



PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS COUNCIL LOS ANGELES

STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR MISSION

To educate and empower communities through an evolving public conversation about photography and photo-based arts, the primary visual language of our time. At our core, PAC LA is committed to creating learning opportunities through unique, collaborative programming that engages and unifies in a space without exclusion.

OUR VISION

We recognize photography and photo-based art connects us to one another and pushes the boundaries of our understanding.

As we build upon our knowledge of photography's complex history, PAC LA fosters a deeper understanding of contemporary artists and their influence on our culture. We engage our diverse community through active learning opportunities – through viewing and discussing classic and contemporary photography, hearing lectures by experts, engaging in an ongoing dialogue with artists and participating in photo-focused travel.

Giving back is fundamental to the PAC LA culture. Through volunteer work, partnerships, mentoring and grant initiatives we empower the PAC LA community to contribute to a new generation of scholars, artists, students and social activists discovering photography as a powerful means of self-expression. Join us and experience the wide range of photographic activity in the art capital of Los Angeles and beyond.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The process of developing a Strategic Plan for PAC LA has been enlightening, exciting, and above all, empowering. Through rigorous self-examination, in-depth board workshops, outreach to our community, and direct conversations with individuals offering a wide range of perspectives on who we are and what we do, our team has emerged with strong and focused ideas about the future of PAC LA. We have an outstanding foundation to build on as we prepare for what comes next.

“The Photographic Arts Council is an irreplaceable and increasingly crucial participant in the Los Angeles art community. In my view, the Photographic Arts Council plays a far-reaching, multi-part, and wholly unique role in the art ecosystem of Los Angeles and Southern California. The Photographic Arts Council has long hosted an ambitious event and education program —studio visits, artist talks, scholarly panels, lectures, behind-the-scenes museum visits, and more. With these events as catalyst, the organization has become a crucial connector, a nexus, a vibrant creator of community within the internationally important Los Angeles art scene.” – Douglas McCulloh, Senior Curator, California Museum of Photography

The Value of PAC LA: Understanding Our Fundamentals

In interview after interview, as well as in comments and responses from our members and our board, the value of being part of our **connected community** rose to the top. PAC LA has a powerful role in helping people **develop relationships** where we learn and share with each other.

“Within the photo community, there is an urge to connect that is not being met. PAC LA can make that happen.” – Rose Shoshana, ROSEGALLERY

Respondents highly prize our **programming** and view PAC LA as an organization that helps people explore and gain inside **access** to the photography world in an open and welcoming environment. Museums, gallerists, artists, foundations, educational institutions, and our peers all recognize and respect PAC LA as a strong **independent voice** and resource.

Notably, PAC LA’s origins as an organization driven by **collectors and collecting** continue to resonate, but our ideas about collecting have broadened. The need to **democratize** collecting has become an ever-present theme with an eye to the crucial role that collecting plays in supporting artists and the photographic arts.

PAC LA will help to shift the idea of collecting from accumulation to **purposeful stewardship**. We will highlight and promote the idea that the world of photography is not exclusive by providing **access, mentorship and education**.

“PAC LA is doing important and pivotal work in photography collecting by helping us discover new names. New artists.” – scott b. davis, Executive Director, Medium Photo

Our outreach findings provided resounding and consistent confirmation about the core values guiding PAC LA. In addition, we gained an enormous amount of data now being

used to inform programming plans, expand cooperative relationships, update our membership offerings, and improve the day-to-day working of the organization.

PAC LA faces inevitable challenges, clear to the board but only a small part of the public's perception of the organization. Recognizing these challenges and regularly examining them is crucial to sustaining the organization. Moving forward we will be vigilant in:

- Becoming self-sustaining financially by **identifying resources** such as grants, gifts and fundraising activities.
- Incorporating and monitoring best practices at the organizational and operational level of PAC LA
- Addressing the membership mix by expanding our **reach** to broader sections of the community, with particular attention to diversity in **age** and **cultural background**, delivering **access** and keeping new audiences **engaged and excited** about PAC LA.

PAC LA is deeply grateful to all who provided their time and valuable input to our organization's future. You inspired us and provided important guideposts to ensure our success. As we finish the strategic planning process, we are excited by our future, welcoming the change we are experiencing, and working hard to ensure success in meeting our goals.

STRATEGIC GOALS

With these goals, our objective is to both **strengthen and leverage our fundamental assets** to move the organization forward, and to **confront and address issues** that may be holding us back.

GOAL: DEVELOP OUR CORE STRENGTHS

PAC LA hit the ground running as a non-profit organization in 2013 and continues to provide ongoing programming and educational opportunities to the photographic community of Los Angeles and beyond.

Community – The center of our work. Our goals include:

- Fostering and expanding opportunities for the photographic community to engage with and learn from each other
- Improving two-way communication by seeking and acting upon feedback from the community

Programming – Our sustaining action. PAC LA generates opportunities for dialogue, co-learning and mutual mentorship by:

- Continuing to stimulate an evolving cultural conversation surrounding the photographic arts
- Developing and augmenting our existing in-person, online and travel-based learning
- Encouraging broader participation by offering free or low cost events
- Producing inclusive and challenging programming ranging from introductory educational opportunities to explorations of work by emerging and established artists
- Developing and recruiting knowledgeable, diverse, and multi-focused programming perspectives

Relationships & Outreach – Firming our foundation. As PAC LA evolves and grows we are:

- Managing relationships across organizations and among peers; those we can support and mentor, and those who can support and mentor us
- Establishing partnerships to help provide focused financial support or in-kind resources for collaborative and educational endeavors
- Expanding our audience by engaging, co-programming and collaborating with fellow organizations that support our mission and enhance our presence and accessibility as a resource for the community

“Ask people what they want instead of sitting around a table and deciding what they need...” – Anne Breckenridge Barrett, Director, Center for Creative Photography

GOAL: BROADEN, DIVERSIFY AND SOLIDIFY THE PAC LA COMMUNITY

As a public-facing, community-based organization, PAC LA is committed to building and sustaining a broader and more diverse membership and audience base.

Focused Outreach – A renewed priority. PAC LA makes inclusivity a central tenet of our growth strategy by:

- Identifying constituencies we have yet to reach
- Creating focused marketing and social media programs for our target audiences
- Developing community partnerships and reciprocal relationships to further expand PAC LA's audience and membership base

Inclusive Engagement – A culture of welcome. As we expand our reach, we will showcase the PAC LA experience by:

- Incorporating affordability and convenience into our programming mandate
- Offering scholarships, sponsorships and grants to foster access
- Creating diverse opportunities for connecting within the PAC LA Community: educational, social, and professional
- Ensuring that new faces are noted and welcomed, and that loyal members are regularly recognized and appreciated

Long-Term Partnership – Insuring our future. PAC LA will be sustained for years to come by:

- Giving members, donors and sponsors compelling reasons to support the growth of the PAC LA community
- Creating giving opportunities for all audiences
- Offering a membership program that appeals to people at each stage of support, and encourages increasing commitment over time

"We need a membership that believes in growth. A membership that believes in change..." – Clare Kunny, Director, Art Muse LA

GOAL: CONSIDERED COLLECTORSHIP

PAC LA has always considered collecting and stewardship to be inextricably linked. The idea of what it means to be a collector is in the hands of each individual.

Redefining – Our new understanding. PAC LA is rethinking collecting by:

- Promoting the concept of considered collectorship for everyone
- Unlinking collecting from large dollar figures as well as from collection size
- Putting the rules of collecting in collectors' hands

Expanding – Our close look. PAC LA explores just *who* collects and *why*. We are:

- Illuminating the collector's role in the arts ecosystem
- Keeping artists at the center of the discussion
- Highlighting the impact collectors have on the ongoing production of art

Encouraging – Using our experience. PAC LA helps point the way to building collections by:

- Providing a space for interaction between emerging and established collectors
- Offering education on the various markets and their function
- Fostering mentorship between collectors
- Providing a liaison between collectors and artists or galleries
- Offering established collectors peer support and exchange of ideas

Learning together – Our community shares knowledge. In collaborative learning environments PAC LA will be:

- Reaching participants at all stages of collection building
- Facilitating understanding of acquisition and care of photography
- Fostering an ongoing appreciation and understanding for all image-based art

"The visits you do with artists are something that students often don't have access to; that's really appealing." – Dhyandra Lawson, Curatorial Assistant, LACMA

GOAL: A SELF-SUSTAINING ORGANIZATION

Through diligent financial, organizational and operational focus, PAC LA will be fully self-sustaining with annual funding sufficient to cover our operational budget.

Financially – Ensuring our future stability by:

- Developing an annual budgeting and forecasting discipline aligned with strategic priorities
- Building an integrated and articulated fundraising plan for all sources: membership, annual giving, major gifts, foundation grants, corporate support and earned income events
- Establishing financial metrics and reporting

Organizationally – Focusing on our continuity by:

- Continuing our transition from an all-volunteer working board to a governing board
- Revising our understanding of the roles of staff and board members
- Offering ongoing educational opportunities to staff and board
- Establishing pathways for identifying and welcoming new board members

Operationally – Improving how we work by:

- Continuing to examine and refine our operational structure and processes
- Incorporating non-profit standards and best practices

“The hiring of Director Bayley Mizelle is a sign of great professionalism for PAC LA.”

– Rebecca Morse, Curator, LACMA