

Greater Boston Cultural Convening

May 8 & 9, 2014

Making Greater Boston Greater:
A 21st Century New Urban Arts & Culture Agenda

10:00am - 6:30pm

Strand Theater | 543 Columbia Road, Dorchester, MA



"Traditions Remixed" by Destiny Palmer

Facebook Page

Program Sponsors: ArtPlace America and The Kresge Foundation
Special Thanks to The Boston Foundation

Greater Boston Cultural Convening

Making Greater Boston Greater: A 21st Century New Urban Arts & Culture Agenda

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BACKGROUND

The Greater Boston Cultural Convening was developed under the auspices of Fairmount Cultural Corridor (formerly Upham's Corner ArtPlace).

Barbara Lewis, Ph.D. is the driving force behind this Convening, with Scott Fraser of Jose Mateo Ballet Theater and Abria Smith of Berklee College of Music, and the agreement of all UCAP partners.

Dr. Lewis is the Director of the Trotter Institute for the Study of Black History and Culture at UMass Boston. A cultural historian, scholar, and arts producer, Dr. Lewis has long been interested in the intersection between art, performance, and community. Since coming to Boston ten years ago by way of New York and Kentucky and before that South Carolina and Canada, she has been promoting the ways in which the arts, primarily but not exclusively theater, nurture an alliance of spirit that proclaims the ties that bind us as humans.

Most recently, this interest of bridging separation found common cause in efforts that she helped to create, later spearheaded by Fairmount Cultural Corridor. An initiative with multiple community partners funded by ArtPlace America and The Kresge Foundation, Fairmount Cultural Corridor was orchestrated by The Boston Foundation. Dr. Lewis is proud to be a Fairmount Cultural Corridor partner.

VISION



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This report will serve as an account of the conversations that took place during the Convening and an analysis of the themes that surfaced. It will be shared with the new mayoral administration, with local, state, regional, and national policy makers, as well as with leaders, artists and communities working in the field. It will also be posted on the UCAP and Trotter Institute websites as well as other websites as appropriate.

In the fall of 2014, Dr. Lewis will create a five- to ten-member Cultural Council that will meet over the course of the next three years, with the objective of seeding future programming to continue community cultural activity and interest. This Cultural Council will study and reference this report, oversee and steer the continuation of the work started at the Convening, carry out further surveys of the Arts and Cultural community at large - expanding the reach of the original Convening - as well as host in-depth focus group conversations on the relevant themes, and develop a larger report detailing its future work.

INTENTION

“This is the right moment to come together, express, and share the kind of creative future we want in this city. Boston is changing. We saw that played out in front of us in the recent mayoral election. New voices and possibilities are afoot and astir in this city, but the question, as always, is who will be heard, who will be supported? It’s the squeaky wheel that gets the grease, so we staged a two-day cultural squeak fest in May 2014.”

- Dr. Barbara Lewis



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Performers and cultural innovators, arts administrators, filmmakers, photographers, painters, break dancers, musicians, choreographers, media & technology innovators, youth empowerment workers, directors, writers, curators, agents, media artists, poets, healers, activists, thought leaders, presenters, spoken word artists, authors, playwrights, social commentators, community organizers, students, allies and friends were invited to come together at the Strand Theatre to network and learn from one another, spark new ideas and possibilities and energize a new urban sense of Boston as a city of many different faces and talents.

NOTE: In this report, “we” refers to the general artistic community in Greater Boston and the specific people, part of this community, who came together for this Convening.



Featured Art - New Urban Dreams: Lanterns from “Beacon to the Dream” honoring the 50th anniversary of MLK’s “I Have a Dream” speech artwork were on stage alongside panels and speakers. These lanterns signify light and legacy and Boston’s Civil Rights role. Courtesy of Medicine Wheel Productions. Photo credit Boston Globe

THEMES THAT SURFACED

Three themes surfaced during the convening: Collaboration, Civic Engagement, and Value of Art & Sustainability. When actualized, these ideas can help bring about a "Boston Renaissance," as articulated by Banjineh "Op" Browne, that can achieve a more unified Boston responsive to and reflective of its communities.

Theme 1: Collaboration

Key Question: How do we stay connected and inspired while supporting each other and our work?

- There is currently not enough collaboration in Boston among artists, art supporters, funders, government and the private sector. As a community, we need to create spaces for collaboration: within and across disciplines, with government, between small and large organizations, and with academia.
- We need to explore more deeply what successful collaborations look like and how to engage successfully.
- There is a need for centralized and accessible resources: funding, key people and organizations, data, mailing lists, and events. There are models we can follow and local initiatives, but we need a concerted effort to make these work for our local community.
- Audience is an essential component of successful collaboration. Our community needs to increase audience participation, engagement, diversity, and explore traditional and innovative pathways of connection.

Theme 2: Civic Engagement

Key Question: How do we stay committed to social justice issues?

- Boston is a divided city: artists are gentrified out and cultural institutions protect their own interests.
- Artists need: training on how to be citizen artists, to show up and follow up, to listen before creating, to heal and be healed, to check their privilege, and to be radical agents of change. Artists demand respect, fair wages and affordable living.
- Art is an act of civic engagement, and artists are creators of culture.
- Artists must make a commitment to access, youth, and diversity as part of their civic engagement.

Theme 3: Value of Art & Sustainability

Key Question: How do we balance the available resources, the resources we do not yet have, our passion to create, and a quest for a sustainable life?

- Boston has powerful resources and all the talent it needs.
- Artists must discuss the value of art and demand that their work be valued by everyone.
- Artists must mobilize and find creative sources of support for Greater Boston to remain affordable.
- Artists must maintain their voice and ensure the continued professional development of their work to achieve value and sustainability.



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CHRONICLE

Two hundred Greater Boston artists and art supporters came together at this Greater Boston Cultural Convening over two days of panels, keynotes and performances to engage in conversation about the current status of Arts and Culture and our vision for the future.

As participants entered and left each day, they deposited business cards and appreciation/commentary in a bowl and provided contact information, including email, websites and Twitter handles, which were collected and entered into a database for future communication.

This two-day convening was catered, photographed, live streamed, and recorded in notes.

Pre-registration

Pre-registration took place on [Brown Paper Tickets](#) where 76 people registered for the first day and 55 for the second.

Social Media

The Convening was advertised on [Facebook](#), where 127 people replied they were attending. The hashtag associated with the Convening on Facebook and Twitter was #GreaterCulturalBoston. Please search this hashtag for Tweets, pictures, and further commentary. The event was also live-streamed through [LiveStreaming.com](#) for those unable to attend in person.



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NOTE: There is no Wi-Fi setup at the theater. We had to rely on a personal Wi-Fi hotspot to share the event via live stream, Twitter and Facebook. We highly encourage the City of Boston to help provide the Strand Theatre with up-to-date internet connectivity so that the programming it hosts can take full advantage of and integrate modern technology in order to better serve its public.

Photographers

LeRoy W. Henderson, based in Brooklyn, has been taking photographs for more than forty years. His photographs have appeared in films, such as Ken Burns' *Jazz*, and books published by Beacon Press, NYU Press and Smiley Books/Hay House Publishers, among others. His exhibition record includes group shows at the High Museum in Atlanta, the Brooklyn Museum (its permanent collection) the Smithsonian, the Bronx Museum of Art, the Springfield Museum, Mass., and the Studio Museum of Harlem. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) chose his photographs for their permanent collections in 2013. All his images are captioned "LWH."

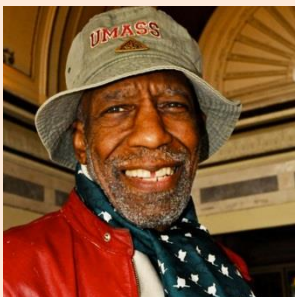


Photo credit: Pampi

Cedric Douglas: see bio under panel "New Urban on the Block: Upham's Corner & Dudley in the House" on page. All his images are captioned "CD."



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Catering

Breakfast, lunch and dinner were catered by 3 C's and Haley House, both establishments local to the Dorchester and Roxbury neighborhoods.

Report Preparers

Pampi and Loreto Paz Ansaldo (Lore) are co-founders of nonprofit PALESCA and are thrilled to contribute to this Cultural Convening. PALESCA creates and implements multi-modal projects that build sustainable community practices by critically engaging education, social change and the arts, and furthers this mission with art events aimed to sustain art-making in Greater Boston through themed gatherings that commission original art, explore relevant socio-political themes and deepen the audience-artist relationship. Online, you can follow Pampi's work as a transmedia performance artist and poet and Lore's musings.

NOTE: "Preparer's Notes," found throughout the report, are meant to link ideas and themes across the various panels and offer some further analysis.

GOALS

The Goals of the Greater Boston Cultural Convening were to:

- EXAMINE Boston's artistic and cultural profile with an eye to identifying how the city might prioritize and achieve a higher level of cultural equity in the next ten years;
- EXPAND a sense of community sharing in the arts so that social segments with limited access to public validation, audiences, and funding can enjoy wider acceptance and participation; and
- ENRICH the space of cultural exchange in the city, opening its channels of exchange to innovative energies emanating from a multiplicity of locales and sensibilities.

With this work set in motion, the Cultural Council to be assembled in the fall can begin to attain these further goals:

- PROMOTE greater awareness of the city's diverse cultural traditions and what each needs to grow and thrive;
- IDENTIFY key skills and supports needed to undergird and sustain cultural equity;
- DEVELOP a network of artists and community activists as cultural equity voices and stewards in Boston;
- DEEPEN and extend the conversation around art as a tool for social justice and urban transformation; and
- CONNECT individuals & organizations interested in championing the work of cultural equity in Boston.



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10am – 11am

May 8 First day theme: New Urban Dreams and Images

DAY ONE Gathering & Networking Breakfast

There was a spread of fruits, breads, coffee and juice. Attendees who arrived early enough for breakfast remarked how the meal was so much more than they had expected and started the day greeting one another and engaging in conversation.



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“This was the **Arts community** coming out to **speak** to **express** what they feel about the Boston Arts and what we **deserve** in our community ... I'm so **blessed** to have been a part of this event.”

- Lino Delgado



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WELCOME

Barbara Lewis, Director, Trotter Institute for the Study of Black History and Culture

"It is in the spirit of **continuing** the best from the **past** and fostering a new **thrust** of artistic **collaboration** that we come to the Strand today. As artists, we dream and dare to make **dreams real.**"

- Barbara Lewis



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"I am excited to welcome you here to the first day of this cultural convening at the Strand, a theater with a long, celebrated story. This theater, where we are gathered, tells a story of how the city grew. As in Paris, where each arrondissement is a little city in itself that was annexed to the urban center, one by one at different times, so that the city grew and spread organically. The same is true in Boston. It is a collection of neighborhoods, each enjoying a bit of autonomy, and priding itself on the history that has developed there. So Boston is a collection of parts.

I remain aware of those parts and how, sometimes they fit together well and at other times they don't. Also, some parts feel themselves more equal than others. The Strand, which opened in 1918, belongs to a time when Upham's Corner was a market hub. It was a place where the new hit first, and so it made sense that it would build a theater that attracted the best of the best. But neighborhoods change and evolve, and the fortunes of Upham's Corner have waxed and waned. In the last twenty years or so, it has developed a reputation as a danger zone. Through it all, the Strand stands, full of evidence of glory and significance from another time. Now, Upham's Corner is part of what is euphemistically called the neighborhood. Translated, that means stay away.

But I didn't want to stay away. I want to acknowledge the history that was built here. Once, this was a gathering place for community, in the best sense of the word. In the last century, the Haitian community put on shows at the Strand. So did the Vietnamese and Cape Verdean communities. Local youth had jobs here, benefiting from exposure and training they could not get anywhere else. When the power folks wanted to tear down the theater, folks rallied to save it. Generation after generation, the Strand has represented history and the harvest possible with concerted effort.

It can do so again. And it is in the spirit of continuing the best from the past and fostering a new thrust of artistic collaboration that we come to the Strand today. As artists, we dream and dare to make dreams real. This time, though, we are betting that our collective dreams attract the right kind of bedfellows, people who can add wheels on our feet so we can cover the distance to which we aspire.

Art, we all know, is risky. It takes us out of our comfort zones and exposes us to the unexpected. But that is how we grow. Through art, we gain empathy. We can imagine ourselves in the skin and circumstances of someone else. In this media age, we are more and more cut off from each other emotionally in the midst of making virtual contact. Art may start as artifice but it becomes actual. It is creative, not destructive, and in the growing distances and stresses of our fast-paced reality, art is balm."

11am - 12pm

May 8 First day theme: New Urban Dreams and Images

KEYNOTE

New Urban Scenarios:

Dreaming a Bigger, Bolder, More Inclusive Cultural City

Andrew Tarsy, President, Edward M. Kennedy Institute



Andrew Tarsy, CD

“be bold in **seeking** to create the **broader** and more **inclusive audience**”

- Andy Tarsy

Summary

- Civic engagement is of critical importance to a democratic society, and the arts are a necessary component of any healthy culture of civic engagement.
- The EMK will offer visitors a chance to learn about government and the obligation of citizens to participate in democracy. It will be interactive, creative and will rely on partners and the input of the visitor to shape how it evolves and the impact it can have over time.
- The EMK hopes to develop ways to be inclusive of the arts community and a place for discussion of issues important to its stakeholders; please contact Mr. Tarsy for follow-up opportunities.
- People are doing great work in Boston: How do we work together?
- Organizing takes work, and we all have a role to play: those who create art, create art; those who strategize, strategize. Then, we all have to connect and communicate.

NOTE: Boston Globe article on Institute, May 7, 2014, "Built on memories, Edward M. Kennedy Institute takes shape"

Please see Addendum One for the complete speech transcript.

Thoughts, Q&A

Susan cautioned that it is important for artists to represent themselves: meeting with representatives is necessary for visibility and surprisingly easy.

She further urged the organizers of the convening to outreach more, perhaps through a mailing list like Mass Creative's.

Adeline Sire, an independent arts journalist and radio producer, asked Tarsy how he envisions institutions such as the Edward M. Kennedy Institute to employ artists as civic agents, especially as she believes that it remains debatable that Boston offers a large number of public programs that engage artists. She broached, “who goes to public events?” - only to answer, “people who have no barriers to get there.”⁵

Maggie Cavallo, curator, educator and contemporary artist of MagZilla, proposed that we create a culture of creative arts administrators who design programming that attracts diverse participants. She pondered with whom we might regionally partner and offered arts and civic engagement and educational organizations as viable.⁶

Deborah Wise, of Central Square Theater, observed that we don’t have the analysis to connect us across artistic domains. She recalled the community-based activist artists of Boston’s past, including Alliance for Cultural Democracy (a volunteer-run organization of eight years) and StageSource, a theater artists’ organization for civic engagement. She also mentioned that she found national conferences at the time “generative.”

Preparers’ Notes (#1-4 reference the Speech text)

1. In the metaphor of cells within a biological culture, the nutrients that feed culture are important to gatekeep. When artists are not allowed into the gates, the culture is then denied the very nutrients that create and make it relevant. This barrier is why public institutions must be encouraged to appoint gatekeepers who are committed to keep the gates permeable.
2. Cynicism in collective action speaks to a lack of trust and knowledge in matters of community building efforts. Community building requires affirmation strategies, investment (time, effort and materials), and sensitivity training.
3. These statistics speak to distrust in certain neighborhoods of promises for adequate representation and access to voter education. Distrust and suspicion are symptoms of our class-based city. We must acknowledge this reality and face our class barriers intelligently.
4. If we are to bring art and government together, then we as artists must make sure that intentions and themes are not censored or toned down.
5. There are barriers between artists and audiences. Therefore, we need to acknowledge, assess, and lower thresholds.
6. In Boston, up-and-coming and independent artists need transparent pathways to interact with major donors who now primarily support big institutions.

Also,

- + Media justice must always be included in conversations on arts and culture.
- + New corporate media teaches “convenience.” Artists must come together and disclaim this myth: patroning and physically attending art events is just as convenient as watching a video online (and the benefit is that interactive art is active while online media is passive).

Bio

ANDREW TARSY is the president of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, which is opening its doors in 2015 in close proximity to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and the Massachusetts Archives, on the campus of UMass Boston. A lawyer and skilled negotiator who values the humanities, Tarsy led the Anti-Defamation’s League New England Region; was Director of Public Policy at Facing History and Ourselves; hosted and conducted educational, health, and energy summits on Capitol Hill; co-founded the Alliance of Business Leadership; and was a visiting professional appointed to the Hague, where he advised on global educational strategy. The recipient of several prestigious citations, including a humanitarian award from the NAACP, Tarsy, a former U.S. Justice Department attorney, is looking forward to bridging the gap between culture and the arts, education and politics in his executive seat at the EMK Institute.

12pm – 1pm

May 8 First day theme: New Urban Dreams and Images

New Urban Images: A Short Introduction to Documentary Filmmaking Workshop, From Concept to Distribution

Chico Colvard, filmmaker, lecturer, film series curator



Chico Colvard, CD

“we have to **show up** and **follow up**”

- Chico Colvard

Summary

- Colvard offered a detailed summary of concrete steps to develop one’s own documentary film.
- Artists need to take ownership of their own work, be agents of their work, and follow through.
- Funding and supportive infrastructures are missing for emerging artists; but infrastructure is essential to understanding the landscape and the labor of artists, which is why we need to work diligently to create infrastructure.

Filmmaker, lecturer, and film series curator Chico Colvard presented the process behind making documentary films.

His advice included: always have participants sign a release form; choose a story that sustains; meet people; hold onto as many territories as possible; learn the art of sale; know the budget; do the best work; show up; demand to be noticed; find allies, such as the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts; follow up when starting up; study the credits following any video, because all films credit funders.¹

He then spoke to the politics of gaining access. His personal story affirmed that access is elusive; it takes a long time to break into the system and access ramps need to be built.

Colvard recommended that we make Boston greater by making access ramps clearer and more visible.

At the same time, he insisted that because success in documentary filmmaking can be rewarding, it is equally necessary to protect these rewards: access should also be a rite of passage.²

As an artist of color, Colvard observed that he was incredibly lucky to end up in the only place with other people of color as a student of UMass Boston.³

Thoughts, Q&A

Tracy Heather Strain, an independent documentary filmmaker, cautioned that when funding streams disappear, there are empty broadcasting stations. For example, “public television never came back.” Now media is web-based and interactive.

Daniel S. DeLuca, of Mobius, mentioned that with emerging technologies, we are increasingly being confronted by novel phenomena such as digital arts preservation, as evidenced by the rise of institutions such as the Computer History Museum.

Preparers' Notes

1. A follow-up panel could focus on how to document and broadcast effectively, via documentary film, the civic engagement in Boston's neighborhoods.
2. It might be beneficial to consider access as separate from rites of passage. The notion of rites of passage is a traditional vanguard. There are many challenges without artificial obstacles. Artists must trust that those who are determined and talented will be lifted up by their work and its reception in the community. In fact, if we add more layers of accessibility, we may be destroying links between art and community by alienating artistic people who may want to dabble. This inclusive approach calls for a more nuanced understanding of the landscape of artistic laboring and developmental needs.
3. When people or artists of color are visible at institutional levels, the choice to be inclusive is part of the institution's decision-making process.

Bio

CHICO COLVARD, documentary filmmaker, curates a popular documentary and discussion series at UMass Boston, where he teaches film and social justice classes. His award-winning film *Family Affair* premiered at Sundance and was the first documentary acquired by the Oprah Winfrey Network: OWN. The film has since shown at major film festivals, cable channels and online platforms around the world. He is a former Sundance Creative Producing Fellow, Flaherty Fellow, Firelight Media Producing Fellow and Filmmaker-in-Residence at WGBH. The recipient of funding from HBO, the Ford Foundation, ITVS, LEF Moving Image Fund, Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media and Vital Projects Fund, Colvard, who is a lawyer, is a frequent guest speaker at colleges and universities, film festival panelist, juror, consultant and moderator. His new documentary, “Black Memorabilia,” is an intimate portrait of avid black image collectors.

LUNCH

Lunch consisted of assorted sandwiches and salads along with a variety of drinks and provided a welcome energy boost in the middle of both days. Convening participants were able to continue discussions started on the panels and during the keynotes as well as network.



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1:15pm – 2:15pm

May 8 First day theme: New Urban Dreams and Images

New Urban Narratives & Technologies

Tracy Heather Strain, documentary filmmaker,
moderator

Liora Beer, ArtMorpheus, ArtApp

Eve Bridburg, GrubStreet

Daniel S. DeLuca, Mobius

Mary E. Hopper, DigitalDen



LWH

“we need to find our people and be generous members of our
given community”

- Eve Bridburg

Initial question

How are social media and new technologies extending and impacting the arts?

Summary

- Artists have much to do today, not only in creating their art but also being mini enterprises. It is important to have collectives or maker spaces to shape this model.
- These maker spaces will also help to taste-make in order to help consumers know what to look at.
- There is a lot of existing technology, but there are not enough attempts at building awareness and literacy to inform people, especially artists, about these technologies.
- Net neutrality will support or challenge our ability to share art democratically.
- Most at the Convening and most artists in Boston are not native to Boston: What can we do to engage people born and raised in Boston?
- What is available for young people of color to learn and use technologies?

Moderator Tracy Heather Strain observed how, increasingly, with new technology and social media, artists have to, in addition to producing work, find, distribute, market, exhibit, and build community around their work.

She addressed that programs such as TFI Interactive of the Tribeca Film Festival are becoming popular spaces for artists to experiment with new media's relevance in their work and careers.

Eve Bridburg, of GrubStreet, discussed e-books and how new technologies and methods of distribution have disrupted the lives of writers. Before, they used to worry just about writing. Now, there is so much more to do to make a successful career. Efforts have become almost superhuman.

GrubStreet provides community for local emerging writers and creates programming that identifies the new skills with which they need to be equipped. Today, writers must think of themselves as small businesses: they must ask who they are and why they write.

Dead Darlings is a writer's collective made up of GrubStreet novel incubator alumni. They encourage participating writers to gift away ideas and writings in order to build their audiences: generosity will sustain the artist by drawing people to and creating community around their work.

New taste-making collectives are necessary.¹

Further, writers must take on publishers: they must band together and organize for new fairer publishing models.

Daniel S. DeLuca, of Mobius, called for an awareness of literacy mobile apps, as they help lower the threshold for artists to gain access to technology (apps such as Konstruct).

Strain inquired after how low this threshold really is. We need infrastructure to help young people perceive that threshold as low. In fact, many of the community artists supporting this kind of work are not from here. She asks why?²

Bridburg responded that the goal of GrubStreet's youth writing program is to approach a zero barrier. The work they encourage their youth to engage is not tech-based - it's story-based.³

DeLuca encouraged artists to check out the maker spaces all over Boston for modeling, organizing and creative collaboration opportunities. Cooperatives such as maker spaces encourage skill exchange and empower and support fundraising efforts after the do-it-yourself models. These spaces are often community funded and sometimes even subsidize on-site 3D printers.

Additionally, he encouraged artists to engage with conversation on net neutrality, which will make or break our ability to art democratically. He urged us to consider municipal broadband which can provide free internet.

Heather Strain discussed the challenges of using social media as a marketing tool for professional development: as creative platforms it keeps users occupied in a connective tissue of communication. How then do we experiment and engage with technology?

Liora Beer, of ArtMorpheus, described her newly developed social entrepreneurial app ArtApp. Traditionally, the gallery, museum, and artists spaces serve as gatekeepers. The premise of this app is that it will disrupt the prescribed ways buyers typically have access to art and art makers. On opening day of South End Open Studios 2014, ArtApp received 10K hits.

Beer also noted that "many artists reject 'business side' of art making, co-ops n skill sharing necessary."

Twitter Feed

Julie Hennrikus wondered whether we apply “social media as marketing tool or art creation tool? Or both?”

Emily Ruddock responded, “How about we stop using #socialmedia simply for marketing and as an instigator of collaboration?”

Ruddock also inquired how we might make “arts summer jobs for the 20 and under set” happen?

Sarah Champnois recommended we “utilize the [Boston Youth Fund](#), now called Department of Youth Employment & Engagement”

Ruddock also observed that while “there are lots of media training for kids and teens... why do we demand adults stop being makers?”

Maggie Cavallo’s question related to arts, community and technology is “how can tech be disruptive to the system of art as we know it?”

Ruddock offered that “maker spaces could change [the] artist / audience paradigm!!!”

Julie Hennrikus reflected, “A lot of today’s conversation is around access and opportunity. #NewCulturalBoston Not equal for all. Let’s change that.”



Preparers’ Notes

1. There is great power in taste-making, so we must be aware that our work is responsive to our communities and mindful of our privilege.
2. An answer could be two-fold: One, there is a divide and distrust between homegrown and incoming artists. Two, artists coming into Boston from other places are often pedigreed, having received high-level formal arts education. Also, pedigreed artists are often invited into the city by Boston’s elite public arts institutions because of their formal education. They then gain higher public visibility as they have been vetted by institutional standards that supercede community support. The distrust between homegrown and incoming artists may stem from this basic inequity in the value of work and effort, as artists homegrown in Boston’s communities may have lower formal public visibility.
3. Barriers are complex and compounded. Effective media justice includes technology and story-telling. Media training must be in school curricula, and we must develop youths as media makers. Not only do youth of color need to breach barriers by being able to support their work in a technologically savvy way, but also resist policing and criminalization by the very act of producing technologically savvy work. Programs such as [UMass’s ICA Teens](#) and Cambridge’s [Do It Your Damn Self Youth Film Festival](#) are examples of local programming incorporating media in youth education.

Bios

TRACY HEATHER STRAIN is an award-winning film and video director, producer, and writer of documentaries and non-fiction media, primarily for public television. Her PBS series credits include *Discover: The World of Science*; *The Great Depression*; *America’s War on Poverty*; *I’ll Make Me a World: A Century of African-American Arts*; *Race: The Power of an Illusion*; *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?*; and *American Experience*. Her other credits include educational, non-profit and museum exhibit videos. A graduate of Wellesley, she has studied at Harvard and the Rhode Island School of Design. Strain, along with her husband, filmmaker Randall MacLowry, own [The Film Posse](#), which is based in Fort Point Channel’s Midway Studios. They

are working on a documentary transmedia storytelling project about the artist and activist Lorraine Hansberry who is best known for writing “A Raisin in the Sun”. Apropos of this panel, she is using social media and Kickstarter to raise money this project.

LIORA BEER is a visual artist, social entrepreneur and the founding Executive Director of ARTmorpheus, a nonprofit organization that drives collaboration and communication among business, community and the arts. ARTmorpheus engages and involves artists of all kinds in the economic life of the region and fosters conditions in which artists can thrive both creatively and economically. ARTmorpheus fulfills its mission by serving as a clearinghouse for a wide range of resources, providing direct support to artists in all disciplines and acting a hub for creative alliances and enterprise development between artists, institutions and art appreciators. Ms. Beer has developed an innovative ArtApp for mobile phones.

EVE BRIDBURG is the founder and Executive Director of GrubStreet, one the country’s leading creative writing centers. A former literary agent, Eve developed, edited and sold a wide variety of books to major publishers before returning four years ago to GrubStreet to oversee an expansion in programming designed to better equip writers to thrive in the digital age. Eve has presented widely about publishing at conferences and writes a monthly blog post called “Publish It Forward” which can be found at GrubDaily.org.

DANIEL S. DELUCA is an artist, curator, and the current Director of Mobius, an experimental artist group and artist-run center in Boston. His work explores structures and concepts related to global culture, art, language, and technology. DeLuca has developed multiple artistic research projects that investigate large-scale recurring events around the world including the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, China; the 2012 Spring Equinox Festival in Mexico; and the 2013 Maha Kumbh Mela in India. His projects are concept driven and integrate live action, context specificity, photography, and appropriated materials.

MARY E. HOPPER is leading an initiative to found a new computer museum in the Boston/Cambridge area. She also serves as the Director of Digital Den which is an organization that creates immersive digital media exhibits and spaces. In the past she has been a Lecturer in the undergraduate Interactive Media and graduate Digital Media programs at Northeastern University, Assistant Professor in the Technology in Education at Lesley University, and Postdoctoral Associate at MIT where she was the Managing Editor of Media in Transition, the flagship project of the MIT Comparative Studies Program.

2:30pm – 3:30pm

May 8 First day theme: New Urban Dreams and Images

New Urban Artists: Breaking New Ground and Making the Invisible Visible

Kathleen Bitetti, visual artist, policy expert, and chief curator, Medicine Wheel Productions, moderator

Leika Akiyama, visual artist

Dell Hamilton, visual artist, Harvard

Ekua Holmes, visual artist and Vice Chair, Boston Arts Commission

Destiny Palmer, visual artist

Mario E. Quiroz-Servellón, visual artist

Jamal Thorne, visual artist



LWH

“artists, advocates of the arts, and politicians **need** to **work together** in an arena of **mutual respect**”

- Jamal Thorne

Initial question

What is most appealing to you about the new urban landscape of the 21st century?

Summary

- Art in cultural institutions must reflect the diversity of the people in Boston.
- Some proposals:
 - More pop-up art
 - Why Boston? Our capital is great. Boston allows us the space to think, and many intellectuals and artists choose to stay here instead of going to NYC.
 - We need resources from the city and state, but we can also not wait for these resources.
 - Part of being proactive is, in order to act effectively at the city and state levels, we need to know our government representatives and their staff, and reach out to them.
 - Traditional art spaces are no longer sacred; we much come up with creative ways to be seen and look for creative partnerships.
 - We need to nurture art lovers to become advocates for their artists.
- The Value of Art: How do we convince people to value art? We must make ourselves visible and demand respect and space for our art and the labor that goes into it.
- Boston has a rich history, and it includes invisibility. We need to encourage artists to do more

historical work connecting to it. How do we heal the pain of invisibility? Part is connecting art to history; we need to connect with people in our communities around us. If this work takes us out of our comfort zones, then that is what we must do.

- Self-care: In feeling that there is so much work to be done, we must pro-actively self-care and not feel selfish.

Moderator Kathleen Bitetti, of Medicine Wheel Productions and Massachusetts Artists Leaders Coalition (MALC), witnessed that people of color are not reflected in Boston's cultural institutions - UMass Boston being the exception, as it is incredibly diverse.

She asked the artist panel, with a new mayor in Boston, "what do you want to see?"

Visual artist Jamal Thorpe reflected that Boston holds for him "amazing opportunities to be an artist ... in so much chaos, there is a perfect storm for art."

Artist Mario E. Quiroz-Servellón affirmed that there's "never been a better time to be an artist, to be alive."

Visual artist Dell M. Hamilton, would like to be able to connect with other local artists. She decided to stay in Boston instead of moving to New York City because Boston offers "empty spaces to think" and has inspiring, intellectual artists.

Thorpe would like to see Boston have "more respect for art and art makers, who produce and create culture. Other cities have this respect." In Boston, we are in competition for community resources. Artists must attend community meetings in order to visually represent and demand the respect and funds for our work.

Additionally, Thorpe would like to see the conversation on the representational history of Boston open up more to the "histories of its multitudinous ethnic communities."

Visual artist Destiny Palmer asked, "How do we heal the pain?" in these impoverished communities?

Visual artist Leika Akiyama added that "if we do not insist on infrastructure at the city level - the access to resources and affordable studio spaces - the city misses out on potential opportunities for enhancing civic well-being. Boston has a lot of hesitation and does not provide enough support."

Bitetti then asked, "how would you envision for a capital city?"

Quiroz-Servellón responded that while visioning is essential, we need to forge ahead meaningfully and act on the visioning. "If we were to wait for resources at the city and state level, we could be waiting forever." Therefore, it is important for the visioning to remain flexible so that we can find "unusual partners in places we would never have otherwise thought about." He envisions "libraries as new town squares."¹

Quiroz-Servellón urged that we simply cannot wait for official sponsorship. "Who leads this effort? All of us."

Bitetti remarked that artists must "nurture art lovers to become advocates for our



Kathleen Bitteti, LWH



Jamal Thorpe, LWH



Mario E. Quiroz-Servellón, LWH



Dell M. Hamilton, LWH

work.” She also cautioned that we “not concede the space to arts administrators.”

MALC urges that “we must be our own labor rights activists. We must get to know our representative and their staff; otherwise, we will be gentrified out.”

Visual artist Ekua Holmes noted that “conversations without resources are conversations we will end up having again.”

Bitetti asked, “how are you an ambassador?”

Holmes broached that as “artist/citizens citizen/artists,” we go out of our “comfort spaces” and go into the community. A practice of daily engagement with activism is necessary. “We must go where people are. Boston is a walkable city.”

Further, Quiroz-Servellón emphasized that “our work should go through every door and still talk about social issues”

Palmer pondered, “Why is art-making such a foreign experience?” Arts education is at an all-time low. “There is no time left in the day for creative expression. It is not right.” No wonder there is such a struggle to create value for art. People have been kept from making and appreciating art and therefore cannot know how valuable and transformative it can be for their lives.

Further, institutions, schools and individuals need to be reminded that artists work: art is labor, research and education.

Palmer shared that “being an art activist can really wear you out.” As a strategy, Holmes recommended we “focus, taking time to focus on one thing till it gets done!”

Bitetti then posed, “how do we convince people art is of value?” - that “fair trade means fair trade.”

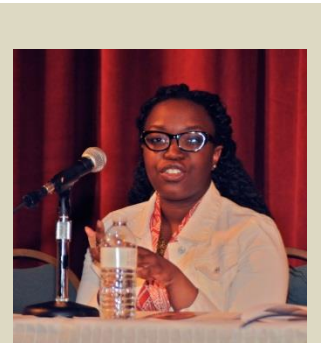
Palmer offered that we have a view to “turn arts lovers into arts advocates/activists.” Outreach is necessary for community well-being.²

Akiyama noted that though “there still needs to be a paradigm shift from sports entertainment towards more art and creative engagement, barriers are getting thinner,” as evident by marked expansion of temporary art projects around the city. People were delighted when the street pianos popped up for Boston’s Street Pianos Festival. “There was music 24/7 for weeks.”

In addition to Open studios, Somerville Arts Council funds frequent art interventions, such as pop-up, guerilla-style art in storefront windows. Public libraries feature pop up art. Much art is being heavily interfaced with technology.

Holmes observed that art mobiles like Cedric Douglas’ UP Truck operate much like food and health trucks, servicing art in communities. Douglas’s Up Truck places art where one would normally not see it: “on the street.” On his mobile truck, residents can design tiles, print tees, and, through these efforts, “experience the appreciation for making something.”

Bitetti emphasized that crowd advocacy, artist unions, and making sure artist



Destiny Palmer, LWH



Leika Akiyama, LWH



Ekua Holmes, LWH

citizens are heard before lobbyists are also essential for civic engagement.

With Lewis's support, Bitetti offered to set up a program for artist advocacy training.

Twitter Feed

Emily Ruddock offered, "Artists are the culture creators. That is a powerful responsibility. #newculturalboston." Julie Hennrikus chased with: "Artists need a combo of small business skills + community organizing + opportunity + access #NewCulturalBoston"

1. Charles McEnerney tweets, "Remember, #Boston, you can get free museum passes from your local library:
http://www.bpl.org/general/circulation/museum_passes.php #bosarts #bostonarts #newculturalboston"
2. Niall Tangney of theatresydney.info tweeted that "Study finds attending plays feels as good as a pay rise <http://bit.ly/1uyRM1a>"

Julie Hennrikus urged, "Crowd advocacy. Let's focus on specific issues and push push push."

Preparers' Notes

- + Make studies on the relationship between art and health commonplace.
- + We need to transform the neighborhoods we live in by assisting artists and the families who live there to act in solidarity and mobilize for living wages and livable homes.
- + We need to develop a model that reclaims what community is from the current broken model.

Bios

KATHLEEN BITETTI is an artist, curator and advocate crafting legislation and regulations for artists' rights, first amendment and intellectual property protection, affordable health care and health care reform, arts funding, small business issues, creative and cultural economies, and for the development of free or low cost resources/services for artists, small arts related businesses, cultural nonprofits, and grassroots organizations. She serves on the State's Creative Economy Council and led Marty Walsh's 2013 arts and culture policy election team, crafted that campaign platform, and served on the mayoral arts and culture transition team. A key architect of MA Artists Leaders Coalition's white paper for the 2014 gubernatorial race, she became chief curator at Medicine Wheel Productions in 2011. Previously, Bitetti directed the Artists Foundation, Emmanuel College's Lillian Immig Gallery, and the Harbor Gallery at UMass Boston. Her artwork has been shown locally, nationally and internationally.

LEIKA AKIYAMA grew up in Tokyo, Japan and witnessed the birth of Hello Kitty™. She has a BFA from the Art Institute of Boston and a Master of Arts and Social Sciences in Art Therapy from Lesley College. Her studio is in the Artist Studio Building at the Boston Center for the Arts (BCA). She had a solo exhibition in 2002 at the Artists Foundation and has participated in group shows at the Nave Gallery, the BCA's Mills Gallery, the Lillian Immig Gallery at Emmanuel College, the DeCordova Museum, the Housatonic Museum, Montserrat College of Art, Somerville Museum, Essex Art Center, Arlington Center for the Arts, the New Art Center, State College, Merrimack College, Cape Cod Community College and ArtSpace @ 16.

DELL M. HAMILTON is a Boston-based artist, writer, activist and curator. Her studio practice is grounded in the interdisciplinary contexts of the African Diaspora and her work has been shown widely, including recently at the MFA in Boston and the Paragraph Gallery in Kansas City. Appointed to Boston Mayor Martin Walsh's arts and culture policy team, she is on the board of the artist group Mobius and has presented scholarly presentations at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris and Boston University. Dell obtained her BA in journalism from Northeastern and received her MFA in studio art from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts/Tufts University. She currently works at Harvard's Hutchins Center for African and African American Research where she has collaborated closely with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Deborah Willis, Carrie Mae Weems, and Lyle Ashton Harris on numerous curatorial projects and conferences.

EKUA HOLMES began her professional career as a graphic designer and photographer. She went on to become an art director for the Department of Public Welfare and an independent fine arts curator. She later became known as a collage and mixed media artist whose use of vibrant color and skillful composition infuse her work with energy. Her layered, abstract creations convey a sense of unity and evoke memories that are both personal and universal. Much of her work recalls and reflects a rich Roxbury childhood. Currently, she serves as the Director and Community Coordinator for "sparc! the ArtMobile," Massachusetts College of Art and Design's mobile arts program. She is also an appointed member of the Boston Art Commission. Holmes is a native of Roxbury, MA and a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

DESTINY PALMER, a graduate of Massachusetts College of Art and Design, is the co-founder of Traditions Remixed, an artist collective whose goal is to create a supportive community for young artists, especially artists of color, encouraging collaboration and networking. Palmer has been exploring and investigating what it means to be an advocate for the arts. Most recently she served on Boston's Arts and Culture Transition Team under Mayor Marty Walsh. Palmer has also worked with organizations like Discover Roxbury, Dorchester Arts Collective and TLC Arts and Sciences Foundation, while showing in exhibitions at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Museum of Fine Arts. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at Boston Arts Academy functioning as the exhibitions instructor. As an educator her goals are to mentor students as they develop as young creators, especially in preparation for college and as artistic professionals.

MARIO ERNESTO QUIROZ-SERVELLÓN, who lives in Cambridge, was born in San Salvador. In 2011, Quiroz was invited to create "Salvadorans, 100,000 immigrant stories." "Peopling America," a 2012 exhibition at Ellis Island, includes his depiction of Dominicans in Jamaica Plain. Also in 2012, he presented several photographic studies, including "Immigrants in New England: An Old American Tradition" and "Domestic Workers: The Invisible Wheels that Empower our Economy." His "Immigrants: A Common Wealth of MA (2013)" is part of the permanent collection of The Archives and Museum of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 2013, he also produced "Travelers: Love Tales from Salvadoran Immigrants" and is now at work on a show for the Fitchburg Art Museum, which looks at Aging Minorities in Massachusetts.

JAMAL THORNE's passion for the visual arts was kindled when he worked as a street artist in the nation's capital. After learning basic techniques in drawing, painting and photography, he wanted more and attended Morgan State in Baltimore, where he studied drawing and photography with Guy Jones, Eric Briscoe and Kenneth Royster. After graduating from Morgan, Thorne moved to Boston where he enrolled in the newly formed cooperative M.F.A. program between Northeastern University and the well-regarded School of the Museum of Fine Arts. During those years, Thorne received the Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA Grant award. Thorne currently lives in Boston and continues to produce work. His art has been shown at the James E. Lewis Museum of Art (Baltimore) and in Boston at Bunker Hill Community College Art Gallery, Gallery 360, Spoke Galley/Medicine Wheel, and the Huret and Specter Gallery.

3:45pm – 4:45pm

May 8 First day theme: New Urban Dreams and Images

New Urban on the Block: Upham's Corner & Dudley in the House

Banjineh “Op” Browne, Boston Public Schools educator and performer with The Foundation Movement, moderator

Angel Babbitt-Harris, Madison Park Development Corporation

Cedric Douglas, artist, Upham's Corner Art Place (UCAP)

Rufus Faulk, visual artist and gallery owner, Gallery RF63

Aziza Robinson-Goodnight, UCAP



LWH

“we need to create **spaces & opportunities** for artists to **create** and **collaborate**”

- Banjineh “Op” Browne

Initial questions

How would you characterize the new urban mix that is coalescing in urban Boston?
Is this thrust in line with or different from national & global trend?

Summary

- The responsibility of the artist is to make people see things differently and vision possibilities for a different world. These days artists also need to engage civically to demand their place in society both politically and economically, which is the only way to demand value and respect and resist gentrification.
- “Radical hospitality” is the concept of making art free for the community while not equating “free” with “cheap”. It is being able to be generous but not exploited.
- Artists must find ways to talk about social issues, bring them to our community, and take art to the streets.

Dr. Barbara Lewis introduced the neighborhoods being discussed in this panel: She mentioned Upham's Corner Art Place (UCAP), the Piano Factory and Hibernian Hall as community spaces to explore.

VIDEO HIGHLIGHT: Moderator Banjineh "Op" Browne opened this panel with Spoken Word, ushering in a revolutionary spirit for the convening.

Banjineh "Op" Browne asked, "what do you feel the responsibility of an artist is?"

Speaking on his role as an artist, Cedric Douglas, of UP Truck, responded, "to make people see things differently" and emphasized that we "need to find new ways to talk about social issues."

A common observation was that groups are not coming together enough in Boston. Douglas offered that "arts, comedy can help engage people in the planning process."

Artist Aziza Robinson-Goodnight, of UCAP, reminisced that there was more local collaboration when the arts budget was higher: at one point, \$22 million for the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Panelist Angel Babbitt-Harris, of Madison Park Development Corporation and Hibernian Hall, spoke to radical hospitality, remarking that arts institutions must also take on some of the responsibility by actively working to be more accessible to up and coming artists.

Robinson-Goodnight said that the responsibility of the artist is much like the role of a lover: to help people see the things they do not see.

Panelist Douglas said his work as a "social interventionist" allows resident participants the opportunity to "engage with low pressure."

Douglas recounted how making one mark on a six foot canvas draped the UP Truck brought people together in Upham's Corner.

Douglas noted that community artists "give their hearts to their community" and the world at large: they gravitate towards making things better, are inspired to try something different, and are empowered to do something creative. Douglas added that when an artist's work is about social issues, the politics comes out in their work and how the work engages with people, especially when an artist brings the work to the people. Their intention "comes out both subconsciously and consciously."

Browne then posed, "How do community artists engage politically?"

Babbitt-Harris contextualized that artists find ways to talk about social issues, bringing the intervention to the community. They "practice radical hospitality: the art we make is 'free' but not 'cheap.'"

Douglas observed, "We get economically exploited as artists; therefore, we must self-sustain. When we have our own economy/ money, we become a threat."

The key is in organizing artists into artist organizations and striving to continue taking art into the streets.



Banjineh "Op" Browne, LWH



Cedric Douglas, LWH



Aziza Robinson-Goodnight,
LWH

Douglas cited an example important to the Uphams Corner area: the bridge allowing access to different parts of Dorchester is in bad condition. Instead of allowing the city to pull it down, people have written petitions to fight for the bridge. In a case like this one, artists can find creative ways to engage the topics that matter to the community. Together with the community, artists can think on specific strategies that speak to problems that a traditional petition may not be able to address. Artistic efforts help remind the community how important something like a bridge is by keeping the topic creatively at the forefront.

Panelist Rufus Faulk, owner of Gallery RF63, also spoke about offering his studio to community for art-making and organizing.

Browne then asked, “As artists, how do we prevent gentrification?”

Douglas answered that as an artist, partnership with community organizations is important. For example, partnering with Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) has allowed him to create work that resists gentrification. DSNI’s work is devoted to resisting displacement. Supporting local artists is part of their process. Organizations like DSNI encourage community artists to “make art that allows the community to take pride in their neighborhood, welcoming visitors to explore while maintaining economic investment and control within the community.”

Preparers’ Notes

- + We must find a balance between organizing for funds and going forward without funds. It is a committed striving that is unfortunately also undervalued, not sustainable, and full of risk-taking. Therefore, community building is crucial: educating members on the value of art in a community’s struggle towards self-determination and self-respect is essential, especially in communities where often there is already insufficient funding.

Bios

BANJINEH “OP” BROWNE, educator with the Boston Public Schools, belongs to the Foundation Movement (FM), a hip hop group known and honored for its commitment to community and for having positive impact, through the arts, in a city with a divided history plagued with violence, racism, segregation, and political corruption. The Urban Music Awards cited the Foundation Movement as the Best Hip Hop Group, and the MIC Hip Hop Awards named FM as Performer of the Year. A long-term Dorchester resident, Browne attended Tufts University and interned at Boston Arts Academy, where he was able to get a grip on how a younger generation is finding refuge and outlet in the arts and creating the new urban pulse of performance in Boston.

ANGEL BABBIT-HARRIS is the Communications Manager for Madison Park Development Corporation (MPDC), a community-based, non-profit organization focused on developing affordable housing, cultivating the arts, and empowering the residents in Roxbury. As part of the many responsibilities that fall under her scope of work at MPDC, Babbitt-Harris works to promote the arts programming that takes place in Hibernian Hall, an organizational and cultural staple in the community since early in the twentieth century. A graduate of Emerson College, Babbitt-Harris was born and raised in Roxbury and currently resides in Dorchester with her husband.

CEDRIC DOUGLAS was commissioned through Design Studio for Social Intervention in Roxbury to connect community and the arts. A social innovator and street artist inspired by graffiti ideology, Douglas transforms abandoned spaces and objects into sites of possibility. His creative process embraces randomness, which he



Angel Babbitt-Harris, LWH



Rufus Faulk, LWH

mines for deeper meaning and significance. Douglas is constantly on the lookout for how to best express the thrust of the everyday. Working out of the Humphrey Street Studios in Uphams Corner, Douglas has championed community art for 20 years. A graduate of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Douglas's lectures and exhibits regionally and nationally. His eye-catching, prize-winning message bus recalls the tap-tap buses that serve as public conveyance in a number of Caribbean and South American cities, showing local genius and demonstrating that art can thrive beyond the museum and the gallery.

RUFUS FAULK, painter and illustrator, maintains a Roxbury studio, and is deeply concerned about the future of community youth. For years, he has coordinated the Gang Mediation and Intervention Program for the Ten Point Coalition. There is little separation between what he sees, understands, preaches, and lives, and what he creates as an engaged person. In his artist statement, he emphasizes that life is the crux of his creativity. To him, the world and the people in it are simultaneously beautiful and cruel. As an activist and an artist, he does not compartmentalize. Art is his language for addressing and putting form to issues that matter. His artistic mission is to awaken thought and feeling and to inspire. His subjects, he says, are drawn from personal experience, whether past or present. He is attuned to the work of other artists, and is constantly learning by the trial-and-error route of studying the technical expertise of artists whose work he admires.

AZIZA ROBINSON-GOODNIGHT is an avid artist, activist, entrepreneur, and community organizer. A former art teacher, Robinson now devotes most of her energy to shaping, reenergizing, and creating systemic, sustainable changes in urban communities. As a member of the Fairmount Cultural Corridor Team, representing her constituency of younger artists eager for more opportunity and inclusion and simultaneously concerned about increasing the health and viability of the community, Robinson regularly made sure everyone stayed on point at meetings and did not veer away from including the artistic voice as a key component in the collective agenda.



CD



CD

New Urban Remix & First Day Networking Reception and Dinner

Excerpt from London Bridgez one-woman show “1974” about being young, gifted, black, and traumatized in Boston in the 1970s. Her colleague June Handy assisted in the performance.

JAMARA LONDON WAKEFIELD is spoken word performer "London Bridgez". Her spoken word performances bridge the worlds of spoken word, literature, hip hop and jazz. In addition to performing poetry, she is currently touring three solo theater plays: "1974" retelling the story of the Boston Public School desegregation; "Will My Thighs Rub In Heaven?" a memoir; and "Rosie" stories about Parchman Farm & Reconstruction in Mississippi. In 2014, London released her third studio album "Children of the Night". A graduate of The New School for Public Engagement in NYC, London is a Masters of Arts 2015 candidate at NYU Tisch School of the Arts where she is studying Performance Studies. She is a lover of cake, literature & equality.

Poetry reading by Jean-Dany Joachim.

JEAN DANY JOACHIM served as Poet Populist of Cambridge, 2009-2011. An author of short stories and poetry, Joachim is also a playwright. Joachim read from his new published collection of poetry, “Crossroads / Chimenkwaze” (2013). He is the director of City Night Readings, a series featuring diverse poetic talents, writers and artists. His work has been published in numerous international and national anthologies and magazines.

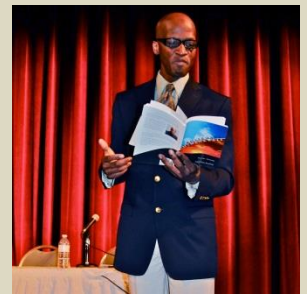
He also read from: *Avec Des Mots* and *Monologue of the Loquacious Dog* (Unpublished)

DINNER

A Caribbean buffet-style dinner, consisting of jerk and BBQ chicken, assorted rice and greens, beef and chicken patties and salads, fruit and pastries, was served in the Strand lobby. Those who stayed until the end were able to continue conversations, prompted by the day’s happenings.



LWH



LWH

CHEMIZ BLANCH LAN

(Pou Jose)

Se mwenmenm
Se mwen k chemiz blanch powèt la
Siman, m dwe pèdi kèk bouton
Kole mwen byen tire nan viwonn kou a
De manch long mwen yo
Byen kouvri bra atis la

Se mwen chemiz blanch sa a
Li chwazi toutan
Se pa chemiz ble misye mete pou l al
travay la
Ni chemiz wouj pou jou manifestasyon yo

Li file m sou li
Enpi l pati avè m
Nan tout okazyon espesyal
Kèlkeswa sezon an

M se chemiz powèt la pi renmen an
M se chemiz blanch lan
M dyayi dyandyan nan mitan lafoul
Pou klere je powèt la
Enpitou m ranmase tout kras.

THE WHITE SHIRT

(For Jose)

It's me
I am the poet's white shirt
I have perhaps lost buttons
My collar stretches around the
neck
My long sleeves cover
The artist's arms

It's me the white one
He chooses always
Not the blue he wears to work
Not the red for protest days

He puts me on
And takes me along
On special occasions
No matter the season

I am the poet's favorite
I am the white shirt
I shine in the crowd
To light his eyes
And I take the stains.

- Jean Dany Joachim, "Crossroads / Chimenkwaze" (2013), collection of poetry

10am – 11am

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

DAY TWO Gathering & Networking Breakfast

On the second day, breakfast also consisted of fruits, breads, coffee and juice.



Julie Hennrikus @JulieHennrikus · May 9



So delicious! ... @HHBakeryCafe catering #NewCulturalBoston - YUMmmmm!

WELCOME

Barbara Lewis, Director, Trotter Institute for the Study of Black History and Culture



“Can we **bring communities together** to share their best, to be culturally and creatively inventive, can we reclaim the **promise** and **possibility** that Boston once had when it was praised as a hotbed of political **daring**, with art and the literary definitely in the mix?”

- Barbara Lewis

“We began our conversations yesterday, and we still have a lot of distance to cover. This isn’t two days and done. The task is much bigger. It is about coming together to create the city we collectively want, a city that takes full advantage of its unique resources, its history, its triumphs, its possibilities. A little about each.

History first. The other day I was walking in Chinatown and I passed a corner. Something pulled my eye upward. It was a plaque. I read it. Near this spot in 1761, it said, a young girl who became Phillis Wheatley was sold. Wheatley was an artist, a poet. Somehow, she defied the odds and achieved the impossible. Sold as a slave, made into a thing without a brain, without a soul, without a future, she landed on arable ground, and her talent was able to flourish. Despite a brilliant beginning, however, she fell prey to an unhappy end. Forgotten after the American Revolution, she died in poverty, along with her children, and no one knows where in Boston she or they are buried.

Now triumph. The nation and the world know how the men and women in this city and in this Commonwealth came together and fought for independence and freedom in the eighteenth century, at the same time that Phillis Wheatley thrived and then died. The Boston Tea Party, I have long thought, was an act of theater that turned real. Men with made up faces and in costume staged a revolt, and that act of resistance ignited a change that took and became permanent. Possibilities. As a city, Boston has had its wins and losses. From the outside, it is seen as the city of

beginnings, where America took root, but it is also seen as a city of entrenched parochialisms. Even though a new crop of freshmen comes here year after year to get the best education possible, they tend to leave once they get their sheepskins. The city is too quiet, they say. Its streets close up much too early. It is not a vibrant, happening place to be. Can we change that perception? Can we spark an artistic ambience in Boston that gets the attention of the world and that draws people here for more than their college years? Can we bring communities together to share their best, to be culturally and creatively inventive, can we reclaim the promise and possibility that Boston once had when it was praised as a hotbed of political daring, with art and the literary definitely in the mix? Can it become a world class city that is creative meeting ground for the world? First, we have to begin with the local. So we are starting at the Strand, which is a laboratory of the local.

And after the lights are turned off this evening and we all go back home, we will continue to think and plan and come together and talk and hone our creativity in service to the collective, in service to the city, in its best, most inclusive sense.”

11am - 12pm

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

KEYNOTE

Envisioning the New Cultural City and Taking Greater Boston into the Artistic Vanguard

Malia Lazu, Future Boston



Malia Lazu, LWH

“We must **engage** in radical disruptive work: **I am willing** therefore,
Boston is willing.”

- Malia Lazu

Summary

- In order to thrive in our neighborhoods, we need to accept the responsibility of helping shape how we want our neighborhoods to be.
- We can take advantage of the trend of development and money going into it. Let us “inundate City Hall with as many ideas as there are dollars” being spent on development.
- “We do not have to wait for the powers that be to get what we need. It is up to us to get the visibility we want/need and validate one another and ourselves. Government can join us if they would like, but they don’t have to for us to succeed.”
- “How do we create a movement with nothing but people, with little political power and even less money?” We must work on our individual agency and co-create with one another. We can align ourselves with people who have a shared vision.
- We are here to co-create a collective agenda; it is how we act it out in our daily lives what counts. “A plan is both useless and essential.” “We are the ones we have been waiting for.”
- Boston gets stuck in tradition. Why do we get stuck? How do we get unstuck? “We must create our own radical disruptive work.” We must get ourselves to our own tipping point.
- Boston has all the pieces needed “to find her 21st century culture.” We need to support the emerging vanguard. We need to support each other.

Malia Lazu opened the second day professing that we must have conversations on envisioning in our neighborhoods. Boston is on the eve of cultural change: we must “take Boston into an artistic vanguard.” With 16 years of organizing experiencing, Lazu attested that “we must envision and create spaces physically and emotionally with intention ... This city’s 21st century organizing shows readiness ... Changing a city is not difficult: it is an easy and fun thing to do.”

She asked, “what might a new Boston mean?” and applied her work with Future Boston Alliance as an example of visioning. Future Boston is two years along with two people as staff.

Through her work she has been able to demonstrate that nourishing and cultivating particular ecosystems help to catalyze cultural renaissances.

Future Boston works on three ecosystems:

Assemble (party program) is an informal yet engaged way for artists to meet and sell art. This program was a response to anecdotal data that conveyed that many Boston residents feel there is a lack of fun in Boston.

Accelerate (entrepreneurship program) coaches artist entrepreneurs on how to run businesses “with a heart” in six-month internships. Twenty-five artists have gone through the program, funded by angel investors. Nine of the 20 business proposals have launched.

Activate (public policy program). “We can forge ahead two-thirds of the way without changing a thing. So let us forge ahead and set up for the change.”

Though Boston is a permission-based city, Lazu urged that we do not need government as much as we think we do. We must remain aspirational and reject this city’s cynicism. We have always had the power to change; it is Boston after all. It is at the heart of progressive change.

Boston gets stuck in minority/majority traditions. These do not serve us. Common scripts include: “Boston will never. Could never. Would never.” - “I’m scared to push back against it.” - “Boston does not support its own.”

The city operates on the idea of centralized power with the mayor as grantor, but we need to reject this model: “it is not up to him. We do not need permission. After all, we are the citizens. Some of our neighborhoods are at risk. We need to stand up. We merely need to do it.”

So, how do we create a movement with no money and no power?

Individual agency. We must accept personal responsibility – “it is up to me to act differently every day - to remain aspirational.” We must validate one another and ourselves. We must co-create with one another. There is no silver bullet.

“The city’s bark is worse than its bite. We must engage in radical disruptive work: I am willing therefore, Boston is willing.”

We must look at alternate ideas and trends. Boston is a majority/minority city: it is the most international city with a quarter of the residents speaking different languages. It is celebrated as one of the most progressive and youthful cities. We must move forward with this knowledge. “These trends only mean something: effective people take advantage; we as artists must take advantage.”

Future Boston has already begun with an impressive track record: it was Future Boston that pushed for the late-night transit service that began earlier this year. It is also working to mobilize under-represented voters through MassVOTE, its civic engagement initiative.

“If we want our main streets to be the heart of intersections, we need to streamline permitting and licensing (i.e. liquor licenses cost \$500k).” We have the talent for the businesses, but we cannot be successful without the permit and licenses.

Hundreds of millions of dollars go into developing neighborhoods we have been in our whole lives. As the creative class, “must take responsibility and create visioning spaces.” The city and its developers cannot do this by themselves. “As keepers of truth, we must help hold onto the places we are scared of losing.”

At this point, Lazu made a nod to Discover Roxbury for its great work.

So let us ally ourselves with a shared vision and co-create a collective agenda; not as words on paper but how we act in our everyday lives. Planning is essential. Plans save time moving forward. We must come together to see humanity in each other.

Quoting Sweet Honey in the Rock, “we are the ones we have been waiting for.”

Like the Piano Factory urges, we need to know our own stories.

“Either we go up together or we go down together. Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness.” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Preparers’ Notes

- + Everything has to be done with care, thoughtfulness, sensitivity, and courage. When we call something out, we must research in depth and produce facts that we can then interpret for re-visioning. Our work must be rooted in the uncovering of history and struggle.
- + To prevent being co-opted, artists must organize for the long-haul, not just for the short-term.

Bio

After completing a two-year fellowship at MIT, Malia Lazu joined Future Boston with over two decades of experience in grassroots activism, political advocacy, and civic engagement. In 2011, Lazu became Future Boston’s Executive Director. She also serves as the chief operations officer, credited for taking Future Boston from concept to reality. Lazu is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the organization’s strategic planning, program development, fundraising, and reporting to the Board of Directors. The passion and success of Lazu’s work has earned her a reputation as one of the most insightful and critical organizers of her generation, and has caught the attention of MTV, Showtime, ABC-TV’s Chronicle, Fox News, and print publications such as Newsweek, The Boston Globe, and Boston Magazine. In addition to her youth advocacy work, Lazu has managed campaigns for numerous tastemakers including Grammy Award-winner and famed Civil-Rights Activist Harry Belafonte, novelist Walter Mosley, and Peter Lewis, philanthropist and Democratic Party donor.

12:15pm – 1:15pm

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

The New Urban Mix: Antecedents and Futures Roundtable

Pacey Foster, UMass Boston, hip hop historian and collector, moderator

David Dower, ArtsEmerson

Julie Hennrikus, StageSource

Abe Rybeck, The Theater Offensive



LWH

"Boston remains a very **divided city**"

- Pacey Foster

Initial question

How have you been involved in the arts to date and what artistic and cultural future do you anticipate in Greater Boston?

Summary

- The hip hop world in Boston is still clearly divided.
- The fringe theater community has exploded in the last 20 years.
- We have a role as citizen artists. It is our jobs to break barriers. We must be radically inclusive of who is part of our communities, mindful of why people might not feel included in the conversation and spaces.
- What can gatekeepers do to help? What can someone who comes with many privileges do to help? What are our responsibilities? There are people in organizations making decisions about who is in and who is out: We must sit with them. We must talk to the people in charge, the gatekeepers, and keep talking.
- If we feel awkward, how do we connect? Artists make connections.
- How do we bridge these divisions? It is about organizing and following up.
- Cultural institutions are set up as fortresses protecting their interests. If we maintain these behaviors, we can easily jeopardize our efforts to organize. It is in the interest of institutions to co-opt this opportunity.

Moderator Pacey Foster, of UMass Boston Hip Hop Studies "Hip-Hop in the Hub," asks, "what is the new urban mix?"

He observed that though Boston offers restricted liquor licenses and no after-hours night clubs, "the fringe has still managed to swell, and in fact, explode." We must make this city a better place; we must make sure we can still live here.

David Dower, of ArtsEmerson, remarked, "Our great strength is abundance, yet we are living in scarcity. Why is that? ... I don't accept that Downtown Boston was redeveloped for some and not others."

Abe Rybeck, of The Theater Offensive, countered, "I love your positivity yet I don't share it." He elaborated that there are barriers: many do not feel welcome in the city, or included. There are so many events he has attended, where he is left wondering, "we just couldn't find a good black artist?"

Rybeck offered "maybe this panel should be called 'what can gatekeepers do to help?' "

Dower offered that "with social media we can break down barriers:" a job of public institutions is to break down barriers by being "radically inclusive."

Rybeck observed that the "intersectionality of people's day to day lives is dramatic."

Foster affirmed that the "urban mix is a period of being awkward."

Rybeck cautioned that without appropriate assessment of power by public institutions, "artists can be co-opted."¹

In considering the question, "why are artists working on the fringe separate from those established in the art world?" Foster noted that due to economic concerns, artists are often interested in short-term successes, living budget to budget. However, organized, we can look into sacrificing opportunities in order to prevent being co-opted or becoming co-opters.

Julie Hennrikus, of StageSource, emphasized that, organized, we can shift out of the "zero sum" mentality; "this unique moment will be squandered if we cannot come into it."

Rybeck responded that we have to change the narrative. The issue of acknowledging power dynamics in the interaction between artists and public institutions is separate and must not be rushed over to capture the magic of this new moment. Boston does not look for its own; therefore, we need to accept two Bostons divided along economic, class, and race privilege.

There are little things we can do to spot opportunities and support our own in Boston: a shift in mindset and re-dedicating ourselves to collaborating and operating from a place of fullness instead of lack. Two opportunities we can actualize: make spaces available and include opening acts. Dower informed the audience that ArtsEmerson has begun featuring local artists for its opening acts as a way for an institution to make spaces available and accessible.



Pacey Foster, LWH



David Dower, LWH



Abe Rybeck, LWH

Boston's theater community is welcoming to its members. The worlds of visual artists and musicians operate very differently.

However, at the institutional level, we can create change. We must find the gatekeepers, educate them, and introduce them to artists for mutual strategic opportunities.

Thoughts, Q&A

Audience members recommended reaching out to other cities with effective programs, such as The Second City in Chicago and the Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative, and asking them about their structural changes over time.

Other recommendations included supporting more public art, such as, pop up art, guerilla theater, political art, a theater marathon.

Preparers' Notes

1. Boston's larger arts institutions must certainly work with local artists, but contingent on owning their power, which has not been done, as alluded to by Rybeck.

Also,

+ There still needs to be a dedicated set of conversations on the making of a sustainable creative economy as inherent to and part of the radical strategizing articulated in this panel conversation.



Julie Hennrikus, LWH

Bios

PACEY FOSTER is an associate professor at UMass Boston, College of Management, where he is a member of the Organizations and Social Change research group. His research focuses on brokerage and social networks in creative industries and the labor and employment dynamics of creative clusters. Foster has used social network analysis to understand how nightclub talent buyers use their personal ties to search for and select musical acts. His current research focuses on regional dynamics in the United States film and television industry. In addition, he recently received a grant to begin archiving a collection of unpublished artist demos and radio show tapes documenting Boston's earliest local rap music radio show, Lecco's Lemma. His research has been published in *The Journal of Management*, *Regional Studies*, and *Work and Occupations*. A lifelong musical omnivore, Foster is a DJ and guitar player with a deep love of music and vinyl records that he catalogs under the title, library of vinyl.

DAVID DOWER is Director of Artistic Programs at ArtsEmerson. Before joining ArtsEmerson in 2012, David Dower spent six seasons as Associate Artistic Director at Arena Stage, where he directed the Artistic Development team, founded the American Voices New Play Institute (AVNPI), and co-founded HowlRound, now at Emerson. He served as the artistic producer on Arena's offerings from 2007 to 2011, including the Tony/Pulitzer-winning *Next to Normal*. Prior to joining Arena he was the founding Artistic Director of The Z Space (a theatre development center focused on new plays) and a founder of its predecessor, the producing ensemble The Z Collective, both in San Francisco. He has directed plays around the country, including at Arena Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Seattle's Intiman and dozens of world premiere productions in the Bay Area. You can follow Dower on Twitter (@ddower) and on HowlRound.com.

JULIE HENNRİKUS, Executive Director at StageSource, a non-profit organization focused on the development of theater, is keenly aware of the financial and the aesthetic bottom line. StageSource provides leadership and services to advance the business of the show on state. The organization seeks to unite theatre artists, theatre companies, and related organizations in vision and goals that help the community to realize its

greatest artistic potential. Before taking on her current role, Hennrikus honed her expertise at several cultural organizations, in colleges, universities, and museums. At Emerson Stage, Hennrikus was the General Manager and Director of Marketing. At the Museum of Fine Arts and at the Institute of Contemporary Art, she held revenue-side positions. At the Sanders Theater at Harvard, she created and grew the box office operation.

ABE RYBECK founded The Theater Offensive 25 years ago and has been a staple of Boston theater ever since. The forte at Offensive is staging and celebrating “the diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender lives in art so bold it breaks through personal isolation, challenges the status quo, and builds thriving communities.” In addition to producing plays, The Theater Offensive also serves as a development environment for new theatrical work. Its mission is helping to build and strengthen community through education, outreach, and political activism. Every year since 1992, the Theater Offensive mounts the *Out on the Edge Festival* of Queer Theater, which showcases new performing arts works by queer artists from around the world.

1:30pm – 2:30pm

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

New Urban Energies: Arts Administrators Roundtable

Joan Lancourt, board chair, Underground Railway Theater, moderator

Cathy Carr Kelly, Central Square Theater

Michael Dowling, Medicine Wheel Productions

Jennifer Hughes, Cantata Singers

Derek Lumpkins, Discover Roxbury

Alda Marshall Witherspoon, arts administrator, the Strand



LWH

“invest fully and recognize what is/isn't working”

- Derek Lumpkins

Initial questions

What do you enjoy most as an arts administrator?

How would you increase the city's cultural arts collaborations?

Summary

- Community building is not marketing; it takes time. It is difficult to make space to build community, but it is vital, and the only way to achieve it is to invest in it.
- How do we choose which opportunities to pursue when so many arise every day? There is a tendency to be reactive instead of proactive.
- We must rethink collaboration and think outside the box; collaboration goes beyond staging a gallery show together.
- Up-and-coming artists also need to mentor the established.

Moderator Joan Lancourt of Underground Railway Theater and panelist Michael Dowling of Medicine Wheel Productions offered that a goal of the convening be to encourage public arts organizations to partner with each other in order to apply art as a threshold for community building. Over time these types of partnerships allow for responses to community concerns with cultural action.

Michael Dowling, of Medicine Wheel Productions, asked us to be mindful that "when [we] ask a group to collaborate on something outside of their mission, that's not collaboration."

Cathy Carr Kelly, of Central Square Theater, envisioned "thinking of the Emerald Necklace as design model to connect the arts in Greater Boston."

Jennifer Hughes, of Cantata Singers, urged patience, cautioning that we cannot approach community building as we might marketing: "it takes time, trust and doesn't happen overnight."

Alda Marshall Witherspoon and her colleague Melodi Greene, of The Strand Theatre, indicated that a prime challenge for cultural institutions is to stay ahead of the needs of the building and the community.

Challenges as producers include connecting with the community, corporate sponsors, and staying relevant in the community. As a cultural institution, the Strand finds that, to ensure producers at different levels receive equal treatment, its leaders must step in and manage the reception of the work presented.

Another big challenge is planning sufficient time to produce a show.

Carr Kelly shared that a challenge faced is that the opportunity to collaborate is limited by almost non-existent time. She added that collaborations in themselves are challenging, because it takes time to develop individual independent artists with whom to collaborate.

Derek Lumpkins, of Discover Roxbury, described that a challenge for Roxbury's cultural network of ten non-profit organizations is gathering monthly to discuss various collaborations. They consider how they can each contribute marketing, food and venues. However, since the organizations have been running into issues with their project timelines, they decided to make their timelines more realistic by re-scaling and thinking longer-term. They understood their limitations and planned around them.

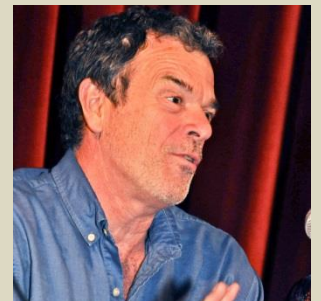
Lumpkins provides dynamic programming where residents and visitors can engage in the history and culture of Roxbury. His work features resident artists, in collaboration with local businesses and city institutions to bring art to the city. For example, Discover Roxbury hosts walking and bike tours of Roxbury (i.e. Radical Roxbury Bike Tour on July 26, 2014). Such pathways create receptivity to creativity.

Marshall Witherspoon always asks producers to identify "who knows? who cares?" – meaning, who knows about the work and who would care about the work.

Carr Kelly noted that both Underground Railway Theater and the Nora Theatre Company, both resident companies at Central Square Theater (CST) with 55 years



Joan Lancourt, LWH



Michael Dowling, LWH



Cathy Carr Kelly, LWH

combined experience, were itinerant companies before they joined to build the CST.

Its project, “Roots of Liberty,” performed in the Spring of 2013, was two years in the making, and because they had received substantial funding, it was free to the public. Well over 1,000 people turned out to see it, and it had an enormous positive impact on the Haitian community.

CST also participated in “The Emancipated Century,” launched in the Summer/Fall of 2013. It was a set of 10 August Wilson reading performed at 5 partnering theaters throughout Boston. It was designed and produced by Barbara Lewis and implemented by the Performing Arts Dept. of UMass Boston, chaired by Robert Lublin, and was very well received by all who attended.

Jennifer Hughes remarked that some institutions design models that attempt to go beyond the traditional audience: The Cantata Singers are working on their 14th commission of new music for choir and orchestra. Three of their commissions, entitled Slavery Documents, “examine the human condition at moments of tragedy, challenge, and moral outrage, [these are] works from living composers that explore themes such as slavery in America and the Holocaust.”

Working beyond tradition requires visionary leadership that can create and sustain an environment supporting innovation.

Hughes asserted that community building is not marketing, as it is not focused around single events but instead a strategic, holistic investment in the community.¹

Twitter Feed

Emily Ruddock delineated that “the difference between collaborations and coalitions is subtle but vitally important.”

Charles McEnerney exclaimed that Art Connection’s service to place donated original art at Boston’s social service agencies” was a “cool idea” – also affirming that the “shoutout to mentoring” at the convening as necessary and significant.

Thoughts, Q&A

Haywood Fennell, Playwright/Author and co-host of “Speaking About,” a Boston Neighborhood Network Television show, asked that we pressure the mayor for systemic appreciation of public education, value of youth life, and love for community² and integrate this work into curricula.

We need to organize together as a politically-engaged, community-based artist organization that advocates for harnessing youth’s creative energy in constructive ways and thereby remove them from violence³

We must propose a manifesto that develops cultural visioning for Boston at the small, medium, and large scale to match the various sizes of arts organizations in the city. The needs of organizations at all levels are not known transparently; we must engage in candid conversation.

Libbie Shufro, former President and CEO, Boston Center for the Arts, said that



Alda Marshall Witherspoon, LWH



Derek Lumpkins, LWH



Jennifer Hughes, LWH

Discover Roxbury ought to be cloned.

Preparers' Notes

1. One way to celebrate the different arts organization non-hierarchically is to organize festivals that align organizations by years in existence, so that, for example, one festival showcases work by groups that have existed for less than five years. It would be a way to: showcase the effort and time that go into developing productions; celebrate the tremendous work the various and diverse Boston arts scenes generate; and inspire newer groups while motivating peers groups to keep aspiring.
2. Engaging community work into public school curricula would also help open a conversation on the value of arts and its labor.
3. Such collaborative projects around youth would give visibility to arts organizations in very public ways and not only help with membership but also help the public see how art sustains and builds Boston's culture, much of which is taken for granted.

Moderator's Summary

"Issues related to collaboration include finding the time, but even more critical – what is the 'exchange'? Is the collaboration mission critical, or peripheral? It often requires visionary leadership, and it needs a long enough arc of time to allow for building a relationship and learning together. Too often, it is undertaken in an episodic fashion, event by event, which doesn't allow for any real learning together. It is reactive rather than proactive, and the organizational resources are frequently too unequal. To succeed, it needs some big ideas, visionary leadership, at least a year-long arc, a focus on community building, real listening, and a mindset that doesn't think of it as marketing. One powerful visual metaphor was to think of a multi organizational collaboration like an 'Emerald necklace connecting a string of neighborhoods.' Collaborations also require us to rethink our relationship to our communities, even how we define our communities, and how we build trust – between the institutions and the communities, and between the institutions and the artists. Often neither artists nor institutions really know how to work WITH communities, so it can be a complex learning process. Therefore, you have to be in it for the long haul to make it work." – Joan Lancourt

Bios

JOAN LANCOURT chairs the Underground Railway Theater Board of Directors. The author of "Why Boards Don't Need to Be Bored," which was recently published in Howlround, Dr. Lancourt is passionate about and well-versed in the subject of good organizational governance. Her career spans work in the public, not-for-profit, and corporate worlds. For ten years, she was an Executive Coach at the Kennedy School, and has held corporate positions as a management and organizational consultant, nationally and internationally. She also has experience in health care cost containment, mental health, foster care and public welfare. With a Ph.D. from the Heller School, she is a recognized author of books on community organizing, organizational management and development, and leading organizational change. A long-time progressive political activist, her hobbies include collecting art, photography, cooking, travel, and antiquing.



Haywood Fennell, LWH



Libbie Shufro, LWH

CATHY CARR KELLY, Executive Director of Central Square Theater (CST), was, for eleven years, the managing director of Underground Railway Theater (URT), which joins the Nora under the CST umbrella. The capital campaign for the new CST venue in Cambridge was under her auspices, and she also managed the construction project. As the founding managing director of the *Women on Top* Theater Festival of New Works, running from 2000 to 2007, she oversaw the creation of scores of world premieres and seven commissioned plays. In addition, she is a founding director of the award-winning *I Was There* project, an interdisciplinary oral history residency for elementary schools created in partnership with the Brown University John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities. Carr Kelly, who has an MBA from Suffolk, often advises theaters and state arts councils in public relations, small business management, and marketing.

MICHAEL DOWLING, founder of Medicine Wheel Productions (MWP), has been making public art that responds to and engages with the natural environment for over 25 years. MWP's mission is encouraging individuals to pay attention to and access the hidden world through art. The organization invites people to gain awareness of themselves and their communities by joining in the creation of enduring, site-specific public art projects that emphasize individual and collective experience. Two key threads of Dowling's art practice and the work created by Medicine Wheel Productions are promoting healing and addressing grief on individual, collective, and community levels. The annual Medicine Wheel Installation for World AIDS Day at the Boston Center for the Arts Cyclorama and the Tonnes Project in Ireland are just two examples of Dowling's important and very much needed artistic agenda. Medicine Wheel Productions is based in South Boston.

JENNIFER HUGHES is Executive Director of Cantata Singers, responsible for the overall management and oversight of Cantata Singers' finances, development, operations, artistic performances, educational outreach and long-range planning as the group's chief administrative officer. Prior to joining Cantata Singers, Hughes was Director of Publicity and Coordination for the Arts at Wellesley College, where she led the promotion of the College's public arts and cultural events, and ran the Music Department's Concert Series. Hughes' history of leadership in the Greater Boston community includes serving as board co-chair of Wellesley College Friends of Art, Boston, Association, as well as a board member of Wellesley College Hillel Alumnae Association and Greater Boston Choral Consortium, a corporation member of the Boston Early Music Festival, and a member of the Spaulding Hospital Young Professional Group.

DEREK LUMPKINS is the Executive Director of Discover Roxbury, an artist-run, non-profit organization that promotes civic engagement and economic development through tours, events, and school visits, while leveraging the arts, culture, and history of Roxbury. During his tenure, Lumpkins has overseen the growth and expansion of Roxbury Open Studios; instituted the annual Black & White fundraiser; branded and created pop-up galleries in Dudley Square and on Beacon Hill; and helped design Roxbury heritage tours. A working photographer, he also serves on the board of directors for Egleston Square Main Streets, belongs to the ArtsMorpheus steering committee, and was a member of Mayor Walsh's arts & culture transition team. A Bostonian with international and social media flair, Derek is a Boston Latin School graduate, who did his undergraduate work in English at Swarthmore and completed his graduate studies in London.

ALDA MARSHALL WITHERSPOON is a lecturer, poet, playwright, performing artist and producer. The Director of Public and Private Partnerships for the Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism and Special Events Department for the City of Boston, Witherspoon has produced and performed with noted political figures President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State John Kerry; civil rights torch bearers Martin Luther King III and Julian Bond as well as a host of performing artists including legends Pattie Labelle and Peabo Bryson. Witherspoon also acts as chair of the non-profit, Witherspoon Institute (WIN), where she is a noted etiquette expert teaching children 7-18 years old leadership, etiquette and arts development featuring ballroom dance. Currently, WIN is co-producing her new theatrical works "Garden of the Universe, the Rise of Georgia Bellar" which will be showcased in 2015 to celebrate Witherspoon's 22nd anniversary as playwright.

2:45pm – 3:45pm

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

New Urban Remedies: Healing the Body Physical and Cultural

Jacqui Lindsay, creator, Innovation by Design,
moderator

Courtney Grey, Trauma Specialist, Boston Public
Health Commission

Chioma Nnaji, UMass Medical

Mariama White-Hammond, Project HIP-HOP

Matt Wilson, MassCreative

Erica Sigal, Dance in the Schools



LWH

"Broken communities are made of **broken individuals**. When you work with the individual, you can **heal community**."

- Chioma Nnaji

Initial question

How can the arts contribute to righting the equilibrium in the city, community, and country?

Summary

- How can we make sure that the arts are spread across equally everywhere?
- Which of us is the gentrifier? People in general and artists in particular can be gentrifying agents. Artists can make people comfortable to move into their neighborhood.
- Our art has to be connected to specific efforts of history and organizing, to open up new conversations.
- How do we bring arts back into the community?
- Youth and Education:
 - A role of artists is to help young people find their voice (and develop the skills and talents necessary).
 - When we teach people to be artists, we may actually change the world.
 - Young people often find a human mentor through the arts, the person who can be the support they need.

Please see Addendum Two at the end of this report for an Op-Ed by Jacqui Lindsay and Libbie Shufro, former president and CEO, Boston Center for the Arts.

Moderator Jacqui Lindsay, of Innovation by Design, asked, “How can the arts contribute to understanding what being in equilibrium as community looks like? Why is this assessment important? What stops us in this city?”

The role of the artist is to find voice and hold the neglected community spaces. We can bring art to campaigns we feel are important to folks who are community organizers.

Artists help us understand the history and life cycle beyond viewership. For example, art can help convey how the Big Dig caused our current fare increases and recent confrontation between our youth and the city in demonstrations requesting the city to honor a promise to decrease youth transportation fare.

There is plenty of research on the importance of arts; however, these knowledge sets are devalued and thus undermined. The people who cut funding must know, but as citizens we must mobilize to fight for the arts in the city. We must also make art despite the restrictions.

Courtney Grey, from the Boston Public Health Commission, responded that there is a lack of equity in the city. For example, he has the opportunity and means to take a yoga class to recover from trauma. But asks, “will arts engagement be equally spread across health programs?”

Chioma Nnaji, of UMass Medical, asked us to address what creates inequity in a study of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and economic disparity. She recommended that community theater, such as Boal’s forum theater, is a strategy for unpacking our own privileges and beginning the healing process. Work in the community such as this facilitates an awareness of African diasporic history in Boston. It helps restore community equilibrium and brings dignity.

Chioma Nnaji observed that “broken communities are made of broken individuals,” offering that “when [we] work with the individual [we] can heal community.”

Mariama White-Hammond, of Project HIP-HOP, noted how artists can unwittingly become gentrifying agents. “Our work allows other people to want to live in our communities. As people of greater economic means move in, they drive up the cost of living and begin to displace the people who have lived in these neighborhoods for years and whom they do not want as neighbors.”

Further, there is little solidarity between the arts and culture in community versus “the arts out there” - the difference between a mural on a building and a wall painting at the MFA. White-Hammond urged that we “move from the ‘me’ to the ‘we.’” – that we need to bridge this gap and distrust in order to allow for effective mobilization, because “art cannot do its work in a vacuum.”

Grey affirmed that the “arts are required for human development” – that “when we teach people to be artists, we may actually change the world.”

Lindsay offered that “when art is separated out from communities in which it is integral, those communities suffer most.”

Lindsay then asked, “What do you think needs to happen to make a vision for arts in Boston?”¹



Jacqui Lindsay, LWH



Courtney Grey, LWH



Chioma Nnaji, LWH

White-Hammond offered, “We need to empower people to believe that these institutions belong to them.” All we should need is a resident ID and fee to enter cultural buildings. Even getting into the building can be intimidating. Therefore, institutions need to be more welcoming. “We must be able to visit institutions as if we already own them. Because we do own them.”

Independent arts function separately, apart from the arts industry, and when we add social justice, we wield power.

Grey observed that by performing, dreaming, and dancing, we are “freeing slaves tonight,” an homage to Harriet Tubman’s spirit to just do.”

Thoughts, Q&A

Lino Delgado, of FloorLords Crew, demanded more respect for artists. He observed that artists receive more respect outside of the city.²

White-Hammond recommended that artist institutions be connected to the government: “funding that comes from the people ensures that people have more ownership to the art.”

Public spaces have become increasingly privatized. Artists must know more about tax policies that redistribute public spaces. We must push for a participatory budget for the arts; Boston is a wealthy city.

Delgado urged we need to help future generations see that it is not about being a “big artist,” but about being a healing one by giving back to community.

Daniel Devoe tweeted that “too much formality stops innovation.”

Emily Ruddock inquired, “Thinking about makers spaces as a launching point, what would a co-op model of art look like?”

Preparers’ Notes

1. Boston Public Schools has greatly removed arts from education and efforts to increase arts education mostly come from outside groups or individual school. This trend by BPS negatively affects communities in lower-socioeconomic brackets who are mostly reliant on public schools for education. Without the arts, children have less opportunity to channel their feelings and experiences in creative and expressive ways and are less likely to appreciate the culture of resistance and creation in history. Youth have less constructive ways to express their feelings and are left more vulnerable to criminalization. We need to mobilize public pressure to place arts back into public education. Additionally, this allows the city to take advantage of the low value of arts by replacing art during school hours with out-of-school activities since teaching artists hired on a short-term basis receive less benefits.
2. Talent in Boston is taken for granted. Artists must unite to demand a practice of livable wages and the maintenance of property value at livable rates in the neighborhoods in which we live.



Mariama White-Hammond,
LWH



Erica Sigal, LWH



Matt Wilson, LWH

Bios

JACQUI LINDSAY is the founder and principal of Innovation by Design, an organizational development consulting firm, with more than thirty years of experience, which specializes in organizations, communities, and leaders committed to social and systems change. As our world becomes ever more interdependent, Lindsay's work focuses increasingly on supporting diverse groups of people to come together across boundaries, social, territorial, organizational. Her experience within and across organizations and communities is that authentic breakthroughs in community building and systems learning are what produce the most profound breakthroughs and innovation in their work. She is committed to the development of a world enriched by what diverse groups of people produce when they are supported to think and learn together, discover common ground, and work together to create the future they want.

COURTNEY GREY directs Trauma Services for the Boston Public Health Commission, where he serves youth and families suffering from disaster, personal and public. Grey uses indigenous arts and healing practices to help poor and disenfranchised people. For the National Institute of Mental Health, he directed the study "Understanding Recurrent Injury in Young Black Men." Grey also co-founded Kilombo Novo, an Uphams Corner-based group that practices Capoeira Angola, the Afro-Brazilian martial arts and community-building practice that helped countless Africans escape slavery and recover from it. After witnessing unequal access to arts and entertainment offerings in Boston, Grey formed Bohemia, a multicultural audience development effort that diversified audiences and donor bases, while increasing revenue for institutions such as the Wang Center, and created the city's longest running multicultural dance event, Soul Revival.

CHIOMA NNAJI includes theater, dance, and social justice in her health practice. Trained as a dancer and drawn to the healing potential of theater, she became a community activist, a role she has embraced for the past ten years. Her focus is on mobilizing communities of color to fight epidemic conditions. Currently Program Director for the Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC) in Boston, Nnaji is also on the staff of the UMass Medical Center for Health Equity Intervention Research (CHEIR), which offers health training to underserved groups. A few years ago, she helped start AWARE, a social justice and health theater ensemble stressing community health issues. Nnaji continues to explore and live the physical, mental, and spiritual principles of theater, African dance and music as a means for social change and is committed to bringing the voice and needs of racial/ethnic communities to the table.

MARIAMA WHITE-HAMMOND, Executive Director of Project HIP-HOP, first got involved with the organization when she was still in high school and stayed as board member until assuming this role in 2001. As a poet, singer, former dancer and amateur hip hop historian, White-Hammond is dedicated to developing the pedagogy and practice of cultural organizing. She is particularly committed to equipping young people to become dedicated, informed and strategic cultural agents. For her work at Project HIP-HOP, she received the 2004 Roxbury Founder's Day Award and along with youth at PHH received the 2005 Boston Celtics "Heroes Among Us" Award. Mariama is also involved with a number of other organizations in Boston including the SE/LR Youthworkers Alliance, FOCUS and at her church Bethel AME.

MATT WILSON currently directs MASSCreative, the advocacy voice for the arts and cultural community in Massachusetts, and is creating a grassroots network of arts and cultural leaders and supporters to build the political strength of the sector. As the National Director of the field staff for MoveOn.org from 2005-2006, Wilson helped develop and implement the strategy behind MoveOn.org's successful 2006 *Call for Change* program that helped the Democrats take back Congress. As the Director of Toxics Action Center from 1989 to 2005, Wilson built the organization from scratch to a New England-wide resource for hundreds of neighborhoods working to protect themselves from pollution threats. Wilson has worked on campaigns on health care privatization, corporate control of water issues, voter engagement issues, and local tax issues as well as several senatorial campaigns in New England.

4pm –5pm

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

Performing, Dreaming, and Dancing the New Cultural City Roundtable

Terri Brown, Boston Dance Alliance and former programmer for Roxbury Film Festival, moderator.

Angela Counts, filmmaker and playwright
Lino Delgado, FloorLords Crew
Adrienne Hawkins, Impulse Dance Company
Mark VanDerzee, Company One



LWH

“how do we **stay connected** and stay **committed** and **inspired?**”

- Angela M. Counts

Initial questions

How can an innovative arts and culture focus enrich Greater Boston’s urban tapestry?
What are the bars to cultural innovation in Greater Boston?

Summary

- We need to function in a mentoring capacity for our youth, so they can develop into fully engaged citizens beyond their particular talents.
- There was a discussion on the word “urban”: “Urban” is a “coded” word and takes on different meanings depending on who says it.
- We need to be creative and generate multiple approaches to inclusion and access.

Moderator Terri Brown, who is on the board of Boston Dance Alliance, stated that artists must be entrepreneurs. Lino Delgado, of FloorLords Crew, recalled how as a dancer he was also compelled to learn the business. He emphasized that we must teach our youth that “the world is wide” and provide them a stable place to grow and learn.

Brown then inquired “How can innovative centers for arts culture enrich the urban tapestry?”

In response to the use of the word “urban,” Delgado indicated he dislikes the word and rejects color.¹ In agreement with Delgado, Mark Abby VanDerzee, of Company One, acknowledged that the word “urban,” when referring only to certain communities, is loaded with racial implications that can be foolish and hurtful.



Terri Brown, LWH

Filmmaker and playwright Angela Counts clarified that “‘urban’ as coded language means a lot of things and depends on who says it. Ultimately ‘urban’ means opportunity.”²

In response to the question, VanDerzee observed that proximity intersects opportunity in many communities.

VanDerzee posited that it is the mission-driven organizations that embrace the crossroads of arts and social change that successfully create social change and serve their communities seriously.

Delgado urged a look to help youth realize they have “more than just one gift,” that they can be more than just a dancer, rapper, or singer.³ Education, training, and mentorship are of utmost importance for youth entering the 21st century workforce: they must train to be adaptable, identify their transferable skills, provide good customer service, and have the knowledge to become productive healthy and happy citizens. Delgado reflected, “In the original form of hip hop there is so much peace, that’s what kept me out of trouble.”

Brown then posed: “Knowing that Boston is a powerhouse city, and recognizing we can cultivate mentorship, how do we have more impact on the quality of the youth cultural experience?”

VanDerzee indicated that “arts organizations must be proactive about bringing people in and making themselves accessible.” Youth must have access to cultural institutions they can treat “as their own.” The idea behind such programming is to get students to go into city.

Counts advocated that not only can we use technology more proactively, but also, that, since we all have strengths and deficits, we need to start tapping into each other’s resources.

She also affirmed that “we need to listen to the youth of Boston, let knowledge trickle upwards.” In NYC, “the youth are it.” They have access to cultural institutions.

Adrienne Hawkins, of Impulse Dance Company, offered that youth must be shown something to see it. These programs help to build appreciation for the arts from a young age. The Arts Initiative at Columbia University in NYC offers a Passport to Museums program.⁴

Hawkins added that all colleges have money for arts allocation for student enrichment; however, independent local artists are in competition with public institutions and corporations. Therefore, a cultural passport would do well. In the meantime, Hawkins provided some practical advice:

- College Directors of Student Activities have allocated funds, and “the City” should require that the college hire at least one “local” group a semester because they get tax-exempt status
- Student groups also are allotted money, though not as much as student activities funds, for extra curricular activities that groups can capitalize on
- Artists need to get to know their audience to know to whom to target publicity – have audiences complete questionnaires
- When writing grants, know what the buzzwords are (such as “cross-cultural” and “intergenerational”)



Lino Delgado, LWH



Mark Abby VanDerzee, LWH

- See other people's shows and explore Boston's cultural offerings regularly
- When creating work, it is important to give audiences something to build on from one event to the next and something to take away so they return for future installations
- Consider having a series of artworks, because it is cost-efficient (printing, emails, etc.) and easier to sell and advertise four to five shows at once.
- With respect to ticketing strategy, most already have senior, children and group prices; consider special performances with discount rates

Hawkins cautioned that "if you run a culture organization and aren't seeing everything [in other disciplines], you're boxed in."

Counts urged that "we need more consortia, conferences, think tanks in order to harness shared knowledge of culture sector." In fact, she emphasized that socially-minded arts organizations should meet with university administrators who advocate for under-represented students and share in the programming.

VanDerzee remarked that "there is a difference between making your art 'accessible' and making it 'welcoming' – requires proactive boots on the ground."

VanDerzee shared that Company One considers a multi-prong approach, where "diversity" is not just ethnicity – it's age, economics, gender – parity on & off stage." The company intentionally works to 1) lower the age of the audience member; 2) make sure women are evenly represented at every level of the production and its helms; and 3) conduct inclusive casting without it becoming a "flavor of the week."

Brown then asked, "What are the barriers to cultural innovation in Boston?"

VanDerzee urged that "we collectively and individually need to articulate our stories better. We're so busy with the work, but it's important."

Counts articulated that supporting youth and incentivizing attending wide variety of cultural events all over city builds the future.

She further remarked that "when there are barriers, people can feel history weighs them down. People feel beleaguered and wonder, 'Why keep asking these questions? Why keep striving?'"

Delgado implied that action requires the right mix of people: he has been to many meetings and hopes that this meeting brings together the right people who will act. He noticed that there is a lacking in adequate administration in researching, pooling and making meaningful sense of data that would eventually lead to artists claiming the respect to live off their art. Volunteering rarely works. Perhaps we can design a consortium or coalition, where, as members, we each contribute a small administrative fee for this necessary work. Delgado called for the development of a website for artists which would enable artists to promote each other's events.

VanDerzee observed that there is a lot of innovation happening now in Boston, and it needs to be celebrated. "Collectively and individually, we must make our story visible."



Angela Counts, LWH

Counts added that when we have meetings like this, we celebrate our possibilities as a sector with vitality, community, and hope.

Hawkins noted that “there are very few stars in Boston for people to look up to” in the arts. She believes “that within the hierarchy of arts one can see layers of cultural landscape - that hierarchy allows for movement.”⁵

Thoughts, Q&A

Illana Brownstein mentioned we need to study how we’ve been silo’d into our disciplines and break out and connect cross-disciplines in creative ways.

An audience inquiry included, “if NYC has APAP | NYC, what are we doing in Massachusetts to collect & celebrate arts?”

Community announcements included a save-the-date for the Greater Boston Theatre Expo on September 9: 70 theater companies at an open house and a shout-out to Activist Calendar: a new resource getting ready to launch.

Preparers’ Notes

1. There are perceptible socioeconomic and cultural barriers working against audiences and artists of color. We are not in a post-racial society: denying color helps perpetuate the myth that racism does not exist. As artists of color we may wish to get beyond being defined by color; yet, the reality is that we must keep organizing and demanding representation. Additionally, it is important to teach young aspiring artists of color (and their allies) to value themselves and critically question issues of race as a means by which to empower themselves to operate creatively beyond this label.
2. There is a nuanced and tenuous history informing the use of particular words in our everyday speech. By not acknowledging the power dynamics, in this case, in relation to the use of the word “urban,” it is easy to dismiss the experience of marginalized groups ascribed as such. Further, as discussed elsewhere, access to these opportunities is not level and why community organizing and advocacy are necessary.
3. Young artists of color must also see themselves as culture creators and not simply as entertainers in order to empower and cultivate their entrepreneurial spirit for effective career-building and advocacy for a living wage.
4. In contrast, as recently as Summer 2014, in Boston we have jailed youth for rallying peacefully for reduced transportation fares.
5. A hierarchy is already evident in Boston’s art scene, and not by virtue alone. Art moves us, audience members and artists alike, whether or not one is trained in what constitutes “high” versus “low” art. We must break from traditional notions of “high” and “low” art; challenge the vanguards, assigned to place value on art as “high” or “low”; and focus more on access to the arts. Through this access, people can learn how to appreciate art and decide for themselves what they choose to see and value.



Adrienne Hawkins, LWH

Bios

TERRI BROWN is an art administrator and operations professional. A long time arts advocate, she has developed expertise in non-profit finance. In her formative years, she lived in a number of different places, the Sea Islands off the Carolina Coast, Brooklyn, and Boston, near the Strand. Living in multiple locations exposed her to different cultures, other aesthetic traditions, and a wide array of art forms, thus broadening her range of appreciation. Terri has worked for the Boston Center for the Arts, ACT Roxbury, and as an independent producer. In her tenure as the ACT Roxbury Program Manager, she produced eight seasons of the Roxbury International Film Festival, Roxbury Open Studios, and the Roxbury Literary Annual. Currently, she serves on the executive board of the Boston Dance Alliance and Discover Roxbury. She continues to advise local artists, connecting them to opportunities and coaching them on strong business practices.

ANGELA COUNTS is a playwright, filmmaker, and performing artist, whose work has been produced at La Mama Experimental Theater and New York Theater Workshop. Her film shorts have been screened at the New England Conservatory of Music and the Museum of Fine Arts. For her most recent project, Counts has been traveling to the Middle East where she began filming a documentary about her father, an American Muslim living in Saudi Arabia since the early 1990s. The film explores the complexities of race, identity, and religion and its impact on a complicated black American family. Counts graduated from the University of Southern California and Northeastern. Currently, she lives in Cambridge.

LINO DELGADO is the president and an original member of the Floorlords, a seminal Boston group in hip-hop culture. The Floorlords can be seen on film in "Krush Groove" and "Southie" and were featured on television in "Live with Regis and Kathie Lee" and "The Donohue Show." At the present time all of the original Floorlords members are still involved with the crew, and the newer Floorlords continue to perform and pass on their teachings. The Floorlords have won numerous local and international competitions, including the "Out For Fame" US National Championship in 2006 and "Evolution 3" in 2007. The Floorlords have also shared the stage with artists such as Madonna, P-Diddy, Jennifer Lopez, The Beastie Boys, Wu-Tang, Slick Rick, Dougie Fresh, Run DMC, Eric B & Rakim, 50 Cent, Busta Rhymes, Fat Joe, Missy Eliot, Big Pun, Talib Kweli, Big Daddy Kane, Nice & Smooth, Maxwell, DJ Qbert, and many more.

ADRIENNE HAWKINS is Artistic Director of Impulse Dance Company of Boston, a perennial in the city with several decades of legacy, as well as co-artistic director of Bass Line-Motion, a music theater, poetry, and dance group exploring spirituality, identity, and social issues. As a choreographer and teacher, she has traveled widely, for example, in Denmark, Japan, Australia, and the Caribbean. She has been a guest artist at numerous colleges in the states, including Harvard, Mt. Holyoke, Boston University, Connecticut College, Stonehill College, The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and Dean College. She presently teaches at Harvard, A.R.T., Dance Complex, and Green Street Studio. Hawkins has also been active on several arts boards, including the Boston Dance Alliance and Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts.

MARK ABBY VANDERZEE is Educational Director and a co-founder of Company One Theatre, now a resident theater at the Boston Center for the Arts. Company One Theatre is a Boston success story. It was created over a decade ago by a handful of irrepressible theater-loving friends, right out of college. Four of them are still with the company. Besides VanDerzee, there are Summer Williams, the Director of Public Relations, who also directs; Sarah Champnois, the Managing Director; and Shawn LaCount, the Artistic Director. Beating the odds, they stuck together and breathed new artistic energy into the city when so many other fledgling companies fell by the wayside. They managed to garner attention across the country for their breakaway audacity as well as the excellence of their productions. In addition to helping the three educational programs at Company One Theatre, VanDerzee serves as the Technical Director for the company, and is a public school teacher as well.

5:15pm – 5:45pm

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

New Urban Archives: Wrap-up Learning Session

Pampi & Lore of PALESCA presented a summary of the issues and concerns and possible remedies that emerged in the two-day convening. They synopsized main take-aways from each keynote and panel. The summary shared informed this report.

5:45pm – 6:30pm

May 9 Second day theme: New Urban Ground and Possibilities

New Urban Celebration: Second Day Reception

Jha D, spoken word artist

Jha D is the founder of the “if you can Feel It, you can Speak It” Open Mic as well as the dreamer of EN-ER-GY, an annual showcase of eclectic Boston talent. She has been writing and performing for over 10 years. Her poetry has afforded her opportunities to participate in documentaries as well as be featured at and/or MC various events such as open mics across the city, the True Colors Conference and the Philadelphia Dyke March. Additionally, she has performed and conducted writing workshops at the University of Pennsylvania, Bucknell University, Northeastern University, Boston College, and UMass Boston. Her pieces are birthed from her experiences, and she therefore writes about self-love, identity, evolution, sexuality, and growth through emotions. She firmly believes in the power of expression and professes that “there is authentic art in spreading your own truths.”

Kitas Lobo, guitarist

Kitas Lobo is a Cape Verdean guitarist, enamored of the music of Cesaria Evora, who often performs around town as a soloist and in tandem with other artists, primarily vocalists.



CD

PARTICIPANTS' REFLECTIONS

After the Convening, Pampi and Lore asked participants to share reflections on their contributions at the event and next steps for the Greater Boston arts and culture community. The two questions posed were:

1. Summarize what you shared on your panel/speech, including your approach to the assigned topic.
2. What are your top three recommendations moving forwards pertaining to your topic/expertise? (or any other topic that came up at the event)

Here are their responses.

KEYNOTE

New Urban Scenarios:

Dreaming a Bigger, Bolder, More Inclusive Cultural City

Andrew Tarsy, President, Edward M. Kennedy Institute

- "Fostering a wider and more inclusive audience for art is an act of civic engagement; and can also accelerate civic engagement among those in the audience.
- There are many reasons the arts community itself has a major stake in the health of our democratic process.
- I offered my hope that the new EMK Institute could be a partner with the arts community in seeking to explore these challenges and to help educate the public about the relevance of civic engagement and public discussion.



CD

I encouraged those in attendance to be bold in seeking to create the broader and more inclusive audience they might desire, and to be resilient in the face of whatever obstacles there are to overcome in the process. I also encouraged them to think about how the EMK Institute can be a partner with organizations and networks that they are part of, and to think about issues that ought to be addressed in forums or exhibits down the road. I also encouraged attendees to come visit next spring when we open in order to appreciate the artistry of those involved in the design and creation of our space; and to think about how art can infuse the Institute's efforts with forms of energy and power that might only come through art."

New Urban Narratives & Technologies

Tracy Heather Strain, documentary filmmaker, moderator

Liora Beer, ArtMorpheus, ArtApp; Mary E. Hopper, DigitalDen;
Daniel DeLuca, Mobius; Eve Bridburg, GrubStreet

Tracy Heather Strain

"I wanted to make sure that the conversation focused around issues of the digital divide, access to training and equipment, public participation and engagement, and new youth participation and mentorship. ... [We need] opportunities for mentorship: It is one thing to dabble in arts and media technology, but teens, young adults and other emerging talents need help refining their skills. They need criticism and mentors. ... The arts community should be advocating for net neutrality or

access to the internet will be limited. [We also need] more opportunities for cross discipline exchanges.”

Liora Beer

“ArtMorpheus was established in 2009 to support the viability of artists working in all disciplines. providing the creative community with a one stop center access to entrepreneurial knowledge, services and resources. However, with limited pathways between artists and art lovers, and the current market models leaving most of the creative community outside of opportunity, we formed New Art Love, a social enterprise to unite the contemporary arts and democratize art lover's access to discovery of and engagement with art they love. To that end, we built mobile apps for several Open Studios and most recently launched ArtApp Boston+. This was a wonderful event. Let's put our heads together and figure out how we can collaborate and assist with planning and marketing to get more participants there in the future.”

Eve Bridburg

“As the publishing landscape shifts, writers need community more than ever. As artists, we need to find our people and be generous members of our given communities. The world is changing quickly and no one can navigate it all without skill-building seminar, continued learning, and guidance from others who are a few steps ahead. Moreover, the community we are a part of as an artist becomes the first inner ring of our audience. If we are doing great work and being generous with our community, that community will use its social network to help us grow our audience. I am interested in continuing the conversation about diversity, cultural equity and bringing the city together. We've been working for two years now on inclusion at GrubStreet. We're making progress but it's slow.”

New Urban Artists:

Breaking New Ground and Making the Invisible Visible

Kathleen Bitetti, visual artist, policy expert, and chief curator,
Medicine Wheel Productions, moderator

Leika Ayiyama, visual artist; Destiny Palmer, visual artist; Ekua Holmes, visual artist and Vice Chair, Boston Arts Commission; Jamal Thorne, visual artist; Dell Hamilton, visual artist, Harvard; Mario E. Quiroz-Servellon, visual artist

Kathleen Bitetti

“As the moderator and person who put the panel together, one of my goals was for this panel to be intergenerational (it was as it had artists in their 20's 30;s 40;s etc.). This panel was to be visual arts centered, thus all the artists on the panel had visual arts as their main practice. However, many of the artists also worked in other disciplines and/or new forms (site specific installations, public art, performance etc.). All of the artists on the panel were active outside of the art making practices (ie they were citizen artists). And often their art, their being citizen artists, and/or where they showed their work “made the invisible visible.” Often their work artistic and/or being a citizen push boundaries etc. (all of us were practicing artists). All of those participating as artists on the panel were “people of color” - still a rarity on city, state and national levels in the U.S.

1. Artists wanted training on how to be “citizen artists” - ie from organizing to understanding how to impact policy on all levels. This needs to happen. I offered to do a training on this for them via MALC and in collaboration with UMB.
2. Fair trade means fair trade - the issue of artists of all disciplines needing to be compensated for their work needs to be key to any cultural/arts/creative economy discussion etc. This is a Massachusetts Artists Leaders Coalition key policy initiative.
3. As the moderator I stated: “Artists, NEVER concede the space to advocate for yourself - demand arts administrators work in collaboration!” This is key as well. Artists get gentrified out of physical spaces, discussions, boards you name it. This relates to #1 and is central to making the invisible visible - those who make our art/culture often get pushed out/marginalized.
4. Enable more intergenerational sharing among artists of all disciplines and also across disciplines.”

Jamal Thorne

“The core of my thoughts emphasized the need for respect. Artists in general are not simply producers of objects and experiences, but producers of CULTURE. We respond to the sociological and political happenings in Boston and produce the images that future generations of Bostonians will look to in their attempts to understand their local history. In most major cities, visual artists and the like are treated with respect in the forms of affordable housing, affordable studio space, and diverse venues for exhibition of work. This is what I would like to see more of in Boston. First, all of the work should not fall on the shoulders of one party. Artists, advocates of the arts, and politicians need to work together in an arena of mutual respect for each other and each other’s struggles. Artists need more opportunities to be heard like paneled discussions, but as artists it’s our responsibility to attend and make our concerns heard. Second, Boston houses a number of prestigious academic institutions. Local administration should start calling upon these institutions to do their part in generating opportunities for local culture creators. If an academic institution is going to exist locally, why shouldn’t they be asked to contribute to the success and exposure of LOCAL artists more?”

Mario Ernesto Quiroz Servellón

“I found the event to be like a small “good seed” growing at the heart of the community. The panelists’ ideas were the perfect roots for beautiful forests. But no tree can growth without water, fertile soil and a loving hand... what can be done to follow up with the ideas and transform them into action? What tools can we all carry away in our “goodies bag?” What can we apply in a world of noise, concrete, steel and indifference? Maybe, instead of a forest, we should start with a park. The only way to start a march is giving the first step. And to that, a second one should follow. The panel was very inviting to do the latter.”

New Urban on the Block:

Uphams Corner & Dudley in the House

Banjineh “Op” Browne, Boston Public Schools educator and performer with The Foundation Movement, moderator
Cedric Douglas, artist, Fairmount Cultural Corridor; Aziza Robinson-Goodnight, UCAP; Rufus Faulk, visual artist; Angel Babbitt-Harris, Madison Park.

Banjineh “Op” Browne

“As moderator, my role was to provide an environment where the panel felt like rich conversation can happen that would be useful to everyone in attendance surrounding the intrinsic value of art and creative avenues of sustaining it locally. In Greater Boston, we need to create: non-traditional/traditional avenues for the community to engage in art; spaces & opportunities for artists to create and collaborate; and opportunity where artists are compensated for their contributions/work. All these pieces can help bring about the Boston Renaissance.”

Angel Babbitt-Harris

“As a representative of Hibernian Hall, I don’t see enough coalescing happening. Some of the successes and challenges we face with getting people to come to the hall for arts performances are shared across most arts organizations, yet we aren’t coming together enough to try to share ideas and solve problems together. Boston, in my opinion, isn’t very collaborative in the arts arena. Often, we are all going up against the same grants and trying to target the same audiences. My hope is that the new arts commissioner will be able to provide some of the glue that is needed to help people stay connected. We need to create more opportunities in the future for the arts community to come together and share ideas; create more opportunities to work together and not in silos; and continue to expose residents in areas such as Uphams Corner and Dudley Square to arts programming that they want, and not arts programming that we think they want!”

Jean Dany Joachim, poet and first day performer

“A very rich two days of events! It was a wonderful idea to gather so many agents of arts from the area to reflect on the state of the arts in the city and the possible links that could exist between the different organizations and individual artists. I say thank you again for being a part of it, and all my good wishes to the organizers.”

The New Urban Mix: Antecedents and Futures Roundtable

Pacey Foster, UMass Boston, hip hop historian and collector, moderator

Barry Gaither, NCAAA; David Dower, ArtsEmerson; Julie Hennrikus, StageSource; Abe Rybeck, The Theater Offensive

Pacey Foster

“We spent time each of us talking about what this new urban mix means to us and then riffing on the many ways that we connect to that in our work. We talked about how Boston remains a very divided city and the need to ensure that the minority majority is central in conversations and planning about our cultural and

artistic future. This new urban mix requires new (and more community engaged) approaches to the development and implementation of cultural policy. Some next steps for me include: Facilitating regular collaboration and convening among policy makers, arts and culture orgs, and academics/researchers; Working to bridging the not-for-profit and for-profit divides in the creative sector; Pooling resources and knowledge between orgs (this has been mentioned before, but things like centralized listings, data on attendance, mailing lists, etc.); Facilitate public engagement with arts and culture orgs and policy via better data collection and analysis and presentation of our stories; Leveraging the massive educational sector here for research, internships, capacity building, etc.; Making sure that creative neighborhoods (and the city as a whole) remain affordable enough for artists to continue to live and work here; Facilitating mentorship and natural partnering among arts and culture orgs and between these orgs and the private sector”

Julie Hennrikus

“Thinking about my work via StageSource, as an arts advocate, and as a teacher, I think a lot about who gets to define the conversation (and how that needs to change), what the resources are that already exist, and how to tell our stories to the rest of the community. This is as much about community organizing as cultural policy development at this point. We need to all make sure that voices are heard at all levels--from the individual artist to the ED of the largest institution. We all need to be very, very mindful about diversity and inclusion in this process. Even at this convening there were a lot of people missing in the conversation. Organizing and advocacy need to be employed to move us all forward. We have a lot here already, we just need to help figure out how to feed the entire arts ecology. And to turn outwards, and tell the story. David Dower's "Scarcity Matrix" is a great way to start some really interesting conversations, and to frame the work.”

Abe Rybeck

“The impulse and the art are already there. Authentic voices are emerging from the hearts of our neighborhoods and communities. The big lie is when you hear institutions complain about the great artists not being there or just going with the few artists of color who have been sanctioned. Our cultural institutions are largely structured as fortresses to protect interests FROM community power. If we behave anything like the way most of us have in the past, we’re going to mess this up. Generational and demographic shift makes dealing with this an imperative. Anyone who has looked at the data knows this. A shift in power is inevitable. What is not inevitable is whether that shift is radical and life changing for our communities or a cosmetic shift that breeds greater cynicism and apathy. Co-optation: The arts community is clumsy at it and has so little resources that the community could leapfrog over it, but still we are the first hurdle. Those of us doing this work need to check our privilege and make sure we’re not positioning ourselves as gatekeepers instead of incubators. I point this out because many of us in this room, by virtue of our positions and our interest in short term successes – important ones like making a living - we run a very high risk of actually BEING the co-opts

New Urban Energies: Arts Administrators Roundtable

Joan Lancourt, board chair, Underground Railway Theater, moderator

Michael Dowling, Medicine Wheel Productions; Jennifer Hughes, Cantata Singers; Cathy Carr Kelly, Central Square Theater; Derek Lumpkins, Discover Roxbury; Alda Marshall Witherspoon, arts administrator, the Strand

Derek Lumpkins

"Organizations must be clear and transparent with their NEEDS in addition to their wants. Failure to do so can lead to frustration and friction, which then lead to confusion and missed opportunities. I also mentioned that it's OK to let go of collaborations which don't seem to be working or that are not a good fit. My recommendations follow along the lines of my statement above: Be authentic and honest; Invest fully and recognize what is/isn't working; Analyze, assess, and build upon newly found knowledge."

Michael Dowling

"We need time and we need to create a larger dialogue on what collaboration means. My particular approach was learning to listen to the people we say we serve before responding with a cultural action. We talked about the need to scratch each other's backs deeply in building creative coalitions that created thresholds, using art to respond to the human condition. The most pressing step forward was to look at how to create a change in the culture of collaboration that helped honor, and support the work of cultural institutions, both large and small, without creating hardships for those involved. The next was how to look at the spiritual part of cultural institutions as an agent to help heal the city breaking down age old barriers, between race, economics, etc."

Performing, Dreaming, and Dancing the New Cultural City Roundtable

Terri Brown, Boston Dance Alliance and former programmer for Roxbury Film Festival, moderator.

Lino Delgado, FloorLords Crew; Shawn LaCount, Company One; Adrienne Hawkins, Impact Dance; Angela Counts, filmmaker and playwright.

Adrienne Hawkins

"There are many colleges and they spend money to bring in 'Arts.' If the city is giving them a break on taxes, the arts community should be able to share the 'student activities' money that each student has to pay to attend the school. The schools bring many people and different categories. In each category of 'Art' we should have someone representing the city: music, dance, art, etc. It should fit into their mission, and it should be institutionalized. We need to follow the money - corporate funding for the arts and collaboration. It is really 'hard' for me to say 'what' kind of art is to be funded, although in the dance community there needs to be more money paid to the hierarchy since that is what the children, or beginning, intermediate and advanced students see as something to strive for and not just the process. For them to understand what it takes to achieve a higher level of 'artistic'"

development and realize they do not have to 'move' to another city to continue with their development..... we do not have that in the city right now"

Lino Delgado

"Being on the panel felt authentic. Sometimes you sit on a panel and everyone has a different agenda. This was the Arts community coming out to speak to express what they feel about the Boston Arts and what we deserve in our community. I would like to thank Barbara for listening to our meeting at UMass that day. I'm so blessed to have been a part of this event."

Angela Counts

"There are powerful arts and people resources in the City of Boston. I come from this point of view as a Boston transplant by way of Detroit, originally, and later Los Angeles and New York City. Many of us spoke of a sense of wanting more connection amongst each other and the multitudes of arts organizations and events. How do we stay connected and stay committed and inspired? How do we connect the dots of the tapestry of arts organizations in Boston, and stay committed to social justice issues therein?

1. There are monies to be tapped into vis a vis the Student Affairs/Student Activities Offices at many colleges and universities. Some are easier to approach than others, but it might be worth a try to seek collaborations there as well.

Perhaps we can put together an Arts Resources list with updated contact information of key people and 'buy-in'; in other words college/university staff and administrators whom we can tap outside of the traditional means and create awareness of the greater arts community in Greater Boston?

2. We discussed creating a permanent consortium of arts organizations, with each organization putting in a small amount to possibly fund a part-time employee; perhaps even an undergraduate or graduate student to maintain communications and assist with convening artists and maintaining outreach and communications amongst us - and perhaps more?
3. Also, there are ways to link together resources via an arts website.... gratified that Loreto and Pampi mentioned creating an arts website with a social justice focus. I also recommended checking out (LINK) New York City Arts <http://www.nyc-arts.org> as a model, as well. I also came across the ArtsBoston website, which requires fees for membership and offers members discounted rates for advertising events. This site may be cost prohibitive for many small organizations, but notably the site is sponsored by many key stakeholders in Boston and thus may have great visibility. Perhaps we can link with this site?

Post convening thought: Another resource may be to invite current undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in arts programs at local colleges and universities to get involved with our efforts. A small committed, cohort of these students are artists/activists, and they can provide energy, insight, and again might even be able to fill volunteer or paid roles to help assist with administrative support."



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GOALS ASSESSMENT

Dr. Lewis, the Convening participants, and the preparers of this report hope for this Convening to be a catalyst for and supporter of actionable work and organization in the Greater Boston arts and culture community. Therefore, as we begin to plan for next steps, it is important to ask whether the Convening achieved its goals.

This Convening was a fruitful step in bringing together Arts and Culture vetted leaders from across Greater Boston. Speakers shared honestly and openly and asked questions of each other and the greater community that are complex and difficult yet necessary. This convening allowed participants to connect within one space and assess many different topics that are seldom discussed together. It is therefore imperative that, for this Convening to be fully successful, participants follow through on Next Steps, as brought up during the Convening and discussed in the following section.

Goal One

EXAMINE Boston's artistic and cultural profile with an eye to identifying how the city might prioritize and achieve a higher level of cultural equity in the next ten years

This goal encompasses three actions:

1. Analyze Boston's "artistic and cultural profile"
2. Create a plan for "cultural equity"
3. Achieve this plan within ten years

Panelists and Key Noters engaged in conversations about the current state of Arts and Culture in Greater Boston and what our city and community need to fully support art-making. These needs fell under three main themes as described in the section "Big Themes Arising from this Convening": Collaboration, Civic Engagement, and Value for Art and Sustainability.

The feeling of urgency was palpable, and participants seemed committed to achieving change quickly.

Goal Two

EXPAND a sense of community sharing in the arts so that social segments with limited access to public validation, audiences, and funding can enjoy wider acceptance and participation

This goal addresses the following issues:

1. Making art as community
2. Access and inclusion for all members of the community
3. Audience building
4. Value of art and funding

Dialogue included many discussions about access, diversity and inclusion. There is consensus that all members of the Greater Boston arts community need to focus on these issues in order to create art that is civically relevant.

The Value of Art and audience building and diversity were main topics throughout,

as was funding and access to other resources.

Goal Three

ENRICH the space of cultural exchange in the city, opening its channels of access to innovative energies emanating from a multiplicity of locales and sensibilities

Convening participants agreed that Boston is vibrant with talented and dedicated artists and art supporters. We now need to work on building stronger and more effective connections that allow all voices to rise. Participants offered both theoretical frameworks and concrete ideas and examples on how to strengthen arts programming so that it includes marginalized voices and responds to community needs.

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Next Steps

1. Cultural Council

Dr. Lewis's vision for this convening includes the creation of a Cultural Council composed of five to ten Cultural Convening participants to continue the work begun at the gathering. This Council will serve a key role in carrying forward the ideas shared in the Convening.

The Council will begin meeting in the Fall of 2014, study and reference this report, and identify concrete next steps. The work of the Cultural Council will include surveying more members of the Greater Boston arts community, especially reaching out to those who did not attend the convening, and creating a more in-depth report.

Again, the goals which the committee will explore, building on the work from this initial convening, will be to:

1. PROMOTE greater awareness of the city's diverse cultural traditions and what each needs to grow and thrive
2. IDENTIFY key skills and supports needed to undergird and sustain cultural equity
3. DEVELOP a network of artists and community activists as cultural equity voice and stewards in Boston
4. DEEPEN and extend the conversation around art as a tool for social justice and urban transformation
5. CONNECT individuals & organizations interested in championing the work of cultural equity in Boston

2. Skills and Professional Development Workshops

Given the strong desire voiced by the arts community at the Convening for specific professional development, Dr. Lewis, through the Trotter Institute of UMass Boston, and Kathleen Bitetti, through Massachusetts Artists Leaders Coalition (MALC), are exploring the creation of an institute targeting this need. This institute would provide workshops that include but are not limited to: self-advocacy, policy making, and marketing.

Preparers' Recommendations for Cross-Pollination

3. Acknowledging the realities and barriers for transformation and empowerment.

- a. It is important to create community spaces where neighbors can directly engage with the art-making process. This connection makes artists and their labor visible and demonstrates both the value of art in creating community well-being and the labor that goes into art making.
- b. It is also necessary to reach out to all sectors of the community for art making and unveiling: small businesses, city officials, potential investors, families and schools. These events must be celebratory because fun, food, and creative transportation and access bring people out and together.



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4. Increasing Collaboration

a. Art alliances.

There are several existing organizations that serve as art alliances. In the spirit of collaboration, it is important that the Cultural Council reach out to these organizations to share knowledge, wisdom and work together as part of a greater agenda.

Some of these organizations were already represented at this Convening: MALC, MassCreative, Boston Dance Alliance, GrubStreet, and Dorchester Arts Collaborative.

Others which were not present or are just forming include: Somerville's "Save Our Scene" and the just-forming "Getting By in Boston" (working name)

PALESCA would gladly want to serve as a link among these organizing bodies.

b. Acting in solidarity.

Encouraging a culture of solidarity and nuanced dialogue,

- automatically lowers the threshold to access for both audiences and artists;
- allows for independent artists whose art is valued by their community to rise up;
- creates ambassadors in art enthusiasts who dabble in art by not discouraging them but encouraging them to be active participants in creating a vibrant arts culture;
- creates a sustainable arts culture that is affirmative, receptive, responsive and self-determining; and
- allows artists to stand in solidarity for a demand for living wage and affordable housing.

5. Centralized resources.

The desire for centralized resources is strong within the arts community. PALESCA's initiative (currently ActivistCalendar.org), which Pampi and Lore mentioned during the Convening, seeks to unify Greater Boston's artists and social justice activists through online tools, including in-depth profiles and searchable databases of events and other resources, and in-person connections to facilitate collaborations and professional development. Pampi and Lore are eager to develop this resource for the Greater Boston Arts community incorporating the ideas and needs arising from this Convening.

6. Audience/Artist divide.

We must go beyond diversifying audiences and work towards breaking down barriers between "audience" and "artist" while building spaces for interactive opportunities, co-creation, and allowing community members to feel they too are artists.

7. Youth must be part of this entire process. Artists must:

- a. Focus heavily on education and work alongside youth, not *for* them (being mindful of adultism)
- b. Value youth as creative forces. Youth are culture creators. With proper arts education and support, youth can be ambassadors to their communities and effectively mobilize to resist, among other pertinent issues, policing in schools and neighborhoods and the criminalization of their advocacy.

8. Balancing formal and informal resources on a path to creative sustainability.

- a. Informal resources include practicing sustainable community building and establishing solidarity with neighbors in terms of livable wage and affordable housing
- b. Formal resources include government assistance, foundation grants, fundraising for individual donations
- c. Artists must negotiate the use of these various resources while visioning and executing progressive work and avoiding burnout

9. Acknowledging the power dynamic between large institutions and individual artists/small organizations.

When collaborating with local artists, large established organizations must:

- a. Promote them as their own
- b. Respect and engage in transparent conversation, especially when benefiting from the free labor of local artists, by establishing fair ways that work and other benefits will be distributed back into the community

10. Pushing a more nuanced conversation on digital technology.

We need to debunk the following myths:

- a. *As artists, by adapting digital technology, we erase the barriers to access:* While it is imperative to learn new technologies in order to remain competitive as entrepreneurs and ambassadors of our work, we still need to apply time-tested hands-on outreach to reach and create audiences for our work.
- b. *Technology and traditional skills like story-telling can be taught separate from each other:* As teaching artists, we must work within the framework of media justice and teach traditional methodologies in conjunction with new technologies to empower youth with comprehensive skills that allow them to critically engage with new media.
- c. *People's cravings for art and entertainment will be fulfilled by corporate media:* As artist ambassadors, we must create a culture that demonstrates that attending live or interactive public art shows by local artists is integral to building community because it will engage the creative centers of the mind in ways that playing a favorite video game or watching a popular cable or reality show cannot.

ADDENDUM 1

Remarks of Andrew Tarsy
President, Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate

**Building a Bigger, Bolder, More Inclusive Cultural City:
seeking a deep connection between the arts and civic engagement**

Thank you Dr. Lewis.

I am grateful for the invitation to share some thoughts and have a dialogue here today. Being part of an event curated by the Trotter Institute at UMass Boston and attended by all of you is an honor for me. I am particularly struck by the choice of the word “convening” because of the work I am doing – which I will describe to you. The simple choice of that word “convening” says to all of this that you are co-creating something unique over the time you are together. The pressure is on.

I am also particularly honored to be in the Strand for the first time. If these walls could talk, they would have so much to say. Ironically however, I understand that the building was closed from 1960 to 1979. Can you imagine a more turbulent 19 year period to sleep through than that? Is this the Rip Van Winkle of buildings – and I am incredibly grateful that it is awake and alive, and made even moreso by those who will make it a vibrant place for – “convening.”

My aim this morning is to offer some ideas about the path to a “bigger, bolder, more inclusive cultural city” and – to that title I have added my own “subtitle” and that is: “seeking a deep connection between the arts and civic engagement.”

Some of you may believe that art serves its own purpose and need not be put to work or given any role or expectations by anyone other than the artist and the person experiencing that art. And others may believe that the connection between art and civic engagement is already inherent because by its very nature, it must have a relationship with an audience in order to exist – and that relationship is always intended to provoke a response of some kind.

And yet another point of view you might have is that the link between art and social action is a rich historical tradition, an active current connection, and it is already well understood and needs no further explanation, least of all from me. From the statues of ancient Greece to the quilts of Gee's Bend and the Arpilleras of the women of Chile – to the poetry of Langston Hughes and the writing of Lorraine Hansberry – and the dance, theater, writing, poetry, music and visual arts of the young people in Dorchester and throughout greater Boston – there is little one needs to say about the capacity of art to connect with social action.

I expect they will come through in this room today and tomorrow along with many, many others. But none of these positions fully addresses the questions that I believe are front and center for this convening: Can we foster development of a bigger, bolder, and more inclusive community of art creators? Can we foster a bigger, bolder and more inclusive community of audiences willing to be affected by art in the myriad ways that art exists to affect people?

In many ways both the communities of artists and the communities of audiences – may be destined to remain as inclusive as the society around them. And in Greater Boston we are getting better and better but like most places most people still too often find their cohort among people with whom they feel most comfortable – and forming new connections becomes a “nice to have” but not a “need to have”.

It is entirely possible that the answers to these big questions lie in the realm of social policy and planning – in other words forces larger than any of us – tectonic plates that feel determinative and either incline us to lean toward each other or lean away. I am reminded of a scene in Tom Stoppard's “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead” where the protagonists realize that as passengers on a ship no choice they make about what direction to move on the deck can affect the direction they will ultimately go due to the simple fact that they are – well, on a moving ship.

The power of artists is to engage with phenomena in the world and somehow bring through a medium of your own choosing a provocation to the audience for some kind of engagement with that phenomenon. The power of an arts community is to contemplate the environment in which that art is being produced and presented, and to confront those larger social forces, those supposedly tectonic plates, and the captains of that ship, if you will. The power of *organizing* the arts community is to insist that no social, political, behavioral, or practical barrier will be allowed to exist between you and your intended audience.

The city's arts scene was a major topic in the Mayoral race in 2014. Something is changing. Something is happening. I don't know whether the artists or the audiences are driving that – or perhaps both. It is a reflection on some level of a new current in civic engagement. Colleagues at a terrific education organization located in Brookline, Massachusetts called Facing History and Ourselves have a saying: 'People make choices; choices make history.'

My total focus right now is on helping to complete and introduce to the community the new Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, being constructed currently on the UMASS Boston campus on Columbia Point. Our mission is to educate the public about how government works and to inspire a new commitment to civic engagement – to participation in the process of confronting together the great challenges of our time. Many of us dream of a bigger and bolder culture of civic engagement; many also dream of a more inclusive city. I believe these two objectives are deeply intertwined and I suspect many of those here today would agree. And I suspect we would also agree that the arts is a major element of bringing about these outcomes, whether it receives a formal seat at the table – or perhaps even moreso when it does not.

After considering what might be at stake in such an important convening as this one, the first thing I did was to look up "culture" in the dictionary.

1.

the arts and other manifestations of **human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.**
"20th century popular culture"

synonyms: the arts, the humanities, intellectual achievement; More

2. BIOLOGY

the cultivation of bacteria, tissue cells, etc., in an artificial medium **containing nutrients.**
"the cells proliferate readily **in culture**"¹ Two words struck me immediately:

In the first definition, I noticed the word "collectively" because it issues the challenge that a simple act of expression does not alone create culture until it is considered in relationship to the expression of others. Through the work of artists, isolated human experiences can become part of a culture of shared experience and can foster empathy even among individuals whose actual experiences are very different from one another's

And in the second definition, I noticed the word "nutrients" because it sounds like in order to stay alive, this thing called culture needs to be fed!

In 2012, US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan reported that "While 100 percent of high schools where 76 percent or more students qualify for free or reduced lunch – a key indicator of poverty – had a music class in the 1999-2000 school year, only 81 percent did a decade later."

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/02/report-arts-classes-at-el_n_1398550.html

Bruce Springsteen paints a picture of despair in his famous 1975 anthem to shattered dreams called *Jungleland*. In the culmination of a loosely tied together tale of romance and ambition collapsing into tragedy includes these stanzas:

The street's on fire/in a real death waltz/between what's flesh and what's fantasy/and the poets down here don't write nothing at all/they just stand back and let it all be.

We need the poets to write. And we need their writing to find audiences – not just among those with shared experience but precisely the opposite. Is it as simple as saying that a bigger, bolder and more inclusive cultural city means creating and promoting art that brings diverse people together? Perhaps. The hard part though is always in the execution.

Similar challenges exist in the world of civic engagement generally. Voter registration and voter turnout are low and cynicism² about government or any kind of collective action is high. Civic education has declined substantially over the past 50 years. According to a 2013 study, only 10% of high school seniors even proficient in U.S. History today. On a recent national civics assessment, **less than one-third of eighth graders could identify the historical purpose of the Declaration of Independence.** Less than one in five seniors could explain how citizen participation benefits democracy.³

Polls show that only 13 percent of Americans have a favorable view of Congress; keep in mind that in the past 10 years the popularity of Congress has never gone above 48% - but still - at 13% the Congress is only 2 percentage points above the favorability ratings for North Korea.

In spite of these trends and because Senator Kennedy believed that democracy depends on an informed and engaged citizenry, he envisioned a center of learning where people from all walks of life would get immersed in learning about this great country and about the United States Senate. He loved the Senate, and he knew that over the past two hundred years it has been a place where time after time, men and women of good will have come together to meet the challenges of their day. The members of the Senate have always represented diverse people with wildly different experiences, views and priorities; but when the members have found a path forward through a process of working together, time after time their efforts have given leadership to the nation and the world. By studying those chapters in history we can help light a path forward in our own time, when we certainly know we need help.

At the new Institute we will be doing some exciting things that I want to tell you about briefly, and I want to tell you in order to invite a relationship with the arts community of Greater Boston in which together we explore all of the ideas you are going to be generating today and through your art and your outreach activities:

- We will be building a full-scale representation of the actual US Senate Chamber and a giant digital, interactive gallery where you can learn about the great debates of the past and test your own ability to make tough decisions and solve big public problems.
- We will be building a game- like simulation of the United States Senate in which you and your classmates will play the roles of Senators debating, deliberating and deciding how the nation should address the challenges of the day.
- We will invite schools, families and community partners like all of you to come to Boston to participate in these activities.
- We will work with a wide array of groups to create content that expands understanding of key public policy debates but also builds our capacity as individuals to appreciate the complexity.

In short – we want to be your partner and we want you to help us create something brand new that strengthens our communities and our country.

The nexus between arts communities and civic engagement is very direct. First of course there are public policy issues to be discussed:

- Protection of the right to freedom of speech, expression and association?
- Funding?
- Education?

Second, there is the special role arts communities play in helping the public struggle with difficult issues.

We can form a partnership around the great debates of interest to you as a community; and in doing so together we may be able together to strengthen your own sense of community among artists, and perhaps even add to your opportunity to connect with those to whom your art might speak. We might also together consider how to protect and nurture the connection between the world of art and the world of politics and government.⁴

It is not a stretch to say that Senator Kennedy was devoted to the arts. He was a painter and singer himself – and was well known for his devotion to musical theater, opera and the orchestra. His work in the Senate included advocacy for the arts as a national priority.

Your task in this convening is important to the health of our communities and also our democracy. Fundamentally, though, I believe that before art has an impact on groups and communities, it has to make a direct connection with individuals – to inspire something about the making of choices – whether that is to stand on a barricade or spend another hour lying under a pretty tree.

Lorraine Hansberry wrote what I think is a brilliant reflection on *Raisin in the Sun* – focusing on the choices confronted by her protagonist, Walter Lee Younger, whose initial aspirations are about his own situation and by the end of the play he has – she thinks somewhat naively – embraced a larger purpose. She is not sure whether he knows the likely futility of his individual action on the particular day he decides to protest the exclusion of his family from whites only housing. But she admires it and calls us to conscience in the following way in an essay she wrote – and with a quote from it I would like to close.

If there are no waving flags and marching songs at the barricades as Walter marches out with his little battalion, it is not because the battle lacks nobility. On the contrary, he has picked up in his way, still imperfect and wobbly in his small view of human destiny....

He becomes, in spite of those who are too intrigued with despair and hatred of man to see it, King Oedipus refusing to tear out his eyes, but attacking the oracle instead. He is that last Jewish patriot manning his rifle at Warsaw.... He is Anne Frank, still believing in people; he is the nine small heroes of Little Rock; he is Michelangelo creating David and Beethoven bursting forth with the Ninth Symphony. He is all these things because he has finally reached out in his tiny moment and caught that sweet essence which is human dignity, and it shines like the old star-touched dream that is in his eyes.

ADDENDUM 2

Op-Ed Submission 5.21.14 A CALL FOR A BOSTON SPRING: Arts for an Urban Renaissance

The arts and cultural convening – ***Making Greater Boston Greater*** – recently hosted at the Strand Theatre was a breath of fresh air. We commend Barbara Lewis, Director of the Trotter Institute at UMASS Boston, for organizing and producing an artful forum with a social conscience.

The convening had the feel of a “Boston Spring,” reflecting a surge of new urban energies combined with the empowering attitude of artists already working with youth and families in underserved communities to expand access and opportunity. The diverse voices signaled a welcome mind shift from a “me” to a “we” culture with a “can do” approach to solving problems together.

This convening set the stage for a more open and authentic dialogue about envisioning and shaping the future of a 21st century city that embraces creativity and racial/ethnic diversity as its greatest assets, key in the midst of realigning minority and majority. Assisted by the demographic shift, Boston just elected a new Mayor who says he is in tune with the new Boston, and who has created a cabinet level position to foreground arts and culture.

The creation of this position was a bold and smart move, and we encourage Mayor Walsh to move forward to build on the spirit of openness, inclusion and creativity exhibited at this recent cultural convening at the Strand, and to be responsive to the community of artists, activists, educators and social service providers that generated that spirit, to work with him to make a *Greater Boston even greater*.

This is call for a Boston Spring! A high stakes moment, that calls for visionary leadership and demands real change. In a city that benefits from an abundance of resources, yet strains from persistent and widening social disparities, we need a sea change in priorities and approach that take head on our most difficult and most extraordinary opportunities of the 21st century.

No easy task but If not now, when? And if not us, who? We are confident that the arts can help break new ground to tap into the entrepreneurship, wisdom and resilience that our diverse communities offer. Embedding arts and culture into the design and implementation of the city’s key social and economic initiatives creates a magnetic core of innovation.

Along with Barbara Lewis and the cultural convening participants, we hope to work with the Mayor and his team to coalesce a series of cross sector convenings, to achieve the following overarching goals:

Define a shared vision for a more inclusive and equitable city with desired social and economic impacts.
Support learning and leadership that reaches across culture, class and sector to identify common cause.
Generate an action agenda for positive community change -- the strategies, innovation, resources, continued public dialogue, and collective action needed to make Greater Boston so much greater!

Last year we became “Boston Strong,” showing our true character as a city in response to a crisis. Let us rise to the occasion again, now, to become a “Boston Spring,” proactively advancing an urban renaissance inspired by our revolutionary roots, shared humanity, and the pursuit of freedom, justice, and opportunity for *all of our citizens*.
Count us in!

Libbie Shufro
Former President and CEO,
Boston Center for the Arts

Jacqui Lindsay
Founder and President,
Innovation by Design