



May 22, 2017

Dear Council on Foundations Conference Participants,

Ava DuVernay here, filmmaker and founder of social impact film distribution company, ARRAY. I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the warm welcome that I received during my conversation with Darren Walker in Dallas.

I would also like to share a bit of background on the launch of my foundation, The ARRAY Alliance. The ARRAY Alliance aims to amplify stories of underrepresented communities by providing people of color and women filmmakers with the resources needed to ensure diverse perspectives are given a platform for change. We envision a world where the rich cultures, diverse viewpoints, and unique perspectives of the communities in which we live are fully represented through film, positively impacting racial and social justice around the globe.

The ARRAY Alliance will amplify the capacity of audiences in under-served communities to engage with impactful, transformative storytelling. Currently, there is no place like Lincoln Center in many inner-cities, no place where art can blossom and minds can expand through film. In the majority black town of Selma, Alabama, members of the community could not watch my film SELMA because there is no movie theater there. In my hometown of Compton, people who live there cannot go see the acclaimed film STRAIGHT OUT OF COMPTON because there is no movie theater there. Imagine how this cinema segregation affects millions who are born into marginalized communities.

If you would like to join our movement, here are a few ideas:

1. We are building a state-of-the-art screening room and community theater workshop in the inner city of Los Angeles that will serve as a gathering space for artists and activists to share their work.
2. We have an ARRAY GRANTS program, which will support grassroots African American, Latino and Asian American film festivals, societies and clubs throughout the country. Many of these local gatherings where people of color and women filmmakers find spaces to share their work would not be able to exist without the numerous dedicated advocates and volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure success. Our goal is to provide the resources necessary to strengthen this model of independent film exhibition, helping local advocates grow their film practice where they are.



3. We want to ensure that younger generations have access not only to the spoon-fed big blockbusters from the studio system, but to the critical genre of independent film and outsider voices in underserved communities across the country. We support screenings, transportation, curriculum development, teacher training and all of the elements that will be a part of making sure there is a young audience constantly learning about the importance of art, independent film and social justice.

It takes partnership to get meaningful work done. The Ford Foundation is generously providing capacity building support to help start our nonprofit entity. I am diligently using this investment in my vision to create an organization with a solid infrastructure that will be sustainable and inspire meaningful change for generations to come. Ambitious, I know! But I walk in the footsteps of Robert Redford with Sundance Institute and Robert De Niro with Tribeca Film Institute, with an eye toward a robust centering of people of color and women. After more than 9 years of running ARRAY, I am over the moon about the addition of this much-needed philanthropic resource.

If there is anything we can provide by way of information or background, please don't hesitate to let me know. My whole team would be more than thrilled to share whatever you need to know to consider supporting this inclusive work. In fact, my colleague, Regina Miller of The Artemis Agency is on call for this very reason and can be reached at Regina@theartemis.agency or via cell at [310.963.7258](tel:310.963.7258) with any questions. You have any number of other things you could be doing, so your attention is wildly appreciated and I so appreciate you taking this time to learn more about my work.

Thank you for your interest in helping to ensure that The Array Alliance will transform lives by providing access, expanding the narrative and creating deep impactful programming to marginalized audiences.

With thanks,

Ava DuVernay