

2014

The Arts and Social Capital For the American 21st Century: A College Course

<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2014.hum.02>

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<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2014.hum.02>

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**The Arts and Social Capital
For the American 21st Century:
A College Course**

A culminating project submitted to the faculty of Dominican University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Humanities

by
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San Rafael, California
May 2014

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This thesis, written under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor and approved by the Chair of the Master's program, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of Humanities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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Abstract

This course is designed to introduce college students to the current significance of the Arts in American civil society. We will begin by examining the concepts of civil society and social capital and their correlations to social well-being. The robustness of voluntary associations is a distinguishing characteristic of American civil society. It is a basis for how we carry out democracy and maintain our common resources. Social capital is the embedded value of our social connections with others. Our mutual trust and reciprocity contributes to the health, wealth, tolerance, and efficient governance of society. We will explore the unique ability of the Arts to bridge socio-economic, ethnic, generational, and educational differences by connecting us to our common humanity. The Arts in civil society are indispensable in their capacity to communicate and address common issues that demand public resolution. We will explore how several Arts organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area contribute to social well-being and sustain access to shared resources.

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Course Syllabus:
The Arts and Social Capital
For the 21st Century

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to introduce college students to the current significance of the Arts in American civil society. We will begin by examining the concepts of civil society and social capital and their correlations to social well-being. Our robust associational and voluntary sector or civil society is a distinguishing characteristic of America. It is how we carry out democracy and maintain our common resources. Social capital is the embedded value of our social connections with others. Our mutual trust and reciprocity contributes to the health, wealth, tolerance, and efficient governance of society. Participating in the Arts connects us to our common humanity. The Arts in civil society are indispensable in their capacity to communicate and address common issues that demand public resolution. Art has a unique ability to bridge socio-economic, ethnic, generational, and educational differences. We will explore how several Arts organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area forms bridging social capital that contributes to social well-being and sustains access to shared resources. Globalization and hyper-connectivity from the information technology revolution have generated new challenges for society in the 21st century. The way our society adapts and innovates to address these challenges is with social capital.

The course will be a seminar format with a participatory, interactive approach consisting of lectures with visual media and provocative discussion, a group project on leadership, and three sessions will consist of student-led presentations. A final

paper of 10-15 pages is also required that is a conceptual piece on the value of social capital to face environmental changes that challenge American society. It will focus on our social response to environmental catastrophes such as drought, earthquakes, agricultural pollution, mudslides, etc. that occur already in the state of California. You can investigate how our communities already respond, discussing what works and what you see as alternative methods. It will include a discussion of what is important for us to learn and understand together, how to form strategies for resilience to environmental challenges, and how our resilience depends on our social connectedness across social differences. Find examples of American creativity and ingenuity in producing innovations and concepts for living that help mitigate climate change (think Elon Musk of Tesla, Michael Pollen and the food revolution, etc). Relate this back to how social capital developed through Arts organizations can effectively be our learning school of resilience.

Schedule:

Session I:

Social Capital and Innovation

150 everyday actions that build social capital

Readings:

Ha´jek, Paul and Anna Ma´kinen. 2010. *Psychology of Happiness*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Cohen and Prusak. 2001. In good Company: How social capital makes organizations work

Session II:

Group Project: 5 Habits of Effective Leadership

Goals: problem solving, decision making and planning;
develop skills in constructive interpersonal relationships and
social participation.

Session III:

The Arts, Creativity, and Social Capital

Effective habits of creative thinkers

Session IV:

The Arts and Social Capital

Community Theatre: East Bay Performing Arts Center
Arts and Education, Community Development

Readings:

Nadon, Daniel-Raymond and Norma Bowles. 2013. *Setting the stage for social justice : Collaborating to create activist theatre*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Dolan, Jill. 2005. *Utopia in performance : Finding hope at the theater*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Session V:

Student Presentations

Community Theatre case studies

Session VI:

The Arts and Social Capital

Public Mural Movement: San Francisco Mission District
Community-building, democratic media

Readings:

Donish, Cassie. 2013. *Creative counter hegemonies: Community arts in San Francisco's mission district*. Vol. 75 University of Hawaii Press.

Session VII:

Student Presentations

Mural Arts case studies

Session VIII:

The Arts and Social Capital

Environmental Art
Resolutions, Revolution, and Awareness

Readings:

Ingram, Mrill. 2012. Sculpting solutions: Art–Science collaborations in sustainability. *Environment* 54, no. 4: 24-34.

Schaefer, Kerrie. 2012. Performing environmental change: MED theatre and the changing face of community-based performance research. *Research in Drama Education* 17, no. 2: 247-263.

Session IX:

Student Presentations
Environmental Art case studies

Session X:
The Arts and Social Capital
Temporal Urbanism and Burning Man

Readings:

Chen, Katherine K. *Lessons for creative cities from burning man: How organizations can sustain and disseminate a creative context*. Vol. 2.

Jones, Steven. 2011. *Tribes of burning man: How an experimental city in the desert is shaping the new American counterculture*. San Francisco, CA: CCC.

Session XI:
The Arts and Social Capital
Burning Man Documentary and discussion

Session XII:
Conclusion: Global Civil Society

Session II Group Project: 5 Effective Habits of Leadership

Goals: learn problem solving strategies, decision making and Planning, develop skills in constructive interpersonal relationships and social participation, learn to participate and lead effectively in civic affairs.

Objectives:

Select an appropriate strategy, Implement the strategy, Communicate own beliefs, feelings and convictions, Work effectively in groups, Identify situations in which social action is required, use the tools of building coalitions, negotiating, compromising and seeking consensus with issues.

1. Students will write responding to the following prompt:
What are the characteristics of a good leader?
 2. Share student responses on board; share 5 habits (reflection, responsibility, organization, open-mindedness and respect, effective communication)
 3. Decide on habits for students as leaders
 4. Together, create a rubric that defines the recognizable behaviors that define 5 effective habits.
 5. As a whole group, create poster for each habit.
- Start with the following prompt: We can tell a student-leader

is being --insert habit-- when the person consistently...

Brainstorm the ideas, move on to the next habit.

6. Divide into 5 groups and assign each group a habit

groups will spend 8-10 minutes at one habit and then circulate to the next.

7. Carousel commentary: If students have additions, put their comment in available space with their name by it.

8. Work together to fine-tune each habit. We will make decisions by practicing consensus.

9. When the group is satisfied, rubric will be typed and given to students. Students will self-evaluate each three weeks according to this rubric. Students will evaluate themselves by highlighting the frequency that they exhibit each observable behavior in class and then give themselves a Habits of Leadership grade. We review the assessments, and discuss ways to develop areas of weakness.

Final Essay:

(Electronic submission due on day of scheduled final exam): Students will write about their strongest and weakest habits of leadership in class as well as their overall growth as leaders. They will include observations of the habits' efficacy in other social networks in their lives.

Oral Presentations:

Students will choose a genre of community art discussed in course. They will find a non-profit organization in their own or another community. Students will then present information to the class with an oral presentation including visual tools. A printed outline of information is required to share with each student. The student will prepare 3 discussion questions for class participation.

Grading:

Final grades will be based on class participation and attendance (25%),

Group project (25%), Oral presentation (25%), and Final paper (25%).

Session I: Social Capital and Innovation

Our robust associational and voluntary sector or civil society is a distinguishing characteristic of America. Listening to and learning from one another is at the center of organizational life. It enables us to learn about people in new and different ways. Americans have opportunities to experience and perform different roles in their communities through civil society. In these voluntary associations, people can decide which social roles they would like to perform. Civic organizations support people to share and learn additional skills necessary for filling a variety of social roles. Being in the community brings us into contact with other people on many levels in a variety of settings. These contacts can develop into closer relationships over time. Making connections to people and building trusting relationships promotes a healthy quality of life. Interacting with others gives people opportunities to engage in reciprocal relationships.

Social capital is the embedded value of our social connections with others. Our personal ties with family, friends and co-workers leads to connections with even more people in the community. Participation in the community broadens a person's social capital network. Robert Putnam's research in measuring social capital finds that communities with higher levels of social capital are likely to have higher educational achievement, better performing governmental institutions, faster economic growth, and less crime and violence. (Putnam 2000)

People have the right to access the resources of the commons, such as cultural and environmental resources, education, and healthcare. Integration in the commons increases exposure to, and acceptance of a wide diversity in people. In places

with greater social connectedness, it is easier to mobilize people to tackle problems of public concern, and easier to arrange things that benefit the group as a whole. As we organize ourselves in civil society to respond to needs and desires in our communities, our social capital helps to maintain our access to our social commons. In *Democratizing Social Capital: In pursuit of liberal egalitarianism*, Lewandowski says social capital bridges individuals to larger social networks of the community and formal networks of the state that can “redistribute and democratize access to social, economic, and human capital” (2007: 593).

Social networks can be any size or with any interest from a book club to a fraternity, a religious group, a sports league, a cooking group, a political association, a labor union, or a school’s PTA. Some of these groups bring people together that are alike in crucial ways like gender, age, and ethnicity. Other groups cut across these social distinctions, and are non-exclusive. Some social networks may only include similar people with similar interests but end up reaching out to the community at large. They find that their interests that are good for their group may also be good for the larger community. These outward-looking social outcomes are borne from individual needs and desires. It is much easier to support individual goals in smaller groups than attempting to first support large numbers of people, but individual goals can effectively reach to promote the goals of others.

Americans have a long history of engaging in civil society and generating social capital. Our participation in civil society helped developed our democracy by informing our governances. Alexis de Tocqueville, the French political writer, came to America in 1831 to study how American society succeeded in creating and maintaining

social order and cohesiveness in the absence of overt government control. He concluded that the dense network of voluntary associations allowed citizens to overcome problems collectively to produce a collective good. He said that the voluntary associations serve as a learning school for democracy because of the interaction with other members to achieve joint decision making by consensus. These informal (non-government) social networks gradually internalized the democratic values of tolerance, negotiation, role-taking, and respecting consensual procedures. (Tocqueville 1835 [1992])

Consensus decision-making is a process that includes and respects all parties, and generates as much agreement as possible and sets the stage for greater cooperation in implementing the resulting decisions. Better group relationships generate a cooperative, collaborative group atmosphere that can foster greater cohesion and interpersonal connection. (Harnett, T., 2011) Social networks assist people in making choices and reaching consensus. We need regular access to groups of trusted peers, friends and families for advice when faced with important choices. Choices and decisions often require creative alternatives to an either-or approach. Creative compromises require flexible approach to choice and decision-making. We are usually more satisfied with our decisions when we choose from an array of options. Organizations that can assist people in identifying creative alternatives that meet individual and group needs creates new possibilities for social well-being.

The Council on Quality and Leadership developed a Social Capital Index by a consortium of scholars including Robert Putnam and health professionals. (Council on Quality and Leadership 2005) Putnam and his research team have been measuring social capital across American communities for the past two decades. The data concludes that

where there are higher values of social capital there is evidence of positive health effects, lower crime rates, economic and civic equality, higher educational performance and better child and elderly welfare in communities. The council developed a measurement for social capital based on eight Personal Outcomes that all correlate to building social capital: people have intimate relationships, people live in integrated environments, people participate in the life of the community, people interact with other members of the community, people perform different social roles, people have friends, people are respected, and people are connected to natural support networks (Social Capital Index, 12). Common human values of autonomy, opportunity and inclusion inhabit our daily lives and are embodied in these personal outcomes and social capital itself. People living in more integrated environments produce higher levels of social capital. The research also suggests that social capital increases our desire for civic involvement which means that social capital increases exponentially.

Social capital anchors community revitalization efforts, renews formal civic institutions, and assists local governments in making policies that address issues of public concern. Forming trusting ties across social differences such as race, income, gender, age, and religious faith increases our social capital's reach outwardly across communities and toward our government. Our capacity to adapt to today's rapid changes in our environment and our society depends upon our ability to make social innovations that sustain quality of life and our shared. Through multiple perspectives we can explore alternative approaches to solving issues of public concern.

Session II: Group Project on Leadership

5 Effective Habits of Leadership

Goals: learn problem solving strategies, decision making and Planning, develop skills in constructive interpersonal relationships and social participation, learn to participate and lead effectively in civic affairs.

Objectives:

Select an appropriate strategy, Implement the strategy, Communicate own beliefs, feelings and convictions, Work effectively in groups, Identify situations in which social action is required, use the tools of building coalitions, negotiating, compromising and seeking consensus with issues.

This project was chosen to have students imagine how they might assume the role as a social capital entrepreneur. It is an initial exercise in our exploration of how Arts organizations or any civic organizations develop.

Session III:

The Arts, Creativity, and Social Capital

The Arts in civil society are indispensable in their capacity to communicate and address common issues that demand public resolution. Participating in the Arts connects us to our common humanity. Arts organizations provide a unique and enjoyable way to build social capital. They spur healthy public dialogue. Arts programs can improve the effectiveness of government agencies in regard to healthcare, preventing crime, beautifying neighborhoods or renewing education systems. The Arts provide an array of options for people with limited experiences to meet and interact with a broad range of other people in an entertaining environment. Arts organizations facilitate contacts with others in the community, Artists, spectators, performers, and directors can build social capital among one another and across those groups. Arts organizations offer opportunities to generate creative alternatives to an either-or approach. Creative compromises require flexible approach to choice and decision-making. Perhaps all collaborative efforts in civil society are creative in terms of decision-making and problem-solving, but the creative process of art-making itself engages creative thinking and reinforces the course of action. Arts organizations can facilitate people's understanding and use of social capital through means that connect us to our common to humanity and producing tangible outcomes. This participatory approach to the Arts in community revives art's direct relevance to our lives. Arts organizations can help communities to resolve difficult social challenges. They create alternative methods of communication and problem-solving that enables individual self-

expression and explore new outcomes. By allowing people to express often difficult issues in a safe environment of tolerance and openness, building social capital in the Arts breaks down social barriers. This is important in our pluralistic society. Civic organizations that can facilitate equal access to social capital generate civically valuable traits in people like trust, openness, tolerance and respect. Arts organizations are well poised to build non-exclusive social capital by enjoyable means.

Daniel Pink, a popular economy and business writer and contributing editor for *Wired* magazine explains in his bestseller book *A Whole New Mind* (2005) that our society is transitioning now from the Information Age of analytical thinkers focused on developing information technology to what he calls the Conceptual Age, a society of designers, creators and meaning-makers. Our social innovations are a reflection of our changing needs and perceived desires. Pink's theory is that the technological advances of the Information Age produced abundant material wealth that has lessened our struggle for survival. Our material prosperity and our technological advancements have allowed us to switch our focus to a broader text of our lives. We can expand the skills that computers can't perform better. Human creativity cannot be duplicated by computers. Creative thinking is a key driver for this transformative era.

Six abilities that Pink defines as key at least for today's jobs and economy but also in how we live are *Design, Story, Symphony, Empathy, Play, and Meaning*. They are abilities common to all humanity and translate as global work skills and socially integrated living. Today, design is highly valued along with function. Story is the ability to communicate a compelling narrative. Today, it is the essence of persuasive arguments and self-identification. Think of the style of commercials today. Symphony is the ability

to see the big picture by putting pieces together, to synthesize rather than analyze. Empathy speaks to the renewed interest in forging personal relationships and caring for others which may be an outcome of our excessive use of information devices. Play is our ability to be open to playing with new ideas and make discoveries in enjoyable ways. The desire to have Meaning in the things we do has become a priority in America. Author Pink says that living in a world of plenty has moved us to pursue more significant desires of purpose and personal fulfillment (2005, 66) It is tempting to suggest that our civic involvement in arts serves as a learning school for this revolutionary era of humanism and creativity. Engagement in the Arts serves multiple purposes that strongly generate social well-being with access to resources. It is also tempting to suggest the similarities of this notion of a Conceptual era to the Italian Renaissance era.

If it is time to exercise the creative side of the human mind, understanding how the creative mind works can help us get on our way to developing creative abilities discussed by Pink. Scott Barry Kaufman, a psychologist at NYU, has spent years researching creativity. Gregoire interviewed Kaufman for the article “18 Things Creative People Do Differently” who said that creative thinking is open-minded and less discriminating, that creative people observe everything as possibilities for creative expression, and that they turn life's obstacles around. Gregoire quoted Kaufman saying “If there's one thing that distinguishes highly creative people from others, it's the ability to see possibilities where others don't -- or, in other words, vision” (Gregoire, 2014) Civic engagement of the Arts offers people opportunities to exercise these creative thinking skills, while it encourages us to see possibilities from new perspectives. It can be used as a collective visioning process as a problem-solving strategy. Researchers found that

being encouraged to think counter-stereotypically “not only decreased stereotyping, but also, on a divergent creativity task, lead to the generation of more creative ideas”.

(Gocłowska, et al., 2003:72) In other words, exercising our creativity is a civically valuable tool. It invites us to think outside of the box and explore multiple meanings.

American participation in the Arts is not weak. We have an excellent head start in this transformative post-information age to herald this renaissance of sorts through our civic engagement of the Arts. The National Endowment for the Arts 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (NEA, 2013) revealed that 50 percent of adults or 118 million created, performed, or shared art through various activities 49 percent of U.S. adults, or 115 million attended a live visual or performing arts event. One in three adults attended at least one live music performance of any type (not solely classical, jazz, or Latin music) in 2012, the first year such data became available. Live music attendance peaked with young adults. But every other age group attended at rates higher than 25 percent—an exception being the 5-years-and-older group (20 percent). Parks and open-air facilities were the most common venues for the music, dance, and theater or art exhibits that adults went to see in 2012, accounting for 15.4 percent of such activities. The next most common venues were theaters, concert halls, and auditoriums (12.3 percent) and restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and coffee shops (11.7 percent). In the category of ‘Art-Making or Art-Sharing’ 50 percent of U.S. adults, (or 118 million) are included if they created, performed, or shared art through various activities. In the category of ‘Arts Learning through Classes or Lessons’, 7 percent of U.S. adults, (or 16 million) took an Arts class or lesson, whether in or out of school. Changes in arts attendance from 2008 to 2012 at visual and performing arts activities dropped slightly, remaining below 2002

levels. In 2012, one in three U.S. adults (33 percent, or about 78 million) visited an art museum or gallery or attended at least one of various types of performing arts events. Non-white and Hispanic groups upheld their arts attendance rates, and even showed increases for some activities. (National Endowment for the Arts 2013)

In terms of building social capital through engagement of the arts, the ideal is that people do art together more than we observe art together. If the Arts are to strengthen social capital, we need to strengthen support for Arts organizations with participation and increase their funding. Arts organizations framed as community institutions revive broad access to art as a shared resource. If we can include these cultural institutions in community planning, the arts can better anchor community revitalization efforts, renew public education systems, and assist governance in making policies that address issues of public concern. We should support public spaces as venues for arts to help increase overall participation. Building social capital through our engagement with the Arts strongly benefits our pluralistic society in forming trusting ties across social differences of race, income, gender, age, and religious faith. Our capacity to adapt and grow as we transition into a new era depends on our ability to innovate, to be open to multiple perspectives, to be creative and to explore alternative approaches to solving issues of public concern with a vision of the future,

Session IV: The Arts and Social Capital

Community Theatre

Theatre has long been used as a tool for initiating civic dialogue for society. Western civilization has used theatre as a public forum since Greek antiquity. Attending or participating in theatre in classical Athens was an important part of citizenship and it created citizen-to state-dialogue regarding politics, law, and religion. A variety of theatre arts techniques have developed over the centuries. Theatre explores personal and social issues in our communities across the nation. Participatory theatre builds on conventional theatre but provides an active way for the audience and the community to become involved. Theatre is a forum to put across a message and a way to address issues, but it also provides an active way for the audience and community to become involved in the issues explored and form a sense of ownership. Participatory theatre is made for and by the community. It engages people to identify issues of concern and together think about how change can happen. Theatre is a powerful means of communicating the human experience, and theatre offers a community the ability to express a collective voice. Theater is a dynamic civic forum in its ability to stage and enact possible solutions to often difficult social challenges, and rehearse the social change through creative narrative and role-playing. Theatre imagines new realities in an ephemeral environment. Involvement in theatre allows us to exercise our ability to tell compelling stories, create narratives about life experiences, and engender empathy in audiences. We may use the solutions produced in the theatre experience to innovate communities and institutions.

Community Theatre is made for and by the people of a community. It creates strong social ties by exploring diverse ways of thinking about social issues in a collaborative setting. More than 7,000 theatres are members of The American Association of Community Theatre, which represents more than 1.5 million volunteers, more than 46,000 annual productions, an audience of 86 million people, and a combined annual budget of well over \$980 million. (American Association of Community Theatres 2014)

In 1968, five teachers gathered together 45 students for music lessons in a rented church hall in Richmond, CA and founded the East Bay Music Center. The intention was to give young people an activity that was more personally rewarding than their own streets of crime and neglect offered. By 1972 the Center expanded programming to include dance, filmmaking, and theater. It also recognized the importance of including culturally distinctive art forms in the repertoire. There is a remarkable wealth of master artists in the greater East Bay, Berkeley, and Oakland. The community of the East Bay Music Center reached out to a variety of artists in greater East Bay representing the variety cultural heritage in the area. These artists are part of the Center's faculty. It became an important change in the Center's mission. Teaching art forms that reflected the city's diverse range and richness of social, cultural, and artistic life became an integral part of the Center. In 1978, the Center changed their name to East Bay Performing Arts Center. The Center developed and stabilized their repertoire over the next twenty years. (East Bay Center for Performing Arts 2014)

What is perhaps most remarkable in terms of social capital and America's future is the Center's development and implementation of outreach programs to five

surrounding school districts. These programs currently take place at fourteen public school and community sites. In these school districts, the Center conducts regular professional development workshops for the teachers. These courses are supported by the US Dept of Education and provide classroom teachers with the resources to integrate the arts into their classrooms. Integrating the arts into the school curriculum can give teachers greater flexibility to make connections from one subject to another and to life. Arts education engenders big-picture thinking, symphonic thinking, design thinking. In “Cultivating A Whole New Mind in the Classroom” (2007), Daniel Pink notes how in the real world problems don’t come to us as a math problem, as an English problem, or a science problem. It comes to you as a problem that involves a lot of different disciplines. Students find a range of artistic problems to solve at the Center both individually and collaboratively. They become effective at integrating art and positive social change. “The more we can get kids to be multi thinkers, the better overall problem solvers they can be. People who are multidisciplinary, multilingual, multicultural, multifunctional are able to move smoothly across boundaries.” (9) Pink suggests ways to integrate his new set of abilities such as integrating story into science as a great narrative of discovery, or integrating empathy in history by taking a perspective of historic figures in context. (10) In our pluralistic society which is also global in scope, moving smoothly across boundaries is important to our social well-being and our future. Integrating the Arts in education facilitates this sort of creative thinking.

In 2005 the Center phased in a four-year Diploma Program, starting for middle school ages, when high school drop-out prevention is most efficacious. Students with deep arts experiences are more likely to be successful in later high school years.

Studies show that students with low SES (socio-economic status) in art-rich environments increased their likelihood of college attendance 15% over their SES peers in art-poor environments, that these same students in their 20s watched 12% less television, were 15% more likely to act as community volunteers, and to become registered voters than their peers from art-poor environments (Catterall, 2009, p. III). At the end of the first two years, students can continue their studies at a more concentrated level of year-round individual lessons and group classes, community engagement, student mentoring projects, recitals, and public performances. At the end of four years a student will have had as much as 2,000 hours of class and lesson time. Many of the Diploma graduates will continue to work at the Center during their last two years of high school as teacher assistants or ensemble members. As members of the ensembles they are paid for performances. During that time the Center supports them with college admissions advice. The Diploma Program is offered free of charge and without auditions. Students and parents are interviewed and parents must commit to volunteer a requisite number of hours. Achieving goals like this degree program gives these youth a sense of accomplishment and enhances their personal image. These experiences facilitate realization of personal goals. Realizing personal goals can enhance personal confidence and participation in the Center can increase the potential for continued civic involvement overall as an adult.

The East Bay Center for Performing Arts as a model for other similar organizations can assist other organizations for successful outcomes. The Center has retained their integrity and quality of services for over forty years. “How the East Bay Center has survived and grown from a modest start in 1968 to a \$15.4 million capital

campaign and building renovation is a model of how multicultural community-based organizations can serve their constituents and grow and mature in cities that are not economically vibrant.” (Enghal 2012) Over its 40 year history the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts has reached over 50,000 youth. The East Bay Center for Performing Arts will soon open their completely restored building with increased capacity. Over the next 50 years they plan to reach 75,000 more youth.

The Center's resident performance ensembles serve the local community regularly, with multiple purposes. These repertoires offer meaningful, free of cost entertainment to the Richmond community and this helps engage students to join. One of their resident companies is the *Iron Triangle Theater*. Since 1968, the Center has been located in a neighborhood called the *Iron Triangle*, the most dangerous neighborhood in Richmond. The company “maintains a repertoire of poetry, scenes, and monologues from Richmond community history. Participants are supported in the translation to stage of material that reflects their life experiences and those of their community”. (East Bay Center for Performing Arts 2014) The collaborative process emphasizes conceptual thinking, problem-solving and imagination.

The East Bay Center for Performing Arts is a paradigm example of the benefits of social capital built through engagement of the Arts. Achieving goals gives these youth a sense of accomplishment and enhances their personal image. The center provides training to develop talents and skills, and provides resources and experiences that will facilitate the realization of personal goals. The East Bay center for Performing Arts creates broad access to art as a shared resource. It is involved in community

planning, has anchored community revitalization efforts, and renewed public education systems by engagement in five surrounding school districts, and assisted local governance in making policies that address issues of public concern. City and state government, as well as citizens have supported the center financially as a venue for arts to help increase overall participation. The Center has supported the formation of trusting ties across social differences of ethnicity, income, gender, age, and religious faith. Moreover, the center has formed social and professional ties among artists, educators and directors, creating many meaningful career opportunities. The contribution and support to public education promotes our youth's capacity to adapt and grow as we transition into the future depends on their ability to innovate, to be open to multiple perspectives, to be creative and to explore alternative approaches to individual and social well-being. The valuable civic skills that enable youth to think, lead, and contribute to the world around them can strongly carry the Richmond community and the countless youth in the surrounding school districts into the future, while serving as an inspiration to other performing arts organizations.

Session VI: The Arts and Social Capital
Public Mural Movement of the San Francisco Mission District

Public murals as a community building activity create social capital. We will examine the substantial social capital of an inner city neighborhood of San Francisco developed from extensive tradition of mural-making and community cohesion. Social capital anchors their community revitalization efforts, renews their education systems and increases their enrollment, and assists local governments in making policies that address issues of public concern. Forming trusting ties across social differences of ethnicity, income, and education level has increased their social capital's reach outwardly toward local agencies and government. The mission District community has the capacity to adapt to social difficulties by maintaining shared cultural resources, practicing their ability to innovate and, through multiple perspectives, utilize an alternative approach to solving issues of public concern.

San Francisco's The Mission district is the home of the city's original settlement developed by Franciscan missionaries at the end of the eighteenth century. The district is rich with cultural history and diversity. It pulses with street life, is filled local businesses, cultural activities and it is aesthetically stunningly with hundreds of attractive public murals. It is also home to many innovative organizations in America's contemporary social history: Galeria de la Raza, Code Pink, Media Burn, Precita Eyes Muralists, Global Exchange, and Burning Man name a portion. It is an amalgamation of activism and art and one of the first such centers of this community-building activity in our nation.

The Mission District is now saturated with murals, starting from the American Civil Rights Movement and the invention of acrylic paint in the late 1960's. The earliest murals sprung from the Chicano Art Movement and owe their style to the three famous Mexican muralists, Los Tres Grandes: David Alfaro Siqueiros, Jose Clemente Orozco, and Diego Rivera, the latter of whom painted iconic public murals in San Francisco. Each wave of American activism since then has produced artists who paint murals on the Mission's public walls. "Painting styles range from WPA formalism to Zap Comix to punk urban oddities to day-glo expressionism". (Jacoby 2009, 30) Mission 'Muralismo' (Mission Mural Movement) is a grass-roots form of public media in artistic expression. It is interactive communication that has an immediacy of social context made by and for the community. This community's muralism is possibly the most democratic public media our society possesses. "Mission artists exploit traditions, directly challenge the status quo, twist puns from capitalist conceits, and resurrect buried histories" (30)

The Chicano Movement represented the struggle of Mexicans born into the American Anglo-dominated society while maintaining the cultural sense as a Mexican. La Raza was a political party and philosophy that inspired literature and art at the same time. The movement encompassed many social and political issues for Mexican Americans: farm workers' rights, enhanced education, voting and political rights, as well as emerging awareness of collective history. Graphic artist Malaquias Montoya, a graduate of UC Berkeley Fine Arts and now a Professor of Cultural studies at UC Davis, made Chicano poster art for demonstrations, benefits and community gatherings in the late sixties. The Chicano movement integrated art, action and community as their accessible media. Poster art was an essential part of the demonstrations and tacked up

around neighborhoods and colleges. A visual language fortified the communication on the streets as inclusive and identifiable. Chicano literature was also powerful and vivid with imagery and ideas. Montoya felt that his graphic art projected Raza poetry into imagery to project a sense of cultural identity. (Barnett 1984, 45) Poster art of protest had a direct influence on early public wall murals.



Fig. 1 *Radio Bilingüe*



Fig. 2 *Yo Soy Chicano*



Fig. 3 *Vietnam Aztlán*

The artistic expression of collective history is perhaps the most important aspect of Chicano art and in that way it was a renaissance; joining historical contexts through vibrant imagery as a means of self-identification. The evolution of Chicano art into mission mural art amplified imagery and gave it space to merge events throughout time and space and somehow reconstituting collective history into new stories. These narratives reflect the people and the experiences for which the art is made.

The cultural legacy and identity of America's immigrants were effectively suppressed, much through television and advertisement, a media that was inaccessible as a communication tool for marginalized people of color and even middle class white Americans. These new murals in the Mission District celebrated the diversity in

American culture which was the reality. The murals have upheld an American value and civil right; that of freedom of expression. This freedom and honesty created a wider sense of belonging for everyone in the community.

In 1973, four women artists began creating their own murals. Graciela Carrillo, Consuelo Mendez, Irene Perez, and Patricia Rodriguez were “Las Mujeres Muralistas”. At first Chicano male artists were not supportive. There were no female muralists at the time. “...we had a different visual story to tell. We had the freedom to paint whatever we wanted, and we chose the beauty of women and their Mexican and Latino cultures.” (Rodriguez 2011). “Las Mujeres Muralistas” made their formal public appearance in 1974 with a large mural located at Mission and 25th Streets. The four women worked as a collaborative group. They designed and executed *Latinoamérica*, and were introduced to the broader community as muralists.



Fig. 4 *Latinoamerica*

Many people watched them and interviewed them for newspapers, television, and radio. As a result, more women wanted to join. Susan Kelk Cervantes, a recent graduate from the San Francisco Institute of the Arts was influenced by these women and their revolutionary murals. She joined them to create the mural *The Marketplace* in 1974.



Fig. 5 *Para El Mercado/The Marketplace*

Susan Kelk Cervantes received her MFA at the San Francisco Institute for the Arts in 1968. She then lived in the Mission District and started a family with husband and muralist Luis Cervantes. She began mural painting with other women artists and was the city of San Francisco's Commissioner for the Arts from 1975-79. She founded the non-profit "Precita Eyes Muralists Association" in 1979. As a collaborative of Mission muralists the association pioneered an infrastructure for the Mission Mural Movement that revolutionized the art form as a community building activity. "Precita Eyes Muralists are encouraged to invite the mural's future neighbors and stakeholders to participate in conceptualizing the images and symbols." (Jacoby, 75)

Precita Eyes Muralists Association uses a community-assets approach that involves volunteer mentoring, civic dialogue, consensus decision-making, and outreach programs at all of the Mission District's schools. Mission Muralismo as community building activity creates social networks between residents, schools, businesses, city and state. Volunteer mentoring strategies are integral to Precita Eyes' mural-making process. Mentoring creates strong social ties in inclusive ways and numerous social directions. Precita Eyes Muralist Association has consistently been instrumental in creating hands-on

educational mural projects in schools over the last three decades. The mural projects offer a means of educating not only the youth but the entire community on effective ways to respond to their world through artistic expression. This social capital has developed personal and social identity, ownership and self-efficacy among Mission residents. Civically valuable skills of consensus decision-making, multi-perspective civic negotiating and creative problem solving are developed throughout this highly creative process.

Involved with Mission Muralism for nearly forty years, Susan Kelk Cervantes has received over two hundred public and private mural commissions. Precita Eyes Muralists Association has supported the creation of over 500 murals in the Mission district. All sorts of social challenges have been addressed in the Mission district through the mural-making process. Through consensus decision-making, decisions are made by including the input of all stakeholders. Proposals for solutions better address all potential concerns. This process includes and respects all parties, and sets the stage for greater cooperation in implementing the resulting decisions. Neighborhood revitalization efforts, renewed education systems, access to health services, civil rights issues, and crime and drug prevention have all improved through the community-building efforts of Precita Eyes.

Precita Eyes Muralists Association codified the mural making procedure as collaborative and community based. Muralists are encouraged to invite the mural's future neighbors and stakeholders to participate in conceptualizing the images and symbols. These stakeholders may include building owners, business owners, and

city/state governances that may commission an artist to create a mural. Artists collaborate with other artists who together work with neighborhood residents to discuss civic issues and narratives. Precita Eyes pioneered an infrastructure for the Mission Mural Movement that revolutionized the art form, while also archiving the information of every one of its murals. With remarkable artists involved for the designs, the murals not only have a powerful aesthetic but Precita Eyes Muralist Association galvanized the process as a powerful community building activity.

Every new mural had to sort out compelling questions of race, ethnicity, gender, artistic responsibility, and activism. The varied strategies used by artists and activists promote civic dialogue with one another and the community. “They argued about what was bourgeois and what was revolutionary, what was sexist and what was inclusive, what was worthwhile and what was garbage, beautiful and ugly, self-indulgent or communal.” (Jacoby 2009, 71). Those questions and more continue to be negotiated by each succeeding wave of muralists while residents are empowered to have a voice in the mural’s visual language.

Collaborative groups can formulate ideas about the future they wanted to create and mural art can express those ideas with imagery. In these groups, the conversations are given space to have a diversity of thinking. Transformation takes place, and the conversations of muralists and neighbors and stakeholders are part of a larger group of people that share the same concerns. More importantly, the questions people have about needing or wanting community innovations are given space. Questions demand engagement. Answering fuels accountability. Commitments take shape when we

engage in conversation to ask and answer what is wanted for the community. The process of collaborative mural making is an incubator for social capital encouraging face-to-face dialogue, endowing people with participatory skills, public speaking abilities and leadership abilities.

“When economic and political negotiations are embedded in dense networks of social interaction, incentives for opportunism are reduced. At the same time, networks of civic engagement embody past success at collaboration, which can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration. Finally, dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we," or (in the language of rational choice theorists) enhancing the participants "taste" for collective benefits. (Putnam, 1995:67)

Every school in the Mission has not one mural but many murals on the walls. The mural process for the Cesar Chavez Elementary School's deaf and hearing impaired program ‘illuminates the power of language and learning to transcend boundaries’ (Jacoby 2009,159) The mural covers the building, celebrating the ways different cultures across time and space communicate. The thirty panels on the façade depict hands signing letters of English, Spanish, Hebrew, Japanese, Egyptian Hieroglyphs, and Hopi.



Fig. 6,7,8 *El Lenguaje Mudo Del Alma/Silent Language of The Soul*

The main building of the Cesar Chavez Elementary School in the heart of the Mission is drenched in bright colors with images of Chavez, icons of the agricultural labor movement including: bountiful fruits in the fields, and generations of citizens holding hands with the leaders of the labor and social justice movements.



Fig. 9 *Si Se Puede/Yes We Can Do It*

The murals in the Mission District offer a means of visually expressing narratives of the world; that of the past, the present, and a vision of the future. The narratives vary with those creating them. Male artists have expressed distinctive themes of, labor, muscles, hands, fists, heroism, that were also dominant in Chicano art.



Fig. 10 *United in Struggle*

Children were some of the earliest artists of murals in the now famous Balmy Alley that has become saturated with murals over time.



Fig. 11 *Those We Love, We Remember*

Women artists began creating their own narratives with images of family, love, sensitivity, and children. Their narratives speak about the Latinas who live in the Mission District or farm workers in California. They depict women's own reality and this enabled other women to identify themselves and feel included in these public representations of life.

“The statements that we made were very feminine and we got a lot of criticism because we weren’t doing soldiers with guns, weren’t doing revolutionary figures. We were painting women; women in the marketplace, women breastfeeding, women doing art. People got really angry that we were doing that. ‘How could you do this when there’s so much going on?’ But we were saying that being a woman is a revolution in society. So in the work we did, culture was emphasized and the best compliments came from our community. We were talking to our own community, our own families. Women would come and say ‘You know I’ve been here working in the hotels and cleaning houses all my life and nobody’s ever thought about us. Thank you for depicting our culture.’ That was the thank you we wanted.” (Rodriguez, 2011)



Fig.12,13Las Lechugueras/The Lettuce Pickers

Muralismo gives the neighborhood its defining visual characteristic. Murals not only express civic history, issues about social justice, and visions of a better world, they also decorate local businesses. Original art used as signage or advertisement sets businesses apart and shares information in a more intimate and attractive way. There is a difference felt by the viewer between impersonal corporate signs that seem bland and cold in comparison to signage in mural form painted by hand. This imparts a personal, human connection for the viewer. *Muralismo* used for advertisement conveys whole narratives of folklore, farces, and faraway places. The ads and signs reflect the wide array of international populations from Central and South America and their well-loved cuisines. These locally owned businesses commission local artists to adorn their locales.



Fig. 14 *La Palma* Fig. 15 *Taco Loco* Fig. 16 *Leyenda Azteca*

Mural artists looked back in history, down the street, and across the world for inspiration. They are a demonstration that lasts. The murals express relevant social issues with hand painted imagery. This visual intimacy between artists and the community gives the murals as media a legitimacy that is unparalleled in mainstream media of television and internet.

Many narratives represented in *Muralismo* remain relevant over time. The fatal police shooting of the teen Trayvon Martin is symbolized in Juana Alicia’s powerful imagery in the mural *Alto El Fuego* on Balmy Alley, while Graffiti art can speak to the iconic Chicano movement poem “Yo Soy Joaquin” written decades earlier.



Fig.17 *Alto El Fuego/Cease Fire*



Fig. 18 *Yo Soy Trayvon*

The Mission District murals are part of many unresolved arguments, but their continued presence is persistent. Conversations continue and grow as the leverage point for an alternative future. Many Americans today see themselves outside of politics and public affairs. The problems of community development in the inner city, of school reform, of violence, and many other problems can be better solved by mobilizing local wisdom, community assets and social networks.

The Mission District has already experienced the pressure of people moving into the district for its central location, its aesthetics, and its truly felt social cohesiveness. It is a neighborhood vibrant with life, communicated through a visual language of public murals. It is a very desirable community to live. The influx of new

residents in the San Francisco Bay area is putting a strain on housing in the city. The city has the highest median rent in the nation, and evictions of long-time residents in the Mission district are skyrocketing. A recent city report finds that the Ellis Act evictions (allows eviction if the landlord wants to sell the building) have increased 170 percent over the past three years. (National Public Radio 2013) Long time residents of the Mission District that were part of the development of the community are being evicted, including the artists and activists that transform and support the community. The issue of affordable housing for low-income residents in the Mission District is persistent, but what is clear is that the community has strong social capital that anchors them. Connection to a natural support network of family and very close friends provides a sense of security and a safety net for people. Social capital in this case may be the only currency readily available to the people regarding housing to these long-term residents. Mission Muralism as a community-building process helps people recognize and understand the rights of everyone. People have the right to be heard, to be informed and give consent. The efforts of Precita Eyes Muralist Association acts as agent for public policy-making by providing people access to communicate with local government with opportunities to express their grievances and limitations to personal freedoms. These limitations can be reversed or removed by reviewing and changing policy and practices that limit or restrict people.

Even though some of the institutions, civic habits, and public traditions that sustained civic participation in generations past have eroded, Precita Eyes Muralists Association commitment to voluntary, community, and grassroots involvement have remained robust. Many American citizens are looking for strategies that engage their practical wisdom and civic commitment. Community art associations like Precita

Eyes can change the relationship between government and the people it serves. The government can be more of a catalyst, facilitator and partner with communities and citizens, and less of a regulator or one-way service provider.

Community mural art as a civic innovation emphasizes the role of ordinary people in making public decisions and solving public problems in their own environments.

Precita Eyes Muralist Association has developed trust-building strategies through diverse social networks in the community and is continuing its efforts through community education, workshops for all ages, and mural tours taken by people visiting from all over the world. It is a powerful model for building social capital.

Session VIII: The Arts and Social Capital

Environmental Art

The term "environmental art" encompasses all sorts of artistic interventions in nature. Environmental art expresses the social movement of sustainability and promotes our role as stewards of the natural world that sustains us. The art of this movement informs us of nature's processes, educates us about ecological systems and facilitates in seeking solutions to environmental problems in communities. It reunites us with nature, proposing new ways for us to co-exist with our environment in healthy long-lasting ways.

In the paper "Going Green with Public Art Policy", Bostwick discusses how environmental problems become social problems which are addressed through education and public policy. She warns that education and public policy alone do not adequately solve the environmental problems themselves (Bostwick 2008). Environmental art projects may struggle with the problem of beautifying an environmental issue without solving it, but this may only be true initially. The first piece of art made from junk or trash may not seem to fix the dilemma of our landfills at first glance. But environmental art has had rippling effects since the 1970's for environmental sustainability.

Jo Hanson was an Artist and activist in 70's in San Francisco. She moved into a dilapidated Victorian and gradually completely restored it. She started sweeping her sidewalk's garbage every day as a gentle reminder and social statement in her community to stop littering. It caught on and everyone started sweeping their streets and sidewalks as if it were a public art performance. Hanson organized community street sweepings all over town and a city-sponsored anti-litter campaign for children. "Hanson's

community-inclusive strategies set precedents in public 'eco-art' created models for younger artists, and provided a representational voice in City Hall for those living in disenfranchised neighborhoods.” (Recology 2014) Hanson became a San Francisco Arts Commissioner for six years and was instrumental in the Arts Commission's restoration of the Coit Tower murals. She advocated for and curated public art in the San Francisco International Airport.

Hanson established The Artist in Residence Program at Recology in 1990 at the same time that recycling was being implemented in San Francisco as a result of the 1989 state recycling law. This law required all jurisdictions in California to divert at least fifty-percent of their waste from landfills by the year 2000. Counties were required to have a County Solid Waste Management Plan to achieve this state-mandated goal, and as a result, the Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) was formed in San Francisco.” (Recology 2014) The SWMP and San Francisco Sanitary Fill Company (now called Recology San Francisco) worked together to create and distribute information about recycling, develop presentations and field trips to teach people about curbside recycling and how to reduce waste. The goals included awareness of our waste’s environmental impact. Jo Hanson came up with the most innovative idea for education plan of an Artist in Residence program and the first program of its kind in the United States.

The Artist in Residence Program at Recology San Francisco is a unique art and education program that provides Bay Area artists with access to discarded materials, a stipend, and a large studio space at the Recology Solid Waste Transfer and Recycling Center.

Since 1990, over 100 professional artists and twenty student artists have completed residencies. The studio is located at the San Francisco Solid Waste Transfer and

Recycling Center, a 47-acre facility that includes the trash transfer station (where trash goes before being sent to landfill), the Household Hazardous Waste Facility, the Organics Annex, the Public Disposal and Recycling Area ('The Dump'), and other recycling areas. The facility also has a three-acre sculpture garden of work contributed by former artists-in-residence. Jo Hanson remained a guiding force for the program and served as a member of the program's board from 1990 until she passed away in March, 2007.(Recology 2014)

During their residencies, artists have scavenging privileges and 24-hour access to the company's well-equipped art studio. They speak to tour groups of all ages about their experience. At the end of their residency Recology hosts a public exhibition and reception. These artists have gone on to exhibit their works in other exhibits all over the nation that promote environmental sustainability and waste reduction. San Francisco met their goal of 50% reduction of waste by 2000. San Francisco then set a goal of 75 percent landfill diversion by 2010 and zero waste by 2020. It reached 77 percent diversion citywide in 2008. In 2009 SF Environment drafted an ordinance to achieve zero waste by 2020 with input from Recology, the Chamber of Commerce, Building Owners and Managers Association, restaurant and apartment associations, unions and other key stakeholders. "The success comes through a model of creating convenient programs, conducting extensive outreach, providing financial incentives and adopting cutting-edge policies such as mandating participation and banning problem products." (SF Environment 2011). In a way, it all began with one artist's simple act of sweeping her sidewalk.

Daniel McCormick artist and ecologist of Marin County, California have been designing ephemeral sculpture that also functions as ecological restoration. Designed with Mary O'Brian their designs remediate damaged environments, restoring ecosystems with artistic and aesthetic structures that are sculpted into the earth. Silt traps and erosion control weavings are made from riverbank vines and branches heal dirty rivers and creeks while merging with the landscape. After helping restore damaged ecosystems, the weavings biodegrade into the local ecology. With the help of 100 volunteers and of all ages, weavings were placed directly into eroded gullies and banks of the Adobe Creek in Los Altos, CA



Fig. 19 *Three Faces of Thicket*

The sculptures are strategic interventions designed to fit into the curves of the streams and gullies where they fill with leaves and twigs, collecting sediment that would otherwise smother the salmon eggs in their spawning areas. The project reconnected local residents to place, developing a new sense of coexistence with nature in a highly developed area in terms of population. The project involved a variety of community stakeholders including naturalists, a local historian, a local biologist and elders working alongside school age children. McCormick's environmental art addresses the structural issues that caused the damage to the Adobe creek and in turn the watershed of the region (McCormick 2012). McCormick's environmental sculpture models and sketches of the design are exhibited in galleries and museums to share with other communities as a model. The environmental sculpture itself stabilized the creek, restored the water quality of the watershed and enhanced fish spawning grounds.

The designs and community involvement of McCormick's project develop innovative models for collaboration and problem-solving for environmental issues. This initiative and others like it around the nation have been so effective that a commissioned report from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency evaluated Community-based environmental protection projects and recognized the value and strength of the projects. The EPA has formed partnerships with communities and stakeholders recognizing their roll to assist in the projects. All of these innovations have built new stocks of social capital that bridges communities to care for their environment and create visible achievements. In addition, they have enhanced local problem-solving capacities and formed invaluable partnerships with local, state and national agencies. This represents

social capital spreading vertically and across vast numbers of communities and preserving vast amounts of natural resources.

Daniel McCormick and Jo Hanson with their communities have created imaginative new ways to identify our current relationship with nature so that it is also a lasting relationship. Working with materials within range of reach in our everyday lives makes art highly relevant to environmental sustainability.

Session X: The Arts and Social Capital

Temporal Urbanism and the Social Capital of Burning Man

What if a city could be constructed completely by volunteers? What if social capital was virtually the only currency readily available to people? What if interacting with others provided us with reciprocal relationships for nearly every single facet of our daily lives? What if the Arts were the prevailing civic institution and at the center of nearly every social activity and interaction? Founder of the burning man event Larry Harvey claims that “to talk about art is to talk about everything else” about Black Rock City.

Black Rock City, Nevada is a temporal city in a vast desert whose infrastructure is built and torn down each year by hundreds of volunteers. The city hosts the community-driven event known as Burning Man held annually at the end of summer for the last two decades. These volunteers stake out the perimeters in the silica powder desert floor and designate its wide streets ample for bicycles and pedestrians, with axis avenues that form somewhat of a grid. Civil and health services are situated in the center camp. The urban design resembles an ancient Greek amphitheatre (Fig. 20) in which center camp would be the theatre’s orchestra pit, the bleachers are Black Rock City’s residential communities, and the stage of the amphitheatre is left blank desert floor to become filled with an endless array of fantastic monumental art sculptures . These structures encourage human interactivity and artists are encouraged to design with participation as key. This open desert turned public art forum is dubbed the *playa*. . Last

year in 2013, participation reached over sixty thousand people based on ticket sales to the event.



Fig. 20 *arial view of Black Rock City*

Going to Black Rock City requires a lot of preparation at the level of primal survival, something we are also unfamiliar with in our everyday lives. At a minimum, everyone must bring their own food, water and temporary shelter for the week long event.

Inventive temporary structures must protect against extreme and erratic environmental conditions; burning sun, gale force winds, and dust storms. Survival at Black Rock City requires a communal strategy.

Black Rock City replaces marketplace commerce with a gifting society. All exchanges turn into a gift and this generates social cohesiveness. Most people camp in groups and all of their camps comprise an endless array of offerings (gifts). Last year there was one camp that built a 40 ft. cube out of scaffolds, shaded it with parachutes, and hung dozens of hammocks for anyone to come in to relax and read. Another camp offered soapy baths. There were cafes, little theatres, pancake breakfasts, hair salons, and yoga classes. There was a clothing boutique filled with donations for people to shop, no cashier just a dj spinning on the counter. Thousands of these offerings appear all over the city. None of them require direct reciprocity. Reciprocity lies in what oneself is offering the community. Harvey says Burning Man developed around the power of gifting within communities. "It coalesced within a group of people who were passionate about living for and by their gifts and about giving those gifts to one another. Black Rock City in many ways is an artist's notion of what a city should be."(2003, 31)

The Burning Man event acts as agency for personal and cultural identity through art and ideas, urging each one of us to create. Art in this community is the cultural tool by which we design new ideas concepts. We may stage them temporally, tell them on the streets, or build monumental sculpture to touch, climb and play. "[Burning Man] encourages art that is designed to be touched, handled, played with and moved through in a public arena. It solicits a collaborative response from its audience even as it encourages collaboration between artists. It blurs the distinction between audience and art, professional and amateur, spectator and participant." (33)

Photographer and artist Michael Garlington (Figure 1), and structural engineer Jonny Hirshmugl of Petaluma, CA built an ornate, gilded, if not gaudy sculpture

that spells out in separate, 20-foot-tall block letters: EGO. Nearly every inch of the surface of the three letters is covered with hand-molded curios. “Garlington and Jonny Hirschmugl, created molds of many figures and objects they picked up at a trophy shop, the county landfill’s recycling yard and elsewhere. They poured plaster of Paris into the molds and made about 4,000 reproductions of horses, ballplayers, cheerleaders and such from trophies and also praying hands, tiny busts of President John F. Kennedy, old medicine bottles, clowns, guns, crosses, skulls, ravens, quail, babies and Buddhas. Then they sprayed the plaster baubles with gold paint and attached them to the wooden frames (Fig. 22) of the great E, G and O with about 25,000 screws.” (Smith 2012)



Fig. 21 Artist Michael Garlington, above, adds gold paint to the sculpture. The structure consists of three 20-foot letters that spell EGO.



Fig. 22 *EGO* and its collected junk relics

The molded pieces attached to the structure made it impossible for observers to climb the structure. Since most art installations at Burning man encourage interaction mostly with climbing, the artists placed a sign near the sculpture that read "This EGO is as fragile as your own." Well put, given the enormity of one's 'ego' at times. The 20-foot letters perfectly juxtapose the human experience of simultaneous vanity and humility. Let it all burn. (Figure 3) Ironically, one could scavenge through the coals after the EGO sculpture burned and *recover oneself* with a memento; all those inflammable plastered relics.



Fig. 23 *Ego burns*

The Burning Man event also hosts countless lectures in the daytime. In 2013, the lectures for the week at the ‘Playadiate: Education, Innovation and Learning Series included: *New Tech City Social Innovation Futures* “creative and autonomous zones and cities of the future...resiliency, thriving, open data, mixing genomes and biometrics with our passwords and crypto currencies”; *Space Summit* “Ships, Tech, colonization, the future of space experiences. Meet spacecraft makers and inventors of new worlds”; TEDxBRC: *Paradigm Shift* . TEDx hosted and televised a stage for Burning Man’s most visionary inhabitants to speak about their ideas and their creations while drawing on the social guiding principles of the community of Black Rock City; *Transformational Learning “Burning Nerds” Global Unconference*. This conference hosted doctors, professors, and geeks, to have 5 minute spark talks on latest research, conversations, games, and a potlatch of BYO DIY; *Burning Man in The World*. “How does playa culture create ripples with momentum in our communities?” This lecture series hosted spokespeople of the central mission of the non-profit organization formally known as Burning Man Project. It included a lecture from spokesperson for Burners without Borders, a sub-organization of BMP that collaborates with people that have solid,

workable ideas for social innovations in their local communities. BWB can fund those projects monetarily. Burning Man Project and Global Network regarded the regional affiliations the BMP has all over the world and organize local meetings and events. The Black Rocks Art Foundation spoke and this foundation collects monetary donations in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Burning Man Project distributes these funds to Black Rock City the community through application for grants for art projects to be brought to Burning Man. The spokesperson for Black Rock Solar spoke regarding the earnest goals of the Burning Man event to use solar power as its exclusive source of energy.

These lectures were a small fraction of those offered throughout the week. On any given day, dozens of lectures and talks fill all the neighborhoods of Black Rock City. This assemblage creates a kind of Conceptual Age think tank, or more aptly, a play tank for right brain and left brain thinkers to unite. It blurs the barriers of distinction between these modes of thinking. Events like this may hold the promise of our future in the conceptual age, if not the incubator itself. Our world can be turned around so we can view it from a strange but enlightening new angle. The ideas that are created in the community play-tank of Black Rock City can be profound, clarifying, contrary, and bizarre. Ideas generated at Burning Man are original, creative and smart. That may well be why one can encounter on the streets of the Burning Man event CEO's of companies like Google and Facebook, scientists and inventors, award winning novelists, medical doctors, politicians, geologists, physicists and technology geeks on any given desert street corner at Burning Man. Yet, they can scarcely be distinguished from the yoga instructor, the fire dancer, the musician, the college student or the sculptor.

Rahul Mehrotra, professor of Urban Design and Planning at Harvard, and his team of researchers studies the question of how a temporary city can be erected so quickly. This is one of the most important qualities of the Kumbh Mela festival in India. The festival site is built with only a couple of months to build the infrastructure of roads, electrical grid, water, sanitation, and hygiene systems that will support those millions of people. During its peak days the mela is the largest city in the world. Mehrotra and his research team mapped the evolution of the temporary city.

Mehrotra calls these temporal landscapes kinetic cities. “Temporal landscapes illustrate human being’s need to organize themselves by jumping protocols. They are elastic in the ways they encounter urban norms. They innovate society [and] inspire utopic notions...” (Gudrais 2013)

Rather than a utopia, author Lee Gilmore of *Theatre in a Crowded Fire* (2013, 22) describes Black Rock City as a *heterotopia*, coined by philosopher Michel Foucault.

... places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted [and which is] capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.

Mehrotra’s research is looking at this urban design in terms of making people, communities and systems throughout the world to be better prepared for natural or human catastrophic events. Mehrotra is doing some of that work through a research seminar he teaches on temporary settlements, that includes case studies of the Kumbh Mela, Burning Man, and refugee camps. (Harnett 2013) We depend on others to identify

and respond to emergencies. Social capital helps communities respond to emergencies. The Rockefeller Foundation launched the 100 Resilient Cities Centennial Challenge in December of 2013 to enable 100 cities to better address the increasing environmental shocks and stresses of the 21st century. Four hundred cities applied to receive technical support and resources for developing and implementing plans for urban resilience over the next three years. San Francisco was chosen as one of the hundred cities for challenge. Resilience is the capacity to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of great upheavals, and even transform when conditions require it. It is in our ability to change, rebound, be flexible, and innovate in order to address great environmental and social challenges. They are studying the role of social systems and physical infrastructures in terms of resilience to environmental catastrophes. (Rockefeller Foundation 2013) The experience of Burning Man and the immense dependence on social capital for survival is an excellent learning lab for people to radically generate resilience. It may seem far off that we will have to exercise our resilience to environmental change or catastrophe in terms of the effects of climate change but the front page headline of *The San Francisco Chronicle* on May 7, 2014 read “Climate Alert” (Lochhead 2014). The article reported that “the third National Climate Assessment compiled over four years by 300 scientists at the direction of Congress, said California’s farm industry, which provides half the nation’s fruit, nuts, and vegetables, is particularly vulnerable.” California had its warmest January on record this year. The comprehensive report that looks at specific regions is designed to show Americans how global warming is already affecting their lives. Temperatures national are expected to raise two to four degrees Fahrenheit over the next few decades. Climate change is not a distant threat.

Larry Harvey, founder of the Burning Man event says, “We tell Burning Man participants...to project a vision of their personal reality into the world’s blankness. This [Black Rock Desert] context of no context...in a primal way, [it] also makes people shine out of themselves—which to me means they becomes artists, because radical self-expression is the better half of art.” (Harvey 2003, 28)

As Gilmore says in *Theatre in a Crowded Fire*, The Burning Man event “provides a domain in which participants can have experiences of connection, purpose, transformation, or simply feeling more fully alive...”(66) People have opportunities to experience and perform often completely different roles in the community than their norm. The intensified interaction with others and hyper-reliance on social capital provides them opportunities to engage in reciprocal relationships with members of the community. The use of art to generate social capital frames our core values with imagery and symbols, inspiring the participants to invent, revolutionize, adapt, or adjust. Experiences can be framed in whatever way one chooses. That may be why participants often answer the question of what Burning Man is with whatever you want it to be. The *what if* questions posed in the beginning of this session can be questioned and answered over and over in the temporal landscape of Burning Man, inventing and exercising ideas and solutions. The event and its social capital bridge self to group, known to unknown, and myth to reality. Thus, art and reality merge. Like one billboard-like sign read in the playa in 2012, Art is not a thing art is a way.



Fig. 23 Art

is... a way

Appendix I:

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