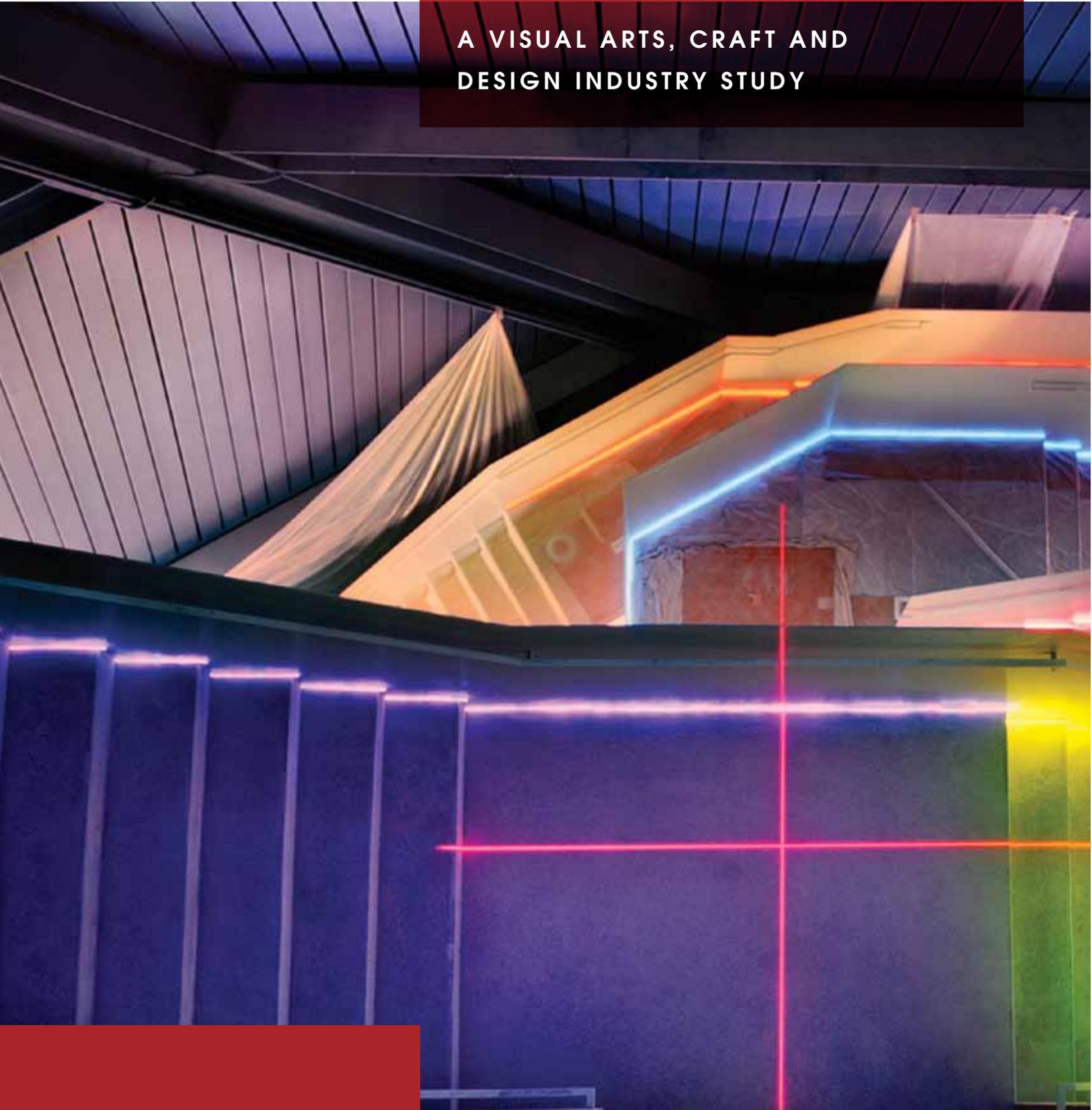


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Forming Cleveland

A VISUAL ARTS, CRAFT AND  
DESIGN INDUSTRY STUDY



# Forming Cleveland

A VISUAL ARTS, CRAFT AND  
DESIGN INDUSTRY STUDY



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# Executive Summary

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“The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.”

- Pablo Picasso



“The Reading Nest” by Mark Reigelman / Summer 2013’s “See Also” temporary installation at the Eastman Reading Garden, Cleveland Public Library’s Main Branch / Photo courtesy of LAND studio

<sup>i</sup> The VACD will also be referred to as “the visual arts sector” or “visual arts.”

<sup>ii</sup> Bernard T. Ferrari and Jessica Goethals. “Using rivalry to spur innovation.” May 2010. Source: [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/innovation/using\\_rivalry\\_to\\_spur\\_innovation](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/innovation/using_rivalry_to_spur_innovation). P.1.

<sup>iii</sup> See Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001, pp. 7–8; and Bernard T. Ferrari and Jessica Goethals. “Using rivalry to spur innovation.” May 2010. Source: [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/innovation/using\\_rivalry\\_to\\_spur\\_innovation](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/innovation/using_rivalry_to_spur_innovation). P.3.

<sup>iv</sup> *Arts and Economic Prosperity. The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences. IV Summary Report*. Americans for the Arts. Source: <http://letsgoarts.org/document.doc?id=979>  
*The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations in Oklahoma*. Americans for the Arts. Source: [http://www.arts.ok.gov/pdf/about\\_us/EIStudy0110FullReport.pdf](http://www.arts.ok.gov/pdf/about_us/EIStudy0110FullReport.pdf). For more information, refer to reports at the Americans for the Arts website: <http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/research-studies-publications/americans-for-the-arts-publications/research-reports>.  
*Arts, Culture, and Economic Prosperity in Greater Philadelphia*. Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. 2012. Source: [http://www.philaculture.org/sites/default/files/2012\\_prosperity\\_report\\_single\\_pages.pdf](http://www.philaculture.org/sites/default/files/2012_prosperity_report_single_pages.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> Jennifer Novak-Leonard. *Measuring Chicago’s (Artistically) Creative Economy*. Cultural Policy Center at the University of Chicago. May 2014. Source: <http://culturalpolicy.uchicago.edu/creative-economy/creative-economy.pdf>.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Art, as illustrated by Picasso’s quote, possesses the unique ability to cleanse our souls of everyday monotony. Given the transformative capabilities of art, we wondered how the arts could help revitalize a city, and, perhaps, revive an entire region. Can the same then be true for the “souls” of our cities, or even the collective soul of a region?

The Visual Arts, Craft, and Design (VACD) sector,<sup>i</sup> encompassing a wide spectrum of creative endeavors, has an impact on all of us in often surprising ways. When we speak generally of the “visual arts,” names like Rembrandt, Cassatt, Warhol, and Bearden may come to mind; however, the Cleveland VACD sector, including all of Cuyahoga County for the purposes of this study, reaches well beyond conventional definitions of art to encompass a variety of consumer products such as jewelry, furniture, and even homes.

In the past, the three great centers of the Renaissance—Rome, Florence, and Venice—provided great examples of energizing industrial innovation “from [creating] the world’s largest masonry dome to linear perspective, modern-day portrait painting, technical breakthroughs in glassblowing and bronze casting, the italic type of the Aldine Press, sfumato and chiaroscuro, and the designs in Leonardo’s sketchbooks.”<sup>ii</sup> The creative energy of the Renaissance promoted urbanization and created a community of painters, craftsmen, and sculptors intensely interacting in dense cities with peers, learning from each other, exchanging ideas and techniques. The growing prominence of artists in this time period “allowed for creative interpretation and stylistic flexibility” of artists’ work, leading to more innovative ideas funded by negotiated contracts.<sup>iii</sup> Thus, the Renaissance provides a blueprint for utilizing the arts to foster cutting-edge engineering advancements in an urban environment. Bernard Ferrari and Jessica Goethals describe the positive metropolitan effects of this collaboration:

*Then the city of Florence began construction of its now-famous Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore (more commonly known as the Duomo) and in 1419 sought an architect to build a dome to cover the massive, 42-meter-wide space above the church’s chancel. Such a vast space had not been capped with a dome since the Pantheon’s construction, in ancient times. To overcome this extraordinary architectural challenge, Brunelleschi, who won the commission, developed a number of engineering techniques and construction practices. . . . His masterpiece defied precedent on innumerable levels: it was the first octagonal dome in history, the first dome to be built without a wooden supporting frame, the largest dome in existence at the time, and is still the largest masonry dome in the world. By drawing on the past and innovating beyond it, Brunelleschi was able to achieve what many had deemed impossible. (2010, p.4)*

As this example demonstrates, the arts provide both aesthetic and economic benefits to individuals and cities alike. Likewise, much current research reveals how existing artistic and cultural production has direct economic benefits for regional economies by attracting investments, generating tax revenues, encouraging in-migration of workers, and energizing tourism and consumer purchases.<sup>iv</sup> Furthermore, economic development intermediaries, public policy makers, and the general public increasingly recognize the impact creative ideas and entrepreneurial workforce can have on economic performance.<sup>v</sup>

In this study, the economic impact's full breadth is considered by analyzing a wide spectrum of economic sectors and occupations beyond those commonly associated with artists. The authors believe that artistic creativity enhances many areas of the regional economy, including design, marketing, packaging, and presentation of products and services in various sectors. This hypothesis is consistent with an approach used by Ann Markusen in her assessment of *artistic dividends*.<sup>vi</sup> According to Markusen, the *artistic dividend* refers to a concentration of artists in a particular area that leads to a widespread impact over a broad range of industries in a regional economy. We did not replicate Markusen's study in this research; instead,

through statistical analyses of data and interviews and focus groups, we demonstrated how the economic effect of the VACD sector expands beyond direct economic benefits of the artists.

This study illustrates the extensive economic impact the Cleveland visual art sector has on the economy of Cuyahoga County. The report's case studies also uncover the Cleveland VACD sector's economic contributions to industries outside of the VACD, emphasizing the larger potential the visual arts industries have for regional economies.



"Factory Work Series" by Stephanie Craig. This hand built ceramic sculpture matches delicate figurines with eroded industrial imagery. The Factory Work Series comments on traditional and contemporary ideologies and cultural habits regarding labor, effort and productivity, as well as art, production, design, craftsmanship, and artistic intention

<sup>vi</sup> Ann Markusen and Greg Schrock's study use this concept in their investigation of urban artistic specialization and economic development implications, in *Urban Studies*, Volume 43, No. 10: 1661-1686, 2006. "Artistic dividends" are also discussed in earlier publications by Ann Markusen and co-authors.

# ARTS AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

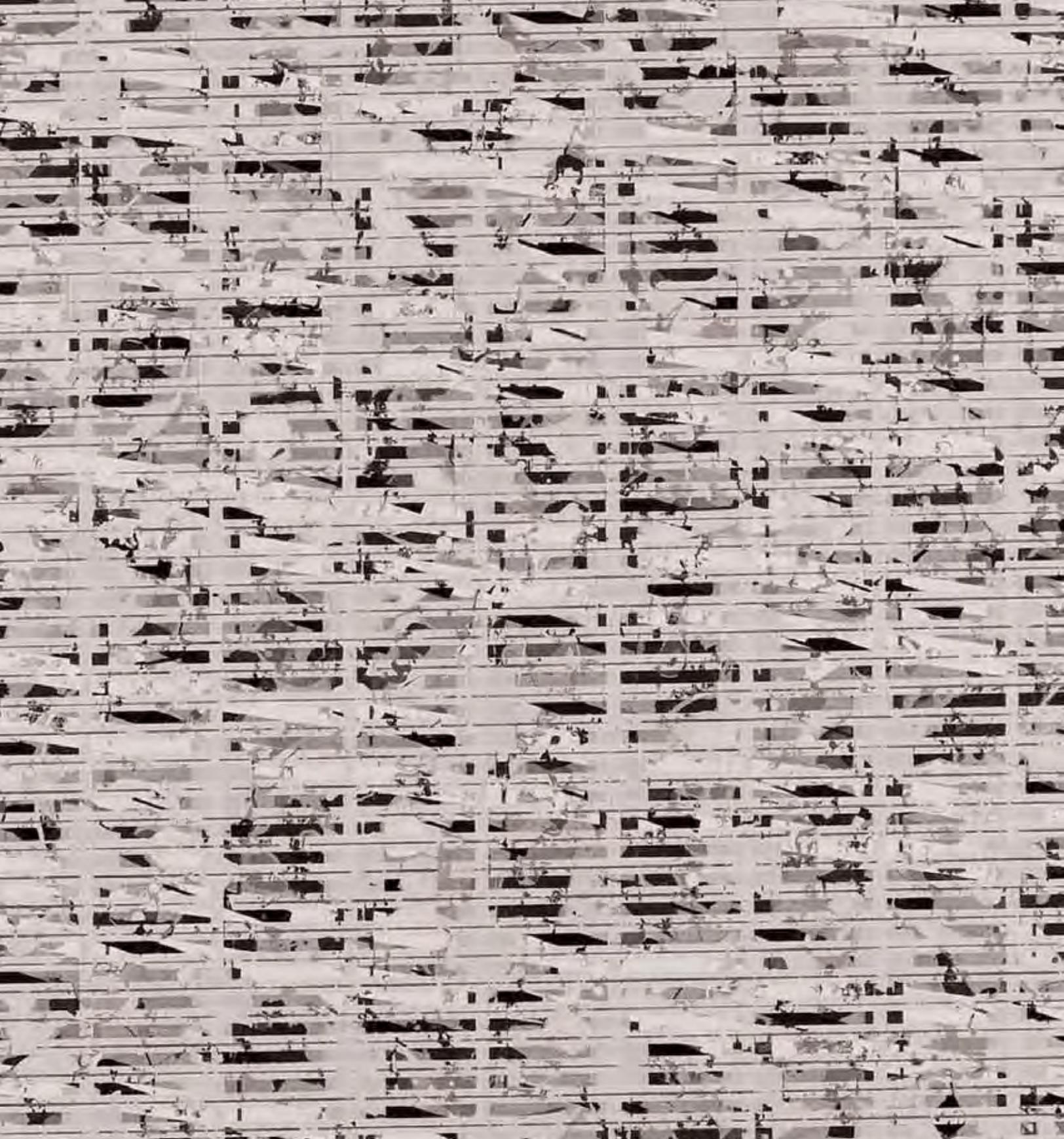
The VACD sector, along with other arts and culture disciplines, can provide a region with a “sticky,” or long-lasting, regional competitive advantage in the form of an economic base industry—one that is capable of creating local economic benefits by exporting its products beyond the regional boundaries.

As in the Renaissance, new knowledge is created when artists look at the world with their unique perspective to spark conversations on previously unseen possibilities. Inventions can then occur when the ideas are conceptualized into a novel product—a real-time digital visual input, 3-D printing, or a material that precisely controls the flow of light and color through structure. Innovation occurs when the invention is applied in practice: an Internet conferencing based on a real-time visual input, manufacturing car parts from 3-D printed prototypes, or ALON (transparent aluminum) or translucent concrete manufactured from a material that precisely controls the flow of light and color through structure. Collectively, such ingenuity holds great potential for spurring a multitude of economic and social benefits if a region embraces it and provides necessary support.

This study illuminates the Cleveland VACD sector's role in the regional economy, illustrating its importance and providing a platform for developing practical steps to sustain and grow the visual arts. Both quantitative and qualitative findings support VACD's image as vibrant,

diverse, and primed for the productive application of creative ideas and innovative techniques. The research team characterizes VACD as an amalgamation of distinct visual art mediums along with broader maintenance and communication functions associated with the sector.

The VACD sector; nonetheless, is at or near its regional audience capacity, which creates some limitations for endogenous growth, or growth from internal resources. As an economic development driver; however, the sector has the potential to grow beyond a local niche, creating a regional competitive advantage in art products appealing to a national or even international audience. When taking into account the scale and scope of the regional visual arts talent network, the existing institutional support, real estate fundamentals, and cooperative character of the visual arts scene, it becomes clear that the VACD sector is currently operating below its capacity to create a more significant regional economic impact. The research team believes this sector provides a unique competitive advantage for greater Cleveland and represents a potential source for new and continued economic growth.



"Sound Between Heartbeats" by Andrea Joki, 2013 / Oil and Acrylic on Linen / 35" x 35"

<sup>vii</sup> Iryna Lendel, Sharon Bliss, Candice Clouse, Merissa Piazza, Ziona Austrian, Kathryn W. Hexter, Renee Constantino, and Matthew Hrubey. "Remix Cleveland - The Cleveland Music Sector and Its Economic Impact." Center for Economic Development, Cleveland State University. October 2011. Executive summary: [http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban\\_facpub/428/](http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub/428/). Full report: [http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban\\_facpub/427/](http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub/427/).

<sup>viii</sup> Data suppression refers to a requirement of withholding data that otherwise could be used to identify individual respondents.

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This study was commissioned by the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC) and follows CSU's first report, *Remix Cleveland*, which examined Cleveland's music sector.<sup>vii</sup> The study identifies the VACD sector by delineating its components, learning its dynamics, and assessing the economic impact it has on the regional economy.

The Center for Economic Development (referred to hereafter as "the Center") of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University conducted this study. The Center gathered answers to a set of core research questions regarding the typology and economic impact of the Cleveland VACD sector with methodology adapted from the broader research framework of *Remix Cleveland*:

- What constitutes the VACD sector in Cuyahoga County—composition of industries and occupations?
- What characteristics help describe the sector now and its dynamics over the last decade?
- What industries, components, and types of products are significant to the vitality of the Cleveland VACD sector?
- Which unique properties of the Cleveland VACD sector make it thrive and contract?
- What challenges is the Cleveland VACD sector experiencing?
- What are prominent examples of success in the Cleveland VACD sector?
- What economic impact do the Cleveland VACD sector and its components create for the local economy?

We believe the findings of this report will spur a discussion and provoke creative thoughts leading to investments, regional dialogue, improved public policies, and a clear vision for the role of this sector in the regional economy.

The research phase of this study occurred in 2013-2014. This report summarizes the detailed findings and methodologies in nine chapters with each chapter reflecting a different stage of the research.

Chapter 1 delineates the breadth and depth of the Cleveland VACD sector, organizing it into a structural framework of industries that house visual art-related businesses and nonprofits. The typology accounts for two non-hierarchical industry levels, and the second level details different visual art mediums providing visibility to the prominent subsectors while also minimizing the need for data suppression.<sup>viii</sup> The Cleveland VACD sector was analyzed in comparison to the regional and national economy, as well as similar regions, while simultaneously illustrating the sector's dynamics over time. Indicators such as employment and wages delineated the size and scope of the VACD sector. Because this study was conducted at an industry level, an analysis of workers' occupations was also included in Chapter 2. Those individuals who have visual arts-related skills and who are employed across all industries in Cuyahoga County were grouped by commonalities of talents and abilities—e.g., occupation. Then, these groups were analyzed through the lens of a broader region—the Cleveland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)—due to data availability.

Chapter 3 enriched the quantitative analyses of industries and occupations with qualitative findings and reflections of individuals who attended one of the six focus groups. These local visual arts scene representatives described the richness of the local visual arts scene, opportunities for young artists, importance of educational institutions, the viability of arts neighborhoods, and the challenges of a limited consumer base. Dovetailing these rich descriptions are findings from the survey of individual artists in Chapter 4. This survey provides a deeper understanding of how professional artists function; moreover, it reveals how amateur artists complete their work often supported by a household, with other family members' income supporting an artist.

Chapter 5 looks deeper at the contribution of artists to the local economy by studying the supply of local artists and the demand from both in- and outside the region. According to the survey of artists at local art fairs, the elevated supply of local artists in the region and high quality of local art are often hurt by a perceived lower reputation of Cleveland's art when compared to other prominent art locales like New York or San Francisco. The mystery of art commerce continues to be unveiled in the following chapter (Chapter 6), which describes the import and export of local arts via the lens of art galleries. Chapter 6 not only reflects on local arts but also refers to broader conceptual changes surrounding the sale of art and consumer outreach through digital media and new forms of retail.

In Chapter 7, all of the VACD sector's components are assembled into one industrial cluster to assess its economic impact on Cuyahoga County. The 2013 economic impact is calculated by including local employment of artists across various industries, individual and amateur VACD artists, and contributions made to the local economy via visitor spending at art events and galleries.

Chapter 8 includes eight case studies:

- MOCA Cleveland: Sturdy, Dynamic, & Stylish—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Cleveland
- Tremont: Creative Placemaking—the Tremont neighborhood
- St. Clair Superior: Creative Reuse—the St. Clair Superior neighborhood
- Public Art: Placemaking in Action—public art in Cleveland
- Artist Activists: Heightening Social Awareness—Donald Black, Jr. and Mimi Kato
- CAN Journal: Pressing for Change—The Collective Arts Network (CAN) Journal
- Dan Cuffaro: Remaking the Regional Economy—designer, educator and business professional Dan Cuffaro
- Cleveland CycleWerks: Starting Up—motorcycle manufacturer Cleveland CycleWerks

Finally, Chapter 9 provides directories of visual arts organizations and individual artists followed by appendices with detailed data, methodological instruments, and databases of artists and art organizations.

A dark, moody photograph of a ceramic studio. In the foreground, a pottery wheel is visible, with several other pottery wheels and workbenches receding into the background. The lighting is low, creating a sense of depth and focus on the craft.

## Craft

Clay

Fiber

Glass

Leather

Metal

Paper

Plastic

Wood

# SECTOR DESCRIPTIONS

## Visual Arts

Computer Art

Drawing

Mixed Media

Painting

Photography

Printmaking

Sculpture

## Design

Architecture

Fashion

Game Design

Graphic

Industrial

Interior

Landscape



Morgan Papermaking Conservatory / Photo by Seth Beattie

<sup>ix</sup> The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, <http://ech.case.edu/cgi/article.pl?id=A18>.

<sup>x</sup> To learn more about Cleveland's art history, go to [www.clevelandartandhistory.org](http://www.clevelandartandhistory.org).

# VISUAL ARTS LEGACY

Cleveland may not be the first city that comes to mind when thinking of a rich visual arts legacy, but the city's assets and potential are, nevertheless, quite impressive.

The earliest recognition for the city came in 1876 when local artist Archibald Willard presented *The Spirit of '76* at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia to widespread acclaim.<sup>ix</sup> Following the success of the exhibition, Willard returned to Cleveland and founded the Cleveland Art Club, beginning a long tradition of collaboration among artists. Interestingly, today's collaborative visual arts landscape in Cleveland was shaped by the 20th century industrial market for artistic talent and products. The commercialism of the visual arts, as seen in the lithography, engraving, and publishing industries at the turn of the 20th century, gave artists the opportunity to make a living while simultaneously producing their own personal art. With the freedom of financial security in hand, Cleveland's artists found that cooperation, not competition, was the order of the day.

By 1890, applied design disciplines like architecture also began to make their mark on the city with the opening of the internationally acclaimed Arcade. This was the first hint of a budding Golden Age for Cleveland's visual arts and design sector. Cleveland's 1903 Group Plan, conceived by architects Daniel Burnham, Arnold Brunner, and John Carrere, represented one of the first fully realized city plans formed during the so-called City Beautiful Movement. This plan laid the foundation for many of Cleveland's major landmarks, including The Mall, the Federal Building, and Cleveland City Hall. Shortly thereafter, American Greetings (1906), which would become the world's largest publicly owned manufacturer and distributor of greeting cards, was founded in Cleveland.<sup>x</sup>

A few years later, the Cleveland Society of Artists (1913), a revival of the stalled Cleveland Art Club, and the Kokoon Arts Club (1911) were initially established as

competing efforts representing conservative and modern approaches, respectively; however, their members began a path towards collaboration. Additionally, the Cleveland Museum of Art (1913), endowed in 1891, was also established around this time, providing a measure of prestige that only a dedicated art museum could offer a region. The museum would serve as an important springboard for young artists, many of whom were coming from the neighboring Cleveland School of Art (Cleveland Institute of Art since 1948), which had among its faculty the renowned Cleveland painter Frederick Gottwald. As one of the most important supportive means for local artists, the museum offered its renowned May Show (1919-1993), an annual juried exhibition of Cleveland's local visual artists and crafters. The May Show would end up exhibiting many artists from the Cleveland School—a testament to the innovativeness and collaborative effort found in Cleveland at the time, particularly in the medium of watercolor paintings.

Before the Great Depression, Cleveland was nationally recognized as a city with a high concentration of artists and a distinctive cluster of visual arts. Unfortunately, the art sector was sustained by industries that were hit hard by the economic decline of the 1930s. The Depression took a heavy toll on the arts and the arts organizations that had relied on members with steady paychecks and discretionary dollars provided by local industry. Still reeling from this shock in the 1940s and postwar era, the visual arts sector in Cleveland sought to double down on the practical application of the arts through an increased emphasis on applied design disciplines, for example, at the Cleveland Institute of Art. This shift led, in part, to what would become an arts scene less dominated by citywide

artist groups and more focused on neighborhoods and their unique contributions particularly during the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

The development of Cleveland's robust community development corporation (CDC) networks strengthened this organic shift toward neighborhoods. The move has led to changes in perceptions and definitions surrounding Cleveland's visual arts, with lower-profile, but nonetheless high quality art, occurring at the neighborhood level. The postwar prominence of applied disciplines like Industrial Design and Architecture, supported by the strength of the region's manufacturing and Fortune 500 corporate profile, would find the transition in the regional economy

particularly damaging in subsequent decades. Declines in many corporations among the Fortune 500, fueled in particular by the decrease in manufacturing employment, have made the neighborhood-based artists, who were otherwise largely shielded from these trends, of greater importance to the VACD sector. Today, approaches that support and encourage these neighborhood-based artists, like those found in the Tremont and St. Clair Superior neighborhoods, have experienced continued success in Cleveland.



# THE VISUAL ARTS THROUGH DATA

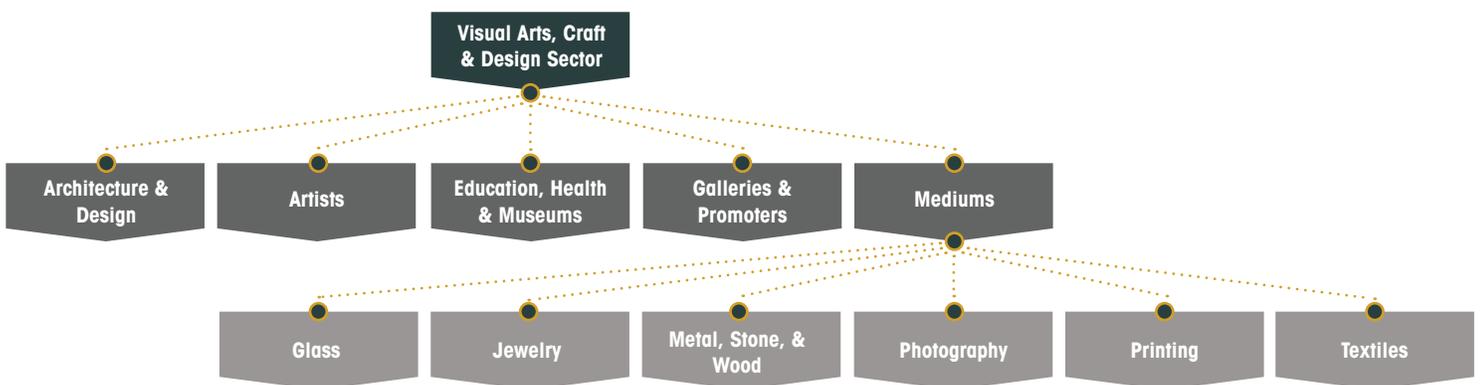
The study began by creating a detailed definition of the VACD sector in Cuyahoga County. The research team created an industrial profile of the sector, including functional components and art mediums applicable for data analysis.

Each component and art medium corresponds to a regional industry or group of industries as identified through a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code (Figure I). This methodology allowed the team to assess the typology of industries within the VACD sector and analyze trends of industries and sector components over time.

Often, industrial studies are conducted according to their products with respective product cycles and applicable innovation. However, this study found that the visual arts are not as homogeneous as other industries. Instead of being separated by functional components of one industry (i.e. music), the VACD sector was divided into five categories and six mediums. While determining the categories, the team discovered that the *Architecture & Design* sector has a different culture and business model with significantly different wages and employment modes for artists, making this subsector its own category. Also, due to data limitations, the team could not split the

category of *Artists* into any specific medium or genre, so this small sector was made into a typological unit. Lastly, the *Education, Health, & Museums* and *Galleries & Promoters* categories represent businesses that also act as a communication mechanism for the industry and substantially differ from the other sub-sectors. Thus, the five categories are: *Artists; Mediums; Architecture & Design; Galleries & Promoters; and Education, Health, & Museums*. Additionally, the six various mediums were classified as a unit and as separate entities in the analysis. The team divided the *Medium* category into six subcategories according to the product's primary material (glass; textile; metal, stone and wood), technological process (photography, printing) or application (jewelry). The rationale is that each medium creates unique inventions applied through either self-proprietorship (individual artist's business) or a business model of an incorporated businesses (with paid employees).

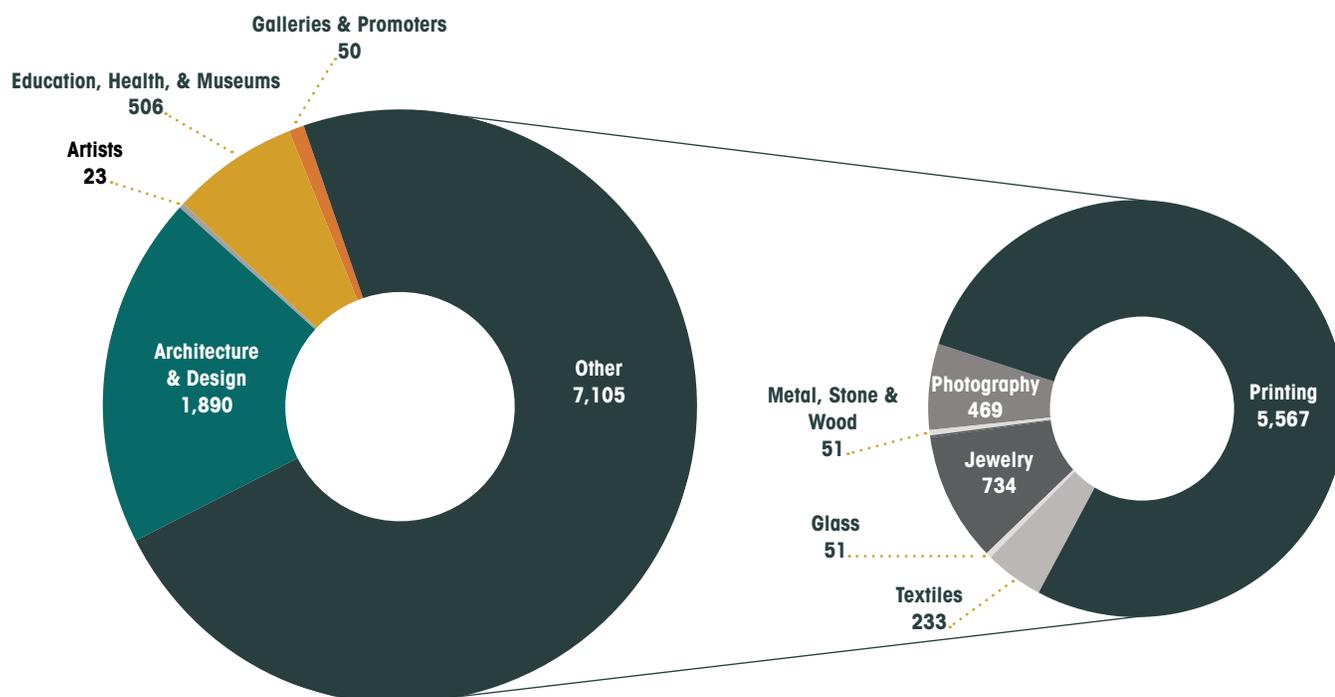
Figure I. Typology of VACD Sector in Cuyahoga County



**Figure II: Index of VACD Employment, Cuyahoga County, Ohio & U.S.**



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

**Figure III. 2012 VACD Employment by Subsector in Cuyahoga County**

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

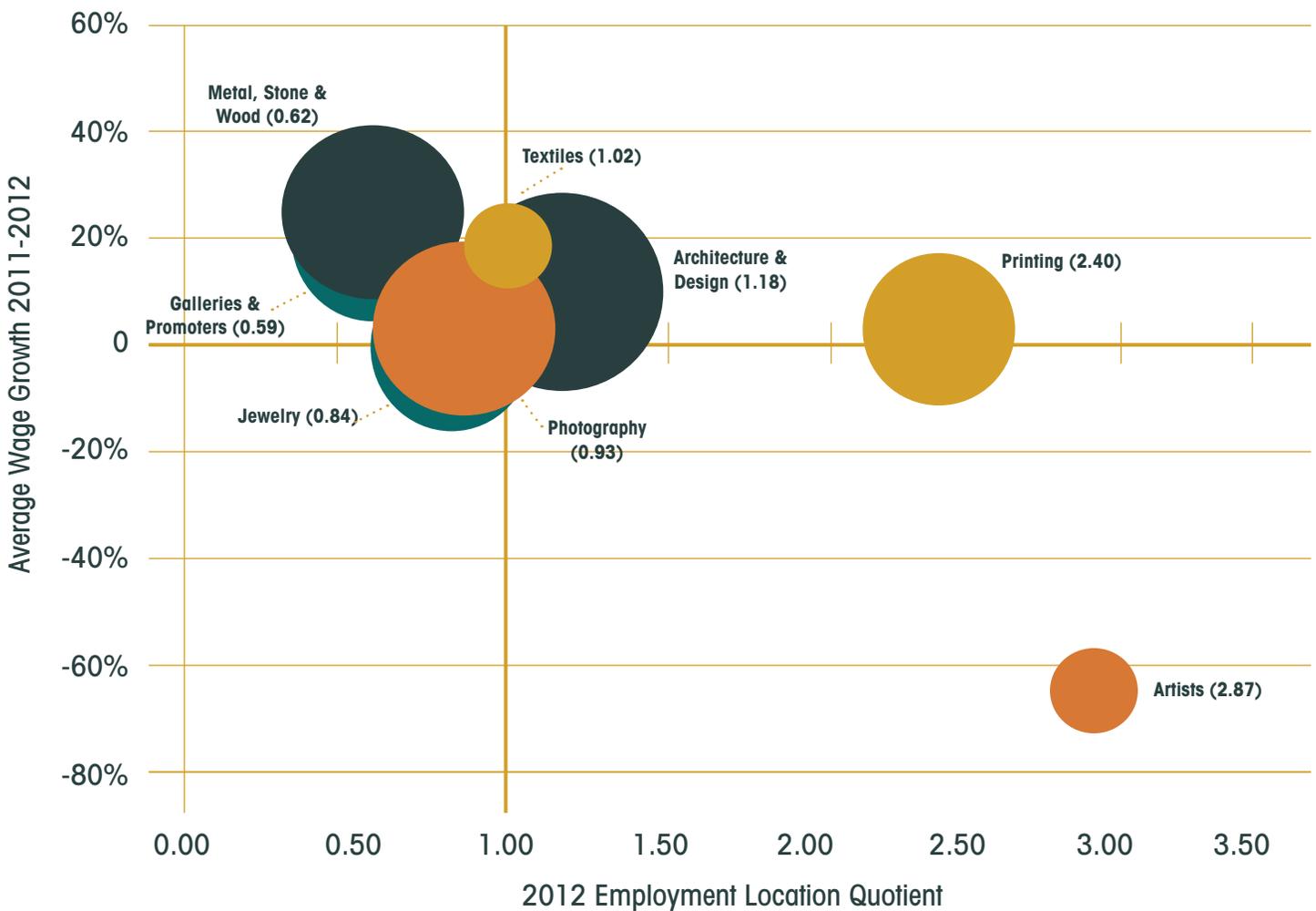
In 2012, the Cleveland VACD sector totaled 9,573 employees. This sector experienced a 31.4% decline from 2000-2011, but between 2011 and 2012, the VACD sector in Cuyahoga County grew by 1.7%. This percentage may seem small compared to the decline, but it becomes more impressive when considering the visual arts' continued decline statewide and stagnancy nationwide during the same time period (Figure II). Moreover, while employment decreased from 2000 to 2012 in Cuyahoga County, the VACD's employment trend is characteristic of employment patterns for both the United States and Ohio. All three geographic regions follow very similar patterns throughout the study period, although the employment in individual VACD subsectors varied.

The *Printing* subsector, the largest VACD medium, dominated the 2012 employment with 5,567 employees and 58.1% share of all VACD employment in the Cleveland area (Figure III). *Printing* includes eighteen industries all related to art printing: periodical publishers and books printing, commercial printing and their supporting activities, professional equipment manufacturing for printing and support materials (like ink and stationery products)

manufacturing, and wholesale and retail (both physical and electronic) sales related to printing. This sector lost 3,082 jobs from 2000 to 2012 due to large losses in a few sizable businesses and across the subsector.

The second largest subsector was *Architecture & Design*, though at 1,890 jobs and 19.7% share, it is just under one-third the size of *Printing*. Artists have the lowest levels of employment, at 23 employees, which is a characteristic of the industrial data approach that undercounts individual artists not employed by a particular company as defined by an NAICS code. Other components of this study, such as focus groups, case studies and surveys, supplemented understanding of this undercounted segment. Subsectors with employment numbers under 100 are *Glass*, *Galleries, & Promoters* and *Metal, Stone, & Wood*.

**Figure IV: Employment Location Quotient and Average Wage Growth of the Cleveland VACD**



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Note: All data adjusted to 2012 dollars using CPI average for US cities, Midwest for Ohio, and Cleveland MSA for Cuyahoga County. In addition, the subsector *Education, Health, & Museums* is not included in Figure IV due to data suppression.

Sectors with location quotients (LQ) above one suggest that they have the potential to export their products outside of the region, bringing money into the local economy.<sup>xi</sup> In analyzing this sector’s concentration and its components by using 2012 employment LQ, *Artists* showed strong regional presence compared to the same share of this subsector in the U.S. (2.87) (Figure IV).<sup>xii</sup> Other

subsectors with an LQ above one include *Printing* (2.40); *Education, Health, & Museums* (1.84); *Architecture & Design* (1.18); and *Textiles* (1.02). These sectors, except *Artists*, also experienced increased average wages and, combined, illustrate a strong potential to export their products outside of the region.

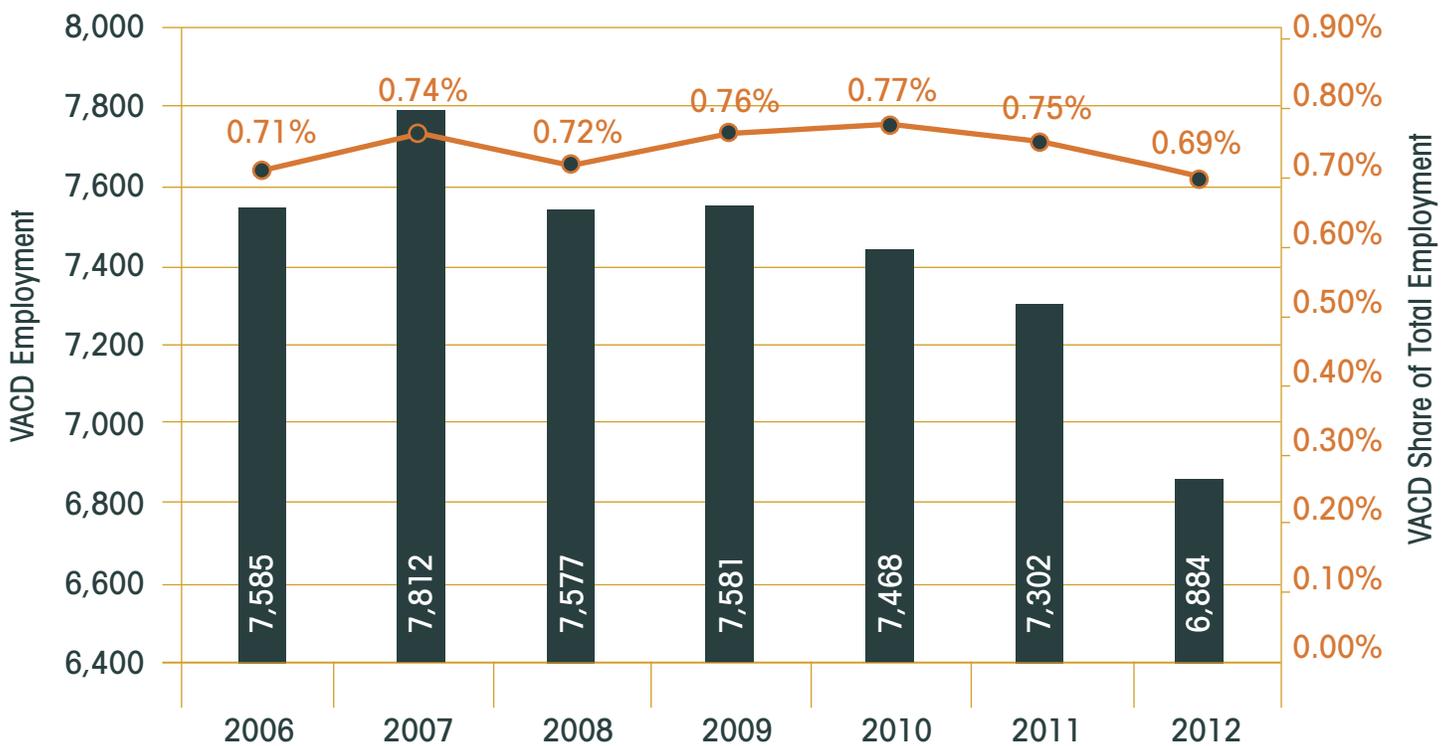
<sup>xi</sup> Location Quotient is a technique for determining which sectors are export-oriented. Export-oriented sectors are defined as having location quotients greater than 1 and import-oriented sectors have location quotients of less than 1.

<sup>xii</sup> The *Artists* subsector is very small and represented only 23 employees in 2012. Therefore, we are hesitant to say that there is a statistically significant overrepresentation of artists in the county due to this sector’s small size and the data reliability.

<sup>xiii</sup> Stun Bullard. “Area architects are drawing business from everywhere.” *Crain’s Cleveland Business*. August 18, 2013.

<sup>xiv</sup> The Cleveland MSA includes Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties.

<sup>xv</sup> Data suppression refers to a withholding data requirement that otherwise could be used to identify individual respondents.

**Figure V. VACD Employment and Share of Total Employment in the Cleveland MSA, 2006-2012**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics  
Occupational data from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

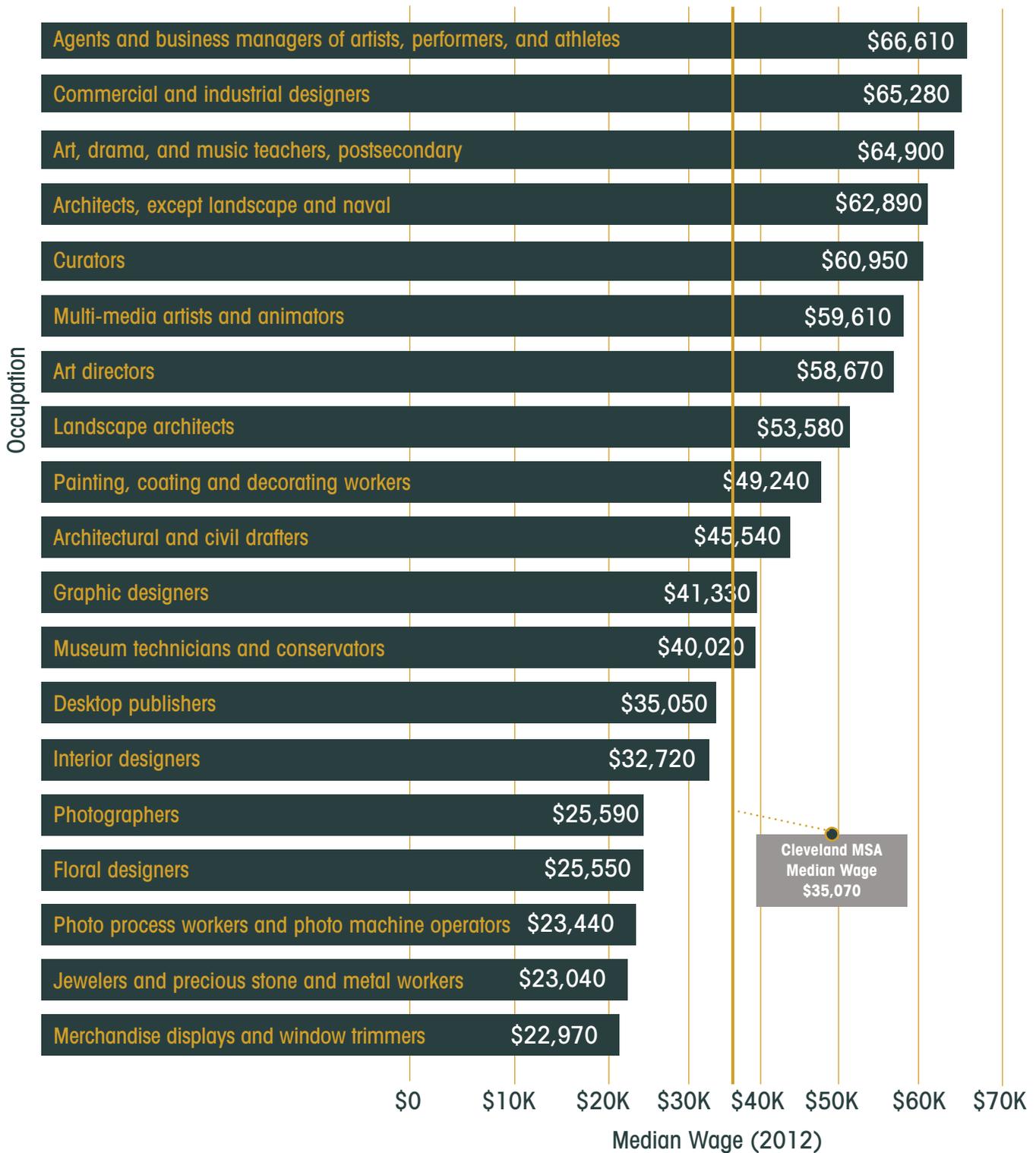
*Printing and Architecture & Design*—two very strong applied visual arts fields—have a market niche and reputation that crosses the county’s boundaries, and growing wages in these sectors approximate healthy labor productivity. The high concentration of visual artists in the area approximates the export capacity for their products. Research findings support the hypothesis that VACD’s products are an asset to the economy and increase the standard of living in Cuyahoga County and Cleveland.

Anecdotal stories testify to the success of these two sectors in Cleveland. Many architecture businesses have experienced project increases due to funding from outside of the region. K2M Architecture Inc., Westlake Reed Leskosky, Vocon, and RDL Architects Inc. represent a small sampling of such firms.<sup>xiii</sup> The success of industrial design in Cleveland is not only built on a legacy of the region’s native Viktor Schreckengost and supported by educational programs, but is also poised for future growth through

the strong leadership of teachers, designers, and business professionals like Dan Cuffaro—the central figure of this report’s industrial design case study (see *Dan Cuffaro: Remaking the Regional Economy*).

To add a more comprehensive angle to the analysis, we collected VACD sector information by occupation and broadened the geography to include the entire Cleveland MSA<sup>xiv</sup> due to data availability and suppression.<sup>xv</sup> Rather than merely identifying art industries, this analysis focuses on occupations, that is, the skills held by members of the workforce across all industries. While total employment of the VACD occupations declined over time, the share of visual artists in the total Cleveland MSA employment remained almost unchanged between 2006 and 2011, only slightly declining in 2012 (Figure V).

**Figure VI: VACD Median Wage, Cleveland MSA, 2012**



Note: Wages in 2012 dollars.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics; Occupational data from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

The data show counts of visual artists as slightly declining from 7,585 in 2006 to 6,884 in 2012. In 2012, there were 1,530 people employed as *Graphic Designers*, the largest employment level of all occupations in the Cleveland MSA. This occupation is closely followed by *Art, Drama, and Music teachers, postsecondary*, with 1,290 individuals.<sup>xvi</sup> Additionally, *Architects, except Landscape and Naval* are above 500 jobs. Ultimately, the top three occupations out of 27 hold a 48.7% share of all occupations.<sup>xvii</sup> This number reinforces the VACD's structure as defined in this study: about half of the occupations of the visual artists in Cuyahoga County are employed as teachers, architects, or graphic designers—occupations that are usually employed by schools, industrial, and commercial sectors of the economy.

Moreover, the study found that the most well-represented VACD occupations pay average wages that are almost twice as high as the Cleveland MSA's median wage for all industries (Figure VI). *Agents and business managers of artists, performers, and athletes* had the highest median wage in 2012 (\$66,610); however, these wages are attributable to all artists rather than solely to the visual artists. *Commercial and industrial designers* is the second-highest pay occupational category of visual arts (\$65,280) and *Architects* follow them (\$62,890). The latter two are the largest occupational groups of the Cleveland VACD sector.

The data analysis of the VACD sector sheds light on the broader industrial base of visual arts deployment. It also illustrates an opportunity for these industrial sectors and art occupations to contribute to regional economic growth through art-based invention and innovation. The significant overrepresentation of some art-related industries in Cleveland also suggests the existence of untapped talent that can be realized by growing the local customer base and strengthening exports to new markets. These sectors need to attract people in the county not actively involved in the local art scene, in addition to broadening the sector's customer base nationally and internationally by selling products outside of Cuyahoga County.

<sup>xvi</sup> The data within this occupation include not only VACD-related teachers, but also music and drama teachers. Occupational statistics prohibit obtaining data specifically on VACD-related teachers within this category.

<sup>xvii</sup> For a complete listing of VACD employment by occupation by year for the Cleveland MSA see Appendix Table A.12 at the completed report of this study.



"Drift" by Lauren Herzak-Bauman is located prominently behind the reception desk in The Westin Hotel lobby / Photo by Lauren Herzak-Bauman; courtesy of LAND studio

<sup>xviii</sup> There is also a hypothesis of a self-selection bias where older artists had less hesitation to answer the survey feeling confident and well-established while younger artists passed the opportunity to answer survey questions counting their opinion as insignificant.

# COMMERCE OF THE VISUAL ARTS

For a more comprehensive understanding of the industrial and occupational analyses, the study also examined the sector’s supply and demand relationship, as well as its importing and exporting capacity.

Through these mechanisms, the true vitality of the sector is exposed. Furthermore, through surveys, in-person interviews, and focus groups, the team not only examined the supply and demand of the artists, crafters, and designers, but also of traded art products.

Survey responses revealed local artists’ perceptions of the supply and demand of the Cleveland VACD sector as a complex phenomenon. Data analysis indicates a large supply of artists paired with small demand for arts in Cuyahoga County, and these facts need closer examination. Many of those interviewed by the Center stated there was a large network of buyers in Cleveland who spent a sizeable amount of money on art, but not necessarily on local art. Additionally, many artists believed that art patrons often sought to purchase art from a Chicago or New York artist at twice the price of local artists because it was “from Chicago” or “from New York.” However, art consumers interviewed for the study pointed out that the Cleveland visual art market offered high quality art that could be purchased at a low cost. All active participants of

this sector were quick to admit that those not immersed in the Cleveland art scene fail to see its depth and quality, and, therefore, do not appreciate or purchase it as readily.

The Center also observed the supply of artists entering the workforce as approximated by degrees conferred by local colleges and universities. As shown in Table I, colleges and universities granted 410 degrees in the arts (music degrees are included in some cases) in 2012, from associate to doctoral degrees. This variety of degrees and programming is an asset to the Cuyahoga County’s workforce development system and important for replacing artists who leave the workforce due to exit and retirement. The Survey of Visual Artists reinforced the importance of having a steady stream of young artists in the VACD sector, as a majority of respondents to the survey, both amateurs and professionals, reported they had been creating art for more than 20 years. This statistic indicates most artists were on the mature side of the production cycle, creating a crucial need for a pipeline of new artists entering the workforce to sustain the local VACD sector.<sup>xviii</sup>

**Table I. Degrees Conferred in Art in Cuyahoga County, 2008-2012**

College/University	City of College/University	Degree Conferred	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Baldwin-Wallace College* (now Baldwin Wallace University)	Berea	Master	0	65	55	0	0
		Bachelor	69	285	253	70	75
		Associate	0	7	1	0	0
Case Western Reserve University*	Cleveland	Doctorate	2	5	0	0	0
		Master	19	20	26	10	20
		Bachelor	26	35	32	31	28
Cleveland Institute of Art	Cleveland	Bachelor	70	108	119	80	88
Cleveland State University*	Cleveland	Master	11	10	18	18	17
		Bachelor	71	92	92	97	82
Cuyahoga Community College*	Cleveland	Associate	55	45	42	60	54
John Carroll University*	Cleveland	Bachelor	5	5	4	1	1
Notre Dame College*	Cleveland	Bachelor	4	1	2	1	6
Virginia Marti College of Fashion and Art	Lakewood	Associate	59	44	38	33	39
<b>TOTAL (% of All Degrees Conferred)</b>		<b>All Degrees Conferred</b>	<b>391 (3.9%)</b>	<b>722 (7.0%)</b>	<b>682 (6.2%)</b>	<b>401 (3.5%)</b>	<b>410 (3.6%)</b>

Note: \*Art and Music degrees conferred. Source: National Center for Education Statistics

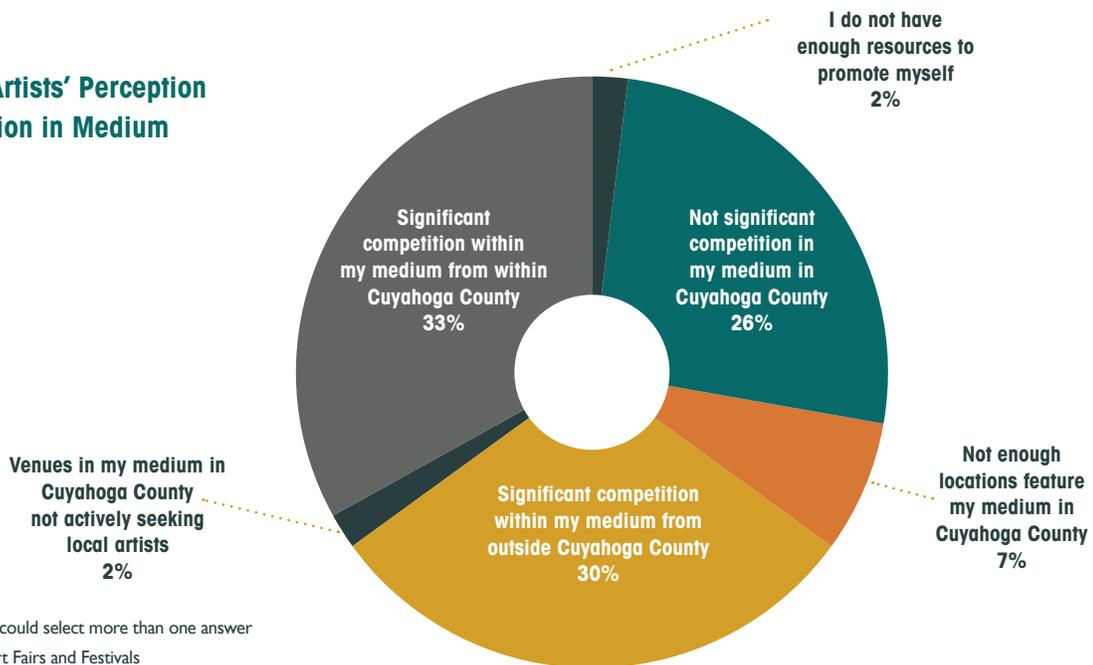
However, based on surveys, interviews, and focus groups, some artists faced challenges finding their place in the local art scene. Some focus group participants indicated that although young artists have a desire to stay in the Cleveland area after graduation to contribute to positive changes in the region, they confront obstacles when trying to break through the local “guild mentality” in the regional art scene. Nonetheless, these budding artists want their voices heard and have the ability to achieve their personal goals. Moreover, many young artists spoke of their desire to be active in their community through creating art and expressing themselves. Ultimately, increased efforts are needed to link young and new artists with other artists and buyers of art, and policies should be created that encourage new graduates in the Cleveland area to stay local.

While encouraging new artists to stay in the area has proved somewhat difficult, many artists maintain that they experience significant competition from within Cuyahoga County, as the Survey of Art Fairs and Festivals reveals (Figure VII). Specifically, 33% of respondents sensed competition existed from inside Cuyahoga County, and 30% of respondents believed competition existed from outside of Cuyahoga County. These responses support the observations espoused during the interviews and

focus groups—that a large supply of artists exist in the Greater Cleveland area. Again, these findings emphasize a need to broaden the local arts market to create greater economic benefits for the region.

The research team also estimated the supply of art by analyzing the ratio of VACD establishments per 10,000 persons in the region. The Cleveland MSA has the second-highest number of establishments per 10,000 of population (4.46) after Cincinnati (5.17), surpassing Columbus, Indianapolis, and Pittsburgh (Table II).<sup>xix</sup> This large number of art establishments indirectly confirms an earlier finding regarding the significant supply of arts and art-related products in the region. Moreover, this figure shows the potential for broadening the local art demand by widening geography and deepening the demand for previously untapped market niches. The small population-to-establishment ratio affirms the breadth of art product supply in the region. The Cleveland MSA has the second smallest ratio among the MSAs (2,241 residents to one establishment) compared to the Cincinnati, Columbus, Pittsburgh, and Indianapolis metropolitan areas. These results signify that there are less people creating potential demand for every art establishment in the Cleveland MSA compared to the other regions. The relatively small number of people per art establishment is even more

**Figure VII. Artists’ Perception of Competition in Medium by Location**



<sup>xix</sup> This indicator is calculated as number of establishments/(population/10,000).

**Table II. Ratio of Persons per VACD Establishment by Comparable MSA, 2010**

	Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)				
	Cleveland, OH	Cincinnati, OH	Columbus, OH	Indianapolis, IN	Pittsburgh, PA
Population	2,077,240	1,625,406	1,836,536	1,756,241	2,356,285
No. of Establishments	927	841	691	745	885
Ratio (Persons per Establishment)	2,241	1,933	2,658	2,357	2,662
No. of Establishments per 10,000 of Population	4.46	5.17	3.76	4.24	3.76

Note: Total Population; Establishments derived from primary VACD NAICS only

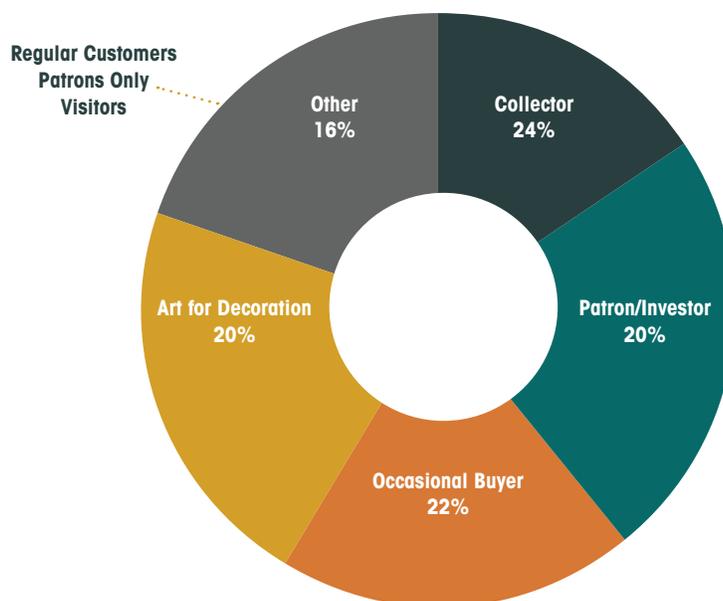
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Census; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

problematic if people are not well informed about the variety and quality of local art—another challenge noted by some focus group participants.

While examining further mechanisms of the art market, we asked owners of galleries and shops to describe their customers by art enthusiast type: *Collector*, *Patron/Investor*, *Occasional Buyer*, *Art for Decoration*, and *Other*. Overall, responses split almost equally, practically one fifth to each

category, with *Collectors* leading the list as the largest category (24%) (Figure VIII). These results indicate a desirable diversity in the customer base, pointing to a well-rounded regional demand for art and signifying the important role art plays in social life. They also suggest that strategies aimed at increasing demand for art should take the diversity of buyers into account and thus design programs to appeal to the various types of art buyers.

**Figure VIII. Description of Customer Base**

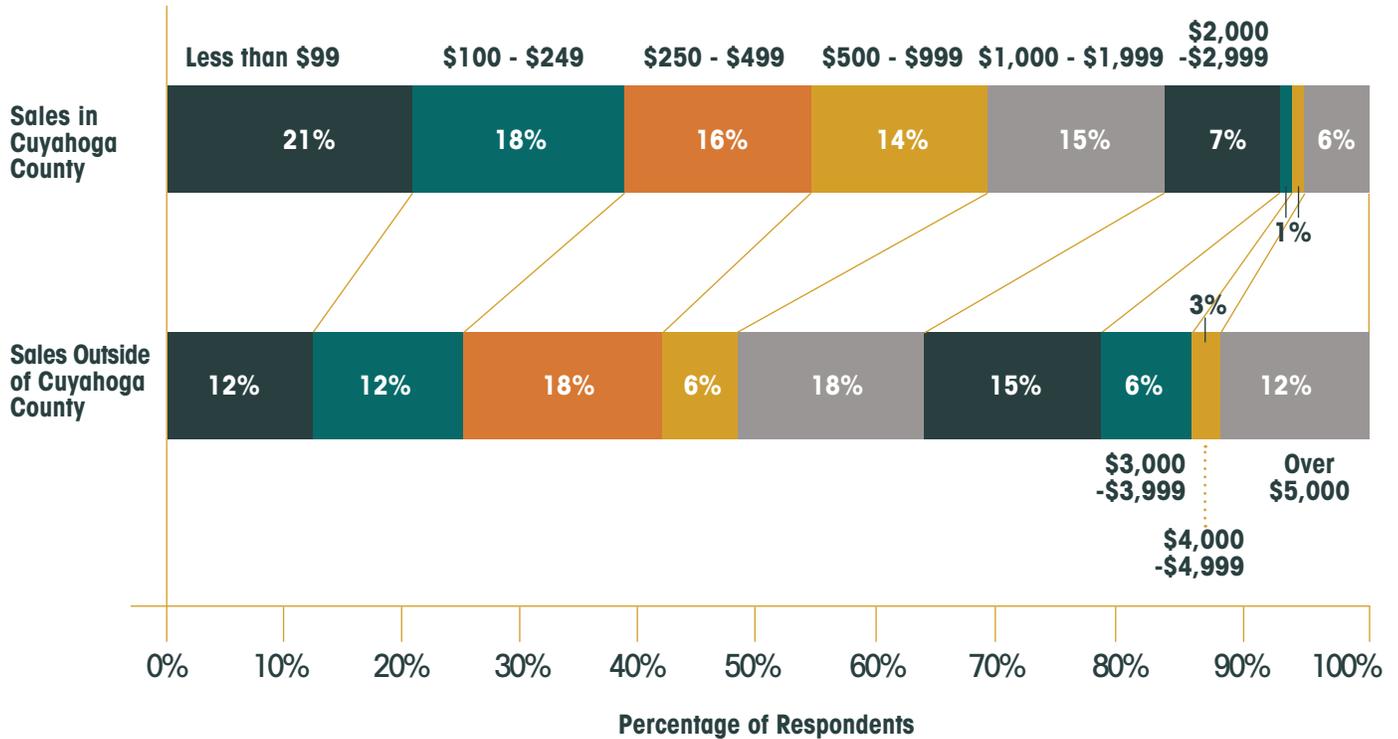


n=51

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer

Source: Survey of Art Galleries

**Figure IX. Amount of Money Earned Per Art Display, All Respondents**



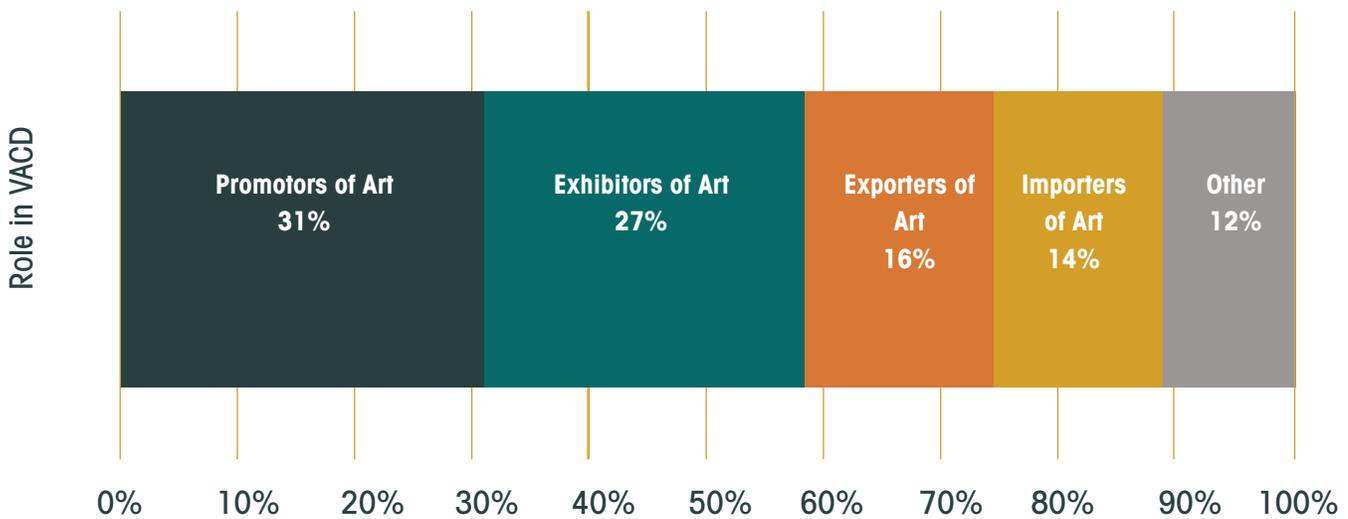
An important component of the supply and demand structure is the region’s import and export of the visual arts. Arts are imported into the region in various ways, predominantly through art purchases by large corporations and major institutions. For example, Progressive Insurance, headquartered in Mayfield Heights, has a collection of more than 7,500 pieces, including works from across the globe, which makes it one of the largest collections of its kind in the world. However, the crown jewel of the visual art world in Cleveland is undoubtedly the Cleveland Museum of Art. The museum opened in 1916 and, in its almost 100-year history, has amassed a collection of almost 45,000 pieces covering 6,000 years of artwork.<sup>xx</sup> While this report focuses on local businesses buying

artwork from local artists, the opportunity to market local art to out-of-region corporations and even to international corporate bodies should not be ignored.<sup>xxi</sup> While the International Directory of Corporate Art Collections claims about 1,500 corporations in the world possess art collections, Shirley Reiff Howarth, the editor of the directory, was cited in a recent publication, claiming, “since 2000, the percentage of collections listed as ‘ongoing,’ or still being added to, has dropped from 55 percent to about 40 percent. Many corporations are limiting new purchases for new buildings, expansions or renovations.”<sup>xxii</sup> Therefore, Cuyahoga County artists should actively participate in selling their art to corporations and also develop new means to export it.

<sup>xx</sup> See <http://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/general-museum-information> for more details.

<sup>xxi</sup> International Art Alliance is a publisher of the International Directory of Corporate Art Collections. Source: [http://www.internationalartalliance.org/selling\\_art\\_to\\_corporations.html](http://www.internationalartalliance.org/selling_art_to_corporations.html).

<sup>xxii</sup> Ula Illytzky, “Corporations do more to put art on public display,” Associated Press, September 6, 2013.

**Figure X. Role Gallery/Shop Plays in VACD**

n=49

Source: Survey of Art Galleries

The sale of art to large corporations is a profitable, but rare, opportunity for the majority of local artists. Instead, most artists rely on sales during art fairs and shows in- and outside of Cuyahoga County. Selling art in Cuyahoga County requires less travel expenses and provides a bulk of financial support for local artists due to convenience. The average amount of money per local art transaction, however, is smaller when compared to the sales made outside of the region. Figure IX illustrates a comparison of art sold in- and outside of the region by price bracket. For example, 21% of art in Cuyahoga County is sold for less than \$99, while only 12% of art outside of the region sells for this price. At the same time, only 7% of art sold in Cuyahoga County is in the \$2,000 - \$2,999 price range, while more than twice that (15%) is sold outside of the region.

Exporting art is more profitable; many Cleveland artists sell their products both outside of the region and worldwide. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of artists responding to the

Survey of Artists said they sell their work in Cuyahoga County; 13% sold work in Northeast Ohio, 8% in Ohio, 16% in the U.S., and 7% internationally. In addition, the Survey of Visitors at Art Fairs and Festivals reported that 30% of the respondents attended events outside of Cuyahoga County, exporting local art to their hometown.

Consequently, this finding implies that local art is more appreciated outside regional boundaries where customers might not possess a bias against "local" art.

Greater opportunities for art sales outside of the Cuyahoga County region also exist due to the digitalization of the market. The Internet has provided shops and art galleries with both new opportunities and difficulties. These opportunities allow them to reach new consumers across the globe, but also challenge retailers to keep their physical locations open. Shops and galleries play several roles in the VACD sector, with a strong emphasis on the supportive nature of the region's art community (Figure X).

Overall, the research shows that shops and galleries understand what it takes to survive. Sixty-three percent (63%) of respondents saw an increase in sales over the last three years, but for many of them success did not come easy. Some businesses were hit hard during the recession, but experienced growth during the last two years, recovering those losses. The other 40% experienced either flat or declining sales and indicated that it has been a challenging period for art galleries and shops. To build business beyond brick and mortar locations, 62% of galleries and shops use the Internet as a digital marketplace, illustrating the Internet's increasingly significant role for art consumption.

Regional artists must continue to prioritize quality to facilitate the exportation of their products. When galleries owners were asked if local art quality had improved over the last three years, 70% of respondents said "Yes." In all, the region's VACD sector demonstrates considerable sustainability in both the import and, perhaps more importantly, export of local artwork. These figures are an indirect testament to the well-established character of the sector, its high quality, and continued innovation. Meanwhile, focus group respondents pointed to the challenge that not a single regional gallery is a broker in major international art shows like the Armory Show (New York, NY) or Art Basel (Miami, FL).

Both the challenges of digitalization and galleries' new roles as both art promoters and exhibitors testify to a paradigm shift in the VACD sector similar to the changes experienced by the music sector in the previous decade. However, this shift does not diminish the fact that Cleveland artists are living in a vibrant, exciting, growing, and talented visual art environment (Figure XI) that needs to overcome the obstacles of art supply overcrowding and local buyer underestimation.

Figure XI. Respondent Words to Classify the Arts Scene





Glass blowing demo from Davenci Glass at the Cleveland Mini Maker Faire  
produced by Ingenuity and the Cleveland Public Library / Photo by Frank Lanza

# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VISUAL ARTS

The VACD sector is linked to other industries through buy-sell relationships that contribute to the overall economic impact of the sector. To provide goods and services, companies in this sector buy goods and services from other companies both in and outside the VACD sector.

This report measures five impacts of the VACD on Cuyahoga County: employment, labor income, output, value added, and taxes. Employment measures the number of jobs in Ohio due to spending in the sector. Labor income refers to payroll paid to employees plus proprietors' income. Value added measures the value of goods and services less the intermediary goods and represents a portion of output—often referred to as Gross Domestic Product. Output measures the total value of goods and services produced in Cuyahoga County because of spending in the VACD sector. Taxes include federal, state, and local tax revenues.

The spending and employment of the VACD sector assessed for the modeling in 2013 includes 9,707 direct employees, \$478 million in direct employee compensation, and \$993,136 revenue in sales at art events. As a result,

the total economic impact of the VACD sector accounted for 17,844 jobs (Table III). Fifty-four percent (54%) of these jobs made a direct effect; in other words, there were 9,707 people directly employed by Cuyahoga County's VACD sector. Another 25% of all impact created in employment constituted the indirect effect. This represents 4,460 jobs in the supply-chain industries of the VACD sector, which are industries that sell their products and services to art industries for the production of visual arts. Lastly, 21% of the total employment impact reflects the induced effect. In other words, 3,677 jobs exist across many sectors and industries due to purchases people make from the salaries they earn either from direct employment in the VACD sector or by being employed in the industries supplying the VACD sector in Cuyahoga County.

**Table III: Economic Impact of the Cleveland VACD Sector (by Direct, Indirect, and Induced Impacts), 2013**

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output	Tax
<b>Direct Effect</b>	<b>9,707</b>	<b>\$491,254,691</b>	<b>\$760,047,355</b>	<b>\$1,794,410,357</b>	<b>\$135,415,475</b>
<b>Indirect Effect</b>	<b>4,460</b>	<b>\$269,272,489</b>	<b>\$412,907,991</b>	<b>\$639,315,215</b>	<b>\$75,721,066</b>
<b>Induced Effect</b>	<b>3,677</b>	<b>\$174,389,430</b>	<b>\$297,455,644</b>	<b>\$469,642,477</b>	<b>\$62,750,114</b>
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>17,844</b>	<b>\$934,916,610</b>	<b>\$1,470,410,990</b>	<b>\$2,903,368,049</b>	<b>\$273,886,655</b>

The true economic impact of VACD sector can be assessed by calculating how the rest of the economy will grow if we increase the final demand in the VACD sector by one unit (one job or one dollar of labor income, for example). That is, for each employee that works in the VACD sector, an additional 0.84 jobs are created outside of the sector through the VACD's supply chain and increase in purchasing power of VACD and supply industry employees (induced and indirect effects) (Table IV top line). In other words, for every 10 jobs that exist in the VACD sector, more than eight other jobs exist in other sectors of Cuyahoga County's economy because of the VACD sector. Furthermore, for each employee added in the VACD sector, there is an additional \$96,428 created in labor income, an additional \$151,725 created in value added, an additional \$299,718 created in output, and an additional \$28,264 created in taxes.

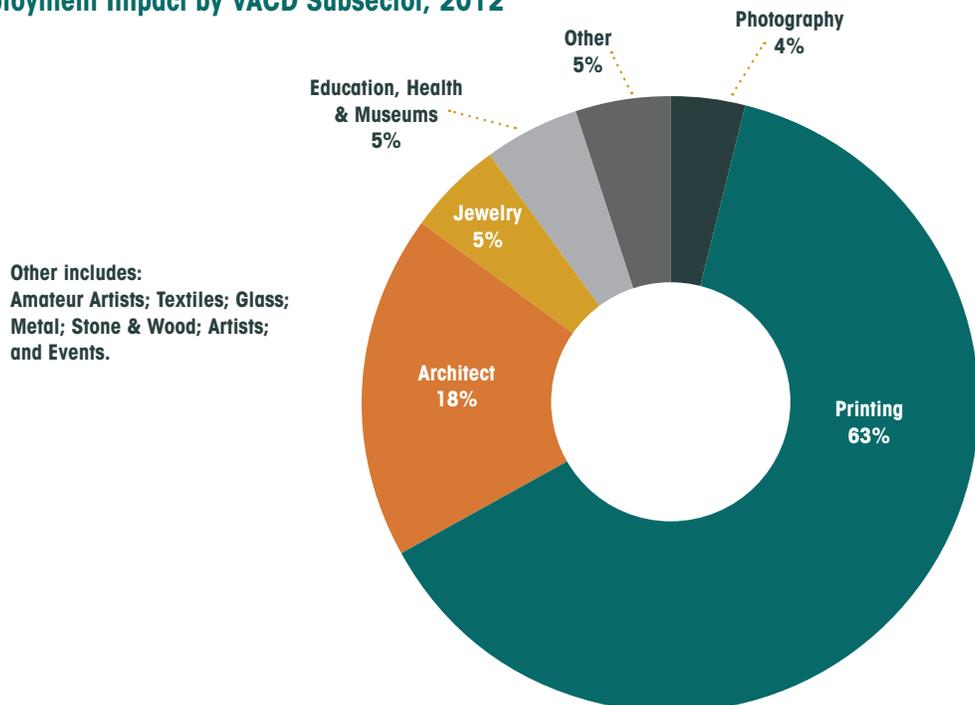
Additionally, for each dollar earned as labor income in the VACD sector, there is an additional \$0.90 created in other sectors. For each dollar in value added, there is an additional \$0.93 created in value added by other sectors of the economy; for each dollar in output, there is an additional \$0.62 created in output; and for each dollar in taxes, there is an additional \$1.02 created in tax impact (Table IV second line).

The largest VACD subsector in terms of all measures of total impact (employment, labor income, value added, output, and taxes) was *Printing* (Figure XII), which has the largest employment in this subsector in Cuyahoga County.<sup>xxiii</sup> The *Architects; Jewelry; Photography; and Education, Health, and Museums* subsectors rounded out the top five in terms of total employment impact. The *Glass; Events; Amateur Artists; Metal, Stone, and Wood* subsectors all had an impact of less than 100 employees.

**Table IV: Impact per Employee and per \$1 of Labor Income**

	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output	Tax
<b>Per Employee</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>\$96,428</b>	<b>\$151,725</b>	<b>\$299,718</b>	<b>\$28,264</b>
<b>Per \$1 of Labor Income</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>\$0.90</b>	<b>\$0.93</b>	<b>\$0.62</b>	<b>\$1.02</b>

**Figure XII: Employment Impact by VACD Subsector, 2012**



In terms of labor income, *Printing* remains the largest subsector, followed by *Architects*; *Photography*; *Jewelry*; and *Education, Health, and Museums* (Table V). In the value-added impact category, the second-highest was the *Architects* subsector, followed by *Photography*; *Education, Health, and Museums*; and *Amateur Artists*. In output

impact, the second-highest category was the *Architects* subsector again, followed by *Photography*; *Education, Health, and Museums*; and *Jewelry*. Finally, in terms of tax impact, *Printing* was the highest subsector, followed by *Architects*; *Jewelry*; *Photography*; and *Education, Health, and Museums*.

**Table V: Economic Impact of the Cleveland VACD Sector by Subsector, 2012**

Subsector	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output	Tax
Artists	40	\$1,017,240	\$1,557,151	\$3,629,570	\$272,982
Architects	3,165	\$176,736,452	\$248,555,309	\$412,788,499	\$45,943,500
Education, Health & Museums	808	\$34,059,436	\$62,575,338	\$104,094,599	\$11,093,356
Glass	97	\$5,563,753	\$8,484,188	\$19,144,950	\$1,660,008
Jewelry	953	\$34,435,287	\$57,310,663	\$66,939,322	\$17,210,805
Metal, Stone & Wood	85	\$4,846,948	\$6,176,487	\$13,690,445	\$1,200,925
Photography	801	\$38,662,126	\$69,409,590	\$170,089,666	\$12,895,627
Printing	11,294	\$621,242,204	\$990,514,721	\$2,073,083,373	\$177,812,398
Textiles	266	\$5,414,748	\$7,927,612	\$8,708,136	\$2,595,362
Amateur Artists	320	\$12,335,405	\$17,060,455	\$29,759,591	\$3,041,396
Events	15	\$603,011	\$839,476	\$1,439,898	\$160,296
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,844</b>	<b>\$934,916,610</b>	<b>\$1,470,410,990</b>	<b>\$2,903,368,049</b>	<b>\$273,886,655</b>

<sup>xxiii</sup> Cleveland is a home to a large cluster of printing companies accounting for 173 business establishments. Employment in these companies totals to 5,567 people, including American Greetings, which employs about 2,000 workers alone, according to *The Plain Dealer*, March 26, 2014. ([http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2014/03/construction\\_begins\\_in\\_april\\_o.html](http://www.cleveland.com/business/index.ssf/2014/03/construction_begins_in_april_o.html)). Another example is Angstrom Graphics, known in Cleveland by its previous name, St. Eves PIC, which employs 564 people in Cleveland and Florida, according to *Crain's Cleveland Business*. (<http://www.craainscleveland.com/article/20090209/FREE/902069931>). For more information on the Printing subsector, see Chapter 1 of the study report, "Typology and Trend Analysis of the Cleveland VACD Sector."



Jakprints lobby on Chester Avenue, Cleveland, OH / Photo courtesy of Jakprints Inc.

### Printing Subsector

The *Printing* subsector had the greatest overall economic impact out of all other categories. The direct employment impact was 5,567 jobs, the indirect employment impact was 3,278 jobs, and the induced employment impact was 2,449 jobs—11,294 jobs in this subsector alone (Table VI). Thus, *Printing* represents 63% of the total employment impact in the VACD subsector:

Additionally, *Printing* represents 66% of the VACD labor income (\$621M), 67% of the value-added impact (\$991M), 71% of the output impact (\$2.1B), and 65% of the tax impact (\$178M). This subsector includes some larger export-based Cuyahoga County employers and represents many small- and medium-sized firms that serve the local population.

**Table VI: Economic Impact of Printing Sector**

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output	Tax
Direct Effect	5,567	\$302,152,663	\$479,750,581	\$1,276,800,275	\$78,857,571
Indirect Effect	3,278	\$202,963,404	\$312,687,242	\$483,517,841	\$57,169,157
Induced Effect	2,449	\$116,126,137	\$198,076,898	\$312,765,257	\$41,785,670
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>11,294</b>	<b>\$621,242,204</b>	<b>\$990,514,721</b>	<b>\$2,073,083,373</b>	<b>\$177,812,398</b>



“Crooked River Skatepark Shade Shelter” by TOI Studio / Responding to a short listed call for artists the Crooked River Skatepark Shade Shelter will be constructed in Fall 2014 at Rivergate Park on the Cuyahoga. The shelter, reminiscent of industrial themes, creates a playful homage to the contextual history of Cleveland’s Cuyahoga River Valley. A series of twisted rigid frames oriented to block the summer sun, create a protected respite, provide seating and mark the entrance to the skate park.”

### Architecture Subsector

The *Architecture* subsector had the second-largest economic impact in Cuyahoga County. This subsector includes both population-serving and export-based businesses in the county. The direct employment impact was 1,890 jobs, the indirect employment impact was 584 jobs, and the induced employment impact was 691 jobs (Table VII). These subcategories result in a total employment impact of 3,165 jobs for this subsector, which represents 28% of the total employment in the VACD sector:

Additionally, the *Architecture* subsector represents 28% of the VACD labor income (\$177M), 25% of the value-added impact (\$249M), 20% of the output impact (\$413M), and 26% of the tax impact (\$46M).

Although these measures illustrate the significant economic impact of the visual arts, overcoming challenges of the Cleveland VACD sector could lead to even greater economic benefits, adding to the future vitality of the regional visual art scene.

**Table VII: Economic Impact of Architecture Sector**

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Value Added	Output	Tax
<b>Direct Effect</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>\$111,887,800</b>	<b>\$145,926,036</b>	<b>\$253,318,908</b>	<b>\$25,714,565</b>
<b>Indirect Effect</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>\$32,097,003</b>	<b>\$46,765,284</b>	<b>\$71,261,402</b>	<b>\$8,444,117</b>
<b>Induced Effect</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>\$32,751,649</b>	<b>\$55,863,989</b>	<b>\$88,208,189</b>	<b>\$11,784,818</b>
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>3,165</b>	<b>\$176,736,452</b>	<b>\$248,555,309</b>	<b>\$412,788,499</b>	<b>\$45,943,500</b>



# CLEVELAND'S VACD SECTOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Cleveland Visual Arts, Craft, and Design (VACD) sector study's purpose is to catalyze discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing the VACD, which often go unacknowledged by artists and sector representatives.

Cleveland has a significant visual arts history rooted in strong traditions and supported by an institutional base comprised of a myriad of companies and artists. Throughout the last six decades, the city of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County have lost population. The decline of population paired with the latest Great Recession has exacerbated the challenge of a scarce consumer base when compared to the existing visual arts scene.

Nonetheless, Cleveland is a city in transition. Many artists prefer to stay local after graduation and some even move to Cleveland. Many graduates choose Cleveland not only because the city is affordable, but also because they want to play a part in the city's revitalization. This revival touches all areas: the economy, surrounding neighborhoods, and the aesthetics of the city. Artists want to participate in this evolution by harnessing their creative energies to produce art.

## **Consumer Base Expansion**

This study's targeted area is limited to Cuyahoga County, which encompasses studio and applied visual arts, crafts, and design. The biggest challenge identified in the study was the limited consumer base for visual arts products. Multiple venues and events that sell art, including art galleries, shows, and fairs, often compete for the same customers from the region. Many focus group participants mentioned that they see "the same faces" at various art events across the area and depict the limited consumer base as a "competition for audience."

The lack of customers can also be described as an over-supply of visual arts and their products. The quantitative findings support this characterization since Cleveland's ratio of population per art establishment is the second

lowest among comparable regions (see the section of Art Commerce earlier in this executive summary). This figure accounts for the smaller customer base for each art establishment and informs the overall consumer-base shortage in the region. The limited consumer base also stems from the bias against "local" art in the Cuyahoga region, in that many art consumers prefer to make purchases from art-branded cities like New York or Los Angeles. The county's visual art audience needs to be broadened in the local sector by involving residents not currently engaged with the VACD sector or these events, in addition to bringing more tourists into the region.

Various challenges face the VACD sector in expanding the consumer base: art locations are widely dispersed, there is a lack of communication among artists, a need for higher visibility for visual arts in- and outside of the region, and the artist business model does not always coincide with traditional small businesses strategies. Additionally, the Cleveland VACD sector is facing challenges that are characteristic to the sector nationally.

## **Art Neighborhoods**

Cleveland is home to many neighborhoods where artists, community partners, and arts and culture organizations share extensive histories of working together to impact economic and community development outcomes.

### *The Grassroots Nature and Authenticity of Cleveland's Art Neighborhoods*

Cleveland's Tremont neighborhood is one of the first neighborhoods in Cleveland to witness a rebirth through the cultivation and growth of its arts and culture assets—a resurgence decades in the making. Thanks to the creative nature of Tremont's residents and many grassroots

efforts, the neighborhood is a crown jewel among Cleveland's many art-based neighborhoods. The neighborhood's success as a true representation of creative placemaking is thoroughly discussed in the case study, *Tremont: Creative Placekeeping*.

In the early 1980s, low real estate prices created an opportunity for artists to purchase homes and studios in which they could live and work. Later, once Tremont became trendy and, subsequently, more gentrified, it no longer possessed affordable housing or workspaces for artists. Nonetheless, Tremont remains a popular venue for residents who want to be close to downtown, as well as to art and entertainment destinations. Tremont signifies a valuable lesson in art neighborhood sustainability, as multiple comments by focus group participants attest.

To sustain an art neighborhood, collaboration is required from citizens, local government, and grassroots organizations. This collective effort might include considering a unique physical infrastructure that can become an asset for creative businesses—key to art neighborhoods. The capacity and uniqueness of each art neighborhood should be combined with efforts to coordinate assets across neighborhoods and stakeholders, aligning them in a way that will create a continuous experience for visitors. More visibility for the local population and cultural tourists would strengthen these areas as art destinations.

Collaborative efforts are essential to enhancing the regional consumer base through art neighborhoods and should include participation in youth educational programs that develop young residents' taste for art; provide business advice to artists; and coordinate regional artists on art events, shows, community days, and other fairs. Another case study presented in this report, *CAN Journal: Pressing for Change*, represents an example of coordinating efforts among art organizations that has spurred a collective publication and leveraged an economy of scale for marketing within the art sector. While cooperative efforts should be organized, artists also gave a note of caution to avoid "over planning" to such an extent that the nature of the grassroots movement is stymied.

Tremont successfully demonstrated that when neighborhoods focus on their unique assets they not only improve the lives of residents, but, over the long-term, they ultimately

produce stronger regional amenities for Cleveland's residents and visitors. Although this neighborhood's development led to some artists having to leave the area due to price increases, this neighborhood experienced revitalization through art. Ultimately, many neighborhoods throughout the city that were once in decline are now recovering because of the region's high density of artists.

#### *Neighborhood Revitalization*

Another area experiencing rejuvenation is Cleveland's St. Clair Superior neighborhood, which is making a name for itself by finding value where others see waste. The *St. Clair Superior: Creative Reuse* case study illustrates how empty two-liter soda bottles, unwanted vinyl flooring remnants, discarded sterile packaging material, and abandoned two-story homes are creating a path to revitalization through repurposing thanks to the *Upcycle St. Clair Project*. This renewal exemplifies Cleveland's truly historic route toward re-establishing itself as one of America's strongest cities. While other cities are still in the planning stages of renewal, Cleveland is putting ideas into action. This city truly embodies "Rust Belt chic": beautiful neighborhood architecture, streets populated with high quality art, and artists who are humble to the point of depreciation, but who are ultimately tough and talented.

One such artist is Scott Colosimo, the primary subject of the *Cleveland CycleWerks: Starting Up* case study says: "I've lived so many places. Cleveland has a unique quality." That "unique quality" is what led him to include "Cleveland" in the name of his business: "For me, there was no other name for the company." Beyond simply capturing the image of the city in his company's name, he wanted to capture the strengths of its people. Colosimo moved back to Cleveland after living in other cities because "no one does anything for themselves [in other cities]," he says. In Cleveland, "we were able to hire good people—people who can actually do things. They can work with computers and their hands."

He moved his business to another young art neighborhood around Gordon Square in the Detroit-Shoreway Neighborhood. The building has more space than Colosimo envisions for his Cleveland operations, so he is hoping to attract other entrepreneurs and innovators into a shared production environment "to rent out space to artists and businesses doing interesting things." He

believes the investment in and energy around Gordon Square should help with attracting workers, renters, and customers.

These examples not only illustrate neighborhood revitalization, but also signify the strength of Cleveland's character. Citizens are mobilizing to revitalize the city through the contributions of artists, products sold by vendors, and purchases by art consumers. Cleveland needs to keep this effort strong by creating more opportunities for visual artists, designers, crafters, and architects, in addition to garnering more recognition by the city and other regional governments to secure financial resources to support the VACD sector:

#### *Dispersed Location of the Visual Art Scene*

The uniqueness of Cleveland's multiple visual arts neighborhoods is also a challenge. The various separate locations of the visual arts scene create an obstacle for cultural tourists wanting to visit multiple locations but properly oriented to what amenities each neighborhood has to offer. All focus group participants admitted that Cleveland art neighborhoods create a unique flavor, and each should be experienced in a different way. Some participants posited that a central art district would make the VACD sector more accessible to tourists and thus broaden the customer base. However, other participants opposed this idea, arguing that many neighborhoods have overcome this geographic dispersion through "art hops," which provide trolley tours through multiple arts neighborhoods on certain weekends.

Furthermore, case studies in academic literature show the benefits of decentralized art districts like Chicago<sup>xxiv</sup> and Silicon Valley.<sup>xxv</sup> These case studies support the view that decentralizing the arts sector correlates with expanded participation in the arts. Moreover, Philadelphia—another

decentralized visual arts city—demonstrates that "new cultural capacity can stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods without displacing lower income and long-time residents while increasing diversity in participation."<sup>xxvi</sup> To increase the customer base, we must engage the local consumer base and cultural tourists by better informing them about art opportunities. Many know about the famous University Circle—one of the most concentrated square miles of arts and culture in the nation and home to more than 20 artistic and cultural venues, including the Cleveland Museum of Art, MOCA Cleveland, Cleveland Institute of Art, and Severance Hall—<sup>xxvii</sup> but it is important to expand cultural horizons beyond the obvious.

#### **Lack of Communication**

There are two types of major communication deficiencies in the Cleveland art scene: the lack of communication between visual arts players and organizations and the absence of a collective message regarding the arts scene, locally and beyond. Speaking with the focus group participants uncovered these communication challenges, including the absence of consistent "Arts" sections in local newspapers. The key word here is "consistent," as participants emphasized that local newspapers and other printed media select particular art events and gallery openings to highlight but ignore the sector's depth. On the other hand, a consistent column or section would not only advertise the artwork or event, it would educate the public in visual arts, get people excited about new events, and, ideally, spur broader interest in the local art scene, leading to an expanded audience.

There is also a lack of communication among neighborhoods that goes beyond just coordinating the dates of major art events. Some neighborhoods are better connected to economic development organizations than others and are

<sup>xxiv</sup> Wali, A., Severson, R., & Longoni, M. (2002). *Informal arts: Finding cohesion, capacity and other cultural benefits in unexpected places*. Chicago: Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College. & Wali, A., Contractor, N., Green, H., Mason, S., Severson, R., McClure, H., & Ostergaard, J. (2006). *Artistic, cultural and social network assets of recent Mexican immigrants in Chicago*. In *American Collegiate Schools of Planning Annual Meetings*, Ft. Worth, TX, November.

<sup>xxv</sup> Alvarez, M. (2005). *There's nothing informal about it: Participatory arts within the cultural ecology of Silicon Valley*. San Jose, CA: Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley. & Moriarty, P. (2004). *Immigrant participatory arts: An insight into community-building in Silicon Valley*. San Jose, CA: Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Stern, M., & Seifert, S. (1998). *Community revitalization and the arts in Philadelphia*. University of Pennsylvania, Social Impact of the Arts Project. & Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A. (2010). *Arts and culture in urban or regional planning: A review and research agenda*. *Journal of planning education and research*, 29 (3), 379-391.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Leif Pettersen. "10 best city art districts around the USA." Special for USA TODAY. May 9, 2014. Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/experience/america/best-of-lists/2014/05/07/10-best-city-art-districts-around-the-usa/8807535/>.

therefore able to create marketing messages about their art events more efficiently. However, all neighborhoods want to be a part of a larger, multifaceted visual art scene. This extended view of the Cleveland VACD sector could help align neighborhoods through their unique qualities and create a tourist roadmap to increase participation in local arts among both Clevelanders and cultural tourists.

Consequently, the *Collective Arts Network (CAN) Journal* was born from a need for communication and exposure. CAN also realized that the most powerful way for the arts and culture sector to attract attention and elevate the voices of artists and organizations lacking an effective platform for promoting their work was through cooperation (see the “*CAN Journal: Pressing for Change*” case study in

this report).

In resolving communication challenges, questions posed by focus groups’ participants need to be answered: Who should participate on behalf of neighborhoods in coordination efforts? How can we find a consensus among multiple players that are eager and hungry for customers? Should there be a separate entity created to collectively promote a bigger picture of the sector? Who will fund such an entity? Facing these questions is necessary to overcome not only informational and communication insufficiencies, but also the multiple challenges of a changing art market landscape.



The Cleveland Museum of Art’s Gallery One / This 40-foot Collection Wall allows visitors to shape their own tours of the museum and to discover the full breadth of the collections on view throughout the museum’s galleries. It is the largest multi-touch screen in the United States, and displays images of over 3,500 objects from the museum’s world-renowned permanent collection / Photo by Seth Beattie

# SECTOR IN TRANSITION: CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE ART MARKET

The visual arts sector needs to adjust to the new realities of the information era to enhance the dissemination of its products.

The digital marketplace expands the accessibility of art for people from all over the world. However, digitalization also creates challenges for artists in demanding more time and effort developing skills for producing digital images of their art and sharing them on the Internet. Artists should embrace these opportunities and overcome difficulties by adjusting their marketing and sales techniques. Furthermore, the digital marketplace will also require business models to evolve in terms of how individual artists and galleries mediate between artists and the public.

In addition to adjusting to the digital market, art galleries must also adapt to a new generation of customers who prefer to experience art rather than merely collect it. Broadening access to the visual arts through digitalization expands the concept of public art, which presents yet another challenge for the visual art sector: "Public art" has evolved to include artwork displayed in public places like streets, parks, and public buildings, as well as any art piece accessible online for viewing as a public good. All of these challenges are changing the art market landscape and require new business models and more support opportunities for individual artists.

## Digital Products

Although many artists, particularly those working in architectural and computer design fields, welcome the addition of the digital marketplace, some artists remain reluctant to learn new computer skills and integrate digital components into their business models. In focus groups and individual interviews, artists indicated that *creating art* is the main focus for an artist, and that someone else should be responsible for website

development, digital marketing and sales, and building a customer base. Nonetheless, artists also indicated that the small scale of their business operations often prevents outsourcing these functions to another person.

Individual artists are not only the ones who need to embrace the growing influence of the digital marketplace. Online sales are also changing the gallery environment, strengthening them as centers of expertise (both online and at the physical location), in addition to evolving them into powerhouses for devoted collectors. Concurrently, the Internet provides access to a broader range of art experiences, which appeals to consumers, especially younger ones who are less likely to buy artwork. Artists and art galleries must make the digital transition to enhance sales and capture the attention of new consumers to succeed economically.

## The Small Business of Visual Artists

Digitalization as a means of selling art is not the only challenge confronting artists. Some artists admitted that often they feel uncomfortable selling their products because their work is such a large component of their identity as individuals and members of society. As one of the focus group participants stated, "Art isn't a commodity, it's an experience. It's about engaging the person and the art." Subsequently, artists care less about profiting from sales and more about establishing a name for themselves by engaging people through their artwork.

However, to support their work, artists must secure financing for their business. Part of establishing a viable business involves creating a unique identity for their products,

constructing a financial and marketing strategy, and developing a customer base. For Cleveland VACD sector artists, developing a customer base outside of the region is essential due to the small customer base in the region. Furthermore, becoming a successful artist and managing a financially sustainable small business often means diversifying one's activities across teaching, tutoring, and writing. To augment their art business, artists participate in local and regional mentoring or residency projects, as well as public art projects, to increase earnings and exposure.

An artist is rarely regarded as a small-business owner in the conventional sense. For example, while traditional local small businesses are supported, at least partially, through "Buy Local" marketing campaigns, art-based small businesses are often overlooked. Additionally, artists are regularly asked to donate their art for fundraisers, which undermines their earning potential. In contrast with other small businesses, artwork seems less valuable than other products or services provided by non-art establishments. Moreover, selling donated art pieces through fundraising often dilutes the work's worth. These financial sustainability challenges need to be addressed by the community to support the visual arts in Cleveland.

### **Art Galleries**

Some art galleries in the Cleveland region and around the country closed their doors due to sector challenges and the Great Recession. With an aging collectors population, there are new audiences who want to experience—rather than purchase—high quality art by enjoying it in galleries and museums. Some artists acknowledge this shift and believe that just having their work exposed in an art gallery brings merit.

Some artists only desire public exposure, either through galleries or public places such as restaurants, corporate offices, or retail stores. Meanwhile, other artists are reluctant to exhibit their work in places other than galleries for two main reasons: sometimes it is not possible to exhibit an art piece that requires special installment, lighting, or background; and sometimes artists prefer the cultural capital of an art gallery to other, more overtly commercial, public places.

### **The Millennial Generation**

Digitalization is changing the VACD sector not only in terms of information dissemination, but also due to the preferences of the next generation of customers. The Millennial Generation is a demographic cohort of about 80 million people born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. Now entering adulthood, they constitute the largest buying power in the economy, or what is referred to as, "the participation economy." This demographic is characterized by "people [who] are their own medium, their own creation. This generation today is the 'creative.' ... They want to interact. Measure 'Return to Involvement' not 'Return to Investment.'" <sup>xxviii</sup> In other words, Millennials prefer to experience art rather than collect it. Even if they want to purchase a piece of art, they want their input reflected in the piece, often asking that specific color, shape, size, and design be fit to their tastes. Taking consumer input into account when creating artwork is a decided challenge to artists whose art is a part of them.

Jeff Fromm and Christine Garton also trace the characteristics of new consumers: "Not willing to be passive consumers any longer, this generation wants to actively participate, co-create, and, most important, be included as partners in the brands they love. Often, the co-creation process begins with the product or service design, includes the customer journey or shopping experience, and is more easily seen [heightens the visibility] in the marketing and social media space closer to the end of the marketing cycle." <sup>xxix</sup> Visual artists should recognize this shift in the market and adjust to it.

### **Public Art**

Public art became a focus of public policy as a response to the growing need for art exposure. Moreover, public art can become a powerful tool to spur community conversations, redefine the look of a community, and even revitalize a neighborhood.

"Public art in the most traditional sense is the insertion of beautiful and meaningful structures" into public spaces, says Terry Schwarz, director of Kent State University's

Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) and contributor to the “Public Art: Placemaking in Action” case study in this report. Despite public art’s abstract and porous nature, it represents a powerful tool for placemaking by sparking community dialogue, nurturing community potential, and helping residents envision new uses for old spaces.

Corporations and the public have created even greater momentum for public art. These stakeholders desire access to public spaces and want to experience unique art as a public good by displaying artwork in public and private buildings, including, restaurants, hospitals, and retail stores. Furthermore, in focus group discussions, public art projects were identified as financially viable venues for artists. This broader movement toward making art a public good creates certain difficulties. One challenge is reaching a consensus when evaluating public art prior to approving it for public display. Often, artists and the public disagree on the judges who are selected to evaluate public art projects, the amount of power given to a funder of public art, and how provocative or controversial public art should be.

These challenges coincide with another interviewee of the public art case study, Amy Callahan, director of Waterloo Arts (formerly Arts Collinwood). Amy mentioned that she did not want to “pick” at the art while overseeing and watching *Zoetic Walls*<sup>xxx</sup> come to life, a project of ten murals painted by various local, national, and international artists on buildings around Collinwood. “To me, that sort of ends up killing the energy that is so positive,” she says. “I’m OK not loving everything.” The idea of “not loving everything” often leads to public conversation and debate that can ultimately lead to dialogue among residents about their neighborhood, and specifically, about reimagining old, forgotten, or otherwise undesirable spaces.

Even if the evaluation of public art was agreeable to all members, compensation for the artist participating in the process remains a difficulty. Artists spend significant time writing proposals, preparing a model, presenting the project, and participating in an approval process which, in the end, might lead to insufficient financial support when compared to the time an artist has spent on the whole process.

All of these challenges affect the visual sector at large and the Cleveland VACD sector in particular, and require a substantial discussion on future public policies for the arts.

<sup>xxviii</sup> “Kevin Roberts: Brands Are Dead. Welcome to the Participation Economy.” Published by Bill George Leadership Team. October 6, 2009. <http://www.billgeorge.org/page/kevin-roberts-brands-are-dead--welcome-to-the-participation-economy>.

<sup>xxix</sup> Jeff Fromm and Christine Garton “Marketing to Millennials: Reach the Largest and Most Influential Generation of Consumers Ever” New York: AMACOM, American Management Association, 2013. P.8

<sup>xxx</sup> See <http://artscollinwood.org/zoetic-walls/> about this program.



Art & Soul of Buckeye Park Festival / Photo courtesy of LAND Studio

<sup>xxxix</sup> Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A. (2010). Arts and culture in urban or regional planning: A review and research agenda. *Journal of planning education and research*, 29(3), 379-391.

<sup>xxxixii</sup> Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A. (2010). Arts and culture in urban or regional planning: A review and research agenda. *Journal of planning education and research*, 29(3), 379-391.

<sup>xxxixiii</sup> San Francisco Arts Task Force. (2006). *Findings and recommendations*. San Francisco.

# PUBLIC POLICY FOR ARTS AND CULTURE IN OTHER CITIES

To resolve challenges the VACD sector should continue to innovate, and the best way to support this process is learning from the experiences of other visual artists in other metropolises.

Many cities, like Cleveland, study their visual art sector and develop various policies and tools to strengthen it by promoting arts and culture, by providing specific services to artists, and by emphasizing public arts to ensure future consumption of art.

## **Promotion of Arts and Culture by Local Governments**

Local governments approach support for arts and culture in a variety of ways. Citywide art funds from dedicated taxes exist in Los Angeles and San Francisco for the funding of both specific public facilities like museums, as well as for grant programs targeted at artists and arts organizations. Other cities and regions look to so-called cultural tax districts, for example, the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture grants, which were funded through a local cigarette excise tax. Most cities engage in public arts programming, whether by commissioning public art projects or supporting cultural events. A few cities subsidize the arts by encouraging residential/professional buildings through land and vacant building renovations. Some cities also engage in cultural plans, or otherwise explicitly include cultural components when undertaking master-planning processes. To meet these needs, larger cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles have created Cultural Affairs Departments. In smaller jurisdictions like Minneapolis, however, this work is typically found within economic development agencies possessing a broader scope. <sup>xxxii</sup>

City planning departments, though not explicitly linked to arts and culture, are often the source of the regulatory tools that both enable and hamper the evolution of an arts scene. Strict zoning laws, such as those in Minneapolis, inhibit the development of the live/work spaces that are typically associated with artist districts. Additionally, cultural policies are often overlooked, either by accident or misunderstanding, when considering land use. Though many cities devote the majority of their arts and cultural commitments to large institutions, some cities, like San Francisco, have placed an emphasis on neighborhood-based centers. <sup>xxxiii</sup>

In 2006, the San Francisco Arts Task Force looked at the complex web of agencies and funding for the arts. The Task Force suggested a reconfiguration and consolidation of the arts support system to streamline and coordinate funding. Large cities with big cultural affairs departments require immense budgets. However, smaller cities have taken a more flexible approach, with smaller community partnerships that bring together the public and private sectors able to transcend bureaucratic quagmires and foster arts-driven revitalization. <sup>xxxiii</sup>

# SAMPLE ARTS AND CULTURE PUBLIC POLICIES FEATURED IN *FORMING CLEVELAND*

Work for  
Art

LA Art  
Show

Public  
Counsel  
and  
Support

Cultural  
Master  
Plan

*Forming Cleveland* reports on the policy initiatives in the cities you see here. This is not an exhaustive list. Many cities throughout the country and internationally support the visual arts, craft and design sector through public policy initiatives. This research provides examples of particular relevance to Cleveland. This map highlights a key type of arts and culture support available in each city. Additional information on these examples is presented in the following section.

Plan for the Arts

Public Art Events and Arts Support

Regional Promoter

Grants & Fellowships

Exchange Program

Cultural Fund

International Artist Services

*Cleveland, OH*

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC), a political subdivision of Ohio and one of the largest funders of arts and culture in the nation, inspires and strengthens the community by investing in the VACD sector. Thanks to a ten-year tax approval by Cuyahoga County voters in 2006, the organization administers approximately \$15 million a year to arts organizations of all sizes and from all disciplines. According to their website, CAC has invested over \$112 million in 237 arts and culture organizations since 2007. These funds are awarded through various programs and grants, like general operating grants, as well as grants for project support.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Also, the Creative Culture Grant, a pilot grant program launched in 2013, awards up to \$150,000 for two arts and culture projects that are selected through a community voting process.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC), a nonprofit service organization dedicated to strengthening, unifying, and connecting the arts and culture sector in Greater Cleveland, has supported individual artists through the Creative Workforce Fellowship program, which is funded through a grant from CAC. This program provides \$20,000 to 20 artists of various disciplines each year.<sup>xxxvi</sup> To date, 14 craft, 6 design and 34 visual arts Fellowships have been awarded, totaling \$1,080,000.

*Portland, OR*

Portland's Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) derives its funding from a mix of public and private sources.<sup>xxxvii</sup> The council provides support to local artists and art organizations through various grants, including, general operating grants for arts organizations located within supporting counties, project grants for individual artists and nonprofit organizations, and professional development grants for artists and arts administrators. Other community services are also offered by RACC, like workshops for artists, organization consulting, as well as printed and electronic resources. The council also supports Art Spark, a bimonthly event that provides an opportunity for artists and art supporters to mix, meet, and network.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Also, *Work for Art*, a fundraising initiative, primarily garners funds through employee charity campaigns at workplaces in Oregon and Southwest Washington.<sup>xxxix</sup> These donations are then distributed through a competitive grant program that is administered by the RACC. Over 100 arts organizations received funding through this program, offering a variety of arts-related services and education opportunities. *Work for Art* also provides supporters an

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Mission and History of Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, <http://www.cacgrants.org/mission-and-history.php>.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Creative Culture Grant, <http://www.cacgrants.org/creative-culture-grants.php>.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Creative Workforce Fellowship, <http://www.cultureforward.org/Our-Programs/Fellowship>.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Regional Arts and Culture Council, <http://www.racc.org/about/about-racc>.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> See <http://portlandartspark.com/index.php/site/about> for more details.

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Work for Art*, <http://workforart.org/index.php/site/about>.

<sup>xl</sup> About the Right Brain Initiative, <http://therightbraininitiative.org/about-the-right-brain-initiative>.

<sup>xli</sup> See <http://austintexas.gov/department/createaustin-cultural-master-plan> for more details.

<sup>xlii</sup> Imagine Austin, <http://austintexas.gov/page/creativeeconomy>.

<sup>xliii</sup> See <http://austintexas.gov/department/next-level-program> for more details.

<sup>xliv</sup> For more information, see <http://austintexas.gov/department/cultural-and-heritage-tourism-resources>.

<sup>xlv</sup> Cultural Arts Division funding, <http://austintexas.gov/department/cultural-funding>.

<sup>xlvi</sup> *Keep Austin Weird*, see <http://www.KeepAustinWeird.com>.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Creative ambassadors, <http://austintexas.gov/department/creative-ambassadors>.

<sup>xlviii</sup> See <http://creativephl.org/about> for more details.

<sup>xlvi</sup> About the Cultural Fund, Mission, <http://www.philaculturalfund.org/about/mission>.

<sup>i</sup> See <http://www.culturaldata.org>.

<sup>ii</sup> Minneapolis Arts Commission, <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dca/mac/index.htm>.

<sup>iii</sup> See <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/dca/> for more details.

“Arts Card” in return for their donations, which offers discounted ticket prices to various art events and performances.

The RACC also supports arts education by funding artist residencies in schools and is currently working on a comprehensive solution to provide arts education to all regional students. The Right Brain Initiative is one such educational program aimed at accomplishing that goal. The Initiative was launched in 2008 to promote “whole brain learning” by providing every K-8 student in the region with access to the arts, regardless of their background.<sup>xi</sup> An arts-integrated learning experience is created through the collaboration of artist, teachers, and The Right Brain Initiative’s staff by designing experiences that fit the unique needs of every student. The program involves a community-wide partnership of schools, citizens, private donors, local government, and cultural groups. The RACC is the Initiative’s managing partner and funding is drawn from public and private sources throughout the tri-county region.

#### *Austin, TX*

The City of Austin’s Economic Development Department has several arts and culture-related programs through its Cultural Arts Division. The Cultural Development program is part of the Division and aims to support the development of creative industries through planning and other initiatives. One such program is the CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan, a ten-year plan to stimulate Austin’s “culture of creativity.”<sup>xii</sup> The Imagine Austin program invests in Austin’s creative culture through supporting “live music, festivals, theater, film, digital media, and new creative art forms.”<sup>xiii</sup> There is also the Next Level program, which offers professional development to creative businesses to help them grow and expand their impact on the creative economy,<sup>xiiii</sup> and Cultural and Heritage Tourism Resources, which aims to stimulate cultural economic development by growing the consumer base and increasing cultural tourism to “bring new resources to the community.”<sup>xliv</sup>

Other programs within the Cultural Arts Division also seek to provide support and funding for individual artists and art organizations, including the Community Initiatives and Cultural Expansion Programs, which offers various levels of funding. Yet another initiative in the division is the Creative Ambassador Program, which designates local

artists from various creative backgrounds “to represent the city while traveling in promotion of their own artistic endeavors,” thereby not only supporting the artist, but also increasing the reputation of Austin as a “weird”<sup>xlvi</sup> and “creative capital destination,” which draws in more tourists, thus helping support the local creative economy.<sup>xlvii</sup>

#### *Philadelphia, PA*

Philadelphia’s Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy (OACCE) was re-established in 2008, aiming to support and promote the arts, culture, and creative industries in the city. The office oversees the city’s art program, offers policy advice to the mayor, and provides access to grant programs.<sup>xlviii</sup> The Philadelphia Cultural Fund, a city-funded nonprofit corporation, was established in 1991 by the mayor and city council and “promotes arts and culture as engines of social, educational, and economic development.” This nonprofit also provides grants, funded by the city’s allocation to the Cultural Fund, to Philadelphia-based arts and cultural organizations.<sup>xlix</sup> The Cultural Data Project (CDP) collects arts and culture financial, programmatic and operational data in a standardized online system for use by organizations and researchers.<sup>l</sup>

#### *Minneapolis, MN*

The Minneapolis Arts Commission, chartered in 1974 with the mission of strengthening the arts and cultural life in the city, stimulates arts development, fosters appreciation and participation in the arts by all citizens, encourages cooperation between artists and arts groups, and, among other things, helps find financial support for the arts.<sup>li</sup> The commission is housed under the city’s Department of Community Planning and Economic Development. In 2005 these groups collaboratively created the City of Minneapolis Plan for the Arts, a ten-year strategic plan to define the city’s role in supporting the arts. Art In Public Spaces works with the Arts Commission in enhancing public spaces with public art, creating more than a dozen public art projects in the city.<sup>lii</sup>

#### *New York City, NY*

The New York Foundation for The Arts (NYFA) offers services, programming, and resources to artists and art organizations.<sup>liii</sup> NYFA originally only served artists throughout the state, but in 2009 it expanded programs and services nationwide and internationally. NYFA offers fiscal sponsorship through their program Artspire. Artspire enables artists and art organizations to raise funds using

NYFA's tax-exempt status as a nonprofit organization. NYFA offers three different online resources: NYFA Classifieds, NYFA Source, and NYFA's Business of Art. NYFA Classifieds serves as a resource portal for advertisers and job seekers. NYFA Source is the nation's largest online arts database and offers resources and opportunities for artists. NYFA's Business of Art provides information and guidance to artists concerning practical matters such as attaining financial security and insurance.<sup>lv</sup> NYFA offers professional development through their NYFA Learning program. NYFA Learning also encompasses the Immigrant Artist Program (IAP), which provides professional support to immigrant artists working in the New York metro area.<sup>lv</sup> NYFA also provides unrestricted grants through its Artists' Fellowships program and provides over \$1 million in cash grants.<sup>lvi</sup>

#### *Chicago, IL*

Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events is dedicated to enriching the city's cultural and aesthetic vibrancy. This energetic atmosphere is accomplished by fostering the nonprofit art sector, individual artists, and for-profit arts businesses through various funding means, like the Individual Artist Program, a grant for Chicago-based artists, and the CityArts Program, which helps generate support for nonprofit arts organizations. The department also markets the city's assets and presents

free and affordable, high-quality events for residents and tourists. In 2012, the Chicago Cultural Plan was created to lay the framework for the city's role in future cultural and economic growth. The Chicago Public Art Collection includes over 700 art pieces displayed in 150 municipal facilities; the collection also administers the city's Percent for Arts ordinance that helps to enrich public buildings and spaces with professional works of art.<sup>lvii</sup>

#### *San Diego, CA*

The City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture serves in an advisory capacity to the mayor and city council of San Diego. The Commission promotes support for the region's artistic and cultural assets. The Commission annually awards funds to support nonprofit and culture organizations and projects. The funds are awarded through two competitive application processes. The funding comes from the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)—levied on individuals who stay overnight in the city's hotels.<sup>lviii</sup> The Public Arts program focuses on three areas: managing art owned by the city, integrating art into capital improvement projects, and the inclusion of art and space for cultural use in private development projects.<sup>lix</sup>

The City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture also has several special initiatives.<sup>lx</sup> The Fall for the Arts program features a month-long spotlight on cultural activities throughout the region. The Survive and Thrive

<sup>lviii</sup> See [https://www.nyfa.org/Content/Show/Fiscal%20Sponsorship%20\(Artspire\)](https://www.nyfa.org/Content/Show/Fiscal%20Sponsorship%20(Artspire)) for more details.

<sup>lv</sup> See <https://www.nyfa.org/Content/Show/Online%20Resources> for more details.

<sup>lv</sup> NYFA Learning, <https://www.nyfa.org/Content/Show/NYFA%20Learning>.

<sup>lvi</sup> NYFA Awards and Grants, <https://www.nyfa.org/Content/Show/Awards%20and%20Grants>.

<sup>lvii</sup> See [http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public\\_art\\_program.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public_art_program.html) for more details.

<sup>lviii</sup> See <http://www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture/funding/index.shtml> for more details.

<sup>lix</sup> Public Art, <http://www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture/publicart/index.shtml>.

<sup>lx</sup> See <http://www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture/initiatives/index.shtml> for more details.

<sup>lxi</sup> See <http://www.theartswave.org/> for more details.

<sup>lxii</sup> See <http://www.gcac.org/> for more details.

<sup>lxiii</sup> See <http://www.culturela.org/aboutcad/organization.html> for more details.

<sup>lxiv</sup> About the Show, <http://www.laartshow.com/about-the-show>.

<sup>lxv</sup> See <http://www.artsforla.org/frequently-asked-questions> for more details.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Artist in Residence, <http://www.cultureforward.org/Our-Programs/Residence>.

<sup>lxvii</sup> See more at <http://www.cultureforward.org/Our-Programs/AEI>.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Collaborative Marketing Database, <http://cultureforward.org/Our-Programs/Collaborative>.

<sup>lxix</sup> Creative Compass, <http://mycreativecompass.org>.

<sup>lxx</sup> See <https://www.indyarts.org/history> for more details.

Initiative is a campaign to assist the nonprofit arts and cultural organizations that have survived the economic downturn. The Diversity Initiative encourages those organizations that received funding from the Commission to develop boards and staff that better reflect the demographics of the city.

#### *Cincinnati, OH*

ArtsWave is Cincinnati's regional promoter of arts and culture with the goal of creating community, connecting people, and creating vibrant neighborhoods through the arts. The organization also offers services and various sources of funding, like one-time project grants and several recurring "Impact Grants." An annual arts sampler sponsored by the retail giant Macy's also gives citizens and tourists access to three days of free arts events and programming. Special offers and discounts to over fifty arts organizations, restaurants, shops, and more are also provided through the ArtsWave ArtPass.<sup>lxi</sup>

#### *Columbus, OH*

The Greater Columbus Arts Council supports and advances the city's culture by providing grants and services for artists and organizations. Existing grant programs provide organizations with technical assistance, operating and project support, and funding that allows organizations to hire performing artists to enhance events. Many grants and programs are also available to artists, including, individual fellowships, networking opportunities, supply and professional development grants, and the ability to participate in an artist exchange program.<sup>lxii</sup>

#### *Los Angeles, CA*

The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) generates and supports high-quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles residents.<sup>lxiii</sup> The DCA Funds projects through four divisions: 1) Grants Administration Division, 2) Public Arts Division, 3) Community Arts Division—arts instruction for underserved populations, and 4) Marketing and Development Division—arts education.

The Los Angeles Art Show, created by FADA, is the longest-running venue for contemporary, modern, historic, and traditional art in the country.<sup>lxiv</sup> Also, Arts for LA is a nonprofit organization that advocates greater investments in the arts.<sup>lxv</sup> They work to achieve this goal through supporting arts organizations, connecting arts stakeholders, working with public policy makers, supporting

arts educational plans in the local schools, and working with citizens to promote the arts.

### **Service to Artists**

Some cities and organizations have a specific focus on supporting arts and culture organizations and individual artists through programs and services, such as databases, workshops or events.

In *Cleveland*, CPAC provides programs and services to support the arts and culture sector. For instance, its Artist in Residence program provided artists access to affordable housing, established programs to connect to non-artists in the community, and provided support for supplies and marketing in Cleveland's Collinwood neighborhood.<sup>lxvi</sup> The Artist as an Entrepreneur Institute (AEI) is an artist-focused course that provides tools to help artists hone their business skills through teaching them about creating an artistic business, marketing, accounting, raising capital, and identifying and developing a brand.<sup>lxvii</sup> Beyond these programs, CPAC also offers services like the Collaborative Marketing Database, which allows members to strategically target their marketing activities,<sup>lxviii</sup> and Creative Compass, which is an online resource website where artists can share information, find opportunities and build connections.<sup>lxix</sup>

In *Minneapolis*, the McKnight Foundation, in partnership with the Walker Arts Center, developed mnartists.org, an online database of Minnesota artists and art organizations. Artists from all disciplines are represented, and the site has become a marketplace and community hub, offering the public a new way of exploring Minnesota's arts scene.

Fostering engagement in the arts, the Arts Council of *Indianapolis* supports artists and art organizations by offering a wide array of programming available to all. The Arts Council awards funding for artists and art organizations through fellowships and grants and also provides technical, marketing, and other business-related services. An online database of over 800 artists from various disciplines and an online calendar of events, performances, and exhibitions are maintained by the council. Public Indianapolis, the city's public art program, is also overseen by the council. In 1995, the Indianapolis Arts Garden was built and now holds over 300 free performances and monthly art exhibits; in 2010, Gallery 925, a public art gallery, was created to highlight local, contemporary artists.<sup>lxx</sup>

The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) in *New York City* provides artists with networks, resources, and support to help create vibrant communities in Lower Manhattan.<sup>lxvi</sup> LMCC is dedicated to “advancing artists, transforming audiences, and catalyzing communities.”<sup>lxvii</sup> LMCC’s Manhattan Arts Grants program provides financial support to artists and community organizations to connect with their audiences in exhibition halls, classrooms, public spaces, and more. The Artist Residences programs offers support to artists by providing work space. LMCC also offers public and professional development programs.

The Brooklyn Arts Council connects with all players in their arts community. The Council provides programs and services to artists, audiences, participants, venues, educators, and supporters.<sup>lxviii</sup> The Council provides grants and free and affordable arts events, in addition to training artists and professionals, teaching students, and developing new projects.

The *Los Angeles County Arts Commission* “provides leadership in cultural services for the County, including information and resources for the community, artists, educators, arts organizations, and municipalities.”<sup>lxix</sup> The Commission sponsors special events, provides grants, and offers professional development programs and programs for educators and students. The Commission contracts arts organizations through the Organizational Grant Program (OGP) to provide arts services.<sup>lxx</sup> The Commission also has a Civic Art program to implement civic arts projects for a variety of county facilities. The Civic Art Policy allocates one percent of design and construction costs on new county capital projects to a Civic Art Special Fund.<sup>lxxi</sup>

### Public Art Funding Programs

While public art is becoming a major focus of the visual arts within cities’ public policies, the funding of these programs and their content differ. Recognizing the value of public art, *Portland’s* Regional Arts and Culture Council helps to acquire and maintain community-owned

art in public spaces through public-private partnerships. Both *Portland* and *Multnomah County* have Percent-for-Art ordinances that require 2% of publicly-funded capital projects to be spent on the creation and maintenance of public art.<sup>lxxii</sup> The RACC helps identify/connect artists to these opportunities, in addition to providing a database of public art projects, a public art gallery in downtown *Portland*, and a public art walking tour.

*Austin* also recognizes the importance of public art through its Art in Public Places (AIPP) program, which requires that 2% of eligible capital improvement projects’ budgets go toward the purchase and inclusion of public works of art; it was the first city in *Texas* to adopt such an ordinance.<sup>lxxiii</sup> The City of *Austin* also maintains public exhibition space at City Hall called the People’s Gallery. In February, the city kicks off a yearly exhibit that showcases regional artists in the People’s Gallery, and, every year, the artwork that wins the People’s Choice award is purchased by the city and added to City Hall’s permanent collection.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

*Philadelphia* promotes art at City Hall through its public art gallery, holding exhibitions that feature local artists.<sup>lxxv</sup> The city’s Percent for Arts program also provides 1% of the total dollar amount of any city-funded construction project to fine arts. This applies to city construction and remodeling projects, as well as to developers using land assembled and acquired by the city’s redevelopment agency. The program was established in 1959, the first such program in *America*, and has helped with the installation of over 400 public art projects.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

Possibly one of the most well-known arts programs, *Philadelphia’s* Mural Arts Program was created in 1984 with the goal of transforming public spaces and improving individual lives with the mantra, “Art Saves Lives.” Originally created as part of *Philadelphia’s* Anti-Graffiti Network, Jane Goldman, the muralist hired to spearhead the program, worked with local graffiti artists after recognizing their raw talent and helped them refine their skills to

beautify their neighborhoods. In 1996, the effort was reorganized into the Mural Arts Program with Director Jane Goldman. Goldman then started a nonprofit organization to advocate and raise funds for the program. Since the program began, over 3,600 murals have been created, helping to reactivate and beautify public spaces, which established Philadelphia as the “City of Murals.”<sup>lxxxii</sup>

CITYarts in *New York City* is a program that brings youth and professional artists together in effort to transform communities by creating public art. Since 1968, CITYarts has produced 287 public arts projects in collaboration with over 500 artists, 100,000 city youth, and almost 500,000 community volunteers. CITYarts has five programs: Young Minds Build Bridges, an art education program that focuses on relationships among youth worldwide; Community Identity, a neighborhood revitalization program; Kids for Justice, an arts education program aimed to reach at-risk youth; and Tribute to New York & New Yorkers, a program in response to the event of 9/11 that promotes New York pride. Finally, Window of Opportunity is a program that identifies artistically talented youth and connects them with professional artists.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

The New York Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) represents and serves nonprofit cultural organizations involved in the visual, literary, and performing arts, as well

as public institutions and creative artists within the five boroughs of New York.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> DCLA’s Materials for the Arts Program provides free supplies for use in arts programs offered by nonprofit groups and public schools. DCLA’s Percent for Art program has changed the landscape of the city by commissioning over 180 works of art at public building sites throughout the city.

In the public realm, the City of Cleveland also has several initiatives that help support the arts. The city’s Arts and Culture Division runs a program called Mural My Neighborhood that connects young Cleveland artists with professional muralists, businessmen, and community leaders to help create uplifting civic murals in several city wards.<sup>lxxxv</sup> The city also has an ordinance that requires 1.5% of the budget for city projects over \$300,000 to go toward public art.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Agency (GCRTA) also supports public art through its Arts in Transit program. Established in 1991, the program sets aside 1% of its projects budget towards public art, leading to the installation of over 20 works of art at GCRTA rail stations and transit centers.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

While all of the programs and policies offered in other cities illustrate the state of art and culture support programs on a national scale, we offer specific recommendations to strengthen the Cleveland VACD sector.

<sup>lxxx</sup> See <https://www.indyarts.org/history> for more details.

<sup>lxxxi</sup> See <http://www.lmcc.net/> for more details.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> About LMCC, <http://www.lmcc.net/about>.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> See <http://www.brooklynartscouncil.org/about> for more details.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> About the Commission, <http://www.lacountyarts.org/about.html>.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> Grants and Professional Development, <http://www.lacountyarts.org/grants.html>.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> About Civic Art, [http://www.lacountyarts.org/civicart\\_about.htm](http://www.lacountyarts.org/civicart_about.htm).

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> See <http://www.racc.org/public-art/overview-opportunities> for more details.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> See <http://austintexas.gov/department/art-in-public-places> for more details.

<sup>lxxxix</sup> The People’s Gallery, <http://austintexas.gov/department/peoples-gallery>.

<sup>lxxx</sup> See <http://creativephl.org/> for more details.

<sup>lxxxxi</sup> See <http://www.phila.gov/pr/percentForArt.html> for more details.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> History, <http://www.muralarts.org/about/history>.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> See <http://www.cityarts.org/about> for more details.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> About Cultural Affairs, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcla/html/about/about.shtml>.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> Mural My Neighborhood, <http://portal.cleveland-oh.gov/CityofCleveland/Home/Government/CityAgencies/ParksRecreationandProperties/Cultural%20Arts>.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Read more at [http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/cwp/art\\_trend.php](http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/cwp/art_trend.php).

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Arts in Transit, <http://www.riderta.com/programs/artsintransit>.



Waterloo Arts Festival / Photo by Seth Beattie

- <sup>lxxxviii</sup> Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A. (2010). Arts and culture in urban or regional planning: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Planning Education Research*, 29 no. 3 379-391.
- <sup>lxxxix</sup> McCarthy, K. F., Ondaatje, E. H., Brooks, A., & Szanto, A. A portrait of the visual arts: Meeting the challenges of a new era. RAND Corporation: 2005, 150p.
- <sup>xc</sup> Preparing Students for the Next America. The Benefits of an Arts Education. The Arts Education Partnership. 2013. <http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America-FINAL.pdf>; and Vaughn, Kathryn (2002), "Music and Mathematics: Modest Support for the Oft-Claimed Relationship." In R. Deasy (Ed.), *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Achievement and Social Development*, Washington, DC: AEP.
- <sup>xc1</sup> Cited in the report Preparing Students for the Next America. The Benefits of an Arts Education. The Arts Education Partnership. 2013. <http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America-FINAL.pdf> with references to Heath, S. B., Soep, E., & Roach A. (1998). Living the arts through language-learning: A report on community-based youth organizations. American for the Arts Monographs, 2 and Montgomerie, D., & Ferguson, J. (1999). Bears don't need phonics: An examination of the role of drama in laying the foundations for critical thinking in the reading process. *Research in Drama Education. The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 4(1), 11 - 20. - See more at: <http://www.artsedsearch.org/summaries/bears-don-t-need-phonics-an-examination-of-the-role-of-drama-in-laying-the-foundations-for-critical-thinking-in-the-reading-process#sthash.SDg7uBRC.dpuf>.
- <sup>xcii</sup> Podlozny, A. (2000). Strengthening verbal skills through the use of classroom drama: A clear link. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34(3-4), 239-276 and Walker, E., Tabone, C. & Weltsek, G. (2011). When achievement data meet drama and arts integration. *Language Arts*, 88(5), 365-372. - See more at: <http://www.artsedsearch.org/summaries/when-achievement-data-meet-drama-and-arts-integration#sthash.2C1LXAfy.dpuf>.
- <sup>xciii</sup> Courey, S. J., Balogh, E., Siker, J. R., & Paik, J. (2012). Academic music: music instruction to engage third-grade students in learning basic fraction concepts. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 81, 251-278 and Kinney, D. W., & Forsythe, J. L. (2005). The effects of the arts IMPACT curriculum upon student performance on the Ohio fourth-grade proficiency test. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 164, 35-48.

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CLEVELAND VACD SECTOR

To tap into the visual arts assets in Cleveland, policy changes are required. These modifications should be directed at both overcoming the deficits that exist in the local visual arts market while simultaneously taking advantage of the various factors that have created Cleveland’s distinctive visual arts scene.

## **Stimulating Local Demand and Growing Pool of Customers**

There is a need to improve an identified deficit of customers by stimulating local and near-local regional demand for the arts among the population in commuting distance of Cleveland. Local supply outweighs local demand, and research has shown that efforts to create external demand through tourism are very often costly and ineffective. Even in studies of well-known destinations like New York and Los Angeles, the vast majority (80%) of art institution attendees were local residents from the county.<sup>lxviii</sup> The best source of demand stems from the local population itself and the best recognized method for increasing local demand for the visual arts is to ensure early exposure during childhood through school and community-based programs.<sup>lxix</sup> Many other cities are growing their future art demand through educational programs to children. Besides the future benefits for the VACD sector, children receiving art instruction as part of their education have greater success in reading, math, critical thinking, and social skills, and are more likely to stay in school.<sup>xc</sup> According to a recent study of the Arts Education Partnership, “Arts education develops students’

critical thinking skills—including skills for comparing, hypothesizing, critiquing, and exploring multiple and alternative viewpoints.”<sup>xc</sup> Arts education helps students become better readers and writers: “Drama instruction, for example, increases reading readiness and word fluency in early grades and continues to improve reading comprehension and writing skills throughout middle and high school.”<sup>xcii</sup> Integrating arts into math instruction “also facilitates mastery of computation and estimation skills, and challenging concepts like fractions,” according to the reports by Kinney et al (2005) and Courey et al (2012).<sup>xciii</sup>

Support for artists’ and art organizations’ acquisition of digital skills for sales and marketing, developing a customer base, and promoting their artwork to a broader audience is necessary. Embracing new media to interact with the audience is critical in responding to the public’s desire for experiencing the arts. A wider appeal to the local public and private leadership in recognition of individual artists and their work as local small businesses would help enhance the VACD sector by promoting locally made goods and enlarging the customer base.

Developing a vision is an important part of integrating the arts into regional strategic planning. In Arizona, for example, a strategic plan established goals promoting community access, living wages for artists, high quality arts primary education, as well as elevating cultural programs and organizations to societal cornerstones and recognizing that the arts are vital to economic viability and quality of life.<sup>xciV</sup>

Beyond a regional strategy, the continued development of Cleveland arts districts like The District of Design, and the establishment of more community art walks, like Tremont's ArtWalk, will help strengthen the local arts and culture sector. Cleveland can also promote the temporary use of unoccupied retail space for art displays, adaptively reuse existing structures for arts and culture facilities, install rotating art displays in businesses and in public places, share performing art and other facilities, develop rosters of artists for developers to use for public art, and encourage artists and businesses to share skills and talents.

### **Encouraging Asset-Based Development**

Cleveland should continue to avoid the strategy that some cities and regions make of creating artificial clustering of the arts. The Cleveland VACD sector is represented by many unique, authentic, grassroots-driven art neighborhoods that have reinvigorated themselves. Efforts to centralize art is often done in an attempt to draw in tourists, which, as mentioned previously, has limited benefits. Research has also found that centralized districts tend to have a less equitable impact on the community.

The “decentralized mosaic”<sup>1</sup> form, as recognized by Markusen, manifests in Cleveland through neighborhood-focused creative scenes, which tend to promote equity and enhance social life, while organically addressing the market's needs.<sup>xcv</sup>

## **Developing a vision is an important part of integrating the arts into regional strategic planning.**

Additionally, the intimate nature of Cleveland's arts neighborhoods and their ties to residents serve as another method for driving local demand for the arts, through experiential and collecting avenues.

### **Sustaining and Growing Support**

The region has to continue financial and other support for artists in Cuyahoga County. Current programs, such as those that currently exist through Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture, should be fostered and expanded. These programs help maintain a supply of high-quality art and artists in the region, in part, by attracting artists to the region. The supply-side approach is the traditional model for supporting the arts in the U.S. and has been effective, despite criticisms of the practice on equity grounds—specifically that the subsidies end up going to wealthy collectors. Also, support for small arts organizations,

<sup>xcv</sup> Stern, M. J., & Seifert, S. C. *Cultivating “Natural” Cultural Districts*. Social Impact of the Arts Project. University of Pennsylvania. September 2007. Source: [http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/cultural\\_and\\_community\\_revitalization/natural\\_cultural\\_districts.pdf](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/cultural_and_community_revitalization/natural_cultural_districts.pdf).

<sup>xciV</sup> See [http://www.aztownhall.org/Resources/Documents/98th\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.aztownhall.org/Resources/Documents/98th_Full_Report.pdf) for more examples of Arizona art strategies.

many of which are nonprofits, must be maintained to sustain the VACD sector. Support can come in the form of grants and through coordination and marketing assistance. The *CAN Journal*, featured in a case study, is an excellent example of this type of support.

### **Fostering Collaborations and Closing Communication Gap**

The report's final recommendation is to create policies that nurture the cooperative character of the visual arts scene in Cleveland so that it continues to welcome and encourage new artists. One way to create these policies is by hosting informal gatherings of artists and patrons where the goal is to create and sustain intra-industry linkages and accumulate social capital that can be leveraged later. This venue could become a great conduit for strengthening ties in the art community to Cleveland's robust industrial base. Such relationships will benefit communities by growing internal corporate demand for art products and, more importantly, demonstrating the potential for spurring creativity, and driving further art-based invention and innovation. This strategy can utilize existing industry products in a new market, to new customers, or, perhaps, create a new product cycle.

Strengthening such collaborative efforts could organically nurture partnerships among art neighborhoods and create better coordination for art events through marketing efforts, generating higher visibility for the people's collective voice in- and outside of Cuyahoga County.

**[Artist and patron] relationships will benefit communities by growing internal corporate demand for art products and, more importantly, demonstrating the potential for spurring creativity, and driving further art-based invention and innovation.**

A region that embraces art as public policy bolsters its cultural citizenship. Artistic practice can be a transformative force and reaffirms the importance of the arts in contemporary society. Thoughtful cultural policy benefits artists and audiences; fosters the mystery and courage of the collective aesthetic imagination; and enriches our understanding of the risk, freedom, responsibility, beauty, and poetry in the world.

# CLEVELAND VACD SECTOR'S FUTURE

Visual arts are a large part of our daily lives, which are inundated with images not only through museums or private collections, but also through product consumption. Art penetrates our environments and can inspire collective action.

Donald Black, Jr., a 33-year-old artist, focused his hybridized photography techniques on exploring issues like foreclosure, father-son relationships, and the racial divide. On the other hand, Mimi Kato, 39, sheds light, quite literally, on the spreading problem of invasive plant species through her photography. Both artists illustrate art-driven activism and heightened social awareness.

Combining everyday objects in unusual ways or looking at the seemingly trivial through a more somber perspective, inspires people to think about new concepts, applications, and markets for stimulating innovation. For the Cleveland VACD sector to continually invent and deploy products in real-life applications, the community needs to understand the challenges the sector faces and have a discussion on what needs to be done to help it.

There is an ongoing effort to redefine the region that has become particularly important as more corporate, academic, and philanthropic voices talk about the kind of “culture shift” that is needed in how our region responds to change. “We’re making the case for why contemporary art matters,” Jill Snyder, MOCA’s Executive Director says in the *MOCA Cleveland: Sturdy, Dynamic, & Stylish* case study. “Artists are visionaries. Contemporary art museums are hubs for creative people.” The new MOCA building “is sort of a laboratory environment that celebrates innovation... Our job in the next few years is to use our role to communicate with the entrepreneurial sector.” The visual arts can powerfully support a plan for the whole region to become a laboratory of innovation.



# CASE STUDIES

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Sturdy, Dynamic & Stylish



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**Tremont:**  
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**St. Clair Superior:**  
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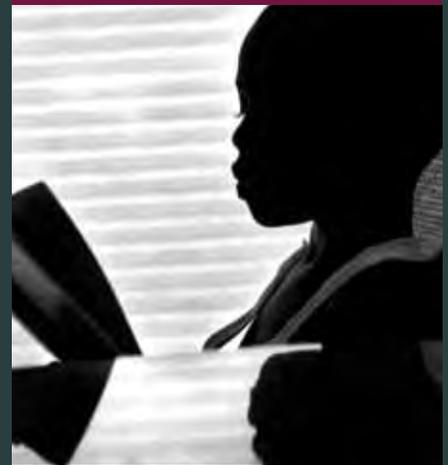
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**Dan Cuffaro:**  
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**Cleveland CycleWerks:**  
Starting Up





## CASE STUDY **MOCA Cleveland: Sturdy, Dynamic & Stylish**

MOCA Cleveland's new home is making an architectural statement at the intersection of Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road. The museum is heralding the city's contemporary arts—and challenging us to think boldly about reimagining our future.

MOCA Cleveland Exterior / Photo by Beth Phillips, CraveableCleveland.com

<sup>1</sup> For more information see Penn Institute for Urban Research study “Anchor Institutions and their Role in Metropolitan Change” <http://penniu.upenn.edu/uploads/media/anchor-institutions-and-their-role-in-metropolitan-change.pdf>



**SPACES** is not a “traditional” art gallery. The Cleveland nonprofit serves artists as a resource and public forum to explore and experiment. SPACES works with artists to help them create new and cutting-edge work that pushes the boundaries of their medium. At the same time, SPACES acts as a platform and advocate for artists; for instance, the artists who display their work in the gallery maintain all rights to their art.

SPACES opened in 1978, sending out invitations to artists in the community to immediately engage in the programming process. The first event hosted by SPACES was attended by 35 people. Since then, over 9,000 artists have worked with the nonprofit as it transitioned from its first location in Playhouse Square to the Warehouse District, and then to its current location in Ohio City on the Superior Viaduct.

Today, the organization offers three programs for artists: The Swap, The Vault, and research and development. The research and development program helps artists, curators, and others explore ideas and objects through exhibition projects, which include solo and group endeavors. The Swap program is a residency program for international, national, and/or local artists to promote the exchange of ideas through discussion and the creation of new art, particularly through collaboration with local artists. The third program, The Vault, started in 2010, is an audio-visual experience inside a converted, walk-in safe allowing audience members to choose their own adventure in what they want to see. The art in the vault rotates every six months.

**Website:** <http://www.spacesgallery.org/>



The creation of The Production Language Factory in Jake Beckman's SWAP studio at SPACES / Photo by Bruce Edwards

MOCA Cleveland's new home is a \$27 million exclamation point for broader redevelopment efforts taking place in the Uptown district of Cleveland's University Circle neighborhood. Today, the area is a hub for Cleveland's arts and culture, medical, and educational sectors, and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Cleveland serves as a significant anchor cultural institution for the area.<sup>1</sup> Its presence is spurring economic investment, improving the urban landscape, and redefining perceptions of place that can attract and retain knowledge-based talent.

The already iconic building, which opened in October 2012, conveys a sense of dynamism, excitement and importance as well as audacity for broader efforts to re-envision our region. Jill Snyder, MOCA's executive director, says the building was designed to make a statement; indeed, its morphing geometric forms—pentagon, cube and prism—protrude into the Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road intersection, creating a salient beacon for the urban district.

### **Building a Home for Contemporary Art**

For most of its recent history, MOCA was largely hidden away in a rented space on the second floor of a retrofitted Sears department store that was part of the old Cleveland Play House complex. “People would never wander by and go in” at its former home, says David Abbott, executive director of the George Gund Foundation. As the former President of University Circle Inc., the neighborhood's community development corporation, he pushed for relocating the museum into a more high-profile setting over a decade ago.

Snyder echoes this sentiment when she recalls the initial site selection talks for the new building in the early 2000s. She says the goal was to move MOCA to a more visible location in University Circle, near the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Institute of Art, and Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) to take advantage of the foot traffic those entities generated. In 2005, CWRU began exploring the area that has become known as Uptown. At the time though, the original master plan was dubbed the University Arts Retail District, giving credence to the idea that, in Snyder's words, “Culture was always a core piece of the economic plan.”



Opened in early 2013, the **Transformer Station** was the result of a partnership between the Bidwell Foundation and the Cleveland Museum of Art seeking to bring contemporary art to the west side of Cleveland through events and programming. The former rail electric substation, built in 1924 and one of sixteen built in Cleveland, was converted into an exhibition space and now acts as a new anchor in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood.

The Transformer Station is the first endeavor of the Cleveland Museum of Art located outside of the University Circle neighborhood. Six months out of the year, the Museum will use the Station for contemporary art displays, with the remainder of the year being devoted to the Bidwell collection. The space serves as a lab or think tank; a place where the museum can uncover new opportunities and take more risks with their art. The space also displays Fred and Laura Bidwell's collection containing contemporary art pieces from the last twenty years by artists from across the globe. The focus of their collection has been on artists in the beginning and middle stages of their careers, with the intent of supporting new and emerging talent.

**Website:** <http://www.transformerstation.org/>



MOCA hired Iranian-born architect Farshid Moussavi to design the new building in summer 2006, before CWRU had even engaged a developer for the district. "MOCA was at the table the whole time," Snyder says. The museum's decision to retain an architect so early in the discussions of the district allowed MOCA to have greater influence over the project. "We didn't know at the time that MOCA would take up the central corner," Snyder says about the planning process. "The timing worked out well. We were able to take the lead in how the master plan evolved before they selected the developer. We proposed the corner site."

### **Building Support**

After securing MOCA's location, the next step in the master plan was to aggressively fundraise and leverage a mix of private, philanthropic, and public funds. The project received \$5 million in New Market Tax Credits, which were made available as part of the federal stimulus program, and \$450,000 in funding from the state. "Everything else was from foundations, corporations or private individuals," Snyder says.

Early foundation support came from the George Gund Foundation and the Cleveland Foundation. Snyder attributes MOCA's successful fundraising efforts to the museum's civic vision and its sustainable approach, both from a business and environmental perspective. The "green" building is heated and cooled by geothermal wells and is expected to earn a Silver rating from the U.S. Green Building Council for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

Another compelling factor for funders was MOCA's "relatively modest scale," Snyder says. Compared to expansion projects that total in the hundreds of millions of dollars at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Institute of Art, University Hospitals, and CWRU, "we looked doable," Snyder says. "For the community, a \$35 million campaign was modest scale with high impact."

Because of these efforts, MOCA had already raised the entire \$27.2 million building cost prior to breaking ground for the new structure. So far, all but \$4 million of its \$35 million campaign goal has been raised, including funds for building the facility and an endowment for the museum. MOCA's fundraising success is particularly notable because it carried out its capital campaign during a time of economic recession. "We were the little engine that could," Snyder says.

### **Anchoring a Neighborhood**

Since the building's completion, MOCA has quickly become an attractive anchor for neighborhood redevelopment. Examples of this include \$44 million in mixed-use development, totaling more than 144,000 square feet, in addition to \$30 million in public investment at two nearby transit stations that build upon the neighborhoods' transit and pedestrian character. "It is part of a growing mixed-use neighborhood with lots of foot traffic," notes Abbott. "There's a much greater opportunity [for people] to walk in casually and participate. That's only going to get better as University Circle grows. That location is a huge part of it."

"We've been told by folks developing retail stores [and housing units] that those are leasing, in part, because of MOCA," says Stewart Kohl, who serves on MOCA's board of directors and co-chaired its capital campaign. "Their job of leasing space has been made significantly easier because of MOCA. People see that something is happening in the neighborhood. They envision themselves out on their balcony overlooking [the building and the nightlife around it]. It's alive."

Snyder says the building's design also sends a message about MOCA's commitment to helping redefine the surrounding neighborhood. "The architect did an unexpectedly bold thing," she says. "The building literally juts into the intersection. So a section of the building is open in the back as public space." This public space contradicts original plans for the building: "The open space had faced the road and wasn't inviting for the public to use," she says. "This design makes it friendlier to use. It really does create a welcoming space."

CWRU owns the plaza behind MOCA and views the open area as an extension of its campus. Restaurant, tavern and store patrons surrounding the plaza will now spill out into the public space behind MOCA. Snyder is pleased at the thought of retail, campus, and cultural life intersecting in a space dedicated to community exchange. MOCA encourages even more public interaction by allowing free access to its spacious first floor during open hours. Snyder envisions the space as an "urban living room," an informal space that invites civic conversations among those who pass through its doors. "These kinds of buildings are really important," Snyder says. "Not for organizational self-congratulation, but for what they come to represent—they become icons," she says. "They say something about the area."

MOCA has especially focused on cultivating the museum's connection with the students drawn each semester to the surrounding area. For example, students at CWRU and the Cleveland Institute of Art receive free memberships to the museum. Some students have been hired to help artists-in-residence and serve as security and retail workers. MOCA also commissioned industrial design students at the Cleveland Institute of Art to create lounge furniture for the community space.



One of the world's most distinguished comprehensive art museums, the **Cleveland Museum of Art** was established in 1913 “for the benefit of all the people forever.” Through Cleveland industrialists Hinman B. Hurlbut, John Huntington, and Horace Kelley setting aside money specifically to found an art museum, Cleveland’s art museum was born. Lending his support, Jephtha H. Wade II, whose family had donated the land for the Museum of Art and Wade Park, served as a founding incorporator and the founding president of the board of trustees. These endowments originally created for the museum continue to fund it to this day and have helped it to remain free and open to the public.

Furthermore, through the leadership of William M. Milliken, museum director from 1930 to 1958, the institution prospered and started to gain its international reputation. That reputation owes itself, in part, to the generous funds from the Rogers Bequeath and the Severance Fund, which allowed the museum to purchase significant works that contribute to the museum’s reputation as a world-class institution.

**Website:** <http://www.clevelandart.org/>



The Atrium at the Cleveland Museum of Art / Photo courtesy of CPAC

During its annual fund raiser in October 2013, MOCA lowered the event's admission fee to \$25 after 11 p.m. “so anyone can come,” Kohl says. “The crowd got younger with more piercings and tattoos. But it was also amazing how many of the original crowd [the funders] stayed. Not many places in the area do you see that. That's really healthy.”

### **Adapting to Change**

Despite its success, MOCA admits there may be some challenges ahead. Snyder expects MOCA to experience some growing pains which may require the museum to reframe its operations and programming.

“I think the jury is still out about our size,” she says. At 34,000 square feet, MOCA’s new building itself is significantly larger than its old, rented space, which totaled 20,000 square feet. MOCA’s operating budget is also larger, increasing from \$1.6 million to \$2.7 million, as well as its annual number of visitors, growing from 18,000 to 60,000. “This growth is risky for us,” Snyder says. “It will take us a few years to get there. Half of our visitors have never been here before. We have to be focused on understanding our visitors and audience.”

As a non-collecting institution, MOCA must also manage its new overhead costs while being mindful of its mission. “Now we have a building and are working toward an endowment,” Snyder says. “It’s not our mission to collect and preserve pieces. That’s a resource issue. If the pie is only so big, if you devote resources to a building and a collection, then you don’t have resources for our core mission of creating exhibitions, identifying trends and bringing them to this region, and doing that in a nimble way that’s forward-looking and that has that laboratory quality to it.”

## Redefining a Region

While the museum continues to adapt to its new structure, Snyder is adamant about the regional implications of the institution as well. “What we did was very bold,” Snyder says. MOCA’s presence adds “heft and weight” to the ongoing effort to redefine the region that has become particularly important as more corporate, academic, and philanthropic voices talk about the kind of “culture shift” that is needed in how our region responds to change and takes on entrepreneurial risk. “We’re making the case for why contemporary art matters,” Snyder says. “Artists are visionaries. Contemporary art museums are hubs for creative people.” The new building “is sort of a laboratory environment that celebrates innovation... Our job in the next few years is to use our role to communicate with the entrepreneurial sector.”

The goal was always to create a space that captures attention and conveys a sense of dynamism, excitement, importance—and audacity. While David Abbott admits he doesn’t expect that every greater Clevelander will love the building’s design, he does expect everyone in the region will benefit from the progressive, creative statement it sends. “Even if you are a 65-year-old person living in the suburbs and will never think about going [to the museum], you have a stake in its success,” Abbott says. A vibrant and visible contemporary arts community sends a message “about our openness, our willingness to approach things in new ways. That helps attract and retain the kinds of people who have a positive impact on our economy.”

Region-wide economic impact may seem like a high expectation for moving a 45-year-old museum a few blocks down the street, but Abbott believes its importance cannot be overstated: “Cleveland continues to struggle with and adapt to the notion that it is in competition with the world in a variety of ways. If we don’t have the quality

of place that people want, then they will move because they can. If Cleveland is going to win at attracting the kind of talent that gives rise to new enterprises and attracts businesses back to the region, it has to exhibit an authentic and engaging quality of place. Contemporary art is part of that attractive mix,” Abbott says. One important area of competition for talent is for “young, creative, innovative people who can be anywhere,” Abbott says. “That’s a never-ending challenge. What is it Cleveland must do to attract and retain talent? One important statement is the arts.” Not all art is created equal, of course, and Snyder notes that “cutting edge funky arts” like those featured at MOCA are one important key to appealing to that talent demographic.

Contemporary art not only tends to appeal to the adventurous, entrepreneurially young workers the region needs to attract, but it also challenges the region to rethink business as usual. “We can’t just be traditional. We can’t be afraid of controversy,” Abbott says. MOCA’s glistening new home “helps us break some of our tradition-bound approaches to doing things. The nature of the world is such that we have to be willing to rethink anything and everything. Contemporary art helps us do that... having a separate institution, especially one that gets attention through its architecture and location is a powerful message. It says something about Cleveland that is important.”

In this way, MOCA’s building is an embodiment of what contemporary art is intended to do—provoke discussion, challenge convention, and call attention to our present. Sturdy, dynamic, and stylish, the MOCA building has firmly planted itself at the intersection of tradition and change, a shimmering metaphor for the region that stands as a permanent beacon for those wanting to experience contemporary art and those daring to change the global conversation about a region.

## CASE STUDY Tremont: Creative Placekeeping

While other cities across the country are beginning to adopt “creative placemaking” as a means of revitalizing neighborhoods, many Cleveland neighborhoods have established reputations as havens for pioneering artists. Today, the Tremont neighborhood is taking steps to ensure it maintains its prominence as one of Cleveland’s established art enclaves.

“Dendrite” by Olga Ziemka, the public art component of a streetscape project undertaken by the City of Cleveland on Professor Avenue in Tremont / Photo courtesy of Olga Ziemka

<sup>2</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa. A White Paper for The Mayors’ Institute on City Design “Creative Placemaking.” National Endowment for the Arts. 2010. <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> To read more about National Endowment for the Arts’ creative placemaking program, go to <http://arts.gov/national/our-town>

<sup>4</sup> To read more about ArtPlace America, go to <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/>

<sup>5</sup> To learn more about Tremont history, go to Neighborhood Link’s Neighborhood Tour: <http://www.nhlink.net/neighborhoodtournew/history.php?neighborhood=tremont>

Creative placemaking is the name of a recent trend for revitalizing neighborhoods, cities, and regions through the cultivation and promotion of their arts and cultural assets. While such efforts have occurred for many decades throughout the country, Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, in their 2010 report of the same name, coined the concept “creative placemaking”.<sup>2</sup> This report explains how arts and culture assets are key components of a broader economic development toolkit because of their unique ability to reimagine vacant spaces, celebrate ethnic and historic legacies, attract and welcome visitors, and rally community stakeholders around issues of common cause.

While more recent national initiatives like “Our Town”<sup>3</sup> and “ArtPlace America”<sup>4</sup> are providing funding to support creative placemaking activities, Cleveland is home to many neighborhoods where artists, community partners, and arts and culture organizations have much longer histories of working together to impact economic and community development outcomes. An emerging issue for such communities is not “creative placemaking” per se, but rather “creative placekeeping.” Specifically, how do Cleveland neighborhoods that were early adopters of utilizing arts and culture-based redevelopment strategies maintain their momentum, remain competitive and respond to their community’s evolving tastes?

Cleveland’s Tremont neighborhood is a primary example. It was one of the first neighborhoods in Cleveland to witness a resurgence through the cultivation and growth of its arts and culture assets—a resurgence that was decades in the making.

### **Latent Potential**

Visual artist, former gallery owner, and Tremont West Development Corporation staff member Jim Votava has one word to describe the neighborhood in 1993: “scary.”

Votava moved to Tremont as part of, what he describes as, a wave of artist settlers and squatters. When Votava arrived, the perception of many residents was that Tremont’s better days were behind it. The neighborhood that, decades earlier, had once attracted waves of Eastern European immigrants looking for good jobs in the nearby steel mills had lost its economic verve and more than two-thirds of its population, which went from a high of about 36,000 in 1920 to 8,138 in 2000.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the neighborhood’s challenges, Tremont’s embrace of arts and culture, in addition to its cheap rent, encouraged

Votava to leave his 5,000 square feet of studio space with its enviable lake views in downtown Cleveland noting that he “wanted to be part of a neighborhood that celebrated art and was affordable.”

Other early artists like crafter Angelica Pozo were also drawn to Tremont for its affordability and the opportunity to be an artist-pioneer that would make arts and culture a driving force in the area’s redevelopment.

Tremont’s affordability and appreciation for the arts also attracted early gallery owner, Jean Brandt. Just two years out of college, she arrived in 1987 to open both her law office and Brandt Gallery, managing to successfully reinvigorate the boarded-up storefronts on Kenilworth Avenue. Eventually, Brandt’s passion for the neighborhood and the arts would coalesce around the development of new programming that served to promote and expand the visibility of Tremont’s art and culture assets.

### **Growing an Artistic Place**

Six years after first arriving in Tremont, and encouraged by the continued growth in the art scene, Jean Brant and Sandy Rutkowski, then-bar manager at Edison’s Pub, organized a handful of galleries and restaurants into a monthly ArtWalk. Today, the Tremont ArtWalk, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2013, continues to draw roughly 4,000 art lovers and pub crawlers the second Friday of each month. Votava points to the ArtWalk as being a critical driver to the neighborhood’s attractiveness and the catalyst for developing the extensive activities available today. “Everything kicked off with the ArtWalk,” Votava says.

As community support for the arts grew, so did the number of programs related to arts and culture. Marking their eleventh anniversaries in September 2013, Arts in August, Tremont Trek, Taste of Tremont, along with the Tremont Arts and Cultural Festival (which celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in September 2013), have followed in the footsteps of the ArtWalk. Arts and culture has become so central to the neighborhood’s identity and sense of place that Votava even includes an “art yard” in the Tremont Farmer’s Market.

Over time many of these programs, like the Arts and Cultural Festival, have grown significantly. Scott Rosenstein,



As a full time, self-employed artist, **Angelica Pozo** splits her time between her widely exhibited sculptural studio work, artist-in-residence programs, and major public art commissions. These commissions include designs at the RTA Airport Station, the Market Place Bench by the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland’s Gateway District, as well as mosaics at Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital and the Cleveland State University Law Library.

A New York City native born to parents of Cuban and Puerto Rican descent, Angelica Pozo moved to Cleveland in 1984 after receiving her Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Pozo has been awarded the Individual Artist Fellowship by the Ohio Arts Council and an Arts Midwest/National Endowment for the Arts Regional Artist Fellowship. Additionally, some of her work is part of a permanent collection in the Museum of Art and Design in New York City.

**Website:** <http://www.angelicapozo.com/>



Angelica Pozo (pictured) in front of her public artwork / Photo by Dan Milner

Tremont West’s Community Involvement Manager and Tremont Arts and Cultural Festival Manager, points to the 94 visual artists and twenty or so performance artists featured as part of the 2013 Arts and Cultural Festival, held in Lincoln Park in September. Rosenstein estimates that the first festival in 1998 attracted about 8,000 people, while 2013 organizers planned for a crowd of 25,000. Rosenstein points out that, unlike years past, the festival now covers the “whole park” and finding ways to fit everyone in has become a problem. Nonetheless, “That’s a good problem to have,” he says.

### **Redefining Place**

With the establishment of new arts and culture venues and events, outsider perceptions of Tremont changed and the next wave of in-migration attracted non-artists seeking to surround themselves with the culture and vitality that artists had created.

“People began to realize it was someplace special,” says Rosenstein. “With the coming of artists came the people who wanted to be around such a space. Young singles, couples, [and] empty nesters found Tremont a cool place to be.”

The process of gentrification often is a double-edged sword for neighborhoods revitalizing through the presence of arts and culture. While an influx of new residents increases property values and draws in new businesses, with it also comes the potential for displacement. Rising rents and increased competition for space often threaten to price out the original residents, in this case the artists and galleries, that had made the neighborhood highly desirable to the subsequent waves of residents.

Local artist and writer Josh Usmani explored the extent to which the forces of gentrification may in fact be displacing Tremont’s arts and culture assets. In a CoolCleveland article Usmani asked “Is Tremont Still an Art Community?”<sup>6</sup> He asked artists and gallery owners to weigh in. Many, including Usmani, observed that restaurants, bars, and boutiques have seemingly crowded out galleries.

“Every time I go out to Tremont I see more people at bars and restaurants than galleries,” Usmani wrote.

In the article, artist Dana Depew, who ran Tremont’s celebrated non-profit Asterisk Gallery from 2001 until it closed in 2010, chalked up the shrinking presence of art to a simple matter of economics: “The bottom line is affordability. The model has existed forever; artists come in when

<sup>6</sup> Josh Usmani “Is Tremont Still an Art Community? A Conversation with Cleveland Artists” <http://www.coolcleveland.com/blog/2013/07/is-tremont-still-an-art-community>

rent is cheap until the place becomes nice and is no longer affordable... Galleries just don't generate a lot of income compared to restaurants or shops."

Also contributing to this trend is the dual role that galleries play as both promoters and sellers of art.

"The art gallery business is like a labor of love, especially for unconventional artists who care more about making statements than selling their work", gallery owner Paul Duda says. "Once rents start to go up, artists can't afford to stay there any longer."

The Survey of Galleries, Shops, and Studios, which focused on a group of 21 organizations throughout Cleveland, confirms this dual role as gallery and shop owners report viewing themselves as primarily promoters (31%) or exhibitors (27%) of art and identifying an economic role for their work to a lesser extent, identifying themselves as exporters (16%) or importers (14%) of art.

### **Evolving Cultural Tastes**

As Tremont's desirability as a neighborhood grew over the past decade, demand for collectible art pieces declined. According to Votava, the recession of 2001 led to a significant drop in sales as fewer art buyers from New York were coming to town to take advantage of lower Midwest pricing to expand their collections. The more recent Great Recession, followed by a tepid recovery, has also meant that those who frequent the ArtWalk and Arts and Cultural Festival are more likely to be browsers than buyers and more likely to enjoy dinner or drinks at one of Tremont's eating houses than leave with a "luxury" art purchase from one of its art houses.

However, for galleries throughout Cleveland, recovery from recessionary challenges has been uneven. The Survey of Galleries, Shops, and Studios, which focused on a group of 21 such organizations throughout Cleveland, revealed that sixty-three percent (63%) of respondents actually saw an increase in sales over the last three years, but for many of them this did not come easy. Some pointed to the fact that they were hit hard during the recession, and the last two years of growth in sales have merely recovered those losses. The other 40% that reported either declines in sales or staying the same indicated that it has been a challenging environment to be a gallery or shop. Looking to build business beyond face-to-face interaction, 62% of galleries/shops use the Internet as a

marketplace. Beyond art, more than half of respondents indicated that they venture into sales that are not art related, or are art peripheral (i.e. framing, posters, etc.); this allows them to diversify their product line. In Tremont, these broader trends are driving new approaches to promoting arts and culture as well.

Votava and Rosenstein acknowledge that rising rents in Tremont have put pressure on galleries and pushed artists to exhibit in less traditional ways. Votava himself was forced to close his own Fruit Avenue Gallery, which he opened in 1998, and he counts only a few exhibition spaces that remain open.

With fewer galleries, it is now becoming commonplace for Tremont's bars and restaurants to double as exhibit space. Local establishments arrange to display the work of regional artists, rotating pieces around monthly. This shift has changed the type of art displayed, as installation, three dimensional, and crafts are eschewed in favor of two-dimensional visual arts. Some artists, like Angelica Pozo, also see differences in the type of artists that are willing to display in these non-traditional venues, which tends to skew toward artists in the early stages of their careers. She notes many established artists would not want to have their art displayed in poorly lit settings, making it difficult to fully appreciate the work. Many such artists, she contends, still prefer the gallery model where the art itself is the focus for visitors. The Survey of Visual Artists also confirms the continuing prominence of galleries as locations for selling or displaying art with most respondents indicating that they display their art in galleries (24%).

Other innovative mechanisms for the delivery of art include the concept of pop-up galleries or temporary exhibitions that avoid the long-term overhead of a permanent gallery. Votava has used this tactic with increasing frequency as a way to be more strategic and creative in how he showcases art. From October to December in 2012, he organized a pop-up show similar to the conglomeration of pieces and products assembled through the Cleveland Bazaar, a nearly decade-old craft fair. Votava's pop-up show included a variety of fine art and craft items, which he used to help market the ArtWalk's 20th anniversary celebration. The pop-up gallery model, though certainly important for the continued vibrancy of the art scene, may suffer from similar issues as displaying in restaurants and bars. Though the art is certainly the center of attention,

the types of art remain limited since large and heavy installations may not be feasible for shows with very short lifecycles. The Survey of Visual Artists also reveals that online platforms for selling art are gaining prominence, with 14% of respondents indicating they have used such virtual space—the second-highest category behind galleries.

Although many rightfully lament the loss of well-known galleries like Asterisk, gallery owner Paul Duda has welcomed the new, wider mix of activities in the neighborhood and does not feel threatened by bars displaying artwork. The way he sees it, Tremont will continue to be a visual arts destination if there is more artwork on display. Additionally, Duda is happy to see ArtWalk spotlight local salons, antique shops Cleveland Auction and Tremont Emporium, and clothing boutiques Banyan Tree and Evie Lou, in addition to the neighborhood galleries, bars, and restaurants. He believes people are attracted to the idea of a fun evening out and want to be able to eat dinner, have a drink, shop for a vintage toy or unique jewelry, get some ice-cream, and buy a piece of art.

“The more that goes on, the better for everybody,” he says. “You have to have destinations to make it fun for people to come down.”

As the notion of display space has changed, so has the neighborhood’s notion of art. Part of this change comes from the recognition of the culinary arts as a new and important addition to the art mix. “We’re all entertaining food as an art form,” Votava says. “We have had very high-end chefs come out of here.” Chefs like Lolita’s Michael Symon, Fahrenheit’s Rocco Whalen, and Dante’s Dante Boccuzzi have all garnered national attention.

The shift in the gallery model toward non-traditional space poses challenges for artists who may not be accustomed to working outside of more formal gallery spaces. However, Tremont continues to offer a mix of options for displaying art and remains a fertile ground for new and burgeoning artists. The neighborhood also continues to find new ways to keep arts and culture opportunities available to ensure they are meeting the evolving desires of residents and arts patrons alike.

### **Local Placekeeping, Regional Placemaking**

Even in cases where an artist, whether due to issues of affordability or not, chooses to live outside of the

neighborhood, there is a push to nonetheless engage them in the arts and culture programming in Tremont. Much of this push continues to come from Tremont West, which hosts the majority of arts and culture programs in the neighborhood, including the Arts and Cultural Fest. Though not explicit in the organization’s strategic plan, Executive Director Cory Riordan emphasized that arts and culture is an important part of the fabric of the community, and contributes to Tremont West’s mission of making the neighborhood a “national destination.”

“We continue to look for ways to express [Tremont’s special qualities] to make it a desirable place to live,” Rosenstein says.

To that end, Tremont West has worked to keep arts and culture in the neighborhood and deliver arts experiences in ways that reflect the changing behaviors of arts consumers who increasingly want to engage with arts and culture in more experiential ways. In many cases this entails bringing art out of formal gallery spaces and into the neighborhood. Examples include public art projects like Lucky Fireflies and innovative “un-programming” like street violinists that lend a feeling of spontaneity and help build an urban ambiance reflective of the neighborhood’s artistic fabric. Tremont West also recently had success in bringing the Beck Center for the Arts, a Lakewood-based non-profit arts institution, to a vacant storefront in their building. The Beck Center in Tremont currently offers classes for adults ranging from drawing to improvisation open to residents and visitors alike. Tremont West and the Beck Center are actively working to establish new partnerships to keep the Beck Center involved in the neighborhood.

Additionally, Tremont West recognizes the importance of expanding the perceived boundaries of the neighborhood to leverage the Tremont brand and encourage development in “Greater Tremont” beyond the traditional arts district. The most visible part of this effort has been the aggressive use of Tremont branded signage outside of what is traditionally viewed as Tremont’s arts district. Visitors are now greeted with signage and banners at the neighborhood’s gateways along Clark, W. 25th, and parts of Scranton. These areas have largely missed out on the arts-based economic revival in the neighborhood’s core further north. By expanding what is perceived as Tremont it is hoped that many of these benefits, like an improved

housing stock and rejuvenated commercial districts, will naturally begin to expand outward.

Finally, Tremont West is currently working with Angelica Pozo to develop an innovative artist-in-residence program for Tremont that would be geared toward developing art with, by, and for residents. The proposed program, which is designed with existing Tremont artists in mind, could potentially buffer said artists from continued increases in rents and property values, helping to create strong artistic anchors that act as a foundation for neighborhood arts and culture. "We continue to look for ways to express [Tremont's special qualities] to make it a desirable place to live," Rosenstein says.

Rosenstein admits to feeling a twinge of concern as other Cleveland neighborhoods seek to grow their art presence: "Arts funding is always competitive. From the standpoint of community development, that's a shrinking pot. As more and more neighborhoods go after grants, it gets more competitive."

His concern is also more basic than competition for limited buyers and grant resources; it's a matter of civic pride: "The thought crossed my mind that I was so... proud of Tremont that I wanted it to be unique."

Despite wanting to maintain Tremont's special qualities, Rosenstein says he now welcomes more communities to follow Tremont's lead: "I was a little threatened by some [of what has been going on in the other Cleveland neighborhoods], but a rising tide lifts all boats." Rosenstein says. "As West 25th Street [in Ohio City] has done better, I think there's a spillover effect. As communities grow and they become connected more and more, I think it builds up all the neighborhoods. It helps each area to be more desirable."

Votava echoes Rosenstein's concerns about competition, but he believes neighborhoods must focus on their different assets. "We attract a very specific crowd," he says. "I go out all over the place. Ohio City is a very different crowd. Each neighborhood has to look at what makes it attractive."

Tremont has successfully demonstrated that when neighborhoods focus on their unique assets they not only improve the lives of their own residents, but also contribute to a stronger regional mix of amenities for Cleveland's visitors and residents.



**The Cleveland Bazaar**, once known as Bazaar Bizarre Cleveland, is Cleveland's longest running indie crafts show, operating for over a decade. Throughout several shows a year, one can find dozens upon dozens of indie artists and vendors, all of whom display unusual and creative treasures. Items for sale range from earrings made from old vinyl records to designer tote bags made from recycled plastic bags. The funky, alternative, and eclectic vibe draws people to the craft shows, which helps the Cleveland Bazaar reach its goals –to draw people out of the malls and into the neighborhoods to support local and regional artists.

**Website:** <http://www.clevelandbazaar.org/>



Cleveland Bazaar at 78th Street Studios / Photo courtesy of CPAC

## CASE STUDY St. Clair Superior: Creative Reuse



Cleveland's St. Clair Superior neighborhood is making a name for itself finding value where so many others see waste. Whether in empty 2-liter soda bottles, unwanted vinyl flooring remnants, discarded sterile packaging material, or abandoned two-story homes, the Upcycle St. Clair project sees repurposing as the path to this neighborhood's revitalization.

"Hope Sketch" was aimed to transform a portion of the St. Clair Avenue streetscape between East 61st Street and Addison Avenue through a temporary installation using the collective input of neighborhood residents, businesses and stakeholders / Photo courtesy of LAND studio



Located on E. 47th St. in Cleveland's Midtown neighborhood, the **Morgan Art of Papermaking Conservatory and Educational Foundation** is an organization dedicated to preserving the art and production of hand papermaking. The organization is primarily education-driven, teaching people how to make paper by hand. Currently the Morgan Papermaking Conservatory teaches people papermaking, book arts, letter press, and silk printing.

The organization also offers students internships and actively promotes education. The goal is to establish the Morgan Papermaking Conservatory as an anchor encouraging artists to stay in Cleveland. The exhibit space displays invitational portfolios, which provide a platform to paper artists. Beyond their educational and preservation goals, the Morgan Papermaking Conservatory also aims to provide locally-sourced materials for their products through their garden. The garden has 51 kozo trees for Japanese paper, as well as other plants, like indigo, to make dyes unique to the organization.

**Website:** <http://morganconservatory.org/>



The Morgan Art of Papermaking Conservatory and Educational Foundation is home to the largest kozo (Japanese Mulberry) garden in the midwest. These plants are harvested every fall during a free community event and used throughout the year in eastern-style hand papermaking / Photo by Lauren Sammon

Visual artist Nicole McGee describes upcycling as a process that takes a material other people don't assign value to, and which is otherwise headed for a landfill or recycling plant, and creatively transforms it into a valuable object. She is also part of a broader partnership with the St. Clair Superior Development Corporation (SCSDC) to leverage this upcycling spirit in the neighborhood through a project called "Upcycle St. Clair." In June 2013, the Upcycle St. Clair project was awarded a \$375,000 grant from ArtPlace America, a consortium of six banks and 13 national and regional foundations. The 18-month grant is being used to pursue an arts-based strategy that dovetails with placemaking efforts already underway in the neighborhood.

"This is not the only arts-based strategy we have, but it is clearly the most significant both from the scope and from the fundraising capacity," says SCSDC Executive Director Michael Fleming. Counting the ArtPlace America grant, the SCSDC has raised more than \$500,000 to help revitalize the St. Clair Superior neighborhood east of E. 55th Street. "That doesn't even include housing, which we are also working on."

Fleming says the ArtPlace funding for the Upcycle St. Clair project is providing a "hook" for the Retail Ready economic development strategy the SCSDC launched in 2012. "The ArtPlace component is infusing our existing efforts with the arts," Fleming says. "We had a really interesting business strategy behind this."

The Retail Ready program provides small grants and free rent to businesses that want to move into vacant storefronts on St. Clair Avenue. Although the project was attracting support from potential business owners and the media, Fleming says his group realized "that there wasn't that clever hook that neighborhoods need. We wanted to make sure that we included the arts in there. So, when we pulled those two together, we saw that a lot of our artists were doing upcycling. Either creating art or doing something for sale, but basically everyone was doing something in that sort of creative reuse model.

### **Building the "Art Quarter"**

For more than a decade, artists have been migrating to the St. Clair Superior neighborhood, home to a mix of industrial and residential buildings stretching along the two east-west avenues from E. 18th Street to E. 65th Street. In 2002, the neighborhood became designated a

Live-Work Overlay District, the first in Cleveland, which spurred growth in the neighborhood's arts and culture presence. For example, Tower Press, a century-old industrial site at E. 19th and Superior, was the first live-work loft project developed under the new zoning ordinance enacted by the city to encourage the development of artist studio spaces. Of the facility's eighty units, sixteen were made available at under market value rates to accommodate artists. In another converted warehouse along E. 30th Street, Zygote Press provides printmaking facilities and individual studio space, Terra Vista Studios offers airy workspace for ceramic artists, and ArtSpace Cleveland works to help local artists find affordable live-work options. The LoftWorks Building, a former automotive plant at the corner of E. 40th Street and Payne Avenue, now houses a photography studio, galleries and a jewelry designer.

**In 2002, the [St. Clair Superior] neighborhood became designated a Live-Work Overlay District, the first in Cleveland, which spurred growth in the neighborhood's arts and culture presence.**

The growing concentration of artists and arts and culture organizations led to the area's renaming in 2007; it is now known as the Cleveland Art Quarter. The ArtPlace grant is allowing the St. Clair Superior neighborhood to

build on its success in attracting artists to grow retail presences and expand economic activity, all the way to the neighborhood's easternmost edge. To continue building on this momentum, the SCSDC wanted to develop a strategy for leveraging the neighborhood's underappreciated objects and places from a new perspective.

### **Creative Upcycling**

Fleming approached McGee in February 2012 about the placemaking and retail potential of creative reuse. "We activate vacant retail spaces," says McGee, whose Collective Upcycle shop has popped up in empty storefronts around greater Cleveland, including, Gordon Square, Shaker Square, and the Fifth Street Arcade. "Part of the goal of the Collective Upcycling effort was to create an ongoing retail experience" to keep people interested in local products and raise awareness of "the value of secondhand."

Today, the ArtPlace grant is supporting the creation of Collective Upcycle's permanent home on St. Clair, where sixty regional upcyclists will display their products at the store, similar to the Ten Thousand Villages model, as described by McGee. To be considered "upcycled," 75 percent of each product must be a resourceful reuse of other products. Products will be sold on consignment, with seventy percent of each sale going to the artist and thirty percent going to the store. "Artists from all over the region will be featured," McGee says, "but they have to upcycle." McGee says the goal of the Upcycle St. Clair project is to build an economy around the practice. "We've sold the goods of 65 upcyclists [through the pop-up events], and there are way more out there... We've proven the model. The pop-up model has definitely worked."



Adding to the Upcycle St. Clair marketplace will be a creative resource center, which McGee will run. This center will function as a “thrift store” for craft supplies culled from waste products. Artists, teachers and other creative types may find inspiration amid fabric remnants, wallpaper rolls, washers, sterile equipment packaging, or even a box full of wine corks. “If you have two corks from a wine bottle, you probably wouldn’t think of a use for them, but if you had a big box of corks, then that inspires imagination,” McGee says. “We’re taking materials that can’t be recycled and finding a different use for them.”

She envisions a mutually beneficial arrangement. “We’re helping them [the suppliers] get rid of things” they see as waste. Meanwhile, artists have access to inexpensive, imagination-inspiring supplies, and the St. Clair neighborhood gets an innovative new business.

McGee admits to building on the model of ZeroLandfill, an upcycling program that channels outdated samples of interior designers and architecture firms into the hands of artists and arts educators in need of creative supplies. The ZeroLandfill program began in Northeast Ohio in 2006 and has since spread to about twenty markets throughout the nation. McGee says she was also inspired by the work of the Scrap Exchange in Durham, North Carolina, which has served as a model for collecting materials from local businesses and distributing them to artists, craft-makers, and arts educators. McGee envisions her Upcycle Parts Shop as a means to engage the community not just in retail activity, but also through community partnerships and workshops.

In addition to the Collective Upcycle and the Upcycle Parts establishments, the ArtPlace grant will help create a permanent home for the Cleveland Flea. The Flea, described on its website as “part urban treasure hunt, part culinary adventure, part maker center,” began in February 2013 as a marketplace for about twenty vendors as part of the Kurentovanje or Slovenian Carnival Festival. The St. Clair Superior neighborhood that is the ArtPlace grant’s target has a rich Slovenian history, encompassing the historic Slovenian National Home and nearby St. Vitus, Cleveland’s first Slovenian Catholic parish.

The ongoing Collective Upcycle pop-up shop, now entering its third year, and the new Upcycle Parts Shop (launched in Spring 2014) each share a common founder—**Nicole McGee**. Her personal artistic expression, is manifested through her company Plenty Underfoot, whose products can be found throughout Northeast Ohio, from restaurants to non-profits. McGee has championed upcycling for years, and her business has transformed countless discarded products into jewelry and home furnishings.

McGee is also planning to launch what she calls the “Shop the Window project,” displaying various artisans’ upcycling products in otherwise empty storefronts and allowing shoppers to purchase items through the ease of Quick Response (QR) codes. The potential for this project is considerable given how vendors across the nation and around the world have successfully used QR codes to enable commuters, pedestrians, and window shoppers to buy everything from groceries to Christmas presents through their smartphones. McGee has her eye on an empty storefront in Shaker Square but plans to experiment with the process in other high-traffic sites throughout the area. Ideally, McGee says, the “activated” vacant storefronts will help artists sell products, raise the visibility of individual artists, and increase recognition of upcycling in general. Through her own and other artists’ upcycled art, McGee has shown that upcycling is a personal passion she is determined to share.

**Website:** <http://www.plentyunderfoot.com/>



Nicole McGee (pictured) / Photo by Bob Perkoski

The Flea returned to the neighborhood in April as a Saturday market day for local artists, artisans, and vendors, and has continued to take place monthly in various locations around the neighborhood.

Fleming depicts the upcycling strategy—adding value to something seemingly valueless—as complementary to other revitalization efforts underway in the neighborhood, including a partnership with Loft Home Builders, Inc. and the Cuyahoga Land Bank, to develop affordable, desirable housing options. The home renovation plan converts vacant, outdated two-story duplexes into single-family homes with open and airy floor plans. Because the redesign eliminates some of the structural, electrical, and ductwork components, the homes can be rehabbed for \$10,000 to \$15,000—only a few thousand dollars more than it would cost to tear them down. So far, two houses in the neighborhood have been gutted and rehabbed as part of the effort; four more are under way. The two renovated homes rent for \$400 to \$500 a month. “We wanted this to be an artist-driven housing project,” Fleming says; so far the plan seems to be working: He has a waiting list of thirty people, mostly artists, hoping to move in.

### **Building the Broader Community**

“Arts are happening here,” Fleming says. Upcycle St. Clair, however, has “more than just an arts focus—we’re pairing it with economic development.”

Consequently, the SCSDC has looked toward their Retail Ready economic development strategy, modeled after a similar program in Bethesda, Maryland. That program, called the Vibrant Streets Initiative, bills itself as a toolkit for helping communities grow retail spaces “from the

grassroots up.” Fleming makes clear “the buildings targeted for the program aren’t falling apart—they’re not burned-out buildings, they are just closed up.” Since Fall 2012, the Retail Ready offer of small business loans and six months’ free rent has attracted four new establishments—a dance studio, a genealogical society, Santana’s Artist Gallery and a coffee and bakery shop. “Part of what we wanted was to import a number of businesses all at once,” Fleming says. “The problem was that not everything fit the space. The infrastructure has taken time to develop.”

**Upcycle St. Clair has “more than just an arts focus—we’re pairing it with economic development.”**

Infrastructure refers to more than simply the physical presence of adequate buildings and roads; it also entails the know-how for creating a product, gauging a potential market, accessing funds, and starting a new business. The SCSDC development strategy is part business attraction and part business creation modeling. Witnessing the creativity going on around them and experiencing upcycling opportunities through workshops and other community events encourages residents to think, “I can do this. I can make this,” Fleming says. Collective Upcycle and the Flea give potential neighborhood entrepreneurs sales outlets to test their products’ viability. Over time, the budding entrepreneurs may be able to expand their products into storefront businesses. “We’re laying out all the steps for people,” he says.

Though the Upcycle St. Clair program zeroes in on the traditionally Slovenian commercial district along St. Clair Avenue between E. 60th and E. 65th Street, Fleming believes the development strategy's benefits will spill into other parts of the ethnically diverse neighborhood. As an example, he cites the artists and artisans living and working in the AsiaTown district along St. Clair and Superior Avenues a few blocks west. Those artists, he says, need public exposure and retail access to help sell their creations. The neighborhood's overall marketability is also enhanced by its convenient highway access and its proximity to both downtown and University Circle's cultural attractions and health industry hub. These factors would indicate that a spark in the Slovenian commercial district could potentially lead to spillovers for the rest of the neighborhood.

To encourage the neighborhood-wide appeal, the SCSDC has been using art to engage the public and brand the neighborhood. On an empty lot at the corner of St. Clair and E. 64th Street, a kiosk system containing doors on seven turnstiles label the neighborhood "ST CLAIR" and invite residents to share their visions for the community. In the future, Fleming and McGee envision a vibrant streetscape of color designating a revitalized retail district. "Part of what we want to do with coloring the street is to make sure we have impact beyond the grant," McGee says. "It's important that we're building the area and not parachuting into the community. It's important that we're building community, not just 'doing something' to it."

While Fleming says some St. Clair Superior residents tend to see the neighborhood's better days firmly in the past, he hopes the SCSDC's efforts will encourage them to "be positive about their neighborhood again." Unique placemaking activities, like those provided by the Flea and Upcycle shops, attract people from outside the neighborhood,

and even outside the region to their area, exposing them to the positive changes taking place in the community. Long-established businesses have reported increasing numbers of customers coming in to shop, eat, or browse, Fleming says. "That exposure is really, really helpful."

**“It’s important that we’re building the area and not parachuting into the community. It’s important that we’re building community, not just ‘doing something’ to it.”**

The parallel between the work of local upcyclists and the SCSDC is clear—both are innovatively taking something that is undervalued, whether it's a piece of scrap material or a whole neighborhood, and reimagining it as something far more valuable. "We're polishing off and uncovering the assets that are here," McGee says. "It's the strategy that feels like it makes the most sense. What we have around us and underfoot is what we need."

## CASE STUDY Public Art: Placemaking in Action

Public art is intrinsically linked to the character of its public spaces. Public art can also test local perceptions: Is painting on the exterior of buildings creative expression or unwelcome graffiti? Are statues and displays worthwhile uses of limited funds, especially when communities are faced with difficult issues like poverty, joblessness, and failing schools? Such questions are important to consider as public art is increasingly valued by developers and community leaders alike for its power to build and brand neighborhoods, leverage existing assets and reveal future purpose.



“Public art” can be a challenging term to define. Murals on exterior walls that commuters pass by every day and statues in public parks would certainly fall within the definition. However, the definitional gray areas of public art are where questions most often arise. In the case of the statue, does public art also extend to the essential components of the park in which it resides? Can the definition be applied to benches that invite commuters to sit and rest while they wait for a bus? Surprisingly enough, many designers would argue yes.

“Public art in the most traditional sense is the insertion of beautiful and meaningful structures” into public spaces, says Terry Schwarz, director of Kent State University’s Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC), which is headquartered in Playhouse Square. Understood this way, public art’s definition can be expanded to include sidewalk pavers, well-designed transit shelters, and beautiful trash cans. “It’s not about looking at an individual paving or trash can. It’s the haptic experience of the overall space. The paving and trash cans add up to the point of changing people’s perception of a neighborhood.”

Art’s relationship and overlap with utilitarian elements create a condition in which public art and public spaces are intrinsically linked. “We would point out our front window at Market Square Park [in Ohio City] and ask is it art or is it a park?” says Ann Zoller, executive director of LAND studio, a nonprofit organization that seeks out opportunities at the intersection of art, landscape, neighborhoods, and development. “Or is it a combination of both? The park component is very much reliant on the art component.”

Despite public art’s somewhat abstract and porous nature, it nonetheless represents a powerful tool for placemaking by sparking community dialogue, nurturing community potential, and by helping residents envision new uses for old spaces. In all three functions of placemaking, public art can help inject energy and investment into neighborhoods.

### Spurring Dialogue

Amy Callahan, director of Waterloo Arts (formerly Arts Collinwood), admits to thinking a lot about the nature of public art in 2013. Callahan spent the year overseeing and watching Zoetic Walls come to life, a project of 10 murals painted by various local, national and international artists on buildings around Cleveland’s Collinwood neighborhood. “I naively thought when we started this project that it would be simple,” Callahan says. On the Internet, Callahan

**Zoetic Walls** came to fruition as part of an ArtPlace grant Waterloo Arts received to stage three exhibits, each exploring the theme of vacancy. Funds from the grant were also used to create a “Welcome to Collinwood” website. Nick Marzullo, a native Clevelander who created the organization Pawn Works in Chicago with street art as a focus, saw the website and contacted Amy Callahan, director of Waterloo Arts. Callahan admits to being largely unfamiliar with street art before Marzullo started talking to her about staging an event in Cleveland. The collaboration was a success, and Marzullo’s relationships with artists have helped Callahan stretch her shoestring budget, allowing her to get 10 murals painted for roughly \$14,000.

An interesting twist to the project is that much of the art around the neighborhood is temporary. Three murals were even painted on buildings scheduled for demolition. This impermanent quality encourages freedom for exploration and creativity, particularly when compared to the planning and rules that involve erecting a new building or a new sign. “This is transitional art that allows you to not invest so much time,” Callahan says. She hopes that adding interest to the walls of buildings around the community will call attention to the destruction and demolition that have leveled a number of the neighborhood’s blocks. “A mural gets you attached in the way that you should be attached to a building,” she says. Translation: “Maybe it means you’ll notice” if it gets torn down.

**Website:** <http://artscollinwood.org/zoetic-walls/>



Brooklyn artist, RAE (pictured) painting a mural in North Collinwood for Waterloo Arts’ Zoetic Walls project in 2013 / Photo by Seth Beattie

found pictures of murals in cities around the world and wondered, “wouldn’t it just be cool to go paint murals, and everyone will love them?”

As it turns out, not everyone in Collinwood loves the murals, which were completed in June 2013. “You just get a reaction much faster when you put up art in public areas than if you put anything else up,” Callahan says. People expect to see billboards, telephone poles, and business signs in their public spaces, but “as soon as you put up a piece of art, a million opinions start to fly.” Some residents were angry about a mural in a prominent spot on the corner of Waterloo Road and East 156th Street that was painted by Argentinean artist Ever. Questions for Callahan abounded like “why did the man in the painting resemble Fidel Castro?” and “why would she allow a mural that seemed to promote communism?” Other residents questioned the meaning of another mural in which an individual is shown wearing a gas mask. “Was the artist calling their neighborhood ‘stinky?’” they asked. Still others wondered why artists from outside of the community were commissioned to create art within it. Callahan understands such perspectives from community members and says the exchange of energy that comes from public creations is worth some people disliking the work. In fact, Callahan purposefully did not seek to approve sketches or ask to see plans. She did not want to “pick” at the art. “To me that sort of ends up killing the energy that is so positive,” she says. “I’m OK not loving everything.”

“Not loving everything” is often what leads to public conversation and debate. Callahan describes an encounter that occurred when a resident began yelling that one of the artists should go paint “in his own neighborhood.” Another resident who lived near where the mural was being painted came out to ask why the critic was giving the artist such a hard time. “I feel like even those kinds of criticisms are fine,” Callahan says. “They create a dialogue.”

### **Nurturing Potential**

Neighborhoods often find public art not only starts conversations, as was the case with Zoetic Walls, but also shifts the existing conversation about the neighborhood in a positive direction. This is true for Slavic Village, a neighborhood that at one point was referred to as the epicenter of the foreclosure crisis. In the wake of this designation, Slavic Village’s master plan for redevelopment hinged on the neighborhood’s Morgana Run Trail, Cleveland’s first multipurpose rails-to-trails project. As part of this trail, Slavic Village Development partnered with LAND studio and artist Jake Beckman to develop Rotaflora, a 35-foot-tall whimsical flower sculpture made of bicycle wheels to mark the trailhead and give the neighborhood a focal point. These investments were a strong statement affirming the neighborhood’s rebirth, particularly to the thousands of commuters that pass the Rotaflora—or “Dr. Seuss Dandelion,” as it is affectionately referred to by LAND studio’s Managing Director Gregory Peckham.

A few miles away, an 18-foot-tall statue of a trumpet player heralds the Art & Soul of Cleveland’s Buckeye neighborhood, transforming a park into a statement about the community and its values. In this case, as with Slavic Village’s Rotaflora, the power of public art to define communities is quite clear. “We can cite a dozen instances where we finished a project with a strong visible public art piece and immediately it was adopted on the front of organizations’ annual reports,” Peckham says. “Almost universally, the photographic landmarks in a city are these unusual public art pieces that define places.”

“There’s growing consensus among our partners that [public art and public space] matters. There is recognition that investment in public spaces is an economic development tool.”

These types of public art projects, however, serve as more than visual landmarks and tools for neighborhood branding. In fact, the potential economic development impact of these projects has, according to Zoller and Peckham, received greater acceptance among both private developers and political leaders. Starting in 2003, the City of Cleveland’s required 1.5 percent of the budget for each new municipal construction or improvement project go toward artwork, which was a codified recognition of private and political acceptance. “There’s growing consensus among our partners that [public art and public space] matters. There is recognition that investment in public spaces is an economic development tool,” Zoller says. A decade ago, “we were more easily dismissed as the nice little park people.” Back then, funding for public art pieces tended to derive from “money that was left over” after major development projects were completed. Now, there is a growing sense that the public art itself is a “difference maker” for neighborhoods. Because of art’s growing significance for a community, Zoller and Peckham have noticed that private developers increasingly initiate the conversation with LAND studio, seeking their input on projects around the city. This dialogue bolsters existing evidence for the growing consensus that quality of place, often enhanced through public art, is strongly linked to economic activity.



A Chicago native, **Terry Schwarz** moved to Cleveland in 1990 after receiving her Master’s degree in City and Regional Planning from Cornell University. She worked for the Shaker Heights City Planning Department for ten years before becoming the director of Kent State University’s Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC), the university’s architecture graduate program specializing in urban design. In 2009, she was awarded the Mid-Career Artists Award from the Cleveland Arts Prize.

In 2005, Terry Schwarz started the Shrinking Cities Institute, which aimed to explore the implications of large-scale population loss and urban vacancy. The Institute organized exhibits, symposiums, and research efforts to start a conversation about the City of Cleveland’s urban transition. From this, Pop Up City was born. Examples of Pop-Up events include Leap Night, in which a vacant lot was transformed into a snow and ice installation on leap day; Bridge Mixx, a night celebration on a pedestrian bridge; and Pop Up Rockwell, a one-week experiment to test complete and green street improvements on Rockwell Avenue in downtown Cleveland. This endeavor aimed to create programs that activated vacant and underutilized space throughout the city. The goal in each case was to inspire people to think of these areas differently and come up with unique solutions and uses for the vast amount of these places existing throughout Cleveland.

**Website:** [http://www.cudc.kent.edu/about\\_us/people/](http://www.cudc.kent.edu/about_us/people/)



Leap Night was the first large scale event of the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative’s Pop Up City initiative / Photo by Natalie Kontur



**LAND studio** has facilitated place-making efforts throughout Cleveland. In 2012 alone, LAND studio installed 32 public art works and spent \$1.8 million on design and implementation. LAND studio projects employed 127 artists and 39 contractors last year. “We spend a tremendous amount [of money] on artists and landscape architects and people like that,” LAND studio managing director Greg Peckham says. “We certainly employ a lot of contract work, and people who fabricate local art projects are mostly all local workers. That’s where there is direct tangible economic impact. When anybody builds public art, there are all these people involved in making it, putting it together, putting it in the ground.”

LAND studio staff, working in separate organizations before a 2011 merger brought the thirty-year-efforts of Cleveland Public Art and ParkWorks together, helped the Slavic Village Development Corporation plant its new vision for the neighborhood with Rotaflora. LAND studio facilitates the creation of these defining pieces by helping match neighborhoods to artists. Selected artists work with neighborhood leaders, residents, and other stakeholders to develop works that reflect the image communities want to convey. LAND Studio executive director, Ann Zoller, adds: “Our work can be very symbolic in telling the story of what a neighborhood is hoping to achieve in a real physical way.”

**Website:** <http://www.land-studio.org/>



“Rotaflora”, LAND studio worked with Slavic Village Development to develop a marker for the trail’s East 49th Street trailhead / Photo courtesy of LAND studio

## **A New Perspective**

Public art has the power to spur dialogue and help nurture a community, in addition to reimagining old, forgotten, or otherwise undesirable spaces. Both LAND studio and Kent State University’s CUDC have been involved in these types of projects, but each is taking a different approach.

**Public art has the power to spur dialogue and help nurture a community, in addition to reimagining old, forgotten, or otherwise undesirable spaces.**

The CUDC’s Pop Up City initiative focuses on temporary and short-term interventions for vacant and foreclosed sites. The CUDC website highlights the opportunity: “Established by the CUDC in 2007, Pop Up City is a program that brings empty places to life through magical, ephemeral experiences that demonstrate how vacancy can be an opportunity and an adventure, not just a liability.” Though *Pop Up City* was initially seen as a way of “reactivating the city,” CUDC’s Director Terry Schwarz suggests the short-term nature of the activities has proven to be a useful community engagement tool. “They help us make better design decisions,” says Schwarz, who is nationally known for her upbeat and innovative approaches to transforming struggling cities. “They help engage the public in ways that we could not with a PowerPoint [presentation]. It gives people an opportunity to inhabit a future design, [and] to experience what a place could be like.”

For example, one of Pop Up City's early projects involved transforming a vacant lot on the East Bank of the Flats into a family-friendly winter wonderland for Leap Night 2008. With funding from the Civic Innovation Lab, the group created fire pits, a winter forest, an ice skating rink, a snowboard ramp, and snow and ice installations. The site was already owned by a developer, but redevelopment had been slow to materialize. Schwarz says the pop up event was meant to remind the public why this site's development, where the Cuyahoga River meets Lake Erie, was so important to the city. "There was just something about the Flats that nobody was going," Schwarz says "We were trying to change the perception about the Flats." Beyond changing perceptions, the project exposed the site developer to possibilities for public use.

Through another event in 2012, Pop Up City created a temporary streetscape downtown on Rockwell Avenue. The City of Cleveland had passed a Complete and Green Streets ordinance the year before, requiring 20 percent of all road-construction budgets go toward making the projects friendlier to pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, and the environment.

The temporary streetscape, dubbed "Pop Up Rockwell," was in place for one week as an effort to help people envision potential outcomes of the ordinance. It featured a dedicated two-lane bike path, or "cycletrack," marked out with duct tape, as well as demonstration "bi-fi" sidewalk benches, which filter storm runoff while providing Wi-Fi access to those using the bench. "Basically the project was about taking an ordinance and giving it physical form," Schwarz says. A physical representation allows people to interact with and better articulate their desired uses for a space.

LAND studio's projects, on the other hand, have tended to be more permanent. Take for example, Perk Park downtown and Market Square in Ohio City. Each was originally designed and built in the 1970s, a time when different sensibilities regarding public spaces were the norm. During that time, public spaces were often designed

away from the street, which made access inconvenient for those most likely to use them, such as mass transit riders. Both parks had "outlived their useful lives," Peckham says. Infrastructure was crumbling. Safety was an issue because of the lack of sight lines through the parks. "They were no longer functioning how the community wanted. They had to look and function differently."

LAND studio helped to facilitate a \$3 million redevelopment of Perk Park and a \$1 million redesign of Market Square Park. The positive effects of both projects, which were completed in 2012, include an increase in nearby storefront businesses opening. Long perceived as uninviting and unsafe, the redesigned Perk Park, with its expansive red canopy, concrete chairs and mood lighting, now draws lunching workers, young families, and dog walkers to an acre of tree-lined downtown greenspace at Chester Avenue and East 12th Street. On Wednesdays during summer months, visitors can enjoy a free outdoor concert while they dine on lunch from a nearby food truck. Market Square Park is serving as a "pivot point" to expand commercial development along West 25th Street south of Lorain Avenue. For both projects, it is hard to tell where "the park stops and the art begins," Zoller says, because the public art and the public park space are so tightly integrated. Market Square Park's inviting landscaping, funky BookBox mini-library, coordinated wooden furnishings, and large mural celebrating the craftsmanship of Market District products work together to create a cohesive public space.

"When you say design, people think about fancy shoes rather than thinking about how you make something that solves a problem," Peckham says. "But when people experience [a well-designed public space] they know that it feels right to them... Public art is a part of that."

## CASE STUDY Artist Activists: Heightening Social Awareness

Art can capture beauty; art can convey whimsy. Art can be commercial or personal, trendy or traditional, introspective or outward-looking. Art can also inspire collective action—even if that action is as simple as making us more aware of the consequences of our daily decisions.



**The Center for Artistic Activism** was founded in 2007 by Steve Lambert and Stephen Duncombe to study and share research that surrounds the intersection between art and activism. Among the organization's board members are a wide array of academics and artists, such as Jacques Servin, co-founder of the internationally recognized group the Yes Men. The group uses media tactics, including impersonating high-level government and corporate officials to make statements that deliberately contradict the actual policy platforms of particular organizations.

Lambert and Duncombe, recognizing the power that a dedicated non-profit could wield, set to work developing a robust organization with dedicated programs to support the Center's mission. These included programs like the School for Creative Activism, a training program for grassroots activists on how to use creativity and the arts to win campaigns. Conversely, the weekend-long Art Action Academy—a workshop offered by the Center—was designed to engage artists interested in using their talents in change-making campaigns. According to the Center's mission, "Creative activism is more than just an innovative tactic, it is an entire approach: a perspective, a practice, a philosophy. Our goal is to make more creative activists and more effective artists. We aim to win."

**Website:** <http://artisticactivism.org/>

The revelatory power of art makes it a powerful medium for shining a light on society. For millennia, artists have expressed their emotions, reflected on their societies, and spurred greater social consciousness through their work. The nonprofit Center for Artistic Activism goes even further, stating that art is the "bridge that connects uncommon, idealistic, or even radical ideas with everyday life." This case study highlights two Cleveland artists who use the arts to raise public awareness of, and interest in, pressing issues they see around them in greater Cleveland. Donald Black, Jr., 33, has focused his hybridized photography techniques on exploring issues of foreclosure, father-son relationships, and racial divides, while Mimi Kato, 39, is shedding light, quite literally, on the spreading problem of invasive plant species.

### "I have a hope for change"

Black-and-white photography projects an image in contrast, but nuances and distinctions lie in the gray values. Activist artists help to frame life's "gray areas" and bring them into greater focus, Black says. By "creating artwork with a heightened social aspect to it, we're looking for some kind of change to occur. . . I look at photography as very synonymous with how I perceive things; I've used it as a metaphor for how I live."

A turning point for Black came while he was working in New York City building a small but successful commercial enterprise offering discount headshots to aspiring actors. He submitted his portfolio to a magazine editor, who reviewed his body of work and declared that he needed to "photograph more white people," Black says. "It wasn't conscious that I was photographing only black people. I was photographing mostly black people because that was who I was around," he says. "I started wondering whether a photographer who photographed mostly white people, whether anyone, would say 'you need to photograph more black people.'"

Black thought about all of his favorite photographers and how his attraction to them was predominantly based on their technical expertise. In particular, he had always been drawn to high-end studio photographs—photos that did not include a "huge array of black faces." The comment nevertheless clicked with him. "It sent me in a different direction completely from the time I left the meeting!" He went home and painted his roommate in blackface,

recalling the pose struck by hip-hop artist Mos Def on his 2004 album, *The New Danger*. Those photos became a series Black called "The Crisis of Realism."

The exchange not only sent him in a different direction—encouraging him to reduce his commercial work so he could spend more time exploring what he wanted to say as an artist—but it also helped bring him home to Cleveland. "I had to do all sorts of jobs in New York to pay my rent. There was a huge economic benefit to moving back to Cleveland. It cleared my mind financially," he says. "My only purpose for going to New York was to get away from home, to test to see if I could rise to the challenge." He had started working with students in New York and, upon returning to Cleveland, led summer programs through the arts education group, Center for Arts-Inspired Learning (formerly Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio). Black worked with teens and preteens in a variety of



**The Center for Arts-Inspired Learning**, formerly known as Young Audiences, aims to enrich the lives of children through arts education while promoting creative learning. The Center works with professional teaching artists who are experts in their fields, ranging from dance, theater, and music to digital and visual arts. The Center also puts on workshops and has artist-in-residence programs. The 120 teaching artists help students from Pre-K through 12th grade explore art and use it to grow, learn, and succeed in the classroom. Throughout its sixty-year lifespan, the organization has served over seven million students in eighteen Northeast Ohio counties and has helped countless more through its advocacy, professional development, and community programs.

**Website:** <http://arts-inspiredlearning.org>



Center for Arts-Inspired Learning Teaching Artist, Mark Yasancheck worked with 150 students from Cleveland's Paul Revere Elementary to create murals for the exterior of the school. Learning patterns, shapes, painting techniques, and art history, the students designed the 12 murals as part of a special school beautification project / Photo by Joe Ionna

after-school programs, teaching them about photography as well as life. "The whole goal is 'what do you want to say?'" he notes. "Ultimately what you're doing is about you, whether you are aware of it or not." He quickly realized his story—growing up learning to draw from his mother, finding refuge from the neighborhood violence at school where he won a spot at Cleveland School of the Arts, and pursuing a passion for photographic technique and artistry at Ohio University—meant more to kids in Cleveland than in New York. When he was invited to work with the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning students for a second summer, Black opted to return to his roots. He never went back to New York.

That was the summer of 2008—the year of the great U.S. financial crisis that threatened the global economy. Cleveland had already been impacted by the subprime mortgage meltdown, exemplified by the vast amount of boarded-up, abandoned homes. Black focused his artist's eye on the issue. "It was very personal," says Black, whose mother had worked as a general contractor when he was young and would participate in city-sponsored weatherization programs. When he drove around the city, he would see boarded-up homes he had shared with his mother throughout his childhood. Black had seen a couple of photography shows documenting the spate of foreclosures, but the photos had always been external shots of the houses. Those images felt distant and removed—and he was neither distant nor removed from what was going on in his hometown: "I became really attracted to what was inside the houses—the life inside. I was attracted to [the fact] that this was my community, [home to] a lot of people who look like me."

In addition to his camera, he grabbed a screw gun, which he used to peel boards off of doors to gain entry to the vacant homes. Of the houses he explored, he had personal ties to only one, a house where his aunt had lived.

"I felt like I was documenting some level of poverty. Being in my aunt's house was like holding up a mirror: 'Oh, wow, I'm a part of this,'" he says. "I went in the house to see what story was left." He compiled a huge body of work—gritty black-and-white images of toys and trash and total abandonment. Then, he stopped. He thought foreclosure photography was becoming too popular, even cliché. He didn't want his work to be misperceived as simply one more example of exploitative "ruin porn." "I didn't want to document ruins," he says. "I was trying to be a voice for those inside the house, for those who didn't seem to have a voice."

After completing his project on foreclosed homes in urban neighborhoods, Black moved on to explore what he perceived to be another sort of vacancy within urban families: absentee fathers. "The Power of the Pieces" was a temporary art installation Black developed in 2011 that recalled the relationship Black built with his own absentee father through chess. "My dad... would come and play me in chess when he was over partying on my side of town," Black says. "I kind of really appreciated what the game of chess did for me."

**"Ultimately what you're doing is about you, whether you are aware of it or not."**

At the time, Cleveland Public Library and Cleveland Public Art (now LAND Studio) selected the installation as part of their See Also program, which installs a temporary work of art in the library's Eastman Reading Garden each summer. Black crafted six chess tables, 2 by 3 square feet, and designed them to be played standing up. He added 1,000 chess pieces and used photographs of the six distinct chess pieces to label each table with a character trait: king—stability; queen—freedom; bishop—wisdom; knight—unique approach; rook—honesty; and pawn—risk-taking. Chess, as Black sees it, is a metaphor for life.

Hanging above the display was a 15- by 9-foot photograph of a young black boy and his father, heads meeting over the chess board. Models for the photograph were Black's cousin and his cousin's young son, but the story they tell is his personal one about finding moments of connection amid dysfunction. "I'm creating what I didn't see or what I saw in a very scarce kind of way," Black says. "It turned into wonderful dialogue. Everyone who learned to play chess seemed to have learned from their dad or granddad."

Black is developing a new project he hopes to unveil in 2014. This work will break down and dissect terms and concepts both familiar and fractious. School. Prison. Poverty. He focuses on examining and exploring "figures and objects and symbols to tell my story," he says. "I'm working on a body of work about public education and my perception of it as a kid and an educator. The education system is killing our kids so I'll visually explore that, visual representation of factory-style learning." He wants to convey perceptions of institutions in the black community that breed dependence. "I have a desire to be the one to tell you how the experience really works," Black says. "I have a hope for change."

#### **"Let's think about it"**

Mimi Kato, artist-in-residence at SPACES Gallery, spent her summer researching plants and crafting thousands of reflective markers, preparing for two simultaneous, interrelated shows. The subject of her installation is likely unfamiliar to most: the runaway growth of the glossy buckthorn.

The glossy buckthorn, or *Rhamnus frangula*, has been identified by the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves as one of the 10 most invasive and difficult to control non-native plant species. Minnesota and Illinois have banned the plant, and the National Park Service has included the glossy buckthorn as part of a "least wanted" posting. Introduced from Eurasia as shrubbery for fences, the glossy buckthorn grows rapidly, reaching heights of 20 feet. This plant also develops vast root systems, tolerates a

wide range of habitats, and produces copious flowers and fruits. According to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) website, “Once established, these species aggressively invade natural areas and form dense thickets, displacing native species.” Despite its raging proliferation and banning in two states, the glossy buckthorn is still available in Ohio for ornamental use in landscaping.

Kato’s installations explore the challenges the glossy buckthorn presents—costs of time, energy, and limited funds—as well as the difficulty in disposing of the waste generated from control efforts. Teaming with Jennifer Hillmer, the Cleveland Metroparks’ invasive plants coordinator, Kato came up with a plan to depict the time and energy costs dedicated to controlling the spread of glossy buckthorn. She picked a day in which members of the Metroparks’ Invasive Plant Management Team would be cutting the stems of mature glossy buckthorn surrounding the marsh and pond outside the North Chagrin Nature Center in Willoughby Hills. For each individual mature glossy buckthorn cut and treated with herbicide, Kato attached a reflective marker to a 7-foot-tall stake placed in the ground next to the severed stems. “I just want to know how much they can cut in a day,” Kato says.

The stakes were connected by a string, from which Kato hung more reflectors to represent the many smaller offshoots of the plant that will require even more time spent in control efforts. From August to October, Northeast Ohioans could experience Kato’s work by visiting the North Chagrin Nature Center after nightfall and shining a flashlight on the reflective markers, thereby revealing the tremendous efforts involved in controlling one plant species in one area on one day. “I like the idea that they have to shine a light and the light comes back to them,” Kato says.

Her exhibit at the SPACES Gallery in the Ohio City neighborhood of Cleveland, a facility that touts itself as “the resource and public forum for artists who explore and experiment,” focused on the waste produced by the control efforts. Kato expected more than 3,000 mature glossy buckthorn plants to be cut in one day of control efforts, which translated into multiple dump trucks full of debris.

**Kato’s installations explore the challenges the glossy buckthorn presents—costs of time, energy, and limited funds—as well as the difficulty in disposing of the waste generated from control efforts.**

Despite the plant’s invasiveness, there is no clear solution for what to do with the waste. In the North Chagrin Reservation, park officials typically pile up the plant waste, Kato says. They cannot turn it into mulch because of the seeds. Struck by this image, Kato called an official at the ODNR, who told her to burn the plant waste. “That’s not really ideal,” she says. “That’s going to pollute the air.” Alternatively, the ODNR recommended putting

the plant waste in bags and putting the bags in a landfill. “Since buckthorn is already so widespread, it’s already everywhere, they weren’t taking an urgent view,” she states. She tried calling other states to learn about their solutions. A natural resources official in Minnesota, which has banned the glossy buckthorn from being purchased or transported into the state, suggested she pile up the waste as a shelter for animals. “But with dump trucks full of cut stems, that would be tons of shelters,” she points out. In her outreach to a number of states, “I never got an answer. No answer, no solution. That was pretty interesting to me.”

Kato’s installation at SPACES Gallery demonstrated how the cut stems could be used to make animal shelters, birdhouses, and walking sticks. She also bagged some of the waste to show how much of the material would be going into landfills. A fine line buckthorn, a hybrid version experts claim is non-invasive, was also part of the exhibit to provoke inquiry. “How do we decide what to do, what to plant, and what to hybridize?” Kato asks. “I’m not against the invasive plants. They’re just plants. They still produce oxygen. They do their thing as plants. I just want to start a conversation about how we make our landscapes.” She believes most people simply buy plants because they are beautiful or easy to grow. Another way to think of the invasive plants, she says, is that they are simply opportunistic—they exploit their advantages to make more of themselves. “I want to start the conversation about what do we grow.”

These shows represent a new art form for Kato, who says her previous work had mostly been photography projects she had worked on alone in her studio. She has long been inspired by landscapes, “how we make our surroundings,” but has never tried to “do something in the real world” until now. She’s excited by the potential for community engagement around this environmental issue. “It’s my show,” she says, “but also everybody’s show.”

Kato was first exposed to the challenge of non-native species a few years ago when she lived in Alabama. There she saw kudzu’s, also known as the “vine that ate



Mimi Kato x Cleveland Metroparks “Retro-reflections on Sculpting Nature” site #1, view from Nature Center viewing deck at North Chagrin Reservation / Photo courtesy of Mimi Kato

the South” for its encroachment on some 7 million acres, impact on the environment. Kato recognized kudzu from her native Japan. She admits that her first reaction was somewhat nationalistic. “I thought: ‘Yay! Go, Japan!’ Plants that I knew were trying to take over.” She initially viewed the expanse of kudzu as a beautiful reminder of home, but then she realized how pervasive the plant was in Alabama. “It’s horrible in Japan, too, but not as bad.” She became intrigued by the fact she was seeing so many plants from her native land. She learned about the challenges of garlic mustard and burning bush. “Suddenly, I got really interested in why we are doing this, so much money and energy being expended.” The plants became metaphors for attractive quick fixes that end up being costly in the long run.

Kato says she is not trying to prevent people from buying plants they like, but she wants them to think about what they are doing and the potential consequences of their choices. “I’m not trying to force change; I just want people to think. Not knowing and participating is a scary thing,” she says. “I didn’t think about it before. Tiny plants grow into something bigger. Let’s think about it.”

Indeed, the “Let’s think about it” mantra underpins the artistic goals shared by Kato, Black, and the countless other artist activists using their talents to uncover societal issues that otherwise might go unchallenged.



A PUBLICATION OF THE COLLECTIVE ARTS NETWORK | CLEVELAND

ART IN NORTHEAST OHIO | SUMMER 2014

## CASE STUDY CAN Journal: Pressing for Change

Printmaker Liz Maugans saw a need: many of Cleveland's artists and arts and culture organizations were going unnoticed and lacked an effective platform for getting the word out about their work. Maugans knew that together their voices would be much more powerful and so the Collective Arts Network (CAN) Journal was born.

Cover of CAN Journal, design by Joanne Dickey, Cover art "Buried It Off Of Ira" oil on panel by Steve Ehret / Photo by Michael Gill

90  
UNDERCURRENTS,  
RECEPTIONS, RAIDS

CLEVELAND MONUMENTS  
MAN JAMES RORIMER

MY MAY SHOW

CLEVELAND ARTS PRIZE  
MYSTERIES REVEALED

ARTFACE

The art of printmaking is defined as the transfer of ink from a plate, block, or screen to a flat surface to create a single fine art print.

Yet this general description is deceptively simple. To produce just one print, a printmaker must carry out a number of steps and utilize a wide range of techniques. In the printmaking process known as intaglio, for example, a printmaker will first use a tool to create an image on a metal plate that is covered with an acid resistant material. The plate is then submerged in an acid bath to etch the image onto the metal. Next, ink is applied to the plate and wiped off so it only remains in the etched lines. Finally, a piece of paper is put on the plate and pushed with uniform force onto the plate using a printing press. This transfers the image from the plate to the paper.

Just as every component of this process—whether large or small—is required to make the final product, a strong arts and culture sector is built on the recognition and understanding that every individual artist and arts and culture organization, even small ones, are essential components of the broader cultural ecosystem.

### **The Spark**

A 2009 Arts and Culture Roundtable hosted by the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC) brought together members of the arts and culture sector during the height of the Great Recession to catalyze discussions on how the sector could develop strategies to weather the economic downturn. To facilitate discussion, those in attendance were asked to form four, impromptu breakout groups representing artists and small organizations, medium organizations, and large organizations. As the groups coalesced, participants like Liz Maugans, co-founder and executive director of Zygote Press on Cleveland's East Side, recognized that even within the smallest category, the range of challenges facing organizations were varied.

“It became clear to the smallest of the small organizations that their needs were materially different from others who put themselves in the small category, which included organizations with budget sizes up to \$500,000,” says Megan Van Voorhis, chief operating officer of CPAC, who led the discussion among the small organization group. “They recognized a need facing the smallest organizations and were catalyzed to do something to address it.”

Upon leaving this event, Maugans wanted to do something that would lead to greater awareness and appreciation for the important work the arts and culture sector does to make our city and region stronger, while ensuring that even the smallest organizations, like Zygote Press, were involved. Later that year, Maugans invited a group of local artists and leaders of arts and culture organizations to discuss the challenges they faced and how they could work together to overcome them. This meeting would become the basis for SALT (Sustainable Arts Leaders Talk)—a monthly convening of arts and culture leaders from organizations like BAYarts, City Artists at Work, Cleveland Arts Prize, CPAC, the Council of Smaller Enterprises' Arts Network, Orange Art Center and RED DOT Project. Although their missions were very different, one mutual dilemma soon emerged: exposure.

The Collective Arts Network (*CAN Journal*) was thus created with the goal of drawing attention to, and elevating the voices of, artists and organizations who they believed lacked an effective platform for promoting their work.

### **Filling a Need**

This lack of publicity pointed to a clear need for a publication that would spotlight members of the arts and culture sector, especially those that were not well known. “All of these galleries need people to know what they are doing, and they need to be able to catalyze beyond to some sort of critical mass,” says *CAN Journal* editor



Four artist-printmakers, Joe Sroka, Liz Maugans, Bellamy Printz, and Kelly Novak, joined forces in 1995 after recognizing the need for a working fine-art printmaking facility in Cleveland. Through this synergy and collective effort **Zygoté Press** was born. Zygoté Press is a non-profit, cooperative, fine art printmaking workshop that offers studio space, printmaking equipment, and technical assistance to local artists. The organization aims to help artists create fine art prints in a collaborative atmosphere promoting the exchange of ideas, increasing awareness about the printmaking process, providing affordable studio space and exhibition opportunities, and stimulating communications between artist-printmakers and the broader community. Zygoté Press also offers several different programs in printmaking for individuals of all levels, from novice to professional artists, including classes that teach participants to use the tools of the trade so they can leave the workshop with a tangible print creation.

To help further the connection between printmaking and the wider community, several initiatives have been undertaken: Press on Wheels, an opportunity that brings printmaking to students by offering them onsite visits of the facility; The Printmaking Expedition, a travelling expedition of the Zygoté Press archives; and the Works in Progress program, which offers an open forum where practicing artists can present and discuss their work. The press also maintains an artist exchange, called the Dresden Program, which brings German artists to Cleveland and sends Cleveland-based artists to Germany. Through this collaboration, Zygoté Press creates connections between the global printmaking community and the community here in Northeast Ohio.

**Website:** <http://www.zygotepress.com/>



Jen Craun (pictured) in Zygoté Press shop; Photo courtesy of Michael Loderstedt

Michael Gill. “If you want [your exhibit] to be more than your friends getting together, if you want to be engaged in the arts economy, if you want to show people works of art not just because they are your friends, then you need public awareness. You need a way to reach people.” The *CAN Journal* set out on a mission to provide the publicity that was so important, yet often lacking.

Prior to the creation of *CAN Journal*, coverage of the local visual arts scene, and the visual arts sector in particular, often focused on the larger players in town, exploring exhibits and events happening at the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Institute of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Cleveland. More recently, challenges in the newspaper and periodical industries have shrunk coverage of arts and culture across the board, but especially for exhibits and activities that fall outside the mainstream.

Comments from focus groups also echoed these concerns, voicing regret about the lack of quality local coverage of the arts even as artists and institutions in the region are recognized by outlets like *The New York Times*. Others note the lack of art critics and arts segments in local print media and broadcast media respectively. Even as the Cleveland Museum of Art engaged in its largest expansion in a century there was little more than a “blurb” on the 11 o’clock news. Referring to this perceived lack of quality of local media coverage, one focus group participant asked “why do we limit ourselves to something that is average?” The *CAN Journal* set out to fill this media gap by going well beyond “average”.

### **Working Together**

Networking and collaboration have been the driving forces behind the *CAN Journal*, Gill says. The first issue was actually conceived as the only issue—a onetime overview of the local arts scene. Individual artists and groups would pay \$100 to be listed as a *CAN* member at the back of the publication. Membership fees would provide the match for a \$2,400 grant from the Ohio Arts Council.

Liz Maugans says she anticipated getting 16 members to sign on to the deal; the first issue, published in January 2012, drew support from 28 members. All members agreed to contribute content. “We each picked a member organization out of a hat” to interview, Maugans says. The group paid \$6,000 to have the *Plain Dealer* print 10,000 copies of the first issue as a newsprint tabloid. As a way to generate excitement and distribute copies, the *CAN Journal* staff threw a launch party, inviting members to mingle and take copies of the publication to share within their own organizations. Free copies were also made available at branches of the Cuyahoga County Public Library and Heinen’s stores.

Though the first issue was out, it did not happen effortlessly. “The problem with the first issue is that structurally we could provide an overview of the organizations, but we couldn’t do anything timely,” Gill says. Follow-up interviews with all 28 original members found overwhelming support for a quarterly publication that would allow local arts organizations to publicize upcoming events. “It’s hard to get these disparate organizations to participate willingly without money coming to them,” Gill says. “That makes this noteworthy.”

In demonstrating the value proposition, Maugans and Gill compare the cost of membership and member articles to the traditional way of promoting art exhibits through postcards. Printing and mailing 1,000 postcards to a list of potential patrons may cost \$500 or more. The *CAN Journal*, on the other hand, provides members a medium for showcasing their events to an audience ten times bigger and wider in scope—at a cost significantly less than \$500. “We looked at this as a model of cost effectiveness,” Maugans says.

### **Sustaining Efforts**

Since the first publication, membership has grown to 55 galleries and organizations and 14 individual artists. Members submit their own articles, with galleries frequently providing a biography and perspective on an artist’s work. All the articles, which Gill edits for style and readability, are meant to preview and promote exhibits

coming up in the next three months. Members pay \$125 for a half-page article and \$250 for a full-page write-up. Traditional advertising space is also available, costing members \$500 and non-members up to \$1,000 for a full-page display. “It’s a good deal,” Gill says. “We can’t really price it much higher. We want it to be affordable for these small organizations. Being inclusive like that is important to us.”

The *CAN Journal* also received support from local businessman and longtime arts patron, Wally Lanci. He serves as corporate counsel for his family’s Consolidated Graphics Group printing business and agreed to print the *CAN Journal*’s first year of issues, in full color and on nicer-than-newsprint paper, for free. “Help from Consolidated Graphics has been pivotal,” Maugans says. “We talked to all sorts who print magazines. The cheapest we could do was tabloid newsprint. . . . Wally Lanci has been amazing in his philanthropy. He walks in and says, ‘I will pay for the first year.’ That freed us to focus on getting off the ground and in the form we wanted.”

Lanci says he was drawn to the *CAN Journal*’s focus on galleries and smaller arts organizations, yet has been impressed by its ability to attract the interest of the region’s larger arts institutions as well. “When you look at the membership and the variety they have, I think that speaks volumes for the need for something like this,” Lanci says. “[Cleveland Museum of Art] doesn’t need to advertise in this, but they see the value.” He cites two features of the *CAN Journal* business plan as critical to its sustainability: membership and collaboration. Membership means there is “financial skin in the game,” which, in turn, enhances collaboration. “If there’s not enough skin in the game for each nonprofit, then collaboration sometimes fades away.”

In a mark of tradition for the young publication, launch parties continue to serve as the primary mechanisms for distributing the 10,000 copies of each edition. Each launch party for a new edition of the journal is held at a different member’s site. “That gets us around town and connects us in the community,” Maugans says.

Although she and Gill are thrilled with the growth in membership, they would like to see more community support for the publication through advertising. So far, most of the advertising has come through member non-profit institutions, such as CPAC and the Cleveland Museum of Art, as well as local community development organizations that appreciate how the publication groups activities by neighborhood. Gill, a former editor at the *Sun* newspapers and *Free Times* and former arts editor for *Scene* magazine, would like to see more restaurants and other businesses advertise, the way that they do in more traditional publications. “We need larger organizations paying for more,” Gill says. “We need more banks, hotels, for-profit advertisers. These are the sorts of things we need for actual sustainability to happen.”

Other challenges that have arisen for the nascent journal include a perception among some non-member artists that the *CAN Journal* represents a closed club of sorts. A focus group participant noted she viewed the *CAN Journal* as a network that strengthens connections within itself, but that it has yet to reach those unfamiliar or outside of the existing network. “It doesn’t reach the average person that is going to pick up the newspaper... it’s preaching to the choir” observed other focus group participants. Part of this issue arises from the fact the *CAN Journal* has, in large part, eschewed embracing digital and social media in promoting and supporting its primary print offering, aside from offerings available on their website. Overall, much of this criticism may be a direct result of *CAN Journal’s* relative youth, small size, and the fact that it was never designed to compete, or in this case supplant, mass media coverage of the arts—the true source of much of the criticism. The core of the *CAN Journal’s* brand in the foreseeable future is to remain the printed journal itself.

### Printing in a Digital Era

In an era when long established print publications are folding or switching to online content, why take the risk of a printed journal? “Print helps crack the whip,” Gill says. “It’s distinctive. It’s limited and therefore people take it seriously. It requires more planning and forethought to get in.” He points out the journal also offers space online, at [canjournal.org](http://canjournal.org), for events that don’t make it into the printed version.

Maugans believes the infrequency of the quarterly *CAN Journal* helps make it seem more special than a daily newspaper or weekly magazine. “There’s something about these [journals] that they can be archived. We need bibliographies and something as artists that’s sexy and that’s written up about us... something that we can put in a PR packet. I just did a program down in Collinwood. I could have [promoted] it online through my blog, but this is something that people wouldn’t find online. It finds you instead of you trying to track it down.”

### Looking Forward

Entering its second year, the *CAN Journal* kept with tradition and celebrated by holding a launch party. However, unlike in the past, the June 29, 2013, event was structured as a fundraiser called “Y2CAN”. The *CAN Journal* also experienced another milestone earlier in the month, when it emerged from under the fiscal wing of Maugans’ Zygote Press. As of June 1st, the St. Clair Superior Development Corporation assumed the role of fiscal agent for the journal. “The journal will still be part of our mission at Zygote Press. We will always be a member. I will be active as one of the founders,” Maugans says. “But this was always an aim of our board.”

While Maugans’ Zygote Press may have stepped away from fiscal control of the *CAN Journal*, the experience has forever changed her relationship with the local arts and culture community. The *CAN Journal* has led to the creation of a database of artists, galleries and organizations and has resulted in a sharing of grant-writing

resources. “We really are tethered because of this experience,” Maugans says. “We all support each other. There is strength in numbers, energy especially. . . there’s cohesiveness in the fabric of this art landscape.”

**Focus group participants [noted] how essential it is that public funding for the arts remain strong so that the region can not only draw artists in from elsewhere, but also its role in retaining existing artists and recent graduates of local colleges.**

### **Pressing for Change**

As the *CAN Journal* enters its third year in print, the organization has begun to shift toward a greater advocacy role for arts and culture as a community development tool. “Broad acceptance of arts organizations and galleries can bring new energy to neighborhoods and catalyze rebirth,” Gill says. As examples, he points to the 78th Street Studios in the Gordon Square Arts District, the Waterloo Arts District in Collinwood, and the Quadrangle arts district in the St. Clair Superior neighborhood as helping to reinvigorate those communities culturally and economically by infusing art and retail spaces. Additionally, public support in the form of a cigarette excise tax, which Cuyahoga County voters approved in 2006, has been central to these creative and catalytic developments, he says. Thanks

to this funding, Cuyahoga County (via Cuyahoga Arts & Culture grants) routinely provides more public funding in terms of real dollars to arts and culture than in all but two states—New York and Minnesota—uniquely positioning the region as a premier supporter of arts and culture nationally. Focus group participants echoed this, noting how essential it is that public funding for the arts remain strong so that the region can not only draw artists in from elsewhere, but also its role in retaining existing artists and recent graduates of local colleges.

Maugans agrees public sector support has been critical. “I just think we’re in a renaissance here as far as arts go,” she says. “I can feel it.” Her next effort will be to use the *CAN Journal* as a platform for arts advocacy. She plans to invite key decision-makers—politicians, corporations, educators and community development leaders—to events that showcase research on the connection between creative workers and economic growth as well as artists who are actively re-envisioning Cleveland neighborhoods. “We need these groups to be our advocates. We’re taxpayers too. We care very deeply about our everyday practice. We need help to be able to vocalize our connection within the community.”

## CASE STUDY Dan Cuffaro: Remaking the Regional Economy

Innovative yet traditional, practical yet alluring, artistic yet marketable, reclaimed from the past yet positioned for the future. These qualities may seem like a tall order for a simple desk, but industrial designer-educator-entrepreneur Dan Cuffaro believes his Hive workstation encompasses all of these characteristics. His work demonstrates how inspired product design can drive business strategy and how building a design-based economy can play an important role in reinventing our region.

Dan Cuffaro, who heads the Industrial Design Department at the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA), views the world around him conceptually as pieces that fit together into a functioning and artful whole. His designer's eye is trained to see all sides of a product and formulate ways to make it not only more functional, but also more visually appealing to its user. Cuffaro's skill manifests while figuring out a way to update a piece of outdated furniture, reusing components of deteriorated housing stock, or remaking Cleveland's regional economy.

For the past few years, Cuffaro has been busy working on all three of these challenges simultaneously through the creation of the "Hive" workstation, a design that utilizes reclaimed materials from abandoned homes in Cuyahoga County and unites them through modern design principles. He believes these products, designed and built in Northeast Ohio, teach an important lesson about leveraging capacity and identifying needs, in addition to pairing the two through practical yet innovative design.

As Cuffaro asserts, "The more Northeast Ohio connects its capacity dots, the better off it will be," because new products, such as his own, emerge where needs, resources, and innovation intersect. Identifying these intersections is essential since new products drive growth—both for individual businesses and for the economy overall.

### **Building on a Legacy**

Think of Cuffaro as the champion of design-driven development in Northeast Ohio, building on a platform established decades earlier by the region's industrial legacy and the influential presence of "American Da Vinci" Viktor Schreckengost. Cuffaro even studied under Schreckengost, whose 70-year association with CIA led to the development of the Industrial Design Department that Cuffaro now directs.

David Deming, who served as president of CIA before retiring in 2010, considers Cuffaro his "best hire" in twelve years at the helm. "Dan is a disciple of Viktor Schreckengost and has embraced Viktor's legacy. He has been a spokesperson for helping Cleveland identify not just what its potential is but what it already is in terms of design."

Cuffaro left Northeast Ohio after graduating from CIA in 1991 and spent his early career in Boston, where he served as design director at Altitude Inc., an award-winning product development firm. Boston, with its wealth of prestigious design schools, high-profile design firms and its attractive urban environment, is a powerful draw for young designers. The kind of "brain drain" Cuffaro's departure represented often leads local policy makers to wring their hands in despair. However, Cuffaro believes it is good for his students to leave the area after graduation—at least, as he did, temporarily. Leaving the area exposes students to different ideas and practices, while allowing companies across the country to experience the quality of talent coming out of Northeast Ohio. Leaving the area also reveals to young professionals the many positive attributes of Northeast Ohio and gives them a feeling they can come back to make a difference. Cuffaro's decision to leave a dream job in Boston and return to Northeast Ohio in 2003 was partly driven by a desire to be closer to family—but he also saw the potential to be a champion for change.

Edward W. "Ned" Hill, Dean of Cleveland State University's Levin College of Urban Affairs, describes Cuffaro's return to Northeast Ohio as a "whirlwind." "He instantly made connections all over the place, reconnecting the design program at CIA to the economy," says Hill, who has been partnering with Cuffaro for years to create and brand a "District of Design" in downtown Cleveland. "It was terrific."

Hill considers Cuffaro to be "walking in the footsteps" of Schreckengost. "Dan is a catalytic connecting presence in Northeast Ohio's industrial design community. He connects art to products through design. He connects students to employers. He is a constant connection between the worlds of art and of commerce. Dan has a vision of using design as a source of competitive advantage and a vehicle for strengthening Northeast Ohio's industrial base."



HIVE can be arranged in many configurations based on individual work style and team environment / Photo by Robert Muller

As Cuffaro started making such connections, two observations stood out: Changes in technology and processes were continuing to erode the region's traditional industrial might, and the traditional drafting tables his students were using had become obsolete. From the start, he saw a need for more collaboration, greater flexibility, and dynamic thinking—both among his students and among regional stakeholders.

“It was really appealing to come back to Cleveland from Boston because it felt like you could be engaged and your engagement would make a difference,” said Cuffaro. “I see students look at it the same way. What they would really like is to be a part of something bigger, be part of shaping the culture . . . In Cleveland, because the region is seen as being so far down, there is a perception that there is something to fix and something for one to do and an avenue to do it.” One way Cuffaro would begin to make a difference is by shifting the conversation around product development towards design.

### **Design-Focused Development**

Cuffaro describes Cleveland's brand of industrial design as pragmatic, solution-based, and business-minded. While all are admirable qualities, the region's emphasis on practical problem solving tends to include factors other than design. For example, accountants may say a product embodies the right cost compromise, or an engineer may say a product adequately meets structural specifications. Companies

also tend to make decisions about where to locate their business based on price factors, such as square footage, labor, and utility costs. Cuffaro says it's hard to get companies to break out of the cost-focused way of thinking about products and see how “the art, the beauty, the function, and the innovation” adds value. This often relegates design to “second-class status” behind cost and practicality, an obstacle Cuffaro points to as a key “problem with design in Cleveland.”

**From the start, [Cuffaro] saw a need for more collaboration, greater flexibility, and dynamic thinking—both among his students and among regional stakeholders.**

To combat this paradigm, Cuffaro uses design-driven product development, what he describes as “a different way of thinking about products than how accountants or engineers think about them. It's a way of thinking about what products should be like, about the way people interface, how they touch it, how they feel it. Organizations need to think about product design as a business strategy.” Pointing to his perception of a lack of enthusiasm towards design, Cuffaro notes that “Industrial design needs to be celebrated more. It needs to be seen as sexier.” Cuffaro envisioned a fundamental shift in this perception that would begin with the creation of a new kind of workstation called the Hive.



Still in its infancy, **think[box]**, a new endeavor spearheaded by Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), is an open resource invention center where design, development, and product commercialization collide. This high-technology design laboratory, located on CWRU's campus, invites visitors to merge science and technology with art and design in new and creative ways. Since CWRU is only a few blocks away from the Cleveland Institute of Art, it was logical for science and design to come together here. Students, faculty, staff, and community members design and create prototypes that could one day lead to commercially produced products. Not only does this process allow them to create rapid-prototype products, but also allows for synergies amongst people and institutions; what CWRU terms "cross-discipline and cross-institution collaboration."

think[box] currently resides in a temporary space that offers access to equipment like circuit board printers, computer-controlled table routers that can cut sheets of wood or plastic, and a 3D printer that can create plastic pieces with moving parts. With fundraising in progress, the university envisions moving the venture into a state-of-the-art open source facility to be housed in a new \$25 million, seven-story, 50,000 square foot complex. The immense size of the future think[box] facility would make it the largest campus-based invention center in the world.

**Website:** <http://engineering.case.edu/thinkbox/>

## Reclaiming History

In 2009, the Cleveland Foundation approached Dan Cuffaro and CIA in order to get him and his students involved in brainstorming potential products that used deconstructed materials. The impetus for this work was a study the Foundation commissioned investigating whether a market for recycled wood salvaged from abandoned homes could be developed in Cleveland.

"What we found was you really needed to build more products and demand for these kinds of efforts to be able to have some value," says Lillian Kuri, the Cleveland Foundation's program director for architecture, urban design, and sustainable development. "If there was more demand from people wanting products using these kinds of deconstructed products that would help bring down the cost of deconstruction to be more in line with demolition."

Cuffaro's mind instantly turned to the designs for a modern workstation he had begun mulling years earlier. The design, called the Hive, has a hexagonal design that is modular yet customizable. The 7-foot-long work surface is at an "interaction height," meaning the desk can be comfortably used whether sitting or standing, while its wheels allow for easy reconfiguration or storage. "The desk is a structure that enables collaboration and innovative thinking," Cuffaro says. "There are times in the creative process when it is important to interact and collaborate and then there are times when you need to focus... We're trying to create workspace that is more like we work. More collaboration, more flexibility."

In 2012, Cuffaro launched a business venture, Abeo Design, to develop his Hive workstation and other commercial furniture products "made in a sustainable manner." The company website describes the venture as "born from the convergence of social and practical need." To help build connections, the Cleveland Foundation soon introduced Cuffaro to the founders of A Piece of Cleveland (APOC), who in their self-described efforts to be "superheroes"



think[box] users have access to state-of-the-art equipment, like the 3-D printer shown here / Photo by Russell Lee



Deconstruction, an alternative to the more common demolition, creates an opportunity to reduce waste by recycling 40% of a building's materials while preserving its history. That is the aim of Chris Kious, owner of **A Piece of Cleveland (APOC)**, a company that specializes in deconstructing houses in Northeast Ohio to turn them into everyday household items. APOC was launched in 2008 as a response to the foreclosure crisis that left over 27,000 vacant houses and properties in Cuyahoga County, 12,000 of which were in the City of Cleveland. APOC's goal was to "upcycle" the materials from these homes that would have been destined for the landfill.

Since its founding, APOC has deconstructed over 63 homes and 5 commercial properties, reusing the materials to make a wide variety of products. Salvaged beams, joists, floorboards, and more are recycled and crafted into chairs, tables, countertops, benches, cutting boards, and a litany of other products. Restaurants like Pura Vida, The Wine Spot, Mitchell's, and Eddie Cerino's, have used APOC products, as well as Key Bank and the Cleveland Sight Center. To acknowledge the original source of these materials, each APOC product comes with a "rebirth" certificate, providing customers with the address and construction date of the source building.

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attempted to preserve some value of Cleveland's abandoned homes by championing deconstruction. The matchmaking effort was successful. Cuffaro works with APOC to supply materials for the desks while production is contracted to Benchmark, a Seville, Ohio, fabricator that produces the workstations to his specifications. In the end, about 60 percent of the materials used to produce each Hive have been locally reclaimed through deconstruction—a process Kuri describes as "taking lemons and making lemonade."

**Demolishing a house in Cuyahoga County typically costs about \$8,000 and generates nothing but waste. Deconstructing a house, however, costs about \$12,000 but salvages building materials that have value and can be reused.**

Cuffaro puts it in more quantifiable terms: His Hives converted roughly \$24,000 in waste into about \$130,000 in value in just one order. That kind of payoff holds tremendous promise in Cuyahoga County, where an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 structures are candidates for demolition. Demolishing a house in Cuyahoga County typically costs about \$8,000 and generates nothing but waste. Deconstructing a house, however, costs about \$12,000 but salvages building materials that have value and can be reused.

## From Design to Delivery

Cuffaro hopes the striking honeycomb structure of his Hive workstation will also demonstrate the power of design to drive purchasing. "The desk is a great example for showing students how to go about the process of developing new products," Cuffaro says. All inquiries so far have been "This is gorgeous; How do I get it?" not, "This meets my needs." "This meets their needs and it's beautiful and inspiring. I want students to see that process."

Within the first year of business, Cuffaro's workstation has generated about \$500,000 in sales and has inspired him to begin development on four more products. He has fielded inquiries from Georgia, Iowa, California and Ontario, Canada—despite no actual marketing of his product. According to Cuffaro, CIA committed to an initial order of 32 Hive workstations, enough to test-drive the process, debug the product, and make necessary changes. At a cost of about \$6,000, Cuffaro says the Hives were only slightly more than the cost of comparable mass-produced workstations. "CIA spent what it would have if it had bought workstations already available off the shelf." Since that initial order, CIA has ordered an additional 98 desks, made of reclaimed wood from 10 houses destined for demolition.

Also essential in the early stages was the support of the Cleveland Foundation, which provided grants to fund prototyping and other development efforts. The Foundation, working with the anchoring institutions of University Circle to better leverage their purchasing power, also agreed to provide CIA with money to cover the gap between the cost of buying off-the-shelf desks and the cost of creating Hive workstations.

Kuri says the Cleveland Foundation's investment in the entire project has been less than \$75,000, an amount she called a "no-brainer" for an activity that has built a model of collaboration. "It means so much more and has so much potential, I think, for Cleveland." She also believes the collaboration that took place around the workstation—both figuratively and literally—may serve as a model for future projects. "It potentially could be something that really

Although many companies have bought into the APOC brand, deconstruction as an industry has yet to take off in Cleveland. This lag in its popularity can largely be attributed to cost differential: deconstruction costs \$12,000 while demolition only costs \$8,000. Nonetheless, Kious argues that deconstruction can do more for the economy and the environment than demolishment because it creates jobs and stops materials from entering the landfill. The ultimate goal is to create a whole new industry in Cleveland based on the idea that deconstruction, and the end products that stem from it, is not available in larger cities like New York, positioning Cleveland as a potential leader in urban revitalization that could benefit other metropolises, like Detroit. To aid APOC in this effort, above and beyond its initial start-up funding from the Cleveland Foundation, the Cleveland Institute of Art has contracted APOC for the source material for their new HIVE desks. The hopes are that this effort will help the company scale-up to meet the needs of larger clients, making deconstruction a viable business model for the region.

**Website:** <http://apieceofcleveland.com/>



Eddie Cerino's Casual Italian, Lakewood, OH / Photo Courtesy of A Piece of Cleveland

puts Cleveland on the map," she says. "This is absolutely practical." Yet collaborative efforts like these also symbolize Cleveland's potential for resilience and innovation by fostering its design community.

Cuffaro believes design can address another problem the region faces through the repurposing of regional assets... the region has existing assets in the form of a robust and ingrained design culture, business clout, and available retail space.

### **Designing a New Regional Economy**

Cuffaro believes design can address another problem the region faces through the repurposing of regional assets: Northeast Ohio has a problem attracting young talent, but the region has existing assets in the form of a robust and ingrained design culture, business clout, and available retail space. These distinct strengths have yet to be deployed in a way that builds excitement and momentum for our region, Cuffaro says.

To meet this need for talent, Cuffaro and Hill's District of Design concept attempts to repopulate a downtown corridor through design activities and affordable studios for young artists. "The thought behind the District of Design was, if we can just get enough of a foothold, a demonstrated concentration of creative thinkers, Cleveland would be better positioned to attract both innovators and the businesses who seek them," Cuffaro says. In creating the District of Design, he and Hill "essentially randomly assigned borders between CSU and Playhouse Square [two anchor institutions in downtown Cleveland]." Upon further investigation, they discovered dozens of design-related activities were already taking place in the geographic target area, employing some 1,300 workers, along Euclid Avenue and adjoining streets between East 14th and East 22nd Streets. "Within these random boundaries, a foothold [of design] was already there," Cuffaro says. "Yet the neighborhood didn't have an identity of being a design neighborhood."

Creating a design designation for the neighborhood is more than simple branding. "When you have a[n] [economic] cluster, the sum is greater than the total of its parts," he says. "The interaction effect is supersized compared to the resources. In Cleveland, it looks like we have all these parts, but they're not working right to supercharge the interaction. It's not advancing our cause. I don't really know why. But, if we can get it to behave like a cluster, then that builds momentum." A design cluster, however, is not simply about supporting existing products; it is also about creating an environment for innovation to take place. A cluster enables "conversations that inspire new ways of doing things," Cuffaro says.

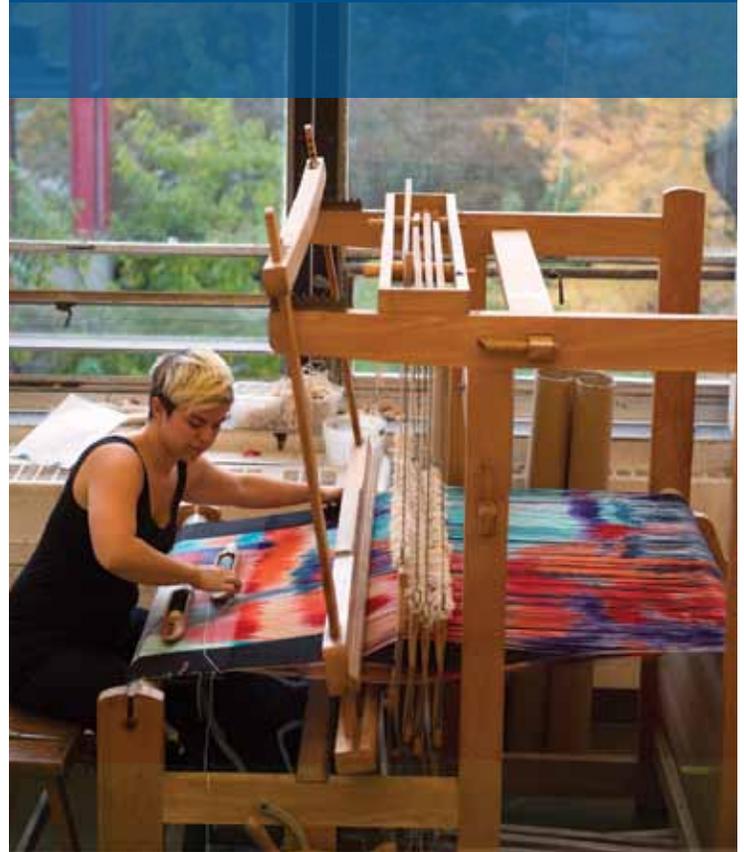
<sup>7</sup> Mike Sharples, Patrick McAndrew, Martin Weller, Rebecca Ferguson, Elizabeth FitzGerald, Tony Hirst, Mark Gaved. "Exploring new forms of teaching, learning and assessment, to guide educators and policy makers." Open University Innovation Report 2. Innovating Pedagogy 2013. [http://www.open.ac.uk/personalpages/mike.sharples/Reports/Innovating\\_Pedagogy\\_report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.open.ac.uk/personalpages/mike.sharples/Reports/Innovating_Pedagogy_report_2013.pdf) and <http://makezine.com/>

Deming also praises Cuffaro's work in developing the District of Design, building on the region's existing assets and its "maker culture" legacy as a manufacturing hub. Today, "maker culture's" contemporary meaning refers to a broader and growing movement that celebrates do-it-yourself tinkerers who use experimentation, hands-on learning, and peer-to-peer interactions to create novel products that solve perceived problems experienced in everyday life.<sup>7</sup> Deming believes Northeast Ohio can provide a fertile ground for such informal, creative exchanges. "If you can develop a place that seems to be a magnet for like-minded [innovative] people, they may work for different firms but get together over coffee and talk. All sorts of new products and ideas come out of that." Such creative exchanges are critical in developing new products, which, in turn, should help create new jobs. The challenge, Cuffaro says, is getting businesses—and the region overall—to be open to designs' contributions.



Teaming up with the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Waterloo Arts and Entertainment district developed **PRAXIS**, an Integrated Fiber Workshop. Examples of fiber artists include dyers, felters, knitters, spinners, weavers, and rug hookers. The Praxis program debuted at the 2013 Waterloo Arts Fest, and the permanent co-op workshop is located across from the Slovenian Workmen's Home in the Waterloo Studios. The workshop serves the community and also provides gallery and studio space to artists and other community members who have an interest in fiber art. Beyond teaching artists and community members how to use a loom, PRAXIS also plans to assist attendees in weaving a community textile to be displayed at the next Arts Fest.

**Website:** <http://artscollinwood.org/arts-fest-2013/arts-alive/>



Jessica Pinsky (pictured); Photo by Rob Muller

## CASE STUDY Cleveland CycleWerks: Starting Up



Scott Colosimo of Cleveland CycleWerks has a vision: design and manufacture custom-made motorcycles in Cleveland. However, Colosimo encountered a number of roadblocks that required him to rethink his business strategy and confront the realities of the globalized economy. In finding his way, Colosimo has received considerable criticism as well as accolades—all in pursuit of making his dreams into reality.

Scott Colosimo (pictured) / Photo by Billy Delfs

<sup>8</sup> West, D. M. (2011). Technology and the innovation economy. *Center for Technology Innovation at Brookings*. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2011/10/19-technology-innovation-west>

<sup>9</sup> Berger, S. & Sharp, P. et al. (2013) A preview of the MIT production in the innovation economy report. *MIT Taskforce on Innovation and Production*. <http://web.mit.edu/press/images/documents/pie-report.pdf>

Today, economic competitiveness is predicated on a locality's ability to not only create, but also apply knowledge. The manufacture of such knowledge occurs through investments in research and development, an entrepreneurial business culture, and public policies geared at bringing ideas to fruition.<sup>8</sup> For formerly industrial cities, this proposition remains challenging—how does a place whose legacy is tied to a production-based economy adapt to a knowledge-based model?<sup>9</sup>

In Cleveland, the story of Cleveland CycleWerks illustrates the challenges a startup can face when transforming an idea to scale—progressing through prototyping a product and demonstrating its market viability—while developing a local manufacturing infrastructure for it.

### **Becoming a Niche Manufacturer**

Scott Colosimo sits glued to a laptop in his office. The room's tight quarters, lack of windows, and floor-to-ceiling industrial yellow brick are more suggestive of a closet than a corporate office. Yet, the head-to-toe black leather suit hanging in the corner and the Brembo brake caliper sitting on his desk make clear that Colosimo, 32, is serious about his plan to build small-engine motorcycles that are both fun to ride and easy on the wallet—and to manufacture them in Cleveland.

Colosimo's preoccupation with the laptop demonstrates the zoom and crash challenges of building a business: Cleveland CycleWerks had been unexpectedly featured on Cycle World's website, the nation's largest motorcycle magazine, in a late June 2013 review of ten bikes with "soul & character." Colosimo's Misfit garnered high marks in Cycle World's review and was deemed very affordable due to its standard \$3,195 price tag. The bike's affordability and accessibility reflect what Colosimo calls the "Cleveland way," encapsulating the values that encouraged him to return to Northeast Ohio.

The favorable magazine review led to a surge of activity on Cleveland CycleWerks' website, such that the site became overwhelmed and its server went offline. This is why Colosimo is now holed up in his office, hunched over his laptop, and operating on only a couple hours of sleep. In a small, startup business, it is not enough to be the visionary; you have to be a jack-of-all-trades—website management included. The 150,000 hits were both exciting and overwhelming for a 4-year-old company that expects to sell only 12,000 to 14,000 motorcycles in 2013. To put those numbers in perspective, Honda reported worldwide motorcycle sales of 12.6 million in 2012. "We're still a very niche manufacturer," Colosimo says.

The Misfit is one of three models Colosimo sells in the United States; he also produces a few other models specifically designed for markets outside of the country. CycleWerks bikes come with stylish, classic lines and 125 or 250 cc engines. (By comparison, the engine displacement for Harley-Davidson motorcycles may be 1500 cc or more.) Colosimo, who began customizing cars and motorcycles as a teenager in his parents' garage in Parma, was working as a product designer in Europe when he got to experience the unexpected fun of riding a small-engine bike. He cites a biking adage: "It's fun to ride a slow bike fast." CycleWerks' demographic niche in the United States includes first-time bikers, particularly women, and serious riders who want a "step-down" bike for everyday use. "The average rider can't get to one-tenth of the level" larger bikes are meant to be ridden, Colosimo says. For local commutes to and from work in traffic, a small-engine bike is more practical, easier to handle, easier on the environment, and easier on the wallet (Colosimo's bikes get almost 100 miles per gallon). Colosimo says "Every bike is created for a purpose."



In 1972, two recent graduates from the Cleveland Institute of Art, John Nottingham and John Spirk, founded their own industrial design firm in Cleveland's University Circle neighborhood. Forty-one years later, the company now has around/close to 1,000 U.S. and international patents, including the Spin Brush toothbrush, Swiffer Sweeper SuperVac, and the Sherwin Williams Twist-n-Pour paint can. These successes are attributable to the firm's ability to work effectively with client companies by reviewing their off-the-shelf products, guiding design improvements, and, finally, ensuring that the redesigned products can be sold at a reasonable price.

**Nottingham Spirk** transforms products through their signature designs, but has also successfully engaged with its clients in new product development and product innovation. A classic example is their work with Zippo Manufacturing Co., the lighter manufacturer. As many states passed tougher tobacco laws and lighters were banned on airlines, Zippo was finding that lighters were becoming harder to sell. Like all companies, Zippo realized they had to evolve, so they invited Nottingham Spirk to take a look at their facilities and help them brainstorm ideas for new products. Through this exercise, Nottingham Spirk helped create a diverse product line that now includes camping gear, watches, and writing supplies, all of which successfully supplemented Zippo's core product.

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Yet utility need not sacrifice panache. Colosimo says his motorcycles have been heavily influenced by classic styles. "Retro-futuristic" is what some reviewers have dubbed them. "From 50 feet away, our bike looks like an old bike," Colosimo says. "Then when you get up on it, you see that it's not an old bike. It's a truly modern bike."

Retro-futuristic is a term "many designers love to use," Colosimo says. But "others say it's a cop-out: You're copying old stuff. As a business person, it's a perfect place for us to live. It's helping us build our brand." By building bikes that look and feel "classic" to riders, Colosimo believes it is making the sales pitch is less difficult, a crucial factor for a startup company like his.

### **Local Draws**

Colosimo launched Cleveland CycleWerks in 2009, but in many ways he worked toward this moment since childhood. He can remember the day when his grandfather Richard Colosimo, a successful Northeast Ohio artist and businessman, suggested they stop by the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA). That afternoon, they walked past figure drawings and medical sketches; then, down in the basement, he got a glimpse of his future: There were "all these drawings of future cars—George Jetson stuff. The quality of the work, I couldn't believe it. It was a defining moment. It was like seeing a masterpiece. From that moment, that's what I wanted to do."

"It put two things I really loved together," Colosimo says. "Art—and cars and bikes... I didn't realize that people actually had a career doing that." Colosimo knew he loved art and product design at an early age, but it took years before he learned he loved Cleveland. "I hated this place when I was a kid. Too small town. Too blue-collar."

After graduating from CIA in 2004 with a degree in industrial design, Colosimo left Northeast Ohio. Design jobs took him to various parts of the nation and world. Yet no matter where he went, they all seemed lacking when compared to his hometown of Cleveland. "I've lived in so many places. Cleveland has a unique quality." That "unique

quality” is what led him to include “Cleveland” in the name of his business. “For me, there was no other name for the company. It conveyed something to me. If it meant something to me, then I assumed it would mean something to others.” For Colosimo, Cleveland and its “maker culture” convey character and competence.

Beyond simply capturing the image of the city in his company’s name, he wanted to capture the strengths of its people. When he lived in other cities, “it was frustrating that no one does anything for themselves,” he says. In Cleveland, “we were able to hire good people—people who can actually do things. They can work with computers and their hands.”

Setting up business in Cleveland came with another perk: “One thing that cannot be overstated is that you can live and operate a business in Cleveland for relatively little [money],” Colosimo says. That relatively slow “burn rate” was important when he found his embrace of Cleveland wasn’t immediately returned.

### **Overcoming Roadblocks**

Manufacturing motorcycles locally has proven much more challenging than Colosimo initially anticipated. For starters, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression was still weighing heavily on the regional—and national—economy. In addition to economic conditions, Colosimo faced challenges in building a supply chain for his bikes in Cleveland. Local manufacturers were unwilling to take a chance on a young startup company wanting to buy parts in small batches. Many of the vendors were also deterred by the potential liability of supplying parts for motorcycles. Manufacturers and potential investors alike told him his venture was too risky.

Unwilling to give up on his vision, Colosimo did what countless other startups do to survive: He looked overseas. “In China, I can get anything built. I can go in with a hand drawing and there will be five or six factories wanting to do it,” he says. “The support system in China was much better.” For example, the Chinese government offered a rebate

Helping other companies vertically integrate is nothing new for Nottingham Spirk, which has its own “vertical innovation process.” The company’s process enables Nottingham to create the design, prototyping, and supply chain management in-house. Consequently, Nottingham Spirk creates tangible products that are tested by the company’s own focus groups. This process speeds up the design work, and those savings are passed on to the client and, ultimately, the consumers. When the company was looking for a new facility in the early 2000s they wanted to remain in University Circle, so in 2005 they spent \$16 million rehabbing the historic First Church of Christ Scientist. Built in 1931 and modeled on the Pantheon in Rome, the building now houses their offices, industrial design studio, and prototype manufacturing center.

**Website:** <http://www.nottinghamspirk.com/>



This stainless steel shell not only ties in with the Zippo product line, but it’s built to suppress the signal sent from a Radio Frequency ID chip, protecting against credit card theft / Photo courtesy of Nottingham Spirk and Zippo

on every part they produced for him. Not surprisingly, manufacturers came to him, hoping to earn his business. Along with being the biggest market for motorcycles, such aggressive pursuit of manufacturing opportunities has helped China become the world's leading motorcycle producer. According to *Cycle World* magazine, more than half of all motorcycles are manufactured in China—and have been for years.

The decision to go overseas has not been without controversy. Colosimo has drawn criticism from those who advocate for “Made in the U.S.A.” products and for stronger environmental and industrial regulations in China. The lack of regulations makes the cost of doing business in China much cheaper in terms of dollars and cents. However, the environmental and human costs are much greater—negative consequences such as unchecked pollution, poor labor conditions, worker abuses, and subpar product quality are commonly cited critiques of China.

Colosimo understands the criticisms but points out “manufacturing is a global affair... whether cars or clothing, it’s a coming together of pieces and parts from all over the world and all over the country.” Research also shows that in a globalized economy, industry development often follows such a course, with greater outsourcing taking place in the early stages of development.<sup>10</sup> For proprietors of startups, such tradeoffs are often viewed as necessary in finding a balance between the founder’s vision and the realities of business.

Colosimo maintains, “From the beginning, I wanted to do everything in the United States. But it’s very, very difficult to work in the U.S. Regulation, cost, and mindset gets in the way of producing things here, when you’re trying to do things like I envisioned for Cleveland CycleWerks.”

### Bringing Business Home

So far, the number of Clevelanders working at Cleveland CycleWerks is admittedly small—about eight full-time employees out of 250 total workers. The Cleveland workers are largely operational and design staff.

Nevertheless, Colosimo is committed to bringing production of his motorcycles to Cleveland. He believes Cleveland’s heritage of designing and manufacturing products adds value, both in terms of process and perception. This conviction led him to take up residence in a 65,000-square-foot, century-old manufacturing building just north of Cleveland’s Gordon Square Arts District. Over the years, the building has been home to rubber production, steelmaking, and meat-processing activities. Colosimo values the building’s history, character and location, which, despite the artsier focus of late, continues to be home to manufacturing activity. Within a few blocks of his company, there are businesses engaged in casting, finishing, welding, coating, and hard chrome plating. As Colosimo succinctly puts it, “They cut steel next door!”

By the time he’s finished with renovations, Colosimo will have invested \$5.5 million in the facility. Cleveland City Councilman Matt Zone helped him qualify for partial tax abatement for the property, which had sat vacant for about 18 months. The building is more space than Colosimo envisions for his Cleveland operations, so he is hoping to attract other entrepreneurs and innovators into a shared environment of production. “We’re trying to rent out space to artists and businesses doing interesting things.” He believes the investment in and energy around Gordon Square should help attract workers, renters and customers.

<sup>10</sup> Dickens, P. (2003). *Global shift: Reshaping the global economic map in the 21st century*. Sage Publications

“Our decision to be here was that it was an up-and-coming neighborhood,” Colosimo says. “We’re a destination retail establishment.” His shop not only sells CycleWerks bikes and accessories, but also specializes in repairing certain brands of vintage motorcycles. “We already have [customers] coming in from around the world. We want them to be able to park. We want them to be able to go to restaurants.”

## [Colosimo] believes Cleveland’s heritage of designing and manufacturing products adds value, both in terms of process and perception.

His goal remains to bring assembly of his motorcycles to Cleveland. But the process has been frustratingly slow. He had hoped to be up and running by now. In the near future, he expects to bring limited assembly to Cleveland, employing 12 local workers, mostly part-time to start. In addition, he hopes to bring cutting, welding, casting, and machining activities to Cleveland, noting that he already sources about 60 parts locally.

“It’s going to be a balance,” he says. “Manufacturing isn’t everything; manufacturing is something... The jobs I want to employ people in full-time are creative—designers, engineers.” He says the value proposition is in creating new products and developing new ideas. “I do love manufacturing. But the fact about manufacturing is it’s a cost-driven society. The real value is in creativity... the IP [intellectual property], the design, the engineering, that’s what we do here in Cleveland.”



According to the nonprofit advocacy group Bike Cleveland, commuting to work by bicycle has increased 280% from 2000 to 2010. Capitalizing on the emergence of Cleveland’s cycling culture, two friends, James Rychak and Travis Peebles, opened **Blazing Saddles Cycle** in Cleveland’s Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood in 2011. The two friends set up in a small storefront on Detroit Avenue and ran their early business as a backdoor custom bicycle shop. As the business grew, a niche market soon became apparent, so Rychak and Peebles decided the time was right to progress to a full cycle shop.

Nonetheless, Blazing Saddle isn’t your ordinary cycle shop. For example, most of their bikes are made of steel, a nod to commuters that rely on a steel frame’s toughness to handle the stress of the road. Bikes in other shops are often made out of aluminum or carbon fiber, a material meant to be lighter for improved speed but not well-suited for the often strenuous roads that commuters face. Though initially conceived of as a custom shop, Blazing Saddle’s overall mission is to put the right bike into the hands of the right cyclist. This mantra seems to be working; more than two years later they have grown so much that they relocated to a 100-year-old ex-hardware store on Detroit Avenue near Lake Avenue - the ceiling now adorned with bicycles instead of hammers.

**Website:** <http://blazingsaddlecleveland.com/>



Photo by Travis Peebles

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Well-resourced, connected and united arts and culture has the power to improve lives and communities. To that end, CPAC serves and supports arts and cultural professionals and community leaders who are creating a bright future for greater Cleveland. CPAC's research and advocacy fosters informed decision-making. CPAC's training, counsel and online resources provide those we serve with the ideas, skills and connections to achieve their aims. By bringing people together both within the sector and throughout the region, CPAC ensures arts and culture is a continued force for community betterment.

### *Vision*

Greater Cleveland's diverse arts and culture sector will be a leading partner in contributing to our community's vitality and enlivening the human experience.

### *Mission*

To strengthen, unify and connect greater Cleveland's arts and culture sector.

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