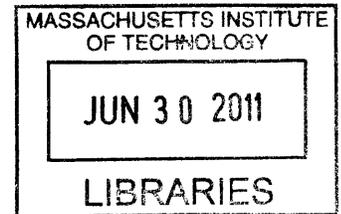


**Beyond the White Box:  
Creating Innovative Art Spaces that Transform People and Places**

By

Julie Chan

B.A. in Economics and American Studies  
Yale University  
New Haven, CT, 2005



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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
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**Abstract**

In the past few decades, arts organizations have played an increasingly significant role in the development of vibrant spaces that improve the livelihoods of people and transform the quality of the urban environment. Innovative art spaces – ones that devise new methods of approaching the creation of space using familiar elements – are gaining attention because of their ability to navigate the challenges of developing affordable and usable art space. These new models of art space, whether they are repurposed storefronts or sustainable buildings, have far-reaching effects on the physical, social, and economic fabric of their surrounding communities.

This thesis examines four innovative art spaces in New York City, Boston, and the greater Los Angeles area. Each case study features unique approaches to space, programming, community engagement, cross-sector partnerships, funding, and sustainability. My focus is on the following questions: (1) What are the factors that make an art space innovative and transformative? (2) What are the successes and challenges in the development of these art spaces? (3) How can cities cultivate these types of art spaces?

Through site visits, interviews with organizational leaders, funders, and other stakeholders, and research with secondary sources, I explore these questions and identify major themes that add to our understanding of how successful and innovative art spaces are conceived. This thesis offers recommendations for city planners, policymakers, arts organizations, and artist entrepreneurs on how to approach the development of art space, including adapting successful elements of these models in their own contexts.

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## Biographical Note

Julie Chan is an urban planner with experience in economic development, business improvement and marketing. She graduated in 2011 from the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) with a Master's degree in City Planning. At MIT, she focused on economic and community development, affordable housing, and neighborhood revitalization through the arts. She was a Research Assistant during the summer of 2010 for MIT DUSP's partnership with Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC) and the 2010 MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Awards.

Prior to MIT, she was the Communications/Marketing Manager at the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, a local development corporation that manages three business improvement districts. In addition, she co-founded Crosby Street Gallery (CSG) in 2009 with Robert Sanchez and Jeff Badillo in New York City. The gallery promotes emerging artists on-line and through pop-up galleries in non-traditional public and private spaces. Previously, she was an Analyst at HR&A Advisors, a real estate, economic development and public policy consulting firm in New York City.

Julie graduated from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and American Studies. A native New Yorker, Julie grew up in the Lower East Side and became interested in urban planning largely due to her fascination with the city's past, present and future. She is an avid urban and landscape photographer and enjoys discovering new places during her travels.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and patience of my thesis advisor, Jim Buckley, and my thesis reader, Susan Silberberg-Robinson. Thank you for seeing me through the writing process and for asking all the right questions that pushed me to think about how this thesis can be of greater service to the cities and art space creators out there.

To all the people who took time out of their schedules to speak with me in relation to my case studies and my thesis in general – your passion, enthusiasm for your work, and your lifelong commitments to helping others gave me so much inspiration. Every interview was like unwrapping a gift. A special thank you to Karen Atkinson, Emily Hopkins, Susan Rodgerson, Abby Hamlin, Anita Durst and Danny Simmons. May you continue the good work that you are doing in the arts for the benefit of current and future generations.

To my professors, fellow classmates, and staff at DUSP who provided moral support, advice, and a smile, especially Tunney Lee, Amy Glasmeier, and Christa Lee-Chuvala – I really appreciate it. To all my night-owl friends, especially Aspasia Xypolia and Jasmine Tillu, the days and nights (and days) wouldn't have been as enjoyable without you.

To my family, for the unconditional support, food and love during my trips back and forth between Boston and New York. And to Robert Sanchez – my fiancé, editor, photographer, chauffeur, assistant, partner in crime and #1 fan. Your unwavering support and faith in me, your fountain of ideas and your infectious enthusiasm for everything is more than I could have asked for. I love you and I can't wait to continue our next chapter together.

## Preface

The topic for this thesis arose out of a confluence of many factors. First, in 2009, prior to starting my graduate degree program at MIT, I co-founded Crosby Street Gallery (CSG) to promote emerging artists on-line and through non-traditional spaces. To date, CSG has staged exhibitions in a former loading dock in Brooklyn, NY as part of the “Your Art Here,” project, in both a former military barracks and an outdoor sculpture garden on Governors Island, NY, and in a vacant storefront in New Haven, CT as part of that City’s award-winning “Project Storefronts” economic development initiative. Throughout these experiences, I have not only expanded my appreciation of the talent of artists – trained and untrained, working full-time as artists or trying to balance art while pursuing other careers – but also witnessed first-hand the challenge of finding affordable space to create and show art. With a background in economic development and urban planning, I saw many opportunities for people like you and me, as well as public, private, and non-profit groups, to create innovative art spaces.

In addition, I worked with Lecturer Susan Silberberg-Robinson, the MIT DUSP team and Leveraging Investments in Creativity on the 2010 MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Awards. It was through this experience that I was introduced to many inspiring people and organizations using the arts to help not only artists, but also youth and disadvantaged communities. The people I met with lived and breathed for their arts organization and those they served. Such passion for the arts and an understanding of their possible benefits to society led me to devote more time and research to this field.

On a personal level, I am fortunate to have been given opportunities to be involved in the arts through the public schools I attended while growing up in New York City. My most vivid memories as a child revolved around arts and culture – taking the subway with my class to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art, photographing with my 5<sup>th</sup> grade class and developing the pictures in a darkroom and performing at Madison Square Garden with hundreds of other children as part of the National Dance Institute. The arts – however broad the term may be – has shaped me into who I am today. It has been through this thesis and the conversations I have had with people along the way, that I now fully realize how important these experiences are to me. My hope is that more arts opportunities can be shared with people young and old across the nation, and more meaningful art spaces can be created so that all people, no matter their background, can access the freedom and inspiration that the arts can give to our lives.



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## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction & Context

## Introduction

In the past few decades, arts organizations have played an increasingly significant role in the development of vibrant spaces that improve the livelihoods of people and transform the quality of the urban environment. From turning former industrial districts into hubs of artist activity to reusing defunct buildings for artist studios, arts organizations find creative solutions to address the challenge of finding affordable and suitable space for their activities. Cities leverage the social and economic impact of arts organizations and their spaces by incorporating the visual, new media, and performing arts into economic development and redevelopment strategies. In doing so, the resulting arts activities and spaces rejuvenate neighborhoods in need of investment, attract residents, visitors, and businesses, and increase the vibrancy of urban life. To yield those results on a large scale, many municipalities create arts and cultural districts out of former industrial areas, building upon existing historic and cultural assets, or invest in the creation of community-based art spaces and organizations supporting the production and consumption of art. Arts activities, with a strong foundation in community engagement and education, promote healthy interaction among disparate groups, including artists, businesses, community residents, real estate developers, youth, and the general public.

Despite the increasing amount of attention and investment given to arts activities, organizations still face many obstacles when developing new art space. To create traditional brick and mortar art space for artists to rehearse, exhibit, perform, or create art, organizations need sufficient funding and financing opportunities, expertise in real estate development when constructing their own space, and strong public and private support. Many art spaces are developed by large arts organizations, museums, or performing art centers because they have the capital, political and institutional support to do so. A number of cities have focused on developing live-work artist space in part because there is a substantial need for artist studio space, and in part to take advantage of federal funding in the form of Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Arts organizations need consistent funding to maintain and operate their spaces and capital partners to fund organizational growth and retain adequate reserves. This is an acute challenge, especially in light of the Great Recession of 2007-2009 when foundation grants and government budgets dwindled. With economic downturns affecting all streams of funding, arts organizations must be innovative, devising new types of spaces and strategies for art space development to accommodate their programs and audiences. These organizations – many of them small or home-grown – now must find new methods to develop or provide affordable space, financially support their programs, engage new and diverse populations, or work with development partners. Art spaces now play a larger role as catalysts for physical, social and economic change, sometimes serving a larger social purpose than just providing a cultural exposure to art. Understanding innovative and transformative art

spaces will help cities invest in spaces that can weather economic downturns, reach wider audiences, and move communities forward in a positive and creative manner.

### ***What is an Innovative Art Space?***

“Innovative art spaces” are non-traditional spaces created by resourceful organizations using “outside of the box” thinking. One example is converting a vacant storefront or parking lot from prior commercial use into a space that houses arts activities. Arts organizations create these innovative spaces both in response to mitigating external factors and to pursue new opportunities that allow them to broaden their audiences. The common quotation, “necessity is the mother of invention,” applies to arts organizations when they have a strong need – such as responding to rising rents or community demand – and are pushed to find alternative types of spaces, programs, and strategies to achieve their goals. Innovative art spaces are thus not entirely intended or strategically planned to be new and inventive; instead, they are often the result of a collaborative process involving multiple stakeholders. By incorporating varying viewpoints, these art spaces often are more effective in reaching and maintaining their audiences and may make us rethink what can be art space. The most successful of these types of art spaces have been recognized locally and nationally for their contributions to community building and the design world. In summary, *innovative art spaces*, for the purposes of this thesis:

- Devise new approaches that address everyday art space challenges
- Result from a reaction or response to external factors
- Involve “outside of the box” thinking
- Can result in both a physical innovation or a new strategic direction

### ***What is an Art Space that Transforms People and Places?***

The effectiveness of art spaces in contributing to physical, community, and economic development is as important as addressing space issues. An art space, while housing arts activities geared towards artists, can also serve as a gathering place for the community and general public. Community-based arts organizations that serve either a geographic area or a specific group of people, such as at-risk youth, therefore have an additional public purpose. Art spaces are important vehicles for the transformation of people and places, and can serve as catalysts for neighborhood revitalization. They can also bring in positive activities that teach community members technical skills and give youth a safe and empowering place to be. In this thesis, *transformative art spaces* therefore:

- Contribute to physical, community, and economic development
- Impact both people and places

- May be part of a larger organizational social mission

### **🏠 Looking Ahead**

This thesis examines four case studies in the New York, Boston, and Los Angeles area that showcase the diversity of approaches to creating innovative and transformative art spaces, ranging from using mobile trailers in vacant lots, to building a mix of affordable housing and storefront spaces dedicated to arts-related uses. Specifically, I identify the successes and challenges faced by arts-based organizations in the areas of physical space and design, arts programming, cross-sector partnerships, financing and operations, and environmental sustainability, among others – all elements that are important to creating an art space that contributes to social and economic development. While the audience of this thesis is everyone interested in art spaces, the primary audience consists of both city planners/policymakers and arts organizations/artist entrepreneurs who desire to create art spaces for differing reasons.

My primary questions are the following:

- 1) What are the factors that make an art space innovative and transformative?
- 2) What has been successful or challenging in the development of these spaces?
- 3) How can cities and art space creators cultivate more of these art spaces?

For these four case studies, I conducted a series of site visits, more than 30 formal and informal interviews with organizational leaders, funders, artists, developers, and other stakeholders, and examined secondary sources of research. This thesis identifies the factors that make these art spaces innovative and transformative, the successes and challenges experienced during the development and utilization of the spaces, and the ways in which the spaces contribute to better social and economic opportunity. Based on this research, I distill my findings into themes that inform how organizations can approach the development of art spaces. I then offer recommendations for city planners, policymakers, arts organizations and artist entrepreneurs on how to initiate or adapt successful elements of these models in their own contexts.

## Context & Literature Review

### ***What is Art Space?***

The “arts” is a broad term. It includes the visual arts such as painting, photography, silk-screen printing, sculpture, among others; new media arts that include video, audio, light, web-based, and other forms of interactive arts; industrial arts, such as woodworking, metalworking, industrial and product design; and performing arts such as theater, film, dance, and music.<sup>1</sup> Art spaces are physical locations that accommodate the production and consumption of these activities. While the phrase “art space” makes many people think of art galleries, museums, or studios, there is no single form that dominates the field. More traditional art spaces vary from artist live-work or work-only studios catering to individuals or collectives, to large art centers containing galleries, dance studios, performance venues, and multipurpose spaces for the creation and presentation of work. Alternative spaces repurpose buildings, outdoor space, private storefronts, and other spaces typically devoted to non-arts related uses, into more public places where people can share their work with others.

Arts organizations incorporate the arts as part of their core mission or business activity in different ways. Some organizations serving artists, for example, develop and promote the work of artists in various mediums, such as in painting, sculpture, or dance. Other, more community-based, arts groups have a stronger educational and community engagement component that involves teaching art techniques to people of all ages and offering arts activities to community residents and visitors. The physical spaces for these organizations, therefore, must accommodate a variety of activities and may have specific design requirements to meet space and accessibility needs. For example, if a space is targeted towards serving a low-income, minority population, it must then be physically accessible to those who are in that group. Or, a space for a dance company must be large enough to safely accommodate a group for rehearsals or performances.

### ***Challenges to Art Space Development***

It is often difficult for arts organizations and artists to find affordable and usable art space. Part of the challenge in developing art spaces is that the supply of such spaces is lower than the demand. A 2007 Urban Institute study, “Artist Space Development: Making the Case,” looked at challenges faced by art space

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<sup>1</sup> Many organizations have looked at the definition of “the arts.” The National Endowment for the Arts, Americans for the Arts, and other arts agencies have a broad definition encompassing these fields.

developers including artists, community development corporations (CDCs), non-profit organizations and for-profit developers. The study found that government funders and foundations tend to provide more support to the development of spaces focused on exhibition and presentation of artistic work, such as museums, concert halls, and other venues, with less support given to living and working spaces for artists. While this is changing, funding and support for art space is generally more directed towards arts consumption as opposed to arts creation. The study also found that it was not until recently that the need for affordable space, not just the need for more grants and financial support, was clearly articulated as a critical issue. In addition, artists and arts organizations have little capacity to build art space projects on their own or engage with partners outside of the arts community to do so.<sup>2</sup>

Ann Markusen, a scholar and researcher versed in art space development and economic issues, and her research team found that small, community-based arts groups compete with each other for a limited pool of government, foundation, and other grants.<sup>3</sup> These arts groups also face other limitations and challenges around securing short- and long-term funding, developing leadership capacity, creating meaningful partnerships, achieving organizational sustainability and soliciting community involvement.<sup>4</sup> A competitive funding environment and capacity issues make it difficult for small, place-based arts groups to amass the funding and expertise necessary to carry out major art space development projects or to support their programs, operations, and staff.<sup>5</sup> While there is an increasing number of successful examples of artists, CDCs, and developers leading the development of art spaces (such as the non-profit Artspace Projects based in Minnesota specializing in brick and mortar art space development that has completed numerous projects nationwide), there are still barriers against putting in the necessary investment into creating art spaces.

Another challenge to the arts sector, and thus art space, is that funding for arts activities is highly dependent on general economic conditions. Despite the presence of arts and culture workers and enthusiasts, represented by the 2.2

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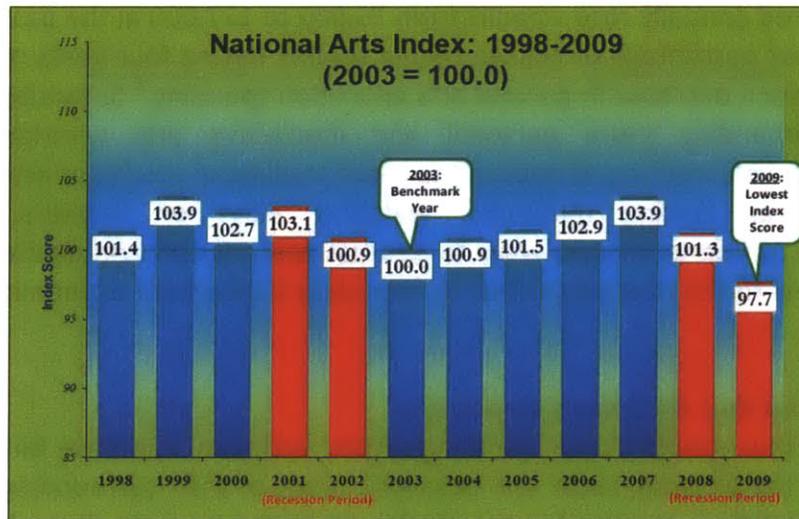
<sup>2</sup> Maria Rosario Jackson and Florence Kabwasa-Green, *Artist Space Development: Making the Case*, (Urban Institute and Leveraging Investments in Creativity, 2007), 9-22.

<sup>3</sup> Markusen, Ann and Amanda Johnson, *Artists' Centers: Evolution and Impact on Careers, Neighborhoods and Economies*. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Markusen, Ann and Anne Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*, A White Paper for The Mayors' Institute on City Design, a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and American Architectural Foundation, 2010, <http://www.nea.gov/pub/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Walker, Chris, *Artist Space Development: Financing*, Urban Institute and Leveraging Investments in Creativity, 2007, [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001175\\_asd\\_financing.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001175_asd_financing.pdf).

million artists in the U.S. workforce, 109,000 non-profit arts organizations and 550,000 arts businesses, and the billions of dollars in consumer spending associated with the arts, as indicated by the arts advocacy group Americans for the Arts, the vitality of the arts sector still depends on funding. Downturns in the business cycle have a negative effect on the amount of funding organizations receive and the amount of sales they generate either in ticket sales, consumer purchases, or services rendered.



**Figure 1-1.** National Arts Index 2010 showing decline during recessions.  
Source: Americans for the Arts.

The Americans for the Arts stated that the 2010 National Arts Index, which has measured 81 indicators relating to the nation’s arts and cultural activity since 1998, fell to its lowest point in the 12 years of study, with the largest drop recorded in a single year. The resulting index of 97.7 in 2010 compares with a high of 103.9 in 2007, before the Great Recession. The study found that growth in arts non-profit organizations was undeterred. In the past decade, the number of non-profit arts organizations has grown by 45 percent, a higher rate than the growth of all non-profit organizations, at 32 percent. However, these non-profits are struggling financially. 41 percent of non-profit arts organizations reported a deficit to the Internal Revenue Service for 2008, which is an increase from 36 percent in 2007. Foundation spending, corporate support, and government grants all declined.<sup>6</sup> During the recession, state and local arts funding decrease

<sup>6</sup> Roland J. Kushner and Randy Cohen, National Arts Index 2010: An Annual Measure of the Vitality of Arts and Culture in the United States 1998-2009, Americans for the Arts, 2011, [http://www.americansforthearts.org/pdf/information\\_services/art\\_index/NAI\\_report\\_w\\_cover\\_opt.pdf](http://www.americansforthearts.org/pdf/information_services/art_index/NAI_report_w_cover_opt.pdf).

at a rate of about 10 percent per year.<sup>7</sup> Considering that the number of non-profit arts organizations is growing in addition to the decline in government funding from federal, state, and local levels, these findings illustrate the growing gap in funding and the importance of developing new models of financial sustainability.

The Americans for the Arts also found that the demand for the arts in education increased and the demand for audience engagement has changed. First, college arts degrees conferred annually rose steadily from 75,000 to 127,000 in the past decade, with a higher percentage of college-bound seniors having four years of arts education despite a decrease in general arts education spending.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, Americans are demanding more personal and interactive arts creation experiences and arts volunteering as opposed to more traditional modes of arts appreciation such as visiting museums, watching plays or concerts.<sup>9</sup> Organizations need to find innovative ways to address space issues and devise programs that appeal to the changing demands especially during hard economic times.

### ***Why are the Arts, and thus Art Spaces, Important?***

Arts activities, and thus spaces accommodating artistic activities, can have far-reaching effects on the physical, social and economic fabric of their surrounding communities. The literature reviewed in this section looks at art spaces through different lenses, ranging from how artists and art spaces relate to the creative economy to their impacts on community development and personal capacities. Art spaces are important precisely because they are multi-faceted and are part of a larger ecosystem of players. Facilitating the development of art spaces will thus affect not only individuals, but neighborhoods and the greater economy as well.

### ***The Arts as Part of the Creative Economy***

Richard Florida's concept of the creative sector as an indicator of an innovative and desirable city has inspired cities to invest in the arts – one component of the creative economy. Public officials now seek to develop an environment that cultivates and attracts talent in the form of visual, new media and performing artists, designers, architects, scientists, engineers, and other “thought leaders”

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<sup>7</sup> Kushner and Cohen, 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> Kushner and Cohen, 9-10.

<sup>9</sup> Kushner and Cohen, 9-10.

creating new forms and products that are useful to society.<sup>10</sup> The premise for the “creative class” is that this diverse set of people contributes to a diversified economy, promoting suppliers and ancillary businesses relating to and supporting creative pursuits such as restaurants, cafes, arts suppliers, arts centers, and institutions. Artists, one segment of this population, thrive when there are arts spaces that provide them with easy access to equipment, performance, rehearsal and presentation spaces, and a network of potential customers as well as other artists, funders, and sources of inspiration. The arts and culture produced by this class creates numerous social and economic benefits, including the opportunity to “create jobs, attract private investment, generate tax revenues and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases” as well as contributing to workforce development, community development and quality of life.<sup>11</sup> By attracting and incubating creative people, organizations, businesses and institutions, and investing in the infrastructure that these creative entities need to thrive, cities directly enrich the social and economic quality of life of neighborhoods in need of rejuvenation.

### *The Arts Provide Significant Economic Impact*

Many scholars also study the economic impacts of arts activities to prove to policymakers that these activities contribute significantly to the economic well-being of cities and regions.<sup>12</sup> According to the Americans for the Arts’ 2005 study “Arts & Economic Prosperity III,” artists are an important part of the “innovation-producing segment of the American workforce” with an estimated two million people who reported artwork as their major occupation, and with a majority of artists holding a college degree. These artists and the eventual activities they generate – working in arts organizations, teaching, engaging with community members, being patrons of restaurants, cafes, and art supply stores, collecting art, selling their work, providing graphic design services for companies, and so many other activities – all contribute to the urban creative economy.

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Florida, “Rise of the Creative Class,” *Washington Monthly*, May 2002, <https://troy.mi.gov/futures/Research/Lifestyle/Rise%20of%20the%20Creative%20Class.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Hayter, Chris and Stephanie Casey Pierce. “Arts & the Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development”. National Governors’ Association for Best Practices, 2008. <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0901ARTSANDECONOMY.PDF>.

<sup>12</sup> There are a number of ways to measure the economic impact of arts on urban environments, such as economic and fiscal impact studies, acknowledging that there are limitations with the data, such as under-reporting by many arts workers who hold several jobs and difficulties in tracking the self-employed.

The non-profit arts and culture industry has been growing steadily, with a 24 percent increase in arts organization and audience spending in just five years, from \$134 billion in 2000 to \$166.2 billion in total economic activity in 2005. This figure consists of \$63.1 billion in arts organizations spending and an additional \$103.1 billion in spending by audiences on event-related activities.<sup>13</sup> The economic activity of the non-profit arts and cultural sector in the United States is larger than the Gross Domestic Product of many countries, such as New Zealand, Ecuador, and Costa Rica.<sup>14</sup> This spending supports 5.7 million full-time jobs, many of which remain local and cannot be shipped overseas because of their community-based or location-specific nature. The 2005 data also reveal that “the arts industry generates nearly \$30 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments every year.”<sup>15</sup>

Economic and fiscal impact studies are the most touted method of analysis in our markets-based society. However, implementing policies based solely on their general economic impacts will lead to social and economic inequality.<sup>16</sup> The belief is that by increasing the creative activity within a city, more educated and talented people will be attracted to live there. There will then be a trickle-down effect in terms of jobs created and tax revenues that will benefit everyone, including more disadvantaged populations such as low-income and minority populations. Mark Stern and Susan Seifert, however, state that “the growth of creative economies has exacerbated inequality and exclusion,” contributing to the “renewed prosperity of the city and the inequitable social and geographic distribution of its benefits.” They see a need for the creative sector to increase social inclusion by sparking dialogues between different populations and to revitalize neighborhoods through cultural planning and community participation.<sup>17</sup> Just looking at the broadest economic impacts of the creative sector, then, isn’t the answer. Can art spaces be used to build social and economic bridges in order to decrease the gap between the rich and poor, the haves and the have-nots?

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<sup>13</sup> Markusen and Gadwa, 10.

<sup>14</sup> “The World Factbook,” Central Intelligence Agency, Accessed February 22, 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html>.

<sup>15</sup> “Arts and Economic Prosperity III: The Economic Impact of Non Profit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences,” *Americans for the Arts*, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Mark J. Stern and Susan Seifert, *From Creative Economy to Creative Society*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Social Impact of the Arts Project and The Reinvestment Fund, 2008), Accessed May 1, 2011, <http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/SIAP/>.

<sup>17</sup> Stern and Seifert, 2008.

## *Art Spaces Transform People and Places*

The benefits of arts organizations and arts activities occur on multiple levels. It is important for city planners, policymakers, and art space creators to recognize that arts activities, and thus art spaces, provide benefits to both people and places through community development, improving livability, and local economic development.

**Benefits to People:** On an individual level, art spaces and their programs teach a variety of people – professional artists, young people, community residents, and the general public – how to think creatively and how to design and build new products using their resources and skills. Art spaces that focus on teaching artists technical skills, such as how to run a business, promote themselves, or engage with public and private partners, increase the capacity of artists to create and sell work. They also provide a space for networking, increasing the potential for new collaborations and ideas.<sup>18</sup> Arts education programs that are focused on teaching youth, especially disadvantaged youth, not only impart technical art and design skills, but also build self-esteem and a sense of responsibility. Studies show that participation in arts activities increase personal confidence, social cohesion, and community empowerment, improve local image and identity, and increase an individual's ability to use vision and imagination. Due to these outcomes, participation in the arts can lead to skill-building and educational developments that improve social networks and employability.<sup>19</sup> The arts also engage multiple communities, promoting civic engagement and capacity building, as shown in a study of performing arts organizations.<sup>20</sup> These are the building blocks to an engaged and talented population. Art spaces are thus both direct and indirect investments in human capital.

Cities normally promote large cultural institutions, such as museums, because of their regional draw and view them as major attractions of tourist and arts consumption activity. However, because of the broader audience and emphasis on “interurban competition and image” these large institutions are less targeted

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<sup>18</sup> Carl Grodach, “Art Spaces in Community and Economic Development: Connections to Neighborhoods, Artists, and the Cultural Economy,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Published online December 15, 2010, <http://jpe.sagepub.com/content/early/2010/12/15/0739456X10391668>, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Francois Matarasso, *Use or Ornament? The Social impact of participation in the arts*, (Comedia, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> Kay Ferres and D. Adair, “Social Capital, Communities and Recent Rationales for the Performing Arts,” Griffith University, Australia, (paper presented for the International Conference on Engaging Communities, Queensland, Australia, August 14-17, 2005), <http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Ferres-Kay-final.pdf>.

to underrepresented or disadvantaged communities.<sup>21</sup> Smaller, community-based ones have numerous additional community benefits and can reach more neighborhood networks. One study by Carl Grodach found that small and mid-sized spaces contribute to the development of artistic clusters, providing “opportunities to build and maintain social capital, peer networks, and a shared identity” and “serve as an anchor that roots the arts community in place.” In addition, cities over the past two decades are now more supportive of creating smaller art spaces that are imbedded into neighborhoods that operate “cheek-by-jowl with private sector export and retail businesses and mixed-income housing.”<sup>22</sup> These smaller art spaces have contributed to improving livability and economic development on a local level.

Art spaces reviewed in the literature are mixed in terms of their ability to foster cross-sector interactions. On the one hand, Grodach found that for a variety of reasons, including lack of time, space, and finances, many art spaces do not “build bridges to other cultural economy sectors” or have collaborations or interactions beyond the arts scene.<sup>23</sup> Markusen et. al.’s study found that artists freely cross over between artistic production, non-profit and community work, and the creative business sector. Artists gain insights and benefits from each sector that help them to build and enrich their careers.<sup>24</sup> While the artists themselves may crossover, do art spaces provide a place for artists to interact with people and industries from different sectors? This point will be explored in this thesis to determine if this engagement is demonstrated in the case studies and how art space creators can strategically build those connections.

***Benefits to Places:*** Art spaces transform places with vibrant arts and cultural activity, improving the livability of neighborhoods and creating local economic opportunity. This could be in the form of reducing crime and stabilizing a neighborhood.<sup>25</sup> Art spaces also contribute to “creative placemaking,” a phrase describing how different players strategically shape the character of a place, ultimately improving its quality of life.

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<sup>21</sup> Grodach 2010, Bianchini 1993.

<sup>22</sup> Markusen and Gadwa 2010, 5-15.

<sup>23</sup> Grodach 2011, 10 and Currid 2007, 454.

<sup>24</sup> Ann Markusen, Sam Gilmore, Amanda Johnson, Titus Levi, and Andrea Martinez, *Crossover: How Artists Build Careers Across Commercial, Nonprofit and Community Work*, The James Irvine Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Leveraging Investments in Creativity, (Minneapolis, MN: Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 2006), <http://www.hhh.umn.edu/projects/prie/pdf/crossover.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Stern and Seifert 2008.

*In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.*<sup>26</sup>

Markusen and Gadwa explore the role of art space, artist entrepreneurs, and their public and private partners in creative placemaking using over a dozen case studies. They find that these arts and cultural spaces demonstrate a commitment to a particular place, and through partnering with different sectors, including the public sector, produce gains in livability and sustainability as well as new jobs and economic activity. Successful examples of arts and cultural spaces have garnered public and private support, secured the engagement of the local arts community, and built strong partnerships.<sup>27</sup>

#### ***What does this mean for innovative art spaces?***

With the understanding of the transformative value of art spaces to both people and place, cities should pay attention to innovative art spaces and how they arise. Learning about and understanding what drives an organization to develop an innovative art space, and what makes them successful or effective – especially as pioneers in their field – is useful in paving the way for more integrated art spaces. In addition, many arts organizations are increasingly trying to attract populations not normally exposed to arts training or art activities. They have incorporated into their mission the need to reach out to disadvantaged populations using the arts as a vehicle to build community and economic opportunity. For these organizations, developing affordable art space is vital to their survival and ability to provide arts programming to underserved populations.

#### ***Current Support for Art Space***

Despite an economic downturn, the increased understanding of the societal benefits of the arts has helped art space garner more recognition and support. In 2009 and 2010, the national organization Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), in collaboration with the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, awarded the MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Awards (ISA) as part of the

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<sup>26</sup> Markusen and Gadwa 2010, 18-26.

<sup>27</sup> Markusen and Gadwa, 2010, 18-26.

Ford Foundation’s “Space for Change” initiative. This prestigious award granted \$50,000 to an arts organization that developed an innovative, replicable, sustainable, model for arts space while demonstrating deep and significant engagement with the community. The 2010 grand prize winner and five honorable mention recipients represented a range of project types including historic adaptive reuse projects, new construction arts facilities, rural land, and reuses of mobile homes. In addition, in April 2010, the Ford Foundation announced a 10-year, \$100 million initiative to support a “new generation of art spaces.” In a time when funding for arts groups and arts programs declined, the Ford Foundation made it a priority to demonstrate that investment in creative pursuits is beneficial to communities and to local and regional economies. In February 2011, LINC awarded the first round of Ford Pre-development Grants, designed to support new projects as well as the revitalization and expansion of existing arts spaces. Twelve grantees were awarded funding of up to \$100,000 and a suite of other resources, including technical assistance, access to experts in real estate development and finance; and opportunities for peer learning with a national network of artist space practitioners and stakeholders.<sup>28</sup>

But while foundations and city agencies are funding the creation of art spaces and recognizing successful models, do we understand what particular “ingredients” go into the development and evolution of innovative and transformative art spaces? What are their successes and challenges that can teach city planners and policymakers about how municipalities can cultivate successful spaces? The following chapters detail the methodology and case studies that seek to answer these questions.

## **❏ Chapter Review**

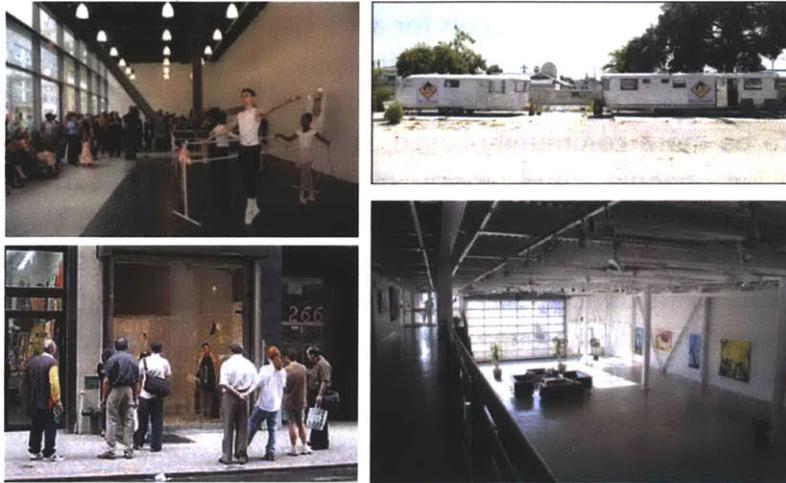
Chapter 1 introduced the context of art space as a means of impacting people and places using information gathered from a literature review. Chapter 2 presents the methodology and case study framework that will be used to analyze the four case studies. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the four case studies in detail. The case studies are Side Street Projects (Pasadena, CA), Artists for Humanity (Boston, MA), Schermerhorn House (Brooklyn, NY), and Chashama (New York City). Chapter 7 presents the analysis and findings that I distill from the case studies, using the case study framework presented in Chapter 2. Based on these findings, Chapter 8 presents a series of recommendations for both cities and art space creators that offer ways to strategically create innovative and

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<sup>28</sup> “Space for Change Planning and Pre-Development Grantees,” Leveraging Investments in Creativity, February 2011, <http://www.lincnet.net/artist-space/ford-foundation-grantees>.

effective art spaces. Chapter 9 summarizes this thesis and presents the conclusion.





## CHAPTER 2

# Research Methods & Framework

## **📊 Research Methods**

The study of innovative art spaces which transform the people and places around them forms the core of this thesis. I examine four organizations or partnerships that have developed new models for art space development. While recognizing the importance of large cultural institutions and art centers, I will focus on small, home-grown arts organizations and their spaces. These small organizations tend to be more community-based, serving a specific geographic location or group of people, and most often demonstrate extreme resourcefulness in creating art spaces on a limited budget. As a result, these organizations are often flexible or nimble enough to adapt their spaces, programs or operations to fit difficult market realities or to make themselves stand out in a sea of non-profit arts groups. This thesis examines non-traditional models that transform underutilized spaces and engage diverse audiences and partners. Those that are successful are able to serve their target audience with specific services, while also producing spillover effects that benefit the larger community. Understanding the evolution of these organizations and their quest for space will help planners identify ways to cultivate similar spaces and support organizations that have a great ability to impact people and places.

This thesis examines four case studies in New York City, Boston, and the greater Los Angeles area. Each case study features unique spaces, programs, community engagement strategies, partnerships, financing and operations, and sustainability elements. My primary questions are the following:

- 1) How can art spaces be innovative and transformative?
- 2) What has been successful or challenging in the development of these spaces?
- 3) How can cities and arts organizations cultivate more of these art spaces?

I conducted a series of site visits for each case study to observe arts activities and experience the space first-hand. To inform my analysis, I conducted over 30 in-person and phone interviews with organizational leaders, funders, artists, students, city officials, and other stakeholders. In addition, to understand the spatial, social and economic context of each case study, I studied Google Earth maps and U.S. Census data using the web interface Social Explorer to gain an understanding of the demographics and context of each case study. My research also incorporates secondary sources such as newspaper articles, scholarly

journals, information from award publications such as the MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Awards and Bruner Foundation awards, internet research, and organizational documents such as strategic plans, and marketing materials such as websites and videos. As some organizations in this study were started almost twenty years ago and others are relatively young, each organization experienced different challenges depending on the stage of their evolution. Much time was devoted to tracing the history of each organization as it moved from different spaces until it developed the model that is the highlight of each case study today. Using primary and secondary information, I identify common elements that arise from the lessons learned from each case study, and propose a set of recommendations for how cities can cultivate similar types of spaces.

### Case Studies

- *Side Street Projects (Pasadena, CA):* The grand prize winner of the 2010 MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Awards, Side Street Projects reuses mobile homes and transit buses as community arts space and teaching classrooms that focus on art and sustainability. The organization is self-sufficient with its own solar panel array, and they describe themselves as a social enterprise that operates outside the traditional gallery system.
- *Artists for Humanity EpiCenter (Boston, MA):* Located in the Fort Point neighborhood of Boston, AFH focuses on providing underserved youth with paid employment and training in the arts. The AFH program has inspired low-income and minority youth to pursue the arts as a career, and has taught youth valuable design and business skills. A finalist in the 2010 Innovative Space Awards, AFH has a LEED Platinum building<sup>29</sup> and mixes a diversity of people together – teenagers, artists, business executives, and others – in its multipurpose studios.
- *Schermerhorn House (Brooklyn, NY):* Built in 2009 through a partnership of Hamlin Ventures, Time Equities, Common Ground and the Actors Fund, Schermerhorn House provides a mix of supportive housing for both formerly homeless individuals and for low-income artists in the entertainment industry. The building contains a black-box community theater and a deed-restricted storefront space devoted to arts uses, which currently houses the studio of the Brooklyn Ballet.

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<sup>29</sup> LEED refers to the internationally-recognized Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification system of the U.S. Green Building Council that is based on a set of prescribed criteria. LEED Platinum is the highest possible rating for a building. "LEED," U.S. Green Building Council, accessed May 4, 2011, <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1988>.

- *Chashama (New York, NY)*: Founded in 1995 by Anita Durst, Chashama is a non-profit organization that transforms temporarily vacant properties into artist work studios and exhibition spaces. Working with real estate developers, property owners, economic development corporations, community groups, the public sector, and arts non-profits, Chashama opens up vacant spaces in all five boroughs, making affordable space available to artists of all types. Through public exhibitions, live shows, and community youth engagement programs, Chashama brings people together to appreciate and experience art. Over the years, it has converted over 50 locations and provides an artist studio/retreat at chaNorth, its residency program in Upstate New York.

***Why were these case studies selected?***

These case studies represent a unique set of space and program types. My goal was to present very different approaches to creating art space so a set of diverse factors could be explored. These case studies have all been recognized in publications or awards as important organizations or spaces that have developed novel ways of building or supporting their spaces.

First, Side Street Projects and Artists for Humanity are both recognized by the 2010 MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Awards as the winner and one of five honorable mentions, respectively. These organizations were selected out of a pool of almost one hundred applicants from across the United States. Side Street Projects represents a truly mobile organization where both their programming and offices are housed in mobile vehicles, and can easily be moved to a different location. This example helps start the dialogue about mobility and temporariness in innovative art space development.

Artists for Humanity is noted for the success of both its arts apprenticeship programs, and the ability of an artist-run organization to build a LEED Platinum building – the first in the city of Boston. Artists for Humanity won numerous design awards, including the prestigious Bruner Foundation Award in 2006. Its approach towards combining arts and sustainability, as well as its focus on at-risk teenagers, makes it an example of cross-sector programming and partnerships, and emphasis on arts as a business.

Schermerhorn House is an innovative combination of supportive and affordable housing, a community theater, and arts-related storefront space. Akin to a more traditional construction of a new art space, it was selected because of the complex partnerships that arose to complete the project; private developers worked with two non-profit organizations and the public sector to finance the

building. Schermerhorn House won the national American Institute of Architects 2011 Award for Housing Design. Schermerhorn House's approach to innovative space includes a diverse building program mix, the vision behind the building, and the focus on arts-related uses to tie different parts of the neighborhood and different people together.

Chashama was selected because of the rising popularity of vacant storefront programs as tools to combat the side effects of a down economy. The project is innovative both in terms of its use of donated storefront properties as well as its partnerships with real estate developers and property owners that donate space, and non-profit arts organizations to program the spaces. The organization has a strong partnership with city government, in part because it has been in operation since 1995.

The variety of development and funding strategies used in the case studies shows the breadth and diversity of how organizations can approach the creation of art space. These case studies, presented in detail in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, illustrate how different organizations, partnerships, and space types and programs can lead to a variety of innovative art spaces. An in-depth exploration of the elements that make these case studies unique both as art spaces and as catalysts of change follows each case study using the framework presented in the next section.

## Case Study Framework

Art spaces and the organizations that manage them are dynamic and complex. The physical art space becomes much more than just a “space” once people associate it with the creation of art, social interaction and artistic expression. The following categorical framework forms the basis of my analysis:

- A. Organizational Factors
- B. Neighborhood Context
- C. Space & Design
- D. Programs, Partners & Financing
- E. Physical, Social, & Economic Impacts

Components of this framework overlap with each other and are all inter-related in intricate ways. Together, this framework illustrates the myriad ways an organization can create an innovative art space that also impacts the people and neighborhood around it.

From my observations and interviews with stakeholders that informed the development of this framework, I find that building a space does not necessarily mean that it will be innovative or effective in furthering the arts in a community. The space is inextricably linked to the organization that utilizes that space – from how the space is used, for what activities, and for what audiences to the original vision of what the organization is trying to achieve and the programs that it has created to serve its audience. It is difficult, therefore, to look at one element – physical space – without looking at all the other factors that influence how innovative a space can be. A mobile home by itself, for example, is not an innovative space, but when it is used as arts and office space for an organization so that it can reach disadvantaged neighborhoods that can’t afford transportation, then it becomes an innovative concept. Understanding the importance of all of these factors, I present the following case study framework. Following each of these sections is an empty matrix that shows the topics that formed the basis of my interviews and research. The completed matrices will be presented in Chapter 7: Analysis.

## A. Organizational Factors

Table 2-1. Organizational Factors				
	Side Street Projects	Artists for Humanity	Schermerhorn House	Chashama
Year formed				
Location				
Year space completed				
Leader				
Organization				
Ownership				
Mission				

## B. Neighborhood Context

Table 2-2. Neighborhood Context				
	Side Street Projects	Artists for Humanity	Schermerhorn House	Chashama
Neighborhood				
Demographics of population served				
Site Context				

## C. Space & Design

Table 2-3. Space & Design	
<b>Vision &amp; Intent</b>	What is the original intent behind creating the art space? What was the vision? Was the space planned or a result of a response to external factors?
<b>Type of Space</b>	What types of spaces do they represent? Are they traditional bricks and mortar or more alternative spaces that are not typically used for arts space?
<b>Time</b>	Is the art space temporary or permanent?
<b>Mobility</b>	Does the art space move or is it stationary in one location? Is movement of space, people or ideas characteristic of the art space?
<b>Sustainability</b>	How is the art space environmentally sustainable?
<b>Connectivity</b>	Does the art space make conscious or unconscious steps to connect physical spaces or paths?

## D. Programs, Partners & Financing

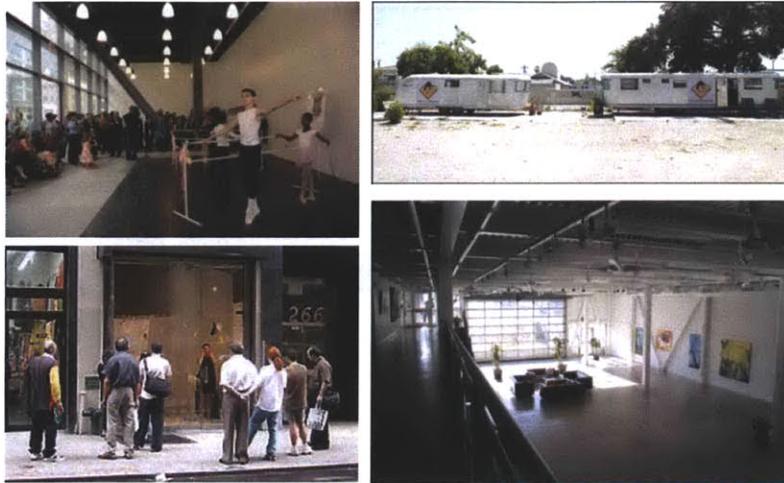
Table 2-4. Programs, Partners & Financing				
	Side Street Projects	Artists for Humanity	Schermerhorn House	Chashama
<b>Audience</b>	Who is the audience that is served?			
<b>Programming</b>	What are the programs that make the space unique?			
<b>Partnerships</b>	What significant partnerships made this space possible?			
<b>Funding/ Financing</b>	How was this art space financed? What are the notable aspects?			
<b>Operations</b>	How is the space operated? What are the notable aspects?			

## E. Physical, Social, and Economic Impacts

Table 2-5. Physical, Social, and Economic Impacts				
	Side Street Projects	Artists for Humanity	Schermerhorn House	Chashama
<b>Physical / Spatial</b>	What are the physical or spatial impacts of the art space?			
<b>Social / Community</b>	What are the individual and community impacts of the art space?			
<b>Economic</b>	What are the economic development impacts of the art space?			

### 📦 Replicating the Model

At the end of each case study, I identify the lessons learned for that particular organization as well as how to think about replicating or adapting the model in other cities. What were the major challenges that the art space or organization faced? What lessons can we take away from this information?



## CHAPTER 3

### Case Study: Side Street Projects (Pasadena, CA)

*A mobile means of bringing  
arts education to youth and  
a community in need.*

## Summary



Figure 3-1. Side Street Projects' mobile headquarters with two trailers and a solar array.  
Source: Catherine Opie, for Side Street Projects.<sup>30</sup>

Side Street Projects (SSP) is an artist-run mobile and sustainable community arts center dedicated to providing artists of all ages the ability and means to support their creative endeavors. SSP operates with a fleet of mobile trailers and buses, and is currently located on a vacant lot in Northwest Pasadena. Through mobile, on-site, and digital programs, SSP encourages both youth and professional artists to be self-reliant and creative problem solvers in a contemporary art context. It is most known for its “Alternative Routes” woodworking buses that bring arts education directly to public school students throughout Los Angeles County. SSP also teaches about environmental sustainability, urban farming, and composting using The Armadillo, a retrofitted FEMA trailer. SSP’s entire operation is off the grid; it is powered by a solar array and uses a wireless satellite communications system. Working in partnership with the City of Pasadena, foundations, and other arts organizations, SSP transforms blighted, transitional spaces using the arts and views itself as a social enterprise that operates outside of the traditional gallery system.

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<sup>30</sup> Photographed by Catherine Opie for the organization’s Sweet 16 fundraiser in 2008. Opie is a renowned photographer who got her start with Side Street Projects.

## Context & Demographics

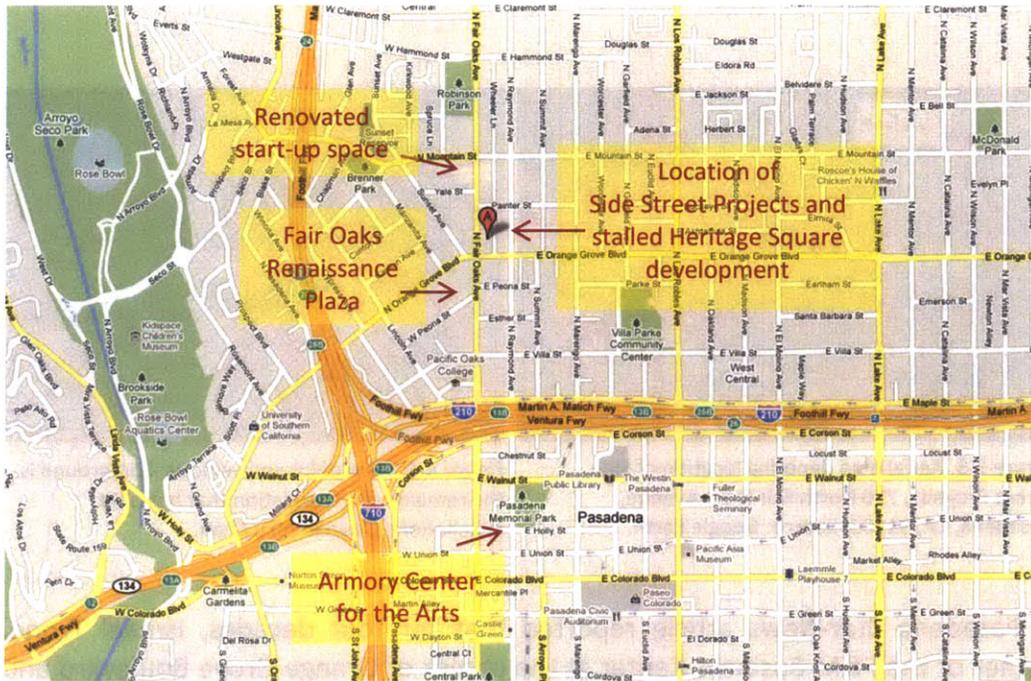


Figure 3-2. Map showing locations of public investment and art centers. Source: Google Maps

Side Street Projects' current site is in the neighborhood of Northwest Pasadena, an underserved community that has experienced disinvestment for over half a century. In the 1960s, the construction of the 210 Freeway required an eminent domain process and displaced thousands of Northwest residents. The freeway also created a physical barrier that separated people along ethnic and class lines. Property values declined as families moved out or were displaced, and crime increased. Today, the area south of the freeway, which includes the tourist destination Old Pasadena, and the area to the west, where the Rose Bowl stadium is located, is more affluent while the area north of the freeway remains the poorest Census tract in Pasadena.

The neighborhood is historically home to African-American residents but has seen an influx of Latino residents in the past few decades. In the 1990s, Latinos outnumbered the African-American population. An increased number of Latino immigrants moving into Northwest Pasadena, coupled with the lack of positive

opportunities for youth led to racial tensions between blacks and Latino residents while gang violence and crime increased.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 3-3. Aerial map denoting location of Side Street Projects, 730 North Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena, CA, 91103. Source: Google Earth.



Figure 3-4. View of lot and vehicles. Foreground is the remains of a foundation that hosts art installations. Source: Julie Chan.

A Pasadena Star-News article reported that for four decades, Ismael Trone, owner of the F&M Business Center at the corner of Orange Grove Boulevard and Raymond Avenue – three blocks away from Side Street Projects’ current site, had “seen it all” with shootings, drug dealing and prostitution. He said, “There hasn’t been much improvement or economic redevelopment in this area for over 30 or 40 years. It’s hard to be a business owner with this type of activity going on.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Public Investment in Northwest Pasadena**

While Northwest Pasadena has been characterized as “disenfranchised,” in recent years the mostly residential neighborhood has seen new development, especially in the Fair Oaks and Orange Grove area. From 1998-2006, city officials and the Pasadena Community Development Corporation developed a number of projects to enhance the quality of life for residents, promote economic development, and beautify the neighborhood. They developed the Fair Oaks Renaissance Plaza at 655 North Fair Oaks Avenue, a 75,000 square foot shopping plaza completed in 1998-1999 with a corner retail space completed in 2002. (See Figure 3-2.) Existing retail includes Von’s Grocery, the first supermarket in the Northwest Pasadena neighborhood, and an additional 14,000 square feet of

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<sup>31</sup> Sid Garcia, “Racial Tensions, Violence, Afflicting Northwest Pasadena,” *ABCNews*, August 29, 2007, Accessed April 21, 2011, <http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=news/local&id=5618172>.

<sup>32</sup> Brenda Gazzar, “City vies for state grant to renovate NW Pasadena neighborhood,” *Pasadena Star-News*, August 18, 2010, Accessed April 21, 2011, <http://www.allbusiness.com/society-social/social-welfare-regulation-policy/14963719-1.html>.

neighborhood retail space. The Pasadena Community Development Corporation also relocated a historic Victorian house in 2002 to 30 West Mountain Street as office space for start-ups.

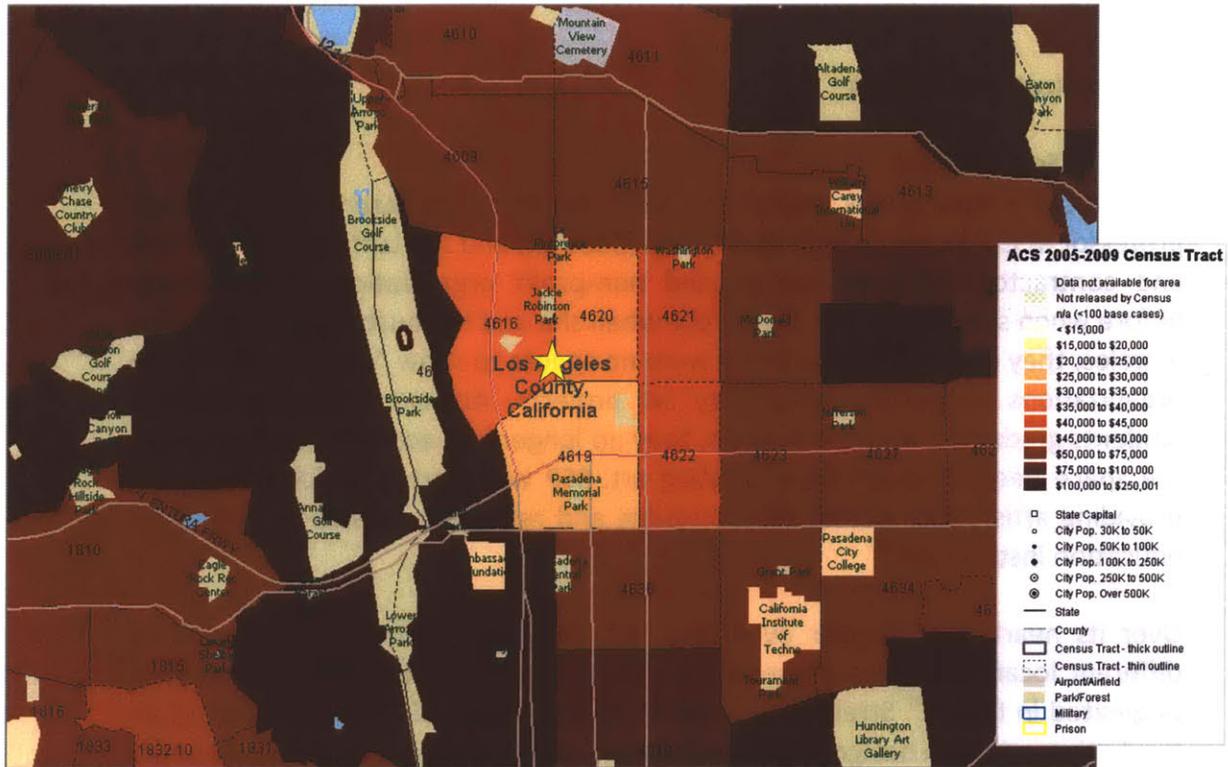


Figure 3-5. Side Street Projects is located in one of the poorest Census Tracts in Pasadena. Source: Social Explorer, American Community Survey, 2005-2009.

While these projects were successfully completed, the Heritage Square development project – slated to become a mixed-use development with 106 affordable rental units for seniors and 4,000 square feet of retail on a city-owned lot – languished.<sup>33</sup> (See Figure 3-2.) Due to a number of reasons, including community opposition after the developer and plan that was approved fell through, the project was delayed. The development site remained vacant until 2008 when Side Street Projects moved its headquarters onto the lot. The site borders a boarded-up historic Victorian house owned by the City of Pasadena

<sup>33</sup> "Economic Development: Fair Oaks Avenue Redevelopment Project Area," City of Pasadena, Accessed April 21, 2011, <http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/planninganddevelopment/development/fairoaks.asp>.

called the Decker House,<sup>34</sup> and contains the foundation remnants of former buildings, including one that once housed a local barber shop. Pasadena south of the 210 Freeway is home to numerous cultural venues, including the Armory Center for the Arts, while Side Street Projects is the only arts organization on the north side.

## Organizational History

### ***Intent to Serve Artists***

Side Street Projects was started in 1992 by Karen Atkinson, an artist and professor at California College of the Arts (CalArts), and Joe Luttrell, her husband and contractor. Atkinson had started non-profit organizations and galleries before when she lived in San Diego, but when she and her husband moved to Los Angeles, they discovered that there were no spaces to show “edgy” work and no organizations supporting temporary art projects. Atkinson noted that once students graduated from art schools, they no longer had access to equipment or the space needed to continue creating art. SSP was started to fill those gaps, providing artists with access to knowledge and resources outside of formal art education institutions.<sup>35</sup>

Over its nearly twenty-year evolution, Side Street Projects moved around to different locations as the organization’s programs and audiences developed. It originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> Street Art Center in Santa Monica, California as part of an incubation program designed to support new organizations. It ran a community fabrication shop and exhibition space, supporting artists in the creation, documentation, and exhibition of art. SSP provided low-cost woodworking equipment and documentation services for artists to stretch canvases, build sculptures, scan slides, and use special tools to create large-scale art installations. SSP operated out of a 600 square foot room containing woodworking and rehearsal space that could be rented out by the hour. SSP offered classes through the UCLA Extension School and showed the work of emerging artists, such as photographer Catherine Opie and painter Mark Bradford, both of whom are now well known. During this time, the organization also created temporary public art projects.

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<sup>34</sup> “Pasadena: Lot Sale Aids Decker House,” *San Gabriel Valley Digest*, December 21, 1989, Accessed May 16, 2011, [http://articles.latimes.com/1989-12-21/news/ga-893\\_1\\_decker-house](http://articles.latimes.com/1989-12-21/news/ga-893_1_decker-house).

<sup>35</sup> Karen Atkinson, Co-founder, Side Street Projects, personal interview, January 21, 2011.

### ***Seizing an Opportunity: Woodworking Bus Program***

An opportunity to expand SSP's program arose when Sheila Dawson, who educated children through "The Woodworking Bus," – a bus that was retrofitted to have child-friendly woodworking stations inside – wanted SSP to continue her program after she retired. In 1997, SSP built its first woodworking bus and piloted its first "Alternative Routes" mobile woodworking program in response to the lack of visual arts and manual arts programs in Los Angeles County public schools. The program uses former transit buses and trailers to bring arts education directly to the students at school and is now what SSP is known for.

### ***Always Moving***

Like many arts organizations, SSP moved to different locations as development pressures and high rents forced them to relocate. Its original intent was not to be a mobile organization – rather, external pressures forced them to devise a solution to the challenge of finding affordable and usable space. The following traces the history of their moves.

In 1999, SSP moved to the old Bank Building in downtown Los Angeles when a developer invited them to become the first gallery in an area known as "Skid Row." The property owner offered them affordable rent knowing that "arts organizations can accelerate gentrification."<sup>36</sup> This gentrification indeed occurred as industrial buildings were converted into lofts and galleries and property values increased. By 2001, SSP was "no longer able to afford to stay in the community it helped create." Ironically, the area is known today as "Gallery Row" and is a popular destination in downtown Los Angeles.<sup>37</sup>

Education Director Otoño Luján became the new Executive Director of SSP after founders Atkinson and Luttrell moved on to start an arts business called Getting Your Sh\*t Together (GYST), providing business services for emerging artists. Side Street Projects seized an opportunity to move to Pasadena in 2001 after the Amory Center for the Arts – a community art center offering classes, gallery space and workshops – invited SSP to be a principle partner and resident organization in a new, satellite multi-tenant art center called the Armory Northwest. From 2001 to 2003, the Armory Northwest collaborative was located in a 9,000 square foot former Hastings Plastic factory at 965 North Fair Oaks Avenue. The Armory Center for the Arts used this location because its building in

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<sup>36</sup> "Side Street Projects Strategic Plan 2011-2014," The Cultural Planning Group, 2011, 3-6.

<sup>37</sup> The Cultural Planning Group 2011, 3-6.

Old Pasadena was being renovated.<sup>38</sup> Along with a few other organizations-in-residence, including a theater company, SSP collaborated and shared resources to provide arts programming to Northwest Pasadena, one of Pasadena’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods.

In September 2003, the City of Pasadena reclaimed the former Plastics factory building to accommodate its own uses and Armory Northwest had to move. SSP first moved its fleet of woodworking buses to the parking lot of the Plastics factory, then from 2003-2004, SSP moved to Hortus, an abandoned nursery that had been overgrown for two years at 284 East Orange Grove. The nursery was later developed into affordable housing. In 2004, SSP moved into a “tiny room” in the Armory Center for the Arts at 145 North Raymond Avenue in the Old Pasadena district once the Armory Center’s building was renovated. SSP stayed there for 6 months. The City of Pasadena then designated a part of the former Plastic factory for SSP once the City made the building available again. However, most of the interior space of the warehouse was already spoken for. Because every move put the organization out of commission for two months, this new situation prompted SSP to think innovatively about its space.

## Space & Design

### ***Vision & Intent: The Catalyst for Mobility***

Because Side Street Projects had to move so many times in its history and because they operated mobile education buses, SSP’s administrators always joked that they would one day operate a bus check-out system out of a parking lot kiosk. The organization also saw the convenience of putting everything, including its files and storage, on wheels because it was easier to move. By 2007, SSP, facing another move, decided to seriously consider using affordable, mobile offices. “Instead of fighting the system and finding a permanent location, we decided to break the system.”<sup>39</sup> SSP did research on the feasibility of operating out of trailers and wrote grant applications to receive funding. With the support of the Pasadena Community Foundation, SSP purchased the first of two vintage Spartan trailers. SSP designed a completely mobile infrastructure that would accommodate office space, equipment and tool storage, and be able to park in any location. In 2005, SSP moved into the trailers and renovated them with support from the Ahmonson Foundation while the fleet was parked at the Armory Northwest at the former Plastics building. In January 2008, Side Street

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<sup>38</sup> “Call for Proposals: Darkness and Light, Pasadena, CA, Armory, Deadline Oct. 11,” AMP: Artists’ Meeting Place and Resource Collective, accessed April 22, 2011, <http://www.pluginamp.com/network/node/1367>.

<sup>39</sup> Emily Hopkins, Executive Director, Side Street Projects, personal interview, January 18, 2011.

Projects moved the trailers to a city-owned vacant lot in Northwest Pasadena. SSP signed a lease with the City of Pasadena to be located on the lot, with a \$5,000 deposit as a reserve in case the organization “chained itself to the fence and refused to leave when it was time to go.”<sup>40</sup>

### ***Type of Space: Mobile Vehicles and Lots***

*SSP has different types of mobile vehicles:*

- Two restored vintage Spartan travel trailers are used as office space. These were purchased from vintage trailer enthusiasts who later joined SSP’s advisory board.
- Two former transit buses from Colorado have been retrofitted into woodworking buses.
- One new trailer, converted with recycled steel and reclaimed furniture, is used as a teaching studio and mobile classroom. It is towed by a biodiesel pickup truck given to SSP by the Department of Water & Sewer through a green initiatives grant. The new classroom trailer increases SSP’s capacity and allows the organization to offer classes incorporating recycled mixed media.
- One heavy-duty trailer supports SSP’s photovoltaic solar panels on the roof and houses the electronic equipment for the solar array, as well as woodworking tools and audio/visual equipment.
- One former FEMA mobile trailer, called The Armadillo and converted by MIT students and faculty, houses a vertical garden and composting station. It also serves as office space and storage.

### ***City-owned Vacant Lot***

SSP has a lease with the City of Pasadena to use the lot in return for providing community arts programming. The City pays for maintenance of the lot, but SSP has put in gravel, planted garden-beds, and is the overall steward of the lot. The 25,000 square foot lot is a multipurpose space and is used as outdoor studio space for artists needing woodworking equipment. It is also used for outdoor events, such as movie screenings, art receptions, and other community programming. The lot is surrounded by chain-link fencing and is locked during off-hours. The structural remains of a house foundation on the southeast corner of the lot is host to public art installations. A Habitat for Humanity surplus store

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<sup>40</sup> Hopkins 2011.

is close by, providing low-cost materials for art projects. The lot also provides parking for SSP's fleet of vehicles.

Before SSP moved onto the lot, there were "hookers and crackheads" in the lot, which was challenging because "it's a densely populated area with lots of kids."<sup>41</sup> Once SSP moved in, the drug dealers and prostitutes moved elsewhere, helping to make that corner a safer place for kids to be. "Originally, people thought we were crazy to move [to Northwest Pasadena] because they were afraid we'd be robbed."<sup>42</sup> Through their weekend community programming, the neighborhood kids and families got to know SSP, and when an incident did occur, the neighbors helped to deter the crime. "People watching and community programming – those are our security."<sup>43</sup>

### ***Mobility & Time: Traveling and Temporary Art Space***

Side Street Projects changed the mobile and temporal elements of art space. First, its mobile education buses go to public schools around Los Angeles County and operate on a temporary basis. Each session is 45 minutes long, and SSP can run multiple sessions back-to-back. The buses deploy from SSP's lot to school parking lots, courtyards or playgrounds during school hours or after school. In this sense, the SSP space exists at each school temporarily yet regularly.

On another level, SSP's space is temporary, yet longer-term. It is on-site at its lot headquarters most days and provides community programming on the weekends. Professional and student artists go to the lot to teach programs as well as install temporary public art projects. These art projects teach community residents about contemporary art and expose them to different forms of creative expression.

SSP has been located at the lot for over three years and plans to be there for as long as the organization is allowed. When the City of Pasadena asks them to leave to make way for the Heritage Square development, SSP can move to a different lot and "set up shop" in 90 minutes. With its mobile solar array, and its files and equipment already in storage within the vehicles, SSP is unique because of its ability to move quickly and get back into operations with little downtime. According to Rochelle Branch, Cultural Affairs Director for the City of Pasadena, many City Councilmembers were clamoring to have SSP locate in their district

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<sup>41</sup> Hopkins 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Hopkins 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Hopkins 2011.

after seeing the organization's success as a positive force in the Northwest community. Potential future sites include a lot three blocks away that is next to many families who live in a public housing project. This is a testament to how the City of Pasadena has accepted SSP as a local arts organization that is here to stay.

Current SSP Executive Director, Emily Hopkins, and her husband, former SSP Executive Director Jon Lapointe, also recently purchased a home a mile from the current site in Northwest Pasadena. This move is a sign of their commitment to the neighborhood both professionally and personally – creating a permanent home in Northwest Pasadena when SSP itself is still mobile.

### ***Connectivity: SSP as the Neutralizer***

*Side Street Projects created a successful and innovative space because of the space synergy and dynamism of bringing a positive force to a location that was associated with a lot of community tension and uncertainty.*

*- Rochelle Branch, Cultural Affairs Director, City of Pasadena*

SSP, by nature of its location and programming, is making physical connections to the neighborhood of Northwest Pasadena. First, SSP brought art and community investment up north past the 210 Freeway barrier. On a more local level, SSP's presence creates connections with people surrounding the lot. North Fair Oaks Avenue has pedestrian traffic during the day, with many mothers with children and infants walking by (Mothers Club Family Learning is a few blocks away). It is also a busy thoroughfare connecting traffic south towards Old Pasadena, where there is more commercial activity, and the 210 Freeway. SSP's presence on that street adds daytime and weekend activity to the once-vacant lot.

Given the community contention regarding the stalled Heritage Square development, SSP came into Northwest Pasadena as a relatively neutral party. "We were the box of puppies that have been dropped in the middle. No one has a problem with us."<sup>44</sup> SSP generates dialogue by working with its professional artists to put up large-scale public art installations that pertain to the site's past, present and future. This programming forms both physical and social connections with SSP's neighbors and helps mediate contention and anger regarding the site.

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<sup>44</sup> Hopkins 2011.

Side Street Projects' main challenge was going into Northwest Pasadena as an organization that was "not of color into a primarily black/Latino neighborhood."<sup>45</sup> SSP was "encumbered with the challenge of needing to befriend neighbors and the community in a way that is both sincere and productive."<sup>46</sup> SSP addressed this through its community programming by reaching out directly to disadvantaged youths in public schools and on-site. They created activities that benefited neighborhood children while simultaneously creating a safe place on a changing block. SSP "neutralized a formally hot and contentious site by becoming part of the community, delivering services to adjacent neighbors. It has become a neighborhood location for positive activities as opposed to one of bitter remembrance."<sup>47</sup>

## Programs, Partners & Financing

### *Programs & Audience*

Side Street's programs have changed over the years as their program evolved from artist services to serving youth through mobile arts education. The programs not only provide income for the organization, but also provide exposure and learning opportunities to community members and the greater Los Angeles County arts community. SSP's primary programs today consist of the following.

#### *Mobile Youth Education*

**Woodworking:** Side Street Projects is primarily known for its "Alternative Routes: Education on Wheels" woodworking bus education program that has served over 15,000 kids in Los Angeles County since its inception in 1997. Children ages 5-11 learn about art, design, math, science and engineering aboard former transit buses that have been converted into mobile woodshops. Inside each bus are ten child-size, adjustable-height woodworking stations that are equipped with saws, hand drills, screwdrivers, supplies and other woodworking materials. The setup allows the kids to use "only hand tools, raw materials, and their imagination"<sup>48</sup> to design and execute woodworking projects and yet allows a number of subjects to be incorporated into the instructions. The students learn

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<sup>45</sup> Rochelle Branch, Cultural Affairs Director, City of Pasadena Planning & Development Department, personal interview, January 21, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Branch 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Branch 2011.

<sup>48</sup> "Alternative Routes: Education on Wheels," Side Street Projects, accessed April 2, 2011, <http://sidestreet.org/mobile-education/woodbus>.

about where the wood comes from, measuring lengths and angles, how to design their own projects, how different pieces can fit together and what colors to use when decorating their final project. In just one class, children can learn about math, geometry, safety procedures, mechanical engineering, color theory, and environmental science.



Figures 3-6 and 3-7. "Alternative Routes" woodworking bus with mural painted by Magu Lujan. Interior photo shows woodworking stations. Source: Side Street Projects and Julie Chan.



Figure 3-8. Children on the woodworking bus. Source: Side Street Projects.

The woodworking buses meet the California Education Standards for Art, Math, and Science and have been vetted by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission's "Arts for All" program. The woodworking lessons are part of the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) curriculum during the school day. The goal for Side Street Projects is to serve all 3rd graders in the PUSD – a goal that SSP is getting quite close to obtaining.

Because the buses are mobile, SSP brings the lessons and tools to the schools, providing a new hands-on experience for students. With most of the students coming from low-income families, SSP gives the children an opportunity to learn or hone skills without burdening parents or schools with transportation costs.

Thus, SSP's mobile nature reduces costs that might have barred some students and schools from accessing this type of arts education.

Many teachers support the woodworking program and see it as an effective method of teaching valuable skills in design and engineering as well as personal safety. Alvaro Ramos, an artist and art teacher located seven blocks away from SSP's lot at 515 Ashtabula St. at the James Madison Elementary School, praises the woodworking program and wishes that his 5<sup>th</sup> grade students could have access to the program, not just 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. The school children – most of them Latino and from low-income families and many who don't speak English very well, develop a "common language" when they are working with tools. They "learn how to control their skills, how to be careful, how to understand, how to use a saw and hammer." The students are "so excited to get on the bus" and are "always asking questions." They are able to understand the math concepts because they apply them while learning the arts, not just learning from a book. "The arts in Pasadena, and especially in our community, are so important. Kids get bored, they don't know what to do – they're walking around in the playground, doing nothing. [With Side Street Projects], kids have an opportunity to learn, enrich themselves, do work. We let kids be creative. Instead of sitting around during recess, they can go into the bus and produce things... it builds their self-esteem."<sup>49</sup>

A former student found his creative talents when he was an SSP student. Eddie, now 14, started SSP's programs when he was seven years old and now volunteers at SSP. Because his early exposure to the program taught him how to work with his hands and the essentials of art skills, as well as principles of ecology and sustainability, he "values art and artistic expression as a valid activity." His mother, Liz, says that, "If he had not been exposed to SSP's woodworking program, he may not have been aware of his artistic side or his competence with equipment." He also learned at an early age, "safety and respect for tools. He learned self-respect because of how he was treated by the teachers and by experiencing some success." Eddie hopes to pursue a career in the creative sector and is interested in cosmetology, fashion design, and theater.<sup>50</sup>

***Sustainability Efforts and Education:*** Side Street Projects prides itself on its emphasis on environmental sustainability. When SSP acquired the mobile trailers

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<sup>49</sup> Alvaro Ramos, Artist and Art Teacher, James Madison Elementary School, phone interview, March 10, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Eddie and Liz, Former Student/Volunteer and Mother of Student, personal interview, January 22, 2011.

as its office space, it looked for ways to fund photovoltaic panels so that it could be “off the grid” or energy self-sufficient. This proved to be surprisingly difficult. “There isn’t much support for solar in Southern California, which is surprising.”<sup>51</sup> It was difficult for SSP to get funding for the solar array mostly because the organization was mobile, or appeared mobile. “We were supposed to get an \$8000 credit for building this array, but the Department of Water & Power couldn’t wrap their heads around us. Visually, it is not permanent because we had wheels -- but we weren’t leaving Pasadena. We couldn’t get anyone to fund the solar except for an art foundation,” says Hopkins. SSP managed to convince the Ahmonson Foundation to fund half of the \$22,000 solar panels in addition to the renovation of one of the Spartan trailers. The 50kw photovoltaic panels power all of SSP’s operations and can last for three days if there is rain. “Many residents in the neighborhood have never seen a solar panel before in their lives.”<sup>52</sup> SSP provides an opportunity to educate people about solar energy and its relevance in everyday living.

In addition, Side Street Projects was selected in June 2009 by MIT to receive The Armadillo, an actual FEMA trailer that MIT students and faculty transformed into a mobile, vertical, sustainable community garden. The trailer was one of thousands of surplus travel trailers intended for use as temporary housing after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. Students and faculty from the MIT Visual Arts Program turned the trailer into a “green” mobile composting center with vertical gardens, a rainwater catchment system, permaculture library, and indoor multipurpose space. The trailer was named The Armadillo after its ribbed retractable shell. MIT selected SSP because The Armadillo fit into SSP’s mobile programs and educational mission. Side Street Projects’ Emily Hopkins and Jon Lapointe embarked on a 6,500 mile journey from Pasadena to Boston to retrieve The Armadillo. On the way back to Pasadena, they toured various cities, teaching kids and adults about vertical farming, sustainability, and permaculture.

The Armadillo is now a part of SSP’s fleet of mobile educational trailers. For the most part, The Armadillo resides full-time at SSP’s headquarters site and is used to teach people about sustainability and urban farming. The Armadillo cannot be transported easily without damaging the vertical planters, so students from the Los Angeles area take field trips to The Armadillo that include a hands-on workshop where they build their own vertical planters from recycled materials.

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<sup>51</sup> Hopkins 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Hopkins 2011.

SSP charges schools a fee for these field trips, which is another source of earned income for the organization.



Figure 3-9. The Armadillo trailer retrofitted with vertical gardening planters. Source: Side Street Projects.

Side Street Projects also promotes the reuse of materials in its arts programming. Its new art trailer was built out of recycled steel and reused furniture and will be used to teach students about using recycled mixed media.

A public garden also exists on various parts of the SSP lot. Vegetables that are grown on the exterior structure of the Armadillo and on the lot are given away for free to the public. Young people from the neighborhood have gone home “excitedly with tomatoes and other vegetables that Side Street Project has grown.”<sup>53</sup>

### *Artist Services & Professional Development*

Side Street Projects has adapted its programs to its unique location by allowing artists to use equipment on-site or rent for a low cost, and by moving some of its professional development services on-line. Since 2001, Side Street Projects has provided artists with access to otherwise cost-prohibitive equipment, tools, and workshop space. After paying a low annual membership fee, member artists can take advantage of low rental rates on equipment such as video projectors, large scanners, cameras, and power tools. SSP also transformed its visiting artist lecture series into a digitally accessible podcast series. Hosted by artist and Side Street Projects Board Member Bari Ziperstein, the series “greatly expanded

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<sup>53</sup> Hopkins 2011.

artists' access to this professional development service.”<sup>54</sup> Finally, SSP also supports other artists and partner organizations by providing assistance, installation space, and advice for contemporary artist projects and exhibitions.

### *Community Programming*

On Saturdays, the Side Street Projects lot and trailers are open to the community for weekend programming, including woodworking, sculpture, drawing and more. Children and their families often come to take advantage of this free programming and receive classical art training that gives them a solid foundation of skills. However, only a limited number of people can fit on board the woodworking buses and trailers. Volunteers and interns, usually students who have grown up with SSP's programs, help out with supervising kids and teaching on Saturdays. By having community programming on-site in addition to their direct work at public schools throughout Pasadena, Side Street Projects has become a visible and engaging member of the Northwest Pasadena neighborhood.

Side Street Projects is also an official partner destination of the Pasadena Art Night. About 2,900 guests attended the past two Art Night events that were held at SSP's location. Attendees included professional artists, supporters, youth, and neighborhood families who had never attended an Art Night before. This brings a significant number of people to Northwest Pasadena who might not otherwise go north of the 210 Freeway.

### ***Partnerships: Strong Advocates Across Sectors***

SSP has very strong partnerships with local government, foundations, arts organizations, arts businesses, and artists that have allowed it to weather many changes over its long history. It also has strong relationships with neighborhood residents, who participate in SSP's free weekend programming. These partnerships have allowed SSP to be where it is today. The funding and support, especially from the local Department of Cultural Affairs, foundations, and the Armory Center for the Arts, were critical in helping SSP evolve and to eventually adopt its innovative mobile model.

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<sup>54</sup> The Cultural Planning Group 2011.

### *Local government and schools*

Side Street Projects holds long-term partnerships with the City of Pasadena and in particular with the Department of Cultural Affairs. Rochelle Branch, Cultural Affairs Director for the City of Pasadena, is a strong advocate for SSP and helps the organization to forge relationships with other city agencies. SSP's relationship with the City solidified when SSP served as a voice for the Armory Northwest for the Pasadena Cultural Nexus Strategic Plan in 2004, which identifies the community's 10-year priorities for supporting the arts and culture in Pasadena.<sup>55</sup> Through this working relationship, the City of Pasadena recognized that SSP filled a valuable need in providing community arts programming. Its do-it-yourself attitude, devotion to investing sweat equity into its former home – the Plastic Factory building – and efforts to help fellow emerging organizations as part of the Amory Northwest, made the organization stand out. In addition, SSP's partnership with the Pasadena Unified School District and with public schools in the county is important for its mobile education programming.

### *Foundations*

SSP has received support from community foundations such as the Pasadena Community Foundation, Ahmonson Foundation, Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, Leonard I. Green Foundation and Tournament of Roses Foundation to support arts programming as well as capital projects including the renovation of the mobile trailers, purchase and installation of the solar array, and the donation of a biodiesel truck.

### *Arts Organizations*

SSP has numerous arts partnerships that have supported the organization throughout its history, including the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, the Pasadena Art Alliance, Pasadena Art League, Pasadena Department of Cultural Affairs, and STOCK Building Supply. Scott Ward, Director of the Armory Center for the Arts and a long-time friend and partner when SSP was a resident organization of Armory Northwest, said that SSP's strong relationship with the Armory Center for the Arts played a major role in SSP's success. SSP's ability to

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<sup>55</sup> "Cultural Nexus Historical Information," City of Pasadena, Cultural Affairs, accessed April 10, 2011, <http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/arts/nexusHistory.asp>.

find space with Armory Northwest helped the organization to establish its programming and leverage a network of arts experts and advisers.<sup>56</sup>

### *Artists and Art Businesses*

SSP has a continuing relationship with GYST, the arts business started by its co-founder. The two organizations produce educational podcasts teaching professional artists about business, presentation, and entrepreneurial skills. SSP also connects its artists with other artists and resources to increase business skills and provide teaching opportunities.<sup>57</sup>

### ***Funding, Financing & Operations***

SSP's primary source of earned income is its woodworking buses, which are hired by schools as well as for private parties, community events, summer camps, and on-site classes. SSP wishes to increase earned income by acquiring more buses and trailers to support the mobile education programming. SSP receives support from individual donors and relies on annual fundraising efforts. The organization has good relationships with foundations and city agencies that provide arts funding.

Becoming mobile, holding a free lease for the lot, and having the solar array have allowed SSP to lower its operating costs substantially. It only pays \$400 a month for wireless communications services and a port-a-potty on-site. When it was located at the Armory Center for the Arts, SSP was paying \$300 a month for utilities alone. By saving on rent, utilities, and parking expense (estimated at \$3000-4000 a month at least), SSP is devoting more of its resources directly towards community programming instead of operating costs.

### **❏ How is Side Street Projects an innovative and transformative art space?**

**SSP adds a mobile and temporal dimension to the definition of a community art center.** SSP makes art accessible to a broader cross-section and larger number of children by operating its mobile woodworking bus program and having a highly visible and convenient headquarters. Mobility allows SSP to "bring art to the people," especially disadvantaged populations who do not ordinarily go to museum or galleries for contemporary art. For Hopkins, "Mobility in general makes you able to serve a much larger population and gives

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<sup>56</sup> Scott Ward, Executive Director, Armory Center for the Arts, personal interview, January 18, 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Sierra Pecheur, Artist, Side Street Projects, personal interview, January 19, 2011.

you flexibility to be able to react to the needs of the community.”<sup>58</sup> SSP’s ability to move to another location when necessary takes away the uncertainty of where to go because the new location is pre-determined with the City of Pasadena and is not as dependent on market fluctuations and private landlords.

**SSP incorporates arts and science into their programming AND mode of existence.** Many organizations may talk about sustainability, but SSP is an example of an organization that is successfully implementing a sustainable strategy. Besides being completely energy self-sufficient with its photovoltaic array, SSP reuses renovated vintage trailers as office space. Its new art trailer is made of steel and recycled furniture, which SSP uses to teach about using reclaimed and recycled materials in art. SSP cultivates fruits and vegetables using the Armadillo and garden-beds on the formerly vacant lot. Using all of these tools, the organization teaches youth and residents about environmental sustainability, urban farming, renewable energy and composting. Most importantly, SSP shows that these topics are all relevant to everyday people by allowing neighborhood residents to take home produce for free and take part in activities.

**SSP uses hands-on and relevant programming to empower youth, engage its neighbors, and serve diverse audiences. Its programs also generate revenue.** SSP’s woodworking bus provides education and art to youth in a unique context. Its programs engage with students, help them grasp math concepts or language skills in the classroom and teach them about creativity and self-reliance. SSP makes art and school-related subjects relevant and fun to both public school students and neighborhood families. It encourages participation in and appreciation of the arts in different populations. Through community events such as Art Night, which draws thousands of people, SSP has developed a neighborhood presence and has taught thousands of children valuable skills. SSP also generates revenue through its Alternative Routes program and artist services. 45 percent of its earned income is generated from this programming.

**SSP creates a positive and transformative place by reclaiming a vacant lot.** The city-owned lot had been vacant for years because the Heritage Square development was stalled. Before SSP came in, prostitutes and drug dealers would conduct their business in full view of local children and businesses. The lot itself is adjacent to a boarded up historic Victorian house, which SSP now watches over to ensure it isn’t vandalized. The structural foundation of a former barber shop is still on the site, which is now used for large-scale art installations

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<sup>58</sup> Hopkins 2011.

that speak to the history and of what is to come. SSP's colorful fleet of vehicles is parked on the lot, where large-scale events can take place outdoors. All of this activity has transformed a run-down and abandoned lot into a positive place where youth and families can experience their neighborhood in a different light and learn about art and sustainability at the same time. These positive effects have occurred without the high capital costs and level of development expertise typically needed to construct or renovate a building.

### **📦 What are the lessons learned?**

**City departments are often slow to understand the concept of a mobile organization.** SSP experienced initial challenges in getting set up as a mobile and self-sufficient organization. The Department of Water & Sewer couldn't "wrap their heads around the new concept" of a mobile organization that needed water and garbage pickup but not electricity. The perception of mobile trailers by the City was initially negative. Regulations did not allow mobile homes to exist in Pasadena, so SSP's lease lists the organization as storing vintage trailers. SSP worked closely with the Cultural Affairs office, where Ms. Branch was SSP's biggest champion and liaison with other city agencies. While it was initially hard to be the pioneers of mobile arts, SSP has built a track record and Pasadena City Council members are already requesting their presence in a number of other vacant publicly-owned lots around the city.

**Being sustainable and mobile has its drawbacks in terms of funding.** Funding for solar energy does not exist for mobile vehicles. SSP tried to apply for a city \$8000 rebate but was denied in part because it was visibly mobile. Also, because SSP was so self-sufficient, during the recession, funders tended to support other organizations (mostly larger institutions with brick and mortar spaces) that were in dire financial situations. To some degree, SSP was too "successful" at lowering its operating costs, but "that is a good thing."<sup>59</sup>

**Balancing disparate target audiences can be tricky, but with specific programs, it can work.** SSP has disparate target audiences - youth and professional artists. The groups do not always mix unless there is a sustained effort towards community programming that combines both parties. SSP is making a concerted effort to create more interaction between the two, which will most likely require taking advantage of its physical location on the lot to provide workshops where professional artists can teach and neighborhood youth can participate.

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<sup>59</sup> Hopkins 2011.

**Vintage trailers and buses require constant maintenance and demand staff to be handy and flexible to manage their unique problems posed by these vehicles.** SSP chose vintage trailers because of their sound structural architecture, allowing SSP to strip down the trailers to their aluminum shell and remodel the interior to fit the organization's unique needs. The old woodworking buses also require constant maintenance and costs for repairs are high. Working out of mobile trailers is also like camping, so this lifestyle is not for everyone. These caveats show that this model might not appeal to everyone, but for some "scrappy," "resourceful" and "hardy" organizations like SSP<sup>60</sup>, this way of working might be the answer to connect with hard-to-reach populations and solve affordable space challenges.

### **🏠 Replicating the Model**

City Council members are clamoring for SSP to locate in their district, demonstrating that the mobile arts organization model is in high demand. With multiple vacant public and private parcels in the city and fiscal crises forcing arts programs to be cut in schools, there is a need for this type of art space and programming. In addition, schools in other counties, such as Orange County, have asked SSP to work with its public school programs. This shows that there is a strong demand for the mobile woodworking program that SSP is providing. Unfortunately, SSP has had to limit its reach to within L.A. County due to transportation costs.

#### ***Replicable Elements***

SSP provides mostly arts education to youth and professional services to artists. SSP could potentially be replicated as long as:

- there is a need for its services in a community or city
- there is a visionary and handy leader who is passionate about this model
- there are funding opportunities and partnerships that can be formed to support this model.

#### ***Elements for Success***

Ideally, new organizations would be located in a region where it is warm enough most of the year for non-insulated mobile trailers to operate (with heating powered by a generator), and solar energy to support a photovoltaic system. The

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<sup>60</sup> Hopkins 2011.

new location would ideally be in a residential area with families with children (if the programming is geared towards youth).

*Programming:* If the program changes, it first must be relevant to the community where the organization is setting up. This could range from drawing, painting, sculpture, and photography, to graphic design, new media, and job training using computer workstations or laptops. Any activity that can be accommodated in a stand-alone vehicle without large demands of electricity would work. In addition, the programming should be a revenue-generator. SSP's partnership with the Pasadena Unified School District ensures a large contract and a relatively stable source of revenue as opposed to ad hoc services.

*Mobility/Time/Sustainability:* The model could be adapted to be more temporary, for example, only serving children during the summer months when school is not in session. It could serve as a positive activity for kids whose parents cannot afford or do not have the time to take their children to enriching summer activities. Instead, arts organizations can use a mobile bus or vacant lot as a station to provide arts enrichment and other learning opportunities to prevent what is commonly referred to as the "summer slump." Sustainability could be taught through a revised version of the Armadillo, which could travel throughout cities teaching people about urban farming, composting and environmental responsibility.

*Type of Space:* Mobile trailers and buses could be a new form of artist live-work space in warmer regions or during the summer months of colder ones. Low-cost art residency programs that operate on islands or places where buildings would upset the environment could open up a new and nomadic way for artists to gain inspiration and develop work.

With proper funding from local and national foundations that see the value in reaching disadvantaged populations, providing temporary or permanent artist space, and contributing to the community and economic development of neighborhoods, cities can adapt Side Street Project's model of a mobile community arts center.

## Summary of Case: Side Street Projects

Table 3-1. A. Organizational Factors	
<b>Year formed</b>	1992
<b>Location</b>	Pasadena, CA (currently)
<b>Year space completed</b>	Adopted mobile programming in 1997; completed mobile trailer headquarters on current site in 2008
<b>Leader</b>	Co-founders artist Karen Atkinson and contractor Joe Luttrell; Executive Directors Jon Lapointe and Emily Hopkins
<b>Organization</b>	Non-profit
<b>Ownership</b>	Owns the mobile homes and vehicles, leases lot from City for free
<b>Mission</b>	Give artists of all ages the ability and the means to support their creative endeavors. It considers itself a social enterprise that operates outside of the gallery system.

Table 3-2. B. Neighborhood Context	
<b>Neighborhood</b>	- Northwest Pasadena
<b>Demographics of population served</b>	- Mostly Latino and Black neighborhood - One of poorest census tracts in city - It brings art to the people – very place-based
<b>Site Context</b>	- Next to busy main road, across from retail and business strip; - Close to Habitat for Humanity store, daycare center. - Accessible by car

Table 3-3. C. Space & Design	
<b>Vision &amp; Intent</b>	- Intended to serve artists, then branched out to youth; - mobile trailers resulted in response to real estate pressures; - choice to become mobile fit in with existing mobile woodworking programming
<b>Type of Space</b>	- Reuse of Vehicles - 5 mobile trailers used for office and art space - 2 woodworking buses - 25,000 SF vacant lot as headquarters
<b>Time</b>	- Temporary
<b>Mobility</b>	- High - Mobile program; semi-fixed headquarters with capability to be mobile
<b>Sustainability</b>	- High - Photovoltaic array; reusing trailers and buses for art space; Armadillo urban farming trailer; focus on reusing materials in art and space; sustainability education
<b>Connectivity</b>	- High - Brings the arts north of 210 Freeway; links vacant lot with greater community;

<b>Table 3-4. D. Programs, Partners &amp; Financing</b>	
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public school students ages 5-11</li> <li>- All youth and families for community programming</li> <li>- Professional artists</li> </ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Woodworking bus for kids</li> <li>- On-site community arts program</li> <li>- Sustainability education with Armadillo</li> <li>- Podcast artist lecture series</li> <li>- Internships, volunteer opportunities older students</li> <li>- Art events</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arts organizations</li> <li>- Foundations</li> <li>- Local government</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- Neighborhood community</li> </ul>
<b>Funding/ Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foundation grants</li> <li>- Earned income from woodworking bus and art trailers</li> <li>- City grants</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Free lease with the City of Pasadena for vacant lot</li> <li>- Photovoltaics cover utility costs</li> <li>- Saves on rent, utilities, parking expense</li> </ul>

<b>Table 3-5. E. Physical, Social, Economic Impacts</b>	
<b>Physical/Spatial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilizes vacant lot</li> <li>- Gives youth/families place to go for arts on weekend</li> <li>- Gives students place to go after school</li> </ul>
<b>Social/Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mitigates neighborhood tensions regarding site</li> <li>- Use deters criminal activity</li> <li>- Programs expose students to art, science, math, and engineering</li> <li>- Teaches creativity, technical skills and self-reliance</li> <li>- Gives artists forum to teach; tools for professional development</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual budget of over \$250,000</li> <li>- Teaches students technical skills</li> <li>- Provides opportunities for teaching, professional development, internship and jobs</li> <li>- Makes corner safer and desirable, attracting more people</li> </ul>





## CHAPTER 4

### **Case Study: Artists for Humanity (Boston, MA)**

*Serving at-risk youth with a micro-  
enterprise employment program in a  
LEED Platinum building*

## Summary

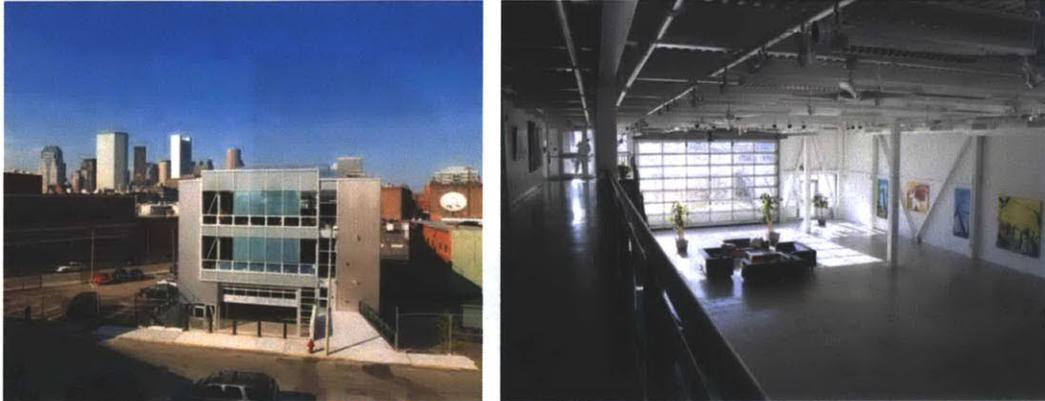


Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2. Artists for Humanity exterior and interior. Source: Artists for Humanity.

Since 1991, Artists for Humanity (AFH) has empowered and employed Boston teens in an intensive program of arts, creativity and enterprise. Its mission is to bridge economic, racial and social divisions by providing underserved youth with the keys to self-sufficiency through paid employment and training in the arts and entrepreneurship. Founded by artist Susan Rodgerson, AFH trains disadvantaged youth in fields such as digital media, graphic and web design, painting, photography, screen-printing, and industrial design. AFH has produced fine art and creative products for many Boston firms and organizations and earned over \$800,000 in sales in 2010. The AFH model has received national recognition and has been studied as a model of effective mentorship, youth empowerment and social entrepreneurship. In 2004, AFH built a LEED Platinum building to house its programs in the Fort Point area of South Boston – the first building of its kind in Boston. It is now looking to expand as the organization continues to grow.

## Context & Demographics

Artists for Humanity EpiCenter is located at 100 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on the border of South Boston and the Fort Point district, with views of downtown Boston to the northwest. AFH is at the junction of three very different and changing neighborhoods. To the north is Fort Point, including the Fort Point Channel Landmark district, which contains Boston's largest collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial loft buildings.<sup>61</sup> Following the decline of

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<sup>61</sup> "Neighborhoods: Fort Point Channel," City of Boston, accessed on March 30, 2011, <http://www.cityofboston.gov/landmarks/historic/fpc.asp>.

manufacturing and harbor industries, the warehouses sat empty and derelict until artists moved in, creating New England's largest artist community.<sup>62</sup>



Figure 4-3. Map showing location of Artists for Humanity, 100 West 2nd Street, Boston, MA. Source: Google Maps.

To the north and east of Artists for Humanity EpiCenter is the South Boston waterfront district, or the Innovation District, which contains the new Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Seaport World Trade Center, Institute for Contemporary Art, Massport Marine Terminal and Marine Industrial Park, as well as new or planned hotel, residential, office, and retail development. The Innovation District is envisioned to be the hub of technology, manufacturing, and design. The goal is to incubate start-up technology companies, encourage new and marketable ideas ranging from industrial art and design to energy and computer technology. Large parking lots that accommodate visitors to the Boston Convention Center and area companies surround AFH, with the South Boston Bypass Road down the block to the east.

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<sup>62</sup> Bruner Foundation, *Rudy Bruner Award: Artists for Humanity EpiCenter, Silver Medal Winner, 2007*, [http://www.brunerfoundation.org/rba/pdfs/2007/artists\\_for\\_humanity.pdf](http://www.brunerfoundation.org/rba/pdfs/2007/artists_for_humanity.pdf), 35-60.



Figure 4-4. Artists for Humanity surrounded by warehouses and parking lots. The Boston Convention Center lies to the northeast and downtown Boston is to the northwest. Source: Google Earth.

To the south of EpiCenter is South Boston, a historically Irish-Catholic neighborhood known as “Southie” that was notorious for racial tensions in the 1970s when a U.S. Court-imposed busing requirement at South Boston High School caused an uproar of community opposition.<sup>63</sup> South Boston is also home to the city’s oldest public housing projects run by the Boston Housing Authority.<sup>64</sup> These buildings are just a few blocks southeast of the EpiCenter. A number of community organizations, health services center, and churches are located throughout this neighborhood.

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<sup>63</sup> “Bussing’s Boston Massacre,” Stanford University Hoover Institute, November 1, 1998, accessed March 30, 2011, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/7768>.

<sup>64</sup> “Neighborhoods: South Boston,” City of Boston, accessed March 30, 2011, <http://www.cityofboston.gov/neighborhoods/southboston.asp>,

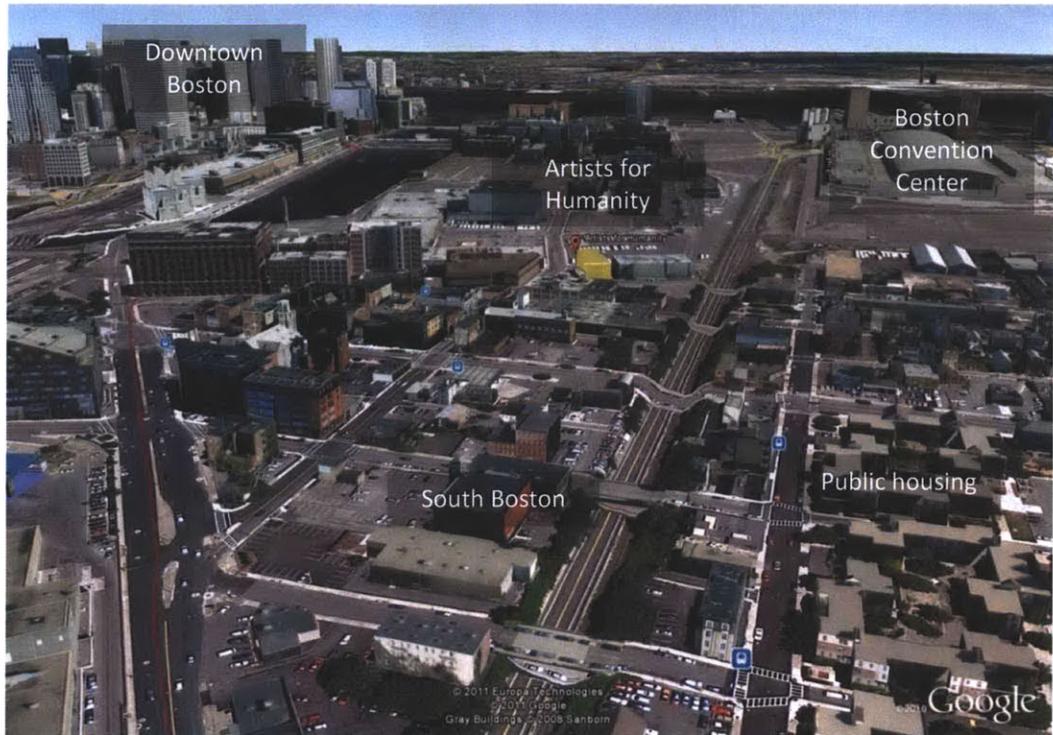


Figure 4-5. Aerial view. Source: Google Earth.

According to 2000 Census data and 2005-2009 American Community Survey Estimates, parts of Fort Point and South Boston around Artists for Humanity saw major increases in median household income in the past decades. Areas of South Boston adjacent to AFH, where concentrations of public housing exist, remain relatively poor with median household incomes of \$19,250 in 2009 and have been relatively unchanged since 2000, when median household incomes were \$21,248. This compares to a median household income of \$84,259 (2009) for Fort Point, an increase of 150-200% from 2000 when the median household income was \$47,888. With increased real estate investment along the South Boston waterfront, the neighborhood is creating pockets of very low- and high-income people.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Social Explorer, U.S. Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates data.

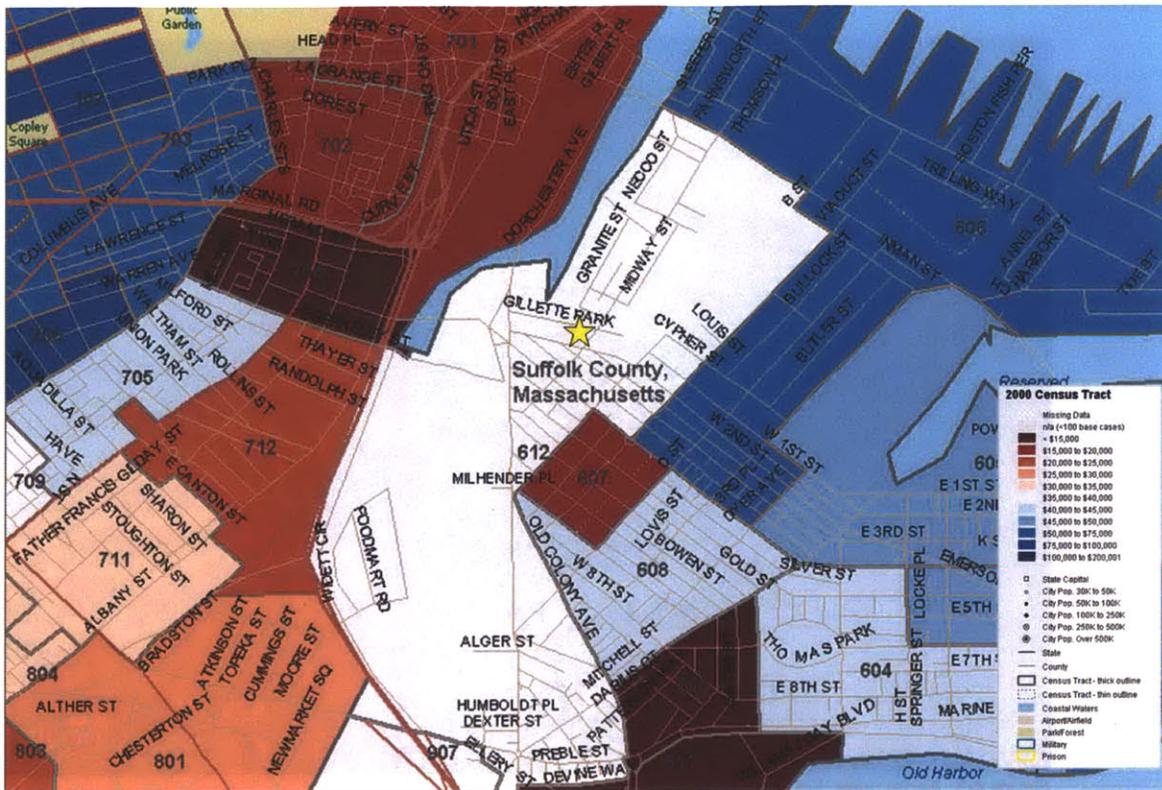


Figure 4-6. Median Household Income in 2000. Source: Social Explorer, U.S. Census 2000.

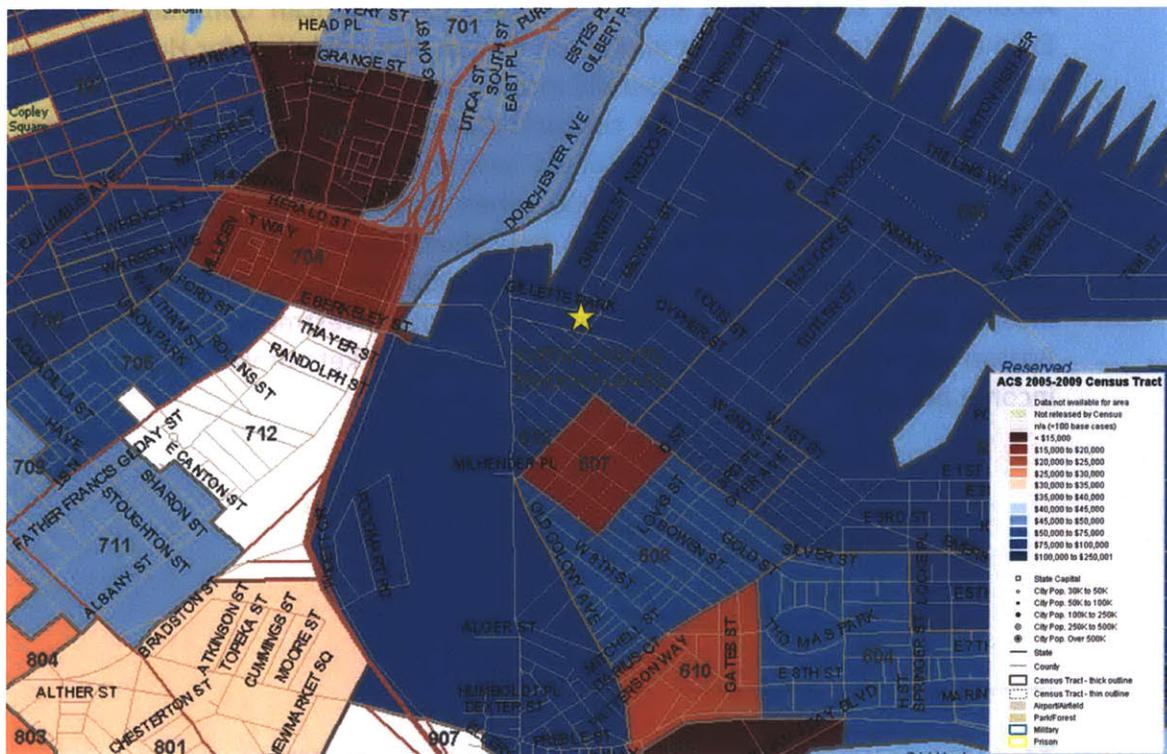


Figure 4-7. Median Household Income in 2005-2009. Source: Social Explorer, American Community Survey 2005-2009.



Figure 4-8. Boston Neighborhoods. Source: City of Boston.

EpiCenter is accessible by public transportation, with the Red Line Broadway stop just over three blocks away. The site was in fact chosen because of its proximity to public transportation. All of the teens and 70% of staff travel by MBTA subway or bus.<sup>66</sup> The teens either live in South Boston or come from all over the city, including Dorchester, Roxbury, West Roxbury, Roslindale, and Chinatown.

### 🏢 Organizational History:

Artist Susan Rodgerson started Artists for Humanity because she saw a need for inner-city youth to gain exposure to and training in the

arts as a path out of poverty. It started with the simple idea of engaging teens, creating experiences that would give them a voice and allow them to comment on their needs and express their views. “Underserved populations don’t have an opportunity to do that.” Rodgerson noted. In October 1990, Rodgerson developed the concept of a teen art program that would expose Boston public school students to the arts. She piloted the program in 1991 at the Martin Luther King Middle School in Mattapan.

During the summer of 1991, six young artists, many who were involved with the MLK program, participated in a collaborative, large-scale painting project. Rodgerson sold these paintings to businesses, building the foundation for the revenue generation model that would be at the core of AFH’s microenterprise program. In 1992, Rodgerson and a small group of teen artists co-founded Artists

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<sup>66</sup> Anja Kollmuss, Dona Neely, and Shubhada Kambli, *EpiCenter, Headquarters for Artists for Humanity: Demonstrating Low-Cost Sustainable Building Strategies and Integrated Design Process, A Case Study of Challenges, Successes, Lessons Learned*. Tufts Climate Initiative & Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Commissioned by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, September 27, 2005, <http://sustainability.tufts.edu/downloads/AFH.pdf>, 10.

for Humanity. The mission of AFH is to use the arts “as a vehicle, a common language, a common denominator” that related to and excited inner city youth. They wanted to use the arts to bridge social, racial, and economic divisions in cities in an effort to end poverty. “I knew from my own experience that it would work,” said Rodgeron.



Figure 4-9. Teen apprentices at Artists for Humanity. Source: Artists for Humanity.

### ***Moving Around***

In 1991, Artists for Humanity’s first physical space was Rodgeron’s private painting studio in the South End neighborhood of Boston. The studio was located in a building on Harrison Street that housed many other artist studios. “When the kids came to work there, they had no idea that artists went to these places — industrial buildings that were divided into artist lofts. They had no previous experience with the enrichment that the arts bring to their lives.” The high school students (whom



Figure 4-10. Work by teen apprentice. Source: Artists for Humanity.

Rodgerson endearingly calls “kids”), came from families and communities that did not have regular access, if at all, to mainstream arts and culture. “These are kids whose parents are working and struggling to get by; museums and cultural institutions weren’t a part of their dynamic.” During this project, Rodgerson found that the teens were excited and “hungry” for this exposure to the arts. However, they needed more than just participating in the painting process. She found that they needed “a *place* to go. It wasn’t just making the art – they also needed a community.”<sup>67</sup>

The organization evolved from one large-scale painting project to a broader collaboration of artists and students working on a variety of art forms, mediums and techniques. The core program of AFH apprentices high school students from Boston area public school in the arts and sells their work through a variety of innovative micro-enterprise programs. As the art sold to private individuals, community members, and businesses, and AFH gained a reputation for its apprenticeship model, the organization expanded to involve more teens.

In 1994, Artists for Humanity moved to a large industrial building in the Fort Point Channel area of South Boston. “When we moved here in 1994 to Fort Point, there were no resident artists here. Buildings were falling down, in disrepair, or were abandoned — these are health risks to communities,” said Rodgerson. AFH’s move to this still-desolate neighborhood marked the starting point of the organization’s long-term commitment to this neighborhood, which has since grown a significant artist population and reputation as an artist community. “We were very fortunate to have a very large loft space for almost ten years, almost free, [that was] sponsored by the Boston Wharf Company. They rented buildings to artists – [in part to] protect their interests.”<sup>68</sup> By having artists as tenants, the property owner could make sure that the building was relatively looked after and invested in. In a district that is full of warehouses and empty lots, this was beneficial to both parties – the artist because they would have large amounts of space for relatively inexpensive rents and the property owner because they received rent in an otherwise dilapidated building.

From 1994-2000, the Artists for Humanity programs experienced continued growth. In 2000, AFH was notified that it had to move again and decided that it would acquire its own property. They recognized the need to have their own

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<sup>67</sup> Susan Rodgerson, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Artists for Humanity, personal interview, February 11, 2011.

<sup>68</sup> Rodgerson 2011.

space and believed that as real estate development increased in Fort Point Channel, this “process of gentrification” would only exacerbate the ability to find an affordable and stable home. After almost ten years of operations, Rodgerson learned that having a sense of permanence, safety and stability were of utmost importance for the organization and certainly for the teens.<sup>69</sup>

## Space & Design

### ***Vision & Intent: Creating a Permanent Home and Safe Space***

In the process of developing such as a place, Rodgerson starting thinking, “What do kids need to feel safe? Where they can be free to express their deepest concerns?” The end result of this space had to be a “place where they can make a living and contribute to their families,” where they can “practice adulthood,” and where “they can be given real responsibility” by staff and adults who “give them the respect that they’re looking for as young adults.” The process of envisioning such an empowering place required the involvement of AFH founders, staff, students and Board of Directors. “Part of the creative process is to observe and listen, respond to what the needs are of this particular population.” This process eventually gave way to the concept of acquiring land and creating a new home called Artists for Humanity EpiCenter.

*“Stability is important, for us as an organization and for the kids. By having our own space, we were able to get a foothold in the community, and become a very established and valuable community organization.”*

*– Susan Rodgerson, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Artists for Humanity*

With this in mind, AFH sought a commitment from their Board of Directors to help them fundraise for the development of a permanent home. They started by looking at the numbers -- what would it cost them to fundraise, acquire, and renovate a space? The Board gave AFH a 6-month trial period to raise money and test the waters for donations. AFH was fortunate to receive an anonymous \$250,000 grant from a private donor that jumpstarted the campaign and paved the way for more donations. Within the first three months, \$1 million had been contributed, helping the organization to imagine that they “could do this” and envision success. “It took off from there. The more people who joined up, the more other people joined.” Other major contributors included Grand Circle Travel (\$1,000,000), the CARLISLE Foundation (\$250,000), and the Fireman Charitable Foundation, run by Paul Fireman, founder of Reebok.<sup>70</sup> From 2000-

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<sup>69</sup> Rodgerson 2011.

<sup>70</sup> Bruner Foundation 2007, 35-60.

2001, AFH raised \$1.3 million and with the help of a Board member familiar with real estate, identified and acquired a property at 100 West 2nd Street in 2001. AFH decided to stay in the Fort Point/South Boston area because it was close to its target population of teenagers from low- to moderate-income families, and because it had already spent several years building relationships and taking root in the neighborhood. The site that AFH acquired on the border of Fort Point Channel and South Boston came with a dilapidated 19<sup>th</sup> century livery stable and site contamination issues. AFH originally wanted to rehabilitate the historic building, but discovered that because of structural and cost issues, the organization was better off building anew.<sup>71</sup>

At the same time as the capital campaign, AFH found itself affected by the changing nature of real estate development in Fort Point Channel, described as a “community in flux.” The organization had to move three times in four years, from 2000-2004. Staff literally carried things from building to building since they were all within a quarter mile of each other. As a result, AFH lost business for three months every time they moved. “It wasn’t a good business model to relocate,” according to Rodgerson. Luckily, AFH was already on its way toward a permanent home with a capital campaign underway and a site acquired.

### ***Type of Space: Combining Art and Sustainability through Design***

AFH set out to find an architect for EpiCenter who shared their vision of creating a positive space for artistic urban youth and that was adept at sustainable systems. In 2001, they selected the firm Arrowstreet. What they found was that there was funding available to build a green building – something that resonated with AFH’s ideas of self-sufficiency and responsibility. While art space and green development might seem like divergent paths, artists and green builders are resourceful, using materials that are readily available, and work creatively within constraints to produce innovative new work. To Rodgerson, the “sustainable mindset is a natural fit for artists.” The combination of the two reflected AFH’s commitment to be resourceful and was an opportunity for people to understand the connection between sustainability and art. “The big connection is teaching people how to create a good life for themselves.”<sup>72</sup>

Arrowstreet held five planning and design workshops involving AFH staff and its students. The teen artists were involved during much of the vision, mission and design process, which helped to set priorities and goals early on. The teens built

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<sup>71</sup> Bruner Foundation 2007, 35-60.

<sup>72</sup> Rodgerson 2011.

a model of the building, studied daylighting options and designed various aspects of the building. Carlo Lewis, an AFH staff member, a graduate of the AFH apprenticeship program, and a Rhode Island School of Design graduate in architecture, was hired by Arrowstreet to work on this project. He facilitated the “communication and exchange of idea between teen artists, staff and designers... Everybody involved commented on how exciting and fruitful the involvement of the teen artists was.” In fact, several AFH teen artists decided to pursue careers in architecture.<sup>73</sup>

The planning and design workshops resulted in a list of priorities that AFH teen artists, staff, and leadership wanted to create through EpiCenter: energy autonomy, an identity, practicality, comfort, health, and efficiency. AFH determined that they wanted an “energy efficient building that would have an iconic presence in the community, provide flexible accommodation of their varying arts programs, and demonstrate a progressive approach towards sustainable design for the teen artists and the community as a whole.” AFH believed that a green development would not only reduce energy emissions and save money in the long run, but also teach young people and the community about sustainability issues. Funders in the early stage of the project were at first skeptical about the “practicality of a green building” but because of Rodgers’s “tireless efforts” to educate them about the importance and benefits of sustainable design, the project was realized.<sup>74</sup>

AFH’s new 23,500 square foot headquarters, Artists for Humanity EpiCenter, celebrated its official groundbreaking in 2003. The 11,000 square foot site has an eight-foot height differential from the north to the south side, which created interesting opportunities for light, event, and outdoor space. The building features a 5,000 square foot open floor plan gallery that functions as a 500-person event space on the subgrade level. The second floor at grade is comprised of a walkway with gallery space along the perimeter. The third floor has a highly-used open studio space that is subdivided



Figure 4-11. An Artists for Humanity studio. Source: Artists for Humanity.

<sup>73</sup> Bruner Foundation 2007, 35-60.

<sup>74</sup> Kollmuss, Neely and Kambli 2005, 3-6.

into areas for printing, painting, sculpture, photography and media arts, as well as a small open office area. The fourth floor contains additional studio space and meeting area with views of downtown Boston.

Sustainable features include a 49kw rooftop photovoltaic solar array that produces all of electricity for the facility, passive solar heating, a tight building envelope, a greywater recycling system, glass walls that maximize daylighting, high efficiency lighting, and north/south siting to allow for cross-ventilation and minimize heat gain from western-facing windows. Because of the participatory planning process involving AFH teens and staff, one bold idea was put forth to exclude air conditioning. EpiCenter is the “first commercial building to be built in the U.S. in 25 years without air conditioning. Thoughtful siting, imaginative ventilation systems, and the sea breezes prevalent in the area have all contributed to the viability of this decision.”<sup>75</sup> Completed in 2004 and built to the highest green standards that made sense for this project, the EpiCenter was certified LEED Platinum level in 2005 – the first building in Boston with that designation and certainly the first home-grown arts organization to have a green building of its kind in this nation. With a construction cost of \$177/square foot, the EpiCenter also is also an example for how green buildings can be built on a tight budget.<sup>76</sup>

AFH graduates and young artists also contributed to the design of the building by adding their ideas and art to the building. For example, young sculptor Nick Rodrigues designed handrails, bathroom stalls made out of corrugated plastics, grills for cooling fans, and other products for the building. Small- and large-scale paintings made by AFH students and alumni on a variety of subjects adorn any existing wall space.

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<sup>75</sup> Bruner Foundation 2007, 35-60.

<sup>76</sup> Kollmuss, Neely and Kampli 2005, 3.

## ☒ Programs, Partners & Financing



Figure 4-12. Teen apprentices at work. Figures 4-13 and 4-14. Tables made of recycled magazines and resin. Source: Artists for Humanity and <http://ambrellakimono.blogspot.com>

### ***Programming & Partnerships: Focus on Entrepreneurship and Sharing Experiences***

AFH's philosophy of respect and responsibility is embedded into all of its programs and partnerships. Its goals are to provide a safe, meaningful place where teens are respected; to provide opportunities for youth to have a voice through the sharing of their work; to allow youth to gain respect and responsibility through employment and entrepreneurship; and to provide access to educational experiences that encourage academic achievement.

#### *Arts Micro-Enterprise*

Artists for Humanity's central program is the Arts Micro-Enterprise, which is a paid after-school apprenticeship and leadership program that employs urban teens from all over Boston. These youth are partnered in small groups with professional artists, designers and young artist mentors to create, market and sell fine art and design services. Artists for Humanity has a number of studios that expose apprentices to a range media and art techniques. Apprentices start out in the painting studio, where they gain a solid foundation in drawing, painting, composition, design and color theory. Once they master the basics, apprentices can move on to mural production, sculpture/industrial design, screen printing, photography, graphic design, motion graphics, web design and video. For each studio, teens learn the latest technology and software and gain valuable skills in conceptualizing and executing projects.

Artists for Humanity is structured to encourage and guide young people to earn respect. Potential apprentices attend a range of workshops, training sessions, and orientations that introduce the youth to AFH's programs and allow AFH staff to select teens for a 72-hour unpaid training program in the arts. Artistic talent is not a prerequisite for employment, since AFH firmly believes that this can be developed and refined with practice. AFH also expects teens to work hard to meet high expectations. As their work is recognized, teen artists gain more and more responsibility – recognition of their capability for success.



Figure 4-15. AFH-designed bike racks. Source: Artists for Humanity.

Once training is completed, teens move through different stages of the paid apprenticeship, where they work in one of the many studios and gain additional technical skills and real-world experience working on design consulting projects for actual clients. They create everything from commissioned murals to eco-friendly furniture to web animation. Teen apprentices are involved in every stage of the microenterprise and meet and negotiate with clients, envision the final product and finally execute the projects. Artist mentors are there to provide moral and technical support. For those who have demonstrated two years of commitment, teens move into the Youth Leadership program to work on special projects. At all stages of the planning, product development, outreach and marketing of projects, teen artists gain technical and entrepreneurial skills, self-respect and responsibility.

### *Business Model*

What sets Artists for Humanity apart from other non-profit arts organization is its focus on both the creative process as well as the marketability of the end product. Whether it is creating logos, paintings, screen-printed t-shirts, tables using recycled magazines and bicycle racks, AFH apprentices experiment freely with techniques and materials, designing and building something that is entirely new. Through this apprenticeship model, teen artists explore their own

identities, express their own individual voices through unique subject matter and styles and believe that their ideas are worthwhile. The dialogue about their artwork continues after its creation through the exhibition and sale of their work, which may reside in public spaces such as airports and hospitals as well as private homes and corporate offices. Kelsey Arbona of Roslindale, who once worked in restaurant positions until she found the AFH apprenticeship program, found that she could turn her hobby drawing on a computer into something more economically fruitful. "I've always loved art," she said in a *Boston Globe* interview. "It's so awesome that it's a job."<sup>77</sup> Since its inception in 1991, Artists for Humanity has earned over \$5 million in revenues through the sale of the teens' fine art, graphic art consulting services, and other arts programs at the EpiCenter. In 2009, AFH sold over \$900,000 in art and services, and in 2010, sold over \$800,000 despite the recession.

### *Inward Bound*

Inward Bound is a leadership training program for businesses and corporations. Employees and leaders in the business sector come to the EpiCenter for arts instruction by AFH teens. Companies view these as team building sessions inspiring creativity and helping their employees think outside-of-the-box. They pay \$100-200 per employee for an hour or more of instruction. Past clients include Starwood Corporation, Social Venture Partners and Athena Health Group.<sup>78</sup> A site visit conducted on a late Monday evening to one Inward Bound event underscored the



Figure 4-16. Teen apprentices advise Starwood employees at an Inward bound event. The Boston skyline can be seen through the window.  
Source: Julie Chan.

success of this program. Approximately 150 Starwood employees went to EpiCenter to take part in a unique rotating training session where groups spent time at different art stations: still-life painting, portrait painting, collage, and free-painting. The AFH teens were on hand to help the Starwood employees get

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<sup>77</sup> Christopher Baxter, "Businesses help put 500 teens to work," *Boston Globe*, July 1, 2008, accessed March 31, 2011, [http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/1254\\_07\\_01\\_08\\_afh\\_businesses\\_help\\_put\\_500\\_teens\\_to\\_work.pdf](http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/1254_07_01_08_afh_businesses_help_put_500_teens_to_work.pdf).

<sup>78</sup> Bruner Foundation 2007, 35-60.

started and to provide enthusiasm and tips. Starwood employees, many of whom had never painted before, were excited about the opportunity to learn from the youth and spend time on a creative project with their colleagues. Smaller sessions on creative thinking involve only a few business executives who work on collaborative paintings with the teens. “Those paintings are the bridge to those adults. We want people sitting in board rooms to know what the kids have to say. These art pieces help the business world understand kids, and kids have an opportunity to meet with people in power.”<sup>79</sup>

### *Creative Design Services*

AFH provides art and creative design services to businesses, non-profits, government agencies, and individual clients in sculpture, murals, graphic design, fine art, photography, large-scale banners, screen-printing, exhibitions, and media. One major client is Cheers Bar, which orders silk-screened t-shirts made by the teens. Another client is the City of Boston, which commissioned the fabrication of creative bicycle racks.

AFH also runs its Saturday Blast! Program geared towards Boston middle-school students. Through a series of three-hour sessions for 8 weeks on Saturdays during the school year, students learn the basics in drawing and painting. Students also work on collaborative projects, which helps youth build off of each other’s ideas. While there is a \$20 registration fee, AFH provides scholarships to the first 50 interested students. Other opportunities include internships and volunteer positions.

### ***Mattaya Fitts, A Success Story***

Mattaya Fitts, a daughter of a Newton native and a Cambodian immigrant, is one example of an AFH teen apprentice who overcame challenging circumstances to gain admission into art school. She grew up in the Franklin Hill housing project in Dorchester that is known for its gang and gun violence. Since the age of 14, she held jobs to fund her own expenses as well as to support her family. With her father paralyzed on his left side due to a mugging incident years ago, and thus unable to work, and her mother working long hours to make ends meet, Mattaya found it difficult to focus on school. What helped her stay focused amidst these challenges was her passion for the arts. She worked at Artists for Humanity as an apprentice where she “found a haven to explore and develop her creative talents in photography, painting and fashion.” AFH nominated her for the Sun

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<sup>79</sup> Rodgeron 2011.

Life Financial's "Rising Star Awards" program that recognizes high school seniors who have overcome odds and remained committed to furthering their education. Mattaya won a one-time \$5,000 scholarship that is helping her pay for part of her studies in fashion design at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.<sup>80</sup>

**Partnerships: Art and Business Partnerships in Innovative Ways**

Over the years, Artists for Humanity has developed a diverse client base. It has numerous partnerships with Boston area businesses and organizations that are the source of client projects for the apprentices. Yet, it is always innovating to keep ahead of the curve. One new program that Rodgeron is working on demonstrates the creative thinking and cross-sector relationships that make AFH so successful in both educating and exposing teens to different fields, as well as exposing the business and professional world the creativity of youth.



Figure 4-17. Mattaya Fitts (center) holding an oversized check for the Sun Life Financial "Rising Stars" award at AFH EpiCenter.

Also pictured, AFH Executive Director Susan Rodgeron (left), Dana Mancini, Sun Life Financial Regional Vice President, and the Cirque du Soleil entertainment team.

Source: *Boston Globe*, March 28, 2011.

AFH has consistently partnered with the health industry, whether it is a public health organization, working with hospitals to install art or working with consultants who design interior environments of healthcare facilities. Rodgeron's goal is to expand on this relationship and make "more concrete links between arts and science." One newly proposed project involves creating a series of paintings about the brain and exhibiting them in public spaces. With a long-standing relationship with Massport, AFH hopes to exhibit the work of their apprentices in the airport and other public places. The youth work with professional health experts and professors to learn about the anatomy of the brain, gaining scientific knowledge through the art process and learning how to represent the brain in an expressive art form. Another apprentice is painting healthy and unhealthy cells impacted by HIV as a way of expressing herself on that subject. By combining art and science, Rodgeron sees an opportunity to educate the kids about their bodies using the arts as a vehicle. Some apprentices have even gone on to pursue health or science degrees in college (as opposed to

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<sup>80</sup> Matt Rocheleau, "Battling tough odds, Hub student remains committed to education," *Boston Globe*, March 28, 2011, accessed March 31, 2011, [http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/roxbury/2011/03/battling\\_tough\\_odds\\_hub\\_studen.html](http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/roxbury/2011/03/battling_tough_odds_hub_studen.html).

art) after completing the apprenticeship program. In addition, Rodgerson sees this as an opportunity to tap into funding by major pharmaceutical companies and non-profits. This type of cross-sector partnership is what AFH is always striving towards to maximize its impact and exposure on both sides – for their teens to learn about other important subjects and professional fields and for the corporate world to be exposed to the creativity of AFH youth.

*“We’re not really about creating artists. We help youth to be inquisitive, creative, and express what they know to others. Teaching and education is very important to us and we’re getting better and better at doing that because we’ve been doing this for 20 years.” – Susan Rodgerson, Founder, Artists for Humanity*

### ***Financing & Operations: Saving with Sustainable Buildings***

In 2006, two years after the building was constructed, AFH completed its \$6.8 million capital campaign. The EpiCenter was largely funded by private donations from foundations and individuals. The funding partners connected to the organization’s mission and understood the value of having a permanent home. In addition, AFH was committed to sustainability and was able to tap into new donors who were interested in building sustainable buildings. AFH received funding from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to conduct a feasibility study on green building features and \$500,000 from its Renewable Energy Trust to support the installation of photovoltaics.<sup>81</sup> The project was also funded in part by energy companies and grant support from Boston’s Green Building Task Force.<sup>82</sup> Between AFH program supporters and people on the front lines for sustainable cities, the combination of those two distinct values allowed AFH to complete their campaign and achieve LEED Platinum certification.

### ***Awards***

The project has since won numerous design awards, include the 2006 Boston Society of Architects (BSA) Honor Award, 2005-2006 AIA Committee on Education Award for Excellence, 2005 Honor Award for Design Excellence K-12 Educational Facilities, 2005 Award for Sustainable Design, and most recently, the

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<sup>81</sup> “The First Platinum Level LEED Certified Building in Boston: The EpiCenter,” DEXIGNER, accessed March 28, 2011, <http://www.dexigner.com/news/6513>.

<sup>82</sup> Gregory H. Kats, “Green Building Costs and Financial Benefits,” Sponsored by the Barr Foundation, Environmental Business Council of New England, Inc., Equity Office Properties, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, Massport, 2003, <http://www.nhphps.org/docs/documents/GreenBuildingspaper.pdf>.

2010 MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Honorable Mention of \$10,000.<sup>83</sup> The press release for the MetLife Foundation award described Artists for Humanity EpiCenter as one of the “Top Ten Green Buildings” in the country, and one of the “5 Most Beautiful Buildings in Boston,” providing “a fitting venue for perhaps the largest permanent display of youth-created fine art in the nation.”<sup>84</sup>

### ***Expanding Operations***

In 2003, the year before EpiCenter was completed, AFH hired Community Partners Consultants, Inc. to develop a comprehensive business plan for the organization’s goals, programs, and actions. The business plan helped to shape what Artists for Humanity is known for today – its youth microenterprise programs and its focus on innovating new ideas and partnerships. In 2010, Community Partners completed an update to the business plan that included goals of expansion now that AFH has outgrown its space. It has its sights set on expanding into other former industrial buildings surrounding the EpiCenter to create larger studio facilities for its metalworking and industrial design shop, which has been very successful. Students created Boston’s new bicycle racks, for example. Because the Boston Redevelopment Authority is working on the Innovation District further north, the EpiCenter expansion is an opportunity for it to take advantage of the City’s commitment to this side of the channel. In addition, AFH is looking to create a branch in New York City and is in talks with arts organizations there. Once the market is right and if it’s “meant to happen,” AFH could experience a rapid growth process that builds upon its enormous success.

### **❑ How is Artists for Humanity an innovative and transformative art space?**

Artists for Humanity is innovative for a variety of reasons pertaining to its programming and use of space. At the core is its microenterprise program that educates and employs teens, and generates significant revenue for the organization. Its focus on entrepreneurship and forging relationships with corporations also makes it unique. Finally, its ability to combine art and sustainability in its operations and its LEED Platinum building make it stand out as a non-profit arts organization.

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<sup>83</sup> “Artists for Humanity EpiCenter,” Arrowstreet, accessed March 28, 2011, <http://www.arrowstreet.com/project.php?p=30&c=4#>.

<sup>84</sup> “Artists for Humanity Awarded \$10,000 Prize in Nationwide, MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Awards Program,” Artist Space Boston, November 18, 2010, accessed March 28, 2011, <http://artistspaceboston.wordpress.com/2010/11/18/artists-for-humanity-awarded-10000-prize-in-nationwide-metlife-foundation-innovative-space-awards-program/>.

**AFH uses a microenterprise and mentoring program to educate and empower inner-city teens.** First and foremost, Artists for Humanity is the largest employer of teenagers in Boston, providing 240 jobs a year, providing them with income and an opportunity to learn valuable skills. “While this might seem like a small number, these are 240 jobs that would not exist otherwise.”<sup>85</sup> The jobs are not typical, however. The microenterprise apprenticeship program gives teens art and business training and professional experience interacting with clients and artists. The teens are more likely to graduate high school, attend some form of higher education and go into careers that leverage their skills in design, business and entrepreneurship. 100% of the teens from last year graduated from high school or received a GED with the help of AFH’s tutoring and mentoring program. 95% of AFH teens attended a two-year, four-year, or community college. By combining art, business *and* employment, AFH has developed an innovative model that not only educates but empowers teens in their own creative and entrepreneurial pursuits. The arts have become a vehicle in learning rather than an end in itself.

**AFH integrates art, sustainability, and community in its LEED Platinum building and programming.** Building and owning a LEED Platinum building – the first in Boston – is a huge feat for an arts organization. By combining art and sustainability, AFH has brought the issues of renewable energy and the aspects of green development to the minds of youth, the art community, government and non-profits. Many green buildings are constructed without giving equal thought to the activities that go inside the building. The way AFH imbeds their commitment to these issues throughout their programming – from giving tours of their building (and showing visitors an actual cross-section of the wall’s insulation) to reusing old materials in their art and building construction – makes the building a symbol of their commitment to self-sufficiency. AFH was able to build EpiCenter at \$208 per square foot including the photovoltaics, demonstrating that it is possible to build a high performance building on a tight budget by prioritizing energy efficiency. AFH also proactively involved staff and its teen apprentices in the actual design and planning process of the building, as well as in the incorporation of art and functional design using recycled materials.

**AFH proactively builds bridges between very disparate groups of people through cross-sector partnerships.** AFH fulfills its mission by organizing meaningful programs that bring underserved youth to interface with the art and corporate world. Through its microenterprise programs, teens learn to work with

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<sup>85</sup> Rodgeron 2011.

artists and business professionals on real design consulting and commissioned projects. In the Inward Bound program, business executives work with the teens on a collaborative painting project. Such an experience is valuable to the teen's sense of pride and self-respect, knowing that their work lives on in major company offices or is seen in public spaces throughout the city of Boston. They gain contacts with professionals while at the same time showing to the corporate world that they have much to learn from inner-city youth. AFH also creates and maintains cross-sector partnerships with supporters, funders, businesses and government agencies. After demonstrating the quality of their services and products, AFH has gained long-standing partnerships with companies, universities, non-profits, foundations and government agencies. These partnerships are essential for AFH's financial sustainability, which is important to the creation, maintenance and programming of its art space.

**AFH's youth art apprentices bring the positive force and investment back to their respective families and communities in Boston.** AFH's apprentices are not from the Fort Point community, though the organization itself has maintained a presence in the neighborhood for most of its existence. They are Boston students, most of whom are from low-income or disadvantaged families, who come after school to make art, socialize, and learn. The students come from 65 schools across Boston. The AFH program invests in human capital through youth education and arts training. By doing so, the teens bring ideas, knowledge, and most importantly, investment back to their respective communities. According to a survey administered by AFH, 30% of teens contribute part of their pay to their families. The teens use that income to pay for their expenses, such as clothing and technology, and learn about the responsibility that comes with employment.

**AFH Invests in a once-desolate neighborhood that is a growing arts community.** Through its long history, AFH has been committed to the Fort Point, South Boston area. Despite real estate pressures, they chose to stay within the same district and build a permanent home. At the same time, the Fort Point Channel District has become a successful artist community, reinforcing AFH's need to stay in that location. With the area still dominated by warehouses, sidewalks relatively empty of pedestrians and large areas of parking lots, the area immediately surrounding AFH has potential for more investment. The City of Boston is committed to the Innovation District along the waterfront and is working with AFH on its plans for expansion into the surrounding area.

**AFH brings new populations in the Fort Point Channel / South Boston District.** As a result of its LEED Platinum art building, artists, students, architects and real

estate developers visit to experience the sustainable elements of the building. The open gallery is in high demand for corporate events, weddings and arts groups as rehearsal space. Teens and business professionals come from all over Boston to be a part of AFH's programming. AFH brings a diverse group of people together to collaborate on art projects and every new person who might not otherwise venture into the neighborhood becomes more familiar with Fort Point and South Boston.

### What are the lessons learned?

**AFH is limited in its community outreach and potential spillover effects in the immediate area.** AFH's model employs teens from all over Boston, which is more of a people-based rather than a place-based approach. While it has a physical location, its programs are not directly geared towards employing youth from the Fort Point or South Boston area or opening up programs to the general public, though it does have a low-cost program for middle school students on the weekends. The low-income community of South Boston could benefit from free community programming that exposes a wider audience to arts training. Another concern is that nighttime events involving corporate events, teambuilding activities or private events like weddings might not directly benefit the surrounding businesses. For example, corporate visitors may travel by motor coach to AFH, use caterers or services that are not from the immediate area, and return to hotels or homes that are not in South Boston. Despite that, the revenues generated from these events are still being directly invested into the physical building and programming of AFH, and people who do participate in these private events could be more likely to visit Fort Point/South Boston again.

**AFH has experienced some limitations with its building.** First, Artists for Humanity has already outgrown its new building and has been at full capacity "ever since they moved in." The office space is much too limited for their growing programs and the studios are full of painting easels and stored art pieces. Storage is a major concern, especially for large art projects and for the sheer volume of art that they create. AFH is looking to expand, which requires another capital campaign and the right real estate market. Other minor issues include how the building gets pretty warm during the summer months without air conditioning. Some parts of the building with sun exposure do get hotter than others. However, stricter adherence to the use of their fan ventilation system would keep the air cooler. In addition, EpiCenter's open floor plans creates a sense of transparency that allows both teen artists and visitors to see each

other's work and encourage a collaborative process; however, this makes it hard for important meetings to take place in private – a small trade-off.

## **Replicating the Model**

### ***Examples of Replicated Models***

Artists for Humanity, while it has a distinctive sustainable space that was designed specifically for its programs, is first a youth employment microenterprise model. Many people and organizations have approached AFH to help them adapt the microenterprise program in their own communities. One such organization is ArtsTech in Kansas City, MO, which established a center for youth enterprise that trains teens in art, design, and entrepreneurship and generates revenues through the sale of products and design services. It also features the My Arts program that trains at-risk youth using art/design studios much in the same way as AFH's microenterprise apprenticeship program.

RiverzEdge Art Project in Woonsocket, RI is also based on the AFH model and was started in 2002 by Michelle Novello with Rodgerson's help. It is based in one of Rhode Island's poorest cities, with many of the teen participants referred to RiverzEdge by social service organizations. The organization functions as a marketing and design company that makes and sells screen-printed T-shirts, photographs, and eco-friendly furniture, engaging teens in a lifestyle of creative expression, disciplined effort, and economic self-reliance. RiverzEdge also has a "MobileStudio," program where the teens go to schools, community centers, and other places off-site to teach children and adults through art seminars and workshops. RiverzEdge was one of 15 organizations to receive the 2010 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award (formerly, the Coming Up Taller Award) presented by First Lady Michelle Obama. Participants have earned full scholarships to Rhode Island School of Design, Arts Institute of Boston and University of Rhode Island.<sup>86</sup>

Both ArtsTech and RiverzEdge are successful programs that utilize the arts to help youth understand that they are capable of achieving educational and professional success – despite their disadvantaged backgrounds. Artists for Humanity is still unique in its ability to combine sustainability and the arts through the construction of its LEED Platinum home.

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<sup>86</sup> "About," RiverzEdge Art Project, accessed May 17, 2011, <http://www.riverzedgearts.org>.

### ***Replicable Elements***

Rodgerson emphasized that if the AFH model is adapted in other cities, it has to be first and foremost a youth employment and training program. It is not just about teaching disadvantaged teens about the arts or giving them something to do to keep them out of trouble. It is about giving them the hard skills (technical arts, design, business, entrepreneurial) and soft skills (respect, responsibility, leadership, interacting with peers and adults), along with income, that makes the multi-pronged program a success.

The mobile studio aspect of RiverzEdge combines the mobility and free community programming seen in Side Street Projects with Artists for Humanity's model. With the proper funding and partnership support, this could grow to be an adaptation of the two models that serves communities which could benefit from both teen employment and larger-scale community engagement.

Replicating the art space requires an organization to be fully committed to both the arts and sustainability. The space itself was designed to accommodate AFH's programming, which requires large, open and multipurpose studios that could be converted into revenue-generating event space. By including staff, teen artists, and alumni directly in the planning and design process, AFH showed that the organization respected and valued their opinions. The result was a building that truly fit their needs and that reflected their values and artistic flair. For other arts organizations to do so, it would be valuable for the organizations to incorporate its community in the planning process as well, and not leave the designing only to the architects.

## Summary of Case: Artists for Humanity

Table 4-1. A. Organizational Factors	
<b>Year formed</b>	1991
<b>Location</b>	Boston, MA
<b>Year space completed</b>	Built EpiCenter in 2004
<b>Leader</b>	Co-founders artist Susan Rodgerson and young artists Jason Talbot, Damon Butler
<b>Organization</b>	Non-profit
<b>Ownership</b>	Owns building and land
<b>Mission</b>	Bridge social, racial, economic barriers for underserved teens through paid employment in the arts

Table 4-2. B. Neighborhood Context	
<b>Neighborhood</b>	- Fort Point, South Boston, an industrial district of low- to moderate-income residents. It is a burgeoning arts district with major investment by the City to create an Innovation and Seaport Center.
<b>Demographics of population served</b>	- At-risk inner city youth, mostly minority populations - It is not tied to the physical neighborhood
<b>Site Context</b>	- Located in an industrial district - South of the Boston Convention Center - Close to highways and mass transit

Table 4-3. C. Space & Design	
<b>Vision &amp; Intent</b>	- Was the result of an intent to create a safe and empowering place for teens - Was also a reaction to real estate pressures - incorporated sustainable design for a new brand identity
<b>Type of Space</b>	Sustainable building - 25,000 SF LEED Platinum building - Open gallery and event space, large open air studios, office
<b>Time</b>	- Permanent
<b>Mobility</b>	- Moderate - Fixed building; mobile students
<b>Sustainability</b>	- High - Photovoltaic array, insulation, LEED Platinum green elements; reusing materials in art and building; sustainability education
<b>Connectivity</b>	- Moderate - Draws people in from other areas - Invests in a community with a permanent home

<b>Table 4-4. D. Programs, Partners &amp; Financing</b>	
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boston area teenagers who are selected for training and employment</li> <li>- Artists work as mentors</li> <li>- Business professionals</li> </ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Microenterprise apprenticeship program</li> <li>- Inward Bound that connects business professionals and teen artists</li> <li>- Art and design consulting services for organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses and corporations</li> <li>- City government</li> <li>- Industry sectors such as health</li> </ul>
<b>Funding/ Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$6.8M capital campaign; private donors, foundations</li> <li>- City and State sustainability grants</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saving on utility cost with photovoltaics and siting</li> <li>- Designed not to have air conditioning</li> <li>- Wants to expand in Boston and New York City</li> </ul>

<b>Table 4-5. E. Physical, Social, Economic Impacts</b>	
<b>Physical/Spatial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invests in a once-desolate neighborhood and has plans for expansion</li> <li>- To an extent, brings new populations to the Fort Point Channel / South Boston District</li> </ul>
<b>Social/Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate/High</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trains and employs 240 teens in arts and entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Teaches art to middle school students</li> <li>- Brings together teens and business professionals to collaborate</li> <li>- Adds to the Fort Point artist community</li> <li>- Reach to immediate community is limited</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate/High</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employs 240 teens</li> <li>- Gives teens valuable entrepreneurial skills and professional experience</li> <li>- Spends \$3M of its arts budget</li> <li>- Increases creativity for Inward Bound clients</li> <li>- Provides arts consulting services to companies and non-profits</li> <li>- Generates nearly \$1M in revenues</li> </ul>





## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Case Study: Schermerhorn House (Brooklyn, NY)**

*Mixing supportive and affordable  
housing with dedicated art space*

## Summary



Figures 5-1 and 5-2. Schermerhorn House exterior and interior, showing ground-floor tenant Brooklyn Ballet. Source: The Actors Fund and Brooklyn Ballet, Julienne Schaer.

The Schermerhorn House is a mix of residential and cultural uses designed with to serve a diverse community. Located at 160 Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn, New York City, Schermerhorn House opened in 2009 through a partnership between private developers Hamlin Ventures, LLC and Time Equities, the nonprofit social services organization and developer Common Ground and the nonprofit organization The Actors Fund of America. Together, these organizations sought to create an architecturally significant building that also instilled a strong sense of community through the performing arts. It consists of 216 units of supportive housing, over half of which are for formerly homeless individuals – many with mental and physical disabilities or HIV/AIDS – and the rest of the affordable units are for low-income arts workers such as musicians, actors, and stage hands. It contains a versatile black box community theater and a ground-floor arts space currently occupied by the Brooklyn Ballet. The building was designed by Polshek Partnership Architects and features an aluminum and glass façade, a green roof and common spaces for the tenants. Situated on a block-long urban renewal area used as surface parking lots for decades, Schermerhorn House is the second phase of a multi-phase development that seeks to link the residential “brownstone Brooklyn” with the commercial downtown core of Brooklyn.



Figure 5-3. Map showing location of Schermerhorn House. Source: Google Maps.

## Context & Demographics

Schermerhorn House is located on Schermerhorn Street between Smith Street and Hoyt Street. It sits between the downtown civic center and the residential brownstone neighborhood of Boerum Hill to the south. This area has witnessed decades of change. As with many central cities, white flight to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s led to widespread disinvestment. With poverty, drugs and crime a city-wide problem, large swaths of land were designated blighted areas and razed for urban renewal. One of the areas, the Schermerhorn-Pacific Urban Renewal site near Brooklyn’s civic center was demolished by the City of New York in the 1960s. In 1974, the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) – New York’s state development agency – acquired three parcels of vacant land from the City of New York that were located on two blocks between Schermerhorn Street and State Street. The three sites, totaling approximately 178,000 square feet, were planned to contain 30% affordable housing. However, the land sat undeveloped for the next three decades due to a lack of federal housing subsidies and strong community opposition against several development proposals. Since 1977, the ESDC leased the land out to surface

parking lot operators.<sup>87</sup> The land sat undeveloped for over 30 years. Hesky Brahmy, principal of IBEC Building Corporation, who eventually developed one of the sites into residential housing said in an article, “It was a no-man’s land. There was nothing. You mention Schermerhorn to people, and they think parking lots... It was neither here nor there.... It was a buffer between the residential neighborhoods of Brooklyn and the commercial hub of Brooklyn.”<sup>88</sup>

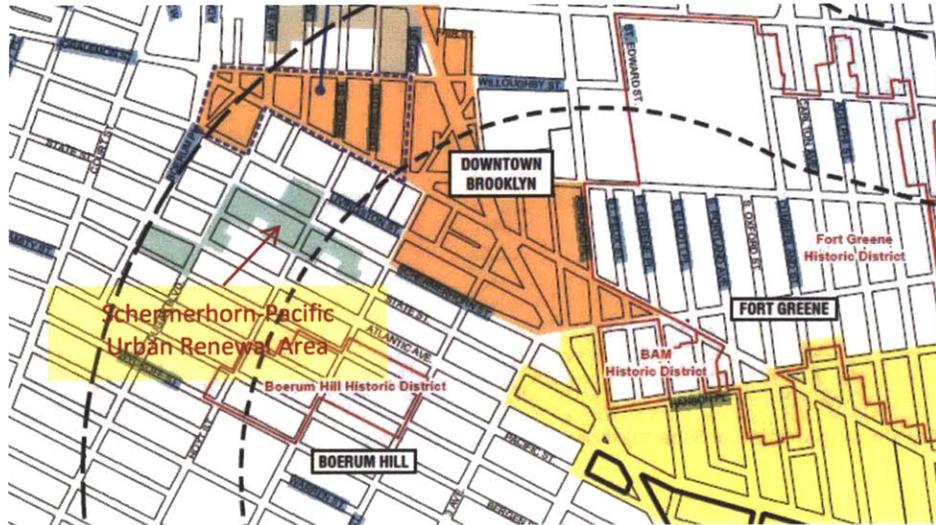


Figure 5-4. Map with urban renewal sites in green. Source: Urban Renewal Area and Historic District Boundaries, Atlantic Yards Arena and Redevelopment Project. [www.esd.ny.gov](http://www.esd.ny.gov)

The site is located just south of the core of Downtown Brooklyn between two very different residential neighborhoods. First, Downtown Brooklyn contains the Civic Center, such as Brooklyn’s Borough Hall, criminal courts and the Brooklyn House of Detention, a recently decommissioned prison that has been slated to reopen (over much controversy). At the core of the downtown is MetroTech Center, an office complex built by Forest City Ratner Companies in the 1990s with Polytechnic University (now NYU-Poly) as the sponsor of this urban renewal project.<sup>89</sup> It is a mixed-use office campus of 11 buildings totaling 3.7 million square feet of office space surrounding a landscaped commons that houses financial, legal, publishing, media and IT companies. Immediately north of the site is Fulton Street Mall, a 17-block shopping district with national stores such as Macy’s Department Store, Dr. Jays, Jimmy Jazz, Rainbow, Conway and Cookie’s

<sup>87</sup> “State issues RFP for two Brooklyn sites,” *Real Estate Weekly*, August 29, 2001, accessed April 22, 2011, <http://www.allbusiness.com/management/809021-1.html>.

<sup>88</sup> Katherine Dykstra, “Horn Section,” *New York Post*, September 3, 2009, accessed April 22, 2011, [http://www.nypost.com/p/news/business/realestate/residential/item\\_XbjGOKg6tHairspuFNrt9H/0](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/business/realestate/residential/item_XbjGOKg6tHairspuFNrt9H/0).

<sup>89</sup> The project was an urban renewal project with Polytechnic University (now NYU-Poly) as the urban renewal sponsor. “The History of MetroTech,” MetroTech Business Improvement District, accessed April 29, 2011, <http://www.metrotechbid.org/index.php/the-community/story-of-metrotech>.

Department Store, as well as independent shoe and apparel shops that attract patrons from all over Brooklyn and beyond. Over 100,000 shoppers flock to Fulton Street Mall each day.<sup>90</sup>

Brooklyn’s affluent brownstone residential neighborhood of Boerum Hill and Brooklyn Heights, with rows of three to four story historic brownstones built in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are to the south and west of the site. Further southeast, within four blocks, is the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), the Mark Morris Dance Center – home for choreographer Mark Morris’ dance company, rehearsal space and dance school – and numerous arts organizations both large and small. The Cultural District surrounding BAM eventually will include new housing, art studios and performance spaces. The site is within walking distance to art galleries, artist studios and performance spaces in the DUMBO arts district to the north.<sup>91</sup> This area of Brooklyn is a bustling commercial and retail center with a growing residential population and is considered a cultural destination. The Schermerhorn-Pacific urban renewal site, however, was seemingly stuck in time. It had been underutilized since its demolition in the 1960s despite the surface parking activity.

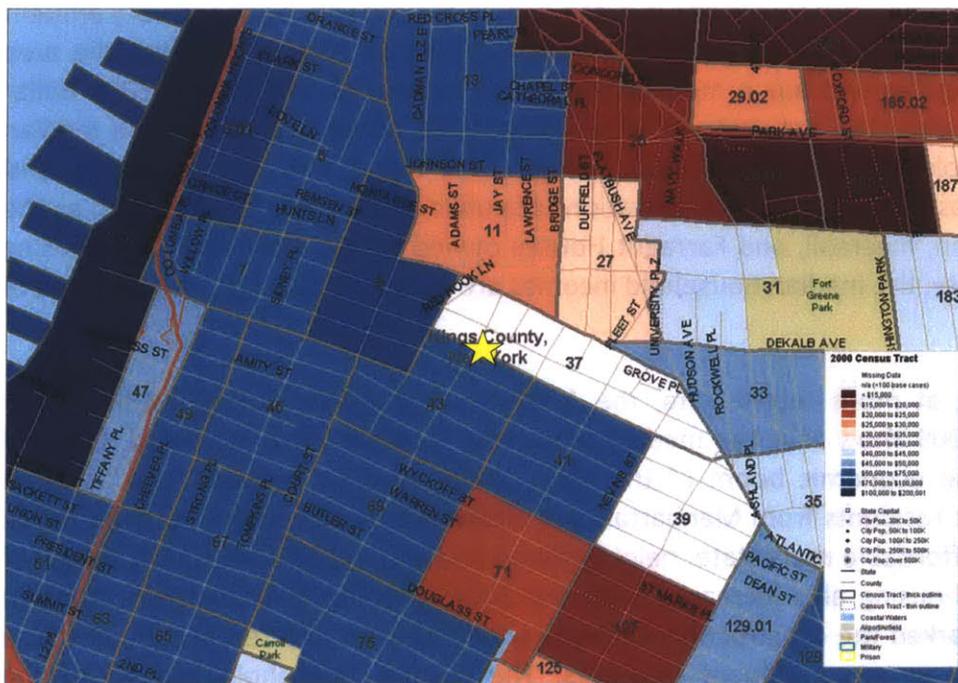


Figure 5-5. Median Household Income in 2000. Source: Social Explorer, U.S. Census 2000.

<sup>90</sup> Fulton Mall Improvement Association, “Fulton Street Mall,” <http://www.fultonstreet.org/>.

<sup>91</sup> Mark Morris Dance Group, “About the Company,” [http://markmorrisdancegroup.org/the\\_company](http://markmorrisdancegroup.org/the_company).

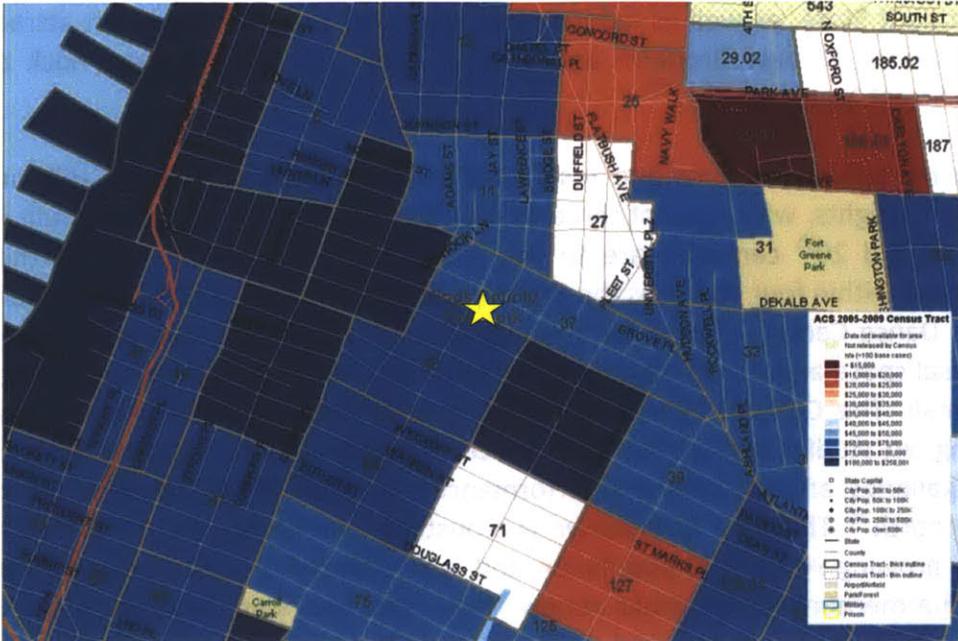
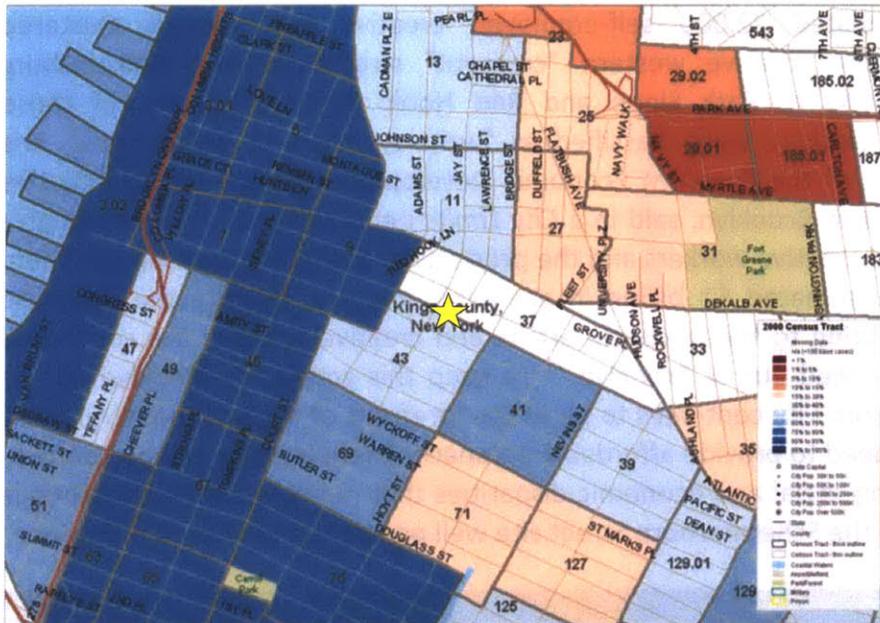


Figure 5-6. Median Household Income in 2005-2009. Source: Social Explorer, American Community Survey Estimates 2005-2009.

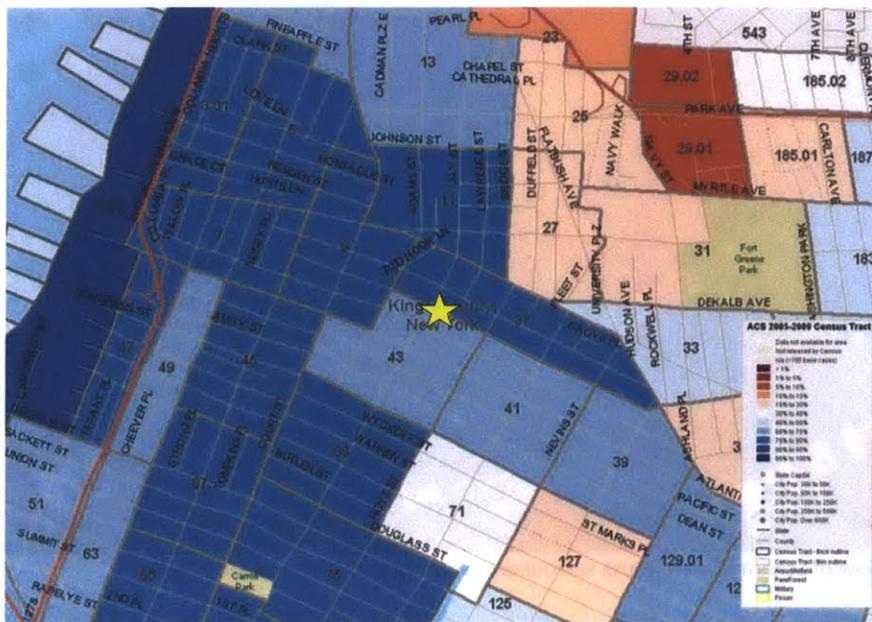
The Schermerhorn House site is in the middle of both very poor and very affluent neighborhoods. Census tract data from U.S. Census 2000 shows that the area including the site has a median household income of \$47,217 (in 2009 dollar terms) while the brownstone community to the south and west has a median household income of \$72,666, almost 54% higher. To the northeast and southeast, where large concentrations of public housing are located, such as the Whitman, Ingersoll, and Farragut Houses owned by the New York City Housing Authority, the median household incomes are as low as \$12,718 – a difference of 73%.

Looking at more recent data, the American Community Survey estimates for 2005-2009 show that the median household incomes have increased. Coupled with the economic boom of the early 2000s, median incomes rose as more affluent residents from Manhattan and elsewhere moved to the borough for its more affordable real estate, neighborhood and cultural amenities. The supply of luxury housing also increased with the 2004 rezoning of Downtown Brooklyn that sparked the construction of luxury condominiums and rental buildings, also drawing in more affluent residents. The median household income of the Schermerhorn House site area increased 22% from \$47,217 to \$57,609 (in 2009 dollars) while the median income of the brownstone community to the south increased by 36% to \$99,028. The densely populated residential neighborhoods became increasingly racially segregated, with the affluent brownstone residents (shown in blue in Figures 5-7 and 5-8) composed of more than 60% white

residents and low-income residents living to the east (shown in red) were mostly black.



Figures 5-7 and 5-8. Spatial concentration of White population in 2000 (above) and 2005-2009 (below). Source: Social Explorer, U.S. Census 2000 and American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates.



The population of artists and freelancers in the creative industry also blossomed in Brooklyn. According to a forum convened by the Brooklyn Economic

Development Corporation and the Center for an Urban Future, the number of independent creative workers living in Brooklyn grew by 33 percent from 2002 to 2005, compared with a 6 percent growth in Manhattan.<sup>92</sup> In 2005, Brooklyn had an estimated 22,000 self-employed creative professionals clustered primarily in the creative western “crescent” stretching from Williamsburg through DUMBO to Park Slope and Red Hook. Seventy percent of those independent workers were classified as “writers, artists or performers.” Kris Reed, director of the Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation’s Initiative for a Competitive Brooklyn, said in a *City Limits* news article that the borough’s self-employed creative workers and the products and services that support them generate an estimated \$1 billion in economic impact. Despite the immense benefit they bring to the borough, artists and creative workers are concerned about being priced out of Brooklyn.<sup>93</sup> To keep this activity in Brooklyn and to ensure New York City continues to be at the forefront of the arts industry, there is a growing need to provide affordable art space. There is also an opportunity to bridge growing social and economic disparities that result when neighborhoods gentrify, with the Schermerhorn Street site well positioned to make a difference.



Figure 5-9. Aerial view of Schermerhorn House surrounded by parking lots. Source: Google Earth.

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<sup>92</sup> Michelle S. Han, “For Creatives, A Haven’s Becoming A Headache,” *City Limits News*, March 10, 2008, accessed April 24, 2011. <http://www.citylimits.org/news/articles/3521/for-creatives-a-haven-s/2>.

<sup>93</sup> Han 2008.

## ❑ The Request for Proposal

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the state's economic development strategy was to privatize publicly-owned land to spur real estate development and business investment. Privatizing the long-vacant lots would generate tax revenues again and fill in a gaping hole in the neighborhood. In 1998, Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden and his office organized the Hoyt-Schermerhorn Community Task Force, which was composed of neighborhood associations and business groups to study and recommend a plan for "the productive reuse of the parking lot sites." The Task Force was composed of the Atlantic Avenue Association Local Development Corporation, Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association, Boerum Hill Association, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, Community Board #2, Hoyt Street Association, and the State Street Coalition. Together, the Task Force produced a detailed plan that outlined "preferred future development, stressing the maintenance of neighborhood character, the need for the sites to link different neighborhoods together, and recommended design guidelines that included restricting building heights to 140 feet and requiring tree plantings."<sup>94</sup>

In 2001, the Empire State Development Corporation announced the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the purchase and development of three state-owned parcels. The RFP included the recommendations made by Borough President Golden's office and the Community Task Force. ESDC hoped to "link downtown Brooklyn with 'brownstone Brooklyn'"<sup>95</sup> and had a number of requirements for the site, including the production of at least 100 units of affordable housing.<sup>96</sup> The site, bounded by Schermerhorn St. to the north, State St. to the south, Smith St. to the west and Hoyt St. to the east, was vacant except for five privately-owned brownstones that were on the National Register.<sup>97</sup> The brownstone community of Brooklyn started just south of the site.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> "State-owned Brooklyn property is for sale," *Real Estate Weekly*, November 22, 2000, accessed April 24, 2011, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/tradejournals/article/68216468.html>.

<sup>95</sup> "State issues RFP for two Brooklyn sites," *Real Estate Weekly*, August 29, 2001, accessed April 24, 2011, <http://www.allbusiness.com/management/809021-1.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Abby Hamlin, President, Hamlin Ventures, personal interview, February 25, 2011.

<sup>97</sup> "Partners purchase Brooklyn block," *Real Estate Weekly*, January 21, 2004, accessed April 24, 2011, [http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi\\_0199-657180/Partners-purchase-Brooklyn-block.html](http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-657180/Partners-purchase-Brooklyn-block.html).

<sup>98</sup> Josh Barbanel, "Embracing the Neighborhood Ambience," *The New York Times*, October 2, 2005, accessed April 26, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/02/realestate/02posting.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=1&ei=5070&en=92d9318ffe168fa0&ex=1148097600](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/02/realestate/02posting.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1&ei=5070&en=92d9318ffe168fa0&ex=1148097600).

Developing a proposal that appealed to the various community groups presented a challenge. Residents of the brownstone community facing the site had a reputation for strong opposition against projects that did not fit into the context of their community. Since the 1970s, they turned down proposals for block-long high-rise low-income housing as well as large-scale court buildings. For years, the site languished until the 2001 RFP that set into motion a literal transformation of this area. Gaining their approval would be critical. Another challenge for the future developer was the need to construct on top of the Hoyt-Schermerhorn subway station and tunnels. The land facing Schermerhorn Street extends over the two-level subway structure for the A, C, and G trains and was designed to support a future building. Despite this allowance, building over a subway line required considerations such as a cantilevered design, coordination with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and higher construction costs.<sup>99</sup>

## Space & Design

### ***Vision & Intent: Abby Hamlin and the Arts***

Schermerhorn House began as the vision of one person – Abby Hamlin, chair of Hamlin Ventures, LLC, a small real estate development company in New York City. Hamlin is an urban planner by training, having obtained a Master’s degree in Urban Planning from Princeton University. She has twenty years of experience in real estate and serves as the recently appointed Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Van Alen Institute, an internationally renowned think tank for design in the public realm. In addition, she serves on the advisory board of the New York University Real Estate Institute and is an Adjunct Professor of Real Estate Development at the Graduate School of Architecture at Columbia University.<sup>100</sup> Hamlin is an enthusiastic supporter of the arts in all of its forms. She attended New York City’s public High School for the Performing Arts, and danced professionally for years before an injury led her to pursue a career in city planning and eventually real estate. Her company, Hamlin Ventures, built projects such as TriBeca Townhouses, a series of environmentally sustainable, single-family townhouses in Lower Manhattan – the first successful single family houses built in Manhattan since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – and the Ice Center, a 100,000 square foot retail, sports and entertainment complex.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Barbanel 2005.

<sup>100</sup> She later became a member of the Board and the Executive Committee of the arts residency organization Art Omi, started by Francis Greenburger.

<sup>101</sup> Board of Trustees: Abby Hamlin,” Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture, accessed April 26, 2011, [http://www.vanalen.org/about/trustees#trustee10\\_content%3Dtrue](http://www.vanalen.org/about/trustees#trustee10_content%3Dtrue).

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

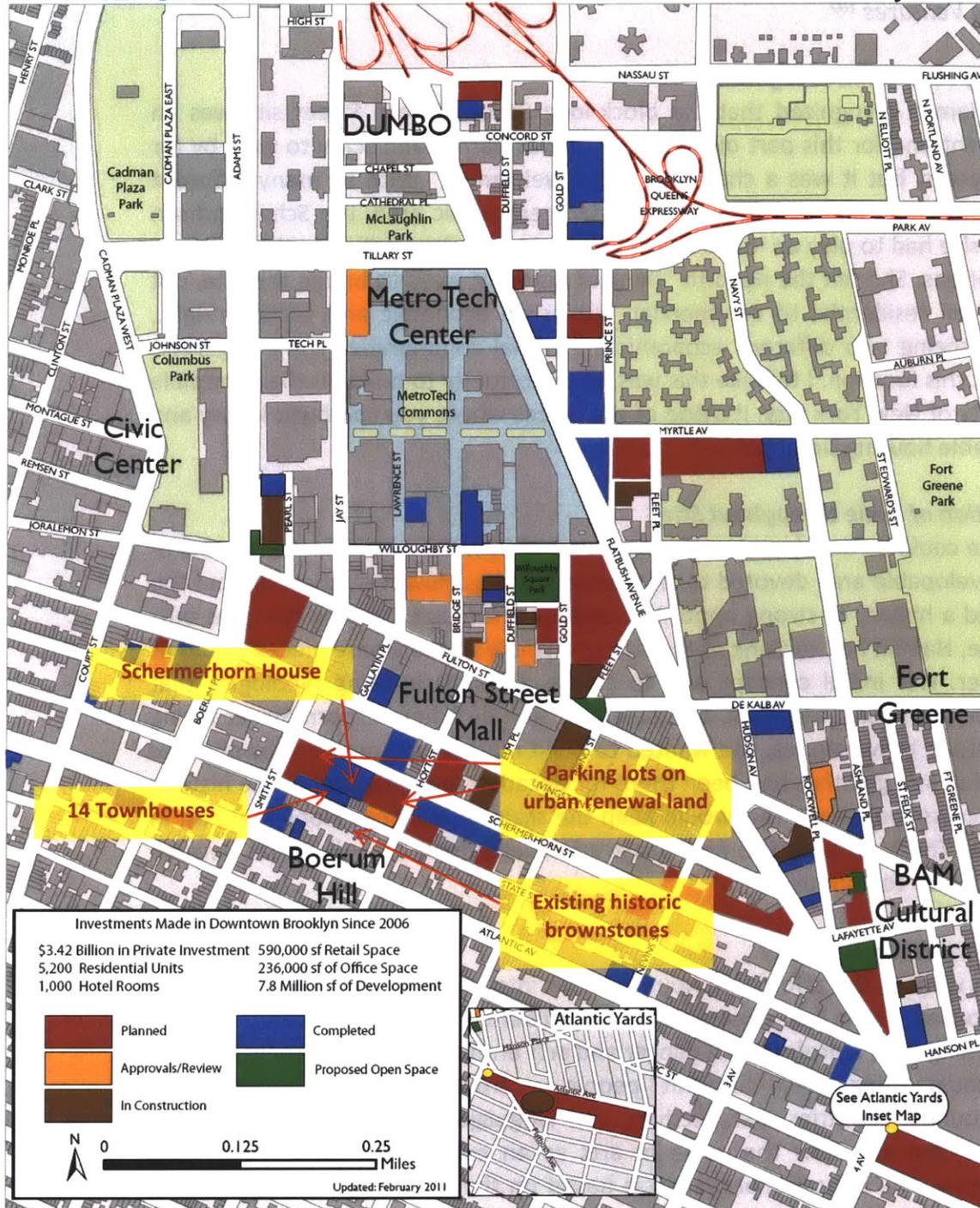


Figure 5-10. Development map. Source: Downtown Brooklyn Partnership.

*"It was an interesting site that knits together residential on one side, and a commercial downtown on the other. This was the site right in the middle that weaves two different kinds of places into one." -- Abby Hamlin, President, Hamlin Ventures<sup>102</sup>*

### ***Knitting communities together***

Abby Hamlin recognized that the block-long Schermerhorn Street site was an important one for this part of Brooklyn. "It was barren and scary to walk by for many years, but it was a challenge that I welcomed." With so many different types of people and activities in one small geographic area, the Schermerhorn Street site had to play an important role in mitigating tensions between the different populations. She felt the need to "think of different ways to bridge this site, not only from residential to commercial, but as an economic and social bridge... You're seeing two different economic and racial communities come together, right at this location. I felt like this was an opportunity to build on the incredible diversity of New York City. It's one of the places where you *can* build luxury and affordable housing side by side."

### ***Transition of Scale throughout Site***

The site could be developed into a maximum of 500,000 square feet with 30% of the developable area devoted to affordable housing. However, knowing that the site had a history of strong opposition against affordable housing that was out-of-scale, Hamlin had to think of the site as a whole to see where pieces would fit together. Her initial concept was to create different building typologies that transitioned in size and bulk. On the south side of Schermerhorn Street facing the historic brownstones, she wanted to build market-rate modern townhouses that filled in a gap that had been there for decades, and gestured to the historic ones across the street. This would keep the scale of buildings along State St. in context. This would be the first phase of development to build what became known as 14 Townhouses.

### ***Using Arts as an Equalizer***

Hamlin wanted the affordable housing to fit into her plan to build market-rate townhouses. From her experience as a student in the High School for the Performing Arts, a professional dancer and arts enthusiast, Hamlin knew how the arts could bring very different people – from different socioeconomic backgrounds, countries, perspectives, and languages – together to share one passion. She also saw the value in arts as an educational tool. "We learn differently. The educational system is based on the three R's: reading, writing,

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<sup>102</sup> Hamlin 2011.

'rithmetic. Not every child is going to blossom with the three R's. The arts might be what help them to blossom. It's a sad thing that arts aren't available to those who need it the most... I was educated in thinking about the arts and its importance. [However, it can be] so distant from some people's existence." Hamlin saw the arts as a great equalizer and humanizer. Her intent was to provide affordable and dedicated art and performance space for artists and arts organizations as the social, economic, and spatial link. It would connect the market rate and required affordable housing components of her plan.

## Programs, Partners & Financing

### ***Partnerships: Private Partner and Supporter of the Arts***

The first challenge was that this type of development required substantial amounts of capital. As a relatively new player to large scale urban development, Hamlin needed reputable partners composing a strong team – both in terms of experience and balance sheets – to support half a million square feet of desired development. Because of this obstacle, Hamlin debated whether or not she would even submit a proposal to the RFP. She decided that if she could find a partner that would meet her financial requirements and would allow her to express her creativity on the site, then she would proceed.

Hamlin reached out to Francis Greenburger, head of Time Equities, Inc. – a privately held real estate company with over 18.1 million square feet of property in 25 states and 4 Canadian provinces.<sup>103</sup> Hamlin did not know Greenburger, but knew that he was a dedicated supporter of the arts. A real estate investor, entrepreneur, and literary agent, Greenburger had founded Art Omi, an international residency program in the Hudson Valley of New York for artists, dancers, writers, and musicians. Greenburger understood the value of the arts in bringing people and localities together. Hamlin pitched her idea of creating a partnership and acquiring the sites for a mix of townhouses, market and affordable housing with the arts as a common component and worked with him on the financials to determine whether it would be a viable joint project. To her surprise, Greenburger said “yes,” and was supportive of her creative ideas. Together, Hamlin Ventures, LLC and Time Equities, Inc. created a joint venture called HS Development and started working on the proposal.

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<sup>103</sup> "New Paradigm in Supportive Housing to Break Ground on May 23rd in Downtown Brooklyn," PRWeb, *Andhranews*, May 22, 2006, accessed May 16, 2011, <http://www.andhranews.net/intl/2006/May/22/New-Paradigm-in.asp>.

## *Non-profit Partner to Build Supportive Housing*

To make the affordable component work, Hamlin had to seek non-profit partners to leverage their expertise in developing affordable housing, as well as increase access to funds. In New York City, the 80/20 financing program is a popular tool for the construction of low-income housing. The program requires multifamily housing projects financed with tax-exempt bonds to have a proportion of 80% market-rate rents and 20% rents for low-income households.<sup>104</sup> Hamlin decided that this traditional method wasn't feasible. A New York Times article, "New Homes for a Varied Cast," dated April 24, 2009, reported that Hamlin had "given up on financing conventional affordable housing soon after the September 11 attacks"<sup>105</sup> because of the poor residential market. She turned to supportive housing as an alternative to fulfill the site's affordable housing requirement because "its sources of subsidy are deeper," particularly with federal, state, and city programs specifically targeted toward supportive housing.

Hamlin and Time Equities approached Rosanne Haggerty, founder and president of Common Ground. The organization had previously completed The Times Square, The Prince George, The Aurora, and The Chelsea, which were old hotels and historic buildings that were converted into supportive housing to help transition formerly homeless individuals.<sup>106</sup> Hamlin chose Common Ground because "it had successfully mixed homeless people with very-low-income tenants," such as arts workers placed by the Actors Fund.<sup>107</sup> HS Development proposed to Common Ground that they donate a portion of the site's developable area so that Common Ground could "create a supportive housing residence of 100 units, fulfilling the site's 30% affordable housing requirement."<sup>108</sup> Haggerty said that she would consider the partnership but

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<sup>104</sup> "The 80/20 Program," Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State, accessed April 14, 2010, <http://www.npcnys.org/Public/State/state80-20.htm>.

<sup>105</sup> Alec Appelbaum, "New Homes for a Varied Cast," New York Times, April 24, 2009, accessed May 16, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/26/realestate/26post.html?sq=schermerhorn%20house&st=cse&adxnnl=1&scp=1&adxnnlx=1301546479-PQDDHsnzI5hsnamMp5fDhA>.

<sup>106</sup> Linda G. Miller, "Emerging Trends in Supportive Housing," *eOculus: Eye on New York City Architecture and Calendar of Events*, American Institute of Architects New York Chapter, March 3, 2005, accessed April 16, 2011, <http://www.aiany.org/eOCULUS/2005/2005-03-04.html>.

<sup>107</sup> James S. Russell, "Schermerhorn Mixes Homeless, \$2 Million Townhouses, Ballerinas," *Bloomberg.com*, August 31, 2009, [http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=ao\\_yWY18F8Rg#](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=ao_yWY18F8Rg#).

<sup>108</sup> "Schermerhorn House to rise in Brooklyn," The Actors Fund, May 22, 2006, accessed May 16, 2011, <http://www.auctionof1000stars.org/about/publications/press-releases/schermerhorn-house-rise-brooklyn>.

requested to double the number of supportive units. HS Development agreed and proposed to build 216 units, more than double the amount required. Common Ground brought on the Actors Fund, which provides services and housing to low-income people in the entertainment industry, and the Center for Urban Community Service (CUCS), which coordinates on-site services such as job training. HS Development would donate the air rights to Common Ground and The Actors Fund after the construction was complete and the non-profits would own and manage the building.

#### *Public Partner to Support and Finance the Project*

Hamlin was set on building supportive housing but it required substantial work to get city and state agencies on board. The first challenge was that because it was an urban renewal site, “there are requirements and rules on how affordable housing was to be built on these types of sites. Supportive housing fell outside of those rules.”<sup>109</sup> The development team would have to convince the City’s Housing & Preservation Department, which administers the urban renewal plan, to amend the urban renewal rule to include supportive housing as a fulfillment of the affordable housing component. According to Hamlin, other challenges included the fact that with supportive housing, funding would have to come from social service agencies and not housing agencies. Also, for mixed-income housing, there was a level of integration that would occur within one building. With supportive housing, there traditionally wasn’t an opportunity for integrating different types of people within one building. In addition, Hamlin knew that the community living next to the site had a history of opposing affordable housing development and supportive housing would be an even lower-income group of people. Hamlin needed to figure out how to address all of these issues to bring the project together in a manner that would appeal to all parties.

#### *Community Theater to Bring People Together*

Hamlin’s focus on the arts as a universal and positive good led her to require the base of the building to contain a community theater that would be programmed and operated by the Actors Fund. It would be a place where building residents and arts groups could present their art and where performances would be open to the public. Her vision was to “have people living in the building and the public interact with each other and not be frightened of one another.” The arts facility

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<sup>109</sup> Hamlin 2011.

would serve as a place where people from very different backgrounds can come together. “You could be sitting next to someone who might’ve been homeless yesterday, and you’re both enjoying a movie or an arts performance.”<sup>110</sup> Her vision was based on her own experience as a performer. All the partners of the development team agreed that the base of the building would have a community theater, which would be open for public performances.<sup>111</sup>

*“You can use the arts in so many different ways to cross social, economic, physical boundaries – I really believe that it’s the great equalizer. That in part comes from my own experience in the performing arts. I attended a [public] high school [in the performing arts where] people from every background worked together on their passion – dance, art, music, theater. The boundaries really fell down.” - Abby Hamlin, President, Hamlin Ventures<sup>112</sup>*

#### *Dedicated Art Space on the Ground-Floor*

Hamlin envisioned the 1,200 foot ground floor retail space as a way to draw in people to the building and to serve as a “beacon of light,” especially on a still revitalizing street undergoing a multi-phased development project. The space would be dedicated to arts-related use such as a bookstore, arts-related café, gallery or space for an arts group, through a deed restriction. “I did not want office use on the ground floor. If there were any retail, it had to be arts-related retail or have an arts orientation.”<sup>113</sup> The art space would draw together residents, community arts groups and the general public to interact with one another.

#### *All Aboard - A Public-Private-Non-profit Partnership*

The team, now a partnership of private developers, nonprofit developers, and human services organizations, was one of six teams to submit a proposal to the RFP. When the State selected them as the winner, Hamlin was ecstatic. “It was like a dream come true.” Charles A. Gargano, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the ESDC at the time, said that their proposal was “the proposal deemed the most interesting in terms of design, site plan, sensitivity to the neighborhood and diversity of program.” They were the only team to propose building single-family townhouses across from the existing brownstones. The proposal, with 216 units of supportive housing – more than double the number

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<sup>110</sup> Hamlin 2011.

<sup>111</sup> Appelbaum 2009.

<sup>112</sup> Hamlin 2011.

<sup>113</sup> Hamlin 2011.

of units required by the RFP<sup>114</sup>, a community theater open to the public, and a dedicated arts space, provided sufficient public benefit to the City for them to move forward to amend the urban renewal interpretation to allow supportive housing to go on this site.<sup>115</sup> The community approved of this contextual development and welcomed the new arts space that was part of the multi-phase plan. With the team selected, HS Development purchased the block-long site from State to Schermerhorn Streets, and from Hoyt to Bond Streets for \$4.6 million in 2004.

### **🏠 The Design & Development**

Innovative architecture for both the market rate and affordable housing on the Schermerhorn Street site was an important component to both the development team and the City. The first phase of development was to construct 14 market-rate townhouses along State Street to fill the existing gap. Called “14 Townhouses” and designed by Rogers Marvel Architect, the townhouses were the first row of uninterrupted new, market-rate, single-family townhouses to be built in New York City since the late 1920s.<sup>116</sup> They were a modern interpretation of the traditional Brooklyn brownstone, with attention towards outdoor space, large interior spaces, windows, and front stoops. They sold for \$2.4-2.6 million each in 2006-2007.



Figure 5-11. 14 Townhouses designed by Rogers Marvel Architect. Photo source: Rogers Marvel Architect.

The second phase of the project was to build the 11-story, 97,000 square foot Schermerhorn House. Hamlin wanted the affordable housing component to have inspired design. To Hamlin, private development is really a “public act,” every

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<sup>114</sup> 116 “supportive housing” units are provided for the formerly homeless while 100 “affordable” units are provided for low-income workers, with preference to people in the entertainment industry.

<sup>115</sup> Hamlin 2011.

<sup>116</sup> *Architectural Record*, “14 Townhouses, Brooklyn, New York, Rogers Marvel Architects: Fourteen Brooklyn residences revitalize a rare find in the city: the block-front facade of the 1920s townhouse,” accessed May 15, 2011, [http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/bts/archives/MultiFamHousing/08\\_14Townhouses/default.asp](http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/bts/archives/MultiFamHousing/08_14Townhouses/default.asp).

time a developer builds a building, she is “creating a piece of the city that people interact with in some way, even if it is just visually.” HS Development worked with Common Ground and the Actors Fund to identify architects who “could build something that was really different, not run-of-the-mill affordable housing.” They selected Polshek Partnership (now known as Ennead Partners) with Susan Rodriguez as the director. While they had not done affordable housing per se, the development team thought their previous design work was exceptional and wanted to bring in someone who could truly innovate – to “think well in a process of finding a new solution to something they’ve never done before.” They wanted the architecture to positively contribute to the community with both artistic merit and arts space design.<sup>117</sup>

### ***Dedicated Art Space: Flexible Theater and Ground-floor Space***

Schermerhorn House contains a black box community theater that is versatile, accommodating up to 199 seated people to watch performances, films and other activities. The seats can be moved and reconfigured to accommodate different types of events. The two-story ground floor retail space is aesthetically open with floor-to-ceiling windows connecting pedestrians along Schermerhorn Street to the activity inside. The art space is accessible from the street and from the apartment lobby next door. Its first tenant is the Brooklyn Ballet, which will be profiled later in this chapter. The main entrance to the community theater is through the lobby of the apartments.



Figure 5-12. Community black-box theater. Source: Julie Chan

### ***Green Design Elements***

Polshek Partnership strove to make Schermerhorn House an example of green affordable housing that incorporates sustainable design. The building has a green roof to reduce the heat island effect, a high-efficiency boiler system, and glass panel façade made of a high percentage of post-consumer waste glass. The building uses non-toxic sustainable materials and has increased natural lighting. Apartments use energy-efficient appliances and are designed to maximize both storage and usable space. The second floor has common areas, including a computer room, meeting and music room for tenants. The south side of the building has a garden terrace on the second floor to ease the transition to the low-level surrounding residential area.

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<sup>117</sup> Hamlin 2011.



Figure 5-13 and Figure 5-14. Exterior and interior views of Schermerhorn House.  
Source: David Sundberg/ESTO<sup>118</sup> and Polshek Partnership Architects<sup>119</sup>.

### ***Addressing the Subway Challenge***

The construction of the building on top of subway infrastructure required an innovative design. The glass façade, largely made of recycled materials, was chosen not only because it contributed to a sleek aesthetic but because it lessened the weight of the building, allowing for the cantilevered foundation system. The building's superstructure is reinforced concrete that sits atop two stories of steel anchored in place by two rows of caissons that are drilled down about 50 feet and are two- to three-feet in diameter.<sup>120</sup> To support the weight of the nine stories above, there are four 26-foot tall steel trusses.<sup>121</sup> Lynn Parkerson of the Brooklyn Ballet commented that the beams and trusses that which are visible in the high-ceilinged dance studio add character and visual interest to the space.<sup>122</sup>

The development team negotiated with the city and state agencies for a year and a half on amending the urban renewal plan to allow for supportive housing. The Schermerhorn House broke ground in 2006 and was completed in 2009. The

<sup>118</sup> Linda Collins, "Building's Arts Tenant Brooklyn Ballet Holds Ribbon Cutting Today," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 16, 2009, [http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category\\_id=5&id=28877](http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=5&id=28877)

<sup>119</sup> Jessica Dailey, "The Schermerhorn House in Brooklyn Receives 2011 AIA Housing Award," *Inhabit New York City*, March 23, 2011, accessed April 29, 2011, <http://inhabitat.com/nyc/the-schermerhorn-house-in-brooklyn-receives-2011-aia-housing-award/>.

<sup>120</sup> Bendix Anderson, "Schermerhorn House: Project Marks Firsts for Common Ground," *Affordable Housing Finance*, July/August 2009, accessed May 16, 2011, <http://www.housingfinance.com/ahf/articles/2009/july-august/0709-specialfocus-Special-Needs-Finalists.htm>.

<sup>121</sup> Tim Moran, "Schermerhorn House rises thanks to unique supports," *Real Estate Weekly*, June 7, 2006, accessed May 16, 2011, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m3601/is\\_43\\_52/ai\\_n16499270/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3601/is_43_52/ai_n16499270/).

<sup>122</sup> Lynn Parkerson, Founder and Artistic Director, Brooklyn Ballet, personal interview, April 8, 2011.

third and final phase still in the planning stages will have an additional nine townhouses, residential, retail and a park.<sup>123</sup>

### **Awards & Accolades**

Polshek Partnership (now Ennead Architects), directed by architect Susan Rodriguez, won numerous awards for their designs for Schermerhorn House. They won the 2011 AIA Housing Award recognizing the best in housing design in the nation for the category of “specialized housing.” One comment from the jury was that “This [design] rises above the aesthetic previously associated with affordable living. This is architecture in which anyone would feel at home.”<sup>124</sup> Chloe Marin, building director of the Schermerhorn House said, “One of the most eye opening things for the tenants is the beautiful, modern space [they have] to live in. In addition to having one’s own apartment – a huge asset, [the] space is a gateway to our programs. It sets the mood for openness and creativity.”<sup>125</sup>

*The building, in its “quiet, pragmatic way... prove[s] what the marriage of philanthropy and government can achieve and demonstrate[s] that pinched budgets need not translate into poverty of imagination.” – Justin Davidson, New York Magazine<sup>126</sup>*

### **Financing & Operations**

The project cost about \$40 million, according to the director of real estate at Common Ground, David Beer, with an additional \$19 million to pay for the cantilevering of the building over the subway tunnels for a total of \$59 million. Schermerhorn House was financed by a combination of sources. The City of New York’s Housing Development Corporation (HDC) used \$30 million in tax-exempt bonds and \$28 million in 4% Low Income Housing tax credits to finance the Schermerhorn House. The tax-exempt bonds financed only the construction portion. Common Ground paid for the bonds with tax credit equity and a deferred loan from the city’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) which would be forgiven after 30 years. Additional funding was from the Federal Home Loan Bank, the New York State Energy Research and

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<sup>123</sup> Appelbaum 2009.

<sup>124</sup> “2011 Recipient: AIA Housing Awards: The Schermerhorn,” The American Institute of Architects, 2011, <http://www.aia.org/practicing/awards/2011/housing-awards/schermerhorn/index.htm>.

<sup>125</sup> Chloe Marin, Building Director, Common Ground, phone interview, April 26, 2011.

<sup>126</sup> Architecture critic Justin Davidson, New York Magazine on Neremiah Creek townhomes and Schermerhorn House. Justin Davidson, “Low-Income? You’re Kidding!: Two architects offer far more than lip service to affordable housing,” *New York Magazine*, February 22, 2009, <http://nymag.com/arts/architecture/reviews/54628/>.

Development Authority, the Robin Hood Foundation and other private donors.<sup>127</sup> Schermerhorn House also received funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs for its arts components.<sup>128</sup> As part of the agreement, HS Development donated the land to Common Ground and the Actors Fund. Common Ground managed the construction of Schermerhorn House.

This was Common Ground's first project to be financed using tax-exempt bonds, as well as its first mixed use project<sup>129</sup> and first project outside of Manhattan.<sup>130</sup> An article by *Bloomberg.com* noted that while some aspects of Schermerhorn House's financing are unique to New York, "the financial gyrations and government red tape are common nightmares for below-market developers everywhere. This is why so little such housing is built." It contrasted financing for the market-rate townhouses, which Hamlin did with a single conventional construction loan.<sup>131</sup> Beers from Common Ground also stated that deals of this kind are difficult to put together, especially in light of the financial crisis.<sup>132</sup>

HS Development donated the air rights to Common Ground and the Actors Fund, who now manage the units. Common Ground and its affiliate Common Ground Community provide building management, operations services, and 24-hour security, while the Actors Fund and Center for Urban Community Service provide on-site individualized support services for the tenants to help them with job training, address health issues and increase self-sufficiency.<sup>133</sup>

### ***Ground-floor Art Space Tenant: Brooklyn Ballet***

#### ***Brief History***

Lynn Parkerson, founder and director of the Brooklyn Ballet, first moved to Brooklyn in 1998 and realized that Brooklyn didn't have its own ballet company even though many people thought it did, or should. She decided to start Brooklyn Ballet because it fulfilled a need that she had to choreograph and

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<sup>127</sup> The Actors Fund, "Schermerhorn House to rise in Brooklyn," 2006.

<sup>128</sup> "Building Communities: The Schermerhorn," The Actors Fund, March 3, 2011, accessed May 17, 2011, <https://actorsfund.wordpress.com/2011/03/03/building-communities-the-schermerhorn/>.

<sup>129</sup> Corporation for Supportive Housing: Financing Supportive Housing with Tax-Exempt Bonds and 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, "Case Study #1: Financing Model Using Bonds Only During Construction (City of New York)," accessed May 16, 2011, <http://documents.csh.org/documents/pubs/BondsPlus4PercentLIHTCsFINAL.pdf>.

<sup>130</sup> Anderson 2009.

<sup>131</sup> Russell 2009.

<sup>132</sup> Russell 2009.

<sup>133</sup> Appelbaum 2009.

teach, and the need of the community that was looking for this art form. She started to develop dance programming for elementary schools through funding from the City Council of Brooklyn, and started the Ballet officially in 2004. The organization moved its dance studios around a lot depending on who offered them rehearsal space. Jane Walentas, an artist and wife of Jed Walentas, creator of the DUMBO neighborhood, had offered them free space in her DUMBO loft and for two years they rehearsed and taught classes there. They moved around a few times, renting space at the Charles Moore Dance Theater near the Fulton Street Mall on the second floor and, a few months later, the Micro Museum at 123 Smith Street for 4-5 months.

This nomadic existence was not beneficial to a growing organization and Parkerson approached Borough President Marty Markowitz for ideas. He put her in touch with a few real estate options, one of which was Schermerhorn House. She chose to move into Schermerhorn House because it was close to where her previous spaces were and thus, she was familiar with the community there. "I felt like it was the best fit – the location was perfect. It was a couple of blocks from where we were doing classes. The size of the space itself wasn't overly ambitious." They received capital funding of \$160,000 to outfit the space through the Borough President's office, Department of Cultural Affairs, and Councilmember David Yassksy's office and were able to move into the space in 2009.

### *Brooklyn Ballet's Programs*

The Brooklyn Ballet's programming that occurs within their 1,200 square foot ground-floor space with floor-to-ceiling windows, includes dance classes for children, rehearsals for the dance company and office functions. The organization itself has ballet residency programs in eight Brooklyn public schools throughout Brooklyn, most of which serve children whose families qualify for free or reduced lunch. Children who excel are given scholarships to attend classes at the Brooklyn Ballet after they finish the program. The children from mostly low-income neighborhoods like Canarsie, Flatlands, Marine Park, Bergen Beach, Weeksville, Farragut and the Navy Yard, don't often get opportunities to receive classical dance training and often do not see ballet as an arts form that is accessible to them. The kids "really enjoy the program. They get exposed to ballet, and we break stereotypes about them being included in it. It's a positive experience for both the boys and girls."<sup>134</sup> The dance company and the children

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<sup>134</sup> Parkerson 2011.

enrolled at the Ballet perform in the Schermerhorn House theater, in civic centers and public schools.

Parkerson said that what she likes about the Schermerhorn House art space is that it is so open to the public. While she has the option to draw the shades to have more privacy during her ballet classes and rehearsals for children, she opts to keep them open so that people can enjoy watching the dance activity, and if they're curious, stop in and find out more about dance classes.<sup>135</sup>

***Programming: Knitting People Together Using the Arts***

The goal of Schermerhorn House was to create a building open physically and open-minded psychologically that could integrate people with special needs with each other and society. By having a theater and arts-related storefront space, the building creates space for organized programming – a critical component to ensure that the art spaces are used in an inclusive manner that is positive for the community. Hamlin's vision of using the arts as a social and economic bridge – while it may sound idealistic – is beginning to be realized, though it still has not reached its full potential yet.

The community theater is used by building residents for meetings, rehearsals, performances, dinners and special events. The Brooklyn Ballet uses the theater for rehearsals for free, as this is stipulated in their lease, and uses it for performances for a nominal fee. As of this writing, the Actors Fund is still working on obtaining the public assembly permit for the theater. In the near future, it will be allowed to open the doors to the public as well as Brooklyn based arts organizations – not just for building tenants. Deciding the mission of the theater is still underway by a community advisory board, which includes people from the building committee, individuals from local groups, arts organizations, and elected officials.

There is an Activities Manager through The Actors Fund who is in charge of developing opportunities for all the tenants to “build a community within a building, and to integrate the building with the neighborhood surrounding it” according to their website. Lynn Parkerson says that this integration and mixing of the tenants and the Brooklyn Ballet is already happening. Some of the low-income residents from the entertainment industry, which include dancers, musicians, stagehands among others, teach dance at the Ballet or are hired to play music at performances. On average, about four films and one live

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<sup>135</sup> Parkerson 2011.

performance event per month are offered free to the building residents in the community theater, and tenants can usually attend performances by outside groups if there are seats available. Performances include those staged by an interim residency program managed by the Actors Fund, local arts groups, as well as student performances of the Brooklyn Ballet. All tenants have access to free health and wellness services, such as yoga and acupuncture in the building’s gym. Programmed activities in the building’s theater, computer lab and terrace, such as a movie screenings, career skills workshops, gardening and volunteering with Brooklyn soup kitchens and animal shelters encourage interaction and positive activities.<sup>136</sup> The Actors Fund Activities Manager Matthew Brookshire says, “Many of our most successful tenants from the artist community look at this housing as transitional, enabling them to stabilize, save money and focus on their career goals.”<sup>137</sup>

*“The idea to create this multipurpose building that had supportive housing and an arts function in the base was my idea and something that I still feel has a ways to go, but it is going in that direction. It plays a really important role in Downtown Brooklyn for diverse groups of people – for artists who need space and those who enjoy watching them.” – Abby Hamlin, President, Hamlin Ventures*



Figure 5-15. Building residents.  
Source: The Actors Fund.

### ❏ How is Schermerhorn House an innovative and transformative art space?

**Schermerhorn House was the result of a collaborative public-private-nonprofit partnership.** Hamlin describes the “triangle” of private, public and non-profit partnership as an emerging way of development that leverages the strengths of each party. In this case, the private sector provides capital and vision, the non-profit sector provides expertise in their niche of building and programming supportive/affordable housing, and the public sector provides the financing and land. Schermerhorn House



Figure 5-16. A diagram of the triangular partnership.

<sup>136</sup> The Actors Fund, “Building Communities: The Schermerhorn.”

<sup>137</sup> Matthew Brookshire, Activities Manager, The Actors Fund, e-mail communication, May 18, 2011.

needed all three sectors to devise a project that was better than what each individual party could have conceived. If it weren't for Hamlin's involvement, there might not be a community theater or dedicated arts space, for example. This innovative cross-sector partnership worked because they were on board with a shared vision of providing much needed affordable living and art space to fill in a long-vacant hole in the neighborhood fabric.

**Schermerhorn House created affordable housing and art space using regulations and deed restrictions.** First, the State required that the site be 30% affordable. The development team went the extra mile and built more than twice as many permanently, affordable units that have been donated to Common Ground and The Actors Fund. In a move that is not common, the 1,200 square foot ground-floor space is deed restricted for use in an arts-related intent. These uses include arts-related bookstores, cafes and space for arts organizations like the Brooklyn Ballet. Schermerhorn House is situated on the border of an affluent residential neighborhood that will most likely increase in property value following the completion of development of the urban renewal site. Deed restrictions are one method of ensuring that artists and arts organizations are not displaced as property values increase, which they are sure to do in this case. The creation of affordable housing also ensures that special needs populations and arts workers have high quality housing and social services.

**Schermerhorn House's site was proactively designed to knit very different and opposing communities together.** There were different elements to the design – from the gradual transition in urban scale from the tallest buildings in Brooklyn in the downtown core to the Schermerhorn House at eleven stories, to the 4-5 story townhouses that mesh with the brownstone community. The physical knitting of the structures was important in creating a development that could be embraced by community members with a long history of opposition. On a human scale, the Schermerhorn House was the keystone of the entire development, creating a community theater and dedicated home for arts-related uses that encourage interactions between people from different backgrounds. The space was created for this purpose in conjunction with critical programming that proactively organizes the formerly homeless individuals, the low-income arts workers and the Brooklyn Ballet.

**Schermerhorn House paid attention to design and sustainability for an affordable housing building on a challenging site.** The development team built award-winning and sustainable architecture to show that a 100% affordable

housing building, especially one where half of its residents are formerly homeless, can have and deserves to have good design. There is a second floor green terrace on the south side of the building that steps down towards the outdoor space of the new townhouses, making a contextual and gradual transition in bulk. The design also had to be innovative to address the challenge of building an eleven-story building without touching the subway tunnels underneath. The site sat vacant for decades in part due to this daunting engineering challenge. The resulting cantilevered design added \$19 million in cost to the project, but finally allowed the site to be used for affordable housing. It also brings unique character to the building through its exposed trusses, and provides visitors with an impressive view of the two-story art space.

**Schermerhorn House integrates people of different economic backgrounds and provides them with supportive services.** Not many private developers opt to build supportive housing next to market-rate housing. Hamlin had a vision of helping people from different backgrounds get to know each other and, more importantly, not to be frightened of one another through shared art spaces. The building's apartments are mixed so that no one knows what designation a resident is – formerly homeless or low-income. The art spaces provide a venue for all the tenants to watch performances or perform. Having positive shared experiences can break down barriers, stereotypes and fears. Chloe Marin, Building Director for Common Ground, said that some low-income arts residents interact with the formerly homeless individuals by saying hello, asking how they're doing or participating in planned activities together. Some have developed friendships. For the formerly homeless, "it's an adjustment for them to go indoors. Some are vulnerable, with mental illness or substance abuse problems. It's incredibly worth it, rewarding, and powerful to see the transformation that people can go through with social services and the consistency of a roof over their head."<sup>138</sup> The number of common spaces and organized activities in the building help to integrate people of very different backgrounds together in a positive manner. It also respects those people who do not wish to interact with others, as it is often a difficult transition for many formerly homeless. Having Common Ground, The Actors Fund and CUCS owning and operating the building is critical because they are expert in working with this special needs population.

**Schermerhorn House creates arts-related use in the storefront that provides a home for a Brooklyn-based organization and attracts people to a still**

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<sup>138</sup> Marin 2011.

**revitalizing street.** Once a desolate street when the land was undeveloped, and still with little pedestrian activity compared to parallel streets even after some development progress, the storefront space is used to attract people to the building and enliven the street. People are drawn to both the dramatic architecture of the storefront and the highly visible dance activity inside. Not only is it novel to see a dance studio on street level, it also gives a home to a ballet company that had been moving around Brooklyn since its founding in 1998. Children now go to the Brooklyn Ballet space for dance classes during the day, night, and weekends, with the dance company rehearsing there as well. Parkerson of the Ballet noted that people have told her, given a choice to walk down Livingston Street or Schermerhorn Street, they would choose to walk down Schermerhorn Street just so they can peer inside and see what's going on. While the Ballet did some initial marketing when they first opened in the space, the visibility of the dance classes and rehearsals through the two-story glass windows has done the marketing for them. This increase in activity attracts people to Schermerhorn Street, and solidifies this new block – so close to the BAM Cultural District – as a place for the performing arts.

**The site benefits the City by generating tax revenue and saves money in the long term by building supportive housing.** The Schermerhorn-Pacific Urban Renewal area was underutilized as parking lots for decades. Now, this land is generating tax revenue through the market-rate components and is encouraging more investment in the area as stores and services follow a new residential population. It also saves money for the City because supportive housing costs comparatively less than addressing homelessness through other means. According to Common Ground, it costs approximately \$36 per night to operate their typical units, which is significantly less than public expenditures as follows: \$54 for a city shelter bed, \$74 for a state prison cell, \$164 for a city jail cell, \$467 for a psychiatric bed, \$1,185 for a hospital bed. By providing housing to the most vulnerable homeless individuals, Common Ground can provide critical social and health services to them rather than having them end up in public institutions.<sup>139</sup>

#### **What are the lessons learned?**

**Combining special needs populations and art space may not be seamless, but with programming and patience, it can be done.** While there are activities and social services targeted to the supportive housing residents, there is less obvious integration between the tenants of the supportive housing and the Brooklyn

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<sup>139</sup> Common Ground, "About Us," accessed April 29, 2011, [http://www.commonground.org/?page\\_id=24](http://www.commonground.org/?page_id=24).

Ballet. The ground-floor art space, while it does connect through back hallways to the lobby of the apartments and the community theater, is essentially self-contained with its own front entrance (albeit, next to the entrance of the apartments). Parkerson was unsure if some of the formerly homeless residents attended their free performances, which suggests that there should be a method to track the attendance and use of the theater. She did note that some supportive housing residents – many with mental disabilities – like to watch the dance activity through the windows, and sometimes imitate them or dance along outside. This may be humorous or distracting to the students, but this so far has not adversely affected the Ballet. The security within the building, provided through Common Ground, has so far taken care of any incidents that might occur given that a population of people who are still in transition and with mental disabilities may have behavior that is hard to predict. The Center for Urban Community Services provides critical mental health services and on-site training to the special needs population. The artist residents are also transitional and view the housing as a way to stabilize their lives before transitioning to larger apartments or moving on to other cities where their career may take them. With the community theater not yet open to the public, with a planned opening for Fall 2011, it is still “too early to see its full impact on the residential community and the greater neighborhood.”<sup>140</sup>

### Replicating the Model

Schermerhorn House is a unique collaboration of design and socially-driven private developers who fashioned a development program with an arts focus from the very beginning. To replicate the model, there would need to be private capital partners, non-profit organizations who specialize in supporting distinct populations, and public sector partners who can work through legal obstacles and varying financing sources to realize the development. This would require a partnership aligned with Hamlin’s vision of using the arts to integrate different populations together.

Every step of the process, from the initial partnerships to the negotiations with the City to the implementation of the art spaces took time, patience, teamwork and aligned visions. The collaborative partnership between the public-private-non-profits managed to create a building that is greater than the sum of the individual parts. If it weren’t for this partnership, it is likely to say that Common Ground would not have developed supportive housing, a community theater and a dedicated art space in this location on its own accord. It may be too early to

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<sup>140</sup> Brookshire 2011.

see what kinds of changes in design and implementation should be undertaken because the community theater is still not yet open to the public, but this model of combining affordable housing and art space is one that can be adapted elsewhere. Once the community theater has its public assembly permit, more integration of the different neighborhood populations can occur and more lessons can be drawn.

Replicating this model would require the “triangle” cross-sector partnerships to envision, develop, finance and operate the building. Other cities wanting to address significant homeless populations would benefit from partnering with Common Ground and its social service affiliates to build and manage supportive housing. Since Common Ground is expanding nationally, this would be an innovative model to consider. Art space could be at the core of these new developments to provide affordable and permanent art space, but also to draw different people in, thus promoting that interaction that Hamlin was envisioning.

### ***Art Spaces for the Homeless***

There are examples of art spaces that are targeted to homeless or formerly homeless populations that could be complementary to a mix of supportive or affordable housing for formerly homeless individuals and low-income arts residents. The following organizations could be potential tenants or partners that could easily locate in a storefront space.

One organization is the Metro Atlantic Task Force for the Homeless in Atlanta, Georgia which runs an art studio that is part of a homeless shelter. Since 1981, the Task Force has been the central coordinating agency to homeless individuals, linking people with services such as shelter, housing outreach, transportation, employment and healthcare. Their goal is to have “no person left outside.” In 1996, a generous donor purchased their 95,000 square foot facility, which is the largest shelter in the southeastern United States. It provides shelter to an average of 1,000 men, women, and children on a daily basis.<sup>141</sup> Its art studio gives participants an outlet to express themselves and was inspired by the artistic interests of its executive director Anita Beaty. According to a news article, people use the studio to paint and create work, taking their mind off of being homeless and giving them a source of income. Participants sell paintings to local

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<sup>141</sup> Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, “About Us,” accessed April 29, 2011, <http://www.homelesstaskforce.org/aboutus.html>.

churches and passersby and keep 80 percent of the sales, with 20 percent going back to the shelter to pay for art supplies.<sup>142</sup>

Another example is the HomeFront Family Preservation Center homeless shelter's art studio called ArtSpace in Ewing, New Jersey that provides people damaged by poverty a way to find themselves, or as studio director Ruthann Traylor says, to rebuild their souls. One participant, a 25-year-old former drug addict, high school dropout and young mother who had never painted before, discovered hidden talents through the studio and was awarded a scholarship to a top design school. An exhibition at Princeton University called "How You See Me," showcased works by ArtSpace artists, who responded to a study that found that homeless people and people on welfare were the most universally scorned. Executive director of HomeFront Connie Mercer initially didn't understand the importance of using the arts as a way to heal, and only focused on the importance of housing and feeding the homeless. "I now understand it's as important to feed folks' souls as it is to feed their body," Mercer said in an article.<sup>143</sup>

Many more examples of these programs exist, including the Arts Street Textile Studio that works with people in transition as well as people with homes in a highly visible storefront space in Philadelphia.<sup>144</sup>

### ***Potential Adaptations***

It would be interesting to see the Schermerhorn House model replicated but with an art studio for both artists and formerly homeless people on the ground-floor space. The advantage is that the use can be connected to the building's inhabitants by providing an outlet of creative expression and a source of income. It would also make the mission of the building more visible to people outside, and proactively draw people into the storefront space. A combination of Artists for Humanity's microenterprise employment program could be used to train the formerly homeless individuals as well. Low-income artists who live in the building could potentially teach classes as an option for part-time employment. In an ideal situation, there would be two storefront art spaces that allow for at

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<sup>142</sup> *The Huffington Post*, "'Metro Atlanta Task Force' Homeless Shelter Provides An Art Studio For The Homeless," April 3, 2011, accessed April 29, 2011, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/03/atlanta-homeless-artists\\_n\\_843888.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/03/atlanta-homeless-artists_n_843888.html).

<sup>143</sup> Nyier Abdou, "Aspiring artist from Ewing homeless shelter program earns design school scholarship," *The Star-Ledger*, June 29, 2010, [http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/06/aspiring\\_young\\_artist\\_on\\_public.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/06/aspiring_young_artist_on_public.html).

<sup>144</sup> Fractured Atlas, "Sponsored Project Profiles: Arts Street Textile Studio: Handmade with the Homeless," accessed April 28, 2011, <http://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/fiscal/profile?id=3986>.

least one to be used in a manner that is directly relevant to the special needs population, while the other could be used for an organization like the Brooklyn Ballet to bring in different people from a broader geographic area. No matter where or what the program is, there should be a need in the community for the supportive housing, art space and the programs inside. Having deed-restricted art space would also be recommended so that these uses can continue when rents, and thus operating costs, rise.

### ☒ Summary of Case: Schermerhorn House

<b>Table 5-1. A. Organizational Factors</b>	
<b>Year formed</b>	2001 (partnership)
<b>Location</b>	Brooklyn, NY
<b>Year space completed</b>	Building completed in 2009
<b>Leader</b>	Developer Abby Hamlin with partners
<b>Organization</b>	For-profit developer, with partnership with non-profits, private developer, and public sector
<b>Ownership</b>	Donated land to Common Ground/The Actors Fund.
<b>Mission</b>	Build mix of market-rate and affordable housing with arts component to bridge brownstone neighborhoods and downtown core; Schermerhorn House addressed the required affordable housing component of the RFP

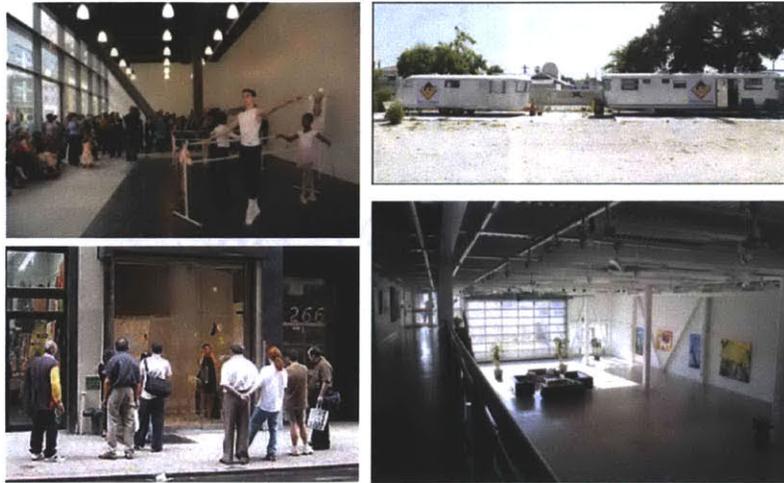
<b>Table 5-2. B. Neighborhood Context</b>	
<b>Neighborhood</b>	- In between Boerum Hill and Downtown Brooklyn on an urban renewal site. Located between affluent brownstone community and low- to moderate-income residents.
<b>Demographics of population served</b>	- Special needs population including formerly homeless individuals, physically and mentally disabled, living with HIV/AIDs, and low-income arts workers such as musicians, actors, stage hands, and artists.
<b>Site Context</b>	- Former urban renewal site - Close to downtown center, cultural district, residential neighborhood, subway and buses.

<b>Table 5-3. C. Space &amp; Design</b>	
<b>Vision &amp; Intent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reactive and Intended</li> <li>- Was initially intended to mix affordable housing and diverse groups using art space; outcome was in response to working with non-profit, public, and private partners</li> </ul>
<b>Type of Space</b>	- Mix of housing & arts uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 97,000 SF, 11-story building with green roofs</li> <li>- 199-seat community theater</li> <li>- 1,200 SF ground-floor art space</li> </ul>
<b>Time</b>	- Permanent
<b>Mobility</b>	- Low
	- Fixed building
<b>Sustainability</b>	- Moderate
	- Façade using recycled glass; green roofs; use of non-toxic materials;
<b>Connectivity</b>	- High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connects residential to commercial district</li> <li>- Connects diverse people within building and outside of building</li> </ul>

<b>Table 5-4. D. Programs, Partners &amp; Financing</b>	
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building tenants – formerly homeless and low-income arts workers</li> <li>- Building tenant, Brooklyn Ballet, and other community arts groups</li> <li>- General public</li> </ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tenant lifestyle and arts activities programmed by the Actors Fund</li> <li>- Performances in community theater</li> <li>- Tenant Brooklyn Ballet programs</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private capital partner with arts focus</li> <li>- Non-profit partners for supportive housing and services</li> <li>- Public partner in city and state agencies</li> </ul>
<b>Funding/ Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$59 million project cost</li> <li>- \$30M tax-exempt bonds</li> <li>- \$28M low income housing tax credits</li> <li>- Foundation grants, energy grants, Federal Home Loan Bank funds</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Owned and operated by Common Ground and the Actors Fund</li> <li>- Center for Urban Community Services provides on-site services</li> </ul>

<b>Table 5-5. E. Physical, Social, Economic Impacts</b>	
<b>Physical/Spatial</b>	- High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connects brownstone neighborhood and downtown</li> <li>- Storefront space attracts visitors and shows activity inside</li> <li>- Provides more pedestrian friendly environment</li> </ul>
<b>Social/Community</b>	- High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides home and social services for special needs and low-income people</li> <li>- Provides arts space and programs to tenants and public</li> <li>- Community theater serves as performance and meeting space</li> <li>- Integrates people of different economic backgrounds</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	- High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gives people a stable home for them to hold their jobs or become employed through job training and social services</li> <li>- Saves City money by building supportive housing</li> <li>- Provides dedicated arts or non-profit space</li> <li>- Makes the street more desirable and increases pedestrian traffic</li> <li>- Underutilized land now generating tax revenue and investment</li> </ul>





## CHAPTER 6

### Case Study: Chashama (New York, NY)

*Working with partners to bring  
artist studios into vacant storefronts  
and other properties.*

## Summary



Figures 6-1 and 6-2. Chashama's window art exhibitions at the vacant Donnell Library in Midtown Manhattan. Exterior and interior view. Source: Julie Chan.

Chashama is a non-profit organization founded in 1995 that transforms temporarily vacant properties into free or low-cost artist work studios and exhibition spaces throughout New York City. It was started by performing artist Anita Durst in response to the need for affordable space to rehearse and present work. Working closely with real estate developers, property owners, economic development corporations, community groups, the public sector and arts non-profits, Chashama opens up vacant spaces in all five boroughs, ranging from individual storefronts to industrial buildings. Chashama partners with many local arts and youth development groups to reach out to different audiences, teaching them about arts and entrepreneurship. Its mission is to support creativity in New York City by repurposing vacant space into art space and, in doing so, invigorate the surrounding community. Since its inception, it has converted over 50 locations. It also operates chaNorth, a residency program in Upstate New York.

## Organizational History

### *Vision & Intent: A Response to a Need for Space*

Anita Durst, founder of Chashama, is an actor and disciple of Reza Abdoh, a famous Iranian-born avant-garde director, playwright, poet and founding director of the Dar A Luz theater company.<sup>145</sup> As a creator of large-scale stage

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<sup>145</sup> "Reza Abdoh's collection of papers 1983-1999," New York Public Library, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://www.nypl.org/archives/4137>.

spectacles, Abdoh and Dar A Luz presented exhibitions that were “known for their visual flamboyance and ferocious energy.”<sup>146</sup>

Anita Durst’s father is Douglas Durst, co-president of the real estate development company and property owner Durst Organization and son of Seymour Durst, also a developer. The Durst family is one of the few major family holders of real estate in New York and has operated and developed Manhattan real estate since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Times Square Revitalization***

Chashama’s model of converting space and using defunct buildings as art space originated in large part because of the opportunities that arose when the Durst Organization started redeveloping the Times Square area in Manhattan. Seymour Durst saw the development potential of the Times Square neighborhood before anyone else did and had the patience to assemble plots one by one over decades until he had a parcel large enough to build on. Since the 1950s to the 1970s, S. Durst amassed parcels of land in the West 40<sup>th</sup> Street area up from Third Avenue to as far west as Broadway. His plan was to buy up land from 42nd to 47th Streets, from Sixth Avenue to Broadway to build a single complex of buildings. However, he fell short of this goal when the markets crashed in the 1970s.<sup>147</sup> This time period was when Times Square – known since before the turn of the century for its theaters as the entertainment capital of the world – became known instead for adult live entertainment and street crime.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> James Traub, “The Dursts have Odd Properties,” *The New York Times*, October, 6, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/06/magazine/the-dursts-have-odd-properties.html>.

<sup>147</sup> Traub 2002.

<sup>148</sup> The New 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, “A Chronology,” accessed May 15, 2011, [http://www.new42.org/new42/new42\\_chronology.html](http://www.new42.org/new42/new42_chronology.html).

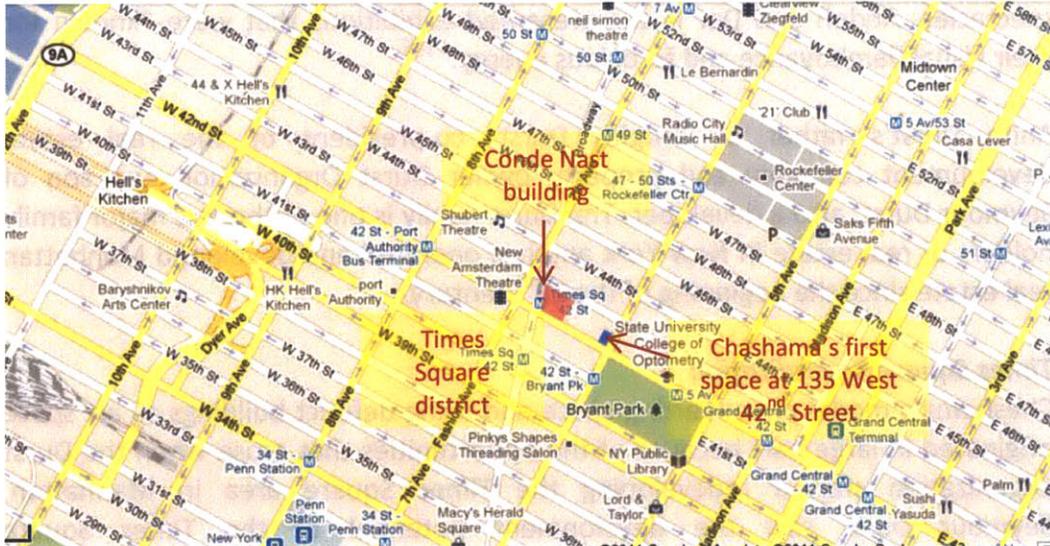


Figure 6-3. Map of Times Square area. Source: Google Maps.

In the 1980s, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Development Corporation was formed as a public/private consortium to promote the redevelopment of the Times Square area. In 1989, the Durst Organization bought the lease for seven “rundown” movie theaters on 42nd Street that could be returned to legitimate use. In 1996, Douglas Durst started building the Conde Nast headquarters at 4 Times Square. The building was the “centerpiece of the 42nd Street Master Plan” that was prepared by the 42nd Street Development Corporation.<sup>149</sup> Because of the corporation’s efforts, as well as the investment of numerous real estate developers and corporations that built prime commercial office space and restored the area’s historic theaters, Times Square transformed from New York City’s Red Light district into the iconic commercial and theater district it is known globally for today.

### ***Founding Chashama in Times Square’s shadow***

Anita Durst had always been passionate about the arts and especially visionary theater. When Abdo passed away at the age of 32 in 1995 because of AIDS, Anita Durst wanted to keep his creative spirit alive. She founded Chashama as a theater company (Farsi “to have vision”) that year and staged the company’s inaugural production with several members from Dar a Luz. Because of the production’s success, Anita Durst started working on other performance pieces and convinced her father to donate space for her to rehearse and perform.

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<sup>149</sup> “4 Times Square – The Conde Nast Building,” Wired New York, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://wirednewyork.com/skyscrapers/4-times-square/>.

In 1997, the Durst Organization was putting together a development plan that spanned parcels bordered by Broadway, Avenue of the Americas and 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Streets, and would become a skyscraper that Durst was building with Bank of America. Anita convinced her father to allow Chashama to use a former Herman's Sporting Goods store, located at 135 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, as interim office, rehearsal and performance space. This building was adjacent to the Conde Nast headquarters under construction in 1997. Artists used the space to perform in, including one artist who spent 80 hours as a window display. "My dad assumed that we'd be there a year, maybe two, not seven years," Ms. Durst said.<sup>150</sup> This space was the very first repurposed space that started Chashama's model of converted art space. With the leases in other storefronts expiring to make way for development, Douglas Durst gave Anita those spaces as well. Over the years, these four or five storefronts alternated with the "Peep-O-Rama, Tad's Steaks and a Duane Reade," stores of the area's storied past that closed to make way for the new Times Square. He even allowed her to use the "semi-defunct" Diplomat Hotel on West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street to stage a play called "The Law of Remains" in its ballrooms. Douglas Durst was Anita and Chashama's chief patron. A *New York Times* article called "The Durst Have Odd Properties," quoted his donations of space as costing him "up to \$2 million in foregone revenue."<sup>151</sup>

### ***Vision & Intent: Bridging Real Estate and the Arts***

With an "abundance of space" to work with, A. Durst staged theater productions in multiple storefronts and historic buildings. A number of her friends asked to use her space to rehearse, create, and show theater productions when it was not in use. "What started out as an informal means of helping her friends and colleagues was formalized into the AREA program"<sup>152</sup> in 1999, which stands for Accessing Real Estate for the Arts.<sup>153</sup> The AREA program provided free or low-cost temporary space donated by real estate owners, developers, and property managers to artists. This program was created in direct response to A. Durst's realization that "the lack of affordable space was the greatest threat to sustaining a diverse, dynamic, and provocative cultural environment in New York City."<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Dan Barry, "About New York; Fading To Memory, And Beyond," *New York Times*, February 25, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/25/nyregion/about-new-york-fading-to-memory-and-beyond.html>.

<sup>151</sup> Traub 2002.

<sup>152</sup> Traub 2002.

<sup>153</sup> Lisa Chamberlain, "Square Feet: For Artists, Cheap Studios in Vacant Commercial Space," *The New York Times*, May 8, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/08/realestate/08sqft.html>.

<sup>154</sup> Chashama, "About Us: History," accessed May 4, 2011, <http://www.chashama.org/about/history>.

The program resulted in a symbiotic relationship between property owners and artists: property owners bring in an active use that could help them market their space to potential tenants and artists receive free or low-cost space. Chashama plays the role of the broker and manager, providing liability insurance and matching donated spaces to the artists. A *New York Times* article called, "Square Feet: For Artists, Cheap Studios in Vacant Commercial Space," dated May 8, 2005, profiled a 42,000 square foot space at 40 Worth Street in Lower Manhattan. The space was temporarily donated by Newmark & Company Real Estate, and was turned into artist studios. In the article, Jeffrey Gural, chairman of Newmark said, "We want to be supportive of the arts. Rents in the city are high. Some artists just can't afford space. So we donated the space with the understanding that if we get a tenant, they have to get out."<sup>155</sup>

A. Durst said that first the organization was almost completely dependent on her family to provide free space. "But landlords are starting to see the benefits of having their empty spaces temporarily enlivened by artists. And because we provide liability insurance, it's no risk to them." The article went on to say that participating landlords "like donating to the arts community and contributing to the vibrancy of the neighborhood" and that they "would rather show prospective tenants a space that is in use rather than sitting empty."<sup>156</sup>

With this idea, Chashama's current model was born, focusing on transforming donated spaces into free or low-cost studio and exhibition space for a variety of visual and performing artists. Chashama incorporated finding space for artists into its mission and continues to strive to bridge the gap between the real estate world and artists.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Chamberlain 2005.

<sup>156</sup> Chamberlain 2005.

<sup>157</sup> Chashama, "About Us: History."



Clockwise from left. Figures 6-4. Interior of Jamaica Studios in Queens showing subdivided artist studio space. Figures 6-5, 6-6, 6-7. Photos of a former beer factory in Harlem converted into artist studio and exhibition space with artist showing her work; vacant top floor; interior of an artist studio on a different floor. Source: Julie Chan

### 🏠 Context & Demographics:

*Because our locations are in a range of areas, from high-volume traffic and commerce districts to under-resourced and culturally underserved areas, each Chashama venue brings with it unique iterations of “community.”*  
 - Chashama website<sup>158</sup>

The locations are in a range of areas, from the commercial center of Midtown Manhattan to a quiet residential neighborhood in Harlem to a commercial side street in Jamaica, Queens. The neighborhoods are completely different in terms of demographics, ranging from very affluent to low-income, a majority white population to majority black or Hispanic. The diversity of contexts makes the model of Chashama able to traverse socioeconomic boundaries.

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<sup>158</sup> Chashama, “About Us: History.”

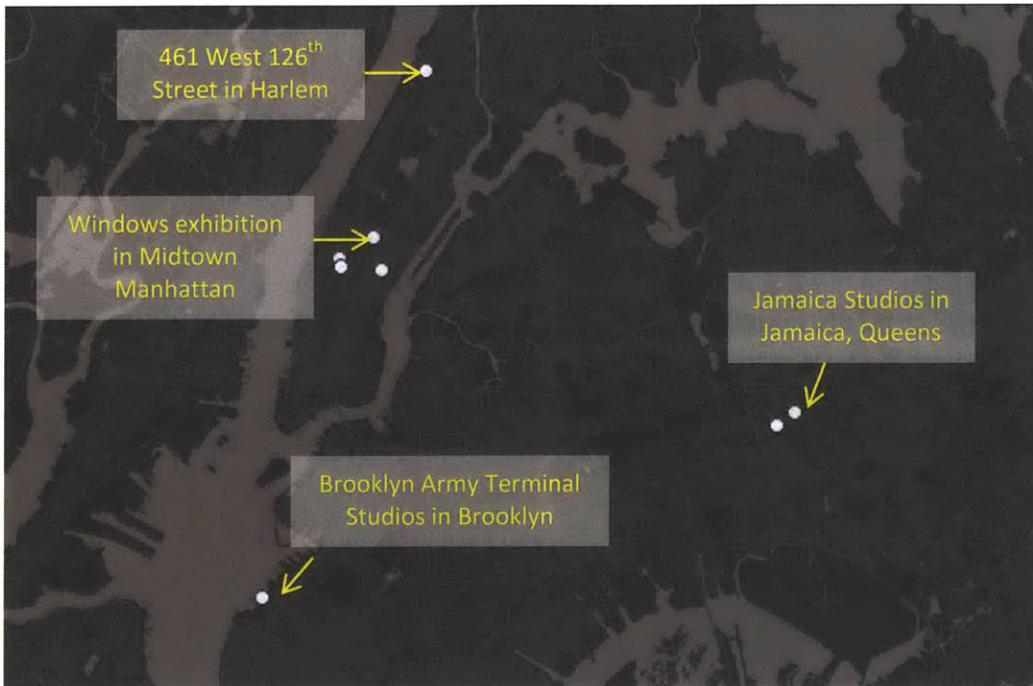


Figure 6-8. Map of Locations in New York City. Source: Chashama.

## 🏠 Space & Design

### ***Type of Space: Repurposing Vacant Storefronts and Properties***

Chashama has a portfolio of different types of spaces, including window displays, storefronts, and buildings. Since July 2010, Chashama has granted 235,775 square feet of space to artists at no or low cost, representing 19 temporary venues. The organization has served 575 artists<sup>159</sup> since July 2010 with studio, gallery, window presentation, rehearsal and performance space.

From July 2010 – March 2011, Chashama served the following number of people:

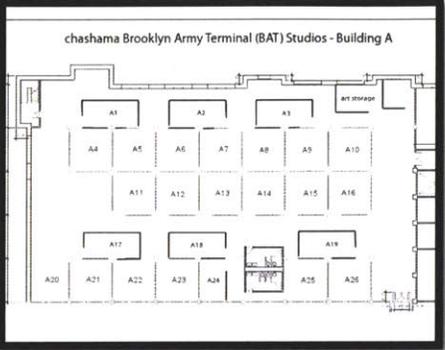
- 285 with subsidized studio space
- 115 with free gallery space
- 95 with free window presentation space
- 50 young people who participate in youth programs supported through Chashama
- 45 with free and subsidized rehearsal and performance space

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<sup>159</sup> Chashama notes in its statistics that many artists participate in multiple programs (ie, studio and gallery), so this number could be lower.

Table 6-1. Examples of Chashama Spaces

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Chashama 461</b></li> <li>- <b>461 West 126th Street, Harlem, NY</b> (bet. Amsterdam &amp; Morningside Avenues)</li> <li>- <b>Square Footage:</b> 45,000 square feet, bi-level</li> <li>- <b>Use:</b> 30 studios, 1 exhibition space, and a Youth Program</li> <li>- <b>Donated by:</b> Janus Management, Inc., LLC</li> <li>- <b>Gallery Space Grants since July 2010:</b> 10</li> <li>- <b>Events since July 2010:</b> 27</li> <li>- <b>Estimated Attendance:</b> 3,996</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Jamaica Studios</b></li> <li>- <b>90-26 161<sup>st</sup> Street Jamaica, Queens NY</b></li> <li>- <b>Square Footage:</b> 2,000</li> <li>- <b>Use:</b> Artist Studios and Gallery space; Youth Program with Reconstruct Art</li> <li>- <b>Donated by:</b> Greater Jamaica Development Corporation</li> <li>- <b>Events since July 2010:</b> 35</li> <li>- <b>Audience:</b> 1,500</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Donnell Library, 20 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, NY</b></li> <li>- <b>Square Footage:</b> 175</li> <li>- <b>Use:</b> Window space</li> <li>- <b>Donated by:</b> New York Public Library</li> <li>- <b>Window Grants since July 2010:</b> 20</li> <li>- <b>Estimated Attendance:</b> 40,500</li> </ul>

 <p>chashama Brooklyn Army Terminal (BAT) Studios - Building A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Brooklyn Army Terminal Studios</b></li> <li>- <b>140 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Building A, Unit J, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor</b></li> <li>- <b>Brooklyn, NY, 11220</b></li> <li>- <b>Square Footage: 19,000</b></li> <li>- <b>Use: 25 Visual Artists' Studios</b></li> <li>- <b>Donated by: New York City Economic Development Corporation</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>217 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street</b> (between 2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues)</li> <li>- <b>Square Footage: 2,000</b></li> <li>- <b>Use: Gallery and Window Space</b></li> <li>- <b>Donated by: The Durst Organization</b></li> <li>- <b>Space Grants since July 2010: 6</b></li> <li>- <b>Events since July 2010: 50</b></li> <li>- <b>Estimated Attendance: 18,900</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>201 &amp; 205 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street</b> (corner of Third Ave.)</li> <li>- <b>Square Footage: 1,500</b></li> <li>- <b>Use: Administrative offices, Film and Rehearsal Space</b></li> <li>- <b>Donated by: The Durst Organization</b></li> </ul>
<p>- All images and information courtesy of Chashama</p>	



Figures 6-9 and 6-10. Chashama's Jamaica Studio, a former doctor's office in Jamaica, Queens.  
Source: Julie Chan

### ***Profile of Jamaica Studio***

One example of Chashama's space is Jamaica Studio, located at 90-26 161st Street in Jamaica, Queens. Jamaica is a very diverse community close to the John F. Kennedy airport with AirTrain access that brings commuters connecting on the subway to the airport. The neighborhood is a mix of low to moderate-income African-Americans and immigrants from the West Indies, India and South American countries, among others. It has a vibrant commercial corridor along Jamaica Avenue. The Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC) owns several properties in the district and has been in charge of economic development and real estate development since it was established in 1967.

Chashama reached out to the GJDC to enquire about vacant spaces that could benefit from becoming art space. One particular space that GJDC donated is a 2,000 square foot former doctor's office with a ground-level storefront. Chashama signed a license agreement with GJDC agreeing to set up, manage, and insure the space. It currently houses a number of artist studios using temporary walls to subdivide the space and has an intimate gallery in the front that houses exhibitions. Passersby can look through the office window and see the art inside. The space has hosted at least 35 events since July 2010, and also houses an art youth program run by a partner, Reconstruct Art. Artists from the borough of Queens rent the private studios for \$150 a month and have access 24 hours a day. Receptions held at the gallery have attracted community residents who come to see art by local artists and to buy art for their businesses and homes. One artist painted scenes from his hometown in the Caribbean. Neighborhood residents from the same hometown passed by, saw a painting of

a coconut tree and shared that they remembered climbing that tree when they were young. Jamaica Studios has an estimated audience of 1,500.

Reuel Daniels, Senior Project Manager at the GJDC, comments that the organization attributes the arts activity as a major force in the revitalization of that block. The activity has “impacted the community by enhancing the vibrancy of 161<sup>st</sup> St. and its quality of life.” While the concept of utilizing vacant storefronts for arts uses is not unique in the country, it is uncommon for Jamaica, Queens, which has not been exposed to this type of community-based storefront art space until recently. Another storefront down the block was used to host arts activities and was later purchased by a new architecture firm that moved its office into the space. By having bright lights, white walls, and art events drawing people in to formerly vacant storefronts, the place doesn’t look run down.<sup>160</sup> Lawrence Joyner, founder of Reconstruct Art says that local youth come to the space to learn about art, curating, and entrepreneurship through its programming. The partnership between Reconstruct Art and Chashama “cultivates local talent and raises awareness of the cultural heritage in Jamaica... showing that it is not just a transit hub, but a vibrant, downtown cultural district.” Jamaica Studios has also deterred crime, with would-be criminals and drug-dealers understanding that the gallery is a positive place for the community and thus, to be avoided. Having arts activity improves this location because of the increase in positive community activity.<sup>161</sup>

### ***Time: A Model for Temporary Art Space***

Chashama’s spaces are temporary and are used as art space for as long as the property owner will allow. The spaces may last for 3-6 months, with some lasting much longer. The spaces are all by donation by property owners such as the Durst Organization, Janus Management, Newmark, Knight and Frank, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, New York Public Library, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, and Scopia Capital. Chashama works within the constraints of the spaces to develop the artist studios and gallery spaces.

### ***Mobility: A Mobile Space and Brand***

Chashama’s art spaces can be located in any neighborhood, giving it an air of mobility. As long as the property owners sign a license agreement with Chashama, any storefront, property, or window can be converted and programmed by the organization. Branding with the Chashama logo and name is

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<sup>160</sup> Reuel Daniels, Senior Project Manager, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, personal interview, April 22, 2011.

<sup>161</sup> Lawrence Joyner, Founder, Reconstruct Art, personal interview, April 22, 2011.

consistent, making it very clear that Chashama has taken a neighborhood store or building and has turned it into art space open to the public.

***Sustainability: Reusing Space***

While Chashama’s mission does not explicitly include environmental sustainability, the simple act of reusing spaces that are vacant contributes to a more sustainable environment. These spaces could sit vacant and deteriorate if it were not for Chashama. The amount of time and investment, in addition to the increased activity that comes with turning vacant space into art studios and exhibition space, makes that area more attractive to potential tenants and neighborhood residents.

***Connectivity: Community-Level Spaces***

Chashama has a high degree of connectivity because of the open aspect of taking over storefronts and windows. The exhibitions within the spaces, whether they are performing arts pieces in window displays or traditional galleries, attract audiences from the neighborhood as well as new audiences from outside of the neighborhood. Jamaica Studios connects directly to the streetscape outside by being lit at night and having its activity visible from the street. It also brings youth, neighborhood residents and business owners into the space for artist events. The local nature of Chashama’s activities, its programming and partnerships make the organization well connected in a variety of neighborhoods. In areas like Jamaica, Queens, Chashama creates low cost artist studio space for communities that do not have many of these spaces available.

** Programs, Partners & Financing**

***Programs & Audience: Focus on Artists***

Chashama focuses on providing studio and exhibition space for artists at no or low-cost. Its primary audience is thus artists while its secondary audiences are youth and the general public. Through its programming, which includes partnerships with youth arts groups and non-profit community organizations, Chashama reaches out to people on a local level. In its other exhibition-focused locations in Midtown Manhattan, for example, Chashama’s audience consists of business workers and visitors in that area that pass by throughout the day. For a major commercial district, Midtown becomes a unique reminder of New York City’s other industries of art and entertainment when artists perform and exhibit in storefront windows.

### ***Partnerships: Real Estate Industry Partners***

Chashama is unique amongst the case studies because of the close relationship it has with the real estate development industry. While this is due in large part to the Durst family connection, Chashama has over time developed strong relationships with major real estate developers and property owners, local city government, community and economic development groups that donate vacant spaces, and youth and arts education groups that program the spaces. Without these partnerships, Chashama would not have the city-wide reach that it has today and also would not have the capacity to program each space with events and workshops that fit within the community.

### ***Funding/Financing: Working with Free Space***

Chashama only uses donated space from real estate developers and property owners. Depending on the deal, sometimes the property owner will pay for utilities. Chashama pays for liability insurance and will subdivide the space into artist studios, which are rented out for \$100-150 a month. Chashama operates with an annual budget of around \$600,000, of which \$200,000 is earned income from studio rentals and the rest from contributed income such as individual and corporate donations, government and foundation grants. Chashama's ability to earn income from studio rentals makes it unique from other types of organizations that use vacant storefront as purely exhibition space.

### ***Operations: Legal Agreements***

Chashama holds a license agreement with the property owner to operate, manage and insure the space in question. As part of the deal, Chashama installs temporary walls and doors to create private artist studios along with gallery lighting. The organization essentially takes the property off of the hands of the landlord. Many parties end up benefitting – the landlord has an active use in an otherwise vacant property, Chashama earns income from its studios and the community near the space receives a new art space that has a stable foundation of programming and support.

### **❑ How is Chashama an innovative and transformative art space?**

Chashama is an example of an innovative art space because it utilizes donated vacant space to provide low-cost work and exhibition space for artists. The use of “free” space and its ability to charge for space are both essential for the survival of the organization. Chashama also has unique partnerships for an arts organization, working closely with the real estate industry as the key contributors of space. Additionally, it partners with local art organizations to program the space. This not only keeps local communities involved but also

provides a new community gathering place. Lastly, its mobile nature has already allowed the organization to replicate its model in very different neighborhoods, from Harlem to Jamaica, Queens. Each space is different in terms of the design and the artists, but the common thread is the capable infrastructure that Chashama has developed over 16 years.

Chashama is a transformative player in local community and economic revitalization. Its ability to impact people is based largely on its ability to provide low-cost studio space for local artists. It also creates community-based art space in neighborhoods where there is a high need for activities of this kind. As seen in Jamaica Studios, Chashama has directly impacted the people involved by giving them a place to buy and sell art.

Chashama is also place-based in its transformative qualities. Its model is built upon the transformation of vacant or neglected space into an active use. Its many locations, from a run-down former beer factory in Harlem or a former doctor's office on a side street in Jamaica, Queens, to a vacant public library branch in Midtown and industrial buildings along the Brooklyn waterfront, is a testament to how Chashama's model can be implemented in many different types of buildings.

In Jamaica Studios, Chashama played a pivotal role in revitalizing a side street. The Greater Jamaica Development Corporation credits the arts presence as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization. Chashama and the arts presence has made that block safer and has attracted investment in the form of an architecture firm moving into a nearby space, and more pedestrian traffic during the day and nighttime hours.

### What are the lessons learned?

**Turning vacant storefronts into artist studio space can be a successful community-based revitalization tool.** First, Chashama has demonstrated that art space can be a successful revitalization tool as seen in multiple neighborhood contexts. Turning vacant storefront space – because of its open presence and space for community gatherings – makes it more effective than simply having exhibitions in windows. However, Chashama has taken the typical static exhibitions that many think of and transformed them into active, performing arts pieces in windows – an uncommon sight and one that often causes passersby to stay and watch. Secondly, Chashama has shown that art space can be neutral territory and can make an area safer by increasing positive activity.

**Some property owners still do not grasp the benefits of allowing temporary art uses in their spaces.** The major challenges are that not all property owners understand the benefit of allowing artists to use their space for any length of time. There is still a process of education that needs to take place in order to convince smaller property owners (as opposed to major property owners like Durst) that allowing artists to use their spaces is beneficial for them.

**The supply of vacant space is higher than the capacity of organizations to program them.** The other challenge in a large city like New York is that there are more vacant spaces than one organization can handle. There is opportunity for other organizations to develop adaptations of Chashama’s model or new models altogether that can create art spaces in vacant spaces. Examples of organizations that are similar to Chashama are discussed in the next section.

### **Replicating the model**

Many cities across the nation have already created programs that utilize vacant storefront and city-owned properties for art space. Within New York City, even, there is a lot of potential for more organizations to devise new models for repurposing vacant space. Chashama only has a limited staff of 5 people and an annual budget of \$600,000, and has stated that there are more opportunities available than there are staff and resources to handle them.

To adapt this model, art space creators should think about what kinds of donated spaces are available and whom to reach out to in the real estate and economic development arena. Art space creators need to negotiate terms of responsibility for rent, if any, utilities, liability insurance and other operating costs. Depending on the duration of vacancy and existing conditions, many spaces have constraints that might interfere with the conversion into art space, such as unsafe flooring, poor lighting and ventilation and little pedestrian traffic. Steps should be taken to address these issues, which could come in the form of using grant money for small improvements, sweat equity on the part of the organization and marketing and community outreach.<sup>162</sup> Besides creating the space, careful attention has to be given to programming the space in a relevant, inclusive, and community-based manner, especially in disadvantaged areas.

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<sup>162</sup> Robert Sanchez, Co-Founder, Crosby Street Gallery, personal interview, May 10, 2011.

### ***Similar Organizations***

Many different organizations and programs have been started in New York City alone and elsewhere that animate vacant spaces. No Longer Empty, a non-profit organization started in 2009 by curator Manon Slome, is one such organization using the same premise of opening up vacant storefront space, but instead focuses on site-specific art installations that speak to the prior uses of each space. Whether it is a sound, light and image exhibition of twenty artists in the former Tower Records at Union Square, which closed down in part because of the change in music distribution with the development of digital technology,<sup>163</sup> to the ground-floor retail space of a new residential development in East Harlem focused on the weaving of different people and ideas together, the spaces that No Longer Empty works with have storied pasts that inspire its art. No Longer Empty presents public workshops, talks, and programs with youth in its spaces.<sup>164</sup>

The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council is an older organization, started in 2004, that is based more on the Chashama model. It uses vacant office and retail properties in Lower Manhattan to provide much needed space to artists, from turning “banks into concert halls, offices into art studios and storefronts into jewel box theaters.” It is known for its program Swing Space, which is a project-based residency program that matches visual and performing artists and arts groups with unused and unconventional spaces in Lower Manhattan. The LMCC also provides business workshops and training for artists, as well as numerous exhibition and residency programs.<sup>165</sup>

In Downtown Brooklyn, the public-private organization Downtown Brooklyn Partnership started a program called “Your Art Here” in 2009. The organization works with property owners to use vacant garages, storefronts, and other spaces for temporary art installations by local artists. Not only does it allow artists to have a platform for showcasing their work to a broader audience, but it enlivens the street with nighttime events and brightly lit windows.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> “No Longer Empty Gets Back to the Beat,” No Longer Empty, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://www.nolongerempty.com/exhibitions/NeverCanSayGoodbye/Tower.html>.

<sup>164</sup> “Weaving In and Out,” No Longer Empty, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://www.nolongerempty.com/exhibitions/Weaving%20Now/Weaving.html>.

<sup>165</sup> “We Make Art Happen,” Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://www.lmcc.net/>.

<sup>166</sup> “Your Art Here,” Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://www.dbpartnership.org/discover/artsculture/yourartthere>.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation and Full Spectrum Experience, Inc., a non-profit arts organization led by Danny Simmons and Brian Tate, initiated CurateNYC in 2010 that was a juried open-call for emerging artists in New York City. The 150 winners of the competition, out of nearly 1,200 entries, had their work displayed in city-owned properties in different boroughs and private galleries for select weekends in October 2010. The city-owned properties included the Essex Street market in the Lower East Side, the St. George Yankees Minor League Stadium in Staten Island, and the La Marqueta Open Plaza in East Harlem.<sup>167</sup>

In New Haven, Connecticut, the New Haven Department of Cultural Affairs, City of New Haven, and New Haven Economic Development Corporation launched “Project Storefronts” that places creative businesses and retailers into vacant storefronts. The project ran for six months from August 2010-February 2011 and worked with property owner Related Properties to place businesses into a former United Way office/storefront space at 71 Orange Street in the Ninth Square district of downtown New Haven. The businesses included a boutique bookstore selling hand-crafted and limited edition books, a gallery that promotes emerging artists from across the nation, including New Haven’s local artists, an incubator space for creative businesses and retailers selling handmade and recycled crafts. The initiative won the Arts Council of Greater New Haven’s Giant Steps Award 2010 and made downtown New Haven a more vibrant place for artists to gather and sell their work.<sup>168</sup>

All of these examples demonstrate that the initiators, types of programs and partnerships that exist all vary. Whether it is artist-initiated as a nonprofit organization or a City-run program, these models benefit from diversity because they showcase different artists, business models, and involve different audiences. Within New York City alone, and certainly in other cities that have suffered from the Great Recession, there are many opportunities to allow artists to be a part of commercial districts, innovatively use non-traditional spaces and engage a wider audience.

There are more opportunities for research on the many organizations that exist currently that utilize vacant storefronts and other properties. The major takeaway from Chashama is that there are many opportunities to create art

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<sup>167</sup> “About Us,” CurateNYC, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://www.curatenyc.org/about/about-curatenyc.html>.

<sup>168</sup> “Partnering Creative Entrepreneurs with Vacant Storefronts,” Project Storefronts, accessed May 15, 2011, <http://www.projectstorefrontsnewhaven.com/>.

spaces if one knows where to look. The ingredients to making a successful art space as a pioneer are to first have a need, and second, to have the partnerships and source of funding that make the spaces possible in the short and long term. Chashama has done so successfully for 16 years.

### Summary of Case: Chashama

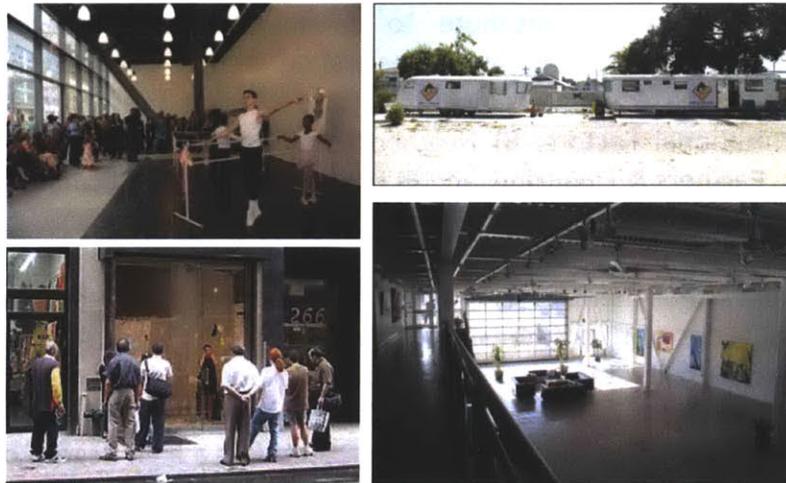
<b>Table 6-2. A. Organizational Factors</b>	
<b>Year formed</b>	1995
<b>Location</b>	Multiple locations in New York City; Upstate New York
<b>Year space completed</b>	Varies – spaces are temporary storefronts and properties, as market provides
<b>Leader</b>	Artist Anita Durst
<b>Organization</b>	Non-profit with public/private/non-profit partnerships for space and programming needs
<b>Ownership</b>	Uses donated buildings and spaces from property owners/City
<b>Mission</b>	Support creativity and neighborhoods by repurposing vacant properties and recycling them as artist work and show spaces

<b>Table 6-3. B. Neighborhood Context</b>	
<b>Neighborhood</b>	- Various – major ones in Jamaica, Queens, Harlem, Midtown Manhattan, and Brooklyn Army Terminal; mostly low to moderate income neighborhoods but demographics vary
<b>Demographics of population served</b>	- Artists seeking low-cost space - It is not tied to any specific location
<b>Site Context</b>	- Densely populated urban areas - Vacant storefronts or properties surrounded by residential or commercial

<b>Table 6-4. C. Space &amp; Design</b>	
<b>Vision &amp; Intent</b>	- Model was developed in response to need for affordable and usable art space
<b>Type of Space</b>	- Vacant storefronts and properties - Varies, can be a 2,000 SF former doctor’s office to an industrial building divided into artist work spaces.
<b>Time</b>	- Temporary
<b>Mobility</b>	- Moderate - Uses fixed properties but the concept is mobile
<b>Sustainability</b>	- Low - Reuses vacant spaces, but minimal focus on sustainability
<b>Connectivity</b>	- High - Connects community to artists through space and programming

<b>Table 6-5. D. Programs, Partners &amp; Financing</b>	
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artists</li> <li>- Youth</li> <li>- Collectors/buyers from community and beyond</li> <li>- General public</li> </ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artist studio space</li> <li>- Exhibitions and receptions</li> <li>- Arts education programs</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real estate developers and property owners</li> <li>- Local arts organizations</li> <li>- Community and economic development groups</li> <li>- Local government</li> </ul>
<b>Funding/ Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uses donated space</li> <li>- City funding, grants</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holds license agreement to operate/manage space</li> <li>- Builds out temporary walls, pays utilities, insurance, marketing</li> </ul>

<b>Table 6-6. E. Physical, Social, Economic Impacts</b>	
<b>Physical/Spatial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High</li> <li>- Helped revitalize blocks with positive arts activity, created space for local community artists to buy/sell/show work</li> </ul>
<b>Social/Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High</li> <li>- Provides arts education and youth development programs in spaces through partners</li> <li>- Provides artists with low-cost work space</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate/High</li> <li>- Gives artists work-studio space to create and sell art</li> <li>- Generates value for nearby properties</li> <li>- Markets the property to potential tenants</li> <li>- Increases pedestrian activity by using vacant space</li> <li>- Investment of time and arts saves in costs associated with deterioration</li> </ul>



## CHAPTER 7

### Findings & Analysis

## **Findings & Analysis**

In the previous chapters, I have presented four case studies highlighting organizations that have approached the creation of art space in creative, yet very different ways. Because of varying contexts, types of spaces, audiences and programs, each case study offers specific lessons about how spaces can be innovative and how they may contribute to community and economic development. This chapter analyzes the similarities and differences between the four case studies using the framework and matrix of themes presented in Chapter 2: A) Organizational Factors, B) Neighborhood Context, C) Space & Design, D) Programs, Partners & Financing, and E) Physical, Social, and Economic Impacts.

For some of the themes that merit comparison, I have marked them as “low, moderate, or high” in terms of their intensity relative to the other case studies. For example, for the mobility theme described in more detail later in this chapter, I categorize Side Street Projects as having “high” mobility and Artists for Humanity having “moderate” mobility. Side Street Projects has a high degree of mobility because of its woodworking bus program and mobile nature of its trailers. Artists for Humanity has a moderate level because, while the building itself is stationary, the teen apprentices are still mobile and come from all over Boston, thus generating a movement in ideas and impact in their home neighborhoods. The comparisons continue with the remaining case studies to show that varying levels of mobility can occur in art spaces depending on their space type and programs. I analyze each of them in the same fashion and distill my findings in this chapter.

When taken together, these themes and findings can inform city planners, policymakers, and entrepreneurs about how to combine visionary and thoughtfully-designed spaces with targeted, creative arts programs that encourage a better neighborhood environment. This analysis leads to a series of recommendations that can be directly applied to cities that want to play a conscious and proactive role in shaping art spaces, and nurturing innovation in the field. These recommendations will be targeted towards city planners and policymakers on the one hand, and arts organizations and artist entrepreneurs on the other. The goal of these recommendations is to encourage – from both a policy and grass-roots level – the development of innovative art spaces that are notable, effective and relevant to the communities they serve.

## A. Organizational Factors

Taking the basic organizational information from each case study, I looked across to see if there were any notable similarities.

<b>Table 7-1. Organizational Factors</b>				
	<b>Side Street Projects</b>	<b>Artists for Humanity</b>	<b>Schermerhorn House</b>	<b>Chashama</b>
<b>Year formed</b>	1992	1991	2001 (partnership)	1995
<b>Location</b>	Pasadena, CA	Boston, MA	Brooklyn, NY	Multiple locations in New York City; Upstate New York
<b>Year space completed</b>	Adopted mobile programming in 1997; completed mobile trailer headquarters in 2008	Built EpiCenter in 2004	Building completed in 2009	Varies – spaces are temporary storefronts and properties, as market provides
<b>Leader</b>	Co-founders artist Karen Atkinson and contractor Joe Luttrell; Executive Directors Jon Lapointe and Emily Hopkins	Co-founders artist Susan Rodgeron and young artists Jason Talbot, Damon Butler	Developer Abby Hamlin and partners	Artist Anita Durst
<b>Organization</b>	Non-profit	Non-profit	For-profit developer, with partnership with non-profits, private developer, and public sector	Non-profit with public/private/non-profit partnerships for space and programming needs
<b>Ownership</b>	Owns the mobile homes and vehicles, leases lot from City for free	Owns building and land	Donated land to Common Ground/The Actors Fund	Uses donated buildings from property owners/City
<b>Mission</b>	Give artists of all ages the ability and the means to support their creative endeavors. It considers itself a social enterprise that operates outside of the gallery system	Bridge social, racial, economic barriers for underserved teens through paid employment in the arts	Build mix of market-rate and affordable housing with arts component to bridge brownstone neighborhoods and downtown core	Support creativity and neighborhoods by repurposing vacant properties and recycling them as artist work and show spaces

**Finding #A1: There are similarities between the case studies, including the type of organization involved, age of the organization, driving force of a female artist, ownership structure and presence of an underlying social mission. All of these factors play a role in creating innovative and effective art spaces.**

The similarities between the case studies are surprising. First, the organizations, with the exception of Schermerhorn House, were developed by non-profits. Schermerhorn House involved non-profits as partners for the supportive housing development, but the idea for art space was initiated by the for-profit developer. The trend toward non-profit art space development makes sense because these types of organizations often focus on providing services to artists and disadvantaged populations. However, Artists for Humanity has a robust revenue-generating model unique among non-profits that is based on employment, training and a philosophy of respect as the way to end poverty.

Secondly, three out of the four organizations developed in the early to mid-1990s. This time period corresponds with the resurgence of central cities after the urban crisis period of the 1970s and 1980s when public policy, fiscal crises, and drug and criminal activity were negatively impacting the quality of urban life.

Thirdly, all the organizations were initiated in part or fully by a female artist. This is significant because while 43% of all artists were female in 1990 according to a National Endowment for the Arts report, “Women Artists 1990-2005” that uses U.S. Census data,<sup>169</sup> 100% of the initiators in these case studies were women. While I recognize that the case studies were selected because of their track record in receiving awards or recognition, this is still an interesting commonality. According to the U.S. Census data, the percentage of female artists is also rising; in 2003-2005, it increased to 46% though subgroups such as fine artists, actors, musicians and photographers still have a male majority. These case

	1990	2003-2005	Change (pp)
All artists	43.2%	45.9%	+2.7
Actors	38.1%	45.1%	+7.0
Announcers	24.4%	22.4%	-1.9
Architects	15.3%	22.2%	+6.9
Art directors, fine artists, and animators	46.2%	47.4%	+1.2
Dancers and choreographers	76.7%	75.9%	-0.8
Designers	55.0%	54.9%	-0.1
Entertainers and performers	49.4%	45.1%	-4.3
Musicians	32.9%	36.1%	+3.3
Photographers	31.5%	42.8%	+11.3
Producers and directors	36.2%	35.3%	-0.8
Writers and authors	50.3%	54.9%	+4.6

(pp)=percentage points (rounded)  
 Small percentage point changes may be statistically insignificant.

Figure 7-1. Percentage Female, 1990 and 2003-2005.  
 Source: National Endowment for the Arts.

<sup>169</sup> “Women Artists 1990 to 2005,” National Endowment for the Arts, NEA Research Note #96, December 2008, <http://www.arts.gov/research/Notes/96.pdf>, 15.

studies show that art space development in particular is often initiated by women who have experience in the arts, who saw a need for art space or arts programming in their communities and who started non-profit organizations to address that need. These case studies are certainly not representative of all non-profits or all developers of art space. However, this shows that four female artists appreciate the value that arts activities and art spaces bring to society and find a way to create them for a social good.

Fourth, all the organizations either own their art space or are using essentially free space donated by property owners or city agencies. This is significant because arts organizations often move around due to restrictions caused by rising rents. When organizations take control over their space, they have a higher degree of stability because their operating costs are relatively predictable. Side Street Projects and Chashama both take advantage of free leases with the City, while Hamlin donated the land for Schermerhorn House directly to Common Ground and the Actors Fund as part of their agreement.

Finally, different mission statements and strategies towards art space development can all lead to innovative art spaces. Side Street Projects and Artists for Humanity are both geared towards teaching youth technical skills and self-reliance methods. Both have a social enterprise mission, though AFH is more explicit and targeted in its mission to bridge racial, social, economic gaps through paid employment. Schermerhorn House also uses the arts as a way to build bridges between very different populations within the building and in the context of the larger neighborhood. Chashama's mission directly incorporates vacant space as a way to support artists with low-cost studio space. Chashama and Schermerhorn House are the case studies whose mission directly relates to the creation of art spaces, while the others have done so as a means of accommodating their programs and audience. The variation in missions shows that there are many paths that lead to an art space that both serves its audience and has larger effects on the neighborhood. For all, though, there is an underlying social mission of using the arts as a way to strengthen communities.

### ***B. Neighborhood Context***

I compared the context of each innovative art space in the case studies to find similarities and differences between factors such as what kinds of neighborhood the organization is located in, what populations it serves and any other characteristics of the site context.

Table 7-2. Neighborhood Context				
	Side Street Projects	Artists for Humanity	Schermerhorn House	Chashama
<b>Neighborhood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Northwest Pasadena, a low-to moderate-income residential neighborhood of mostly Black and Hispanic residents; it is gentrifying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fort Point, South Boston, an industrial district of low-to moderate-income residents; it is a burgeoning arts district with major investment by the City to create an Innovation and Seaport Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In between Boerum Hill and Downtown Brooklyn on an urban renewal site; located between affluent brownstone community and low- to moderate-income residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Various – major ones in Jamaica, Queens, Harlem, Midtown Manhattan, and Brooklyn Navy Yard; mostly low to moderate income neighborhoods</li> </ul>
<b>Demographics of population served</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mostly Latino and Black neighborhood</li> <li>- One of poorest census tracts in city</li> <li>- It brings art to the people – very place-based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At-risk inner city youth, mostly minority populations</li> <li>- It is not tied to the physical neighborhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Special needs population including formerly homeless individuals, physically and mentally disabled, living with HIV/AIDs, and low-income arts workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artists seeking low-cost space</li> <li>- It is not tied to any specific location</li> </ul>
<b>Site Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Next to busy main road, across from retail and business strip</li> <li>- Close to Habitat for Humanity store, daycare center</li> <li>- Accessible by car</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Located in an industrial district</li> <li>- South of the Boston Convention Center</li> <li>- Close to highways and the subway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Former urban renewal site</li> <li>- Close to downtown center, cultural district, residential neighborhood, subway and buses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Densely populated urban areas</li> <li>- Vacant storefronts or properties surrounded by residential or commercial</li> </ul>

**Finding #B1: Each organization is more likely to be located in an area with higher vacancies or more affordable space, which tends to occur in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Regardless, the case studies have varying location types (residential, commercial, industrial) and have good access to transportation.**

First, each case study is located in an area with low-income and minority populations and includes those populations as part of their audience served. This fact could be due in part to my selection of case studies that do not emphasize

traditional art space, such as performing arts centers, museums, art galleries or even live-work housing. Each case study incorporates the arts into a larger social mission, which dictates to an extent the kinds of communities where the art space is located. Side Street Projects, for example, is located in Northwest Pasadena and is one of the only arts organizations on the north side of the freeway where there is a large Latino and Black population.

The case studies are also located in a variety of transportation-accessible location types spanning residential, commercial and industrial areas depending on the space and the programming. This suggests that these art organizations can take root any place where there is affordable or vacant space that they are given permission to occupy. Side Street Projects specifically looks for vacant lots in residential neighborhoods because the organization needs to be close to a higher population of families with children. Given its program model, SSP would not be as effective in reaching its audience if it were located in a commercial or industrial district, for example. Chashama is located in commercial districts because of the organization’s focus on using storefront space. Its other properties are in a mix of residential and industrial areas because those properties were vacant and have been converted into work-studios. All of these areas have transportation access, whether it is by car, walking or public transportation. This finding suggests that art spaces should think strategically about a location where they are closest or most accessible to the specific audience they want to reach. These art spaces arose as a result of looking at the inventory of available space in areas that fits their needs and making the spaces work to their advantage.

### C. *Space & Design*

The following themes are all elements that affect the space and design of each case study. These encompass the most innovative physical qualities that make the spaces stand out. I analyze how the organizations arrived at these design elements during their planning process.

<b>Table 7-3. Space &amp; Design</b>				
	<b>Side Street Projects</b>	<b>Artists for Humanity</b>	<b>Schermerhorn House</b>	<b>Chashama</b>
<b>Vision &amp; Intent</b>	- Reactive	- Reactive	- Reactive/Intended	- Reactive/Intended
	- Intended to serve artists, then branched out to youth; - mobile trailers resulted in	- Was the result of an intent to create a safe and empowering place for teens	- Reactive and Intended - Was initially intended to mix affordable housing and diverse groups	- Model was developed in response to need for affordable and usable art space

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>response to real estate pressures;</li> <li>choice to become mobile fit in with existing mobile woodworking programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was also a reaction to real estate pressures;</li> <li>incorporated sustainable design for a new brand identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>using art space; outcome was in response to working with non-profit, public, and private partners</li> </ul>	
<b>Type of Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reuse of Vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of housing &amp; arts uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vacant storefronts and properties</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 mobile trailers used for office and art space</li> <li>2 woodworking buses</li> <li>25,000 sf vacant lot as headquarters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25,000 sf LEED Platinum building</li> <li>Open gallery and event space, large open air studios, office, garden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>97,000 sf, 11-story building with green roofs</li> <li>199-seat community theater</li> <li>1200 sf ground-floor art space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varies, can be a 2,000 SF former doctor's office to an industrial building divided into artist work spaces.</li> </ul>
<b>Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permanent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobile program; semi-fixed headquarters with capability to be mobile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixed building; mobile students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixed building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixed/Mobile</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photovoltaic array; reusing trailers and buses for art space; Armadillo urban farming trailer; focus on reusing materials in art and space; sustainability education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photovoltaic array, insulation, LEED Platinum green elements; reusing materials in art and building; sustainability education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Façade using recycled glass, green roofs, non-toxic materials;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reuses vacant spaces, but minimal focus on sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brings the arts north of 210 freeway, links vacant lot with greater community;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draws people in from other areas;</li> <li>Invests in a community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connects residential to commercial district</li> <li>Connects diverse people within building and outside of building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connects community to artists through space and programming</li> </ul>

## *Vision & Intent*

**Finding #C1: The creation of innovative art spaces is organic and not pre-planned. All of them serve a need and desire to be more stable in the long run, but develop innovative qualities as a reactive yet opportunistic response to external and internal factors.**

Why do arts organizations create these types of art spaces? What drives them to become completely mobile, for example, or develop a sustainable building? My original hypothesis for this question was that art spaces were strategically planned to be innovative as a way to stand out. While this is partly true, my findings show that instead, art organizations are reactive yet opportunistic – they develop innovative art spaces as a result of responding to the needs and challenges around them. They see a chance to devise a solution to a problem in a new way because they *have to* in order to continue serving their audiences and to be financially stable in the long run and *they can* because as artists, they are trained to think creatively. This is at the core of what makes a space inventive – it involves an organization that sees a need and reacts with the development of a combination of new ideas that, as a whole, address the need in a way that keeps all parties involved satisfied.

One lens through which we can analyze the intent of organizations is to explore how these art spaces fit into the context of the organization's evolution and growth. All the case studies demonstrate characteristics of being reactive, yet opportunistic. This common bond shows that to be successful, organizations have to be flexible enough to react to different external and internal factors that 1) impact the type of space that is available to them and 2) the type of programming they focus on. My findings show that none of the art spaces were pre-planned in that exact fashion, that is, the organization did not build out an exemplary art space overnight; instead, there were sometimes years of evolution, back and forth dialogue in the consideration and planning of new types of spaces and singular opportunities that arose that led to the creation of the spaces presented in the previous chapters.

Side Street Projects, Artists for Humanity, and the Brooklyn Ballet all had to move around in response to real estate market pressures. The types of spaces they inhabited were based on how affordable the space was and how the space fit their needs. The instability of constantly moving and the uncertainty of not knowing where the organization would move to forced them to consider taking their future into their own hands. While SSP had always joked about going

completely mobile, the organization only considered this option when affordable space was scarce and when an opportunity arose to apply for grant funding. SSP could not have imagined that it would actually be working out of trailers in a vacant lot and able to move if the need arises. This level of flexibility and SSP's emphasis on resourcefulness and self-sufficiency are characteristic of the organization as well as the artists associated with it.

Artists for Humanity is similar to Side Street Projects in that when it was established, its intent was not to create the type of space that AFH is now known for. Both SSP and AFH focused on the programming first, and the space was seen as a way to complement their programming or broaden their reach. AFH did decide early on that creating a safe, empowering and permanent space in which its youth could create art was of utmost importance. AFH incorporated input from the organization's staff and students in the design of the building, allowing them to leave a physical mark on the building of AFH's identity.

Schermerhorn House and Chashama had more initial intent to create an innovative space for artists while the other two case studies were more reactive. Schermerhorn House is slightly different from the other case studies because it was not borne out of one arts organization that evolved over many years. It did, however, arise from a need to create a development project that was contextual and agreeable within a community that was known to be difficult to please. The intent to devote 30% of the developable floor area for affordable housing was stipulated in the RFP. However, the step towards supportive housing was a result of the need to leverage the resources that non-profit partners can provide, as well as subsidies for supportive housing to make the project financially feasible. The intent behind Schermerhorn House was to meet the affordable housing requirement with a development that could knit together the brownstone community and downtown Brooklyn *and* prevent neighborhood contention because of their intent of housing an even needier population. The resulting mix of housing and dedicated art space occurred because art spaces are considered to be positive community assets, or at least, neutral territory, and these spaces were a counter-balance to housing at-risk populations.

Chashama's initial idea of using vacant window and storefront space for artists arose when artists started approaching Anita Durst to use her space for rehearsals when she was not using it for her performing arts projects. When she found a niche market for low-cost artist studio and exhibition space within these vacant properties, she decided to focus her organization around that model, and sixteen years later, is currently managing over ten spaces throughout New York City.

## *Type of Space*

**Finding #C2: Innovative art spaces change how we think about what is an art space. There is no one prescription for the physical qualities of an innovative art space but there are numerous examples of non-traditional types of space that can be adapted for art production and consumption.**

The case studies present a variety of approaches to art space – whether it is traditional brick and mortar or the reuse of a vintage transit bus. The type of space dictates the experience of creating and sharing artwork inside, the visibility of the organization and its programs, the operating costs of leasing/buying and maintaining the space and the financing costs of developing a new space. These are all factors important to arts organizations, many of whom are cash-strapped or need multi-year capital campaigns to fund a new space. As seen in the case studies, arts organizations can transition to different types of art space as their organizations and programs evolve over time. Based on my case studies as well as supplementary interviews with other arts organizations during my research, I have developed the following art space typologies:

***Reuse and/or rehabilitation of existing buildings:*** Many artists and arts organizations use existing buildings, such as former warehouses, that provide the required square footage, access and flexibility of use and affordable rents. Other factors of industrial buildings that make them attractive to arts uses include large, open floorplans for maximum light and cross-ventilation, structural integrity for heavy uses, existence of loading docks for large or heavy materials and existence in a “frontier” neighborhood where artists can be inspired and creative at will. Side Street Projects, prior to becoming fully mobile, operated out of former factories that were neglected or run down. SSP’s property owner leased the space to the organization because artists and arts groups would use the existing space without any need for capital improvements. Artists for Humanity also leased space in a large former warehouse building owned by the Boston Wharf Company at affordable rents. These types of buildings provided sufficient space until their owners decided to sell the building to real estate developers, or redevelop the building on their own for other, more lucrative purposes. In many cities with industrial districts that have been abandoned or vacant due to the national decline in manufacturing, these former industrial buildings have been converted into arts uses with much success.

When an organization outgrows its traditional brick and mortar space, private studio, or garage, it may require a larger space that is better suited to its needs.

In this case, simply leasing an existing space is not enough. It must find a space that meets the technology and design standards of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, the Armory Center for the Arts embarked on a complete renovation of the former Armory Center to house its galleries and studio spaces. This rehabilitation brought to life a below-standard space to meet a modern standard of art exhibition and creation.

***New Building Construction with emphasis on sustainability:*** Artists for Humanity and Schermerhorn House both developed art spaces that would fit into the programming needs of the target audience. Both also incorporated elements of green design into their buildings for a number of reasons. For AFH, creating a new construction building meant that the space design could be tailored specifically to the organization, its programming and its identity. The EpiCenter featured open floorplans to showcase the youth artwork and art-making process, with multipurpose galleries and studio spaces. The green design was featured most prominently in AFH's design in part because the organization aligned with environmental responsibility as a goal and also because it was able to find more financial support by meeting arts and sustainability objectives in one building. The energy savings created by running its own photovoltaic array also meant that in the long run, AFH would be in a better position in terms of operating costs if it hadn't tried to be sustainable. Schermerhorn House also incorporated green elements in its design by using post-consumer waste glass in its façade, having a green roof and garden for its residents and using non-toxic materials. The air quality, light and open space can be enjoyed by all residents. Side Street Projects, while not a new construction, did incorporate new mobile trailers in its fleet of vehicles. Its reliance on the mobile solar array also makes the organization less dependent on fossil fuels for energy, and instead, completely energy self-sufficient.

***Use of vacant lots:*** There are many publicly- and privately-owned vacant lots in dense urban areas that could use positive activity and community investment. In the case of Side Street Projects, the city-owned lot was vacant because of a stalled development and was a source of discontent and anger in the community. After SSP moved onto the lot, drug and criminal activity disappeared from that specific corner because of the "eyes on the street" and the care that went into maintaining the lot. The presence of weekend and community programming helped decrease negative activity, at least in that location. With council members vying to have SSP locate in other vacant lots in their districts in the future, the mobile unit has become a desirable purveyor of community and youth development. Schermerhorn House transformed the former parking lots

into viable affordable housing and arts space. It is another example of how a neglected lot can be turned around with community-conscious development.

***Use of Storefront Space:*** Adapting vacant storefront spaces transforms unused spaces into active uses that keep lights on the street, creating a safer pedestrian environment, and create gathering spaces for artists and community members. In Schermerhorn House, the ground-floor storefront space was deeded for arts-related uses. The two story-high windows provide high visibility to the dance activities inside, which is a marketable attribute of storefront spaces. Their visibility and accessibility from the street make storefronts ideal spaces for arts use. The full-time presence of a dance studio on the ground floor is unique because the dancers can be watched by viewers from the outside. Chashama turns storefront space into small work studios for artists, adding daytime and nighttime activity and allowing local artists low-cost space to create work. No Longer Empty focuses on site-specific art installations that engage the public in a dialogue about the history and prior uses of the space. For Chashama and No Longer Empty, the art activity adapts to the constraints of the storefront space provided. For all cases, adapting a storefront provides space for local community members to gather to appreciate art and also attracts a population that wouldn't otherwise go to an area.

***Reuse of vehicles:*** Side Street Projects is a prime example of how old and new vehicles can be used for community and economic development. Its woodworking buses are former transit buses that have been retrofitted into childrens' woodworking shops during and after school hours. The buses would park back on the vacant lot, which doubles as a docking station for SSP's fleet. Its new art trailer will be geared towards older students and will be towed by a biodiesel truck. The Armadillo is also a mobile trailer that can demonstrate to kids how vertical gardening can occur in cities. Each trailer can be adapted to showcase specific programs or accommodate a variety of age groups. The challenges with these vehicles pertain to how well they function and their at-times costly maintenance especially in the vintage models. However, the presence and high visibility of the exterior of these vehicles act as marketing and public relations tools.

### *Mobility*

**Finding #C3: Mobility is a tool to reach more people with targeted programming by moving people and ideas, reducing the transportation burden on individuals and allowing for more social connections. It is also a way to deal**

**with real estate pressures by operating outside of traditional bricks and mortar art spaces and real estate markets.**

Side Street Projects is a prime example of how mobility can be beneficial to an arts organization faced with the challenge of finding affordable and usable space. Mobility for SSP works on multiple levels, most notably for its woodworking buses, art trailer and Armadillo, which transport its arts programming directly to public schools throughout Pasadena. It reaches more students with the mobile system because transportation and supervision costs often make it cost-prohibitive for young students to travel to a distant location. Instead, by bringing the arts experience directly to the students at school, more kids can be reached. SSP's cross-country road trip with the Armadillo also reached schools and neighborhoods across the nation that otherwise would not have had access to that education.

SSP is also mobile in its administrative operations. Its ability to move its operations and spaces at a moment's notice minimizes the amount of downtime whenever they have to move its operations, and thus stall programming. The move away from the traditional brick and mortar art space that requires a high operating cost gives it flexibility in terms of managing its own time if development pressures affect their lot. They can relocate in a different lot and set up their solar apparatus in 1.5 hours, instead of months.

On a community level, the mobility of SSP is an advantage because it equalizes the types of education that public school students can access. It is no longer the case that 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in more disadvantaged communities can't access stimulating alternative methods of teaching art, science and math just because they do not have the time nor financial resources to take their students to a woodworking program. SSP's mobility allows it to reach directly into neighborhoods and be a visible presence. One teacher hopes that SSP will broaden its programming and reach to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, which would require more buses and more resources for SSP to do so. There is a definite need for arts education of this type.

Artists for Humanity technically has a fixed space because of the EpiCenter, but is mobile on a different level. Rather than serving one specific neighborhood like many community-based art organizations, Artists for Humanity draws its youth apprentices from all over Boston. After school, the teens converge at EpiCenter for their training and apprenticeship workshops and return back to their respective neighborhoods. The mobility factor is in the students. In much the same way, the business professionals who come to EpiCenter for teambuilding

and creative workshops with the teens go back to their respective communities with a better understanding of art and entrepreneurship as well as appreciation for the talents of inner city youth. The mobility is in the exchange of ideas and knowledge resulting from bringing together different individuals and groups of varied backgrounds. Mobility also translates into reducing transportation costs for individuals, which is crucial for low-income families. The Brooklyn Ballet, while it is “mobile” in that teachers teach directly in public schools, sometimes has low-income students who qualify for scholarships to continue classes at the Schermerhorn House but who decline due to transportation costs or time constraints. The Massachusetts Cultural Council addresses similar issues by subsidizing transportation costs for schools to visit arts institutions. Cities can do more to ensure that students have access to art space, whether it is by subsidizing transportation costs or ensuring that organizations that could benefit from mobility have the resources to do so.

*Time: Temporary vs. Permanent Space*

**Finding #C4: A short term or temporary model can be a cost-effective and flexible way of creating art space that can reach disadvantaged neighborhoods. A permanent space is advantageous because it prevents displacement, but requires a capital campaign or innovative financing if it is constructed by the organization.**

Time in the form of short- and long-term space, or whether a model is temporary or permanent art space, influences the programming that can take place inside. By being able to move to a new location, Side Street Projects can directly impact the neighborhood’s quality of life with its presence and community programming. From the City of Pasadena’s perspective, the ability of SSP to move to a different location is beneficial because it 1) allows for the real estate development of the original lot, 2) allows for a different part of the neighborhood to receive direct art education and encourage investment and 3) decreases the amount of time that SSP is out of commission in the delivery of its arts programming. For SSP, it becomes important to identify itself with one neighborhood so that it can serve community residents with a degree of stability. It would be difficult if SSP constantly moved to different neighborhoods because the organization would have to take time to build new partnerships and relationships with community residents.

One disadvantage is that SSP will have to identify new locations every time it must relocate. So far, the organization is in high demand, demonstrating that

there is a need for its services. Another disadvantage is that by relocating, the immediate neighbors and community residents currently within walking distance of SSP's current location might not be served as conveniently as before. So far, the amount of time spent at the current lot is anticipated to be 3 years, which is a sufficiently long period of time to reach area residents and create a positive presence on their block. Another disadvantage pertains to the mode of operations itself – SSP does not own a building, and thus cannot gain asset value as property values rise in the neighborhood. It does not own the vacant lot, which could appreciate in value as well and could allow for the construction of a future building if the need arises. This is a trade-off, as temporary space allows for innovative programs and unique brand identity but does not fully allow an organization to take root in a physical and financial sense. Another variation of SSP's model would be to operate out of mobile trailers in transitional neighborhoods but acquire the lot for the future construction of a building when it has the resources and need to do so. This, of course, may be counter to SSP's brand, which prides itself in operating in a non-traditional format.

Artists for Humanity's EpiCenter is permanent and is reflective of art organizations that are financially sound enough to own and occupy their own building. They have shown their commitment to their neighborhood by acquiring a site and constructing a building designed specifically for their programming and audience. Their intention to acquire additional land for their expansion ensures their permanence within the Fort Point neighborhood.

Schermerhorn House provides a slightly different level of permanence. Its affordable and supportive housing is permanent because of deed restrictions as well as the nature of the apartment design. The apartments are mostly for single individuals in transition, for example, and would be costly to convert into family housing. The land was also donated to Common Ground and the Actors Fund, which owns and operates the building. The ground-floor arts space is permanently deeded for arts-related uses, but its tenants are temporary in the sense that they sign leases for a specified period of time. The tenant may change year to year, giving the space a level of flexibility. The permanence of the deed is important in a borough that has seen increases in property values, as artists and art organization often are displaced as property values rise. The residents, however, are transitional and view the housing as a temporary means of stabilizing their lives before moving on to more stable forms of housing.

*Sustainability:*

**Finding #C5: Many of the art organizations are committed to sustainability in both their spaces and their programs. Combining art and sustainability may lead to lower operating costs, greater access to funds and greater impact on the environment through education.**

Not all art spaces are committed to sustainability in their practices since being sustainable requires extra initial investment. For those that do, they may pay careful attention to using recycled or reclaimed materials or being energy efficient in their everyday routine. When art organizations combine art with the elements of sustainability in their work (often referring to the three E's of environment, equity, and economy), a new paradigm surfaces. Artists for Humanity and Side Street Projects are the two organizations that exemplify the combination of art and sustainability within one art space. For Artists for Humanity, sustainability was something that they believed in and wanted to incorporate more fully into their practice. Constructing the EpiCenter as a LEED Platinum building was a demonstration of their commitment to the environment that also allowed them to access specific sources of funding to support their capital campaign. For Side Street Projects, the organization was also practicing resourcefulness and self-sufficiency, but when they became mobile and saw a need to be energy self-sufficient, they embraced the opportunity to show how they can live by their mission. Their commitment to living within their means helped them move off the grid and locate in less developed areas such as a vacant lot. It also helped them to obtain the Armadillo trailer from MIT to add to their fleet, which gave them an additional method of communicating the ideas of sustainability and environmental responsibility to others. Schermerhorn House also combined green elements in its design while Chashama reuses vacant space, inherently a sustainable endeavor.

Why should art spaces be environmentally responsible? First, it is beneficial to think about how art spaces impact the environment in which we live and how we may effect greater change by educating others about environmental issues, especially lower income populations that otherwise would not be exposed to education about how living sustainably impacts everyone. Second, taking steps towards energy efficiency saves money in the long run and using renewable energy reduces our reliance on fossil fuels. Third, art organizations can access more funds as funders and cities often prioritize organizations that encourage sustainable living. Arts organizations that teach environmental responsibility and incorporate it into their spaces produce benefits towards their financial, social

and environmental impact – essentially their own triple bottom line that addresses those three areas.<sup>170</sup>

### *Connectivity*

**Finding #C6: Art spaces can foster physical and social connections. With sufficient community engagement, they can be seen as neutral ground, helping to mitigate community tensions or build bridges between very different populations.**

Arts uses are considered a public good and help to ease tensions and initiate positive dialogue with community members, as long as the art space successfully conducts outreach. Schermerhorn House was the result of a conscious decision to knit the brownstone Brooklyn and Downtown Brooklyn community together through a transition in building heights, typologies and programming. In particular, its art spaces and contextual development mitigated the NIMBYism (Not in My Back-Yard) sentiment that the community had been known for. This concept was also manifest in Side Street Projects, whose presence on the lot mitigated community tensions regarding the stalled development of the space. This is seen with Chashama’s spaces as well, an example of art spaces that connect with the local communities and deter drug and other criminal activity. Artists for Humanity had less of a neighborhood community due to its location in an industrial area, but from the city’s perspective, arts uses align with its Innovation and creativity focus along the waterfront. Also, by drawing in hundreds of people from other parts of Boston, students, business professionals and event holders will come away with a more positive view of Fort Point.<sup>171</sup>

Artists and arts organizations, with sufficient community engagement, can be considered “neutral territory” that allow them to enter contentious neighborhood fights and ease the tension. Because of this view, it can be used as a way to heal neighborhoods that are in need of positive attention and investment, whether it is temporary or permanent. However, it can also be misconstrued, with cities using the arts as tools of change or gentrification, in ways that exclude certain populations, such as the poor, or minorities.

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<sup>170</sup> The Economist, “Triple bottom line: It consists of three Ps: profit, people and planet, November 17, 2009, [http://www.economist.com/node/14301663?story\\_id=14301663](http://www.economist.com/node/14301663?story_id=14301663).

<sup>171</sup> Adele Bacow, President, Community Partners Consultants, phone interview, April 7, 2011.

## D. Programs, Partners & Financing

Table 7-4. Programs, Partners & Financing				
	Side Street Projects	Artists for Humanity	Schermerhorn House	Chashama
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public school students ages 5-11</li> <li>- All youth and families for community programming</li> <li>- Professional artists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boston area teenagers who are selected for training and employment</li> <li>- Artists work as mentors</li> <li>- Business professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building tenants – formerly homeless and low income arts workers</li> <li>- Community arts groups</li> <li>- General public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artists</li> <li>- Youth</li> <li>- Collectors/buyers from community and beyond</li> <li>- General public</li> </ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Woodworking bus for kids</li> <li>- On-site community arts program</li> <li>- Sustainability education with Armadillo</li> <li>- Podcast artist lecture series</li> <li>- Internships, volunteer opportunities older students</li> <li>- Art events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Microenterprise apprenticeship program</li> <li>- Inward Bound that connects business professionals and teen artists</li> <li>- Art and design consulting services for organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tenant lifestyle and arts activities programmed by the Actors Fund</li> <li>- Performances in community theater</li> <li>- Tenant Brooklyn Ballet programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artist studio space</li> <li>- Exhibitions and receptions</li> <li>- Arts education programs</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arts organizations</li> <li>- Foundations</li> <li>- Local government</li> <li>- Schools</li> <li>- Neighborhood community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses and corporations</li> <li>- City government</li> <li>- Industry sectors such as health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private capital partner with arts focus</li> <li>- Non-profit partners for supportive housing and services</li> <li>- Public partner in city and state agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real estate developers and property owners</li> <li>- Local arts organizations</li> <li>- Community and economic development groups</li> <li>- Local government</li> </ul>
<b>Funding/ Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foundation grants</li> <li>- Earned income from woodworking bus and art trailers</li> <li>- City grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$6.8M capital campaign; private donors, foundations</li> <li>- City and State sustainability grants</li> <li>- Revenues from microenterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$59 million project cost</li> <li>- \$30M tax-exempt bonds</li> <li>- \$28M low income housing tax credits</li> <li>- Foundation grants, energy grants, Federal Home Loan Bank funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uses donated space</li> <li>- Earned income from artist studio rentals</li> <li>- City funding, grants</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Free lease with the City of Pasadena for vacant lot</li> <li>- Photovoltaics cover utility costs</li> <li>- Saves on rent, utilities, parking expense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Saving on utility cost</li> <li>- Designed not to have air conditioning</li> <li>- Wants to expand in Boston and New York City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Owned and operated by Common Ground and the Actors Fund</li> <li>- Center for Urban Community Services provides on-site services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holds license agreement to operate/manage space</li> <li>- Builds out temporary walls, pays utilities, insurance, marketing</li> </ul>

## *Audience*

**Finding #D1: Professional artists are the main audience for only half of the case studies. These arts organizations target different audience members such as youth, community members, artists, and at-risk or special needs populations. This yields a broader audience, but also challenges in integrating the groups together through programming.**

At the beginning of my research, I initially thought that these organizations would target professional artists but by the nature of my case study selections, only Chashama and Schermerhorn House directly target artists and arts organizations. The others (Side Street Projects and Artists for Humanity) target youth with innovative programming. Historically, SSP has targeted artists, but with the adoption of the woodworking bus program, it has begun to see professional artists as a secondary audience. SSP, though, is trying to create more opportunities to engage artists and youth together. Professional artists are involved at least indirectly in all of the case studies, whether it is by teaching or mentoring, or directly benefiting by having studio space. All the organizations have a strong youth arts education/training component that seeks to give the younger generation access to the arts as a means to gain technical skills and self-respect, whether or not they become professional artists later on.

## *Programming*

**Finding #D2: The arts programming within these innovative art spaces are people-focused, where teaching skills, how to be self-reliant and entrepreneurial, are important, as well as space-focused, where the primary goal is to create art spaces. In all cases, meaningful and relevant programming is just as critical as the space they are housed within.**

The programs in the case studies focus on combining art, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. All of them believe that diverse populations stand to benefit significantly from the process of art-making as well as being exposed to the arts. This is most apparent with AFH where at-risk teens, by producing and selling art in a safe and empowering environment, graduate high school and go on to college. These teens are exposed to arts and business and learn valuable technical and professional skills. Side Street Projects also teaches a range of math, science and engineering and sustainability through its program.

Program-specific organizations such as Side Street Projects and Artists for Humanity focus on one niche program (such as woodworking and

microenterprise). This is beneficial for communities that have an affiliation with a particular skill or cultural art form or can stand to gain by focusing on arts entrepreneurship. Space-specific organizations such as Schermerhorn House and Chashama find or develop the art space first, and then program the space with studio, exhibition or arts education programs. Whether it is program-oriented or space-oriented, both methods work in yielding creative art spaces, though the latter method is more flexible at accommodating different types of art forms.

In all of these cases, I found that having innovative, meaningful and relevant programming is just as critical as having an innovative space. For example, Side Street Projects could have mobile trailers but without its woodworking focus filling a need in a community that can relate to the manual arts, SSP might not have connected with its audience. The same is true for Chashama. While it could have opened up any vacant storefront, without its dedication to creating studio space for local artists and its partners with youth arts groups that bring together community youth to learn about art, the space would be innovative, but certainly not successful. The combination of the art space and meaningful programs creates a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This combination can build connections, encourage education for youth and bring communities together.

### *Partnerships*

**Finding #D3: Building cross-sector partnerships contributes directly to the long-term organizational and financial success of an art space. While arts organizations may think “outside of the box,” it is essential that they remain “connected to the box” in novel or strong ways.<sup>172</sup>**

Remaining connected to its base helps an arts organization build an audience as well as a network of supporters. Building cross-sector partnerships – not just typical partnerships that exist in the arts industry – generates a cross-pollination of ideas that create something appealing to a wider audience. For example, Artists for Humanity works with business professionals, artists and youth on teambuilding activities using the visual arts. Its current work with the health industry has the potential to open up new sources of funding and a new network of financial supporters. Chashama builds partnerships with real estate developers, property owners, city agencies and economic development

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<sup>172</sup> Susan Silberberg-Robinson, Lecturer, MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, personal communication, May 3, 2011.

organizations that are invested in filling vacant space or marketing properties to potential tenants. Schermerhorn House came about because of what Abby Hamlin describes as the public, private, non-profit partnership “triangle” that came together to create a development greater than what each partner could have developed alone. Whether the partnership is two-way public/private, public/nonprofit, or private/non-profit or in Schermerhorn House’s case, with all three, the cross-sector partnerships leverage greater resources and produce a greater product when the best ideas and intentions of all sides can collaborate.

### *Funding & Financing*

**Finding #D4: Attention to revenue generation models and working with public/private/non-profit partners can be beneficial for arts organizations in funding and financing their spaces.**

The case studies shed light on how organizations can seek methods of innovative funding or financing for their art space projects. The common theme is that funding makes or breaks a project. First, the financial sustainability of an organization allows it to create or operate an art space. As such, there is a need for a robust revenue-generating model so that an organization’s earned income can be strong enough to support it when contributed income declines. Secondly, financing a project takes innovation. In Schermerhorn House, a combination of public subsidies from the federal to local government, as well as grants helped to make the building a reality. Side Street Projects paid for its trailers through foundation grants relating to both arts and sustainability, holds a free lease with the City for its lot and relies on revenues from its mobile arts programming. Artists for Humanity by far has the most innovative model of funding with its microenterprise program that not only employs teens but gives them a percentage commission if they sell their work. Chashama operates with space donated by property owners. By combining multiple financing sources, working with partners to leverage resources and working with public or private entities for donated space, arts organizations can save a significant amount of money. In addition, the nature of the ownership structure, as introduced in the beginning of this chapter, implies that there is minimal or no debt relating to the space development. Anita Walker of the Massachusetts Cultural Council said that the biggest challenge that arts organizations face in relation to space is taking on debt. “Debt defines their future.”<sup>173</sup> By accumulating funding up-front or working with partners willing to donate free space, these arts organizations

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<sup>173</sup> Anita Walker, Executive Director, Massachusetts Cultural Council, personal interview, April 12, 2011.

move towards their goal of being a stable organization financially so that they can continue to serve its audience.

### *Operations*

**Finding #D5: Reducing operating costs and providing quality management aid arts organizations in achieving long term organizational sustainability. This allows the arts organizations to devote more of their resources towards programming and serving their target audience through the arts.**

Through different ways of reducing cost and ensuring that the most qualified people are managing the art spaces (and ensuring that the spaces are inclusive of different populations), art spaces can function on a day-to-day basis with a smaller amount of stress. SSP and AFH use photovoltaics panels to reduce or completely eliminate their electricity bills. SSP also manages its own vehicles and solar array and could use more technical assistance. Schermerhorn House's art spaces are managed by the Actors Fund, with a larger community advisory group to be in charge of the community theater. Chashama is the operator of the vacant spaces – in Jamaica Studios' case, it has a license agreement with the landlord to operate the former doctor's office as work studios.

### ***E. Physical, Social & Economic Impacts***

The following section identifies the physical, social and economic impacts using information from stakeholder interviews, site visit observations and the findings for each section described in this chapter. Each category below – physical, social, and economic impact – is rated “low, moderate, or high” to show on a relative level how well the innovative art spaces contributed to improving their immediate neighborhood, raising the technical skills of community members through the arts, and strengthening economic opportunities within the surrounding area. The space design and programming of each case study had a direct hand in influencing how well these art spaces connected on a physical, social and economic level with the neighborhood. Taking together the design, programs, financing and other themes, I identified the specific impacts and used the comparisons to illustrate how well each case study was able to impact their neighborhood using that theme. While I separate the different themes, they are all interconnected as part of a network of factors that influence the general outcome. Using this framework, my findings show that innovative art spaces can solve a variety of urban, education, and economic challenges.

**Table 7-5. Physical, Social, and Economic Impacts**

	<b>Side Street Projects</b>	<b>Artists for Humanity</b>	<b>Schermerhorn House</b>	<b>Chashama</b>
<b>Physical/Spatial</b>	High	Moderate	High	High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilizes vacant lot</li> <li>- Gives youth/families place to go for arts on weekend</li> <li>- Gives students place to go after school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invests in a once-desolate neighborhood and has plans for expansion</li> <li>- To an extent, brings new populations to the Fort Point Channel / South Boston District</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connects brownstone neighborhood and downtown</li> <li>- Storefront space attracts visitors and shows activity inside</li> <li>- Provides more pedestrian friendly environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helped revitalize blocks with positive arts activity, created space for local community artists to buy/sell/show work</li> </ul>
<b>Social/Community</b>	High	Moderate/High	High	High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mitigates neighborhood tensions regarding site</li> <li>- Use deters criminal activity</li> <li>- Programs exposes students to art, science, math, engineering education</li> <li>- Teaches creativity, technical skills and self-reliance</li> <li>- Gives artists forum to teach; tools for professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trains and employs 240 teens in arts and entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Teaches art to middle school students</li> <li>- Brings together teens and business professionals to collaborate</li> <li>- Adds to the Fort Point artist community</li> <li>- Reach to immediate community is limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides home and social services for special needs and low-income people</li> <li>- Provides arts space and programs</li> <li>- Community theater is serving as performance and meeting space for different groups.</li> <li>- Integrates people of different economic backgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides arts education and youth development programs in spaces through partners</li> <li>- Provides artists with low-cost work space</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	Moderate	Moderate/High	High	Moderate/High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spends over \$250,000 in budget</li> <li>- Teaches students technical skills</li> <li>- Provides opportunities for teaching, professional development, internship and jobs</li> <li>- Makes corner safer and desirable, attracting more people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employs 240 teens</li> <li>- Gives teens valuable entrepreneurial skills and professional experience</li> <li>- Spends \$3M of its arts budget</li> <li>- Increases creativity for Inward Bound clients</li> <li>- Provides arts consulting services to companies and non-profits</li> <li>- Generates nearly \$1M in revenues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gives people a stable home for them to hold their jobs or become employed through job training and social services</li> <li>- Saves City money by building supportive housing</li> <li>- Provides dedicated arts or non-profit space</li> <li>- Makes the street more desirable and increases pedestrian traffic</li> <li>- Underutilized land now generating tax revenue and investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gives artists work-studio space to create and sell art</li> <li>- Generates value for nearby properties</li> <li>- Markets the property to potential tenants</li> <li>- Increases pedestrian activity by using vacant space</li> <li>- Investment of time and arts saves in costs associated with deterioration</li> <li>- Spends \$600,000 in budget</li> </ul>

### *Physical/Spatial*

**Finding #E1: Innovative art spaces make connections to their neighborhoods through spatial transparency, careful design, and community outreach. This leads to a safer neighborhood, the creation of a positive place for the community, and an improved pedestrian experience.**

The physical transformation of each of the case studies is marked by vibrant activity, with different people coming together and arts programming as the common element. These innovative art spaces all make a concerted effort to connect the physical space with the people in the community. Side Street Projects transformed a neglected, vacant lot that harbored drug and criminal activity into a space that is cared for by its staff and neighbors with “eyes on the street” and inclusive community programming. Artists for Humanity received a “moderate” rating because it is less focused on serving its immediate community members and instead focuses on bringing in teens and business professionals together. All of the spaces have a level of transparency and openness that allows people to see “inside” and partake in the activities at least as observers, whether it is through windows, open connections on a lot, or public programming. All of the case studies reported improved pedestrian experiences around their site because of the new level of activity there, and the interest people have on observing or participating in their acts activities. For all of the case studies, the physical transformation of taking a vacant property and changing it into something new and active lead to positive impacts.

### *Social/Community*

**Finding #E2: The innovative art spaces strengthen individuals, communities, and bring together very disparate populations of people under a shared experience. They create a safe and neutral place for this to take place in, helping to invest in human capital and individual capacity and build social bridges between many different players.**

The art spaces, through the creation of a new and positive space for the audience they serve and through the execution of meaningful programming, are very effective in contributing to community development. They create a space for people to gather, to create art and to buy/sell work. The shared experience of these arts activities builds understanding between youth, artists, businesses, and the general public. The organizations such as Side Street Projects and Artists for Humanity focus on arts education and training. This directly impacts human

capital development, providing youth with technical skills, professional experience, or the self-esteem to make things on their own. The philosophy of the organizations – many of which focus on self-reliance, an entrepreneurial spirit and a can-do attitude for all people especially at-risk populations – adds to the generation of people who are more likely to stay in school or continue with higher education. As SSP and AFH show through their statistics and my interviews, if it were not for the kids’ access to these programs that believed in them, they might not be graduating from high school, interested in a creative career or gaining scholarship money for school. What is less easily quantified or tracked, but is mutually understood by these organizations, is that work with the arts has a very positive effect on youth, giving them an outlet for expression when the rest of their lives may be filled with stresses associated with poverty.

In addition to youth, these art spaces provide community development opportunities for artists. SSP gives outdoor public art space and technical assistance to artists who end up building sculptures about hot-button issues that pertain to the neighborhood. In starting a dialogue about the Heritage Square development, for example, and by using the lot of the stalled development, SSP created a positive association where previously negative feelings existed. Innovative art spaces with concerted outreach efforts can serve as neutral spaces, as discussed earlier, mitigating community tensions. Artists also gain a network of other artists and youth to collaborate on projects, as in AFH, or enjoy a show together, as in Schermerhorn House.

### *Economic*

**Finding #E3: Innovative art spaces provide economic opportunity in the form of improving the urban environment and giving individuals the skills, access and network to create, buy and sell creative work.**

These art spaces result in a number of outcomes that only improve the economic opportunity and business environment for the neighborhood around them. As said previously, Side Street Projects helped to make the corner a safer and more desirable place to go to by adding a “pull” factor in the form of community programming that attracts activity and eliminating the “push” factor of criminal activity that deters visitors. Not only does it begin to give Northwest Pasadena a better reputation, but it teaches public school youth valuable skills. Chashama increases the pedestrian traffic to and from its storefronts just by having artists, youth and visitors during day and night hours. All of these case studies increase pedestrian traffic, which has the effect of promoting the place as a desirable place to visit and impacts the human capital, increasing the economic potential

of both artists and youth. Once an area has more demand, additional business investment will take place. In addition, many of the case studies generated tax revenues to the city through the sale of its work or in Schermerhorn House's case, generating tax revenue for its market-rate components on the site. It is also saving the City in costs in the long run by housing homeless individuals and is generating revenues by putting an urban renewal site back into active use.

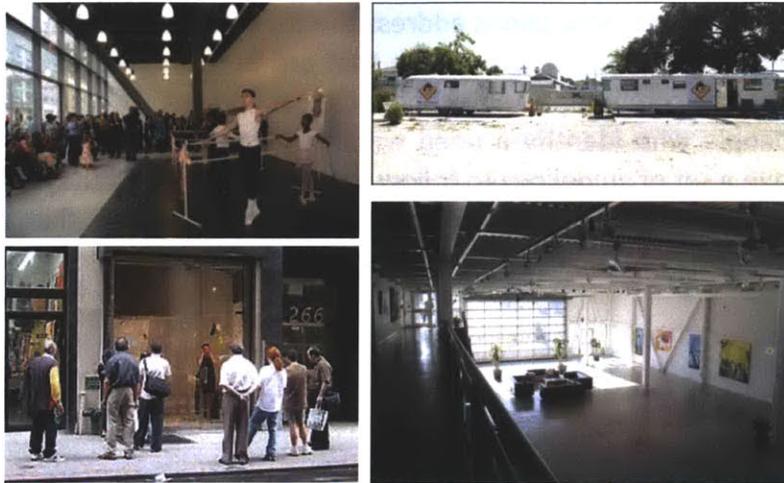
The conclusion of all of these findings in this chapter is that innovative art spaces are multifaceted. They impact both the communities the organizations serve and the neighborhood in which they are located in positive ways. They solve, whether directly or indirectly, a multitude of urban challenges – such as blight and neglect, educational issues including the need to engage students in an exciting way while improving their technical skills, community challenges such as tensions due to differing viewpoints or backgrounds and finally economic issues that plague low-income populations that stand to benefit the most from public and private investment. Art spaces that are both innovative and effective in contributing to community and economic development are thus better than the sum of all its elements. They transcend merely creating a new model of space and instead devise strategies to make sure that people of all backgrounds have access to the benefits of the arts.

## Summary of Findings

Table 7-6. Summary of Findings	
FRAMEWORK	FINDINGS
A. Organizational Factors	<b>A1: Organization:</b> There are many similarities between the case studies, including the type of organization involved, age of the organization, driving force of a female artist, ownership structure, and presence of an underlying social mission. All of these factors play a role in creating innovative and effective art spaces.
B. Neighborhood Context	<b>B1: Location:</b> Each organization is more likely to be located in an area with higher vacancies or more affordable space, which tends to occur in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Regardless, the case studies have varying location types (residential, commercial, industrial) and have good access to transportation.
C. Space & Design	<p><b>C1: Vision/Intent:</b> Innovative art spaces are not necessarily a prescribed intent by an organization. All of them serve a need and desire to be more stable in the long run, but develop innovative qualities as a reactive yet opportunistic response to external and internal factors.</p> <p><b>C2: Type of Space:</b> Innovative art spaces change how we think about what is an art space. There is no one prescription for the physical qualities of an innovative art space but there are numerous examples of non-traditional types of space that can be adapted for art production and consumption.</p> <p><b>C3: Mobility:</b> Mobility is a tool to reach more people with targeted programming by moving people and ideas, reducing the transportation burden on individuals and allowing for more social connections. It is also a way to deal with real estate pressures by operating outside of traditional bricks and mortar art spaces and real estate markets.</p> <p><b>C4: Time:</b> A short term or temporary model can be a cost-effective and flexible way of creating art space that can reach disadvantaged neighborhoods. A permanent space is advantageous because it prevents displacement, but requires a capital campaign or innovative financing if it is constructed by the organization.</p> <p><b>C5: Sustainability:</b> Many of the art organizations are committed to sustainability in both their spaces and their programs. Combining art and sustainability may lead to lower operating costs, greater access to funds and greater impact on the environment through education.</p> <p><b>C6: Connectivity:</b> Art spaces can foster physical and social connections. With sufficient community engagement, they can be seen as neutral ground, helping to mitigate community tensions or build bridges between very different populations.</p>

<p><b>D. Programs, Partners &amp; Financing</b></p>	<p><b>D1: Audience:</b> Professional artists are the main audience for only half of the case studies. These arts organizations target different audience members such as youth, community members, artists, and at-risk or special needs populations. This yields a broader audience, but also challenges in integrating the groups together through programming.</p> <p><b>D2: Programming:</b> The arts programming within these innovative art spaces can be focused on people, investing in human capital by teaching self-reliance, technical skills and entrepreneurship, or on creating art space for artists. In all cases, meaningful and relevant programming is just as critical as the space they are housed within.</p> <p><b>D3: Partnerships:</b> Building cross-sector partnerships contributes directly to the long-term organizational and financial success of an art space. While arts organizations may think “outside of the box,” it is essential that they remain “connected to the box” in strong or novel ways.</p> <p><b>D4: Funding/Financing:</b> Attention to revenue generation models and working with public/private/non-profit partners can be beneficial for arts organizations in funding and financing their spaces.</p> <p><b>D5: Operations:</b> Reducing operating costs and providing quality management aid arts organizations in achieving long term organizational sustainability. This allows the arts organizations to devote more of their resources towards programming and serving their target audience through the arts.</p>
<p><b>E. Physical, Social, Economic Impacts</b></p>	<p><b>E1: Physical:</b> Innovative art spaces make connections to their neighborhoods through spatial transparency, careful design, and community outreach. This leads to a safer neighborhood, the creation of a positive place for the community and an improved pedestrian experience.</p> <p><b>E2: Social:</b> The innovative art spaces strengthen individuals and communities while bringing together very disparate populations of people through a shared experience. They create a safe and neutral place for this to take place in, helping to invest in human capital and individual capacity and build social bridges between many different players.</p> <p><b>E3: Economic:</b> Innovative art spaces provide economic opportunity in the form of improving the urban environment and giving individuals the skills, access and network to create, buy and sell creative work.</p>





## CHAPTER 8

# Recommendations

## 🗘 Introduction

This chapter uses my findings to propose a set of recommendations for two distinct audiences: 1) cities, represented by city planners and policymakers and 2) art space creators, such as arts organizations, artist entrepreneurs, and real estate developers. These recommendations address the themes discussed in the previous chapter and aim to cultivate art spaces that are both innovative and effective in contributing to community and economic development. This section is geared towards people who identify a need within their community for art space and wish to have a set of guidelines to follow that will ensure that they not only serve their intended audience but also develop a physical space that is conducive to the transformation of people and places over time.

## 🗘 Recommendations for Cities

- 1 Be open-minded and recognize the benefits of art spaces.
- 2 Adapt or replicate models if there is a need and the right people to lead.
- 3 Promote the use of non-traditional art space.
- 4 Incentive long-term or permanent art space.
- 5 Encourage cross-sector partnerships and programs.
- 6 Provide resources and networking opportunities for arts organizations regarding space.
- 7 Support art spaces and art education for low-income communities.
- 8 Build bridges in contentious areas using art spaces and meaningful programs.
- 9 **Provide more funding that aid in the long-term operations and sustainability of art spaces.**
- 10 **Plan for transformative art spaces and set the stage for innovation**

1. **Be open-minded and recognize the benefits of art spaces.** To support innovative art spaces, cities themselves have to be innovative too and also recognize the benefits of arts activities and art spaces. That means, city planners and policymakers need to be open to new and seemingly “crazy” ideas, with the larger understanding that arts activities – when implemented with a broader social mission – improve physical, social and economic connections. Just because an idea has never been done before does not mean that it will not work. Cities should be flexible and supportive, especially when they are working with arts organizations that need help coordinating with multiple government agencies, whether it is in understanding the new concept, or acknowledging the benefits which

arts activities may have in other areas of life. Side Street Projects is an example of an organization that benefited greatly from having an advocate in the City who was open-minded and saw the merits in their program even in the face of many others who did not immediately grasp them.

2. **Adapt or replicate models if there is a need and the right people to lead.** All of the case studies presented in this thesis are replicable models that can be adapted fully or in part in cities that *have a need* for that kind of space or program. Artists for Humanity, for example, has already been adapted in two other cities and can be applied to other cities that have a population of youth looking for a creative outlet. The leaders of these organizations or initiatives have to be passionate about the program and philosophy in order for it to work. Therefore, cities would benefit by looking at grass-roots ways of developing innovative art space so that the community fully supports the endeavor. The beauty of these models is that because they all started out as the concept of one or two people, they can be started and cultivated by small-scale arts organizations or community groups that value the arts as a tool to bridge social and economic gaps.
3. **Promote the use of non-traditional art space.** There are many vacant or underutilized storefronts, buildings, lots and large vehicles in every city. Cities can leverage existing spaces by adapting them into non-traditional art space that can either have a temporary or permanent lifespan. To do this, cities can provide funding and technical assistance for art space development, help to connect arts organizations with property owners who can lease temporary space or create policies that encourage the development of non-traditional mixed-use art space like Schermerhorn House. The spaces may exist, but every city does not necessarily have the capacity to manage them. Cities should consider adopting programs, working with partner organizations like Chashama or helping to start a similar type of non-profit organization to promote the creation and use of alternative spaces.
4. **Incentive long-term or permanent art space.** Cities should encourage real estate developers and property owners to provide art space to non-profit organizations by raising the awareness of the benefits of putting in arts uses so that property owners more willingly consider alternative uses. They should also examine the feasibility of a range of incentive

programs, such as tax incentives, to encourage the creation of long-term or permanent art space. Cities facing gentrification in neighborhoods that were revitalized due to arts uses should encourage deed-restrictions for art space. This action provides a stable home for organizations that can't afford to stay because of rising market values and ensures that the city remains a place for new art and emerging artists. Restricted rents and other forms of regulation can keep arts organizations from having to move or disband. Art spaces cannot support the same rents as retail or revenue-generating businesses. These policies or restrictions could come from socially conscious developers like Abby Hamlin but would more likely need to be encouraged by cities. The Center for an Urban Future recommended issuing an RFP for developers to convert vacant or high vacancy real estate into arts spaces, a move that was made in the early 1990s in New York City with some success, as well as offering non-profit condominiums within buildings for tax breaks.<sup>174</sup>

5. **Encourage cross-sector partnerships and programs.** As shown in Schermerhorn House, an innovative partnership of public/private/non-profits developed the mix of affordable housing, community art space and storefront art space that has been recognized for its novelty and success so far. Cities could encourage these cross-sector partnerships to create the right venues for idea generation and promote new ways of inter-sector cross-pollination. This could take the form of conferences, informal networking opportunities and knowledge groups that showcase the best practices of these “triangle” relationships. Cities can also encourage real estate developers by reducing land cost for publicly owned land, providing expedited review, issuing RFPs that explicitly encourage cross-sector partnership and other similar actions that would appeal to developers. Cities should also encourage the combination of cross-sector programs such as arts, business and sustainability by providing incentives and technical assistance for those programs. Cities can also provide knowledge for how to put together successful cross-sector partnerships and programs by showcasing best practices, walking through examples of how the relationships were built in case studies and how to generate new ideas as a collaborative effort. In the end, necessity is the mother of all invention, but cities would benefit if they provide the knowledge, tools and extra push that facilitates the creation of these partnerships and programs.

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<sup>174</sup> Jonathan Bowles, “Time to Be Creative: Taking advantage of the real estate downturn to create affordable spaces for NYC’s creative sector,” *Center for an Urban Future*, October 2010, 1-12.

6. **Provide resources and networking opportunities for arts organizations regarding space.** Along the same lines as the previous recommendation, cities should provide opportunities for arts organizations to convene and collaborate formally and informally. During my interviews, I found that arts organizations and city and state agencies were so busy focusing on their own programs, issues and constituents, that very few had any knowledge of other unique models outside of their purview. Cities, therefore, can support workshops, discussions and resources, and provide awards that help arts organizations approach the development of affordable art space and identify best practices. For example, cities can support awards such as the MetLife Foundation Innovative Space Award. They can also have an information clearinghouse for all vacant building, storefront space and vacant lots that can be made into art space for different lengths of time, how to do so, what potential partner organizations to contact and who in the City would provide technical assistance. Cities can also identify neighborhoods or at-risk populations that have fewer arts resources and could benefit from the creation of art space and direct arts programming. Arts organizations and artist entrepreneurs can then use this information to jumpstart their programs.
  
7. **Support art spaces and art education for low-income communities.** Many of the arts organizations stressed the importance of third-party arts education programs that bring in artist teachers into public schools or take students outside of the school environment to experience first-hand artist studios and performance venues. Cities need to recognize the value of incorporating third-party arts education into public schools and especially the need to do so for youth from low-income communities. With arts funding the first to go during budget crises, cities should reconsider how the arts can help kids learn multiple subjects, as Side Street Projects and Artists for Humanity has shown, and apply their knowledge in ways that make them excited to be in school. Teaching kids the arts is not a means to groom them into artists; rather, it is a way to teach them how to think creatively and apply what they have learned in many areas to create a product they can see and show others. The underlying lesson of all the case studies is that people, especially disadvantaged youth and at-risk populations, need an activity that they can use to lift themselves out of their current conditions, whether it is through creative expression, being paid for a painting or gaining the self-confidence to graduate from high school. The perception that the arts

refers to the passive appreciation of a painting in a museum or a high-end gallery is a common one. However, cities can benefit from learning about the direct impact of the arts as a form of human capital investment and promoting art spaces and arts education in both an expanded and a more concerted way.

8. **Build bridges in contentious areas using art spaces and meaningful programs.** As shown in Side Street Projects, Schermerhorn House, and Chashama, art spaces can build social bridges in neighborhoods. Cities should understand the important role that art spaces can play as a neutral party. Art spaces have been shown, at least anecdotally, to decrease crime and protect the immediate area because they are considered neutral ground. While cities should be careful about using art spaces as a “band-aid” solution to cover up the vacant lots of stalled real estate developments or using them as a way to spur gentrification, they can, for example, identify areas that have succumbed to the real estate downturn that can benefit from community-based arts programs. Or, cities can work with community art groups to help ease the tensions, deter negative activity around stalled sites and start proactive dialogues that both acknowledge hot-button issues and work to ameliorate them through the arts.
9. **Provide more funding that aid in the long-term operations and sustainability of art spaces.** Nothing can happen without financial support, whether it is through earned income or contributed income. Cities should consider providing free leases to city-owned space and providing funding for non-profits to reduce operating costs, such as subsidizing utility costs, rents or other fixed costs since most grants are programmatic and cannot directly pay for operations costs. Cities can also provide grants for sustainability initiatives that would decrease operating costs in the long run. This would have helped SSP when it tried to get an \$8000 rebate for its solar panels but was declined because it was not considered permanent. Cities should be creative about protecting themselves legally so that organizations do not “run away with the money” if they are mobile, but should also be open to new models, especially if an organization has a solid track record of investing in one neighborhood.
10. **Plan for transformative art spaces and set the stage for innovation.** The case studies all show that developing an innovative art space is the result of an organic process where arts organizations react to external factors

and seize opportunities that make sense to them. An effective and transformative art space requires a strategy for relevant programming and community engagement, funding/financing and creating partnerships. Cities can help arts organizations plan for transformative spaces by giving organizations the tools and resources to identify and implement the most effective methods. They can also set the stage for innovation by encouraging the collaboration of different players and rewarding new ideas and ventures. Their goal should be to cultivate innovative and transformative art spaces, because both are important ingredients to make the “soup” of successful art spaces that contribute to individual and neighborhood improvement.

## ❏ Recommendations for Art Space Creators

As presented in the beginning of this chapter, art space creators can include a variety of individuals and entities, including arts organizations, artist entrepreneurs, real estate developers, and city planners. However, these recommendations are targeted to arts organizations and artist entrepreneurs and are meant to guide the process of creating an innovative and transformative art space.

- 1 Find an arts need and devise a creative solution using alternative spaces.
- 2 Develop cross-sector partnerships and arts programs that involve environmental sustainability and business.
- 3 Make strategic physical and social connections with the surrounding neighborhood.
- 4 Involve users and stakeholders in the planning and design process.
- 5 Create a safe and flexible space.
- 6 Build capacity and technical skills through arts programming.
- 7 Develop strategies for long term financial sustainability and stability.
- 8 Consider mobility and time when planning art space.
- 9 Track and evaluate outcomes regularly.
- 10 Be patient and be open to evolution.

- 1. Find an arts need and devise a creative solution using alternative spaces.** If there is a significant need for art space or arts programming in the community, arts organizations should consider the space and design, programs, partners and financing framework in Chapter 2 and develop a space that accommodates their programming or vice versa. They should consider utilizing non-traditional spaces such as vacant storefronts, lots and vehicles. They should also consider adapting or scaling up one of the case studies based on the need and context of the neighborhood. For example, one can adapt Side Street Projects' mobile trailer and transit bus model to bring services directly to communities or Chashama's vacant storefront model if there is a shortage of affordable studio space. The programming can pertain to the arts, but can easily be applied to other fields such as computer skills training, job training and other workshops that can directly benefit disadvantaged communities. Art space creators should first identify what kind of space or program they

would like to focus on and utilize available alternative spaces to house them.

2. **Develop cross-sector partnerships and arts programs that involve environmental sustainability and business.** Synergies are created when different sectors and people come together to collaborate on a project. The case studies show that working with multiple parties from varying viewpoints and interests – if they all have an aligned vision – can create something that is innovative. While arts organizations should think “outside of the box,” they should still stay connected to “the box.” Art space creators should actively seek out partners that align with their vision for the arts, as well as in fields such as sustainability, education, business and real estate. They should look for potential public, private and non-profit partners as seen in the Schermerhorn House and Chashama case studies by utilizing arts networks, asking their city’s department of cultural affairs for referrals and other forums. Other relationships to forge include government officials, funders, businesses, universities and individual community members. Art space creators can approach city agencies, property owners and economic development groups to identify vacant buildings, storefronts or lots that can be used. On a programmatic level, art space creators should also think strategically about arts education that can expose different populations to multiple subjects, such as science, math, engineering, sustainability, entrepreneurship, real estate and business. Incorporating sustainability and business into programs and partners will aid in organizations’ financial health as well.
  
3. **Make strategic physical and social connections with the surrounding neighborhood.** Using careful physical design, community and user feedback and relevant programming, art space creators should incorporate the strengthening of physical and social connections into their mission. Many of the organizations studied have an underlying social purpose in their mission, which helped them bring different people together through positive arts experiences. Art space creators should think about the physical and social barriers that currently exist in their neighborhood and devise solutions to tear down those barriers with art space as the neutral ground. They should also prioritize community outreach and programming that fosters a level of understanding and trust between the arts organization and the community, especially if the arts organization is “white” and is going into low-income communities of

color. This lesson was important for all the organizations studied, and especially so for Side Street Projects.

- 4. Involve users and stakeholders in the planning and design process.** To develop a space that can accommodate its programs and audience, art space creators should involve their users and stakeholders in the participatory planning process. Artists for Humanity did this successfully with its staff and teen artists. This involves a conscious initial effort to determine who to reach out to and how to incorporate user or community input. Doing so will create an art space that the community can see as their own because they played a part in shaping it. Another way to incorporate the community is by including their art in the space as part of a permanent exhibition or in the building structure itself, as Artists for Humanity did.
- 5. Create a safe and flexible space.** These are two very different characteristics of space but are both very important for long-term relevance. A safe space is as much a literal meaning as a general philosophy. Artists for Humanity, for example, built its programs and space out of an underlying value of respect and responsibility. With regard to flexibility, art space creators should develop a multipurpose space that can accommodate different arts and non-arts related uses. Artists for Humanity uses its completely open main floor as a painting studio and as an income-generating private event space. Chashama converted a doctor's office into artist work-studios with temporary walls that can be taken down as uses change. All of the studied arts organizations created a flexible space that could serve many functions, as well as an inclusive place where people of all backgrounds could appreciate and make art together.
- 6. Build capacity and technical skills through arts programming.** Art space creators should think about how they build capacity and technical skills geared towards professional artists, youth or the general public (or some combination of the three). Arts education programs that resemble human capital programs especially benefit disadvantaged communities that would not otherwise have access to similar educational resources. Art spaces and their programming are inextricably linked. Careful thinking about how the two may interact and build upon one another will yield an art space that empowers its audience and builds value.

- 7. Develop strategies for long term financial sustainability and stability.** Art space creators need to think strategically about how to financially support the organization, and therefore the operation of the space. They must think about the advantages and disadvantages of leasing or owning space, which impacts stability in changing real estate markets. They should think innovatively about revenue generating programs, like Artists for Humanity and Side Street Projects, and be very careful about taking on debt. Free space and free/low operating costs constitute the ideal scenario, as seen with most of the case studies. Art space creators should look into the feasibility of reducing utility costs by getting funding for photovoltaic panels, reusing materials for art projects, or conserving energy in their everyday operations.
- 8. Consider mobility and time when planning art space.** These two elements were seen throughout the case studies as innovative approaches to art space. Mobility allowed Side Street Projects to bring services directly to different populations, and allowed Artists for Humanity to draw students from all over Boston. Time – as in temporary space and permanent space – allows for flexibility or stability. Depending on the program and goals, it would benefit art space creators to think carefully about how mobility and time can improve their ability to reach a broader audience.
- 9. Track and evaluate outcomes regularly.** It makes it easier for art spaces to tell their story, apply for funding, show successes or learn from challenges when they track and evaluate their outcomes regularly. Art space creators should think carefully from the beginning about what types of data to collect, what surveys to administer and to whom and how they can track the impacts of not only their program and space on their immediate audience, but also other outcomes such as physical, social and economic effects on their neighborhood. The more art space creators understand their successes and the role they play in the larger realm of urban planning, the better they can influence other art space creators to adopt best practices or fix common mistakes. This can only benefit the knowledge sharing of art space creators across the nation and inform better and more effective art spaces in the future.
- 10. Be patient and be open to evolution.** The case studies show that innovative and transformative art spaces are not created overnight. It takes years, even decades, of work and fine-tuning for an organization to

evolve in such a way. Art space creators thus need to understand that the creation of a good space takes time and to always be on the lookout for ways to improve or seize new opportunities that align with their mission. Art space creators should be patient because of the potentially long, organic process, but also nimble to react to external factors. Art space creators that intend to create an innovative space at the outset should do so knowing that plans often change, and potentially for the better.



## CHAPTER 9

## Conclusion

## Conclusion

Art spaces play important roles in providing opportunities for creative people to continue their pursuits and in weaving together diverse populations and places. Art organizations that have innovatively developed new types of spaces and programs in response to community need have presented new strategies for art space development. From repurposing mobile homes to combining art and sustainability, from partnering with the private, public and non-profit sector to working closely with the real estate industry, these models for art space development strategies are diverse, yet can be replicated or adapted in other cities. Doing so will broaden the transformative properties of art spaces on a national scale, providing access to the arts and building local community gathering places in neighborhoods that stand to gain from this investment.

The four case studies that were examined in this thesis – Side Street Projects, Artists for Humanity, Schermerhorn House, and Chashama – are all unique in their type of space, design, program, partnerships and financing schemes, among other factors. Together, the case studies show the diversity of approaches that exist in creating art spaces with limited budgets and means. In addition, their common thread is their ability to produce immediate results in the artists, youth and neighborhood residents that they reach. On a human and social capital level, the people who are exposed to the creative process learn technical art and business skills, as well as creativity, responsibility and self-reliance. These lessons especially benefit disadvantaged populations such as inner-city youth, low-income populations and special needs groups. Communities with tension surrounding stalled real estate developments or with significant crime can also benefit from the neutral ground that art spaces represent and the dialogue that is opened through creative expression. The fact that so many different people can be brought together in the shared experience of art production and consumption is a testament to the open nature of art space and its potential to break down social, racial and economic barriers that exist to some degree in every city.

In addition to the impact on people and communities, successful art spaces make places more desirable, vibrant and connected. Innovative spaces that add a level of mobility are able to access hard-to-reach neighborhoods and populations. Those spaces that are temporary have the potential to bring in artistic resources to new areas, enlivening vacant storefronts or lots and deterring crime, or for permanent spaces, can ensure that there is a dedicated place for the arts for future generations even as property values rise. Art spaces, through their programming and partnerships with different sectors, make way for unique

collaborations between artists, youth, businesses, and local government, as well as a generation of creative new ideas.

In order to cultivate more innovative and transformative art spaces that are strategic about all of these factors, including space, programs, partnerships, financing, and sustainability, city planners and policymakers, arts organizations and artist entrepreneurs need to first acknowledge the physical, community and economic benefits of art spaces. Cities can help cultivate art spaces by breaking down barriers, convening partners, providing incentives to create permanent art space, and funding innovative programs. Art space creators can help by thinking creatively, adapting successful models in their own cities and adopting socially conscious missions. Together, cities and art space creators can ensure that all people – artists, youth, businesses, and the broader community, can continue to benefit from the making and appreciation of the arts. Developing innovative art spaces is just one method towards bridging social and economic gaps. As more art spaces are developed in cities across the country, the quality of life can improve neighborhood by neighborhood and cities can be one step closer to a more creative and sustainable future.

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