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Eyedrum Awarded \$30,000 Grant from Warhol Foundation Prize to benefit continued innovation in gallery's visual arts programming

ATLANTA — In recognition of its dedication to innovative visual arts programming, Eyedrum Art & Music Gallery was awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation on Thurs., June 15. It is the largest national grant for the alternative arts space.

The Warhol Foundation's objective is "to foster innovative artistic expression and the creative process by encouraging and supporting cultural organizations that in turn, directly or indirectly, support artists and their work," according to the foundation's website.

Eyedrum is the logical recipient of such an award. Since its founding in August 1998, Eyedrum's mission in the visual arts has been to provide a sympathetic venue for emerging artists, artists working outside mainstream esthetics, and artists making advanced work with little commercial potential — three often overlapping communities who were drastically underserved in Atlanta before Eyedrum changed the rules of the game.

"We are very grateful that a national funding agency of such repute as the Andy Warhol Foundation has seen fit to recognize our efforts. We feel that it validates the efforts of the many people who have labored mightily with Eyedrum for eight years," said Eyedrum Executive Director Robert Cheatham. "This grant will enable us to continue our programming and to serve the artists of Atlanta who often persevere in the face of much adversity."

The artwork that such artists bring to Eyedrum already has earned the gallery a reputation for being the Southeast's premier venue for ground-breaking, truly new visual art. Board members expect that adding the Warhol grant to Eyedrum's 8-year-old timeline will raise its profile across the nation, and internationally.

"The Warhol Foundation evaluated our visual arts schedule for the next year as part of the application process, and receiving the grant to support it is just like getting a four-star review from a very tough New York critic. It's a wonderful vindication for our programming and our curatorial process," said Eyedrum Art Committee member Richard Gess.

The Art Committee plans to use the Warhol Foundation grant in programming from June 2006 through June 2008 to provide financial support for curators and artists and their projects at Eyedrum, and to further promote Eyedrum's overall mission. The \$30,000 in funds will be distributed to selected visual artists and guest curators scheduled to exhibit at Eyedrum over the 24-month grant period.

Executive Director Robert Cheatham, board member Karen Tauches, and Eyedrum Art Committee members Gess and Alyson Laura each played an instrumental role in securing the grant, from budgeting the visual art that made the Warhol Foundation take notice, to writing the grant application, to helping shepherd it through to confirmation.

The award is an undeniable statement to Atlanta and the Southeast's arts community about what an "underground," all-volunteer organization with fierce dedication to its integrity, artists and supporters can achieve.

From last year's 3,000-square-foot expansion including a professional-quality stage and lighting, an awards ceremony of its own coming in fall 2006, a six-time-winner standing as *Creative Loafing's* Best Alternative Arts Space, continued support from the Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs, and ever-growing popularity among the avant-garde as well as curious mainstream-leaning folks, the Warhol Foundation grant is an achievement not just for Eyedrum, but all of Atlanta.

For more info, please contact Eyedrum at 404-522-0655 or www.eyedrum.org.



Started in 1998, Eyedrum is a nonprofit organization developing an interdisciplinary approach to the arts by incorporating a wide range of contemporary art, music and new media in its gallery space. The gallery is operated entirely by volunteers, and supported through memberships and donations. It has been recognized internationally as well as locally by Atlanta's Office of Cultural Affairs and within the community at large for its advancement of innovation.