



ARTISTS AT THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TABLE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS



RESOURCE GUIDE

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↑ *Love, community and forgiveness for Harbor Light* by Erin Sayer and Bianca Janine Pettis, 2017. Commissioned by Southwest Airlines and Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District. Photo courtesy of Bianca Janine Pettis.

↓ *Social Seed* by Gurpreet Sehra with NorWest Co-op Community Food Centre, 2017. Commissioned by the Winnipeg Arts Council. Photo courtesy of KMA.



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FOREWORD

By Cristyn Johnson, Americans for the Arts

At Americans for the Arts, we deeply believe in the power and importance of integrating artists and arts organizations into discussions about public policy, civic systems, and community development efforts. Artists and arts organizations that bring their creative processes to the table to address social issues can exert transformational power, disrupting norms of whose stories are told because of who has access to self-expression. By inviting voices not generally represented by dominant stories and power structures into the civic realm, artists and arts organizations challenge status quo positions of law, policy, or social interaction. Their work also can provide a foundation for grassroots organizing; lend inspirational images, messages, and meaning to sustain the work of movement building; enhance public understanding of complex and often divisive issues; and animate the public processes, spaces, and dialogue through which we make change happen in community.

As communities face ever-changing demands and increased need for creative problem solving, interest in arts-based solutions to community development issues grows among both arts and non-arts stakeholders. In response, many of our nation's 4,500 local arts agencies have evolved from arts-centric to community-centric organizations. Americans for the Arts has created the Artists at the Community Development Table program to deepen the capacity at the local level to pursue creative work to address core community issues. This program will deliver direct and indirect educational trainings and resources that are needed to encourage deeper, varied, and sustained partnerships among artists, arts organizations, and other sectors.

In Opa-locka, Florida, the arts have been used to revitalize a community devastated and divided for years by literal barriers put into place in the 1980s to control drug traffic and reduce crime. They remained in place long after they were actually needed, standing as a constant reminder of the city's troubled past. In St. Louis, Missouri, a vacant lot in a blighted neighborhood has been transformed by artists into a safe, central gathering place where primarily arts-based activities are tied to addressing the realities youth face, such as high crime, poverty, and lack of opportunities for creative and autonomous expression. Hundreds of examples such as these can be found in communities across the country.

This *Resource Guide* is meant to be a primer on how to be successful in arts-based community development work. In addition to containing general information that will help artists and arts organizations engage in this type of work, it also contains an array of case studies to serve as examples and inspiration.

For more information on Artists at the Community Development Table program, as well as the many other educational resources and training opportunities that Americans for the Arts offers, please visit our website at AmericansForTheArts.org/ACDT.

Americans for the Arts

Americans for the Arts seeks to build recognition and support for the extraordinary and dynamic value of the arts and to lead, serve, and advance the diverse networks of organizations and individuals who cultivate the arts in America. It believes that in connecting your best ideas with leaders from the arts, communities, and business that we can work to ensure that every American has access to the transformative power of the arts. Americans for the Arts recognizes that the arts are integral to the lives of all people and essential to healthy, vibrant, and equitable communities across the nation.

Statement on Cultural Equity

To support a full creative life for all, Americans for the Arts commits to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, equitable nation.

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INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE TABLE

By Roseann Weiss, Pacia Elaine Anderson, and Con Christeson

ARTISTS. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. TABLE.

This guide was created to provide usable information on how to deepen the local capacity for arts-based community development. It will outline ideas on how to bring creativity and new ways of thinking about collaborating across sectors to the conversations between local arts agencies, organizations, artists of all disciplines, and their communities. While there are complexities and many layers to working in this way, this guide aims to connect threads and make those complexities visible. Reading this guide and participating in training on this topic will hone skills and build knowledge. You may come away with more questions than answers, but that's good. In fact, that is the purpose.

Who are *we*? What do we know?

Americans for the Arts invited the three of us to guide you in creating this pathway to the arts-based community development table. There are many books, articles, websites, and blogs about arts-based community development (see Sources and Resources in each section for a sampling). This particular guide is based on our collective knowledge and a collective 75 years of work in this field. We met a couple of times a week at a small round table covered in a cloth with a mandala pattern. We co-conceived, co-wrote, and told stories to each other. This is how we know how to work—in collaboration.

*“The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions
which have been hidden by the answers.”*

—James Baldwin, Author

Roseann Weiss is a creative strategist who worked at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis for 14 years. In this position, she was the guiding force for the Community Arts Training Institute, which has prepared more than 300 people to work in collaboration. Artist Pacia Elaine Anderson works with words as her medium. She is a spoken word poet, visual artist, teaching artist, and a founder of Cherokee Street Reach, an arts-based children’s summer camp in a south St. Louis neighborhood. For two decades, community artist Con Christeson, in partnership with Peter and Paul Community Services, has gathered with groups of people who are working their way out of homelessness or who are living with HIV/AIDS. Christeson also is a professor of communications at Webster University. Together we offer you this guide to create your own table, to be invited to other tables, and to make connections.

This is a guide that implies a big picture focus: terms, tools, and territories; events, investments, and documentation; agency for artists and engagement by, for, and with communities; and multiple levels and viewpoints from multiple perspectives.

As the title implies, it is at the table where you begin and how you have these conversations—with the issues and opportunities in front of you, and mindful of the time and intention it will take to do what works.

The *Resource Guide*—a conversation of sorts—has four sections of equal importance and urgency in terms of efficacy and best practices for building and maintaining a creative and culturally competent community. It provides a methodology that considers equity in community culture, artists and agency, partnership and collaboration, and resources for all of the above. Mostly, it gives you a way to tell your story in a meaningful way to each other, in real and surprising ways. You will notice that many of the stories we tell are based in St. Louis. We wanted to tell stories we knew well and had permission to tell. You will also notice that the lessons of these stories are universal.

FRAMEWORK



SECTION 1 COMMUNITY + CULTURE + EQUITY

The *Resource Guide* begins with terms and concepts that will lead you to develop creative processes and shared content. As you sit down at the table, how do you experience and enable listening and language and get comfortable with authentic engagement and relationship building? Why are you here? Who is here? Who should be here? How do you name your resistance and resolve conflicts? How do you invite someone to the table and create a sense of trust and empowerment? How do you identify the scope and direction of what *your* community calls development? How do you respect and honor all the stories?



SECTION 2 ARTIST AGENCY

There are many chairs around your table. What does it mean for an artist to be there? How do artists learn to join in, to show and tell, take a risk, or invest time, talent, and commitment? How do you educate yourselves across sectors about the value of artists' perspectives, creativity, and experiences? How can creativity help you reach across the street or across community sectors? In what ways do you nurture confidence in your influence while driving out fear of the unknown, of failure, or of success?



SECTION 3 PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Equity and creativity meet to form the parts of the whole. Who and what do you bring to the table? What do you take away? How do you balance equity when both partnership and collaboration are in play? As you lay the groundwork, find ways to check assumptions and promote understanding, early and often. Agree to and manage outcomes and evaluation criteria. Navigate this map of relationships, actions, and expectations—even as you draw it.



SECTION 4 ASSETS AND SUPPORT

Yes, it's about money and new models for distributing funds equitably. It's also about social and creative capital and the validity of the process. It's about using the arts to cross sectors to nonarts disciplines, fields, and institutions. It's *arts and...* When you reflect on what happened, what did not happen, or what could happen, you add value to the process. Hold yourselves to rigorous standards of honesty and inclusion. Go broad and deep with documentation tools. Be realistic as you evaluate and analyze. Appreciate the imperfect but intrinsic impact of what you do. Go forward to the next project with what you know and who *you* are.

GLOSSARY: SHIFTING THE LANGUAGE

*Artists.
Community
development.
Table. Chairs.*

*People. Places.
Projects. Stories.*

*Tips. Tools.
Techniques.
Practice.*

*Imagine. Move.
Sit. Hear. See.*

All fields have specific meanings for terms and words. Below is a brief list of terms found in this *Artists at the Community Development Table Resource Guide* and what their meanings are in the context of this guide. As you become immersed in work with communities, you may add to the depth of these meanings. How do your partners around the table use these terms? What is your shared language?

Accountability: An awareness and understanding that true collaboration and partnerships are respectful and honor the agency of the people with whom you are working.

Agency: The capacity, condition, motivation, and inspiration to initiate action.

Asset mapping: Information about available strengths and resources that can help a community find solutions to addressing its needs.

Capacity: The potential or ability of an individual or group to accommodate, plan, execute, or move an idea forward using its own resources, skill sets, and knowledge base.

Co-conception and co-creation: A process of collaborative visioning and the execution of ideas and actions around a particular theme or project. This includes the notion of collective ownership.

Collaboration: The coming together of people who work collectively over time in order to reach goals while aware of the unpredictable but complementary nature of the creative process.

Community: A unit of social organization based on some distinguishing characteristic or affinity (for instance, proximity, geography, belief, ethnicity, profession, or orientation).

Community art: An artistic expression of the people in a specific place and time that springs from the imaginations and creativity of those people.

Community artists: People with creative skills engaged in work within specific communities or in collaboration with those communities to make art that has relevance or is expressive for those communities. The work is co-conceived and co-created.

Creative placemaking/placekeeping:

This term could be defined as a multifaceted, arts-based design and planning process for creating interesting, useful, transformative, vibrant spaces *with* the people who live there.

Cross-sector: A form of intentional intersection of organizations, institutions, industries, or other groups which can benefit from arts-based collaboration or partnerships.

Cultural competency: The ability to integrate and recognize cultural practices and traditions in communities. Understanding of and respect for people and organizations of different cultures and for the complex ways in which a particular community expresses what is important or not important to it.

Cultural equity: The values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in policy development, artist

support, nurturing of accessible venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.

Culture: The customs, environment, preferences, and practices of a group that encompasses the distinct spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and material traditions of a people or individuals of society. The people create the culture.

Developer: The nonprofit organization or for-profit corporation or representative engaged in acquiring, building, or renovating real estate and neighborhood or community development projects.

Development: The act or outcome of intentional, equitable growth over a period of time, including a *with, not for* approach that is rooted in long-term investment and commitment. Development also can include the process of generating a mutually agreed-upon community identity.

Diversity and inclusion: The creation of expansive room for awareness of differences and personal divergences, and the acceptance and accommodation of multiple identities and equal access.

Documentation: The process of preserving experiences, histories, stories, activities, and changes over time for the benefit of future evaluation, reflection, problem-solving, and record keeping.

Engagement: An interaction that connects people and does not assume privilege, hierarchy, or outcomes.

Inquiry: The engagement with a specific group or community around a topic of shared interest. This may include a line of questioning, conversation, activities, or the recording of oral histories.

Integration: The incorporation of specific arts-based ideas or processes into a larger nonarts context, practice, professional field, or industry.

Intersectionality: The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple descriptors combine or intersect.

Invitation: To invite or be invited into collaboration or partnership by a group with an awareness of the group's stated needs, shared goals, and considering one's own perspective, experiences, and potential biases.

"I believe in the power and mystery of naming things. Language has the capacity to transform our cells, rearrange our learned patterns of behavior, and redirect our thinking."

—Eve Ensler, Playwright/Performer/Feminist/Activist

Language: The complex ways in which various sectors, fields, communities, or cultures express what is or is not important to them.

Local arts agency: A private community organization or local government agency that supports cultural organizations, provides services to artists or arts organizations, or presents arts programming to the public.

Methodology: A creative approach to gathering and disseminating information, and the process by which that approach is applied.

Partnership: An agreement to share assets to achieve a mutual goal.

Perspective: The world as seen from a particular view. What a participant may bring to the *table*.

Process: Planned or spontaneous action with gradual changes over a period of time that leads to a final outcome.

Social capital and creative capital: What an individual or a group can bring to the *table* as a resource. Resources can include networks, contacts, relationships, skill sets, creativity, and more.

Social impact: A discernable and measurable change in a community as a result of an organization, project, or program.

Social practice: Artmaking that is based on political or issues-based ideas, is specifically rooted in an individual artist's work, and focuses on interaction and social discourse.

Sustainability: The capability to survive and thrive over an extended period of time with limited degrees of struggle.

Table: Metaphorically *the place where it happens*. The intersection where ideas, needs, goals, challenges, opportunities, plans, and frustrations meet.

Transactional communication: A model of communication in which communication is sent and received in turn. With this model, both the sender and the receiver are viewed as communicators, and their roles reverse each time sending and receiving occurs. A transactional perspective on interpersonal communication process—verbal and nonverbal. It is a *process*, the elements of the process are *interdependent*, and the participants are *mutually influential*.





SECTION 1

COMMUNITY + CULTURE + EQUITY



1

“If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.”

—Shirley Chisholm, US Representative and 1972 Presidential Candidate

Framing and Setting

An abandoned asphalt-paved lot becomes a park named for Love. A little house in the middle of a block where the children walk home from school turns into a creative community gathering space. A homeless shelter cafeteria doubles as an arts studio for a dozen men who tell their stories and make their way back home. Each of these transformations was facilitated by the ingenuity and creativity of artists who chose to work in those communities.

Each of these artists were integrated into their community through both large and small interventions. They participated in what is often called *arts-based community development*, which can be defined in multiple ways. Here it includes the design and planning processes to create transformative spaces with the people who are there. It is the outcome of intentional change over a period of time that includes a *with, not for* approach and is rooted in commitment to the artistic expression of the people in specific places. Arts-based community development comes from the imaginations and creativity of the people, in collaboration with the artists.

In this section, we examine how you identify the scope and direction of development in your community through the arts. How do you respect and honor all the stories of any community? And what roles do art and artists take as they join the community development table?

First Question: Who’s At the Table?

Before you begin to plan arts-based community development, look around and see who might be at this metaphorical table. When you think about the community development table, imagine a kitchen table, not a formal boardroom table. The kitchen table metaphor calls to mind a familiar and comfortable time and place. Space and information are shared here. Discussions, agreements, and disagreements take place here. Plans and decisions are made here.

The community development table seats a number of individuals representing many cultures, ideas, preferences, purposes, and functions. There may be individuals from more than one intentional or discrete community at the table, along with those from parallel communities (such as ethnic, cultural, or faith groups), all of whom will be asked to state goals and intentions. The table is the place where all goals, needs, and purposes intersect. The people make the culture, and the kitchen table is where it all happens. What you cook up and serve reflects your awareness of who is there and why you are there. You may want to think about who made the table and who invited you there.

You may need to ask other questions. Whose table is it? Who made this table?

The *Resource Guide* calls out a particular community, one that is comprised of artists. Artists create visual, oral, or performing works. They are creative thinkers and problem solvers, big picture and detail-oriented observers as well as active listeners and effective speakers. Because the diversity of preferences and authentic presence at the table is essential, artists are most effective when they are seated from the very beginning. Creativity is not a last-minute invitation. Art and its processes are not after-dinner mints. Art and creativity bring energy early and often to the building of relationships and to the direction of the group process itself.

Local arts agencies are another group essential to the process. What is the role of the local arts agency at the table? Is it the convener? If you do the convening, how do you issue the invitation? What is the power dynamic at the table? Who or what agency or community is taking the lead?

These questions can be asked of other groups. The goal is to intentionally work across sectors and intersect with organizations, institutions, industries, and other groups, so each can benefit from collaboration or partnerships with artists and arts groups. All have resources and capital to bring to the table.

The notion of *arts and...* can include many civic sectors.

Economic Development	Military
Education & Youth Development	Political Activation
Environment & Sustainability	Prisons & Rehabilitation
Health & Wellness	Public Welfare
Housing	Transportation & Infrastructure



1

The members of these sectors may be the conveners or creators of the community development table. How do artists and members of the creative sectors also get to the table? Take time and build these relationships. Approach community development as a creative act.

To help people better understand the long-term and wide-reaching social impact of the arts, Americans for the Arts has produced the **Arts + Social Impact Explorer**, an online primer that draws together top-line research, example projects, core research papers, and service/partner organizations on 26 different sectors, all in an effort to make more visible the powerful, wide-reaching impact of the arts. For more information on the intersection of arts and other areas, visit AmericansfortheArts.org/socialimpact.

Folding Chairs at the Table and Cultural Competency

At this point, consider these questions: What is community development? What are its essential components?

Community development can be defined as a multifaceted design and planning process for creating useful, transformative, vibrant spaces with the people who live there. It can be the act or outcome using a *with, not for* approach of intentional, equitable growth that is rooted in long-term investment and commitment over time. It also can include the process of generating a mutually agreed-upon community identity. Recently, community development that includes the arts has been identified as *creative placemaking* or *creative placekeeping*, although such development is not only about place. A place can have many layers of communities that are intricately interwoven with meaning and histories.

“*Placekeeping* [is] not just preserving the facade of the building but also keeping the cultural memories associated with a locale alive, keeping the tree once planted in the memory of a loved one lost in a war and keeping the tenants who have raised their family in an apartment. It is a call to hold on to the stories told on the streets by the locals, and to keep the sounds ringing out in a neighborhood populated by musicians who perform at the corner bar or social hall.”

—Roberto Bodoia, Manager, Cultural Affairs, City of Oakland, California

A key component of facilitating impactful community development is *cultural competency*. Again, who is at the table? Who makes up the community in which the development is proposed? Who has a chair? Who speaks? What are you doing there? Cultural competency

includes the integration and recognition of cultural practices and traditions, as well as understanding and respect for the language of the people—the complex ways in which a particular community expresses what is important or not important to them.

Take for example the Bertha Knox Gilkey Pamoja Preparatory Academy, a public school in St. Louis that practices an African-based approach to education. Rooted in the *Nguzo Saba*—or the Seven Principles often associated with Kwanzaa—this school strives to “teach our children our greatness, and our truth of our beauty and the grace of our magnificent ability to rise above adversity.”

Although the notion of *culture* is apparent in the aesthetic of the school—from the walls adorned with pictures and quotes of Africans and African-Americans to the traditional printed garments of the administrators—culture extends beyond these material elements to, literally, the language that is used. When entering a room, every student, instructor, and visitor asks permission at the door and awaits a response, in the language of Kiswahili—a Bantu language of the Swahili people. As the language most spoken across the African diaspora, Kiswahili is spoken throughout the day, as both a teaching tool and as a means of preserving customs in questioning and responses. Teaching artists and arts program coordinators are expected to honor these traditions not only through the use of simple Kiswahili phrases but to incorporate these traditions into their lesson plans. All the artists working with Gilkey Pamoja Prep learn and honor the culture of the school.

Communities at large express what is important to that community in many ways, both visibly and not so visibly. Carlton Turner, in talking about the work of Alternate ROOTS, referred to the understanding of *dark matter* within the multilayered culture of communities. “Many astrophysicists believe that the universe is held together by a substance called dark matter—it cannot be seen or measured but makes up the majority of the mass of the universe.... Dark matter is the stuff that holds a community together—like history, memory, and relationships. It is impossible to measure and is often overlooked in development initiatives. However, without this dark matter, a community cannot function.” Who around the community development table holds the *dark matter*? Diversity looks different in each community. Who is missing from the table, and how do you know that?

If you start with respect, recognition of complexities, and relationship building as the essential elements of cultural competency, you can examine how to communicate these ideas. And how to listen.

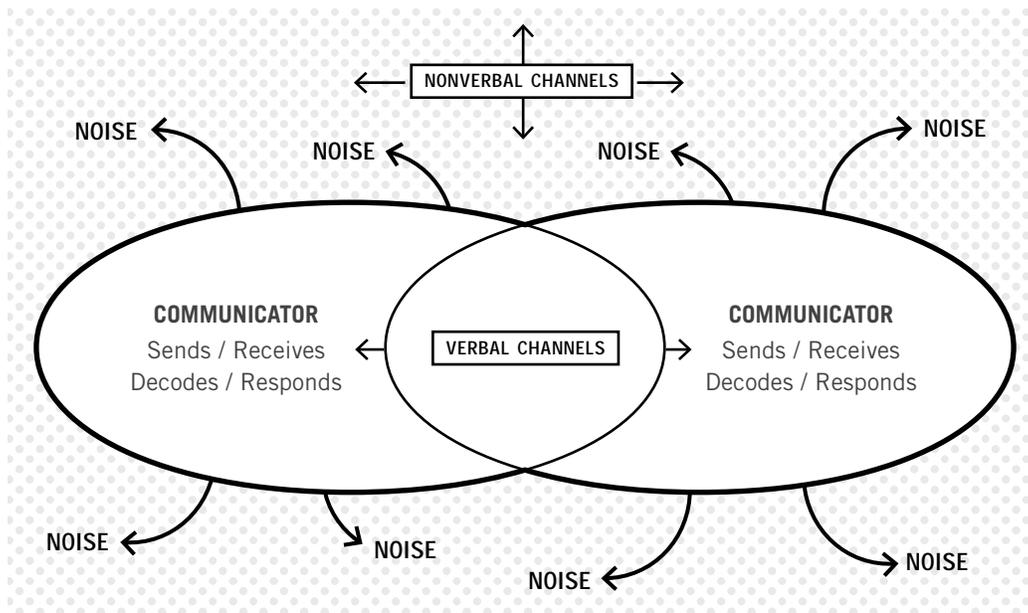


IMAGE 1.1

Transactions. Perspectives. Assumptions.

Communication is not “I speak. You listen.” Communication does not start with “I.” Communication is reciprocal and continuous. Consider the communication model, Transactional Communication (see Image 1.1). It illustrates the multidirectional aspects of communicating through what you might think of as the noise that surrounds you. This noise can include the assumptions you make and your own perspectives or bias.

Who do you see when you look around the table? How do you see them, and how do they see you? Assumptions—your noise—become the barriers. When you name your resistance and let go of your assumptions, you open yourselves to others’ perspectives. Each of you has a perspective from which you see the world. Each participant brings that perspective to the table. This can be a barrier or an asset. How can you turn away from *us and them*? Can you turn the noise of your assumptions into understanding the perspectives of the others around the table? Communication is not a focus group. Communication is relationship building by listening.

Intentionality + Humility = How to Listen

Listening vs. hearing vs. understanding. Listening is actively processing what you hear—with attention, focus, and intention—and with the goal to deeply and empathetically understand. Listening is about being present without judging. It is about asking questions, not giving answers.

“I hear, I forget. I see, I understand. I do, I remember.”

—Chinese proverb



The Chinese symbol for listening is a combination of the symbols for the eyes, the ears, the heart, and the gift of undivided attention (see Image 1.2). As illustrated in the Transactional Communication model, the success of listening is impacted by many kinds of noise that have nothing to do with sound waves or the function of the ear.

IMAGE 1.2

Many listen not to understand but to respond. You think of what you will say, while forming judgments and bringing your assumptions and biases (more noise) too close to the table. You are afraid that you will run out of time. You might not be the quickest or the smartest. You might be forgotten or overlooked altogether. It is with listening that you can see the wisdom of one of statistician W. Edward Deming’s points for business management: Drive out fear. Without fear, there can be empathy, increased understanding, openness to new ideas, creative presence, and process toward productivity.

A seat at the community table where collective development is at stake requires focus, good questions, commitment, and trust in the power of relationships. All of the above can be said to begin with the verb *to listen*.

Whisper it with us: *Listen*.

Community engagement vs. inquiry. Community engagement is not an event. It cannot take place from behind a desk or a locked door. It is not a survey or simply the asking of questions. Community engagement is an active time and relationship-based process that goes beyond inquiry and research. It is how you tap into and amplify many voices. As artists, as local arts agencies, as those involved in community development—you all ask what your mission is and why you are here. The answer to that will be varied and multiple.

You all have heard protesters in the streets chant, “This is what democracy looks like!” Imagine if everyone involved in community development could chant together, “This is what participation looks like! This is what community looks like! This is what transparency looks like!” You have nothing to lose but your fear.



1

Storytelling and Storykeeping

When you listen at the table, the richness and depth of people's stories can be the guides to community development. When working with communities, you hear and share stories that are essential for understanding. Listening to stories is where community development is a creative act. Artmaking is storytelling. Stories can change the picture, alter the narrative, make or break the relationships in a community. Again, begin and end with the questions.

How do you get to the stories? If you think about your own stories, learn to listen to and respect the stories of others.

What is *your* story? To whom will you tell it? When and why? Your story is almost certainly part of a complex series of stories—current and past—about your family and friends, your job or calling, your beliefs and values, your status and resources. Others might only see the current story, but you know all of the chapters and characters.

Based on the task or set of tasks, where does the collective story start? When does the table become *your* story? Your stories may qualify you to participate, in either a leadership or supportive role. How will those at the table learn about and integrate your skills and preferences?

Someone might try to take over your story and change it or finish it or even co-opt it for their own purpose. Then what?

The stories of many communities have faced this challenge. Colonialism, economic power, and social privilege are all story changers in many countries and communities. Power can impress, repress, or suppress. Power might want you to forget some of your story, start the story in a different place, or convince you that there is a better story altogether. Then what?

Each story keeper will likely have a different answer to *then what* questions. However, if you bring your story to the table, if you believe it is valuable and shareable, you need to consider these points.

- *Know* your story and take possession of the facts and the sequencing.
- Take *ownership* of your story and decide when and where and to whom you speak.
- If you choose to *tell* your story, it may advance your own agenda or the goals of the community.

When stories are told and stories are heard, there is no going back to “Hi, my name is....” Stories are the gestural lines of self-portraits. Stories make known those who share their experiences. Strangers become more familiar as empathy is created among those who engage, think, feel, and create together. Public policy commentator Robert Reich has spoken often about the *empathy deficit disorder* in our general society. Empathy—an essential element for work around the community development table—is built and strengthened by storytelling and story listening.

In working within communities, arts-based development efforts sometimes integrate stories into artistic practices. As you listen for the stories of communities with which you work, of the people around the table, consider these questions.

- Whose story is it? Who is telling the story? Do you have permission to retell it?
- Do they start the story at the beginning? Or is it started in the middle to serve a purpose for a project or change a narrative?
- What happens to the story after it’s told? How do you use it? What do you base on the story?
- Are many people telling similar stories? Does the multiplicity underscore your commonality?
- How do you handle the complexity of many stories?
- Who is not there to tell their story?

Storytelling in communities can manifest in many ways. Consider the podcast. An illustration of community storytelling is the *Who Raised You?* podcast. It is a storytelling project created by Treasure Shields-Redmond (poet, master educator, community arts organizer, and successful entrepreneur) in collaboration with Jia Lian Yang (arts program manager, trained social worker, minister, and community organizer). With its origins as a conversation at Yang’s kitchen table, *Who Raised You?* has swiftly grown to reflect the region through authentic and engaging storytelling.

The podcast co-founders are poised now to develop the *Who Raised You?* Listening Collective, a media project that will train artists, educators, and changemakers of all kinds to become Citizen Sound Agents. These agents will record stories of ordinary wisdom in the St. Louis region and create a digital audio archive for generations to come.



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Shields-Redmond and Yang asked, and answered, the question: Who sits at this table?

“We center on people-of-color voices, paying attention to the intersections of age, class, race, gender, sexuality, and ability. We record stories that are not defined by our identities but informed by them. We are interested in you, not for your labels but your journey to this moment in time where we are sitting down to get to know each other. We invite guests whom the public doesn’t often hear from, who are humble about their work and proud of their community.... This conversation is from our worlds, to other worlds, as we look toward liberation. We are interested in art, culture, education, religion, organizing, activism, our intersecting identities— the ingredients that make up our reality and create future realities. Our different perspectives make our conversation possible.... As we explore how culture, family, and intersecting identities pave our way toward liberation, we want to know: Who raised you? We’re curious and somewhat irritated. Sit down. We have lots to talk about.”

—Treasure Shields-Redmond and Jia Lian Yang, “Who Raised You?” Podcast

Invitations and Border Crossings

Respectfully and thoughtfully entering (and exiting) a community with which you will work and to which you do not intrinsically belong is another essential element of arts-based community development. Artists, local arts agencies, and others at the community development table have resources that can be useful to a community, but who else in that community also has resources? With permission (an idea that is often ignored), you can enter into community spaces for observation, documentation, and inquiry. You can come with partnerships and collaborations, with services and resources that are based on the stated needs of the culture and community. You are border crossers. You cannot, and should not, assume needs. Journey in your work beyond your own communities, cultures, and sectors to gain new insights and understandings. Listen ... and connect.

“Entering community is a process of becoming aware of the values, leadership, and history of a community. Building or engaging community is putting those values into action, often questioning or even challenging existing values. Exiting community is ensuring that all who participate feel recognized and can identify what they learned from the experience.”

—Urban Bush Women

Bring your folding chair to the table and know that you need understanding and regard for the community you are entering, along with clarity of your purpose and mission. When working with a community, there has to be time for relationship building. Who are your guides and mentors within that community? How are they aware of why you are at this particular table? Respectfully navigating the unseen histories, memories, and relationships that hold a community together—that actually make community—with the help of guides is not a shortcut, but it can be a path.

Accountability + Adaptive Response

To whom are you accountable?

You may have just thought *the funder*, but that's not the ultimate answer. At the community development table, community members and artists need to be there from day one. They should not arrive after all the planning and decisions are made, not after everyone else has taken a chair at the table. You are responsible and accountable to the community. From day one.

Indeed, you will have to report to the funder what happened as a result of their investment in community development. If they are the kind of funder that has been a partner and left room for the time and relationship-based elements of working with communities, they may also be at the table. They are not at the *head* of the table.

To whom are you accountable? This question provides a check on behaviors and acts as a guide to ensure artists and local arts agencies work to respect and honor the capacity and input of the people in the communities with which they work.

To the people. Period.



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CASE STUDIES

Case studies illustrate various aspects of arts-based community development and can tell the story in detail. The model for the studies in this guide is adapted from William Cleveland's *Making Exact Change*.

(See Sources and Resources, page 29.)

CASE STUDY

LOVE BANK PARK

LOCATION:	St. Louis, Missouri
DATES:	Established October 2015
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Alexa Suda, Executive Director, Cherokee Street Development League
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:	Multidisciplinary
CONSTITUENTS:	Area residents, all ages
ARTISTS:	Various community artists

Love Bank Park, located at the end of a St. Louis commercial district, used to be two littered vacant lots. It was transformed into a public gathering space through a collaboration overseen by the Cherokee Street Development League (CSDL) between area businesses, residents, and artists. Two years after purchasing the property, CSDL installed a basketball hoop for neighborhood youth, with help from a local business owner. Basketball hoops had been long banned in public parks in the South City area of St. Louis, and this initiative was greeted positively by children and teens and opened the space up to different types of activity that stretched far beyond basketball. Love Bank Park now offers programming that addresses the realities the youth face—such as high crime, poverty, and lack of opportunities for creative and autonomous expression—and has become a central gathering place in an environment safe for both children and adults.

History

Love Bank Park was born from an expressed desire by neighborhood youth to have a place in the largely adult-inhabited business district. In 2014, CSDL, the nonprofit arm of the Cherokee Station Special Business District and Association, purchased an empty lot. In 2016, CSDL installed a permanent basketball hoop on the property at the urging of neighborhood youth and encouragement by business owner Will Porter. Porter, who owned an art-themed specialty pizza parlor across the street from the property (and who later became a CSDL board member), took the lead in gathering support and financing for the cleanup of the park and construction of the basketball court. Working with youth and CSDL Executive Director Anne McCullough (who was also a Cherokee Street Community artist and resident), the group secured the materials for the park build. Local artists painted colorful game markers on the concrete paving and permanent lighting soon followed.



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Later, CSDL purchased the grassy lot next to the court, which was owned by the City of St. Louis. CSDL found local artists who took up the charge to guide programming in the space and provide supplies and facilitation for all kinds of arts activities—always free of charge. Love Bank Park has been supported by state and local elected officials, cultural and faith groups, community development organizations, residents, and a wide range of others.

Park-based activities, primarily facilitated by neighborhood-based artists, enabled youth to learn from their neighbors. Residents can engage in activities ranging from painting murals and breakdancing to learning how to build their own instruments, make pottery and food art, garden, and explore healing art modalities such as yoga. The park represents the idea that all youth, regardless of socioeconomic status, deserve access to art and play. Many of the artist-led community art projects have been funded through donations, out-of-pocket contributions, and small local grantors or fundraising initiatives.

Mission

Love Bank Park builds on the existing grassroots momentum both at the site and in the surrounding neighborhoods to create a thriving, multifunctional, and environmentally sustainable public space amenity in the business corridor of Cherokee Street.

Success and Change

Goals

- Provide a safe space for residents (primarily youth) to gather outdoors without having to leave their neighborhoods or travel far from their homes.
- Address the social, educational, creative, and environmental needs of the area.
- Host events that are initiated, led, and implemented by residents, local business owners, and other community members.
- Create both a launching and landing point for creative, physical, and social exploration through partnerships, collaborations, and community-based initiatives.

Defining Success

- Residents continue to engage in the space, during all seasons, and actively participate in events that happen there.
- Community artists, entrepreneurs, and community caretakers consistently engage with the park, even with little to no funding.
- Community volunteers maintain the physical space through organizing cleanups, plantings, and repair of outdoor furnishings.
- There are few incidents of petty crime and no reports of major crimes committed on property.
- Residents, business owners, artists, and others donate hardware, art supplies, landscaping materials, and foodstuffs.

Outcomes

- Love Bank Park has partnered with a wide range of government and private organizations and groups to host events and activities that serve the neighborhood and the City of St. Louis.
- Youth have access to safe, open outdoor space.
- There is a more complete representation of the economic dualities of the business district, as visitors to Cherokee Street can engage with residents who have expressed a feeling of invisibility in other areas of the business corridor.
- Community members have engaged with artmaking and increased their understanding of and appreciation for artmaking in various forms.
- The park has served as a conduit for community building and conversation around development, arts learning, and socioeconomic issues in the face of a swiftly gentrifying area.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

Cherokee Street is an arts-and-business district located on the South Side of St. Louis, Missouri. Stretching over 13 city blocks, the street is also the dividing line between four neighborhoods and two city wards. An overwhelming number of residents live below the poverty line, with rental housing making up a majority of the built landscape. It is a gentrifying area with an artist-heavy mix of ethnicities. Cherokee Street is most known for its eclectic mix of shops and creative storefronts, antique stores, and Hispanic and Latinx-owned businesses. Most of the businesses on Cherokee Street are owned by white people, while people of color are the overwhelming majority of residents in the area. Two name designations, Calle de Cherokee and Antique Row, describe two of the most notable collections of businesses on the Street, as it is affectionately called by locals.

Governance/Leadership

CSDL is a nonprofit organization that manages the development, construction, maintenance, and programming of Love Bank Park, primarily through the Love Bank Park Committee. The five-member collective made up of artists, residents, and local business owners oversees the upkeep of the park and guides the direction of programming. Love Bank Park is unique in that the committee serves in an advisory capacity; much of the programming and activity that takes place on the property is community generated.



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Financial Resources

Love Bank Park is a public space located on privately owned property. The CSDL budget, with monies largely generated by outside grantors and profits from cultural and artistic festivals, is limited. Much of the budget goes towards general upkeep such as lawn care and cleanups. Some organizations that present events in the park pay a nominal rental fee, which goes towards programming and upkeep.

Partnerships/Collaborations

CDSL (through its Love Bank Committee) has collaborated with numerous entities to bring a variety of activities to the park, including a weekly farmer's market, candlelight vigil for youth lost to gun violence, Missouri State Representation community awards ceremonies, community bonfires and festivals, art camps, pop-up art days, movement workshops, gardening tutorials, mural art and banner-making activities, basketball tournaments, and much more. It also has been the meeting point for neighborhood alley cleanups, trick-or-treating excursions, and street-wide crawls (Jazz Crawl, Indie Hop, etc.).

Constraints/Challenges

- The park, being a public space on private property, must be a place of safety while supporting autonomous engagement.
- Issues of liability are another challenge of being a public space that is privately owned.
- Much of the park's support comes from donations, grants, and small contributions.
- Public perception of what is permitted at the park can be a challenge, particularly when groups of young black teens gather in the space after dark.

Advice to Others

Love Bank Park is an example of what can happen when artists are at the community development table from the beginning. Neighborhood artists have been a driving force in building the relationships that keep the park safe, activated, and fun. Whether it be through direct facilitation, or just their presence as neighbors and residents themselves, initiatives like this are possible because of the creativity, agency, and generosity of artists in lending their time and skills to the development of a private space for public use.

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SECTION 2

ARTIST AGENCY



2

“Look closely at the present you are constructing. It should look like the future you are dreaming.”

—Alice Walker, Author/Poet/Activist

The term *agency* frequently refers to the thoughts and actions taken by an individual in an effort to express their individual power. As it relates to artists, agency is an important part of arts-based community development. It is important for artists to feel agency, to believe they have creative control to develop a piece or project the way they know will be reflective of a community and beneficial to its people. Having this sense of agency allows an artist to be empowered and free to do their best work.

Framing and Setting

In the midst of political upheavals, artists have often been among those who protest. In the streets of Ferguson, Missouri, after the police shooting death of unarmed 19-year-old Michael Brown, Jr., a number of artists looked around as they stood at the front lines of the demonstrations to discover fellow artists who were part of a community arts network. Seven of these artists created a work of art and dissent in the form of a mirrored casket to carry as they marched. No one commissioned them to do this. It was powered by their anger, passion, and perseverance—and the ability to co-create and collaborate. That mirrored casket is now in the collection of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

In this section, as you consider the components of an artist’s agency, question creativity, capacity, and power. How do artists navigate within communities? What assets do they hold? How can these assets—this power—advance community development while respecting the stories of the people? How can creativity help you reach across the table, move across the street, or across community divisions?

What is Creativity? How Is It Useful?

Creativity is a process. Creativity is the imagination in action. It can involve the formation of a new idea or be used to improve an existing one. Creativity is traditionally aligned with *thinking outside the box*, but in truth real creativity can be described as what it would take to build the box itself. Creativity can stem from a variety of places—imagination, personal experiences, or formal study. It is a vital element when facing complex problems or in the search for nontraditional solutions. Creativity is inventiveness, imagination, and innovation. Creativity is transformation.

Creativity is an artist's secret weapon. Their super power. Their language. Artists see, hear, move, and manifest in ways that—until that moment of manifestation—were unseen or unheard. Everyone is creative. Artists manifest the creativity. Any artist of any discipline will say they need to be an artist, that it is not a choice. Creativity is embedded into their being. Creativity is a tool that belongs at the community development table.

Artists use their creativity to move to the next project. It's their primary tool. For instance, artist Shepard Fairey used the image of Barack Obama above the word HOPE to visually capture the extraordinary point in time of the political campaign of the first black man to run for and become president of the United States. Fairey exercised his agency as an artist to underscore a historical moment. Creativity is what gives an artist capacity and power to initiate or contribute to change: it contributes to an artist's agency. And it belongs at the table.

Although typically relegated to anything arts-related, creativity serves as the basis for examination, critical thought, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and any method that explores or initiates diverse concepts or processes. This is useful because new ways of thinking are how you birth the new ideas and big concepts that move civilization forward. They are essential to all community development.

Artists hold a power that is often unrecognized or dismissed. Stereotypes and cartoonish concepts of how artists work are the *noise*—the assumptions and barriers—that can keep artists from participating in the building of communities. At the community development table, you cannot afford to ignore new ways of thinking, big ideas, and problem-solving.



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Artists at the Table

To state the obvious: there is no art without the artist. No music. No dance. No poetry. No museums. No theaters. No arts organizations. No local arts agencies.

Let's use the example of the desk chair you sit in, the car you drive, the book you hold, or your pair of basketball shoes. Each of these items was first conceptualized and later actualized and rendered (via paper, clay models, or computers) by an artist or teams of artists of some kind. Objects you rely on in your everyday lives for both convenience and necessity originated in the mind or hands of an artist.

Artists are part of all communities and deserve to be at the community development table. They live next door. They have families. They pay taxes. They could be members of any political party. They might have other jobs to supplement their artmaking. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 2.48 million artists in the US workforce in 2017, or 1.55 percent of all US workers 16 and older. What artists bring is the power to synthesize, translate, and transform the conversation at that table.

Artists are becoming more aware of their right to be at the table. They want to and should join at the beginning of the planning process, not be brought in afterwards. They can be equipped with the tools to assess the value of their work or service, learn to accurately price that work or service, and present that value in a coherent way that clearly communicates their value and the *superpower* of their creativity. They can be at the table not only as a community member but as one of many trained professionals.

Process/Product

Every artist, no matter what discipline, has a process for creating work. If they are engaged with a specific community or work with partners or collaborators, they bring that process to that engagement.

Traditionally, community partners rarely take into consideration an artist's creative process. Conversely, many artists rarely see the conceptual and organizational process of the community developer or local arts agency for projects for which they are being commissioned or contracted. More transparency in the process from all partners can lead to a better outcome.

An artist might ask what resources an agency can provide. What kinds of responsibilities and obligations is an artist to bring to the table? How do you work together? Apply your methods and process, repeat, and come to understand through experience the most practical, fluid, and efficient ways to do the work. In sharing these processes, everyone can adjust, adapt, and grow.

Creative process comes with roles and responsibilities, and these need to be determined at the onset, with the buy-in of everyone at the table. For example, it is not the role of a funder, commissioning agent, managing partner, or local arts agency to police an artist's process. Sometimes there will be missteps that can serve as beneficial learning experiences—although hopefully not at the expense of the project, relationships, or resources—and be viewed as research and experimentation. Arts-based community development is not only based on relationships. It thrives when there is time for process. Agreed-upon benchmarks and close communication are tools that keep the process flowing. When artists are invited to be an integral part of the community development process—from visioning to execution—their creative skill set can spark innovation in the early planning stages of any project.

In community development, the process (the why and the how) may be as important as the product. Once again, the essential elements are time and relationships. Once again, entering a community is to engage with it and exiting that community is to ensure that all voices were heard. Once again, who is or who is not at the table is important. Building this expansiveness into the process will result in a richer and more meaningful product. Know that here is where budgets, time constraints, and other pressures and anxieties come into play. *It is often tempting to rush to the end before the end has really come.* The balance comes from the commitment to openness and communication at the beginning, middle, and end. Art is the catalyst for moving past the noise, through the planning, into the product, and on to the reflection, documentation, and evaluation. Artists understand process. It is their language.



2

“Passion is one great force that unleashes creativity because if you’re passionate about something, then you’re more willing to take risks.”

—Yo-Yo Ma, Composer and Cellist

Communicate Needs and Value with Conviction

An artist takes risks when stepping outside their studio, theater, or music hall to sit at the table. Artists who feel empowered can take ownership over their own process, practice, and personhood. They know, or can be taught to know, the value they bring to a project. This is key. The ability to communicate that value effectively and consistently is equally as important.

Artists may fear that if they turn down a project or commission, they will never have opportunities again. Artists may also fear that if they speak out about harmful practices and conditions, they may face repercussions such as loss of funding or be branded as difficult to work with. These fears need not paralyze their involvement. Artists can, and should, learn to know who they are and that what they have to offer is unique, creative, and rigorously professional. There are support systems—both personal and organizational. The lesson here is that no one needs to face these types of challenges alone.

When challenged, artists could use training facilitated by a local arts agency or seek out other artists as mentors. Other tools may include education on how the business side of art and development work, such as learning how to create a project proposal or an invoice. Lack of information can be disempowering. Research and study, matched with support, can help artists evolve their ability to communicate needs and value and to be better participants at the community development table. Around the country, there are means of supporting artists’ networks through education in formal programs. One example is the Community Arts Training Institute at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis. This fellowship program is designed to provide rigorous training across sectors and create connections. Artists and people who work in community are educated side by side. They create the tables.

Another program to consider is the Americans for the Arts program, Arts Administrators Essentials: Supporting Individual Artists. This program is specifically geared at individuals that work in organizations directly supporting individual artists. Participants learn how nonprofit arts organizations function, how to lead from their position, strategies to engage with communities, best practices for developing programming, ways to support artists, and how to gain support from supervisors to be effective. (See the Sources and Resources section for more programs.)

Community Art Practice and Social Practice

Artists who want a place at the community development table bring with them the power of their creativity and their process. And it is a requirement of those working with communities to understand co-creation and social imagination. Whose responsibility is it to work with communities? Whose work does it become?

There are artists who refer to *social practice* (or *social sculpture*) as their way of creating, working, and living. This idea is rooted in the philosophies of artist Joseph Beuys, who advocated extending the definitions of art outside of the boundaries of the traditional art world. He viewed creativity as part of every aspect of life, including politics. The outcomes can be provocative art that examines current events, issues, or the values of a community. The work conceived and created by these artists most often has a significant community or social component.

There are artists who work solidly in the realm of community arts, who are adept at co-conceiving with groups of people. They understand the idea and process of being invited. The art is made in a collective way, and the stories told belong to the group. The artists may take the lead and facilitate. They may offer up their skill sets and experience. They may teach. They may guide the process of creation, and they understand the collective power of co-creation.

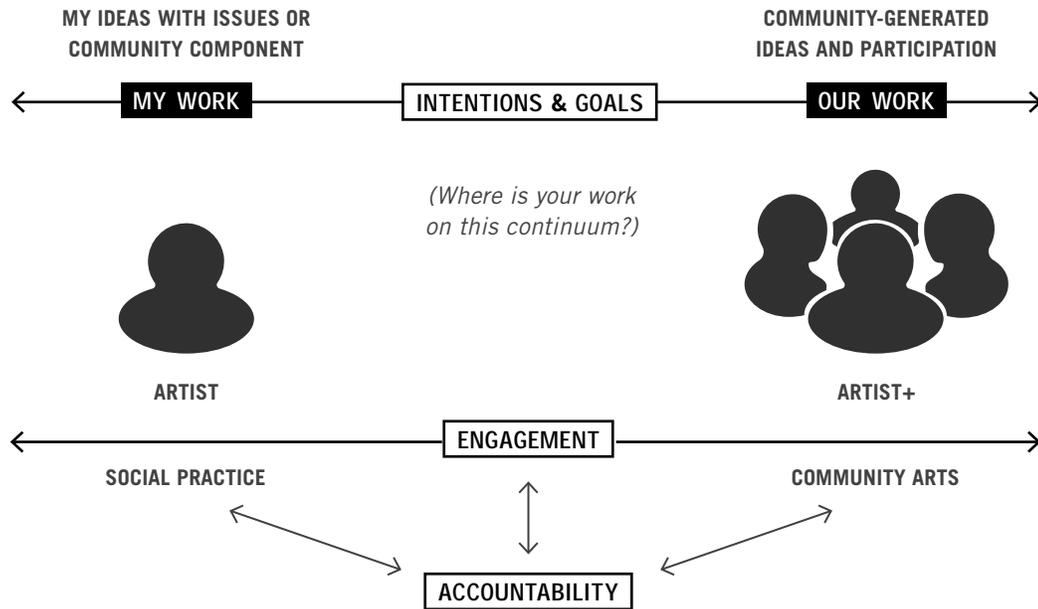
Artists work with and in communities in many ways. They can work more in social practice or more in community arts or somewhere in-between. There is a continuum of practice, focus, and development that takes into account community engagement, intentions, goals, and accountability. Artists often dance back and forth along that line of engagement. Wherever the artists are on that continuum, it is essential for you to know how and with whom they are working to understand their relationship to the community.

In Image 2.1 on the next page, you can see art as key to community development—as a systemic influence, as an expression of the people in a specific place and time, or as that which springs from the imaginations and creativity of those people. Cultural policy writer Arlene Goldbard noted that, “community arts practice is based on the belief that cultural meaning, expression, and creativity reside within a community, that the community artist’s task is to assist people in freeing their imaginations and giving form to their creativity.”

How are the people comprising the community dreaming their future?



IMAGE 2.1



Events vs. Engagement

Engagement goes back to the notion of active listening, co-creation, and co-conception. Artists can go where people are gathered. They can look into all corners of the community to build relationships without preconceived expectations.

A single event does not constitute community engagement. However, a single event or short-term project done well can lead to continuing engagement. Here are other points to keep in mind.

- A focus group is research, not community engagement.
- An interview with one elder is not engagement.
- Outreach is not engagement.
- If the product is the purpose, it's social practice.
- If the process is the purpose, it's community art.

Engagement is complex work. It can't be done from a desk or a studio. Engagement is not something simple you can put into a box.

Documentation + Evaluation + Reflection Leads to Transformation

Artists deal constantly in reflection and documentation. Their reflection is the creative well from which documentation is drawn. Artists who work with communities can create art that documents the change that is the mission of community development and thus enable others to understand that change. But first, before you can reflect, you must first know where you've been. How can you map where you are and dream the future if you don't know where you've been and—more importantly—how you got here? Evaluation itself is a creative act. The process of reflection makes up that act. Documentation can make visible what was hidden.

The moment you take a place at the community development table, be prepared to start documenting, mapping, and charting. Evaluation, based on this documentation, also best begins at the start of the process, or perhaps even before you start the process. The information you find through evaluation could carry you to a new project. Those with a seat at the table—the local arts agencies, the developer, community members, the artists—all are responsible for assessment of value and impact.

Here is where you record (with permission) the stories. The memories. The histories. The learning moments. The knowing that nothing happens (or changes) in a vacuum. Your documentation and subsequent analysis and synthesis of that information creates a platform for all of that.

Evaluation is necessary and doesn't need to be dry or academic. There are many models, but one we recommend is the Theory of Change. This tracks *how* the change happens—the *theory* of how and why you are where you are. Capturing that information leads to an evaluation methodology. What signifies a transformation? What triggers it? How does it manifest? Map it. Here are some items to consider when thinking about evaluation.

- Start with the shared mission of the people around the community development table. What do you want to happen? What do you want to change? What do you want to achieve? What do you want to impact?
- Who or what will be impacted? How will you influence this group? Are they at the table?
- What are your strategies? What are your tools, resources, research, partners, and processes?



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- Reflect. Does this look like it will work? What is missing? Who is missing?
- How will you know you have completed your mission or reached your goals? Determine outcomes.
- What's the timeline? What are the benchmarks you will set for reflection and recalibration? What indicators—numbers and stories—are you going to use to measure success?

What changed? What's your Theory of Change?

This business of change brings us back to transformation, and the power that art and artists hold there. In mapping the change created by your project, you may find that three tiers of transformation are often the hallmarks of successful community arts development and engagement.

Tier 1: Personal transformation

Do the thoughts, behaviors, or circumstances of the participants and collaborators reflect a change due to new insights? Creating art—writing a poem, moving in dance, singing with others, painting a mural—taps into parts of ourselves that we may have forgotten to nurture or value. This is the power of the process.

Tier 2: Organizational transformation

Introducing art into an organization or a group or a planning process opens up unforeseen avenues. Questions like *why not* are asked. The stories that people tell influence how the story of the organization, group, or process is told. How things are done or get done can change.

Tier 3: Community transformation

When art is shared and made visible, the heart of the stories it embodies and reflects become visible. Community art very often has a community/public presentation, performance, or exhibition. These events are invitations to see and experience the stories of others and create the space for empathy and understanding of what we did not know. Reflection is a creative act.

One example of these tiers of transformation is the community CollabARTive, which evolved into an integrated component of two transitional housing programs and a permanent supported housing program at Peter and Paul Community Services in St. Louis. During the pilot program, the shelter director observed that participants became less solitary and more supportive of each other when they shared stories and created artwork that made their individual talent and style visible. He related that when he succeeded and failed making art and writing poetry alongside the men in the program, he learned much more than in some counseling sessions. By participating, the staff experienced a new level of relationship with residents that made treatment and care planning more effective. These transformations occurred because art and artists were part of the equation. The visual creativity, writing, and storytelling—and individual and group goal-setting by the participants—contribute to their self-esteem and self-efficacy. Peter and Paul has been able to share powerful stories and images with its community and its donors.

Transformation can be observed at the individual, programmatic, organizational, and community levels. Individuals have transformed from solitary seekers of housing, employment, sobriety, and mental health to members of a community that includes artists, arts organizations, students, neighbors, and volunteers. Homelessness is not the *only* chapter in their stories. They realize their voice through their art, a voice that others can hear. (For more about Peter & Paul, see Case Studies.)

Artists as Arts Leaders

This is a good place to talk about the general issues of gentrification and artwashing that can often come on the heels of the creation of an arts district or as part of a community development project. These are urban phenomena that are fueled by the presence and economic effect of creative influence and energy in and on a neighborhood. Artists can take a lead in understanding not only the dynamics of displacement and exploitation but also the political and economic tools needed to prevent them.

Artists can be at the table and they can provide the leadership. The Great Rivers Greenway (GRG) project in St. Louis recognized the leadership potential of artists. GRG connects residents to area parks and rivers through the construction of greenways—designated areas within the urban landscape. In one of its largest undertakings, the Chouteau Greenway will connect large swaths of St. Louis to the Mississippi River. The



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“The precise role of the artist, then, is to illuminate that darkness, blaze roads through that vast forest, so that we will not, in all our doing, lose sight of its purpose, which is, after all, to make the world a more human dwelling place.”

—James Baldwin, Writer

greenway will feature an east-west corridor with connections north and south to knit together neighborhoods, parks, business and cultural districts, employment centers, transit, and dozens of cultural and educational institutions.

To select the team to execute this massive project, GRG hosted an international design competition. In addition to involving the usual complement of architects, landscapers, urban planners, and community-based partnerships in its plan for the greenway, each prospective group also had to include community and social practice artists. GRG recognized the rich contributions of artists to the built environment and their value in high-level municipal planning and development, as well as their deep roots and active practices that document the history of place. This, however, was not enough.

In seeking to understand the complex history of representation and erasure in the region—and address issues of displacement, gentrification, reclamation, community voice, contribution, and access—GRG sat down at the request of local arts organizations and activist artists of color to envision ways these artists could be an important part of the process. GRG supported the development of a compensated Artists of Color Council, comprised of eight visual, literary, and performing artists charged with providing guidance to design, promote, and implement art and engagement opportunities along the Chouteau Greenway. Selected artists represent a diversity of mediums, demographics, experience, and geography within the City of St. Louis. With artists in a leading role, the goal is to make the Chouteau Greenway representative of the communities in its footprint.

Although more and more colleges and universities offer courses in social practice, artists who are trained through these systems may not have encountered this notion of influence, social imagination, and community leadership. With good intentions, but little understanding of arts-based community development, artists can become frustrated.

Those interested in their communities sometimes seek additional training in arts-based community development and community arts. For example, a number of the Chouteau Greenway Artists of Color Council members are graduates of the Community Arts Training (CAT) Institute at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis. Here are some key elements in nurturing the leadership of the creative sectors.

The local arts agency invests in ...

- Systems of identifying artists with demonstrated potential or expressed interest in being leaders or taking leadership roles within their communities.
- Offering opportunities for artists to demonstrate their creative influence.
- Offering opportunities for personal and professional development and training.

Artists commit to ...

- Assess their own interest, strengths, and capacity in areas about which they are passionate and research where their skills would be useful.
- Seek out mentors, long-term support systems, and networks, or offer mentorship.
- Bring in other artists when taking on leadership roles (paying it forward and positioning other artists to be at the table).
- Lead by example and practice collectiveness and collaboration.

Artists transform and create. This is their power and their agency. Artist Andy Warhol said it in this way: “If there’s ever a problem, I film it, and it’s no longer a problem. It’s a film.”



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CASE STUDY

CHEROKEE STREET REACH

LOCATION:	St. Louis, Missouri
DATES:	Established July 19, 2014
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Pacia Elaine Anderson
WEBSITE:	facebook.com/Cherokee-Street-Reach-397581010423660
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:	Multidisciplinary
SITES:	15 City Block Radius (E/W) & 5 City Block Radius (N/S)
CONSTITUENTS:	Cherokee Street Neighborhood Youth, ages 6-17
ARTISTS:	Pacia Elaine Anderson, Basil Kincaid, Erika Johnson, Shareca Reynolds-White, Eric White

Cherokee Street Reach (CSR) is a grassroots and arts-based neighborhood youth development group founded by artists who reside in the four neighborhoods that surround the Cherokee Street Business District (the Street). It directly engages with groups of neighborhood youth and also collaborates on projects with area schools, recreation centers, faith groups, and elected officials in a variety of environments, including outdoor spaces. The group shares its skills to enrich youth experience with visual and performance art and connects youth to local teaching artists and mentors locally or in trips to local institutions of art and culture beyond the Street. CSR is highly active in organizing neighborhood initiatives—from serving on boards of neighborhood groups, curating art events, and programming and curriculum development to neighborhood cleanups and tours, engaging with students interested in urban planning or social work, participating in various social justice campaigns, and fundraising for other organizations.

History

CSR first began when a group of five local artists—three of whom were associated with a DIY community arts space on Cherokee Street—sought to raise funds so a neighborhood youth could attend a summer camp. The preteen had little to do in the waning days of summer and was often found running in and out of the local bars and adult spaces on

the Street. Having no luck finding a sponsor, the group decided to host a summer camp of its own. After discussing it with the owner of the space in which they worked, they organized a free art camp with 12 local youth. The timeline from idea to execution was a total of two weeks, and the group secured in-kind donation of the space and one \$25 donation from a local business. The artists paid out of pocket for supplies, food, and take-home art kits.

The week-long art camp of half-days included explorations of visual art through the study and practice of tribal mask making, collage, photography, and mural art, as well as poetry writing and performance, movement and music, and the exploration of place through neighborhood walks and the gathering of objects. The camp culminated in the first Cherokee Street Reach Art Camp and Festival, open to the entire community. More than 200 people came for free food, entertainment, and a host of artist workshops, facilitated by some of the city's most well-known artists. During the festival, youth curated an art exhibition that showcased what they had created at the camp. Youth learned to price their work and made more than \$1,200 at the festival, including \$250 for a group mural.

The festival ended on August 8, 2014, just one week after CSR began its participation at the Community Arts Training Institute and the day before the murder of Michael Brown, Jr. Both of these factors would shape the mission and objective of CSR moving forward. What was started as a one-time art camp to support a single youth in need has grown to help support an entire community of youth through a variety of goals and hoped-for outcomes.

Today, CSR continues to host its annual art camp and festival each summer on the Street. It has expanded its capacity, reimagined its mission, and continues to be present in the neighborhood where artists and youth participants live.

Mission

CSR provides creative exploration through experiential learning, amplification of youth voices in community development, and youth-based economic empowerment. Its priority is for youth to explore what is *valuable*—to see beauty in themselves, their neighborhood, and their creativity—while exploring opportunities to recreate their worlds in ways that economically and holistically sustain them.



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Success and Change

Goals

- Demonstrate to youth that people that look like them, that are people of color—their neighbors, the folks they see at the corner store, or at the gas station—can beautify their neighborhoods, travel the world, financially support themselves, and engage in artmaking that transcends the limits of what they have been told is possible for them.
- Co-create community art to beautify the neighborhood and build bridges between different community groups and cultures through collaboration and fellowship.
- Provide an economic education to build an understanding of the value of the work of community members and options for self-sufficiency through artmaking.
- Introduce nontraditional and unique art forms, taught by neighborhood artists.

Defining Success

- Artists with the capacity, experience, and skill sets work with youth from a variety of backgrounds and levels of participation.
- Youth are interested and included in the programming of and participation in large-scale development projects and activities, including festivals, neighborhood planning initiatives, and funding allocation.
- The community understands that its youth need to be included at various community development tables and extends invitations to engage them.
- Neighborhood youth are consistently engaged and demonstrate interest in art and artmaking.
- Lower rates are reported of negative incidents and encounters directly involving neighborhood youth on the street.
- Youth have increased awareness and skill of introduced forms of artmaking.
- There is measurable progress in youth understanding of and engaging with art forms, both general and nontraditional.
- The community invests in the mission and goals of CSR through parental/guardian involvement or feedback, partnerships and collaborations, volunteerism, positive press, and opportunities for engagement and inclusion.
- The community provides support through the donation of physical space, in-kind donations, grantmaking, and direct financial aid.

Outcomes

- Youth participate in community art events outside of CSR, based on work created through CSR programming.
- Youth develop capacity to create and monetize work autonomously.
- Youth and other community members are invited to participate in community engagement and inquiry activities with civic and nonprofit leaders on neighborhood-level and city-wide policy initiatives.
- Youth generate ideas for future programming.
- Businesses and area residents give positive feedback on observable positive changes in youth choice-making.
- CSR partners with other organizations across the city to develop curriculum and facilitate programming.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The Street is a 12-block stretch of commercial area in South City St. Louis. The strip serves as the dividing line between two city wards (9th and 20th) and four city neighborhoods, in which upwards of 70 percent are people of color. The densely populated neighborhoods flanking Cherokee Street are challenged by high crime and poverty. Despite having the most densely populated neighborhood in South City St. Louis on its border—Gravois Park, of which nearly one-third of its residents is under 18—Cherokee Street hosts no businesses that cater to or have a mission of supporting youth. The area is swiftly gentrifying, with rents rising for both residents and businesses. The district boasts a thriving collection of Hispanic and Latinx-owned businesses, as well as antique stores, art galleries, and niche restaurant and storefront shops, many of which do not cater to the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Governance/Leadership

CSR uses a group-centered leadership model, with all decisions decided by majority consensus. Although individuals undertake tasks, the broader vision, direction, and planning happens through the core group of founders, based on engagement and feedback from participants, parents, partners, and volunteers.



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Four of the five founding members of CSR graduated from the Community Arts Training Institute; the fifth is an Arts Connect International Fellow. Additionally, all founding members are professional artists who currently serve as teaching artists in some capacity outside of CSR. Three of the five are state-certified educators, with one holding a master's in education. Each founder is multidisciplinary in craft and training, maintains a vast network of mentors and community partners, and has a rich history of experience working at the intersection of community development, artmaking, and education.

Financial Resources

The program is funded through small-scale grant opportunities, event-based fundraising initiatives, partnerships with nonprofit organizations, individual financial contributions, in-kind donations, and out-of-pocket expenses of participating artists and founders. The group is fiscally sponsored by the Cherokee Street Development League.

Partnerships/Collaborations

Partnerships and collaborations are generated via expressed interest by community partners, direct invitation and request from CSR, and third-party connections through organizations with shared goals but limited capacity to execute a proposed project or activity. Current and past partnerships span the range of city institutions of arts and culture, individual artists and artist collectives, elected city and state officials, local businesses and business leaders, schools (public, private, charter, and parochial), faith groups, community spaces, and city recreation centers, as well as a host of nonprofit and grassroots organizations.

Constraints/Challenges

The primary challenges faced by CSR are funding and consistent youth participation. Funding often requires a dedicated manager to research and apply for support, which is something the group has limited capacity to ensure, given the nature of the members' lives and obligations. Additionally, many of the youth who participate are transient or have unstable home environments, so it is often difficult to ensure consistent involvement from one activity to another.

Advice to Others

Be patient. The grassroots nature of an initiative such as this has many different factors that aren't always clear at the outset. It is a rolling dynamic that requires flexibility, teamwork, and willingness to extend oneself beyond what traditional programming looks like. It involves taking the time to build trust, being present in the community beyond when it's time to *do the work*, and a willingness to develop and deepen relationships with the entire community—youth, their caregivers, business owners, property owners. Be prepared to be rejected for funding because funders aren't used to your type of programming model. If you always keep *community* and a *with, not for* approach as the basis of your endeavors, however, you will be supported in ways and by people you may never have suspected.



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CASE STUDY

GRAVOIS–JEFFERSON HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN

LOCATION:	St. Louis, Missouri
DATES:	January 2017 – July 2018
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Carrick Reddin
WEBSITE:	gravoisjeffersonplanning.org
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:	Not applicable
CONSTITUENTS:	Residents of the planning area
ARTISTS:	Pacia Elaine Anderson (Steering Committee Artist)

The Gravois–Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods Planning initiative, a partnership between a number of community and municipal groups, pulls together the diverse voices in its planning area into a common vision to guide community revitalization. As inspired by community engagement and established by the Resident Steering Committee—and with artist input from the onset—the vision is for “accessible, sustainable, inclusive neighborhoods where families and individuals thrive in a diverse and historically rich, engaged community.” The plan, which was officially adopted by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis, includes extensive recommendations in the areas of arts and culture: the support of artist agency, leveraging the arts for social change and community development, support for artist housing, and providing infrastructure for telling authentic stories of people and place. The plan is named for the two major arteries that encompass the planning area.

History

The Gravois–Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods Plan is the result of a partnership between Rise Community Development, Dutchtown South Community Corporation in cooperation with members of the Board of Alderman, and the City of St. Louis Planning Department. The plan is a public document that provides policy recommendations and long-range development guidance for elected officials and citizens engaged in community development. It also recommends programs and strategies intended to contribute to the community’s vision.

The nearly two-year process from initial planning to official adoption included a host of community contributors. Residents and other stakeholders in the area were engaged to look at economic development, racial disparity, land use issues, social services, environmental concerns, transportation (including pedestrian and bicycle networks), housing, educational opportunities, community health, parks and open spaces, and much more. The bulk of the community planning work was done through an open engagement process using a combination of focus groups, public roundtables, design workshops, and open houses. The makeup of the planning committee included community caretakers, organizers, a community artist, and supporters of arts and culture. Throughout this collaboration, arts-based activities and facilitation were key tools in the engagement process. Recommendations for the integration of the arts were part of the extensive vision for the plan.

The Gravois–Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods planning area has a strong arts community and a rich cultural heritage. With one of the highest concentrations of artists in the St. Louis region, the neighborhoods of Benton Park West, Gravois Park, and the northeastern portion of Dutchtown have the potential to support and expand the arts community. The arts community will, in turn, leverage the power of creativity and ingenuity to spur positive community development.

Mission

The Gravois–Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods Plan seeks to establish a vision for the neighborhoods of the planning area, the path to achieve that vision, and recommendations to influence all future development. The vision for this area is for a thriving inclusive community with vibrant mixed-use corridors, historic architecture, and a myriad of activities available for all ages. These are neighborhoods where residents of all backgrounds and beliefs will be able to enjoy communal space and engage in civic matters.



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Success and Change

Goals

- Foster decent, stable housing for families and individuals of all incomes and abilities through community-led development and historic preservation.
- Ensure access and coordination to resources so that youth reach their full potential.
- Enrich the community and beautify the neighborhoods by supporting and broadly integrating inclusive arts.
- Foster a favorable investment environment for the area that retains, expands, and attracts quality businesses and serves as a center for job generation that supports economic mobility.

Defining Success

- Community stakeholders—residents, businesses, groups, civic leaders, and others involved in development efforts—have a broad awareness of the plan and instigate and participate in a strong community-based push for implementation of specific recommendations.
- Community stakeholders use the plan and its recommendations in long-term planning, community development, and when formulating their own plans and projects.
- Community stakeholders utilize the arts to enhance public space.
- Members of the arts community serve as community advocates, mediators, and activists.
- The neighborhoods in the planning area are promoted as live-work-play communities.
- The arts are utilized to bridge the business community with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Cultural events and programming are supported and expanded.
- Housing for local artists is supported.

Outcomes

- The plan is officially adopted by city officials.
- Residents, business owners, and community members in the planning area are equipped with a plan to guide neighborhood development.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The Gravois–Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods planning area is encompassed by Gravois Avenue to the north, South Jefferson Avenue and South Broadway Avenue to the east, Meramec Street to the south, and South Grand Avenue to the west. It includes the entirety of the Benton Park West and Gravois Park neighborhoods and a small northern portion of Dutchtown. These neighborhoods are among the most densely populated in the City of St. Louis and State of Missouri. They also suffer from some of the highest rates of vacant housing units in St. Louis, no doubt connected to the high number of buildings in disrepair and a seemingly high number of parcels held by speculators and absentee landlords who have chosen not to invest in maintenance and repairs. However, the planning area benefits from being located in the Gravois–Jefferson Streetcar Suburb National Register Historic District, the largest historic district in Missouri. The district stretches across large swathes of Benton Park West, Gravois Park, and Dutchtown, and includes 1,679 contributing buildings. The planning area also is surrounded by several higher income neighborhoods and bisected or bounded by thriving and growing commercial corridors.

Governance/Leadership

This planning effort is the collective action of a 14-member steering committee made up of neighborhood community leaders and community-focused organizations. The plan was guided by Carrick Redding, project manager of Rise Community Development, and Amanda Colon-Smith, executive director of Dutchtown South Community Corporation. Redding worked extensively with community stakeholders in engagement facilitation and data gathering. Colon-Smith found ways for community members to tell their stories and then ensured that their expressed desires were represented throughout the engagement process. Her extensive background in urban planning and development, as well as her deep ties to the residents of the planning area, were invaluable.

The Gravois–Jefferson Historic Neighborhoods Plan is supported by each of the aldermen serving the planning area and was officially adopted by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis. Although no penalties are incurred should community developers or other interested parties not adhere to the plan recommendations, it is a governing tool to be used by residents when conflict may arise between parties. The plan was co-conceived and co-created by the community. Governance lies in the hands of the community.



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Financial Resources

The planning project was funded by Lutheran Development Corporation, in partnership with Rise Community Development and Dutchtown South Community Corporation. Steering and Planning Committee members donated their time. Additional funding was provided through the Incarnate Word Foundation and Deaconess Foundation.

Partnerships/Collaborations

The planning process and project management were jointly facilitated by Rise Community Development and Dutchtown South Community Corporation. Through these organizations' vast community networks, and with the aid of aldermen and other community partners, the groups worked with residents and business owners to form steering and planning committees. Architects, urban planners, and other collaborators played vital roles in the plan design, research, and data gathering.

Constraints/Challenges

- There are perceptions and realities of violence that make implementation difficult.
- Access to job and educational opportunities is limited.
- Portions of the planning area are experiencing disinvestment due to their decline. Factors include physical deterioration of the built environment and condition of vacant land.
- Surrounded by prospering neighborhoods and characterized by below-average home sale prices, the neighborhoods are vulnerable to unplanned, inequitable development.

CASE STUDY

METROGLYPH PORTAL/ ST. LOUIS METRO ARTS IN TRANSIT

LOCATION:	St. Louis, Missouri
DATES:	2004–2005
PRIMARY CONTACTS:	Con Christeson and Phil Robinson
WEBSITE:	artsintransit.org/art-collection
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:	Mixed Media
CONSTITUENTS:	Transit employees and customers

When the Metropolitan Saint Louis Transit Agency (Metro) began to integrate the components of its system, it decided to upgrade and redesign its bus loop locations. Arts in Transit (AIT), a nonprofit subsidiary of Metro, managed the bus loop redesign process. *Metroglyph Portal* was the second capital project of the redesign process. Through a selection process, Con Christeson and Phil Robinson were commissioned as lead artists. The design team was comprised of the artists, architects, engineers, project managers, fabricators, and installers. The artists were asked to make initial recommendations to the team based on preliminary drawings and assessments of onsite challenges. They also incorporated a community engagement component in each project.

History

When AIT was founded in 1986, its primary role was to establish and coordinate a team of artists, engineers, and architects on the design of the future MetroLink light rail system. The St. Louis area had been without rail transportation since 1966. In 1989, AIT launched ArtLink—a series of temporary public art installations along the developing route—to bring community awareness to the developing transit system. AIT also scheduled speakers, neighborhood art exhibits, school programs, and launched the AIT Art Bus program.

From the initial phase of MetroLink onward, artists were part of AIT's planning and design efforts, including station canopies, platforms, railings, and vertical bridge columns. AIT has produced more than 150 temporary and permanent projects



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throughout the St. Louis regional public transit system—MetroLink, MetroBus stations and transfer centers, park-ride facilities, and other community-based activities—in addition to hundreds of art events and programs.

AIT began the process of updating the bus loop locations for Metro by forming design teams with artists, architects, engineers, and project managers. The lead artists for each project hired the fabricators and installers. Each of the projects had its own challenges—hardscape, infrastructure, and transportation patterns. One site was located near an intersection where four neighborhoods came together, another was surrounded by light industry and manufacturing. The third was a combination of the first two, but it had the distinction of having the first buildings in the system with onsite public restrooms and indoor waiting and retail areas.

Mission

AIT facilitates public art programs and community engagement projects in the St. Louis metro area. It provides art and art activities to highlight the Metro transit system, creates an environment where riders are safe and engaged in their surroundings, and celebrates the communities and neighborhoods.

Success and Change

Goals

- Engage riders, drivers, and system maintenance people and bring them together as a community through interaction with the art and with each other.
- Include the commuters and the workers in the process of travel, and make each place of transit feel like an actual place and not some kind of in-between limbo.
- Create traditional installations of public art that relate with the community of users of the space.

Defining Success

- Each AIT design team collaboration results in an infusion of creativity into the mundane culture of a lonely bus stop.
- Each project has three design elements that are easily recognized and that mesh in the final design: a paving pattern suggesting a compass (direction), a large sundial (time), and a portal (travel).

- Artists are willing to ask questions and have conversations with the people using the systems.
- Each project elicits reactions and comments from commuters. For example, one day while the artist was installing the numerals on a sundial, a commuter waiting for a bus stood watching. At one point she said, “It’s wrong. The time is wrong.” At first the artist panicked but then quickly realized the problem. “Ma’am, the sun does not know about daylight saving time.”

Outcomes

After the installations, each commuter and transit worker saw something unique. No one was shy about expressing an opinion. In fact, responses were encouraged. Most users asked questions: Is this Egyptian hieroglyphic? Where did you get that transmission/flywheel/gear box part? But what does it say? The artworks led to lots of engaging conversation and lots of opportunities for the artists to ask the users what they thought of the work and if they liked it.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The existing site for the *Metroglyph Portal* project included the original bus turn-around, a few yellow bollards, a foggy customer shelter near the corner, and an outbuilding with some architectural interest at the rear of the site that houses operator restrooms. The entire property was surrounded by chain-link fence that enclosed truck parking and vacant lots. Across the street was a bread and cupcake factory. There was no green space and no residences, but there was plenty of traffic and noise.

The artists created a paving pattern that radiated out from an existing round planter to suggest a compass, and also designed and installed the sundial element of the art installation. The third element onsite is the *Metroglyph Portal*. It is a standalone concrete gateway through which commuters enter the bus stand. The more than 20-foot high *Portal* faces the street and is visible from all angles. Its shape echoes the architectural detail on the outbuilding in the rear. At the top of the installation is a circle containing a cast resin mandala symbolic of movement and mindfulness. The rest of the three-dimensional structure is veneered in 8x10-inch tiles, which are impressed with textures and patterns from scrap parts of buses. The week-long installation of the tiles was like a performance piece and assemblage of a huge puzzle, with the artists solving install issues while welcoming comments and questions from riders.



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Governance/Leadership

- Bi-State Development (BSD), an interstate compact formed by Missouri and Illinois, operates Metro, which includes MetroLink, MetroBus, and Metro Call-A-Ride, as well as the St. Louis Downtown Airport.
- Working closely in partnership with AIT staff, the collaborating artists were afforded agency and access.
- AIT, through the larger transit system and the City of St. Louis, oversees all the moving parts of creating public art for users of the system. MetroLink also travels across the Mississippi River, and there is cooperation with the state of Illinois and the small municipalities east of St. Louis.

Partnerships/Collaborations

The entire project was managed by AIT and approached as a collaboration between the lead artists, architects, engineers, project managers, and contracted artists and fabricators. Part of the collaborative process included the installation. The artists were able to speak with mechanics and were given generous access to the bus barn, piles of discarded scrap metal, and fly wheels and gear boxes that would become interesting patterns. Because the artists talked with bus drivers about punching tickets, a punch tool was used to impress the clay. The artists also used other found objects and random letters and text as seen on the bus while passing billboards and signs.

Constraints/Challenges

This community of Metro travelers and operators was an interesting challenge. The artists observed, listened, and related to who was using the space and how they used it. Wayfinding images and metaphors seemed to be in order. The idea of movement, people, and creative directional tools was introduced to the team by the artists. The artists' initial recommendations included removing the rickety shelter, orienting a new structure diagonally on the site, and considering the design detail on the existing restroom building.

Advice to Others

This installation was viewed from the beginning as a creative monument to a particular sense of place. The people who walk and wait there every day create and recreate the place and the space with stories and interactions with art. It belongs to them. It's a peaceful place to wait in a chaotic environment of transience and movement. It needed a bit of repair to the resin, grout, and caulking after about eight years, *but* it has never been vandalized.

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SECTION 3

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS



3

“The world begins at a kitchen table.”

—from “Perhaps the World Ends Here” by Joy Harjo, Poet/Musician/Playwright

How do you do your work together? Working with others is hard and fraught with risks and vulnerabilities. There also are great joys and opportunities. Creativity and communication are two crucial factors at the community development table. Everyone at the table, including artists, who is new to partnerships and collaborations requires guidance and training. Those who are experienced still may need help in working with a new community. Everyone at the table benefits from awareness of strengths and challenges, gaps and unmet needs, and an expressed intention to be clear and present for each other.

This section looks at how to lay the groundwork for working in partnerships or collaborations and ways to check assumptions and promote understanding, early and often. It explores recognition of roles and how to take on the multifaceted work of working together.

Framing and Setting

The City of St. Louis owns nearly 11,500 vacant properties—3,400 buildings and 8,100 lots. A partnership—including the city, a foundation, a private donor, a local arts agency, a community district, a community development corporation, and a committee of artists and residents—has been formed to reanimate and rebuild one neighborhood that has a number of these vacant buildings and spaces. The group is developing a plan that has spaces for arts and culture and affordable housing geared towards artists at its core. These partners are navigating a complex map of relationships, actions, and expectations. Even as they draw it.

Partnerships and Collaborations

How big is your table?

In this guide, we distinguish between partnerships and collaborations. Like artists working along the social practice and community arts continuum, working groups and alliances work along a similar continuum. At one end, there is partnership; at the other, collaboration.

Partnerships may be described as an agreement between two or more people or groups to share assets to achieve a mutual goal. Partnerships can but do not necessarily include collaborative elements. Sometimes the cooperation ends at the signing of an agreement or the completion of a contract. Commitments may be limited or conditional.

Collaboration may be an agreement among a group of people who work together over time in order to reach goals, and who are aware of the unpredictable and complementary nature of a creative process. For work to be truly collaborative, there is agreement about abilities and capacity, as well as a fair distribution of labor and responsibilities. Collaborations tend to be less transactional and more transformational than some partnerships. The emphasis is often on the collective power of the group.

This is the place and time to examine and understand shared power and agency. Who sits at the head of the table? Is there a head of the table? The answers may be different when forming a partnership or a collaboration. There was a reason the legendary Arthur commissioned the making of a round table.

When all the parties are fully committed to a partnership or collaboration, they clearly state expectations and outcomes. Hidden stories and histories are made visible. The table is diverse in all ways and lively. The group has articulated and agreed upon systems of decision-making, organization, manifestation, engagement, and creation, as well as addressed how to deal with disagreements and manage conflicts. Image 3.1 on the next page illustrates the overlapping and individual goals that occur when two or more parties come together in a collaboration or partnership.

Why set the table? Why do you prepare so carefully? What are the elements to consider? The essential ingredients—and part of the why—are a deep understanding and consideration of a number of aspects of partnerships and collaborations of arts-based community development.



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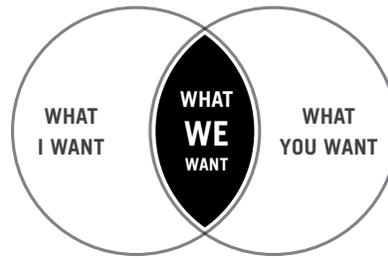


IMAGE 3.1

Capacity. What do you need to do the work? To make a change? To develop a community? Who has capacity? Can partnerships and collaborations increase your capacity? Capacity to do the work includes the potential or ability of a group to accommodate, plan, execute, or move an idea forward using its own resources, skill sets, and knowledge base. This is where attention to relationships within communities is an asset.

Capacity refers to what people can or will actually do. What capacity do you have for truly committed engagement? Are you considering the practical elements? For example, can community partners participate in gatherings once a week or once a month? When is the best time for people to come together? After school, after work, on the weekends? If you are working with a faith-based group, when is their Sabbath or sacred time? Is there public transportation to where you will be working? Can people easily get to where you are? If you want people involved, can you go to them?

Organizers sometimes forget to ask these questions. When the program or project attracts few participants, think about what the factors and barriers to participation are.

Artists around the table can be *capacitors*. Like conduits of electrical charges, artists can spark ideas, innovations, and new perspectives on problem-solving. They can ask *why not?* Artists can multiply capacity and add value through their creative and social capital.

Mutual agreement of goals and outcomes. Why are you at this table together? What is it you are actually doing? What is the change you wish to make?

Build relationships and develop understanding with your tablemates through discussions, stories, listening, and understanding. Minimize assumptions as you jointly outline and document the process. Outline the steps and document the work together. Map and chart your path. Use a process that allows all of you to take on appropriate roles and responsibilities. Begin at the start to make your evaluation tools and outline your Theory of Change. Agree on the changes you wish to create. Know that all of this takes work, commitment, and time.

*“You can’t hurry love. No, you just have to wait. She said,
“Love don’t come easy, but it’s a game of give and take.”*

—“You Can’t Hurry Love,” on The Supremes, *The Supremes A’ Go-Go*, 1966

Time

All successful, meaningful, impactful work within communities is based on time and relationships. Nothing can be rushed. Mutually agreed-upon deadlines and benchmarks should be made to leave ample room for creating, growing, conflicting, reflecting, and making. In other words, process. When time is limited by grant deadlines or urgent situations, the ability to rely on the relationships already made and nurtured will get you through. Look around the table. See allies, guides, and friends who—over time—have shared experiences, language, and values. And who will overcome short deadlines and crises. Together.

Enter by invitation only. Authentic relationships develop organically over time, around an idea or need, and are key to trust and to an invitation to sit at the table. The climate for the invitation is ideal when all members of a collaboration come to the table prepared to be open, to provide opportunities, and to take risks. Who will invite you and why will you be invited? What are your experiences together? Why are you there—in this particular place—at this particular table? Is this your community? Who are you inviting? It’s a big table.

Entering a community with respect can happen through many paths. Take Xander, for instance. In his case, there were many small tables. Xander is a white 20-something who finds joy in the game of chess. Having learned the game from a mentor, he wanted to introduce it to the young people that congregated at Love Bank Park—a public space created by artists on private property that is a gathering spot for neighborhood teens. Many activities there result from local teens’ creativity or a group of adults supporting programming on a given day. Nearly all the youth that hang out at the park are black.

Although Xander lives a short distance away and considers himself a neighbor, he was intentional about how he entered this community of which he was not a part. He took a nontraditional route when it came to entering this community. Instead of going to the property owners with a proposal, writing a grant, or asking to be introduced or *given access* to the youth, he simply brought his chess board and chess pieces to the park one day. He nodded to the youth he saw (acknowledging them and their space), chose a table, and sat down. He unrolled his cloth board and began to play a solitary game.



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Initially, he was ignored. It took another trip before curiosity took over. Soon Xander was rolling out more canvas chess boards and pieces—at the request of the youth in the park—and teaching them the fundamentals of the game. One youth was in the chess club at her middle school and was delighted to be able to play with her friends in Love Bank Park. Xander slowly became part of the community in a deeper way. Outside of the park boundaries, youth began to greet him with familiarity and warmth when they saw him around the neighborhood. He did this by entering with respect and without any agenda. He understood that youth may not have interest in learning chess, or more importantly, in learning from *him*. He also understood, perhaps intuitively, the importance of taking time and building relationships. (For more about the story of Love Bank Park, see Case Studies in Section 1.)

Co-conceive and co-create. Co-conception and co-creation are processes of collective visioning and execution of an idea around a shared message or goal. Make this a practice of working together from day one. Co-conception can happen in both partnerships and collaborations, where all the teammates design a project *together* from the beginning. All the expertise around the table is honored. The artists, developers, planners, funders, residents, and community members bring their own experience and their own voice.

Some at the table may not have personal experience in the type of project being undertaken or practice in how problems or challenges might be addressed. What they do have is agency. Their experiences and perspectives will provide the information needed to make decisions, and what is conceived by the group as a whole will have a better chance of success. Group process benefits from consensus, initial buy-in, ongoing support, and effectively addressed obstacles and challenges.

Here's an example. Imagine you are creating a pocket park from an empty lot at the end of a neighborhood block. When you are designing the surface and the paths, look beyond aesthetics or park planning norms. Observe where the grass has been trampled by users. That's your data. The users have the expertise to create the path. This knowledge is not gained from a focus group or through one community meeting with Post-It notes on a map. It is gained through the expertise of the community. It is gained on the ground.

All of those at the table—the artists, funders, planners, architects, community developers, and community members—bring resources, imagination, and ideas for what *might be* to the table. All of their expertise is to be valued. Co-conception requires respect, listening, communication, and a commitment to understanding the community in *community development*. As designer and behaviorist Ruben Anderson put it,

“Citizens of a city know how the built environment makes them feel and how they would like to feel.” That *how they would like to feel* is an essential and important part of the planning process.

Co-creation is the execution of an idea by numerous group members. There are artists who are trained to consider cross-sector language differences and cultural sensitivity. When they hold a space for co-creation, they are adept at listening and relationship building. Even if the artists are not at the table from day one to participate in co-conception, they may be commissioned to combine and recombine the ideas conceived by others. If this commission does not include co-creation and the artists are left to execute the idea or project without direct contributions from the co-conceivers, the questions and obligations of who is accountable and responsible still remain.

Boundaries and contracts. As you commission and contract with artists for community development programs and projects, and as artists negotiate the value of their work, you need to set clear boundaries. Pay particular attention to the areas of time commitment and hours of availability and encourage reasonable autonomy and respect for process. The processes for conflict resolution and problem-solving should be included in any contract for everyone at the table. If co-creation is part of this process, and if the artist is not an intrinsic part of the community, articulate clear steps for respectfully entering and exiting the community. Those who are already at the table are responsible for reflection and direction in preparation for those who have yet to be seated.

When artists enter and exit communities, they need to be aware of the values of each community, when and how to speak with community members, and how to ensure that the community feels as though it has ownership of the entire process. Not every artist is trained to be or is suited for work as a community artist. Not every project is suited for collaborative co-creation. Give deep consideration to where the artist is and where community members are on the continuum of understanding community engagement. Who will guide the artist?

Transparency. Partners and collaborators need to commit to openness and not hide agendas. Who else is at the table? Are there multiple tables? Who are partners or participants who are not at the table? All participants have the right to know the sources of funding, the details of the budget, and the marketing plan. Share and discuss significant changes in any circumstances. How will you describe the identity of the community? How will the artwork be used, attributed, or represented?



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Language. What do you mean, and what do they mean? Glossaries exist because every field and every community has its own language and terminology. How do you understand each other? In partnerships and collaborations, use of specific language with clear meanings is essential. Commit to making documents, contracts, and agreements—with their expectations, requirements, and desired outcomes—unambiguous. Flexibility and room for creative process can be built into any contract or memorandum of understanding, project descriptor, or narrative. Aim for direct and specific language without jargon. Clearly outline roles and who does what when. Start from clear communication and avoid miscommunication. Move past the noise to mutual understanding.

Vigilance and problem-solving. How's it going? Check in throughout the project with your partners and collaborators. Circle back. Here is where you revisit the Theory of Change. Here is where you can reflect and plan together and create a culture of problem resolution. Understand that one bad moment or misstep need not make a bad experience and follow your agreement to work through unanticipated issues. This alone may avoid derailment of your project or program. The work of arts-based community development is dynamic and fluid. To work together requires everyone to revisit, reflect, reimagine, and, yes, recommit.

Conflict resolution. People are going to disagree. Passionate people are *really* going to disagree. Don't be surprised and be prepared to handle disagreements and conflicts respectfully. Partners at the table can discuss up front some methods for addressing conflict, major and minor. It is not a failure to invite a mediator or a coach trained to work with conflict resolution. Refer to group rules and norms. Start by separating the people from the problem and understand that you each have your own perspectives and expectations. Repeat as necessary. When you value each other's agency, you can sit next to each other at the table, face the problem, and craft a solution together.

This is an investment in a valued process and a sign of commitment. Despite best efforts, there are times when those at the table have exhausted attempts (and themselves) in striving to reach an equitable solution on their own. In these instances, it may be useful to seek the assistance of an outside third party to help resolve conflicts. One such group—Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts (VLAA)—offers arts-related mediation among its list of services. According to the VLAA, “mediation is an innovative and informal process in which trained neutral mediators guide discussion between disputing parties. The process allows the parties to control the outcome, rather than accept the decision made by an outsider (such as a judge or arbitrator). Mediation

“Our public spaces are as profound as we allow them to be. They are our shared spaces and reflect what matters to us as a community and as individuals.”

—Candy Chang, Artist

is voluntary, confidential, fast, and affordable. It is particularly well suited for the arts because it addresses relationship issues (like trust, respect, fairness, and friendship), procedural issues (like how decisions are made), and substantive issues (like money).” There are a number of organizations similar to VLAA or in the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts network around the country.

Document, reflect, evaluate, reflect, repeat. Evaluation is a group activity that begins at the start and continues to the end. It is a creative act. Everyone at the table has the power to document. This goes beyond taking pictures and writing on Post-It notes. Chart, map, observe, write, revisit your Theory of Change. What you preserve and make visible is how you can look back at when and why the change happens/is happening/happened. Your documentation is the evidence and the artifacts that teach others. In reviewing your document, examine what you’ve learned and process what you now know. It can be an opportunity to check in with all partners, recalibrate, and recommit. As a group, ask if this is the change you want to see.

Thick or thin commitment. Are you in it for the community, or are you in it for the grant? Why are you here? No, really, why? Ask yourself. Ask others. These questions are the compass. Really listen to all the answers before entering into any partnership or collaboration agreement. Authenticity, perspective, and empathy are the result. They will sustain the group through thick and thin. An informed commitment to people around the table and to the community will be the bridge from *the work* to *our work*.

Accountability. You are accountable to the community being served by your project and accountable to each other at the community development table. If the table has been set to be inclusive, *each other* includes people from the community. Do your work. Make sure it’s good work. Add value by doing more than required or expected. Own mistakes or missteps and see them as lessons learned. Be generous with your peers and parallel co-communities that are your allies or mentors. Not only are you accountable for doing your work, you also are accountable for and to the relationships you have built.



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Exiting

At the beginning, plan for the end. How will the program or project conclude? When is it finished? Who decides? How will its impact be manifested? Is it something that can continue—with guidance or aid (or without)—from local arts agencies, the artists, the developers, the funders, or particular partners? If it is not to continue, what will this particular project or program gracefully leave behind? What contingencies are available in the event of an unexpected or abrupt ending? What will the community hold in its place? Consider ceremony, ritual making, parties, parades, and blessings. Somehow say *we did it!*

Look at, for instance, the Pink House in Pagedale, Missouri, in North St. Louis County. This community arts space was embedded in an under-resourced neighborhood with a strong history of family unity. Over time, the neighborhood children claimed it as theirs. It was the arts next door in a little salmon colored house in the middle of the block. The Rebuild Foundation and Beyond Housing, which owned the house, partnered to create a community space lovingly and thoughtfully guided by artist Regina Martinez. The Pink House thrived for five years. And then, for a number of reasons, it became clear that the use of the Pink House as a community arts and gathering space was coming to an end. Everyone involved in the house was invited to create plans for what became a graceful and even joyous closing. Artmaking and several celebrations and meaningful ceremonies were all part of the ending. (For more about the story of the Pink House, see Case Studies in this section.)

Who Holds the Histories, Stories, Work?

The stories of the people are told and made visible as the community changes and develops through creative actions and artmaking. Agree to choose what you leave behind; imagine and articulate clearly who has *ownership* of the art and the stories. Where will the work be stored or displayed? If it's a physical manifestation of the stories and histories of a community—a public work, a neighborhood place, a play, a publication, a film, an opera, a mural—who owns it? Who will maintain it? Who benefits from it, and how will you know? True ownership takes into account all contributors to the project, the overall goals, and permissions given.

Stories and histories hold the community spirit. It is imperative that they are handled with care. Cultures, traditions, and languages have been lost because they were not held in honor. Being a caretaker of stories and histories means going beyond storing and displaying. It means acting responsibly to safeguard the contributions of the people who made the work and lived the stories.

At the table. The circle is unbroken.

CASE STUDY

THE PINK HOUSE

LOCATION:	St. Louis County, Missouri, and Pagedale, Missouri
DATES:	June 2011 – December 2016
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Regina Martinez
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:	Multiple
CONSTITUENTS:	Neighbors, friends, and families in Pagedale centered around Salerno Drive
ARTISTS:	Pacia Elaine Anderson, Jenna Bauer, Jacob Berkowitz, Kyle Brandt-Lubart, Lisa Byrd, Dail Chambers, Stan Chisholm, Marcus Curtis, Carly Faye, Caph Guei, Takashi Horisaki, Is'Mima Nebt'Kata, De Nichols, Tabatha Pate, Cynthia Redmond-Jenkins, Kat Reynolds, Eric Schwarz, Carlie Trosclair

The Pink House—the result of a collaboration between Rebuild Foundation and Beyond Housing—was a residential space that provided community-driven arts and cultural programming for residents of the Pagedale community. Open for five years, it offered visual, literary, film, music, and cultural programming for youth and adults. The committed relationships at the root of the Pink House’s momentum—described by one neighbor as “a spiderweb that caught all the beautiful things”—set the tone for the opportunities, collaborations, and overall legacy of the little pink cottage.

History

In 2011, Beyond Housing (a support service organization for low-income families) and Rebuild Foundation (an arts-based community development project of Chicago artist and urban-planner Theaster Gates) partnered to develop an arts-based program in north St. Louis County. Beyond Housing’s Pagedale Family Support Center staff became important partners in this venture.

Regina Martinez, an artist/photographer who was working with Rebuild, slowly opened the house at 1545 Salerno Drive to the neighborhood. She carefully took her time to get to know the neighbors, discover their talents, and solicit their ideas for the house’s



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function as a community space. In the first months, she organized an inaugural backyard barbeque; facilitated numerous workshops with visiting artists for both adults and children; and invited Nurses for Newborns, a social service organization, to share the space. A neighbor, Tabatha Pate, started regular crocheting classes in the house and another young neighbor, Patrick Fuller, took up photography to become the house's documenter.

The Pink House—so dubbed by the neighborhood children—brought in local artists to hold six to eight-week sessions in everything from photography and painting to yoga and meditation. It held monthly receptions, where parents could learn what their children were doing at the studio. The Pink House partnered with Great Rivers Greenway, a regional parks district, on summer events in the neighboring St. Vincent's Park. In addition, the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis (RAC) held a place-based Community Arts Training Institute there. Institute participants either lived in or had a connection to the Pagedale area.

In the fall of 2016, the leaders of Beyond Housing decided they could reach more children if they closed the Pink House and added art classes to their afterschool program at the Pagedale Family and Services Center. The Pink House closed January 1, 2017.

Mission

The small pink house in the middle of a residential block in Pagedale didn't look like it, but it was the site of an informal creative placekeeping inquiry: What can an arts-based space and programs embedded within a neighborhood do to positively transform that neighborhood and its people? The Pink House made itself and its arts programs completely accessible to its community. It believed that art belongs to the people and offered love, trust, respect, and openness to Pagedale residents.

Success and Change

Goals

- Become a place for the neighborhood to express the creativity that resides there.
- Illustrate that the arts are next door and an intrinsic part of the fabric of the neighborhood.
- Provide a safe haven for children.
- Offer creative placekeeping and identity-building in a quiet, organic way.

Defining Success

- Soon after Martinez entered the community in a slow, respectful way, the neighborhood children—who were the most curious and the first to come—became her enthusiastic cohorts in this project.
- Key adult neighborhood leaders and elders also became her cohorts, and in return she honored their creativity and skills.
- Arts programming involved the community. Workshops for both adults and children attracted neighbors. Visiting artists created artworks with anyone interested in participating. Tabatha Pate and Patrick Fuller, both neighborhood residents, facilitated numerous art workshops.
- The house was active year-round, but especially so in the summer. Fuller’s photos, for example, were exhibited on clotheslines strung between the trees.

Outcomes

For five years, the Pink House flourished and provided a safe, warm space for the children and adults on Salerno Drive and the surrounding blocks. Signs of continuous activity, creativity, and trust bloomed. The interior walls of the Pink House were papered with artwork the children made along with the rules of conduct they themselves penned (crayoned). Art supplies were somewhat haphazardly placed back after use on the shelves. A chalkboard wall in the basement was covered with messages of joy. There was a papermaking screen over the bathtub. People no longer knocked, they just came in. When the neighborhood found out that the Pink House would be closing, they made plans for a graceful and even joyous exit. More artmaking and several celebrations and ceremonies were part of the ending. Since the Pink House closed, the most active participants have stayed in touch.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The Pink House was among the many properties owned by Beyond Housing in Pagedale. Beyond Housing offered the house to the Rebuild Foundation as a possible location for its cultural community development work. Pagedale is a small municipality of contrasts in north St. Louis County, and the Salerno neighborhood—where the Pink House is located—is low income but stable. Neighborhood children walk to and from school on Salerno Drive, and the Pink House was an ideal location to create a space for gathering.



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“Pink House, thank you for giving me a place where people respect art as I do and a place where I can sit and let my imagination fly free and my feet to rest and where my cousin can come. Pink House 4ever.””

—Uriah Savage, age 9

Governance/Leadership

With a bachelor's in photojournalism and a master's in social and economic development, St. Louis-based artist Regina Martinez is passionate about collaborative process and tension. She is interested in cultivating relationships that encourage risk and opportunity, and in reinforcing contexts of care for artists' work. For five years, she was the artistic director of the Pink House. This endeavor was in partnership with Rebuild Foundation and Beyond Housing. The deed to the house belongs to Beyond Housing.

Financial Resources

Primary funding was provided by Beyond Housing and the Rebuild Foundation, with additional support from RAC and other sources. Community members gave in-kind donations of materials and time. The Community Arts Training Institute session at the Pink House was underwritten, in part, by the Kresge Foundation.

Partnerships/Collaborations

The Pink House partnered with RAC for a pilot neighborhood-based Community Arts Training Institute session. It also worked on joint programming with Show-Me Sound Organization, Pulitzer Arts Foundation, Yeyo Arts Collective, Trailnet, Wyman Teen Outreach Program, Design Serves (D*Serves) by De Andrea De Nichols, Refab, *Social Dress St. Louis* by Takashi Horisaki, Citizen Carpentry, and Saint Louis Story Stitchers.

Training

Regina Martinez graduated from the Community Arts Training Institute and the Institute's Graduate Education and Research programs through RAC. She also was among the faculty for the place-based Community Arts Training Institute at the Pink House, of which the fellows were artists, social service providers, educators, and community

activists who live, work, or have some connection in the Pagedale area. Martinez is co-founder of *the clothesline*, a monthly installation where artists intersect to transform space for one night only, and a leadership team member of Yeyo Arts Collective, dedicated to the creative empowerment of women and their families. Martinez is the 2017 St. Louis Visionary Award recipient for Community Impact.

Constraints/Challenges

While both Beyond Housing and the Rebuild Foundation highly valued the work being done through the Pink House, the partners had many other priorities and funding sources were often unclear. These made it a challenge to plan for a long-term future for the Pink House.

Advice to Others

Martinez describes the Pink House as a neighbor and an open arts studio. “It is a community inside of a community. It has been a platform for both individual and collaborative creativity, authentic to the spirit of the place and the relationships that developed organically. It is a platform with potential to be valuable in any and every neighborhood.” Imagine if there was a Pink House in every neighborhood.



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CASE STUDY

Community CollabARTive Saint Louis

LOCATION:	Peter and Paul Community Services (PPCS), St. Louis, Missouri
DATES:	Established 1999
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Con Christeson
WEBSITES:	ppcsinc.org/programs/arts-athletics facebook.com/CommunityCollabarTiveSaintLouis
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:	Community arts
CONSTITUENTS:	People who are homeless
ARTISTS:	Tom Burnham and multiple artists

For 20 years, the Community CollabARTive has been part of Peter and Paul Community Services (PPCS). Founded by an artist and a homeless shelter director, the CollabARTive began as a partnership between local artists and staff and clients of PPCS. Outside of CollabARTive meetings, Peter and Paul staff mostly interact with clients on a social service basis, pushing them to build life skills. The CollabARTive art process, however, places PPCS residents and staff on the same level as they become art students, working with local artists in writing, dance, drumming, sculpture, and painting. Residents and staff succeed and fail together and learn to relate to one another on a personal level. The CollabARTive also gives PPCS residents an opportunity to document their journeys from homelessness to independent living through art.

History

The Community CollabARTive began in 1999 with funding for a project that had a nine-month timeline. Con Christeson, a community artist, and Tom Burnham, PPCS community relations officer, were co-founders. They first worked with 26 men in a transitional housing program, along with six trained community artists, two case managers, and a few grade school-aged students. The group met in the parish hall across the street from the shelter in Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. On Thursday nights, they cooked, ate, and made art such as writing, printmaking, collage, painting, and photography. The original goal was to produce material for a handmade book that would tell a story. The title of the book was *How do I get home? How much does it cost?*

The participants were from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and social strata. They were (mostly) required to attend the CollabARTive as a condition of participation in the transitional housing program. Some came and went quickly, which is the nature of this transient population and its challenges—substance abuse and mental illness, poor literacy and work skills, and family and legal issues. Some came for the good food and were intrigued by the art and artists. Over time, participants built relationships by sharing personal stories and completing projects. Successes were seen and heard, problem-solving occurred, and self-esteem and self-efficacy became more common.

The CollabARTive has expanded to two other PPCS transitional programs. In the 20 years of weekly art groups, hundreds have participated. Women began to be included in CollabARTive programs beginning in 2013. Program participants have created more books, participated in several exhibits and gallery shows, acted in three performance pieces, and told countless stories.

Mission

The primary goal of the CollabARTive is to create a community among residents of the transitional housing programs, as well as between residents and staff. It creates program support and community connection with clients of PPCS who are in transition from homelessness or living with HIV/AIDS. In a safe environment provided by the CollabARTive, art enables the participants to learn about themselves, tap into their creativity, and to make lasting relationships.

Success and Change

Goals

- Significantly contribute to the clients' individual journeys out of homeless to functioning in society.
- Go beyond the bounds of social services to address the creative capacities of each person.
- Create a community that meets around making art and models possibilities for the future.



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Defining Success

The catalyst here is story, the result is relationship, the focus is *with, not for*. When the original project—the book, *How do I get home? How much does it cost?*—was printed and ready to be bound, the 26 men assembled, glued, sewed, bound, and weighted 30 books. They each had a lot of pride on the day when they each held a personal copy in their hands. Since then, hundreds have told stories that tell the greater community that homelessness is not the *only* chapter in any person’s story; their stories humanize them and that shrinks the distance between *us* and *them* to become *we*.

- Knowing when and where the art would happen was essential to people who have experienced much disruption through homelessness.
- Over time, actions never taken before—like writing poetry or moving to the directions of a choreographer—can become easier. This takes trust and time.
- It was essential to find the right partners within the organization—shelter managers and supervisors—who value art’s role in an individual’s transition and transformation.

Outcomes

- The art and the process found through the CollabARTive continue to have influence on the personal level, offer support and insight at the program level, and offer consistent change and impact at the agency level.
- The CollabARTive works across all of PPCS departments. It is completely funded by grants and donations. PPCS development staff helps manage grantwriting and reporting and uses stories and pictures to represent the agency in other grants and requests to donors and for community support. The staff can point to the national and international attention received, such as a National Endowment for the Arts grant and work with contracted artists from Canada and Europe.
- PPCS dedicated one room for art when it moved into a new facility. Grant monies help to pay for rent at Christeson’s studio, which is located in the Cherokee district and gives PPCS clients a new access to community.
- Alumni/ae of the program return weekly to take advantage of support from each other and the community that was built, one Thursday at a time.

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The PPCS social service facility and art studio spaces are envisioned as havens from the streets. John and Panit, a married couple from Missouri and Thailand respectively, are an example of how individual each story can be. One is 50 years old, the other is much younger. John was once homeless and still struggles even though he has a job and a car. They have each struggled with addiction, mental illness, and abuse. As a couple, they dealt successfully with a system that made it difficult for Panit to get a visa and green card and have worked through John's tendency to spend too much and Panit's struggle to get and keep paying work. Panit recently returned to Thailand to help his family and will be gone two years. The CollabARTive is a place where John can get support, contribute ideas, make things, and make and keep friends. The art is the connecting thread, but the fabric is the people who engage, appreciate, and make art together.

Governance/Leadership

PPCS, a nonprofit organization, is the fiscal sponsor of the CollabARTive, and its staff is required to report on the program to PPCS leadership. In addition, the lead artists and staff of PPCS work with the participants to create the trajectory for the CollabARTive program.

Financial Resources

The program is completely funded by grants and donations through PPCS. Artists are paid. The bulk of the funds comes from local arts agencies and private donors, with some donation of materials.

Partnerships/Collaborations

The PPCS transitional housing program clients work with the artists and the facilitators, while the managing artist and PPCS collaborate on program schedules and projects.

Training

The majority of the artists working for the CollabARTive graduated from the Community Arts Training Institute.



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Constraints/Challenges

The CollabARTive is an example of how collaboration can work, *but it is work*. The grant deadlines keep coming and schedules and projects continue, even with a transient population as the key players.

Advice to Others

Just start. Know that—because it is *with, not for*—constant attention is paid to individual needs, program support, staff input, staff feedback, and the big picture of the social service agency in the community. Know that—because it is *with, not for*—artists, students, volunteers, and visitors are welcome to join and contribute and add value. The managing artist is a liaison between individual clients, professional and administrative staff, contracted artists, schools and students, and funding agencies. More importantly, the managing artist and the shelter manager consistently hold a space for that collaboration. On Thursday nights, there is always someone there at the agency, in the studios—regardless of whether no one shows up or is ready with a story. They are there to answer passerby's questions: What is this place and what do you do here? Most importantly, they hold the stories, the muscle memory, the lead-by-example commitment to arts-based community development. Just start.

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SECTION 4

ASSETS AND SUPPORT



4

“An individual working alone has limited capacity, obviously. But individuals coming together—in their communities, in their neighborhoods, in their small societies—and linking up with others in other communities and neighborhoods can accomplish a huge amount.”

—Robert Reich, Public Policy Commentator

What do we need to do our work? The big question around the community development table is what do you really need to do your work in arts-based community development? Put aside the money. Look beyond donors and dollars. This is not to suggest that funds are not important. Of course, financial capital is needed, and we will get to that. Social capital and creative capital also are significantly valuable in arts-based community development. Ask again as you look around at the participants at the table: What do you need to do your work together? Creating a multiplicity of sources for support ensures that if one source is not available, the work can still continue and grow.

This section is about financial, social, and creative capital and examines some of the ways in which arts-based community development can be supported, including alternatives to traditional grantmaking. What resources are needed, and how are they secured and sustained?

Framing and Setting

A group of five artists who were part of the same neighborhood came together around the question of what to do about CJ. This young boy, like other youth in the neighborhood, did not have a place to go on summer days and roamed around with little to do. His family could not afford summer camp, and he was too young for summer jobs. The artists knew it was too late to find a grant or make a pitch to a major donor. With a \$25 donation from a local business and the social capital to find space and supplies, the artists organized a two-week art camp. The camp culminated in a community arts festival with 200 people in attendance where the children sold their artwork. The next year the partnering artists applied for funds from a local arts agency to be able to pay themselves and other artists to continue the arts camp.

Beyond the Grant. Re-sourcing.

Creativity is an asset.

Asset mapping takes a look at what you have and what is missing. With partners and collaborators, who brings what to the table? What's on the checklist? It's a creative group activity to literally map or chart these assets.

Creating budgets together from the beginning and including the unseen or overlooked and then giving those items value can help you picture your assets. For example, use of community space, an organization's staff support, free use of a copy machine, Wi-Fi connections, equipment, supplies, and volunteers can all be listed an assigned value. What else has value and is counted among your resources?

Remember that the intangibles—transparency, trust, flexibility, availability, influence—also can be counted as assets. These are the resources that are built over time through relationships.

Connections and networks. It is about who you know and who knows you. This is not only about having friends in high places, although that can be helpful. This is about your friends, your allies, your networks, and your community. Who can you call on? Who shows up? Who is willing to vouch/speak/publicly support you or your work? Will you do the same for them?

Actively seek out opportunities to expand your networks via shared experiences such as trainings, memberships, organizational associations, committees, boards, and neighborhood circles. Who do you want to know? What do they have to share with you? Initiating connections means not waiting for the connections to come to you. Be the inviter. Open the invitation to others as you would like to be invited—with respect, humility, and excitement.

Shared knowledge and lived experience. At the community development table, expertise comes from many directions. Elders are invaluable for their lifetime of experience. Children are fantastic teachers due to their inherent ability to see the world through fresh eyes. Everyone knows something about something. Creating an environment in which all can be generous with what they know will become the biggest asset in any project. What do you know? How did you come to know it? How did you learn? How will you share it as an asset? In your accountability to the community, you have a responsibility to share your knowledge.



4

Guides and mentors. Who is offering the knowledge you need to do your work? Having people who are in a community help you enter that community and navigate all of its complexities is a golden asset. It also is indispensable to have people with experience and expertise about arts-based community development. A guide is someone who knows where you want to go and can help you get there. A mentor is someone who has been where you want to go and done the work you would like to do.

Guides...

- Are willing to generously show you the *dark matter*—the histories and the underlying stories of a community.
- Negotiate the invitation to enter.
- Can come from any sector.
- Should be at the table with you.

Mentors...

- Are doing work you admire or respect.
- Transact or dialogue about learning, issues, and best practices.
- Have made mistakes that you can learn from.
- Are not necessarily famous or rich.
- Are not necessarily people you know. Distance can be powerful.
- May not always be aware that they are mentors.

Social Capital

Social capital, in some cases, can be more valuable than financial capital. It is where you have influence. It is where trust is given, and integrity is expected. Acquired over time, it includes deep relationships and networks. Some of your partners may have broad networks, and others have very specific groups in which they carry this capital. Just like money, social capital is to be spent wisely. Social capital is shared and requires a commitment to reciprocity.

The labor movement is a model of reciprocity for this kind of capital. For example, Jobs with Justice—an organization that is leading the fight for workers' rights and an economy that benefits everyone—organizes different industry unions around the powerful pledge

to “be there for you if you will be there for me” at rallies, picket lines, and social justice actions. It understands that standing up and being present in numbers is a valuable asset to exchange. Whether it is visibly recognized or not, social capital provides ways to connect to resources of all sorts and mutual exchanges. It can be used to open doors for work to happen. Some examples of tangible and intangible social capital are:

- *Inclusion, access, and entrée* to others you need to include at the community development table.
- *In-kind* services and expertise.
- *Donations* of both objects and funds.
- *Social media* as a tool for extending influence and audience.

Money

What financial resources do you need to do your work together? Yes, show us the money! In the nonprofit and community development sectors, grants from local, regional, and national agencies are often the vital sources of funding.

Arts and.... When all sectors, including the arts, are seated at the community development table, opportunities for grants and funders can expand beyond the usual arts investors. At the arts-based community development table, the arts are used to address community issues, problems, challenges, struggles, and gaps. In the arts and culture sector this is frequently referred to as arts and.... Creativity and the inclusion of art and artists bring fresh tools and approaches to the table. Think art and job training, art and literacy, art and science, art and civic dialogue, art and social justice, art and health, art and infrastructure, art and environment, art and transportation, art and housing. In other words, think of art and community. These are the intersections at which you meet. These are the intersections where you might find the confluence of funding streams when you successfully make the case that the arts are fundamental to the overall health and ecosystems of a community. This case is not just made to the nonarts sector but to arts funders as well. When local arts agencies and community development funders share the table, they can see ways and means to share resources and collectively address the social issues impacting their communities. There is cumulative power of creativity, collectivity, and collaboration in these intersections.



4

The Fear of Grants

Applicant. Not supplicant.

Grants are the most visible component of a larger funding system. In a grant application, you strive to be transparent about your mission, vision, and process. You want to tell your story effectively and be seen as worthy of support. There are all kinds of advice manuals for writing grants, but few consider the very real distrust and fear associated with the grant application process. Look at your community development table where diverse and inclusive partners and collaborators are seated, and there will be some who have never written or even explored a grant application. In addition, those at the table may have seen grant-funded development initiatives come and go with little effect. They may have seen arts funding used in inauthentic ways under the guise of *engagement*. Research, openness, and experience can minimize the fear and the distrust. Real-time information and analysis of how these systems actually work can build confidence that results in a successful and satisfying exchange—of money and also of creative and social capital—between funders and grant seekers. All of this requires time and patience and, in many cases, personal agency and motivation.

There is a perceived power distance between many artists and arts organizations and potential community funders that is pervasive. *Power distance* is the extent to which the less powerful accept and expect that power is unequal. A prospective grantee might describe themselves as a hopeless novice or feel less worthy than others. They may not be grant-literate. They may be overwhelmed by the research required or the writing process itself. More likely, the funder's institutional presence, real or imagined, looms large. Uncertainty is heightened by the as-yet-unknown-or-unclear expertise and expectations of the funder.

Your goal should be to minimize the real gap that perceived power distance creates. How can you establish and keep open the conduits and channels that are about questions, answers, and shared information? How and where can you meet each other and with what tools can you create a shared narrative of community and competence and relationship? How are you vulnerable? What is your collective dream?

Partners who have experience and expertise—those who courageously begin and continue to nourish relationships from both directions—are critical. Initiative, agency, and creative energy and openness level the field. Everyone around the table—each artist, each partner, each collaborator, each funder—is a contributor to the focus, content, and stories included in the granted project. Permissions are given to use those stories.

No one should feel they are disadvantaged because they are left out of the conversations. How, where, and by whom the money is spent should be clearly outlined. Accountability, roles, and responsibilities should be clearly and intentionally articulated. What will/can/does change as a result of the granted arts process should be documented and evaluated. What you create is influenced by your best efforts—a shared narrative, with many chapters and many voices.

Jargon and access. Sometimes you have to translate when working with communities. Applicants and grantmakers become aware that *speaking the language* can influence funding and contribute to the barriers for equitable capitalization of community development. Language can exclude. Conversely, *sounding* well-versed may lead funders to believe applicants have a deep awareness of and capacity to meet the objectives. The way past these barriers is to be clear about what a funder means by its *jargon*. Do you have the same definitions of terms? Can you create a shared language?

Request clarity when applying for grants and make use of tools such as workshops and online trainings to enrich or expand what is known about the language of the funding application process.

Grantmakers as Partners at the Table

Working directly with communities is a transformative act for some funders. It may enable them to reexamine how they make and award grants. At the arts-based community development table, the systems of grantmaking could become barriers to authentic transformation.

Community-based organizations and groups usually do not have dedicated grant writers. Funders may need to shift focus from looking for organizations that can perfectly write a grant to those with the potential for change and community transformation. Consideration of additional or alternate application models—such as first round, in-person interviews with program constituents; site visits; or examinations of documentation—may widen the applicant pool and present new opportunities for artists and organizations who in the past lacked the time, administrative support, or expertise to successfully engage in grantwriting. As a funder, you might consider a reexamination of criteria. How do you research the focus and issues the grants address? Who are your guides in the communities in which you will invest? Where do you reward collaborations? Are there barriers? Are you funding the same types of organizations or projects? This is work you cannot do from behind your desk. The answers can be only found within the communities.



4

Integrity and funding. Who is making the grant? From where or whom does the money come? Are the funders aligned with your agreed-upon mission? It is tempting to follow the money and apply for the grant even if the project or program has to pivot, squeeze, expand, or change color to accommodate the funder's direction and grant criteria. The outcome of that grant may skew the trajectory of the work already accomplished and cause it to drift away from your mission.

When the funder who aligns with your goals has the potential to be a partner, it brings to the table not only funds but also the resources of social capital and expertise. This doesn't mean funders may micromanage the program, but it does mean that they are more than banks. They become partners and allies.

The application process for arts funding can be highly competitive. A fair amount of competition can lead to robust demonstrations and exchanges that connect a local arts agency and funder to an accomplished artist with the capacity to meet the project need. However, these processes can also fuel mistrust and disruption in artist communities if both the artists and the local arts agencies are not mindful of mechanisms that offer access to some while locking out others.

Artists can self-check for behaviors that may call their integrity into question in an effort to secure funding (such as over-representing prior contributions to group projects or embellishing knowledge base and experience). Conversely, a local arts agency or funder can examine whether or not it tends to fund *the usual suspects* or the same general group of artists over time. Equity in the distribution of funding opportunities is one of the best ways that local arts agencies and funders can demonstrate their integrity to artists, donors, and the community at large.

Artists, local arts agencies, and funders can and should work together to ensure that the process of supporting artmaking in communities does not damage the communities in the process. The process of economic and systemic support for art in community works best when the health and needs of the community are put first, and the local arts agency, artist, and funder work as integral partners—over time—to identify, reach, and celebrate mutual goals.

Support from Other Sources

Artists and creative entrepreneurs bring their alternative economies with them to the table. These economies are often the lifeblood of the communities in which you work. People trade goods for services (and vice versa) and use their creativity to meet daily needs. Working alongside traditional systems of cash-exchange, the foundation of these interactions is more personal and reciprocal and requires a level of trust and relationship building. An examination of nontraditional funding structures can connect both the artist and the local arts agency to methods that go beyond the rigid, limiting system of application-based funding processes and into more inspired, expansive ways of co-creating. What other means of raising funds are possible? How can you harness the collective imagination to help fund community development?

Creative capital. Artists can monetize their creativity, ideas, and inspirations, and sell their art. Investment can be made into the collective imaginations of people without exploiting them or their stories. Paid apprentices can work with paid artists to create a marketable work like a bench or a textile. The sale of that work can be looped back into the program. Think about Paul Artspace in Florissant, Missouri, for a moment. A nonprofit artist residence program and site, Paul Artspace has a fertile lawn that was turned into a cucumber patch. Not only is Paul Artspace known for hosting international visual artists and writers, it also sells pickles. And some of the artists and writers in residence there have taken part in the canning at harvest time.

Entrepreneurialism and product. Who around the table has the *business chops*? Collaborating with people who have expertise can lead to a plan for capital. Process is everything, but is there a product too? If *necessity is the mother of invention*, then creativity can be seen as necessity's partner. Beyond commissions and contracts, the artist holds tremendous capacity for monetizing work and services. The difficulty can come when trying to do so in a crowded market or when the artist lacks the expertise to reach potential new audiences. Marketing experts and sales professionals can collaborate with artists and demonstrate to them how to develop a viable plan for accessing new capital.

Local arts agencies can support this kind of entrepreneurialism when they design training programs that help develop artist capacity. The more that artists use their craft for self-sufficiency, the less they are reliant on competitive, single support sources (such as grants). Social entrepreneur models can be adapted to work at the community level also. Businesses can hire community members—including artists—to build new alliances and allies. The community development program itself may be *arts and job training*.



4

Events. Activities that raise capital to financially support or sustain a program can sometimes bridge a funding gap. They are stand-alone or series-based happenings with the dual goal of activating philanthropy while engaging old and new supporters as attendees. When designed with community collaborators, events can avoid exploiting members of that community. With co-creation, there is the awareness of how to avoid any tendency to objectify, reach down, or use each other as *examples*. In planning, ask for participation in every instance: Who is telling the story?

Events can be celebrations of the community's collective work. They also can be a means through which you show your work in process, practice, development, or action, and where you invite attendees to take part in the work's co-creation. Events also can bring together people from divergent experiences and backgrounds—funders, local arts agencies, other supporters—in dialogue and fellowship.

Marketing guru Seth Godin posits that if something is *interesting*, it should be surprising. And it should tell the truth. So, events can be a way to invite the audience to take part, here and now, in co-creation. Put out some art supplies. Get some cardboard and push pins. Ask the attendees to create by attaching actual verbal and visual artifacts or written comments or drawings. These are the things that tell the truth in real time of the effects of art and creativity in the community development process. A real time response to what the community can do. Together.

Crowdsourcing. As we all move further into the digital age, crowdsourcing via digital platforms has become a valuable tool in fundraising for artists and organizations alike. Campaign sites such as GoFundMe and Kickstarter have been utilized to fund major filmmaking initiatives, record releases, and large-scale art installations, and have supplemented organizational funding losses. Monetary digital crowdsourcing is advantageous in that it can be widely shared, donations can be anonymous or come from strangers, and giving options can include very small dollar amounts so many people can contribute. It does take time and work to get the word out about these digital platforms. While crowdsourcing is tempting, it is not magic. A hoard of anonymous benefactors will not suddenly appear to save the day. Successful crowdfunding requires a network, built intentionally, over time, with people who are interested and invested in the project in some way.

Community or personal crowdsourcing events can be digitally-based or in-person events. They can merge celebratory events with fundraising and are adaptable as an appeal for support in a specific context, to a special audience, or for a good cause. This form

of pooling money also provides space for artists to pitch projects directly to a room of community members or small organizations.

In the *soup bowl* model, organizers offer a free meal (such as a bowl of soup) and charge an entry fee. Pitches and presentations for funding are given by artists or organizations under consideration, and the crowd votes. At the end of the event, the pitch with the most votes is awarded the pooled funds. Be sure to offer multiple ways to contribute in person and online.

Barter and trade. These are ancient but now nontraditional forms of transactions using goods and services in lieu of cash or other forms of support. These may include trading goods of equal or lesser value for services. It is important to remember, however, that although no actual *money* is used in these types of transactions, there is still value attached to the good being traded or service being rendered. Setting clear boundaries in pricing can prevent the devaluation of a good, particularly a material work such as a painting or sculpture. Additionally, terms of barter and trade can be co-conceptualized at the outset to avoid conflict after the transaction. Although gaining popularity in artist communities in recent years, these forms of commerce are generally between individuals and not between organizations.

Timebanking. *Time* is a currency. Timebanking collaborative organizations are generally services-based, and trades are calculated via a digital hub where one can request a service and another person can fulfill the request. Time is added or subtracted from the user's total balance, depending on the value placed upon service rendered. The Cowry Collective in St. Louis, for example, states, "Your time is your money." This kind of timebank links members in a cycle of reciprocity. Community development partners could use this currency to gain the time of someone who has expertise they need (a grant writer, for example).

Individuals. The power of passionate individuals with access to any of the above support options can be a base for development. Investing in the mission of an organization or the creative capital of an artist can be the catalyst for a project or program. Patrons can include partners with mentorship or professional development skills.

What do you need to do your work? All kinds of capital.



CASE STUDY

4

THE BLACK SKILLET FUNDERS GROUP

LOCATION:	St. Louis, Missouri
DATE:	Established Fall 2017
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Treasure Shields-Redmond and Dail Chambers
WEBSITE:	blackskilletfunders.tumblr.com
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES:	Multidisciplinary
CONSTITUENTS:	Artists of color and arts patrons
ARTISTS/ADMIN:	Treasure Shields-Redmond and Dail Chambers

The Black Skillet Funders Group (Black Skillet) is a community-based crowdfunding initiative that supports projects and needs of artists of color. The model is one of community-driven donor sponsorship built on fellowship and the breaking of bread. Quarterly events offer artists the opportunity to pre-submit a proposal for funding and then pitch that proposal to attendees who have paid \$10 to attend the event. Each event begins with a shared soul food meal prepared by Black Skillet volunteers, and then funds are awarded via a group-centered selection process. The funds are generated from cash donations in the lead-up to the event and attendee entry fees (minus meal preparation costs). There is no artist application fee, and funding applicants receive free entry and meal.

History

The Black Skillet was founded by visual artist and author Dail Chambers and poet, educator, and consultant Treasure Shields-Redmond. The two women envisioned a way of generating community-based financial support outside of the grant-and-loans model that was weighted by cumbersome and hyper-competitive processes that didn't speak to the needs, schedules, and skills of many young black artists. Chambers and Shields-Redmond designed the Black Skillet events to have no barriers to entry, rigid timelines, or burdensome application processes. The heart of the model is an homage to the ways that black communities, led by women, often raised funds for occasions like the birth of children, weddings, commemorations, anniversaries, and funerals—through community-based, collective giving that was often rooted in the sharing of a meal.

During its first Black Skillet event, nine artists presented projects for funding in numerous genres—literary arts, visual art, music, textiles, and fashion. The event was well attended by community members. At the end of the night, emcee/rapper Bates was awarded almost \$600, funds that she tearfully exclaimed were desperately needed as she gave details of

her struggles as a successful, yet financially struggling, touring performing artist. Subsequent Black Skillet events have funded timebanks and childrens' books, with some events ending in attendees deciding to split the funding between two equally deserving artists and projects.

In addition to the quarterly events, the group seeks to generate monthly support at tiered giving levels, ensuring that funding events are not solely reliant upon participant attendance.

Mission

The mission of Black Skillet is to show care for one another, honor custom and tradition, and create a community of philanthropists through the arts, using food and fellowship as the pathway.

Success and Change

Goals

- Provide a framework of financial and social support for artists of color.
- Build community and honor tradition through meal preparation and sharing.
- Demonstrate the ability of communities of color to change the paradigm of an established system when that system does not serve all.
- Place value on the arts and reshape the conversation about how the arts are funded.

Defining Success

- The goals and conversations of the community are centered around empathy; not *money*.
- Artists are aware of and take pride in a new funding model outside of the hyper-competitive nature of what currently exists region-wide.
- The application process for artists to take part in the quarterly crowdfunding events is easy and enables participation. Also, funded artists do not have to report back to the group on the funds they were awarded.
- Attendees of the quarterly crowdfunding events can decide how to apply the pooled funds.
- The community of Black American society reconnects with its practices and traditions and honors its ancestors.

Outcomes

- Community and relationship building is created around a shared meal.
- Fellowship through the arts takes place in a safe, welcoming, noncompetitive environment.
- Artists who may have barriers to entry to other funding models can and do receive funding.



4

Nuts and Bolts

Environment

The Black Skillet serves the entire metropolitan area of St. Louis. There is a large cultural community, and numerous arts organizations award funds that are largely grant-based and provide opportunities via residencies, trainings, and physical space. However, especially for black artists, it can be difficult to access those funds in a city with a high number of practicing artists, all vying for the same grants. The Black Skillet recently began hosting events in the Fannie Lou Hamer House, a community writers' retreat space owned by one of the founders.

Governance/Leadership

The Black Skillet is led by longtime friends and collaborators Dail Chambers and Treasure Shields-Redmond. They have extensive experience working in community art, academia, and funding and economic systems, and are accomplished in their craft, both exhibiting and reading across the country and abroad. They also have a keen understanding of the dynamics of power, race, and equity in the funding matrix and history of St. Louis.

The Black Skillet is governed by its founders, with community input during its events. Because the group is mostly made of a small number of volunteers, a formal governing process has yet to be established outside the mutually agreed-upon framework formed at the beginning.

Financial Resources

The Black Skillet is largely funded by attendees who attend its events. However, the group also offers monthly patronage packages that can be supported by those with the will and the financial means to contribute to the Black Skillet in larger dollar amounts. This helps to offset the cost of food and other supplies, as well as to supplement the financial awards given to artists.

Constraints/Challenges

- The funding stream and giving pool are based on attendee entry fees and individual giving.
- Numbers of attendance at the quarterly events are not consistent.
- The founders and their small group of volunteers have difficulty being able to reach a large number of potential donors and attendees.
- The group lacks capital for seed money.

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CLOSING: TOGETHER AT THE TABLE

We leave this guide as we entered it—with a quote from the writer James Baldwin.

“The artist is distinguished from all other responsible actors in society—the politicians, legislators, educators, and scientists—by the fact that he is his own test tube, his own laboratory, working according to very rigorous rules, however unstated these may be, and cannot allow any consideration to supersede his responsibility to reveal all that he can possibly discover concerning the mystery of the human being.

Society must accept some things as real; but he must always know that visible reality hides a deeper one, and that all our action and achievement rest on things unseen. A society must assume that it is stable, but the artist must know, and he must let us know, that there is nothing stable under heaven. One cannot possibly build a school, teach a child, or drive a car without taking some things for granted.

The artist cannot and must not take anything for granted, but must drive to the heart of every answer and expose the question the answer hides.”

— James Baldwin, Excerpt from his essay *The Creative Process* from *Creative America*, 1962.

Each of us navigates the questions and the answers. As the writers here, we do this through traveling where communities and the arts intersect. The work of arts in community can be messy. It is not neat or step-by-step. It is not available in ten easy lessons. Thus we have raised many questions in this resource guide. The provocations and disruptiveness that can come with the territory of arts and communities provide friction and spark. This is generative and connective. It is where creation happens. It can be where profound transformations unfold.

Art is not separate from our lives. It is the language of emotion and empathy. Artists are translators. In an alternate society in which money did not equal success, the artists who live in our communities would be the billionaires because they hold the currency of vision. In truth, when we allow ourselves, we all do. Each of us holds the potential for vision and creation. We ask you to embrace the generative and the connective work of arts-based community development as a path to transform your communities into places and spaces that support, nurture, and honor the people that live there. We ask you to listen to the stories. To tell the stories. To create new stories.

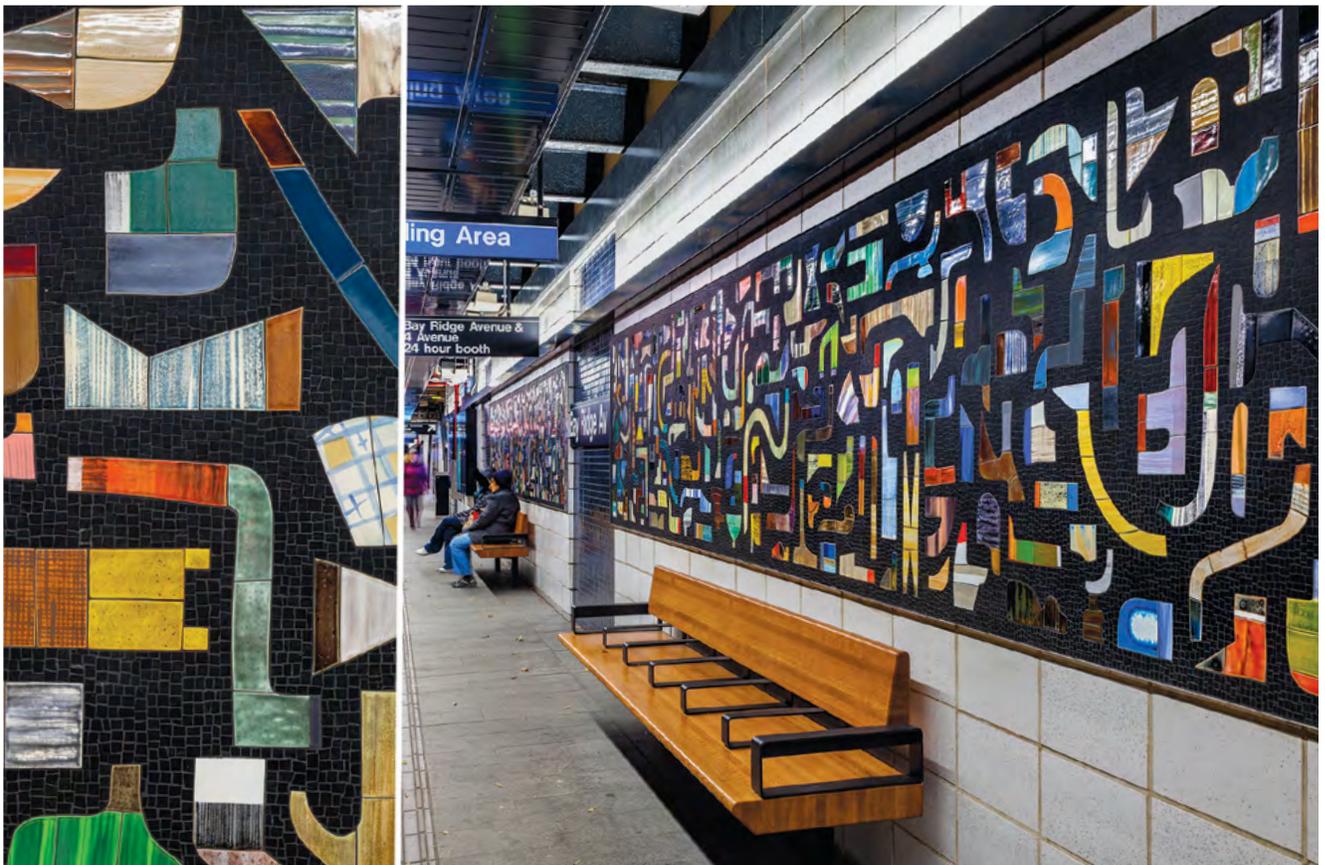
In our metaphor of tables and chairs, we are all carpenters. We craft and turn. We pound and nail and construct. We are all at this table—wobbly though it may sometimes be. Together.

Thank you.



↑ *Angle of incidence* on the Seattle, Washington SODO Track by Christopher Derek Bruno, 2017. Commissioned by 4Culture and King County Metro Transit. Photo courtesy of @wiseknife.

↓ *Untitled mosaics* installed in Brooklyn subway stations in New York City by Mickalene Thomas, Katy Fischer, and Monika Bravo. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design. Photo courtesy of Anthony Verde.



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