The Museum as Agent of Participatory Planning:

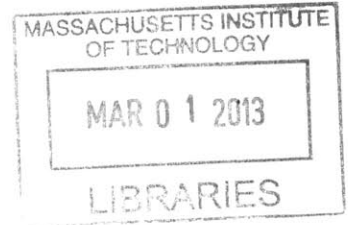The Queens Museum of Art Engages an Immigrant Neighborhood

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in City Planning
at the

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The Queens Museum of Art Engages an Immigrant Neighborhood

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ABSTRACT

In neighborhoods facing demographic shifts, like changes in ethnicity, class and language, resident participation in state-sponsored planning processes can be difficult due to unfamiliarity, mistrust or cultural misalignment between residents and existing planning agents. This is particularly true in neighborhoods with large populations of new immigrants, where residents do not only face language barriers, long working hours and a general unfamiliarity with local planning processes, but are also prone to face cultures of discrimination or self-induce exclusion for fear of legal action to shaky residency status. In this thesis I ask how can a cultural institution include new immigrants in participatory artist-led, neighborhood-based processes that ultimately connect to state-sponsored planning efforts? Specifically, how can a museum tie together independent participatory artist-led projects in a meaningful and impactful manner? Through a primarily case study of the Queens Museum of Art (QMA) located in New York City, I illustrate how with the specific goals of incorporating the voices of new immigrants in the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) renovation project in Corona Plaza, the museum was able to facilitate a collaborative participatory process that engaged multiple actors in an open and dynamic manner. I situate the case within the literatures of participation, from planning and art, in order to present various perspectives on the meaning, value and limitations of participation. Drawing from the literature, I highlight how without a clear declaration of long-term goals, QMA may face difficulty maintaining the commitment and participation of residents and may face questions of legitimacy in their community-based work in Corona.

Following a general discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of a civil society institution involving itself in the political realm, I conclude that with a clear set of goals and with an acknowledgement of their own capacity limitations, museums can facilitate collaborative and dynamic participatory processes that overcome limitations of formulaic government-led processes and promote the planning of inclusive and equitable neighborhoods.

THESIS COMMITTEE

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This thesis is dedicated in memory of my Uncle Doug.
Watching him love New York, inspired me to love cities – especially places in them like Queens.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MOTIVATION

My work often exists at the intersection of pragmatism and poetry. Specifically, I am interested in the intersection of urban planning and cultural practice, because of the power of bringing together rational data-driven ideas and those related to our emotions, behaviors and perceptions. I believe with varied modes of inquiry and types of information, multiple voices will be heard, even those with less money, less political power, and formal education.

Though unsure of exactly what motivates my interest in equitable environments and processes, I know that my upbringing in a Jewish family and Quaker school, instilled in me a deep sense of empathy, a value that rests at the core of many decisions. At home I learned to have an opinion and at Germantown Friends School I learned of about making decisions through committee. I recognized that committees are not always efficient or even effective, but also came to appreciate that through deliberation relationships come into being and the act of gathering to deliberate in itself is generative and meaningful.

My first professional contact with participation came when I moved to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to work with an urban planning firm that was responsible for facilitating community participation during a recovery planning process. Impressed by how citizen participation enabled the merging of local knowledge with technical information, I came to realize that the planning process had limited power within the broader political context. It is precisely that disconnect between the planners and the politicians, the micro-scaled interactions and the structural issues that upset me, motivated me to critically question the value of participation and inspired this thesis research.

Having lived and worked in many cities (Philadelphia, St. Louis, New York, New Orleans, Oakland, Los Angeles, Boston) and many neighborhoods in those cities, I learned in deeply personal way that value comes in all forms. Simple calculations of real estate price or economic potential are knowable metrics for bankers and politicians to use in making decisions, but it is clear to me that stories and cultural histories are necessary for making *just* decisions.

As part of Transforma Projects in New Orleans, I learned first hand how artists narrate, facilitate and animate such stories and layers of knowledge. During these years I expanding my appreciation for the aesthetics of socially-engaged art, and also acknowledge the role that cultural practice can have in addressing the social and physical environment. However, I also came to know the limitations of the cultural work in pursuits to overcome broad structural and embedded political issues.

I take a scalar approach to analysis, considering how micro-scaled interventions affect (or not) larger macro-scaled dynamics and inspired by both the pragmatic and the poetic, I take on research and action.

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INTRODUCTION

- Research Question + Thesis Format
- Data: Interviews, Participant-Observation + Document Review
- Limitations in the Research
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In neighborhoods facing demographic shifts, like changes in ethnicity, class and language, resident participation in state-sponsored planning processes can be difficult due to unfamiliarity, mistrust or cultural misalignment between residents and existing planning agents. This is particularly true in neighborhoods with large new immigrant populations, where residents not only face language barriers, long working hours and a general unfamiliarly with local planning process, but they are also prone to face cultures of discrimination or self-induce exclusion for fear of deportation due to shaky legal status. Bloemraad (2006) posits that citizenship is not only a legal status that accords rights and benefits, but also an invitation to participate in a system of mutual governance, creating an identity that provides a sense of belonging. Borrowing from this idea, in this thesis I ask can a cultural institutions begin the process of citizen formation by including new immigrants in participatory artist-led, neighborhood-based processes that ultimately connect to state-sponsored planning efforts?

I also address the question posed by Arturo Ignacio Sanchez, chairperson of the New Yorkers Committee of Queens Community Board 3, scholar and educator, "will the increased foreign-born population in Queens and decline of the African-American population lead to the worst-case scenario of hollowed-out local political institutions and politically fragmented neighborhoods, or the best-case scenario where immigrant and bottom-up grassroots groups establish multi-cultural and multi-racial political and civic institutions that highlight concerns informed by a social justice perspective?" (Sanchez, 2012). This thesis examines how a museum, as a civil society institution, can facilitate deliberative processes, that combines the often unheard voices of immigrant neighborhood residents, with those of community-based organizations, business and state-sponsored agencies, in an effort to promote more inclusive and equitable neighborhood planning and development. Specifically, through the primary case study of the Queens Museum of Art (QMA), I analyze how the institution evolved to create infrastructure to support connections for socially-engaged artists and community-based organizations in Corona, becoming itself a civic institution with a social justice orientation.

Connecting to Chaskin's idea of *community capacity*, -- the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community – I apply his systemic framework for understanding the mechanisms through which it operates to the museum (Chaskin, 2001). He notes that community capacity is engaged through some combination of three levels of social agency – individuals (skills, knowledge, resources of residents), organizations (CBOs, service providers, local businesses, development institutions and local branches big companies) and networks (concerning social structures and patterns of relations among individuals and organizations), and I examine how the museum engages with all three levels, to improve services for immigrants and enlarge their influence on decision-making.

This study does not focus on immigration reform or direct political participation but rather focuses on participation at the scale of neighborhood planning. Noting that neighborhoods can follow a path of either stability, decline or upgrading, Temkin and Rohe (1996) argue that a neighborhood's trajectory results from it's internal character (physical, social and location characteristics) and it's relationship with external forces (sources of financial, political and social resources). Instead of following the existent models of neighborhood change models; the ecological model, which focuses on how change is affected by large structural changes and the subcultural model, which recognizes the importance the social characteristics, Temkin and Rohe (1996) create a model that synthesizes these two ideas with a political economy approach that focuses on the importance of institutional actors in the process.

In the presentation of the QMA case, I borrow from this synthetic model and consider how the museum recognizes the larger structural issues (city-level development policies, neo-liberalized public space programs), the importance of the neighborhood's social character (patterns of social interaction, use of local commercial, religious and cultural facilities) and also considers itself as an institutional actor in the neighborhood connected to other institutions (political, cultural and economic) in the rest of the city and region. In the case study I focus on QMA's role in Corona, the neighborhood adjacent to the museum facility.

Though QMA is committed staying relevant to its namesake borough and serving their community, under the leadership of the museum's current Director, Tom Finkelpearl, much of the attention has shifted to focus on the "majority-minority" neighborhood of Corona, adjacent to the museum's Flushing Meadows Park facility. In this case study, I focus on the role QMA has taken in planning efforts in this neighborhood.

Defined as a multi- and trans- national neighborhood, nearly 70% of Corona's population is foreign-born (according to the 2010 U.S. Census) and many individuals, and many estimate that up to 40% are undocumented (including an estimate in a 2004 study prepared by Hunter College Department of Urban Planning).[1] Many of Corona's residents share Spanish as a common language, and though there are large populations from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador, over a dozen countries are represented. In addition to diversity in countries of origin, there are significant class distinctions, differences in levels of educational attainment, and discrepancies in legal voting status rights between groups.

As geographer Ash Amin argues in *Ethnicity and the Multicultural City: Living with Diversity,* the purpose of engagement is not to move towards the goal of creating a unified or cohesive community, but rather in service of maintaining spatially open, culturally heterogeneous, and socially variegated neighborhoods, (Amin, 2002). In this thesis, I ask, can a museum effectively

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[1] *Local Economy Public Space and the Olympics, Prepared by Hunter College Urban Planning and presented to Queens Community 3 on November 5, 2004. Census http://www.socialexplorer.com/*

engage with individuals and organizations in new immigrants neighborhoods defined by high rates of residential and commercial turnover, and facilitate neighborhood-scale planning that values such heterogeneity?

When QMA began forging connections in Corona it was well-aware of the large population of undocumented residents, and thus was intentional about using non-threatening engagement strategies, initially commissioning artist to make work *about* the community, which often involved anonymous consultation with residents. Though the museum saw value in highlighting the often under-represented communities, it also recognized its value in working *for* and *with* Corona residents and community-based organizations. Engagement in the form of anonymous, one-time consultation is still part of the arsenal of strategies, but many of the museum-commissioned, artist-led projects are also deliberative and action-oriented in nature.

The case chapters focus on the internal staff and program changes at QMA and highlight the work of various socially-engaged artists that have influenced the museum to act as agent of participatory planning, especially related to public space improvements sponsored by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) in Corona Plaza. I identify the museum's strengths in weaving together discreet participatory artist projects that highlight the needs and desires of the neighborhood and connecting to local organizations and public official, but also note weaknesses and issues related to legitimacy and representation.

Though many elements of this case are unique to the nature of QMA and the Corona neighborhood, this thesis presents components that are generalizable and applicable in other contexts. If urban migration patterns trends continue along the same trajectory as they have for the past decades due to global capital, goods and services, and more and more neighborhoods face demographic changes, whether increased diversity, ethnic shifts, or extreme gains or losses in population, the New York-based case will provide insight about how to facilitate planning in a manner that acknowledges and accepts social and physical change as a constant element of the neighborhood, and encourages resident engagement in an inclusive and just manner.

LITERATURES

To understand the work of QMA, I will situate the case within literatures of participation, firstly, that of the planning discipline and secondly, that of art and cultural production. Through the literature review, I will present various perspectives on the meanings, value and the limitations of participation. Since most work examining participation has not considered it as a creative act or consider the role that artists can take in facilitating participation, I introduce the history of participation in art-making and the emergent genre of social practice art (defined in this thesis as practices that connect the *symbolic* realm of art and the *real* social realm).

I also introduce historic connections between art and urban planning, research that considers the connection between cultural practice and neighborhood well-being, but since the primary case is of a museum, I build industry context by presenting a brief history of American museums, highlighting institutions from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries that were particularly responsive to their local physical and social contexts.

METHODOLOGY

I chose the case study method of research since there is limited analysis on the role of museums as agents of participatory planning, particularly in the context of an immigrant neighborhood. Many of the programs at the Queens Museum of Art (QMA) are in-progress, and occurred in real-time with the writing of this thesis, so even if perspective may change over time, I believe presenting the current findings is valuable. With access to the museum's Director and staff, I was welcome to think about how the institution can better achieve its goal of being the most community-engaged in the country. With the opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to social science inquiry, I present descriptive information about QMA as a revelatory case Yin (1994).

Though this thesis is built around one in-depth primary case study, I was inspired by Mukhija's *N of One plus Some: An Alternative Strategy for Conducting Single Case Research"* (Mukhija, 2010). Throughout the research process I followed secondary cases to assist me in identifying issues to expect, questions to ask and data to look for in the primary case.

DATA SOURCES

I grounded my mixed-method research in qualitative data collection, including key informant interviews, the review archival documents related to the museum's activity and careful observation of events, meetings and communication.

INTERVIEWS

Targeted interviews with employees of the Queens Museum of Art (QMA), commissioned artists, representatives from Corona-based organizations, students and faculty involved in the Social Practice Queens program, were a primary source of data. I conducted all interviews in-person though there were a few follow-ups via email and telephone. Most of the interviews were recorded with a digital devise, though I also took hand-written notes in real-time during the conversation. The interviews generally lasted between 40 to 70 minutes, and though the interview questions varied for each individuals based on their relationship to the case, I generally asked about their professional background, connection to the museum's work, especially that related to community engagement in Corona. Weiss's *Learning from Strangers: the Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies* (Weiss, 1994) provided guidance in my choice of who to interview, how to interview them and how to analyze the data.

PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION

In addition to the in-person interviews conducted during my two trips to Queens, I also spent a significant amount of time with museum staff and artists throughout their normal daily routines, observing private meetings, public events and all of the moments in-between.

I made two site visits to Queens, the first from March 5 – 6, 2012 and a second, longer trip from May 5 – 12, 2012. During both visits I stayed in Manhattan, and commuted to Queens on the #7 train, known informally as the "International Express".

Between the scheduled meetings and interviews, I spent significant time in the museum facility, meeting with staff-members, sitting-in on meeting and generally observing how the space was used. I traveled to Manhattan with QMA staff to meet with the local City Council Representative, Julissa Ferreras and was invited to participate in the final review for the Social Practice Queens course, *Transforming Corona Plaza*. I also spent many hours at the *Immigrant Movement International* space, located at 108-59 Roosevelt Avenue in Corona, getting to know QMA artist-in-residence, Tania Bruguera, her staff and the daily users of the space. As I moved between the storefront space and the primary, park-based museum facility (about a 12-15 minutes walk) I became familiar with the sights, sounds and smells of the neighborhood, and ultimately used my field notes to inform the case study.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

To balance the interviews and on-site observations, I analyzed other forms of data including internal documents (e.g. grant applications, reports, memos) provided by museum staff, web-based materials provided on QMA-hosted websites and blogs and articles written by reporters, students and community members. I also watched relevant lectures (mostly available on YouTube), listened to podcasts, conducted basic web searches (via Google) about museum programs and followed the museum's official Twitter and Facebook feeds. (Most of the documents I reviewed were publically accessible, but given my working relationship with the museum's Director and staff, I also reviewed some internal, unpublished writings.)

LIMITATIONS IN THE RESEARCH

Though I use a well-established body of literature to help contrast the museum against other planning agents in similar contexts, the presentation of a single-case as its limitations. Also, since much of the community-based activity at the QMA was happening simultaneous to the writing of this thesis, there will surely more research to do and more conclusions to draw about the work in the future.

NOTE ABOUT AUDIENCE

Though this thesis in intended for diverse readers, including those from the planning, museum and art worlds, it is primarily geared towards planning professionals and academics interested in

the meaning, value and limitations of participation, especially in neighborhoods facing rapid demographic change.

Chapter 2 offers geographic and social context for the Queens Museum of Art (QMA). I describe the museum's internal structure, physical footprint and relationship to community-based organizations, and also provide an overview of the Corona neighborhood.

Chapter 3 provides a literature review relevant to the primary case study. Firstly, the review will focus on participation within planning literature and define offer various perspectives on the meaning, value and limitations of participation. Then I introduce a history of participation in art, highlighting the power of the practice, its diversity and tensions between symbolic work and social action. In the final part of the chapter, I outline the pros and cons of a museum acting as an agent of participatory planning.

Chapter 4 provides a history of the relationship between citizen participation and museums in the North American context. I provide historic examples of museums from the 18th, 19th, and 20th century that had a specific focus on their local neighborhood communities in order to provide context for contemporary and future museums.

Chapter 5 introduces the QMA case by examining how staffing decisions and programmatic changes increased the museum's knowledge of and capacity to engage with residents and organizations in the surrounding neighborhoods, ultimately enabling the museum to serve as an agent of planning in Corona.

Chapter 6 continues to the QMA case by examining how with the specific goal of incorporating the voice of new immigrants in the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT)-sponsored public space improvement project, the museum was able to facilitate an collaborative participatory process that engaged multiple actors in an open and dynamic manner.

Chapter 7 identifies some of the dilemmas and risks of an art museum serving as an agent of participatory planning with a focus on issues of accountability, legitimacy and tension between different museum publics. After presenting some of these potential challenges, I propose how other *types* of museums might become active in participatory planning, even at scales beyond that of the neighborhood.

CHAPTER II

THE QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART (QMA)

- The Museum
- The Neighborhood
- The Neighborhood-based Museum

In this thesis I focus on the work of the Queens Museum of Art (QMA) in majority-minority Corona neighborhood, so this chapter offers geographic and social context for the neighborhood and additional organizational context for the museum, including its internal structure, physical footprint and relationship to community-based organizations and other museums. These descriptions are not full portraits of the museum or surrounding communities, but rather pictures full enough to situate the contents following chapters. The context starts with a broad introduction of the museum, as a New York-based organization, with a focus on its relationship to the city, the borough and more specifically, and recently, Corona. I then describe the specific demographic profile of Corona, and briefly introduce the museum's connection to the neighborhood.

THE MUSEUM

The Queens Museum of Art (QMA) occupies a city-owned building located in Flushing Meadow-Corona Park in Queens, New York. Designed to house the New York Pavilion during the 1939 Worlds Fair, the building was renovated for the 1964 Fair to accommodate the scale-model of the city of New York, known as the Panorama, commissioned by Robert Moses Given the historic connection New York's (in)famous planner and two Worlds Fairs, the museum has always had a connection to issues *the city,* and as Larissa Harris says "to talk about the city, is just ingrained in our DNA [at the museum]". In recent years, however, the museum has become increasingly involved in Queens-specific topics more intentional about its role in community development instead of city-building.

The 50,000 square foot park-facility is located walking distance from the last stop of the #7 MTA subway line train, known unofficially as the "International Express" the line connects mid-town Manhattan and Queens and goes through extremely diverse communities. Corona, the neighborhood adjacent to the Flushing-Meadows park on the west-side, is where QMA has focused most of the community development work.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Defined geographically, as the area between Northern Boulevard, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, the Horace Harding Expressway and Junction Boulevard, Corona is a mid-size neighborhood in Queens. Unlike the familiar density of Manhattan, this neighborhood is not filled with skyscrapers and high-rise apartment towers, but rather comprised of modest 2-3 story residential buildings on lots with modest front and side yards. Though many were built as single-family homes, there are now multiple families living in each structure, sometime with multiple families sharing carved out units on one floor.

Defined as a multi- and trans- national neighborhood, nearly 70% of Corona's population is foreign-born (according to the 2010 U.S. Census) and many individuals, and many estimate that up to 40% are undocumented (including an estimate in a 2004 study prepared by Hunter College

Department of Urban Planning).[2] Many of Corona's 90,000 (approximate) residents share Spanish as a common language, and though there are large populations from the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador, over a dozen countries are represented.[3] Along with these differences in origin and time of arrival, there are significant class distinctions, differences in language proficiency, education, legal status and voting rights. Many of the neighborhoods political representatives are of Dominican descent, and though there language is shared with most residents this does not equate to share cultural or political views or social norms. In addition to diversity in countries of origin, there are significant class distinctions, differences in levels of educational attainment, and discrepancies in legal voting status rights between groups.

Given this demography, Corona is often referred to as a "majority-minority" neighborhood, and more generally the neighborhood has a higher percentage of Hispanics than other parts of Queens.

With various commercial corridors, along National Street, Roosevelt Avenue and 37th street, Corona is a vibrant neighborhood with active business, street life, audible music and great food. Though vibrant and active many residents deal with housing shortages, overcrowded public schools, few transportation options, limited healthcare access and language issues and limited public space and recreational facilities, all of which are common to working-class and lower-income immigrant neighborhoods.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED MUSEUM

As mentioned above, QMA has become increasingly concerned with these issues, commonly considered aspects of community development – recognizing that even as a cultural institution dedicated to its traditional role as a museum, Tom Finkelpearl, the museum's Director aspires to be "the most community-engaged museum in the country", playing a role in local community development issues. QMA is still committed to presenting high quality contemporary art to an international audience, and educational programming for people in the New York metropolitan area, but the non-profit governed by a twenty-member Board of Trustees is led day-to-day by the Executive Director, who manages an administrative staff organized in three departments; curatorial, education and public programs.

Given the focus on Corona, QMA thinking about how to encourage participation with residents, like new immigrants, who are known to bring their home country's civic or political culture with them when they migrate, influencing the group's attitudes toward citizenship and political participation (Bloemraad, 2006, Greeley and McCready 1975). Many residents are also living under conditions of poverty, working long hours at jobs where they are often facing

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[2] *Local Economy Public Space and the Olympics, Prepared by Hunter College Urban Planning and presented to Queens Community 3 on November 5, 2004. Census* http://www.socialexplorer.com/

[3] Most residents are either bilingual or Spanish speaking (though some speak Spanish as a second language since a native indigenous language may be their first), only 20% of the households are English-only speaking households.

discrimination and abuse, and also that many residents are undocumented or face language barriers, participation and engagement in civic and political life is a concern, something to fear. In a panel called *Fresh Thinking about Community and Anchor Partnerships: Creating Shared Value for More Equitable Communities,* Prerana Reddy, Director of Public Programs, asked "how do you partner with communities that are in-flux so rapidly?" QMA has taken the position to figure out appropriate strategies to facilitate engagement, and provide services to the community, within its bounds as a museum.

Recognizing the institution's social and political capital (staff resources, connection to City Council, the local Community Board, representatives in the Mayor's office, etc), the museum's director, Tom Finkelpearl has expressed an interest in and willingness to push the boundaries of typical museum work. Since 2004, QMA has been more involved in Corona, programming in Corona Plaza and renting the storefront space. This work in addition to the portions of the budgets from the education, public programs and curatorial departments geared toward community engagement account for 60% of the museum's overall budget. [4]

While QMA has been fundraising for and under-going a major expansion on-site in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park[5], it has also added 1,500 square feet to its inventory in an off-site annex located at 108-59 Roosevelt Avenue in Corona. The privately-owned storefront space, leased by the museum since 2010, is located between the two train stops and about a 20 minute walk from the main facilities. The storefront is often referred to as IMI since it is primarily used as the headquarters for Tania Bruguera's *Immigrant Movement International* project. It is also used as a classroom space for the Corona Studio course offered as part of Social Practice Queens program jointly organization by QMA and Queens College.

In order to critically understand the work of the museum, I will not focus on specific architectural or facility-related issues but rather situate the community-focused activity within a history of participation in planning, and also look at a few historic and contemporary museums to consider how this museum is different or similar from others interested in public engagement.

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[4] From email correspondence with Tom Finkelpearl in June 2012.
[5] The other half, which has been unused for many years, is undergoing renovations. When the $65 million project is complete, the museum will have an additional 50,000 square feet of usable space, nearly doubling in size. Entrance will be moved to the center on the building, on axis with a major promenade in the park will be a gran re-opening in May 2013.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In communities undergoing demographic change, and those with large immigrant or trans-national populations, participatory processes are challenging due to cultures of discrimination (imposed by others), fear of participation (self-imposed), language barriers, or trust issues. In this chapter, I examine the history of participation in planning, both in the public and non-profit sectors and discuss more broadly the values and limitations of participation. I then introduce a history of participation in art, highlighting the power of the practice, its diversity, and the tensions between symbolic work and social action.

The final part of the chapter proposes the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the socially-engaged museum as an agent of participatory planning with specific attention devoted to institutional ability to put ideas into action. This thesis describes various programs and artist projects, and critically assesses the museum based on criteria suggested in the literature on participatory planning and consideration of the museum against alternative organizational sponsors of participation, like public planning agencies and non-profit community-based organizations.

PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

There are many definitions of participation in planning literature, writings on political philosophy and critical theory, but for the sake of this thesis, I keep the definition broad, including all processes motivated to create a stronger democracy. Fung and Wright (2003: 3) note "democracy has come to be narrowly defined by territory based competitive elections of political leadership for legislative and executive offices, yet, increasingly, this mechanism of political representation seems ineffective in accomplishing the central ideals of democratic politics." Though I borrow from their work in *Deepening Democracy,* I consider processes of participation that facilitate the active involvement of citizens and devise public policies grounded in ideas of healthy society, but not necessarily political, or state-run processes as presented in the volume (Fung & Wright, 2003). I made the choice to consider participatory processes outside of government since in this thesis I present a case in which many residents do not have voting rights, or even legal residency status.

With a focus on the inclusion of immigrants particularly at the neighborhood scale, I look to Chaskin's work in *Building Community Capacity: A Definitional Framework and Case Studies from a Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI)* in which he notes the importance of participation of community members in collective action and problem solving and the need for a mechanism to support such participation (2001). Defining *community capacity* as the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community, Chaskin focuses on CCIs interested in building such capacity to identify opportunities to foster and sustain positive neighborhood change (2001). Specifically related to the participatory nature of CCIs at the scale of the individual, organization and network, he notes that organizations facilitating this type of work, (like the Upper Albany Neighborhood

Collaborative in Hartford, which I will refer to in later chapters) often deal with issues of accountability and questions about the legitimacy of representation.

Chaskin builds on decades of work about the importance of participation in planning. Writing during the "War on Poverty" era of the Johnson Administration in the 1960s, Arnstein (1969) argued that citizen participation is an important strategy by which have-nots, those excluded from political and economic processes, are able to join in to determine the future and share in the benefits of an affluent society She was reacting against the technocratic, top-down planning of the previous era of urban renewal, and with a specific focus on the ability for have-nots, those excluded from political and economic processes, to participate, she illustrates an 8-runged *Ladder of Participation*. Divided into 3 sections; nonparticipation, tokenism and citizen power, the top rung, *citizen control* is reached when community institutions are formed in which participants become part of the governing body.

Arnstein distinguishes clearly between citizens having the power to go through a process and having the power to affect the outcome of the process, noting "that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless", and warns that processes of participation that take the form of consultation, can be tokens, rarely assure the citizen voice will be taken into full account (Arnstein 1969: 216).

By law public participation is required in many decision-making processes in the U.S. and takes the form of public hearing, review or comment period. Innes and Booher (2004) argue that these methods are rarely genuine and do not meet basic five basic goals of participation, to present citizen preference, incorporate citizen knowledge, advance fairness, legitimate public decision-making process and fulfill legal requirement. Likewise these methods can pit citizens against each other creating polarized and aggressive situations in which planners and policy-makers may become more ambivalent as opposed to more active. At the worst, these forms of public participation are counterproductive (Innes & Booher, 2004), and when a process is participatory in name only, a *ritual* more than a real effort, Briggs (2003) argues there is potential for disappointment, confusion, power grabs and growing mistrust.

Rather than accepting this model of one-way communication, Innes and Booher (2004) propose a multi-dimensional one in which participation is collaborative and citizens, non-profits, for-profits, planner and public administrators are joined together in communication, learning and action. In this model, participation fulfills the five goals mentioned above and also serves to build civil society and create an adaptive, self-organizing polity that co-evolves with citizens and interests (Innes & Booher, 2004, Rittel & Webber, 1973).

VALUE OF PARTICIPATION

De Tocqueville argued that through participation and association, individuals are able to overcome selfish desires, thus making both a self-conscious and active political society and a vibrant civil society functioning independently from the state (Tocqueville, Reeve, & Bowen, 1882). From the political philosophy perspective, the power of participation is derived from the act of associating, coming together for mutual purpose, not on an evaluation of outcomes. Habermas (1984) also urged for a focus on process over product, by arguing that positive change originates from *communicative action*, a type of cooperative deliberative action undertaken by individuals. By providing people with the practice and capacity to work productively with each other, such social action can have effective and even emancipatory impact on the spheres of politics and culture. Calling for participation that extends beyond that of the "one voice, one vote" idea standard in representational democracy, this type of social action requires participants to listen in addition to using their voice. Forester (1989) distinguishes between the active nature of listening over the passive process of hearing, and argues that a planner's ability to hope is tied to his or her ability to listen. Davidoff (1965) argues that planners have not only have the responsibility to listen but also to advocate for various interest groups, so that urban democracy can be more effective.

Like De Tocqueville, Habermas and Forester who emphasize the generative nature of communication, speaking and listening, Mouffe (2000) argues for "agonistic" political culture, in which engagement allows for vibrant clashes of democratic political positions instead of serving as a quest for consensus or resolution. Given the prescribed public hearing format where citizens are encourage to react to ideas as opposed to actively presently their own, the sponsoring agent is forced to make judgment rather than encourage dialogue (Innes & Booher, 2004).

Creating channels for participation beyond the confines of voting and formulaic government-led processes, is especially relevant in this thesis since I focus on participation in immigrant neighborhoods where many residents do not have voting rights and thus cannot directly participate in the political sphere. In this context participatory planning is a valuable tool not only because of the ability to determine *just* neighborhood planning decisions, but the *just* processes themselves, often dialogical, can address issues of isolation, exclusion and discrimination common in immigrant communities, and provide a sense of belonging even in the absence of "official" citizenship.[6]

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[6] In this sentence I refer to Fainstein's definition of the *Just City*, as one in which public investment and regulation produce equitable outcomes rather than support those already well off. Fainstein notes that "although there is a rich literature in planning and public policy prescribing appropriate decision-making processes, these process-oriented discussions rarely make explicit what policies would produce greater justice within the urban context" (2010), and to consider how to best plan and create a *just neighborhood*, I consider her point, I consider the value of participatory processes not for their own sake but rather on the connection between process and implementation.

In literatures on communication theory, Poulos (2008) describes how the word dialogue is derived from the Greek words *dia* (through) and *logos* (meaning, word), and posits that dialogic moments allow groups "to break out of the bounds of ordinariness into a space imbued with an extraordinary sense of connection – or at least a shared meaning-making". Through authentic dialogical processes, people that were otherwise functioning independently can begin to recognize themselves as a unit and constituencies can be formed and the processes can be transformative (Innes & Booher, 2004: Roberts, 2002; Yankelovich, 199; Forestor, 1999).

Non-voting constituents, like new immigrants, are more likely to prefer the delegate model (in which representatives follow the will of their constituents) over the trustee model (in which representatives do what they think is best, regardless of constituent sentiment) since they feel their concerns could be ignored in the later (Carman, 2007), and though the relationship between the delegate and the constituents can be complicated, through the spokesperson the community itself can come into existence, politically or symbolically (Bourdieu & Robinson, 1985).

Unlike consultation, which assumes the maintenance of power relations, deliberation is defined in planning literature, as open, collective dialogue-based process that aims for broader understanding and learning, allows space for the questioning of authority (Fung, 2006a). These collectives processes in which all participants – representative of public agencies and private interest groups, elite and disadvantaged citizens – are considered equal, can lead to joint fact finding in which data is questioned (Innes & Booher, 2004; Ozawa, 1991) and can enable conversations in which the deeper reality hidden behind popular myths, scientific theories of arguments in common use are uncovered (Innes, 1996)Generally, sharing of information can lead to "more full" information and subsequently more accurate definitions of problems and answers (Fung, 2006a).

Briggs (2008) argues that deliberation presents an alternative to models of pure competition, such as voting, strategic bargaining and business-related negotiation. Even though thinking about deliberative processes may evoke an image of "let's hold hands and get along", real-world deliberation can be heated and create winners and losers, but unlike in the voting model, in these processes individuals are given the opportunity to at least know why their ideas were rejected (Fung & Wright, 2003).

Even in face-to-face negotiation where parties are contentious, through dialogue, trust and legitimacy can be built and help each side understand the other's interest and even form tactical alliances or frame propositions with less conflict (Susskind & Ozawa, 1984). By coming to together in collaborative processes, new relationships and networks are built that can help form new power as players share heuristics and information, resulting in a new form of action (Booher & Innes, 2002) and such processes can enhance community capacity by supporting the development of institutional capacity or infrastructure (Chaskin, 2001).

LIMITATIONS OF DELIBERATION

Observers cited above acknowledge that deliberation has the potential to be a formidable tool in planning and democratic systems more generally, but the next section outlines some limitations of the collaborative dialogical model.

Mansbridge argues that small deliberative groups foster empathy and responsibility, and are more likely to gain complete information about one another leading to a greater likelihood of approaching consensus, however, because they are based on ideas of equality, consensus and face-to-face assembly over representation, she refers to Artistotle saying that participatory democracies share the "principles of friendship" and thus there will be constant tension between the principles of friendship and their need for universalistic and equitable decision rule (Mansbridge, 1980: 293). This statement acknowledges many social benefits of deliberation but clearly notes that this form of participation is not by definition "more fair" than other forms, and Briggs (2008) notes that though deliberation allows minority voices to have a chance at influence, more than in majority-rule voting, this can also enable minority groups to block even overwhelming majorities.

Small scale, deliberative processes can increase an individuals power within a group, or allow a quiet voice to be heard, but in another warning, Mansbridge (1983) cautions that consensual decision-making can lead to imprecise decisions, and Briggs (2003) notes that though more information is assumed better than less, citizen know-how should enhance, not replace, technical expertise.

Shapiro (2003) sums up the limitations by arguing that though deliberation can be generative, it cannot be assumed useful since it can miss the point of addressing fundamental power inequities and harm the interests of politically weak groups who are less able than others to participate in deliberation.

Mansbridge (1983) urges that micro-scaled participation is connected to larger scale democracy and others urge that communicative practice is not seen as an ending point but rather argues that action is considered central in planning (Friedmann, 1995). In *Empowered Participation,* Fung (2006) suggests a practical orientation for deliberative processes, in which goals are specific, in geography and time, and the decisions generated by such processes determine the actions of officials or those in power, and Briggs (2007) notes that by engaging those who would typically be considered clients in a service delivery approach, as agents or co-producers, tangible social outcomes can be realized.

Though Fung's work is in the international context, and focuses primarily on participatory processes embedded in or closely tethered to the politics of the state, I note one of his conclusions, in which he finds that the less advantaged communities benefited more than those already with power participatory practice since accountable autonomy created new opportunity

for voice and civic engagement (Fung, 2006b).

Again, with a focus on the participation of immigrants at the neighborhood scale, I refer to Bloemraad (2006), who posits that citizenship is not only a legal status that accords rights and benefits, but also an invitation to participate in a system of mutual governance, creating an identity that provides a sense of belonging. She notes the important of institutions that allow immigrant to acquire sense of citizenship and other scholars emphasize the role that non-profit organizations can play as critical intermediaries between immigrant populations and civic society at large since they can effectively mediate community resources (Hum, 2010)

Though Innes & Booher note that "institutional change… will require creativity", most planning scholars have not considered participation a creative act nor have they considered the role of that creativity plays in planning more generally (2004: 432). Dewey (1927) argued that participatory, social, and creative feedback was the essence of democracy but recognized that in the face of a changing economy and society, political forms are unable to generate this feedback. Considering this argument, this thesis looks at how modes of inquiry used by artists in social and community-based projects are relevant to planners, and how cultural institutions that can support these projects are also relevant to traditional planners and policy-makers. The next portion of this chapter introduces the history of participation in art, and the chapter concludes by outlining the pros and cons of a cultural institution acting as an agent of participatory planning.

PARTICIPATION IN ART

Participation in art, like planning, is difficult to define, and the practices defined as such are equally varied and boundaries difficult to mark. Though there is long and rich history of writings on public art, performance art, site-specific art, environmental art, and institutional critique, the purpose of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive review, but rather to start making links between participation in art and planning. This conversation is especially relevant now, due to the current popularity of social practice art, defined in this thesis as, practices that connect the symbolic realm of art directly to the "real" social realm.

Some aspects of social practice art can be valuable contributions to planning practice, since the work, often tactical or applied, engages with community members or groups. Beyond an expertise in creating objects, painting public murals, artists, often working as non-affiliated individuals, can, interact with individuals, create connections and facilitate dialogue, which can reveal issues important to planning processes. The processes, many of which are deliberative in nature, can be meaningful participatory planning processes in their own right or provide research useful in the urban context. Though many planners are ultimately interested in maximizing public good, the practice tends to be rational, respecting known financial models, building codes and other rules, but given the work of many social practice artists, their insight or value-based ideas may be useful to planners. Artistic practice may be particularly *useful* in neighborhoods with entrenched trust

issues, or with individuals that might not be likely to avail themselves to public planning or social service agencies because of shaky legal status.[7]

There are historic connections between art and planning, particularly on the neighborhood-scale. Settlement reformers in the movement of the early twentieth century argued that mutual understanding could only be obtained by daily contact and a commitment to shared space, seeing artistic and cultural practices as a key domain for sustaining meaningful interaction (Hayden, 1981, S. Jackson, 2000). Though in literature about urban revitalization, the arts are often discussed in the context of economic development (Currid and Williams 2010; Florida 2003; Markusen and Schrock 2010) and artists often linked to raising rents and gentrification, and modeled as an opening wedge to real estate interests looking to displace lower-income residents, (Zukin, 1982) there are also arguments that in neighborhoods experiencing a slower rates of change, arts and cultural activity can plant the seeds of local empowerment (Stern & Seifert, 1998). Arts and cultural participation are also discussed as important elements of community life, essential components of the community-building process and catalysts of gradual change that can be beneficial to the existing community (Roasrio-Jackson & Herranz, 2002).

Though there is some literature about the intersection of planning and cultural, there is great opportunity for cross-referencing and learning to occur across the two disciplines. Joint projects with artists and planners can help demystify the work and make it more effective in practice. "One of the key lessons of the community arts fields is that empowerment and dignity can come out of the creative process; so why not consider the arts part of the pedagogy in community economic and workforce development courses?" (Chapple & Jackson, 2010: 487) Likewise, though social practice artists often refer to precedent participatory projects by other artists or literature about social- or community-based art practice, they could learn a lot from planners and planning theory, especially related to the meaning of participation.

Social practice art takes many forms and has many definitions, but at its core the genre is interested in how artist utilize their skills to engage in society, and many social practice artists refer to the concept of "social sculpture" introduced by Beuys and, like him, believe in the potential for art to bring about revolutionary change (Mesch & Michely, 2007). Many creative practitioners, whether intentionally or not, refer to Habermasean concept of *communicative action*, a type of social action that can have effects, even emancipatory effects, on political and cultural spheres (Habermas, 1984). Bourriaud (2002) coined an art-specific term, *relational aesthetics* to describe artworks based around communication and exchange and Kester (2004) writes about dialogical art and situates cultural practice within ideas of democracy, civic engagement and community-basing. Given that the work of social practice artists is trans-disciplinary there is often debate

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[7] In a later chapter, I introduce Tania Bruguera's work on Arte Util (Useful Art) – the idea of implementing art in society for social good and political need.

about whether it is created for it's aesthetic or social value, and this tension fills much of the discourse.

Social practice art often negotiates between the theories of participation and the actual practice of engagement, making it a critical yet constructive form. Unlike other forms of contemporary art, social practice often exists outside of the traditional arts market, and thus must find financial and intellectual support elsewhere. It is unclear whether artists desire this disconnect from the market, for ideological reasons or not, but given the condition of being under-funded or recognized, social practice artists are keenly aware of their relationship to established organizations and many act in an entrepreneurial manner to overcome such limitations. Some chose to work within the bounds of arts organizations, with organizations from other sectors, or like a (political) entrepreneur, navigate space between institutions, focusing attention on boundaries, rather than focusing on the rules of one (Sheingate, 2003). Being an artist, somewhat an outsider in some cases, can give artists the ability to slide between social barriers and unlike "the carpenter, baker, shoemaker, blacksmith, that remain tied to their stations in life. The 'office' of the artist, however is ambiguous" (Sholette, 2011).

Like planning, social practice art, employs various modes of participation, and the projects take various forms with differing models and relationships between the engaged publics and the lead artists. Social practice art has roots in site-specific public art, and many public agencies that commission this work (e.g. local arts councils, Percent for Art programs, the NEA) required, and still require, the consultation of stakeholders. As consultation is described above in the section about participation in planning, in the most traditional mode, the lead artist maintains authority in the creation of the work and simply seeks input and approval from the public for the placement of an object. In its most modest form, consultation may be the hosting of a single public forum to discuss the placement of a permanent bronze sculpture in a park or neighborhood, or it could take a form like it did in Krzysztof Wodiczko's "Homeless Vehicle project" where he placed a particular group, the homeless, as the subject matter and consulted with them regarding the object's design, not the project's concept. The proposed vehicle was designed to literally provide shelter and discursively animate the connection between the physical transformations of the city (through real estate and economic development) and the creation of homelessness (Wodiczko, 1999).

Though many requirements for engagement in local and municipal public art commissions are still quite modest, artist Suzanne Lacy traced the changes in language on National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) guidelines from the 1970s into the 1990s. Initially the work had to be "appropriate to the immediate site", then there had to be "informed methods of community response" and eventually projects had to have "plans for community involvement, preparation and dialogue" (Lacy, 1995).[8]

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[8] The early language is similar to the HUD guidelines for citizen participation mentioned in Arnstein (1969).

Though practices did not change due to changing guidelines, new-genre public art emergent in the 1990s questioned the conceptual boundaries of site-specific work and rather became exploring how the work interfaced with the social and political realm. Many artists expressed their primary desire as to better serve and engage the public and thus experimented with modes of engagement that were more dialogical than consultative (Kwon, 2004). Some of the work is, in fact, purely about deliberation, the conversation itself being the artwork, and the value, both aesthetic and social, has to do with the creation of a new forum for dialogue. Such modes of engagement can strengthen bonds between art, audience and context and can expose social agendas and make connections visible (Lippard, 1997), similar to what takes place in participatory planning processes.

Beyond simply creating new social relationships (Bishop, 2006), there are also participatory art projects that use deliberation as a tool of empowerment or as a strategy for action. Though the language and definitions are subject to ongoing debate, Kester (1995) notes that public artists most commonly interact with urban planners, architects, and city agencies concerned with the administration of public buildings and spaces, while the community-based public artist more commonly interacts with social service agencies and social workers (women's shelters, homeless advocates, neighborhood groups, etc). Community-based projects, many focused in underserved or marginalized neighborhoods, engage local residents in dialogue and seem to frequently lead to the co-production of events, objects, campaigns, taking a more action-oriented approach. Under the leadership of John Malpede, the Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) was founded in 1985 as a group of artists and Skid Row residents to create performances and multidisciplinary artworks to connect the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities.[9] Like Fung's (2006) call for action-oriented participatory processes described above, LAPD had concrete goals and location, and allowed participants to observe the consequences of their strategies.

Though artistic practice can address the actual processes that shape our contemporary environment as opposed to just presenting an enlightened demonstration of its failings (S. Jackson, 2011), the nature of participation is complex. Kester (2004) notes the "complex dynamic of political and symbolic representation can be elided in community art projects that fail to distinguish between the artist's ability to exhibit a given community in a project and the authority to take up an enunciative position sanction by that groups actual experience". In addition to these tricky questions of authorship and the authority of a delegate, artists are often limited in financial terms and have limited access to traditional planning agents and politicians. Even artists that are interested in institution-building as art, creating *mockstitutions* as termed by Sholette (2011), the work can be symbolic more than functional because of limited resources.

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[9] http://lapovertydept.org/

Symbolic work is not necessarily bad, and neither is temporary work, but many are critical of artists that "parachute in" to briefly work on local issues, noting that in the least offensive manner, the work can be superficial and at its worst, can be self-serving to the artist at the detriment to the community (Chang, 2010). In those projects claiming to be participatory or community-based, some critics claim that artists create communities for the sake of their project, and since they are "fictional" some critics even go so far as to say that artists are taking advantage or manipulating the situation (Kwon, 2004).

In response to this critique some might urge that socially-engaged artist stick to working in their local communities, but there are many angles and debates about this issue, one being that many local artists find that their own artistic profiles are raised only when they leave their local communities, paradoxically gaining a more legitimate reputation at home when they build their careers elsewhere (Chapple & Jackson, 2010). Others note that outside perspectives offer a healthy, productive tension between local and outsider, and urge art professionals need to consider new ways to support these practices (Chang, 2010). Together artists and community organizations must recognize that harvesting their knowledge and experience in a systematic way is key to the creation of solid grounded theory that can guide urban research and policy (Jackson & Herranz, 2002), and if we assume that artists are going to work both in their home communities and afar, the question becomes how to connect their practices to durable community institutions and existent and persistent social networks in communities?

In this thesis I am committed to asking this question, and through the case study of the Queens Museum of Art (QMA), I explore how an art museum can serve as a platform to overcome the challenges of connecting social practice art to the (social practice) of planning.

Research connects community well-being and cultural vitality (Jackson, 2006), cultural engagement and positive neighborhood social outcomes (Stern & Seifert, 2007) and identifies art spaces (particularly those community-oriented) as effective conduits for building the social networks and social capital contributing to community revitalization and artistic development (Grodach, 2010). In the last portion of this chapter, I preview the advantages and disadvantages of an art museum serving as an agent of participatory planning, which I will fully present in subsequent chapters.

PARTICIPATION AND THE MUSEUM: PROS + CONS

As civil society organizations, museums operate primarily in the cultural sector, which is both as asset and a challenge in realizing community development goals. Though these institutions can present political ideas or leverage their social capital to highlight political issues, they are situated outside of politics, giving space for critical perspective on society.

As organizations with substantial physical facilities, museums, unlike planning consultants, are place-based entities and have space a resource for programming. Unlike the average city hall or public agency, which is also place-based, the nature of museum programming, exhibitions, events, courses, means that the institution has multiple points of entry, providing an array of options from the one-time exhibition viewer to the weekly workshop attendee or ongoing board member. Through these multiple options individual "users" can maintain anonymity (which is especially important for individuals with undocumented or shaky legal status) or become an outspoken representatives of their own views or those of a larger community, generally creating the impression of accessibility.

Unlike many community development corporations that are ethnically identified (e.g. Asian CDC, Arab-American CDC), art museums are often named based on their physical location (e.g. Queens, Philadelphia, Los Angeles County). Such naming devises are useful in bringing together communities across ethnicities and countries of origin, and allow the museums to adapt to changing demographics over time, without having to change names.

Though art museums have many assets and institutional resources to support surrounding neighborhoods and neighborhood planning, they are also limited in terms of their ability to impact neighborhood change or community development. Unlike community development corporations (CDCs) that are recognized by government and private sector as being conduit for community economic development, museums are not recognized in that light, and have not traditionally had access to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, or other planning-related public funding sources.

As incorporated 501(c)3s museums are restricted from legal lobbying or supporting political campaigns, and thus situated in the social realm not the political one. Like the frequent critique of political art being symbolic and not useful, museums must too be honest and transparent about their ability to implement and follow-through with programs in operating environments of other sectors (like health, housing, social services).

Though museums can reach out to members of the surrounding community through programming, many museums, especially art museums, are more familiar with the likes of an art-viewing audience, and may need to learn additional strategies and methods for reaching others. As museums become more engaged and invested in the planning-related work, they will have to become familiar with metrics used in community-building, and the development of human capital, local economies and real estate. Though there is research connecting museums to tourist economies (Plaza, 2006), cultural activity to regional economies (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010), and the creative class and urban regeneration (Florida, 2002), this thesis rather situates the work of community-minded cultural institutions within the literatures on participation reviewed in this chapter.

Skramstad (1999) argues in *An Agenda for Museums in the Twenty-first century,* that "authority, trustworthiness and connectedness are essential for the museums to become vital for American communities in the future" and through a primary case study of the Queens Museum of Art (QMA), I will illustrate how some internal organizational changes and the support of artist-driven projects has created opportunities for participation in in the "majority-minority" immigrant neighborhood of Corona, Queens.

MUSEUMS + CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- Emergent Museums
- Big Art Museums
- The "Everyday" Museum
- The Community-based Museum

In this chapter, I provide a brief history of the relationship between citizen participation and the museum in the North American context. I begin with earliest emergent museums of the 18th century, then describing the archetypical large 19th century institution and then focusing on various 20th century reactions to the large museum. Since the primary case study in this thesis focuses on an art museum, I give particular attention, though not exclusive attention, to this type of museum. The purpose of this chapter is not to present a comprehensive history of the American museum, but rather to provide enough context to make sense of case of the Queens Museum of Art (QMA).

EMERGENT MUSEUMS

Before the development of the archetypical, large art museum of the American city, museums of the 18th century were relatively informal, often owned and operated by entrepreneurial individuals and housed within small-scale buildings. These museums, which predated the development of most public education and library systems, were the sites of diverse activities, not specialized like museums of later eras and focused greatly on the desires of local residents, if for no other reason, mobility was limited in the 18th century so residents of the surrounding neighborhoods were the most frequent users.

The term museum, originating from the Greek word *mouseion,* meaning "a place sacred to the Muses", defines a broad range of organizations, though the International Council of Museums defines them as "a non-profit, permanent institutions in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment." (ICOM statute 2007)[10]

Noted by many as the first public museum in the country, the space opened in 1786 by Charles Wilson Peale, an artist, naturalist and scientist, in Philadelphia, contained his collection of objects and specimens that sought to represent the world. Peale wanted the collection to appeal to all social classes, and intended for the museum to be a place to both educate and entertain.[11] Since the museum was formed as an enterprise, relying on ticket sales for financial support, Peale was responsive to the needs and desires of his audience, noted to be everyone from members of congress to merchants and skilled laborers, and in historical accounts, the place was defined as one of discovery, dialogue and conversation (Skramstad, 1999).

Many cities were beginning to expand in the later portion of the 18th century, and in some cases, museums functioned to anchor communities since they were built before much of the neighborhood infrastructure, both physical and social, was developed (Skramstad, 1999). Daniel J. Boorstin, social theorist and Librarian of the United States Congress, noted that some early

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[10] http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/
[11] http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92388477

museums were formed as voluntary associations that brought together civic boosters in the context of creating and recreating, new, transient and upstart communities (McClellan, 2003). As organizations dependent on the income of their users and other community support more than wealthy donors, board members or philanthropies, emergent museums were generally oriented towards and responsive to the needs of a localized community.

BIG ART MUSEUMS

As cities grew as centers of commerce, thanks mainly to industrialization, in 19th century, museums became a means of displaying economic and cultural power. They were not only functional but also symbolic display of power, and with significant private funding from wealthy patrons, and less income needed from ticket sales, museums focused more attention on the needs and desires of the elite over the average city resident. The collections built by curators and museum professionals were primarily for elite art-knowing audiences and the institutions became more dedicated to research and scholarship that an interaction with the surrounding urban context.

THE "EVERYDAY" MUSEUM

By the early twentieth century, some began to question the 19th century paradigm of the museum as an enclosed and insulated place existing only in service to the elite. John Dana Cotton, who started his career as a librarian, opened the Newark Museum insisting that the museum serve its local constituents through active involvement in their everyday lives and ground the programs in the community not in imported European values (McClellan, 2003). [12] In Dana's work as a librarian he was dedicated to the idea of the accessibility of knowledge, directing the physical transformation of library reading rooms and programs, and urging that "the most essential attribute of the librarian, if he would be forever helpful and never an obstacle, is a profound belief that the end is not yet, that new conditions arise daily and that they can be wisely met only after a confession of ignorance, a surrender of all doctrine and careful and unprejudiced observations" (Dana, 1916).

He brought this belief in the integration of education and art viewing to his work as a museum director. When he opened the first two galleries of the Newark Museum in 1909, inside the Newark Free Public Library, one was dedicated to art and the other to science. There were objects in the museum, but more important to Dana was the continuous programming for children, immigrants, and businessmen. His dedication to these programs, which were intended to help individuals develop skills for daily living in a given community, over the collection of valued objects, caused him to received criticism from others in the museum-world. Though the museum is no longer embedded in the library building, as the largest art institution in the state of New

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[12] When I use the term European values, I mean those based around strict separation between the landowning classes and other. Whitechapel, for instance, founded by a priest and located in London's poorest quarter near the docklands of the East End, opened in 1901 to "provide moral guidance and redemption to an illiterate public" (Blazwick, 2006).

Jersey, the museum is still dedicated to serve diverse users, as centrally stated in the mission of the museum.[13]

By the 1920s, wealthy industrialists also began to question the practice of collecting grand antiquities and objects deemed valuable by Euro-centric standards of the 19th century art museum. In 1929, Henry Ford opened the Edison Institute[14], which was part museum and part hands-on school, near the company headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan. This institution and others of emergent in the era, valued the everyday experience over the extraordinary, and chose to display artifacts that were about the lives of everyday people rather than those about an elite ideal borrowed from Europe. (Skramstad, 1999). These museums, were more similar to the emergent museums of the 18th century that were places of education and entertainment intended to be accessible by all social classes.

During the Depression, the relevance of the hermetic museum and the objects it contained were questioned more widely as citizens considered the social relevance and economic value of everything in the face of financial hardship. Not necessarily in response to public opinion but rather by the necessity of shrinking budgets and limited attendance, museums began to question their internal organizational divisions. Specifically, art museums began to question the strict divisions between curatorial and education departments (Skramstad, 1999). Laurence Vail Coleman spoke of this professional segregation in the 1939 study commissioned by the American Association of Museums and also called for museum worked to try to close the gap between themselves and their publics, claiming that "the museum, like the library, is a *community* enterprise in its very nature" (Coleman & American Association of Museums., 1939).

In an effort to connect to new publics, Philip Youtz, when on staff at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, opened an experimental branch of the large institution in a commercial space at the outskirts of the city at the 69th Street Community Center across the street from a supermarket. He claimed this was an effort to combat "museumitis" a disease he said could only be cured by "a new kind of art education that shall stress the vital social connect of art" and looked to department stores and commercial ventures as inspirations in the effort to reach audience, not other museums (McClellan, 2003). The annex was open daily, until 10pm and generally exhibited material that was more digestible to an everyday audience. Though this experiment could be considered a failure, in that the neighborhood branch was only opened for a short period, Youtz brought his ideas to the Brooklyn Museum, an institution considered for it's populism.

Though the actions of Youtz and Dana were innovative, they were the exception rather than the rule. As the country recovered from financial crisis and the elite again prospered in the post WWII era, art museums generally continued to grow their collections, expand their gallery space

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[13] http://www.newarkmuseum.org/About.html
[14] This Institute is also known as the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.

and accommodate publics in a manner they were used to. There was a proliferation of museums in the United States throughout the twentieth century, and though diverse in foci, their structures were fairly traditional, with emphasis placed on collection development.

COMMUNITY-BASED MUSEUM

Counter to the dominant trend, some museums were created specifically to promote social equity, and thus inherently critical of the museum as an elite institution. Established in 1967 in a small storefront space in the Chinatown-International neighborhood, the Wing Luke Museum, named after the first Asian American elected city official in Seattle, was created as community-based institution dedicated to examining diverse Asian and Asian-American cultures. The museum has been recognized for its community work since it's founding, especially relative to fights for civil rights and ends to discriminatory housing policy in the neighborhood. In the 1990s, the museum achieved even more widespread recognition, when under the direction of local journalist Ron Chew redefined the institution by melding cultural identity, civic participation, and programs into a new tool in the fight for social justice.[15]

The curatorial model, which is generally more participation-oriented than most, creates opportunities for user-input, establishing a feedback loop between the cultures inside and outside of the museum. "Produced through the joint efforts of museum staff and an ad hoc advisory committee of elders, teachers, students, artists and community leaders" the programs and exhibitions often tell local stories, as related to broader themes (Chew, 2002).

Though museums are diverse organizations with diverse missions and relationships to the public, contemporary museums might have something to learn from the locally-focused museums of the past. With a greater focus on the needs and desires of local residents, museums overcome the current struggles of staying relevant in the digital age[16], by finding a new role in society, and in adjacent neighborhoods, more specifically.

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[15] Included in a biographic note in the *Community-Based Arts Organization: A New Center of Gravity*

[16] These issues are highlighted in the *Demographic Transformation and the Future of Museums*, a study authored by the American Association of Museums and the International Committee of Museum's CAMOC *Finding Relevance through Community*

QMA FOCUSES ON QUEENS

- Community Capacity
- Artists in the Public Realm
- Citizens of the Classroom
- Connecting to Local Organizations
- Exhibitions in the Public Realm

As I showed in the prior chapter, art museums can focus on an elite audience, a standard art-viewing public or be more neighborhood-oriented with particular interest in adjacent communities and organizations. Recognizing that Corona's neighborhood infrastructure was under-developed as compared to Jackson Heights and Flushing, other neighborhoods adjacent to the museum, the Queens Museum of Art (QMA) realized its capacity to support its development, and simultaneously helped define and potentially overcome some of the local challenges faced by the neighboring immigrant populations in Queens. In this chapter I examine how staffing decisions and programmatic changes increased the museum's knowledge of and capacity to engage with residents and organizations in the surrounding neighborhoods, ultimately enabling the museum to serve as an agent of planning in Corona.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Though not part of a formal comprehensive community initiative (CCI), the museum was acting much like a single, broad-based community-based organizations (CBO) and to understand the organization's work in a planning context, I situate it in the concepts introduced in Chaskin's *Building Community Capacity* (2001) since he describes a similar case. The Upper Albany Neighborhood Collaborative (UANC) in Hartford, which was part of one of the earliest CCIs supported Ford Foundation's Neighborhood and Family Initiative, had a threefold strategy: to organize a block clubs, to link to other local CBOs in broader revitalization processes, and, to engage with state-sponsored neighborhood planning processes. UANC was building the neighborhood's capacity for planning, information dissemination and advocacy, broadly increasing community capacity, and QMA seemed to be doing the same through a similar threefold strategy; engaging with residents through artist-led projects and educational programs, connecting with Corona-based non-profits and service organizations through public programs and campaigns and ultimately influencing a state-sponsoring planning process.

In his framework Chaskin notes that community capacity is engaged through three levels of social agency; individuals (skills, knowledge, resources of residents), organizations (CBOs, service providers, local businesses, development institutions and local branches big companies) and networks (concerning social structures and patterns of relations among individuals and organizations) (Chaskin, 2001). Given this framework in this chapter I focus on how QMA came to know individuals and organizations in Corona, enabling the institution to become more civic-minded and capable of building community capacity. In the following chapter I will analyze how QMA came to facilitate participatory planning connected to a New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) project.

ARTISTS IN THE PUBLIC REALM

QMA acknowledged that the major demographic changes in Corona were not yet recognizable in local institutions and thus through artist-led projects in the public realm, and education-based

programs in partnership with the Queens Borough Public Library, made an effort to connect directly to residents in order to better understand the current population.

Just as UANC focused on forming "block clubs" in Hartford as building blocks of community action and mechanisms through which resident commitment, connection and association, QMA focused on artist-led projects to accomplish these goals and also to help identify the skills, knowledge and resources of neighborhood residents. In this section I highlight three projects led by QMA commissioned artists that engaged with Corona residents in public space, and allowed for anonymous participation, so even those without formal legal status were able to engage.

Maria Teresa Ponce initially conceived of her project in 2004 as an exhibition to display the image of Ecuadorian migration to the U.S. though photographs of people and places. But as she spent more time in Corona, walking around Corona Plaza talking with the drivers of the mundanza trucks (which are essentially for-hire moving trucks, a common need in a transient neighborhood), she became particularly aware of the communication issues faced by the many in the Ecuadorian community in Queens. Due to tenuous legal status, limited travel resources and high rates of illiteracy, many were unable to communicate with families abroad.

As an immigrant herself from Ecuador, Ponce was able to communicate in Spanish, understand the feeling of missing home and identify with the residents feeling of the U.S. as a foreign place. Different, however, from the mundanza truck drivers and other residents in Corona, she was able to travel back and forth to Ecuador, due to her visa status and financial resources, becoming as QMA staff member Prerana Reddy noted, "an unofficial, artistic post office, delivering video letters between the two countries."[17]

Though Ponce's project was not tethered to a planning process and did not seek specific outcomes, the multi-month investigation, which culminated in a public projection of videos of Ecuadorian landscapes and narrations of the migration stories on the exterior of mundanzas trucks parked in Corona Plaza, made visible many of these voices and stories often left invisible in immigrant communities. As the lives of these Corona residents were displayed, discussed and talked about, knowledge of them was actualized, within the museum and the community at-large (Habermas, 1984). [18] As one of the early QMA-commissioned projects that took place outside the museum's wall, this project simultaneously enabled residents to form associations with each other and create shared-meaning (Poulos, 2008), and enabled the museum to learn more about Corona residents and users of the Corona Plaza site.

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[17] From an internal QMA document "How Three Artists Led the Queens Museum into Corona and Beyond"
[18] Youth involved with *Leadership through the Arts Program* (LTAP) [18] at the time, many undocumented themselves, continued documenting the plaza and gathering narratives.

Though Ponce moved on to work on projects in other cities (as is typical in for artists working on commission), QMA learned from *Mundanzas* and continued to investigate the issues raised, specifically the needs of new immigrants and the importance of challenging negative stereotypes of new immigrants. In the summers of 2008 and 2009, through the *Corona Plaza: Center of Everywhere* program the museum commissioned eight artists to create temporary, site-specific works in the plaza, as part of the larger *Heart of Corona* initiative in which the museum partnered with community organizations to beautify the neighborhood and activate its public spaces. Though the artist-led projects were temporary and driven by certain aesthetic goals, they related to issues of community capacity, because the artists were creating new forums for dialogue, whether around Miguel Luciano's *Pimp my Piragua* shaved-ice stand or in the barbershops related to Lin & Lam's *Unisex* project. The projects were making social agendas and connections visible (Lippard, 1997), and more generally, the *Center of Everywhere* program questioned the assumption that Corona is peripheral, or somehow not as important as places in Manhattan or wealthier portions of other boroughs.

Though the nature of the artist commissioning process changed slightly, in summer 2011 QMA commissioned Ghana Think Tank to directly interact with Corona residents. Self-described as worldwide network of think tanks creating strategies to resolve local problems in the "developed" world, the artist-led project operates in countries throughout the world and in diverse forms, including radio stations, push carts, booths. For instance the founding artists Christopher Robbins, John Ewing, and Matey Odonkor might ask residents in a wealthy Connecticut suburb to share what's wrong with their community, and send the problem to their think tank in El Salvador for a solution.

When working in Corona, Robbin's noted that the process was a bit more complicated because though the group was working in the "developed-world", many of the residents, as new or undocumented immigrants, were facing issues common in the "developing world". Specifically, Ghana Think Tank heard that Corona residents, mostly immigrant men, were frequently harassed by police and forced to leave the plaza with the loitering law as the legal excuse. "As we looked into it more, we discovered that the Loiter Law was actually ruled unconstitutional, the NYPD was found to be in contempt of court when they would implement it, but nobody knew that and it was still being used, so we starting making these –[legal waiting zone] signs."[19]

The artists in the Ghana Think Tank and *Mundanzas* projects and those commissioned in the *Center of Everywhere* program were able to gain the trust of Corona residents and access to their stories. The artists were always transparent about their relationships to QMA, and their motivation as artists, and though their projects were all beautiful, holding aesthetic and symbolic value, they were also, as Lippard notes about other projects, making social agendas and connections visible (Lippard, 1997).

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[19] Quotes from an interview posted on the Provisions Library website - http://provisionslibrary.com

QMA also came to know Corona residents and their networks, through the *New New Yorkers program,* designed in partnership with the Queens Borough Public Library to meet the needs of immigrant adult communities in Queens. Like John Dana Cotton's Newark museum, QMA "started serving its constituents through active involvement in their everyday lives and grounding the programs in the community" (Dana, 1916).

Though instructors began with specific lesson plans focused on teaching skills like Photoshop and photography, through a process of Collaborative Action Research[20], students and teachers would check-in throughout the semester to assess whether they were accomplishing their collectively set goals, and re-set them appropriately for the remainder of the course. Through this dialogical process, students expressed unexpected learning. For instance, sometimes students articulated that the best thing about the photography class was becoming familiar with the computer (and email), which allowed them to better communicate with children at home.

Likewise, the museum learned about neighborhood social structures through conversations in the classrooms. Instructors came to know that beyond the goals for English proficiency and increased artistic skill, students (adult new immigrants) were generally feeling less isolated in America and were beginning to form bonds with others — Chinese and Hispanic students were forming bonds, and even within diverse Hispanic population, the Ecuadorian, Mexican and Columbian students, who were otherwise much divided because of class, place of origin, began to form bonds.[21]

In the classrooms students expressed their feelings of isolation and exclusion, showing that through face-to-face meetings, trust and alliance were built (Susskind & Ozawa, 1984) and through dialogical-processes they were learning more about themselves and their place in the community, and broadly learning how to shift the stakes of the game (Briggs, 2008). Education Director José Emilio Rodríguez González noted that, "participating in these classes is a way for the students to become participating citizens from day one"[22] and it's clear that most students felt more confident in sharing their opinions and communicating with each other even outside of the classroom.

QMA learned a lot about local social structure from the students in the *New New Yorkers* and from its partner organization, the Queens Borough Public Library, while students came to know each other and become more comfortable with the museum as a space, and institution.

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[20] A mode of evaluation used by the museum

[21] In a May 2012 visit to museum's off-site location on Roosevelt Avenue, the headquarters of Immigrant Movement International, I observed a Spanish class being taught by an Ecuadorian immigrant to a room full of older female immigrants from China. A sign that Queens residents are interested in cross-ethnic ties and communication.

[22] http://community.queensmuseum.org/lang/en/blog/adult-education-3/discussing-museum-and-library-partnerships-at-this-year%E2%80%99s-aam-conference/

CONNECTING TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Though the commissioned artists and existing museum staff had some ability to connect to neighborhood residents, hiring new staff members helped QMA understand more about and become embedded in the broader organizational context in Corona. The new staff members brought local knowledge with them, and also had the specific skills to connect the museum to community-based organizations, local businesses and institutions through public events and exhibitions.

Though QMA had been located in Queens since 1970, one of the nation's most diverse counties, at the time of Finkelpearl's arrival in 2002, there were no Spanish language speakers on staff outside of the security and janitorial staff (even though the neighborhoods surrounding the museum were majority Spanish speaking). In the first couple years as director, Finkelpearl hired people with different professional backgrounds, recognizing that individuals with local knowledge, language ability and cultural fluency were better at understanding community issues and dynamics than those with curatorial credentials or degrees in museum studies.

Jaishri Abichandani, an immigrant herself (from India), who had previously worked for the Census Bureau was hired as the first Director of Public Programs. She knew, firsthand, the challenges and deficits faced by the borough's residents since her previous work with the Census brought her into direct contact with many individuals and community-based organizations. Knowing that new immigrants often live in small quarters with little access to community meeting space and safe public space, she encouraged the museum to offer complimentary use of its space and produce cultural events around the museum to animate Flushing Meadow-Corona park.

The Passport Fridays series, which had the goal to give people a taste of other cultures through free outdoor programming (dance, video, music) in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, was started during Abichandani's tenure. By partnering with various organizations (like AfroColombia New York, an organization dedicated to sharing their heritage), the program highlighted various ethnic groups in Queens and helps connect the groups to each other.

Likewise, classroom and meeting spaces were made increasingly available to community-based organizations at no-cost[23] and an exhibition space, the Partnership Gallery, was created within the museum for local cultural and non-profit partners to develop and mount exhibitions about their programs. This space made the often invisible relationships with community groups, visible within the museum, again highlighting Lippard's (1997) point.

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[23] During visit in May 2012, I noticed a wide array of people using the museum space, from NYPD detectives, to student children from a public school in Queens.

In 2006, based on vision of Finkelpearl in collaboration with Prerana Reddy, the director of public programs, the museum made a substantial investment in its Corona-based work by hiring Naila Rosario, the first full-time on-staff community organizer. (This was in fact this was the first position of its kind in the nation, though there is now evidence of similar hires related to cultural and community organizing in other museums.) Having worked for Corona's City Council representative, Hiram Monserrate, and as a canvassing coordinator and political organizer for the Working Families Party, she brought knowledge of the local political landscape and ability through language (Spanish) and cultural fluency to forge additional connections.

During her tenure, QMA partnered with Elmhurst Hospital and MetroPlus during the Heart of Corona initiative to get the word out about health insurance and worked with the American Heart Association and The American Diabetes Association to create awareness about heart disease and diabetes. Specifically through projects like the *Healthy Taste of Corona* cookbook, partners from other sectors could grasp aspects of what the museum was trying to do, and contribute based on that understanding. For instance, in the creation of the 150-page bi-lingual cookbook featuring recipes from Corona residents, a nutritionist from Elmhurst hospital analyzed each recipe and made suggestions about making the dish healthier. Knowing the health problems faced by the community, she focused on reducing sugar and salt amounts in each recipe and included other tips from the local heart health education campaign.

Rosario's competencies allowed her to gain community access and trust, and to connect with the community-specific organizations, civic, religious and service-oriented, "bridge people", as described by Chaskin (2001).

EXHIBITIONS IN THE PUBLIC REALM

The next community organizer, Alexandra García had experience in housing policy and thus was able to connect Damon Rich's foreclosure-focused exhibition, *Redlines: Housing Crisis Learning Center* to housing experts and local advocacy organizations like CHANGER (Communities, Homeowners, and Neighbors Gaining Economic Rights), which helps families dealing with foreclosure issues.[24]

Marking every block containing three or more foreclosures with a pink object on the Panorama (full-scale model of the City of New York) created a powerful image of tragedy. With the programs initiated by García, like the "tours" of the Panorama scale model and two bilingual off-site town halls, the *Redlines* project created opportunities for learning, dialogue and exchange between housing organizations, elected officials, neighborhood groups, and service providers. Larissa Harris, the museum's curator, who was involved with the project even from its earliest

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[24] Damon Rich was a co-founder of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) and the *Redlines* project was started during residency at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT.

days at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT, noted "we're motivated not to just produce work but to consider the processes and relationships built as part of the art."

NETWORKS

These processes of listening, learning and relationship-building undertaken by staff in the museum's three departments – curatorial, education and public programs – enabled QMA to gain the trust of local residents and for the institution to formulate more coherent idea of the neighborhood's social patterns and organizational landscape, both in line with Forester's ideas about the planners role cultivating networks of liaisons and contacts (1982).

Through this process QMA learned about the dynamics, both positive and negative between existing community-based organizations and itself formed deeper relationship with the organizations and local elected officials, like Julissa Ferreras, the City Council member in the 21st district that represents Corona (and had ties to the former representative through staff member Rosario).

The Center for Creative Community Development at Williams (C3D) had mapped the social network of the museum early in Finkelpearl's tenure and noted that most of the institutions contacts were Manhattan-based (funders, partner organizations, political contacts). A revised, map, (which is updated on an ongoing basis)[25] showed that the museum's network had expanded significantly in Queens.

Though still physically cut off from the residential fabric and street grid of Corona by 1960s era highways, QMA began to resemble the community-embedded Newark Museum of the early twentieth century. And though QMA's leader was not trained as a librarian, as Newark's museum was, through a partnership with the Queens Borough Library and other local organization, the museum housed in Flushing Meadows Corona Park started serving local constituents through active involvement in their everyday lives and learning to provide needed skills and resources.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Sanchez, a scholar and community board member in Queens noted "to transform politics in neighborhoods dealing with rapid rates of social change, indigenous neighborhood institutions that that reflect a humane set of values that supports and facilitates social justice, ethnic and racial diversity, and socio-economic differences, need be established" (Sanchez, 2012). QMA was evolving into such a neighborhood institution with competencies to serve as an agent of planning, but the exact nature of the museum's agenda and the level of commitment were not clear.

This chapter began with an introduction to Chaskin's case analysis of UANC, due to some shared features with QMA, and the chapter will end with some notes about the complications that arose

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[25] http://web.williams.edu/Economics/ArtsEcon/

in Hartford. "With a focus on associational action and the overlap among associational groups have created complex dynamics around issues of representation, goals and legitimacy (Chaskin, 2001: 313). He highlights that without a clear declaration of goals, its difficult to maintaining the commitment and participation of residents and evaluate whether the participation is itself legitimate, and I raise this as an advance warning to QMA related to its work as a broad-based community organization.

DYNAMIC PARTICIPATION IN CORONA

- New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Plaza Program
- Artist-led Research
- Social Practice Queens (SPQ): Learning Together
- Immigrant Movement International: the Place, the People , the Dialogue
- Participating Beyond Implementation

Though I concluded the following chapter with a cautionary note about the museum preserving its legitimacy and accountability in its community work, in this chapter I focus on how with the specific goal of incorporating the voice of new immigrants in the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT)-sponsored public space improvement project, QMA was able to facilitate a collaborative participatory process that engaged multiple actors in an open and dynamic manner. Though many macro-level structural issues are not susceptible to micro-scaled change strategies, Chaskin notes that building community capacity can provide responsive reactions to particular problems and can consolidate locally-based constituencies to influence policy and practice at higher levels of action (Chaskin, 2001: 319).

With a consideration of these micro and macro scales, I analyze how QMA consolidated locally-based constituencies and created a dynamic framework for public sector agencies, non-profits, community-based organizations, formal businesses, informal businesses and neighborhood residents to deliberate. Innes & Booher (2004) note that institutional change will neither be rapid nor easy and will require creativity, and in this chapter, I highlight how through a multi-year process, the museum embraced artist-led projects as forms of dialogue-based planning and wove together these independent projects in a manner to produce an innovative, collaborative plan for the DOT-supported capital improvements in Corona Plaza.

NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) PLAZA PROGRAM

On September 13, 2012, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) [26] and official-partner the Queens Economic Development Council (QEDC) celebrated the completion of phase one renovations to Corona Plaza. The $2 million in capital improvements to Corona Plaza were funded through the DOT Plaza Program started in 2008, "to work with local non-profit organizations to transform underused streets into vibrant, social public spaces".[27] The public agency provides the capital funds for the plaza renovations but places responsibility for community outreach, ongoing liability insurance, and a maintenance and funding plan on the non-profit partners.

In locations like Times Square where there is a developed Business Improvement District (BID) or Bedford Stuyvesant with a high-capacity community development corporation (CDC), the public-private partnership model is possible because the neighborhood partners have both organizational capacity and access to resources (either through foundational grants or issuing of costly permits for special event and film shoots) to support the ongoing maintenance and insurance needs. This model is not possible in Corona, where there is no BID or CDC, but rather a landscape of community-based organizations, faith-based groups and social service organizations, and many struggling to find adequate resources for their own operations. QMA

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[26] As a city agency, DOT's primary mission is to provide for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods in the City of New York and to maintain and enhance the transportation infrastructure crucial to the economic vitality and quality of life of city residents.
[27] http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/home/home.shtml

commissioned designer, Aurash Khawarzad, of Change Administration noted "there may not be a traditional BID, but there is still a network" and in the previous chapter I described how QMA had recognized that network and its role within it.

Though QMA may seem like an unlikely partner in this program since it is a cultural organization and not a community development corporation or other traditional planning consultant, the DOT approached Finkelpearl, the museum's director, requesting that the museum become the official operations and maintenance partner in the Corona Plaza project. It seems he was approached because of QMA's positive track record producing programs in the plaza and generally connecting to residents and local organizations. With the confined budget of an arts organization and a belief that the public sector should take on the financial burden of insuring and maintaining an active public space, the museum declined the offer.

QMA was, however, determined to see physical improvements made in Corona through an open and inclusive process, and thus Finkelpearl and his team helped structure a local team to support the project. They considered various organizations partners and ultimately helped the Queens Economic Development Corporation (QEDC), a borough-focused organization primarily concerned with business services, neighborhood development and tourism, become the formal partner with DOT. Ricardi Calixte, Neighborhood Economic Development Director with the QEDC, noted "the museum is the number one institution for programming events in the plaza," and acknowledged that by understanding the local culture, the museum was able to build on the neighborhood's existing strength.

QMA brought experience to the process with DOT from previous artist-led projects in Corona, ongoing research in the Social Practice Queens (SPQ) program (formed as a partnership between QMA and Queens College), and the Corona-based *Immigrant Movement International* project led by artist Tania Bruguera. With the newly enhanced internal infrastructure, the museum also had staff capacity and expertise to support the communication with residents, organizations, students, politicians, and artists related to the DOT-sponsored work. Though Finkelpearl and his staff, particularly Prerana Reddy, the museum's director of public programs, and Jose Serrano-McClain, the on-staff community organizer, Larissa Harris, head curator and David Strauss, director of external affairs, did not self-identify as radical planners, their collective skills of analysis, synthesis, communication and group management, and access to data and information about the issues in Corona, gave them the abilities needed to perform the role of such a planner, according to Friedmann (1987: 393).

In the remainder of this chapter, I focus on how the collaborative participatory process, which allowed public sector agencies, non-profits, community-based organizations, formal businesses, informal enterprises and neighborhood residents to engage and deliberate with each other, overcame the deficits of formulaic state-sponsored participation process. The flexibility of the

process, even enabled it to overcome some of the difficulties faced by traditional community-based organizations (like CDCs), especially in the context of rapid demographic change. Specifically, I describe the participatory nature of the individual initiatives and analyze the adaptive system structured by QMA to weave together the distinct projects and connecting them, coherently, to the DOT-sponsored work in Corona Plaza. (The museum's internal structure, Serrano-McClain and Reddy's roles in particular, enabled the development of an institutional knowledge, and for information to flow from one project to the next.

ARTIST-LED RESEARCH

In the previous chapter I described the *Mundanzas* project and the work of Ghana Think Tank, but I want to introduce again these projects with an emphasis on how they brought information and (under-represented) stakeholders to the surface, which ultimately influenced the DOT-sponsored project in Corona Plaza.

Mundanzas addressed the layers of economic activity, both formal and informal in Corona Plaza. Though the moving trucks are considered a nuisance by some of the property owners (many of Greek descent and not residents in Corona) and "formal" business owners (including small businesses and national chains like Walgreens) because they take up parking spaces that would otherwise be used by customers, Ponce's project humanized these small-time entrepreneurs, and generally articulated their role in the transient immigrant neighborhood. Like the participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Ponce did not distinguish between existing groups and ad-hoc aggregations of people (Baiocchi, 2004), but rather shared the perspective of the drivers with a broader public, ultimately giving them a seat at table to discuss modification in Corona Plaza.

Ghana Think Tank also addressed layers of activity in Corona Plaza, but they focused on the users – transit riders, vendors, laborers, shoppers, etc – of the public space. As described in the previous chapter, the police were harassing many individuals, especially young Hispanic men that would hang out in the plaza, with an outdated loitering law as an excuse.

Though a social art project and not a formally structured planning process, by making the "loitering signs" Ghana Think Tank addressed actual processes that shape the contemporary environment, and generally raised the issue about who gets to use the public space and why. With greater awareness about the breadth of users in the space, and acknowledging that the space could be a place to just hang out (maybe even "loiter" in a social accessible way), DOT and QEDC considered adding more benches and other such amenities when re-designing the public space.[28]

These projects brought information to the surface, an important aspect of participation, and made certain that all users, business types, informal and formal were included in discussions about the

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[28] http://queenscourier.com/2012/corona-plazas-sense-of-community/

plaza. Also, along the way, the museum was learning how to better engage different populations in discussion about planning.

The full-time community organizer ensured that Ghana Think Tank and other commissioned artists were supported and also ensured that the knowledge and data gathered in each project was carried forward. Serrano-McClain was also enrolled as a student in the first course offering of the Social practice Queens (SPQ)[29] so he created a direct through-line from the previous artist-led projects to those produced by students in the spring 2012 semester. Prerana Reddy, director of public programs also provided continuity as one of the courses four instructors. (The other instructors included, Maureen Conner, professor of sculpture at Queens College, Greg Sholette, assistant professor of sculpture at Queens College, Tarry Hum, associate professor of Urban Studies at CUNY's Queens College and Graduate Center).

SOCIAL PRACTICE QUEENS (SQP): LEARNING TOGETHER

Corona Studio: Transforming Corona Plaza course brought together graduate and undergraduate students in studio art and in urban studies "to merge research work involving the demographics, local politics, and concerned stake-holders with interventionist theory and practical design concepts drawn from case studies of socially-engaged visual art."[30] Throughout the semester, in small teams, students created plans for the re-design of Corona Plaza that considered physical needs, financial realities and social context.

Using a combination of traditional social science methods like semi-structured interviews, and artistic methods like photography to survey the site, they expanded the knowledge of the museum by creating comprehensive database of the businesses, vendors and CBO stakeholders. Though they collected substantial data through surveys and interviews and portrayed the realities of the public space through photographs, videos and painting, as it relates to participatory planning, the course created opportunities for dialogue with public officials and local community leaders.

Individuals, such as, Julissa Ferreras, the local City Council representative, Valeria Treves, Director of New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE), Ruben Pena, Director of Corona Community Action Network (the local business alliance) and Vaidila Kungys, Coordinator of the Plaza Program from the DOT, were invited as guest lecturers. Though lectures can create one-way streams of communication from presenter to student, and not emphasize the importance of dialogue, many of these individuals returned to the studio to check-in on student progress or participate as guest reviewers.

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[29] SPQ is part of the development of an MFA in Critical Social Practice degree at Queens College. In the past few years there have been an increasing number of Social Practice/Public Practice MFA programs introduced in the landscape of higher education in the U.S. This included programs at Otis College of Art and Design, Portland State University, Maryland Institute College of Art, Columbia College Chicago, etc.
[30] http://www.socialpracticequeens.org/

In these reviews, I observed public officials and representatives of Corona-based organizations listening to the students intently and acknowledging their projects even when they offered a direct critique of the DOT or other public agencies. The interactions were dynamic, multi-way, and informal, allowing, as Innes & Booher point out, for "citizens and others players to influence action in the public arena before it is virtually a foregone conclusion" (2004: 429).

IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL: THE PLACE, THE PEOPLE, THE DIALOGUE

These interactions were particularly interesting because they were held in the *Immigrant Movement International (IMI)* headquarters, the museum-leased space on 108-59 Roosevelt Avenue, along a primary commercial district in Corona. Open daily from early morning to late in the evening (like the 69th street branch of the Philadelphia Museum of Art), local residents were always welcome to walk in, even during SPQ class and reviews. This allowed residents to give feedback about the student-led design projects, interact directly with some of the public official and local representatives, and also just listen to conversations and deliberation about planning.

Though the Roosevelt Avenue space looked much like other storefronts in the area, it's important to note that it existed as the headquarters for the *IMI* project, which was initially intended to take form as a political party for immigrants, but ultimately developed as a socio-political movement due to the legal issues related to the non-profit status of the museum.[31] Led the Cuban-born artist-in-residence, Tania Bruguera, (who literally resides above the *IMI* storefront), this project examined the political representation of immigrants, since as people move away from their countries of origin, they are defined in their new home not by language, class, culture, or race, but instead by their condition as immigrants.

Each day of the week there was a unique schedule of classes (photography, dance and language classes), legal clinics or lectures depending on the suggestions of Corona residents and ideas of project's staff, including Elisabeth Ingwersen Ganung, Camilo Godoy, and Alejandra Salcedo Casas. Structured around Bruguera's concept of Arte Util (Useful Art), the project implemented art in society for social good and political need.

Through discussions and deliberative workshops, *IMI* invited many to become involved, acknowledging that "it is not just participation through the vote of the structuring of wider forms of participation but structuring participation to achieve social progress that makes for strong democracy" (Briggs, 2008: 13)

In addition to encouraging resident-level participation, as a "mockstitution" (noted by Sholette, 2011) *IMI* has become a delegate through which the immigrant community in Corona, has come into existence politically and symbolically (Bourdieu & Robinson, 1985). Bruguera met

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[31] And also the non-profit status of the New York-based arts organization, Creative Time, which co-sponsored the first year of *Immigrant Movement International.*

representatives from Mayor Bloomberg's office to discuss issues related to immigrant services, and in 2011 met with representatives from the United Nations on International Migrants Day, December 11, to discuss issues of immigration reform.

But to again, connect this project to local planning issues, particularly the DOT-sponsored project, *IMI* has provided a path through which the oft-ignored voices of undocumented immigrants were shared with public officials and planners designing upgrades to Corona Plaza. Likewise, the *IMI* storefront space had become an important information center, and in fact, in June 2012, the DOT held its "official" public meeting in the Roosevelt Avenue space because it was so well-known and accessible.

At this meeting, which was also a charrette, DOT, having already learned about the work of the *Corona Studio* course, and having already met Bruguera and residents active in the *IMI* project, presented the plans for the public space improvements. In this meeting an inclusive set of participants engaged in authentic dialogue where all had the opportunity to share, and it seems "they were all working on a task of interest to all, following their own agendas," changing and influencing each other (Innes & Booher, 2004: 428). The local council representative was an active voice in the meeting, claiming "people want a clean space and a space they can maintain and bring their families to, and we have to take pride in our community and pride in the different projects that are rolling out so our community can improve."[32]

PARTICIPATING BEYOND IMPLEMENTATION

In the following summer months, DOT made physical changes in the plaza (closed the street to vehicles for pedestrian access only, resurfaced the pavement and installed additional seating) all of which considered the needs of diverse users. Unlike in the legally required methods of public participation in government decision-making that often ends at the point of implementation, the QMA commissioned architect Quilian Riano (DSGN AGNC)[33] and city planner Aurash Khawarzad (Change Administration)[34] to continue conversations with local community about how to use Corona Plaza as a space that builds social connections and provides opportunities for recreation, education, and commerce. As noted on the *Corona'S Plaza blog*, "this process of involving diverse community members — including immigrant communities that are frequently uninvolved in the planning and development process — seeks to have community members determine the long-term development of the site, and to exert ownership over public space to ensure its long-term functionality and importance within Corona."[35]

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[32] http://queenscourier.com/2012/corona-plazas-sense-of-community/
[33] Design Agency is a research and design collaborative that follows the concept of critical activism -- that folding activism into the discourse of critical spatial and design practice opens up new possibilities to rethink the structure and scope of the design process
[34] Change Administration is a studio for urban planning, urban design, and action.
[35] http://www.queensmuseum.org/10399/coronas-plaza-community-design-workshop-1-offsite

"Democracy means participation beyond the point of decision, to popular implementation, monitoring of that implementation, and disciplined review of its effects (Fung & Wright, 2003:31) and given QMA's work to beyond the moment of the ribbon-cutting ceremony, it appears as though the museum is committed to the building of such democracy.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

By weaving together various projects and appreciating that "participation spans a wide range of actions, disciplines, and levels of expertise" (Jackson, 2003) QMA was able to overcome the issues faced by many immigrant communities when interfacing with public agencies and bureaucratic planning processes, ultimately leading to the creation of a great public space. Since the processes came in different forms, from one-time interactions with artists on the street to multiple interactions through course at *IMI,* many types of individuals, those informed and not, those documented and not, those familiar with planning processes and not, were all able to participate. By weaving together various projects enhancing community capacity, such projects have "the potential to create a more intelligent society, better able to adapt quickly to changes in the conditions and more competent to address controversial, difficult issues (Innes & Booher, 1999; Innes & Booher, 2004: 431).

Though the neighborhood-scaled work did not appear to affect structural issues, unlike many social art projects and participatory planning processes that are simply symbolic[36], this multi-year, multi-layered work grounded by the infrastructure of the museum had *real* impact in a *real* place, Corona.

As more and more neighborhoods face demographic changes, whether due to immigration, ethnic shifts, or extreme gains or losses in population, the QMA can provide insight about how to facilitate planning in a manner that acknowledges and accepts social and physical change as a constant element of the neighborhood, and encourages resident engagement in an inclusive and just manner. Likewise, as QMA continues its community-oriented participatory work, it could learn from the successes of this process, which had specific, and declared, goals.

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[36] Hum (who teaches in the SPQ program) critiques of community boards of New York City, which were formed to encourage community input into public decision-making beyond the election system, noting that they function more as a form of 'symbolic inclusion' then real influence progressive redistributive outcomes (Hum, 2010).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the past chapters, I examined how a cultural museum can act as an agent of neighborhood-scaled planning within the context of the literature on participation in planning. As presented, QMA was able to avoid many of the traps that formalistic "participation" mechanisms, typical in the public sector (Innes & Booher, 2004), and engage with the local immigrant community much like a non-profit community-based organization (like a CDC), however, this chapter identifies some of the dilemmas and risks of an art museum serving as a such an agent.

After presenting some of these potential challenges, I propose how other *types* of museums might become active in participatory planning, even at scales beyond that of the neighborhood, and, how other planning entities (like public agencies and CDCs) might consider engaging socially-engaged artists in the pursuit of building just and equitable communities.

THE DILEMMAS + RISKS OF AN ART MUSEUM AS AGENT OF PLANNING

As a civil society organization operating in the cultural sector, the museum can help construct new bases of solidarity by allowing participants to reconsider and reconstruct their preferences in deliberative arenas outside formal politics, but these processes can also inadvertently favor citizens who are represented by established organizations, inadvertently give social movement leaders too much legitimacy and political capital (undermining democratic standards), or simple "balkanize" political life (Fung & Wright, 2003: 57). QMA has become a significant player in Corona, but since the museum is acting in a somewhat renegade fashion, without a clear long-term plan, the work could interfere with the long-term health of the community.

Collaborative participation, like that facilitated by QMA, can help build civic capacity and help build an adaptive, self-organizing polity in which citizens and interests co-evolve (Innes & Booher, Rittel & Webber, 1973) or such processes can co-opt the citizenry. With arguments that democracy is better off when polity and civil society are kept separate (Dryzek, 2000), QMA needs to acknowledge that limits of its work. Likewise, though the deliberative processes can present citizen preference, incorporate citizen knowledge, advance fairness, legitimate local decisions-making, in isolation they do not necessarily address fundamental power inequities (Shapiro, 2003) and since neighborhood-scaled efforts often cannot overcome structural barriers (Chaskin, 2001), the museum needs to consider if too much energy is being funneled towards cultural rather than political projects.

Chaskin notes that community-based organizations trying to build community capacity through associational action create complex dynamic around issues of representation, goals and legitimacy, and highlight the challenges of maintaining the commitment and participation of residents (Chaskin, 2001: 313). To prevent confusion, conflict and potential harm to community capacity, QMA should craft more specific goals about its community work, especially long-term goals, so that neighborhood residents and organizations can form appropriate expectations.

In the case of the work with the DOT in Corona Plaza the goals were clear – to engage neighborhood residents in the planning process to ensure the public space was designed to its maximum potential from multiple perspectives -- which allowed the museum's role to have legitimacy. The museum should learn from the successes of this work, and built on them to establish a clear agenda and framework for its long-term involvement in Corona, in order to avoid the challenges faced by community-based organizations like those Chaskin (2001) described as part of first generation comprehensive community initiatives (CCI).

With a defined agenda, a declaration of what the museum can do in Corona, as opposed to what is cannot do[37], will optimize the museum's community work in the long-term. Greater specificity will not only help QMA recognize its limitations as a planning agent, but also help the neighborhood acknowledge its limitations, so that community-level action is appropriately combined with strategies as other levels of action (Chaskin, 2001: 293), and the museum is held appropriately accountable for its actions and claims.

In addition to setting a clear agenda for the sake of the community partners and neighborhood residents, the museum needs to be clear for the sake of its other publics; traditional museum visitors, their board of directors and commissioned artists. QMA is still committed to preserving its collection and curating high quality contemporary art, but in his best estimate, the director calculated that in 2011, 60% of the museum's overall budget (time, energy, etc) was allocated to community engagement.[38] As the current leader, Finkelpearl heavily supports (and guides) the Corona-based work, but the museum must consider the fate of the community work in his absence.

ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY OR COOPTING IT?

Tethering the work of social practice artists to the Corona-based planning work enabled the projects to be connected to a *real* social context (as is a declared value of social practice), but with clear short-term goals related to the DOT project in Corona Plaza, did the museum too heavily direct the artists projects? The museum's head curator, Larissa Harris is supportive of work in Corona, and in fact, one of the innovators designing these community-based process, but she asks a similar question, "can art survive as an independent entity inside and institution with an agenda?"

Pressuring artists to make their work relevant in Corona or to operationalize the projects to satisfy planning goals, could smother the autonomy of the artists, constrict their creativity, or alienate them all together. On the issue of collaboration, cooperation and collective practice, like those supported by the museum, Kester notes that "it is telling that within the continuum of terms we use for working together, each carries with it a counter-meaning: a warning, so to speak,

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[37] "We know we're not a CDC and we don't plan to develop housing" said Prerana Reddy, director of public programs in May 2012.
[38] From email correspondence in June 2012.

of its ethical undecidabilty" (Kester, 2011: 3). Though there will always be challenges in balancing pragmatic and poetic goals in social practice art, QMA has shown that creating an infrastructure (connections to community-based organizations and access to community-specific knowledge) provides an opportunity for the projects to extend beyond the representational realm to the real one.

Even with all of these potential challenges, and dilemmas, the case of QMA illustrates how a creatively-designed, place-based institution with an ability to work with artists, neighborhood residents and organizations can support dynamic participatory processes. Especially when connecting the work of social practice artists to state-sponsored planning (like DOT), the museum enabled the participatory aspects of the projects to meaningful beyond their aesthetic value. These projects amplified the voices of many undocumented immigrants, created a conduit for the planning opinions of informal business-owners to be shared and provided opportunities for deliberation more generally, all of which supported the maintenance of spatially open, culturally heterogeneous, and socially variegated neighborhood (Amin, 2002). Like an acupuncturist that understands the whole body well enough to place hundreds of tiny needles on a patient, the museum wove together micro-scaled interventions in the public realm in Corona to create a quilted form of participation. Given that a neighborhood's trajectory results from its internal character and its relationship with external forces (Temkin & Rohe, 1996), the participatory work facilitated by QMA enabled Corona gain capacity and move in the direction of improvement rather than decline.

Though this thesis focused on a case study of a QMA, an *art* museum, after reading more about contemporary museums and participating in the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums (CAMOC)[39] conference in October 2012, I realize that other types of museums, like the *city* museum, may also have the potential to serve as agents of participatory planning, since they like art museum, are place-based organizations with large facilities and staff resources to design programs for members of the public. Though non-art-museums have less experience working with artists, they also are not constrained by needs of an art-viewing audience, or art-focused board of directors.

Larry Beasley, an urban planner with experience in the public and private sectors was the keynote speaker at the CAMOC conference. In his talk he argued that in most cities there is no planning agent that addresses the ongoing issues of the city, and presented the idea that the city museum play that role. One major takeaway from his talk that is specifically relevant to this thesis, it to think about museums as *urbanariums* -- places for testing, imagining and viewing the future of the city.[40] In the spirit of deliberative planning, Beasley's idea calls for individuals to come together

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[39] Sub-group of the Cities of the International Council of Museums (ICOM)
[40] This term refers to the terrarium, typically a transparent enclosure for raising plants or animals, in which controlled experiments and observations can be performed.

with different types of knowledge (data and stories) in shared space, to make meaning and come to understanding about how to make better decisions about their city. His solution not only addresses the current gap in planning practice, but also addresses Blazwick's (2006: 120) argument for a museum "to be relevant in the twenty first century it must be at once a permeable web, a black box, a white cube, a laboratory, and a situation."

Events and open-ended conversations about long-term and ongoing issues of the city will not likely take place in city halls for cultural (and maybe legal) reasons, but if museums can host deliberative processes and connect the work to issues to state-sponsored planning efforts, than there is real potential for these cultural institutions to become effective agents of participatory planning and help society overcome the formulaic processes of participation managed by public agencies.

CRITICAL SPECULATION: MUSEUMS + PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Though the initial inquiry of this thesis was to consider how cultural museums could be effective agents of participatory planning in neighborhoods facing demographic change, I want to extend the scale beyond that of the neighborhood. As the global community faces difficulty determining how to mitigate and adapt to climate change, cultural institutions may have a role in that process. The participatory projects in Corona made visible many of the unknown issues of undocumented immigrants in Corona, and likewise, artist-led projects can help the invisible issues of climate change find form. Museums can help make visible the invisible social relations behind climate change, and through collaborative and dynamic participatory processes possibly overcome limitations of the ritualistic diplomatic talks[41], which have thus far proved ineffective.

Much like how the Queens Museum of Art began the process of citizen formation for new immigrants by inviting them to participate in systems of mutual governance, so too can other museums begin the process of forming us all into environmentally-aware citizens of the world by inviting us to participate.

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[41] Like the 2012 United Nations Convention on Climate Change in Doha.

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