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## New study shows ‘clear benefits’ to artists and communities from creative placemaking

MINNEAPOLIS (August 12, 2011) – A new study of Artspace projects around the country shows that both artists and communities receive “clear benefits” from projects that create and sustain affordable space for artists.

*How Art Spaces Matter II*, commissioned by Artspace with support from LINC (Leveraging Investments in Creativity) and the Bush Foundation, was published this week by Metris Arts, a Minneapolis-based consulting firm. Metris principal Anne Gadwa conducted the study.

*How Art Spaces Matter II* is the second in a series of Metris reports on the ways in which Artspace projects benefit artists, arts organizations, and surrounding neighborhoods and regions. Whereas the first study, *How Artist Space Matters* (2010), focused on three Artspace projects in the Twin Cities, *How Art Spaces Matter II* examines the impacts of two Artspace projects in other cities: the Riverside Artist Lofts in Reno, Nevada, and the Tashiro Kaplan Artist Lofts in Seattle, Washington. It also synthesizes findings from all five case studies to draw out lessons learned about which factors influence successful outcomes and why.

“Overall,” the study concludes, “the Riverside and Tashiro Kaplan generate clear benefits for arts tenants and the surrounding neighborhood and region.” Evidence from these projects “strongly affirms our initial findings” from the 2010 study “that art spaces yield tangible benefits for artists, arts groups, neighborhoods, and regions.”

“We’re very pleased to have this second Metris study completed,” Artspace President Kelley Lindquist said. “It confirms both our long-held conviction and the findings of the earlier study that artists living on the edge of poverty and chronically underfunded arts organizations can leverage transformative social change.”

The two Metris reports provide advocates of creative placemaking “with thorough evidence about how artist live/work and studio buildings and arts mixed-use projects benefit the in-house artists and arts organizations and the surrounding neighborhood and region,” Anne Gadwa said. “This research underscores Artspace’s leading commitment to critical-learning, both internally and for the field at large.”

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## KEY FINDINGS

*How Art Spaces Matter II* found that art spaces benefit artists by:

- Providing space that meets residential and professional needs at affordable rates. Across the five buildings studied, 85% of surveyed tenants said the space was appropriate to their needs and 69% said it was affordable.
- Catalyzing an arts community to become more than a sum of its parts. Metris found that “co-locating artists in a single building may foster networking and collaboration, often translating directly into artists’ ability to land new opportunities to show their work, find clients, obtain employment, or learn new skills to expand their practice.”
- Increasing artistic production. Across the five projects, 75% of surveyed tenants said that living in an art space increased their productivity as artists.
- Enhancing the professional reputations of individual artists, and in some cases their income generated through art activity. Metris found that artist households living in the Riverside and Tashiro Kaplan projects had average income growth of 27%, 39% and 30% from move-in year to their second, third, and fourth year of residence.

The study found that art spaces benefit communities by:

- Animating deteriorated historic structures and/or underutilized spaces.
- Bringing vacant and/or underutilized spaces back on the tax rolls and boosting area property values. The Tashiro Kaplan grew from an appraised value of \$2.8 million in 2003 to \$16.9 million in 2010, and went from paying less than \$500 in property taxes in 2003 to more than \$28,000 in 2010. Over a 2½-mile radius, the Tashiro Kaplan increased property values by an estimated average of \$14,679 (one-time per house or condo).
- Fostering the safety and livability of neighborhoods without evidence of gentrification-led displacement. Metris found that the neighborhoods around both the Tashiro Kaplan and the Riverside remain “racially and ethnically diverse” six and ten years after the projects began operation.
- Anchoring arts districts and expanding public access to the art.
- Attracting additional artists, arts businesses, organizations, and supporting non-arts businesses to the area. In one Seattle example, the affordable space of Tashiro Kaplan allowed a resident to open a gallery space on the ground floor, and its success allowed him to launch Aqua Art Miami.

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The keys to developing and sustaining successful art spaces, according to the report, are:

- Affordable, stable space that is physically appropriate for artists and arts organizations.
- Governance structures that foster involvement and effectively manage potential conflicts.
- Active, dynamic, and artistically rigorous internal communities, frequently driven by individual leaders who catalyze engagement.
- Building features (exhibition space, community rooms), anchor tenants (arts businesses and organizations) and special programs (art crawls and open studio events) that connect with the broader community.
- Geographic connectivity with a critical mass of arts activity and complementary community development initiatives

*How Art Spaces Matter II* can be downloaded free at Artspace's and Metris Arts' websites:  
[www.artspace.org](http://www.artspace.org), [www.metrisarts.com](http://www.metrisarts.com)

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