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## The Bidirectional Relationship between Art and Business

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**The Bidirectional Relationship between Art and Business**

by

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**Advisor: Dr. Anne Velliquette**

**An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of  
Science in Business Administration in Information Systems and Marketing.**

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## **Abstract**

There has long been an established relationship between art and business, finding its roots in the Industrial Revolution when the effects of arts on the economy were first explored. Since then, creative economies have been influenced by adaptation of businesses through urban development and revitalization and by continuous growth in artistic and cultural spaces. Capturing the relationship between arts and urban design, cultural districts establish strong economic communities within vastly creative, business- and culture-centered spaces. Current research provides insight to the economic, social, and cultural outcomes of creative economies.

As a contribution to that narrative, I will use this analysis to further explore the bidirectional relationship between the art and business sectors. I will first cover historical artistic influences on the economy- how art has become a top economic developer. Then, I will analyze how art is currently affecting economic development and, alternatively, how modern business and brands cultivate artistic spaces and the creation of art. Finally, I will outline six cultural district subtypes and their characteristics, and I will use these definitions to classify prominent art districts in Arkansas among them.

## **Historical Artistic Influences and the Economy**

It is well known that art has deep roots in society dating back to the beginnings of civilizations. For as long as people have been studied in anthropology so, too, has art. The development of businesses and economic systems birthed creativity in the business sector as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century when current marketing foundations were first observed in the Industrial Revolution. However, marketing concepts hadn't yet changed attitudes toward creativity as much as they influenced business growth during this time- where the main motivation behind development was interest in "urbanization, information, and knowledge" (Bell, 1976).

Later, creative and cultural industries gained footing when Europe recognized the economic impacts of culture, design, and media in the 1990s. Emphasis on human resources and their relationship with work fostered creativity in the workplace and promoted individual thought and the sharing of novel ideas. This development increased the prominence of individualism and creative space-making in business sectors. In 2001, John Howkins developed the concept of a *creative economy* whose definition continues to evolve, but generally refers to economic activity that stems from individual(s) creativity.

Some narrow definitions of creative economies hone in on specific creative industries and elevate key cultural aspects of creativity like design, media, and arts as the driving forces of economic development in cultural spaces. While creative economies are vastly present and continue to grow, it's the more narrowly defined creative economies that build the foundation for artistic districts and communities. In my research, I will explore creative economies in which arts-defined as the theory and physical expression of creativity found in human cultures and societies- are the key stimuli.

*\*For the purpose of this analysis, I will be centering the discussion on art that is locally created and experiential. It is important to note that, because of modern technology, most art can be visually consumed on a digital platform; I want to establish the distinction that I will focus on art that is experienced on-site. In relation to cultural districts (page 9), this includes artistic institutions like galleries, museums, performance halls, and non-institutions like various forms of public art and excludes art created for mass-media and -consumption.*

## **Artistically Led Economic Development**

Art has long been an economic stimulant and because of sustained interest in culture and history the arts will continue to stay relevant. Generally, people crave creativity and creation which is what keeps growth of the arts so steadfast and why the arts sector is such a large part of the United States economy. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), in 2015 “the arts contributed \$763.6 billion to the U.S. economy... employ[ed] 4.9 million workers... [and] saw a \$20 billion trade surplus” through the production and exportation of arts and cultural goods (Hutter, 2018). Of this data, independent artists, writers, and performers accounted for \$22 billion of the economic contribution alone and performing arts companies, performing arts presenters, museums, and fine arts schools made up an additional \$37 billion combined. This shows how important independent creators and local creative institutions are in stimulating the economy. Additionally, the arts have seen consistent increase in economic contribution and growth over time. Data reported by the NEA from recent years shows a 69.5% increase in the arts and cultural production’s GDP contribution from 1998 to 2016 and most currently reported the arts contribution to United States GDP as \$877.8 billion in 2017 (“The Arts and Economic Growth”, 2020). The national economic impact of arts and cultural production is clear and the value that the arts add to America’s economy every year is growing. Local creators and local artistic facilities specifically account for significant portions of economic activity. Understanding the relationship these artists and institutions have with their communities is beneficial to understanding the reason for their economic impact.

It is important to analyze the flow of money through artistic spaces to understand the influence creators have on local economies. As much as research supports local spending to improve local economies, spending outside of these communities can improve local creativity and business growth over time. For example, if native consumers are spending their money outside of their communities on certain commodities, they can highlight the need for those goods and services to be provided locally. This can improve creativity in these communities and, because of their familiarity with the community, “the local producer adds creative elements that make either the product or materials used more appropriate to the place,” says Susan Witt, Executive Director of the Schumacher Center for New Economics (Schwartz, 2009). Essentially, small creators find a need in their community that is being filled by outside markets and they take over as the resident suppliers of those goods and services. Once these creators establish a presence in their community, the opportunity for local economic development increases. In fact, money spent locally stays in those economies twice as long as money spent elsewhere which doubles the economic impact of every dollar spent (Schwartz, 2009). Spending money locally also increases the speed in which those dollars spent circulate through the local economies. Local businesses and creators put more money into input costs than big businesses. This is beneficial in creative spaces because spending money on art or investing in local artists puts that money back into the community as creators invest in supplies and create more art. This cycle persists as long as native residents continue to put their money into the local economy. The application of this principle in artistic spaces is what forms the foundation for art district creation. Consumption of local art empowers artists to create more art and, as more art is created, consumption grows leading to increases in economic development.

Within these communities, there are several ways that the arts can be used to stimulate economic activity. Individual artists or art institutions, in conjunction with local government, can create pieces or series of art, artistic events, communal spaces, and more to promote community involvement with the arts, local surroundings, and businesses. Two specific ways that cities and

towns embrace the arts and promote the economy are through (1) public art and (2) cultural tourism.

#### (1) Public Art

There are many interpretations of what “public art” is and the range of art it describes. Generally, public art is any art in a visually and physically accessible format that is created for the public. It is typically regarded that independent art (graffiti, street art, private property decorum, etc.) in or near public space is not included under the “public art” umbrella. This is primarily because independent art lacks official sanction or public process. Essentially, art must be “planned, created and/or maintained through a public process that can define public art goals, community participation, artist and artwork selection, and funding mechanisms” to be considered legitimate public art (“What is Not Public Art?”).

Public art can be categorized in several ways. Public Art in Public Places identifies five types of public art as stand alone, integrated, applied, installation, and ephemeral, focusing primarily on how the art is integrated with the physical environment. Stand alone art typically refers to pieces like sculptures, statues, and structures, which take up space within but are not attached to the built environment. Integrated art describes works like bas-reliefs or mosaics which are worked into existing façades, pavements, or landscapes. Applied art refers to art applied to surfaces; this includes art like sculptures that are building-mounted and murals. Installation art is embedded within the design of the site. Transit station art is an example of this type of public art, where the artwork is built into the walls of underground transit stations during development. Ephemeral art is non-permanent like artistic performances or temporary installations. Other sources identify integrated, semi-integrated, discrete, and community art as additional types of public art (Martin, 2019). The definitions of these types of public art focus more on the relationship the art has with the community rather than the physical environment. Previously described integrated art considers how the art resides within a physical space. The alternative definition of integrated art describes it as being specific to a certain location. Integrated art, in this sense, “uses the location’s history, culture, and social circumstances that make the work of art distinctly a part of the community” (Martin, 2019). Semi-integrated public art is inspired by its location to an extent but is not necessarily exclusive to that location or community. Discrete public art pieces are not dependent upon their location or community at all; they are not integrated into any area for a specific purpose. Lastly, community art is designed by and for the community in which it resides. This public art type focuses primarily on community goals, beliefs, problems, and experiences which help the residents to feel personally connected to the art pieces.

Independent art, as previously mentioned, does not usually fall within the category of public art. This does not, however, come without conflicting points of view. Some sources consider independent art like street art to be akin to applied public art like murals. Because public art “may also be artist-driven, self-funded, and created outside of an institutional framework,” some believe that there is a grey area specifically between street art and public art where street art is technically unsanctioned but can often serve the same purposes and provide the same benefits as sanctioned, planned, and maintained public art (“Public Art”, 2020). Historically, street art appeared in the United States as early as the 1960s in New York City, after introduction in Philadelphia. Street art, known as “graffiti,” became quickly widespread and by the 1980s was being regarded as Urban Art. Still, street art was illegal at this time, but it began to influence artists’ styles and techniques in new ways. In 1984 in the city of Philadelphia, where the street art movement began nearly 20 years earlier, an anti-graffiti program was founded “with the goal of facilitating collaboration between professional artists and prosecuted graffiti writers to create new murals in the city” named

Mural Arts Philadelphia (“Mural Arts Philadelphia”). In this way, street art became the foundation for public art initiatives in the quest for urban development surrounding changing communities.

In regard to promoting economic development and contributing to the creative economy, public art has become increasingly prominent in urban revitalization efforts. Urban revitalization, or urban renewal, is a component of urban development in which initiatives are created to improve the quality or experience of an urban environment. The three pillars for Sustainable Urban Design are economic development, environmental responsibility, and social progress. While there are factors outside of the arts that contribute to urban development, it is also widely believed that supporting “inner-city cultural environment[s] contributes to a healthy economy and social environment” (Benfield). Public art aims at enhancing communities by “evoking meaning and purpose in the public setting” (Irons, 2019). This can be true whether the pieces of art have personal significance to the community or not because communities will create meaning surrounding the art in their spaces either way. Foundationally, supporting artists and art institutions is a promising way to empower community residents, create jobs, strengthen local economies, and give rise to enduring communities that people love and work to sustain.

## (2) Cultural Tourism

Like public art, there are many widespread and differing definitions of cultural tourism. At a basic level, cultural tourism is defined as “all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence” (Gómez, 1970). Cultural tourism provides many opportunities in the United States as travelers’ “appetite for authentic cultural experiences in heritage, ethnicity, cuisine, crafts, arts, and music continues to expand,” making cultural travel a growing market (Goss, 2017). Economically, the cultural traveler differs from other travelers and their impact in the tourism sector is notable, contributing to data that makes cultural tourism “one of the largest economic stimulators in any particular area” (“How culture and art influence economic development”).

The Travel Industry Association of America reports that “roughly eighty percent of the 150,000,000+ adults who travel more than fifty miles from their homes can be considered ‘cultural tourists’” (Goss, 2017). These travelers are included within market of leisure travel. Broadly, cultural tourists consist primarily of older generations reaching retirement and younger generations seeking experiential, immersive, and authentic travel. The most economically significant trait of cultural tourists is that these travelers are proven to spend more than average travelers on their trips and more than local community members in their destinations. A study on event-related spending for local versus nonlocal Nonprofit Arts and Culture audiences showed that nonlocal attendees spent twice the amount of money than local attendees per event on top of admission costs (“Arts & Economic Prosperity IV”). These expenses were noted as being made in direct response to the attendance of a cultural event and included expenditures on meals and refreshments, lodging, transportation, childcare, gifts/souvenirs, and more. Compared to the average traveler, cultural travelers are more likely to spend large amounts of money, travel by air, and book longer trips, making their economic contribution greater (Goss, 2017).

Americans for the Arts cites that “nationally, 59.4 percent of all nonlocal arts attendees report that the primary reason for their trip is ‘specifically to attend [an] arts/culture event’” (“Arts & Economic Prosperity IV”). Alternative reasons include vacation, work/business, visiting friends/relatives, or miscellaneous purposes. Additionally, 41.9 percent of local cultural attendees report that they would travel elsewhere to enjoy similar experiences to those they attended had they not been happening locally. Based on these figures, there is strong evidence that cultural

tourism is widely appealing to both local and nonlocal communities. Local economies risk losing local dollars and missing out on new dollars from cultural travelers when they fail to provide artistic and cultural experiences, driving these arts attendees elsewhere. When communities embrace arts and culture and invest in cultural tourism, they cultivate stronger communities and promote local economic development.

Later, I will discuss how cultural tourism is approached from the business sector to stimulate art creation.

### **How Modern Businesses Feed the Arts and Culture**

Small businesses often best understand how to connect with local communities because they are their primary consumers. Local businesses already have a unique relationship with community residents; they generally understand their goals, beliefs, problems, and experiences, all of which are pillars for community art in public art creation. This explains why small businesses are some of the best contributors to artistic and cultural growth in local communities. Because of limited resources, small businesses must turn to their community residents and local government to advance their communal goals. By doing this, businesses give power to those within their community and stimulate local arts and culture.

Global businesses, alternatively, have historically tended to lack a strong relationship with smaller communities. Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at market research company the NPD Group, explains that “retailers felt they wanted to create a universal experience and now they’re recognizing that ... what you need is to make it special and unique” (Kansara, 2016). This shift in perspective is what is ultimately leading global businesses to more local approaches in community engagement. Sociologist Roland Robertson coins the term ‘glocal’ to explain how modern global businesses must now understand local cultures (inclusive of languages, religions, social habits, music, arts, and more) to succeed (Fraser, 2018).

To analyze the relationship modern businesses have with the arts and culture, I will explore (1) how global brands approach public art and (2) how local economies use cultural tourism to support artistic and cultural interests.

#### **(1) Big Brands in Small Spaces**

Increasingly, international artists, brands, and other presences can be seen taking over small spaces for various angles of promotion and marketing strategy. With the ever-present goal of reaching target audiences where they are, big names are seemingly inserting themselves into the lives of their audiences through public art. Public art is common in urban areas and has gained momentum as a global movement, extending the impact it has in contemporary marketing and communication. This is especially true in pop culture where the demographic of interest tends to be trendy young people. Because there is so much geographic freedom in public art, this format gains the upper hand on the marketing front, allowing businesses to be virtually anywhere their audience is. Alternatively, public art is still beneficial when the goal of the brand is not to be on the frontlines. Much like traditional advertisement, public art can be widely visible and attention-grabbing with the added benefits of giving the audience an artistic experience that feels more tangible and relatable. Often, city residents create an emotional connection to the surroundings in which they live. To incorporate their brand directly into these spaces, businesses are leveraging the emotional experience consumers already have with their settings. As previously covered, applied art is one type of public art that includes creations like murals. Murals and similar forms of applied art are some of the most common implementations of public art that we can see brands and individual artists utilizing today.

Individual artists choosing to promote content and connect through public art is often viewed largely as a form of self-expression because their identity and their personal lives are so integrated with their brands. Think of music artists. Audiences connect with, follow, and promote these creators because of the who they are, what they stand for, and/or the content they create. One example of an individual artist using public art to connect to their audience while promoting their content is when singer Louis Tomlinson commissioned London-based artist, Jay Kaes, to paint a mural in East London unveiling, for the first time, the tracklist of his debut album Walls.



Louis Tomlinson's Walls Album Tracklist Mural by Jay Kaes, London

Countless local fans travelled to see the mural as it was being painted on livestream and long after it was completed, helping to further promote the album and generate new attention surrounding both Louis Tomlinson and artist Jay Kaes from the community. In addition to fan appeal, the local community benefits from the added public art and the increased foot traffic.

Another example of a popular music artist using public art to promote their work is Harry Styles' promotion for his music single Lights Up. Overnight, several posters appeared in major cities Sydney, London, Los Angeles, and New York to promote Harry Styles' single Lights Up. With the cryptic phrase 'Do You Know Who You Are?' and letters 'TPWK' at the bottom standing for 'Treat People With Kindness,' Styles' adopted phrase, fans quickly traced the posters back to him and began speculation about their meaning.





Harry Styles' Light Up Single Poster by Unknown Artist(s), Los Angeles

While Styles' route of promotion was more cryptic in nature, the posters served their purpose within his fanbase, drawing attention and raising awareness surrounding his impending single at the time. By choosing a public art format, Harry Styles connected with fans in individual communities around the world. As with Louis Tomlinson's mural, fans traveled to see the posters, increasing foot traffic in those areas and encouraging community involvement with the art. Because the posters were placed in communities with already high amounts of public art, they served to expand the public art scenes in those areas. Additionally, the inexplicit nature of the content allowed for all viewers, fans or not, to benefit from the art.

Besides individual creators using public art for promotion, global brands also benefit from it by creating public works of art often in collaboration with celebrity endorsers to incorporate a personal connection with the brand and the community environment. Examples of this are Amazon Music's mural of Sam Smith promoting his single 'To Die For' in London or Gucci's Mémoire d'une Odeur fragrance campaign 'Art Wall' in Hong Kong sporting Harry Styles, as the face of the Gucci perfume, alongside a group of models, musicians, and artists.



Amazon Music's Sam Smith 'To Die For' Mural by Unknown Artist(s), London



Gucci's Mémoire d'une Odeur 'Art Wall' by Unknown Artist(s), Hong Kong

What all these artistic ventures have in common, across brands and individual creators, is a human aspect. Businesses understand that to make a connection with their audience, they must meet them where they are in an immediate and emotional way. To do this, they harness arts and locality to create a truly personal experience which is inherently emotional and individualized as each person has a unique relationship with the art.

## (2) Cultural Tourism

I previously discussed the economic impacts of cultural tourism and cultural tourists. In addition to the economic implications, cultural tourism is a large motivator for artistic creation and involvement in various locations. Many communities see cultural tourism as a means to strengthen community identity, stimulate local economy, empower resident creators, and much more. Regardless of the purpose behind increasing cultural tourism in their area, a community's business sector, arts sector, and local government all work together to develop artistic and cultural experiences in their spaces.

The top drivers of tourism are shopping, dining, and entertainment. While they are travel motivators outside of any cultural context, cultural tourism provides communities the opportunity to apply cultural context to them by creating events, destinations, or goods and services for local communities and travelers. Communities support the arts through cultural tourism by investing in local artists, arts organizations, and artistic institutions who offer pieces of public art or artistic communities and venues which draw tourists. Additionally, when a group of people or a location has strong cultural roots, local government and businesses can create or organize cultural events, activities, and institutions to foster "authentic cultural exchange between locals and visitors" ("What is Cultural Tourism"). There are many ways that communities can increase cultural tourism in their regions; the most vital aspect of any of these is to empower resident creators and creative institutions. By doing this, local governments and businesses enrich their cultures and strengthen their arts sectors.

## Cultural Districts

At its core, a cultural district is a demarcated urban area being a hub for a variety of cultural establishments, assets, and happenings. Among serving countless cultural scenes, these districts also inherently feed into artistic and economic activity and are, most broadly, broken down into six subtypes: *Cultural Compounds*, *Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts*, *Downtown Area*

*Focus Districts, Cultural Production Focus Districts, Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts, and Naturally Occurring Focus Districts* (“Cultural Districts FAQs”).

*Cultural Compounds* are primarily the oldest of the art districts. They typically center around long-standing institutions or “open green spaces” which are removed from prime business sectors (“Cultural Districts Basics”, 2019). These cultural districts are prominent in their communities and engrained into the culture and mindset of their home regions as they often hold historical significance. An example of a Cultural Compound is St. Louis, Missouri’s Forest Park (See Appendix A). Often, these districts can look like university campuses and over time the edges of the cultural district can spread beyond the initially established boundaries, bleeding into new territory as cities “continue to remodel, expand and enhance their facilities” (Frost-Kumpf, 1998). The ongoing expansion of Cultural Compounds makes them vital for sustained economic growth.

*Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts* are defined by few major facilities which attract smaller surrounding cultural institutions to create an encompassing district, typically located near touristic locations. Americans for the Arts cites the Pittsburgh Cultural District as an example; housing over 160 distinct art and business facilities in a 14-square block area, this district is a hub of cultural and economic activity anchored by a handful of major venues (“The Cultural District Pittsburgh”). The Dallas Arts District is another example of a Major Cultural Institution Focus District, encompassing several significant artistic facilities amidst notable tourist destinations (See Appendix B).

*Downtown Area Focus Districts* serve to promote tourism in areas where foot traffic is common. These districts reside in smaller cities and encompass most of their downtown area including the central business district. Cultural tourism is the primary economic stimulant in this type of district as tourists are drawn to the variety of attractions offered. East End Arts of Long Island, New York is recognized by Americans for the Arts as a Downtown Area Focus District. Known for “a long history of engagement in economic development through cultural tourism initiatives and programs that collaborate with various levels of government, civic groups, private business and non-profit entities,” East End Arts provides the five East End towns of New York with artistic gathering spaces and events meant to draw tourists and stimulate local economy (“East End Arts Overview”). Downtown Area Focus Districts are most commonly found in smaller cities because the whole cultural district is “easily packaged as a destination” in tighter quarters, however, evidence of successful Downtown Area Focus Districts outside of these settings is seen.

*Cultural Production Focus Districts* function to promote livability for a city’s residents. Without the intent to stimulate tourism, these districts embrace community art and entertainment institutions in inexpensive developmental areas. The Warehouse Arts District in Tucson, Arizona is an example of a Cultural Production Focus District whose purpose is to “preserv[e], creat[e], and maintain affordable spaces for arts uses” (“National Endowment for the Arts”). The most unique quality of these districts is that their goal is not to present art, but rather to stimulate creation and creativity for artists. These districts are home to artistic studios, production centers, private galleries, classrooms, small theaters, and more. Removed from the primary business districts and attractions, these cultural districts “focus more on inner-city neighborhood development” and “include a significantly higher percentage of residential space” for local artists (Frost-Kumpf, 1998). Economic development and investment in these districts directly contribute to creators in those spaces and promote the growth of artistic output in surrounding communities.

*Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts* are home to smaller cultural, artistic, and economic venues focused around “popular culture and commercial attractions” (“Cultural Districts Basics”, 2019). In Nashville, Tennessee, The District- noted as an A&E Focus District by Americans for

the Arts- covers an area spanning several blocks surrounded by what is essentially a ring of “landmark attractions” including performance halls, parks, arenas, and auditoriums (See Appendix C). The attractions in these districts are typically smaller venues, though they can include major facilities. This, seemingly, creates overlap with Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts especially as both are centers for cultural and economic activity, however, Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts primarily revolve around their smaller institutions and attractions. A&E Focus Districts often reside near “central business districts and major tourist sites,” and appeal to younger people because of their emphasis on pop culture (Frost-Kumpf, 1998).

*Naturally Occurring Focus Districts* are commonly grown around strong community identities and led by resident artists. These districts “are holistic and are highly diverse” and, because they are natively driven, thrive with support from “local empowered leadership” (“Cultural Districts Basics”, 2019). The Architectural League of New York offers Fort Greene, Brooklyn as an example of a Naturally Occurring Focus District. The district is home to a concentration of existing and emerging arts facilities grown from “a predominantly African American community of artists and cultural groups in the performing arts, film production, music, and spoken word [who] have gathered and worked in Fort Green since the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s” (Kraus, 2013). Community support for resident creators fuels the economy in these districts, increasing the velocity of money movement and promoting local creativity and economic growth.

Distinction between the six cultural districts serves to define how consumers interact with the artistic facilities and the communities in which they reside. Despite differences in attractions, benefits, and outcomes, cultural districts all carry with them the same goals. Americans for the Arts outline the top seven, noting that the goals of cultural districts are to: revitalize a particular area of [a] city; offer evening activities, extending hours during which the area is in use; make an area safe and attractive; provide facilities for arts activities and arts organizations; provide arts activities for residents and tourists; provide employment and housing for artists; and connect the arts more intimately with community development (Frost-Kumpf, 1998). Cultural districts stem from a collaboration between local businesses, government, and artists and feed into the cyclical relationship between artistic investment and economic development where their existence proves that art is an urban revitalizer and economic stimulator. Because of this, cultural districts provide the most insight into the relationship between art and business as they are created out of and thrive in the space where the two sectors converge.

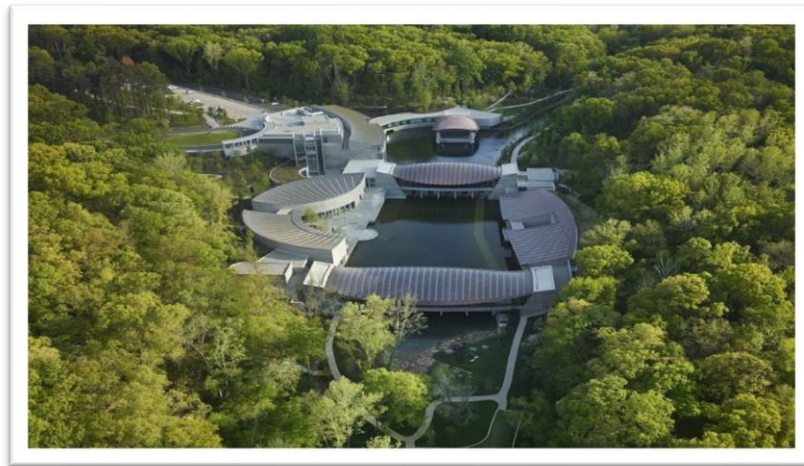
### **Analysis of Prominent Art Districts in Arkansas**

Because cultural districts highlight arts and culture in local communities, I believe it will be valuable to analyze the presence of similar districts in local areas to make a case for the types of cultural districts that exist in Arkansas. Based on personal experience, I believe Arkansas is home to fertile artistic communities that foster strong local cultures. Likewise, the NEA’s arts economies and employment data for Arkansas shows \$2.9 billion in added value to Arkansas’ state economy by the arts, \$1.6 billion in compensation for arts workers, and over 33,500 people employed by the arts as of 2017 (“State-Level Estimates of the Arts’ Economic Value and Employment (2001-2017)”, 2020). I will expand upon individual local art districts including (1) Bentonville, Arkansas; (2) Fayetteville, Arkansas; (3) Fort Smith, Arkansas; and (4) Little Rock, Arkansas and make cases for their cultural district subtype identities based on the six cultural district subtypes- *Cultural Compounds*, *Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts*, *Downtown*

*Area Focus Districts, Cultural Production Focus Districts, Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts, and Naturally Occurring Focus Districts-* as previously identified and discussed.

(1) Bentonville, Arkansas – *Major Cultural Institution Focus District*

Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts are defined by major artistic facilities that influence arts in the surrounding community in smaller or aesthetic ways. Bentonville, Arkansas has a rich art scene anchored by significant arts and culture institutions including the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Museum of Native American History, and newly-founded The Momentary. These well-known hubs are surrounded by several other artistic and cultural destinations. Additionally, the downtown square and other public spaces are adorned with public art, and historic sites provide engaging cultural experiences, making the city a popular tourist spot.



Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

The most well-known art museum in Northwest Arkansas, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art houses educational spaces, galleries, gathering halls, food services, a reference library, and more. The Museums 120-acre park is connected to downtown Bentonville by walking trails.

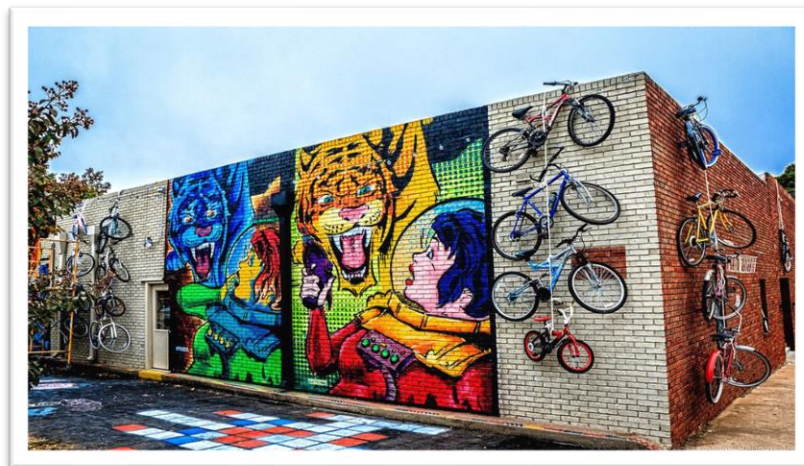


The Momentary

The Momentary, newly established in February 2020, is a “contemporary art space satellite to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art ... [serving as] a multi-disciplinary space for visual and performing arts, culinary experiences, festivals, and artists-in-residence” (“The Momentary”, 2020).



Bentonville Octopus by Jason Jones



Untitled by Unknown Artist

Public art located in downtown Bentonville shows the importance of art to the surrounding community outside of the larger crowd-drawing artistic institutions. Scattered art across the city helps to support the local creative economy in large and small areas.

I believe, based on Bentonville, Arkansas’ artistic and cultural layout, this city can be considered a Major Cultural Institution Focus District.

#### (2) Fayetteville, Arkansas – *Arts and Entertainment Focus District*

Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts are typically comprised of small artistic, cultural and economic venues. These districts can also contain major institutions, though the community and culture do not generally revolve around them. Popular culture is a primary driver of these districts as well as commercial entertainment. Fayetteville, Arkansas is home to a vast array of small businesses, parks, and public art with few notable major institutions within the downtown

arts scene. Located near the University of Arkansas, this community and art district draw from the popularity of the Arkansas Razorbacks, embracing the school’s culture and demographics within the art and business sectors. While technically separated from the “central business district” at the head of Fayetteville, the main downtown artistic venues are in close proximity to many local businesses, which arguably appeal more-so to the primary audience of Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts- young people concerned with popular culture. Because the arts district is located directly off the University of Arkansas campus, the businesses in the area benefit from heavy foot traffic and attention from college-aged students. Places like the Fayetteville Farmers’ Market in the downtown square host local artists and creators. George’s Majestic Lounge welcomes local musicians and larger music artists. Dickson Street is a nightlife hub located near the Walton Arts Center and TheatreSquared- two substantial institutions for performing arts featuring both national and local performing arts companies. Several additional businesses and institutions reside in the downtown area, though many more are also scattered outside of the primary district.



Untitled by Unknown Artist



Untitled by Unknown Artist

An ongoing “graffiti abatement project,” these Utility Box Beautification artworks are under the management of the Keep Fayetteville Beautiful Committee and the Community Policing

Division of the Fayetteville Police Department (“Public Art”). These creations help to involve local artists with Fayetteville’s urban revitalization. Keisha Davis, Member of the City of LA Advocacy Team and Administrative & Scholarship Manager for Community Build regards “neighborhood beautification projects [as] a powerful vehicle for community building and visual revitalization” (Davis, 2010).



Enjoy Local by Jason Jones

One of Fayetteville’s abundance of public art murals off the downtown square, Enjoy Local encompasses community values of supporting local businesses, art, and artists. Arkansan artist, Jason Jones, says “Fayetteville is a very fertile place to be an artist” regarding opportunities for resident creators (“Youtube: ‘Experience Fayetteville – Visual Arts’”, 2018). Other applied public art works can be found also in the downtown area, as well as on business walls, sidewalks and streets, park tunnels, parking garages, and more, throughout Fayetteville.



UpStream by Leah Saffian





Walton Arts Center

Like Bentonville, the art and business sectors in Fayetteville are widespread and profound, showing the community's dedication to the arts and local economy. Because so much of Fayetteville's culture surrounds its local businesses and artists, despite the presence of major artistic institutions, this district does not fall within the definition of a Major Cultural Institution Focus District.

I believe, based on Fayetteville, Arkansas' artistic and cultural layout, this city can be considered an Arts and Entertainment Focus District.

(3) Fort Smith, Arkansas – *Cultural Production Focus District*

Cultural Production Focus Districts are mainly concerned with improving the development of a certain area to increase the livability of residential spaces. These districts are not typically concerned with promoting tourism, rather, their efforts go toward helping to empower the community. In Fort Smith, artistic leadership comes from the non-profit organization 64.6 Downtown which aims to “mobilize place-making in Fort Smith ... through the establishment of innovative and creative spaces, events, and activities” (“Bringing Life”). Their projects work to promote economic development and artistically aesthetic spaces with long term goals in creating “sustainable growth in retail, attainable residential, increased bike-ability, walkability and cultural spaces” in downtown Fort Smith (“64.4 Downtown - Projects”).



The Rainbow Embassy by Okuda San Miguel



Rapto Divino by Jaz & Pastel



Light Poem by Robert Montgomery



Arrows by D\*FACE

Artistic endeavors in Fort Smith show dedication to revitalization and development of residential areas. Most uncharacteristic of Cultural Production Focus Districts, the arts in Fort Smith are not primarily the creation of resident artists. 64.4 Downtown instead works to improve community and residential areas with the help of nonlocal and/or international artists. Despite this, I consider their efforts to be largely in-line with the goals of Cultural Production Focus Districts which are to improve urban development and promote livability for a city's residents.

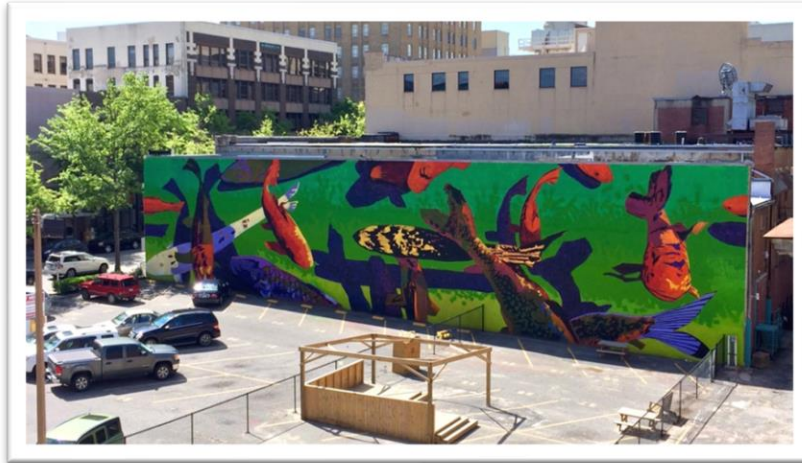
I believe, based on Fort Smith, Arkansas' artistic and cultural layout, this city can be considered a Cultural Production Focus District.

(4) Little Rock, Arkansas – *Major Cultural Institution Focus District*

Again, Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts are cultural districts typically surrounding few major anchoring artistic institutions. As the capital of Arkansas, Little Rock is a hub for entertainment and arts. Some of the major arts and culture facilities include the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, the Robinson Center, Arkansas Arts Center, Wildwood Park for the Arts, and more. Because Little Rock is a major city, it's artistic, cultural, and economic offerings are vast in variety and number. As a significant location, Little Rock aims to promote tourism, community engagement, and historic preservation within its artistic and cultural spaces.



Playtime by Jason Jones



Beneath the Surface by Matt McLeod



The Gathering/Flying Free by Angela Davis Johnson

Public art, artistic spaces, and art and culture institutions can be found nearly anywhere in Little Rock. The city is invested in its local and nonlocal community and is dedicated to providing artistic goods, services, events, institutions, and spaces in pursuit of a healthy, growing creative economy. At large, there are many major and non-major artistic facilities within the community that are located near touristic attractions and that promote popular culture. All of these traits are indicative of either a Major Cultural Institution Focus District or an Arts and Entertainment Focus District. However, small venues and businesses are not primarily the driving institutions within the artistic and cultural scene and tourism is one of the city's primary motivators, aligning more closely with the goals and characteristics of a Major Cultural Institution Focus District.

I believe, based on Little Rock, Arkansas' artistic and cultural layout, this city can be considered a Major Cultural Institution Focus District.

## Conclusions

This research serves as a contribution to the literature surrounding the bidirectional relationship between the arts and business. It explores the nature of creative economies as an outcome by analyzing historical narratives as well as current affairs surrounding arts, culture, and

business sector interactions. The phenomenon of arts as an economic stimulant was supported by public art and cultural tourism data. Further, promotion of the arts was shown to be driven, in part, by economic and business interests and creative economic theory is evidenced to be the foundation of cultural districts. This analysis outlines the subtypes of cultural districts as Cultural Compounds, Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts, Downtown Area Focus Districts, Cultural Production Focus Districts, Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts, and Naturally Occurring Focus Districts. From this research, an argument for the classification of major Arkansan art districts- Bentonville, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, and Little Rock- within the six cultural district subtypes is proposed.

The cultural district classification arguments are based on community characteristics surrounding public art and arts and culture institutions in these cities. Bentonville is proposed to be a Major Cultural Institution Focus District because of the community's major anchoring artistic and historic institutions which influence arts throughout the surrounding area. Fayetteville is proposed to be an Arts and Entertainment Focus District because of the community's primary interest surrounding local artists and institutions despite the presence of major venues. Resident demographics support the A&E Focus District consumer as young peoples interested in popular culture and commercial attractions. Fort Smith is proposed to be a Naturally Occurring Focus District because of the community's primary focus on urban development and residential livability. Lastly, Little Rock is proposed to be a Major Cultural Institution Focus District because of the community's abundance of major artistic and cultural institutions and widespread investment and presence of public art.

With the focus of these proposals surrounding local cultural districts, the opportunities for supplementary research and analyses of additional localities are abundant.

### **Further Research**

Across the course of this analysis, I focused on the relationship between art and business in the United States and from a western standpoint. I think it's important to recognize that this point of view does not capture the diversity of global art and business spaces and provides an opportunity for further exploration and research from additional sources. I believe there is room to expand the analysis to creative economies across geographies and cultures. Below, I have begun a list of topics that may benefit from such contributions and sources.

- The importance of art and/or creativity in different cultures or regions
- The influence of art and/or creativity on economic development in different cultures or regions
- The contribution of business sectors on economic, cultural, and social stimulation in different cultures and/or regions

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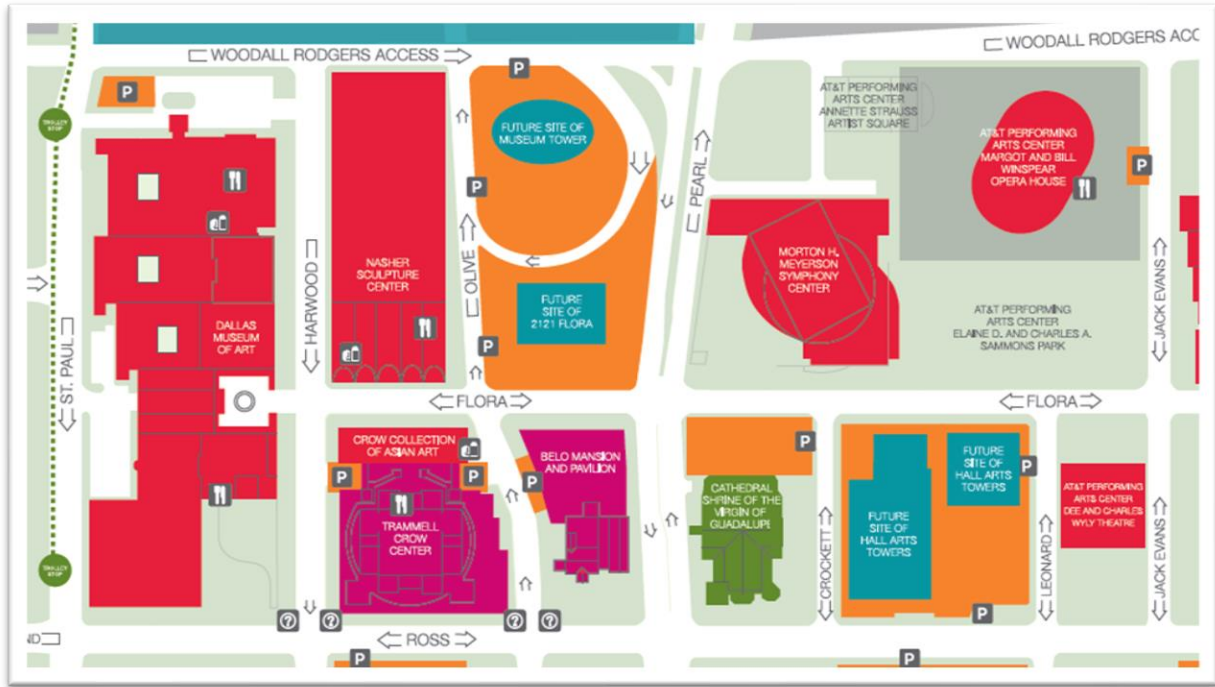


Appendices  
Appendix A



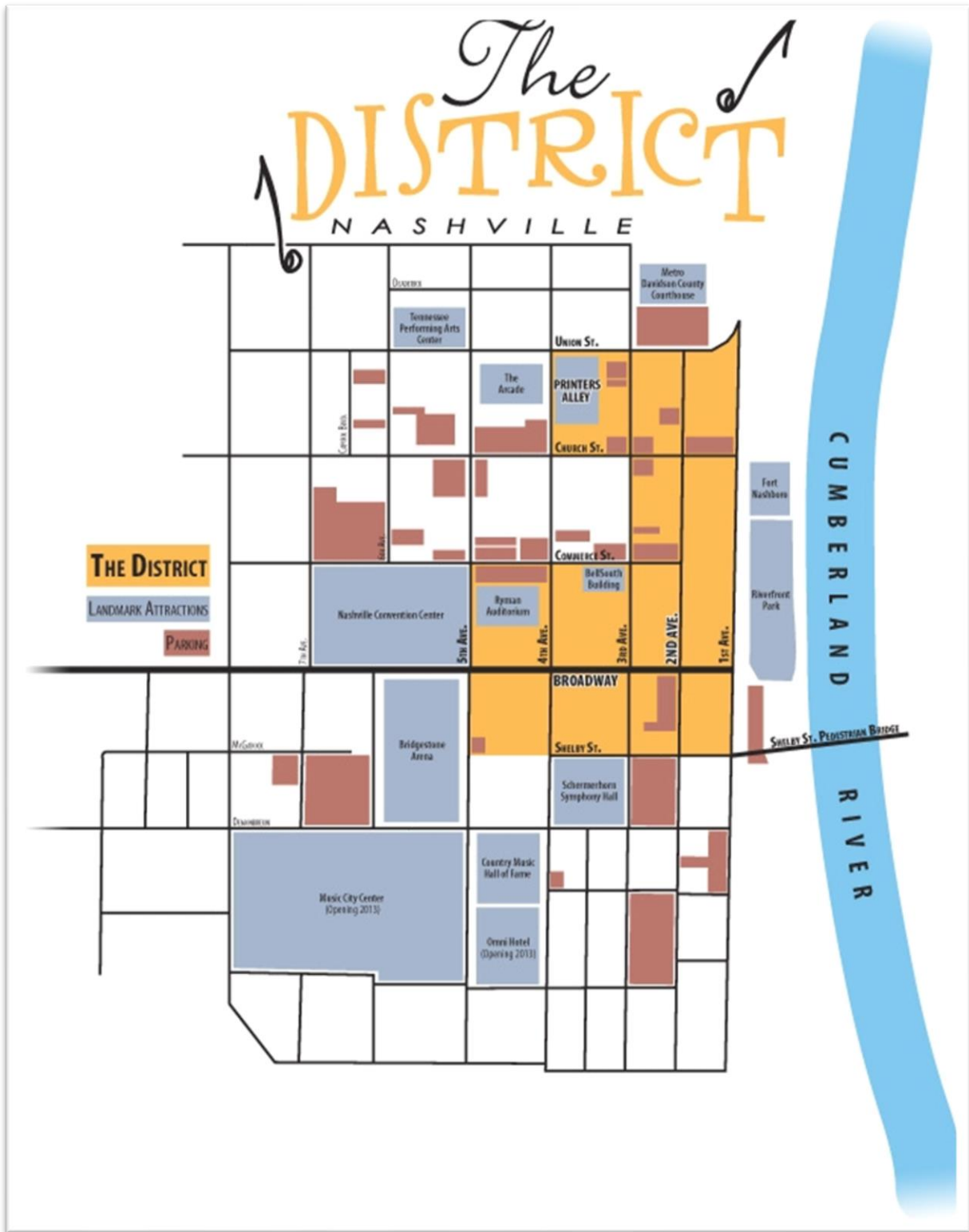
Source: <https://www.archcityhomes.com/discover-st-louis-forest-park>

Appendix B



Source: <https://www.dallasartsdistrict.org/map/>

Appendix C



Source: [thedistrictnashville.org/](http://thedistrictnashville.org/)