

Gallery and museum hypotheticals - gallery and museum management

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Objective: “ The artist run initiative that offers an opportunity for emerging artists and emerging curators to collaborate with international practitioners specially in Asia, to learn and to gain experiences in a diverse community.”

Terminology

Before initiating any organization, there has to be a clear understanding on the terminology of it. It is worth discussing about the definition of Artist Run Initiative or Space prior to the establishment as it gives the clear and mutual understanding and, as a result, lead the direction of the Initiative. Artist Run Initiative in the past few decades has become a global phenomenon (Miranda). Artist Run Initiative is, according to NAVA (National Association for the Visual Arts) the organization that “ generates opportunities for artists and curators to experiment, learn and share, through providing exhibition opportunities and developing social and creative networks that benefit artists and local communities” (NAVA). This definition provides the brief explanation of what artist run initiatives’ general is. Furthermore, people who operate Artist Run Initiatives are primarily artists themselves. Artist Run Space, in my terminology, is preferably regarded as Initiatives since it does not have to be set up in an actual space.

According to NAVA, Artist Run Initiatives can be in diverse form; a gallery, a multi-purpose space, a publication, a festival or a series of projects (NAVA). One of the examples is the one-year mobile project, ‘ Tarpspace’, a physical and conceptual framework in a blue tarpaulin. It was launched in 2013 in Adelaide and had travelled across Australia to collaborate with the project (Miranda). Therefore, the space can be disregarded as it might cause

confusion in the terminology. After this, we will discuss further about the model, purposes, and approaches of Artist Run Initiatives by examining different case studies. The case studies include Artists Run Initiatives in different countries around the world to identify the similarities and differences of each initiative. It is important to look at these institutions domestic and overseas as it is important for the International Collaborative focused Artist Run Space. Case Studies of Artist Run Space in Australia

Blindside

BLINDSIDE is an Artist Run Space located in Melbourne, Australia and is regarded as one of the state's leading artist run spaces. The organization is founded by a group of artists; Christine Morrow, Pip Haydon, Renai Grace, Simon Koger and Asim Memishi who fostered the idea of an independent non-for-profit space for emerging artists. As claimed by Grace (pp. 12), this ARI since founded focused on providing opportunities not only for artists and curators but also emerging writers through promoting critical writing from the exhibitions which reflected their aim to support the work of emerging artist as well as emerging writers and curators. One of the reason BLINDSIDE has become one of the most successful Artist Run Initiative that has been receiving the secured funding from Australian Council, Creative Victoria and City of Melbourne is that the initiative reflected their ambition and visions through their programs; various arts exhibitions, mentorship program for artists and curators and educational program for visitors. Emphasizing on the mentorship program, BLINDSIDE has one strong belief in the learning process.

Case Studies of Artist Run Space in Asia

Gallery Seescape Thailand is a county that contemporary art scene is thriving as well as its neighboring counties in South East Asia contrasting to the lack of support of the government. The idea of Artist Run Initiative has not yet been spread out but there are organizations in Thailand as well as projects that could be considered as Artist Run Initiatives. Gallery Seescape is one of them as many Australian art journals, Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art and Realtime, have mentioned and regarded the organization as 'Artist Run Space' (QAGOM). Located in Chiang Mai province in Thailand, Gallery Seescape was established by Torlarp Larpjareonsuk with the assistance of Sebastian Tayak, the curator in 2010. The original goal of the gallery comes from the strong belief that art should be a part of society. The gallery was created to provide the space for artists to present their works since there was very limited space in Thailand back in that time. Gallery Seescape nowadays is one of the most successful Artist Run Space in Thailand. The Gallery was self-funded and has always been. The funding comes from the sales of art objects from local artists, part of space rent out as well as the founders' freelance works. It relied also on a lot of volunteers during the exhibition openings but because of the nature of close community in Chiang Mai, they never had to ask for help, said Torlap (Larpjareonsuk).

Nowadays, the gallery is funded by the café opened next to the gallery and becomes more stable. Gallery Seescape, Chiang Mai, Thailand Ruangrupa Ruangrupa is founded in 2000 and is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. It claims itself as a nonprofit contemporary art organization which offers many art

exhibitions as well as public programs including festivals, art laboratory, workshops, researches and book, online journal publications, educational program and podcast every year in order to advance art ideas in urban context and support local artists, curators and writers (Ruangrupa).

With this nature of the organization, it can be said that Ruangrupa is not different from Artist Run Initiative model. This model of Ruangrupa is interesting and is beneficial to investigate as they offer many more programs that could be initiated in our Initiative. With art exhibitions, they established a space, RURU gallery, in order to present six art exhibitions every year and each exhibition is run for approximately two weeks. In other times, they organize festivals, workshops and art markets. It is interesting that they do not only spend time and energy only on art exhibitions since they have limited six exhibitions per year but they also give importance to the other activities to make sure they are engaged with the community as well as advance their art practices in other forms of activities. This is something worth remembering that art practice is not merely the art exhibitions but it can come in the form of other practices. Similarly, to Gallery Seescape, Ruangrupa arranges RURU shop which sells various artistic merchandises produced by themselves and the local artists, such as bags, CDs, books and accessories. All the profits go to the Initiatives and the artists.

The Art Space Pool

The Art Space Pool was founded in Seoul, South Korea in 1999 by twenty local artist-curators, art critics and writers. It was established as a nonprofit art organization with the mission to initiate contemporary art practices and

production in order to foster cultural discourses and ideas. Pool can proudly represent themselves as the institutional model of artist run space, the art sharing community and collaborative practice ground. The Art Space of Pool has been of the leading initiatives in South Korea founded during the time of alternative cultural movement in the 1990s. At the time of its establishment, Pool was challenging the heavily commercialized Korean art scene calling for a return of 'real arts' (Pool). Pool has presented with the help of artists more than 170 art exhibitions, 36 education programs and 13 journal publication. From this, Pool regarded themselves not merely a space that holds the art exhibitions but rather a community of local artists dedicated to collaboratively engaged art practices.

The Art Space of Pool Galley, Seoul, South Korea

Pool funding is support by South Korean government as well as donation which proves them to be the leading AIRs. Currently, Pool has a curatorial office where the members are responsible for budget review, fundraise and curatorial programs advice. This is a good example of the organized management section that will be discussed further in the paper. Another way of securing their financial stability as well as actively engaging the community after their success is membership subscription. Pool welcomes the membership applications with the annual fee 10, 000 won (12. 5 Australian Dollar). With the benefit of membership, the subscriber will receive the bimonthly newsletter, invitation to the events, invitation to project proposal, and invitation to open call for exhibition proposal. This way, Pool gains strong community and benefits financially as well.

Organization Nature

While it has been obvious that ARIs are the institution ran by a group of artists in order to generate the opportunities for artists to present their artworks to because there are not enough commercial galleries and contemporary art spaces that can accommodate all the workforces.

However, there are other factors to be considered about. According to Brett Jones, one of the founder of West Space, an Artist Run Space in Melbourne, founding and working in the initiatives can be seen as supporting and enhancing a group of artists' career and professional development collectively. It is common for newly graduated to decide to establish their own ARIs partly because of their passion and partly because their need to work collaboratively and creating the sense of community. The art practice at art school focuses more on the individual practice rather than collaborative which is ironic since collaborative practice is most likely common in the art world. The space and initiative is a great practice for the artists to adapt themselves into the real world after school. Moreover, Nankervis has claimed that artists can " excel when working collaboratively". In his article, Minic, one of the artists in ARIs stated that he loves the supportive environment of being surrounded by people who he could merely talk to about his ideas. Therefore, the collaborative idea of our ARI is supported with these evidences.

Based on the all the evidences which can be applied to our Artist Run Initiative since our ARIs will be established by a group of newly graduates, it is important to consider about what kind of community we want to create for

our own ARIs aside from it being a space for the group to present their works. The space or environment among the group should be supportive of each person's creativity. Moreover, since the ARIs will focus on international collaboration, the environment should not be only opened and supportive but it should also be welcoming and diverse. Consequently, these aspects should be one of the main objectives to consider to the next section.

Setting Objectives, Values and Vision

Each Artist Run Initiative has different goal and vision. Even though, when initiating the space, it seems quite obvious what the objective and goal of the organization are, setting organizational foals from the beginning is important. Since ARIs consists of different members who have different expectations and values so the discussion is needed for deciding mutual objective for the organization. Therefore, once the ARIs face the problems and setbacks, this objective will be a reminder for the members to go through tough times. However, these objectives and visions are evolvable once the organization progresses. Jones claimed that when West Space was created, one of its main values was to react against commercial gallery centered system in supporting contemporary arts (Jones). They construct their own support system for arts. The space they set up in Western suburbs was even challenging the geographic center of the city. Jones believes that these embedded values were helping them to ' developed and sharpened' as the organization grows until today. Consequently, defining the objectives, values and visions from the outset is the most important discussion among our own ARIs. It should not be merely creating the space to provide

opportunities for the artists but knowing why we are doing what we are doing to crucial.

According to our case studies, each of the organization has a clear objective of theirs. They might be similar yet different and unique in their own way depending on their locations, time period of establishment and belief for example, Gallery Seescape was built when there were no more than five contemporary galleries in Chiang Mai. Understanding each member expectations also create harmony and respect among the group and will generate the supportive system among the community. The points that should be discussed prior to the beginning of the ARIs are listed below. Each members' expectations value including the management team's. The organization objectives that have to be mutually agreed. The visions of the ARIs that are realistic and achievable which will lead to the kind of activities and programs that will be conducted in the ARIs. For this project, one of the objectives of the ARIs that we will be launching is obviously being the international collaborative organization. Each member should think about what is the expectation of theirs to gain from this valuable experience being a part of the institution. Then, the visions would lead to determining the programs the ARI will be running over the year which will be based on working internationally with artists overseas as well as ARI across Asia.

Programs

Every organization needs to determine what kind of programs they would like to offer as well as our ARI. Since our ARI is a uniquely international collaborative, the programs including exhibitions will involve around that

idea. Moreover, since there are six artists in the members, they each will get a chance to present their exhibition once a year. They can choose to collaborate with whatever international artist or organization they like as long as it is realistic and they will have to take care of managing their own exhibition with the assistance of the manager so they can learn and gain experiences. Another program that could be interesting for our ARI is the artist or global ARI residency. By inviting international artist who are involved in managing and founding Artists Run Initiative, it will be a valuable experience for the locals as it will transform the space into a sharing and learning community. Moreover, the artists will gain connections which will be useful for their future reference.

Managing the ARIs

It is important to take care of management section as ARIs are the organizations no matter they are big or small. The Art Space Pool in Seoul, South Korea obtains an office dedicated to the management matters, such as, fundraising, budget reviewing and curatorial advising. Management part is as essential as the art practice and should not be taken care slightly. The works in management part could be clarified in the following points.

- General Administration: taking phone calls, sending and replying emails, scheduling the meeting, paper works writing including exhibition applications, grants applications, rental agreement, insurance, etc.
- Marketing: Social media and website updates, press release, posters distribution, etc.
- Financing: Book keeping, fundraising and donation, paying rent, water and electricity bills, etc.
- Archives: Exhibition documentation, website updates, written texts documentation, etc.

As suggested above, there are many aspects to be concerned about. It requires commitment to management part and it is advised that the work load could be shared and distributed to each member of the ARI. It is beneficial for the organization to have good management and structure so it is easy trace who is responsible for which part. Moreover, this could be an opportunity to enhance the members' professional skills in the real site experience. Torlarp Larpjaroensuk, the owner of Gallery Seescape states that he and his team were active constantly in the art practice but they took the slight thought of the management part. Once the new member stepped in to help organizing the gallery, the immediate growth was visible. Furthermore, one thing that should be discussed after the objectives are determined are the organization plan. The yearly plan that decides what kind of programs will be conducted at which time and how many exhibitions will be held over the year which at times could be altered due to the external circumstance. However, this plan is as important as the organization objectives as it is a concrete version of visions. It makes visions become clearer and more tangible which drives the members to stay active.

Maintaining ARIs

After founding the organization, one of the hardest to achieve is to maintain it. At the first stage of every organization, the members are filled with passion to create their ideological space. They are willing to sacrifice their time and energy to it despite gaining any financial benefit from it. However, once they come across setbacks due to limited funding, lack of manpower which impacts the losing of inspirations. Once the fire dies down, it is easy that the organization collapses. Gallery Seescape founder, Torlarp,

mentioned that there were lots of times he wanted to give up but then he remembered why he built this space and it kept him from doing it until today (Larpjereonsuk). This is the key as mentioned in the Setting Objectives, Values and Vision section that by determining the objective, the members can realize the reason why they establish the Initiative in the first place and hold on to it.

Another thing that can also be challenging for maintaining the organization is the change internally and externally. Sometimes, people leave the organization and the new comers step in. Some former values or objectives might no longer apply to the current members or the external situation, therefore, it is necessary for the members to revisit these points. The Art Space of Pool was established because they wanted create the system against the commercialized art world in the South Korea at the time. As time passed by, this objective no longer applies in the current environment as well as the members change, so they adjusted their objectives and values to fit the circumstance into forming the socially artist communities.

Funding

This is an unavoidable topic that needs to be discussed if we would like to establish the organization. Financial aspect needs to be taken care of carefully and attentively. First of all, we have to identify the possible source of funding. The most obvious one is through grant application. There are numerous grant applications available but the organization I would like to emphasize that would be helpful is the local council. The space and location of the ARIs determines which local council we belong to. Sometimes, there is

a specific grant programs that provide affordable spaces in the city-owned buildings (Boland). By expressing and getting in touch with the local council, there is more probabilities and chances to gain support. However, that is not always the case. There should always be an alternative for the ARIs to support themselves independently since the government funding is not always reliable. There have been a huge budget cutting in art sectors in the past few years (Miranda).

Taking a look at our case studies, each ARI has their own alternative to handle this issue. The Art Space of Pool receives donation, organizes fundraising event as well as charging for membership subscription. Gallery Seescape and Ruangrupa both own artist shops that sell artist objects and works in order to support the artists as well as their own organizations. Recently, SEVENTH gallery has restructured their space by contributing part of the space to Variety Hour Studio, a textile label because of the increase renting price. These are all the options for the Initiative to be considered since I believe it is important for the organization to survive independently. In conclusion, there are different matters to be considered that should be discussed among the members before initiating this Artist Run Space including, the mutual objective, individual values, management sector, and financial aspect. Lastly, I hope that this information and case studies will be helpful for the ARI even for the future reference.

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