

# T/A/O



Issue 1	<b>We Have Lift Off</b>
Systems Thinking: SP 2017	MASD   MCAD

# T/A/O

## WHO WE ARE

Reaching higher than the status quo, we at T/A/O unapologetically name our bottom line is the well being of our artists. In a culture that notoriously exploits artists for their talent, we make the bold claim that creativity is an asset flow that remains untapped and unchallenged. Our mission is exploratory - we produce and exhibit collaborative local innovation for the betterment, enrichment, and growth of our creative community. By bringing interdisciplinary creativity to the forefront, T/A/O challenges performing artists and creators to come together to support each other and lay the groundwork. We explore the bleeding edge of what performance, creativity, and collaboration can do. We are T/A/O.

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Theresa Akers at Bedlam Theatre: Farrington Smalls 2012.

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# 01

## RESOURCES TO REACH HIGHER

The support capability of a performing arts co-working space to answer the holistic health and wellness of the artists in the community is immense. The suicide and depression rate in performing arts is staggering - Studies prove that depression causes stress and drastically affects the performance of the person affected. Moderate to severe anxiety in the performing arts industry is 10 times higher than the general population, while depression is 5 times higher, planning suicide is 4-5 times higher, and committing suicide is twice as high. A co-working space, while not a cure-all for all of the struggles that come with working in the arts, can at least begin to create a space for the community to come together and support one another through grueling work conditions.

The wider impacts of creating a support system for the arts results in more experimentation, collaboration, and rich narratives that enrich our communities and cultural legacy. In facilitating interdisciplinary dialogues and learning throughout the general maker community, a performing arts community also provides a great stepping-stone for young makers to be connected to their future community and profession through mentorship, scholarship, and networking opportunities. In diversifying skillsets and maintaining openness, actors within the community are readied for a diverse career in the arts.

## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ARTS

It is easy to mistake sustainability as a practice limited to our environment. Sustainability is inherently human-centric, however. We at T/A/O place social sustainability at the center of our organization, recognizing that performing artists and makers do not have resources typically available in other professional spheres. While it is true that many of the most egregious social offenses seem to occur outside the industrialized world, those of us in the so-called developed world may share

more responsibility for them than we care to know. In addition, there is a risk that we have become blind or inured to our own special violations and can't see the dysfunction that we've created in our own backyards. Ultimately, we at T/A/O strive to bring awareness to the larger issue that the impact of local, social investment results in more empathy, a stronger commitment to the betterment of local communities, and a vibrancy to local economies.



Collaboration at Bedlam Theatre: Farrington Smalls 2012.

## THE PERFORMANCE ECOSYSTEM

The needs of performing artists are unique, and the options for the community slim. At its core, the world of the performing artist is one that is full of opportunity for collaboration as independent contractors and freelancers, behaving in many ways like bees would in their pursuit of work and sustenance. However, our performing arts workers have little to no access to the protection and community a hive offers to the humble honeybee. Performance artists work around the clock, uninsured, in terrible working conditions, suffering from lack of self-care and legal resources to protect themselves. In this vein, we must protect our endangered pollinators, the stewards of new and fresh ideas, from extinction.

### FACILITIES

In addition to social sustainability, we also care for the environment we act in: the performing and fine arts. Some systems that are affected by the issue include support of the auxiliary forces in performing and fine art. Back-end production for theatre is notoriously expensive. The infrastructures required to fabricate materials, rent equipment, rehearse performers, and hire crew often span several facilities, vendors, and tool typologies. The co-working space outlined in this document answers this infrastructure need and the sustainability need by putting all of these disparate factors in one place and housing all industrial processes in a single community. Through the inclusion and situation of infrastructure in one place, the T/A/O model creates an industrial estate, where all areas of creation are efficiently located.

Within our approximately 10,000 sq foot facility, we support programming of a wide array of activities related to creating new works of art.

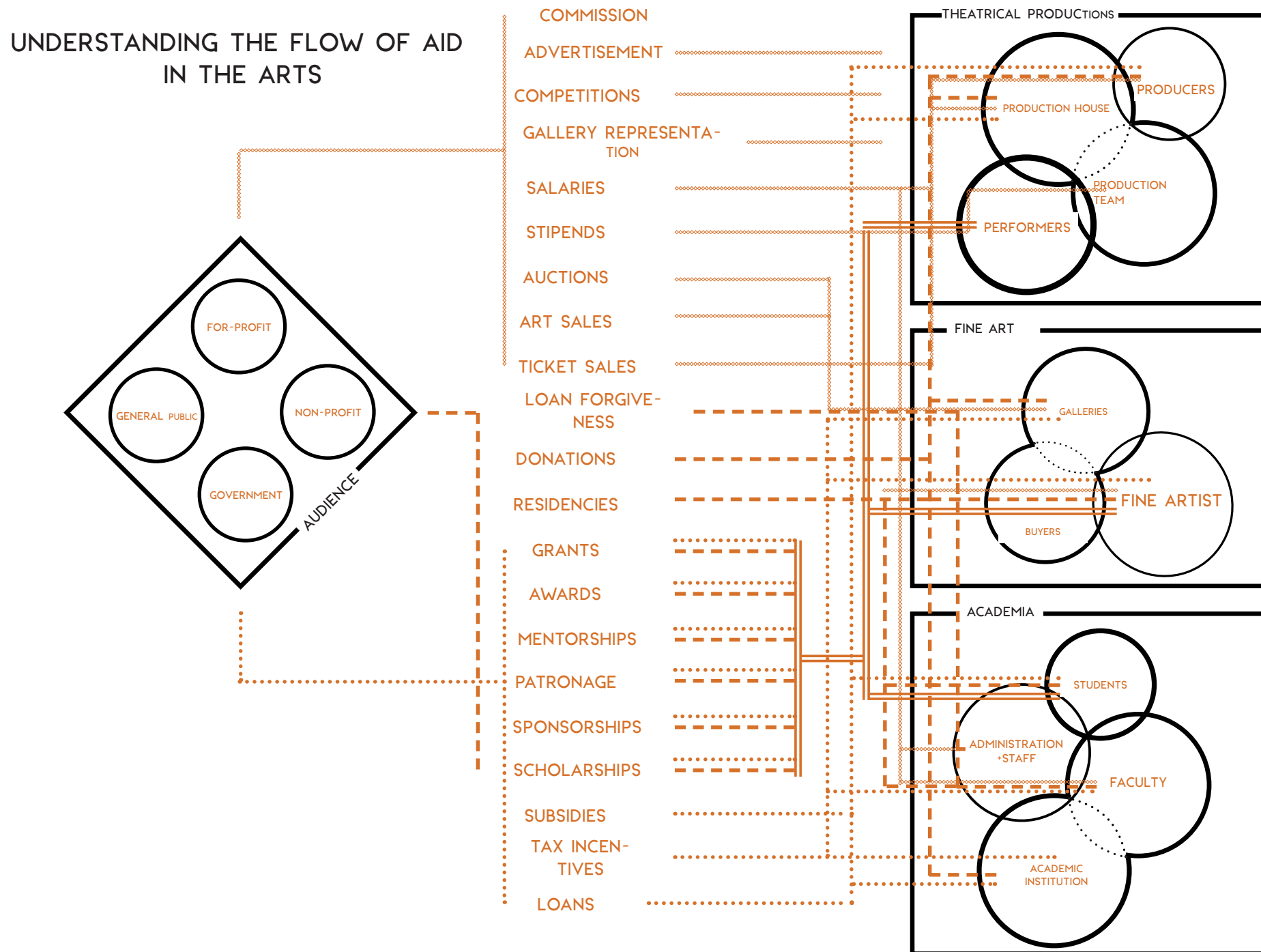


Fig. 3

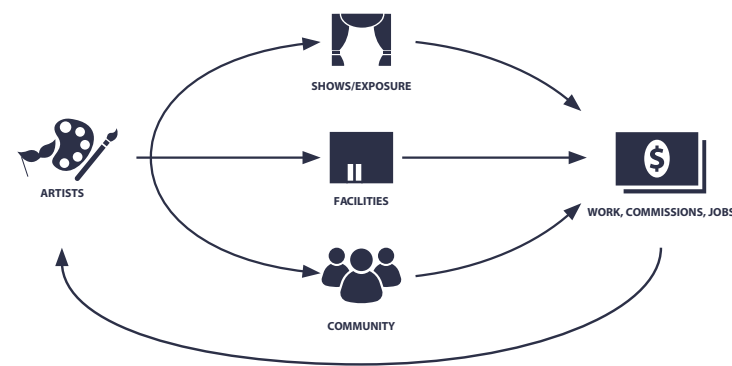
## WHAT YOU ARE INVESTING IN

According to the 2017 Creative MN Report, the Minnesota Creative Economy is a two billion dollar market, home to over 100,000 creative workers. A recent artist study conducted by Indiana University ranks the Twin Cities within the top three cities to live as an artist--following New York and Los Angeles. Creative MN has additionally stated for Minnesota's creative economy, two of the top needs for all Minnesota artists include: 'Space to Work,' and 'Opportunities to Connect.' T/A/O is the way, the means for Minnesota artists to make their mark by making it easier to get there.

We understand it's a huge deal to invest your hard earned dollars. With a bit of creativity, we've made it easier to see where your money is going to make the best choice for your time.

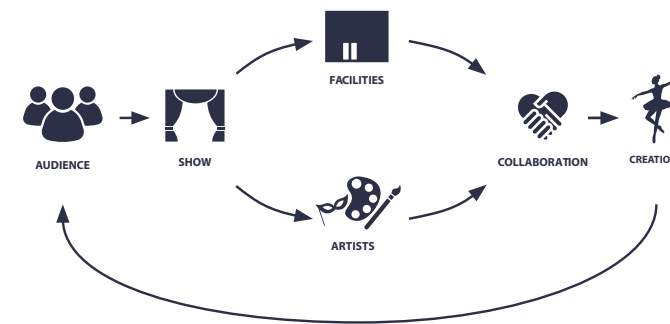
## I AM AN ARTIST

The freelance life is tough, and for this reason we accommodated for a holistic view on artist life. By combining the resources of rehearsal spaces, technical equipment, tools, administrative spaces, and communal environments, we provide a boon of options for you to make the most of your time and create the work you've always wanted to, but may not have had the means to.



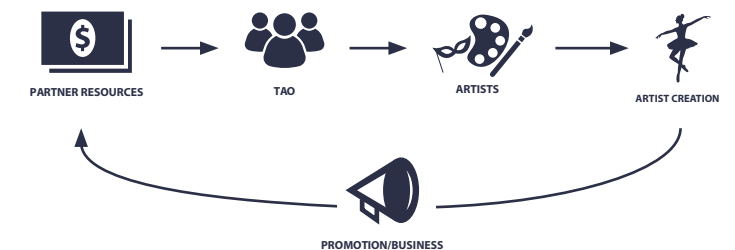
## I AM AN ENTHUSIAST

When you attend a performance or gallery opening at T/A/O, you directly invest in the infrastructure necessary for artists to feel secure and reach higher. Like gravity's confirmation of human existence, the performing arts could not exist without you. When you invest in our programming, you are our singular driver for success.



## I AM A PARTNER

We understand that the business side of the art world may not be an artist's biggest strength. With the expectation for artists to increasingly become Jacks and Jills of all trades, we come together to complete each other's skill sets with the strength needed to succeed. With your business minds, your investments, and your dedication, you ensure that business workshops, connections, and auxiliary resources make a difference in our community, all while benefitting your own business.





## 02

### LEVERAGING SYSTEMATIC SUCCESS

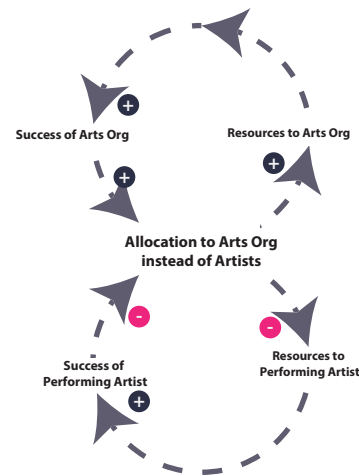
As touched on previously, the top environmental constraints that impact this business model involve the overall lack of funding and economic support that flow into the arts. Volatility in career opportunities for the arts also impacts the ability for users to maintain a long-term membership to a co-working space if income is to come specifically from freelance work. While business models, such as work-trade, may work for some special instances, the overhead costs of maintaining the organization as a whole need to be monetized in areas outside of simply grants, internal membership fees, and sales opportunities.

In addition, area-centric conversations around running a performing arts space become highly specialized. How might one create and run a venue, in addition to maintaining a safe maker-space, where high organizational skills would be required to enforce and maintain order? As each space becomes more fleshed out, the priority becomes ensuring burn out prevention across teams - daily operations running out of trust.



## IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

So, exactly how does business as usual contribute to instability of the performing arts? By studying the impact of archetypal behaviors in systems theory, typical performing arts models contribute to a behavior of systems infrastructure that contributes to the successful to the successful.



Nothing could be more succinct than Donella Meadows, world famous Systems Engineer, explaining why the Success to the Successful loop can be so insidious:

"If you've played Monopoly, you've experienced "success to the successful." Everyone starts out equal. By chance some players land on and buy up valuable "properties" for which they can charge rent. They use the rent money to build "hotels," with which they can extract even more rent. The game is supposed to end when one person has bankrupted everyone else, but most adults quit long before that. The game gets too predictable and boring when "hotels to the hotel-owners" kicks in.

Once our neighborhood offered a \$100 reward for the most impressive display of Christmas lights. The winning family the first year spent the prize money on more lights. After they had won three years in a row, the contest was suspended.

"Success to the successful" is no fun.

To him that hath shall be given. Lower electric rates for big users than for small ones. Lower postage rates for bulk mailers than for ordinary folks. Lower taxes on capital gains than on earned income. Incinerators, dumps and polluting factories located disproportionately in low-income neighborhoods. The poorest kids get the worst health care and the worst schools.



Theresa Akers at Bedlam Theatre: Farrington Smalls 2012.

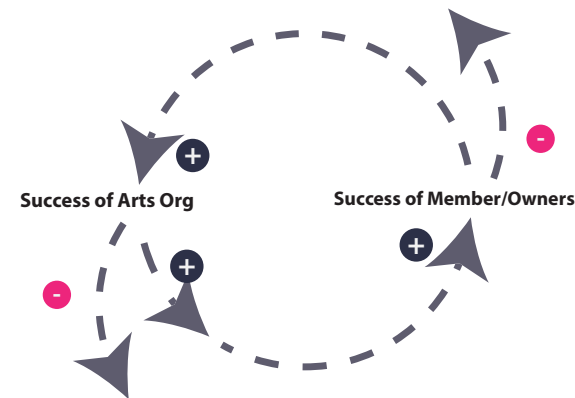
"Success to the successful" is not fair, though the successful work hard to believe that they deserve the favors the system accords them."

However, it is easy to ascribe the blame to the morals of the people who purport the system, when the structure of the system itself is to blame. Such a system produces injustices not because people are bad, but because people are smart enough to see that in this game altruism is fatal. In society, we have evolved past the success to successful model through the institution of democracy, progressive income taxes, and universal public education.

A call to diversify the system is not just necessary - it is revolutionary. Through redefining success from the standard monopolization of the capitalist business model, T/A/O chooses to break it all wide open. We, unafraid, follow in the famous foot steps of one Greyston Bakery: "We don't hire artists to produce art. We produce art, to enrich our performance community."

## T/A/O IS THE WAY

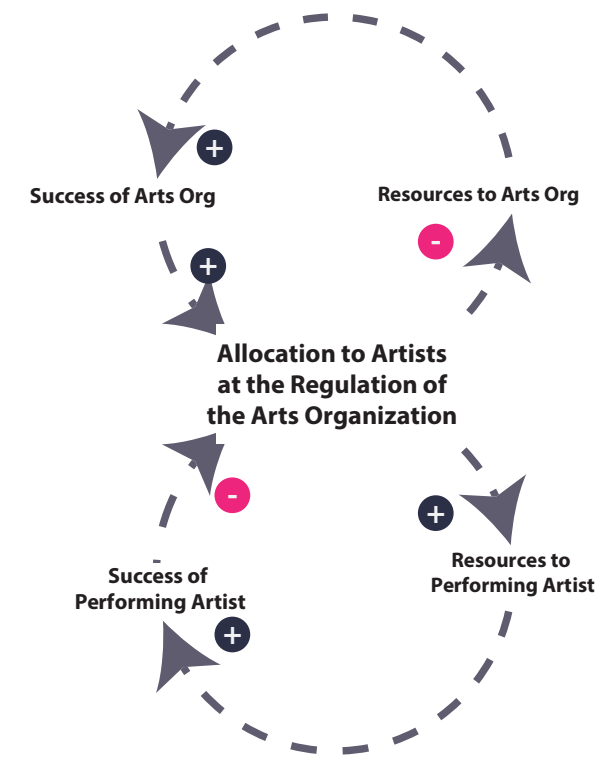
From a systems perspective, diversification solves the archetypal behavior of Success to the Successful. T/A/O, as a socially sustainable B-Corp outlines a three pronged approach to a systematic proposal of how a business can run for the betterment of its member-employees.



### SOLUTION ONE

Unify Organizational Success with its Members

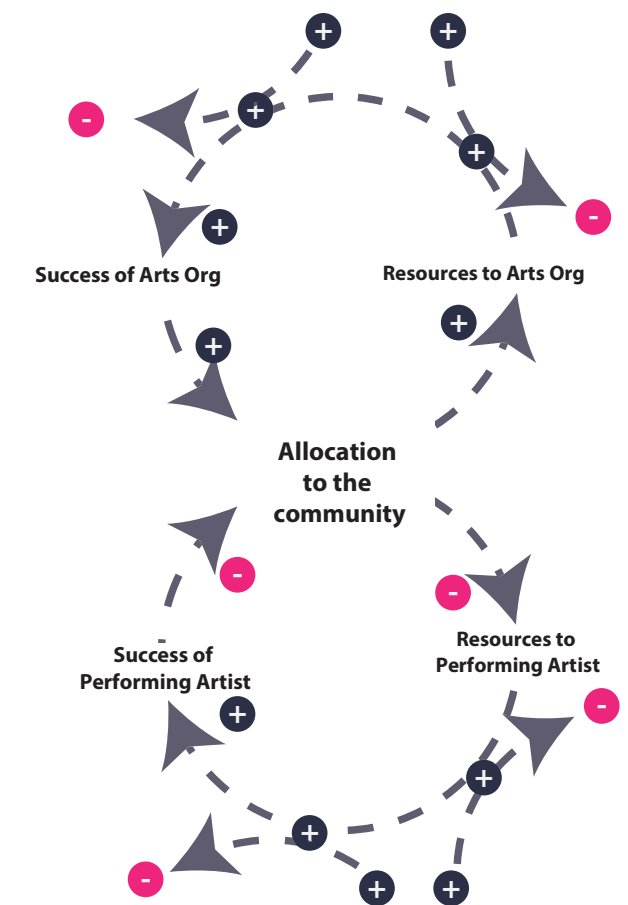
Using the cooperative business model, a loose cohort of entrepreneurs would be in charge of taking care of facility management according to the types of spaces they are in charge of looking after, and from there some spontaneous influx of ideas can come from members coming and going as they need. By decentralizing the organization completely, the monopoly one organization has on asset flow is removed.



### SOLUTION TWO

Enforce Union Standards of Operation

In standardizing the flow of resources via labor laws, there becomes a collective accountability, where resource allocation ceases to be subjective. In becoming transparent and regulating the flow of resources directly to artists and support technicians, the irregularity in resource allocation is alleviated and the system remains stable.



### SOLUTION THREE

Diversification of Models of Income

If times get hard in a certain area of the organization, the introduction of additional discrete models of income allows for a buffer between the immediacy of the status quo and the integrity of the organization. By balancing financial support in both the performing artists and the arts organization as a whole, the organization has support bottom-up and top-down, providing security to all involved.



# 03

## OPEN CALL FOR COLLABORATION

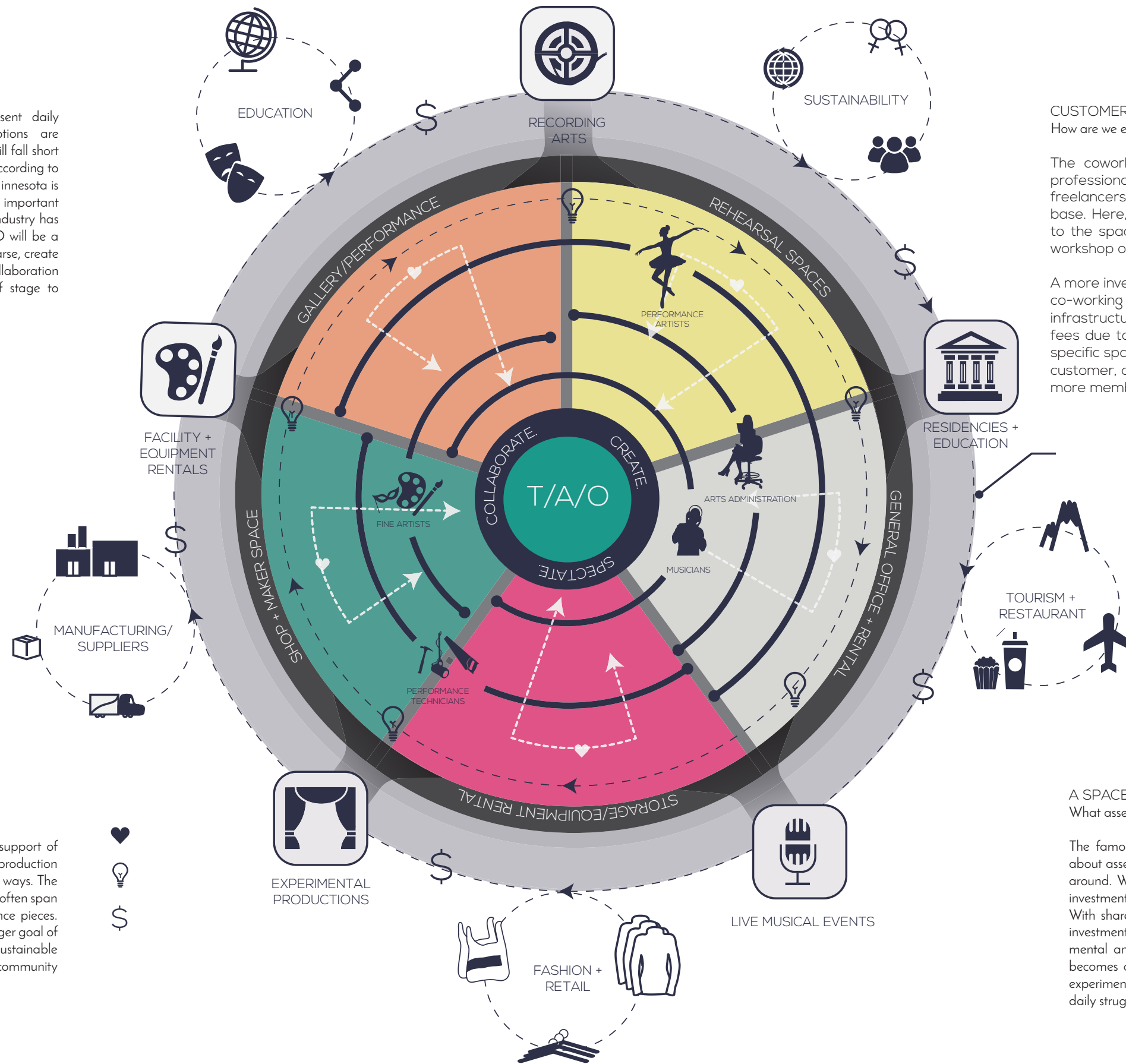
Equal parts production company, gallery, and co-working space, the T/A/O design house welcomes collaborators on a variety of rolling plans for access to our rehearsal, facility, design, and prototyping space. Our community is highly collaborative and professional, and therefore ask that our member, member-employees, and staff:

1. Are working artists, designers, innovators in their field with up-to-date print and web presences.
2. Actively participate in collaborative performances or fine art shows for the duration of their membership, according to choice.
3. Commit to creating work that pushes the limits of what art can do.

We value our commitment to interdisciplinary thought and innovation, and for this reason discourage membership for the sake of simply co-working. We believe that the best ideas come from disparate fields working together. We love and welcome art of all kinds - if there is a need that you are interested in here, but do not feel comfortable collaborating, we are more than willing to connect you to an organization that will provide the support you need.

THE PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC LIFE

Finding suitable rehearsal and design spaces present daily challenges for performing arts professionals. Options are expensive, inaccessible, or create a disturbance; most will fall short in supporting the rehearsal and creation of new work. According to Creative MN's 2017 report, the Creative Economy in Minnesota is a \$2B industry, home to over 100,000 creatives. As an important faction of the creative economy, the performing arts industry has yet to find its niche for its specific space needs. T/A/O will be a physical location for performers and technicians to rehearse, create and perform. By providing the spaces, resources, and collaboration opportunities, we enable artists involved on and off stage to experiment and support each other.



CUSTOMERS/ACTORS  
How are we engaging our community?

The coworking business model created for creative professionals in corporate industries features freelancers and contractors as the typical customer base. Here, freelancers pay a monthly fee for access to the space and resources, with additional fees per workshop or additional auxiliary enrichment programs.

A more inventive approach in drawing customers into a co-working space for the performing arts must include infrastructure that is more flexible in membership fees due to income restrictions. In a performing-arts specific space, the performing arts contractors are the customer, as well as an active participant in drawing in more member/clients.

THE BIG PICTURE  
How are we enriching our economy?

Some systems that are affected by the issue include support of the auxiliary forces in theatrical and fine art. Back-end production for the arts incorporates local economies in unexpected ways. The infrastructures to fabricate, rent, rehearse, and hire crew often span several facilities, actors, and tools to create performance pieces. T/A/O facilitates economic growth by looking at the larger goal of enriching local economies, as well highlighting a more sustainable way to put all industrial and artistic processes in a single community and infrastructure.

A SPACE TO FEEL SUPPORTED  
What assets are we trying to capture?

The famous line from "Cabaret" comes to mind when thinking about assets, as money, more often than not, makes the world go around. We at T/A/O, however, posit that there are additional investments available that are not tracked on the bottom line. With shared resources, performing artists can minimize up front investments in expensive infrastructure, freeing up important mental and financial space for creativity to flow. T/A/O, then, becomes an investment in community support, novel ideas, and experimentation, all untapped energy flows otherwise lost in the daily struggle for resources.

# 04

## BENEFITS PRICING & BREAKDOWN

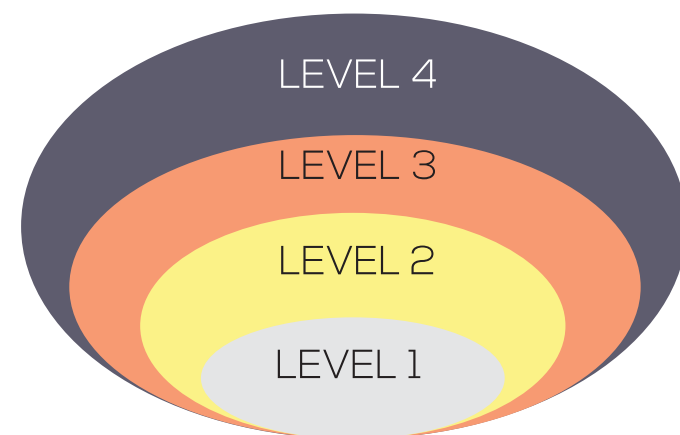
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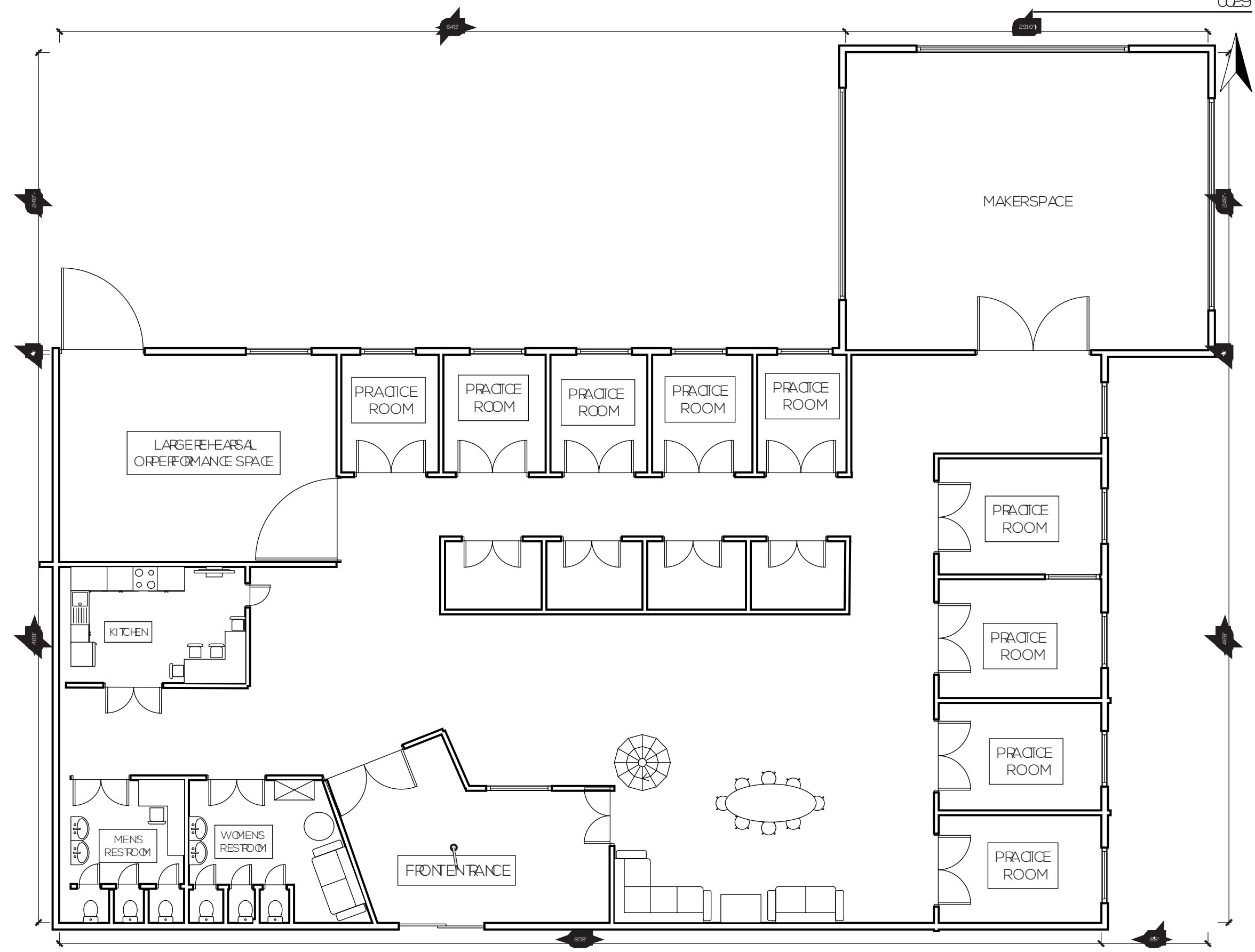
FACILITIES + MEMBERSHIP

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LEVEL 1 - CORE AMENITIES	LEVEL 2 - SPECIALIZATION 1	LEVEL 3 - SPECIALIZATION 2	LEVEL 4 - ORGANIZATIONAL
<p><b>BASIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80 Hours Per Month Access To General Spaces</li> <li>Bicycle Storage And Showers</li> <li>Complimentary Coffee, Tea, And Water</li> <li>Access To Community Events</li> <li>Member Profile On Website</li> <li>Networking Opportunities</li> <li>Access To Work Critique Sessions</li> <li>Member Discounts With Local Vendors</li> <li>Complimentary Wifi</li> </ul> <p><b>FULL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Basic Membership</li> <li>Additional 80 Hours Per Month Access To General Spaces</li> <li>Priority Access To Work Critique Sessions</li> <li>Computer Lab Access</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERFORM 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Basic Membership</li> <li>15 Hours Per Month Rehearsal Space Access</li> <li>50% Discount On Per Hour And Per Day Rehearsal Space After Included Time Is Used</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERFORM 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Full Membership</li> <li>Perform 1</li> <li>Additional 30 Hours Per Month Rehearsal Space Access</li> <li>Secure Instrument Storage</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERFORM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Dedicated Rehearsal Space For Cast For 80 Hours/Month</li> <li>Perform 1 Memberships For Up To 5 Individuals</li> <li>Discounted Individual Rates For Perform 2 Memberships</li> <li>Admin 1 Membership For 1 Individual</li> </ul>
	<p><b>SHOP 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Basic Membership</li> <li>40 Hours Per Month Shop Space Access</li> <li>Tool Library Access</li> <li>50% Discount On 8 Hour And 40 Hour Shop Space Access After Included Time Is Used</li> </ul>	<p><b>SHOP 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Full Membership</li> <li>Shop 1 Membership</li> <li>Additional 40 Hours Per Month Shop Space Access</li> <li>Temporary Project Storage</li> <li>20% Discounted Shop Class Rates</li> </ul>	<p><b>SHOP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storage And Shop Space Access For Duration Of Production Build During Hours Of Operation</li> <li>Priority Tool Library Access For Tech Week</li> <li>Admin 1 Membership For 1 Individual</li> </ul>
	<p><b>ADMIN 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Basic Membership</li> <li>12 Hours Per Month Conference Space Access</li> <li>Mailbox</li> <li>50% Discount On 4 Hour And 8 Hour Conference Space Access After Included Time Is Used</li> </ul>	<p><b>ADMIN 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Full Membership</li> <li>Admin 1</li> <li>Capability To Promote Through T/A/O Social Media</li> <li>Prorated Printing Access</li> <li>25% Discount On Rehearsal Space Rental Rates</li> <li>Storage Locker</li> </ul>	<p><b>ADMIN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admin 2 Memberships For Up To 5 Individuals</li> <li>25% Discount On Perform 2 And Shop 2 Memberships For Up To 5 Individuals</li> <li>Free Printing Pass</li> <li>Admin 1 Membership For 1 Individual</li> </ul>
	<p><b>TECH PASS 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Basic Membership</li> <li>Ability To Rent Technical Equipment For Audio And Photography</li> <li>Tool Library Access</li> </ul>	<p><b>TECH PASS 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 Full Membership</li> <li>Tech Pass 1</li> <li>Ability To Rent Technical Equipment For Lighting, Video, And Effects</li> </ul>	<p><b>TECH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20% Discounted Rental To Black Box Event Spaces For Long-Term Productions</li> <li>Tech 2 Memberships For Up To 3 Individuals Per Production</li> <li>Admin 1 Membership For 1 Individual</li> </ul>



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