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Rockefeller Foundation Opens 2010 NYC Cultural Innovation Fund Competition as Cultural Organizations Continue to Struggle in Today's Economy

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Press release

Edwin Torres Named as Associate Director responsible for New York City Grant Making

Today, the Rockefeller Foundation announced the opening of its 2010 New York City Cultural Innovation Fund competition. The fund, established in 2007, annually awards \$2.5 million in grants – ranging between \$50,000 and \$250,000 – to spur and support cultural innovation in New York City's creative sector, a vital economic engine. Today's announcement comes after a difficult economic year for the industry in which 80 percent of NYC's nonprofit cultural organizations were forced to reduce their budgets and more than half have reduced staff and postponed or canceled programs.

The Rockefeller Foundation also announced today that Edwin Torres has been hired to replace the long serving Joan Shigekawa, who recently left the foundation for a position as Senior Deputy Chair for the National Endowment for the Arts. Torres comes to the Foundation from Parsons the New School for Design where he was Director of external partnerships. Prior to his work at Parsons, Edwin worked at the Bronx Council on the Arts and the Ford Foundation. Torres will oversee the Foundation's Cultural Innovation Fund competition, as well as being responsible for the Foundation's New York City grant making.

"The Rockefeller Foundation is proud to continue to build on our history by supporting artistic innovation and creativity right here in New York City," **said Dr. Judith Rodin, the Foundation's President.** "As New York City's artists and cultural institutions continue to be impacted by today's economy, there is a great need to support our local creative sector as they are on the forefront of challenging all of us to think and react differently. With the addition of Edwin Torres to the Foundation, we are gaining a rich background in the New York City creative sector, which will allow us to both continue and grow our work right here in our hometown."

"Creative expression is New York's chief natural resource," **said Edwin Torres.** "Through the Cultural Innovation Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation is pleased to be able to continue to support this critical creativity that is the lifeblood of New York City. I'm humbled and honored to come to the Rockefeller Foundation, with its long tradition of support for New York City; and I look forward to being a part of that storied history."

Cultural Innovation Fund award recipients' projects will employ new strategies for cultural production and to achieve solutions for New York City's creative sector. Projects selected for funding fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Creative engagement with the issues shaping New York City's future cultural and civic agenda;
- Programming and premieres of new artistic work that demonstrate fresh perspectives and can activate new directions in the visual, performing and media arts;
- New partnerships among cultural organizations, community-based institutions, universities and the private sector;
- Interventions designed to confront longstanding bottlenecks and limitations to the expansion of cultural vitality with fresh approaches and solutions.

The fund is specifically meant to support changes in organizational and/or artistic practice. Many of last Year's winners focused on innovative survival strategies for the arts during difficult economic times, from developing new business models to artist peer loan programs

Organizations that want to apply are asked to articulate how their proposed innovation differs from their past efforts – and others' efforts – to achieve their organizations' goals.

To qualify, organizations must be based in one of the five boroughs of New York City. Applications—which must encompass innovative approaches—must be submitted online, through the Rockefeller Foundation's website, www.rockefellerfoundation.org, starting at 12:00 noon on Monday January 11, 2010 until 11:00pm on February 8, 2010. Shortly thereafter, applicants will learn if they will be invited to submit full proposals. Winners will be announced later in the year.

Two prominent leaders from the fields of innovation and the arts will again serve as advisors to the Cultural Innovation Fund. They are:

- David Thorpe, Director of Innovation, Institute for State effectiveness and former Global Director of Innovation, OgilvyOne Worldwide, and
- Andrew Zolli, founder, Z + Partners, a consulting firm specializing in analyzing cultural, technological and global trends, and curator of the annual Pop!Tech conference.

The New York City Cultural Innovation Fund builds on the Rockefeller Foundation's tradition of support for the arts. The Foundation has funded arts organizations and provided support for the formation of several of New York City's landmark cultural institutions, including Lincoln Center, the Museum of Modern Art, Creative Capital, and the Tribeca Film Institute.

About the Rockefeller Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation fosters innovative solutions to many of the world's most pressing challenges, affirming its mission, since 1913, to “promote the well-being” of humanity. Today, the Foundation works to ensure that more people can tap into the benefits of globalization while strengthening resilience to its risks. Foundation initiatives include efforts to mobilize an agricultural revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa, bolster economic security for American workers, inform equitable, sustainable transportation policies in the United States, ensure access to affordable and high-quality health systems in developing countries, accelerate the impact investing industry's evolution, and develop strategies and services that help vulnerable communities cope with the impacts of climate change. For more information, please visit www.rockefellerfoundation.org.

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