

## **Creative Placemaking from the Community Up**

### **Lessons Learned**

National cohort:

Arts & Democracy, Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona,  
Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance, LA Commons, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY,  
Roberto Bedoya, Elizabeth Hamby, Judith Jennings, and Vanessa Whang



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# **Creative Placemaking from the Community Up - Lessons Learned**

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*This report was written by co-project directors Caron Atlas and Karen Mack with contributions by Roberto Bedoya, Debi Chess Mabie, Elizabeth Hamby, Judith Jennings, Sharon LaRue, Masoom Moitra, Tom Oesau, and Vanessa Whang*

## **Abstract**

Creative Placemaking from the Community Up brought together a national cohort of groups—Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY, Arts & Democracy, LA Commons, Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance, and the Oakland Cultural Affairs Office— whose creative placemaking is grounded in communities. We came together through a shared set of values including equity, racial justice, and self determination, and the overall goal of advancing social justice in our communities.

Our approach to learning is from the community up, drawing on deep reservoirs of local experience and knowledge and making connections between our communities. Cutting across a range of issues—from public housing to public health, from transportation to equitable development—we came together as peers across the country to share our knowledge about how to build powerful, arts-based community initiatives.

Project activities over the 22-month project included experiential learning through cross sector collaborations, peer exchanges and skill building workshops, participatory planning and cultural mapping, thematic convenings, and presentations at local and national conferences. The project also developed and disseminated toolkits, webinars, reflective essays, case studies, cultural plans, and other resources.

## **PART I WHAT WE DID: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Purpose and Goals:**

Many communities across the nation have been torn apart. Highways cut through urban neighborhoods and mountaintop removal destroys rural homes. Social and economic inequities, the loss of vital community institutions, and political dysfunction magnify the physical destruction and erosion of civic life. Yet our communities are resourceful, drawing on deep cultural reserves to stay strong. This idea was at the core of our NEA Our Town Knowledge Building project, Creative Placemaking from the Community Up. The project learned from diverse urban and rural localities how to leverage the power of arts and culture to reweave social fabric and build healthy communities.

In Southern Arizona, an arts foundation examined how art spaces further a sense of belonging. New York City artists played a catalytic role in engaging residents in the city's participatory budgeting process. Cultural asset mapping is being used in LA as a key strategy in promoting economic development in one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the country. And cultural workers from across Kentucky have come together across the rural and urban divide, to exchange ideas and build a collective action oriented vision for social justice in their state.

Creative Placemaking from the Community Up brought together a cohort of groups—Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY (NOCD-NY), Arts & Democracy, LA Commons, Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance, and the Oakland Cultural Affairs Office—whose creative placemaking is grounded in our communities. We came together through a shared set of values and the overall goal of advancing social justice in our communities.

Cutting across a range of issues—from public housing to public health, from transportation to equitable development—we have come together as peers from across the country to learn from each other, grow together in creative placemaking that is grounded in our communities, and share our knowledge about how to build powerful, community initiatives across sectors that use art and culture as the primary drivers of positive change.

This project responded to a moment of opportunity. We engaged around rezonings, affordable housing, resiliency planning, and racial justice. We were part of new initiatives that connect arts and culture with public health, participatory budgeting, community safety, land stewardship, and the Appalachian economic transition. Several of our cities were initiating cultural plans. People were embracing new forms of dialogue and civic engagement in response to growing polarization. This project was about how we, and our members and networks, could come together to seize this moment and share knowledge to make a difference.

### **Pedagogy:**

Our pedagogy reflected our values and our sustained relationships with our communities as grounded intermediaries and place-based networks. We learned from and documented on the ground experiences, made connections between communities and across sectors, exchanged exemplary practices and amplified them.

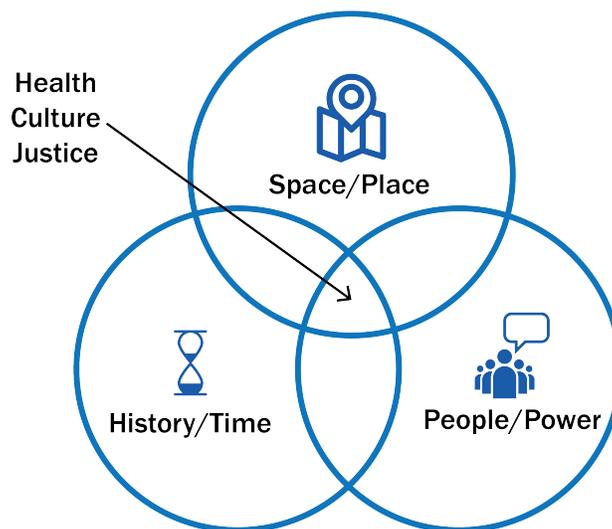
The Creative Placemaking from the Community Up team came together regularly to exchange experiences and reflect on them. We started our collaboration at a team retreat in Ajo, Arizona where we exchanged work, identified shared values and goals, and framed questions for our inquiry. Partners also participated together in the Cultural Organizing for Community Change learning exchange in Brooklyn in 2017. A final retreat at Kentucky Foundation for Women's Hopscotch House in 2018

provided an opportunity to reflect on and synthesize our learnings and discuss the dissemination of the resources we created. Throughout, we shared our learnings in multiple contexts through presentations at national conferences and through our Placemaking from the Community Up webinar.

Our approach to learning is from the community up, drawing on deep reservoirs of local experience and knowledge while also making connections between our communities. Knowledge building about creative placemaking happened on multiple levels: experiential learning, mentoring, skill building workshops, case studies, local and national peer learning exchanges, participatory action research, writing, and collaborative inquiry.

### Values:

Creative placemaking from the community up is really about placekeeping in partnership with communities, recognizing that they exist with many assets including their rich stories and artful ways of telling them. Our key values are equity, self-determination, racial justice and community knowledge. We support people on the ground in leveraging their creativity and culture to make their places more just, healthy and livable.



We work with members and partners who are community-based organizations from a range of sectors with a history and trust in their communities. Our work responds to local needs, cultures, and leadership, and we take time to develop mutually beneficial partnerships and sustained processes. Understanding how race and class can impact who can access or fully participate in programs, we schedule activities in places and at times that work best for diverse participants. We take care that programs don't reinforce the power dynamics that we want to shift, e.g. when TA strengthens cultural hierarchies. We work with a wide range of respected community leaders who bring multiple forms of knowledge to the table, including youth, elders and artists.

As Elizabeth Hamby wrote in her essay, *Creative Placemaking from the Community Up: From Activating Space to Exposing Structural Racism*, "Creative placemaking from the community up has less to do with the activation of space, and more to do with illuminating the ways that places are constructed through imagination and perception, which themselves are shaped by history and systems of oppression. Perhaps rather than using the arts to activate public space, creative placemaking from the community up is about working to transform the systems that determine what is public in the first place. It's about pushing ourselves, over and over again to enact that this is what democracy looks like."

## Challenges:

In our communities, there is a history of mistrust and isolation of some artists and cultural organizations, which is often the result of deep structures of racial inequity and unequal power. This has been exacerbated in recent years by issues related to gentrification and displacement. In these contexts, over stretched community groups are expected to do more with less money.

*It is difficult “being a very small organization and being able to keep the work going with a small part-time staff. As our profile raises people expect more from us. And just raising the money to continue takes up a large part of our time.”*

Although government plays an outsize role in the areas where we work, in many instances there exists a significant disconnect between communities and opaque and impermeable government bureaucracies -- ultimately an equity issue. Functioning as an intermediary in this context can pose risks.

*It was a...”challenging balance being an advocate and identifying with community based groups and then being a partner with the city. We just kept presenting our case, convincing some of our allies that we could work with the city, remain committed to our progressive values and work with integrity.”*

*For me, when I’m at that table with public will and political will—which is the table of power in government—I’m going to say, hey, those artists have another kind of will called “poetic will”! I’m the weird dude at the table who is supposed to be speaking for all these different kinds of artists.*

As we live in a time of extreme political polarization, longstanding narratives about people and places -- e.g. southern rural locales or public housing communities -- amplify these divides. Again working as intermediaries, this complicates our efforts to bring people together across difference.

*“Cultural Organizing is alive and well but it is hard to dream big and do cultural organizing when your culture is under attack all the time and when people are already spread thin.”*

*“How do we create civic spaces to not just deal with the celebration of culture, but also the contestation of culture.”*

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do and creating and maintaining partnerships is rarely easy, particularly as we ally with organizations across sectors. We often find ourselves working with community organizers whose campaign orientation is sometimes hard to align with the slower pace of cultural programming. Additionally, in some cross sector projects, partners feel used and their expertise disrespected because of the difficulty in bridging across divides.

*“Is our work about systems or ecologies? Do we embed ourselves in systems to try to make change or do we learn how to create together a holistic ecology?”*

Undergirding all of these challenges is that of sustaining the work with project funding often ending right when the work needs to continue, contributing to high staff turnover and the inherent inconsistencies this brings. And, we also find frustrating, the lack of recognition of and support for the leadership of community based initiatives. Additionally, we struggle to take advantage of opportunities to participate in statewide and national efforts, having limited resources, which also limits the time available to reflect and write about the work on our own terms.

*“Often times we start projects thinking it is one project but what is revealed is a different question altogether or a different question that is important to the community.”*

## **Activities:**

Despite the hurdles that are inevitable in this work, the members of our cohort successfully achieved the programming goals of the grant through a range of activities that fostered our learning and shared this knowledge with others. In our activities, we found common ground on themes that included civic participation, cultural planning/community planning, equitable development, public health, human rights vs. real estate rights, claiming public space, belonging, working across difference and creating civic spaces that are ethical spaces.

### Experiential Learning

The most powerful growth in our knowledge came from the work of cohort members rooted in on-the-ground cross sector collaborations. These included Creative Transformations, NOCY-NY's program of 17 projects involving 19 artists and organizational partners working with residents in public housing communities across all five Boroughs of New York City and LA Commons' Heart of Hyde Park art project which engaged residents in asserting their unique identity amidst radical changes to their neighborhood with the coming of a new above-ground light rail line.

### Learning Exchanges

Learning exchanges and workshops enhanced knowledge and built the capacity of others seeking to do this work. Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona brought together teaching artists for an Arts and Learning convening (10/17). Arts & Democracy and NOCD-NY co-sponsored Cultural Organizing for Community Change, a daylong exchange that included a cultural organizing framework, 11 skill-building workshops and case studies, and a walking tour (11/17). NOCD-NY continued this conversation through bi-monthly Peer Learning Exchanges focused on immigration, rezonings and power mapping. Creative Transformations project partners met quarterly through learning community exchanges and roundtables. Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance's statewide Cultural Organizing Learning Exchange in Berea focused on arts and social justice, highlighting exemplary work such as The Letcher County Culture Hub and Mijente, an immigrant rights organization that included a community tour (5/17). Visiting each other's work across Kentucky, including the Letcher County Culture Hub; language justice trainings; and a Lexington convening (2/18) continued the learning. LA Commons held several exchanges in Los Angeles that brought together local creative placemaking practitioners to engage with speakers like Roberto Bedoya and Roberta Uno, in addition to local site visits. Programs and documentation for learning exchanges can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/CommunityUp>.

### Cultural Planning

NOCD-NY was a primary partner on the Hester Street team for CreateNYC, New York's first comprehensive cultural plan, organizing community engagement and focus groups related to artist needs, public plazas, resilience, labor, and public housing. Oakland Department of Cultural Affairs completed their first cultural plan, with a focus on equity, culture and belonging. Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona also explored the relevance of their existing cultural plan in dialogue with the community through their "Conversations" project.

### Presentations

We shared our learnings through presentations Grantmakers in the Arts (10/17), Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (8/17), National American Planning Association (5/17), Americans for the Arts (6/17 & 6/18), Hunter College (5/17), Participatory Budgeting (PB) conferences in Arizona and Montreal (6/17 & 3/18) and Arts for LA Annual Convergence (11/17). Art and public health was one of the shared themes

that ran throughout our work. To deepen our learning on this theme, we organized a national roundtable that was hosted by the NYC Center for Health Equity (5/17). We also participated in an ASU Creative Placemaking roundtable for technical assistance providers (11/17) and PolicyLink Equity Summit in Chicago (4/18).

### National Webinar

A national webinar, hosted by PolicyLink (10/17), featured presentations by Arts & Democracy, NOCD-NY, LA Commons, Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance, Hector Design, and PolicyLink. It shared our stories, lessons learned, and resources. It was recorded and made available to a broader audience through social media and as part of a resource newsletter.

### Resources

The project generated and distributed the following resources: (which can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/CommunityUp>)

- NOCD-NY and Arts & Democracy joined with El Puente and Hester Street to create the Cultural Blueprint for Healthy Communities toolkit ([culturalblueprint.org](http://culturalblueprint.org)) for integrating arts and culture, broadly defined, in neighborhood planning. The Blueprint tool was piloted in Gowanus and Bushwick, Brooklyn, two communities undergoing rezonings. The resulting website, poster, and report were distributed across the city.
- Arts Foundation wrote a report with Artspace surveying available art spaces and focusing on three long dormant spaces.
- Arts & Democracy collaborated with Hector Design and the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) to create a resource to encourage and support communities in integrating arts and culture in participatory budgeting. The resource will be disseminated nationally by PBP.
- NOCD-NY disseminated its Creative Transformation: Arts, Culture, and Public Housing Communities report and public housing cultural plan recommendations to city agencies, elected officials, housing organizations, and artists.
- Cohort members Judi Jennings, Karen Mack, Elizabeth Hamby, Roberto Bedoya and Vanessa Whang wrote essays. Topics include arts and public health, claiming space, advancing racial justice, rural urban connections, and cultural planning. Jennings' series of essays will be featured on the Artplace blog, asking tough questions about creative placemaking and considering the unbuilt environment. Bedoya will help disseminate our project writing through his fellowship at Arizona State University.
- The Kentucky Cultural Organizing Learning Exchange highlighted The Letcher County Culture Hub's work that combines the expertise of economists, humanities scholars, and artists to advance economic development driven by cultural assets. This work is documented in the Culture Hub's Performing Our Future digital toolkit ([performingourfuture.com](http://performingourfuture.com)).
- The cohort recorded our national Creative Placemaking from the Community Up webinar.
- The group created a power point illustrating our work and lessons learned for our American Planning Association presentation.
- A slideshow illustrating our work through stories and images makes up Part 3 of this report. Some examples of the stories and images follow on the following two pages.

## Stories About our Work



### LA Commons

#### The Sankofa Bird at Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks procession in Leimert Park.

The Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks closed a month of community awareness and education around traffic safety as part of Mayor Eric Garcetti's "Vision Zero" campaign to end all traffic-related deaths by 2025. According to statistics, Los Angeles has the highest number of traffic fatalities per capita in the country. Crenshaw Boulevard ranks high in serious injuries and fatalities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

A giant Sankofa Bird puppet was present at multiple events throughout the month, a recognized icon of the Adinkra symbolic system of the Akan people of Ghana. Sankofa asks not to forget the past, translated as "it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind." The Sankofa Bird's design has it looking back as it moves forward—an integral message of the Vision Zero initiative.

These African symbols are meaningful to Leimert Park and can be seen throughout the area. Multiple Sankofa "proverbs" were displayed on signs and banners along Crenshaw between Martin Luther King and 52nd Street to share messages of safety, including: "Drive Don't Fly," "Fast Drive Could Be Last Drive," and "Normal Speed Meets Every Need."

Photo: Brian W. Carter

### KY Cultural Organizing Alliance

#### Summer Art Camp for Youth with Incarcerated Friends and Family Members

The Special Project creates weekly art activities with families visiting their loved ones incarcerated in the Louisville Metro Jail. All of the art activities are especially designed to strengthen protective factors for these children and young people. For example, activities encourage hopefulness, optimism, self-expression, and social bonding.

In 2017, The Special Project was able to partner with YouthBuild Louisville to offer a Summer Art Camp for youth with incarcerated loved ones in a community setting outside the jail. YouthBuild Louisville is part of a national program that offers job training and GED programs to young people 18-24 facing social and economic challenges.

To break through the silence and stigma, camp leaders put up a sign that said "Art Camp for Young People with Incarcerated Friends and Families". The campers appreciated being able to talk about how incarceration affected them and eagerly participated in the art activities.



### Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona

#### Cultural Places: An Exploration of Tucson's Assets

The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona (formerly the Tucson Pima Arts Council) invited Artspace to help them explore short- and long-term strategies to address the facility needs of Tucson's creative sector. The challenge was to create and preserve culturally-relevant spaces. Efforts focused on three properties: Dunbar School Project in the Dunbar-Spring neighborhood, downtown's Tucson Performing Arts Center (PAC), and the central-south Julia Keen School in the Julia Keen neighborhood adjacent to Barrio Centro.

The project helped bring these sites together under a framework of placemaking and placekeeping. A robust conversation came together about how artists engage with space—the value of places with a sense of belonging. With an African American population of less than 4%, a place of belonging in Tucson is everything. It was concluded that there cannot be a sense of belonging without a place of belonging, challenging the Arts Foundation's original definition of "placemaking"...

photos: Creative Spaces Consulting Report, Tucson, Arizona, January 2017



## Case study: Gowanus

Arts & Democracy was engaged in Bridging Gowanus, a community planning process to shape a sustainable, livable, and inclusive future for the Gowanus neighborhood. They were also part of the arts and culture committee of the Department of City Planning's Gowanus PLACES Neighborhood Planning Study. Additionally, Arts & Democracy and NOCD-NY are part of the Gowanus Neighborhood Coalition for Justice, a concerted effort by local residents and stakeholders to specifically elevate the priorities of low- and moderate-income residents, industrial firms, and the neighborhood-based organizations and small businesses that serve them.

Hester Street, in collaboration with Arts & Democracy, NOCD-NY and a steering committee of community organizations, joined forces with local artist and resident

Imani Gayle Gillison to recognize and elevate the neighborhood's arts and culture landscape through the Making Gowanus project which included the social justice performance "Soft" by Theater of the Liberated.

### ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT:

75+ people

Who:

- Making Gowanus and Theater of the Liberated: Soft (Cast - Audience)
- Gowanus Neighborhood Coalition for Justice
- CHPS (Park Slope Christian Help, Inc.)
- Gowanus Neighborhood Planning Study arts and culture committee

### KEY ISSUES:

- Challenged community engagement and trust
- Recognition of and reinvestment in community assets
- Erosion of neighborhood health and livability
- Concern over affordability and development
- Focus on public and green spaces
- Recognition of community artistic and youth resources and leadership



## NOCD-NY

### Cultural Blueprint for Healthy Communities

In partnership with El Puente, Hester Street and Arts & Democracy, NOCD-NY produced a Cultural Blueprint for Healthy Communities toolkit, website and poster for citywide and national audiences that describes the purpose of the blueprint and how it was applied in Bushwick and Gowanus (pictured), Brooklyn.

## Participatory Budgeting + Arts

Adding arts throughout your participatory budgeting process can make it more fun, meaningful, and powerful. This brochure shares examples for incorporating arts as you brainstorm ideas, develop proposals, get out the vote, and fund winning projects.



Develop leaders

### 1 Build collaborations with art partners



Lift participant voices

### 2 Make PB more visible and engaging



### 3 Increase and improve deliberative decision-making

## Arts & Democracy

### Participatory Budgeting + Arts

With Hector Design and the Participatory Budgeting Project, Arts & Democracy created a resource to help communities incorporate art in participatory budgeting (PB). It shows how involving arts at all stages of the process can further PB's vision of democracy and equity from the community up.



## Accomplishments:

### Short term:

Creative Placemaking from the Community Up strengthened communities through the arts by:

- Carrying out successful and enduring cross sector collaborations integrating arts and culture in community development, housing, public health, planning, public safety and transportation.
- Furthering arts and culture as an anti displacement strategy by collaborating with housing organizations and social justice coalitions.
- Making community planning more inclusive, including arts and culture in neighborhood rezonings, participatory budgeting, Promise Zones and citywide planning, e.g. 2028 LA Olympics.
- Highlighting community-based creative approaches to building the post coal Appalachian economy and shifting narratives about rural communities.
- Creating ongoing mechanisms for peer learning exchanges, skill building, equitable partnership development, and cross sector collaboration.
- Building and strengthening community, city, and statewide networks that build social fabric and support racial justice.
- Connecting urban, suburban, and rural issues and experiences to further understanding about commonalities and differences.
- Developing three cultural plans—a city agency (Oakland), a primary partner (NYC), and a program committee member (LA County)—and following up on a fourth plan (Pima).
- Leveraging support from city government and non arts sources such as NY Civic Engagement Table, Robert Wood Johnson, and Transportation for America.
- Developing recommendations for inclusive and accountable alliance building, effective cross sector collaborations, and policies furthering equity.

### Longer term:

It will take more than the 22-month project period for our work to realize its full impact. Our activities advance longer term goals, shape policies, and produce the ripple effects that result from embedding the arts in other sectors. Public health collaborations will show their full impact as arts and culture are integrated into health strategies to further social cohesion. In Kentucky, this led to the Special Project's and Center for Health Equity's upcoming publication *Parental Incarceration, Children's Health, and an Opportunity to Shift the Future* highlighting their Health Impact Assessment. In NYC it resulted in a new partnership with NOCD-NY and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on an anti-violence project and Our Town proposal. In Los Angeles, LA Commons' work on the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative led to a shift toward more purposeful integration of arts-based strategies to address the social determinants of health related to housing, education and criminal justice.

NOCD-NY's Creative Transformations is working long term to improve the quality of life for public housing residents and increase support for arts in public housing. This includes strengthening cultural infrastructure and resident leadership. It also involves institutional change, e.g. how arts organizations and settlement houses engage with communities and how housing groups incorporate the arts. The full impact of LA Commons' pilots with Transportation for America, LA Metro and the LA City Department of Transportation will be seen as arts are further integrated into the massive build out of the county's metro system. The cohort's engagement of city and regional planners through the American Planning Association presentation, involvement in rezonings and participatory budgeting, development of planning curriculum, and service on the LA City Planning Commission will lead to more participatory approaches to civic participation and participatory planning.

Ripple effects in Kentucky include the Kentucky Foundation for Women working with the Rural Urban Exchange to integrate cultural organizing strategies in their work, and continued work in support of Mijente, a new organization working for immigrant rights. After highlighting their work at the Cultural Organizing Learning Exchange, Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance supported Mijente in attending a language justice training in Asheville, NC, that led to them leading language workshops in Kentucky. The Letcher County Culture Hub, also highlighted at the Learning Exchange, is having a growing impact as a national model of grassroots economic development that connects artists with local businesses.

Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, in partnership with Nature, Arts, Culture and Heritage Organizations, invested in long-term strategies to elevate the profile of the arts and foster cultural equity. Their goal was to place the arts at the center of local and regional economic development and quality of life policies and programs that affect the overall well-being of the region.

Examples of our work to shape policy include:

- LA Common's creative collaboration with Vision Zero in LA used the power of the arts to promote policies that further street safety.
- The Louisville, KY-based Special Project drew directly from their arts-based programming in the jail to shape their policy work. They are advocating for a pilot project to consider family ties and responsibilities in District Court sentencing. Arts-based messaging focused on decision makers and changing the public narrative about the people who are incarcerated and their families.
- The Cultural Blueprint for Healthy Communities' rezoning recommendations (with the Gowanus Neighborhood Coalition for Justice) included reopening the Gowanus Houses Community Center. At his 10/17 Town Hall, Mayor De Blasio committed to making this happen.
- Arts & Democracy served as part of the citywide committee that set policy for PB in NYC, including lowering the voting age to 11 and financing targeted outreach and translation to ensure full inclusion. As part of the local District Committee they helped extend the program beyond capital to include expense funding. Arts & Democracy was also part of city discussions about a proposed City Charter revision to create an independent NYC Office of Civic Engagement and worked to ensure that artists and cultural organizations were included in the proposal.
- The cultural plans we helped to create (Oakland's, *Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan*, NYC's *Create NYC* and LA County's *Equity and Inclusion Initiative*) included significant policy recommendations related to equity, inclusion, access, and working across city agencies, and generated new programs and structures to implement these recommendations. As a result of the LA Initiative, an equity statement is now part of their grant applications.

### **Scaling out and scaling up:**

In his essay with Vanessa Whang, Roberto Bedoya writes, "One of the things I got to thinking about through the plan and the idea of creative placemaking from the community up is this whole language about scale and scaling, and how it has currency in the world of philanthropy and arts management. It's usually about scaling up and rarely about scaling out. But if you do creative placemaking from the community up, it's usually about scaling out...It's creating strong networks and knowing those networks have power."

We will scale out our work across our local, regional, and national networks and partnerships. We will broaden our reach through the national distribution of our resources and writings on such platforms as the Artplace Blog and Arizona State University. Our trainings and curricula will have a ripple effect through those who participate - be they urban planning students who then take positions in city government, or community activists who incorporate cultural organizing.

We will scale up through cross sector partnerships with national organizations like Transportation for America, Participatory Budgeting Project and PolicyLink who will bring our experiences and resources to their memberships and embed our practices in their work. Government partnerships also scale up our work and help it to have a greater, and more systemic impact. A new partnership with the Governmental Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a national network of policymakers, will scale up our work around equity. This partnership grew directly from the Creative Placemaking from the Community Up project and has resulted in a new knowledge building project: The Power of Culture to Advance Equity that focuses on what it means to operationalize equity - both by advancing cultural equity and by incorporating arts and culture into other equity efforts. Leveraging grounded community knowledge with a national network of equity-focused local/regional governments will provide a powerful model for broadly disseminating leading-edge work in this area and bringing it to scale.

### **Participants:**

The core partners in this project are the knowledge building cohort: Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY (NOCD-NY), Arts & Democracy, Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance, Judith Jennings, Roberto Bedoya, Elizabeth Hamby, and Vanessa Whang. The group includes community-based organizations, citywide and statewide networks, local arts councils, artists and scholars in Arizona, California, Kentucky and NY. PolicyLink was a national partner, hosting our webinar and participating in our public health convening and American Planning Association panel. Artists Masoom Moitra and Mark Valdez participated in our final cohort convening and helped synthesize learnings. Other leaders in the field who joined us in presenting at national conferences included Maria Jackson, ASU and Kresge; Damon Rich, Hector Design; and Jeremy Liu, Policy Link.

Tucson partners included: Southwest Folklife Alliance, City of Tucson Planning and Development Dept., Lovell Foundation, Flower and Bullets, Dunbar Coalition, Ward 6 Council member Steve Kazakh, Ward I Council Member Regina Romero.

New York City partners included: Fourth Arts Block, Spaceworks, The Laundromat Project, University Settlement, BRIC, Good Old Lower East Side, Groundswell, Red Hook Initiative, El Puente, Hester Street, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, City Council Member Brad Lander, Center for Health Equity, and the Participatory Budgeting Project.

Los Angeles partners included: Office of the Mayor, LA Department of Cultural Affairs, LA Department of Transportation, LA Metro, Hyde Park Organizing Partners for Empowerment, Strategies for a Just Economy, Community Development Technologies Center, Esperanza Community Housing, Community Health Councils, Multicultural Communities for Mobility and, LA Bicycle Coalition.

Kentucky partners included: Kentucky Foundation for Women, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Appalshop, Letcher County Western KY University Folk Studies Department, Louisville SURJ, Showing Up for Racial Justice, Mijente Louisville, Kentucky Rural Urban Exchange, Metro Louisville Center for Health Equity, Pew Health Impact Project.

Artists included: Tere Fowler Chapman, Alex Jimenez, Claire Sezobic, Josh Shatner, Logan Philip, Najee Omar, Bomba Yo, Baron Ambrosia, Raul Ayala, Imani Gaye Gillison, Hector Design, Urban Bush Women, George Emilio Sanchez, Theater of the Oppressed NY, Mari Mujica, Marcos Morales, Tara Remington, Noni Olabisi.

## **Creative Placemaking from the Community Up**

### **PART 2**

#### **HOW WE DID IT: PUTTING OUR VALUES INTO ACTION**

Through our work together the cohort identified how to move our values into action to successfully engage in creative placemaking from the community up:

##### **Advance equity from the start**

- Ask from the start how equity is reflected in the project goals, partnerships, and budgets. Understand that all change is not always positive, nor does it benefit all parts of the community. Who might your project benefit and who might it harm? What are possible unintended consequences?
- Recognize the power dynamics of insiders and outsiders, and how our work promotes belonging and dis-belonging. Who holds different kinds of power and how do decisions get made? Power mapping can be a good tool for carrying out this analysis.
- Analyze how places are shaped by history and systems of oppression.
- Promote language justice, ensuring that programs are accessible to people who speak languages other than English.
- Embrace the tensions that are inevitable in collaborative projects. Avoiding discomfort will ultimately increase it.
- Develop partnership models between small and large organizations that shift power and share financial, space, and staff resources, and access to funding in a manner that strengthens small organizations beyond the project.
- Pay community participants.

##### **Identify shared goals and take the time to build trust**

- Be intentional and transparent about what each partner's goals, expectations, and assumptions are and how they might advance or conflict with the values underlying the project.
- Build artists and other community members in from the start.
- Take the time to get to know one another, learn about each others' communities, build trust, and listen to one another before pushing for a shared agenda or joint action.
- Name and advance ethical practices (e.g. around the use of peoples stories) and develop ways to assess accountability for the people most impacted by the work.

##### **Build on local assets with an understanding of history and context**

- Ground work in an asset-based approach that recognizes that all communities have culture and creativity. When engaging in cultural asset mapping be intentional and proactive about including those who are often left out, don't have formal organizations or who don't call themselves artists. Find and build unexpected connections.
- Recognize that communities are complex, with multiple cultures, and perspectives. Take the time to learn about nuances and relationships between communities and engage in intersectional approaches.
- Take the time to learn about communities' histories through research, walking tours, site visits, stories, and oral histories.

- Learn about concerns related to arts driven gentrification and displacement and the root causes and structures of inequity at the foundation of those concerns.
- Recognize that tools and processes that may work in one community may be inappropriate in others and avoid cookie cutter models. Ground your process in the specific contexts, complexities, and experiences of the community.
- Break down urban rural binaries (while also recognizing the unique qualities of rural communities).

### **Support community agency, self determination, and infrastructure**

- When identifying goals and creating budgets, continue to ask how the project will leave the community stronger and with greater agency.
- Center governance and decision making in the hands of local leaders and support local artists.
- In cultural and neighborhood planning, go to where the people are and include trusted allies as facilitators.
- Reclaim, animate, and reopen important public spaces that have deep meaning for communities and bring people together, such as historic African American schools, public plazas, and public housing community centers. Support cultural preservation and reclaiming on the community's own terms.
- Support critical grassroots infrastructure including community hubs and networks and the naturally occurring cultural districts that cultivate them.

### **Engage the power of arts and culture to make transformative change**

- Engage arts and culture, broadly defined, to promote positive change by connecting, communicating, increasing participation, healing, making meaning, reinforcing identity, envisioning, and furthering a sense of belonging.
- Engage cultural organizing processes to help people bring their full selves and creativity to organizing, reach people's minds and hearts, shift narratives, sustain momentum and diminish burn out.
- Bring people together through collaborative community-based performances that raise key issues and increase civic participation. Images such as those created as part of LA Common's Vision Zero collaboration or the public housing Creative Vision design team attract new people and move them to action, creating visual identities for campaigns.
- Use art and design to demystify policies and help advocates engage community members in complicated policy change. As described by Damon Rich in our webinar, arts can be integrated into all stages of planning and policymaking, including organizing, regulating, building and stewarding.
- Connect artists and cultural organizations with community coalitions and alliances to increase social change impacts and sustain the work.

### **Work holistically across sectors**

- Recognize and respect the expertise that everyone brings to the table while also identifying areas of connection that transcend sector silos.
- Support the critical role played by bridge people. These include artists working in city agencies (such as Elizabeth Hamby who describes herself as a "naturally occurring artist in residence"), or cultural leaders like LA Commons Director Karen Mack, who serves as a planning commissioner.

- Support grounded intermediaries who connect and strengthen community based work, build artists' skills to do cross sector work, and translate between sectors.
- Work with sympathetic insiders and ombudsmen to help navigate bureaucracy.
- Cultivate young urban planners through culturally based planning school curriculum and experiential learning such as the course Arts & Democracy and LA Commons developed for Pratt Institute.
- Make the case for social and economic impacts through efforts such as the Special Project's work around health indicators. At the same time, be cautious about over claiming impacts for collaborative efforts or imposing unrealistic measures.
- Analyze when it's best to work with the government and when it's best to work outside of it based on your goals.

### **Support peer learning**

- Recognize the value of experiential knowledge and support peer learning and mentoring.
- Incorporate pedagogies that are rooted in self determination, action research, and education for liberation.
- Shift paradigms from technical assistance and professional development that replicates hierarchies to those that build agency.
- Create affordable spaces for reflection such as the locations where we held our cohort retreats: Kentucky Foundation for Women's Hopscotch House in Kentucky and the International Sonoran Desert Alliance's Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center in Arizona.

### **Fund in a manner that supports best practices**

- Design funding programs in collaboration with practitioners so they can be informed by their on-the-ground knowledge.
- Ask tough questions about philanthropic trends and practices.
- Provide multi year funding that provides support for relationship and trust building, and enables groups to take risks, incorporate learnings, and sustain their work. The NYC Cultural Agenda Fund, for example, provided planning and implementation grants, capacity building, and opportunities to present the work.
- Support organizations that bridge multiple worlds who often fall in between funding gaps
- Support community based practitioners to write about and evaluate their work and to attend and present at conferences.
- Share exemplary practices of funders outside of the arts who fund arts-based work.
- Recognize that creative placemaking from the community up happens across the country in rural as well as urban communities, and support work in diverse contexts in ways appropriate to those contexts.
- Develop realistic expectations and timeframes for project impacts and don't expect artists or cultural organizations to make structural change on their own.

## Part 3: What it Looks Like - Stories through Images

# Creative Placemaking from the Community Up



National  
Endowment  
for the Arts  
arts.gov

**LA Commons**



## LA Commons: Artists design fists as a part of the Vision Zero Initiative in Los Angeles

LA Commons received a grant from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to engage residents living near Hoover Street and Crenshaw Boulevard, two corridors identified in the city's Vision Zero High Injury Network that are located in historically lower income South LA. The City wanted specifically to use art as an engagement strategy. LA Commons, in partnership with Multicultural Communities for Mobility (MCM) and Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC) organized a one-week street activation on Hoover Street preceding a festival to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1992 LA Uprising. *Future Fest*, connected to the visionary platform *South Los Angeles is the Future: A Community Vision for Health and Justice 25 years after the 1992 LA Uprising*. LA Commons was already involved with organizing this event and had deep ties in the neighborhood. They asked residents to share thoughts on the meaning of mobility justice and made maps available so people could write comments about areas where they felt unsafe. The team integrated art into each aspect of outreach to reinforce themes of community empowerment and traffic safety. Photos: Karen Mack



## **The Sankofa Bird at Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks procession in Leimert Park.**

Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks closed a month of community awareness and education around traffic safety as part of Mayor Eric Garcetti's "Vision Zero" campaign to end all traffic-related deaths by 2025. According to statistics, Los Angeles has the highest number of traffic fatalities per capita in the country. Crenshaw Boulevard ranks high in serious injuries and fatalities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

A giant Sankofa Bird puppet was present at multiple events throughout the month, a recognized icon of the Adinkra symbolic system of the Akan people of Ghana. Sankofa asks not to forget the past, translated as "it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind." The Sankofa Bird's design has it looking back as it moves forward—an integral message of the Vision Zero initiative.

These African symbols are meaningful to Leimert Park and can be seen throughout the area. Multiple Sankofa "proverbs" were displayed on signs and banners along Crenshaw between Martin Luther King and 52nd Street to share messages of safety, including: "Drive Don't Fly," "Fast Drive Could Be Last Drive," and "Normal Speed Meets Every Need." Photo: Brian W. Carter



## Heart of Hyde Park Story Gathering: Community Healing with Stories

Residents gathered at the free “Heart of Hyde Park” event to tell stories, write, eat, and celebrate the existing community living in the neighborhood. They shared stories about the neighborhood and brainstormed ideas of what a better future for Hyde Park could look like. LA Commons partnered with Transportation for America and Metro to support creative placemaking projects in Hyde Park, a 97 percent non-white neighborhood in South Los Angeles known for its jazz, hip hop, and black cinema scene. Amid disruptive station construction on the Crenshaw/LAX light rail, LA Commons is using arts and culture to foster ownership and pride among longtime residents and develop a long-term economic development strategy for local businesses.

Community leaders first began by collaboratively selecting artists to engage with the community. Although artists from around LA applied for the position, the panel chose local artists from Hyde Park who could personally relate to and understand the community. Artists Moses Ball and Dezmond Crockett facilitated a “Story Summit,” where Hyde Park residents shared their experiences living, working, and growing up in the community.



### **LA Commons: Exchange Between African American and Little Tokyo Leaders**

In Hyde Park, local leaders adopted our project and are making it truly reflective of their community—its victories and important stories as well as challenges. The resident leadership and engagement of this effort will become a model for our future community based art projects in Los Angeles. We did something unique for us, taking leaders in Hyde Park on a tour with leaders in Little Tokyo. This site visit underscored the value of experiential knowledge and sharing as peers, as opposed to TA that doesn't come from that place of deep understanding. This activity also emphasized the power in supporting community agency and self-determination as a long-term community investment.



### **LA Commons Peer Learning Exchanges**

LA Commons hosted several peer learning exchanges over the course of the project, two of which featured Roberto Bedoya and Roberta Uno on separate occasions. These sessions centered on addressing inequity in terms of access to personal and community cultural expression from various points in the system. Attendees included diverse perspectives, including LA Metro staff, artists, cultural workers and funders.

**Naturally Occurring  
Cultural Districts NY  
(NOCD-NY)**



## Creative Transformations: Arts, Culture and Public Housing Communities

Creative Transformations is a program of 17 projects involving 19 artist and organizational partners from across all five boroughs of New York City that support infrastructure and sustained arts and cultural work in public housing communities, provide tools for advocacy and activism, and bridge communities with their surrounding neighborhoods.

The initiative began with learnings and recommendations gathered from research and a cross-sector roundtable, grew into a six-month planning process, then partnered on projects citywide in 2017 and 2018.

Create Transformations is focused on what arts and culture are particularly good at accomplishing: engaging creativity and imagination, healing trauma, breaking down isolation and stigma, bringing together diverse people, and connecting public housing communities with their neighbors. Project activities have included youth media and production, mural making, photography workshops and exhibitions, theater and dance creation, oral history, neighborhood tours, housing advocacy, markets, community councils, and festivals highlighting the creative work of public housing residents.

A sample of partner projects include, clockwise from top left: "Resistance is Resilience" with GOLES and Downtown Art, The Bronx is the World's Strongest Borough with Casita Maria and Baron Ambrosia, Making Gowanus and Theater of the Liberated: Soft, Intergenerational Community Arts Council (ICAC) at Ingersoll Houses Community Center, CVH Vision with Community Voices Heard, and Park Hill Community Market with Napela Inc.



## Learning Exchange and Neighborhood Tour: ARTs East New York and ReNew Lots

Visiting one other's neighborhoods across the city helps NOCD-NY's network celebrate opportunities and understand challenges on the ground. In August 2017, ARTs East New York concluded NOCD-NY's learning exchange with a tour of East New York, Brooklyn's local community gardens and a visit to their next ReNew Lots site, where a vacant lot is being outfitted with shipping containers to house an artists' incubator and vendor market.



## NOCD-NY Peer Learning Exchanges

NOCD-NY launched bi-monthly peer learning exchanges in December 2016 to share knowledge across our network, incorporate new partners and allies, and disseminate learnings and resources citywide. Exchanges have included art and culture's role in and creative approaches to topics including: immigration activism, planning and zoning, power mapping and public housing.



## What Creates Health? A Community Conversation

NOCD-NY collaborated with NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Center for Health Equity to integrate arts and culture into their 'What Creates Health?' conference, which included three artist residencies in the Bronx with community-based health initiatives.

Hosted in Sept 2016, the conference showcased community stories and efforts to address health disparities, fostered reflection and dialogue about social and racial justice, and highlighted the critical role of art and activism in eliminating the stark and unjust differences in health and wellness that exist between New York City neighborhoods and New Yorkers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses. Residencies partnered Educational Video Center with BronxWorks Betances Community Center, Baron Ambrosia with Casita Maria, and BombaYo with Hunts Point Alliance for Children (pictured).



## CreateNYC: NYC's First Comprehensive Cultural Plan

NOCD-NY played a lead role as partner with Hester Street in the development of Create NYC, NYC cultural plan. It led community engagement to further an inclusive process, hosting neighborhood conversations and focus groups, and drafting three chapters for the plan. Nearly 200,000 New Yorkers from every part of the city were engaged in the planning process and over 100 recommendations were proposed.

Left to right: Bay Ridge, Brooklyn and Washington Heights/Inwood, Manhattan neighborhood workshops.

# Arts & Democracy



## Participatory Budgeting: Resources for Creative Communities

Arts & Democracy integrated arts, culture and design resources for Participatory Budgeting in New York City (PBNYC) in the Winter and early Spring of 2017 and 2018. Residents age 11 and older decided how to spend \$36,618,553 across NYC on 124 community improvement projects for schools, parks, libraries, public housing, streets, and other public spaces. Local residents made posters to promote proposals in their district at multi generational poster making workshops. The tri fold posters were featured at science-fair style expos where community volunteers shared their projects with their neighbors. Silk-screened tote bags, printed with Works in Progress, are cherished giveaways at the annual PBNYC celebration to thank delegates for their hard work. Each year different artists are commissioned for the bag design. Arts & Democracy collaborated with Hector Design and the Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) on a guide to incorporating arts into PB, which will be distributed nationally by PBP.



## Cultural Organizing for Community Change

Arts & Democracy's full day Cultural Organizing for Community Change workshops—co-sponsored annually with NOCD-NY and held in Gowanus Brooklyn—integrates arts and culture into organizing strategies. Cultural organizing comes from a particular tradition, cultural identity, and community of place or worldview that advances social and economic justice. The workshop includes a cultural organizing framework; participant mapping exercises; workshops, movement activities, and a community tour that connect artists, educators, community organizers, and policymakers.



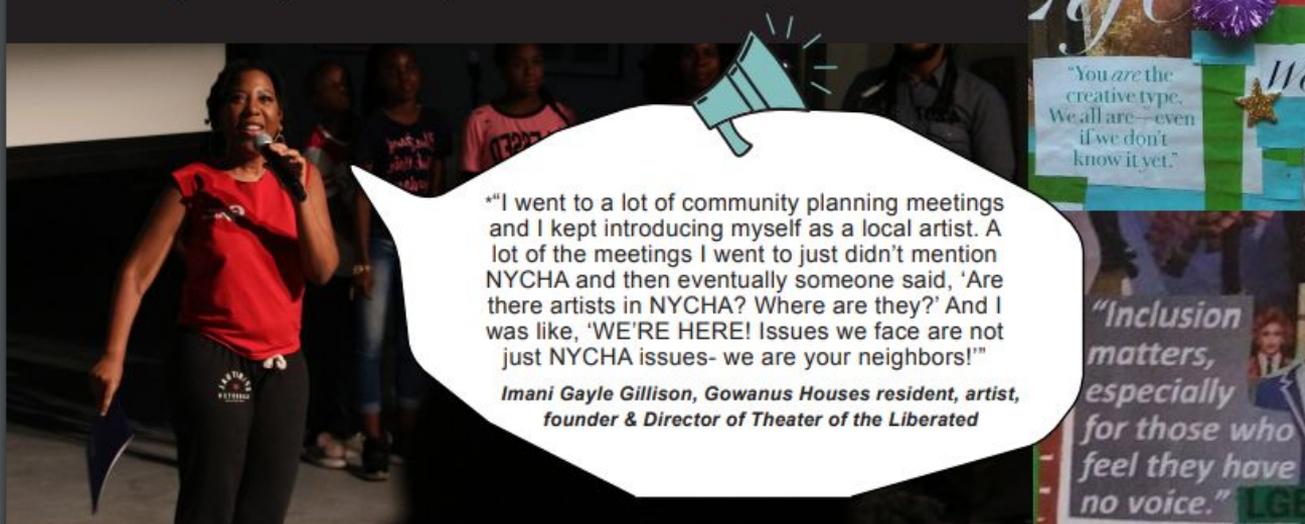
## Community Iftar and Cultural Exchange at Avenue C Plaza Kensington, Brooklyn

Arts & Democracy's Bangladeshi Project collaborated with ArtBuilt Mobile Studio and the Ave C Stewards on plaza programming in June of 2017 and 2018. Programming included a concert celebrating immigrant communities and a Community Iftar featuring the food of diverse Muslim cultures and Muslim women artists.

According to Arts & Democracy project director and Kensington community leader Hasiba Haq, this event was "a small opportunity to take back the narrative and teach neighbors about Islam and Ramadan and let them learn a little more about their Muslim neighbors."

Year-round programming included youth video projects and Adda Art, which included storytelling and painting on saris.





"I went to a lot of community planning meetings and I kept introducing myself as a local artist. A lot of the meetings I went to just didn't mention NYCHA and then eventually someone said, 'Are there artists in NYCHA? Where are they?' And I was like, 'WE'RE HERE! Issues we face are not just NYCHA issues- we are your neighbors!'"  
*Imani Gayle Gillison, Gowanus Houses resident, artist, founder & Director of Theater of the Liberated*

### **“We are your Neighbors”: Key Issues & Policy Recommendations Towards Cultural Equity in Gowanus, Brooklyn**

In the summer/fall of 2017, a diverse group of residents, artists, cultural organizers, organizations, and community leaders in Gowanus used arts and culture as an engagement tool to identify to arrive at seven recommendations—documented in the “We Are Your Neighbors!” report—that advocates for a neighborhood planning and rezoning process that is equitable and sustainable.

Through cultural mapping, arts activations and conversations, Imani Gayle Gillison engaged the community—especially public housing and low-income residents—to celebrate cultural assets, identify issues and form priorities as it faces multiple planning and rezoning processes, increased real estate speculation, and resiliency concerns post-Sandy.

Community feedback was translated into the report using the Cultural Blueprint for Healthy Communities, a tool that takes inventory of and advocates for culturally healthy and sustainable communities.

# **Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance**



### 2017 KY Cultural Organizing Alliance Exchange: Seeking Stories of Community-Based Cultural Organizing @ Berea College

For five years, the Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance, a coalition of partners, has organized annual workshops and exchanges to share resources and knowledge about the power of art and culture to create a more just and equitable Kentucky.

The 2017 Kentucky Cultural Organizing Learning Exchange was held on May 13th in Berea, KY to bring together artists, activists and advocates from across the state who believe in the power of art and culture to advance social justice and build unity and inclusivity through community based cultural organizing. Partners included Kentuckians for the Commonwealth; Appalshop; the Kentucky Foundation for Women; Western KY University Folk Studies Department; and Louisville SURJ, Showing Up for Racial Justice.



## Cultural Organizing in the South @ Brooklyn

At the 2017 Cultural Organizing for Community Change Workshop in Brooklyn, Joe Tolson and Judi Jennings created and presented an interactive session on what has been happening in the South since the 2016 election.

As an interracial, intergenerational and straight/gay team, Joe and Judi demonstrated some communication modes from Kentucky and Tennessee and asked NYC participants to consider their modes. The session broke into two groups, each had lively discussions, then each shared a movement/story/song with the other group to express what they learned about “the South.”

The conversations and report backs included tough issues and unresolved questions, but participants said they learned new things, felt heard and recognized the importance of authentic exchanges and cultural sharing across geographical and regional differences in the country.



## Bridging Political Divides Through Arts & Culture

The Culture Hub brings diverse groups together—from artists and musicians to volunteer fire departments and business associations—to strengthen community relationships and overcome differences in Letcher County, in the heart of the Appalachian coalfields..

After the 2016 election, some folks in Leveret, Mass., a “blue area,” felt angry and bewildered about the outcome. They wanted to connect with a similar size community in a “red area.” They saw a blog written by Ben Fink and published by Bill Moyers about Appalshop and The Culture Hub. In the blog, Ben invited people to come to eastern KY and see for themselves what life is like here.

The residents of Leveret did just that. First, they invited participants in The Culture Hub to visit them. Then, in May 2017, 10-12 Leverett residents participated in The Culture Hub Celebration. They told why they wanted to come and joined wholeheartedly in the celebration.

Presentations and conversations revealed tough issues and unresolved questions. Yet participants said they learned new things, felt heard and recognized the importance of authentic exchanges and cultural sharing across geographical and regional differences.

This small-town community center is involved in the Letcher County Culture Hub, an effort in eastern Kentucky to bridge political differences through arts and culture. Photo: Gwen Johnson



## Summer Art Camp for Youth with Incarcerated Friends and Family Members: A Partnership with The Special Project and YouthBuild Louisville

The Special Project creates weekly art activities with families visiting their loved ones incarcerated in the Louisville Metro Jail. All of the art activities are especially designed to strengthen protective factors for these children and young people.

For example, activities encourage hopefulness, optimism, self-expression, and social bonding.

In 2017, The Special Project was able to partner with YouthBuild Louisville to offer a Summer Art Camp for youth with incarcerated loved ones in a community setting outside the jail. YouthBuild Louisville is part of a national program that offers job training and GED programs to young people 18-24 facing social and economic challenges.

To break through the silence and stigma, camp leaders put up a sign that said "Art Camp for Young People with Incarcerated Friends and Families". The campers appreciated being able to talk about how incarceration affected them and eagerly participated in the art activities.

**Arts Foundation for  
Tucson and Southern  
Arizona**



## Cultural Places: An Exploration of Tucson's Assets

The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona (formerly the Tucson Pima Arts Council) invited Artspace to help them explore short- and long-term strategies to address the facility needs of Tucson's creative sector. The challenge was to create and preserve culturally-relevant spaces. Efforts focused on three properties: Dunbar School Project in the Dunbar-Spring neighborhood, downtown's Tucson Performing Arts Center (PAC), and the central-south Julia Keen School in the Julia Keen neighborhood adjacent to Barrio Centro.

The project helped bring these sites together under a framework of placemaking and placekeeping. A robust conversation came together about how artists engage with space - the value of places with a sense of belonging. With an African American population of less than 4%, a place of belonging in Tucson is everything. It was concluded that there cannot be a sense of belonging without a place of belonging, challenging the Arts Foundation's original definition of "placemaking". photos: Creative Spaces Consulting Report, Tucson, Arizona, January 2017



Youth perform in the hoedown segment of the cultural celebration August 12, 2017, on the eve of the Tucson Arizona Temple dedication. Source: LDS.com

## Conversations: Tucson Cultural Plan

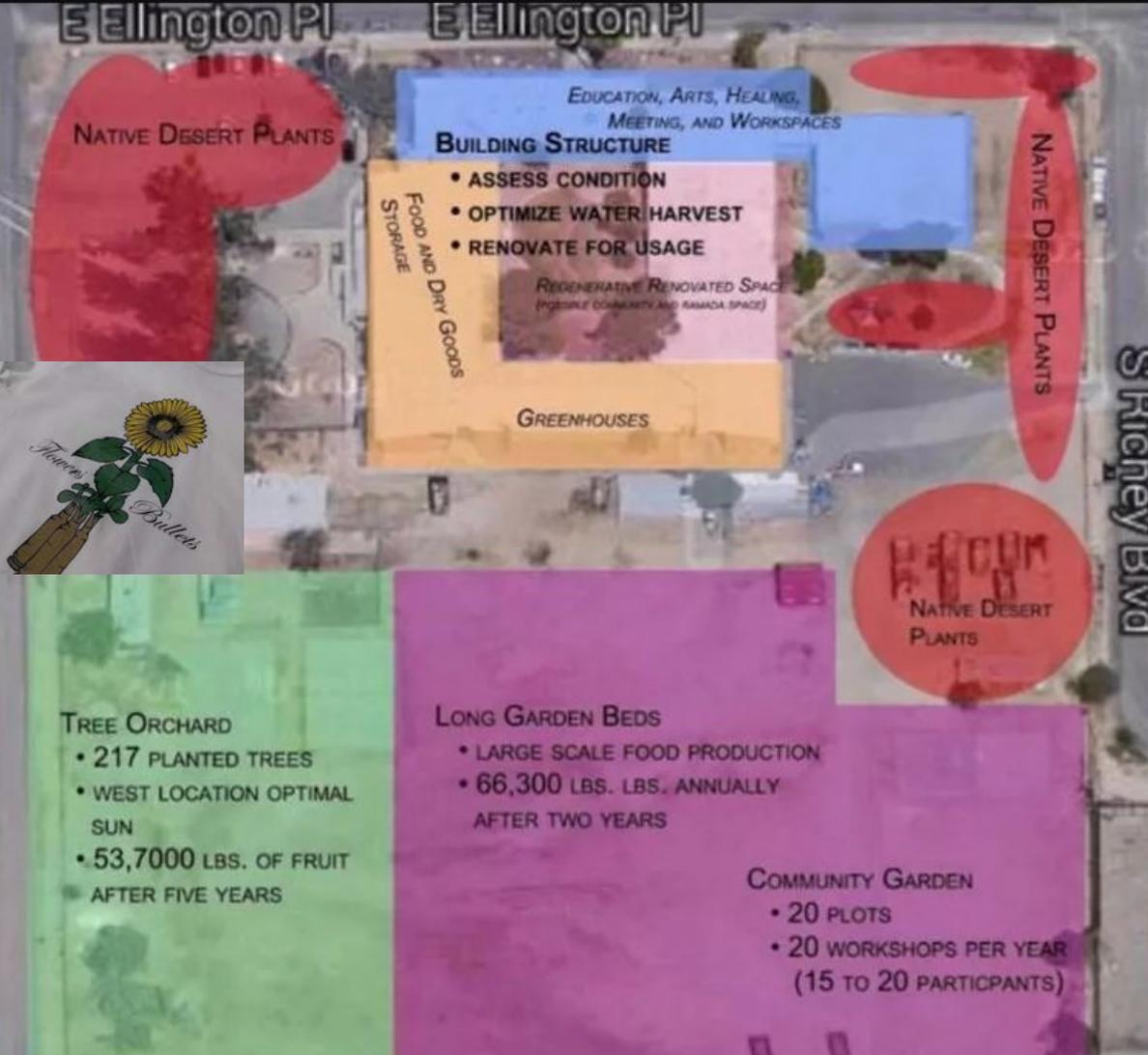
The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona hosted conversations around the Tucson Cultural Plan in partnership with Lobell Foundation. Their primary concentration was on arts education, due to a lack of regional funding. The conversations focused on the value of the arts in community, placemaking and creating a sense of identity for Tucson. They hosted community forums, presentations in front of Tucson City Council on advocacy for the arts, and a postcard campaign about what the arts mean to people. Arts educators and teachers were invited to look at the role and value of the arts in education. A day-long convening, facilitated by board members of the Arts Foundation that were deeply involved the arts, included artists and, arts educators and founders.

The Arts Foundation and Lobell Foundation also held a collective reflection on the cultural plan from ten years ago, an opportunity to figure out what has already been accomplished, what is still relevant, what is successful, and what remains to be done.



**arts found:  
A Salon Series 2008**

A series of conversations were hosted by the Arts Foundation to present and share a cross section of work “delving into the intersection of art and ideas” in Tucson. Topics included an Atlas for Rural Arts, Late-Life Creativity, Science & Art and Cultural Diasporas.



## A Creative Placemaking from the Community Up Model: Julian Keen Elementary

When Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) had to close Julia Keen Elementary school in 2004 because it was in the flight path to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, an initiative was organized by a group of young people living in the surrounding Julia Keen neighborhood. Artists, community organizers, residents, formerly incarcerated citizens, and those with limited opportunities to see families wanted to lease the vacant school to build a community farm and garden. TUSD secured almost a million dollars, including a big grant from the Howry Environmental Justice program and Atlas, to create a community garden and artists space at the school.

As a result of their efforts, TUSD governing board unanimously voted to let the *Flowers and Bullets* collective lease the Julia Keen Elementary property to build a community farm and garden. *Flowers and Bullets* was formed to bring together a unique set of skills such as farming, grassroots organizing, healing, and arts and culture practices.

<http://www.tucsonnewsnow.com/story/34057066/tusd-allows-flowers-and-bullets-to-lease-vacant-school>

# Oakland Cultural Plan



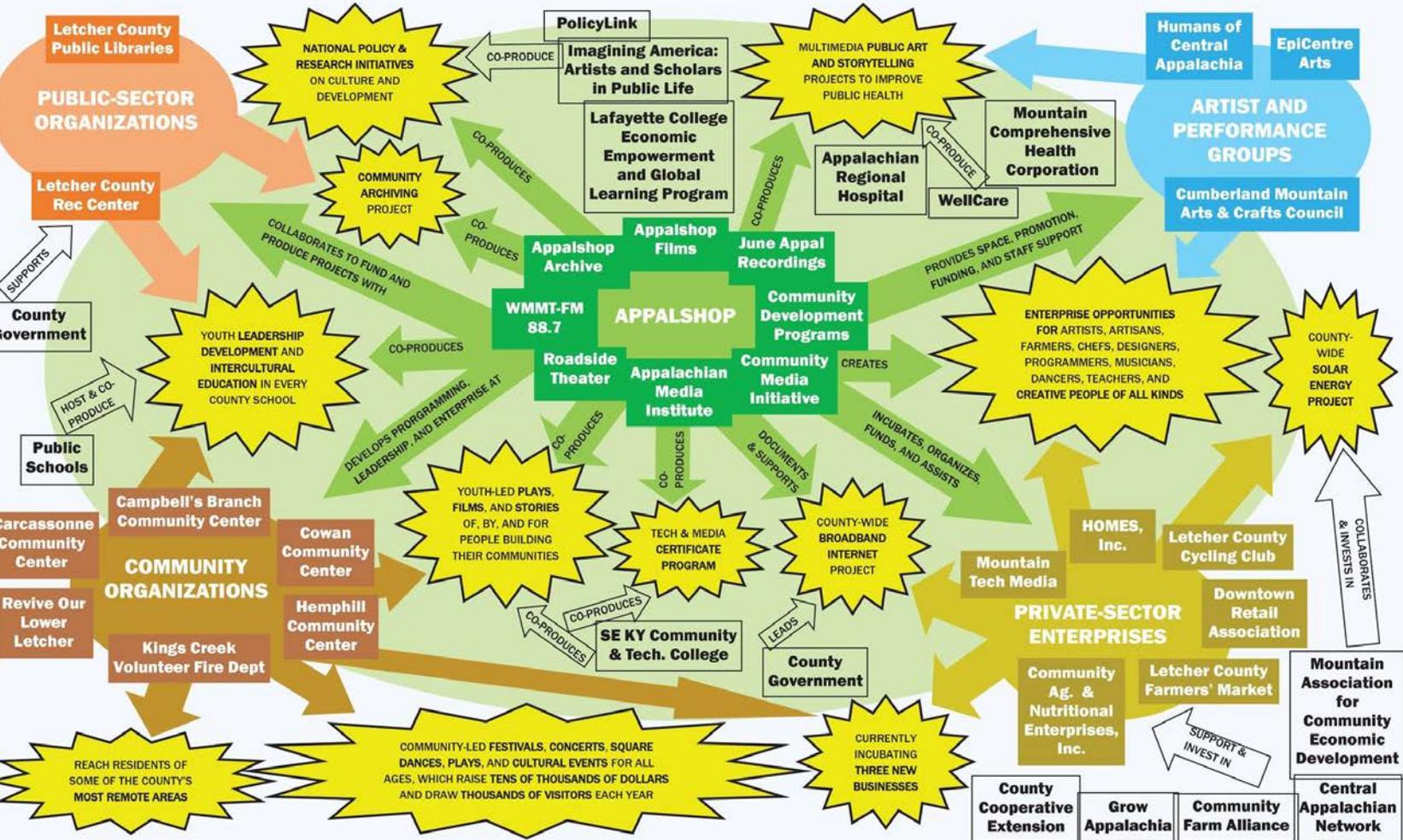


## Liberate 23rd Ave Community Building

A long-time, low-rent community building in East Oakland could have become a giant playground for big tech. The landlord sold the building, but with the support of community allies and the Oakland Community Land Trust, the Peacock Rebellion was given the rare opportunity to buy the building and build a dream of long-term affordable housing and community space with over \$90,000 raised. The vibrant, tight-knit community members who share the historic building and community resources at 23rd and International will stay here long-term. <http://www.peacockrebellion.org/liberated/>

# Community Mapping

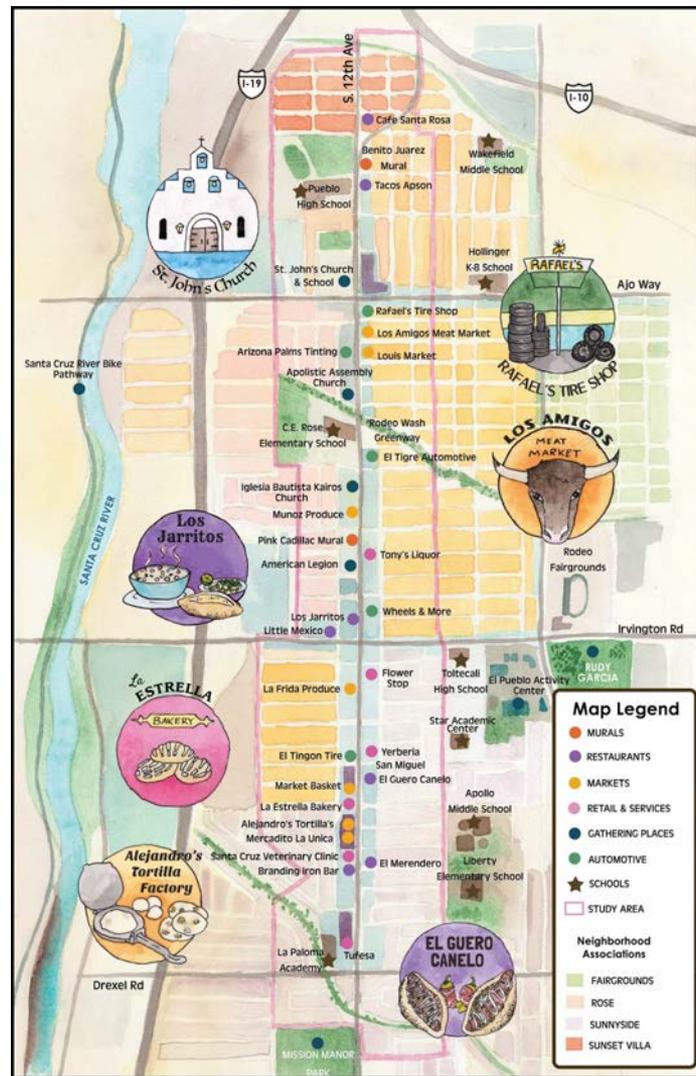
# THE LETCHER COUNTY CULTURE HUB – A Sketch



KY Cultural Organizing Alliance

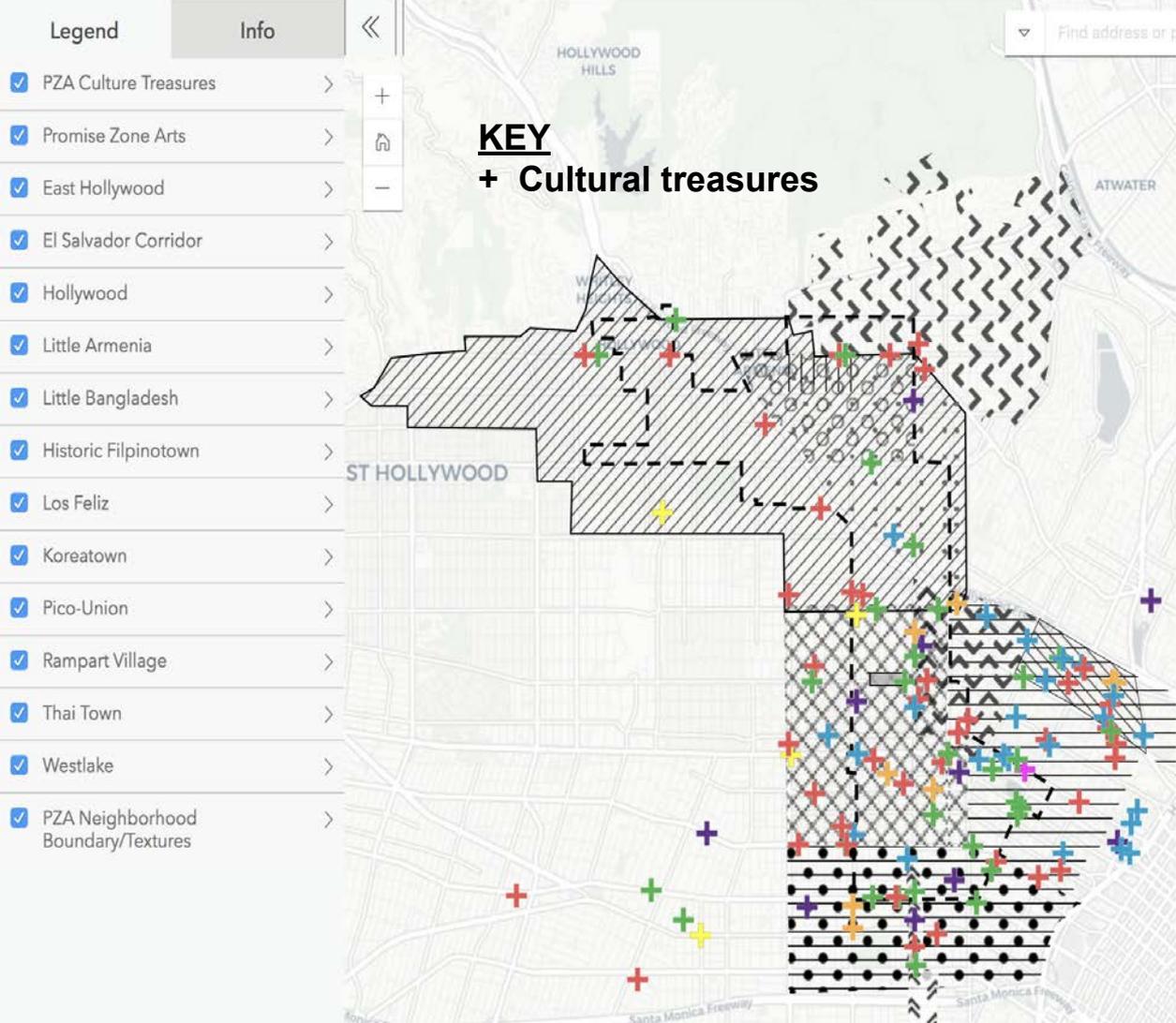
The Letcher County Culture Hub sketch illustrates cultural relationships in the region.

Sketch: Ben Fink



**Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona**

La Doce neighborhood cultural map



### LA Commons

Promise Zone Arts (PZA), co-created by the Alliance for California Traditional Arts and LA Commons, includes creative and inclusive Cultural Mapping with the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).

# Creative Placemaking from Community Up

National cohort retreats

\*Ends  
 Feb - April  
 → Creating fundraising piece & reach out to funders  
 → Apply for grant sessions - GIJA Allied Media  
 → Prepare NYC cultural plan events / Ecogroups  
 → Art + Public housing - Condit table  
 → Developing culture program  
 → Synthesize notes  
 → Open Planning Space programming in LA  
 → Writing - Judi's first piece  
 → Art Fair releases Family study (April)  
 → Art Fair releases Public History  
 → request as much VET \$ as allowable  
 → Grant conference call  
 MAY - July  
 KY Cultural Org Learning Exchange (May)  
~~APA Panel~~ | APA Panel

Art Learning Coverings  
 Health Equity  
 Hunter Class  
 NYC Cultural Plan Completed 4/30  
 Writing - Karen  
 Review budget + scale of project  
 Interim report (Invoice 40% / partners)  
 OIG presentation - June  
 Judi 2nd writing paper  
 Allied Media Conf (June)  
 \*Grant conference call

Where are efforts best spent?  
 What can we do together that we can't do alone?  
 What can this cohort uniquely offer?  
 At this time?

