

MEDIA ALERT

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Funds Awarded to Support Artists and Activists Working Together in “School for Creative Activism”

Stephen Duncombe (NYU) and Steve Lambert (SMFA) Receive \$45,000 Through George Soros’s Open Society Foundations Grant

Founded and directed by Stephen Duncombe, a professor at the Gallatin School of New York University and long-time activist, and Steve Lambert, a faculty member of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and recognized political artist, the **School for Creative Activism** is a participatory workshop infusing community organizing and civic engagement with culture and creativity. As co-director Lambert describes it, “Imagine if Saul Alinsky took a class in performance art.”

Working directly with organizers and community actors, the SCA leverages the strengths of grassroots activism and the attention grabbing and complex messaging of art through a curriculum designed to:

- Teach cultural tactics and creative strategies employed effectively by organizers in the past.
- Recognize and draw upon the cultural resources and creative talents residing within individuals, organizations, and communities in the present.
- Collectively run scenarios and plan campaigns that utilize culture and creativity.
- Build a network of organizers and artists using a model of creative organizing more effective in our media-saturated, spectacle-savvy world.

“The first rule of activism is to know the terrain and use it to your advantage,” explains co-director Duncombe, “and the current political topography is one of symbols and signs, images and expressions. This is the avant-garde of activism today. From small community organizations to international NGOs, visionary activists are looking to broaden their base of appeal and the reach of their message by employing culture alongside more traditional organizing practices. Our training will help these organizations use innovative and creative ways to engage politics.”

“The SCA is not just about ‘better messaging,’ adds Lambert. “Our goal is more effective organizing. Our curriculum updates the activist tool-kit through the reimagination and reconfiguration of tactics, strategy and organization in such a way that creativity and culture factors into every plan and every action.”

Over the 2010-2011 year the SCA will run two training sessions working with local artists and Open Society Foundations organizing partners, one in the New York area, the other in North Carolina.

The Power and Democracy fund of the Open Society Foundations’ (formerly Open Society Institute) recently awarded the School for Creative Activism (SCA) a grant for \$45,000 for curricular development and organizer training over the 2010-2011 year.

The School for Creative Activism is a new project of the Center for Artistic Activism. For more information about the center and its programs use contact information above.

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