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Arts In Place: Philadelphia's Cultural Landscape

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Arts In Place: Philadelphia's Cultural Landscape

Abstract

To inform the debate over costs vs benefits of arts-based development to neighborhood revitalization, Penn Urban Studies Program chose "arts in place" as the theme of its Third Annual Public Conversation Series 2003-04. This document is a synthesis of the narratives and insights gleaned from the series--eight events with 23 speakers over five months--to share with a wider audience. The report describes the models and theories about how the arts influence development raised in six site-based discussions. Lastly, the report presents themes and issues that cut across Philadelphia's cultural landscape aired during the culminating session and throughout the series.

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Civic and Community Engagement | Urban Studies and Planning

Comments

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**Social Impact of
the Arts Project**

University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Policy & Practice
<http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/SIAP>

University of Pennsylvania
Third Annual Urban Studies Public Conversation Series 2003-04
Arts In Place: Philadelphia's Cultural Landscape

Prepared by the
Social Impact of the Arts Project
May 2005

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Social Impact of the Arts Project
3701 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6214
Tel: (215) 573-7270
E-mail: seifert@sp2.upenn.edu

Acknowledgements

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Planning Committee

Helen Cunningham, Samuel S. Fels Fund

Marian Godfrey, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Thora Jacobson, Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial

Mirella Landriscina, Urban Studies Program

Cary M. Mazer, Theater Arts Program

Carol Muller, Music Department

Julie Schneider, Fine Arts Department

Elaine Simon, Urban Studies Program

Mark Stern, Urban Studies Program and Social Impact of the Arts Project

Domenic Vitiello, Urban Studies Program and History Department

Documentation

Susan Seifert, Social Impact of the Arts Project

Domenic Vitiello, Urban Studies Program and History Department

Host Institutions

Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Center City

Moore College of Art & Design, Logan Square

The Rotunda, University City

Snyderman Gallery, Old City

University of the Arts, South Broad Street

University of Pennsylvania

Speakers

Beth Feldman Brandt, Executive Director, Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation

Donna N. Brown, President, Point Breeze Performing Arts Center

Iris Brown, Garden & Grupo Motivos Coordinator, Norris Square Neighborhood Project

Happy Fernandez, President, Moore College of Art & Design

Ken Finkel, Executive Director, Arts and Culture, WHYY Inc.

Jane Golden, Director, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

David Grazian, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Pennsylvania

Mei-Ling Hom, Artist

Paul R. Levy, Executive Director, Center City District

Shannon Mattern, Mellon Fellow in Art History, University of Pennsylvania

Charles Moleski, Project Manager for New LandMarks, Fairmount Park Art Association

Michael Nairn, Principal, Michael P. Nairn Landscape Architects

William Scott Noel, Professor and Artist, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Laurel Raczka, Executive Director, Painted Bride Art Center

Matthew Ruben, University of Pennsylvania doctoral student, English and Urban Studies

Lynne B. Sagalyn, Professor of Real Estate and Planning, University of Pennsylvania

Rick Snyderman, Owner, Snyderman/Works Gallery

Harris Steinberg, Executive Director of Penn Praxis, Penn School of Design

Mark J. Stern, Professor of Social Welfare and History, University of Pennsylvania

Nick Stuccio, Producing Director, Philadelphia Fringe Festival

Thomas Sugrue, Professor of History and Sociology, University of Pennsylvania

Andrew Zitcer, founder and director of the Foundation Community Arts Initiative

Sharon Zukin, Professor of Sociology, Brooklyn College, New York

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, American cities have increasingly turned to arts-based development strategies to revitalize depressed areas that have declined in the wake of deindustrialization. Advocates promote cultural districts as a means of developing urban tourism, attracting visitors, and improving the quality of commerce and residential life. Opponents sound the alarm that increasing property values and rising rents and taxes will lead to “gentrification” and displacement of long-standing residents and businesses, including artists and other sweat-equity entrepreneurs.

Both advocates and opponents overstate the potential benefits or costs of arts-based development. As a result, current policy often ignores the diversity of the cultural sector and the many ways that it shapes urban spaces, experiences, and communities.

To inform the debate, Penn’s Urban Studies Program chose “arts in place” as the theme of its 2003-04 Public Conversation Series. The planning committee—which included representatives of the university’s arts departments, the regional arts community, and local foundations—identified the following “desired outcomes” for the series.

- Raise awareness of Philadelphia’s cultural landscape, its varied settings, and diverse players.
- Increase understanding of the role of the arts in the city – how the arts contribute to the social life of a place and how artists and arts organizations contribute to community capacity and economic vitality.
- Increase understanding about what local conditions best support artists, arts enterprises, and cultural organizations—that is, what the arts need to thrive.
- Identify models and strategies of mutual support among artists, arts organizations, public policy-makers, corporations, foundations, individual patrons, and other nonprofit agencies.

The purpose of the *Arts In Place* series was to explore the uses and effects of the arts in a variety of neighborhoods by examining the patterns and complexities of actual cultural districts. What are the ingredients that make a place? How does the context—the demographics, current land uses, the role of the arts, and physical design—influence the outcomes? Who drives arts-based development, and how does this influence the types of outcomes? What are the long-term issues confronted by arts districts once those responsible for creating the district are gone?

The committee designed the series as an “arts tour” of the region, examining the work of public and private institutions and highlighting places and place-making strategies where the arts figure into community and urban development. The kick-off event was a discussion with Penn sociology professor David Grazian about his new book, *Blue*

Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs, which explores the City of Chicago’s use of the blues club as a revitalization strategy. The tour then looked at five Philadelphia districts and themes:

- 40th Street (West Philadelphia)—an institution-driven model exploring the use of the arts and culture to revitalize University City;
- Old City (Center City)—an artist- and market-driven model of revitalization in the city’s downtown historic district;
- Norris Square (North Philadelphia)—a community-driven model of neighborhood revitalization through the integration of the arts, culture, and gardening;
- public art in Philadelphia—perspectives on place, community, and public art in the Philadelphia context; and
- Avenue of the Arts (Center City)—a government-driven and publicly funded, large-scale downtown performing arts and education district.

Each session featured panelists who represented three perspectives:

- *engines*—organizations or individuals who spark arts-related development in that place;
- *practitioners*—artists, arts organizations, or arts enterprises that have taken root in a particular place; and
- *theory*—an analytical perspective that connects local arts-related development to broader issues of urban development and social change.

The series culminated in a forum with scholars and public figures to reflect on efforts to promote and strengthen the arts as a strategy to revitalize the region and contribute to its social and economic well-being.

Arts In Place is a work-in-progress. Through the series, we encountered a variety of models and theories about how the arts influence economic development in particular neighborhoods. The conversations probed a number of issues and provided an excellent framework for working toward the “desired outcomes”.

This document synthesizes the information and insights gleaned from the sessions to share them with a wider audience. Part II provides an overview of the program, Part III summarizes the site-based discussions, and Part IV summarizes perspectives that cut across Philadelphia’s cultural landscape.

II. THE PROGRAM—PUBLIC CONVERSATION SERIES, 2003-04

Below is a description of the Urban Studies Third Annual Public Conversation Program. The series included: a public exhibition connected to an Urban Studies course on place-making; five place-specific panel discussions, one on Chicago and four on Philadelphia; one panel discussion on public art in Philadelphia; and a culminating session on Philadelphia's cultural landscape. The series was held in various sites around the University and Center City from December 2003 through April 2004. All sessions were free and open to the public.

Authenticity and Place-Making—Chicago Blues Clubs

Time: December 4, 2003, 4:00-6:00 PM

Location: University of Pennsylvania, Irvine Auditorium, Amado Recital Room,
34th & Spruce Streets

Speakers:

David Grazian, Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania Department of Sociology, talked about his book, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs*.

Thomas Sugrue, Bicentennial Class of 1940 Professor of History and Sociology, University of Pennsylvania, was the discussant.

Processes of Place-Making—Case Study, 40th Street and the Rotunda, Philadelphia

Time: Public exhibit during December 2003
Final event on December 14, 2003, 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Location: The Rotunda, 4012 Walnut Street

Organizers:

Dr. **Shannon Mattern** and the students of her class, "Policies of Place-making: Fostering Public Design" (Urban Studies/Arts History, Fall 2003)

The Foundation Community Arts Initiative, a nonprofit organization that maintains The Rotunda as a community gathering place for the promotion of arts and culture

The exhibit featured the evolution of 40th Street and The Rotunda, the history of University of Pennsylvania and West Philadelphia efforts to plan for 40th Street redevelopment, and current ideas about realizing 40th Street's potential as a dynamic public space.

The closing community event was held inside and outside of The Rotunda and featured local performers, donations of food by local merchants, outdoor "found-art" furnishings, and interactive public art components.

West Philadelphia—40th Street & The Rotunda

Time: January 27, 2004, 4:00 to 6:00 PM

Location: The Rotunda, 4012 Walnut Street

Panelists:

Dr. Shannon Mattern, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, History of Art Department, University of Pennsylvania

Harris Steinberg, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania, and Executive Director of Penn Praxis, the clinical consulting arm of the School of Design

Andrew Zitcer, founder and director of The Foundation Community Arts Initiative

Center City—Old City

Time: February 17, 2004, 4:00 – 6:00 PM

Location: Snyderman/Works Gallery, 303 Cherry Street

Panelists:

Ken Finkel, Executive Director, Arts and Culture, WHYY Inc.

Laurel Raczka, Executive Director, Painted Bride Art Center

Matthew Ruben, University of Pennsylvania doctoral student, English and Urban Studies

Rick Snyderman, Owner, Snyderman/Works Gallery

North Philadelphia—Norris Square

Time: February 26, 2004, 5:00-7:00 PM

Location: University of Pennsylvania, 286 McNeil Building, 3718 Locust Walk

Panelists:

Iris Brown, Garden Coordinator, Grupo Motivos Coordinator, Norris Square Neighborhood Project

Jane Golden, Director, Philadelphia Department of Recreation Mural Arts Program

Mark Stern, Professor of Social Welfare and History, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work

Public Art in Philadelphia

Time: March 18, 2004, 3:30 – 5:30 PM

Location: Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, 1616 Walnut Street

Panelists:

Mei-Ling Hom, Artist (Ms. Hom's work was on display at the Fleisher/Ollman Gallery.)

Charles Moleski, Project Manager for New LandMarks, Fairmount Park Art Association

Michael Nairn, Landscape Architect, Principal, Michael P. Nairn Landscape Architects

Center City—the Avenue of the Arts

Time: March 23, 2004, 4:00 – 6:00 PM

Location: University of the Arts, Broad & Pine St., CBS Auditorium, Hamilton Hall

Panelists:

Paul R. Levy, Executive Director, Center City District

William Scott Noel, Professor and Artist, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Lynne B. Sagalyn, Professor of Real Estate Development and Planning, University of Pennsylvania

Arts in Place Public Conversation Series—Culminating Event

Time: April 30, 2004, 4:00 – 6:00 PM

Location: Moore College of Art & Design, 20th & Benjamin Franklin Parkway,
Great Hall

Panelists:

Beth Feldman Brandt, Executive Director, Stockton Rush Barton Foundation

Donna N. Brown, President, Point Breeze Performing Arts Center

Happy Fernandez, President, Moore College of Art & Design

Nick Stuccio, Producing Director, Philadelphia Fringe Festival

Sharon Zukin, Professor of Sociology, Brooklyn College, New York

Moderator: **Mark J. Stern**, Professor of Social Welfare and History, University of Pennsylvania

III. ARTS IN PLACE—THE TOUR

This section summarizes the six place-specific discussions that were the core of the *Arts In Place* public conversation series. Tour #1 is a visit to Chicago to look at the City's use of the blues club as a revitalization strategy. The next five Philadelphia tours look at a variety of arts-based revitalization strategies: Tour #2 is 40th Street, an institution-driven model in University City; Tour #3 is Old City, an artist- and market-driven model in historic Center City; Tour #4 is Norris Square, a community-driven model in North Philadelphia; Tour #5 is a look at public art around Philadelphia; and Tour #6 is the Avenue of the Arts, a government-driven model in Center City. Each summary includes a description of: the place, the engine catalyst, the arts practitioners, and policy issues or theory that links the site to broader urban issues.

Tour #1. Chicago and the Blues Club

Speakers

David Grazian, Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania Department of Sociology, talked about his book, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (University of Chicago Press, 2003). [<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/15592.ctl>]

Thomas Sugrue, Bicentennial Class of 1940 Professor of History and Sociology, University of Pennsylvania, was the discussant.

Place—Chicago, from South Side to North Side to Downtown

David Grazian provided a thumbnail description of place. From 1945 to 1960 Chicago witnessed “an intense black blues presence.” During their heyday in the 1950s, the segregated black neighborhoods on the city's South Side and West Side hosted some 50 blues taverns and clubs. Beginning in the late 1960s and over the next twenty years, in tandem with the decline of industrial employment, these neighborhoods saw the older clubs steadily disappear.

Meanwhile, in the 1970s and '80s blues clubs began to open in Chicago's North Side neighborhoods. Clubs on the South Side continued to close, some reopening in the white neighborhoods. The new clubs attracted a wider range of people, increasingly white and middle-class, as well as out-of-towners. As a result, the city's North Side and downtown areas became the new centers of blues activity in Chicago. Gradually, with the change in venue and demographics, the blues clubs became tourist attractions.

Engine—City of Chicago

The rise of the blues club as a tourist attraction has been driven by public policy on the part of the City of Chicago. City officials saw the potential of drawing on Chicago's blues heritage as a means of attracting tourists and latched its identity onto this legacy as a strategy to revitalize the downtown and local economy.

Opportunism by the City was aided by local boosters and journalists who, according to Grazian, were keen on “inventing the Chicago blues.” The development of “a narrative of the past to represent the present”—in which Chicago is “the blues capital of the world”—has successfully served to attract tourists in search of an “authentic” Chicago blues experience.

The City of Chicago continues to rely on its blues legacy to cultivate its image as a world-class city and boost the urban economy. In 1984 Mayor Harold Washington initiated the Chicago Blues Festival, an annual festival held downtown in Grant Park. Every summer celebrity musicians perform on stages named for blues themes such as Crossroads, Juke Joint, and Front Porch. In April 1997 the City launched “Cultural Chicago,” a \$6 million, three-year campaign to attract national and international tourists featuring a series of downtown concerts, celebrations, and exhibits. In May 1997, to provide visitors “more authentic encounters with urban life,” the City began to run half-day bus tours to nine local Chicago neighborhoods.

Chicago has “demonstrated the cultural usefulness of authenticity as a strategic tool in the promotion of place” (*Blue Chicago*, 234).

Arts—Blues Clubs and Musicians

According to Grazian, the Chicago experience raises questions. How has Chicago’s decision to appropriate popular culture as public policy affected the art form and the artists? What happens when music is put into a museum? What is the history of the blues in America, and what is Chicago’s role in that history? What is the future of American blues, and what is Chicago’s role in that future?

In an era of commercialization, people seek authenticity. Chicago’s policy has generated a critical mass of cultural consumers armed with an image and in search of an authentic blues experience. Chicago has successfully packaged and commodified authenticity. The blues “designer label” is awarded only to black musicians. An “authentic” blues experience is a night out at a frumpy bar with a black band and raunchy regulars.

From an artistic point of view, the search for authenticity leads to standardization. For blues musicians this translates into what they call “the set list from hell,” a short list of mandatory blues “standards” incorporated into all performances. Critics say that the blues as an art form has been put in a straitjacket; it has been “embalmed.”

Policy Issues

Grazian believes that Chicago’s decision to cast popular culture as public policy has exacerbated a number of the city’s social and economic problems.

- Blues club tourism has led to uneven development. The Blues Fest, for example, serves only the downtown area. Overall, the downtown economy and club owners are the beneficiaries at the expense of local neighborhoods, local clubs, and local musicians.
- Tourism in local neighborhoods has resulted in cosmetic improvements only, with few benefits for the poor, and has served as a substitute for needed economic investment.

- City-sponsored blues has created a bifurcated labor market of official vs. unofficial musicians. The City generally books “big names” from out-of-town. Local Chicago musicians have been marginalized. Many play (illegally) for spare change on the streets outside of formal festival events.
- The marketing and sale of the blues as “authentic” is based on the maintenance and reproduction of racial and ethnic stereotypes.

Chicago public officials, however, are pleased with “the political and economic rewards that come from successfully exploiting the artistic production of the city’s neighborhoods and their creative sectors” (*Blue Chicago*, 208). As a Philadelphia economic development planner commented during the discussion, “We would love to have an annual event in Philadelphia as successful as the Chicago Blues Fest!”

Theory—arts in place and authenticity

Thomas Sugrue recommended David Grazian’s *Blue Chicago* as a wonderfully readable book that is full of good sociological theory. The book offers fresh insight into a set of key concepts and relationships: community, race and culture, authenticity and place.

Community—In *Blue Chicago* is a rich discussion of the regulars at the clubs and the community they create. Grazian portrays “community” as a place of the imagination, an invention, a construct, a cognitive map. Community is our idealization of social relations. It is where we want to be, the place we create through our relationships. The essence of community is relational.

Race and culture—Through the story of the blues in the post-Civil Rights era, the book takes on such topics as the cultural construction of race, notions of whiteness and blackness, race as performance, and how racial scripts get played out in a blues bar. The irony is that in the “hyper-segregated” city of Chicago, blues clubs are one of the few places where blacks and whites can interact. Unfortunately, in a setting of contrived authenticity, the blues as a genre reinforces age-old themes in race relations—hypersexuality, emotionality of black culture, and the paternalism around who can express certain experiences.

Place and authenticity—The manufacturing of a culture of authenticity has implications for place. Community economic development is about making places safe for visitors, in this case making black Chicago safe for white America. Given “a sliding scale of comfort and authenticity,” the policy goal is “a *safe* walk on the wild side.” The Chicago blues club could be anywhere; place has become homogenized.

Tour #2. 40th Street, West Philadelphia

Panelists:

Dr. Shannon Mattern, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, History of Art Department, University of Pennsylvania

Harris Steinberg, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania, and Executive Director of Penn Praxis, the clinical consulting arm of the School of Design [<http://www.design.upenn.edu/pennpraxis/>]

Andrew Zitcer, founder and director of The Foundation Community Arts Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships [<http://www.foundationarts.org/>]

Place—40th Street in University City, West Philadelphia

The 40th Street district in University City encompasses the area along and around 40th Street from Market to Locust Streets. 40th Street—the western boundary of the University of Pennsylvania campus (though university affiliates own much student housing to the west)—is a commercial corridor that functions as the intersection between Penn and West Philadelphia.

The 40th Street area has long been home to a mix of retail and eating establishments that that serve the university and nearby West Philadelphia neighborhoods. A grocery store and market opened on the northwest corner of 40th and Walnut Streets in 2000. Since then, cultural activities have joined the mix and appear to be the anchors of an emerging arts district. These are: the Rotunda at 4012 Walnut Street (1999); the Bridge Cinema at 4000 Walnut St. (2002), and the Free Library of Philadelphia's Walnut Street Branch at 201 South 40th Street (renovated and reopened in 2004).

Arts—The Rotunda and The Foundation Community Arts Initiative

Shannon Mattern talked about two forms of public culture—public libraries and arts organizations—and the potential synergy between the two. Bookstores and libraries are complementary to other kinds of arts programming and help create a multi-use district that is potentially active “24-7.” In Fort Greene in Brooklyn, for example, the public library and local visual and performing arts organizations have worked together effectively to resuscitate the neighborhood.

The Walnut Street Branch of the Free Library has been renovated and reactivated as “a knowledge center.” Mattern describes it as “a center of off-beat scholarship” that complements the University as well as the other local arts and entertainment activities. The library anchors the district in three ways: its physical presence, the times of day and week it is active, and its status as a trusted institution.

The Rotunda began in 1996-97 as a project of Penn student Andrew Zitcer, who was inspired by an Urban Studies course taught by Ira Harkavy and Lee Benson. The structure was originally built in 1911 as the First Church of Christ Scientist. After the church departed the building, it sat vacant until Penn bought it. With the support of the University, Zitcer and his collaborators started a group called The Foundation and opened

The Rotunda to community arts initiatives and artists. Andrew talks about the sensation that they are playing the role of “squatters.” The Rotunda is a place free from commerce and—even though Penn owns it—free from the university.

The Foundation sees the Rotunda as a cultural meeting ground, a place where a lot of different genres are represented—a 21st century community center. “There is something about the place that makes you want to make something of it. If it were nicer or smaller, it would already be something else.” The Rotunda functions as an “inter-zone,” a commons. Andrew sees himself as a “*keshet*,” which in Hebrew means “connection,” “liaison,” or “one who makes connections.”

During the discussion, people noted The Rotunda’s view—or lack thereof—from the street and asked about plans for façade or site improvements. Conventional wisdom would look to streetscape beautification as a good way to transform an activity center into a district. But Andrew considers the issue of content vs. appearance a chicken-and-egg-type question. The Foundation’s approach is to ask what is the minimum infrastructure required. Its low visibility has prompted some to ask if the Rotunda is a club or exclusive in some way. The Foundation says that The Rotunda is free but “underground.” They see The Rotunda serving “niche cultures” and “sub-cultures.” It has multiple publics and multiple audiences and is inclusive of all of them—often simultaneously. They talk about “a permeability between arts and artists” west and north of 40th Street.

From a practical point of view, in order to stay free and underground, The Foundation operates on minimal overhead. They have not sent out a single piece of mail. However, they do have an e-mail ListServe of several thousand people and artists.

Of paramount importance to Zitcer is to take more time and build more trust. The Foundation does not want The Rotunda to be the biggest or the best but rather to be serious, intensive, and trusted. Simply stated, their goal is “to be the most trusted, highly regarded, serious venue for artists in the city of Philadelphia.”

In talking about challenges faced by the fledgling arts district, Shannon Mattern proposed an alternative strategy, which she calls, “Do It Yourself.” Shannon said that space that is outside officialdom, that is bohemian, cannot be engineered. Zitcer agrees that The Rotunda is a very special kind of arts place—“an experiment in progress.” But, from his point of view, “it is a highly bureaucratic process to give artists freedom.”

Engine/Model—University of Pennsylvania

On 40th Street, the University of Pennsylvania sees the development of an arts district as a key part of its broader urban strategy. Under the tenure of President Judith Rodin, Penn initiated a plan to assist the revitalization of the University City neighborhood of West Philadelphia. [<http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/v50/n27/rodin.html>] Penn has claimed success in transforming the safety and cleanliness of University City as well as providing new retail amenities and increasing home ownership, education and business opportunities for the residents of West Philadelphia.

The 40th Street corridor is well positioned as an arts district in that it is a commercial and social zone adjacent to campus where people meet, but it is not a residential area. The advantage of Penn’s involvement is that where the university is willing to intervene, it can control the market.

Meanwhile, Penn has been working to improve an historically contentious relationship with its West Philadelphia neighbors. In 2001 the School of Design founded Penn Praxis, its clinical arm that provides planning and design services to communities around the city. Harris Steinberg, a Penn graduate, is the director of Penn Praxis.

Steinberg talked about a new model for civic engagement with respect to planning for 40th Street. The new model is based on Praxis' experience with its Penn's Landing forums during 2003. Steinberg, with Harris Sokoloff at the School of Education, facilitated a community process that combined expert theory with citizen dialogue. The result was consensus on a set of seven planning principles to guide Penn's Landing development.

Steinberg was helping to facilitate a similar set of conversations for 40th Street. One effort involved coordinating the gamut of Penn offices—over 15 different departments—that have an interest in 40th Street. Another effort involved working with a 40th Street Steering Committee and holding an informal series of conversations in the community. In addition, Glenn Bryan, Penn's Director of Community Relations, was holding a First Thursday event where he convened 15 to 30 community groups as well as resource organizations—e.g., LISC's Main Street Program, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, and Penn Archives—for information-sharing.

Praxis' goal was to develop a shared set of planning principles for 40th Street. People have been generally struck by the wealth of arts in West Philadelphia and University City. According to Steinberg, "it is probable" that the arts will play a key role in planning for 40th Street.

In essence, because the University of Pennsylvania is so large (it's the city's largest employer), it is able to internalize the externalities that flow from the creation of a district. For example, Penn benefits directly from more successful commercial tenants, fewer street crimes, and increases in property value. In a way, Penn operates like government but more effectively because it does not have to accommodate so many interests and it can benefit from many intangibles, such as improved quality of campus life and "hot" neighborhood. In the words of former President Rodin: "Ten years ago, few thought Penn had the guts to stick its neck out for its neighbors. Today, we realize that by putting our money and reputation on the line to help revitalize University City, the neck we saved might well turn out to have been our own."

Policy Issues

The discussion revealed both agreement and concern about the key role of the arts in the future of 40th Street. The arts and arts organizations often serve as the *avant garde* of development and shape an area's identity for revitalization. The hope and challenge is to manage a balance of culture and commerce in the district.

One question raised was how broadly to define "art" in terms of the district. The general sentiment is to be inclusive both of "high art" and of organic and flexible art forms that promise to be conducive to place-making.

Penn's major challenge with respect to 40th Street, according to Harris Steinberg, is developing trust. The University of Pennsylvania needs to overcome decades of mistrust

on the part of the University City and West Philadelphia communities. The challenge to community engagement is how to become “future-” rather than “past-oriented.”

Andrew Zitcer, artist and Penn employee, is concerned about how to measure cultural assets without reducing them to numbers. Penn’s Facilities and Real Estate Services department, for example, measures progress in terms of dollars of advertising sold, rent per square foot, and amount of foot traffic generated. Zitcer noted the need for a different type of valuation to assess the success of cultural projects.

Lucy Kerman, in the Penn President’s Office, raised the issue of how to balance the use of the arts for community building vs. its potential role as catalyst for gentrification. What can Penn do to stabilize the area? What is the best approach to property ownership for stabilization?

Shannon Mattern, in her course on “processes of place-making,” explored the question of what is a public space. What makes a space public? She referred to Thomas Bender’s idea of “representative space”, which focuses on the symbolism of a place. Another question is whether public involvement in the design of a space makes it public. Different people have different stakes in a space. Contestation and debate about space is good in that it is indicative of its public nature. She raised the concept of what Richard Sennett calls “unfinished”—or finishable—space as a way to make it more public. Less is more. Mattern’s pitch for a “Do It Yourself” model of creating an authentic arts district plays off the concept of “unfinished” public space.

The Rotunda experiment and “processes of place-making” perspective served to broaden the discussion of arts-based urban districts. The 40th Street panel prompted a number of questions about public place, urban space, and the meaning and role of the arts in urban communities. Who makes an arts place? For whom are cultural spaces made? Are the processes of place-making as important—or more important—than the outcomes?

Update 2005. Source: www.brynmawr.edu/local/40th//arts.html

Friends of 40th Street, Arts Task Force

"The Task Force is committed to the proposition that the arts can profoundly change and enrich our community. We represent and are committed to local artists, arts organizations, arts venues, arts businesses, and all other organizations that recognize that the arts are a necessary part of a creative and healthy neighborhood. ... "

Tour #3. Old City, historic Center City Philadelphia

Panelists

Ken Finkel, Executive Director, Arts and Culture, WHYY Inc. [<http://www.whyy.org>]

Laurel Raczka, Executive Director, Painted Bride Art Center
[<http://www.paintedbride.org/>]

Matthew Ruben, University of Pennsylvania doctoral student, English and Urban Studies

Rick Snyderman, Owner, Snyderman/Works Gallery [<http://www.snyderman-works.com/>].

Place—Old City, historic Center City Philadelphia

Old City, located in the northeast corner of Center City near the Delaware Riverfront, is the site of many of Philadelphia's historic resources associated with early settlement. Once a thriving industrial and wholesale district, Old City began to decline in the decades after World War II as industry moved out of the city center. Numerous industrial and commercial loft buildings were left vacant or underutilized. In the 1970s and early 1980s, artists and entrepreneurs attracted by cheap rents and large spaces—and pushed off of South Street to make way for the Crosstown Expressway—began moving into the area.

By the 1980s, developers in Old City had begun to convert lofts into apartments for rent or sale and, in addition to studios and galleries, the area had attracted a mix of offices, wholesalers, shops, bars and restaurants. Between 1980 and 1986, according to Matt Ruben, the population increased by 366 percent, from 656 people to 2,400 people. The 1990s saw even more growth and investment; increasingly residential, retail, and restaurant development has catered to affluent markets. As rents and property values rose, many of the pioneer artists and entrepreneurs were forced to move out of Old City. Unlike the SoHo story in New York, however, the option of buying and staying was open to modest organizations—with foresight—like the Painted Bride Art Center.

Arts—Painted Bride Art Center

The Painted Bride Art Center, an artists' collective founded in 1969, first occupied the former site of "The Bridal Shop" on South Street. In 1981 the Bride relocated from South Street to Old City, when it was dominated by artists' studios. The neighborhood seemed to grow organically due to the synergy among the arts, the businesses, and the restaurants. However, the Bride, located at 230 Vine Street under the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, has had obstacles to overcome such as inadequate parking, lighting, and signage and being on the "other side of the bridge." Director Laurel Raczka raised the question of who is responsible for the infrastructure such as site and streetscape improvements needed to support local institutions.

Raczka noted three factors that have contributed to the success of Old City as an arts district: (1) it was artist-driven; (2) there was little financial capital but great people-power; and (3) some groups were able to purchase their property—including the Painted Bride, which acted on the advice of a board member and lessons learned on South Street.

Engine—Old City Arts Association

Old City is Philadelphia’s model of an artist-driven and market-based cultural district. Rick Snyderman, owner of the Snyderman-Works Gallery in Old City, and his wife, Ruth, have been active in arts-based urban revitalization for 35 years.

Snyderman calls himself a “cultural entrepreneur,” a term coined by political activist and artist Isaiah Zeigler. In the late 1960s Rick founded a nonprofit on South Street called Urban Community Alternatives to help fight the planned Crosstown Expressway, which would have required demolition of all buildings between Lombard and Bainbridge Streets and from the Delaware River to the Schuylkill River and thus the eradication of the South Street artists’ community. Through this group and others, including the Painted Bride, the arts played a critical role in “saving” South Street. Snyderman’s model for cities undergoing revitalization is “the massing of forces”—young people and artists coming together for artistic and social action.

Rick Snyderman talked first-hand about the dynamic interdependence of the arts and the city. “The business of having a city is what makes civilization happen.” At the same time, the business and politics of making art help make a city vital. The arts are the “nexus.”¹ He made the point that most artists do not work in an ivory tower but understand the business and political roles of making art.

Urban Community Alternatives was an important early model, and the South Street experience was a turning point for Philadelphia’s cultural entrepreneurs. Priced out of South Street by rising rents due (ironically) to the area’s popularity as an “artsy,” hip place for entertainment, dining, retail, and residential development, these enterprising artists and youth relocated to Old City and decided to position it as a cultural district. Or, as Snyderman put it, they “willed” Old City to become a cultural district.

The city-arts-nexus philosophy of the former South Street activists dovetailed with their Old City organizing strategy. A simple concept served to channel their energies effectively: (1) nurture the city as a cultural nexus; (2) concentrate the arts into particular places within the city; and (3) make Old City the center of the cultural nexus. The artist-activists had also learned that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In 1991 they started the Old City Arts Association to collectivize the efforts of individual artists and entrepreneurs and to fuse the district with an arts identity that would be legible and visible to the public at large. The founders of Old City Arts made a self-conscious decision to identify the arts with the place—that is, to make it clear that the arts are ‘what’s happening’ in Old City.

The Old City Arts Association [<http://www.oldcityarts.org/start.html>] initiated First Friday, Old City’s monthly open house, and continues to send out a brochure regularly to thousands of people. First Friday spin-offs benefit the district’s galleries and artists as well as its growing retail and entertainment businesses. The Old City Arts Association provided the seed money to launch the Philadelphia Fringe Festival [[---

¹ *Nexus*, from the Latin *nectere* ‘to bind’, is defined both as the connection or link between the individuals of a group and the group connected.](http://www.livearts-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

fringe.org/], which started in 1997 and has since expanded into an independent \$1 million citywide festival.

The City of Philadelphia, according to Rick Snyderman, is just beginning to learn how to use the city's cultural resources. The City has only recently started to use the Old City Arts Association brochure as a marketing strategy for its conventions. Generally, local government has not shown an understanding about how to take advantage of the arts.

Snyderman recommends the arts model as a revitalization strategy for Philadelphia and other cities. He points to several key advantages of the arts:

- Cultural resources are land-locked. They cannot move away. Unlike the region's mobile sectors, cultural resources are tied to place and here to stay.
- Arts organizations are the best value for the money of any investment. A small investment in the arts generates great value and a huge impact.
- The arts are a generator of external resources by bringing outside economic activity into the city.

Snyderman believes that Philadelphia's cultural resources are the city's most under-utilized assets. From the point of view of both economist and cultural consumer, Philadelphians have only begun to tap the potential of the arts.

Policy Issues

Matt Ruben, Penn doctoral candidate and resident of Northern Liberties, noted the central dilemma of the cultural district and artist-driven development. That is, a neighborhood becomes publicly known as an artists' neighborhood just when the artists have to leave. Matt raised a number of other policy issues that led to a lively discussion with the audience and other panelists.

Inter-urban competition. Matt Ruben talked about the many definitions of culture that pertain to the role of the arts in the city. Culture can be defined as a way of life. Culture is also defined by the creative process, by the many art forms and traditions, and by the work of artists or artisans. Regarding their role in urban development, the arts and culture are important elements of inter-urban competition. In other words, the arts contribute to winning the competition for investment, residents, and consumption.

Can we use public-private partnerships to replicate the Old City model elsewhere in the city? From 1980 to 2003, the population of Old City increased 11 times over. What is the desirable multiplier? What are other measures of the impacts of the arts? For example, what is the spatial impact? What would these properties or spaces be used for otherwise? What is the impact of arts districts on livability?

Uneven development. A central issue of revitalization is that of "uneven development"—the inequitable distribution of the costs and benefits of a local upswing. Ruben raised the question of creating "linkages" that could redistribute the benefits of revitalization. Would it be possible, for example, for a neighborhood on the rise to capture the economic benefits in a way that could provide rent subsidies or save spaces for a particular kind of use?

The discussion raised questions about the social and cultural dimensions of uneven development. How does a particular community retain its character or identity as it is being “managed” or “conquered” for development? Old City, for example, has prospered off the synergy of its artists, businesses, and restaurants. However, the neighborhood from which the Painted Bride now draws the fewest patrons is Old City, an unexpected indicator of decline in diversity. Is there a way to invest the benefits of synergy to maintain the diversity of an area?

The group expressed interest in a foundation-sponsored public policy study to examine the process of urbanization in the 21st century with a focus on Philadelphia. Ideally, such a study would document the interdependence of culture and the urban economy as well as recommend ways to maximize the benefits for the public good.

Neighborhood cultural districts. What is the possibility of policy that promotes the creative reuse of space as a catalyst for a cultural district? Urban gardens, for example, are grounded in neighborhoods and become their engines. There is a church-based activity cluster on Frankford Avenue that has potential as a neighborhood eco-center. Economic opportunities, such as urban farming, have been largely unexplored. The energy represented by such local enterprises and the synergy of the city could be channeled into economic development institutions.

Ken Finkel, WHYY arts and culture director, noted that Philadelphia has historically been a city of neighborhoods, a conglomeration of villages. Outside of Center City are many interesting but isolated districts, the legacy of once distinctive communities. The consolidation of Philadelphia city and county in 1854 resulted in “a leveling of place,” a loss of social topography. Finkel speculated that the influx of new immigrants and new perspectives on culture and horticulture could revive these old neighborhoods with new character.

Rick Snyderman talked about the imperative of the city expanding outward from the center. He sees “little satellites” of cultural and economic activity moving closer to the center. “It is happening, it is inevitable, and it is good.” However, Snyderman noted, there is an absence of public policy to guide the use of civic space and public space. The City’s Neighborhood Transformation Initiative was a promising step forward as a plan but has fallen drastically short in implementation. Local philanthropy too has been short on vision and support of the city’s emerging cultural satellites. In these fragile, marginal areas beyond the city center, public and private policy-makers need to see culture not just as an economic tool but also as a gesture of hope. “If a community feels good about itself, other things happen.”

Arts, place, and the 21st century city. Ken Finkel talked about the need for the cultural sector to anticipate and plan for its role in the 21st century city. Over the past 30 years, the region’s nonprofit organizations have exploded both in number and square footage. However, the way that the arts are presented and experienced and the sector’s use of place and space are based on old models. In his book on the history of museums in Philadelphia and other American cities, Steve Conn argues that society has moved from “object-based” knowledge to “discourse-based” knowledge.

[<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/13578.ctl>] Despite this significant

societal change, said Finkel, we are still packaging and presenting the arts as objects. The new Constitution Center, for example, looks like a 19th century institution.

Finkel sees a need for comprehensive planning of the region's cultural sector. What are the infrastructure and resources needed to strengthen the arts from within? How should independent and isolated artistic activities, institutions, and clusters be coordinated and integrated with the larger community? What is the potential of the media to voice the concerns of the region's arts and cultural enclaves and mobilize responsive thinking and action? What is the role of the broadcast media in shifting the arts and culture from an object-based to a discourse-based experience?

Call for a new political culture. Artists play to the advantage of cities. Cities are about interaction; suburbs are private. Philadelphia is one of the top cities in the United States, after New York and Chicago, with downtown residential communities. The role of the artist has been urban pioneer and visionary. Artists have been moving into neighborhoods in decline and creating stability. Over the past decades, we have witnessed artists' migrations from South Street, to Old City, to Northern Liberties, and to Fishtown. Now artists are "smarter" and buying buildings and houses.

Several noted local government's absence in this process. Philadelphia could benefit from a loan program for artists who want to buy and develop properties. The New York City Zoning Code, for example, defines "artists' zones" where properties qualify for assistance by a Cultural Loan Bank. Philadelphia has potential pools of significant public support that warrant investigation. For example, the City's 10-year tax abatement granted for new construction in 1997 is due to expire in 2007. We should take a look at that income stream and its potential as a new source of tax revenue. What is the potential cash flow from these properties? What could the City do with those funds?

The discussion focused on the need for a change in political culture. We need more alliances with artists and arts organizations. We need organizations to spur and support development that is thoughtful and equitable. We need to boost the salience of the arts in the eyes of the public and the public officials who make the decisions about land use and public investment that affect the arts. We need to address the relationship between public and private interests that are about the larger community rather than individual benefit. Rick Snyderman posed the question this way: "Can we create a private culture that has a public consequence?"

Ultimately, in Snyderman's view, the engine for revitalization is the artist and the cultural entrepreneur. Ultimately the "sweat equity" of the young and of "hard-working" people generally is what makes things happen. No one demographic or ethnic group is responsible—except maybe youth.

Tour #4. Norris Square, North Philadelphia

Panelists

Iris Brown, Garden Coordinator, Grupo Motivos Coordinator, Norris Square Neighborhood Project [<http://www.nsnp.org/>]

Jane Golden, Director, Philadelphia Department of Recreation Mural Arts Program [<http://www.muralarts.org/>].

Mark Stern, Professor of Social Welfare and History, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work [<http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/SIAP/>]

Place—Norris Square, North Philadelphia

The Norris Square neighborhood is a largely Latin American community in the West Kensington area of eastern North Philadelphia. Norris Square, well beyond Center City and its ring neighborhoods, had a poverty rate of 49 percent in 2000. West Kensington lost 11 percent of its population between 1990 and 2000, well above the aggregate citywide loss of 4 percent.

Norris Square Park—bounded by Diamond, Susquehanna, Howard, and Hancock Streets—has been the focal point for the neighborhood and its history. Isaac Norris, one of colonial Philadelphia’s most prominent Quaker merchants, built his country estate and farm called Fairhill in the area. In the mid-19th century, following the vision of William Penn, the Norris family set aside a plot of land for a public green that became Norris Square. During the decades that followed, the square became a desirable location for townhouses and churches and served as a green respite for the dense neighborhood of row houses built for workers employed by nearby factories and mills.

In the 1950s and ‘60s, with the decline of Philadelphia’s industrial base after World War II, Kensington factories closed and homeowners relocated, leaving behind scores of vacant buildings and the associated blight. The largely Jewish and German North Philadelphia neighborhoods to the west experienced “white flight,” making way for African Americans arriving in the Second Great Migration from the South. To the east, whites in Kensington resisted the arrival of minorities, sometimes violently. Residents began to call the area between white Kensington and black North Philadelphia, in the area of Norris Square, “the demilitarized zone,” a name borrowed from the Korean War. It was into this area that Puerto Rican immigrants moved beginning in the 1950s. Ironically, like African Americans from the South, Puerto Ricans came to Philadelphia seeking the good factory jobs that were fast disappearing. By 1970 Norris Square was home to unemployment and poverty, gang wars and drug dealers. Norris Square Park was known as “Needle Park.” Children from Miller Elementary and St. Boniface schools, which faced the park, were forbidden to walk through it.

Arts—Norris Square Neighborhood Project with Philadelphia Green and the Mural Arts Program

The roots of Norris Square Neighborhood Project (NSNP) date from 1973 when a fifth grade teacher, Natalie Kempner, started a mini nature museum in the basement of Miller School. Her students’ efforts at greening over the next years were supported by a

neighborhood coalition called S.O.S. (Save Our Square) and by Sister Carol Keck, principal of St. Boniface School, who in 1988 became NSNP executive director.

Iris Brown and Tomasita Romero—long time Norris Square teachers and gardeners—were instrumental in connecting the Norris Square Neighborhood Project with the Philadelphia Green program of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the City of Philadelphia’s Mural Arts Program (then the Anti-Graffiti Network). Brown told the story of how the women of Norris Square tapped their Puerto Rican culture and tradition to reclaim Norris Square Park for the community.

Iris Brown made a long story short but was able to give us the flavor of Norris Square in the late 1980s and early ‘90s. The *bochichi*—“complaining women”—were talking among themselves: “We are from Puerto Rico. We need trees. What to do? The government does not understand us, does not even see us. ...” Also, the women don’t like to go to meetings, especially when their husbands are at home. NSNP was talking with Philadelphia Green about how to get Norris Square designated as a Greene Countrie Towne. They needed to organize a network of gardeners to make it happen. So Iris and Tomasita organized the *bochichis* into the *Grupo Motivos* (“motivated group”).

But the drug economy was becoming more – not less – entrenched on the streets and corners of Norris Square. Iris continued her story. “It seems like a dream. One day they came and took away 60 of our people.” Many of the men in the community were arrested in a single sting operation. The United Neighbors Against Drugs (UNAD) held all-night anti-drug vigils to move out dealers and shut down corners. The Grupo Motivos set out to reclaim the abandoned, trash-strewn lots for horticulture. “We have to celebrate every day. That’s how we get our energy.”

The Grupo Motivos were persistent in their vision of the Norris Square Greene Countrie Towne. They made a proposal to Philadelphia Green to become Philadelphia’s first Latino Greene Countrie Towne. Here they met Jane Golden, director of the Mayor’s Anti-Graffiti Network. Golden helped NSNP negotiate with Philadelphia Green—no, we do not want a fountain in the park, yes, we want trees and sidewalks. Brown called this “a spirit-lifting process.”

Jane Golden also helped put a human face on City government and integrate mural-making with community gardening. Murals are about place-making, which in the case of Norris Square was about taking back the square. Jane talked about her first meeting with Mrs. Bagby, who described Norris Square’s relationship with the City of Philadelphia: “Either nothing was done, or something was *done to us*.” At the time, the only visual stimuli in the neighborhood were billboards that advertised tobacco and alcohol. “The goal of mural-making is to bring beauty and hope to a community,” said Jane. In the case of Norris Square, mural-making worked hand-in-hand with gardening to bring beauty and hope.

In 1997 the Anti-Graffiti Network moved to the Philadelphia Department of Recreation (and subsequently to the Managing Director’s Office) and changed its name to the Mural Arts Program (MAP). MAP’s relationship with Norris Square Neighborhood Project was ongoing. In the summer of 2000 MAP commissioned Salvador Gonzales, an Afro-Cuban artist from Havana, to work with the neighbors to find an image for a mural that reflected the community’s connections with their gardens and Puerto Rico. Gonzales created a

stunning mural mosaic behind the community gardens at 163 West Susquehanna Street called “Butterflies of the Caribbean.”

Under Mayor John Street, said Jane Golden, the Mural Arts Program has become increasingly involved with social services that draw upon the healing uses of art—for example, its program with Graterford Prison and the neighborhoods of North Philadelphia. MAP artists have been working on a collaborative project that involves three groups of people: the inmates at Graterford, local victims of crime, and other neighborhood residents. The process is central to the project: crime victims voice their pain, inmates listen to the victims, and then all groups pursue “a commonality” as “the basis to move on.” The approach is multi-sensory and involves forms of expression such as poetry and wind chimes as well as visual imagery.

Iris Brown recounted the successes of the Norris Square neighbors: “We have art and color everywhere!” They have created seven gardens; one community garden cultivated by 16 families; La Casita, the little house that is a replica of a 1950s Puerto Rican house; an installation in the Philadelphia Flower Show of 2003; and a plan for a Taino village that involves the Puerto Rican artist Pepon Osorio (a Philadelphia resident). Culture and the arts are embedded in everyday life in the Norris Square community. Art forms appear in so many different ways—“in cooking, in dancing, whatever we do, we call it an art. ... We are looking for those tiny things that no one sees. From there we get our inspiration.”

Engine & Model—Norris Square Neighborhood Project with Grupo Motivos

Mark Stern described Norris Square as the most unorthodox of the models investigated during the *Arts In Place* series. First, Norris Square was “in really terrible shape” and by far the most economically depressed district. Second, the “strategy” was non-economic. The Norris Square Neighborhood Project, led by Iris Brown, took initiative to organize the community by building social networks among residents. The Grupo Motivos, a group of Puerto Rican women of all ages “who strive to share traditions and link neighborhood women with opportunities,” exemplifies the approach.

The NSNP approach has resulted in a phenomenon called “collective efficacy,” a term coined by Harvard University sociologists Robert J. Sampson and Felton Earls. The collective effect of incremental individual efforts over a twenty-year period enabled the local community to respond to crisis and initiate positive change. In Norris Square building social connections has resulted in a set of tangible impacts, including home improvement investments and lower vacancy rates, as well as a change in perception by residents that the neighborhood is more secure.

The Norris Square story is an excellent example of the need to shift our framework from that of “urban crisis” to that of “the new urban reality.” For decades our view of cities has been dominated by the metaphor of “urban crisis”—i.e., the city at the center of economic depression and social pathology. It is time to use a new lens to look at urban neighborhoods as a balance of distress *and* regeneration. It is easy to characterize Norris Square as a depressed urban neighborhood, but the Grupo Motivos make it also easy to see the promise.

An essential element of “the new urban reality” is the recognition of the interdependence of regional and community-based organizations to advance urban neighborhoods.

Community groups need the kinds of resources amassed at the city or regional level, and regional agents need the grounding represented by local associations. There was a great fit between Norris Square Neighborhood Project and the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program because of MAP's interest in integrating community voices into its work and Norris Square's ability to integrate mural arts into its broader neighborhood planning initiatives.

In the words of Jane Golden: "Murals are political—there is a ripple effect from mural-making." Murals are a form of public art. They are not parachuted in, but rather mural-making is an inclusive process, a partnership. "Ideally murals serve as a catalyst of further action. Our most successful projects are where we are working with a local organization."

Policy Issues

The discussion raised the issue of the long-term security of the gardens. In fact, Norris Square Neighborhood Project has taken ownership of all of the properties that are garden sites. In addition, the Neighborhood Gardens Association, which is affiliated with Philadelphia Green, administers a Neighborhood Land Trust that buys community garden sites citywide. Thus, although the Neighborhood Gardens Association is by no means able to purchase and preserve every community garden in the city, Philadelphia's community gardeners are ahead of its artists in addressing issues of property control and stability over the long-term. We posed the question of whether a land trust could be a useful model to address the need for affordable and predictable artist housing and studio spaces.

Another issue raised was the longevity of murals. Jane Golden responded that murals are part of the changing city landscape. On the one hand, "a mural painter creates a sense of place." On the other hand, even the "permanent" murals are temporary. Thus murals as public art play a variety of roles in place-making and the development of arts districts.

According to Iris Brown, now "the real war in the community" centers on new housing and new residents. During the past few years, six to seven politicians have moved into the neighborhood, and gentrification pressures are on the horizon.

Tour #5. Public Art in Philadelphia

Panelists

Mei-Ling Hom, Artist (Hom's work was on display at the Fleisher/Ollman Gallery.)

Charles Moleski, Project Manager for New LandMarks, Fairmount Park Art Association
[<http://www.fpaa.org/>]

Michael Nairn, Landscape Architect, Principal, Michael P. Nairn Landscape Architects

Place—Philadelphia, perspectives on place and public art

The public art session explored perspectives on place and public art in general with particular reference to Philadelphia. Its main message was that a “new style” of public art, which emphasizes the social processes that produce the art, has replaced an old emphasis on monumental products. The popular shorthand is “process art” vs. “plop art.” Much of the public art referred to during the panel—whether old-style monumental products or new-style process art—was not discussed with reference to place.

Michael Nairn, a landscape architect, teaches an Urban Studies course called “Public Environment of Cities: Introduction to the Urban Landscape.” He talked about what is “public” about public art. “Public” refers to places where people can express their First Amendment rights. The public art process is a way by which people express their identity and their collective memory. Nairn highlighted two functions of public art in a community: one, it unlocks collective memory and, two, it makes a place ‘image-able’.

With respect to art and place, Nairn contrasted the public artist with the landscape architect. Landscape architects study and design for the natural environmental phenomenon of “succession”—that is, the natural landscape changes from season to season and from year to year in a relatively orderly and predictable way. By contrast, public artists design for one moment in the timeline of humanity. How does public art stand the test of time as the community—the social environment—changes? What is the theory of public art and community change?

According to Nairn, public art is “about the past informing the present informing the future.” But there is no theory or framework that prepares public artists for the typically unpredictable changes of the social landscape in a given place over a given period of time. Landscape architects are trained to shape systems and places; public artists are trained to create objects in space. As an example, Nairn discussed the differences among three memorials—the Gettysburg battleground memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, and the Vietnam Memorial—with respect to the relationship of object to space.

Arts—Mei Ling Hom, Artist

Mei Ling Hom introduced herself as American-born Chinese. She showed slides of arts projects and collaborations that were connected to community and identity—or identity communities. Much of her work is temporary rather than permanent and is installed in public places.

Hom talked about the role of the artist as a “visual anthropologist.” She sees a collaborative community art project as a catalyst for a dialogue. A project called

“Picturing Asian America,” for example, involved giving a group of young people in San Francisco disposable cameras and asking them to “take pictures of what it means to be ... Korean-American, Vietnamese-American, Japanese-American ...” for an audience of non-Asian-Americans. To present the photos they took, they lined up their images on a long, low banquet table in a gallery for viewing and discussion.

Mei Ling Hom talked about some of her work in the Philadelphia area: “Wedge of China,” a permanent work of sculpture in the lobby of the Pennsylvania Convention Center made of thousands of Chinese porcelain cups, saucers, and spoons; “Journey,” a 100-foot long boat as a Vietnamese monument to immigration for Vietnamese United National Association (VUNA); and a temporary installation at Rosemont College of 285 Chinese (non-native) trees planted in serpentine lines called “Invasive Aliens.”

Engine—Fairmount Park Art Association

“Throughout history, most art is public art.” Charlie Moleski, Program Manager at the Fairmount Park Art Association (FPAA), talked about FPAA’s work as a public art organization. Charlie describes its role as “mechanic” rather than engine. The Fairmount Park Art Association functions as a broker—a mediator between the artist and the community—in the planning and commissioning of new works of public art. In its New LandMarks program, the artist works with community organizations and local residents for a full year to plan a new work of public art for the neighborhood.

Policy Issues

Who’s the public? Public art serves as a way of reflecting people’s identity, introducing a new group (such as recent immigrants) to a place, or sparking conversation and controversy. However, the juncture of place and community is often a point of tension. Whose history or space is being marked? What if the space is contested?

Can public art be a vehicle for bridging diverse communities? Can public art educate city residents about their past and about change and transition within their community, neighborhood, and environment? Is there a way to encourage the cross-fertilization of the different “publics” or “communities” involved in public art—i.e., site-specific art vs. social-specific art. What is the interaction between place-based community and non-place community with respect to planning for public art?

How can we make the public art process more meaningful? For example, what can we learn about public art from two local programs, the Village of Arts and Humanities and the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program?

Public processes. Historically, “public art” referred to monumental works created for public spaces. Now public art is about public process. While “interactive design” is a desirable process, “design by committee” is not. What is the best public process—top-down or bottom-up? According to Michael Nairn, the architect or artist should lead the public art process.

But processes need not stop with production. Nairn asserted that “people don’t love places, they love objects.” At the University of Pennsylvania, the broken button (in front of Van Pelt Library) and Ben Franklin’s bench (at Locust Walk and 37th Street) are very popular—and it’s not an accident that both pieces afford an interactive opportunity with the public. “People create art through use and interaction,” connecting history with new

generations. He pointed also to the success of Smith Memorial Playground in Fairmount Park.

What's a success? How do we define “success” with respect to public art? What is the legacy of public art? For some people, Philadelphia is a veritable outdoor museum of art, while others complain that “memorials are littering the landscape.” How can we document the impact of temporary installations beyond the benefits to those who participate directly in the making or initial opening of a new project?

Nairn noted examples of success and failure in public art. A project of the One Percent for Art program of the Redevelopment Authority—Franklintown Park between 18th and 19th Streets—was a complete failure in that it has attracted very few people to use or appreciate it. However, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway is a prime example of success, as is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, as is the Gettysburg battleground memorial—all of which have stood the test of time as places that people use and, in the case of the two memorials, find quite moving. The creative process typically involves a substantial percentage of endeavors that fail. The public art process, however, does not anticipate failure. Should we not expect a certain percentage of public art projects to fail?

During discussion the question was posed: “Why is Philadelphia poor in site-specific public art?” Two of the leading “engines” in the arts districts explored during the series—the City of Philadelphia (Avenue of the Arts) and the University of Pennsylvania (40th Street)—are also leading agents of public art in Philadelphia. However, during the public art discussion, both the City (percent for art programs) and Penn were criticized for lack of vision and guidelines for public art, in particular for lack of connection with place-making. By contrast, the City’s Mural Arts Program, which was linked to the evolution of Norris Square as a cultural district, was cited as a successful public art program.

Below is an excerpt from a commentary by Christopher Knight, art critic for the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, called "Notes toward Public Art," in *Arts and Architecture* (1983), 9-12.

An observation on politics made by Plutarch also seems appropriate when considering the nature of public art. "They are wrong who think that politics is like an ocean voyage or a military campaign," he wrote, "something to be done with some end in view, something which levels off as soon as that end is reached. It is not a public chore to be got over with; it is a way of life."

It may be that public art is not a thing at all, not a sculpture in a plaza, nor an artist-designed park, nor some functional configuration. Significantly, the two primary approaches to the concept of public art that have emerged over the past 20 years—that it is art to which the public has access, and that it is art which the public can use—do not express art's relationship to the public realm adjectively, but adverbially. What these approaches instinctively acknowledge is that the true locus of public art lies within our culture's way of life. Where they collapse, however, is in their intention to visibly and directly connect 'the public' to 'a work of art.' Their thrust is "like an ocean voyage or a military campaign, something to be done with some end in view."

Perhaps the appropriate question to be asked is not how can we make public art, but rather, how can we make art publicly?

Tour # 6. Avenue of the Arts, Center City Philadelphia

Panelists

Paul R. Levy, Executive Director, Center City District [<http://www.centercityphila.org>]

William Scott Noel, Professor and Artist, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts [<http://www.pafa.org>].

Lynne B. Sagalyn, Professor of Real Estate Development and Planning, University of Pennsylvania [<http://www.design.upenn.edu/new/cplan/facultybio>]

Place—Philadelphia’s South Broad Street, the Avenue of the Arts

Broad Street between Walnut and Pine Streets in downtown Philadelphia has long been known as “the Avenue of the Arts.” Long-standing institutions located along this stretch of South Broad include the Academy of Music, home of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1900 to 2001; the Merriam Theater, formerly the Shubert Theater; the University of the Arts; and the Jewish Community Center’s Gershman Y Branch.

The impetus for revitalization of South Broad Street as a cultural district began in the 1970s and 1980s with the Philadelphia Orchestra’s vision of moving out of the Academy of Music into a new concert hall. The concept included the renovation and restoration of the Academy of Music to its original purpose as a home for opera, musical theater, and dance.

Meanwhile, Center City’s economy and land use were in the protracted process of shifting from an industrial to a service base. By the 1980s the downtown office core and new construction had shifted west of Broad Street, which generated a 40 percent vacancy rate along South Broad Street and to the east of Broad. A new Convention Center was going to be built behind the Reading Terminal head house site on Market Street East. In its *Plan for Center City* (1988), the Philadelphia City Planning Commission proposed development of a South Broad Street performing arts district to meet the facility needs of renowned local institutions, capture convention-generated tourism, and help stimulate the transition of the downtown economy.

During the 1990s, the official boundaries of the Avenue of the Arts District were extended south along South Broad Street to Washington Avenue, the new home of the Pennsylvania Ballet, and north along North Broad Street beyond Temple University to York Street. The reconfiguration of the “district” to a 3.5-mile Broad Street corridor was an attempt by the City to share the benefits of public investment and political attention with the neighborhoods of North and South Philadelphia. Planning and implementation have treated the corridor as three districts—Center City, Avenue South, and Avenue North. The Center City District was the focus of the panel.

For the City Planning Commission’s most recent report on the Avenue of the Arts, see: [<http://www.philaplanning.org/plans/avearts.pdf>].

Arts—Philadelphia Orchestra and Center City’s performing arts institutions

Many of Philadelphia’s established cultural institutions supported development of a performing arts district on South Broad Street. The goals of the cultural sector were to increase seating and production capacity with new, state-of-the-art facilities; capture a wider regional and visitor audience for their programs; and give more visibility to Philadelphia’s performing artists and institutions.

Although the Philadelphia Orchestra triggered Avenue of the Arts planning, a number of smaller organizations managed to break ground and open their doors ahead of the orchestra. The Philadelphia Arts Bank, a bank building converted to a theater by the University of the Arts, opened in 1994 at Broad and South Streets. In 1996 the Wilma Theater relocated from its original home at 2030 Sansom Street (now The Adrienne) to a new 301-seat facility at Broad and Spruce Streets. In 1999 the American Music Theater Festival changed its name to the Prince Music Theater and relocated from the Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania to its first permanent home in the renovated former Midtown Theater at 1412 Chestnut Street.

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, opened its doors in December 2001. The Kimmel Center houses a number of resident companies in addition to the orchestra: Peter Nero and the Philly Pops, the American Theater Arts for Youth, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Philadanco, and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. Two other resident companies, the Opera Company of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Ballet, perform at the Academy of Music, which is undergoing renovation.

In many cases, the “Avenue of the Arts” designation embraced institutional planning already in the works—for example, renovations planned by the Brandywine Graphics Workshop and the Clef Club in South Philadelphia and the New Freedom Theatre in North Philadelphia. Other institutions have been reactive members of the Avenue of the Arts, for example, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA), located at Broad and Cherry Streets just north of City Hall. Artist and staff member William Scott Noel explained that PAFA was in the process of “reinventing itself.” A fine arts academy and a museum of American art, PAFA was immersed in a retrospective of its exhibitions since its founding in 1805. Staff and board were taking a critical look at this institution’s historical role vis-à-vis the larger community and assessing whether it has been “too bound by taste as defined by past traditions.”

Engines—City of Philadelphia, Center City District, Avenue of the Arts, Inc.

The Avenue of the Arts is a downtown cultural district sponsored by the City of Philadelphia with quasi-public and non-profit organizations serving as the planning and implementation agents. The Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC) took the lead on planning and in 1990 retained the firm of Kise Franks & Straw, Inc. to do the first design and streetscape plan. With the advocacy of Mayor Ed Rendell, a working group was formed that included CPDC, the University of the Arts, and the William Penn Foundation. Over the next few years, CPDC continued strategic planning for the Avenue of the Arts and the South Broad Street corridor.

The Center City District, a business improvement district created by CPDC in 1990, has functioned as the agent of the City of Philadelphia to implement planning for South Broad Street. In 1993 the City supported formation of an independent nonprofit, Avenue of the Arts, Inc., to oversee development with a focus on financing. [See: <http://www.avenueofthearts.org>.] The Avenue of the Arts is the only district on the tour that has received significant government support and investment from the City and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Paul Levy, Executive Director of the Center City District, talked about the current focus of Avenue of the Arts planning in Center City. To diversify and animate downtown, planners are looking at the whole picture to see where “to fill in the gaps.” The concept is animation of the **Y** that links three districts—South Broad Street, Market Street East, and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway—with City Hall and Penn Square at the juncture. The question is what improvements would link the nodes of activity generated by existing institutions and commerce with a special focus on the “dead space” surrounding City Hall. Finding a creative way to use and animate City Hall Square would link the North and South Broad Street arms of the Avenue of the Arts as well as the **Y** institutional and commercial spine.

The next phase of work along the Avenue of the Arts will involve a new round of investment in the public environment such as more vibrant public art, improved landscape design, and brightening of the blank walls on Market Street East. Development of a new facility—a music museum and hall of fame—is also under consideration.

Policy Issues

The arts and culture have been a central component of the City’s economic development strategy to diversify and animate downtown. Avenue of the Arts projects have resulted in the creation of 4,000 new theater seats. At the same time, cultural redevelopment helped boost office building occupancy and conversion of vacant office structures to residences. This mix of cultural, office, and residential uses has increased night life and life on the streets generally.

But the arts alone have not resuscitated Center City. A combination of factors—the Convention Center; the Constitution Center; the city’s tourism, marketing, and visitors’ agencies; and Center City District’s emphasis on streetscape and safety—all have been responsible for the turn-around in downtown Philadelphia. When office buildings were reclaimed for residential use—along with major new visitor attractions, promotional efforts, and a tangible streetscape upgrading—land and property values began to rise.

Paul Levy’s message was that creating an arts scene was “a necessary but not sufficient” condition for Center City revitalization. City officials still worry that the boost has not translated into a job engine. Philadelphia continues to lose too many jobs to the suburbs. Despite a multi-million dollar investment in the district, says Levy, there is still a need to create good jobs and stimulate business in Center City.

Painter William Scott Noel raised the issue of the impact of the Avenue of the Arts on the arts and artists. With a slide show of his own “place” paintings, Noel illustrated the displacement cycle of a Philadelphia visual artist as a result of redevelopment. A central issue not addressed by the panel is the impact of the Avenue of the Arts development on

local performing artists and performing arts organizations. What have been the costs (increased rents and operating costs) and the benefits (increased performance opportunities and audiences) of the Avenue of the Arts? What has been the impact on performing artists and organizations that are not direct beneficiaries of the new facilities and other Avenue of the Arts investment?

Theory – arts as an urban development strategy

Lynn Sagalyn, Professor of City Planning and Real Estate at the University of Pennsylvania, provided an overview of arts-based development policy. The use of the arts as an urban development strategy is not limited to Philadelphia or even the United States but is a worldwide phenomenon. Leveraging culture in cities is widespread because the arts, which are intrinsic to people's satisfaction in life, are preeminently urban activities.

In New York City, monographs on the arts and development appeared in the 1970s. During these years—with a mayoral task force, economic impact analyses, as well as academic studies and symposia—the City and policy-makers were interested in how to promote as well as evaluate the arts as a development strategy. Policy analysts gradually realized that impact is magnified when focused on a spatial territory. Sagalyn traces the idea of the “arts district” to the 1980s when the development of cultural institutions, such as museums, was seen as a catalyst to drive downtown revival.

Why are the arts opportune for cities? Arts and cultural activities are essentially urban and represent one of the key comparative advantages of the urban center. Several qualities highlight this relationship.

- Cultural activities require large audiences and must be consumed where they are produced. Cities are positioned to provide for both. Moreover, cities have a deep capital base that is not reproduced easily elsewhere in a metropolitan region.
- Cities have a historical legacy of an agglomeration of cultural institutions. In New York, for example, commercial radio and big musical productions have located near Broadway in midtown Manhattan. A single cultural attraction does not make a district. There must be a clustering of activities.
- Cultural districts such as Times Square function as places for people to see and be seen by others, a uniquely urban phenomenon.

Thus, two characteristics of successful arts-based development—clustering and urban experience—exploit the inherent symbiosis of the arts and the city. The question is how public intervention can foster successful cultural districts.

Cities need to value and enhance the “urban experience”—that is, to create an environment that is different from what people can experience in the suburbs or at home. Sagalyn talked about the value of signage and the importance of district identity. For example, Japanese reporters broadcasting from Times Square filmed the signage to show where they were broadcasting from.

Arts-based strategies are different from other types of economic development in several ways.

- Arts-based development must be based on *local* cultural resources. The current wisdom is that successful local economic development cannot be based on imported cultural resources.
- Developing cultural resources necessitates the support of the local cultural community. The economic side of cultural development must involve historic preservationists. The political side must involve coalitions that include local artists and cultural institutions.
- Arts-based development is not tied directly to increasing the city's tax base. Tax increases are dependent on multiplier effects—i.e., the number of patrons who eat in restaurants or shop, ride in cabs or park in lots. While the arts are in some ways easier than other sectors to jumpstart, they are also a tougher sell to those who want immediate and easily demonstrable dollar results.

There are two main marketing challenges for cultural districts: one, to stimulate repeat business and, two, to draw people with discretionary income onto the street. What is different today is that the reason why people go out is *to see and be seen by* other people.

In general, according to Sagalyn, policy-makers need to be persuaded to recognize the arts as an effective economic development strategy. How a proposal gets labeled is critical to its appeal and its likelihood to be supported.

Lynn Sagalyn is optimistic. “The times are ripe,” she believes, for arts-based development. The current demographic shifts favor cities. The Baby Boom generation is deciding to move back into the urban center. Moreover, there is a cache about living where artists work. Cities are poised to take advantage of these trends, “but it must be a local job.” To stimulate arts-based development, local officials cannot look to state or federal government for assistance.

What policy response would encourage and leverage these trends? Sagalyn's comment is to urge the City of Philadelphia to give high priority to protecting the spaces where artists live and work.

IV. PHILADELPHIA'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE—INSIGHTS AND ISSUES

Panelists

Beth Feldman Brandt, Executive Director, Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation
[<http://www.bartol.org/>]

Donna N. Brown, President, Point Breeze Performing Arts Center
[<http://www.pbpac.org/>]

Happy Fernandez, President, Moore College of Art & Design [<http://www.moore.edu/>]

Nick Stuccio, Producing Director, Philadelphia Fringe Festival [<http://www.livearts-fringe.org/>]

Sharon Zukin, Professor of Sociology, Brooklyn College, New York
[<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/soc/faculty/zukin.htm>]

Moderator: Mark J. Stern, Professor of Social Welfare and History, University of Pennsylvania

The culminating event of the public conversations on *Arts In Place* provided an opportunity to talk about Philadelphia and the region more broadly and about Philadelphia as an environment for the arts. What is Philadelphia's unique arts landscape? How do the arts fit into and shape the landscape of the city? How do the city and its institutions support the arts? In this concluding section, we present observations from the culminating session as well as common themes and issues aired throughout the public conversation series.

Theory and History of Culture and the City

In the *Arts In Place* culminating session, sociologist Sharon Zukin, whose work explores the relationship of culture to the contemporary city, presented theoretical frameworks to help us understand Philadelphia's cultural landscape. Below are, first, Zukin's illustrative history of the changing relationship of culture to urban space and, second, a summary of her discussion of "mass" vs. "popular" culture.

Culture and urban space

Sharon Zukin presented a set of six drawings to illustrate how the relationship between cultural use and city space has changed over the past 200 years.

Figure 1 below shows the 19th and early 20th century city, the old industrial paradigm as described by the Chicago School. The image is that of concentric circles, with the commercial core at the center and ethnic clusters—places where people worked and places where people lived—surrounding the commercial core.

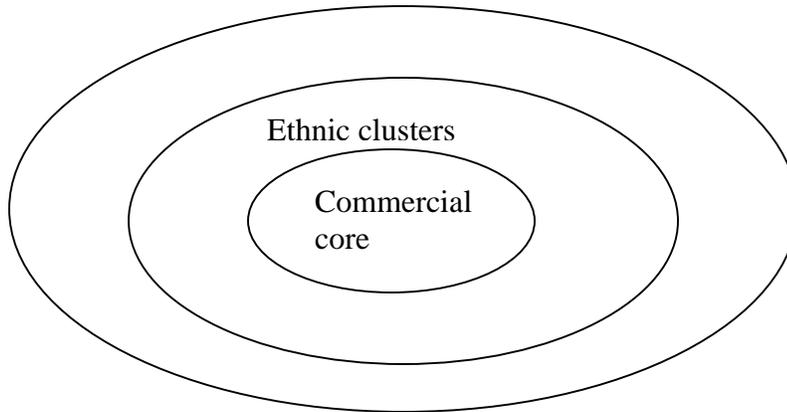


Figure 2 below illustrates urban neighborhoods of the early 19th century. In the old industrial city, neighborhoods were relatively homogenous with respect to social class but were ethnically heterogeneous. The image is that of intersecting zones—*home space* and *work space* with *ethnic space* at the intersection.

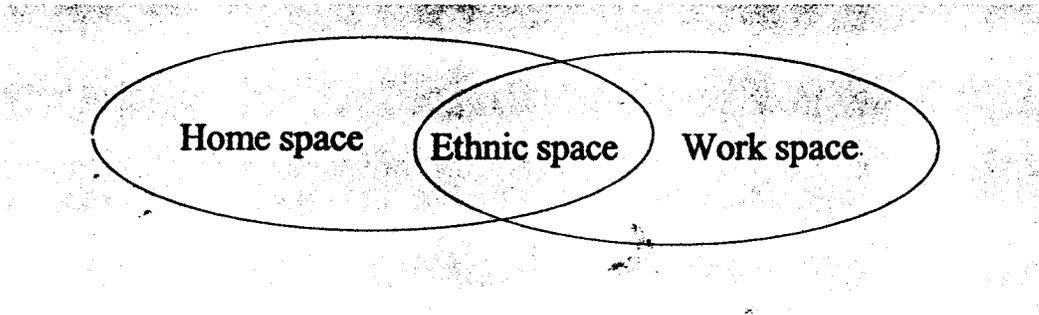


Figure 3 below jumps forward to the mid-20th century, the city of the 1950s and 1960s. The image is that of disconnected circles. The larger, center circle is the historic city center, *space with old cultural capital*. The smaller circles—encircling but not connected to the central city—represent two types of space, *ethnic spaces* and *spaces with low cultural capital*.

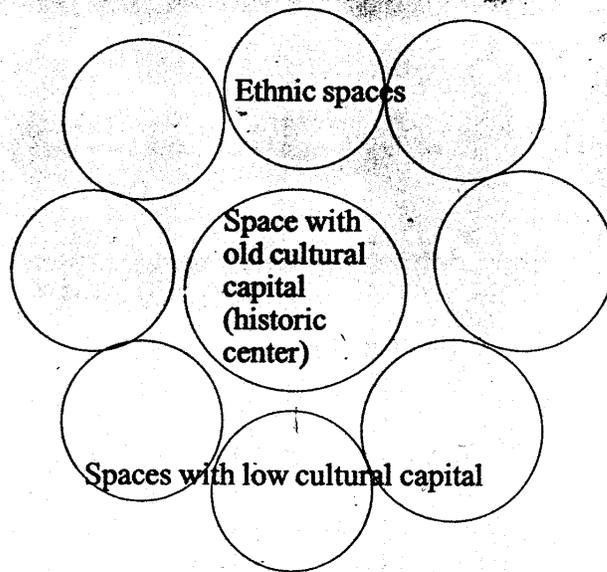


Figure 4 below represents the 1970s city that Zukin describes in her book, *Loft Living*. The 1970s city is represented by one central circle intersecting with each of two other circles of the same size. The central circle represents *spaces with new cultural capital*. *Spaces with new cultural capital* intersect with *spaces with old cultural capital* through *historic preservation* and with *ethnic spaces* through *gentrification*.

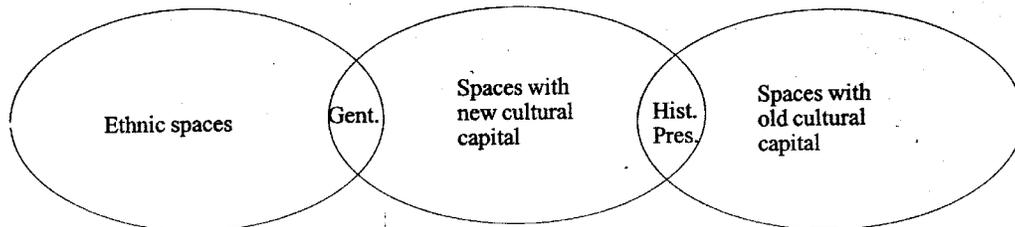


Figure 5 below represents the “post-collage aesthetic” of the city in the 2000s. The three circles represent the same phenomena as the 1970s city—*spaces with new cultural capital* intersecting with *spaces with old cultural capital* as well as with *ethnic spaces*. However, ethnic spaces are now dominated by “new immigrants”. The intersection of *ethnic spaces* and *spaces with new cultural capital* is through *media spaces*, and the intersection of *new cultural capital* and *old cultural capital* is through *museums*.

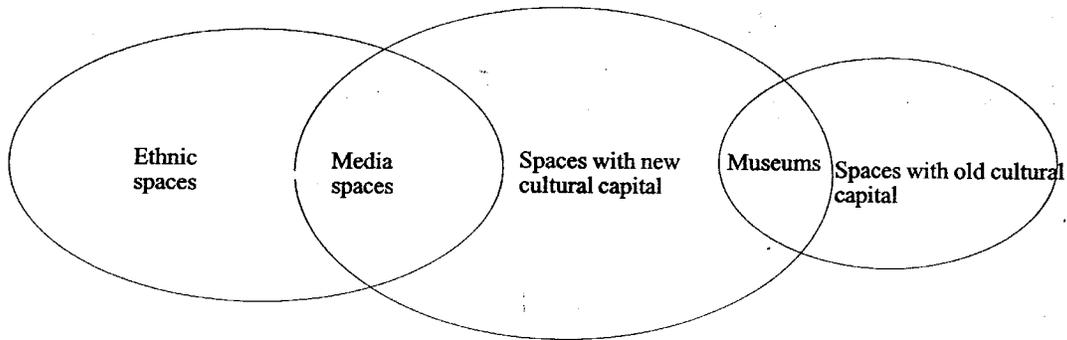
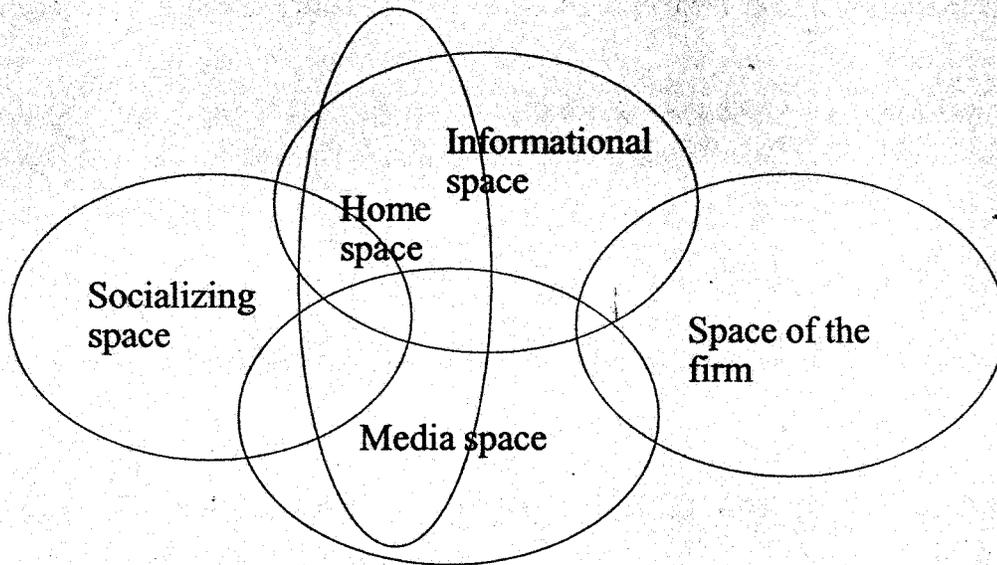


Figure 6 below shows the 21st century city as a fundamentally different portrait of culture and urban space. Two intersecting circles of the same size—*information space* and *media space*—are at the center. Intersecting with “media” and “information” at one end is *space of the firm* and at the other end is *socializing space*. An overlay called *home space* intersects with information, media, and socializing—but not with the firm—spaces.



Ultimately, as explored in her most recent book called *Point of Purchase*, Zukin portrays the modern city as a function of spaces of varying cultural capital.

“Mass” vs. “popular” culture

Sharon Zukin, in her book *Landscapes of Power*, draws the distinction between two types of culture—“mass culture” and “popular culture.” Mass culture, according to Zukin, is hegemonic and market-led. It is about the redevelopment of real estate that produces both the space and the culture. The strategies of mass culture focus on how to change things through the use of market forces.

Popular culture, by contrast, is led by either the community or the state. Popular culture keeps people in their space. It is about people coming together to produce culture. The strategies of popular culture focus on how to maintain and stabilize things, how to protect places and social institutions from the momentum of market forces.

What do “mass culture” and “popular culture” have in common? Both are characterized by creativity. However, mass culture is produced by individual, market-driven creativity, while popular culture is produced by collective, community-driven creativity. Both types of culture vary their creativity with respect to mobility vs. immobility and production vs. cultivation. Overall, there are more challenges facing community-led culture.

What is the interaction between mass culture and popular culture? What is the spillover? Many cities, for example, have cultivated markets for the consumption of ethnic culture. In the global economy, according to Zukin, community-led strategies are doomed to be in places with low economic development.

In New York City, the arts are flourishing while the artists live in fear of the consequences of their economic insecurity. In fact, the City is concerned about the future balance of its two—popular vs. mass—cultures. The New York City Planning Commission is looking to address these issues through its Zoning Code.

The Arts and Urban Development in Philadelphia

Every *Arts In Place* session, in both formal and informal comments, raised questions about the role of politics and public policy in light of the Philadelphia experience with arts-based development. People talked about the need for coalitions that include artists and cultural organizations to foster arts districts in ways that maximize benefits to all players. A central issue was the need for public intervention that is sensitive to both arts consumers and arts producers, that promotes a balance between commercial prosperity and the viability of local artists. Another recurring theme was the need to take the whole city into consideration, rather than focus only on a particular arts district, and to foster linkages between what are now isolated clusters of cultural or arts activity.

Arts and the urban economy. The series highlighted the need to strip some of the sugar-coating that the arts place around the dynamics of urban real estate markets. To what degree are models for arts-based development based on the experiences, both positive and negative, of global cities like New York? How do the market dynamics of a second-tier city like Philadelphia differ, and how do those differences affect the outcome of arts districts?

On the one hand, as noted by Paul Levy and Lynn Sagalyn in the Avenue of the Arts panel, arts-based development has become quite widespread and plays effectively off the comparative advantages of cities. On the other hand, it appears that the case for cultural districts as the engine for the post-industrial urban economy has been oversold. Even in Center City, the agglomeration effects of South Broad Street redevelopment as a cultural district turn out to have been exaggerated—that is to say, the predicted economic spin-off has not been realized. As Center City District director Paul Levy explained, “The arts are necessary but not sufficient for the revitalization of Center City.” The irony is that because of its public accountability and downtown location, the City of Philadelphia cannot reap the benefits of the Avenue of the Arts as systematically as the University of Pennsylvania (a private institution and the city’s largest employer) stands to gain from investment in 40th Street and The Rotunda.

Happy Fernandez, President of the Moore College of Art and Design, questioned whether the arts and culture have been used successfully by the City of Philadelphia as an economic development strategy. There are mixed reviews. Arts and culture were advanced during the 1990s through the leadership of Mayor Ed Rendell. Meanwhile, the City, state, and federal government regularly grant massive tax breaks, in the hundreds of millions of dollars, to corporations. The ten-year tax abatement for new residential construction, federal tax credits for historic preservation by private real estate developers, and the state-created Enterprise and Opportunity Zones throughout the city are just three examples of incentives for place-based investment and development. Fernandez echoed questions raised by other commentators in the series:

- What will be the implications for the City budget of the 2007 expiration of the new construction tax abatement (assuming it is not renewed by the City)?
- What is the potential to use tax incentives for investment in arts districts throughout the city?

Why not enact tax breaks for arts districts? That could help keep our young graduate artists—Philadelphia’s “creative class”—in town. According to Fernandez, Philadelphia is already the No. 2 place after New York City for artists locate.

Artists in place. Public policy tends to focus on arts districts as centers of cultural consumption rather than production. Although the arts, culture, history, and humanities are recognized as a vital sector of the post-industrial urban economy, the public sector generally leaves the vitality of artists-as-producers to market forces. Public subsidy of cultural facilities even for renowned performing arts organizations is justified based on patron expenditures as generators of jobs and taxes. The Avenue of the Arts, for example, has no identity as an *artists’* district.

At the Avenue of the Arts panel, William Scott Noel talked about the conditions that support artists and the tension between artists’ needs and the creation of arts districts. Noel, on staff at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, spoke also as an independent visual artist. He first moved to Philadelphia in 1978 (at the time of the first MOVE confrontation with the City) and located in East Oak Lane. In his presentation, he showed slides of his paintings of all the places where he has lived for the past 25 years and what has happened to each neighborhood. For nearly three decades, Noel has repeatedly been forced to relocate due to rent increases or redevelopment. He said that

Philadelphia had been a livable place for artists because of its many neighborhoods with affordable space, but this resource has become endangered. Philadelphia needs to make it possible for artists to be part of the mix, even as many parts of the city become more prosperous. “Don’t forget the people who make the art.”

There was another point of view, of course. Nick Stuccio, former ballet dancer and producing director of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival since 1999, observed that Philadelphia is a good city for artists. He moved to Philadelphia 15 years ago and still believes that it is an affordable city where artists can have a personal life. “The Philadelphia artists’ community is wonderful. There is terrific collaboration and cooperation in this town. Artists are moving to Philadelphia. Artists are flourishing in Philadelphia. Mark Russell from P.S. 123 in New York City says that Philadelphia is the place to be.”

Philadelphia’s lack of public support for artist-producers has provided a fertile environment for “cultural entrepreneurs.” Ironically, the founding of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival in 1997 coincided with the implementation and start-up of the Avenue of the Arts. The Old City Arts Association, a coalition of over 40 organizations, helped spawn the Fringe to fill a niche need that was likely exacerbated by the more elite venues and performances on the Avenue of the Arts. According to Stuccio, the Fringe Festival was started as a platform for Philadelphia’s “robust contemporary arts scene.” In the mid-1990s, “Philadelphia had a dearth of venues and a wealth of underground culture. Our success is due to the artists’ success.” The lesson is that there is earned revenue to be made from the presentation of local artists. Only New York City, however, takes advantage of this fact.

Still, the general sentiment is that the artist’s role in community development is double-edged in that the artist is both agent and victim of the development cycle. Typically, the artists function as the engine, the initiator, the catalyst of economic development and then get run over or run out by higher priced development. A central issue is the need to explore protections for artists—via tax or real estate policy—so that artists can share the benefits of arts-driven revitalization. A message reiterated throughout the series was that it is important for artists—and arts organizations—to own their property. Without the foresight of a board member, for example, the Painted Bride Art Center could have been forced to move out of Old City.

The *Arts In Place* public conversation series suggested a need to reframe the issue of the economic impact of the arts. A key question is: how can the benefits of arts-based revitalization be distributed equitably? To begin with, we need a broader set of assessment tools to measure those costs and benefits and their current distribution. There are a number of related questions, such as:

- How can the value added by artists—as producers of art and investors in the community—be quantified?
- Who realizes the increased value—those who create the value (artists) vs. those who capture the value (private owners and developers)?
- What are the costs vs. the benefits of neighborhood change and social mobility?

An arts district is not a stage set but a dynamic landscape. Place-making is a creative process fraught with risk. Three components are central to the arts-in-place scenario: *institutions*—community-based arts organizations and programs; *artists*—entrepreneurial individuals; and *land*—local real estate. One policy challenge, therefore, is how to protect artists and arts activities in the land market while at the same time stimulating and increasing the mobility of the labor market.

Arts and public places. The series raised questions about the broader issues of public access and equity with respect to the arts and place. During the 2002-03 Public Conversation Series on public education, historian Michael Katz made the point that it is a mistake to identify the “public-ness” of education with the public education bureaucracy. Katz challenged us to think about how other models of education—including charter schools—might actually contribute to a revival in the public-ness of education. How does the issue of “public-ness” apply to the culture of cities? What are the challenges around using public space for the arts? How do the positive and negative effects of arts-based development affect public access?

The session on public art shed light on the meaning of “public” with respect to art. A traditional view of public art is that it is the same as art—typically of a monumental scale—in a public place. The focus of new-style public art is rather on process, a collective creative process involving artists and communities. Creating or strengthening a community identity may in fact be the purpose of the project. In any case, the new public artist seeks to connect individuals with a wider social group. However, that group or “community” is likely to be a sub-culture—there is no pretense that “public” refers to the general public.

The Fringe Festival’s Nick Stuccio was articulate about the complexity of people connecting with art. He talked about two kinds of access issues—artistic and participatory. The fringe movement, which began 60 years ago in Edinburgh, was about freeing artists—and audiences—from curators. It’s worked. Now “in-work” (work-in-progress) is “in.” What was fringe is now mainstream and part of regular programming. But the Fringe Festival is still needed for participant access—to lower the barriers of place, time, cost, and sociability.

Concerns about public access—to both arts and place—also drive the mission of the 40th Street and Old City arts districts. The Foundation at The Rotunda is “a community gathering place for the promotion of arts and culture.” The Old City Arts Association promotes “a healthy environment for freedom of expression and advancement of arts and culture.” All of The Foundation’s programming and Old City’s monthly First Fridays are open to the public for free.

Stuccio talked about art as a market-driven phenomenon. What kinds of arts experiences do you want? It is possible for audiences to enter the artistic process at different points in the cycle. What kinds of context for the arts do you prefer—formal presentations on stage or informal creations on site? The model for sustaining the arts is to fuse “social culture” with “arts culture” in both formal and informal settings. People need to define “fun” as “social life with culture.” The two ingredients, offered by the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, are barrier-free access to artists and a curated contemporary arts network.

For the first time in September 2004, the festival was produced as two programs: the Philly Fringe and the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival. Philly Fringe, continuing the “fun and outrageous” fringe tradition, offered nearly 150 shows, all self-produced and free from any selection process. All kinds of performance voices were represented: theater, dance, music, spoken word, visual arts, film, interdisciplinary works as well as “buskers and happenings”—that is, street performers and “situation artists”. The Live Arts Festival featured contemporary performances grouped by “kind of experience”—Other Places, On Stages, Bodies in Motion, and Performance Installations. “*Live* is that moment during a performance when you experience something new, fresh, different, and exciting.”

So, the public realm of art can be found at the intersection of arts production and consumption—that is, in the participatory potential of the creative process. How does the experience shape place, and how does place affect the experience? Stuccio commented that the design of Philadelphia’s new Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts “works” in that “there are lots of spaces.” But the Kimmel Center falls short in the design of common spaces, in its lack of “civic space.” Philadelphia needs more places where people can do have fun social experiences *and* see art. “We need actual, relevant, social, civic space.” Meanwhile, the Philly Fringe and Live Arts festivals have animated *unusual spaces* and *other places* all over town.

Arts and the politics of place. During the culminating session, Happy Fernandez, a former City Councilwoman, talked about the big picture—the relationship between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with respect to arts and the city. The role of the public sector has been to provide vision and leadership while the private sector provides funds. The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance serves as the voice of the nonprofit cultural organizations and plays the role of advocate.

Fernandez cautioned, however, that elected officials are unpredictable. Amidst broader City budget cuts in the spring of 2004, Mayor John Street proposed to cut the Philadelphia Cultural Fund by 60 percent. Former Mayor Rendell also cut support of the city’s major arts institutions. Although an occasional individual plays advocate for the arts, public officials overall are not a proactive force. The initiative and responsibility for the vitality and future of creativity rest with the private sector, the nonprofit organizations, and the citizens of Philadelphia. Fernandez advised the audience: “Be ready to inform the broader debates ... Don’t just stay in a reactive mode, responding to budget cuts...” Arts advocates need to be proactive and put arts on the agenda of future candidates for mayor and City Council.

What about the role of philanthropy? The culminating session presented two differing perspectives about the impact of arts funding on place or local community. Beth Feldman Brandt, Executive Director of Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation, talked about foundations’ increased consciousness of community arts as a field and a profession. In addition to targeting all grants to Philadelphia-based community arts organizations, Bartol advocates for community culture, opens doors for grantees, and supports community partnerships and cross-sector neighborhood networks. Bartol gets institutions talking to each other and to other foundations.

Donna Brown, Executive Director of the Point Breeze Performing Arts Center (PBPAC), told a different story about foundation support for arts-based community revitalization.

Nine years ago, PBPAC did a community plan. Local kids wanted to stay in the neighborhood and see the place get better. Today, PBPAC runs a diverse program at its South Philadelphia center (on Point Breeze Avenue at Morris Street)—a performing arts academy, a dance troupe, and a community development coalition—as well as satellite programs in charter schools and public housing sites around the city. As a result, foundations refuse to recognize PBPAC as a professional arts organization but classify it as a social service or community development agency. The Point Breeze Performing Arts Center is all of these—and it is committed to providing artists with full employment, professional development opportunities, and living wages. A side-effect of foundation myopia is that PBPAC has become entrepreneurial—50 percent of its \$1.5 million annual budget is earned income. According to Brown, foundations love to fund projects but not to support organizations.

Nick Stuccio offered an independent artist's perspective. Philadelphia is an affordable place to live. City services are great. Local resources and services, such as the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and various discipline-based alliances (e.g., theater, dance, and visual arts) are very supportive. Good or bad, foundations are a source of leadership and support. Foundations could be more helpful, however, if artists could apply for funding without forming a 501(c)3 corporation. However, business is a zero—the city's business sector provides no support for artists despite the fact that the city's artists are good for business. Traveling Philadelphia artists, such as Philadanco and Rennie Harris, are important ambassadors for the city. Many artists—such as German dancers Brigitta Herrmann, Helmut Gottschild, and Manfred Fischbeck of Group Motion Dance Company who moved to Philadelphia in 1968—have put Philadelphia on the map globally.

Philadelphia's strength is its wealth of artists, cultural organizations, and community culture. Sharon Zukin claims that cultural activism develops cultural capital. Community activity in the arts is working. There is a perverse payoff for creating dynamism in the arts. Groups like the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation have begun to partner with community arts centers to develop neighborhood tourism.

Place ties an issue to land, and so the politics of place—and of arts in place—is likely to happen from the bottom up. As Rick Snyderman noted, the business of having a city is what makes civilization happen. The business and politics of making art makes a city vital. The arts are the *nexus*.