

# Kris Nelson Community-Based Research Program

*...a program of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)*

## Building Art Space Into a New Multi-Use Building

**Prepared in partnership with**  
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The creative economy and the use of the arts as a tool for economic development have emerged as trending topics in the field of Urban Planning. All over the country, communities are working to incorporate creative developments as a strategy for economic and community development. Recently, the city of Minneapolis announced it has formed a partnership with Intermedia Arts to engage city planners and artists on the role that culture and creativity has in developing vibrant places, and in the city of St. Paul, arts organizations are working to retain artists, create artistic hubs, and attract visitors to an area that is undergoing major transformations due to the construction for the new Central Corridor light rail transit line. The arts' ability to be a catalyst for economic development is one of the most frequently used reasons for arts and cultural planning policies. Thus, creative placemaking, strategically shaping of the physical and social character of a neighborhood, city, town, or region around arts and cultural activities, has become a buzzword amongst planners and other civic officials (Barbour 2011). In this research paper, I examine the influence that the arts and creative placemaking, whether intentional or not, has had on metropolitan centers in the United States. What benefits do art, artists, and cultural centers bring to a neighborhood? How can city planners and other civic leaders use creative placemaking to an area's benefit without causing gentrification?

Investigating how the arts commercial development can be combined to promote reinvestment in neighborhoods without gentrifying the landscape, I began my research by examining existing studies of creative placemaking, art and artists' influences, centers, cultural districts, the creative class, and creative city literature. I also looked to literature on gentrification to further my knowledge on the ways in which gentrification can change a landscape. Next, I study my local environment, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, to understand the role that

the arts have assumed in Minnesota's metropolitan centers by conducting interviews with professionals involved in the Minneapolis and St. Paul arts scene and studying documents and local literatures.

Existing research and literature paints the arts as a tool for economic development, but the research fails to explain how to quantify the direct economic and social impacts that the arts have in urban cities. Several publications and authors address the role the artists and bohemians have in their environment. In *The Role of Arts in Economic Development*, the National Endowment for the Arts in collaboration with the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices studied the non-profit arts industry, a sector with 36.8 billion dollar annual revenues and employs 1.3 million jobs, to see if the non-profit arts industry has a large influence on economic development around the country. Using examples from metropolitan areas around the country, they conclude that the arts can be used as a tool for revitalization in cities and create lively public spaces that showcase urban amenities. They argue that the arts are crucial to a city's success because they contribute to the quality of the place, and thus, have an integral role in bringing people to the city. Anne Markusen and Anne Gadwa whose research focuses primarily on artists, arts organizations, cultural industries and cultural activity as tools for economic development, collaborated to write *Creative Placemaking*, an executive summary report for the Mayor's Institute on City Design which is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts on how creative placemaking changes an environment. Focusing on case studies from Cleveland, Buffalo, Portland, and San Jose, Gadwa and Markusen argue that creative placemaking helps attain an area's livability, diversity, and economic development goal. By establishing a clearer community identity, increasing workplace options for the creative economy, and increasing collaboration among civic, non-profit, and for profit partners, creative placemaking makes

important contributions towards an area's livability. Creative placemaking livens up public and private spaces, rejuvenates streetscapes, improves local business vitality and brings diverse people together to "celebrate, inspire, and be inspired" (Gadwa 2010).

Several authors and studies address the role the artists and bohemians have in their environment. Sociologist Sharon Zukin studies the role that artists had in changing the social and physical landscape in the current SoHo neighborhood in her book *Loft Living*. Zukin outlines the social change that occurred in New York City during the 1960s that led to the creation of SoHo neighborhood. According to Zukin, "loft living started as a trend, turned into a 'movement,' and finally transformed the market" (Zukin 1982). As vacancies grew in abandoned production warehouses, artists in need of large living and working spaces began to take over these abandoned spaces. Artists were drawn to these buildings because of their large space and cheap rent (free is cheap), and thus, an arts base developed in SoHo. The redevelopment of these expanded not only to the artists but to the city and new residents. Later on, middle class residents began to appreciate the old loft buildings as part of an overall movement towards historic preservation. Zukin explains that the loft lifestyle could not have happened without a new found appreciation for arts and historic preservation that occurred in the 1960s which led to the expansion of loft living in historic warehouses by middle class New Yorkers and suburbanites moving back to the city. The artists who moved into the abandoned loft buildings profoundly changed the area by encouraging the reuse of these vacant buildings and completely changing the fabric of this neighborhood because "lofts changed from sites where production took place to items of cultural consumption" (Zukin 1982). Eventually, gentrification occurred.

Unintentionally, the SoHo artists became a catalyst for gentrification. Zukin explains the gentrification through what she calls the "artistic mode of production" in which large-scale

investors in the built environment attempt to ride out and control a precarious investment climate, using the culture industries as a tool for attracting capital. Although artists are claimed to revitalize neighborhoods, they are also blamed for the rapid gentrification of areas. This phenomenon is widely known as the “SoHo Effect”: a neighborhood becomes an arts district only to lose the majority of its artists when rents shoot up after the area becomes popular.

As more and more neighborhoods experienced gentrification, research on the subject has been done to explore what causes gentrification, who are the gentrifiers, and what are its effects. Authors Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly define gentrification as “the transformation of a working class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use” (Lee, Slater, and Wyly 2008). In their book, *Gentrification*, they search the answer to the question of who are the gentrifiers of cities and what draws them to live in urban areas. Referring to Sharon Zukin’s *Loft Living*, the authors of *Gentrification* argue that, “one of the most commonly noted trends in the process of gentrification is that places and people once deemed hip, authentic, trendy, and subversive quickly become appropriated, manufactured, and mass-produced kitsch for higher-earning groups.” In essence, the artists who revitalized the area are driven out once the area begins to gentrify.

While artists are viewed as positive assets to metropolitan areas, their ability to cause gentrification is also acknowledged by authors. In his well-known book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida argues that a city’s economic growth is dependent on the ability to attract the creative class and to retain them by promoting creative landscapes. Composing thirty percent of workers in the United States, the Creative Class is, according to Florida, the key to economic success because metropolitan areas with high concentrations of the creative class have a higher level of economic development. Florida’s definition of the “Creative Class” is a broad one. A

large range of occupations, such as engineers, computer programmers, professors, and health care specialists, to artists, musicians, and performing artists are included in Florida's "Creative Class". By fostering an open, intelligent, dynamic, and professional urban environment, the creative class is central to a city's success because the city, in turn, attracts even more creative types, business, and capital. Florida uses the "Creativity Index" to describe how members of the Creative Class are attracted to a city. The Creativity Index is composed of four elements: the Creative Class's share of the workforce, innovation which is measured in patents per capita, high tech industry using the Tech Pole Index, and diversity which is measured by his "Gay" and "Bohemian" index. Florida has found a large correlation between cities that have a very tolerant atmosphere in relation to culturally unconventional people such as gays, artists, and musicians, and the numbers of Creative Class workers who live and work there. Florida argues that current approaches to urban planning are going the wrong direction and not suiting the desires of the creative class. Cities that do not plan their landscapes with the Creative Class in mind are at risk of becoming stagnant places void of activity. "The bottom line is that cities need a *people climate* even more than they need a business climate," says Florida about city planning. (Florida 2002). A lack of historic buildings and authentic urban neighborhoods can put cities at a disadvantage in attracting top talent.

While Florida illustrates the Creative Class as a tool for driving and retaining economic prosperity, he also studied the role of the Creative Class in gentrifying areas. In *Who's Your City*, Richard Florida studies the relationship between housing prices and the concentration of artists, bohemians, and gays. Florida argues that the creative economies tend to cluster in certain geographic regions, such as manufacturing and industry once did. He studies the "artistic dividend" to see if artists, designers, musicians, and writers stimulate local economies and drive

up real estate values (gentrification). He found that the presence of artists, musicians, and designers with the concentration of gays and lesbians within an area had a direct relation to housing values; “bohemian and gay residents drive up housing values because they make areas that were already ripe for growth even more desirable and to a greater number of people” (Florida 2008).

Furthermore, in *From Creative Economy to Creative Society*, authors Mark Stern and Susan C. Seifert argue that the creative economy is “contributing to both the renewed prosperity of the city and the inequitable social and geographic distribution of its benefits”(Stern, 2008). This report focuses on cluster economics and identifying the impact of neighborhood-based creative economies. Many people are included in the creative economy's new wins, but at the same time, many do not feel its benefits. They argue that the creative industries are dominated by jobs with high educational requirements, and that the expansion of the creative economy will not create more employment opportunities for the majority of urban residents. Stern and Seifert offer a different approach to the creative economy to avoid inequality: the social inclusion strategy. This strategy would create resources that support artists and community-based and community-serving cultural programs. According to the authors, this method would build social networks among neighborhoods, across the city, and throughout the region. They give the example of an artist center that would encourage local residents to interact with artists and participate in the creative process, thus contributing to the social, cultural, and commercial lives of the local community.

Author Jeremy Nowark also examines the role of community-based arts in neighborhood development in *Creativity and Neighborhood Development: Strategies for Community Investment*. Nowark argues, “artists are often early market entrants whose search for works space

can help stabilize neighborhoods and mitigate the risk of investment” (Nowark 2007). He goes on to say that art-making, performance, craft production, and exhibition spaces are ideal for unstable or deteriorating historic neighborhoods because this sector enjoys adapting and recreating space in flexible ways. Arts and culture related spaces are good for uncertain markets because “the cultural and design communities provide entrepreneurial energy to the task of preserving something new”(Nowark 2007).

In *Cultural Clusters: The Implications of Cultural Assets Agglomeration for Neighborhood Revitalization*, authors Mark Stern and Susan Seifert focus on creating neighborhood cultural clusters that can revive urban areas by using the arts to engage community members and revitalize their neighborhood. They found that these cultural clusters, urban communities have concentrations of cultural resources such as nonprofit arts organizations, commercial cultural firms, and resident artists cause higher levels of civic engagement and a rise in population, housing values, and a decrease in poverty rate.

Moving to more a specific location of study, I will now examine how the arts have influenced development in Minnesota. The state of Minnesota has an established reputation for its thriving and diverse arts scene. Minnesota’s individual artists, arts and cultural organizations, and for-profit art industries make a large impact on Minnesota’s economy. In 2007, artists and arts related organizations in Minnesota supported 86,340 jobs and provided over \$118 million in state and local government revenue (Minnesota Citizens for the Arts 2007). Minnesota is home to at least 19,676 individual artists who provide a \$205.2 million industry in Minnesota (Citizens for the Arts 2007). Minnesota and its major cities support more artists per capita than the nation does, and Minnesotans patronize the arts in larger numbers and with greater economic returns than the United States does as a whole (Johnson 2006). In Minneapolis and St. Paul, the

philanthropic, city, and community leaders have collaborated to foster an environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining artists in their neighborhoods. Thus, the arts have had an influential role in the revitalization of declining neighborhoods and preservation and reuse of historic buildings in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Looking to understand how the arts have impacted the metropolitan regions of Minneapolis and St. Paul, I conducted interviews from professionals who work with art development organizations in the Twin Cities and looked to literature specific to Minnesota.

Although Minnesota is known for its vibrant arts scene today, the state's dedication to the arts has evolved over time. One of the leading proponents of securing and building developments devoted to artists is called ArtSpace. ArtSpace, a leading non-profit real estate development organization devoted to the arts across the United States, started as a task force commissioned by the city of Minneapolis in the early 1970s in response to a growing artist community in the city's Warehouse District (Deaver 2012). Then, in 1979, ArtSpace became a real estate developer for the arts. Kelley Lindquist, the president of Art Space for over twenty years, explains the reasoning for becoming the organization to become as real estate developer, "The economic development that the artists' activity attracted was fine. But if we had a nonprofit that actually owned and operated a building here or there, it could be kept permanently affordable for the artists. [The idea] wasn't anti-economic development at all. We wanted the neighborhood and business councils to include a redeveloped artist space within their vision for the community" (Harris 2012). Today, ArtSpace has grown and is prominent leader in artist live/work, studio, and gallery space developments in Minnesota and throughout the United States. Through their work in Minnesota, ArtSpace and its projects illustrate the ways in which

artists can re-use historic buildings, revitalize a declining area, and benefit their local community without falling into the gentrification trap.

Today, ArtSpace has a prominent role in creative placement development in Minnesota and throughout the United States. In St. Paul's historic warehouse district, Lowertown, ArtSpace helped transform two underutilized warehouses into live/work space for artists. Now, the Tilsner Artists' Cooperative and the Northern Warehouse Artists' Cooperative stand as an example of artist spaces can positively change an environment in the long run. Originally, Lowertown was an under-populated area that was perfect for warehouses that served the railroad industry (Gadwa 2010). However, disinvestment in the area occurred after the railroads glory days ended, the area suffered from severe decline (Gadwa 2010). Through the 1980's, Lowertown was " 'a dead-zone,' 'forlorn,' and a wasteland" (Gadwa 2010). The area's vacancies, in addition to the large open space and free rent, attracted artist's to inhabit the warehouses.

As in the New York's SoHo neighborhood, artists began to occupy abandoned warehouses in the Lowertown area of St. Paul. In the late 1970's, the city of St. Paul made redeveloping Lowertown one of its top priorities (Gadwa 2010). Once talk of the area's future redevelopment was heard by the artists living in the Lowertown warehouses, they began organizing for stable and affordable housing in Lowertown (Gadwa 2010). In 1990, with ArtSpace working as the real estate consultant and developer, the Tislner Artist's Cooperative was completed, and in 1993, the Northern Warehouse Artist's Cooperative was opened. The artists have played a central role in the revitalization of the Lowertown area. The quality of life in Lowertown improved without displacing residents or removing affordable housing. ArtSpace is dedicated to keeping their developments one hundred percent affordable rather than mixed income. Additionally, the rest of Lowertown made a commitment to affordable housing despite

its revival: 25% of Lowertown's housing stock is designated for affordable housing (Gadwa 2010). Overall, census data shows that Lowertown's rents increase was moderate in comparison to other neighborhoods that were experiencing redevelopment, such as the Minneapolis North Loop neighborhood, which is examined later in this paper. Between 1990 and 2000, rents in Lowertown increased from an average of \$619 to \$645 (Gadwa 2010). Thus, here the artists were neither the cause nor the victims of gentrification because of the help of ArtsSpace to secure affordable spaces for the area and the city of St. Paul's dedication to keeping Lowertown affordable. Gary Peltier, a retired member of the St. Paul Planning and Economic Development recalls the city's goals for the Northern Artists' Cooperative,

“It has to have a positive external impact...If it was an eyesore, boarded up, a nuisance, whatever, that has to be corrected...It has to look good. It has to be attractive. For heaven sakes, it has to be decent housing; the units have to meet all the codes. Yes, we also want it to have an impact in the immediate surrounding neighborhood. The city is always hoping that if we put a dollar of public funds in then maybe something will happen next door that we don't have to put public funds into. We want the units to be a good live/work space for the artists. We expected and wanted the project to be a viable artist project because we saw all the positives the projects and the artists bring to Lowertown” (Gadwa 2010).

Today, the ArtSpace developments have played a large role in the success of the redevelopment of Lowertown as a vibrant and active neighborhood of St. Paul. According to the Lowertown Redevelopment Corporation's website the artist community concentrated in the neighborhood “continues to have a major influence on the quality of life in the neighborhood, and adds significantly to its cultural and artistic richness”. In addition to supporting, attracting,

and retaining artists, the Tislner and Northern buildings have significant neighborhood impacts. Surrounding businesses have an increased demand for services by the artists who live in the neighborhood and the visitors attracted to the area's art galleries who spend money. Arts organizations have established themselves in Lowertown, including the Jerome Foundation, Mu Performing Arts, and the Zeitgest. Ann Gadwa studied the regional impacts of Northern and Tislner developments in a piece titled *How Art Space Matters*. Interviewing 22 "community informants", including Artspace staff, artists, government officials and neighborhood residents and business owners, and 21 artist and arts organizations". She found that the Northern and Tislner's artists residents benefited area business with increased demand for services and an increase in visitors who then engage in more spending. In addition, interviews suggested that these artist centers expanded the public's arts offerings through open studio events and art crawls (Gadwa 2010). The St. Paul Art Crawl draws 20,000 in total, and 3,000-4,000 people to the Northern and Tislner (Gadwa 2010). Interviewees also noted the buildings adaptive re-use of an eyesore into a special addition to a community (Gadwa 2010). Gadwa also reviewed the potential role that the Tislner and Northing buildings had on increasing property values in the neighborhood. She found that the Tislner building added one-time average increase of \$13,827 per housing unit in property values within a three mile radius of the building (Gadwa 2010). However, Gadwa recognizes this data's potential error because, "Although we include the distance from the artist space's coordinates to geographically isolate the investment, the model may capture other concurrent investments in the immediate vicinity (within a few square blocks)" (Gadwa 2010). Lowertown was already beginning to experience redevelopment and increased investment in the neighborhood due to the city of St. Paul's revitalization goals for the area.

Following a similar story, artists began to take advantage of the Minneapolis Warehouse District's vacant building stock by adapting these historic warehouses into studios and gallery space in the 1970s (Gadwa 2010). Soon, the Warehouse District became the "epicenter of the Minneapolis art scene of the 1980s" (Gadwa 2010). Nick Legeros, a sculptor and former president of the North East Minneapolis Arts Association, illustrates the area's artists' success when he says, "downtown office workers would knock off work on Friday evenings, hit a couple of happy hours, and go to gallery opening after gallery opening, drinking wine and buying art. (...) Artists were making great money and successful business people were finding artists they liked" (Gadwa 2010). The artists had found success in the Warehouse District.

Then, in the mid 1990's, the North Loop neighborhood experienced an extraordinary increase in condominium and townhouse construction. The neighborhood began to experience dramatic increases in population and rent. Between 1980 and 1990, housing stock grew 807%, from 84 units in 1980 to 403 units in 1990 (Gadwa 2010). Census data from the neighborhood shows that median gross residential rents increased 184% from 1980 to 2000 when adjusted for inflation (Gadwa 2010). At the same time, the North Loop also began to transform into more of an entertainment area with the Target Center opening in 1989 and nightclubs, bars, and restaurants were developed. Thus, the artists were beginning to be forced out of their neighborhood: "the North Loop's working artists all but disappeared" (Gadwa 2010).

The cause of this neighborhood's expansion is still unclear, and it is possible to determine one sole factor that contributed to the area's gentrification. ArtSpace publications point towards the North Loop's close proximity to the Minneapolis' central business district and the appeal of the historic housing stock in the neighborhood, some of which had been recognized as historic districts. Yet, the question of the artists influence on the area's revitalization is still worth

debating. David Frank, a resident of the North Loop and chair of the North Loop Neighborhood Association believes that the area would eventually develop regardless of the artists being there because of the area's close location to downtown (Gadwa 2010). At the same time, North Loop developer Check Leer acknowledges the artists contribution in the adaptive re-use of this historic area: "[The artists] do identify cool spaces, but the social value in that is in turn-over to the next higher and better use, which in this case has been residential" (Gadwa 2010). In this case, it is not clear if there was a correlation among the artists moving in and the soon revitalization of the area. In the wake of losing their studio space, a group of artists in a North Loop warehouse building and ArtSpace partnered up in the early 1990's to secure and develop a building, the Traffic Zone, in the Warehouse District in efforts to retain some of the area's artists. Although the majority of the artists in the neighborhood had been driven out by dramatic rent increases, ArtSpace and the artists worked to create the Traffic Zone, a co-owned studio/gallery space among artists and ArtSpace, that stopped the artists from being dislocated and secured them a space in their former artist community.

On a different scale, non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups in St. Paul have recently been experimenting with creative placemaking in their communities. By combining the arts, its local community, opportunities for entrepreneurial experience, the Starling Project is attempting to mitigate the effects of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit construction and rejuvenate a community along University Avenue. Created in December of 2011, the Starling Project was the brainchild of graduate students at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs in Minneapolis. In a personal interview with Kristen Murray, I learned that Murray and co-founder Ben Shadlow were concerned about the negative impacts that construction for the new light rail

transit line had on businesses along University Avenue. Vacancies along University Avenue were increasing and empty storefronts were not attracting visitors to the declining area.

By matching vacant building owners with potential tenants who are looking for short-term rental opportunities to test out new businesses, art galleries, and event space, the Starling Team found a way to make the vacant buildings an asset to the neighborhood by starting a short-term rental program. Rentals have ranged from a one-day event to up to three months. The idea is to literally fill the void with activities such as art, a small business testing out their products, or events such as workshops and the performing arts. Artists and new small business owners were especially attracted to the short term program because it allows them to see what having their own gallery or shop would be like, and at the same time, property owners were glad to have tenants in their buildings. Knowing the importance of marketing and publicity, the Starling Team sent out press releases to local newspapers and arts organizations such as Irrigate Artists, MNArtists.org, and Springboard for the Arts to find potential tenants and collaborators.

Murray argues that their PR efforts and the tenants who occupied the buildings brought extra energy into the area. She explains that, “there’s a sense that something positive is happening here along University Avenue (...) the LRT construction process is so long, but the arts provide an energy in the present that leads to the future”. Since the organization developed, Starling has had two theater shows, one student art gallery, two artist galleries, and an artist event, in addition to several small business owners renting out the spaces for various periods of time. Kristen learned that the best way to increase foot traffic in the area and encourage visitors to come is by having layered uses in the buildings such as displaying art in storefront, having gallery spaces, events, workshops, and performances. The building should become a place that people produce/display art or sells unique products to draw the community to gather there.

Despite the Starling Project's success, Murray is unsure if the Starling Project will continue to exist once the Central Corridor Light Rail construction is complete because the demand for commercial space will rise. Thus, Murray and other members of the Starling Project have created a toolkit that they have available on the Starling's website for other communities to use for their own neighborhoods as a guide in how to use empty storefronts to generate excitement and economic activity in a declining neighborhood.

Last summer, the Starling Project began to work with the St Anthony Community Council (SAPCC) to use a vacant storefront to help express a new identity for the neighborhood: the "Creative Enterprise Zone", an area between Raymond and University Avenue. However, before leasing out a Starling building, the Saint Anthony Community Council had already started to promote creative industries in their neighborhood for almost three years. Community leaders such as Amy Sparks, the Executive Director of the St. Anthony Community Council, had already started a planning process to keep creatives in the neighborhood. I had the opportunity to interview Ms. Sparks to learn more about her work with the Creative Enterprise Zone. She informed me that the catalyst for creating the area's new identity as "the Creative Enterprise Zone" was the apprehension of what the future would hold for creatives already working/living in the Saint Anthony Park neighborhood after the Central Corridor Construction was completed.

The arts became a priority because the neighborhood anticipates development pressure due to the Central Corridor LRT. In this case, the owner of the C&E Building (2402 University Avenue, St. Paul), a seven story building that houses 30 artists studios, an architecture firm, film producers, a nonprofit publishing company, as well as furniture related business, was eager to take advantage of the upcoming light rail transit line and listed the property for sale. Worried that they would lose their studio space, the building's tenants approached the SAPCC.

Due to the neighborhood's direct proximity to the future light rail transit line, the physical buildings that houses creative industries in the Saint Anthony Park neighborhood are at risk of being bought by developers who have no intention in keeping the pre-existing uses of the previous buildings. Thus, SAPCC formed a task force to focus on the preservation—and eventually development—of affordable space for artists and other creative industry workers. ArtSpace was hired to complete a prefeasibility study to see what type of demand existed for art spaces in the neighborhood. The community members, artists, and creative workers expressed that they want more than just a live/work building, they wanted a zone because of the spread out nature of their existing buildings and the range of occupations. Co-locating with artists are architects, wood workers, publishers. The artists did not want a one size fits all building solution.

Since its renaming as the Creative Enterprise Zone, Sparks argues that the rebranding of the neighborhood has brought development initiatives that are congruent to their goal of preserving artist spaces. For example, University United, a coalition of businesses and residents on University Avenue, hired Green Point Manufacturing and Design Center a nonprofit organization from Brooklyn that is dedicated to rehabilitating industrial properties for use by small manufacturing enterprises, artists, and other small business entrepreneurs, to as a consultant in the Creative Enterprise. Now, the St. Anthony Community Council and University United are collaborating with the city of St. Paul and the St. Paul Port Authority to determine if a Green Point type building could be developed in the Creative Enterprise. Last year, the Saint Anthony Community Council partnered with the Starling project to rent a vacant building for three months. Then, they subleased the space for one to four week periods to artists, designers, arts organizations, and enterprising individuals who used the space in various ways.

Sparks quantifies the success of the Creative Enterprise Zone: “If we see development that is focused on keeping creative enterprises, we can take partial credit for raising visibility on the issue. We can make all sorts of plans, brand the area, do events, support artist, but if the buildings get sold out from underneath us, we don’t have the space and the whole thing is a mute point. The physical infrastructure that supports the creative enterprises is really, really important because we do not control the land, but if we can get developers to embrace our idea of making the rent affordable, bringing an old warehouse building up to code for artist to use, we can be happy with that”. In declining neighborhoods, the arts and cultural events help develop a positive sense of space. As Kirsten Murray, from the Starling Project, alluded to, the arts can bring a sense that something positive is happening in an area that is usually disregarded. An arts organization in the north side of Minneapolis is working to do just that.

The effort to revitalize a neighborhood from the inside of the neighborhood rather than a top down approach is one worth applauding. University of Pennsylvania professors Mark Stern and Susan Seifert studied the social and economic impacts of the arts in cities and concluded that, “public policy promoting the creative economy has two serious flaws: one, a misperception of culture and creativity as a product of individual genius rather than collective activity; and two, a willingness to tolerate social dislocation in exchange for urban vitality or competitive advantage” (Seifert 2008). By empowering neighborhood residents with the ability to positively change their communities, a neighborhood based arts community can develop “shared prosperity and social integration” (Seifert 2008). Furthermore, including people of all backgrounds is crucial because the arts and cultural programs are not keeping up with the pace in which our population is diversifying.

In North Minneapolis, an organization called Juxtaposition Arts uses art and local youth to create a new image in a neighborhood that is viewed as an unsafe and poverty stricken area. Community based arts programs, such as Juxtaposition Arts, are crucial in creating positive change in neighborhoods. By using the arts to connect people from diverse backgrounds to come together, community based arts programs can be a healthy and creative way to improve communities.

North Minneapolis has a history of being an urban neighborhood for those who were persecuted in our country. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century discrimination, prejudice, steering, and redlining in the real estate market restricted Blacks and Jews to reside in north Minneapolis. Today, Black residents make up the majority of the area's residents. Two thirds of north Minneapolis is composed of people of color: 44% of its population identify as black, 13% as Asian, and 8% as Latino (Cummings 2011). Outsiders view north Minneapolis as an unsafe area, and this perception is not lacking in some truth. Minneapolis's 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct encompasses all of north Minneapolis. Although the 4<sup>th</sup> Precinct only contains 16% of Minneapolis's entire population, it contains 48% of homicides in the city (Cummings 2011). Additionally, north Minneapolis has a large population of youth in its neighborhood. One third of the community's population is under the age of 18. Deanna and Roger Cummings saw potential in the neighborhood that they grew up in, and decided to create Juxtaposition Arts 15 years ago. Juxtaposition Arts engages neighborhood youth to create a local arts scene to promote social and economic development in north Minneapolis. The organization provides youth with training that teaches them professional design, production, and marketing skills that they can use in the future.

By participating in the creative process, local youth in north Minneapolis between the ages of 13-18 years old can contribute to the social, cultural, and economic success of their

community. Most importantly, the youth in a troubled inner city neighborhood can gain new skills, and one day, gain better employment. Studies have shown that people involved with arts have a higher sense of self sufficiency because they learn new skills and gain better employment (Cummings 2011). This is crucial in the Twin Cities, which has the worst racial employment disparities in the entire country. In the Twin Cities, blacks are three times more likely as whites to be unemployed (Cummings 2011).

Each year, Juxtaposition Arts serves as many as 650 young artists and has helped a few well-known artists launch their career. Multi-media artist Ernest Brant began coming to Juxtaposition arts in 1996 when he was fifteen years old. In 2008, he was named one of the City Page's Artists of the Year (Priesmeyer 2010). Another artist, Bobby Nathan Wilson, came to Juxtaposition when he was sixteen years old and homeless. Today, he works as a graphic designer for a marketing firm and design studio in St. Paul and also teaches at Juxtaposition Arts (2010). Additionally, the work that Juxtaposition Arts does has received national attention: for the past two years, ornaments that were designed and handcrafted by Juxtaposition Arts participants have been hung by on the National Tree in Washington, D.C. for Christmas.

By using the arts to connect people from diverse backgrounds to come together, community- based arts programs can be a healthy and creative way to improve communities. At the same time, “the stabilizing effect of culture in low-income communities seems to counter the overstated maxim that when artists move in, neighborhoods automatically gentrify” (Cummings 2011).

Similarly, on the West Side neighborhood of St. Paul, the Neighborhood Development Alliance's latest project is to build a mixed-use rental building with 25 apartment units and about 5,000 square feet of commercial space that it wishes to utilize as a space for artists. The

Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA), is a non-profit community development group located on the West Side of St. Paul that has built several developments on the West Side, but never one that incorporates arts.

Known for its District del Sol commercial corridor on Cesar Chavez Street, the West Side is rich in diversity with its large Hispanic/Latino population. Forty percent of the West Side is composed of Hispanics/Latino and 35% of the population earns less than \$35,000 income annually. In fact, the District del Sol's Cinco de Mayo Fiesta is the largest Hispanic/Latino event in Minnesota according to the Riverview Economic Development Association.

Because of its diversity, the West Side of St. Paul is a prime location for artists because “studies of cities across the country have demonstrated that communities with striking differences based on social class, ethnicity, and household structure are consistently more likely to have high cultural participation, house many cultural groups, and provide studios and shelter for artists” (Seifert 2007). Diverse neighborhoods have an energy that is beneficial to creativity. Neighborhoods that are ethnically diverse (areas in which no more than 80% of the residents are members of a single ethnic group) are more likely than homogenous areas to be associated with cultural engagement (Seifer 2007). Already a place for art, the West Side is home to over 35 murals (many of which were painted by area artists), sculptures, and streetscape enhancements that add to the area's distinct cultural atmosphere (Saint Paul Planning Commission 2011). NeDA is looking to develop this mixed use arts building and residential apartments on a vacant parcel of land on Cesar Chavez Street in the heart of the District del Sol commercial neighborhood. The hope is that this building will draw local residents and visitors to the area and encourage local business spending.

After months of research on the influence of artists and arts centers around the country and in the Twin Cities, these are my suggestions for NeDA in its development of this building:

- Reach out to local artists in the area using flyers, social media, word of mouth, and community meetings to learn what artists would like to see in an arts oriented building on the West Side.
- Use comments from artists at community meetings to make specific goals as to what uses the space will be designated for (gallery space, studio space, performing arts space, community space, etc).
- Use the local Hispanic/Latino population in the West Side to the space's advantage by incorporating local Hispanic artists into the center or encouraging youth participate in the center by allowing open mic nights if there is a performance stage,
- Consider subsidizing artists rental space if they are willing to host a weekly or monthly event/or class for the public that would encourage the community to participate in the center.
- Partner with businesses located in the District del Sol to promote events in the center.

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