



Speech by Rip Rapson:

Creative Placemaking: Rethinking the Role of Arts and Culture in Strengthening Communities

Kresge CEO addresses League of Historic American Theatres conference.

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It's a joy to be back in Minneapolis, where I spent the first 50 years of my life. And it's an honor to speak with the League of Historic American Theatres. I know only a sliver of your individual stories, but those I know are moving and impressive, each a reminder of the power of distinguished architecture, great art and focused community vision and will in helping shape the destiny of America's cities and towns.

I want to spend my time this evening trying to place the historic theaters movement into a larger context of "creative placemaking," a term that holds pivotal meaning for us at The Kresge Foundation. I'll do that in three parts:

- Describing how creative placemaking has become central to our work at Kresge,
- Exploring how the creative placemaking construct is playing out in the larger field of arts and culture, and
- Discussing how this intersects with the work that you all do.

I. Kresge's Approach to Arts and Culture

In 1924, Sebastian Kresge established the nation's first five-and-dime store and grew it into a network that 50 years later would become Kmart. That same year, he established a foundation in Detroit with the mandate of "promoting human progress." For the past 30 years, that mandate was helping nonprofits complete capital campaigns for building projects. Kresge's brand was crystal clear – we were synonymous with bricks and mortar. Thousands of libraries, hospitals, schools, museums, cultural centers and other

buildings across the country stand as evidence of the enduring value of that work.

The urban opportunity frame

When I arrived seven years ago, it was clear to me – and to the Kresge board – that the time had come to refresh our approach. What was needed was not necessarily more new buildings, but a more expansive way of thinking about how our foundation could lean more directly into society’s most intractable problems – problems that can’t be influenced by just one “tool.” We have moved accordingly toward a more expansive aspiration and a diversification of our methods.

We have restructured the foundation topically, assessing field by field how we might contribute to improving the bedrock economic, social, environmental and cultural conditions of low-income people in America’s cities.

Creative placemaking

Our commitment to expanding opportunities in America’s cities has had profound implications for how we approach arts and culture.

We’ve predicated our activities on the proposition that arts and cultural activity – seen as spanning a wide spectrum of organizations, genres and forms of participation – is central to defining community life. We believe that arts not only enhance human development, but also can help shape the social, physical, cultural and economic identity of a community, spurring economic development, creating stronger social cohesion and revitalizing disinvested communities.¹ We call this intentional intersection between arts and culture and community revitalization “creative placemaking.”²

The term is not original to us – to have this extraordinary conference centered around the concept makes that abundantly clear.

Nor is what it describes particularly new – it is a clear derivation of the concept of “place making,” a term popularized in the 1960s and ’70s in the urban design and planning fields to refer to the development of distinctive, livable places through community engagement.³

But Kresge’s particular conception of creative placemaking is fueled by our belief that a powerful synergy

emerges when you marry it to a focus on urban opportunity.

Let me be clear that we understand fully that the construct of creative placemaking is as compelling in rural Montana as it is in Detroit. The theaters you represent stand as irrefutable proof of that.

But by hitching creative placemaking to urban opportunity, we are trying to ensure that arts and cultural activities stand front and center in efforts to revitalize and re-imagine some of America's most disinvested places. We believe that rather than standing outside the community development fence line and looking in, arts and culture can step inside it and join a multitextured fabric of land use, housing, transportation, environmental, health and other systems necessary for stronger, more equitable and vibrant urban places.

II. Creative Placemaking in Practice

That's been our path. I want to suggest, however, a number of characteristics that define creative placemaking in broader practice.

ArtPlace

But first, a word about the importance of the NEA's former chair, Rocco Landesman, to the emergence of the discipline of creative placemaking.

Shortly after Rocco assumed his position at the endowment in 2009, he asked me to talk with him about an idea he had percolating. Rocco explained he wanted to commit the NEA to the proposition that arts and culture could help restore and animate American communities. This was based on Rocco's experience as a theater guy – he received his Ph.D. from the Yale Drama School and ran the Jujamcyn Theaters on Broadway for more than 20 years, producing such shows as “The Producers,” “Angels in America” and “Big River.”

He told me he had seen the catalytic effect theaters across the country have on their communities. Many of you may recall his address to this conference two years ago when he described how the Proctors Theatre had changed Schenectady, N.Y.:

Proctors attracts a broad swath of the Capital Region to Schenectady, and that foot traffic, that influx of new people needing places to eat and shop and visit along the way, is what drove the (city's)

revitalization.⁴

Rocco explained that he wanted to amplify and extend this pioneering work by partnering with the nation's leading arts and cultural foundations. He asked if I would work with Luis Ubiñas of the Ford Foundation to birth that effort.

The result was ArtPlace, a collaboration of the National Endowment for the Arts and some dozen foundations – Ford, Kresge, Mellon, Irvine, Knight, McKnight, Bloomberg and others. Luis was its first chair; I am its second.

In just a little under three years, ArtPlace has made \$40 million in grants, contributed to a network of more than 100 creative placemaking projects across the nation and helped break down the traditional view in Congress and federal agencies of arts as an isolated and perhaps marginal activity.

Four key tenets of creative placemaking

Creative placemaking lies at the heart of ArtPlace. The defining characteristics of creative placemaking are not, however, always self-evident when describing the potential leverage of arts and culture on the arc of America's cities and towns. I want to note four of those characteristics.

1. Place

First, creative placemaking is grounded in the particulars of place.

The particulars of place can be reflected in the rich architectural and theater traditions embedded in the kind of historic structures you represent. But a sense of place can also trace to less tangible qualities – deeply rooted cultural traditions, significant historical legacies or shared lineages of dance, music, language and other forms of expression.

Rocco underscored this notion two years ago, saying: “Most art is place-based. It's like the French concept of ‘terroir’: the best wine reflects the unique geography, geology and microclimate of the area in which the grapes were grown. In the same way, the best art reflects its unique local influences.”⁵

A quick example.

Twenty years ago, an arts insurgent named Rick Lowe embarked on an effort called Project Row Houses to stabilize one of Houston's most vulnerable neighborhoods. Creating what he called "a kind of temporary, guerrilla-style art project," he focused on a block and a half of 22 abandoned Depression-era row houses. These "shotgun shacks" were a powerful pillar of African American neighborhoods in the post-Civil War South and ubiquitous in art and images depicting life in early 20th-century urban and rural black communities.

Lowe worked closely with the residents of the community to extract a vision for a contemporary identity. Project Row Houses has evolved into a complex of 49 buildings that house exhibition and arts-education spaces, artist studios and a residential program for single mothers and their children that provides both human services and artist residency workshops and classes.

Project Row Houses underscores the extent to which places create a map for civic life. A place's form and scale, its history and norms, determine the ebb and flow of life's daily routines. Engaging places through the arts draws us into intimate relationships, creates an emotional bond across a community and resets the boundaries of collective aspiration.

Creative placemaking accordingly has the potential to do more than embellish a location. It holds the promise of creating an essence – identifying, elevating or assembling a collection of visual, cultural, social and environmental qualities that imbue a location with meaning and significance.⁶ When we're able to connect to a city or a neighborhood through an individual or shared cultural experience, there's a magnetic pull. You want to stay committed. You want to invest. You want to build a future. These are the conditions for civic transformation.

Creative placemaking would have us contemplate community building as a creative act – and the creative act as indispensable to community building. This is true for all places where arts and culture have a toehold, but it is particularly true in cities. Cities present a concentration of activities, skills and ideas that serendipitously or intentionally circulate, recombine and catalyze, creating the preconditions for innovation. Their complex networks and diverse subcultures are conducive to the dismantling of stale and unproductive approaches to intractable problems in favor of the new or imaginatively recycled – a perfect recipe for creative placemaking.

In fact, it's a perfect recipe to birth truly resilient cities – those able to absorb and adapt to the stresses of change while retaining their essential functions, structures and identities. As Richard Florida has argued so powerfully, creative and resilient cities will be those that adopt a people-centered approach and use arts and culture in ways that build connectivity, sustainability and quality of place.⁷

2. Community engagement

The second quality of creative placemaking is authentic and ongoing community engagement.

Creative placemaking, to be truly successful, is created with and by a community – not to or in spite of it. Community engagement through the arts is important both because it provides a voice for residents in shaping the future of their community and because it contributes to social cohesion.

The centrality of arts and culture to social cohesion is one of the arts and culture community's secret sauces. Underappreciated and insufficiently understood, this phenomenon has been meticulously documented by the 20-year Social Impact of the Arts research project conducted at the University of Pennsylvania by Mark Stern and Susan Seifert. Stern writes:

It turned out that the arts were associated with preserving ethnic and racial diversity in urban neighborhoods, lower rates of social distress and reduced rates of ethnic and racial harassment. Perhaps most surprisingly, we found that the presence of cultural assets in urban neighborhoods was associated with economic improvements, including declines in poverty. [We] documented that it was the social and civic engagement associated with the arts that seemed to drive these economic benefits and revitalization.⁸

It's not simply that the arts promote social well-being; they are indispensable elements of social well-being. Just as you can't strip out health or housing or transportation from social well-being, neither can you remove the arts.⁹

Hence the argument that the arts need to be part of any public, private and community conversations that seek to bring about change. Creative placemaking can introduce a variety of tools to ensure that happens. Indeed, artists themselves can emerge as compelling leaders in a community's revitalization, working hand-in-glove with leaders from traditional sources of power and influence.¹⁰ In Chicago, Omaha and St. Louis, for example, Theater Gates has mobilized teams of artists, architects, developers, educators,

community activists and residents to integrate the arts into the process of neighborhood transformation. They've done this, moreover, with an entrepreneurial bent, creating jobs by converting decrepit houses into arts venues, organizing mural projects, installing public art and making other temporary and permanent improvements to a neighborhood's condition.

A second example of community engagement through the arts is Irrigate, an effort by Springboard for the Arts to enlist artists in shaping the billion-dollar light-rail project linking the downtowns of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The light-rail line passes through some of St. Paul's poorest neighborhoods, neighborhoods that are home to large numbers of African Americans and first- and second-generation immigrants whose shops and restaurants act as cultural anchors and institutions for their communities, but whose livelihoods could be threatened during construction of the line.

More than 450 artists have partnered with residents, business owners, the mayor and the city council to ensure that doesn't happen. Their presence is felt all up and down the line: here with a sculpture that looks like a mutant fruit tree, there with a stretch of chain-link fence festooned with colored glass tiles. They've formed cultural flash mobs, mounted exhibitions and infused the neighborhoods with music. Every week, strange and wondrous art has popped up in convenience stores, bus stops, restaurants and construction zones. The corridor is dotted with new landmarks that allow a business owner to give directions like, "turn into my parking lot at the purple hippopotamus."

Laura Zabel, Springboard's executive director, believes that Irrigate's efforts foster the kind of long-term social capital the community will need "to not just survive construction, but thrive after its completion."¹¹

3. Embrace of community development systems

The third quality of creative placemaking is arts and cultural organizations' embrace of community development systems.

Arts and culture, even if rooted in place and tied to community engagement, will contribute to community revitalization only to the extent that they engage private, public and nonprofit policies, practices and investments. The arts have to take into account other disciplines such as health, the environment, housing, transportation, education and human services. They have to interact with the financial, governmental and

nonprofit sectors.

This can happen any number of ways.

One way is when arts and cultural activity produces a sufficient critical mass to start a chain reaction of revitalization.

We're sitting in the middle of a strong example of that. As artists began to cluster in Minneapolis' warehouse and riverfront districts over the last decades, cultural institutions sprung up around them. Within a mile of this auditorium, you'll find the McPhail Center for Arts Education, the Center for the Book, the new Guthrie Theater, the Mill City Museum, a new Central Library, the Hennepin Center for the Arts, the renovation of the great theaters along Hennepin Avenue and many others.

That set in motion a redefinition of the downtown district. The for-profit sector followed the artists, with restaurants and shops providing employment, purchasing from local vendors and generating street vitality. That activity in turn created the preconditions for residential investments, which have brought tens of thousands people of all ages, ethnicities and income levels downtown.

The region's transportation system began taking note, with the convergence in the warehouse district of the Hiawatha light-rail line, the Northstar commuter line and a truly astonishing bikeway system. Even pro sports got into the mix, with the Twins baseball stadium replacing an enormous surface parking lot on the edge of the district. All of a sudden – or more accurately, over a decade – the arts had set in motion a downtown environment that was walkable and accessible by multiple forms of transportation, filled with commercial and cultural amenities and occupied by a diverse residential population.

Arts and culture can also join with other systems by participating in the formation and implementation of a city, community or neighborhood plan.

We've talked about how that played out with the Minneapolis-St. Paul light-rail planning process. Let me mention the potential for it to drive community planning at a larger scale in Detroit.

In those vast stretches of abandonment so familiar from the national media's photo essays, Detroit has more abandoned and blighted land – some 40 square miles, or the approximate size of the city of San Francisco – than traditional planning and development constructs can handle. Over the last three years, Detroit has

developed the Detroit Future City Strategic Framework, which provides a blueprint for how the city can address this challenge. It creates an investment framework that calls on the city to build out its nodes of strength and convert its abandoned and vacant land to productive uses, whether urban farming, reforestation, natural stormwater-runoff landscapes or countless other gestures.

The plan represents an open invitation for neighborhood residents, including artists and arts organizations, to write the code for Detroit's future trajectory. And that is exactly what has happened.

Alongside thousands of Detroit residents, homegrown creatives and artists from around the world are investing their time, energy and creativity in reimagining the city, encouraged by the opportunity to buy a house for \$1,000 or rent for a relative pittance, by the possibility of working unconstrained by the city's bureaucracy to fashion unexpected uses in unexpected places, by the appeal of converting the public ruins of factories and warehouses into studio and exhibition spaces. For the generation of artists experiencing Detroit for the first time, it is not a city on the skids but – in the words of a transplanted New Yorker – “a theater of engagement.”¹² It holds expansive promise for my town to see its future in fresh terms.

4. Outward orientation

The fourth quality of creative placemaking is the willingness and capacity of arts and cultural organizations to assume an outward orientation.

For all sorts of understandable and justifiable reasons, the arts and culture community can often be inwardly focused. Part of that is necessary – there is no substitute for continual cultivation of sound and efficient systems of finance, administration and artistic mission. But increasingly, that is only part of the puzzle. The fate of cultural institutions is inextricably intertwined with the fate of their host communities.

I know that's a bit jargon-y, so let me offer the example of the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle. Walk into Wing Luke and you are immersed in the experiences of Asian Pacific immigrants. The museum is nestled inside a building erected in 1910 as a rooming house and commercial-social hub for the growing immigrant community. You can see immigrants' one-room apartments, their communal kitchen, their shops and altars to ancestors, as well as representations of more recent experiences that range from making inroads in the fashion industry to homelessness.

But you'll likely notice something missing in the \$23 million, 60,000-square-foot facility. There's no place

to eat: no cafeteria, no restaurant, no snack nook. If you get hungry, you'll have to step outside and patronize one of the many eateries in the surrounding Chinatown-International District.

It's an unequivocal statement. By sending visitors out into the museum's largest exhibit – the community itself – Wing Luke drives home the point of the inseparability of the institution and its home. It's an act of outward-looking leadership, a leadership that is concerned with not only the well-being of the institution itself, but also with the well-being of the greater community it seeks to serve and represent.

This plays out beyond propelling visitors to neighborhood commercial establishments. Wing Luke's staff participates in every dimension of community life. As their director, Beth Takekawa, notes:

When you care about the health of your community and the small businesses that support it, you cannot set yourself apart. ... One must go to these meetings about sanitation or public safety or transportation or housing development issues. Perhaps that's not your area of expertise or knowledge set, but if it's important to the neighborhood you have to be there too.

III. Implication for Historical Theaters

So that's a bit of the theory and practice of creative placemaking. Place based. Focused on community engagement. Concerned with issues of community renewal. Outward facing.

The question you've so patiently waited for me to address, I suspect, is what all of this has to do with you. A great deal, I would suggest. It strikes me that some of your most compelling attributes parallel the four qualities of creative placemaking.

1. Place: Elevating historic preservation

First, your connection with the architectural, social and cultural history of a place assures you a central role in defining a community's distinctiveness.

A decade ago, I took the lead in a struggle to prevent the demolition of the Guthrie Theater on the Walker Art Center site. A big part of that, I have to admit, was motivated by the theater being the masterwork of Minnesota's most important 20th-century architect, my father, Ralph Rapson. But it was also rooted in the sense that the Guthrie was not only a nationally iconic statement of theater architecture, but also an important slice of Minneapolis' history – a reflection of our town's coming of age in 1963 as a place of

artistic and cultural significance.

The Guthrie was the nation's first Shakespearean repertory theater. In its formative years, it was the creative expression of the foremost Shakespearean director of his era, Sir Tyrone Guthrie. Its design was path breaking in the American theater movement, with its asymmetrical stage, revolutionary façade, state of the art acoustics and countless other design and construction innovations.

And it was the launch pad for what would become one of the nation's premier theater ecologies, giving rise to an intertwined, interdependent constellation of pioneering theaters of all kind and sizes – the colorblind casting of *Mixed Blood*, the French-trained and clown/mime/dance/opera-inspired productions of *Jeune Lune*, the interdisciplinary multimedia innovations of *Red Eye*, the premieres of American productions of the *Cricket*, the African-American repertoire of *Penumbra* and countless other theaters that fed, and were fed by, the Guthrie: A two-way portal for actors, directors, costume and set designers, choreographers, composers, writers, lighting technicians, audiences.

The Guthrie's demolition a decade ago accentuated a painful recognition that in our rush to create anew, we too often fail to account the violence we do to our collective identity and soul as we rip through the rich and varied layers of another age.

All the theaters represented in this room are an antidote to this blindness. Stewarded properly, as yours are, historic structures are indispensable aids to identifying those parts of our past that have the kind of enduring value that can be put to service in charting a path to a community's future. As the author Roberta Gratz observes: "The rebirth of today's thriving cities started with the rediscovery of yesterday's discards."¹³

2. Community engagement: Building social capital

The second point of relevance of creative placemaking stems from your power to build social cohesion. Bob Putnam of "Bowling Alone" fame uses the term "social capital" to describe the informal networks of social support that bond people of like beliefs and that bridge people across difference.¹⁴ The magic of theater is that it builds both kinds.

Just spend a mental minute at Jack Reuler's *Mixed Blood Theatre* in the West Bank area of Minneapolis. I'm one of the few who can claim to have known Jack continuously since he was a zoology major at Pomona College in the 1970s. It's one of life's great mysteries how someone focused on the mating

maneuvers of manatees has kept afloat for almost 40 years a professional, multiracial theater company that has never wavered from its mission of “promoting cultural pluralism and individual equality through artistic excellence.”

Every decision Mixed Blood makes – artistic, programmatic, organizational, financial – is driven by a profound sensitivity to the ripple effects it will have in the larger community. It isn’t possible to imagine Mixed Blood anywhere else than in its turn-of-the-century firehouse in the heart of Minneapolis’s Somali and Ethiopian community. It describes its approach as follows:

[Mixed Blood] uses theater to address artificial barriers that keep people from succeeding in American society. [It seeks to be] the definitive destination where theater artists and audiences representing the global village can create and share work that spawns a ripple effect of social change and revolutionizes access to theater.

It’s too much to ask theaters to overcome the erosion of trust and sense of mutual obligation that seems characteristic of the here and now in America. But as Mixed Blood reminds us, theaters can – as I suspect so many of you do daily – cultivate both the bonding and bridging social capital that Putnam describes. By inviting us to step outside our immediate experience into a world of shared ideas and imagination. By creating a public platform undergirded by a fundamental respect for reasoned civil discourse.

The creative process – whether the restoration of an historic theater, the presentation of programming within it or the embrace of the community in which a theater nests – ignites the collective imagination and bends individual inclination towards a shared civic pride. It is the gift you all offer to your host communities.

3. Community development: Catalyzing revitalization

The third quality of creative placemaking – engaging with community development – is related closely to the power of historic theaters to help catalyze a city’s revitalization.

Rocco framed his remarks to you two years ago around the transformative effect of Proctors Theatre in Schenectady. The Hennepin Avenue Theater District has had a similar effect here in Minneapolis.

When I served as deputy mayor in Minneapolis some 20 years ago, our office was sucked into a mind-numbingly complex set of negotiations over whether, and the extent to which, the State Theater should be

renovated and incorporated in a hotel-office project called La Salle Plaza.

The stars aligned, and it was done magnificently. It also spurred the chain reaction I described earlier, in which the State Theater's renovation was followed closely by that of the Orpheum Theatre, bringing back on-line the region's most spectacular 1920s vaudeville and movie houses and creating a market for Broadway shows that was previously nonexistent.

The chain reaction continued with the restoration of the Pantages Theatre, and then the epic physical relocation of the Schubert, migrating inch-by-inch on giant rollers down Hennepin in an adventure worthy of an "Indiana Jones" shoot. And finally, the reopening of the New Century Theatre in City Center. The restorations of this necklace of irreplaceable historical artifacts ushered a sense of renewal and reinvention that has anchored downtown Minneapolis's renaissance.

And, as I noted earlier, these developments necessarily touched and influenced the policies and practices of the public, private and civic sector in the realms of housing, transportation, commercial and other systems.

As Leonard Bernstein once said: "Any great work of art revives and readapts time and space, and the measure of its success is the extent to which it makes you an inhabitant of that world – the extent to which it invites you in and lets you breathe its strange, special air." These theaters have done that for this remarkable town.

And it wasn't just the inside of the house. The Hennepin Theater Trust, under Tom's leadership, recognized that the real lobby of the theatres was, in all actuality, the larger district of which the theatres are a part. The trust embraced the possibilities of the public realm, opening conversations with business owners and residents that would culminate in a community cultural plan to re-imagine Hennepin Avenue, block by block. That plan now enjoys the support of over 57 arts organizations as well as many nonarts stakeholders and has become the blueprint for public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit investment.

4. Outward orientation: Creating institutional porosity

In a similar vein, creative placemaking's fourth quality of outward orientation is an invitation for theaters to spill out of their homes into the broader community.

There must be something in the Minneapolis water system because a couple of miles from here, in one of

the city's poorest neighborhoods, the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater embodies what it means for a theater enterprise to conceive its existence in terms of the host community.

Located in the 1937 art deco Avalon Theater, Heart of the Beast centers its performances, youth education programs, apprenticeships, theater-arts trainings and most everything else it does on setting the stage for the annual May Day parade.

For the non-Minneapolitans among you, let me assure you that this is not the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

It is instead an incomprehensibly phantasmagorical event a full year in the making that involves tens of thousands of outrageously costumed participants parading to that year's theme – invariably tied up in issues of democracy, community empowerment and social justice – displaying hundreds upon hundreds of puppets and masks, some up to 20 feet tall, created in the Heart of the Beast workshops over the preceding 12 months. It is a boisterously exuberant, unabashedly radical, artistically thrilling, culturally mesmerizing cross between Mardi Gras, a political campaign rally and the United Nations General Assembly.

But it is as much what happens before and after May Day as what happens on May Day that is so terribly important. All year long, Heart of the Beast is a magnet for community involvement. Workshops hum constantly, as kids and grown-ups alike are trained in the puppet- and mask-making traditions. Professionals and volunteers collaborate to create sets, costumes, scripts and other components of the company's productions. The rich diversity of Hispanic, East African, African American, Hmong and Native American populations infuse the theater's daily operations and overarching sensibilities.

After 35 years of leadership under Sandy Speiler, Heart of the Beast has become a community mainstay. It has touched two generations of residents in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood, shaping a sensibility about how to celebrate diversity, how to push arts and cultural expression into the middle of any conversations about the future of the community and how to create the ultimate porosity between the theater and its surround.

IV. Conclusion

Let me conclude by saying that in these wickedly difficult and complicated times, creative placemaking is a clarion call for a creativity that is rooted in place and engaged with community to actively engage the

defining issues of our time.

It is also a call for a different way of working. The arts and culture sector will occasionally need to leave the safe and secure moorings our institutions have come to know. Sometimes, we will pivot just a bit, and get it right. At other times, however, we'll have to expand our range of motion to embrace a level of risk and uncertainty commensurate with the magnitude of the challenges we face.

I can think of no better example than Minneapolis's own ArtSpace, truly one of the most remarkable illustrations in the arts and cultural galaxy of how arts can propel the revitalization of place. When Kelley Lindquist started ArtSpace some 35 years ago with a \$40,000 budget, little could we have known that it would grow to command a \$30 million budget, control a half-billion dollar portfolio of arts infrastructure, provide housing for more than 1,000 artists and administrative and retail space for more than 300 arts organizations, entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Those data points only begin to describe the true influence that Kelley, and ArtSpace, have had in this country.

First, Kelley was one of the first to recognize that artist live/work developments were not a step in the process of ushering in some higher use of real estate, but were instead a statement about serving artist needs in perpetuity.

Second, ArtSpace has, perhaps as much as anyone, been responsible for arts and culture investments taking their rightful place as drivers of economic and community development. These investments are not simply parachuted into communities to operate in isolation, but are, instead, responsive to and very much a part of their place.

And third, Kelley and his staff have inspired a generation of creative placemakers. One of my great joys while in Minneapolis was watching how they got into the water system of a place. Kelley brought onto the staff people who possessed his same qualities of vision, tenaciousness, honesty and ruthless adherence to excellence. And, well beyond his own organization, he has inspired a wide net of practitioners in communities across America who have redefined how we think about the role of artists in daily life.

ArtSpace is far from through. It continues to evolve in remarkable and sometimes unpredictable ways. It is ever-more conscious of the importance of outward-looking leadership. It is increasingly tuned into the

possibilities of working with ethnic-specific and low-income communities. It epitomizes how an arts and cultural organization can shed conventional boundaries and work at the sharp edge of risk and change.

And it suggests just why creative placemaking is so important at this juncture in history. In the face of the dizzying pace of change in every conceivable economic, social and political dimension, cultural institutions will have no choice but to break some of the family china and try new approaches. Nothing is as it has been. Not theater, not community. We are different now, and we move differently together. Elevating the particulars of place. Drawing on the wisdom and energy of community engagement. Embracing the challenges of recommitting and reinvesting in America's poorest communities. Looking beyond one's own institutional walls.

Cultural creativity may well be the driving force of community revitalization in the 21st century. It promises more adaptive ways of seeing, understanding, experiencing and transforming where we live, how we work, what we dream.

You occupy an important part of that creative geography. I know you are committed to making it matter. And keep in mind Martha's Graham's admonition: "No artist is ahead of his time. He is his time. It is just that the others are behind the time." So go ahead, question. Explore. Create. Lead.

¹See generally, Jackson, M.R., "Developing Artist-Driven Spaces in Marginalized Communities: Reflections and Implications From the Field," *Leveraging Investments in Creativity* (Urban Institute: 2012).

²This definition is adapted from Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A., "Creative Placemaking" (National Endowment for the Arts: 2010); Washington, D.C.; Nowak, J., "The Power of Placemaking: A Summary of Creativity and Neighborhood Development Strategies for Community Investing," (Reinvestment Fund: 2007); and Project for Public Spaces, "Making Places," http://www.pps.org/info/bulletin/what_is_placemaking.

³Hayden, D. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (MIT Press: 1995).

⁴Landesman, R., "Suggested Comments at the League of Historic American Theaters," July 15, 2011, Schenectady, N.Y.

⁵*ibid.*

⁶McMahon, E., "The Place Making Dividend." *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 80, p. 16 (Fall 2010). See more at <http://kresge.org/about-us/presidents-corner/connecting-detroit%E2%80%99...>

⁷Florida, R., *The Rise of the Creative Class. And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday*

Life (Basic Books: 2002).

⁸The Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania (1994-present). See Stern, M.J. “Rethinking Social Impact: ‘We Can’t Talk About Social Well-Being Without the Arts and Culture,’” *ARTSblog*, May 1, 2012. <http://blog.artsusa.org/2012/05/01/rethinking-social-impact-we-cant-talk...> See also Stern, M.J. and Seifert, S.C. “Documenting Civic Engagement: A Plan for the Tucson Pima Arts Council, (University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Arts Project, June 2009).

⁹Stern, M.J. “Rethinking Social Impact,” op cit.

¹⁰See, e.g., National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. “Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change: High Impact Strategies for Philanthropy.” A Philanthropy at its Best Report, October 2011.

¹¹Laura Zabel, executive director of Springboard Arts, interview with W. Kim Heron of The Kresge Foundation, June 2013.

¹²Yablonsky, L. “Artists in Residence” *The New York Times*, September 26, 2010. Yablonsky also quotes a photographer as saying: “I think it’s the most visually compelling place on the planet. If you have a sense of adventure and curiosity, there’s no place like this.”

¹³Gratz, R.B. “Organic Renewal: St. Joe’s Story,” Citiwire.net, July 5. 2013.

http://citiwire.net/columns/organic-renewal/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dispatch.

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