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## **PLACEMAKING AND SOCIAL EQUITY: EXPANDING THE FRAMEWORK OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING**

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### **Abstract**

Artists play a seminal role in advancing humanity through place-based creative initiatives that change not only the aesthetics of place, but also the aesthetics of belonging. Creative placemaking initiatives should provide authentic opportunities for community members to express their relationship with their physical and social environment. Current models of creative placemaking are tethered to the built environment and urban revitalization. An expanded model of creative placemaking is needed to address the complexities of today's urban neighborhoods, a new model that develops places of belonging for the collective good; measures empowerment, cultural stewardship and community attachment as indicators of success; and is committed to addressing the root causes of social inequity through artist-led civic engagement activities. Artists develop arts-based initiatives that fully engage and empower a community's capacity to self-express their distinct cultural identity through place. Artists equipped with nimble entrepreneurial skills who are guided by a spirit of authentic collaboration can be significant change agents in their communities. Established and emerging creative practitioners will benefit from identifying cross-sector collaboration that expands the role of artistic life into civic life.

### **Introduction**

Creative placemaking that is rooted in social equity can foster aesthetics of belonging through place-based arts initiatives. Current models of creative placemaking are tethered to the built environment and urban revitalization. An expanded model of creative placemaking is needed to address the complexities of today's urban neighborhoods, a new model that develops places of belonging for the collective good; measures empowerment, cultural stewardship and community attachment as indicators of success; and is committed to addressing the root causes of social inequity through artist-led civic engagement activities.

Emerging themes within my scholarly inquiry are: 1) the principles and practice of creative placemaking; 2) the politics of belonging and dis-belonging; 3) placemaking in immigrant communities; and 4) the role of artists as placemakers. My research coalesced from reviews of extant literature, informal fieldwork, interviews, and case study analysis of more than ten artist-led projects that explore housing, displacement and cultural identity as themes of engagement. Theoretical insights have emerged from close observation and analysis of artists of color practicing expansive creative placemaking. The artist-led projects I investigated are unique in their practitioner, mission, partners, and geography, but all have authentic community collaboration and a deep commitment to social change through the arts.

A key finding in my research is that the practice of creative placemaking has generated vocal skepticism. Several highly respected cultural leaders argue that placemaking initiatives that are tethered to the built environment and urban renewal are shortsighted and suffocating for today's complex social, political and economic landscapes. Creative placemaking initiatives should be intentional and purposeful, preserving and advancing the existing communities pluralistic identity and aspirations.

I recommend that visionary artists develop arts-based initiatives that fully engage and empower a community's capacity to self-express their distinct cultural identity through place.

Artists equipped with nimble entrepreneurial skills who are guided by a spirit of authentic collaboration can be significant change agents in their communities. Established and emerging creative practitioners will benefit from identifying cross-sector collaboration that expands the role of artistic life into civic life.

### **Creative Placemaking**

Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa (2010) define creative placemaking as “partnerships with the public, private, non-profit, and community sectors to strategically shape the economic, physical and social characteristics of a place around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.” (p.3).

When Rocco Landesman arrived at the National Endowment for the Arts as its new chair in 2009, he observed what was happening all across the country. From the Little Haiti neighborhood in Miami, Florida, to the cultural district that sprang up around the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington cities and towns were using the arts to help shape their social, physical, and economic characters. Like any good producer, Landesman realized that we could not create a community of practice without a name for our shared endeavor, and so the phrase “creative placemaking” was introduced into our national lexicon (Schupbach, 2012).

Landesman launched “Our Town” the federal government’s signature investment in creative placemaking and ArtPlace, an independent consortium of philanthropic and corporate investors who grant twenty-six million dollars annually to creative placemaking projects across America. Landesman traveled the country reframing the way we position arts and culture in our communities. He wanted to create an entirely new conversation that was based not on what the arts needed, but on what they bring to the table. Landesman explained his creative vision in an interview with Ann McQueen for Grantmakers in the Arts (McQueen, 2013) in which he said, “The entire impulse behind the creative placemaking conversation was to be explicit about the ways that the arts change the social, physical, and economic characters of places.” (p. 13).

### **Theory and Practice**

The goal of creative placemaking is to advance humanity through artistic initiatives that build healthy, strong communities. Creative placemaking is a movement of artists and designers, cultural groups and arts organizations that get out of their silos and into their neighborhoods. It is about cross-sector partnerships that leverage the power of art to transform and advance our neighborhoods, initiated by an entrepreneur or entrepreneurial team (see Markusen and Gadwa, 2010).

Influential research defined a framework for cultural practitioners to envision, partner and implement placemaking initiatives that would contribute to the economic growth and livability of their communities. The creative city vision (Markusen, 2006) was intended to serve livability, diversity, and economic development goals. It addressed safety, aesthetic, expressive, and environmental concerns of people who live, work, and visit. Resident artists, often traversing the neighborhood at all hours, make the streets livelier and safer, as do patrons of cultural venues and well-designed streetscapes (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010 p.15) .

Markusen and Gadwa identify six components of successful placemaking strategies:

1. Each effort starts with an entrepreneurial initiator - often an artist.
2. Demonstrates a commitment to place and its distinctive character.

3. Mobilizes public will, both in local government and the citizenry.
4. Attracts private sector support, from cultural industries or developers.
5. Wins the active participation of arts and cultural leaders.
6. Succeeds in building partnerships across sectors, missions and levels of government. (p.26)

### **Outcomes and Indicators**

In October 2012, ArtPlace published their “Vibrancy Indicators,” metrics for program evaluation that attempt to measure placemaking outcomes. The indicators are divided into three broad categories: people, activity and value. For the initial iteration of the indicators, ArtPlace developed both the “people” and “activity” families of indicators. They are currently gathering data on appropriate value indicators.

By late 2012, Markusen, and other outspoken cultural leaders and scholars, expanded the national dialogue on the practice and purpose of creative placemaking. They argued that a new framework for creative placemaking is needed that transcends economic growth to value social equity and belonging through place. Ann Markusen offered a revised definition of creative placemaking in a keynote presentation “Placemaking & Belonging: A National Conversation” sponsored by the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (Markusen,2013). She acknowledged that placemaking has immense potential to create belonging, address challenging social issues and connect people to each other and strengthen their communities. Markusen affirmed that the intrinsic values of the arts are to inspire, entertain, deliver beauty, critique social issues, communicate our rich differences and make us think in new ways. She noted that successful creative placemaking does not judge itself by higher property values and livelier streets; it seeks to build community and a better world with arts and culture at its core.

Jeo Soule and Kimberley Hodgson from the American Planning Association Research Center offer three key points to consider when creating meaningful place in their white paper “Community Character: How Arts and Cultural Strategies Create, Reinforce, and Enhance Sense of Place” (Soule, Hodgson, and Beavers, 2011). They suggest that to develop a strong sense of place we must: 1) understand community character by articulating the historic, cultural, economic, and cultural context of the community; 2) locally implement the framework; and 3) include robust arts and cultural programming (p.2). This is an example of insightful cultural leaders expanding the conversation of placemaking to include social equity, cultural inclusion and people, not just place at the core of the movement.

### **The Politics of Belonging and Dis-belonging**

Roberto Bedoya, Executive Director of Tucson Pima Arts Council asserts that “There is a lack of insight in creative placemaking discourse and practice that does not acknowledge nor address the politics of belonging and dis-belonging that operate in civic society.” He continues, “Before you have places of belonging, you must first feel like you belong. Before you have a vibrant street, you need to understand the social dynamics on the street” (2012, p.1).

Bedoya challenges creative placemaking initiatives that are ingrained in a construct of placemaking that is generated by dominant white ideology. He asserts that the NEA and ArtPlace are tethered to a meaning of place that is manifested in the built environment. Artist live/work spaces, cultural districts, and spatial landscapes that are rooted in the disciplines of economic development and urban planning are entrenched in urban planning initiatives from the 1960s. They sought to eliminate urban blight, but in doing so destroyed many working class ethnic

communities. Bedoya argues that creative placemaking that is tied to the allure of speculation culture and its economic thinking of “build it and they will come” is suffocating, unethical, and supports a politics of dis-belonging employed to manufacture a “place.” (p.2).

I assert that highly skilled creative practitioners have the responsibility and capacity to examine institutional racism, social inequities and cultural intolerances through arts-based civic engagement initiatives. I am in full support of re-imagining and rebuilding our neighborhoods with ambitious and innovative vision. However, it is not enough to inject a vacant lot with quirky art happenings, or develop an artist live/work collective in an old, dank warehouse district. Before we can envision placemaking, we must first acknowledge our legacy of place-taking and seek to establish places of connection, social equity and economic opportunity for everyone.

I had the privilege of interviewing Mr. Bedoya while attending the 2013 Pave Biennial Symposium at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. I asked Bedoya what role race and social equity have on place. He shared that he has witnessed a troubling tenor of creative placemaking discourse, which is an avoidance to address social and racial injustices at work in society. He argues that “race, class and poverty have everything to do with shaping place, and that we need to know our own legacy of colonization, displacement, encampment and the removal of entire ethnic groups before we can construct a healthy future.” I inquired, “What is a more just and equitable model for creative placemaking?” He proposed two key concepts that need to be in motion for placemakers to do good work. “First, the aesthetics of belonging and its ability to shape a community of aesthetics. That means creating an articulation of beauty that is not tied to objects and experiences, but beauty as it relates to community. The second concept that must be at work is cultural stewardship. It’s the idea of listening, looking and learning all the time with who you are, and who you are working with.” Bedoya’s insights remind us that art does not exist on its own, but is interlinked with our social and political systems. He fervently challenges the cultural sector to acknowledge and transform dominant ideologies of placemaking by expanding the canons of aesthetics.

Native American values on the aesthetics of belonging are holistic and offer wisdom for expansive discussions on arts-based initiatives. Pamela Kingfisher, a Native cultural consultant, offers her insights on aesthetics in “Diversity Is Knowledge: Cultural Assets from our Collective Medicine Bundle” (Kingfisher, 2013). She notes, “There is no word for art in our Native language. We see ‘living in beauty’ as inextricably intertwined with community building, spirituality and religion, land and natural resources, health, intergenerational learning, economic development, cultural continuity, and other important aspects of individual and community life. Art for art’s sake does not exist in our communities. Art is sovereignty - art is survival” (p. 38).

### **Immigrant Communities and Placemaking**

What is the role of placemaking in immigrant communities? How do immigrant communities create a sense of belonging in a new country? Dr. Pia Moriarity (2004) investigated the role of everyday people engaging in artistic practice through participatory arts. Moriarity found that the dominant reason for amateur arts groups in immigrant communities derives from a strong desire of parents to maintain the structure, values, and traditions of their families. Participatory community arts are one of the strongest channels that immigrants have for self-assertion as authoritative adults, teachers of their children, and allies to their new friends and neighbors (p.6). Within Moriarity’s framework, creative placemaking has the potential to bond cultural identities and bridge a sense of belonging for immigrant communities in their new host community. For this paradigm shift in theory and practice to occur, the definition of place must

encompass much more than the built environment. New approaches can provide culturally relevant arts-based opportunities to gather, express, exchange and understand one another. For example, “place” could be a cultural center that authentically reflects the unique character and aspirations of the community; “place” could be a vibrant mural that depicts the visual history of a refugee’s journey to America; “place” could be a youth led multi-media arts program that invites youth to share their stories through poetry, graphics and photography; “place” could be a literacy and weaving collective of immigrant women that hosts ELL classes while weaving traditional textiles from their homeland.

Further investigation of the role of arts-based activities in immigrant communities lead to Erika Byrd and Anne Gadwa’s 2009 community based research report “Working Effectively with Somali Residents through the Arts: Collective Wisdom from the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood.” The Cedar Riverside community located in Minneapolis, Minnesota has the largest concentration of Somali immigrants in the United States. Their research objective was to empower arts providers to work more effectively with Somali residents. Core findings of the research concluded that Somali community members value arts activities for enjoyment and recreational opportunities, and as a means to facilitate communication, preserve cultural traditions, and empower individuals (p.4). Byrd and Gadwa offer four guiding principles to consider when working with Somali community member:

1) Employ empowered collaborations by fostering open communication and trust, seeking intersecting goals and sharing power; 2) be sensitive of cultural differences especially around gender and religion; 3) ensure accessibility by recruiting “link” people, providing compensation, using spaces Somalis feel comfortable accessing; and 4) use relevant artistic forms and content especially poetry, theater or craft and active arts participation that builds skills or celebrates Somali cultural heritage. (p.6)

Byrd and Gadwa advocate for a new, more culturally informed partnership with immigrant communities that are based on authentic partnerships, shared power and artistic relevance. Their findings and practical tools for engaging immigrants can inform a new framework for placemaking that is rooted in creating places that authentically establish belonging and provide dynamic opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.

### **Artists as Placemakers**

Artist-led initiatives are a catalyst for root cause discourse that spurs social change. In their book, *Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities*, Lynda Schneekloth and Robert Shibley (1995) assert that placemaking is embodied in the fields of architecture, urban planning, and landscape design and that it has traditionally denied community participation in the fundamental role of creating place. They argue that artists have the potential to affect positive social change by being active civic engagement initiators through arts-based interventions. Schneekloth and Shibley outline an approach for creative interventions. Practitioners should follow three principles:

1) make “dialogic space” by facilitating respectful and open discussion; 2) conduct exercises of “confirmation” (affirming aspects that are working) and “interrogation” (critically analyzing conventions and challenges); and 3) employ “framing action” by allowing these insights to guide and inform subsequent actions. (p. 8)

These methods of engagement are based on an ethos that acknowledges the legitimacy of every person’s experience of living, the potential competence and compassion of human action, and the fundamental importance of place as an actor in living well.

Artist-led civic engagement initiatives require modification and flexibility from the practitioner. It requires artists to expand their studio practice and become civic agitators, negotiators, entrepreneurs, interpreters and storytellers. Suzanne Lacy, artist, activist, and writer, in her well known book, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, (1995), illustrates the transition artists must make to practice socially engaged work, “When art moves outside studio production and becomes a process of community or institutional negotiation, when it must be responsive to a social dynamic and address the needs of others, when it is collaborative in nature, or when it draws upon the expertise of other fields, it becomes a more open-ended and fluid process” (p.24).

Artists who move fluidly beyond their studio practice and into a collaborative, civic-based practice have tremendous potential to connect, inspire and transform their communities through art. Artistic change agents do not create merely to beautify and ignite urban renewal. Many have the capacity and desire to broaden the role of artists in urban planning and design. David Pinder, Professor of Geography at the University of London, (2005) asserts, “It is not simply an issue of asking what artists can do in a narrow instrumental sense to bring about progressive urban change, but rather of opening up through such practices the potential for collaboration, interventions, re-imaginings that disrupt and expand senses of both the city and self” (2005, p.404).

In my research, I examined artists of color whose path-breaking approach to placemaking is significant and notable. I conducted a study of three artists or arts programs that placemaking as it relates to housing, displacement, and urban redevelopment. These artists agitate, strengthen, and transform their communities with art and culture. They are highly skilled creative change agents on the frontier of expanding creative placemaking practices that harness social equity, empowerment, and an articulation of the aesthetics of belonging; in a phrase, they are arts entrepreneurs.

## Case Profiles

### I: The Women’s Textile Collective

In a high-rise apartment complex in Minneapolis, East African women of all ages including elders, girls, and mothers with small children gather at the East African Women’s Center. In the cozy, sun-drenched rooms they take advantage of early childhood education programs, connect with the neighboring Cedar Riverside Adult Education Collaborative (CRAEC) to study ESL or work towards entering a GED program, and most intriguingly, they sew and weave (Byrd, 2010). To encourage participation, the Center started offering sewing classes. The weaving happened organically as recounted by Program Director Doroth Mayer:

When the Women’s Center opened, we did not plan on including weaving in our program; in fact, its start-up could be called “serendipity.” One day, a Somali woman saw yarn through one of the windows of the Center and came in to ask how much it cost. A staff member asked her what she was going to make, and to everyone’s surprise, she pulled a beautiful weaving from her bag. Through this happy accident, the staff at the Center learned that there were elder women in the Twin Cities who still remembered how to create the twined weavings of Somalia. The Women’s Center started providing these weavers with materials, connecting them with each other, and finding them opportunities to display their work. (qtd in Petersen-Roach, 2010).

Artist-led initiatives that explicitly fill the gaps in service and support to families are tangible and measurable mechanisms for social change through the arts. The Women’s Weaving Collective honors cultural traditions through weaving and provides a gathering place for women to bridge their traditions and bond with their new host community. The project supports aesthetics of belonging that are culturally informed and communal in nature. Participants earn supplemental income, acquire essential literacy skills and valuable business skills as they make and sell their goods. Literacy and income are quantifiable results that help women thrive and achieve independence in America. Intrinsic outcomes of the program are preserving traditions, cross-cultural understanding, empowerment and a transformative sense of belonging.

“The display of intricate twined weavings from the East African Women’s Center represents an important step for local Somali women to reclaim and pass along a valuable artistic tradition,” offered Kate Wolford, President of the McKnight Foundation (qtd in Petersen-Roach, 2010). Program Director Doroth Mayer emphasizes that forging personal relationships and being open to doing things a little differently are key to working effectively across cultures. Although Mayer feels there is no one right way, utilizing art forms that are familiar and comfortable to new Americans, such as textiles, provides an effective platform from which to build (Byrd and Gadwa, 2010).

## II: Takashi Horisaki – *Social Dress*

Takashi Horisaki is an artist who moves fluidly beyond his studio practice. He is a Brooklyn-based, Japanese born artist who investigates housing and displacement in his series *Social Dress*. *Social Dress* explores the human impact of social theory, government planning, and political activism as it relates to housing, displacement and individual memories. In his site specific interactive work *Social Dress*, Horisaki creates latex casts of architectural facades and meaningful objects community members want to honor and preserve. His goal is to trace the evolution of urban landscapes with art. (See Figure 1)



Figure 1. Latex casts from Takashi Horisaki’s *Social Dress*. Used with permission of the artist.

*Social Dress* also investigates the meaning of materiality, place, and identity with a focus on the architecture of abandoned neighborhoods. Horisaki uses the latex casting process as a means of circumventing the normal hierarchy of social activism, creating a situation in which the focus on art-making allows space and time for frank, informal dialogue about the history and potential of these neighborhoods. In my recent interview with Takashi, I asked him how his art spurs social change. He noted, “For the local residents, I wanted to create time and space to chat and perhaps address their issues and concerns while working together on an art project. This allows for a sort of indirect investigation so people can be more open but also think about issues from different perspective.” The final sculptures, assembled from cast latex, stand as memorials to these communities, souvenirs of the conversations, and potential structures to house extended dialogue on alternative solutions to the recurring dilemmas of urban planning (Horisaki, 2012).

In the interview, Horisaki reflects on the experience of civically engaged art-making, “From this experience, I have continued to work with communities, and tried to create open platforms for discussion with the art-making as a safe space for casual conversation: the art-making allows participants a different kind of focus and a shared activity that lets them address each other in different ways, avoiding usual stereotypical or canned responses and the limitations of established hierarchies.” (See Figure 2)



Figure 2. *Social Dress* by Takashi Horisaki. Used with permission of the artist.

Horisaki is a skilled artistic anthropologist. He records, preserves and connects through socially engaged art. His process agitates dominant ideologies of the built environment and challenges current housing policies. Horisaki facilitates meaningful dialogues with community

members that support and articulate an aesthetic of belonging that is self-generated and self-preserved.

In my research to better understand how artists make the fluid shift from studio practice to civic practice, I asked Horisaki what the challenges and benefits of moving from a solo studio practice to an interactive civic practice are. He offered an insightful response:

I would say that the benefits of an interactive practice are the ability to open up your own work style and learn to use materials and develop ideas in different ways. The difficulty is that you cannot move forward at your own pace, and you must keep in mind the goals of your collaborators that may be very different from your own goals. You have to adapt yourself to the pace of your collaborators, and learn how to motivate and push them while still giving them space to keep their own voice and their own stake in the project.

I asked also what specific entrepreneurial skills and tools he finds essential in building a successful artistic practice that interfaces with multiple stakeholders:

I rarely think of myself as an entrepreneur. Certainly flexibility is an important skill, and in doing the kind of community interactive projects I do, being able to develop and write up grant proposals is also extremely important as most of my projects are dependent on such funding. Another key skill is being able to talk with a range of people, from curators and collectors to heads of community organizations and workshop participants. While art-making skills like basic carpentry, molding and casting, painting and the like are important, I often develop new techniques as I try to incorporate new materials based on each new project's parameters, so again flexibility and problem-solving, and an ability to find people to help you learn new skills are essential to a practice that moves forward.

### **III: Yesler Terrace Youth Media**

Built in 1941, Yesler Terrace is our nation's first racially integrated public housing community. It is home to 1,239 residents and represents one of the most ethnically diverse and economically challenged communities in Seattle, Washington. The majority of residents are refugees and immigrants from East Africa and Southeast Asia. In 2012, Seattle Housing Authority began a historic fifteen-year redevelopment of the twenty-acre Yesler Terrace neighborhood. Yesler Terrace is currently comprised of 500 low-slung townhouse style residents with private yards and expansive green space. At full build out, the neighborhood is projected to provide 5,000 high-rise housing units and dense commercial space to accommodate more than 30,000 people (see Figure 3).

Claire Garoutte of Seattle University's Fine Arts department partnered with Asfaha Lemlem, coordinator of the Yesler Terrace RechTec Computer Lab and Learning Center, Kat Vello, program director at Youth In Focus, and Assaye Abunie, Executive Director of the Multimedia Resource and Training Institute to lead a group of 13 teens in a summer youth media program at Yesler Terrace. The students tackled a range of historical topics over six weeks about the subsidized housing project. "It's good for the university to engage with the community for something like this," says Abunie, whose nonprofit serves Seattle immigrant communities and seeks to mobilize young media enthusiasts through multimedia training. Youth in Focus is an after school photography program for disadvantaged teens. (Seattle University, 2012).



*Figure 3.* Architectural rendering of the Yesler Terrace redevelopment. Image used courtesy of Stephanie Bower.

The Yesler Terrace Youth Media program inspires youth to become powerful advocates for their community through documentary photography and video. The program connects them to community leaders and residents, and empowers them to be outspoken activists for their changing neighborhood. As residents prepare to move to make way for the fifteen-year redevelopment, dislocation and alienation threaten to undermine the benefits of redevelopment. Robust arts programming during construction strives to connect residents to their changing neighborhood and each other. A sustained dialogue concerning issues of community and shared voice through the arts will also inform how communal areas such as parks, gardens, and commercial spaces will reflect and serve the rich cultural diversity of the Yesler Terrace neighborhood. One youth participant discovered that the loss of private garden plots is a serious concern for many residents. “Lovely little gardens will not exist when the redevelopment is finished. The loss of these private patches of land is a serious concern for the residents who treat their gardens as an extension of themselves,” he observed in a written comment about the program.

As a result of the compelling photographs and videos produced by the youth, Seattle Housing Authority executives and Seattle civic leaders now have an honest and unedited critique of the redevelopment efforts (see Figure 4). Important issues of childcare and communal gardens were highlighted in the youth films. With twenty-five in-home day care providers residing in Yesler Terrace, the redevelopment threatens their livelihood, independence and social cohesion.

By illuminating important social issues through film, the youth were able to shift the construct of power and bring community perspective to the Housing Authority.



*Figure 4.* "The land use signs go up and the bulldozers roll in." Photo and caption by R. Meshesha, 2012.

Yesler Terrace Youth Media is an exceptional example of advocacy through documentation that incorporates current placemaking practices and expands the framework to include racial justice through social activism, youth empowerment, and a shared community voice through artistic practice.

Another youth participant explains the power of art best, "I know that I have a voice and I've learned that this community will face a lot of big changes because of the redevelopment. This makes me want to share my opinions and let people hear from a youth's perspective. There needs to be a change in voice."

### Conclusion and Recommendations

At the intersection of art and society lies the change agent, the dogged practitioner who creates place and purpose in the vastness of humanity. A change agent agitates, inspires and transforms society through artistic practice. A skilled change agent asks - how can I animate the root causes of injustice? How can I contribute to a shared aesthetic of belonging? How can I use art as a tool for civic engagement and social change?

Following extensive literature reviews, interviews and informal fieldwork, I assert that placemaking practitioners have a responsibility and an opportunity to incite systemic social

change through place-based artistic activities. Artists are storytellers, preservers of cultural identity and critics to the injustices that stagnate humanity.

In the case of Yesler Terrace Youth Media, youth generated documentary photography and film provided powerful tools for advocacy and community activism. The arts gave voice to youth of color who are often misrepresented and underrepresented. To envision a new neighborhood, Yesler Terrace youth residents contextualize the past, present and future dynamics of their neighborhood before they began articulating a new, more equitable neighborhood. Seattle civic leaders, creative practitioners and citizens have an opportunity to articulate an inclusive placemaking model in partnership with the residents of Yesler Terrace. A model that provides abundant opportunities for residents to lead artistic initiatives that promote, preserve, and advance their community. As the gardens shrink, structures rise, and demographics shift, the arts are a powerful catalyst for celebrating culture, encouraging social cohesion, and articulating the aesthetics of belonging for all residents.

In the case of Takashi Horisaki's Social Dress, the temporal latex objects preserved place, recorded identity, and skillfully commented on widespread housing inequities across our nation. Social Dress provided opportunities for citizens to express their relationship with their social and physical environment through art and civic engagement. Horisaki's intent is to incite further discussions on housing inequities through community based art workshops. His ability to collaborate with multiple stakeholders, authentically engage residents and promote aesthetics of belonging through place are essential skills for creative change agents.

In the case of the Women's Textile Collective, art became a tool for bonding and bridging for the Somali community. Local textile artists expanded their studio practice and partnered with service providers, educators and cultural groups to establish a shared experience through art. The Somali women were able to celebrate their cultural identity, pass on weaving traditions to their children and share their rich heritage with others. The collective is a dynamic example of cross-sector with art at the epicenter.

For artists who have the capacity and courage to incite social change through arts-based place initiatives, I recommend that an expanded framework of placemaking include three key components: 1) placemaking that is guided by civic engagement activities that foster cultural stewardship; 2) placemaking that spurs systemic social change and youth empowerment; and 3) placemaking that articulates a shared aesthetic of belonging.

Diana Boros, artist, scholar and political theorist, affirms the importance and potential for transformative artistic practice, "Truly transcendent visionary art opens the way to freedom of thought, real conceptual change, and an expanded worldview that extends individual concerns into concern for the greater human community." (Boros, 2012, p. 142).

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