

RURAL VOICES

RURAL PLACEMAKING: MAKING THE MOST OF CREATIVITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Dear Friends,

Creative placemaking is both time-tested and cutting-edge. The term “creative placemaking” is only about a decade old, but rural community organizations have long taken on community-building endeavors that have included the arts. Creative placemaking offers the explicit recognition that arts and artists, when fully engaged with local stakeholders, are often a gel or a catalyst toward sustained community betterment and economic growth.

Federal and private sector partners have come together to create a stable and long-term platform for locally driven creative placemaking and related endeavors. Rural setasides within funding streams are substantial and are creating results – from innovative architecture for self-help homes in the colonias to music-based boosts in long-suffering coal communities. As you’ll see from *Rural Voices* contributors in the Mississippi Delta, Appalachia, and Indian Country, the enthusiasm and results for creative placemaking extend to the most challenged corners of rural America, where cultural resources run deep. Through creative placemaking, the economic, educational, and social impact of the arts can complement affordable housing efforts. And such efforts must fully engage the most vulnerable.

HAC is pleased that creative placemaking – in HAC’s case, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and in partnership with buildingcommunityWORKSHOP (bc) – is allowing HAC an opportunity to bring resources to local efforts. HAC and bc are eager to learn from our local partners as well, thus increasing HAC’s internal capacity around placemaking and place-based endeavors. This edition of *Rural Voices* is one attempt to share some of our partners’ knowledge across our network.

In a time of diminishing resources, unconventional partnerships to achieve affordable rural housing and stronger communities are both wise and necessary. Going forward, one can only guess the long-term impact of creative placemaking on the work of HAC’s partners across the country. Thus far, the results are intriguing, and promising. Let us know what you think.



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Chair, Board of Directors

Peter Carey

Moises Loza

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A View From Washington

Illuminate, Connect, Energize, and Imagine *The Arts in Rural America*

By Jen Hughes

The National Endowment for the Arts offers funding and technical assistance for rural creative placemaking across the United States.





Thunder Valley CDC's Regenerative Community, seen under construction here, includes design elements that reflect unique local culture and heritage. For example, the community poultry house, which will house hundreds of chickens as part of the TVCDC's food sovereignty strategy, features colorful designs developed by a local bead worker and a quill worker - both members of TVCDC's artist advisory council. Photo courtesy of Andrew Iron Shell.

I have had the honor and pleasure of serving the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) since January 2011, most recently as Acting Director of Creative Placemaking and Design Programs. One of the things I learned early in my time and that continues to impress me is how much this agency does for America's rural communities. In fact, 22.8 percent of NEA funding goes to small-metropolitan and rural places, a percentage in line with the 23 percent of Americans who live in those communities.

Local Cultural Resources are Key

The projects that the NEA supports in rural America are often remarkable for their ingenuity and authenticity, building upon local cultural resources to engage residents and attract visitors. For example, the NEA has funded the University of Texas of the Permian Basin in Odessa for Pots-n-Prints, ceramic and

printmaking workshops that travel to towns in West Texas in a specially outfitted van. Since the 1970s, the NEA has supported Appalshop in Whitesburg, KY for a variety of projects including documentary films about the region and workshops for children in Appalachian music and oral traditions.

In addition, the NEA's National Heritage Fellowship program, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts, recognizes many artists who practice traditions that thrive in rural places like Forsyth, MT – home of cowboy poet extraordinaire Wally McRae – and Chimayo, NM where Irvin Trujillo weaves spectacular Rio Grande style rugs on human-powered looms.

Beyond grantmaking, the NEA provides technical assistance to rural communities across the country. Our Citizens' Institute on Rural Design workshops bring together design experts and



The Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park in Wilson, NC has sparked significant investment. For example, one of the two adjacent historic brick tobacco warehouses is being developed into Whirligig Station, a mixed-use property housing 90 loft style apartments, restaurants, retail, and the Whirligig Park museum and gift shop. Photo courtesy of the City of Wilson.

local leaders to develop solutions for tough problems facing small towns. The issues include building strong economies, planning for growth and redevelopment, improving transportation systems, and protecting historic and culturally significant resources.

We also work closely with other federal agencies in serving communities. Recently, we trained 17 staff members of the Delta Regional Authority – a federal agency focused on rural economic development in the eight states along the Mississippi River – to help ensure that local cultural assets are part of economic development strategies from the beginning.

National data on arts and culture in rural places also tells a story. The Bureau of Economic Analysis and the NEA recently published a report examining state-level data on arts and cultural employment and wages. Fourteen states were identified as rural (in which more than 50 percent of residents live in non-urbanized areas with fewer than 50,000 people) and half of those states demonstrated arts and cultural activity above national rates. For example, Vermont's employment in museums is 54 percent greater than the national average while Arkansas's arts and cultural sector grew 2.1 percent faster than the national average.

Culture Helps Define Community

A key element to the NEA's rural work is the recognition that cultural expression is fundamental to our understanding of what defines community – from festivals to celebrate special days, to historic buildings on our main streets. So when we talk about community development, we should include strategies that draw upon these local strengths as part of our approach.

Arts-based community development strategies are making a difference in Wilson, NC, where an artist's collection of kinetic sculptures or whirligigs led to a jobs program involving restoration and preservation of the whirligigs and the creation of a park to display them. According to a feature story in the *Washington Post*, the park, in turn, attracted \$35 million in private real estate investment.

These strategies are what the NEA calls creative placemaking, or community development that leverages the power of arts and culture. In 2011, we created Our Town, a grant program to support creative placemaking projects in communities of all sizes and in 2016, the Housing Assistance Council was awarded one of those grants, in partnership with buildingcommunityWORKSHOP. Their project's goal is to help capture and share best practices in creative placemaking among rural affordable housing and community development practitioners. We are thrilled to be working with HAC to nurture this promising field.

Speaking of best practices, through nearly 500 Our Town projects in all 50 states, the NEA has learned that creative placemaking contributes to community development in four unique ways:

1. Thinking inclusively about culture can help illuminate local assets that can spark a new development approach: things like residents' special skills or knowledge, or significant buildings or public spaces, which may have gone unnoticed.
2. Cultural activities like festivals or performances are a natural way to bring people together – they can help us connect with each other across geographic or social divides.
3. The arts can also help energize people around issues, places, or economies by injecting new ideas, resources, or enthusiasm where progress stalls.
4. The arts can introduce a sense of possibility, helping us imagine new options for ourselves and the places we live.

With these practices in mind, Our Town grantees across America are doing amazing things to help their communities. The Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (TVCDC), based on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, is an inspiring example. TVCDC received an Our Town grant to engage local artists in designing cultural structures that will be part of new housing and community facility development. Having local artists at the table from the start ensures that the community engagement process will benefit from creative local input, and the final design will reflect the aesthetic heritage of the place and people.

Although the phrase creative placemaking is relatively new, this important work has been happening in rural communities for a long time and we believe that much more potential has yet to be unlocked.

We are determined to continue working alongside America's rural-serving housing and community development practitioners to enhance the promise of arts and culture for improving the livability of American communities.



Jen Hughes is Acting Director of Creative Placemaking and Design Programs at the National Endowment for the Arts.



A Tool for Economic Development in the Mississippi Delta

By Chris Masingill

Chris Masingill, Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority, describes DRA's Delta Creative Placemaking Initiative, which encourages communities to engage more deeply with the region's arts and culture sectors. This is the first of two interviews published in this issue of *Rural Voices* that HAC conducted with individuals deeply involved in rural creative placemaking work.

Tell us about your organization.

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) is responsible for working with local, regional, and national partners to promote economic development in the 252 counties and parishes of the eight-state Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt. We invest in basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, business development (with an emphasis on entrepreneurship), and workforce development.

What is DRA's relationship/role with respect to creative placemaking?

DRA recognizes the growing importance of quality of place and quality of life in resident attraction and retention, workforce development, innovation and entrepreneurship, and economic resilience. That is why we are implementing a new pilot program, the Delta Creative Placemaking Initiative, to encourage municipalities, counties and parishes, local development districts, and other economic development entities to engage more deeply with the region's arts and culture sectors to spur economic growth in the Delta. Through regional collaboration and the formation of cross-sector partnerships, DRA will support efforts to revitalize vacant and underutilized land, buildings, and infrastructure; support job creation in construction, local businesses, and cultural activities; and train the next generation of cultural workers.

Placemaking is a vital tool for economic and community development organizations to deliver their missions of building communities and helping create jobs.

What is your advice for rural or tribal housing and community development organizations looking to explore creative placemaking (i.e., where to go for help getting started)?

DRA conducted Creative Placemaking Regional Workshops in June and July throughout the Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt. These workshops were intended to provide an invaluable training opportunity for municipal, county/parish, and economic development organization teams planning to submit proposals for the Delta Creative Placemaking Investment program. These workshops were facilitated by subject matter experts representing nationally renowned organizations that lead the nation in creative placemaking – including ArtPlace America, the National Endowment for the Arts, Springboard for the Arts, the Rural Policy Research Institute, state arts agencies, state humanities councils, and more.

How do you approach conversations with funders – public or private – about creative placemaking?

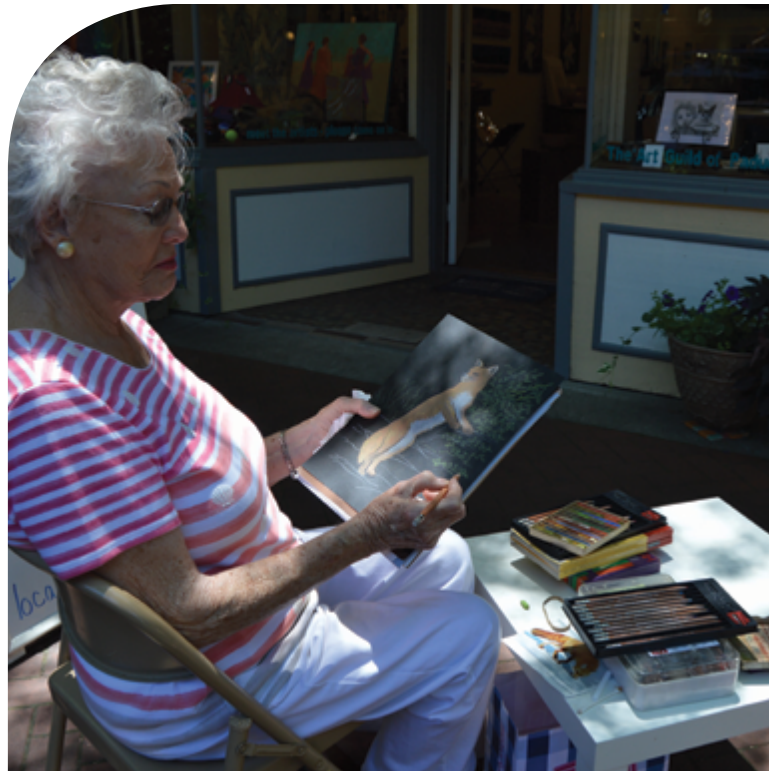
DRA's Creative Placemaking workshops provide participants with strategies for approaching conversations with funders. In addition, leaders in the arts and cultural sectors can learn how to speak the same economic development language as their counterparts working in the non-arts sectors. According to one report published by the International Economic Development Council, "placemaking aims to create or enhance a community's assets to improve its attractiveness and livability – and economic development seeks to create and retain jobs and investment." Clearly, placemaking is a vital tool for economic and community development organizations to deliver their missions of building communities and helping create jobs. In today's increasingly competitive, knowledge-based economy, economic developers must strengthen their community's brand. At DRA, we believe that including creative placemaking efforts in a community's overall economic development strategy will add brand enhancement and grow the local economy. Placemaking helps identify and leverage existing assets to attract and retain a higher-skilled workforce, small businesses, and entrepreneurs.

Can creative placemaking work in the most vulnerable communities? And if so, how do you secure buy-in from these communities?

At DRA, we believe creative placemaking can work anywhere and we have seen some of the greatest impact in our nation's most vulnerable and distressed communities. Regina Smith, managing director of the Kresge Foundation's Arts and Culture Program, said it best: "Stronger, more collaborative partnerships that foster equitable and inclusive community development will help advance creative placemaking projects that improve the life circumstances of vulnerable populations and strengthen neighborhoods." We have seen firsthand the successful implementation of creative placemaking projects – even if communities do not realize it when they are advancing these efforts.

DRA has invested in several creative placemaking projects over the years, and has seen many Delta communities invest in projects that enhance quality of place for local residents, attract others who do not live there, and provide tourists with places to visit throughout the Delta region.

We believe the best way to build buy-in and trust from our nation's most vulnerable communities is three-fold. Creative placemaking efforts must 1) be inclusive of diverse residents, so it is important for communities to be mindful of these voices and ensure they have a seat at the community development table; 2) allow communities to learn from their peers (i.e., other vulnerable communities) and remember that a one-size-fits-all approach will not contribute to long-term, systemic change; and 3) develop a greater understanding among community and business leaders to integrate placemaking in local development strategies.



What are the most interesting and/or unexpected partnerships to emerge from creative placemaking work that you've been part of?

DRA has been involved in several creative placemaking initiatives.

For example, DRA has partnered with:

- Bridging the Blues – Tri-State (Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee)
- Lower Town Arts District – Paducah, KY
- NUNU Arts and Culture Collective – Arnaudville, LA
- Meraki Roasting Company – Clarksdale, MS
- Grammy Museum Mississippi – Cleveland, MS
- DRA-National Geographic Geotourism – Delta Region
- B.B. King Museum – Indianola, MS
- Crosstown Concourse Project – Memphis, TN

How do you address common misconceptions about creative placemaking?

Creative placemaking can be intimidating, especially to those working in the world of economic and community development. To address the common misconceptions about it, we must build a foundation of knowledge to better understand what this phrase means and how we can engage in efforts to improve the physical and social character of our communities. Rural America's survival depends, in part, on our arts and culture: the unique contributions we can make through music, food, crafts, literature, and art. Arts and culture do not merely contribute to our nation's overall GDP; arts and culture are essential investments to help build more creative, entrepreneurial, and inclusive communities.

Is creative placemaking an effective term? And how do you best convey the essence of creative placemaking to those who are unfamiliar with the concept?

At DRA, we know that we must help build the foundation for systemic change in the minds, attitudes, and actions of our local elected officials, economic development practitioners, and business and other community leaders. While definitions abound, the National Endowment for the Arts noted: "Creative placemaking is when artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work – placing arts at the table with land use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety strategies."

For More Information

To learn more about DRA's Delta Creative Placemaking Initiative, visit:

www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking

For more information about our partners and creative placemaking, please visit:

www.arts.gov/news/2016/how-do-creative-placemaking

www.artplaceamerica.org/

To best convey the essence of creative placemaking to economic and community development practitioners, it is important that we demonstrate both the qualitative and quantitative impact of the arts and cultural sectors. For example:

- In 2014, arts and cultural production contributed more than \$729 billion to the U.S. economy – that's more than a 32 percent increase since 1998.
- The creative economy contributes to more than 4 percent of overall GDP.
- The estimated sales of all arts and cultural goods/services reached \$1.1 trillion in 2014.

In core arts and cultural production industries, nationwide employment grew 3.8 percent to more than 1 million jobs. In supporting arts and cultural production industries, nationwide employment grew to more than 3.5 million jobs.

Ultimately, the arts and cultural sectors and the public/private sectors must have a mutual understanding in order for long-term, systemic change to occur in our communities.

Do you have any other nuggets of wisdom about creative placemaking for HAC's partners?

At DRA, we encourage HAC and its partners to seek and find new and innovative solutions to achieve community development goals by working cooperatively with other individuals and organizations to enhance the intersection of arts, culture, economic development, and housing. Creative placemaking is a tool for neighborhood, main street, and downtown revitalization. That means creating partnerships with organizations like HAC that support housing development in some of our most distressed communities across the nation.

Arts and culture are essential investments to help build more creative, entrepreneurial, and inclusive communities.

Chris Masingill is Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority, established by Congress to improve regional economic opportunity in the 252 counties and parishes of the eight-state Delta region.



Housing Developers Come Together with Arts Groups and Artists

By Bob Reeder

This is the second of two interviews in this issue of Rural Voices with individuals deeply involved in rural creative placemaking work. Bob Reeder of Rural LISC advises rural community developers to keep their placemaking work inclusive, culturally relevant, and economically equitable.

Tell us about your organization.

Launched in 1995 by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Rural LISC now partners with 77 community development organizations. Rural LISC provides a wide range of services, including training, technical assistance, information, and financial support to help rural community developers address their communities' problems.

What is Rural LISC's relationship/role with respect to creative placemaking?

LISC enjoys a multifaceted role with respect to creative placemaking. LISC is a national grantee of both the Kresge Foundation and the NEA. At Rural LISC we developed and launched our own arts and culture grants program as a means of assisting in the revitalization – both economic and cultural – of rural communities and spaces.

On a personal level, I was one of the leading architects of Rural LISC's arts and culture grants program. I have also presented on creative placemaking at various national and local forums, am involved at an advisory board level on several creative placemaking ventures, and have served on several national creative placemaking grant awards panels.

What is your advice for rural or tribal housing and community development organizations looking to explore creative placemaking? (i.e., where to go for help getting started)

I would say to not seek to "recreate the wheel" on the one hand. On the other hand, recognize that many, if not most, of the direction that will be most helpful already resides within their local communities.

How do you approach conversations with funders – public or private – about creative placemaking?

Avoid jargon and translate the conversation into highlighting evidence-based, community-wide "positives" that can be generated by adding creative placemaking to comprehensive community development and economic revitalization forums.

Can creative placemaking work in the most vulnerable communities? And if so, how do you secure buy-in from these communities?

It certainly can and does work in these communities. The key to securing buy-in is to keep the process inclusive, culturally relevant, and economically equitable.

One example here is the work of the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED), which is based in Berea, KY. MACED used Rural LISC Arts and Culture funding as a part of a collaborative venture with its Hazard office and InVision Hazard, the Appalachian Arts Alliance, the River Arts Greenway project, and Northfork Local Food. The group promotes art and culture in downtown Hazard, advancing the goals of each of these initiatives. Now a recurring event, MACED's "Thursdays on the Triangle" has engaged the community of Hazard in a downtown park setting by providing access to local, place-based art, featuring demonstration artists, music, local food, and farmers' market vendors twice a month during the summer. The venue provides an outlet for local artists to display and sell their work in a centrally located festive setting alongside other musical and food venues.

Additionally, the Southern Mutual Help Association (SMHA) used Rural LISC's Arts and Culture funding to integrate and mesh two of their creative placemaking initiatives taking place in New Iberia, LA in two demographically distinct neighborhoods: the emerging, mostly white Teche Ridge neighborhood and the traditional African-American, culturally historic West End neighborhood.

The two initiatives and their associated arts/cultural clusters on opposite sides of the Bayou Teche are dissimilar in many ways, yet each embraces creative placemaking as a key element of creating a strong, healthy, and prosperous community. SMHA partnered with a consultant, Phanat Xanamane, to help create an important link between the two clusters. Phanat is a West End native who returned to participate in rebuilding his home community as an artist, architect, hydroponic horticulturist, and creative thinker, helping SMHA design the family and community development model for its Teche Ridge village-style community.



What are the most interesting and/or unexpected partnerships to emerge from creative placemaking work that you've been part of?

It's been very interesting to see traditional housing developers, local arts-based organizations, and artists come together. We've seen this work particularly well in Everglades City, FL, among other sites. In Everglades City, Rural LISC Arts and Culture funding enabled our partner, Rural Neighborhoods, to engage a neighborhood revitalization manager for an initiative in the Eden Park-Esperanza Place (EP^{SQUARED} or EP²) target area. This EP^{SQUARED}: Building Livable Places through Music, Art and Cultural Traditions Initiative added to Rural Neighborhoods' revitalization and housing development toolbox and increased its placemaking capacity. It incorporated creative placemaking as a way of assisting in the cultural

Recognize that many, if not most, of the direction that will be most helpful already resides within their local communities.

development and physical transformation of the EP² target area. The project sought to impact critical financial investment in ways that strengthened the neighborhood with a goal of retaining and attracting homeowners and encouraging business growth.

The project instituted a creative placemaking steering committee comprised of residents, neighborhood stakeholders, community-based funders, and arts organizations to guide EP² capacity-building activities. It established a blueprint for EP² outdoor art installations, setting out guidance for the acquisition, siting, and maintenance of neighborhood murals and sculptures. Four sculptures and murals are currently in progress or being restored, and two additional sculpture placements have been pledged.

To engage at-risk adolescents, the project used a hands-on, arts education trial boot camp that resulted in a permanent neighborhood installation of the participants' artwork. And in spring 2017 it launched the First Annual EP² Music, Art and Cultural Festival to meet resident calls for a branded celebration that trumpets the multicultural character of the neighborhood.

How do you address common misconceptions about creative placemaking?

Again, by avoiding the temptation to default to jargon and the specter of elitism when discussing the concept. Also, by elevating past successes in bridging divides – racial, generational, and economic, as well as cultural.

Is creative placemaking an effective term? And how do you best convey the essence of creative placemaking to those who are unfamiliar with the concept?

I do not necessarily think it is the best, nor is it a particularly effective moniker. I think it is critical to always remember that this work we call creative placemaking is nothing new, and that we should avoid couching it as such. Finally, to quote William Shakespeare and to make a really awkward analogy, “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

Do you have any other nuggets of wisdom about creative placemaking for HAC's partners?

Always remember that the process is not about us as professionals. It's all about the residents of the communities we have been charged with serving.

Bob Reeder is the Program Director and Program Field Manager for Rural LISC.

Bridging Boundaries *Contributing to Quality of Life on the Reservation*

By Joseph Kunkel

A collaborative process encompassing community, culture, and the environment contributes to the success of a tribal development project.





Photos courtesy of AOS Architects.

What can creative placemaking mean for Indigenous communities? How is this conversation framed differently in relationship to urban or rural non-native contexts? A general definition of creative placemaking is offered by ArtPlace America, a ten-year (2010–2020) funding and research collaborative made up of foundations, including the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA):

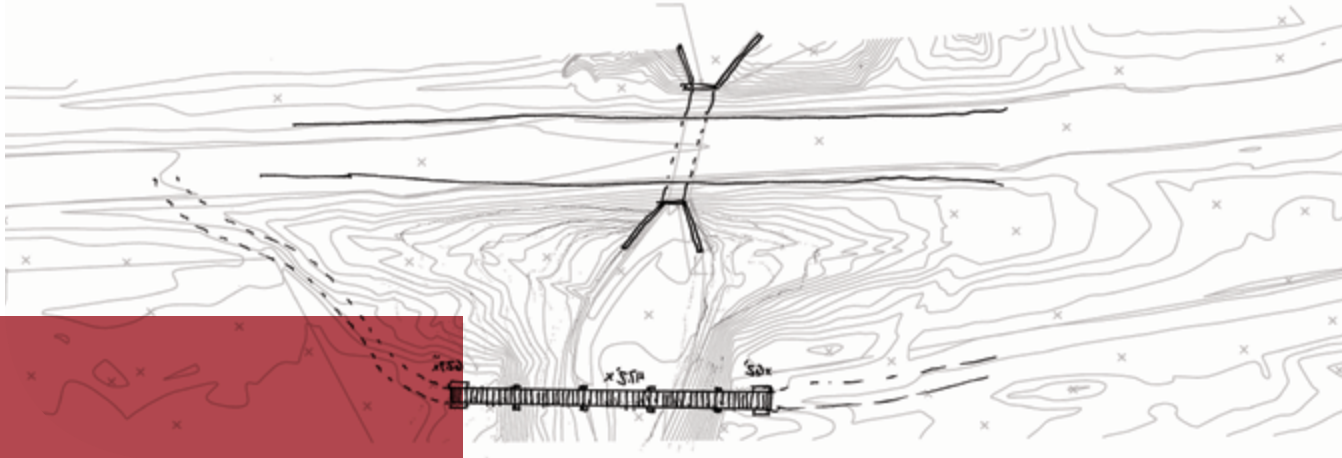
Projects in which arts and culture play an intentional and integrated role in place-based planning and development that is human-centric, comprehensive, and locally informed. The “creative” simply invites artists and arts organizations to join their neighbors in shaping communities’ futures; not necessarily in making places more creative.

This human-centric approach to community development is not unlike methods seen on Native lands. In fact, these methods and approaches have spurred debate around a theory specific to native communities. “Indigenous Placemaking” and “Indigenous Placekeeping” both get at the nuances that are specific to

creative-built environment work within our tribal communities. The University of New Mexico’s Indigenous Design and Planning Institute (ID+PI), led by Dr. Theodore Jojola, has defined Indigenous placemaking as:

A strategy shaping the physical and social character of a tribe by animating its community spaces in a manner that improves its economic and social viability. The process is predicated on meaningful public participation and using its culture to inform its style of community development. Tribes have been subjected for generations to assimilative policies. Nowhere is this more evident than in the built environment. Indigenous placemaking proposes to remedy that, by giving more direction and building capacity for tribes to take control of their design and planning efforts.

Frameworks such as Indigenous placemaking and Indigenous placekeeping are important to the overall conversation around creative placemaking, but even more critical is the understanding of how these approaches play



out in built and natural environments. In 2013, the Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative (SNCC) published 17 case studies highlighting the exemplary work being done by tribal communities around the country. These projects show how tribes are taking control of the overall development process and self-determining their own visions, informed through culture, environment, economy, and community collaboration.

The case studies influenced a planning and development process for the Santo Domingo Pueblo (Kewa Pueblo), which resulted in the design and construction of a 41-unit Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project, known now as Wa-Di. This project was the focus of my three-year Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellowship (2013–2015) and a clear example of what Indigenous placemaking or placekeeping can be. The recent work at Santo Domingo shows how a collaborative process encompassing community, culture, and the environment contributes to the success of a tribal development project.

Starting with a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant, the Santo Domingo community carried out a community asset mapping exercise. That allowed a Pueblo-specific community process to develop, leading to a cultural district plan and a related master plan for the broader community. This planning work expanded to incorporate a walking trail as well as Wa-Di and another proposed housing development scheme, all with an emphasis on historic and cultural retention.

The walking trail, now known as the Santo Domingo Heritage Arts Trail, was funded by an ArtPlace America grant, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. The project brought together several artists from the tribe to design gathering spaces along the 1.5-mile trail. These spaces were conceived as visual icons, connecting community elements with the land while attracting visitors. The Heritage Arts Trail is designed to activate the local creative economy as well as establishing a connection between Wa-Di and the Historic Pueblo Village.

The relationship between these two locations merges the economic, social, cultural, and physical landscapes of Santo Domingo. It also provides jobs, housing, and safe access to a heavy commuter rail station, while fostering creativity and a heightened sense of place and community. Ultimately, this emphasis on holistic sustainability in our design and planning process will improve quality of life for people in Santo Domingo Pueblo.

When we began to consider the design of Wa-Di, we knew that the development had to provide more than just housing. To make it culturally responsive and native-to-place, we facilitated a series of community meetings to: 1) develop housing models that are specific to Santo Domingo and the environment; 2) understand how the relationship between economic, social, cultural, and physical space can improve the quality of residents' lives; 3) provide home designs that promote healthy living through building system and material choices, durability, ease of maintenance, and creating spaces of comfort and peace of mind; and 4) plan secure and culturally appropriate outdoor community spaces integrated with surrounding landscapes and built environment.

Our understanding of Indigenous placemaking or placekeeping integrates these emphases on access, affordability, cultural specificity, and sustainability.

Emphasizing the collaborative design in the conceptualization of Wa-Di was an important component of the development process. The Santo Domingo Housing Authority brought on Atkin Olshin Schade Architects (AOS), a firm known nationally for its tribal portfolio and integrated design strategy. The final design merges modern accessibility and technology with traditional components of the Pueblo lifeways and sustainable practices. For example, a percentage of the homes are ADA accessible, allowing for communal gatherings in areas that may have been inaccessible in the past. There is also a visual connection between the design of the Pueblo and Wa-Di, which contributes to a sense of ownership and congruency over time.

Our understanding of Indigenous placemaking or placekeeping integrates these emphases on access, affordability, cultural specificity, and sustainability. The process we used in Santo Domingo is unique to this place and community. While we can transfer general values between projects, Indigenous placemaking or placekeeping calls for a new community-defined process every time.

We believe in the essence of good design, and the power that design brings to the overall development process. These conversations around creative placemaking are critical in grounding the work of practitioners and stakeholders in establishing shared definitions and a set of values. It is critical to have this conversation around creative placemaking. While we see the challenges ahead in Indian Country, we're confident in those who are open to these design and planning strategies. The future of our tribal communities depends on it.

Joseph Kunkel is a Northern Cheyenne Tribal member, Executive Director of the Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative, and Visiting Scholar at Arizona State University's School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment, Del E. Webb School of Construction, and Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering.



Kentucky Communities Use Their Creative Assets

by Sandi Curd

Placemaking, at its core, is fostering what is abundant in rural Kentucky: a strong sense of place coupled with people dedicated to making their communities stronger.



Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation (KHIC), a 49-year-old community and housing development organization, has always worked toward building a stronger economy by increasing good jobs, investing in employers, and building affordable housing for KHIC's 22-county service area across the southeastern corner of Kentucky. We've found a new tool to boost these efforts through creative placemaking. We do it by tapping partners from disparate sectors to use arts and culture to shape our future and stimulate our economy.

We have witnessed firsthand the role placemaking has on quality of life, and then on economic development. As an example, when an international company, Euro Stick, considered where to expand its business in the U.S., it looked at three sites that had more or less equal operating costs. The decision to open a plant in southeast Kentucky was made because this community would allow their transplanted French families to thrive. And we're just getting started.

Placemaking

Placemaking, at its core, is fostering what is abundant in rural Kentucky: a strong sense of place coupled with people dedicated to making their communities stronger.

Here at KHIC – an organization known for its business savvy and ability to help start new businesses – we have been asked why the jump into place-based initiatives and, more recently, creative placemaking? We do have some background in the field as three of our counties were included in the Empowerment Zones, a place-based effort in the 1990s. Over 20 years, this effort created 3,500 jobs and dropped the poverty rate by 28 percent. Therefore, the answer is clear: creative placemaking helps KHIC promote community, economic, and social development efforts. It plays to our strengths.

In 2014, KHIC – specifically eight counties in southeastern Kentucky – became the first federally designated rural Promise Zone. Federal Promise Zones receive targeted assistance and other support to create opportunity. The federal government calls Promise Zones a “collaborative, evidence-based approach [that] puts citizens and local leaders at the center of federal solutions.”

With the designation, KHIC was tasked with coordinating resources across sectors – from education to law enforcement to the private sector – for a renewed effort in economic development. The Promise Zone vision, championed by the federal government's executive branch and a wide range of public

and private supporters, encourages sectors to work toward common goals, breaking down silos in the process. Promise Zones continue to draw bipartisan support including from our Congressman Hal Rogers, a Republican, and Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, a Democrat.

A 2015 report from the National Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts found that in 2012, arts and culture production contributed more than \$698 billion to the U.S. economy, or 4.3 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. To put this in perspective, that was more than either the construction (\$586.7 billion) or the transportation and warehousing sectors (\$464.1 billion). There were 4.7 million workers employed in the production of arts and culture activities, generating \$334.9 billion in compensation. Arts and culture spending has a ripple effect on the overall economy, boosting ancillary businesses. The federal government calculated that for every 100 jobs created in the arts, 62 additional jobs are created in fields such as retail, information technology, manufacturing, and food service. That's a big impact. We want those dollars in our corner of Kentucky.

We define creative placemaking as “any artistic, food, crafts, small business/entrepreneurial activity or endeavor that tells a community’s unique story – both past and present – to pull people together, create a sense of place, strengthen health and improve the quality of life for everyone in that community.” Creative assets are hardly new to Kentucky. But over the past few years, funding streams, ranging from high profile national foundations to state and federal arts agencies, have merged to create a sustained level of support for placemaking, allowing communities to learn from one another and build on small successes. In 2016, our Promise Zone partner, Berea College, along with the Kentucky Arts Council, were chosen as one of the 69 Our Town awardees through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Our Town awards are intended to “transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places.” Through the power of partnerships, we’re doing just that.

Taking the Lessons Across Kentucky – and Beyond

As placemaking gains momentum, I’ve been asked to co-chair the Kentucky Regional Networking Group that is part of the “Next Generation: The Future of Arts & Culture Placemaking” initiative. Through this work, we’ll promote placemaking leadership and best practices across Kentucky. This effort is part of a nationwide conversation around rural placemaking facilitated by the Rural Policy Research Institute. Appalshop, an arts and education center based in Whitesburg, KY, has a 50-year history of placemaking and is a mainstay in these conversations.

Going forward, KHIC is eager to share our lessons – successes and mistakes – from placemaking far and wide. And we’ll always be learning. We are pleased to be at the forefront of a strategy that helps us control our own local destiny.



Sandi Curd is the Promise Zone Coordinator, a position created when Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation was named the first rural Promise Zone in the nation.



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Placemaking Grants Support Rural Communities

buildingcommunityWORKSHOP (bc) and the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) recently announced the selection of two organizations for their Rural Placemaking Program, supported by a Knowledge Building Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Carrying out the grant, the smART Kinston City Project Foundation in Kinston, NC and the Woodlands Development Group in Elkins, WV will implement rural creative placemaking initiatives during summer and fall 2017. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov.



The smART Kinston City Project Foundation

The seat of Lenoir County, NC, Kinston is a rural former tobacco town along the Neuse River and home to about 21,000 residents. While metropolitan areas within commuting distance are bursting at the seams from population growth, Lenoir County is expected to lose 1,000 residents before 2035. Like many rural towns, Kinston has a deep tradition in the arts. The North Carolina Arts Council smART initiative created smART Kinston LLC as an organization to recruit artists to live and work in the area and promote the town as an arts and culture attraction.

smART Kinston has been working to foster the development of an arts-driven and asset-based economy by cultivating an Arts & Cultural

District in downtown Kinston for the last two years. Now a rainbow of houses lines the downtown area, many of them filling with painters, potters, dancers, and jewelry makers adding visibility to the artistic history of the city. smART Kinston focuses its initiatives on connecting individuals and communities, using art as a tool to address local infrastructure and regional economic challenges. The city council carefully rezoned the area for both commercial and residential use, relieving any regulation on business permits for entrepreneurs living within the district. Constant public-private partnerships are leveraged in their efforts, and they have seen some amazing results. The Arts River Walk runs through the Arts & Culture district and connects the area to downtown and to Kinston Music Park.

A rural placemaking effort also serves to unify Kinston and drive efforts of inclusivity. In Kinston/Lenoir County, where the population is 70 percent African American, the long history of segregation is deeply felt. Efforts underway aim to aid the city's efforts to alleviate racial tension and include the communities of immigrants in the rural reaches of the county who depend on the city for arts and culture. Ongoing partnerships with the state's African American Heritage Commission hope to continue to tackle racial tension and bring together all cultures.

The placemaking project in Kinston will partner with Kinston Teens, a local youth nonprofit, to conduct a "history harvest," a collaborative and community-based approach to collecting stories and memories around a theme. The harvest will

occur in the historic Mitchelltown area, which is at the heart of the Kinston Arts & Cultural District. At a harvest, community members are invited to share their memories, stories, photographs, and other objects and to participate in a conversation about the significance and meaning of their artifacts. These artifacts are digitally captured and documented by community volunteers (“harvesters”) and eventually shared with the wider public. The eventual sharing of the harvest artifacts can take many forms – permanent/temporary exhibit display, online archive, or art work.

The history harvest is also looking to examine the impact of smART Kinston efforts themselves: the homes now occupied by artists once belonged to workers at the Glenn Raven Mill, and contain their own unique history and stories. Beyond linking generations and old and new residents, the project will undergird future arts-related initiatives including murals and other projects of artists associated with smART Kinston.

Woodlands Development Group

Woodlands Development Group (WDG) is a certified Community Housing Development Organization that has been working in Elkins, WV and the surrounding counties since 1995. Deep in the mountains of West Virginia, WDG is building homes for low- and moderate-income families, offering lending services, renovating older buildings, and promoting community development in the seven counties it serves.

With support from the Benedum Foundation, USDA, and other partners, Woodlands has contributed to the redevelopment of more

than 70,000 square feet of space in local downtowns in the last four years. Its projects have included community-oriented outdoor spaces like the walking trail in Belington or the River Park in Thomas. It has also been able to focus on revitalizing downtown areas – a key driver of economic success. WDG has produced comprehensive planning of vacant spaces in its area, as well as revitalization projects at the Delmonte Hotel in Elkins, the Tap Room in Thomas, and the Sunshine Building in Philippi – all West Virginia hamlets working to revitalize their local economies.

When WDG took an interest in creative, arts-based placemaking as an extension of their community development work, ArtSpring was a natural partnership. A nonprofit that nurtures the arts community, ArtSpring has worked since 2011 to engage the public and promote Tucker County as an arts destination. For five years, it has run an annual festival with attractions such as live music, an art market, artist demonstrations, a farmers’ market, and an Art Crawl, celebrating the community through the arts. WDG and ArtSpring previously worked together in a series of roundtables to design a renovation of a historic building downtown. The project combined WDG’s expertise in building and ArtSpring’s enthusiasm to turn the ground floor community space into a gallery and art tourism information center.

Now, Woodlands and ArtSpring will use community input to develop public art and wayfinding installations that reflect the artistic assets of the region and highlight the quickly developing cultural identity of Thomas – a town with a population of 600. Their plan

details an online mapping of arts centers and attractions in the area, implementing a new informational kiosk for arts-related tourism, and installing a public art piece in downtown Thomas. The selection and installation processes will be facilitated by a committee of residents, artists, and business owners – supported by WDG and ArtSpring. Community residents hope to see their town recognized as a vibrant arts center, to draw more business to the area and empower residents.

Working with ArtSpring and other local businesses and artists in Tucker County, WDG will host a peer exchange centered on creative placemaking, allowing HAC partners from across the country to contribute to ongoing placemaking work in Thomas, learning local best practices while helping to craft future projects.





HAC FACTS

RURAL VETERANS AND LOCAL NONPROFITS RECEIVE HOUSING AID

The Home Depot Foundation and the Housing Assistance Council are awarding grants totaling \$284,225 to ten local nonprofit housing associations to build or preserve housing for veterans in rural America. The new funds are part of The Foundation's Veteran Housing Grants Program, which was created to support the development and repair of housing for veterans.



For more information, visit :

www.ruralhome.org/ahrv2017



HAC AWARDS OVER \$1 MILLION FOR LOCAL SELF-HELP HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The Housing Assistance Council is partnering with six organizations to build 67 self-help homes for low- and moderate-income families. HAC provides financing for these projects using \$962,325 in funds from the federal Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP), which is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.



For more information, visit :

www.ruralhome.org/SHOP



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