

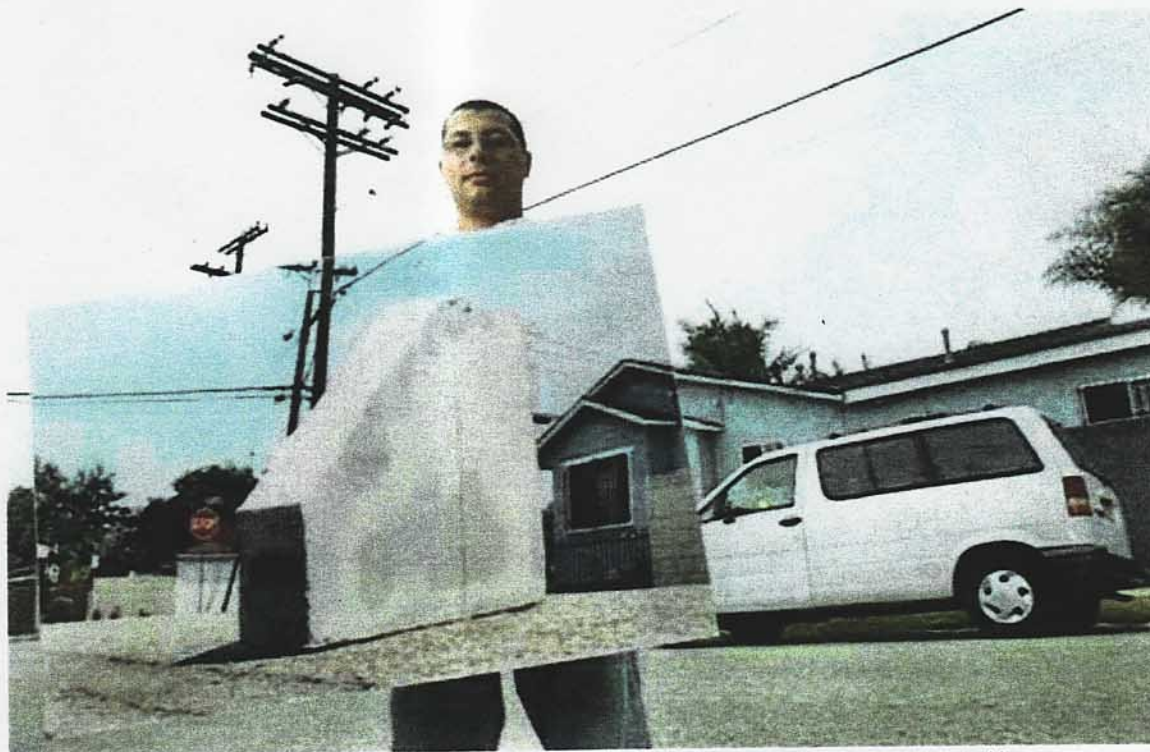
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Creative types get a bit of business schooling

***As it distributes grants to artists, the Creative Capital Foundation also tries to teach them how to succeed in the wider world.**

By Scott Martelle, Times Staff Writer



Ruben Ochoa displays a photograph from his "Freeway Wall Intrusions" project, meant to suggest Los Angeles' class divides. A related endeavor has received a grant from Creative Capital Foundation, as have the ventures pictured below.
(Myung J. Chun / LAT)

SAM EASTERSON was beginning to think his idea for depicting the world from unexpected perspectives — by strapping mini video

"That's the whole thing about going public," Lerner said. "You get a business to a certain point and then you want to take it public where other people will invest in it."

In the case of artists, Creative Capital uses its contacts to help artists gain other grants to augment its funding, and to entice galleries and museums to consider displaying the projects.

The program is not for everyone. Early-career artists whose vision has yet to gel aren't ready for the professional guidance. Established artists often have already navigated the business part of the arts and don't need career guidance, contacts or help developing their artistic infrastructure — conceiving, executing and presenting their works.

Los Angeles artist Ruben Ochoa is just at the beginning of the cycle. He received a \$5,000 grant last year for his still-developing project "Freeway Extractions," an act of optical illusion in which he hopes to cover a portion of an Interstate 10 retaining wall with photographic wallpaper of the green space on the other side. It's part of a three-stage project that includes erecting a billboard of a photograph he took of a fake chunk of freeway retaining wall posed in a suburban neighborhood, and constructing another chunk of retaining wall this September at LAXART, a nonprofit gallery on La Cienega Boulevard.

The point: to use the freeway retaining walls as cultural artifacts to draw attention to Los Angeles' class divides, Ochoa said. But to paper over the freeway wall he needs permission from both the city of Los Angeles and Caltrans, which he is in the process of obtaining.

Ochoa believes the grant gave his project enough credibility to gain the attention of public officials whose blessing he needs, and the Creative Capital retreat he participated in helped him in his discussions. "As cheesy as it sounds, it gave me a sense of empowerment that I came back with that, as an artist, I could negotiate," Ochoa said.