

Community Development

# INVESTMENT REVIEW

## Creative Placemaking

### Articles

Opportunity at the Intersection of Community Development and Creative Placemaking

Creative Placemaking: An Interview With the Ford Foundation

Five Roles for Arts, Culture, and Design in Economic Development

Arts for the City: Community Arts and Affordability Innovations in San Francisco

The Meaning of the Creative Economy in Los Angeles

Creative Placemaking: How to Do It Well

Measuring the Economic and Social Impacts of Cultural Organizations

Assessing a Set of Indicators for Creative Placemaking: Reflections From the Field

Financing Creative Places

Our Town: Supporting the Arts in Communities Throughout the United States

Arts and Culture in Detroit: Central to Our Past and Our Future

### Profiles in Placemaking: ArtPlace America Grantees

Creative Placemaking in Community Planning and Development:  
An Introduction to ArtPlace America

Strengthening Economic Development

Seeding Civic Engagement

Building Resiliency

Contributing to Quality of Life

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF SAN FRANCISCO



## Community Development INVESTMENT REVIEW

The Community Development Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco created the Center for Community Development Investments to research and disseminate best practices in providing capital to low- and moderate-income communities. Part of this mission is accomplished by publishing the *Community Development Investment Review*. The *Review* brings together experts to write about various community development investment topics including:

**Finance**—new tools, techniques, or approaches that increase the volume, lower the cost, lower the risk, or in any way make investments in low-income communities more attractive;

**Collaborations**—ways in which different groups can pool resources and expertise to address the capital needs of low-income communities;

**Public Policy**—analysis of how government and public policy influence community development finance options;

**Best Practices**—showcase innovative projects, people, or institutions that are improving the investment opportunities in low-income areas.

The goal of the *Review* is to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to enlist as many viewpoints as possible—government, nonprofits, financial institutions, and beneficiaries. As a leading economist in the community development field describes it, the *Review* provides “ideas for people who get things done.” For submission guidelines and themes of upcoming issues contact David Erickson, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 101 Market Street, Mailstop 215, San Francisco, California, 94105-1530, Esther.Fishman@sf.frb.org. The material herein may not represent the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco or the Federal Reserve System.

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# Foreword

*Laura Callanan*

Guest Editor, Volume 10, Issue 2

December 2014

As a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco in February 2014, I had the opportunity to share my ongoing research. I introduced them to the work of Theaster Gates—an artist turned community development catalyst on Chicago’s South Side—and the concept of “creative placemaking.” The idea for this journal evolved from those initial conversations.<sup>1</sup>

My case study on Gates was one of three focused on artists who are also social innovators. I also wrote in-depth about James Houghton, founding artistic director of Signature Theatre in New York and San Francisco’s Deborah Cullinan, executive director of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. While I had selected these three as successful arts leaders, I quickly recognized that they were all highly focused on making a difference in their communities.

Gates renovates and activates long-abandoned buildings in neighborhoods with high need and few resources. Houghton built and leads a three-theater performing arts center designed to encourage “orchestrated collisions” bringing audience, artists and staff in continuous contact; he expands who is the audience by selling affordable \$25 tickets. Cullinan reimagines what it means to be a community arts center by moving out of the building and into the community, demonstrating the relevance of art to the lives of everyday people.

These three leaders were my introduction to the many ways artists and arts organizations are changing the use of public space, knitting social fabric across difference, contributing to community resiliency, and improving the economies of cities across America. This work is concrete and measurable—and, increasingly, mayors, investors and philanthropists are partners to these efforts.

This journal looks at what creative placemaking does and how it does it. We are fortunate to have perspectives from 16 organizations on the frontlines of this work, the funders and financiers supporting them, and the researchers and evaluators who are interpreting progress. We hear what this means to the broader community development field, from economists focused on communities becoming and remaining competitive, and from the mayor of San Francisco, who leads a city at the epicenter of creativity and innovation. If we are successful, this journal will reach a new audience of lenders and investors, civic leaders, and community organizations who haven’t yet heard of “creative placemaking” but will understand its potential to help their work.

As Deborah Cullinan has said, “Creativity exists in the community to solve problems. Artists don’t just solve specific problems. Artists represent our ability as a society to solve all our problems.” See if you don’t agree.



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<sup>1</sup> This journal would not have been possible without the generous help of Jamie Bennett and his team at ArtPlace America, in particular Lyz Crane and Prentice Onayemi. I am also grateful for the insights and advice shared by Jane Chu, Joan Shigekawa, and Jason Shupbach at the National Endowment for the Arts. My thanks, also, to the community development team at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, in particular Scott Turner, David Erickson, and Ian Galloway.

# Preface

Ian Galloway

December 2014

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

While spending time here at the San Francisco Federal Reserve as a visiting scholar, Laura Callanan introduced us to a hidden world of practitioners transforming their communities through the arts—the world of “creative placemaking.”

Creative placemakers use the arts to “activate” places: storefronts, trails, abandoned railways, town centers, and main streets. As Jamie Bennett, executive director of ArtPlace America, writes in this issue: “In creative placemaking, ‘creative’ is an adverb describing the making, not an adjective describing the place. Successful creative placemaking is not be quantified by how many new arts centers, galleries, or cultural districts are built. Rather, its success is measured in the ways artists, formal and informal arts spaces, and creative interventions contribute toward community outcomes.”

Laura’s introduction to this new world got me thinking about the world that I usually occupy: community development. In this world, unfortunately, “community” is not an adverb describing the development; it’s more often an adjective describing the physical places where we work. This is no small thing. The community development industry continues to favor brick-and-mortar solutions, like affordable housing, over “soft” solutions like early childhood education. The result is more funding for real estate development and less for human capital alternatives. Thankfully, that may change thanks to the arts. Creative placemaking could be the bridge that finally moves the community development industry to, in the words of Nancy Andrews in a previous issue of this journal, the “nexus of people and place.”<sup>1</sup>

This issue of the *Community Development Investment Review* explores creative placemaking: what it is, how it’s done, how it’s measured, funded, and experienced. The issue is divided into two parts. The first is composed of a series of articles written by practitioners, academics, and leaders in the creative placemaking field. The second profiles 16 ArtPlace America grantees. These profiles explain how creative placemaking actually works in the field.

As guest editor, Laura was the driving force behind this issue of the *Review*. I’m very grateful for her partnership and her willingness to so generously share her time, networks, and ideas with the community development team here at the San Francisco Federal Reserve.<sup>2</sup>



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1 Nancy O. Andrews and Christopher Kramer, “Coming Out as a Human Capitalist: Community Development at the Nexus of People and Place,” *Community Development Investment Review*, Vol 5, Issue 3, (2009).

2 My thanks also to David Erickson, Scott Turner, and the rest of my colleagues at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco; Jamie Bennett, Prentice Onayemi, and Lyz Crane at ArtPlace America (and Louis Gulino for his independent consulting work); Tom DeCaigny, San Francisco Arts Commission; Jason Schupbach at the National Endowment for the Arts; Deborah Cullinan, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; and Barbara Ray and her team at HiredPen. This journal would not have been possible with their generous support.

# Opportunity at the Intersection of Community Development and Creative Placemaking

*Ben Hecht*

*Living Cities*

The community development field has delivered unprecedented social change work since the 1960s: billions of dollars in private capital invested; hundreds of thousands of affordable housing units built; the development of many high-performing local, regional, and national nonprofit organizations; and the creation of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, the most successful private-public partnership the nation has ever seen.<sup>1</sup>

The emerging creative placemaking field has a different but complementary set of assets. Creative placemaking leads with the ability to address the intangibles that make a successful and vibrant community (see Gary Hattem’s article in this issue), to mobilize social capital (Darren Walker and Xavier de Souza-Briggs in this issue), to bring performance and participatory activities to public spaces (Jamie Bennett, this issue), and—maybe most important—the capacity to “challenge preconceptions about what a city is supposed to look like and how it works” (Rip Rapson, this issue).

The intersection of community development and creative placemaking holds great promise. If we combine the energy and spirit of creative placemaking with the demonstrated capacity and practices of community development, we can create an exciting, inspiring, and inclusive vision for our communities in the future. To reach this goal, we should better understand the potential and common challenges of each field. The essays in this collection enable us to do just that.

## What Creative Placemaking Brings to Community Development

### *Focusing on Human Capital*

There is growing consensus in the community development field that we need to expand from our initial focus on the built environment to include strategies that simultaneously address people and opportunity. As Xavier de Souza Briggs, vice president for economic opportunity and assets at the Ford Foundation, explains in this issue, we are going from a “near obsession with the hardware of place—the physical systems—to a much deeper appreciation for the role of human capital, knowledge, and creativity.”

Jamie Bennett, executive director of ArtPlace America, underscores this point. “In creative placemaking, ‘creative’ is an adverb describing the making, not an adjective describing the

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Erickson, *The Housing Policy Revolution: Networks and Neighborhoods*, (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, August 2009).

place. Successful creative placemaking is not quantified by how many new arts centers, galleries, or cultural districts are built. Rather, its success is measured in the ways artists, formal and informal arts spaces, and creative interventions contribute toward community outcomes.” Expanding this idea, Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, notes that creative placemaking, particularly in under-resourced communities, can unearth and support inherent creativity within a community: “I reject the idea that a community that is poor can’t be a place of creative placemaking....The creative process might need to be organized, leveraged, and oxygenated, but you often find that creativity is there.” Examining communities through a lens of assets instead of deficits transforms perspectives. In addition, de Souza Briggs notes that artists, better than developers, can “connect, engage, and listen” toward enabling the community to “narrate itself:” how it sees itself, what the critical issues it faces are, and where it is headed. As many in the community development field and the broader social sector learn how to meaningfully engage communities and incorporate their voices and visions in development strategies, enlisting artists as partners has proven particularly effective in many geographies and contexts.

Further, creative placemaking opens the door to marry physical environment improvements to arts programming, events, and education. It fosters public spaces that encourage social cohesion and engagement, and nurtures local talent and distributed, diverse leadership.

### *Unearthing Engines of Economic Development*

The essays in this collection are rich with examples of how art and culture serve as engines of economic development (Mary Jo Waits, Stephen Sheppard, among others). Samuel Hoi, president of Maryland Institute College of Arts, writes about a recent Otis report documenting the potent economic drivers and jobs generators that the creative professionals and industries are in Los Angeles and California. In the same vein, Bennett writes, “Creative placemaking supports economic diversity and place-based prosperity in the community, creating more opportunity for all...By clustering together different types of arts spaces along underused streets, communities are able to create consistent patterns of foot traffic, which provides a positive presence on the street to improve public safety and to drive a neighborhood’s economy, as these members of the public dine and shop.”

Rip Rapson, president of the Kresge Foundation and chair of the ArtPlace presidents’ council, tells a compelling story of how creative placemaking in Detroit has leveraged both the economic potential and the creativity of artists to reimagine the city: “Artists in Detroit ...are instrumental in helping us see connections among the past, the present, and the future. They embody, embrace, and express the soul of the place. And they are fully engaged in creative placemaking—contributing tangibly and powerfully to energizing and animating neighborhoods.” Artists, both long-term residents and those recently attracted to the city by the prospect of a community of like-minded individuals and affordability, do not, according to Rapson, see the city as “on the skids” and are instead converting public ruin and decline

into a new cultural identity that has significant potential for attracting attention, visitors, new residents, and further investment.

In addition, Jane Chu, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Jason Schupbach, director of design programs at NEA, outline how the endowment's Our Town grants have, among other important goals, supported communities in defining arts as economic assets. They emphasize that "Artists and designers provide amenities for consumers and rejuvenate downtowns and neighborhoods....[They] help form the core of community development practice."

### *Releasing Imagination, Boldness, and Animation*

As de Souza Briggs points out, community development has a "problem-solving frame: delineating problems and fixing them." This frame is important and necessary. However, creative placemaking allows for more comprehensive solutions that supplement those fixes with bold, inventive reinforcements that contribute to resilience. Artists can breathe life into buildings, make places more attractive, and provide elements of unique character and the unexpected.

As Bennett describes, "Creative placemaking provides a sense of community identity and agency, which connects community members with one another as stewards of shared space." This type of shared stewardship holds great promise for extending the impact of community development initiatives.

## **What Community Development Brings to Creative Placemaking**

The community development field is mature, and with that maturity, it has developed, refined, and applied tools and mechanisms that have helped transform underinvested places in the course of decades. These mechanisms can add great value to and strengthen the creative placemaking movement and bring the two fields into even closer, more productive collaboration in a few key ways.

### *Harnessing Private Capital*

One of community development's greatest accomplishments has been its success in leveraging public and philanthropic dollars with private capital. The Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) movement has invested and catalyzed more than \$30 billion in financing to urban, rural, and Native communities, with losses of less than 1.7 percent.<sup>2</sup> As many of the essays in this issue note (Ann Markusen/Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Gary Hattem), financing is one of creative placemaking's greatest challenges. As Hattem notes, "Intentionally directing a flow of commercial capital for creative placemaking will require a sustained commitment to fostering a network of resources that allow for a capital-ready environment" Community development has done that consistently throughout the United States.

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2 Democracy Collaborative. Overview: Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), <http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/cdfis/index.html>.

### *Managing Permanent, Dedicated Funds*

Community development has built the capacity to create, manage, and deploy a pool of funds dedicated to community development activities—from the \$230 million New York City Acquisition Fund to the \$50 million Bay Area Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing (TOAH) Fund. Community development also has effectively supported public measures such as Seattle’s special fund for construction and rehabilitating housing for low- and moderate-income families, the Seattle Housing Levy. Initially enacted in 1981, 66 percent of Seattle voters supported the most recent renewal of the fund in 2009. These public and private funds provide not only a ready source of capital, but the capacity to move from the periodic to the predictable—a long-term asset that enables a robust level of transactions that have the potential to be transformational. If the Public Art Trust Fund, Nonprofit Displacement Working Group and Mitigation Fund, and Community Arts Stabilization Trust—described by San Francisco mayor Ed Lee and director of cultural affairs Tom DeCaigny in their essay in this issue—are indicators of what the future holds, community development could dramatically accelerate the creation of similar mechanisms throughout the United States dedicated to creative placemaking.

### *Building Public-Private Partnerships*

The power and effect that the community development field has had are directly related to building public-private partnerships. Whether it is the blending of public, private, and nonprofit funding streams in individual transactions or large-scale funds, such as in New York and the Bay Area, or in the implementation of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, this concept has long been at the core of community development efforts.

Several essays in this issue clarify that this type of collaboration, beyond financing, is essential to advancing effective creative placemaking at scale. Mayor Lee and DeCaigny refer to the Rainin project that builds on the momentum of several public-private partnerships including the “Let There Be Light” video installation on the side of 1019 Market Street by the producer of the internationally heralded “Bay Lights,” a monumental public artwork that adorns the Bay Bridge; the UN Plaza Fall Event Series that fills the San Francisco Central Market district with daytime and evening cultural and culinary programs; and the mayor’s Living Innovation Zones. Community development’s experience with building win-win relationships could be invaluable in expanding these types of activities.

In addition, the community development field could help creative placemakers ride the current wave of “zones” or districts and make arts-led zones more ubiquitous. Zones are a city’s effort to bring an array of partners and institutions together in a defined geographic area to achieve specific outcomes, whether it be creating jobs, clustering arts institutions, or stimulating innovation. For example, community development’s experiences navigating land use laws and regulations and understanding how to create incentives for desired types of development—gained by working in an array of zone initiatives such as the empowerment zones of the 1980s and President Obama’s current Promise Zones—could be invaluable.

## Working Together Toward More Rigor in Measuring Results

Uniting community development and creative placemaking has the potential to both better address the needs of communities and take better advantage of local assets, particularly the people, in more comprehensive, responsive, authentic, and inclusive ways. Although each field brings unique strengths to the table, they both lack effective measures of success. Many essays in this issue refer to efforts to bring rigorous measurement to creative placemaking and the lack of success in doing so (Elaine Morley/Mary Winker, Sheppard, and Walker/de Souza-Biggs, for example). De Souza Briggs summarizes these efforts well: “I don’t think that creative placemaking has necessarily made a big impact on how success is measured in communities, though it has much to offer and the potential is there.” As the two fields work in closer collaboration, defining the results that investors and citizens should expect in these place-based efforts should be easier to articulate, supported by data, and more measurable. We must organize evaluation efforts based on understanding outcomes for individuals and communities, rather than outputs.

## The Road Ahead

The synergies from and benefits of more collaboration between the community development and creative placemaking fields are compelling—an almost certain case of one plus one equals three. Less certain, however, is how collaboration will be accomplished. Should philanthropy or government, which fund both fields, drive the marriage and, if so, how? Would something such as a large-scale, national “prize” competition create a tipping point? Should we simply maintain the current transaction-by-transaction strategy, which has been receiving traction, but do more to share “what works” more broadly? This anthology makes it clear that something special is happening in US communities and raises the ante on determining what more we should do to nurture the movement.

*Ben Hecht became president and CEO of Living Cities in July, 2007. Since that time, the organization has adopted a broad, integrative agenda that harnesses the collective knowledge of its 22 member foundations and financial institutions to benefit low income people and the cities where they live. Prior to joining Living Cities, Mr. Hecht co-founded One Economy Corporation, a nonprofit organization that leverages the power of technology and information to connect low-income people to the economic mainstream through broadband in the home and public-purpose media. Immediately before One Economy, Mr. Hecht was senior vice president at the Enterprise Foundation. There, he led the organization’s efforts beyond housing – into childcare, workforce development and economic development and oversaw the expansion of the organization’s revolving loan fund from \$30 million to \$200 million. Mr. Hecht received his JD from Georgetown University Law Center and his CPA from the State of Maryland.*

## Creative Placemaking: An Interview With the Ford Foundation

*Laura Callanan, visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, interviewed the Ford Foundation's president, Darren Walker, and the foundation's vice president for economic opportunity and assets, Xavier de Souza Briggs, to understand the foundation's commitment to creative placemaking.*

Laura

Callanan: *The Ford Foundation funds in areas like “economic fairness” and “metropolitan opportunity.” How does creative placemaking fit Ford's priorities?*

Darren

Walker: The Ford Foundation has, for over five decades, invested in the arts and invested in community and economic development. The research that generated this idea of creative placemaking has its roots in both community development and in arts and culture. In some ways, creative placemaking is about a new paradigm at the intersection of both.

The use of arts projects, cultural facilities, and the creative process in communities to enliven and enrich the community experience, while at the same time contributing to economic development, is a really appealing idea to us. Creative placemaking was a way to bring together two long-standing areas of work of the foundation.

Xavier (Xav)

de Souza

Briggs: The Ford Foundation has always looked for the innovative edge. When it comes to the vitality of places, that innovative edge might be social programs. Certainly that was true historically. It might be catalytic uses of capital, what's now called impact investment. Or it might be the arts. Creative placemaking is at Ford because it is consistent with the foundation's culture of taking a risk and innovating.

There is also a second reason: There has been a clear shift over the last 10 to 20 years in the leading thinking about places and what makes them vital and attractive. It has gone from a near obsession with the hardware of place—the physical systems—to a much deeper appreciation for the role of human capital, knowledge, and creativity. Our support of creative placemaking reflects this shift.

Laura: *A lot of attention has been paid to the “creative economy.” What's the connection between a creative economy and a creative place?*

Xav: The creative economy is centered on livelihoods. Creative placemaking is about revitalizing a small town, or a neighborhood in a bigger city.

One of the ways in which the creative economy and creative placemaking come together is through talent and production: These are both rooted in

place. Exchanges happen in place. It's through a percolating of talent—through ideas riffing off each other—that places behave in creative ways and produce creatively.

There is a culture of place that evolves through tradition, a sense of memory, and a narrative of a place—all things artists address in their work. And this culture is deeply connected to the economic activity of a place.

Laura: *Art needs an audience—a community if you like. Does that mean all art is creative place-making?*

Darren: No. I think it's very important for those of us who are supporters of the creative placemaking movement to be rigorous and to be analytical about what actually constitutes creative placemaking. If everything that an artist does is creative place-making, then nothing is. The challenge for us all is to bring some sense of rigor to our understanding.

Being a painter and just living in a place doesn't necessarily equate to creative placemaking. But, if you have an artist housing complex that houses 50 artists, and that housing complex includes a community center, and there is a creative output from the artists living there that is impacting the community—through the creation of livelihoods or by transforming the physical space—and, if that artist housing is part of a broader strategy for revitalization of the community, then that's creative placemaking.

You've got to be clear about what the community development elements are. Is it jobs? Do physical design and redesign play a role? I think that we have to get more rigorous. The early work of economists and researchers like Ann Markusen<sup>1</sup> or Mark Stern<sup>2</sup> helped to do just that. It was formative, and even they would argue that it needs to be further refined. There continues to be a very robust research agenda around this idea of creative placemaking. We at Ford, as supporters of this movement, are investing in that research agenda. Ultimately you've got to have data to back up this idea.

Xav: Placemaking, for a variety reasons, is necessarily defined by the boundaries of place; community does not have to be. Audience for a theater company or visitors to a museum may come from a wide geographic area. And there are large numbers of people—including some of the most disadvantaged—who have a place that serves as a base camp for them, though they don't actually reside there. It's where their important relationships are—the ones they treasure, the ones that define their routines—the place that anchors their church community, where they are from, where their extended kin still live.

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1 Ann Markusen and David King, "The Artistic Dividend: The Arts' Hidden Contributions to Regional Development" (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota's Project on Regional and Industrial Economics, July 2013), [http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/prie/pdf/artistic\\_dividend.pdf](http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/prie/pdf/artistic_dividend.pdf); "Evolution and Impact on Careers, Neighborhoods and Economies Artists' Centers" (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota's Project on Regional and Industrial Economics, February 2006), [http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/prie/pdf/artists\\_centers.pdf](http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/prie/pdf/artists_centers.pdf).

2 Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, "Culture Builds Community Evaluation: Summary Report" (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project, January 2002), [http://impact.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/culture\\_builds\\_community/summary\\_report.pdf](http://impact.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/culture_builds_community/summary_report.pdf).

But, I don't think that fact about communities being unfettered by physical location changes the possibilities for placemaking. Place is defined by boundaries plus a distinctive character. An important place can be quite micro. You think of the Mission District in San Francisco, and the famous mural alley there,<sup>3</sup> which was a center for Latin American political art. That place was tiny, but it was incredibly meaningful.

Laura: *“Creative placemaking” is a newly coined term. What has been the historical relationship between community development and the arts?*

Xav: In the past, community development and the arts were in parallel play. There has not been a lot of interaction, even when both were happening in the same places. Until recently, community development has not included a deliberate effort to create new kinds of economic opportunity through the arts. This is despite the fact that some of the places that have received the most community development investment have also been the cradle of important artistic movements, like the Bronx and hip-hop.

This lack of interaction is in part because, in this country, community development since the 1960s has had a problem-solving frame: delineating problems and fixing them. It has been very heavy on financial investment and social programs. Community development has also had elements of a social movement, with community members making claims on government and the wider society.

Artists and cultural institutions can take on an anchor quality in a community, particularly when they decide to be community serving and to be productive in place. But there is, understandably, a concern about compromising artistic standards for the sake of some community cause. That can be an important conversation, something to be talked through between artists and community constituents.

Laura: *What do artists and arts organizations add to the work of traditional community development actors (like Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), vocational training programs, small business incubators)? And do artists need traditional community development partners for their creative placemaking activities to be successful?*

Xav: Artists often draw on the place where they are—give voice to that place. They learn about the neighborhood's history and patterns in a way that goes beyond day-to-day experience. Artists help access the historical context of the community.

Community development has not consistently focused on the community narrating itself. I think that artists can help community developers to connect, engage, listen—all things that are very central to successful community development. The artists I've met who are deeply engaged in their communities, like the artists at Project Row Houses, have these kinds of community conversations.

This is good for the artists as well as the community. It gives the artists allies. It

<sup>3</sup> Balmy Alley is located in the San Francisco Mission District between 24th Street and Garfield Square. Beginning in 1972, it was the location of murals commenting on the experience of Mexicans and Chicanos of the United States.

helps the artists to generate audiences and to imagine the larger social significance of what they do. Artists can be part of the dialectic about where the community is headed—about what are the critical issues.

And artists can also gain a lot from teaming up with traditional community developers. There is a wide array of hard skills—like project management, budget management, taking financial risk—where community developers have a lot of experience working with projects at scale and ensuring projects run on time.

Darren: Artists and artist-led projects in communities often become platforms for community resilience. They help create social capital. There are many, many examples: from the Ashe Cultural Arts Center in New Orleans, to Rick Lowe’s Project Row Houses in Houston, to Theaster Gates’s work in Chicago, to Mark Bradford’s redevelopment work in Los Angeles. There are many. When we look at those kinds of projects, artists’ contribution to community resilience and building social capital, it is both tangible and intangible. It’s hugely important.

Laura: *Creative placemaking seems to assume every community has embedded creativity. What about under-resourced communities where much of the population has moved away, poverty is high, crime is high? Is creative placemaking possible in poor and vulnerable communities?*

Darren: There’s cultural production and culture in every community. I reject the idea that a community that is poor can’t be a place of creative placemaking. It may take an intervention. The creative process may need to be organized, leveraged, and oxygenated, but you often find that creativity is there. Whether it is in song or dance or in some other art form, it’s there.

People may not identify it as culture, in the kind of high art elitist way in which many people think of culture, but it is often there. The discovery of that inherent creativity is what is so exciting. It doesn’t mean that, in a poor neighborhood, in order to have creative placemaking, you have to have artists move in. I reject that idea categorically.

However, we’d be ignoring history if we didn’t take into account that the more cultural production becomes commodified, the more it becomes attractive to a mainstream audience and the more a community will become attractive as a place to live and work. It is then that the issues of gentrification, and some of the tensions inherent in transformation, become salient.

Xav: Communities of place have always shown a certain amount of turnover. They’re not static sandboxes. That turnover is a source of vitality. There are times when it can come with pain and conflict, it’s true. But the question is how the newcomer—including the newcomer artist—finds home, finds a place, relates to neighbors, becomes productive in a whole new direction in that place, and is inspired by that place.

Laura: *Beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, but when it comes to community development, it’s all about outcome data. What are some of the factors you consider to measure whether a creative place is a strong and healthy community?*

Xav: This idea of what makes a healthy community has evolved a lot in recent decades

and recent years. Happily, it is a more multidisciplinary conversation now. Sometimes, it's literally about health—things like health indicators. Sometimes, it's about norms, behaviors, and the membership metrics that Bob Putnam<sup>4</sup> and others have done so much to illuminate. Sometimes it is rightly about the community as a place of investment: flows of capital, buying power.

I think that it's a good thing that measurement is more multidimensional now. But, we still have a lot to learn about how to capture the impact of creative place-making on communities. I don't think that creative placemaking has necessarily made a big impact on how success is measured in communities, though it has much to offer and the potential is there.

Laura: *You travel around the United States and the world visiting Ford programs. Do you have any favorite examples of “creative places”—communities that have been shaped by creativity?*

Xav: Yes, many. These are communities suffused with cultural energy and creative production that is central to the sense of place. New Orleans, of course, and Salvador da Bahia in Brazil. Havana, Cuba, has that same, intensely creative energy, many neighborhoods in New York City, Berlin, Amsterdam. What's so amazing, though, is that a place does not have to be big and cosmopolitan—like those “world” cities—to be a very creative place.

Darren: Two projects are standouts: The GoDown in Nairobi founded by the remarkable Joy Mboya. The GoDown is a repurposed industrial park on the outskirts of the city that houses artists housing and studios, creative design SMEs, NGOs, and an artist gallery collective. The other is the Townhouse in Cairo situated close to the central business district and somewhat derelict. It's a series of former auto repair and manufacturing buildings that were refashioned as a community arts center including a large theater, gallery, and local vendors. During the Arab Spring, the Townhouse was a place for public discussion and debate, and it served as a refuge during confrontations on the streets of Cairo. It's a model of ingenuity and innovation in a very challenging context.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

*Friends of the High Line, the New York City Ballet, and the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.*

*Xavier (“Xav”) de Souza Briggs, PhD, is vice president of the Ford Foundation’s Economic Opportunity and Assets program. He leads the foundation’s work promoting economic fairness, advancing sustainable development, and building just and inclusive cities in the United States, Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. He also oversees the foundation’s regional programming in China, Indonesia, and India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Before joining the foundation in 2014, Xav was associate professor of sociology and urban planning and associate head of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Xav’s books include The Geography of Opportunity (Brookings, 2005) and Democracy as Problem Solving: Civic Capacity in Communities across the Globe (MIT Press, 2008). His latest book, Moving to Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment to Fight Ghetto Poverty (Oxford, 2010), won the best book of the year from the National Academy of Public Administration. From January 2009 to August 2011, while on public service leave from the MIT faculty, Xav served as associate director of the Office of Management and Budget in the White House. There he oversaw a wide array of policy, budget and management issues for roughly half of the cabinet agencies of the federal government. Xav holds an engineering degree from Stanford University, an MPA from Harvard and PhD in sociology and education from Columbia University.*

*Laura Callanan was a visiting scholar at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco in February 2014 and guest edited this volume. She became the senior deputy chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts in November 2014. From 2008-2013, Callanan was a consultant with McKinsey & Company, where she led work on social innovation and authored Learning for Social Impact: What Foundations Can Do, From Potential to Action: Bringing Social Impact Bonds to the US, and Leaders Who Scale What Works. Prior to joining McKinsey, she had been a senior adviser at the United Nations Development Programme, executive director of the Prospect Hill Foundation, and associate director at the Rockefeller Foundation. Most recently, Callanan was a senior fellow with the Foundation Center and scholar-in-residence at UC-Berkeley/Haas School of Business’ Center for Nonprofit and Public Leadership where she authored case studies on James Houghton, founding artistic director of Signature Theatre in New York; Theaster Gates and his community development activities on the South Side of Chicago; and Deborah Cullinan, executive director of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco. Callanan recently completed a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Fellowship and a visiting fellowship at the American Academy in Rome to research and write The Surprise Social Entrepreneur, a book about artists as social innovators.*

# Five Roles for Arts, Culture, and Design in Economic Development

*Mary Jo Waits*

*Mary Jo Waits Associates LLC*

**A**lthough economic recovery is beginning to take hold, governors and mayors remain focused on finding better policy and strategies to drive job creation and economic growth. They seem to be gravitating toward five areas:

1. Identifying and supporting high-growth, entrepreneurial firms and globally-oriented industry clusters.
2. Creating new growth opportunities for mature industries.
3. Building places that will attract and foster innovation and businesses.
4. Finding new uses for old properties, functions for declining districts, and new economic opportunities for growing cities and regions.
5. Constantly updating workforce skills.<sup>1</sup>

Many are taking an all-hands-on-deck approach as they call on state and city agencies—and not only the obvious economic and workforce development agencies—to create better strategies for long-term economic growth. They are asking energy offices, budget offices, transportation, health, and procurement offices to be more attuned to the success or failure of a local business, technology venture, or job training program.

Some governors and mayors are including arts and cultural agencies in their approaches. The 2012 National Governors Association (NGA) report, “New Engines of Growth: Five Roles for Arts, Culture and Design,” outlines how arts, culture, and design can compel economic solutions in five ways:<sup>2</sup>

1. Create a fast-growth, dynamic industry cluster.
2. Help mature industries become more competitive.
3. Provide the critical ingredients for innovative places.
4. Catalyze community revitalization.
5. Deliver a better-prepared workforce.

I review each of these roles here.

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1 Erin Sparks and Mary Jo Waits, “New Engines of Growth Five Roles for Arts, Culture and Design.” (Washington, DC: National Governors Association, Center for Best Practices, 2012), [www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1204newenginesofgrowth.pdf](http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1204newenginesofgrowth.pdf).

2 Sparks and Waits, “New Engines of Growth.”

## Creating a Fast-Growth, Dynamic Industry Cluster

Policymakers in state capitols and city halls eager to drive economic growth and innovation have for several decades focused on strengthening industry clusters. Clusters are geographic concentrations of similar and related firms, their suppliers, and supporting institutions. Clustering helps firms improve productivity, promote innovation, and increase value-added, which enables them to compete globally and pay higher wages. There is strong evidence that the health of a state economy and a city economy (e.g., rates of job, income, and export growth) depends on the strength and economic performance of its principal industry clusters.<sup>3</sup>

Strategies to strengthen industry clusters and maximize their value to the local economy typically involve providing high-value services and resources (e.g., research institutions, regulations, cultural attractions, skilled workers) that are shaped to cluster needs and getting cluster firms and other organizations together to address common problems. Republican and Democratic policymakers alike pursue cluster development as a way to better focus on areas where the returns on investment may be strongest and where it affects the competitiveness of several companies simultaneously.

While science and technology industry clusters (e.g., information technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology) are a common and high-yield focus of economic development, increasingly, states and cities are looking to enhance clusters of firms in the arts, culture, and design sectors.

Arkansas, Colorado, and Mississippi are among approximately a dozen states treating creative individuals, institutions, and businesses as an industry cluster. By looking at the geographic concentration of not only visual artists, cultural performances, and nonprofit institutions, but also large economic sectors such as entertainment, fashion, publishing, and broadcasting in the state, Arkansas identified the creative industry to be its third-largest cluster in the state, Colorado found it to be the fifth largest, and Mississippi found it to be among the fastest-growing clusters in the state.<sup>4</sup>

Strategies to strengthen the creative cluster and maximize its economic value in the local economy are similar to those in other industry clusters. They focus on connecting all of the potential participants in a cluster with one another and focus on supplying the ingredients necessary for business success that are missing locally.

## Helping Mature Industries Become More Competitive

Most states and cities recognize the merits of using arts, culture, and design to enhance tourism, and they depend on the cooperation between economic development and arts

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3 Mary Jo Waits and Joe Cortright, "Growing State Economies: A Policy Framework." (Washington DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2012), <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/11heinemanframework.pdf>. See pages 28-31 for a summary of the research describing industry clusters and their role in regional economic growth.

4 Sparks and Waits, "New Engines of Growth."

and cultural agencies to design and implement strategies for leveraging and marketing the unique quality of life, culture, and cuisine in regions to boost tourism value and growth. Newer for states and cities is the connection that arts, culture, and design can have to renewal and retooling other industries. One such industry is manufacturing.

Although there is new optimism that technologically sophisticated, high-value manufacturing—advanced manufacturing, as it is sometimes called—can thrive in the United States, there is concern that the country does not have the system of supports in place to deliver the tailored research, quality suppliers, and skilled workers that manufacturers need if they are to invent, design, and produce high-value-added products for existing and emerging manufacturing industries. In its “Report to the President on Capturing Domestic Competitive Advantage in Advanced Manufacturing,” the American Manufacturing Partnership in 2012 recommended that universities, national labs, intermediate technology institutes, independent research institutions, and community colleges work together with industry to support research, development, and deployment of advanced technologies, and to support the talent pipeline for industry.<sup>5</sup>

For many manufacturers, the whole system of supports includes more than science and technology research, suppliers, and talent. It also includes a strong design industry and infrastructure with many creative individuals. Leading companies such as Apple, BMW, and Nike have achieved major market success with elegant and smart design. Several states, including South Carolina, Virginia, Michigan, and Illinois are working with advanced manufacturers, both large and small, to create this type of specialized infrastructure. South Carolina’s Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR) is an example.

Created in 2007, CU-ICAR responded to calls from BMW and other automotive manufacturers for universities, schools, and state agencies to reinvent their interactions with regional industry. They wanted these schools and agencies to provide a unique approach to teaching graduate automotive engineering students and to conduct leading-edge, applied research based on industry needs. The centerpiece of the new approach is Deep Orange, a project in which students, multidisciplinary faculty, and participating industry partners collaborate to produce a new vehicle prototype each year. Each new vehicle project provides the automotive engineering students with hands-on experience in vehicle design, engineering, prototyping, and production.<sup>6</sup> Recent Deep Orange projects partnered automotive engineering students and faculty with design students and faculty. The fifth-generation Clemson vehicle, sponsored by General Motors, for example, partnered the Art Center College of Design in

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5 AMP Steering Committee, “Report to the President on Capturing Domestic Competitive Advantage in Advanced Manufacturing.” (Washington DC: President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, July 2012).

6 See <http://cuicar.com> for description and history of CU-ICAR. See <http://www.cuicardeeporange.com> for description of Deep Orange project.

Pasadena, California with Clemson University.<sup>7</sup> As of 2011, CU-ICAR has generated nearly \$250 million in investments with additional \$500 million in developments and 2,300 jobs announced.<sup>8</sup>

### Providing the Critical Ingredients for Innovative Places

Several reports by the National Governors Association and others, such as the National Academy of Sciences Board on Science, Technology, and Economic Policy, describe how states and cities are particularly interested in cultivating a well-developed innovation ecosystem. Governors and mayors tend to translate the innovation ecosystem goal into building an array of innovation hubs or innovation zones within their state borders. For example, Washington State passed legislation in 2007 to create state-designated Innovation Partnership Zones (IPZs). These zones were designed to encourage and support research institutions, workforce training organizations, and businesses to work cooperatively in small geographic areas.<sup>9</sup> Currently, Washington has 12 designated IPZs. In June 2014, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo launched the Tax-Free NY initiative in which State University of New York (SUNY) campuses and university communities throughout the state will be transformed into tax-free communities to attract start-ups, venture capital, new business, and investments from around the world.

State and local policymakers may typically focus first on tax-free zones or physical infrastructure for educational and medical research institutions (Eds and Meds). But they also often want to create or reinforce several critical ingredients for innovation: smart people, innovative firms, and research institutions to spur new ideas; entrepreneurs to commercialize the ideas and build businesses in the area; and industry networks to boost interaction and encourage cross-industry partnerships that enable innovation and business growth. A few states and cities have in their plans place-making attributes (e.g., art and cultural venues, public spaces, mixed land use, and walkability) that support innovation and improve quality of life. These attributes motivate creative people and the innovation-based companies that rely on them to stay and grow in the area.

In Arizona, for example, when Phoenix officials developed a strategic vision and blueprint in 2004 to transform the downtown into a hub of creativity and innovation, they outlined seven priorities.<sup>10</sup> These priorities included adding research and other large institutions such as a \$90 million Center for Translational Genomics, a 15,000-student campus for

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7 Peter Hull, "GM to Sponsor Fifth-Generation Clemson Vehicle Prototype Program," *The Newsstand*, March 5, 2013, <http://newsstand.clemson.edu/mediarelations/gm-to-sponsor-fifth-generation-clemson-vehicle-prototype-program/>.

8 See <http://www.sstiawards.org/?cat=25>. CU-ICAR was a State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI) 2012 Award Winner for the Improving Competitiveness of Existing Industry Category. See SSTI interview with Fred Cartwright, CU-ICAR, <http://www.sstiawards.org/?p=148>.

9 Washington State Department of Commerce. "Innovation Partnership Zones," <http://choosewashingtonstate.com/i-need-help-with/site-selection/innovation-partnership-zones/>.

10 City of Phoenix, "Downtown Phoenix: A Strategic Vision and Blueprint for the Future." (2004), [http://www.phoenix.gov/econdevsite/Documents/d\\_038196.pdf](http://www.phoenix.gov/econdevsite/Documents/d_038196.pdf).

Arizona State University, and the new University of Arizona medical school. Priorities also included strengthening downtown Phoenix arts, cultural and entertainment facilities with a new children's museum, science museum, and a performing arts facility. They also sought to use urban design to ensure connectivity (active street frontage, a grand civic space, and shaded places or oases for people to gather). Diversity, both physical and cultural, was also emphasized, including old and new buildings, big and small venues, global and local businesses, sun and shade, and street life. In 2006, Phoenix voters overwhelmingly passed a bond program to implement the downtown plan.

The approach is paying off. Although Arizona shed jobs faster than any state did, except Michigan, during the 2007–2009 recession, downtown Phoenix attracted new companies, young entrepreneurs, restaurants, and residents, in addition to more than 10,000 students, staff, and faculty to a previously neglected part of the city. The City of Phoenix reports that this part of the city saw the only rise in revenue (retail, hotel, and restaurant) and tax receipts during the recession. From 2007-2014, downtown tax receipts increased 105 percent compared to a city-wide decline of 1.04 percent for the same period.<sup>11</sup>

## Catalyzing Community Revitalization

Throughout the country, states and cities are scrambling to find ways to reinvent and revitalize downtowns, commercial districts, neighborhoods, and communities. The arts, culture, and design sectors can play two important roles. First, artists, designers, entertainers and cultural and entertainment activities can create important anchors in neighborhoods and districts, often helping to revive them. Second, the presence of such activities and creative talent can draw other players (e.g., entrepreneurs, researchers, software developers) in the innovation economy who seek to live and work within a creative ecosystem.

Austin, Texas, which is one of the great economic success stories in the United States in the last 30 years, is an example of that revitalization dynamic. The city's strategy, best summarized in the local slogan, "Keep Austin Weird," is built first on assets that include the downtown's flourishing music scene and funky cultural attitudes and second on the University of Texas' strengths in science and technology.<sup>12</sup> The reoccurring themes in the city's effort include building a critical mass of creative and technology talent; facilitating co-location, or geographic clustering of complementary creative and technology industries; and removing barriers to collaboration, whether physical, social, or cultural.

Downtown Phoenix, discussed earlier, is another example of revitalization built on arts, cultural, and design initiatives laying a groundwork—a set of community amenities that

11 See Downtown Phoenix Partnership, "Annual Report 2012," (2013), <http://www.downtownphoenix.com/downloads/17/annual-report-2012.pdf>. Also, see Don Brandt and David Roderique, "It's Important to Keep Downtown Phoenix Alive," *The Arizona Republic*, November 27, 2010, <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/viewpoints/articles/2010/11/27/20101127downtown-phoenix-vision.html>; Revenue and tax receipts by Downtown Phoenix Partnership in email December 2014.

12 Mary Jo Waits et al, "Meds and Eds: The Key to Arizona Leapfrogging Ahead in the 21st Century." (Phoenix, Arizona: Horace W. Steele Foundation, 2005), <http://www.solimar.org/pdf/medseds.pdf>.

improve quality of life and that enable easy interaction, which attracts and keeps creative talent and innovative businesses in the area.

More than one-half of the states have arts and design districts, historic preservation programs, or artist relocation programs that encourage artists to live and work in distressed areas and set the stage for the next stage of revitalization.<sup>13</sup> In reviewing the paths of Austin and Phoenix—and more cities like them, including Tacoma and Walla Walla, two of the innovation zones in Washington state—cities and states have important opportunities to further cooperation between economic development and arts and cultural agencies.<sup>14</sup>

### **Delivering a Better-Prepared Workforce**

Education and skills are central to nearly every issue of economic growth today: rising levels of productivity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and wealth. Governors and mayors consistently place the education and skills of their citizens at the top of their economic development agenda. Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education is often the focus. However, both K-12 and adult education are beginning to focus on arts, music, design, and creativity as a way to foster the very skills necessary to succeed in the STEM fields. Clemson University's integration of arts and design into automotive engineering degrees, discussed earlier, is one example in higher education. Other examples include the Jimmy Iovine and Andre Young Academy for Arts, Technology, and the Business of Innovation at the University of Southern California (USC), and the School of Arts, Media and Engineering in the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts and the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, both at Arizona State University (ASU).<sup>15</sup> For both USC and ASU, the goal is to provide new degrees and research opportunities that merge or span disciplines—arts, design, sciences, engineering and entrepreneurship—to meet both industry needs and student interests.

An example at the K-12 level is Oklahoma A+ Schools. The schools commit to a set of eight education essentials, including arts, experiential learning, and collaboration. The professional development needed to integrate these essentials is provided by Oklahoma A+ School Fellows, a group of teachers as well as teaching and practicing artists. The schools develop a curriculum that crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries, teaches art daily, and integrates arts into other subjects. For example, students might learn about math or science concepts through music. Such cross-curricular connections are made using a curriculum mapping process in which all teachers participate.<sup>16</sup>

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13 Sparks and Waits, "New Engines of Growth."

14 See Walla Walla example in Sparks and Waits, "New Engines of Growth," pp. 18-19.

15 See <http://ame.asu.edu> for Arizona State University and <http://iovine-young.usc.edu> for University of Southern California.

16 See Sparks and Waits, "New Engines of Growth," pp. 38-39.

## Conclusion

The benefit of an all-hands-on-deck approach to confronting economic challenges and opportunities becomes readily apparent when considering the case of arts, culture, and design. Not traditionally present in the domain of economic development, this trio has many potential benefits for boosting the economy. They touch the economy at crucial leverage points, including innovation, entrepreneurship, employment, and revitalization. An arts, culture, and design strategy is not the only requirement for promoting prosperity. However, coupled with other strategies, the three can provide a competitive edge for cities and states.

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# Arts for the City: Community Arts and Affordability Innovations in San Francisco

*Edwin M. Lee*

*City of San Francisco*<sup>1</sup>

*Tom DeCaigny*

*City of San Francisco*

## San Francisco Arts and Culture in the Current Economy

San Francisco is known internationally as a progressive and diverse city with a rich history of avant-garde subcultures, incubating and innovating new and exciting forms of expression, technology, and urbanism. Whether hippies or hackers, San Francisco has invited newcomers and their new ideas. In fact, San Francisco has become synonymous with risk taking, innovation, and creativity in many parts of the United States and abroad. According to the San Francisco Center for Economic Development, the arts and creative industries represent the fourth-largest growth sector in our city—which any mayor or director of cultural affairs knows is a very good thing. San Francisco’s arts and culture-inspired tourism alone generates \$1.7 billion in local visitor spending.<sup>2</sup>

Our arts and culture organizations support nearly 20,000 full-time jobs and more than \$500 million in household income to our residents.<sup>3</sup> Attracting highly-educated and talented workers to the region’s labor force and feeding a range of creative industries, San Francisco’s diverse artistic and cultural communities are key to its booming innovation economy. The city invests more than \$75 million annually in support of this arts ecosystem including world-renowned museums and performing arts institutions as well as hundreds of community arts organizations and artists who express myriad cultures rooted in our distinct neighborhoods. In addition, San Francisco is one of the most diverse cities in the world, with more than 45 percent of residents speaking a language other than English at home.<sup>4</sup> But how does this rich cultural ecosystem interface with a rapidly growing economy?

San Francisco is emerging strong from the worst recession in a generation when we were faced with budget shortfalls in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Since then, the unemployment rate has been cut in half from almost 10 percent to now less than 5 percent.

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1 We would like to acknowledge the following people for their important contributions to this article: Rachelle Axel, San Francisco Arts Commission; Moy Eng, Community Arts Stabilization Trust; Shelley Trott, Kenneth Rainin Foundation; Frances Phillips, Walter & Elise Haas Fund; and Deborah Frieden, Deborah Frieden & Associates.

2 San Francisco Travel Association, “San Francisco Arts & Cultural Travel Study.” (San Francisco, CA: Destination Analysts, Inc., December 2010).

3 Americans for the Arts, “Arts & Economic Prosperity IV.” (New York: Americans for the Arts, 2012).

4 U.S. Census Bureau Data Sets from San Francisco, 2010, available at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06075.html>.

This broad-based recovery includes growth in every industry, from technology to small-scale manufacturing and hospitality. The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce credits San Francisco's recent success, in part, to the Central Market Payroll Tax Exclusion that helped the city attract 18 technology companies, 22 new small businesses, and 11 new arts venues as a result of its revitalization efforts. The chamber said that the tax exclusion provided employers of all types and sizes with the incentive to relocate to the Central Market district or expand their businesses, revitalizing a dynamic segment of San Francisco's urban core. These efforts are credited with generating \$7.6 million in additional business tax revenue.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, as we welcome new jobs and new residents to our city, we must also address affordability challenges that have arisen because of that success and prosperity. Some of those challenges affect the sustainability of our arts and culture sector.<sup>6</sup> We, as a city, must grapple with the arithmetic of squeezing more people into San Francisco's 49 square miles. In addition to solving the space challenges related to such significant economic growth, the dissolution of California's Redevelopment Agencies has required the city to step forward with new solutions to sustain some of San Francisco's most critical cultural assets, once held under state ownership, for years to come.

### **The City of San Francisco's Affordability Response**

As was the case with stimulating the economy during the economic downturn, municipal intervention is necessary to ensure that San Francisco's unique cultural system continues to thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

#### *Central Market/Tenderloin Strategy*

In 2011, the city launched a public-private effort to revitalize Central Market. A cornerstone of this effort was to restore Central Market as San Francisco's downtown arts district (the mid-20th century epicenter for theater and cultural life) while inviting new retailers, restaurants, and businesses to take advantage of transit-rich Market Street. Market Street is San Francisco's primary commercial corridor that connects the adjacent Tenderloin and SoMa neighborhoods to the Greater Bay Area. The Tenderloin neighborhood has a high concentration of children and families, a rich network of social service providers, single-room occupancy hotels, and one of the city's lowest median household income levels. SoMa is home to a historically working-class Filipino community and many nonprofit organizations, and it is the emerging center of San Francisco's growing technology industry.

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5 San Francisco Chamber of Commerce statement on Central Market Turnaround. (San Francisco, CA: Gwen Oldham; April 2014), available at <https://sfchamber.com/blog/san-francisco-chamber-commerce-statement-central-market-turnaround/>.

6 City and County of San Francisco Budget & Legislative Analyst Policy Report, "Review of the Impact of Increasing in San Francisco on Local Nonprofit Organizations." October 9, 2013, available at [http://www.sfhsn.org/documents/hsn\\_iss\\_oth\\_blapres\\_10-09-13.pdf](http://www.sfhsn.org/documents/hsn_iss_oth_blapres_10-09-13.pdf).

Creating positive street life with regular day- and night-time arts and cultural activities has been a primary component of this strategy and benefitted from an early \$250,000 Mayor's Institute on City Design award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Strategies we have implemented include free outdoor dance classes, aerial performances on buildings, publicly accessible pianos, light and other public art installations, and arts engagement opportunities for local residents and visitors by neighborhood arts organizations.

Central Market has transformed in the past three years. The neighborhood is now home to 18 technology companies, 22 new small businesses, and 11 new arts venues owing to the city's revitalization efforts. This public-private revitalization effort has been a nationally recognized success, and the investment is bringing long-desired improvements to the Tenderloin, where we are beginning to see exciting new businesses, more housing, streetscape improvements, and renovated parks. Private arts partners have invested in new Central Market and Tenderloin arts venues such as the American Conservatory Theater's \$32 million restoration of the long-vacant historic Strand Theater.

We have more work to do to create a healthy, vibrant, and inclusive neighborhood and to help longtime residents, small business owners, and nonprofit organizations remain in the neighborhood as it changes. But the decades of disinvestment and abandonment in Central Market and the Tenderloin are over, and the arts have been a key driver of this momentum.

### *Living Innovation Zones*

The Living Innovation Zones (LIZs) are part of the city's efforts to revitalize and reconstruct Market Street. LIZs are site-specific projects that engage the public in interactive science, art, and technology exhibits on sidewalks, in plazas, and in other accessible areas. These temporary installation projects are developed by the San Francisco Planning Department, Department of Public Works, and the Mayor's Office of Civic Innovation in partnership with private organizations such as San Francisco's groundbreaking art and technology museum, the Exploratorium.

### *The Public Art Trust*

San Francisco's planning code requires that 1 percent of private development project costs downtown be allocated to include publicly accessible art. In 2012, we led an effort to expand that legislation to create the Public Art Trust—a mechanism that gives private developers the option to satisfy their 1 percent art requirement by paying all or part of the equivalent value into a newly established Public Art Trust Fund administered by the San Francisco Arts Commission. The trust allows a broader array of uses, including conservation of existing city-owned public artworks, capital improvements to nonprofit arts spaces, and temporary art installations or art activation programming within downtown.

The first Public Art Trust project is underway, funded through a contribution made by the private developer Emerald Fund. Artists have been solicited through a request for proposals to create permanent artwork for San Francisco's historic Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, directly across from where Emerald Fund is constructing two residential properties. Other

developers are in discussions with the San Francisco Arts Commission as they consider the benefits of contributing to the success of the local arts ecosystem.

### *Nonprofit Displacement Working Group and Mitigation Fund*

The city established the Nonprofit Displacement Working Group in 2013 to find creative policy solutions for citywide arts and social service nonprofits facing fewer affordable leasing options in San Francisco. The city allocated \$4.5 million to help implement the recommendations that emerged from this working group, \$2 million of which helps arts nonprofits stay in San Francisco. This \$2 million, administered by the San Francisco Arts Commission, will enable the Northern California Community Loan Fund and Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) to launch a three-year, citywide technical assistance and grantmaking initiative for arts nonprofits affected by displacement. Specifically, the funds will support:

1. Technical assistance to nonprofit organizations for lease negotiations, financing, capital campaigns, co-location and back-office sharing.
2. Direct financial assistance in the form of grants for tenant improvements, acquisition of property, security deposits, and support in accessing federal tax credits.
3. Space identification and inventory.
4. Planning, zoning, and developer incentives.
5. Private partnerships with foundations and corporate partners.

### **Private Partnerships in Affordability**

Many San Francisco arts organizations share the city's values of cultural equity. A pluralistic arts ecosystem requires small-, mid-, and large-budget organizations to thrive, including those run by and serving historically underserved communities.

#### *The Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST)*

The CAST was founded in 2012 and presents a model solution to build sustainability in the arts community. CAST's innovative approach to sustaining healthy arts organizations currently focuses on Central Market and the Tenderloin and SoMa neighborhoods. CAST secures real estate and works with community arts organizations to help develop and strengthen their financial and organizational capacity to purchase permanent facilities and navigate the complex San Francisco commercial real estate market. CAST's model is informed by years of experimentation that attempted to address affordable arts space and sustainability. CAST has three primary program strategies:

1. Purchase buildings and lease them to suitable nonprofit arts organizations, then transition the agreements from lease to ownership within seven to ten years at the initial purchase price.
2. Serve as master leaseholder on properties and manage the spaces for subtenants from the arts.

3. Identify underused, below-market rental spaces and match them to uses and programs for the arts.

This three-pronged approach is undergirded by a commitment to organizational capacity building. CAST aims to match arts groups with the appropriate facility option for their needs and capacity. Further, CAST helps organizations build acumen to manage their facilities, one of the most resource-intensive components of any arts nonprofit's operation.

To achieve its goals, CAST aims to raise \$25 to \$30 million by 2017 from public- and private-sector institutions and individuals. The majority of the funds will help purchase and renovate cultural facilities. With a \$5 million grant from the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, CAST purchased two properties in Central Market and the Tenderloin, which will be the new homes for CounterPULSE and the Luggage Store Gallery/509 Cultural Center. These two community-based, contemporary arts organizations project serving approximately 95,000 people each year in new, expanded facilities. Philanthropic donations and public-sector financing will support the purchase and renovations.

The City of San Francisco is supporting CAST and the capital campaign efforts of CAST's first two arts nonprofit projects. The National Endowment for the Arts has also awarded an Our Town grant to support CAST's real-estate mapping and space-matching efforts (see Chu and Schupbach's article in this issue for more on Our Town grants). This grant is based on the promising practices of arts intermediaries such as Fractured Atlas, Sustain Arts, and the Northern California Community Loan Fund.

### *The Rainin Initiative*

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation launched a new "Imagining Central Market" initiative focused on arts and culture innovation grants in the Central Market neighborhood, and it selected Luggage Store Gallery/509 Cultural Center as its first awardee. Luggage Store Gallery/509 Cultural Center, the lead organization in a collaborative effort that includes the Nighthouse Studio and Hyphae Design Laboratory, received \$100,000 to create "Light Up Central Market," seven site-specific art installations illuminating buildings and sidewalks on Market Street. The initiative encourages interaction and dialogue on community identity, and it celebrates the vibrancy and innovative spirit that permeate the Central Market neighborhood. The illuminated structures inspire residents, pedestrians, and tourists to engage with large-scale art that sparks the imagination, invites play, and builds community.

This Rainin initiative builds on the momentum of several public-private partnerships, including the newly unveiled "Let There Be Light" video installation on the side of 1019 Market Street by Illuminate the Arts, producer of the internationally heralded Bay Lights, a monumental public artwork that adorns the Bay Bridge. The Rainin initiative also builds on the UN Plaza Fall Event Series that animates the Central Market open space with daytime and evening cultural and culinary programs. Finally, it builds on the mayor's Living Innovation Zones. For her work, Rainin's director of arts strategy and ventures, Shelley Trott, was honored with the Council on Foundations' 2014 Robert W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking.

These public and private initiatives are making great advances in creative community building during a time of economic growth and affordability challenges in San Francisco. Our collective strategies aim to improve the city by advancing the capacity of the arts to foster successful community connections for both residents and visitors. Together, these and other cultural efforts throughout the country demonstrate how the arts can lift our communities and drive equitable urban development strategy. The outcome? A better, more livable city for everyone.

*Edwin M. Lee is San Francisco's 43rd mayor, and the first Asian-American mayor in San Francisco history. His focus is economic development and job creation, building San Francisco's future including its housing, parks, transit, quality of life and public safety. He works to make government more responsive, efficient and accountable through innovation and technology, keeping San Francisco a dynamic city of diverse neighborhoods, and a global hub for innovation and new economy industries. Mayor Lee has worked for the city and county of San Francisco since 1989, first as investigator for the Whistle Blower Ordinance, then as director of the Human Rights Commission, director of city purchasing, and director of the Department of Public Works before being appointed as city administrator in 2005. Prior to joining the City, Lee was managing attorney for SF Asian Law Caucus. Lee graduated Summa Cum Laude from Bowdoin College and Boalt Hall School of Law, UC Berkeley.*

*Tom DeCaigny is San Francisco's director of cultural affairs where he oversees the San Francisco Arts Commission, the \$22 million city agency that champions the arts as essential to daily life by investing in a vibrant arts sector, enlivening the urban environment and shaping innovative cultural policy. Before being appointed director of cultural affairs in 2012, Mr. DeCaigny served nine years as executive director of Performing Arts Workshop, an organization dedicated to helping marginalized young people develop critical thinking, creative expression and basic learning skills through the arts. He helped found an arts middle school for youth in the juvenile justice system, managed the AIDS Memorial Quilt's National Youth Education Program and conducted research for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. He serves on the board of directors for the California Alliance for Arts Education and has a BA in dramatic arts from Macalester College in St. Paul, MN.*

# The Meaning of the Creative Economy in Los Angeles

*Samuel Hoi*

*Maryland Institute College of Art*

Creativity is a major sustaining force for the 21st century and a long-standing strength of the United States. Artistic services and innovation are, more than ever, essential resources for the dynamic, knowledge-based, and increasingly global economy. Nurtured and parlayed correctly, rich creative capital can lead to social and economic health for communities. A compelling example is in the Los Angeles region.

Since 2007, the Otis College of Art and Design has commissioned an annual “Otis Report on the Creative Economy Report for the Los Angeles Region” (Otis Report) from the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC). The study documents the wealth and jobs generated and supported by cultural and artistic goods and services and creative industries and practitioners in the Los Angeles region. The report offers a new, more accurate, and useful economic analysis of the creative sector to help policymakers, business leaders, cultural leaders, artists, and entrepreneurs understand the significance of this segment of the Los Angeles regional economy. The latest edition, the 2013 Otis Report, was expanded to cover the entire state of California.

In the Otis Report, the creative economy is defined as the economic output of 11 creative industries: architectural and interior design, art galleries, communication arts, digital media, entertainment, fashion, furniture and decorative arts, product and industrial design, publishing and printing, toys, and visual and performing arts. The report also examines the economic effect of self-employed creative professionals, a significant force in the arts. The final piece of the creative economy consists of the support system that nurtures and sustains creative activity: arts programs in K–12 schools; postsecondary arts institutions to develop talent; and philanthropic foundations, along with other nonprofit funding organizations, to provide financial resources, incentives, and services to the creative arts. By design, the report casts a wide net to more accurately portray the entire creative ecology, not just the arts and nonprofit organizations. The economic effect of the creative sector includes jobs, payroll, revenues, and state and local taxes generated as a result of related activities.

The seven editions of the Otis Report have consistently established the creative professionals and industries as a singularly potent economic driver and jobs generator in Los Angeles and California. The latest findings from the 2013 report are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Otis College of Art and Design, “2013 Otis Report on the Creative Economy Report of California and the Los Angeles Region,” (Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, February 2014). [http://www.otis.edu/sites/default/files/2013-Otis\\_Report\\_on\\_the\\_Creative\\_Economy-2.pdf](http://www.otis.edu/sites/default/files/2013-Otis_Report_on_the_Creative_Economy-2.pdf).

1. California's creative industries generated \$273.5 billion in total (direct, indirect, and induced) output.<sup>2</sup>
2. The Los Angeles region's creative economy supported one in seven wage and salary jobs, accounting for 10.4 percent (net) of the region's gross economic output, or \$1 of every \$10 produced.
3. The Los Angeles region's creative industries sustained 726,300 workers who earned \$50.6 billion.
4. Across California, the creative sector accounted for 9.7 percent of all wage and salary employment, and contributed 7.8 percent to California's gross state product. That means, on average, the creative economy accounted for one in ten payroll jobs and \$1 of every \$12 generated in the state.
5. The creative economy is strong and pervasive across the state. Nearly 56 percent of creative occupations are outside of the creative industries. For example, graphic designers work in both specialized design studios and the design division of financial firms.

Such powerful data offer hard evidence of the impact of the creative economy, and argues for continued support and greater awareness of its role. The evidence was so convincing that following a presentation at the California capitol of the 2013 findings, the state legislature approved a one-time \$5 million increase in general fund support for the California Arts Council (CAC) in the 2014–2015 state budget, marking the first time in more than 10 years that the arts have seen an increase in the state's general fund. (Support for the CAC was cut by 94 percent in 2003, and in the recent past, CAC received an average of \$1 million in annual general fund support from the state.)

Although the Otis Report provides headlines in dollars and cents, it tells a larger story of the broad and critical value of artists and the creative professions in society. Further, it addresses the multiplying social effect of the creative economy. The result is a new and heightened understanding and integration of—and investment in—artists and creative enterprises in social and economic policies and strategies beyond the traditional cultural arena such as museums and concert halls.

No doubt, Los Angeles and California are striking models of the creative economy and concentration of creative resources. Yet, creative capital abounds in many regions in the United States and can be deployed to the benefit of both the creative and broader communities. For optimal effect, investment in the nation's creative capital should consider three key aspects: place, people, and collaboration.

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<sup>2</sup> Indirect output is created when firms in the creative industries make purchases from their suppliers and vendors. Additional induced output is generated when direct and indirect employees spend their wages on consumer goods and services.

## Invest in Place

The creative capital of a place innately showcases its distinctive cultural advantages. Southern California provides an outstanding example. The “Pacific Standard Time: Art in Los Angeles 1945-1980” regional initiative, led by the Getty Foundation, brought cultural organizations throughout southern California together from 2011-2012 to present a series of exhibitions featuring works of art and architecture created in Los Angeles during the post-World War II period. More than 60 cultural institutions and more than 70 galleries in Southern California held a variety of coordinated exhibitions in a six-month period. These exhibitions covered a range of media and movements in a collaborative effort to document and share the birth of the art scene in Los Angeles. Pacific Standard Time achieved historic cultural results by uniting an unprecedented network of partners, attracting visitors and attention worldwide, and reframing how art and design made in Los Angeles are viewed, contemplated, and understood. The initiative infused a greater sense of pride into the regional identity. Further, its economic effect included \$280.5 million in revenues, 2,490 jobs, and \$19.4 million in tax revenues for state and local governments.<sup>3</sup>

## Invest in People

In a nation stratified by an alarming and widening income gap, educating a creative workforce is a great equalizer. By developing their innate creativity and talent, young people with disadvantaged backgrounds can more readily advance themselves and their families socioeconomically. Art and design colleges such as the Otis College of Art and Design and Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore offer abundant evidence that graduates who are first-time college attendees in their families can help the creative economy thrive. Equitable and inclusive investment in arts education and creative jobs and enterprises can lead to opportunities that activate the natural strengths of a diverse workforce.

## Invest Together

A coalition composed of diverse sectors should invest in the creative economy because of a common stake in the outcome. Companies want a first-rate workforce and an abundant supply of innovators; federal, state, county, and city governments want more businesses, tourists, jobs, and revenue; philanthropic organizations hope to see an increasingly equitable, sustainable, and healthy society; academia and nonprofit organizations strive to fulfill their educational and service missions, and they share similar goals; and, last but not least, independent entrepreneurs and creative professionals relish a supportive and fertile environment in which their ideas and practices can flourish.

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3 Los Angeles County Development Corporation, “Pacific Standard Time: Art in Los Angeles 1945-1980/ Economic Impact Analysis.” (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Development Corporation, September 2012).

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s “Creative Economy Report 2010” effectively summarizes creativity’s return on investment: “Adequately nurtured, creativity fuels culture, infuses a human-centred [sic] development and constitutes the key ingredient for job creation, innovation and trade while contributing to social inclusion, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability.”<sup>4</sup> Working together, we must value, integrate, and invest in creative enterprises and professionals for effective social and economic development. We must also invest in arts education and cultural participation to cultivate talent in a sustained way. Our times mandate smart solutions. Creativity must be part of our big picture.

*Samuel Hoi is the president of Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), the oldest continuously degree-granting college of art in the United States. He is an advocate for art and design education, and creative professionals as drivers in social, economic, and cultural advancement. Hoi was president of Otis College of Art and Design, where he shepherded new academic initiatives involving innovative partnerships and community engagement. He also launched the annual “Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region,” which was recently expanded statewide in California. As former dean of the Corcoran College of Art and Design, he created a visual arts outreach program that received a Coming Up Taller Award from the President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities. In addition to holding honorary doctorate degree from the Corcoran and Otis, he was decorated in 2006 by the French government as an Officer of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques.*

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4 United Nations, “Creative Economy Report 2010: Creative Economy—A Feasible Development Option.” (New York, NY: United Nations, 2010).

# Creative Placemaking: How to Do It Well

*Ann Markusen*

*University of Minnesota*

*Anne Gadwa Nicodemus*

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In four years, Our Town, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), has invested more than \$21 million in creative placemaking in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. ArtPlace America—an unprecedented consortium of foundations with national bank partners and government agencies serving as strategic advisors—has invested \$56.8 million in projects where art-making improves community or place. The Kresge Foundation has adopted this framework for all of their arts funding. And both the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the US Department of Education have revised funding guidelines to encourage arts strategies as part of the Choice and Promise neighborhood programs.

We played a role in this story. In fall 2009, the new NEA chairman, Rocco Landesman, and deputy chair Joan Shigekawa commissioned us to write a white paper to frame a new Our Town funding initiative.<sup>1</sup> With their help, we chose a framework of creative placemaking. We spent six months surveying successful forerunners, identifying ingredients of success as well as common challenges. Our case studies cover many types of communities from older, industrial, inner cities to younger, lower-density cities to rural towns to Native American reservations. Through this process we honed a definition of creative placemaking that we hoped would fit them all:

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local businesses viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

The definition emphasizes three features: strategic action by cross-sector partners, a place-based orientation, and a core of arts and cultural activities. The definition speaks to both instrumental and intrinsic outcomes—economic benefits, physical and social impacts,

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking” (Washington, DC: Mayors’ Institute on City Design and the National Endowment for the Arts, October 2010), <http://www.nea.gov/pub/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>.

and the arts' ability to inspire. This broad framing has helped creative placemaking win unprecedented policy action,<sup>2</sup> with practitioners and funders adopting multiple definitions to suit their particular circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

The framing and resources may be new, but the work has been unfolding organically in American towns and cities for decades, as we document in our *Creative Placemaking* case studies. In this article, we focus on how to do creative placemaking well, including challenges in partnering, project design, securing finance, and evaluating progress. We go beyond the limits of our initial definition and case studies, adding insights from subsequent research, consulting, public speaking, and community engagement.

### Partnerships: Essential and Challenging

Cross-sector partnerships are fundamental to creative placemaking. Our Town funding requires that at least one public-sector agency and one nonprofit organization partner on a project, one of whom must be focused on arts and culture. In an example from *Creative Placemaking*, three Cleveland nonprofit theater companies partnered with a community development corporation to create the Gordon Square Arts District.<sup>4</sup>

What are the features of good partnering? First, partnerships are made, not born. We found that a single person, often an artist, initiated a surprising number of successful cases. His or her vision and persistent search for the right partners paid off. And second, successful initiators choose partners—and not too many—who bring complementary skills to the project. For Cleveland's Gordon Square Arts District, a musician who wanted to restore a defunct community movie theater sought out two local live theater companies who needed performance space and a community development corporation (CDC) that had successfully built low-income housing for 30 years. The three theater companies formed a cultural district in the city's underserved working-class west side.<sup>5</sup> The CDC contributed development, fund-raising, and conventional finance experience. Together, the four organizations proposed and raised funds for an artist-designed streetscape to herald the theater capacity to come. They then won funding to restore two historic theaters and to build a third for the youth theater company.

Partnership challenges include coalition building, courting public will (winning mayoral, city council, city staff, and community support), and navigating imbalances in power, skills, and resources. To make partnerships work, each party must understand and take seriously the priorities of its partners. Each must acknowledge what it does not possess in terms of skills and

2 Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, "Fuzzy Vibrancy: Creative Placemaking as Ascendant U.S. Cultural Policy," *Cultural Trends*, 22 (3–4) (2013): 213–22.

3 Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, "Creative Placemaking 2.0," *Grantmakers in the Arts Reader* (Summer 2012), <http://www.giarts.org/article/creative-placemaking-20>.

4 Markusen and Gadwa, "Creative Placemaking," pp. 34–35; W. Dennis Keating, "The Gordon Square Arts District in Cleveland's Detroit Shoreway Neighborhood," *Urban Publications* (Cleveland State University, March 18, 2014), [http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban\\_facpub/1162](http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub/1162).

5 Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, "Cultural Clusters: The Implications of Cultural Assets Agglomeration for Neighborhood Revitalization," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 29, no. 3 (2010): 262–79.

resources and patiently teach and share what it can bring to the table. Personal rough edges must be tolerated or addressed diplomatically. The partnership also must incorporate input from diverse community constituencies affected by the initiative.

Organizational time and resources also pose daunting challenges. Each Gordon Square partner reported that for as long as five years, lead staff devoted one-third of their time to the district effort, a considerable tax on their own agendas. To raise money for the streetscape and theater renovations and construction, each partner had to restrain its own funding-raising efforts lest it compete for the same funding pots.

## Designing around Distinctiveness and Local Patronage

Building on uniqueness of place and community practices is a strong predictor of success. San José, California, for instance, has prioritized the marriage of art with technology. Its Zero1 Biennial builds on Silicon Valley's distinctive technology leadership while attracting and retaining artists.<sup>6</sup> In another example, the Fond du Lac reservation in Minnesota purchases and incorporates artworks by contemporary Ojibwe artists in all five of its social services and health care buildings, where they quicken healing and encourage staff while generating income for regional artists.<sup>7</sup> In many cases, projects that place local and regional community participation center stage tend to fare better than those that are preoccupied with attracting tourists from elsewhere. If community members actively engage in expanded and unique arts and cultural capacity, others will be attracted in time.

## Roles for Community Development Bankers

*Creative Placemaking* identifies attracting private sector buy-in and assembling adequate financing as key challenges. Community development banks play a key role in this process. Artspace, for instance, has relied on bank finance, philanthropic grants, and low-income and historic tax credits to create and maintain dozens of affordable art spaces in both large and small US cities since the early 1990s. To create artist loft housing in an empty auto plant in Buffalo, NY, Artspace assembled \$17.6 million from 19 different lenders and grantmakers.<sup>8</sup> This nonprofit has consistently been able to secure bank mortgages based on demonstrated long-run rental returns and evidence of prospective artist occupancy. Bank finance, along with nonprofit foundation grants, enables Artspace to create and manage arts-dedicated residential, presentation and commercial space with positive benefits and minimal displacement.<sup>9</sup>

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6 Ann Markusen, "City Creative Industry Strategies: the State of the Art," Companion Report to the Otis Report on the Creative Economy (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design: December, 2012), pp. A1-14, [http://www.otis.edu/creative\\_economy\\_report/download/2012-Otis-Report-on-the-Creative-Economy.pdf](http://www.otis.edu/creative_economy_report/download/2012-Otis-Report-on-the-Creative-Economy.pdf).

7 Markusen and Gadwa, "Creative Placemaking," pp. 43-44.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

9 Anne Gadwa, "How Artist Space Matters: Impacts and Insights from Three Case Studies Drawn from Artspace Project's Earliest Developments" (Minneapolis: Metris Arts Consulting, March 2010), <http://www.metrisarts.com/>; Anne Gadwa and Anna Muessig, "How Art Spaces Matter II: The Riverside, Tashiro Kaplan and Insights from Five Artspace Case Studies and Four Cities" (Minneapolis: Artspace and Metris Arts Consulting, July 2011), <http://metrisarts.com/evaluations/>.

Community development banks can also finance artist homeownership. In Paducah, Kentucky, a local bank extended loans to artists to convert buildings into artist-owned, live-work space. Paducah’s city planning director Tom Barnett picked up the idea from an artist who had renovated an old Lowertown building into studio space and housing. Barnett spearheaded the budgeting, land acquisition and transfer, and regulatory, marketing, and public meetings required for the project. Advertising nationally for tenants, the city extended \$2,500 per artist to subsidize the cost of professional fees and architectural services, turning over property titles for as little as one dollar. Paducah Bank provided the renovation financing for artist owners: low-interest loans for up to 300 percent of appraised value to cover artists’ purchase and renovation costs. Starting with a \$370,000 demonstration project loan that renovated three storefront buildings, Paducah Bank increased its lending to \$2 million within the program’s first year. Ten years later, in 2010, the city had achieved a 10-to-1 return on public investment, thanks to Paducah Bank’s willingness to invest in artists.<sup>10</sup>

Banks with community development experience can help ensure the success of creative placemaking loans by counseling clients about regulations they must navigate. In Paducah, the city’s planning department liberalized its zoning ordinances to permit both residential and commercial uses, designating the city’s Lowertown as a historic district, requiring that renovations follow design guidelines, and adopting and enforcing strong health and safety codes. Banks can also coach loan applicants on future maintenance and programming costs so that projects will remain viable beyond their initial construction.

## Evaluating Creative Placemaking Outcomes

Public-sector and nonprofit funders find it challenging to define and monitor desired outcomes for creative placemaking. Within local initiatives, partners often struggle to define success and measure it. In *Creative Placemaking*, we call for evaluation and performance metrics charting impacts on artists, the area arts community, local businesses, residents, quality of life, civic engagement, return on the dollar, and opportunity cost.

Three pioneering empirical studies serve as role models in demonstrating whether outcomes match aspirations: economist Stephen Sheppard’s documentation of the impact of MASS MoCA and other visual arts spaces on neighborhood property values and social networks<sup>11</sup> and two studies by urban planners Anne Gadwa and Anna Muessig of five Artspace live-work buildings that measured the impact of those spaces on artists, arts

10 Markusen and Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking,” pp. 46–47.

11 Stephen Sheppard, “Museums in the Neighborhood: The Economic Impact of Museums,” in *Handbook of Economic Geography and Industry Studies*, ed. Phil McCann, Geoff Hewings, and Frank Giarrattani (London: Edward Elgar, 2013), 191–204. MASS MoCA is a contemporary art center in North Adams, Massachusetts, that exhibits and supports the development of visual art, music, dance, film, and video. Situated on the former Sprague Elective Company’s 13-acre campus, it occupies one-third of the downtown business district and is the result of a \$31.4 million adaptive re-use of nineteenth century factory buildings. Its facilities include exhibition space, office and retail space for commercial tenants in creative industries (both at 200,000+ square feet), a natural amphitheater, workshop and art fabrication facilities, and more.

communities, neighborhoods, and businesses.<sup>12</sup>

Early on, the NEA and ArtPlace both launched efforts to create indicators from secondary data sources such as the American Community Survey. The NEA initially laid out four general goals for creative placemaking projects: 1) strengthen and improve the local community of artists and arts organizations; 2) increase community attachment; 3) improve quality of life; and 4) invigorate local economies. They planned to generate indicators for each goal from existing data and to “build out this system and publish it through a website so that anyone who wants to track a project’s progress in these areas will be able to do so, whether it is NEA-funded or not. They can simply enter the time and geography parameters relevant to their project and see for themselves.”<sup>13</sup>

As its work evolved, the NEA developed indicators for the four goals as a way to help creative placemaking project planners be more intentional about generating local outcomes. They also hoped the indicators would help them to better understand the broader context (and geographical area) of their project’s impact, and support the design of program evaluations for specific projects. The NEA took care to ensure that all of the resulting 23 indicators were available from publicly accessible data sources. In general, the promotion of open data tools—both for decision-making and for the NEA’s better understanding of its own work—conforms to guidance from the Office of Management and Budget ensuring greater transparency and accountability.

To test the viability and usefulness of their indicators, the NEA commissioned a study from the Urban Institute to canvass creative placemaking grantees.<sup>14</sup> Respondents generally considered indicators such as violent crime rate, median commute time, and proportion of housing units occupied as good measures of quality of life and attachment to community. But they were skeptical of the utility of indicators for assessing creative placemaking results, especially indicators seeking to capture changes in homeownership rates, election turnout, and median commute time. Respondents from both urban and rural areas also “expressed strong concerns about the relevance of data at large geographies—county or ZIP code—as indicators for smaller areas.”<sup>15</sup>

In a parallel effort, the ArtPlace consortium wanted to explore whether its funded projects had a transformative impact on community vibrancy (and within this, “people, activity

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12 Gadwa, “How Artist Space Matters”; Gadwa and Muessig, “How Art Spaces Matter II.”

13 Jason Schupbach, “Creative Placemaking—Two Years and Counting!” (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, May 31, 2012), <http://artworks.arts.gov/?p=13382>, accessed October 1, 2012.

14 National Endowment for the Arts, “Validating Arts and Livability Indicators in Selected Communities and Developing a User’s Guide with Case Examples and Local Data Sources” (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, August 23, 2012), [http://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=39f0ca2bec49a35d83076660a0b76992&tab=core&\\_cvview=1](http://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&id=39f0ca2bec49a35d83076660a0b76992&tab=core&_cvview=1).

15 Elaine Morley and Mary Winkler, “The Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study: Results and Recommendations” (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, April 2014), p. 3, <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/VALI-Report.pdf>.

and value”).<sup>16</sup> But concepts like “vibrancy” are fuzzy.<sup>17</sup> One group’s passions (e.g., loud evening concerts) may be another group’s nightmare. Even if groups can agree, how can concepts such as vibrancy be operationalized? ArtPlace proposed tallying smartphone location requests on Saturday night as a measure of vibrancy, but smartphone ownership is heavily biased toward younger people and those with higher incomes, and many people turn off their phones while dining or at a performance. A rise in homeownership? That discriminates against young adults, seniors, and lower-income households who are more likely to rent.

Even when measures are well-designed, data that focus on the small target area are often unavailable. Other data sets, like the American Community Survey, are simply not robust enough to capture features such as artist density in a neighborhood or community area. Above all, changes in any of these indicators could be caused by other unrelated forces or community changes independent of a creative placemaking project. And if ill-fitting indicators are used to gauge success, funders will be tempted to favor those proposals where indicators will turn out well rather than projects with the greatest potential impact.

Both the ArtSpace and the NEA indicator initiatives raised many questions. What would these indicators mean, how would they be constructed, and would their projects be compared across places and across time? These concerns led to a healthy and broad-based debate.<sup>18</sup> Recently, ArtPlace leadership has been turning away from words like “outcomes,” “evaluation,” and “metrics.” Instead, it asks grantseekers to articulate their goals, in their own terms, for art projects that will intentionally move a place closer to what the community aspires to be. ArtPlace hopes that evaluation in this fashion will be less intimidating and more useful to grantees, as well as helping to inform current and future projects. They are still contracting for vibrancy measure updates and making them available, but they are no longer using them for evaluation.

The NEA creative placemaking team is currently working to help applicants and grantees understand the evaluation challenge and to articulate goals, be they artistic excellence, social change, cultural bridging, or quality of life. NEA is encouraging groups to work with professional evaluators and planning to actively work with creative placemakers to show them good examples of evaluations. They have commissioned *Exploring Our Town*, an online resource that includes case studies of more than 60 Our Town grants and an insight section of lessons learned. The NEA is also broadening partnerships with organizations and universities whose staff can help with local evaluations.

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16 ArtPlace, Vibrancy Indicators, 2012, <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/articles/vibrancy-indicators/>; ArtPlace, Vibrancy Definitions, 2012, <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/loi/>.

17 Ann Markusen, “Fuzzy Concepts, Scanty Evidence, Policy Distance: The Case for Rigour and Policy Relevance in Critical Regional Studies,” *Regional Studies*, 37 (6-7) (October 2003): 701–17; Gadwa Nicodemus, “Fuzzy Vibrancy.”

18 Ann Markusen, “Why Creative Placemaking Indicators won’t Track Creative Placemaking Success,” Createquity Blog, November 9, 2012. Reprinted in *Grantmakers in the Arts Reader*, 2013: Vol. 24, No. 1, Winter, 2013: 22-29, 50, <http://createquity.com/2012/11/fuzzy-concepts-proxy-data-why-indicators-wont-track-creative-success.html>; and in *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2013: 291-303.

## Improving the Model

Four years have passed since we wrote *Creative Placemaking*. Would we tweak our characterizations? Yes, thanks to the burgeoning experiments nurtured by NEA, ArtPlace, foundations, arts organizations, city and state governments as well as an outpouring of research and comments.

For one, we would stress the intrinsic contributions of arts and culture as co-equal with instrumental contributions. Many creative placemakers and their patrons strive for more than job creation, reuse of abandoned buildings, commercial retail sales—traditional economic development results. They aim for a more expansive notion of livability. They also deliver what arts and culture do best: beauty, heritage, innovation, bonding within cultures and bridging across them, social critique, entertainment, and expression, or as former NEA chairman Bill Ivey put it, a “right to an expressive life.”<sup>19</sup>

For another, we’d emphasize more fully the importance of equity. Creative placemaking initiatives should be designed to expand opportunities for low-income communities, people of color, and artists. They should also take care not to displace (either directly or via property value and rent escalation) existing residents, their practices and cultural gathering places. Forceful voices from within the creative placemaking community have articulated these concerns and pointed to alternatives, as we have on gentrification and equity research agendas.<sup>20</sup>

Given current initiatives and proposed improvements, creative placemaking will likely be deepened and sustained. Appropriate financing will play a key role in that future. Many communities are embarking on efforts tailored to unique cultures, environments, and capacities. Applications to the NEA’s Our Town and ArtPlace are robust. Many communities not yet funded are proceeding anyway. In this decade, arts and culture are coming into their own, having won interest from mayors and city councils and community development orga-

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19 Ann Markusen, “Creative Cities: A Ten-Year Research Agenda,” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36, (s22) (August 2014): 567–89; Kevin McCarthy, Elizabeth Ondaatje, Laura Zakaras, and Arthur Brooks, *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2004), <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG218>; and Bill Ivey, *Arts, Inc: How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed Our Cultural Rights*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008).

20 For examples of forceful voices, see Roberto Bedoya, “Placemaking and the Politics of Belonging and Dis-Belonging,” Grantmakers in the Arts Reader (Winter 2013); Carolina Sarmiento, “Strategies of Fire and ICE: Immigration, Cultural Planning and Resistance.” Doctoral dissertation. (University of California Irvine, 2014); Maria Rosario Jackson, “Developing Artist-Driven Spaces in Marginalized Communities: Reflections and Implications for the Field” (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Leveraging Investments in Creativity, October 2012), <http://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/Developing-Artist-Driven-Spaces-Marginalized-Communities.pdf>. Our work on gentrification includes Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, “Artists and Gentrification: Sticky Myths, Slippery Realities,” Createequity Blog (April 5, 2013), <http://createequity.com/2013/04/artists-and-gentrification-sticky-myths-slippery-realities.html>. Our work on equity research includes Markusen, “Creative Cities: A Ten-Year Research Agenda.”

nizations as well as commitments of time and energy from artists and arts enterprises.<sup>21</sup> As more partners become engaged in this work, we expect to see more innovation, tailoring to meet specific community circumstances, and learning from shared experiences among many participants.

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21 Ann Markusen, "Creative Cities: A Ten-Year Research Agenda," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36, (s22) (August 2014): 567–89; Kevin McCarthy, Elizabeth Ondaatje, Laura Zakaras, and Arthur Brooks, *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2004), <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG218>; and Bill Ivey, *Arts, Inc: How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed Our Cultural Rights*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008).

# Measuring the Economic and Social Impacts of Cultural Organizations

*Stephen Sheppard*

*Williams College<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction

In 1941, world-renowned economist John Maynard Keynes became chair of the Committee for Encouragement of Music and the Arts (precursor to the Arts Council of Great Britain) and in the committee's first annual report following the end of the war, he wrote that:

The day is not far off when the economic problem will take the back seat where it belongs, and the arena of the heart and the head will be occupied or reoccupied, by our real problems—the problems of life and of human relations, of creation and behaviour [sic] and religion.<sup>2</sup>

Nearly 70 years afterwards, the day Keynes spoke of remains elusive, and communities as well as the cultural organizations they support are frequently asked about the economic and social impacts that are associated with the presence of such organizations. In measuring the social and economic impact of cultural organizations, there are at least three possible types of impact that should be the focus of our efforts. The economic activity that takes place in the community, economic indications of the desirability of the community and the 'quality of life' available for residents, and the social cohesion and social connectedness of the community. Before proceeding to discuss approaches to measuring each of these types of economic and social impact, we should identify some of the reasons why measurement of economic and social impacts is so important for cultural organizations and community development practitioners. The issue seems to arise with greater frequency regarding arts and cultural organizations than it does with regards to many other producers of goods and services. Why?

Most producers of goods and services can, by collecting payments from those who consume the goods and services made available, collect sufficient revenues to completely cover the costs of production. For some goods and services, and often for cultural goods and services, this is not possible, and purely private decisions made by potential suppliers will result in too little—or even none—being made available to the community. In such cases it will often improve community wellbeing to make some collective decision or implement some policies that will result in a larger amount of the good. These actions can take several forms, ranging from direct public provision to exempting from income taxation any dona-

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1 Department of Economics, Williams College, 24 Hopkins Hall Drive, Williamstown, MA 01267.

2 John Maynard Keynes, "First Annual Report of the Arts Council (1945-1946)", 1946.

tions of funds to assist in the production. When such policies are implemented, it is natural and appropriate to make some comparison between the collective costs of the policies with the collective benefits of having the increased supply of the good or service. In this sense it is natural and appropriate to inquire about the economic and social benefits of arts and cultural organizations.

### **Local Economic Vitality**

In evaluating the “impact” of cultural organizations, the initial focus is generally the overall level of economic activity in the community, including the total value of goods and services produced, the income generated, and the number of workers employed in this process. Measurements of this sort can be carried out either retrospectively, for an existing organization or set of organizations, or prospectively for a new or proposed organization. For both types of evaluation it is appropriate to begin with an economic model of the local economy that provides an estimate of the difference between the level of local economic activity with and without the organization being evaluated.

For retrospective evaluation, the analysis provides a comparison between the current observed level of economic activity and the total value of output, labor earnings, or employment that would be observed if the organization being evaluated did not exist and everything else in the local economy remained the same. For prospective evaluation the analysis again compares the observed state of the local economy with a counterfactual: in this case the level of economic activity that would be observed if the organization commences production (with a proposed budget and level of production) and all other factors in the economy remain the same.

Such evaluations are most frequently undertaken using linear models that have been calibrated to the structure of the local economy, including current levels of production and employment in each industry, the interactions between different industrial sectors, and the patterns of final sales to local households. In these evaluations the budget of the organization itself and the expenditures of visitors who are drawn to the community from outside provide the starting point for measuring impacts (generally called the direct effect). Additional impacts accumulate based on changes in activity levels in other local industries that supply the organization or its local trading partners (called indirect effects). Finally, these direct and indirect impacts typically result in increased local employment and earnings, and the increased local income will in part be spent purchasing goods and services from local industrial sectors and further increasing local economic activity (called the induced effects). The combined impacts will generally be larger than the direct effects that are based on the budget of the cultural organization, and this increase is often referred to as the “multiplier” for the cultural organization.

There are several important observations to be made about the multiplier and this approach to evaluation of economic impacts. First, the multiplier is derived from a calibrated model of the local economy, usually comprised of data at the ZIP code or county level. It is an estimate that emerges from observed patterns of trade and exchange and when done properly generally produces values between 1.5 and 2.5.<sup>3</sup> While values outside this range are certainly possible, they should be viewed with caution.

Second, impacts measured in this way should generally be regarded as the maximum short- or intermediate-run impacts on the local economy. As noted above, the impacts make comparisons assuming other conditions and production levels remain constant. Given time to adjust, other factors will typically not remain constant. A new performing arts center may boost local economic activity, but some of these gains may over time be eroded because local businesses that provided other forms of entertainment—from bowling alleys to movie theaters—find that households are spending more time at the new performing arts center and less time pursuing other forms of entertainment. This caution is further motivated by the simple argument that if the population of the community remains the same, and labor productivity is not changed, then total earnings of residents will remain approximately constant. Unless new visitors are drawn from outside of the community to patronize the new cultural organization, there may be zero net increase in local economic activity.

Of course, there are situations when local cultural organizations do increase local labor productivity or attract visitors from outside the community. In such cases cultural organizations may have persistent local economic impacts, and an increase or decrease in the activities of these organizations will generate changes that persist even after all local economic adjustments have taken place.

Whether there is such a long-run relationship between the total production of local cultural organizations and local economic activity has almost never been investigated, but a recent paper attempts to provide such an evaluation.<sup>4</sup> By looking at more than 20 years of data from 380 metropolitan areas in the US, the authors are able to establish that there is a long-run positive relationship between output of cultural organizations and local economic output per capita.

## Quality of Life in the Community

Cultural organizations often make their surrounding communities more attractive places to live. Living in the community requires purchasing or renting a residence. If living in a community becomes more attractive relative to other places, we then expect an increase in the demand for residential property in the community. This increase in demand for property will cause an increase in the market value of residential property.

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3 That is, the total change in local economic output will be 1.5 to 2.5 times the sum of the budget of the cultural organization and the total expected expenditures of visitors coming from outside the community.

4 Peter Pedroni and Stephen Sheppard, “The Economic Consequences of Cultural Organizations,” Chapter 9 in *The Arts, New Growth, and Economic Development*, Michael Rushton, ed., (Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2013).

Such increases in property values have been controversial in some communities, and on occasion have caused concerns about whether these increases in property values will result in gentrification and reduced availability of affordable housing. Whether or not such changes take place, the increase in property values would provide an indication of the ability of cultural organizations to enhance the desirability of a community as a residential location and to enhance the wealth and wellbeing of local residents.

These observations do not dismiss or discount concerns about affordable housing, but such concerns should not be an excuse for avoiding actions that improve quality of life in a community. Housing values are also increased by good local schools, but it would be short-sighted to embrace underfunded and underperforming local schools so that housing would be more affordable. A more appropriate response is to embrace and support policies that improve local quality of life while simultaneously working to ensure that housing supply increases include a range of affordable options.

Do cultural organizations have a measurable impact on the value of local residential property? Most observers answer this question affirmatively, but again there are surprisingly few empirical studies that demonstrate and measure this impact. One such recent study examines the creation or expansion of art museums in four different urban areas.<sup>5</sup> In each of the cases, the opening or expansion of the museum resulted in an increase in residential property values with the largest impacts estimated for properties near the museum. Estimated impacts extend for distances from one to more than 20 kilometers.

The total increase in local wealth thus associated with increased production by local cultural organizations ranges from a few million to hundreds of millions of dollars. While further testing and estimation of such relationships is warranted, it seems clear that an important economic measure of local impacts of cultural organizations is the associated increase in local residential property values, an increase that is unambiguously related to the ability of such organizations to improve the quality of life for current or potential residents.

Another possible approach for evaluation of how cultural organizations affect the quality of life in communities is to make use of subjective measures of wellbeing and life satisfaction that have shown promise in other applications. One recent study presents a tentative exploration of this relationship.<sup>6</sup> The study uses a small survey sample in a single city, and establishes a weak relationship between participation in arts activities and responses designed (and used in other studies) to measure life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing of respondents. The statistical analysis presented is limited but the study does suggest some promise for such an approach. This would be particularly true if the analysis could evaluate responses over several time periods, during which there were unambiguous changes in number or levels of operation of cultural organizations.

5 Stephen Sheppard, "Museums in the Neighborhood: the local economic impact of museums," Chapter 8 in *Handbook of Economic Geography and Industry Studies*, Giarrattani, F., Hewings, G., and McCann P., eds., (Edward Elgar Press, Cheltenham, 2013.)

6 Alex C. Michalos and P. Maurine Kahlke, "Arts and the Perceived Quality of Life in British Columbia," *Social Indicators Research* Vol. 96, No. 1, pp. 1-39, March 2010.

## Social Connections

Community development practitioners, artists, and administrators of cultural organizations have noted that the benefits generated for their host communities extend beyond changes in levels of economic activity. This is no doubt correct, and while the evaluation of residential property values can provide some evidence of the magnitude and extent of such benefits, there is strong interest in developing methodologies that do not rely on observed market prices and transactions.

One potential approach is to directly evaluate the capacity for cultural organizations to strengthen social networks in the community, and to examine the position of cultural organizations within these communities. The idea that underlies this approach is that the social capital that is essential for community function is built through interaction between community residents. This is directly facilitated by cultural organizations that provide a venue for residents and neighborhood groups to meet, interact, and exchange ideas in formal and informal ways.

Two recent studies have drawn attention to this specific function of cultural organizations by introducing network analysis to evaluate the social function of cultural organizations.<sup>7</sup> The first paper introduces some basic measures of network density and the centrality of an organization in its network (essentially the number of other individuals and social organizations that could be connected through their connection to the cultural organization). The second paper presents case studies of three cultural organizations in very different urban settings and regions of the country. In this analysis, applications identified the neighborhoods and geographic areas that are potentially connected through their association and interaction with the cultural organization. Evidence is also presented that demonstrates the ability of cultural organizations to connect nearby communities that are in many respects very disparate.

These studies suggest that the analysis may have great potential for tracking the social impacts of cultural organizations. Undertaking studies of social connection in and between communities requires more data collection than analysis of traditional economic measures because the economic data are routinely collected for other purposes. More complete analysis of social networks would provide measures taken over time, showing how the nature of the social network changes with the opening or expansion of cultural organizations in communities.

## Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

As cultural organizations seek support from the public sector and communities, it is natural and appropriate to inquire about the magnitude of social and economic benefits arts and cultural organizations generate. We have reviewed several methodological approaches

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7 Kay Oehler, Stephen Sheppard, Blair Benjamin and Laurence Dworkin, "Network Analysis and the Social Impact of Cultural Arts Organizations," 2007, <http://www.c-3-d.org/library/pdfs/NA%20Network%20Paper%20010807.pdf>; and Kay Oehler and Stephen Sheppard, "The Potential of Social Network Analysis for Research on the Cultural Sector," 2010, <http://www.c-3-d.org/library/pdfs/NetworkAnalysisAndCulture.pdf>.

that have been applied for such evaluations. Evaluations using economic models provide a useful starting point, but generally should be viewed as providing an approximation of the short-run impacts. Recent analysis has confirmed that there are long-run sustained impacts on local economies, but the magnitude of such impacts may diverge significantly from the multipliers that emerge from short-run analysis.

Evaluation of the impacts on quality of life and the social structure of communities is more difficult, and three approaches that have been used can potentially measure these impacts. Changes in the value of residential property, changes in survey responses concerning subjective wellbeing, and analysis of local social networks all show promise in this regard. As community development practitioners continue in their efforts to understand the impacts of these organizations, it is essential to choose some approaches that can be applied repeatedly over time. Establishing a baseline of these measures that characterize a community, and then tracking the changes as new organizations open or expand will provide the best approach for measuring the full range of benefits that cultural organizations can bring to our neighborhoods and cities.

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# Assessing a Set of Indicators for Creative Placemaking: Reflections From the Field

*Elaine Morley and Mary K. Winkler*

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Along with the interest and growth in creative placemaking is a concomitant interest in measuring and communicating accomplishments of those efforts and sharing good practices among creative placemaking practitioners. Toward this end, funders, researchers, and other interested parties are developing methods of measuring impact and identifying what information (e.g., indicators) to collect to measure progress toward a goal. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), for example, developed a set of creative placemaking indicators to enable practitioners and other stakeholders to better identify and understand potential outcomes of their efforts and how they might be communicated.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, ArtPlace America identified an initial set of 10 Vibrancy Indicators intended to help assess its investment in creative placemaking and learn more about the contributions of arts activities to creative placemaking.<sup>3</sup> Indicators have also been developed for some local creative placemaking projects.<sup>4</sup>

Identifying these indicators is not without challenges because creative placemaking efforts often have multiple and varying goals, such as increasing employment, reducing crime, and attracting or retaining residents. Community context also affects the appropriateness of particular indicators. For example, crime rates may not be considered particularly useful as indicators for communities that generally have little crime. Thus, multiple indicators are needed. In addition, considerable debate exists among arts researchers and practitioners about which indicators are best aligned with and able to measure benefits of creative placemaking efforts.<sup>5</sup> Despite these challenges, managers and funders of creative placemaking initiatives are interested in identifying and using indicators to help determine whether outcomes of interest are moving in the desired direction.

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1 The described study received support from the NEA. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, its funders, or the NEA.

2 The NEA does not expect all grantees to use all of its indicators. Rather, they are intended as resources to be used where applicable. For more information, see Sunil Iyengar, "Taking Note: Learning Is the New Word for Evaluation," *Art Works Blog*, May 8, 2014, <http://arts.gov/art-works/2014/taking-note-learning-new-word-evaluation>.

3 For more information on the ArtPlace America indicators and their use, see "Vibrancy Indicators" at <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/vibrancy-indicators/>; and "ArtPlace America Metrics FAQ" at <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/artplace-metrics-faq/>.

4 See, for example, indicators developed for Minneapolis' creative placemaking effort focused on Hennepin Avenue: Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, "Track-It Hennepin 2012: Baseline Indicators and Data Roadmap" December 2012; and pp 10-24 of Appendices to "Plan-It Hennepin: Creative Placemaking for Downtown Minneapolis," [http://hennepintheatretrust.org/sites/default/files/user/email/plan-it\\_appendices.pdf](http://hennepintheatretrust.org/sites/default/files/user/email/plan-it_appendices.pdf).

5 Ann Markusen, "Creative Cities: A 10-Year Research Agenda," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36 (S2) (2014): 567–589.

## The Validating Arts and Livability Indicators Study

The NEA sponsored the Urban Institute's Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study from fall 2012 to spring 2014 to validate a set of 23 potential indicators.<sup>6</sup> The NEA selected indicators to reflect four key dimensions of livability: resident attachment to community, quality of life, arts and cultural activity, and economic conditions. The NEA identified multiple indicators for each dimension (Table 1). It chose indicators by reviewing goals of applicants for NEA funding and by reviewing relevant research. The NEA chose only indicators for which data are available from national, publicly available sources, such as the US Census Bureau's County Business Patterns data to avoid the need for practitioners to rely exclusively on local sources, which may not always exist, or to collect their own data, which can be expensive and time-consuming. Publicly reported data establishes reasonably reliable indicators of changes in a community's livability. Although creative placemaking efforts are not the only cause of changes in publicly reported data values, such changes could be examined in combination with local or project-specific data to better understand a creative placemaking project's effects. In addition, changes in indicator values could be a starting point for more rigorous project evaluation.<sup>7</sup>

The VALI study sought feedback about the suitability of the indicators for two purposes: to reflect livability conditions and, separately, as outcome indicators specific to local creative placemaking efforts. Researchers conducted site visits and held a convening to obtain feedback from approximately 80 participants involved in creative placemaking from 10 Our Town grantee communities.<sup>8</sup> (For more on the NEA's Our Town grants, see Chu and Schupbach in this issue.) Urban and rural sites were equally represented in the study. Participants provided feedback by reviewing community-specific maps and bar charts based on indicator data and also discussed indicators conceptually (independent of numeric values). Participants represented approximately 50 organizations, including arts and cultural organizations, community or neighborhood organizations, and businesses and local government agencies. The study also included a focus group with five practitioners or researchers with expertise in community development and indicators who were not directly involved in creative placemaking.

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6 E. Morley, M. K. Winkler, S. Zhang, R. Brash, J. Collazos, "The Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study: Results and Recommendations," (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2014), <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413142-The-Validating-Arts-and-Livability-Indicators-Study-Results-and-Recommendations.pdf>.

7 J. Schupbach and S. Iyengar, "Our View of Creative Placemaking, Two Years In," November 27, 2012, <http://createequity.com/2012/11/our-view-of-creative-placemaking-two-years-in.html>; and J. Schupbach, "Creative Placemaking—two years and counting!" May 31, 2012, <http://arts.gov/art-works/2012/creative-placemaking-two-years-and-counting>.

8 Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, who served as an advisor to this study, facilitated portions of this day-long convening.

Table 1. NEA Candidate Indicators for the Arts and Livability

Indicator	Geographical Area
<b>Resident Attachment to Community</b>	
Capacity for homeownership (proportion of single-unit structures)	Census Tract
Length of residence (median length)	Census Tract
Proportion of housing units owner occupied	Census Tract
Proportion of housing units occupied	Census Tract
Election turnout rate	County
Household outflow (tax returns leaving)	County
Civic engagement establishments per 1,000 population	ZIP Code
<b>Quality of Life</b>	
Median commute time	County
Retail and service establishments per 1,000 population	ZIP Code
Violent crime rate	County
Property crime rate	County
Percentage of residential addresses not collecting mail	County
Net migration	County
<b>Arts and Cultural Activity</b>	
Median earnings of residents employed in arts- and entertainment-related establishments	Census Tract
Proportion of employees working in arts- and entertainment-related establishments	County
Relative payroll of arts- and entertainment-related establishments	County
Arts, culture, and humanities nonprofits per 1,000 population	Census Tract
Arts and entertainment-related establishments per 1,000 population	ZIP Code
<b>Economic Conditions</b>	
Median home purchase loan amounts	Census Tract
Median household income	Census Tract
Active business addresses	Census Tract
Unemployment rate	Census Tract
Income diversity	Census Tract

Note: Based on outcome area and the lowest geographical level at which national data are available.

## Reactions to the Indicators

Participants approached this study with more interest than expected. They were very engaged with the indicators and local data validation activities throughout the process. Many asked thoughtful questions, challenged assumptions, and offered alternative proposals. Their responses suggested an appetite for measuring the impact of creative placemaking efforts. This was particularly evident at the convening of four Our Town grantees—two rural and two urban communities. Each community had two representatives—one from an arts-related partner agency, the other from a government partner agency. The mixture of perspectives, evident in both full-group and small-group discussions, provided a particularly rich exchange of ideas. Often, such “buy in” is absent and measurement activities are primarily viewed in the context of grant compliance and less often in the context of program improvement.

Key findings from the VALI Study (the report is available on the NEA and Urban Institute websites) include the following:<sup>9</sup>

*Participants viewed most of the indicators as representative of their respective livability dimensions.* Some exceptions included single-unit housing structures (representing capacity for homeownership) and election turnout rates as signals of community attachment; and home purchase loan amounts and a measure of income distribution (Gini coefficient) as indicators of economic conditions.

*Less consensus existed on the validity of indicators as measures of creative placemaking project contributions.* Participants had mixed or less favorable reactions to a greater number of indicators when they considered using them to reflect their own project’s intended outcomes. Less favorable were single-unit housing structures and election turnout rates (resident attachment to community), and median commute time (quality of life). Several indicators, including crime rates, household income, and unemployment rates received mixed ratings. Given the relatively small size and scope of many creative placemaking efforts in the context of the larger community, many participants believed these projects could not have much effect on these indicators.

*Community context matters.* The communities selected to participate in this study were diverse in many ways, including age of community; geographic region; population (age, size, density); project type (e.g., arts infrastructure, cultural district development, festivals and engagement); and project objectives. These and other characteristics appeared to affect perceptions of indicators, particularly their appropriateness as creative placemaking indicators. For example, individuals representing an urban or rural area often expressed different views about the same indicator (e.g., crime rates). However, when the responses were aggregated among all communities, these differences tended to be more muted.

9 Elaine Morley et al, “The Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study: Results and Recommendations,” <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/VALI-Report.pdf>.

*Geographic scope of indicators is a principal concern.* Study participants often raised concerns about using indicator data reported in large geographic areas (e.g., county crime rates) to reflect changes in smaller areas where creative placemaking projects typically focus efforts (e.g., neighborhoods). However, participants considered data reported for these larger areas useful in providing context for other indicators.

## Looking Ahead

The VALI study showed that most respondents viewed the indicators as relevant within their respective livability dimensions. However, participants viewed some indicators as less strongly relevant for measuring the contribution of individual creative placemaking efforts. Most participants viewed the set of indicators as a reasonable place to start, but many also thought that additional indicators and tools were needed to effectively communicate individual program or collective community effects. These findings suggest a two-part agenda. The first part should address identifying the most appropriate measures. The second should focus on how best to develop the capacity of creative placemaking organizations to capture and report on their contributions to individuals and communities. We offer the following suggestions:

### *Taxonomy of Outcomes*

Build on the efforts of NEA, ArtPlace America, and others in the field by assembling a working group to develop and gradually refine a taxonomy of outcomes to capture the individual and collective contributions of creative placemaking efforts. Efforts such as the Cultural Data Project—or the more recent effort by Grantmakers in the Arts to establish a National Standard Taxonomy on Support for Individual Artists<sup>10</sup>—could guide development of such a classification structure. The taxonomy of cultural vitality indicators, developed by Maria Rosario Jackson and colleagues, could also offer guidance.<sup>11</sup> A distinguishing factor of this suggestion is emphasis on outcomes for individuals and community rather than a set of indicators that largely captures inputs and resources supporting arts activities. The four livability dimensions are a start, but other dimensions, such as education, health, and diversity (sometimes noted as gaps by study participants) could be readily added. Initially, this taxonomy could be an inventory of indicators currently available and in use, but it could quickly evolve to build a menu or wish list of desirable indicators currently unavailable or untested.

### *Creative Placemaking Monitoring and Evaluation Peer Network*

The VALI Study revealed considerable interest in indicators, data sources, and data collection techniques. Creating a forum for various stakeholders to continue to engage in

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10 Alan Brown et al, “A Proposed National Standard Taxonomy for Reporting Data on Support for Individual Artists,” (Seattle, WA: Grantmakers in the Arts, 2014), <http://www.giarts.org/article/support-for-individual-artists-research-initiative>.

11 Maria Rosario Jackson et al, “Cultural Vitality In Communities: Interpretation and Indicators,” (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2006), <http://www.urban.org/publications/311392.html>.

these and other topics could support creative placemaking activities and better measurement opportunities. The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, as an example of a network, sponsors a listserv enabling participants to share resources, post research inquiries, or share ideas about current or best practices. Depending on the size, scope, and interest of a potential creative placemaking community of interest, participants could work together to solve problems with gaps in research, data collection strategies, and methods. Such a network could be established with relatively low overhead, but choosing a sponsor or moderator for the network may require more consideration.

### *Repository of Tools and Approaches for Evaluating Creative Placemaking*

Although the size and scale of creative placemaking activities vary considerably, many projects have limited capacity and resources to undertake measurement or evaluation activities. Finding a place to post sample community surveys, local strategies for obtaining less commonly available data elements, or case studies would shorten the learning curve for many communities. The repository could include links to publicly available resources, with new links added as they become available. Materials could include case studies, such as the NEA's recently released e-storybook of case studies and lessons learned from Our Town grantees;<sup>12</sup> studies or guidance documents on indicators; and data sets or descriptions of data sets, such as those available from local indicator projects in some communities.<sup>13</sup> VALI Study researchers identified several projects that may have indicators relevant to creative placemaking. The NEA expects to provide this information in 2015.

### *Research Partnerships*

Data collection and evaluation capacity concerns of local creative placemaking projects may also be addressed by encouraging partnerships with local universities or community-based groups. The advantages of such partnerships, in many cases, is to offer low-cost support beyond what may be possible with limited funding for most local creative placemaking efforts. Depending on the type of data collection activity, it may be possible for partners to help engage residents (e.g., recent retirees) in conducting in-person community surveys or participating in focus groups to obtain data on a variety of community outcomes unlikely to be available to national, regional, or local administrative data sources.

We believe advancement on any of these fronts would lead to a broader menu of indicators, data collection strategies, and, ultimately, better data in support of creative placemaking efforts.

*Elaine Morley, PhD, is a senior research associate in the Urban Institute's Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. She has more than 25 years of experience in performance measurement*

12 The National Endowment for the Arts, "Exploring Our Town," <http://arts.gov/exploring-our-town/>

13 The Boston Indicators Project is a well-known example. It includes a section of indicators on cultural life and the arts. See <http://www.bostonindicators.org/>.

*and in conducting evaluations of a wide variety of programs. As part of the Urban Institute's Public Management Program, she has participated in projects addressing performance measurement practices for nonprofit organizations and for federal, state and local government entities. She has contributed to numerous publications on performance measurement for such entities, including guides for practitioners. She received a PhD in social science from Syracuse University.*

*Mary Kopczynski Winkler is a senior research associate with the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute. Since coming to the Urban Institute in 1995, Ms. Kopczynski Winkler has been actively involved in various projects focused on strategic planning and assistance in the development of performance measurement systems for government agencies and nonprofit programs. In addition to her work with the NEA to validate indicators of community livability for creative placemaking, Ms. Kopczynski Winkler was principal investigator for the Urban Institute's work with OPERA America and five major national arts service organizations to develop a system for building the research and analysis capacity for the performing arts. Ms. Kopczynski Winkler graduated from Bryn Mawr College and has an MPA from American University. She is also an accomplished accordionist.*

# Financing Creative Places

*Gary Hattem*

*Deutsche Bank*

## **An Early Believer**

Following the passage of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), early community development efforts set out to rebuild decaying and abandoned neighborhoods with a laser focus on the built environment.<sup>1</sup> Making the case for private investors meant proving that urban decline could be stemmed and reversed, building by building, block by block.

I came of age as a city planner during this era, in the mid-1970s, having completed graduate school and finding myself at the helm of a nascent community development corporation (CDC) in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Like other self-help efforts throughout the United States, our organization was stewarded by local residents and business owners who had little faith in government coming to their rescue. Instead, they sought a path that would re-engage the private sector in investing in the future of their community.

After 15 years as the executive director of the St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, we had a great deal to show for this approach, with buildings redeveloped, new businesses opened, jobs created, and pride restored. From that grassroots perspective, I came to appreciate the very important intangibles that make a successful and vibrant community. Along the way, we enlisted unlikely partners, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, whose support enabled us to design a new streetscape for a deteriorated shopping district, prototype the redesign of abandoned factories into affordable housing, and celebrate the lost history of the neighborhood's origins.<sup>2</sup>

## **From a Banker's Perspective**

Having the opportunity to lead Deutsche Bank's Global Social Finance Group and Americas Foundation has been a unique platform to advance these lessons to those working to bring commercial capital into communities. Deutsche Bank operates as a wholesale bank, without a branch system or conventional retail products or services, so our strategy has required a more expansive perspective for how to invest capital into low- and moderate-income communities.

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1 Passed by Congress in 1977, the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) is designed to encourage commercial banks and savings associations to help meet the credit needs of borrowers in all segments of the communities in which they are chartered, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. The act intends to reduce discriminatory credit practices against low-income neighborhoods, a practice known as redlining. To enforce the statute, federal regulatory agencies examine banking institutions for CRA compliance.

2 Karen Hudes, "The Vanishing Icons of Metropolitan Avenue: A History of Williamsburg's Handmade Shop Signs from the 1980s," (Brooklyn, NY: Art Exhibit, October 24, 2010), <http://wp.me/16Gu7>.

Although we have been mainstay providers of debt and investment for affordable housing and economic development, we have also sought to recognize the value of the cultural sector in strengthening communities. In particular, we have recognized cultural institutions for the multiple roles they can play as engines of economic development, agents of community reconciliation, educators of disadvantaged youth, stimulators of new creative talent and leadership, and a source of pride and community equity on the larger political stage. The Arts and Enterprise program, a Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation signature program, has devoted a stream of philanthropic resources to this approach by deploying more than \$10 million over the past 12 years to cultural institutions primarily in New York City. As anchor institutions in transitional neighborhoods, we have come to appreciate the enormous value cultural institutions can bring to communities struggling to regain their footing and define a path forward.

For instance, the Queens Museum of Art took advantage of these funds to hire a community organizer, a very unusual move for a cultural institution. The museum used other funds to establish “Leadership through the Arts,” a program for immigrant young adults who graduated from the public school system but are not likely to attend college. The program equipped youth with the skills and tools needed to navigate the civic and educational power structures in their communities. Participants examined the tension points in their neighborhoods and interacted with community and political leaders, seniors, local businesses, and entrepreneurs to advance solutions to their most pressing problems. Efforts have focused on predatory lending practices, with a focus on preventing non-English speakers from becoming victims of predatory practices and to work themselves out of crises if they had already been ensnared.

Beyond our support for cultural organizations, some of the most promising creative place-making efforts in New York City have involved traditional CDCs working in partnership with arts groups to incorporate new cultural venues into mixed-use affordable housing developments. These efforts are notable for a variety of reasons. First, they are being driven, like my work at St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation, by organizations with housing and real estate development at their core, but which view arts and culture as fundamental parts of their community revitalization missions. Second, the CDCs have deep expertise in initiating and sustaining complex capital projects that blend a range of sources, including federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), city and state subsidies, private debt, and various types of grants, including philanthropy. These projects are located in neighborhoods such as East Harlem, the South Bronx, and Sugar Hill in Harlem where demand for affordable housing is urgent. The higher densities in these communities also provide for ground floor commercial space that can be leveraged to deliver community development benefits that may not be tied to optimizing retail rents through traditional commercial tenants. The CDCs driving these projects are using their hyper-local civic capital—their relationships, their connections to the arts community, and their knowledge of the local real estate and commercial markets—to design financially sustainable projects that will appeal to both the local community and to the city at large.

Deutsche Bank has supported these initiatives—spearheaded by Broadway Housing Communities (BHC), WHEDCo, and El Barrio’s Operation Fightback with Artspace—through two signature housing programs that provide predevelopment grants and soft loans (in the form of program-related investments) to assist CDCs moving complex capital projects from concept to implementation.<sup>3</sup> These very competitive programs prioritize applicants who can demonstrate innovative practices in community development—such as incorporating arts and culture uses—as well as those that appear most likely to move toward financial closing and implementation within a three- to six-year period.

Deutsche Bank supported BHC’s Sugar Hill development with a three-year award starting in 2007. Located on West 155th Street in Harlem and in the final stages of construction as of this writing, Sugar Hill features a unique design by renowned architect David Adjaye, providing 124 affordable apartments, an early childhood center, and an innovative new cultural institution, the Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art and Storytelling. The project was financed by a blend of LIHTCs, New Markets Tax Credits, bank debt, federal HOME Invest Partnerships Program funds allocated by the City of New York, New York City Council funds, and various philanthropic grants.<sup>4</sup> Occupying more than 17,000 square feet of flexible space, the museum will draw on the rich history of oral traditions in the African-American and Latino communities, and will showcase storytelling and artwork inspired by Harlem. BHC’s Executive Director, Ellen Baxter, says, “At Sugar Hill we leveraged more than 30 years of experience in Upper Manhattan to create a new concept for community development where more than 70 percent of children are born into poverty. These youngest citizens are the community’s most valuable assets, and this intergenerational cultural investment strategy will highlight equal cultural and educational opportunity. The early education center

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3 Deutsche Bank’s key housing programs are the Working Capital Program (WCP) and DB Supportive Housing Acquisition and Rehabilitation Efforts (DB SHARE). WCP funds early stage, predevelopment activities by community-based organizations that are starting housing, commercial or community facility developments. DB SHARE supports developers of new permanent housing for homeless New Yorkers with special needs. Through both, Deutsche Bank has provided 122 awards to community development corporations since 1994, and counts among them Broadway Housing Communities, WHEDCo, and El Barrio’s Operation Fightback. Broadway Housing Communities is a New York City nonprofit housing developer committed to providing innovative permanent housing for individuals and families in the greatest need; it provides nearly 300 units of supportive housing in the communities of Washington Heights and West Harlem. WHEDCo takes a holistic approach to economic development; it has built hundreds of high-quality, sustainable, and affordable homes surrounded by services too often out of reach for Bronx families—from help starting micro-enterprises and building rooftop farms that grow healthy food, to access to high-quality, afterschool and early education programs, arts and cultural events, to safe, livable streets. El Barrio’s Operation Fightback is devoted to planning and implementing projects and programs that will bring more affordable housing and tenant services to East Harlem. Program-related investments (PRIs) are investments made by foundations to support charitable activities that involve the potential return of capital within an established time frame. PRIs include financing methods commonly associated with banks or other private investors, such as loans, loan guarantees, linked deposits, and equity investments in charitable organizations or in commercial ventures for charitable purposes.

4 The Low Income Housing Tax Credit and New Markets Tax Credit programs were designed to provide the private markets with incentives to invest in affordable rental housing and to spur revitalization efforts of low-income, distressed communities across the United States. The Federal Home Investment Partnerships Program is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments and funds a wide range of activities, including building, buying, and rehabilitating affordable rental housing.

and the museum together will benefit thousands more children and families than the residential component, yet affordable housing is the foundation that made it all possible. The model integrates housing, early education and cultural development to achieve a far broader community impact, and enhances sustainability.”<sup>5</sup>

In the South Bronx, Deutsche Bank provided WHEDCo with a three-year award starting in 2012 in support of the Bronx Commons development, a partnership with Blue Sea Development Company, a firm that has been on the leading edge of the “green” building industry for decades. The project is expected to break ground this year and open in 2017. Bronx Commons will feature the Bronx Music Heritage Center (BMHC), a cultural heritage and music education center celebrating the influential musical forms with strong roots in the Bronx, including jazz, Latin music, and hip hop. “Bronx Commons is about two things: the Bronx—through the Bronx Music Heritage Center—and the Commons, which we interpret as creating housing with indoor and outdoor public spaces that stimulate commerce and encourage pedestrian traffic. Bronx Commons shines a light on the borough’s displaced music heritage and builds it back as fertile soil for the growth of new art forms in the new economy,” says Nancy Biberman, WHEDCo’s founder and president.<sup>6</sup>

WHEDCo has already begun building an audience and constituency for this institution through a series of music, film, spoken word performances, and artist residencies at the BMHC Lab, a pop-up storefront space in the already-built Intervale Green development in Crotona East. The Bronx Commons development anticipates combining financing from tax-exempt bonds, LIHTCs made available by both New York City and New York State, grants from New York City Council funds and the Bronx borough president, Enterprise Community Partners, the New York State Research and Development Authority, and philanthropic sources.

Deutsche Bank’s support of El Barrio’s Artspace PS109 development, in partnership with El Barrio’s Operation Fightback, suggests a possible way that financial institutions could engage with this new model of CDC-driven arts institutions. Deutsche Bank initially supported this revitalization of a long-vacant public school through \$225,000 in philanthropic resources in 2006, and followed that initial investment with \$7 million in equity through a LIHTC fund syndicated by financial services firm Raymond James. This alignment of philanthropic support and CRA-motivated bank capital (either loans or investments) suggests a particularly effective model for other financial institutions to follow. Shawn McLearn, vice president of property development with Artspace, remarks, “As a nonprofit real estate developer for the arts, Artspace needs financial institutions like Deutsche Bank as partners, as they not only support our complex financing models, but also understand them well enough to be trusted advisors throughout our predevelopment, construction administration, and operational periods. Banks are best positioned to provide strong private sector financing tools that

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5 Email correspondence. Ellen Baxter and Gary Hattem. October 14, 2014.

6 Email correspondence. Nancy Biberman and Gary Hattem. October 17, 2014.

can allow groups like ours to attract scarce and highly competitive public sector resources. We're honored that Deutsche Bank has been a partner precisely when community-driven real estate is needed most."<sup>7</sup>

The development will open this year, having created 90 units of permanently affordable live-work housing for artists and their families, with at least 50 percent of the units reserved for current residents of East Harlem. The project developers are currently selecting East Harlem cultural partners for the ground floor commercial spaces.

### **Building a Field of Practice**

ArtPlace America began with a pioneering group of foundation executives supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. The initiative galvanized resources to build a national practice of creative placemaking. Although funded by philanthropies, the premise of ArtPlace America is to be catalytic in enabling places to succeed socially, culturally, and economically. The goal to build social and economic equity into cultural initiatives is unique to ArtPlace America, a rare topic of conversation among art funders. This aspiration included the belief that conventional commercial capital providers should be at the table in the making of ArtPlace America and in developing its strategy.

Fortunately, one of the unique attributes of the community development sector is collegiality. That helps foster collaboration among financial services firms to develop new ideas, share risks, and to build out a marketplace. I had the opportunity to enlist this good will—and capital—of Citi, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Bank of America, and MetLife to partner with ArtPlace America. Each of these six institutions committed \$2 million in financing to the ArtPlace America initiative. Relying on the financial architecture of traditional community development, we enlisted Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) to provide financial intermediation.<sup>8</sup> Our philanthropic partners also prudently recognized the perceived early-stage risk of this type lending and stepped up with dedicated capital to provide further loan loss reserves, enabling NFF to go beyond their traditional underwriting standards to allow for more nascent projects to access our debt.

With this financing structure in place to deploy capital, we had hoped for a diversity of projects to align the sectors of community development and creative placemaking. Although projects surfaced initially, they quickly faded, and the credit facility expired without being deployed. According to Jeremy Nowak, who served as a consultant to ArtPlace America, "The original structure of the loan program was problematic for a variety of reasons: no financial incentives to make loans; some incentive to use the credit enhancement capital

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<sup>7</sup> Email correspondence. Shawn McLearen and Gary Hattem. October 15, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> The Nonprofit Finance Fund unlocks the potential of mission-driven organizations through tailored investments, strategic advice and accessible insights. Founded in 1980, NFF helps organizations connect money to mission effectively, and supports innovations such as growth capital campaigns, cross-sector economic recovery initiatives and impact investing. A leading Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), NFF has provided more than \$287 million in loans and access to additional financing via grants, tax credits, and capital in support of more than \$1.4 billion in projects for thousands of organizations nationwide.

for purposes other than lending; a grantor-led process without the flexibility to respond to market demand; no singular party responsible for the loan program's success; a lack of clarity regarding our loan products and the kinds of projects that fit the creative placemaking mission; the national character of ArtPlace America versus the localized knowledge of NFF (with respect to a half-dozen areas)."<sup>9</sup>

Although the history of community development has more than a few examples of funds organized and not deployed, our experience has offered important lessons as to what needs to come next to build a field of creative placemaking that can regularly tap into the capital markets that have been built for community development.

## A Path Forward

Capital-intensive projects in the traditional community development arena, or in the emerging field of creative placemaking, are labor intensive and time consuming when compared with traditional real estate transactions. Organizing the political will, gaining community support, and assembling often layered financing can easily take three- to five-years to complete.

Intentionally directing a flow of commercial capital for creative placemaking will require a sustained commitment to fostering a network of resources that allow for a capital-ready environment. As such, we are encouraged by the next iteration of ArtPlace America grants that will select sites for longer-term funding commitments. This commitment will allow for a local ecosystem of private capital to be aligned with these philanthropic resources. Importantly, this longer-term perspective to local field-building should provide local cultural actors who have proven to be “debt phobic” the opportunity to be socialized to the idea of more complex capital structures beyond business models that rely entirely on grants.

I envision in these locations the potential to marry traditional CDCs with local cultural organizations similar to the successful partnerships that Deutsche Bank has helped to support in New York City. Ideally, these locations would identify a local Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that could further help with capital intermediation to institutionalize the capacity to manage a continual deal flow.

Most promising of all is the spirit of ArtPlace America as a social enterprise that seeks to advance creative placemaking as measurable, leveraged, and sustainable. The foundation executives who pioneered ArtPlace America are a rare group of seasoned community development funders and proponents, in addition to being cultural leaders. They were quick to arrive at the role they could play in facilitating private-sector engagement in creative placemaking. The goal we all share is to normalize this work so that all local communities that undertake the hard work of community development consider and deploy it as they create lasting opportunities for low- and moderate-income communities.

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<sup>9</sup> Email correspondence. Jeremy Nowak and Gary Hattem. October 6, 2014.

*Gary Hattem is managing director at Deutsche Bank and heads the global social finance group as well as its foundation. Responsible for the firm's lending, investment and philanthropy, he oversees corporate citizenship activities for the Americas. Mr. Hattem established the Community Development Finance Group in 1990 and is recognized as an innovative leader in the field of private sector investment in distressed communities. Over the past two decades he has overseen over \$2 billion in financing for projects which benefit low-income communities in the Americas and throughout the developing world. Mr. Hattem holds many leadership positions in philanthropy and community reinvestment. He is a trustee of Pratt Institute, chairman of the Carbon Initiative for Community Impact, director of the New York City Energy Efficiency Corporation, and a member of the Haiti Presidential Advisory Council on Economic Growth and Investment. Mr. Hattem holds a MA in city and regional planning from Pratt Institute and a BS from Purchase College. In 2009 he was selected as an American Council on Germany McCloy Environmental Fellow.*

# Our Town: Supporting the Arts in Communities Across America

*Jane Chu*

*National Endowment for the Arts*

*Jason Schupbach*

*National Endowment for the Arts*

**W**hy are a farm, a church, a museum, an arboretum, and a festival working together to create a new environmental arts center in rural Freeman, South Dakota? Why are a community loan fund and an office of economic and workforce development working with a local arts agency in San Francisco to secure permanent space for arts organizations? Why are a bank, an energy company, and a music organization collaborating on a series of pop-up performances in suburban Maize, Kansas? The answer: They are all working on projects funded by Our Town grants.

A vast diversity of places and projects have been funded through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grants. Since Our Town's inception in 2011, the NEA has awarded 256 grants totaling more than \$21 million in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

## **Why Our Town?**

The social, educational, economic, and aesthetic benefits of the arts for communities are well documented. Artists and designers provide a powerful aesthetic imprint on communities with their craft, sparking vitality and creating an environment conducive to ideas, creativity, and social engagement. Artists and designers provide amenities for consumers and rejuvenate downtowns and neighborhoods and strongly connect people to one another. Artists and designers help form the core of community development practice, along with public safety, land use, transportation, education, and housing, among others.

The NEA created Our Town as a catalytic investment tool. It has served as the Obama administration's signature place-based arts program, supporting a network of practitioners and neighbors who are positioning the arts as a driving force for creating opportunity and building strong communities. As part of President Obama's "Ladders of Opportunity" agenda, and in strategic partnership with sister federal agencies, the NEA makes Our Town grants as anchor investments. Motivated by these grants, communities form coalitions between their elected leadership and other key civic leaders. These grants create an opportunity for artists and arts organizations to connect with various development areas including public health, housing, economic development, and even agriculture, thereby bringing these stakeholders together for their community's benefit.

## How Did It All Get Started?

Arts-based community development is nothing new. For example, Italian sculptor, painter, architect, poet, and engineer Michelangelo was a creative “placemaker” in his own right. Many artists, arts organizations, and their supporting networks have been engaged in this work for years in the United States. The foundation for the NEA’s efforts began in 2007 when Jeremy Nowak, with key support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the University of Pennsylvania’s Social Impact of the Arts Project, published the groundbreaking paper “Creativity and Neighborhood Development—Strategies for Community Investment,”<sup>1</sup> based on research in Philadelphia for The Reinvestment Fund, a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). This research placed arts-based work in the language and context of community investment, outlining the role of the arts in building social capital, documenting the arts as economic assets, and showing how they affect market relations.

After reading Nowak’s paper and related research—and observing the success of the arts-driven community development communities in Philadelphia, his native St. Louis, and his home turf of New York City—former NEA chairman Rocco Landesman decided that the federal government could be a more effective partner for community-based arts efforts. “When I came to the NEA,” Landesman said, “I wanted to focus on...how the arts can be a force for social cohesion and economic development in neighborhoods, communities, [and] cities.”<sup>2</sup>

Landesman launched a three-part strategy that continues to unfold. First, he created a new NEA fund to support arts-based community development that ultimately became Our Town. Second, understanding that any NEA place-based funding alone would be insufficient on its own, he pursued strategic partnerships with other federal agencies that were also implementing place-based programs. His team identified where other agencies were investing and sought to develop alliances among federal officials, and arts and community development stakeholders.

These efforts have yielded a more comprehensive federal commitment to the arts, expressed in both funding and policy. For example, NEA’s work on the White House Council on the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2)<sup>3</sup> initiative has yielded new projects focused on chronically economically distressed cities. NEA provides staff support to the SC2 Council, providing technical assistance to SC2 cities—leveraging their arts sectors in support of their revitalization strategies and long-term economic planning. NEA staff is also participating in the White House’s Promise Zones<sup>4</sup> initiative, strategically linking Our Town investments and grantees to Promise Zone communities. Staff also provides technical assistance and policy guidance to the selected neighborhoods, working with arts policy makers, organi-

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1 Jeremy Nowak, “Creativity and Neighborhood Development—Strategies for Community Investment.” (Philadelphia, PA: The Reinvestment Fund, 2007).

2 Email correspondence. Rocco Landesman, Jane Chu, and Jason Schupbach. September 4, 2014.

3 For more on the SC2 Initiative, see <http://www.huduser.org/portal/sc2/home.html>.

4 For more on Promise Zones, see <https://www.hudexchange.info/promise-zones>.

zations and artists to drive positive community transformation. Further, NEA is supporting the place-based policy efforts of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative and the White House Rural Council, and its partnership with the US Department of Agriculture on the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design.

As the final part of the strategy, Landesman encouraged new philanthropic investment in arts-based community development. The most visible example is ArtPlace America, a consortium that includes the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the Knight Foundation, and Bloomberg Philanthropies, as well as banks with a strong presence in community development such as Deutsche Bank and Bank of America. Landesman understood the federal government works best partnering with philanthropic organizations and the private sector to experiment and build capacity of local organizations and individuals.

### **Our Town and the Mayor's Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary Awards**

In 2010, on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Mayor's Institute on City Design, the NEA commissioned *Creative Placemaking*, a white paper by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa.<sup>5</sup> The paper placed Nowak's research in a new framework and coined the term creative placemaking. It also laid out the many challenges and opportunities for the field and helped shape the guidelines for an NEA creative placemaking program—the Mayors' Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary Awards (MICD25)—which was created to test if there was interest from communities in NEA funding for creative placemaking activities.<sup>6</sup>

MICD25 were one-time grants for cities that had participated in the Mayor's Institute on City Design. Grantee projects ranged from public art invigorating a new greenway beneath a railroad track overpass in Greensboro, North Carolina, to plans for a cultural district in downtown Shreveport, Louisiana. The 21 awards confirmed a demand for a federal program supporting art-based development in US communities.

NEA based guidelines for the Our Town grants program on a few key elements that reflected the best research on creative placemaking: Broad partnerships are necessary to achieve good project outcomes; political support is essential; all communities have unique “arts assets” and projects should be tied to local assets and knowledge; and arts-based activities must work in concert with other community development efforts, plans, and goals. Hoping that Our Town's partnership structure would foster new collaborations, the guidelines were broad enough to allow a range of organizations and geographies to apply.

The NEA wanted to validate and support the many cultures found in the United States with Our Town. The program was designed to support high-capacity communities, with

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5 Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking.” (Washington, DC: The Mayors' Institute on City Design, 2010).

6 Since 1986, the NEA and the US Conference of Mayors, with the American Architectural Foundation, have run the Mayors' Institute on City Design. The institute has trained more than 1,000 mayors in the basics of city design and frequently addresses art-based community development issues. These mayors were the perfect first-time audience for the new research on creative placemaking.

many investment opportunities and long-standing relationships between arts and community stakeholders, as well as communities lacking those attributes but possessing a clear vision and committed leadership. The NEA decided to take a risk and see if requiring a partnership between arts organizations and local governments as a condition of each Our Town grant would produce successful collaborations.

## **What's Happened?**

After a coordinated release of the Our Town grant application guidelines with the help of federal and field partners, the response has been enormous. Every year, the Our Town budget is only sufficient to fund approximately one-fifth of the applications received. Applicants can apply for up to \$200,000, and the average grant size is \$75,000. All grants from the NEA must be matched one-to-one by the grantee, and Our Town grantees typically match grants up to three or four times. And the diversity of places and projects where the grantees are working is astounding: the Native Village of Mary's Igloo on the Bering Strait in Alaska; Last Chance, Colorado, a town of 23 people; the urban neighborhood of Willowbrook in Los Angeles County; Bloomington, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis and home to the Mall of America; the jazz district of Kansas City, Missouri; Miami Beach; the Acadian villages on the border of Maine and Canada; and New York City.

Many communities have used their Our Town grant to catalyze multi-stakeholder partnerships. As of 2014, 246 partners are involved in 66 projects funded by Our Town grants, averaging 15 partners per project. Community development sponsored by the NEA creates incentives for artists and designers to participate in conversations from which they might have been traditionally excluded. Approximately one-third of the partners in Our Town projects are arts organizations from all fields the NEA supports: filmmaking, theater, folk arts, dance, literature, arts education, museums, symphonies and opera companies, and others. The range of other institutions that have stepped up to partner on Our Town projects is vast and exciting: aging services agencies, botanic gardens, religious institutions, scientific organizations, local businesses, banks, farms, business improvement districts, education institutions, and land trusts. Government is represented at the local, state, and federal levels.

## **Trends We Have Seen**

Our Town projects generally fall into two categories: engagement activities, and planning and design activities. In engagement projects, the focus is on artistic programs that foster interaction among community members, arts organizations, and artists, often by leveraging existing community assets through public art, festivals and performances, artists working in storefronts, or pop-up artist studios. Planning and design projects develop the infrastructure necessary for community development to succeed, such as creative asset mapping; master planning for a cultural district; support efforts benefiting creative businesses; and designs for artist space, cultural facilities, and public spaces.

At the beginning of the Our Town program, more of the applications and the grants were focused on design and planning activities. Projects such as the Opa-Locka (Florida) Community Development Corporation's project focused on removing metal barricades placed around the predominately minority Magnolia North neighborhood in the 1980s. The barricades were erected by the local leadership to, as they saw it, isolate and mitigate high levels of crime and violence at that time. With Our Town support, a community-wide collaborative design process addressed removing the barricades and transforming intersections into inviting neighborhood entryways with new public open spaces and public art.

More recently, applications have moved toward arts engagement activities. For example, the Music City Opera Project by Nashville Opera is challenging dominant conceptions of what constitutes opera. In an open competition, amateur and professional composers, librettists, and arrangers will create new operatic works. Finalists will perform in unexpected places, such as honky-tonks and country music venues in downtown Nashville. Several other projects are focused on preserving Appalachian musical heritage. For example, Hindman, Kentucky (population, 777), will celebrate its local dulcimer-making tradition, and in Pickens, South Carolina (population, 3,012), a senior citizen group is creating the Center for Southern Appalachian Music.

In addition, some of the most interesting projects are happening on tribal lands. Southwestern Native American nations in Arizona and New Mexico are working to better design their communities. In addition, famed architect Maya Lin is working with northwestern tribes on the Confluence Project, a large-scale multisite public art project on the Lewis and Clark expedition.

### **Other Creative Placemaking Efforts at the NEA**

Our Town is only one of the NEA's projects to support arts-based community development. In addition to our expanding interagency work through SC2 and Promise Zones, the agency is funding convenings, research, and expansion of field building efforts for communities that engage artists as generators of social and economic capital. Three of agency's efforts merit mention:

#### *Performing Arts and Transforming Place Convening*

Performances have multifaceted ways in which they transform places, people's relationships with their communities, and community development processes. On November 3, 2014, the Arts Endowment hosted the "Beyond the Building: Performing Arts and Transforming Place" convening to develop a better understanding of how performance-based organizations, and the artists they engage, transform places through their artistic practices. The convening archive is available online.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Convening archive for "Beyond the Building: Performing Arts and Transforming Place," <http://arts.gov/partnerships/beyond-the-building-performing-arts-and-transforming-place>.

### *Sharing Lessons Learned*

In late September 2014, the agency launched “Exploring Our Town” on the NEA website.<sup>8</sup> It is an electronic storybook chronicling more than 70 case studies on, and insights from, Our Town investments. This resource was created in response to calls from the field for lessons learned throughout the country.

### *Developing Results Indicators*

NEA researchers have constructed arts and livability indicators from publicly accessible national data sets. In 2013, the NEA worked with the Urban Institute to validate the indicators for a representative sample of towns and cities that participated in the Our Town or MICD25 initiatives. The resulting report, “The Validating Arts and Indicators Study (VALI): Results and Recommendations,” is available on the NEA website as a tool for tracking contextual data deemed to be important for a variety of creative placemaking projects (see the article by Morley and Winkler in this issue for more on the VALI project).<sup>9</sup>

Artists’ and designers’ work with partners as diverse as farms, churches, and energy companies signals an exciting future for communities. Together, arts and community development practitioners are building communities with enhanced quality of life, increased creative activity, a distinct sense of place, and opportunity-rich local economies. Collectively, this work has demonstrated—for the first time at a national scale—that arts stakeholders are fundamental players in a community’s transformation. They are working authentically and equitably, and they are building on existing community assets. The NEA strives to support these efforts to make the arts available to everyone.

*Jane Chu, PhD, was confirmed by the US Senate in June 2014 as the 11th chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Since 2006, Chu served as the president and CEO of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City, Missouri, overseeing a \$413-million campaign to build the center. As the performance home of the Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony, and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, the Kauffman Center has hosted more than one million people from all 50 states and countries throughout the world since its grand opening in September 2011. She was a fund executive at the Kauffman Fund for Kansas City from 2004 to 2006, and vice president of external relations for Union Station Kansas City from 2002 to 2004. Previously, she was vice president of community investment for the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation from 1997 to 2002. Chu also served as a trustee at William Jewell College and on the board of directors of the Ewing Marion Kauffman School and the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. Chu was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma, but was raised in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, the daughter of Chinese immigrants. She studied music growing up, eventually receiving bachelor’s degrees in piano performance and music education from Ouachita Baptist*

8 National Endowment for the Arts, “Exploring Our Town,” <http://arts.gov/exploring-our-town/>.

9 National Endowment for the Arts, “Validating Arts and Indicators Study (VALI): Results and Recommendations” by Elaine Morley and Mary K. Winkler, <http://arts.gov/publications/validating-arts-livability-indicators-vari-study-results-and-recommendations>.

*University and master's degrees in music and piano pedagogy from Southern Methodist University. Additionally, Chu holds a master's degree in business administration from Rockhurst University and a PhD in philanthropic studies from Indiana University, as well as an honorary doctorate in music from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance.*

*Jason Schupbach is the director of design programs for the National Endowment for the Arts, where he oversees all design and creative placemaking grantmaking and partnerships, including Our Town and Design Art Works grants, the Mayor's Institute on City Design, the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design, and the NEA's involvement in the HUD Sandy Recovery Taskforce Rebuild by Design Competition. Previous to his current position, Jason served Governor Patrick of Massachusetts as the creative economy director, tasked with growing creative businesses in the state. He formerly was the director of ArtistLink, a Ford Foundation funded initiative to stabilize and revitalize communities through the creation of affordable space and innovative environments for creatives. He has also worked for the mayor of Chicago and New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs.*

## Arts and Culture in Detroit: Central to Our Past and Our Future

*Rip Rapson*

*Kresge Foundation*

No community in America, except perhaps for those in the paths of natural disasters, has faced the prospect of losing so much of its arts and cultural heritage as Detroit has in the last 18 months. The threatened sell-off of the collection at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) to satisfy creditors in the city's municipal bankruptcy has served as a symbol of the painful path of restructuring.

The Kresge Foundation and other philanthropies responded to the dual prospect of lost art and draconian reductions in benefits to pensioners. Partnering with the State of Michigan and the DIA itself, the philanthropies contributed to an \$816 million fund to transfer the DIA collection to a nonprofit entity outside city control and dramatically reduce the cuts pensioners would have to suffer. Without this "grand bargain," the bankruptcy process very likely would have embroiled the city for a decade, as pensioners invoked Michigan's constitution's protection of pensions and creditors and the DIA litigated whose rights to the art would be primary.

The imperative to deal honorably with pensioners was clear. Equally clear, however, was the need to protect and preserve an integral part of the city's cultural patrimony, an institution that has served as a beacon for residents and visitors alike—an institution that has anchored Detroiters' sense of identity and connection to their community. Compromising such a civic treasure would have diminished the city in unfathomable ways.

That the philanthropic, public, and cultural communities stepped forward to prevent this misfortune speaks volumes about the value Detroit places on arts and culture. Their actions also are an invitation to explore the burgeoning vibrancy of other dimensions of the city's cultural ecology.

Detroit is among the countless cities across America continuing to reap the benefits of Rocco Landesman's extraordinary 2009–2012 tenure at the helm of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Landesman committed the NEA to the proposition that arts and culture can restore and animate our communities. Further, he sought to institutionalize this commitment by bringing together the Kresge and Ford foundations to spearhead the creation of ArtPlace America, a philanthropic consortium committed to creative placemaking.

The idea of placemaking has long been a staple of urban planning—the act of creating the map of civic life by developing distinctive, livable places. Landesman proposed that by connecting arts and culture to placemaking, their roles in contributing to the social, physical, cultural, and economic identities of a community can be recognized. He suggested that arts and culture have to step inside the fence-line of community development and claim their

places in the diverse terrain of land use, housing, transportation, environment, health and other systems necessary to create stronger, more vibrant places.

Detroit is increasingly enlivened by such thinking. Philanthropies, nonprofit organizations, private entities, and government are all pursuing mutually reinforcing strategies. The lineup of partners may vary from project to project, but the principles remain the same.

Consider the more than 160 arts organizations located in the city. The major institutions—the DIA, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, College for Creative Studies, Michigan Opera Theatre, Charles Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit Historical Museum, and others. There is no shortage of small-, medium-, and large-sized organizations, projects, and activities touching the lives and daily routines of thousands of city residents. Just a handful of examples are illustrative:

*Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit* recently moved into the same building as University Prep Math and Science Elementary School. The youth theater can now integrate arts and culture into the school’s curriculum and provide new cultural activities for the surrounding neighborhood.

*Festivals and celebrations*—among them the Detroit Design Festival (the design arts), DLECTRICITY (light and contemporary art installations), and Art X Detroit (showcasing the work of Kresge Artist Fellows and Eminent Artists)—regularly attract thousands of people to Midtown Detroit to participate in installations, workshops, shows, studio tours, lectures, and block parties.

*The community+public arts: DETROIT program* draws on community engagement, large-scale public art, urban planning, and green infrastructure to transform vacant and underused spaces in multiple Detroit neighborhoods.

*The REVOLVE Livernois initiative* created 30 temporary and permanent art installations and pop-up activities along a stretch of Livernois Avenue, historically known as Detroit’s “Avenue of Fashion.” It has been expanded with grants from Kresge and the NEA’s Our Town program to five additional corridors (for more on the NEA’s Our Town program, see Chu and Schupbach in this issue).

*Intersections*, an arts-infused pocket park project, has engaged the North Corktown business and residential community in redeveloping contiguous vacant lots at one of the neighborhood’s key intersections.

*Power House Productions* reclaims vacant land and houses purchased for as little as \$100 in Banglatown (named for the multiple generations of Bangladeshi immigrants) and gives the properties new lives as power generators (wind and solar), cultural spaces, artistic installations, and community centers.

Through the *Alley Project*, Young Nation has transformed an alley in Southwest Detroit into a permanent outdoor exhibition space dedicated to aerosol paint street art by local artists and youth. The project is shaped by a design process that continuously engages neighborhood residents.

Artists are standing at the heart of this ecosystem. Those who have resided in the city for many years have been joined by new arrivals. Together they are helping the city creatively reimagine the arc of its aspirations. The newcomers are attracted to the city by what some have termed “Rust Belt chic:” the possibility of buying a house for \$1,000 or renting for a pittance; working unconstrained by bureaucracy to carve out unexpected uses in unexpected places; converting the public ruins of factories and warehouses into studio and exhibition spaces; and the opportunity to experience community vibrancy, street life, and cultural identity.

All these efforts entail some degree of risk and a willingness to see potential where others have not. Rebuilding a city requires not just the spirit to try something new; it also requires a common sense of purpose. Detroit is fortunate to possess both of these qualities. In fact, city residents spent more than two years coming together to establish parameters for the city’s transformation and to identify pathways to better opportunity for all Detroiters, captured in a framework for action called “Detroit Future City.”<sup>1</sup>

Since its completion, Detroit Future City has become the guide for all of Kresge’s investments in the city and has entered the fabric of municipal and regional planning. It draws from the input of thousands of Detroiters to define quality of life and affirm that safety, health, prosperity, housing, and public services are among the essential building blocks of an economically viable, socially cohesive city.

Detroit should approach its challenges with unprecedented ambition. It will have to be smart—challenging preconceptions about what a city is supposed to look like and how it works. It will have to be bold—pursuing ideas that will strike some as outlandish and others as foolish. It will also have to be unflinching in its courage—bracing against forces that will not welcome such sweeping change. Anything less won’t be enough.

Artists in Detroit are uniquely suited to help meet these challenges. They are instrumental in helping us see connections among the past, the present, and the future. They embody, embrace, and express the soul of the place. And they are fully engaged in creative placemaking—contributing tangibly and powerfully to energizing and animating our neighborhoods.

*Rip Rapson is president and CEO of the Kresge Foundation, a \$3 billion national, private foundation based in metropolitan Detroit. Rapson came to Kresge in 2006 and led the philanthropy in a multiyear transition to expand and recalibrate its grantmaking. Strategically focused programs emerged: arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development in Detroit, Kresge’s hometown. Each seeks to expand opportunities in America’s cities so that vulnerable people can lead self-determined lives and join the economic mainstream. Rapson serves as chairman of the ArtPlace Presidents Council and sits on the boards of Living Cities, the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, the Downtown Detroit Partnership, M-1 Rail, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation of New York. He earned a law degree from Columbia University.*

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1 For more on the Detroit Future City framework, see <http://detroitfuturecity.com/>.

# Profiles in Placemaking: ArtPlace America Grantees

Creative Placemaking in Community Planning and Development:  
An Introduction to ArtPlace America  
*Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace America*

Strengthening Economic Development  
*Town Square Anchor for a Changing Skyline*  
*REVOLVE Detroit*  
*Irrigate*  
*Arts and Culture Temporiams*

Seeding Civic Engagement  
*Sonoran Desert Retreat Center and Residences*  
*Great Chicago Fire Festival*  
*Creative Trails at the ARTery*  
*Fairmount Cultural Corridor*

Building Resiliency  
*Prattsville Center and Artist Residency*  
*World Garden Commons*  
*Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk*  
*Design/Relief*

Contributing to Quality of Life  
*SALT District*  
*Follow the Light*  
*Santo Domingo Heritage Trail Arts Project*  
*The Porch at 30th Street Station*

ArtPlace America has supported 189 projects to-date across 122 communities of all sizes in 42 states and the District of Columbia

# Creative Placemaking in Community Planning and Development: An Introduction to ArtPlace America

*Jamie Bennett*

*ArtPlace America*

## **Creative Placemaking**

For the past five years, “creative placemaking” has increasingly been used to describe projects in which art plays an intentional and integrated role in place-based community planning and development. The phrase simply adds creative interventions alongside the other “placemaking” strategies pioneered by Jane Jacobs and her colleagues who believed that community planning and development should be human-centered, local, and holistic.

A growing interest in creative placemaking led to the creation of ArtPlace America, which is a 10-year project supported by a partnership of 14 foundations, eight federal agencies, and six financial institutions that is working to position art and culture as a core sector of community planning and development. To date, ArtPlace has invested \$56.8 million in 189 creative placemaking projects in 122 communities of all sizes across the United States.

Each of these projects has done four things: (1) defined a community based in geography, such as a block, neighborhood, city, or even a county; (2) articulated a change the group of people living and working in that community want; (3) proposed an arts-based intervention to help achieve that change; and (4) developed a way to know whether the change occurred.

In each project, arts and culture are working to help achieve a place-based change, which means that it is the interventions that are creative, not necessarily the outcomes. In creative placemaking, “creative” is an adverb describing the making, not an adjective describing the place. Successful creative placemaking is not quantified by how many new arts centers, galleries, or cultural districts are built. Rather, its success is measured in the ways artists, formal and informal arts spaces, and creative interventions contribute toward community outcomes.

As a result, ArtPlace has adopted the language of community planning and development as the framework and context for understanding the impact of our investments.

## **The Functions of Creative Placemaking**

In examining the projects in which ArtPlace has invested, we found four ways that creative placemaking has regularly functioned in communities—ways that are both of interest to those involved in community planning and development, and those that are grounded in existing research. Communities consistently employ creative placemaking interventions to

strengthen economic development, encourage civic engagement, build resiliency, and/or contribute to quality of life.

### *Strengthens Economic Development*

Creative placemaking supports economic diversity and place-based prosperity in the community, creating more opportunity for all. At the end of 2013, the US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis published their first Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account. It estimated 3.2 percent of the 2011 gross domestic product (GDP), or \$504 billion, was uniquely attributable to arts and cultural production. For comparison, this figure is only slightly less than the construction industry's contribution to GDP—and slightly more than the travel and tourism sector's contribution.

Arts and culture are often consumed in person, which means they also increase foot traffic and its associated benefits. Different types of arts spaces attract different patterns of foot traffic. Performing arts venues, for example, attract many people who arrive and depart at set times in the course of a week. Museums and other visual arts venues attract a steady stream of people in the course of a day. And rehearsal and studio spaces for artists tend to attract individuals on an hourly basis, throughout the day, seven days per week.

By clustering together different types of arts spaces along underused streets, communities are able to create consistent patterns of foot traffic, which provides a positive presence on the street to improve public safety and to drive a neighborhood's economy, as these members of the public dine and shop. Perhaps not surprising, social scientists at the University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project have said their signature finding is that "high levels of cultural engagement are a leading indicator of a neighborhood's revitalization."<sup>1</sup>

### *Encourages Civic Engagement*

Creative placemaking provides a sense of community identity and agency, which connects community members with one another as stewards of shared space. In "Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places," Alaka Wali, an anthropologist commissioned by the Chicago Center for Arts Policy, examined participation in the informal arts—the types of art participation that are more likely to be a part of daily life, such as singing in a church choir, participating in a drumming circle, writing poetry at the local library, painting at home, or acting in a community theater.<sup>2</sup> She found that individuals with higher rates of participation in the informal arts also vote and volunteer at higher rates.

James Catterall, a University of California, Los Angeles professor emeritus, looked at patterns of participation in arts among students with low socioeconomic status in "The Arts

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1 Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, "The Arts, Civic Engagement, and the 'Tragedy of the Commons.'" (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Arts Project, June 2008), [http://impact.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/civic\\_engagement/4d-Civic-Tragedy%20of%20the%20commons%20PDF.pdf](http://impact.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/civic_engagement/4d-Civic-Tragedy%20of%20the%20commons%20PDF.pdf).

2 Alaka Wali et al., "Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places," (Chicago, IL: Chicago Center for Arts Policy, June 2002), [http://archive.fieldmuseum.org/ccuc/ccuc\\_sites/Arts\\_Study/pdf/Informal\\_Arts\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://archive.fieldmuseum.org/ccuc/ccuc_sites/Arts_Study/pdf/Informal_Arts_Full_Report.pdf).

and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies.”<sup>3</sup> According to Catterall, young people who are at risk, but who actively participate in arts, have “comparatively high levels of volunteering, voting, and engagement with local or school politics.” People who participate in the arts are also more likely to engage civically beyond the arts.

### *Builds Resiliency*

Creative placemaking contributes to long-term investment in a community. It helps reestablish normalcy and provides psycho-social relief following a natural disaster or community tragedy. Thanks to the leadership of the Rockefeller Foundation (an ArtPlace partner), for example, communities are increasingly focused on building resiliency: the prevention of, preparation for, and recovery after major disruptions. The foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities project uses a framework that gives 12 attributes of a resilient city.<sup>4</sup> Two of their key ingredients for resiliency are “social stability and security” and “collective identity and mutual support.”

The Knight Foundation (another ArtPlace partner) worked with Gallup to investigate the drivers of “community attachment” (their term for Rockefeller’s “social stability”). They conducted the “Soul of the Community” poll in 26 different communities and discovered that the top three drivers of community attachment were consistently “social offerings, (such as entertainment venues and places to meet), openness (how welcoming a place is), and the area’s aesthetics (its physical beauty and green spaces).” Arts and arts organizations regularly provide all three, also providing one of the key ingredients for resiliency.

Turning to Rockefeller’s “collective identity,” the same Chicago Center for Arts Policy paper that delineated the role of the informal arts in encouraging civic engagement also found that these same informal arts “build both individual identity and group solidarity,” which means that the informal arts play an important role in helping heterogeneous communities create the stable and shared sense of collective identity that is a second key ingredient for resiliency.<sup>5</sup>

### *Contributes to Quality of Life*

Creative placemaking creates more vibrant and livable places by offering social activities and improving an area’s aesthetics. During her tenure as the founding director of ArtPlace—building on the work she did in her previous role with CEOs for Cities, and work which she continues in her current role at the Knight Foundation—Carol Coletta worked with Joe Cortright of Impresa Consulting to investigate and understand the quality of life offerings that today’s increasingly mobile workforce seek in the places they choose to live. Their research reveals that arts and cultural leisure activities are regularly among the quality of life offerings that are present in the “vibrant, close-in neighborhoods” that are seeing population growth.<sup>6</sup>

3 James S. Catterall et al, “The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings From Four Longitudinal Studies,” (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, March 2012), <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>.

4 The Rockefeller Foundation, “City Resilience Framework,” (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, April 2014), <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/0bb537c0-d872-467f-9470-b20f57c32488.pdf>.

5 Alaka Wali et al, “Informal Arts.”

6 Joseph Cortright, “The Young and Restless in a Knowledge Economy.” (Chicago, IL: CEOs for Cities, December 2005). [http://www.ceosforcities.org/pagefiles/CEOs\\_YNR\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ceosforcities.org/pagefiles/CEOs_YNR_FINAL.pdf)

## How Creative Placemaking Works

For these outcomes to be useful in community planning and development, we should look beyond the functions of creative placemaking and examine how creative placemaking works.

Looking again at the projects in which ArtPlace has invested, we found communities use creative placemaking to anchor, activate, “fix,” and plan.

### *Anchoring*

Creative placemaking leverages arts and culture organizations as stable community institutions, contributing to neighborhood identity, bringing jobs, and attracting patrons who support area businesses.

Community developers have long understood how hospitals and universities serve as community anchor institutions: employing community members, purchasing goods and services, having a stake in communities, and drawing diverse foot traffic to the area. Museums, performing arts centers, and other arts organizations can serve the same functions while bringing the added benefits of social offerings, aesthetics, social cohesion, and quality of life.

### *Activating*

Creative placemaking brings performance and participatory activities to public spaces (including plazas and alleyways) to make them more attractive, exciting, and safe.

In her groundbreaking 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs recognized that public spaces regularly inhabited by diverse people are safer, more prosperous, more enjoyable for residents, and more attractive to visitors.<sup>7</sup> Planned public performances, flash mobs, and temporary and permanent works of public art have attracted residents and visitors to previously abandoned and underused spaces.

### *“Fixing”*

Creative placemaking ameliorates structural design problems. It encourages beautification, engagement, and reimagining use—and it connects people with opportunities and one another. The quotation marks around “fixing” are intentional. It can be too easy to talk about a broken home or struggling neighborhood. We are not using “fixing” to describe a problem that needs to be fixed from an outside perspective. Instead, we are talking about challenges that communities have identified and the changes they want to see.

Artists and arts organizations can use their creative processes and the imagination they inspire to help communities invent new solutions to historic challenges. From using lighting to increase safety and help pedestrians navigate a city, to the more aspirational use of beauty to help change a community’s narrative, creative placemaking projects can help communities address their most pressing concerns.

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7 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (New York City, NY: Random House, 1961).

### *Planning*

Creative placemaking engages residents in the neighborhood development process. It solicits input and suggestions through rapid prototyping and iterative design so that residents may determine the future of their community. Some community planning and development is done to communities. Most successful community planning and development is done by and with communities. Designers, planners, and community developers have seen the benefits of allowing people to use public spaces before making permanent infrastructure investments in them. Engaging with a community at the beginning of a project promotes understanding of how people currently use space and how they are likely to use space in the future. Proper planning often negates the need for “fixing” later. The arts, by bringing people together in a way that fosters both individual identity and group solidarity, can facilitate community-engaged and community-led planning efforts.

### **Creative Placemaking in Action**

The following profiles describe 16 projects that ArtPlace has supported. Creative placemaking is at work in communities of all sizes and in all areas of the country—from Anchorage, Alaska, across to Charlotte, North Carolina—because artists are an asset that exists in every community. Not every community has waterfront access, a strong public transportation system, or a major hospital or university. However, every community has people who sing, dance, and tell stories. These sixteen projects represent some of the functions of creative placemaking and how it is at work.

*Jamie Bennett is the executive director of ArtPlace America, a partnership among 14 foundations, 8 federal agencies, and 6 financial institutions working to position art and culture as a core sector of community planning and development in order to help shape a community’s social, physical, and economic. To date, ArtPlace has invested \$56.8 million through 189 grants to creative placemaking projects in communities of all sizes across the United States. Until December 2013, Jamie served as chief of staff at the National Endowment for the Arts. Previously, he served in similar roles at the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and to the president of Columbia University; provided strategic counsel at the Agnes Gund Foundation for 8 years; and worked in fundraising at The Museum of Modern Art, the New York Philharmonic, and Columbia College.*

The framework below showcases some of the many different ways that creative placemaking projects are employing arts-based strategies to achieve place-based outcomes.

## What Creative Placemaking Can Do

	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
<b>Strengthening Economic Development</b>	Drive economic diversity, new investments, and new access points to participate in growing economies	The REVOLVE program of the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation has paired artists and pop-up businesses in vacant storefronts along Livernois Ave to catalyze interest in the community's revitalization ( <i>Detroit, MI</i> )
<b>Seeding Civic Engagement</b>	Connect community members to one another, as stewards of their place, and to a shared sense of the future of a place	International Sonoran Desert Alliance hosts traditional and contemporary Tohono O'odham and Mexican artists to create a tri-national border-themed art installations, bringing the community together around a broader vision for their place ( <i>Ajo, AZ</i> )
<b>Building Resiliency</b>	Help re-establish normalcy, generate new community assets, and provide psycho-social relief following a natural disaster, community tragedy or long-term disinvestment	The new Prattsville Art Center and Residency serves as a central community hub and engages artists to reimagine the future of this rural town as it recovers from devastating 2011 floods ( <i>Prattsville, NY</i> )
<b>Contributing to Quality of Life</b>	Create new amenities and increase access to public spaces, resources, and infrastructure to increase attachment to place	The Near Westside Initiative has increased recreational, social, and economic opportunities in for residents in their neighborhood through engaged scholarship, innovative design practices, and community coalition building ( <i>Syracuse, NY</i> )

## How Creative Placemaking Can Do It



How Creative Placemaking Can Do It

	ANCHORING	ACTIVATING	"FIXING"	PLANNING
<b>Strengthening Economic Development</b>	Town Square Anchor for a Changing Skyline <i>Miami-Dade County, FL</i>	REVOLVE Detroit <i>Detroit, MI</i>	Irrigate <i>St. Paul, MN</i>	Arts and Culture Temporiams <i>Washington, DC</i>
<b>Seeding Civic Engagement</b>	Sonoran Desert Retreat Center and Residencies <i>Ajo, AZ</i>	The Great Chicago Fire Festival <i>Chicago, IL</i>	The ARTery <i>Milwaukee, WI</i>	Fairmount Cultural Corridor <i>Boston, MA</i>
<b>Building Resiliency</b>	Prattsville Art Center and Residency <i>Prattsville, NY</i>	World Garden Commons <i>Fargo, ND</i>	Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk <i>Charlotte, NC</i>	Design/Relief <i>New York, NY</i>
<b>Contributing to Quality of Life</b>	SALT District <i>Syracuse, NY</i>	Follow the Light <i>Anchorage, AK</i>	The Santo Domingo Heritage Trail Arts Project <i>Santo Domingo Pueblo, NM</i>	The Porch at 30th Street <i>West Philadelphia, PA</i>

What Creative Placemaking Can Do

# Strengthening Economic Development

- Anchoring    Town Square Anchor for a Changing Skyline—Miami, FL  
***Jodi Farrell***  
*Senior Director of Foundation Relations, Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts*
- Ana Morgenstern***  
*Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Miami*
- Activating    REVOLVE—Detroit, MI  
***Michael Forsyth***  
*Retail Business Development Manager, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation*
- “Fixing”      Irrigate—St. Paul, MN  
***Laura Zabel***  
*Executive Director, Springboard for the Arts*
- Planning      Arts and Culture Tempori-ums—Washington, DC  
***Kimberly Driggins***  
*Associate Director, DC Office of Planning*

# Strengthening Economic Development: Anchoring

Authors: Jodi Farrell and Ana Morgenstern

Organization: Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts

Program: Town Square Anchor for a Changing Skyline

Location: Miami-Dade County, FL

## At a Glance

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts leverages its status as a world-class arts and cultural institution to anchor economic development in Miami’s racially and economically segregated downtown area, benefitting commercial investors and local businesses while improving living standards for local residents. Through the implementation of its Town Square initiative, the Arsht Center addresses the long-term effect of growth on the existing infrastructure—particularly with regard to traffic, walkability, and parking. In addition, the center calls for public and private developers to respect the following key design principles: organized public open spaces, connectivity to nearby communities, dynamic mixed-use buildings, enhancement of existing landmarks, and roadways and sidewalks that encourage foot traffic. The degree to which construction projects in the area have adhered to these principles since 2011, when Town Square began, is the center’s primary measure of success.

## Overview

Built with public and private funds, and owned by Miami-Dade County, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts has been credited with attracting more than \$1 billion in investment in downtown Miami as developers from Spain, Argentina, and Malaysia have learned about the area’s cultural awakening. Opened in 2006, the 550,000-square-foot center was purposely built in an unpopulated, blighted area of downtown Miami to spur development. The Arsht Center’s board strongly believed that critical infrastructure and an arts identity should not be left purely to chance or market demands, but that it should rely on a planning model to organize and transform the space. In 2011, with private developers from around the globe buying vacant land surrounding it, the Arsht Center organized a group of cultural leaders and area stakeholders to create a vision for its rapidly changing neighborhood, called the Town Square. Its master plan and aggressive pursuit of improved living standards in the area ensure the arts will be an integral part of downtown Miami’s revitalization.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

Miami-Dade County is majority-minority, with Hispanics (66 percent) and African Americans (19 percent) constituting the dominant populations. Racial and income segrega-

tion are two of the biggest challenges facing the area. Miami has the third highest rate of income inequality among US cities after Atlanta and New Orleans, roughly on par with Mexico City. With 30 international banks and 28 consulates in Miami, the “Gateway to the Americas” also faces infrastructure challenges in keeping up with its expanding population and business activity. Miami residents love their cars, and as a result, the city ranks 18th in the nation in public transportation use, although it ranks 12th in population. The downtown population directly south of the Arsht Center has grown from 40,000 to 70,000 in less than a decade, with another 15,000 people expected in the next few years.

### **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

One of Town Square’s first major accomplishments was the creation of a neighborhood master plan by the Arsht Center’s original architect, César Pelli. Written in collaboration with cultural leaders, traffic engineers, community stakeholders, city planners, public officials, and urban planning consultants hired by the Arsht Center, the aspirational plan addresses the long-term effect of growth on the existing infrastructure, particularly with regard to traffic, walkability, and parking. It calls for public and private developers to be culturally aware and respectful of a holistic vision for urban livability that is mindful of the following key design principles: organized public open spaces, connectivity with nearby communities, dynamic mixed-use buildings, enhancement of existing landmarks, and roadways and sidewalks that encourage foot traffic. The center, as the neighborhood’s anchor institution, seeks to ensure inclusivity by connecting the area to Overtown, an adjacent, historically black neighborhood; Museum Park, a sprawling configuration of museums and a public park along Biscayne Bay; and Wynwood Art District, an up-and-coming district composed largely of start-up companies, galleries, and artists.

### **Implementation**

Instead of one government entity or organization leading the charge for neighborhood development, Town Square has strengthened itself by partnering with various government institutions; other arts/entertainment organizations; and civic leaders, philanthropists, developers, and community organizers. The “creative bureaucracy” organized by the center has broken down the traditional confines of government and culture. The nonpartisan collaborating network is not a controller, but an enabler that provides broad direction, strategic focus, and a collective vision. The involvement of all stakeholders—elected representatives, professionals, residents, and organizations—has been imperative in establishing ownership of the project and strengthening its possibilities for success.

The Arsht Center emerged as an anchoring leader in this effort partly because it was the first and largest organization to occupy the neighborhood. Spending by the Arsht Center and its audiences has a \$220 million annual economic effect on Florida, generating 450 hotel room nights, more than \$4.5 million in local and state taxes, and more than 1,500 jobs. For

a cultural center and group with no land rights or power, Town Square has earned significant respect and support. Since its master plan was publicly discussed at a town hall meeting at the center in 2012, an increasing number of private developers have altered proposals to embrace its principles. Genting Group, a Malaysian conglomerate aspiring to build a hotel–retail complex next to the Arsht Center on a waterfront site formerly owned by the *Miami Herald*, has scaled back the design’s size and incorporated a public park. Other developers have added street-level retail to their condominium and apartment towers. Even the Florida Department of Transportation has altered its redevelopment of a nearby interstate overpass and agreed to construct a taller signature bridge allowing walkability underneath.

In 2013, the Arsht Center became the first major cultural institution in the nation to establish its own Office of Neighborhood Development (OND), which, with the assistance of national consultants, is actively pursuing its own development opportunities, including a new public piazza, a revamped on-site restaurant, and a new bookstore café. The OND is collaborating with Miami–Dade County Public Schools, which owns land in the neighborhood, to explore the possibility of building a mixed-use facility that could house parking, retail, and a new high school magnet program devoted to the arts. Transportation and urban planning consultants hired by OND continue to benefit state and local roadway reconstruction and parking for the neighborhood.

## Progress to Date

Parking, pedestrian-friendly streets, and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods continue to be challenges for Town Square. However, in the past three years, the “signals of momentum” used by the center to track its progress are showing signs of success. The community is cleaner, safer, and far more attractive than it has been. Other arts institutions, studios, restaurants, and businesses are settling into the area. A new 30-acre public urban park has opened within walking distance. A growing number of alternative public transportation options—a free trolley, a car-sharing business, and proposed higher-speed rail service—have been added to the city’s above-ground transit system. Four residential towers are under construction and three others are planned. The Arsht Center will continue to track these livability indicators to gauge Town Square’s success, along with comparative data on the number of new residents in the area, completed construction projects, and attendance at Arsht Center events.

*Jodi Mailander Farrell is senior director of foundation relations at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County, where she has worked for five years. She was a journalist in Florida for more than 20 years at the Miami Herald and Palm Beach Post. Her writing has appeared in National Geographic Traveler, Latina, People, Robb Report and DC Comics, among other diverse publications. She continues to write about food, travel and culture for the Miami Herald and other newspapers and magazines, and is the “Culture Insider” for Visit Florida, the state’s consumer travel news agency.*

*Ana Morgenstern, PhD, is the grant writer at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County, where she works to ensure that the organization may fulfill its mission of engaging diverse communities through the power of the performing arts. Ana received a PhD from the University of Miami where she also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in a multidisciplinary study, where she co-authored several studies published in Nature and IEEE. She also holds a MPA with a specialization in nonprofit administration. She has been a Webb Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution and a distinguished fellow with the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Miami. Passionate about people-centered art, Ana is also the co-founder and habitual contributor to Independent Ethos, an online publication that celebrates culture and art as independent means of expression.*

# Strengthening Economic Development: Activating

Author: Michael Forsyth  
Organization: Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC)  
Program: REVOLVE Detroit  
Location: Detroit, MI

## At a Glance

REVOLVE Detroit strengthens economic development along Livernois Avenue, Detroit’s historic “Avenue of Fashion,” by activating vacant commercial real estate with pop-up and long-term arts programs that draw on the area’s storied jazz culture, diverse population, and history as a once-great luxury shopping sector. Since 2013, two of REVOLVE Detroit’s longer-term pop-up businesses have signed permanent leases. In addition, attention in local, regional, and national media has helped sustained interest in the project. Two of the major redevelopment sites activated during the project are under construction, resulting in private investment of approximately \$2.5 million that will create approximately 80 jobs.

## Overview

REVOLVE Detroit is a collaborative program created by the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC). The program partners with community leaders, building owners, entrepreneurs, and artists to transform vacant storefronts into businesses and art installations. The goal of the program is to foster vibrancy among Detroit’s neighborhood business districts. REVOLVE Detroit’s 2013 creative placemaking activities along Livernois Avenue, focused on how temporary arts and entrepreneurial activity encourage larger, long-term, place-based investment strategies. This work demonstrated how local government, economic development agencies, and other community-based organizations can strengthen economic development by using creative placemaking to activate underused spaces. The Livernois Avenue project was created by the Livernois Working Group, a collaborative consisting of government, universities, philanthropy, business, and community development stakeholders.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

During the 1940s-1970s, Livernois Avenue was a top destination for luxury shopping and entertainment in Detroit. Businesses such as B. Siegel Company, Woolworths, and Grinnell—the famed piano company—were trendsetters in the retail industry. African American cultural heritage played a principal role in shaping the arts and business along Livernois. The avenue has a rich musical legacy defined by American jazz. Baker’s Keyboard Lounge, America’s oldest operating jazz club, has hosted performances on the avenue since 1934. Famed musi-

cians such as Dave Brubeck, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, and Miles Davis have graced Baker’s stage. Strong economic assets provide more support for the business district. Livernois Avenue is surrounded by some of the city’s most stable and architecturally distinctive neighborhoods. Two of the city’s premiere higher education institutions, the University of Detroit Mercy and Marygrove College, are one to two miles from the main shopping district.

Despite these assets, the business district currently suffers from high vacancy, retail leakage, and a current image that is inconsistent with its rich historical brand. The Livernois Working Group has recognized the need to generate entrepreneurial interest in the area based on its unique arts and culture legacy, putting the arts at the center of its revitalization strategy.

### **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

In 2013, REVOLVE Detroit began working with the local community development corporation, University Commons, to identify property owners with vacant spaces and pending redevelopment projects in a two-block stretch in the heart of the business district. Once a series of committed property owners agreed to cooperate, the Detroit Collaborative Design Center—a multidisciplinary, nonprofit architecture and urban design firm at the University of Detroit Mercy’s School of Architecture and key collaborator—created the Livernois Community Storefront. This served as the first temporary vacant storefront activation and demonstrated the potential for repurposing the commercial corridor along Livernois.

Creative placemaking projects facilitating temporary use of vacant space through creative means can help solve some problems. But while these small investments can have big effects, they are not an end-all, be-all solution. When creative placemaking initiatives are integrated in a portfolio of investments or interventions, long-term sustainable change is more likely. These initiatives are particularly well suited for collaborations allowing multiple actors to contribute to the change they want to see. Involving multiple partners at the local, city, regional, and state levels when creating a broader vision for business district revitalization can instigate additional investments. When creative placemaking is part of the vision, the momentum and excitement planted by small investments and small projects help illustrate potential solutions and support the case for tackling larger opportunities and challenges.

### **Implementation**

A creative placemaking initiative to activate 10 vacant storefronts and three public spaces began in May 2013. It began with Livernois Community Storefront hosting “Light Up Livernois,” showcasing Livernois businesses, assets, and local entrepreneurs.

REVOLVE Detroit launched an international call to artists and entrepreneurs to submit proposals to repurpose vacant spaces. The project team targeted equal representation from Detroit-based, national, and international artists, along with opportunities to engage local

university students. Another desired project outcome was to empower artists and entrepreneurs to create unique, arts-forward retail environments while delivering the vision and functionality that specific businesses desired. The proposal review committee included Charles McGee, a prominent Detroit artist; Rufus Bartell, a long-time Livernois boutique owner and property owner participating in the project; and representatives from the local community development corporation, neighborhood organizations, and neighboring universities.

For two months, artists, entrepreneurs, building owners, community volunteers, and project teams collaborated on 31 unique projects. “We Came in Peace,” the experiential design firm serving as the project’s creative director, quickly scaled their team to bring in additional design-build consultants, contractors, and production assistants to execute events quickly. Relationship management was important throughout the implementation process. The primary daily challenge was to facilitate common actions and consensus among artists, entrepreneurs, and landlords who spoke different languages and had different work styles, objectives, and personalities.

Resulting projects included two permanent businesses and 12 pop-up businesses ranging from one-day to 90-day activations (some of which hoped to become permanent fixtures along the avenue). Eighteen art projects were also completed as part of the initiative. These projects spanned the spectrum of artistic mediums, engagement techniques, and degrees of permanency. Art installations included two large-scale exterior murals showcasing prominent local African American musicians by Baltimore-based artist Michael Owen. Several artist teams transformed the interiors of new retail shops. Temporary installations ranged from theater, spoken word, music, dance, and diverse visual arts mediums.

## Progress to Date

Projects were unveiled to a regional audience of approximately 3,000 people at the Detroit Design Festival in September 2013. Since then, two pop-up stores have signed permanent leases, and the attention generated from the project has helped recruit several other permanent businesses. Two of the major redevelopment sites activated during the project are under construction, resulting in private investment of approximately \$2.5 million that will create approximately 80 jobs. Increased media visibility continues to elevate the business district with increased regional coverage, and a recent *New York Times* story highlighted development progress in Detroit.

The project produced several valuable lessons. This work is very labor intensive: going forward, REVOLVE Detroit will allocate more staff time and resources to assist first-time business owners and to manage the delicate collaboration between artists and entrepreneurs. Value exists in upfront assessment and planning: in the future, REVOLVE Detroit will conduct more in-depth due diligence on business owners and project spaces, engaging the help of experienced design-build consultants. This will include a better assessment of project feasibility to identify risks and challenges, and to scope costs. Ongoing programming is essential to sustain the momentum of short-term interventions: Detroit Collaborative

Design Center has instituted “Third Thursdays on Livernois,” hosting regularly scheduled events throughout the district to attract customers to new and established businesses.

*Michael Forsyth is the business development manager with the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation and the founder and program manager for REVOLVE Detroit. REVOLVE is a collaborative program of the DEGC that partners with local leaders, building owners, entrepreneurs, and artists to activate vacant storefronts with transformational businesses and art installations. Michael Forsyth attended Michigan State University where he earned a degree in environmental studies and a master’s in urban planning. Prior to joining the DEGC, Mr. Forsyth studied temporary use in Germany’s post-industrial cities and joined a Seattle consulting firm where he led a range of economic development projects.*

# Strengthening Economic Development: “Fixing”

Author: Laura Zabel  
Organization: Springboard for the Arts  
Program: Irrigate  
Location: St. Paul, MN

## At a Glance

The Irrigate program strengthens economic development in St. Paul, MN, and Fergus, MN, by empowering artists to create inviting, whimsical projects that draw attention to small businesses adversely affected by construction along the new Green Line of the Twin Cities’ light-rail. Irrigate’s creative placemaking initiatives increase foot traffic and attract new revenue streams through pop-up performances, art installations, and community outreach initiatives, effectively recasting the disruptive construction as a reason to visit the area. Irrigate was developed by Springboard for the Arts, an economic and community development organization that connects artists with information and resources in an effort to build more vibrant communities.

## Overview

Springboard for the Arts strives to create reciprocal relationships between artists and communities in and around St. Paul and Fergus Falls. To that end, in 2011, Springboard for the Arts, the City of St. Paul, and Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), developed the Irrigate project as a series of artist-led creative placemaking activities. This unique cross-sector partnership came from the city’s desire to mitigate the disruptive effects of major infrastructure projects on the community by leveraging the creative skills of their residents. For three years, Irrigate trained artists from the neighborhoods in community organizing, and provided support for them to pursue collaborative partnerships with businesses and neighborhood organizations. Irrigate has trained more than 600 artists and has supported more than 180 collaborative creative placemaking projects that bring artists, neighborhood organizations, and local businesses closer together.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

The new Green Line of the Twin Cities’ light-rail stretches through the heart of St. Paul and connects some of the most traditionally underinvested yet culturally significant neighborhoods in the city. It has garnered public investment of nearly \$1 billion, with an additional \$7 billion leveraged in private investment made possible, in large part, by a coalition of local and national foundations called the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative. The

collaborative anticipates that the Green Line will bring economic development and vitality to the community. At the same time, it acknowledges the burdens that living through four years of sustained construction has placed on residents and the diverse small businesses that cater to them. Traditional methods for addressing these challenges—community meetings, town halls, and employing marketing consultants—have yielded few tangible results.

### **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

Through a set of arts projects, Irrigate builds social capital among a wide set of residents and draws attention and revenue to small businesses and commercial areas affected by the Green Line construction. Irrigate was developed through a collaboration that uses Springboard’s expertise in artist training and community problem solving, LISC’s background in “brick and mortar” community development, and the City of St. Paul’s policy and planning knowledge. Participation in Irrigate has established Springboard as a trusted resource for artists seeking greater community engagement, placing them at sites where they can be the most effective and providing technical assistance to ensure their projects are actualized.

Before Irrigate, Springboard maintained relationships with staff at LISC and the City of St. Paul, but it had never partnered with them on a large-scale initiative. The Irrigate collective reflects the city’s desire to find new ways to support the community during the Green Line disruption. It also reflects the willingness of Springboard and LISC to develop new strategies for communities to think creatively about their development. In addition to the three leading partners, six district councils representing the neighborhoods along Green Line served as critical collaborators for Irrigate. Community organizers from these neighborhood organizations cofacilitated artist training with Springboard staff, giving artists well-connected allies to help them find business and neighborhood partners for their projects.

### **Implementation**

Two of Irrigate’s key messages are that artists are assets for their neighborhoods and that every neighborhood has artists. These messages were a rallying cry for artists who were excited to use their creative skills to improve the places where they lived. Without prompting, artists who participated in the training started calling themselves “Irrigate Artists,” showing up at each other’s events, sharing resources, and communicating with each other through a private Facebook group.

Small projects can build a sense of ownership among people who share a place. In three years, Irrigate has trained more than 600 artists in the community using simple organizing tools. These artists have generated more than 180 collaborative placemaking projects. Irrigate’s only requirement was that the projects should demonstrate a partnership between artists and neighborhood organizations or businesses. Suddenly, small, creative, engaging, and interesting projects, popping up everywhere, give people reasons to patronize local businesses. Examples include the following:

*Artist Chris Gardella* works with the Black Dog Cafe to construct a giant black dog puppet that roams the neighborhood while the restaurant's sign is obscured by construction.

*Artist Kristen Murray* declares herself "artist in residence" for a bus stop and spends weeks engaging neighbors in art-making activities and gathering their input on important neighborhood issues, including a new stop for the light-rail.

*Artist Carrie Christensen* constructs a series of wayfinding bikes that help people find local businesses amid the construction (the bikes appear as temporary billboards, locked to public bike racks).

*Artist Mira Kehoe* organizes a monthly jazz night at Mai Village Restaurant, an important community gathering space owned by first-generation immigrants from Vietnam, after construction workers had dug a moat around the site. These jazz nights increase nightly revenue by 50 percent.

*Artist Dianne E'Laine* creates a song and Zumba dance called the "Light Rail Shuffle." Initially performed at Arnellia's Night Club, this song is both an expression of joy and a song about how constructing the light-rail echoes the construction of the interstate, which cut through Rondo, a historically African American neighborhood. The "Light Rail Shuffle" has become a sort of anthem, and Dianne performs and teaches it at community events and celebrations.

## Progress to Date

One of the most important ways Irrigate measures its progress is by charting the public's perception of the neighborhoods along the Green Line. By supporting several small projects, Irrigate has demonstrated how the arts can inspire positive media coverage and increased visibility. As Irrigate projects started to appear, they provided daily opportunities for the press to write about fun, interesting, curious, and authentic happenings in St. Paul's neighborhoods—compelling stories that did not focus on the difficulties and disruption of the construction projects. Irrigate set up simple tracking mechanisms to collect media stories generated by the artists' projects. Tunheim Market Research conducted a study of these stories, showing that Irrigate generated more than 30 million positive earned media impressions of an area that otherwise would have had a nearly exclusively negative public perception. Irrigate can compare these numbers to the typical return on investment of a marketing firm that places ads, which could generate only 5.25 million purchased media impressions with the same amount of investment. In addition to the effect on neighborhood perception, businesses and other groups that participated in Irrigate saw increased interest and foot traffic because of the projects. Ninety percent of participating businesses say they are "more likely" as a result of the project to work with an artist again.

Because of the success of Irrigate in St. Paul, the Irrigate model has been piloted and adapted at different funding levels to inspire artists everywhere. The Irrigate toolkit developed by Springboard for the Arts is available at [www.springboardexchange.org](http://www.springboardexchange.org).

*Laura Zabel is executive director of Springboard for the Arts, an economic and community development agency based in Minnesota. Springboard provides programs that help artists make a living and a life, and programs that help communities tap into the resource that artists provide. Some of Springboard's projects include: Community Supported Art (CSA), the Artists Access to Healthcare program, and the Irrigate project, a national model for how cities can engage artists to help reframe and address big community challenges. Springboard's programs have been replicated in over 50 communities across the country. Springboard recently launched the Creative Exchange, a new national platform for story and resource sharing.*

# Strengthening Economic Development: Planning

Author: Kimberly Driggins

Organization: District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP)

Program: Arts and Culture Temporiums

Location: Washington, DC

## At a Glance

In 2012, the District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP) piloted elements of its long-term Central 14th Street Corridor Plan and Revitalization Strategy through small-scale arts and culture “Temporiums,” which took place in Wards 1 and 4 of Washington, DC. The Temporiums were only one component of a broader planning initiative that blended several traditional and nontraditional community investment approaches. Based on data collected from three sites along the Central 14th Street Corridor where the Temporiums occurred, OP concluded that an arts-based approach is an effective, affordable way to test comprehensive, long-term initiatives. OP now implements similar approaches in the early phases of all its economic development planning.

## Overview

OP is the chief planning agency for Washington, DC. Its mission is to guide real estate development in the District of Columbia, including preserving and revitalizing its distinctive neighborhoods. In 2011, OP created arts and culture Temporiums in four emerging creative neighborhoods along Central 14th Street. Temporiums are temporary, pop-up creative and retail projects that aim to reduce vacancy and spark economic development. In a six-month period, recommendations made by the Central 14th Street Corridor Plan and Revitalization Strategy were pilot tested in each of the corridor’s three struggling commercial areas. Arts-based activities were central to these pilots.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

The Central 14th Street area, only one-quarter mile north of Columbia Heights, includes several residential neighborhoods with clearly defined business districts. This 1.3-mile corridor includes three distinct commercial areas, each with its own character, challenges, and potential. The area bounded by Spring Road to the south and Longfellow Street to the north encompasses Wards 1 and 4. Surrounding neighborhoods include 14th Street Heights, 16th Street Heights, Crestwood, Petworth, and Brightwood. Approximately 14,500 residents live in these neighborhoods, and as of the 2010 Census, the racial composition of the area is 48 percent African American, 31 percent Latino, and 16 percent white.

The 14th street corridor was a thriving commercial district for much of the 20th century, but it was devastated after the race riots of 1968. The ensuing exodus of long-time residents and the loss of commercial businesses further accelerated the corridor's decline, amid mounting concerns about safety. More recently, however, Central 14th Street has undergone a transformation. More private interest and investment, accompanied by a sizable increase in population, have spurred OP to think broadly about how to plan the next phases of the corridor's revitalization. The Central 14th Street Vision Plan and Revitalization Strategy was initiated in 2009. After receiving extensive input from the community, OP adopted the following goals: to enliven retail and encourage patronage in the area; to create active, safe, and walkable streets; to increase connectivity between commercial areas; and to develop more green areas in public spaces. The plan was approved by the city council in the fall of 2012.

### **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

From April to October 2012, the Central 14th Street project hosted a series of temporary, catalytic, art- and cultural-based activities (Temporiums) that celebrated each of three commercial areas along 14th Street, from Spring Road to Longfellow Street Northwest. Residents and visitors were invited to experience the corridor's culturally diverse businesses and unique public space through art-based activities. The Central 14th Street Vision Plan and Revitalization Strategy called for unique, episodic activities that would recreate a reason for patrons not merely to pass by, but actually stop and enjoy 14th Street's hidden treasures. The goal of the plan was to position the 14th Street Corridor to attract public and private investment, as well as reposition itself as the vibrant commercial heart of Ward 4.

Four major efforts took place in a six-month period to pilot the Vision Plan and Revitalization Strategy:

1. **Celebrating Colorado Triangle as a public plaza (April 2012).** The Colorado Triangle area, between 14th Street and Longfellow Street, was transformed into a unique arts cluster by temporarily closing off a portion of Colorado Avenue and designating a pedestrian friendly art plaza. Visitors and residents painted a public mural, created landscaping, and used temporary seating.
2. **Experiencing the corridor through arts and culture (May to October 2012).** Foot traffic in the Bus Barn area, between Decatur Street and Webster Street Northwest, was increased through a series of musical performances and a large community festival that gave residents an opportunity to linger on the corridor's large sidewalks and patronize local businesses.
3. **Repositioning to benefit from Columbia Heights (August 2012).** A "food, art, and cultural crawl"—to support restaurants along Spring Road and Shepherd Street—was a combination of an art showcase and progressive neighborhood dinner tour. The event made approximately \$1,000 from ticket sales, and the proceeds were reinvested in the surrounding businesses.

4. **Connecting the commercial areas (July 2012).** Increasing the area's aesthetic appeal and improving its walkability, and connecting each of the commercial areas, was approached through beautification. Through a community charette, stakeholders (residents, property owners, artists, and business owners) designed temporary street furniture for the corridor's wide sidewalks. After the charette, the street furniture was refabricated by a local company and assembled and painted by residents during a subsequent workshop. Approximately 30 pieces of temporary furniture were made and could be seen in various storefronts and public spaces along the corridor.

## Implementation

The Central 14th Street project is a model for how public and private partnerships can work collaboratively during the early stages of a broader, long-term planning process. OP's partners were selected on the basis of their experience executing complex public art projects and building community relationships with property and business owners. Key partners included Rebar, a California-based public art and design studio that provided valuable advice on how best to translate community input and plan recommendations for art mediums suited to the space; the 14th Street Uptown Business Association (14 UBA), a local merchants association, which helped connect key business leaders with Rebar and communicate the vision plan to local businesses and provide incentives to participate; and the Commission on Arts and Humanities, which was instrumental in helping OP identify a curator and artists for the project.

## Progress to Date

The neighborhoods involved in the vision plan underwent immediate structural and aesthetic improvements as a result of the Temporiiums. Businesses received storefront upgrades; community-building initiatives and sustained dialogue occurred among residents and business owners; and 14 UBA developed better organizational capacity by obtaining technical assistance from the city.

Owing to the success of the Temporiiums in 2012, the OP has fundamentally changed how it goes about neighborhood planning. It now incorporates early initiatives that harness the arts and design for all neighborhood planning studies and projects. As small-scale enterprises, these activities help OP visualize the specific ways a neighborhood might benefit when a more comprehensive, longer-term plan is fully implemented. Temporiiums, then, can serve as a litmus test for the types of large-scale investments from the private and public sectors that are most likely to yield positive results in a given area.

*Kimberly C. Driggins is the associate director for citywide planning in the District of Columbia's Office of Planning. She is responsible for managing citywide planning projects across several areas including: housing, economic development, transportation, facilities and capital improvement planning. In addition, Kimberly serves as the project manager for several OP creative placemaking initiatives including: Temporary Urbanism program, Kresge Foundation and ArtPlace grants, and the Third Place initiative. She received a MPP from the University of Chicago and a BA in political science from Hampton University.*

# Seeding Civic Engagement

Anchoring Sonoran Desert Retreat Center and Residencies—Ajo, AZ

***Tracy Taft***

*Executive Director, International Sonoran Desert Alliance*

Activating Great Chicago Fire Festival—Chicago, IL

***Jim Lasko***

*Executive Artistic Director, Redmoon Theater*

“Fixing” Creative Trails at the ARTery—Milwaukee, WI

***Julia Taylor***

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***Lori Lobenstine***

*Program Design Lead, Design Studio for Social Intervention*

# Seeding Civic Engagement: Anchoring

Author: Tracy Taft  
Organization: International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA)  
Program: Sonoran Desert Retreat Center and Residencies  
Location: Ajo, AZ

## At a Glance

The International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA) encourages civic engagement in Ajo, Arizona, an economically depressed former mining community. Efforts designed to attract artists from throughout the United States have helped restore and repurpose historic buildings in the town center into the Sonoran Desert Retreat Center and Residencies, a cultural hub that will anchor a vibrant, ongoing community revitalization process. ISDA measures its success by tracking restored building use.

## Overview

For the past 10 years, ISDA has implemented a series of intensive strategies to spark economic and community development in Ajo, a remote rural town in the heart of the Sonoran Desert. ISDA encourages broad-based community participation, bringing people together across cultural divisions. Its mission is to anchor the region's economy by providing a showcase for environmental excellence and an international center for arts and culture that offers opportunities for all the city's residents. ISDA's strategies are a blend of real estate development efforts, which use historic restoration and renovation practices, and cultural programming designed to help people connect among generations, cultures, and national borders.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

Ajo was originally built as three segregated company towns: Indian Village, Mexican Town, and the Ajo Anglo Townsite. After Ajo's copper mine began operating in 1917, the town reached a peak population of more than 7,000 residents in the 1960s and boasted one of the best public schools in Arizona. When the mine closed in 1983, homes in Indian Village and Mexican Town were moved or demolished, which ultimately fully integrated the three communities. Miners lost their livelihoods and homes, and the local economy was devastated. The effects still exist. For older community members in particular, memories of institutional racism persist, and cultural rifts among the long segregated ethnic groups are slow to mend. Ajo's 3,300 year-round residents still experience high rates of poverty (23 percent) and unemployment (12.7 percent).

In the past five years, Ajo has experienced a second economic challenge. Located only 40 miles from the US–Mexico border, Ajo has been swept up in the national press’s depiction of the border region as a “war-zone.” A decade ago, 1.4 million cars passed through Ajo each year en route to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and the beaches along the Sea of Cortez in Mexico. Today, the traffic count is less than 700,000 cars, and the reduced customer base has crippled the local economy on both sides of the border.

Nevertheless, Ajo remains an undiscovered treasure. Built in 1916, Ajo’s town center is one of the finest examples of the City Beautiful architectural reform movement in town planning and implementation. Ajo’s plaza is a stunning set of white, arcaded buildings with red tile roof accents, surrounding a two-acre palm tree–lined center park with a bandstand and flagpole. A visitor looking west in the park sees two historic churches. Between them is a wide avenue leading to the historic Curley School, built in Spanish-revival style, and the entry point for a campus with several more significant historic buildings. The entire 15-acre town center is on the National Register of Historic Places. Restoring these buildings and repurposing them for the arts creates significant opportunities. The plaza and the retreat center generate earned income that can support ISDA’s operations and programming, and in years to come, they will underpin a building reserve fund for long-term maintenance and preservation costs.

## **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

Conventional community and economic development initiatives likely cannot revitalize Ajo on their own. Ajo’s challenges are more socioeconomic and cultural than physical. ISDA believes that an intensive combination of building renovations coupled with arts and cultural programming can be effective. At the intersection of three nations (Indian Village, Mexican Town, and the Ajo Anglo Townsite), the Ajo community is complex, spanning diverse cultural, ethnic, and political boundaries. In this context, ISDA has found that an arts and culture-based approach has enormous potential. Doing creative work together dissolves barriers. It makes communal bonding easier and helps people connect among generations, cultures, and across national borders. Providing the community with dedicated communal spaces that display the arts for all is, therefore, an important step toward cultural integration and encouraging civic engagement.

## **Implementation**

Market opportunities, such as the availability of large, affordable spaces to live and work, have brought artists to urban inner cities in the United States, and in many cases, the artists have created neighborhood economic revitalization. Ten years ago, ISDA wagered that by creating and marketing affordable and attractive rural live-work opportunities for artists, a similar revitalization phenomenon could occur in Ajo. ISDA’s first project was the conversion of the historic Curley School into 30 units of spacious and affordable live-work space

for artists. During the years it took to secure \$9.6 million in financing and redevelop the Curley School, ISDA developed arts programming aimed at raising spirits and bringing the community together across cultures. ISDA invited artists from the local Tohono O'odham Nation to the Curley School to teach painting, basket weaving, and pottery. It also sponsored a Mexican cultural crafts group that has continued to meet weekly, and it brought puppet makers to Ajo to teach residents and visitors how to make giant parade puppets. ISDA then organized parades, festivals, and celebrations in the town center.

Curley School Artisan Housing opened in 2007, and since then, artists from throughout the country have come to Ajo to live and work. ISDA renovated additional historic buildings on the Curley School campus, creating a gallery, microenterprise center, and clay studio. Eventually, ISDA purchased the entire Ajo town plaza and began to raise federal and state grant funds for its renovation. ISDA expanded arts programming to include workshops on business development and asset building designed for artists.

ISDA is currently working on the capstone project at the Curley School campus—the conversion of the elementary school's courtyard into the Sonoran Desert Retreat Center with 21 apartments, multipurpose rooms, a commercial kitchen, art studios, and access to the indoor/outdoor performance and conference venue at the adjacent Curley School. With its short-term residencies, the retreat center will complement the Curley School's long-term artist housing and create a gathering space for arts and cultural groups, environmental organizations, and people concerned about the border. While anchoring the town center with more cultural institutions, the steady influx of visitors will help drive the ongoing revitalization of the local economy.

Key partners in ISDA's creative placemaking initiatives include the Ajo community, which has been involved in large and small building renovations and town center planning; the Ajo District Chamber of Commerce; and the Ajo Regional Food Partnership. Pima County has been one of ISDA's government partners from the beginning. Important funding sources include the Ford Foundation, ArtPlace America, NEA Our Town, NEA ArtWorks, USDA Community Facilities, HUD Rural Innovation Fund, HUD Community Development Block Grant, Arizona Community Foundation, and Community Foundation of Southern Arizona.

## **Progress to Date**

As conflict in the border region continues to intensify, ISDA has realized that its new Sonoran Desert Retreat Center will create an opportunity for Ajo to turn its toughest economic challenge into an asset. ISDA envisions Ajo and the retreat center as places where people come to experience regional arts and culture, as well as to engage in peaceful dialogue on immigration and other border issues. The artist-in-residence program at the retreat center will host artists from Mexico and the Tohono O'odham and Yaqui Nations.

In the long-term, economic measures will be relevant in determining whether the arts, cultural, or business development programming in Ajo has succeeded. In the short-term, ISDA suggests that the best measure is the town center's vibrancy. When ISDA began 10

years ago, Ajo had four annual festivals, only two of which were in the town plaza. Last year, Ajo had seven annual festivals and 32 significant community events in the plaza. Although ISDA assisted with marketing several of these events, it produced only one of them, signaling its dramatic increase in community involvement and cooperation.

*Tracy Taft, PhD, is the executive director of the International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA), based in Ajo, Arizona near the US/Mexico border and the border of the Tohono O'odham Nation. With her leadership, ISDA has been engaged in the redevelopment of Ajo's historic town center as an arts-based community economic development strategy. ISDA's projects have won regional and national awards and recognition. Taft is a tenacious visionary with a background in academic and community education and experience in nonprofit development and management. Prior to working in Ajo, she spent 15 years in Washington, DC, building the NeighborWorks Training Institute. She holds a BA in history from Stanford University and a MA and PhD in philosophy from SUNY/Buffalo.*

# Seeding Civic Engagement: Activating

Author: Jim Lasko

Organization: Redmoon Theater

Program: The Great Chicago Fire Festival

Location: Chicago, IL

## At a Glance

In 2014, the Redmoon Theater produced the inaugural Great Chicago Fire Festival—a new signature event presented in partnership with the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and the Chicago Park District. The festival celebrated the city’s resurgence following the devastating Great Fire of 1871, and it honored the grit and resilience of Chicagoans who continue to rebuild and strengthen the city. To engage residents, Redmoon partnered with community-based organizations in 15 Chicago neighborhoods to produce a series of free public arts events called “Summer Celebrations.” The festival culminated on October 4, 2014, with a large-scale urban spectacle on the main branch of the Chicago River, with more than 30,000 in attendance. The grand spectacle and summer celebrations were a citywide expansion of Redmoon’s mission to transform residents’ experiences of the city by activating the community through creativity and empowered democracy.

## Overview

Redmoon Theater alters Chicago’s urban landscape through ephemeral events that disrupt everyday life and provide opportunities for public engagement, community building, and recognition of the possibility for change. Founded in 1990, Redmoon transforms streets, stages, and architectural landmarks, bridging international, economic, cultural, and generational boundaries with a unique brand of spectacle: a public art form that draws on pageantry, gadgetry, puppetry, robust physical performance, and visual art. The festival atmosphere generated by such public art turns familiar places into exciting destinations, encouraging social cohesion, attracting tourists, and provoking thought and conversation. The Great Chicago Fire Festival is a natural extension of Redmoon’s mission to engage the public in new and meaningful ways, and it represents the theater’s largest community activation initiative to date.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

Chicago is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the United States. There are 77 officially defined community areas within the city limits, and each is unique regarding its demographics, socioeconomic status, culture, history, and challenges. For the 2014 festival,

Redmoon partnered with 15 neighborhoods, including Albany Park, Austin, Avondale, Bronzeville, Englewood, Humboldt Park, Little Village, North Lawndale, Old Town, Pilsen, Roseland, South Chicago, South Shore, Uptown, and Woodlawn. Of these, 12 have a higher percentage of residents living below the poverty level than the city average, and 11 have higher unemployment rates than the city average. Located predominantly in west and south Chicago, these neighborhoods are among the most racially segregated in the nation.<sup>1</sup>

## How Creative Placemaking Helps

There is a unique opportunity to integrate these neighborhoods with the rest of Chicago by generating citywide interest in site-specific arts and culture interventions. Since it was founded in 1990, Redmoon has hosted performances in 49 Chicago neighborhoods, at more than 180 urban locations. Redmoon's expertise lies in its ability to create larger-than-life machines and interactive installations that amplify the voices of its collaborators and the communities they serve. Redmoon hopes these installations will continue to prompt regional, national, and international tourism; foster new avenues of communication between people, community-based organizations, and neighborhoods; and provide citywide opportunity for creative expression.

Redmoon amplifies existing neighborhood events and public spaces primarily through its massive spectacle machines. One of Redmoon's most recent contraptions, designed especially for the festival's summer celebrations, is the mobile photo factory—a booth housed inside a refurbished horse trailer that captures beautiful portraits of community members. Before entering, participants respond to the prompts, "I overcome..." and "I celebrate..." on chalkboard placards and then they have their pictures taken with the placards in hand to commemorate the event. Participants are encouraged to share their photos with one another and post them on social media.

In its past neighborhood engagements, Redmoon learned how successfully food can bring people together. Theater designers and master builders created the Cyclone Grill, an otherworldly 15-foot-tall, 15-foot-diameter carousel—outfitted with nine Weber grills in three elevated grilling stations—that cooks and serves food. The Cyclone Grill has hosted "Grill Master Contests" in all 15 participating neighborhoods. In these contexts, community members can step up and take turns making meals for one another. The Cyclone Grill further engages the audience by providing a performance platform for local poets, musicians, and speakers. Community members are invited onto the grill's stage, which is equipped with a

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1 According to a 2011 report in the *Chicago Reader* that aggregated housing data from the 2010 US Census, "The south-side section, between Western Avenue and the lake . . . includes 18 contiguous community areas, each with black populations above 90 percent, most of them well above that. The west-side black section includes another three contiguous 90 percent-plus community areas. Fifty-five percent of Chicago's 964,000 African-Americans live in these 21 community areas, in which the aggregate population is 96 percent black. Two-thirds of the city's blacks live in community areas that are at least 80 percent black." Steve Bogira, "Separate, Unequal, and Ignored," *Chicago Reader*, February 10, 2011, <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/chicago-politics-segregation-african-american-black-white-hispanic-latino-population-census-community/Content?oid=3221712>.

DJ station and two microphones, to share the sentiments they wrote on their mobile photo factory placards and voice their concerns to fellow residents.

## Implementation

Redmoon selected its 15 official neighborhoods for the Great Chicago Fire Festival in early 2014 and at the same time began planning its Summer Celebrations with the help of corporate supporters including the Boeing Company; city government offices including the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and the Chicago Park District; and 36 community organizations including churches, public schools, local theaters and arts troupes, community boards, local businesses and restaurants, and public library branches. Its total budget for the Summer Celebrations and finale on the Chicago River totaled approximately \$2 million. In the spring of 2014, Redmoon expanded its outreach by hiring canvas leaders to manage the Summer Celebration events. It brought on talented undergraduate fellows from the University of Chicago to support the expert builders and makers tasked with constructing the large-scale machines and sculptures for the October 4th finale. Redmoon also became a program provider for After School Matters, a Chicago nonprofit organization offering teens free high-quality, out-of-school apprenticeship and internship opportunities to gain skills in the arts, science, sports, technology, and communications. Ultimately, Redmoon launched three After School Matters programs and worked with nearly 90 teens from throughout the city to help build the festival's infrastructure.

## Progress to Date

After three months of sustained neighborhood activity through its Summer Celebrations, Redmoon turned its attention to the culminating event of the Great Chicago Fire Festival—the grand spectacle on the Chicago River on October 4th. The finale attracted more than 30,000 spectators representing many of the 15 neighborhoods engaged through the Summer Celebrations. It also gave 2,000 artists, makers, and builders an opportunity to showcase their work for an audience of incredible scale. The degree to which these artists can translate such exposure into future creative placemaking activities will ultimately be an important measure of Redmoon's progress. A more immediate indicator of Redmoon's success has been its partners' enthusiasm for supporting the Great Chicago Fire Festival in years to come—despite malfunctions during the finale, which prevented three floating sculptures on the Chicago River from catching fire. In the days following the finale, Michelle Boone, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, remarked that the office “remain[s] committed to helping Redmoon and its team of education and arts organizations build a foundation for this new annual event, which activates our riverfront with dynamic new recreational and cultural uses—and experiences for the entire city to enjoy.”<sup>2</sup>

2 Ted Cox and Lizzie Schiffman Tufano, “Rahm Stands by Fire Fest, but Says ‘Changes, Adaptations’ to Be Made,” *DNAInfo Chicago*, October 8, 2014, <http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20141008/downtown/rahm-stands-by-fire-fest-but-says-changes-adaptations-be-made>.

*Jim Lasko is an artist creating theatrical events that reveal and celebrate overlooked and hidden cultural assets. As a founding principle to Redmoon Theater in Chicago, Jim's work has activated a wide range of public spaces, from the Great Chicago Fire Festival, to the Museum of Contemporary Art to the Jackson Park Lagoons, to urban interventions in some of the Chicago's most underserved communities. Jim's theater work has received numerous awards and critical notices and played across the country. He was the City of Chicago's first ever Artist in Residence. In 2011 he was honored to design the staging for a public talk by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Jim is a Harvard University Loeb Fellow. He is pleased to serve on the advisory board for such institutions as The Nantucket Project and the Chicago Children's Museum.*

# Seeding Civic Engagement: “Fixing”

Author: Julia Taylor

Organization: Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC)

Program: Creational Trails: The ARTery at the Beerline  
Recreational Trail Extension

Location: Milwaukee, WI

## At a Glance

In 2013, the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC) partnered with arts initiatives Beintween and the Riverworks Development Corporation (RDC) to transform an unused railroad corridor into the ARTery. This linear park engages residents from Harambee and Riverwest, two neighboring communities whose economic prosperity and racial composition are markedly divergent, by using arts and culture programming as a bridge. The GMC encourages residents to participate in planning initiatives and design-builds that make the space these communities share safer and more hospitable. It does this by adapting the site’s cultural programs and construction projects to reflect input gathered from residents. Early on, the GMC and its collaborators petitioned the city to purchase a closed railroad bridge that crosses Capitol Drive—a major dividing line between the two communities—and recondition it for foot traffic. Now, residents from Harambee, Riverwest, and other nearby neighborhoods come to the ARTery regularly for open mic nights, film screenings, community meals, workshops, and other events.

## Overview

The GMC is a CEO-led civic organization with a 65-year history of fostering support for the arts and economic development in the Milwaukee area. The GMC focuses on strategic social investment compatible with Milwaukee’s neighborhoods. It advocates investment in historic architecture, repurposing buildings as new and inviting public spaces. The GMC works in neighborhoods where a strong community development corporation is present or forming. With partners, the GMC assembled a committee in the fall of 2014 to raise local awareness of creative placemaking and highlight the important role creative placemaking can play in improving underdeveloped neighborhoods.

A flagship project of the GMC is the ARTery—an eight-acre linear art park developed from a disused railroad corridor. The ARTery connects Harambee and Riverwest geographically and culturally. Residents are encouraged to participate in designing the park space and public performances that occur at the site. The GMC has partnered with Beintween; the RDC; and the City of Milwaukee on “Creational Trails: The ARTery at the Beerline Recreational Trail Extension.”

## Context for Creative Placemaking

More than 30 percent of the Harambee population does not have a high school degree, and 33 percent of families live below the federal poverty line. Property values have declined dramatically in recent years, with the median assessed value of single-family homes at \$44,611, compared with \$91,462 in Riverwest in 2010. Harambee has the highest crime rates of any district in Milwaukee. Directly east of Harambee and known as a haven for artists for many years, Riverwest continues to attract many young people, students, and families. In 2008, the average household income in Riverwest was \$32,593 compared with \$23,664 in Harambee. 23 percent of the population in Riverwest has bachelor's degrees versus eight percent in Harambee. As a comparison, Harambee's 25 percent unemployment rate is markedly higher than Milwaukee's 11 percent.

## How Creative Placemaking Helps

The GMC recognizes the severe perceptions of social, cultural, and economic separation among residents of Riverwest and Harambee. These issues have grown for several generations. Today, emerging leaders in both communities are interested in arts- and design-based entrepreneurship as a way to redress past problems. The GMC has an opportunity to inventively address these issues through programming at the ARTery. The ARTery will catalyze redevelopment in the greater Riverworks area, which includes both the Riverwest and Harambee communities, by drawing on existing networks of artists, makers, and other entrepreneurs. The GMC and its partners aim to grow Riverwest and Harambee as cultural hubs by building new access ways to the park and surrounding neighborhoods. These efforts will change the perception that neighborhoods in the Riverworks area are separate while promoting a sense that Harambee and Riverwest have distinct but equal cultures.

## Implementation

Collaborations with multiple departments of the city have enabled the GMC to activate the ARTery and plan for the long-term economic vitality of the surrounding area. The City of Milwaukee has implemented design and structural improvements at the ARTery site, in program infrastructure, and in assistance obtaining permits for on-site programming and installations.

RDC has been responsible for graffiti removal at the ARTery site and public relations support to promote on-site programming among the neighbors. Further, RDC has helped form an advisory board. Earthbound Development, the current private owner of the site and an active member of the RDC, allowed access to its property in 2014 for site cleanup, programming, installation, and landscaping ahead of the city's formal purchase and acquisition of the land.

Another key partner on the ARTery is Beintween, a social and spatial networking initiative that improvises spaces to strengthen communities, making "art do work." Beintween

began working at the ARTery in 2012, focusing their initial efforts on repurposing old rubber tires found along the trail. The organization launched its arts activity in the community with a pop-up tire swing park at the Holton Bridge in Milwaukee's East Side neighborhood. Its work is now an integral part of the linear park and is responsible for the construction of the ICAN2 Laboratory, an alternative learning site built from a recycled shipping container.

Beintween also sponsored a series of community barbeques leading to the initial site construction. These barbeques allowed attendees to discuss sensitive social and political issues between the two neighborhoods and for community members to help plan performances and installations, as well as contribute to the development of the site. One of the major issues raised by the community during the barbecues was Harambee's difficulty accessing Capital Drive—one of the most heavily trafficked streets in the state and the dividing line between the Harambee and Riverwest neighborhoods.

## Progress to Date

Previously, the ARTery area was a sort of “nonspace” marked by illegal dumping and abandoned tires. It was used only occasionally by dog walkers or residents taking a short cut. Now, the trail is the destination. The ARTery has become an established, friendly, usable site because of landscaping efforts, lighting additions, and art installations.

Early on, the GMC and its collaborators petitioned the city to purchase a closed railroad bridge that crosses Capitol Drive and recondition it for foot traffic. Now, youth and adults from Harambee, Riverwest, and other nearby neighborhoods come to the ARTery regularly for open mic nights, film screenings, community meals, workshops, and other events. Residents continue to work on the ARTery's design-build projects and often come to the GMC with ideas that the committee encourages them to pursue at the site themselves.

By fall of 2015, the City of Milwaukee will have purchased land along the ARTery to install a new bicycle and pedestrian path, inviting residents from the two communities to grow even closer.

*Julia Taylor was appointed president of the Greater Milwaukee Committee in December 2002. The GMC is a CEO leadership organization creating a Milwaukee region that is the best place to live work, play, learn, and create. Her recent work includes MiKE (Innovation in Milwaukee), which creates new innovation pathways for corporate and social problems, and the Our Creative Placemaking projects, which align creative and art-place-based efforts with authentic community-based economic activities. Ms. Taylor serves on the boards of the United Performing Arts Fund, the Water Council, the Milwaukee Film Festival and the Spirit of Milwaukee.*

# Seeding Civic Engagement: Planning

Author: Lori Lobenstine  
Organization: Fairmount Cultural Corridor (FCC)  
Program: Making Planning Processes Public  
and StreetLab: Upham's  
Location: Boston, MA

## At a Glance

“The Upham’s Corner Pilot is a unique cross-sector partnership of city, philanthropic, community-based, and arts organizations that have come together to elevate the Fairmount/Indigo Line Cultural Corridor (in Boston, MA) as a destination. Today, the Fairmount/Indigo transit line passes through a number of historically-disinvested neighborhoods without stopping, but after years of community advocacy, new transit stations are being constructed to bring critical access to these neighborhoods and their residents. The vision is to build a brand for the neighborhoods along the corridor that is based in and sustained by the cultural assets and ethnic traditions of its residents.”

—*F. Javier Torres, senior program officer, the Boston Foundation (2012)*

## Overview

Fairmount Cultural Corridor (FCC) is a collaboration that engages residents, artists, community organizations, and businesses along the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line in Boston, Massachusetts. Its goals are as follows:

1. Use an artistic approach to increase local awareness, engagement, and leadership regarding plans for neighborhoods along the Fairmount Line.
2. Support and expand the local creative economy.
3. Explore, with these communities, what it would mean to create an “aesthetic of belonging” in some of the most vibrant, hectic, and diverse neighborhoods in Boston.

FCC does this in various ways: equipping each community with its own artist-in-residence; through pop-up creativity labs that bring communities together to reimagine public spaces, planning processes, and food access; and supporting artists active in the local economy.

A 2012 pilot project in the Upham’s Corner neighborhood is currently expanding to other communities along the rail line. The numerous organizational partners involved in the initiative include business-led, community-based, and artist-led organizations. Using creative placemaking to prompt dialogue and action, FCC hopes to create a cultural corridor that is accessible, affordable, and meaningful for both residents and visitors.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

The communities along the Fairmount Line are both culturally diverse and economically vulnerable. The businesses serving these neighborhoods are primarily small, locally-owned shops including restaurants, clothing stores, and hair salons. The two neighborhoods under development by FCC—Upham’s Corner and Four Corners—include a large Cape Verdean population, along with African Americans, Dominicans, West Indians, Caucasians, and Asians (primarily Vietnamese). Upham’s Corner is anchored by the Strand Theatre, an iconic cultural landmark in Boston.

## How Creative Placemaking Helps

FCC’s long-term vision is to foster vibrant, diverse, and livable communities that feel empowered to design their own quality of life and culture. The communities along the Fairmount Line have been disconnected from each other and from Boston.

One successful element of FCC’s efforts has been increasing civic engagement and the communities’ access to the urban planning process. Well-intentioned city planners often rely on town-hall-style meetings to receive residents’ input on significant urban planning projects. However, this format rarely provides a nuanced and holistic picture of the community’s needs and desires. In response, FCC partner Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI) commissioned artists to take urban planning into the streets, designing interactive opportunities that involved hundreds of community members. DS4SI artists used spectacle, play, and the subtle repurposing of everyday objects to invite community members to step into both community planning and implementation. Examples of this include:

**Making Planning Processes Public.** An interactive, weeklong pop-up exhibit that aimed to make planning accessible to residents of Upham’s Corner featured installations and interactive signage designed by two local artists. It engaged more than 600 community members both in the exhibit and on the streets. Community input helped stop plans for the construction of a fence in the middle of the main street.

**StreetLab: Upham’s.** The project put tactical urbanism in the hands of the Upham’s Corner community by creating an outdoor makerspace where community members worked with local artists, designers, and builders to create and test solutions to “micropublic” spaces in Upham’s Corner. Temporary installations included an “alley gallery,” a community-knit railing, and a street-installed Cape Verdean mancala game.

## Implementation

Beginning in 2012 as a pilot project in Upham’s Corner, the FCC initiative was funded by the Boston Foundation, ArtPlace America, and the Kresge Foundation. As the initiative expanded to Four Corners, leadership shifted to the local organization Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI). Participating organizations are staffed primarily with local

residents. The budget includes direct support for local artists such as paid positions for artists-in-residence and new microgrants for cultural entrepreneurs.

Large collaborations require strong coordination and attentive communication. To that end, DSNI has hired a full-time arts and culture manager who will play a critical role in coordinating the ongoing multineighborhood collaboration. Measuring FCC's effect on civic engagement, community belonging, and the degree to which residents feel empowered to lead is particularly challenging because much of the arts programming intentionally engages busy residents, merchants, and passers-by rather than a fixed constituency such as members of an established, well-anchored institution. FCC has addressed this by creating quick, interactive ways for participants to voice their ideas and feelings. For example, StreetLab: Upham's could focus on seating at bus stops and alleyway safety in part because of responses collected on posted notes from residents during a pop-up installation. FCC's current plan to dedicate ongoing artists-in-residence programs to communities was based on community feedback that indicated residents wanted more time to build permanent microsolutions during StreetLab: Upham's.

### **Progress to Date**

During the two-year pilot project in Upham's Corner, FCC succeeded in engaging thousands of community members—artists, merchants, students, families, and senior citizens. Hundreds attended community events such as DSNI's Multicultural Festival and the Upham's Corner Street Fair; DS4SI's creative pop-up installations such as the Public Kitchen, Making Planning Processes Public, StreetLab: Upham's, and the pilot UP Markets. Feedback from more than 50 street interviews showed many residents felt a new sense of energy, connectedness, and hope, and community members' willingness to participate in new events, and lead them, indicated that FCC's creative placemaking was succeeding.

*Lori Lobenstine is a co-founder of the Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI), a creativity lab for the nonprofit social justice sector. She is also an established consultant and experienced youth development and diversity trainer, including over 15 years of experience as a certified trainer in the National BEST Youth Worker Training Initiative. Her recent writings include "Social / Justice / Practice: Exploring the Role of Artists in Creating a More Just and Social Public" (published by AnimatingDemocracy.org), and "Spatial Justice: A Frame for Reclaiming our Rights to Be, Thrive, Express and Connect."*

# Building Resiliency

Anchoring Prattsville Center and Artist Residency—Prattsville, NY

***Nancy Barton***

*Clinical Associate Professor of Art and Education, New York University;  
Director of the Prattsville Art Center*

Activating World Garden Commons—Fargo, ND

***Nicole Crutchfield***

*Planning Administrator, The Fargo Project*

“Fixing” Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk—Charlotte, NC

***Lisa Hoffman***

*Associate Director, McColl Center for Art + Innovation*

Planning Design/Relief—New York, NY

***Laetitia Wolff***

*Program Director, Design/Relief for the American Institute of Graphic Artists,  
New York Chapter*

# Building Resiliency: Anchoring

Author: Nancy Barton

Organization: Prattsville Art Center and Residency

Program: Creative Main Streets

Location: Prattsville, NY

## At a Glance

The Prattsville Art Center builds resilience in a small New York State community devastated by flooding from Hurricane Irene in 2011. It helps lay the groundwork for recovery in Prattsville through its Creative Main Streets initiative, and by supporting reconstruction efforts among painters, designers, builders, and other creative professionals. In the months following Irene, artists connected knowledgeable professionals from outside the community with rural residents' local expertise.

Prattsville and the surrounding area have little access to culture, entertainment, or other creative outlets. Located in the middle of this very small town, the art center offers arts education and programming designed to help the town "build back better than before." By combining its own resources with the generosity and do-it-yourself spirit of rural residents, the center was up and running within months of the disaster, and is now poised to operate year-round.

## Overview

The Prattsville Art Center is a community art space and residency located on Main Street of a Catskill Mountain town that is rebuilding from scratch following Hurricane Irene in 2011. The center is the region's first public social space and an anchor for a developing Main Street cultural district. The center welcomes the local rural community as well as second homeowners, tourists, and artists-in-residence from diverse urban centers. It encourages residents to engage one another on the town's Main Street as the community reinvents its identity and recovers from devastating flooding. The center's newly restored building provides free community art classes, exhibitions, and events. It also plans to offer a computer lab with high-speed Internet access, an espresso bar, and community meals.

Prattsville's new Creative Main Streets initiative is part of the town's award-winning NY Rising Flood relief plan, which emerged from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-directed Long Term Community Recovery Planning Process. The center operated seasonally in its flood-damaged building from summer 2012 until 2014 when additional funding provided structural repairs, heating, electricity, plumbing, and year-round operations support. The center is now the cultural centerpiece of a walkable hamlet plan that includes the Zadock Pratt homestead, new streetscaping, a new riverwalk, a restored Town

Green, hiking trails, an antique store, a hotel, and restored local businesses. It represents Prattsville's first strategic approach to sustainable rural tourism.

### **Context for Creative Placemaking**

Prattsville once housed the world's largest tannery but that prosperity has largely faded, as it has in many northeastern farm and factory towns. By the time Hurricane Irene hit in 2011, Prattsville was struggling economically, with 30 percent of households classified as low income, and more than 14 percent of residents living in poverty. Irene devastated this already vulnerable community, destroying 40 percent of the homes and business on Main Street. Rivers rose 16 feet in a few hours, washing homes, businesses, and 30 trailers into the current rushing through the town faster than the water flowing over Niagara Falls. By the time the waters receded, many residents had lost everything. The community recognized that rebuilding Main Street from scratch offered a chance to imagine a new future.

Prattsville is home to many artists in the summer and on weekends. This offered an opportunity to strengthen the town's appeal to prospective residents and tourists by linking Prattsville to the creative economies taking root in the region. By placing Creative Main Streets at the center of its recovery, Prattsville has capitalized on the increasing appeal of this beautiful and affordable region, attracting more artists and art lovers from New York City, Albany, and Boston, and creating an exciting new mix of rural arts and culture.

### **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

In the weeks and months following Hurricane Irene, Prattsville's residents came together to lay out an extensive recovery plan. Professionals who had worked in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina joined FEMA-led town halls and workshops. Artists, who are constantly engaged in problem-solving and the search for nontraditional solutions, filled the knowledge gap between urban professionals and rural residents with local expertise. By combining the skills of planners and grantwriters with the generosity and do-it-yourself spirit of rural residents, the center was up and running within months of the disaster. The center's long-term vision for the community is to build a genuine connection between urban and rural populations and bring access to creativity and new ideas to this historic American town.

### **Implementation**

The center is made up of resident artists, visiting artists-in-residence, volunteer teachers, visiting students, and paid local interns. The center's board mixes local teachers, writers, and community leaders with artists from nearby New York City. To date, the center has brought more than two dozen artists with Mexican, Korean, Iranian, African American, German, French, Canadian, Chinese, Taiwanese, and both rural and urban American backgrounds to this largely white rural community. This diversity has been particularly inspiring to young people in Prattsville. Since repairing the center and beginning to offer classes in

computer art, painting, and drawing, participation has been intergenerational, with students' ages ranging from 14 to 60.

The center has partnered with the Mainly Greene Arts initiative, which has received a \$150,000 New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) grant to bring the arts to the main streets of rural towns along 50 miles of the northern Catskills. The center works closely with Prattsville's town board and has recently aligned with the town on a \$150,000 USDA Community Foods grant and a \$2.5 million New York State Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) grant. Other pending grants include a design-build proposal for a raised, flood-proof "treehouse," garden, and entertainment complex on the center's property, which has been covered by 10 international architecture writers in online journals.

### **Progress to Date**

The center plans to hold community roundtables twice a year to assess its progress and determine new goals. Success can be measured in many ways. Despite lacking heat and electricity initially, the center has hosted more than one thousand visitors. Programs have featured 10 exhibitions, including two expansive installations created through collaboration with local community members and interns, New York University, and the Paris Sorbonne. The center's collaborators have established a nonprofit corporation, purchased the art center property, and renovated more than 3,500 square feet of flood-damaged historic space. They have created paid internships for more than 20 local low-income youth, as well as 10 local construction jobs and by hiring and buying locally, they have returned more than \$185,000 to the area's economy, nearly the entire amount of award funds spent to date.

*Nancy Barton is an artist, educator, and director of the Prattsville Art Project. She teaches in New York University's Steinhardt Art Department, which she also chaired, and works in creative placemaking, rural revitalization, and contemporary art. Working collaboratively with individuals, organizations, and institutions around the world, she has created lasting positive change in both academic and community settings. Her artwork has been shown and reviewed internationally. She curates and speaks on art, education, and placemaking in the US, Asia, Africa, and Europe, most recently at the "Art of Care" conference at the Sorbonne, Paris.*

# Building Resiliency: Activating

Author: Nicole Crutchfield

Organization: The Fargo Project

Program: World Garden Commons

Location: Fargo, ND

## At a Glance

The Fargo Project (TFP) is transforming an 18-acre barren stormwater collection facility into a multifunctional community space called World Garden Commons (WGC). TFP aims to foster a sense of shared ownership and responsibility in a community of long-time residents and newly established immigrant and refugee populations from around the globe. A team of local artists has engaged environmental experts, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and area residents to determine community needs and to develop arts- and place-based programming that encourages the exchange of cultural values and traditions. TFP measures users' participation in these programs over time and asks them what they think through semi-structured interviews, gathering important information about how the space could be used. In late 2014, WGC produced a workbook that captures lessons learned from the process, offering a guide for others to integrate arts and culture into ecological infrastructure design.

## Overview

WGC is the pilot program of TFP. It aims to shape public infrastructure through a combination of ecological restoration, multifaceted community programming, and artist-led initiatives. A team of local artists has collaborated with area residents, environmental experts, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations to transform an existing stormwater facility into a community commons. WGC identifies local needs by enlisting partners to transform and provide programming in the space, seeking out specialized knowledge of ecological restoration practices, and building bridges between constituencies. The project was launched in 2011 with an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

WGC offers people of all ages and backgrounds a chance to envision, design, and build a place where they can connect with others and celebrate Fargo's rich natural and cultural diversity. Fargo is home to Native Americans from many different nations. The city also has a diverse population of recent immigrants and refugees from more than 20 countries including Bhutan, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Iraq, and Bosnia.

TFP began with community conversations, which revealed that if a curated, arts-oriented public space were available at Rabanus Park, the current site of WGC, residents and nonprofit groups would be more inclined to pursue goals that overlapped with public interests: local neighbors would expand their gardening initiatives; the state university would experiment with new planting practices; and residents would be more likely to participate in public gatherings.

## How Creative Placemaking Helps

TFP began in 2010 with a participatory community project to retrofit a local pond. Five local artists were part of the project team, whose goal was building local capacity for the artist community to take on more community projects in the future. By partnering with the Fargo Park District, Lutheran Social Services, River Keepers, the Plains Art Museum, the Arts Partnership, the Fargo-Moorhead Visual Arts, the Fargo School District, West Fargo School District, North Dakota State University, the YMCA, and countless volunteers, TFP encourages artists to consider the role that their work can play in the community more broadly. These partnerships have allowed TFP to adapt its goals to the specific needs of the community and implement them at WGC.

For example, older immigrants who have recently relocated to Fargo often have a hard time finding opportunities to connect with other residents, which can exacerbate feelings of homesickness and lead to depression. Therefore, the first activity at the WGC site was an expansion of the Growing Together program, which resulted in the first community-managed garden on publicly-owned land, encouraging Fargo's newcomers to come together and cultivate a shared space.

## Implementation

TFP instituted WeDesign in 2012, a community-wide gathering for residents to imagine how the WGC site could and should be transformed. The event opened with a blessing given by the Native American community and featured a day-long design workshop, as well as a Native-American-hosted community meal. Approximately 200 people attended the event.

TFP's team of local artists spent three months raising awareness about WeDesign, especially among new immigrant communities, neighboring businesses, and church groups. At the pilot site in the West Acres Neighborhood, there was no collective community space, and local solicitation laws forbade team members from approaching residents directly. In response, artists and team members developed a unique outreach program that included puppet shows in public places, riding on public transit routes with art pieces, and networking through word of mouth. At a "bowl-a-thon," a group of local ceramists gathered to make more than 400 ceramic soup bowls. These bowls were given to area families along with placemats illustrated by local grade school students, which served as invitations to join the WeDesign gathering.

From the outset, TFP realized that its staff and volunteers would require intermittent training on managing ecological restoration. FTP's artists and project managers connected faculty members at the local university with community volunteers by developing a citizens' eco-lab at WGC. Scientists and researchers teach practitioners, developers, and volunteers about appropriate land management practices on site.

### **Progress to Date**

This project has been fairly slow to develop, which makes measuring the effectiveness of the community outreach difficult. Intermittent progress is evident, however. Volunteers from the local university developed a survey to ask artists and community members about the team building exercises used throughout the WeDesign gathering. Their responses were analyzed and adopted as part of a "lessons learned" dialogue before further outreach activities.

*Nicole Crutchfield is a licensed landscape architect and a certified city planner. Currently, she is the planning administrator for the City of Fargo and was previously a principal planner for Round Rock, Texas. She started her career in Kansas City Missouri where she worked for ten years in multi-disciplinary architecture firms. She holds both a bachelor's degree of landscape architecture and a certificate in community and regional planning from Kansas State University. She is currently completing a master's degree of science in natural resources management at North Dakota State University.*

# Building Resiliency: “Fixing”

Author: Lisa Hoffman

Organization: McColl Center for Art + Innovation

Program: Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk

Location: Charlotte, NC

## At a Glance

The McColl Center for Art + Innovation is an urban artist colony that matches artists who have specific social agendas with government and nonprofit partners working in economically and environmentally vulnerable areas across Charlotte, North Carolina. The center engages a wide array of partners and residents in the process to promote a sense of stewardship. Since 2013, the McColl Center’s Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk has aimed to reverse ecological, social, and economic problems along Charlotte’s Statesville Avenue corridor, which has suffered myriad challenges. The McColl Center evaluates its service to artists based on whether they believe the center helped them achieve their goals, whether the experience has enriched their artistic practice, and whether the artist gained specific technical knowledge they can apply in the future.

## Overview

McColl Center for Art + Innovation’s mission is to give artists tools to support their communities and positively impact lives through art and the creative process. Through the years, the center has built strong partnerships that enable artists to collaborate with various social service organizations, education providers, and cultural institutions throughout Charlotte. As an urban artist colony and residence program, the center recognizes that its most significant contributions occur when artists interact with groups who may not ordinarily visit the center, or who may not see themselves as patrons of contemporary art.

Guided by artist and community input, the center has identified 10 issues that are critical to Charlotte’s future: the environment, social justice, health, education, science/technology, international affairs, business innovation, beauty, craft, and design/architecture. The center adopted these “spheres of impact” to guide how it curates residencies, exhibitions, and experiences through public practice. The center actively seeks out artists who have a defined studio and social practice in one of the 10 spheres.

The environmental sphere of impact, the most highly evolved of the ten, exemplifies how artists’ skills and vision, combined with community involvement, can lead to innovative solutions. The center selects environmental artists-in-residence who blend art, science, and social practice to address site-specific concerns by enhancing livability, promoting envi-

ronmental stewardship, improving infrastructure, and protecting natural resources—all while raising the site’s aesthetic and cultural value.

### **Context for Creative Placemaking**

Although located only a mile away from uptown Charlotte, the Statesville Avenue corridor and site of the Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk lacks a sophisticated transportation infrastructure and adequate access to food and commerce for its residents. Its public schools consistently underperform. Recently, the area was known as the heroin capital of the Carolinas, plagued by blight, drug trafficking, and criminal activity.

Now the Brightwalk community is in transition, and four neighborhoods with industrial and commercial space are being revitalized. There is support for using art, education, and environment stewardship to drive economic development, attract newcomers, celebrate the place’s cultural vibrancy and create a community where people choose to live. Brightwalk already had green spaces, sidewalks, and a street connectivity index that exceeded the county average. Artists help make the environment even more inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as visitors from other areas of the city. These unusual spaces are dynamic and experiential—beyond what a typical landscape architect or designer might conceive. The new development serves as a catalyst for growth with improved infrastructure, green space, environmental art, and new spaces for education and public gatherings.

### **Why Creative Placemaking Helps**

The center builds connections between artists and residents to alter the perception of the Statesville Avenue Corridor, drawing attention to its rich cultural history and natural resources rather than its collective dysfunction. The Art and Ecology Campus responds to the need for renewed pride, sustainability, and connectedness in the community, and has quickly become a destination for many community members. Events such as pop-up exhibitions, performances, and participatory art projects have attracted hundreds of visitors to the area. This new arts and performance platform allows residents to work together in a constructive way to develop a vision for addressing environmental issues while preserving the area’s unique cultural identity.

Guided by the center’s spheres of impact, site-specific art projects have garnered local support and helped the center meet its goal of fully integrating communities within the corridor. The projects encourage artistic excellence, provide creative agency, celebrate localism, and offer educational opportunities and civic involvement. They directly correlate to the quality of life indicators of the neighborhood profile area set by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership (a nonprofit housing development and financial corporation that expands affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families). These initiatives are also helping to attract new business entrepreneurs, recreational amenities, art venues, and a needed health care facility to the area.

## Implementation

The center creates partnerships with organizations in the community working on their sphere of impact issues. Once partnerships are established, the center identifies artists whose practices align for potential pairing. Artists are selected who are keen listeners, comfortable in diverse audiences, have a demonstrated ability to be nimble and self-directed, can build relationships across community segments, and who can inspire stakeholders to work together to implement a creative solution to the relevant issue. Examples of partner organizations include the aforementioned Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, the City of Charlotte, and Charlotte Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation.

As an intermediary agent, the center's three main priorities are ensuring operational excellence, maintaining stewardship of artist/community relations, and securing financial stability. Many artists are new to the communities they serve and require resources, time, and space to gain the technical expertise needed for their projects to succeed. Site-specific environmental interventions require an understanding of ecosystem problem-solving, which accounts for the ecological, social, and economic consequences of site-specific interventions. Disruptive innovation at the expense of the environment can introduce hidden costs or create psychosocial barriers that have a negative effect on community health. Navigating this complex landscape requires firm trust between the artist, the McColl Center, and community partners.

## Progress to Date

The center has plans for eight completed installations by June 2015. Four neighborhoods are currently undergoing revitalization, replacing dilapidated structures with mixed-income, mixed-use projects. The new developments serve as a catalyst for growth with improved infrastructure, green space, environmental art, and spaces for education and public gatherings. They also spur new cultural amenities and opportunities for civic engagement. All of these efforts enhance economic competitiveness.

The center has developed a dashboard of metrics on safety, quality of life, access to cultural and recreational amenities, carbon footprint, and education and training initiatives. Where there are gaps in information, the center works with each partner to correlate disparate data. In addition, the center evaluates its service to artists by collecting responses to survey questions, such as: Does the artist believe the center helped achieve his/her goals? Has the experience enriched the artist's practice? Did the artist gain technical knowledge? These surveys combined with existing data sources allow the center to carefully monitor indicators of success and opportunity and recalibrate support when needed.

*Lisa Hoffman oversees programs and strategic initiatives, community engagement, and the flagship Environmental Program at McColl Center. Honored for her dedication in connecting children and families to the natural world; she is committed to place-based education, the improvement of schools in*

*marginalized communities and research in creative placemaking. The recipient of Charlotte Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Award, Lisa has served on the board of North Carolina Association of Environmental Education Centers, North Carolina Play Alliance, and regularly participates as a speaker at various community and national events including the National Innovation Summit for Arts and Culture. She serves on the board of the Alliance for Artists Communities. Holding an MS in biology and a BS in botany from Howard University in Washington, DC, Hoffman is dedicated to social practice and the convergence of art and science as a vehicle to improve lives and effect systemic change.*

# Building Resiliency: Planning

Author: Laetitia Wolff

Organization: American Institute of Graphic Arts,  
New York Chapter (AIGA/NY)

Program: Design/Relief

Location: New York, NY

## At a Glance

In 2013, Design/Relief, an initiative of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, harnessed the expertise of the city's design professionals to tackle social issues, reimagine urban spaces, and build more resilient connections in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Design/Relief selected outer borough urban communities in New York City known for their waterfront conditions, relative geographic isolation, and prevalence of low-income housing. Those selected were the Seaport in Manhattan, Red Hook in Brooklyn, and Rockaway in Queens. By October 2014, the teams had engaged in an ongoing collaborative process, creating participatory moments to invite diverse groups—including youth, arts leaders, small business owners, and local activists—to use design to share their visions for the future.

## Overview

The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) is the leading professional graphic design association in the United States. Founded in 1982, the New York chapter has a mission to demonstrate graphic design's impact and cultivate the future of design in New York City. AIGA connects professionals and students with ideas, information, and one another; leads collaborative projects with local communities; and champions excellent work and innovative practices. In fall 2013, AIGA/NY launched the Design/Relief initiative to spur cultural, community, and economic development through design in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Design/Relief demonstrates how designers can help devise solutions that activate public space, foster relationships and collective identity, and positively transform the community.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

Red Hook is a diverse and vibrant community in south Brooklyn. Geographically isolated, the neighborhood is surrounded by water on three sides and is a fair distance from any subway lines. As the site of the second-largest public housing project in New York City, Red Hook has suffered from serious socioeconomic issues, which reached their peak in the 1990s and received wide public attention in the aftermath of Sandy. In recent years, Red Hook has become a haven for artists looking for affordable warehouse-style studios and lofts.

The South Street Seaport in Manhattan suffered some of the heaviest destruction during Sandy, inundated with seven-foot floodwaters that caused extensive damage. Not only did the receding waterline leave in its wake a crippled neighborhood, but it also exposed the deep-rooted issues that have long plagued it. The Seaport is a 12-square-block area surrounded by Manhattan’s financial district and divided in half by Beekman Street, which separates a district of historic nineteenth century architecture from a shopping facility called Pier 17. Both draw radically different crowds, patrons, and tourists.

Rockaway, in Queens, is often neglected by city officials in part because of its lack of proximity to the rest of the city—it is located at the eastern-most stop on the A train, on a sliver of land just 11 miles into the water that separates Jamaica Bay from the Atlantic Ocean. Sandy brought unprecedented media attention to Rockaway as flood damage exacerbated existing problems in the area related to its high concentration of public housing and relative isolation.

## How Creative Placemaking Helps

In the wake of the storm, each Design/Relief neighborhood team collaborated on a design concept to address livability, navigability, and vibrancy. A key component was promoting dialogue among community members, relief workers, and city government. To this end, each of Design/Relief’s projects drew on feedback at the three locations, giving voice to residents’ fears, needs, and desires.

The Red Hook team pursued an embedded approach, plugging in to existing community gatherings of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents. This resulted in the Red Hook “Hub,” a strategically located public information system that collects and displays information based on community needs during periods of crisis and non-crisis alike.

The Rockaway team invited a handful of nonprofit organizations, local newspapers, and activists to visioning sessions that helped designers identify symbolic locations for the “Dear Rockaway” project. Dear Rockaway was developed to foster the spirit of goodwill and connectivity that emerged across the peninsula in the wake of the storm. A collection of 100 or more recorded interviews with residents provided content for outreach initiatives, which used wheat-pasted posters, sidewalk stencils, and newspaper inserts to reach the community. This arts-based outreach highlighted connections between neighbors and reacquainted them with places of local significance, amplifying existing recovery efforts while broadening the discussion about Rockaway’s future.

The Catch&Release installation at Manhattan’s Seaport literally captured—through a system of hooks and pulleys—the words and messages of gratitude on cards written by community members, passing tourists, and New Yorkers curious about the future of the Seaport waterfront. Manhattan’s Seaport has a different character altogether, and in recent years has been torn by ambitious waterfront plans including the refurbishment of Pier 17, which made neutral, constructive dialogue more challenging.

## Implementation

The Design/Relief initiative was launched in fall 2013. AIGA/NY curated one team per site, each including a designer, a community engagement strategist, and a storyteller. Two filmmakers were hired to document the teams' process from start to finish. In total, more than 20 New York creative professionals participated in Design/Relief. They were chosen based on their experience with social design and their familiarity with the site they were assigned. As alliances formed between the teams and local organizations, AIGA/NY recruited residents to perform specific project tasks.

Design/Relief worked with local community leaders and social service nonprofits such as Red Hook Initiative and Rockaway Youth Task Force. It collaborated with local media such as *The Wave*, a weekly newspaper in Rockaway, as well as cultural organizations such as the South Street Seaport Museum. It also involved business district associations, such as the newly formed Old Seaport Alliance. Design/Relief also consulted with independent entrepreneurs with vested interest in the economic health of these neighborhoods. In the Seaport, where the conversation had been polarized around the future development of Pier 17, Design/Relief's Manhattan team aligned itself with Community Board 1, which championed its neutral, community-building efforts. The Red Hook team obtained the financial support of the new Red Hook Coalition and benefited from the area's strong activist culture, which had been reinforced by post-Sandy recovery efforts. Design/Relief also nurtured relationships with City Council, Community Board 6, and District 12 congresswomen.

## Progress to Date

The Dear Rockaway guerrilla campaign and the Red Hook Hub project are completed, and the Seaport storytelling project culminated in a performance in October 2014. Each team had its own way of measuring participation, awareness, and community buy-in. As the organizing body, AIGA/NY was interested in visibility for the Design/Relief initiative. Therefore, each site needed to promote its specific project name, identity, and mission. The Catch&Release installation at the Seaport had a tangible measure of participation, with more than 200 written cards at the end of a three-month exhibit. The messages became the content of a booklet hand-delivered to local businesses. Regular feedback provided at Community Board 1 meetings helped contextualize the installation's modest impact during the winter months, when foot traffic was at its lowest.

In Red Hook, the number of individuals and organizations that joined community workshops demonstrated a growing interest in the project, and signaled that Red Hook had become a testing ground for post-Sandy recovery efforts. The fact that the project is anchored within the Red Hook Initiative Digital Stewards program is a sign of success, indicating that it will live on beyond Design/Relief's presence.

In a community as geographically divided as Rockaway, Design/Relief gained recognition mostly through word of mouth. Residents began sharing their opinions and were outwardly

proud to see their comments published in the local newspaper. Although handing off the initiative to local nonprofit partners has not yet taken place, the plan is for the Rockaway Youth Taskforce to take on the Dear Rockaway project and continue its street graphic tactics while adapting it to relevant messages and timely needs. The Rockaway team also helped build relationships between different organizations, notably Rockaway Artists Alliance and Rockaway Youth Taskforce, which are now planning to co-produce youth programs in the neighborhood.

*Laetitia Wolff is a design curator, strategist and author, self-described as a cultural engineer, interested in design and the city. Her work focuses on creating projects that generate new discourses and question design practice as a tool for change and investigation. She joined AIGA/NY to direct Design/Relief, a creative placemaking program and leads other civic initiatives. She headed the nonprofit startup designNYC as its first executive director following her launch of expoTENTial, an urban intervention platform. She consulted for the City of Montreal on “Unsitely!” an international colloquium exploring design’s potential in mitigating the negative impact of construction sites. She teaches at SVA’s Impact! Design for Social Change.*

## Contributing to Quality of Life

- Anchoring    SALT District—Syracuse, NY  
*Marilyn Higgins*  
*Vice President, Community Engagement and Economic Development, Syracuse University*
- Activating    Follow the Light—Anchorage, AK  
*Bruce Farnsworth*  
*Founding Member, Light Brigade*
- “Fixing”      Santo Domingo Heritage Trail Arts Project—Santo Domingo, NM  
*Joseph Kunkel*  
*Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow, Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority*
- Planning      The Porch at 30th Street Station—Philadelphia, PA  
*Prema Gupta*  
*Director of Planning and Economic Development, University City District*

# Contributing to Quality of Life: Anchoring

Author: Marilyn Higgins

Organization: Near Westside Initiative (NWSI)

Program: SALT District

Location: Syracuse, NY

## At a Glance

The Near Westside Initiative (NWSI) improves the quality of life of residents living in the Syracuse Art, Literacy, and Technology (SALT) District—a diverse, post-industrial, impoverished neighborhood bordering downtown Syracuse, New York—by channeling the human and capital resources of the area’s anchor institution, Syracuse University (SU), toward various arts and culture initiatives. Through engaged scholarship, innovative design practices, and community coalition-building during the past seven years, the NWSI has reinvigorated the local economy and fostered greater appreciation for the arts among residents. It has raised \$74 million in new investment, renovated and leased more than 350,000 square feet of abandoned warehouse space, built a Latino cultural center, and brought more than 300 new jobs to the neighborhood.

## Overview

The SALT District is a creative, rapidly revitalizing neighborhood bordering the Armory Square District of downtown Syracuse, New York, approximately 1.5 miles from the SU campus. In 2007, the university created the nonprofit NWSI, with support from the Gifford Foundation, Home Headquarters, Inc., the Syracuse Center of Excellence in Energy and Environmental Systems (COE), and a coalition of neighborhood residents and business partners. The mission of the NWSI is to use the power of art, technology, and innovation, together with neighborhood values and culture, to revitalize this diverse post-industrial, impoverished area. The NWSI’s approach capitalizes on the intellectual and creative resources of SU to improve the quality of life of area residents. From bilingual magazines and newspapers to crime prevention networks, neighborhood nutrition services, and new playground equipment, the NWSI has touched on and improved almost every facet of neighborhood life.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

Syracuse’s Near Westside has a rich multicultural base with 42 percent of residents identifying as African Americans, 31 percent Caucasian, and 23 percent Hispanic/Latino. Of the 3,300 residents, one-in-five are physically or mentally disabled, and one-half have incomes below the poverty line. The rate of homeownership is 19 percent, up from 13 percent seven

years ago, and unemployment is 52 percent. A century-old dilapidated public school stands in the center of the neighborhood, which is also home to a large public housing project and many social service agencies. Highway construction in the 1960s demolished the neighborhood's business district. The subsequent five decades saw no significant private investment, with the exception of the conversion of the Delevan Center, a turn-of-the-century warehouse, into a gallery and studios for 30 working artists. This creative asset, along with an independent grocery store, an activist Catholic Church, and a small band of committed long-time homeowners, composed the Near Westside's primary assets when work on the NWSI began.

### **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

The NWSI board of directors believes that, with the commitment of an anchor institution, art and neighborhood culture can unite to create a revitalized community. The board's creative placemaking approach was influenced in part by the relocation of university faculty and students dedicated to architecture, art, and design to a building adjacent to the SALT District.

From the outset, the NWSI adopted a nontraditional operating model. The initiative was designed to harness, not duplicate, the collective energy and resources of Syracuse University, local and state government, and existing best-in-class organizations. Residents were asked to serve on the NWSI board to ensure that the community would remain at the heart of the decision-making structure. In the NWSI's first five years, the university dedicated one full-time staff person to the effort. SU's Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development (CEED) manages the overall redevelopment initiative, forms the campus/neighborhood teams to work on projects, and leads the redevelopment of vacant commercial structures along with an active board of directors and more than a dozen local, state, and national partners.

### **Implementation**

Success in the SALT District involves engaged scholarship, innovative design, and the synergy of unlikely coalitions. This combination anchors the NWSI's work in the community while providing rich academic experiences for university students.

Engaged scholarship, for example, resulted in a former crack house being transformed into a neighborhood art center by students and faculty through a course entitled "Social Sculpture." The course began with a professor inviting residents to join her students to share their stories and memories of the building. Abandoned telephone booths in the neighborhood have become well-stocked free libraries with resident "curators" through a partnership of Library Science and Industrial Design faculty, neighborhood residents, and university students. A professor of writing helped neighbors create their own "Gifford Street Press," which publishes books on controversial topics such as community/police relations. The neighborhood's first bilingual monthly newspaper is now mailed to every home in the

neighborhood. A nationally recognized watercolorist and SU professor of art brought her students together with neighborhood sixth graders to paint portraits of their neighborhood and publish their work. Communications/Design faculty and students worked with residents to rebrand the Near Westside as the SALT District and develop the community's logo and website. Engaged scholarship has created rich learning experiences for SU students, signaling change to residents and made the Near Westside a place to expect the unexpected.

Innovative design was introduced to the neighborhood by the SU School of Architecture and involves, in most instances, green design informed by the Center of Excellence in Energy. An international competition to design green homes to fit the scale and character of the neighborhood resulted in the construction of family residences, a feature in *Dwell* magazine, coverage in the *Wall Street Journal*, and the decision by several business owners to relocate to the neighborhood and purchase the homes. A design professor and artisan from the neighborhood created a new green process to manufacture unique cast iron skillets. The NWSI is the recipient of the 2014 Richard M. Daley Legacy Award for Global Leadership in Creating Sustainable Cities for these practices.

## Progress to Date

The first major public art project of the NWSI was the installation of a dozen giant self-portraits of neighborhood children on the boarded-up windows of the abandoned warehouse at the entrance to the neighborhood. Created by photographer Stephen Mahan, this project juxtaposed aspirational self-portraits of children against the most visible sign of blight.

In 2009, the creation of another dramatic public art installation facilitated neighborhood dialogue and visually disrupted the barrier between the neighborhood and downtown. Artist Steve Powers painted his "Love Letter to Syracuse" on three large rusted elevated train trestles that loomed forebodingly over the intersection of the two neighborhoods. Powers drew his inspiration from going door to door to ask people simple questions, which led to profound statements about the struggles of daily life and the simple joys that take place in the Near Westside. This dialogue established a pattern of conversation between residents and artists that continues to this day, and contributes to the success of the SALTQUARTERS artist-in-residence program.

Another project, "The Talent Agency," created by two faculty members who live in the neighborhood, has deepened this dialogue. Their project enables neighborhood youth to create public art on vacant lots and simultaneously develop portfolios for entrance to art schools and colleges.

During the past seven years, the NWSI has raised \$74 million in new investment, renovated and leased more than 350,000 square feet of abandoned warehouse space, and attracted seven new employers, 40 new households, the city's first Latino cultural center, dozens of artists, and 308 new jobs to the neighborhood. Forty-six faculty and 975 students have infused the university's academic expertise in the areas of art, design, green technology, architecture, and communication into the neighborhood, revitalizing formerly vacant lots,

boarded-up homes, and abandoned warehouses. The region's public broadcasting station has relocated to the SALT District, as has the nation's largest literacy organization.

The premise that art and neighborhood culture can unite to create a revitalized community with the commitment of an anchor institution is proving to be true in Syracuse's SALT District. Resident associations, community gardens, parks, schools, job training, and social networks have all been strengthened as a result.

*Marilyn Higgins is responsible for the Connective Corridor and the Near Westside Initiative, (or SALT District); two multi-million dollar urban redevelopment projects that serve as platforms for engaged, interdisciplinary scholarship at Syracuse University. She is a founder and principal architect of the Near-west Side Initiative, Inc., a nonprofit development corporation revitalizing one of the poorest census tracts in the nation. Ms. Higgins also leads a collaborative effort with the university, Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse to create the Connective Corridor; a signature strip of urban streetscape linking University Hill to downtown Syracuse. Prior to her position at Syracuse University, Ms. Higgins was vice president of economic development for National Grid where she was responsible for attracting new business investment and jobs into the corporation's thirty-seven county, upstate New York service territory.*

# Contributing to Quality of Life: Activating

Author: Bruce Farnsworth

Organization: Light Brigade

Program: Follow the Light

Location: Anchorage, AK

## At a Glance

The Light Brigade is a collective of independent artists based in Anchorage, Alaska, that designs and executes multimedia urban art interventions in the built and natural environment. Its work is site-specific and almost always ephemeral, occurring in most cases only once. Members of the Light Brigade work collaboratively according to an agreed-on dogma that eschews standard theatrical hierarchies and titles, aiming to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Anchorage by “activating” their surroundings in creative and challenging ways. Maintaining its artistic focus on themes of special interest to northern dwellers, the Light Brigade, with the support of the Anchorage Park Foundation (APF) and other partners, planned a large-scale, month-long sculptural installation and multimedia performance series in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the city of Anchorage, culminating in January 2015.

## Overview

A growing interest on the part of audiences for opportunities to enjoy art and culture in nontraditional settings inspired the Light Brigade to consider how people might approach the arts differently. In the past, artists have depended on traditional arts organizations because of their monopoly on access to venues, equipment, audience and subscriber lists, and donors. However, the multidisciplinary tools employed by the Light Brigade—recording, projecting, broadcasting, amplifying, lighting—have become so inexpensive during the past decade that minimally and intermittently funded arts groups now have broad access to them. This encouraged the Light Brigade to bring art to the public in new and unexpected ways. The Light Brigade empowers the citizens of Anchorage by planning, designing, and executing creative, time-based interventions to activate the local landscape and built-environment using the full assortment of tools that its consortium members possess—dance, lighting, illusion, visual and sonic media, augmented reality, and poetry. The Light Brigade’s installations change how audiences relate to their everyday surroundings, which during the long, dark winter months can challenge the resilience of visitors and life-long Anchorage residents alike.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

With its increasingly diverse population of 300,000 residents, Anchorage is by far the

youngest city of its size in the United States. Like many Western cities, the community's economy depends largely on the extraction of natural resources, with its patterns of economic boom and bust and dramatic fluctuations in the population. Policy and business leaders have only recently begun to embrace economic development strategies that look beyond resource extraction, and they have yet to advocate fully for economic and environmental diversification. Progress is slowly being made, however. Community leaders and development entities are starting to acknowledge the role that the arts can play in reimagining how natural and social resources can be leveraged to promote prosperity. For example, the Light Brigade's work has been designated by the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation as part of a new class of community-born assets, citing creative placemaking as one of its seven major areas of focus for community change.

### **How Creative Placemaking Helps**

The Light Brigade has two principal goals. The first is to set the course of Anchorage's next 100 years by helping it become a fully mature winter city, like its vibrant sister cities in the circumpolar north—Oslo, Stockholm, and Alberta. For the Light Brigade, this involves creating opportunities for Anchorage residents to gather in large groups outdoors to celebrate their northern identity. The other goal is premised on the belief that a city's artists set the tone for how the community defines its aspirations, and that business and policy leaders can provide the infrastructure for making those aspirations manifest.

### **Implementation**

Pursuing effective, lasting partnerships is an integral part of the Light Brigade's mission. To this end, the group has nurtured relationships with leaders of many influential institutions whose advocacy, permission, and cooperation are required to carry out the Light Brigade's vision. The Light Brigade's main fiscal partner is the Anchorage Park Foundation, and in recent years the group has engaged the Railroad Corporation, the University of Alaska, the Anchorage Museum, the Rasmuson Foundation, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, and the Municipality of Anchorage itself. The Light Brigade has staged multimedia interventions of various sizes in downtown Anchorage, the Ship Creek neighborhood, the Spenard neighborhood, and in the Anton Anderson Memorial Railroad Tunnel.

The largest and most ambitious one-time-only, site-specific work was called *Over Beyond Across Through (OBAT)*, which occurred on the exterior of the recently renovated Anchorage Museum. A diverse crowd of 5,000 people filled the museum's front lawn and courtyard on a late-September night in 2013 to view the performance, which consisted of an original work of "expanded cinema," incorporating video imagery and animation projected on the museum's highly reflective surface. Twenty dancers, some suspended in harnesses, engaged in an art form known as "urban aerial dance" on the museum's glass and steel walls. Others danced on three tiers of decks that the Light Brigade had constructed at the edges of the museum's roof-

tops. The dance element of the performance interacted with the projection piece through the use of real-time, movement-activated technology, which was controlled onsite by the Light Brigade's technical team. The piece was driven by an original musical soundscape composed by one of the Light Brigade's artistic collaborators. Since OBAT, the Light Brigade has observed an increased tendency of the museum to offer programming on its outdoor lawn and courtyard. This past winter, for example, the museum screened a movie outdoors in February, and in the summer, it staged several events on the museum lawn.

OBAT took nearly two years to create and required the participation of more than 75 local artists, designers, filmmakers, programmers, technicians, riggers, and stagehands, not to mention the many museum staff members who contributed enormous amounts of their time and energy. Its total budget was \$129,000, and nearly all of it was spent in the local economy, putting money in the hands of artists and local businesses. The Light Brigade spent a considerable sum on material and equipment rentals, all acquired locally with the exception of about \$1,200 worth of specialized climbing rope, which staff members could not procure in town.

## Progress to Date

Follow the Light is a large-scale light sculpture installed along the flowing contours of a historic and popular downtown park, and will be activated by a series of performances that are free and open to the public. Thousands of residents and visitors will experience the installation and events held within it during the winter of 2014/2015. This large-scale light sculpture and outdoor performance space will illuminate the far west end of the downtown area. Installation includes temporary decks to support performers, and projection screens of fabric, snow, and ice. Follow the Light is both longer in duration than OBAT and contains a more robust evaluation component than previous installations. Among other techniques used to document effects on and around the chosen site, the Light Brigade mounted a time-lapse camera one month prior to the launch of the project that remained in place for the duration of the month-long installation and for an additional month following the installation's activation. Through such efforts, the Light Brigade hopes to contribute something useful to the ongoing conversation about how best to assess the positive effects of activating public space.

*Bruce Farnsworth is an Anchorage-based writer, community organizer, and founding member of the art group Light Brigade. Previously, Farnsworth founded and directed the MTS Gallery in Anchorage from 2005 through 2011. During that time MTS hosted a renowned program of monthly cutting edge visual art exhibitions and performance art work by both local and visiting or invited artists from around the state and the world. In 2011, Farnsworth was the recipient of the first ever "President's Award" from the Rasmuson Foundation, an award created by the foundation's president and CEO to honor his work in neighborhood revitalization through the arts.*

# Contributing to Quality of Life: “Fixing”

Author: Joseph Kunkel

Organization: Santo Domingo Planning Department (SDPD);  
Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority (SDTHA)

Program: The Santo Domingo Heritage Trail Arts Project

Location: Santo Domingo Pueblo, NM

## At a Glance

The Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority (SDTHA), in partnership with the Santo Domingo Planning Department (SDPD), preserves and promotes the culture of Pueblo Country—located between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico. It seeks to expand the local economy of Santo Domingo Pueblo, the capital of the 19 Pueblos, and make key improvements to existing infrastructure. In 2012, with the support of the SDTHA and other local partners, SDPD began planning a 1.5-mile walking trail with intermittent stations that showcase artwork and design projects from Santo Domingo’s Native American artists and artisans. Residents were encouraged to contribute at every stage of development, from planning and design to construction. The trail is an essential component of a larger community development project linking housing developments with community- and government-sponsored tribal programs, building cohesion and pride of place among the 19 Pueblo communities.

## Overview

In 2012, the Santo Domingo Planning Department (SDPD) was awarded an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to develop a framework for a cultural district and to create an overall community master plan that capitalizes on arts-based economies. This framework highlighted existing economic assets while focusing on potential future development of the area’s community and culture. At the same time, the Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority (SDTHA) and SDPD collaborated to host an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow (ERAF) to address issues of affordable housing and community engagement and to explore how design can positively affect community, culture, and place. In January 2013, the SDTHA, SDPD, and ERAF reached out to local community artists for input on community arts projects along a proposed 1.5-mile trail. The Santo Domingo Heritage Trail Arts Project is the culmination of these efforts. Through the creative arts, it aims to preserve the Santo Domingo Pueblo’s culture of place while distinguishing Santo Domingo as the capital of the 19 Pueblos.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

The Pueblo of Santo Domingo (also known as Kewa Pueblo) is located between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, along major historic and contemporary trade routes, which date back to the early 1920s. Serving as the capital of the 19 Pueblos, Santo Domingo is home to approximately 5,100 tribal members, with more than one-half of its population still living within the historic pueblo village and surrounding areas. Santo Domingo was a major stop along the famed Route 66 Highway, where local artists sold and traded traditional *heishi* jewelry, turquoise jewelry, and pueblo pottery. To this day, the community boasts a tradition and culture of creativity that contributes significantly to its economy. Even so, as of 2012 more than 30 percent of Santo Domingo's residents were living below the poverty line, and 23 percent were unemployed.

## How Creative Placemaking Helps

Since work on the Heritage Trail began, Santo Domingo has experienced a period of renewal and growth, drawing support from outside the community and from within. Strong tribal leadership on cultural preservation has largely made this possible, resulting in a range of community-centric, place-based projects focused on positive and creative social change. The projects range from master-planning efforts that integrate the rehabilitation of the old historic pueblo core, to the development of culturally appropriate affordable housing. Because more than two-thirds of the community consider themselves artists, makers, and doers, it is both practical and fitting that future development should be based around the creative arts and creative placemaking.

## Implementation

During 2015, the SDTHA and Heritage Trail Planning Committee will select up to 11 local Santo Domingo Artists to design and construct a series of art interventions along the 1.5-mile segment of the Heritage Trail. The planning committee is composed of an architect, a landscape architect, a national artist, a local artist, community members, and a project manager. This small committee will help guide and mentor local artists in their conceptual thinking, visioning, and implementing art interventions. Working with the community and various partners, the planning committee will also develop a unified narrative throughout the trail; each art intervention will have its own unique identity while fitting into a larger, cohesive whole. The interventions will take shape either as an observation platform, rest area, or designated stopping point, heightening the pedestrian's experience both on and off the trail. The section of the trail dedicated to art installations is a major focal point of the project, but SDTHA and SDPD will also develop the remaining mile-long stretch of road, providing pedestrians with a safe place to walk, run, or bike.

The Heritage Trail project is an essential component of a larger community development process. Through careful planning, the SDTHA and SDPD have proposed a network of

walking trails to connect new housing developments with community- and government-sponsored tribal programs and with public transportation. Through this process, the SDTHA and SDPD engaged various organizations and members of the community, including the Santo Domingo Tribal Council, Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health, the Santa Fe Art Institute, and Santo Domingo Natural Resources. Developing sustained relationships with these entities has allowed for inclusive, open dialogue that has given each vested party a sense of ownership, providing a forum for constructive criticism at every stage of the planning process.

## Progress to Date

Since starting this project, the SDTHA and SDPD have continued to build stronger relationships with local organizations. The Santa Fe Art Institute has dedicated a summer design-build studio to investigate how a seating and shelter prototype might influence how individuals experience a large natural landscape. This partnership also allows for local youth to participate in the design and construction of permanent objects along the trail. This helps broaden the impact of those affected by the artists' work, transferring a sense of ownership and pride to the community. The SDTHA and SDPD hope to set a precedent for other tribal communities to explore how art, culture, and place can invigorate future growth in their communities.

In 2015, open dialogue with the various partners, tribal programs, and community members will help establish standards through which the SDTHA and SDPD can measure the project's overall success. The most important factor is how the community relates with and supports the project as it continues to grow. Identifying which populations will be affected most is critical to understanding who will use the trail to access the Rail Runner for public transportation, who will use it for recreation purposes, and how the trail will appeal to both local artists and their colleagues from surrounding communities. SDTHA will gather survey data during construction to help meet the specific needs of populations who will use the trail. Once the trail is completed, SDTHA will make the survey data public in an effort to promote community-building elsewhere.

*Joseph Kunkel is an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow currently working directly with the Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative (SNCC), and the Santo Domingo Tribal Housing Authority. His most recent focus with SNCC has been to help research and showcase exemplary Native American housing nationwide, and to build and develop emerging best practices. His professional career has centered on community-based educational design. His work ranges from material research and fabrication to community-based planning, design and development. Joseph is currently working on a Cultural District Plan at Santo Domingo Tribe, funded by an a National Endowments for the Arts Our Town grant, which has led to an ArtPlace America grant award. This award will fund multiple arts project tying together two new affordable housing developments on the Santo Domingo Pueblo.*

# Contributing to Quality of Life: Planning

Author: Prema Gupta

Organization: University City District (UCD)

Program: The Porch at 30th Street Station

Location: West Philadelphia, PA

## At a Glance

The Porch at 30th Street Station (The Porch), developed and maintained by the nonprofit University City District (UCD), provides residents of the University City area of West Philadelphia a unique public space to sit, socialize, read, stroll, or take in magnificent views of the Center City skyline. UCD rigorously charts how its 20,000 daily users interact with the site, and periodically modifies The Porch's configurable planters and landscaping, amenities, concessions, and arts programming to fit the community's ever-changing needs and desires. Delivering a public space that is perpetually in tune with its users improves their quality of life by seamlessly integrating the arts into their daily routines.

## Overview

University City District (UCD) is a nonprofit partnership of world-renowned anchor institutions, small businesses, and residents that creates opportunity, improves economic vitality, and raises quality of life standards in the University City area of West Philadelphia. Its primary mission is community revitalization; UCD works within a place-based, data-driven framework to invest in world-class public spaces, address crime and public safety, bring life to commercial corridors, connect low-income residents to careers, and promote job growth and innovation.

In April 2011, UCD seized on a rare opportunity. Earlier that year the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation created a 55' x 500' stretch of sidewalk where 33 parallel parking spaces had previously abutted. UCD wagered that adequate demand existed at the location for a vibrant and engaging public space. In November of that year, UCD unveiled The Porch, which provides the 20,000 pedestrians who pass through the site daily a safe environment to sit, read, stroll, socialize, or take in magnificent views of the Schuylkill River and the Center City skyline. UCD envisions The Porch evolving into an iconic, inviting, and beloved public space that is both attractive to visitors to West Philadelphia and a source of civic pride for area locals. UCD is currently planning an extensive redesign, redevelopment, and expansion of the site that will include robust arts and music programming.

## Context for Creative Placemaking

Philadelphia's University City is the region's leader in education, science, and innovation, with highly esteemed universities and medical institutions. It is a destination for food lovers and culture seekers, with internationally acclaimed dining, museums, and galleries. University City's arts and cultural organizations are some of the fastest growing in the region, and the neighborhood houses numerous performance spaces of all sizes in museums and galleries, hosting artists and festivals regularly. The Porch plays an important role in attracting both artists and audiences. Once a congested parking lane and bland, barren sidewalk, The Porch has quickly become one of the most animated public places in Philadelphia. It sits adjacent to the second busiest train station in the country, between two magnificent historic buildings and within a short walk to more than 16,000 jobs, and serves as a key gateway to the region.

## How Creative Placemaking Helps

Early in the development process, UCD adopted a novel approach to achieve its goals for The Porch. When designing a new park, an architect or landscape artist will typically be hired before the site or budget is established. The assumption is that the designer will understand potential users' needs and behaviors first, and execute a design tailored to those needs. Drawing on a rigorous study of site use patterns using a method inspired by urban sociologist William "Holly" Whyte, The Porch evolves iteratively in response to user behavior.

The physical interventions at the site in 2011—the "hardware"—were basic. The space was divided into a series of outdoor rooms bounded by trees and umbrellas. High-quality seasonal plantings were used because large planters were cost-prohibitive. Agricultural feeding troughs were repurposed with green roof technology to create large, economical planters with trees to filter traffic noise and foster a hospitable pedestrian environment. Movable tables and chairs were added to allow users maximum flexibility in choosing where to sit in relation to the space, other people, and the sun.

To attract new users, UCD also made a sizable investment in the site's "software," or programming: farmers markets, yoga classes, musical performances, and concerts of different scales; food truck events; and a beer garden, among others. Using this approach, UCD effectively "beta tested" the public space, experimenting with a variety of physical configurations and programming to determine what would best attract people to the space before making permanent capital changes.

## Implementation

The first iteration of The Porch cost \$350,000 to design and build, with subsequent yearly maintenance costs of \$150,000 that included a variety of programs, horticulture, security, cleaning, and site modifications. The Porch is arguably the most rigorously observed and analyzed public space in the country. The Porch concierge walks the site hourly, mapping

and noting activity. Are users eating, talking, or participating in programming? Are users evenly divided between male and female? Are they sitting in the sun or the shade? This information is added to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and allows UCD to observe, analyze, and evaluate use patterns and make small changes. These observations continually inform the long-term redesign of the space, as well as short-term decisions relating to its programming, maintenance, and stewardship. For example, after testing a farmers market, UCD concluded that it was not successful and replaced it with a food truck event.

Before selecting a landscape architect to design the second iteration of The Porch, UCD identified a tentative set of design elements, furnishings, and amenities that included a planted buffer, food kiosk(s), large flexible space for destination programming, adjustable shade structures, and continued use of movable tables and chairs—all informed by observations. For example, UCD has graphed the percentage of users who sit in the shade by the temperature. Although the general conclusion is obvious, UCD will be able to push its design team to develop flexible shade structures with mathematical precision, based on observed behavior at the site. UCD selected a Philadelphia-based design team—landscape architect Studio Bryan Hanes and architecture firm DIGSAU3—to redesign The Porch. Rebar, an artist collective from San Francisco, was recently added to the design team to develop, fabricate, and install a piece of functional art.

## Progress to Date

During the past eighteen months, UCD has demonstrated that iconic, inviting, animated public spaces can substantially improve the quality of life of the communities they serve. Given the vast unmet need for pedestrian amenities, as well as a fiscal climate that restricts public funding for large capital-intensive public space projects, UCD believes an iterative, user-based approach is the ideal way to develop new parks and pedestrian amenities.

*Prema Katari Gupta is University City District's director of planning and economic development, where she is responsible for the development and stewardship of public spaces, bike/ped improvements, public art, business attraction and retention, transportation management, sustainability, and market research. She has worked in real estate at PIDC, the City of Philadelphia's economic development authority, and at the Urban Land Institute, where she authored a book on placemaking in mixed-use development. Prema is a graduate of Bowdoin College and has a master's degree from University of Pennsylvania School of Design and a certificate in real estate from the Wharton School.*

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