



# Creative PLACEMAKING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

A White Paper for The Mayors' Institute on  
City Design, a leadership initiative of the  
National Endowment for the Arts in partnership  
with the United States Conference of Mayors  
and American Architectural Foundation

Convincing public leaders

Project sustainability  
and year round vibrancy

Evaluating progress

**Ann Markusen**

Panel opening remarks

**CREATIVE PLACEMAKING  
CONFERENCE**

**DOX, Centre for Contemporary Art**

**Poupětova 1, 170 00 Prague**

**November 7 2014**

# How to convince Mayors and other political leaders?

- invite them to go with you to an arts event
- bring them to the neighborhood to meet your most inspiring arts initiators
- bring a group of arts participants and arts lovers to a City Council meeting
- create a coalition to elect arts-friendly leaders (Seattle City of Music)
- initiate a campaign to raise tax money for the arts

## HOW CITIES CAN NURTURE CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Ann Markusen  
University of Minnesota,  
Humphrey School of Public Affairs

November 2013

Ewing Marion

KAUFFMAN  
Foundation

Evidence from case studies:

Seattle City of Music

San Jose Creative Entrepreneur Project

Minneapolis/St. Paul Artists' Centers

### CITY CREATIVE INDUSTRY STRATEGIES: THE STATE OF THE ART



Ann Markusen  
Economist and Professor, University of Minnesota

December 2012

This is fourth in a series of special studies on the creative economy commissioned by Dits College of Art and Design ([www.crea.edu](http://www.crea.edu)) to accompany the annual *City Report on the Creative Economy of the Los Angeles Region*.

Image: *Powering Flight: Challenging the Urban Environment* by Soil Design Lab/Bike Zoo  
Courtesy of Ernest Tassevigen.

## Sustainability and year-round vibrancy:

avoid large capital projects and one-off events

encourage smaller scale dedicated spaces:  
theatres, artists' centers, live/work or studio  
buildings with entrepreneurship built in

avoid designating cultural districts – instead,  
an urban mosaic

build in participation by community members:  
sweat equity, education, co-curating

# Evaluating Creative Placemaking?

2012: ArtPlace and NEA plan to use Indicators based on secondary data sets to evaluate creative placemaking progress at the community level

ArtPlace. (2012a). Vibrancy indicators.

<http://www.artplaceamerica.org/articles/vibrancy-indicators/>

ArtPlace. (2012b). Vibrancy definitions.

<http://www.artplaceamerica.org/loi/>

National Endowment for the Arts. *Validating Arts and Livability Indicators in Selected Communities and Developing a User's Guide with Case Examples and Local Data Sources*, August 23, 2012.

# “Fuzzy Concepts, Proxy Data: Why Creative Placemaking Indicators won’t Track Creative Placemaking Success”

By [Ann Markusen](#) | Published: November 9th, 2012



“There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept.” -Ansel Adams  
Photo by beast love

# Issues

Fuzzy concepts: What ARE the outcomes we seek?

Difficulties in designing operational indicators

Dearth of good data

Absent: arts and cultural indicators

Political dangers of relying on indicators

# FUZZY CONCEPTS, PROXY DATA....

Charting a better path:

Commit to real evaluation

Build cooperation among grantees

Provide technical assistance to creative placemaking grantees

Results: ArtPlace has abandoned any attempt to use indicators as evaluation; NEA commissioned an Urban Institute study to research the indicators – little confidence in their usefulness



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