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Grodach, Carl
(2010)
Art spaces in community and economic development : connections to neighborhoods, artists, and the cultural economy.
Journal of Planning Education and Research, *31*(1), pp. 74-85.

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http://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X10391668

Art Spaces in Community and Economic Development: Connections to Neighborhoods, Artists, and the Cultural Economy

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Abstract

There is growing interest in the arts in community and economic development, yet little research examines the dynamics of community-based arts institutions to inform urban planning and policy. Drawing on interviews with participants and organizers of small and mid-sized art spaces, the study explores the factors that influence their involvement in neighborhood revitalization and outreach, support for artistic communities, and efforts to build bridges to commercial cultural sectors. Art spaces function as a conduit for building social networks that contribute to both community revitalization and artistic development. But, issues pertaining to the location, organization, and management of art spaces may limit their community and economic development potential. The article concludes with proposals to craft stronger arts-based community and economic development programs.

Introduction

There has been growing recognition of the role that the arts and artists play in economic and community development and an associated interest in how governments can capture and enhance their positive spin-off effects. Some argue that cities should focus on nurturing artistic and cultural milieus, which provide essential skilled labor and specialized services in the regional cultural or creative economy while also serving as an amenity that attracts other highly skilled and educated people and the businesses that employ them (Florida 2002; Markusen and Schrock 2006; Scott 2000, 2008). Another strain of research focuses on community-based arts activity, that is, the production and consumption of art rooted in and reflective of a specific group of people with a shared sense of values and practices based on geographic location and/or identity. This line of work asserts that community arts support local economic development indirectly by enhancing interaction within and between communities, which in turn generates businesses, jobs, and tourism dollars (Borrup 2006; Seifert and Stern 2010). Central to both streams of literature is an interest in how the social and institutional context of the arts or cultural industries affects urban economic development (Currid 2007; Lloyd 2006). However, little research specifically examines how particular arts institutions anchor and sustain local cultural milieus and translates the findings to inform urban planning and policy.

This study addresses this issue by analyzing the community and economic development roles of small and mid-sized art spaces and identifying lessons for building stronger arts-based community and economic development programs. Neither museum nor commercial gallery, these flexible and multifunctional spaces may at once serve as performance space, gallery, art school, incubator, resource center, and outreach center. In contrast to the large-scale, flagship cultural institutions (Grodach 2010b), which typically show well-known work from their massive

collections or blockbuster tours, these art spaces tend to present a more eclectic range of work from traditional folk art to the experimental, often do not possess a resident company or permanent collection, and frequently work closely with local artists (Evans 2001; Grodach 2010a). Additionally, rather than seeking out a wide audience like mainstream cultural institutions, they are typically community-based; they may be dedicated to assisting local artists (Markusen and Johnson 2006), a particular ethnic group (Loukaitou-Sideris and Grodach 2004), or the specific neighborhood or city in which they are located.

To study the community and economic development roles of different types of art spaces, the study draws on in-depth interviews with art space participants and organizers in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. The first section provides a brief overview of the literature on art spaces and the cultural economy. Next, following a description of the methodology, I discuss the extent to which the art spaces fulfill the community and economic development roles identified in prior studies and the degree to which this activity grows artistic communities (e.g. artists, art managers, collectors, audience, and other art spaces) and creates bridges that link the arts to other commercial cultural sectors. This study reveals the limitations-- and potential-- of art spaces to engage in community and economic development. The primary contribution of art spaces is that they serve as a conduit for building the social networks and social capital that contribute to both community revitalization and artistic development. However, issues pertaining to the location, organization, and management of art spaces may limit their community and economic development potential particularly in relation to making connections to other cultural clusters in the region. The article concludes with proposals for addressing these issues.

Art Spaces and the Cultural Economy

Broadly speaking, the cultural economy is defined by those products, services, and establishments that relate to education and entertainment and are of high symbolic value (Gibson and Kong 2005; Scott 2000). Depending on policy agenda, a definition of the cultural economy may encompass industrial sectors and occupations in the fields of media (e.g. film and television, magazine and book publishing), design (e.g. architecture, graphic design), and visual and performing arts and cut across commercial, nonprofit, and informal spheres (Markusen, et al. 2008). Frequently, activity in these sectors is conducted by small, specialized, and interdependent organizations or firms that cluster together due to their need for specialized labor, knowledge and expertise, and physical and technical infrastructure (Porter 2000; Scott 2000). Much of the work is project rather than product-based such as that found in the making of a film, an architectural project, an advertising campaign, or theatrical production and so tends to be characterized by high turnover and rapid change. Given the availability of part-time and temporary employment, cultural workers devise "flexible career paths"-- many hold multiple, short-term jobs, are self-employed, and work across multiple art and commercial culture sectors (Currid 2007; Lloyd 2006; Rantisi 2004; Throsby 2007). As a consequence, many cultural economy sectors depend on the availability and maintenance of dense social networks that enable the dissemination of information on employment opportunities, new talent, products, and techniques which, in turn, reduce business costs and alleviate risk in a highly insecure job market (Evans 2001; Scott 2000).

Institutions and organizations are crucial for the production and reproduction of these "place-based cultural communities" (Kong 2005, 63). Examples abound from Hollywood film (Scott 2005) to New York fashion (Rantisi 2004) in which schools, unions, trade associations, and various interest-based organizations advocate on behalf of their constituents and provide

opportunities for networking, education, training, and other support services. By creating

channels through which participants share knowledge and gain experience in their field or by

serving as "gatekeepers" that set quality standards, these entities support innovation and create a

shared identity that roots the cultural cluster in place (Bassett et al. 2002; Caves 2000; Fleming

2004).

Increasingly, cultural economic activity is framed within a larger creative economy that,

in addition to the arts and culture, may include science, engineering, high technology, and other

sectors that require highly educated labor (Florida 2002; Hutton 2009; Scott 2008). As both

Markusen et al. (2008) and Throsby (2008) point out, however, while this approach denotes a

move away from a definition of culture as the fine arts or high culture, it collapses together very

different types of activity (e.g. cuisine and video games) and includes all workers in an industry

regardless of occupation including those that may not be involved in creative work. Many others

studying the cultural economy focus solely on cultural industries, those that are "concerned with

the industrial production and circulation of texts" (Hesmondhalgh 2007, 12). Core sectors

include broadcasting, film, internet content, music, publishing, video games, and advertising.

This definition generally excludes or treats as peripheral high, informal, and community-based

arts because activities in these areas tend to not rely on industrial production methods and are

generally subsidized in part by public and private sources.

Alternatively, many involved in cultural policy and planning include the arts in their

definition of the cultural (or creative) economy because they view the interaction between

nonprofit and commercial arts industries as a critical factor in many of the features described

above, but do not include engineering and technology fields. For example, the Americans for the

Arts (2008), concentrates on "for-profit and nonprofit businesses involved in the creation or

distribution of the arts," which includes museums, performing and visual arts, film, radio, design, publishing, and arts schools. Similarly, Cherbo et. al. (2008) identify seven "creative industry clusters" that include similar fields as well as informal and community-based arts. This definition unites the cultural industries with a more place-based cultural planning approach, which concentrates on developing the arts, culture, and heritage at the local level as a springboard for community development (Borrup 2006; Evans 2001; McNulty 2006). In studying art spaces, this paper works from the latter definition to more clearly incorporate community-based arts into our understanding of the cultural economy; explore potential relationships between cultural industry sectors and participants in the nonprofit, informal, and community arts; and expand the potential of cultural or creative economy activity to address issues of social inclusion and development.

In so doing, this definition engages in the debate over the use of the arts as an amenity to attract the creative class (Florida 2002) and the associated tendency of planners to approach the arts as an instrument to enhance neighborhood status and the value of real estate (Chapple and Jackson 2010). Critics have tended to view Florida's creative class theory either as bolstering neoliberal agendas by justifying the gentrification of urban places and the evasion of addressing social justice issues (Peck 2005) or as neglecting to consider the dynamics behind the production systems and labor force characteristic of the cultural-creative industries (Scott 2006). While both positions address weaknesses of what appears to have become the dominant argument for supporting artistic activity, neither is concerned with exploring alternative possibilities for arts and cultural activity in the space that Florida has opened following the *Rise of the Creative Class*. Whereas the former critique tends to assume a uniform top-down exploitation of disenfranchised groups and the commodification of arts and cultural resources, the latter tends to reduce cultural activity to social and spatial factors of production. Incorporating community-

based arts into a definition of the cultural economy adds a third dimension to this debate that, although continues to treat the arts as instrument, considers artistic and cultural activity rooted in specific communities as a means of empowerment and improvement for existing places and populations not simply as an amenity or industrial subsector.

Prior research has identified five ways in which art spaces may achieve community and economic development outcomes. First, art spaces are widely viewed as neighborhood anchors or amenities that contribute to local revitalization by boosting tourism and consumption and improving the quality of life in specific areas (Borrup 2006; Carr and Servon 2009; Clark 2004; Florida 2002; Grodach 2008; Markusen and Schrock 2006; Seifert and Stern 2010). Second, art spaces may serve as a venue for outreach and community involvement by providing opportunities for marginalized groups (e.g. homeless, mentally ill) and those with limited access to artistic activities to participate in the arts or to start their own cultural business ventures, which may also lay the foundation for neighborhood revitalization (Borrup 2006; Grams and Warr 2003; Mommaas 2004; Seifert and Stern 2010). Third, art spaces may incubate new talent and stimulate creativity by providing work and display space, shared office services and equipment, and programs to build artistic and business skills important for career development (Markesun and Johnson 2006; Mommaas 2004; Montgomery 2006; Philips 2004). Fourth, art spaces may function as a community center for artists by providing a space to display their work in an environment where mentoring, peer review, and discussion are encouraged (Markesun and Johnson 2006). Finally, art spaces may build social capital-- the trust, mutual understanding, and collective identity that roots cultural communities to place. Building social capital for individuals may reinforce the social networks that enhance involvement and economic development within a community (bonding social capital) (Grams and Warr 2003; Seifert and Stern 2010) as well as

create access to new resources and opportunities and increase the potential for interaction and collaboration across cultural sectors (bridging social capital).

While most research is highly positive on these accounts, Mommaas (2004) and Kong (2009) assert that, first, art spaces often do not live up to their potential to encourage collective interaction and exchange. On the one hand, art spaces may foster social capital that serves to insulate groups and create barriers for new membership thereby negating positive outcomes. On the other hand, as Kong (2009) finds in her study of Singapore art spaces, artists may lack trust and fail to build mutual support amongst peers working in the art spaces; hence, the reputation of the space and affordable, suitable space is more important. Alternatively, as Florida (2002) asserts, artists, like other creative workers, may in fact prefer and benefit from weak ties and loose networks, which he theorizes promotes openness and innovation. In fact, given that art spaces do not have a permanent company or collection, some may function as a way station for multiple users rather than a permanent home for building cohesion among a single group. Second, like larger mainstream cultural institutions, Mommaas (2004) argues that art spaces focus primarily on the consumption of art, a role that is reinforced by local governments that tend to view the arts as an opportunity for place promotion and tourism generation rather than arts or cultural economy incubation (Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris 2007). In turn, the emphasis on interurban competition and image potentially threatens the ability of art spaces to provide social and economic development to underrepresented or disadvantaged communities (Bianchini 1993).

Research Methods

This research examines the community and economic development roles of different types of art spaces and explains how planners can use them as tools of community and economic

development. In the process, I pay particular attention to the following questions: Do art spaces balance a focus on the consumption of art and other audience-focused activities alongside support for artistic production? Are there pressures that minimize their community outreach and revitalization potential? What sort of social networking opportunities do art spaces provide and do they enable participants to primarily foster strong or weak ties within the local arts community? Do they build bridges to the wider cultural economy?

The study concentrates on small and mid-sized art spaces in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Dallas-Fort Worth provides a rich study site because it contains a wealth and diversity of art spaces sponsored and operated by public, private, and nonprofit sources. Additionally, the 2008 Americans for the Arts study of "art-centric businesses" in the 50 largest US cities ranked Dallas 6th highest in arts employment and 7th in the arts businesses listed above and the region contains slightly above average levels of visual and performing artists (Markusen and Schrock 2006). While it lags behind New York, Los Angeles and other cultural capitals, the region's notable arts scene may provide useful insights for planners in many US cities.

For the purpose of the study, art spaces are defined as those that focus on the presentation and support of regional art work, are publically accessible, do not contain a permanent collection or resident company, and do not consider art sales their primary function. The art spaces are generally less than 25,000 square feet in size and range from a 1,000 square foot store front space to a 77,000 square foot space created by the City of Fort Worth in the former home of a major art museum. Based on this definition, I identified 45 art spaces in the four counties that encompass the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth. From this, I selected 12 art spaces that reflected the variations in size, mission, programming, and location (Table 1). Types of art spaces, located in central city and suburban locations, include the following:

- artist cooperatives: art spaces established, managed, and owned cooperatively by artists;

- arts incubators: an art space that offers low-cost technical, administrative and professional assistance and exhibition, rehearsal, and/or office space for arts organizations, arts-related business, or artists;

- ethnic-specific art spaces: an art space dedicated to the presentation and display of the history, art, and culture of a specific racial or ethnic group;

- community arts or cultural centers: multifunctional and multidisciplinary art spaces that typically focus on arts consumption and participation for residents of their immediate neighborhood or city-wide.

While each type is in some sense a "community-based" art space in that they all serve a defined community, for the purposes of the typology, I reserve the community arts label for those art spaces that maintain a place-based service area and mandate focusing more on audiences than artistic producers. As Table 1 shows, many of the art spaces have characteristics that allow them to cut across these four ideal types.

[Table 1 Here]

At each art space, I conducted in-depth interviews with current and former directors, administrators, artists, arts organization directors, and founding members. I selected respondents that had a deep involvement with the art space, often from inception, and/or people who were responsible for managing daily operations. I also interviewed current and former directors of the Dallas and Fort Worth cultural affairs agencies because they oversee those art spaces sponsored by their respective city. The semi-structured interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the motives of art space participants, how they view the role and purpose of their organization, and how the art spaces engage communities and artists. To this end, I asked interviewees to explain the origins, purpose, roles, and perceived impacts of the art spaces. After allowing them to emphasize what they felt is most important regarding these topics, I probed for more specific details on the art space roles and issues

10

identified in the prior studies outlined in the literature review.

In addition to the interviews, I conducted a survey of visual artists working at two art spaces. 500X is an artist-run cooperative in Dallas. Established in 1978, it is the oldest of its kind in Texas. The Fort Worth Community Art Center (FWCAC) opened in 2002 and is owned and operated by the City. I focused on these two art spaces because they represent different types of art spaces (private artist cooperative and public community arts center) that identified the role of artist incubator as central to their mandate. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the claims made by interviewees concerning the effectiveness of the art spaces in meeting this mandate and to gauge the ability of the art spaces to serve as conduits for social networks within the arts scene and across cultural sectors. The six question survey was distributed by email and asked respondents to identify how the art space assists them with their work based on the incubators roles identified in the literature review as well as how the art space assists artists in establishing career-related networks and opportunities inside and outside their primary field. On average, respondents have been involved with 500X for 4.5 years and 4.2 years at FWCAC. I received 8 responses from current 500X members and 26 responses from current members of the Texas Artists Coalition at FWCAC. This resulted in a 50% response rate at each institution.

The survey and interviews were supplemented by observation and attendance at various events (e.g. gallery openings, performances, speaking engagements) at many of the art spaces and informal interviews with artists and audience members to get a sense of the art space's environment and corroborate statements made by interviewees. While this study does not attempt to directly measure the contribution of art spaces to the regional cultural economy, it does provide a deeper understanding of their role within and thus provides directions for policy analysis and a springboard for further research on the topic.

Community and Economic Development Roles and Outcomes

This section examines the different types of art spaces in the context of four of the roles previously identified-- tourism and consumption, community outreach, arts incubator, and community center. The discussion includes a summary of the art spaces' awareness, interest and perceived ability to achieve the roles, the problems that they encounter, and, when applicable, the strategies they employ to address them.

Anchors of Revitalization: Local Tourism and Consumption

While none claim to be major economic generators in and of themselves, half of the arts spaces identify neighborhood revitalization as an important role and the vast majority consider themselves to be an integral part of the neighborhood quality of life. Nine of the 12 art spaces in the study are housed in buildings adapted and rehabilitated for arts uses. In so doing, they at once inhabit vacant buildings, save historic structures from demolition, and attract artists and audiences from outside the area. With extremely active exhibition and presentation schedules the art spaces draw both regular patrons and new audiences that change with the subject matter. FWCAC, for example, holds on average 80 exhibitions annually in its 9 exhibition spaces where it shows up to 1000 artists annually (E. Taylor, personal communication, March, 2008) and the Latino Cultural Center holds over 300 visual, performing, and literary arts events (Latino Cultural Center, n.d.). Even small, artist-run spaces like Kettle Art holds one or more shows a month that feature multiple artists and pulls crowds for shows on diverse themes ranging from tattoo art to mathematics. Although none of the art spaces conduct regular visitor surveys, all report that their audience primarily travels from within the surrounding region and 8 claim that special events attract national and international followings. The active representation of regional artists also provides financial support for emerging artists through the sale of work at all but one

of the arts spaces, although only 26% of the artists in the survey report actually selling their work directly through their art space. Sales is particularly emphasized at established art spaces such as 500X; Kettle Art, which strives to exhibit "affordable" art to enable young people, struggling artists, and those new to collecting to do so; and FWCAC with its many gallery spaces.

In Mesquite and Irving, the connection between the arts and tourist consumption is obligatory. These two suburban cities fund their art centers directly through the city's hotel tax and are thus expected to provide a visitor draw, which forces them to creatively juggle objectives that require them to serve artists, residents, and visitors simultaneously. At the Irving Arts Center, the director explains that "there are requirements on the hotel tax to serve the convention and tourism [industry]. So…I try to balance. We just hosted the Texas Non-Profit Theater Association. About thirty theater companies come to town. We gave them some money to support their meeting, we provided a hospitality suite, and we provided events here at the Arts Center for them." (W. Huff, personal communication, April, 2008). However, both art centers report that the vast majority of their audience is regional and, therefore, they do not increase hotel stays in any significant way.

Further, in only rare instances do the art spaces report that visitor attraction translates into area spending or that they have sparked interest in the area from arts and associated businesses and services such as galleries, retail, restaurants, or artist studio spaces. Half of the art spaces are located in areas with considerable impediments to sparking commercial activity. For instance, the Sammons Center, which is housed in a building donated by the City of Dallas, is physically isolated by a toll road and one-way arterial with no adjacent property. Metrognome Collective selected its site in Fort Worth's "skid row" despite incompatible zoning due to the area's affordability. In fact, the artist coop was recently forced to close its doors due to zoning and code

violations (such as a lack of air conditioning), which has caused members to work without a dedicated space. The dependence of these organizations on outside support and inexpensive rent problematizes a long-standing assumption that the simple presence of the arts anchors revitalization (or causes gentrification). Art spaces, irrespective of type, are often forced into areas where it is difficult to attract compatible commercial activity and, when they do receive public support, it may be because the City wants to fill a vacant building not necessarily support artistic development.

Anchors of Revitalization: Community Outreach

All of the art spaces provide some form of community outreach ranging from arts education programs to neighborhood improvement projects or occupational development. Frequently, this work is focused on the immediate area. For example, the owners of Kettle Art Gallery are involved in the surrounding Deep Ellum community because of their deep affinity for the area. This art space created projects such as the Recover Mural competition, a week long event in which artists paint murals in the area and the Dallas Video Festival, which features films that document Deep Ellum. Others, such as Metrognome Collective, seek to "bring about increased awareness and consciousness of other people and their plights and their issues and experiences" (J. Watkins, personal communication, April, 2008). In this regard, the Fort Worth art space works with homeless shelters and advocacy groups surrounding their facility by offering weekly photography classes for twelve-week intervals to the homeless and have presented two exhibitions of this work.

The director of the South Dallas Cultural Center (SDCC) approaches the "multifaceted Afrocentric multimedia and fine arts center" sponsored by the City of Dallas as a "community development project" (V. Meek, personal communication, April, 2008). Responding to the needs

of her constituents in largely low-income, African-American South Dallas, SDCC offers a vast range of free art and media classes to residents-- ranging from dance and photography to cooking and sewing-- and provides cultural programming for educational institutions, neighborhood CDCs, and a merchants association. Additionally, the art space trains area youth for work in commercial cultural sectors in its video production, 48 track recording, print making, and digital photography studios. In the video production studio, for example, participants create documentaries on their neighborhood and the artists and exhibits featured at SDCC. Upon graduation from the program, many are hired by Preservation Link, a South Dallas organization that continues neighborhood work while also earning participants community college credits. At the same time as the studios provide a job ladder and skill base for area youth, they serve as a source of revenue for the center and provide a space for local artists and media groups to work. As the director explains, "we're building a hub of entrepreneurial activity. So it's not just a place where you can see a good show or a good exhibition, but where the young people and old are using it as a means of creating employment opportunities" (V. Meek, personal communication, April, 2008)

Despite this work, interviewees affiliated with three of the art spaces admit that outreach is overlooked or has met obstacles. The most prominent factor, as suggested above, is the tendency of some art spaces to ignore their surrounding community. One artist identified "cultural barriers" to explain the lack of outreach at an art space located in a lower-income minority neighborhood: "There was never any serious effort. Mostly because everybody there at the time was white…They didn't really try to interact with any other people. And it's hard to start a dialog-- it's hard on both sides-- because some are suspicious of people. They see white artists coming in [and] kind of think, 'Well, they want to exploit us'." In addition to perceived

15

cultural differences, facility characteristics such as a deep setback or poor signage, combined with the inward nature of art space activities, may create a sense of distance or inaccessibility between an art space and its immediate community (Grodach 2010a). This too minimizes the ability of an art space to cultivate relationships within the neighborhood as discussed below.

Arts Incubator

Although only the Sammons Center refers to itself as an arts incubator, ten of the art spaces provide some form of low-cost technical and professional assistance and all provide space for local artists to exhibit their work. Incubator activities assist artists both individually and collectively by providing enhanced security and autonomy to conduct their work, while creating opportunities for interaction and networking within the regional arts scene. This provides both a springboard and safety net for artistic development.

As an arts artist incubator, the most important role is simply providing space for artists to exhibit their work. All survey respondents at both art spaces cite this as one of the most important roles of the art space with 75% at 500X and nearly all (87%) at FWCAC listing it as the most important role overall. In addition to exhibition space, many art spaces are designed to accommodate multiple functions including performances, meetings, events (e.g. gallery talks, readings), rehearsals, and some provide studio, office, and classroom space. As an income generator and community service, all city-run art spaces and one other rent their galleries and theaters, and some do so at reduced rates for local artists and other residents. The provision of space is especially helpful for students, emerging artists, and those without gallery representation and organizations that cannot afford or find an appropriate space. Those that house or provide office space for artists or organizations may divide the cost of office supplies and equipment, utilities, insurance, and building maintenance among tenants as well, thus enabling individual

artists and arts organizations to reduce the costs associated with their work. For instance, arts

organization directors at the Sammons Center estimate shared telephone and high speed internet

services reduce utility costs for their organizations by 20-30% (R. Perry and D. Tocha,

communication with Michael Seman, March, 2010).

Second, art spaces provide professional and technical assistance and work experience.

This is accomplished through public seminars on topics ranging from grant writing and

fundraising to portfolio production, membership programs such as the Texas Artists Coalition at

FWCAC (which holds monthly meetings on career development topics), and informal assistance

from art space staff. Over half (57%) of the TAC members in the survey cite professional

assistance at FWCAC as one of the most important roles of that art space as do all 500X

members in the survey. At 500X in particular, all participants learn by sharing the

responsibilities of running the art space and serving as a board member. As a former artist-

member explains, "really, you're in 500X to learn how to be a professional artist. It's just

amazing how many people come out of grad school and they have no idea how to...mount a

show, how to hang a show, how to promote themselves" (S. Cruz, personal communication,

April, 2008). Another former member adds, "what you're presenting is going to actually apply to

your career…and all these things are what you have to learn on the job" (E. Tosten, personal

communication, April, 2008). Again the survey confirms these statements with a majority of

current members stressing that 500X has been instrumental in helping them in their career

through portfolio development, marketing their work, and obtaining arts administration skills.

Finally, art spaces incubate regional talent by commissioning and producing work. The

SDCC commissions and displays emerging artists from the region through its Diaspora

Performing Arts Community Project. Jazz programs at SDCC, Mesquite, and Sammons art

centers were each initiated by the art spaces due to artist demand and the lack of venue for

presentation. Much of this work is conducted in partnership with other organizations. For

example, SDCC works with the National Performance Network on the Diaspora program and

regularly partners with local African-American arts organizations to present work. The Ice

House Cultural Center provides opportunities for local artists through partnerships with various

community colleges and local arts organizations ranging from Oak Cliff Artisans and Ballet

Folklorico Alegre to the Dallas Museum of Art (E. Fernandez, personal communication, April,

2008).

Despite these strengths, arts incubation can be problematic. First, all of the art spaces that

provide office, rehearsal, and performance space for arts groups do not impose a term limit on

the length of residency and, as a result, those organizations rarely leave the incubator. In

becoming essentially dependant on the incubator, these de facto resident organizations restrict

access for other arts groups, reduce the potential audience for an art space and, therefore, limit

the potential impact of this art space role. This condition is due partly to the shortage of

affordable and accessible space in central city locations desired by arts organizations and partly

due to a lack of regulations on residency or performance measures related to their tenure.

Community Center

An art space serves as a community center by providing a venue for social interaction,

information exchange, and mentoring. For artist communities, this reinforces the incubator role

by creating opportunities for peer interaction and career development. In interviews, all but one

of the art space representatives identified the community function as one of their most important

roles, emphasizing "fellowship," their role in "nurturing artists. Watching them get better" (F.

Campagna and K. Hopper, personal communication, March, 2008) and "camaraderie, a real

sense of assisting each other in what we all knew was a very iffy and challenging way of life"

(W. Hipps, personal communication, April, 2008). Similarly, "the genesis of SDCC was a group

of artists, black artists, who said that they were sick and tired of not having any place in the city

where they could have their things happen" (V. Meek, personal communication, April, 2008)

while Metrognome Collective sought to provide artists "a space in Fort Worth so they don't have

to move off to Austin or Chicago" (J. Watkins, personal communication, April, 2008). The

survey reinforces these statements: nearly all 500X and FWCAC artists pointed to opportunities

for peer review and interaction as one of the three most important roles of the art space alongside

the provision of exhibition space and professional assistance discussed above. Contrary to

Florida's (2002) assertion of the importance of weak ties, these artist-focused spaces seek to

create "bonding" social capital and anchor artistic communities in place.

Art spaces create a community center through the structure of the space itself. Despite

their relatively small size, because most art spaces contain multiple, flexible spaces, they can

support multiple disciplines and provide wider representation than found in a gallery and, given

their mandate, feature regional artists at a much higher rate than mainstream museums. Ten of

the art spaces contain some combination of gallery, performance, and multipurpose space.

Metrognome Collective, which was formed by visual artists, combined gallery, performance,

studio, and rehearsal spaces expressly to foster collaboration and exchange between artists

working in different mediums: "our goal was to [create] a sort of arts salon because for me the

ideal of bringing together artists with different disciplines gives the opportunity for the growth

and interchange that's just not possible with strictly visual studio space" (J. Watkins, personal

communication, April, 2008).

The approach to curating exhibitions and performances also contributes. As noted above,

the vast majority of art spaces maintain ambitious schedules, primarily feature regional artists, and often offer free admission. Many feature peer or critic juried shows like the Latino Cultural Center's *Hecho in Dallas* and open shows like FWCAC's *39 Hours* show (that annually features 330 artists exhibiting work under 36" in size) or the *Open Show* at 500X. This approach increases the opportunity for local artists to exhibit their work while providing a space to meet and exchange information on future exhibit possibilities, support programs, and employment with other artists and audience members. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of collaboration. The director of the Sammons Center emphasizes the mutual support and "wonderful collaborations that have occurred" between arts organizations that share the space: "If you need a choreographer, there's more than one organization in this building that can give you the names of the best choreographers, or if you need to find a particular piece of music, or if there's a grant you're having trouble with, someone here is bound to have done that grant before…because we've learned that we're stronger working together than we are thinking that we are somehow competing with one another" (J. St. Angelo, personal communication, April, 2008). This is corroborated by interviewees with two of Sammons' organizations (R. Perry and D. Tocha, communication with Michael Seman, March, 2010). Similarly, art spaces such as 500X create a space for mentorship as emerging artists get the opportunity to interact with more established ones (who are often former members) that come to exhibit, speak, or simply hang out. As a survey respondent expressed, 500X "helps to create a new community of artists outside of academia who support and encourage your art." In these ways, the art spaces provide a social milieu, which as others have noted, is critical to artistic production (Currid 2007; Lloyd 2006).

While these findings contradict Kong's (2009) study that shows art space participants lack mutual support, there is some evidence to support this assertion as well as her emphasis on

20

the importance of the reputation of an art space. As one community arts space director reported, organizations that use their facilities are often too busy or internally focused to collaborate or even interact. This individual felt that the relationship between art organizations was marked by competition and in-fighting, explaining that "the reality of it is, it's a competitive relationship. Everybody is trying to outdo everybody else if they're hungry." Additionally, in terms of reputation, some art spaces have difficulty realizing their community center role due to bias in the local arts community. The openness that some spaces tout under the label "community art" is interpreted by some as the work of amateur artists in a setting that lacks quality or curatorial control. As the former director of the FWCAC admits, "the artists didn't come flocking to the Arts Center [when it opened]. That was a shocker…My expectation was that the artist community would just leap at the opportunity to do stuff…Then I found out that a lot of the established artists were skeptical about the Arts Center because it had the word 'community' in the title. They thought that because it was a community arts center, the quality would be low" (F.M. Garcia, personal communication, April, 2008). In response, FWCAC set up an artist advisory committee to help make programming decisions and connect with local artists, but continues to struggle with this image.

Art Spaces and Social Networks

This section examines the ways that the art spaces assist participants in building and maintaining different types of social networks. We first consider if and how the art spaces assist artists in networking within their arts scene and with other cultural sectors. Second, we look at how the art spaces make connections to their audiences and the reasons why some art spaces focus on audience-focused activities over artistic production.

Interaction and Collaboration Within and Between Cultural Sectors

By serving as nerve centers in the regional arts scene, the artist incubators in particular create work-related advantages through the social networks that they enable artists to build and maintain. As discussed above, art spaces facilitate interaction not simply through exhibitions, but through studio tours, lectures, guest-curated exhibitions, and workshops that bring artists, gallery owners, museum curators, collectors, and others involved in the regional arts scene together. The presence of social networks is most apparent in member institutions like 500X that provide opportunities for artists to establish a web of contacts useful in building their career beyond the art space. As a former member explains, at 500X "it's about networking because you automatically are introduced to other artists. That's how I met [MFA Gallery owner] Steve [Cruz]. We both were in 500X, and I saw him at the openings [and now his gallery represents me]. And then all the other artists that I've met through 500X and all the connections that I've made" (E. Tosten, personal communication, April, 2008). In the survey, most artists at 500X (75%) stated that exhibitions led to opportunities to exhibit their work in other galleries and museums both locally and internationally and half of the respondents received reviews of their work as a result. Similarly, just under half of FWCAC artists surveyed found exhibition opportunities elsewhere based on their work in TAC.

In addition to supporting their artistic career, art spaces may help provide individuals with other opportunities. At least three members at 500X, for instance, have gone on to establish their own art galleries and another has set up a program to support and represent local artists. Additionally, according to interviewees, members have worked in arts occupations ranging from museum curators to art handlers. In particular, the majority of current 500X members in the survey (75%) work as adjunct or permanent instructors at university and community college art departments in the area and they attribute the experience at the art space, both through portfolio

development and social networking, as assisting them in acquiring these positions. In contrast, reinforcing the importance of established networks and reputation, only 2 FWCAC artists identified teaching opportunities as a result of their work there.

Art space staff serve as informal agents as well. As the FWCAC gallery director explains, "I'm not a specific artist agent, but that's a role I play for artists…I'm not handing out money. I'm handing out information" (E. Taylor, personal communication, March, 2008). This role hinges on the arts world experience and connections that individuals at the art spaces possess. One art space director explains, "as a practicing artist, I was lucky to have come to Dallas already having had a solid exhibiting record and deep ties to the black visual arts community around the states. So I can bring people in here who other people couldn't afford because a lot of them do it because it's me" (V. Meek, personal communication, April, 2008).

However, while artists stress the importance of the art spaces for their career networks, they do not always translate into financial benefit-- only about 1/3 of 500X members and about 1/4 of FWCAC artists in the survey report actually selling work at art space exhibitions. Moreover, it is rare that the networks and social capital cultivated in the art spaces extend beyond the local arts world or even beyond particular art scenes to produce programs that result in cross-sector opportunities. According to the survey, other than teaching and two artists working in curatorial positions, respondents uniformly stated that the art spaces do not assist them establishing career networks that lead to employment in other, related fields. While artists do not seem to establish informal networks across cultural sectors, neither are the art spaces set up programmatically to accommodate this. Only the Dallas Contemporary reports exploring the boundaries of the arts that overlap with other cultural sectors by hosting fashion runway shows and an attempted partnership with the Fashionistas, a fledgling Dallas-based fashion industry

group. Further, with the exception of SDCC's media studios and programs discussed above, none have facilities specifically designed to encourage and train individuals for occupational cross-over, although their multifunctional spaces would not prohibit this.

As such, while the arts incubator role serves an important artistic development function, it is not geared to expand artists' career options by preparing them for or connecting them with work in the larger cultural economy, even despite in some instances a reported interest from commercial cultural sectors (especially fashion, an industry rooted in the region). Although all of the art spaces cite some combination of time, space, and financial restrictions as factors that limit the scope of their incubator activities, only one maintains programs to expand their work into other mediums such as video or media art that might push cultural sector overlaps. By restricting access to visual and performing artists, art spaces fail to capitalize on the potential to build connections between the arts and commercial cultural industries, which can result in mutual benefit. Further, this ignores the fact that artists often work in multiple, related cultural occupations (Markusen et al. 2006; Throsby 2007). In other words, the art spaces seem to excel more at building relatively close ties and community relations between artistic groups than the weak ties that may link various cultural sectors.

Incubating Audiences

Although art spaces attempt to foster artistic capacity, they also focus on programs to expand their audience. Not only is the role crucial for the survival of the art space itself, but as Stern and Seifert (1998) find, those that are active in cultural activities are often also involved in other aspects of their community. In particular, as noted above, the multifunctional, multidisciplinary city-sponsored community arts and cultural centers tend to struggle with balancing the needs and interests of various constituencies, most notably, accommodating local

artists while serving amateurs and providing community-focused activities. Indeed, the six municipal art spaces tend to take a consumption-oriented approach that focuses on incubating audiences over artists through an emphasis on youth and adult arts education. The director of the Mesquite Arts Center in suburban Dallas targets "those adults and young families who have given up going to the arts in favor of the television or the game boy or whatever it is that keeps them home. Engaging the arts in a live fashion is, in my mind, the single most active scholarship this society can engage in" (M. Templeton, personal communication, April, 2008).

As is occurring in most mainstream cultural institutions across the US, art spaces want to build the cultural capital of their surrounding communities at least in part to create future patrons. SDCC, which contains a strong roster of artist-focused programs, likewise focuses a great deal on programs that inculcate children with an appreciation of the arts: "we're hoping [to grow] up a generation of children who will become patrons of this Center. Even if they move out of this neighborhood, they'll continue to come" (V. Meek, personal communication, April, 2008). Of course, financial pressures modify the programming and mandate of municipal and artist-run spaces alike. Over the years, the Dallas Contemporary has shifted from its initial structure as an artist cooperative to a board dominated institution that resembles a contemporary art museum. As the director of that art space states, focusing only on local artists "is a very small window, and there's a very small window of people who would support it. You can't run an institution like this without community support. I'm up to a $600,000 plus budget. It costs me $1,800 to unlock the door every day, to pay for the lights, to pay for the insurance, to pay for everything that it takes to run an institution" (J. Davidow, personal communication, April, 2008). However, focusing entirely on audience development creates a vicious circle. Without a solid support system to nurture, attract, and retain artists of quality, an educated regional audience will

have to appreciate and consume work exported from elsewhere.

In addition to financial pressure, the audience-oriented nature of the municipal art spaces derives their adherence to a model established in the 1970's that focuses on enhancing access to and appreciation of the visual and performing arts. For example, the City of Dallas, which currently funds and staffs four community cultural centers, became involved in the establishment of art spaces in the late 1970's. Until that time, the City solely administered youth arts programs at recreation centers through the Parks Department, which according to the director of Dallas' Office of Cultural Affairs were "great places for youth arts activities, but not necessarily for long-term teaching…For us, it's about making sure that our citizens have access to the arts. Access for residents and for visitors" (M. Munoz-Blanco, personal communication, April, 2008). With the exception of SDCC, municipal art spaces continue to pursue this mandate without evolving or adapting their approach as the cultural economy has expanded in importance.

Conclusion: Lessons for Planning

This article has examined the ways that small and mid-sized art spaces contribute to community and economic development. The findings show that the art spaces are involved in neighborhood revitalization and tourism activities, community outreach and arts education, and incubating artistic production. In addition, they provide intangible resources identified as critical to the development of artistic clusters more widely including opportunities to build and maintain social capital, peer networks, a shared identity, and serve as an anchor that roots the arts community in place. However, for a variety of reasons-- lack of time, space, finances, a traditional community arts mission rooted in neighborhood activity, and possibly a lack of awareness of the potential benefits of expanding beyond the visual and performing arts-- they generally do not build bridges to other cultural economy sectors. As such, while Currid (2007,

454) stresses the importance of the "local arts social milieu" to the cultural economy in New York and Florida (2002) stresses the importance of weak ties more generally, here we see barriers to interaction and collaboration beyond the arts scene and an emphasis on more insulated, close ties within arts communities. Future work could examine if this condition is common to art spaces in other cities with less developed cultural economies or if it is contingent to Dallas-Fort Worth.

Based on these findings, I offer five considerations and associated proposals for planners and policy makers interested in incorporating art spaces into their community and economic development programs. First, because planners typically do not have a background in the arts, they may fail to recognize that art spaces are not generic entities-- different types of art spaces serve different types of communities and are better suited to realizing different community and economic development goals. For example, similar to Mommaas's (2004) findings in the Netherlands, existing municipal art spaces tend to be driven by audience development and arts education goals for a specific neighborhood (or city wide in suburban areas) rather than by programs to assist local artists beyond exhibiting their work. Conversely, artist cooperatives and those focused primarily on artist incubation assist in career building, but at times ignore their surrounding community. Planners can target different types of art spaces depending on their existing strengths and weaknesses and, where appropriate, can assist art spaces in restructuring their existing base of activity. In the case of artist cooperatives, for instance, incentives may stimulate interest in neighborhood engagement. This can be accomplished through funding for community outreach programs directly, attaching community engagement requirements to other forms of assistance (e.g. facility maintenance funds), or providing support to encourage partnerships with more active organizations.

Second, however, planners should recognize that art spaces can not be everything to everybody. Those art spaces that attempt to serve as neighborhood or community and artist-based institutions simultaneously struggle to achieve both objectives because they may either stretch their resources too thin or acquire a reputation for one or the other. SDCC is a positive example that combines community and artist incubator activities. Their success, as opposed to FWCAC's struggle, is due in part to the fact that SDCC's galleries primarily focus on working artists rather than display work by any individual in the community. Open access is a wonderful feature of FWCAC, but a lack of quality control hinders artist interest. Further, education and outreach at SDCC is not limited to the visual and performing arts, but incorporates video, audio and other arts programs, which are framed as job-building programs for community members and resources for artists alike rather than solely amateur artist education and thus elides the negative connotations of "community art" with which FWCAC struggles.

Third, location is an important factor in the community and economic development potential of each type of art space. Cash-strapped arts institutions often locate in areas that are isolated from compatible community and commercial establishments. To ameliorate this, planners can site or incentivize the development of artist studio and live-work space in areas surrounding existing art spaces. Artist-in-residence zoning is an already widely discussed approach, but attention to building code requirements needs to accompany zoning revision. The City of Fort Worth ignored Metrognome Collective's community-based work with neighboring homeless shelters and its incubation of local artists when it forced the art space to close due to code violations for "comfort issues" like lack of air conditioning and heating.

Fourth, incubators need to enforce length of tenancy so that their benefits can be widely shared, but also planners can assist fledgling artists and arts organizations to leave the nest.

Often, incubator tenants stay because they can not find appropriate space elsewhere. The initiatives described above are helpful in this instance. Further, planning and economic development agencies can offer site selection assistance and help navigate the permitting process as they do for small businesses.

Finally, in most instances here, the social networks that art spaces support and the social capital they help individuals to generate do not bridge different cultural fields. As others have established, artists add value to the products and services of a range of culture and knowledge-based industries and many artists support themselves by working in multiple related sectors (Markusen et al. 2006; Throsby 2007). However, they often do not have formal assistance in this regard. Art spaces already excel at providing key resources to regional art scenes and can help to better integrate visual and performing artists into the regional cultural economy as well. First, most of the art spaces already partner with other public, private, and nonprofit entities to realize much of their agenda and to reach a wider audience. They can build on this expertise to form partnerships beyond the arts and collaborate on new ventures that broaden their incubator activities to enable artists to work in other cultural sectors. Second, incubator spaces can explore new tenant mixes that allow start-up cultural industry enterprises to rent space and access the existing resources of the incubator. This would help to defray operating costs for the art space and potentially aid in the expansion of incubators to help meet the existing high demand (the Sammons Center reports a 30 organization wait list for entry) and short supply of appropriate work space. Further, bringing individuals together from different fields increases the likelihood of collaboration and new employment opportunities for individuals outside of their primary sector. Third, art spaces can create programs aimed directly at cross-sector collaboration and employment. Cultural planning and policy can assist art spaces in these directions by making

seed money available for cross-sector programs and those that encourage partnerships between

institutions in fields related to the visual and performing arts like fashion and film. Further, they

can target funds toward the adaptation and expansion of facilities to enable such programs,

which would also potentially engender local revitalization opportunities. In each of these ways,

planners and policy makers can build on the existing strengths of the art spaces in their city to

enhance community and economic development opportunities.

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Table 1. Dallas-Fort Worth Art Spaces Selected for the Study

Art Space	Location	Primary Types	Organizational Status
500X	Dallas (central)	artist cooperative, arts incubator	private
Dallas Contemporary	Dallas (central)	arts incubator	private, nonprofit
Fort Worth Community Arts Center	Fort Worth (central)	arts incubator, community arts	public
Ice House Cultural Center	Dallas (central)	community arts, ethnic-specific	public
Irving Arts Center	Dallas (suburban)	community arts	public
Kettle Art	Dallas (central)	arts incubator	private
Latino Cultural Center	Dallas (central)	ethnic-specific	public
Mesquite Arts Center	Dallas (suburban)	community arts	public
Metrognome Collective	Fort Worth (central)	artist cooperative	private
McKinney Avenue Contemporary	Dallas (central)	arts incubator	private, nonprofit
Sammons Center for the Arts	Dallas (central)	arts incubator	private, nonprofit
South Dallas Cultural Center	Dallas (central)	arts incubator, community arts, ethnic-specific	public