Artist Space Development: Making the Case

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Findings about Space for Artists from Investing in Creativity Report:

- Space related funding is focused on arts presenting institutions rather than artists-focused organizations or individual artists.

- For arts funders affordable space is not articulated as central to artists needs compared to grants and financial support, etc.

- With few exceptions, there is little capacity within the arts sector to deal with artists space development.
Making the Case for Artist Space Development (ASD)

• Key arguments and positioning

• Advocacy strategies

• Anticipated Impacts
Research Approach

• Selected case studies

• Context analysis for study sites

• Site visits to 30 emergent and mature ASD’s

• In person interviews with artists, community developers, lenders, funders, architects, designers, and urban planners

• Examined diverse non-profit and private sector projects--live/work, studio, presentation, and multipurpose spaces
Study Sites

• Detroit, MI
• New Orleans, LA
• Philadelphia, PA
• Pittsburgh, PA
• Providence, RI
• Seattle, WA
• Tucson, AZ
Important Contextual Factors

• Availability of real estate, location and nature of space

• Artists space development track record

• Special initiatives that include/pertain to artists
Key Public Arguments

• Community Economic Development and Social Improvements

• Viable Business Ventures

• Services to Artists
Community Economic Development and Social Improvements

• Almost half of the projects examined fall in this category

• Artists are presented as catalysts for economic development

• Multi-purpose properties

• Range of financing, lengthy development process
Key Advocacy Strategies
(Community Development and Social Improvement)

• Community Development Corporation (CDC) involvement key

• Community planning process

• Research and projection of potential benefits (market survey, economic impact study)

• CDC collaboration with artists
Viable Business Ventures

- 6 of the 23 projects examined were primarily positioned as business ventures

- All include studio/work spaces

- Private investors and commercial lenders key

- Project is positioned as responding to artists demand and a viable business investment
Key Advocacy Strategies
(Viable Business Ventures)

• Market research and cost-benefit analysis

• Artists are catalysts for creative clusters/creative economy

• Public officials and stakeholders held accountable to assertion of interest in creative economy

• Blend for-profit interest with commitment to community benefit/public good
Services to Artists

• 6 initiatives were positioned as serving artists’ needs as workers or professional group

• Individual artist leadership key

• Investments and sweat equity of highly motivated artists

• Take-over of otherwise abandoned or neglected sites
Key Advocacy Strategies
(Services to Artists)

• Clear and passionate articulation of vision/project

• Strategic alliances

• Artists’ appeal to community/economic development, housing and business fields using norms and languages in those fields

• Entrepreneurial eye (to take advantage of a range of potential resources and opportunities)
Impacts

• Range of Impacts claimed and/or anticipated
  – Effects on artists
  – Effects on broader community

• Very little formal documentation of impacts
Effects on Artists

• Increased ASD stock and access to it

• Development of ASD infrastructure

• Enhanced artists’ careers

• Enhanced artists’ relationships to broader community
Effects of Artist Space Development on Broader Community

• Physical impacts
• Social impacts
• Economic impacts
Physical impacts

• Decreased blight

• Beautification

• Animation of vacant property

• Creation of destination community

• Historic preservation
Social Impacts

• Increased arts based programming for community

• Multi-purpose space for community

• Diversification of low-income communities

• Youth development programming

• Increased intergenerational interaction
Economic Impacts

- Promotion of creative clusters

- Increase in real estate cost/value leading to revitalization/gentrification

- Small scale increase in jobs

- Diversification of community development strategies

- Inclusion of ASD in cultural and community plan
Documentation and Accountability

- Many ASD’s are nascent, so difficult to measure impacts

- Base line data used to make the case, not to track progress overtime

- Most evidence of impacts is informal and anecdotal

- Attempts to establish direct impacts of ASD’s are not realistic

- Indicator approach is promising but resource intensive (ex. Artscape-Toronto and Metropolitan Chicago Information Center)
Supporting ASD Momentum

- Identification of suitable ASD properties
- Connecting artists to properties
- Convening and involving key stakeholders
- Documenting lessons from ASD experience
- Documenting contributions of ASD’s
- Improving practice and cultivating next generation of ASD practitioners