

# LAMBENT FOUNDATION

*Lambent Foundation leverages the critical role of arts and culture  
at the intersection of social justice.*

## DEPUTY DIRECTOR

### BACKGROUND

Lambent Foundation was established in 2008 as one of the first national funders dedicated to supporting arts and culture as a strategy for social change. It supports contemporary cultural organizations and projects in a range of disciplines, nurturing some of the most promising artists and artist-driven organizations working at the intersection of art and social justice.

Lambent's engagement with philanthropy, contemporary art, and social justice are guided by a core set of values that illuminate the Foundation's grantmaking decisions and inform the work with its grantee-partners. These values provide a compass for Lambent's goals and aspirations, and include:

#### **Mutual Accountability**

Lambent works to transform philanthropic practice by promoting a culture of reciprocity, joint commitment, and mutual accountability among funders and grantee-partners;

#### **A Reimagining of the Relationship between Art and Social Justice**

Lambent advances justice and equity throughout the contemporary art world – from major museums to artist collectives – and supports artists and artistic practice as valuable disruptors of the *status quo*;

#### **Cultural Landscapes Matter**

Lambent operates in the three unique landscapes of Nairobi, New Orleans, and New York, honoring and engaging with the vibrant legacies of art and struggle that emerge from each landscape's singular history and culture;

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### Honoring Uncertainty

Transformation comes from embracing turbulence and ambiguity. As funders, artists, and people, the Lambent community takes risks, knowing that impact is not always quantifiable, and that transformative work thrives in a climate of trust; and

### Championing the Emergent

“Lambent” means flickering and emergent. Concepts like gender equity and racial justice are a narrow expression of the Lambent ethos, which champions the intangible, the expansive, and the intuitive. Lambent embraces global perspectives to elevate the uncertainties of artistic practice as a framework for changing the world.

In 2013, the advent of its fifth anniversary, and in response to recession-driven needs, Lambent embarked on a *strategic refresh* to assess its philanthropic practice, with the aim of developing more effective and innovative ways of directing its support. The process led the Foundation to focus on the broader issues related to mission achievement and field-wide impact, and prompted a shift in the Foundation’s understanding of art ecology as an “ecosystem”: a collection of parts that are interconnected and whose actions affect the whole.

The process also heightened an awareness of the potential for innovation when groups come together, and led to Lambent’s consideration, and ultimate adoption of **network theory** as a new grantmaking strategy – leveraging the collective influence, resources and power of Lambent’s grantee partners.

The underlying idea is that Lambent’s grantee partners form a “Network” an entity that creates value for both the individual members, as well as for the Network as a whole. Within this context, the Network will identify issue areas to address and goals to advance. It is Lambent’s hope that when fully implemented, Lambent’s grantee partners will come to value the Network’s assets as much as they value their relationship with Lambent – assets that include:

- Open and easy access to, and trust in, their Network partners for exchanging ideas, problems and solutions;
- Access to opportunities for partnerships within the Network; and
- Access to opportunities for partnership and leadership within the broader social justice community, thus allowing for greater influence and impact.

Working at this level requires all participants to move into a place of creative flow and deep relationship, setting the stage for a more co-creative process. Lambent’s network theory reaffirms the Foundation’s commitment to leveraging its influence, relationships and resources for collectively held power.

Within the context of this new strategy, while continuing its standard annual grantmaking, Lambent has undertaken a multi-year commitment to making strategic investments of progressively larger amounts in a selected cohort of visionary organizations in Nairobi, New

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Orleans and New York. These grants are intended to support each organization's next "big leap" or significant institutional pivot, and requires that each Partner:

- Meet certain organizational characteristics, in alignment with Lambent's values; and
- Reflect an organizational practice and ecosystem awareness defined by equity and inclusivity.

## **THE POSITION**

The **Deputy Director** will be responsible for managing Lambent's operations and programs, ensuring that all programs are intentionally-focused and mission-aligned, and that the integrity of the Foundation's work is well-maintained.

The Deputy will play a central role in fully integrating network theory into Lambent's philanthropic practice, and help evaluate its effectiveness. With direct reports that will include two Program Officers, the Deputy will work to ensure the adaptation of transformative leadership practices within each of Lambent's grantee partner organizations, and the successful networking among grantee partners.

Reporting to Lambent's Executive Director, the Deputy Director will provide the leadership, strategy and direction necessary to increase Lambent's capacity to engage and serve its diverse slate of grantees, and will serve as a thought leader and advocate for Lambent's principles both within and outside of the organization;

**It is important that within the first year the Deputy Director prioritize doing the following:**

- Get to know Lambent thoroughly – its history, values, operations, philanthropic approach and work culture;
- Gain the confidence of Lambent's Executive Director, forging a partnership built on trust and a shared vision;
- Build healthy relationships with all Lambent staff and consultants, continuing to bring forth everyone's best thinking and efforts;
- Get to know Lambent's grantee partner community and aligned philanthropic partners. Begin to establish credibility and rapport with the leadership teams of grantee partner organizations;
- Become immersed in Lambent's network theory, learning and embracing the core principles and strategies to be able to advance understanding of its potential and practice with all Lambent staff and within the grantee Network.

## **ADDITIONAL KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Additionally, it is expected that the Deputy Director will:**

### **Management & Operations**

- Build, manage and evaluate a highly skilled professional team, capable of fully implementing Lambent's philanthropic mission and programs;
- Actively seek opportunities for staff development; inspire a spirit of collaboration and facilitate unity around the Foundation's core values and purpose;
- In partnership with the Executive Director, regularly evaluate Lambent's organizational structure – reviewing all operating, financial/budgetary, and technological systems and controls, making sure that all efficiently support the Foundation's programs;
- Participate in regular meetings with Lambent's Executive Director to discuss projects, budgets, staff performance and such;
- Regularly conduct Lambent staff meetings to encourage shared learning, ensure the flow of internal information, and discuss the status of projects/deliverables;
- Interface with Lambent's back office and Donor-Advised Services provider, the Tides Foundation;

### **Programs & Grantmaking**

- Help manage Lambent's grantmaking program. Working closely with Lambent's program staff, participate in annual meetings with members from grantee partner organizations to review the projects, practices, needs and growth;
- Provide high-level review of the Network, assessing its effectiveness, and translating its outcomes both within and beyond Lambent;
- Manage Lambent's Program team; ensuring that the Program Officers are effectively executing a grant-making program consistent with the Foundation's mission and values; conduct annual performance reviews;
- Working in partnership with Lambent's Network Consultant, oversee the continuous training of network theory for Lambent's entire internal team to ensure its effective implementation with grantee partners;

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- Ensure that effective systems are in place for the efficient distribution of grants and assessment of grantee deliverables;
- Prepare and present the annual grantmaking docket for Lambent's Founder's and Lambent's Executive Director's review and approval. Ensure that the docket reflects the updated and evolving needs of grantee partners, and also reflects the details of all new grantmaking initiatives;
- Partner with the Executive Director in short and long-term strategic planning. As appropriate, help inform the design and implementation of new projects.
- Represent Lambent in public fora, as necessary.

## **IDEAL EXPERIENCE**

The ideal candidate should have the following experience and qualifications:

- Critical interest in, and deep passion for, Lambent Foundation's mission and programs;
- An anchoring (curatorial, presentation or administration) in at least one area relevant to Lambent's work – alternative arts spaces, contemporary arts, progressive social justice movements, philanthropy—and experience with an entity known for real impact;
- Proven senior-level managerial, problem-solving and team building experience with commensurate fiscal responsibility;
- Solid project management experience; an ability to frame and nimbly adapt systems which ensure efficient and harmonious work flow;
- Working knowledge of the nonprofit sector and/or nonprofit organizations;
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with and gain the respect and support of highly accomplished leadership and staff; experience developing plans that benefit an entire organization;
- Strong organizational, interpersonal, and analytical skills, including keen judgment and the ability to work with people from a wide array of cultural backgrounds and perspectives;
- An efficient work style with the ability to prioritize quickly;
- An intuitive command of, and respect for, the role of community in the arts ecosystem;

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- Global awareness. Travel required.

### **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate will be or have:

- Personally committed to Lambent's values of equity, creativity, collaboration and mutual accountability;
- An inspiring, persuasive and dedicated leader who is passionate about effecting change;
- A unifying team builder; able to maintain an environment where mutual respect, collegiality and diversity are valued;
- Decisive and confident, yet open and able to involve others in planning and decision making;
- A risk taker who looks for new ways to work with external partners;
- An ethical individual who imparts trust, integrity, sensitivity, tolerance and is able to motivate others in a similar vein;
- Accessible and gracious; someone who values transparency, has a good sense of people and a good sense of humor;
- A persuasive advocate on behalf of artists and activists who is able to connect with a broad spectrum of people in meaningful ways;
- Good intuition and comfort with ambiguity.

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*Equal employment opportunity and having a diverse staff are fundamental principles at Lambent Foundation, where employment and promotional opportunities are based upon individual capabilities and qualifications without regard to race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation/preference, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status or any other protected characteristic as established under law.*

**To apply for this position, please forward a resume, as well as a substantive cover letter outlining your interests and qualifications via e-mail to:**

**Sandi Haynes, Executive Search Consultant**

**[SandiHaynes@aol.com](mailto:SandiHaynes@aol.com)**