Oakland Avenue Urban Farm in Detroit’s North End was founded by wife-and-husband team Jerry and Billy Hebron. Though the North End was once a middle-class neighborhood known for producing Motown luminaries like Aretha Franklin, the neighborhood has in recent years struggled with the fallout from Detroit’s broader economic depression: unemployment, crime, and civic disinvestment. For the past decade, the Farm has served as both a physical and social anchor for its community. Now, in partnership with local design studio Akoaki, cultural programmer ONE Mile Project, the City of Detroit City Planning Commission, and the Center for Community Based Enterprise, the Farm is doubling its footprint and growing its offerings with an arts-centered redevelopment strategy.

The planning team is integrating the existing garden sites into an expanded landscape that will feature an art venue, off-grid energy systems, retail markets, and housing for visiting artists.

According to Anya Sirota of Akoaki, “We’re not making things valuable simply by attracting developers. We’re finding ways to leverage existing structures, to use design to broadcast existing frequencies. ... Detroit Cultivator is a plan in which food production, cultural activity, and civic assets work together to reactivate a locally rooted economy.”

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Oakland Avenue Urban Farm

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The AGRICULTURE & FOOD community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to ensure a steady supply of and ready access to fresh and healthy food. Programs and practices ranging from neighborhood-scale community gardens, farmers markets, and commercial kitchens to regional-scale food distribution systems and rural farming economies all play a role in helping communities achieve food security: the continuous availability of adequate amounts of healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate foods that are produced using safe, humane, and ecologically sustainable methods.
For the past 20-plus years, multidisciplinary artist Carlton Turner has spearheaded local- and national-level projects that center ideas of manhood, race, art, culture, and social justice.

One of his current endeavors is leading an “economic revolution” in his home community of rural Utica, Mississippi: population 840. With the Mississippi Center for Cultural Production, Turner is empowering local young people to become creative content producers (filmmakers, photographers, musicians) and take ownership of their own narratives and their community’s. As they learn to use the technological tools of the storytelling trades, they also learn about Utica’s history and their connections to it.

Sipp Culture also involves young participants in local agricultural production, showing them the art of nurturing community relationships through food, and demonstrating the present-day viability of age-old economic strategies rooted in land cultivation.

Turner says, “We have been told for so long that our communities are poor and have little or nothing of value to offer, so our children grow up looking forward to the day when they get the opportunity to leave. ... [Our work] is to recalibrate the measurements by which economic prosperity is calculated, and in the process, redefine wealth for our rural community.”
The ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to increase economic opportunity, stability, and financing availability for low-income individuals, families, and communities. Such economic development endeavors seek to equalize the inequitable economic playing field through community control of labor (e.g., worker cooperatives), fair labor policies (e.g., community benefit agreements), and small business development (e.g., low-interest bank or municipal loan programs), among other methods. Increasingly, this sector is taking a “triple bottom line” approach: one that follows community-driven practices that prioritize long-term positive outcomes for “people, planet, and profit.”
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<td>LOCATION</td>
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The border community of Nogales funnels an estimated $30 billion worth of produce and manufactured goods from Mexico into Arizona and the greater US annually. While this trade has historically supported thousands of jobs in both countries, the advent of NAFTA and the 9/11 attacks dealt blows to cross-border retail and local entrepreneurship that continue to linger. Many young people now leave Nogales after high school; if they return, they face limited opportunities.

The Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA) conducted a needs assessment in Nogales using “the tools of the folklorist: observing, listening, and interviewing” and found a number of existing business incubation programs, art curricula in schools, successful efforts to bring activity back downtown, and more.

As executive director of SFA, the folklorist, curator, and anthropologist Dr. Maribel Alvarez is leading the charge to build on these initiatives-in-progress by transforming the former residence of Raul Castro, Arizona’s only Mexican-American governor to date, into VozFrontera: a center for youth engagement, leadership, and local arts incubation.

Kimi Eisele of SFA says, “VozFrontera will celebrate the energy in Nogales and bring additional activities specifically for young people to create both workforce and economic development opportunities for youth in and around our community.”
The EDUCATION & YOUTH community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to strengthen a community’s well-being through its academic and youth development initiatives, which may or may not take place in traditional school settings. Practitioners in this sector may help to support the relationship between schools and the communities they serve; assist in school reform; work to improve student engagement; empower youth to transform their built environment; or help students build a pipeline to gainful employment. Every educational model—from charter schools to alternative community learning centers—has the potential to integrate whole-community health goals into its programs, communications, and outreach.
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To handle the seasonal overflow of the Red River, the city of Fargo, North Dakota constructed a series of large stormwater retention basins. While the basins do prevent flooding during heavy rains, they are most often fallow: dry, empty lots the size of a dozen football fields, occupying public space and separating neighborhoods. Hoping to make better use of the basins and improve the lives of nearby residents, the city partnered with environmental artist Jackie Brookner and local artists to create a plan for World Gardens Commons, a project that transformed an 18-acre basin in the neighborhood of West Acres into a vibrant public space that connected, rather than divided, adjacent communities.

The team used storytelling, food sharing, and dance to engage residents in a multi-year process of reimagining the space. West Acres’ largely Native American and new American cultures are reflected in the plan, which includes a natural amphitheater and a “listening garden.” City of Fargo planning director Nicole Crutchfield says, “By working with artists and using creative problem solving, we found solutions that functioned on multiple levels—ecological, spiritual, infrastructural, aesthetic. We picked up on nuances about what the community needed that we would have missed if we had approached it using our conventional planning methods.”
The ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to design a healthy and sustainable future for people and the planet. Regardless of the issue—climate resilience and adaptation, clean energy, water infrastructure, habitat preservation, responsible use of natural resources, managing toxic waste and pollution, or simply acknowledging that socioeconomic inequality means vulnerable populations experience the impacts of climate change first and worst—the urgent and complex challenges we face require systems thinking, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and holistic approaches that address root causes and prioritize long-term beneficial impacts for many over short-term gains for select few.
The Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling (SHCMAS) occupies two floors of Broadway Housing Communities’ (BHC) Sugar Hill Project: a nearly 200,000-square-foot building in Harlem designed by renowned architect David Adjaye. In addition to SHCMAS, the site provides 124 units of permanently affordable housing for very low income and formerly homeless individuals and families, and hosts the Sugar Hill Museum Preschool, a community art gallery, and a garden.

Too often, housing for low-income people is isolated, stigmatized, and marginalized. The Sugar Hill Project breaks this cycle by providing opportunities for education, socialization, and creative development all under the same roof as a stable, affordable home.

The Project further expands the definition of “mixed-use building” by purposefully incorporating the arts and artists into the daily lives of its residents and community members. SHCMAS in particular focuses on the cognitive and creative development of children ages 3-8, especially those living in Upper Manhattan communities beset by deep poverty.

BHC’s founder and executive director Ellen Baxter says: “Arts and culture bring needed relief and inspiration to struggling communities. To create a museum of art and storytelling was an aspirational vision informed by the rich cultural heritage of Sugar Hill.”

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The HOUSING community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to build and preserve high-quality affordable housing for low- and moderate-income individuals, families, and communities. Community development corporations and real estate developers leverage incentives like the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program to build the majority of new affordable housing units in the U.S., while renters and advocacy groups campaign to create and preserve policies like rent control, inclusionary zoning, and land trusts that facilitate and protect affordable housing locally and nationally. This current system for building and preserving affordable housing in the U.S. has its roots in the 1970s, when local efforts to fill gaps left by declining federal funding flourished.
In 1932, Japanese immigrant Sanzo Murakami built a two-story building on South Jackson Street in Seattle’s Nihonmachi (Japantown). His Higo 10 Cents Store occupied the first floor, while he resided upstairs with his wife Matsuyo and their four children.

During World War II, the Murakamis were forcibly removed from their home and incarcerated in Idaho’s Minidoka concentration camp. A few years before they were imprisoned, Matsuyo and Sanzo’s 22-year-old daughter Chiyo lost her life to tuberculosis in the upper floor of the Jackson building.

Over 70 years later, Seattle’s Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience partnered with the Murakami family, Japantown businesses, and local artists to turn a plot of land behind the building into Chiyo’s Garden: a welcoming public space that commemorates her and all children who grow up in the neighborhood. The garden’s Nihonmachi Fence shows the growth, decline, and rebirth of Seattle’s Japanese American population, its slats representing years in the life of the community.

Chiyo’s Garden has become a social hub for the area, and a destination on The Wing’s walking tours. Visitors are invited to reflect on both historic Nihonmachi as a whole and on the personal stories—like Chiyo’s—behind it.
The IMMIGRATION community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to provide social services and advocate for policies that support the integration of immigrants and refugees into communities across the U.S. Despite current polarization and mercurial policies at the federal level surrounding issues of border infrastructure and security enforcement, the immigration sector is seeing a rise in creative, community-level efforts to engage long-time residents—including those most susceptible to cultural anxiety—in building trust and working with nonprofits and local governments to weave new Americans into the social, economic, and civic fabric of communities.
Creative placemaking happens when artists and arts organizations join their neighbors in shaping their community’s future—working together to produce beneficial, place-based outcomes. This practice is at its best when it is locally defined and informed and centers the people who live, work, and play in a place.

The term “creative placemaking” was introduced to American communities in 2010 through a white paper Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus wrote for the Mayors’ Institute on City Design. While artists’ involvement in building communities stretches back to the earliest civilizations around the world, this paper summarized two decades of creative placemaking in the United States, with an emphasis on the role of the arts in livability and economic development.

Over time, practitioners of creative placemaking have increasingly pushed the boundaries of traditional community planning and development and have demonstrated the effectiveness of building creative, cross-sector, interdisciplinary solutions to local challenges. To support and advance this way of working, ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) was established as a collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development.

Today, as the field of creative placemaking rapidly grows in cities, towns, and rural areas across the United States, the conversation has grown to encompass many other ways arts and culture can address community planning and development issues.

The people and organizations who do this work are also more diverse than ever: they operate across sectors, strive to achieve a range of human-centered outcomes, and include everyone from residents to artists to teachers to professional community planners.

ArtPlace has organized much of the work of community planning and development into 10 core sectors that show the variety of areas in which arts and culture can contribute to positive place-based outcomes:

- **AGRICULTURE & FOOD**
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- **EDUCATION & YOUTH**
- **ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY**
- **HEALTH**
- **HOUSING**
- **IMMIGRATION**
- **PUBLIC SAFETY**
- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Inherent in each of these 10 sectors are specific goals and desired outcomes, and a particular set of strategies and tactics to achieve them. Having made investments of over $100 million in this work since 2011, ArtPlace is growing the field of creative placemaking through demonstration projects, meaningful investments in organizational change, and catalytic research. By exploring how arts and culture have been and might be allies in helping to reach community development goals, ArtPlace aims to develop open processes, shared languages, and common aspirations, so that communities across the country can benefit from the powerful, cross-sector synergies today’s creative placemaking practitioners are generating.

Creative placemaking does not necessarily seek to make places more “creative”—instead, it empowers residents, artists, and planners to creatively address local challenges and opportunities. ArtPlace measures creative placemaking success by the ways artists, formal and informal arts spaces, and creative interventions contribute to sustainable beneficial outcomes for communities.

**EXHIBITION OVERVIEW**

Many traditional planning and development efforts have fallen short of delivering equitable, healthy, sustainable outcomes in communities.

In response, artists and arts organizations across the United States are developing the kinds of human-centered, contextual, adaptive solutions that can strengthen their communities from within.

This exhibition highlights 10 creative placemaking projects from across the country, each supported by ArtPlace America, each addressing a community need, and each working within a traditional community planning and development sector: Agriculture & Food, Economic Development, Education & Youth, Environment & Energy, Health, Housing, Immigration, Public Safety, Transportation, and Workforce Development.

**ORGANIZERS**

This exhibition is organized by ArtPlace America and co-presented with the Kibel Gallery at the University of Maryland.

**CURATORS**

Adam Erickson, ArtPlace America Ronit Eisenbach, University of Maryland

**EXHIBITION DESIGN**

Manuel Miranda Practice

**ABOUT ARTPACE AMERICA**

ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) is a 10-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions. Beginning work as an organization in 2011, and finishing in 2020, its mission is to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development.

**ABOUT MANUEL MIRANDA PRACTICE**

Manuel Miranda Practice (MMP) uses graphic design to make places and content visible, legible, and navigable to people. In addition to studio practice, Manuel Miranda is a critic at the Yale School of Art and a member of New York City’s Public Design Commission. MMP is based in the Lower East Side of New York City.
When you share an arts experience with someone you can both maintain your unique cultural identity and share a bond.

— Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace America

The arts help people realize ‘I can’ — they are an antidote for disempowerment.

— Frances Lucerna, El Puente
Eastern Kentucky suffers from some of the highest opioid-related hospitalization rates in the country. Opioid users in the region face not only risks to their health and relationships: if convicted of drug-related crimes, they can also find gainful employment almost impossible to secure—especially in the economic void being left by the retreating coal industry.

In response to this complex problem, the Culture of Recovery project at the Appalachian Artisan Center (AAC) is pairing aspiring craftsmen who are in recovery with mentors from AAC's network of over 300 artists. The artists lead their apprentices in skill-building and entrepreneurial workshops in blacksmithing, ceramics, printmaking, luthiery (stringed instrument building), and more.

"Those of us that do creative work already know how engaging and therapeutic art can be," says Jessica Evans, AAC's executive director. "More than that, the way that we learn a craft—through master/apprenticeship relationships, for example—builds human connection."

Culture of Recovery also opens new employment possibilities to participants, particularly as demand for handmade musical instruments and other crafts from the region increases.

"When you’re an artist ... you think outside the box," says AAC's Chris Boyd. "I think that’s what’s needed in finding solutions to this epidemic."
The HEALTH community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to prevent disease and promote overall health at the community level. Traditional practitioners such as hospitals, municipal health departments, researchers, and community groups are increasingly working alongside urban planners, community developers, businesses, and artists as the field becomes more focused on equity and the social determinants of health. Involving these nontraditional partners is an acknowledgement that individual and community health is affected not only by behaviors and genetics, but also by factors like physical environment, family and social environment, resources and wealth, religious practices, social norms, economic policies, education, and sociocultural values.
This exhibition features 10 creative placemaking projects supported by ArtPlace America. Each of the projects works with a different sector of community planning and development. This map demonstrates the geographic diversity represented in the exhibition, and also shows community types: Urban, Rural, and Suburban.

This matrix shows the different Community Planning & Development Sectors each project is working with, along with Artistic Disciplines engaged.
The power of community can put people like me in places that matter.

— Carlos Contreras, Progress Now New Mexico

Those of us closest to the problem are also closest to the solution.

— Shelton McElroy, Artist, The Bail Project

Artists can be powerful influencers because art can cross boundaries and ideological barriers.

— Kate Wolford, McKnight Foundation
The Alameda County Sheriff’s Office (ACSO) in California is a state and national leader in progressive public safety. Using sports, arts, economic development, and recreation to build relationships between deputies and residents, the ACSO is helping to transform disinvested and disenfranchised neighborhoods in its jurisdiction into vibrant and safe communities.

Alameda’s Deputy Sheriffs’ Activities League (DSAL) uses its nonprofit status and public programming skills to complement the ACSO’s community-oriented police work. The two collaborated with the local Chamber of Commerce, community groups, and local artists to present Eden Night Live: a seasonal pop-up festival that transforms a vacant lot on Mission Boulevard in unincorporated Cherryland into a safe place for creativity, community, and joy.

In its first two years, Eden Night Live drew over 20,000 visitors and attracted 27 local vendors. DSAL is now implementing a community-driven process that will allow residents and the ACSO to transform an additional vacant lot along the East 14th Street-Mission Boulevard Corridor into another thriving cultural space.

“I don’t know how many public agencies understand how much the arts can affect good outcomes,” says Alameda Deputy Charles Joe. “I haven’t seen anything else that’s been that connecting tissue.”
The PUBLIC SAFETY community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to ensure the welfare and protection of the general public, allowing people and communities to feel free of threats to their persons and property. The achievement of public safety means more than the suppression of crime: it also includes prevention, intervention, and diversion strategies and programs; reentry support following justice system involvement; and the bolstering of “protective factors” like civic engagement, education, physical and mental health, and neighborhood livability. While public safety has often been cast as the sole responsibility of law enforcement and court systems, community members’ ability to self-establish informal social control also plays a major role in creating and sustaining it.
The Washington, DC suburb of Takoma Park is home to many new residents from India, El Salvador, China, Ethiopia, and other countries, a number of whom have opened businesses along New Hampshire Avenue, the six-lane highway that forms the city’s eastern boundary. While the highway is an important artery, its auto-centric design endangers those who walk along it or cross it (many of whom are new Americans) and discourages foot traffic to their businesses.

As part of its efforts to make New Hampshire Avenue more human-friendly, Takoma Park’s Housing and Community Development Department invited local dance company Dance Exchange to help them better understand users’ relationships to the thoroughfare.

Employing dance, visual art, sculpture, photography, and storytelling in a suite of artistic experiences, the company posed six core questions to residents, community leaders, business owners, and city staff, including: “What brings us to this place?” “What traditions do we carry here?” “What do we hope for the future of the Avenue?”

Over the course of more than a year, a team of Dance Exchange artists, under the direction of the company’s executive artistic director Cassie Meador, worked with Takoma Park residents to gather and incorporate local cultural feedback into its municipal planning processes, and to shift the narrative of a place so often defined by its transportation challenges.
The TRANSPORTATION community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to maintain, repair, and build transit infrastructure at the local, regional, state, and national levels. Federal grants that filter down from state agencies to municipal governments are the primary source of transportation funding, though public-private partnerships and tax revenue also contribute significantly. Practitioners in this sector focus on building effective public transport networks and green infrastructure projects that: improve users’ access to jobs and other economic opportunities; distribute transit options equitably across a region; include low- and moderate-income individuals in decision-making processes; and contribute to positive health outcomes for communities.
About 30,000 Oglala Lakota Sioux tribal members live on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Half are under the age of 30, and 80 percent are unemployed.

Rolling Rez Arts (RRA) is a state-of-the-art mobile unit that traverses Pine Ridge to bring an arts space, business training center, and bank to Native American artists who need these services but have limited access to them.

The concept of the colorful roaming bus came in response to a local study that found more than half of households on the reservation were operating home-based businesses—79 percent of which were based in traditional arts.

The study also found that 61 percent of the reservation’s emerging artists have annual incomes of less than $10,000, but that when they receive entrepreneurial training—of the kind offered by RRA—that number increases dramatically.

According to First Peoples Fund, owner and operator of RRA, “The Rolling Rez embodies what it takes to build a creative economy in an expansive space. There’s not enough critical mass in any one location to make it happen otherwise. The RRA is a pollinator in growing this ecosystem, seeding the many partnerships of organizations, artists, and individuals [that form] a vibrant Indigenous arts ecology.”
The WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT community development sector is comprised of individuals, organizations, and policymakers who are working to develop skills, job readiness, and financial literacy for low- and moderate-income individuals and people who are unemployed. Workforce development initiatives can take many forms, including union and labor advocacy; the creation of jobs for specific communities; supportive measures designed to increase employee retention; municipal workforce programs that fill gaps left by inequitable education systems; and economic development programs that help businesses grow and expand their hiring capacity.