

ARTDESK



IMPOSSIBLE TO POSSIBLE

The Art Production Fund Makes it Happen

By Ryan Steadman | Issue 11 - Winter 2018



These are some of the impossible ideas the Art Production Fund has made possible: a high end Prada store in the middle of nowhere. Stacks of rainbow-colored boulders in the desert—tall as a three-story building. Another stack, this time of gigantic bagels in the middle of downtown Manhattan.

Some may seem outlandish, but in an era where art has to compete with up-to-the-minute news cycles and social-media campaigns, it's no wonder APF's projects have been wildly popular.

“We believe in art for everyone,” says Kathleen Lynch, the Art Production Fund's director of operations. “We want to help artists create work with an important message and a deep meaning, and bring that to the public realm. Our goal is for all types of individuals—from children to art historians—to interact with the artwork and take something profound away from the experience.”

Founded by trend-setting art enthusiasts Yvonne Force Villareal and Doreen Remen in 2000, the Art Production Fund has become a powerful nonprofit “facilitator” over the years, one that uses its collective art-world knowledge and contacts to help artists produce fantastical concepts that might otherwise never be realized.

“One of the most important—and fun—aspects of our work is going out and seeing as much art as possible,” Lynch says. “Connecting with artists and immersing ourselves in their work is an important part of our practice. These moments bring so much inspiration to what we do and encourage us to dream big.”

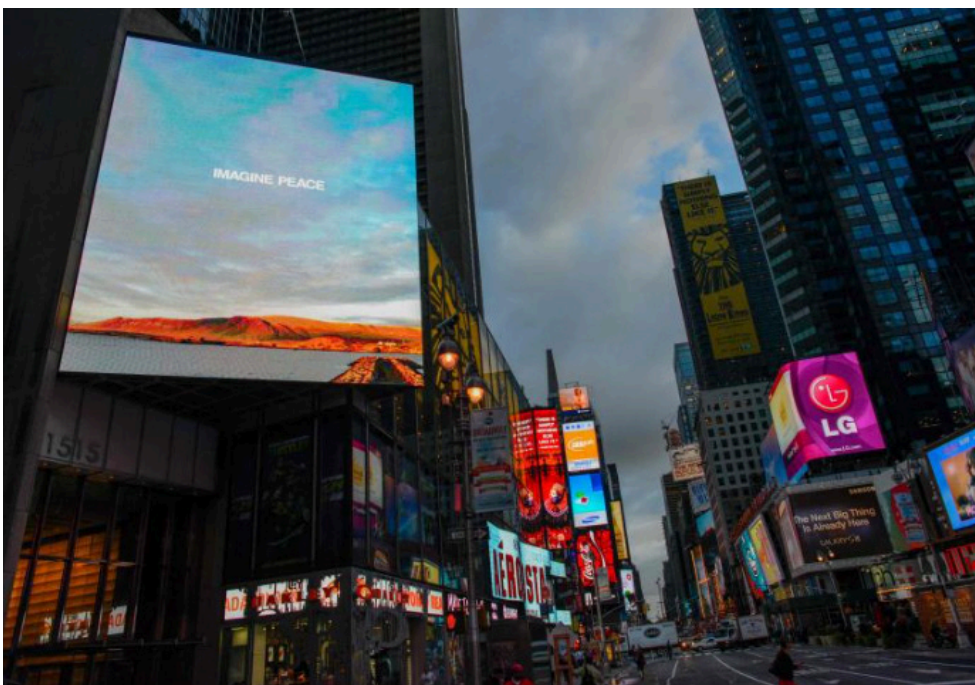
APF pinpoints artists whose work it thinks would translate well into a public setting and begins a conversation with them. It has worked with some prestigious names over the years—Chuck Close, Kehinde Wiley, Yoko Ono, Marilyn Minter—and always has a wish list of artists to work with in the future (two such artists are Ebony G. Patterson and Amanda Ross-Ho). It’s that ability to get contemporary art into a public setting, whether it’s in the desert outside of Las Vegas or on a billboard in Times Square, that makes the Art Production Fund so desirable as a partner for artists.

Multidisciplinary artist Zoë Buckman, who makes art out of objects that range from boxing gloves to vintage lingerie, was thrilled to find out she’d been tapped to collaborate with APF for a project that will be unveiled this year in Los Angeles. “I’d been speaking with APF for several years about various projects and installations,” she says. “We’d been waiting for... something that makes sense. [Then] they actually suggested we turn one of my pieces into a giant public sculpture, and obviously I was ecstatic about this idea.”

It’s not like APF is the first organization to ever commission artworks, but the consensus is that it is uniquely effective at what it does. Buckman was quick to point out how comfortable and all too rare it is to work with a team composed entirely of women. But beyond that, the team—which also includes executive director Casey Fremont—tends to think more like artists than most commissioning bodies. “Like me, they dream big,” Buckman continues. “The difference is they actually know how to make these dreams realities.”

That means being able to keep your cool when plans change or hiccups happen during the art-making process. “Occasionally an artist will shift their vision for a project,” Lynch says, “and sometimes that means starting over from square one. However, in the end, the project is always stronger and more impactful than we could have ever imagined.”

And based on the social media virality of the projects, including a recent ten-foot fiberglass cartoon cloud sculpture by the art collective FriendsWithYou, it’s safe to say that the work Art Production Fund does is nothing if not impactful.



L to R: Imagine Peace (2012) by Yoko Ono in Times Square. Photograph by James Ewing. Courtesy Art Production Fund ; Everything (2015) by Hana Liden, presented by Kiehl’s since 1851. Photograph by Nicholas Knight. Courtesy Art Production Fund