



Ben Blanco

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Creative enterprise management for major projects and innovative programs

Skill Tree



Employment History

Creative Arts Manager and Creator of VaultArt Studio, Achieva

Pittsburgh, PA | July 2016 - present

In 2016, I was hired to develop Achieva’s new Creative Arts Department, based on my vision of an arts-based employment model. One year later, I opened VaultArt Studio, a commercial gallery and marketplace located in Pittsburgh’s thriving Penn Avenue Arts District. At VaultArt, we provide college-level training and inclusive professional support to artists with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Business Operations

- Wrote, applied for, and awarded grants to fundraise for \$200K startup costs
- Negotiated with PA Office of Developmental Programs and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to bill Medicaid for an innovative and unique employment service; successfully transitioned department to a higher billing rate with profit increase in 2021
- Located an ideal department site in a high-priority business district; oversees facility management for gallery and service operations
- Launched a commercial website in 2020 that earned \$20K in its first year through national and international sales
- Develops, monitors, and analyzes departmental finances with the goal of quarterly profits on a \$350K annual budget

Programs

- Develops comprehensive training resources through lectures, presentations, demonstrations, and experiences for groups and individuals based on specific professional goals, skill assessments, diverse learning styles, and communication preferences
- Hires and manages 3 full-time staff with Masters degrees, and 20 artists receiving professional supports
- Designs and promotes exhibitions and art markets that attract thousands of guests and average \$25K in annual sales
- Manages VaultArt social media and commercial website operations; creates promotional copy, design, and video assets
- Investigates and secures adaptive technology resources for artists pursuing advanced careers in design, fabrication, and production

Associate Producer, 13th Gen Film Production

San Francisco, CA | July 2014 - July 2016

While pursuing my Masters I worked for the documentary film production company 13th Gen, and upon graduating, was hired as an Associate Producer, a second-in-command position reporting directly to the Executive Producer. I travelled extensively in this role as I organized complex film shoots and prepared licensing agreements across California, the United States, and abroad.

- Implemented internal project and financial controls with Google Workspace and Microsoft Office to precisely organize budgets, deadlines, and contractor staffing in accordance with California film production laws
- Carried out on-site advanced negotiations in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Berlin Germany for film festival, streaming, and home video distribution; drafted contracts for licensing agreements between production and distribution channels
- Oversaw financial operations for seven feature and short film productions with budgets up to \$500K
- Designed toolkits, educational materials, press notes, marketing assets, and websites on Wordpress and Squarespace
- Select titles included: *The G Word: A Documentary about Giftedness* (Post-Production), *The Watermelon Woman* 20th Anniversary Re-Master (2016), *The Nine* (2015), *Buried Above Ground* (2015), and *Desert Migration* (2015)

Civic and Community Leadership

Consultant, ASSEMBLE: a community space for arts + technology July 2021 - present

- Invited by the founder to serve as a strategic vision consultant for the fundraising and operations committee

Councilmember, Vibrant Pittsburgh August 2019 - present

- Serves on the Next Gen Council to provide leadership in attracting, retaining, and improving diverse professionals in the region

Steering Committee Member, Associated Artists of Pittsburgh February 2019 - present

- Current steering committee member due to extensive industry knowledge, developed professional training seminar for members

Board Member, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation November 2018 - 2020

- Wrote sections of the Strategic Vision Plan 2020-2025 to improve economic development for residents and businesses

Education

Institute for Community Inclusion | National ACRE Employment Certification 2019

California College of the Arts | Master of Fine Arts in Film Production and Design 2014

- Dennis Leon and Christine Nelson Scholarship Recipient | Teaching Assistant for industrial fabrication courses

University of Pittsburgh | Bachelor of Arts in Studio Arts and English Criticism 2010

- Summa Cum Laude | Graduation Speaker | First undergraduate Teaching Assistant in recent department history (Sculpture II)

References available upon request
