

# Creative Placemaking Case Study: Brookland-Edgewood

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When Brookland-Edgewood intentionally embedded arts and culture into its economic resurgence, the Washington, DC neighborhood succeeded in protecting its cultural identity, bridging social differences, and elevating the voices of existing residents. As new businesses have set up shop and newcomers have settled in, long-time residents have collaborated with developers, planners and local artists to ensure that the neighborhood remains welcoming and familiar to the people who already call it home. These robust, multi-sector partnerships continue to encourage new and existing residents to take part in shaping the character and direction of development in their community.

Like many neighborhoods, Brookland-Edgewood has experienced significant real estate and commercial development in recent years. As urban revitalization and the mass transit-oriented lifestyle of millennials attract new investment and younger, more affluent residents to the neighborhood, existing residents could become alienated, and the community could be at risk of losing its creative character. Creative Placemaking in this neighborhood offers an instructive example of how arts and culture can address these challenges.

This case study illustrates how Creative Placemaking<sup>1</sup>, the deliberate integration of arts and culture into comprehensive community development, can serve as a critical catalyst in forming equitable living and working solutions for all the social, economic, and racial constituencies of a neighborhood. It also shows how Creative Placemaking depends on collaboration across several different sectors, each with different goals, mind-sets, work styles, and skills.

In the Brookland-Edgewood case, the multi-sector network of stakeholders included a forward-thinking government agency, a visionary nonprofit, a private developer, and the existing residents of a disadvantaged neighborhood:

**1— The District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP)** explicitly integrated Creative Placemaking into its redevelopment plans for the neighborhood (2008). Creative Placemaking is a natural fit, as the charter of this technical government agency is to create long-term plans and then work with local partners to realize those plans.

**2— Dance Place** a dance-centered community nonprofit, has practiced an implicit<sup>2</sup> form of Creative Placemaking in Brookland-Edgewood for 30 years, using cultural enrichment to bring residents together. Dance Place also creates forums for newcomers to work with existing residents and businesses. By the end of 2016, Dance Place will open the Arts Park, a shared, outdoor creative space, designed through democratic community engagement.

**3— Bozzuto Development, Inc.**, a for-profit real estate developer, built and manages the new Monroe Street Market, a mixed-use development of residential, retail, performance, event, and studio spaces at the Brookland/CUA Metro station.

**4— Brookland-Edgewood Residents** are a diverse community physically separated into distinct halves, east (Brookland) and west (Edgewood) of the Metropolitan Branch rail line. Residents are actively involved in neighborhood development and political issues through the Advisory Neighborhood Commission. Artists lived and worked here well before the recent development.

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## THE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING FIELD

The key cross-sector partnership was between DCOP and Dance Place. Without the local relationships and creative engagement skills of Dance Place, DCOP could not have realized fully its responsibility to conduct community-based planning across the District. Without DCOP's financial support and credibility, Dance Place could not have realized fully its potential to embed arts and culture into the local urban planning landscape, now and for the future. Between them, these two stakeholders drew together four vital sectors required for successful Creative Placemaking: planning, development, community, and the arts.

This case study offers two contributions to the field of Creative Placemaking: (1) a model of the main constituent sectors of cross-sector collaboration in Creative Placemaking, and (2) recognition that inherent in the structure of Creative Placemaking programs is a challenge: how to truly link the abstract ideas of planners to the tangible concerns and lives of community residents. Creative Placemaking in Brookland-Edgewood had an answer in the form of a relationship between DCOP and Dance Place.

Creative Placemaking is an emerging field still in its dynamic infancy.

In 2009-2010, a burst of activity formed the critical turning point: Rocco Landesman's appointment as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, the formation of the ArtPlace America partnership, and the Markusen-Gadwa whitepaper<sup>3</sup>. This coalescence, while definitively establishing the field's conceptual name, built upon work that had already been going on for decades. The practice of community development has a history stretching back to the 19th Century, and was enfranchised in federal policy and funding in 1974. With *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961, Jane Jacobs helped spark a revolution in urban planning theory toward a more sociological and cultural perspective anchored in understanding the needs of neighborhood residents, real people. Richard Florida's influential and controversial theory of the creative class and its importance as a driving force in U.S. post-industrial cities appeared in 2002<sup>4</sup>.

Intentional intellectual contributions to the field of Creative Placemaking can be separated into two phases— "laying the foundation" and "consolidating the field". Though work in the latter phase may be better known, because it was then the field took on a name, earlier forbearers did groundbreaking work in several different areas. In the 1970s, the Comprehensive Employment Training Act spurred, among other things, development of neighborhood programs that employed artists to improve community environments. Numerous community based arts organizations across the country had been using local arts and cultural assets to advance equitable outcomes in their communities since the early 1980s<sup>5</sup>. Mark Stern and Susan Seifert created the Social

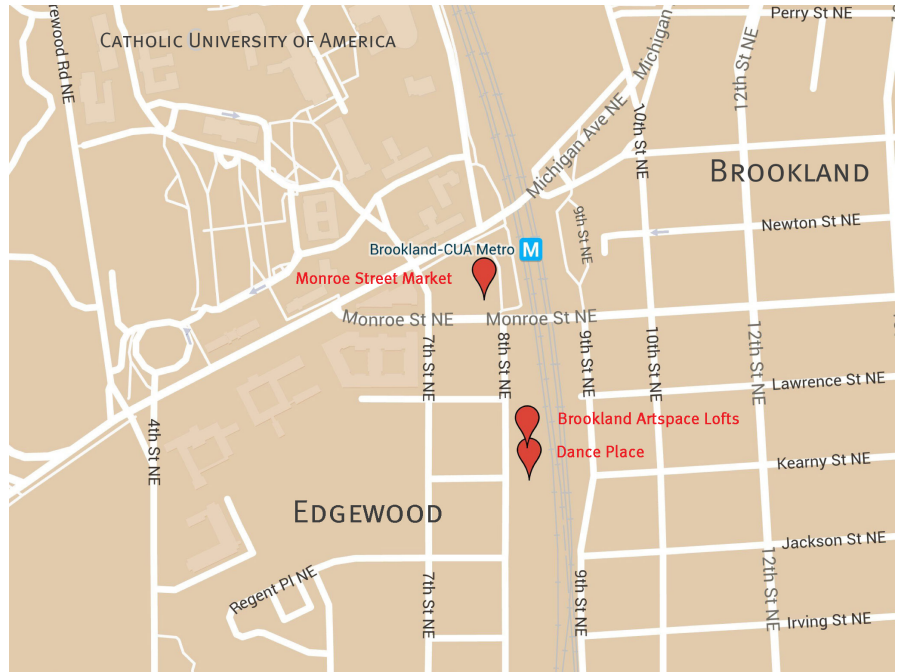
Impacts of the Arts Project in 1994 to explore how local arts and culture affect community life and to inform strategies for neighborhood revitalization, social inclusion, and community wellbeing<sup>6</sup>. Maria Rosario Jackson at the Urban Institute launched the Arts and Culture Indicators Project in 1996 to establish a more expansive definition of arts and culture, inclusive of heritage based cultural practices and non-professional activity and create a cultural data framework as well as a set of measures, based on widely available data, of the cultural vitality of communities. This work made an objective and empirical case for the significance of activities relevant to "creative placemaking"<sup>7</sup>. Studies by anthropologists Alaka Wali (of "informal arts") and Maribel Alvarez (of emerging and alternative arts organizations) brought deeper understanding of the natural grassroots operation of culture and its artistic expressions<sup>8</sup>. These pioneering efforts observed and documented a more expansive definition of arts and culture, interrogated the roles of arts and culture in communities, and assayed new methods for measuring the presence of arts and culture activity in communities, and the contributions that activity was making to its communities.

The landmark whitepaper by Ann Markusen and Ann Gadwa is an early and primary exemplar of field consolidation writing. They and a number of other authors<sup>9</sup> have defined and clarified the scope of the term "creative placemaking," illustrated the range and profusion of its on-the-ground work through short example cases, offered guidelines for practitioners, suggested elements that should make up the field's philosophy and theory (of social change, of art, of political context), and discussed the tactics, strategy, and problems of Creative Placemaking as a social change

movement. However, much work remains to be done defining the parameters of the field and capturing the nuances of field practitioner work in communities.

Creative Placemaking still labors to overcome a handful of stubborn shibboleths about the position of “arts and culture” in contemporary American society. Creative Placemaking seeks to extend earlier efforts and replace a conventional concept of art as a currency of elites, or a luxury good only produced by specialists, with a broader and more democratic notion that art-making is an essential process naturally embedded in all communities. To gain recognition of their significance, Creative Placemaking programs have to continually push against the widespread assumption that economic factors are singular in determining standard of living and well-being. And because built environment changes are easier to see and appreciate than softer, more abstract, complex social and cultural changes, Creative Placemaking efforts often struggle to definitively show the effects of their program actions if they are not tied to real estate development or other construction projects.

This case study aspires to contribute to the field by drawing inferences about the social structure of collaboration at the center of Creative Placemaking from a qualitative, ethnographic<sup>9</sup> account of one on-the-ground effort. Understanding the “social organization of action” from the details of an example Creative Placemaking project should help practitioners and planners improve the effectiveness of future efforts.



## SETTING OF THE CASE

The physical impact of Creative Placemaking projects transforming Brookland-Edgewood in Washington, DC can be found around the intersection of Monroe Street NE and 8th Street NE.

The critical mass of several Creative Placemaking projects is becoming branded as the 8th St Arts Corridor. This area sits at the nexus of three neighborhoods, with Brookland to the east and north across the Metro tracks, Edgewood to the south, and the Catholic University of America (CUA) campus to the northwest.

These three neighborhoods have distinctly different characters and reputations. Brookland is known as a sleepy bedroom community with a history of successful racial integration and political organization. Its streets are lined mostly with standalone single-family homes. 12th Street is a relatively healthy small business

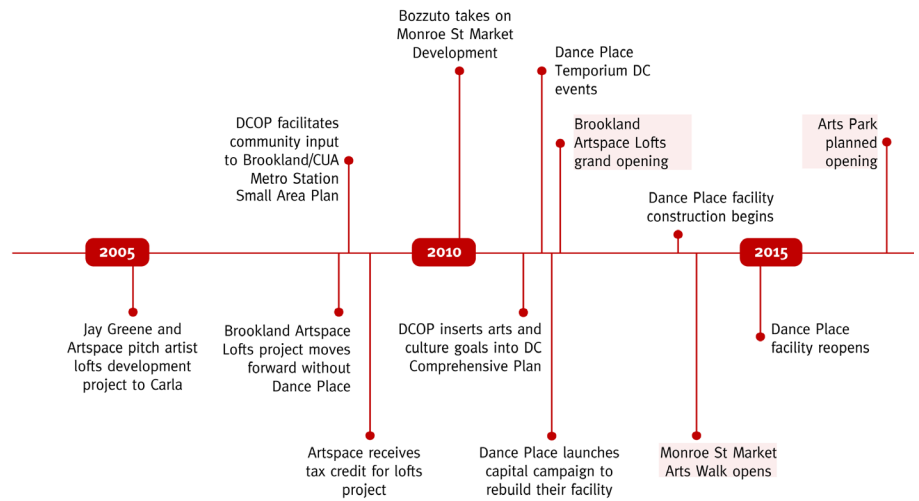
corridor surrounding an historic theater that has been converted into a CVS pharmacy. Numerous Catholic churches and parochial schools dot the neighborhood—owing to this and to the proximity of CUA, Brookland earned the nickname “Little Rome.” During the Great Migration (1910-1970), blacks quietly and persistently broke Brookland’s racially restrictive housing covenants until by the 1960s it was integrated across class and race divides. Brookland has a history of community organization and mobilization: between 1970 and 1977 the neighborhood fought successfully to prevent a planned interstate highway that would have followed the train tracks, destroying many homes and connections between Brookland and CUA.

The Edgewood neighborhood to the west of Brookland has seen significantly less investment. It contains Edgewood Commons, a large-scale public housing development, and a concentration

of industrial land use zoning. The average poverty rate has been above 20% for the past 35 years — more than twice the rate in Brookland. The Brookland Metro stop, which actually lies between Brookland, Edgewood, and CUA, has the highest crime rate of any stop in the DC metro system. Since 2000, five charter schools have moved into Edgewood.

The CUA campus is largely self-contained. Michigan Avenue, a wide artery with fast-moving traffic, kept the campus separated from adjacent neighborhoods—Edgewood more so than Brookland. (This has begun to change with the recent advent of the Monroe Street Market development.) Relations between the University and its neighbors have been strained from time to time, unsurprisingly, by boisterous students disturbing residential tranquility.

Sensing opportunity, a handful of public, private, and non-profit players started making plans for the neighborhood little more than a decade ago. In 2005, the District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development, together with Artspace Projects, first proposed a project that would encompass the current Artspace Lofts building and Dance Place, providing living and working space for artists and administrative, training, and performance space for Dance Place. The proposed design ran afoul of easement restrictions, and in early 2008 a scaled-down Brookland Artspace Lofts project moved forward without Dance Place. Around the same time, DCOP began gathering community input for the Brookland/CUA Metro Station Small Area Plan. Dance Place facilitated one of the input-gathering sessions,



their first official foray into the community development field. In February 2010, privately-owned Bozzuto Development took over implementation of a southward expansion of the CUA campus, known as Monroe Street Market.

The next few years brought a flurry of development activity. In 2011, as a result of conducting a study of the District’s creative economy, DCOP was able to add an arts and culture element in to the DC Comprehensive Plan, and soon thereafter began a series of “Temporiums”—District-sponsored, pop-up occupancy of vacant urban spaces by creative entrepreneurs to highlight retail potential in emerging areas. Dance Place launched a capital campaign to rebuild its facility, and the Brookland Artspace Lofts opened, next door to Dance Place. The Monroe Street Market came online in phases: The Arts Walk and its resident artists began operating in the Fall of 2013, with the full complex of residential and retail spaces opening a year later. After re-opening their new facility in September 2014, Dance Place applied for and received a grant to transform the alley between them and Artspace Lofts into an Arts Park, slated to open at the end of 2016.

All this new development around the Metro stop and along Monroe St. has been marketed using the Brookland name, though most of Dance Place the developing area is technically in Edgewood or on CUA land. A “Brookland” branding evokes that neighborhood’s positive image and, by stressing the metro stop name, this branding also appeals to mass transit-oriented newcomers.

The new development comes with a new set of issues. So far, because the Monroe Street Market development utilized vacant property in a less-developed neighborhood, physical displacement has not yet become a problem. But discussions at Arts Park steering committee meetings surface deep differences in lifestyle and attitudes about the neighborhood’s development. There was vigorous debate about the extent to which the new park should accommodate dogs. In the view of long-time residents, many newcomers seem to favor dogs over having children. This is at odds with the family orientation of long-time residents, many of them retired, and 70% of them African American.

In the midst of all this change and uncertainty, a network of public, private and non-profit entities used art to engage neighbors, draw up a shared vision, and breathe life into that vision, for the benefit of an entire community.

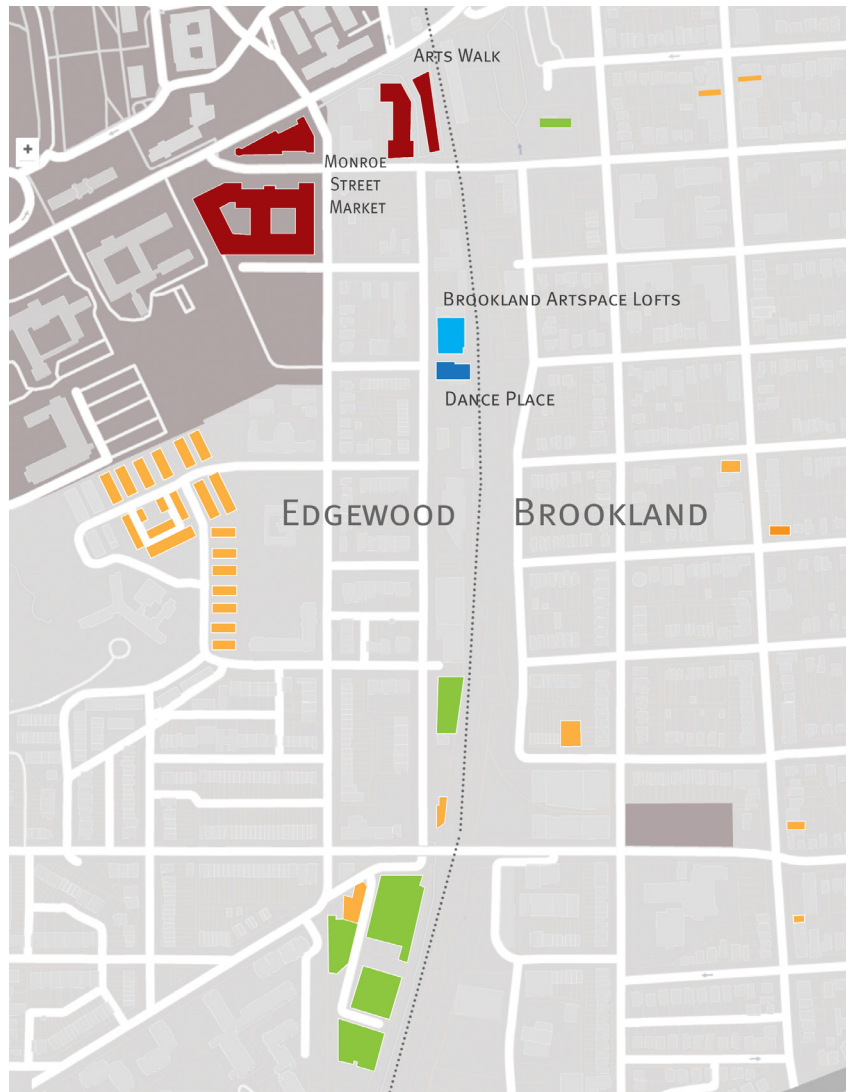
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## DANCE PLACE

Dance Place lies at the geographic and spiritual heart of Brookland-Edgewood. For the last 30 of the 35 years that Carla Perlo has run Dance Place, the organization has been located on 8th Street below Monroe, at the border between the Brookland and Edgewood neighborhoods.

### History

In 1985, Perlo found herself displaced after dramatically raised rents forced her out of a previous dance studio in an old automotive dealership in Adams Morgan. This left a lasting impression and spurred her resolve to never again be forced to uproot her organization. She recognized the necessity of ownership and the value of place. Acting on this resolve, she purchased a rough warehouse in the industrial part of Edgewood, backed up against the Metro tracks. When she caught neighborhood kids throwing rocks at passing trains from the roof of the building next door, Perlo saw in their idle hands an untapped potential, where others might have seen a threat. She fostered that potential by teaching them job skills through activities that eventually became part of Dance Place's long-running Energizers program. This program is just one example of how Dance Place has always had horizons broader than dance—it is an organization that values creativity and tries to nurture the potential of the children of neighborhood residents by nurturing their creativity and curiosity. Along the way, Dance Place became a treasured community resource.



*A progression of arts-related physical development: a cluster of charter schools and nonprofits (green) moved in 2000-2010, numerous townhomes and new restaurants (yellow) built 2010-present, Brookland Artspace Lofts (light blue) opened October 2011, Monroe Street Market complex (dark red) began rolling openings July 2013, renovated Dance Place facility (dark blue) completed September 2014.*

*Dance Place has always had horizons broader than dance—it is an organization that values creativity and tries to nurture the potential of the children of neighborhood residents by nurturing their creativity and curiosity.*

## Today

Dance Place hosts public performances by local dance companies and national touring artists alike, as well as community arts events that bring the neighborhood together. Its staff of 20 (mostly) dancers teaches multiple forms and levels of dance, ranging from classical ballet for preschoolers to master classes for modern dancers. They also provide after school programs and job skills training for teens. All of Dance Place’s activities stem from Perlo’s philosophy of nurturing the potential of individuals, and responding to the emerging needs of those individuals and the community. This philosophy has allowed a dance-focused community organization to grow outward from its dance roots, branching into community development conversations.

As a property owner, Dance Place is deeply tied to the neighborhood. In 2007, when their facility renovation (originally planned as a part of the Brookland Artspace Lofts project) fell through due to land use restrictions, and the Artspace Lofts went forward without them, Dance Place continued to facilitate and support the project enthusiastically because it was going to be a boon to the neighborhood. Dance Place then successfully mounted their own, independent capital campaign to accomplish a full upgrade of their facility in the same location. As a result, Dance Place remained in the heart of Brookland-Edgewood, serving even more community members with a wider range of programs.



*After completing a \$4.5M capital campaign, Dance Place expanded and updated their warehouse theater on 8th Street to accommodate more staff and programs. The new building proudly displays their creative nature, welcoming audiences and anchoring the south end of an arts corridor stretching up to the Arts Walk in Monroe Street Market at the Brookland/CUA Metro Station.*

Dance Place sees plenty of potential for long-time neighbors and constituents as the neighborhood changes, and they are passionate about keeping them on stage—and at the table—while decisions that will alter the character of the neighborhood are being made. The organization plays a strategic and vigilant role in giving the community a voice while welcoming and shepherding new, energetic stakeholders who want to become part of the community.

Before the cluster of projects described here began in 2005, Dance Place’s Creative Placemaking efforts were implicit rather than intentional, springing naturally from Perlo’s passion for people and the arts. **Dance Place has long exhibited five assets that have proven key to their success in these efforts:**

- 1** Their creative process as artists, and perspectives informing their creative process
- 2** The relationships anchoring them to the neighborhood, yielding respect and credibility
- 3** Their skill in engaging the community with relevant, accessible events
- 4** Their speed and nimbleness in seizing opportunities and taking action
- 5** Their flexibility in adapting to changing neighborhood needs

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## THREE STORIES OF CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

Brookland-Edgewood serves as an example of how Creative Placemaking works in real time, thanks to deliberate and implicit Creative Placemaking projects undertaken in the neighborhood over the past decade.

The Brookland Artspace Lofts opened in 2011, followed by Monroe Street Market in 2013. Arts Park is scheduled to open toward the end of 2016. Overall, eight different types of stakeholders worked together, in different combinations, to carry out these three projects (see table). The following narrative tells the story of Brookland-Edgewood Creative Placemaking by focusing on different examples of cross-sector collaboration. Two Kresge grantees, Dance Place and DCOP, keep showing up in this work, so the first example of cross-sector collaboration is an account of their relationship.

### The DCOP-Dance Place Relationship

As the city agency responsible for urban planning and historic preservation in the District of Columbia, DCOP's mission is to ensure that development and revitalization of the District's distinctive neighborhoods are consistent with the documented strategic vision for the whole city, and that the process of development and revitalization engages affected communities along the way. Research, planning, evaluation and reporting are central to their approach.

The city agency first encountered Dance Place in 2008, when DCOP was gathering input from community stakeholders for their Small Area

Plan for development surrounding the Brookland/CUA Metro Station. As active mediators and neighborhood advocates, Dance Place director Deborah Riley sat on the advisory committee, and Dance Place founder Carla Perlo attended many of the community meetings. Perlo and Riley built relationships with DCOP staff, who recognized Dance Place's close connection to the Brookland-Edgewood neighborhood and their capacity to plan programs of dance performances.

So in 2012, when DCOP was conducting Temporium DC, they encouraged Dance Place to bid for involvement in the project. Though they knew the project would stretch their capabilities, Dance Place followed their instinct to "say yes

first and then figure out how to do it second." They brought together developers and community members for live music, community art, and a question-and-answer session, all in the same informal setting. Not only did the event help fulfill DCOP's requirement to involve the community in development decisions, it encouraged Dance Place to think more broadly about their potential impact in the community.

The success of the Temporium project led to yet another collaboration between the two parties in 2013, when DCOP tapped Dance Place to administer public art and beautification funds, drawing on their quick, adaptive culture and their budding strength as a funding intermediary.

In the Monroe Street Market work, DCOP saw Dance Place as a trusted connection to the community and a credible broker for communicating and engaging with community members. DCOP also valued Dance Place as an "arts anchor," an organization rooted in the community that would reliably continue to do art and attract additional arts activity.



*This rendering of the Arts Park shows the space between Dance Place and the Artspace Lofts transformed into a neighborhood social asset*

This partnership paired two quite different kinds of organizations, to the benefit of each, and seems to be a necessary component of self-aware, programmatic Creative Placemaking.

Dance Place gained a powerful ally in DCOP, an agency with clear leverage over the private developer to help the community achieve specific benefits. Negotiating formal approval of the development and zoning amendments with DCOP, the developers agreed in 2009 to include work space for artists at below-market rents (which became the Arts Walk); a separate venue for community organizations and arts groups to hold meetings, recitals, performances, and receptions (which became the Edgewood Arts Center building on the corner of 8th and Monroe); and a sprung floor in the arts center to accommodate dance classes and recitals. The developers promised to deliver these arts-specific benefits and amenities on top of commitments to create large civic and public spaces (the plaza on Monroe near the Michigan Ave. intersection and at the end of the Arts Walk near the Metro stop), to dedicate a portion of the total units to be affordable housing, to hiring District residents for construction jobs, and funding college scholarships for local residents<sup>41</sup>.

DCOP has a seat on Dance Place's Arts Park steering committee, providing ongoing input based on their planning expertise, on their familiarity with District and local plans, and on their strategic interest in fostering the creative economy.

This partnership paired two quite different kinds of organizations, to the benefit of each, and seems to be a necessary component of self-aware, programmatic Creative Placemaking. One entity, DCOP, works patiently on a long time horizon, socially establishing

conceptual and strategic frameworks, in collaboration with another entity, Dance Place, a fast-moving, pragmatic, flexible, on-the-ground, community-embedded organization with the local respect to help achieve true social engagement with residents. In Brookland-Edgewood, a city agency (DCOP) and an arts-focused, community-committed entity (Dance Place) readily and explicitly adopted the Creative Placemaking language and theory. For DCOP, Creative Placemaking provides a new organizing framework which usefully enhances their approach to community revitalization. For Dance Place, formally linking their programs to Creative Placemaking validates their long-standing approach and brings them into alignment with funding entities. Dance Place takes a creative view that sees potential where others see challenges, and works in a quick and adaptable way inspired by the staff's artistic practice. Land ownership, decades of shared history, and nurtured relationships bind them to the community. Dance Place used the trust they had built in the community to play a powerful role as a mediator, broker and engagement mobilizer. DCOP conducts studies and creates plans and other long-lived documents that guide policy formation, and ultimately determine the way large amounts of development capital are used in the District's neighborhoods. Capturing and utilizing the community voice is central to their mission. If either one of these partners had acted without the other, much less positive Creative Placemaking impact would have resulted.





*The Monroe Street Market complex at 7th Street and Monroe. Chipotle, the CUA bookstore, and Busboys and Poets are on the left, three fast casual eateries on the right.  
Photo [http://ktgy.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Monroe-Street-Market\\_00-5-920x684.jpg](http://ktgy.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Monroe-Street-Market_00-5-920x684.jpg)*

## Enlightening a Private Developer

Embedded in the Monroe Street Market development work is an improbable story of openness to and respect for a private developer by a community organization, as well as a telling influence on the developer’s understanding and embrace of the arts by the community organization and its city agency partner. Dance Place helped transform Bozzuto’s view of the arts from something they saw as a neighborhood amenity of only marginal significance, into what they came to realize was a vital local community resource creating distinct appeal for their residential offerings—in other words, they saw that it could generate real economic value for them.

When Catholic University decided to move forward with its south campus redevelopment project, the proposed residential and commercial complex offered an opportunity for DCOP to carry forward the District’s Comprehensive Plan and to secure benefits and amenities for the local community. The private developers were attracted by the economic potential of an emerging neighborhood near a Metro stop.

But neither they nor DCOP had the community connections to engage residents in the process, a crucial requirement for DCOP’s oversight of new development and for an authentic and equitable outcome.

Dance Place’s Perlo and Riley realized the new development could be a positive influence on the neighborhood, and might open up space for artist studios and performance venues. Having seen Bozzuto executive Mike Henehan in operation at community meetings beginning in 2009, Carla invited him to lunch. Once she was convinced that Henehan truly cared about community needs and genuinely wanted to maintain the character of the neighborhood, she offered Dance Place’s services as a convener, mediator, and facilitator.

Dance Place smoothed Bozzuto’s entrée into the neighborhood by hosting an art exhibition featuring development plans for Monroe Street Market. Neighbors were invited to view these plans as art and participate in a moderated question and answer session that presented the developers as a kind of artist. Perlo emceed the meeting, maintaining a non-confrontational

atmosphere throughout. By the time the residential and retail parts of Monroe Street Market came online in 2014, Dance Place had been brokering neighborhood input to the developers for more than four years.

Dance Place had decided in 2011 they were going to rebuild their facility. After a successful \$4.5 million capital campaign, they began construction in August of 2013—but this meant they were to be without their usual performance, teaching, and administrative spaces for over a year. Mike Henehan was one of the partners they turned to. Dance Place then temporarily became one of the original occupants of Monroe Street Market’s Arts Walk studios; they also made use of the newly finished Edgewood Arts Center. Bozzuto and Dance Place worked together to repurpose unused space for training and free outdoor performances, and inaugurated the Arts Walk space to the community, opening the community to the new development. Dance Place leaders knew they had to continue their active program of performances during renovation of their facility, and the collaboration with Bozzuto helped them do this. Putting on more performances in public outdoor venues has intensified Dance Place’s connection to neighborhood residents.

An entirely new program, Art on 8th, grew out of this collaboration and from Dance Place being forced outdoors by their building construction. As they put on short dance programs for the public in several spaces around Monroe Street Market, Dance Place staff realized they might parlay this activity into a more organized and marketed series of events that could pull in more local businesses as sponsors, draw outsiders to the neighborhood for performances, and put their neighborhood on the map as a cultural corridor. Art



Arts Loft resident Rajan Sedalia paints live during an Art on 8th event. Since moving to the neighborhood he has also been commissioned to create several murals and tech classes.

on 8th programming is eclectic, bringing together artists from varied disciplines to work together, such as trumpeter and Artspace Lofts resident Freddie Dunn playing for audience-interactive hula hooping.

Working together, Bozzuto and Dance Place both got much more than they bargained for. By opening their spaces to the cultural life of the neighborhood, Bozzuto had its horizons expanded, encouraging the private development company to think actively about how their developments could relate to the community, and how the cultivation and presentation of art could create vitality and activity in those same developments. Dance Place found common ground with a private developer who is invested in the neighborhood, and gained a willing collaborator and investor in future artistic endeavors. And the Brookland-Edgewood community got a new development that brings numerous small businesses into the local arts community; provides new performance and activity spaces for community and arts groups; draws new restaurants into the neighborhood, expanding food options for existing and new residents; and opens a connection between Brookland, Edgewood, and Catholic University by creating shared spaces. Dance Place's pro-active engagement with the developer won their support and

eventually educated the developer about the value of live arts programming for the ongoing vitality of their new public spaces and for the arts branding they were now giving Monroe Street Market.

## Engaging the Community

Dance Place brought community members into the center of the planning and design phases of the Arts Park project. Arts Park will transform the alley between the Dance Place building and the Brookland Artspace Lofts next door into a shared public space for performances, classes and everyday activity. The vision includes playful seating, public art, game spaces, a movie wall, and a bike repair station. By encouraging foot traffic and public gatherings, the park will promote civic engagement, cultural activity, and safety. The early imagining

and definition of the Arts Park involved the whole neighborhood in open-ended discussion and voting about what to include, much like a charrette in the design field. This process included a wide cross-section of the community and helped to inform the project based on the community's interests rather than a more limited official or expert view. This forum generated unexpected suggestions like movie projection and bike repair along with the more traditional performance space. As the project continues, Dance Place guides a diverse steering committee representing a wide variety of perspectives, from longtime to newer residents, across a range of ages, life stages and races. The comprehensive quality of this steering group shows how robust Dance Place's connections to the neighborhood are.

The Arts Park concept helps fulfill several elements of the combined Creative Placemaking vision of the Brookland Artspace Lofts and Art on 8th. The Lofts originally aimed to create a physically unified cluster of artists in a single campus, bringing together a variety of genres of loft-resident artists and Dance Place dancers. The idea was this would



Dance Place Affiliate DC Casineros performs Cuban rueda de casino during an Art on 8th event. The club attracts members from nearby neighborhoods and from across the District, an example of arts engagement bridging social differences. Photo: Chantal Cough-Schulze.

Arts Loft Resident Freddie Dunn performs at the Monroe Street Arts Walk during Art on 8th in Fall, 2013. Photo: Niesha Ziegler.

lead to creative synergy resulting in economically valuable output, and, from strength in numbers, the community of artists would be more sustainable, guaranteeing an ongoing positive impact on the community. But when that project discovered it would be impossible to build over the Kearney Street alley between the Lofts and Dance Place, they reduced their scope to developing the single Artspace Lofts property. Dance Place then mounted their own independent reconstruction project. And now the Arts Park will not only recover much of the originally planned physical continuity, it will improve upon the original vision by making the alley a “public and permeable”<sup>12</sup> space, attracting community activity and a feeling of ownership by neighborhood residents. This is much closer to the spirit of Art on 8th, which seeks to bring accessible arts performance out into to the community, and draw them into arts and culture, by using public, outdoors, community spaces. The arts corridor now embodied by Art on 8th has created a critical mass of engaged community arts activity, not just artists.

A four-constituent structure underlies the surface details.



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## THE STRUCTURE OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

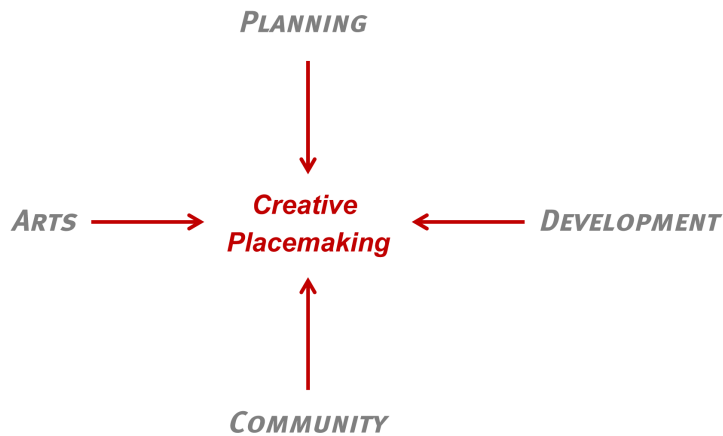
The mutual dependency between DCOP and Dance Place, the positive symbiosis between Dance Place and Bozzuto Development, and the community activation of public spaces in the Art on 8th and Arts Park programs reveal an underlying structure of cross-sector collaboration in Brookland-Edgewood Creative Placemaking.

By examining specific, salient cross-sector collaborations, it is possible to peer underneath the rich details of projects, personalities, and local history to see four main constituent sectors: planning, development, community, and the arts. While this leaves to the side sectors like government, philanthropy, and local business, in this particular case these sectors either play in the background or are linked to one of the identified main constituent sectors. Also, there is a difference between sectors and stakeholders. Stakeholders can be hybrids, pulling together attributes, goals, values and skills from multiple sectors. Dance Place is a prime example of this, combining the arts and community sectors. In this view, sectors are functions—they can be understood by inquiring about the “jobs” the sector does inside Creative Placemaking. Stakeholders are unique social expressions of these functions,

or function combinations. In order to know how these functions are being applied in Brookland-Edgewood Creative Placemaking, the activities of stakeholders must be observed and interrogated. In any successful Creative Placemaking effort, all four sectors must be genuinely present and involved.

### Planning Sector

The planning sector is embodied in Brookland-Edgewood by DCOP, a city government agency tasked with a long-term planning function. DCOP works by means of defining and administering policy—so it always exerts impact indirectly, by constraining the actions of other entities. Due to the unique history of modern municipal government in the District of Columbia, as the steward of the District’s Comprehensive Plan, DCOP is by design committed to a community stakeholder-driven planning process. DCOP planners work in the realm of ideas. Envisioning the future, they are intentional and enthusiastic about change. The full life cycle of their work is measured in years, if not decades. For the planning sector, Creative Placemaking is an attractive body of theory with the potential to fine tune and improve the effectiveness of their discipline.



## Development Sector

Two different organizations, one for-profit and another nonprofit, delivered the development sector function in Brookland-Edgewood Creative Placemaking: Bozzuto Development and Artspace Projects. Developers took substantive actions to materialize vision and plans. Their means are financial investment and building construction. Whether a developer is for-profit or nonprofit affects the potential scale of projects. The Brookland Artspace Lofts was a \$13.2 million development which created 39 artist live work spaces. They received a \$10 million Low Income Housing Tax Credit. The Monroe Street Market project was a \$200 million development that created 720 new residences, 83,000 square feet of retail, 27 artist studios, and a 3,000 square foot community arts center. Conceptually the development sector can encompass functions beyond building construction. By generalizing the concept to “economic growth”, local businesses are included in the sector. Another useful widening of the definition of development is ‘improving the health and vitality of a community.’ This is certainly the kind of development

function that Bozzuto learned about from watching how Dance Place public street performances activated their Arts Walk and Monroe Street retail corridor. Creative Placemaking helped form Artspace Projects as an organization and defines its mission. To date, Bozzuto has not engaged formally with the concept of Creative Placemaking, but it has recognized the benefit of working closely with Dance Place and other local artists to animate its new spaces, as well as the value of ensuring the vitality of the surrounding neighborhood.

## Community Sector

The most complex and multi-dimensional sector, community, is represented in Brookland-Edgewood by the residents themselves (both those engaged in community activities and others who are less active) and by their proxies: Dance Place, the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, local schools, and others. Except on rare occasions, when it mobilizes for action, the community collectively is wary of change. The community is not really a unified whole, but comprises a multiplicity of voices with differences of opinion, sometimes deeply held. The Brookland-Edgewood community

has a specific location with historical and cultural associations that have emotional significance for residents. This is where residents live their lives, where they raise their children, and where some of them work. Community is the physical place where Creative Placemaking actions happen and have an impact. The resulting change affects community residents more, and more directly, than the planning or development sectors, because those sectors live elsewhere. As a community entity, Dance Place has fused its identity with the neighborhood where it owns property and has become part of the lives of many residents. Creative Placemaking is a new name for what Dance Place has been doing for 30 years: seeing and helping to realize the potential of individual community members through creativity and a passion for art and youth education.

## Arts Sector

In Brookland-Edgewood, Dance Place provides leadership and expresses arts sector functions in their most organized and focused form for Creative Placemaking, but artists living in the Artspace Lofts, artists occupying Arts Walk studios, and other artists and arts-related businesses in the neighborhood also contribute. The arts sector is the wildcard in this structure of cross-sector collaboration. It is a creative engine that can generate surprising solutions to almost any problem. The thinking of arts sector stakeholders is very free, not restrained by the bottom-line imperatives governing development sector actions or the policy mandates for DCOP. We see in Dance Place’s work how skills from their creative practice help bridge economic, social, and

cultural differences within the community, and how they are able to draw in and engage community members through fun, entertainment, esthetic beauty, and enrichment. As a venerable and natural part of the community, Dance Place has truly embedded arts and culture into the Brookland-Edgewood community sector.

## Structural Challenges

The underlying structure of cross-sector collaboration in Brookland-Edgewood Creative Placemaking is marked by two challenges: the difficulty of authentically linking the abstract vision of the planning sector with the real-life concerns of people in the community, and the tension between the arts' cultural notions of value and the economically grounded value of the development sector. In this case, the relationship and repeated project collaboration between DCOP and Dance Place successfully addressed the vertical linking problem. Through Dance Place, DCOP genuinely engaged the local community in their aspirations for the District's creative economy. The horizontal tension between culture-based values and economic-based values was mitigated in recent Brookland-Edgewood development by mutual openness, respect, and dialog between Dance Place and Bozzuto Development. Neither of these challenges can be put to rest at a point in time. They are inherent in the underlying structure of Creative Placemaking as an approach to community development.

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## CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVE

Arts and culture were integrated into comprehensive community development in Brookland-Edgewood in three different ways by three different stakeholders.

DCOP, a deliberate creative placemaker, incorporated an arts and culture element into the District's Comprehensive Plan, impelling policy leverage that is affecting derivative local plans across all of the District's neighborhoods as of 2011. They then applied this strong planning context in negotiating with Bozzuto for specific arts and culture benefits and amenities funded by the developer in return for zoning amendments they needed to proceed with Monroe Street Market construction. So DCOP integrated arts and culture into community development through policy and its application.

As part of its mission "to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations," Artspace Projects, another deliberate creative placemaker, added 39 sustainable artist live-work spaces to the community, substantially incrementing the creative critical mass already present in nascent form. Artspace integrated arts and culture into community development by executing its business model in this place, thereby injecting artist change agents into the neighborhood. Until Dance Place was awarded a Kresge grant for the Arts Park development, its Creative Placemaking was implicit, not deliberate. And Dance Place has always approached "community development" as engagement with individual people, helping them realize their unique potential. Arts and culture were integrated into Dance Place's community efforts by founder Carla Perlo's simultaneous passions for dance and for educating young people, coupled with an enduring commitment to place. Dance Place's Arts Park work is deliberate Creative Placemaking, integrating arts and culture into community development by improving a shared public space, by welcoming community residents into the planning and design so that the resulting park will reflect their needs and goals, and by creating more opportunities for art making and art appreciation to be part of the community's daily life.

Focusing on three stories of cross-sector collaboration in Brookland-Edgewood has made it possible to see structure underlying Creative Placemaking. Four key sectors were identified as the minimum and necessary constituencies of any Creative Placemaking action (planning, development, community, and the arts). Sectors were defined functionally and distinguished from stakeholders, which were characterized as social expressions of the sector functions. It was noted that stakeholders can be hybrid expressions of sector functions, and Dance Place was given as an example, representing both the arts and community sectors in this case. It is reasonable to expect to find many other configurations of stakeholders playing out the functions of the four main constituent sectors. Finally, it was suggested that any Creative Placemaking effort must solve the challenge of authentically linking the abstract vision of the planning sector with the real-life concerns of people in the community. In the Brookland-Edgewood case this problem was addressed by a key, ongoing relationship between DCOP, the city planning agency, and Dance Place, the community-embedded arts anchor. What other solutions to this problem have been invented by creative placemakers?

Significant challenges remain as economic development proceeds. Continual effort bridging intra-community divisions of income, age, and race will be necessary. Although Creative Placemaking work in Brookland-Edgewood has largely held off cultural displacement, the risk of economic displacement will keep rising as the neighborhood's development continues.

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## ENDNOTES

1 The best known general conceptualization of “creative placemaking” was offered by Markusen and Gadwa in 2010: “In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.” Kresge’s approach fits comfortably inside this definition, but focuses on a specific outcome.

ArtPlace, in stating the concept of creative placemaking that informs their attempt to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development, covers this same ground, while emphasizing certain aspects of the work: “creative placemaking ... describes projects in which art plays an intentional and integrated role in place-based community planning and development. This brings artists, arts organizations, and artistic activity into the suite of placemaking strategies pioneered by Jane Jacobs and her colleagues, who believed that community development must be locally informed, human-centric, and holistic. In practice, this means having arts and culture represented alongside sectors like housing and transportation – with each sector recognized as part of any healthy community; as requiring planning and investment from its community; and as having a responsibility to contribute to its community’s overall future.... In creative placemaking, “creative” is an adverb describing the making, not an adjective describing the place. Successful creative placemaking projects are not measured by how many new arts centers, galleries, or cultural districts are built. Rather, their success is measured in the ways artists, formal and informal arts spaces, and creative interventions have contributed toward community outcomes.” Again, Kresge’s approach is closely allied, in stressing the critical requirement for cross-sector collaboration, while focusing more strategically on outcomes that improve opportunity for low-income residents in cities.

One further clarification is necessary—to distinguish “placemaking” from “creative placemaking.” “Placemaking” is the planning and designing of public spaces. In Kresge’s view, “creative placemaking” is designed to connect across disciplinary and sector silos and influence a range of systems and practices that will have direct and tangible outcomes for people with low income. Creative Placemaking then is an integrated, cross sectoral approach to equitable community development.

2 We distinguish “deliberate” from “implicit” creative placemaking. Since Rocco Landesman launched the national conversation about creative placemaking in 2009, there has been an explicit concept, accumulating literature, and an emerging field of practitioners loosely united under this rubric. This 7-year-old movement we refer to as deliberate creative placemaking. Carla Perlo has been implicitly practicing a form of creative placemaking since she took over a dance studio in the then marginal neighborhood of Adams Morgan 35 years ago, and simultaneously practiced her art, taught it to children in her neighborhood, and tried to contribute to the improvement of her community through performance and teaching. There are undoubtedly many other individuals in America’s cities who have also been doing implicit creative placemaking for decades.

3 See Parker, L. O. N. (2013). “NEA head, Rocco Landesman, found money in new places”. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Pittsburgh, January 2, 2013, Retrieved from <http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/art-architecture/2013/01/02/NEA-head-Rocco-Landesman-found-money-in-new-places/stories/201301020204>; Markusen, A., and Anne Gadwa (2010), *Creative Placemaking*, National Endowment for the Arts; Rapson, R. (2014), “Creative placemaking: The next phase for ArtPlace; Address to the ArtPlace Summit in Los Angeles,” Retrieved from <http://kresge.org/library/creative-placemaking-next-phase-artplace>.

4 The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, See <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2184/housing-and-community-development-hcd-act-of-1974/>. Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House. Florida, R. (2014). *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York, Basic Books.

5 Borrup, Tom (2006), *The Creative Community Builder’s Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Arts, and Culture*, St. Paul, Fieldstone Alliance; Chew, Ron (2009) “Community-Based Arts Organizations; a New Center of Gravity,” *Americans for the Arts*. See also Bedoya, Callanan, Jackson (2013b), Nowak, and Stern.

6 See <http://impact.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/>

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7 Jackson, M. R., Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz (2006) *Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators*. Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute; Jackson, M. R. (2009) "Toward Diversity That Works: Building Communities through Arts and Culture," *Twenty-First Century Color Lines*. A. Grant-Thomas, and Gary Orfield. Philadelphia, Temple University Press: 220-234; Jackson, M. R. (2009) "Shifting Expectations: An Urban Planner's Reflections on Evaluation of Community-Based Arts," *Arts & Civic Engagement Impact Initiative, Americans for the Arts*; Jackson, M. R. (2011) *Artists' Hybrid Work Challenges Old Ways of Evaluating Quality, Urban Wire*; Jackson, M. R. (2013) "A Framework for Understanding PLACE and Its Impact," *People, Land, Arts, Culture, and Engagement: Taking Stock of the PLACE Initiative.*, K. Eisele, Tucson Pima Arts Council: 8-9.

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8 Wali, Alaka (2002) "Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places," *Chicago Center for Arts Policy*. In this work begun in 1999, Wali was the first to show that ethnography is a particularly effective method for uncovering rich areas of arts and culture in community life not necessarily visible from mainstream perspectives. Alvarez, Maribel (2009) "Two-Way Mirror: Ethnography as a Way to Assess Civic Impact of Arts-Based Engagement," *Tucson Pima Arts Council*.

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9 See also Bedoya, R. (2013) "Placemaking and the Politics of Belonging and Dis-Belonging," *GIA Reader* 24(1); Callanan, L. (2014) "Creative Placemaking," *Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Community Development Investment Review* 10(2); Jackson, M. R., Katherine Bray, John Arroyo (2013) "Initial Scan of Selected Creative Placemaking Projects: Digest of Key Findings," *Internal Working Paper for the Kresge Foundation and Surdna Foundation*; Nowak, J. (2007) *Creativity and Neighborhood Development: Strategies for Community Investment, The Reinvestment Fund*; and Stern, M. J., and Susan C. Seifert (2014) *Communities, Culture, and Capabilities: Preliminary results of a four-city study*, Human Development and Capabilities Association. Athens, Greece.

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10 Ethnography is an inclusive, holistic account of social events, behaviors, institutions, and processes that happen within a specific community under study at a point in time. As shorthand, the product of this style of research is called "thick description" (Geertz 1973: 3-30). The "thickness" refers to a depth of context. In our fieldwork and in the written account of a given case, we are eclectic and open about the kinds of context facts that can add to an understanding of creative placemaking. Our account is therefore broad, sociological, and historical. It is also anthropological and cultural—the worldviews of the individual people doing creative placemaking, as well as residents of the impacted communities, are central to our account.

Each of the respondents we interviewed gave us a narrative of their experience of creative placemaking. We view these narratives collectively as an important public record of what goes on in creative placemaking on the ground. What follows is not an "objective" account in the standard sense, but a representation and an exploration of the social phenomenon of creative placemaking as refracted through the experiences of its practitioners. We believe this ethnographic record of the representations that creative placemakers make of what they do, why they do it, and the effects they think it has, is a valuable resource for understanding the complexity inherent in embedding arts and culture in community revitalization, and advancing creative placemaking as a field of practice.

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11 Retrieve "08-24 0824A 04-25.pdf" by clicking the CPUD link at [https://app.dcoz.dc.gov/Content/Search/ViewCaseReport.aspx?case\\_id=08-24](https://app.dcoz.dc.gov/Content/Search/ViewCaseReport.aspx?case_id=08-24)

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12 Jackson, M.R. (2009) "Toward Diversity that Works": 224.