



# TAKING A MEASURE OF CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Future home of Tannery World Dance & Cultural Center, an Artspace project in Santa Cruz, California

**artspace**

2011

# It

is with great pleasure that I share with you the key findings of *How Art Spaces Matter II*, the second in a series of studies commissioned by Artspace and conducted by Metris Arts Consulting.

For decades now, Artspace and related organizations like Toronto's Artscape, LINC, the Urban Institute and others have pioneered ways to build better communities through the arts. We have collectively championed the once radical idea that artists living on the edge of poverty and chronically underfunded arts organizations can leverage transformative social change. Our work, and that of many others, has moved the arts from the sidelines into the heart of public discourse on issues ranging from the future of cities to enduring social justice.

Artspace has the in-the-trenches, practitioner's knowledge to assert with confidence what works. Our understanding is based on lessons learned from 30 completed projects from coast to coast. But we also recognize the need to concentrate more rigorously on systematizing what we know, testing what we don't, and sharing what we discover.

Based on thousands of conversations with artists, elected officials, government leaders, creative business owners, investors, nonprofit organizations, and others, we know that the questions our community partners ask about creative placemaking are:

**1. How does affordable, appropriate space benefit artists and arts organizations?**

Virtually everywhere we go, artists and arts organizations need space, and we can measure how creative placemaking answers this basic challenge through numbers served and satisfaction rates. A more difficult question is how to test creative placemaking's capacity to generate "second tier" arts benefits: increased efficiency from co-location; increased revenue; greater visibility and/or recognition as artists; greater opportunity to engage with audiences; and greater capacity to produce art.

**2. How does a thriving arts community translate into more livable communities?**

Why should a community prioritize investment in its arts sector? For some, the intangible benefits of arts exposure are sufficient, but increasingly organizations like Artspace are being challenged to demonstrate how art investments advance other social agendas: economic development, urban sprawl, and public safety to cultural and historic preservation.

**3. How do creative placemaking projects remain mission-focused, affordable, and transformative over time?**

Simply put: capital projects are too hard and expensive to be short-lived. Evaluation must test creative placemaking's capacity to remain true to its arts mission, remain affordable to its residents, and generate community benefits long after the initial capital investment is spent.

*How Art Spaces Matter II* is an attempt to identify and test the metrics that allow us to judge our work against the standards identified by our partner communities themselves. While it answers many questions, we recognize that – like most good research – it also opens paths of further exploration, and we are excited to pioneer those regions in the coming years with our partners in the field. We hope you will take the time to read this summary or to download the full report from our website, [www.artspace.org](http://www.artspace.org).

Sincerely,



**Kelley Lindquist**

PRESIDENT, ARTSPACE PROJECTS



# HOW ART SPACES MATTER

## KEY FINDINGS

1

### Art spaces benefit artists by:

*How Artist Space Matters* and *How Art Spaces Matter II* are reports by Metris Arts Consulting that provide an in-depth examination of five Artspace projects: the Northern Warehouse Artists' Cooperative (St. Paul, MN), the Tilsner Artists' Cooperative (St. Paul), the Traffic Zone Center for Visual Art (Minneapolis, MN), the Tashiro Kaplan Artist Lofts (Seattle, WA), and the Riverside Artist Lofts (Reno, NV). The three Minnesota projects are among Artspace's earliest efforts and therefore address questions of long-term impact and sustainability. Both Reno and Seattle reflect Artspace models where there is either a major nonprofit anchor tenant (Sierra Arts in Reno) or a substantial presence of non-residential space (the 16 galleries that anchor Tashiro Kaplan in Seattle).

Metris' findings are based on more than 90 interviews with artists, business owners, government officials, and arts organization representatives, complemented by arts tenant surveys; analysis of changes to artist household income and socio-economic data (census, American Community Survey, County and Zip Code Business Patterns, etc.); and hedonic analysis of property value impacts.

- a. Providing space that meets residential and professional needs at affordable rates.** Across the five buildings studied, 85% of surveyed tenants said the space was appropriate to their needs and 69% said it was affordable. In more colorful terms, a Reno artist said, "*I'm not a religious person, but I give thanks to god for this place ... I've been here for two and half years and the only way they'll get me out is in a body bag!*" The benefits also extend to arts organizations, as described by this St. Paul tenant: "*This space and the affordable rent are a huge part of our stability as an organization and our ability to grow and change and serve our mission... When I look at my rent as opposed to what other arts organizations are paying, for us, the space we have for the price we pay is really incredible.*"
- b. Catalyzing an arts community to become more than a sum of its parts.** In Metris' words, "*Co-locating artists in a single building may foster networking and collaboration, often translating directly into artists' ability to land new opportunities to show their work, find clients, obtain employment, or learn new skills to expand their practice.*" An artist at the Tashiro Kapan described this in simple terms: "*There are six to seven photographers in the building. We loan each other gear all the time. We help each other out, advise on pricing, borrow disk drives. We are able to stretch resources together.*"
- c. Increasing artistic production.** Across the five projects, 75% of surveyed tenants said that living in an arts space increased their productivity as artists. "*It's wonderful living with like-minded artists, and we continually learn and develop with each other. This greater sense of security of place helps artists to create more,*" said one Tashiro Kaplan resident.
- d. Enhancing the professional reputations of individual artists, and in some cases their income generated through art activity.** After controlling for changes in household size and inflation, artist households living in the Riverside or Tashiro Kaplan projects had average income growth of 27%, 39% and 30% from move-in year to the second, third and fourth year of residence.

#### ARTIST RESIDENT SURVEY *Respondents selecting yes*

Overall, do you perceive your space and the building...

- As appropriate to your needs? ..... 85%
- As affordable? ..... 69%

#### ARTIST RESIDENT SURVEY *Respondents selecting agree to strongly agree*

Living and/or working in the Artspace building has...

- Facilitated my networking with others in the building ..... 82%
- Helped me increase my productivity ..... 75%
- Allowed me to share my artistic or business skills/knowledge with others in the building .... 70%
- Helped me increase the percentage of income I earn from my artistic work ..... 48%

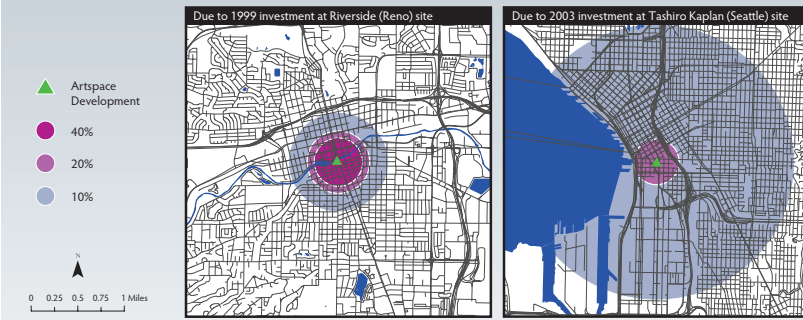
# 2

## Art spaces benefit communities by:

- a. **Animating deteriorated historic structures and/or underutilized spaces.** As one Reno resident said, *"It opened the eyes of our elected officials and members of the public to what downtown could be, and it linked contemporary activity with the historic uniqueness of Reno... It was pivotal to the transformation of the river corridor and demonstrated clearly that people would live downtown."*
- b. **Bringing vacant and/or underutilized spaces back on the tax rolls and boosting area property values.** The Tashiro Kaplan grew from an appraised value of \$2.8 million in 2003 to \$16.9 million in 2010, and went from paying less than \$500 in property taxes in 2003 to more than \$28,000 in 2010. Over a 2½-mile radius, the Tashiro Kaplan increased property values by an estimated average of \$14,679 (one-time per house or condo).

### HEDONIC ANALYSIS LINKS INVESTMENTS IN ART SPACES WITH INCREASES IN AREA PROPERTY VALUES

Estimated Percentage Increase to Property Value (One-time Average Increase per House or Condo)



- c. **Fostering the safety and livability of neighborhoods without evidence of gentrification-led displacement.** In Metris' words, *"The Riverside attracted a previously nearly non-existent residential population to its neighborhood in conjunction with other initiatives, and the Tashiro Kaplan helped preserve space in Pioneer Square for arts businesses and artists, as landlords rehabbed studio space from dot com offices. Both areas still host racially and ethnically diverse populations..."*
- d. **Anchoring arts districts and expanding public access to the art.** From the Metris report: *"Community members prize the Riverside and Tashiro Kaplan as prominent arts symbols and anchors, as models that helped foster spinoff art spaces or events, and as sites for the public to engage in arts and cultural events."*
- e. **Attracting additional artists, arts businesses, organizations, and supporting non-arts businesses to the area.** In one Seattle example, the affordable space of Tashiro Kaplan allowed a resident to open a gallery space on the ground floor, and its success allowed him to launch Aqua Art Miami. In his words: *"Now we're going into our seventh year bringing 44 – 55 galleries to Miami during Art Basel. We are bringing artists who would never have had national exposure...I've never been given a grant of any substance. This building is like being given a giant loan."*



Photo by Robin Hill

### IN-HOUSE ARTS BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY RESULTS: MEETING NEEDS AND AFFORDABILITY

Overall, do you perceive your space and the building as appropriate to your business' or organization's needs?

**YES = 100%**

Do you consider your space affordable?

**YES = 86%**

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

### IN-HOUSE ARTS BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY RESULTS: BENEFITS

Renting space in the Artspace building has...

Enabled us to share equipment and/or resources

**100%**

Facilitated our collaborations

**88%**

Allowed us to learn new artistic or business skills/knowledge

**50%**

Allowed us to share our artistic or business skills/knowledge

**88%**

Helped us to financially stabilize

**50%**

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Respondents selecting agree to strongly agree

# 3

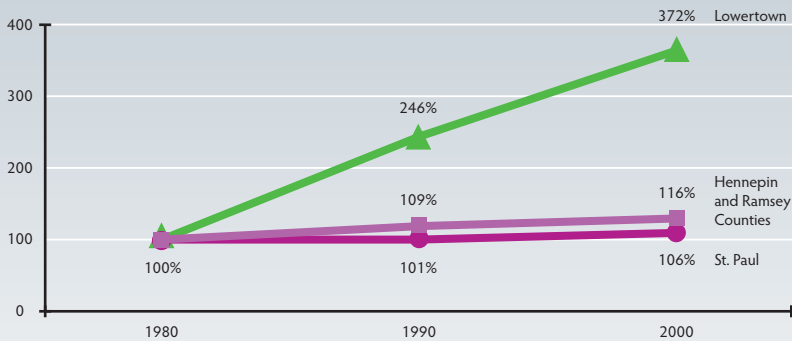
## The keys to successful art spaces are:

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



To view the full *How Art Spaces Matter II* report, please visit [www.artspace.org](http://www.artspace.org).

THE NORTHERN (1990) AND TILSNER (1993) PROJECTS SPARKED SUSTAINED POPULATION GROWTH IN LOWERTOWN, FAR OUTPACING ST. PAUL AND HENNEPIN AND RAMSEY COUNTIES



TRADITIONAL MEASURES SHOW THAT JOB CREATION NEAR THE TASHIRO KAPLAN MODESTLY LED JOB CREATION IN GREATER KING COUNTY, WA.

These measures, however, may not capture the full scale of entrepreneurial activity. **For example, 48% of resident artists reported increased earnings from their artistic work.** Many artists operate as micro-businesses that fall beneath the radar.



Metris Arts Consulting provides research and analysis to help communities strengthen the arts – and vice-versa. It connects clients with critical resources including impact studies, evaluations, and “think” pieces and presentations. Metris helps change-agents make the case for and improve cultural vitality.

Metris Principal Anne Gadwa is a leading voice in arts and community development who combines academic training in urban planning with extensive experience in managing the operation and finances of nonprofit arts organizations.

With her frequent collaborator, Dr. Ann Markusen, she has co-authored a number of major reports and journal articles, including *Creative Placemaking for the Mayors' Institute on City Design* and “Arts and Culture in Urban and Regional Planning: A Review and Research Agenda” for *Journal of Planning Education and Research*.

For more information and to access research and publications visit [metrisarts.com](http://metrisarts.com).

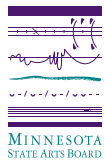


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# ARTSPACE

## The nation's partner in arts-driven community transformation.

**Experience.** For 30 years, we have brought our hard-earned expertise to more than 200 cultural facility planning efforts that have resulted in the creation of more than 50 affordable arts facilities from coast to coast. Of these projects, 30 have been developed and are owned and operated by Artspace itself. Our national database of artist space needs is based on input from thousands of artists.

**Knowledge.** Our highly capable staff of 40 professionals is our intellectual capital. Our hands-on, inclusive approach allows Artspace to build coalitions that merge artistic, civic, political, philanthropic, and financial agendas, and to guide diverse teams through complex real estate and financial transactions. We are recognized for our proven capacity to get hard deals done while putting in place structures – based on enduring relationships and sound finances – that position projects for long-term success.

**Entrepreneurialism.** Artspace has thrived by prioritizing sustainability, self-sufficiency, and entrepreneurial solutions, and our businesslike approach is valued by our board, our staff, and our many partners. At its core, our entrepreneurial spirit has made us distinctly capable of understanding and supporting the needs of aspiring artists.

**Impact.** Our projects allow individual artists and arts organizations to be more productive and to increase their arts-related income. They also foster safer, more livable neighborhoods without gentrification-led displacement. They animate deteriorated historic structures and underutilized spaces, putting them back onto the tax rolls and boosting area property values. They help anchor arts districts, expand access to the arts, and attract additional artists, creative businesses and organizations, and complementary businesses to the area.

**The future.** Building on our solid foundation of experience, knowledge, and entrepreneurial values, over the next decade we anticipate doubling our portfolio and continuing to provide national leadership, innovation, and sustained impact in the field of creative placemaking.