

PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES

At the intersection of heritage, faith, and community

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation 3-City Arts Study: Baltimore, Austin, & Detroit



Definition of sacred place or house of worship: When either of these terms are used over the course of this study, it may include the actual worship space or sanctuary but more likely refers to fellowship halls, gyms, educational wings, and social halls which are key architectural elements in many sacred places.

Hypothesis

The facility needs of the theatre and dance sectors are dire and in need of serious rethinking. Throughout the country, arts organizations are losing their purpose-built spaces due to capital campaigns coming up short or mortgages going unpaid. There are also the spaces that artists use that are substandard for their needs. Dance and theatre artists can easily — and without much capital — re-use facilities within sacred places. Developing relationships with these, as of yet, untapped resources can relieve artists from building ownership and responsibility, thereby freeing their time and resources for creative output. In addition, matching nonprofit arts organizations with houses of worship who understand mission and vision provides artists with the possibility for a long-term partnership with their building's owners, giving them a greater sense of permanence and the capacity to grow and thrive.

Partners Staff

Karen DiLossi, Partners' first Director of Arts in Sacred Places program, has developed a Manual of Best Practices and a series of systems critical to developing long-term sustainable relationships between faith-based and arts organizations. She has contributed to the Center for the Future of Museums as a guest blogger and was an essayist for MICA's MFA in Curatorial Practice, as well as the journal for the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. She has worked in professional theatre since 2000, both onstage and off. She also brings over three years of experience "matching" artists and arts organizations with congregations that have unused space they are willing to share.

Research Partner

Neville Vakharia, Assistant Professor and Research Director at Drexel University's renowned Arts Administration graduate program, undertakes research and projects that seek to strengthen the arts, cultural, and creative sectors. He supervised the operations, expansion, and strategic direction of the Cultural Data Project (CDP) at the Pew Charitable Trusts, which is a national initiative created to improve the management and financial capacity of arts organizations, inform grant-making strategies, and serve as a powerful tool for



cultural policy research and analysis. A seasoned presenter, he is a frequent speaker, moderator, and panelist at a wide range of conferences nationally.

Vakharia also has more than 10 years of experience in the corporate sector, holds two international patents, and has developed several new products and technologies. He earned both his Bachelor of Science degree in materials engineering and his Master of Science in Arts Administration from Drexel University.

Role of Cultural Partners

Partners is working with cultural affiliates in each city: Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, Austin Creative Alliance, and Culture Source (Detroit). Partners wanted to directly tap the specific needs of their region's artists and the city-specific environment in which they work, and will be working closely with them as the study progresses. Specifically, our cultural partners have taken a role in

- Development of the online survey questions
- Sent invitations for our large town hall to each cultural community
- Help facilitate and acted as host for each Town Hall meeting
- Guide Partners in selecting arts organizations and artists to interview

Results of Findings

At the end of this study, Partners will create a report that includes a summary of where artists currently rent space, the conditions of those spaces, and how much they spend on rent. We hope to shed light on what the current spaces available have enabled the artists to do or if those spaces have acted as a hurdle in the creative process. In addition, the report will include a catalog of six houses of worship from each region that will show information on the physical spaces, missions, outreach programs, and overall openness to sharing space with an artist or arts organization.

The report will be presented at a national convening of our cultural affiliates, some participating houses of worship, and, most importantly, foundations from many regions and community development partners.

From these findings, Partners hopes to create a replicable model that could be used in these three cities and others to help alleviate the dearth of space that artists face.

Contact Us

For more information about this study or Partners' Arts in Sacred Places program, please contact Karen DiLossi at kdilossi@sacredplaces.org or (215) 567-3234, x16



AT THE INTERSECTION
OF HERITAGE, FAITH,
& COMMUNITY

Partners for Sacred Places

CULTURAL PARTNERS

GBca GREATER BALTIMORE
cultural alliance



austin **creative** alliance



culturesource

RESEARCH PARTNER



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Westphal
College of Media Arts & Design