

# LAMBENT FOUNDATION

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

## PARTNER NETWORK MANAGER

### 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,

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New 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 **Partner Network Manager** will manage Lambent's grantee Partner Network (the Network) connecting the grantee partners to each other, coalescing a highly-functional collective that embraces and operates from a set of core values, to the end of being more impactful and sustainable.

Working closely with Lambent's Network Consultant, the Partner Network Manager will deepen the Network members' exposure to the practice of network theory and an understanding of all that it can be.

Lambent is working to dispel the myth of philanthropy as the dominant problem solver, and promote the idea of collectively held power, illuminating the value of nonfinancial resources that the Network members can share amongst themselves. The Partner Network Manager will be the point person in advancing this mission.

**It is important that the Partner Network Manager immediately:**

- Get to know Lambent thoroughly – its history, values, operations, philanthropic approach, and work culture;
- Gain the confidence of Lambent's Executive Director, other team members and Lambent's grantee partners, forging relationships built on trust and a shared vision;
- Begin to learn about Lambent's grantee partners, and the broader cultural, social and geographic landscapes in which they function;
- Begin an immersion in Lambent's network theory – learning and embracing the core principles and strategies – to be able to translate its potential and practice to the Network members.

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### **ADDITIONAL KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Additionally, it is expected that the Partner Network Manager will:**

- Initiate and Convene the Network. Host a range of exciting opportunities that keep the Network members in close contact – building trust, sharing experiences, and growing into a self-sustaining entity;
- Travel and explore the Network members' landscapes (artistic, social and political), to better interpret the Members' challenges, and to curate shared learning opportunities;
- Activate the Network as a learning pod. Working in partnership with Lambent's Network Consultant, design a training curriculum that teaches the principles and practices of Network Theory;
- Curate a wide-range of programs (live and digital) that give the Network partners open and easy access to each other for problem solving, resource sharing, and the exchange of ideas;
- Design a partnership framework for possible collaboration (artistic and otherwise) between Network members;
- Create a Network framework and mechanisms that allows grantees opportunities to collaborate (as appropriate);
- Regularly evaluate the Network's functionality and effectiveness;
- Serve as an external teacher and ambassador of Lambent's Network Theory;
- Working in partnership with the Director of Communications, tease out and showcase stories that celebrate the individual grantee partners and the Network, as a whole.

### **IDEAL EXPERIENCE**

The ideal candidate should have the following:

- Leadership experience as a successful organizer with strong analytical and strategic planning skills. Sensitivity to group dynamics;
- Knowledge of network theory considered a plus;
- A background, or demonstrated interest in a field relevant to Lambent's work, including, but not limited to: contemporary arts, social justice and community building;

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- An adaptive ability to understand the implications of changes at the intersection of issue areas and where new ideas might emerge for the field;
- Experience leading and managing an entity of some scale, ideally with knowledge of the nonprofit sector;
- A demonstrated commitment to equity; a real competency dealing with issues of race at the intersection of a range of justice, societal, political and economic dynamics;
- Ability to work effectively with and gain the respect and support of highly-accomplished and creative leaders from a wide array of backgrounds and political perspectives;
- Good negotiation skills, with the able to influence others without having supervisory authority;
- Solid event planning skills;
- Global experience and/or perspective, strongly desired.

## **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate will be:

- Personally committed to Lambent's values of equity, creativity, collaboration and mutual accountability;
- A strategic and entrepreneurial thinker who is able to think in interdisciplinary ways, conceptualize new ideas and anticipate and act on events which may create opportunities for the Network, specifically, and for Lambent, generally;
- A decisive and unifying leader; able to inspire a collaborative of passionate creators;
- Able to develop a sense of team spirit and common purpose; maintaining an environment where mutual respect, collegiality and diversity are valued;
- A thoughtful, persuasive negotiator; open and responsive to the ideas of others; able to prioritize and balance competing interests, and build consensus from disparate viewpoints;
- Authentic, transparent and self-possessed; one who shares information readily, listens well, and is used to seeing and grappling with nuanced issues;
- Emotionally intelligent, with great empathy, humanity, and curiosity.

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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)**