

CLOSING REMARKS

Speakers:

András Szántó, deputy director, National Arts Journalism Program

Randall Bourscheidt, president, Alliance for the Arts

Szántó: I just wanted to say two things about research and journalism, and how the Alliance for the Arts and the National Arts Journalism Program came together for this event.

With respect to research, I think we may disagree about the details, but I think we all agree that it's inadequate. It was refreshing to see some research here today, with some of this discussion connecting to, or being grounded in, fact. But the sad fact is that at the time of bidding for scarce resources, in this, the greatest cultural metropolis, I heard this today several times: We lack consistent, reliable, comprehensive data to enable you to make your case to whomever you want to make it to. That's a shame, and I think it's a shame that could be easily remedied. Research has a tremendous multiplier effect. Without it, you're dead in this situation.

Our great universities—and we have several of them in this city—haven't really risen to this challenge. I would like to offer the idea that perhaps Columbia University, with its enormous resources, could be one of these places where some of this material could be gathered, assembled and discussed. I invite you to engage us in the discussion of what our academic institutions can do in this area.

Press. How does the story about arts funding come out? The usual lamentation is that there's nobody there to hear it, because it doesn't get in the newspapers. Certainly, we are on symbolic ground here today in this area. Some of the fault does lie with the press, but I think there's also a lot more that the cultural community could do to make its case to the press. I'd like to invite you to come to us with ideas as to

how we can connect the dots, or connect your stories with the men and women in the nation's newsrooms who write them.

One good piece of news is that tomorrow morning, in "the paper of record," in the Arts section, there will be an article about this conference. Thank you, Randy, for bringing this conference to us.

Bourscheidt: When Quakers have something important to communicate, they gather to be silent. When people in the arts have something to say, they gather to talk. And talk we have, a lot, today. And I've been thinking for the last half hour or so: who are we talking to, besides each other? I happen to believe in preaching to the converted as well as to the unconverted. Because I think, especially after Sept. 11, we need to remind ourselves that we are a community. And one way to do that is to talk to each other, to gather.

We have seen, and it's been reflected in the discussion today, a flowering of research. A couple of people have suggested that there might be too much research, but I don't believe that's true, and I hope you agree with me, because we have to have something to say. We have to have the facts on which to build the case. If we have the facts—and I think we're beginning to have much more of a factual basis for our arguments—we can be persuasive.

Then, we have to figure out what our audience is. I think a lot of the discussion today has been based on the convenient assumption that the audience is the mayor and his representatives. I think the mayor is probably the single most important individual, and it's very important to us that we seem to have a mayor who really cares about and knows about the arts. And even more importantly, in my opinion, we seem to have a mayor who has opened the doors of government to people's ideas. I think

we heard that at the outset today. Those of you who were lucky enough this morning to hear Kate Levin talk will remember that we heard this astonishing (compared with the last period of time, anyway) openness to ideas. I, for one, consider that an extremely healthy beginning.

I would also like to say that in the conversations that I have begun with people on the

City Council—and some of the speakers have referred to those conversations as well—there are members of the City Council that have a similar openness. We have a new City Council, we have new leadership and new members, and a lot of them are really interested in what we have to say, especially when we talk about strengthening their own communities. So with that, I want to thank you all.