

Dan Nelson
876 – 44th St.
Oakland, CA 94608

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Tracinda Corporation
attn: Kirk Kerkorian
150 S. Rodeo Drive # 250
Beverly Hills, CA 90212-2417

Dear Mr. Kerkorian:

I've read that you're a private person who doesn't relish the public eye, so I thank you for taking a moment to read an unsolicited letter. I take the liberty of writing because I see in you a skill to turn nothing into something great, and am looking for a way to have some of that skill rub off on me. Your astounding success has been a mixture of hard work, resources, and a knack for seizing opportunity, with a little bit of luck thrown in and, last not least, help from some people along the way. You're clearly someone who has had a great impact on our country, having literally made an oasis out of a desert, but you haven't done it alone.

I'm a musician and an artist, and one of my current projects is called "Make an Artist a Millionaire." The primary method of the project is to get one million people to donate one dollar, which has proved difficult, but not unfruitful. The purpose is to collect and invest the million, enabling me to live off the interest and to achieve the ultimate goal: to buy back time to work on my artistic endeavors without the need for a day job. Time is money, but for artists especially, money is time. How would you like to help me become a millionaire?

This is not an investment opportunity in the strictest sense, but a request for a donation. Why would a businessman like yourself be interested in something that doesn't yield a return to you? I have a good answer to this, so bear with me. I grew up lower middle class in Pennsylvania and got my first job when I was 12, in my mom's bookstore. I played music and developed a visual art practice while washing dishes in high school, then while shucking oysters to help pay for college. Though the progress has been slow, I've had some success, and given and received more joy from music and art than from anything else in life. I still work hard all day at my day job, and then into the evening on my own projects, but the job saps most of my energy and focus, which feels squandered on other peoples' business. I have more ideas and plans than ever but, frankly, the arts is one hell of a line of work to be in if you want to realize those ideas.

My research suggests that you are someone who views money as a way to create opportunities, as an instrument of change. For an artist, on the other hand, money is something that time and ideas and artistic production in general must be translated into, in order for that production to continue. A completely free mental attitude and free time are necessary to create art (at least for me). The process by which this freedom is converted into cash on the table is vast and complex and, in short, it stinks.

Money is both a necessary tool for, yet non-essential byproduct of, making art. Artists are, in some sense, trapped in a market sector that doesn't go by the same rules as the rest of the market.

- Fine art: artworks are made on spec, then consigned to a gallery which will give the artist—if the work sells—50% of the proceeds.
- Music: the sale of physical recordings is falling sharply, while their price goes up; digital files, when they are not shared freely, are sold by outlets like iTunes; royalties from digital sales, *when paid at all*, are anywhere from 70% to 5% of their value.
- Writing: pieces and books are made on spec, the writer receives—in the best possible deal—50% of the profit

None of this is your problem—you didn't make the rules of business. But it at least explains why an artist would be driven to create a crazy scheme like this where he writes letters seeking a patron: instead of playing by these rules, I'm breaking them. I'm not interested in money for consuming things like cars and clothes and fine wine, but for producing and creating. If there's one thing that you and I, artist and businessman, have in common, it's that we look at money as a means.

At the same time, I recognize that the causes you've contributed to have been the worthiest possible: disaster relief, education, hospitals, and so on. And that they benefit the many and not merely the few. In a long life of exercising great power and effecting change, there's one thing you probably never thought you could do: invest in one person to give him the power to produce and to be a dynamic member of his cultural community, and not just a cog.

Thanks for your time, and I'd love to hear your thoughts, this project isn't confined to yes or no answers.

Best

Dan Nelson