



THE ROLE OF ARTISTS & THE ARTS IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

WHO IS
CREATIVE
PLACEMAKING?

**GOETHE
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THE ROLE OF ARTISTS & THE ARTS IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

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INTRODUCTION

WILFRIED ECKSTEIN, GOETHE-INSTITUT WASHINGTON, D.C. / EUNIC WASHINGTON, D.C. CLUSTER

Welcome to a transatlantic dialogue and the thoughts gleaned from it. In May 2014, the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts (BOPA) and the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) cluster of Washington, DC organized a symposium entitled *The Role of Artists and the Arts in Creative Placemaking*. Seven curators from Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, and the United Kingdom met 12 organizers of arts activities from the three designated Baltimore Arts Districts (Station North, Highlandtown, and Bromo Art), as well as three artists who also serve as city consultants in Providence (Rhode Island), Worcester (Massachusetts), Minneapolis (Minnesota), and three nationally-acknowledged experts.

Each of the participants is experienced in promoting the arts in their cities on a city-wide or neighborhood scale. They are actively involved in organizing placemaking efforts in dialogue with artists on the one hand, and with stakeholders such as neighborhood residents, city administrations, proprietors, neighborhood organizations and executive authorities on the other. The American participants often identify themselves as “risk-translators.” Being curators for the arts in an urban context, they are a trusted face on the artists’ as well as the stakeholders’ side.

Americans and Europeans convened to engage in a peer-to-peer exchange about best practices for the roles of artists and the

arts in what in Europe is usually referred to as “revitalization” of urban spaces, in the U.S. has been denoted as “creative placemaking”¹ and what nowadays tends to be reframed as “arts in urban resilience.”

This publication aims to retrace the dialogue that occurred, and to provide a basis for future American-European encounters about the role of the arts in transformation processes of the urban environment. Our current situation began with the shrinking of the traditional city due to the proliferation of suburban landscapes, continued with the reduction of wages among local populations due to the export of jobs into lower-wage regions and has devolved into a competition for survival among people and cities due to the digitalization of human energy, resulting in a winner-take-all class with many impoverished precariats spread globally.

This documentation does not re-produce what was said during the symposium, although you will discover some transcripts from our dialogues. The authors have graciously accepted the request to reformulate their presentations and thoughts in the aftermath of the symposium. These articles are intended to help others orient themselves when talking about the complex role arts and culture play in inspiring urban development in light of the rapid depletion of economic growth’s ample resources. This documentation is not an academic paper. It does not, for example, distinguish placemaking from resilience. We accepted the general

notion that “creative placemaking” denotes artistic efforts to revitalize urban areas. On this general understanding we glide, as if on an ice rink, demonstrating to one another what can and cannot be expected from the arts in urban contexts.

The symposium’s participants praised its success. We managed to meet one another, leaving behind different terminologies and their sharp differentiations for the time being to build communication. We made a conscious decision to approach one another in the grey zone of dialogue and exchange. We discovered we had to make the search for a shared terminology (urban revitalization–regeneration through culture–creative placemaking–art and resilience–social engineering) second priority, instead focusing on accepting each person and listening to one another’s accounts. This documentation takes up the conversation where we ended it—at the reflection about our practice and our terminologies.

The symposium was initiated by EUNIC to highlight the role of arts and culture in the development of civil societies. We felt that this topic deserves more attention in the transatlantic conversation, both in the academic departments of European Studies and Urban Studies, as well as in European and American cultural exchange programs. We hoped foremost to be of service to those who are occupied on a daily basis with the question of how to bring the arts into the urban environment and enhance their role

in urban life and culture. This transatlantic dialogue intends to open new perspectives for collaboration and to strengthen the creative placemaking agenda on both sides of the Atlantic. This publication underlines that effort.

The symposium was part of a comprehensive program initiated by the EUNIC cluster Washington, DC and BOPA. It commenced with the European Month of Culture May 2013 and lasted until Summer 2014. With financial support from the European Union Delegation to the U.S., we brought artists from Europe to engage with Baltimore artists and neighborhoods. Highlights of our program included cooperation during the street art activities of Station North, with five of 12 murals being produced by artists from Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain; three artists-in-residencies in three neighborhoods and three exhibitions and panel discussions on urban development in Europe; and finally, this symposium.

None of our activities would have been possible, nor would have the connection with artists and neighborhoods been achieved, without the untiring support of BOPA, MICA and the three Arts Districts. I want to particularly thank Bill Gilmore for his support and the time he spent showing me around, opening my eyes and developing my affection for the City of Baltimore.

Baltimore was a booming town until the 1940s, the United States' second most important port and third most important

city. It boasted big industry, elegant department stores, tasteful residential areas, and prosperous ethnic communities whose residents hailed from all over Europe. Beginning in the 1950s, but increasing during the 1970s, the City of Baltimore lost much of its economic power. People moved to the suburbs and industry relocated abroad, draining the city's tax base. At the end of the 1990s, GDP in the United States rose, but this increase is no longer being felt in the middle class or evidencing itself in increased employment and income in low wage sectors. Over the last thirty years, Baltimore has witnessed many efforts to bring "healthy" city life back to its residential districts, the city center and the harbor. But "revitalization" is very "slow growth"² with unpredictable ups and downs. Yet in many respects, Baltimore has become a good example of this process of revitalization, with many successful and encouraging stories to share. Within the broader context of the U.S. perspective, Baltimore offers itself as an instructive showcase for a transatlantic dialogue on the nature of creative placemaking for the many mid-size cities in Europe which do not make it into the headlines or have the fortune of being selected as a European Culture Capital.

The United States has accumulated a wide variety of rich experiences in this arts practice over the last three decades. The successful revitalization of a neighborhood examines the quality of urban life. Visible indicators of success include a decline in drug-dealing statistics, criminal activity and

prostitution through increased civil life. Creative placemaking encourages the return of street life in the evening hours, the influx of new residents and their interaction with long-time residents, the return of business activities, and ultimately, the increased value of real estate, new investment, and even employment. Through creative placemaking, art in the public sphere has shown the capacity to release energies, provide visions and connect people—all cornerstones for returning life to a city. The speakers at our symposium and the authors of the articles in this compendium have an important share of such success stories in the cities in which they work.

With my deepest respect for their work and devotion to the improvement of civil life in our urban environment, I want to thank the authors who gave their time to this transatlantic dialogue.

ENDNOTES

1. Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*, National Endowment for the Arts, accessed February 3, 2015, www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf
2. The term is borrowed from James K. Galbraith, *The End of Normal* (Texas: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 242.

**THROUGH
CREATIVE
PLACEMAKING
AND
URBAN
RESILIENCE**

Over the past decade, the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) has emerged as an anchor institution for the redevelopment of the post-industrial city of Baltimore's Station North District. Through its staff and students, and via course offerings such as community development, social design and curatorial practice, MICA has diversified its profile and played a major role in the development of the surrounding neighborhood. The Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts (BOPA) has been another anchor. It is a formally independent structure which brings artists into dialogue with the mayor, city and metropolitan administrations and regulators, law enforcement officials, neighborhood committees, individual proprietors, and other stakeholders and users of urban space, in effect functioning as an interface between government and civil society. In this chapter, Fred Lazarus, the former president of MICA, and Bill Gilmore, executive director of BOPA, reflect on the beneficial changes their institutions have initiated in the city.

Creative placemaking refers to the efforts of creative and entrepreneurial people to turn derelict places and their post-industrial legacies into starting points for both their own lives and the neighborhoods around them. Prudent curatorial practice has proven to generate effective interactions between artists and their neighborhoods. German muralist Hendrik Beikirch relates how he worked to give voice to some of the people living adjacent to his mural.

Creative placemaking seems doable. But what can be said from a systematic point of view? Architect and teacher Michael Stanton and PhD candidate Elena Lombardo look critically at the term "creative placemaking," and Rafael de Balanzo-Joue introduces a new term into the conversation, "resilience."

BUILDING TRUST & RELATIONSHIP

FRED LAZARUS IV, PRESIDENT OF THE MARYLAND INSTITUTE COLLEGE OF ART (MICA), 1978–2014

Almost exactly a year ago, Ben Stone, who runs Station North Arts District, put together a wonderful symposium that brought together a number of people from around the country to discuss arts districts and how they work.

I attended most of those sessions, and I think the most common denominator was the differences amongst us. Each of these arts districts is very different from the others. Even here in Baltimore, the three districts that we have are all very, very different from one another. Not only the role that the arts and culture districts play in their neighborhoods varies, but also the way the districts integrate into their communities. In truth, it was not easy for me to see common denominators. It also became clear that a lot of the economic incentives which are in this country, the driving forces for starting arts districts, had a pretty minimal impact on almost all these districts. The economic benefits that the government, state or local entities were providing to artists and cultural institutions really weren't the drivers. The drivers were the leadership, passion and vision of the individuals involved in each. These were the factors that seemed to me to be unifying the really exceptional work in various places around the country.

There are many ways to do our work of developing strong arts and entertainment districts. And you can't impose what works in one place onto another. Because of the unique DNA of each place, of each

community, there needs to be this kind of organic quality to the developmental process. Each of these programs is considered to be successful when it is integrated into its community and the larger urban agenda in a cohesive way. The leaders have to do this in a way that supports the urban agenda without being swallowed up by that urban agenda. And that's a really delicate balance. This is hard for both those who control the urban agenda and for the arts community. However, this balance is the key to making it happen.

In Baltimore, Station North, which is probably the most mature of our arts districts, existed for a number of years in an ineffective way. It really was not able to get much traction or make things happen. The change came through a combination of new leadership and because it was integrated into a larger agenda. We have heard presentations on the importance of an identity, and I think the term that was used was not only DNA of a place but the identity of an area. One of the things I find in my own microscopic world here is that there isn't one identity. There are lots of communities within one community and each one has a very different set of needs, interests and agendas. The artists bring a special dimension to that, and they become another set of identities that are not monolithic in their interest. Certainly, the arts organizations are also not always in alignment with the artists, and the artists are not always in alignment with each other. So there are a lot of identities here, and one

of the hardest pieces in all these communities is building a sustaining trust among all those separate entities. My experience here has been that without trust, you don't do anything. Everybody has a lot of power to stop new initiatives but very little power of creating, and that power to stop is primarily driven by a lack of trust.

One of the first things that happened when we created the arts district is that it became another thing to fear: Is it going to displace the residents who were in this community before the artists came? Are the artists going to be displaced by the revitalization that's going to happen if we become successful as an arts community? The fear factor seems to dominate. Finding a way to mitigate the fear and build trust and let people work together was the greatest challenge we faced. The most important thing I found in listening to the arts districts around the country was that their success depended on whether or not trust was developed.

I'd like to talk about MICA's role in this Creative Placemaking story. I guess I started conversations with people in this particular area, which we call Station North, a good twenty years ago. We had many roundtable planning conversations that did not go anywhere. But what became clear from those conversations was that there was not only this area of mistrust but also that a broad coalition was needed to make redevelopment work. We needed public and private



Mural by Finnish artist Santtu Mustonen as part of Open Walls Baltimore 2 © Martha Cooper

partnerships. We needed involvement from the government and the private sector. We needed the artists involved. We needed everybody at the table.

Furthermore, the agenda had to be inclusive: We couldn't do artists' housing if we couldn't do affordable housing. If we couldn't do market rate housing, we couldn't do venues for artists without looking for commercial spaces as well, which needed to be in the area at the same time. You couldn't just add elements that added quality of life without also addressing those areas that were deteriorating the quality of life and were negative forces in that community. The question then was: How does all this happen in a cohesive way? You can't build it one block at a time, you've got to build it across the board or it doesn't work.

It also became clear to me very early on that MICA couldn't lead this process, even though we were the largest institution in the area. We couldn't do it ourselves, even if we wanted to. We needed to work with a broad coalition. The questions for MICA were: How do we facilitate without leading? What role could we play? Who are the other partners needed at the table?

We spent a lot of time building the coalition and creating strengths among those partner organizations. I give a lot of credit to all the partners we have had that have been at the table for many years working on this. It would have never been possible without those partnerships. As you go through the day and panels, I think you'll see how that happens to be true and also, as you do the walking tour, you'll see something else that is very different—what I would call a non-top down planned development process. The Station North area has benefited from incremental growth. There is no master developer; there is no master physical plan. There have been some visions but they are very loose visions about what needs to be done and it's very much entrepreneurial in nature. I also think that is the future of lots of urban development today. It's going to be much more entrepreneurial, much more incremental, bottom up development. The question is, how do you do this in a way that is cohesive and still have broad support without a broad plan which is supporting it and leading it, as many of these developments were in the 1970's and 1980's in lots of cities in the country. I think it's a very exciting time.

I look forward to where we will be not only tomorrow afternoon but where we will be in three years, five years as a result of this.



Mural by Finnish artist Santtu Mustonen as part of Open Walls Baltimore 2 © Diana Zhang

POST-INDUSTRIAL SLOW GROWTH

WILFRIED ECKSTEIN IN CONVERSATION WITH BILL GILMORE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BALTIMORE OFFICE OF PROMOTION & THE ARTS (BOPA)

BOPA, the official Baltimore City Arts Council, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which produces events and arts programs as well as manages several facilities.

Wilfred Eckstein: *Bill, for close to thirty years you have been a major player in what we now call “creative placemaking” in Baltimore. You have worked with six mayors, and you created BOPA. You as a person and as a BOPA representative have been the face, and BOPA has been the interface between the city administration and civil society, as you have structured a mutually beneficial partnership between the arts and city development. What is the aim of BOPA?*

Bill Gilmore: BOPA’s mission is to make Baltimore a more creative and vibrant city. While we serve as the structural interface between the city administration and civil society, we also have responsibilities in other areas. To answer the question, quality of life seems to be the overarching umbrella on which we base our programs. For instance, our programs range from on-going arts education for approximately 2,700 children in underserved areas to a civic celebration like the Star-Spangled Spectacular which has an estimated attendance of over 1 million people with a significant economic impact on the city. Obviously some are larger or smaller, but our intent is to provide a broad range of genuinely free opportunities and activities that serve the general public.

WE: *How did it all begin?*

BG: The beginning is a relative term. For me, the beginning, at least to my knowledge, was Tall Ships in 1976, the celebration of our country’s bicentennial. That is where many people begin the story of the city’s renaissance and its placemaking history. The Inner Harbor was void of any attraction at that point. The land had been cleared and there was no Aquarium, Harbor Place or Convention Center. When the city participated in Tall Ships, it was a grassroots volunteer effort that was supported by the city administration. Who could have anticipated that hundreds of thousands of people from the city and surrounding counties would come to the event? After this, the Inner Harbor was branded as a place for not only visitors but also residents to come and enjoy the waterfront that had previously been reserved for industry. Now it’s become an opportunity for recreation. Our office has had a long history of continuing these destination events to brand not only our city but specific neighborhoods suitable for public gathering. The Sunday farmers market is another good example, where we took an unused parcel of land underneath the city’s main expressway to create an attraction that now brings in more than 5,000 people each Sunday.

WE: *What have been the biggest challenges over the past twenty years?*

BG: For any nonprofit organization, the ups and downs of the economy play an important role in our financial ability to provide programming. Many cities have a dedicated source of funding which helps to level out these peaks and valleys. We’ve not yet established a fund like this, but we’re working on it.

WE: *The population of the city of Baltimore has been shrinking for more than half a century. This is a breathtaking stress on the city’s inner life. How has cultural life changed over the last 20 years?*

BG: Baltimore is not so different from other major cities or metropolitan areas that have always relied on the arts as an integral component to quality of life. Since Baltimore was at one time the third-largest city in America, we have cultural assets of size and quality that reflect our heritage—like our museums, our symphony, and historical landmarks—which are at the root of the character that defines Baltimore. It’s true that the population within the city’s borders has declined, but the population within the metropolitan area has grown dramatically, and the thirst and demand for access to fine art and performance has not abated. It seems that within the last 12 years or so we have garnered more attention, and younger populations and social media have increased the awareness and buzz about what’s going on in Baltimore artistically. Certainly the growth of the Maryland



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Institute College of Art into one of the premiere art schools in the country has also been a factor.

WE: *The arts and cultural life are one of several factors in maintaining urban life. What can realistically be expected from the arts in this post-industrial city? What should not be expected from the arts?*

BG: One of the things we can expect from the arts as it evolves to reflect our population is the influence of new immigrant communities. The city is welcoming this new population, and new cultural traditions are being established through dance, craft and visual art. We expect that these new art forms will be included in what reflects our city and our city's future. There's also been an emphasis on the creative industries and their role in economic development. We anticipate that that will hold true in the near future. What should not be expected from the arts? I don't think that's a fair question. I think the expectation of what the arts can do to build and sustain a city is unlimited because of art's broad impact on quality of life, education and entertainment. I wouldn't limit capacity.

WE: *Baltimore is a best-practice example for the progress of a city in tackling crises such as well-established urban sprawl, de-investment, the relocation of jobs overseas, digitalization of labor, unemployment and poverty, drug-trafficking and crime and the loss of upward mobility. The arts have contributed to neighborhood stabilization and the revitalization of a civic life in districts such as Highlandtown and Station North. What is the lesson Baltimore teaches us? Is there a tool kit which we can deduce from the Baltimore's extensive experiences?*

BG: I would agree that the arts have contributed to the city through the retention of its young people, both those who were born

here and those who come here for education or jobs. We have recently seen a modest increase in population not only in the arts districts, but throughout the city as a whole. I think Baltimore's history of diversity and inclusion and its relatively low cost of living have been assets. Is there a tool kit? I think the tools are the assets previously mentioned, along with an educated population that embraces diversity and inclusion, doesn't take itself too seriously, and enjoys a little fun.

WE: *Who are the most reliable partners for your work? What makes them reliable? Is a special intelligence needed to make creative placemaking successful?*

BG: I think collaboration is the key to all of these questions. I believe that Baltimore has collaboration as a core value. You'll see this in many fields across the spectrum, whether it's education, special events, civic celebrations, or business development. People are very good at working together. Plans for the near future are to continue on this steady course of increased activity, collaboration, embracing diversity, serving the people of Baltimore and continuing to improve the quality of life that is so essential to a healthy city.

WE: *Cities are competing against one another for population growth, investment, economic growth, and a healthy urban life. What do you feel that Baltimore is missing in comparison with cities of comparable size and historical weight? And what are Baltimore's particular strengths?*

BG: As it was in the beginning, Baltimore's location and unique geography play an important role in its success in comparison to other cities. Our advantage of being located amidst a dense population along the Eastern seaboard allows for cross-pollination and access to other major cities such as

Washington, DC, Philadelphia and New York. We have a relatively strong infrastructure of colleges and universities that draws students from across the nation and the world. Our city is a city of neighborhoods with strong communities. Other strengths include the large pool of housing, an inventory of industrial buildings that can be re-purposed, a relatively low cost of living, incentives that encourage students to stay after graduation, the openness of City Hall to new ideas, a strong DIY artist community embedded in neighborhoods, and myriad opportunities for neighbors to work together and strengthen their communities. We also offer housing that's more affordable than most East Coast cities. I'm not sure we're missing anything. Baltimore has some challenges like poverty, substance abuse, access to good jobs and affordable education, but I'm not sure they're unique.

One area in which BOPA competes with other cities is in film production. BOPA's film office provides logistical support and coordination between city agencies and film production companies. The film industry has been an important industry in Baltimore since the late 1970s, creating jobs and supporting small businesses. These jobs are well paying and diverse, employing artists, camera and lighting technicians, carpenters, painters, and hair, makeup and wardrobe specialists. Over 100 productions shoot in Baltimore every year, from large television series like *House of Cards* to national commercials to documentaries and small indie films. The annual economic impact is nearly \$100 million per year.

WE: *BOPA and the Baltimore Festival of the Arts (BFAI), which produces Artscape, have a combined annual general operating budget of approximately \$7 million. In general terms, about a third of that comes via a grant of general fund monies from the City of Baltimore. Another third comes from corporate*

sponsorship and foundations. The final third of the overall budget comes from earned revenue in the form of ticket sales, administrative fees, and other items like food, beverage and merchandise sales. BOPA relies moderately on foundations, as these funds are generally restricted and targeted to specific programs, not general operating costs. How do you ensure a long-term commitment from private companies and foundations to the long-range goals of BOPA? What do you do to encourage them to stay with you rather than “event hopping”?

BG: Most importantly, BOPA has more than 35 years of achievement specifically in the areas of events and promotions, so the BOPA brand is a known entity. Therefore, private companies and foundations have an understanding of what we do. We have a reputation for accomplishing our mission on time and on budget. Many of our programs, such as Artscape, the Book Festival and many of our arts education initiatives, have years of data to support their success. We pride ourselves on good follow-up. There’s no way to prevent event hopping. This is

often a result of event fatigue, feeling that something has run its course. We find that there are always companies or foundations that are willing to fund good programs. We’ve always said that lack of funding must mean there’s a weakness or problem that needs to be addressed.

WE: *I have the impression that in US cultural policy, the financing of arts and culture by taxpayer money channeled through state bureaucracy is an exception rather than the rule. Therefore, I wonder how fragile or stable BOPA is. How much of BOPA’s power hinges on you as the face and history of BOPA?*

BG: The state of Maryland has one of the strongest arts councils in the country, with a guaranteed source of funding through the general assembly which is proportioned out to the jurisdictions. City funding is less guaranteed, but the mayor and BOPA are establishing the Creative Baltimore Fund through revenue generated by the billboard tax, not from the general fund. This is a step in the right direction. Because of our broad-based funding sources mentioned

previously, we are not fragile since we do not rely on any single source for a large percentage of our funding. Our stability does rely on the power of BOPA or as you said the face of BOPA, and its track record and history of success.

WE: *Do you see a recent trend for the City of Baltimore? What do you hope for Baltimore in the near future?*

BG: I believe that the success of the arts and entertainment districts is shedding light on the opportunities that exist when you bring together artists, arts venues, creative industries and the willingness of the government to sanction and assist not only within their geographical boundaries, but also in a way that provides all neighborhoods within those boundaries the opportunity to participate. What I hope for in the near future is to continue on this steady course of increased activity, collaboration, embracing diversity and increasing the visibility of Baltimore as a creative and vibrant city.

WHO IS THIS MAN? MURALS IN BALTIMORE

INTERVIEW WITH HENDRIK BEIKIRCH, GERMANY, CONDUCTED BY WILFRIED ECKSTEIN

Go to the Station North Arts District in Baltimore and you can't miss him. There, looming over the neighborhood on the side of a multi-story building, is the face of an old man with a stern expression on his face. People pass by him day and night. Who is he? The artist Hendrik Beikirch must know.

Wilfried Eckstein: *Mr. Beikirch, who is depicted in your mural?*

Hendrik Beikirch: The portrait shows the father of a Korean shopkeeper in the Station North district. His business, Seoul Rice Cake, produces Korean rice cakes and is located about 150 meters away from the artwork.

WE: *Why did you choose this man?*

HB: First of all, the wall is in a Korean neighborhood. In addition, I made an aesthetic decision to paint the father and not the shop owner himself. The wall has its own structure, and in this case the older face fit better with the substrate and the architecture of the building. It may also be advantageous if the person pictured is not living right next to his own image. The father died eleven years ago, so a certain distance is preserved despite the proximity to the neighborhood.

WE: *What is different about this wall compared to other walls?*

HB: Public art needs to respond and adapt to the unique conditions where it is located.

For example, the wall is located along one of Baltimore's arterial roads. Thus, the majority of viewers perceive the painting for just a fleeting moment out of a car window. That was one of main reasons I decided to depict a frontal view, because the work can be easily absorbed even with a brief glimpse.

WE: *How did the residents respond to the artwork?*

HB: The neighborhood arranged a big barbecue as a thank-you gift. The residents seem to not only like the picture, but to feel honored. The reactions of people passing by and residents have so far been very positive.

WE: *How did you implement the project technically? I thought it was very impressive that you were up there with nothing but a brush and a template.*

HB: I transferred the photograph to the wall. The materials I used were water-based wall color, as usual, and spray paint.

WE: *Why did you decide to work with portraits in general?*

HB: Stories and history generally are best told in the faces of those who have experienced it. And just like in photography, I feel the presentation in black and white is the most effective, as this does the best job of conveying the emotions of the person being portrayed.



The mural by German artist Hendrik Beikirch (aka ecb) in Station North was created as part of the 2014 murals art festival Open Walls Baltimore 2, curated by the street artist Gaia. © David Muse

ART-BASED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIES, OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

**ELENA LOMBARDO, PH.D. CANDIDATE,
IULM UNIVERSITY OF MILAN, ITALY**

Although the role of art and culture in local economic and social development is extensively recognized in Europe as well as in the United States, it is important to first observe that approaches and methodologies are as varied as the contexts which are addressed. This paper will briefly examine the evolution of art-based local development strategies and provide an overview of the current main tendencies underlining the opportunities and challenges.

The first aspect to consider is the “dimension” or “setting” of these strategies and projects. The inherent difficulty in comparing American and European cities, regions and neighborhoods, which differ in urban structure, history, and socio-economic conditions, suggests how diverse the urban needs can be and how differently art is integrated into development planning. A small city in Maryland is unlike a small city in the center of Italy; the concept of “small” itself can change from country to country.

Differences between Europe and the United States are not only evident in physical and social contexts, but also appear when one considers public policies and political agendas, aesthetic and ethical perspectives and funding support for the arts. In regards to this last point, for example, the American cultural sector is shaped by a decentralized funding system with a higher presence of

private sector support (Nicodemus 2014). This fragmentation, argues Nicodemus: “can seriously constrain efforts to coordinate major cultural policy initiative[s].”

The creative placemaking model, which aims to “strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities,”¹ deals with these constraints by highlighting the importance of partnerships between public, private, non-profit and community entities in pursuing shared goals.

Over the past decades, under rubrics such as “Creative Cities,” “Cultural Districts,” “Cultural Capitals” and “Creative Placemaking,” two things seem to have gradually gained in importance both in Europe and in the United States of America: the role of partnerships between (local) stakeholders across sectors, and the increasing interest in community-based projects as a strategy to foster urban resilience.

Retracing the long history of art-based local development trends, Johnson (2009) describes four main tendencies still in use that help contextualize and put in perspective the current strategies.

The first model, adopted in the 1960s, has become known as the “arts tourism approach.” This method consists of

large-scale investments in art centers and cultural infrastructure that aim to convert industrial cities’ images, deal with important urban transformations and focus on visitor attraction and retention. One of the most famous examples of this strategy is the Guggenheim Bilbao designed by architect Frank Gehry.

In this case, often cited as the “Bilbao Effect,”² the city of Bilbao, Spain chose to cope with their economic crisis which began with the collapse of the steel industry in the 1980s by investing in a famous museum brand and building an iconic structure to serve as an engine of urban renaissance. The hope was that this new building would draw tourists and new investments to the city.

A second trend emerged in the 1980s, and is best exemplified in Richard Florida’s book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). This strategy based its formula on attracting young, creative professionals to create “Bohemian neighborhoods” as a way to revitalize previously unappealing areas and invest in the most important resource of the creative economy, people’s ideas. Strongly criticized as causing gentrification and for its unequal “class centered” perspective, this tendency is critiqued by Andy Pratt (2009) in the case study of Hoxton Square, North London.

The early 1990s saw the development of a third model when the high potential of the “creative sector” began to be recognized and big investments from both the public and the private sector were made to foster innovative behaviors and support creative and cultural industries. The emerging creative economy helped many European and American cities cope with deindustrialization and diversify their economic base (Pratt 1997).

The most recent trend consists of increasing interest and support for community-based art projects and artists as engines of local economic and social development as well as placemaking initiatives. This “micro-development” trend (Johnson 2009) focuses on cultural participation and community engagement, highlights the social role of arts and culture and suggests its relevance for the creation of social capital and social innovation.

All four of these approaches are currently being employed, and often integrated with one another. This adapting, together with the wide support and attention that creative placemaking is receiving from different stakeholders and the “unprecedented speed and coordination with which the policy was adopted” in the USA (Nicodemus 2014), suggests that a more accurate analysis is needed to better understand some relevant aspects for both the American and the European scenarios.

As the creative placemaking definitions elaborated on the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Artplace America websites³ suggest, the quite wide and mixed scenario of trends seems to diverge on some points. Nicodemus (2014) argues the importance of exploring “the interplay between policy and practice” and defining the “fuzzy concepts” that have been largely adopted, especially when it comes to the descriptions of possible outcomes.

In this regard, concepts open to interpretation such as “livability” and “vibrancy” contribute to enriching the debate on how to measure the outcomes, which indicators to use, how to evaluate projects, how to overcome the limit of empirical data and how to explore the intangible impacts of aesthetical experiences and cultural active participation.

With creative placemaking and arts practice in urban space in general, the thresholds between art, architecture, urban design and social intervention are extremely blurry, and it may be argued that in these situations art is considered only for its instrumental value, as a single ingredient in a complex recipe. When we consider art in public spaces, many questions emerge, such as: What is art and what is not? How can we evaluate the artistic quality of the work? If we examine socially engaged art practices, how might we determine the real level of engagement of the audience/participants? Can we evaluate this aspect properly?

In regards to this last point, Ranciere (1992) argues that participation is often limited to a “question of filling up the spaces left empty by power” whereas, he adds, real participation is “the invention of an unpredictable subject who momentarily occupies space and time.” Sherry Arnstein (1969) created a “ladder of participation” to describe the levels of citizen involvement, ranging from manipulation and therapy (non-participation), through informing, consultation, placation (tokenism) to partnership, delegated power and citizen control (citizen power). Although some argue that the ladder is hardly applicable to “the complexity of artistic gestures” (Bishop 2012)⁴ it deserves more attention for how the term participation can be understood.

Based on this perspective, community participation can be a tool for urban activation, a strategy for a more sustainable development or an engine to challenge the

dominant narratives and contribute innovative and disruptive ideas. But at the same time, “participation” could also be a label behind which no real dialogue or conversation exists and what is happening actually qualifies as “filling up the empty spaces” in an already defined process.

According to Lefebvre (1992) and Habermas (1991), public space should not be considered “public” because of the space itself, but rather because of the activity that takes place in it. For the same reason, the term “Public Art” cannot simply be used to identify outdoor monuments or artworks located in a public space. Public art has to be meaningful and in dialogue with the place and the community. The artist Jochen Gerz argues that “Public art is about stories, narratives, the self-presentation of people through acts of memory, and it does not work within the designated spaces of art institutions, but through them and around them, creating discursive spaces within which conceptions and expectations are talked through in everyday language” (Gerz 2004).

In ‘new genre public art,’ explains Wilsher (2011), this notion of dialogue is critical and is derived from Habermas’ “structural transformation” of the public sphere, a condition where hierarchies disappear and every individual is able to participate in the democratic conversation.

In the harmonizing activity between the parts proposed by creative placemaking, in which successful paths are specifically defined⁵, the goals range from economic development (reusing vacant spaces to generating income and jobs) to livability outcomes (public safety, community identity, environmental quality, etc.).

At the transatlantic symposium⁶, German artist/architect Barbara Holub challenged this notion by outlining the differences between art and artistic strategies. If art has its own



value and is “reluctant to fulfill expectation[s], [and is] often provocative, disruptive, challenging and inconvenient?” then art strategies can be used as tools to change perspective[s] on things, apply divergent thinking, ask questions, promote hidden potential and contribute to the creation of new narratives and imaginings. From this perspective, employing art and art strategies to sustain urban resilience means to engage issues of social justice, social cohesion and social equality. However, these aspects tend to be overshadowed by a focus on economic and more tangible and measurable results.

This instrumental role of the arts can also be considered through some of the theories of art activism. Boris Groys (2014), for example, underscores this idea by explaining how contemporary art practice belongs to two different domains: “art in the proper sense and design.”

He argues that: “Design wants to improve reality, to make it more attractive, better to use. Art seems to accept reality as it is, to accept the status quo. But art accepts the status quo as dysfunctional, as already failed—that is, from the revolutionary, or even post-revolutionary, perspective,” stressing the importance of art in challenging the dominant narrative and preserving its critical perspective.

If the positive potential economic and social outcomes are clear⁸, even if not yet fully described and proved, many important topics still need to be discussed. Above all, there is a risk of instrumentalization and legitimation of art by only considering its measurable impacts on the development process and not for its implicit or critical value. Whether or not creative placemaking seems to respond to these concerns by promoting horizontal partnerships and rewarding community-centered projects and celebrating art for its own unique contributions, only long-term analysis will provide a true picture of how policies have adjusted based on experience.

ENDNOTES

1. Definition as provided in Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking,” National Endowment for the Arts Executive Summary, 2010.

2. As referred to in “The Bilbao effect,” *The Economist*, December 2013, www.economist.com/news/special-report/21591708-if-you-build-it-will-they-come-bilbao-effect, last accessed October 2014, and in “The Bilbao Effect,” *Forbes.com*, February 2002, www.forbes.com/2002/02/20/0220conn.html, accessed October 2014.

3. “In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.”—See more at: www.arts.gov/NEARTS/2012v3-arts-and-culture-core/defining-creative-placemaking (accessed October 2014).

Definitions provided on ArtPlace America: “Creative Placemaking: Strengthening the social, physical, and economic fabric of a community through arts and culture. ‘Community’: A group of people related by geography.”—See more at: www.artplaceamerica.org/loi/national-grants-summary/#sthash.Yd5R2r2E.dpuf (accessed October 2014).

4. As stated by Claire Bishop C. in *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991–2011* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012).

5. See Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, chapter V: “Components of Successful Placemaking Initiative”. These are the components for success: 1. Entrepreneurial Initiator 2. Demonstrate Commitment 3. Mobilize Public Will 4. Attract Private Sector 5. Win Active Participation 6. Succeed in Building Partnerships.

6. Transatlantic Symposium: *The Role of Artists and the Arts in Creative Placemaking*. Baltimore, Maryland; May 30–31, 2014.

7. Barbara Holub in her presentation at the transatlantic symposium *The Role of Artists and the Arts in Creative Placemaking*.

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CREATIVITY AND PLACE ON BALTIMORE'S RECONSTRUCTED CITYSCAPE

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(John Kenneth Galbraith) calculates that today roughly half of the Western economy has been taken over by capitalist hierarchies. The other half comprises the low-profit regions, which these hierarchies willingly abandon to the market... what gives capitalism this freedom of motion is economy of scale... there is a dialectic still very much alive between capitalism on one hand, and its antithesis, the "non-capitalism" of the lower level on the other. 'And he (Fernand Braudel responding to Galbraith) adds that, indeed, capitalism was carried upward and onward on the shoulders of small shops and 'the enormous creative powers of the market, of the lower story of exchange... [This] lowest level, not being paralyzed by the size of its plant or organization, is the one readiest to adapt; it is the seedbed of inspiration, improvisation and even innovation, although its most brilliant discoveries sooner or later fall into the hands of the holders of capital.'

—Manuel De Landa,
*A Thousand Years of
Nonlinear History*¹

I am an architect and urbanist and teach these disciplines, yet until this conference I confess to not having previously encountered the shibboleth *creative placemaking*. This may result from the fact that the term is more linked to the fine arts than to the study of the city that I engage in. On the other hand, the role of art—its community, practices and physical locations—as a mechanism for metropolitan redefinition

is indeed a familiar phenomenon and was the preferred topic of discussion at the event. In Baltimore, this has particular significance since an expanding arts community, the product of generations of graduates of MICA (The Maryland Institute College of Art), has occupied the inexpensive and marginal in-betweens and vague terrains of this city that, over the past six decades, has lost almost half of its population. Given that the symposium's issue was art within an urban context and as an initiator of civic space and action, the art community needs to be assessed in its role as an avant-garde in the original military sense, as skirmishers for real estate initiatives and gentrification. This problematic position immediately arises when art and the city collide, yet the symposium's extraordinarily erudite and international group deftly sidestepped or simply chose to marginalize some of the obvious conundrums that could have bogged down the dialogue. Largely ignored, therefore, were the overbearing economic factors that have turned the art market into one of the planet's most lucrative and stable investment fields and therefore one of the most compromised. Indeed, this aspect of art actually has little to do with the urban actions that the arts can generate. It was thus correctly avoided, given the quagmires of responsibility that it leads to and the fact that art's engagement, as a practice and a community at a less lucrative level, has much more possibility.

The core issue that concerned the two days of this symposium, and directed the extraordinarily rich exchanges, was how art could generate other relationships on an urban level than those expected or easily exploited. To that end the discussion and presentations went immediately below the radar to that 50% identified by Galbraith, that "lower story of exchange." Clearly that is where the art community dwells, works and makes change—with the exception of the tiny fraction of a percentage of the super successful. And there is probably no other group than artists, with the possible exception of recent immigrants, who have such an ameliorative effect there. The discussion varied between description of various initiatives in placemaking, both residential and disciplinary, and an even more cogent discourse on policy, on how to implement these initiatives, on how to approach a reluctant body politic who see art as a last imperative, not realizing its crucial position as an urban generator. Therefore, patronage in a more egalitarian, municipal environment than that established by the gallery system becomes a vital issue. The "New Patrons" program, arts coordination within skeptical governmental contexts, spatial recycling, iconography and popular taste, aesthetic arrogance, the failure of simplistic notions of "public art"—all these resonated. But clearly policy, agency and affect took center stage.

So back to *creative placemaking*. As I said at the conference but will elaborate here, there are problems within this name that are central to the issues it tries to address. First, the term *creative*. Creativity is universal, in fact central to life. It is a mandate and has an effect in all organic arenas. It manifests itself in every mortal endeavor, as essential as mortality itself. Procreation, that simple primal drive, is its base, but the most innovative technologies, car repair, selecting routes of travel—all actions find it essential. Humans in particular, with the ill-spent gift of exceptional intelligence, rely on it to advance their soft bodies, dull teeth and claws. Yet the art community sometimes seems to have filed a patent on this phenomenon, to have made it their special venue. We know that this isn't a fact, especially now with emphasis on community arts, with self-organization and emergence theory accepted analytic norms, with increasing emphasis on the political and the everyday, with a fervent embrace of the synchronic. Art knows it's not alone in the matrix that breeds innovation, yet there is still an innate conceit that seems to come with the various disciplines marked as creative. Art and design schools are redolent with it before the humbling processes of practice come into play. And the others, all the creators who fix cars or raise families or devise organizational strategies or cook, sense that they are seen as lesser beings and react viscerally by placing this vital activity in the dust bin of irrelevance, ignoring both its contribution to those other methodologies that must embrace invention and the powerful urban self-organization that art and design so vitally contribute to. Creative is a problem that the impulses that drove this conference and its extraordinary participants mostly worked to overcome and did so with vehemence.

Then there's *place*. Unfortunately, we in architecture and urbanism have been bludgeoned by this concept. Its attachment to a fuzzy notion of phenomenology, to the *placeness of place*, to only slightly paraphrase Heidegger, and the implications of a sort of local gestalt that can emanate creativity itself have become bankrupt mantras of conservatism. The Locus, as advanced by Christian Norburg-Schulz and a host of Scandinavians and poetic adherents to the "eternal return", is surely a concept of great importance. There is something about specificity and identity that are essential to work in general and Baltimore, the site of this conference, is a fine example of that. Its quirky and often funky nature is implicitly a source of both self-deprecating pride and a radical resource. But we also see such awareness oppressing vast sections of the planet and aiding the agendas of plutocrats by emphasizing cultural difference while tacitly engaging the worst aspects of globalism, itself a very dynamic force for change and a challenge to the most grievous local protocols. *Place* calls for "contextualism" and regional awareness, and these have morphed into vapid historicism of the eclectic post-modern sort and the faux-populism of a developer-friendly New Urbanism. Furthermore, it has led to the actual rejection of the accepted notions of creativity and the essential embrace of radicalism with its mandate for change.

This leaves us with *making*, a term that cannot be refuted or challenged given its basic nature. *Production* is certainly a more social and elemental concept than creativity, and the essential mantra of many of the most hopeful endeavors toward mollifying that previously-mentioned ill-spent gift that humans squander so predictably. The tentative conclusions that were arrived at in those vibrant two days were toward this end. The NEA (National Endowment for the Arts), civic officials and an art school president were involved, so perhaps teeth may be a little duller than usual. Like urbane termites in the ruins, the arts can burrow

into culture: below that 50% of economy but addressing the 95% of humanity, Chantal Mouffe's (2013) "multitude"² who struggle in that "lower story." Risk abounds. Given its gargantuan task, *making* is bound to fail. That is its fate. Yet failure is as valuable as any achievements. The tale of Sisyphus makes a point that is unappreciated in a US where success is the only standard, where experimentation can only produce progress or revenue. But beneath the gaze of the most brutal of political/economic realities while struggling up a very tilted playing field, passions, burlesques and synchronicity may flourish. Colin Rowe (1995) writes regarding Mannerism "the object itself and its detail suffer a devaluation."³ In this new situation, devaluation makes room for marvels. We find ourselves at the crossroads where these agencies and the multitudes intersect with private and public patronage. The "creative" disciplines may deliriously exploit the work of *making*, recognizing that creativity and mortality go hand in hand.

ENDNOTES

1. Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Swerve, 1997), 46. Quote from Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1986), 631.
2. With all associated implications, I borrow this term from Chantal Mouffe, "Radical Politics Today" in *Agonistics*, (London: Verso, 2013), 68.
3. Colin Rowe, "Mannerism and Modern Architecture," *Architectural Review* (May 1950), 289–299.

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THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN URBAN RESILIENCE: VALLCARCA NEIGHBORHOOD AND RECREANT CRUÏLLES STREETSCAPE. GRASSROOTS CASE STUDIES IN BARCELONA, SPAIN

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“in Detroit flowers are clearly growing through the cracks in the pavement.”

—Enelow, 2013

Resilience has become a top priority for sustainable social and institutional development. Strengthening local marginalized populations enables them to more effectively respond to complex economic, social, political, and environmental problems and inequality. Long-term resilience includes art and action research by local communities so that cities can adapt and transform themselves. This approach adopts the ecological concept of resilience in which social-ecological systems are viewed as inherently complex, adaptive and evolving. This article considers neighborhoods in the city of Barcelona, Spain, which are currently urban resilience works-in-progress case studies: the Vallcarca Neighborhood and the *Recreant Cruïlles* Streetscape.

Complex economic, social, political and environmental problems no longer seem amenable to old-fashioned top-down, state-based

interventions of government operating at a macro-level. Some of government’s most intractable problems are being re-thought in a more people-centered or bottom-up way (Chandler 2014). A city’s resilience lies in its capacity to adapt and transform itself to meet the needs and aspirations of people, rather than in its ability to retain a form that was successful in the past. Self-managed urban communities lead bottom-up urban strategies, utilizing arts, social justice and environmental stewardship with the objective of engaging citizens to adapt to necessary urban changes.

This study analyzed the city of Barcelona using a heuristic process which involved people in hands-on discovery as their neighborhoods evolved to become more resilient. The research agenda had three goals: (1) to highlight the hierarchical structure of the interconnected adaptive cycles and the key role of local community initiatives in resilient development; (2) to bring to light the relevance of interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary interactions between institutional

networks and their key actors in achieving sustainable development; and (3) to emphasize the attributes of a sustainable, resilient urban design: adaptability, self-sufficiency, auto-organization, redundancy, diversity, innovative learning and empowerment of local communities.

Holling and Gunderson (2002) refer to the adaptive cycle as a metaphor to classify systems, order events, and suggest specific questions and testable hypotheses. It is possible to note features of the adaptive cycle in a wide variety of phenomena, including the rise and decline of businesses, industries, and political or jurisdictional entities such as cities. The adaptive cycle metaphor provides us with a useful way of understanding recent events and long-term processes currently underway in societies at micro and macro levels such as the city, the neighborhood or the street.

The theory of the adaptive cycle contains four recurring phases: rapid growth, conservation, release or creative destruction, and

reorganization. The back loop, during the last two phases, is a time of uncertainty and big change, a period of new beginnings and possibilities to track the evolution of a city. Non-traditional indicators or categories of activities are considered, including tangibles such as social entrepreneurship, urban agriculture, civic participation, and creative innovation, and relationship factors, such as trust, cooperation and collaboration across communities. As highlighted by Westley et al (2013), cultures of collaboration are crucial to effective social movements.

TWO CASE STUDIES IN BARCELONA CITY

Local empowerment in a city such as Barcelona inherently means becoming accustomed to confronting and interacting with popular and sometimes oppositional movements. These experiences focus on two of Barcelona's wards in the Gracia and Eixample districts, exploring how the local communities in Vallcarca¹ and *Recreant Cruilles*² promote local placemaking initiatives via three different projects:

- Street art intervention
- Mapping the neighborhood with the inhabitants
- Socially-innovative actions and empowerment

In the realm of street art intervention, *Recreant Cruilles* is a group project working for the release of the *Germanetes* site, a decision which is still under deliberation by the city council. The collective bases its argument upon the idea that empty spaces in the district represent a waste of resources, and that the district's residents should own and manage them. This project has been granted funding by the "Empty Plan" competition organized by the city council. To realize these goals, the group calls for the participation of all residents and district associations. Currently, it is carrying out a self-management project that activates the empty space with support and contributions from several

art creative networks such as *Idensitat*³ and *Makea*⁴ (shown in Image 1). The grassroots communities organize bottom-up initiatives by graffiti artists and artistic interventions to highlight the real needs and dreams within the local communities. In Vallcarca, graffiti and artistic interventions are led by the squatters living in the neighborhood.

A second example of architecture modeling involves mapping the neighborhood with inhabitants and the support of local multidisciplinary teams as *Raons Publiques*⁵, *Recetas Urbanas*⁶, and the Urban Resilience Center⁷. The *Germaqueta*⁸ model project from Raons Publiques empowers the appropriation of space by residents of Eixample District. During collective construction workshops held over the course of several days, the Germanetes site becomes the center of a collective reflection upon public space. The resulting district model enhances the local communities' understanding of space and environmental issues. In Vallcarca, young architecture students create models (shown in Image 2). This architecture modeling generated new dynamics in the neighborhood urban planning.

The final experience, which revolves around social innovation and empowerment, includes individual-led organization and construction initiatives, such as urban furniture (shown in Image 3), community gardens, ecological goods markets, free continuing education schools, books fairs, urban workshops and the naming of community gathering places.

To summarize, these three kind of practices suggest a new urban adaptive governance perspective for a new era to reinforce urban resilience thinking as a response to current systemic urban crises. These attributes of self-organization, adaptation and demise, and dynamics playing out on multiple spatial and temporal scales lead to the conclusion that sustainable cities could benefit from the employment of a resilience thinking approach (Walker et al 2006).

ENDNOTES

1. See "Plaça de la Farigola (Vallcarca)" for more information, www.bcncomuns.net/cpt/placa-de-la-farigola-vallcarca-2/.
2. See Recreant Cruilles website for more information, www.recreantcruilles.wordpress.com/.
3. See Idensitat website for more information, www.idensitat.net/en/id-barrio-barcelona/dispositifs-post.
4. See Makea website for more information, www.makeatuvida.net/.
5. See Raons Públiques website for more information, www.raonspubliques.org/es/.
6. See Recetas Urbanas website for more information, www.recetasurbanas.net/v3/index.php/en/.
7. See Recetas Urbanas website for more information, www.recetasurbanas.net/v3/index.php/en/.
8. See Raons Públiques website for more information, www.raonspubliques.org/es/portfolio/germaqueta-2/.
9. See Tony Garreta's website for more information, www.tonigarreta.com/.

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Image 1: Art Intervention Recreant Cruilles Streetscape, Barcelona artist and author © Catie de Balmann



Image 2: Vallcarca's Neighborhood Model © Toni Garreta⁹



Image 3: Vallcarca Neighborhood Grassroots: newly constructed urban furniture, Barcelona © Martina Kano

**SEVEN
EXAMPLES FOR
CREATIVE
PLACEMAKING:
ART IS
PUBLIC SPACE**

A work of art can convey an aura from the past, become a symbol of transformation brought about by urban development, or change the public sphere. How art energizes a place, encourages interaction and even promotes public decision-making—the following seven chapters vary in terms of context, approach and results. Public art is a critique of what's going on around us. It inspires in a meaningful way that cannot be achieved by dialogue alone. The protagonists and contributors in this section are artists. They articulate visions in their environments. Public art is an action, and people reply in response.

“The creative placemaking field is an area of work that is, however now self-consciously, emerging, and we are at a moment to unpack what is out there. To think about creative placemaking as a homogenous kind of activity is not accurate. There are a lot of ways that creative placemaking happened. In some threads of creative placemaking practice, there is an ethos about equity and a mindfulness about equitable outcomes. It is important to highlight that. However, it would be a mistake to talk about creative placemaking with a one-size-fits-all approach. As practitioners, we have an obligation to be constructively critical about what impacts we have and what they mean in our community.”

—Maria Rosario Jackson

ARTISTS RESPOND TO THE PARTICULARITIES OF PLACE

MARY MCCARTHY, NATIONAL SCULPTURE FACTORY, CORK, IRELAND

Over the past 15 to 20 years, the arts have gained an increasingly prominent and sometimes problematic role in urban regeneration processes. The cultural sector has been recognised and championed by various authorities as being a key contributor to the complex placemaking process.

In many ways, this recognition has led to the creation of opportunities for artists and arts organisations, and has indeed increased and diversified audiences for many artists' work. It has also generated a whole new set of practices and terminologies to describe these activities, and created opportunities for new professions to support the processes of commissioning, mediation and project management.

This area can, however, be problematic when it's assumed that artists and arts organisations can 'decorate' or add economic value to a place, and when attempts are made to use art in a very direct and non-creative way.

The National Sculpture Factory (NSF)¹ in Cork, Ireland supports artists in making works that are ambitious and complex in scale and nature. It recognises the complexity of inserting and/or making projects for the public realm, and attempts to support artists and the public in meaningful engagement at all stages.

The NSF, itself a studio base for artists, proposes that the role of arts organisations in communities or in various contexts is a positive generative force, and that those tasked with the planning and delivery of placemaking agendas should consider the complex ecosystem that needs to be in place to aid in community development. We would also argue that the language used in such developmental projects should be humanised and less instrumental.

In general, places that are considered interesting evolve over time. Artists are familiar with disruption, and are comfortable with states of transition. They are frequently interested in bringing to light certain aspects of place that may be interesting, unusual, unseen or undervalued.

As an arts organisation, the NSF frequently supports artists to produce projects that are direct responses to sites. One such project, *Evening Echo*, was proposed by New Zealand artist Maddie Leach.

Leach's work is largely project-based, site responsive and conceptually-driven. It addresses new thinking on art, sociality and place-based practices.

Leach seeks viable ways of making art works in order to interpret and respond to unique place-determined content. She is recognised for innovatively investigating ideas of audience spectatorship, expectation and participation in relation to art.

Evening Echo is sited on old gasometer land gifted by Cork Gas Company to Cork City Council in the late 1980s, and subsequently dedicated as Shalom Park in 1989. The park sits in the centre of an old Cork neighbourhood near the city centre known locally as 'Jewtown.' This neighbourhood is also home to the National Sculpture Factory. Not a specific commission, nor working to a curatorial brief, *Evening Echo* is a project generated as an artist's response to the particularities of a place, and has quietly gathered support from Cork Hebrew Congregation, Cork City Council, Bord Gáis and a local Cork newspaper, the *Evening Echo*.

References to the slow subsidence of the Jewish community in Cork have been present for years, but there is now a palpable sense of disappearance. Within the Cork Hebrew Congregation there are practical preparations underway for the still-unknown future moment of cessation. *Evening Echo* moves through a series of thoughts and questions about what it might mean to be on this kind of cusp, both for the Jewish community and for other communities in Cork.

Evening Echo is manifested in a sequence of custom-built lamps, remote timing systems, a highly controlled sense of duration, a list of future dates, an annual announcement in Cork's *Evening Echo* newspaper and a promissory agreement.



Evening Echo, Tuesday 27 December 2011 (ongoing); Active at sunset on the last night of Hanukkah; Shalom Park; Gas Works Road & Albert Road; Cork, Ireland

Fleetingly activated on an annual cycle, and intended to exist in perpetuity, the project maintains a delicate position between optimism for its future existence and the possibility of its own discontinuance.

Evening Echo is a significant project for the NSF as an organisation. Through our residency programme, we were able to support Maddie Leach as she researched and developed her project, and ultimately supported the production of a new art work. It is a significant art work in how it addresses place and reveals something to the world about Cork as a city that welcomed a Jewish

population in the early 1900s, and as a place that has borne witness to waves of emigration and immigration over many centuries.

In addition, the NSF facilitates debates on city making, and frequently challenges those who have formal responsibility for city planning to consider more active engagement with other diverse professional and citizen groups in the early stages of the pre-planning processes. We would argue that, like art making, placemaking is a process that needs considered thought, time and reflection.

ENDNOTES

1. See the National Sculpture Factory for more information, www.nationalsculpturefactory.com.

TRANSITION: BEST PRACTICE NARRATIVES

CAROL BELL, NEWCASTLEGATESHEAD INITIATIVE, NEWCASTLE, U.K.

BACKGROUND

NewcastleGateshead

Population	460,000
White British ethnic origin	93.1%
Christian	70%
Muslim	16%
Unemployment	5.1% (UK 3.7%)
Distance to London	280 miles (3 hours on the train)
Distance to Edinburgh	100 miles (1½ hours on the train)

HISTORY

Hundreds of years ago, coal mining made Newcastle into the fourth largest town in England, and one of the richest. At its peak in 1913, the industry employed almost a quarter million men working in around 400 pits. It is a town with a rich industrial heritage. George Stephenson built the world's first locomotive here. Sir Joseph Swan invented the light bulb in Gateshead, and one of the main streets in Newcastle was the first in the world to be lit with an electric bulb. Tyne & Wear was the world's shipbuilding superpower, and over a quarter of the world's ships were being built here in 1900.

When I was a child growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, I witnessed the decline of these heavy industries (shipbuilding and coal mining), which hit the North East very hard. Shipyards were shuttered, factories closed and the mining industry was virtually demolished.

Twenty-five years ago, we were a city at the 'edge'—isolated, fallen, lacking ambition, with a fractured leadership. The area was underperforming in terms of culture, transport and tourism. We were insular, with few international connections. People were employed in the creative industries in a lower percentage than in any other region. Our arts facilities were second-rate, and had the lowest levels of attendance by the local population of anywhere within the United Kingdom.

Simply put, 25 years ago, NewcastleGateshead was a place that was closed. Leisure tourism was minimal, and business tourism less than £5 million a year. Houses were selling on the west end of the city for just £1! Something needed to change, both in terms of the quality of life we all had access to and the external perceptions about the place.

It has been an interesting journey, but one that is fully rewarding. I am very proud to live and work here in what is now a thriving cultural sector. That was something that would have been almost impossible to imagine when I was just starting out in my career 25 years ago.

So what were the drivers? We used 100 years of underinvestment as one of the things that worked to our advantage, along with strong political leadership. Simultaneously, the role of artists was taken seriously. We began to work in partnership with one another—artists, local authorities, development agencies, universities.

We took advantage of available public sector funding and funds from Europe, matched by a new funding stream that started in the late 90s, the National Lottery. The existing cultural institutions and leaders united together to drive a case for capital investment. We put forward a case for a capital (£250 million) investment programme to revive our cultural facilities across the North East. This investment eventually grew to be much more (£400 million). And you could argue that it all started with an Angel!

The Angel of the North, created by Anthony Gormley, is now seen as the symbol of regeneration in NewcastleGateshead. It was hugely controversial at the time, with people complaining that there would be accidents on the nearby motorway and that television reception would be affected. It has now become a great broker of our ambition and a major icon, even used in advertising all over the world (by, for example, Boeing Airlines, the Olympics and even soccer legends).

As the next fifteen years passed, the transformation progressed and more cultural facilities came online:

- Gateshead Millennium Bridge¹ (£22 million)
- BALTIC Centre of Contemporary Art² (£50 million)
- Sage Gateshead³ (£70 million)
- Seven Stories⁴ (£6.5 million)
- Dance City⁵, a national dance centre
- Northern Stage⁶ (£9 million)

- Live Theatre⁷
(£10 million for Live Works project)
- Great North Museum⁸ (£26 million)
- Tyneside Cinema⁹ (£7 million)
- Theatre Royal¹⁰ (£4.9 million)
- Centre for Life¹¹ (£90 million)

In total, over 20 cultural buildings, parks and institutions have been built or redeveloped. The negatives were turned around. Partners began to use all the things that had held us back. All of this was achieved through a strategy which put cultural regeneration at its heart, and the rest followed.

On NewcastleGateshead Quayside, the investment in cultural facilities has had far-reaching benefits over the last 25 years:

- Over £400m has been committed in new construction and redevelopment of world-class cultural capital infrastructure;
- A further £45m has been committed by public and private organisations to create an annual programme of world-class festivals and events;
- Over 20 newly built or refurbished cultural buildings and 60 pieces of public art have been commissioned;
- Tourism in the region is now worth £20m per year, making use of thousands of new hotel rooms;
- Over 1,040 firms work in the culture leisure, tourism and hospitality sector in NewcastleGateshead;
- The cultural and creative sector employs 24,500 people, the equivalent of 9% of North East England's total workforce.

In 2000, we began a bid to be named a European Capital of Culture. Although we did not win, this helped focus our minds on what Gateshead and Newcastle wanted to collectively achieve and created further clarity and ownership.

From 2002–2010, we ran a programme of festivals and events that engaged the local population and attracted tens of thousands of visitors. Buildings are nothing without people, and this was an important area of work that helped to engage local residents as well as attract visitors to the area.

Ongoing cultural regeneration means we are constantly reinventing ourselves as a place to live and work as well as a destination, while simultaneously maintaining our very distinctive identity and sense of place.

Today, NewcastleGateshead's economy is evolving, with learning, digital technology, retail, tourism and culture all playing an important part in its success. The creative industries are rapidly growing, and the city has plenty to offer the discerning freelance professional who is looking for somewhere to live, work and play.

As we look to the future, the strengths of the region's cultural sector are established. However, our success to-date will only continue if collaboration and partnership continue to work as well. We have to remember that working to a collective goal helps to achieve more for everyone on the long-term.

Even in a time of austerity, our aim is to ensure NewcastleGateshead maintains and continues to promote our reputation as a cultural destination; that we continue to engage the local population; and that we provide residents with opportunities to participate in cultural activities, while also inviting the world to visit NewcastleGateshead. To do this, we will continue to work hard to refresh and reinvigorate the festivals and events and present broad cultural offerings within the context of the wider NewcastleGateshead cultural programme.

ENDNOTES

1. See the Gateshead Millennium Bridge website for more information: www.gateshead.gov.uk/Leisure%20and%20Culture/attractions/bridge/Home.aspx
2. See the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art website for more information: www.balticmill.com/
3. See the Sage Gateshead website for more information: www.sagegateshead.com/
4. See the Seven Stories National Centre for Children's Books website for more information: www.sevenstories.org.uk/
5. See the DanceCity: Dance for the North East website for more information: www.dancecity.co.uk/
6. See the Northern Stage website for more information: www.northernstage.co.uk/
7. See the Live Theatre website for more information: www.live.org.uk/
8. See the Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums website for more information: www.twmuseums.org.uk/great-north-museum.html
9. See the Tyneside Cinema website for more information: <https://www.tynesidecinema.co.uk/>
10. See the Theatre Royal: Newcastle Upon Tyne website for more information: www.theatreroyal.co.uk/
11. See the Life Science Centre website for more information: www.life.org.uk/

MAKE ART EVERYWHERE

ERIN I. WILLIAMS, CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, WORCESTER, MA

GREAT CITIES DESERVE GREAT ART!

The City of Worcester, MA encourages and promotes the enrichment of the cultural landscape of the city through aesthetic improvements of public spaces, uniting artists and community and inspiring civic pride. Worcester is the second largest city in New England, with a population of 181,000 residents in the city proper. Worcester's history embraces a spirit of innovation and risk taking. We are a city of abolitionists, suffragists, and creative entrepreneurs, taking our cues from Abby Kelly Foster, Major Taylor and Stephen Salisbury of the past. How does this work continue today?

The Worcester Cultural Coalition (WCC)¹ is the unified voice of 78 Worcester-area arts and cultural organizations, in addition to 35 creative businesses, all working together to make Greater Worcester a great place to live, learn, work and play. Founded in 1999 as a public-private partnership with the City of Worcester, the WCC's mission is to draw upon Greater Worcester's rich and diverse cultural assets to foster economic revitalization and create a strong cultural identity for the region.

WCC works to establish creativity and culture as a highly visible element of the region's identity. The Coalition's success lies in collaboration and mutual support. Cultural organizations affect every aspect of our city. Organizations such as the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester County Poetry Association, and Southeast Asian Coalition (to name but a few) preserve and

tell our stories in compelling ways. Neighborhood cultural festivals like Canal Fest, stART on the Street, and the Latin Fest actively engage local residents and attract visitors. The Worcester Art Museum, Arts-Worcester and Worcester Center for Crafts actively engage us in the making of art.

Worcester's creative community brings a vitality that makes our city more interesting and engaging to businesses, residents and visitors. Artists challenge our ways of experiencing the world, and help bring our city to life in a unique way. They help us to ask questions and to wonder "What if?" They encourage risk taking.

When you think of a terrific city where you would like to spend time, what comes to mind? Is it a city with walkable streets with public art? Is it a city of neighborhoods that are easy to navigate? Is it a city where you are immersed in a variety of cultures via public art and activity? That is the Worcester of the 21st century.

PUBLIC ART IS IMPORTANT!

The City, local residents and artists all think so. Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development is leading an effort to increase the amount of publicly accessible art in Worcester. As part of these efforts, staff created a catalogue of existing public art as well as a public art map which resides on the city's website. In an effort to identify locations and opportunities throughout the city for the installation of additional permanent and/or temporary public art pieces,

the Public Art Working Group (PAWG) was formed. It is made up of local citizens and art lovers who are committed to supporting public art initiatives in the City of Worcester. PAWG advocates for the creation and installation of new publicly accessible art, and is currently working to identify possible sites for new public art and support their installation.

In order to truly engage the community, PAWG has taken a multi-pronged approach to the creation of public art. PAWG convened a town hall meeting in August 2013 and conducted a public art survey to gain a better understanding of what we as a community would like to see created through public art. As a result of the public's input, PAWG identified a three-tiered approach for the creation and promotion of public art:

1. Commission large-scale public art in the downtown.

The PAWG engaged three international artists to create large-scale murals in the downtown theater district. The first to be installed was artist Caleb Neelon's *The Block Player*, which is situated on the side of the old Denholm Building department store. It was completed in August 2014.²

2. Support local and regional artists in the development of public art throughout the City.

Allen's Court Art Alley is a new arts corridor which supports local and regional artists in the development of public art throughout the City. Art is seen by downtown developers as a successful tool for the revitalization of the area. It cannot be realized without the participation of the arts community. Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC) donated the exterior wall space in Allen Court for a public art mural installation. The Arts Alley will be a showcase of high-quality temporary murals that reflect the chosen theme, "Celebrates Community and Connectivity." The goal is to reactivate a deteriorating space to be an exciting work of art that engages students, professionals and residents in the downtown area. The WBDC sought assistance from distinguished artist Susan Champeny, who is facilitating this project.

This project is an important first step in a campaign PAWG has begun entitled "Make Art Everywhere." The community has been very responsive to the project. PAWG has received a number of inquiries from people who are really enthused or want their

building decorated with public art. PAWG sees this project as a catalyst, a spark to ignite other projects.

3. Encourage and support the engagement of young people and the general public in creating public art.

Art for All. The arts play an important role in giving young people ways to express themselves as individuals and create a sense of ownership within their communities. PAWG encourages and supports the engagement of young people and the general public in creating public art. PAWG is working with a number of community organizations to engage young people in the creation of art in the neighborhoods.

PAWG will continue to advocate for the creation and installation of new, publicly-accessible art. It is currently identifying possible sites for new works. For example, Art in the Park is a private organization which creates temporary arts exhibitions in the historic Elm Park every other year. In addition, new murals and public art are springing up throughout the city. Worcester continues to Make Art Everywhere!



ENDNOTES

1. More about the Worcester Cultural Commission (now the Worcester Arts Council) can be found at www.worcestermass.org/culture
2. Richard Duckett, "Street Artist Transforms Side of Worcester's Denholm Building," *Telegram & Gazette*, August 19, 2014, www.telegram.com/article/20140819/NEWS/308199963/1312#.U_NMIJBXLPQ



Caleb Neelon, The Block Player, 2014
Photo: Che Anderson



Jon Allen
Photo: Susan Champeny



Erik Nassinnyk
Photo: Susan Champeny

PLAY THE PLAZA. RECLAIMING PUBLIC SPACE FOR THE PUBLIC.

**ALISTER O'LOUGHLIN, PRODIGAL THEATRE
& THE URBAN PLAYGROUND TEAM, LONDON, U.K.
INTRODUCED BY BEN STONE, STATION NORTH ARTS
& ENTERTAINMENT, INC., BALTIMORE, MD**

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC) partnered with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts and the city's three Arts & Entertainment Districts on a project that became known as TRANSIT. This consortium successfully applied for funding from the Delegation of the European Union to the United States and ArtPlace America to support artistic residencies in the three Arts Districts. Each of these residencies was focused on an artistic intervention at a site of public transportation in the Arts Districts. Station North Arts & Entertainment, Inc. (SNAE) chose Penn Station Plaza as its project site. SNAE had been working in this site for more than a year, after being hired by the City to activate this auto-oriented, poorly designed space in the center of Baltimore. We felt that with the proper intervention, Penn Station Plaza might assert itself as an attractive civic space.

As with much of Baltimore, the Plaza had been redesigned to facilitate automobile movement and to quickly disperse people into the rest of the city and surrounding counties, primarily via the adjacent highway. The Plaza lacks curb cuts, permanent seating areas, shade, and other amenities, but does feature a large Borofsky sculpture known as *Man / Woman* as its centerpiece.

SNAE was fortunate to select the Urban Playground Team (UPG) to take on the Plaza as part of a TRANSIT residency in April and May of 2014. We selected UPG due to their genuine interest in the space, their flexibility and patience working in untraditional spaces, and their ability to attract a diverse audience that had not yet been engaged by our existing programming.

UPG's project, *Play The Plaza*, brought participants to the Plaza from local schools, dance companies, a parkour gym, and a skate-park, while also engaging the commuters who passed through the plaza each day. The length of the residency and the consistency of the participants, despite some issues with severe weather, made the project immensely successful. Additionally, UPG's commitment to engaging a diverse population in Baltimore enabled them to serve as a bridge between Baltimore communities that don't usually work together on public projects.

Play The Plaza has proven an important contribution towards making the Plaza a more human-oriented space. While the project did not make any permanent changes to the Plaza, it has helped shift people's perception of the Plaza towards being a space of possibilities and play rather than an unfortunate first stop when entering Baltimore. The project has also forced the entities that own and manage the Plaza, including Amtrak and various City agencies, to develop a

simplified approval process for programming at the Plaza in the future. UPG's professionalism and the project's success will also help SNAE as we propose additional programming in the future; we are now just beginning to program the Plaza, so each proposal is met with some skepticism. We anticipate *Play The Plaza's* success will help with this.

PLAY THE PLAZA.

The UPG Team was invited by the British Council to write a proposal for the Transit public arts residency in Baltimore. The briefs described three locations in the city. We responded to the description of Penn Station Plaza given by SNAE.

We were aware that a New York City-based architecture firm had already undertaken a consultation and created a design for the future of the space, and that SNAE had brought tables, chairs and sun shades to the Plaza. We understood from SNAE's brief that they embraced a performative element to the project, coupled with an 'experimental aesthetic' and the need to work with both local artists and the local community.

The gap we identified in these briefs was any mention of young people. Our work tends to attract a general public audience spanning all age ranges, but with particular significance for young people, especially our teaching and the legacy elements of our residency



Borofsky sculpture known as Man / Woman as its centerpiece. Photo © Theresa Keil

projects. SNAE stated that the project must be “locally relevant and inclusive,” and we took this to indicate that work with local young people could be a key element.

To this end, we submitted a project brief that combined the following:

- Creation of a series of temporary architectural / sculptural furniture pieces, each with a dual function, one entirely practical and one expressive. The expressive element would be that each piece could be interpreted through parkour, street dance, skateboarding, BMX or other street-based disciplines.
- None of the objects would announce their purpose; all would reward investigation.
- They would be created by local fabricators and / or sculptural artists.
- Each week a new object would appear at the Plaza and the UPG Team would run workshops for young people, artists, and diverse community groups on these objects.
- Each week would include a performance element created with workshop participants.
- Each week would focus on a different urban discipline and / or participant group.
- In the final week, all four objects would be presented together in a finale performance with participants representing all of the work from the previous four weeks.
- Throughout this time, the UPG Team, supported by SNAE, would consult with users of the space on its design and potential re-purposing as a community space focused around street based performance arts.

Our proposal was selected by both SNAE and the Baltimore Office of Promotions & the Arts.

PLANNING & PARTNERING

Prior to our arrival in Baltimore, we established an ongoing correspondence with Station North. Our primary aim was to ensure that we had a considerable number of

participants from a broad range of backgrounds. This was important if the project was to sustain an active presence on the site that could be engaged with and responded to by passersby and audiences. Equally important was ensuring that the objects accurately met our brief for fabricators, were truly functional both as furniture and for exploration, and would be delivered on time.

We shared the responsibility for locating participants. From our base in the UK, we engaged with the Baltimore parkour community, the skateboarding community and the Baltimore Club Dancers ‘Team Squad Up’ (TSU). They pledged support to the project. In addition, we and SNAE sent out dozens of calls, and repeat calls, to potential participants from the SNAE arts community and further afield, attempting to form new relationships. Although this did not produce more participants, all came back to us with broad general support for the project and offers to host workshops off-site or work with us in the future given more advance notice.

A NEW EXPERIENCE

Our usual UPG technique of planning by internet months in advance was less effective in Baltimore. Most participant groups would only engage following repeated face-to-face meetings, closer to the event, and often depending on a personal recommendation. A formal Artist’s Presentation may have helped attract more participants. We attended several artists’ presentations as part of the OWB2¹ project, and saw similar events hosted by other organisations in the city.

Once we arrived in Baltimore, we encountered some delays during the first two weeks. We adapted by meeting with the local parkour community off-site, exploring their working methods and introducing them to

our techniques of devising choreography. We created two short films with them and a series of photographs which we published on our dedicated 2PK Facebook and used to promote all aspects of the project.²

FABRICATION OF THE SCULPTURAL OBJECTS

Rachael London was selected as the lead fabrication artist. We were also fortunate to have Urban Evolution (UE) as a project partner. Their knowledge, resources and generous commitment helped facilitate a workable first object and the production of a second.

STARTING THE PERFORMANCES

Our original schedule planned a performance for the end of week 2, and a second at the end of week 3. In fact, the first choreography was presented on the Tuesday of week 4, tied into SNAE’s monthly Open House, which was hosted at a bar one block north of the Plaza. The choreography brought together members of TSU with members of UE, and this was a case of two worlds colliding in the best possible way.

The leading representatives of TSU are a young, fashionable group of African-American female and male dancers embedded within the authentic dance and music culture of Baltimore’s African-American community. They perform constantly, often undertaking two or three appearances across the city in a single day.

UE is a predominantly white American, male group of parkour practitioners drawing members from across the city, but based around the Eastern side. They had no practical performance experience at all, though their skill level in parkour is high. Together, they made a really unique piece that intrigued and entertained.³



WORKSHOPS WITH VISIONS FOR THE PLAZA

Positioned just outside the SNAE district, the Lab School was an ideal partner for the project. They were contacted late, but we quickly gained support from parents to bring staff and students to the site. Theirs is a school for students with specific learning difficulties, which is really our primary participant group as a company, so it was a natural fit. The students undertook a 90-minute workshop in which they watched a mini-performance, learned some basic parkour, created their own choreographies and drew designs for a new Penn Station Plaza—some of which involve such radical ideas such as urban tree houses and giant blocks of Swiss cheese to climb upon and slide through. The workshop was precisely what we'd intended to produce on a daily basis, and stands as an indication of what we consider to be our standard practice.

CONTINUING THE PERFORMANCES

The second performance again involved a three-way collaboration between TSU, Urban Evolution and the UPG Team. We played it twice during the rush hour commute on the Friday evening before Memorial Day weekend. We succeeded in stopping commuters in their stride, with dozens of them delaying their rush home to stand and watch the show and discuss with us what the project was about.⁴ Responses were extremely positive, and we were delighted to be showcasing the skill of our volunteer performers who had given considerably of their time and talent to make it happen.

PUBLICITY & MARKETING

Overseen by Purple Dot PR for SNAE, we gave several interviews for radio and local television. Two early mornings were spent on site with hourly segments going out

live through the Fox Network, and these seemed to be very effective in publicising the project. A radio presentation on SNAE's regular weekly spot added to the overall coverage. A further recorded segment was almost rained out, but the interviewer from ABC agreed to use our recorded material alongside his filmed interviews and this also seemed to work well.⁵ We managed an online social media campaign primarily involving Facebook, and supported by Twitter and Instagram. Over 400 photos were published alongside 12 videos.

THE FINAL WEEK

Two skate-able "fun boxes" arrived on site at the start of the finale week, and we were very gratified to see they attracted a large number of skaters. They were overwhelmingly supportive of the plan, and we learned that Penn Station Plaza is already a favourite spot for skaters but the usual option is to "skate through" on the way to somewhere else, as any lingering will result in what the parkour community terms "a move on" from the police or station staff.

Skateboarders were observed using the site into the night, which is very interesting given the curfew for young people that was implemented whilst we were in the city. Under the law, approved by the City Council in June, children 13 and younger must be off the streets by 9 pm, and those aged 14–16 must be indoors by 10 pm on school nights and 11 pm on weekends and during the summer. The Mayor has defended this controversial measure as a means of protecting at-risk young people, though many fear it will lead to increased negative interaction between young black men and the police. Perhaps creative placemaking might provide a more positive way of building dialogues about issues of young people being out in public later.

The choreography of our finale was set to the music of TT the artist. Building on her personal contact network, we expanded the ensemble to include Vogue dancer Marquis Revlon Clanton. The performance of voguing, an essentially 'queer' art form, alongside an overtly heterosexual club dance style was initially controversial with the male dancers from TSU, but we were able to broker a mutually supportive atmosphere and as soon as the TSU dancers saw what Marquis could do, they gave him their total respect.

Following addresses from Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Ben Stone and from Alister O'Loughlin of the UPG Team, the audience was invited to watch whilst moving themselves to keep pace with the performance, and this they certainly did. The piece shifted geographically, incorporating both the imported objects created through *Play The Plaza* and architectural elements of the Plaza itself. At the end of the show, the New Edition Marching Band led the audience up North Charles Street to the YNOT Lot-based OWB2 party.

PLAY THE PLAZA. SELF-EVALUATION

Our aim with *Play The Plaza* was to involve the local community, especially young people, in creative placemaking by providing a means for active dialogue. This was achieved with those participants to whom we had access, and there is a real foundation now that could be built upon.

The objects installed on the Plaza changed the energy of the space. Its formal atmosphere was broken, and many conversations were ignited and shared by diverse users of the space who would not otherwise have spoken with one another. The objects were used by commuters and passersby when we were not on site. The communities of

practice that we engaged with would love a city location in which they could train, create, play and meet each other.

The usage of space changed, with more people interrupting journeys to remain on site as both audience and participants. This was most noticeable during formal performances, but we also enjoyed numerous instances of small audiences gathering to watch workshops and devising sessions. In time, a training spot *will* double as an informal performance space.

The basic hypothesis of the project proved to be of value. Currently, the location is not the right one for attracting the levels of participation we hoped for, but it could become one in time. Until then, we'd love to explore expanding the project with one or more carefully chosen locations in the city, a more condensed timeline of two to three weeks, and building upon the relationships we've created through this project.

Play The Plaza would not have been the success it turned out to be without the Lab School, Team Squad Up (TSU), Urban Evolution (UE), dancer performer Liz Lerman and AKIMBO, TT the artists, Marquis Clanton and of course the team of SNAE. Thank you to you all!

RECLAIMING THE PLAZA AS PUBLIC SPACE. SELF-EVALUATION.

Penn Station Plaza is a crossing point on the edge of the SNAE district. Whilst it is **the** major connecting point for transiting the city, it sits within an otherwise vacant block. For all intents and purposes it **is** the block. Standing out there for six weeks, we were increasingly aware of the pollution levels, the complete lack of sufficient shade, and how dehydration which can quickly become an issue.

In terms of young people, this is not a friendly space. Not yet. The skaters who traverse the Plaza daily are on their way to college or to work. They are at the upper edge of any definition of young, and they are skilled.

It also takes a particular design sensibility to create a space in which (young) people can learn as well as practice a physical discipline. The constant movement of cars along every edge of and indeed through this space makes it quite a difficult learning spot. One group of participants sat and watched us workshop for a full hour before their curiosity overcame their reticence. A more secure atmosphere in the place would, we are sure, have shortened this time.

On the subject of who the placemaking is curated for, we should note the difficulties we and SNAE encountered in engaging children and young people from the resident community. There seemed to us to be two distinct communities in the District, which we imagine to be similar to other parts of the city where industrial buildings are being re-purposed as arts spaces. We observed a mixed, but predominantly white, population of artists and social entrepreneurs alongside a mixed, but predominantly African-American, resident population.

Penn Station Plaza is not *in* a community neighbourhood. It is a place one might cross or pass by, but it does not feature within anyone's sense of "my neighbourhood." The difficulty of moving people, especially the children growing up in the SNAE district, beyond these mental borders proved to be an almost insurmountable hurdle for both us and the SNAE team.

Whenever we were working on site, we had conversations with our passerby audience. Everyone, every single person with whom we discussed the project, agreed that the

young people of the local community should have a voice in deciding what the space they grow up in looks like, and how it functions. The fundamental premise of our work is that delivering art to a community cannot substitute for engaging them in the creation of that art, and this process must include participants defining for themselves what that art form is.

ENDNOTES

1. Open Walls Baltimore 2 (OWB2) was an international festival of site-specific street art, performance and installations in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District, building on the predecessor event in 2010, www.stationnorth.org.
2. Some of that work can be viewed at "Play the Plaza 2PK #1," YouTube video, posted by "UPGTeam," April 29, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=21b6-xlPXPI, "Play the Plaza 2PK #2," YouTube video, posted by "UPGTeam," April 30, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aicQ5qmpv0, and Play the Plaza Community Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/playtheplaza.3
3. Footage from the show can be seen at "OWBX: Play The Plaza /// featuring the Urban Playground Team, Team Squad Up, Urban Evo \\\\", Vimeo video, posted by "M. Holden Warren," May 16, 2014, vimeo.com/95511363.
4. Rehearsal footage can be seen here, "Play the Plaza #4", YouTube video, posted by "UPGTeam," May 24, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jWpCybiYwo.
5. "Open Walls Baltimore 'Play the Plaza'," Nicki Mayo, June 11, 2014, www.thelisttv.com/the-list/around-baltimore-open-walls-baltimore-performers-play-the-plaza.

BELONGINGS. TELL ME WHERE YOU ARE FROM. MARGARET FOOTNER, CREATIVE ALLIANCE AT THE PATTERSON, INTERVIEWED BY WILFRIED ECKSTEIN



BACKGROUND

What the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) is for Station North, the Creative Alliance has been for Highlandtown and the neighboring Patterson Park, an anchor institution of creativity. Creative Alliance at the Patterson was co-founded by Margaret Footner. Its eclectic roster includes satire performances, dance classes, art projects for children, support for emerging filmmakers, concerts and theatrical productions. It is

housed in a renovated former movie palace. Since its opening in 2003, it has brought new life to a once-struggling neighborhood.¹

Wilfried Eckstein: *How did the Creative Alliance start in Highlandtown?*

Margaret Footner: We started as three volunteers. I had a restaurant / gallery in Fells Point, and all three of us shared the idea of what we would like to see happen in Baltimore: that local artists would

get recognition and support; that the arts would be more incorporated into our lives, not in a kind of pristine and intimidating environment, but part of community life and more comfortably and naturally; that kids would be involved; and that we would be multi-disciplinary and supportive of all media, not just visual arts.

We had been operating for several years in my restaurant, our gallery and at various spaces around Fells Point. We were the Fells Point Creative Alliance. Two of our co-founders and members of the board had some connection to Highlandtown, one of them being the State Senator for South East Baltimore. He was working with leaders in this neighborhood, Highlandtown. They figured out how to save this neighborhood, which was on a really strong downward spiral. Residents were leaving, business was leaving—it was looking pretty bleak. We suggested an arts organization to help in this process, but nobody wanted to come here. To make a long story short, at some point we realized we could use the space. We talked with Senator Perry Sfikas. He liked the idea and took us to a community meeting. That was a “coalition” of business and church and political leaders focusing on the redevelopment of Eastern Avenue, and in particular on some large commercial buildings along the main avenue. We met with them and they were like: “Great idea! Let’s do it!” This was completely shocking. It showed their level of desperation. After the meeting we were like, “Oh, my goodness. Now what?”

So, we toured some buildings and picked this one, drawn to the cultural center that it once was—a movie theater. Senator Perry Sfikas got us a meeting with Governor Parris N. Glendening. He had developed the smart growth policies around development, refocusing it from suburban sprawl back into the inner city. Perry was able to get us some major grants to buy the building and redevelop it. Then we started a capital campaign. Imagine, we didn't have anything, we were not paid, but we were in a capital campaign. So we knocked on a lot of doors and the people were like: "What is going on over there? What are those crazy artists up to?" I heard this from people who subsequently supported us.

Concurrent to this, Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*² came out. This was great ammunition for us to have, an economist tuning our song. We used that in our fundraising. That got people's attention even if they did not totally read this book. It was shorthand for what we were doing. We also became partners with Southeast Community Development Corporation, a viable organization with paid staff, a board of directors, an endowment. They needed to be doing something, some projects. So we became really good partners. Together we raised the money. They actually raised State money because they had more legitimacy than we. When the building was built, we bought it from them and took it over as the owner-operator. That was a huge, huge risk. I was not even paid at that point. We really were scrappy. Then we began to operate as Creative Alliance (different from the Fells Point Creative Alliance) in the neighborhood and operated basically out of one space to see if we could pull people here.

WE: *What do you consider a best practice which is typical of the direction and character of the Creative Alliance at The Patterson?*

MF: All credit for the play *Belongings* goes to Luisa C. Bieri de Rios. She was an Open Society Institute³ fellow here at the Creative Alliance in what evolved into our first community program in 2007. One of her projects was this theater piece called *Belongings*. She picked the theme of belongings as a topic to talk with lots of people in the neighborhood about, asking questions such as, "What makes you feel like you belong somewhere?," "Do you feel like you belong here?," "What would make you feel like you belong here?" and "What objects do you have that you hold dear that are representative of your sense of belonging?" For one young man, the answer to that last question turned out to be the shoes that he wore, which were now in tatters, during his trek from his original country, which was in Latin America, across the border.

These were the conversations which Luisa had. From the conversations, she created a theatre piece. The play incorporated some of the people that she had talked with. Other people were represented by professional actors from the Theater Action Group⁴. But some of the folks in the neighborhood were courageous enough to represent themselves.

In the play, characters from the neighborhood were seen on the stoops of the row houses. There were different interactions and dialogues that reflected what was happening in the neighborhood at that time, be it racism and fear of the young black youth or complete incomprehension of the Spanish-speaking guy or the fear and resentment of an older business owner who is harking back to the heyday of this neighborhood, when it was really vibrant but fiercely segregated. The neighborhood at that time had different cultures: Eastern Europeans, Italians, Ukrainians. The old lady whose family had moved out to the suburbs while she decided to stay was the main

kind of population when we started work at the Creative Alliance. The old people who were left behind did not want to leave. They were watching from their windows, I don't know, with some comprehension or non-comprehension of what was happening to their neighborhood and how it made them feel in terms of safety and belonging.

The piece *Belongings* [WE: picked up on this reality and] took place in Spanish and English. The neighborhood totally turned out for it. We were packed for all the shows. After the show, Luisa would walk around with the mike and hold a dialogue with the audience. This was really powerful and fascinating. We were all learning from each other. That was part of *Belongings*. For example, there was a middle-aged black gentleman who was still angry about being moved into the high rise projects. There was a white woman who said, "I was really aggravated that part of the play took place in Spanish but then it occurred to me: "Oh my gosh, this is how they feel, not being able to understand what is going on. I feel so much more conscious about that now." That's it.⁵

Our challenge is to figure out how to build relationships, dialogue and projects that have a sense of continuity that involve and engage people over time. It is ultimately for them and for the neighborhood, to make them feel like they belong and that there is a way to participate. This might start with an arts project, but will hopefully evolve into going to community meetings and becoming involved citizens who [develop] the feeling that they can participate and make an impact on how a neighborhood evolves in an active way instead of being impacted upon and having decisions made for them.



2012 Patterson Park Lantern Parade, top left photo by Laure Drogoul, Top Right and Bottom photos by Matt Saindon

WE: *The positive effects of the Creative Alliance are not limited to events at the Patterson itself. From the start, you have been reaching out to the neighborhood and adjunct organizations similar to the Creative Alliance. Together, you turned around the nearby Patterson Park, which used to be a crime scene and a place for drug trafficking.*

MF: Patterson Park and Highlandtown were pretty bleak at that time. The Friends of Patterson Park⁶ has done a phenomenal work and were organizing themselves at the same time as we were. They did a wonderful job with fixing up and programming the Park. They organized the playgrounds, brought sports teams to the Patterson. Today, it is beautiful and alive.

Way back, we started the big Halloween Lantern Parade along with the Patterson Park Community Development Corporation, which was a non-profit community development corporation working north and east of Patterson Park. The executive director, Ed Rutkowski, knew that the park was key to his success. As long as the park was a dreary and dangerous place, it was a detriment rather than an asset for his efforts. It was he who said, "I want a parade." With that call, we organized the first Halloween Lantern Parade.

There was another artist group I can think of, the Fluid Movement.⁷ In 2007, we supported them in doing water ballets in the Patterson Park pool, which were hilarious. They were drawing people in. We could see that with the right kind of events, people would come. That continued for a few years. Then they moved on to other pools and projects.

The creator of the Halloween Lantern Parade was an artist called Molly Ross.⁸ We worked with Molly from 2000 to 2013 every year to create and build the great Halloween Lantern Parade. That was part of the spirit to re-building the Park. There was a time when Molly wanted to stop the parade, but the neighborhood insisted, "We want this parade," and so we continued it.

ENDNOTES

1. Glenn McNatt, "A Very Creative Alliance," *The Baltimore Sun*, May 20, 2005, www.articles.baltimoresun.com/2005-05-20/features/0505200040_1_creative-alliance-highlandtown-mikulski.
2. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Basic Books: New York, 2002).
3. The Open Society Institute Baltimore, established in 1998 and the only field office for the Open Society Foundations' U.S. programs, focuses

on a single city and tests the effectiveness of place-based philanthropy strategy on some of the biggest challenges facing Baltimore and other urban centers in the United States. See their website for further information: www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/offices-foundations/open-society-institute-baltimore.

4. The Theater Action Group uses theater for social justice purposes. Learn more about them on the website of the Baltimore Art + Justice Project: baltimoreartplusjustice.wordpress.com/tag/theater-action-group

5. Kelly Brewington, "Play Distills Diverse Avenue," *The Baltimore Sun*, November 17, 2007, articles. baltimoresun.com/2007-11-17/news/0711170115_1_highlandtown-portillo-southeast-baltimore.

6. For more about Patterson Park, see their website: pattersonpark.com.

7. For more about Fluid Movement, see their website: www.fluidmovement.org.

8. For more on Molly Ross, see: www.mollyross.org/curriculumvitae/

THE BUS STOP PROJECT

MMMM..., MADRID, SPAIN

INTRODUCED BY CHRIS RYER, SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, BALTIMORE, MD

INTRODUCTION

The Highlandtown community was settled a hundred years ago by immigrants from central Europe—Germany, Italy, Poland and Hungary. Those immigrants bought homes, built churches and schools, and created the second largest shopping district in Baltimore. Over the decades, many families were raised in Highlandtown, but by the late 1990s the neighborhood was predominantly a community of senior citizens. As their numbers dwindled, a new group of residents, which included their grandchildren and other young people from the suburbs, began to discover the convenience of urban life. Then, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, immigrants from Central America—Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador—also began moving into the community.

The Bus Stop Project was conceived as a bridge between the old and the new communities. Using public space, and a technique known as creative placemaking, the project recruited residents of all ages (which meant residents of all nationalities, ethnicities and races) to reinvent their neighborhood, recognizing that, for the first time in many years, most of the people who lived in the neighborhood did not grow up there.

Creative placemaking became a tool for recruiting both new and old residents to get involved in the revitalization of their public spaces. Furthermore, it gave residents a chance to reinvent the public space in their community—to give it an identity that matched their view of the neighborhood.

THE PROCESS

The Southeast Community Development Corporation (CDC), with assistance from a facilitator that specializes in creative placemaking (Deborah Patterson of ArtBlocks) convened a group of residents, businesses and property owners who represented the diversity of the community and were interested in the creative placemaking process. The group looked at three intersections in the commercial district where the City was about to make a major investment in transit infrastructure, including new crossings, shelters and street furniture.

A different workshop was held for each intersection. Participants studied the area and made ten short-term and ten long-term recommendations. At the corner of East and Eastern avenues, residents identified a major opportunity for an interactive bus stop, one that reflected the unique nature of the Creative Alliance community art facility adjacent to it.

When the European Union National Institutes of Culture approached the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA) with the idea of doing a cultural project in each of Baltimore's Arts and Entertainment Districts, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to take advantage of the transit experience of members of the European Union while connecting to the immigrant heritage of the community.

The Highlandtown team selected the Spanish artist's collective mmmm... based on their past experiences with a creative placemaking project in Times Square and their ability to communicate with Latino residents in the



Meeting Bowls in Times Square, New York, by Spanish artist's collective mmmm... ©mmm...

community. Two local artists were solicited by the Creative Alliance to assist with fabrication and other logistical arrangements.

The Spanish collective's first submission was not felt to be appropriate for the character of the neighborhood. After much discussion, it was agreed to bring one artist over before the design was finalized to meet and discuss the project with neighbors. Based on that trip, a new proposal was submitted that was widely received by the community.

HOW BUS WAS CONCEIVED

A year ago, in August 2013, the Spanish Embassy in Washington contacted us to participate in a competition for carrying out a project in Baltimore, part of the EUNIC initiative "TRANSIT—Creative Placemaking with Europe in Baltimore."

In 2011 we built the Meeting Bowls in New York City's Times Square. The Meeting Bowls were large objects shaped like bowls that provided seating to accommodate eight people. They were temporary, playful urban furniture designed to promote interaction by having those seated inside the bowls face one another. We thoroughly enjoyed our experience working in the United States, and this seemed like a good opportunity to build upon that success.

We presented an initial project for Baltimore. The Creative Alliance and Southeast CDC representatives selected us from among the artist submissions to their contest.

In our first telephone conversation with Creative Alliance and Southeast CDC staff, they asked us to completely change our initial concept, and to instead think about how to make a unique bus stop. The Highlandtown community wanted a new and fun bus stop in their neighborhood, and that is what they wanted us to build.

We made our first trip to Baltimore in April to get to know the neighborhood and to meet with the community. We remember talking with a bus driver about the bus stop we were planning, and he told us, "Make it heavy." And we did...

Three months later, in June, all four of us, the entire mmmmm... collective, traveled to Baltimore. Three of us stayed for a month at the Maryland Institute College of Art. This was enough time to get to know a little bit about the city, the people we would be working with, and the Highlandtown community.

We created an obvious bus stop: three large sculptures that form the letters BUS. It's a place to enjoy, interact, and meet while waiting for the bus. It's a leisure space in the middle of the rhythm of the city, a fun place that provides levity during the inevitable waiting at a bus stop. Bus stops are usually boring spaces, whereas BUS allows people to assume different postures of sitting or standing while waiting for the bus. The S allows people to lie back while they wait, and the B provides handicap-accessible shelter from the wind and rain... The size, shape, and function of BUS is designed to make this bus stop an iconic urban meeting point. A bus stop you will never miss.

During the month we were in Baltimore, we spent a lot of time with Gina Caruso, Managing Director at Creative Alliance. We could not have completed the sculptures without the help of Kyle Miller and Tim Scofield, two local sculptors from Baltimore who fabricated the piece in collaboration with us at Tim Scofield Studios at 421 North Exeter Street.

We like the people in Baltimore and their hospitality. They are fun and interactive. They like to work and to party. We would love to go back! Baltimore is a city with a lot of personality. It reminds us of Madrid. Both are open cities where everybody is welcome.

We would love to create a second project in Baltimore. Many things might happen in Baltimore in the next few years. The city seems to be changing.

THE BUS STOP PROJECT. EVALUATION

The project has been more successful than anyone dreamed. The collaborative, iterative process of creative placemaking resulted in a superb piece of sculpture that was embraced by the community and the press. The "sculpture" is also a practical piece of furniture in the community, particularly for transit riders, a group typically overlooked by artists in the Baltimore area.

Our first photograph came from a bus driver, and the pictures, letters and blogs haven't stopped coming. Every day, it seems someone is photographing the piece with a friend posed atop a letter. Children can be seen playing on the sculpture while waiting for the bus with their parents.

The project was a true collaborative—the community couldn't have created a new sense of place without a group of artists looking at the community with fresh eyes. The Spanish artists couldn't have created the piece without the assistance of the Creative Alliance, and local fabricators and the Southeast CDC couldn't have done it without the assistance of EUNIC and the EU Delegation to the U.S., BOPA and ArtPlace America. The flexibility of the partners in being willing to bring over an artist before the piece was finalized was critical. Finally, both the City and the transit authority were very flexible with their permitting process and allowed this unusual interpretation of a transit shelter to be installed. It is anticipated that the project will continue to be an attraction and a landmark for the neighborhood for many years to come.



BUS is a permanent public art project commissioned by Creative Alliance and Southeast Community Development Corporation in conjunction with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts, supported by the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC), SPAIN arts & culture, and the EU Delegation to the U.S.

THE FIRST WORLD CONGRESS OF THE MISSING THINGS, BALTIMORE, JUNE 7–8, 2014 BARBARA HOLUB, TRANSPARADISO, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

“Missing Things” is neither a scientific category, nor a typical congress topic. Missing things are abundant and diverse. They are subject to personal valuation. They are sometimes visible, sometimes invisible – especially in contested areas like Lexington Market in Baltimore.

The First World Congress of the Missing Things was conceived in response to a call by EUNIC and Bromo Arts and Entertainment District in Baltimore.¹ It was realized at the Lexington Market subway station entrance, next to the “World Famous Lexington Market” – a historical landmark that has become an unfortunate indicator of the absence of social welfare in the nation. Lexington Market is located in the once-bustling city center, neglected since the 1950s due to “white flight.” Baltimore is a shrinking city. Undertaking a massive urban development project, it began regenerating the Inner Harbor area as a major tourist attraction in the early 1980s². Today, the adjacent and formerly lively city center with its luxurious department stores remains boarded up. In October 2013, Bromo Arts and Entertainment District became Baltimore’s third Arts District in an endeavor to regenerate Howard Street and the surrounding area.

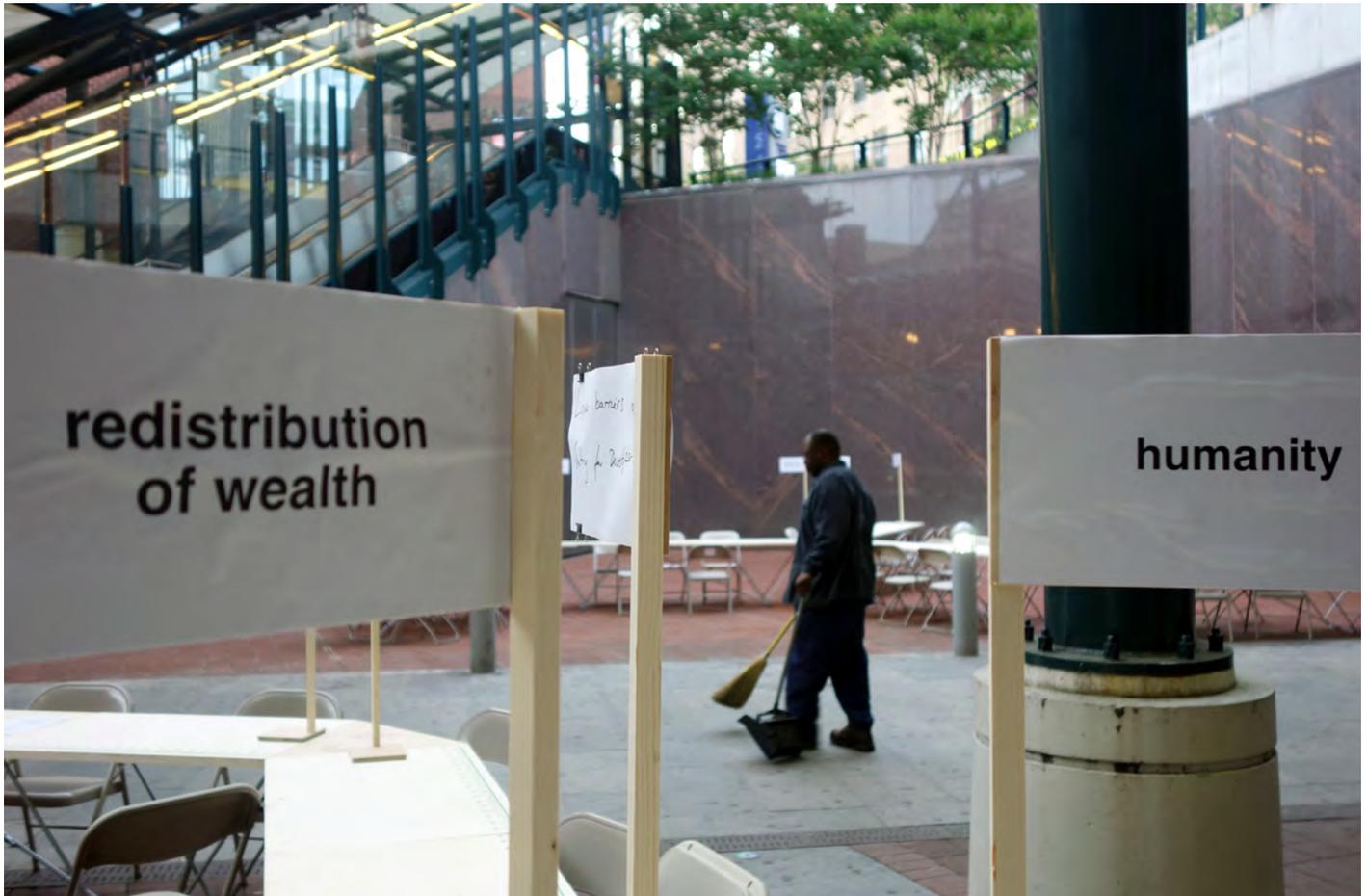
The starting point for developing an art project within this highly disputed context was the question of whether or not art has a function (and if so, what kind of function?), and if it should become involved in current

societal and urban issues. The project was co-funded by ArtPlace, a program initiated by the National Endowment for the Arts under President Obama. The goal of ArtPlace is to counteract community deficiencies arising from the lack of a social system and the enormous inequalities generated by the neo-liberal economy. The expectations of the program – to use art to facilitate the bridging of these gaps – would reduce art to another commodity, a good perpetuating the interests of the neo-liberal economy. It would go from providing a social service to being part of a “creative economy” intended to create new business. A project fulfilling these expectations would not only hollow out the role of art in questioning overall context, but would also run the risk of intensifying gentrification processes if not embedded in a long-term strategy. So the question was how to develop a critically-engaged project that uses the opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of a neighborhood while maintaining the premise of prioritizing social revitalization as a key goal.

I therefore decided to create a congress, handing over responsibility and giving voice to the people of Baltimore, those already using this urban space (mainly homeless persons, drug addicts, and ex-convicts), as well as to the people of the municipality and to whomever else was interested in participating in a publicly accessible congress on urban public space. *The First World*

Congress of the Missing Things shifted the usual setting of a congress, often exclusive and dominated by the division of “panel” and “audience”, by creating a spatial rhizomatic structure enabling non-hierarchical communication. In this inclusive situation, one-to-one communication was enhanced and topics were presented simultaneously without differentiating between “experts” and “audience.” In a process that took place before the congress, the people of Baltimore were invited to contribute their ideas and opinions about missing things to be published on the project website³. Information was distributed at an event at the Gallery Current Space⁴, on a table set up at Lexington Market for the purpose of engaging in one-on-one conversations, at events, and by spreading the word through people engaged as multipliers in Baltimore.

By asking the public to shape its content, the congress emphasized the democratic right to participate in public decision-making and the shaping of our society. *The First World Congress of the Missing Things* wanted to counteract the division of society and dominant decision-making processes by handing the voice over to the people. It wanted to enable people to speak who are usually unheard, invisible, or reduced to being considered a “problem” or a disturbing factor in the otherwise seemingly functioning, dominant system.



The First World Congress of the Missing Things ©Barbara Holub

If art is to have the function of challenging urban societal issues, it is by using the position of coming from the outside, in my case as a European, by being unbiased and propagating different values, shifting expectations from “problem solving” to offering ways to empower local people and activate hidden potentials and spaces. This art project is also about creating poetic moments in an area of decline and poverty in addition to addressing weighty social and urban issues.

The First World Congress of the Missing Things employed the transparadiso method of direct urbanism, which means involving artistic strategies in long-term urban development, at the very least as a vision, as in this case. For city authorities, this means becoming engaged in an open-ended process, one not finished when the artist leaves the site of intervention.

Programs like ArtPlace are based on achieving measurable results. However, art projects such as *The First World Congress of the Missing Things* must not be measured by quantifiable criteria or expected to deliver immediate results (such as crime rate reduction or rising property values). These are expectations that artists like myself intentionally do not want to comply with in order to avoid being instrumentalized. How can one measure the invaluable qualities of the personal conversations that took place during the congress, ones, for example, starting with the question, “I was born a slave, you were born a master. So how can we communicate?” People felt taken seriously, on an equal level, and opened up to the same extent that we, the European artists, did.

We made use of our background – not being part of unresolved racial and social

issues – to create a situation of confidence. This was in and of itself a huge achievement and led to concrete first ideas evolving out of the congress. These ideas need to be heard by the municipality, and subsequent steps must be taken sensitively so as to not betray the people who confided in us during the congress.

Individuals from organizations such as the Bromo Arts and Entertainment District, the Maryland Transit Administration, the Alternative Press Center and Gentrification (K) not Project, all of whom were intensively engaged in the project, are striving to achieve change in the social and urban policies of Baltimore. They need to continue to be involved in future processes in order to provide new perspectives for the people inhabiting the site, and to ensure that *The First World Congress of the Missing Things* is not held up as an example of a project that involuntarily contributed to a gentrification process. Despite the distance from Baltimore, if European artists were kept involved for the duration, their voices from the outside could further a socially-invested and sensible process of urban development.

The First World Congress of the Missing Things must not be confounded with activism, even though it activates people by creating a setting within which people can take over the situation. It emphasizes fluid and changing roles, raising the question of what kind of expertise is needed for each specific occasion. Is there a way to overcome the current dichotomy between critically engaged art and activism, which reduces both rather than acknowledging the crucial differences? Artists active in this field could be considered “new urban practitioners”⁵, transdisciplinary experts proposing controversial, unwanted, immeasurable, and poetic

moments, enhancing communal cohabitation and a sense of community based on recognizing individuals from diverse backgrounds as able to contribute to a multi-faceted society. Instead of being implemented to mask social problems or being considered a speculative investment for the art market, the otherwise often under-recognized voice of art could thus gain a new position in society

ENDNOTES

1. At the invitation of Anton Falkeis, Head of Social Design at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, the congress was realized with students Marie-Christin Rissinger, Elisabeth Stephan, and Julian Verocai in Baltimore. Contributions to the opening ceremony were made by Lucia Hofer and Marit Wolters. An additional project was carried out by Nika Kubyrova (student of TransArts at the University of Applied Arts) and Simone Klien, who performed at the closing ceremony.

The project is part of TRANSIT, an initiative of the Washington, D.C. cluster of the EUNIC and BOPA, supported by a grant from the European Union Delegation to the U.S.

2. Grant Kester, *A Survivor's Guide to Baltimore's Renaissance: Baltimore Citizens Discuss Their Experiences of Urban Renewal. Photographs by Chris Hartlove. Texts by Grant Kester* (Baltimore: Maryland State Arts Council, 1992). (Includes interviews with people who tell about the “other side” of Baltimore's urban renaissance. EPFL: Md F 185. S87 1992.)

3. See the Missing Things website for more on this and another congress: www.missingthings.org.

4. Current Space is an artist-run gallery and studio; see their website for more information: www.currentspace.com.

5. Symposium “Planning Unplanned_Exploring The New Role of the Urban Practitioner,” curated by Barbara Holub, Institute of Art and Design of the Vienna University of Technology, November 19–20, 2012, www.urban-matters.org.

POLICYMAKING AND THE ARTS

Re-use of post-industrial ruins, bringing about social connectivity within neighborhoods, giving voice to those who have been unheard: these are some effects which make the arts attractive for urban development. While decision-makers in the United States usually see the arts as an add-on or afterthought, there are examples from European cities of the arts being an integral part of the urban landscape and even of urban planning. Sine qua non for successful art are artistic independence, integrity of thought and freedom of creative expression. Within the context of placemaking, however, we are reminded of how important it is to learn to interact with society.

The following chapter presents a *tour d'horizon* of a U.S. federal agency, an American city and a European city, and culminates in a question about the “pipeline”: How do you teach a new generation of artists to be prepared for the demands of the arts system and the utilitarian expectations of society?

THREE QUESTIONS TO THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA), WASHINGTON, D.C.

WILFRIED ECKSTEIN IN CONVERSATION WITH JASON SCHUPBACH, DIRECTOR OF DESIGN PROGRAMS, NEA

Jason Schupbach 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 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sandy Recovery Taskforce *Rebuild by Design* Competition.

Wilfried Eckstein: *Can you please describe your vision for the integration of arts policy, institutions and decision makers in urban planning, and how that might impact urban planning higher education and programs for city administrators?*

Jason Schupbach: It is an exciting time for arts and culture in the United States. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has long positioned arts and culture as an essential part of building a strong community, and in the past few years the role of arts in a community has gained significant momentum and attention. The arts' social, educational, economic, and aesthetic benefits for communities are well-documented. Artists provide a powerful aesthetic imprint through their craft, sparking vitality and creating an environment for ideas, creativity, and social engagement. The arts offer novel approaches to improve a variety of challenges facing communities of all sizes. The NEA has spotlighted this work through

the *Our Town* creative placemaking program and numerous federal partnerships.

Since its inception in 2011, the *Our Town* creative placemaking grant program has helped foster partnerships between local government and nonprofit arts/design/cultural organizations through the grantmaking requirements. The idea was to position artists and arts organizations at the table with other key city/town leaders, affirming them as important contributors to strengthening the community. *Our Town* was developed as a catalytic investment with a focus on the local community and assets, serving the Obama administration's holistic, place-based investment agenda.

Simultaneously, then-Chairman Rocco Landesman laid the groundwork for the inclusion of arts and culture in other federal programs. Understanding that any NEA place-based funding alone would be insufficient, Landesman pursued strategic partnerships with other federal agencies that were also implementing place-based programs. This work involved identifying where other agencies were already investing in the arts and fostering alliances among federal officials, arts stakeholders, and community development stakeholders to apply for and implement place-based grants from federal agencies other than the NEA. For example, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development included specific language that invited arts and cultural stakeholders to serve as partners on neighborhood planning and implementation grants.

These are just a few examples of how the NEA has sought to integrate arts and culture into urban planning and to illustrate their impact in improving the quality of life for residents. Higher education urban planning programs are validating the potential for creative placemaking strategies to improve outcomes of livability—some through specifically starting programs on creative placemaking, others by incorporating the teaching of art-based community development strategies into curriculums.

WE: *What has the NEA done to bring awareness of creative placemaking to city administrators and to build a wider constituent base?*

JS: The NEA has a long history of introducing mayors to the power of design and creative placemaking through the Mayors' Institute on City Design. Since its founding by Mayor Joseph Riley of Charleston in 1986, MICD has convened more than 1,000 mayors alongside architects, urban designers, real estate developers, transportation professionals, landscape architects, and city planners to prepare mayors to be the chief urban designers of their cities. Supported by the NEA and in partnership with

the American Architectural Foundation and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, this program has had a profound impact on the design of American cities over the past three decades, having trained over 1,000 mayors in the importance of city design and placemaking.

Similarly, the intent of the *Our Town* program is to put arts and culture at the table with local leaders and government agencies. The *Our Town* grant program requires a partnership between a local government agency or federally-recognized tribal government and an arts / culture / design nonprofit 501c3 organization. The grant program has catalyzed new, innovative local partnerships that haven't been explored before. Annually, the NEA receives around 300 applications from communities across the country of all shapes and sizes. Requiring a partnership between the local government and a nonprofit has enabled local leaders to form new creative partnerships that expand their imagination on the role of arts and address a wide range of issues, including public safety, economic development, and education via arts-driven interventions.

After four years of funding 256 creative placemaking projects in local communities, the NEA has crafted a new funding category for 2015 to support projects that build knowledge about creative placemaking. These projects are intended both to expand the capacity of artists and arts organizations to work more effectively with economic and community development practitioners and to improve the livability of the

communities and create opportunities for all. The goal is to ensure that authentic and equitable creative placemaking is a strategy that city administrators understand and employ in their approach to neighborhood revitalization.

WE: *How have the NEA granting programs helped develop and educate non-arts advocates to better understand the role that art and design can play in making good places?*

JS: The *Our Town* creative placemaking grant program has both catalyzed and amplified partnerships between arts and non-arts organizations in communities of all shapes and sizes, all across the country.

We have witnessed how artists and arts organizations are working to make America a better place. Many communities have used their *Our Town* grant to assemble multi-stakeholder partnerships; in 2014 there were 246 partners on 66 *Our Town* grant-funded projects, an average of 15 partners per project. Community development sponsored by the NEA incentivizes artists and designers to participate in conversations from which they have traditionally been excluded. As a result, approximately one-third of the partners on *Our Town* projects are arts organizations from all of the fields the NEA supports, including filmmaking, theater, folk arts, dance, literature, arts education, museums, and symphonies and opera companies, among others. The range of other institutions that have stepped up to work on *Our Town* projects is

vast and very exciting as well: aging services agencies, botanic gardens, religious institutions, scientific organizations, local businesses, banks, farms, business improvement districts, educational institutions, land trusts. Government is represented at the local, state, and federal levels. Any type of project partnership is challenging, but the staff at the NEA frequently hear that simply applying for an *Our Town* grant helped build new relationships in the communities which led to concrete undertakings, even if the *Our Town* application was turned down.

In September 2014, the NEA released the *Exploring Our Town* e-storybook on the NEA website to highlight successful creative placemaking projects. *Exploring Our Town* was developed to expand the imagination of both arts and non-arts leaders on the potential of arts and culture to drive community revitalization. *Exploring Our Town* features more than 65 case studies, each of which outlines community context, project vision, engagement strategies, partnerships, and both the anticipated and unanticipated impacts resulting from the *Our Town* project. This resource is not so much of a "how to guide" as a means to foster networking and learning among communities in employing arts and design to improve their neighborhood, district, town, or city. It showcases a wide range of creative placemaking strategies—from cultural planning and artist housing to temporary arts interventions—and illustrates comprehensive approaches to community development through arts and culture.

ARTS, CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IN THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

GÜLGÜN KAYIM, DIRECTOR, ARTS, CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY, CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

I develop strategic partnerships for the City. Traditionally, departments of cultural affairs in other cities are grant-giving institutions and an important support for the local non-profit arts infrastructure. For the City of Minneapolis, this model is not so relevant because we are blessed with a generous foundation community, support from many Fortune 500 companies¹ and taxpayer support through the State Legacy Amendment passed in 2008. The amendment generates \$7.5 billion in statewide funding over a 25 year period; of this, 19.75% goes towards arts and cultural funding. Compared to many other states and cities in the United States, Minnesota and Minneapolis sit in an environment of arts-funding abundance. As a result, our local city government has (compared to other municipalities) historically done very little to invest in the local arts community, arts support, funding or engagement².

My position was created in 2011. The impetus for its development came from a need to create an executive arts position within the city administration to provide consultation services to other city departments and create a visible presence for outside arts stakeholders. The program I eventually developed is strategically targeted at connecting the dots between government, policy makers and the arts community. For lack of a better term, I see my job as a “sector translator” role or a “risk translator” of sorts, responding to the conditions that exist in the United States public sector that place low value on artists and arts

activities. We have seen that the public sector historically has invested very little in the arts (compared to budgets for transportation spending, for example), so when one considers embracing this sector from within government, it is politically a very risky proposition. However, the primary focus of my work is to create relationships between the public sector, non-profit activities and for-profit industries. Its stance is therefore transformational rather than transactional. It is focused on fostering systems change rather than providing funding support.

The Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy program in the City of Minneapolis operates out of the City Coordinator’s office. The City Coordinator is the highest non-elected official in the City of Minneapolis and serves a position similar to the role and authority of a CEO in a large cooperation. In this analogy, “the board” collectively is the City’s elected officials: the City Council and Mayor. The political reality in our system is that power—authority and decision making—is extraordinarily diffused throughout. No one person is allowed exclusive control. The Mayor in actuality has few powers and is in a relatively weak position. Although she controls the city’s budget, she has to win the support of the majority of the Council to move her goals and priorities forward. She has power as a figurehead, which shouldn’t be underestimated, but must acquire a majority in the council for any major decisions. The Coordinator’s office in this system is needed to oversee the orderly operations

and functioning of the administration and to act as a crucial coordinating link between and among elected and administrative officials. We in the Coordinator’s office have an enterprise view of the City, seeing it as a whole, not a sum of its parts, and work with departments to support innovation and best practices, create meaningful connections to the community and provide departments with strategic resources.

This idea of developing a position in an arts role whose job is to strategically connect the dots between government, administration, policy makers, and the community is a model that other cities have undertaken³, some of them out of sheer necessity because their budgets were cut during the economic downturn. I came to the city in 2011 in a newly created position with no resources assigned for implementation. My title was originally Director of Arts, but in a few months it became apparent that with no resources, the best approach to working effectively in the Minneapolis system was to develop a stance that was broadly inclusive, collaborative and strategic. Recent research⁴ in the field acknowledges the importance of inclusiveness if the arts are to remain sustainable, build broad community support and participate in the revitalization of cities. This strongly influenced the stance I took, and thus I changed my title to reflect the work I was engaged in doing from Arts to Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. The new title acknowledges that the arts are part of broader cultural expression and that

the work I do is cross sector. The types of projects I have developed have all represented this point of view.

The *Creative CityMaking* project is a powerful example of the work that my program is engaged in developing. It is a collaboration between Intermedia Arts, a forty-year-old community-based arts organization, the City's Long Range Planning Division of the Community Planning and Economic Development department and my program. *Creative CityMaking* seeks to provide city departments with artists to develop arts-based community engagement approaches that will help the City engage more meaningfully with underserved communities. The Long Range Planning Division worked with five artist/planner teams for a period of one year on five city planning processes. The results of our year-long work have been a significant increase in community engagement among under-represented populations. Over 85% of our participants had not engaged in a previous city planning process. In this project, the planning division of the City learned that to engage the full range of our rapidly diversifying communities in making decisions about their future, we needed to find alternative methods to how we address and engage these communities. In short, the role of the arts in this process was to enable citizen engagement in the democratic process. My role was to recognize an opportunity and bring the experience and resources of Intermedia Arts to the Planning Division of the City, whose staff was struggling to understand how to engage underserved populations in their planning processes. I also helped manage and

develop a framework to allow the work to continue. This required cross sector understanding, partnership and resources for implementation. I understood that Planning was interested in working with artists but was not willing to commit any resources to learning how to do so. Therefore, we collaboratively applied for funding from ArtPlace America (a national creative placemaking funder) and agreed that Intermedia would receive the funding and the City would receive the program. *The Creative CityMaking* program successfully created 22 tools, with 60% of its participants coming from underserved populations. We built on our first year of success by securing \$1 million in private funding (from the Kresge Foundation), and we are developing the program to offer, for the next three years, any department in the city an opportunity to collaborate with an artist. Again, the objective is to develop a tailored community engagement process that meets the needs of the communities the City is trying to reach.

The value added by the arts and artists in this project cannot be underestimated. With very little outlay from the taxpayer or risk to the administration, we have leveraged the capacity of the creative sector to innovate new approaches to City processes. Another gain here is the relationship that has been built between City departments and an important local arts institution, and the door we have opened for artists to work with the public sector in a new way. I concede that part of my strategy in bringing Intermedia and other arts organizations to the City is to help trigger systems change.

Often those who do not work in government forget that while at the higher decision making levels there is a lot of fluidity and flux⁵, there is a lot of stability and inertia at the mid-administrative level. Picture this as a rapid stream flowing over hard impacted ground: lots of action at the surface but very little penetrates down to the roots. No surprise that government systems often become stagnant and fixed with very few incentives for change. I see my role as bringing the resources of the creative sector to bear on helping to nurture movement at all levels. Through education, experimentation (at small levels of risk) and support, I work to bring the rapid pace and need for results of the elected officials into the cautious, process-oriented perspective of the administrative worker.

ENDNOTES

1. The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area ranks first among the 30 largest metro areas in the country for Fortune 500 companies per capita. It is the headquarters of giants such as Target Corporation, 3M, General Mills, Cargill and Medtronic.
2. Minneapolis City government per capita spending on arts activities is only \$2.
3. The cities of Philadelphia, Rhode Island and Wooster follow similar paradigms.
4. Maria Rosario Jackson, Florence Kabwasa-Green, Joaquin Herranz, "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators," *Urban Institute* (November 2006) and Maria Rosario Jackson, "Progress in Arts and Culture Research: a Perspective," *Urban Institute* (December 2008).
5. Elected officials have four year terms in Minneapolis and department heads are appointed. There have been four city coordinators in the three years I have been at the City.

ARTWORKS IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA

ARABIANRANTA, HELSINKI

TUULA ISOHANNI, DA, ART COORDINATOR, AALTO UNIVERSITY

The story about artistic collaboration in Arabianranta, Helsinki began in the year 2000, when the first architectural competitions for the area were concluded and the percentage-for-art principle was adopted, in which 1% of all development project costs are to be spent on art. Lying behind the art investment is an appeal, based on a proposal by Helsinki's city planning department, which the city management made to the developers as they were in the planning phase for the area. At that time, the city had established the position of an art coordinator at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture to manage the art projects or "to enable the implementation of art in the area".¹ The art coordinator is intended to be an integral participant in every construction project from the very start of the planning period. She participates in all project meetings and is held responsible for the organization and quality of the art work which is realized.

THE PLACE

The Arabianranta residential area, located on the eastern side of Helsinki between the Arabia Factory and the seashore, is a landfill area where the factory had been dumping ceramic waste for decades. During the planning stage, the city of Helsinki spent more than 100 million euros on readying the area for construction and related soil purification, analysis, sorting and stabilization. As the city's art coordinator, I attended meetings about the area's cleanup and envisioned

how future works of art could highlight the care for humanity which the city was demonstrating by building new housing for its inhabitants on purified soil.

I began my own work at that time, analyzing the area, its immediate surroundings, and its past, present and potential future in order to find concepts for future sites and themes for the works of art. I collected knowledge about the area and surroundings as layers (e.g., history, nature, and community), seeing those as themes for forthcoming art works. As evidenced in previous projects on which I have worked, the place and its atmosphere are very important to me,² and I wished to make the uniqueness of the place visible through this approach.

THE ARTWORKS

The works of art in Arabianranta were not chosen from existing collections. Instead, in each project artists planned and implemented their works during construction.

The art coordinator shared the suggestions artists made for each building project with its developers and architects, prepared the budget with architects and artists, arranged contracts and maintenance plans for the artworks, and was responsible for the schedule and work safety. The art coordinator supported the artists throughout the process.

When construction began on Arabianranta's north side, most of the works of art were at

the entrances (especially in the initial years, 2000-2006). With art work, we were able to create different entrances. For example, a large wall painting informs the disabled young residents living in one house that they are home.

A new concept was implemented in the southern part of the area, where five art gardens have been realized as a collaborative effort between the garden's designers and its artists. The artistic concept treats the outdoor environment around the buildings as a whole and emphasizes the importance of garden art in an urban space. The art gardens all have their own themes, and the works of art establish each garden as a complete artistic whole.

Knowing the locality and the site, the art coordinator can communicate to the artist the specific concepts of the place. For example, the artwork located closest to the bay and the waterfront, *Swaying Bronze Rocks*, is made to invite people to sit down, view the bay, and be in contact with the water.

When positioned in proximity to residential entrances and communal yards, art conveys the artist's touch and viewpoint within the day-to-day living environment while simultaneously distinguishing spaces such as staircases from one another. The artists are forced to acknowledge the everyday life of the residents, who encounter the artworks thousands of times when returning home or on festive occasions. The works celebrate



Work by Esa Vesmanen: Taika kivet (Magic Stones), photo courtesy Esa Vesmanen

the moment of homecoming with the residents and so must become part of their lives and respect their privacy.

The works of art, in turn, guide one's gaze towards the immediate environment, adding an artist's perspective to it and making it special. They link a residential area to its surroundings, functioning both as a gateway to nature and a place of contact with other residents. The residential areas are not merely collections of buildings. The everyday lives of the residents take place in –people meet, get to know each other, get together and celebrate.

THE URBAN PARK

The main park in the area is the Arabianranta Waterfront Park. The streets and squares in the Arabianranta residential area have been named after designers who worked at the factory. The man-made art park Tapio Wirkkala Park, designed by Robert Wilson, became a counterpoint to the natural space of the Waterfront Park. The Tapio Wirkkala Park is in itself a

comprehensive work of art in which light plays a leading role.

When Robert Wilson drew his plans for the park, he changed the location from an uninspired rectangle into a dynamic one dominated by a square. The square shape of the park creates a strong sense of independence between the apartment buildings. Its diagonal movement seems to blast away daily life and boredom. The square-shaped park is divided into nine rooms surrounded by hawthorn shrubs. Each room has its individual variety of surface textures and features artistic elements typically found in homes.

In one of the rooms, which is lit from below, you can find a marble fireplace encircled by spinning stone seats, and you can reserve the room and light a fire in the fireplace for a few hours. These rooms invite visitors to utilize them for celebratory occasions. The Tapio Wirkkala Park offers festive moments and a place with a unique atmosphere for the local residents and everyone in Helsinki. The perspective shifts from the artwork to the person experiencing the park.

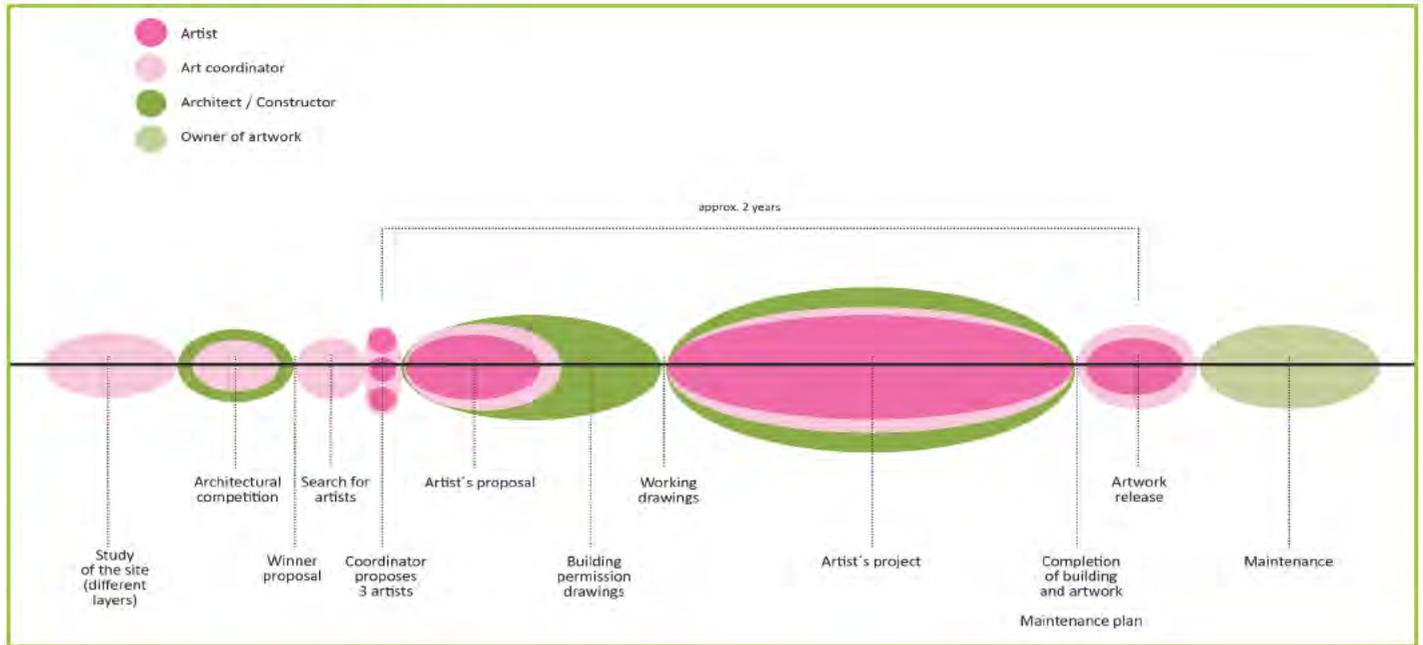
One building remains to be completed in 2014. Therefore, no research results have yet been compiled about the area. However, as sociologist Pasi Mäenpää observed during the first years: “some stop by works of art with their children to look at them and talk about them. Others take their guests for walks in the area to show them the art works.”³

The art works are becoming an important part of the everyday life of the residents.

ENDNOTES

1. The City Planning Bureau of Helsinki and the Mayor's Office nominated Tuula Isohanni, M.A. to be the first art coordinator in Finland. These days, the position of art coordinator has become routine in Helsinki and other Finnish cities.
2. Based on books and research work done by German philosopher Gernot Böhme about urban atmospheres.
3. Pasi Mäenpää, “Residents' experiences of Arabianranta,” in Joanna Kangasoja and Harry Schulman, eds., *Arabianranta: Rethinking Urban Living* (Helsinki: City of Helsinki Urban Facts, 2007), 180.

ART COORDINATION PROCESS



NOTES FROM A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN FUNDING FOR THE ARTS (MAY 30, 2014)

**KRISTA GREEN (BALTIMORE, MD),
RAFAEL DE BALANZO-JOUÉ (BARCELONA, SPAIN),
BARBARA HOLUB (VIENNA, AUSTRIA),
LYNNE MCCORMACK (PROVIDENCE, RI),
ERIN WILLIAMS (WORCESTER, MA)**

Holub: I would like to understand how funding functions in America. I can tell you how it works in Vienna. There are three urban planning departments with different agendas, for housing, for arts & culture, and a new structure for public art which is called Public Art Vienna. It was established in the mid-1990s. This department has undergone many different changes in structure and responsibilities. Currently, representatives from the three bodies sit on one board, plus three or four curators or representatives from local and international arts institutions. There you can submit project proposals. The board receives them and decides which projects are funded and which are not. I consider the intention behind this is good, because all the people relevant for decision-making at the city level are actually involved. The problem at the moment is that the final decision lies with the director of the Arts Department. The recent practice has hollowed out the whole process by both budget cuts and by occupying the public arts committee with other jobs. For example, creating a monument for gays prosecuted in WWII. So by pushing other agendas onto this body, the development goes into the opposite direction. What the public art

committee could actually do is develop concepts for Vienna's urban planning. Instead, recent developments have been governed by developers' interests. From our history based on the "Red Vienna" [WE: nickname for the tradition of social democratic city government in Vienna], we know how good urban development could work, but we are doing exactly the opposite at the moment. I think the structure could function, but it doesn't at the moment.

McCormack: Are the different city departments giving grants or are they doing other things?

Holub: They are in charge of the whole political agenda of art and culture. They do everything.

They get the budget and decide how it is distributed. How much goes to established institutions like the Vienna Opera and how much goes to the independent art scene, for example, to theater groups. They don't make grants but they give funding.

McCormack: Is that what they do mostly, or do they also do policy work like bringing

such ideas to the planning department to be a broker of that?

Holub: That would actually be the task of the Public Arts Department. The Public Arts Fund was created as a crossover section where all the different departments would come together. But the new director of the department does not have a background in the arts but rather in finance, and cannot be considered a facilitator; she does not have such vision.

McCormack: Where does the vision happen?

Holub: It comes from the artists who put in proposals. The Public Arts Committee puts out calls, and individuals can apply.

Green: You were talking about the woman who is not the facilitator but an overarching administrator who makes sure the program stays on, but there is no other body? For instance, the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts (BOPA) has a public art commission at the office. BOPA facilitates the program, puts out the calls, maintains the artist database, all that. But the projects come from the commission. Agencies come

in to the commission proposing projects. While BOPA may track the budget for the project, and provide what the artist and the agency need and facilitate between those two groups, we don't decide ourselves as individuals who the artist is going to be for that project. There is the commission; there is the community engagement.

McCormack: In the US, we have a very public process around development. A new developer comes into the city, they want to put a building up, they have to go before the city planning commission, they have to go before the zoning commission and every step along the way, the public is invited to make comments. And many times it becomes a very contentious conversation. To think about having an artist involved from the beginning—they are doing this in Minneapolis somehow, and working with the developer—could almost help because artists do community engagement work in a different way than a developer does development work because artists think differently. That would be an interesting test model to run.

The situation in the US is that the art agencies at the state levels run pretty much the same way. For the most part, they take money from the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) and then they re-grant to the community. The state legislature puts in matches for the NEA. That's all grant money. That is the operating support for the larger organization. It's all smaller grants at each agency. At the city level, there is no consistency at all. So even between the three of our organizations [WE: in Providence, Worcester, and Minneapolis], we all run very different ways.

Green: BOPA is a non-profit and we are outside of city government, but we work on behalf of the city in a lot of different capacities. In some capacities, we are completely

independent, and I think you [Lynne] are in city government.

McCormack: I report to the Mayor. I am very engaged with my Council, I work very closely with the planning department and we cross-fertilize each other on many different levels. I work with the Parks Department, and then I have relationships with many of the directors across city government, from the licensing board to the Department of Public Works (DPW) that makes the parking happen. So we have relationships. But, I do not have the autonomy [in comparison to BOPA]. I know Erin works in a hybrid situation.

Green: We have some hybrid [situations] too. For example, the Creative Baltimore Fund comes out of the city's general fund. That means that the over-arching process is monitored very particularly by the city. The public art process, we have "Memorandums of Understanding" with every city agency. We have an understanding with the city agencies that when Planning presents their capital planning, we have a person for Art Coordination. We manage that. So we know what capital projects are coming down, what the percent is that we should be pulling. Then because we do large events we have to have these relationships, too. It is interesting because we do have to talk regularly with city agencies. Even our mail and technology infrastructure is by the city. We have our own e-mail address, but it is managed by the municipal mail.

McCormack: But that model is kind of a stand-alone, too.

Green: We have the luxury to raise funds.

McCormack: But still, you have a very tight relationship with the city government. There are other places where the outside agency is really totally outside and doesn't

have that same sort of relationship. You are a little bit more integrated. You are quasi-public.

Williams: We work with independent curators if there is a project. Every community in Massachusetts receives a state allocation. We have a coalition that raises the operating budget for programming and they oversee the curating process for whatever the project that might be.

McCormack: The way public funding works in the US is that there is not really a curatorial process that is by a curator. It's usually by a panel of people. So when you apply for a grant to do a project, there is an application process with a deadline. The projects are funneled into a process. Then there is a panel of experts. So, the work is not curated. If you are doing a festival, you might have a curator.

Holub: We have both. Usually public art boards function in two ways. On the one hand, they put out calls, which I consider curating because they frame certain issues. On the other hand, there is a process, where the individuals can apply and propose their projects. I think this can create a good process of communication and exchange from both sides.

Balanzo: In Barcelona, the city planning department is very big, with housing, open space, citizen participation, environment, parks; and on the other side, we have the culture department. It is not integrated. Culture is more integrated with the district. Housing and urban planning go together with environmental issues but not with cultural and social issues. There is a big chasm between development and culture. Speaking to the question of how we engage developers and planners, I am aware that developers are negotiating with politicians, and they are not urban planners, not architects,

not artists, not citizens. They [WE: do not organize participation] simply inform. So participation is information. We have not yet begun to work altogether and decide who will participate. It's really not a way of cooperating.

A very important person is the project manager. He refers to the developer, to the politicians. He has the possibility to set a budget so other experts can participate. This is the reason why I do not agree to the approach of asking: How do we engage the developers and planners? You have to specify who you are engaging. In the end, it is the budget which says, there is a budget for the expert, a budget for the artist, [for] how much goes to citizens to make workshops, in particular in the beginning, to advise these people on how to make a more holistic urban development.

Holub: This is exactly what artists achieve in Austria and Germany when commissioned. There is usually a long research process about which issues do we want to address and how do we want to address this kind of call. A lot of work has to be done before framing the topic. This preliminary work is lacking in urban planning. [...] The work really starts before the developer comes into the picture. The developer needs to be addressed according to the agendas laid out before them.

Balanzo: I agree.

Holub: So, the planners, experts, artists, the sociologists need to work before them.

Green: Once it gets to the developer stage, our ordinances are only enforceable by city agencies and that is public money, so if you are a private developer we could maybe suggest, but we don't have the command.

Williams: We are setting up a new process

around that in order to gain TIPs (tax incremental financing special perks)¹ from the city. We are tying it in to TIPs. It gives special incentives to a developer if they give a percent of their project to art. It would either be for the creation of public art or for putting it into a fund.

Holub, Balanzo: We have that.

Holub: But the problem is again that art comes afterwards. Instead, I think arts need to be included, for example, in workshop situations with the developers or even before the developer comes up with an image or a plan.

Green: Currently, the mindset of developers does not include public art in the design process.

McCormack: How do we shift the mindset? That's the question.

Holub: A city government doesn't need to have an expert knowledge in the arts, but they need to open up a process for the arts to be involved in an early stage. Or how else can urban interventions have something to do with urban planning processes? Actually, creative placemaking funded by the NEA, to me, seems like putting a plaster on a wound or like the proverbial drop of water on a hot stone. [...]

McCormack: I also think that the intention behind that program comes very specifically from the project that they were doing with the mayors. *Our Town* grew out of the Design Institute for Mayors. That was a specific program set up to teach mayors about good design. So part of the problem is that in *Our Town* you do have to have a government partner, but it hasn't been specific about how to engage artists and elect the officials together. So it is very organic and it is very much about the individual

community. *Our Town* grantees are not asked about how that has been articulated. Instead we are asked about how our projects and the art worked. There is nothing in the final report that asks, "How did this change the thought process of a politician or elected official?" So I think we need to get to that. I think the intention of that program was to move that needle with this work. The program is also new and you can't think of everything.

Williams: How do we embed the arts in city planning, engineering? How do we achieve a more holistic approach?

Balanzo: From my point of view, the existing context of the built environment is very important, and furthermore the environmental issues are very important. For example in Vienna, to engage the developers in environmental issues, the council of Vienna provides incentives. Once your building is more environmentally friendly and up to standards, you are allowed to add height to the building and increase density in the city. This way you can pay for environmentally-friendly applications. This can serve as an example that through such incentives you can not only integrate solutions for environmental issues, but also social or even artistic issues. To change the normative prescriptions and to integrate new solutions, you need to look at the city.

McCormack: Why was the legislation changed to get the ecological issues taken care of in this manner? How did that happen? I think I know. It's on the mind of people. There are advocates.

Balanzo: Not quite. What motivated the change of the legislation is that cities have to apply sustainability indicators and if you have more efficient buildings, you can reduce your carbon emission. Of course, they know about environmental issues but

it is the indicators which make them change.

McCormack: What do we have to do to move that needle so that they feel the same pressure? There is nothing happening on the federal level [U.S.] or even state level, but the city level makes the changes happen.

Green: Yes, so how do we become an indicator? [...] We need indicators and data set that say when **all** of these things are happening, this is a healthy neighborhood.

McCormack: So for example, Housing and Urban Development [department]

participated in this sustainable community/challenge grant where they added an extra ten points when the community put in an arts and culture piece of it. That's how we ended up doing this transit planning work. It wasn't because someone in the planning department or the Mayor's administration thought it was a great idea or thought of it on their own. There was an incentive that said: "If you do this, you will get an extra ten points". It was an extra credit in a **competition**. So that demonstrated to my planning and development colleagues the value of the arts. Those are the kind of incentives that work in the US.

Green: Everything is so data-driven in terms of getting somebody to do something. You always have to make your case for "Why?"

Williams: This is where the notion of the healthy city comes in.

ENDNOTES

1. A tax that increases in increments based on income levels. Incremental taxes must be considered when evaluating new investment opportunities, especially for individuals or companies in the upper end of their current tax brackets.

NEW PIPELINE FOR NEW ACTION

SAMUEL HOI, PRESIDENT, MARYLAND INSTITUTE COLLEGE OF ART (MICA) GWYNNE KEATHLEY, VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES, MICA

The transatlantic symposium *The Role of Artists and the Arts in Creative Placemaking*, spearheaded by Goethe-Institut Washington with support from the European Union National Institutes of Culture and the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts, took place at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) on May 30th and 31st, 2014. The symposium explored the concept and action of the arts as a stabilizer of public life. A focus on creative placemaking examined the agency of artists, curators and designers in fostering urban resilience with outcomes in greater social cohesion, an enhanced sense of community, and increased economic and social vibrancy.

As expected, the sharing and debates among American and European curators, artists, and educators yielded powerful case studies in a wide range of settings and rich food for thought. While the exchange illuminated cross-Atlantic alignment and resonance, it also highlighted a degree of attitudinal difference between American and some European artists who both actively engage communities in their artistic practices; the latter group was more reluctant to acknowledge social outcomes as explicit project goals despite the achievement of such outcomes. Risking oversimplification, the intellectual and political reasoning for this position is as follows – an artist’s domain is art. Therefore, artists should focus on their expertise and

interest and not overpromise. Artists should resist the coopting of art as a utilitarian tool to be used to achieve certain outcomes by public and corporate forces.

In the United States, the arts, as delivered by artists and curators, need to embrace in an unabashed manner the potential of multiple outcomes they can help effect in the cultural realm and beyond. Lucy Lippard once expressed lament that artists tend to be exalted or devalued in America. Artists are usually exalted in rarified spheres and in public ceremonies, and yet support to artists is generally devalued in the public mind and especially in the realm of policy and resource investment. Hence, despite a healthy public consumption of and engagement in the arts, there is a persistent attitude that arts and arts education are dispensable, as demonstrated by a history of arts funding being among the first items to be cut in coping with budget stress.

There is a complex set of external factors at work. However, the internal construct of the art world is also partially responsible. The long-existing artistic stance of “artists as outsider truth seekers” has fostered a lingering tradition of an artist’s self-perception and often self-fulfilled destiny of being simultaneously “above it all” and marginalized.

All this is particularly ironic since we are living in an age of idea and creativity when artists are poised to have a pervasive and central presence in society. Educational institutions and other pipeline systems that prepare future artists and curators have unprecedented opportunities to do so, and should usher in a new generation capable of defining a more open artist identity and inventing their new worth and value in society.

MICA can offer three curricular examples of such new pipelines for action in its graduate Curatorial Practice, Community Arts and Social Design programs. A new breed of curators, artists, and designers learn to contribute to community advancement through the cultural, social and economic interventions of their creative practices. The artistic and social goals are completely integrated in their project goals and expected outcomes.

The *MFA in Curatorial Practice* expands the role of curators to connect art, artists, and communities and contribute to the creation of a vibrant cultural life. Students in the program work closely with others to identify relevant issues that inform timely and accessible exhibitions for their audiences. As curators, they use the power of interpretation to design new forms of exhibitions that activate history, identity and location and serve to reclaim the cultural value for a community.

The thesis work of Michele Gomez, Curatorial Practice, MFA '14, created an opportunity for people to rediscover their identity and deepen their connection to place. In her project, *Devociones y Fe* (Devotions and Faith), Gomez worked with Maryland Traditions, the Latino Providers Network and local Latino communities to develop *Devociones y Fe* (Devotions and Faith), an exhibition of objects, artworks, and interviews that investigated how Latino spiritual traditions express faith and devotion and how these spiritual traditions create a sense of belonging within the Upper Fells Point and Highlandtown neighborhoods—the centers of Baltimore's growing Latino communities.

The *MFA in Community Arts* prepares artists to use their art making as a means of promoting civic, youth, and community development. In this program, students are encouraged to use their work to help communities articulate their own history, culture, and needs – and in turn, that community inspires the artists' own creative expression.

For his thesis, Edgar Reyes, Community Arts, MFA '14, developed *Open Hearts*, a project that promoted cross-cultural sensitivity with African American and Latino

communities. Utilizing communal design practices, African American and Latino youth of East Baltimore developed posters, t-shirts and outdoor installations. The collaborative planning process for this production created a platform that stimulated conversations about rising tensions and encouraged cross-cultural acceptance. Not only did the process promote the self-expression and the points of view of the participants, but the revenue generated also helped to sustain the program and empower the multi-cultural identity of the community and its connection to place.

The *MFA in Social Design* program brings the creative skills and processes of design together with those of other disciplines to address critical social problems. Designers utilize this human-centered, collaborative and design-driven process to define the pressing issues for communities. The program promotes the value of design in addressing complex challenges and inspires the next generation of creative change makers.

With an interest in addressing urban poverty, Vincent Purcell, Social Design MFA '14, works with communities in East Baltimore

to develop a maker space. With this project, Purcell aims to take advantage of free and open source hardware, software and education to provide an opportunity for a disadvantaged area to leverage the booming technology sector growth. His intention is to create a scalable and viable model that provides access to a community to empower and drive economic development.

Creating a conceptual and action framework like the creative economy or creative placemaking for the engagement, validation and support of artists and designers is one critical path towards expanding the role of creative change agents in society. Training artists, designers and curators to occupy, enliven and magnify that framework is a necessarily parallel path. Both must happen for a new reality in which artists can thrive and contribute in bold new ways to communities and the world.

THE BALTIMORE ART + JUSTICE PROJECT

KALIMA YOUNG, PROJECT COORDINATOR, WWW.ARTPLUSJUSTICE.ORG

The Baltimore Art + Justice Project (BA+JP) in the Office of Community Engagement at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) works under the theory that if you identify, strengthen and support collaborations between the art/design community and the advocacy community, you will create a better, more just Baltimore. Through storytelling and community dialogues, the Baltimore Art + Justice Project works to help bridge the gap between the arts/design community and local advocacy groups. In the summer of 2013, the BA+JP launched an interactive map of the artists, designers, non-profits and advocates (stakeholders) working at the intersection of art and social justice in Baltimore City. Participants are tasked with creating a profile about the nature and location of their work, projects and organizations, while also answering questions about their livelihood as artists, designers, non-profits and advocates. The interactive map is layered with demographic data about neighborhoods in Baltimore to better facilitate and strengthen art- and design-based social justice collaborations.

In efforts to encourage city-wide participation in the mapping process, the BA+JP created a mobile kiosk in the Fall of 2013 where city-wide stakeholders are able to promote their social justice-based work and locate potential collaborative partners. The BA+JP mobile kiosk has mapped the social justice art and design scene at local arts festivals, independent galleries and throughout the MICA campus.

Coordinators of the BA+JP have been working closely with Station North Arts and Entertainment, Inc. to map representatives of Baltimore's creative placemaking community in the Station North Arts and Entertainment Arts District (SNAED). In the Fall of 2014, the BA+JP joined with the SNAED to participate in the yearlong *Artists Within* project, funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

A coalition of award-winning interdisciplinary arts and activist organizations engaged with social practice are working with SNAED, the Central Baltimore Partnership, and MICA's BA+JP to bring new energy to the sophisticated community development efforts underway in the SNAED. This coalition includes Dance & Bmore, FORCE: Upsetting Rape Culture, Single Carrot Theatre, and Youth Learning Lab of Education and Applied Design. Working with local residents ranging from middle school students to senior citizens, the coalition will activate and cultivate the artists, designers, and performers within these communities with the intention of increasing local participation in the arts and in community development efforts.

Artists Within seeks to eliminate the superficial barriers between artists and non-artists living and working in Station North, and demonstrate the ways in which design and artistic practice can play an important role in community development efforts. The BA+JP will capture qualitative and quantitative data from project participants, map the work, and tell the story of art- and design-based intervention taking place in Station North.



Top: The Baltimore Art + Justice Project Kiosk in the Station North Arts and Entertainment District; Center: Baltimore Art+ Justice Project Home Page, Bottom: Maryland Institute College of Art, Brown Center



Transatlantic Symposium *The Role of Artists and the Arts in Creative Placemaking* meeting at Area 405 in May 2014 © Diana Zhang

PLACEMAKING AND THE NARRATIVE TURN

What may be true still today in non-digital culture may lose its relevance in the near future. At the moment, the *narrative turn* has attained public relevance. Artists and moderators who take the Otherness into their perception promote a culture close to democratic values such as the bottom-up notion of freedom of expression.

THE ART OF TELLING A STORY. THE NARRATIVE IN PLACEMAKING.

NOTES FROM A DISCUSSION WITH RONIT EISENBACH, MARIA ROSARIO JACKSON, SUSAN SEIFERT, KAREN STULTS, POKA-YIO.

What is the *Narrative Turn* in placemaking all about? Who decides which stories are told? Is this decision a form of social engineering? These were some of the questions that shaped a roundtable discussion.

Eisenbach: Let's start with the narrative.

Poka-Yio: That's basically what I am working on. What we are doing in placemaking is exchanging stories. Every place, every community has its own story. The identity of a place is the common story that the people say. In a way, it is a collective narrative. You cannot erase the story. You can incorporate new chapters, new elements; but basically, a place has a story. Who are the people, how they came here, a tragic event maybe or a fantastic event that happened. The idea about placemaking is to bring forth these stories, enhance them, amplify them, build on them in order to make a sample which is relevant to the people. Otherwise, it is meaningless.

Eisenbach: Are you familiar with the work of James Young?¹

Poka-Yio: Yes.

Eisenbach: He challenges the idea of a collective narrative. He talks about the collected narrative rather than the collective. This acknowledges that there are different stories and we don't actually necessarily

share the same memory. I think—at least in the communities that I've worked in: in Detroit, in Maryland. One of the things that Gülgün Kayim said yesterday was that there are multiple truths and that all the stories are true. So I assume you are not talking about a single story.

Poka-Yio: No, of course not. In each story, there are different perspectives.

Eisenbach: Yes, I think this is very important. A part of that is also which stories get elevated and which stories do we not hear?

Poka-Yio: So that's our job. Amplifying and making sense of the stories, trying to pick which one to use to weave our narrative. A work of art, a performance or other work couldn't be totally alien to the narrative of its given space.

Jackson: Let me ask you this. From your perspective, what is the use or role of narrative? Why is narrative important?

Poka-Yio: It drives people's lives. Individually, I work with archetypes—I believe it drives each one's life, the story that we say to ourselves. I am a creative, meaning, I try to make sense by being a creative. I believe it's not something intrinsic exactly. It's something that I keep saying to myself in my environment, so it's the perception of myself for myself.

Jackson: Would you say your narrative is your belief system?

Poka-Yio: Of course, this is very important. Narratives create the belief system.

Seifert: So you mean the narrative drives individuals' lives?

Poka-Yio: It drives individuals, a brand, a place, a whole country.

Eisenbach: [...]But narratives are not neutral.

Poka-Yio: Of course they are not.

Stults: It is important to consider which stories are elevated and which are suppressed. I think it is a battle of stories sometimes.

Jackson: What it raises for me is, Who gets to decide? And what are the mechanisms of this decision making? One of the challenges with creative placemaking is that there is never a blank slate. So, who gets to decide? If your intention with art or projects is to either represent a story or modify it or create a new one, what's the system in place to mediate what happens? What becomes the dominant or the public narrative?

What I would like to call attention to is "power dynamics." Power dynamics are inherent in all of this. You can talk about this at the individual or collective level.

There are identities which in a way are stories. Then there are identities which you may craft for yourself. So, I have a story about who I am, where I came from, how I operate in this world. As an African-American-Mexican woman in the United States, people will impose stories on me. Those are imposed identities. I think the question in the creative placemaking world and work is, How do you give more license to those stories that are organic to the people in the place and less license to the stories that are imposed? Stories that are imposed are not always completely opposite from the ones that are organic. But to recognize that there are organic identities and imposed identities and that they coexist and that you navigate that is really important. And it plays out in how you think about constructing your environment or how you think about creating the place where you want to live. But there are power dynamics inherent in that.

Susan: Even within the organic, even internal. [...]

Seifert: There are multiple stories within that are internal.

Poka-Yio: Multiple stories make a thing like identity. There is not a single story for a thing like identity. Each identity has different stories—this is important. For example, you can have both the illuminati and the separation. I choose any of these stories. The story that you chose is only the separation for example. You might have different communities that have different values. So each community has its story. Whose story do you give priority to? There different stories together. There are so many communities with different stories. There are even stories within stories.

Stults: I think that there are projects that can really pull out what is that imposed identity and that imposed identity is then actually

countered by the story they are telling.

Jackson: That is complicated. There is a project I have been involved in which is looking at the integration of heritage-based arts in a public health initiative. This is something with the Californian Endowment. That foundation has identified “healthy” places in low-income communities. The work is a very urban planning / environmental approach to health. So they look at social determinants of public health. Things like joblessness and gentrification are looked at as stressors that have an impact on mental and physical health. This project I am working on is looking at heritage-based cultural assets in that community. So, the rituals and practices are part of the heritage and it is important to see how those can be marshalled and support the health agenda.

So, there are some things that are great and fine. The idea of communing over a meal, the idea of mourning together, the idea of having ritual and understanding as part of healing. All that is consistent. But then there are some things that have to do with diet. There are dietary habits that are retentions and that are adaptive behaviors to colonialism and oppressive histories. In the African-American community, for example, there are dietary practices that are unhealthy that historically come out of the vestiges of slavery. You ate the scraps, you ate the fat, you ate whatever. So there are these adaptive behaviors that are not altogether positive, but that is part of the story and that is an organic story. So when you are trying to look at nutritional changes and practices, there is something in there. The work through the California Endowment has a strong focus on nutrition, so these dietary issues are addressed, but reckoning with that complexity can be difficult.

Eisenbach: But the power of that story is that, once they know that story, they might

be able to reject that part as not being part of the story they want to be part of.

Jackson: Right, but that involves rejecting a belief system. There are other things that are adaptive behaviors that are also complicated. So for example, mediators in a project may have an expectation that a community’s aesthetic choice should come out of a heritage-based narrative but sometimes the community doesn’t make a choice consistent with its “tradition”—they go rather for something more aligned with more generic consumer-oriented patterns. But who am I to say what the people should want? So really, who gets to decide?

Poka-Yio: That’s a good story, though.

Eisenbach: So motivation and agency are pieces of storytelling.

Seifert: It’s really interesting that in art, storytelling is a positive validating thing but in slang “Don’t go telling stories” means “Don’t go telling me lies.” So, it’s an adaptive behavior in the sense “I don’t want to get into trouble.” Who is the bad guy and who is the good guy in your story? The question is, Who gets to define the moral tale of the story? I just think it’s interesting that telling stories is so positive in art.

Poka-Yio: It’s cathartic. It’s not only positive.

Jackson: It’s neutral. I don’t assume a positive or negative. I mean it can be either. It’s value neutral. [WE: signs of consensus]

Seifert: It depends on how the story is used, the context and what the response is.

Eisenbach: Then there is the question of the response. For example: A story can be used to pit one community against another or debase one type of person over another,

leading to serious consequences in relation to territory and culture, such as loss of economic opportunity, de-legitimization of a culture, expulsion or even violence, which brings the question of response into the picture. So I think the motivation of the use of stories is important.

Poka-Yio: The motivation is such a potent thing for the mechanism of storytelling that it can be used for all wrong uses.

Eisenbach: Yes, exactly. So maybe that's the fundamental thing. The stories are potent.

Poka-Yio: So the responsibility is the number one factor. But in order for a story to make sense, it has to ...

Eisenbach: ...resonate.

Poka-Yio: It has to resonate, otherwise, it's nonsensical.

Eisenbach: So, if you put something there [in the community] and nobody values or believes in it, hopefully it will get knocked down. We want a place to be sustainable and people to connect to it. So you're saying there has to be a story that is connected to the place and that community that could build towards that condition.

Poka-Yio: Storytelling should not be patronizing.

Seifert: I am curious what the word social engineering means to you.

Poka-Yio: Placemaking is a way to police some kind of neighborhood or community. It can be a softer means of suppression.

Jackson: I think it depends on who is doing placemaking.

Poka-Yio: But who is doing placemaking? Who has the authority? Placemaking for

me can be even through a big disaster. The placemaking we are discussing here is that someone who decides to do something to a place. But we are talking about placemaking through some kind of body that...

Stults: They don't always have authority.

Jackson: It doesn't have to be an external hand. The kind of placemaking that I am interested in is not about the external entity coming in to impose something. It's about *unearthing what's there*.

Poka-Yio: By whom? Without any motivation? By themselves?

Jackson: By the people themselves.

Poka-Yio: Without any moderation?

Stults: A catalyst.

Jackson: Sometimes it takes a catalyst. There can be an external catalytic force. So, for example, the project that I was talking about in LA, the health project. The organization that was the catalytic force is the Alliance for Californian Traditional Arts. So they went in and started working with residents to develop a kind of survey for the residents to talk to the other residents about cultural treasures. So the residents were speaking to their peers about what is culturally important to them. That organization was a catalyst in a way to begin that kind of process from within. But that process was really held by that community.

Poka-Yio: Yes of course, the process was held by the community or the artist but who is doing the strategy to move there?

Jackson: The community is doing the strategy.

Eisenbach: You [referring to Poka-Yio] still think there is someone that is organizing?

Jackson: For me, placemaking can be understood as the recognition that places are constantly changing and that residents of those places have agency in those changes.

Poka-Yio: Very well put. But I think we should concentrate on our practice to expose the weaknesses that we have. That's why I brought forth the social engineering part. If we say: "No, the community is doing that..."

Jackson: It might not usually be the case. Of course it's not always the case.

Poka-Yio: It is wishful thinking.

Seifert: It is an ideal.

Jackson: It is an ideal, but I think there are examples. They may not be rampant, but that's what you shoot for. Shoot for the ideal.

Eisenbach: Ok. If there is someone in control—what are the challenges?

Seifert: What are the pitfalls and problems?

Poka-Yio: There are a lot of problems. And this is something nobody wants to touch.

Jackson: For me, the first pitfall is to pretend that there was nothing there. To come in and act as if it were *tabula rasa*, a white canvas.

Stults: There is this idea that if you put in some seating features, some water features and a sculptural object, you have just made place. When in fact, the place needed something else.

Eisenbach: So, in the end it is about meaningful place.

Stults: But there are a lot of nuances there. Like what is the conceptual experience

of the place and whether this place provides these physical features. Whether they are merely architectural features or more ritual-based.

Seifert: I wonder if you could think of narrative as a history of place...

Poka-Yio: ...and the people.

Seifert: If you say it is a place narrative, then its people's...

Poka-Yio: ...story.

Seifert: It's plural. It's stories. It's just returning to what you [WE: Eisenbach] have said about perceptions and responses.

Stults: Can we speak of the narrative as people's stories, as place-based? Can we think of narratives as the history of place?

Seifert: In other words: you are coming to a place and what you are getting is history and response.

Eisenbach: I would like to go back to the interrogation of the belief systems. So, an example in Halifax, Canada: in one of their parks, there is a big bronze statue of the first governor of Nova Scotia, Edward Cornwallis. He was also the person who invented scalping. So, a few years ago one of the faculty members of Dalhousie University, Richard Kroeker, made a project with students to challenge Cornwallis' reputation, where they built a mobile staircase that they brought to the statue. The project was called *Eye Level*². People could go up and look that guy in the eye and bring up the question again, Why is this person being celebrated? There are still a lot of Mi'kmaq people in the community. The story of Cornwallis as a British leader is present, but the horrible things he did are not. What was powerful about that project was that they brought

that other story to light and it started a citywide conversation. So there is the point of interrogating existing belief systems. This example raises another question: Is it possible to make something permanent for a place that remains meaningful to people over time?

Here is another example. Cleveland, Ohio is a city settled by many different immigrant groups. In the city is a public garden with gardens originally designed to represent each community and which were taken care of by each ethnic group. Today, none of those immigrant groups still live in that area. Who takes care of the gardens? Are they still meaningful to current residents? So there has been an interesting challenge about continuity and change, how to tell new stories and how to regenerate old ones. So the question is: How does it continue to be relevant? How to bring in new narrative to the old narratives. So the projects have to evolve.

Jackson: I always think that a healthy community has the capacity to both preserve and invent.

Eisenbach: That's very nice.

Jackson: So, there is room for the old and there is room for the new. And there is inherent tension in that, and that tension is a sign of vibrancy. It shows that people believe they have a voice and that they are represented. People tend to shy away from tension...

Poka-Yio: of course

Jackson: ...because they want it to be sanitized and easy, but in fact, the place that is alive has that constant debate and there are mechanisms that ensure that that debate happens.

Eisenbach: I think this is a great comment and talks to the potency of narratives.

Poka-Yio: Yes, a good narrative and a good character have to have antinomies within. Otherwise it's two-dimensional. Halifax is a very good example. How can we re-invent our figures and speak about intolerance, crimes and so on.

Eisenbach: But there are a lot of people who don't want to hear about that.

Seifert: Is a story always about the past or can it be about the future? Can you have a contemporary story? Is it a story if it is about the future? I am just curious about the way we use the word *story*.

Eisenbach: Storytelling can be about the question: Is it what you want to be?

Jackson: It is a way of rationalizing what happened.

Poka-Yio: Story is always about the past. And when it is about the future, it is about imagining the future. Sometimes, we talk about the future but it is a projectile, and it is also about the past. When we speak about the future it is predicated by the past. So the end of the story...

Jackson: is predicated by something else.

ENDNOTES

1. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). Young prefers memorials which form a dialogue with the spectator. "An ongoing debate about a memorial is itself the best memorial."

2. For more information, see the Rename Cornwallis Initiative website: www.renamecornwallis.com/.

THE NEW PATRONS. CURATING & PUBLIC AUTHORSHIP

ALEXANDER KOCH, BERLIN, GERMANY

Commissioning cultural goods is an influential tool to express a patron's interest, identity, and social position – a device that has always been, in any given culture, a privilege for only a tiny part of the population. The *New Patrons* program is the first of its kind to redistribute this privilege to potentially anyone, which is in line with the project of democracy.

New Patrons is an international network of independent cultural mediators who support engaged citizens on a local level to commission significant works of art as an expression of their needs and desires, conflicts and ambitions. The *New Patrons'* mediators engage in an exchange with local communities, listening to their issues and receiving requests directly from them, with an eye open for those who are seriously motivated and willing to take action. Using their competence and contemporary art network, the mediators recommend an artist to the community (in any genre, from music to drama, literature to sculpture, film to architecture) who they believe is well positioned to respond best to the people's needs. The mediators provide support to both the artist and the community in creating a commission statement, developing a project proposal, locating the requisite financial and logistic means and producing a new cultural good from their partnership.

With its methodology, *New Patrons* offers a new role model to curators and other cultural mediators and activists, allowing them a more responsible practice that comes to

terms with the ambition of public authorship and citizen participation in cultural production. And it offers artists the opportunity to step out of the museum and gallery system and make their creativity meet social realities. In fact, *New Patrons* creates art worlds where none existed before.

Here is an example: In 1997, the small French village Blessey was a desperate place with the few remaining farmers facing demographic and economic decline. In order to symbolically improve their situation, they decided to commission a public sculpture, and called upon mediator Xavier Duroux, who brought Remy Zaugg to the village. The experienced Swiss artist and conceptual artist harshly rejected the request as being naïve—but at the same time, proposed a project which would work on improving the structure and appearance of the village and its surroundings. In response, the community commissioned Zaugg to come up with a proposal, which resulted in a decade-long collaboration. The Blessey village and the surrounding landscape, along with the social relationships, the “public imagination” and the economic conditions of Blessey's inhabitants, were transformed and reshaped, creating a case study which many surrounding villages in the region later followed.

This is one out of 400 projects that *New Patrons* mediators have realized in 10 European countries over the course of 22 years, many of them in collaboration with artists of international renown. Today, the *New Patrons* program has spread beyond

Europe's borders to Nigeria and Cameroon, South Africa and India, and to one project in Louisiana, US.¹ Civil society development, encouragement and cultural self-determination meet in the program's methodology, offering creative new ways for social responsibility and emancipation, for public practice and sustainable placemaking, and for new cultural policies and investments.

Particularly in France, where the program was invented by the Belgian artist Francois Hers and kicked off by the *Fondation de France* in 1992, *New Patrons* has become an influential public stakeholder. It adds to the country's cultural production and diversity, and remains independent of the political administration while partnering on multiple levels with mayors, communes, associations, foundations and enterprises to create new cultural heritage commissioned by citizens from all social, educational and financial backgrounds.

ENDNOTES

1. At NUNU Arts and Culture Collective in Arnaudville, Louisiana—see more at: www.arts.gov/NEARTS/2012v3-arts-and-culture-core/defining-creative-placemaking



New Patrons project realized by artist Remy Zaugg in Blessey, France. (c) Alexander Koch

HOW A STORY BECOMES A PUBLIC VOICE

NOTES FROM A DISCUSSION WITH RONIT EISENBACH, MARIA ROSARIO JACKSON, SUSAN SEIFERT, KAREN STULTS, POKA-YIO.

Seifert: I was interested in the New Patrons Society and the projects that were so engaged in place for three, five, ten years. The duration of the projects communicates a lot. The structure is fascinating. When the artist comes, the artist is not at the forefront, not kind of planned in at, let's say, stage three. When we talk about art and place, places are years in making. That these projects were conceived and supported and that that's understood, that allows for engaged social transformation instead of engineering.

Eisenbach: It is a positive social transformation.

Jackson: It allows what is really important, community engagement.

Eisenbach: It is moving from observer to participant.

Stults: That duration creates the ability for the involvement to happen, the opinions to happen, the conversations to happen.

Seifert: (jokingly) And the enemies can come up. The bad guys can get re-defined.

Eisenbach: Poka-Yio, you talked about the way we tell our own stories that allows us to act in a certain way. That community, I have to imagine, had to create an ongoing story in order to continue to do this work...

Poka-Yio: Yes.

Eisenbach: ...to sustain. It's not a "story after," it is a story that they had to continuously reconstruct and continuously believe in and tell themselves not only what they are doing now but also what the potential is in the future.



New Patrons project realized by artist Remy Zaugg in Blessey, France. (c) Alexander Koch

RESILIENCE TO WHAT?

POKA-YIO, VISUAL ARTIST, CO-FOUNDER AND CO-DIRECTOR OF THE ATHENS BIENNALE

2014 Athens: a barrage of activities relating to public space led by private foundations is in full deployment. To name a few: a major international urban planning and architectural project to redesign the city center; a gigantic architectural complex that includes the construction of the new Opera House and the new National Library at the city's waterfront; a series of major international exhibitions and conferences on public space; even a museum exhibition for street art and a new festival on public art. Suddenly, public art and public space are in the spotlight and have become strategic targets for private institutions in a country that has been seriously injured by the economic meltdown, and in a city which is dotted by homeless people for the first time in its recent history.

It is interesting to notice the differences in the way citizens speak about their habitats compared to stakeholders and planners. It is in precisely these differences in narration that we can trace the biopolitics of urban planning. Often when speaking about urban planning, we use the word "strategy," and indeed the job of dealing with issues of territory has its background in military theory and practice.

Using a bird's-eye view, we can see that the crisis-led vacuum has resulted in a major disruption or reconfiguration in the Greek / Athenian "public terrain." This reconfiguration is clearly visible in the physical urban tissue as well.

With an unprecedented burst of energy, an

amalgam of initiatives, high and low, top and bottom, authority and fringe-led has been trying to fill this vacuum. Both the *überpatrons* and the "outlaw" graffiti artists have proven equally eager to offer their own take on what public space is or should be. Is it a time of rebirth for public space? What is it that makes the Athenian landscape so tempting for such endeavors?

In the aftermath of the huge demonstrations that shattered Athens, we witness an alarming shrinking of public space to the point of extinction. Simply put, there is little to no space for public gatherings. Athens is turning from a somewhat chaotic urban mess into a petite bourgeois backyard, complete with grass, flowers etc. And then, to top it off, we have the murals, a newfound trend that is so, umm, subversive, artistic, cute, perfect for a "selfie" background.

While the blackened outlines of burnt bus stops and trash bins from the 2008 and 2011 riots are still visible every here and there, bands of over-eager volunteers, like the acclaimed Atenistas, are doing their best to revamp the city neighborhoods with improvements like knitted tree quilts or rainbow-painted staircases. Gloomy Athens, with a new class of homeless, contrasts with an ever-cheerful army of new optimists, urban-make-up artists.

The battle for urban space is fierce. The defeat, retreat and shrinkage of the state in the public space are strikingly obvious. It is now almost exclusively limited to a beefed-up, fully-armored police force,

omnipresent 24 / 7 as in besieged Gaza. An ominous public performance of authority? Coinciding with the series of conferences on public art, we are losing vital public space. Are we in need of public sculptures or even more sophisticated public performances and art interventions? More murals maybe? What is in public art that still manages to capture the collective imagination of us urbanites? We have moved from banal statues and monuments to kitsch murals that mash up visual subculture. This mimics what the mix and match of tattoo design is doing, but is exploded in the gigantic scale of the city's complexion. This semiotic cacophony is the perfect tool for an Instagram-led visual (and real) gentrification.

Speaking of which, I was recently "followed" by an account named PublicArtOfDoha, whose account description read: "Public Art could be an important vehicle for making art an inseparable part of our daily life! Its identity totally depends on public's encounter with it." Sure, let's deprive ourselves of public space, of public interventions, public gatherings and demonstrations, let's fill our lives with "art encounters" enough to feed the gargantuan appetite of our smartphones and their cameras.

After all, public art has indeed always been a "vehicle" (kudos here for the well-put term) for authority. The less state authority operates in the public space, the more private authority seizes the opportunity to manage (art in) public space. The term "art," though, is mistreated here. The utilitarian nature of public art usually deprives art of

its potency or even its formal qualities. The bureaucracy, the committees, the public safety rules, the... common taste, all subtract from the importance of a public work of art. There are many examples of great contemporary public art, one could argue. For me, it is not the physical art object that is the subject of my objection. It is the suffocating public space, both physical and conceptual, that deprives us of a life free of pre-arranged, saturated "encounters," "points of interest," "spots." It is this dystopic Emirate-like future that lacks democracy and real public space but has plenty of mammoth public art sufficient to consume terabytes of our collective imagination.

In advertising, everything is counted in "impressions." Narrative is built with these impressions and consensus is built on the narrative as a result. The more an image is circulated, the more canonized the narrative becomes. Visual landmarks are mostly used to conceal, rearrange or silence the local narrative. This is a fabricated narrative that is imposed on the "native" narrative of the space and its inhabitants. Cities have stories, and most of these stories are about public unrest, about common fights for freedom and democracy. In fact, democracy IS the public space. In our over-eagerness to beautify public space, we ostracize democracy from it, or the other way around.



"Masks," an artist-led initiative that started as a silent demonstration prior to the "Indignados" uprising in Syntagma square in 2011.

Performance "The Beggars Opera," held at the former Athens Stock Exchange during the 4th Athens Biennale Agora in 2013, photo courtesy Marianna Katsaouni.

WHAT ARE THE MAKINGS OF A HEALTHY COMMUNITY?

MARIA ROSARIO JACKSON, PH.D.

When urban planners think of good places to live, they most often consider whether or not a place has quality affordable housing, high performing schools, adequate transportation, good public safety, access to good jobs and commercial amenities. They may also consider whether or not a community is impacted by environmental issues. They may even have some concern for adequate open space. More recently, with a focus on the concept of livability and propelled by a rejection of suburban homogeneity and sprawl, planners have also begun to think more about some less tangible qualities of place—whether or not it is distinctive or has character, if the scale of the community is conducive to walking and conviviality. Considerations in determining world-class cities echo some of these themes and also include the presence of iconic buildings, large cultural institutions and even considerations about the “brand” of a place—the allure of its external identity.

While all of the afore-mentioned is certainly important and worthy of attention, I submit that a key feature of a community that, for the most part, is consistently neglected in assessments of quality of place is consideration of the extent to which residents have the where-with-all to create and control their own narrative—their own story.

Around the world and throughout the ages in strategies to dis-empower people one of the first things to be stripped or controlled is a community’s ability to express itself authentically—to make art, lift its voice, ask questions and make sense of the world on its own terms. With this in mind, shouldn’t efforts to create healthy communities proactively address that which is so important and powerful that it must be stripped or controlled in efforts to subjugate? Isn’t a community’s ability to shape and express its story with authentic voice a key element of a healthy place to live? Too often, I think, this is a question that we don’t sufficiently interrogate. How does a community express its story—its history, struggles, frustrations, triumphs and aspirations? What does it need to effectively mourn together? Celebrate? Imagine? Why don’t we consider these elements more in our assessments of quality of place?

If we were to consider these issues alongside more traditional metrics related to housing, jobs, environmental issues, etc., what would we be tracking? For many years, I have pondered this question—what are indicators of a community that has the where-with-all to create and control its own narrative? A few easily determined questions or issues to track come to mind. For

example, does the community have sufficiently independent media? Are there working artists who are engaged with community issues and community members? Are there what I like to call “cultural kitchens,”—places where people come together to be generative and creative, to make culture and hash out who they are and what roles they play in the world? Is there evidence of preservation and innovation concurrently? Evidence of the vibrant tensions that concurrent preservation and innovation generate? After years of mulling this over and experimenting with how all of this might be measured, I have come to the conclusion that identifying the right metrics—the right things to track—and even collecting new data that hasn’t been collected before isn’t the hardest part of this work. The hardest part of this work is figuring out whose job it is to do something with the data once we have it. If we did have measures of a community’s ability to create and control its narrative, so what? What would we do with it? How would it change the ways in which we plan cities, make policies and allocate resources?

Who will step up and begin to change the old and fundamentally deficient paradigm by which we gauge our success?

OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

“What is the return on investment?” Within the field of art promotion, this question would only be asked with *chutzpah* by a traditional European, but is viewed as acceptable in an Anglo-American context. Using taxpayers’ money for social welfare, childcare, schools and sports elicits little hesitation, but when it comes to the arts, the standard response seems to be, why should public money be spent on the arts? As government deficits mount, the standard neo-liberal response has been to legitimize public funding by demanding evidence proving the deliverables of civil society and the arts in particular.

Predicting outcome and reporting quantitative indicators have become standard practice in the interaction between arts promotion’s donors and recipients. The most developed practice and language in this field can be found in the United States, so we took the opportunity to ask one of the most respected experts in the field of social impact studies in the United States to share his research and thoughts about outcome measurement. This chapter may serve as a starting point for arts communities on both sides of the Atlantic to position themselves in relation to this trend of subsuming even arts and culture to the algorithms of investment and trade. Our conversation ends with an afterthought about the fashionable term of resilience in the context of art and the city, and the role of art in placemaking.

MEASURING THE OUTCOMES OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

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As noted blogger Ian Moss wrote in a 2012 post: “Creative Placemaking Has an Outcomes Problem.”¹ I would correct Ian in only one respect: creative placemaking has *several outcomes problems*. In this brief presentation, I’d like to address several of these. Most of the presentation will focus on the problems of *conceptualization* and *measurement* of the ways that creative placemaking influences a place and the people who live in, work in, and visit it. In the conclusion, I want to raise the problem of creative placemaking *grantmaking*, which is critical because it is funders who are primarily pushing the creative placemaking agenda.

This presentation is organized in five sections: 1) the controversy over outcomes of creative placemaking; 2) the potential contradictions in its conceptual foundation; 3) how economic impact and creative economy approaches have addressed the question of measurement; 4) the social impact of the arts project’s approach to the issue; and 5) implications for policy and grantmaking.

1. THE CONTROVERSY OVER OUTCOMES

Ann Markusen, emeritus professor of urban and regional planning and public policy at the University of Minnesota, caused a stir in the arts and cultural communities in 2012 with a blog post (which eventually became an article) arguing that since creative

placemaking was a product of fuzzy concepts and bad data, the search for indicators was doomed to failure.² Markusen argued that creative placemaking was an example of a “fuzzy” policy concept, that is, “one that means different things to different people, but flourishes precisely because of its imprecision.”³ Furthermore, Markusen outlined a number of data problems which make it unlikely that a rigorous assessment of creative placemaking could succeed. These included:

- The dimensions to be measured are hard to pin down.
- Most good secondary data series are not available at spatial scales.
- They are unlikely to be statistically significant at the scales desired.
- Charting change over time successfully is a huge challenge.
- There are very few arts and cultural indicators included among the measures under consideration.

In a follow-up piece Ann Gadwa Nicodemus made a similar argument:

“Creative placemaking” and its “livability” and “vibrancy” outcomes are malleable concepts, open to interpretation. Although this has increased creative placemaking’s appeal to varied stakeholders, it has also left it susceptible to criticism—that it is vague and supports development and gentrification over social equity. As funders and

policy-makers develop indicators and metrics for measuring the success of creative placemaking projects, these fuzzy concepts are becoming less opaque and, therefore, even more open to challenge and contestation.⁴

Markusen’s blog caused widespread consternation among the advocates of creative placemaking, in part because the 2010 “white paper” she and Gadwa wrote for the National Endowment for the Arts was seen by many to be the founding document on creative placemaking. Perhaps not “fuzzy,” but Markusen and Gadwa’s definition of creative placemaking was certainly expansive:

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.⁵

One notable feature of their conceptualization was to emphasize the role of cross-sector collaboration and the absence of any clear spatial element in their definition. Indeed, in their view, “[p]lacemaking can occur at scales as large as a multi-state region and as small as a rural town or city neighborhood.” As I will suggest later in this talk, if we employ the idea of cultural

ecology as central to the arts and place, such a fuzzy idea of the spatial dimension is bound to cause problems.

I strongly agree with Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus: we need to work to clarify the conceptual foundation of creative placemaking, a task to which I will turn in the next section. I disagree, however, with Markusen's gloomy position on measurement. In effect, she argues that unless we can develop a complex multivariate model to test creative placemaking's effects, we should focus on more descriptive, qualitative data on creative placemaking in action. I share neither Markusen's optimism that complex multivariate models are the best way to understand the impact of the arts on communities nor her pessimism about developing credible and useful indicators of that impact.

2. POTENTIAL CONTRADICTIONS IN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING'S CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

I see three distinct conceptual foundations of the contemporary interest in creative placemaking in scholarly and professional literature: planning and architectural literature on the importance of streetscapes; economic ideas of undervalued urban resources; and the social capital literature on the spillover social benefits of social networks.

Placemaking

The placemaking literature usually traces its origins to Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte's influential attacks on modernist architecture.⁶ Jacobs and Whyte called on architects and planners to abandon grandiose ideas about urban design and to focus on how residents actually use space. In particular, they pointed to the importance of streetscapes in avoiding the "grayness" of

so many modernist urban developments. Their work influenced the rise of postmodern architecture and the "rediscovery" of a human scale in urban development.⁷ By linking place to the construction of meaning, placemaking literature had a lasting impact on urban development in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.⁸

Undervalued urban resources

A second source of creative placemaking ideas derives from economics. Sharon Zukin, in a number of influential books on culture and cities, has argued that the arts are critical to the *symbolic economy* that influences how buildings, neighborhoods, and cities are valued. As she notes: "public art installations, modern art museums, and festivals have become a pervasive part of cities' toolkit to encourage entrepreneurial innovation and creativity, cleanse public spaces of visible signs of moral decay, and compete with other capitals of the symbolic economy."⁹ Thus, for Zukin, placemaking operates at the very local level but has impacts that ripple out to the entire city.

In a more concrete approach, Neil Smith has sought to explain the process of gentrification through his *rent gap* theory. Smith argues that as the buildings on a particular parcel of urban land age, a gap opens up between the current value of the building and land and its *potential* value for redevelopment. The waves of urban displacement that we've witnessed around the world, for Smith, flow from property owners' efforts to capture this rent gap.¹⁰

Social capital

Social capital—the idea that one's social networks are a resource that one can "convert" into other assets (jobs, opportunities, etc.)—has been one of the more popular ideas in sociology of the past generation. Although Coleman and Bourdieu could be seen as its proper creators, the work of Robert Putnam

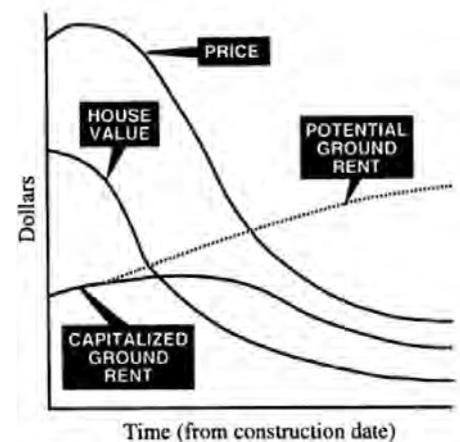


Figure 3.2 The devalorization cycle and the evolution of the rent gap

is generally credited with popularizing the concept.¹¹

In Putnam's work, forms of organizational participation—hobbyists, bowling leagues, cultural and community organizations—play an important role in creating social capital. Putnam goes on to argue that this social capital is then converted into stronger democratic institutions and ultimately more prosperous communities.¹²

Advocates of creative placemaking have sought to weave together these three strands to produce an appealing garment. Ideally, cultural entrepreneurs will pursue the redevelopment of under-used urban land to create appealing urban spaces that serve local residents, build social trust, and attract increasing investments. Advocates have been less likely to consider alternative outcomes. A tilt toward the interests of investors could lead to a flood of money (what Jane Jacobs called “cataclysmic money”), spiraling prices, and massive displacement. By the same token, an emphasis on placemaking and social capital could lead to the search for policy tools that encourage “gradual money” and slower economic change.¹³

This lack of attention to the potential contradictions in the conceptual foundations of creative placemaking has led to some missteps in its recent history. For example, ArtPlace America—a consortium of philanthropies and public agencies to support placemaking—published the following summary of its theory of change.



Although its grantmaking paid attention to the potential social capital benefits of investments, its public presentation seemed to veer toward advocating cataclysmic investment.

Rather than paper over the potential tensions within creative placemaking, it would be wise for advocates to acknowledge them. Certainly there is room for both investment- and social capital-driven policy making, but without a clear understanding of the possibilities and pitfalls, funders are likely to stumble and end up with outcomes that they neither anticipated nor wanted.

3. MEASURING IMPACT: SOME EARLY ATTEMPTS

Creative placemaking needs to work on clarifying its conceptual foundation, but at the same time be open to experimentation in developing methods for understanding its outcomes. With a clear set of concepts, one can continue to improve one's methods over time.

The most durable approach to measurement over the past generation has been the economic impact study. These studies try to estimate the total additional value created by a particular arts investment or the aggregate of all cultural assets in a city or region. The national advocacy organization Americans for the Arts has been the most consistent creator of these studies.¹⁴

The goal of the economic impact study is to produce a really big number, hopefully

one that ends with billions and billions of dollars. Yet, this emphasis on the really big number creates its own problems. It's great if the arts community thinks its number is big, but what if the number for casinos or scrap metal is even bigger? By reducing the arts to their economic impact, we are likely to lose the most important ways that the arts matter to a community.

Perhaps more worrisome, many economic impact studies ignore the substitution effects of investments in the arts, that is, how the money would have been spent in the absence of the arts activity. When all costs and benefits are accurately considered, the really big number is likely to be greatly diminished.¹⁵

In more recent years, the economic impact study has been supplanted by a focus on the creative economy and the creative class. Richard Florida, in a set of influential books and presentations, has argued that creative people, not large corporations, are the driver of economic growth and that cities should focus on becoming “creative class magnets” rather than waste resources luring corporations. The Florida boom spawned a variety of policy silliness, including the decision of one city to attract “creatives” by designating a “gay” district.¹⁶ This overreaching has sometimes obscured Florida's contribution in focusing policy on the complex economic, social, and cultural forces that shape a place.

One undeniable implication of Florida's work is its de-distributional impact. By arguing

that communities should divert resources to efforts that attract college-educated “creatives,” creative class strategies are likely to divert resources from programs that benefit less prosperous and less-cool residents of a city. At its worst, this approach confuses the arts’ potential for social development and social animation with its role as a hook for upscale consumerism.

Creative class strategies certainly seem to have influenced ArtPlace America’s vibrancy index that it proposed as a way to track the outcomes of creative placemaking. By defining vibrancy in terms of cell phone activity and a set of economic development indicators, ArtPlace found itself attacked from all sides, both for the flaws in its indicators and for ignoring the role of distributional issues and the threat of gentrification.¹⁷

ARTPLACE AMERICA VIBRANCY INDICATORS

The Indicators

The Indicators are divided into three board areas: People, Activity and Value. For the initial version of the Indicators, we have developed both the people and activity indicators. We are still gathering data on appropriate value indicators, which will be added later. The following table summarizes the ten indicators, their data sources, and their underlying geographic detail.

People Indicators

#	VARIABLE	SOURCE	GEOGRAPHY
1	Population	Census	block
2	Workers in Creative Occupations	ACS	tract
3	Employment Rate	LEHD / Census	block

Activity Indicators

#	VARIABLE	SOURCE	GEOGRAPHY
4	Indicator Business	DB	point
5	Jobs	LEHD	block
6	Walkscore	FrontSeat	point
7	Mixed Use	LEHD	block
8	Cell Activity	Spotrack	100m
9	Independent Business	DB	point
10	Creative Industry Jobs	ZBP	zip code

Source: ArtPlace America, accessed May 2014.
www.artplaceamerica.org/vibrancy-indicators/

ArtPlace America Vibrancy Indicators

In contrast, as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has formulated tools to support its Our Town initiative, it has done a much better conceptual job of integrating economic and social indicators. Unfortunately, as a federal agency the NEA must use existing indicators that are available for the entire nation. As a result, its list of indicators includes inadequate (if not misleading) measures of resident attachment and quality of life and less-than-ideal measures of arts and cultural activity. A recent validation study reached similar conclusions.¹⁸

INDICATOR		GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL
RESIDENT ATTACHMENT TO COMMUNITY		
C1	Capacity for homeownership (proportion of single-unit structures)	Census Tract
C2	Length of residence (median length)	Census Tract
C3	Proportion of housing units owner-occupied	Census Tract
C4	Proportion of housing units occupied	Census Tract
C5	Election turnout rate	County
C6	Household outflow (tax returns leaving)	County
C7	Civic engagement establishments per 1,000 population	Zip Code
QUALITY OF LIFE		
Q1	Median commute time	County
Q2	Retail and service establishments per 1,000 population	Zip Code
Q3	Violent crime rate	County
Q4	Property crime rate	County
Q5	Percent of residential addresses not collecting mail	County
Q6	Net migration	County
ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY		
AC1	Median earnings of residents employed in arts-and-entertainment-related establishments	Census Tract
AC2	Proportion of employees working in arts- and-entertainment-related establishments	County
AC3	Relative payroll of arts-and-entertainment-related establishments	County
AC4	Arts, culture, and humanities nonprofits per 1,000 population	Census Tract
AC5	Arts-and-entertainment-related establishments per 1,000 population	Zip Code
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS		
E1	Median home purchase loan amounts	Census Tract
E2	Median household income	Census Tract
E3	Active business addresses	Census Tract
E4	Unemployment rate	Census Tract
E5	Income diversity	Census Tract

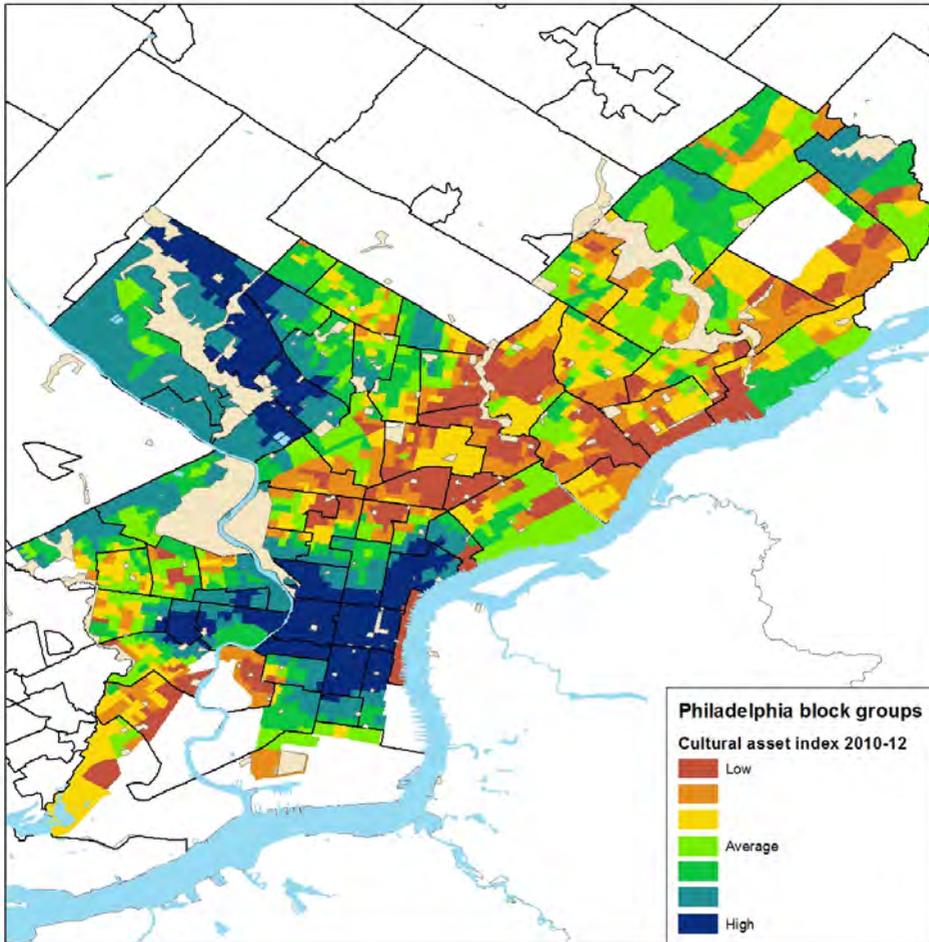
4. THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE ARTS PROJECT'S APPROACH

Over the past two decades, the University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) has worked to develop methods and data to study the ways that the arts and culture influence urban neighborhoods. Over the years, SIAP has documented the relationship between the arts and culture and a variety of social benefits, including child welfare outcomes, reductions in neighborhood conflict, and community economic development.

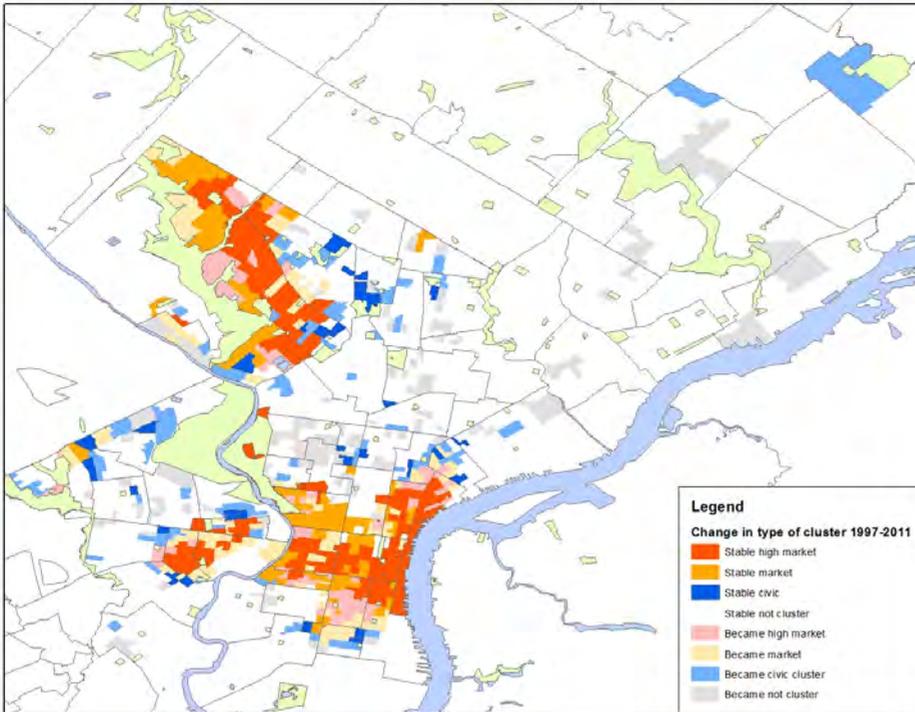
Space and place have been central to SIAP's conceptualization of social impact. We borrowed the idea of arts ecosystem from John Kreidler's seminal article and repurposed it with an explicit spatial meaning.¹⁹ In contrast to much research that takes individual organizations as the "unit of analysis," SIAP has seen how a variety of cultural resources—nonprofits, commercial firms, resident artists and cultural participants—interact in a particular place as defining its cultural ecology.

In Philadelphia and other U.S. cities, we've developed quantitative indexes of these different assets and combined them into a cultural asset index (CAI) that we estimate for small geographies (typically, a census block group of about 5–7 city blocks). We use geographic information systems to then link cultural data to other measures of social wellbeing in order to study the arts' social impact. We supplement our quantitative and spatial analysis with interviews and observational data to both generate hypotheses for testing and validate and give depth to our findings.²⁰

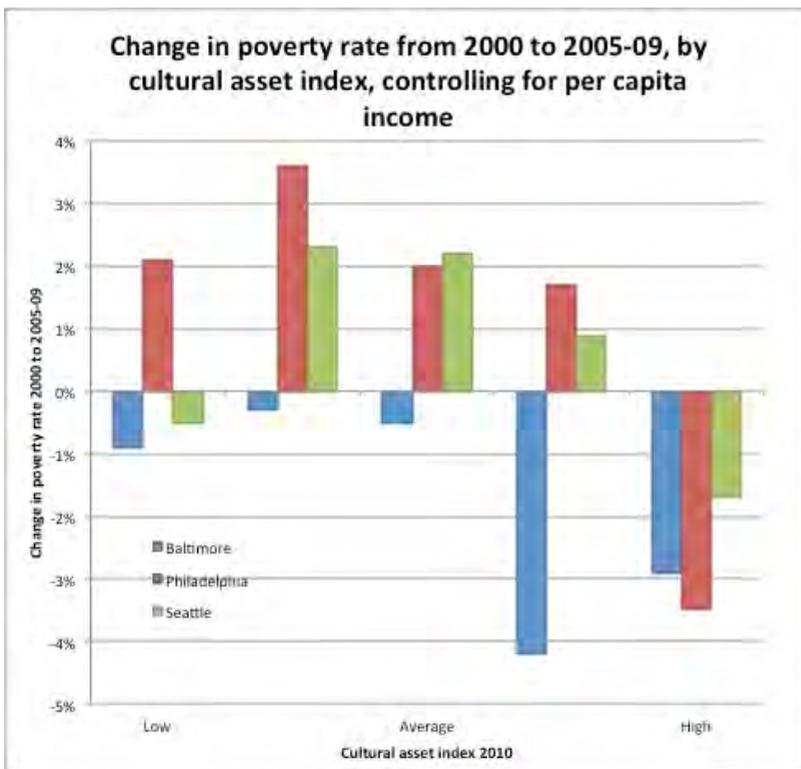
Source: Morley and Winkler, VALI Study (2014)



Over the years, we've come to realize that particular neighborhoods with very high concentrations of cultural assets—what we call “natural” cultural districts—were those most likely to demonstrate social impacts. What is more, we discovered that to understand the role of cultural ecology in low-income neighborhoods, we had to “correct” the CAI for a neighborhood’s income. Using both the CAI and corrected CAI, we created a categorization of “natural” cultural districts, including high market districts, with high scores on both the CAI and corrected CAI; market districts, with high scores on the CAI only; and civic clusters, lower income neighborhoods with high corrected CAI scores.



Types of cultural districts, Philadelphia, 1997. SIAP categorizes cultural districts based on their socio-economic status and concentration of cultural assets. High-market and market districts enjoy high socio-economic status, while civic clusters have many cultural assets given their lower socio-economic status.



Change in poverty rates between 2000 and 2005-09 by Cultural Asset Index 2010, controlling for per capita income, selected cities. During the mid-2000s, block groups with the highest concentration of cultural assets enjoyed declines in poverty while most other sections of these three cities saw their poverty rates increase.

In the past, we've been able to show the links between "natural" cultural districts and a variety of social and economic outcomes. These districts were more likely to experience declines in poverty, population growth, improved housing markets and rising property values than similar neighborhoods with fewer cultural assets. Furthermore, we found strong and durable connections between public health and child welfare outcomes and lower rates of neighborhood disputes in these sections of the city.²¹

Change in poverty rates between 2000 and 2005-09 by Cultural Asset Index 2010, controlling for per capita income, selected cities. During the mid-2000s, block groups with the highest concentration of cultural assets enjoyed declines in poverty while most other sections of these three cities saw their poverty rates increase.

Beginning in 2009, SIAP engaged the European literature on capabilities as one possible way to link its individual findings to a broader understanding of social wellbeing.²² Instead of looking at the relationship

between the arts and other factors will-nilly, the capabilities approach (CA) provided a conceptual grounding for these results in the idea of social wellbeing. This engagement was hastened by the publication of the Sen/Stiglitz report, which proposed the most fully articulated system for operationalizing wellbeing.²³ This year (2014), in collaboration with The Reinvestment Fund, SIAP has generated a multi-dimensional framework of wellbeing with thirteen sub-indexes and has begun to examine the connections between cultural assets and social outcomes.

DIMENSION	SUB-INDEXES	DESCRIPTION
Economic wellbeing		Material standard of living: income, educational attainment, labor force participation
Economic and ethnic diversity		Gini coefficient (measure of inequality), household income diversity, ethnic diversity (percent of residents not members of largest ethnic group)
School effectiveness		Current school proficiency scores, dropout rate, private school attendance
Housing burden		Overcrowding, housing financial stress, distance from work
Social connection		
	Institutional	Nonprofit organizations, geographic mobility
	Face-to-face connection	Trust, belonging, participation
	Cultural asset index	Nonprofit and for-profit cultural providers, artists, cultural participants
Insecurity		High personal and property crime rates, Human Relations Commission complaints
Health		
	Morbidity	Diabetes, hypertension, overall health condition, obesity
	Insurance, access	Low insurance rates, delayed care due to cost, use of hospital emergency rooms
	Social stress	High teen pregnancy, lack of prenatal care, high homicide, reports of child abuse & neglect
Environment	Environmental assets	Parks, trees, grass, underground streams (inverse), heat vulnerability
Political voice		Percent of eligible population casting ballots in 2010 and 2012

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	Correlations	
		B	Std. Error	Beta		Zero-order	Partial
Top 60 %	(Constant)	-0.530	0.025		0.000		
	Economic wellbeing	-0.821	0.050	-0.640	0.000	-0.547	-0.509
	Cultural asset index	0.098	0.026	0.144	0.000	-0.266	0.132
Bottom 40%	(Constant)	-0.133	0.092		0.149		
	Economic wellbeing	-0.615	0.071	-0.344	0.000	-0.384	-0.352
	Cultural asset index	-0.450	0.084	-0.215	0.000	-0.278	-0.228

Regression analysis of social stress with economic wellbeing and cultural asset index. Separate analyses for bottom 40 percent and top 60 percent of block groups on economic wellbeing index.²⁴

In our most recent work, we have investigated four of these sub-indexes—morbidity, social stress, school effectiveness, and personal security—for the city of Philadelphia. We've focused on the role of economic wellbeing (income, educational attainment, labor force attachment) and our cultural asset index in explaining variations in these social outcomes at the neighborhood level. The analysis produced several significant findings:

- High-income neighborhoods enjoy higher levels of social connection than poorer sections of the city.
- Despite this association, social connections have a stronger influence on other dimensions of social wellbeing in low-income neighborhoods.
- Within low-income neighborhoods, economic wellbeing has the strongest influence on social outcomes. However, the presence of cultural assets has a significant impact in mitigating social inequality.

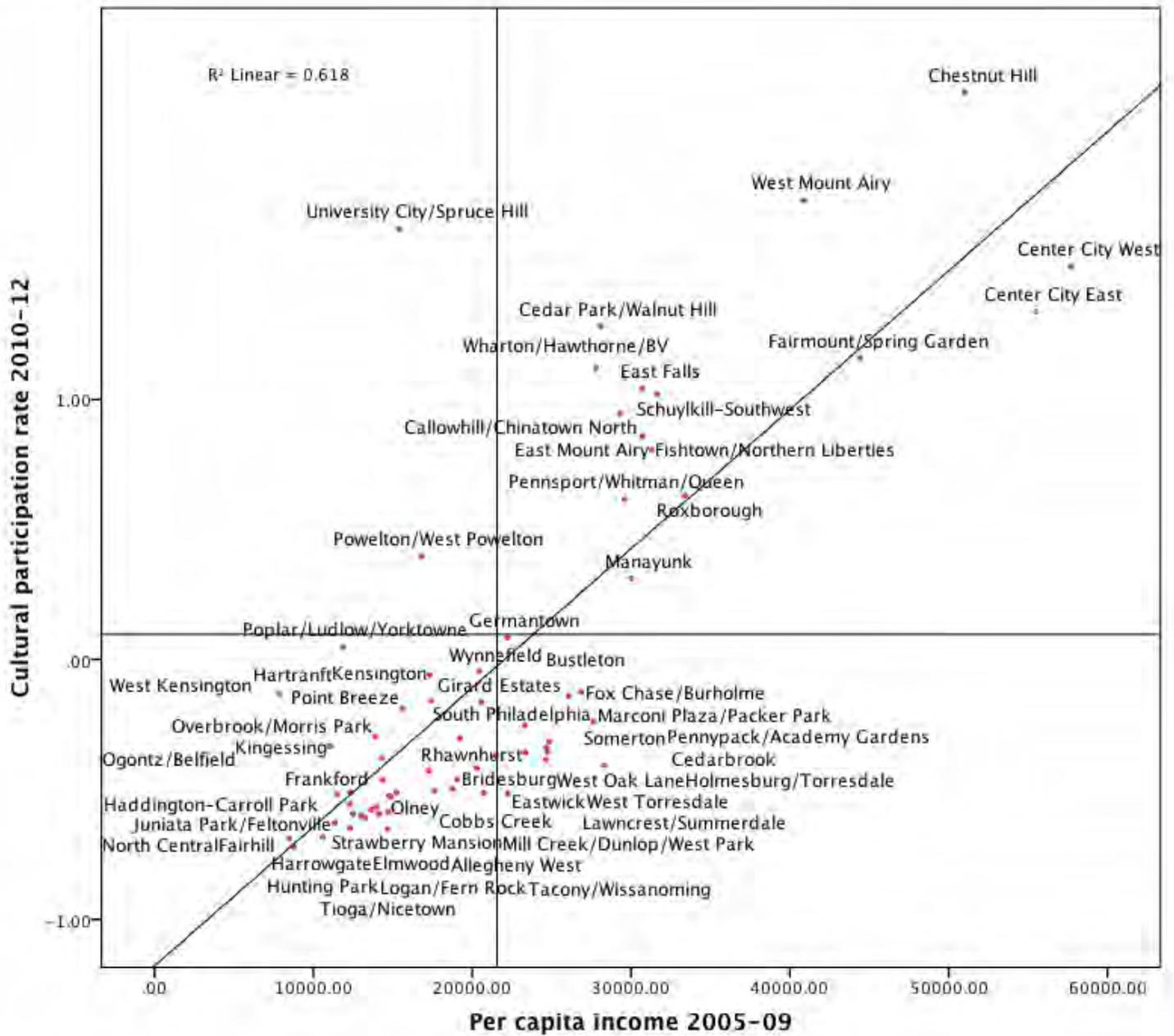
For example, in the case of social stress, which tracks birth outcomes, teen pregnancies, homicide deaths and reports of child abuse and neglect, economic wellbeing and the cultural asset index each had a strong association with lower rates of social stress in the poorest 40 percent of block groups. However, among the more affluent block groups, cultural assets were not associated with lower levels of social stress.

Our research on the role of culture as a dimension of social wellbeing, including development of neighborhood-based indexes of wellbeing, is still in its early stages. Over the next several years, we hope to complete the study of Philadelphia and replicate the analysis in several other U.S. cities.

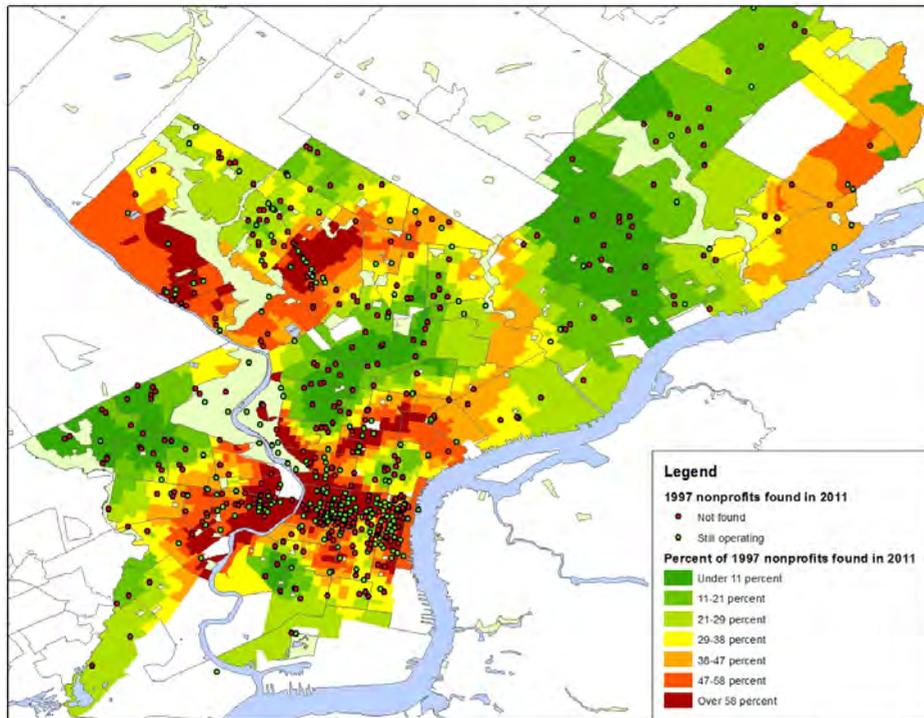
At the same time that we focus on the ability of the arts to mitigate the impact of economic inequality on low-wealth communities, we must be cognizant of the growth of inequality and its harm to cultural

institutions and engagement. Using data gathered over the past two decades, SIAP has been able to document the impact of rising inequality on Philadelphia's cultural sector. We have discovered, in particular, that cultural resources in the city are increasingly clustered in better-off neighborhoods. As a result, the correlation between the Cultural Asset Index and per capita income nearly doubled between 1997 and 2011.

One reason for the increasing relationship between culture and economic inequality has been a decline in cultural assets in Philadelphia's low-income communities. We can see this in two ways. First, we tracked whether cultural organizations that were present in 1997 still existed in 2010-12. We found that the "mortality" rate of cultural organizations was much higher in low-income African American neighborhoods in North and West Philadelphia than in white or diverse sections of the city. As a result, many of the civic clusters we identified in 1997 were no longer present in 2010-12.



Cultural participation rate by per capita income, Philadelphia neighborhoods, 2011



Mortality rate of nonprofit cultural organizations, Philadelphia neighborhoods, 1997-2011

The arts and culture continue to have a demonstrable impact on measures of social wellbeing in Philadelphia, particularly in the city's least advantaged areas. One wonders, however, if economic inequality continues to undermine the strength of cultural programs in low-wealth neighborhoods, whether the arts can continue to mitigate the effects of social injustice.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND GRANTMAKING

SIAP's approach to the study of social wellbeing and the arts has made clear contributions to the ongoing debate over the social benefits of creative placemaking. At the same time, our research raises some significant challenges to future efforts to formulate a place-based cultural and urban policy.

Conceptually, SIAP's work provides two lessons for future work. First, place matters. A conceptualization of creative placemaking needs to focus on how the arts can make a difference in urban neighborhoods and how those differences can have a ripple effect on the city as a whole.²⁵ This means that policymakers and funders need to conceptualize a neighborhood's cultural ecology instead of focusing on one type of asset.

Second, the capability approach's use of a multi-dimensional definition of social wellbeing provides a set of concepts that can be tested empirically. What is more, this will allow the cultural sector to link its interest in social outcomes to discussions and debates about these issues in other fields, including public health, housing and community development, and education.

Yet, incorporating these lessons into policy and grantmaking poses the final "outcomes problem" for creative placemaking. The concept of cultural ecology provides a solid foundation for creative placemaking, but it also poses a challenge. Ultimately, creative placemaking initiatives are about making grants to organizations. Even when these initiatives require collaborations between multiple partners, they are likely to include only a fraction of the "cultural assets" in a particular neighborhood. The gap between culture's impacts—based on the aggregate efforts of dozens of different organizations, informal groups, and individuals—and funding mechanisms—which identify specific organizations—will continue to pose a challenge to those who wish to link creative placemaking to a specific set of social benefits.

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NOTES FROM THE DISCUSSION FOLLOWING MARK STERN'S PRESENTATION

MARK STERN, JASON SCHUPBACH, ALEXANDER KOCH, CHRIS RYER, MARY MCCARTHY, FRED LAZARUS

Jason Schupbach: Can you explain that wishing that it all goes together is the wrong thing to be doing?

Mark Stern: What we are seeing on the ground is that in fact it is not all going together. That in fact we are finding places where creative placemaking is generating some of the negative impacts that people worried about. In particular from some of the national funders that by wishing it all goes together they are not paying sufficient attention to the places where it is not working, or where the social equity side of creative placemaking is falling by the way-side. That's my concern. ...

This is all in the context of increasing economic inequality across our entire society or transatlantic world. If we are not mindful of the fact that you have this overwhelming avalanche of economic inequality or the social side of things, the other stuff is taking over.

Alexander Koch: In Europe, we often discuss a dividing line. On the one hand, there is this ideology of improvement. For example, the creative sectors are pushed more and more into the direction of improving communities, improving cities, of being effective, etc. This sometimes tends to push the arts close to creative industries. We consider this a neo-liberal concept, which is

more about creating economies than creating a better society. On the other hand, we say that what art does which is crucially important for society is creating empathy, allowing solidarity for people who do not necessarily share the same reality. Art helps to take a perspective which is not necessarily yours. Art addresses the imaginary in society and this is an efficiency which you cannot measure.

Chris Ryer: Data collection is great, but survey data is where it's at. If you want to figure out how your work is affecting or benefiting a neighborhood or how people view it, you ask them. That's important for the funding community. We have done 45-minute surveys hundreds and hundreds of times to find out people's attitudes to their community, and there is no shortcut to that. You have to ask people in your community, and it needs to be built into your creative placemaking model if you want to have an accurate of how the community sees your work.

Mark Stern: Surveys are one of many tools we have for understanding neighborhoods. As we are seeing nationally, getting people to respond to surveys is getting harder and harder. In a neighborhood, the threat around response rate is that you'll only hear from the same 20 percent of residents, so you'll do a good job of knowing what's on their minds, but miss other parts of the

community. [...] We evaluated a mural project. If you look just at the mural, you can find all the social benefits about the mural in the neighborhood, but if you control/look at all the other stuff going on in the neighborhood, the mural did not stand out. But on the other side, funders are demanding to prove what you have done. But what we have to make sure is that there is access to cultural opportunities. This is actually where we are losing ground. The language of placemaking has the bad tendency to emphasize the outcome of processes, physical change over social change.

Mary McCarthy: Instead, what is interesting about the arts and artists is its potential role of enablement. Art-making is a process rather than a product. Art institutions and artists can enable societies to fulfill themselves rather than simply creating product.

Fred Lazarus: I wonder if it is possible to turn this conversation around to a different set of outcomes. We are actually using somebody else's evaluation to justify what we do. One of the things we are losing track of [in the present mode of measuring] is that one of the outcomes here is to support artists, to support the creative process for artists, to create opportunities for that to happen. We are looking at building and places that allow that to happen as an outcome. That never gets talked about. We are

always forced to evaluate whether the crimes goes down or real estate value goes up or something else. But maybe our goal here is that we really think that the intrinsic value of our artists and our artist community is worth something and [we are] creating these places which foster that. Looking at a neighborhood basis, that having at the streets and having artists as part of this community is part of what we stand for - just as we are in favor of diverse housing. We are talking about the value of the artist for this community. If we are creating an environment for artists - aren't they an intrinsic value that we should supporting?

Mary McCarthy: That is a more European philosophy: the patronage of the arts and public support for the arts. We (in Ireland) recognize the value of the artist. Local and city authorities recognize the value the creative sector brings so they create spaces for artists to work because they know it creates a more attractive environment, a more textured and more "disruptive" environment with low cost and minimum commitment. We want to disrupt the normal kind of business, the perceived usual ways of doing things. The fuzzy logic is actually important. We need to find a better way to articulate that.

MAKING A PLACE FOR THE ARTISTIC DIMENSIONS OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

RONIT EISENBACH, ARCHITECT / ARTIST; ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

*"Measure what you value and people will value what you measure."*¹

—Jason Schuppach,
National Endowment for the Arts

Based on the belief that meaningful places are likely to be developed over time by people with a diverse set of talents and perspectives, by its very nature creative placemaking endeavors to bring together a wide range of stakeholders, disciplines and funders from many sectors—planners, artists, economists, politicians, social entrepreneurs, government, arts administrators, community members, etc.—and convince them of its value. Each one desires some way to measure the impact of their "investment." It is not surprising that a variety of outcome assessment strategies have evolved that target the goals of these diverse groups while at the same time attempting to acknowledge their intertwining impacts on people and place, a concept fundamental to the overall effort.

As someone who identifies as an artist/architect and educator/academic rather than artist/arts administrator or researcher, I come at this from a slightly different perspective than many of the other participants: one focused on the character of the art and design itself, in addition to the instrumental role it plays. I am interested in how to evaluate or describe the quality of

the art and design work; assess a design's effects on people's sense of connection to place and their sense of themselves over time; and value the ability of artists and designers to reframe public discourse, challenge the status quo, spark imagination and build empathy through their work.

When the dimensions of art and culture were being discussed at the symposium, it often seemed that we were doing so in an instrumental way, with the focus of the work as a means towards another end. Perhaps this is due to how the symposium was structured, or perhaps it is because the majority of presenters were those who are "in the trenches," whose job it is to make this work happen – researchers whose work shapes policy and influences funders, arts administrators originally trained as artists who now serve as "risk translators" in local governments, and academic leaders who develop community engagement opportunities for young artists and faculty. There were a few other types of stakeholders and several artists or hybrid artists/architects like myself present, but the focus of our conversation rarely dwelled on the art, the artist, or the specificity of the cultural engagement experience.

In considering the measurement of creative placemaking outcomes, Mark Stern of the University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP)² argues

convincingly that there is a critical need to clarify creative placemaking's conceptual foundation, but at the same time to "be open to experimentation in developing methods for understanding its outcomes." With a clear set of concepts, he offers, one can continue to improve one's methods over time, but without them the measurement effort will be adrift. Stern describes how the current practice of creative placemaking has evolved from three distinct conceptual threads: "planning and architectural literature on the importance of streetscapes; economic ideas of undervalued urban resources; and the social capital literature on the spillover social benefits of social networking."³ I wonder, however, if it might be possible to acknowledge and weave in a fourth thread? This strand could include the literature and critique of art, design, and aesthetics, and articulate the value as well as the challenges of public reception, engagement and cultural participation into the conceptual structure of creative placemaking.

Creative placemaking assumes change. It assumes that the places that are targeted for these projects are in transition, or should be, and that an important role of each project is to stimulate change, to guide change, to be part of change. This implies the dimension of time in addition to space. It pre-supposes that people agree that change is desirable, which may or may not be the case. But as

noted by many other symposium presenters, territorial, cultural, economic and community change can by its very nature be contested and divisive. While celebrated by some, specific creative placemaking assumptions and activities may be viewed quite differently by others. Even thoughtful interventions and public processes that explore and try to address questions such as “change for whom?” and “of what kind?” and involve community members as active participants can lead to unwanted tension and unintended consequences. Yet though messy, complex and filled with challenges, this work can also bring to the surface important issues that stimulate public debate and engage residents in managing and being part of such transformation. One local example comes to mind.

In Washington, DC’s Anacostia neighborhood, a predominantly African-American community, there are many efforts underway to stimulate investment, build cultural assets, and employ art to “transform” the neighborhood⁴. Some long-term residents have voiced their concern that these efforts unfairly tagged their community as “blighted” and “underserved,” and may result in the undesirable effect of accelerating gentrification, ultimately resulting in a loss of local culture and economic diversity. Others argue that this work celebrates the existing community and brings welcome attention to a community that could greatly benefit from new investment and a narrative shift. How do these different perspectives, values and stories of impact relate to one another? An enriched understanding of these complex dynamics and tensions via studies focused on comparing creative placemaking efforts in communities and sites-in-flux may help us to better assess the effect of the specific artistic choices that were made as well as their short- and long-term impacts.

So, how might we better understand the complex socially-engaged, place-based, temporal and artistic dimensions of creative placemaking efforts on a community and site-in-flux? Perhaps we can adapt SIAP’s concept of a “cultural ecology” which, rather than focusing on the impact of an individual institution in isolation, enables us to better understand the complex, dynamic and networked set of relationships among culture, economy and social impact. Looking closely at a constellation of comparable case studies could help us better understand the specific experience and complex impact of these targeted interventions.

Let us imagine that the cultural ecosystem of a city is horizontal, like a puddle, and creative placemaking efforts are analogous to vertical temporal borings focused on nodes within this ecosystem. Ideally we would identify a series of interventions to study that would focus on different aspects of the “cultural ecology.” We could benefit through comparison, thereby learning what conditions and what types of art are more likely to generate different kinds of impacts.

It may now be possible to undertake this work as we have two new databases that can serve as a starting point for this effort, the National Endowment for the Art’s Exploring Our Town,⁵ and the ArtPlace America website⁶, as well as the archives of the Public Art Review⁷ and the Americans for the Arts Public Art Networks’ newly launched archive.⁸

As we move ahead with this endeavor, I look forward to new research and future conversations that explore the importance of celebrating, assessing and valuing the art and cultural activities in-and-of-themselves in concert with the work’s much-discussed instrumental worth. Both contribute to the creation of meaningful places, civic discourse, and healthy cities over time.

ENDNOTES

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Aldana is the community arts manager for the Creative Alliance. She organizes and builds communities through creating art and

corralling performances that share the cultural traditions of new and long-standing neighboring families and generations of immigrants and refugees of southeast Baltimore. Aldana also coordinates a leadership force, Communities for All Ages, with the Southeast CDC. Maria received a leadership award from the Latino Provider's Network in 2013 for her "dedication, commitment and passion to better the lives of Latino families in the City of Baltimore." Aldana founded and directed Bmore Cultured, a grassroots organization led by inner-city teenagers who connect issues of global poverty, race, and identity between Baltimore and Nicaragua.

WILLIAM B. GILMORE II



Gilmore has been the Executive Director of Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA) since 2002. He directed the merger

of the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Art & Culture to form BOPA, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. It coordinates high-quality special events, festivals and arts programming that stimulate communities economically, artistically and culturally; inspires and promotes literary, performing and visual arts, and artists; celebrates Baltimore's rich, diverse heritage while enhancing the quality of life and sense of community for all

residents; forges partnerships that make Baltimore a premiere visitor destination; manages cultural and historic attractions; and generates positive local, national and international publicity about Baltimore.

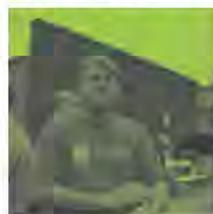
KRISTA D. GREEN



Krista D. Green is the Cultural Affairs Assistant Director at the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA), the city's arts council and producer of major civic events. As

a managing member of the Cultural Affairs Department, she is directly responsible for developing, approving and monitoring program budgets; overseeing departmental programs and projects, including School 33 Art Center, a contemporary art center in south Baltimore; assisting in the development and support of arts institutions, programs and individual artists through workshops, grants, fundraising, etc.; and serving as a liaison to Baltimore's cultural organizations and Arts and Entertainment Districts.

CHRIS RYER



Chris Ryer began working in community development over 25 years ago as an intern at the Baltimore City Department of

Planning. After ten years as a community planner with the Department, he moved to the non-profit sector, where he worked for the Trust for Public Lands and a community-based organization in southwest Baltimore. In 2002, he returned to the Baltimore Planning Department, where he served as Chief of Comprehensive Planning and Deputy Director. He has been the Director of the Southeast Baltimore Community Development Corporation since 2007.

BEN STONE



Stone, a native Baltimorean, is a city planner, designer, and occasional artist. Ben most recently served as an architectural designer/

planner for the Baltimore Development Corporation, working on revitalization projects in Baltimore's Middle Branch, Central Business District, and Station North. Joining Station North Arts & Entertainment, Inc. in August of 2011, Ben now serves as the organization's third Executive Director, as well as a board member of D center Baltimore, and a member of the Central Baltimore Partnership's Steering Committee. Ben is a frequent guest critic and lecturer at Baltimore universities.

SPECIALISTS FROM THE E.U.

RAFAEL DE BALANZO-JOUE



Rafael de Balanzo-Joue has a Master of Arts in Design & Communication from the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. He has

been visiting professor at several universities in Spain, France and Belgium, and is currently a research fellow at the Institute of Sustainability of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona Tech, in the field of Urban Resilience. Professionally trained as both an architect and a landscaper, he works as a consultant for the council of Barcelona to promote urban regeneration and resilience in different neighborhoods in the city and as an advocate for citizen and local community participation in urban design projects. As an urban activist, Rafael de Balanzo provides and participates in innovative action learning instruction and placemaking through engagement with local communities. He is the president of the environmental and educational community-based non-profit organization Amics del Bosc Turull in the Gracia District of Barcelona.

CAROL BELL



Carol Bell has worked in the cultural sector for twenty years. Her current role as Head of Culture and Major Events at Newcastle

Gateshead Initiative (NGI) is to develop and deliver a vibrant festivals and events program that contributes to the cultural life and reputation of NGI. From March 2005

to March 2010 she was Head of Program Development at NGI. Here she was responsible for overseeing the management, delivery and evaluation of the culture10 program, a £50m curated program of exceptional cultural events and festivals across the North East region. Prior to working at NGI she was Program Manager for the Northern Rock Foundation and worked for one of the UK's first independent Arts in Education Agencies. In 2010 Bell was recognized as one of the most talented and ambitious women in the UK cultural and creative industries. She defines culture in the broadest sense and sees the interface between arts, sports and science of particular resonance to Newcastle Gateshead.

BARBARA HOLUB



Barbara Holub is a Vienna-based artist. She studied architecture at the Stuttgart University of Technology, Germany. In 1999, she

founded transparadiso with Paul Rajakovic, a transdisciplinary practice in between architecture, art, urbanism and urban intervention which received the Schindler grant from the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles in 2004, and the Otto Wagner Prize for Urban Design in 2007. Holub is a member of the editorial board of *dérive* magazine for urban research in Vienna, and on the advisory board of *Art & the Public Sphere Journal* (UK) and *WCPUN* (New York). Holub is assistant professor at the Institute for Art and Design, Faculty of Architecture, Vienna University of Technology, where she directed the research project "Planning Unplanned—Towards a New Positioning of Art in the Context of Urban Development." and organized the 2012 conference "Planning Unplanned—Towards a New Role of the Urban Practitioner" (www.urban-matters.org).

TUULA ISOHANNI



Tuula Isohanni studied architecture at the ETH Zurich (the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) and has years of experi-

ence of working for her own architectural practice and for architects in Finland and Switzerland. She has actively participated in architectural competitions and has been involved in building projects. Between 1999 and 2001, she worked as a researcher on a joint project of the Academy of Finland and the Arts Council of Finland entitled "Urban Adventures", which explored the interaction between art and research. She received her doctorate in art in 2006 with her thesis "Arabia. Arabia. Artistic activity in planning a housing district, case Arabianranta, Helsinki". From 2000–2012 she worked as an art coordinator in the Arabianranta area in a joint project of the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture and the city of Helsinki. Isohanni has developed the artistic concepts that form the basis for the 87 works of art that currently exist in that residential area. Isohanni is an active lecturer and has published articles, brochures, and books on the art in Arabianranta. Currently she works as the art coordinator of Aalto University.

ALEXANDER KOCH



Alexander Koch studied visual arts in Dresden and Leipzig and taught at the Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig. He has worked as

a curator and editor on various exhibitions and publications. Koch is a frequent lecturer and author. The dropping out of art, the economic and institutional transformations within the art world, and the societal

significance of artistic practices have been main concerns in his theoretic writings. In 2003, he co-founded the Galerie Jocelyn Wolff in Paris and in 2008 KOW, a Berlin-based gallery specializing in socially-oriented art. Since 2008 Koch has been co-initiator and chairman of Neue Auftraggeber, the German branch of the NEW PATRONS program. This international network for cultural mediation and self-organization offers citizens the possibility to commission art works of all genres as a response to their social concerns. In 2013, Koch started New Patrons initiatives in Nigeria, Cameroon and South Africa, followed by one in India in 2014, supported by the Goethe-Institut and in cooperation with local project partners. Their aim is to combine civil society development with cultural self-determination.

MARY MCCARTHY



Mary McCarthy is Director of the National Sculpture Factory in Cork, Ireland. Previously, Mary held the roles of Executive Arts

Manager for Dublin Docklands Development Authority, Deputy Director and Programme Director at Cork 2005: European Capital of Culture as well as Programme Manager of the Artist Work Programme at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. She has worked in commercial galleries in New York and Dublin. Mary currently sits on the boards of The Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and the Cork Film Festival, and serves as an expert advisor for Culture Ireland, Ireland's state agency to promote Irish arts abroad. She has also acted as an expert panel member for the selection of European Capitals of Culture for the European Commission and as an advisor to bidding Capital of Culture cities. In her current role, she is an advocate for the role of art and artists in city and placemaking initiatives.

POKA-YIO



Poka-Yio was born and lives in Athens, Greece. He is a visual artist and curator, co-founder and co-director of the Athens Biennale.

His work revolves around the opposite poles of attraction and repulsion. From painting to gastronomy and from coaching to curating, Poka-Yio uses narration as his main creative tool. Poka-Yio's work includes the co-curation of the first Athens Biennale, "Destroy Athens," 2007 and the third Athens Biennale, "Monodrome," 2011. In addition, Poka-Yio uses narrative in his work as a consultant for major brands and coach for executives and individuals. He was part of the team that organized the 1st Place-Branding Conference in Greece. Poka-Yio focuses on questions such as: How can one turn negative issues in urban ecosystems into powerful narrative elements that can rejuvenate and strengthen a city and its brand? He looks at the paradigm of the Greek crisis and the birth of the Athens Biennale.

HOST & ORGANIZERS

WILFRIED ECKSTEIN



Wilfried Eckstein has been director of the Goethe-Institut Washington since 2012. He studied German and English Literature

and Languages, History and Political Science at Heidelberg, Princeton, and Frankfurt/Main. He has been with the Goethe-Institut since 1988. Previous positions took him to Moscow (USSR), St. Petersburg (Russ. Fed.), Bangkok (Thailand), and Shanghai (PRC). From 2009 to 2012, Eckstein was involved in organizing seminars, panels and pilot projects with a focus on urban development and sustainability in China. The American history of creative placemaking appeals to him as a rich resource of experiences, creative responses and management of urban crises in economic, social and ecological aspects.

FRED LAZARUS IV



Fred Lazarus IV was president of the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), from 1978 until 2014. He led the evolution of

MICA into a globally recognized leader in transformative art and design education. Lazarus has been a national leader in the advancement and integration of the arts, education, and community development. He served as founding chair of both Americans for the Arts and the National Coalition for Education in the Arts, and has also chaired the Maryland Independent College and Universities Association, the Arts Education Committee of the American Council for the Arts, and the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance. While Lazarus has overseen innovations in academic programming that are global in scope, much of his work has also been focused on improving the cultural and economic vitality of Baltimore. Prior positions included serving as senior aide to the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, working as president of the Washington Council for Equal Business Opportunity, and two years in the Peace Corps.

CONFERENCE OBSERVERS

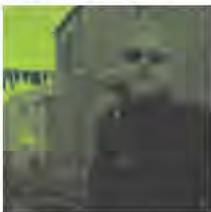
RONIT EISENBACH



Ronit Eisenbach is an Associate Professor of Architecture and Curator of the Kibel Gallery at the University of Maryland. Through

teaching, curating, exhibition design, and the construction of temporary site-specific environments and performances, Eisenbach explores how the perception of subjective, invisible, and ephemeral objects affects understanding of place. Her installations have been exhibited throughout the United States as well as in Europe and Israel and her work has been published widely. Eisenbach is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and Cranbrook Academy of Art.

MICHAEL STANTON



Michael Stanton received his Masters in Architecture from Princeton University. He organized and directed 12 2-to-4-week architectural

workshops in Beirut, Barcelona and Venice and has conducted study-abroad programs for the universities of Miami and Minnesota, and for Tulane University, where he taught throughout the 1990s. Subsequently, Stanton was Chair of the Department of Architecture and Design at the American University of Beirut where he lived for a decade. He has taught at diverse art and architecture schools, including the University of Texas, the Royal Danish Academy and, most recently, the University of Maryland, Maryland Institute College of Art and Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid.

SUSAN C. SEIFERT



Susan Seifert is co-founder and director of the Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP), a research group at the Penn School of

Social Policy & Practice. She received her M.Sc. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Toronto. Seifert has over 20 years' experience in planning, policy, and research for cultural, economic, and community development in Philadelphia and New York City. The relationship of artists and the arts to urban resilience, neighborhood revitalization, and community wellbeing are central to SIAP's inquiry. In Baltimore and other U.S. cities, Seifert and her research team have explored aspects of all four symposium topics: (1) measuring social and economic impacts of cultural clusters; (2) types of "natural" cultural districts, their evolution and prospects; (3) processes of community building and network construction, given an inclusive definition of arts and artists; and (4) a policy framework that incorporates both intrinsic and instrumental values of the arts.

ELENA LOMBARDO



Elena Lombardo is a Ph.D. candidate in Economics, Management and Communication for Creativity at IULM University (Milan, Italy), where

she earned an MA in Arts, Markets and Cultural Heritage. Her PhD research is focused on the themes of culture as an engine of local development processes, cultural active participation, arts and community engagement and creative cities. From May-October 2014 she was in residence as a visiting scholar at the University of Maryland.

SPECIALISTS FROM THE U.S.

SAMUEL HOI



In July 2014, Samuel Hoi became president of the Maryland Institute College of Art. Hoi is an advocate for arts education

and creative professionals in social, economic, and cultural advancement. Previously as president of Otis College of Art + Design, he shepherded new academic initiatives involving innovative partnerships and community engagement, as well as the annual Otis Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region. Formerly dean of the Corcoran College of Art and Design, Hoi created a visual arts outreach program that received a National Multicultural Institute Award and a Coming Up Taller Award from the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities. Hoi has served on many boards and panels, including chairing the board of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design from 2004 to 2009. Currently, Hoi serves on the boards of The James Irvine Foundation and the Strategic National Arts Alumni Survey Project, is a member of the Los Angeles Coalition for the Economy and Jobs, and is immediate past chair of the board of United States Artists. He holds an honorary doctorate degree from the Corcoran College of Art and Design, and was decorated in 2006 by the French government as an *Officer of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques*.

MARIA ROSARIO JACKSON



Maria Rosario Jackson's expertise is in comprehensive community revitalization, systems change, the dynamics of race and ethnicity

and the roles of arts and culture in communities. She consults with national and regional foundations and government agencies on strategic planning and research. President Obama appointed Jackson to the National Council on the Arts in 2013. She is on the advisory board of the Lambert Foundation and on the boards of directors of the National Performance Network, the Alliance for California Traditional Arts and LA Commons. She also advises a number of national and regional projects focusing on arts leadership, arts organizations and changing demographics and arts and health. Jackson is adjunct faculty at Claremont Graduate University, where she teaches courses on cultural policy and the role of arts and culture in communities.

Previously, for almost 20 years, Jackson was based at the Urban Institute (UI), a public policy research organization based in Washington, DC where she was a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center and founding director of UI's Culture, Creativity and Communities Program. At UI, she led pioneering research on arts and culture indicators, measuring cultural vitality, the role of arts and culture in community revitalization, the development of art spaces, and support systems for artists.

GÜLGÜN KAYIM



Gülgün Kayim joined the City of Minneapolis in 2011 to develop a new role for the creative sector. Previously she was the Assistant Director of the

Archibald Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship Program, served as the Public Art on Campus Coordinator at the Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota and consulted extensively on site-specific performance, public art and individual artist professional development with various arts organizations in the Twin Cities. Kayim is also a practicing interdisciplinary artist, and co-founder of the Minneapolis based site-specific performance collective Skewed Visions, which was awarded the 2004 City Pages Artists of the Year. She is a core member of the international artist network Mapping Spectral Traces and Theatre Without Borders. Her artistic work has been recognized through a number of local and national awards, grants, residencies and fellowships including a Walker Art Center artist residency, Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship, and a Shannon Institute Leadership Fellowship. Kayim holds an MA in Intercultural Performance from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, an MFA in Theatre Directing from the University of Minnesota and a BA (Hons) in Theatre and Film from the University of Middlesex, London. She also teaches on the affiliate faculty in the Department of the Theatre Arts and Dance at the University of Minnesota.

LYNNE MCCORMACK



Lynne McCormack serves as the director of Art, Culture + Tourism for the City of Providence, Rhode Island where she has worked for

over 16 years. McCormack has successfully transitioned the agency from an office of cultural affairs to a community and economic development model. She forged a series of partnerships that have resulted in a destination branding campaign, a summer workforce development program for youth, citywide arts festivals and increased funding for artists and organizations through federal and city economic development funds. A leader in community engagement, McCormack and her staff spearheaded a cultural planning process that included over 2,500 participants and was endorsed by the city council as part of the city's comprehensive plan. Recognized as a leader in the field of creative economic development, McCormack is regularly invited to speak about the City of Providence's cultural infrastructure at conferences across the country, and has served on the Local Arts Agency panel for the National Endowment for the Arts.

JASON SCHUPBACH



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. Prior to his current position, Schupbach served as the

Creative Economy and Information Technology Industry Director for Massachusetts. In that job he focused on the nexus of creativity, innovation and technology to grow the innovation industries cluster in the state. He formerly was the director of ArtistLink, a Ford Foundation 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.

MARK J. STERN



Mark Stern is Kenneth L. M. Pray Professor of Social Policy and History and Co-Director of the Urban Studies Program at the Univer-

sity of Pennsylvania. His scholarship covers United States social history, social welfare policy, and the impact of the arts and culture on urban neighborhoods. He is co-author of *One Nation Divisible: What America Was and What It Is Becoming*, which examines the history of social inequality during the 20th century, and *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis*. Stern is co-founder and Principal Investigator of the Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP), a policy research group at Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice. SIAP conducts research on the role of arts and culture in American cities, with a particular interest in strategies for arts-based revitalization. His monograph *Age and Arts Participation: A Case Against Demographic Destiny* was published by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2011.

ERIN I. WILLIAMS



Erin Williams is the Cultural Development Officer for the City of Worcester, MA and the Executive Director of the Worcester Cultural

Coalition, the unified voice of the Greater Worcester, MA creative community. The Coalition is a unique public private partnership which shines a spotlight on the creative activity produced in the region and supports creative placemaking through such initiatives as the WOOcard, Worcester Wayfinding signage and public art program and Creative Confabs. Under Williams' leadership, the Worcester Cultural Coalition was presented Massachusetts' highest award, the Creative Economy Catalyst. Worcester was named as one of the top 20 creative cities in the U.S. in Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Williams co-orchestrated a citywide residency resulting in a creative citymaking plan known as the Worcester Way. Williams currently serves on Governor Patrick's Creative Economy Council, and is a founding director of MASSCreative, a board member of Destination Worcester, and a participant in Americans for the Arts Local Arts Agency Executive Leadership Forum, in conjunction with the National Arts Policy Roundtable.

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