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Understanding the Arts and Creative Sector in the United States

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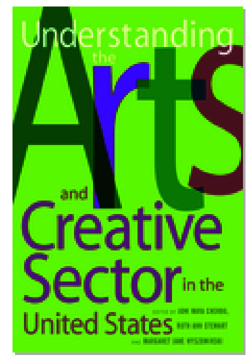

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Chapter 7

The Arts and Artist in Urban Revitalization

Ruth Ann Stewart

The Arts Have Helped to define and shape urban life in significant ways throughout America's history. This chapter explores the vital role played by the arts and cultural sector in the rise and fall and, in the last two decades, rise again of the great American city.

City culture was of little consequence during the colonial period and drew its artistic inspiration almost entirely from European modes. With the establishment of the American Republic, cities quickly became a destination for creative, newly minted Americans seeking opportunity, inspiration, and community with like-minded individuals. Historian Neil Harris observes that the very urbanism that drew artists and others of adventurous mien rendered the city suspect in a young country defined by agrarian and nativistic principles (1990). While America would eventually become a country of many cities, the idea took root early on in the American psyche that cities were undesirable, even dangerous places populated by unruly immigrants of the darker hues—first the Irish, Jews, and Italians, later African Americans, Bangladeshis, Hispanics, and other national groups (Higham 1955). Cities were seen as an unwarranted burden for state taxpayers and sites of both decadent displays of wealth and unhealthy, potentially explosive population density. No less reprehensible was the high concentration of bohemians and immigrant-inspired popular arts and cultures that flourished in all manner of rakish forms rejected as counter to the spirit of independence and the American way of life.

Emergence of the Modern City

The image of the city as dangerous and undesirable or as a place of endless opportunities for work, success, creative advancement, and excitement would shift back and forth over time in direct proportion to private and government investment in the urban lifestyle. Even though a majority of Americans would continue to favor rural or smaller town living, by the late nineteenth century American cities were major draws for millions of venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, immigrant workers from every region of the country and the world, and artists and entertainers whose combined efforts spawned booming commercial centers from New York to St. Louis to coastal California.

With the accumulation of great urban-based industrial and mercantile fortunes, a highly profitable war against agrarian slave interests, and the emergence of new technologies, city dwellers began to assume a pride of place. Technology spurred the development of world-changing new industries, skyscrapers of dizzying heights, and modern advances in every sector from transportation to street lighting to the typewriter and department store that created a new class of independent working women. One of the pivotal events that would give form to America's urban ambitions and a point of pride for the entire nation was the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, which transformed a neglected South Side Chicago lakefront park into a Beaux-Arts vision of the new American city. Named the White City, this safe, clean, graft-free, conveniently serviced, and aesthetically pleasing confection of grand international exhibition halls, gondolier-filled waterways, and stately promenades stood in sharp contrast to the realities of nineteenth-century urban life.[1]

The elegant assemblage (along with moneymaking sideshows that included the wheel ride George Ferris invented for the fair, belly dancers, and animal acts) would launch an American architectural movement known as the City Beautiful. This movement reflected the classical design principles advocated by Daniel Burnham, the fair's chief architect, and would influence the look of cultural institutions and civic buildings for much of the twentieth century (Larson 2003).

Urban Competition and the Ascendancy of the American Arts

Emboldened by their increasing prosperity, wealthy industrialists and merchants began to cast off their feelings of cultural inferiority to Old World culture. Between 1870 and the onset of World War I, wealthy civic leaders plunged into the arts and culture, sponsoring the creation of a blizzard of concert halls, museums, libraries, botanic gardens, and zoos in their cities large and small throughout the nation, laying the foundation for a uniquely American system of philanthropy and private support for the arts. Government and men (and a few exceptional women) of means and position formed public/private partnerships, striking a bargain for delivery of the arts to the general public that was distinctively American in both form and intent. While the federal government was the major financial backer of the Columbian Exposition (awarded by Congress to Chicago only after a fierce contest between competing cities), city government constituted the public half of the municipal cultural bargain.

The formula took different forms in different localities, but the general pattern was one in which the city provided the land and assumed responsibility for construction, ongoing facility maintenance, and security, while private donors made possible the professional functions and an endowment to ensure financial stability going forward. In exchange for this largesse (admission was minimal or free), local government officials largely deferred to the private side in matters of management and thus mission, privileging these enterprises with an elitist status that still persists. While these institutions were of unquestionable public benefit, they also served as highly visible demonstrations of the wealth, power, and success of their benefactors, who competed with their wealthy counterparts in rival cities for the title of great American city. This cycle of culture-based municipal competition that by 1880s had gained momentum nationwide would repeat itself almost to the decade a century later.

Prospering cities also attracted artists drawn by the availability of jobs and training in the new art schools and conservatories; suppliers, galleries, agents, publishers, and impresarios to facilitate the production, presentation, and sale of their work; inexpensive live/work spaces; and a swelling population with leisure time and disposable income to spend on the arts. In a country of immigrants, the modern American city offered a diversity of ethnic and popular expression—from light musical comedies known as vaudevilles to Yiddish theater to exhibitions of plaster casts of Greek statues in the same space with mastodon bones—unrivaled anywhere in the world. Meanwhile, the Beaux-Arts temples were busily sorting out the high arts (classical) from the low arts (popular) and the nonprofit fine arts from the commercial for-profit arts, a process that would establish a rigid hierarchy that persisted well into the second half of the twentieth century (Levine 1986).

Government and the Arts

By the turn of the twentieth century, cities struggling with the ills of unbridled population and industrial growth began to recognize the need for beautification and building standards and procedures. New York City, pressed by the Municipal Art Society, which had been formed by a private group in 1893, created one of the nation's first official art commissions. City government, with frequent private financial and advocacy support, engaged artists, designers, engineers, and architects to enhance public spaces and facilities. In 1916, New York enacted the nation's first residential zoning ordinance, separating residential and industrial activities and leading the way to the design and construction of the great Art Deco skyscrapers of the 1920s (Municipal Art Society). A commission on fine arts was created by President William Howard Taft to regulate and revitalize the official architecture of the nation's capital city. Fifteen years later the principle of good design established by the commission was extended to include federal buildings in cities, small towns, and rural areas throughout the nation, which would in turn become models for construction undertaken by local government.

With the wholesale collapse of the American economy in 1929 and the onset of that period of history known as the Great Depression, a massive federal jobs program created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt played a pivotal role in the lives of urban artists and the cities in which they worked. From 1935 to 1943, the Works Projects Administration (WPA) put writers and visual and performing artists to work as one of various categories of unemployed workers who benefited from the program. Under the WPA, artists of all races enlivened the quality of city life with murals and sculpture in post offices, hospitals, and schools, taught classes for adults and children, compiled local histories, and created pioneering theatrical and musical performances.

While the visible effects of WPA were far more lasting in the bridges and dams (many enhanced with outstanding artistic details) built outside urban centers, numerous inner-city auditoriums and exhibition halls were also built under WPA and many remained in use as primary performance and arts education centers well into the 1980s and 1990s (Bustard 1997). More to the point, the WPA artist, theater, music, and writers programs were central to lifting the public's spirits and sustaining some measure of the city's traditional artistic vitality through hard times, while at the same time ensuring the ability of individual artists to remain engaged and employed in their profession. It might be noted that WPA also set a precedent for federal support of the arts that influenced the shape and scope of the urban cultural landscape for much of the latter half of the twentieth century.

The Arts in the Decline of Cities

Some urban scholars believe that the Great Depression was a tipping point that reversed the forward development of cities from which they will never fully recover (Beauregard 2003). This decline appears to have been further exacerbated by federal policies intended by Congress to stimulate the postwar economy that instead promoted (rather, reasserted) the American predisposition to celebrate suburban life at the expense of cities. This anti-city movement resulted in the substitution of the historic centrality of cities in the realization of the American dream for suburbia, or what historian Kenneth Jackson famously termed the crabgrass frontier (1985).

At the close of World War II, the federal government promised the returning soldiers educational and housing opportunities unprecedented in American history. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill, eventually provided for the enrollment in colleges and training programs of 7.8 million veterans. At its peak in 1947, 49 percent of all college admissions were veterans. The bill was a particular boon to art schools and conservatories, which saw the size of their enrollment grow by unprecedented numbers. The GI Bill also guaranteed 2.4 million home mortgage loans thus setting the stage for the massive exodus of cities by white middle class America.

The out-migration was further facilitated by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which opened the way for an extensive interstate highway system that greatly accelerated the pace of suburbanization that had already been underway since the advent of public transportation. Business and industry soon followed. Deprived of good jobs, the middle-class tax base, and tax and investment capital from business, inner cities were left to support an increasing concentration of low-income, immigrant, and minority populations barred from the suburban dream—including many who had served in the war and were entitled to full GI Bill benefits—by discriminatory economic and racial policies.

Urban Renewal and the Great Urban Giveaway

By the early 1960s the state of American inner cities had declined to the point where local decision makers were dependent on federal intervention as their best hope for relief. Urban planning became synonymous with slum clearance, and population dislocation as federally funded urban renewal programs, armed with the more permissive power of eminent domain allowed by Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, rolled over entire neighborhoods in the belief that cities could lure back the middle class and business by making them more like the automobile-centric suburbs. Without exception, neighborhoods designated for the bulldozer were home to African Americans, Latinos, and poor and working-class whites. Highways were cut through the heart of protesting neighborhoods, disrupting historic patterns of community and destroying structures and institutions that today would be preservation treasures. The giveaway continued downtown as city officials driven by competition with other municipalities made tax-incentive deals with real estate developers and corporations to lure their investment or retain their headquarters in the center city in the hope of creating jobs where vacant buildings lined main thoroughfares and streets stood empty both on weekends and after five o'clock. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s many cities became hollowed-out vestiges—doughnuts surrounded by vast suburbs—with the very highways meant to stimulate the return to the city in practice facilitating the daily commuter exit (Caro 1974).

Urban decline was a mixed blessing for the arts. Individual artists and small arts presenters and producers flourished in the cheap and expansive spaces abandoned by the manufacturing sector, New York's SoHo being a famous example. The story was less favorable for the older, established cultural institutions, which found both their audience and their volunteer base significantly diminished. With city government deprived of the tax base essential to the provision of adequate city services and the inner city increasingly perceived as darker, dirtier, and unsafe, suburbanites were unwilling to venture into downtowns, where most of the temples of culture had been located with great fanfare by their nineteenth-century benefactors. Both the public and the private side of institutional partnerships wavered as declining tax revenue caused cutbacks in public funding for cultural institutions and donors moved their philanthropic loyalties to more congenial localities.

The Lincoln Center Story

Brutalist concrete architecture, vest-pocket parks, and sports facilities became the signature symbol of inner-city revitalization strategies, and Robert Moses, the czar of New York's slum clearance program, the model of the master urban planner. While more focused on highways, parks, and swimming pools, Moses took advantage of the interest of influential New Yorkers in culture and education to engineer the construction, beginning in 1957, of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and a multitude of attendant arts and educational institutions, including the Juilliard School of Music, High School of Performing Arts, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and a downtown campus for Fordham University.

The first and, for a long time, only major cultural compound was unquestionably a great gift to the world of the arts. Nevertheless, Lincoln Center was Moses's cover for eliminating what he deemed a blighted West Side Manhattan neighborhood in order to open up the area to high-end residential and commercial development. So much for the intended purpose of urban renewal, namely to replace tenements with decent affordable housing; in fact, using Title I federal slum clearance money, the building of Lincoln Center displaced seven thousand low-income residents and eight hundred businesses (Caro 1974), erasing forever the neighborhood setting for the film version of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*.

THE RISE OF THE URBAN ARTS

Lincoln Center aside, the traditional high-arts institutions suffered cutbacks in hours, services, and staff, while smaller, more agile urban arts organizations found fertile ground as a result of the civil rights and antiwar social reordering of the1960s and early 1970s. Experimental visual and performing arts productions and presentations flourished, reflecting the changing demographics and concerns of a new generation of inner-city creative workers and their loyal audiences. A vigorous urban arts movement emerged, fueled in large part by two federal programs reminiscent of WPA in their impact, namely the Expansion Arts program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)—the remarkable new federal arts support agency established in 1965—and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA). The Expansion Arts Program was introduced in 1971 as a means of funneling NEA funding to minority and under-served inner-city professionally directed community-based arts activities.

It signaled a more democratic, multicultural, less elitist approach to the arts by the largely high art discipline–based Endowment that even the cultural temples to some degree embraced through special outreach programming.

The CETA program provided strategic federal funding for emerging minority and community-based arts organizations that many agree advanced an entire generation of women and minority artists early in their careers (Riojas 2006). The act provided funding in the form of federal block grants that were given to cities and states for job training for economically disadvantaged, unemployed, and underemployed adults and youths. Because urban artists are chronically unemployed the program was especially critical in enabling them to find work in film, dance, libraries, and theaters that without this federal infusion would not have existed. Similar to the WPA, CETA also gave city officials the opportunity to provide some relief for their citizens from the grimness of city life.

The concept of outreach entered the urban cultural vocabulary. An explosion in community-based audiences opened up new opportunities for young talent generally and first time opportunities for black, Latino, and Asian artists whose revolutionary and innovative work built new audiences even among suburban commuters intrigued enough to stay in the city after five or even return on weekends for exhibitions and performances. While city planners focused their revitalization efforts on big-ticket, unionized job-producing construction items such as sports arenas, riverwalks, and festival malls, the nonprofit arts were playing an important "soft" revitalization role that in retrospect could be viewed as a rehearsal for the future.

Reinvention of the City

The 1980 presidential election marked the onset of a conservative political agenda in the United States that witnessed the elevation of antiurban sentiments to a new high. With the almost immediate neutering of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and the handing off (termed devolution) of major social programs to the state level by the new administration, city officials and urban planners quickly got the message that they could no longer look to Washington for help in solving local problems.

Dramatic shifts in the closing decades of the twentieth century at all levels of government called for new ways of thinking about urban development policy. Just as journalist and urban critic Jane Jacobs had predicted, the bulldozer renaissance had proven socially and physically destructive to the fabric of urban life and largely unsuccessful in reversing the downward slide of the post industrial city regardless of size or location (J. Jacobs 1961).

Amid a growing outcry from disenchanted citizens, historic preservationists, policy analysts, and urban growth planners, a new generation of state and local elected officials sought correctives for the failure of urban renewal. It was also clear that an alternative had to be found to development strategies based on budget-busting tax incentives pitched to a rapidly vanishing manufacturing sector.

Municipalities began to incorporate a new set of metrics for judging urban progress as it became clear that demographic, technological, and economic changes promised cities new opportunities to reposition themselves economically while at the same time improving the quality of life for their citizens. As early as 1982, cultural economist James Shanahan (1982) advised planners that the success of any new strategy would by measured by a city's ability to:

1. Draw people back to the center for work and leisure time uses.
2. Attract vacationers, conventioneers, and business trippers to the city.
3. Generate new residential living in the downtown and adjacent areas.
4. Increase office jobs by attracting the growing service industries, including finance, insurance, health, education, tourism and recreation, culture, and entertainment.

Increasingly convinced by data emerging from the academy and think tanks, and eventually an influential but highly debated book by economist Richard Florida (2002), late twentieth century policy makers took on a new set of revitalization strategies. These strategies looked at the transformations being wrought in the American economy by globalization, trade, and technological innovations that are dependent on service industries that cluster in cities and place a premium on high-end skills and education (Katz 2006; Katz 2007). In his analysis, Florida claims that there is what he terms a creative class that makes up 30 percent of the U.S. labor force. He suggests that workers trained in the creative professions—particularly the arts, media, architecture, and design—are among the most sought after by industry in the digital age (2002). Although not all workforce researchers agree with Florida's argument, findings in the field suggest that city planners would be wise to gear revitalization strategies to attracting workers having cutting-edge, creative skills with the expectation that businesses eager to tap into this talent pool would soon follow.

The Arts as Urban Asset

Under the old urban planning approach, public officials focused on selling their distressed municipalities to potential investors, whether large-scale private investment firms or football franchises, by offering a variety of tax and infrastructure incentives better than the next best competitor city. Often such initiatives resulted in dubious public policy that entailed long-term public debt, especially in the case of tax-supported stadium expansions or construction (Herrick 2006a). By the 1980s under the new paradigm public officials shifted from an emphasis on the discounting and selling of their city to the repackaging and marketing of their city's distinctive assets. Cities began to promote their arts—real and invented—as a major quality-of-life asset in the belief that a vital artistic sector would increase their competitive edge in attracting visitors, residents, and the creative worker. Business in turn would be attracted by the opportunity to capitalize on this critical mass of consumers and highly skilled employees.

That the arts can play an important role, even a linchpin role, in a municipal redevelopment strategy is an idea that has gained sufficient traction to warrant a measure of confidence in the arts as a key element of revitalization policy. However, it is essential to keep in mind that the nonprofit arts in and of themselves cannot and should not be positioned as engines of urban revitalization. First, with few exceptions, nonprofits employ relatively small numbers of staff at modest salary levels, and their work as a rule is supplemented by as many if not more volunteers than paid staff. Second, in large measure monies paid by nonprofits for talent and the purchase of goods and services leave the city where they were generated. Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, cities with large commercial and nonprofit arts sectors, are the possible exceptions. Third, the nonprofit arts are by their nature subsidized enterprises no matter how much revenue is earned through income-generating activities (tickets, recordings, sales shops, restaurants, space rentals), government grants (NEA, state and local arts councils, and line item appropriations), corporate underwriting, private philanthropy (foundations, individual), or endowment investments. Fourth, their status as determined by the Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)(3) organizations exempts them from city property taxes, which are the primary source of funding for essential municipal services, including police, parks, and education.

While the for-profit arts can generate tax dollars and large numbers of jobs, and many of the most successful arts-based revitalization strategies include significant commercial cultural components, for-profit enterprises cannot be depended on or required to operate in the public interest. Fortunately, the collaboration of for-profits with nonprofits and city government in support of a larger public good is by now a well-tested concept. Updated from the late nineteenth/early twentieth–century model when art was about displaying wealth rather than generating it, arts-based public/private partnerships are locking into place in cities and towns throughout the United States, and internationally.

Marketing the Creative City

Political scientist Elizabeth Strom (2002) identifies the convergence of city government growth policies with the special interests of both the Information Age businesses that cluster in downtown corporate towers and the arts and culture sector as the primary force driving today's cultural revitalization partnerships. This intersection of goals and objectives is the result of stakeholder recognition that:

1. Cities will never again be major manufacturing centers, and, lacking the space, population, and appeal of suburban wholesaling and retailing business, municipalities must, to be able to attract and retain investment and population, revitalize their central business districts in order to raise their city's profile as an interesting, safe, convenient, and congenial place in which to live, work, and visit. Arts institutions and artists enliven downtown by increasing street traffic, public safety, and the area's appeal—what economists call the multiplier effect[2]—to restaurants, for profit businesses, and, given current gentrification trends, residential living.
2. It is to their advantage for arts organizations and institutions to participate in arts-based development strategies, as such efforts give new heft to local cultural policy and better position the arts community to advocate for both private and public resources, expand their audience and volunteer base, and advance the concept of the nonprofit and for-profit arts as creative industries essential to the health of local economies.
3. Businesses, in their competition for a skilled workforce, will locate in cities that offer the amenities (education, culture, entertainment, recreation) and tolerance of diverse lifestyles that attract and retain educated workers—especially members of the so-called creative class—essential in the global economy.
4. The arts provide unique opportunities for branding cities with one-of-a-kind buildings and cultural clusters that can help a city reinvent its image as a vital, livable city and confer distinction and competitive advantage to its marketing strategies.

Measuring the Economic Impact of the Arts

Economic impact studies were commissioned by hundreds of local arts institutions, arts councils, and service organizations from Kentucky to Oregon in an attempt to demonstrate to public officials the economic importance of the jobs, wages, and taxes generated by artistic activity in their regions. These studies are seen as both the cause and the effect of the proliferation of arts-centered development strategies in the 1980s and 1990s. Among the earliest and most influential of these studies was the one undertaken by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in 1983. A second study ten years later gave so much weight to the argument for the arts as a major factor in the regional economy that New York's newly elected mayor relocated the Department of Cultural Affairs to the city's Economic Development Department. In the most recent update of the economic impact of the arts on New York, the New York City advocacy group Alliance for the Arts cites a figure of $21.2 billion (Alliance for the Arts 2006).

In their heyday, impact studies were also commissioned by individual cities and cultural institutions. Such efforts were conceived by the arts sector as a way to quantify its role as a valid and important producer and consumer of taxable products and services that cumulatively would be a significant contribution to the local economy. Often considered less economic analyses—seldom posing the question "arts as compared to what?"—than public relations documents, such studies nonetheless gave the arts sector a new tool. With this tool, advocates now have a calculated alternative to the increasingly less persuasive art-for-art-sake strategy for advocating, as a public good, for its fair share of government subsidy.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art claimed that its highly publicized 1996 Cézanne exhibition drew 777,810 visitors, who contributed $86.5 million to the Philadelphia economy. A Lincoln Center economic impact study claimed the combined effect of the center's operations (including wages, benefits, and purchasing) and visitor spending in 2003 generated $1.52 billion in business activity throughout the city and state, resulting in a total of 38,600 jobs. Direct local spending by visitors (including restaurants, lodging, and retail) was estimated to have contributed an additional $258 million to the city's economy that same year (Philadelphia Museum of Art 1996; Lincoln Center 2004.)

As impressive as such figures sound, cultural economists caution advocates against making this multiplier effect their primary argument. With few exceptions, such measurements have proven imprecise, self-serving, and lacking in rigor when applied to the arts. As noted earlier in this chapter, the nonprofit arts are not economic engines but rather cost centers that by definition operate at a deficit that must be continually offset by public and private contributions. Arts advocates are urged to deemphasize the direct, indirect, and induced economic activity of the arts in favor of the more qualitative values unique to the creative process. Relieved of weighty economic expectations and appropriately embedded in a larger strategic vision, the arts can play a central role in a city's revitalization plan. Once so positioned the arts can generate social capital and public goods, which can translate into development dividends that will excite citizens and outsiders (the so-called halo effect) about the promise of a new beginning for distressed and abandoned urban centers (Shanahan 1982; Cowan 2006).

Models of Arts-Based Revitalization Strategies

Cities have undertaken a variety of recovery solutions utilizing the arts and culture in their determination to cast off the postindustrial image of their center city or downtowns as gritty, dangerous, and inhospitable. Each of the approaches discussed here would appear to be a function of the particular history, nature of the stakeholders, and perceived or invented assets claimed to individualize the locality. According to urban politics and policy specialist Dennis Judd, "Between 1976 and 1986, in the service of the new downtown, 250 convention centers, sports arenas, community centers, and performing arts facilities were constructed or started, at a cost of more than $10 billion" (Judd and Fainstein 1999).

ARCADES, BAZAARS, FESTIVAL MALLS, AND WATERFRONTS. These were among the first attempts to soften the sharp edges of the declining postindustrial cityscape. Outstanding examples included Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Baltimore's Harborplace, Chicago's Navy Pier (with its signature Ferris wheel a dramatic reference to the 1893 Columbian Exposition), and, among the oldest, San Francisco's Ghirardelli Square. New York City's South Street Seaport proved far less successful, for a variety of bureaucratic reasons, through changing city administrations that enabled the retail component to ultimately trump community interests and overwhelm the Seaport Museum, which had been the impetus for the project in the first place. Festival malls and similar urban amenities were primarily aimed at the tourist and convention trades and heavily subsidized by municipal financing. Such subsidies set a precedent that would become the benchmark for the public financing of privately owned stadiums and arenas (Metzger 2001).

PUBLIC PARKS AND ARTS IN PUBLIC PLACES. Parks and other outdoor or public areas were among the earliest of cultural amenities to confer distinction on American cities, very much in the British and European mode. Early public art tended toward the monumental, and parks were extended arboretums. More recent instances of the arts in parks have helped support urban development goals. For sixteen days in February 2005, the Mayor's Office, Department of Parks, and Department of Cultural Affairs allowed installation artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude to hang at their own expense 7,503 saffron-color banners throughout New York City's Central Park. The city reported that the Gates, a stunning display of orange color against the stark winter landscape, drew 3.25 million visitors, hotel occupancy rates went up 14 percent, and business revenue (if one is to believe the multiplier effect) was an estimated $254 million (Murphy 2005).

Chicago's Millennium Park is another recent example of the arts and parks model. A permanent 24.5-acre installation built over railroad tracks in the downtown lakefront area, the park was the brainchild of a mayor with strongly held views about the centrality of the arts (and flowers) to the successful marketing of his city. The park idea originated with and was led throughout by Mayor Richard Daley in partnership with local business and philanthropic leaders. The city contributed $270 million, matched by $205 million in private donation for a total final cost that was triple the original estimate. City tax revenues provide for day-to day-operations, although income from the public parking garage underneath the park was intended to offset these costs.

With a signature band shell designed by architect Frank Gehry, sculpture and fountains commissioned from cutting-edge international artists, state-of-the-art landscaping, a theater designed for small and midsize performing arts groups (the result of a needs assessment study commissioned by a local foundation), and the predictable restaurant and ice-skating rink, Millennium Park has emerged as a major tourist attraction, popular corporate entertainment venue, and source of pride and enjoyment for local citizens thus seeming to justify the large cost overruns requiring additional public funds. Local area real estate valuations have also increased, and more upscale retailing has moved into the area bordering the park. Chicago would also seem to be on the leading edge of an emerging trend in urban parks that like art is a new status symbol for cities (including Seattle, Minneapolis, Houston, and Atlanta) seeking progressive images (Weinback 2007).

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS AND CONVENTION CENTERS. These have been tried-and-true public/private partnership strategies for drawing out-of-towners to localities they might not otherwise visit. Successors to the national and international fairs and expositions that were hallmark urban events of the nineteenth century, postindustrial cities from Austin, Texas, to New York City to Seattle to Montreal have invested heavily in fairgrounds and convention centers (and sports facilities in the case of the Olympics) in an escalating municipal competition that has imposed heavily on public coffers, often with debatable results.

Conventions, along with tourists in general, are prized as major inducers of the so-called multiplier effect. Conventioneers, paying tax all along the way, consume hotel rooms, restaurant food, taxi rides, florist services, commercial entertainment including Broadway shows and gambling, retail shopping, and, when well marketed, the nonprofit arts. By 1992 trade associations and corporations were spending more than $60 million annually in the United States on conventions. It is no surprise that many of America's most job- and tax-hungry city governments sought to insure their competitive advantage in attracting this business by constructing (in addition to providing discounts and outright subsidies) what Judd characterizes as tourist bubbles (Judd and Fainstein 1999). Such center-city clustering of arts venues and tourist-oriented amenities (real and contrived), sometimes designated as cultural or business improvement districts (BIDs), are closely policed and sanitized for any signs of poverty, grit, or urban decay (Frost-Krumpf 1998). Outstanding examples of this model include

San Antonio's Riverwalk, New York's Times Square (post–peep shows), and Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts. Because these bubbles tend to be perceived by locals as separate from the fabric of a city's ordinary life, critics question the soundness of using public resources for such purpose, given its high potential for exacerbating racial, ethnic, and class differences.

Seasonal, short-term cultural events have proved beneficial: examples include the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina; Aspen Music Festival in Colorado; New Orleans's Jazz Fest; summer music and dance at Tanglewood in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts; the Ravenna Festival outside Chicago; and the annual folk festival held in Lowell, Massachusetts. These events provide seasonal employment, tax revenue, physical improvements, and, in ethnically and racially diverse communities like Lowell, a source of social cohesion and local pride. However, they have limited impact as economic revitalization strategies. Much of the employment connected with such events pays low wages, lacks fringe benefits, and is short-lived and dead-end; salaries paid to artists for the most part leave the area at season's end.

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS. Structures emptied of workers and residents by postwar deindustrialization, suburbanization, and decline of railway travel spawned the conversion of central downtown train stations, department stores, office buildings, mills, and factories to new cultural, retail, and residential uses. Largely a function of the rise of the historic preservation movement and Main Street initiative advanced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (formerly a federal agency), adaptive reuse had entered the urban-planning tool kit by the late 1960s. Artists early on recognized the advantages of large abandoned work space originally zoned for manufacturing and retail. Landlords eager for tenants kept rents low in exchange for the artists' sweat equity, which gradually rehabilitated these barely serviced lofts, as well as the new life creative activity brought to the neighborhood.

For example, a group of for-profit entrepreneurs partnered with Artsplace, a Canadian nonprofit arts service organization, to convert a defunct Toronto distillery complex into a mixed-use development for work, presentation, and retail for both visual and performing artists that has also become a major tourist destination. In the economically depressed city of North Adams, Massachusetts, a vacant nineteenth-century factory complex became the home in 1992 of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) through guidance from the Guggenheim Museum and private fund raising efforts spurred by the promise of a major funding match from the state of Massachusetts (Zukin 1995). An increasingly popular artistic venue, it remains to be seen how much of a change agent it will be for the local economy beyond the seasonal and the museum itself. Lowell, Massachusetts, with the help of its congressman, persuaded the federal government to fund the conversion of long-abandoned textile buildings into a national historic site operated by the National Parks Service to preserve and document the origins of the American Industrial Revolution. A case of rescue and successful marketing of a unique local cultural asset, Lowell's National Historical Park is today a major tourist destination and the linchpin of the city's postindustrial recovery strategy. In 2006, an abandoned 21,000-square-foot warehouse was redesigned as the temporary home of Detroit's new contemporary art museum, with the announced intension of helping to revitalize the downtown core, a considerable burden for the arts in this especially distressed city (Ouroussoff 2006a).

By the 1980s, artists found themselves increasingly challenged by young professionals—characterized by author David Brooks as bobos (bourgeois bohemians)—and empty nesters drawn to cities by a growing appreciation for urbane architecture and loft living and nostalgic for urban alternatives to suburbia (Brooks 2000). City officials seized upon this trend incorporating it into their marketing strategies first as historic preservation and then as the cool or hip new big thing, inspired by television shows such as *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, and *Sex in the City*. Fortunately for urban planning strategies, the convergence of these trends came just as a strong national economy and low interest rates spawned a post–9/11 economic recovery and an unprecedented run-up of the real estate market. Municipalities rushed to rezone districts from manufacturing to residential, giving rise to gentrification and the so-called SoHo syndrome, pricing artists out of the very neighborhoods their presence had made trendy (Gratz and Mintz 1998).

Displacement of artists would at first appear counterproductive to a city's arts-based revitalization policy. However, the return of abandoned or under-assessed property to tax rolls, creation of an interesting housing stock that attracts and retains the middle and creative classes, and surging real estate transaction fees are irresistible tax revenue sources that without government regulatory policies or citizen group actions inevitably trump the arts.

CULTURAL DISTRICTS AND LIVE/WORK PROJECTS. These artist-centered development models (also termed "artist villages") are frequently among the most prominent features of arts-based revitalization initiatives. Cultural districts are given in-depth treatment in chapter 8 of this book and only briefly mentioned here because of the impact on individual artists who have in many cases pioneered inner-city living only to be driven out by gentrification. Despite the proliferation of arts-based revitalization efforts, individual artists feel at risk even as they are encouraged by the new status being accorded to the arts in their cities. Cultural districts have proven to be a successful counterbalance to unregulated gentrification. They also provide the space and place for art making done outside of institutions to be operated like small businesses. The concept of artists as small businesses comes out of the new thinking about the arts—nonprofit and for profit—as creative industries that, like other types of businesses, have the capacity to export or sell their goods and services outside the local area and bring back new money to enrich the local economy (Keegan and Kleiman 2005).

Artists are making the case that if they are to survive and flourish in the city their needs for affordable and appropriate live/work space, beneficial zoning laws, tax incentives, health benefits, access to suppliers, distributors, markets, and audiences must be recognized as core elements of revitalization efforts. The perception is that the cultural institutional agenda, especially for the new raft of celebrity museums and performing arts centers, takes precedence over that of individual artists. Many urban policy analysts believe that recognition of the vital role played by artists and the importance of having their subsistence and production needs embedded in a city's cultural planning process from the beginning would restore balance to the process (Williams et al. 1993). While limited in its capacity to address these types of basic concerns, good faith cultural districting (such as that in Pawtucket, Rhode Island) has proven a promising place to begin.

Equally promising is the movement for development of dedicated artist live/work space through the innovative efforts of a number of nonprofit organizations. Chief among those working at the national level is Artspace Projects. Founded as an advocacy organization in Minneapolis in 1979, Artspace has evolved into the leading American nonprofit real estate developer for the arts and has been instrumental in the development of more than thirty loft and studio buildings in cities as diverse as New York, Duluth, Reno, Fort Lauderdale, Minot (North Dakota), Seattle, and Monterey (California).[3] Artscape credits its work with having major revitalizing implications, noting that "other neighborhood development typically follows within three years of the completion of an artists' live/work project. This development in turn helps generate other cultural activity and creates a general increase in visitors to the area." Such conversions help a city's preservation of historic building stock and its return to active use (Artspace).

LINC (Leveraging Investments in Creativity) is a national nonprofit organization created in 2002; unlike the Minneapolis grassroots origins of Artspace, it resulted from a foundation-supported research study carried out by the Urban Institute.[4] This study, Investing in Creativity, was funded by a ten-year, $20 million grant from the Ford Foundation and other private foundations to address the creative, survival, and advocacy needs of artists in all disciplines (M. R. Jackson et al. 2006). As one of its first major programs, LINC established and supported local collaborative efforts to develop affordable and appropriate space in a variety of locations. Boston's Artistlink is one such effort; its mission is to provide "individual artists, developers, and municipalities with targeted information and technical assistance" and advocate for artist-centered programs at the state level. Artistlink demonstrates the growing organizational sophistication that artists must assume to accomplish larger cultural policy objectives beyond the studio. Artistlink succeeded as an arts-based revitalization strategy by bringing together in common purpose a complex public and private stakeholder group that included the state arts council, several private foundations, the city's redevelopment agency, a nonprofit economic development organization, and the Mayor's Office for Arts, Tourism and Special Events (Artistlink).

MUSEUMS AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTERS. In the last two decades these institutions have assumed a centrality in the life of cities not unlike the grand cathedrals of Europe in earlier times (Kotkin 2006). Beginning in the 1980s, the proliferation of new facilities and modification of existing ones became the most visible manifestation of the boom in arts and culture as an instrument of economic revitalization. Between 1985 and 2002, seventy-one major facilities were constructed or expanded in American cities, including Albuquerque, New Mexico; Austin, Texas; Wichita, Kansas; Anchorage, Alaska; New York City; and Orlando, Florida (Strom 2002). Five years later, the *New York Times* reported that forty-six art, science, historical, and religious museums were in the process of expanding, relocating, or constructing new buildings. In the autumn of 2006 alone, five U.S. and Canadian performing arts centers were opened at a total cost of nearly $1 billion (Pogrebin 2007; Wakin 2006).

Critics agree that the high-profile cultural construction movement took a dramatic turn as the result of two pivotal fin de siècle events: the opening in 1997 of the Frank Gehry–designed Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, and the international architectural competition held for the reconstruction of New York's World Trade Center site after the 9/11 attack. Thereafter, high-profile architects found themselves members of an international pantheon of signature architects (also referred to as "starchitects" and "celebrity architects") whose work was eagerly sought by an increasing number of postindustrial cities in the hope of duplicating what had come to be called the Bilbao effect.

Bilbao is a former steelmaking and shipbuilding city located in the heart of the Basque region of northern Spain. A classic example of postindustrial decline, the city of one million had a 25 percent unemployment rate by the time of the opening of a museum designed by American architect Frank Gehry that enjoyed instant renown. The planning by the Basque provincial government for an arts-based makeover of the city's image and economy began in 1980 with a major shift (devolution) in Spain's cultural policy from national to provincial control. A decade later, Basque officials signed an agreement for loan collections and technical assistance with New York's Guggenheim Museum, drafted architect Cesar Pelli to design a master city plan, and hired Frank Gehry. The rest is history. Basque authorities claimed 1.36 million visitors in the first year—85 to 90 percent of whom came from outside the Basque region—and an estimated addition to the local economy of $500 million within the first three years (Plaza 2006).

The Bilbao Effect: Architecture as Revitalization Strategy

Seemingly overnight, municipal officials and civic boosters throughout the Western world (countries in Asia and the Middle East would soon follow)[5] developed ambitious plans for iconic cultural spaces, with the optimistic expectation that these facilities would translate into high-profile recognition by the media, tourism, the international arts community, corporate sponsors, wealthy donors, and citizens who would embrace the large investment of their tax dollars in this arts-based strategy as a source of local pride. How these expectations are being met, and at what cost, has varied greatly.

For example, Newark, New Jersey, the third oldest city in the United States, is a textbook case of postindustrial urban decline and continues to struggle with the blight and crime that have marred its image since the racial unrest of 1967. Thirty years later, a coalition of state, city, education, foundation, and business leaders variously constituted under three New Jersey governors saw the realization of a vision that promoted culture as the leading edge of a pragmatic new strategy for Newark's revitalization. Funded at a cost of $187 million (more than half provided by state, county, and city sources), the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) is a model of the arts-based initiative conceived and positioned to advance a larger strategic plan. Architecturally modest by comparison with more fashionable celebrity-designed centers, NJPAC's glass and red brick building achieves a spatial and social integration with the city that, along with its deliberate multicultural and community-oriented programming policy, has inspired pride and loyalty in area residents.

By 2007, a *New York Times* reporter could observe that "many people peg the city's nascent resurgence to the inauguration of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in 1997." A modest but blossoming condominium market, arts suppliers and galleries putting down roots as part of a growing arts community, the opening of more upscale restaurants and bars, and the first annual Newark Arts and Music Festival held in June 2007 were cited as signs of change directly traceable to the halo effect created by NJPAC ten years out. NJPAC is also credited with the increase in the city's population by 10,000 since 2002. Civic leaders are encouraged that many of these new residents are representative of Florida's much vaulted demographic—young, hip, white professionals—who are now seeing Newark as a livable, affordable alternative to New York City (A. Jacobs 2007).

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, celebrity architect Santiago Calatrava is described by critics as having "created an urban landmark in the guise of an addition for the Milwaukee Art Museum" (Dejong 2005). The soaring, winglike movable sun screen that tops the lakeside Quadracci Pavilion increased the museum's gallery space by 30 percent. However, the 345 percent cost overrun increased the original $35 million estimate to a final cost of $120 million by the time it was completed in 2001. Although a public bond issue would be necessary to retire the construction debt, a debt that was consuming 20 percent of the museum's annual budget, museum trustees and city officials considered the money well spent on their architect's constantly expanding vision.

Museum attendance the first year after completion was 500,000, up from 160,000 the previous year. A schematic form of the Calatrava design features prominently in the campaign that markets the Milwaukee renaissance to tourists, conventions, young professionals, and potential business interests. Rather than a failed brewery town, the city now projects itself as a national and international cultural destination and burgeoning center for creative class industries, a 24/7 youth culture, higher education, and a lively musician and artist scene. Milwaukee's choice of a Bilbao-like model puts dramatic architecture and engineering at the center of the city's development strategy. Claims for the positive impact of the museum addition are supported by the perceptible increase in local pride, the national and international name recognition of this midwestern city, and the 20 percent rise in downtown residential living since its completion (Dejong 2005). While not refuting the claims, critics say the museum expansion fails as public space (except for the view and the gift shop) and stands aloof from its urban context (Project for Public Spaces 2007).

Los Angeles gained a Bilbao look-alike with the 2003 opening of the Walt Disney Concert Hall. Although supported by $120 million in corporate and private contributions (including funds raised by the resident orchestra and a $50 million starter gift from Mrs. Disney), the city provided the land and major infrastructure support. Like NJPAC, Disney Hall can be viewed as the cultural linchpin of a larger strategic Grand Avenue plan to reinvent the city's historically depressed downtown with new corporate towers, retail shops, bars and restaurants, galleries and cultural destinations, hotels, and residential housing based on a master plan designed by Frank Gehry. Los Angeles presently draws only 2.5 million tourists a year, compared to the ten to fifteen million visitors claimed by New York and London. Forty percent of New York's visitors frequent cultural venues, while only one in ten visitors seeks out LA's cultural sites. As recently as 2004, the then mayor proposed abolishing the city's cultural affairs department as unnecessary. A new mayor has hired an arts professional as the new cultural affairs director and proposed a public/private partnership to raise the level of local awareness about the centrality of cultural philanthropy (historically low) and the arts and artists in LA's latest revitalization efforts (Wyatt 2007). Despite the mayor's efforts to embed a cultural policy component in his administration, local critics dismiss the Grand Street plan as old-fashioned and derivative. They consider it, at best, inconsistent with LA's vibrant multicultural and decentralized character and, at worst, artistically elitist and racist in its potential impact on the Hispanic community. It remains to be seen whether the city's arts-based plan is primarily commercial (as in the case of New York City's South Street Seaport), or whether downtown residents, artists, and the older, less glitzy cultural institutions have any participation in the revitalization process (Ouroussoff 2007; Pristin 2007).

In a final example, a controversial expansion of the Denver Art Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind opened to mixed reviews in 2007 (Ouroussoff 2006b). The dramatic, angulated building was funded by $62.5 in public bonds and $28 million raised from private sources. Considered by critics to be one of the more extreme examples of the current trend in museums as "spectacle," the museum is expected to be a major tourist attraction and the linchpin of the city's arts-based downtown revitalization plan. The museum is the newest addition to what city officials have designated the Civic Center Cultural Complex (including the original Beaux-Arts art museum, the central library, and a history museum) that is being pitched as a vibrant urban corridor connecting downtown to the rapidly gentrifying Golden Triangle, a historic neighborhood ploughed under by urban renewal and now reinvented by the city as a cultural district. The district's artists and small arts businesses are increasingly sharing space with condominiums and lofts constructed by savvy developers alert to the growing attraction of artistic, funky inner-city neighborhoods for young urbanites eager to be within walking distance of their downtown jobs. Even the new museum is flanked by Libeskind-designed condos, yet another manifestation—one part vanity, one part business—of the cultural dynamic driving the celebrity architecture movement (Chen 2007).

The emphasis on high-profile construction and feats of engineering for cultural facilities has been criticized by museum professionals for overshadowing the intended purpose for these buildings and diminishing their artistic mission, sometimes at their peril. One visit to Bilbao will be the only visit for most people. The director of the Milwaukee Art Museum attributes the first year's shortfall in projected attendance, after the initial flurry of interest, to underestimating the importance of having an exhibit in the nearly empty new pavilion. The Bellevue Art Museum in Bellevue, Washington, closed in 1994, three years after moving into an expansive, cutting-edge building designed by an upscale East Coast architect. Local opinion pronounced the new museum baffling and poorly suited to its traditional Northwest collections. The museum reopened two years later with a new name, mission, management, and board of trustees (Lloyd 2004). The aberrant design of the Denver museum is an acute example of space that competes with and challenges the curatorial function. However, in personally selecting a high-profile architect known for his difficult buildings, Denver's mayor has made it quite clear that such issues are of little concern to him. The choice of a Libeskind was about civic purpose, not the museum's artistic mission (Chen 2007). Similarly pragmatic, the mayor of Providence, Rhode Island, pioneered the creation of a lively tax-credit-supported cultural district that he subsequently allowed to gentrify. Because gentrification served his citywide revitalization goals, low-income artists were no longer the point and purpose of the district.

Final Thoughts

Arts-based revitalization strategies have placed the arts and culture sector and individual artists at the center of civic life in an ever-increasing number of cities. A strategy for urban recovery based on privileging the arts in a society that lacks a national consensus about the importance of the arts would seem to entail considerable risk, unlike a Germany where the national government has made the arts its primary strategy for reinventing its capital city of Berlin (Stewart 2003). It may be premature to pass judgment on U.S. revitalization efforts, as many are still in the early stages of their development and implementation. After all, the area around New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts took twenty years to transform into the vibrant residential and business district it is today. Research and analysis have debunked the earlier idea that stadiums and arenas were major catalysts for urban job growth and inner-city revitalization. Economists like Tyler Cowen view similar claims about the new wave of cultural facilities as lacking in scholarly proof and likely to turn out equally unfounded (2006). There are those who wonder, if every city has a Bilbao, who will have the competitive edge, and, after one visit, will even the locals who are the sustaining force of most museums make regular visits? Others question whether the major cities, with their high-profile investment of public funds, can prevail as what urban critic Joe Kotkin calls aspirational cities, like Akron, Ohio, and San Jose, California, promote equally compelling arts-based alternatives. There is even potential competition from faux cities, with residential loft living and cultural amenities, being built outside of major cities by trend-savvy real estate developers for that growing segment of the population seeking the urban experience without the grit (Herrick 2006b).

In the final analysis, nonprofit museums and performing arts centers are subsidized enterprises, not economic engines. Their value as providers of social capital and attractions for the creative class notwithstanding, positioning them as other than the occasion (the halo effect) for revitalization planning is at best unfair and at worst dangerous. Artists and art businesses do have the ability to enhance local economies and transform neighborhoods, but not without regulatory practices to address market forces that have the potential to strip cities both of their creative infrastructure and of the middle-class families who prize urban life and are the backbone of arts audiences.

Globalism and technology have propelled creative workers into the forefront of the American labor force, but the measure of the great cities in which they cluster is more than high-end lofts and condominiums. Racial, gender, and ethnic diversity, tolerance, and nostalgic appreciation for community rank high on the list of amenities that attract talent in the Knowledge Age. City planners and the elected officials who hire them are cautioned to pay heed to such factors as they commit public dollars to costly ventures, seen as elitist, that frequently shed private supporters once their novelty wears off, leaving future city administrations and boards of trustees freighted with debt.

Ultimately, reversing the decline of American cities is about good jobs, personal income gain, elimination of racial barriers, and expanded and diversified sources of tax revenue, not just the proliferation of gentrified downtowns. Investments in the arts are easier than big-ticket, society-changing items like public education and human services for politicians to sell to local taxpayers and wealthy donors. City officials and the arts community with whom they are now partnering have a major public policy challenge: to dispel the perception—and the reality if such is the case—that arts-based revitalization is class-bound and only for elites. It is government's role to play the honest broker and represent the public interest even in matters of beauty and art.

Notes

1. "Walt Disney's father, Elias, helped build the White City; Walt's Magic Kingdom may well be a descendant. Certainly the fair made a powerful impression on the Disney family. It proved such a financial boon that when the family's third son was born that year, Elias in gratitude wanted to name him Columbus [instead of Roy]. . . . Walt came next, on December 5, 1901." Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 373.
2. An example of the multiplier effect is when buying local products at local businesses creates a ripple effect as those businesses and employees in turn spend your money locally. Cultural economists James L. Shanahan cautions arts advocates against making the multiplier effect their primary argument. With few exceptions, such measurements have too often proven imprecise, self-serving, and lacking in rigor when applied to the arts (see "Selected References" for Shanahan 1982).
3. "The mission of Artspace Projects is to create, foster and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations. We pursue this mission through development projects, asset management activities, consulting services, and community-building activities that serve artists and arts organizations of all disciplines, cultures, and economic circumstances. By creating this space, Artspace supports the continued professional growth of artists and enhances the cultural and economic vitality of the surrounding community" (see www.artspaceusa.org/about).
4. LINC's agenda is fourfold: (1) increase direct support for artists' work; (2) improve necessary life supports in areas such as live/work space, insurance, and financial services; (3) enhance artists' networks and the policy environment that support artists; and (4) explore the impact of artists on communities and community redevelopment (see www.lincnet.net).
5. The Guggenheim Museum's plan to build another Bilbao in Latin America collapsed after two years of exploratory discussions when a court ruled that the 2001 contract

signed by the city of Rio de Janeiro with the museum violated Brazilian law. Larry Rohter, "Court Bars a Guggenheim Museum," *New York Times*, June 7, 2003.

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