integration discussion, but the fun art projects and arts related features. The website is itself integrated, and a visitor learns about art integration by seeing examples in the projects and features before finding an

official ArtsEdge definition. Instead of talking about arts integration from the start the website shares examples and later discusses arts integration in depth in the How-to's for Educators.

ArtsEdge effectively creates interest, advocates and informs. The organization is a model of multiple best practices:

1. Providing Website Services

- My ArtsEdge: Users create an account and join My ArtsEdge to share and save lesson plans. After login, users can save information in files in their account. For educators interested in using the arts integrated lessons on the website, this is a user-friendly, time-saving service.

2. Providing Website Resources

- ArtsEdge provides valuable resources for teachers. The Educator section is divided by Lessons, How to's, and Standards. The Lessons page is a colorful, inviting directory of interdisciplinary lessons searchable by age and subject. The How-to's section leads to articles, tips and discussions about teaching the arts. The Standards section provides the National Standards for Arts Education for all age groups and art genres.
- The Families section of ArtsEdge provides resources categorized as At School, At Home, and Out and About. The At School section includes articles addressing concerns by parents about children and education. The At Home section shares articles about how parents can foster creativity in their home. The Out and About section shares articles for families on attending art events.

- ArtsEdge also has a section for students. This section includes information on Kennedy Center activities, articles for students, and a section of resources organized by student age group.
- Organizing information by the intended users of that information makes ArtsEdge more efficient and improves service. The website’s design serves the individual user.
- GRFA might consider its current website resources, their intended audience, if any additional resources ought to be provided and the importance of effectively sharing those resources, and then organize the website to serve the public better.

3. Introducing Arts Integration

- ArtsEdge shares best practices in introducing, defining and discussing the educational approach of arts integration.
- ArtsEdge formally introduces arts integration with a carefully constructed definition: “Arts Integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.”²¹ Each line of this definition is given additional explanation on the website.
- ArtsEdge defines arts integration also in its historical and educational context, and explains why: “The Kennedy Center’s Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) program was in its initial years when it became clear that there was a wide variation in the quality of arts integration teachers were providing in classrooms.”²²
- ArtsEdge helps users better understand the use of arts integration by comparing three ways art is presented in schools: Arts as Curriculum, where art, music and theater are

separate classes; Arts-Enhanced Curriculum, where art is used to help students in other disciplines; and Arts-Integrated Curriculum.²³ Separating arts integration from the other approaches better defines its use for educators.

- Maintaining the quality of arts integration in the classroom, ArtsEdge provides a checklist for educators. If an educator can answer yes to all the questions on the checklist they then know their lesson was arts-integrated.
- GRFA can help educators, parents and the general public better understand arts integration by sharing the historical and educational context and standards of arts integration to educators uninformed on the subject. Also, the Foundation can attract more visitors to its website by providing resources for families and students.

4. Connecting with Other Nonprofits

- ArtsEdge encourages visitors to connect with Verizon Thinkfinity, another website providing free educational resources from 11 education and literary partners. (ArtsEdge is one of the Thinkfinity partners.) ArtsEdge describes and encourages the use of Thinkfinity with several pages of information. This is a mutually beneficial practice and increases the influence of both. Similarly, GRFA would bolster its influence by connecting with other nonprofits interested in art education.

5. Being Adaptable

- ArtsEdge demonstrates an adaptable and open-minded manner to information. Openly discussing the reasons for revising the definition of arts integration is helpful and candid of the organization.

- By making changes, and highlighting those actions, ArtsEdge proves itself to be adaptable in serving the needs of its users.

6. More Pictures and Less Text

- Considering so many people use mobile devices to access websites it is necessary to design for smart phone and tablet users. More pictures and less text, especially on the main page of a website is most effective. Pictures say a great deal in little time, and text can be burdensome. ArtsEdge is one example of an organization that makes a splash with mostly images on its main page and saves textual content for later.
- GRFA can use Google Analytics to see how many of its website visitors use mobile devices to access their website.

V. ANALYSIS

Recommendations

1. Donor Management System (DMS)

GRFA does not have and would greatly benefit from a donor management system. There are many available to choose from that address a variety of needs and budgets. Donor Perfect Online is straightforward, allows basic customization, and is relatively inexpensive and easy to learn. GiftWorks by Mission Research is a more traditional system installed on a server and requires someone at the organization to install and maintain the program. It is well designed, is easy to search, can be integrated with Quickbooks, and is a relatively inexpensive donor management system. Unfortunately, the standard version is limited in its customization and again it is not a hosted option, meaning it must be maintained by the organization. Raiser's Edge is the

gold standard of DMS programs. It is highly recommended, allows vast customization options and allows complex analysis. However, Raiser's Edge costs over \$10,000 just to get started. GRFA will need to assess its needs and resources in choosing a donor management system.

2. Additional Staff Support for Educational Initiatives

GRFA can expand on its existing educational programming if it has additional staff support. In only a few years the foundation has done an outstanding job engaging educators, students and schools in Louisiana and establishing effective programs. These efforts are a strength of GRFA. Maintaining the momentum however, will require additional help. The two weeks of summer art camp in which I was involved will increase in 2012 to five weeks. This program alone will necessarily require additional staff. Also, maintaining the current programs requires and/or would benefit from regular weekly, or even, daily efforts. Processing the art print donation program orders takes time everyday, and online resources (i.e. the calendar) would benefit from regular attention. If more is to be done regarding the development of resources and programming for educators and other art-in-education advocates then more attention will need to be regularly given to those activities.

In order to grow current programs, I suggest GRFA take on additional staff and/or interest suitable volunteers and interns. If the Foundation establishes clear expectations and guidelines for engaging volunteers the organization will have invaluable help in the future for events and programs. Continuing to interest interns, such as myself, will also improve GRFA's program support and give students valuable experience. Due to the considerable time commitment required of anyone involved in summer art camp, as well as the necessary qualifications to work with children, I suspect GRFA will be required to hire education and art

professionals to assist every summer. If additional staff support is not engaged soon I think the Foundation's programs will falter and future plans will be stalled.

Conclusion

Thoughts on Art-in-Education Advocacy

In its mission statement GRFA “advocates the importance of the visual arts in the development of our youth.” The overarching purpose of the foundation is to move the public to see value in the practice and appreciation of art, and then to persuade that public to support art-in-education programs. Art-in-education advocacy is typically theoretical, but must be more practical if it is to have an effect. Current studies and reports, discussions of research in the classroom, and educational approaches, such as arts integration, provide theoretical endorsements for art-in-education. However, arguments for art-in-education travel only as far as the people who care to listen. Sensibly, the art-in-education advocate must also respectfully persuade an indifferent or unfriendly audience. That may include school principals, city council members, parents and legislators – all important decision makers about the role of art in education. The plan of action for the art-in-education advocate is necessarily multipronged.

The approach to “others,” the non-supporters, deserves attention. It does no good to harshly criticize someone for a perceived lack of support for the arts. Hostile behavior to an educator who cuts classroom time for art, or a public official who cuts funding for the arts, does not count as advocacy.²⁴ “Non-supporters” have reasons for cutting art funding and art classes. The challenge of the art-in-education advocate is to come up with more compelling reasons for the “non-supporter” to fund and increase art instruction in schools.

I believe that GRFA is up to the challenges of an art-in-education advocate. The organization shares current reports and studies, and communicates the arguments for art-in-education to the public at large but also addresses very real practical issues, such as lack of art supplies in schools. George's Art Closet is a creative way for a non-profit interested in art-in-education to make an effective difference in schools. A donation of \$1500 to \$2000 in art supplies to a school in need gives educators at that school one less reason to cut art instruction. Also, the Art Closets are presented to a school, and in the presentation generate publicity. The publicity can only help assure parents and school officials that art education deserves attention.

The annual Art Contest is another effective tool of advocacy. The program encourages and rewards the artistic efforts of high school students in Louisiana. This past year the art contest had over 500 entries from more than 120 schools in Louisiana. The scholarships, without GPA or college study requirements, do more than help students. The scholarships make a difference for parents and educators too. Parents and educators see artistic practice as motivating and supporting further academic achievement. As such, these people of influence in the role of art in education may see further reason to support the artistic practice of students.

GRFA also takes care creating special, memorable events. Finalists of the art contest come from all over Louisiana and are invited with their parents to New Orleans for a special awards luncheon. The students are recognized and awarded in front of their peers and parents for their artwork. The students, their parents, and their teachers can all see possibility in artistic achievement. The awards luncheon is another effective tool of advocacy. "Non-supporting" parents, family and friends see artistic effort and achievement valued at the luncheon and in its publicity. After the luncheon, GRFA posts images of the students, their artwork, and graciously acknowledges all the students who participated.

The Foundation does a creditable job creating invaluable publicity for its programs. George Rodrigue and his son, Jacques, both take opportunities on television, in print, and in person to inform the public about the mission of GRFA and discuss the importance of art in education. The organization has active Facebook and Twitter accounts, and maintains a website presence. GRFA effectively makes the most of special events, such as White Linen Night, to publicize its mission. For example, for White Linen Night George designed fans that were cut outs of the blue dog head with the mission of the GRFA on the back. During White Linen Night there was a long line out the door to the corner of Julia Street of people waiting to get a blue dog fan. The fans were graphic, clever, and used for many photographic opportunities during the event. The fans were terrific publicity for GRFA.

Other special events over the summer that further served to share the Foundation's mission included *Draw with George* and *Musings of an Artist's Wife*. By association, the work done at the LSU Museum of Art for the exhibition *Blue Dogs and Cajuns on the River* also provided positive publicity for GRFA. Both Education Director Marney Robinson and Executive Director Jacques Rodrigue, while leading tours of schools groups, met teachers and students and were able to share information about the organization.

GRFA identified challenges to its mission when it was started. Looking to the Thea Foundation in Arkansas as a harbinger of successful art-in-education programming, the Foundation quickly addressed challenges to its mission with an effective agenda. George's Art Closet tackled the art supply issue in classrooms. The indifferent and/or uninformed public now might have at least heard of GRFA because of successful publicity including blue dog fans, appearances by George and Jacques Rodrigue on the morning news, and newspaper articles. Educators and others who are curious about arts integration can contact the Foundation with

questions, read influential reports on the subject on the GRFA website and use the website resources for ideas on incorporating art in the classroom.

Is GRFA advocacy critical? Does it make a difference? The impact of the Foundation's programming so far is seen best in the art contest. There are students in Louisiana sincerely thankful for the financial resources and motivation provided by the foundation. As one student said, "I'm really, really appreciative that my art teacher introduced this contest to me and that I decided to be bold by creating something beautiful for this foundation, and to be honored for my creativity!"²⁵ In the short term, GRFA can quantify its success based on the number of art contest submissions and the number of Art Closets given to schools. Measuring the long-term effects of the Foundation's advocacy and impact on youth development will be more challenging.

I began my summer at GRFA with the goal to learn more about art education from the perspective of an arts administrator. I believe the subject is important to anyone interested in art administration. Art museums, cultural centers, festivals, community arts councils, and non-profits for the arts all include education as part of their programs. Observing and participating in the GRFA programs demonstrated for me the challenges and need for advocacy in art education. The Foundation also showed me the necessary time commitment and benefit of well-timed and well-expressed publicity for a new organization. I very much appreciate my opportunity to work with the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts. I learned much about arts-integration and other approaches to art education.

NOTES

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- ¹⁷ "Events Calendar." *George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts*. n.p., n.d. Web. 12 Feb 2012.
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APPENDIX

The Ten Lessons the Arts Teach

1. The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.
2. The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
3. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.
4. The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the ability and a willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.
5. The arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can know. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.
6. The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects. The arts traffic in subtleties.
7. The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which images become real.
8. The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must reach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.
9. The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.
10. The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.

[SOURCE: Eisner, E. (2002). *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, In Chapter 4, What the Arts Teach and How It Shows. (pp. 70-92). Yale University Press.

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