ADDING IT UP:

52 PROJECTS BY 30+ ARTISTS IN 4 NEIGHBORHOODS

AN EVALUATION OF ARTS ON CHICAGO & ART BLOCKS

JANUARY 2016

METRIS ARTS CONSULTING
ANNE GADWA NICODEMUS
RACHEL ENGH
CHRISTOPHER MASCARO

PILLSBURY HOUSE + THEATRE

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An evaluation of Arts on Chicago and Art Blocks

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Authors:
Metris Arts Consulting
Anne Gadwa Nicodemus
Rachel Engh
Christopher Mascaro

Photos:
photos courtesy of Pillsbury House + Theatre (Alan Berks, Kelsye A. Gould, Mike Hoyt) except as noted

Design:
Kelsye A. Gould

Metris Arts Consulting
230 Ferry Street, Fl 2 Ste 3
Easton, PA 18042
metrisarts.com
484-548-0073

Pillsbury House + Theatre
3501 Chicago Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407
pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org
Main Line: 612-824-0708
Box Office: 612-825-0459

The free, digital version of this report is available online at
http://pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org/adding-it-up

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in 2012, Pillsbury House + Theatre (PH+T), a hybrid arts center/social service organization, began experimenting with arts-based community development in its four surrounding neighborhoods. With ArtPlace and subsequent Minnesota State Arts Board funding, it launched the Arts on Chicago (AOC) and Art Blocks programs. In the span of two years, over 30 neighborhood-based artists engaged their neighbors in 52 projects that ranged from a stilting club to artistic bike racks to puppet shows to photographic portraits of neighbors. PH+T also developed structures to remain responsive to changing community interests and provide artist project leaders with professional development.

What is the change that PH+T sought to make and how and why did it expect this change to occur? Ultimately, they hoped to empower neighborhood residents, which included artist project leaders, to affect positive change. That positive change could be individual, family-level, or community-wide outcomes, with goals and values ideally determined collectively by neighborhood residents. PH+T theorized that this change would come about by catalyzing a critical mass of participatory neighborhood arts activities. Led by neighborhood artists, these activities would be strategically designed to foster residents' access to arts participation, increase residents' levels of community attachment, and promote residents' agency (both individual and collective). PH+T imbued each of these concepts with sub-themes and values, which directly informed the selection of our research questions.

ACCESS
"I (we) feel welcome here."

ATTACHMENT
"I (we) fit here."

AGENCY
"I (we) want to make good stuff happen here."

To advance field-wide knowledge, provide accountability to its stakeholders, and deepen the effectiveness of its future work, PH+T engaged Metris Arts Consulting to collaborate on this evaluation. This report assesses the impact of 2012-2014 Art Blocks and Arts on Chicago activities on residents' arts and cultural "access," community "attachment," and individual and collective "agency." It also explores what strategies were most effective and makes recommendations on how to improve data collection efforts moving forward.

Our findings capture the perspectives of artist project leaders, neighborhood residents and other civic stakeholders. We made use of the extensive data collected internally by PH+T, prior to Metris' involvement, and also designed and executed select additional methods to help us address gaps in our ability to answer specific research questions. Core data sources include artists' final reflections (response rates of 70%-83% of artist teams/year); spreadsheets detailing the social connections that Arts on Chicago artists made via their projects, which underpinned our social network analysis (response rate of 60% of artist teams); and a residents' survey designed with a quasi-control group (response rate of 14%). Using a range of data sources, we explored AOC and Art Blocks' impacts related to residents' arts access, community attachment, and individual and collective agency.

FOSTERING ARTS ACCESS

We found clear evidence that AOC and Art Blocks provided residents with opportunities for creative expression.

We found clear evidence that AOC and Art Blocks provided residents with opportunities for creative expression. In the two-year period, AOC and Art Blocks artists initiated 52 projects, many of them clearly visible in the public realm, within the four neighborhoods that surround PH+T. The residents' survey, event participants' survey, and focus group data suggest that residents noticed these efforts and that they helped build towards a critical mass of arts activities. Survey respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks where AOC activities took place, for instance, were 1.5 times more likely to rate their neighborhood as good or excellent in terms of opportunities for creative expression. Through their final reflections, artist project leaders provided details about the ways in which neighbors encountered art projects.

Mike Hoyt's Art Blocks project was a growth chart mural on his fence featuring people on his block.

We found more modest evidence surrounding the projects' abilities to remove barriers to arts participation and help residents feel welcome at these and other arts events. Through their final reflections, artists illuminated a variety of ways in which they strove to make their projects welcoming and remove barriers; and focus group respondents contrasted arts activity in the neighborhoods surrounding PH+T with another Minneapolis-based neighborhood with arts cachet, and characterized the former as much more accessible. However, high percentages of both quasi-control group respondents and respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks with AOC activities indicated that they felt welcome at PH+T arts events. While PH+T's neighborhood standing as an accessible and welcoming arts center is to be celebrated, we are unable to correlate this trend to recent Art Blocks or AOC activity.

In terms of shifting attitudes regarding arts participation, similarly, the AOC and Art Blocks' influence on increasing residents' awareness of the connections between art and community building was difficult to assess. Through qualitative responses, resident survey respondents demonstrated an awareness of the connections between art and community building, but illustrated with examples other than from AOC/Art Blocks projects. Event participant survey respondents, however, did indicate a strong demand for similar arts experiences and in their final reflections, artists supplied examples of how individual Art Blocks/AOC projects served as springboards for other neighborhood-based arts projects.

INCREASED ATTACHMENT: PEOPLE AND PLACE

A range of data sources allowed us to probe whether or not residents felt more connected or trusted each other more. Social network analysis, artists' final reflections, and resident survey data provided clear evidence that the Art Blocks and AOC projects fostered social connections. Respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks where AOC activities took place, for instance, were 1.6 times more likely to report that they felt more connected to their neighbors because of arts offerings than quasi-control respondents. For AOC, social network analysis illustrated a cohesive group of artists that bring together many disparate individuals in the community. In addition, particular individuals stood out for their role in the network. Via final reflections, artists conveyed that they truly valued the relationships that they developed through the projects and how this helped foster their attachment to place. This data source also yielded insights into the ways in which their projects facilitated initial interaction between neighbors. We also wished to specifically explore whether increased social connections and trust between neighbors spanned difference (including race/ethnicity, income status, and age, among other dimensions.) Although artist final reflections and the relationship data submitted by AOC artists reveal that the projects involved people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, we found very little qualitative evidence to help us contextualize the depth or relative significance that participants placed on those interactions.

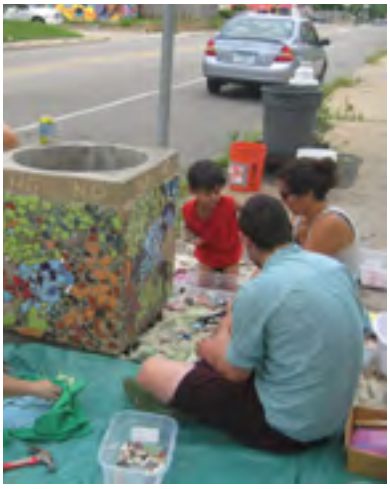
Respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks where AOC activities took place, for instance, were 1.6 times more likely to report that they felt more connected to their neighbors because of arts offerings than quasi-control respondents.

TAWU's Art Stop Garden installation was revealed at the 2013 Arts on Chicago Celebration; photo by Bruce Silcox.

Another desired dimension of the community attachment goal was residents' increased appreciation for difference, such as valuing knowing people of different backgrounds or being invested in neighbors' success, regardless of difference. Two participants shared testimonial via event participant surveys that AOC/Art Blocks activities helped expand their thinking in this regard. The residents' survey also provided only modest evidence. High majorities of both AOC and Art Blocks survey respondents and quasi-control group respondents indicated that it was very important to them to know neighbors of different backgrounds. This suggests that majorities of residents may share these values, but that life experiences beyond and pre-dating the AOC and Art Blocks projects shape these world-views.

PH+T also wished to explore residents' sense of belonging as another component of the community attachment goal. Qualitative data from artist final reflections, artist video interviews, participant event surveys, and focus groups suggested that the AOC and Art Blocks activities may have deepened residents' sense of belonging and/or fostered it for those that did not initially feel that they belonged to their neighborhood. In addition, these dynamics appeared closely linked to residents' sense of safety and increased familiarity with neighbors and neighborhood amenities. The residents' survey, however, revealed that high majorities of residents feel a sense of belonging with no apparent correlation to AOC or Art Blocks activities.

The final dimension of the community attachment goal is fostering pride of place. We found strong qualitative and quantitative evidence that AOC and Art Blocks projects helped increase residents' pride in where they lived, particularly as relates to its arts identity.



Nicky Duxbury's Art Bloks project engaged neighbors in creating a mosaic trash can.

Peter Haakon Thompson's *Mobile Sign Shop* at the 2013 Arts on Chicago celebration

PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE AGENCY

PH+T wished to explore five facets of individual and collective agency: inspiration, empowerment through skills and confidence, increased voice in community decision making, increased sense of civic responsibility at the neighborhood level, and residents' ability to work collectively and engage in dialogue about tough issues.

We found clear evidence that AOC and Art Blocks activities helped residents gain inspiration, as well as skills and confidence to generate opportunities. Higher percentages of AOC and Art Blocks respondents, for instance, reported that they imagine positive futures for themselves and their neighborhood than for quasi-control group respondents. This pattern also held for skills and confidence, with higher percentages of Art Blocks and AOC respondents agreeing with the statement, "I have the skills and confidence to generate opportunities." Artist final reflections illustrated the ways in which the projects inspired participants and provided them with new skills, particularly for artist project leaders and youth participants.

Our analyses revealed promising signs that Art Blocks and AOC may help previously underrepresented individuals have a greater voice in community decision making. Higher percentages of Art Blocks and AOC respondents agreed with the statement: "I have a voice in community decision making," and this trend was even more pronounced for racial minorities, low-income individuals, and people of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, though extremely small sample sizes limit the validity of these results.

In terms of the projects' abilities to increase residents' commitment to be civically engaged in their neighborhood, our data sources suggest success in this area, particularly for the artist project leaders, themselves. Respondents dwelling on blocks where AOC or Art Blocks activities took place were 1.8 times more likely to state that it was very important to them to be civically engaged in their neighborhood. In their final reflections, artists provided qualitative evidence of this commitment, which seemed particularly pronounced for Art Blocks artist project leaders. Their experiences seemed to whet their appetites for more hyper-local civic engagement.

Lastly, with regards to increasing residents' capacity for dialogue and collective work, we found only modest qualitative evidence. Interestingly, residents held up non-AOC/Art Blocks examples of arts-based strategies that can help people discuss divisive issues, develop shared values, and better appreciate alternate points of view, including the community process surrounding In the Heart of the Beast's MayDay parade and festival and PH+T's own Breaking Ice program. We speculate that with increased artist experience, the potential for Art Blocks and AOC to generate these kinds of impacts will increase.

IMPLICATIONS: LEARNING FROM PH+T'S EXPERIENCE

To explore how PH+T, project partners, and the broader field can learn from these efforts, this study also explores factors that appear to help or hinder desired access, attachment, and agency-related outcomes and also provides guidance for future measurement efforts.

The “living” fiber art installation created by StevenBe’s Arts on Chicago Fiber Sprawls

Looking across all individual AOC and Art Blocks projects, we identify six factors that seem to help (or hinder) access, attachment, and agency-related outcomes:

1. Active participation and connecting participants to unfamiliar people and places
2. Tradeoffs between geographically diffuse and concentrated approaches
3. Deep artist-to-artist social connections
4. Staying attuned to challenges and value of collaborations with outside partners
5. Successful navigation of tight timelines
6. Balancing artists’ experimentation and building on experience

With regards to future measurement efforts, the data sources and methods that proved most valuable in helping us address access, attachment, and agency impacts were the artist final reflections, the residents’ survey, and the artist relationship data and resulting social network analysis. We provide specific recommendations on ways to boost response rates, increase sample sizes, and improve the quality and specificity of the data collected. In addition to these three core data collection efforts, we recommend that resident/participant focus groups are added to the mix of data collection efforts with protocols strategically designed to illicit qualitative responses from those impact-areas for which we had limited or inconclusive data.

In conclusion, with a relatively small amount of money and a lot of gumption, PH+T sought to help “make good stuff happen” by seeding its four surrounding neighborhoods with a series of neighborhood artist-led art projects that it hoped would foster residents’ access to arts participation, community attachment, and individual and collective agency. It also set out to measure the impact of these efforts so that it could iteratively improve its work and offer insights to others in the field trying their hand at related efforts.

Although some impacts may be modest, this evaluation finds evidence that Art Blocks and AOC did, indeed, help PH+T make inroads towards its agency, attachment, and arts access goals. It also synthesized lessons learned about which strategies and approaches appear to be most effective and how measurement efforts can be improved moving forward. This in-depth evaluation makes a valuable contribution to the emergent creative placemaking field, both in sharing what kinds of “people-stuff” impacts creative community development projects such as Art Blocks and Arts on Chicago can generate, and by helping others improve their own program design and evaluation efforts.

Rebecca Rayman's 2015 Art Blocks event; photo by Bruce Silcox

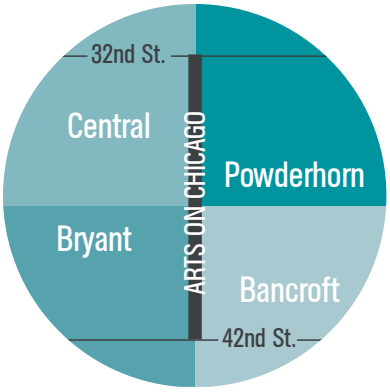
INTRODUCTION

Pillsbury House + Theatre engaged Metris Arts Consulting to evaluate the first phase of its "creative community development" work: the 2012 to 2014 Arts on Chicago and Art Blocks programs. These projects supported over 30 community-based artists to engage their neighbors in creating art on the blocks where they live and in events and performances occurring in the four neighborhoods surrounding this unique hybrid arts center/human services agency. The study meets multiple objectives: an outcomes evaluation assesses the impact of Arts on Chicago and Art Blocks on residents' arts and cultural "access," community "attachment," and individual and collective "agency;" a process evaluation explores which specific strategies were most effective and why; and a scan of past data collection efforts determined which methods should be maintained, modified, and improved moving forward. PH+T pursued this study to advance field-wide knowledge; provide accountability to its stakeholders; and identify ways to strengthen this work moving forward, with an eye toward scaling up to other locales.

This report first provides background on the organization and program design, followed by an overview of the study objectives and methodology. We next share PH+T's theory of change, our impact findings, implications, and lastly, conclusions.

BACKGROUND

Pillsbury House + Theatre. The plus sign is more than a graphic branding element. This unique organization fuses a neighborhood-based human service organization (Pillsbury House) and an arts center (Pillsbury House Theatre). The theatre, launched in 1992, grew out of the Settlement House tradition of creating art in collaboration with the community and affirmed the commitment of Pillsbury's parent organization (Pillsbury United Communities, a human services agency) to the arts as an integral part of healthy communities. In 2008, however, this interconnection deepened. The co-artistic directors of the theatre also became co-center directors of Pillsbury House and began work to integrate the arts into all aspects of the human services from early childhood



Arts on Chicago spanned four neighborhoods along Chicago Avenue between 32nd and 42nd Streets.

A photo installation from Stephanie Rodgers' 2013 Arts on Chicago project, *Urban/Environment*

Lacey Prpić Hedtke created tintypes of the houses on her block.

education to truancy prevention and from a health clinic to a bike shop that provides a food shelf and training to homeless teens (Fushan 2013).

In 2012, PH+T applied its radical arts integration approach not only to social service programs under its own roof, but also to a larger vision of community development. In collaboration with community partners and with support from a $250,000 ArtPlace grant, it began implementing and experimenting with ways to infuse active arts and cultural participation in the daily lives of residents in four surrounding neighborhoods: Powderhorn, Central, Bryant, and Bancroft. The population of Powderhorn, Central, Bryant, and Bancroft is younger, more racially diverse, and lower income than Minneapolis as a whole (Minnesota Compass 2015). Arts on Chicago (AOC) was PH+T's first foray, followed by Art Blocks.

In AOC's inaugural year, PH+T supported 20 projects, led by artists living in any of the four neighborhoods, to animate a 10-block stretch of Chicago Avenue that touches all four neighborhoods. This major Minneapolis corridor is home to high bus and car traffic, and a mix of residential homes and businesses. The intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, once known as the most dangerous corner in Minneapolis, boasts a growing commercial node that includes a corner store, barbershop, tattoo parlor, art gallery, and a coffee shop.

Projects spanned visual art (mural, sculpture, photography, glow-in-the-dark images, and artistic bike racks), ephemeral performance pieces (story walks), and a stilting club. Artists received stipends of $3000 - $10,000, with additional support provided for specific project needs, such as materials sourcing and language translation. These artworks took place from fall 2012 to early summer 2013 in front yards, businesses, parks, and on sidewalks. Many artists emphasized direct participation by the public. StevenBe, for example, organized weekly community "fiber sprawls," where people could learn fiber arts techniques and contribute to a fiber installation outside his fiber arts business. A number of different artists, such as Stephanie Rogers, Wing Young Huie, and the team of artists that created *EyeSite*, asked residents and business owners to host their projects. This resulted in artists displaying photographs in windows and front yards and installing glowing images on garages. Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes heard stories from people living and working in the community and then shared them in their walking storytelling performance, *What Grows Here*.

With an additional $92,600 grant secured from the Minnesota State Arts Board, PH+T piloted Art Blocks in the late summer of 2013 with 12 participating artists/artist teams. Art Blocks artists received stipends of $3,500. Charged with engaging their immediate neighbors in artistic activity, Art Blocks artists hosted a BBQ, put on a puppet show, wrote and read poetry, designed a neighbor-painted mural, photographed their neighbors, and organized block "field trips" to other arts or cultural events within the four neighborhoods. Art Blocks differed from AOC in its greater emphasis on direct arts participation by neighbors. Projects varied from large-scale events to one-on-one interactions. Niky Duxbury and Aaron Blum, for example, presented *Porch Fest*, a neighborhood-wide concert on a variety of porches, which attracted people from within and outside the neighborhoods. Lacey Prpić Hedtke researched the history of each house on her block, created images of the houses that she attached to telephone poles, and hosted a ritualistic walk with her neighbors to honor the people who had lived in the houses.

Beyond the projects themselves, PH+T put in place structures to remain responsive to community interests and facilitate the programs' stewardship

One of the performances at the 2013 *Porch Fest* event

and artists' professional development needs. AOC and Art Blocks artists participated in "institute" cohorts, a reflective process designed by consultant Bill Cleveland. Artists first learn about arts-based community development and then engage in project cross-pollination; they discuss resources, challenges, and big-picture issues related to their projects. To guide the development of both Arts on Chicago and Art Blocks , PH+T assembled a core leadership team with government, civic/arts nonprofit, and educational stakeholders (PH+T; Upstream Arts; Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association; Council Member Elizabeth Glidden's office; and artist Natasha Pestich, a professor at Minneapolis College of Art and Design). The leadership team contributed to high-level program design and discussed successes and hurdles along the way. In addition, each team member spearheaded an Arts on Chicago project. Through Lunch on Chicago, which happened weekly between July and December 2013, residents, artists, leadership team members, and other civic partners could access an informal space to talk about specific projects or placemaking in general.

Both Arts and Chicago and Art Blocks continue. PH+T funded three new AOC projects in 2014 and two in 2015. Art Blocks grew in 2014 with 17 participating artists, many of whom had participated in 2013. It continued to grow in 2015, with 25 participating artists, including an intentional focus on adding 5 community elder artists. The leadership team also expanded with new arts-based and government stakeholders—the Third Place Gallery, Councilmember Alondra Cano's Office, and artist and former Ward 8 Policy Aide Andrea Jenkins.

STUDY MOTIVATION

PH+T was motivated to both do and study this work, in part, in reaction to the dominant national conversation within the burgeoning creative placemaking[1] field. In 2012, when PH+T began implementing its AOC program, a leading creative placemaking funder, ArtPlace, introduced its proposed "vibrancy indicators." This sparked a tumult of debate (Schupbach and Iyengar 2012), with both strong methodological (Markusen 2012; Moss 2012) and philosophical (Bedoya 2013; Gadwa Nicodemus 2013) critiques. Through the practice and evaluation of its creative community development work, PH+T hoped to address what it saw as a void in creative placemaking projects focused on social outcomes, as distinct from economic impacts and/or physical revitalization. Today, the pendulum has shifted back significantly. ArtPlace's website explains that "rather than attempt to develop universal systems to quantify projects," it asks grantees, "what is it you are trying to do, and how are you going to know whether you have done it?" (2015). The National Endowment for the Arts pursues a range of evaluation approaches towards its own Our Town creative placemaking programs—from testing "livability indicators" (Morley and Winkler 2014) to creating an interactive website with project mini-case studies (National Endowment for the Arts 2015). *Adding It Up* also follows in the footsteps of the Tucson Pima Art Council's PLACE evaluation (2013), which represented the first, high visibility foray into evaluating social impacts of any ArtPlace and/or NEA-supported creative placemaking project. Despite these shifts, this detailed exploration of how hyper-local, artist-driven projects fuel agency, attachment, and arts access outcomes for neighborhood residents represents an important contribution to practitioners, funders, and researchers' knowledge of how this work unfolds, its impacts, and measurement challenges and opportunities.

1. Markusen and Gadwa defined creative placemaking in 2010 in a white paper for the National Endowment for the Arts' Mayors Institute of City Design (2010). The NEA created a new flagship grantmaking program, Our Town, and to date has invested $25.9M in over 325 projects nationwide. A new consortium of philanthropic funders, ArtPlace, has invested $66.8M for 227 projects across 152 communities. The Kresge Foundation has also realigned its guidelines to make creative placemaking a major area of focus.

In addition to advancing fieldwide knowledge and debate, PH+T also pursued this study for several other reasons. As an arts-integrated agency, it must remain accountable to its core stakeholders: area residents, and program participants. PH+T also desires to share impacts and lessons learned with other immediate stakeholders (community and artist partners, funders, elected officials, as well as the internal audiences of staff and board of PH+T and Pillsbury United Communities). Lastly, by gaining insights into its process—what was effective, and why?—PH+T hopes to improve its own service delivery and extract lessons learned with an eye towards scaling up creative community development work in other Pillsbury United Communities locales.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Metris and PH+T's approach to this evaluation was truly collaborative, in the spirit of participatory action research[2]. PH+T began collecting the majority of the data analyzed for this study internally, prior to Metris' involvement.

PH+T staff, the leadership team, and the artists used their judgment about what research questions were of interest and self-collected data they deemed to be of value. Internally collected data sources include artist pre- and post-project questionnaires, surveys administered to event participants, artist final reflection narratives, video interviews with artist project leaders, spreadsheets detailing the social connections that artists made via their projects, and even community members' responses to the *Wish Well* interactive art project. (Download the Technical Appendix for details on all data sources.)

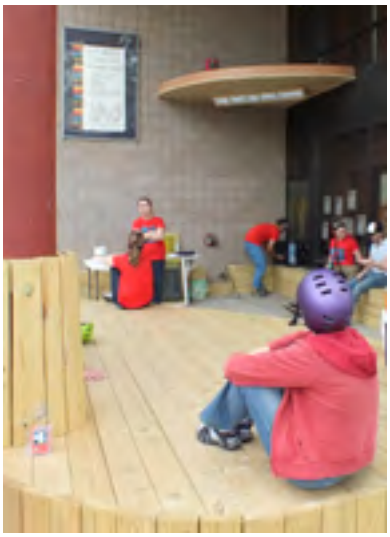
This evaluation also benefited from prior research from graduate students from the Humphrey School at the University of Minnesota (Briel, Engh, and Milavetz 2013). Through a capstone project for PH+T, they conducted focus groups and interviews, developed survey instruments, and reviewed literature on relevant indicator systems and evaluation approaches related to capturing changes in levels of residents' attachment to place due to arts and cultural activity. Summary findings from focus groups and interviews with neighborhood residents, business owners, and leadership team members were made available to us.

Metris refined the research design used in this evaluation, first by reviewing the body of literature related to measuring the social impacts of the arts (Winter 2014). Our methods drew inspiration from the Tucson Pima Arts Council's PLACE evaluation (2013), Mark Stern and Susan Seifert's "Civic Engagement and the Arts: Issues of Conceptualization and Measurement" (2009), and various resources shared through Animating Democracy's "Impact" web resource (Alvarez 2009; Gamble 2006; House and Howe 2000; Jackson 2009; Mackinnon and Amott 2006; McGarvey 2004; McGarvey and Volkman 2006; Arts Animating Democracy 2014).

Next, we engaged core stakeholders (staff, artists, and the leadership team) in an interactive session to coalesce on a theory of change and unpack the access, attachment, and agency concepts (April - May 2014). In close collaboration with PH+T, we developed detailed research questions in relation to the outcomes, impacts, and strategies specified in the theory of change (January 2015).

Metris analyzed existing quantitative and qualitative data in relation to research questions, beginning in February 2015. After we identified gaps in our ability

2. In Participatory Action Research, the research is participatory (owned and controlled by the community), defined by a need for action, reflexive about the creation of meaning, and flexible and iterative, and it yields useful and meaningful information (Arts Animating Democracy, 2014).



Mike Hoyt's Arts on Chicago project, *Wish Well*, invites community members to sit, share, and reflect on well wishes left anonymously by community members.

to answer specific research questions with existing data sources, we designed and executed select additional methods (April - June 2015). These included a residents' survey designed with a quasi-control group, social network analysis to better understand the nature of the social networks made through the projects, and a focus group conducted with key artists' contacts that we identified via the social network analysis.


Peter Haakon Thompson and his red A sculpture; photo by Bruce Silcox

Throughout the process, we also served as a thought-partner resource for how PH+T might explore more artistic and creative means of data collection, evaluation, and dissemination. A community arts project (displaying artist Peter Haakon Thompson's large red "A" decals in windows) became integrated into the door-to-door survey, with the prompt: "We're inviting neighbors to display these 'A' symbols in a window, if they feel more connected to their neighborhood because of arts offerings. The 'A' stands for art. Would you like to participate?" PH+T independently will monitor the percentage of households who display this symbol and track variation between blocks that have had Arts on Chicago or Art Blocks activities and those that have not. In addition, we audio-recorded qualitative responses in the residents' survey, so that PH+T could make that available for future creative uses.

Cumulatively, our findings capture the perspectives of artist project leaders, neighborhood residents, and other civic stakeholders.

For Arts on Chicago, 80%, 35% and 70% of the 20 artists/artist teams submitted pre-project surveys, post-project surveys, and final reports/evaluations, respectively. Sixty percent of artist teams submitted data on the relationships that they cultivated through the process, and 60% also shared their insights via video interviews. One hundred thirty-five audience participants, 61 of whom were neighborhood residents, completed event surveys. Five business owners, six leadership team members, and eight residents/other community members also shared their insights via interviews and focus groups. The latter included four "artists' contacts"—individuals who had connections with multiple artist project leaders, as identified through our social network analysis.

For Art Blocks, artists also shared their views via final reports (83% of artists/artist teams for 2013 and 76% for 2014). One hundred ninety-five Art Blocks audience participants shared their views via event surveys, 72 of whom were neighborhood residents.

The Metris-designed residents' survey spanned both Arts on Chicago and Art Blocks activity areas. Our survey design featured a sample that included 18 residential blocks from all four neighborhoods, half with AOC/Art Blocks activity and half geographically buffered from this activity to approximate a quasi-control group. We therefore compared survey findings between residents who had had Art Blocks or AOC projects in their immediate area with those who had not. Door-to-door surveyors captured data for 69 of an estimated 491 households (response rate of 14%).

We provide a discussion of which data sources and methods best helped us address the research questions and make recommendations for improvements to future measurement efforts in the Guidance for Future Measurement Efforts section. We provide more details on all data sources analyzed for the study in the Technical Appendix.

Paint the Pavement, part of the 2013 Arts on Chicago Celebration

THEORY OF CHANGE: "THE PEOPLE STUFF"

What is it that PH+T hopes will happen because of Art Blocks and Arts on Chicago activities? What is the change it seeks to make, and how and why does it expect this change to occur? Foundation program officers, nonprofit grantees, and evaluators refer to this as a theory of change and/or logic model (Mackinnon and Amott 2006). For social scientists, these ideas would form the basis of hypotheses to be tested.

Through its creative community development work, PH+T is most interested in influencing social outcomes—what staff refer to as "the people stuff." PH+T staff and the leadership team draw particular inspiration from the Knight Foundation's *Soul of the Community* reports and Mark Stern and Susan Seifert's Philadelphia-centered research on cultural clusters (Stern and Seifert 2007; John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Gallup, Inc. 2010). The former documents the importance of aesthetics and social offerings for levels of residents' attachment to their communities, whereas Stern and Seifert explore correlations between concentrations of arts participants, resident artists, and cultural nonprofits and businesses with a broad array of positive social outcomes. Inspired by Stern and Seifert, PH+T leadership pondered whether it would be possible to reverse engineer positive social outcomes by fostering ample neighborhood opportunities to participate in arts and creative expression.

Ultimately, they hope to empower neighborhood residents, including the artists leading the activities, to affect positive change.

Through a Metris-led interactive workshop in April 2014, the leadership team coalesced around a theory of change (see Figure 1).

Ultimately, they hope to empower neighborhood residents, including the artists leading the activities, to affect positive change. Positive changes could be individual, family-level, or community-wide outcomes. The PH+T staff and leadership team also takes an agnostic stance; rather than impose their own concepts of what this "good stuff" should be, they hope that neighborhood residents will collectively determine goals and values.

How would this positive change come about? PH+T hoped to catalyze a critical mass of participatory neighborhood arts activities. Neighborhood artists would lead the activities and strategically design them to achieve three goals:

1. Foster residents' access to arts participation
2. Increase residents' levels of community attachment
3. Promote residents' agency (individual and collective)

But what do these concepts really mean? As one focus group participant said, access, attachment, and agency, "may mean a lot to the people in this [PH+T] building, but outside the building, they are just words."

In laymen's terms "success" for PH+T would be if, *because of the arts*…

- Residents felt welcome (at arts events out in the neighborhood, at the PH+T center, and in the place where they live);
- Residents felt that they "fit" in their neighborhood; and lastly,
- Residents wanted to make "good stuff" happen.

PH+T staff and the leadership team also imbued each concept with sub-themes and values.

FOSTER ARTS ACCESS

The fostering arts access goal involves three main components: a critical mass of arts activities, feeling welcome, and a shift in attitudes regarding arts participation.

In PH+T's theory of change, the Art Blocks and Arts on Chicago artists and project partners would remove barriers to arts participation (racial, cultural, economic, educational and physical). Neighborhood residents, from of all walks of life, would feel welcome at PH+T arts activities and have ample opportunities for creative expression in their immediate neighborhoods. Because of the arts activities, residents would demonstrate greater awareness of the connections between art and community building and desire more arts experiences.

INCREASE COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

The increasing community attachment goal relates to fostering pride in one's physical neighborhood, but also encompasses a number of social concepts: social connectedness, appreciating difference, and fostering a sense of belonging. In other words, the leadership team views community attachment as attachment to a place *and* people being attached to one another.

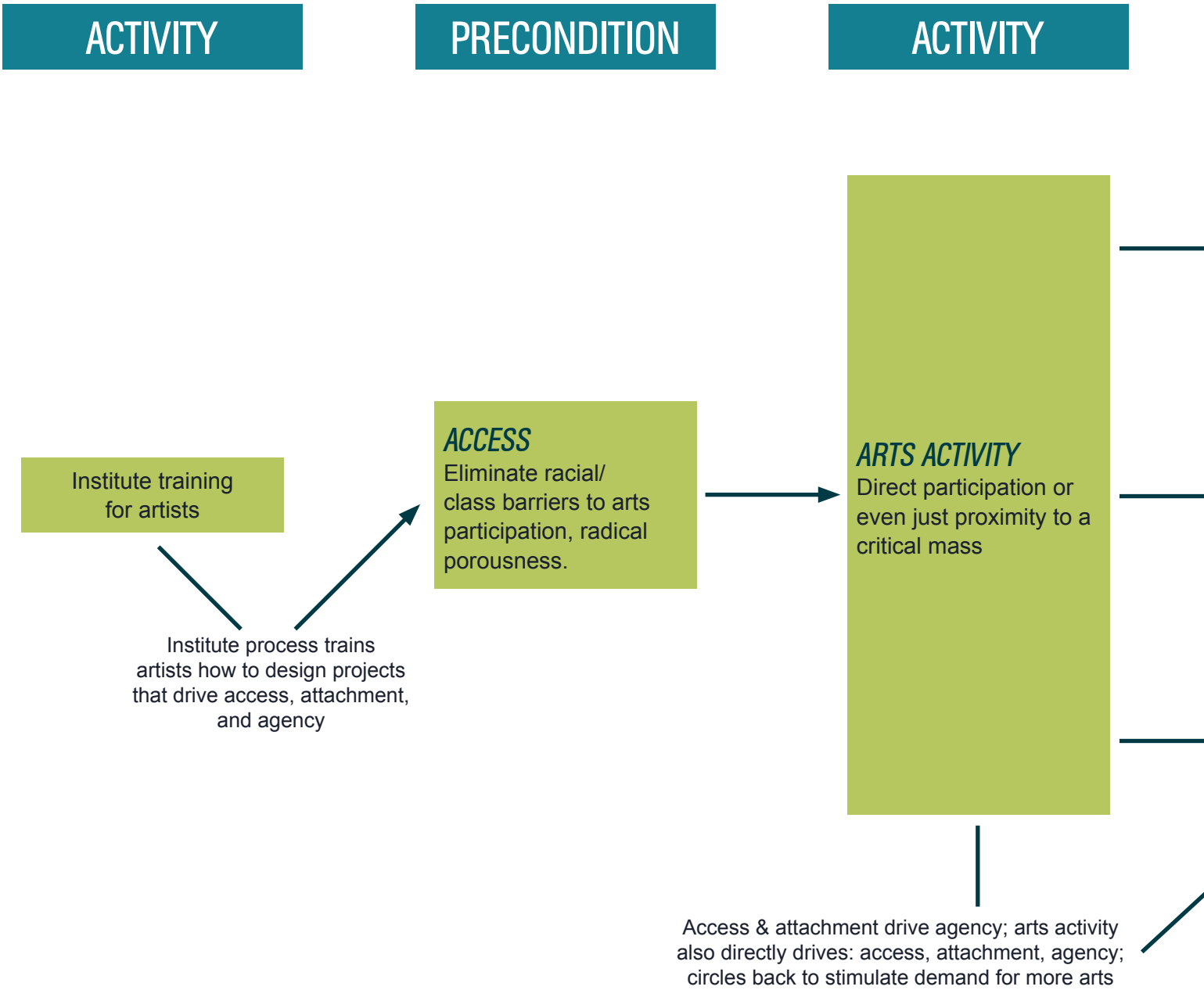
Because of the Art Blocks and Arts on Chicago activities, PH+T hoped that neighbors would feel more connected to one another (especially to those of different backgrounds) and trust each other more. They would have increased appreciation for diversity, for instance they would value knowing people of different backgrounds, and feel invested in their neighbors' success, regardless of difference. They would have an increased sense of belonging. Lastly, they would take pride in living in Bancroft, Central, Powderhorn, or Bryant, which they would view as rife with opportunities for creative expression.

PROMOTE INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE AGENCY

PH+T's leadership team sees three core components to the "agency" goal: empowering neighborhood residents, inspiring them, and helping expand their ability to work and dialogue effectively together to improve each other's lives.

Specifically, because of the Art Blocks and Arts on Chicago activities, PH+T hoped that neighborhood residents, including artist project leaders, would gain the skills and confidence needed to generate opportunities. Residents would be inspired; they would think more expansively and optimistically about possibilities for themselves and their community. They would feel a responsibility to be civically engaged in their neighborhood. Folks that were previously underrepresented would have a greater voice in community decision-making. And lastly, residents would be able to work more effectively together across difference, dialogue about tough/divisive issues, develop shared values, or better appreciate alternate points of view.

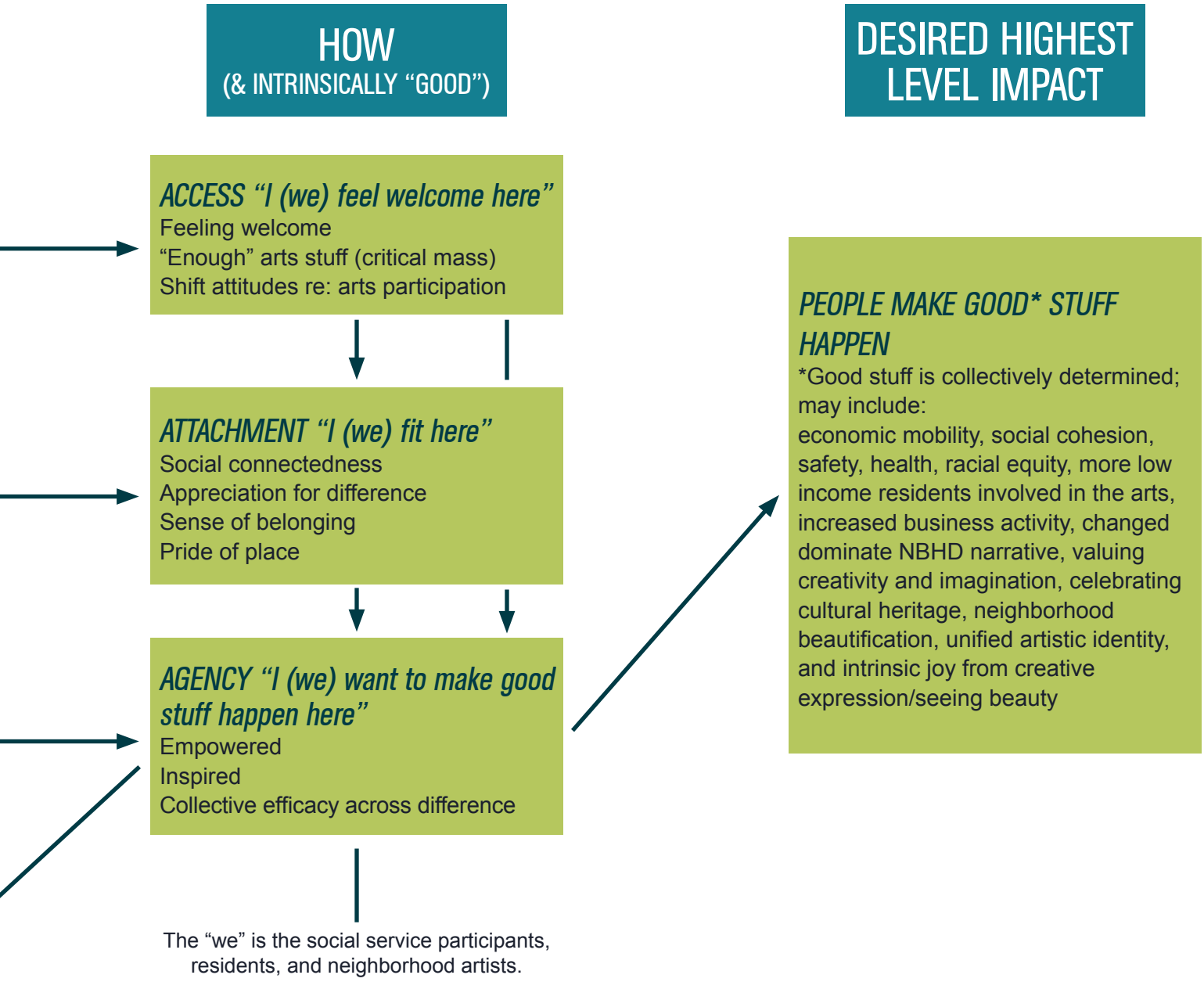
Figure 1. Theory of Change



PROCESS

How would these access, attachment, and agency goals be met? First, artists would learn how to strategically design community art projects that met these goals through PH+T's intensive "institute" training process. A given arts activity ideally directly promotes each goal, but the leadership team also theorizes that increased access to arts activities fosters increased levels of community attachment, which in turn, promotes agency, and ultimately increases a community's capacity to affect change. The theory of change also depends on continual efforts to remove racial and class barriers to arts participation. As one leadership team member said, "Racial equity doesn't come at the end. You hit at it every time."

Figure 1 (continued). Theory of Change



Soozin Hirschmugl's 2014 Art Blocks event

IMPACT FINDINGS

To what extent did AOC and Art Blocks projects achieve PH+T's access, attachment, and agency-related goals? This section explores each, in turn.

FOSTERING ARTS ACCESS

PH+T's fostering arts access goal involves three main components: ample opportunities for neighborhood-based creative expression, feeling welcome, and a shift in attitudes regarding arts participation. We find clear evidence that Art Blocks and AOC artists and project partners helped build towards a critical mass of arts activities for residents, and modest evidence that they removed residents' barriers to arts participation and helped them feel welcome at PH+T arts activities. We also explore whether residents demonstrated greater awareness of the connections between art and community building and desire more arts experiences. For the former, residents articulated an understanding of the links between art and community building, but these impressions did not seem specifically tied to AOC/Art Blocks. Past participants, however, did express strong demand for similar experiences, and we documented instances of projects serving as springboards for other neighborhood arts projects. In the following sections, we elaborate on these findings.

A much greater percentage of residents sampled on Art Blocks or AOC project blocks rated their neighborhood as good or excellent in terms of opportunities for creative expression.

BUILDING TOWARDS A CRITICAL MASS OF ARTS ACTIVITIES: CLEAR EVIDENCE

A variety of data sources provide strong evidence that Art Blocks and AOC projects helped build towards a critical mass of neighborhood arts activities. Survey respondents on blocks where AOC or Art Blocks activities took place, for instance, were 1.5 times more likely to rate their neighborhood as "good" or "excellent" in terms of opportunities for creative expression.[3] Qualitative data from focus groups, surveys, and artist final reflections also illuminated the ways in which neighbors encountered and valued these arts offerings. Below, we provide details on these findings.

3. Source: Residents' survey. Based on a 5-point scale: Poor, Fair, Average, Good, Excellent. N=38 for Arts Blocks/AOC resident respondents and 31 for quasi-control respondents.

By the nature of the effort itself, PH+T in partnership with Art Blocks and AOC artists helped increase the volume of neighborhood arts activities, many of them clearly visible in the public realm. In total from 2012 to 2014, these artists initiated 52 arts projects within the four neighborhoods (see Figure 2).

Survey and focus group findings indicate that residents noticed these efforts and that they helped build towards a critical mass of arts activities. A much greater percentage of residents sampled on Art Blocks or AOC project blocks, for instance, rated their neighborhood as good or excellent in terms of opportunities for creative expression versus the quasi-control group (73.7% versus 48.4%, respectively).[4] All focus group participants also agreed that AOC and Art Blocks have resulted in more community arts offerings.

4. Ibid.

Masanari Kawahara helps a kid learn to stilt at the 2013 Arts on Chicago Celebration.

How did this infusion of arts activities play out? Through Arts on Chicago, PH+T saturated a ten-block stretch of Chicago Avenue with art. Both ephemeral experiences and temporary art installations occurred in businesses, front yards, and sidewalks. In their evaluations, AOC artists provided some insights about the ways in which neighbors encountered their art projects. Drivers honked their support and neighbors stopped by to say, "Hi," for instance, during Masanari Kawahara's youth stilting project. Molly Van Avery's *Poetry Mobile* turned "a street into a studio space," and provided an interactive, "whimsical, and surprising thing to have on the streets of Powderhorn." Art Blocks artists created projects that materialized just steps outside the doors of their immediate neighbors. Soozin Hirschmugl, an Art Blocks artist, wrote that their efforts garnered a reputation for the artists as "folks who do potlucks, puppet shows, and community gatherings in the neighborhood." Artists pulled off projects in public spaces, in businesses, in alleys, and on the streets so that their neighbors would encounter creative projects in unconventional spaces.

HELPING RESIDENTS FEEL WELCOME AND REMOVING ARTS PARTICIPATION BARRIERS: MODEST EVIDENCE

Survey and focus group data provided modest evidence that artists' efforts to help residents feel welcome at PH+T arts activities and remove barriers for arts participations were met with success. For instance, a greater percentage of respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks with AOC activities indicated that they felt welcome or very welcome to participate in PH+T arts offerings than quasi-control group respondents (100% versus 93.1%).[5] Such high responses, for both groups, speak well to PH+T's overall reputation for accessibility in the community. Focus group participant Mike Stebnitz, a local developer, also illuminated how, in his view, Art Blocks and AOC activities reached a higher bar of accessibility than some other prominent Twin Cities arts events:

> The level of engagement here, compared to many neighborhoods, the opportunities that actually exist…in many ways may be very unusual. The arts community is not as connected and established here as it is in Northeast Minneapolis, but for that reason, it may be more accessible. In Northeast, there is a little something assumed about arts culture [that can be] intimidating for some people…I don't know a lot about art, so to be involved in Art-a-Whirl or something like that [can be intimidating], but any arts thing here in this neighborhood, I feel very comfortable at, very welcome.[6]

5. Source: Residents' Survey. Based on a 4-point scale: Very unwelcome, Unwelcome, Welcome, Very Welcome. Sample size=68 for Art Blocks/ AOC resident respondents and 56 for quasi-control respondents.

6. Source: Focus group, May 2015.

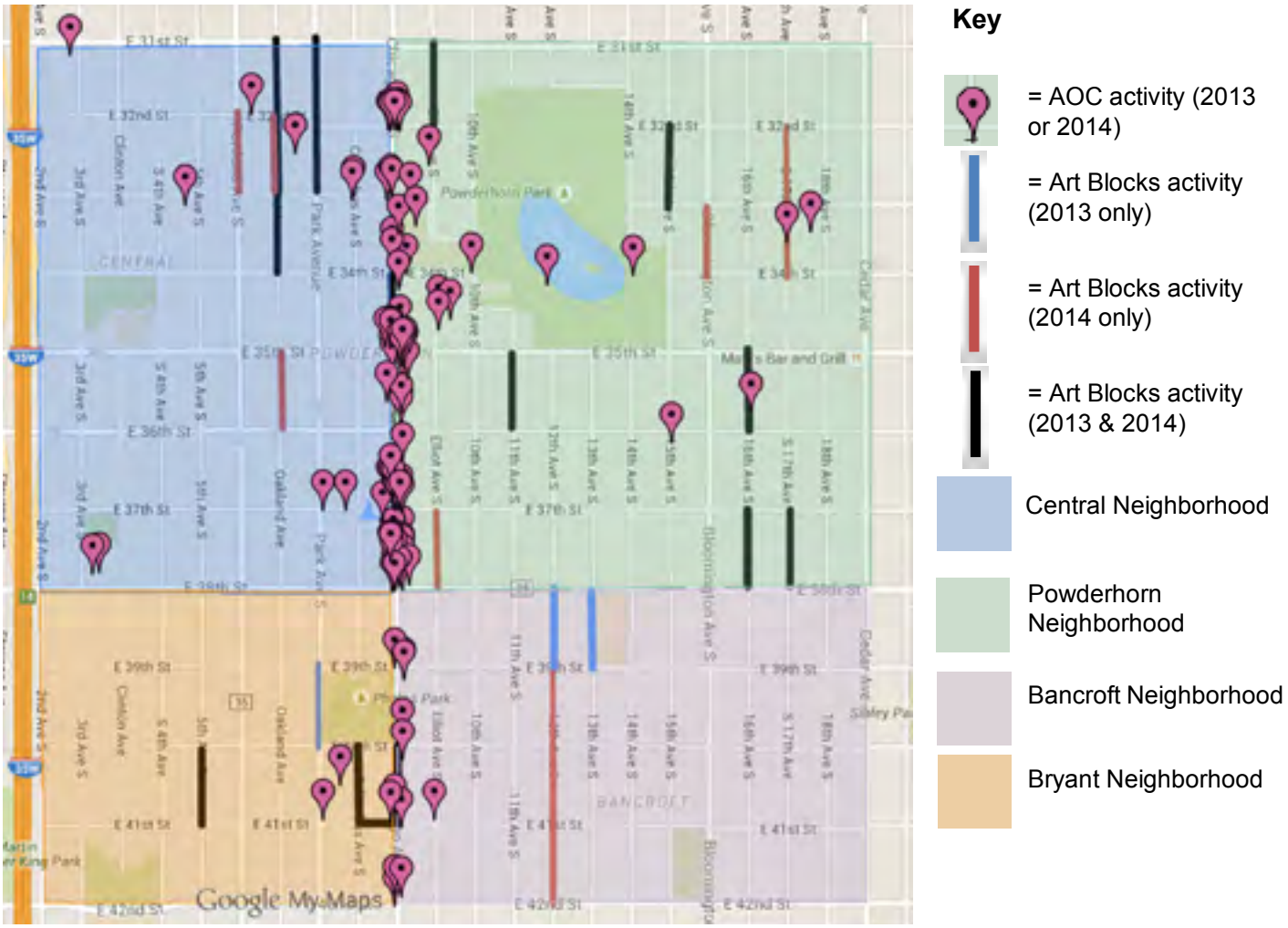
Through their final reflections, artists conveyed the variety of mechanisms they applied to work towards cultivating a welcoming environment and removing barriers to arts participation.

First, most artists designed their projects to be experienced in the public realm and/or unconventional venues for viewing art. They theorized that residents would be more likely to feel welcome to participate in arts projects that occurred in backyards, local businesses, or on the street. Art Blocks artist Soozin Hirschmugl wrote that this approach, "added intrigue for neighbors and helped pull in some people off the street who might otherwise just be passing by." Particularly for ephemeral projects located in public places, a number of artists wrote about the importance of having their artwork out in public places where people can experience the project at their own convenience.

> "Here, I'm making a screen, or a painting, and I am part of the art. I'm part of it."
> *–Focus group participant*

Many artists, especially with the programs' emphasis shift in the Art Blocks pilot year, also employed the tactic of designing projects that encouraged direct public participation. As one focus group participant stated, "I like to go to Art-a-Whirl [in Northeast, Minneapolis], and that is nice, that is art, but it is so inaccessible. Here, I'm making a screen, or a painting, and I am part of the art. I'm part of it." In her view, this broad interpretation of art and culture, which emphasized direct public participation, helped foster accessibility.

Figure 2. AOC and Art Blocks Project Sites, 2013-2014



Xavier Tavera's 2013 Art Blocks project opening at the Third Place Gallery

Many artists specifically strove to make their projects accessible to people of diverse backgrounds and employed specific measures to remove barriers to participation. None of the AOC or Art Blocks projects charged an admission or participation fee, which removed one economic barrier. Some artists found ways to minimize other economic barriers. One Art Blocks artist team, Roxanne Anderson and Anna Meyer, for instance, provided their local business, Café Southside, as a space for people to gather and make art without having to buy anything. Art Blocks artist Xavier Tavera organized free transportation to an opening of his work at the Third Place Gallery. Many artists took strides to make their projects accessible to non-English speaking individuals. Stephanie Rogers translated text included in her projects into Spanish and Somali; and two artists, Molly Van Avery and Soozin Hirschmugl, reported translating invitations to participate in their projects into Spanish; Molly Van Avery also hired Spanish-speakers to translate poetry for her poetry picnics . From the final reflections, we only found evidence that one artist took physical accessibility for people with disabilities into account. Niky Duxbury reflected on involving people with physical disabilities in her project and hopes to think more in the future about "how to create projects that a) are accessible to a wide range of abilities and b) let people know that a wide range of abilities are welcome to come participate so they feel welcome and included."

SHIFTING ATTITUDES REGARDING ARTS PARTICIPATION: LIMITED EVIDENCE

The final component of PH+T's fostering arts access goal—shifts in attitudes regarding arts participation—was challenging for us to investigate with available data. We wished to learn 1) to what extent the AOC and Art Blocks activities contributed to residents desiring more arts experiences and 2) to what extent they contributed to residents' increased awareness of the connections between art and community building. For the former, we observed strong demand for similar arts experiences from past participants, as well as instances of artists' projects leading to other neighborhood arts projects. For the latter, survey and focus group participants articulated links between art and community building, but these perceptions appeared to be shaped by any number of arts experiences. Although the findings from available data provided only modest evidence of the specific connection between AOC/Art Blocks activities and residents' increased awareness of the links between art and community building, PH+T's working theory, that these additive arts activities should be able to help expose these ideas to new people, remains sound. Below, we unpack these findings.

In terms of desiring more arts experiences, over 96% of the neighborhood residents that participated in AOC (98.6%) and Art Blocks (96.4%) events and completed event/participant surveys reported that they were either likely or extremely likely to attend a similar event in the neighborhood in the future.[7] Though no pre-post project data exists, this does suggest strong demand for similar arts experiences among past neighborhood participants. Through the artist final reflections, we also learned of instances of the AOC or Art Blocks project being used as a springboard for follow-up, neighborhood-based arts events. One Art Blocks artist team, Roxanne Anderson and Anna Meyer, for instance, organized a local artists' bazaar in their business, Café Southside, and they plan on continuing with quarterly bazaars because of artist demand. Other artists, such as Natasha Pestich and Peter Haakon Thompson, reported requests to bring their projects to events in the community.

7. Source: AOC and Art Blocks event/participant surveys. Based on a 5-point scale: Not likely, Slightly likely, Neither likely nor unlikely, Likely, Extremely likely. Sample size=69 for AOC and 85 for Art Blocks.

Molly Van Avery types poems on the *Poetry Mobile*; photo by Bruce Silcox

POETRY MOBILE AND POETRY PICNIC

MOLLY VAN AVERY, AOC ARTIST AND ART BLOCKS ARTIST IN 2013 AND 2014

It's summer solstice. People bring blankets to Powderhorn Park. They're treated to food prepared by Youth Farm, an organization that empowers youth to grow, prepare, and sell food. Ten local poets make the round of blankets, giving individual readings of original poems to the picnickers. The *Poetry Mobile* leads the way in a parade through the park into the sunset.

Artist Molly Van Avery has a passion for poetry. Through Arts on Chicago and Art Blocks, she's created unique ways for people to experience poetry through listening, reading, and writing. For her 2013 Arts on Chicago project, Molly created the *Poetry Mobile*, a traveling poetry-writing station on wheels. For Art Blocks, Molly hosted *Poetry Picnics* in Powderhorn Park and delivered individual odes to her neighbors.

In what ways did Molly's projects help foster PH+T's access, attachment, and agency goals?

Molly's poetry projects most clearly advance access. Molly offered a variety of ways for neighbors to engage with poetry, from reading an ode taped on one's front door, to listening to poems at the park, to actually trying your own hand at a poem. *Poetry Mobile* "turns a street into a studio space," Molly wrote. People climbed up and wove words together on a typewriter in an informal, quirky space. *Poetry Picnics* turned a popular neighborhood park into a place to hear poetry written by local poets. Molly recounted that "[w]e heard many people saying that they don't really have any experiences with poetry, and they loved the chance to have an experience with it and were surprised by how much they loved it." Through all these mediums, Molly created welcoming avenues for neighbors to experience an art form that many consider intimidating or inaccessible.

In terms of PH+T's agency goals, Arts on Chicago and Art Blocks fostered Molly's professional development. As an artist, Molly learned how to navigate the challenge of facilitating artistic projects that engage a specific community in a way "that won't bug them or ask them for anything, but still makes them feel seen and acknowledged and celebrated." Molly wrote, "I know more about myself as an artist and the kinds of things I am comfortable with, as well as my areas where I can still stretch and build bravery." These projects also opened the door to a job opportunity for Molly. She now serves as PH+T's Artist and Community Coordinator, a newly created position that involves working closely with all the Art Blocks artists.

We also found modest evidence that Molly's poetry-related projects provided opportunities for individual neighbors to gain inspiration and confidence for their personal development. One neighbor, for instance, received an ode taped on her door that detailed Molly's love of seeing her neighbor hang laundry. She keeps the poem taped to the fridge and it helps motivate her to hang up the wash and save energy, even when she feels the pull of the dryer. This made Molly "aware of how the small acts we witness around us have impact" and that the ways in which we choose to live our lives can inspire others. Molly also provided an anecdote of a budding young writer who practiced his craft and built confidence on the *Poetry Mobile*:

> At the AOC block party, the *Poetry Mobile* saw a lot of action. There were often lines of people waiting to have their chance to write a poem. I was tired, and there was one pre-teen little guy who was hovering a lot. He was alone and I kept ignoring him because other people were more insistent. He was patient and waited, never demanding and often overlooked because he was shy. Eventually, he got to sit up on the bench and I asked him if he needed help, if he knew what he wanted to write. He quietly said, "I'm fine," and started typing. I left him to go talk to other people about the project, and he truly looked like an experienced writer, typing, pausing to think, writing again. He got the hang of the typewriter immediately. His poem had zero typos. When I read it, I fell in love. His poem was really imaginative, fresh, and had really good writing in it. I exclaimed immediately that I loved it and he said quietly, "I'm a good writer." I was so happy that the *Poetry Mobile* was a place he wanted to share his writing.

Molly's projects also aimed to increase attachment to place and neighbors. Molly wrote an ode to her block, as well as to individual neighbors, which she hoped would allow her neighbors to reflect on their sense of belonging to their block. But attachment outcomes are most clearly evident for Molly, personally. Molly connected more deeply with other AOC and Art Blocks artists, her neighbors, and her block. "I think that all of this is helping me articulate what really matters to me as an artist, which is intimacy and person-to-person individual contact," she wrote. Molly even made a new connection with a neighbor who became a collaborator for one of Molly's projects. Molly ranked this as the most positive part of her 2013 Art Blocks project. These connections contributed to Molly's sense of belonging to and feeling pride in her neighborhood. She wrote, "I feel as though this project is a manifestation of my love for this neighborhood. It is so fun to have a tangible way to contribute something very real to the streets I love."

Molly has created unique ways for people to access and connect with poetry. These experiences will allow her to guide other community artists in their quests to bring creativity to the streets and grow as artists.

The 2015 *Poetry Picnic*; photo by Bruce Silcox

Youth from PH+T's summer arts camp practice stilting on the sidewalk in front of PH+T.

In terms of increased awareness of the connections between art and community building, surveyed residents and focus group participants spoke to the importance of artists as facilitating community building, particularly by creating opportunities for different people to meet and foster relationships. One survey respondent said, for instance:

> I drive by PH+T every morning and see community members of all different backgrounds, all different races, and cultures attending programs, and there are children outside, and there are art establishments in our community that bring people together that maybe wouldn't otherwise be connected.

Focus group participant Mike Stebnitz articulated how he, personally, understood the connections between art and community building. Though not formally an AOC or Art Blocks project, the community mural painting event he offered as an example, Greta McLain's Green Central Mural, took place at the PH+T *Wish Well*:

> It forced you, gently as only the arts can do, gently to a table where you were doing something not so mentally intense, and it encouraged conversation with the other folks at the table…I saw people scratching the surface, bridging culture, language, getting to know our neighbors, and how beautifully that happened, and it created this beautiful mural that we now see every day.

However, we observed no discernable pattern of difference between respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks with AOC activities and the quasi-control group. Therefore we are unable to attribute this understanding specifically to PH+T's creative community development projects.

Artists, who are themselves neighborhood residents, did modestly demonstrate increased awareness of the connections between art and community building. For instance, Art Blocks artist Xavier Tavera wrote, "the project has helped me to think about…how this audience is part of a vibrant community that understands the value of art." In a related vein, AOC artist HOTTEA wrote, "Hopefully our project inspires people to use artwork to change their community in a positive way." And AOC artist Stephanie Morris wrote that she now gets arts-based community development "in a much more tangible way than before. Bring it on! I am all for it."

Available data indicated that AOC and Art Blocks helped advance PH+T's access-related goals.

In conclusion, available data indicated that AOC and Art Blocks helped advance PH+T's access-related goals, though evidence for some facets of this goal was more modest. In terms of providing ample opportunities for creative expression, the residents' survey, qualitative findings from the event participant survey, and focus group data suggest that residents took notice of the volume of activity that these projects produced. Respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks with AOC activities, for instance, were 1.5 times more likely to rate their neighborhood as good or excellent in terms of opportunities for creative expression. We found more modest evidence that the projects removed barriers to residents' arts participation and made them feel welcome. Artist reflections did illuminate a variety of ways that they strove to increase access. Respondents from both quasi-control and Art Blocks and blocks with AOC activities indicated that they felt welcome at PH+T art offerings with high percentages. Lack of substantial difference means that we cannot infer that AOC or Art Blocks led residents to feel more welcome, but thankfully, PH+T does seem to have a pre-existing reputation as an accessible neighborhood arts organization. Similarly, focus group and qualitative survey data indicated

that residents are aware of connections between art and community building, but that experiences that pre-date AOC and Art Blocks may have shaped those perceptions. We did, however, document strong demand from past participants for similar arts experiences. We next explore the degree to which AOC and Art Blocks activities helped achieve PH+T's community attachment goals.

INCREASING ATTACHMENT: PEOPLE AND PLACE

PH+T views attachment as being connected with other people who live in one's community and being connected to one's physical place.

PH+T's community attachment goal spans both pride in one's physical place and social concepts—social connectedness, appreciating difference, and fostering a sense of belonging. PH+T views attachment as being connected with other people who live in one's community and being connected to one's physical place. It hoped that the AOC and Art Blocks initiatives would facilitate social connections across difference throughout the four demographically diverse neighborhoods and also help better connect residents to their physical environments. Therefore our research explored four "attachment" goal-related research questions: whether residents, including artist project leaders 1) felt more connected to one another and trusted each other more, especially residents of different backgrounds; 2) had increased appreciation for diversity, for instance valuing knowing people of different backgrounds and feeling invested in their neighbors' success, regardless of difference; 3) felt an increased sense of belonging; and 4) took pride in living in their neighborhood, especially as it relates to ample opportunities for creative expression.

To summarize our attachment-related findings, a variety of data sources indicated that AOC and Art Blocks did foster social connections. With regards to whether those connections spanned people of different backgrounds, the projects engaged diverse participants, but we lack data as to the depth of those connections or the relative value participants placed on those interactions. Qualitative data suggests that AOC and Art Blocks projects may have helped foster residents' appreciation for diversity, but residents' survey data suggests that these values may be widely held and shaped by a range of experiences. With regard to sense of belonging, similarly, qualitative data suggests that AOC and Art Blocks projects may have deepened residents' sense of belonging (particularly because of increased senses of safety and increased familiarity with neighborhoods and neighborhood amenities), but survey data suggested that high majorities of residents felt they belonged, independent of AOC or Art Blocks activities. Lastly, in terms of pride of place, a wide range of data sources provided clear evidence that AOC/Art Blocks helped foster pride in living in one's neighborhood, especially as related to its arts-identity. Below we elaborate on findings for each research question.

INCREASING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS FOR ARTISTS AND NEIGHBORS AS WELL AS ACROSS DIFFERENCE: STRONG EVIDENCE

Social network analysis, artists' final reflections and event survey data indicate that Art Blocks and AOC projects fostered social connections between and across both artist and non-artist neighbors. Survey respondents living on blocks where AOC or Art Blocks activities took place were 1.6 times more likely to report that they felt more connected to their neighbors because of arts offerings.[8] Our social network analysis of artist connections illustrates a cohesive group of artists that bring together many disparate individuals in the

8. Source: Residents' survey. Based on a three-point scale: Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree. Sample size=38 AOC/Art Blocks resident respondents and 30 quasi-control.

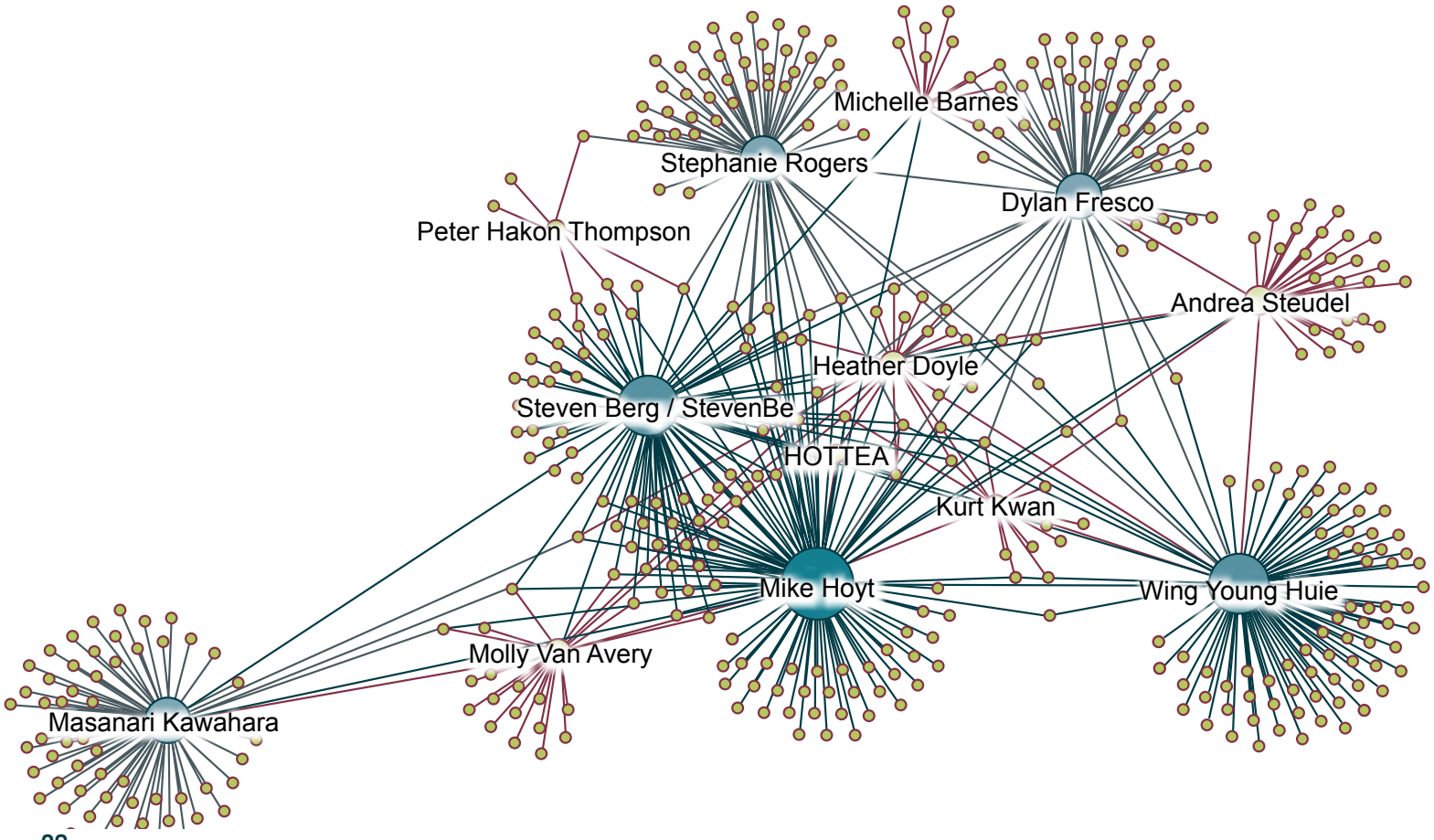
community. It also highlights the importance of particular individuals' roles within the network. Qualitative findings from artist final reflections indicated that artists placed a high value on the relationships they made with other artists through the AOC and Art Blocks processes and also yielded insights into the ways in which their projects facilitated initial interactions between neighbors.

With regard to whether these connections specifically occurred between people of different backgrounds, artists' final reflections and AOC relationship data indicate that the artists and those they engaged in their projects came from different backgrounds, including age and race. Interestingly, although many AOC and Art Blocks participants reported feeling more connected to the community through meeting new people and strengthening connections with people they already knew, few participants specifically mentioned fostering relationships with people of different backgrounds. We are, therefore, limited in our ability to gauge the depth of these connections or relative significance placed on them by the participants.

Below, we elaborate on the above summary findings.

By conducting a social network analysis of connections between artists and individuals in the community, we gleaned insights into the nature of these connections. We limited our analysis to AOC artists, because PH+T did not collect social connections data for either Art Blocks artists or artists' contacts. Our analysis revealed a concentrated network with a strong core of individuals (the artist project leaders) who maintain ties with other individuals in the community. Figure 3 illustrates the connections between the AOC artists and the individuals in the community. The AOC artists all maintain close connections to each other and act as a hub within the community that brings together disparate sets of individuals.

Figure 3. AOC Artist-Contact Relationships: Network Visualization



Through social network statistics used to measure the cohesiveness of a network of individuals, we identified a centralized network. *Modularity* is a measure that identifies the relative presence of modules (i.e. communities). A network with a limited community structure would measure closer to zero, whereas a tightly connected community would measure closer to one. The modularity of this network is .651. Given the larger size of the network and the lack of recorded connections between the artists' contacts, a network modularity of .651 suggests a community structure that one might expect in a close-knit group of individuals. In addition, four ties or fewer connect everyone in the network to one another (network diameter measure of four).

Through an analysis of the artists who play central roles in the network, we gain further understanding of the network dynamics. In Table 1, we present the AOC artists included in the dataset and the number of connections for each artist, i.e. the raw *out-degree*. Out-degree measures the number of times an individual is on the originating end of a connection. In the case of this analysis, out-degree is the number of times that an artist lists another contact.[9] AOC artists Mike Hoyt, Steven Berg, and Wing Young Huie reported the highest numbers of connections made of all the AOC artists.

9. Note that because only the artists (versus the artists' contacts) supplied data, the artists have the highest out-degree, whereas none of the contacts have any measure of out-degree. The measure of out-degree, therefore, provides a count of the relationships provided by the artists, but no other information related to the network and their connection to it.

Table 1. AOC Artists' Numbers of Social Connections

AOC Artist	Connections
Mike Hoyt	105
Steven Berg / StevenBe	88
Wing Young Huie	82
Dylan Fresco	63
Masanari Kawahara	60
Stephanie Rogers	60
Andrea Steudel	30
Heather Doyle	23
Molly Van Avery	22
Kurt Kwan	15
Michelle Barnes	10
Peter Hakon Thompson	6
HOTTEA	1

Source: Social network analysis of AOC artist relationship data

MODULARITY
identifies the relative presence of communities

OUT-DEGREE
the number of times an individual is on the originating end of a connection

IN-DEGREE
the number of times a contact is identified as a connection by another contact

We also explored *in-degree* (see Table 2), i.e. the number of times a contact is identified as a connection by another contact. Note that the dataset did not fully capture in-degree for all contacts, since only the AOC artists, and not their contacts, reported connections. Eighty-one percent of the individuals were listed only one time as a connection, which illustrates a significant skewed distribution. Moreover, only 9% of the individuals were listed more than twice. Of the individuals that were listed as a connection more than three times, six were artists. These in-degree measures suggest a cohesive group of individuals and that the AOC artists connected with members of the community as opposed to only other artists. Note that in many networks, the in-degree statistics reported in

Table 2 might suggest number of gaps in the network. In this instance, however, these statistics illustrate that the artists were connecting with members of the community as opposed to only other artists. When viewed in the context of data collected via open-ended responses, the percentage of shared connections is high. This suggests a highly centralized network, which is the result of the artists maintaining connections among themselves. In contrast, a decentralized network would have few, if any, shared contacts beyond the individuals submitting data. This pattern would be typical for most networks, as most individuals maintain a number of connections that are often not shared by others.

These statistics illustrate that the artists were connecting with members of the community as opposed to only other artists.

Table 2. AOC Artists' In-Degree Distribution

In-Degree	Number of individuals
7	1
6	1
5	2
4	16
3	18
2	40
1	342
0	1

Source: Social network analysis of AOC artist relationship data

In terms of individual level in-degree findings, AOC artist Wing Young Huie has the highest in-degree; other artists listed Huie as a connection seven times. (See p. 31.) Six of the artists listed Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association's Executive Director Becky Timm, who also served on the leadership team, as a contact. AOC artist Heather Doyle and Chicago Avenue business owner Christy Frank had the third highest in-degree; they each were listed five times by other artists. Only one AOC artist, Peter Haakon Thompson, had no measure of in-degree.

The social network analysis also revealed a number of contacts, other than the AOC artists submitting data, who play a central role in the network. Table 3 illustrates non-AOC artist contacts in the network who had the highest in-degree. These individuals play a unique role in the network—multiple artists listed them as contacts, therefore they act as connectors between multiple artists and parts of the network. Further relationship data gathering might incorporate these individuals to provide greater context to the connections and help to answer why they are centrally located in the network.

Through the social network analysis, we also identify individuals who play central roles in connecting different parts of the network by exploring *betweenness*. Someone with high betweenness has a position in the middle of a number of subgroups (i.e. parts) of the network. If a network lacked someone with high betweenness, the network might split into multiple parts. In this artist-contact network, the artists themselves maintain the highest measures of betweenness because of the high number of connections between the individuals. Artists Mike Hoyt and Steven Berg, followed by Wing Young Huie, had the highest betweenness measures, suggesting that these artist project leaders played critical roles in connecting disparate parts of the network (see Table 4).[10]

10. Betweenness is a relative measure. Although the numbers do not have an absolute relationship outside of a network, one can group individuals into tiers that have similar betweenness. In this analysis, Mike Hoyt, Steven Berg and Wing Young Huie have similar betweenness positions in the network.

Table 3. Non-AOC Artist Respondents with High Ranking In-Degree

Contact	In-Degree
Becky Timm	6
Christy Frank	5
Dina Metaweh	4
Jeff Mitchell	4
Journey Gosselin*	4
Dwight Alexander	4
Natasha Pestich*	4
Crystal Brinkman	4
Adam Croft*	4
Mike Stebnitz	4
Sara Lopez	4
Loretta Day*	4
Andrea Jenkins*	4

Source: Social network analysis of AOC artist relationship data.
**The noted individuals are actually artists. All individuals other than Adam Croft and Andrea Jenkins were AOC artists who did not provide PH+T with the requested relationship data. Adam Croft collaborated on an AOC team led by another artist, and Andrea Jenkins was an Art Blocks artist.*

BETWEENNESS
is a measure of the extent to which an individual connects parts of the network.

Table 4. AOC Artist Betweenness

Artist	Betweenness Centrality
Mike Hoyt	1002
Steven Berg / StevenBe	933
Wing Young Huie	771
Dylan Fresco	573
Masanari Kawahara	571
Stephanie Rogers	398
Heather Doyle	379
Andrea Steudel	201
Molly Van Avery	164
Michelle Barnes	65
Kurt Kwan	56

Source: Social network analysis of AOC artist relationship data

Artists' final reflections indicated that they strongly valued the connections made to other neighborhood artists via the AOC and Art Blocks processes.

In addition to the social network analysis, artist final reflections and survey data augmented our understanding of the social connections fostered through AOC and Art Blocks projects.

Artists' final reflections indicated that they strongly valued the connections made to other neighborhood artists via the AOC and Art Blocks processes. StevenBe explained that this was like "a whole new horizon opening up" for them, as they met artists in the area that they did not know existed and formed close working relationships with some. Many artists rated it as the most positive experience of

"[The project has] expanded my network of artists working in the neighborhood, which enriches my experience of living in Powderhorn Park and makes me feel more connected to a creative pulse in my neighborhood." *–AOC artist Sarah Peters*

their projects. Just as PH+T theorized, these social connections helped increase the artists' attachment to their communities, overall. As AOC artist Sarah Peters articulated, participating in the project has "expanded my network of artists working in the neighborhood, which enriches my experience of living in Powderhorn Park and makes me feel more connected to a creative pulse in my neighborhood." A number of other artists also linked increased connections to other neighborhood artists to a feeling of belonging to a strong creative community.

Survey data and artists' reflections corroborated the social network analysis by providing evidence that the AOC and Art Blocks projects fostered connections between neighbors and between artists and other residents. For instance, 60.5% of respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks with AOC activities agreed with the statement, "I feel more connected to my neighbors because of arts offerings," versus only 36.7% of quasi-control group respondents (see Table 5).

Table 5. Residents' Survey Results: Connections, Belonging, and Empowerment Outcomes.

	Respondents Selecting Agree…	
Statement	Art Blocks/AOC	Quasi-Control
I feel more connected to my neighbors because of arts offerings.	60.5%	36.7%
I feel I belong in my neighborhood; it feels like home.	94.7%	93.5%
When I think about my future, I imagine positive options.	94.7%	86.7%
When I think about my neighborhood, I imagine a bright future.	78.9%	74.7%
I have the skills and confidence I need to generate opportunities for myself.	92.1%	77.4%
I have a voice in community decision-making	52.6%	41.9%

Notes: Based on a 3-point scale, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree. N=38 for Art Blocks/AOC, 31-30 for quasi-control

Event participant survey data suggest this dynamic may be even more pronounced for Art Blocks than for AOC populations; 58.5% of Art Blocks participants versus 42.6% of AOC participants who live in the four neighborhoods reported that their perception of the neighborhood changed after attending an event.[11] Via qualitative responses, many survey respondents explained that their perception changed because they met people who were friendly and committed to the community. Along similar lines, 77.1% of Art Blocks versus 53.6% of AOC neighborhood-based event survey respondents reported that they felt more connected to the neighborhood after attending events.[12] Via qualitative responses, two Art Blocks participants explained that initial connections to their neighbors made during the projects fostered their increased sense of neighborhood connection. In one respondent's words: "I will recognize people from the hood and say 'Hi, I saw you at that thing at Third Place' or 'I saw you in that video' and I'm able to say 'Hello' to my neighbors by name now."

11. Source: AOC and Art Blocks event/participant surveys. Based on a five-point scale: Not at all; Not really; Neither no nor yes; Somewhat; Yes, very much so. Sample size=68 for AOC and 82 for Art Blocks.

12. Source: AOC and Art Blocks event/participant surveys. Based on a five-point scale: Less, Somewhat less, Neither less nor more, Somewhat more, More. Sample size=69 for AOC and 85 for Art Blocks.

Wing leads a walking tour of his *We are the Other* project

WE ARE THE OTHER AND TALENT SHOW FEAST

WING YOUNG HUIE, AOC ARTIST IN 2013, AND ART BLOCKS ARTIST IN 2014

StevenBe sits with Dan, the owner of an auto body shop, in StevenBe's Yarn Garage. The newly acquainted pair smile at each other. Photographer Wing Young Huie snaps a photo. Fast forward to the spring: A group of people led by Wing walk past this photo, and dozens of others as they stroll by and duck into the pizza place, wellness clinic, tattoo parlor, barbershop, or neighborhood association and crane their necks to see the images of their community on the ceiling of Cup Foods.

Although a well-known artist, Wing had never before focused one of his artistic projects on the neighborhood in which he now lives and works until *We are the Other*. Wing owns and runs the Third Place Gallery on 38th and Chicago, a gallery and community gathering place. For *We are the Other*, Wing photographed people along Chicago Avenue, in businesses, homes, and on the street. Some are "neighbor diptychs," photographs of two people who don't know each other but spend time in the same environment. Sometimes, they respond to questions by writing on chalkboards and pose with their answers. Displaying his 102 photos in 22 host businesses and organizations, Wing then led walking tours along Chicago Avenue.

For his 2014 Art Blocks project, *Talent Show Feast*, Wing's focus became even more hyper local; he filmed people on his block as they answered open-ended questions or performed a talent. The project culminated with a viewing party and live talent show at the Third Place Gallery where neighbors could meet and learn about each other and discover hidden talents of their neighbors. They also broke bread together, feasting on BBQ from Smoke in the Pit. Wing decided to devote resources to supporting this newly opened, minority-owned restaurant that operates across the street from the gallery. The project also involved Wing artistically stretching himself as he explored the new medium of video.

Taking a peek into these two projects allows us to see the ways in which a particular artist's projects can help advance PH+T's access, attachment, and agency goals.

First, in terms of community attachment, *We are the Other* and *Talent Show Feast* unequivocally helped connect neighbors, often of different backgrounds, to one another. Whether through posing for a "neighbor diptych," seeing a neighbor perform a talent at *Talent Show Feast*, or meeting a neighbor at the Third Place Gallery, these projects brought people together, often for the first time. Just as PH+T's theory of change predicted, we also found evidence that these new social connections helped foster residents' sense of belonging. For instance, one *Talent Show Feast* participant reported that she had lived in the neighborhood for five years, but she had previously distanced herself from her neighbors because of concerns about "violence." She wrote that because she attended a viewing of *Talent Show Feast* where she got to know her neighbors on screen and off, she has "seen that I've got some great neighbors."

In addition to connections to other neighborhood residents, new connections to previously little-frequented neighborhood businesses also helped foster participants' pride of place and sense of belonging. One walking tour participant wrote that she felt even "prouder of the artists and activists in the neighborhood." Because she now knows more of the artists in the neighborhood and businesses that she would "walk, bike or drive by in the past…it changed my awareness of what is around me." Wing corroborated this. He wrote, "I've had people tell me that they were reluctant to go into certain businesses until they saw the photos."

In terms of promoting agency, one of Wing's goals was that his photographs and videos would promote positive aspects of the community. He intentionally wanted his photographs to "close the gap between perception and reality" and counter urban stigma driven by mainstream media and popular culture. Though it may be modest in terms of agency outcomes, working to dispel a negative narrative may help inspire residents to think more optimistically about the possibilities for themselves and their community. Highlighting the local commerce along Chicago Avenue was one way that Wing attempted to rewrite the narrative of the neighborhood.

Lastly, in terms of fostering arts access, the choice to display the photographs of *We are the Other* in neighborhood businesses helped drive accessibility. Instead of asking residents to enter a gallery or museum to view art, they encountered it in places where they may go regularly and already feel comfortable. Wing also strives to make the Third Place Gallery a welcoming venue. He generously allows fellow AOC and Art Blocks artists to use the gallery space, which may help more and more neighbors comfortably frequent the space.

Wing's projects demonstrate how neighbors connected with each other and new places through art. He plans on spending more time photographing 38th and Chicago, continuing to create more beautiful work and weave positive community narrative.

Left and Top-Right: *We are the Other* photos by Wing Young Huie
Bottom-Right: One of Wing's photos on display in the neighborhood

Zoe Sommers Haas organized a pot luck for her Art Blocks project.

Through their final reflections, several artists also described the ways in which their projects facilitated initial interactions between neighbors. Wing Young Huie, for instance, wrote, "just getting people from the neighborhood from all walks of life in one room with good food being entertained by amateurish videos of themselves and others in the room was the point…just getting people familiar with each other was important." In other projects, residents came together to discuss collective block histories, for barbeques, and for games of ping-pong. Another Art Blocks artist, Peter Haakon Thompson, explained that his project forced him to get outside of his comfort zone and knock on his neighbors' doors—"having an 'excuse' of an art project made it much easier for me, than just walking up to the strangers on my block and chatting with them."

Our research sought to explore not only whether social connections increased, but also to what extent neighbors of *different backgrounds* felt more connected to and trusted one another. Interestingly, although many AOC and Art Blocks participants reported feeling more connected to the community through meeting new people and strengthening connections with people they already knew, few participants specifically mentioned fostering relationships with people of different backgrounds. Our data, however, illustrate that both the AOC and Art Blocks projects provided opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to connect. Artist final reflections also provided some evidence of the importance of these experiences.

Artists' final reflections reveal that AOC and Art Blocks projects involved diverse participants. Strong majorities of Art Blocks artists (92%) and AOC artists (91%) reported engaging people of all ages (youth, adults, and seniors). AOC, in particular, appears to have excelled at engaging racially diverse audiences. Seventy-three percent of AOC artists reported that their projects engaged people from five or more racial groups, whereas 23% of Art Blocks projects made that claim.[13] This difference may be driven by Art Blocks' focus on engaging residents of a particular block. Although these four neighborhoods are racially and ethnically diverse, due to the legacy of institutionalized racism (red-lining, deed restrictions, mortgage lending discrimination, etc.), particular blocks may still be relatively racially homogenous. Art Blocks artists, however, did lead their neighbors on "field trips" to neighborhood arts experiences outside of their immediate block. None of our data sources, however, provided evidence that field trips, specifically, led to new connections or connections that spanned people of different backgrounds.

13. Source: AOC and Art Blocks artists' final reflections. Sample size=12 AOC and 23 Art Blocks artists.

In their final reflections, artists also described some of the ways people of different backgrounds converged during their projects. For instance AOC artist Dylan Fresco noted:

> I smile just thinking about watching participants in our Saturday, June 18th evening storywalk, just standing in front of Pillsbury House in the last light of the sun, continuing to talk with people they'd just met on the storywalk, for a good ten minutes after the walk was over. It was proof positive that the project had connected people together from different communities around Chicago Avenue, and had engaged them about the neighborhood they share.

And Niky Duxbury, an Art Blocks artist wrote:

> The most positive for me is simply watching people come together through art. It is truly special to see inter-generational groups of neighbors find commonalities and to watch people who otherwise feel like art is "not for me" engage in the creative process.

AOC relationship data also suggests AOC artists fostered and nurtured relationships with people whose backgrounds differed from theirs. Two-thirds (66%) of connections reported by AOC artists[14] were with people who were of a different race/ethnicity than the artist, and it's worth noting that both AOC and Art Blocks artist cohorts were racially diverse. Many AOC artists also reported making connections with a mix of neighbors, business owners, peers, government employees, and artists of different disciplines.

14. Source: AOC relationship data. Sample size=12 AOC artist teams, 13 artists.

Nicky Duxbury's Art Bloks project engaged neighbors in creating a mosaic trash can.

In sum, a variety of data sources indicate that AOC and Art Blocks projects fostered social connections for neighborhood residents, including the artists themselves. Survey respondents living on blocks where AOC or Art Blocks activities took place, for instance, were 1.6 times more likely to report that they felt more connected to their neighbors because of arts offerings. Social network analysis revealed a cohesive group of AOC artists that brought together many disparate individuals in the community and identified critical roles that a few individuals played within the network. Qualitative data from artist final reflections highlighted the importance that artist project leaders placed on the relationships that they developed with other artists throughout the process and provided insights into the ways in which their projects fostered initial interactions between neighbors. Finally, although both relationship and artist final reflection data demonstrated that the AOC and Art Blocks projects involved participants of varied races and ages, limited qualitative data from participants on connecting with people of different backgrounds restricted our ability to address the question of whether the AOC and Arts Blocks projects helped neighbors, specifically of different backgrounds, feel more connected or trust each other more. We next turn to our second "attachment" goal research question, to what extent AOC and Art Blocks fostered an increased appreciation for diversity among residents.

INCREASING APPRECIATION FOR DIFFERENCE: MODEST EVIDENCE

Modest evidence also limited our ability to ascribe an increased appreciation for difference to AOC and Art Blocks projects. We wished to explore whether these arts activities increased residents' appreciation for diversity, for instance valuing knowing people of different backgrounds or feeling invested in their neighbors' success, regardless of difference. Nearly identical percentages of AOC and Art Blocks survey respondents and quasi-control group respondents, for instance, felt that it was very important to them to know neighbors of different backgrounds (78.9% versus 77.4%, respectively).[15] We also discerned no patterns of difference via free response submissions. People in both groups talked about the importance of meeting people who are different from themselves because it broadens and enriches one's perspective, helps foster empathy, and recognize similarities across difference. People in both groups also talked about how connections across difference can result in overall community benefits because more people may become involved in decision-making, access opportunities, and experience success. These findings suggest

15. Source: Residents' survey. Based on a three-point scale: Not important, moderately important, Very important. Sample size=38 for AOC/Art Blocks residents respondents and 31 for quasi-control respondents.

that majorities of neighborhood residents share these values but that life experiences beyond and pre-dating the AOC and Art Blocks projects shape these world-views.

Two participants' testimonials suggest that AOC and Art Blocks projects may have fostered specific individuals' appreciation for difference. One AOC participant, for instance, wrote that she felt more connected to the neighborhood because she met people and strengthened connections with people she knew peripherally. She noted, "I did still have a sense that there are strong racial (and class) divisions that I don't know how to navigate or breach, but just being there was a good way to be present with those divides and take a look at them." One Art Blocks participant reported that his perception of the neighborhood changed because of the potential for bridge building between sub-cultures and that it "gives me better hope for more communication (inter-generational/ interracial), which is essential for neighborhood development."

DEEPENING RESIDENTS' SENSE OF BELONGING: LIMITED EVIDENCE

This section explores to what extent AOC and Art Blocks projects have helped residents feel an increased sense of belonging. Survey findings suggest that high majorities of residents feel a sense of belonging, but that this may be independent of AOC and Art Blocks activities. Over 93% of resident survey respondents agreed with the statement, "I feel I belong in my neighborhood; it feels like home," (See Table 5). Hardly any variation occurred between AOC/ Art Blocks and the quasi-control group (94.7% versus 93.5%, respectively). Qualitative findings, however, suggest that AOC and Art Blocks projects may have deepened residents' sense of belonging and/or fostered it for the minority of residents that did not already feel a sense of belonging. Artist final reflection, video interview, event survey, and focus group data suggest that increased sense of belonging may be closely linked to residents' sense of safety and increased familiarity with neighbors and neighborhood amenities. Below, we provide details on these findings related to safety and increased familiarity.

"The arts, somehow they make me think, 'Everything is okay.' It means that we aren't ducking for cover. We are taking back the night."
–Focus group participant

One of the most crucial aspects of "belonging" to a neighborhood is the degree to which one feels safe; i.e. for a neighborhood to feel like home, one would expect that residents do not feel pre-occupied with concerns about personal/ property crimes. Focus group and event survey free-response data suggest that Art Blocks and AOC projects did help foster residents' sense of safety, typically by building social connections:

> Putting a face on the familiar homes and cars, putting names to faces with near neighbors makes city life feel less paranoid, more "homey."
> *—Art Blocks event survey respondent*

> The arts, somehow they make me think, "Everything is okay." It means that we aren't ducking for cover. We are taking back the night.
> *—Focus group participant*

> Because of the violence that's occurred here, I've distanced myself from my neighbors. But…I've seen that I've got some great neighbors.
> *—Art Blocks event survey respondent*

Qualitative evidence suggests that through the projects, participants did increase their familiarity and comfort with amenities in the neighborhood,

Wing Young Huie hangs a photo from his Arts on Chicago project on the ceiling of Cup Foods.

which was a specific goal for a number of artists. (See Xavier Tavera's project profile on p. 37.) Local business owners, such as Samir Abumayyaleh, owner of Cup Foods, reported that hosting AOC or Art Blocks events helped attract first time patrons. Art Blocks artist Roxanne Anderson described how her Art Blocks project, based at her café, brought new people into her establishment and led to first time attendees at PH+T performances. In another example, for her Art Blocks field trip, Molly Van Avery invited her neighbors to a Pillsbury House Theatre stage production. Molly wrote that her neighbor "now attends everything Pillsbury does." Wing Young Huie reported, "I've had people tell me that they were reluctant to go into certain businesses until they saw the photos" in his AOC project. One of the participants in Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes' storywalk told Dylan "that the walk made her feel so much better and more connected to and excited about all the things on her block," and eased her transition as a new Chicago Avenue resident.

Through social network analysis, we also identified geographically focal points for the interactions between the AOC artists and their contacts. We analyzed the data on where AOC artists reported that connections occurred. A high number of unique locations suggest that connections occur in a diverse number of locations: AOC artists listed 179 unique locations and listed 77% of those locations two times or less.[16] Therefore, except for a small subset of common locations, most AOC connection locations were not shared. The analysis revealed, however, that the small subset of common locations served as the meeting grounds for sizable numbers of AOC connections. Table 6 provides the locations listed at least ten times by the artists. PH+T represents 22% of the total locations where the AOC connections occurred.

16. Despite the researchers' efforts to reconcile single locations reported differently, it is possible that there are more common locations than reported, but they are noted differently.

Table 6. AOC Connection Locations Reported Ten or More Times

Location	In-Degree
PH+T	122
SW corner of Powderhorn Park for BBQ on June 8, 2013	26
38th & Chicago business node	25
Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center	18
Covet Consign and Design	17
SE corner of Powderhorn Park	12
various project hosts sites	10
Cafe Southside	10
37th & Chicago	10

Source: Social network analysis of AOC artist relationship data

Xavier's second Art Blocks exibit at Pillsbury House + Theatre, 2014.

BLOCK 16TH AND BUY SOUTHSIDE

XAVIER TAVERA, ART BLOCKS ARTIST IN 2013 AND 2014

Sixteen images of families decorated the Third Place Gallery's walls. Look closely at the people mingling in the gallery and you'll see those same faces. These faces are different colors and speak different languages, but they're all connected by a very small and specific geography, one block in the Powderhorn neighborhood.

During his time as an Art Blocks artist, Xavier Tavera has photographed people in the spaces where they live and work. He captures relationships with those that we tend to spend the most time with: family members and colleagues. In 2013, with the help of his 15-year-old daughter, Xavier took photos of 16 families on his block and hosted an opening reception for *Block 16th* at the Third Place Gallery. In 2014, Xavier photographed business owners in the community, primarily in the Powderhorn neighborhood. Xavier and PH+T displayed these photos in the PH+T lobby with a release event to celebrate the publication of a printed collection of these *Buy Southside* photographs.

Xavier's projects set the stage for his neighbors to feel greater attachment to the people and places that surround them, as well as increased access to art in the community.

Regarding attachment, Xavier sought to connect neighbors across difference to each other and to places in the community. Every family Xavier photographed on his block, which he notes is diverse in terms of race, socioeconomic status, and exposure to the arts, came to the opening of *Block 16th* at the Third Place Gallery. One person at the opening who was visiting her/his sibling, a neighborhood resident, noted in the survey, "I rarely have the opportunity to connect with others in his neighborhood. So fun to see/meet these folks! … Enjoyed watching the folks look at their portraits and

converse with each other. So positive!" Another survey respondent felt more connected to the neighborhood, because, "I met many more people in the neighborhood and the event had people sharing their experiences and interests, making them more connected."

In *Buy Southside*, Xavier also sought to help illuminate the resources that already existed in the community and increase neighbors' sense of pride that they live somewhere with a variety of local businesses that contribute to their community's vibrancy. "I hope that this project helps to have a better understanding of the number and diversity of the local businesses that we have in the neighborhood," Xavier notes, "and to frequent, buy, and use the services provided by these businesses." The most positive part of creating *Buy Southside* for Xavier was how interested and open the business owners were in participating in the project. From pouring coffee, to selling ukuleles, to detailing cars, Xavier captured, and therefore projected value on, the people who make the local economy tick.

In terms of access, Xavier removed barriers and contributed to a critical mass of arts activities in the community. In 2013, Art Blocks artists were required to take their neighbors on a "field trip." A few Art Blocks artists invited their neighbors to the opening of *Block 16th*. They took advantage of free transportation organized and provided by Xavier and PH+T. One Art Blocks artist, Neil Sontag, noted, "Looking back, I wish I'd made the time to attend other participants' events. It's probably from attending Xavier Tavera's event at the Third Place Gallery and the unexpected good time we had." Xavier was able to share the stories of the people on his block with a wide audience and fellow Art Blocks artists could see how another Art Blocks artist connected his neighbors through art.

By photographing people who live and work in the neighborhood, Xavier illuminated the wide variety of people who spend time in the community everyday. Sixteen family portraits hang on walls of houses on Xavier's blocks. They remind residents that they form a small community brought together by Xavier's camera.

Above: Xavier's Art Blocks exibit at The Third Place Gallery, 2013.
Right: Xavier Tavera's *Buy Southside* project, 2014.
Below: James "Jimmy" Bynum; Amanda Lazo Lem and Maria Collaguazo; Tom Myhre; part of *Buy Southside;* photos by Xavier Tavera

INCREASING PRIDE OF PLACE: STRONG EVIDENCE

This section explores our final "attachment" goal research question, to what extent Art Blocks and AOC projects increased residents' pride in their neighborhoods, especially as it relates to ample opportunities for creative expression. Artist final reflections, event surveys, and interview findings provide qualitative evidence that AOC and Art Blocks initiatives did help residents take pride in living in their neighborhood. In addition, AOC or Art Blocks survey respondents were 1.5 times more likely to rate their neighborhood as "good" or "excellent" in terms of opportunities for creative expression, which suggests increased opportunities for creative expression.[17] Focus group data illuminate ways in which arts offerings fostered residents' pride of place. Below, we elaborate on these findings.

17. Source: Residents' survey. Based on a five-point scale: Poor, Fair, Average, Good, Excellent. Sample size=38 for Art Blocks/AOC resident respondents and 31 for quasi-control respondents.

Event survey and interview data provide qualitative evidence that Art Blocks and AOC projects helped foster residents' pride of place. In residents' own words:

> Knowing more about the history of my neighborhood, even very recent history, gives me more to be proud of. I love this neighborhood, where I've lived for 18+ years, and I love learning new things about it.
> *—AOC event survey respondent*

> It makes me feel so proud to live in Powderhorn!
> *—Art Blocks event survey respondent*

> The events have reminded me of all the amazing things and people in our neighborhood. One can tend to become kind of jaded about these things, and the Arts on Chicago events/projects were a great way to look at the neighborhood through new eyes.
> *—AOC event survey respondent*

> I feel like just bursting full of pride talking about what's happening on Chicago… I think it's one of the cooler things…this collaboration with the businesses, with the four neighborhoods, with PH, and all the partnerships that we're bridging to do something about Chicago Avenue.
> *—Leadership team interviewee*

> In so many ways I fell in love with where I have lived for 35 years all over again. I talked with more people as well as went in businesses I normally do not go into.
> *—AOC event survey respondent*

Stephanie Rodgers leads a walking tour of her Arts on Chicago project.

Art Blocks and AOC artists also contributed insights through their final reflections, both on how the projects fostered their own pride of place and what they observed in participants. Molly Van Avery, for instance, wrote, "I feel as though this project is a manifestation of my love for this neighborhood. It is so fun to have a tangible way to contribute something very real to the streets I love." AOC artist Stephanie Rogers noted that the most positive part of her project was that participants were "actually seeing things in the neighborhood that they hadn't seen before." AOC artist Dylan Fresco also noted that numerous participants in the storywalk commented about how meaningful it was to walk along the streets that they usually drive by. He wrote, "I believe the project fulfilled one of its goals of giving people the chance to learn more about the

neighborhood they live in and be reminded of all the positives in it and the stories that exist all around it that are unseen and unheard."

We also found evidence that AOC and Art Blocks projects contributed to residents increasingly perceiving their neighborhoods as having sufficient opportunities for creative expression and that this also helped foster pride of place. Tellingly, much higher percentages of AOC or Art Blocks versus quasi-control group survey respondents rated their neighborhood as "good" or "excellent" in terms of opportunities for creative expression (73.7% and 48.4%, respectively).[18]

18. Ibid.

"The art I see, what I know about AOC and PH+T, it makes me feel that most of the art that I'm seeing is made by the people who live in the neighborhood."

–Focus group participant

Through different focus groups, community members also illuminated these statistics. One focus group participant explained that the activities happening in the community gave him something to brag about; he feels pride when he sees people engaged at all times of day in creative activity. Two other focus group participants emphasized that their perception that *local* artists most often generate the artistic projects and works of art that they see in the public realm also helps them take pride in their neighborhood. One participant explained, "the art I see, what I know about AOC and PH+T, it makes me feel that most of the art that I'm seeing is made by the people who live in the neighborhood."

In conclusion, a variety of data sources illuminated the degree to which AOC and Art Blocks advanced PH+T's community attachment goals. Social network analysis, artist final reflections, and event participant surveys indicated that AOC and Art Blocks did foster social connections. Respondents living on Art Blocks or blocks with AOC activities, for instance, were 1.6 times more likely to report that they felt more connected to their neighbors because of arts offerings. Social network analysis revealed a cohesive group of artists that bring together many disparate individuals in the community. Artist final reflection data revealed that artists greatly valued relationships with other artists and yielded insights into the ways in which their projects facilitated initial interactions between neighbors. Although we can conclusively say that AOC and Art Blocks engaged participants of diverse ages and racial/ethnic backgrounds, we lack data to understand whether those interactions helped neighbors of different backgrounds genuinely feel more connected to or trust one-another more. In terms of increasing residents' appreciation for diversity, limited qualitative evidence suggests some modest inroads, but the residents' survey suggests that high majorities of residents value knowing people of different backgrounds, independent of AOC/Art Blocks activities. Similarly, resident survey data suggests that high majorities of residents feel a sense of belonging, independent of AOC/Art Blocks activities, but a variety of qualitative data suggests that project activity deepened (and fostered for those that did not initially feel it), a sense of belonging. This appeared to be linked to residents' increased senses of safety and increased familiarity with neighbors and neighborhood amenities. Lastly, a range of data sources provided clear evidence that AOC and Art Blocks activities helped increase residents' pride in living in their neighborhood, especially as related to its arts-identity. We next explore the degree to which AOC and Art Blocks activities helped achieve PH+T's agency-related goals.

PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE AGENCY

Three core components make up PH+T's "agency" goal: inspiring neighborhood residents, empowering them, and helping expand their ability to work together to improve each other's lives. Our research questions, specifically, ask:

Because of the Art Blocks and AOC projects, to what extent did:

1. Residents gain inspiration and think more expansively and optimistically about possibilities for themselves and their community?
2. Neighborhood residents and artist project leaders gain skills and confidence to generate opportunities?
3. Folks who were previously underrepresented have a greater voice in community decision-making?
4. Neighborhood residents/artists feel a responsibility to be civically engaged in their neighborhood?
5. Neighborhood residents/artists work more efficiently together across difference, dialogue about tough/divisive issues, develop shared values, or better appreciate alternate points of view?

To summarize agency-related findings, resident survey data suggests that AOC and Art Blocks activities may have inspired residents to imagine more positive futures for themselves and their neighborhood and helped them gain skills and confidence to generate opportunities. Artist final reflections provide illustrative examples. Higher percentages of respondents living on Art Blocks and blocks with AOC activities agreed with the statement, "I have a voice in community decision making." This trend was even more pronounced for people of color and low-income respondents, though extremely small sub-sample sizes limit the validity of these results. In terms of increasing neighborhood civic engagement, survey and artist final reflections do suggest that these projects may have fostered residents' sense of civic duty, particularly for artist project leaders. Lastly, limited qualitative evidence yielded inconclusive data for the projects' ability to foster residents' dialogue and collective work. Below, we elaborate on these findings for each research question, in turn.

INSPIRING ARTISTS AND RESIDENTS: CLEAR EVIDENCE

Findings from the residents' survey suggest that these projects did inspire neighbors and the artist project leaders to think more expansively and optimistically about possibilities for themselves and their community.

Findings from the residents' survey suggest that these projects did inspire neighbors and the artist project leaders to think more expansively and optimistically about possibilities for themselves and their community. Greater numbers of Art Blocks and AOC block respondents agreed with the statements, "When I think about my future, I imagine positive options," than quasi-control group respondents (94.7% versus 86.7%, respectively). This pattern also held for optimism about the neighborhood, though with a less pronounced difference—78.9% of Art Blocks/AOC block respondents agreed with the statement, "When I think about my neighborhood, I imagine a bright future," versus 74.2% of quasi-control group respondents (See Table 5).

Artist final reflections illustrate some of the ways Art Blocks and AOC projects inspired residents. For instance, the signs that Peter Haakon Thomson produced via his mobile sign shop inspired his neighbors to independently

make their own signs as part of a block party. Artist Molly Van Avery also described how the process deepened her commitment to her neighborhood: the project "marks my interest and desire to have my art be public and it also helps my art be of service, which I love. I feel as though this could be a major turning point in me thinking bigger about what's possible for me as an artist and a member of my neighborhood."

EMPOWERING ARTISTS AND RESIDENTS WITH NEW SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES: CLEAR EVIDENCE

The Arts on Chicago mural on the side of the Chicago Fire Arts Center incorporates sculptural metal pieces and LED elements, fabricated by youth from the Hennepin County Home School.

For his Art Blocks project, Eduardo Cardenas constructed a number of playful, modular structures for the kids on his block.

Our findings suggest that Art Blocks and AOC projects helped empower residents, particularly the artist project leaders, by helping them gain skills and confidence to generate opportunities. Over 90% of survey respondents (92.1%) living on blocks where AOC or Art Blocks activities took place agreed with the statement, "I have the skills and confidence I need to generate opportunities for myself," compared to only 77.4% of quasi-control respondents (See Table 5). This difference suggests that the AOC and Art Blocks projects may have helped fuel residents' empowerment. Through artist final reflections and video interviews, artists and participants illuminate these findings.

Artists described how participants learned new skills and gained familiarity with new artistic mediums. Niky Duxbury, for instance, described how through her project participants created a tile mosaic on a busy street corner and learned an artistic process, new to most. "Around 50 people can go by and say, 'Hey, I did that!'" she wrote. Two youth-focused AOC and Art Blocks projects demonstrated clear skill/confidence building outcomes. Specific youth took on leadership roles, for instance, in Natasha Pestich's project that featured printmaking and producing wearable art—processes that require a team effort and close working relationships. And Heather Doyle explained that her Chicago Fire Arts Center project provided youth "with tangible, technical skills in areas such as design, welding, metal fabrication, and electronics, while also giving them the chance to leave a lasting, beautiful mark on a neighborhood where many of them grew up." One youth participant explained:

> Here I can show the community that I'm not trying to be a troublemaker anymore; I'm trying to change and be a better human than I was before. I didn't even know it was a marketable skill at first. When I show them what I can do when this project is revealed, I'm going to be like, 'Yeah, I did that.' (Iwaskewycz 2012).

However, the confidence, skills, and new opportunities that the artist project leaders gained, themselves, present the clearest evidence of the ways in which AOC and Art Blocks projects fostered residents' empowerment.

A number of artists described how their participation in AOC or Art Blocks validated their artistic identity. For instance prior to Art Blocks, Eduardo Cardenas didn't consider himself an artist. He described the process as incredibly important for his artistic career in that it helped him find a place for him and his art in his own community and served as the small push that cast him off as an artist. Some artists, such as Mike Hoyt and Andrea Jenkins, mentioned that the project helped raise their visibility as artists among their neighbors. Andrea Jenkins, for instance, wrote that the project helped her neighbors perceive her "in a more professional artistic light" and gave her

"more confidence to continue to pursue opportunities to create and present new work in different venues and ways."

> "The experience of writing and receiving funding for this project, and then producing it successfully, will give me the confidence to seek out more funding and take on larger risks and projects in the future."
>
> *–AOC artist Dylan Fresco*

Other artists spoke to how proposal-writing experience, from applying and the imprimatur of their involvement, benefited their professional artistic development. For AOC artist Stephanie Rogers, for instance, AOC represented the first successful competitive project of her career. This vote of confidence encouraged her to also apply for grants. She successfully earned a Minnesota State Arts Board grant, which doubled the budget for her AOC project. Through the project, she also received her first press recognition via coverage by the *Star Tribune*. In a similar vein, AOC artist Dylan Fresco wrote, "The experience of writing and receiving funding for this project, and then producing it successfully, will give me the confidence to seek out more funding and take on larger risks and projects in the future."

Other artists emphasized how these experiences of creating artwork for the public realm would benefit their artistic careers. Dylan Fresco had previously identified mainly as a theatre artist. Through the program he worked as a peer alongside artists of other disciplines and saw commonality in their work across different media. He now identifies as a public artist, as well, and envisions that more of his future work will be interactive and grounded in a specific community. He wrote, "From where I sit now, it feels like it's definitely changed the arc of my career." Other artists cited securing city permits to display their work as a valuable new skill. And AOC artist Sarah Peters wrote: "Having the support to see through a significant public art installation ups our profiles as working artists and provides a concrete set of experiences working in the public sphere that we can draw on in future projects."

Although it is too early to judge the full implications that artists' participation in AOC or Art Blocks will have on their ability to generate future opportunities, preliminary data are encouraging. Strong majorities of artist respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Art Blocks or AOC had a positive impact on their artistic careers (86% for AOC, 90% for Art Blocks 2013, and 92% for Art Blocks 2014).[19] In their final reflections, some artists also mentioned securing funding to continue their projects or begin new ones that build on their AOC or Art Blocks experience. Some artists even noted that people and organizations have approached them about continuing to use materials that they developed for the project. Peter Haakon Thomson, for instance, noted that he now realizes that he has a "critical mass of artistic engagement tools" that he can use as a source of income.

19. Source: AOC and Art Blocks artists' final reflections. Based on a five-point scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree.

FOSTERING A GREATER "VOICE" FOR UNDERREPRESENTED PEOPLE: ENCOURAGING SIGNS

When asked about having a voice in community decision-making, a higher percentage of respondents living on blocks where AOC or Art Blocks activities took place agreed with the statement, "I have a voice in community decision-making" than quasi-control group respondents (52.6% versus 41.6%). The trend was even more pronounced for non-white respondents: 66.7% of non-white treatment group respondents agreed versus 22.2% of non-white quasi-control group respondents. Similar patterns held for Latino respondents (60% treatment versus 0% quasi-control), and for those with household incomes under $35,000 (100% treatment versus 50% quasi-control). Though these

findings provide encouraging evidence that Art Blocks and AOC projects may have helped people who have faced historic marginalization gain a greater voice in community decision-making, the extremely small sizes of these sub-samples severely limits the reliability of these results (see Table 7).

Table 7. Residents' Survey Results: Voice in Community Decision Making, Variation Across Demographic Groups

I have a voice in community decision-making	Art Blocks/AOC		Quasi-Control	
	#	%	#	%
All respondents	20	52.6	13	41.9
Latino/Hispanic Identity	3	60.0	0	0.0
All racial groups other than White	8	66.7	2	22.2
Under $35,000 in household income	4	100.0	3	50.0

Notes: Based on a 3-point scale, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree. N=38 for Art Blocks/AOC, 31 for quasi-control. Caution should be used in interpretting results, due to extremely small sample sizes of sub-groups.

Numerous projects provided opportunities for residents to build agency by sharing their stories and seeing them reflected to others. See, for instance, the project profile on Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes' *What Grows Here: A Neighborhood StoryWalk,* or the example of Molly Van Avery's *Poetry Mobile* providing a platform for budding young poets to express their artistic voices. In the following section, we explore not just the ways in which projects helped amplify residents' voices, but connections between project activity and commitment to civic engagement.

HELPING DEEPEN RESIDENTS' COMMITMENT TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: CLEAR EVIDENCE

Survey and artist final reflection data provided evidence that the AOC and Art Blocks projects may have helped deepen residents' commitment to civic engagement within their neighborhood. Respondents dwelling on blocks where AOC or Art Blocks activities took place were 1.8 times more likely to state that it was very important to them to be civically engaged in their neighborhood (47.4% for Art Blocks/AOC versus 25.8% for quasi-control group respondents).[20]

Qualitative evidence suggests that artists' and other residents' increased commitment to local civic engagement may be closely tied to AOC and Art Blocks' abilities to foster a sense of belonging. In an event survey, one Art Blocks participant noted that because of the project, "I feel invested and more committed to the well-being in my neighborhood."

Given data sources, and presumably the depth of the individuals' experiences, we observed these patterns most strikingly for the artists, themselves. Artist Soozin Hirschmugl, for instance, wrote that her two year involvement in Art Blocks helped her to examine how her own actions can have an impact in her "backyard" and how she is now more committed to making work in her

20. Source: Residents' survey. Based on a three-point scale, Not important, Moderately important, Very important. Sample size=38 for Art Blocks/AOC resident respondents, 31 for quasi-control respondents.

neighborhood instead of always taking it to other communities. In their final reflections, other artists echoed this desire to continue creating artistic projects based in their neighborhoods. Art Blocks artists, in particular, frequently mentioned the possibility of future local projects.

FOSTERING RESIDENT DIALOGUE AND COLLECTIVE WORK: MODEST EVIDENCE

The final component of PH+T's "agency" goal involves fostering residents' ability to work collectively and engage in constructive dialogue. Specifically, we sought to explore whether AOC and Art Blocks projects fostered residents' ability to work more effectively together across difference, dialogue about tough/divisive issues, develop shared values, and/or better appreciate alternate points of view. Though findings from artist final reflections and focus groups do provide evidence that AOC and Art Blocks helped advance this goal, these impacts not only seem more modest than other access, attachment, and agency-goal outcomes, but stakeholders also spoke to a larger context in which other factors' contributions appeared more influential than those of Art Blocks or AOC.

With regard to the modest positive evidence, the projects often involved multiple partners, from other arts organizations to local parks to neighborhood organizations to youth-oriented nonprofits to local businesses. These entities provided space, collaborators, participants, and other resources. To the degree that project partners viewed these efforts as successful, one can expect that neighborhood stakeholders' capacities for working effectively together in the future would be strengthened. Focus group participant Becky Timm (formerly of the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association) spoke to this. She said that through AOC, individual artists "bubbled up their things," and other artists and project partners got to know one another and sought opportunities to help each other. She also credited AOC with strengthening neighborhood organizations' connections to PH+T and empowering neighborhood stakeholders to direct community change:

> I watch the artists change, the communities change…Change that hasn't happened to us, but that we've been a part of…I'm inspired by having development not run over us, but be[ing] a part of the conversation.

Through final reflections and project descriptions, a few artists documented ways in which their projects directly aimed to provide platforms for dialogue. Jenny Schmid, Drew Anderson, Andrea Steudel, John Allen, and Sarah Peters for instance, created murals viewed exclusively at night when triggered by motion sensor lights across the four neighborhoods. She wrote, "The piece playfully reflects upon the successes and failures of the network of motion activated security flood lights in the neighborhood, sparking a conversation in the community about safety and what it takes to create a secure neighborhood at night by instigating the actuality of human presence with a creative intention." In artist Mike Hoyt's *Wish Well,* participants submitted their wishes for the future, which were then displayed on a changing LED display. One survey respondent revealed how *Wish Well* helped spur dialogue because, "I've seen a lot of things that have connected with me and I've never written anything but I feel that there are other people in the community that feel the same way."

A motion sensor-activated glow-in-the-dark image, part of the *EyeSite* Arts on Chicago project

Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes' *What Grows Here* Storywalk, 2013

WHAT GROWS HERE

DYLAN FRESCO AND MICHELLE BARNES, AOC ARTISTS IN 2013

Throughout May and into June 2013, intimate groups of people walked Chicago Avenue guided by two artists, Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes. They stopped at street corners, ducked into the Fox Egg or Third Place galleries, and listened to Dylan and Michelle weave narrative along the way. Through this narrative, participants experienced place through stories, and stories in place.

To develop the storywalk, Dylan and Michelle walked the neighborhood surrounding 32nd Street, 38th Street, and Chicago Avenue throughout the winter and early spring of 2013, keeping their ears wide open. Asking "What Grows Here; from kids to families, to businesses, to trees," Dylan and Michelle talked with over 70 people in homes, schools, and businesses, people who have lived in the neighborhood for years and people who had left the neighborhood. In ten performances of *What Grows Here*, they shared these stories with small groups who traversed the same blocks where Dylan and Michelle first heard the stories.

Dylan and Michelle's *What Grows Here* contributed to achieving PH+T's goal of boosting attachment and agency in the neighborhood.

Regarding agency, *What Grows Here* allowed participants to connect with a variety of community perspectives and empowered them to reflect on their own. "The stories shared, and the chance to walk with strangers and share a common experience together down an avenue shared in common, created connections and recognition of commonality for many people," Dylan noted.

Dylan and Michelle also found that the act of listening to the *What Grows Here* narrative, empowered participants to tell their own stories about what was important to them about Chicago Avenue. Making

room in *What Grows Here* for participants to tell their own stories wasn't a large part of Dylan or Michelle's original vision of the project, but it became a defining feature of *What Grows Here*. Each storywalk became a unique blend of stories shared by the performers and spontaneous stories from the participants.

Dylan and Michelle also sought to increase *What Grows Here* participants' feeling of attachment to and belonging in the neighborhood. After one storywalk, Dylan had a conversation with a woman whose family stories influenced Dylan and Michelle's creative process: "She thanked me and told me that the storywalk went 'deep,' and that hearing all the stories provided a sense of healing for her, as she too had experienced trauma in the neighborhood." Dylan noticed that during storywalks, participants would wander over to businesses and take peeks in the windows, wanting to learn more about what was inside. By talking about the neighborhood businesses and stopping in during the storywalks, Dylan and Michelle hoped that participants would feel more comfortable going back again in the future.

What Grows Here allowed people to pay close attention to their surroundings, something that doesn't necessarily happen while driving in a car or pedaling a bike; by learning about and noticing neighborhood gems, people could then reflect on feelings of neighborhood pride. One storywalk participant noted, "I saw more on the storywalk than I have ever noticed.

Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes

It made me slow down and savor our environment." After one storywalk, a participant reflected, "knowing more about the history of my neighborhood, even very recent history, gives me more to be proud of." Dylan mentioned that one participant who just moved to Chicago Avenue and was having a hard time with her new and noisier location, "told me that the walk made her feel so much better, and more connected to and excited about all the things on her block."

A unique blend of sharing and hearing stories, and visiting physical spaces along Chicago Avenue, *What Grows Here* allowed people who both contributed stories in the winter and those on the storywalks to reflect on and experience the neighborhood.

Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes lead a storywalk for their 2013 *What Grows Here* project

Qualitative data from focus groups and the residents' survey, however, suggest that AOC and Art Blocks projects occur in neighborhoods that may already have a healthy track record of stakeholders working effectively together, and also that other arts-based initiatives have a more robust track record of spurring dialogue around divisive issues and fostering shared values. One focus group participant, for instance, characterized her neighborhood as having a healthy culture of organizational-collaboration in contrast to territorial and combative cultures in other Twin Cities neighborhoods. Survey and focus group participants also cited the annual May Day Parade produced by In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre in the Phillips/Powderhorn neighborhoods and PH+T's *Breaking Ice* performance and discussion forum as particularly laudable arts-based ways to foster constructive dialogue. Both May Day and *Breaking Ice* (a series which is not confined to PH+T's immediate neighborhood) benefit from time-tested processes, whereas the majority of AOC and Art Blocks artists had at most one-year's experience with the program.

Future years may present opportunities for Art Blocks/AOC artists to work more strategically to affect these agency-related outcomes. For instance after completing his AOC storywalk project, Dylan Fresco realized that the same framework could be used as a platform for neighborhood dialogue and planning:

> I think it could be an interesting model to use in the future as a way of gathering feedback from people about issues in a neighborhood, and generating information of what's important to people. It could be a very interesting tool to set agendas for what to work on, or just to strengthen connections and understanding between people in a community.

In conclusion, a range of data sources paint a picture of Art Blocks and AOC advancing PH+T's agency goals, though some particular sub-goals have only modest evidence or inconclusive data. In terms of fostering inspiration and gaining skills and confidence, resident survey data suggests the projects may have helped residents imagine more optimistic possibilities for themselves and their neighborhood and be empowered with new skills. Through artist final reflections, we gain insights into specific ways youth participants and artists, in particular, experienced these impacts. In terms of increasing previously underrepresented individuals' voice in community decision making, survey data suggests AOC and Art Blocks may have played a beneficial role, though higher sample sizes are necessary to ensure the validity of results for people of color and low-income respondents. Survey and artist final reflections also suggest that the projects may have fostered residents' commitments to neighborhood civic engagement, particularly for artist project leaders. AOC and Art Blocks' contributions towards fostering residents' dialogue and collective work seemed quite modest from the qualitative data available to date.

Making bubbles at one of Zoe Sommers Haas' 2014 Art Blocks events

IMPLICATIONS: LEARNING FROM PH+T'S EXPERIENCE

This section explores not *whether* Art Blocks and AOC affected PH+T's access, attachment, and agency goals, but *how* project partners and the broader field can learn from these efforts. PH+T, artist project leaders, and other project partners have a vested interest in gaining a deeper understanding of program strengths and weaknesses so that they can deepen their impact moving forward. Practitioners and funders seeking to emulate or support this kind of work don't want to reinvent the wheel. We explore these questions along two avenues of inquiry: program design and measurement.

FACTORS THAT HELP/HINDER ACCESS, ATTACHMENT, AND AGENCY OUTCOMES

Although both targeted the local community, Art Blocks and AOC were different programs. For AOC artists, the ten-block stretch of Chicago Avenue was their canvas, although some chose to engage specific groups of community members. PH+T charged Art Blocks artists with engaging a very specific audience, their immediate neighbors. In addition, within the two programs, artists from varied artistic disciplines engaged people in many different ways. What strategies and interventions seemed most effective and why? What particular project attributes appear to be most closely associated with success? How can PH+T improve this work moving forward, and how can other practitioners and funders learn from their experience?

Comparing the Art Blocks and AOC programs and looking at variation among projects within each, we identified six factors that seem to help or hinder agency, attachment, and access outcomes.

The cookbook generated by Zoe Sommers Haas' Art Blocks project

1. ACTIVE ARTS PARTICIPATION AND CONNECTING PARTICIPANTS TO UNFAMILIAR PEOPLE AND PLACES

Art Blocks artists such as Zoe Sommers Haas, Xavier Tavera, and Wing Young Huie relied on their neighbors' participation to create final products (a cookbook, portraits, and film, respectively). Artists even distributed some final products to neighbors, such as the cookbooks and portraits. Qualitative data reveal that neighbors who attended Xavier's opening and Wing's viewing particularly enjoyed seeing themselves on the wall or on the screen and learning about their neighbors while all milling about in the same space. These trends suggest that practitioners seeking to foster attachment-related outcomes (such as increasing neighbors' connections to one another, sense of belonging, and/or pride of place) should prioritize participatory art projects that help people connect to previously unfamiliar people or places.

2. TRADEOFFS BETWEEN GEOGRAPHICALLY DIFFUSE (ART BLOCKS) AND CONCENTRATED (AOC) APPROACHES

The Arts on Chicago *EyeSite* bike tour

The diffuse (Art Blocks) structure appears more likely to deepen artists' commitment to future hyper-local engagement than the concentrated (AOC) approach. In their final reflections, for instance, Art Blocks artists were more likely than AOC artists to write about and express excitement for future arts projects in their immediate communities. Such a trend makes intuitive sense, as one would expect artists to have a greater vested interest in their block than their larger neighborhood.

The diffuse structure also seems more suited to lay groundwork for neighbors' future social interaction, due to neighbors' immediate proximity. Some AOC artists' projects heavily relied on direct community participation, such as Dylan Fresco and Michelle Barnes' *What Grows Here*, Wing Young Huie's *We are the Other,* and Jenny Schmid, Drew Anderson, Andrea Steudel, Sarah Peters, and John Allen's *EyeSite*. Although we found evidence that these projects successfully brought participants to new places, we lacked evidence as to whether participants maintained social connections made through the projects. Although all the AOC participants shared a common larger geography of the four neighborhoods, projects targeted to individual blocks may prove more fertile ground for lubricating repeat social interactions.

Despite these comparative strengths for diffuse activity, stakeholders perceived AOC projects to have higher visibility and momentum, due to its greater geographic project density. Both focus group participants and an artist voiced some concerns about the shift from concentrated AOC projects on a ten-block stretch of Chicago Avenue to Art Blocks' more diffuse mosaic approach taken across the four neighborhoods. Focus group participant Becky Timm credited AOC with creating "tangible excitement" through its high visibility, which was not matched by Art Blocks (though she also viewed that as "good work"). Steven Berg, an AOC artist, also expressed concerns about visibility and momentum: "I am afraid if we don't keep the torch burning, people will forget about the projects and slowly become complacent." Other artists and focus group participants pointed to a need to raise the visibility not of individual projects, but of the interconnectedness and PH+T's overarching role. If such a measure was identified, this might successfully mitigate the visibility tradeoff faced by the more diffuse, Art Blocks approach.

Practitioners will want to keep these tradeoffs in mind as they design projects and programs. If fostering artists' commitments to hyper-local civic engagement and/or lubricating social interactions of immediate neighbors are the priorities, then diffuse, block-based approaches are more appropriate. If they seek to generate momentum and change a dominant narrative about an area, then a more concentrated, highly visible intervention may be most appropriate. In either case, efforts to promote the interconnections between projects can help community stakeholders understand how their involvement fits into a greater whole and generate excitement.

3. DEEP ARTIST-TO-ARTIST SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Even though many artists rated the connections they made with other artists through the AOC and Art Blocks programs as the most valuable aspect for them, mandatory "institute" trainings and work sessions suffered from uneven attendance. In their final reflections, a number of artists pinpointed this as a lost opportunity to learn more from one another. Other artists expressed that in hindsight, they wished that they had made more efforts to attend their colleagues' events and activities. To the degree that PH+T or other practitioners can foster robust cultures of artist exchange and training attendance, artist-to-artist social connections should be maximized. Our impact findings suggest that increased artist-to-artist social connections should directly help increase artists' attachment to place. In addition, such interactions should allow artists to learn from one another's successes and challenges and, therefore, indirectly advance all desired objectives.

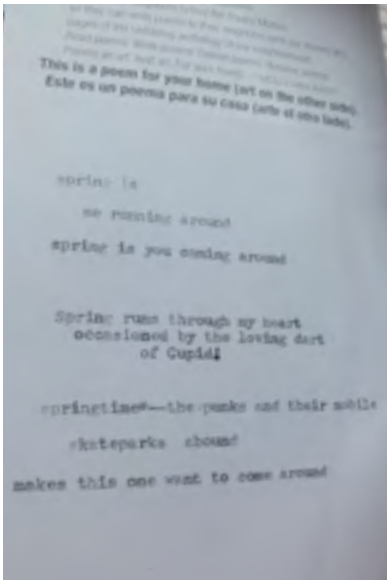
Kelly Brazil collaborated with the Chicago Avenue Fire Arts Center and interns from Full Cycle Bike Shop in constructing five welded bicycle racks for Arts on Chicago; photo by Ethan Turcotte.

4. STAYING ATTUNED TO CHALLENGES AND VALUE OF COLLABORATIONS WITH OUTSIDE PARTNERS

Despite the importance of collaborating with outside partners to increase opportunities to deepen neighborhood stakeholders' capacity to work effectively together, artists spoke to the inherent challenges of such efforts. Some partners and volunteers did not follow through on their commitments and the process of coordinating these collaborations often took more time than artists anticipated. Nevertheless, outside partners proved instrumental for hosting projects and connecting artists with participants and new resources. We advise PH+T and other practitioners to take these challenges to heart. They might seek opportunities to help manage artists' expectations, coaching them to anticipate and plan for challenges well in advance. Peer-to-peer based learning opportunities about how to effectively plan for and manage challenging collaborations could also be invaluable.

5. SUCCESSFUL NAVIGATION OF TIGHT TIMELINES

Although nothing motivates like a deadline, a number of artists reflected on the tension of tight timeframes to complete projects and their desire to authentically connect with neighbors and execute a meaningful project. ArtBlock artists are given eight to nine months to develop, plan, and execute their projects, with many timing projects to coincide with the summer months, which condenses the timeframe to five to eight months. In her 2013 final reflection, Soozin Hirschmugl wrote that she wanted to jump right in to sharing poems but realized that "just having an easy going dinner with some social art making was a good



One of the poems from Molly Van Avery's *Poetry Mobile*

starter." In her second year as an Art Blocks artist, Soozin started earlier and was surprised at the turnout for her initial gathering at the beginning of the season, which resulted in positive momentum "that spilled over the summer." Another Art Blocks artist, Zoe Sommers Haas, faced the challenge of "asking a favor from my neighbors before I developed a relationship with them." Zoe found it hard to collect recipes from her neighbors without being "too intrusive or obnoxious…but also the short time frame of the project and grant made it necessary to get to the point." Molly Van Avery also faced the challenge of creating a project that "won't bug them or ask them for anything, but still makes them feel seen and acknowledged and celebrated." PH+T, and those seeking to design programs similar to AOC or Art Blocks, may wish to consider extending project time frames and/or offering opportunities for veteran artist project leaders to share with newer cohort members the ways in which they successfully navigated these challenges. Too hurried a timeline could result in superficial engagements and potentially breed mistrust and resentment between participants, the artist-leaders, and the sponsoring entity.

6. BALANCING ARTISTS' EXPERIMENTATION AND BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

A number of artists praised the AOC and/or Art Blocks programs for offering them opportunities to test out new mediums, artistic disciplines, or for providing a platform for their first foray into community-based artistic work. Those designing programs that prioritize fostering artists' agency (building skills and increasing opportunities) should seek to emulate such opportunities for artistic experimentation.

However, as artists deepen their experience working in community-based settings, and specifically to advance PH+T's access, attachment, and agency goals, they can be expected to refine their crafts and further impacts. In final reflections, numerous artists articulated specific changes they would make in future projects, such as building on successful components, creating art projects year-round, and making more of an effort to fully engage peripheral participants. Practitioners seeking to advance broad-based community outcomes would do well to engage artists with pre-existing experience in arts-based community development. Retaining a mix of veteran and novice artist project leaders should give artists opportunities to learn from their own and their colleagues' past experiences and help balance multiple objectives.

GUIDANCE FOR FUTURE MEASUREMENT EFFORTS

Through the AOC and Art Blocks efforts, PH+T hoped not only to advance its access, attachment, and agency goals, it also sought to learn to what degree it moved the needle. By critically reflecting on the measurement efforts PH+T used to date, PH+T can refine and improve its data collection and evaluation methods moving forward. Practitioners seeking to do similar work can also learn from their experience and even adapt specific protocols. Lastly, funders and practitioners can gain a more realistic appreciation of the level of resources and commitment that thorough evaluation efforts require. This section provides an overview of which data collection methods proved the most useful in our efforts to answer research questions and recommendations for improvement.

Of all the data sources and methods, the artist final reflections, residents' survey, and artist relationship data and resulting social network analysis proved to be the most valuable. Below, we discuss the strengths of each of these sources and opportunities for improvement. The Technical Appendix provides greater details on all sources and sample protocols.

The Metris team relied more heavily on the artists' final reflections than any other internally collected data source. These provided a wealth of rich, qualitative data that shed light on nearly all the access, attachment, and agency research questions. The data's main limitation is that it only provided insights from the artist project leaders' perspectives. Although the artists can, and did, speak to the experiences of neighborhood residents who were not artist project leaders themselves, this source is best used in combination with those that directly capture other residents' perspectives. In addition, we observed a great deal of variation in the level of detail provided by the artists, with 17-30% of AOC/Art Blocks artist teams in each year failing to submit final reflections. This variation surfaced in our report, with those artists and projects that provided richer, fuller final reflection reports being more extensively quoted and more likely to be profiled within the report. Moving forward, PH+T should emphasize the importance of this data source to the artists, and encourage them to complete final reflections and to provide more than cursory responses. PH+T should continue its practice of making artists' final payments contingent on receiving completed final reflections to boost response rates. If resources permit, future research teams might augment the final reflections with artist interviews to gain more insights into the perspectives of artists who are more comfortable expressing themselves verbally than in writing.

The residents' survey proved invaluable for several reasons: Metris tailored it to the research questions of interest, it directly captured non-artist residents' perspectives, and it had more causal explanatory power than other data sources. First, Metris designed the residents' survey protocol after we had analyzed the pre-existing, internally collected data sources and identified gaps in our ability to answer research questions. This timing allowed us to tailor the questionnaire specifically to the research questions, whereas PH+T designed the protocols for the internally collected data sources before the final research questions had been specified. Secondly, because residents, and not artist project leaders, were the target population, we were able to directly get at access, attachment, and agency impacts on residents. Lastly, the survey also held far more causal explanatory power than most sources because it introduced a quasi-control group for comparative purposes. By comparing differences in respondents' answers between blocks on which and AOC and/or Art Blocks projects happened with those that were geographically buffered from them, we can infer with more confidence that differences may stem from the AOC or Art Blocks activity.

The residents' survey's main limitations are its labor-intensive nature and that small sample sizes and sample bias limit the validity of the data. The door-to-door survey required far greater time and staff capacity than we originally anticipated. For future efforts, we suggest that PH+T pair or replace door-to-door efforts with a mailed survey, identify and train a larger team of surveyors, and plan for a longer administration period. Such steps should also increase the sample size and help mitigate sample bias, the other main limitation of the data source. As discussed in the Technical Appendix, larger sample sizes would

have allowed us to test whether differences observed between the treatment and quasi-control groups were statistically significant. In addition, our sample underrepresents people under 18, those of Hispanic or Latino origin, African Americans, and those making less than $35,000 of annual household income. People under 18 were specifically not targeted, in keeping with best practices for informed consent, but the underrepresentation of Latinos, African Americans, and low-income individuals may stem in part from the difficulty we had accessing multi-family and apartment buildings. A mailed survey may end up being more cost effective and should also increase our ability to reach apartment dwellers. Moving forward, PH+T also has a unique opportunity to re-survey a select number of quasi-control blocks that now are home to current Art Blocks projects. Comparing this before and after data should prove a rich data source.

The social network analysis and underlying AOC artist relationship data comprised another key method/data source. Although this method only sheds light on one impact area, "Attachment: Increasing social connections for artists and neighbors as well as across difference," it yielded some of the most novel, interesting analyses. PH+T leadership felt that this kind of visualization and analysis of different dimensions of social networks had seldom been applied to arts-based projects at the neighborhood level and would help them communicate attachment-related impacts. As detailed in the Technical Appendix, most of the opportunities for improving this data source center on increasing response rates and gathering more complete and detailed information from respondents.

We strongly recommend continuing these three core data collection efforts with the modifications described above. Given limited resources, PH+T may choose to discontinue collecting data for any number of the minor sources, such as event participant surveys, video interviews, and the artist pre- and post-project questionnaires. We see, however, a valuable opportunity to add more resident/participant focus groups to the mix of data collection efforts, which could even be a relatively informal discussion among block residents over food (in keeping with the spirit of Art Blocks activities).

With the available data, we were unable to conclusively measure a number of desired impact areas. Adding resident/participant focus groups and modifying existing data collection methods should give us more complete information and, for modest/inconclusive impacts, help us determine whether the programs were unsuccessful at achieving the desired impacts or whether previous data collection efforts simply did not ask the right questions.

We found, for instance, only modest or limited evidence for:

- Access: Helping residents feel welcome and removing barriers to arts participation
- Access: Shifts in attitudes regarding arts participation
- Attachment: Increasing social connections for artists and neighbors and across difference
- Attachment: Increasing appreciation for difference
- Agency: Fostering a greater "voice" for underrepresented people
- Agency: Fostering resident dialogue and collective work

By modifying the artist final reflection questionnaire to include more specific

questions, PH+T may be able to more conclusively explore a number of modest/inconclusive impact areas. For instance, the final reflections could include the following new questions:

- Please describe any steps you took to help welcome residents to participate in your event/remove barriers to arts participation. Please reflect on to what extent you felt these efforts were successful.
- If you observed any indication that your project helped increase appreciation for diversity (for participants or for yourself), please tell us about it. Examples of appreciation for diversity include valuing knowing people of different backgrounds and/or feeling invested in a neighbors' success, regardless of difference.
- If you observed any indication that your project helped foster residents' ability to work more effectively together across difference, dialogue about tough/divisive issues, develop shared values, and/or better appreciate alternate points of view, please tell us about it.

New resident/participant focus groups could also include similar questions and would directly capture residents' perceptions. In addition, the residents' focus group protocol could include a question to probe whether the projects helped neighbors, specifically of different backgrounds, feel more connected or trust each other more. Through discussion, we might determine the depth of these connections and the relative value that residents place on them. The focus group format could also present an opportunity to gather more complete data on "Access: Shifts in attitudes regarding arts participation," by exploring whether residents felt they had increased awareness of the connections between art and community building because of the project.

The last remaining impact area for which we desire more complete data is "Agency: Fostering a greater 'voice' for underrepresented people." Modifying the artist final reflection and designing the focus group questionnaire to include specific questions on this topic is advisable, but in addition, higher sample sizes for the residents' survey would allow for greater reliability of results when analyzing the variation across demographic groups on the question, "Do you disagree, neither agree nor disagree, or agree with the statement: I have a voice in community decision-making?"

One possibility for PH+T to consider is that majorities of residents may experience the kinds of outcomes it seeks, independent of AOC or Art Blocks activities. Resident survey data suggests that this may be the case for feeling a sense of belonging, feeling welcome at PH+T art activities, and valuing knowing neighbors of different backgrounds. Qualitative evidence suggests that many individuals also understand the connections between art and community building, but that experiences other than Art Blocks and AOC drive those impressions. By expanding the survey sample size to improve its validity, we should be able to more conclusively determine whether this trend holds for the larger neighborhood population. If so, PH+T should explore whether there are ways to modify its programs to target individuals for whom these trends are less apt to hold, i.e. "preach less to the choir." Or, if core elements of its theory of change are already in place, what is the potential to maximize the ultimately desired "people make good stuff happen" impact? Are there other barriers to achieving this goal that PH+T has not mapped but might be able to identify and influence?

Niky Duxbury and Aaron Blum's 2013 Art Blocks event, *Porch Fest*

CONCLUSION

PH+T's model for creative community development is, in some ways, audacious. As PH+T creative community liaison Mike Hoyt said, "Compared to the cost of public infrastructure improvements and development projects, we are working with relatively small amounts of resources in an attempt to make meaningful impact on the lives of people, not just places."

But, with not a lot of money, this organization set out to transform a whole slew of "people stuff" outcomes. As a result of Art Blocks and AOC activities, they wanted residents to feel welcome at arts events and where they lived. They wanted to nurture residents' sense of belonging and, ultimately, help empower them to make "good stuff" happen.

Not only did PH+T want to affect this change, but it also set out to measure the impacts of their efforts and advance thinking and practice within the larger field, helping to counter what it perceived as an over-emphasis on vibrancy, commerce, and economics.

To a large part, this research indicates that they were successful. Some impacts may be modest and/or related data inconclusive, but a range of data suggests that PH+T, artist project leaders, and project partners' efforts have helped drive desired access, attachment, and agency-related impacts. We found particularly clear and strong evidence for AOC and Art Blocks' contributions towards a critical mass of neighborhood arts activity, fostering social connections, fostering pride of place, inspiring residents to think more expansively and optimistically about opportunities for themselves and/or their community, helping artists and youth gain skills and confidence to generate new opportunities, and increasing artists' commitment to civic engagement.

PH+T also collected relevant data, often acting primarily on instinct and common sense. Its strong learning organization culture[21], shaped by its regular reflective "institute" process, gave it a relatively strong base from which to launch internal evaluations. We commend PH+T staff and artists for their

21. An environment "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole (reality) together" (Senge 1990).

commitment to critical self-learning. They diligently identified data points of interest, captured that data, engaged a research partner to analyze it, and are engaging in iterative processes of adaptation (both of program design and evaluation). We hope that creative placemaking funders have an increased appreciation for the resources and dedication that thorough evaluation requires.

This report also provides PH+T and other practitioners seeking to emulate this kind of work with insights that they can use to strengthen the design and evaluation of similar efforts and avoid reinventing the wheel. This will prove invaluable as Pillsbury United Communities scales up creative community development work across other locales. The question remains to what extent these impacts are context/program specific. Will trends extend to other places and program derivatives? We welcome opportunities for exchange, dialogue, and comparative research.

The technical appendix is available for free, digital download online at http://pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org/adding-it-up

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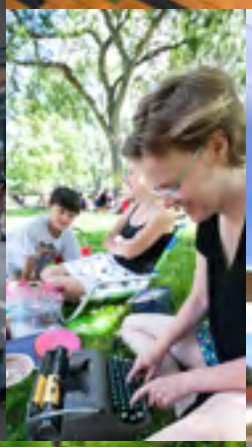





A.G. LINDQUIST
COMPANY





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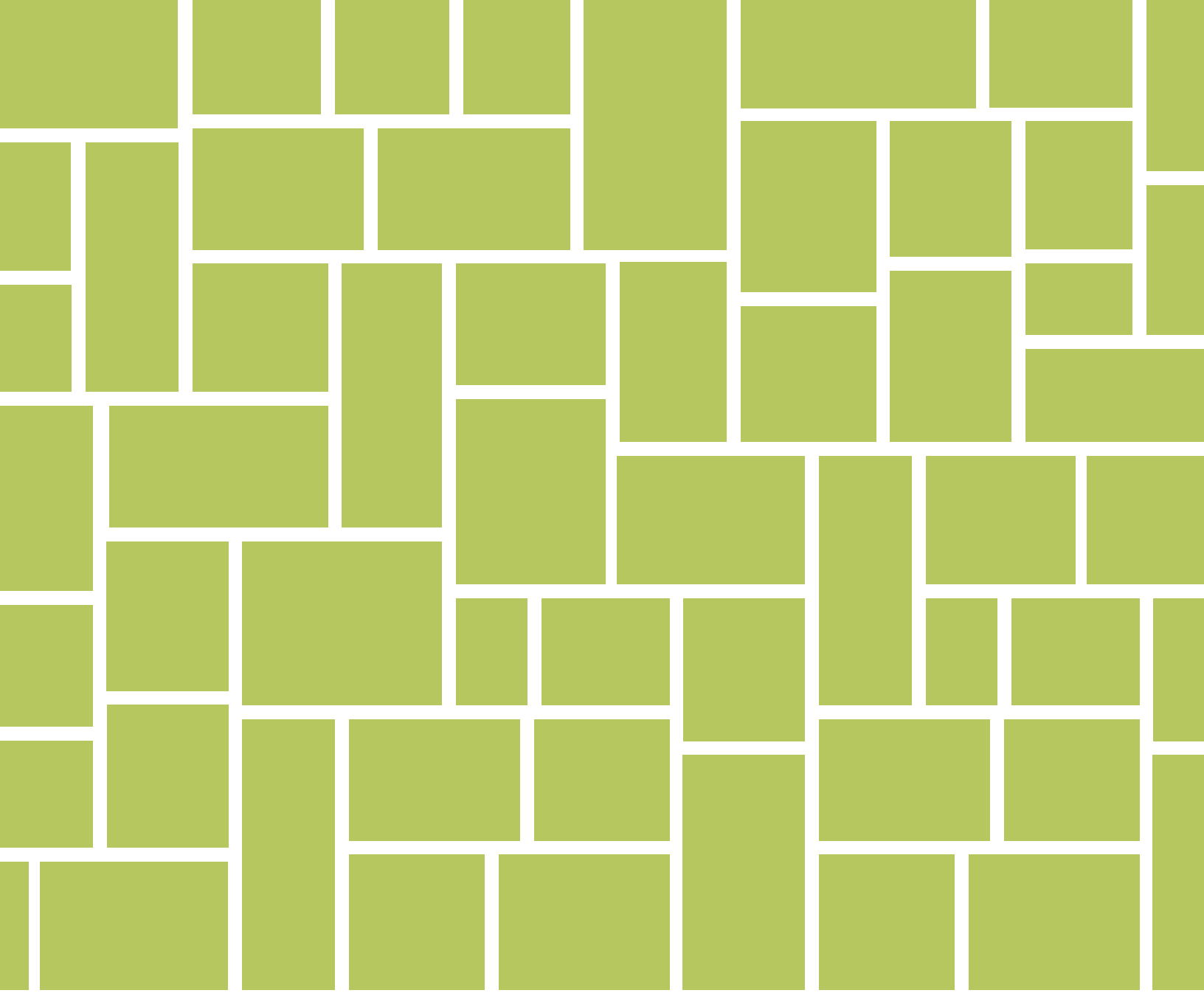
APPOINTMENTS

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