W.A.G.E. Certification - Working Artists And the Greater Economy

W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) works to draw attention to economic inequalities that exist in the arts, and to resolve them. W.A.G.E. has been formed because we, as visual + performance artists and independent curators, provide a work force. W.A.G.E. recognizes the organized irresponsibility of the art market and its supporting institutions, and demands an end of the refusal to pay fees for the work we're asked to provide: preparation, installation, presentation, consultation, exhibition and reproduction. W.A.G.E. refutes the positioning of the artist as a speculator and calls for the remuneration of cultural value in capital value. W.A.G.E. believes that the promise of exposure is a liability in a system that denies the value of our labor. As an unpaid labor force within a robust art market from which others profit greatly, W.A.G.E. recognizes an inherent exploitation and demands compensation. W.A.G.E. calls for an address of the economic inequalities that are prevalent, and proactively preventing the art worker's ability to survive within the greater economy. We demand payment for making the world more interesting.

_____ member

Project author or developer:
W.A.G.E. Certification - Working Artists And the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.)

Where:
US / Stati Uniti / New York Metropolitan Area

Website:
www.visibleproject.org/blog/project/w-a-g-e-certification/

W.A.G.E.?s central focus is the administration of a certification programme for non-profit arts organisations.

Initiated and operated by W.A.G.E., Certification publicly recognises those non-profits demonstrating a history of, and commitment to, voluntarily paying artist feesâ€"it is also the first of its kind in the U.S. that establishes a sector-wide minimum standard for compensation, as well as a clear set of guidelines and standards for the conditions under which artistic labour is contracted.W.A.G.E. worked in dialogue with arts organisations, writers, sociologists, labour historians, and critical theorists over four years to produce a scalable model that can be applied across the non-profit arts economy in all its variation: from small artist-run spaces struggling to support a single employee to large institutions with hundreds of full-time workers and top salaries in the seven figures. Since its launch in October 2014 we have certified nine organizations across the U.S. and there is widespread interest in expanding the programmeâ€™s scope and operating it internationally.

In addition to developing compensation standards for the commissioning of online digital artworks with e-flux, we are in the early stages of setting up a certification program for individual artists. Under this programme, artists would be W.A.G.E. Certified on the basis of their commitment to work only with organisations that pay fees according to Certificationâ€™s payment guidelines. Artists would be linked in solidarity by their collective demand for equitable compensation, and this collective demand would be leveraged to apply pressure to those as yet uncertified organisations to get certified. We will begin work on this new model for union building in summer 2015 with a planned roll out in early 2016.

W.A.G.E. Certification was initiated in 2010 in New York City. After nearly four years of research and development it was launched publicly in 2014. Its scope is currently national, with Certified organizations in New York, Minnesota, Texas, and soon Florida, Illinois, Michigan, and California.

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